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Scribalism and Diplomacy at the Crossroads of Cuneiform Culture:

The Sociolinguistics of Canaano-Akkadian

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

by

Alice Helene Mandell

2015

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Scribalism and Diplomacy at the Crossroads of Cuneiform Culture:

The Sociolinguistics of Canaano-Akkadian

by

Alice Helene Mandell

Doctor of Philosophy in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor William M. Schniedewind, Chair

The following study examines Canaano-Akkadian, the unique cuneiform system used in the southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age (1550-1150 B.C.E.), as a diplomatic scribal code used in contexts of mediated diplomacy with Egypt. The methodologies presented draw upon recent work on the sociolinguistics of writing and script choice that best elucidate the genesis of this scribal system and its role in Egypt's eastern empire. The classification of the language of the Canaanite Amarna Letters is still a matter of contention. The primary debate is whether or not the mixed Canaano-Akkadian forms are a reflection of a local dialect(s) of Akkadian, or a written scribal code––one that was quite distanced from the actual language underlying such messages.

Recent petrographic and paleographic analyses further complicate the correlation between language and writing in this corpus. Certain cuneiform scribes worked for multiple polities and, moreover, many tablets were created at quite a distance from the political centers generating this correspondence. For example, a number of letters were written at Egyptian administrative centers across the Levant and not at the local courts "sending" these messages. The Canaanite scribe emerges as the central figure in discussions of linguistic classification, as the language of these letters is a better reflection of scribal training during this period than what was actually spoken at local Canaanite courts. As such, there is a need for a reassessment of the scribal and administrative landscape of this period, and in particular, the system of scribes and messengers. This system of communication was a dynamic, complex process that entailed at the very least four linguistic layers: the spoken dialects of the original messages; Canaano-Akkadian, the scribal code of the written versions; the mediated reading of these letters once delivered, along with any additional socio-political or metapragmatic subtext; and the final translation into Egyptian.

The present study considers the metapragmatic, linguistic, orthographic, and rhetorical strategies employed by cuneiform scribes to bridge the geographic and cultural gulf between Canaanite polities and the royal court at Tell el-'Amarna, Egypt. The Canaanite glosses and scribal marks resurface as unique evidence for how Canaanite scribes approached the problem of translation and linguistic "border-crossing" in these cross-cultural and multilingual exchanges. Such strategies added nuance and a metapragmatic commentary to guide the translation and interpretation of these letters and to ensure that they received a positive reception. The cuneiform script was not limited to a

technological tool in such interactions, but entailed participation in a much larger cultural horizon—one shared by cuneiform scribes in Canaan and Egypt, who were the gatekeepers facilitating diplomacy throughout this period.

This dissertation of Alice Helene Mandell is approved.

Giorgio Buccellati

Kathlyn M. Cooney

Bruce Zuckerman

William M. Schniedewind, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

For Brigitte Alice Mandell, the most beloved wife of Don and mother of Alice and Samuel. She was born in Paris, but spent most of her adult life in San Diego. She had the most depressing taste in literature and music (Virginia Wolfe and cacophonic music at the breakfast table). When asked, she'd say that her two favorites songs were Villanueva Junction by Jimi Hendrix and Amazing Grace. We nicknamed her "truthie" because she spoke truth in a kind but mischievous way. She made the most outrageous comments when she did not approve of something. She described herself as a "non-joiner," "non-achiever," and "foggy-lofty," yet she could converse with anyone, and touched many lives. Her memorial was full of people that she encouraged and supported throughout her life. She had fabulous style: Paris meets southern California. She was beloved by all the animals. She never killed bugs, but carefuly set them outside in a safe place. She made amazing pies, breads, and soups. She read poetry, English literature, and she cheated at Sudoku. She was very small, but made up for her size with feist and conviction.

...

ברוך יהוה שלא נתננו טרף לשניהם

נפשנו כצפור נמלטה מפח יוקשים הפח נשבר ואנחנו נמלטנו

Blessed is the LORD, who did not let us be ripped apart by their teeth. We are like a bird escaped from the fowler's trap.

The trap broke and we escaped.

Ps. 124:6–7

...

Lorsque ma muse refroidie,

Vers le passé fera retour,

J'irai revoir ma Normandie,

C'est le pays qui m'a donné le jour.

— Frédéric Bérat

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Abbreviations

AHw	*Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJSL	*The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
Am Anthropol	*American Anthropologist*
AL	*Anthropological Linguistics*
Ä&L	*Ägypten und Levante*
Am. Ethnol	*American Ethnologist*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*
AOAT	*Alter Orient Altes Testament*
AoF	*Altorientalische Forschungen*
AuOr	*Aula Orientalis. Revista de estudios del Próximo Oriente Antiguo*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BIFAO	*Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*
BiOr	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BMSAES	*The British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan*
BZAW	*Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*

CDA	*A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian.*
CAT	*Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets:*
CDLI	*Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative*
COS	*The Context of Scripture*. 3 Volumes.
CRIL	*Colorado Research in Linguistics*
CSSH	*Comparative Studies in Society and History*
CRAIBL	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres*
CRRAI`	*Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm*
Folia Orient	*Folia Orientalia*
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.*
IJB	*International Journal of Bilingualism*
IJM	*International Journal of Multilingualism*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
ISO	*Journal of Sociolinguistics*
Int'l. J. Soc. Lang	*International Journal of the Sociology of Language*
JANES	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies*
JAEI	*Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*

JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JWSR	*Journal for Writing Systems Research*
SSEA	*Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities*
KHO Bilim Dergisi	*Kara Harp Okulu Bilim Dergisi 12*
Lang. Commun	*Language & Communication*
Lang. Soc	*Language in Society*
MARI	*Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires*
MIO	*Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung*
Or	*Orientalia*
OrAnt	*Oriens Antiquis*
RAI	*Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
SBL	*Society of Biblical Literature*
SED	*The Journal of Special Education*
SEL	*Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici*
SKPAWB	*Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*

SSEA	*Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities*
StOr	*Studia Orientalia*
TPhS	*Transactions of the Philological Society*
UF	*Ugarit Forschungen*
WL&L	*Written Language & Literacy*
VAB	*Vorderasiatische Bibliothek*
YOS	*Yale Oriental Series*
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete*

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The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.

—Bilbo Baggins (The Fellowship of the Ring)

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.
"I don't much care where—" said Alice.
"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat."—so long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation. "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

—Cheshire Cat (Alice in Wonderland)

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CHAPTER ONE

Canaano-Akkadian's Role in Egypt's Eastern Empire

I. Introduction

Very few corpora in the Ancient Near East elucidate large-scale diplomatic relations like that of the Amarna Letters. This was a period when intricate trade networks channeled goods throughout the Near East, connecting Egypt, the Eastern Mediterranean, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia.[1] The economic relationships forged between the major palace institutions of this period ushered in an era of heightened diplomacy and the first truly "international" age. Tablets recovered from diverse archives describe a cosmopolitan palace culture fueled by the circulation of raw materials, luxury commodities, and even elite personnel throughout the Near East. Access to these trade and communication networks was also an important symbol of the power and prestige of local elites.[2] The

---

[1] Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook describe it as a watershed period in the development of ancient Near Eastern diplomacy: "Not until the Amarna Age, in the circumstances of a multipolar, polycultural system encompassing the Great Powers of the ancient Near East, could the machinery of statecraft achieve its full potential, transversing immense barriers of distance, language, culture and political tradition ("Introduction: The Amarna System," in *Amarna Diplomacy. The Beginning of International Relations*. Edited R. Cohen and R. Westbrook [Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 2000], 212). G. Buccellati prefers the designation "cosmopolitan age," following McNeil's description of the dynamism and interconnectedness of this period. See G. Buccellati, "From Khana to Laqe: The End of Syro-Mesopotamia," in Ö. Tunca, De la Babylonie à la Syrie en passant par Mari (Mélanges Kupper: Liège, 1990), 234-235; W. H. McNeill, The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 110-113. R. Raioniere describes this network of rulers and administrators as an "international society" and the first of its kind for this early period ("The Amarna Age: An International Society in the Making," in *Amarna Diplomacy. The Beginning of International Relations* [Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 2000]: 42-70; esp. 42-46).

[2] For example, in one such letter, King Niqmaddu of Ugarit asks for a physician from the Egyptian court, claiming that there was no such specialist at Ugarit: "And give to me a palace retainer, a physician. There is no physician here" (EA 49:22-26). It seems unlikely that no such specialist was available in closer proximity. Ugarit was a cosmopolitan hub that fell under the Syro-Hittite sphere of influence during this period. The request for a physician from Egypt seems quite absurd at face value. However, reading this text through a political lens lends a slightly different interpretation. It appears

luxury goods coveted by the elites were designed according to an international aesthetic that became in and of itself a sign of power and prestige. The correspondence between specific members of the royal courts in the course of these material exchanges also served as a testament to their wide-reaching influence and membership in the "Great Powers Club."[3] Personal ties between elites were made possible by the cuneiform scribes working for diverse polities and an intricate network of officials and messengers who served as *de facto* ambassadors. Regarding the interactions between Canaanite and Egyptian officials, although face-to-face interactions were most likely in a mix of Canaanite, Egyptian, and perhaps Akkadian, the written code linking them together was Akkadian and their cuneiform scribal training.

The role of cuneiform and Akkadian in diplomacy in the Levant during the Late Bronze Age (LBA), which spans 1500-1150/1100 B.C.E., is best understood within the socio-political backdrop of this period.[4] An examination of the role of writing and the various uses of local (i.e., West Semitic [WS]) and foreign (i.e., Egyptian and cuneiform) writing systems indicates that Canaano-Akkadian served a

---

that this request was really an appeal for political validation from the royal court at Tell el-'Amarna. Such a favor from the Pharaoh undoubtedly had symbolic as well as pragmatic importance, serving as proof of an intimate friendship with the Egyptian court. Having the Pharaoh's personal physician at Niqmaddu's court would have been a testament to their close relationship and to Niqmaddu's membership in the club of Great Kings.

[3] For a discussion of this term see Cohen and Westbrook, *Amarna Diplomacy,* 232-236; Mario Liverani, "The Great Powers' Club," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations* Edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 15-27; see also Ibid., "Political Lexicon and Political Ideologies in the Amarna Letters," *Berytus* 31 (1983) 41-56.

[4] For a recent discussion of the comparative chronology of this period see Susan Sheratt, "Introduction to the Levant During the Late Bronze Age," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000-332 B.C.E.* Edited by Steiner, M L, and Ann E. Killebrew (Oxford, Oxford Press, 2014), 497-508.

specific role in the context of Egypt's rule in the southern Levant and Eastern Mediterranean. The "birth" and "death" of this scribal system was bound to Egypt's enterprises in the east. Canaano-Akkadian was a scribal code employed in the Levant under the auspices of the Egypt's administrative apparatus.

A. Canaano-Akkadian

Canaano-Akkadian is the designation used to describe the language of the Canaanite Amarna Letters and various cuneiform texts and fragments from the southern Levant that date to the LBA. It is typically approached as a dialect of Akkadian used by a specific ethno-linguistic group (i.e., the "Canaanites").[5] Most recently, it has been described as an Akkadographic code used to write Canaanite. Both approaches are problematic on multiple accounts. Such understandings overly wed Canaano-Akkadian to spoken language and neglect the scribes and/or literate officials using this system. The written medium used to physically transport these messages was an intermediary and rather small stage of a complex diplomatic process—one that entailed rulers and their counselors, scribes, officials, messengers, at least one written, and various "oral" versions of these messages. In a

[5] As Eva von Dassow point out, the terms "Canaan" and "Canaanite" for convenience, when in truth, the material culture of the LBA demonstrates a plethora of cultures moving through the region ("Canaanite in Cuneiform," *JAOS* 124 (2004), 643-644. I use the term "Canaanite Akkadian" to refer to Akkadian texts produced in the southern Levant during the second millennium B.C.E.; this includes texts written in the standard Old Babylonian (OB) and Middle Babylonian (MB) orthographies. The designation "Canaano-Akkadian" (developed primarily by S. Izre'el) refers to the writing system and corresponding texts from the southern Levant that mix Akkadian and Canaanite orthographies. Canaano-Akkadian appears in the southern Levant throughout the LBA. I use this term to differentiate between the mixed Canaanite/Akkadian writing system of this period from Canaanite Akkadian, which is a more general category, comprising of all Canaanite cuneiform texts written in Akkadian. For a list of the cuneiform texts from the southern Levant (including alphabetic cuneiform) found in the southern Levant see Wayne Horowitz, Takayoshi Oshima, and Seth L. Sanders. *Cuneiform in Canaan: Cuneiform Sources from the Land of Israel in Ancient Times* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2006).

sense, there was no "real" language of the text, as it was spoken in a Canaanite dialect, written in Canaano-Akkadian, interpreted by the cuneiform scribes at Tell el-'Amarna, and then presumably translated into Egyptian. In order to understand the nuances of this corpus, the Canaano-Akkadian letters are best examined as a diplomatic scribal code, not between Egypt and Canaanite polities, but rather between the cuneiform scribes working for them. Such an understanding elucidates the function of the linguistic and non-linguistic signaling in these letters, which would have only been accessible to those trained in this scribal system.

The "Canaanite in cuneiform," theory attempts to move past an overly linguistic understanding of the "mixed" WS and Akkadian forms in these letters by proposing that they were not truly ever spoken, but were logographic spellings that encoded an underlying Canaanite text.[6] This understanding, however, presumes an overly complex scribal system that does not accord with the distribution of Canaano-Akkadian texts or the sociolinguistic backdrop of this period. It calls for the emergence, development, and standardization of a Canaanite base dialect and a set of orthographic conventions about how to write it logographically using scribal conventions from OB cuneiform. Yet, Canaano-Akkadian was used throughout the southern Levant from the Transjordan (Pella) up into the Lebanese coast (Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos), which presumes an authoritative body and/or

[6] See the series of articles on the topic by Eva von Dassow: "What the Canaanite Cuneiformists Wrote: Review Article Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets: A Linguistic Analysis of the Mixed Dialect Used by the Scribes from Canaan, four volumes (Handbuch der Orientalistik, 1. Abteilung: Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten, Bd. 25) by Anson F. Rainey. Review," *IEJ* 53:2 (2003), 196-217; "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 641-674; "Peripheral Akkadian dialects, or Akkadography of local languages?" In *Language in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 53rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (*Moscow, Russia, July 23, 2007*), vol. I/2, ed. Leonid Kogan, et al. *Babel und Bibel* 4/2. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 895-926.

institution, if not controlling and standardizing then, at the very least, endorsing use of this scribal system. The LBA, however, was a period characterized by internecine fighting and political fragmentation—no Canaanite polity would have been sufficiently powerful to standardize this scribal system.

The thesis that Canaano-Akkadian was innately "Canaanite" or used to write Canaanite furthermore breaks down in light of its use outside of Canaan. This scribal code was also used at various stages by scribes working for the rulers Alashia and Amurru, which were on the fringes of Egypt's eastern empire. It is unlikely that the king of Alashia would write to the Pharaoh in "Canaanite," or that Egyptian officials would themselves engage in diplomacy in an Akkadographic code. It is also striking that both Amurru and Alashia use MB to write to Ugarit, which was a WS speaking kingdom, not Canaano-Akkadian. Moreover, there are no letters between WS polities or personal texts (e.g., inscribed objects or personal records etc.) that use Canaano-Akkadian, which suggests that WS scripts served for intergroup communication. The Akkadian(s) of the Amarna Letters was more a product of the diplomatic protocols in place and the status of the correspondents, than a reflection of the spoken court dialects.

The distribution of Canaano-Akkadian texts suggests that it was a scribal system used for diplomacy with Egypt, and moreover, was harnessed by Egypt for administration in the east. This may appear as an "argument from silence," as there is a paucity of evidence that Canaano-Akkadian was used outside of dealings with Egypt. The chronology of the emergence and spread of this scribal

system, however, correspond to Egypt's military and administrative agenda in the east.[7] It was in Egypt's best interest to promote the continuity of cuneiform scribalism within its borders. Recent petrographic evidence ties a number of Canaano-Akkadian texts to Egyptian centers in the Levant, which suggests that it was endorsed and even sponsored by Egypt. Having a unified script and writing system in the east ensured intelligibility between diverse polities, which presumably spoke quite different dialects. This facilitated Egypt's economic operations in the region. Also, Egyptian ideologies about the Egyptian language and script called for the use of a foreign script and language to administer the peoples of the east. The "death" of Canaano-Akkadian, too, corresponds to Egypt's retreat from the region. This cumulative evidence suggests that Egypt was the power that provided the stability needed for Canaano-Akkadian to spread and become the scribal system used in Egypt's eastern empire. When Egypt retreats from the southern Levant, there was no institutional force left to perpetuate the use of cuneiform. It lost its socio-political function and, as a result, Canaano-Akkadian scribes were essentially unemployed and unemployable. In the Iron I, the WS linear script emerged

[7] For a discussion of the progression of Egyptian expansion in the Levant see James M. Weinstein, "The Egyptian Empire in Palestine: A Reassessment," *BASOR* 241 (1981), 1–28; Eliezer Oren, "'Governors' Residences' in Canaan under the New Kingdom: A Case Study for Egyptian Administration," *JSSEA* 14 (1984), 37-56; James K. Hoffmeier, "Aspects of Egyptian Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Dynasty in Western Asia and Nubia," In *Egypt, Israel, and the Ancient Mediterranean World: Studies in Honor of Donald B. Redford. Probleme der Ägyptologie* 20. Edited by G. N. Knoppers and A. Hirsch (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 121–141; Donald B. Redford, *Egypt and Canaan in the New Kingdom* (Beer-Sheva 4) (Beer-Sheva: Ben Gurion University, 1990); Ibid., *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1992); Ibid., *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Ibid., *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Ibid., "Egypt and Western Asia in the Late New Kingdom: An Overview," in *The Sea Peoples and Their World: A Reassessment*. Edited by E. D. Oren (Philadelphia: The University Museum, 2000), 1-20; Ellen F. Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism: Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

and eventually was adopted and standardized by regional polities, thereby supplanting the role of cuneiform writing in this region.

II. The Emergence of Canaanite Cuneiform

Epigraphic evidence suggests that there was a tradition of Akkadian dating to the OB period. The cuneiform texts from the southern Levant dating to the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) are few yet, the extent tablets are most similar to the Akkadian produced by the Amorite kingdoms of Syria.[8] The bulk of Akkadian texts from the MBA are actually from Hazor, which was in the cultural sphere of Mari and the Amorite kingdoms of the MB II. By the LBA however, the scribal schools at Hazor produced Akkadian texts that diverged from OB and were increasingly influenced by WS. This

[8] What exactly constituted "Canaan" during this period is debated. The term "Kinnaḫu" derived from WS *kn'* is thought to be related to the word for purple or for the pruple dye extracted from murex shells. This designation then because associated with the Lebanese coast which was the center of purple dye production (William F. Albright, "The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization," 1st ed., in *Studies in the History of Culture* [Menasha, Wisconsin, 1942]: 25, n. 50; Benjamin Mazar, "Canaan and the Canaanites," *BASOR* 102 (April 1946), 7-12). This view is that most cited in the literature. For an overview of the origins of this term see Michel C. Astour. "The Origin of the Terms 'Canaan,' 'Phoenician,' and 'Purple," *JNES* 24 (1965), 346-348. Astour argues that this origins of **kn'* relate to the verb "to subdue," attested in the N- and H- stems in biblical Hebrew. He proposes that the verb may be a calque or counterpart to the Akkadian term for the "west" which is Amurru (i.e. the place where the sun sets or the western lands). In the LBA the term Canaan, if indeed it a term with the meaning of "west" or "western," suggests an origin stemming from the geographic orientation from a Mesopotamian or eastern Syrian perspective. In the LBA, the term Canaan included the Lebanese coastal littoral and parts of southern Syria, the northern border being the territorial boundaries of Amurru which served as a buffer between Egypt and Hatti. Whereas in later Iron and Persian period narratives the term Canaan refers to the entirety of the southern Levant in the period before the Judean and Israelite monarchies, corresponding roughly to the modern day area of Gaza, the West Bank and Israel. It is also used pejoratively to designate non-Israelites living in this area. Rainey adopts a more maximalist view, and sees Canaan as having a similar geographic scope to that in biblical literature to refer to the entirety of the southern Levant. See Anson F. Rainey, "Who is a Canaanite?" *BASOR* 304 (1996), 1-12, which is a rejoinder to Niels P. Lemeche, *The Canaanites and Their Land: The Traditions of the Canaanites*. *JSOT Supplemental Series* 110 (Sheffield, 1991). Though in truth, such debates about "Canaan" are a smaller part of a larger debate about Israel's history and the historicity of the biblical narratives; as such it is no surprise that Lemeche's skepticism is really a reflection of a more "minimalist" stance, whereas Rainey tended to mine biblical texts for clues about this region's early history. Although the term Canaan is not ideal, nor is the designation "Canaanite" as a cultural and linguistic catch-all designation, both will be used here for convenience and in accordance with scholarly convention.

indicates that there was a break with the scribal centers of the northern Levant.[9] Outside of Hazor, the corpus of MB cuneiform from Canaan is limited mainly to inscribed cylinder seals, which are less useful as gauges of scribal skill and literacy.[10] By the Late MBA, there was then a tradition of cuneiform already present in the Levant. However, it was mainly in the north (e.g., Hazor) and it followed the conventions of Syro-Mesopotamian scribal schools.

The emergence and spread of Canaano-Akkadian in the LBA marks a dramatic break with the scribal tradition of the Amorite dynasties of the northern Levant, and attests to a reorientation south, towards Egypt. The first Canaano-Akkadian texts correspond to a heightened Egyptian presence in the region. Thutmoses III's campaigns east marked a shift in Egypt's foreign policy, and a more focused interest on the Levant.[11] The Taanach Letters, the next corpus of cuneiform texts from this

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[9] For example, a text at Hazor glosses an Akkadian verb with a WS verbal form: Hazor 10:20-21 *ù ip-ta-ra-*{*eras.*}*-aš-ni\ša-pa-ṭú-ni*) "[The gods] have decided between me and them\ [they] judged me). The Akkadian verb *parāsu* "to decide, cut" is glossed with the NWS verb *špṭ* "to judge." The enclitic suffix *–ū* is the 3mp WS form; here the verb *špṭ* is used as a past tense, i.e., a WS perfect, whereas the Akkadian suffixed form is typically a stative (or permansive). The WS form in this text is "marked" as it deviates from the rest of the language of this text, and moreover, it is preceded by a *Glossenkeil*. See Horowitz et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan,* 80-82. For a discussion of the Akkadian suffix conjugation, or stative, see Wolfram von Soden, *Grundriss Der Akkadischen Grammatik* (Roma: Pontificium institutum biblicum, 1952), § 77.

[10] The corpus of MB cuneiform from Canaan, with the exception of the texts from Hazor, is as follows: Bet Mirsim 1 (a mix of cuneiform and hieroglyphs), Beth Shean I, Tell Jemmeh 1, Jericho 2 and 3 which are cylinder seals; Megiddo 3 (LBA or MBA), the Megiddo Gilgamesh fragment, which dates to the LBA/MBA; the Shechem letter fragments, which date to the late MBA, or early LBA. Such small, inscribed objects were portable and tended to be reused by successive generations or were valued as heirlooms, which complicates dating these objects and identifying their provenience. Seals also tended to use logographic rather than syllabic spellings, which limits the linguistic data than can be gleaned from such objects. For example, Beth Mirsim 1, which also contains a hieroglyphic inscription, appears to have used cuneiform for esthetic, rather than linguistic purposes, which reduces the already small corpus of MBA cuneiform texts in the southern Levant. See Horowitz et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan*, 10-15.

[11] From the reign of Thutmoses III-on Egyptian presence in the Levant is characterized by a more involved approach to governance. As Morris argues, Egyptian rule in the southern Levant was not static, but was "ever-evolving and fundamentally political," in accordance with the political climate of the LBA. See Ellen. F. Morris, *The Architecture of*

region, contain the earliest Canaano-Akkadian forms and are the *terminus post quem* for the emergence of this scribal system. This corpus demonstrates two importance developments: 1) the evolution of a "local" scribal system to write Akkadian that was at odds with MB, and 2) the use of this scribal system to write to Egyptian officials.[12] Rainey describes the Taanach Letters as demonstrating the "same OB traits and lack of MB traits" and the "strong West Semitic flavor" as the Canaanite Amarna Letters.[13] The Taanach Letters make use of WS mixed verbal forms and other features standard in Canaano-Akkadian, such as verb-initial word order.[14] This corpus attests to the emergence of a distinct scribal system in the southern Levant that was used to write cuneiform by the late 15th century B.C.E.

This scribal system subsequently was adopted by scribes working for polities throughout the southern Levant, corresponding to the area of Egypt's eastern territories.[15] It appears as a standardized scribal system by the mid-14th century B.C.E. in the Canaanite Amarna Letters. Also, letters from

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Imperialism: Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 17-21; quote in 20.

[12] Taanach Letters 5-6 are written from Amenhatpa to Talwašur, the local ruler at Taanach. These letters include Canaano-Akkadian orthographies (e.g., the forms *tu-wa-še-ru-na* and *ti-il$_5$-la-ku-na* in Taanach 6: 11, 14). Horowitz, *Cuneiform in Canaan,* 140-141.

[13] A. F. Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets: A Linguistic Analysis of the Mixed Dialect Used by Scribes from Canaan*. In *Handbuch der Orientalistik. Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten* 25. 4 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 31.

[14] See Taanach 3, 4, 4a, 7, 12, 13, 14 (administrative texts), Taanach 1, 2, 8-11(letters), and Taanach 5-6 (in missives from the Egyptian administrator stationed at Megiddo). Also, see Albert. E. Glock, "Texts and Archaeology at Tell Ta'annek," *Berytus* 31: 57-66; A. F. Rainey, "Verbal Usages in the Taanach Letters," *IOS* 7 (1977), 33-64; "Taanach Letters," *EI* 26: 153*-162;* W. F. Albright, "The Prince of Taanach in the Fifteenth Century B.C.," *BASOR* 92: 28-30.

[15] Scribes do, however, have varying degrees of competency in cuneiform. The centers that appear to write most to Egypt, such as the scribes in the highlands and the Lebanese littoral, demonstrate a more skillful use of this system.

Amurru, Alashia, and Egypt, too have Canaano-Akkadian forms. Canaano-Akkadian was then, at this stage, not really "Canaanite," or a reflection of a spoken dialect(s) of Akkadian. It was a scribal system used by the scribes working for polities corresponding with Egypt that were lesser in status in the southern Levant, or did not have an established scribal traditions of their own, such as Amurru and Alashia. Recent petrographic studies indicate that a number of Canaanite Amarna Letters were actually written at Kumidi, Ṣumur, Beth-Shean, and Gaza, which were Egyptian bases in the east.[16] This suggests that Canaano-Akkadian scribes worked for and/or with Egyptian administrators in the Levant. Canaano-Akkadian was intrinsic to Egypt's administration in this region— it was the scribal system that united disparate polities, and ensured clear communication between them and Egypt.[17]

Canaano-Akkadian features are also seen in some of the Egyptian letters sent to Canaanite rulers. This suggests that Canaanite scribes worked directly for Egypt and/or that Egyptian cuneiform scribes used Canaano-Akkadian orthographies from time to time, which appears at times to be stylistic.[18] Also MB forms and Egyptianisms are embedded in the more advanced Canaanite letters. This does not mean that Egyptian scribes "spoke" Canaano-Akkadian or that Canaanite scribes

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[16] Yuval Goren, Israel Finkelstein, Nadav Na'aman, and Michal Artzy. *Inscribed in Clay: provenance study of the Amarna tablets and other ancient Near Eastern texts* (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004), 322-325.

[17] As Goren et al. note, the script of these letters suggest that scribes traveled to Egyptian sites to write these letters. This raises the issue of why these letters were not simply written in Egyptian or Egyptian-Akkadian. The form of the written message during this period is a reflection of the status of the rulers. There are no examples of a Canaanite polity writing to Egypt in MB, for example. See Goren, *Inscribed in Clay*, 323.

[18] EA 369, a letter from Egypt to Gezer, includes a Canaano-Akkadian verbal form. See also Zipporah Cochavi-Rainey, "Canaanite Influence in the Akkadian Texts written by Egyptian Scribes in the 14th and 13th Centuries B.C.E," *UF* 21 (1989), 39-46.

"spoke" MB. That is to say, the rulers and scribes collaborating on these letters did not spontaneous "shift" into different dialects of Akkadian. These diplomatic missives were after-all carefully crafted works of diplomatic writing. Such code-switching is best understood as a strategy to highlight and/or add metapragmatic commentary to a particular passage. The shift to a more oral-poetic style added a more personal touch to an otherwise formulaic text. In the context of this scribal code, code-switching, (i.e., shifting from Canaano-Akkadian to MB, or from MB to a Canaano-Akkadian orthography etc.), was a key strategy that enabled the scribes sending and processing these letters to communicate beyond the scope of the literal message of the tablet. Such metapragmatic signals gave cues about how the text was to be read, interpreted, and performed.

Cuneiform texts at Aphek dating to mid-13th century B.C.E are the *terminus ante quem* for Canaano-Akkadian. This corpus is also the latest evidence for the production of cuneiform by Canaanite scribes in the southern Levant. During this period, Aphek was an Egyptian garrison and appears to have also been a place of Canaano-Akkadian scribal training. The presence of the Canaano-Akkadian texts and scholastic materials at this site is indicative of the importance that this scribal system had in Egypt's eastern empire into the Ramesside period.[19] In particular, a WS>Akkadian

[19] The Aphek corpus includes a lexical list with WS entries that are written in syllabic cuneiform. Lexical lists were a key part of scribal training and suggest that by this point there was a well-established Canaanite scribal curriculum—one that diverged quite dramatically from that elsewhere in the Periphery. For a discussion of the material culture and extent texts see Yuval Gadot, "The Late Bronze Egyptian Estate at Aphek," *Tel Aviv* 37 (2010): 48–66; Nadav Na'aman, "Aphek in the 13th Century B.C.: From a City-State to an Egyptian Administrative Center," *Cathedra* 27 (1983): 27-32; Itamar Singer, "The Aphek Inscriptions," *Cathedra* 27 (1983): 19–26; Ibid., "Takhulinu and Haya: Two Governors in the Ugarit Letter from Tel Aphek," *Tel Aviv* 10 (1983): 3–25; Yuval Goren,Nadav Na'aman, Hans Mommsen, and I. Finkelstein. "Provenance Study and Re-evaluation of the Cuneiform Documents from the Egyptian Residency at Tel Aphek." *ÄeL* 16 (2006), 161–171.

lexical list at this Egyptian base suggests that scribes were trained at Aphek. At the end of the LBA cuneiform vanishes from the epigraphic record, which corresponds to a hiatus in the presence of a foreign military and administration on Canaanite soil.[20] The WS linear script, which was on the margins of institutional life in Canaan in the second millennium B.C.E., filled this scribal vacuum and eventually became *the* script of the Levant and Eastern Mediterranean. In the second millennium B.C.E. this script does not appear to have been used in institutional contexts in the southern Levant (i.e., for governance and centralized administration), but is only attested in non-administrative inscriptions (e.g., dedicatory objects and personalized graffiti). Unlike the "Ugaritic" cuneiform script, the WS linear scripts was not standardized or adopted by institutions during this period. Egypt's retreat from the Levant and the collapse of the palace institutions in this region catalyzed a scribal vacuum. The adoption of alphabetic technology by the WS institutions that rose out of the ashes of the LBA is in part a result of the demise of cuneiform scribalism in this region.[21]

The cuneiform script, moreover, had a different role in the southern Levant and Eastern Mediterranean than in the northern Levant. In the south, it appears to have been tied to Egyptian administration, as the earliest texts and the end of this corpus are all linked to Egypt. This system stands in stark contrast to use of Akkadian as a contact language, one written and spoken to varying

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[20] The next phase of cuneiform in this region is that used in the Neo-Assyrian and Babylonian periods and are not made by local polities but by foreigners in the Levant. See Horowitz, *Cuneiform in Canaan,* 18-25.

[21] For a discussion and tabulation of the range of texts, mediums, and writing systems in the southern Levant during this period see Rachael T. Sparks, "Re-writing the Script: Decoding the textual experience in the Bronze Age Levant (*c.*2000–1150 bc)." In: K. E. Piquette and Whitehouse, R. D. (eds.) *Writing as Material Practice: Substance, surface and medium.* (London: Ubiquity Press, 2013), 75-104. DOI: http:// dx.doi.org/10.5334/bai.e

degrees by scribes, specialists, elites, and perhaps even merchants in the rest of the Periphery that had contact with Akkadian speakers.[22] In the southern Levant, cuneiform technology appears to be restricted for the most part to dealing with outsiders.

In Syro-Anatolia, even polities that innovated ways to write their own languages using cuneiform still used Akkadian internally for a range of genres. Their scribal schools were up-to-date and used MB, which was the contemporary written dialect of Babylonia.[23] For example, the scribes at Ugarit and Hatti wrote in their own prestige written languages in texts for local consumption and also used Akkadian texts for specific genres that were associated with cuneiform culture (e.g., legal texts, treaties, and diplomatic letters). Furthermore, the scribes working for polities such as Hatti, Ugarit, and Amurru and Egypt etc. implemented scribal conventions that marked them as players in the international arena where MB functioned as a written diplomatic language.

Canaano-Akkadian, on the other hand, is marked as a regional scribal system that was of a lesser prestige and served a very specific function tied to Egypt's expansionist policies in the Levant during the LBA. It appears to have only been used in written communications sent from rulers in the eastern Mediterranean to Egypt or to have been used in (or to communicate about) administrative tasks relating to Egypt's military and administrative presence in the region. Throughout the LBA,

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[22] Polities in Syro-Anatolia appear to have had regular access to some register of spoken Akkadian, as it is used in texts for local consumption and in a wide rage of genres throughout the second millennium B.C.E. For a discussion of the lack of use of cuneiform for internal matters see Karel van der Toorn, "Cuneiform Documents from Syria- Palestine. Texts, Scribes, and Schools," *ZDPV* 116 (2002), 97-113.

[23] For example, scribes at Ugarit created an alphabetic cuneiform that was used to write the local language as well as other dialects of WS (e.g., the predecessor to Phoenician). Scribes at Hatti also developed strategies to write their own language syllabically, while using some Akkadographic and Sumerographic spellings.

scribes in Egypt's eastern territories adhered to the cuneiform script and the basic tenets of cuneiform writing, and yet persisted in using their own unique orthography, which was unlike that used elsewhere in the cuneiform world. Canaanite scribes made use of innovative orthographies that were understood by the scribes working for the Egyptian court, but would not have been evident to those unfamiliar with this system. The presence of Canaano-Akkadian forms in the Amarna Letters from Alashia and Amurru indicate that Canaano-Akkadian was not a spoken dialect, but was a learned scribal system used in areas controlled by Egypt. At Alashia, Canaano-Akkadian is only used in letters sent to Egypt. The northern border of Canaano-Akkadian appears to be the area associated with Amurru, as the Amurru letters use Canaano-Akkadian when they are allied with Egypt, but shift to northern scribal conventions when they side with Hatti. It is no coincidence that numerous tablets were actually composed in Egyptian administrative centers in the Levant, or that the geographic scope of this scribal system aligns with areas under Egyptian influence. Moreover, the "death" of this scribal system in the south, too, is linked to Egypt's decline in the Levant. Egypt was the political force that provided the stability and impetus for this scribal system to endure throughout the LBA.

Another important consideration is how the scribes themselves viewed their own scribal system—and whether or not they viewed it as Akkadian, a mixed language, or Canaanite.[24] Unlike the cuneiform of Ugarit or Hatti, the language underlying Canaano-Akkadian is ambiguous at best. There

[24] For a recent summary of the debates about its classification see Shlomo Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistic." in *Language and Nature: Paper Presented to John Huehnergard on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday.* Rebecca Hasselback and Na'ama Pat-El. *Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 67 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2012), 171-218.

is no evidence that Egyptians and Canaanites actually spoke Canaano-Akkadian during their collaborations in Canaan or at the Egyptian courts of the Amarna and Ramesside periods. It is unlikely that Canaano-Akkadian was ever actively spoken at WS courts (in Jerusalem or Shechem for example). Canaano-Akkadian was only accessible to those trained in this scribal system, or at the very least, those who were familiar with its unique features (e.g., use of WS syntax, WS calques, OB orthography, and WS influenced verbal affixes).

The key texts from this period that describe Egyptians living and working abroad indicate that Egyptian officials stationed in the Levant were competent in WS and were able to decipher Canaano-Akkadian.[25] Papyrus Anastasi I, in particular, demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of WS linguistic peculiarities.[26] Egyptian-Canaanite interactions predated the Amarna Age—there is no reason to suppose that there was a need for an outside language such as Akkadian for oral communication between these two groups. In light of millennia of interactions between these two groups, WS and Egyptian, or perhaps a contact language based upon these languages would have sufficed. There is no evidence that anyone, outside of perhaps the scribes learning this scribal system, ever "spoke" Canaano-Akkadian. The "contact" language model does not fit the sociolinguistic role that it played during this period. Canaano-Akkadian was a *written*, as opposed to a *spoken* medium of communication and served as a code between the cuneiform scribes writing these letters—rather

[25] The Tale of Sinhue, Wenamun, and Papyrus Anastasi, and even the biblical narratives depict fluid communication between these two cultures.

[26] See Thomas Schnieder, "Fremdwörter in der ägyptischen Militärsprache des Neuen Reiches und ein Bravourstück des Elitesoldaten (Pap. Anastasi I 23, 2-7)," in *SSEA* 35 (2008), 181–205.

than the actual rulers themselves.

It is also important to consider Egyptian language ideologies to better understand why the Egyptian language and scripts were not used in official correspondence between Egypt and its Levantine vassals. Although there are no texts that explicitly describe attitudes towards the written Egyptian language (or the writing systems used in the Levant for that matter), its symbolic link to Egyptian culture and statehood is clear. The fact that the Egyptian script was restricted to the Egyptian language up until the 3rd century B.C.E. is an indication of the symbolic importance of this script to Egyptian identity.[27] Also, the development of the WS alphabetic script, modeled after the Egyptian script, and yet not a part of the Egyptian system, suggests that there was a need for a writing system that could be used by outsiders working on the margins of the Egyptian empire. That is to say, Egypt "chose" to restrict its written language, scripts, and scribal traditions, and to use a foreign system to administer its empire in the east. For this reason in the LBA, Canaanite scribes traveled to Egyptian bases to send letters to Egypt that were written in Canaano-Akkadian and not in Egyptian or even in MB, the Akkadian used by Egypt for its own dealings with non-Egyptians. Canaanite scribes received letters written in Canaano-Akkadian and on occasion responded using an occasional Egyptian or MB form, however, they themselves never updated their syllabary or orthographies to this contemporary and higher prestige register of Akkadian. Canaano-Akkadian thus appears to have

[27] Serge Sauneron, "La différenciation des langages d'après la tradition égyptienne," *BIFAO* 60 (1960), 31 – 41; John Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 38; see also Sami Uljas, "Linguistic Consciousness," In Julie Stauder-Porchet, Andréas Stauder and Willeke Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles, 2013, http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz002dn8xd.

played a distinct role that may have been the product of a desire to keep the language of Egypt apart from that of its vassals in the east.

This attitude towards language may explain why cuneiform in the southern Levant was never updated to Middle Babylonian and why the cuneiform scribes employed by Egypt did not write for Canaanite polities. As such, it is tempting to see the status of written Egyptian as a political and ethno-cultural writing system as a key reason for the sustained use of Canaano-Akkadian in the southern Levant throughout this period. There appears to have been a cultural aversion to the adoption of Egyptian by non-Egyptians polities. This explains why the Egyptian court corresponded with its vassals in Egyptian-Akkadian rather than the Egyptian language. Egyptian administrators encouraged the use of the pre-existing, lesser prestige register of Akkadian, and did not encourage Canaanite scribes to employ Egyptian or even MB, which they themselves used, to write to Egypt.

In summary, the contact language model, which presumes face-to-face communication, does not quite suit the sociolinguistic setting of Canaano-Akkadian. Rather, it appears that while there was no need for a new spoken language of communication, Canaano-Akkadian filled another need—it served as a written language in contexts of long distance communication with Egypt. For this reason, Canaano-Akkadian is best described not as a "language," *per se*, but as a scribal code.[28] This is a compromise between von Dassow's proposition that it was an Akkadographic system used to write

[28] See von Dassow, "What the Canaanite Cuneiformists Wrote," 196-217; "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 641-674; "Peripheral Akkadian Dialects," 895-926; S. Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 171-218; for his original arguments see "Canaano-Akkadian: Some Methodological Requisites for the Study of the Amarna Letters from Canaan," (2007), 1-48. Currently available online at *http://www.tau.ac.il/humanities/semitic/canakk2007.pdf.*

Canaanite (i.e., a purely graphemic system) and Izre'el's proposal that it was a mixed-language.[29] Both of these conclusions are based assumptions about the underlying spoken languages of the Canaanite Amarna Letters (Canaanite vs. a continuum of Canaanite Akkadian dialects).

I view Canaano-Akkadian to have been a scribal system that was developed in the southern Levant during the early LBA. It was harnessed by Egypt to run this region, which catalyzed its relative standardization and sustained divergence from the cuneiform texts produced in the rest of the Periphery. It emerged as a short-hand used by scribes working as intermediaries between Egypt and Egypt's vassals and/or subservient allies in the eastern Mediterranean to facilitate diplomacy and administration by the mid 14th century B.C.E. Canaano-Akkadian sucdeeded because it was a polyvalent, and flexible code. Scribes trained in this scribal tradition provided WS nuances to an otherwise Akkadian text, and when needed used MB orthographies, and Egyptianisms as well to enhance the content of the letters. The scribes, officials, and messengers transporting these letters clarified and gaps in meaning and/or ambiguities. Such intermediaries provided the context for these diplomatic exchanges; thus, the reading of each letters was really a mediated literacy event. Its success, then, did not depend of a community of speakers, but on individuals trained in its peculiar orthography that were able to explain any ambiguities in the written text. Unlike the letters written

[29] In Izre'el's more recent description of Canaano-Akkadian, he has somewhat modified his stance on the degree to which this "mixed dialect" was spoken (most certainly in response to von Dassow's astute observations about the oral nature of contact languages and what catalyzes them). He writes that it was only spoken in very limited scribal and perhaps elite settings, and at the very least, in the context of scribal education. S. Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," in *Language and Nature: Paper Presented to John Huehnergard on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday.* Rebecca Hasselback and Na'ama Pat-El. *Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 67 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2012), 171-218.

in MB, which would have been understood by competent cuneiform scribes throughout the Near East, Canaano-Akkadian letters from this period were aimed for a very specific audience and demanded an understanding of how the system worked. A scribe with no training and/or previous experience would have had difficulty deciphering the orthographic peculiarities of Canaano-Akkadian and the function of code-switching and glosses as a guide to the interpretation of the text.

This scribal system was for the most part cohesive. That is, scribes working in diverse locales (ranging from the northern Negev, to Pella, the central highlands and the Shephelah, and along the coast up into the Lebanese coastal littoral as well as in Alashia, and for Amurru during the early part of the Amarna Period. In some cases, the scribes worked for warring polities, yet for the most part, the letters from this region conform to the same basic orthographies and conventions.[30] The range of sophistication and rhetorical persuasion in these letters is a reflection of the degree to which the local ruler was engaged with Egyptian administrators. Scribes in urban, cosmopolitan cities (e.g., Jerusalem, Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Beirut, Gezer etc.) that were actively working with Egyptian administrators demonstrate higher levels of sophistication in their use of this system. These letters make use of complex political and rhetorical statements and the most skilled use of code-switching, glosses, and scribal marks (best demonstrated in the Rib-Hadda letters and in the corpus of letters from Jerusalem). Whereas the scribes working for smaller polities, in many cases that did not have a scribe of their own, produced less complex messages that range from "maintenance letters" (i.e., a simple prostration of

[30] Some basic commonalities in the southern Levantine texts include the use of WS syntax, WS affixes to code person, gender, number, modality, and tense and the retention of marked OB orthographies in contrast to the updated MB spellings (e.g., the retention of the intervocalic –*w*- and the preservation of sibilants before a dental).

submission formula and a few phrases about the ruler's obedience to the Pharaohs' commands), or are simple statements that use repetitive and formulaic language. These letters are limited mainly to declarations of loyalty and appear to have had a symbolic value that demonstrated that they had the Pharaoh's ear. The do not demonstrate the innovation and skill of the letters from polities with their own scribal apparatus.

The shorter messages would have necessitated an oral explanation to flesh out the ongoing political discussions between local and Egyptian officials. The more complex messages with a wider range of verbal forms that drew upon rhetorical strategies and a more oral-style (e.g., the use of metaphor and parallelism that characterizes Rib-Hadda's letters), however, would have also necessitated explanation and interpretation. Indeed, these letters are the most challenging for scholars. The Jerusalem letters in particular are translated quite differently by scholars such as William Moran and Anson Rainey due to ambiguities arising from shifts between Canaano-Akkadian and more northern or "Assyrian" spellings. However, an investigation of the context of the code-switching in this corpus reveals that it was a key part of the interpretive process. The change to a cluster of Middle Assyrian (MA) spellings in an otherwise MB text, for example, as seen to have communicated at a metapragmatic level. That is to say, such marked forms in the text informed the scribes in Egypt not only *what* the letter meant, but also *how* to read and perform it, serving as a semiotic system accessed only by the scribes. Canaano-Akkadian is best described as a scribal code that attests to a range of scribal habits and proficiencies rather than to a range of contemporaneous spoken "dialects" of Canaano-Akkadian.

As such, any assessment of the language of these letters must consider that the scribes themselves were the sources of this scribal system and its linguistic matrix—not necessarily the polities that they were working for. Approaching Canaano-Akkadian as a scribal code best accounts for aspect of Canaano-Akkadian that do not conform to spoken language such as the idiosyncrasies and/or strategies of individual scribes that are non-linguistic (e.g., preference of certain spellings and sign values, departure from protocol to make a point in a letters, the use of glosses as emphatics and for structure, and the use of scribal marks to guide the performance of the letters). Also, a sociolinguistic approach considers how Egyptian and Canaanite ideologies about language and writing in the context of Egypto-Canaanite relations impacted the development of this system. The discussion of the use of Canaano-Akkadian outside of Canaan, in the letters from Alashia, Amurru, and even Egypt establishes that this was a written diplomatic code, and not a reflection of a spoken dialect of Akkadian (Chapter Six and Seven). The examination of the use of code-switching and scribal marks as a type of metapragmatic commentary on the text and a mean of guiding its interpretation, too, will prove that this was a complex code that was really more a communication between the scribes writing and receiving these letters than the rulers sending them (Chapters Seven and Eight).

The discussion of the chronology of Canaano-Akkadian and its sociolinguistic role in the LBA and that of the other scripts of this period, and, moreover, its disappearance at the end of the LBA, will demonstrate that this was a scribal system dependent upon Egypt's presence in the region (Chapter Nine). The disappearance of this script and scribal code in the Iron I and the sudden flowering of the

WS linear script render it unlikely that Canaano-Akkadian was used extensively outside of the institutions interacting and/or dependent upon Egypt. The “death” cuneiform and the wholesale shift to linear alphabetic writing in Iron Age, attest to a digraphic situation. In the LBA when Egypt controlled the Levant, these two writing systems served radically different socio-political roles. Canaano-Akkadian was a scribal system imposed by and/or associated with an outside power (i.e., Egypt) and was only used in institutional settings. The, epigraphic evidence suggests that the linear alphabet, which is a “silent” script during much of this period, co-existed with Canaanite cuneiform. It was, however, ignored both by Canaanite institutions and by Egypt, However, it survived into the Iron Age specifically for this very reason, as WS speakers viewed it *their* script In the second half of the first millennium B.C.E., it appears to have played a role as a prestige local script that was inscribed upon personal and ritual objects. For this reason, in the in Iron Age, the WS linear script was eventually adopted and standardized by autonomous WS polities in the Levant seeking to fill the power vacuum left by the collapse of the Hittite empire and Egypt’s retrenchment from the region.

While most studies of this corpus have focused upon the linguistic peculiarities of Canaano-Akkadian, and the language underlying this corpus, the present study analyzes Canaano-Akkadian as a scribal code used in contexts of mediated diplomacy between lesser polities in the ancient Near East and Eastern Mediterranean and Egypt. This approach elucidates the function of the code-switching and use of scribal marks in these letters as a means of adding nuance and a metapragmatic commentary to these diplomatic missives. Such strategies were intended to aid the interpretation and translation of the text and to ensure that it received a positive reception in Egypt. The methodologies

presented in this work draw upon recent work on the sociolinguistics of writing. Such an approach best elucidates the genesis of this scribal system and its role in Egypt's eastern empire as a diplomatic scribal code.

The following outlines the arguments presented in each chapter. Chapter Two (The Amarna Period and the Amarna Corpus) presents a history of the site and an overview of the major publications. Chapter Three (Approaches to the Linguistic Classification of the Canaanite Amarna Letters) explains the features of Canaano Akkadian and how it has been traditionally classified. The main critique of past works is that scholars overly assume that the written language of the texts is a reflection of the language of a community of speakers, as opposed to a scribal code used by trained elites that had a very limited function. This chapter examines the most recent theories, namely, that it was either a mixed and/or contact language or that it was a logographic system used to write Canaanite.

Chapter Four (The Mechanics of Diplomacy: The Role of the Scribe—Cuneiform Culture in the Periphery) presents the scribe as the gatekeeper facilitating diplomacy in the LBA and examines cuneiform scribal culture. The main argument is that Canaano-Akkadian was a reflection, not of a community of speakers, but of a community of writers who used a similar code to bridge diverse polities during this period. Chapter Five (Writing, Language, and Script Choice-The Sociolinguistics of Canaano-Akkadian) establishes a framework for how to best approach the language of the Canaanite Amarna Letters. The main argument is that this was a scribal system and not a spoken dialect of Akkadian. Chapter Six (Canaano-Akkadian as a Diplomatic Scribal Code) examines the use of

Canaano-Akkadian in Alashia and Amurru, or by Egyptian scribes was not a reflection of the spoken languages of these courts. The ruler of Alashia (and/or his officials) employed Cananao-Akkadian trained scribes to write to Egypt—they themselves did not speak a "dialect" of Canaano-Akkadian. The move away from Canaano-Akkadian in Amurru after the reign of ʿAbdi-Aširta, and its disappearance in the Levant at the end of the LBA, did not result from a change in speech *per se*, but rather in scribal training and in the social role of cuneiform.

Chapter Seven (Multilingualism and Code-Mixing as a Diplomatic Strategy) examines code-switching in the Canaanite Amarna Letters and in the Egyptian Amarna Letters. I argue that the "shifts" were scribal strategies to enhance the written text and provide clues to the reading and performance of these letters. They functioned as a part of the metapragmatic framework of the correspondence between Egypt and Canaan. Chapter Eight (Metalinguistic Communication in the Canaanite Amarna Letters: The Function of the Scribal Marks and Glosses) examines the use of scribal marks and glosses as a part of the scribal system used in Canaan during the LBA. Such markings were used to structure the text and add commentary. Also, the glosses and scribal marks appear to have provided guidance to the translation and performance of these messages. Chapter Nine (Cuneiform and the WS Scripts in Egypt's Eastern Empire) establishes the sociolinguistic backdrop for the Amarna Age from the perspective of writing systems and scripts. It explains the aspects of geo-politics that need to be considered to understand the role of Canaano-Akkadian in Egypt's territories, as well as cuneiform in the WS world more broadly. It presents the alphabetic scripts as local innovations, whereas Canaano-Akkadian was associated with Egypt's control of the region.

CHAPTER TWO

The Amarna Period and the Amarna Corpus

I. Introduction

In the late 19th century, the discovery of cuneiform tablets dating to the mid-14th century B.C.E. in Middle Egypt appealed to the imagination of scholars, antiquarians, and history-enthusiasts alike. A. H. Sayce describes the discovery in romantic terms:

> "In the ruins of a city and palace, which, like the palace of Aladdin, rose out of the desert sands into gorgeous magnificence for a short thirty years and then perished utterly, some 300 clay tablets were found, inscribed, not with the hieroglyphics of Egypt, but with the cuneiform characters of Babylonia."[31]

Subsequent excavations and treasure hunting at the site of Tell el-'Amarna, Egypt unearthed an extensive corpus of diplomatic letters and scholarly texts thought to have been archived in the environs of the palace complex.[32] The Amarna Letters is one of the largest and more diverse

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[31]Archibald. H. Sayce, *The Archaeology of the Cuneiform Inscriptions* (2nd ed.; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1908), 187-8; at this point, more than 350 cuneiform tablets had been discovered at this site (S. Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets,* 1.

[32] Tell el-'Amarna is the modern name for the ancient city of Akhenaten, the capital of the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV. Amenhotep IV (more famously known as Akhenaten) founded this city as part of a series of religious and political

diplomatic archives from the 2nd millennium B.C.E., as it includes letters from Near East and Eastern Mediterranean. It is also largest group of texts from the southern Levant dating to this period.

I. The Amarna Period and the Amarna Corpus

A. The Contents of the Amarna Corpus

Since the majority of the Amarna tablets surfaced on the antiquities market as a result of treasure hunting, they are technically unprovenienced. Of the 382 odd texts, 44 letters have been identified as being from the great powers of the period (e.g., Mittani, Hatti, Babylonia, and Assyria). Over 300 letters are from diverse polities in the Levant. The first official excavation of the site identified a building next to the palace that was a hub of cuneiform activity where these letters were processed. Stamped mud bricks identified area Q42.21 (or House 19) as "the place of the letters of the Pharaoh," i.e., a processing center and archive for the Pharaoh's international correspondence.[33] The presence of 32-odd school texts and anepigraphic tablets in this building suggests that it was also a center of cuneiform scribal training.[34] J. Mynarova understands this part of the site to have been a

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reforms enacted during his reign. Petrie expressed his doubts about the name of the site, and describes the name Tell el-'Amarna as a "European concoction" derived perhaps from a conflation of *iṭ-Ṭill* and the name of the *Beni Amran*, a local community who named their village *el-Amariah* (*Tell el Amarna* [London: Methuen & Co. 1894], 2).

[33] Today this building is referred to as Q42.21, though it was originally designated as House 19 in Petrie's publications. See W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Tell el Amarna*, 1894; Ibid., *Syria and Egypt: From the Tell el Amarna Letters* (London: Methuen & Co., 1898).

[34] The Amarna school texts are diverse in scope, ranging from epic literature (EA 340[?], 356-359, 375 [?]), syllabaries (EA 348, 350, 379), lexical lists (EA 351-354, 373), a deity list (EA 374), a Hurrian myth (EA 341), a rare example of an Egyptian-Akkadian bilingual lexical list written in syllabic cuneiform (EA 368), what may be an amulet (EA 355), various fragments (EA 342-347, 349, 360-361, 376-377, 380-381), a cylinder seal, and several un-inscribed tablets. See S. Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets* (Groningen: Styx, 1997).

scribal quarter, as Q42.21 is adjacent to an Egyptian scribal center, which identified by stamped bricks as the "House of Life."[35]

B. The Chronology of the Amarna Corpus

The cuneiform archives at Tell el-'Amarna correspond to a period of approximately 30 years, beginning about the 30th year of Amenhotep III's reign until the abandonment of the site following Akhenaten's death.[36] The letters dating to the reign of Amenhotep III are thought to have been part of the original archive of diplomatic texts at Thebes. Philippe Abrahami and Laurent Coloun propose that the skewed nature of the corpus may have resulted from relocation of the royal archive from

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[35] Jana Mynarova, "The Scribes of Amarna: A Family Affair?" in *La famille dans le Proche-Orient ancien: réalitées, symbolisms, et images: RIA 55 Paris* (Ed. Marti Lionel; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 375-382. For a more in-depth discussion of the scribal/priestly institution of the House of Life see Katarina Nordh, *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission* (Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations 26. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1996), 107-130; John Baines, "Literacy and Ancient Egyptian Society," *Man* 18: 3 (1983), 572-599; and for a discussion from a non-Egyptological perspective see K. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[36] The Amarna Period (1403-1306 [1390-1295 B.C.E.]) designates the later 18th Dynasty in Egypt. This period spans the reigns of Amenhotep III (1403-1364 B.C.E.), Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) (1364-1347 B.C.E.), and a short-lived succession of heirs ending with Horemhab ending with the beginning of the 19th Dynasty (or Ramesside Period). Akhenaten's successors are as follows: Smenkare (1348-1345 B.C.E.), Tutankhamun (1345-1335 B.C.E.), and Ay (1335-1332 B.C.E.), who married Tutankhamun's widow. The 18th dynasty ends with Horemheb (1332-1306 B.C.E.), a general under Tutankhamun, who seized power and installed his own administrative and military reforms. It is thought that there may have been a period of overlap between the reigns of Amenhotep III and Akhenaten whereby they served as co-regents. It is also unclear whether or not Smenkhare served as a co-regent towards the end of Akhenaten's life. For a discussion of the chronology of the period see Cyril Aldred, *Akhenaten: King Of Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968); Edward F. Campbell, *The Chronology of the Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965); W. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992), xxxiv; D. B. Redford, *Akhenaten The Heretic King* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

Thebes to Tell el-'Amarna (in Akhenaten's 8th regnal year) and back again when the capital was abandoned, as the earliest letters cover years 30-38 of Amenhotep III's reign.[37]

C. The History of Tell el-'Amarna

Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, or Akhenaten, founded the site today known as Tell el-'Amarna as a religious and political center dedicated to the cult of the god Aten, the solar-disk deity. The city was named Akhenaten (i.e., "He who is useful/beneficial to the Solar Disk"), which was the name that the Pharaoh took on to symbolize his break with the cult of the god Amun.[38] The move to a new site, one unaffiliated with the priesthood the Egyptian capital cities or with any previous Egyptian dynasty, was part of a calculated, political strategy aimed at restructuring Egypt's administrative and religious institutions.[39] Akhentaten's new capital was created to disrupt existing hierarchies and consolidate his power base. This site is best understood as a "disembedded capital," i.e., a new capital city founded on

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[37] Philippe Abrahami and Laurent Coulon, "De l'usage et de l'archivage des tablettes cuneiformes d'Amarna." in *La Lettre D'archive: Communication Administrative Et Personnelle Dans L'antiquite Proche-Orientale Et Égyptienne: Actes Du Colloque De L'université De Lyon 2, 9-10 Juillet 2004* (Ed. Laure Pantalacci; Le Caire: Institut français d'archeologie orientale, 2008), 10-11.

[38] His new name "Akhenaten," or "He who is beneficial to Aten" (Eg. *3ḫ.t jtn*) symbolized his break with the cult of Amun, and the Pharaoh's new royal identity as Aten's spokesman on earth. Amun-Re and his cult were relegated to secondary importance in the pantheon, which further diminished the status of the priesthood the capital cities, such as Thebes and Heliopolis. Aten was portrayed as a supreme, yet remote creator deity accessible only through the royal family. Akhenaten and the rest of their lineage (including his deceased father Amenhotep III) served as the *de facto* priests of Aten. The priesthood of Amun was subjugated, in official spheres at least, to the cult of Aten. Though, the ease with which Akhenaten's reforms were dismantled after his death indicates that in the rest of the country religious life continued as it had been prior to them. See Redford, "Akhenaten," 23, 26-29.

[39] Barry J. Kemp and Salvatore Garfi. *A Survey of the Ancient City of El-'Amarna* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1993); Ibid., *The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti: Amarna and Its People* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012); D. B. Redford, *Akhenaten The Heretic King*, 1984.

virgin soil—one unaffiliated with the traditional seats of royal and religious power.[40] The move to Tell el-'Amarna was thus both practical and symbolic. The remote nature of the site and its geographic distance from Thebes, the traditional capital seat of Egypt's religious institutions (in particular the cult of Amun-Re), was its main attraction. This was a pragmatic move to undermine the power of the priesthood of Amun, which had been greatly enriched by Egypt's foreign territorial expansion and trade missions during this period.[41] By transferring Egypt's administrative center to this new city, Akhenaten and a handpicked entourage of loyal elites and administrators were able to dictate the terms of governance (more or less) unimpeded by the Theban priesthood.[42] Akhenaten furthermore established himself and his immediate family as the focal point of Egypt's religious life now centered around the worship of the Solar Disk.

The city (located approximately 300 km south of Cairo) eventually covered 10-12 km along the eastern bank of the Nile River and had an estimated population of 30,000-50,000.[43] The borders were delineated by boundary stelea that commemorated Aten's choice of this site for his new cultic capital. The unique artistic style at Tell el-'Amarna further distinguished the city, serving as a visual reminder

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[40] For a discussion of disembedded capitals in the context of the ancient near east see Alexander. H. Joffe, "Disembedded Capitals in Western Asian Perspective," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 40:3 (1998), 549-580.

[41] See Donald B.Redford, *Akhenaten The Heretic King* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 158-165. For the chronology of Akhenaten's reforms and progressive distancing from the cult of Amun, see D. B. Redford, "Akhenaten: New Theories and Old Facts," *BASOR* 369 (2013), 9-34; with focus on 13-15.

[42] Joffe, "Disembedded Capitals," 552-556.

[43] For a discussion of the relationship between these two scribal centers at Amarna see J. Mynarova, "The Scribes of Amarna," 375-382.

of Akhenaten's active campaign to break away from the traditional capital cities such as Thebes, Memphis, and Heliopolis.[44] During Akhenaten's lifetime he commissioned the construction of a royal compound in his new city replete with palace, administrative center, a series of cultic monuments, the "Great" and "Small" Temples to Aten, and the Egyptian institution known as the "House of Life" and a cuneiform scribal center and archive.

Despite his dynamism and the drastic means with which he enacted his religious reforms, Akhenaten's vision for a new Egypt was short lived. Following his death, Tell el-'Amarna was abandoned and his reforms were rejected wholesale.[45] During Tutakhamun's reign, the cult of the god

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[44] The emergent "Amarna style" is unique to this period in Egyptian history and is ubiquitous in royal art at Tell el-'Amarna further distinguished the city, serving as a visual reminder of Akhenaten's active campaign to break away from the cult of Amun. The art from this period is characterized by a distinct style of figurative representation that contrasted with the rigid artistic canon of proportions used in traditional Egyptian monumental art. Works produced under Akhenaten's patronage were executed with in this new artistic style of flowing lines and rounded human forms that are, to this day, synonymous with the Amarna period. Monumental reliefs in the new style, particularly in and around the new capital, focused upon the royal family and their interactions with Aten. In this way, the iconography of this period reinforced Akhenaten's religious reforms, underscoring the shift in power from the cult of Amun to the state-sponsored cult of Aten. D. Redford understands this to have been a gradual process, whereby Akhenaten's figure eventually became the focal point of royal reliefs: "The reduction of the sun god to a nonhuman disc is but the most prominent act in a progressive move to rid concepts of the divine, and even art itself, of all anthropomorphic or theriomorphic forms…Akhenaten was directing a strong counterblast, doing so consciously we may be sure, against the prevailing involvement of magician and craftsman in the manufacture of the god's earthly "body," his cult-image " (*Akhenaten The Heretic King*, 172-181; quote 175). D. Laboury describes this period as a reassessment of cultural values from the perspective of the *longue durée* of Egyptian intellectual traditions: "Like the Atenist ideology that yielded and shaped it, this new artistic conception was actually rooted in a cultural evolution, which, inspired by a new metaphysical approach to reality, led to a questioning of the long-established mindset and the traditional ways of imagining the world, whose forerunners can be traced back one century before Amenhotep IV's birth" (Dimitri Laboury, "Amarna Art," in *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. Edited by Willeke Wendrich, and Jacco Dieleman [Los Angeles, 2011], 10, http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz0026vj6m).

[45] Though religious practices and funerary rites continued on as before Akhenaten's reign, there is a marked shift in the content, which became Aten-focused. Funerary literature for example, makes mention of the underworld as the domain of Aten and ignores the pantheon of Egyptian gods traditionally appealed to in funerary rites. See Redford, *Akhenaten The Heretic King*, 175-176.

Amun was reinstated.[46] The Egyptian court (and the royal archive) was also presumably relocated to Thebes, which resumed its role as the seat of royal and religious power.[47] The Akkadian letters between Egypt and the Hittites discovered the Hittite capital, Boghazkoi, and a small corpus of texts from Aphek indicate that cuneiform continued to be the medium of diplomacy between Egypt and foreign courts into the Ramesside period.

In Egypt's cultural memory, Akhenaten's reign became a black stain synonymous with a period of heresy that disrupted an idealized progression of "legitimate" kings.[48] References to Akhenaten are brief, and he is discussed in pejorative terms as "the enemy of Egypt."[49] Egyptian historians, such as Manetho, denigrated Egypt's prominence during this period, attributing the years of Akhenaten's rule to that of Horemheb, who was not even a member of Akhenaten's direct lineage. Akhenaten's religious reforms were effaced from Egypt's history, both in deed and text. Not only was his religious revolution expunged from Egyptian history—his name was also stricken from inscriptions and king-lists. Monuments and inscriptions etched in the unique artistic style associated

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[46] None of Akhenaten's heirs retained the theophoric element *Aten* in their names. Akhenten's famous son changed his birth name from Tutakh*aten* to Tutakh*amun*.

[47] The decision to abandon the city Akhenaten was made during the third year of Tutankhamun's reign. This ushered in a period of rebuilding and renovation in Thebes, replete with new appointments to the cult of Amun. For a discussion of the aftermath of the Amarna Age see Redford, *Akhenaten The Heretic King*, 204-211.

[48] Jan Assmann describes the censoring of all evidence of this period as much more than an "official *damnatio memoriae,*" enacted and ignored. He describes the vitriolic reaction to the Amarna Age as reactionary and a manifestation of a deeper cultural trauma due to the radical nature of Akhenaten's reforms (*The Mind of Egypt* [New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002], 222).

[49] Ibid., 226-228.

with the cult of Aten were destroyed.[50] The monumental stones used to build Akhenaten's new capital were carried off to rebuild the very religious and administrative institutions he had sought to undermine.[51] The legacy of Amarna was forgotten until the late 19th century when artifacts from this site kindled the interest of Egyptian and European treasure hunters and historians in this "heretic" king and his ruined capital, and in process unearthed the one of the most extensive diplomatic archives of the second millennium B.C.E.

II. The Discovery of the Amarna Letters—An Archive Scattered in the Sand

A. The Discovery(ies) of the Amarna Corpus

The account of how the tablets were collected, catalogued, and purchased by various museums and private collectors is better documented than the story of their initial discovery, which has several versions.[52] The exact details of the recovery of the Amarna Letters are obfuscated by conflicting accounts of the date, find spot, and the identity of the individual who first discovered cuneiform tablets at this site.[53] W. L. Moran summarizes the initial chaos surrounding this corpus:

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[50] Ibid., 214-218.

[51] During the reign of Ramses II (1290-1224 B.C.E.) blocks from Amarna were relocated and reused in his building projects in Hermopolis.

[52] For the best synthesis of the early publications see J. Mynarova, *Language of Amarna—Language of Diplomacy. Perspectives on the Amarna Letters* (Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2007), 13-33; For a list of the tablets and museum collections and an overview of the history of the tablet collections see Pinchas Artzi, "The Present State of the Amarna Documents," in *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies. World Union of Jewish Studies* (1985), (Hebrew University: Jerusalem, 1988), 3-16.

[53] For the earliest accounts of these tablets see Ernest A. T. Wallis Budge, "On Cuneiform Dispatches from Tûshratta, King of Mitanni, Burraburiyash the Son of Kuri-Galzu, and the King of Alashiya," *PSBA* June 5 (1888), 540-569; Ibid., *A History of Egypt From the End of the Neolithic Period to the Death of Cleopatra VII, B.C. 30* (Oosterhout N.B., Netherlands: Anthropological Publications, 1968); Sayce, *The Archaeology of the Cuneiform Inscriptions*, 1908; for a

"We may never know how many tablets may have been found and later lost or destroyed, nor all the ways, perhaps many and devious, by which more than 300 tablets came to the possession of antiquities dealers and private collectors."[54] J. Mynarova, too, describes the chaotic nature of tablet recovery as "rather wild" and an unresolvable mystery.[55]

E. A. Wallis Budge writes that by the end of the summer of 1887 there were rumors of a significant find of cuneiform tablets in Egypt.[56] In one of the earliest renditions of the "find", Budge credits an Egyptian peasant woman with unearthing cuneiform tablets while "digging out dust from among the ruins to lay upon her land for 'top-dressing.'"[57] This is the most cited version of how these tablets surfaced in the antiquities market, however, Budge's own involvement with this corpus only began in December of that same year when he was finally able to examine the tablets in person. Budge describes his encounter: "A gentleman in Egypt, who was, I believe, the first European who saw the Tell el-'Amarna Tablets, who had personal knowledge of the men who brought them from their

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detailed summary of the discovery of these tablets and their purchase see Jørgen Alexander Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*. vol. 1 (*Vorderasiatische Bibliothek* 2. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907), 4-15; Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 11-39; Aldred, *Akhenaten: King Of Egypt,* 1988; Ibid., "The Discovery of the Tell El-Amarna Tablets," *AJSL* 33: 2 (1917), 89-90; Artzi, "The Present State of the Amarna Documents," 3-16.

[54] William. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, (1992), xiii.

[55] J. Mynarova, "Discovery, Research, and Excavation of the Amarna Tablets—The Formative Stage," in *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*. Edited by and William M. Schniedewind (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 37-54; quote on 46.

[56] E. A. W., Budge, "On Cuneiform Dispatches from Tûshratta, King of Mitannl, Burraburiyash the Son of Kuri-Galzu, and the King of Alashiya," *PSBA* June 5 (1888), 540.

[57] Budge, *A History of Egypt*, 185.

finder."[58] This man, presumably, was the source of the above-mentioned version where the local woman "stumbles" upon the archive.

Archibald H. Sayce dates the discovery slightly later in the year, to October of 1887. He writes that the tablets were discovered in the ruins of a building that was identified as Akhenaten's foreign office by stamped bricks.[59] William M. Flinders Petrie corroborates this: "'The natives, while plundering about the ruins and carrying off Akhenaten's bricks for their modern houses, lit upon this record chamber containing many hundreds of tablets."[60] Petrie was the first to formally excavate the site. He hired local men who offered to show him where he could find artifacts. They led him to what was later identified as Akhenaten's "Foreign Office," though they were unable to locate anything of value. Petrie was convinced that this structure was the original find spot of the Amarna tablets, as he was led to this same spot by yet another local, who also claimed that this was the source of the tablets.[61] He designated it House 19 in his excavation report, though it has since been renamed Q.42.21. During the course of his excavation, he eventually discovered a tablet and fragments of school texts in this same building, which confirmed that this was indeed a hub of cuneiform activity.

Once recovered, the Amarna Letters were quickly absorbed by museum and private collections. From as early as May of 1887, artifacts from the ancient site of Akhenaten were registered

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[58] Ibid., 185-186.

[59] Sayce, "The Discovery of the Tell El-Amarna Tablets," 89.

[60] W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Syria and Egypt: From the Tell el Amarna Letters* (London: Methuen & Co., 1898), 1; Albright follows Budge (*The Amarna letters from Palestine. Syria, the Philistines, and Phoenicia* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966]: 3).

[61] Petrie, *Tell el-Amarna*, 23-24.

in the Cairo Museum. It appears that there were ongoing transactions between Egyptian villagers living adjacent to the site and antiquarians and treasure hunters procuring artifacts for interested parties.[62] These first tablets were most likely discovered by villagers searching the site for materials to sell. It seems that the successful sale of objects from the site perpetuated local interest in finding additional artifacts for museums and private collectors—for this reason, most of the tablets were not found in a "secure" archaeological context, but first emerged on the antiquities market.

B. The Excavations of Tell el-'Amarna

The first excavations began shortly after the tablets' discovery. The excavations of the site are as follows: the English excavations of 1891-1892 under Petrie; the German excavations of 1891-1914 by L. Borchardt; the joint English and American excavations of 1921-1924 and 1926-1937 under E. Peet, L. Woolley, H. Frankfort, and S. Pendlebury (referred to as the "Pendlebury" excavations); excavations were on hiatus until 1977, when they were resumed by Barry J. Kemp, who is currently the director of operations at the site.

1. Petrie's Excavations

Petrie's first excavation of the site began in November 1891. His description of the find does not clarify much about the context, a problem inherent to archaeology from this period. The excavation report of House 19 is not very detailed, though Petrie does provide a rough map of the building and the spots where he found cuneiform texts. Of the 22 tablets, a clay cylinder seal, and

[62] Mynarova, *Language of Amarna*, 13.

fragments, his report only identifies two by their content: EA 354, a fragment of *diri* (a sign list used in scribal training), which was recovered from inside House 19 within the rubbish pits, and an uninscribed tablet.[63] The rest of the tablets discovered in this early excavation have since been collectively described as the "Amarna Scholarly Tablets," as they appear to have been used in cuneiform scribal education.[64] The presence of such materials and epistolary texts in the vicinity of the Foreign Office suggests that this was indeed a (if not the) nucleus of cuneiform scribal activity at Tell el-'Amarna.

2. Excavations Post-Petrie

The subsequent 1913 excavation by the German Oriental Society unearthed two additional scholarly texts outside of the Main City.[65] EA 359 is a fragment of the epic *šar tamḫāri* that was recovered from Building O47.2; EA 379 is a small fragment of Syllabary A that was recovered from Building N47.3. The 1920-1921 excavation of the Egypt Exploration Society discovered yet another scholarly text outside of the palace complex. EA 368, a bilingual lexical list, was discovered in a trash pit in Room 8 of locus O 49.23, which corresponds to a corridor in the south of the city. This tablet is unique in the Amara corpus as it comprises a list of words in Egyptian and Akkadian written in syllabic cuneiform. The Pendlebury 1933-34 excavation unearthed ten additional tablets, and two

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[63] Petrie, *Tell el Amarna*, 2-24; see also the map in plate XLII and the initial drawings of the tablet fragments Plates XXXI-XXXIII.

[64] For a list of the "school texts" discovered at the site (lexical lists, literary texts thought to have been used in scribal education, and syllabaries etc. see Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets*, 2.

[65] For a summary of the excavation history of the site see Mynarova, *Language of Amarna*; Ibid., "The Scribes of Amarna," 375-382; Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets*, 1997; Abrahami and Coulon "De l'Usage et de l'Archivage des Tablettes Cuneiformes d'Amarna," 1-26.

anepigraphic tablets. Nine tablets (EA 372-377) were discovered in Q42.21, the Records Room where Petrie originally found a stash of tablets. EA 371, a fragment of a letter from ʻAbdi-Aširti, was discovered in an adjacent building in Q43.43.

In summary, the tablets were discovered during the excavations at the site: EA 342, 344-348, 350-353, and 355 were discovered during Petrie's investigation of the trash pits under Building 19. EA 354 was discovered in the southeastern room of this building. EA 359 (discovered in house O.47.2) and 379 (discovered in house N.47.3), which were published by Schroeder, were discovered by the Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft team about 1.25 km away from the Records Office.[66] EA 368 was discovered in 1920/21 during the excavations conducted by the Egypt Exploration Society in House O.49.23, and was published by Smith and Gadd.[67] EA 372-377 were discovered during the 1933-34 Pendlebury excavations in House 19 (Q.42.21), and were published by Gordon in 1947.[68]

C. Was the Records Room An Archive?

There is debate as to the nature of the "Records Room" and whether or not the tablets were originally in the trash pits. This impacts how scholars interpret the chronology of cuneiform activity at the site. It is debated whether or not the room served as a center of tablet production, was an archive, a cuneiform scribal school, or all of the above.[69] Petrie's original assessment was that the pits had been

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[66] Otto Schroeder, *Die Tontafeln von el-Amarna* (Leipzig, J.C. Hinrich, 1914-1915), 190-193.

[67] Sidney Smith and Cyril John Gadd, "A Cuneiform Vocabulary of Egyptian Words," *JEA* 11 (1925), 230-239.

[68] C. Gordon, "The New Amarna Tablets." *Orientalia* 16 (1947), 1-14.

[69] For a synthesis of the various positions see the introduction in Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets*, 1997.

filled prior to the construction of the walls. In other words, he proposed that the pits were filled before the Records Room was constructed. Cord. Kühne, on the other hand, argues that there were two archives, one brought into the site, and another produced locally. This is due to the two types of documents discovered at Tell el-'Amarna: the epistolary materials that were largely discovered by locals, and the scholarly materials (lexical, literary, and educational texts) that were part of later excavations.[70] Cyril Aldred, on the other hand, proposes that the two pits were created specifically to bury the tablets.[71] John Pendlebury and Jaroslav Černý, among others, remains skeptical of this assessment, citing the contaminated archaeological context. The room was in poor condition as a consequence of ongoing attempts to find more tablets.[72] In short, Pendlebury argues that the stratigraphy is unclear. Due to the sparse nature of the original excavation reports, there is no way to know if the tablets were originally in the pits, or whether or not they fell into the trash pits when the original floor collapsed after the site was abandoned.

S. Izre'el takes a different approach to resolving this issue. His assessment weighs heavily the content of the written materials that were recovered from this Building 19. He concludes that it was a multi-purpose building and a center of cuneiform scribal activity. He views this to be the original site

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[70] Cord Kühne, *Die Chronologie der internationalen Korrespondenz von El-Amarna*. AOAT 17 (neukirchen-Vluyn: Kevelaer, 1973), 70, cf. 345.

[71] Aldred, *Akhenaten, King of Egypt*, 189.

[72] J. D. S Pendlebury, and J. Černý. *The City of Akhenaten: The Excavations at Tell El-Amarna During the Seasons 1926-1927 and 1931-1936* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1951).

of the tablets.[73] He sides with Petrie that the cumulative evidence (the stamped mud bricks, the uninscribed tablets, school texts, lexical lists and literary texts) suggests that was a site of cuneiform production for an international audience as well as a place of scribal training. As Mynarova points out, this sector of the city was dedicated to scribal activity—it is no coincidence that the focal point of cuneiform scribal activity is adjacent to an Egyptian scribal center.[74]

D. Where Are the Amarna Tablets Today?

After their initial discovery, the majority of tablets were quickly purchased by private collectors and museums. Today, the entire known corpus has been integrated into museum collections.[75] This corpus comprises about 382 registered tablets (including fragments), the bulk of which are divided between The British Museum in London, The Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, and The Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo. The first batch of tablets was purchased by the Bulaq Museum and by Daninos Pasha, a private collector, by the end of 1887.[76] By the end of that year, W. E. Budge acquired 82 tablets for the British Museum.[77] Theodore Graf, an Austrian antiquities

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[73] Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets*, 6-7.

[74] Mynarova, "The Scribes of Amarna: A Family Affair," 375-382; see also chapter four for an in-depth discussion of scribal activity at the site.

[75] Artzi (The Present State of the Amarna Documents," *3-16*) provides an excellent synthesis of the recovery and present location of the Amarna tablets. See also Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets,* 1-6; for the location of Amarna educational materials, see Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets*, 1997; also Mynarova (*Language of Amarna,* 23-39) for the museum numbers, provenience, and original publication information of the Amarna Letters.

[76] Sayce, "Letter from Egypt," *Academy Feb. 18, 1888*; see also Budge, "On Cuneiform Dispatches from Tûshratta," 540-541.

[77] For a discussion of the discovery of the tablets and summaries of the contents of the letters procured by Budge see *A History of Egypt,* 186-241.

dealer, procured about 160 tablets for the Berlin Museum, which were the focus of the first comprehensive study of the Amarna Letters published by Ludwig Abel and Hugo Winckler in 1889/90.[78]

Overtime, the tablets purchased by private collectors made their way into museum collections. Today, the Voderasiastische Museum in Berlin houses 202/3 tablets;[79] the British Museum has 96 tablets; the Cairo museum holds about 52 tablets;[80] the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford houses the 23 tablets discovered during Petrie's excavations; and the Louvre has 7 tablets. The smaller collections are as follows: EA 70, 137, and 160 were purchased from a private collection (Vladimir Golenischeff) and were donated to the Pushkin Museum in Moscow in 1911; EA 15 and 153 are at the Metropolitan Museum in New York; EA 26 was purchased by the Reverend Chauncey Murch, and was acquired by the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago in 1894; EA 260, which was sent via post by Urbain Bouriant to Julius Oppert is lost, though Oppert published a transcription of this tablet in 1888;[81] EA 369 was purchased by the *Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire* in Brussels from a private dealer in 1934; an additional Amarna letter from the site of Tell el-Hesi, which has been assigned the number EA 333, is housed at the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul.

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[78] Hugo Winckler and Ludwig Abel. *Der Thontafelfund von el-Amarna* (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1889).

[79] Three additional fragments are joins with tablets at the British Museum; a box of fragments is collectively labeled as EA 382 (VAT 8525).

[80] This includes a fragment that is a join with EA 209, which is now at the British Museum, but was originally at the Louvre.

[81] Jules Oppert, "Les Tablettes de Tell-Amarna," *CRAIBL* (1888), 251-254.

In total, there are about 381 texts, plus EA 382, a collection of tablet fragments that are registered collectively and are currently in the Vorderasiatische Museum. The irregularity in the total count is due to the fact that some of the tablets and tablet fragments that were registered separately are actually joins to tablets housed at other museums. Shlomo Izre'el published the Amarna School texts in 1997, whereas Anson Rainey's 2014 publication, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets,* offers the most up-to-date transliteration, translation, and collation of the Amarna Letters.[82] Unless specified otherwise, all of the transliterations and translations in this work are based upon those in this 2014 publication.[83]

III. Scholarship

A. Date and Political Context

At the onset of their discovery there was much speculation regarding the date and historical context of the Amarna Corpus. Sayce initially dated the tablets to the Neo-Babylonian Period, specifically the period spanning the reigns of Aššurbanipal to Darius. He proposed that the letters

[82] See Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence;* S. Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets*; see also Artzi, "The Present State of the Amarna Documents," 3-16.

[83] To simplify matters in case there is a second edition, I am not including the page numbers for each translation but rather direct readers to Rainey's 2014 publication, which lists the Amarna Letters by their EA numbers.

chronicled Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt.[84] Budge first examined the tablets in person in December of 1887 and made some preliminary notes.[85] He writes of meeting with a man from *Hajj Qandil*, the village near the ruins of the ancient city of Akhenaten, who approached him with a half-dozen tablets and asked him whether they were "*qadim*" "old" or "*jadîd*," "new" (i.e., authentic or fake). Despite this brief assessment, Budge disagreed with Sayce's late dating of the tablets, but was called to Iraq on business for the British Museum and did not publish his observations. In 1888, A. Erman and E. Schrader conclusively dated the tablets to the reigns of Amenhotep III and IV; this anchored the Amarna Letters in the Late Bronze Age, more specifically, in the 18th Dynasty.[86]

B. Early Scholarship and Publication

1. Early Studies of the Amarna Letters (1887-1917)

In the first decade following their discovery, the Amarna letters were published piecemeal—scholars focused upon discrete museum collections, or smaller collections owned by private collectors. In 1888, Sayce published a collection of 13 letters in the collection of Urbain Bouriant, and

[84] The Bulaq Museum obtained a number of tablets by the end of 1887, however Sayce was not permitted to examine the Bulaq collection during his initial visit. He made this preliminary assessment based upon a copy of a tablet obtained from Mr. Urbain Bouriant, the director of the French Mission Archéologique at the time. See Sayce, *Academy*, Feb. 18, 1888; quoted in Budge, "On Cuneiform Dispatches from Tûshratta," 540-541; Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 19-20.

[85] E. A. Wallis Budge, *By Nile and Tigris, a Narrative of Journeys in Egypt and Mesopotamia on Behalf of the British Museum Between the Years 1886 and 1913* I, (London: J. Murray, 1920), 140. For his first account of the tablets, see Budge, "On Cuneiform Dispatches from Tushratta," 540-569.

[86] Adolf Erman, *Der Thontafelfund von Tell-Amarna*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 1888.

in 1889 several tablets held by private collectors (including that in the Boulaq Museum).[87] H. Winckler and L. Abel published the first nuanced large-scale work on the Amarna Letters in 1889/90.[88] Abel provided the autographs for this publication. In 1892, Budge and Bezold published the British Museum tablet collection that Budge purchased in Egypt.[89] Jean-Vincent Scheil published the four tablets originally acquired by Rostovitz Bey (EA 28, 82, 230, and 292) and EA 29, which was owned by Chauncey Murch, in 1892.[90] Abel also published the Murch tablet fragment in that same year.[91] Scheil published the Tell el-Hesi Amarna Letter (EA 333), which was discovered during Frederick J. Bliss's excavation in 1892; Hermann V. Hilprecht re-published it with images in 1893.[92]

In 1896, Winckler re-edited the Amarna Tablets that had been published at this juncture, and J.P. Metcalf provided an English translation of this publication.[93] In 1984, Sayce published 22 newly

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[87] See Oppert, "Les Tablettes de Tell-Amarna," 251-254; also A. H. Sayce, "Babylonian Tablets from Tell el-Amarna, Upper Egypt," *PSBA* (1888), 488-525; Ibid., "The Cuneiform Tablets of Tell el-Amarna, Now Preserved in the Bulaq Museum," *PSBA* (1889), 326-413.

[88] At the time, it was the most comprehensive publication to date as it included the tablets that Graf had procured for the Voderasiastische Museum, the collection at the Cairo Museum, EA 209 from the Louvre, and three tablets owned by collector Vladimir Golenischeff (EA 70, 137, 160). H. Winckler and L. Abel, *Der Thontafelfund von el-Amarna* (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1889).

[89] Carl Bezold, E. A. Thompson, and E. A. W. Budge, *The Tell El-Amarna Tablets in the British Museum: With Autotype Facsimiles* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1892).

[90] J. V. Scheil, *Tablettes D'el-Amarna* (Paris: s.n, 1892), 298-309.

[91] L. Abel, *Stück Einer Tafel Aus Dem Fund Von El-Amarna* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1892).

[92] J. V. Scheil, *Une Tablette Palestinienne Cuneiforme. Recueil des Travaux Relatifs a la Philologie et I'Archeologie Egyptiennes et Assyriennes* 15 (1893), 137-38; H. V. Hilprecht, *Old Babylonian Inscriptions* (Philadelphia: s.n., 1896), Pl. LXIV, No. 147; Pl. XXIV, Nos. 66-67.

[93] H. Winckler, *Die Thontafeln Von Tell-El-Amarna* (Berlin: Reuter & Reichard, 1896); H. Winckler, *The Tell-El-Amarna-Letters*, trans. J. P Metcalf (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1896).

discovered tablets and fragments housed in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford that were discovered during Petrie's excavation.[94] The two tablets currently housed at the Metropolitan Museum of New York (EA 15 and 153) were originally published by Scheil in 1902, photographed by Bull in 1926, and then re-published by Moran in 1988.[95]

Nearly two decades after their initial discovery, Jørgen Alexander Knudtzon's monumental work, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln* (1907 vol 1; 1915 vol 2) provided the first transcription and translation of the entire corpus to date (EA 1-358). Knudtzen also provided invaluable observations regarding the grammatical forms, lexemes, and sign readings, and his own analysis of the tablets' size and composition. He was unable to provide line drawings or images, yet his descriptions of the tablets are still invaluable as certain have since been damaged.[96] This work served as the premiere edition of the Amarna Letters until Anson Rainey's posthumous publication of the entire corpus.[97]

Knudtzon devised a system of classification to organize and number the Amarna Letters that

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[94] A. H. Sayce, The Cuneiform Tablets," in Petrie, W.M.F., *Tell el-Amarna* (London: Methuen & Co., 1984), 34-37 XXXI-XXXIII.

[95] J. V. Scheil, *Deux Nouvelles Lettres D'el Amarna* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1902); Ludlow S. Bull, "Two Letters to Akhenaton, King of Egypt," *BMMA* 21(1926), 169-176; W. L. Moran, "Amarna Texts (Nos. 102, 103)," in *Tablets, Cones, and Bricks of the Third and Second Millennia B.C> Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.* 1 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988), 149-151.

[96] As Rainey states, "Knudtzon was the last person ever to see *all* these tablets, his own outstanding ability at reading texts and his thorough mastery of the contents of the Amarna archive made his work a priceless treasure which still stands today" (*Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets* Vol. I, 3).

[97] In this two-part volume, Otto Weber provided the historical analysis for the tablets, and Erich Ebeling compiled the indexes. See J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*. *Vorderasiatische Bibliothek* 2 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907 [vol. 1]; 1915 [vol. 2]).

set the standard for the field. The designation EA (=El-Amarna) as used today is based upon the title of his publication *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*. Tablets discovered after Knudtzon's publication have been added in numeric order to this series, which today ends with EA 382. Knudtzon first grouped the tablets together based upon their provenience. When the point of origin was not specifically mentioned in the actual messages, he deduced the tablets' origins by drawing comparisons between their composition, clay color, and size. Considering that Knudtzon was working without the benefits of modern petrographic analysis or imaging technology, his classification was quite accurate and impressive.[98] Knudtzon further grouped the corpus according to the nature of the relationship between the sender and the Pharaoh, be it that of a peer-polity or subservient polity.[99] The majority of the Amarna Letters are addressed to the Pharaoh, and a handful to Egyptian officials working in the Levant. Eleven "Egyptian" Amarna letters reflect the Egyptian side of this diplomatic exchange, and are either originals that were never delivered or copies.[100]

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[98] The most recent petrographic analysis of the Amarna Letters can be found in Y. Goren, I. Finkelstein, N. Na'aman, and M. Artzy, *Inscribed in clay: provenance study of the Amarna tablets and other ancient Near Eastern texts* (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004).

[99] Knudtzon identified two main types of diplomatic relations with Egypt: that of Egypt's peers and esteemed rivals, and that of lower polities subservient to Egypt. The first group, which begins with EA 1, a letter from the Babylonian court, consists of about 50 diplomatic exchanges between Egypt and established Near Eastern powers who considered themselves peer-polities (e.g., Babylonia, Assyria, the Hittites, and the Mitanni) These letters are arranged counter clock-wise geographically as follows: Babylon (EA 1-14), Assyria (EA 15-16), Mitanni (EA 17-30), Arzawa (EA 31-32), Alašiya (EA 33-40), and the Hittite court (EA 41-44). The second group, comprising over three hundred letters, are exchanges between Egypt and various rulers in the Levant who considered themselves vassals (e.g., the diverse rulers in the southern Levant at Shechem, Jerusalem, and Gezer), and polities indirectly controlled by Egyptian foreign policy that remained more autonomous (e.g., Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, and Amurru).

[100] The letters originating from Egypt were addressed to the following polities: Babylonia (EA 1, 5, 14), Arzawa (EA 31), and various vassals in the Levant ('Ammiya EA 99, 'Aziru of Amurru EA 162, an unknown Canaanite ruler (?) EA 163, Etakkama of Qidšu EA 190, Intaruta of Achshaph EA 367, Milkilu of Gezer EA 369, and Yidya of Ashkelon EA 370).

C. Key Scholarly Works Post-Knudtzon

The most comprehensive works on the Amarna Letters after Knudtzon's publication are as follows: O. Schroeder published a new edition of the tablets housed at the Berlin Museum that included several tablets not in Knudtzon's publication (EA 359-360 in 1915, and EA 379, and 371 in 1917); these included updated hand copies and a useful study of the paleography of the Amarna Letters compared to other corpora.[101] In 1939, S. Mercer published what is essentially an English translation of Knudtzon's work, with the addition of several tablets discovered after Kundtzon's publication (EA 359-361).[102] C. Gordon (1947) published additional fragments discovered during the

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With the exception of EA 162, W. L. Moran argues that the vassal letters in this group are not copies, but rather letters that were never sent to the Levant (*The Amarna Letters* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992], xvi-iii. The degree to which Egypt actively corresponded with Canaanite rulers is debated. A more minimalist view, proposed by Liverani, characterizes the Egyptian court as adopting a more *laissez faire* approach, to the point of ignoring the stream of vassal letters from the Levant. Other scholars, advocate a more hands-on approach to governance and credit the southern Levant with a high level of economic importance to Egypt. S. Ahituv contends Egyptian rule was much more "hands-on." See M. Liverani, *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Near East Ca. 1600-1100 B.C.* (Padova: Sargon, 199]); A Seasonal Pattern for the Amarna Letters," in *Lingering Over Words*, Edited by Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller, *Harvard Semitic Studies* 37 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), 337–348; Shemuel Ahituv, "Economic Factors in the Egyptian Occupation of Canaan," *IEJ* 28 (1978), 93-105; N. Na'aman, "Economic Aspects of the Egyptian Occupation of Canaan," *IEJ* 31: 172-185.

[101] O. Schroeder distinguished two main paleographic trends in the Amarna Letters—a "southern" and "northern" script style that corresponded to discrete geo-political entities. The "northern" style was found in the letters from the Mitanni, Hatti, Alashia, Egypt, Babylonia, Amurru, as well as the Syrian-trained scribe working at Jerusalem. The "southern" script is found in the letters from the southern Levant, including the coastal city-states of Byblos, Beirut, Tyre and Sidon (*Die Tontafeln von El-Amarna: 1.-2. Teil Die Tontafeln von el-Amarna* [Leipzig, J.C. Hinrich, 1914-1915]). The ductus and orthography of the scribe working at the court of 'Abdi-Ḫeba in Jerusalem is an anomaly, as it aligns with northern scribal tradition (Assyrian). For the classic analysis of the subset of letters see W. L Moran, "The Syrian Scribe of the Jerusalem Amarna Letters," in *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*. eds. H. Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1975), 146-166.

[102] S. Mercer adopted the practice of designating the tablets "EA," after Knudtzon's work Die *El-Amarna Tafeln* (*The Tell el-Amarna tablets* [Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1939]).

excavation conducted by the Egypt Exploration Society (1933-34).[103]

In 1978, A. F. Rainey published EA 359-379, which were discovered after Knudtzon's publication.[104] In 1986 (English edition in 1992), W. L. Moran published a translation of the entire known corpus of Amarna Letters and included some notes about the more challenging passages.[105] S. Izre'el published the Amarna educational and literary texts in 1997.[106] The most recent and comprehensive publication of the Amarna Letters since Kundtzon is Anson Rainey's posthumous published of the entire corpus.[107] This final publication is Rainey's *magnum opus*; he was the last

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[103] Gordon added the 'new' Amarna Letters (i. e., more recently found) to the end of Kundzon's EA sequence, a practice that has since been adopted by the field. C. H. Gordon, "The New Amarna Tablets," *Orientalia* 16 (1947), 1-14.

[104] Rainey omitted the collection of fragments were collectively assigned EA 380 and 381 that are located in the Berlin Museum. Of these, four were discovered in the Berlin collection, two in the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Geselllschaft (1911-14), one in the excavations of the Egyptian Exploration Society (1921-24), eight in the excavations at the site conducted between 1926-37, and the rest are from Petrie's excavations and illegal searches of the site, see Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, xv; A. F. Rainey, *El-Amarna Tablets, 359-379: Suppl. to J.A. Knudtzon, Die El-Amarna-Tafeln*. (Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker, 1978); see Jean Georges Heintz, *Index Documentaire D'El-Amarna: I.D.E.A.* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1982), 410-411.

[105] This was the first substantial translation since Knudtzon's original publication. Moran's translations are based upon updated sign readings and advances in scholarship, particularly in the domain of lexicography. Moran included letters not originally included in Knudtzon, though he omitted all non-epistolary materials, including the Amarna school texts (Moran, *The Amarna Letters*).

[106] Izre'el lists twenty-nine numbered tablets and fragments, though the number vacillates between twenty-nine and thirty-two tablets in the related literature. For example, Moran lists thirty-two tablets in this category of Amarna texts that are not epistles. Of the school texts, EA 340-341 and 356-358 were included in Knudtzon's publication of the Amarna Letters, as they were part of the original collection at the Berlin Museum. Moran lists 32 tablets in this category of Amarna texts that are "not letters or inventories of letters (*The Amarna Letters*, xv). For a summary of the find spots and publications of these tablets see the introduction in S. Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets*. He has also made his personal translations of the Amarna Letters available online. See S. Izre'el, "The Amarna Tablets," http://www.tau.ac.il/humanities/semitic/amarna.html.

[107] Rainey entrusted William Schniedewind with overseeing this publication. Z. Cochavi-Rainey compiled Rainey's notes into a second volume; she includes the particulars of the letters from A. Rainey's notes, and a discussion of their clay composition. See Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (*1-2*), 2014.

person to personally examine, collate and translated the extent tablets. This work offers the most up-to-date reading of the letters, many of which were facilitated by advances in photography and digitalization not originally available to the previous generation of Amarna scholars.

D. Individual Tablets and Smaller Collections

A comprehensive list of individual and smaller groupings of tablets that were discovered subsequent to Knudtzon can be found in Heintz's bibliography of the Amarna Letters.[108] Some key publications of individual tablets and smaller collections are as follows: The Louvre's collection was published by François Thureau-Dagin.[109] EA 368 was published by Smith and Gadd in 1925.[110] The Hittite Amarna Letters (EA 31-32) were published Albrecht Goetze.[111] EA 369, which was acquired by

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[108] Jean Georges Heintz lists each letter line by line and provides the relevant works, though this work is somewhat dated as it is only up to workd published before 1982 (*Index Documentaire*). Other notable publications that discuss the Amarna Letters as a whole include the following: E. F. Campbell (*The Chronology of the Amarna Letters* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965]) and C. Kühne's (*Die Chronologie Der Internationalen Korrespondenz Von El-Amarna* [Kevelaer, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Butzon & Bercker, 1973]) works on the chronology of the Amarna Letters; R. S. Hess's study of the personal names in the Amarna corpus (*Amarna Personal Names* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1993]); Moran's work on the Byblian corpus and collected essays that reflect his lifetime of work on this corpus (*A Syntactical Study of the Dialect of Byblos as Reflected in the Amarna Tablets* [Ph.D Dissertation, John Hopkins University, 1950]; *Amarna Studies: Collected Writings*, *Harvard Semitic Studies* 54. [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003]); the most recent petrographic analysis and provenience study of the clays in the Amarna tablets by Yuval Gorenet al. (*Inscribed in Clay: Provenance Study of the Amarna Tablets and Other Ancient Near Eastern Texts* [Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004]); J. Mynarova's study of the epistolary formulae in the Amarna Letters (*Language of Amarna.*); and J-P. Vita's most recent publication offers a synthesis and update to his work on the paleography of the Canaanite Amarna Letters (*Canaanite Scribes in the Amarna Letters* [Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2015]).

[109] François Thureau-Dangin, "Nouvelles Lettres d'el-Amarna," *Revues d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 19 (1922), 91-108.

[110] S. Smith and C. J. Gadd, "A Cuneiform Vocabulary of Egyptian Words," *JEA* 11 (1925), 230-239.

[111] Albrecht Goetze, *Versteute Boghazköi-Texte* (Marburg, 1930).

the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire in Brussels, was published by Georges Dossin in 1930.[112] In 1965, Alan R. Millard published EA 378, which was found in the archives of the British Museum.[113] In that following year, Artzi published EA 379, which had been overlooked in Gordon's publication.[114] Shlomo Izre'el published the Amarna Letters in the Pushkin Musem in 1995.[115]

E. Key Works on Canaano-Akkadian

The Akkadian produced in the southern Levant during the LBA has generated a great deal of scholarship, and is a subfield it its own right. The first scholars who accessed this corpus, such as Knudtzon and Böhl, Dhorme and Ebeling, observed that the Canaanite letters differed from the rest of the Amarna Corpus.[116] Although they were written in cuneiform and made similar use of the formulaic language of other diplomatic exchanges, the verbal system and syntax diverged dramatically from MB. Canaano-Akkadian was the product of a distinctly WS scribal tradition, one that retained elements of OB as well as innovative "mixed" Akkadian/West Semitic orthographies. In 1909, Böhl provided a general analysis of the syllabary, phonology, morphology and syntax, focusing on the Canaanite

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[112] G. Dossin, "Une Nouvelle Lettre d'el-Amarna," *Revues d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 31 (1934), 125-36.

[113] A. R. Millard, "A Letter from the Ruler of Gezer," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 97 (1965), 140-143, PL. XXV.

[114] P. Artzi, "The Exact Number of the Published Amarna Documents," *Orientalia* 36 (1967), 432; "The precise number of el-Amarna tablets," *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society* 31 (1967), 128-131 [Hebrew].

[115] S. Izre'el, "Amarna Tablets in the Collection of the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts," *Journal for Semitics* 7 (1995), 125-161.

[116] Some of the earliest descriptions of Canaano-Akkadian are in the following: Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*; Franz Böhl, *Die Sprache der Amarnabriefe mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kanaanismen* in *Leipziger Semitische Studien* 5/2. Leipzig: J.C.Hinrichs, 1909; Erich Ebeling, *Das Verbum Der El-Amarna-Briefe* (Leipzig, 1910).

Letters. This work contains one of the first descriptions of the Canaanite features in the letters from the southern Levant such as the Canaanite glosses; Böhl also designated certain forms as "Kanaanismen," i.e., Canaanisms reflecting the influence of the substrate NWS dialects spoken by the scribes.[117] Ebeling focused upon the verbal system employed in the Amarna Letters, including the anomalous forms found in the Canaanite corpus.[118] Dhorme's investigation of the verbal system of the Amarna Letters includes a section on the verbs unique to the Canaanite letters; he also discussed the use of Canaanite glosses.[119] Based upon the West Semitic features embedded in this corpus, scholars such as Albright and Moran reconstructed the NWS substrate influencing this corpus, which they understood to be the ancestor Hebrew, Aramaic, and the Transjordanian languages of the Iron Age.[120]

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[117] Böhl mainly compares the extant Canaanisms and their Hebrew cognates (*Die Sprache der Amarnabriefe,* 80-91).

[118] Ebeling, *Das Verbum Der El-Amarna-Briefe*.

[119] Édouard P. Dhorme, "La Langue de Canaan," *RB* 10 (1913), 369-393; Ibid., "La Langue de Canaan," *RB* 11 (1914), 37-59; 344-372.

[120] W. M. F. Albright's publications include: "The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki, Prince of Tyre." *JEA* 23 (1937), 190-203; "The Prince of Taanach in the Fifteenth Century B.C." *BASOR* 92 (1944), 28-30; "Tell el-Amarna." *Encylopaedia Judaica*. 15 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), 933-935; Ibid., *The Amarna letters from Palestine. Syria, the Philistines, and Phoenicia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966); W. L. Moran, "Tell el-Amarna." *EJ* 15 (1972), 933-935; *A Syntactical Study of the Dialect of Byblos as Reflected in the Amarna Tablets* (Ph. D Dissertation, John Hopkins University, 1950); Ibid., "The Syrian Scribe of the Jerusalem Amarna Letters." in *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*. eds. H. Goedicke and J.J.M. Roberts. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1975), 146-166; Ibid., "Amarna Texts (Nos. 102, 103)," in *Tablets, Cones, and Bricks of the Third and Second Millennia B.C> Cuneiform Text sin the Metropolitan Museum of Art.* 1 (New York, 1988), 149-151; Ibid., *The Amarna Letters*; Ibid., *Amarna Studies: Collected Writings*, *Harvard Semitic Studies* 54 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003).

In 1996, A. Rainey published the most comprehensive analysis of Canaanite Akkadian in a descriptive grammar.[121] Continuing in this academic lineage, S. Izre'el analyzed the Gezer tablets and the Akkadian of Amurru. He has also published extensively on the Canaanite Amarna Letters, and contributed a grammar of Canaanite Akkadian that understands it to be a mixed-language.[122] Overall, his work addresses the linguistic classification of Peripheral Akkadian during this period within a sociolinguistic methodology.[123] Cochavi-Rainey identified EA 33-34, 39-40 of the Alashia corpus as part of the Canaano-Akkadian continuum, even though these letters were composed on Cyprus and send on behalf of a local ruler.[124] Also, her study of Egypto-Akkadian includes a discussion of Canaano-Akkadian forms in the corpora of the 13th and 14th centuries B.C.E.[125]

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[121] The Amarna Letters are the focus of this publication, though, he also draws upon other Akkadian corpora from the Periphery. See A. F. Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets: A Linguistic Analysis of the Mixed Dialect Used by Scribes from Canaan* in *Handbuch der Orientalistik. Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten* 25. 4 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

[122] S. Izre'el, *Canaano-Akkadian. Languages of the World/Materials* 82 (München: LINCOM Europa. 1998).

[123] S. Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," in *Language and Nature: Paper Presented to John Huehnergard on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday.* Edited by Rebecca Hasselback and Na'ama Pat-El. *Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 67 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2012), 171-218.

[124] For example, EA 33:14 features the Canaano-Akkadian 1cs *yaqtul-o* prefixed preterite using the 3ms Akkadian perfect as a verbal base following WS syntax (vs. the MB 1cs perfect **ašteme> alteme*), which is verb initial: *ù iš-te-mé a-na-ku* "I have heard." EA 34: 9 retains the intervocalic *–w-* and also makes use of the verntive as a peripherative dative, which is characteristic of Canaano-Akkadian: *la-a tu-wa-ši-ra* "Why have you not sent your envoy to me?" See Z. Cochavi-Rainey, *The Alashiya Texts from the 14th and 13th cent. B.C.E. A Textual and Linguistic Study*, AOAT 289 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003).

[125] For example, EA 369 is written on behalf of the Egyptian court to Milkilu the rule of Gezer. Yet, its ductus and use of the *y-* verbal prefix demonstrate the influence of the Canaano-Akkadian scribal tradition. This is the lone example of a clear Canaano-Akkadian verbal prefix. Interestingly enough, the subject of this verb is not a Canaanite ruler but is rather the god Amun: EA 339:28-32 *a-nu-um-ma yi-⌜ta⌝-din/* ^{d}*A-ma-nu* KUR *i-li-ti* / KUR *šap-li-ti ṣi-it* ^{d}UTU/*e-re-eb* ^{d}UTU *i-na šu-pa-al* / 2 GÌR LUGAL "Now Amon has placed the upper land, the lower land, (from) the coming forth of the sun god (to) the entering in of the sun god beneath the two feet of the king." The verb *yi-⌜ta⌝-din* is a Canaano-Akkadian preterite that makes used of the 3ms prefix *yv-* and it built from the Gt of the verb *nadānu* "to give." The Akkadian produced by

Other notable works in more recent years include Josef Tropper and Juan-Pablo Vita's succinct but excellent grammar of Canaanite Akkadian.[126] Vita's ongoing work to identify the individual scribes using paleography offers a fresh approach.[127] Augustinus Gianto's publications on the glosses in the Canaanite Amarna Letters and on its classification, delve into the field of sociolinguistics.[128] Mynarova contributed an analysis of the epistolary formulae in the Amarna Letters.[129] Eva von Dassow's publications on the classification of Peripheral Akkadian represent a methodological challenge to "Canaano-Akkadian," which she understands to have been a scribal

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Egyptian court officials is characterized as 'proper' Middle Babylonian, with slight interference from Egyptian and occasional Canaano-Akkadian features, which Cochavi-Rainey attributes to the frequent contact between Egyptian and Canaanite officials. She proposes that the WS features in the Egyptian-Hittite correspondence are the result of Canaanites or West Semitic scribes working in Ramesside Egypt. See Z. Cochavi-Rainey, "Canaanite Influence in the Akkadian Texts written by Egyptian Scribes in the 14th and 13th Centuries B.C.E.," *UF* 21 (1989), 39-46; Ibid., "Egyptian Influence in the Akkadian Texts written by Egyptian Scribes in the 14th and 13th Centuries B.C.E," *JNES* 49 (1990), 57-65; Ibid., "The Style and Syntax of EA 1," *UF* 25 (1993), 75-84; Ibid., *The Akkadian Dialect of Egyptian Scribes.* For further discussion of cross-cultural exchanges between Levantine and Egyptian scribes see S. Izre'el, "The Amarna Glosses: Who Wrote What for Whom? Some Sociolinguistic Considerations," *IOS* 15 (1995), 111-118; Albright, "The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki," 190-203; L. R. Siddal "A Geographic Analysis of the Injunctive in the Amarna Letters from Syria-Palestine and its Relevance for Egyptian Imperialism," *JAEI* 1: 4 (2009), 5-12; Ibid., "The Amarna Letters from Tyre as a Source for Understanding Atenism and Imperial Administration," *JAEI* 2:1 (2012), 24-35.

[126] J. Tropper and J-P. Vita, *Das Kanaano-Akkadische der Amarnazeit* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010).

[127] J-P. Vita, "Scribes and Dialects in Late Bronze Age Canaan," in *Language in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 53rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (*Moscow, Russia, July 23, 2007*), vol. I/2, ed. Leonid Kogan, et al. *Babel und Bibel* 4/2 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 863-894; Ibid., "Amurru Scribes in the Amarna Archive," in *Paleography and Scribal Practices in Syro-Palestine and Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age. Papers Read at a Symposium in Leiden, 17-18 December 2009*. Edited by Elena Devecchi (Leiden: Nedelands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 20012), 185-200.

[128] A. Gianto, *Word Order Variation in the Akkadian of Byblos*. Studia Pohl 15 (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1990); Ibid., "Amarna Lexicography: The Glosses in the Byblos Letters," *Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici* (1995), 65-73; "Amarna Akkadian as a Contact Language," in *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm — Proceedings of the 42th RAI*. Edited by K. van Lerberghe and G. Voet (Leuven, 1999: 123–132).

[129] Mynarova includes an invaluable discussion of the history of the field (*Language of Amarna*, 11-39).

system used to write Canaanite Akkadographically.[130]

There is also an enormous volume of literature on the geo-political climate of this period. The nature of Egypt's control of the southern Levant is central to scholarly understanding of the interactions between Egyptian officials and Canaanite administrators.[131] This of course has huge bearings on the nature of Canaanite scribalism and the degree to which it was impacted by Egypt's administrative apparatus ruling the Levant. Though the context of the Canaanite letters will be discussed more fully later in this book, it is worth mentioning a few key authors who are central in these debates. Mario Liverani delves into trade and power dynamics and understands a more "hands off" approach to Egypt's governance in the Levant.[132] Shemuel Ahituv, too, views there to have been little economic advantage to controlling the Levant.[133] Nadav Na'aman, on the other hand, argues for a stronger and more interactive relationship and that the resoruces were the impetus for Egypt's presence in this region.[134]

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[130] Von Dassow, "What the Canaanite Cuneiformists Wrote, 196-217; Ibid., "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 641-674; Ibid., "Peripheral Akkadian Dialects," 895-926; ibid., "Gloss Marking and the Languages of the Alalah IV Texts," in *Paleography and Scribal Practices in Syro-Palestine and Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age. Paper Read at a Symposium in Leiden, 17-18 December 2009.* Edited by Elena Devecchi (Leiden: Nedelands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2012), 201-216.

[131] The most comprehensive work on Egypt's expansion in the Levant is Ellen F. Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism: Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

[132] M. Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*; Ibid., "A Seasonal Pattern for the Amarna Letters," in *Lingering Over Words*. Edited by Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller. Harvard Semitic Studies 37 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), 337–348.

[133] Shemual Aḥituv, "Economic Factors in the Egyptian Conquest of Canaan," IEJ 1:2 (1978), 93-105.

[134] N. Na'aman, "Economic Aspects of the Egyptian Occupation of Canaan," *IEJ* 31: 172-185; Ibid., "The Origin and the Historical Background of Several Amarna Letters," *UF* 11 (1979), 673-684.

IV. An Overview of Peripheral Akkadian

A. Akkadian in the Periphery in the Second Millennium B.C.E.

Peripheral Akkadian is an umbrella term that describes the diversity in written and spoken Akkadian dialects in areas outside of Mesopotamia during the second millennium B.C.E. The linguistic variation in the Akkadian Amarna Letters has lead to more specialized studies of "dialects" of Akkadian used by non-native Akkadian scribes during this period.[135] The Akkadian of the LBA, in

[135] For example, the variation in second millennium Akkadian outside of the Mesopotamian heartland is typically linked to discrete geo-political entities (e.g., Kassite Akkadian, Assyrian Akkadian, Egypto-Akkadian, Hittite Akkadian, Hurro-Akkadian, Amurru Akkadian, and the subject of this work, Canaanite or Canaano-Akkadian). Key studies include René Labat's work on the Akkadian of Boghazköi (*L'akkadien De Boghaz-Köi: Étude Sur La Langue Des Lettres, Traités Et Vocabulaires Akkadiens Trouvés À Boghaz-Köi* [Bordeaux: Librairie Delmas, 1932]); Cyrus H. Gordon's study of Nuzi Akkadian (*The Dialect of the Nuzi Tablets*. *Or NS* 7 [Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1938]); Gernot Wilhelm's analysis of the Hurro-Akkadian at Nuzi (*Untersuchengen zum Ḫurro-Akkadischen von Nuzi. Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 9 (Kevelaer, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970]); and Hans-Peter Adler's study of Mittano-Akkadian (*Das Akkadische Des Königs Tušratta Von Mitanni* [Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker, 1976]). The Akkadian of Alalakh was studied by George Giacumakis (*The Akkadian of Alalaḫ* [The Hague: Mouton, 1970]) and later Daniel Arnaud ("*Le dialecte d'Alalah: un examen preliminaire*," *AuOr* 16 [1998], 143-186). Izre'el conducted the first comprehensive analysis of the Akkadian of Amurru (*Amurru Akkadian: A Linguistic Study* [Atlanta Georgia: Scholars Press, 1991]). Cochavi-Rainey has focused upon the Akkadian produced by the Egyptian Court and that produced in Alashia ("Canaanite Influence in the Akkadian Texts written by Egyptian Scribes in the 14th and 13th Centuries B.C.E.," *UF* 21 [1989], 39-46; "Egyptian Influence in the Akkadian Texts written by Egyptian Scribes in the 14th and 13th Centuries B.C.E.," *JNES* 49 [1990], 57-65; *The Alashiya Texts from the 14th and 13th cent. BCE. A Textual and Linguistic Study*. AOAT 289 [Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003]; *The Akkadian Dialect of Egyptian Scribes in the 14th and 13th Centuries Bce* [Münster: Ugarit-Verlag: Ugarit-Verlag, 2011]); for a more recent reassessment of the Akkadian produced by Egypt see Matthias Müller, *Akkadisch in Keilschrifttexten aus Ägypten: Deskriptive Grammatik einer Interlanguage des späten zweiten vorchristlichen Jahrtausends anhand der Ramses-Briefe*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 373 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010); Ibid., "Review of Cochavy-Rainey: The Akkadian Dialect of Egyptian Scribes in the 14th and 13th centuries BCE," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 109 (2014), 192-195; Ibid., "Akkadian from Egypt," In Julie Stauder-Porchet, Andréas Stauder and Willeke Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles, 2014, http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz002jjz3z; John Huehnergard has published on the Akkadian of Carchemish and Ugarit (*The Akkadian Dialects of Carchemish and Ugarit* [PhD. diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, 1979]; *The Akkadian of Ugarit. Harvard Semitic Studies* 34 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989]). Wilfred H. Van Soldt, too, has also published the Akkadian documents from Ugarit (*Studies in the Akkadian of Ugarit: Dating and Grammar,* AOAT 40 [Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1991]). Studies of the Akkadian of Emar include Stefano Seminara, *L'Accadico di Emar.* Materiali Epigrafici di Ebla / Materiali per il Vocabolario Sumerico - MEE/MVS 6 (Roma: Università degli studi di Roma "La sapienza," 1998); Eugen J. P entiuc, *West Semitic Vocabulary in the Akkadian Texts from Emar*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001; and Jun Ikeda, "Was Akkadian spoken in Emar ?. Diglossia in Emar," In *Language in the Ancient Near*

particular that in the Amarna Letters, has been described as an "international" diplomatic language.[136] However, use of Akkadian in the Periphery is by no mean unique to this period or to this corpus, but was already a phenomenon in the late third millennium B.C.E.[137] The variation in the Akkadian in the Amarna Letters as the product both distance from Mesopotamian scribal centers and the influence of regional ideologies about language and writing.

Most Akkadian grammars, for convenience sake, distinguish between three main dialects of Akkadian during the LBA: Middle Babylonian (MB), the language of southern Mesopotamia, Middle Assyrian (MA), the language of northern Mesopotamia––both of which had a spoken and written reality;[138] and Standard Babylonian (SB) (*Jungbabylonische*), a designation used to classify a prestigious register of Akkadian used for writing, copying and transcribing religious and royal texts, and to

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East: Proceedings of the 53e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale. Vol. 1 Edited by L. Kogan, N. Koslova, S. Loesov et al., (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 841-850.

[136] For an overview see M. Liverani, "The Great Powers' Club," In *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations.* Edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 15-27.

[137] As Andrew R. George writes, "While we talk of the Amarna Period as exemplifying the widespread use of international Akkadian in the eastern Mediterranean region of the 14th century, it should be remembered that this was not an innovation of this period, even in Egypt" ("Babylonian and Assyrian: A History of Akkadian," in *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern* Edited by J. N. Postgate [London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2007], 53). The main examples are the use of cuneiform at Ebla and Mari. See W. Sallaberger, "Ein Synchronismus der Urkunden von Tell Beydar mis Mari und Ebla?," in *About Subartu: Studies Devoted to Upper Mesopotamia*. Vol 2. *Culture, Society, Image Subartu* 4/2 Edited by M. Lebeau (Turnhout, 1998), 23-29); Ibid., "Nagar in den frühdynastischen Texten aud Beydar," in *Languages and Cultures in Contact*. Edited by K. van Lerberghe and G. Voet *CRRAI* 42 (Leuven, 1999), 393-407; Markus Hilgert, "*New Perspectives in the Study of Third Millennium Akkadian CDLJ 4* (2003), *1-14;* Gonzalo Rubio "Eblaite, Akkadian and East Semitic," *The Akkadian Language in its Semitic Context. Studies in the Akkadian of the Third and Second Millennium BC.* Edited by G. Deutsher and N. J. C. Kouwenberg [Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten 2006], 110-139.

[138] See Wolfram von Soden, *Grundriss Der Akkadischen Grammatik. Wolfram Von Soden* (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1952), 296-302.

canonize and systematize OB literature.[139] OB enters into the discussion because it was the basis for the orthographies used in Canaan during the LBA, whereas MB was used elsewhere in the cuneiform world.[140]

B. Canaano-Akkadian

Canaano-Akkadian is a part of the continuum of Peripheral Akkadian. The Amarna Letters from the Southern Levant, hereto referred to as the "Canaanite Amarna Letters," or the "Canaanite Letters," are the largest group using this scribal system. The epigraphic evidence suggests it evolved from the previous period, as Canaanite cuneiform in the LBA retains OB forms. The Amorite

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[139] The classic work on Standard Babylonian is Brigitte Groneberg's dissertation and following book on the subject (*Untersuchunger zum hymnisch-epischen Dialekt der altbabylonischen literarischen Texte.* Ph. D Dissertation [University of Münster, 1971]; *Syntax, Morphologie Und Stil Der Jungbabylonischen "hymnischen" Literatur* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1987). SB grammar is largely pattered after the norms of OB grammar, yet, reflects the contemporary language of the scribes and is viewed as a "hymo-epic" literary dialect used for textual production and copying.

[140] MB appears in the written record following the gap in the written record after the fall of Babylon (1599 B.C.E. [Middle Chronology]), which signaled the end of the OB period. The following synthesis of features is drawn from Wolfram Soden (*Grundriss Der Akkadischen Grammatik.,* 298); J. Aro (*Studien zur mittelbabylonischen Grammatik. St. Or. 20* [Helsinki, 1955]) and John Huehnergard (*A Grammar of Akkadian* [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996], Appendix C). Some of the more distinctive traits of MB include *š/s/ṣ/z* are written as *l* before dentals (*sinništu>sinniltu* "woman"); dentals followed by enclitic pronominal suffixes starting with *š* assimilate (though they can be written both morphographemically and phonetically *qat-šu* vs. *qa-as-sú* "his hand"); initial *w-* is lost in nouns and verbs (*wardu>ardu* "slave;" *walādu> alādu* "to give birth" (*wašib>ašib*); intervocalic *–w-* is written as *m* (*awīlu> amīl/lēu* "man"; also in verbs *uwaššar> umaššar*); the *w>m* shift generates new infinitive forms (e.g., *muššuru* as the D infinitive of OB *wuššurum*); there is loss of mimation (*šarrum>šarru*); doubled consonants (in particular voiced dentals) can be nasalized in the orthography (*–dd-/–zz-> -nd-/-nz* , e.g., *inandin* for *inaddin*); *i+a/ā* contracts to *â* (*iqbiam* [OB]> *iq-ba-a*); *a* before *i* can assimilate to *i/e* in the next syllable in the D and Š (preterite, perfect, and participle) stems whereby *a* before *i* is sometimes written as *e* (*li-maš-ši-ir* vs. *li-mi-iš-ši-ru-ni*). In addition, the case system is not use consistently, which affects the pronominal system and case inflection on nouns. For example, accusative nouns can be written as though nominative (*amātu iqbâ*) and genitive nouns as nominatives. Nouns can appear in their bound form without the expected case); this case confusion also applies to plural nouns (e.g., nominative plural nouns at times take the oblique plural ending *ī/ē*). Also, *-iš* takes on a comparative function (vs. its OB terminative-locative function) and the function of the ventive is not always clear.

kingdoms of Syria were the conduits for cuneiform's introduction into the south.[141] Canaano-Akkadian is attested from the 15th up to the 13th centuries B.C.E., and was most likely used by Canaanite scribes until the collapse of the palace institutions in the southern Levant in the 12th century B.C.E. The dearth of Canaanite (or Israelite) cuneiform in the Iron Age indicates that cuneiform scribalism died out at the end of the LBA. In the subsequent period, the Iron Age, it was supplanted by alphabetic writing throughout the Levant.[142]

Texts dating to the end of the MBA already show slight departures from OB grammar and orthography. The diverse (though limited) nature of the cuneiform materials Hazor attest evinces a gradual shift in scribalism during the transition between the MBA>LBA.[143] Texts from Hazor dating to the late MBA show the first stage of transition away from OB.[144] Rainey describes this phase of

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[141] The MBA corpus from Hazor shows similarities to the cuneiform at Mari. Horowitz et al. list only thirteen texts from the OB period in Canaan. The northern site of Hazor has the largest number (eight texts) that span several genres; most famously, Megiddo boasts of a thiry-eight line fragment of the Gilgamesh epic. The Hazor OB materials comprises 2 liver model fragments for divination, a court record, a school text with *Urra-Ḫubullu*, an administrative text, a letter and a letter fragment, and part of a four sided prism containing multiplication tables. See Horowitz et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan*, 65-87; for the Gilgamesh fragment see 102-105.

[142] After this period, there is a gap in the cuneiform record in this region; the next phase of cuneiform dates to the Neo-Assyrian period and is relegated to works produced for an Assyrian audience during Assyria's conquest of this region. There are 18 texts that can be securely dated to the Neo-Assyrian Period, and about four to five cuneiform texts assigned to the Neo-Assyrian/Babylonian, and Persian Period. The end of cuneiform in Israel corresponds with the fall of the Persian Empire in the West. See Horowitz, et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan*, 19-23.

[143] The limited MBA corpus includes a complaint in the form of a personal letter (Shechem 1), an administrative text from Hebron (Hebron 1) comprising mainly Sumerograms, cylinder seals from Beth Shean, Jemmeh, and Beth Mirsim; the 8 cuneiform texts from Hazor from this period represent several genres: an inscribed vessel (Hazor 1); 2 live model fragments (Hazor 2-3); a court record (Hazor 5), a school text (Hazor 6), an administrative text with a list of payments of silver (Hazor 7), a letter fragment (Hazor 8), and a prism fragment with a series of multiplication tables (Hazor 9).

[144] For example, the use of *inūma* and *u* to begin a clause are the product of interference from WS. Rainey also identifies forms in a court verdict from Hazor as being "peripheral features," i.e. forms that depart from OB, but are

Akkadian as though slightly more "provincial" in style than its contemporaries in Syria and Mesopotamia, demonstrating its affinities with the OB Peripheral tradition. There are also a small number of texts from Canaan that are slightly later than the Hazor corpus and fill in the gap between the peripheral features at Hazor and the fully developed Canaano-Akkadian orthography of the Amarna Letters.[145] The early LBA corpus demonstrates an even more radical departure from the cuneiform of the northern Levant. The Taanach Letters dating to the 15th century B.C.E. feature an unique orthography that is adopted fully in the southern Levant by the Amarna Letters.[146] This corpus demonstrates that Akkadian was not only used to communicate with the royal court in Egypt, but was also used for communication with Egyptian officials operating in the Levant by the 15th century. The distinctly Canaano-Akkadian features in this corpus include West Semiticized verbal forms and orthographies not found in MB (e.g., *tu-wa-še-ru-na* and *ti-il$_5$-la-ku-na* in Taanach 6: 5-6).[147] For this

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increasingly attested in the Periphery. This includes the use of *gerû* as a legal term in the expression "to initiate proceedings against" (e.g., in Hazor 5:4 has *ig-ru-ú* and *i-re-bu* [the G pret. 3mp of *erēbu* "to enter" with the theme vowel *i/e* as opposed to *u*]). This form is also present in Alalakh 12:7 and in EA 137:34 (Byblos) and EA 127:19 (Ḫasi from the Beqa). See also A. Rainey, *CAT* II, 29; Ibid., "Taanach Letters," *EI* 26 (1999), 153-162.

[145] For example, the form *mu-ša-di-na-ti* (Hebron 1) is without mimation, and *inūma* (Shechem 1: 9) and *ù* (Shechem 1:8) are used as conjunctions in a similar way to their use in the Canaanite Amarna Letters. The later MBA texts contain non-Semitic names that are thought to be of Hurian origin; some propose that this onomastic shift was caused by an influx of Hurrians in the southern Levant at the end of the MBA. See N. Na'aman, "The Hurrians and the End of the Middle Bronze Age in Palestine," *Levant* 26 (1994), 175-187; Horowitz et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan,* 10-15.

[146] See A. F. "Taanach Letters," *EI* 26 (1999), 154-155; Horrowitz et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan*, 13-14.

[147] For a list of cuneiform texts in Canaanite see Ibid., 10-25; in particular 10-19.

reason, Rainey describes the language in the Taanach letters as OB with a "strong West Semitic flavor."[148]

Canaano-Akkadian, was fully developed and used throughout Egypt's eastern empire by the mid-14th century B.C.E. Overall, Canaano-Akkadian is distinguished from the Akkadian produced in other regions of the Periphery by heavy WS influence and a retention of the OB orthographies from the preceding period.[149] Traditionally described as a "dialect" of Akkadian, Canaano-Akkadian developed in isolation from the scribal schools of the northern Periphery, and is mainly attested in contexts of Egyptian-Canaanite relations. The cuneiform corpus at Aphek, which was a Egyptian center during this period, is the *terminus ante quem* of this scribal system.[150] The Aphek material is limited, yet the range of texts indicates that cuneiform was central to Egypt's administrative agenda in Canaan.[151] The range of cuneiform texts at this site indicates that cuneiform scribes working at this site were competent in MB (the language of the letters that they received), Canaano-Akkadian, and were trained to write out WS words syllabically using cuneiform (e.g., Aphek 3).[152] Despite the divergent

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[148] The texts with the main features are Taanach 1, 2, 5 and 6. See Rainey, *CAT* II, 31-32.

[149] A characteristic example is the retention of intervocalic *-w-*, e.g., *awātu* in Canaanite texts, e.g., EA 138:96-97 (Byblos) *la-a tu-uš-mu/ a-wa-ti* "my word is not heeded" vs. *amātu* in EA 166:28 (Amurru) *ù* UGU *a-ma-ti šu-wa-ti* "and because of this matter."

[150] This is also the last cachet of cuneiform texts in this region until the Neo-Assyrian period.

[151] It includes diverse materials, including lexical lists and even a tri-lingual Sumerian, Akkadian, and West Semitic list (Aphek 3), fragments of administrative texts, and an Akkadian letter from a high ranking official at Ugarit to an Egyptian official stationed at the site. See David Owen, "An Akkadian Letter from Ugarit at Tel Aphek," *Tel Aviv* 8 (1991): 1-20; A. Rainey, "A Tri-lingual Cuneiform Fragment from Tel Aphek," *Tel Aviv* 3 (1976): 137-40.

[152] Aphek 3 is a lexical list with a Sumerian, syllabic Akkadian, and WS column. Though broken it reads: [A].MEŠ: *ma-wu : mu-mi* "water;" [GEŠTI]N.MEŠ: *ka-ra-nu : ye-nu* "wine." This appears to be a list of liquids, as the two lines are

elements, Canaanite Akkadian was a cohesive and standardized scribal system. The divergent orthographies that characterize Canaano-Akkadian, and distinguish it from MB are attested throughout the southern Levant, and fall along the borders of Egypt's political influence. The cohesiveness of this writing system is even more striking in light of the internal political chaos of this period. As will be discussion, it appears that the political mechanism that fostered the development and standardization of this scribal system was Egypt's administrative apparatus in the Levant.

CHAPTER THREE

Approaches to the Linguistic Classification of the Canaanite Amarna Letters

This chapter explains the features of Canaano-Akkadian and how scholars in the past classified it. It suggests that scholars overly assume that the written language of the texts was spoken, or a reflection of the language of a community of speakers, whereas it was used by trained elites that had a very limited function. For this reason, much of the richness of this scribal system and its socio-political function as a diplomatic scribal code are overlooked.

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reconstructed as [*ša*]-*am-nu* (Akk.) and [*di-iš-pu*] *du?-uš-bu* "oil" and "honey." See Horrowitz et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan*, 31-32; Rainey, "A Tri-lingual Cuneiform Fragment," 137-140.

I. A Summary of How Scholars Classify the Language of the Canaanite Amarna Letters

A. Introduction

Scholarship on Canaano-Akkadian texts is greatly impacted by how scholars understand the relationship between speech and writing in the texts from the ancient Near East. Past studies have explained the features of Canaano-Akkadian in terms of the features of spoken languages (e.g., equating orthographic variation with dialectal difference). This view is informed by methodologies that equate writing with speech, and view ancient texts as a reflection of ancient speech communities. However, for this period we can only speak confidently of a community of writers who were predominately elites. The assumption that the written language is a reflection of the language of a community of speakers is problematic. Canaano-Akkadian was not a spoken contact language, nor was it a code used to write Canaanite. Canaanite was the original language of these letters and Egyptian was the language of their delivery. Canaano-Akkadian was just the written code that recorded the basics of such exchanges.

In the continuum of Peripheral Akkadian, Canaano-Akkadian emerges as a cohesive and discrete scribal system—one among the myriads of scribal sub-cultures during this period that were geo-politically determined. The similarities in orthography, style, scribal marks in the cuneiform texts from Canaan suggest that Canaano-Akkadian was an overarching, cohesive, and coherent scribal system. As such, a new model is posited for understanding this corpus, one that does not limit this system to a particular "language." Canaano-Akkadian is best understood as a scribal system used by trained elites that had a very limited function. This approach best elucidates the social role that

Canaano-Akkadian played in LBA diplomacy within Egypt's eastern territories, how it was sustained, and why it disappeared at the end of the LBA.

B. Classifying Canaano-Akkadian

As Eva von Dassow observes, at face value the "language" of the cuneiform texts from Canaan dating to the LBA does not neatly fall into any known linguistic category. As she puts it, "(W)hat kind of language salad was this; who used it with whom, and how?"[153] It does not resemble the Akkadian produced in the Periphery during this period, nor is it wholly a WS linguistic system. Even the basic act of classification presents a challenge and is the subject of heated debate. The main points of contention concern whether or not Canaano-Akkadian was a spoken dialect of Peripheral Akkadian, a written variety of Akkadian limited to scribal circles, or a logographic code used to write Canaanite (i.e., using Sumerograms and Akkadograms). These different positions are the result of a methodological schism regarding the anomalous verbal forms and the orthographies that diverge from MB. That is, scholars debate the degree to which they reflect the spoken dialects from the LBA. The lack of consensus about Canaano-Akkadian, and written cuneiform texts from the Periphery more generally, is a reflection of fundamental differences in how scholars view the relationship between writing and speech.[154]

The lexicon of Canaano-Akkadian is predominantly Akkadian (including prepositions, particles, and nouns), yet the sentence structure and overall syntax tends to conform to the rules of

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[153] See von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 642.

[154] For a discussion of the methodology used to determine whether or not the written Peripheral Akkadian "dialects" reflected an underlying spoken variety of Akkadian, see von Dassow, "Peripheral Akkadian Dialects," 895-926.

WS. The interpretation of the verbal tense and/or aspects is complicated, however, by different understandings of what WS verbs looked like during this early period. Scholarly understanding of WS syntax for this early period is impacted by the languages of later periods, in particular, Classical Hebrew. There is agreement that the orthography is based upon OB, the Akkadian of the MBA, and not its contemporary MB, which was used by other polities in the Periphery during the LBA.[155] The "mixed" Canaano-Akkadian forms have been studied traditionally as a reflection of local dialects of Akkadian that blended elements from Akkadian and WS.[156] In particular, the verbal system lies at the heart of debates concerning its classification. The "hybrid" verbal forms are the most distinctive aspect of this corpus as they make use of Akkadian verbal bases for the most part, whereas the semantic information about the verb (person, gender, number, aspect, and tense) is coded using affixes derived from WS.[157] There is a general consensus that they are essentially composites of Akkadian verbal roots that the scribes treated as though WS verbs. The degree to which these composites were graphemic (i.e., for reading, or as a guide to the texts' interpretation) as opposed to

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[155] Canaano-Akkadian orthography and phonology is closer in many ways to OB. For example, it features the retention of intervocalic *-w-*, e.g., EA 255:13 *ú-wa-še-ru* (Canaan) vs- *ú-maš-šer* EA 29:150 (Mittani). See Rainey, *CAT* I, 38-39; *CAT* II, 19-20, 28-32. Canaano-Akkadian is relatively free from typical MB innovations such as the nasalization of geminated consonants, e.g., EA 51: 13 *i-ma-an-gur* vs. EA 234: 27 *i-ma-gur* (Akko)and EA 1: 68 i-*na-an-di-nu-na-ši* (Egypt) vs. EA 137: 55 *a-na-din-mi* (Beirut). Also, the *š>l* shift before a dental is a hallmark of the Akkadian of this period, e.g., EA 20: 20 *el-te-me* (Mittani) vs. EA 108: 24 *eš-te-me* (Byblos). See Rainey, *CAT* I, 37-42; vol. 2: 21-23.

[156] Izre'el presents a summary of the key debates in "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 171-218; for a description of how cuneiform was introduced into the southern Levant see Horowitz et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan*, 10-15.

[157] For example, some "mixed" forms include use of *y-* for the 3ms prefix conjugations (EA 138: 38 *yi-iṣ-bat* "he seized" vs. *iṣbat*, the Akkadian preterite; also, Canaano-Akkadian texts use *–ti* for the 1cs suffix as oppose to *–āku*, e.g., EA 127: 25 *ṣí-ir-ti* "I am hard pressed" vs. *ma-ṣa-ku*.

phonemic (i.e., reflecting what was actually spoken) is, however, contested. In other words, the debates center on the degree to which Canaano-Akkadian was Akkadian, but a product of poor training and/or second language acquisition, a distinct elite dialect of Akkadian in its own right (i.e., a mixed-language), or a means of coding Canaanite (i.e, Canaanite written in cuneiform).

Those that wed orthography to speech (the "traditional" view) describe Canaano-Akkadian as a mixed-language, inter-language, spoken dialect, or contact language that fused elements from both Canaanite and Akkadian verbal forms.[158] Most recently, it has been suggested that the language of these texts was not Akkadian, but Canaanite. That is, that the scribes used glosses and Akkadographic spellings as a means of clarifying the language of reading, which was understood to be WS.[159] The approach here distances the language of the text from that of its written form. In other words, Canaano-Akkadian is approached as a scribal system based on Akkadian that was not actually spoken, or if so by a limited view. The language of the written form of these messages was a cryptic code, one unlocked only by the scribes trained in this system who presumably knew Akkadian and Canaanite

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[158] See Maarten Kossmann, "Amarna-Akkadian as a Mixed Language," in *Mixed Languages: 15 Case Studies in Language Intertwining*. Edited by P. Bakker and M. Mous [Amsterdam: IFOTT, 1994]: 169-173); Rainey, "The Hybrid Language," 851-861; Gianto, "Amarna Akkadian," 123–132; and Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 168-180. For a recent assessment that describes it as a professional jargon, one both spoken and written see Alexander Andrason, and Juan-Pablo Vita. "From Glosses to the Linguistic Nature of Canaano-Akkadian," *Folia Orientalia* 51(2014), 155–175; quote 162; J-P. Vita, "Language Contact between Akkadian and Northwest Semitic Languages in Syria-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age," in *Semitic Languages in Contact.* Edited by Aaron Michael Butts, Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 82 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 375-404. For a recent description of Egyptian Akkadian as an interlanguage see Matthias Müller, *Akkadisch in Keilschrifttexten aus Ägypten*; "Akkadian from Egypt," http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz002jjz3z.

[159] For this view see von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 641-674.

(in the case of the Egyptian scribes receiving these letters a basic understanding of WS).[160] Also, such orthographies are indicative of how the scribes themselves viewed their writings. That is, Canaanite scribes did not use cuneiform to write Canaanite verbs syllabically, but used Akkadian for their interactions with Egypt, as it was the prestige language of written diplomacy of this period.

The lack of consensus regarding the state of the WS verbal system in the second millennium, complicates the current classification of Canaano-Akkadian. For example, are the short *yaqtul* verbal forms that are indicative in meaning (i.e., that by their context can not jussive) genuine WS preterites, or hybrid forms modeled after the Akkadian preterite? This distinction does not really affect the meaning of these verbs but rather informs how scholars interpret this scribal system and the evolution of WS languages. The reliance on this corpus to define what WS languages looked like in the second millennium B.C.E. leads to a fundamental methodological problem, that is, to a linguistic "catch 22" of sorts.[161] Scholars use the WS texts and/or features in Ugaritic and the Canaanite Amarna letters as the basis of how to understand the earliest phases of the WS verbal system; these forms are then used to elucidate the "archaic" forms in biblical Hebrew and in WS inscriptions. Yet, the

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[160] Chapters 6-8 address the use of code-switching and scribal marks to influence the interpretion and translation of these letters.

[161] The affixes are typically used to assign these forms to a linguistic group. This is particurally true of WS and Akkadian preterites (*yaqtul* and *iprus*) and the Akkadian and WS suffix conjugations. For example, the following two verbs are distinguished by the 1cs suffix: *pal-ḫa-ti* "I am afraid" EA 77:36 (Rib-Adda; Byblos; Sidon, Beirut, or Byblos), which is in opposition to the use of the Akkadian predicative *pal-ḫa-ku* "I fear/ am afraid" in EA 164:28 ('Aziru; Amurru; Tell 'Arqa). Both verbal forms employ the Akkadian verbal root *palāḫu* with the basic meaning of "to be afraid." The –*āti* ending the form *pal-ḫa-ti* as a 1cs Canaano-Akkadian verb following the pattern of the WS *qatala* form. The ending -*āku* is the standard ending for a 1cs Akkadian predicative form, though in meaning these two verbs are identical. They both function as statives in the context of these ruler's con-current circumstances. The verbal roots are identical and their form and functions overlap, only the affixes are different.

interpretation of the verbal forms in LBA Canaanite texts are then, in turn, colored by scholarly understanding of WS languages of the Iron Age and later periods. In other words, we look to the LBA for the earliest attestations of the "archaic" forms in later WS languages and yet, our analysis of the LBA verbal forms is greatly influenced by Iron Age evidence.

The WS preterite is at the heart of this problem. The following discussion demonstrates how different assumptions about the evolution of WS complicate the classification of Cananao-Akkadian. Scholars, such as Rainey, view archaic poetic texts in biblical literature to retain the vestiges of more ancient features of WS. For example, the preterite *yiq†ol* (the short prefix conjugation) is seen to be the survival of the NWS preterite **yaq†ul*. The proof that this form did exist in WS is largely based upon similar short prefix forms in the Amarna Corpus and, to a more limited degree, in Ugaritic poetic texts.[162] Rainey reconstructed the WS verbal system as follows:[163]

Table 1 Rainey's Verbal Classification
Indicative

Preterite	*yaqtul,û*
Imperfect	*yaqtulu, -ûna*
Energic	*yaqtulin(n)a*

Injunctive

[162] For example, in the following verse in Deut 32:8 the phrase יַצֵּב גְּבֻלֹת עַמִּים is seen to be a 3ms preterite form from the verb **nṣb*, i.e., "he set.":בְּהַנְחֵל עֶלְיוֹן גּוֹיִם בְּהַפְרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם יַצֵּב גְּבֻלֹת עַמִּים לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל "When the Most High apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the gods; bounds of the peoples."

[163] A. Rainey, "The Prefix Conjugation Patterns of Early Northwest Semitic," in *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran.* Edited by Tzvi Abusch et al. (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1990), 407-420; Rainey, *CAT* II, 221; "Whence Came the Isrraelites and Their Language." *IEJ* 57 (2007): 41–64; "Verbal Usages in the Taanach Letters," *IOS* 7 (1977): 33-64; see however the critique in Jo Ann Hackett, and Na'ama Pat-El. "On Canaanite and Historical Linguistics: a Rejoinder to Anson Rainey." *MAARAV* 17.2 (2010), 173–188.

Jussive	*yaqtul-û*
Volitive	*yaqtula, -û*
Energic	*yaqtulan(n)a*

A problem arises, however, when this paradigm is used to analyze the Canaano-Akkadian verbal system, as this understanding of the verbal system is not universally accepted. Dennis Pardee, among others, argues that there is slim evidence for a WS preterite in the LBA corpus of WS texts. This form certainly existed at some point in WS, but by the Amarna Period the suffix conjugation largely took over this function and shifted from a stative to a finite verb (having a past-tense function). Pardee argues that the WS *yaqtul* preterite is not attested in prose texts and is only in poetic texts at Ugarit. That is, if the preterite was indeed still in widespread use, there would be more attestations. He views the few attestations of this form as a reflection of "a more archaic state of the language."[164] As such the **yaqtul* verbs in the Canaanite Amarna Letters are not true WS forms (as Rainey suggests), but are (as Moran suggested) Akkadianisms modeled after the Akkadian preterite *iprus*. As a result, Pardee's reconstruction of the WS verbal system is radically different than Rainey's:[165]

Table 2 Pardee's Reconstruction of the WS Verbal System

Indicative

Perfective	*qatala*
Imperfective	*yaqtulu*

Volitive

[164] Dennis Pardee, "Review of *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets: A Linguistic Analysis of the Mixed Dialect Used by Scribes from Canaan*, by A. F. Rainey," *JNES* 58 (1999), 314.

[165] Pardee, "*Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets,*" 314.

Imperative	*qutul*
Jussive	*yaqtul*
Cohertative	*yaqtula*

Energic

Energic I	*yaqtulan*
Energic II	*yaqtulanna*
Energic ?	*yaqtuluna*

This also has implications for the linguistic awareness of the scribes, as Pardee views the Canaanite scribes to have been "trying to write Akkadian." The anomalous forms were the result of their limited skills, uneven scribal training, and lack of contact with Akkadian speakers. Thus, according to his understanding of the verbal system the scribes viewed their forms to be Akkadian, and not Canaanite, or Canaanizing verbs. This is quite a different view than that which Rainey proposes, whereby the short prefixed verbs were patterned after WS verbal forms (e.g., WS *yaqtul* vs. Akkadian *iprus*).

Von Dassow has another solution to this problem, which informs her analysis of Canaano-Akkadian. Her review of Rainey's of *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets* describes the verbal system as such:

> "Instead of merely using standard Akkadian forms and writing an occasional Canaanite form in cuneiform, the Canaanite scribes developed peculiar hybrid forms by grafting their native conjugation system onto the borrowed Akkadian one. For a given Akkadian verb, an Akkadian

> 3ms. finite form, either *iprus, iparras,* or *iptaras* was chosen and used as a base to which Canaanite affixes for person, tense and mode were applied. Which Akkadian form served as the base did not determine the tense of the resulting verb form; rather, both tense and mode were determined by the Canaanite affixes."[166]

Ultimately, this observation became the basis for her argument that this was not a true verbal system *per se*, rather a means of writing Canaanite verbs in cuneiform using Akkadographic spellings (i.e., the use of Akkadian words spelled syllabically to stand in for Canaanite lexemes in a text).[167] She contends that Rainey's reconstruction of the WS verbal system (consisting of 6 patterns and three conjugations) is needlessly complicated. Instead, the "short" preterite/jussive form (*yaqtul*) served two functions: in past contexts it denoted the past tense; in future or present contexts it served as a jussive. By the same token, the "long" imperfect (*yaqtulu*) denoted the present/future. Each of these two conjugations could then be supplemented by emphatic (-*a*) or energic –(*a*)*nna* etc., which were endings that added semantic meaning to the verb.[168] Von Dassow remained cautious, however, about reconstructions of the WS verbal system from this early period since they should be evaluated "through the lens of the Canaano-Akkadian 'interlanguage,' or 'mixed dialect, written by the cuneiform scribes."[169] In this

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[166] For example, she cites the form *yi-la-ak* as a composite formed from the following units: the Canaanite 3ms prefix *yi-* and the preterite zero -*o* suffix marked the verb as a 3ms past tense; the verbal base was derived from *illak*, the Akkadian durative of the verb *alāku* "to go." In this context the form *yillak* functions as a 3ms past tense with the meaning "he went." See von Dassow, "What the Canaanite Cuneiformists Wrote," 200.

[167] Ibid., 200.

[168] Ibid., 213-214.

[169] Ibid., 214.

review, she questioned the whole premise that Canaano-Akkadian was a language that can be analyzed by the standard tools of linguistic analysis. As she writes,

> Grafting Canaanite affixes onto already inflected Akkadian verb forms, for example, is really quite a strange thing to do. It is hard to imagine people using such forms in spoken communication: who would have understood them?... There was practically no context in which the dialect of the Canaanite Amarna tablets could have been used for discourse, spoken or written, by all parties to the communication. The Canaano-Akkadian mixed dialect must have been, therefore, essentially a code used for writing in cuneiform, not really a dialect of Akkadian, nor, indeed, really a dialect at all.[170]

Von Dassow's skepticism of the hybrid-verbs as a viable linguistic system and her observation that there was not real community of speakers using Canaano-Akkadian challenge the traditional analysis of this corpus.

The very classification of Canaano-Akkadian is complicated by the lack of consensus on how to interpret the verbal system. Yet, this problem is resolved when it is approached as a scribal code that served a pragmatic function—that of communication rather than transcription. Viewing Canaano-Akkadian from the perspective of scribalism eliminates the need to reconstruct verbal forms that do not appear to have ever been spoken outside the context of these letters and/or scribal training. Rather than reconstruct the language of the original utterance or the language of reading, a more fruitful approach is to consider the overall meaning of the verbal forms in the context of these letters and how the scribes used syllabic and logographic spellings and scribal marks to encode data.

C. Was Akkadian a Contact Language, *Lingua Franca*, *Littera Franca* or *Scriptura-Franca?*

1. Introduction

[170] Ibid., 215.

Differing views of the relationship between language and writing impact how scholars approach the use of Akkadian in the Periphery. The assumptions that text=language, sender=speaker, or even scribe=speaker are problematic and reflect a fundamental methodological rift in the field. There are three main approaches to analyzing the language of the cuneiform texts of the second millennium B.C.E. from the Periphery: 1) scholars who distance the written language from a spoken variety; 2) scholars who are skeptical about the degree to which such "dialects" were spoken, yet assume that written forms in this corpus had an underlying phonological reality; and 3) scholars who attribute orthographic variation to the spontaneity of speech and attribute the distinctive features to spoken regional dialects of Akkadian.

The Akkadian texts produced by non-native cuneiform scribes working outside of Mesopotamia from the second millennium B.C.E. were all influenced to some degree by the local languages spoken by cuneiform scribes, yet overwhelmingly conformed to MB.[171] The cuneiform texts produced in the southern Levant, on the other hand, are unique within this scribal continuum. It is as though scribes working at the borders of Egypt's eastern empire were excluded from a "global" scribal trend. The differences in Akkadian(s) were not necessarily dialectal, as is often assumed, but also reflected diversity in scribal education and in the geo-political orientation of the scribes and their affiliated polities. Most studies of this system are limited to linguistic analyses of the hybrid forms in

[171] Interference is defined as "[t]he influence that knowledge of one language has on the way one speaks another." This includes the influence of other languages known by the speaker and/or errors from second language acquisition. See P. H. Matthews, "Interference," *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* (Oxford University Press, 2007); Ibid., "Oxford Reference," 11 Mar. 2015, Date Accessed 11 Mar. 2015, http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199202720.001.0001/acref-9780199202720-e-1657>.

this corpus, and do not consider the larger issues of how Canaano-Akkadian developed, and what political or social institutions orchestrated its use in the Levant throughout a period of (at least) 300 years.

2. Lingua Franca, Scriptura Franca, or Littera Franca

The whole matter of "Canaano-Akkadian" is relates to the larger question of the use of cuneiform in the periphery. Akkadian in the second millennium B.C.E. was used in the Near East in diplomacy and commerce. Peripheral Akkadian was subject to an influx of foreign words, yet for the more part, its lexical inventory and morpho-syntax are based in Akkadian. For this reason, it is traditionally classified as part of the continuum of Peripheral Akkadian *linguae francae*.[172] Akkadian's status as a *lingua franca* during the LBA is considered a "truism."[173] Selz, however, calls this into question:

> [T]he observation that the spread of Sumero-Akkadian texts (with local scribal schools) over much of the Ancient Near East is, not exclusively and perhaps not even primarily a linguistic, but a cultural feature. This assumption is corroborated by the fact that the entire tradition of cuneiform writing made extensive use of 'logograms,' which means signs have only weak ties to a specific pronunciation.[174]

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[172] A modern example of a *lingua franca* is English, which is language that an agreed upon medium of communication between diverse language speakers. English is not a contact language—although it contains up to 75% loan words derived from a French/Latin origin, it is clearly derived from the Germanic language family. For a discussion of contact languages see Sarah. G. Thomason. *Language Contact: An Introduction* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2001).

[173] For this description see Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 171 and von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 641.

[174] Gebhard J. Selz, "Texts, Textual Bilingualism, and Mesopotamian Hermeneutics," *Between Text and Text. The Hermeneutics of Intertextuality in Ancient Culture and Their Afterlife in Medieval and Modern Times*. Edited by Michaela Bauks, Wayne Horowitz, and Armin Lange (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck& Ruprecht, 2013), 55-56.

The objection here is that the term *lingua* inherently refers to "speech" and not necessarily to written communication.[175] Moreover, there is a tendency in scholarship to restrict the impact of cuneiform to a technology or skill. Cuneiform scribes were actually participants in an extensive cultural horizon that spanned the entire Near East during this period. Cuneiform scribalism entailed an overarching transference of knowledge, replete with a deeply entrenched culture and set of conventions. Seltz describes the intellectual dynamics underlying this system: "Speculations evoked by signs and words play a dominant role in Mesopotamian scholarship, a fact which must be attributed to the Mesopotamian notion that writing (and mental objects) possessed much the same ontological status as the physical environment. In this notion "texts" provide a kind of second (or third) order reality."[176] He contends that Akkadian of the periphery is best classified as a "*scriptura franca*," and approached from the vantage point of scribal culture.[177]

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[175] Various definitions have been provided for this term. The following definition derives from the 2013 publication put forth by the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) of the European Commission (Piet Verleysen. *Lingua Franca: Chimera or Reality?* Editor. *Studies on Translation and Multilingualism 1*. [Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2011]) defines *lingua franca* as "a vehicular language which allows inter-comprehension among people speaking different mother tongues, as a neutral language or jargon of which nobody can claim ownership, but also as the mother tongue of one of the parties in the exchange," moreover, one "with a large community of fluent speakers." This definition takes into account that a *lingua franca* is originally a language associated with a specific group, yet, overtime, becomes harnessed by outsiders. According to this definition, a *lingua franca* is spoken by a significant group of people, thus attaining a type of international, or in the modern period, global status (e.g., English in modern day media, commerce, and diplomacy). The term *lingua franca* was first used to describe a contact language on the margins in the Mediterranean that was mainly oral, and appears to have been based upon Italian, with loan words from multiple languages. This contact language dates at least to the Crusader Period, which peaked in use in the 16th century CE, and died out during the French colonial period, as it was replaced by French. This system was adapted by merchants, soldiers, and mercenaries across the Mediterranean; the lexicon varied depending upon the region, as this was a malleable system (Ibid., 18-19). The term *lingua franca*, i.e., "language of the Francs" (i.e., non Greek Europeans) is thought to have been derived from the Arabic *lûghat al-Ifranj;* it is first attested in the 9th century in an Arabic text, though is used in the West by the 16th century CE (Ibid., 19-20).

[176] Selz, "Texts," 56.

Miguel Civil's writings on the use of Sumerograms in Akkadian language texts provide another model for how Canaano-Akkadian may have evolved. He describes the use of Sumerian at Ebla as a means of representing Sumerian and Semitic lexemes, though only in writing: "[T]hey [the Sumerian lists] were litterae francae, so to speak, that could be read in almost any language."[178] In a similar vein, Von Dassow questions both Akkadian's role in the Near East during this period and the assumption that language of written and spoken messages was one and the same.[179] She views the designation *lingua franca* to be problematic as Akkadian was primarily as a written medium of communication.[180] She views such texts as "memoranda (or advertisements, or creators) of reality" that always entailed an oral component. As she writes, "[T]he concept of a text-based *lingua franca* may be altogether inappropriate to a world where communication, even when mediated through writing, was not fundamentally textual but oral."[181]

Ignacio Márquez Rowe, too, challenges the *lingua franca* model. He views the acquisition of Akkadian in the Periphery as fundamentally linked to literacy and the cuneiform script.[182] Rather than

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[177] Ibid., 47-65.

[178] M. Civil, "Early History of ḪAR-ra: the Ebla Link," *Ebla 1975-1985: Dieci anni di studi linguistici e filologici*. Edited L. Cagni (Naples: Instituto Universitario Orientale, 1987), 140.

[179] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 641.

[180] Von Dassow uses the term *lingua franca* in her 2006 article, though in a later piece on Peripheral Akkadian she challenges the notion that Akkadian was a spoken *lingua franca*. See Ibid., 641.

[181] Ibid., 674.

[182] See also I. Márquez Rowe, *The Royal Deeds of Ugarit: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Diplomatics* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2006), 140-166; focus on 144-151.

"bilingualism," he advocates that the study of the corpora of this period consider the "biliteralism" of the scribes. He does not view Akkadian to have been the spoken vehicle of diplomacy, or even in economic transactions between traders of different linguistic backgrounds.[183] Rowe proposes that Peripheral Akkadian was a "written contact language" and a *lingua scripta franca*.[184] This is the view that best aligns with the approach to Canaano-Akkadian presented here (see Chapter Six). Seth Sanders, too, adopts Civil's model to explain the role of cuneiform in the second millennium as a written language used in textual exchanges.[185] He views Peripheral Akkadian to have been a scribal system that "encoded a variety of messages and related to language in a variety of ways."[186] This view, too, highlights the agency of the scribes who drew upon a well of linguistic and non-linguistic

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[183] Rowe contends that there was no one *lingua franca* in the LBA, contra von Dassow who views Canaanite to have been the spoken and written language of Egypt's eastern empire. Rather, he credits the translators and messengers as the mediators between polities that clarified any ambiguities in written communication (Ibid., 166, cf. 81).

[184] Ibid., 163-164.

[185] Sanders is skeptical of von Dassow's Akkadographic system, as he views her methodology to be too invested in reconstructing the original speech underlying the text, and views her reconstruction of the Canaanite underlying the cuneiform artifact to be only useful as a theoretical academic exercise. Overall, he views von Dassow's rejection of the inscribed text and her search for the "original" language of the text hidden under an Akkadographic shroud as problematic (*The Invention of Hebrew*, 203, n. 17). The scribes writing these texts were uninterested in accurately representing the 'original' speech act with the writing on the "text-artifact." He also critical of the argument that Canaano-Akkadian was a contact language; namely, Canaano-Akkadian does not adhere to the rules of how contact languages actually work, nor does it display characteristics of a pidgin or a creole (Ibid., 206-207, n. 41.). He describes it as having a unique "morphological interpenetration" that is at odds with both the "lexical /grammatical split" and the "compartmentalized" grammatical models of contact languages. Canaano-Akkadian was rather, a communicative means that linked "a speech community and a writing community" (Ibid., 89-90). His work provides a valid critique of both Izre'el and von Dassow. Canaano-Akkadian does not conform to the sociolinguistic context wherein contact languages emerge, as neither the Canaanite scribes nor their Egyptian counterparts were native Akkadian speakers. All oral communication was most likely conveyed in Egyptian, and perhaps whatever standardized dialect of Canaanite was prestigious during that period (most likely an urban elite (e.g., Byblian) dialect). See Ibid., 82.

[186] Civil, "Early History of ḪAR-ra," 140.

strategies.

Izre'el, on the other hand, contends the adoption of Civil's work to describe Canaano-Akkadian. He argues that the language of these texts was a spoken dialect, one mainly used by the scribes:

> As for the term "litterae francae," suggesting, as it does here, the total disengagement of text from language, or, rather, a polyglot nature of the text, I myself would hesitate to explain its use beyond the lists for which Civil had originally coined this term, namely Sumerian lexical lists at Ebla.... To me it is unimaginable that morphosyntactic variation of the sort manifested in the Amarna Letters, involving components from two languages, fine tuned and orchestrated, could have been a feature of mere spelling, or "a rationale for the failure of the data to conform systematically to the rules proposed under that model (von Dassow 2004, p. 652). That this code could be translated to other linguistic codes does not make it different from any linguistic system encoded in writing or decoded from the written.[187]

The problem, however, with this view is that *writing is fundamentally different from speech* (see Chapter Five). Izre'el overwhelmingly approaches this corpus from the vantage point of spoken language, be it that spoken by the scribes, or that spoken in the transmission of these messages. Whereas, we have a very limited view of what was actually spoken in the southern Levant during this period.

Alexander Andrason and Juan-Pablo Vita's most recent assessment of the classification of Canaano-Akkadian is a compromise between the positions of various scholars (Rainey, Kossman, Gianto, and Izre'el etc.).[188] They approach Canaano-Akkadian as a contact language, rather than a

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[187] Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 196.

[188] Their work provides a synthesis of past works and offers a compromise to past approaches to classifying Canaano-Akkadian: as a "mixed language" (Kossmann, "Amarna-Akkadian as a Mixed Language," 169-173); "hybrid mixed language" (Rainey, "The Hybrid Language," 851-861); an inter-language (Gianto, "Amarna Akkadian," 123–132; and mixed

scribal code, and do not address von Dassow's methodological critique. Their work does, however, consider the sociolinguistic role that Canaano-Akkadian had in Canaan. As they write, the choice of Akkadian and opposed to WS, as a written medium of communication was a reflection of the scribe's linguistic ideologies: "The scribes were *de facto* uninterested in developing an orthography convention, with which they could write their Northwest Semitic mother tongues employing this type of writing system." This was in part a reflection of the higher prestige of Akkadian, whereas Canaanite dialects were the spoken, less prestigious, lower-prestige variety.[189]

A main contribution is their argument that the attempts to pinpoint one designation from among the various types of contact languages and apply it to Canaano-Akkadian are misplaced—contact languages by their very nature present a continuum of linguistic varieties that are unbounded and can share features. For the sake of scholarship, they are classified somewhat artificially as jargons, pidgins, and creoles etc. In truth, however, these clear-cut categories are imposed on languages that are in practice "fuzzy (both dynamic and gradual) and overlapping."[190] Ultimately, they propose that Canaano-Akkadian was a "professional jargon," that was spoken yet, "predominantly written" as it was tied to the scribal profession.[191] It also demonstrated elements of a mixed language, in that it emerged

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dialect (Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 168-180).

[189] See Alexander Andrason, and Juan-Pablo Vita. "From Glosses to the Linguistic Nature of Canaano-Akkadian," *Folia Orientalia* 51(2014), 155–175; quote 162; see also J-P Vita, "Language Contact between Akkadian and Northwest Semitic Languages in Syria-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age," in *Semitic Languages in Contact.* Edited by Aaron Michael Butts, Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 82 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 375-404.

[190] Andrason and Vita, "From Glosses to the Linguistic Nature of Canaano-Akkadian," 167.

[191] Ibid., 171.

from Akkadian and the WS languages of the scribes, whereby the lexicon was derived mainly from Akkadian and the morpho-syntax from WS. They conclude that it was the product of a "triglossic" situation, whereby Akkadian (written; high variety), Canaano-Akkadian (written; high-variety), and Canaanite (spoken; rarely written; low-variety) were all used by scribes and all contributed to their professional jargon.[192] Canaano-Akkadian was not "static" but as a "dynamic fuzzy (yet synchronic) object" that was used in professional contexts and also may have also been used as an in-grouping language by Canaanite cuneiform scribes. They thus conclude, following Izre'el, that Canaano-Akkadian was a mixed-language, one that was written but "also commonly spoken, constituting a professional jargon."[193] Although Matthias Müller understands Egyptian Akkadian to have been an interlanguage, he adopts a similar description of the variation inherent to Egyptian Akkadian. As he writes,

> Interlanguages are individual learner varieties of a given target language to be acquired. They show various stages of mastery, according to the degree to which their respective learners acquired the rules of the target language. Interlanguage systems are generally unstable, that is, new rules can be acquired and incorporated into the system. Hence the same individual might produce texts with different patterns over time.[194]

Ultimately, he classifies Egyptian-Akkadian, not as a dialect, but as an interlanguage that reflected the influence of Egyptian and the scribes' diverse trainings and ranges of competencies.

Rather than focus on the language of or underlying these texts, however, the present

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[192] Ibid., 169.

[193] Ibid., 172.

[194] Müller, "Akkadian from Egypt," http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz002jjz3z.

study seeks to focus instead upon the ways in which Canaanite cuneiform scribes used graphemic and linguistic forms to create a semiotic field of meaning that would best serve their purposes to communicate with the Egyptian court. Approaching this corpus as a set of scribal conventions liberates us from such questions that cannot be currently answered. Instead, we are able to appreciate the diversity of the strategies employed in these texts. This perspective elucidates the ways in which WS speaking scribes were able to negotiate with their counterparts working for Egypt using cuneifrom as a vehicle of diplomacy.

C. Was Canaano-Akkadian An Akkadography or a Mixed- Dialect…Or Something Else?

1. Introduction

Scholarship on Canaano-Akkadian offers a cacophony of opinions, as scholars do not agree on the basic principles of how to go about studying the language of this corpus. The main positions regarding the classification of Canaano-Akkadian are as follows: Rainey's work, which approaches Canaanite Akkadian as a "mixed dialect" used by scribes, represents the traditional approach to analyzing this corpus. Rainey, for the most part, classifies Canaano-Akkadian as a dialect, or as an institutionalized "interlanguage" (following Gianto), which arose as the product of imperfect secondary language acquisition.[195] Rainey used diverse terms to describe this system (e.g., jargon,

[195] A. Gianto, "Amarna Akkadian as a Contact Language," in *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm — Proceedings of the 42th RAI*. Edited by K. van Lerberghe, K. and G. (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 123-131.

pidgin, mixed dialect, scribal code, and hybrid language).[196] He was not confident that scholarship could resolve the issue of it being a spoken vs. a written dialect, though he was vehemently opposed to those (chiefly von Dassow) who challenged that it was an actual language.[197] Yet, as von Dassow points out his grammar treats Canaanite Akkadian as a spoken language, and he dedicated an entire volume to its phonology.[198]

Izre'el's description of Canaano-Akkadian presents a slight modification of the traditional view that this is a "mixed" or "hybrid" linguistic system. The following passage describes his view of this system, which largely follows Rainey:

> "Akkadian almost entirely predominated in its lexical inventory, while Canaanite, the mother tongue of the scribes who wrote these letters, predominated in the domain of grammar. The latter influenced syntax and the morphology of this mixed language, and affected its phonology and semantics. Here and there a purely Canaanite word appears, written in the cuneiform syllabary, to translate a particularly difficult Akkadian word or a (Sumerian)

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[196] Pidgins and Creoles use the vocabulary from one language (that of the more powerful group) with a simplified grammar from the other system. Mixed languages tend to fall into two categories: where lexicon is taken from one language and grammar derived from the other, or certain morphosyntactic features (e.g., the pronominal morphemes) follow one language while the other features (e.g., the verb morphology) follow the other. For general scholarship on the contact language phenomenon and pidgins, creoles, and mixed languages more generally, see Jacques Arends, Pieter Muysken, and Norval Smith. *Pidgins and Creoles: An Introduction* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Co, 1994); Sarah. G. Thomason. Ed. *Contact Languages: A Wider Perspective* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Co, 1997); Ibid., *Language Contact: An Introduction* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2001); Umberto Ansaldo, Stephen Mathews, and Lisa Lim, *Deconstructing Creole* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2007); Peter Baker, "The Absence of Reduplication in Pidgins," *Twice as Meaningful. Reduplication in Pidgins, Creoles, and Other Contact Languages*. Westminster Creolistics Series 8. Edited by S. Kouwenberg (London: Battlebridge, 2003), 37-46; "Reduplication in Saramacccan," *Twice as Meaningful. Reduplication in Pidgins, Creoles, and Other Cntact Languages.* Westminster Creolistics Series 8. Edited by S. Kouwenberg (London: Battlebridge, 2003), 73–82. For discussions of contact languages in relationship to Peripheral Akkadian and Canaano-Akkadian see Seth L. Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 202, n. 12; also 206, n. 40; 206-207, n. 41; also Gianto, "Amarna Akkadian as a Contact Language," 123–132; Rowe, *The Royal Deeds of Ugarit,* 140-166; and von Dassow, "Peripheral Akkadian Dialects," 895-926.

[197] Personal communication.

[198] Rainey, *CAT* I, 182; CAT II 31-31; also von Dassow, "What the Canaanite Cuneiformists Wrote," 205.

logogram."[199]

For Izre'el, as in most linguistic analyses of Canaano-Akkadian, the text is not treated as a scribal system, but as a mixed language with an underlying phonological (i.e. spoken) reality.

2. Canaanite in Cuneiform

Von Dassow's view that Canaano-Akkadian to have been an Akkadographic code presents a radically different understanding of these letters and a methodological critique of scholarship on Peripheral Akkadian. Rather than understanding these forms as Akkadian, her hypothesis presents them as a logographic code used to write the WS dialect(s) of the local courts. The use of one language of writing to express meaning, or a word in another language is a phenomenon that is referred to in various ways in diverse fields. "Alloglottography," the term used to describe the use of one language to write another, was used by Ilya Gershevitch to describe the Bisitun Inscription and the process by which the original Elamite inscription was translated, and then back-translated into Old Persian:[200] "[T]he essence of what I mean is not that an alien ('xeno') 'graphy' is used, but that an alien 'glotta' is

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[199] S. Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Some Methodological Requisites for the Study of the Amarna Letters from Canaan," 30 November 2015, *www.tau.ac.il/.../CanAkkMethRequisites_2007.pdf.*

[200] Von Dassow's work builds off of Ilyla Gershevitch's 1979 study, which proposes that Achaemenid Elamite was actually an alloglottographic means of writing Old Persian. According to this theory, the Achaemenid Royal inscriptions were first dictated to the court scribes in Old Persian. The scribes transmitted this oral text into writing, using their Elamite training. When the text was read, the scribes translated it back into Odl Persian. Elamite then served as a vehicle for transmitting ideas and messages in Old Persian. See IIyla Gershevitch, "The Alloglottography of Old Persian," *TPhS* 77:1 (1979), 114-190; see also Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst "Huzwāres," in E. Yarshater ed. *Encyclopedian Iranica* XII, fasc. 5 (New York, 2003), 585-588; Shaul Shaked, "A Dictionary of Aramaic Ideograms in Pahlavi," *JAOS* 113 (1993), 75-81; for a discussion and examples see 75-76; for a more recent discussion see Jonas C. Greenfield, Bezalel Porten, and Ada Yardeni. *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great. Aramaic Version*. Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicum, Part 1: Inscriptions of Ancient Iran, Volume 5. The Aramaic Versions of the Achaemenian Inscriptions, etc., Texts 1 (London: Published on behalf of Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum by Lund Humphries, 1982).

used for the 'graphy' of one's own 'glotta'."[201] Rubio views this practice, or as he terms it, the phenomenon of "partial alloglottography," as an intrinsic part of cuneiform tradition (e.g., the use of Sumerograms in Akkadian, Sumerian to write Semitic at Ebla, and to write Hittite).[202]

Von Dassow proposes that the "hybrid" forms reflect distinct a Canaanite orthographic tradition whereby Akkadian verbal stems were used logographically to represent Canaanite verbs (akin to the use of Akkadograms to stand in for Hittite verbs in Hittite texts). The WS affixes served as phonetic complements that guided the reader as to the proper underlying Canaanite form.[203] Overall, von Dassow approaches the "mixed" Canaano-Akkadian verbs as learned spellings.[204] According to the principles of her Akkadographic system, Canaanite scribes used 3ms Akkadian verbs (*iprus, iptaras,* and *iparras*) as codes for underlying Canaanite verbs. Canaanite affixes were then added to the Akkadographic verbs, to denote number, person, gender, and aspect/tense. For example, Akkadian prepositions take on extended meaning to express the semantic range of their Canaanite

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[201] Gershevitch "The Alloglottography of Old Persian," 138, 154, cf. 65.

[202] See G. Rubio, "Writing in Another Tongue: Alloglottography in the Ancient Near East," in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures*. Edited by Seth L. Sanders (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2006), 33-66, in particular 48-49.

[203] This approach is first articulated in von Dassow's review of Anson Rainey's grammar of Canaanite Akkadian ("What the Canaanite Cuneiformists Wrote," 196-217; it is more fully developed in "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 641-674).

[204] Von Dassow also examines the use of Aramaic in the Persian Empire as an example of how "writing could serve as an intermediary *between* languages," drawing a distinction between the language of *reading* and the language of *writing.* She cites Ezra 4:7 where Aramaic serves as a written buffer language between the Persian Empire and Judean officials: "And in the time of Artaxerxes, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their colleagues wrote to King Artaxerxes of Persia, a letter written in Aramaic and translated into Aramaic (כְּתָב הִגְּשְׁתְּוָן כְּתוּב אֲרַמִּית וּמְתֻרְגָּם אֲרַמִּית)" ("Peripheral Akkadian Dialects," 921. See also J. C. *Greenfield, "Of Scribes. Scripts* and Languages," in *Phoinikeia Grammata* Edited by in Cl. Baurain, C. Bonnet and V. Krings (Liege-Namur, 1991), 73-185; in particular 182).

counterparts, e.g., *ana* for *l* "to, for," and *ina* for *b* "in, from." Also, she understands Akkadian *u* to take on the role of the Canaanite particle *w* serving as a coordinator.

Von Dassow proposes that Levantine scribes added morphemes from their own NWS dialects to modified Akkadian verbal bases. Canaanite prefixes and suffixes were then added to these verbal roots to denote the appropriate tense. For example, the form *yi-ik-šu-du* consists of *yi* (3ms NWS verbal prefix)+ the Akkadian verb *kašādu* "to arrive" + *u* (the NWS present/future marker) rendering the translation "he will arrive."[205] Also, in the case of the 1cs pronominal prefix, the Canaanite 1cs is *aleph*, which is rendered *o-* in Canaanite cuneiform, and as such, 1cs verbs in the cuneiform texts from Canaan do not have their own verbal affix, but appear formally identical to the Akkadian 3ms (*iprus*). In von Dassow's system, *iṣ-ṣú-ru* ("I am guarding") is not an Akkadian word, or a mixed Canaano-Akkadian form, but rather is an Akkadographic spelling used to write a Canaanite verb. This form *iṣ-ṣú-ru* (or more properly *IṢ-ṢÚ-RU* following Assyriological conventions of how to transcribe Akkadograms) is made up of the following components: 1) *o-* marks the lack of affix stands for 1cs Canaanite prefix which is *aleph*; 2) the Akkadian 3ms preterite of *naṣāru, iṣṣur* (**inṣur*), stands in for an underlying verb in Canaanite with the meaning "to guard;" 3) the final –*u* marks this verb as a *yaqtulu*, or as a Canaanite imperfect. These three parts work together to code this verb as the 1cs Canaanite imperfect, "I am guarding." She proposes that use of o- to stand for the Canaanite 1cs prefix

[205] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Akkadian," 641-674.

was extended by analogy the to *e*- verbs, rendering forms such as *i-pu-šu* (*0-*i-pu-šu*) for the 1cs.[206] This opens the door to the possibility that past reconstructions of the WS verbal based on Canaano-Akkadian spellings (e.g., the reconstructed vocalic affixes) may need re-evaluation.[207] The following represents von Dassow's proposed transcription and reconstruction of what may have been the Canaanite substratum underlying the cuneiform texts.

Table 3 An Akkadographic Reading of EA 254: 6-15
A Letter from Laba'yu of Shechem to the Pharaoh; local clay)

Rainey's transcription	Canaanite in Cuneiform[208]	Von Dassow's Canaanite Reconstruction
01) *a-na šàr-ri* EN-*ia ù* ^{d}UTU-*ia* 02) *um-ma La-ab-a-yu* ÌR-*ka* 03) *ù ep-ru ša ka-bá-ši-ka* 04) *a-na* GÌR.MEŠ *šàr-ri* EN-*ia* 05) *ù* ^{d}UTU-*ia 7-šu 7-ta-a-an* 06) ⌜*am*⌝*-qut iš-te-me a-wa-te.*MEŠ 07) ⌜*ša*⌝ *šàr-ru iš-tap-ra-an-ni* 08) ⌜*ù*⌝ *mi-ia-ti a-na-ku ù* 09) ⌜*ya*⌝*-aḫ*!(ḪÉ)*-li-qú šàr-ru* KUR-*šu* 10) ⌜UGU⌝*-ia a-mur a-na-ku* ÌR *ki-ti*	*A-NA* LUGAL-*RI* EN-*IA Ù* ^{d}UTU-*IA* *UM-MA La-ab-a-ya* ÍR-*KA* *Ù IP-RU ŠA KA-BÁ-ŠI-KA* *A-NA* GÌR.MEŠ LUGAL-*RI* EN-*IA* *Ù*^{d}UTU-*IA 7-ŠU* 7-TA.ÀM *AM-QUT IŠ-TE-ME A-WA-TE.*MEŠ *ŠA* LUGAL-*RU IŠ-TAP-RA-AN-NI* *Ù mi-ia-ti A-NA-KU Ù* *ya-aḫ-li-qú* LUGAL-*RU* KUR.KI-*ŠU* UGU-*IA A-MUR A-NA-KU* ÍR *KI-TI* LUGAL-*RI Ù LA-A AR-NA-KU* *Ù LA-A ḪA-ṬÁ-KU Ù* *LA-A A-KAL-LI* GÚ.UN.ḪI.A-*IA*	*li malki ba'liya wa šamšiya* *taḥummu Lab'aya 'abdika* *wa 'aparu ḏi kabōsika* *li-raglê malki ba'liya* *wa šamšiya šab'a-da šab'a-da* *qâlti 'išma' dabarīma* *ḏūti malku yišlaḥannī* *wa miyāti 'anōki wa-* *yaḥliqu malku 'arṣahu* *'alêya r'â 'anōkī 'abdu 'amitti*(*?*) *malki wa lō paši'ti* *wa lō ḥata'ti* *wa lō kali'ti* (*?*)*-ya*

[206] Ibid., 662. To this Izre'el points out that this feature (use of *i*- vs. *e*- for the *primae vocalis* 1s verbs is also attested in infinitives, and therefore, this phenomenon is "better explained by phonology rather than by morphology, all the most so by a writing convention" (Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian," 198).

[207] This suggestion is quite interesting, especially in light of Mark Weeden's proposal that phonetic complements in Hittite texts were used more as markers of the grammatical function than an indication pronunciation (*Hittite Logograms and Hittite Scholarship* [Harrassowitz Verlag: Weisbaden, 2011] 368).

[208] See von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 665-666.

11) *šàr-ri ù la-a ar-na-ku* 12) *ù la-a ḫa-ṭá-ku ù* 13) *la-a a-kal-li* GÚ.UN.ḪI.A-*ia* 14) *ù la-a a-kal-li* 15) *e-ri-iš-ti*$_7$ LÚ *ra-bi-ṣí-ia*	*Ù LA-A A-KAL-LI* *E-RI-IŠ-TI*$_7$ ^{LÚ}*RA-BI-ṢÍ-IA*	*wa lō kali'ti* *'arišta sōkiniya*

The translation of this text is as follows:

> Von Dassow: (1-5) "To the king, my lord and my sun, message of Lab'ayu, your servant and the dust of your treading, at he feet of the king, my lord and my sun, seven times seven times I fall. (6-10) I have heard the words that the king sent me; and who am I, that I the king should loose his land on account of me? (10-15) See, I am a loyal servant of the king; I have not transgressed, and I have not sinned, and I have not withheld my tribute, and I have not withheld and request of my commissioner."

Von Dassow does not distinguish between the Akkadian introduction and the body of the letter, but transcribes them both Akkadographically. Her reconstruction of the underlying Canaanite text flattens the internal variation and ignores the range of scribal training and use of a wide range of strategies in this letter. For example, Canaanite scribes adhered to Mesopotamian chancellery practice when writing the introductions of such letters.[209] In the mind of the scribes, there was a demarcation between the "code" used in the epistolary formulae and that of the body of the letters. Even the most "Canaano" of Canaano-Akkadian letters overwhelmingly preserved the Akkadian case

[209] The scribes of Ugarit, too, appear to have modeled the introduction to their letters upon the Akkadian epistolary formula, even when writing in alphabetic cuneiform. For a side-by-side comparison see William M. Schniedewind and Joel H. Hunt. *A Primer on Ugaritic: Language, Culture, and Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Section 3.1.

system and the Akkadian verbal forms in the introductions of letters.[210] The protocol for the introductions of letters appears to have been dependent, not on the underlying language of the message, but rather upon the script and linguistic classification of the written message—that is, on the metalinguistic awareness of the scribes and the protocols of cuneiform diplomacy.[211] The speakers in these cases were most likely WS—their words were then translated and transcribed into cuneiform. The language of the oral and written messages was not necessarily one and the same. The introductions of these letters do not reflect what was spoken, but what the scribe deemed appropriate. The scribes were quite aware of the degree to which their own work product differed from that of their cuneiform counterparts in Egypt.[212] To varying degrees, they replicate these orthographies, yet for the most part retained Canaano-Akkadian conventions.

For example, they viewed the introductions as being Akkadian and being part of a set prestigious epistolary tradition. In the body of the letters, they used a mix of scribal and linguistic systems and mainly retained their own set of learned orthographies. Deviations were marked forms

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[210] Mynarova suggests that the retention for the case system may be due to the existence of a comparable case system in Canaanite languages. However, it does appear that in the case of the introductions of the letters, scribes memorized basic formula and various permutations thereof (*Language of Amarna,* 173).

[211] See Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 182.

[212] There is a demarcation too, between the Egyptian and Canaanite Amarna Letters that is not merely linguisitc. For example, *umma* is not used as a quotative particle in the Canaanite corpus but appears as a frozen form with the semantic meaning of "message." In the Egyptian Amarna Letters, it is used as a noun but also retains it original function as a quotative particle. For example, EA 1 has *um-ma* in the introductory formula as nominalized form but it also serves a quotative function in the body of the letters. In the following examples, the first use of *umma* follows what we see in the Canaanite Letters, whereas the second usage conforms to that in MB where it is used as a quotative particle: EA 1:02 *um-ma* [1]*Ni-ib-mu-a-re-a* "message of" vs. EA1: 11 *um-ma-a-mi a-nu-um-ma tu-ba-a* DUMU.MUNUS-*ia a-na* DAM-*ut-tika* (10–17) "Now I have heard the message which you sent to me concerning it,) saying: "You seek my daughter for your wife."

and carried with them a layer of meaning that was metapragmatic (see Chapter Eight). The use of code-switching in these letters (e.g., the shift to MB orthographies, and between various styles and registers in these letters) are rare, yet when they occur they impact the text in a way that was not merely linguistic. MB verbs, for example, were marked forms in the Canaanite Akkadian letters when they occur outside of the introductions. Such orthographies were used strategically to highlight key passages of the text.

The conventions of protocol and the content of the messages, too, affected the "language" of these letters. References to the Pharaoh and/or citations from letters from Egypt tend to display clusters of MB forms or orthographies that mimic MB (i.e., are in the style of the letters from Egypt). Sections that use colloquialisms and/or display WS rhetorical strategies drawn from oral sayings tend to use more Canaanite forms. If we limit Canaano-Akkadian to a series of Akkadographic spellings, the nuanced shifts between the various registers of written cuneiform are lost. But, if we view this as a scribal system used to communicate between scribes, such "shifts" in orthography take on new meaning. They emerge as a part of a complex set of signals intended to highlight important aspects of these letters and give guidance as to how they were to be read (for a more in depth discussion see Chapter Seven).

As mentioned, there is a tendency in the letters to use more standard Akkadian orthographies in the introductions, when referring to actions performed by the Pharaoh, or when citing letters from Egypt. The Pharaoh's direct speech was not derived from actual quoted material, but rather reflected a translation and/or approximation of a message from Egypt that was originally written in MB. The

Canaanite scribes at times code-switched to the Akkadian associated with Egypt when writing about Egypt. Canaanite scribes using a more standard orthography were not shifting from one spoken dialect of Akkadian to another, but modified their use of cuneiform to the higher register used by the cuneiform scribes working for Egypt.

For example, in EA 254, the famous "biting ant" Amarna Letter from Labya'u, the scribe shifts between MB and Canaano-Akkadian.[213] As Richard Hess points out, this letter is permeated with the influence of local oral culture. The scribe deviates noticeably from the protocols of the other Laba'yu letters to make point the ruler is frustrated with Egyptian policies. This letter illustrates the use of MB for the formulaic language in the introduction, the use of MB-like forms to refer to the Pharaoh, and the shift to Canaano-Akkadian to refer to Laba'yu and to highlight a dramatic part of the letter.

Table 4 MB and Canaano-Akkadian forms in EA 254: 1-10

EA 254: 1-10	Translation
01) *a-na šàr-ri* EN-*ia ù* ^{d}UTU-*ia* 02) *um-ma La-ab-a-yu* ÌR-*ka* 03) *ù ep-ru ša ka-bá-ši-ka* 04) *a-na* GÌR.MEŠ *šàr-ri* EN-*ia* 05) *ù* ^{d}UTU-*ia* 7-*šu* 7-*ta-a-an* 06) ⌜*am*⌝-*qut iš-te-me a-wa-te* MEŠ 07) ⌜*ša*⌝ *šàr-ru iš-tap-ra-an-ni* 08) ⌜*ù*⌝ *mi-ia-ti a-na-ku ù* 09) ⌜*ya*⌝-*aḫ*!(ḪÉ)-*li-qú šàr-ru* KUR-*šu* 10) ⌜UGU⌝-*ia*	"To the king, my lord and my sun god, thus says Lab'ayu, your servant and the dust on which you tread: At the feet of the king, my lord and my sun god, seven times (and) seven times I have fallen." "I have heard the words that the king has sent to me. And who am I that the king lose his land because of me"

[213] Richard Hess, "Smitten Ants Smite Back: Rhetorical Forms in the Amarna Correspondence from Shechem," In *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose*. Edited by J. C. Moor and W. G. E. Watson. AOAT 42 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 95-111.

The following is an analysis of the verbs in this passage: ˹*am*˺-*qut* is a 1cs MB preterite. *iš-te-me* is a 1cs Can. Akk. prefixed preterite modeled on the Akkadian perfect, or, an Akkadian perfect; this form retains the *št* orthography vs. *lt* in MB. In the phrase ˹*ša*˺ *šàr-ru iš-tap-ra-an-ni* the verb is a 3cs Akkadian perfect with a 1cs dative ending (a composite of the 1cs acc. ending and the ventive **am-ni*> -*anni*). This form also retains the *št*, perhaps due to the influence of the *št* in the preceding verb(?). The verb is final, whereas in lines 39 and 42 the forms *ša-pár šàr-rù* and *ša-pár* ˹*šàr*˺-*ru* reflect WS syntax (VSO) and make use of the suffix form *qatala* as a past tense. The verb ˹*ya*˺-*aḫ*!(ḪÉ)-*li-qú* is a 3ms Canaano-Akkadian *yaqtulu*, which marks the present/future "he will loose." The verb is either fronted or conforms to WS syntax.

The shifts in this passage beteen MB and Canaano-Akkadian do not really reflect a change in the dialect of Laba'yu's original message, but are best understood in terms of scribal convention and strategy. The first verb, ˹*am*˺-*qut,* is a continuation of the more formal register of MB used in the introduction of the letter in lines 1-6. The shift to the Canaano-Akkadian form *iš-te-me* in lines 6 marks the "real" start of this letter. This transition from MB to Canaano-Akkadian was not a reflection of what was actually spoken, as it is very unlikely that Laba'yu, a Canaanite highland chief, spoke Akkadian. Such code-switching was limited to the written layer of language and aimed at the scribe at the other end of this correspondence.

The orthography of the body of the letter was influenced by the content of the message. There is a transition from the formulaic MB introduction to Canaano-Akkadian in line 6b that is triggered by the discussion of a letter from Egypt. The reference to the Pharaoh in line 7 triggered the shift back to

a more MB style in the phrase ˹*ša*˺ *šàr-ru iš-tap-ra-an-ni*, which also uses MB syntax. This more formal register was perhaps also prompted by the proximity to the introduction. By the end of the letter, which is increasingly written in a more oral style of rhetoric, even the references to the Pharaoh make use of Canaano-Akkadian syntax and forms. This shift is seen in line 9 whereby the dramatic claim that Laba'yu is somehow responsible for the turmoil in the hill country prompts the scribe to use a Canaano-Akkadian verb to refer to the Pharaoh: lines 8-10 ˹*ù*˺ *mi-ia-ti a-na-ku ù/* ˹*ya*˺-*aḫ*!(ḪÉ)-*li-qú šàr-ru* KUR-*šu/* ˹UGU˺-*ia* "And who am I that the king would lose his land because of me…" The transitions between Canaano-Akkadian and MB orthographies contributed to the interpretation of these letters as they added layers of meaning that enriched the text.

In the Canaanite Amarna Letters, a transition typically occurs in the orthography after the initial introduction of the letter, whereby there is a shift from MB to Canaano-Akkadian. This is best demonstrated by the orthography of the 1cs verbal forms, which are written following the standard Akkadian orthography in the introductions (e.g., whereby *a-* marks the 1cs). The bodies of the messages, on the other hand, tend to employ Canaano-Akkadian orthographies (e.g., use of *i-* for the 1cs prefix). There is thus a stark contrast between these two sections of the letter, which are delineated by a radical change in the orthography of the verbs. This transition is quite apparent in line EA 254:6 where the 1cs prefix is *a-* in *am-qut* "I have fallen," yet *i-* is the verbal prefix in the form *iš-te-me* "I have heard." This suggests that the scribes learned two sets of spellings and these orthographies were context specific. MB orthographies were used consistently for memorized formulae in the introductions and in certain idiomatic expressions. Canaano-Akkadian was deemed appropriate for

the body of their messages. When Canaano-Akkadian is approached as an Akkadographic system, however, the focus shifts from what the scribe was writing to what was said. The inherent problem with this approach is that there is no way to reconstruct the underlying oral message. Our reconstructions of the Canaanite forms are conjecture at best. The written layer of language, on the other hand, elucidates a great deal about scribal conventions, education, ranges of proficiency, and, moreover, the degree to which scribes in the southern Levant shared a similar scribal culture.

It is unclear, moreover, why cuneiform scribes in the Levant would not simply have adopted the Akkadian used by Egypt and the rest of the periphery as the basis for this Akkadographic system. That is, they did not use MB Akkadian verbals forms (e.g., *altapar* "I wrote" or *ašteme* "I have heard") but retained Canaanized spellings (e.g., *ištapar* and *išteme*). If this was a logographic system, one would anticipate more mainstream orthographic conventions. Also, it would have been simpler to use the Akkadian preterite *iprus* or perfect *iptaras* affixed with phonetic complements to specify events in the past and the Akkadian *iparras* to denote ongoing events or those in the present/future, as opposed to using the Akkadian verbal bases according to the WS verbal system (e.g., use of *yaqtul, qatala,* and *yaqtulu* etc. to denote tense and modality).

There also remains the question of how much of this system was Akkadographic? According to von Dassow's rendering, there are only two Canaanite forms in this section of text: the interrogative *mi-ia-ti* "who" and the 3ms verb *ya-aḫ-li-qú* "he should loose." Are these syllabic spellings functioning as marked forms meant to signal to an Egyptian or Canaanite scribe in Egypt that these words were to be read emphatically? Or, was the scribe simply at a loss for how to write these words

Akkadographcially and thus experimented with a syllabic spelling? Again, it is not clear in her transcription why only these two forms are spelled out in Canaanite whereas common words such as the negation *LA-A* (for *lō* "no, not") are spelled *plene* using Akkadograms. These negations are being used according to WS usage, whereas Akkadian distinguishes between *lā* and *ūl*.

According to this interpretation, we have Canaanite scribes using Akkadograms according to the rules of WS syntax to write out a WS word that happens to be a cognate for a nearly identical WS word (i.e., *lā* in Akkadian standing in for *lō* [assuming that variants of this word were uniformly affected by the Canaanite shift]). Did the scribes really view *la-a* as a logographic spelling? Or, perhaps, this was just a more archaic spelling of the word "no, not" in Canaanite that was a frozen orthography? Or, did they perceived the language of their text to be Akkadian, but an Akkadian that was less prestigious than that employed by Egypt, which retained the distinction between *lā* and *ūl*? This whole matter of linguistic classification is not really a question of the original languages of articulation or that of delivery. Rather, the orthography is a reflection of the of the metalinguistic awareness of the scribes, that is, their ideological associations, awareness of the indexing quality of certain forms, and also the social and cultural role that Canaano-Akkadian played during this period (See Chapters 7-8)

When we return to EA 254, we must resolve the fact that this letter actually features both *lā* and *ūl*. The negation *lā* appears five times in a cluster (between lines 10-19) during Laba'yu's defense of his actions. In this passage *lā* is used to negate both predicative (e.g., *la-a ar-na-ku*) and indicative verbal forms (*la-a a-kal-li*).

Table 5 Parallelism in EA 254: 10-19

EA 254: 10-19	
10) ˹UGU˺-*ia a-mur a-na-ku* ÌR *ki-ti*	Look, I am the loyal servant of the king
11) *šàr-ri* ***ù la-a ar-na-ku***	and I am not a wrongdoer
12) ***ù la-a ḫa-ṭá-ku ù***	nor am I a criminal
13) ***la-a a-kal-li*** GÚ.UN.ḪI.A-*ia*	and I have not withheld my tribute
14) ***ù la-a a-kal-li***	nor have I withheld
15) *e-ri-iš-ti*$_7$ LÚ *ra-bi-ṣí-ia*	the request of my commissioner.
16) *a-nu-ma yi-ka-lu ka-ar-ṣí-ia*	Now I have been viciously maligned
17) *ḫa-ba-lu-ma ù* ***la-a***	and the king, my lord, is not
18) ***yu-sà-ni-qú*** *šàr-ru* EN-*ia*	even investigating
19) *ar-ni-ia*	whether I'm guilty!

Alhough there are no marked glosses in this text, there is what may be an unmarked gloss. Lines 11-12 present to verbal roots of a similar semantic meaning: 11-12 *šàr-ri ù la-a ar-na-ku*/*ù la-a ḫa-ṭá-ku.* Rainey translates these as statives ("and I am not a wrongdoer nor am I a criminal"), whereas von Dassow views these as having an active, past sense ("I have not transgressed, and I have not sinned"). Use of *arānu* as a stative is quite rare and is either an innovation on the part of the scribe, or at the very least a use that was limited to the Periphery.[214] It appears to have been a derived form the Akkadian noun *arnu,* which has the basic meaning of "fault," or "guilt." The pairing of *arnu* and *hiātu* also occurs in EA 253: 16-17 ([*l*]*a*[-*a*] ˹*ar*˺-˹*na*˺-˹*ku*˺/˹*ù*˺ ˹*la*˺-˹*a*˺ ˹*ḫa*˺-*ṭá-ku*) *it-ta-na-la-ku.*

The use of *lā* in the parallel constructions is quite rhythmic and suggests that this portion of the letter may have been an approximation of an oral speech. Lines 11-14 in particular make use of this parallelism. The pair ***ù la-a ar-na-ku/ ù la-a ḫa-ṭá-ku***, whereby *arnu* "wrongdoing" and *ḫīṭu* "crime, sin"

[214] The *CAD* (*arnu* 1a: 4, 296) lists this as the sole attestation of this root used as a stative. Wolfram von Soden also lists this as *arānu*, II, derived from *arnu* as being unique to Amarna (AHw, *arānu*, pp. 65). The two examples that he lists are *ar-na-ku* here and EA 253:16 and *ar-nu* in EA 140:22-23: [1]*A-zi-ru/* [*i-n*]*a ur-ru-bi-šu/* [*a-na*] *mu-ḫi-ka ar-nu/* [*a-na mu-ḫi-n*]*u*? "Furthermore, look, the crime which Aziru committed [wh]en he entered in to you. It was a crime [against] us."

(lines 11-12) and ***ù la-a a-kal-li/ ù la-a a-kal-li*** (lines 13-14) does appear to have been inspired by the scribe's desire to create a compelling text. The sound play would have worked best when this letter was aloud by the cuneiform scribe in Canaano-Akkadian, however, the repetition of the negation and same basic words (wrongdoing/ crime and not withheld/not withheld) would have carried over into a translation (as it does into the English translation above). Overall, such parallelism in sound and meaning suggests that the scribe was attempting to create a text that would be compelling when it was read in Akkadian but also when it was translated.

In a similar vein, the portion of the letter that features predominantly Akkadian forms repeats the accusations addressed to Laba'yu, as though citing a previous letter from Egypt. The "Akkadian" negation *ūl* occurs in the second portion of this letter in Laba'yu's defense, which appears to mimic the language of Egypt:

> EA 254:30-35: *ša-ni-tam/ a-na* ^{I}DUMU.MU-*ia ša-pár šàr-ru/* ***ú-ul i***$_{15}$***-de*** *i-nu-ma/* ^{I}DUMU.MU-*ia it-ti/* LÚ.MEŠ SA.GAZ "Furthermore, concerning my son the king has written. I did not know that my son has been associating with the *ʿApiru*, but behold, have I not turned him over to Addaya?"

The code-switch to *ūl* appears to be a citation of the Pharaoh's letter to Laba'yu (e.g., EA 1:29 *ú-ul i-de*$_4$-*ši*). If we choose to read it Akkadographically, then we are left with why the scribe suddenly chose to code-switch from using *LĀ* to *ŪL* (both Akkadographic forms in this theory) to represent Canaanite *lō*.[215]

[215] *Ú-UL* appears as an Akkadographic spelling in EA 32 the Hurrian Letter: (lines 4-6) [*nu*(?)]^{I}*Kal-ba-ya-an Ú-UL ḫa-a-mi* /INIM-*ya-at me-mi-iš-ta A-NA ṬUP-PÍ-ma-at-ša-an* /*Ú-UL ki-it-ta-at* "(I do not trust Kalbaya. He said it, but it does not figure on the tablet."

The conclusion of this letter contains two expressions of loyalty most likely built off of local idioms. We have a return of the form *lā*, used rhetorically in the expression: *ki-i*$_{15}$ *la-a ep-pu-šu ši-pí-ir-ti šàr-ri* "how could I not carry out the king's instruction?" This line is the dramatic conclusion to this letter:

> Lines 38-46 *ša-ni-tam ki-i*$_{15}$ *šum-m*[*a*]/) *a-na* DAM-*ia ša-pár šàr-rù*/ *ki-i*$_{15}$ *a-kal-lu-ši ki-i*$_{15}$/ *šum-ma a-na ia-ši*/ *ša-pár* ⌜*šàr*⌝*-ru*/ *šu-ku-*⌜*un*⌝ GÍR ZABAR/ *i-na lìb-bi-ka ù*/ BA.ÚŠ *ki-i*$_{15}$ *la-a*/ *ep-pu-šu ši-pí-ir-ti šàr-ri* "In addition, if the king had written for my wife, how could I withhold her? Because if the king had written to me, "Stick a bronze dagger into your heart and die!" how could I not carry out the king's instruction?"

The shifts in orthography here and in other Canaanite letters appear to have been deliberately crafted to convey an ideological point, all the while, expressing the requisite deference to Egypt. However, if we read this whole letter Akkadographically, there is a leveling of the text. The code-switching between MB and Canaano-Akkadian, which is a shift between higher and lower register of Akkadian, becomes negligible when this letter is reduced to Akkadographic spellings.

Ultimately, there is too little evidence of the Canaanite languages from this early stage to do more than speculate about the "Canaanite" lexemes underlying these texts. In practical terms, her system requires at least three to four layers of linguistics specialization on the part of the scribes: Canaanite (the spoken language of the message); "Canaanite in cuneiform," (i.e., the Akkadographic writing of Canaanite) that would be intelligible to scribes working at Tel el-Amarna, and to scribes at other Canaanite courts. This written message was then translated in the following ways: to either (a) a local dialect of Canaanite (if the recipient was a NWS speaker), or (b) Egyptian, as Egypt was the the final destination of this corpus. Thus, to this complex system we must then add another layer, the

Egyptian language, and Egyptian scribes, who utilized Middle Babylonian in such diplomatic exchanges. Von Dassow's system thus calls for Canaanite scribes able to transmit the Akkadographic texts into Canaanite and then into Egyptian, or, similarly, Egyptian scribes able to navigate through this complex linguistic and graphic web to produce an intelligible Egyptian translation of a Canaanite text that was written in Akkadograms.

Von Dassow's work also offers quite a different view of the relationship between Egypt and local Levantine polities: "On the theory that Canaano-Akkadian was not a hybrid language but the Akkadographic writing of Canaanite, it emerges that we have numerous extant tablets written in Canaanite, for the scribes of Canaaan wrote their own language in cuneiform, rather than being entirely in the thrall of Mesopotamian scribes traditions. More significantly, perhaps, Canaanite emerges as the spoken and written lingua franca of part of Egypt's empire in the Levant." [216] Again, the previous statement is an interesting proposal, yet von Dassow does not really unpack it, nor provide model for how this came about, moreover, for Egypt's role in this process. If indeed, Canaanite was the *lingua franca* of the Egyptian empire in the east, there remains the questions of how such a system arose, and moreover, how this local, Canaanite writing system would have fit into the schema of Egyptian administrative control in this region

3. Canaano-"Akkadian?"

As Izre'el proposes in his most recent work on Canaano-Akkadian, there does seem to be

[216] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 674.

evidence that Canaano-Akkadian was both written and, to some degree, articulated in scribal settings. The scribe's education was rooted in Akkadian. Also, as he notes, they could not have learned this scribal system without pronouncing the forms to some degree. For example, EA 245 and 320 feature the *n*C>CC assimilation whereby the energic *nun* (-[*n*]*na*) assimilates to the following pronominal suffix.[217] This is the type of orthography expected of a scribal setting where scribes actual pronounced the text. His most recent assessment of Canaano-Akkadian has presented a much more conservative estimate of the degree to which this language was spoken. Also, the evidence that he presents about how the scribes themselves viewed Canaano-Akkadian as a cuneiform language and as Akkadian is compelling.

His claim that it was a "mixed language," however, does not take into consideration that Canaano-Akkadian was limited to a written medium of communication that served more of a symbolic and ceremonial function. Egyptians working in the southern Levant by this point were proficient in Canaanite dialects (as is evident in Papyrus Anastasi I). By the same token, Canaanite officials, especially those frequently traveling to Tell el-'Amarna, or that worked at the Egyptian bases

[217] In the following examples, Izre'el assumes the dropping of the final –*a* vowel due to the additional endings, whereby the *nun* then assimilated to the following consonant. One examples is EA 320:20 (Yidia; Ashkelon; clay not examined)* ˹*iš*˺-*te*$_9$-*mu-uš-šu* "I am heeding it" from **ištemun+šu>una+ šu> -unšu>ušššu*). There are two examples in EA 245 (Biridiya; Megiddo; clay from Megiddo): EA 245: 5 *ni-ik-šu-du-um-mi* "we overtake him," from **nikšudun+mi* and EA 245: 7 *nu-ub-ba-lu-uš-šu* "we must bring him" from *nubbalun+šu*. The above examples, two of which are from the same letter, are insufficient evidence to make conclusive claims about the whole corpus. Such forms do suggest, however, that some scribes had more of a mastery of Akkadian and rules of Akkadian phonology and orthography than others. The assimilation of **nm>mm* in EA 245 is quite interesting as it suggests that the scribe did not approach particles such as quotative –*mi* merely graphically as metalinguistic markers but actually articulated them. This does not seem to be an assimilation derived from pronouncing this form in Akkadian, rather it reflects the influence of a local dialect of WS.

in the Levant, would have mastered sufficient spoken Egyptian for face-to face communication. Canaano-Akkadian does not fit the profile of a contact language, as it had no community of speakers. It was an integral part of court life, but served only as a written method of communication, and was primarily a diplomatic scribal code.

4. The Language of the Glosses

The glosses in the Canaanite Letters will be discussed more fully in Chapter Eight. For now it is sufficient to point out that Izre'el's claim that the glosses mark Canaanite words as foreign "to the linguistic system that they were writing in" is compelling. The scribes appear to have an understanding of the norms of Akkadian, and the norms of Canaano-Akkadian, and they tend to treat syllabic Canaanite words as insertions and/or marked forms into an Akkadian text. In some cases, scribes use Akkadian phonetic complements on Sumerograms, which suggests that they were understood to code MB and Canaano-Akkadian—not Canaanite. In some cases, Sumerograms are used to gloss Canaanite words, which distinguishes Canaanite words in the text as marked forms.[218]

For example, in EA 245, which is the Megiddo letter that features the *nun* assimilation discussed above, the scribe glosses Sumerograms, Akkadian words, and Canaano-Akkadian forms with Canaanite and Canaano-Akkadian words. This also raises the question of why the scribe felt it was necessary to use these logograms if indeed they were ambiguous and needed to be glossed by WS words: 6: *ù* TIL.LA-*nu-um-ma* \ *ḫa-ia-ma* "we must bring him alive" (Sum.>Can.); 8: *tu-sà-aḫ-mì* \ *tu-ra*

[218] For a discussion see Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 171-218.

“my mare was shot” (Can. Akk [Gp of *nasāḫu*]>Can.Akk. [GP of *warû*)); 10: EGIR-*šu* \ *aḫ-ru-un-ú* “after that” (Sum. +Akk. 3ms suffix>Can.); 14 *da-ku-šu* \ *ma-aḫ-ṣú-ú* “they had smitten him” (Akk.>Can.); 28: GIŠ.MÁ \ *a-na-*⌜*yi*⌝ “ship” (Sum.>Can.); 35: ŠU-*ti-šu* \ *ba-di-ú* “in his hand” (Sum.+Akk. phonetic complement and suffix> Can.); 38: SIG-*ia* \ *yi-qí-ìl-li-ni* “that he belittles me” (Sum. + Akk. suffix> Can. [H-causative of *qll/qalālu*]); 39: DUGUD \ *yu-ka-bi-id* “he honors” (Sum.>Can.). In the case of the above glosses there are a range of uses. The Sumerograms that stand in for nominal forms are treated as though Akkadian words, as they are glossed with Akkadian phonetic complements. Both Akkadian and Canaano-Akkadian verbs here are both glossed with more “Canaanite” forms. For example, both of the verbs in line 8 are G passives, which is a Canaanite verbal stem: 8: *tu-sà-aḫ-mì* \ *tu-ra*. The numerous glosses in this letter is a bit odd. The Akkadian lexemes and logogram are not rare forms or particularly complex; they should have been easily understood by the recipient scribe(s). This suggests that there was perhaps an ideological element to the writing of this letter, or that the scribe’s hubris was at play. For example, EGIR-*šu* \ *aḫ-ru-un-ú*, the form EGIR is not ambiguous at all but is quite standard in Peripheral Akkadian. Also, the verb *dâku* appears frequently both as an Akkadian word 14 *da-ku-šu* \ *ma-aḫ-ṣú-ú*; GIŠ.MÁ is quite standard for ship; ŠU-*ti-šu* is clearly standing in for *qātī-šu*—it is marked with a phonetic complement and a suffix. The Canaano-Akkadian>WS glosses attest to the metalinguistic awareness of the scribes, and overall, suggest that the language of their scribal system was understood to be Akkadian and that Canaanite lexemes embedded in the text were seen as intrusions. However, as will be discussed, the glosses were not limited to lexical clarification, but were used to structure the text and served as a type of metapragmatic commentary as well (see

Chapter 8).[219] The scribes enhanced their letters using a mix of written languages (Akkadian, WS and Egyptian) and orthographies.

Von Dassow takes quite the opposite view of Izre'el and understands the Canaanite glosses as a signal to the reader(s) that the language of reading was Canaanite and not Akkadian. She writes,

> (T)he reason for writing such glosses would have been to assist the reader, by means of a Canaanite translation, in the interpretation of the cuneiform text. That is, these glosses are evidence that the reader was expected to understand the text in Canaanite!...Surely the Jerusalem scribes (for example) did not write Canaanite *la-qa-ḫu*, "they took," *la-qí-ḫu*, "they have taken," among the many other Canaanite words, in this letters to Egypt, without assuming his Egyptian reader would understand them.[220]

She cites the following as examples as evidence that the underlying language was Canaanite: EA 364:8 (Byblos) SAḪAR \ *a-pa-ru* "dust;" EA 228:18-19 (Hazor) [*ù*] *li-iḫ-šu-uš-*˹*mi*˺)/ ˹\˺ *ya-az-ku-ur-mi* "let him

[219] For example, in EA 245, which is the Megiddo letter that features the *nun* assimilation discussed above, the scribe glosses Sumerograms, Akkadian words, and Canaano-Akkadian forms with Canaanite and Canaano-Akkadian words. This also raises the question of why the scribe felt it was necessary to use these logograms if indeed they were ambiguous and needed to be glossed by WS words: 6: *ù* TIL.LA-*nu-um-ma* \ *ḫa-ia-ma* "we must bring him alive" (Sum.>Can.); 8: *tu-sà-aḫ-mì* \ *tu-ra* "my mare was shot" (Can. Akk [Gp of *nasāḫu*]>Can.Akk. [GP of *warû*)); 10: EGIR-*šu* \ *aḫ-ru-un-ú* "after that" (Sum. +Akk. 3ms suffix>Can.); 14 *da-ku-šu* \ *ma-aḫ-ṣú-ú* "they had smitten him" (Akk.>Can.); 28: GIŠ.MÁ \ *a-na-*˹*yi*˺ "ship" (Sum.>Can.); 35: ŠU-*ti-šu* \ *ba-di-ú* "in his hand" (Sum.+Akk. phonetic complement and suffix> Can.); 38: SIG-*ia* \ *yi-qí-ìl-li-ni* "that he belittles me" (Sum. + Akk. suffix> Can. [H-causative of *qll/qalālu*]); 39: DUGUD \ *yu-ka-bi-id* "he honors" (Sum.>Can.). In the case of the above glosses there are a range of uses. The Sumerograms that stand in for nominal forms are treated as though Akkadian words, as they are glossed with Akkadian phonetic complements. Both Akkadian and Canaano-Akkadian verbs here are both glossed with more "Canaanite" forms. For example, both of the verbs in line 8 are G passives, which is a Canaanite verbal stem: 8: *tu-sà-aḫ-mì* \ *tu-ra*. The numerous glosses in this letter is a bit odd. The Akkadian lexemes and logogram are not rare forms or particularly complex; they should have been easily understood by the recipient scribe(s). This suggests that there was perhaps an ideological element to the writing of this letter, or that the scribe's hubris was at play. For example, EGIR-*šu* \ *aḫ-ru-un-ú*, the form EGIR is not ambiguous at all but is quite standard in Peripheral Akkadian. Also, the verb *dâku* appears frequently both as an Akkadian word 14 *da-ku-šu* \ *ma-aḫ-ṣú-ú*; GIŠ.MÁ is quite standard for ship; ŠU-*ti-šu* is clearly standing in for *qātī-šu*—it is marked with a phonetic complement and a suffix.

[220] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 655.

remember."[221] In the first example, a Sumerogram is glossed with what appears to be a Canaanite form. However, the term for "dust" is a cognate in Akkadian and Canaanite; moreover, this logogram was a common one and would not have necessitated a gloss serving as a lexical clarifier. Rather, the gloss and Canaano-Akkadian spelling appears to have served an emphatic function in this letter (see Chapter 8: II.B).[222] Also, while it is certainly valid to assume that the Egyptian officials working with Levantine polities knew Canaanite, the existence of these limited Canaanisims in letters from Egypt does not really support the theory that Canaanite was the *lingua franca* of Egypt's eastern empire. The glosses do not appear to only be for the reader, which should have known these basic logographic forms, or as personal notes for the scribes themselves—any scribe writing for the palace should have been able to retain the gist of these messages—they are for the most part quite simple. Rather, the shifts in code and the use of glosses appear to be metapragmatic and, at times, stylistic. The contexts in which they appear suggest that they were meant to capture an element of the original oral articulation of this message and to serve as a guide for how these messages were to be performed.

To clarify the scribes' choice of orthography, von Dassow cites the use of *inūma* in the function of *kī,* which is the WS subordinating conjunction for several purposes that are atypical of standard Akkadian usage. As she writes, it was to introduce "substantive ('that…') clause," and for

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[221] Ibid., 654-655.

[222] The gloss in the introduction of EA 63 (line 6: 7 *ù* 7 *ma-aq-ta-*˹*ti*˺ ˹*a*˺-˹*na*˺ ˹GÌR˺.MEŠ ˹*ša*˺ ˹I˺˹LUGAL˺ ˹EN˺-˹*ia*˺˹˺\˺ ˹*am*˺-˹*qú*˺-*ut*) appears to serve a purpose that is not merely linguistic, but is metapragmatic. The use of a Canaano-Akkadian verb in the introduction of a letter is unusual, as the scribes adhere to formulaic MB forms in the introductions. The scribe remedied the breech in protocol by following up the Canaano-Akkadian suffixed form *ma-aq-ta-*˹*ti*˺ with the standard Akkadian 1cs preterite used in the introduction (˹*am*˺-˹*qú*˺-*ut*), which is joined by means of a *Glossenkeil.*

"temporal, causal, and conditional clauses."[223] She views views *INŪMA* to have been used as an Akkadogram for WS *kī* rather than a calque for this particle, as Canaanite scribes were influenced by their cuneiform training and thus did not used their own WS particle *kī* for this function. The usage of *inūma* as a standing for WS *kī* is well established. The question here is really how the scribes themselves viewed this form. Was *INŪMA* really an Akkadographic spelling for WS *kī* ? This interpretation raises the question of scribal training and why *kīma* or Akkadian *kī* was used for this purpose. In other words, why did not Canaanite scribes just use Akkadian *kī* to write their own particle *kī*?

The choice of MB versus a more Canaanized form appears to be related to the rhetorical style of the letters. For example, EA 254 features both *inūma* and *kī*, though in quite different contexts. This section of the letter makes use of dramatic rhetoric aimed at persuading the Pharaoh of Laba'yu's loyalty:

> Lines 38-46 *ša-ni-tam ki-i*$_{15}$ *šum-m*[*a*]/*a-na* DAM-*ia ša-pár šàr-rù/ ki-i*15 *a-kal-lu-ši ki-i*$_{15}$/ *šum-ma a-na ia-ši/ ša-pár* ˹*šàr*˺*-ru/ šu-ku-*˹*un*˺ GÍR ZABAR/ *i-na lìb-bi-ka ù/* BA.ÚŠ *ki-i*$_{15}$ *la-a/ ep-pu-šu ši-pí-ir-ti šàr-ri* "In addition, if the king had written for my wife, how could I withhold her? Because if the king had written to me, "Stick a bronze dagger into your heart and die!" how could I not carry out the king's instruction?"

In this dramatic passage the scribe uses *ki-i*$_{15}$ to set up the clause. In this case, should we see *KI-I*$_{15}$ as an Akkadographic spelling that also stood in for WS *kī*, or rather view the form *ki-i*$_{15}$ as a stylistic shift used to frame a WS expression? It is indeed interesting that this form occurs in a section that is the

[223] Von Dassow, "What the Canaanite Cuneiformists Wrote," 202; "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 644. See also Rainey, *CAT* II, 74-94.

most influenced by WS oral culture. The use of *šumma* here is complemented by *kī* which serve together as an "and if…then" clause. In line 32 *inūma* is used with the meaning "that," analogous to the function of *kī* in WS, though in a very "Akkadian" sentence that makes reference to a letter from the Pharaoh:

> 30-35 *ša-ni-tam/ a-na* [I]DUMU.MU-*ia ša-pár šàr-ru* /*ú-ul* i_{15}-*de i-nu-ma/* [I]DUMU.MU-*ia it-ti/* LÚ.MEŠ SA.GAZ/ *it-ta-na-la-ku* "Furthermore, concerning my son the king has written. I did not know that my son has been associating with the *ʿApiru*."

This sentence makes use of the GTN stem of the verb *alāku*, a verbal root is shared in Akkadian and in WS (**hlk*). This stem, however, is unique to Akkadian. In this letter, it functions as an intensifier and imprints an iterative sense on the verb. This sense is augmented by the WS suffix –*u*, which denoted an ongoing sense (the WS *yaqtulu*, hence Rainey's translation "been associating"). The verb in the second part of this clause is verb final, which conforms to Akkadian syntax (SOV). The following line shifts to a more Akkadian syntax (*i-nu-ma/* [I]DUMU.MU-*ia it-ti/* LÚ.MEŠ SA.GAZ/ *it-ta-na-la-ku* [Subject-Dative Prepositional Phrase-Verb]). This sentence may be a direct quote or a paraphrase of what was written in the original letter from Egypt, which would have been written in MB. The phrase in the preceding line, on the other hand, is structured according to WS syntax and is verb final (*ša-ni-tam/ a-na* IDUMU.MU-*ia ša-pár šàr-ru* [Indirect Object-Verb-Subject]). This sentence is part of the Canaano-Akkadian structure of the message whereas the next line appears to be influenced by the MB of the letter from the Pharaoh. Again, the section of the letter that appears the most influenced by WS style rhetorical strategies is the one that uses the form *kī* rather than *inūma*.

The above examples demonstrate that the scribes writing these texts navigated between their own Canaano-Akkadian system, a more standard Akkadian, and likewise their own WS dialects to create compelling letters and to infuse the dry prose of diplomacy with nuance and depth. The content of the letters, too, informed their rhetorical strategies and use of orthography. In other words, Canaano-Akkadian was not an either/or system, but comprised of a mix of orthographies and linguistic usages to convey meaning and bridge the cultural and linguistic gap between Egypt and the WS world. In order to do this, scribes used whatever scribal tools were in their cuneiform arsenals. The main goal was not to reproduce Akkadian or Canaanite for that matter, but to present a compelling message to the Egyptian court that would be understood and would elicit a favorable response.

Von Dassow's theory presents a creative solution to the age-old problem of Canaano-Akkadian, however in the end, it raises more questions than it resolves. She attributes the variation to a lack of standardization:

> Every Canaanite scribes differed from every other in regard to his usage and understanding of cuneiform writing, and of the languages underlying what he had learned to write, as is evident from studies of distinct corpora writing the Canaanite Amarna letters (such as the letters form Byblos, Tyre, and Jerusalem…Therefore my hypothesis that these scribes used cuneiform Akkadographically, and my outline of how they wrote Canaanite in cuneiform, would surely not be found universally applicable throughout all the various text groups. Not all scribes need have learned to write according to the same curriculum, up to the same level of proficiency, and the evidence indicates that they did not.[224]

[224] Ibid., 666.

She replaces the theory of a variety of dialects of learned Akkadian with a diversity of Akkadograpahic spellings used to represent diverse Canaanite dialects. There remains, however, the problem that writing, unlike spoken languages, necessitates a degree of training and agreed upon norms for it to be successful. Von Dassow's theory necessitates specialists in each and every written variety of this system, which would have needlessly complicated communication between Egypt and also Canaanite polities, who no doubt spoke different dialects of Canaanite.

This is too complicated a system when applied to the entirety of the LBA Canaanite cuneiform corpus, particularly in light of the fact that the audiences of these letters were Egyptians—not Canaanites. Although her system attempts to avoid the pitfalls of equating writing with spoken language. We are still are left groping in the dark for unknown Canaanite dialect(s) underlying the Cananaite Amarna Letters, and moreover, for the practical function that this scribal system could have had within Egypt's eastern territories. There is only evidence for a learned and developing scribal system. Also, it is important to remember that Canaano-Akkadian was not only used by Canaanites, but appear in letters from Alashia, Amurru and Egypt (See Chapter 6-7). A number of letters were produced at Egyptian centers for Canaanite rulers, presumably under the auspicious of Egyptian officials. As it is impossible to reconstruct what was actually articulated in such exchanges, such variation is best described as a reflection of the differences in scribal training in the Periphery.[225]

[225] J-P. Vita comes to the conclusion that the "dialects" in the Canaanite Letters are a bit more complex. For example in some cases the language is perhaps best assessed as a reflection of the scribes' language production, and not the rulers that they are writing for. Whereas in more complex circumstances, as in the case of EA 136-138 which were written for Rib-Adda of Byblos at Beirut, the language of the letter was that of the Beirut court ("Scribes and Dialects, 868).

Scribal practices evident in these letters shed light upon scribal education and the power structures sponsoring their training within a circumscribed geo-political context.

The classification of Canaano-Akkadian is thus greatly impacted by markedly different approaches to language, writing, and scripts during this period. Approaching this corpus from the vantage point of scribalism and writing shifts the focus to the scribe and the sociolinguistic function of this scribal system in the context of Canaano-Egyptian relations. This presents a dramatically different understanding of the linguistic map of the Levant than previous studies, which have followed the assumption that text=language (and at times=ethnicity). Izre'el attributes the variation to variation in scribal training and to differing degrees of influence of the substrate WS languages of the scribes. In his analyses of these forms he attributes this aviation to the variation in speech, in particular, to the dialects in Canaan mixing with Akkadian.[226] Von Dassow's approach accounts of the gap between writing and speech (albeit in the framework of her Akkadographic system). She attributes the varation to "a variety of Canaano-Akkadian 'ideolects,' but through the mask of those spelling conventions the underlying language can be read as Canaanite."[227] However, her proposed system ultimately ties the variation back to spoken language.

The terminology used in scholarship to describe Canaano-Akkadian also needs review, as it is derived from the study of spoken languages and is not necessarily suited for a writing system. Akkadian was certainly spoken in some parts of the Periphery, but the main function of Akkadian in

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[226] See Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 176.

[227] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 661.

the WS speaking world was relegated primarily to the domains of written communication, law, and administration. The term *lingua franca* also does not do justice to the prestige and pervasiveness of Mesopotamian scribal traditions during this period. This designation does not really capture the fact that this was a learned scribal system first and foremost. Use of Akkadian as a spoken language between such polities was secondary.

Also, Von Dassow and Izre'el's models for how Canaano-Akkadian functioned in this period do not align with the sociolinguistic backdrop of the period. It is not clear how this scribal system would have been sustained in Egypt's eastern empire. The scribal setting that Izre'el proposes is hardly that of a living spontaneous language. Von Dassow's system, in spite of her stance to the contrary, entails some degree of pronunciation on the part of scribes memorizing the lexical equivalencies between Canaanite and their Akkadographic orthographies. Oddly enough, in practice their two theories presuppose the same restricted scribal environment as the foci of these writing systems. The real issue here is not really whether or not scribes mumbled these forms, but whether or not the accumulation of "mixed" forms constitutes language, or is more of an academic system that was confined to a limited professional context. As Sanders points out, by seeking to avoid the language question, Dassow's theory calls for much speculation about the native language underlying Canaano-Akkadian.[228] In a sense, we are back at square one—attempting to reconstruct a linguistic form and an associated speech community for which we have little evidence.

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[228] As Sanders writes, von Dassow's reconstruction "does not necessarily show anything more than a scholar skilled in comparative Semitics can fill in the texts' universally acknowledged West Semitic syntax with a reconstructed West Semitic vocabulary and morphology" (*The Invention of Hebrew*, 203, n. 17).

D. The Akkadian of Ugarit—A Parallel for Understanding Canaano-Akkadian

The Akkadian of Ugarit is generally considered to be "good" Peripheral Akkadian (unlike the Akkadian of its Canaanite neighbors). It presents a fruitful parallel for understanding the relationship between language and writing during this period, namely, the degree to which the presence of written Akkadian texts in the Periphery is a reflection of a community of Akkadian speakers. The writing system is clearly Akkadian. Some economic texts make use of alloglottography, but for the most part the majority of syllabic cuneiform texts at this site that feature Akkadian lexemes and grammar are intended to be read in Akkadian. Moreover, it appears that the scribes themselves considered the language of these texts to be Akkadian. It is likely that they were translated into the native language of the audience when being read aloud.[229] There was no real need for purely Akkadographic system at Ugarit to write WS. The alphabetic cuneiform script was used specifically for this purpose for local administration, personal letters, and local literary and religious traditions, by the 13th century B.C.E. (and most likely had antecedents into the 14th century).

This corpus demonstrates the complexity of evaluating Peripheral Akkadian, as even the Akkadian of Ugarit prompts different responses regarding the question of language. For example, Huehnergard cites analogical innovations that may be the influence of WS; others are the result of

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[229] Carol Roche, "Classification de L'Utilisation du Cunéiforme Mésopotamien dans les Texts Ougaritiques," *Proceedings of the 51st Rencontre Assyriologique International Held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago July 18-22, 2005*. Edited by Robert D. Biggs, Jennie Myers, and Martha T. Roth (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005), 155-170.

Assyrian influence.[230] Overall, Huehnergard's analysis blurs the line between phonology (as though this was a spoken dialect) and orthography (i.e., learned spellings).[231] Yet in practice, he ultimately approaches the Akkadian of Ugarit as a dialect among the other dialects of Peripheral Akkadian, one influenced by the local WS language.[232]

Van Soldt is quite direct in his skepticism regarding the degree to which the Akkadian at Ugarit reflects a spoken stratum of language. Although cuneiform scribes at Ugarit were quite competent in MB, he cautions against equating their scribal skill in Akkadian with speech: "We cannot really speak of the Akkadian <<dialect>> of Ugarit, as the term dialect generally refers to the

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[230] Some examples include analogical innovations in some III-weak verbs, as well as the m. pl. nominal ending –*ūt*, also, use of of *e* vs. *i* in I-'aleph verbs and –C*e* as a genitive ending. See John Huehnergard, *The Akkadian of Ugarit. Harvard Semitic Studies* 34 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 54).

[231] Huehnergard, *The Akkadian of Ugarit,* 20; 54.

[232] Huehnergard, for example, does not directly broach this matter in his comprehensive study of the Akkadian of Ugarit. He only addresses it in a roundabout manner in a footnote. As he writes, "A fundamental issue that it not considered in any explicit detail in this study, because it concerns not just Ugarit Akk. but all varieties of Akk. attested outside of Mesopotamia, is whether such varieties are "real" languages, that is, whether they are in fact spoken dialects with their own internal linguistic rules and processes, rather than merely bad Akkadian, as is sometimes maintained. To my mind there is growing evidence that the former is the true situation, and I have implicitly assumed it to be true" (*The Akkadian of Ugarit* 21 n.37). See also Ibid., *The Akkadian of Ugarit. Harvard Semitic Studies* 34 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 55-56; 146-147. Izre'el is openly critical of the fact that this issue of language is not addressed more explicitly in Huehnergard's work. He writes, "I cannot understand why this important and basic concept, which underlies and influences the entire study, is offered in a footnote [see above quote]…The assumption that a linguistic variety is characterized by its own internal rules and processes, needs to be stated vigorously again and again in the study of ancient language which were not native to the scribes whose documents have been preserved." Izre'el's review of Huehnergard expresses his views about the need to recreate the linguistic "map" of the periphery during this period, one that is more intentional about treating the various "lects" of Akkadian as a reflection of speech. He calls for an approach that applies the methods of dialect geography to the corpus of cuneiform texts from this period. This view is consistent in his other writings on this period, as he treats the Akkadian in the periphery as a spoken language with diverse regional and social manifestations. He uses sociolinguistic parallels, particularly from contact language contexts, as a model for how these dialects (sublects and idiolects) of Akkadian developed outside of Mesopotamia (S. Izre'el, "John Huehnergard, *The Akkadian of Ugarit. Harvard Semitic Studies* 34, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989," in *BiOr* XLIX ½ [1992], 168-180, focus on 179).

opposite, at least in modern times: a spoken substandard variety of a standard language, usually without a writing tradition of its own."[233] He treats the scribal errors and departures from MB as the product of "interference," i.e., influence from surrounding scribal traditions, rather than that of neighboring dialects of Akkadian. He is quite critical of treatments of "the so-called Akkadian dialect of Ugarit as if it were a spoken language."[234] For example, he attributes the orthography of the earlier Akkadian texts at Ugarit (from the reigns of Niqmadddu II, Arḫalba, and Niqmepaʿ) to the domain of scribal education, and argues that the scribes at Ugarit were influenced by the syllabary used by Mittanni scribes. In a similar vein, he does not associate the orthographic shift in the Akkadian at Ugarit during the reign of ʿAmmiṯtamru II with a spoken or dialectal change.[235] Overall, van Soldt cautions that the orthography in the Akkadian at Ugarit is a reflection of learned spellings, and it not necessarily phonological. The unevenness in the Akkadian at Ugarit can thus be explained by divergent scribal traditions, as opposed to multiple "dialects" of Akkadian operating synchronically in the city.[236] For example, it is clear that scribes drew upon a diversity of orthographies. The archive of

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[233] Van Soldt, "The Akkadian of Ugarit," 206.

[234] Ibid., 207-209; quote on 207.

[235] For example, van Soldt proposes that the orthography used by the scribes of Ugarit, in particular the "confusion of the stops" also attested in EA 24 (the Hurrian Amarna Letter), are learned spellings. As such, he complains that scholars have muddled interpretations of the texts from Ugarit, e.g., confusing forms like *ṣamadu* with *ṣamatu*. He sides with *AHw* (contra the *CAD*) that the proper interpretation of terms such a *ub*-PA-*lu* (a legal term denoting a type of service by the owner of a property) (RS. 15.89:21; PRU 3,53 dating to Niqmaddu II) vs. *ub*-BA-*lu* (RA. 16.138:36; PRU 3, 143 dating to the reign of ʿAmmiṯtamru II) is *abālu* and not *apālu*. In other words, these shifts in spelling do not reflect a change in pronunciation (i.e. are NOT dialectal), but rather reflect a shift in orthographic tradition, and a movement away from the Mittannian syllabary.

[236] The Assyrian forms in the Akkadian at Ugarit "speak" more to the training of the individual scribe writing this text, and are less an indication of the state of the Akkadian "dialect" of Ugarit. In a similar vein, in Hittite texts,

the "House of Tablets" demonstrates interference from Middle Assyrian, yet the Lamaštu archive adheres to Babylonian Akkadian. Van Soldt attributes the use of both Babylonian *–šu* and Assyrian *–šīt* in RS 16.250 (PRU 3 85f.) to scribal training in both cuneiform traditions, whereas treating such features as a reflection of speech necessitates explanations such as code-switching between the MA and MB forms, or the existence of two viable pronominal suffixes in the Ugaritic "dialect" of Akkadian.

Carol Roche's study of the digraphic texts that feature both Mesopotamian and alphabetic cuneiform at Ugarit, too, distances the language of writing from that of the text. She points to the use of Akkadograms to represent words that were ultimately read in Ugaritic, which challenges the assumption that Akkadian was a spoken *lingua franca*. Roche proposes that it was a written medium, whereas the actual reading of the messages occurred in the local vernaculars.[237] Ignacio I. Márquez Rowe, too, comes too similar conclusions.[238] Scribes at Ugarit memorized formulae and technical legal idioms, but Akkadian was not spoken at the site by locals, nor was it used as a royal language of the

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Akkadograms are for the most part in MB, though there are some Assyrian forms. In such cases, the actual language of the text is Hittite––not Akkadian. As such, we cannot really consider such forms to be a reflection of MA phonology, but can only speak confidently about what scribal syllabary the scribe was appealing to. Use of *E-EṢ-BAT* v.s *IṢBAT* (DAB_5) as an Akkadographic spelling would not have impacted the underlying Hittite verb. Such variation is best understood as learned spellings that really had no phonological impact on the text. Weeden cites used of the Akkadian abstract morpheme *–ŪT-* spelled as *–ŪTT-* which conforms to Assyrian orthography; also some cases where /e/ is written instead of /i/, e.g., *EL-KI* v.s *IL-KU*; *E-EṢ-BAT* v.s *IṢBAT* (*Hittite Logograms,* 336-337). See also van Soldt, "The Akkadian of Ugarit," 207-209; quote on 210, and for a brief discussion of these two forms see Huehnergard, *The Akkadian of Ugarit,* 134-135.

[237] Carol Roche, "Classification de L'Utilisation du Cunéiforme Mésopotamien dans les Texts Ougaritiques," *Proceedings of the 51st Rencontre Assyriologique International Held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago July 18-22, 2005*. Edited by Robert D. Biggs, Jennie Myers, and Martha T. Roth (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005), 155-170; focus on 160.

[238] I. Márquez Rowe, *The Royal Deeds of Ugarit: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Diplomatics* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2006), 139-174; focus on 158-166; 171-174.

court. Rowe describes the Akkadian of Ugarit as a "vehicle for written communication," one that was only known and used by the scribal elites.[239] The legal texts, which make up the bulk of the Akkadian texts from Ugarit are particurally formulaic, whereas the economic texts offer little linguistic data. For this reason, Rowe describes both the works of Huehnergard and Van Soldt on the Akkadian of Ugarit as grammars "of *a written language for legal purposes*."[240] That is, he views is as a language, to the degree that it reflects language, that was a professional code used in restricted contexts.

E. Alloglottography in Hittite Texts

Von Dassow's theory that Canaanite scribes used Akkadian to write Canaanite is in large part inspired by the use of Sumerograms and Akkadograms in Hittite texts. The corpus of Hittite texts from the LBA demonstrates the distinction between the language of the text and the writing system used to record it. For example, the following word has several interpretive layers that a scribe would have needed to understand. ^{LÚ}*BE-LUM-aš* (nom. or acc. Hittite of *isḫa-* "lord") comprises the following: 1) LÚ is a determinative marking this person as a male. 2) *BE-LUM* is a logographic spelling made up of two signs that are the syllabic spelling of *bēlu*, the Akkadian word for "lord." This is more properly identified as an Akkadogram, i.e., an Akkadian word used as a logogram. 3) The ending –*LUM,* is a ms nominative ending in Akkadian; this case ending functioned as a means of indexing the case, gender, and number (nom. ms.). 4) The language of the text is Hittite, which indicates that *BE-LUM* functions logographically and that the morpheme –*aš* marks the Hittite nominative case. The ending -*aš* is best

[239] Ibid., *The Royal Deeds of Ugarit* 172.

[240] Ibid., 173.

understood as a phonetic complement that clarifies the underlying Hittite lexeme (i.e., what the scribe actually said). ^{LÚ}*BE-LUM-aš* has the reading of *isḫaš,* or "lord," in Hittite.

Hittite scribalism during this period presents a multifaceted, and inherently "mixed" linguistic and orthographic system. Hittite words were spelled using syllabic cuneiform. Overall, knowledge of Sumerian in Hittite scribal circles during this period was "faltering."[241] There are only a very few texts that suggest some scribes may have retained knowledge of Sumerian and perhaps even pronounced Sumerograms in Sumerian (as opposed to Hittite or Akkadian) during dictation. Akkadograms representing an underlying Hittite word could stand alone for an underlying Hittite word (*I-NA*), or be marked with Hittite phonetic complements (as in the above example: ^{LÚ}*BE-LUM-aš* whereby *-aš* marks this as the nom. or acc. Hittite of *isḫa-*). In some cases, "true" Akkadian words appear in Hittite texts.[242] Also, the line between an Akkadographic spelling as opposed to a genuine loan from Akkadian (i.e., a word that was considered part of the Hittite lexicon), or the use of Akkadian lexemes as a foreign word (i.e., a marked form) within a Hittite text is not always clear. For example, *bēlu* was also a loan from Akkadian used as a title of deference in Hatti.[243]

Akkadian was the base language of logographic writing in Hittite texts—not Sumerian. As Mark Weeden writes, "Sumerian had retreated into the Sumerian column of a lexical list, where

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[241] Weeden, *Hittite Logograms,* 352-353.

[242] Weeden cites the following: BE-LU-*uš-ša-an* (voc.sg.) in two letters from Hattusa; also DUMU.LÚ.LU$_7$^{LÚ}*uš-ša-an*; and Akkadian names marked by Hittite phonetic complements ^{d}IŠKUR-*BE-LÍ-iš* (Ibid., 334).

[243] Ibid., 175-176.

occasionally an innovation could be fashioned for a logographic writing."[244] Sumerian verbs only take Hittite phonetic complements, an indication that Hittite scribes used Sumerograms to represent Hittite and not Akkadian lexemes. This suggests an evolution whereby the scribes in Hatti viewed Sumerograms as Akkadograms and used them to represent Hittite words (Sumerogram>Hittite). Hittite scribes also inherited "a layer of Akkadograms" that were not all suitable to stand for Hittite words. In such cases, the scribes preferred Sumerograms, which were much more flexible and in some cases time saving.[245]

Weeden describes a process whereby Hittite scribes developed their own intergroup language to speak the mixed forms that they used when writing Hittite. This "jargon" applied Hittite morpho-syntax to Akkadian and "used Akkadianising constructions to deal with common phrasal or compositional syntax."[246] This offers a parallel to how Canaano-Akkadian may have been articulated in scribal settings, as a written language that had no native speakers. However, he takes a different view of phonetic complements—one that distances them from speech. He understands them as more of a guide to the reader about the grammatical function of a term that an indication of its pronunciation. The presence or absence of phonetic complements in a text is a reflection of scribal

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[244] Ibid., 352-353; for quote 359.

[245] For example, a scribe seeking to write "lord" (*isḫaš*) had the following orthographic options: EN-*aš* (Sumerogram+phonetic complement [pc]), *BE-LUM-aš* (Akkadogram+p.c), or *iš-ha-a-aš* (Hittite spelled syllabically).

[246] Weeden, *Hittite Logograms,* 359.

training at Hattusa and the "idiosyncrasies" of its scribes.[247] The absence of complements indicated that the writer assumed that the form and its function in the sentence were well understood by the intended audience.[248] That is to say, that they were sufficiently trained the use of Akkadographic and Sumerographic spellings to be able to understand the underlying meaning without needing additional guidance. Scribal education was not the rote learning of signs and their values, but was rather "a vast repertory of ways of writing to denote artifacts of cultural heritage."[249] The frame of reference needed to be able to decode a Hittite text replete with syllabically spelled Hittite lexemes, Sumerograms, Akkadograms, and varying use of phonetic complements transcended the category of "language."

This parallel suggests Canaano-Akkadian texts be approached first and foremost as the products of an intricate scribal culture. The use of Akkadograms and Sumerograms in Hittite, however, is not suitable parallel for Canaano-Akkadian. Both the function of these two scribal systems and how they were perceived by the scribes employing them were quite different. Hittite in cuneiform was developed as a local written language. Logographic spellings were embedded into syllabically spelled Hittite texts. Canaano-Akkadian, on the other had, was for the most part an Akkadian scribal code—syllabically spelled Canaanite lexemes are rare. Also, Canaano-Akkadian was used to correspond with an outside power (Egypt). As such, the Sumerograms in Canaano-Akkadian are in

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[247] Weeden is dismissive of claims that the use of such complements are necessarily "earlier" (before Hattusili III), as has been proposed in the past; nor does he views the use of complemented forms as an absolute means of dating a text (Ibid., 368).

[248] Ibid., 368.

[249] Ibid., 13.

this corpus are treated as though having an underlying Akkadian and not WS reading, which contrasts with how Sumerograms were analyzed at Hatti as having an underlying Hittite reading.[250] The majority of phonetic complements in the Canaanite letters point to an Akkadian, rather than a WS, reading of the text.[251]

EA 63, a Canaanite Amarna Letter, offers insight into this issue. The verb of prostration in the introductory formula is presented in two forms, as a Canaano-Akkadian 1cs suffixed form and the expected 1cs Akkadian preterite:

> EA 63 (Abdi-Aštarti; Gath; Tell eṣ-Ṣafi). EA 63: 5-6 *a-na* 1 GÌR.MEŠ ˡ*šàr-ri* ˹EN˺-˹*ia*˺/ 7 *ù* 7 *ma-aq-ta*-˹*ti*˺ ˹*a*˺-˹*na*˺ ˹GÌR˺.MEŠ ˹*ša*˺ ˹ˡ˺˹LUGAL˺ ˹EN˺-˹*ia*˺˹\˺ ˹*am*˺-˹*qú*˺-*ut* "At the feet of the king, my lord, seven and seven (times) have I fallen; at the feet of the king, my lord, have I fallen"

Both verbs are built off of the Akkadian verbal stem *maqātu* "to fall." Use of this Akkadian verbal stem rather than a WS equivalent, suggests that the scribe did view the text to be Akkadian, albeit, an

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[250] For example, there are numerous Sumerograms with phonetic complements that point to an Akkadian and not WS reading of the text, e.g., EA 363:05 GÌR-*pí* "feet;" there are many examples of the Sumerogram EN being complemented as to suggest an underlying reading *bēlu*"lord" (EA 73:35 *šàr-ri* EN-*li-ka* "the king my lord." EA 362:11 *ù ni-nu-mi* BA.ÚŠ.MEŠ *ni-mu-ut* "we will die" is really an unmarked gloss where the Sumerogram BA.ÚŠ "to die, death" is complemented by the MEŠ, a logogram marking plurality. The following verb *ni-mu-ut* is a 1cp Akkadian durative "we will die." In Canaano-Akkadian, we would expect a vocalic ending signifying a *yaqtulu* (present indicative). Because the lack of this ending Rainey translates this verb as a Canaano-Akkadian jussive: "we must perish."

[251] The two following forms are nice examples of how phonetic complements were used to clarify the meaning of the text. These verbs derive from the introductory formula where the scribes appended additional signs to specify that the QUT sign was to be read as such. Ironically, this is precisely where we might assume an Akkadographic spelling standing in for an underlying WS verb, as these formulae were memorized by scribes and used in every letter: ˹*am*˺-*qú*-*qut* "I have fallen" EA 330:08 (Šipṭi-Baʿlu; Lachish; Shephelah [vicinity of Lachish]); *am-qut*-*ut* "I have fallen" EA 362:04 (Rib-Adda; Byblos; Byblos). In both examples, the underlying form is the 1cs Akkadian preterite of the verb *maqātu* "to fall." We might expect a NWS gloss to indicate that the underlying verb was the verb "to fall" (*npl*) in WS. Instead, we have two letters from two different scribes and proveniences whereby the verb (at least as articulated on the tablet) is identified as being Akkadian.

Akkadian written using the local scribal conventions.[252] The two following forms also demonstrate how phonetic complements were used to clarify the meaning of the text. These verbs derive from the introductory formula where the scribes appended additional signs to specify that the QUT sign was to be read as such. Ironically, this is precisely where we might assume an Akkadographic spelling standing in for an underlying WS verb, as these formulae were memorized by scribes and used in every letter: ⌜*am*⌝-^{qú}*qut* "I have fallen" EA 330:08 (Šipṭi-Baʿlu; Lachish; Shephelah [vicinity of Lachish]); *am-qut-*^{ut} "I have fallen" EA 362:04 (Rib-Adda; Byblos; Byblos). In both examples, the underlying form is the 1cs Akkadian preterite of the verb *maqātu* "to fall." We might expect a NWS gloss to indicate that the underlying verb was the verb "to fall" (*npl*) in WS.[253] Instead, we have two letters from two different scribes and proveniences whereby the verb (at least as articulated on the tablet) is identified based on an Akkadian root. Rather than viewing this as an Akkadographic used to write Canaanite, a simpler solution is that the scribes provided "clues" that enabled those with a knowledge of cuneiform to be able to determine the underlying meaning of these messages.[254] The

[252] EA 65, for example, presents what could potentially be an Akkadographic spelling. A double gloss mark precedes a 1cs suffixed form of the verb *maqātu* "to fall:" EA 65: 4-5 *a-na* ^{I}GÌR.MEŠ EN-*ia* 7 *ù* 7 *mi-la*/\\ *ma-aq-ta-ti ù ka-ba-tu-ma ù ṣú-úʾ-ru-ma* "At the feet of my lord seven and seven times \\ have I fallen both on the stomach and on the back, at the feet of the king, my lord." In light of EA 63, which is from this same provenience it is likely that *amqut* in EA 65 was omitted because it was assumed that the prostration formula was clear from context.

[253] Von Dassow reconstructs *qâlti,* a 1cs perfect as a possible Canaanite reading of the verb *AM-QUT* ("Canaanite in Cuneiform," 665).

[254] The development of such scribal strategies to write local languages was part of a more general phenomenon in the periphery. In the second millennium B.C.E., Sumerian words evolved beyond the Sumerian language; frozen Sumerian sign sequences were universally recognized by cuneiform scribes throughout the Near East and could be used in multilingual contexts. In a sense, Sumerograms were detached from any one particular language, as they were logograms/symbols that could represent any language. Moreover, the use of logographic writing could serve as a shorthand, standing in for more lengthy syllabic sign combinations, especially in lists (e.g., LUGAL vs. syllabically spelling out *šarru,* and ZABAR vs. *sipparru*).

written form of these messages were written in Akkadian, due to their formulaic nature were written to be easily interpreted by the scribes that knew the basics tenets of this scribal system.

III. Orthography or Phonology?

Ultimately, the interpretation of Canaanite cuneiform from this period depends largely on the classification of this scribal system. Thus the translation and linguistic analysis of this corpus is largely based on the assumptions that such scholars have about dialect geography and scribal training during this period. The question of language classification and the interpretive process needed to "decipher" Canaano-Akkadian are central to understanding scribal culture during this period.

Today, the trend in scholarship has been to attribute this variation to dialectal influence. According to this approach, Canaano-Akkadian is classified as just one among the many subsets or "dialects" along the continuum of Peripheral Akkadian. For example, Izre'el attributes the orthography of the Beqa Valley Amarna Letters, whereby E is written for I (e.g., *e-ša-t*[*i*] "fire" EA 174: 17 for *išāti*) to a "Beqa" dialect of Akkadian:

> These forms may be explained as idiosyncrasies of a specific scribe who did not use this language but in his writings. Still, the constant use of the sign *e* in all other forms, as well as in these two specific forms, may reflect a phonemic or phonetic reality in the substrate dialect. We would think of a timbre [e], which would appear in all these instances when the scribes were trying to pronounce these forms on the grounds of their foreign phonological system.[255]

According to this view, the scribes' local language affected how they pronounced Akkadian, resulting in a distinct Beqa dialect of Akkadian. In other words, their pronunciation of Akkadian lexemes

[255] Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian," 9.

influenced their spelling. Izre'el interprets orthographic tendencies as having a phonological reality.[256] Rainey, on the other hand, tended to normalize his transcriptions to standard Akkadian whenever possible and preferred "long" sign readings that conformed to the expected Akkadian of the period. As such, his transcriptions treat anomalous sign readings as orthographic variants rather than reflections of an underlying pronunciation. For example, in Rainey's transcription, Izre'el's *e* is transcribed as i_{15}, rendering forms such as *e-ša-t*[*i*] (according in Izre'el) as i_{15}*-ša-t*[*i*] (EA 174: 17). The Beqa letters are distinguished from the rest of the Amarna Letters by the use of the E sign for the value i_{15}. Rainey does not equate this variant orthography with an underlying phonological difference in the initial *i-* words. Izre'el's "Beqa dialect" is reduced to an orthographic preference (E for i_{15}), and a reflection of the local syllabary used to train scribes rather than a phonological feature.[257]

Von Dassow, too, attributes the Beqa forms to a variant orthography, but argues that the actual "language" of these messages was most likely not Akkadian, but was whatever dialect(s) of WS was spoken in the Beqa Valley—the cuneiform version of the message was a scribal invention. Such

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[256] Another such example is the orthographic "tick" whereby *e-* initial words are spelled as though *i-* initial words (e.g., EA 74:63 *i-pu-šu-na* [*epēšu*; 1cs + the Canaanite energic]) in the letters from Byblos and from Amurru. Again, Izre'el views this as a dialectal form, representing a local variant of Canaano-Akkadian. As Izre'el writes, "The differences in phonemic status or phonetic distribution of the vowels *e* and *i* between Akkadian and the NWS dialects may be responsible for the introduction of the vowel *i* to the verbal forms of predominating *e* formations of the Akkadian superstratum in some dialects of Peripheral Akkadian (Izre'el, Canaano-Akkadian," section 2.2.3). See also von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 661-662.

[257] Also, Rainey preferred the reading ti_7 for TE, rather than *–te*. Rendering the sign TE as ti_7 normalizes verbs with this ending to the expected 1cs NWS enclitic verbal ending *–ti*. He understood the use of the sign TE to represent the 1cs Canaanite suffix as a variant orthography, not as a phonological feature: "The mass of variant spelling examples from the G and related stems have *ti-*. The predominance of the TI sign in these spellings assures that the occasional TE sign must be read ti_7." He argued that the 1cs is expressed "with I signs, never with E (=i_{15}), thus, he rendered TE as ti_7 to follow this phonological pattern (*i-* for 1st person, and *ti* [ti_7]- for the 2nd person) (*CAT II*, 45; 137).

spellings are better seen as a reflection of the WS dialects spoken by such scribes, rather than how they spoke Akkadian.[258] According to an Akkadographic reading of these forms, the initial *e*-vowel may be a reflection of the scribes attempt to write their own language. That is, this vowel reflects not an Akkadian dialect, but their own substrate.[259] This approach distances the written forms in these letters from phonology even further, and looks instead to the scribal training as the source for such variation.[260] It is founded upon the understanding that the scribes writing these letters modeled their Akkadographic spellings on the underlying WS language of the text.

The "Canaanite in cuneiform" system detailed above presumes an agreed upon system of orthography for how to write these underlying WS forms, for which there is currently little evidence. Writing to a foreign audience was not a system of transcription but communication. The party on the

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[258] Von Dassow offers a critic of Izre'el: "(S)uch spellings "may reflect a phonemic or phonetic reality in the substrate dialect [citing from Izre'el, "Some Methodological Requisites for the Study of the Amarna Jargon: Notes of the Essence of the Language." 1987 Section 2.21]. They may well do so, if the scribes' hypothetical pronunciation of /i/ with an /e/ timber in their native Canaanite speech (a phonological feature inferred only from the spellings it is meant to explain) led them to abandon distinguishing between I- and E- signs, which then prompted them to use Ci- and Ce- signs interchangeably as well" ("Canaanite in Cuneiform," 661.

[259] Von Dassow agrees with Arnaud and Salvini that I, E, and IA are allographs in peripheral cuneiform, and are, at best, ambiguous evidence of what the scribes were actually pronouncing. Based on their work, she proposes that *I*-, *E*- and *IA*- may have been used allographically whereby the root phonology was derived—not from the Beqa dialect of Canaano-Akkadian—but from the scribe's dialect of WS. If there was any phonological basis to such forms in the spoken language of the scribes, we should look to the local Canaanite substrate as the culprit ("Canaanite in Cuneiform, 661-662, cf. 49; 662 for quote; also Mirjo Salvini and Daniel Arnaud "Une Lettre du roi de Beyrouth au roi d'Ougarit," *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-anatolici* 42:1 [2002], 5-17, focus on 9-10). Izre'el's response is as follows: "We agree, of course, on the origin and nature of the allographs as reflecting differences in phonologies of substrate dialects. However, if Canaano-Akkadian would be used only in writing, where words would be representation[s] of different forms of words in another language (viz., Canaanite), why would the phonology of the substrate be reflected in the forms that would not be pronounced at all?" In other words, he argues, why would the scribes take the trouble of recording how these forms were pronounced, if they were never pronounced at all?" ("Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 197).

[260] Erica Reiner, too, discusses the vowel inventory in Akkadian as an opposition between the orthographic and phonological alternation (e.g., *a* vs. non-*a* and *i* vs. non *i*) ("How We Read Cuneiform Texts," *JCS* 25 [1973], 45-48).

other end of this exchange had to be able to interpret what was being written. Just as Izre'el's approach raises the question of who would have spoken this mixed dialect of Akkadian, von Dassow's approach raises the question of why the scribes would have taken such pain to model their logographic writings after their own dialects of WS. Logographic writings are useful precisely because they can directly represent any language of reading. In the context of diplomacy with Egypt, it is unlikely that the scribes from this region have altered their orthography to better reflect their spoken dialects.

There are features of Canaano-Akkadian, moreover, that are not easily explained away by a difference in orthography.[261] As discussed, the assimilation of *n* (the Canaanite energic) to *š* when *nun* precedes an Akkadian *š*- initial pronominal suffix is one such example (e.g., *nu-ub-ba-lu-uš-šu* <*nubbalun*+*šu*).[262] The above examples and the diverse justifications for the varied orthographies illustrate the complexity of classifying this corpus, as a simple difference in sign reading can "create" or "erase" a dialectal feature of Canaano-Akkadian

IV. Conclusion

In the early days of Amarna Studies, the distinctive features of this corpus were attributed to

[261] Izre'el dedicates the end of his description of Canaano-Akkadian to countering von Dassow's arguments. See Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian," 197-203.

[262] Von Dassow's response is this type of assimilation is rare, and moreover, that *nun*-assimilation is a feature in both Canaanite and Akkadian, and therefore could have been applied into the writing system by analogy with either language, without necessarily being spoken (Canaanite in Cuneiform," 662-663).

scribal incompetence in Canaan.[263] However, the "barbaric" features that single out Canaano-Akkadian from other Peripheral Akkadian varieties appear consistently in the cuneiform from this region. The characteristic Canaano-Akkadian orthographies in the Canaanite Amarna letters (e.g., the "hybrid" verbal systems) were not used *ad hoc* but appear systematically in the cuneiform from Canaan. The variation in these letters and their collective differences from MB are the hallmarks of a cohesive scribal system. The WS scribes writing these letters merely adhered to a different set of scribal conventions than their Egyptian, Syrian, Hittite, or Mesopotamian counterparts. Their training allowed for variation, and yet it was based upon an established curriculum. Evidence for this scribal system first emerges in the Taanach Letters (late 15th century) and, by the Amarna Letters (mid 14th century) appears as a fully developed system in texts from all over the southern Levant. The tendency in scholarship, however, is to focus upon the variation within Canaanite cuneiform from this period and to downplay its overall cohesiveness. Scholars too often equate the variation in this corpus with a lack of standardization in stark black and white terms.[264] When Canaano-Akkadian is approached as a

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[263] Moran's description is particularly pejorative: "Eloquent and moving as it may be at times, it [Canaano-Akkadian] lacks all elegance; it is awkward, often barbarous, betraying the scribes' ignorance not only of Akkadian but of their native speech" ("Tell el-Amarna," *EJ* 15 [1972], 933).

[264] As discussed, Izre'el views the variation in the orthography of the Canaanite Amarna Letters as evidence for linguistic diversity and he reconstructs a plurality of Canaano-Akkadian dialects which were, in turn, influenced by the local Canaanite dialects (Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian," 171-218; "Canaanite Varieties in the Second Millennium BC," 66-104). Von Dassow understands there to have been "as many Canaanite cuneiform idiolects as there were Canaanite cuneiform scribes," though in her system, the differences in writing are orthographic and not phonological. That is to say, she does not believe that the forms in the Canaanite Amarna Letters were ever spoken as represented on the tablet, but rather were read aloud in Canaanite, as her "Canaanite in Cuneiform" hypothesis inherently detaches the orthography of the Canaanite cuneiform texts from the underlying languages (or dialects). She warns, however, against the use of oversimplified labels to describe the diverse linguistic and social terrain of this period, in particular the use of designations such as "the Canaanite scribes" or "the Canaanite-Akkadian hybrid," of moreover, the use of "Canaanite" as a linguistic label (von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 643-644).

scribal system along a continuum of Peripheral Akkadian scribal traditions, it presents more, rather than less, standardized scribal system. The ways in which the sign sequences are utilized to reflect a written register of cuneiform, and yet an underlying Canaanite mode of expression, is used by scribes throughout the southern Levant.[265] Also, texts from the southern Levant are more alike in terms of orthography, structure, and rhetoric that texts from other regions. In particular, the unique way in which Canaanite scribes coded verbs using Akkadian verbal bases and WS affixes carries throughout. In the end, the orthography variation in these letters would have been flattened out when the text was translated—this is true of both von Dassow's Akkadography theory and the more traditional view that these letters were written in a multiplicity of Canaanite Akkadian dialects.

The more important issues are not what Canaanite officials were speaking, but rather, what they were writing and why. Also, it is important how they themselves classified the language of these letters, and who could interpret it. Further, we should also consider the institutional power of this script, who was "backing" it and why, also how these second millennium Canaanite scribes viewed their own scribal traditions. In such a view, the terms dialect or idiolect are not quite suited to describe a written scribal code.[266] There is no evidence that Canaano-Akkadian was a spoken contact language or even evidence for a one-to-one correspondence between the sender and recipient. Rather, we have a plethora of scribes, court officials, and messengers serving as interfacers between

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[265] Moran, "The Syrian Scribe," 146-166.

[266] *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* defines idiolect as follows: "The speech of 'dialect' of a single individual. Dialectal variation is described as "variation within a language that is simply between one speaker and another." See P. H. Mathews, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1997), 183.

polities—the "writing" and "reading" of an Amarna Letter was a mediated diplomatic event. The variation in the Canaanite Amarna Letters is best attributed to diversity in scribal training and a lack of concern for rigid orthography (as attested by the range of spellings, the unique uses of determinatives, and the frequent scribal errors), and, in certain cases, served as a means of highlighting the text.

In spite of slight regional orthographic variation, this scribal code was used throughout the southern Levant and Eastern Mediterranean and understood by an audience that extended from the Transjordan, the highlands, the coast, up into the Lebanese littoral, to the royal court at Tell el-'Amarna, Egypt. Training in this scribal system was not hampered by the volatile territorial boundaries between feuding polities within Canaan proper. In spite of the internal strife that characterized this period, cuneiform scribes from one corner of the southern Levant wrote in ways very similar to their peers working for "enemy" polities.[267] In short, if we approach cuneiform in the periphery as a "continuum," Canaano-Akkadian presents itself as a cohesive and discrete system among the myriads of scribal sub-cultures during this period.[268] In spite of the internal variation, the orthography, style, and process of interpretation links together the cuneiform traditions in this region into an overarching, cohesive, and coherent writing system—one just like all the others, which were

[267] Indeed, the strategies used in the Amarna letters from Laba'yu and his rivals are eerily similar and attest to a shared scribal tradition that also drew upon a shared cultural stock of rhetorical strategies.

[268] One cannot mistake a Canaanite cuneiform text from this period for an Akkadian text from outside the southern Levant. In this corpus the true 'deviant' forms are the occasional standard MB orthographies. Forms such as ⌜*él*⌝-*te*$_9$-⌜*né*⌝-⌜*mé*⌝ in EA 300:23: ("I am continually heeding [the words of the King my lord.") are marked forms in Canaano-Akkadian texts and are quite jarring to the trained eye (see Chapter Seven).

separate from one another and from the core. When the scribal and geo-political maps of this region converge, this scribal system appears in the area controlled by Egypt.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Mechanics of Diplomacy: The Role of the Scribe–Cuneiform Culture in the Periphery

I. Akkadian in the LBA

This chapter presents the scribe as the gatekeeper facilitating diplomacy in the LBA and examines cuneiform scribal culture. The main argument, is that Canaano-Akkadian was a reflection of writers who used a similar code to bridge diverse polities during this period. The scribe emerges as a gatekeeper and key part of the diplomatic process.

A. **Language and Diplomacy in the Late Bronze Age**

The discovery of the Amarna Letters inaugurated a clearer understanding of the role scribes, messengers, and officials working in the international arena between the "Great Powers." Though

limited to a period of about thirty years, this corpus offers unique insight into diplomacy during the LBA.[269] In part, this is because it comprises letters from three tiers of Near Eastern polities: Egypt's peers—the Kassite, Assyrian, Mitanni, Arzawa, Alashian, and Hittite courts; autonomous rulers of client kingdoms—Ugarit and Amurru; and finally, Levantine rulers under direct Egyptian control.[270]

B. The Canaanite Letters

The diplomatic corpus from the southern Levant offers a slightly different perspective into the politics of the LBA, as Canaanite polities were not privy to the club of Great Powers, but were subservient. The Canaano-Akkadian corpus elucidates the internecine struggles within this region and the inner workings of Egypt's eastern empire.[271] During this period, the southern Levant was firmly under the control of the Egyptian military and administrative personnel, whereas northern polities retained more political autonomy. The letters to the Egyptian court from the southern Levant reflect the fragmented and often violent nature of regional politics. Local rulers jockeyed for power, forming and breaking alliances based on their quest for local dominance. Unlike the peer-polity

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[269] The majority of these tablets are diplomatic exchanges between ANE polities and the Egyptian court, date to the second half of the 14th century B.C.E., corresponding to the reigns of Amenhotep III, Amenhotep IV, and the early years of Tutankhamen before the capital was relocated from Tell el-ʻ Amarna back to Thebes.

[270] The Akkadian term used to refer to local Canaanite ruler, *ḫazannu* "mayor," corresponds to the Egyptian term *ḥ3ty-ʻ*. Na'dav Na'aman writes of the cultural clashes between Egyptian and Canaanite expectations of what this position entailed. From the Egyptian perspective, Canaanite rulers were entrusted with defense of the cities, meaning the specific area entrusted to them by the pharaoh. The Canaanite letters suggest, however, suggest that the command to "guard" the pharaoh's land was understood to mean the region in its entirety, as local rulers often complain about hostile incursions into the region as a whole and request Egyptian troops ("The *Egyptian-Canaanite Correspondence," Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*. Edited by R. Cohen and R. Westbrook [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000], 131-133).

[271] See Wolfgang Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens Zu Vorderasien Im 3. Und 2. Jahrtausend V*[*or*] *Chr*[*istus*] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), 107-188.

letters which discuss trade, royal marriages, and gift-giving, Canaanite rulers air their grievances, request military aid and political support, and cajole the pharaoh to take a more active role in their local squabbles. The scribes working for such rulers were entrusted with creating appealing letters that would gain an audience with the Pharaoh and his officials.

C. The Role of Cuneiform and Cuneiform Scribes in the Second Millennium B.C.E.

Writing in the ancient Near East was for the most part an elite commodity that reflected the interests of only a fraction of ancient speech communities. The most basic function of writing in the Amarna Letters was not to transcribe spoken language, but to serve first and foremost as an efficient system of communication. Canaano-Akkadian scribes were less concerned with capturing speech than conveying ideas in such a way as to be intelligible to a foreign audience. Knowledge of Akkadian was bound to literacy and the study of the cuneiform script. As Rowe writes, there is currently no evidence to suggest that it was used in the Levant outside of a professional and/or academic setting.[272] The cadre of literate officials and scribes managing the written diplomatic exchanges between such polities were the gatekeepers controlling the flow of information.

Regarding the Canaanite-Egyptian exchanges, there are several possible scenarios for these diplomatic letters. The messengers delivering such letters may have been the ones reading them at the royal court; the text would then have been translated into Egyptian by a local official. Another possibility is that these letters went through a hierarchy of scribes and officials; the ones that made it to the royal scribe were then read in his presence. In both cases, the recipient scribes or literate

[272] Rowe, *The Royal Deeds of Ugarit*, 145.

officials were the key to gaining access to the Pharaoh. Those preparing these letters in Canaan developed strategies, at times stemming from their own linguistic and cultural repertoires, to make their letters more appealing. Scribes also used scribal marks in innovative ways to add nuance to these letters and provide a guide to their performance. Some letters even include postscripts that make direct appeals to the scribes working at Tell el-'Amarna to transmit their letter in a positive light. Scribes working for Canaanite polities thus attempted to navigate the delicate balance between demonstrating respect and deference to Egypt, and yet vocalizing their grievances against Egyptian rule in the Levant.

Throughout cuneiform's history it remained, for the most part, an elite technology. That is, those with an economic incentive to hone this skill were for the most part elites themselves, or worked for state and temple institutions and/or the individuals navigating these institutions (e.g., in trade for example).[273] Non-professional scribes could learn the basics of name writing or perhaps basic letter writing. Their work product adhered to conventions regarding the layout, scope, and formulaic language appropriate for a limited range of written genres, all of which are learned skills that presume

[273] Dominique Charpin is critical both of the view that cuneiform was limited to an elite scribal class as well as the claim that cuneiform literacy was widespread. He also proposes that a rudimentary knowledge of cuneiform was not limited to scribes but that non-professionals had, at least, a passive understanding of reading and writing and perhaps even basic letter writing. This is in part a reaction to a tendency in scholarship to overestimate the impact of the Greek alphabet (which he refers to sarcastically as the "Greek miracle") as catalyzing the diffusion of literacy outside of the scribal caste (*Reading and Writing in Babylon* [Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010], 66-67; quote on 66). For a discussion of models of a more widely spread literacy see Claus Wilcke, *Wer Las Und Schrieb in Babylonien Und Assyrien: Überlegungen Zur Literalität Im Alten Zweistromland; Vorgetragen in Der Sitzung Vom 4. Februar 2000* (München: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000); S. Parpola, "The Man without a Scribe and the Question of Literacy in the Assyrian Empire," in *Ana Šadî Labnāni Lū Allik: Beiträge Zu Altorientalischen Und Mittelmeerischen Kulturen Festschrift Für Wolfgang Röllig*. Edited by Wolfgang Röllig, Beate Pongratz-Leisten, Hartmut Kühne, and Paolo Xella (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1997), 315-324.

an established set of conventions and cultural attitudes about writing.[274]Writing in the second millennium B.C.E was used to further the interests of the institutions of the period and, to the degree that it represented spoken language, was a closer reflection of elite dialects and styles of language.

Cuneiform in the second millennium B.C.E. was harnessed by non-Akkadian speaking polities in the Periphery where it served primarily as an administrative tool for record-keeping, accounting, and in written personal communications. Canaano-Akkadian, for example, was one such highly specialized scribal code and is only attested in diplomatic and administrative contexts. Cuneiform writing also enabled rulers from opposite ends of the Near East to cultivate interpersonal relationships and thus bridge (at least in part) the cultural and geographic gaps between the royal courts.

The cuneiform scribal literati of the second millennium B.C.E worked predominantly from within the confines of their institutional frameworks.[275] Eckart Frahm describes the paradox of the

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[274] For a discusson of mediated literacy and letter writing see David Barton and Nigel Hall, eds. *Letter Writing as a Social Practice* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub, 2000).

[275] One might assume that the system would become simpler over-time. Yet the writing system as a whole became increasingly complex. This was in part a consequence of a developing scribal intellectual tradition that preserved more archaic sign forms. For example, Frahm cites the increase in the numbers of logograms in omen texts, which by the 1st millennium shifted to nearly 84% of signs in the *Šumma ālu* series. In a similar vein, the OB syllabary comprises predominantly CV, V and VC syllabic signs, whereas the 1st millennium B.C.E. scribes increasingly used CVC signs, which added to the number of possible sign readings. As Frahm writes, "It would have been easy to reduce the complexity of the cuneiform writing system even further, but somewhere surprisingly, this did not happen. No systematic attempt was ever made by the scribes to dispose of the hundreds of signs and thousands of possible readings associated with them that were for all intents superfluous" ("Reading the Tablet, the Exta, and the Body: The Hermeneutics of Cuneiform Signs in Babylonian and Assyrian Text Commentaries and Divinatory Texts," in *Divination and Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World*. Edited by Amar Annus [Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010]: 94). Based on his work on omen texts, which are among the most complex of texts, Frahm describes the retention of highly intricate sign forms as a reflection of the scholarly nature of this corpus. Not all scribes, however, had specialized in the more esoteric texts and obscure sign forms; most scribes still produced basic economic texts and letters during later periods. The process that he

cuneiform script, developed "as a far more reliable medium for communication over large distances of space and time than the human memory," which implies a script that was accessible by diverse groups. However, cuneiform was quite a complex writing system and was "full of intricacies and ambiguities," as it demanded training in a complex sign system that presumed an understanding of logograms based in Sumerian and in the Akkadian language.[276] Learning to write Akkadian in a non-Akkadian speaking setting would have been a challenge. For this reason, we can assume that those invested in producing this non-local language and script in the Periphery were subsidized by groups and/or individuals invested in developing cuneiform scribalism in a local setting. There must have been a social role for the use of cuneiform that warranted this effort and expense.

The Amarna Letters and other corpora of the period attest to a range of scribal proficiency that suggests that the demands of the clients determined the skill of the scribe.[277] For example, the

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described evolved as the knowledge of the script became a valued skill and lead to the retention of archaic and highly complex forms in the written language and writing system in certain scholastic genres. Frahm attributes this trend away from simplified writing to the intellectual character of cuneiform scribal culture in the first millennium, whereby the writing system in and of itself was viewed as a prestigious legacy of the past by the highest order of the scribes: "(T)hey [the scribes] regarded the overabundance of possible meanings associated with the polysemy of cuneiform writing systems as an inexhaustible source of knowledge and wisdom…words and signs were not arbitrarily chosen conventions, as claimed by Aristotle and Saussure, but representations that denoted their objects by nature. Consequently, Sumerian and Akkadian words, however obscure or rare, had to be collected in lexical lists to be never forgotten, and so had the numerous signs used to write them. Giving up any of them, or reducing the complexity of their meanings, would have meant to lose access to some particular truth they conveyed," ("Reading the Tablet," 95).

[276] Though, this true to some degree of any writing system as writing is a skill that requires training and systematic use. See Frahm, "Reading the Tablet" 93-94.

[277] It is important to remember, however, that there was a hierarchy within cuneiform scribal institutions— not all of the sign values known today were actually used regularly by most scribes. For example, letter-writing scribes in the OB period consistently used only about 68-82 syllabic signs. Scribes specializing in administrative texts tended to use more logograms and a limited range of syllabic signs, as logographic writing was better suited to lists and accounting texts. The requisites for cuneiform literacy were quite high—literacy is by no means an easy process, let alone for those, such as

extensive lists of commodities in the letters from the Greater Powers make use of the most challenging and complex logographic sequences in the Amarna corpus.[278] It is well established that the introductions of the Amarna letters draw upon stock formulaic language.[279] However, letters from larger polities in Canaan (for example, from Tyre, Byblos, and Jerusalem) demonstrate a heightened complexity.[280] There was, therefore, a continuum of proficiencies, and most of the scribes working in the southern Levant were not as advanced as their northern scribal counterparts.

The formulaic nature of the Canaanite corpus sheds light on scribal training during this period. Moreover, the variation in the letters suggests that scribes followed general guidelines about the content, but had leeway about how to shape these messages (in particular in cases where their client was non-literate). For this reason, Karel van der Toorn argues that the Canaanite Amarna letters are best approached not as dictations, but as creative scribal compositions. As he writes, "Despite the personal touch a scribe might give to a letter, he was forced to draw on the same source of conventional phrases as his colleagues. These men could not express their thoughts, or the thoughts

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scribes working in the Periphery, using "borrowed" languages and writing systems. To be competent, cuneiform scribes in the second millennium B.C.E. would have had to dedicate a substantial effort to mastering the range of signs needed to produce texts for their clientele. See Frahm, "Reading the Tablet," 94; for a discussion of cuneiform literacy see Charpin, *Reading and Writing in Babylon*, 64-67.

[278] EA 22, for example, demonstrates use of complex logographic sequences to describe a list of royal gifts.

[279] The majority of Canaanite letters include a basic greeting and in most cases a declaration of loyalty; this is then followed by the actual message being communicated, though in many cases it is quite brief message, and is rote, stilted and quite predictable. The scribes reused the same formulaic language in most of their letters. For example, EA 221-223, 225 are reflective of this type of letter; they are quite succinct and do not very much information.

[280] The letters from Shechem present something of a paradox as they are quite simple, yet quite eloquent and draw upon an oral-poetic register of language. The language and sign forms used are not highly complex in terms of the Akkadian being used; rather Laba'yu's letters are highly expressive on account of the pervasive use of WS forms.

of their clients, beyond the common reservoir of fixed phrases and stereotyped expressions."[281] Scribal innovation was inherently limited by the scribes' training, level of expertise, and the protocols expected in the text. For this reason, the prose in the peer polity letters tends to repeat the same themes and concerns. Letters between powers such as Egypt, the Kassites, and the Hittites etc. consist primarily of requests for gifts and raw materials, lists of the gifts being requested or delivered, and discussions about the nature of the alliances between the royal families. Indeed, the gift lists are the most challenging part of the peer-polity letters as they comprise technical terms for objects that are ill understood by scholars as they tend to be written logographically. However, such lists would not have posed a problem to the ancient scribe or the accompanying messenger who presumably could stand and examine them in person. Furthermore, the messengers transporting the written message, serving as *de facto* ambassadors, would have clarified any ambiguities in the official written message.

The themes and concerns in the Canaanite Amarna Letters are quite repetitious. Even the more innovative letters tend to make similar use of the same stock of scribal marks, glosses, and code-switching, and rhetorical strategies. Letters from the southern Levant are concerned with security, local squabbles, and reassuring the Pharaoh that his orders are being carried out. The vassal letters often repeat a portion of a specific letter from Egypt; these citations tend to use non-specific, stereotyped phrases (e.g., that the vassals are to guard their city and obey the local Egyptian

[281] Karel van der Toorn, "Cuneiform Documents from Syria- Palestine. Texts, Scribes, and Schools." *ZDPV* 116 (2002), 103.

representative). The correspondence suggest that letters were regularly delivered to Tel el-'Amarna, serving as evidence of the Canaanite stance in matters of governance and administration.[282]

D. Who is Actually "Speaking" in the Amarna Letters?

The 2004 petrographic analysis of the Amarna Letters, *Inscribed in Clay,* offers the most comprehensive study of the provenience of many of the Canaanite Amarna Letters.[283] The results, however, have complicated our understanding of scribalism during this period. In particular, this study has challenged the scholarly assumption that the language of these texts is a reflection of the scribal dialect of Akkadian used at local courts as not all of these texts were written in Canaanite political centers. The most significant outcome of *Inscribed in Clay* is its conclusion that a number of the Canaanite Letters were actually written at various Egyptian administrative centers in the Levant. This has dramatically impacted the linguistic and scribal maps of this period, calling into question the degree to which the linguistic features in these letters reflect the language of Canaanite polities (i.e., the senders of these message) as opposed to that of the scribes writing these letters (in some cases writing for multiple rulers.) Moreover, this raises the question of Egypt's role in the use of this scribal system for Canaano-Egyptian relations. In other words, it appears quite likely that the scribes writing Canaano-Akkadian letters at Egyptian administrative centers were actually working for Egypt and not

[282] Though, Na'aman views the limited responses from Egyptian to be evidence that most communications between Egypt and WS polities were not written but were conveyed orally via messenger. He contrasts the handful of Egyptian Amarna Letters with the "flood" of vassal letters to Egypt, which he views a desperate attempts to elicit a response form the Pharaoh ("The Egyptian-Canaanite Correspondence," 127-128).

[283] Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay.*

necessarily for local Canaanite polities. Indeed, Finkelstein has suggested that Canaanite scribes were trained at such Egyptian sites, which suggests that Egypt was the force behind the use this scribal system.

There also remains the question of the linguistic classification of the letters. Should they be attributed to the language of the ruler or their court, do they reflect the dialect of the scribes working at a particular base or in a specific region, or are these letters written in a scribal code that show regional variations, but was overall only accessible to the scribal elites? For example, Goren suggests that most of the Beqa letters were actually written at an Egyptian center, as the rulers of the Beqa city-states could not afford their own scribal apparatuses.[284] The materials in these tablets best match the composition of clay at Kumidi (Khamid el-Loz), which served as an Egyptian administrative center during this period that was jointly operated by a Canaanite ruler and an Egyptian official.[285]

This raises the interesting question of whether or not there actually was a distinct regional dialect of "Beqa Akkadian." If the Beqa letters were composed by the same scribe/circle of scribes working at Kumidi, to what degree does the Beqa corpus reflect the local languages in the region, as opposed to that of a small group of scribes? Are the orthographic features in these letters (e.g., E [=i_{15}] and TE [=ti^{7}]) due to a local Akkadian dialect, or to the syllabary used by the scribes working at Kumidi for local polities? Moreover, seeing as letters using the "Beqa dialect" were produced at

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[284] Ibid., 133.

[285] The Beqa Letters comprise EA 173; 185-187; 174-176 and 363 (either by same scribe, or the same provenience and period), 177, possibly 178-179; also, EA 182-184 are included in this group are they are most similar to the letters from the Beqa Valley. For a discussion of the "Beqa Alliance" see J-P. Vita, "The Town of Mušiḫuna and the Cities of the "Beqa' Alliance" in the Amarna Letters," *SEL* 22 (2005), 1-7.

Egyptian centers and at administrative centers run by local elites, should we not speak of a regional cuneiform scribal tradition rather than a spoken dialects of Akkadian—keeping in mind that the scribes may not have been WS speakers or may have been working directly for Egypt?

Juan-Pablo Vita's 2010 article, "Scribes and Dialects in Late Bronze Age Canaan," builds upon this premise, calling into question the assumption that the language of the Amarna Letters reflects the language of local courts, as opposed to that of individual scribes working for numerous polities. He challenges the association made between "king—scribes—places of draft and dispatch of the letters." In other words, that the language of the messages is that of the sender as opposed to that of the scribe:[286] "A scribe reproduced in his writings his own language and grammar first and foremost, even more so than the language of the location where he worked (remember the existence, well proved in Canaan of foreign scribes)."[287] He proposes that paleographic analysis of the letters be the first step in determining their provenience. Only then should letters from different polities that are written in the same hand be evaluated as a linguistic unit. For example, Vita identifies letters that use the "Gezer dialect," yet are actually sent on behalf of neighboring rulers who presumably did not have their own scribe.[288] Such letters must either be the work product of itinerant scribes, or scribes stationed at

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[286] Juan-Pablo Vita, "Scribes and Dialects in Late Bronze Age Canaan," in *Language in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 53rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (*Moscow, Russia, July 23, 2007*), vol. I/2, Edited by Leonid Kogan, et al. *Babel und Bibel* 4/2 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 878.

[287] Ibid., 878.

[288] Vita distinguishes between the "Historical Corpus," which are written at Gezer for the King of Gezer (e.g., EA 267-272, 292-293, 297-300, 369, 378 vs. the "Linguistic Corpus," which includes letters written for other rulers (e.g., EA 266-280, 292-294, 296-300, [369], 378) ("Scribes and Dialects," 877).

Gezer who worked for the Egyptian administration to provide their scribal services to diverse rulers passing through the site.[289]

Vita's point that past scholarship has not sufficiently taken into account the paleography of the Amarna Letters is well taken. He proposes that scholars distance the textual artifact (i.e., the tablet) from the original speech event underlying these messages, as we cannot be sure that the language in the letters is that of a particular ruler of that of their scribes. He views the language of the tablets to be most akin got the language of the scribes writing these missives. Though, this approach still assumes that the language in these tablets was fixed, i.e., that is was the range of Akkadian forms expressed in these written messages.

It is important to remember that the "language" that Vita describes in these letters was most likely not a spoken vernacular, but rather is a reflection of a very limited scribal system that was only used in writing. The "speakers" in this corpus were the scribes writing these missives, whereas the recipients were the cuneiform scribes working for Egypt. In other words, Canaano-Akkadian was a learned scribal code, one that varied based on the writer. The original language of utterance of these messages, which is what we are missing from the written record, was not Akkadian but rather an elite register of a local Canaanite dialect.[290] The language reflected in the Canaano-Akkadian corpus is thus best approached as a written scribal language, one used for official communication between polities in the Eastern Mediterranean and Egypt. In order to better understand how this scribal code

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[289] See Vita, "Scribes and Dialects," 879; Goren et al., 279.

[290] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 641-674.

functioned, it is important to examine the culture of cuneiform that arose during this period.

II. Cuneiform Scribal Education in the LBA

During the second millennium B.C.E. (as during most of ancient history), scribal education was geared towards participation in economic and administrative systems that were largely determined by the palace and temple authorities of the period. This does not mean that all scribes worked in these two domains—the bulk of archives are actually in private residences. Rather, scribal culture in both official and private contexts was greatly impacted by these institutions. Moreover, scribes worked to meet the diverse professional, and at times, ideological ends of those commissioning written works. This is not to say that scribal training was identical, but rather that similar forces affected the demands of the market.

Writing at the 'higher' echelon of scribal culture required a different type of education and range of textual expertise than that required by scribes (or literate individuals) working for merchants and private citizens. Scribes working for such individuals only needed to know how to produce simple records and personal letters. The cumulative effect of scribes working in the same region for similar groups of individuals, who likewise shared similar institutional and societal concerns, catalyzed the development of regional scribal traditions. This in turn ensured a relative degree of standardization as such scribes reinforced these conventions in order to ensure intelligibility.

A. The Edubba

A working knowledge of the Akkadian language and the cuneiform script was merely one facet in cuneiform scribalism. For scribes in the Periphery, this process entailed enculturation into a

borrowed scribal tradition. Cuneiform scribal training was arduous, lengthy, and demanded an investment of time and funding. Yet, there is a dearth of evidence for scribal education in the Periphery during the second millennium B.C.E., in particular in the southern Levant. The following questions are still unresolved: What were the loci of scribal training in the Periphery? Did scribal training take place in institutional settings, guild settings, or in private homes? Can we even speak of institutional and/or state sponsored "scribal schools" in the traditional sense? If so, were they modeled after the scribal schools in Mesopotamia or Egypt, or is there evidence for local innovation?

Cuneiform scribal training drew upon similar pedagogical strategies (e.g., lexical lists, memorization, and copying techniques) used throughout the history of cuneiform, yet cuneiform pedagogy was not monolithic. It changed, as did the tablet formats, shapes, and sign forms, particularly when cuneiform was harnessed to write diverse languages.[291] The technological component of a writing system such as the preparation and manipulation of the writing materials, the layout (on a tablet versus a sheet of papyrus, stone, or ostracon), the way to properly hold a writing implement, and the proper stance, spacing, and orientation of the texts, are all learned habits. This well of knowledge contributed to the evolution of distinct scribal culture for each generation of cuneiform scribe.[292]

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[291] Eleanor Robson, "The Production and Dissemination of Scholarly Knowledge," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Edited by Karen Radner and Eleanor Robson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 562-563.

[292] For a discussion of cuneiform technology, including the preparation of clays and stylus manipulation see Jonathan Taylor, "Tablets as Artifacts, Scribes as Artisans," *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1-31.

The role of the *edubba* (É.DUB.BA.A), or the *bīt ṭuppi*(*m*) in Akkadian (i.e., "tablet house" or "school") is central in discussions of cuneiform scribal training, yet also somewhat misleading. The term É.DUB.BA.A appears in Old Babylonian texts that discuss learning and the scribal craft. Scholars initially viewed these scribal centers with a modern 20th century lens as a sort of university. Although this term is often translated as "(scribal) school" the modern notion of a formal state sponsored school in an institutional building is anachronistic for this early period. Education was not centralized by the state. There is no evidence for a counsel of state administrators convened to draw up the parameters of the written language. Moreover, most of the evidence for scribal education (i.e., the lexical lists, literary texts, and practice texts associated with scribal training) is actually found in private dwellings, not in palace or temple complexes.

The older *edubba* model is often used anachronistically to describe scribal schools in and outside of Mesopotamia.[293] The current trend in scholarship is quite critical of past descriptions of scribal training that compare it to the modern day desk-lined classroom.[294] For example, Andrew

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[293] The *edubba* as a scribal institution is first mentioned in texts that describe school lessons and activities that were copied during the OB period. George argues that the descriptions of the *edubba* in OB academic texts are actually idealized from Ur III accounts. He proposes that such formalized state sponsored schools were limited to the Ur III (21st cen B.C.E.). That is, by the OB scribal education had already undergone a shift away from the "grand institutions called é .d u b .b a .a in Sumerian literary texts" to a smaller, private, and more intimate systems of education lead by scribal experts (um.mi.a or *ummânu*), who taught their apprentices in their homes. From the OB on, students were trained in scribal arts at the home of a master scribe, or in a family/guild setting. Yet, the understanding that the descriptions of the *edubba* in OB texts actually dated to this period traditionally had a pervasive hold on the field. See Andrew George, "In Search of the *é.dub.ba.a*: The Ancient Mesopotamian School in Literature and Reality," in *"An Experienced Scribe Who Neglects Nothing:" Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Jacob Klein*. Edited by Y. Sefati et al. (Bethesda: CDL, 2005), 12-137; see also a general discussion of the *edubba* and the search for schools in Mesopotamia in Charpin, *Reading and Writing in Babylon*, 22-52.

[294] Ibid., 25- 29.

George's critique is that the overzealous search for "schools" has lead to the misidentification of scribal schools in the archaeological record.[295] It is generally understood today that the presence of "school" or practice texts does not necessarily indicate the presence of a schoolroom in the modern sense. From the OB on, scribal education did not take place in the grand institutions described in texts that discuss scribal training and the *edubba*, but a smaller, more intimate operation run by families and/or small groups and individuals.[296] There is also little evidence of school texts or evidence thereof in temple complexes. As Konrad von Volk observes, a preponderance of school texts in private homes suggests that the scribal craft was learned in a familial setting within the home of a master/priest scribe.[297] Furthermore, it is likely that much of scribal practice took place outdoors in the daylight, as cuneiform is quite an intricate script. In sum, there has been a shift in current understanding of scribal training and the *edubba.* Scribal training is now thought to have taken place in smaller more intimate settings, such as in a home or guild setting.

B. Scribal Training in the Periphery

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[295] George cites the following "test case" demonstrating this past problem and its impact on the analysis of material culture. Leonard Wooley, for example, identified two OB private dwellings as schools based on the large number of school texts. No. 7 Quiet Street had about forty student tablets; No. 1 Broad Street housed about 400 tablets, most of which were in secondary contexts. He proposed that Igmil-Sîn, the owner of the one of the homes, was a "headmaster," a description that George critiques as overly anachronistic. Additional scrutiny of these two structures has since lead scholars to quite a different understanding. Today, it is thought that these two buildings were actually private residences that were owned by literate priestly elites. See A. George, "In Search of the *é.dub.ba.a*," 3-4; quote on 4.

[296] Ibid., 4; for quote see Charpin, *Reading and Writing in Babylon*, 32.

[297] See the discussion in K. Volk, "Edubba'a und Edubba'a-Literatur: Rätsel und Lösungen," *ZA* 90: 7.

Cuneiform scribal education inherently impacted the language of the scribes. We can describe the scribal education in Mesopotamia as diglossic, as scribes in Assyria and Babylonia were learning to write prestige registers of their own spoken languages. Conversely, scribes in the Periphery were learning a foreign script, one based on syllabic and logographic signs that was originally developed to express linguistic forms in Sumerian and Akkadian. Cuneiform culture in the Levant is better analyzed as a subset of cuneiform scribal culture than a reflection of the languages spoken in Canaanite societies at large.[298] This is a subtle shift in view, yet one that calls for re-framing current understanding of the *linguistic* map of the region as a *scribal* map. The ancient scribe emerges front and center according to this approach.[299] As J-P. Vita writes, "A scribe reproduced in his writings his own language and grammar first and foremost, even more so than the language of the location where he worked (remember the existence, well proven in Canaan, of foreign scribes).[300] Before analyzing the language of the tablets, scholars must consider its materiality, in other words, "the general shape of signs, the overall ductus, the presence of telling or distinctive signs, the morphology of tablets as well as the distribution of the text on them (use of space, distance between signs, between lines),

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[298]J-P. Vita proposes that the language inscribed on the tablet was not necessarily a reflection of the individuals sending these letters, but attributes the linguistic forms in the Canaanite Amarna Letters to the languages of the scribes writing these texts ("Scribes and Dialects in Late Bronze Age Canaan," 868-869).

[299] Vita cites the letters of Rib-Adda the king of Byblos that were composed while he was in exile in Beirut (EA 136-138). Although the language of these letters has been discussed as part of the continuum of Byblian-Akkadian, Vita calls into question whether or not the scribe that wrote these letters was actually from Byblos, as the paleography of these letters aligns best with the ductus of the Beirut Amarna Letters. For example, he proposes that the language of these letters could equally result from (a) the language of Beirut; (b) Rib-Adda's Byblian speech being faithfully transcribed by a local Beirut scribe; or (c) a mix of the scribe's dialect and that of Rib-Adda (Ibid., 869).

[300] Ibid., 878.

which serve to identity the scribe, or type of training that they received."[301] Vita's view that the tablets reflect the language of the scribes writing these letters has dramatic implications for the classification of the dialectal continuum of Canaano-Akkadian, at least for those who view it as a spoken language.[302]

Vita proposes that scholars examine the paleography of the Amarna corpus as the first step in determining distribution of Canaanite Akkadian dialects. Currently, he identifies 95 different scribes through paleographic analysis, who wrote 275 Canaanite Amarna letters. Letters written in the same scribal hand should therefore be grouped together as belonging to the same linguistic variety.[303] For example, the Gezer corpus serves as a model of how to distinguish between the sender and the scribes producing these texts.[304] In this corpus Vita identifies the hand of two (possibly three) scribes working

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[301] Ibid., 866.

[302] In the case of the Gezer Amarna Letters, which are the main focus of his study, the scribes from this site appear to have composed missives for diverse rulers in the area. His analysis of the paleography of the Gezer letters suggests that one scribe working for Milki-Ilu actually wrote letters for other polities (Lapuma, Gath, Gintu-Kirmil, possibly Beth-Shemesh, and may also have written a letter from Ashdod or Jaffa). Of these, EA 273-274 were written for the Queen of Ṣapuma; EA 278-280 were sent on behalf of Šuwardata of Gath; EA 275-276 were written for Yaḫzib-Adda, an unknown ruler; EA 277 is broken and the sender and point of origin are unknown; EA 266 for Tagi of Gintu-Kirmil (modern Jatt); EA 296 Yaḫtiru, perhaps sent from Ashdod or Jaffa; EA 294 was sent from Ashdod, though the ruler's identity is unclear (i.e., whether or not this a new king of Gezer or another local ruler?). Vita concludes that 2-3 scribes working for the kings of Gezer also worked for other rulers in the region; these letters however were made from the local clays, which suggest that the scribes traveled to these courts (Ibid., 869-877).

[303] Ibid., 877-880.

[304] He delineates the following for the Gezer Amarna Letters: Historical corpus: EA 267-272; 292-293; 297-300; 369; 378= 14 letters; Linguistic corpus: EA 266-280; 292-294; 296-300 (369); 378: Total=24 (25) letters. This group accounts for the letters sent by other rulers, yet were written by the Gezer scribes. As he writes, the "linguistic" corpus includes letters that were written by the scribes of Gezer for other polities. This understanding best elucidates the scribal apparatuses in the Levant during this period. For example, Scribe 1 is credited with EA 267-272, 292-293, 297-300, 369, and 378 (a total of 20 letters); Scribe 2 with EA 266-280, 292-294, 296-300,369 (?), and 387 (total of 4 letters); Scribe 3 EA 369 (?). See Vita, "Scribes and Dialects, 877.

at Gezer for a range of polities, not only the dynasty ruling this site.[305] Overall, he calls for the "re-organization" of the scribal map of the Levant and seeks to bring the focus of the discussion of linguistic classification back to the scribes writing these missives who left their own linguistic imprint on this corpus.[306]

Vita's point about the importance of the scribe and use of paleography as a precursor to linguistic analysis of this corpus is well taken. However, he, following Izre'el, equates what is written in these tablets with a spoken, living dialect rather than a scribal code.[307] He describes Canaano-Akkadian in the following terms:

> Canaano-Akkadian was a type of a mixed-language that was genuinely spoken at the scribal centres, constituting a professional jargon. It is possible that conforming to the typical behaviour of jargons, scribes may have been using Canaano-Akkadian as their in-group code for all types of conversations, not only the formal ones.[308]

In more recent works, he has described Canaano-Akkadian as a contact-language, though at an intermediary stage in the continuum of contact-linguistic varieties (e.g., jargons, pidgins, creoles, and koines etc.).[309] The creation or elimination of dialects that he refers to above is based on the traditional assumption that the varieties of Canaano-Akkadian reflect spoken dialects, whereas these tablets are scribal artifacts and are better understood as the product of differences in scribal training.

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[305] Ibid., 876.

[306] Ibid., 879-880.

[307] For Vita's most recent work on this topic see "Language Contact," 375-404.

[308] Ibid., 392-393.

[309] Ibid., 393.

Vita's work is thus best understood as a description of the scribal schools/traditions in the southern Levant during the LBA than a study of the dialects spoken by the scribes of this period. He contends that there was no real need for Canaano-Akkadian, as Akkadian or "pan-Canaanite" could have served for communicative purposes. Rather, he proposes that this "mixed language" arose in part as an elite, scribal language used for in-grouping that was "an educational elite code which distinguished the community of Canaanite scribes from other social strata." This view, however does not consider the geo-political climate of this period, which is characterized both by Egyptian hegemony and by inter-group warfare. As will be discussed, the emergence, spread, and use of Canaano-Akkadian appear tied to Egypt's enterprise in the region. The true "Canaanite" scripts during this period were the linear and cuneiform alphabetic scripts (see Chapter Nine)—Canaano-Akkadian was a script of submission and is no longer used when local polities emerge in the Iron Age.

C. The "Stream of Tradition"

The academic and intellectual culture associated with cuneiform is central to discussions of literacy and scribal education in the Periphery. Not all scribes working in the Periphery were equal in skill, or had the same training, their identity as cuneiform scribes and use of the same writing system united them. In spite of the differences in use of this writing system, Canaanite cuneiform scribes and Egyptian cuneiform scribes were able to communicate because they were indoctrinated in the same basic system and shared knowledge that informed their identity as cuneiform scribes.

Traditional religious and/or administrative languages that are valued for their prestige and secrecy tend to be controlled by an elite few and thus can withstand social and cultural changes. This

is especially true for written languages. Jan Assmann distinguishes between "communicative" and "cultural" memory as a matter of access.[310] Communicative memory is an open stock of traditions that is not restricted to any particular group, but rather comprises recent memories of the past in a society. "Cultural memory," on the other hand is differentiated as it is propelled by specialists within a given society (religious leaders, teachers, scribes, and scholars), who pass down the tradition in its appropriate oral or written form (which can include ritual and performance).

This process occurs in both literate and non-literate societies, though in literate societies scribes and literate individuals tend to take on the role of specialists bearing these traditions. As a consequence, literate elites develop their own distinct sub-culture, one that further reinforces social stratification and can lead to a detachment from the rest of society. Assmann attributes the genesis of social stratification in literate societies to the specialized nature of writing, which tends to be a restricted skill. As he writes,

> [I]n the early civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt scribes were members of an elite that united cognitive, political, economic, religious, ethical, and legal competencies… an ever widening gap opened between the writing, administrating, and ruling elite on the one hand, and the working, producing masses on the other. The question arises as to whether there was a self-image that encompassed both levels. Did they still see themselves as members of a single group?… An Egyptian official, for example, would not have seen himself as the bearer of a specific official culture—for example, technology professional or class ethics—but as the bearer of culture itself.[311]

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[310] J. Assmann's focus on written, textualized traditions is somewhat problematic for biblical traditions which entailed parallel oral and written traditions, yet this model works well for the cuneiform of the second millennium in Canaan, as Akkadian was not spoken but only used in writing (*Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* [New York: Cambridge Press, 2011]).

[311] Assmann, *Cultural Memory,* 129.

The literate specialists become the driving forcing behind a facet of traditional culture and eventually claim to be representatives of society as a whole. Assmann describes the prestigious and conservative nature of scribal culture in the ancient Near East as a widespread phenomenon.[312] He views the perpetuation of written, textual traditions as a reflection of the prevailing attitudes of those undertaking the selection process, typically the scribal and institutional elites.[313] Such groups controlled the written legacy passed down to future generations, as they were for the most part the main groups able access this technology. For example, he cites the destruction of the religious texts written during the Amarna Age in Egypt was part of a more general cultural purge following Akhenaten's death. In this case, those shaping the written tradition chose to efface Akhenaten's imprint on history. The literati of the society thus controlled the written stream of tradition, to borrow Oppenheim's metaphor. That is not to say that such elites controlled *all* literary traditions, but they influenced the writing system and shaped those traditions that took a written form.

In a similar vein, the evolution of a distinct scribal culture is also evident in the scholastic and intellectual traditions of cuneiform scribes. For example, the retention of the Sumerian language and its corresponding literature in the far reaches of the Periphery exemplifies the "antiquarian pursuit" inherent to cuneiform scribal culture.[314] As Gonzalo Rubio writes,

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[312] Ibid., 84.

[313] Ibid., 85.

[314] G. Rubio, "Scribal Secrets and Antiquarian Nostalgia: Writing and Scholarship in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Reconstructing a Distant Past* (*Fs. Silva*). Edited by D. Barreyra & G. Del Olmo (Barcelona: Ausa, 2009), 158.

> Such traditionalism and antiquarian concern dominated the most basic aspects of cuneiform scholarship, from language choice to the relation between the language in which a text was written and the language in which the same text was read. Thus, one finds manifestations of this ideological framework in the survival of Sumerian two millennia after its natural death as anybody's mother tongue.[315]

The use of Sumerograms throughout the history of cuneiform is understood as a part of an entrenched intellectual tradition. Akkadian, too, attained such prestige status in Mesopotamia and the Periphery in the second millennium B.C.E. In Mesopotamia, this legacy carried into the later first millennium B.C.E., even when Aramaic speakers dominated the population.. However, it is important to differentiate scholastic knowledge of a language and/or writing system from active fluency or proficiency. To claim that Canaanite scribes "knew" Sumerian because they employed Sumerographic writing would be a bit of an exaggeration. Canaanite scribes understood the basic semantic value underlying these logograms and their Akkadian equivalents as part of their rote training in cuneiform. It is quite unlikely that the Canaanite scribe working for the king of Gezer, for example, viewed the logographic spellings in their letters to be "Sumerian," or could pen an original text in Sumerian.

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[315] The following Sumerian proverb best expresses the elite status of Sumerian: "A scribe who knows no Sumerian, what sort of scribe is he?" A working knowledge of Sumerian, perhaps even the "classic" Sumerian works, remained central to elite, scribal education, even though Sumerian was no longer a spoken vernacular after the Ur III Period (2114/5-2004). As Eleanor Robson writes, 18th century scribal training in Nippur, for example, was steeped in Sumerian literature; specialist scribes were trained to be the bearers of an ideal paragon of Sumerian literary culture ("The Production and Dissemination of Scholarly Knowledge," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Edited by Karen Radner and Eleanor Robson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 562-563). For a discussion of cuneiform scribal culture and antiquarian interest in what they considered to be ancient texts, see Rubio, "Scribal Secrets and Antiquarian Nostalgia," 153-180. For a discussion of the role of Sumerian in scribal education see George, "In Search of the *é.dub.ba.a*," 2. For the above quote see Rubio, "Scribal Secrets and Antiquarian Nostalgia," 172; original publication is in Proverb Collection 2 no. 47 in Bendt Alster, "Interaction of Oral and Written Poetry in Early Mesopotamian Literature," in *Mesopotamian Epic Literature*. Edited by M. Vogelzang and H. L. J. Vanstiphout (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 54.

Competency in a writing system and the ability to repeat learned spellings and sign forms demands a lesser level of proficiency than complex spoken language production.

Indeed, this tendency to value and preserve the traditions of the past may explain the retention of older orthographies in Canaano-Akkadian from OB Akkadian, such as *awatu*, with the retention of the inner vocalic –*w*- versus the more update MB form *amatu*. This, too, could explain why there might have been a reticence to employ cuneiform to write Canaanite texts syllabically.[316] Rather, the scribes in Canaan preserved the basic orthography of the writing system to write in an Akkadian code to outsiders. They reserved their own emerging alphabetic scripts to write in their own languages and to compose small personal, ritual texts, whereas cuneiform and the Akkadian language were restricted to diplomacy and administration.

The above discussion establishes the need to evaluate the corpus of cuneiform from Canaan during the second millennium B.C.E. not merely as a linguistic system, but rather as a subset of a unique scribal culture. Rubio notes several aspects of cuneiform scribalism that are key to understanding the cultural context of the Canaanite Amarna Letters: 1) Cuneiform writing was part of a larger system of intellectual and historical traditions; 2) Scripts and writing systems were specific to a genre of texts; and 3) The language of writing was not necessarily the language of reading. Cuneiform was used as a medium of communication in multilingual contexts (including between those speaking the dialects of the same linguistic variety, e.g., Assyrian vs. Babylonian). Cuneiform's

[316] Vita views the uniqueness of Canaano-Akkadian to be a reflection of the scribes' ideologies about language and describes it as an "'in-group-language' granting and emphasizing the identity of the group of scribes" (Vita, Language Contact," 29).

established history in the Levant, dating to the MBA, combined with its use of both logographic and syllabic signs rendered it a convenient vehicle of communication between multiple language groups. Indeed, Egypt's adoption of cuneiform for diplomacy suggests that this script was an intrinsic part of the international *koiné* of diplomacy.[317]

A. Leo Oppenheim famously describes the continuity of cuneiform as a "stream of tradition," to explain the *longue durée* of this writing system and its associated literature. [318] However, in recent years this metaphor has been challenged as approaching cuneiform texts as though "independent" of the groups using this system. There is a shift in focus to a discussion of their materiality, genre, and social context.[319] Eleanor Robson cautions against a too entrenched view in scholarship that Mesopotamian intellectual culture was "conservative, traditional, and even 'canonical,'" whereas cuneiform scribalism was also characterized by "innovation, creativity, individualism, and localism."[320] Cuneiform scribal culture was dynamic and ever-changing. Though scribes trained in cuneiform throughout the ANE did go through the same hurdles as their peers, and followed the basic

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[317] Marian Feldman includes cuneiform writing as a part of the "International Style" pervasive in court culture during this period (*Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient Near East, 1400-1200 B.C.E.* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006]).

[318] A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964; revised by Erica Reiner 1977), 13.

[319] Niek Veldhuis, "Domesticizing Babylonian Scribal Culture in Assyrian: Transformation by Preservation," in *Theory and Practice of Knowledge Transfer: Studies in School Education in the Ancient Near East and Beyond: Papers Read at a Symposium in Leiden, 17-19 December 2008*. Edited by W. S. Egmond and W. H. Soldt (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2012), 12.

[320] Robson, "The Production and Dissemination of Scholarly Knowledge," 557.

parameters, in practice, scribal practices were regionally quite diverse. Also, the scribes' idiosyncratic styles added an additional layer of meaning to the tablet- artifact that was not necessarily always articulated when the tablet was read—that is, such written messages also communicated at a metapragmatic and non-linguistic level.

For example, the Amarna glosses and the postscripts added at the end of the tablets were intended for the scribe on the receiving end and were meant to influence the translation of the official messages. They were most likely not read as written on the tablet to the Egyptian officials or to the Pharaoh. In a similar vein, a note in a colophon, or a personal preference for certain sign reading, or a variant orthography could add nuance to the written text. J-P. Vita proposes that the glosses in the Canaanite Amarna Letters are not linguistic footnotes, as most scholars have viewed them, but rather are a reflection of the scribes' desire to "show off."[321] This interpretation opens up the possibility that the innovative (or divergent) spellings in the Canaanite Amarna Letters are quite possibly demonstrations of scribal skill.

It is also important to recall that scribes working for local were not passive secretaries or copyists but had a significant impact on international affairs. They were charged with navigating between the protocols of Canaanite and Egyptian courts, using a writing system and written language that was not really spoken by either set of officials. K. van der Toorn describes the scribes working for

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[321] For example, he cites the use of both the syllabic and logographic spellings of IZI "fire" by the scribe of EA 185 (a letter from Mayarzana of Hasi to the Pharaoh). In this letter the scribe uses variable spellings: the gloss IZI/ *i-ša-ti* in lines 19 and 32, yet just the Sumerogram IZI in lines 24, 39, and 60. Had IZI been used simply as a short hand for the gloss IZI/ *i-ša-ti* one would expect it to be used consistently after line 19. See Vita, "On the Lexical Background of the Amarna Glosses," in *AoF*, 39 (2012), 282.

local polities in the Periphery as members of local cabinets who were themselves elites, as scribes in the ruling inner circle were often of elite lineage and/or represented the best of their craft.[322] The advanced level of scribal training needed to work directly for such rulers entailed competence in the limited set of syllabic signs and logograms for their work, as well as a basic understanding of Akkadian write letters and to decode the replies from Egypt.

It is unlikely that scribes were fluent or even conversant in Akkadian, but rather learned it in set, formulaic phrases. For this reason, van der Toorn views knowledge of Akkadian in the Periphery to have been mainly passive and "primarily occupational." Use of Akkadian was restricted to diplomacy. Cuneiform scribes learned the terminology necessary for their craft, but had limited knowledge of the traditional Mesopotamian literary and scholastic texts. As such, Mesopotamian culture was a "remote reality."[323] He credits the innovations in Canaanite cuneiform to Canaanite scribes developing their own curricula using small formulaic phrases drawn from their own oral culture. Apprentice scribes were entrusted with "collecting and memorizing of proverbs and sayings" as a chief part of their scribal education. The Canaanite Letters are replete with such snippets of local proverbs and figurative language and tend to highlight Canaanite lexemes and expressions using *Glossenkeilen*.[324] Such formulaic idioms are often repeated in letters by the same scribal group. A more oral-poetic style also appears in sections that introducing criticisms of the Pharaoh or at dramatic

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[322] Van der Toorn, "Cuneiform Documents from Syria-Palestine," 105.

[323] Ibid., 106; quote 108.

[324] Ibid., 107-108.

points in these letters.

The proverbial sayings in the Canaanite Amarna Letters and the Canaanite glosses offer a window into Canaanite scribal culture. It is quite interesting that the areas with the most developed Canaano-Akkadian, namely those that feature the more complex messages, are those that incorporate these "local" WS idioms. This use of a more "oral" style appears to have been intended to enhance the reading of the text and contribute to its dramatic appeal.[325] Seeing as the alphabetic scripts were also used during this period, it is quite possible that there was some crossover in the core strategies used by those trained in cuneiform and the emerging WS alphabetic scripts. As van der Toorn suggests, they may have drawn upon the same stock of proverbs and memorization techniques as part of their training.[326]

D. **Scribal Training in the Periphery and Cuneiform Scribal Culture**

The adoption of cuneiform writing outside of Mesopotamia was much more than a technological borrowing. Mark Weeden discusses the evolution of Hittite cuneiform traditions as the adoption of a cultural framework that transcended a mere knowledge of the cuneiform script, as "[s]cribes were not just learning an abstract set of signs, they were learning a repertory of ways of

[325] The following examples draw from an oral style of rhetoric: EA 288: 32-33 *ša-ak-na-ti/ e-nu-ma* GIŠ.MÁ *i-na lìb-bi* A.AB.BA "I am situated like a ship in the midst of the sea;" the Laba'yu Letter EA 252: 16-19 ⌜*ša*⌝-*ni-tam ki-i na-am-lu/tu-um-ḫa-ṣú la-a/ti-ka-pí-lu ù ta-an-*⌜*šu*⌝-⌜*ku*⌝/*qa-ti* LÚ-*lì ša yi-ma-ḫa-aš-ši* "Furthermore, when ants are smitten, they do not just curl up, but they bite the hand of the man who smote them."

[326] Ibid., 107-108.

writing for artifacts of Mesopotamian cultural heritage."[327] There was a symbiotic relationship between state and cuneiform scribal institutions in the Periphery. Wide-scale changes in scribalism entailed institutional involvement. Major reforms, such the development of a scribal system to write Hittite in cuneiform, could not have been actualized by "the occasional wandering scribes." The development of a cohesive writing system, such as Ugaritic, or Canaano-Akkadian, required the backing of an authoritative body—one able to foster a relative degree of standardization and to provide the stability for its sustainability. Lone, itinerant scribes were not sufficient to promulgate the wide range and complexity of these scribal systems. In the case of Hittite cuneiform, the local scribal apparatuses were under the influence of the administrative institutions working in Hatti; as such, they were able to enact "reforms" in the scribal system and to ensure a relative degree of standardization. In the southern Levant. Canaano-Akkadian appears as a comprehensive system, yet there is no evidence for a cohesive Canaanite authority orchestrating this scribal system. Also, there is quite limited evidence that Canaano-Akkadian was used for local matters. This scribal code is attested overwhelmingly in interactions with Egypt, which suggests the Egyptian administration was the unifying factor endorsing this system.

1. Peripheral Akkadian

Scribal education in the Periphery adhered to the basic tenets of scribal education in Mesopotamia and followed a progression from the simpler elements of cuneiform. These included

[327] Mark Weeden, "Adapting to New Contexts: Cuneiform in Anatolia," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Edited by Karen Radner and Eleanor Robson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28.

knowledge of the signs, to the basics of letter writing, and finally, some familiarity with Sumerian and Akkadian literature. Akkadian in the Periphery was also influenced to varying degrees by the languages spoken by local populations, which fostered the development of a distinct scribal curriculum that emerged by the LBA.[328] The script employed in the Periphery was simplified and, by the 16th century B.C.E., included new signs and values that better represented local languages.[329] Such shifts in script adapted cuneiform to the needs of local administration, which further differentiated scribal traditions in and outside of Mesopotamia.

Though treated as an extension of Mesopotamian culture, cuneiform writing in the Periphery extended to the third Millennium B.C.E. There was an extensive and singular use of this script at Ebla to write "Eblite." It was also used by the Amorite dynasties of the first half of the second millennium B.C.E., and after their collapse, it continued to be the main script used for administration in the northern Levant. In the south, it was used for correspondence with Egypt up until the end of the LBA.[330] Cuneiform was thus intrinsic part of the scribal landscape in the Levant, and served more broadly as an "international" script along the eastern Mediterranean and the broader Near East.

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[328] For a discussion of scribal education in the Periphery see van der Toorn, "Cuneiform Documents from Syria-Palestine," 97-113; S. Izre'el (*The Amarna Scholarly Tablets*. Groningen: Styx, 1997).

[329] For example, in the west the sign PA was used in verbal prefixes to represent *wv*- and *yv*-; in Canaano-Akkadian PA stands consistently for *yv*- in verbal prefixes. See Theo V. D. Hout, "The Rise and Fall of Cuneiform Script in Hittite Anatolia," *Visible Language: Inventions of Writing in the Ancient Middle East and Beyond*. Edited by Christopher Woods, Geoff Emberling, and Emily Teeter (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010), 102-103.

[330] An OB period fragment from Tell el-Dab'a is the earliest cuneiform text in Egypt. It was not made locally, but appears to have been owned by a merchant or diplomat. See Manfred Bietak and Irene Forstner-Müller, "Der Hyksospalast bei Tell el-Dab'a. Zweite und Dritte Grabungskampagne (Frühling 2008 *und* Frühling 2009)," *Ä&L* 19 (2009), 91-120; Frans

2. Digraphia at Ugarit

The sociolinguistic situation at Ugarit presents a better parallel to the digraphia of the southern Levant in the LBA. In both cases there is a local in-grouping script used to write the local languages used for interactions between members of the local community; there is also an adopted script based on cuneiform used predominantly for interactions with outsiders.[331] These two categories are not absolute, but rather reflect a general pattern in the written material culture. In the Levant, as a general rule Akkadian was used for diplomacy, whereas the alphabetic scripts were restricted to local communication.[332] The adoption of the cuneiform alphabet at Ugarit exemplifies the pervasive power of cuneiform culture as well as the innovation and experimentation that characterizes writing in the WS world during the LBA; knowledge of alphabetic and Mesopotamian cuneiform entailed some of the same training.[333] The WS alphabet, on the other hand, evolved from Egyptian scribal traditions

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van Koppen, and Manuela Lehmann, "A Cuneiform Sealing From Tell el-Dabʿa and its Historical Context," *Ä&L* 22-23 (2012-2013), 91-94.

[331] For a definition and descriptions of diglossia see Charles A. Ferguson, "Diglossia." *Word* 15 (1959): 325–40; Joshua A. Fishman, "Bilingualism With and Without Diglossia: Diglossia With and Without Bilingualism," *Journal of Social Issues* 23.2 (1967): 29–38; for a definition of digraphia see John DeFrancis, "Digraphia." *Word* 35:1 (1984): 59–66.

[332] There is no example of an alphabetic text sent to Egypt, for example; the cuneiform alphabet at Ugarit was restricted to personal letters, administrative texts, and literary works that were produced for local use.

[333] The Kingdom of Ugarit was the first WS administration to adopt an alphabetic writing system for official use. Written evidence dates to the 13th century B.C.E., the creation of the alphabetic cuneiform script at this site most likely dates to the early LBA. By the 11th century B.C.E., the Phoenician coastal cities adopted a 22-letter alphabet modified from the early WS script for their royal inscriptions. This alphabet was then harnessed by emerging Israelite, Aramean, Moabite, Edomite, and Ammonite states, which eventually developed their own distinct alphabetic scripts. In Greece, the first public use of the alphabet dates to the 7th century B.C.E. The alphabet was only used on a wide scale by Greek city-states beginning in the 5thcentury B.C.E., when the Ionic script was adopted as the official script in Athens. This script was standardized, and eventually spread throughout the Classical World.

and entailed knowledge of a different technology and set of scribal conventions.[334] Currently, the corpus of texts from Ugarit offers the earliest standardized use of an alphabetic script. Scribes at Ugarit worked adapted the Proto-Canaanite alphabet, which was written using ink and papyrus, into a

[334] One popular theory is that it was inspired by the Egyptian system of unilateral signs, which were used predominantly as phonetic complements to syllabic and logographic signs. In Egyptian writing each unilateral sign represented a discrete phoneme. This is the standard view, though Goldwasser (1991; 2010) proposes that the WS "inventors" of alphabetic writing did not understand the principals of Egyptian writing but only borrowed its iconic elements (i.e., the sign themselves). Most scholars agree that WS speakers developed alphabetic writing in Egypt by the 18th century B.C.E., though Sass has more recently advocated a 15th century B.C.E. inception. It is debated whether or not this system was truly an alphabet as opposed to an *abjad,* or consonantal system. I use the term "alphabet" in correspondence to what is standard in NWS scholarship. Pertinent studies include: William M. F. Albright, *The Vocalization of the Egyptian Syllabic Orthography* (New Haven, Conn: American Oriental Society, 1934); Alan H. Gardiner, "The Egyptian Origin of the Semitic Alphabet," *JEA* 3:1(1916), 1-16; John C. Darnell and Chip Dobbs-Allsopp et al. *Two Early Alphabetic Inscriptions from the Wadi el-Hôl: New Evidence for the Origin of the Alphabet from the Western Desert of Egypt* (*Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 59/2, 2006); Orly Goldwasser, "An Egyptian Scribe from Lachish and the Hieratic Tradition of the Hebrew Kingdom," *TA* 18 (1991), 248-253; "How the Alphabet was Born from Hieroglyphs," *BAR* 36:2 (2010), 38-51; Gordon J. Hamilton, *The Origins of the West Semitic Alphabet in Egyptian Scripts* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2006); Benjamin Sass, *The Genesis of the Alphabet and its Development in the Second Millennium B.C.* (New York: Wiesbaden, 1988); "The Genesis of the Alphabet and its Development in the Second Millennium B.C. Twenty Years Later," *KBN* 2 (2004-2005), 147-166; William A. Ward, "Notes on Egyptian Group Writing," *JNES* 16:3 (1957), 198-203. For an overview of the development and spread of the alphabet see Joseph Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet: An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Paleography* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1982); Seth L. Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); André Lemaire, "The Spread of Alphabetic Scripts(c. 1700-500 B.C.E.)," *Diogenes* 218 (2008), 44-57; Joseph Lam, "The Invention and Development of the Alphabet," in *Visible Language: Inventions of Writing in the Ancient Middle East and Beyond*. Edited by Christopher Woods, Geoff Emberling, and Emily Teeter (Chicago, Il: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010), 189-195; For a discussion of the spread of the alphabet in the Classical World see Martin Bernal, *Cadmean Letters: The Transmission of the Alphabet to the Aegean and Further West Before 1400 B.c.* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990); Carlo Consani, "Ancient Greek Sociolinguistics and Dialectology," *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, Brill Online, 2014, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-ancient-greek-language-and-linguistics/ancient-greek-sociolinguistics-and-dialectology-EAGLLCOM_00000024 (Reference. 22 October 2014); Lilian H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece: A Study of the Origin of the Greek Alphabet and Its Development from the Eighth to the Fifth Centuries B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961); Barry B. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); *Writing and the Origins of Greek Literature* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, Ad 50-250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Roger D. Woodard, *Greek Writing from Knossos to Homer: A Linguistic Interpretation of the Origin of the Greek Alphabet and the Continuity of Ancient Greek Literacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); *The Textualization of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Harvey Yunis, *Written Texts and the Rise of Literate Culture in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

script suitable for stylus and clay technology.[335] The linear alphabet does not appear to have been used in the northern Levant, which may be a reflection of the two different scribal cultures influencing the development of these two WS scripts (i. e., cuneiform in the north and Egyptian in the south). The paucity of alphabetic cuneiform inscriptions discovered in the southern Levant suggests that it was not widely used and/or ever adopted for local administration.[336] In Canaan, alphabetic writing does not appear to have been standardized until much later in the Iron I/early Iron II.[337] As such, the Ugaritic system is the earliest attested adoption of an alphabet by a political institution.

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[335] The scribes appear to have attempted to preserve the original shape of some of the letters of the early Proto-Canaanite script (e.g., the *beth* and *'ayin*), though the new medium resulted in an alphabetic script that had different shapes and orientations than the linear alphabetic script used in the southern Levant. This new script eventually comprised 30 signs that included three *aleph* signs. Though there is no direct evidence that Ugarit was where this script originated, the vast number and range of texts in alphabetic cuneiform at and around Ugarit suggests that this was indeed the birthplace of alphabetic cuneiform. Alphabetic cuneiform texts outside of Ugarit and its environs appear to be directly related to the Kingdom of Ugarit (e.g., the Ugaritic text at Cyprus is written by a court official stationed there). Also, though this writing system is attested in a few cities outside of the kingdom of Ugarit in the Levant, for example, at Cyprus (Hala Sultan Tekke near Larnaca), in Syria (Tell Sukas; Kedesh), Lebanon (Kamid el-Loz; Sarepta), and in Israel (Mount Tabor; Taanach; Beth-Shemesh), the bulk of texts are actually from Ras Shamra.

[336] The three texts to date discovered in the southern Levant are of ritual/personal, and non-administrative nature. The Mount Tabor Adze inscription, the abecedary from Beth Shemesh are small portable objects that do not appear to have been linked to an institutional setting; the lone text that might have an administrative function is Taanach 15. Although the meaning of this text is not clear, it appears to be a type of receipt or a record of an exchange. Frank Moore Cross understands this little text to be a receipt for a payment of some sort and proposes the following reconstruction and translation: *kkb' lp'/ kpr š yḥtk l/dw kôkaba' la-pu'm/ kupr ša yaḥut*(*t*)*ak la-/dêw: "Kôkaba' to Pu'/ the fee fixed* (*had been*) *remitted/to /him."* See D.R. Hillers, "An Alphabetic Cuneiform Tablet from Taanach (TT433)," *BASOR* 173 (1964), 45-50; Manfred Weippert, "Zur Lesung der alphabetischen Keilschrifttafel vom Tell Ta'annek," *ZDPV* 83 (1967), 82-83; Frank Moore Cross, "The Canaanite Cuneiform Tablet from Taanach," *BASOR* 190 (1968), 41-46; M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, J. Sanmartin, "Zu TT 433=KTU 4.767," *UF* 6 (1974), 469-470.

[337] The first concrete "royal" text that makes use of alphabetic writing is Ahiram's sarcophagus, which is commonly dated to the late 11th-10th centuries B.C.E. As Christopher Rollston writes, the early alphabetic inscriptions from the southern Levant (the most recent of which is the Eshba'al inscription discovered a at Tell Qeiyafa), point to the presence of scribes trained in the linear script (which he designates the Early Linear Alphabetic Script). This points to a professional class of scribes and administrators and to a standardized scribal system ("The Incised Ishba'l Inscription from Khirbet Qeiyafa: Some Things that Can and Cannot be Said," 6/21/1, https://zwingliusredivivus.wordpress.com/2015/06/21/christopher-rollston-on-the-ishbal-inscription-a-guest-post/).

A comparison between scribalism at Ugarit and in the southern Levant reveals a southern (i.e., Egyptian) orientation in Canaan. The hallmarks of alphabetic culture in the south (e.g., ink and papyrus, scribal terminology, the use of the hieratic number system) were rooted in Egyptian scribal culture. Scribalism outside of areas of Egyptian control was rooted in cuneiform scribal culture. In both regions, the "local" alphabetic scripts appear to have been reserved for internal matters, whereas dealing with outsiders prompted use of cuneiform.[338] For example, at Ugarit, Akkadian was used to write personal letters, nearly all of the legal texts recovered from the site, and also served in some capacity in administration; texts for local consumption, in particular, personal letters and religious and literary texts, were increasingly written in both the local language and script.[339] By implementing a writing system that was derived from the cuneiform system and employed the same mediums, the scribes in Ugarit were able to hybridize and have the best of both worlds—they developed a local system that better expressed their spoken vernacular for internal matters, and yet, one that inherited the prestige and status associated with cuneiform writing.

III. The Art of Diplomacy—Letters as Scribal Artifacts

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[338] Wilfred H. van Soldt, "The Akkadian of Ugarit: The Lexicographical Aspect," *SEL* 12 (1995), 206.

[339] In an evolution similar to that of the local script at Ugarit, for internal affairs, it appears that the first texts written in the Hittite language (as opposed to Akkadian) were ritualistic texts describing the state cult. Gradually Hittite became the language used for a wider range of texts. For example, in the Old Hittite period land grants were written in Akkadian, yet by the Early New Kingdom they were written in Hittite. By the 14th century, Hittite operated as the written language of the Hittite empire and by the 13th century B.C.E., Mesopotamian literary "classics" were translated into Hittite. Hittite became valued as a regional written language, and was even used in Western Anatolia (Arzawa, etc.) for diplomacy. Ilya Yakubovitch attributes this to a nationalistic trend, as Akkadian began to be supplanted by local written languages by the Old Kingdom. By the Early New Kingdom, scribes developed their own writing system, Anatolian Hieroglyphics, to write their own language (Luvian) (*Sociolinguistics of the Luvian Language. Brill Studies in Indo-European Languages & Linguistics* 2 [Leiden: Brill, 2010], 363-379).

The Canaano-Akkadian letters are best evaluated within the context of mediated diplomacy. The scribes creating these letters innovates new orthographies and ways to attract the attention of the Egyptian court, yet they adhered in large part to the basic tenets of the epistolary protocols of this period. Before examining the language of this corpus, it is worthwhile to consider the role of the scribes as intermediaries and ambassadors.

A. Epistolary Protocol

The rules of written protocol enabled cuneiform scribes trained in diverse regions across the Periphery to successfully communicate. These diplomatic exchanges were structured in such a way as to bridge the gap between distant powers and create a sense of solidarity between royal families. The epistolary formulae used in these letters are rooted in the language of familial relationships. The language of family hierarchies (e.g., father>son for a superior>inferior, or brother=brother for peers) was used to establish and maintain the political relationships between such polities. Each letter is framed as though a conversation between two closely knitted individuals. Letters between peer polities, i.e., the members of the "Great Powers Club" —Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, the Hittites, and Mitanni—are structured as discussions between siblings; letters from smaller, less powerful polities in the Levant use the deferential language of a parent/child relationship when addressing the Pharaoh.[340] The metaphor of familial relationships was also implemented to express concern over strained diplomatic relations (for example, in disputes regarding marriage agreements, trade, and royal gift

[340] EA 7:1-6: "To Amanappa my father, the message of Rib-Haddi your son: At the feet of my father I have fallen. May the Lady of the city of Byblos grant you honor before the king, your lord."

giving), thereby framing serious grievances as though conflicts between family members.[341] In the case of the Canaanite Letters, the references to the Pharaoh as a "father" (e.g., in the Byblos letters) implied that the king had an obligation to his vassals.

KUB 23.102, a draft of a Hittite letter from a Hittite king (Muwattalli II or Muršili III) to King Adad-nirāri of Assyria (dating to the Late Hittite period) demonstrates the importance of protocol in diplomatic missives. This text presents an example of what happened when the use of kinship terminology was deemed inappropriate and caused offense—apparently the scribes that penned Adad-nirāri's letter overstepped their bounds. This text is a response to a letter from Adad-nirāri where he boasted of his military success against Wasašatta (the vestiges of the Mitanni). The Hittite letter reproaches Adad-nirāri for his hubris:

> So you've become a "Great King," have you? ...But why do you continue to speak about "brotherhood" [ŠEŠ-*UT-TA*]*?* ...For what reason should I call you my "brother" [ŠEŠ-*tar-ta*]? Who calls another his "brother" [ŠEŠ-*tar*]? Do people who are not on familiar terms with each other call each other "brother" [ŠEŠ-tar]? Why then should I call you "brother" [ŠEŠ-*tar*]? Were you and I born of the same mother [AMA-*ni*]? As my grandfather [{A-B}I A-BA A-BI-YA-*ya*] did not call the King of Assyria "brother," you should not keep writing to me (about) "coming" and "Great Kingship." It displeases me."

This letter is dismissive of Adad-nirāri's claim that he is of equal status to the Hittite king. The caustic language attests to the delicate balance between kings who considered themselves the super-powers of the day, and smaller, ambitious rulers, such as Adad-nirāri, seeking to attain international status. As Bryce notes: [The term] 'Brotherhood' implied the existence of close personal links between two royal

[341] The Sumerograms and Akkadograms are included here in the translation for emphasis. For the translation see Harry A. Hoffner and Gary M. Beckman. *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 322-324 (Letter 104).

houses….Adad-nirāri was being outrageously presumptuous in thinking that his military successes gave him the right to an instant "brotherhood" relationship with the king at whose expense these successes had been won."[342] In this case, the use of kinship terminology backfired—Adad-nirāri is seen as an upstart and an opportunist. The Hittite response concludes with a more literal interpretation of "brotherhood" that is quite tongue in cheek; the Hittite scribe makes the point that the two monarchs are actually not from the same mother, and thus they are not "brothers." The repetition of kinship terms in this letter such as the term "brother" (lines 9', 10', 12', 13'), "brotherhood" (lines 5' and 7'), and the references to their mothers (line 15') and forefathers (lines 16') twist the meaning of Adad-nirāri's words. Instead of affirming the relationship between the two courts and his newly won status as a regional power, the repetition of family terminology is ultimately a rejection of him as a peer. The letter dismisses Adad-nirāri's claim to be a "Great King" (LUGAL.GAL in line 4' and LUGAL.GAL-*UT-TA* in line 18') and effectively puts him in his place as an underling and an upstart.

The exchanges between Amenhotep III of Egypt and Kadashman-Enlil, the king of Babylonia, too, demonstrate how such terminology was used to bridge the vast geographical and cultural gulf between such monarchs:

> Speak to Kadashman-Enlil king of the land of Karaduniash, my brother! Thus Nibmuʿareʿa the great king, king of the land of Egypt, your brother: With me all is well; may all be well with you. With your house, with your wives, with your sons, with your senior officials, with your horses and with your chariotry, (and) in the midst of your territories, may all be exceedingly well.[343]

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[342] For the quote see Trevor Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age* (London: Routledge, 2003), 83.

[343] EA 1: 1-6.

Such formulaic language was key to diffusing tensions and served as a polite reminder of the delicate balance of power during such peer-polity interactions. By referring to Kadashman-Enlil as a sibling, Amenhotep III positioned himself as Kadashman-Enlil's equal. Inquiries after the well being of the royal family and court also reinforced the impression that there was a close interpersonal connection between rulers. In reality, it is unlikely that monarchs ever met—there is certainly no evidence of such a meeting. Rather, messengers and court officials served as proxies in these diplomatic exchanges.

A letter from Tushratta, the king of Mittani, to Amenhotep III, the king of Egypt, demonstrates how the importance of written messages was not limited to their content but that the actual tablet served as a symbol of sustained relations between the two courts. The written artifact is described in this passage as an extension of the Pharaoh:

> (EA 20: 9b-13) *ú ṭup-pa/ ša il-qà-a al-ta-ta-as-sí-ma*[*ú a*]*-ma-t*[*i-*]*šu el-te-me*/ *ù* [*ṭ*]*a-a-bá da-a*[*n-n*]*i-iš-ma a-ma-a-ti*[*-š*]*u ša* ŠÉŠ*-ia ki-i ša* ŠEŠ*-ia-ma*/ *a-mu-ru ù aḫ-ta-du i-na* u_4*-mi š*[*a-a*]*-ši ma-a'-dá da-an-ni-iš*/ u_4*-ma ù mu-ša ša-a-ši* [*bá-*]*na-a e-te-pu*[*-uš*] "And I read over and over the tablet which he [Mane, the royal envoy] brought [and] I heard its [w]ords and they were very sweet; the words of my brother were as if I saw my brother himself. And I rejoiced on that day very much. And I made that day and night a celebration."

The messengers transporting this message undoubtedly also brought Tushratta gifts from Egypt (most likely the true source of his jubilation). At this juncture, these rulers were in the process of negotiating the bride price for Tushratta's sister. In this letter they come to an agreement about the terms of the marriage. Although they did not meet in person to discuss these matters (the official Mane served an

intermediary during the negotiations), there is an illusion of intimacy as the written message served as a record of the negotiations and, perhaps symbolically, as a tangible link to the Egyptian court.

Writing in such contexts served several important pragmatic ends: a) Tablets served as records of such "conversations" and any resulting agreements; b) The written word kept scribes and messengers accountable for delivering the right message and for accurately conveying its contents; and c) Such written, sealed documents validated the messengers, proving their authenticity as representatives of the rulers in question. Messages encased in clay served as records of accords, feuds, and the drama that arose periodically between the royal courts. For the above reasons, Marion Feldman includes the materiality of such letters in her description of the international stylistic *koiné* operant during this period. She understands the tablet-artifact to have been valued in a similar way to the elite, luxury goods of this period. Participating in such diplomatic exchanges signified the high rank of the correspondents. According to this view, the materiality of the tablet (i.e., its format, content, and composition) and the language of the text had esthetic and symbolic value that transcended the written message.[344]

Most of the actual discourse between these polities most likely took place via face-to-face interactions between Egyptian officials stationed in the Levant and local rulers and their representatives. The importance of writing diplomatic letters went beyond the pragmatic need for communication via written message. These tablets also served a symbolic function—that of a

[344] Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design*, 145.

tangible link between rulers. Also, in the case of lesser rulers, proof of communication with Egypt was a means of demonstrating their power to a local audience. Also, the tablet-artifact compressed the vast geographic gap between the palace complexes of the ancient Near East and, in a sense, breached the gap of time. Letters between peer polities served as records of diplomatic agreements and were thus a key part of royal archives. The scribes in charge of such archives served as *de facto* historians who used their familiarity with the diplomatic history between two powers to their advantage when writing new diplomatic letters, working perhaps under the direction of the king's advisers. Diplomatic archives enabled officials to draw upon older letters to reframe diplomatic discourse and/or serve as precedents in ongoing spats.[345] In such interactions, the scribal elite controlled all aspects of communication, serving as authors, translators, ambassadors, and historians of the respective dealings between polities.

The established formulae enabled scribes working in Canaan, for example, to frame vehement complaints all the while expressing deference to the Pharaoh. Yet, they were ultimately bound by extent protocols and their scribal training. One such strategy was the practice of referencing past diplomatic interactions as though part of a long established dialogue.[346] For

[345] EA 74: 5-12 refers to this very practice: "May the king, ‹my› lord be apprised that the city of Byblos, the faithful handmaiden of the king, has been at peace since the days of his fathers, but now the king has forsaken his loyal city. May the king examine the tablets of his fathers' palace whether the man who is in Byblos has not been a loyal servant."

[346] For example, EA 17 is an apologetic work that excuses Tushratta's violent rise to power and the tumultuous events in his country. The letter aims to re-establish close diplomatic relations with Egypt, citing a past alliance between the fathers of Tushratta and Amenhotep III, which was formalized by Amenhotep's marriage to Kelu-Ḫeba, Tushratta's sister. It also points to the Hittites as a common enemy: "Inasmuch as you were friendly with my father, then because of that I have written and I have spoken to you so that my brother may hear of these things and so that he may rejoice. My father loved you and you, moreover, as for my father, you loved him and my father, because of (that) love, [g]ave to you

example, often in complaints scribes described an idealized past relationship between the two courts as a point of comparison.[347] Specific citations from past exchanges served as thinly veiled critiques that the other party was not meeting the illustrious standards of their ancestors.

For example, the heated exchange between Kadashman-Enlil and Amenhotep III in the Amarna Corpus demonstrates the process by which state archives were consulted to craft new diplomatic letters.[348] The Pharaoh's response to this earlier letter is scathing; he is particularly angry that Kadashman-Enlil is citing Thutmose IV (Amenhotep III's father) in his reproach:[349]

> "And as for your citing the words of my father, leave it! Don't speak of his words! Moreover, 'Establish friendly brotherhood between us.' This is what you wrote; these are your words. Now, we are brothers, I and you, both of us, but I got angry concerning your envoys because they speak to you, saying, 'Nothing is given to us who go to Egypt.' Those who come to me, does one of the two go [without] taking silver, gold, oil, garments, every thing nice [more than from] another country, but he speaks untruth to the one who sends him? The first time the envoys went off to your f[ath]er and their mouths were speaking untruths. The second time they went forth [and] they are speaking lies to you. So I myself said, 'If [I gi]ve them

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my sister. And who else was with my father like you (EA 20: 21-29)?" Again we see skillful references to an idealized past and to the interactions of the previous generation of rulers. Scribes interwove kinship terminology to frame such appeals in intimate, familial terms, as though a letter to a long lost relative. This letter demonstrates the artfulness of court scribes who employed the palace records to their advantage, at times citing old letters verbatim to establish precedents in ongoing disputes.

[347] For example, the diplomatic relationship between the "fathers," (i.e., the previous generation) is contrasted with the deteriorated relationship under the current regime under the son.

[348] In EA 1, Amenhotep III responds to a letter from Kadashman-Enlil; though we do not have the initial letter from Kadashman-Enlil, it appears that it cited a letter from Thutmoses IV and accused Amenhotep as being responsible for the deterioration of the relationship between Babylonia and Egypt. Kadashman-Enlil accused Amenhotep III of delaying his messengers and withholding royal gifts.

[349]The main complaint is that Amenhotep III married a Babylonian princess (Kadashman-Enlil's sister), yet failed to honor the terms of the political marriage alliance between the two states. He also accuses Amenhotep III of hiding her from the Babylonian envoys at the Egyptian court.

> something or if I don't give them, they will speak lies likewise, so I made up my mind about them; I did not gi[ve to] them further.'"

The reference to Thutmose IV's correspondence with Egypt apparently struck a nerve. Amenhotep III responds by shifting the blame to the Babylonian envoys, which he accuses of lying about the poor treatment that they received in Egypt.[350] The scribes and officials writing these exchanges walked a fine line between airing their masters' frustration and disrespect. The language of kinship and references to past letters between these two royal houses helped to diffuse tension between rulers—instead of open hostilities between two world powers, the epistolary protocol of the period framed such tirades as a disagreement between two "brothers"—a spat, yet one easily resolved by the dexterity of the scribes and diplomats interfacing between these royal houses.

In the case of the letters from the greater polities in the Periphery which were more cosmopolitan and had a longer and/or more established tradition of Akkadian, we can expect that court officials may have had an understanding of Akkadian, whereas in the southern Levant the scribes who knew this written language had the ultimate control of the written message.[351] Diplomatic

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[350] In another such exchange between these two rulers, the scribe working for Kadashman-Enlil cites past interactions with Egypt to criticize the current regime: "In the past, my father used to send an envoy and you would not detain him many days. You used to set him on his way quickly and you used to send a lovely greeting gift to my father (EA 3:7-12)." Relations have since soured and Kadashman-Enlil is unhappy. His envoys are not respected in Egypt and when they return home they arrive empty handed. This reference to the golden age of diplomatic relations between the two families before Amenhotep III came to power serves as a critique framed within the acceptable diplomatic language of the period.

[351] One such example from the Canaano-Akkadian corpus is EA 74, which is a letter from Rib-Adda of Byblos. Though Rib-Adda is clearly subservient to the Pharaoh, there is a similar reference to the history of correspondence. He asks the Pharaoh to review his father's correspondence to demonstrate his unswerving allegiance: EA 74:5-12 "May the king, ‹my› lord be apprised that the city of Byblos, the faithful handmaiden of the king, has been at peace since the days of his fathers, but now the king has forsaken his loyal city. May the king examine the tablets of his fathers' palace whether the

letters served as a record of past agreements to hold the other party accountable when one party felt defrauded. When there was a dispute, it appears as though the court scribes consulted the past correspondence between two polities and then used them to craft complaints. The Rib-Adda letter further intimates familiarity with the cuneiform apparatus at Tel el-'Amarna where there was an archive of diplomatic letters that included the Egyptian copies of letters sent to the Levant. Moreover, this letter suggests that the scribes working for Rib-Adda were likewise entrusted with attending to a royal archive at Byblos where there may have been copies of the letters sent to Egypt.

B. Diplomacy—An Oral Literate Continuum

Reconstructing the original speech event underlying these letters is a somewhat precarious exercise, yet we can glean the general scope of what was articulated from the written message and perhaps even how it was performed. Although we only have the written records of Canaano-Egyptian interactions, it is clear that such correspondence was only one facet of a complex network of diplomatic channels between these groups. The oral messages that accompanied the written were the "true" messages. These face-to-face exchanges between scribes, officials, and messengers provided a fuller context for grievances and/or held the particulars of negotiations. We can also glean strategies in the written tablet-artifact to ensure that the written text was presented in a way that would elicit a positive response.[352]

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man who is in Byblos has not been a loyal servant. The reference to the former palace of Amenhotep III here indicates that Rib-Adda was abreast of the changes in Egypt during the reign of Akhenaten that the capital had been moved. Akhenaten relocated the capital from Thebes to his new city, Akhenaten, early in his reign. The assumption here is that Akhenaten did not relocate the archives of his father's diplomatic correspondence to his new city.

[352] For example, Marion Feldman views the physicality of the tablet to have been part of a set of established

The scribe/literate officials creating, interpreting, and performing these letters were central to the diplomatic process. They shaped the message, not just by the act of writing but by interpreting the writing in a spoken delivery. According to the sociolinguist Deborah Tannen, writing lacks the paralinguistic channels that facilitate face-to-face interactions.[353] Such cues "reveal the speaker's attitude toward the message and establish cohesion—that is, show relationships among ideas, highlight relative importance, foreground and background information, and so on."[354] Writing is dependent upon lexemes and syntax to code meaning, whereas verbal communication can be underscored by range of nonverbal cues that appeal to multiple senses (e.g., the dynamism of body, gesture, cadence, tone, facial expression, the range of volume of speech). Such auditory and visual signals help the speaker engage their audience. A speaker thus has a multiplicity of strategies to convey meaning.

When we turn to the Canaano-Akkadian corpus, we lack the interpersonal cues and performative gestures that accompanied the reading of such messages. These paralinguistic signals shed light upon the nuances of the written message and insured that the foreign court properly

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conventions that conformed to an international esthetic (*Diplomacy by Design,* 147). Moreover, the use of "paragraph dividers," i.e., single and double lines used to demarcate sections of the text, were also an intrinsic part of the metalinguistic structure of such letters.

[353] Deborah Tannen's discussion of the different strategies of both oral and textual communication provides a useful model for how to analyze the scribes' endeavors to convey the force and rhetorical strategies of the original speech event. She cautions that the gulf between orality and literacy tends to be over-emphasized in scholarship, when in fact oral and literate strategies or styles can appear in both text and speech. Instead, she argues for the cohesion hypothesis whereby "spoken discourse establishes cohesion through paralinguistic features, whereas written discourse does so through lexicalization" ("The Myth of Orality and Literacy," in *Linguistics and Literacy.* Edited by W. Frawley [New York: Plenum, 1982], 41).

[354] Ibid., 41.

understood it. For example, a scribe or literate official may have shaken his head in disgust when reading out a complaint or a hesitance to comply with the Pharaoh's demands, or even provided additional commentary about the political complexity of the ruler's court etc.

The verbal and paralinguistic accouterments that were a part of the messaging process are lost to us, yet we can still apply the some of the basic principles of the cohesion principle to this corpus. A close reading of the Canaanite Amarna Letters reveals that a number of the rhetorical strategies were influence by spoken language, as some of the expressions are unattested or very rare in Akkadian. Such idiomatic language indicates that Canaanite scribes attempted to breath life into the written text by drawing upon an oral-poetic register of linguistic expression. The skill of the scribes was not merely dependent upon their knowledge of cuneiform, but rather their ability to successfully transmit the essence of a verbal message spoken in WS into a written form—one that stayed true to the spirit of the original speech event. Moreover, scribes writing to an international audience had to formulate diplomatic missives in such a way that would ensure that even their translated form would capture the attention of the Pharaoh and key officials.

For example, many writing systems, including cuneiform, have evolved conventions that distinguish direct speech in the body of a text.[355] In the Amarna Letters, line dividers are used to visually structure and prioritize sections of text; they tend to be used to separate the formulaic

[355] A modern day example is the use of capitalization and punctuation in many Latin-based scripts; in typed texts varied fonts, italics, and underlined options can be used to highlight a portion of the text. The emoji phenomenon is a more recent evolution that enables writers to infuse a text or email with additional, non-linguistic meaning.

introductions from the body of the text and to organize the main thematic ideas.[356] The use of *Glossenkeilen* to comment and/or provide clarity to a word or to group together a sentence unit also functions in such a way. [357] In addition, the type of introductory formula used, and in some cases, the omission of the proper epistolary protocol, too, served as a subtle means of expressing deference or rebellion and distain.

Not only did the physical aspects of the writing system change, cuneiform scribal schools in the Periphery were increasingly influenced by their own oral and literary traditions.[358] Tannen does not consider there to be an "oral" versus "written" style of language, but rather writes of how these styles interplay. Writers can use the style associated with speech in their writings; in formal settings, speakers tend to appeal to registers of language most associated with written expression. She discusses the rhetorical strategies often associated with spoken language that was used in writing. For example, the modern short story is a genre that often attempts to mimic speech:

> [I]t depends for its impact, like face-to-face conversation, on a sense of involvement between the writer and the audience or characters in the narrative. It is for this reason that literary discourse (short stories, poems, novels), rather than being most different from ordinary conversation, is, in fact, most similar to it: those features which are thought quintessentially literary (repetition of sounds and words, syntactic parallelism, rhythm) are all basic to ordinary spontaneous conversation, as is demonstrated in the spoken version of the narrative analyzed here.[359]

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[356] For example, in the Jerusalem Amarna Letter EA 287, such a scribal mark is used to mark off a private message intended for a scribe working at Tell el-'Amarna.

[357] For a classic study on the Amarna glosses see Gianto, "Amarna Lexicography," 65-73.

[358] Marc Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramses II* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007), 196-205, with focus on 204-205.

[359] Tannen, "Oral and Literate Strategies," 1-12; quote on 2.

This understanding is applicable to the Canaanite Amarna Letters, as the letters in this corpus tend to emulate the style of spoken language.

The use of an oral-poetic register of language in the Canaanite letters is an example of how Canaanite scribes adapted oral strategies and style to a written medium. Indeed, considering the limits of the written medium, the challenges of preparing a text that could be read by a foreign audience and, moreover, the stilted nature of the Canaano-Akkadian code, the degree to which Canaanite scribes were able to convey the loyalty, fear, frustration and desperation of their employers is quite remarkable.[360]

1. EA 252: The Biting Ant

The Canaanite letters feature the creative re-working of Canaanite literary idioms in cuneiform dress. For example, the scribe that wrote EA 252, a letter from Laba'yu to the Pharaoh, employed various strategies to add an emotional depth to this letter. The language of this letter is steeped in the local, Canaanite style of Akkadian, which serves to express the king's frustration.[361]

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[360] Van der Toorn, "Cuneiform Documents from Syria- Palestine," 107.

[361] Layba'yu's chief complaint is that the Pharaoh is detached from the political reality confronting his subjects. Apparently in a previous letter Laba'yu was ordered to wait and sit by passively while his city was attacked. His response to this command is vitriolic. Although this letter reiterates that Laba'yu is the Pharaoh's faithful servant, it uses a Canaanite metaphor to criticize of the way that Egypt deals with its vassals. The implicit argument is that self-defense when justified is not an act of disobedience, but is a natural and just response to aggression. Moreover, the implicit references to size in this proverb is telling. Laba'yu is writing about a peer polity, yet the scale of this conflict is framed as a mismatch whereby Laba'yu is a small power (an ant) and the aggressor is a larger power (a hand). This may also be a double entendre whereby Laba'yu warns that any incursions by Egypt, the larger power and perhaps the true "hand" in this scenario, will be met with the same fate, as he is described by other polities as being a disruptive force in the region. This letter is a true feat of diplomatic maneuvering. Although Laba'yu reproaches the Pharaoh for being out of touch with the needs of his vassals, he

Although Laba'yu is facing dire political problems, violence, and aggression, the Pharaoh's response that he wait and not retaliate against his aggressors is characterized as absurd and essentially a death sentence. The overly subservient, yet, ironic tone underlying this letter would not have been lost on those transmitting this message. The implicit complaint is that the Egyptian court is too far removed to have any insight into the political realities of the highland.

In this letter, the scribe skillfully utilizes the Canaanite oral-poetic register, drawing upon what is most likely a local proverb. Hess describes this as part of a deliberate strategy by the scribe: "Labaya and his scribe are more than Canaanites struggling with the international Akkadian language of their day. They represent rhetoricians who use poetical devices in these prose texts in order to convey their message with the maximum effect."[362] The rhetorical style employed in this letter overwhelmingly draws upon WS narrative traditions—the scribe fused an oral-poetic language in the appropriate diplomatic language (Canaano-Akkadian). This letter was then sent through the designated diplomatic channels, where it was eventually performed in Egyptian, albeit, most likely in a more oral register of language than the more formulaic letters from Canaan. This appears to be part of an overall rhetorical strategy to convey Laba'yu's defiance, though in a way that would not overtly offend the Pharaoh.

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does not openly rebel against Egypt. By means of a proverb, he is able to reassert his local autonomy, albeit in a manner that still pays lip service to Egypt.

[362] Richard Hess, "Smitten Ants Smite Back: Rhetorical Forms in the Amarna Correspondence from Shechem," In *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose*. Edited by, J.C. Moor and W. G. E. Watson. AOAT 42 (Neukirchen-Vluyn : Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 111.

The structure of the letter as a whole appears to be a subtle way of expressing Laba'yu's anger and frustration with the Pharaoh's orders. Hess views the abrupt beginning as an intentional stylistic strategy meant capture the urgency of Laba'yu's situation and prompt the Pharaoh to act. The epistolary niceties in this letters are minimal, which appears to be deliberate. This letter begins with an abbreviated version of the introductory formulae, and omits the prostration formula seen in the other Shechem letters.[363] The scribe moves directly into Laba'yu's complaint regarding the orders that he received from Egypt.[364]

This lapse in protocol appears to have been an intentional means of expressing Laba'yu's unhappiness with the Pharaoh's orders. As Hess argues, this abbreviation of the introduction of the letter, the use of numerous Canaanisms, and the use of a local expression are part of a rhetorical strategy intended to distance Laba'yu from Egypt and to express his defiance. This letter uses a more "oral" style to better convey Laba'yu's emotional state. Moreover, by breaking with the expected

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[363] This letter stands out from the other Laba'yu letters as it begins with an abbreviated version of the introductory formula. EA 253 and 254, for example, make use of a fuller and more respectful prostration formula. EA 252: 1-6 "Speak to the king, my lord, the message of Lab'ayu, your servant: At the feet of my lord have I fallen. As to your having written to me…"; EA 253: 1-10 "[To the ki]ng, [my lord] and my [sun god], Thus (spoke) [La]b'ayu, your [servant] and the di[rt of your] treading; [A]t the feet of the k[in]g, my lord, sev[en] times (and) seven times have I fallen. [I have] [heard the words [which] the king, my lord, wrote to me [i]n a tablet;" EA 254 "To the king, my lord and my sun god, thus says Lab'ayu, your servant and the dust on which you tread: At the feet of the king, my lord and my sun god, seven times (and) seven times I have fallen. I have heard the words that the king has sent to me."

[364] In EA 253 and 254, Laba'yu addresses the Pharaoh in the 3rd person, which creates a deferential distance between the two rulers, as Laba'yu's is an inferior in this relationship. In EA 252, Laba'yu addresses the Pharaoh in the 2nd person "as to your having written me…" In EA 253 the Pharaoh's "words in a tablet" and in EA 254 the Pharaoh's "words" are buffers between the two rulers. The written message is the subject: EA 253: 7-10 [*iš-*]*te-me a-wa-te.*MEŠ/ [*ša*] ⌜*šàr*⌝*-ru* EN-*ia*/ [*i-*]*na lìb-*[*bi*] *ṭup-pí*/ ⌜*iš*⌝*-tap-ra-*⌜*an*⌝*-ni* "[I have] [heard the words [which] the king, my lord, wrote to me [i]n a tablet;" EA 254: 6-7 *iš-te-me a-wa-te.*MEŠ/ ⌜*ša*⌝ *šàr-ru iš-tap-ra-an-ni* "I have heard the words that the king has sent to me." In EA 252, on the other hand, the scribe uses a Canaano-Akkadian suffixed form (*šap-ra-ta* "you wrote") to refer to the Pharaoh and Laba'yu is the direct recipient: 5-6 *i-nu-ma šap-ra-ta/ a-na ia-a-ši* "regarding what you wrote me…." The use of the 2ms is a more intimate and less formal mode of address, one that addresses the Pharaoh directly with a complaint.

epistolary conventions, Laba'yu's scribe abstains from the "code" appropriate to dialogue with Egypt. The use of Canaanisms in this letter reinforces Laba'yu's Canaanite identity, and couches the letter in an oral-style that would have been more compelling when read than a more formulaic letter. The crux of this message occurs in lines 16-31 where the scribe uses a parable to make a pointed argument against Egypt's incursion into regional politics:

> (EA 252: 16-31) ⌜*ša*⌝-*ni-tam ki-i na-am-lu//tu-um-ḫa-ṣú la-a/ ti-ka-pí-lu ù ta-an-*⌜*šu*⌝-⌜*ku*⌝/ *qa-ti* LÚ-*lì ša yi-ma-ḫa-aš-ši/ ki-i a-na-ku i-ša-ḫatu/ ú-ma a-nu-ta*$_5$ *ù/ ṣa-ab-ta-at-mì* 2 URU-*ia/ ša-ni-tam šum-ma ti-qa-bu/ ap-pu-na-ma// nu-pu-ul-mì/ ta-aḫ-ta-mu ù/ ti-ma-ḫa-ṣú-ka/ i-bi ú-ṣur-ru-na/* LÚ.MEŠ *ša ṣa-ab-tu*$_4$ URU *‹ù›/ i-li šu-sú-mì a-bi-ia/ ù ú-ṣur-ru-šu-nu* "Furthermore, when ants are smitten, they do not just curl up, but they bite the hand of the man who smote them. How I am being pressed at this time! And two of my towns have been seized. Furthermore, if you further command, 'Fall down beneath them so they can smite you,' I will verily keep watch on my enemy, the men who seized the town ‹and› my god, the plunderers of my father! And I will certainly keep watch on them!"

The parable of the ant in the climax of the letter appears to be a local idiom, as this portion of the letter contains a cluster of WS terms.[365] In this parable, just as the bitten ant retaliates when attacked, Laba'yu warns the Pharaoh that he too will retaliate against his aggressors:

> Lines 16- 22: ⌜*ša*⌝-*ni-tam ki-i na-am-lu tu-um-ḫa-ṣú la-a/ ti-ka-pí-lu ù ta-an-*⌜*šu*⌝-⌜*ku*⌝/ *qa-ti* LÚ-*lì ša yi-ma-ḫa-aš-ši// ki-i a-na-ku i-ša-ḫatu* "Furthermore, when ants are smitten, they do not just curl up, but they bite the hand of the man who smote them. How I am being hard pressed!"

The rhetoric in this letter illustrates how, at certain points in diplomacy between Egypt and Canaanite, polities, scribes departed from the polite, formulaic language of their training to make a point.[366] When the sterile language of diplomacy was inadequate to express frustration or anger, the

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[365] The key verb "smitten" is a Canaano-Akkadian internal passive (*tu-um-ḫa-ṣú*), a stem foreign to Akkadian.

[366] For example, this letter uses Canaanite syntax and verbal forms modeled after the pre-fixed present indicative

scribes, officials, and perhaps even the polities themselves worked together to craft responses that harnessed rhetorical strategies from their own languages and oral traditions to fill in the gaps in communication.

2. The Rib-Adda Letters (EA 378)

The correspondence of Rib-Adda, which is also notable for its emotional outpouring, makes much use of poetic language. The type of parallelism and hyperbole seen in the Canaano-Akkadian letters can be described as an oral style of rhetoric, in that it makes use of discursive strategies from speech to enhance the impression that the Canaanite polities are in "dialogue" with the Pharaoh. In particular, the use of parallel constructions and repetition are techniques that appear to be derived from NWS poetic and literary traditions.[367] For example, EA 378: 18-26 demonstrates the use of parallelism in a section that offers a reprimand to the Pharaoh. Here the interrogative *u mannu* is paired with a series of nouns, culminating in a declaration of loyalty to the Pharaoh:

> 18-26) [*u m*]*a-an-nu-mì a-*⌜*na*⌝*-ku* UR.GI$_7$ [*u ma-*]*an-nu* ⌜É⌝*-ia* ⌜*u*⌝ [*m*]*a-*⌜*an*⌝*-nu* ⌜URU⌝.⌜KI⌝*-ia* [*u m*]*a-an-nu* ⌜*gáb*⌝-⌜*bi*⌝ *mi-im-mì ša* ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*ba*⌝*-aš-ši a-na ia-ši a-wa-te.*MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia* ^{d}UTU ⌜*iš*⌝*-tu* AN *ša*$_{10}$*-mì-i ú-*⌜*ul*⌝ ⌜*il*⌝*-te*$_{9}$*-né-em-me* "[And w]hat am I, a dog, [and wh]at is my house,

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yaqtulu: *tu-um-ḫa-ṣú* is a Gp; *ti-ka-pí-lu* is a Canaanite D; and *ta-an-*⌜*šu*⌝-⌜*ku*⌝ is modeled on the WS verbal root **nšk*. Rainey viewed these verbs as semantically 3mp forms, whereby the "ant" is treated as a collective in the proverb, though Hess translates this word in the singular.

[367] The use of "oral" styles of rhetoric in a written medium fall under the rubric of what Tannen considers "oral" strategies of communication used in writing, which she describes in the following terms: "The use of syntactic parallel constructions may also be associated with reduced planning time: by repeating a syntactic construction, a speaker can stall for time, while planning new information to insert into the variable slot at the end. But what seems most significant is that syntactic parallelism at the end… [such parallelism creates] a mesmerizing rhythm which sweeps the hearer along" ("Oral and Literate Strategies," 1-12; see also Elinor Ochs, "Planned and Unplanned Discourse," in *Syntax and Semantics, vol. 12: Discourse and Syntax*. Edited by T. Givon (New York: Academic Press, 1979).

> [and w]hat is my city, [and w]hat is everything that belongs to me, that I should not continually heed the words of the king, my lord, the sun god from heaven?"

Even in translation this use of parallelism would not have lost its rhythmic quality, as it would have been easily translated into Egyptian. This type of parallelism is well attested in WS poetry, that is, in a fundamentally oral literature.[368] The scribes writing these letters skillfully incorporated this oral, poetic dimension in such a way that transcended the linguistic and cultural gulf between Canaanite rulers and the members of the Pharaoh's court. Such techniques were used to punctuate an otherwise detached medium with a more human "voice" in order to better appeal to a distant audience.

The use of Canaanite elements in this way suggests that there was indeed a high level of linguistic awareness on the part of the scribes and perhaps the monarchs themselves who commissioned these texts. Canaanite and Canaano-Akkadian were indeed seen as a separate linguistic systems from MB, the Akkadian used by Egypt, and perhaps even became a symbol of the autonomy of local polities (as demonstrated by the use of Canaano-Akkadian in the more defiant Laba'yu letter). In a similar vein, the use of MB in the Canaano-Akkadian corpus was a demonstration of their knowledge of the scribal code used by their Egyptian counterparts. That is to say, Canaanite scribes infused their writings with subtle expressions of emotion, and in some cases used MB forms to "in-group" with the scribes at Tel el-'Amarna. As will be further developed, such forms were not meant

[368] 2 Sam 7:18 (and the parallels from the Persian period, 1 Chron 17: 16) and 1 Chron. 29:14 present a nice parallel to EA 378 as both rhetorical statements comprise of "who" clauses in parallel structure and are punctuated by a declaration of loyalty to YHWH: 2 Sam 7:18b מי אנכי אדני יהוה ומי ביתי כי הביאתני עד־הלם "Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?"

for the Pharaoh and/or his officials, but rather were "transmission" guides for the scribes working in Egypt who were entrusted with the translation of such messages.

C. Writing and Reading the Amarna Letters––a Mediated Literacy Event

Letters blur the line between literacy and orality. Letters typically mimic speech and are a written conversation between two parties, bridging time (the time to delivery and response) and space (the geographical gulf between the parties in dialogue). Diplomatic letters, such as the Amarna Letters, can seemingly be a back and forth between two individuals, but in truth the rulers were representatives of a larger population. There was an added dimension to the context of the Amarna Letters that entailed back channels, negotiations, and subtext and was an instrinsic part of this process. Each letter was much more complex than a simple exchange between two kings, as it involved the work of diplomats, translators, officials, as well as the scribes writing these missives.

The creation, interpretation, and translation of the Amarna Letters entailed an oral discussion, and thus can be described as a "literacy event," which Heath defines as "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretative process."[369] Such events are subject to social norms as "participants follow socially established rules for verbalizing what they know from and about the written material."[370] The ways in which such texts are viewed and read, and the interactive nature of the translation, interpretative, and

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[369] Shirley Brice Heath, "What No Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and at School," *Lang. Soc.* 11 (1982), 50.

[370] Ibid., 50.

analytic process, as well as the process of crafting a proper response are dependent upon socio-cultural patterns.[371] To better understand the mechanics by which these letters were read upon delivery, it is important to consider the linguistic proficiency of both author and audience and the cultural context in which the text was meant to be read.[372]

The presence of cuneiform scribes was a key component of prestige palace culture. Polities in the Near East corresponded in Akkadian in part because the cuneiform writing system was practical for cross-cultural interaction, but also because use of this language conferred prestige status to their royal courts. As Marc van de Mieroop writes, "The greatest influence Babylonia had in the Eastern Mediterranean world was cultural. All cultured people of the area adopted Babylonia's language, script, writing practices, and literature."[373] Cuneiform scribes were elite commodities and symbols of power during this period, and were mobile, just as the other elite goods exchanged by the royal courts.[374] Those unable to subsidize their own scribes commissioned texts from scribes working regionally or from another polity, which explains the market for itinerant scribes during this period.[375]

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[371] Ibid., 72-73.

[372] Mark Sebba, "Multilingualism in Written Discourse: An Approach to the Analysis of Multilingual Texts," *IJB* 17: 1 (2013), 5-6 (updated from the 2012 online publication: http://ijb.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/04/12/1367006912438301).

[373] M. Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007), 23.

[374] Ibid., 22.

[375] One such example is the scribe working at the court of ʿAbdi-Ḫeba in Jerusalem who appears to have been trained according to the conventions of Assyrian scribalism. See also Vita's discussion of the scribes working at Gezer and for multiple rulers in the region ("Scribes and Dialects," 863-894).

The tablets that we have today are just a part of this dynamic process. The composition and interpretation of the Amarna Letters was greatly influenced by the parties involved, and as each had different linguistic abilities, it was the task of the scribes and court officials to bridge this linguistic gap. Indeed, the at times vapid content of the letters exchanged between various Near Eastern powers suggests that the very act of sending a message was in and of itself an affirmation of their membership to the exclusive "club" of great powers. In many cases, the Canaano-Akkadian letters sent to Egypt appear on the surface to be simplistic, formulaic, and in of themselves, quite devoid of substance.[376] Many of the vassal letters comprise stock phrases and snippets of past exchanges with the Pharaoh. The sub-text of this correspondence (which is unfortunately lost to us) most certainly contained the meat of these exchanges.[377] The actual reading of these letters entailed a more nuanced explanation of

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[376] EA 212 provides a clear example of the symbolic importance of such messages. At face value this tablet documents Zitriyara's loyalty to the Pharaoh. However, as Liverani points out, Canaanite subordination to the Pharaoh was assumed—the court at Tel el-'Amarna did not allow for disobedience. The real messages underlying such rote correspondence were most likely communicated verbally by a trusted messenger. The letter in its entirety reads: "To the king, my lord, message of Zitriyara, your servant, at the fe‹et› of my lord have I fallen, seven (times) and seven times. Just as we have always done, as all the city rulers (have done), thus I will do for the king, my lord. A servant of the king, my [lo]rd am I. All the words of the king, my lord, I obey." At face value this letter does little more that affirm Zitriyara' s loyalty to the Pharaoh. It is an extremely short text, one that could have been easily communicated orally via messenger or in person to an Egyptian official or governor in Canaan. However, this text does serve a political purpose in spite of the lack of content. Such messages were tangible links between Canaanite rulers, such as Zitriyara, and Egypt. Its symbolic importance transcended the actual content of this message. This letter appears to be less about assuring the Pharaoh of Zitriyara's allegiance and more of a means of ensuring that this local ruler had a presence at the royal court. Having such an exchange with the Pharaoh ascribed Zitriyara a measure of prestige as part of an elite group of local rulers in direct communication with Egypt. The rest of his correspondence and much of the vassal letters from the Southern Levant are such reaffirmations of loyalty and assure the Pharaoh that his orders are being carried out. See M. Liverani, "Political Lexicon and Political Ideologies in the Amarna Letters," *Berytus* 31 (1983) 41-56.

[377] 2 Sam 11: 18-25 provides a rare example of the subtext of a message, indeed the whole Batsheba story provides interesting insight into an epistolary process. David dictates a letter (וַיִּכְתֹּב בַּסֵּפֶר) to Joab to send Uriah to the front of the battle so that he will be killed. The irony of this passage is that Uriah is the one entrusted with this message. When Joab does so many of David's soldiers are killed. Joab then sends a message to David with an update about the war. He instructs the messenger what to respond should David react badly to the number of casualties. Joab presents a hypothetical critique

the matter at hand that was undertaken most likely by the messengers that accompanied the messages. In short, there is a tendency to approach the Canaanite Amarna letters as a transcript of communication between Egypt and its vassals, yet the collection of tablets at our disposal preserve only the barebones of a much fuller and more nuanced dialogue.

Also, as discussed, the writing system used to record these messages was more of a scribal code, than an actual spoken vernacular of Akkadian. The true "text" of these letters was relayed by a network of scribes, messengers, and translators who facilitated these diplomatic interactions. Such court officials and messengers were entrusted with transmitting "official" written messages, as well as voicing the more delicate, and perhaps controversial subtext inherent to palace politics. As Holmes writes, such messengers were not merely human transporters of these messengers but were themselves a part of the diplomatic process and played an important role in gift-giving and trade negotiations:

> The messenger served not only as a bearer, reader, interpreter and defender of his master's message, but also as a diplomat, and more importantly, a merchant. Because of his numerous functions, the Amarna messenger usually was a person of importance and had associated with himself many problems, which became prime points of discussion in the Amarna letters.[378]

Orality was intrinsic to the whole messaging process from dictation to translation, and finally to the official reading and analysis of the message. The advent of writing and of the use of Akkadian as a

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that David may have about how the number of troops killed at the front, to help the messenger navigate this somewhat delicate situation. The messenger then delivers the message to David, who of course says exactly what Joab predicted. This passage is quite insightful and demonstrates the importance of the scribes and messengers who contextualized such written exchanges.

[378] Yulssus Lynn Holmes, "The Messengers of the Amarna Letters," *JAOS* 95:3 (1975), 376-381; quote on 376.

diplomatic medium did not replace, but rather complemented the process of oral transmission and the importance of the messengers and emissaries. Indeed, Na'aman views the paucity of Egyptian Amarna Letters as evidence that most "routine" messages from Egypt were delivered orally—only those sent for a specific purpose were written down.[379] Although the oral component of diplomacy is lost, the oral 'messages' that accompanied these letters are refereed to in the Amarna Letters. For example, EA 1, a letter from Amenhotep III to Kadashman-Enlil, discusses a report that Kadashman-Enlil's envoys relayed regarding their sojourn in Egypt:

> (78-88) And as you wrote, saying, "You said to my envoys, 'Has [your] master no troops? The girl he gave to me is not beautiful!'" These are your words. Not so! Your envoys are speaking to you untruths in this manner! If there are warriors or if there are not, it is known to me. Why is it necessary to ask him if you have troops or if you have horses? No! Don't listen to your two envoys that you send here in whose mouths are lies! Perhaps they are afraid of you, so that they tell lies so as to escape your punishment?"

The tension between these two monarchs is largely a product of the envoys' negative experience at the Pharaoh's court and lingering court gossip about the welfare of the Babylonian princess languishing at the royal court in Egypt. Again, though we are limited by written data, such insight into the multilateral channels between these two rulers, which included both oral and written transmissions, sheds light upon the diplomacy of this period and the centrality of both scribes and messengers in such exchanges.

Use of Akkadian for international diplomacy during the second millennium B.C.E. was in part practical and in part ideological. Most scribes in the Near East were Akkadian-trained scribes, as a

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[379] N. Na'aman, "The Egyptian-Canaanite Correspondence," *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations.* Edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 127-128.

legacy of the MBA in the Levant.[380] A shared training in cuneiform scribal traditions united scribes from all over the Near East, fostering an age of mutual intelligibility. Despite their different cultures and native tongues, cuneiform scribes were able to compose missives that could be read, interpreted, and translated by their peers working at the opposite ends of the known world. The power of royal scribes was considerable as they inherently controlled the flow of information between ambitious monarchs, often mediating between opposing political and economic agendas.

The prominent role of the scribe in such interactions did not go unnoticed by the rulers and officials brokering marriage, trade, and territorial agreements. Oppenheim describes the role of such scribes as being quite crucial:

> Everything referring to the king or emanating from him—official utterances such as edicts, directives addressed to officials, letters to fellow and subject kings, the so-called "royal inscriptions"— testifies to the work of the royal scribe as political propagandist and is, and the same time, representative of the scribe's literary ambition and of his role as arbiter of style.[381]

Scribes working for the palace institutions of the Near East controlled the flow of information to and from the palace and thus, along with the officials negotiating between royal families, had a monopoly on the realm of diplomacy. Without access to such elite scribes, smaller polities were limited and/or unable to participate in this wider international discourse.

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[380] Cuneiform was the first writing system employed in the wider Near East, as the Egyptian writing system was only used by Egyptians. For this reason, the local writing experiments in the Periphery were for the most part based on cuneiform, with the exception of the southern Levant. Moreover, the spread of cuneiform may also have been a product of the materials needed. The elements needed to make cuneiform tablets, i.e., clay, and stylus were more universally accessible, as opposed to the challenge of procuring papyrus and ink.

[381] A. Leo Oppenheim, "A Note on the Scribes in Mesopotamia," in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday April 21, 1965* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1965), 253-256.

1. Postscripts: A Message within A Message

The power of scribes and the dependence upon literate elites raised concerns regarding the degree to which the messages arriving at royal courts were being faithfully transmitted. For this reason, merely sending a letter was not enough to ensure that it was transmitted to the Pharaoh, or was translated in a favorable way. The scribes writing these messages developed strategies to make them more appealing. As will be discussed, scribes highlighted passages using code-switching and scribal marks and also wrote postscripts to the recipient scribes asking that their letters be transmitted in a favorable light.[382] For example, the Šunaššura Treaty between Šunaššura, King of Kizwatna and Tudhaliya II, King of Hatti, includes a provision that the message be read aloud exactly as written on the tablet:

> If the Sun sends you a letter (tablet), in which the letter the (record) of a matter has been put down, and the messenger reports (verbally) to you about the matter which he has brought to you: it the words of the messenger agree with the wording of the letter, then you Shunashshura, trust (believe) him. But if the words which you have from the mouth of the messenger do not correspond with the words of the letter, you, Shunashshura, shall not trust him" (32-39).[383]

The following example reflects a concern with the transmission process, and calls into question the credibility of the messenger. The treaty calls for a system to verify that the messengers (and presumably the scribe) working at Šunaššura's court are trustworthy. Messengers who do not faithfully repeat what is transcribed on the tablet are not to be trusted. This clause infers that scribes

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[382] Postscripts are well attested in Hittite epistles See also Heinrich Otten, "Hethitishche Schreiber in ihren Briefen," *MIO* 4 [1956]: 179-189; see also Oppenheim, "A Note on the Scribes of Mesopotamia," 253-256.

[383] This is slightly modified from D. D. Luckenbill, "Hittite Treaties and Letters," *AJSL* 37: 3 (1921), 186-187.

and messengers working between these two monarchs have proven untrustworthy in the past. It is also quite interesting that in this treaty, the authoritative standard is the written rather than spoken message. The insistence that the written messages from Tudhaliya II are binding (as opposed to verbal messages) also exculpates the Hittite court from any agreements not formally codified in writing.

This concern with the reliability and trustworthiness of scribes and messengers also surfaces in the Amarna Corpus. The language of the postscripts elucidates the linguistic backdrop of the scribes writing and receiving these letters.[384] The following is not a comprehensive analysis of the postscripts but rather a selection of features that shed light upon the sociolinguist backdrop of these letters and demonstrate what scribes in Egypt were expected to know, and moreover, how these letters were presented upon delivery. It is noteworthy that of all the letters using postscripts only one example (EA 316) demonstrates a local Canaanite use, and even this letter appears to be influenced by an outside (in this case Egyptian) cuneiform tradition. The use of postscripts to appeal to the scribes at the other end of such exchanges is attested in the cuneiform corpora of the north of the southern Levant, particularly at Hatti. As such, it is no surprise that the Arzawa Letter, which is written in Hittite, and Jerusalem letters, which are the work of a northern scribe, have postscripts.[385]

a. EA 32

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[384] EA 32, 286, 287, 289, and 316 include postscript messages to the scribe at the Pharaoh's court. EA 32 is a letter from Tarḫundaradu, the king of Arzawa to Amenthotep III; EA 286-287, and 289 are letters from 'Abdi-Ḫeba, and are the work of a scribe trained in a northern Levantine tradition. EA 316 is a letter from Pu-Ba'lu, the ruler of Yurza to the Pharaoh. Rainey identifies Yurza as either Tell Jemmeh or possibly Tell Haror; the clay from this letter is from the NW Negev. See Moran," The Syrian Scribe," 146-166; also Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 300-301.

[385] Moran, "The Syrian Scribe," 146-166.

EA 32, a letter from Tarḫundaradu of Arzawa, to Amenḥotep III, the king of Egypt, demonstrates the power of cuneiform scribes during the LBA. We have a rare glimpse into the communication between two rulers who spoke different languages, lived at opposite ends of the Near East, and participated in dramatically different cultural spheres. Communication between these polities was made possible because cuneiform culture established a set of protocols for communication—expert scribes trained in the nuances of both cultures and courts worked to bridge the cultural and geographic gulf between these two rulers. This letter is written in Hittite as Tarhuntaradu does not appear have scribes at his court competent in Akkadian.[386]

In the postscript of this letter, Tarḫundaradu addresses the scribe working at Tell el-'Amarna, presumably to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with him and requests that further letters be written in Hittite.

Table 6 The Postscript in EA 32

EA 32 — TRANSCRIPTION	
01) [*k*]*a-a-ša-mu ki-i ku-it* [1]*Kal-ba-ya-a*[*š*] 02) [*u*]*t-tar me-mi-iš-ta ma-an-wa-an-na-aš* 03) *iš-ḫa-ni-it-ta-ra-a-tar i-ya-u-e-ni*	(1-6) Behold, with regard to this matter that Kalbaya said to me, "We should establish a blood-relationship between ourselves,"
————————————————————————	
04) [*nu*(?)][1]*Kal-ba-ya-an Ú-UL ḫa-a-mi* 05) INIM-*ya-at me-mi-iš-ta A-NA ṬUP-PÍ-ma-at-ša-an*	(4-6) I do not trust Kalbaya. He said it, but it does not figure on the tablet.

[386] Melchert proposes that such messages between such polities were transmitted orally and then transcribed upon arrival, or that competent translators worked at the frontiers of these polities, in part to facilitate diplomacy. He views the Arazawa Letters (EA 32; VBoT2), whereby an Egyptian messenger (Kalbiya) appears to have accompanied the letter from Egypt, as evidence that messengers transmitted an oral message that was then written down ("Mycenaean and Hittite Diplomatic Correspondence," 11-12). In these exchanges, the Pharaoh appears to have had the upper hand and a more advanced scribal apparatus ("Mycenaean and Hittite Diplomatic Correspondence: Fact and Fiction" Lecture, *Mycenaeans and Anatolians in the Late Bronze Age: The Ahhijawa Question* (Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, January 4, 2006), 7-8.

06) *Ú-UL ki-it-ta-at* ————————————————————	
07) *nu ma-a-an ḫa-an-da-a-an am-me-el* DUMU.MUNUS-*YA* 08) *ša-an-ḫi-iš-ki-ši nu-ut-ta Ú-UL im-ma* 09) *pí-iḫ-ḫi pí-iḫ-ḫi-it-ta* ————————————————————	(7-9) If you really want my daughter, would I not give her to you? I will give (her) to you. (10-13) Send Kalbaya back to me promptly together with my envoy and write back to me (about) this matter on a tablet.
10) *nu-mu-kán* I*Kal-ba-ya-an* EGIR-*pa pa-ra-a* 11) *IŠ-TU* LÚ*ṬE-MI-YA li-li-wa-aḫ-ḫu-u-an-zi* 12) *na-i ku-u-un-na-mu me-mi-an ṬUP-PÍ-az* 13) EGIR-*pa ḫa-at-ra-a-i* 14) *ki-i-kán TUP-PÍ ku-iš* DUB.SAR-*a*[*š*] Lo.ed. 15) *ḫal-za-a-i na-an* ^{d}*É*!-*A* 16) *ḫa-at-ta-an-na-aš* LUGAL-*uš* 17) *ḫi-lam-na-aš-ša* ^{d}UTU-*uš* 18) *aš-šu-ú-li pa-aḫ-ša-an-ta-ru* 19) *nu-ut-ta* ŠU.ḪI.A *-uš a-ra-aḫ-za-an-da* 20) *aš-šu-ú-li ḫar-kán-du* ————————————————————————	(14-20) The scribe who reads out this tablet, let Ea the king of wisdom, and the Sungod of the gate house protect him in good will! Let them hold the(ir) hands in good will around you!
21) *zi-ik-mu* DUB.SAR-*aš aš-šu-ú-li* 22) *ḫa-at-ra-a-i nam-ma-za* [*Š*]*UM-an* EGIR-*an* 23) *i-ya* ————————————————————————	(21-23) You, scribe, write to me in good will and add (your) name thereafter.
24) DUB.ḪI.A[-*ká*]*n ku-e ú-da-an-zi* 25) *nu ne-eš-*[*u*]*m*!-*ni-li ḫa-at-ri-eš-ki* ————————————————	(24-25) The tablets that are brought (here) keep writing (them) in Nešite (i.e. Hittite

Tarḫundaradu's letter first and foremost expresses frustration that the diplomatic channels have been coopted by Akkadian trained scribes. Tarḫundaradu does not have scribes proficient in Akkadian at his court. He is also suspicious of the translation process and seeks to have more control in his communications with Egypt. This letter is preoccupied with the distinction between oral and written messages, and whether or not the written messages accurately reflect the deals being made on his behalf. EA 32 has several layers. Hawkins reconstructs the sequence of events as follows:

> (1) Kalbaya arrived in Arzawa with a verbal proposal, possibly also an Akkadian tablet, for a marriage alliance; (2) Tarhundaradu distrusted the verbal proposal and could not find it in the unintelligible tablet; (3) Tarhundaradu sent back Kalbaya with an Arzawan envoy, carrying EA 32 and its first tablet; (4) Amenophis III responded by sending EA 31 with Iršappa to view the prospective bride, and a promise that Iršappa and a new Arzawan envoy (the previous one having died [?]) on returning to Egypt will return to Arzawa with the bride-price.[387]

Tarḫundaradu was quite aware of his disadvantage in dealing with Egypt, and sought to shift written diplomacy to Hittite, the written *lingua franca* of western Asia Minor.[388] His letter to the Pharaoh seeks to remedy this by (1) fostering an advantageous relationship with a scribe employed by the Egyptian court and (2) correcting the balance of power by ensuring that future written messages be written in Hittite, the written language used in his court.

This letter is structured as a complaint that the marriage negotiations between the two royal families was not properly documented in writing. The first section (EA 1-6) expresses concern that the alliance was discussed verbally, yet Kalbaya, the intermediary between the courts, did not actually write down the terms of the deliberations:[389]

> (1) See, this message which Kalbaya
> (2) <u>spoke</u> to me (saying): 'Let us
> (3) make ourselves a marriage-alliance,'
> (4) [now] I do not trust Kalbaya.
> (5) He <u>spoke it verbally</u>, but on a tablet it
> (6) was not set down."

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[387] See J. David Hawkins, "The Arzawa Letters in Recent Perspective," *BMSAES* 14 (2009), 73-83; translation 76-77.

[388] For a discussion of the linguistic situation in west Asia Minor during this period see Alexander Herda, "Greek (and Our) View on the Karians," in *Luvian Identities: Culture, Language and Religion between Anatolia and the Aegean*. Edited by Alice Mouton, Ian Rutherford, and Ilya S. Yakubovich (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 436.

[389] The excerpt above uses Hawkins's translation, which emphasizes the complaint that the agreement has not yet been documented in writing. See J. David Hawkins, "The Arzawa Letters in Recent Perspective," *BMSAES* 14 (2009), 73-83; translation 76-77.

Tarḫundaradu complains that the terms of the alliance were “spoken” but not recorded in writing. There appears to be a distinction between the “verbal” communication (via messenger) that was certainly the first phase of such negotiations, and the written communication (via Akkadian trained scribes) that would have formalized the agreement and served as a record of the terms that each party was to uphold. To Tarḫundaradu the medium of the message appears to be just as important as its contents.

Hawkins’ translation underscores the concern that a verbal message would not be contractually binding to the same degree as a written message between the two kings. The concern with the written vs. oral communication points to the use of written messages as records of diplomatic dealings that were stored in the royal archives. Indeed, it was quite common in such circumstances to cite such records to gain an advantage, or to remind the other party of their lapse in fulfilling an agreement. For this reason, Tarḫundaradu is uneasy that there is no written agreement chronicling the terms of the marriage alliance.

The rest of the message comprises a direct appeal to the scribe working at Tell el-‘Amarna to ensure that all future correspondence from Egypt be written in Hittite. The postscript letter begins with a blessing that is conditional upon the scribe transmitting Tarḫundaradu’s message in a favorable light. There is also a request that the scribe transmit his personal information and thereby form a mutually beneficial relationship with Tarḫundaradu. Such a relationship would have entailed gifts and/or payment for loyalty (as for example in EA 316).

The postscript is separated from the official message by a double horizontal line. There are three internal divisions: (1) a private message meant to forge an alliance with the scribe reading the message; (2) a request for the identity of the scribe (the implication is that the scribe will benefit from this exchange); (3) a final request that future letters be written in Hittite as opposed to Akkadian.

14–15) The scribe who reads this tablet
(15–18) may Nabu king of wisdom and the Sun-God of the Gatehouse duly protect him,[390]
(19–20) and may they duly hold (their) hands around you!

(21–23) You, Scribe, duly write to me, also put your own name after.

(24-25) The tablets which they will bring, always write in Hittite (*nešumnili*).)[391]

The format of this portion of the letter, which is framed by double horizontal lines, underscores the private nature of this message; it was not meant to be read as part of the official message to the Pharaoh, but is a private aside to the scribe.

The postscript serves as a within a message, so to speak—a backroom appeal to the scribe embedded in an official diplomatic letter. Tarḫundaradu appeals to a string of deities that were more

[390] Rainey's translation differs slightly: "The scribe who reads out this tablet, let Ea the king of wisdom, and the Sun-god of the gate house protect him in good will! Let them hold the(ir) hands in good will around you!" (14-20). The actual signs in the tablet for the first deity are $^{d}É^{1}$-*A*.

[391] See also Hawkins, "The Arzawa Letters," 73-83; translation 76-77.

widely known in cuneiform culture, as opposed to regional Anatolian or Egyptian deities. The appeal to a Mesopotamian deity, as opposed to Thoth, the Egyptian god associated with scribal arts, attests to the nature of cuneiform's status as an international scribal system. The scribe being appealed to lives and works at the Egyptian court and is most likely Egyptian or acculturated into Egyptian society, yet because he is a cuneiform scribe he is being enticed with a cultural reference drawn from Syro-Mesopotamian, as opposed to Egyptian, culture. The response from the Pharaoh in Hittite (EA 31) indicates that Tarḫundaradu's appeal to this scribe was successful.[392] The reply from the Egyptian court was written in Hittite and included a diplomatic gift. Moreover, in this letters the Pharaoh expresses his interest in the ongoing marriage alliance between the two courts.

This question as to why the messages to Tarḫundaradu were written in Akkadian to begin with as opposed to Hittite.[393] As Craig Melchert writes, "(T)he use of Hittite could have a demeaning, not complimentary effect for the king of Arzawa (his exchange with the Pharaoh is not is Luwian)."[394] The negotiation reflected in EA 32 is one between Akkadian, the diplomatic language of the east, and Hittite, which was written *lingua franca* of the west. The appropriate language of written diplomacy was a direct reflection of the power dynamics such these polities.

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[392] EA 31, which comprises the response to Tarḫundaradu written in Hittite, was discovered at the site of Tell el-'Amarna. This was most likely a copy of the actual tablet sent to Tarḫundaradu. Copies of the outgoing correspondence were preserved as records of the Pharaoh's diplomatic exchanges (Ibid., 80).

[393] Melchert views the letters at Hattusa from Egypt that were written in Hittite to be translations that were made at Hattusa in order enable those heads of state and officials who did not know Akkadian to best draft a reply ("Mycenaean and Hittite Diplomatic Correspondence," 7-8).

[394] Ibid., 7-8; 8 cf. 6.

b. The Postscripts in Jerusalem Letters

In the Canaano-Akkadian corpus the letters of ʿAbdi-Ḫeba of Jerusalem also include several direct appeals to the Egyptian scribe(s) receiving these messages. The postscripts are quite formal and appear as miniature letters that are appended to the end of the letters.

Table 7 The Postscripts in the Jerusalem Letters

EA 286 (ʿAbdi-Ḫeba; Jerusalem)[395] 61) [*a-n*]*a* ⌜*ṭup*⌝-*šar* ⌜LUGAL⌝ EN-*ia um-ma* I⌜ÌR⌝-⌜*ḫé*⌝-⌜*ba*⌝ 62) [Ì]R-*ka-ma* \ *še-ri-ib a-wa-ti.*⌜MEŠ⌝ 63) ⌜*ba*⌝-*na-ta a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia ḫal-qa-at* 64) ⌜*gáb*⌝-*bi* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN-*ia*	[T]o the scribe of the king, my lord, thus ʿAbdi-Ḫeba, your [ser]vant: "Present eloquent words to the king, my lord; [al]l of the lands of the king, my lord, are lost!"
EA 287 (ʿAbdi-Ḫeba; Jerusalem) 64) *a-na ṭup-šar šàr-ri* EN-*ia* 65) *qí-bi-ma um-ma* ˡÌR-*ḫe-ba* ÌR-*ka-ma* 66) *a-na* 2 GÌR.MEŠ-‹*ka*› *am-qut-mi* ÌR-*ka a-nu-ki* 67) *še-ri-ib a-wa-ta*$_5$.MEŠ *ba-na-ta* 68) *a-na šàr-ri* EN-*ia* 69) ⌜LÚ⌝ ⌜*ú*⌝-⌜*e*⌝-⌜*é*›⌝ ⌜*šàr*⌝-⌜*ri*⌝ *a*-⌜*nu*⌝-⌜*ki*⌝ 70) *ma-at-ti a-na ka-ta*$_5$!(WA)	Speak to the scribe of the king, my lord; thus ʿAbdi-Ḫeba, your servant: At ‹your› feet have I fallen. I am your servant. Present eloquent words to the king, my lord. I am a soldier of the king. I am ready to die for you!
71) *ù ti-ip-pa-ša ip-ša la-am-na* 72) *a-na muḫ-ḫi* LÚ.MEŠ ⌜KUR⌝ *Ka-ší* 73) ⌜*ú*⌝-*ba-na la-a* GAZ \ *de*$_4$-⌜*ka*⌝-⌜*ti*⌝ 74) [*i-n*]*a* ŠU LÚ.MEŠ KUR *Ka-ši* 75) [*i-na*] *lìb-bi* É-*ia* \ ⌜*li*⌝[-*iš-al*] 76) *šàr-ru a-na ša*-⌜*šu*⌝[-*nu*] 77) [7-*t*]*a-a-an ù* 7-*ta-a-an* [*am-qut*] 78) [*li-is-kín šàr*]-⌜*ru*⌝ EN-*ia a-na i*[*a-a-ši*]	And you should do something really bad to the men of the land of Cush. I came within an inch of being slain by the hand of the men of the land of Cush [in]side my own palace! May the king make in[quiry] concerning the[m]. [Seven t]imes and seven times [have I fallen]. May the king, my lord, [give his attention] to m[e].
EA 288 (ʿAbdi-Ḫeba; Jerusalem) 62) [*a-na*] ⌜LÚ⌝ *ṭup-šar šàr-ri* EN-*ia* 63) [*um-ma*] ⌜ˡ⌝⌜ÌR⌝-*ḫe-ba* ÌR-*ma a-na* 2	[To] the scribe of the king, my lord, [thus]ʿAbdi-Ḫeba, ‹your› servant: At ‹your› two feet hav[e I fallen]. Present nice

[395] For a discussion of the clay see Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay*, 267-268.

GÌR.MEŠ 64) [*am-qut-*]*mi še-ri-ib a-wa-ta*$_5$.M[EŠ] 65) *ba-na-ti a-na šàr-r*[*i*] 66) [*e-nu-ma* LÚ] ÌR[-*ka ù* LÚ.]⌜DUMU⌝-*ka a-na-ku*	words to the king [because] I am [your] servant [and] your son.
EA 289 (ʻAbdi-Ḫeba; Jerusalem) 47) ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ LÚ *ṭup-šar šàr-r*[*i* EN-*ia*] 48) [*um*]-*ma* ᶦÌR-*Ḫe-ba* ÌR[-*ka*] 49) *a-wa-ta*$_5$.MEŠ *ba-n*[*a-ta*] 50) *i-din-mi a-na* ⌜*šàr*⌝-*ri ma-at-ti ma-gal* 51) ⌜*a*⌝-*na ka-ta*$_5$ ÌR-*ka a-na-ku*	To the scribe of the king, [my lord,] thus ʻAbdi-Ḫeba, [your] ser[vant]. Present to the king many elo[quent] words. I would sincerely die for you! I am your servant!

EA 316: 16-25 (Pu-Ba ʻlu of Yurza; clay Tel Jemmah or Tel Haror) [396] [*a-n*]*a* ᶦ*ša-aḫ-ši-ḫa-ši-*⌜*ḫa*⌝ [EN-*ia*]/*um-ma* ᶦ*Pu-*⌜d⌝⌜IŠKUR⌝ ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜2⌝ ⌜GÌR⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝-*ka* ⌜*am*⌝[-*qú-ut*]/⌜*i*⌝-*ia*-⌜*nu*⌝ ⌜*mi*⌝-⌜*im*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝/⌜*i*⌝-[*n*]*a* ⌜É⌝-*ia i-n*[*a*]/ [*i*]-*re*[-*bi-*]⌜*i*⌝*a a-*[*na*] ⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*šu*⌝/⌜*u*⌝ ⌜*ki*⌝-*na-na la-*[*a*] *uš-ši-ir-*[*t*]*i*$_7$/KASKAL-*ra-*⌜*na*⌝ *a-na k*[*a-ta*]$_5$/*a-nu-ma i-*⌜*šu*⌝[-*ši-*]*ru*/ KASKAL-*ra-na dam-*⌜*qá*⌝-*ta*/ ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *ka-ta*$_5$	"[T]o the scribe of letters [of my lord], the message of Pu-Baʻlu: At your feet have I fa[llen]. There was nothing i[n] my house upo[n] my [e]nt[ering] it and therefore I did not send a caravan to y[ou]. Now I am preparing a nice caravan for you."

Is it noteworthy that the postscripts only appear in the Jerusalem letters that were actually written in Jerusalem. EA 285, which was written at Beth Shean, and EA 291, which was written at Gezer, do not have postscripts.[397] The above Jerusalem letters begins with the introductory formula that specifies the sender (ʻAbdi-Ḫeba) and the addressee (in this case the royal scribe). EA 287 and 288 make use of the prostration formula as a sign of deference to the head scribe working at the Pharaoh's

[396] Ibid., 300-301.

[397] EA 285 is somewhat broken at the end of the tablet, but there is not room for a postscript. EA 291 is extremely fragmentary, which allows for the possibility that this letter had a postscript that is no longer preserved.

court. EA 287 and 289 use stylized language modeled from that of loyalty oaths. EA 287 retains the longer introduction formula, whereby the reader of the message is to "speak" (2ms impv.) the words of the letter, in this case, to the royal scribe. It is not clear, however, whether the scribe or 'Abdi-Ḫeba is speaking. The formulaic language in the postscripts attests to the power of the court officials and scribes receiving these messages. It appears that they controlled access to the Pharaoh, as the tacit assumption in these postscripts is that the scribe receiving the message would be the one reading it.

The language of the Jerusalem letters is quite complex as it presents a mix of orthographies that draw from Syrian and Canaano-Akkadian traditions. Vita ascribes EA 285-291 to Jerusalem Scribe 1, of which EA 286-290 were written in Jerusalem for 'Abdi-Ḫeba.[398] The ductus of EA 385-291 is that of the same scribe, though the petrographic analysis of this corpus indicates that EA 285 was produced in the Egyptian garrison at Beth–Shean. The clay of EA 291 appears most similar to the clays in the Amarna Letters from Gezer. Goren et al. propose that this letter was written at Gezer when 'Abdi-Ḫeba was visiting the city. Vita concludes that EA 291 is damaged for a proper paleographic analysis, but from what is left on the tablet, it differs from the ductus of the Gezer Letters, and thus it may very well have been written by the Jerusalem scribe while at Gezer.

In the Jerusalem postscripts, which were framed as a private communications, one would expect perhaps a shift in register to MB or perhaps the northern Akkadian of the scribe, as the Jerusalem scribe was writing directly to a peer trained in MB, as opposed to Canaano-Akkadian. Also,

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[398] For an analysis of the paleography and clays of Jerusalem see Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 90-91; Goren et al. *Inscribed in Clay,* 264-269.

the postscript would present an ideal place for this scribe to show case his/her superior training, which was more akin to what the scribes working for Egypt wrote than the variety used in the southern Levantine tradition. Yet, the language in the postscripts is similar to that in the body of the Jerusalem letters. The syntax follows that of the Canaanite letters and is largely VSO. The following show Canaano-Akkadian influence: the 1cs suffixed form *–ti* in EA 287: 70 *ma-at-ti a-na ka-ta*$_5$!(WA) "I am ready to die for you;" the idiom of loyalty EA 289: 51 *ma-at-ti ma-gal* ⌜*a*⌝*-na ka-ta*$_5$ "I would sincerely die for you," is thought to be calque for a Canaanite idiom.[399] The proposed parallels are EA 136:42 (⌜UGU⌝ LUGAL EN-*ia* BA.ÚŠ *a-na-ku*) EA 137:52 (*ù yi-de be-li i-nu-ma* UGU-*šu a-mu-tu*); and EA 138:27 (*a-na* LUGAL *ša-a ia-mu-tu* [UGU *be*-]*li-ia*). This basic expression of loyalty stems from a local idiom that was re-purposed in Canaano-Akkadian.[400] It is important to remember, that these letters combine written and spoken styles of language. In the above examples, the body of the letters comprise an oral message that was spoken in Canaanite was converted into Canaano-Akkadian. The postscripts, on the other hand, were private messages between two scribes that were communicated in writing alone.

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[399] This translation follows Rainey, which is based on J. J. Finkelstein's original proposal that this is a Canaanite idiom. Moran, on the other hand understands this to be a related to the form *tāmîd*. He argues that the perfect does not have a modal use and that *magal* ("very much") is an unlikely adverb for the verbal root **mwt* "to die." See Jacob J. Finkelstein, "Three Amarna Notes," *EI* 9 (1969), 33-34 and Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 330, cf. 20. See also EA 136:42; EA 137:52; EA 138:27 and Rainey, *CAT* II, 364. See also the *CAD* entry for *ma'da*, which includes the form *ma-at-ti* as an adverb (M-1, 4; 30).

[400] For example, *kâta* is not WS but is only attested in Akkadian as a 2s pronoun; it serves as a dative in Standard Babylonian, though it was originally an acc/gen pronoun. The form *mâtatī* conforms to the 1cs WS suffix conjugation, which is used here to express a promise and is a stative.

Approaching Canaano-Akkadian as a written scribal code also resolves the lack of concern for precise orthography. For example, the writing of the 1cs independent pronoun fluctuates in the postscripts. It appears as *a-nu-ki* in EA 287:66, 69, which is the WS form featuring the Canaanite shift; in EA 288:66 and 289:51 we see the standard Akkadian orthography *a-na-ku*. This mix of spellings is typical of this sub-corpus of Canaanite letters, which reflects both Canaano-Akkadian and the northern training of the scribe. The scribe adapted his/her training to communicate in writing to another scribe, one who would most likely been accustomed to deciphering both Canaano-Akkadian and MB.

Returning to the above discussion about the delivery protocol for these letters, it is possible that the Canaanite form *a-nu-ki* in EA 287 was meant to be read and translated by the messenger transporting this letter. The final lines in the postscripts in EA 286, 287, 288 (?), and 289 can be interpreted as referring to the scribe, though these passages are somewhat ambiguous and allow for the possibility that the declarations of loyalty are actually intended for the Pharaoh. According to this reading, the postscripts served as a guide for the scribe regarding which sections of the messages were the most important.

> EA 286: 62-64 *še-ri-ib a-wa-ti.*⌜MEŠ⌝/ ⌜*ba*⌝-*na-ta a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia ḫal-qa-at*/ ⌜*gáb*⌝-*bi* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN-*ia* "Present eloquent words to the king, my lord: '[Al]l of the lands of the king, my lord, are lost!'"

> EA 287: 67-70 *še-ri-ib a-wa-ta*$_5$.MEŠ *ba-na-ta*/ *a-na šàr-ri* EN-*ia*/ ⌜LÚ⌝ ⌜*ú*⌝-⌜*e*⌝-⌜*é*'⌝ ⌜*šàr*⌝-⌜*ri*⌝ *a*-⌜*nu*⌝-⌜*ki*⌝/ *ma-at-ti a-na ka-ta*$_5$!(WA) "I am your servant. Present eloquent words to the king, my lord: 'I am a soldier of the king. I am ready to die for you!'"

> EA 288: 64-66 *še-ri-ib a-wa-ta*$_5$.M[EŠ]/ *ba-na-ti a-na šàr-r*[*i*]/ [*e-nu-ma* LÚ] ÌR[-*ka ù*

LÚ.]⌜DUMU⌝-*ka a-na-ku* "Present nice words to the king [because] I am [your] servant [and] your son."[401]

EA 289: 49-51 *a-wa-ta*$_5$.MEŠ *ba-n*[*a-ta*]*i-din-mi a-na* ⌜*šàr*⌝-*ri ma-at-ti ma-gal* ⌜*a*⌝-*na ka-ta*$_5$ ÌR-*ka a-na-ku* "Present to the king eloquent words: 'I would sincerely die for you. I am your servant.'"

The expression "good/eloquent words" expresses a wish that the messages be transmitted in a positive light. This phrase is then followed by a declaration of loyalty. When this is omitted, the postscript leads directly into a citation of the main body of the letter, the understanding being that this is the part of the message that should be emphasized to the Pharaoh.

c. The Yurza Postscript (EA 316)

EA 316 is a letter from Pu-Ba'lu of Yurza to the Pharaoh and also to a scribe at the court of Tell el-'Amarna.[402] EA 316 is something of an anomaly. This letter, unlike the Arzawa and Jerusalem Amarna Letters, was written at a site in the southern Levant by a Canaano-Akkadian trained scribe that was familiar with Egyptian culture, one not under the influence of the northern cuneiform traditions. Moreover, this letter does not employ the Akkadian term *ṭupšarru* for "scribe," but uses an Egyptian term, which appears to be a reference to a specific official known as the person responsible for processing and transmitting the Pharaoh's correspondence from Canaan. The Arzawa letter, for example, writes the title of "scribe" with a logogram as DUB.SAR-*aš* using -*aš* as a phonetic complement. The term "scribe" is written *ṭup-šar šàr-ri* in the Jerusalem postcripts, which may be a

[401] This line is damaged. Rainey reconstructs this as a part of the message to the scribe, though it is also possible that this declaration of loyalty was also meant for the Pharaoh.

[402] Vita assigns EA 314 and 316(?) to Scribe 1 of Yuza and EA 315 to Scribe 2 of Ashkelon. Goren et al., tentatively identified Yurza as the site of Tell Jemmeh. See Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 91; Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 265-269; 301.

calque for "royal scribe" in Egyptian.[403] The Yurza letter, on the other hand, employs an Egyptianism to refer to the scribe by his/her actual Egyptian title. The term ˹*ša-aḫ-ši-ḫa-ši-*˺*ḫa*˺ [EN-*ia*] is a syllabic spelling of the Egyptian title *sš šʿ.t* or "letter-writer" or "epistolary secretary."[404] It is preceeded by a determinative that marks this title as a proper noun. This suggests a more intimate knowledge of the scribal apparatus at Tell el-ʻAmarna, namely that the scribe working for Yurza was writing with a specific official in mind.

EA 316 comprises three parts: an introduction, the body of the letter, which is essentially a declaration of loyalty, and a postscript to the Egyptian scribe working at the royal court at Tel el-ʻAmarna. In this private "message within a message" Pu-Baʻlu offers an apology for why he has not sent a gift previously and promises gifts in the near future. Though we can not be certain as to the reception of these postscripts, their very existence and, in particular the apology postscript in this letter, implies a back and forth exchange between the scribes working in Canaan and Egypt.

Table 8 The Postscript in EA 316

EA 316 **Introduction** Obv. 01) [*a-na* LUGA]L ˹EN˺-˹*ia*˺ ˹DINGIR˺.˹MEŠ˺[*ia*] 02) [^{d}]UTU-*ia iš*[-*t*]*u* AN *š*[a_{10}-*mi*] 03) [*um*]-*ma* ˹*Pu*-˹^{d}˺˺IŠKUR˺ ÌR-[*ka*]	[To the kin]g, my lord, [my] deity, the sun fr[o]m hea[ven], the [mess]age of Pu-Baʻlu, [your] servant, [and the d]irt at your feet, the [gr]oom of your horses. [A]t the feet of the king, my lord, my deity, my sun god from heaven, seven times and seven

[403] Mynarova proposes that this is a calque for the Egyptian title *sš nswt* "royal scribe" or *sš nswt mꜣʿ.t* "true royal scribe" or "royal secretary." There are about 14-15 attested uses of the titles *sš nswt* "royal scribe" or *sš nswt mꜣʿ.t* at the site of Tell el-ʻAmarna ("The Scribes of Amarna: A Family Affair?" in *La famille dans le Proche-Orient ancient: réalitées, symbolisms, et images: RIA 55 Paris*. Edited by Marti Lionel [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014], 380).

[404] The title *sš šʿ.t.* is rare in the 18th Dynasty and is not attested at Amarna or in texts dating to the Amarna period (Ibid., 380).

04) [*u* SAHA]R ⌜*ép*⌝-⌜*ri*⌝ ⌜*ša*⌝ 2 GÌR.⌜MEŠ⌝-⌜*ka*⌝ 05) ⌜LÚ⌝ \ [*ku*]$_8$-sí ⌜*ša*⌝ ANŠE.KUR.RA.⌜MEŠ⌝.⌜KUR⌝.⌜RI⌝-⌜*ka*⌝ 06) *a*[-*n*]*a* ⌜2⌝ ⌜GÌR⌝.MEŠ LUGAL ⌜EN⌝-*ia* DINGIR.⌜MEŠ⌝-⌜*ia*⌝ 07) ⌜^{d}⌝⌜UTU⌝-⌜*ia*⌝ ⌜*iš*⌝-⌜*tu*⌝ AN *ša*$_{10}$-*mi* 08) ⌜7⌝-*šu u* ⌜7⌝-*ta* ⌜*am*⌝-*qú-ut* 09) ⌜*ṣe*⌝-*ru*-⌜*ma*⌝ \ *u ka-íb-tù*-⌜*ma*⌝ **Message to the Pharoah** 10) [*a*]-⌜*nu*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝ ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝-*ṣa-ru a*[-*šar*] 11) *š*[*àr-r*]*i* ⌜*ma*⌝-⌜*gal*⌝ ⌜*u*⌝ ⌜*mi*⌝-*ia-mi* 12) [LÚ] ⌜UR⌝.GU ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜*yi*⌝-⌜*im*⌝-*ta-ku*$_8$ 13) ⌜DUG$_4$⌝.⌜GAR⌝.⌜RA⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝ *a*-⌜*nu*⌝-*ma* 14) ⌜*iš*⌝[-*te*-]⌜*mu*⌝ *a-wa-te*⌜MEŠ⌝? 15) [^{I}*Ta*]*ḫ-m*[*a-i*]*a* ⌜LÚ⌝ ⌜GIR$_5$⌝+PA ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝ ----------	times have I fallen on the back and on the stomach. [N]ow, I am guarding carefully the pl[ace] of th[e ki]ng, my lord. And who is the dog that would neglect the command(?) of the king? Now, I am o[be]ying the words of [Ta]ḫm[ay]a, the commissioner(!) of the king. ————————————————————————————
Private Message to the Scribe Rev. 16) [*a-n*]*a* ^{I}*ša-aḫ-ši-ḫa-ši*-⌜*ḫa*⌝ [EN-*ia*] **(Kn.)** 17) *um-ma* ^{I}*Pu*-⌜d⌝⌜IŠKUR⌝ ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜2⌝ ⌜GÌR⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝-*ka*⌜*am*⌝[-*qú-ut*] 18) ⌜*i*⌝-*ia*-⌜*nu*⌝ ⌜*mi*⌝-⌜*im*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝ 19) ⌜*i*⌝-[*n*]*a* ⌜É⌝-*ia i-n*[*a*] 20) [*i*]-*re*[-*bi*-]⌜*i*⌝*a a*-[*na*] ⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*šu*⌝ 21) ⌜*u*⌝ ⌜*ki*⌝-*na-na la*-[*a*] *uš-ši-ir*-[*t*]*i*$_7$ 22) KASKAL-*ra*-⌜*na*⌝ *a-na k*[*a-ta*]$_5$ 23) *a-nu-ma i*-⌜*šu*⌝[-*ši*-]*ru* 24) KASKAL-*ra-na dam*-⌜*qá*⌝-*ta* 25) ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *ka-ta*$_5$	[T]o the scribe of letters [of my lord], the message of Pu-Ba'lu: At your feet have I fa[llen]. There was nothing i[n] my house upo[n] my [e]nt[ering] it and therefore I did not send a caravan to y[ou]. Now I am preparing a nice caravan for you.

The actual message to the Pharaoh is non-specific and comprises a generic message that Pu-Ba'lu is carrying out the order of the king. His exchanges with the Egyptian court seem to relate mainly to the procurement of goods via caravan, which corresponded to Yurza's location near the frontier with Egypt. The main purpose of these messages appears to be a reassurance that the caravans are indeed

on their way, and will include a gift for the royal scribe:

> EA 314: 17-22 [Inasmuch as the king, my lord sp]o[ke about st]ones of raw glass, I have sent to the king, my lord, my deity, the sun god of heav[en]; EA 316 18-25 "There was nothing i[n] my house upo[n] my [e]nt[ering] it and therefore I did not send a caravan to y[ou]. Now I am preparing a nice caravan for you."

The postscript in EA 316 suggests that it was common practice to bribe the scribes/officials working as intermediaries between local Canaanite rulers and the Egyptian court who may have been the ones regulating the flow of goods from the Levant. The caravan here in question was most likely one promised to the court that included a small bribe for the scribe. By embedding this news in a private message, Pu-Ba'lu is in effect using this Egyptian official as an intermediary between him and the Pharaoh to apologize for a delay and ensure that his apology was transmitted in a positive light.

Pu-Ba'lu's correspondence demonstrates a more intimate knowledge of the Egyptian apparatus controlling the caravan from the Levant and to Egypt as it refers to a certain Egyptian officials by name. The following letters from Yurza make reference to specific Egyptian officials:

Table 9 EA 315 An Appeal to Reʿanapa

EA 315 3) [1]⌜*Re*⌝*-a-na-pa* LÚ.MAŠKIM *ša* 14) [LUGA]L⌜EN⌝‹*-ia*› *ša qa-ba* LUGAL EN-*ia* 15) [*da*]*m-qá ki-ma* ^{d}UTU *i-na* AN *ša*$_{10}$*-mí* 16) [*mi-i*]*a-mi* LÚ UR!(UŠ).GI$_{7}$!(GU) *u la-a* 17) [*yi-n*]*a-ṣa-ru a-wa-te* LUGAL EN-*ia* 18) [^{d}UTU *š*]*a* ⌜*iš*⌝-⌜*tu*⌝ AN *ša*$_{10}$*-mí*	Reʿanapa, the commissioner of [the kin]g, ‹my› lord, whom the king, my lord, commanded, is [fi]ne like the sun god in heaven. [Wh]o is the dog that would not [ke]ep the words of the king, my lord, [the sun] from heaven?

Table 10 EA 316 An Appeal to Taḫmaya

10) [*a*]-⌜*nu*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝ ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝-*ṣa-ru a*[*-šar*] 11) *š*[*àr-r*]*i* ⌜*ma*⌝-⌜*gal*⌝ ⌜*u*⌝ ⌜*mi*⌝*-ia-mi* 12) [LÚ] ⌜UR⌝.GU ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜*yi*⌝-⌜*im*⌝*-ta-ku*$_{8}$	[N]ow, I am guarding carefully the pl[ace] of th[e ki]ng, my lord. And who is the dog that would neglect the command(?) of the king? Now,

13) ⌜DUG$_4$⌝.⌜GAR⌝.⌜RA⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝ *a-⌜nu⌝-ma* 14) ⌜*iš*⌝[*-te-*]⌜*mu*⌝ *a-wa-te*.⌜MEŠ⌝? 15) [^{I}*Ta*]*ḫ-m*[*a-i*]*a* ⌜LÚ⌝ ⌜GIR$_5$⌝+PA ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝	I am o[be]ying the words of [Ta]ḫm[ay]a, the commissioner(!) of the king.

Such appeals to the entourage of scribes and officials at the royal court were a part of an overall strategy to gain access to the Pharaoh. By means of securing powerful allies at the royal court, officials who controlled the flow of communication between Canaan and Egypt worked to ensure a favorable response from Egypt and thus, jockeyed for power in Canaan.

Returning to the language of the postscript in EA 316, it too is written in the Canaano-Akkadian scribal code.

Table 11 The Language of the Postscript in EA 316

EA 316 ----------	————————————————————————————
Private Message to the Scribe Rev. 16) [*a-n*]*a* ^{I}*ša-aḫ-ši-ḫa-ši-*⌜*ḫa*⌝ [EN-*ia*] **(Kn.)** 17) *um-ma* ^{I}*Pu-*⌜d⌝⌜IŠKUR⌝ ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜2⌝ ⌜GÌR⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝-*ka*⌜***am***⌝[*-qú-ut*] 18) ⌜*i*⌝-*ia*-⌜*nu*⌝ ⌜*mi*⌝-⌜*im*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝ 19) ⌜*i*⌝-[*n*]*a* ⌜É⌝-*ia i-n*[*a*] 20) [*i*]-*re*[*-bi-*]⌜*i*⌝*a a-*[*na*] ⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*šu*⌝ 21) ⌜*u*⌝ ⌜*ki*⌝-*na-**na la-**[**a**] **uš-ši-ir-**[**t**]**i**$_7$ 22) KASKAL-*ra-*⌜*na*⌝ *a-na k*[*a-ta*]$_5$ 23) *a-nu-ma **i-**⌜**šu**⌝[**-ši-**]**ru*** 24) KASKAL-*ra-na dam-*⌜*qá*⌝-*ta* 25) ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *ka-ta*$_5$	(16-25) [T]o the scribe of letters [of my lord], the message of Pu-Baʿlu: At your feet have I fa[llen]. There was nothing i[n] my house upo[n] my [e]nt[ering] it and therefore I did not send a caravan to y[ou]. Now I am preparing a nice caravan for you.

The syntax is largely VSO, the one exception being that the verb in the introduction is Akkadian (*amqut*) and is part of a set formulaic phrase. The verbs in the body of the message of the postscript

are Canaano-Akkadian and occur in the verb initial position: *uš-ši-ir-*[*t*]*iʾ* is a 1cs suffixed form; *i-*⌜*šu*⌝[-*ši-*]*ru* is a Š-causative 1cs conjugated according to the *yaqtulu* pattern. The logograms are complemented by phonetic complements that point to an Akkadian reading of these words.The treatment of the Sumerogram KASKAL suggests that this word was understood to stand in for a Akkadian, and not a Canaanite lexeme:

316: 22 KASKAL-*ra-*⌜*na*⌝

316: 24 KASKAL-*ra-na dam-*⌜*qá*⌝*-ta*

In both attestations, the logogram KASKAL is understood as having the reading *ḫarranu* or "caravan" in Akkadian. The phonetic complements –*ra-na* mark this noun in the appropriate accusative case; furthermore the adjective *dam-*⌜*qá*⌝*-ta* indicates that it is understood to be a f. noun. In Akkadian and WS the term for "way" is f. (*drk* in WS). This postscript demonstrates the use of Canaano-Akkadian, and not Egyptian or Canaanite as the base for such written exchanges, even in private discussions between Canaanite and Egyptian officials. Canaano-Akkadian was not used in spoken in face-to-face interactions, but remained a scribal code of the subjugated lands in Egypt's eastern territories that could be infused with local, WS expressions for added emphasis and nuance.

D. Itinerant Scribes?

As Akkadian was the prestige writing system used for diplomacy throughout the LBA cuneiform scribes were in high demand. There is compelling evidence that such scribes were highly mobile, especially those who were multilingual and able to negotiate between the written Akkadian of diplomacy and the diverse substrate languages spoken in Near Eastern courts. Melchert, following

Beckman's suggestion, proposes that scribes working between two polities may have been dispatched in pairs, one from each ruler to assure the proper transmission of such diplomatic letters.[405] Indeed, there is evidence that scribes trained in one tradition of Peripheral Akkadian were employed by polities at the other end of the Near East. For example, the ruler of Alashia appears to have employed scribes trained in the MB, Canaano-Akkadian, and Hurro-Akkadian traditions.[406] In a similar vein, the development of the Hittite cuneiform tradition is often described as a by-product of Hattushili I's conquest of Alalakh and the consequent relocation of its scribal apparatus to Hattusas. Scribes formerly working for the Syrian court produced Akkadian texts for the Hittite court, which culminated in the creation of a distinct "Hittite" cuneiform script and the adaption of cuneiform to write the Hittite language.

An example of scribal mobility in the Canaanite cuneiform corpus from this period is the presence of a scribe trained in the northern Levantine, or "Syrian" tradition, working in Jerusalem at 'Abdi-Ḫeba's court. Moran first observed that the Akkadian in the majority of the Jerusalem correspondence conforms to the Akkadian produced in northern Syria as opposed to Canaan. The majority of the letters from Jerusalem reflect a mix of scribal traditions. For example, the letters typically do not use the verbal forms typical of Canaano-Akkadian but also display northern orthographies; also, the scribe makes use of postscripts, which appear mainly in the cuneiform of the

[405] Melchert, "Mycenaean and Hittite Diplomatic Correspondence," 11, cf. 8.

[406] Cochavi-Rainey, *The Alashiya Texts from the 14th and 13th Cent. B.C.E.*

north.[407] The presence of a specialist trained outside of the region at ʻAbdi- Ḫeba's court is not too surprising in light of the high demand for Akkadian trained scribes at the larger urban centers. Vita's "Gezer" scribe also seems to have worked regionally along the coast and the Shephela working for multiple rulers (Lapuma, Gath, Gintu-Kirmil, possibly Beth-Shemesh, and possibly Ashdod or Jaffa).[408]

The presence of such mobile scribes alters the scribal map of the ancient Near East and challenges past assumptions about the language of these letters. The Amarna Letters did not represent the language of the polities sending them. Rather, they reflected a negotiation between the Akkadian of the scribes' original training, the scribal conventions of their employers, and the pragmatic need to present appealing messages to the cuneiform scribes working in Egypt. In this sociolinguistic setting, the scribe emerges as central to Amarna Age diplomacy.

G. Conclusion: The Scribe as Diplomat

In summary, the use of Akkadian as the written medium of communication between diverse language speakers in diverse geo-political regions reflects the need for a codified and standardized writing system, one accessible by cuneiform-trained scribes working throughout the Near East. The letters in the Amarna corpus, however, are quite limited in scope and content—they offer only a

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[407] The theophoric element in the name of the ruler, ʻAbdi-Ḫeba, or "sevant of Ḫeba,"comprises the name of an Anatolian deity. Some scholars argue reflects the northern Syro-Anatolian ancestry of the ruling dynasty of Jerusalem, which is referred to in much later biblical traditions about the origins of this city. See for example, Ezek 16:3: "And say, Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: 'Your origin and your birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite'." For a discussion of the unique elements of the Jerusalem corpus see Moran, "The Syrian Scribe," 146-166.

[408] Vita, "Scribes and Dialects," 863-894.

limited view of diplomatic interactions between these polities.[409] Akkadian was prestigious—having an Akkadian trained scribe was a symbol of the status of the local court. Moreover, the use of Akkadian as opposed to Hittite or Egyptian in such dealings, even when each court employed scribes fully capable of deciphering each other's languages suggests that Akkadian served an important function in diplomacy.[410] Use of Akkadian into the 13th century B.C.E., a period of heightened tension and diplomacy between the two courts, suggests that the use of Akkadian as an interface language was not merely pragmatic but had symbolic importance.

In the southern Levant, Canaano-Akkadian was a standardized medium of communication in areas controlled by Egypt. This system evolved from an accumulation of older cuneiform traditions from the MBA, as well as local innovations that were gradually codified (e.g., the use of Akkadian verbal bases, yet a morpho-syntax influenced by WS). The Canaanite Amarna letters tend to be stilted and quite predictable, as they follow formulaic protocol and deal with common themes and concerns. The letters from smaller polities, in particular those without a scribal school, seem to be particularly stilted and communicate little other than formulaic expressions of obedience. The scribes at more

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[409] For example, the letters between powers such as Egypt, the Kassites, and the Hittites etc. consisted primarily of requests for of gifts and raw materials, and discussions about the nature of the alliances between the royal families. The most challenging part of the Amarna corpus are the gift lists, which are replete with technical terms for object that are ill understood by scholars. However, such lists would not have posed a problem to the ancient scribe, who presumably could stand and examine the exotic gifts that accompanied the messenger.

[410] For example, although there were scribes trained in Hittite at Tell el-'Amarna, Akkadian remained the written language of Egyptian-Hittite diplomacy. The bulk of exchanges between Hatti and Egypt were written in Akkadian (e.g., EA 41-44 as are the letters from Egypt that were recovered from the Hittite capital of Hatusas). There are only a handful of letters written in Hittite in this diplomatic exchange (KUB 21.36, KUB 26.53, KUB 26.89). See. E. Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache* [= Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 77] (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994).

developed centers, such as Jerusalem, Byblos, and Tyre for example, used innovative strategies to make their letters more appealing. Canaano-Akkadian orthographies can at times be quite ambiguous, as demonstrated in the above examples. This was not a problem, however, as any gaps in the official written messages were filled by the messengers transporting the written message, who served as *de facto* ambassadors. Moreover, as the use of Canaano-Akkadian forms in the postscripts suggests, the scribes dealing with Canaanite affairs were familiar with the cuneiform conventions of their Canaanite counterparts.

Unlike Egyptian and Hittite, writing in Akkadian was a more neutral written language, and was ideal for cross-cultural diplomacy. It had been adopted outside of Mesopotamia, in particular in Syria, by powerful dynasties in the mid-third millennium B.C.E, and was thus well established and prestigious. In the LBA, it was used by too many diverse groups to be claimed as a symbol of geo-political identity. In communications between rival powers, such as Egypt and the Hittites, Akkadian served as a writing system known by all, but claimed by none. Written Akkadian thus served as a linguistic buffer between polities in conflict. In the southern Levant, it appears to have served a similar function. Egypt retained its own writing system for its own use; WS polities used the writing system already in place in the second millennium B.C.E., which had by this point evolved into a regional scribal system used by diverse Canaanite polities. Egypt appears to have encouraged the use of this system and to have provided scribes for those polities that did not have scribal centers of their own (see Chapter 9). The messages were then translated into the languages of the respective courts

upon arrival—diplomacy was thus dependent upon the scribes and officials processing these messages, whereby written Akkadian thus served as a code between scribal groups.

CHAPTER FIVE

Writing, Language, and Script Choice-The Sociolinguistics of Canaano-Akkadian

I. The Sociolinguistics of Canaano-Akkadian: Developing a Methodology

Even the most nuanced approach to the languages underlying Canaano-Akkadian—one that considers the language of the original message, its graphemic form as inscribed onto the tablet-artifact, the language in which the text was transmitted, and that of translation at its final destination—will still run into the problem of linguistic classification. Indeed, scholarship on the development of Levantine scribalism during this period is mired in debates regarding how to evaluate the "language" of the Canaano-Akkadian corpus. The irony of this corpus is that the languages of actual utterance, i.e., the original speech (presumably a dialect of Canaanite) and the language of delivery (an Egyptian court dialect) are not preserved in the historical record. The Canaano-Akkadian version of the message captured in these tablets represents a layer of language that was only accessible to the scribes writing and receiving these messages, and perhaps by certain trained court officials.

A. An Introduction

Canaano-Akkadian had a very specific sociolinguistic function that was inherently tied to the scribal apparatuses operating in areas under Egyptian influence and control. The Akkadian produced in other parts of the Periphery served quite a different socio-linguistic purpose than that in the Levant, and moreover from Mesopotamia. As Augustinus Gianto writes,

> [I]n the south, Akkadian was virtually used only in communication with the Egyptian court. No legal documents, not even monuments, have been found…It seems that the use of Akkadian in the southern regions of Syria-Palestine was restricted to certain fields of communication among local scribal circles and between them and their colleagues in Egypt. It is true that the material from Amarna has to be recognized as independent from Middle Babylonia. Yet, on the other hand, it cannot be treated as if it were a language or even a dialect.[411]

In truth Canaano-Akkadian was not really limited to Canaan. Canaano-Akkadian forms are most prevalent in the cuneiform texts from the southern Levant, which was under direct Egyptian control. They are also attested, however, in the Akkadian from Alashia and Amurru, which were regions under Egyptian influence. They also appear in certain Egypto-Akkadian texts written on behalf of the Pharaoh that date to the 14th century B.C.E.[412] This suggests that the cuneiform trained scribes working for Egypt were familiar with this scribal code to the point of being influenced by this WS scribal tradition, or were at the very least able to parody a Levantine style. Overall, the distribution of this corpus suggests that Canaano-Akkadian served primarily as a standardized system of communication between lesser polities and Egypt. A less prestigious register, i.e., Canaano-Akkadian

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[411] Gianto, "Amarna Akkadian as a Contact Language," 126.

[412] The Canaano-Akkadian forms in letters written by Egyptian scribes mainly date to the 14th century B.C.E. See Cochavi-Rainey, "Canaanite Influence in the Akkadian Texts," 39-46.

in all of its manifestations, was used to corresponded with Egypt; the responses were inscribed in the prestige register of Akkadian used by Egypt as well as the more powerful polities of this period who could afford a developed cuneiform scribal apparatus at their courts.

The main argument set forth in this chapter is that there is evidence for the use of Canaano-Akkadian as a scribal code, one not concerned with spoken language, but dependent upon a system of semiotic signals within the graphemic system. This system employed linguistic, graphemic, and metalinguistic cues to communicate with the scribes at the other end of the correspondence. Rulers from areas that were more cosmopolitan and better situated to have well-trained scribes employed a higher register of this system that was a more developed and included MB and Egyptianisms as well as WS-influenced forms. Scribes working for rulers of smaller areas used a much simpler version of this scribal code that served as a short-hand. Their messages are short, repetitive, and do not entail complex verbal forms, but used a stock of verbs and logographic spellings. Such scribes employed extremely simple formulae and couched the actual "message" of these texts in idiomatic phrases that were further expanded upon by the scribes and/or messengers delivering these texts to Egypt. The true language underlying the tablets in these cases was not Canaanite or Egyptian or even Akkadian for that matter, but at various times may even have been a mixture of all three.

The scribes working at the seams of these polities employed Canaano-Akkadian as a written code because it effectively bridged the gaps between these diverse speakers. This scribal system operated as a continuum—there were basic conventions and scribes working within this system, innovated based on their proficiency in Akkadian and cuneiform more generally. They also integrated

rhetorical strategies from their own linguistic backgrounds, which again resulted in the range of styles and orthographies. The messengers and translators working for as intermediaries been these courts provided the necessary contexts for such exchanges. Though we cannot securely identify the underlying WS languages due to the lack of evidence of the spoken dialects during this period, we can assume that the "language" of these exchanges was not tied to one language or dialect. Rather, the written text served as a vehicle to transmit a polysemous field of meaning that could be deciphered by cuneiform scribes in the Eastern Mediterranean and Egypt.

The scribes working for the king of Alashia had eclectic scribal backgrounds, not because there were ranges of Akkadian dialects spoken at the court of Alashia, but because scribes from diverse parts of the Periphery were employed to write for the local court. This small but diverse corpus calls into question the disconnect between the traditional view that the "language" of these tablets reflects the language of the senders or of the courts producing these letters. The cuneiform letters from Cyprus demonstrate influence from Canaano-Akkadian, Hurro-Akkadian, and MB (see Chapter Six).[413]

For example, EA 34: 48-49, a letter from Alashia has several Canaano-Akkadian forms. The main thrust of this passage is the king's commitment to fulfilling the Pharaoh's demands: *ù ša te-ri-šu at-ta ù a-*[*na-k*]*u id-di-nu* "And that which you request, ⌜I⌝ will give." This clause makes of parallelism that is founded upon a use of WS syntax:

[413] Cochavi-Rainey's work on the Akkadian at Alashia reveals that EA 33, 34, 39, and 40 were written in a Canaano-Akkadian style (*The Alashiya Texts*).

A	B
ù ša te-ri-šu	*at-ta*
B'	A'
ù a-[*na-k*]*u*	*id-di-nu*
"And that which you request,	⌜I⌝ will give."

The verb is fronted and followed by an independent pronoun (A +B). This is then mirrored in the second part of the clause (B'+A'). The independent pronoun is placed after the verb in the first clause, whereas in the second clause the order is reversed. Typically, this type of parallelism serves an emphatic function. The verb *id-di-nu* is a Canaano-Akkadian form. The *i-* prefix marks the 1cs and the verbal stem is modeled after a long indicative (WS *yaqtulu*), which serves here to mark the present/future. Lines 52-53, too feature a Canaano-Akkadian form: *i-nu-ma tu-ša-ab a-na* GIŠ.GU.ZA *šàr-ru-*⌜*ta*⌝*-ka* "because you have sat on your royal throne," reflects WS syntax. The verb, which is a Canaano-Akkadian *yaqtul* preterite, is fronted at the head of the clause.[414] This suggests that the language of these letters was informed to a greater degree by the scribes writing them than by the ruler or his officials, who presumably were less familiar with Akkadian and the protocols for communication with Egypt.

Returning to the sociolinguistic backdrop of these tablets, it is quite unlikely that the king of Alashia was communicating with Egyptian officials in Canaanite. Rather, the ruler spoke or commissioned a basic message in the local prestige language, which was inscribed in Akkadian cuneiform, though in the scribal code used in the southern Levant. Upon delivery to Egypt, Ugarit, or

[414] There are also some Canaano-Akkadian forms in letters written by Egyptian cuneiform scribes (Cochavi-Rainey, "Canaanite Influence in the Akkadian Texts, 39-46).

Ḫatti etc., these messages were deciphered and translated into the local languages. The training of the scribes dictated the form of the message—not the language of the sender or recipient.

There assumption that there is a great degree of correlation between writing and speech or writing and ethno-cultural identity is inherently problematic. It is unlikely that each and every Canaano-Akkadian form in the cuneiform of this period was the work of a Canaanite scribe. This is particularly true of the Canaanisms in the Egyptian Akkadian texts from this period, for which we must assume a measure of scribal cross-influence (see Chapter Seven). Scribes wrote according to their training and scribal influences, and at times shifted in their approach depending on the audience. Moreover, as seen by the example of the Syrian-trained scribe working for ʿAbdi-Ḫeba, scribes could be trained, or at least familiar with, multiple scribal traditions and could code-switch when they deemed it necessary to further their written agenda. Once we approach the cuneiform texts from this period as scribal artifacts, we are liberated from an impossible search for the languages hiding behind these long lost speech events.

The debates about what "language" was used, and if indeed it was a scribal dialect of Akkadian or an elite register of Canaanite (and if so which one), overlook the more tangible question of how this scribal system developed and became the authoritative medium of communication with Egyptian administrators. Canaano-Akkadian is best described in terms of scribal systems rather than a spoken dialect of either Akkadian or Canaanite, or a spoken mixed or contact language.[415] Such an approach

[415] For an alternative approach that views it as a contact language see J-P. Vita, "Language Contact between Akkadian and Northwest Semitic Languages in Syria-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age," in *Semitic Languages in Contact.* Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 82 Edited by Aaron Michael Butts (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 375-404.

best accords with the available epigraphic evidence and does not necessitate the reconstruction of dialects of Akkadian or Canaanite that are forever lost. Nor moreover, does it demand the evolution of a hypothetical, highly complex, regional Akkadographic tradition during a period when there is no evidence for a local Canaanite institution powerful to create and enforce such a writing system. We must look for another model for how Canaano-Akkadian developed into a cohesive scribal code, and moreover, seek out the sociolinguistic context for its use and spread.

The "language" of these texts does not fit into the tidy linguistic categories of Canaanite, Akkadian, Egyptian, nor was an array of Canaano-Akkadian dialects *per se*. Also, as Andrason and Vita contend, even when approached as a contact language, it does not quite fit into any of the prescribed categories of contact languages.[416] Rather, Canaano-Akkadian emerges as a regional, written scribal code, one that may have been articulated to a limited degree in scribal settings, but was mainly limited to an elite scribal and diplomatic milieu. Moreover, the written record limits use of this scribal system to the southern Levant and eastern Mediterranean, where it was used for communication involving Egypt. This included buffer zones on the fringes of Egypt's eastern empire, hence its use in the Akkadian of Alashia and Amurru. That is, Canaano-Akkadian was limited to areas that fell under Egyptian control, which suggests that this scribal system that was actually endorsed by Egypt.

These messages existed in several forms and in various languages during the course of these

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[416] Alexander Andrason, and J-P. Vita, "From Glosses to the Linguistic Nature of Canaano-Akkadian," *Folia Orient* 51 (2014) 155–175.

diplomatic exchanges, which were mediated literacy events. The actual messages were spoken in the local dialect of the sender and delivered in the language of the addressee. The written version preserved in the Amarna tablets captures only the transitional phase of these messages. That is to say, it reflects a stage of the message between its initial articulation and final expression. In its Canaano-Akkadian form, it was only accessible to the scribes trained in this system. Outside of a very limited scribal setting, no one really "spoke" Canaano-Akkadian. As Sanders writes, "(T)here is no explicit evidence that anyone ever read a Canaano-Akkadian letter out loud to its recipient…The pattern of note-making and erasures in one letter (EA 369) implies that it was a set of mental notes by a scribe for an oral presentation to the Pharaoh: purely written, not spoken." [417] Any speakers who articulated these messages as they are reflected on the tablet (e.g., during scribal training, or in the composition of a tablet) were an elite few who were trained in the intricacies of diplomacy with Egypt.

Approaching Canaano-Akkadian as a writing system best elucidates the sociolinguistic background underlying its emergence, use, and eventual "death"—all of which correspond to Egypt's intensified presence in the southern Levant and eastern Mediterranean in the 15th century B.C.E. and its eventual decline by the 12th century B.C.E. Canaano-Akkadian does not appear to be dependent upon a community of Canaanite or Akkadian speakers in this region, but rather was connected to administration and diplomacy within Egypt's eastern empire. The scribes serving as buffers between Egypt and its regional polities drew upon a common set of cuneiform conventions that was limited to

[417] Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 82.

Egypt's territorial boundaries in the east.

B. The Sociolinguistics of Spoken vs. Written Language

The leap in scholarship that "language=writing" is understandable and unavoidable to a certain degree—written texts are all that are left of the ancient languages of the Near East. As Thomas O. Lambdin once famously said, "I don't know if you've noticed it…but we work with no data in this field."[418] The written record, on which we depend is quite limited in scope. Scholarly reconstructions of both the synchronic and diachronic variation in the languages of the ancient Near East are largely dependent upon the written record, which is often quite fragmentary. In some cases the inscriptional record may be supplemented to some degree by written and oral traditions that have been passed down to later generations (e.g., such is the case with Hebrew traditions).[419] As a result of this very restricted data set, reconstructing the ancient languages of this region—i.e., the diversity of dialects, ideo- and socio-lects, codes, registers, and the individual quirks of spoken language that makeup of linguistic repertoires of individuals and linguistic communities—is quite a challenge. Additionally, a community of speakers is not defined by what "language" they use, rather, by the social meaning that

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[418] This statement is reported to have been made during Lambdin's Comparative Semitic seminar. For the full story see Bruce Zuckerman, "Working with a Little More Data: New Finds in the 20th Century: Semitic Languages of the Ancient World," in *Double Takes: Thinking and Rethinking Issues of Modern Judaism in Ancient Context*. Studies in the Shoah 26. Edited by Zev Garber and Bruce Zuckerman (Lanham, MD: University Press America, 2004), 197; originally in "Working with a Little More Data; New Finds in the 20th Century: The Semitic Languages of the Ancient World," *Israel Oriental Studies XX*; *Semitic Linguistics: The State of the Art at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*. Edited by S. Izre'el (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 481.

[419] For a discussion of this problem see Cynthia L. Miller, "Methodological Issues in Reconstructing Language Systems in Epigraphic Fragments," in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions: the Proceedings of a Symposium, August 12-14, 2001 at Trinity International University* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 281-309.

these forms have and the ways in which language "represents, embodies, constructs, and constitutes meaningful participation" in that community.[420] Unfortunately, the social roles, rules of protocol, and the conventions of interpersonal interaction that informed linguistic practice within these ancient linguistic communities are largely lost. The written artifacts available to scholars offer a very narrow view of the range of linguistic varieties, practices, and the ranges of socio-cultural expression that existed in the ANE.

1. Dispelling with the Taxonomies of Language

Linguists, sociolinguists, and linguistic anthropologists have long realized the limitations of the traditional category of "language," and have striven to develop better terminology to describe and define the vast range of human communication. Yet, even the host of designations used to describe linguistic praxis that seek to avoid the term "language" (e.g., code, dialect, register, style, etc.) inevitably approach it as a bounded, static, and normativizing process.[421] Human linguistic expression

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[420] For this definition see Marcyliena Morgan, "Speech Community," in *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Edited by Alessandro Duranti (Ma: Blackwell, 2006), 3.

[421] As a modern day example, there are a host of regional dialects of American English that are un- and under-represented in writing. This linguistic patchwork is further complicated as groups of speakers that speak the "same" vernaculars can have a range of other dialects, registers, styles etc. at their disposal. We can thus speak of African American (Vernacular) English (AAVE or AAE) as a discrete dialect of English. Yet, within this large community of speakers are a range of smaller sub-groups that correspond to a range of AAE speakers all of which claim various degrees of membership to this group and to other communities. Furthermore, there are implicit social rules about the social contexts where AAE is used. For example, AAE plays a central, important social role in Black American culture, and yet is constantly in a state of opposition to General English which is seen as the hegemonic language of public and official space (e.g., the language of government, education, and media). Morgan argues that the AAE community uses both varieties "according to an elaborate integration of language norms and values associated with the symbolic and practical functions." Part of the inside knowledge passed down in this community entails knowing when and where use of General English (GE) is appropriate (i.e., professional life or in school contexts). Morgan describes GE as the learned institutional language which speakers of AAE "choose to speak;" AAE is the variety that speakers can "choose not to speak," as it is the language of socialization (associated with the family, home, and the AA community). Use of AAE in domains where GE is the dominant language and is considered normative and an index of "intelligence, compliance and so on" can lead to

is really a multifaceted and multiplicitious thing that is problematic precisely because it defies definition and is constantly in flux. Language is inherently tied to human institutions as it creates "identity, ideology, and agency" within a linguistic community."[422] That is, it shapes individual and group identities and it is shaped by them.

Michael Silverstein's critique of traditional approaches to the category of language is methodological. He is opposed to the "museologically or taxonomically inspired enterprise" which presumes use of a "model of an isolatable language system-a langue-in the Saussurean construal of the matter." He understands such an approach to be an oversimplification of the complexity of linguistic expression and the interconnectedness of language and culture, as it "presumes that we can unproblematically draw the boundaries of a language as a 'natural,' yet at once sociocentric and 'mental,' object." [423] Silverstein discuses the problem with approaching language as a bounded construct, namely that it flattens the linguistic diversity in communities and masks "multilingual speakers in plurilingual communities, pidgin and creole languages, and other abominations of classification of isolatable systems."[424] Overall, Silverstein cautions against the taxonomic approach to language that bundles linguistic varieties into tidy categories. As he writes,

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stigmatization. For a discussion see Morgan, "Speech Community," 11-13; Ibid., *Language, Discourse, and Power in African American Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[422] Morgan, "Speech Community," 3.

[423] For a discussion of the problems with classifying language see Michael Silverstein, "Languages/Cultures are Dead: Long Live the Linguistic-cultural!" In *Unwrapping the Sacred Bundle: Reflections on the Disciplining of Anthropology*. Edited by Daniel A. Segal and Sylvia J. Yanagisako (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), quote 110-111.

[424] Ibid., 111.

> [T]he very concepts of stable "cultures" and "languages" are ideological constructs that have their own sociocultural conditions of viability. That is not to say that languages and cultures are not "real"; indeed, they are very real, though just not the kind of natural objects upon the existence or boundaries or essence of which anthropological theories in all of the subfields of the museological era have depended.[425]

According to this view, we cannot really speak of speakers of a single stream of language but are obliged to speak in pluralities—we must consider the ranges of linguistic forms in the repertoire of a speaker and of their community and the negotiation between them.

For example, Asif Agha describes the dynamic range of registers that can co-exist as a community of speakers expands or contracts. A community must constantly pass on these forms and their ranges of meaning to the next generation of speakers for a register to remain relevant. However, speakers in a community do not all have the same level of competence in all facets of a linguistic system. Agha describes the manipulation or competency in these registers as a social mechanism that partitions society and creates "groups distinguished by differential access to the particular registers, and to the social practices which they mediate."[426] This, in turn, can contribute to uneven power dynamics in a given society. In other words, language use can and does affect the very power structures of the communities that produce it.

Language thus presents a paradoxical problem. We are obligated to approach it as a bounded

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[425] Ibid., 114-115.

[426] See Asif Agha, "Registers of Language," in *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Edited by Alessandro Duranti (MA: Blackwell, 2006), 27-29; quote on 29.

"thing" for purposes of classification and as an object of study.[427] Yet, to effectively study "language" we must come to terms with how it defies definition and categorization. In the context of the diversity of expression of the languages in the ANE we have an even more difficult challenge, as written registers are is by their very nature quite different from speech.

2. Writing as a Semiotic System, Not Merely a Linguistic One

Graphemic systems are inherently limited in their ability to convey the depth, dynamism, and diversity of human linguistic expression and the social processes that inform and are informed by linguistic practice. This is, in part, because the semiotic systems used in writing can only offer a distorted shadow of the linguistic systems that they represent. In a sense, writing can be conceptualized as a graphemic time capsule that presents a snap shot of language at a particular point in time. A text-artifact can capture the essence of a community's linguistic variety at a very specific moment, and perhaps even elucidate aspects of the history of that speech community, but it will not necessarily evolve alongside it. Also, much of the interpretation of the original utterance may depend upon the context and/or a shared cultural understanding that is no longer existent, and cannot be recreated by the modern scholar. Writing provides a means of preserving and/or commemorating a speech event, and thus offers a relative degree of permanence to speech. Yet, writing and its interpretation are contingent upon a whole other system of semiotic conventions that elucidate how the underlying linguistic form is represented in the medium of a text. Moreover, there is also the

[427] As Florian Coulmas notes, even linguists are bound by the physical and cognitive limitations of writing when they transcribe speech events for analysis (*Writing Systems: An Introduction to their Linguistic Analysis* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 11).

matter of the recipient who must reconstruct the meaning of the text from its graphemic guise.[428]

The truism is quite the opposite of what is commonly assumed about writing systems—no writing system is suited to capture the speech of its community. Even at the moment of conception when a writing system is "created," or amended with a particular linguistic community in mind, it will still be unable to capture all of the nuances of the "language" of that community. Writing systems are not systems of transcription but reflect very limited modes of linguistic production in a community's history. Moreover, written language tends to preserve forms that are no longer used in speech by a linguistic community. Spelling systems can also be more ideological than phonological, serving as a means to index membership to a geo-political group or to a cultural or linguistic community. For example, standardized writing systems in the ANE represented elite interests and first and foremost met the needs of state institutions. In such cases, the orthography of a language can be used to mark a cultural or political distinction; the "language" that is coded into the writing system may then take a graphemic form (i.e., visual) that has no true phonological and/or morphological (i.e., auditory) parallel in the actual spoken linguistic system. Or, it may reflect a historical form preserved for ideological reasons, or due to a more conservative orthographic system. That is to say, writing is a semiotic system that has its own field of meaning, one that is not limited to language *per se*.

To offer an ancient example, the high prestige "standard" emanating from Babylonia greatly influenced the orthography of the cuneiform texts of the Semitic speaking world of the second

[428] Coulmas defines writing as "a system of recording language by means of visible tactile marks" (*Writing Systems*, 1).

millennium B.C.E. As Cooper writes, "Because the language of Babylonia was the standard, the local dialects of written Akkadian were periodically reformed to conform, more or less, to that standard."[429] The reform at Mari whereby the *Shakkanakku* scribal conventions were supplanted by the Babylonian standard offers an example of an "overnight" reform in the ANE. As Cooper writes, "[I]t should make us feel very insecure, indeed about our ability to reconstruct spoken language from the written norm, if the same man can be called Iggid-Lim on Monday, but Yaggid-Lim on Tuesday…"[430] This appears to have been an extreme case, as most scribal reforms were most certainly gradual. Still, this example does expose the limitations of writing as a gauge of linguistic practice in the cuneiform world.

a. A Modern Reform. The Language of the Guardian and the Englishes of the 21st Century: American, British, or Global English?

Spelling often is ideological and, as such, a reform in orthography can be a better reflection of a shift in linguistic ideologies than a sudden change in phonology. The distinction between "American" and "British" spelling can index speaker's "dialect" of English. The differences such as color and center vs. colour and centre were codified in Noah Webster's Dictionary of American English to promote a new way of spelling in the colonies that distanced American English from that produced in Great Britain. This spelling was used to reflect a new American identity and emerging nationalistic

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[429] Jerrold Cooper, "Sumerian and Semitic Writing in Ancient Syro-Mesopotamia," In *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm — Proceedings of the 42nd RAI*. Edited by K. van Lerberghe and G. Voet (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 69; for original discussion see Pietor Michalowski, "Languages, Literature, and Writing at Ebla," in *Ebla 1975-1985. Dieci anni di linguistici e filologici*. Edited by L. Cagni (Instituto Universitario Orientale. dipartimento di studi Asiatici 27, Naples, 1987), cf. 125; Jean-Marie Durand, *La Situation Historique des šakkanakku: Nouvelle Approache, M.A.R.I.* 4 (1985), 147-172.

[430] Cooper, "Sumerian and Semitic Writing," 69; for original quote see Michalowski, "Language, Literature and Writing," 124.

ideology. Though, in truth, today these orthographies are a better indicator of the educational background of the writer, than their nationality. Both British and American English are used globally and are less tied to nation-states or national identity and are more an indication of education and cultural orientation.

Moreover, there is an interesting development that is in part catalyzed by the global economy. The American English orthography, which has been adopted more widely internationally, is perceived as encroaching on British spelling, particularly in British print media. The Guardian's recent shift in spelling policy adopts the spelling of governmental agencies according to the orthography used in their country of origin (e.g., *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Labor Day, One World Trade Center, Australian Labor party*).

Overnight, the spelling of non-British governmental agencies shifted to use of the same honorific use for British institutions— which was not without controversy. David Marsh the production editor of the Guardian explains the impact of this mini-reform:

> "(T)he US department of defence has – literally overnight – become the Department of Defense…this change has been driven by the growing realisation that it can appear insulting or demeaning to Guardian readers outside the UK to see their government bodies rendered in lowercase when we do not do the same for British ones."

The previous custom of only using capital letters to spell the names of agencies in the UK appears to have been perceived as having ideological undertones (and perhaps a legacy of the UK's colonialist past). The Guardian's recent openness to a plurality of spelling is a reflection of an overall shift in readership to a more international audience. As Marsh writes,

> "The Guardian is written in Standard English. (Well, most of the time.) The point of Standard English is that it can be understood by English speakers anywhere in the world – from York to New York, from Melbourne to Mumbai. The language we use is important only because of what we have to say." [431]

In a sense, the Guardian's spelling and style "reform" is really a by-product of globalization and the widespread adoption of Standard English as a written and spoken *lingua franca*. The notion of the "Queen's English" has been disbanded, as even British media is impacted by the conventions of a new trans-national standard of written English. This does not mean that there is a change in the spoken languages of the writers for the Guardian or their readership. This reform only impacts the orthographic conventions and their associated meanings in written language.

3. Writing as Artifact, Writing as Code

Once a written message is formed and is distanced from the speaker and from its original context and it is transformed into a material object, it becomes a text-artifact—a depository of meaning that requires interpretation. Coulmas describes this inherent materiality as a key distinction between written language and speech:

> "Language becomes visible, and as such assumes a physical existence which can be investigated and consciously regulated. In speech language is in flux; in writing it is stable…Writing provides the means of analyzing language because it turns language into an object."[432]

A text, which is durable and tangible, supplants the oral message, which is "ephemeral;" the written

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[431] See David Marsh, "Journey to the Center of the Global English Debate," *The Guardian*. November 21st 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2014/nov/21/mind-your-language-center-or-centre. Note: Even the title of this piece (center vs. centre) is quite provocative.

[432] Coulmas, *The Writing Systems of the World*, 13.

word then "assumes the qualities of an object" as does the "the code itself" used to turn words into graphemic notation.[433] That it so say, the written word becomes a physical representation of what was communicated—one that is totally detached from the original utterance or speech act. This is the "reifying function" of writing, i.e., the process by which "a linguistic message becomes interpretable as detached from, and independent of, its conceiver."[434]

Writing is codified, semiotic system that has a material form that serves to link a reader back to the meaning of an utterance that would otherwise be lost—writing is not in of itself language. As O'Conner writes, "Writing is not part of language proper; it is rather a delinguistic sign system, one in which linguistic units are replaced by units proper to other productional and perceptual channels."[435] For a text to have meaning, it must be animated by two participants who have a relative degree of competency in both the written code and in the underlying linguistic system.

Writing, however, only works when both the writer and audience are indoctrinated into the same semiotic system. But since languages are constantly in flux, there is typically a lag between speech and written language in even the most transparent writing systems. Moran describes this lapse as an inherent part of the passing down of scribal traditions, which resulted in the retention of older forms that were no longer used in the heartland of Mesopotamia. As Moran writes,

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[433] Ibid., 12-13.

[434] Ibid., 12-13.

[435] Michael Patrick O'Connor, "Writing Systems, Native Speaker Analyses, and the Earliest Stages of Northwest Semitic Orthographies," in *The Word of the Lord Shall go Forth.* Edited by Carol L Myers and M O'Connor (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 440.

> [T]he cuneiform culture of the provinces was to some extent up-to-date, it was not infrequently, as is usually the way with provinces, also behind the times…a logogram that had been replaced by another logograms centuries before in the scribal schools of Babylonia survives in the provincial culture; an exercise one part of the scribal training but long abandoned in Babylonia is still part of the provincial curriculum; old orthographies are retained, sometimes mixed together with the modern ones, and so on…The provincial scribes, perhaps at times because of analogues in their own native language, may used old common or dialectal forms that had otherwise disappeared centuries before…It is this combination of the old and the new that is so typically provincial and so distinctive of the Amarna cuneiform culture.[436]

Much of what sets "Peripheral Akkadian" apart from that employed in Mesopotamia relates to the new traditions innovated by non-native Akkadian speakers. The features unique to the Akkadian of the Periphery includes graphemic preferences (e.g., QA for *ka*$_4$; TA for *dá*; GAN for *ḫé*; more *plene* spellings, such as EA 20:53 *i-ra-'a-a-am-ka*); the retention of archaic spelling at times in the same text as their MB equivalents (e.g., EA 38: 09 uses an OB orthography: *a-wa-‹ta›-ma* yet, line 20 spells this word *a-ma-ta*); some scribes make use of *ti-* for the 3mp form, which is also a feature attested at both Ebla and Mari, whereas the Akkadian 3s and 3p prefix is *i-*).[437]

Scribal practice at Emar, too, attests to a gradual transition from older "Syrian" scribal conventions, replete with a unique "tablet format, sealing practices, paleography, phraseology and orthography."[438] The newer "Syro-Hittite" tradition at Emar, on the other hand, drew from MB. It thus differed quite dramatically from the older Syrian phase, which was based on traditions from the OB

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[436] Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, xix-xx; Cooper, "Sumerian and Semitic Writing," 70.

[437] For this list of features see Gianto, "Amarna Akkadian," 124-125.

[438] Cooper, "Sumerian and Semitic Writing," 70, cf. 14.

period.[439] The shift in scribal training and orientation towards MB in the Periphery included an updating of the syllabary (e.g., in the case of Emar, the use of the signs not a part of the Syrian scribal tradition such as the *'aleph* sign, *šú*, *šá* and a range of CVC values). There as also some changes in the orthography that reflected an interest in adopting MB spelling conventions (e.g., *w>m*, *š>l* before a dental, and nasalization such as in the form *ḫa-am-bu-rù* for **ḫabburu/iru*). One occasion older forms lingered as "relics of an older linguistic stratum," which, in truth, are really the reflections of an older scribal convention.[440]

For the above reasons, Cooper describes the flux in scribalism at Emar, not in terms of language change, but rather as one technology superseding another:

> Because a scribe writing in the Syrian tradition may have a son writing in the Syro-Hittite tradition, but a scribe writing in the Syro-Hittite tradition will never have a son who reverts to the Syrian tradition, scribal practice as Emar was clearly in a period of transition from the Syrian to the Syro-Hittite practice.[441]

Indeed, such updating is a basic need of any technology. Writing systems, too, require periodic reforms to enable them to remain relevant to the needs of a new generation of writers.

Writing systems are by their very nature quite limited in capturing the nuances of language,

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[439] See Yoram Cohen, *The Scribes and Scholars of the city of Emar in the Late Bronze Age.* Harvard Semitic Studies 59 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 230.

[440] Some examples include OB signs *vḪ/Ḫv* for *aleph* as in Emar 559 (HhXXII) A 170': *tu*-UḪ-*ú-mu* for *tu'umu*); the occasional retention of the sibilants as in Emar 602 (*lú=ša*); Emar 352' has *eš-ta-am-me* for **aštamme* (as opposed to *eltamme*); also, Emar 537 (S[a] Voc. Copy 1) 279 has the form *me-ri-iš-tu*$_4$.; the retention of the intervocalic *–w-* occurs in Emar 651 (Lunar Signs) B 34': *a-wa-ta*$_5$). For a discussion and examples see Cohen, *Scribes and Scholars*, 224-231; many of the examples that he cites are from S. Seminara, *L'accadico di Emar* (Roma: & Università degli studi di Roma La Sapienza, 1998).

[441] Cooper, "Sumerian and Semitic Writing," 70, cf. 14.

and yet they work because of an agreement on the part of the community of writers upon a system of graphemic encryption and interpretation. For a reader to be able to decipher a writer's meaning in the decontextualized, abstraction that we call a "text," the code (i.e., writing system in place) must be clear and accessible to the audience. The metalinguistic awareness of the writer and reader must extend beyond the confines of the language of speech and meet in the space around the text. As Coulmas writes, "All the information that can be inferred from reference to a common deictic field in speech has to be explicit in writing."[442] Successful writing thus has more to do with the writer's fluidity in the conventions of the written code and their audience's skill in reconstructing either the original utterance (or its basic semantic meaning) than with the degree to which the writing system can faithfully transcribe the underlying language.

C. Some Considerations for the Study of Writing and Writing Systems

The evolutionary model of writing proposes that alphabetic writing systems, which are thought to be at the "apex" of writing technology, are better equipped to represent phonology than logo-syllabic writing.[443] The assumption is that alphabetic systems with reduced graphemes make for more literate societies. The alphabet has been credited with the development and preservation of Judeo-Christian and Greek intellectual traditions, and heralded as bringing about the "democratization" of literacy, the shift from "simple" (i.e., oral) to "complex" (i.e., literate) societies,

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[442] Coulmas, *Writing Systems of the World*, 13.

[443] Ignace J. Gelb, *A Study of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963).

and the rise of western civilization more generally.[444] However, contemporary studies in literacy and writing systems challenge such assumptions.[445]

1. The Evolutionary Model: From Logo-Syllabic to Alphabetic?

Early works on writing systems described writing in evolutionary terms as a progression away from logographic and syllabic systems, culminating in the development of the Greek alphabet (with its innovation of vowel letters), which was thought to best represent speech, and thus catalyzed the spread of literacy in the ancient world. The spread of literacy to nonprofessionals and non-elites was a gradual process, as even in Ancient Greece, described as the first "literate" society (by the 6th-5th cen. B.C.E.), literacy did not attain more than 10%, but remained mainly an elite commodity.[446] Even in the modern era, literacy is a skill that takes time and dedication to acquire. Even in the United States, school children spend the bulk of their formative years mastering the complex orthography of Standard English. Productive literacy, i.e., literacy that enables an individual to produce a text, is a challenging feat regardless of the writing system. It is not merely a matter of memorizing signs but is a

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[444] For the classic works on this matter see Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Ibid., *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," *CSSH* 5:3 (1963), 304-345; Walter Ong *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982); John Halverson, "Goody and the Implosion of the Literacy Thesis," *Man* 27: 2 (1992), 301-317.

[445] Albright famously stated: "since the forms of the letters are very simple, the twenty-two letter alphabet could be learned in a day or two by a bright student and in a week or two by the dullest." Yet, even in our highly literate society, children dedicate years of their education to mastering the intricacies of alphabetic writing and orthography ("Discussion," in *City Invincible: A Symposium on Urbanization and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East*. Edited by C. H. Kraeling and R. M. Adams [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960], 123).

[446] For a discussion see William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 226-227.

skill that depends upon contextualization (understanding the rules of a system), recontextualization (recreating them for a new text), and interpretation (analyzing the text that another individual creates). Speakers of diverse dialects of English around the world are able to communicate through written Standard English(es) precisely because they are communicating in a standardized written system that is distanced from their own dialects. Today, specialists in writing systems and literacy have distanced themselves from the older trend in scholarship that privileged alphabetic writing systems. There is still a need, however, for a fresh study of writing in the ancient Levant that integrates contemporary sociolinguistic theory regarding the relationship between language and writing and the economic and ideological motivations behind script innovation and standardization. Some common assumption in past scholarship are that "writing=language," moreover, that alphabetic scripts are "easy" for non-literate peoples to learn, and that writing is a reflection of a community of speakers, as opposed to writers. Yet, writing systems (even alphabetic ones) imperfectly capture the nuances of spoken language for the simple reason that graphemes cannot capture the immense variation in a linguistic repertoire.[447]

Furthermore, literacy involves a range of proficiencies: reading is a passive skill, whereas writing is more active and consequently more difficult to master. It is one thing to reproduce letters in

[447] Writing systems are limited in scope, whereas human speech is characterized by variation. Vowels and consonants are colored by their immediate environments (e.g., the pronunciation of "x" in e*x*ist, e*x*istential, and *x*enophobia, whereby the grapheme *x* represents multiple phonemes). Most languages have well beyond the five vowels (and sometimes y) of Latin-based alphabets; English for example has upwards of 23 vowels and composite vowel sounds. The English *schwa* (the phoneme [ə]), which has no grapheme of its own in our alphabet, is spelled in diverse ways: *a*bout, reb*e*l, compat*i*ble, *o*blique, circ*u*s. It is up to the reader to deduce the proper sound values in these words. For a discussion see F. Coulmas, *Writing Systems: an Introduction to Their Linguistic Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 95-96.

the appropriate stance and script style to inscribe a simple, memorized formula (such as the earliest alphabetic inscriptions that are attested in Egypt, the Levant, and in the Aegean, which are short, personalized texts). It is quite another to improvise, combine, and recombine letters to formulate a new and original text, such as a legal decree, or a work of literature. Alphabets, though simpler than logographic or syllabic writing, do not necessarily produce more literate societies, as literacy was and is a skill with a sharp learning curve and entails both training and impetus for proficiency.[448] Nor are alphabets better suited for intellectual or abstract thought, as there is much ethnographic evidence for abstract, analytic, and logical thought processes in non-literate societies.[449] Furthermore, in most societies, there is no strict dichotomy between literacy and orality, rather they operate on a continuum.

Writing systems, such as the WS and Greek alphabets, do not materialize out of thin air, nor are they invented on a whim. Innovation comes hand in hand with an economic need or a pervasive ideology—one powerful enough to provide a justification for why the established and generally more prestigious writing system or script should be replaced.[450] In order to be successful, the new system

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[448] For example, Japan, which uses sign-based system, derived from Chinese characters has among the highest literacy rates in the world.

[449] For a critique of the "Literacy Hypothesis" see John Halverson, "Goody and the Implosion of the Literacy Thesis," *Man* 27: 2 (1992), 301-317.

[450] As Pierre Bordieu (1982 p. 48) writes, "only when the making of the 'nation,' an entirely abstract group based on law, creates new uses and functions does it become indispensible to forge a *standard* language, impersonal and anonymous like the official uses it has to serve, and by the same token to undertake the work of normalizing the products of the linguist habitus" ("The Production and Reproduction of Legitimate Language," in *The Economy of Linguistic Exchanges* (1982), 48.

must appeal to the members of that society, and merit the expense, time, and trouble of training a new generation. Writing systems are only successful when there are tacit social rules that govern their use––literate members of society must adhere to agreed upon norms of production and interpretation and belong to the same cultural framework (or in the case of the acquisition of a new script, be indoctrinated into the new system).[451] Indeed, it is no coincidence that the standardization of both the WS and Greek alphabets came about when they were adopted by state institutions powerful enough to train scribes and administrators in the new system.[452]

Indeed, Miller argues that the WS alphabet, an early "desyllabarizing script," was more abstract and much less intuitive than the syllabaries of the second millennium. This is quite contrary to the traditional view, which posits that the alphabet was an improvement on syllabic writing. Miller understands the early experiments in alphabetic writing to have "had the advantage of being a useful heuristic for representing roots in Semitic language."[453] He argues that this polyvalent system functioned logographically as the form *ktb* could signify a plethora of meanings relating to the basic

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[451] Based on the written evidence, it would seem that the phoneme *ġ* was no longer used in the southern Levant. Yet, the retention of the phoneme *ġ* in place names such as Gaza and Gomorrah in the Septuagint (spelled *'azzā* and *'amōrāh* in the Hebrew Bible), suggests that these two phonemes were still distinct into the second century B.C.E. The 22-letter Phoenician alphabet conflated the signs ʿ and *ġ* into one, bivalent grapheme. Yet, readers understood that this one sign could stand for two different phonemes.

[452] By the 11th century B. C. E., the Phoenician coastal cities adopted the 22-letter alphabet for their royal inscriptions. This alphabet was then harnessed by emerging Israelite, Aramean, Moabite, Edomite, and Ammonite states, who eventually developed their own distinct alphabetic scripts. In Greece, the first public use of the alphabet dates to the 7th century B.C.E. The alphabet was only used on a wide scale by Greek city-states beginning in the 5th century B. C. E., when the Ionic script was adopted as the official script in Athens. This script was standardized, and eventually spread throughout the Classical World.

[453] D. G. Miller, *Ancient Scripts and Phonological Knowledge* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Co, 1994), 104.

meaning "to write" (e.g., writer, he wrote, writes, will write, etc.). This system was only useful for those who knew the underlying linguistic system, as such, this script was not really "strictly segmental," i.e., it could not be accessed by merely pronouncing the letters. One had to decipher the meaning of the words from context and supply the vowels holding the consonants together accordingly.[454]

This system presents a stark contrast to Akkadian cuneiform, which was also based on a similar Semitic root-based system but was written in a consistent logo-syllabic manner. Even when Akkadian is used logographically, as in Hittite for example, the words are spelled out syllabically in Akkadian (e.g., *I-NA* "in," *ṬU-PU* "tablet," *AD-DIN* "I gave [it]"). There is no clear evolution whereby C and V signs were used solely to write out the root-skeleton of words, which is what one would expect if indeed, "simpler" writing was a concern. Rather, the vowels are embedded as a part of the writing system, which no doubt is a reflection of the more conservative and prestigious nature of Akkadian cuneiform which was not as open to innovation as the WS scripts.

2. Writing and Cognition: Conceptualizing Language

There is yet another layer to the divide between writing and spoken language that complicates the study of Canaano-Akkadian. All writing systems ultimately force the participants in that system to prioritize certain aspects of language to the neglect of others. Coulmas makes the following assertion:

> (1)[T]hat the independent existence of the units supposedly depicted by a given writing system cannot be taken for granted, and (2) that in mapping language, writing system, scripts

[454] Ibid., 104

> and orthographies are as much based on analytic perception as they form them and the resulting conceptualizations of the structural unit of language.[455]

According to this view writing impacts on how writers perceive their own languages—it forces them to think about language in an abstract way and to classify, categorize, and define their own linguistic systems to some degree. Writers must then strategize how to best encode meaning into a graphemic system by manipulating the materials used to make the text and navigating the established conventions of writing.

a. Segmentization, Morphemes, and Word Units

A word segment is often thought of as a contained semantic unit that is expressed graphemically, typically with one or several signs that function together to form a unit of meaning (e.g., c-a-t "cat"). Though, not all phonemes in the English language correspond to one discrete grapheme. For example, diphthongs, affricates, prenazalized consonants, and compound sounds do not conform to the 1 phoneme=1 grapheme model of the relationship between writing and sound. A classic example is grapheme *x* in English orthography, which formally represents the compound *ks* but in practice stands for a range of sounds depending on where it occurs in a word and its vocalic environment (e.g., exit, Xerox, ex-, xeno- etc.).

Literacy changes something fundamental about how we see language. Without prior instruction in alphabetic writing many speakers are unable to divide their own linguistic systems into neat, compartmentalized phonological segments that we associate with language. As Alice Faber

[455] Coulmas, *Writing Systems of the World*, 40.

writes, our assumption that such an equivalency exists (whereby a written symbol is equated with a discrete and consistent sound unit) is largely a product of the influence of alphabetic literacy.[456] Today, because of the high degree of literacy, we tend to conceptualize language in segmental form. This, in turn, effects how we analyze ancient languages, as there is a tendency in the study of ancient literacies to assume that the way in which we ourselves see writing was a truism for the ancient scribe and/or writer.

It is important to remember that morpheme boundaries are not always clear in speech, let alone in writing. Some writing systems, however, go as far as to privilege orthographies that reflect even the morpheme boundaries that are inaudible. Written French presents a helpful example of this as it abounds with morpheme boundaries that are not articulated in French vernaculars. For example, the plural marker –*s* is not pronounced in /*hommes*/ "men" but it is preserved in writing where there is a distinction between /*homme*/ (sg.) vs. /*hommes*/ (pl). This orthographic difference did once reflect a spoken difference, that of the –*s* plural morpheme. Today, however, in French Standard orthography it functions only as a reminder of the history of the language. Such "archaic" spellings are also a by-product of the pervasive ideology of the Académie française (the French Academy), which strives to preserve older forms of the language in the orthographic system. Functionally, the –*s* serves as a guide to the reader on a semantic and semiotic level, yet it does not actually impact the spoken articulation of the written word. In short, writing forces sounds into graphemic units, which has impacted how we

[456] See Alice Faber, "Phonemic Segmentation as Epiphenomenon: Evidence From the History of Alphabetic Writing," *Speech Research* 101 /102 (1990), 28-40; David Olson, *The Word on Paper* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1994. See also the discussion in Coulmas, *Writing Systems,* 13.

conceptualize our own phonological systems. Our concept of the "word unit" is really a by-product of literacy, which has in turn impacted our perception of language more generally.

b. Literacy and Metalinguistic Awareness

According to the traditional view, native speakers design their writing systems to best represent their language. This understanding can quickly lead to a view of language and writing whereby writing serves as a system of transcription, rather than an efficient vehicle of *communication* between individuals that share a similar linguistic and cultural horizon. As such, David Olsen is critical of the assumption that creating a writing system necessitates a high degree of awareness language, or that subsequent fine tunings of that system stem from a desire to "represent those structures unambiguously."[457] In a similar vein, Von Dassow contends the presupposition that writing is a system of transcription, which she views to plague the study of Peripheral Akkadian.[458] Such ideas can be applied more generally to ancient Near Eastern languages, as reconstructions of said linguistic systems tend to rely too heavily on the scribes themselves accurately understanding and representing their own phonologies. Linguistic systems constantly blur the lines between the semantic and phonemic units of language. For this reason, writing from the ancient Near East, and everywhere, is better understood as complex mediation between the visual marks that make up a graphemic system, the paralinguistic cues of communication, as well as the verbal form (i.e., the speech) underlying the text—whereby the ancient scribe and literate members of society emerge as specialists able to bridge

[457] Olsen, *The Word on Paper*, 67.

[458] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 641-674; Ibid., "Peripheral Akkadian Dialects," 895-926.

these diverse semiotic fields.

For a scribal system to be successful, both those "innovating" and/or "borrowing" a writing system (as in the case of the cuneiform scribe working in the LBA Levant) must consider their communicative needs and the scope of their own linguistic repertoires before they make choices about what to prioritize.[459] As Silverstein writes, our understanding of the building blocks that make up "language" is inherently influenced by our perception of its relationship to writing. Literacy further enhances individual metalinguistic awareness by obliging writers to constantly make choices about how to best represent ideas and language.[460] The accumulation of individual choices overtime results in the development of conventions (that include formal standards as well as more popular trends) that are adhered to by a community of writers. The ways in which writing systems analyze language thus reflect how the literate members of that community perceive their own languages—this is not to say that writers have a complete grasp of the structural elements of their linguistic system, but rather that writing system bear the imprint of their metalinguistic awareness and cultural ideologies about language.[461] In other words, when we examine the ancient corpora of the Near East we are not

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[459] A "weak hypothesis" of writing is that a writing system will reflect something about the way that native speakers perceived their own language when it is created *ex nihlo* (e.g., the Cherokee syllabary). This also is an assumption of borrowed writing systems (e.g., the development of diacritics in Icelandic to supplement the letters of the Latin alphabet, as Icelandic has about 36 vowels). For a discussion and further examples see Michael Patrick O'Conner, "Writing Systems," 441-443.

[460] For example, the word-unit tends to be conceptualized by literate groups in terms of its written form. Even the notion of a phoneme is impacted by the advent of alphabetic writing in which (ideally) a grapheme maps on to one specific unit of sound. See Coulmas, *Writing Systems of the World*, 40.

[461] In the case of the Greek alphabet, Sampson proposes that the Greek innovators misunderstood the phonological value of certain Canaanite consonants and that graphemes such as *'aleph* and *'ayin* we reinterpreted as

necessarily seeing what language existed, but rather how the ancient writers perceived their own languages and needs and how they used the technology of writing to communicate with other literate members of their societies. We have access only to the elements that they prioritized in their written codes, which were restricted to the linguistic varieties and scribal conventions that they themselves used.

3. Script Innovation and Reform

Groups that adopted a foreign writing system (e.g., cuneiform by Semitic and Indo-European speakers) had to come up with strategies to encode their linguistic repertoires as best they could.[462] When cuneiform was first used to write Akkadian, Semitic-speaking scribes developed a system to encode the particles and morphemes that are mapped onto the lexical structure of words using syllabic and logographic orthographies.[463] Overtime, such scribes further innovated the writing system by extending logographic signs to comprise a more expansive range of syllabic signs (i.e., CV, VC, and

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vowels in the Greek alphabet. For example, *'aleph* was reinterpreted as the vowel "a," as Greek did not have an initial glottal stop. See Geoffrey Sampson, *Writing Systems* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985: 101); see also O'Connor, "Writing Systems," 441.

[462] The voiced and devoiced distinction in Akkadian was ignored by scribes writing Hittite, for example. Hittite scribes also had to account for the fact that cuneiform was not ideally suited to write languages, such as their own that tended towards consonant clusters.

[463] In the case of cuneiform syllabic writing, the segmentation of morpheme boundaries would have required analysis by the scribes. Syllabic scripts are not ideally suited for all languages, in particular those with initial and final consonant clusters. The linguistic system must be molded into a syllabic structure so that it confirms to the segmentation of the sign system. However, the graphemic box that encoded language in a written medium was not always quite able to contain the underlying language. Cuneiform worked relatively well for Semitic languages, as it provided syllables and vowel signs that account for a range of C and V combinations. Yet, in spite of the polyvalent nature of the signs, the limited expressions of vowels obfuscated the actual pronunciation of these ancient utterances.

CVC signs).[464] This basic system was then further experimented upon in the Periphery when it was harnessed by non-native Sumerian and Akkadian scribes.

a. Ebla

Scribes at Ebla developed a unique system of writing comprising a mixture of Sumerograms (which Cooper terms "Semitograms") as well as syllabic signs adapted from the scribal conventions of Mesopotamia for a WS speaking context.[465] This logographic code was a step removed from phonetic writing and the actual pronunciation of these texts (as opposed to more syllabic spellings used to write Akakdian). Yet it appears to have been sufficient for their work. As Cooper writes, scribes working at Ebla were quite able to write nouns and verbs using syllabic signs (i.e., phonetically), but describes their preference for logographic writing, as this way of writing was already a part of their training:

> [T]he fierce avoidance of phonetically written verbs in the *enma*-texts ("letters") at Ebla seems perverse when considered in terms of the later system with which we are so familiar. The great irony is that verbs were the very *first* Semitic elements ever written phonetically; surely Semitic personal names, with their finite verbal predicates, found their way into Sumerian documents long before anyone thought of writing actual texts in Semitic. The system for writing Semitic used at Ebla prefers phonetic writing for proper names and for linguistic elements *other* than nouns and verbs. Numerous exception in texts and the bilingual vocabularies attest that the scribes could very well write nouns and verbs phonetically, but the system in place neither required not encouraged it.[466]

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[464] For example, the Sumerian word LUGAL, "king," or *šarru* in Akkadian was used to write the syllable /*šar*/ and thus developed a new syllabic reading (*šàr*) that was used to spell out a range of words that had nothing to do with kingship.

[465] Cooper, "Sumerian and Semitic Writing," 66.

[466] Ibid., 66-67.

According to this view, the preference for logographic writing and the dearth of syllabic (i.e., more morpho-phonetic writings) does not indicate a lack of skill. Rather, there appears to have been a set of scribal standards in place at this site that encouraged logographic writing. It is quite likely that these logographic spellings were viewed as an esteemed part of the cuneiform traditions inherited from Mesopotamia.

Writing at Ebla thus demonstrates two aspects of the use of cuneiform in the Semitic speaking world—an appreciation for the prestige of inherited traditions, and a lack of interest in faithfully transcribing speech. As Cooper writes, the system that they were borrowing (ED IIIa Sumerian) was in and of itself a highly logographic system; the Eblaite scribes were simply borrowing a pre-existing convention. As such, the Semitic speaking scribes at this site do not appear to have been interested in developing a purely phonetic system of transcription, even though they did have the tools and requisite knowledge to do so.

Cooper proposes that this preference for logographic writing was inherent to their local cuneiform culture and was, moreover, a reflection of the demands of the scribal craft: "The force of tradition, no doubt, has something to do with it, but there are practical advantages to logographic writing that our alphabetocentric culture doesn't understand or appreciate."[467] As he puts it, logographic writing is much more succinct as it "can be less ambitious than syllabic writing" and is

[467] Ibid., 67.

thus "much easier to scan."[468] For those trained in this scribal code, logograms and clever logographic spellings appear to have been a revered part of an elite, scholastic scribal tradition, one transmitted to scribal schools in the Periphery when they adopted cuneiform.[469]

b. Canaan and Ugarit

When turning to the Canaano-Akkadian corpus, which dates to a later period (the mid-14th century B.C.E), we see the same pragmatism and lack of concern with using writing as a system of transcription. For example, scribes working in the southern Levant used *i-* for the 1cs in opposition to *yv-* which was used for the 3rd person; this does not mean that all Canaanite dialects pronounced the 1cs or 3s/p in the same way. Rather, it demonstrates that scribes were seeking to differentiate between the two pronominal prefixes and developed a systematic way of showing this opposition in a graphemic way. This basic *i-*/*y*V difference most likely had some basis in their own linguistic varieties, yet we must keep in mind the scribes writing these texts were less interested in reflecting pronunciation and more interested in conveying semantic meaning.

Also, as with Ebla, there seems to have been no real need or perhaps desire to use logo-syllabic cuneiform to write local WS languages. Scribes working in the Levant either only wrote in Akkadian, using logo-syllabic writings, or they used locally developed alphabetic scripts to write WS (e.g.,

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[468] Ibid., 68.

[469] Cooper goes as far as to attribute the challenging nature of the UD.GAL.NUN orthography to "scribal exuberance" and a delight in experimentation as a "symptom of the perverse pleasure that academics can take in their most arcane and recondite creations" (Ibid.,73).

alphabetic cuneiform at Ugaritic and the linear alphabets in the southern Levant).[470] The scribes working in the southern Levant were satisfied with the existing sign repertoire to express their communicative needs. Whereas scribes working in the Hurro-Hittite tradition, on the other hand, innovated additional signs to fill in the perceived gaps in the existing syllabary and used syllabic writing to transmit their own languages into a written form.

To date there is no evidence that Canaanite scribes systematically used cuneiform to compose texts in their own languages—the WS forms in the cuneiform corpus from this period are limited to isolated lexemes in lexical lists (e.g., the Aphek list), single words in the glosses in the Canaanite Amarna Letters, and WS influenced forms embedded within the Canaano-Akkadian scribal code (e.g., the use of the WS suffixes). Cooper understands the hesitancy to use cuneiform to write WS to be a symptom of a more general cultural bias in Syro-Mesopotamian scribal schools that privileged Babylonian literature and Akkadian:

> In Syro-Mesopotamia the cultural hegemony of Babylonia signified, as we have seen, that writing a Semitic language meant writing a Babylonian-based language, and writing literature meant writing Babylonian literature or an imitation thereof. Hittites and Hurrians had no scruples whatsoever about using Sumero-Akkadian cuneiform to write their own languages and literatures, but Semitic speakers were so thoroughly under the spell of their ancient association of writing with Babylonia that they just could not do so. Eventually, the empire writes back, but this became possible only after it invented a writing system of its own. The

[470] As Y. Cohen writes, the scribes working at Emar are presumed to have been for the most part WS speakers, yet they did not use cuneiform to write texts in their own dialects. Rather, they used Babylonian Akkadian for administrative and ritual texts. Interestingly enough, Akkadian was used to write ritual texts, whereas at the site of Ugarit, the local myths appear in WS using the cuneiform alphabet. Unlike the Canaanite cuneiform texts from this period, there is minimal influence from the WS substrate languages. Moreover, it appears not to impact the scholarly materials at the site, but is instead seen occasionally on the "extra-scholarly materials." For a discussion see Cohen, *The Scribes and Scholars of Emar,* 10-12; also for an analysis of the Akkadian at Emar see Stefano Seminara, *L'accadico di Emar* (Roma: & Università degli studi di Roma, La Sapienza, 1998).

> Semitic alphabetic abruptly turned away from the syllabic phonetic writing of Babylonian cuneiform, and embraced the principle of consonantal writing that was the basis of writing in Egypt, but in a simplified form and without the cultural baggage of the Egyptian system itself. Only then did people feel free to commit other Semitic languages and literatures to writing.[471]

Indeed, even at Ugarit where both Mesopotamian and alphabetic cuneiform scripts were in use, each script appears to be linked to a specific sociolinguistic function and is dependent on the language of the text and its genre. WS texts are written in the local alphabetic scripts (both the linear and alphabetic cuneiform), whereas Akkadian language texts are written in logo-syllabic cuneiform.[472] Millard, too, understands there to have been a link between the genre of text and the script used since "the Canaanite alphabet gained its foothold only gradually in this where two other writing systems were well established and the monopoly of a privileged class."[473] He contrasts the palace monopoly on cuneiform with the use of the Canaanite alphabet in "free" and non-institutional settings, citing the limited use of the linear alphabetic script in graffiti and personal votive objects etc., whereas there are no monumental or administrative texts in this script for this early period.

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[471] Cooper, "Sumerian and Semitic Writing," 73-74.

[472] There are a handful of exceptions to this truism. Cooper lists just one example of an Ugaritic text written in syllabic cuneiform and four texts in Akkadian that were written using the cuneiform alphabet (Ibid., 74, cf. 20). See too John Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription*. Harvard Semitic Studies 32 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 11f); Van Soldt, *Studies in the Akkadian of Ugarit*296-301. Florence Malbran-Labat also cites the use of both writing systems in certain lexical lists, whereby an "Ugaritic" list will at times include a subscript written in syllabic Akkadian as an example of the "symbiose" between these two scripts and language systems ("Les Textes Akkadienes Découverts à Ougarit en 1994," in *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm — Proceedings of the 42nd RAI.* Edited by K. van Lerberghe and G. Voet (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 237-244; for this particular example see 237-238).

[473] Alan R. Millard, "The Knowledge of Writing in Late Bronze Age Palestine," in *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm — Proceedings of the 42nd RAI.* Edited by K. van Lerberghe and G. Voet (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 323.

II. Writing as A Telic Technology—Not a System of Transcription

Writing is a telic technology—one concerned with communicating a specific viewpoint, unit of information, or idea deemed significant by the writer to a specific audience. It is about communication first and foremost, not about faithfully transcribing language. Writers in the ancient Near East grappled with the problem of how to best transmit language into a written form just as their modern descendants. This was not a problem that faced only those using a logographic or syllabic writing system. Alphabetic scribes were not immune to the problem of how to express the range of their phonological systems in the much more limited number of graphemes offered in the WS scripts (such as the affixes on verbs and nouns or particles that assimilate in Semitic, for example).

A. What Writing Is Not

As Olsen writes, there is an inherent assumption (particularly regarding alphabetic systems) that writing developed progressively to better represent *speech*:

> Historical developments in the evolution of writing systems—from idea-writing, to whole words, to syllables, to consonants, and finally to consonants and vowels—are seen as reflecting the progressive achievements of the goal of representing the ultimate units of speech… Thus, the achievement is seen as one of a series of successes in representing more fundamental aspects of the linguistic system, ultimately phonemes, to make a system which is both economical—employs a small number of signs, and complete—capable of representing anything that can be said. Writing, on this view, is the attempt to represent speech...Specifically, they [Gelb, Diringer, Havvelock] assume that the inventors of writing systems *already knew* about language and its structure-words, phonemes and the like—and progress came from finding ways to represent those structures unambiguously.[474]

[474] D. R. Olsen, "How Writing Represents Speech," *Lang Commun* 13:1 (1993), 1-2; see also Gelb, *A Study of Writing*; David Diringer, *Writing* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1962); Eric A. Havelock, *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1982).

Olson views the "evolutionary model" of writing systems, whereby there was a unilinear progression that ended with the alphabet, as quite flawed. According to such a view, writing evolved from less efficient, to more efficient systems of writing, which were better equipped to capture the range of structures in language (e.g., phonemes, morphemes, words, and ideas, etc.). The assumption inherent to this understanding is that the best systems are those that better reflect the phonology of the language, rather than those based upon a clear and well-developed semiotic system.

Olsen argues that the above understanding offers an overly simplistic analysis of the function of writing and its history. Moreover, such an understanding is plagued by an ethnocentric view of writing technologies that is quite ignorant of the highly developed nature of societies whose writing system uses more complex signs (e.g., he cites the highly developed Japanese and Chinese scripts, for example). Olsen also cautions against a bias that attributes Greek intellectual traditions and human ability to think about the world in abstractions to alphabetic literacy. He proposes, rather, that writing's inherent abstraction from language is what enables it to foster intellectual development:

> [T]he graphic system may play such a role by providing a model for language in a way that emblematic symbols never could. Rather than viewing writing as the attempt to capture the existing knowledge of syntax, writing provided a model for speech, thereby making the language available for analysis into syntactic constituents, the primary ones being words which then became subjects of philosophical reflection as well as objects of definition.[475]

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[475] D. R. Olsen, "How Writing Represents Speech." *Language & Communication* 13:1 (1993), 7-8; see also B. Snell, *Discovery of the Mnd: The Greek Origins of European Thought* (Harper: Torchbooks, New York, 1960; E. Havelock, *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1982).

He proposes instead that writing catalyzed a more general distancing from speech—language became an abstract subject of inquiry. In the case of ancient Greece, this abstraction created an intellectual space in which to examine the unseen. Writing provided a means to analyze the more abstract aspects of social and religious life that held together ancient Greek society. Writing was transformatory, not because it enabled man to capture speech, but rather it obligated man to reflect upon language and come up with a framework by which to analyze and classify it. It thus impacted human cognition and enhanced linguistic awareness as it "provide[d] concepts and categories for thinking about the structure of speech rather than the reverse."[476] Also, it obliged the writer and reader to reflect on language in abstraction.

Ultimately, writing is a semiotic system that has its own logic, as not all of the aspects of natural language make their way into writing systems.[477] As Olsen writes,

> [T]he evolutionary development of scripts, including the alphabet, is the simple consequence of attempting to use a graphic system invented to be 'read' in one language, for which it is thereby reasonably suited, to convey messages to be 'read' in another language for which it is not well suited. In each case the development of a functional way of communicating with visible marks was, simultaneously, a discovery of the representable structures of speech.[478]

It is important to keep in mind, however, that certain structural elements in writing systems are not

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[476] Davie R. Olsen, "How Writing Represents Speech," *Lang & Comm* 13:1 (1993), 2.

[477] Mogens Trolle Larsen's work on Sumerian administrative texts (ca. 2600) suggests that defective writing did not impede comprehension of the texts. Writing in these contexts was aimed at conveying basic information and not to record of a speech event, but rather "as an aid for someone who was to give an oral performance" ("What They Wrote on Clay," in *Literacy and Society.* Edited by K. Schousboe and M. T. Larsen [Centre for Research in the Humanities, Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, 1989]: 130; see also the discussion in Olsen, "How Writing Represents Speech," 8).

[478] Ibid., 2.

derived from speech nor do they affect the natural language. Rather, these conventions encode specific meaning for the reader that is never articulated (e.g., the use of capitalization in English).[479] As he argues, sign systems that have a syntax (by which he means a set of conventions) are writing systems. For example, he understands numerical systems to be writing systems. He concludes that writing is not really concerned with "what is said," but is a system used to "represent events."[480]

B. What Writing Is

Writing is affected by the linguistic system that it represents, yet it also imposes structure on language. The cross-influence of language and writing impacts the metalinguistic tools that we use to understand language production and is not necessarily reflective of the actual structures in speech. As Olsen proposes, writing informs how we see language and how we conceptualize of speech. In the case of predominately non-literate societies, the literate members of that society have a unique visual, segmental, and graphemic perception of language. Literacy can also impact the metalinguistic awareness of those with passive or functionally literate abilities. For example, non- or functionally literate individuals may be able to access writing in specific contexts even though they cannot read or produce writing. That is, they may understand the segmental nature of a script (e.g., that it is a sign unit corresponding to a word unit), or they may be able to learn the basic meaning of certain signs

[479] Ibid., 8.

[480] Though he views numerical systems to be distinct from logographic systems as they are limited to a language but provide a loose semantic meaning that can be articulated in a plethora of ways. Ibid., 9.

(such as the word STOP at a stop sign, which is memorized as a logogram).[481]

Cultural ideas about language tend to be informed by the conventions adopted by the literate elite, who then influence the linguistic ideology of that society as a whole. Even in cases where there may be a polemic against the hegemony of such literate elites and the writing system or standard language in place, the ensuing language revolt will be largely determined by the existing norms in place, even when it seeks to dismantle them and/or replace them.[482] In literate societies, writing becomes hegemonic as it "plays a special role in the maintenance and development of language in those communities."[483] If it is an emergent system, the community of writers must devise a way to minimize miscommunication and develop sufficient conventions to ensure that their system is intelligible. If there are already conventions in place, the literate members of that society must work within confines of that system, or at least adhere to the main tenets that will ensure that they will be understood by their readership. In all cases, they must consider their audience, their linguistic system, and how to best convey meaning.

Literacy thus affects how we see our own languages, as we are forced to pare down the linguistic range in our speech repertoires into digestible units of information that can be captured in

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[481] For a discussion of how writing sculpts language use, awareness, and in turn language production see Michael Silverstein, "Language Structure and Linguistic Ideology," In *The Elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels*. Edited by Paul Clyne, William F. Hanks, and Carol L. Hofbauer (Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society, 1979).

[482] For example, in the case of the Turkish script reform, there was a conscious effort to purge Arabic influences from the Turkkish writing system. The main goals were to replace the Arabic script with a Roman script, to replace Arabic and Persian loanwords with Turkish words, and to simplify and standardize the written language. See Nafi Yalfin,"*The Turkish Language Reform*: *A Unique Case of language Planning in the World*," *KHO Bilim Dergisi* 12: 3 (2002), 113-114.

[483] O'Connor, "Writing Systems," 440.

the confines of a tablet, scroll, or page. When we approach Canaano-Akkadian, or the other Peripheral cuneiform systems of this period, it is important to keep in mind what "writing doesn't represent," i.e., language.[484] As Olsen argues: "Writing systems, then, do represent speech. But not in the way that is conventionally held. Writing systems create the categories in terms of which we become conscious of speech."[485] Instead, we can use these ancient corpora to glean from the minds of the ancient scribes how they *perceived* language.

This understanding of writing assumes a barrier between the speaker and the audience and offers a novel perspective from which to approach writing in the ANE. This is even more so with the Canaanite Amarna Letters whereby the actual "speaker" and "audience" did not participate directly in the same linguistic systems but relied on scribes and translators. Indeed, the audience of these exchanges appears to have been the scribes working at the royal court who had the ultimate say in who had access to the Pharaoh. Once the ancient scribe is understood as the locus of the production and interpretation of these texts—the agent, gatekeeper, and audience of the tablet-artifact— we can then appreciate how these scribal conventions worked as part of an intricate scribal code. This frees the text from the narrow confines of linguistic classification, and elucidates how they saw their own place in the cuneiform world and, moreover, their individual strategies to best utilize this technology.

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[484] See David Olsen, "What Writing doesn't represent: How Texts are to be Taken," (Chapter Five) in *The Word on Paper* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 91-114.

[485] Olsen, "How Writing Represents Speech," 15.

Such a view calls for the reexamination of the text-artifacts as scribal products using a shared "code."

As Olsen writes, our understanding of what it means to "read," i.e., access the written word, can also be problematized by an overreliance on the literal meaning of the written text as being the "true" interpretation:

> The blind spot which our alphabetic script continues to impart leads us into two kinds of errors. It invites the inference that any meaning we personally see in a text is actually there and is completely determined by the wording-the problem of literalism. Conversely any other 'reading' of that text is seen as the product of ignorance or 'hardness of heart'...Does 'read' mean to lexicalize or 'decode' a text or does 'read' mean to construct a meaning? Is it decoding or interpretation? Battles over the verb 'read' are usually non-productive; what is critical is understanding what a script represents and what it fails to represent.[486]

In the context of written diplomacy in the second millennium B.C.E., the cuneiform artifact was a visible record of what was said, yet one that needed deciphering, as the written text was inherently detached from the original utterance. Thus, our model of the communicative process must account for a more complex system of "reading" that encompass more than just a straight reading and translation of the written message. We must account for the oral register of language, for the performance of such texts, and for the scribe and translator's own acumen in representing their employers and navigating the intricacies of the Egyptian court.

Approaching writing as a system of communication in a sense frees writing from the unrealistic expectation that it is an accurate reflection of a speech event. Instead, writing is a technology that is meant to communicate information, whereby "(t)he relation to speech is at best

[486] Ibid., 15.

indirect."[487] As such, the aims of the ancient scribe in composing a text should not be conflated with that of the modern linguist who seeks to most accurately reflect the language of a particular community of speakers, or the writer who hopes to add "local color" to their narrative. The data so central to linguistic analysis, such as the dialectal features, phonology, range of tones, cadence, stress, speed of communication, as well as the paralinguistic features of language (e.g., gesture, eye movement, facial expressions, pauses, and turn taking cues etc.), tend to be omitted, flattened, simplified, or rendered irrelevant in writing systems—yet, these semiotic cues are central to human communication and work together as " language."

III. Canaanite Cuneiform as a Scribal Code

A. Some Considerations for a New Methodology

Cuneiform writing presents several graphic obstacles to speech as it is an ambiguous writing system. This appears to have been its main appeal—the malleability and access to cuneiform, as opposed to Egyptian for example, is what enabled scribes across the ANE to harness cuneiform to write a plurality of languages. Scribes could use frozen sign sequences (Sumerograms and Akkadograms) for larger concepts, determinatives for precision, and V, CV, VC, and CVC signs to spell out specific words in their own languages, or as phonetic complements to confirm a specific sign reading. They were not hampered by institutions claiming cuneiform was *their* writing system, as this script had been adopted early on by Semitic speakers (e.g., Akkadian speakers in Mesopotamia and presumably West Semitic speakers in Syria). It was thus already established as a prestigious script that

[487] Olsen, *Word on Paper*, 67.

was used by diverse polities. Once they adopted this script, such polities were free to innovate it to a relative degree to best suit the needs of their societies.

Scribes also used logograms to enrich the text by adding layers of meaning for clarification, which could be linguistic or merely semiotic. For example, determinatives and plural markers could be used to index lexemes, thereby serving as an internal metalinguistic means of communication, i.e., one that was not-necessarily linguistic *per se*, as it depended upon logograms and could be interpreted in a variety of languages. Scribes were thereby able to communicate using a range of visual markings, metapragmatic codes, and linguistic cues. For example the string of logograms ^{GIŠ}GIGIR.MEŠ for "chariots" [*narkabatu* in Akkadian] communicates at several levels. The determinative GIŠ marks this as a wooden object; the plural marker MEŠ indicates that several chariots are in question. The actual sign for chariot is a Sumerogram that could technically be read in any language as long as the reader was trained in cuneiform and still have the basic meaning of "chariot." It is also possible that this entire sequence was memorized as a set formula used to have the simple meaning of "chariots." Cuneiform scribes also had an array of syllabic spellings at their disposal that were used to indicate the language of the text though, of course, in the end we cannot be certain that the language underlying the written message was the same used to "deliver" the message to its final destination.

Despite claims, for example, that the scribe at Ugarit knew four languages (Ugaritic, Akkadian, Sumerian and Hurrian, etc.), the scribes writing Sumerograms in the Periphery did not have an in-depth grasp of Sumerian. To be competent a scribe only had to know the basic semantic meaning of the most common logograms ("king" from LUGAL, for example) as well as their equivalents in

Akkadian and in the language of the local court. It is unlikely that scribes in Canaan knew the history of the Sumerograms that they embedded in their texts, or distinguished between Sumerographic vs. Akkadographic spellings.[488] While it is true that cuneiform scribes only learned the requisite signs and fixed formulae needed for their work. They did, however, clearly identify as "Akkadian" scribes, as they both as they produced and received Akkadian missives. Also, they appear to have had an understanding of the underlying semantic meaning of logograms, and perhaps the Mesopotamian literary traditions as conveyed via scribal training, though it is clear that there were ranges of proficiencies.

Scribes working in the northern Levant and Anatolia were much more skilled and adhered to MB, for the most part. Scribes in the southern Levant retained OB forms and developed their own system of orthography, which served a limited purpose of communication with outside powers, and perhaps internal administration and diplomacy. The scribes of the southern Levant, the proverbial backwoods, had a working knowledge of Akkadian and, at the very least, a passive knowledge of MB, which was the language of the Egyptian Amarna Letters. Moreover, certain scribes working for Canaanite rulers did also on occasion replicate MB forms, which suggests that they had knowledge of this more contemporary branch of Akkadian.

To understand the evolution of Canaano-Akkadian, it is important to push back against the model of linguistic study, wherein scribes are seen as secondary language learners rather than

[488] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 668.

specialists mastering a technology and its associated lore. Cuneiform scribalism was as much an intellectual tradition as it was a pragmatic means of communication. As Brown writes:

> The full meaning of a logo-syllabic text [i.e., cuneiform as opposed to alphabetic] could not be gleaned from merely pronouncing the words. Some of the richness of such literature is love through translation and through transliteration, which would perhaps account in part for a particular attachment to the logo-syllabic script.[489]

In the ANE, there was a tendency to retain the fundamentals of the pre-existing scribal tradition, especially if it is symbol of a more ancient and prestigious cultural horizon. Typically, the symbolic and ideological dimension of writing and its association with prestigious powers of the past led scribes to retain aspects of the older system that were not quite suited to their linguistic systems. Indeed, much of the intellectual skill of the cuneiform scribe was their manipulation of the writing system, which was infused with meaning. Cuneiform scribes did at times enjoy showing off their understanding of the signs used to represent words and employed graphemic puns. Cuneiform spellings can be defective, plene, morpho-graphemic, or hyper-corrective, which allowed for a wide range of orthographies and plays on sign meanings. The orthographic conventions underlying Peripheral Akkadian varieties were not always based upon pragmatism or ease of use. For example, scribes sometimes used morpho-graphemic writing that revealed the underlying morphological skeleton of a word unit. Scribes in the Periphery made heavy use of Sumerograms as well as varying use of Akkadograms, and, for a range of reasons, retained spellings that did not reflect the

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[489] David Brown, "The Increasingly Redundant: The Growing Obsolescence of the Cuneiform Script in Babylonia From 539 BC," in *The Disappearance of Writing Systems. Perspectives on Literacy and Communication*. Edited by John Baines et al. (London: Equinox, 2010), 79.

contemporary phonological changes in the spoken Akkadian dialects of Mesopotamia.

The disparity between the language of the bounded text-artifact in the ANE, which was for the most part informed by scribal culture and the actual spoken linguistic varieties, which were for the most part not reflected in said text-artifacts, is therefore quite problematic. When we turn to deciphering the linguistic map of the ANE, we are faced with something of a catch-22. The problem is methodological. How do we identify ancient linguistic/speech communities in the ANE when our only evidence for their languages is viewed through a written artifact—that can be quite at odds with spoken language? The very groups who in theory generated all of the spoken linguistic forms in these ancient communities for the most part did not produce or inform written texts, as the technology of writing was used and accessed by an elite few. As such the very writing systems employed by these groups were largely unconcerned with speech, and as a consequence, were not designed to represent the linguistic varieties spoken by the bulk of these ancient communities.

Moreover, due to the general disinterest in authorship and in the persona of the scribe and/or writer (in contrast to later periods, for example when there is an interest in the person producing literary and historical texts), we have at best a very hazy glimpse of who was writing and what they were speaking. This is further problematized as we have no true way of knowing the degree of disconnect between the prestige written and spoken dialects used by the educated elites. Institutional writing, which makes up the bulk of the written record, tends to fall into a "higher" register of language and does not necessarily reflect what was actually spoken day to day, even among the literati of the ANE. Or in the case of administrative texts, which reflect the exchange of commodities, for

example, the language is pared down to lists and their values. Such texts tend to be written in scribal shorthand, which in the case of cuneiform uses a preponderance of logographic writing that does not reveal much concerning the actual verbal communications between the involved parties.

How then should scholars of ancient corpora, such as the Canaanite Amarna Letters, go about reconstructing ancient dialects, and more fundamentally, is such a reconstruction even possible? This is particularly challenging as the range of features used today by linguists to differentiate speech varieties and their associated speech communities are largely lost in the written record. We must work from the assumption that the written record ignores the multiplicity of linguistic forms in these ancient communities. In the case of Canaano-Akkadian we are working on a corpora that is based upon elite registers of language that may only have been used by scribes, officials, and diplomatic intelligentsia working in the southern Levant and Eastern Mediterranean. Rather than searching for the underlying languages, the search for the ways in which these ancient scribes used writing, and moreover, how their understanding of writing and language informed these strategies appears to be a more fruitful avenue of inquiry.

B. Writing as a Code, or a Transcription of Ancient Utterances?

1. Can We Equate Orthography With Phonology?

Ultimately, approaching Canaano-Akkadian from the vantage point of writing systems resolves several puzzling and problematic aspects of this corpus. Its overall coherence but internal variation is best explained as a product of scribal training rather than a reflection of the phonological differences stemming from a very limited pool of speakers of a continuum of Canaanite Akkadian

dialects (as Izre'el proposes).[490] The following reanalyzes past methodologies that have overly equated language and writing, and proposes instead that Canaano-Akkadian be analyzed as reflection of scribal culture.

a. Izre'el's "Mixed" Dialect

In the past Izre'el has argued quite staunchly that Canaano-Akkadian had an "underlying spoken reality" and functioned as a living, spontaneous, spoken language. In his 2012 article on this subject he adopts a more cautious position and redefines what he means by "spoken" language in the context of scribal training. He proposes instead that Canaano-Akkadian has its origins in speech, yet became restricted over time to a primarily scribal setting where it was "potentially" a pronounced language. As he writes:

> [A]n underlying spoken reality for the language attested in the Amarna Letters can be shown to have existed, albeit not as a native tongue or in every day speech…the texts written in Canaano-Akkadian did not serve as a visual code on its own, but represent a language that can be coded phonemically rather than solely graphemically…Canaano-Akkadian continued to play a role not only as a written code, but also as a genuine linguistic system, which was necessary for maintaining the scribal curriculum at Canaanite cuneiform school, where the scribes-to-be would have vocalized words in that language. I further claim that this language was—at least potentially—pronounced. In any case, it had a phonological system underlying the graphemic strings as they are attested in Canaano-Akkadian texts. [491]

This position is a change from his earlier thesis that Canaano-Akkadian was a living language and that the variation was the result of different Canaanite dialects imprinting upon regional dialects of Akkadian.

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[490] Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics, " 181; 189.

[491] Ibid., 189.

Though, even in this modified definition, whereby Canaano-Akkadian was only pronounced to read texts and in scribal training, there is still the matter of what "language" means. Is pronouncing a text mentally or aloud at the same level of language production as speaking a language? Should we consider written language, which may entail speech at the scholastic level, in the same vein as those languages actively spoken by a community? There is also problematic assumption that speakers and writers have the same use of, and in turn, impact upon language. The key distinction between written and spoken language relates to the technology of writing, which is at best an imperfect representation of speech. Moreover, we have to account for the vast difference between communities of speakers and writers. These two domains may intersect, as in modern literate societies for example. But, when we examine a language such as Canaano-Akkadian, which was only used as a written means of communication by elites, we cannot expect it to behave as a spoken language but must view it as a subset of scribal culture.

In Izre'el's examples and discussion of the Canaano-Akkadian forms he still analyzes the orthographic variation as a reflection of spoken dialects. For example, the following section entitled "Phonological Features Representing an Underlying Spoken Reality," lists orthographic features and analyses them as though these spellings are reflections of a spoken register of Canaano-Akkadian. However, the conservative nature of Canaano-Akkadian is more a reflection of the prestige nature of Akkadian in the Periphery than it is continuity in spoken Akkadian; scribes in the southern Levant retained the forms that they had learned from past generations, forms that were at odds with what was spoken in Mesopotamia during this period. These forms also diverged with what was written by

non-native speakers who used Akkadian as a written and spoken language. The innovative forms, in particular the writing of verbs, was a product of scribal innovation—any influence from "spoken" Canaanite were again limited to the domain of the scribes, who were the only ones using this writing system.

In the end, his work, though an excellent and nuanced analysis of the actual forms within Canaano-Akkadian, presents the reader with a methodological paradox. He maintains that the Egyptian Akkadian and Canaano-Akkadian were "variants of the same language" that "show deep and significant structural differences"—dialects that were somehow not really intelligible, yet were used for diplomacy. He posits that an Egyptian scribe would have to be trained in Canaano-Akkadian to understand it in "face-to-face" interactions. Again, this presumes that the actual language of spoken communication between Egyptian and Canaanite officials was one and the same as that of their written correspondence. This is problematic as it ignores Egypt's presence in the Levant in varying capacities throughout the second millennium B.C.E. Egyptians and Canaanites most certainly would have used a language that they both had access to—but is it unlikely that it would have been Akkadian, let alone, dialects of Akkadian that were not mutually intelligible. Rather, we should look to an Egyptian, Egyptian-WS, or WS language as a medium of contact in face-to-face interactions. As Egypt was the dominant power, is appears likely that WS officials accommodated to the spoken language that of their overlords, and there is also some evidence that Egyptian officials knew WS.[492]

[492] See for example the list of WS terms and descriptions of WS culture in the Papyrus Anastasi. Anson. F. Rainey, "The Soldier Scribe in Papyrus Anastasi I," *JNES* 26 (1967), 58-60; Thomas Schnieder, "Fremdwörter in der

If we adopt the model of Canaano-Akkadian as a range of Canaanite influenced Akkadian dialects, we are still left with the conundrum of how to explain the emergence of a range of dialects of Akkadian used in cross-cultural communications in an area where there were no actual native Akkadian speakers—and moreover how and why these dialects were used for diplomacy between Canaanites and Egyptians as opposed to WS, Egyptian, or even a pidgin WS-Egyptian dialect. His work is too dogmatic concerning the relationship between this scribal system and spoken language. If indeed there were 100 or so scribes that spoke some form of Canaano-Akkadian in the context of their scribal education and scribal enterprise, we are still left with a linguistic variety that was ultimately an elite product—one that sheds very little light on the actual dialects spoken in the southern Levant. That is to say, we are left with a very murky picture of what was *spoken* in this region; we do, however, know what was *written* during this period. Rather than focus on what we cannot prove, our efforts are best spent considering the political and social structures that would have enabled such a scribal system to be a viable inter-cultural and an inter- and intra- regional method of communication. Moreover, we can make deductions about the sociolinguistics of script choice, as the prestige of cuneiform seems to have trumped the use of the alphabet or the Egyptian script for diplomacy.

2. "Reading" the Amarna Letters, Though in What Language?

a. Von Dassow's Akkadographic System

ägyptischen Militärsprache des Neuen Reiches und ein Bravourstück des Elitesoldaten (Pap. Anastasi I 23, 2-7)," *SSEA* 35 (2008), 181–205.

Von Dassow's methodology attempts to avoid trap of equating language and writing. In her work on Peripheral cuneiform she distances the language of these texts from the writing system used to inscribe them. In her review of Rainey's 1996 grammar of Canaanite Akkadian, she challenges the claim that Canaano-Akkadian was actually a spoken, living dialect of Akkadian. Furthermore, she argues that a Canaano-Akkadian dialect would have been "incomprehensible" to Canaanite, Akkadian, and Egyptian speakers alike, and even to those reliant upon Akkadian as a medium of cross-cultural communication. As such, she calls into question the practicality of a contact language that does not really work as a conduit between its participants ("with whom might the Canaanite scribes have communicated in their Canaano-Akkadian pidgin?").[493]

In short, in the contexts of long-distance diplomacy the language of the texts varied depending upon the audience. She does not believe that the letters from Canaan were ever actually read as written on the tablet, but were translated as "certainly no scribes reading one of those letters to, for example, the Pharaoh or his staff would have read out loud what was actually written on the tablet, hybrid forms and all."[494] The response letters from Tel el-'Amarna were not written in Canaano-Akkadian but in a slightly Egyptianized Middle Babylonian, which indicates that Canaano-Akkadian was not a dialect used on the Egyptian end of these exchanges. Moreover, she does not believe that Canaano-Akkadian was ever used between Canaanite polities in their own diplomatic and economic interfaces, but that WS was the base language used in diplomacy and administration in the southern

[493] Von Dassow, "What the Canaanite Cuneiformists Wrote," 215.

[494] Ibid., 215

Levant. Even the biggest differences in the WS dialects spoken in the diverse polities in this region would have been more easily understood than the gulf between their respective Canaanite dialects and Canaano-Akkadian.[495] The written messages in the Amarna tablets would have been translated on sight into whatever dialect was spoken at the local court.

Von Dassow concludes that the very act of reading these letters was "an act of translation," as there was no true context where these letters would have ever been read as inscribed on the tablet, that is to say, in the Canaanite cuneiform code:

> The users of this code were perhaps 'thinking' in cuneiform when setting words on clay, but not thinking in Akkadian, and most likely they did not discriminate language from writing system in using cuneiform. One might almost characterise the Canaanite scribes' use of cuneiform as Akkadographic, and the texts they wrote as tablet-length Akkadograms, punctuated by occasional Canaanite words and explanatory glosses.[496]

She advocates that this corpus be approached—not as a mixed dialect—but rather as a "code" used for writing cuneiform comprising of Akkadographic and Sumerographic spellings that were ultimately used to write Canaanite. The Canaanite lexemes and phonetic complements embedded into the Akkado-Sumerographic skeleton served to guide the reader to the underlying *Canaanite* reading of the text.[497] Though it is not quite clear how, for example, a scribe would have "thought" in cuneiform (had to think of which signs to use, and to distinguish between syllabic and logographic spellings?), used Akkadian spellings, received Akkadian messages from Egypt and translated them, and yet not

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[495] Ibid.

[496] Ibid.

[497] Ibid., 217

read basic Akkadian words such as *ina*, for example, in Akkadian. Furthermore, an Akkadographic system could only work if scribes knew Akkadian words that corresponded to Canaanite words and their meanings. Any re-interpretation from an Akkadographic spelling into Canaanite was still mediated by Akkadian. Moreover, scribal training in such a system would have entailed an understanding of Akkadian and the memorization of Akkadian>WS equivalencies. We have also to remember that the main audience of the cuneiform texts from this period appears to have been, not native WS speakers of Canaanite scribes, but rather the Egyptian officials controlling the flow of information to the royal court.

Von Dassow's hypothesis that Canaanite in cuneiform served as both "the spoken and written *lingua franca* of part of Egypt's empire in the Levant" is too complex.[498] There is insufficient evidence that Canaano-Akkadian was developed as an Akkadographic code to write Canaanite. She seeks to distance writing from speech, yet her hypothesis presumes that the scribes using this system were really writing in Canaanite and considered themselves to be producing WS texts that were meant to be read in WS, whereas the main audience of this corpus was Egypt, a hegemonic power that had a strong linguistic and script ideology of its own. In order to understand the sociolinguistic backdrop of this period, it is important not to forget Egypt's role in assuring the stability of its operations in this region.

Moreover, there remains the question of why cuneiform was even used in these exchanges if indeed Canaanite was the language of mediation. Cuneiform, and more specifically, written Akkadian,

[498] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 674.

was retained in the Levant despite the existence of at least two other viable writing systems, the linear and cuneiform alphabetic scripts. It appears that cuneiform was retained in the southern Levant because of what it represented. Cuneiform was a visual symbol of the participation of local Levantine polities in the elite, international club of powers. Being a part of the select group of rulers that corresponded with Egypt in the language and scribal system of the great powers of this period assured local rulers such as Laba'yu and 'Abdi-Ḫeba a certain measure of local prestige.

The "Canaanite in cuneiform" hypothesis ultimately improvable. It is quite critical of Izre'el and Rainey's reliance upon contact language models, yet it does not avoid this same pitfall. Von Dassow's theory, too, is wed to speech and adds yet another layer of written and spoken language that is not evidenced in the epigraphic record. The Akkadographic code that von Dassow envisions would have necessitated a written standardized Canaanite dialect used for the Akkadographic and Sumerographic equivalencies. This dialect would have most likely been based upon a spoken intra-regional, and most likely elite and urban WS dialect that then became the basis for the writing system. In effect, von Dassow's theory replaces the plethora of Canaano-Akkadian dialects with a theoretical Canaanite dialect used as the underlying language of these exchanges, one that is even more obfuscated in the historical record. Currently there is very little evidence for such a standard spoken or written prestige dialect of Canaanite, however, there was undoubtedly a WS trade/prestige *koine* used in cross-cultural communication. We cannot assume that the diverse inhabitants of the Levant were monolingual, monocultural, or spoke dialects that were mutually intelligible. We do not know, however, what that dialect or prestige register looked like, as we only have evidence for the written

stratum of communication—which is in Canaano-Akkadian.

At the scribal level, an Akkadographic system would have necessitated lexical lists and a whole pedagogical system to train scribes in the appropriate Canaanite equivalency for each and every Akkadogram. Canaanite scribes would have also had to agree upon the proper Canaanite forms underlying the range of Akkadian verbal bases in Canaano-Akkadian. This also opens up the question of how they deciphered Sumerograms. If Akkadian was not the base language of this system, this presupposes that each and every Sumerogram would have had to be assigned a Canaanite equivalency. Again, this would have been further complicated in the dynamic and diverse linguistic continuum of the southern Levant. In short, we are left asking "whose" dialect of Canaanite (if indeed these polities were all speaking the same languages) served as the linguistic base for this system? Also, we are still left with the question of who created and codified this system and why.

We can acknowledge that the underlying forms may have been articulated at some point in Canaanite, yet we are not bound to limit this system to a purely Akkadographic one. It is doubtful that Canaano-Akkadian messages were ever read in Canaano-Akkadian, that is to say, accessed in their graphemic form by anyone other than the scribes and or officials first receiving these messages. These texts were uttered in Canaanite and delivered in Egyptian—Canaano-Akkadian was merely the intermediary form that these messages took on the tablet. Also, as Sanders points out, von Dassow's attempt to reconstruct the Canaanite embedded within a logographic system is largely an academic

exercise.[499] Unlike the WS linear script and cuneiform alphabetic inscriptions found in the southern Levant during this period (which are used in small, personal inscriptions) the Mesopotamian cuneiform texts served an institutional function. This suggests the backing of a state and/or authoritative body.

At Ugarit there is evidence of a cohesive ruling body, a stable economy, and an ideological and pragmatic need for a distinctly local scribal system. Ugarit boasts texts in the traditional cuneiform languages, and texts in their own local script for internal matters. At Ugarit the cuneiform alphabet is used for interpersonal letters and to record local customs and literatures, as well as for economic matters that only affected the immediate area. We see a similar digraphic situation in the southern Levant whereby Canaano-Akkadian co-existed with the linear alphabet, though in general there is a paucity of writing from this region outside of the Amarna Letters (which were discovered in Egypt), and texts from Hazor, Taanach, and Aphek (which make up the bulk of the cuneiform from Canaan) which date to the LBA. Canaano-Akkadian is only used in administrative or diplomatic contexts, whereas alphabetic texts are non-administrative and occur mainly on personal objects. There is no evidence for extensive use of the alphabet as in the northern Levant at Ugarit, as the extent alphabetic inscriptions are extremely small and are limited to a few words. This lacuna could in part relate to the materials being used to write the linear script, which may have been perishable. The lack of standardization of this script by the Iron I suggests, however, that it was not standardized because it was not harnessed by any institutions in the LBA. We also do not have very much evidence for the use

[499] Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 82.

of cuneiform by local, Canaanite polities outside of their interactions with Egypt. In short, there is evidence for two alphabetic scripts (linear and cuneiform) that were not used by polities, but appear in private, and often ritual contexts (e.g., the Lachish fosse). Mesopotamian cuneiform was produced at local Canaanite courts and at Egyptian centers but does not appear to have been used outside of these official settings. We do not have, for example, votive objects or dedicatory inscriptions in cuneiform. Even at Ugarit, where there was an established tradition of Akkadian, the local literatures were written in the local, Ugaritic script and language. This dichotomy suggests a cultural preference for local scripts for internal matters and writing of texts for religious and/or personal use.

Canaano-Akkadian and the Mesopotamian cuneiform script, on the other hand, were integral to the institutional scribal system employed in the southern Levant. When the scribes were learning cuneiform they learned the fundaments of Akkadian, and moreover, they appear to have conceived of the linguistic system inscribed on the tablet as Akkadian, just a different and perhaps less prestigious variety than that produced by Egypt.[500]

It is not always clear whether or not the linguistic variety of the speakers (i.e., the rulers commissioning these letters) and the scribes were one and the same. Even the direct speech in these letters, for example, when a ruler quotes the "speech" of another ruler, is not necessarily what was *said*. It is important to keep in mind that the famous example in which the Pharaoh "utters" a Canaanite word when reminding Abi-Milku of his duties to the crown in EA 147: 36-38 (*kûna* [*ku-na*] "prepare, be

[500] Although Izre'el perhaps overstates the degree to which this scribal code was spoken, he is right to point out that in the course of scribal education the scribes would have had to recite and/or articulate this scribal code to some degree ("Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 195).

ready") is a bit ambiguous.[501] This is not a letter from Egypt, but rather a letter to Egypt that purports to quote from a previous letter from the Pharaoh.

33) … *e-nu-ma*	"When I heard the sweet breath and the gracious envoy who came to me.
34) *iš-me še-ḫu* DÙG.GA *ù* DUMU KIN-*ri* SIG_5	
35) *ša i-kà-ša-dá-ni e-nu-ma*	When the king, my lord said: "Be ready for the arrival of the great army,"
36) *iq-bi* LUGAL *be-li-ia* \\ *ku-na*	
37) *a-na pa-ni* ÉRIN.MEŠ GAL *ù iq-bi*	then the servant said: "Yea, yea, yea!" On my stomach and on my back I carry the word of the king, my lord.
38) ÌR-*du a-na be-li-šu* \\ *ia-a-ia-ia*	
39) *a-na muḫ-ḫi ga-bi-dì-ia muḫ-ḫi* \\ *ṣú-ri-ia*	
40) *ú-bal a-ma-ta*$_5$ LUGAL *be-li-ia*	

Yet, Von Dassow cites this passage as evidence that Canaanite and Egyptian scribes "shared[d] the same code," whereby even Egyptian scribes used Canaanite forms.[502] In her later work, "Peripheral Akkadian Dialects, or Akkadography of Local Languages," she view the assumption that "the language of quoted speech more closely approximates spoken language" to be "probably valid in a general way;" though, she understands the scribes who were involved in crafting the written form of such messages to have left their imprint on reported speech.[503] As she writes, "[I]f his system of writing employs alloglottography, then so will his written representation of quoted speech." Even direct quotes were

[501] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 655-656, also 656, cf. 35.

[502] Some other examples of Canaanite forms used in contexts of direct speech of the Pharaoh include: (in the Tyre Letters) EA 147 35-38 *e-nu-ma/iq-bi* LUGAL *be-li-ia* \\ ***ku-na***/*a-na pa-ni* ÉRIN.MEŠ GAL *ù iq-bi*/ÌR-*du a-na be-li-šu* \\ *ia-a-ia-ia* "When the king, my lord said: 'Be ready for the arrival of the great army,' then the servant said: 'Yea, yea, yea!'"; EA 154: 5-8 ⌜*aš*⌝-*te-me/ša* ⌜*iš*⌝-⌜*ta*⌝-*pár* LUGAL *a-na*/ÌR-*šu* ⌜\⌝ ⌜***ia***⌝-***ku***-‹***un***› *e-mu-qí*/⌜*muḫ*⌝-⌜*ḫi*⌝ *ia-wi* "have heard what the king has written to his servant, "May my forces be rea‹dy› for (or: against) Yawi; (in the Byblos Letters) EA 112: 7-9 *a-na mi-ni yi-iš*-⌜*ta*⌝-*pa-ru/* [*š*]*àr-ru* EN-*li a-na ia-ši/ú-ṣur-mi lu-ù* ***na-ṣir-ta*** "Why does the [ki]ng, my lord, write to me: 'Guard! May you be on guard!'" [see also EA 99:7-9; 367:4-5; 370:4-6, which also used this suffixed form]).

[503] Von Dassow, "Peripheral Akkadian Dialects," 912-913.

ultimately transformed into the written code use by the scribe. She goes on to challenge the view that quote speeches were actual citations of what was spoken as opposed to "paraphrases, summaries, or embellishments of what the person quoted said."[504] This in large part draws upon Jack Sasson's work on the Mari corpus, which has shown the stark difference between the citations in the Mari letters, and what was appears in the actual letters.[505] In von Dassow's more recent reassessment of quoted speech, she concludes: "[W]hat is presented as quoted speech does *not* replicate the actual words spoken, in the language in which they were spoken. If one were to insist that it does, one would be compelled to conclude that the Pharaoh spoke Canaanite as well as Canaano-Akakdian, for he is quoted in both idioms."[506] However, even if we distance the language from the actual ruler, we are still left with Canaanite/Canaano-Akkadian forms in a message from Egypt. Who then is responsible for this shift away from Egyptian-Akkadian and was the purpose of these purported quotes? If the delivery of this message was in Egyptian, why then would an Egyptian scribe take the trouble of shifting to a Canaanite form in the written version of the message? Also, as she states, ultimately all letters in the Egyptian/Canaanite exchanges would have been "read out loud to its addressees in his own language"—which presumes that letters to Egypt were read aloud in Egyptian and that letters to Canaan were read aloud in Canaanite. The sudden shift to a Canaanite form then would not have

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[504] Ibid., 913.

[505] Jack Sasson, "The Burden of Scribes," in *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen.* Edited by. Jacobsen, Thorkild and T. Abusch (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 211-228.

[506] Von Dassow, "Peripheral Akkadian Dialects," 913.

been heard in the Canaanite translation of the Pharaoh's letters, which was presumably translated in its entirety into the local court dialect of Canaanite.

Also, we do not really know whether or not this Canaanism was a genuine citation from one of the letters from Egypt. It is equally possible that it was introduced into the conversation by Abi-milku's scribe, who perhaps shifted the purported quote from the Pharaoh's letter to a Canaanite register in order to emphasize this part of the reply, or as a stylistic effect to add in a bit of local color, as this section of the letter does delve into a more Canaanite oral-poetic style. It could also be a genuine paraphrase from Abi-Milku, who would have heard the quote in Canaanite, and may have recited this initial message to the best of his recollections (Egypto-Akkadian>WS translation at court>WS phrase repeated when the oral message was composed> WS phrase is then introduced into a Canaano-Akkadian text when it is written):[507]

Table 12 Code-Switching in EA 147: 35b-39

EA 147: 35b-39	
e-nu-ma/ iq-bi LUGAL *be-li-ia* \\ *ku-na/ a-na pa-ni* ÉRIN.MEŠ GAL *ù iq-bi/* ÌR-*du a-na be-li-šu* \\ *ia-a-ia-ia* */a-na muḫ-ḫi ga-bi-dì-ia muḫ-ḫi* \\ *ṣú-ri* *-ia*	"When the king, my lord said: 'Be ready for the arrival of the great army,' then the servant said: 'Yea, yea, yea!'" On my stomach and on my back (I carry the word of the king, my lord).

This exchange is presented as a conversation between the Pharaoh and Abi- Milku. The scribe frames this section as reported speech citing from a letter from the Pharaoh. The structure comprises a verb

[507] Much thanks to Jared Norris Wolfe for this suggestion.

of speaking, which is the Akkadian 3ms preterite, though it is fronted following Canaanite syntax. The speaker, in this case the Pharaoh, is presented with a formal title; the scribe then uses *Glossenkeilen* as quotes marking what was said. In the Pharaoh's purported speech, he uses the Canaanite 2ms imperative of the verb *kwn* followed by an Akkadian prepositional phrase. This direct speech does not seem to be an Akkadographic spelling, but rather to be a case where there is a shift from Akkadian to Canaanite, and back again to MB.

If this really is a direct citation from a letter sent from Egypt, this example only demonstrates that Egyptian scribes were able to parody the Canaanite language. It is more likely that the scribe working for Abi-milku strategically used an oral register of language and a shift into Canaanite to describe an idealized, more intimate relationship between the two monarchs—one where there is more parity between them. The Pharaoh speaks in the Canaanite dialect of Tyre; Abi-milku's response also draws upon an oral register of language, as he responds enthusiastically with an exclamation (*ia-a-ia-ia*) that is also introduced by *Glossenkeil*. This structures the conversation between the two monarchs in intimate terms as a verbal, face-to-face discussion when, in truth, it is doubtful that Abi-milku could have procured such an audience at the Pharaoh's court. It is even more unlikely that the Pharaoh would have ever addressed the ruler in his native WS dialect.

Indeed, this whole passage is replete with scribal "showing off." Overall there are three glosses in this section (lines 36; 38; 39). Abi-milku's scribe uses Canaanite forms, Canaano-Akkadian forms,

MB orthographies, and employs several Egyptianisms.[508] The eclectic forms in Abi-milku's letter do not reflect what the monarch actually spoke, or what was spoken at he royal court at Tyre. Rather, it appears to be part of a scribal "jousting" of sorts, whereby both scribes demonstrated their competency in each other's linguistic and scribal repertoires.

C. Conclusion: Canaano-Akkadian as a Scribal Code in the Context of Egypt's Eastern Empire

Overall, there is insufficient evidence that Egyptian scribes were trained in Canaano-Akkadian to the degree that they would be able to produce complete texts in this scribal tradition, though it does appear that they could understand it to a certain degree. The few "Canaanisms" in the Egyptian Amarna Letters do not really demonstrate that Egyptian cuneiform scribes were trained in Canaano-Akkadian.[509] The *ku-na* example is after all an outright syllabic spelling of a WS verb—not a Canaano-Akkadian verb or a logographic spelling. Rather, it is the type of syllabic spelling used by scribes working in Hatti, for example, who wrote Hittite words syllabically. This is the type of development that we would expect to see in the WS world, whereby eventually cuneiform was harnessed to write Canaanite syllabically, if there was truly an interest in writing Canaanite in cuneiform during this period. Such experiments with syllabic writing are attested in both Canaanite and Egyptian contexts

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[508] For example the scribe uses an Egyptian term in the following gloss in line 12: *du-ni* ZAG \\ *ḫa-ap-ši* "power of his arm." The reference to the breath of the king as a life giving force in lines 25-26 is also an appeal to an Egyptian literary trope: *e-nu-ma it-ta-*⌜*ṣi*⌝ *še-ḫu* LUGAL *a-na muḫ-*⌜*ḫi*⌝-⌜*ia*⌝ "and the sweet breath which has come forth from the mouth of the king." Line 27 makes use of the Canaano-Akkadian 1cs suffix *–ti* yet uses *magal* as an adverb: *ù ḫa-ad-ia-ti ma-gal* "I rejoiced greatly." The verb in line 16 does not have the Canaano-Akkadian *yv-* prefix but rather a standard 3ms Akkadian *i-* prefix: *an-nu-ú iš-pu-ur* ÌR-*du a-na be-li-šu* "Behold, the servant has written to his lord."

[509] Indeed, students of Akkadian, even those with a background in WS, tend to find Canaano-Akkadian a challenge. Canaano-Akkadian is marked through and through as a WS system, yet not necessarily linguistic one, but a WS scribal code.

during this period (e.g., the Egyptian lexemes in the lexical list at Tell el-'Amarna and the WS list at Aphek).

If the use of Canaanite forms, such as *ku-na* in EA 147:36, demonstrate anything about Egyptian scribalism (based on the assumption that they were genuine citations from the letters from Egypt), they suggest that certain Egyptian officials working to administer the eastern territories were expected to understand the rudiments of Canaanite. This is not surprising in light of the in-person negotiations that most likely made up the bulk of diplomacy. This does not mean that Egyptian officials read the letters from Canaan in Canaanite, as von Dassow's theory of Canaanite in cuneiform assumes, but that they were competent enough in the spoken language to understand it in writing.

Again, the understanding that such shifts in the language of written messages reflected genuine shifts in the original utterance of the text approaches these messages as though communications between individuals. Such letters were really dialogues between institutions, and moreover, scribes who served as the unofficial ambassadors between these polities. We must look at such shifts in register in this corpus as cues from one scribe to another that were an established part of the scribal code used in these interactions. As will be discussed, such shifts are not merely linguistic, but rather paralinguistic as they served as cues about how to perform and/or transmit the contents of these written messages.

A shift to a Middle Babylonian or "genuine" Canaanite form, for example, would not have been perceptible to the intended audiences of these letters unless the scribes reading them made such a distinction in their translations. It is important to remember that the translation process flattened

out any of the linguistic variation in this correspondence. The written texts were only accessible to the scribes and officials trained in cuneiform; the shifts in "language" were only evidenced when these same literate elites worked them into their translations. Such strategies enabled the writers to convey a deeper range of meaning than that conveyed merely by the linguistic forms in these letters.

Moreover, there seems to have been a division between the protocols of speech and those of written diplomacy. Von Dassow's claim that Canaanite was the *lingua franca* of the Egyptian Levant still implies the development of *both* a spoken and written register of Canaanite for interregional and diplomatic communication, and some sort of consensus or similar use by scribal groups and/or literate officials about how to capture this dialect using pre-existing cuneiform traditions. Such a system would have required some degree of institutional backing powerful enough to standardize and enforce this system. Yet Canaanite rulers did not actually write to Egypt in Canaanite, though they could have done this using either syllabic cuneiform or the linear or cuneiform alphabets. Rather, Akkadian served as the written *koine* for diplomacy. There was a stark difference between the protocols for speech and writing, which fall into quite different socio-linguistic domains.

The WS influence in some of the Egyptian cuneiform texts demonstrates an understanding of WS syntax, but not the use of the Canaanite Akkadographic system. We have, instead, scribes who are familiar with interacting with Canaanite scribes and dignitaries and who are comfortable showing off their knowledge of each other's cultures. This should not be taken as proof that the staff working in the cuneiform processing center at Tell el-'Amarna were truly trained in Canaano-Akkadian or in a Canaanite Akkadographic system. These forms only demonstrate that they had an understanding of

the system and/or a background in Canaanite languages. Von Dassow's arguments that the Egyptians and Canaanites "share[d] the same code" overlooks the simple truth that they really did not—the inscriptional record attests to cuneiform scribes operating in quite different scribal traditions replete with different conventions and orthographies, not to mention each held a very different sociolinguistic status in the larger cuneiform world. Indeed the differences between these two writing systems is what makes these exchanges so remarkable. One would expect Canaanite scribes to shift to the Akkadian produced by Egypt, or to send letters in Egyptian via Egyptian intermediaries. Rather, we have two disjointed systems that happened to work symbiotically, which begs the questions how the scribes working for these polities were able to successfully communicate, and moreover, what political or institutional force was orchestrating this scribal symphony. As, unlike the linear and cuneiform alphabetic scripts attested in the southern Levant, Canaano-Akkadian is only attested in institutional settings where it served for official correspondence with Egypt.

The political climate of the second half of the second millennium B.C.E. belies the socio-linguistic context needed for the development of such a complex regional Canaanite scribal system by a local Canaanite power. Currently, there is insufficient evidence that Canaano-Akkadian existed as a developed system before the 15-14th centuries B.C.E.[510] The Taanach Letters offer the first glimpse of an emergent Canaano-Akkadian system and appear to be produced as the product of interactions with Egypt. The two parallels for Canaano-Akkadian are the scribal system used in the kingdom of Ugarit

[510] These letters includes verbal forms that make us of the Canaano-Akkadian verbal prefixes (e.g., Taanach 1: 8 *at-ta ta-aš-pu-rù* "you have written) and retain some of the archaic features that are seen in later texts from this region (e.g., intervocalic –w- as in *ú-ul tu-wa-š*[*a*]*-ru-n*[*i*]) "you have not sent me").

and the use of Akkadographic and Sumerographic spellings in the corpus of Hittite texts do not quite align with the sociolinguistic situation in Canaan during this period. At Ugarit, where the cuneiform alphabet was used institutionally, there is evidence of a cohesive ruling body, a stable economy, and an ideological need and use for a distinctly local scribal system. We see a relatively autonomous polity with a strong script ideology, whereas in the southern Levant was a patchwork of feuding groups allied by their subservience to Egypt. The one standardized script only appears in contexts of administration and communication with Egypt. Hittite use of cuneiform, and the use of Akkadograms in particular, is also not quite a fair parallel for the use of cuneiform in the southern Levant. The Hittite scribal system was the product of state backing and was inspired by a political and ideologically driven agenda to write the Hittite language for state purposes. Whereas, there are no political, religious, legal texts or monuments written in the local languages of the southern Levant. There is a dearth of evidence, moreover, for cuneiform used in outside of diplomacy with Egypt and administrative cooperation with Egyptian officials.

Contra Von Dassow's proposal, it is quite unlikely that Egypt would sponsor a scribal system in its eastern territories that would require its scribes to learn the Canaanite equivalencies underlying an Akkadographic system. It also seems quite far-fetched that Egyptian officials would foster the creation of a "Canaanite" writing system that could potentially be used to unite the various warring factions of the Levant. Rather, Canaano-Akkadian was a useful tool precisely because it was not identified with any particular Canaanite linguistic or political group. Throughout the LBA, it but was marked as a foreign writing system, one that was used in interactions with the outside world—it was

the product of Canaanite scribes but it was not something that unified Canaanite polities—rather it reinforced the context of subjugation.

Approaching Canaano-Akkadian as a writing system, first and foremost, brings to light the sociolinguistic aspects of writing and language and the ideologies of script choice operant during this period that are currently masked by the debates about how to classify Canaano-Akkadian. Canaano-Akkadian was not dependent on a community of speakers, but rather a community of writers and readers.[511] This approach divorces the language of the text from that of the sender. Instead, any linguistic evidence that can be gleaned from this corpus is better understood as a reflection of the language of the scribes writing these missives and not necessarily that of the polities sending them.

In addition, there is compelling evidence that a large number of the Canaanite Amarna Letters were actually written by cuneiform scribes working at Egyptian centers.[512] The petrographic analysis of the Amarna Letters reveals that the clays of at least 36 tablets match the clays around Egyptian administrative centers, rather than the clays of the regions from which they were dispatched. Three main hubs stand out in the landscape of Egypt's empire in the Levant: Ṣumur in the north, Beth Shean in the east, and Gaza in the southwest. For this reason Radner describes these administrative bases as "interchange stations" where the letters arriving from Tel el-'Amarna were distributed to

[511] J-P. Vita makes the excellent point that scholars too quickly assume that the linguistic features these letters are a reflection of the language of the sender as opposed to that of the scribe. Vita's study of the paleography of the Amarna Letters ultimately calls for a revaluation of the scribal map of the Amarna Letters. For example, letters written for the King of Gezer and his allies were really the work of one (or two) scribe(s) who worked for multiple rulers, and do not necessarily reflect a Canaano-Akkadian dialect spoken in the Gezer region ("Scribes and Dialects in Late Bronze Age Canaan," 866).

[512] Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay*, 322-325.

Canaanite officials. It appears that these centers also served as message depots for missives addressed to the Pharaoh.[513] The Canaanite Amarna Letters that were written at Egyptian sites are the product of the following chain of communication: local polities traveled, or sent their emissaries, to these Egyptian enclaves, most likely for advice and directives; in some cases these exchanges culminated in the creation of a letter composed on site by local scribes. These letters were then sent to Egypt, most likely by Egyptian messengers who traveled between Egyptian outposts and Amarna in a regular circuit.[514] Egyptian administrative centers thus emerge as foci of scribal activity in the scribal map of the Levant.

The heavy Egyptian hand in this chain of communication is no surprise. By controlling the flow of information to and from Egypt, Egyptian administrators were able to keep local polities dependent upon them in all transactions with the Egyptian throne. Canaano-Akkadian was a system sponsored by Egypt. Despite the added complexity of using two scribal systems for communication (MB in the letters from Egypt and Canaano-Akkadian in the letters from Egypt's territories in the southern Levant), Egyptian administrators appear to have encouraged the used of this writing system and even employed Canaano-Akkadian scribes to write letters for polities that did not have their own cuneiform-trained scribe. The choice of cuneiform between Egypt and Levantine rulers was in part affected by the overall protocol of diplomacy during this period, which was entrenched in cuneiform culture. Though considering Egypt's power during this period as a prestige and ancient culture, and

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[513] Karen Radner, "Introduction: Long-Distance Communication and the Cohesion of Early Empires," *State Correspondence in the Ancient World: From New Kingdom Egypt to the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2014), 4-5.

[514] Liverani, "A Seasonal Pattern," 337-348.

moreover, its military and (perhaps more importantly) economic presence in the Levant, the Egyptian language and writing system could theoretically have been imposed in the east. It would have been much more efficient to simply compose an Egyptian text at these Egyptian centers, as these messages were ultimately headed to an Egyptian speaking audience. And yet, we have letters written from Gaza in Canaano-Akkadian.

The use of Canaano-Akkadian in such interactions appears to have been a product of Egyptian and local ideologies about language and writing. It is also a reflection of the power dynamics between this outside force and the patchwork of local polities attempting to benefit from Egyptian patronage in any way possible. The cuneiform scribes working on behalf of the Pharaoh wrote in MB, a foreign prestige language; cuneiform scribes in the southern Levant responded in a language and scribal system of much lesser prestige. The use of cuneiform rather than Egyptian in the southern Levant can be understood as the product of an Egypto-centric view of writing and language that impacted scribalism its eastern territories. Despite extensive contact and more than a millennia of trade, Egypt's vassals in the southern Levant were still seen as foreigners, as much so as the much more distant polities in the Near East. As such, Egyptian officials dealt with them in a foreign writing system and language rather than Egypt's own treasured writing system.

Also it is important to remember, however, that the spoken is never wholly disconnected from the written layer of such interactions—the whole sphere of verbal communications between Canaanite rulers and Egyptian administrators is lost to us. We can be confident however that it most certainly operated in tandem with these more formal, written missives. There was also at the very

least a distinct register, or variety of "Canaanite," used for diplomatic purposes between diverse polities within the southern Levant. It is unlikely, however, that this *lingua franca* (a spoken and perhaps even written linguistic variety, albeit not in cuneiform), was Canaano-Akkadian. Such a use of this written language would have necessitated a rather advanced knowledge of Akkadian––a skill that was rather useless in daily, oral interactions in Canaan between WS speaking peoples. Furthermore, the practice of traveling to Egyptian centers to have a message written in Canaano-Akkadian suggests that smaller polities did not have cuneiform trained scribes working directly for them, but were dependent upon traveling scribes, those working for the more cosmopolitan neighbors (as in the case of the "Gezer scribe,"), or whose hired by Egypt. We have then several co-existing linguistic and scribal systems in play during this period. Egypt emerges as the power determining the medium of communication appropriate for correspondence with the Pharaoh.

The best description of Canaano-Akkadian borrows from past scholars. Rainey is right that there is insufficient evidence to determine the degree to which Canaano-Akkadian was ever articulated. Von Dassow is right to question its classification as a mixed-language or a dialect. Izre'el is right to presuppose that scribes learning Canaano-Akkadian, regardless of whether or not they actually spoke Akkadian, would have had to at least pronounce what they wrote in the context of their scribal training and subsequent duties. Though von Dassow and Vita approach this corpus from different perspectives (linguistic and paleographic), they both describe a process that implicitly distances the physical act of writing from the speech event underlying these texts—the Canaano-Akkadian scribe emerges as the gatekeeper creating and decoding the written word. Yet, any re-

classification of Canaano-Akkadian should approach this system as a writing system—not a dialect, pidgin, creole, or mixed language, even one written logographically, as there is not really much evidence that it was used by any one but the elite literate few trained in this system. At the end of the day, for purposes of "language" classification, Canaano-Akkadian serves more or less as a guide of possible linguistic Canaanite forms, but it does not really stand on its own as a viable spoken "dialect" of Peripheral Akkadian.

Much of the debate about its place in the continuum of Akkadian dialects is really about the underlying methodology used to approach writing during this period, and implicitly, our ability to reconstruct what langauges(s) these ancient peoples were actually speaking. At the end of the day, we must analyze the available evidence based upon what contemporary studies of writing and language tell us more generally about how writing systems work. In other words, we must consider the power structures that enable cohesive writing systems to develop, specifically against the geo-political backdrop of the LBA Levant. We must also keep in mind that the institutionalized "schools" of the modern age do not present a viable model for the smaller, more intimate scribal "schools" of the second millennium B.C.E., which were predominantly in familial or guild-like settings. No state was handing out standardized school books (or in this case, tablets) to Canaanite scribal apprentices, yet from the cohesion in the writing system and its distribution throughout the Egyptian controlled Levant, we must assume some level of involvement by the Egyptian administration. This would have entailed either an enforced or an implicit agreement that the protocols of correspondence with Egypt were to take place in Canaano-Akkadian as opposed to Canaanite, Egyptian, or Middle Babylonian.

Canaano-Akkadian's place in Egypt's administration of the southern Levant and its possible usages in interactions between WS speaking factions is then key to understanding this role of this scribal system. Also, it is important to consider the other writing systems in circulation in the southern Levant during this period, and the whys and why not's of their use and standardization.

CHAPTER SIX

Canaano-Akkadian as a Diplomatic Scribal Code

I. The Indexicality of Written Language

Use of Canaano-Akkadian in Alashia and Amurru, or by Egyptian scribes, was not a reflection of spoken language. The ruler of Alashia (and/or his officials) employed Canaano-Akkadian trained scribes to write to Egypt—they themselves did not speak a "dialect" of Canaano-Akkadian. The move away from Canaano-Akkadian in Amurru after the reign of 'Abdi-Aširta, and its disappearance in the Levant at the end of the LBA, did not result from a change in speech *per se*, but rather in scribal training and in political orientation. This points to the conclusion that Canaano-Akkadian was a

diplomatic scribal code, and moreover, a proverbial "flash" in the linguistic pan of the ANE, one that had a very specific diplomatic role linked to engagements with Egypt.

For other ancient Near Eastern corpora, there is evidence of a stronger correlation between what was written and spoken. That is, there is evidence for the *longue durée* of linguistic practice, whereby the written stratum of language was a closer approximation of a spoken linguistic variety. For example, there is extensive evidence that the written registers of Akkadian correlated with the languages being spoken in Mesopotamia. The orthographic changes in MB (e.g., the *št*>*lt* shift and the partial collapse of the case system) are reflective of changes in spoken Akkadian. In other cases, even when a written language dies out in a relatively short period, there is evidence that it was part of a well-established linguistic continuum. In the case of Hebrew and Aramaic, for example, where an ancient written record was survived by diverse communities of speakers, there is a sufficient textual and oral record to establish a linguistic correlation between the written stratum of language and what was presumably spoken. We can then use later phases of these languages to elucidate the written record (e.g., Hebrew from the biblical record to elucidate Iron Age inscriptions).

In the case of Canaano-Akkadian, however, the correlation between the written code used by scribes and what was actually spoken in local courts is much more tenuous. No Canaano-Akkadian "speakers" survived into the first millennium, to the extent that they existed in the LBA. The orthographic variation in Canaano-Akkadian could reflect the influence of what the scribes themselves spoke in a limited fashion in diplomacy or in their scribal training; yet, this cannot be proven. We do not have evidence for a community of speakers outside, perhaps, of the scribes or

officials who used this system in the course of their professions. There is no indication that Akkadian or knowledge of cuneiform technology continued into the Iron Age once the alphabet was adopted for state matters. Akkadian was not an indigenous language, and it appears to have become obsolete for communication in the Levant by the Iron Age.

The orthographic variation in this corpus does, however, elucidate the evolution of the scribalism in this region and the conventions of written diplomacy.[515] In the case of explicit deviations from Canaano-Akkadian, when there is a code-switch to a Canaanite or Egyptian term or a MB orthography, for example, we can consider the intention of the scribe and why it occurs in this particular section of the text. Such shifts would have been meaningful to the scribes/officials receiving these messages—otherwise they would not have been included in these letters. Furthermore, writing in diplomatic contexts is a much more intentional than verbal communication. Thus, in order to best understand the decision to use and/or move away from Canaano-Akkadian, it is important to first examine how writing, in and of itself, was an intentional process that was used to index individual and group identities. The following attempts to discuss the indexicality of writing and script choice in the context of LBA diplomacy, namely, why polities outside of Canaan used Canaano-Akkadian to write to Egypt.

The argument presented here is that Canaano-Akkadian was not a spoken "Canaanite" dialect of Akkadian *per se*, but evolved into a learned scribal system used more generally in Egypt's eastern empire. Scribalism during this period was informed by the protocols regarding which scribal

[515] Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 171-218.

conventions were appropriate for which polities. Canaano-Akkadian had its origins in the southern Levant, however, by the Amarna Age, it had evolved into a scribal code appropriated for use in areas directly controlled by Egypt. That is, it shifted from a local system to one that was harnessed by Egypt to ensure the smooth flow of communication in this region, hence the production of Canaano-Akkadian texts at Egyptian military centers. It was thus identified by outside groups as a suitable code to use in diplomacy with Egypt, and for this reason, Canaano-Akkadian trained scribes were hired by outside polities to write to the Pharaoh. In the case of Amurru and Alashia, these two groups were allied with Egypt, though of a somewhat lesser status in the international arena. Moreover, they do not appear to have had their own established cuneiform scribal traditions, but demonstrate the practice of hiring itinerant scribes to work at their local courts. Canaano-Akkadian was a "borrowed" system in these contexts that was used because it was seen as a fitting mode of communication with which to engage the Pharaoh. Also, the shift in from Canaano-Akkadian (i.e., the code use to write to Egypt) to an Akkadian more like that used in Hatti in the Akkadian of Amurru, suggests that there was a conscious decision to break ties with the scribal apparatus associated with Egypt. That is to say, writing was a way for smaller polities to self-identify with their political allies—shifts in scribal systems during this period do not imply a change in a community of speakers, but rather in the scribes employed by these polities and in their political orientations.

A. Writing and Identity

If we dispense with the notion that orthographic variation always presents a corollary to spoken language, we must then evolve a new model that accounts for the underlying reasons behind

change in written language. The understanding here is that a better understanding of the relationship between writing and identity will elucidate the human element behind the variation in the cuneiform texts from Alashia and Amurru, namely, why Canaano-Akkadian trained scribes were hired to write to Egypt.

The choice of a script and/or writing system is a means of creating distinctions between groups that are more enforceable than other aspects of human behavior.[516] This idea is well developed in socilingusitic literature. As Peter Unseth writes, "There is a difference between choosing scripts and choosing a language, in that scripts are small, finite systems, whereas languages are infinite systems."[517] It is much easier to reform a script or aspect of a writing system than a feature of spoken language. Alexandra Jaffe understands orthography to be much more than mere spelling as it "can become a particularly potent locus for the exercise of symbolic and political control."[518] Orthography is "the most visible, tangible evidence for internal linguistic unity, regularity, codification, and autonomy," and as such, it can serve as a mechanism of group control that presents formalized conventions about the "one right way of using language."[519] Written language is thus a semiotic system that functions quite differently than spoken communication, but shares some attributes of speech. It, too, can index group and individual identities. As Jaffe describes the power of orthography in the

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[516] Alexandra Jaffe, et al., *Orthography As Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012).

[517] Peter Unseth, "Sociolinguistic Parallels Between Choosing Scripts and Languages," in *WL&L* 8:1 (2005), 26.

[518] A. Jaffe, "The Second Annual Corsican Spelling Contest: Orthography and Ideology," *Am. Ethnol* 23: 4 (1996), 818.

[519] Ibid., 818-819.

following terms:

> "Orthography selects, displays and naturalizes linguistic difference, which is in turn used to legitimize and naturalize cultural and political boundaries. Orthography is a tool in the symbolic fusion of language and identity..."[520]

The choices made by the writer about their use of written language can be informative about their identity and that of their audience. Such an understanding of the relationship between orthographic practices and linguistic ideology in the context of minority languages provides a fruitful parallel to the sociolinguistic situation in the southern Levant in the LBA. Canaanite was the spoken language continuum and the WS alphabets were the scripts used for intergroup communication; Canaano-Akkadian appears to have been imposed as the linguistic medium of administration and dealings with Egypt, a hegemonic power. There was thus an internal opposition between the spoken languages and local scripts of this region (i.e., the linear and cuneiform alphabets) and Canaano-Akkadian, as well as an opposition between the scribal languages used by Egypt (i.e., MB and the Egyptian scripts) and Canaano-Akkadian, which was of less prestige. Such tension between the languages associated with a dominant outside power and that of the local community can become manifested in linguistic practice.[521] Jaffe understands a group's linguistic identity to be dependent on this intrinsic opposition,

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[520] A. Jaffe, "Non-standard Orthography and non-standard speech," *ISO* 4:4 (2000), 503.

[521] For example, she examines how Corsican nationalistic ideologies have been articulated, not in only in the use of spoken, but also written Corsican. She reviews a spelling contest that was broadcasted in Corsican to demonstrate "both resistance and accommodation to dominant models of language as an autonomous, authoritative mode." The use of Corsican in this public and official forum was meant to be a demonstration of the unity of the Corsican language and community. Yet the assumption in this demonstration that linguistic practice is either/or, failed to "challenge the binary, compartmentalized logic that perpetuates the unequal use and standing of Corsican in relation to French." Even their approach to breaking away from what they perceived to be a linguistic hegemony was performed according to an understanding that French and Corsican were indexes for "foreign" versus "local" identities. Jaffe views this as a contradiction as it "left a diglossic model of linguistic identity and value intact," and was ultimately a product of how

and as such, a minority group's linguistic identity and practice is an expression of their dealings with the dominant power.[522] As she writes,

> The mere existence of this alternative set of norms and standards implicitly challenges the dominant cultural and linguistic ideology… Much metaphorical codeswitching from dominant to minority language can be read as an expression of the countervalue of intimacy and solidarity.[523]

Minority languages can be used as an expression of defiance to outsiders, or internally as a way of in-grouping and working towards group cohesion. The choice to write a minority language and the ways in which this is accomplished in such contexts is a reflection of a group's socio-political identity.

Recent work on the sociolinguistics of spelling and written language elucidates some of the social factors that may have led to the diverse varieties of Akkadian produced in the LBA Levant. For example, Mark Sebba describes orthography as a "social practice," one impacted by the same cultural practices that shape the spoken languages and, in turn, the writing system of the society in which it is used.[524] Standardized writing systems are most often those that have benefited from a patron power.

French and Corsican are seen to be in opposition.[521] In her analysis, she argues that the perceived boundaries between these linguistic domains, in this case the diglossic situation in Corsican, whereby French and Corsican are both used, is what "gives the minority language its powerful alternative value" ("Corsican Spelling Contest: Orthography and Ideology," *Am. Ethnol* 23: 4 [1996]: for quotes see 817 and 829).

[522] Jaffe, "Corsican Spelling Contest," 829.

[523] Ibid., 819; see also, Elizabeth Mertz, "Sociolinguistic Creativity: Cape Breton Gaelic's Linguistic 'Tip,'" in *Investigating Obsolescence: Studies in Language Contraction and Death*. Edited by Nancy C. Dorian (New York: Cambridge University, 1989), 115; Kathryn Woolard, "Language Variation and Cultural Hegemony: Toward an Integration of Sociolinguistic and Social Theory," *Am. Ethnol* 12 (1985), 744.

[524] Mark Sebba, *Spelling and Society. The Culture and Politics of Orthography Around the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2009), 13.

That is, a state and a corresponding bureaucratic system.[525] Moreover, they proceed from the development of a standardized orthography and its implementation, typically in state-sponsored educational systems.[526] The motivations underlying linguistic practice in the modern era, though not identical to that of the ANE, still make for fruitful comparisons. The indexicality of written language would have been a factor in the coalescence of national/group identities. There is also ample evidence for the corresponding influence of such ideologies on both spoken language and writing, and moreover, the iconization of writing and scripts in the ANE.[527] Seen as such, the use of Canaano-Akkadian in the Levant, Alashia, and Amurru appear linked to a specific geo-political context, that of a somewhat lesser power in communication with a "great" foreign power, i.e., Egypt.

B. The Indexicality of Writing Systems and Script

Language is an inherent part of identity. As will be discussed, written language, too, can be an expression of individual and group identities. There is no one-to-one correlation between a style of

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[525] For example, the implementation of diacritics in written Arabic correlates with the spread of Islam and a need for a standard writing system to better convey the language of the Qur'an and to facilitate administration in non-Arabic speaking areas.

[526] Sebba lists the following as the conventions of writing that inform the implementation and evolution of writing systems: the choice of which script to use (in the case of a multiplicity of available scripts in a society); the evolution of graphemes and the relationship between the "sound-character correspondences" (e.g., phonemes to graphemic units); how this correspondence is affected when there is a sound change, or shift in pronunciation based on the position of the characters in a word and/or fixed orthographies (e.g., *dʒ* can be represented in English as <j> when word initial [jab] but <dge> when word final [badge]; <sku:l> is written as school, not <skool> or <scool>); whether or not the vowel length is indicated in the orthographic system, and if so how this is done (e.g., the doubling of long vowels in Dutch [*haan* "cock"]); and the development of diacritics and other ways to mark the text to clarify the sound value (*é, è, â*, and *ç* in French) etc. (*Spelling and Society,* 29-30).

[527] The theory in this section is largely based upon Mark Sebba, "Iconisation, Attribution and Branding," *WL&L* 18:2 (2015), 208-227; "Orthography As Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power," in *Orthography As Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power.* Edited by A. Jaffe et al., (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 1-20.

speech and a social identity; human identity is multifaceted and a direct product of diverse socio-cultural roles. Rather, the indexicality of language, (i.e., "contextually bound meaning"), is understood to be "multimodal and multidimensional" and makes use of a range of strategies that include non-linguistic signals. As Mary Buchholtz writes, "In an indexical theory of style, the social meaning of linguistic forms is most fundamentally a matter not of social categories such as gender, ethnicity, age, of region but rather of subtler and more fleeting interactional moves through with speakers take stances, create, alignments, and construct personas."[528] Writing and scripts inform and are informed by a community of writers in the same way that spoken features of language index a speech community.[529] An approach that considers the "script-as-image," that is to say, writing as a semiotic system in and of itself, can be used to better understand group identities and linguistic ideologies.

Writing (which includes writing systems, scripts, and orthographies) is indexical just as spoken language. Mark Sebba identifies three principles from the study of spoken language and identity that can be applied to writing: attribution, iconization, and branding. Attribution is "the process whereby one group of people, A, make an association between a linguistic feature or language-related practice, X, and a group of people, B, who (supposedly) use that feature to engage in

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[528] For quote see Mary Bucholtz, "From Stance to Style. Gender, Interaction and Indexicality in Mexican Immigrant Youth Slang. Introduction: Indexicality and Identity in Sociolinguistics," in *Stance: sociolinguistic perspectives*. Edited by A. Jaffa (Oxford: Oxford University Press., 2009), 146; See also M. Silverstein, "Indexical Order and the Dialectics of Sociolinguistic Life," *Lang. Commun.* 23 (2003), 193-229.

[529] One such example is the "Egyptian" /g/ for ج as a marker of urban "Egyptian" identity in speech. In the Arabic script, however, this distinction is not seen in writing. However, it can be marked using the Latin script which has a distinction between j/g.

that practice."[530] The second process, iconization, draws from Judith Irvine and Susan Gal's work on ideology and linguistic differentiation. Iconization is "the transformation of a sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social image with which they are linked."[531] The feature(s) become associated with a group and then are attributed to qualities thought to define that group's character and identity. The third process, "branding," in the context of orthography is "a process whereby a specific visual graphical element of written language such as an alphabetic character becomes emblematic of a group of people who use that member in their writing practices."[532] A particular sign or "salient element" in the writing system is selected as a symbol of the group.

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[530] A feature of speech or writing is attributed to a specific group of people, though attribution is about perception, and may not be in accordance with "ascertainable facts," or it may be based on limited experiences with that group. Sebba cites the campaign to promote the vernacular writing of Haitian Creole in the 1940's, whereby the proposed orthographic update deviated from the traditional French orthographies. The new practice of using w, y, and k, was criticized by elites and those more sympathetic to Francophone influences as being "too American." Irvine and Gal describe the view of the association of /y/ with American spelling as an act of erasure, as this letter in truth is not unique to American English, and is actually quite prevalent in French orthography. This is an example of outside group making an assumption about what "French" versus "American" spelling practices are, and associating them with cultural values and practices. See Mark Sebba, "Iconisation," 209-211, for quote see 209; also Judith T. Irvine and Susan Gal, "Language ideology and linguistic differentiation," in *Regimes of Languages: Ideologies, Polities and Identities*. Edited by Paul Kroskrity (Oxford: James Currey, 2000).

[531] Cited in M. Sebba, "Iconisation," 212; for original quote see Judith T. Irvine and Susan Gal, "Language Ideology," 27.

[532] Sebba cites Jürgen Spitzmüller's work on German orthography, whereby the replacement of ß with /ss/ was lauded by those in favor of the German spelling reform of the 1990's, but rejected by those opposing the changes in orthography. Thus, "Germanness" is expressed in spelling, though as Sebba writes, to outsiders use of ß may not have such a connotation. On the other hand, the German umlaut, which is used by all writers of German and is not an ideologically charged symbol in the German speaking world, has become the salient marker of "German" writing to non-Germans. As Spitzmüller writes, the umlaut is seen outside of Germany as a marker of German identity. This is to the point that heavy metal groups seeking to enhance their image of Gothic Germanness use umlauts in the spelling of their band names, though in these contexts this diacritic serves no phonological function (e.g., Mötley Crüe). For a discussion see Sebba, "Iconisation," 210; for original publication and work on "Germanness" in writing see Jürgen Spitzmüller,

The iconicity of a script or writing system can have semiotic meaning that extends beyond the linguistic meaning of a text, and can be accessed even by those who are non-literate. For example, the use of cuneiform in Canaan in the LBA was not merely the borrowing of a writing system, but also had a range of symbolic, visual, non-linguistic, and linguistic meaning. A Canaano-Akkadian text was a status marker and symbol of the sender's elite status in the local community. It suggested that they had the means of hiring a scribe, and signified to the local audience that they were in direct contact with Egypt. This script was visually distinguishable from the local, emerging WS scripts, including alphabetic cuneiform; it was also visually divergent from written Egyptian. Though, to an untrained eye, it appeared to be written in the same language as the Egyptian Akkadian texts sent to the Levant and the script used by the larger international powers. In the development of the linear WS alphabetic scripts, we see the desire to employ a writing system at odds with that of a hegemonic or neighboring power (i.e., both Egyptian and cuneiform, which was associated with foreign powers).[533]

When an association is created between the graphemes and the visual esthetic of a writing system (or written language) and a particular socio-cultural or political group, the visible markings in and of themselves become icons of both the writing system and the group. They associate a text or written work with a specific group. Such *icons of difference* can in turn shape the identities of those

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"Floating Ideologies: Metamorphoses of graphic 'Germanness,'" in *Orthography As Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power*. Edited by A. Jaffe et al., (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 255-288.

[533] We also see how hegemonic powers, such as Egypt and Assyria were reticent to use their own scripts and written languages for administration in areas considered to be "foreign." Instead these two super-powers harnessed systems already in place in these regions, which were based on foreign scripts and languages (e.g., Canaano-Akkadian in the Egyptian controlled southern Levant in the LBA and Aramaic and the Aramaic script in the Iron Age by Assyria).

that use them.[534] In the case of Canaano-Akkadian, the use of anomalous orthographies, Canaanite forms, glosses, and local expressions led to the development of a differentiated written register of Akkadian; one that was less prestigious than MB. This evolution appears to have occurred at the beginning of the end of the MBA and continued throughout the LBA, as the last Canaano-Akkadian texts at Aphek date to about the late 13th century B.C.E. Use of Canaano-Akkadian was encouraged by Egypt, but this scribal system also appears to have operated as passive symbol of resistance. The Canaanite forms tend to occur in clusters in the letters where local rulers express their dissatisfaction with Egypt, a hegemonic power, whereas there is a tendency to revert to a more MB style when referring directly to the Pharaoh (see Chapters 7-8 for a discussion).

Use of Canaano-Akkadian outside of Canaan appears to relate to Egypt's hold in the region. For example, the presence of Canaano-Akkadian forms in the Akkadian produced in Alashia suggests that the local ruler and/his officials employed Canaano-Akkadian trained scribes because this scribal code was deemed appropriate for correspondence with Egypt. Moreover, the distribution of the various "dialects" represented in the Akkadian of Alashia (MB, Canaano-Akkadian, and Hurro-Akkadian) suggests that scribes were hired to write to polities that employed scribes trained in the same/similar scribal code. That is, the audience, too, informed the crafting of these letters. In a similar vein, Amurru Akkadian displays a shift from the "lesser" Akkadian used by Egypt's southern Levantine vassals, to an Akkadian more like Hatti and the peer polities of the period. The choice of

[534] Sebba, *Spelling and Society,* 131.

scribe and scribal system was not arbitrary, but appears to be a part of the diplomatic process. Polities used written language and different diplomatic codes to express allegiance and/or to distance themselves from the "great" powers of the period.

II. The Mixed Codes of the Amarna Letters: Canaano-Akkadian in Texts from Alashia and Amurru

A. Introduction

Canaano-Akkadian does not fit into the sociolinguistic *Sitz im Leben* expected for a spoken contact language.[535] That it, it was not used with Akkadian speakers—but in written exchanges with Egyptians. It was only used by a small group of scribes and officials trained in this writing system, and it was limited in use to a period when Egypt controlled the southern Levant and was the main power in the eastern Mediterranean.[536] Once we approach the unusual forms as a scribal code rather than the product of a spoken language contact situation, we are freed from the constraints of searching for an elusive community of speakers and can focus upon its development as a technology and system of written communication. Also, we can consider why it is that polities of Alashia and Amurru employed scribes trained in the Canaano-Akkadian tradition. This written code was used in areas under Egyptian control, and also served as a key part of diplomatic exchanges with polities on the borders of

[535] Indeed, the problematic sociolinguistic context of Canaano-Akkadian is what led von Dassow to develop her alternative "Canaanite in Cuneiform" theory. As she writes, "If it was not spoken, could Canaano-Akkadian have been a language invented for use in writing only? But again, who needed it, for communication with whom?" ("Canaanite in Cuneiform," 647).

[536] Andrason and Vita take a somewhat different approach that focuses on defining Canaano-Akkadian as a type of contact language, yet one in flux that was written and spoken by scribes in their professional work and inter-group communication ("From Glosses to the Linguistic Nature of Canaano-Akkadian," *Folia Orientalia* 51: 155–175).

Egypt's territories. These polities were interacting with multiple rulers (Egypt, Ugarit, Hatti), hence the multiple "codes" in the Akkadian of Alashia and Amurru. That is, the use of Canaano-Akkadian outside of Canaan demonstrates the impact of the geo-politics of the period on scribal conventions.

The two main arguments presented here are that the three "Akkadians" (Hurro-Akkadian, MB, and Canaano-Akkadian) in the Akkadian of Alashia evidences the presence of itinerant scribes hired to write to specific polities on the behalf of the King of Alashia. The presence of Canaano-Akkadian forms in the Akkadian of Alashia does not indicate that a new dialect of Akkadian was spoken on Cyprus, but that the local ruler hired specific scribes to write for specific audiences. Canaano-Akkadian and MB were the codes used to write to Egypt. The diachronic developments in Amurru away from Canaano-Akkadian to the scribal conventions employed in Hatti and Ugarit correspond to the period when Amurru broke away from Egypt and became aligned with Hatti. The Amurru Amarna Letters thus demonstrate a shift to a more Syro-Anatolian inspired Akkadian. Such shifts in the Akkadian of Alashia and Amurru are not indicative of changes in *spoken* linguistic practice, but attest to new orientations in *scribalism*.

The larger implications of this study are that Canaano-Akkadian was not a dialect, but a scribal code that was used outside of Canaan because it was deemed appropriate for communication with Egypt. Also, the language of the Amarna Letters was not just influenced by the training of the scribes, but also by the scribal conventions at the recipient court (i.e., the intended audience). This has implications for the analysis of the scribal map of the Levant during this period.

B. The Akkadian of Alashia

The following section will re-examine the Akkadian of Alashia as a reflection of the presence of cuneiform scribes with diverse scribal training. The Alashian corpus of Akkadian demonstrates that use of Canaano-Akkadian was not limited to Canaan, and thus "Canaano-Akkadian" may be a misnomer. It was used more widely as a part of Egyptian operations in the east, even in areas not traditionally inhabited by WS speakers. This demonstrates the use of Canaano-Akkadian as a scribal system, not a reflection of court dialects of Akkadian. Moreover, this corpus elucidates the role of scribes/literate officials as ambassadors in the Periphery during LBA, whereby itinerant scribes wrote for diverse polities. In particular, the distribution of the texts suggests that scribes trained in a particular tradition of cuneiform may have been hired to correspond with rulers in these same polities.

1. The Akkadian of Alashia: The Corpus

Zipporah Cochavi-Rainey adopts the traditional view of the Akkadian from Alashia as a range of Akkadian "dialects," comprising "mixed" Canaano-Akkadian forms, MB, Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian features, as well as Assyrianisms. However, when the tablet artifact is distanced from speech, this corpus demonstrates, rather, that the scribes working for the king of Alashia were trained in a range of scribal traditions.[537] At first glance the plethora of written "dialects" of Akkadian in this sub-corpus appear to be *ad hoc*—as if there were no set cuneiform tradition in the kingdom of Alashia and no logic behind which scribe was commissioned to write to which ruler. Upon closer scrutiny, the style

[537] See Cochavi-Rainey, *The Alashiya Texts*; Ibid., "Canaanite Influence in the Akkadian Texts," 39-46.

and language of each letter tends to correspond to the cuneiform culture of the scribes working for its intended audience. Overall, the scope and distribution of the cuneiform from Alashia suggests that scribes working for the King of Alashia may have served a dual purpose as cultural ambassadors, as the Akkadian that they used tends to correspond to the cultural horizon of the recipients of these letters. The cuneiform letters from this site are listed below as well as the system of classification presented in Cochavi-Rainey 2003.[538]

Table 13 The Alashian Amarna Letters

Letter	Destination	"Dialect" of Akkadian
EA 33	EG	Canaano-Akkadian
EA 34	EG	Canaano-Akkadian
EA 35	EG	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian
EA 36	EG	MB
EA 37	EG	MB
EA 38	EG	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian
EA 39	EG	Canaano-Akkadian
EA 40	EG	Canaano-Akkadian
RS 20.18	Ug	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian
RSL 1	Ug	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian

This grouping indicates that Egypt received four letters in Canaano-Akkadian, two in Hurro-Akkadian, and two in MB. As Egypt was a "Great Power," it appears that the scribes working at Tell el-'Amarna were assumed to understand all such letters. It is interesting that a slight majority are in Canaano-Akkadian (4:2:2); also, Canaano-Akkadian only appears in the letters intended for Egypt. Likewise the

[538] Cochavi-Rainey, *The Alashiya Texts*.

two “MB” letters, which are written in the register of Akkadian used by scribes working for Egypt, are both addressed to the Pharaoh.[539] The Hurro-Akkadian letters sent to Egypt suggests that it was known that Egypt was in active correspondence with scribes from Syro-Anatolia. The letters sent to Ugarit, a polity seeped in northern scribal culture, on the other hand, only feature “northern” Assyrian and Hurro-Akkadian features.

Although this corpus of texts is small, the style of the letters and their distribution is telling. The variation in orthography suggests that several scribes worked on behalf of the ruler of Alashia, including scribes from Canaan and Syro-Anatolia. The Canaano-Akkadian scribe working at Alashia appears to have been engaged for the specific purpose of writing with Egypt. Canaano-Akkadian served as a diplomatic code to communicate with Egypt outside of Canaan. The variable orthography in the Hurro-Akkadian letters may also be the product of writing for an Egyptian cuneiform audience, which would have been familiar with both northern and southern scribal traditions.[540] Scribes trained in the northern tradition were to some degree influenced by the scribal traditions operant in the southern Levant and Eastern Mediterranean. This phenomenon is seen in the Jerusalem Amarna

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[539] The MB features include use of PI for *pi* rather than *wv* or *yv* which is standard Canaan (e.g., line 15 has ⌜*pi*⌝-*ḫa-ti* and line 17 has *ina ṭup-ia*); see also a-*ma*[-*te*.MEŠ] for “word” vs. *awatu* in Canaano-Akkadian. The term *pīḫati* (in 36:15 ⌜*pi*⌝-*ḫa-ti ša ki-na-ḫi* “the province of Canaan”) is not used in the Periphery but is standard in MB. See Cochavi-Rainey, *The Alashiya Texts*, 23-25.

[540] Cochavi-Rainey classifies EA 35 and 38, which were written to Egypt, as Hurro-Akkadian. Though, these two letters display a mix of features that may reflect other scribal influences. She cites GA for *kà* (e.g., *a-ba-e-kà* “your father” in line 27 and *la-a ta-ša-kà-an* “don’t take it [to heart]”) as a northern sign use. In line 29, however, we see *lìb-bi-ka.* Also EA 38: 07 retains the inner-vocalic -*w*-, which is also a Canaano-Akkadian feature (*a-wa-ta*). This letter also has the MB form *a-ma-ta* in line 20. Lines 9/10 use what may be a Canaano-Akkadian orthography for the 1cs prefix, also the syntax is either VSO or the verb is fronted (*la-a i-pu-uš/ a-na-ku* “I did not do”). For the full analysis of these letters see Cochavi-Rainey, *The Alashiya Texts.*

Letters, which were written by a northern trained scribe working in the southern Levant.[541] The orthographies used in these letters were conditioned by the intended audiences of the letters, i.e., the scribes working at the other end of such exchanges.

There is evidence that the cuneiform produced at Alashia was seen as a scribal short hand and was expanded upon by the very messengers/scribes delivering them. EA 33 in particular has a few abbreviated orthographies that were considered sufficient for the scribe on the other end of the exchange to decipher their meaning. For example, the following logograms are treated as frozen forms (i.e., as collectives) in lines 5-6. They occur without a plural marker, yet from context it is clear that these nouns are to be read in the plural: [542]

Table 14 Short Hand Spellings in EA 33

EA 33 1-08	
01) ⌜*a*⌝-*na* LUGAL KUR *Mi-iṣ-ri* ŠEŠ-*i*⌜*a*⌝ 02) *um-ma* LUGAL KUR *A-la-ši-ia* ŠEŠ-*ka* 03) *a-na ia-ši šul-mu*—————————————— 04) *a-na maḫ-ri-ka lu-ú šul‹-mu›* 05) *a-na* É-*ka* DAM-*ka*$_4$ DUMU-*ka* 06) ⌜ANŠE⌝.KUR.RA-*ka* GIŠ.GIGIR-*ka* 07) ⌜*ù*⌝ *a-na lìb-bi* KUR-*ka* 08) [*ma*]-*gal lu šul-mu*	(1-8) To the king of the land of Egypt, my brother, thus the king of the land of Alashia your brother. It is well with me; may it be we‹ll ›with you. To your house, your wife(s), your son(s) your horse(s), your chariot(s) and throughout your country, may it be [ve]ry well.

The string of nouns is not followed by the MEŠ determinative, which is expected in such a context: É-*ka* DAM-*ka*$_4$ DUMU-*ka* ⌜ANŠE⌝.KUR.RA-*ka* GIŠ.GIGIR-*ka* ⌜*ù*⌝ *a-na lìb-bi* KUR-*ka* "(To) your house, your

[541] Moran, "The Syrian Scribe."

[542] This section of the message is a contained unit that is separated from the opening section of the introduction by a partial line divider; it is followed by another line divider between lines 8 and 9 that marks the transition in the text between this abbreviated formal greeting and the body of the letter.

wife(s), your son(s) your horse(s), your chariot(s) and throughout your country, may it be [ve]ry well." The abbreviated form of this formula thus appears to have been a part of the "code" between two scribes. The recipient of this text would have understood exactly what was intended and would have translated this part of the message more fully in the plural, which conformed to the etiquette of the period.

2. EA 33 and 34: Canaano-Akkadian in Alashia

The following list of Canaano-Akkadian features is limited to EA 33 and 34. It demonstrates how Canaano-Akkadian was used by the scribes working as intermediaries between the king of Alashia and Egypt. In the context of Alashian-Egypto relations, it appears to have been limited to a scribal code. It is highly unlikely that officials working for the court of the king of Alashia spoke Canaanite and/or a Canaanite dialect of Akkadian when they were dealing with Egypt. Canaano-Akkadian was associated with Egypt's eastern territories and most likely endorsed by the Egyptian administration. For this reason, it was also employed by polities working with Egypt that did not have a have a cuneiform scribal tradition of their own. The list of features below is not exhaustive, but is sufficient to demonstrate the range of scribal training in this corpus, which appears to be the work of itinerant scribes that were trained in the Canaano-Akkadian tradition and were hired by the ruler of Alashia to write to Egypt, or perhaps even by Egyptian administrators overseeing trade between these two polities.

a. EA 33: Orthography and Language

EA 33 (classified by Cochavi-Rainey as Canaano-Akkadian; destination Egypt):[543]

1. 33: 14: *ù iš-te-mé a-na-ku* "I have heard."

The verb is fronted or follows WS syntax which is VSO. This form follows Canaano-Akkadian orthography for the 1cs, which uses *i-*, whereas Akkadian uses *a-* (or *e-* depending on the verb). In Canaanite texts, weak verbs tend to be modeled on the Akakdian perfect, or according to Rainey, are treated as infix *-t-* verbs (as *šemû* is a III-w verb). The verb here is followed by the Akkadian 1cs independent pronoun *anāku*, whereas the Canaanite form **anōki* would have (presumably by this time) featured the Canaanite shift.

2. 33: 15, 17: *uš-ta-bar*[*-ra-*]*ku; u*]*š-te-bi-ra-ku-m*[*a*]

The verb features the 2ms affix *–ku*, which is used here as a dative suffix; this suggests that the ending was perceived as *kv*, as it appears as both*–ka* and *–ku* in the letters in this corpus.[544] The spelling of this ending does not seem to affect the meaning of the text. Again, such differences are not necessarily dialectal, as these letters were commissioned by a non-Akkadian speaking court, written by cuneiform scribes from diverse linguistic and scribal backgrounds, and upon delivery were communicated in Egyptian. This lack of concern for spelling supports the idea that orthography was not related to "speech" but operated as a scribal code that was understood by scribes working for Egypt and lesser polities in the eastern Mediterranean. Such inconsistencies in orthography are a by-product of

[543] This is drawn from the list provided in Cochavi-Rainey, *The Alashiya Texts*, 118-120.

[544] For example, EA 33, which has Canaano-Akkadian elements, features *–ku*; EA 34, which is in Canaano-Akkadian features *-ka* (*ut-ta-šir*$_9$*-ka* "I will send to you"); EA 35, which Cochavi-Rainey classifies as Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian, uses *–ku* (e.g., *ul-te-bi-la-ak-ku*).

divergent scribal traditions and a lack of concern with spelling, as these messages were contextualized by the messengers/officials that carried them, which may have even been the very scribes that wrote these missives. For example, some of the verbal forms in EA 33 are written in Canaano-Akkadian whereas others follow MB. EA 33: 26: [*u*]*š-ši‹-ir-›šu* is derived from the verbal root *wušuru* with the meaning "to send." This is a usage that is quite prevelant in the Canaano-Akkadian letters. EA 33, however, also uses Akkadian predicative forms, which include use of the suffix conjugation as a stative.[545] The predicative is also used as a past tense using the 1cs Akkadian suffix, as opposed to the Canaano-Akkadian form (*-ti*).[546]

b. EA 34 (Canaano-Akkadian; Egypt)

1. EA 34:7 *a-mur at-‹ta›* ŠEŠ-⌜*i*⌝[*a*] "Behold, you are my brother"

This imperative *amur* serves as an introductory particle to structure the context of the Canaanite Amarna Letters. It is also used this way in Egyptian Akkadian.[547]

2. EA 34: 9: *la-a tu-wa-ši-ra* "Why have you not sent (your envoy to me?)"[548]

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[545] EA 33: 10-11: *aš-ba-ta* UGU-li [GIŠ.G]U. ZA É *a-bi-ka* "you are seated on the [th]rone of the house of your father."

[546] EA 33:15-18: *ù uš-ta-bar*[*-ra-*]*ku* [*ši-ip*]*ra-ta 2 me* URUDU.*MEŠ* [*ù*]*u*]*š-te-bi-ra-ku-m*[*a*] [*1-en* G]Ú 10 GÚ.UN [URUDU DÙG] "And I transp[orted] to you [a sh]ipment of two hundred (talents) of copper [and I] transported to you [one lo]ad of ten talents of [fine copper])."

[547] A. F. Rainey, "The Imperative "See" as an Introductory Particle: An Egyptian—West Semitic Calque," in *Go to the Land I Will Show You: Studies in Honor of Dwight D. Young*. Edited by Joseph Coleson and Victor Mathews, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 309-316.

[548] Also in 47-48: *la-a tu-wa-ši-ru-ni* "why haven't you sent me?"

This line features use of the periphrastic dative (the final –*a* vowel). Moreover, retention of intervocalic -*w*- is a characteristic of Canaano-Akkadian, which preserves this archaic OB spelling.

3. EA 34: 11-12: *ša-ni-tam ù la-a iš-mé i-nu-ma ti-na-qú ni-qa-am ù la-a ti-*⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*kán*⌝ "Moreover, then I had not heard that you were making a celebration. So don't take it to heart. "

The word *šanitam* functions as an organizational particle here. It serves as such in OB, OA, and in the Canaanite Akkadian corpus; the form of the verb *iš-mé* is formally an Akkadian preterite, yet since it refers to a 1cs, it appears to be best analyzed as a Canaano-Akkadian 1cs form. In Canaano-Akkadian, *i-* is used to write the 1cs prefix, which appears to be used to mark the 1cs (which was *'aleph* in WS).[549] Again, such differences in orthography are reflections of how the scribe was trained. The original language of utterance here was not Semitic, but was most likely spoken in an elite court dialect of Alashia, or a dialect spoken in the copper rich region from which these letters were sent.

4. EA 34: 16-18 features use of both a finite verb (*ti-na-qú*) and the infinitive (*ni-qa-am*) of the same verbal root for emphasis.[550]

> EA 34: 16-18 CA *ù al-lu-ú ut-ta-šir*$_9$*-ka i-na qa-ti* LÚ DUMU *ši-ip‹ ri›-ia a-na ka-ta*$_5$ 1 *me* GÚ.UN URUDU.MEŠ "And behold, I have sent by the hand of my ambas‹sador› to you one hundred talents of copper."

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[549] Cochavi-Rainey proposes that the scribe using the Canaano-Akkadian 1cs orthography for the 1cs and the *yV*-Canaanite prefix to mark the 3rd person; she writes, "it seems that his use of the *i*- vowel reflects his Canaanite background" (*The Alashia Texts*, 90).

[550] The classic example from biblical Hebrew is in Gen 2:17:

ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

The particle *allu* is used as a presentation particle in Canaano-Akkadian texts. The syntax here is verb initial, which also conforms to Canaano-Akkadian. The verbs *ti-na-qú* and *ti-*⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*kán*⌝ feature use of the *ti-* performative to mark the 2ms, whereas the expected MB 2ms prefix is *ta-*. The use of the infinitive absolute as an emphatic, whereby the verbal root is echoed by the infinitive of the same verbal root in the accusative, is a rhetorical strategy that is common in WS and in Akkadian. Seeing the Canaanite training of the scribe, we can posit that this was a strategy derived from the scribe's WS background.

5. EA 18-19: *a-nu-ma ú-nu-tu*.MEŠ *yu-ba-al* LÚ DUMU *ši-ip-ri-ka*$_4$ "Moreover, so now the vessels that your envoy should bring…"

The verb here is 3ms; the affix *yV-* is characteristic of Canaano-Akkadian and occurs in opposition to *i-*, which marks the 1cs in Canaano-Akkadian. The verb is derived from the Akkadian verb *wabālu*, "to carry," but employs the Canaano-Akkadian affix *yV*. In this case, the form *yu-ba-al* is not an indicative (*yaqtulu* in Canaano-Akkadian), but follows the *yaqtul* pattern. This form functions either as a past tense, akin to the Akkadian preterite, or as a jussive. Since the context refers to the immediate future, we should then view this as a Canaano-Akkadian form that denotes a polite request ("may he bring").

6. 34: 27 KUŠ *i-ma-ru* "donkey hide"

Cochavi-Rainey marks this orthography as being "Assyrian," whereas the Babylonian term is *imēru.* However, may be more a reflection of scribal training than pronunciation; it is also possible that this was a learned spelling.

7. 34: 43-46 has two Canaano-Akkadian verbs.

ù LÚ.DUMU *ši-ip-‹ri›-ia a-na maḫ-ri-ka*$_4$ *yi-li-ku ù* LÚ.DUMU *ši-ip-ri-ka yi-⌜li⌝-ku* "and my envoy will go to you and your envoy will come to me."[551]

The final verb in this clause is Canaano-Akkadian, and is best analyzed as a *yaqtulu* form standing for the 3ms present/future indicative. The syntax here is not WS, but rather the verb is placed in the verb final position, the word order in Akkadian. This "shift" to a more conventional syntax appears to be a part of the rhetorical style. This break in narrative flow highlights the parallel structure in this phrase, and introduces a key section of the letter established the terms of the agreement between these two polities.

7. EA 34: 48-49: has both a Canaano-Akkadian verb and WS syntax: *ù ša te-ri-šu at-ta ù a-*[*na-k*]*u id-di-nu* "And that which you request, ⌜I⌝ will give."

In this clause, the first verb is fronted, or follows WS syntax; moreover, there is a stylistic use of the independent pronouns after the verb, which is a rhetorical device common in the Canaanite Amarna corpus, and serves as an emphatic. The verbs in this passage may be patterned after the form *yaqtulu*. Again, we see the *i-* to mark the 1cs (*id-di-nu* "I will give").

8. 34: 52-53 has a Canaano-Akkadian verb

i-nu-ma tu-ša-ab a-na GIŠ.GU.ZA *šàr-ru-⌜ta⌝-ka* "because you have sat on your royal throne"

The verb is pattered after the *yaqtul* preterite, though it can also be formally analyzed as an Akkadian preterite. The first classification is based on the assumption that there is an opposition in this text between the *yaqtulu/yaqtul* forms.

[551] The translation here has been slight modified from that in Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (1).

3. Scribal Errors

The orthographies presented above show a mix of Canaano-Akkadian and MB forms and demonstrate several shifts in the syntax of the letters. There are also numerous errors in the Alashia corpus that suggest that the phonology or precise orthography was not deemed important for communicative purposes.[552] They reflect a lack of concern with precise orthography and tend to be clustered towards the end of the lines. This suggests that some of the signs being omitted may have been left out due to a concern for space in the tablet line. Although, several "errors" are repeated several times, which suggests that they are not really errors but may be abbreviated spellings, or even Akkadograms.[553]

4. Epistolary Protocol

The range of formats and ways in which the scribes organized their texts attests to no one monolithic "Alashian" Akkadian, but rather to a diversity of traditions employed, which were

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[552] The following are the errors in this corpus: EA 33:04 *a-na maḫ-ri-ka lu-ú šul‹-mu›*; EA 33: 12 (error in Cochavi-Rainey page 8), [*ù u*]*š-te-bi-ir!*(*RI*)*-mi*; EA 33:26 [*u*]*š-ši‹-ir-›šu ki-ma* [*ar-ḫi-iš*]; EA33: 29-30 ⌜*li*⌝*-li-ki*(*sic!*)*; li-li-ki*(*sic!*)*-ma;* EA 33:30 [D]UMU *ši-ip-ri-ka-ma*!(IP); EA 33:31 ⌜MU⌝.KAMV MU.KAMV-*ma i‹-na› pa-ni-i*[*a*]; EA 33:32 *li-li-ki*(sic!)*-ma;* EA 34: 06 DAM.MEŠ-‹*ka*$_4$› ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ-‹*ka*$_4$›GIŠ.GIGIR-*ka*$_4$MEŠ; EA 34:07 KUR.KI-*ka*$_4$ *ma-gal lu-ú šal-mu a-mur at-‹ta›* ŠEŠ-⌜*i*⌝[*a*]; EA 34:17 *i-na qa-ti* LÚ DUMU *ši-ip‹-ri›-ia a-na ka-ta*$_5$; EA 34: 20 1-*en* ^{GIŠ}*er-šu* GIŠ.ESI GUŠKIN *šu-ḫa*!-*a ;* EA 34:44 LÚ.DUMU *ši-ip-‹ri›-ia a-na maḫ-ri-ka*$_4$; EA 35:03 [*a-na*] UGU-*ia šul-mu* É.MEŠ-*ia* DAM.‹MEŠ›-*ia*DUMU.MEŠ-*ia;* EA 35: 15 *ù* ŠEŠ-*ia i-na lìb-bi-ka la-a ‹i›-ša-ki-in;* EA 35:35 *a-ḫi i-na lìb-bi-ka la-a ‹i›-ša-ki-in ki-I;* EA 36:10 [*ma-l*]*a li-bi-ka* [*l*]*u-ú-še-‹bi›-la-ku* [. . .]; EA 37:06 [*a-n*]*a* DUMU-*e-šu a-na* ANŠE.KUR.RA‹-*šu*› GIŠ.G[IGIR]-*šu;* EA 37:07 ⌜*ù*⌝ *a-na lìb-bi* KUR-*i-šu dan-‹níš› lu-ú* [*šu*]-*ul-mu;* EA 38: 07-09 *am-mi-ni* ŠEŠ-*ia a-wa-ta an-ni-ta/ a-na ia-ši ta-qáb-bi šu-ú* ŠEŠ-*ia/ la-a i-de*$_4$-*šu a-wa-‹ta›-ma an-ni-ta la-a i-pu-uš;* EA 38: 27 ⌜*ša*⌝*-ni-tam a-i-‹ú›-tu*$_4$ *a-ba-e-kà a-na;* EA 38:29 *a-ma-‹ta› an-ni-ta ù i-na-an-na* ŠEŠ-*ia;* EA 40:04 *a-na* ⌜*ia*⌝(!)-[*ši*] *šul-mu;* EA 40: 06 ŠEŠ-‹*ia*› *a-na* [*m*]*aḫ-r*[*i* ⌜*šu-m*]*i-it-ti.*

[553] For example: EA33: 29-30 ⌜*li*⌝*-li-ki*(*sic!*)*; li-li-ki*(*sic!*)*-ma* and EA 33:32 *li-li-ki*(sic!)*-ma;* EA 34:17 *i-na qa-ti* LÚ DUMU *ši-ip‹-ri›-ia a-na ka-ta*$_5$ and EA 34:44 LÚ.DUMU *ši-ip-‹ri›-ia a-na maḫ-ri-ka*$_4$; A 35: 15 *ù* ŠEŠ-*ia i-na lìb-bi-ka la-a ‹i›-ša-ki-in* and EA 35:35 *a-ḫi i-na lìb-bi-ka la-a ‹i›-ša-ki-in ki-i;* EA 38:09 *la-a i-de*$_4$-*šu a-wa-‹ta›-ma an-ni-ta la-a i-pu-uš;* EA 38:29 *a-ma-‹ta› an-ni-ta ù i-na-an-na* ŠEŠ-*ia;* also note the omission or partial writing of pronominal endings in EA 34: 06 DAM.MEŠ-‹*ka*$_4$› ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ-‹*ka*$_4$› GIŠ.GIGIR-*ka*$_4$ MEŠ; EA 34:07 KUR.KI-*ka*$_4$ *ma-gal lu-ú šal-mu a-mur at-‹ta›* ŠEŠ-⌜*i*⌝[*a*]; EA 37:06 [*a-n*]*a* DUMU-*e-šu a-na* ANŠE.KUR.RA‹-*šu*› GIŠ.G[IGIR]-*šu;* EA 40: 06 ŠEŠ-‹*ia*› *a-na* [*m*]*aḫ-r*[*i*^{1}*Šu-m*]*i-it-ti.*

ultimately a reflection of the eclectic training of the scribes working for this polity. The following is a list of the cuneiform texts from Alashia, their destination, the respective scribal "dialect" of the tablet, as well as the classification of the introduction of the letters according the Mynarova's typology.[554]

Table 15 The Scribal "Dialects" of the Alashian Letters

Letter	Destination	Scribal Tradition (aka "dialect"	Mynarova Structure Type/Heading Type
EA 33	EG	Canaano-Akkadian	5/1 + line dividers
EA 34	EG	Canaano-Akkadian	3b/4
EA 35	EG	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian	2/2+ line dividers
EA 36	EG	MB	Broken
EA 37	EG	MB	5/2+ line dividers
EA 38	EG	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian	5/2
EA 39	EG	Canaano-Akkadian	5/2
EA 40	EG	Canaano-Akkadian	4/2+ line dividers
RS 20.18[555]	Ug	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian	11/5+ line dividers
RSL 1	Ug	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian	11/5+ line dividers

[554] Mynarova, *Language of Amarna*, 120.

[555] The two tablets from Ugarit are not included in Mynarova's study, yet I am classifying them according to her typology as Type 8, which comprises of (1) a heading, (2) salutation (2.iii) a greeting (inverted). The formula PN1 *ana* PN2 *qībi-ma* is prevalent in the texts from Ugarit. The second part, which comprises a simple greeting calling for the wellbeing of the addressee and not the sender, is similar to that employed at Ugarit and it is also attested in EA 41, a letter from Hatti. Heading type 5 is used at the Hittite materials (in particular the period of Hattusili III and Tudhaliya IV) and is also attested in the material from Ugarit. See Cochavi-Rainey, *The Alashiya Texts,* 114-115; Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 80-88; 112-113; 120-121.

There appears to be a less of a correlation between the protocol of the introductions and the variety of Akkadian used to write the body of the letters. The type of introduction used in these letters does not appear to be conditioned only by the language of the text (i.e., by the scribal tradition used), but also by the nature of the relationship between the sender and recipient. EA 34 is unique in the Amarna corpus as its structure best matches that in letters from Ugarit that date to the 13th century B.C.E.[556] Type 5, according to Mynarova's typology, is primarily found in the Amarna Letters from the Hurro-Akkadian tradition.[557] However, it also occurs in letters in the Alashia corpus that are not written in Hurro-Akkadian.[558] There is also some variation in the structures of the letters from Alashia, as 34 (Type 3B), EA 35 (Type 2), and EA 40 (Type 4) are unique in the Amarna corpus.[559] Again, we can attribute the use of a northern introduction to "cross-pollination" of scribal conventions; it may also be a reflection of the ambitions of the ruler of Alashia, who modeled his

[556] Mynarova proposes that his heading was used because the king of Alashia and Egypt considered one another peers See Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 120.

[557] It is only found in EA 17-21, 23, 26-29 from Mittani, EA 42 from Hatti, and EA 33, 37-39, and 41 from Alashia. Type 5 follows a structure used between peer-polities in the Periphery. This formula does not appear in Canaano-Akkadian, simply being that Canaanite polities were subordinate to Egypt and used more subservient language to begin their letters.

[558] For example, EA 33 and 39 are Canaano-Akkadian and EA 37 is classified as MB.

[559] In the Alashia corpus, line dividers are used in two-thirds of the letters (not in EA 34, 36, 38, or 39), of which 3 are in the Canaano-Akkadian continuum and EA 38 has Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian features.

letters after those of the greater powers of this period, thus we see the formulae as a form of elite emulation.[560]

5. Analysis from a Sociolinguistic Perspective

The lack of a cohesive cuneiform system at the king of Alashia's court indicates that there was no true "Alashian" scribal school, rather scribes from throughout the ANE were hired as needed. Cuneiform was not used internally on Cyprus; the scribal traditions of Egypt and Syro-Anatolia do not appear to have ever supplanted the Cypro-Minoan script. This "outside" writing system was used only for diplomacy, and is only attested in exchanges with Egypt and Ugarit. An alphabetic cuneiform text sent from Alashia to Ugarit to the king of Ugarit indicates that alphabetic cuneiform was produced at least by Ugaritic trained scribes on this island. There is no evidence, however, that it was ever used by the scribes working for the rulers of Alashia.[561] Furthermore, the petrographic analysis of the tablets from this site indicates that cuneiform scribal activity was actually not centered at Enkomi, but rather in the mountainous copper-rich eastern part of the island along the Trodos foothills. Goren, et al. proposes that Alashian Amarna Letters are either from Alassa or Kalavasos, which served as the nexus of the Cypriot copper industry during this period.[562]

The dearth of cuneiform from the administrative capital also suggests that the cuneiform

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[560] EA 39 has an ink hieratic inscription that marks the tablet as being from the "Letter of the great one of Alashia" (*šʿt n wr n ʾÀ-la-śa*), which suggests that he had a higher status than the Canaanite polities also corresponding with Egypt.

[561] Chronologically the Amarna Letters from this site fall during the reign of Akhenaten, whereas the two letters to Ugarit date to the 13th century B.C.E.

[562] Yuval Goren, Shlomo Bunimovitz, Israel Finkelstein, Nadav Na'Aman, "The Location of Alashiya: New Evidence from Petrographic Investigation of Alashiyan Tablets from El-Amarna and Ugarit," *AJA* 107:2 (2003), 233-255.

activity and underlying need for diplomacy was actually related to trade and the flow of copper to Egypt and Syria. It is quite possible that the scribes working as intermediaries between Egypt and Alashia, may have been commissioned not by the king of Alashia but rather by Egyptian emissaries. The use of Canaano-Akkadian in the Alashian Letters serves a similar purpose as the letters sent to Egypt from Canaan. Moreover, there appears to be a correlation between the use of cuneiform and Cyprus and Egypt's involvement in the region, in particular regarding the copper trade. As soon as the copper trade was disrupted and there was abatement in the flow of goods to Egypt, cuneiform ceased to be produced on Cyprus. In the subsequent period, the Phoenician alphabet gradually became the new script of maritime trade in the Mediterranean and was also adopted on Cyprus.

Cochavi-Rainey's work on the Akkadian produced at Alashia, when reevaluated using a sociolinguistic perspective, supports the model of Canaano-Akkadian as a scribal system rather than a spoken dialect. A number of these letters include WS syntax and forms that are only otherwise attested in the southern Levant, yet these letters were produced outside of the traditional territories of WS speakers. The use of diverse scribal conventions in this corpus also supports Vita's argument that the language of the Amarna Letters are a better representation of the language of the scribes than that of the rulers/polities that they represent.[563] If these letters reflected any spoken stratum of language, it was not that of the rulers or officials but rather a circumscribed scribal "language" that was used in diplomacy in the eastern Mediterranean. Also, it is noteworthy that Canaano-Akkadian was used as a medium to correspond with Egypt by groups outside of the southern Levant. This suggests that this

[563] Vita, "Scribes and Dialects," 863-894.

scribal code was deemed an appropriate medium for communication with Egyptian scribes even in areas not directly under Egyptian control. Rather than view this scribal system as the product of local Canaanite administrative efforts, it appears to have been imposed and/or borrowed from the outside, perhaps even as part of Egypt's overall strategy to ensure its economic agenda in this region.

C. The Akkadian of Amurru

The Akkadian of Amurru presents an interesting test case for the link between the geo-politics of the LBA and scribalism. Though the corpus of Akkadian texts from Amurru is small, there is a clear transition that occurs when the rulers of Amurru shift their allegiance from Egypt to Hatti. This impacted the "language" of the Amurru Amarna Letters, which challenges the view that Amurru Akkadian was a veritable court dialect of Akkadian. We would not expect a transition that spanned such a short period to so quickly impact the spoken dialect of Akkadian. But, this change in political orientation would (and did) have an impact on the scribal conventions used to communicate with foreign groups, in particular Egypt and Hatti, the great powers of the period. The analysis below includes a discussion of the petrography of the Amurru Amarna letters and a fresh analysis of their language, including a discussion of the different scribal hands.[564]

1. The Akkadian of Amurru: The Corpus

The Akkadian texts from Amurru are an ideal corpus for a controlled analysis of the evolution of scribal conventions in the face of dramatic political change in the LBA. This corpus includes letters

[564] See Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*.

to Egypt, Hatti, and Ugarit and spans several generations of rulers (about 150 years). The Amurru Amarna Letters are of particular interest, as they include letters sent to Egyptian officials and to Aziru and dignitaries stationed in Egypt.[565] Also, several letters in this corpus were sent from Ṣumur, which was an Egyptian center in the northern Levant during this period, as well as the capitals of Amurru. The diachronic changes in this corpus correlate with a political shift beginning in the reign of Aziru, whereby Amurru became increasingly allied with Hatti as opposed to Egypt. The Akkadian of Amurru in the list below includes the Amurru Amarna Letters and letters that post-date this period, which were sent to Hatti and Ugarit.[566]

As discussed above, the written texts of this period are better understood as a reflection of scribal conventions than of spoken language. This shift away from the Akkadian of the southern Levant to a register used by Amurru's new allies demonstrates a concern with using the appropriate "code" for communication. That is to say, the transition in the Akkadian of Amurru does not reflect a change in spoken language (i.e., in the Amurru "dialects" of Akkadian), but rather a change that affected the indexicality of the orthography and script during this period. Writing was key to diplomacy and it was affected by Amurru's changing political orientation. The officials working for Amurru employed scribal conventions that were like those used by their allies.[567]

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[565] EA 170 is unique as it is a "double letter" (i.e., a tablet containing two letters) that was sent to Aziru while he was in Egypt. The first and main letter, 170a, is sent from Ba'luya and Beti'ilu, his brother and son to Aziru; the second letter, 170b, is addressed to Rabi-ʾilu, ʿAbdi-URAŠ, Binana, and Rabiṣidqi from Amur-Baʿalu.

[566] The most comprehensive study of Amurru Akkadian is Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian*.

[567] It is also interesting that the correspondence with Ugarit, a WS speaking polity, was in Akkadian and

2. The Chronology

Shlomo Izre'el has done much to clarify the chronology of this period based upon the change that takes place in the Akkadian of Amurru.[568] The subgroupings below are derived from his comprehensive study of Amurru Akkadian, though he overly approaches this corpus from the standpoint of spoken language, which is problematic for this corpus. As he notes, there is an overall trend whereby scribes write increasingly like their counterparts in the northern Levant. This is in contrast to the texts dating to the reign of 'Abdi-Aširta, which are most akin to Canaano-Akkadian. The list below is adopted from that in Izre'el 1991. He first lists the letters chronologically, and then further divides the letters based on "dialectal" subgroupings within the Amurru Akkadian corpus reproduced below. The list below presents the letters chronologically moving vertically down the list (early>late); the linguistic groupings are separated by a tab (e.g., EA 60 and 371 belong to one grouping; EA 61-62 to another).[569]

Table 16 The Chronology of the Akkadian of Amurru

Ruler	Letters (clustered according to Izre'el's linguistic groupings)	
'Abdi-Aširta:	[EA 60, 371	EA 61-62]
Aziru:	[EA 156-158, 171 EA 170]	
	[EA 169]	
	[EA 159-161; 164-168]	
	[RS 20.33	RS 19.68]

Mesopotamian cuneiform rather than WS or the cuneiform alphabet. There was a strict adherence to Akkadian as the written script and language of diplomacy, whereas it is most likely that the actual face-to-face diplomacy between these two polities would have been conducted in a shared language/dialect of WS.

[568] Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian.*

[569] In this grouping, EA 60 and 371 are considered to be in a different "dialect" than EA 61-62 as they contain more Canaano-Akkadian forms.

Ir(i)tešub:	[RS 15.24+] [RA 16.111	[RS 16.146+] RA 17.152; OA 23]
Pendišenni:	[Boghazköy Letters]	
Šauškamuwa:	[RS 17.116] [RS 17.228] [RS 17.286] [RS 17.318+] [RS 17.372A+]	
Post- Šauškamuwa:	[RS 20.162]	

The early letters dating to 'Abdi-Aširta's reign are the most influenced by Canaano-Akkadian. As the corpus progresses diachronically, there is an influx in Assyrian forms that are also attested in the Akkadian of Hatti and Ugarit. This may be a reflection of Assyria's rise in power during this period. The discussion below will begin with an analysis of the word order, followed by use of epistolary formulae, and then end with an overall assessment of the linguistic features in the letters.

3. Word Order in Amurru Akkadian

Thomas J. Finley demonstrated a correlation between the shift in word order in the Akkadian of Amurru and this polity's change of allegiance from Egypt to Hatti. He observed that the early letters are VSO (Verb, Subject, Object [Adjunct]), which is the word order of Canaano-Akkadian and is reflective of the WS substratum, to SOV, which is standard in Akkadian and the word order used in the northern Levant and the rest of the Periphery. Finley concluded that the verbal clauses are consistently VSO in the Amarna Letters from the southern Levant, and at times VSO (+A when there is

an adjunct clause). On occasion the subject or object is fronted before the verb in the Canaanite Letters, but they do not both occur before the verb.[570] Conversely, in the northern Levant, the word order is SOV, which, interestingly, is not attested in the letters from the south, even those that contain MB forms. The corpus from Amurru appears to be between these two poles. The early letters conform to the word order of WS used in Canaano-Akkadian, the letters dating to Aziru reflect a word order in flux, and those after Aziru's reign and Amurru's alliance with Hatti consistently follow SOV word order.

In Finley's study of the letters from the southern Levant, he concluded that the language of the introductions conformed to that in the northern Levant (i.e., followed the formulaic language of standard Akkadian), whereas the word order in the body of the letters was "innovative" and the product of "contact with languages which were spoken in southern areas."[571] We thus have a demarcation in the Akkadian of these two regions. The letters in the northern and southern Periphery both used formulae in the introductions that were conservative, in the sense that they appear to have followed established protocols. The bodies of the messages, however, are more telling of the scribal conventions employed in these two geo-political areas. Polities under Egyptian control, which includes several letters from Amurru (dating to 'Abdi-Aširta) and EA 96, a letter from the Egyptian garrison at Ṣumur, employ a register of Akkadian that differed from that employed by polities in the

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[570] Thomas J. Finley, *Word Order and Clause Structure of Syrian Akkadian* (Ph. D Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1979), 73.

[571] Finley, *Word Order,* 74.

northern Levant, which were more closely allied with Hatti. The one exception is the word order in the introduction of the letters from both the northern and southern Levant, which followed a different set of conventions that adhered overwhelmingly to the orthography and word order in MB.

Finley's work provides a useful starting point for an evolution of the scribal school/traditions in this region, as he first observed that the "early" letters in this corpus, i.e., those associated with 'Abdi-Aširta, tend to use VSO word order, which is that used in Canaano-Akkadian.[572]

Table 17 VSO Word Order in EA 62

EA 62: 13-16[573]	
13) *ù*⌉[***in-n***]***é-ri***-⌜***ir***⌉ ⌜*a*⌉-⌜*na*⌉-⌜*ku*⌉ *iš-tu* ⌜URU⌉ ⌜*Ir*⌉-[*qat*]⌜ KI⌉ 14) ⌜*ù*⌉ ⌜***ak***⌉-⌜***šu***⌉-[***ud***]-*ma* ⌜*a*⌉-⌜*na*⌉-⌜*ku*⌉ ⌜URU⌉ ⌜*Ṣu*⌉-*mu-ri*⌜ KI⌉ 15) ⌜*ù*⌉ ***u!-uš***[-***te-ṣí***-]***ka*** ⌜*iš*⌉-⌜*tu*⌉ UZU.ŠU-*ti* 16) ÉRIN.MEŠ URU ⌜*Še*⌉-[*eḫ*]-⌜*la*⌉-[*li*]⌜ KI⌉	"But I was called out from the city of 'Ir[qat] and I reached the city of Ṣumur and I brou[ght] you out of the hand of the troops of the city of Sheḫlali."

The order in lines 13, 14, and 15 is verb initial, as in Canaano-Akkadian and WS.

Table 18 VSO Word Order in EA 60

EA 60: 13-32	
13) ⌜KUR⌉.⌜ḪI.A⌉ LUGAL *a-nu-ma gáb-bi* 14) LUGAL.[ḪI].A *ša* LUGAL ERÍN.MEŠ *Ḫur-ri* 15) ***tu***-⌜***ba***⌉-***ú-ni***$_7$ KUR.[ḪI].A 16) ⌜***a***⌉-***na ḫa-ba-lì*** *iš*-⌜*tu*⌉	(13-19) Now all the kings of the king of the Hurrian host are seeking to confiscate the lands from my control and from the control of [the commissioner] of the king, [my] lord,

[572] Ibid., 75-94.

[573] Though I am drawing my analysis from Finley, the transliterations and translations are derived from Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (1), 2014, which is based on a more recent collation of the Amurru Letters. For example, Finley reconstructed the verb as [*a*]*ban*[*nīm*]*a* following Knudtzon's 1915 transliteration, whereas Rainey has ⌜*ak*⌉-⌜*šu*⌉-[*ud*]-*ma* (Ibid., 76-77; Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (*1*), EA 62).

17) [Š]U-⌜*i*⌝*a ù* ŠU [LÚ.MÁŠKIM] 18) [*š*]*a* LUGAL EN-[*ia ù*] 19) **[*a-n*]*a-ṣa*-⌜*ar*⌝-*š*[*u-nu a-mur*]** 20) [^{l}*Pa-ḫ*]*a-na*-⌜*te*⌝ *i*[*t-ti-ka*] Rev. 21) **⌜*yi*⌝-⌜*iš*⌝-*al-šu*** LUGAL ^{d}[UT]U-[*ia*] 22) *šum-ma la* ***a-na-ṣa-ar*** 23) URU *Ṣu-mu-ri* URU *Ul-la*-⌜*sà*⌝ 24) *i-nu-ma* LÚ.MÁŠKIM-*ia* 25) *i-na ši-pir*$_{6}$*-ti* LUGAL ^{d}UTU 26) *ù a-na-ku* ŠE.KIN.KU$_{5}$ ŠE.ḪI.A 27) *ša* URU *Ṣu-mur ù gáb-bi* 28) KUR.ḪI.A *a-na* LUGAL ^{d}UTU-*ia* 29) EN-*ia* ***a-na-ṣa-ar-šu*** 30) *ù* LUGAL EN-[*i*]*a* ***lu-ú yi-da-an-ni*** 31) *ù* ***yi-ip*-⌜*qí*⌝-*id-ni*** *a-na* ŠU 32) ^{l}*Pa-ḫa-na-te* LÚ.MÁŠKIM-*ia*	[but I] am guarding th[em.] (19-29) [Look, Paḥ]a(m)nate is w[ith you]; may the king, my sun god, ask him if I am not guarding the city of Ṣumur and the city of Ullassa while my commissioner is on a mission of the king, my lord. And I am guarding the barley harvest of the city of Ṣumur and all the territories of the king, my sun god, my lord. (30-32) So may the king, my lord, recognize me (officially) and assign me to the jurisdiction of Paḥa(m)nate, my commissioner

EA 60 features the fronting of the subject or object, though the base word order is VSO. This strategy is also seen in the Canaano-Akkadian letters where it serves as an emphatic. For example, the first clause features the fronting of the object, which is then followed by the subject. The following verbal clause comprises a verb followed by an infinitive; this is then followed by an adjunct adverbial clause (OSVA):

> ⌜KUR⌝.⌜ḪI.A⌝ LUGAL *a-nu-ma gáb-bi*/ LUGAL.[ḪI].A *ša* LUGAL ERÍN.MEŠ *Ḫur-ri*/ ***tu*-⌜*ba*⌝-*ú-ni*$_{7}$** KUR.[ḪI].A/ ⌜***a***⌝-***na ḫa-ba-lù*** *iš*-⌜*tu*⌝. [Š]U-⌜*i*⌝*a* "Now all the kings of the king of the Hurrian host are seeking to confiscate the lands from my control…"

Lines 26-30 feature the order SOAV:

> *ù a-na-ku* ŠE.KIN.KU$_{5}$ ŠE.ḪI.A/ *ša* URU *Ṣu-mur ù gáb-bi*/ KUR.ḪI.A *a-na* LUGAL ^{d}UTU-*ia*/ EN-*ia* ***a-na-ṣa-ar-šu*** "And I am guarding the barley harvest of the city of Ṣumur and all the territories of the king, my sun god, my lord."
>
> We see SV in line 30: *ù* LUGAL EN-[*i*]*a* ***lu-ú yi-da-an-ni*** "So may the king my lord recognize me

(officially)."

Departures from VSO order in the Canaanite letters seem to serve as a means of focusing sections of the sentence. Finley notes about 10% of the verbal clauses begin with the adjunct phrase. For example, in EA 287: 51-52, the imperative occurs after a temporal clause; in a parallel phrase an adverbial clause ends the sentence, thus functioning as a bookend to 'Abdi-Ḫeba's request: [MU] *an-ni-ta* ***mu-še-ra-an-ni*** LÚ *ma-ṣar-ta/* [*ù* LÚ] MÁŠKIM *šàr-ri* ***mu-še-ra*** *an-ni-ka-nu* "This [year] send me a garrison [and] a royal commissioner send here." The word order here is AVO/OVA, a structure that serves to emphasize 'Abdi-Ḫeba's desire for a more visible Egyptian presence in the region.

The only letter that deviates from the basic VSO order of the Canaanite Letters is RS 11.370 (PRU 3:12=11.730), a letter that was sent from Beirut to Ugarit. The letter features SOV word order and MB orthography that aligns it with "northern" Akkadian.[574]

Table 19 SOV Word Order in RS 11.370

Akkadian	Translation
māruya anumma mār šipriya an[*nū*] [No verb] *aššum epēši ṣabūtiya ašrānu ina libbi mātika* ***altaparšu*** **[OAV]** *u atta māruya īnēka damqūta ana muḫḫišu* ***šukun*** **[SOAV]**	"My son, now this is my messenger. I have sent him to carry out my desires in your land. So you, my son, take good care of him [idiom: "place your good eyes towards him"]"

The word order is consistently verb final, and the letter reflects the *št>lt* shift characteristic of MB; also the 1cs pronominal affix in ***altaparšu*** conforms to that in Akkadian which features initial *a-*, whereas in Canaano-Akkadian *i-* is used to indicate the *aleph* of the 1cs, and is in opposition to *yV-*which is used for the 3ms/p.

[574] The above passage is from Finley's work, though the verbs are marked in bold (*Word Order,* 73).

Finley noted a transition in the letters from the reign of Aziru to use of both VSO and SOV word order. He saw "[m]uch greater 'freedom' of word order for the relative positions of subject, object, and verb," and also a predominance of SOV order (of 129 clauses he cites 71% SOV; 9 with complete SOV, 3 of which were OSV).[575] The following demonstrates the use of both southern and northern word order.

Table 20 VSO and SOV Word Order in EA 161

EA 161: 23-25; 41-43 (Aziru to the Pharaoh)	
23) ⌜ANŠE⌝.KUR.RA.MEŠ ANŠE.MEŠ ***at-ta-din*** 24) [*a*]-⌜*na*⌝ KASKAL-*ni-šu ù* LUGAL EN-*ia* 25) ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝-⌜*te*⌝.MEŠ-*ia* ⌜***li***⌝-***iš-mé***	"I provided horses and asses for his journey. So may the king, my lord, heed my words."
41) *ù* EN-*ia* ***lu-ú i-de***$_4$ *i-nu-ma* 42) BAR-*šu-nu ša ú-nu-te.*MEŠ *ša* ***id-din*** 43) LUGAL EN-*ia* ^{1}*Ḫa-ti-ip* ***i-le***-⌜***eq***⌝-***qè***	"And may my lord be apprised that Ḥatip is taking half of the things that the king, my lord has given (to me)."

In the above example, lines in 23-25 feature both the use of a word order common in Canaano-Akkadian (OVA) and the traditional SOV order of Akkadian. It is noteworthy that the phrase referring to the Pharaoh (lines 24b-25) transitions to the 'higher" register of Akkadian, which is SOV (*ù* LUGAL EN-*ia* ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝-⌜*te*⌝.MEŠ-*ia* ⌜*li*⌝-*iš-mé*). In lines 41-43, the first clause referring to the Pharaoh is SVO, and contains a dependent clause (i.e., "may he know that…"); the dependent clause, which is structured as follows, comprises two relative clauses: 1) *i-nu-ma* BAR-*šu-nu ša ú-nu-te.*MEŠ *ša id-din* LUGAL EN-*ia* "that half of the things that my lord gave me" is OVSA 2) ^{1}*Ḫa-ti-ip i-le-*⌜*eq*⌝-*qè* "Ḥatip is taking" is O (the previous clause) SV.

[575] Finley, *Word Order,* 80.

Of the Aziru-era letters, EA 158 and 170 were more prone towards SOV order. EA 158 has 13 SOV clauses and one that is VO; 6 are SV, and contain an independent pronoun. EA 170 has 14 SOV clauses. The clay of EA 158 was not tested, but EA 170 was written at Irqata (Tell 'Arqa), which became Aziru's capital.[576] EA 170 is the double letter between members of the Amurru court (Aziru's brother and son) and Aziru while he was in Egypt as well as several Amurru elites. Interestingly, this letter is not written in the Akkadian of Amurru, *per se*, but contains a Hurrian gloss. For this reason, Izre'el proposes that it was written by a scribe of Hurrian, or northern background.[577] This may explain the predominance of SOV word order in this letter, even though it was written as a communiqué between WS speakers, who presumably spoke the same or similar dialects. Vita attributes this letter to "Scribe 6" who wrote EA 169, which was also from this site and was sent by Beti-ili (or DU-Teššup).[578] The letters sent to Ugarit show SOV order; of 30 verbal clauses, all show O/S before the verb. Of the adjunct clauses, 26/33 precede the verb. The main order in this corpus is SOV, which corresponds to the Akkadian used in the northern Periphery. [579] The one example of an object following a verb is in a letter that quotes from a previous letter from Ugarit: PRU 4 180:10=RS 17.286: *leqaššunu ana muḫḫiya* "Bring them to me." This may be an authentic citation, or it may be a shift to WS syntax triggered by

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[576] Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 114-115; Y. Goren, I. Finkelstein, and N. Na'aman, "The Expansion of the Kingdom of Amurru according to the Petrographic Investigation of the Amarna Tablets," *BASOR* 329 (2003), 1-11.

[577] S. Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 55-60; 371-372.

[578] J-P. Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 121-123.

[579] Finley, *Word Order,* 86-87.

the context of an interaction with another WS ruler.[580] The "General's" Letter demonstrates two main orders SOAV and VSOA, the second of which, Finley views to have an "emphatic" meaning.[581]

Finley concludes that there is a diachronic transition in the word order in the Akkadian letters from Amurru. As he writes,

> "In the earliest period the letters from Amurru are aligned with the southern Amarna [i.e., Canaanite] letters with respect to word order. In the latest period they are aligned with the northern area…Looking at all of the twenty-two letters which can be assigned to Amurru, the main historical event which separates them is the switch from Egyptian to Hittite allegiance under Aziru. When Amurru oriented towards Egypt, the word order structure of the letter was southern. When that orientation was redirected towards the Hittites in the north, a linguistic change in the direction of northern word order started. By the period of Ammistamru II of Ugarit that change was apparently complete."[582]

Letters from the period of 'Abdi-Aširta follow VSO word order, whereas the letters from the reign of Aziru reflect an "intermediary stage" whereby both VSO and SOV word order were used. The later texts from Amurru feature SOV word order and the adjunct phrases can be to the right or left of the verb. Finley describes the variety in word order in terms of dialect geography and not scribal training: "Apparently the geographically intermediate position of Amurru led to a situation where both SOV and VSO were unmarked or base orders. As least there is considerably more 'freedom' of word order than for its neighbors to the north or south." As will be discussed, such shifts are better attributed to a change in scribal conventions as a by-product of a change in political orientation.

Amurru Akkadian proves particularly interesting as it demonstrates a shift in the Akkadian

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[580] Ibid., 88.

[581] Ibid., 82.

[582] Ibid., 94.

produced for these rulers that can be dated to specific geo-politics developments. The earliest letters that date to the reign of ʻAbdi-Aširta do not feature the standard Akkadian order SOV that becomes normative in the later texts from Amurru. The letters from the reign of Aziru, on the other hand, demonstrate a transition to conventions more like those used in the northern Levant. The letters at the tail-end of this corpus are most like the Akkadian employed at Ugarit and Hatti.[583]

This observation has radical implications for how to understand the language of this corpus, and moreover, how to approach Canaano-Akkadian. The correlation between the geo-politics of this period and evolution of Canaano-Akkadian has, for the most part, been overlooked in scholarship, as has the indexicality of the varieties of cuneiform produced in the ancient Near East during this period. Producing texts in the style of a Canaanite vassal as opposed to one of the great powers, such as Egypt, or in the case of Amurru, Hatti, would have had a different political meaning. Writing like a super-power could be construed as an act of allegiance. In a similar vein, the rejection of a script or scribal tradition too had meaning. It is no coincidence that Amurru transitioned away from Canaano-Akkadian—the scribal system associated with WS groups subservient to Egypt— and gravitated towards a scribal system akin to that used by Hatti, its new overlord.

It is also important to keep in mind that spoken languages are less impacted by political changes than writing systems, in particular, those dependent upon institutions. A sociolinguistic approach which considers the ways in which writing, too, is an act of identity best explains the correlation between the scribal and political changes in Amurru. The span from the reign of ʻAbdi-

[583] Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 379-386.

Aširta to Aziru was less than a generation. Rather than posit the demise of a community of Canaano-Akkadian speakers or a reform in the *spoken* language of the Amurru court, it appears that there was a change in the community of *writers* and diplomatic protocols. Quite simply, Amurru reoriented its scribal apparatus to be more like Hatti and the powers of the north.

4. The Introductions in the Amurru Amarna Letters

The shift in Aziru's letters also corresponds to a change in the introductory formulae, which further aligned this corpus with the letters from the "greater" powers of the ancient Near East (e.g., Egypt, Babylonian; Assyria and Mitanni etc.) as well as the more autonomous, smaller polities from the northern Levant. The letters below include a wish for the well-being of the recipient, a formula that is used in the Syro-Anatolia. This suggests that the epistolary protocols, too, shifted during the reign of Aziru from the style employed by Egypt's vassals to that used by Hatti and peer polities in this region.[584] The table below lists the Amarna Letters from Amurru according to Mynarova's typology for the introductions of the letters.

Table 21 The Introductions of the Amurru Amarna Letters

Reign	Type	EA
'Abdi-Aširta	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	60, 61-62
'Abdi-Aširta	*Introduction is broken	371
Aziru	Type 13: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration; 2. iii) greetings (inverted).	158
Aziru	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	156-157, 159, 160-161; 164-165, 168, 171

[584] Finley, *Word Order,* 34-35; 49-51; 80; Sally Ahl, *Epistolary Texts from Ugarit: Structural and Lexical Correspondence* in *Epistles* in *Akkadian and Ugaritic* (Brandeis University; unpublished PhD dissertation, 1973); Mynarova, *Language of Amarna.*

Aziru	Type 9: 9: 1) heading; 2) salutatinos2; 2. iii) greetings (inverted) 2. iv) extended greetings.	166
Aziru	Introductions are broken	167, 169
Aziru	Type: 8: 1) heading; 2) salutations 2:iii) greetings (inverted)	170a/b

Type 12a occurs in 70% of the Amarna Letters. In the Amurru letters it occurs in both letters from 'Abdi-Aširta and the majority of letters from Aziru's reign.[585] This formula is not typical in the letters from the "greater" powers, rather the majority of the letters with this opening are from the southern Levant. This may be a reflection of the lower status of Canaanite polities and Amurru who were corresponding with Egypt, a greater power. The divergent letters that do not make use of this type of introduction, EA 158, 166, and 170a/b, are those sent to peers and lesser dignitaries. Overall, the formulaic language in these letters draws upon that employed in the northern Levant. It is tempting to see the transition away from Canaano-Akkadian and the protocols for communication with Egypt as politically motivated, perhaps even as a reflection of Aziru's impatience with the Pharaoh's criticism and lack-luster support.[586]

[585] Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 105-106.

[586] By the same token EA 164: 39-40, a letter of Aziru, alludes to the religious reform in Egypt as a means of in-grouping with an Egyptian official. The writing ^{d}A appears to be a reference to the deity Aten. This letter reflects a period when Aziru was still courting Egypt. See Giorgio Buccellati, *Aten in Amurru?"* in *Leggo! Studies Presented to Frederick Mario Fales on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*. Edited by Giovnni B. Lafranchi et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 95-98.

EA 158 corresponds to Type 13: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration; 2. iii) greetings (inverted).

Table 22 the Introduction of EA 158

EA 158: ‘Aziru of Amurru to Tutu (clay not examined)	
01) *a-na* [1]*Tù-ú-tù* EN-*ia a-bi-i*[*a*] 02) *um-ma* [1]*A-zi-ri* DUMU-*ka* ÌR-*ka*[-*ma*] 03) *a-na* GÌR.MEŠ *a-bi-ia am-qut* 04) *a-na muḫ-ḫi a-bi-ia lu-ú šul-mu*	To Tutu, my lord, my father; the message of Aziru, your son, your servant: At the feet of my lord have I fallen. May it be well with my father.

The only other letter with this type of introduction in the Amarna corpus is EA 48, which is a letter from the Queen of Ugarit to the Queen of Egypt.[587] As Mynarova writes, the social relationship between the sender and sendee may be the reason for this type of introduction. In EA 48, it is possible that the two queens corresponded in friendly, less formal terms than the official letters of state sent between their male counterparts. Aziru appears to have an established relationship with Tutu, which may have warranted this type of more intimate salutation.

EA 166 is the only letter classified as type 9: 1) heading; 2) salutatinos2; 2. iii) greetings (inverted) 2. iv) extended greetings.[588]

Table 23 The Introduction to EA 166

EA 166 Aziru to the Pharaoh (Ṣumur)[589]	
01) [*a*-]⌜*na*⌝ [1]*Ḫa*-⌜*a*⌝-*i* ŠEŠ-*ia* 02) *um-ma* [1]*A-zi-ri* ŠEŠ-*ka-ma*	[T]o Ḫaʿi, my brother, the message of Aziru, your brother: May it be well with you and with the

[587] Mynarova, *Language of Amarna*, 107.

[588] Ibid., 104.

[589] Goren et al., 108-111.

03) *a-na* UGU-*ka lu-ú šul-mu* 04) *ù iš-tu* ÉRIN.MEŠ *ṣa-bi pí-ṭá-te* 05) *ša* LUGAL EN-*ia ma-gal lu-ú šul-mu*	troops of the regular army of the king, my lord, may it be very well indeed.

As Mynarova observes, the omission of the prostration formula, which was a breach in protocol is unusual, and may even have been deliberate. As she writes,

> If letter EA 166 was written in and sent from this Egyptian centre (Ṣumur), it could only have happened after the seizure of the city by Aziru and his allies. Could the position of Aziru, after the conquest of Ṣumur, be strong enough to show his self-confidence by means of an omission of a symbol of subordination, i.e., the prostration formula?[590]

In light of the general transition in the Amurru corpus away from the scribal conventions of the southern Levant this omission does appears to be act of defiance.[591]

EA 170a/b is classified as type 8: 1) heading; 2) salutations 2:iii) greetings (inverted). The only other letter in the Amarna corpus with this heading is EA 44, which is a letter from Hatti to the Pharaoh.[592] This letter also includes a Hurrian gloss and other features that led Izre'el to identify the writer as being written by Hurrian or, at the very least, a Hurrian influenced scribe.[593]

Table 24 EA 170a/b: A Composite Letter

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[590] Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 149-150; quote on 149.

[591] EA 252, the "biting" ant letter from Shechem also deviates from protocol. It appears that this was an intentional strategy to voice opposition to Egypt.

[592] Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 103-104.

[593] The gloss is the among the more compelling evidence that this was written by a scribe trained in the north, perhaps a Hurrian speaker: EA 170:1: *ù pa-ni-šu-nu ṣa-bat* \\ *zu-zi-la-ma-an* "(Our lord, whenever you are able,) meet with them." See Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 55-60; 371-372.

EA 170a/b[594] Baʿluya and Beti-ili to Aziru; Amur-Baʿalu to Rabi-ʾilu, ʿAbdi-URAŠ, Binana and Rabiṣidqi.	
01) *a-na* LUGAL EN-*ni* 02) *um-ma* ^{Id}IŠKUR-*lu-ia ù um-ma* 03) ^{I}*Be-ti*-DINGIR *a-na* GÌR.MEŠ EN-*ni ni-am-qut* 04) *a-na muḫ-ḫi* EN-*ni lu-ú šul-mu* 05) *ù an-na- kam*V *iš-tu* KUR.MEŠ-*šu* 06) *ša* EN-*ni dan-níš šul-mu*	(1-6) To the king, our lord, the message of Baʿluya and the message of Beti-ili: at the feet of our lord, have we fallen. May it be well with our lord. And here from the lands of our lord, it is very well.
36) *a-na* ^{I}GAL.DINGIR *ù* ^{I}ÌR-^{d}URAŠ 37) *a-na* IDUMU-*a-na ù* ^{I}GAL-*ṣí-id-*⌜*qi*⌝ 38) *um-ma* ^{I}*A-mur*-^{d}IŠKUR 39) *a-na muḫ-ḫi-ku-nu lu-ú šul-mu*	(36-44) To Rabi-ʾilu and ʿAbdi-URAŠ, to Binana and Rabiṣidqi, the message of Amur-Baʿalu: May it be well with you. Do not make your hearts sick and don't take anything to heart. And here with your households it is very well.

As the only other letter with this type of introduction is a letter from Hatti, is does appear that the "northern" aspects, including the gloss, are reflective of a gradual transition away from the cuneiform of Egypt's eastern territories.[595]

Of the Amurru Amarna Letters, the lack of prostration formula in EA 158 (Type 13:1) and 166 (Type 9:9) is unusual. EA 158 reads: "To Tutu, my lord, my father; the message of Aziru, your son, your servant: At the feet of my lord have I fallen. May it be well with my father;" EA 166 reads "[T]o Ḫaʿi, my brother, the message of Aziru, your brother: May it be well with you and with the troops of the regular army of the king, my lord, may it be very well indeed." This may reflect a more informal relationship with these officials, as in the case of EA 170a/b, which also has a slightly less deferential introduction.

5. The Language and Orthography of Amurru Akkadian

[594] Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay*, 114.

[595] Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 104.

a. The Evolution of Amurru Akkadian

The Amurru corpus has traditionally been analyzed as a spoken linguistic system, rather than a reflection of scribal conventions, which were in a state of flux.[596] The approach here contends that such developments should be examined first from the perspective of scribal training and writing systems. The "shift" in forms was not a reflection of a change in the speech of the scribes, but rather a change in the scribal system and/or in the scribes hired by Amurru. This was a result of the change in audience from Egypt to northern polities, in particular Hatti. That is to say, it is unlikely that the actual spoken languages of Amurru changed during this period. Rather, as demonstrated by the correlation between the shift in audience (Egypt>Hatti) and the shift in scribal system (Canaano-Akkadian>MB), the scribes wrote in a manner more akin to that of their audience.[597]

b. Assyrianisms in Amurru Akkadian

Amurru's political rapprochement to Hatti began in Aziru's reign and continued into later periods. Pendišenni's trip to Hatti appears to have been a watershed moment. This period corresponds to an influx of Hittite influence at the court of Amurru and northern scribal conventions

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[596] For example, Izre'el's study of Amurru Akkadian is grounded in the understanding that each of the dialects in this linguistic system was a "(once-) living language with a definable coherent structure, where, like any other linguistic entity, its components, either the spoken or the written ones, are formal symbols of units of meaning" (*Amurru Akkadian,* 13).

[597] Izre'el describes the lexicon of Amurru Akkadian to be derived primarily from Babylonian, which included lexemes and forms that are only attested in Old Akkadian or OB (e.g., *anumm*a "now" in EA 158:10, *na'arruru* "to rush to help" in EA 62:14, which is also seen in OB texts from Mari). Also, Amurru Akkadian texts have forms that are not used in MB but occur in the Periphery as retentions from an older phase of Akkadian, for example, *assurri* "heaven forbid" (EA 165:20); *inūma* "when, that" versus *enūma*; *kīam* "thus" (EA 157:25) versus *kâm*; *pānānu* "formally" (EA 157:9); and *qadu* "with" (EA 371: 22) (*Amurru Akkadian,* 356).

in the Akkadian of Amurru.[598] For example, Izre'el cites a lone Assyrianism from the "early" corpus dating to Aziru's reign, but numerous Assyrianisms in the Akkadian from a later period.[599] After Aziru's shift of allegiance to Hatti, the northern forms are much more pronounced. This suggests that closer diplomatic relations with Hatti had ramifications for the scribal apparatus at Amurru as well. Pendišenni's visit to appears to have been a watershed moment in diplomacy between these two polities, one that ushered in the influx of northern orthographies in the Akkadian of Amurru.[600]

b. The "Canaanite-style" Amurru Letters: EA 60 and 371

The early letters from Amurru, EA 60 and 371 and 61-62 are written in a Canaano-Akkadian style. Of these, EA 60 and 371 (though the later is somewhat fragmented) best reflect the period when Amurru was still subject to Egypt. The subsequent shift away from Canaano-Akkadian corresponds to Amurru's increasing defiance against Egypt's dictates.[601] Overall, the Canaano-Akkadian forms in these letters disappear in the texts from Amurru after the reign of 'Abdi-Aširta, which suggests that there

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[598] Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 359.

[599] For example, RS 19.68: 21, a letter to Ugarit that dates to this later period, features the Assyrian orthography *eppaš* "he will do." The Assyrianisms in the letters to Ugarit are best understood in light of the closer relationship between these two polities. This text is a treaty between Aziru and Niqmaddu II. As Izre'el suggests, this letter is influence by the scribal conventions at Ugarit (*Amurru Akkadian,* 364).

[600] The following examples are from Pendišenni's letters from Hatti: the lengthening of the *a* vowel in *idabbubāšu* "he will speak to him;" use of the infinitive *aṣā'i* "to go out;" and also the orthography of *ušebbalšunu* "I will go out to him;" the use of the adverbs *ummā* "thus" and *akanna* "thus" (Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 359). The texts in this corpus that date to the reign of Šauškamuwa (and perhaps just after, e.g., RS. 20.162), contain an influx of Assyrian verbal forms. The following are Assyrian forms: *ippaš* "he will make;" *iqabbiū* "they will say;' *ila"ēšu* "it will overcome;" the 3fs independent pronoun *šīt* "she;" and *ma-* as the quotative particle (Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian:* 360). Some of the Assyrian forms in RS 20.162, which is the last text in the Amurru corpus, are quite striking. For example, *aqṭibi* "I said," shows the partial assimilation of a dental to an emphatic (*qt>qṭ*) (Ibid. *Amurru Akkadian,* 359-360; 385-386).

[601] Ibid., 260.

was a change in scribe and/or in the scribal schools working for this polity.[602] EA 60 is quite interesting, as the Canaano-Akkadian features are clustered predominantly in the second half of the letter.

Table 25 Canaano-Akkadian Forms in EA 60

EA 60	Translation[603]
01) [*a-n*]*a* ˡLUGAL ᵈUTU EN-*ia* 02) ⌜*um*⌝-*ma* ˡÌR-ᵈ*Aš-ra-tu*4 03) [Ì]R-*ka*$_4$ *ep-ri ša* GÌR.ḪI.A[*k*]*a*$_4$ 04) [*a-n*]*a* GÌR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN [*ia*] 05) 7-*šu ù* 7-*šu am-qut*	(1-5) [T]o the king, the sun god, my lord, the message of ʻAbdi-Ashratu your [ser]vant, the dirt under your feet: [a]t the feet of the king, my lord, seven times and seven times have I fallen.
06) *a-mur a-na-ku* ÌR LUGAL *ù* 07) UR.GI$_7$ *ša* É-*šu ù* 08) KUR A-*mur-ri gáb-ba-šu* 09) *a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia a-na-ṣa-ar-šu* 10) *aq-bi aš-ta-ni a-na* ˡ*Pa-ḫa-na-te* 11) LÚ.MÁŠKIM-*ia le-qa-mi* 12) ERÍN.MEŠ *til-la-tì a-na na-ṣa-ri*	(6-13a) Look, I am the servant of the king and the hound of his household and I guard the land of Amurru in its entirety for the king, my lord. I have said repeatedly to Paḥa(m)nate, my commissioner, "Bring auxiliary troops to protect the lands of the king."
13) ⌜KUR⌝.⌜ḪI.A⌝ LUGAL *a-nu-ma gáb-bi* 14) LUGAL.[ḪI].A *ša* LUGAL ERÍN.MEŠ *Ḫur-ri* 15) *tu-*⌜*ba*⌝-*ú-ni*$_7$ KUR.[ḪI].A 16) ⌜*a*⌝-*na ḫa-ba-lì iš-*⌜*tu*⌝ 17) [Š]U-⌜*i*⌝*a ù* ŠU [LÚ.MÁŠKIM] 18) [*š*]*a* LUGAL EN-[*ia ù*]	(13b-19) Now all the kings of the king of the Hurrian host are seeking to confiscate the lands from my control and from the control of [the commissioner] of the king,[my] lord, [but I] am guarding th[em.]
19) [*a-n*]*a-ṣa-*⌜*ar*⌝-*š*[*u-nu a-mur*] 20) [ˡ*Pa-ḫ*]*a-na-*⌜*te*⌝ *i*[*t-ti-ka*]	(19-29) [Look, Paḥ]a(m)nate is w[ith you]; may the king, my sun god, ask him if I am not guarding the

[602] For example, these two letters make use of the long conjugation prefix *yaqtulu* rather than *iparras* to mark the indicative: EA 60: 30-31 *lu-ú yi-da-an-ni ù yi-ip -*⌜*qí-id-ni* "So may the king, my lord, recognize me (officially) and assign me (to the jurisdiction of Paḥa(m)nate, my commissioner)." Still, the verbal affixes are written using a mix of standard Akkadian and Canaano-Akkadian orthographies.[602] For example, the 1cs in these two letters is written with an initial *a-*, whereas in Canaano-Akkadian it is *i-* (e.g., EA 60:09 *a-na-ṣa-ar-šu* "I am guarding it;" 371: 12 *a-na-ṣa-*⌜*ar*⌝-*šu-nu* "I am guarding them;" 60: 10 *aq-bi aš-ta-ni* "I repeatedly said"); the 3ms prefix is *yV-* as it is in Canaano-Akkadian, whereas in Akkadian from Mesopotamia and the rest of the Periphery it is is *i-* (e.g., EA 60: 30-31 *lu-ú yi-da-an-ni*/ *ù yi-ip-*⌜*qí*⌝-*id-ni* "may he recognize me and appoint me;" EA 371: 34 *yi-iṣ-bat* "he captured"). The 3mp prefix is *ti-* which is also attested in the Canaanite Amarna Letters, though the ending is *–ūni*, which is not in Canaano-Akkadian, which has *–ū*(*na*) as the 3mp ending. The sketch of the language of these letters draws from Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian*260-262; the examples are from Rainey, 140-141.

[603] The transliteration and translation are derived from Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (1).

21) ⌜*yi*⌝-⌜*iš*⌝-*al-šu* LUGAL ^{d}[UT]U-[*ia*] 22) *šum-ma la a-na-ṣa-ar* 23) URU *Ṣu-mu-ri* URU *Ul-la-*⌜*sà*⌝ 24) *i-nu-ma* LÚ.MÁŠKIM-*ia* 25) *i-na ši-pir*$_6$*-ti* LUGAL ^{d}UTU 26) *ù a-na-ku* ŠE.KIN.KU$_5$ ŠE.ḪI.A 27) *ša* URU *Ṣu-mur ù gáb-bi* 28) KUR.ḪI.A *a-na* LUGAL ^{d}UTU-*ia* 29) EN-*ia a-na-ṣa-ar-šu* 30) *ù* LUGAL EN-[*i*]*a lu-ú yi-da-an-ni* 31) *ù yi-ip-*⌜*qí*⌝-*id-ni a-na* ŠU 32) ^{I}*Pa-ḫa-na-te* LÚ.MÁŠKIM-*ia*	city of Ṣumur and the city of Ullassa while my commissioner is on a mission of the king, my lord. And I am guarding the barley harvest of the city of Ṣumur and all the territories of the king, my sun god, my lord. (30-32) So may the king, my lord, recognize me (officially) and assign me to the jurisdiction of Paḥa(m)nate, my commissioner.

The language of the introduction conforms to MB. The name here is in the nominative case, whereas in EA63 it is treated as a genitive (⌜⌝ÌR-*A-ši-*⌜*ir*⌝-*ti*$_7$ ÌR[-*ka*$_4$]). The verb *am-qut* is in a verb final position and is a 1cs Akkadian preterite. Izre'el views the language in lines 6-19 as comparable to the other Amurru texts from this early period.[604] The form *aq-bi* is an Akkadian 1cs preterite; paired with *aš-ta-ni*, it forms a hendiadys.[605] The form *le-qa-mi* is a 2ms imperative; the ending –*a* is similar to that in Canaano-Akkadian. The final –*a* vowels are interpreted as ventives or as a reflection of the WS volitive –*a* ending, an interpretation favored by Rainey.[606] The form *tu-*⌜*ba*⌝-*ú-ni*$_7$ makes use of the 3mp ending –*ūni*, and use of the *t*- prefix for a mp subject, which is standard in Amurru Akkadian. The word order is not SOV, but tends towards VSO order. In lines 13b-17, the subject is fronted and the verb

[604] Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 261.

[605] Ibid., 271-272.

[606] As Rainey notes, the appearance of this –*a* vowel in EA 147:36 *ku-na* ("prepare,"), which is a WS imperative suggests that this is most likely a WS feature that denotes modality (WS *yaqtula*), akin to the cohortative in later Hebrew. See CAT II, 255-265; 266.

precedes the object and adjunct clause to SVOA. Lines 19-32 mark a clear shift to Canaano-Akkadian orthography and word order. The following verbs make use of the 3ms prefix *yV-* seen in the Canaanite letters, also these verbs are *yaqtul* jussives: ⌜*yi*⌝-⌜*iš*⌝-*al-šu*, *yi-da-an-ni,* and *yi-ip*-⌜*qí*⌝-*id-ni.* EA 371 features use of the Canaano-Akkadian suffix conjugation.

Table 26 Canaano-Akkadian in EA 371

25) [*šum-ma ul*] *en-né-ri-ir* 26) [*a-na-ku*]*qa-du* GIŠ.GIGIR.ḪI.A-*i*⌜*a*⌝ 27) [*qa-du* ÉRIN.MEŠ-]⌜*i*⌝*a ù ša-ar-pu* 28) [URU.KI *ù* É.GAL-]*ši ù ma-aḫ-ṣú-ni*$_7$ 29) [*gáb-ba* LÚ.MEŠ] *ša i-na lìb-bi* É-*ti*	[If I had not] come to (their) aid [myself] together with my chariots (and) [together with] my [infantry] then they would have burnt [the city and]its [palace] and they would have smitten [all of the men] who were within the house (palace)

This letter features the 3mp ending *–ūni,* which is attested in the other texts from Amurru. It occurs in the prefix conjugation in line 21 *ti-iṣ-ba-tu-ni*$_7$ "they captured" and in the suffix conjugation in line 28 as *ù ma-aḫ-ṣú-ni*$_7$ "they would have smitten." Line 27 features *ša-ar-pu* "they would have burned," which has*–ū,* which is also used in Canaano-Akkadian as the 3mp verbal suffix.[607] The forms *ša-ar-pu* and *ma-aḫ-ṣú-ni*$_7$ are 3mp suffix forms that denote events in the past, though *ša-ar-pu* appears to be a stative set in opposition to *ma-aḫ-ṣú-ni*$_7$, which is an active verb.[608] Also, both verbs are fronted by *u*, in a way similar to use of this conjunction in Canaano-Akkadian, which, as Izre'el notes, is well

[607] Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 260.

[608] Izre'el describes the evolution of *–ūni*(*m*) as the ventive enclitic *–ni*(*m*) losing its semantic meaning, and becoming associated with the 3mp pronominal ending *–ū*. We can reconstruct the following progression: *-ū+nim*> *-ū+ni*(*m*)> *-ūni* (Ibid., 137-140).

attested in the Amarna Letters from Byblos.[609] The word order in EA 371 is VSO and follows that of WS, which is also characteristic of the Canaano-Akkadian corpus.

c. EA 61 and 62

EA 61 and 62 are grouped together, as they also contain Canaano-Akkadian features, though to a somewhat lesser degree.[610] This gradual transition is reflective of a souring of the relations between Egypt and Amurru. EA 61 is broken but features Canaano-Akkadian characteristics (e.g., *a-*⌜*wa*⌝*-ta*$_5$ *li-*⌜*te*⌝[*-ra*] "may he send word" displays the final *–a* of the volitive and the retention of the intervocalic *–w-* which becomes *–m-* after Aziru's reign). EA 62 makes use of VSO word order (e.g., 62: 21-23 ⌜⌜*ù*⌝ ⌜*i*⌝*-nu-ma in-né-ri-ir a-na-ku*/ *iš-tu* URU *Ir-qat*⌜KI⌝ *ù ak-*⌜*šu*⌝*-*⌜*ud*⌝*-m*[*i*] ⌜*a*⌝*-na-ku*/ *i-na* URU *Ṣu-mu-ri*[KI] "But when I was called out from the city of 'Irqat and I reached the city of Ṣumur..." The WS verb *kazābu* "to lie" in line 39 ⌜*i*⌝*-*⌜*ka*⌝*-*⌜*az*⌝*-zi-bu-ni*$_7$.[611]

The shift in the language of the letters dating to 'Abdi-Aširta's reign suggests that, at first, the scribes hired by Amurru were trained in Canaano-Akkadian, as this was the epistolary register used by Egypt's eastern vassals. As Amurru emerges as a growing regional power, the local administration threw off the proverbial yoke of Egyptian influence and became more oriented towards the north. As a result, they increasingly used the scribal conventions of the northern Levant.

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[609] Ibid., 219-220; 260-262.

[610] As Izre'el writes, "The more we advance in time, the lesser is WS interference." He distinguishes between the "lexical interference, syntactic and phonological traits," which are the shallow features of language that are easiest to influence, and morphology, which is a deeper structure in a linguistic system. EA 60 and 371 demonstrate the later influence and a greater degree of interference, whereas EA 61-62 show interference at a more shallow level (*Amurru Akkadian,* 380).

[611] Ibid., 381-383.

6. **The Petrography of the Amurru Amarna Letters: Evidence for Amurru's Emergence as a Regional Power**

Recent analysis of the clays of the Amurru letters have elucidated the chronology of this corpus and the events narrated therein. It has also shed light upon the transition from the southern scribal conventions to those of the northern polities.[612] The clays in the letters fall into four groups: EA 60 ('Abdi-Aširta) and 157 (Aziru) from the mountains east of Tripoli (ancient Ullasa?); EA 61-61 (Aziru) and 156 and 159 (Aziru) were sent from Ardata (Tell Ardeh); EA 161, 164, and 171 (Aziru), 169 (Ba 'alu), 170a/b (Ba'luya and Bet-ili) were sent from Irqata (Tell 'Arqa); EA 165, 166 and 167 (Aziru) were sent from the Egyptian garrison at Ṣumur (Tell Kazel).[613] From this distribution, it appears that Amurru was originally a small kingdom in the mountains east of Tripoli that expanded north, as eventually Ardata was taken over and became the capital. Aziru moved his power base to Irqata, which was his main base until his death. The three letters sent from Ṣumur (EA 165-167) were addressed to the Pharaoh and to Egyptian officials governing in the region, most likely in the context of face-to-face meetings.[614] Two other letters from the Amarna corpus corroborate Ṣumur's role as a hub of diplomacy and a scribal center. EA 96 is a letter from an Egyptian official to Rib-Adda; EA 103 is a letter from Rib-Adda to the Pharaoh, both of which were composed at this site.[615]

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[612] Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 101-155; Goren et al., "The Expansion of the Kingdom of Amurru," 1-11.

[613] Ibid., 5-8.

[614] Ibid., 8-9.

[615] Ibid., 7.

7. The Shifting Amurru Akkadian Code: Scribal Conventions and Geo-politics

When the shift in the introductions in the Amurru Akkadian letters is compounded with the change in word order and evidence of a shift in the orthography and influx in northern Akkadian forms (in particular Assyrianisms), it does appear there was an overall rejection and/or abandonment of Canaano-Akkadian.[616] This appears to have been a result of the iconization of scribal traditions during this period. That is, Canaano-Akkadian was associated with subservient, WS areas under Egyptian control in the Levant. Whereas, the new scribal conventions employed during the reign of Aziru, and increasingly in the later periods, oriented Amurru with powers such as Hatti and Ugarit.[617]

This divergence may be a reflection of the overall transition in the language and orthography away from the Akkadian of the south. As Izre'el notes, EA 158 and 170 show SOV word order, which was that used in MB and in the northern Levant, whereas in the south the order is VSO.[618] That is to say, when these letters are evaluated within the political context of Amurru's emergence as a regional power, it does appears that the changes in scribal conventions were not happenstance, but were in part a product of the move away from Egypt. Rather than view the spoken languages of the scribes to have changed dramatically as the consequence of political events in Amurru, we should consider the

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[616] Mario Liverani, "Social Implications in the Politics of Abdi-Ashirta of Amurru," in *Three Amarna Essays*. Translated by Martin L. Jaffe. Monographs on the Ancient Near East 1/5 (Malibu: Undena, 1979), 14-20.

[617] For example, EA 158 and 170 do not use the introduction (Type 12a), which was standard in the southern Levant to address a greater power.

[618] Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 348-349.

change to be one of scribal conventions and a reflection of the indexicality of writing. The shift away from Canaano-Akkadian to a more northern orthography and/or set of scribal conventions was not reflective of a change in spoken language *per se*, but reflected a reform of sorts. Scribes working for Amurru needed to communicate more efficiently with a new political apparatus. Aziru either employed scribes trained in the northern tradition, or the scribes working for Amurru adopted scribal conventions more like their new audience. Ultimately, the correlation between the dearth of Canaano-Akkadian forms in the Amurru corpus after this political move away from Egypt suggests that use of Canaano-Akkadian was tied to dealings with Egypt. This is also supported by EA 96, a letter written at the Egyptian base at Ṣumur in Canaano-Akkadian to Rib-Adda from an Egyptian official, which will be examined in the following section.

We thus see a change in the type of scribe hired to write on behalf of these polities.[619] This suggests that Aziru and the royal family were unable and/or unwilling to hire the Canaano-Akkadian trained scribes that were used during ʻAbdi-Aširta's reign. We thus see a transition away from Canaano-Akkadian, the code used in the southern Levant to write to Egypt, to northern scribal

[619] J-P Vita's study of the scribes writing the Amurru Amarna Letters suggests that there was a transition in the scribal apparatus working for Amurru. He assigns EA 170 to scribe 6, which is the same scribe credited with writing EA 169, both of which are from Irqata, Aziru's new capital city. EA 169 is a letter from Beti'ilu, Azuru's son, to Tutu, an Egyptian official. This letter, like EA 170, is written when Aziru was in Egypt. Izre'el proposes that the scribe that wrote EA 170a/b to be of northern, and perhaps Hurrian origin, but does not consider EA 169 to have these features, which would imply that these were not written by the same scribe. This letter features use of both –*VwV*- and –*VmV*- (e.g., EA 169: 13 *la tù-wa-aḫ-ḫi-ir-šu* and 22 *ú-wa-šar-šu*, yet in line 17 *a-ma-te.*MEŠ), which reflects a transition in the scribal system. The letters from ʻAbdi-Aširta's reign only feature –*VwV*-, whereas the letters from Aziru's reign show a growing preference for –*VmV*—(e.g, EA 61: 8 *a-*⌜*wa*⌝*-ta*$_5$ and EA 62: 33 *ú-wi-i-mi* versus RS. 20.162: 26 *ú-maš-šar* and RS. 17.286 *um-ta-šir*$_9$*-šunu*). EA 158 is the only letter assigned to scribe 5, which suggests perhaps that Aziru commissioned a new scribe to write this letter (*Canaanite Scribes*, 15-20; 122-123) See also Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay:* 124 and Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 42-42; 55-60; 371-372.

conventions. The scribes working for Amurru thus adapted to the geo-political climate. During Aziru's reign Amurru was still subject to Egypt, yet increasingly under the sway of Hatti.[620] In this backdrop, the move to MB forms akin to those produced by Amurru's new allies was indicative of a general overhaul of the scribal system in Amurru.

8. The Scribes of Amurru

The following table provides an updated assessment of the scribes working for Amurru and delineates the transition from the scribal conventions of the southern Levant to those oriented more towards Hatti and other polities in the north.[621] The letters are placed in order of their chronology; those that share linguistic/scribal features are placed in the same table.

Table 27 The Scribes of the Letters of Amurru

EA	Scribe	Provenience	Introduction	Ruler
60	1	Mountains east of Tripoli	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	'Abdi-Aširta
371	1	?	*Introduction is broken	'Abdi-Aširta
61	2	Ardata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	'Abdi-Aširta
62	2	Ardata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	'Abdi-Aširta
EA	Scribe	Provenience	Introduction	Ruler

[620] M. Liverani, "Aziru, Servant of Two Masters," In *Myth and Politics in Ancient Near Eastern Historiography.* Edited and introduction by Zainab Bahrani and Marc van de Mieroop (Ithaca: Cornell University Press; London: Equinox, 2004), 125-146.

[621]The table above synthesizes Izre'el's work on the language of this corpus, the provenience of the letters, and Vita's recent study of the paleography of the letters, and Mynarova's study of the introduction of the letters (Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 370; Vita, *Canaanite Scribes;* Mynarova*, Language of Amarna*).

156	3	Ardata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
157	3	Mountains east of Tripoli	12a: 1) heading;2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
158	5 (?)	?	Type 13: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration; 2. iii) greetings (inverted).	Aziru
171		Irqata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru

170a/b	6	Irqata	Type: 8: 1) heading; 2) salutations 2:iii) greetings (inverted)	Aziru[622]

EA	Scribe	Provenience	Introduction	Ruler
169	6	Irqata	Introduction is broken	Aziru (sent from Beti-Ili or DU-Teššup)

EA	Scribe	Provenience	Introduction	Ruler
159	3	Ardata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
160	3	?	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
161	3	Irqata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
164	3	Irqata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
165	4	Ṣumur	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
166	3	Ṣumur	Type 9: 9: 1) heading; 2) salutatinos 2; 2. iii) greetings (inverted) 2. iv) extended greetings.	Aziru
167	3 (?)	Ṣumur	Introduction is broken	Aziru
168	4 (?)	Gaza	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru

[622] This is the famous "double letter" of the Amarna corpus; 170a is addressed from Baʿluya and Beti-ili to Aziru; letter 170b is addressed from Amur-Baʿalu to Rabi-ʾilu, ʿAbdi-URAŠ, Binana and Rabiṣidqi).

a. The Scribes Writing for Amurru

The paleography of EA 60 and 371 and EA 61-62 suggest that they are the work of two different scribes, which accords with the difference in the language of these letters.[623] There were, at the very least, two scribes were working contemporaneously for ʻAbdi-Aširta.[624] Based on the above analysis of the language of these letters, Scribe 1 (of EA 371) was trained according to Canaano-Akkadian conventions, whereas Scribe 2 (EA 62) was less influenced by Canaano-Akkadian.

EA 156-157, 159, 161, and 164-168 appear as the work of multiple scribes that worked contemporaneously for Aziru.[625] EA 161 and 164-168, too, use a more *plene* spelling, which may add to the argument that these were written by the same scribe, or scribes trained in a similar manner.[626] EA 158 and 171 share a similar script and writing of AM, and both retain the intervocalic –*w*- in *awatu*.[627]

EA 169 and 170 present an interesting conundrum, as Vita views their script and paleography to be identical, and the work of the same scribes. Izre'el, however, points out that the language of these letters is different as EA 170 has Hurrian elements, whereas EA 169 is more similar to the rest of

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[623] Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 260-262; Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 17.

[624] Vita considers EA 62 and 371 to have been written at the same time, as they both concern ʻAbdi-Aširta's claim that he intervened militarily to protect Ṣumur from the army of Sheḫlali (*Canaanite Scribes,* 17-18).

[625] These letters are grouped together as the work of scribes with the same training. Some key paleographic characteristics include use of an "upward tip" in the sign NA and two upward tips in preposition *i-na* but only one in *a-na*. See Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 18; Pl. V.

[626] Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 383.

[627] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 18-19.

the Amurru corpus. Both letters were sent from Irqata, which suggests a similar scribe or scribal school.[628] The differences in EA 169 and 170, however, may also be a reflection of their respective audiences. EA 170 is addressed to Aziru and Amurru officials (i.e., members of their group), whereas EA 169 is written to the Pharaoh, which would have occasioned a higher register of Akkadian.

b. The Amurru Letters Written At Egyptian Centers (Gaza and Ṣumur)

The petrographic analysis of the Amurru Akkadian letters reveals that several were written at Egyptian centers. EA 168 was written at Gaza, whereas EA 165-167 were written at *Ṣumur*. A similar phenomenon is evidenced in the southern Levant, where a number of Canaano-Akkadian letters were written at the Egyptian centers of Gaza and Beth-Shean.

EA 168, the only Amurru Amarna Letter not produced in the northern Levant, appears to have been written at Gaza, most likely during Aziru's trip to the Egyptian court.[629] Unfortunately, this letter is severely fragmented and does not contain much material for linguistic analysis. The form ⌜*li*⌝-*ma-lik-ku* features a doubling of the final root consonant that is well attested in Amurru Akkadian. Such consonantal doubling is seen as a scribal convention used to mark a long vowel.[630] This exact spelling

[628] Izre'el suggests that these letters were written contemporaneously, though by two scribes. He cites the writing of EN-*lí* (EA 169:15; 170:6), *ša-ni-tam* (Ea 169: 16; 170:14); and the two forms of NA used in *i-na* and *a-na* (compare EA 169: 13 and 16 and EA 170: 12 and 29). Itamar Singer suggests that the scribes at Tunip may have written letters for the kings of Amurru, which would result in a Hurrian-style Akkadian in the Amurru corpus ("A Concise History of Amurru," in *Amurru Akkadian:* 372; 383-384). See also Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 129-132.

[629] Ibid., 62-63; 113; 139; 147-148; Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 15-20; 147.

[630] Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 372; 383-384.

of *malāku*, with a doubling of the third radical is also attested in the Akkadian of Ugarit.[631] EA 168: 11 features the adverb *šulmiš* "safely," which is very rare in Akkadian.[632] EA 159 was written at Ardata and is attributed to Scribe 3 of Amurru; this letter features the use of the stative (or suffix conjugation) to foreground past events.[633]

Table 28 EA 168: An Amurru Letters from Gaza

EA 168: 4-12	
04) ⌜^{d}⌝UTU EN-*ia* ⌜DINGIR⌝-⌜*ia*⌝ 05) [***kà-aš***-]⌜***dá***⌝-⌜***ku***⌝ ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜*šul*⌝-⌜*mi*⌝ 06) [*a-na a-ma*]-⌜*a*⌝[-*ri*]⌜*pa*⌝[-*ni*] 07) [LUGAL EN-*i*]*a* ⌜*ù*⌝ LÚ ⌜DUMU⌝ ⌜KIN⌝-[*ia*] 08) [*ù* ^{I}*Ḫa*-]*ti*-⌜*ip*⌝⌜***i***⌜-***kà***-⌜***aš***-⌝[***ša-du***$_4$-***ni***$_7$] 09) [*i-na š*]*ul-mi* ⌜*ù*⌝ ⌜*ú*⌝-⌜*nu*⌝-⌜*tu*$_4$⌝.[MEŠ *ša* LUGAL] EN-*ia* 10) [*i-na* GI]Š.⌜MÁ⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝ ⌜*kà*⌝-⌜*aš*⌝-*du*4-*ni*$_7$ 11) [*i-na*]⌜*šul*⌝-⌜*mi*⌝-⌜*iš*⌝ ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜KUR⌝ [LUGAL EN-*ia*] 12) [. . . *š*]*i*-⌜*id*⌝ *ù* [. . . . .]	O sun god, my lord, my god, I will [arri]ve safely [to beho]ld the fa[ce of the king, m]y[lord], and my envoy [and Ḥa]tip will arri[ve sa]fely and the assets [of the king,] my lord, will arrive [sa]fely [by s]hips in the land [of the king, my lord . . .] and [. . .].

The writing of this tablet is instructive about the system of messaging used to communicate with Egypt. This letter does not have any of the Canaano-Akkadian features of 'Abdi-Aširta's letters, nor is it like the other texts produced at Gaza that were written by scribes trained in the southern

[631] J. Huehnergard cites *im-lik-ku* "they took counsel" in Ug. 5 157:1. He does not understand this type of doubling to show vocalic length to be consistent, as it was not used frequently, but occurs only in six cases in the canonical Akkadian texts from Ugarit and one in a non-canonical text. Though, in some cases, it is possible that this is an influence of Assyrian orthographies (*The Akkadian of Ugarit,* 49).

[632] *CAD*Š/3: 254 does not even list this form, but classifies this attestation as *šul-mi*. The other attestation that Izre'el cites in EA 159: 14 (another Aziru letter) is extremely fragmentary: [*i-na šu*]*l-mi-i*[*š*]. See zre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 201-202.

[633] Ibid., 217-219; 224-225.

Levantine tradition (e.g., EA 298-300 [for the polities at Gezer]; 329 [Lachish] etc.).[634] EA 168 is best classified with texts like EA 97 (a letter written at Gaza on behalf of the ruler of Beirut), as a letter written at the Egyptian centers in the Levant. These works were most likely created in consultation with the Egyptian officials there, yet using a scribe from Amurru. EA 168 was most likely written at Gaza during an envoy to Egypt.[635]

The presence of diverse "dialects" being written at Ṣumur suggests that polities may have either employed a local scribe working at such centers, or as in the case of the Rib-Adda texts, brought their own scribes with them to Ṣumur.[636] As Goren, et al., write,

> "Some Canaanite rulers must have arrived at the Egyptian centres for service, to bring their tributes and gifts, or to negotiate local matters with the Egyptian authorities. Their scribes, who served as private secretaries and political advisors, must have traveled with them. This explains why the script and text of the letters are similar to those of the other tablets sent from the hometown of the respective rulers, while they are different from the scribe and text of other letters dispatched for the same Egyptian centre."[637]

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[634] Izre'el's translation views the form [*kà-aš-*]⌜*dá*⌝-⌜*ku*⌝ to be a stative, "I will have arrived safely," as opposed to Rainey, who views this to have a more active meaning. Izre'el contrasts this with the form ⌝⌜*i*⌜-*kà*-⌜*aš*-⌝[*ša-du* 4-*ni*$_7$], which he reconstructs as ending in *–nim,* which preserves the mimation. He translates this form as a future indicative: "he will arrive," and views them to add nuance to the translation. The use of *–ūni*(*m*) in line 10 (⌜*kà*⌝-⌜*aš*⌝-*du* 4-*ni*7), which is the standard 3mp enclitic ending, is another characteristic that distinguishes Amurru Akkadian from cuneiform in the south. Izre'el makes the following observations: this ending occurs on prefixed verbs, and in the earlier corpus, on suffixed forms and/or statives; it does not occur when the verb is followed by a pronominal suffix (*Amurru Akkadian,* 136-142; 224-225; 275-279).

[635]Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 147-149; Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay*, 322-325.

[636] The corpus of letters from the Egyptian center at Ṣumur includes EA 165-167, and also EA 96, which is a letter to Rib-Adda from an Egyptian officer. Vita attributes EA 165 to Scribe 4; EA 166 and 167 (?) to Scribe 3. Vita also cites EA 78, 103, and 126, which were letters written on behalf of Rib-Adda at this site. Of the Byblian letters from this site, Vita credits EA 78 and 103 to Scribe 8 and EA 126 to Scribe 4 (see *Canaanite Scribes,* 47-50 and also Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 139; 147-148; 154-155).

[637] Goren, *Inscribed in Clay,* 322-325; quote 323.

A study of the paleography and language of the letters from Ṣumur indicates that the scribes working for Amurru (and Byblos) traveled to this site with their employers. These letters were written in consultation with Egyptian officials at this site and were then sent to Egypt.[638] For this reason, there is no difference in the language of the Aziru letters produced at Ṣumur and Amurru. EA 96 is the only letter written at Ṣumur by a scribe working for specifically for Egypt. This letter was written on the behalf of an Egyptian official to Rib-Adda, yet, it has Canaano-Akkadian features.[639] Also, its paleography sets it apart as being from a different scribe than the other letters from this site.[640]

This raises the interesting question of why this tablet was discovered at Tell el-'Amarna. The presence of a Canaano-Akkadian scribe at Ṣumur suggests that such scribes worked closely with the Egyptian administration, to the point of being stationed at the northern-most frontier of Egypt's

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[638] The clays of EA 165-167 match the petrography of Ṣumur. See Vita, *Canaanite Scribe,s* 21.

[639] EA 96 contains so many distinct Canaano-Akkadian forms that Ronald Youngblood considered it to be a veritable Canaanite Letter that showed some influence of Amurru Akkadian The list of Canaano-Akkadian and WS features here is, in part, derived from Youngblood's 1962 analysis, though I base the linguistic analysis on Rainey's 2014 transliterations, which are more up-to-date. The features that Youngblood lists include the following: *um-ma* is treated as a noun in construct rather than a particle of speech; *ilānu* is treated as a singular and is paired with the 3ms precative form *li-iš-al*; the form *taq-bu-ú* appears to be a 2ms form patterned after *yaqtulu*, to indicate the indicative; the writing of *an-ti-in-nu e-re-eb* can be seen as morphographemic orthography, or as a reflection of a dialect where the *nun* does not assimilate to the dental; it is a 1cs that is patterned upon the *yaqtulu* of Canaano-Akkadian. The form *ta-la-ku*-[*na*], as Rainey reconstructs it is a 3fp energic. The form *te-ep-pu-šu* is a 2ms form, whereby the –*u* ending marks the form as an indicative. The suffix at the end of *ú-ba-a-šu-nu* is a shortened form, whereas the longer Akkadian suffix would be *šunūti*. The verb *uš-ši-ra-am-mi* with the meaning "send" is common in the Canaanite Amarna letters. The particle *al-lu-ú* is also derived from WS, and is common in Canaano-Akkadian. The form *ša-ap-ra-ti* is a 1cs Canaano-Akkadian suffix form that is used to denote the past tense. See Ronald Youngblood, "Amorite Influence in a Canaanite Amarna Letter (EA 96)," BASOR 168(1962), 24-27.; Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence,* EA 96.

[640] Vita attributes EA 96 to Scribe 1 of Ṣumur, EA 165 to Scribe 4 of Amurru, and EA 166-167 to Scribe 3 of Amurru (*Canaanite Scribes,* 21).

eastern territories.[641] Vita attributes the Canaano-Akkadian language of EA 96 to "an autochthonous dialect from Ṣumur."[642] However, this presumes that the language of the tablet was a spoken language, and not merely a reflection of the scribe's training. In light of the role of Canaano-Akkadian in Egypt's eastern empire, the presence of a Canaano-Akkadian trained scribe writing for Egypt at an Egyptian center is not very surprising. Also, the presence of EA 96 at Tell el-'Amarna indicates that Egyptian officials that commissioned letters outside of Egypt sent copies to Egypt. In this case, the scribe produced two tablets: one that was sent to Egypt and one sent to Byblos. This scenario seems much more likely than the existence of yet another "dialect" of Peripheral Akkadian in the northern Levant. This also has implications for Aziru's choice to forgo using the Canaano-Akkadian scribe at this site, and to instead bring his own scribes to Ṣumur. This attests to a move away from a dependency on Egypt and a reform of sorts in scribalism in Amurru.

9. Conclusion

The scribes working for 'Abdi-Aširta were trained in a similar manner to their peers working in the southern Levant who were corresponding with Egypt and employed forms most akin to Canaano-Akkadian. The letters early in Aziru's reign demonstrate a gravitation towards the Akkadian of the northern Levant. The Amurru letters written at Ṣumur and EA 168, which was written at Gaza,

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[641] For a discussion of Egyptian administration and Canaanite interactions see N. Na'aman, "Economic Aspects of the Egyptian Occupation of Canaan," *IEJ* (1981): 172-85; "Praises to the Pharaoh in Response to his Plans for a Campaign to Canaan," in *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*. Edited by T. Abusch, J. Huehnergard and P. Steinkeller (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1990), 397-405; "The Egyptian-Canaanite Correspondence," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations.* Edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 125-38.

[642] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 21.

were written in the style of Akkadian of the north as opposed to Canaano-Akkadian. It appears that Aziru's entourage included a royal scribe, one that was trained according to the northern tradition and traveled with him/his officials in dealings with Egypt. It is telling that EA 168 and the letters written at Ṣumur were written by Aziru's own northern trained scribes and were not written by the Canaano-Akkadian scribes working for Egypt at these two sites. This may have been part of an overall strategy to keep control of the flow of communication with Egypt as opposed to trusting the cuneiform scribes employed by the Pharaoh. This transition in scribal system at Amurru was reflective of a greater political shift, whereby Aziru allied himself with Hatti and proceeded to realize his own political ambitions by expanding his territories at Egypt's expense. EA 96, which was written on behalf of an Egyptian general/official at Ṣumur, on the other hand, is riddled with Canaano-Akkadian forms. We must then classify EA 96 part of the Egyptian-Canaanite system of correspondence, which was based in part in Canaano-Akkadian.

The Akkadian from Alashia and Amurru indicate that Canaano-Akkadian served a greater role in Egypt's eastern empire than merely that of a local, Canaanite scribal system. Canaano-Akkadian was perceived as an appropriate medium for communication with Egypt in the international arena and played an important role in Egyptian administration. This scribal system was subsequently used as well in interactions with Egypt between non-Canaanite polities in the east, even, in the case of Alashia, a polity that did not "speak" WS. Moreover, Canaano-Akkadian disappeared when these groups no longer engaged with Egypt (e.g., when Alashia stopped corresponding with Egypt in cuneiform, or in the case of Amurru, when Aziru broke away from Egypt's control). We thus see how

Canaano-Akkadian was somehow wedded to Egypt's operations in the southern Levant and eastern Mediterranean. In these two examples, Canaano-Akkadian appears, not as a spoken dialect of Akkadian, *per se*, but rather as a scribal diplomatic code dictated by the geo-politics of the period, namely engagements with Egypt.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Multilingualism and Code-Mixing as a Diplomatic Strategy

I. Code-Switching in Written Texts

This chapter examines code-switching in the Canaanite Amarna Letters and in the Egyptian Amarna Letters. The "shifts" were not code-switches in the spoken language underlying the text. Rather, they served as part of the scribal strategies to enhance these messages and provide clues to the reading and performance of these letters that was not "linguistic" *per se*, but functioned as a part of the metapragmatic framework of the correspondence between Egypt and Canaan.

A. Introduction

The presence of multiple "Akkadians" (e.g., Canaano-Akkadian, MB, and MA orthographies) in the Amarna Letters from Jerusalem, Tyre, Gezer and Egypt is best described in terms of code-switching. However, such shifts in the scribal code used between these polities are not indicative of a transition in spoken Akkadian in these letters.[643] Such shifts were not meant for the Egyptian court at large or for the Pharaoh, but were cues for the scribes and officials processing and translating these letters. A sociolinguistic understanding views code alternation in written texts as contextually motivated. Code-switching in the Canaano-Akkadian letters functioned in a similar way to the use of scribal marking (e.g., line registers and *Glossenkeilen*). That is, code-switching played a key part in the scribal system between Canaan and Egypt. Such shifts in language and/or orthography were not arbitrary but added depth and emphasis and operated at a metalinguistic level to highlight important passages in these letters.

B. **Orthography as a Marker of Social Identity**

Before examining the phenomenon of code-switching in writing, it is important to first establish a criterion for how to view the relationship between orthography and spoken forms of language. Current work on the sociolinguistics of writing takes issue with past assumptions in scholarship that have equated orthography and phonology, or held the view that "the ideal orthography [is] being close to, if not identical to, a standardized phonemic transcription of a selected

[643] Giorgio Buccellati proposes that the matter of dictation and the performance of the Amurru letters was at least a two-step process. The scribe dictated the letter, hence some of the more oral-style elements; if needed, the scribe created a more polished version. See "Aten in Amurru?" in *Leggo!: Studies Presented to Frederick Mario Fales on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday.* Edited by G. Lanfranchi et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 95, n 1.

variety of language."[644] Such a view leads to the evaluation of writing systems based upon their ability to approximate language, whereby "better" systems are thought to be those that are most able to approximate speech. However, writing systems—even alphabetic ones—make for poor systems of transcription. As Sebba writes,

> Orthography is *par excellence* a matter of language and culture. It is a matter of linguistics too, of course, but one where the classic principle of sociolinguistics comes into play: the signs carry not only linguistic meaning, but also social meaning at the same time…Outside of linguistics, it is clear that writing matters to people.[645]

Written language can operate as a means of constructing identity and is a semiotic system. In such cases, orthography can be ideologically laden and serve to communicate ideas that are perhaps not overtly expressed in the written text itself and in ways that are not necessarily linguistic.[646] Alexandra Jaffe describes the use of orthography to mark a text as being in opposition to other written codes and the respective communities:

> "As a linguistic boundary-marking device, orthography both differentiates a code from other codes, and displays the internal coherence and unity (sameness) of that code. In this respect, orthography is one of the key symbols of language unity and status itself."[647]

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[644] Sebba, *Spelling and Society,* 6.

[645] In periods of heightened nationalism he cites the rejection of orthographic practices that were associated with hegemonic colonial powers. See Sebba, *Spelling and Society,* 7; for examples 81-100.

[646] In personal names in Iron II inscriptions in Israel and Judah the orthography of the theophoric element derived from YHWH takes the "longer" spelling, *-yhu* in Judah but the shorter form *–yw* in texts from Israel. This is described as dialectal, though it may also be an orthographic practice that served was an index of the differences in religious practices in these two kingdoms. Also, the rejection of "continental" spellings (e.g., centre versus center) in the US was a reflection of an ideology about language. This change in spelling did not affect the pronunciation of these words or their meaning but was symbolic of a desire to create distance from Europe.

[647] Jaffe, "Non-standard Orthography and non-standard speech*,* 108; Deborah Cameron, *Verbal Hygiene* (London: Routledge, 1995); Rosina Lippi-Green, *English With an Accent: Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

The differentiation between "standard" and "non-standard" linguistic forms is more complex, as it is not always apparent. Moreover, when such oppositions exist, they do not manifest in the same way in written and spoken language.[648] Such "boundary marking" in many cases in spoken language remains an ideal but is not always adhered to in practice. Whereas, this opposition can be much clearer in written language. As Jaffe writes,

> "'[S]tandard language X' is by definition an abstraction from practice; it is only imperfectly realized in everyday speech (even of those who are labeled as 'standard' speakers)… 'the Standard' has a palpable existence in writing—and it is through literacy—and more specifically, differential social access to literacy— that both the idea of a Standard and the status of 'standard speakers' are reproduced."[649]

Social factors, in particular the degree to which a society is literate, as well as the educational system in place, inform the development and spread of spelling conventions. Spellings associated with national languages in the modern era tend to be propelled by ethno/nationalistic ideologies about what forms are "correct" and which are deviant. This in turn may prompt the speakers of minority language to create a more standard written version of their language as a response to the majority written and spoken language.[650] Written language and its evolving conventions can thus be used to

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[648] For a discussion of the "standard-myth" see Nikolas Coupland, "Sociolinguistic Prevarication About 'Standard English'," *ISO* 4 (2000), 622-634.

[649] Jaffe, "Non-standard Orthography," *ISO* 4/4 (2000), 500.

[650] Jaffe views the broadcast of a Corsican spelling bee to be an attempt to demonstrate that Corsican was standard to the degree of having a normative orthography like French. In this example, Corsican orthography became a ultimately as a symbol of resistance ("The Second Annual Corsican Spelling Contest," 816).

express solidarity and group identity and to comment upon and/or reject the political/cultural/linguistic hegemony of an outside group.

For example, *Ausbau* languages are languages that are formally very similar and are considered to be in the same linguistic continuum.[651] Yet, when written these language look very different.[652] Differences in orthography mark written language as belonging to different communities, even though the groups may speak very similar and intelligible languages. The key difference is that the speakers and writers consider themselves to be culturally and politically distinct, and use their written language(s) to reflect these social differences. As Sebba writes, "By changing your orthographic conventions (or in extreme cases, the script) you can make your language *look* very different while leaving the structure unchanged."[653] Orthography can then go beyond a simple attempt to capture the phonology of a language; spelling can be an act of identity.

The iconicity of written language also is influenced by a key difference between speech and writing. Spoken language is much more spontaneous. Spoken language, even that produced by those who self-identify as being speakers of the linguistic "standard," may be quite variable in practice.

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[651] Heinz Kloss first described written languages as "'Abstand' or 'Ausbau' languages," *AL* 9 (1967), 29-41.

[652] Sebba cites the example of the following phrase in Czech and Slovak as an example of the use of orthography to mark boundaries and reflect differentiation: "The toy is not suitable for children under three years. They could swallow or inhale small parts." Czech: "*Hračka neni vhodná pro děti do 3 let. Mohly by spolknout nebo vdechnout male časti*." Slovak: "*Hračka nie je vhodná pre deti do 3 rokov. Drobné časti by mohly prehltnut' alebo vdychnut*." As he writes, some of the differences are ambiguous and "could be treated either as phonological or as a matter of orthography: *pre* vs. *pro*, *vdechnout* vs. *vdychnut*'." He understands such differences in spelling to at times be more ideological than linguistic. See Sebba, *Spelling and Society,* 113.

[653] Ibid., 116.

Whereas, writing, even in the most informal of settings (e.g., text messages for example), is more laborious and intentional. Writing is more bound to socially imposed standards than spoken language.[654] For this reason, writing is often used as an expression of independence and/or solidarity in periods of heightened nationalism or in the rise of a new socio-political groups. Spelling and scripts can serve as symbols of conformity or resistance; orthography and script use can index the identities of hegemonic powers as well as the minority groups resisting them.[655]

Writing can be used to voice political resistance and/or support for state/social institutions in a way that is not merely linguistic. Plays on orthography can also work at a more local level to express humor and a subtle challenge that undermines, challenges, and/or creates opposition to the "standard." As Jaffe writes,

> "[T]he use of non-standard orthography is a powerful expressive resource. Unlike standard orthographies, which render invisible many features of casual and 'non-standard' speech, non-

[654] Indeed, as Gunther Kress writes, "One could nearly say that in a 'literate culture' speech is the spelling of writing" (*Early Spelling: Between Convention and Creativity* [London and New York: Routledge, 2000]: 18).

[655] In such politically charged contexts, a writing reform calling for a return to traditional ways of writing can signify nostalgia for the older, "better" ways of the past (e.g., the call for the return to more traditional scripts at the fall of the Soviet Union); at the same token, a call for a radically different script and/or orthographic system can symbolize a break with the past and a move to a new political system (e.g., the writing reforms in China; the shift to new spellings in Germany). For examples of this use of script and orthography see John S. Rohsenow, "Fifty Years of Script and Written Language Reform in the P.R.C.: The Genesis of the Language Law of 2001," in *Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice Since 1949*. Edited by Minglang Zhou and Hongkai Sun (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 21-43; Suzanne Wetheim, "Reclamation, Revalorization, and Re-Tartarization via Changing Tatar Orthographies," in *Orthography As Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power*. Edited by Sally Johnson et al., (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 65-102; Jürgen Spitzmüller, "Floating Ideologies: Metamorphoses of Graphic "Germaness," in *Orthography As Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power.* Edited by Sally Johnson et al., (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 255-288; Andre Savage, "Writing Tuareg—the three script options," *Int'l. J. Soc. Lang* 192 (2008), 5–13; Sally Johnson, "Orthography, Publics, and Legitimization Crises: the 1996 Reform of German," in *Orthography As Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power*. Edited by Sally Johnson et al., (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 21-42; Mark Sebba, "Reform or Revolution," Where Angels Fear to Tread," *Spelling as a Social Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2007), 132-156.

> standard orthographies can graphically capture some of the immediacy, the 'authenticity' and 'flavor' of the spoken word in all its diversity. In this respect, non-standard orthographies have the potential to challenge linguistic hierarchies, for they can make nonstandard voices visible/audible in a medium that habitually does not recognize them."[656]

Sebba's work on orthographic systems, too, examines the "unlicensed variation" in orthographic practices, (i.e., orthographies that deviate from the expected forms) within the writing of individuals and groups. In order for new or idiosyncratic spellings to be understood, however, they must still adhere to some degree to the expected forms known by the community.[657] This is particularly true of ideological spellings, i.e., orthographies prompted by a desire to create group cohesion or to express dissent with the group controlling the writing system. As Jaffe notes, "spelling systems are not simply, convenient, conventionalist (and arbitrary) codes that make reading and writing possible. The orthographic representation of non-standard codes is in fact the public representation of the nature and status of those codes and their speakers."[658]

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[656] Jaffe cites the humorous example of a sign posted to advertise a bbq-special at the University of Mississippi campus: "Bar B-Quesday "We don't need no stinkin utinsels." This sign uses several strategies to convey "a local, casual, irreverent non-standard voice," such as non-standard orthographies. For instance, the lack of /g/ in stinkin, the "misspelling" of utensils, a more colloquial register of language evidenced by the pun on the word Tuesday, and the use of a double negative (don't/no), contribute to the intentionally non-standard register of the sign. Also, as she writes, the use of quotation marks presents the phrase "We don't need no stinkin utinsels" as being "'genuine' and oral—something someone would say." She further attributes the unusual orthography of "utinsels" as an attempt to mimic the vocalic pattern in the local dialect (the fronting and raising of the *shewa*). Dr. Jared Norris Wolfe (personal communication) pointed out to me that this may also be an allusion to the famous line from Blazing Saddles "We don't need no stinkin' badges." I emailed Jaffe with this proposal and she agrees that the sign does indeed make allusion to this popular film. See A. Jaffe, "Non-standard Orthography," *ISO* 4/4 (2000), 498.

[657] For example, Sebba argues that a system with no standard or normative spelling, deviations would "have little to no social meaning." Spelling shifts are only meaningful in opposition to a more or less established norm or tradition. The notion of correct versus "wrong" spelling is a recent phenomenon, one that assumes that there is a standard. Ibid., quote on 32; see also 33.

[658] Jaffe, "Non-standard Orthography," 498.

Overall, writing in the ANE was characterized by a lack of concern with spelling, which is resultant from several factors. Logo-syllabic scripts offered a plurality of ways to write; cuneiform scribes could employ logographic writing, use phonetic complements, as well as diverse syllabic spellings. The principle of opposition (i.e., differences that distinguish conventions) in orthography in this corpus elucidates scribal culture during this period. The patterns in spelling and the use of scribal marks unite certain scribal traditions, and differentiate others. As will be discussed, there are still general rules that scribes followed. Yet, within the confines of the Canaano-Akkadian scribal system scribes innovated, and at times deviated, from the expected scribal norms. The different orthographies used by cuneiform scribes employed by Egypt and those working in Canaan offer insight into the power dynamics between these polities. The Akkadian of Canaan was a lesser prestigious scribal system, whereas Egypt replied to Canaanite polities in the scribal code used between the great powers of this period. The retention of Canaano-Akkadian orthographies further set apart Egypt's vassals from the rest of the cuneiform world. Moreover, the code-switching in the Canaanite letter (from Canaano-Akkadian, to syllabic Canaanite, Egyptian, or MB orthographies), appears to have operated as a semiotic system that impacted the metapragmatic framework of the text, and was not a reflection of a shift in code in the original oral message, which would have been in Canaanite.

C. **Code-Mixing/Shifting in Writing**

Code-switching in speech has been extensively studied, however, there is a lacuna of such

studies that examine this phenomenon in written language.[659] When it is addressed, it is typically approached as equivalent to code-switching in conversation.[660] In speech, "shifts" in linguistic varieties, registers, and styles to "say" something about a speaker's social role and their attitude towards their audience.[661] The term "language alternation," relates to the grammatical forms and/or linguistic systems being interchanged (e.g., French vs. English). In the case of borrowings (e.g., the expression *coup d'état*) the distinctions are not always clear-cut. The term "code-switching" is more expansive as it refers less to the linguistic form, and more to the context and social meaning attributed to such shifts.[662] Also, "code-switching" accounts for the co-existence of a plurality of codes within the same speech even (or text) and a wide range of social meaning. For example, code-switching is not limited to a transition from one language to another, but also includes shifts in styles

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[659] Several works that approach this phenomenon in ancient texts include James N. Adams, Mark Janse and Simon Swain. *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002); Hannah M. Cotton, Robert G. Hoyland, Jonathan J. Price and David J. Wasserstein eds. *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Arietta Papaconstantinou, *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, From the Ptolemies to theʿAbbāsids*. Editor (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Vierros, Marja. *Bilingual Notaries in Hellenistic Egypt: A Study of Greek as a Second Language*. Brussels: Comité Klassieke Studies, Subcomité Hellenisme, Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 2012.

[660] This is particularly true of letters, which tend to be structured as conversations between participants.

[661] The key works on this phenomenon are Celso Alvarez-Cáccamo, "Rethinking Conversational Code-Switching: Codes, Speech Varieties, and Contextualization," in *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society.* Edited by Kira Hall, Jean-Pierre Koenig, Michael Meacham, Sondra Reinman and Laurel Sutton (Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistics Society, 1990), 3-16; Ibid., "From 'Switching Code' to 'Code-switching': Towards a Reconceptualization of Communicative Codes," In *Code-Switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction, and Identity*. Edited by Peter Auer (London: Routledge, 1998), 29-48; Peter Auer, *Code-switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction, and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1998); John J. Gumperz, "Linguistic and social Interaction in Two Communities," *Am Anthropol* 66(6) Part 2 (1964), 137-153; *Discourse Strategies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1982; "Contextualization revisited." In *The Contextualization of Language*. Edited by P. Auer and A. di Luzo (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1992), 39-53; Carol Myers-Scotton, *Social Motivations for Codeswitching: Evidence from Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

[662] Celso, "From 'Switching code' to 'Code-switching,'" 29-48.

and/or registers of language within the same linguistic system.[663] Such shifts can be triggered by a change in context and are seen to have meaning to the speaker and their audience that is socio-culturally determined.

Changes in orthography can demarcate the shift from one code to another. It is thus important to establish what level of language can be classified as a "code" since speakers do not merely switch between languages, but also employ various styles of language within the same utterance. For this reason, Alvarez adopts a definition for code that is quite open-ended:

> A communicative code would then be a mechanism of transduction between intentions (at several levels of generality) and utterances, and then between utterances and interpretations. These intentions include illocutionary forces at the speech act level, turn-construction functions at the sequential level, overall communicative goals at the situational level, social indexical meanings, etc. While linguistic structures are subject to grammatical constraints, the linguistic shaping of utterances is subject to situational constraints. Thus, we may have a switching of communicative codes with language alternation (Gumperz's 'situational switching'), not-switching with language alternation (most of conversational 'code-switching styles'), not switching without language alternation (short utterances in monolingual speech), or switching of codes without language alternation (where the same variety is used across an activity boundary). [664]

This calls into question contemporary uses of the term code-switching to equate codes with language. Alvarez proposes that sociolinguists take a less narrow understanding of code-switching, and adopt the "communicative view" of codes (as Jacobsen originally intended) that approaches such shifts as "systems of transduction between two sets of signals: at the one end, communicative

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[663] For a useful summary of scholarship on this topic see also Chad Nilep, "'Code-switching' in Sociocultural Linguistics," *CRIL* 19 (2006), 1-70.

[664] Ibid., 38.

intentions, and at the other end, linguistic-discursive forms amenable to interpretation." He concludes:

> Codes transduce communicative intentions into utterances, and utterances into interpretations. Since various codes operate simultaneously and jointly for the production of linguistic material at several levels of discourse organisation (situation, activity and speech act), the resulting utterances are inherently polysemic as to the intentions being encoded. [665]

According to this view, each instance of a shift in code appeals to a new set of semiotic signals that convey meaning by appealing to knowledge shared by the participants. The speaker and writer can use a plurality of codes in the same utterance or text to further their communicative agenda. Also, it is important to keep in mind that code-switching and multilingualism in writing differs from code-switching in speech. As Sebba writes,

> The written medium is different from the spoken in complex ways and encompasses a great diversity of genres, most of which do not correspond to spoken genres even where there is some overlap. It is therefore not obvious (though also not much questioned in the literature) that the term 'code-switching' and the related terms mentioned above are applicable to written language at all, and if so, whether they refer to the same phenomena, or slightly different phenomena or substantially different phenomena.[666]

Code-switching in writing is tracked by shifts in orthographic practice or a even a change in script. Variable spellings are thus seen to mimic the types of shifts that occur in spoken language. Though,

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[665] See Ibid., 30; see also 42.; Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and communication theory," *On the Structure of Language and Its Mathematical Aspects: Proceedings of the XIIth Symposium of Applied Mathematics* (*New York, 14–15 April 1960*). Edited by Roman Jakobson (Providence, R.I.: American Mathematical Society, [1961]), 245–252; Roman Jakobson, Gunnar M. Fant and Morris Halle, *Preliminaries to Speech Analysis: The Distinctive Features and their Correlates* (*Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press*)*; Selected Writings* [*of Roman Jakobson*]. *Major Works, 1976–1980*, Vol. 8, (Berlin / New York / Amsterdam: Mouton de Gruyter, 1952), 583–646.

[666] Sebba, "Multilingualism in Written Discourse," 98.

past descriptions of code- switching in writing have held some of the problematic assumptions that plague descriptions of code-switching in spoken language. For example, the view that code-switching is a shift from one distinct language to another limits code-switching to the mixing of two languages.[667] A better approach to this phenomenon breaks away from the archetype that code-switching is a practice limited to bilinguals, and considers the use of different written codes in contexts where the delineations between linguistic varieties are not always clear-cut (e.g., in multilingual communities and/or those that use contact languages).

More recent work on sociolinguistics approaches language alternation and/or code-switching as a navigation between a plurality of linguistic systems to express a multiplicity of social identities—it is a communicative strategy that is used by all "languagers," (i.e., everyone using language).[668] As Jørgensen writes, "[L]anguage users employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposal with the intention of achieving their communicative aims."[669] Similarly, the term "translanguaging" refers to linguistic practice that "go[es] between different linguistic structures and systems.... [to] creat[e] a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and

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[667] In the case of Canaano-Akkadian and MB, for example, there is a shift between registers of written Akkadian, not two different languages.

[668] Sebba, "Multilingualism in Written Discourse," 112-113; see also Jens Normann Jørgensen, "Urban wall languaging," *IJM 5* (2008), 237–252; Ibid., "Metrolingualism: Fixity, Fluidity and Language in Flux," *IJM, 7* (2009), 240–254; Li Wei, "The 'Why' and 'How' Questions in the Analysis of Conversational Code-switching," in *Code-switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction and Identity.* Edited by P. Auer (London, England: Routledge, 1998), 156–176.

[669] Jørgensen, "Urban Wall Languaging," *IJM 5* (2008), 169.

physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance…"[670] Such studies of language alternation/mixing, however, tend to focus on spoken language and neglect written language.

Sebba offers a guide to how to best understand this practice in written contexts. The sociolinguistic study of writing is a relatively new avenue of research and it entails the development of new theoretical models and tools of analysis that account for the differences between written and spoken language.[671] There is no unifying theory, but rather some basic principles that factor in the use of writing as a semiotic system at both a linguistic and a metalinguistic level. His work also takes into consideration the materiality of writing and the use of graphemic marks to differentiate linguistic varieties, systems of writing, and their respective communities within a text. Overall, he proposes a "multimodal" approach that considers "the visual and spatial relationships of languages on the page, screen or sign" as well as "their linguistic properties."[672] This approach is particularly insightful as it considers the production and reading of such texts as "products of, and part of, literacy practices, which are embedded in the culture of specific language communities and reflect their sociolinguistic and economic circumstances."[673] Thus, the creation and consumption of such texts are analyzed, not merely at linguistic level, but in their social context.

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[670] Wei, "The 'Why' and 'How' Questions," 156–176.

[671] Sebba, "Multilingualism in Written Discourse," 113-114.

[672] Ibid., 113.

[673] Ibid., 113.

Seen in this light, the code-switching and orthographic variation in the Canaano-Akkadian Amarna Letters is understood to have social meaning but not to reflect shifts in speech. The shifts in code were not merely linguistic, but a part of the written code used by Canaanite cuneiform scribes. Such shifts functioned as a means to express the ideologies of the senders and, quite often, their dissatisfaction with Egypt. The shifts to MB orthographies or to Egyptian served to appeal to the Egyptian scribal audience of these texts. Overall, these shifts marked sections of the text that were viewed as key to diplomacy between these two groups. Code-switching appears to have been a strategy that functioned at a metapragmatic level to inform the scribes in Egypt how to best decode and translate these letters.

II. Code-Switching in the Canaanite Amarna Letters

A. Introduction

The inconsistent use of sociolinguistic terminology to describe the shifts in language and orthography in the Canaanite Amarna Letters is problematic. There is a lack of consensus as how to classify Canaano-Akkadian. Also, there is deeper methodological issue—a disconnect in scholarship on code-switching and the sociolinguistics of a written language.[674] Past linguistic analysis of the

[674] For a general introduction see Kathryn Woolard, "Codeswitching," in *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Edited by A. Duranti (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004). 73–94.

variation in this corpus has not adequately considered the social/political "cues" in the text that may have warranted these changes. The scholars that have addressed this, such as Rainey and Izre'el, tend to view changes in the text as though changes in language. In the past decade, however, the wholesale application of methodologies from the study of spoken languages to written language has been problematized, and linguists and specialists on writing systems have worked to develop better methodologies for understanding the use of a plurality of languages/registers/scripts in writing.[675] As such, code-switching in this corpus warrants reevaluation.

For example, Rainey's analysis of Canaano-Akkadian made inconsistent use of the terminology used to describe the code-switching in this corpus.[676] He approached the written language as a dialect (singular). Yet, in many of his notes this same study, he writes of different strata of Akkadian dialects operating contemporaneously. He referred to Canaanite Akkadian, in turn, as a "hybrid language," "dialect" "interlanguage," and a "jargon," even though such designations are typically used to describe spoken languages. His grammar, too, treats Canaano-Akkadian as a spoken vernacular, replete with a phonological system. In his analysis of Canaano-Akkadian, he tended to

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[675] A. Jaffe, "Non-standard Orthography," 497-513; A. Jaffe et al., *Orthography As Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012); Peter Unseth, "Sociolinguistic Parallels," 19-42; Sebba, *Spelling and Society;* "Sociolinguistic approaches to writing systems research," *JWSR* 1:1 (2009), 35-49; ibid., "Multilingualism in Written Discourse," 97-118; also the original 2012 online publication: "Multilingualism in Written Discourse: Approaches to Multilingual Texts," http://ijb.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/04/12/1367006912438301); ibid., "Iconisation, Attribution and Branding," *WL&L* 18:2 (2015), 208-227; ibid., "Orthography As Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power," Orthography As Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power (2015), 1-20.

[676] Rainey alternates between the following designations to describe Canaano-Akkadian: "pidgin" (*CAT II* 17; 19); "interlanguage" (*CAT* II 31-32); Jargon (chapter headings in *CAT* II); hybrid language and dialect in his 2010 article "The Hybrid Language." This inconsistency is critiqued in von Dassow's review (von Dassow, "What the Canaanite Cuneiformists Wrote," 852-853).

equate the orthography of the letters with speech, rather than as a reflection of scribal training. The orthographic variation is understood as having a viable phonological reality, and not merely being the reflection of a lack of standardized spelling. In one of his last publications, Rainey described Canaanite Akkadian as a "hybrid" language and a "real dialect" comprising: a. an Old Babylonian base that dictated the orthography, and was the reason for more archaic spellings), b. "local modifications" (i.e., NWS elements added to this Akkadian base), and c. true NWS elements. [677] These scribes knew MB, yet, used "Old Babylonian as the foundation of their hybrid language."[678]

Rainey's hesitance to engage directly with sociolinguistic theory may be in part a result of the classical nature of Rainey's training, which was grounded in Semitics and Near Eastern Studies, and retained a more traditional understanding of language.[679] Although he made invaluable observations about the corpus, he did not always provide a context or reason for these divergent forms. He viewed the adherence to Old Babylonian to be a matter of preference, contrary to Moran, who viewed it as a testament to scribal ignorance of other more standard Akkadian orthographies.[680] Also, Rainey did not

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[677] See in particular the treatment of EA 286 in Rainey, "The Hybrid Language," 851, 852-853. This article is largely a response to von Dassow's Akkadographic theory, even though she is not expressly addressed in this work, Her views on this corpus is also expressed in this same publication next to Rainey's article. See von Dassow, "Peripheral Akkadian Dialects," 895-926.

[678] Rainey, "The Hybrid Language," 851.

[679] For example, Rainey's analysis of Canaano-Akkadian approaches the shifts mid-text between the Canaanite Akkadian "hybrid," MB, and Middle Assyrian (MA) forms as a type of code-switching, though he does not use this exact term ("The Hybrid Language," 851-861).

[680] Moran's description of Canaanite Akkadian is as follows: "Eloquent and moving as it may be at times, it lacks all elegance; it is awkward, often barbarous, betraying the scribes' ignorance not only of Akkadian but of their native speech" ("Tell el-Amarna," *EJ* 15 [1972], 933).

really address the socio-political function of Canaano-Akkadian (i.e., how and why this scribal system evolved and was sustained throughout the LBA without being actively spoken).[681] As discussed, S. Izre'el has since incorporated sociolinguistic theory in a series of articles on the linguistic variation in Canaano-Akkadian. However, he has not adapted these models to written contexts and tends to attribute the variation in orthography to variation in phonology.[682]

B. MB Orthographies in the Canaano-Akkadian Amarna Letters

Canaanite scribes knew of the alternative MB orthographies but only selectively employed them.[683] MB orthographies are marked forms in the Canaanite letters and appear to have special

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[681] Rainey always maintained that the degree to which Canaano-Akkadian was spoken is difficult to ascertain and he was hesitant to specify its origins. In his writings he consistently analyzed the written forms as though reflective of a spoken dialect of Akkadian. His four-part grammar and subsequent works compared Canaano-Akkadian to other contemporary varieties of Akkadian, but did not provide much analysis of the reasons for this diversity. He postulated that the scribes in the Egyptian Province of Canaan devised this language, but never specified the degree of Egyptian involvement in this system, why it died out when Egypt diminishes in the region, or how it functioned in relation to Egypt's administration agenda in the region. See Rainey, "The Hybrid Language," 851; 860; Rainey, *CAT* I-III.

[682] His more recent 2012 synthesis, however, has been more cautious about the degree to which Canaano-Akkadian was spoken. See for a contrast Izre'el, "Canaano-Akkadian: Some Methodological Requisites," 1-48 and "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 171-218.

[683] Two main hallmarks of Canaano-Akkadian orthography are: 1) the retention of the intervocalic –w- whereas, Akkadian in the Periphery tends to reflect the shift *VwV*>*VmV*; and 2) the retention of sibilants before dentals. Canaano-Akkadian has *št*, the orthography characteristic of the OB period, whereas in SB and MB, *š* tends to be written as *l* before a dental (e.g., OB *ištapar* "he wrote" vs. MB *iltapar*). The *št*>*lt* shift appears in areas where Akkadian was spoken, but it does not occur everywhere in the written record. The continuum of orthographies in the Periphery suggests that this was a transitional period of cuneiform scribal education. The orthography *št* vs. *lt* can be considered a scribal "isogloss" demarcating schools that were more "up-to-date" with the conventions in Mesopotamia as opposed to those with more conservative tendencies. Certain scribes were trained according to this new orthography, whereas, others retained the older orthography. This lapse reflects the detachment between what was written by scribes in the Periphery and what was actually being spoken in Mesopotamia. The *št*>*lt* shift is attested in Mesopotamia, where it becomes standard and appears to reflect a real shift in the phonology of Akkadian. In the Periphery however, the *št*>*lt* shift varies depending on the use of Akkadian and the scribal school. In Nuzi, for example, this shift appears but is not standard throughout. It is not attested at Alalakh, but it is present in the Mittani Akkadian corpus and in the Akkadian from Carchemish and Ugarit. The Egyptian Amarna letters used a mix of *št* and *lt* forms. For a discussion of the shift in Egypt and Canaan see A.

meaning and/or have been used to add nuance to these letters. For example, there are only two instances of the *lt* orthography in the Canaanite Amarna Letters, in EA 300: 23 and EA 378:26, both of which are letters from Yapa'i of Gezer. In both cases, the /*lt*/ spelling appears as a shift to a MB orthography (i.e., the register of Akkadian used by Egypt) in an otherwise Canaano-Akkadian text. Also, the *lt* forms occurs in GTN stems of the verbal root *šemû* "to hear," which is a cognate in WS and Akkadian. This verbal occurs only in Akkadian and is extremely rare in Canaano-Akkadian. Use of both the GTN verbal stem and the *lt* orthography mark these verbs as part of the Akkadian register used by Egypt. As such, I view these two verbs to be doubly marked and to have served as emphatics. EA 300:23 has the form: ⌜*él*⌝-*te*$_9$-⌜*né*⌝-⌜*mé*⌝: "I am continually heeding [the words of the King my lord:" EA 378: 26 has the form ⌜*il*⌝-*te*$_9$-*né-em-me*, which concludes this letter.[684]

Rainey provided a sociolinguistic explanation for these two MB verbs. He writes that the scribe(s) "even went so far as to use the *koine* form from the MB and peripheral dialects which they knew was employed by the Egyptian scribes…they injected these two Akkadianisms with the *št*>*lt* shift!"[685] In other words, the scribes used a MB form (the GTN stem replete with the *lt* shift) to mimic

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Rainey, *CAT* II, 21-23; also, for Nuzi Gernot Wilhelm, *Untersuchengen zum Ḫurro-Akkadischen von Nuzi,* Alter Orient und Altes Testament 9 (Kevelaer, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970), 19-21; for this feature in MB Letters see Jussi Aro, *Studien zur mittelbabylonischen Grammatik*. ST. OR 20 (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Kirjapaino, 1955), 37-38; Alalakh see George Giacumakis, *The Akkadian of Alalakḫ* (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), 29; for Carchemish and Ugarit see John Huehnergard, *The Akkadian Dialects of Carchemish and Ugarit* (PhD. diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, 1979), 28; 188-189.

[684] In EA 300: 23, two lines down in a parallel construction, the scribe employs the form *iš-te*$_9$*-mu* "I am obeying," which is the stock Canaano-Akkadian verb. There is thus something about the particular context of line 23 that lead the scribe to shift to the register of Akkadian used by Egypt.

[685] Rainey, *CAT* II, 22-23.

the Akkadian produced by the scribes working for Egypt. Although Rainey does not provide the linguistic term for such a switch, this is a description of code-switching (or as Sebba terms "code-mixing") albeit in a written medium.[686] In the use of the GTN form and the *lt* orthographies in the above examples, it appears that the scribe(s) would have had to step outside the bounds of the learned orthographies of their scribal training to produce more complex verbal forms. These two verbs were marked in the text as orthographies used by Egyptian cuneiform scribes (e.g., ⌜*il*⌝-*te*$_9$-*né-em*-me vs. *iš-te*$_9$-*mu*). This was a shift from Canaano-Akkadian to an orthography associated with Egypt's own cuneiform tradition—in other words, we see a shift from a local system used only in the southern Levant and by certain polities corresponding with Egypt (e.g., Alashia, and Amurru during 'Abdi-Aširta's reign) to a register that was of higher international prestige.

The retention of the *št* form in the southern Levant, however, does not necessarily mean that Akkadian was pronounced this way in Canaan, just that Canaanite scribes retained a more archaic spelling. Also, there is no actual evidence that the original speaker, the scribe, or the messenger

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[686] Sebba understands code-mixing to "typically correspond to the commonly held prototype of code-switching in spoken language: languages alternate within a discourse unit (*intersentential*), possibly within a sentence (*intrasentential*)." Language mixing tends to occur in contexts of language contact, whereby speakers of two or more linguistic varieties interact, though the term "code" is preferable as it accounts for shifts in registers and styles of linguistic expression. For example, a speaker may alternate between various socio-lects that are technically part of the same linguistic system. The underlying assumption in the context of speech and writing is that, either consciously or unconsciously, such shifts in code (and/or script) mean something to someone. The speaker or writer must have a degree of competence in the registers that they are using, or must attach some significance to them. Use of code-switching as a communication strategy also implies that the intended audience is aware of underlying social meaning being appealed to. See Sebba, "Multilingualism in Written Discourse," section 5.4.

pronounced this message in such a way. We do not even know if the message was verbally communicated in Akkadian, or was presented in Egyptian upon arrival at Tell el-'Amarna. The shift to *lt* would have only been perceptible those who could read these tablets, i.e., a restricted group of scribes working at the Pharaoh's court. These two groups of scribes were participating in a shared system that comprised a relay between the MB of the Egyptian court, Canaano-Akkadian, and the Canaanite and Egyptian vernaculars used by those delivering and interpreting these messages. Code-switching in these texts was intended for the scribes and officials processing the Pharoah's foreign letters.

Another remarkable aspect of these two letters is that the clay composition of these two tablets indicates that they were not written at Gezer. The clays match that of Gaza, which served as an Egyptian base during this period.[687] J-P Vita ascribes EA 300 to Scribe 3 of Ashkelon and EA 378 to Scribe 4 of Ashkelon.[688] This suggests that the messages were either dispatched verbally and were then transcribed in consultation with the Egyptian administrators working in Canaan, or were composed on the spot and then sent to Egypt.

The question remains then as to the identity of the scribes writing these letters. In the case of EA 300 and EA 378, are these two MB forms the product of consultation with an Egyptian Akkadian scribe? Were these forms in the "original" version of these messages, perhaps on a preliminary draft that was transported to Gaza and then was then recopied at the site on tablet material made from the

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[687] Goren, *Inscribed in Clay*, 322-325.

[688] Scribe 3 also wrote EA 307, 308, 309(?), 321, and 329; Scribe 4 wrote EA 298-299, 301-306, and 313. See Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 75-76, 91-96.

local clays? Or, were they composed in their entirety by a Canaanite scribe based at Gaza? We cannot be sure. Yet, the Egyptian hand in the production of Canaano-Akkadian is striking and belies a more "hands-off" model of Egyptian governance.

Again, in the matrix of communication between Egypt and the Levant, we must assume that Canaanite scribes had at least a passive knowledge of MB and that Egyptian cuneiform scribes could recognize, and indeed did at times employ Canaano-Akkadian trained scribes to write on their behalf (e.g., as with the case of EA 96). Also, cuneiform scribes working for Egypt on occasion integrated Canaano-Akkadian forms into otherwise Egypto-Akkadian texts (e.g., the most famous example being EA 147: 35b-39, which will be discussed below).

In the case of these two Gezer letters, it possible that Yapa'i admonished his scribe to write this section with in a way that would appeal to the scribes working for Egypt. The scribe decided to emphasize these two sentences by using the orthography used by his Egyptian counterparts. The Canaanite scribe(s) on Yapai's end of this exchange counted on such recipients to understand the MB forms and notice that it diverged from the rest of the letter. Such code-switching to MB appears to have served as a means to highlight the text and guide its translation. This passage would have been translated with emphasis in the Egyptian version of this message performed before the court and/or officials dealing with the Levant.

B. Code-Switching in the Canaanite Amarna Letters?

1. EA 286: A Jerusalem Amarna Letter (*MB, MA, and Canaano-Akkadian*)[689]

The Jerusalem Amarna Letters stand out from the rest of the Canaanite corpus as the Jerusalem scribe code-switches between Canaano-Akkadian, MA, and MB forms.[690]

Table 29 Code-Switching in EA 286: A Jerusalem Amarna Letter

EA 286[691]	Translation
17) *a-qa-bi a-na* LÚ MÁŠKIM LUGAL ⌜EN⌝-[*ia*] 18) *am-mi-nim-mi* ***ta-ra-ia-m[u]*** 19) LÚ *ḫa-pí-ri ù* LÚ.MEŠ *ḫa-z*[*i-a-nu-ti*] 20) ⌜***ta***⌝***-za-ia-ru*** *ù ki-na-an-na* 21) ***ú-ša-à-ru*** *i-na pa-ni* LUGAL EN *ia*	"I will say to the commissioner of the king, my lord, "Why do you love the *ʿapîru* and hate the city [rulers]?" Thus I am maligned in the presence of the king"

The following are notes on the "dialectal" features in this passage: *a-qa-bi* is an Akkadian 1cs durative (*iparras*). The syntax is this passage is verb initial, which follows WS rather than Akkadian

[689] The following examples are derived from Rainey's 2010 article, "The Hybrid Language Written by Canaanite Scribes in the 14th Century B.C.E.," in which he outlined his basic argument that Canaanite Akkadian was a "real dialect" of Akkadian, akin to Babylonian and Assyrian Akkadian. Although Rainey does not use terminology from sociolinguistics, his article is essentially an analysis of the phenomenon of code-switching/switching/mixing in these letters. Rainey writes: "The Jerusalem scribes recognized three dialects: MB, Middle Assyrian and the hybrid language. The hybrid is a full fledged dialect alongside MB and MA!" ("The Hybrid Language," 853). Rainey begins with an analysis of several of the Jerusalem Amarna Letters, which as Moran [The Syrian Scribe," 146-166] first argued, were written by a scribe trained in a Syrian cuneiform tradition. He then moves to some examples from the Gezer Amarna Letters that also feature the use of code-mixing. Rainey's examples are restricted mainly to the verbs, which is interesting, as one would expect code-switching between these "dialects" to affect more that just the verbal system.

[690] Rainey's basic argument is that the forms in this letter are evidence that the scribe viewed all three to be viable "dialects" of Akkadian and alternated between them. I have replicated Rainey's analysis of these verbal forms, though I am using different styles of font, as opposed to different fonts to make the distinctions between these forms a bit more apparent. Italics represent an unmarked form, which is this case, follow Akkadian conventions and do not reflect a shift from OB to MB (e.g., the prepositions *ina* and *ana* and most lexical items are pretty consistent in Akkadian). Sumerograms are marked in capital letters. Words in bold that have a double underline are what Rainey designates as "hybrid forms," i.e., Canaano-Akkadian. MB orthographies are marked in bold, underlined, and italicized, and Middle Assyrian forms are underlined. I am retaining Rainey's classification for the purposes of showing his view on the language of the text.

[691] The transcription and translation are derived from Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (1), EA 286. The analysis of the verbs draws upon his 2010 article "The Hybrid Language," 852-853.

word order. The form *ta-ra-ia-m*[*u*] is a "hybrid" verb and a composite of the WS 2ms G indicative (*yaqtulu*), but the verbal root is the Akkadian verb *râmu.* The form ⌜*ta*⌝-*za-ia-ru* is a composite based on the WS 2ms G indicative (*yaqtulu*) and the Akkadian root *zâru.* The form *ú-ša-à-ru* is a hybrid as well. It is based on the 1cs D indicative (*yaqtulu*) and appears to fuction as though a Gp of the WS root **šrr, šwr*.[692] That is, the WS root appears to be Akkadianized, as it functions as a passive, yet is not internally marked as one would expect from a WS passive.

Table 30 The Verbs in EA 286

EA 286: 39-48	Verbs
39) *a-na-ku a-qa-bi* ***e-ru-ub-mi***	*a-qa-bi*: Akk. 1cs durative
40) *it-ti šàr-ri* EN-*ia ù* ***la-mur-mi***	***e-ru-ub-mi***: MB 1cs durative
41) 2 IGI.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia ù nu-kúr-tú*.MEŠ	***la-mur-mi***: MA 1cs precative[693]
42) KAL.GA *a-na mu-ḫi-ia* ⌜*ù*⌝ ***la a-la-⌜á'⌝-e***	***la a-la-⌜á'⌝-e:*** MA 1cs durative
43) ***e-ra-ba*** *iš-tu* LUGAL EN-*ia*	*li-it-ru-uṣ* : Akk. 3ms precative
44) *ù li-it-ru-uṣ i-na pa-ni* LUGAL [*ù*]	***lu-ma-še-ra***: MA
45) ***lu-ma-še-ra*** LÚ.MEŠ *ma-ṣar-ta*	***le-ru!(LU)-ub***: MA 1cs precative
46) *ù* ***le-ru*!(LU)-*ub*** *ù* ***la-mu-ur*** 2 [IGI.MEŠ]	***la-mu-ur***: MA 1cs precative
47) LUGAL EN-*ia* \ *e-nu-ma* LUGAL E[N-*ia*]	***it-ta-ṣú-ú:*** MB 3p Gt durative
48) [T]I.LA ⌜*e*⌝-⌜*nu*⌝-*ma* ***it-ta-ṣú-ú*** LÚ.M[ÁŠKIM.MEŠ]	

Translation (lines 39-52): I keep saying, "I will go in to the king, my lord, so that I may behold the two eyes of the king, my lord." But the hostility against me is strong and I am unable to go in to the king, my lord. So may it be pleasing in the sight of the king [so that] he may send a garrison troop that I may enter(!) and that I may behold the two [eyes] of the king, my lord. As the king, [my] lo[rd], lives, whenever the com[missioners] come forth…"

[692] The consensus is that this verbal root is WS as it is only used in the WS Amarna Letters. See *AHw* 1193; *CAD* Š/2 132b; *HALOT* 1454.

[693] The MA forms are not contracted and tend to reflect non-harmonization of the internal vowels in the verbal stem. See for example, the difference between *e-ru-ub-mi* and *e-ra-ba.*

In EA 286, the suffix conjugation is used in the main body of the letter to indicate the past tense, but the Akkadian durative (*iparras*) is used to designate the present. Though, when referring to the present, the scribe mainly shifts between use of prefixed MB and MA durative verbs.[694] In direct quotes, the scribe has a tendency to shift to "hybrid" verbal forms.[695]

b. Code-switching in EA 286, a Sociolinguistic Analysis

A more sociolinguistic approach that examines the contextual cues triggering the "shifts," elucidates the cognitive process of the cuneiform scribes navigating between these diverse scribal traditions. EA 286 offers insight into the skill of the Jerusalem scribe, who navigated between (at least) three orthographic traditions. Code-switching in this letter appears to be a means of marking the metapragmatic structure of the letter, as opposed to being merely linguistic. This and the use of glosses serve to highlight key parts of the message. The navigation between MB and MA forms is a reflection of the scribe's own northern training. The more "Canaanite" Akkadian forms demonstrate the scribe's adherence, in part, to the conventions used in the southern Levant to write to Egypt. Canaanite cuneiforms scribes did not write in the more prestigious Akkadian of the north (that used by the "great" powers), but wrote in a local register that was less prestigious, but was understood by scribes at the Pharaoh's court. The scribe working for 'Abdi-Ḫeba thus accommodated the language of

[694] Rainey, "The Hybrid Language," 852-853.

[695] For example, in two lines of direct speech in lines 5-6, we have use of a Canaanite suffix *-ti* applied to the Akkadian verb *epēšu*, a standard Akkadian durative from the verb *akālu*, and a Canaanite GP or DP of the verb *šâru*, which is a Canaanite verbal root: EA 286:5-6 *ma-an-na ep-ša-ti a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia/i-ka-lu ka-ar-ṣi*!(MURUB4)-*ya* \ *ú-ša-a-ru* "What have I done to the king, my lord? They are maligning me; I am being maligned before the king" (1cs NWS Suffix conjugation; 3mp durative Akk; 1cs G passive of *šâru*).

the letter, not to a Jerusalem "dialect" of Akkadian, but to the written conventions deemed appropriate to interact with Egyptian officials.

"Discourse" Analysis of EA 286: Transliteration and Translation[696]

The following offers an analysis of the verbal forms in this letter. Each thematic sub-section is evaluated. The speaker, subject of the verbs, and the context appear to inform code-switching between Canaano-Akkadian, MB and MA forms. The format is as follows: lines numbers; section heading and/or an identification of the "speaker" and the subjects of the section; also, a comment about whether or not the passage is presented as direct speech; and a classification of the verbal forms and their number.

(1-4)
Introduction[697]

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[696] In order to highlight the correlation between the speaker, subject matter and the used of both direct and reported speech in this letter and the shifts in orthography, I have sub-divided this letter according to the shifts in speaker and topic. I have also provided a detailed analysis of the structural devices used in this letter, which elucidates how code-switching in this letter served to highlight key passages. As with the above example, the MB verbs that are "marked" and "unmarked" according to Rainey's schema are underlined here. MA words are in bold and the Canaanized or "hybrid" forms are in bold and have a double underline. Some of the verbal forms are ambiguous. For example, the 3ms Canaanite suffixed form *qatala* is quite similar to the 3ms predicative Akkadian form *paras-* or *parsu*, depending on whether or not there is an added suffix; the same applies for 3fs forms such as *ḫal-qa-at!*(*AB*)*-mi* (line 22). The more ambiguous words are underlined with a dotted line. For example, an understanding of Canaano-Akkadian as a scribal system and not a phonological system renders the omission of the final –*a* vowel insignificant to the meaning of the text. I tend to view such forms as Canaano-Akkadian rather than MB because it appears that the scribe did make a choice not to use the Akkadian preterite. This suggests a preference for the using learned Canaano-Akkadian forms to denote the past, which are ultimately influenced by WS. When the forms concern the Pharaoh, which would entail a higher register of language, or when they are used expressly as statives, I tend to view them as MB. That is to say, I consider the indexicality of the orthographies in the text as well as where they appear in the letter (i.e., in direct speech, or in a passage that expresses defiance etc.), and how register of language employed is affected by the subject matter.

[697] In the above analysis AH refers to 'Abdi-Ḫeba and P to the Pharaoh; CA designates Canaano-Akkadian forms.

The heading is followed by a prostration formula that is framed as the direct speech of AH (1cs). The verbal forms here are MB (2). The retention of MB forms in the formulaic introductions of these letters, in particular the verbs *qabû* and *maqātu*, is standard for the Canaanite Amarna Letters.

01) [*a*]-*na* [1]⌜LUGAL⌝ EN-*ia* ⌜*qí*⌝-⌜*bí*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝
02) *um-ma* [1]ÌR-*ḫé-ba* ÌR-*ka-ma*
03) *a-na* 2 GÌR.MEŠ EN-*ia šàr-ri*
04) 7-*ta-a-an ù* 7-*ta-a-an am-qut-mi*

"Speak [t]o the king, my lord; thus ʿAbdi-Ḫeba, your servant: at the feet of my lord, the king, seven times and seven times have I fallen."

(5-7)
Defense Against Accusations
Direct Speech: speaker is AH (1cs)
Subject: ʿAbdi-Ḫeba (AH) 1st person; officials (3mp)
Forms: CA (2); MB (1)

05) *ma-an-na ep-ša-ti a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia*
06) *i-ka-lu ka-ar-ṣi*!(MURUB4)-*ya* \ *ú-ša-a-ru*[698]
07) ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *pa-ni* LUGAL EN-*ri*

"What have I done to the king, my lord? They are maligning me; I am being maligned before the king, my lord."

(7b-8)
The Accusation
Direct Speech: the speakers are the officials; AH is refereed to in the 3ms;
Forms: CA/MB (1)

07b) [1]ÌR-*ḫé-ba*
08) *pa-ṭa-ar-mi a-na šàr-ri* EN-*šu*
"'Abdi-Ḫeba has deserted the king, his lord."

(9-13)

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[698] For other examples of this idiom see *CAD K* 222-223; also *akālu* 7d pp. 255-256; *AHw* K, 333; *HALOT,* 1148. The idiom is built around a metaphor; it has the more literal meaning of "gnawing at the pieces (of a person)," i.e., to slander them.

AH Affirms his Allegiance
Direct Speech: AH speaks.
Subjects: AH's parents; the Pharaoh is referred to indirectly by his "strong arm."
Forms: MB (3)

09) *a-mur a-na-ku la-a* LÚ *a-bi-ia*
10) *ù la-a* MUNUS *ú-mi-ia* \ *ša-ak-na-ni*
11) *i-na aš-ri an-ni-e*
12) ⌜*zu*⌝*-ru-uḫ šàr-ri* KAL.GA
13) ⌜*ú*⌝*-še-ri-ba-an-ni a-na* É LÚ*a-bi-ia*

"Look, as for me, neither my father nor my mother put me in this place. The strong arm of the king installed me in the house of my father."

(14-17)
AH's Rebuttal
Direct Speech: AH (1cs)
Subject: AH 1cs
Forms: MB (2)

14) ⌜*am*⌝*-mi-nim-mi a-na‹-ku› e-*⌜*pu*⌝*-uš*
15) \ *ar-na a-na* LUGAL EN-*ri*
16) *a-di* LUGAL EN-*ia* TI.LA
17) *a-qa-bi a-na* LÚ MÁŠKIM LUGAL ⌜EN⌝-[*ia*]

"Why would I (of all people) commit a crime against the king, ‹my› lord? As (long as) the king, my lord, lives, I will say to the commissioner of the king, my lord,"

(18-22a)
AH Reproaches the Pharaoh's Official
Direct speech: AH addressed the commissioner of the king.
Forms: CA (3); MB (1)

18) *am-mi-nim-mi ta-ra-ia-m*[*u*]
19) LÚ *ḫa-pí-ri ù* LÚ.MEŠ *ḫa-z*[*i-a-nu-ti*]
20) ⌜*ta*⌝*-za-ia-ru ù ki-na-an-na*
21) *ú-ša-à-ru i-na pa-ni* LUGAL EN-*ia*
22a) *e-nu-ma à-qa-bi*

"Why do you love the *ʿapîru* and hate the city [rulers]?" Thus I am maligned in the presence of the king, my lord, because I am saying"

(22b-24)
The Region is in Turmoil
Direct Speech: AH 1st speaks to the Pharaoh
Subjects: the lands (fs); AH
Forms: MB/CA (1); CA (1)

22b) *ḫal-qa-at*!(AB)-*mi*[699]
23) KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN-*ia ki-na-an-na*
24) *ú-ša-à-ru a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia*

""Lost are the lands of the king, my lord," thus am I slandered to the king, my lord."

(25-27)
The Garrison

Direct Speech: AH
Subject: P
Forms: MB (2)

25) *ù li-de4-mi* [l]LUGAL EN-*ia*
26) *e-nu-ma ša-ka-an*[700] LUGAL EN-*ia*
27) [L]Ú.MEŠ *ma-ṣar-ta*

"So may the king, my lord, be apprised that the king, my lord, placed a garrison (here)"

(27b-31)
Yenḫamu's Crime
Direct Speech: AH
Subject: Yenḫamu
Forms: CA (1)

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[699] The "lands" are treated as a collective. The form *ḫal-qa-at* is fronted before the subject (VS). This form could be added to the ledger of Canaano-Akkadian forms, though formally it could also be a 3fs Akkadian predicative form since it is operating as a stative.

[700] This form is particularly ambiguous as it is formally a 3ms predicative form, though it precedes a Canaano-Akkadian suffix form. I view it as an MB form here, as it refers to the Pharaoh, which would warrant a higher register of Akkadian.

27b) *la-qí-mi*
28) [*gáb*]-⌜*ba*⌝-*š*[*a*] ⁱ*E-en-ḫa-mu*
29) [*ù ša-ka-an i-na* É]-⌜*šu*⌝ [*ù*] ⌜30⌝
30) [LÚ.MEŠ *ú-ma-še-er*]
31) [*a-na*]⌜KUR⌝ *M*[*i*]-*iṣ ri*⌜KI⌝ [*ù*]

"(but) Yenḫamu took [al]l of it. [He installed them in his house and] 30 [men he sent to] the land of Egypt"

32-34
The Troops are Missing
Direct Speech: AH
Subject: P; the garison
Forms: MB (1)

32) [*li-de*4-*mi*] ⌜LUGAL⌝ ⌜EN⌝-⌜*ri*⌝
33) [*ia-a-*]⌜*nu*⌝-*mi*⌜⌜LÚ⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝ *ma-ṣar-*⌜*ta*⌝
34) [*ù*] *l*[*i-iš-*]*ki-in*4 LUGAL *a-na* KUR-*šu*

" [May] the kin[g], my lord, [be apprised]: [There are] no garrison troops. [So] may the king show concern for his land."

(35-38)
The Land is Lost
Direct Speech: AH
Subject: P; Ilimilku; the lands
Forms: MB (4)

35) [*li-d*]*e*4-*m*[*i*] ⌜LUGAL⌝ *a-na* KUR-*šu pa-ṭa-*⌜*ra*⌝-⌜*at*⌝
36) ⌜KUR⌝.⌜ḪI.A⌝ LUGAL EN *gáb‹-ba›-ša* ⁱ*I-li-mil-ku*
37) *i-ḫal-li-iq gáb-bi* KUR *šàr-ri*
38) *ù li-is-kín* LUGAL EN *a-na* KUR-*šu*

"[May] the king be apprised concerning his land: The lands of the king, (my) lord, have deserted, all of them. Ilimilku is causing the loss of all the king's land. So may the king, (my) lord, show concern for his land."

39-43
AH Wishes to Travel to Egypt
Direct speech: AH
Subject: AH
Forms: MB (2); MA (3)

39) *a-na-ku* *a-qa-bi* *e-ru-ub-mi*
40) *it-ti šàr-ri* EN-*ia ù* ***la-mur-mi***
41) 2 IGI.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia ù nu-kúr-tú*MEŠ
42) KAL.GA *a-na mu-ḫi-ia* ⌜*ù*⌝ ***la a-la-⌜á'⌝-e***
43) ***e-ra-ba*** *iš-tu* LUGAL EN-*ia*

"I keep saying, "I will go in to the king, my lord, so that I may behold the two eyes of the king, my lord." But the hostility against me is strong and I am unable to go in to the king, my lord."

(44)
Speaker: AH
Subject: P
Forms: MB (1)

44) *ù* *li-it-ru-uṣ* *i-na pa-ni* LUGAL

"So may it be pleasing in the sight of the king"

(45-48)
The Commissioners
Direct Speech: AH
Subject: the Pharaoh's commissioners
Forms: MA (3)
MB (1)

[*ù*]
45) ***lu-ma-še-ra*** LÚ.MEŠ *ma-ṣar-ta*
46) *ù* ***le-ru*!(LU)-*ub*** *ù* ***la-mu-ur*** 2 [IGI.MEŠ]
47) LUGAL EN-*ia*
\ *e-nu-ma* LUGAL E[N-*ia*]
48) [T]I.LA ⌜*e*⌝-⌜*nu*⌝-*ma* *it-ta-ṣú-ú* LÚ.M[ÁŠKIM.MEŠ]

"[(45-46) so that] he may send a garrison troop that I may enter(!) and that I may behold the two

[eyes] of the king, my lord. As the king, [my] lo[rd], lives, whenever the com[missioners] come forth"

(49-50)
The Lands are Lost
Direct Speech: AH 1st
Subjects: the lands; the commissioners
Forms: MB (2); CA (1)

49) ⌜*a*⌝-*qa-bi* ⌜*ḫal*⌝-*qa-at-mi* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL E[N-*ia ù*]
50) ***la ta-ša-mé-ú***[701] *a-na ia-a-ši*

"I say, "Lost are the lands of the king, [my] lo[rd," but] they do not listen to me."

(51-52)
The City Rulers are Lost
Direct Speech: AH
Subject: nearby rulers
Forms: MB (1)

51) *ḫal-qu-mi* ⌜*gáb*⌝-*bi* LÚ.MEŠ *ḫa-zi-a-nu-ti*
52) *ia-a-nu-mi* LÚ *ḫa-zi-a-nu a-na* LUGAL EN‹-*ia*›
"All of the city rulers are lost. The king, ‹my› lord, has no city ruler."

(53-55)
Military Aid
Direct Speech: AH
Subject: P; troops
Forms: MB (2)

53) *li-din* LUGAL *pa-ni-šu a-na* LÚ.MEŠ *pi-ṭa-ti*
54) *ù lu-ṣi-mi* LÚ.MEŠ ÉRIN *pi-ṭa-ti*

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[701] This form is quite interesting as it displays the lack of vowel harmony of MA; the subject is a plural "lands" yet a f. noun. The final –*u* vowel is either a plural marker or a marker of the indicative in WS. It seems to reflect the unique mix of the scribe's northern Levantine scribal training and the influence of the local Canaano-Akkadian tradition. This form does seem to be an Akkadographic spelling comprising of the prefix *ta-*, the verbal stem *šemû*+ the final –*u* marking the 3pl: *ta-ŠAMÊ-ū*.

55) LUGAL EN-*ia ia-a-nu-mi* KUR.ḪI.A *a-na* LUGAL

"May the king turn his attention to the regular troops so that the regular troops of the king, my lord, may come forth. The king has no lands!"

(56)
The ʿApiru
Direct Speech: AH
Subject: ʿApiru[702]
Forms: CA/MB (1)

56) LÚ.MEŠ *ḫa-pí-ru ḫa-ḫat gáb-bi* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL

"The *ʿapîru* men have plundered all the lands of the king."

(57-60)
The Troops and Lands
Direct Speech: AH
Subjects: troops; lands
Forms: MB (3)
Key framing device:
*Use of *šum-ma* to structure the two key topics: 1) the troops and 2) the lands.[703]

57) *šum-ma i-ba-aš-ši*[704] LÚ ÉRIN.MEŠ *pi-ṭa-ti*
58) *i-na* MU *an-ni-ti i-ba-aš-ši* KUR.ḪI.A
59) LUGAL EN‹-*ia*› *ù šum-ma ia-a-nu-mi* LÚ ÉRIN *pi-*⌜*ṭa*⌝*-ti*
60) ⌜*ḫal*⌝*-qa-at* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN-*ia*

"{A} If there are regular troops in this year,
{B} there will still be lands of the king, ‹my› lord."

"{A'}But if there are no regular troops,

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[702] The verb here is fs, which reinforces the notion that a form formally similar to the fs/p can be used to refer collectively to a mp subject/object. This is a WS feature that is attested in the northern Levant, in particular, at Amurru and Ugarit.

[703] See EA 286:64

[704] This feature is used in the Periphery and is not unique to Canaano-Akkadian.

{B'} the lands of the king, my lord, are lost."

(61-64)
Postscript
Private aside to the scribe
*Repetition of lines 60, which appear to be the key section of the text that AH seeks to communicate the Pharaoh

61) Introduction (verbless clause)
61) [*a-n*]*a* ⌜*ṭup*⌝-*šar* ⌜LUGAL⌝ EN-*ia um-ma* I⌜ÌR⌝-⌜*ḫé*⌝-⌜*ba*⌝

"[T]o the scribe of the king, my lord, thus 'Abdi-Ḫeba, your [ser]vant:"

(62-63)
Instructions for the Translation of the Letters
Direct speech: AH
Forms: MB (1)

62) [Ì]R-*ka-ma* \ *<u>še-ri-ib</u>* *a-wa-ti.*⌜MEŠ⌝
63a) ⌜*ba*⌝-*na-ta a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia*

""Present eloquent words to the king, my lord"

(63b-64)
The Lands are Lost
Direct Speech: AH
*Echos the key refrain from the body of the letter
Forms: MB (1)

63b) *<u>ḫal-qa-at</u>*
64) ⌜*gáb*⌝-*bi* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN-*ia*

"{B"} [Al]l of the lands of the king, my lord, are lost!"

EA 286 Analysis

This letter demonstrates how the scribe used various techniques to guide his scribal counterpart(s) in Egypt to the proper decoding of this message. Canaano-Akkadian orthographies tend to cluster

around ‘Abdi-Ḫeba’s speech when he is the subject (lines 5-6; 18-21; 24). This is particularly the case in the dramatic moments in the letter, such as ‘Abdi-Ḫeba’s defense (in lines 5, 18-21, 23-24) and in his accusation of Yenhamu (line 27). The MB forms occur in the metapragmatic framework of the letter, such as in the introduction and the structuring devices. For example, the verb *qabû* is used to structure the letter by marking the use of direct speech [lines 17, 22, 39, 49]). Also, MB forms occur when the Pharaoh is the agent of the action, also when the letter refers to the Pharaoh, which may be a way to show respect (lines 13, 25-26, 34-35, 38, 44, 53-54). Use of MB and Canaano-Akkadian then appears to relate to the status of the participants, as a way of marking deference.

In EA 286: 39-52, has a cluster of MB and Middle Assyrian. Rather than view this as code-switching in the spoken dialect of the scribe, it appears that these forms serve to highlight this passage.

EA 286: 39-52
a-na-ku *a-qa-bi*
e-ru-ub-mi *it-ti šàr-ri* EN-*ia* *ù* ***la-mur-mi*** 2 IGI.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia*
ù nu-kúr-tú.MEŠ KAL.GA *a-na mu-ḫi-ia*
⌜*ù*⌝ ***la a-la-⌜á'⌝-e*** (43) ***e-ra-ba*** *iš-tu* LUGAL EN-*ia*
ù li-it-ru-uṣ i-na pa-ni LUGAL
[*ù*] ***lu-ma-še-ra*** LÚ.MEŠ *ma-ṣar-ta*
ù ***le-ru*!(LU)-*ub*** *ù* ***la-mu-ur*** 2 [IGI.MEŠ] LUGAL EN-*ia*
\ *e-nu-ma* LUGAL E[N-*ia*] (48) [T]I.LA
⌜*e*⌝-⌜*nu*⌝-*ma* *it-ta-ṣú-ú* LÚ.M[ÁŠKIM.MEŠ]
⌜*a*⌝-*qa-bi*
⌜*ḫal*⌝-*qa-at-mi* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL E[N-*ia ù*]
la ta-ša-mé-ú *a-na ia-a-ši*
ḫal-qu-mi ⌜*gáb*⌝-*bi* LÚ.MEŠ *ḫa-zi-a-nu-ti*
ia-a-nu-mi LÚ *ḫa-zi-a-nu a-na* LUGAL EN‹-*ia*›

“I keep saying,
“I will go in to the king, my lord, so that I may behold the two eyes of the king, my lord.”

But the hostility against me is strong and I am unable to go in to the king, my lord.
So may it be pleasing in the sight of the king [so that] he may send a garrison troop
that I may enter(!) and that I may behold the two [eyes] of the king, my lord.
As the king, [my] lo[rd], lives, whenever the com[missioners] come forth,

I say,

"Lost are the lands of the king, [my] lo[rd," but] they do not listen to me.
All of the city rulers are lost. The king, ‹my› lord, has no city ruler.

The verbs that introduce a new topic in are written in MB; they are a part of the metapragmatic framework of the message (e.g., *a-na-ku a-qa-bi* in line 39 and ⌜*a*⌝-*qa-bi* in line 49). The verbs referring to the Pharaoh in this passage are either MB or MA, and are a higher register than Canaano-Akkadian.[705]

The MA forms are perhaps the most interesting part of this letter. They appear to be clustered around lines 39-47, which is a thematic unit built around an expression that refers to 'Abdi-Ḫeba "seeing" the Pharaoh. This idiom appears to have been what prompted the scribe to revert to the orthography of his/her scribal training to MA. This expression comprises the verb *amāru* "to see" in the precative, followed by the sequence 2 IGI.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia*. As seen below, the structure of this section makes use of the verb *erēbu,* which introduces the expression "to meet face to face with;" this second expression comprises the verb *amāru* and the string IGI.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia*. This idiom is shortened in line 46 and is gapped (i.e., implied) by the full idiom in line 40b. The parallel expressions in lines 39-41//46-47a serve as bookends that highlight the key part of this letter, which is the demand for military aid in lines 42-45.

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[705] EA 286: 39b-*e-ru-ub-mi it-ti šàr-ri* EN-*ia ù* ***la-mur-mi*** 2 IGI.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia;* 286: 42-43 *ù*⌝ ***la ; la***-⌜***á***'⌝-***e e-ra-ba*** *iš-tu* LUGAL EN-*ia ù li-it-ru-us i-na pa-ni* LUGAL; 286:45 ***lu-ma-še-ra*** LÚ.MEŠ *ma-ṣar-ta;* 286: 46-47 *ù* ***le-ru*!(LU)-*ub*** *ù* ***la-mu-ur*** 2 [IGI.MEŠ] LUGAL EN-*ia*; 286:50 ***la ta-ša-mé-ú.***

There is a sudden shift in line 44 to a more classic Babylonian orthography in the formulaic expression *li-it-ru-uṣ i-na pa-ni LUGAL* "may it please the King," comprising the verb *tarāṣu+ ina pāni* PN i.e., "to be pleasing in the sight of PN."[706] This appears to be a calque from WS, though it is expressed using the precative rather than the WS jussive (the Canaano-Akkadian form *yaqtul*). Use of the precative is a reflection of the scribe's training, as he was more "classically" trained than his peers in the southern Levant. Also, use of the precative, as opposed to the Canaano-Akkadian jussive, tends to be in contexts where the Pharaoh is being appealed to, and appears to be contextually motivated as a higher prestige, more reverent register of Akkadian.[707]

The structure of the letter highlights the content of the message:

{Speaker AH} 39) *a-na-ku a-qa-bi* [Structuring device]	
	39b) e-ru-ub-mi [MB]
	40) it-ti šàr-ri EN-*ia*
	40b) ù la-mur-mi
	41a) 2 IGI.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia* [MA]
	41b) ù nu-kúr-tú.MEŠ
	42) KAL.GA *a-na mu-ḫi-ia*
	42b) ⌜*ù*⌝ *la a-la-*⌜*á*'⌝*-e* [MA]
	43) e-ra-ba iš-tu LUGAL EN-*ia* [MA]
{*Subject Pharaoh*}	*44) ù li-it-ru-uṣ i-na pa-ni* LUGAL[*ù*] [MB]
	45) lu-ma-še-ra LÚ.MEŠ *ma-ṣar-ta* [MA]

[706] The verb *tarāṣu* I has the basic meaning "to reach, stretch out" in Akkadian; the second meaning of this verb "to be right, ordered, correct" is much rarer *AHw tarāṣu* I, 1326-1327 and *tarāṣu* II, 1327; *CAD tarāṣu,* 208-215 and *tarāṣu* B, 215-217.

[707] This expression is quite interesting as it only appears Canaanite Amarna Letters: Byblos: EA 74:59; 92:46; 103:40; 106:28, 35 and 41; Kômidi: EA 198:24; an unidentified sender from Canaan: EA 219:27; Gath-padalla: EA 250:22; Jerusalem: EA 286:44 [this letter]; Gath: EA 366:28. Von Soden also cites a Bo. St 8 Letter 5: 13 in the Hittite Akkadian corpus, however this is reconstructed and is not in the actual tablet. The tablet is quite broken but the use of PA as a verbal prefix *y*V- suggests a Canaanite origin (e.g., *yi-pu*-? and ⌜*yu*⌝-[*uš-ši-ra*]). Bo. ST 8 Letter 5: 13 has the following reconstruction: *a-na pa-ni a-bi-ia ki-i ta*[*r-zu a-na pa-ni-ia*] (78; cf. 3); see also Ebeling *VAB* II S. 1529. *Note: I have updated the –*ia* instead of –*ja* which is an older transcription.

46) ù le-ru!(LU)*-ub ù la-mu-ur* 2 [IGI.MEŠ] [MB;MA]
47) LUGAL EN-ia

The idiom "to see the face of my lord" is a framing device that emphasizes lines 41b-45. Use of MA and MB orthographies set this section apart linguistically as being in a "higher" register of language than the rest of the letter. The MA forms and this idiom work together to highlight this passage for the recipient scribe. There is a shift in line 41b where the scribe introduces the true gist of this message, which is a subtle critique of Egyptian governance in the region. The Pharaoh's territories are so poorly managed that 'Abdi-Ḫeba deems it unsafe to venture to Egypt. Whether or not 'Abdi-Ḫeba actually ever intended to journey to the Egyptian capital is unclear. His purported desire to visit the Pharaoh in person becomes the basis for a critique of the way that the highlands are being mismanaged. Rather than out right accuse the Pharaoh of incompetence, this letter expresses a complaint that 'Abdi-Ḫeba would like to visit and pay his respects, but is unable due to the dangers of the journey. By code-switching, the scribe is able to remain within the conventions of polite language, and yet express 'Abdi-Ḫeba's frustration with the recent decline of the hill country.

Though this shift in scribal code has typically been analyzed linguistically, an analysis of what contextual "triggers' may have occasioned the shifts in code sheds light into the practice of code-mixing in the Canaanite Amarna Letters. These cues are not linguistic *per se*, as they would not have been a part of the oral version of this message that was spoken in a Canaanite dialect of Jerusalem. Also, in Egyptian, the final form of this message was at the mercy of the scribe/officials translating it. Rather, the shifts in code in this letter were a part of metapragmatic framework of this letter; they

served to communicate to the cuneiform scribe receiving and translating this text the sections that warranted careful interpretation and translation. In the case of the shift from Canaano-Akkadian forms to refer to ʻAbdi-Ḫeba to a higher register of Akkadian to refer to the Pharaoh, it is possible that the Egyptian versions of these letters when they were translated and read aloud would have also used a lesser prestigious register of Egyptian for ʻAbdi-Ḫeba's "speech" and more reverent language for the Pharaoh.

The repetition of the line "all the lands of the king, my lord, are lost," at the end of the letter underscores the warning of the consequences if the Pharaoh does not send troops. It also serves as a rebuttal to the accusations introduced in the beginning of the letter, as it emphasizes the severity of ʻAbdi-Ḫeba's situation. The parallelism appears to be a part of oral-poetic style meant to make a compelling case to the Pharaoh and his officials concerning the need for increased military presence in the region.

Lines 58-60

{A} *šum-ma i-ba-aš-ši*[708] LÚ ÉRIN.MEŠ *pi-ṭa-ti*
{B} *i-na* MU *an-ni-ti i-ba-aš-ši* KUR.ḪI.A / LUGAL EN‹*-ia*›

{A'} *ù šum-ma ia-a-nu-mi* LÚ ÉRIN *pi-⌜ṭa⌝-ti*
{B'} *⌜ḫal⌝-qa-at* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN-*ia*

{A} If there are regular troops in this year,
{B} there will still be lands of the king, ‹my› lord.

{A'} But if there are no regular troops,
{B'} the lands of the king, my lord, are lost.

[708] This feature is used in the Periphery and it not only a Canaano-Akkadian form.

These two clauses are structured in the same way. *šum-ma* is followed by the positive outcome if the Pharaoh does indeed send troops: *i-ba-aš-ši* + the troops is in parallelism with the result clause *i-ba-aš-ši* + the land will be the Pharaoh's. The reference to the troops and the security of the land is an indirect reference to the hostility facing ʿAbdi-Ḫeba in lines 41b-45, which is the reason why he is unable to travel.

The second clause in lines 59-60 outlines what will happen if the troops are not sent. Again, the clause begins with *šum-ma* and the negative act (he does not send out the troops)+ the negative outcome (the land will fall away). The language here is characteristic of that of the vassal letters to Egypt. There is no verb in these clauses, the use of *i-ba-aš-ši* as a particle of existence (though it is sometimes conjugated as an active verb in Canaano-Akkadian) is contrasted with *yânu*, which is a particle of negative.

The letters ends with this warning, though there is an additional aside to the scribe receiving this letter. The postscript in lines 61-64 is an appeal to the scribe that gives inscriptions about the transmission and translation of this portion of the message:

Postscript EA 286: 61-64

61) [*a-n*]*a* ⌜*ṭup*⌝-*šar* ⌜LUGAL⌝ EN-*ia um-ma* ˹⌜ÌR⌝-⌜*ḫé*⌝-⌜*ba*⌝
62) [Ì]R-*ka-ma* \ *še-ri-ib a-wa-ti.*⌜MEŠ⌝
63) ⌜*ba*⌝-*na-ta a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia ḫal-qa-at*
64) ⌜*gáb*⌝-*bi* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN-*ia*
"[T]o the scribe of the king, my lord, thus ʿAbdi-Ḫeba, your [ser]vant:
"Present eloquent words to the king, my lord; [al]l of the lands of the king, my lord, are lost!"

The introduction to the postscript makes use of a simpler formula than that at the beginning of the letter and refers explicitly to the scribe receiving this letter:[709] 62-63a [Ì]R-*ka-ma* \ *<u>še-ri-ib</u>* *a-wa-ti*⌜MEŠ⌝/⌜*ba*⌝-*na-ta a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia* "Present eloquent words to the king, my lord." The letter then quotes the body of the main message (lines 58-59). This suggests that the scribe is using the postscript to reinforce the request for troops calling the Pharaoh to action:

> Lines 63b-64
> {B"} *<u>ḫal-qa-at</u>* /⌜*gáb*⌝-*bi* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN-*ia*
> {B"} [Al]l of the lands of the king, my lord are lost!"

In line 64, the temporal adverb in the expression *i-na* MU *an-ni-ti* in this year" is lacking. Rather, the threat is rephrased in a way that makes it appear to be more immediate. The tenor of this final appeal is quite dramatic. The addition of *gabbi* ("All of the lands…") reframes this second "message within a message" as being quite urgent. The letter then ends with a warning that the Pharaoh's power is being challenged, and that "all is in the process of being lost."[710] That is the say, they are in the process of being lost—they are not quite lost yet. The Pharaoh still has time to act, namely, to "send troops" and reclaim his land.

In conclusion, in this data set, all of the metapragmatic elements adhere to MB forms (e.g., the verbs in the introduction and the forms of *qabû*). Such verbs are not really a part of the actual message

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[709] Mynarova classifies the introduction here as Type 1: *ana* addressee>*umma* + sender, which is commonly used in letters addressed to a superior. The "real" introduction falls into Mynarova's Type 2: *ana* addressee+ imperative of *qabû*+ *umma*>sender (*Language of Amarna,* 117-118). The title ⌜*ṭup*⌝-*šar* ⌜LUGAL⌝ EN may be a calque for the Egyptian titles (*sš nswt*) "Royal Scribe" and "royal scribe" or "royal secretary" or *sš nswt mɜ'.t* "true Royal Scribe/Royal Secretary" (Ibid., 95-98; for a discussion of Type 1 see 116-117).

[710] Rainey translates *<u>ḫal-qa-at</u>* as a 3fs past tense, based on the context and form, an alternative interpretation is that it is an Akkadian 3fs stative.

were used to frame the direct speech of the king. The epistolary formulae in the beginning of letters and the verbs used to structure the body of the letters should be classified separately, as they serve a metapragmatic function and organize the letter. The verbs here appear to be learned spellings that were part of the protocol of letter writing. The prepositions are also "good" Akkadian; moreover, the nouns in this passage are written in Akkadian or using Sumerograms as opposed to Canaanite syllabic spellings. Only the verbs and word order are affected by the Canaanite substrate language. The "hybrid" spellings in this letter are clustered in contexts of direct speech.[711] The scribe was presumably from the north and not a Jerusalem native. Does then the language of the Jerusalem letters then reflect that of the scribe, a Canaanite dialect spoken in Jerusalem, or the speech of the king commissioning this letter? The view adopted here is that this letter is best analyzed, not as an accurate transcription of speech, but as part of a diplomatic code used in Canaanite-Egyptian relations. The Egyptians working in the "Levantine" foreign office had a knowledge of WS; also, they knew Canaano-Akkadian, which was the formal written register deemed appropriate for such diplomatic missives. For this reason, despite the scribe's northern training, he/she used Canaano-Akkadian forms when referring to 'Abdi-Ḫeba.

The postscript serves as an additional appeal to the scribe and seems to be instructive about the content of the message. This and the shift to MB and MA forms in lines 39-47 serve as a "guide" of sorts for the interpretation of this letter. The code-switching is not a refection of a composite spoken

[711] The "hybrid" form in the expression *akālu+ karṣu* is glossed with a WS form in line 6: *i-ka-lu ka-ar-ṣi*! (MURUB4)-*ya* \ *ú-ša-a-ru*. The form *ú-ša-a-ru* "I am being maligned," is a Gp passive, which is a form not found in Akkadian.

dialect, with three linguistic streams, nor is it a transcription of the Akkadian "spoken" in Jerusalem. Rather, this is a multifaceted text that was influenced by the oral text spoken by 'Abdi-Ḫeba, or his counselors, Canaano-Akkadian, the written means of communication with Egypt in this region, and the original training of this scribe in a "higher" prestige scribal tradition. Scribes, like those working for 'Abdi-Ḫeba, used what was in their scribal arsenal to their advantage. All three strands here are woven together to make a compelling argument. The scribe code-switches at pivotal moments in the letter to signal to the scribes at the Pharaoh's court. We are not dealing with "shifts" in dialect, but rather in a code used to communicate in writing between two scribal bodies—the loose conglomerate of cuneiform scribe working in Canaan and those working directly for the Egyptian court.

2. The Gezer Letters Written at the Egyptian Center at Gaza

a. **Code-switching in EA 300, a Sociolinguistic Analysis**

The clays in EA 300, a letter from Yapa'i of Gezer, match the soil between Raphia and Ashkelon. This letter was written at the Egyptian center on the coast.[712] This suggests that Yapa'i either traveled to Ashkelon and commissioned a scribe at Ashkelon, or that these letters were written and dispatched from Gaza.[713] The latter is more probable, as this was the main depot for letters sent to

[712] This letter is written on behalf of Yapa'i of Gezer, though as Knudtzon first observed, the paleography of EA 298-300 (to which Vita adds EA 378) stand apart as the work of scribes trained in the same paleographic conventions. Vita ascribes this sub-corpus to two scribes at Ashkelon: EA 298-299 and 378 are the work of Ashkelon Scribe 4, which also includes EA 301-306 and 313; EA 300 is grouped along with EA 307-308, 309(?), 321, and 329 as the work of Ashkelon Scribe 3. He proposes that EA 300 and 309 may be the work of the same scribe, as they share similar paleography (e.g., use of *qa* for ka_4 which is attested in letters from Ashkelon). Other hallmarks of the Ashkelon scribes include the use of a different writing of the sign/*na*/ when it occurs after *a* (e.g., as in *a-na* versus *i-na*) (*Canaanite Scribes,* 82, 91-95, 103-107 Pl. LXIII, LXXXI; Goren et al., *Inscribed in Cla*y, 273-274).

[713] Goren et al. view the composition of these letters at an Egyptian center to be a reflection of Yapai's political

Egypt on the coast. J-P Vita classifies EA 300 being one of the letters in the historical corpus of Gezer butas a part of the linguistic corpus of Ashkelon. This accords with his view that the Amarna Letters reflect the dialects of the scribes that wrote them, and not necessarily the polities that sent them.[714] When approached as "language," we are again left with the problem of whose language: that of a scribe from Ashkelon or Gezer, Yapa'i, or that of a scribe working at the Egyptian base at Gaza?

EA 300 presents an interesting conundrum as it contains forms that are not common in either the Amarna Letters from Ashkelon or Gezer for that matter. At a key juncture in this letter, it shifts from Canaano-Akkadian to a verbal form that is MB. As discussed above, this is one of two such uses of the GTN with the *št>lt* shift, the other being in EA 378, which is also a letter from Ashkelon that was written on behalf of Yapa'i. Again, we must decide whether or not such a shift in code is dialectal or rather was a means of marking the written text. The later understanding views code-mixing in the diplomatic letters of this period as a part of the metapragmatic structure of the letters. Such marked forms served as a cues or signals to the recipient that guided them to a particular reading and/or translation of the text.

The initial discussion of this letter established the presence of code-switching in this corpus,

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problems, as he was constantly consulting with Egyptian officials (*Inscribed in Clay,* 274; quote 323-324; see also Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 95).

[714] As Vita writes, "[W]e believe that we can accept as a working hypothesis that a scribe reproduced in his writings his own language and grammar first and foremost, even more so than the language of the location where he worked…The letters from kings of different kingdoms that were written by the same scribe, must, in principle, be considered as a unit form the point of view of the language" (*Canaanite Scribes,* 133-135; quote 135).

whereas the analysis below seeks to understand what contextual cues triggered such a shift.[715] The variant spellings are approached as a reflection of written registers of Akkadian and diverse scribal conventions in the Periphery and how they were drawn upon by scribes in Canaan to create a compelling written text. I am primarily interested in understanding the impetus for the shifts in code seen below and what they can tell us about the scribes writing and receiving these letters.

EA 300 — TRANSCRIPTION

01) [*a-na* LUGAL E]N-*ia* [DI]NG[IR.MEŠ-*ia*]
02) [^{d}UTU-*ia*] ^{d}[UT]U ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜*iš*⌝-*t*[*u*]
03) [AN *ša*$_{10}$-*mì*] ⌜*qí*⌝-[*b*]*í*-⌜*ma*⌝ [*um-ma*]
04) [^{I}*Ia-pa-ḫi* LÚ *š*]a
05) [URU] ⌜*Gaz*⌝-⌜*ri*⌝⌜KI⌝ ⌜ÌR⌝-*ka*$_{4}$
06) ⌜*ù*⌝ ⌜*ep*⌝-⌜*ri*⌝ ⌜*ša*⌝ 2 ⌜GÌR⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝- *ka*$_{4}$
07) ⌜LÚ⌝ ⌜*kàr*⌝-⌜*tap*⌝-⌜*pí*⌝ ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜ANŠE.⌜KUR⌝.⌜RA⌝.MEŠ-*ka*$_{4}$
08) ⌜*a*⌝-[*na*] 2 ⌜GÌR⌝.M[EŠ] ⌜LUGAL⌝ ⌜EN⌝-[*i*]*a*
09) ⌜7⌝-⌜*šu*⌝ ⌜*u*⌝ ⌜7⌝-⌜*ta*⌝-⌜*a*⌝-⌜*an*⌝
10a) ⌜*am*⌝-⌜*qut*⌝

10b) ⌜*li*⌝-⌜*de*⌝-⌜*mi*⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝
11) ⌜EN⌝-⌜*ia*⌝ *a*-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜ÌR⌝-⌜*šu*⌝
12) ⌜TI⌝.L[A] ⌜*ḫal*⌝-⌜*qa*⌝ ⌜*iš*⌝-⌜*tu*⌝
13) ⌜KUR⌝-⌜*ia*⌝ *u a-‹nu›-ma ia-nu*
14) ⌜*mi*⌝-⌜*im*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝ ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜*ia*⌝-⌜*ši*⌝

15) [*u*] ⌜*lu*⌝-⌜*ú* ⌝ ⌜*yu*⌝-⌜*wa*⌝-⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*a*⌝*r* ⌜LUGAL⌝
16) ⌜ÉRIN⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝ ⌜*pí*⌝-⌜*ṭá*⌝-⌜*ta*⌝-⌜*šu*⌝
17) *šu-nu* ⌜*ia*⌝-⌜*a*⌝-⌜*ti*⌝
18) *tu-šu-ra*!-*ba-ni*
19) *a-na* URU.DIDLI.KI-*ni-ia*
20) *u lu*-⌜*ú*⌝ *i-ru-da-am*
21) LUGAL EN-*ia ki-ma ša*
22) A.A-*ia u* ⌜AB⌝!.⌜BA⌝-*ti*[-*ia*(?)]

EA 300 — TRANSLATION

(1-10a) Sp[ea]k [to the king,] my [lo]rd, [my de]ity, [my sun god, the [sun god fro[m heaven; the message of Yapaʿi, the ruler o]f [the city of] Gezer, your servant and the dirt under your feet, the groom of your ho[r]ses: A[t] the feet of [the king, m]y lord seven times and seven times have I fallen.

(10b-14) May the king, my lord, be apprised concerning his servant. Lost are the provis[ions] from my land and n‹o›w I don't have anything.

(15-22) So may the king send his regular troops. They can restore me to my cities and I will verily serve the king, my lord like my father and [my(?)] ancestors.

[715] Rainey argued that Canaano-Akkadian was "recognized" by the scribes writing it to be an alternative to MB and MA ("The Hybrid Language," 853).

23) *u ša-ni-*⌜*tam*⌝ ⌜*él*⌝-*te*$_9$-⌜*né*⌝-⌜*mé*⌝ 24) ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *a*-⌜*wa*⌝-⌜*te*⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝ EN-*ia* 25) ⌜*u*⌝ *iš-te*$_9$*-mu* [*a-na*] ⌜*a*⌝-*wa*-⌜*te*⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝ 26) ⌜⌝*Ma-i*[*a*] ⌜MÁŠKIM⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝ 27) EN-*ia* ^{d}[UTU] *iš-tu* 28) AN *ša*$_{10}$*-mì* DU[MU] ⌜^{d}⌝UTU(!)	(23-28) And furthermore, I am constantly obeying the words of the king, my lord, and I am obeying the words of Maya, the commissioner of the king, my lord, [the sun god] from heaven, the s[on] of the sun god.

The introduction of this letter retains the stock spellings that are standard for the opening epistolary formulae: the verbs ⌜*qí*⌝-[*b*]*í*-⌜*ma*⌝ and ⌜*am*⌝-⌜*qut*⌝ are standard Akkadian forms; also the syntax of the introduction is SOV, which conforms to Akkadian word order, whereas the rest of this letter is VSO:

Clause 1: 01) [*a-na* LUGAL E]N-*ia* [DI]NG[IR.MEŠ-*ia*] 02) [^{d}UTU-*ia*] ^{d}[UT]U ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜*iš*⌝-*t*[*u*] 03a) [AN *ša*$_{10}$*-mì*] ⌜*qí*⌝-[*b*]*í*-⌜*ma*⌝	[To the king,] my [lo]rd, [my de]ity, [my sun god, the [sun] god fro[m heaven] sp[ea]k!
Clause 2: 03b[*um-ma*] 04) [^{I}*Ia-pa-ḫi* LÚ *š*]a 05) [URU] ⌜*Gaz*⌝-⌜*ri*⌝⌜KI⌝ ⌜ÌR⌝-*ka*$_4$ 06) ⌜*ù*⌝ ⌜*ep*⌝-⌜*ri*⌝ ⌜*ša*⌝ 2 ⌜GÌR⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝- *ka*$_4$ 07) ⌜LÚ⌝ ⌜*kàr*⌝-⌜*tap*⌝-⌜*pí*⌝ ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜ANŠE.⌜KUR⌝.⌜RA⌝.MEŠ-*ka*$_4$ 08) ⌜*a*⌝-[*na*] 2 ⌜GÌR⌝.M[EŠ] ⌜LUGAL⌝ ⌜EN⌝-[*i*]*a* 09) ⌜7⌝-⌜*šu*⌝ ⌜*u*⌝ ⌜7⌝-⌜*ta*⌝-⌜*a*⌝-⌜*an*⌝ 10a) ⌜*am*⌝-⌜*qut*⌝	The message of Yapaʿi, the ruler o]f [the city of] Gezer, your servant and the dirt under your feet, the groom of your ho[r]ses: A[t] the feet of [the king, m]y lord seven times and seven times have I fallen.

The body of the message transitions to VSO word order and displays a mix of Akkadian and Canaano-Akkadian verbs.

Table 31 Code-Switching in EA 300: 10b-22

EA 300: 10b-22	Translation
10b) ⌜*li*⌝-⌜*de*⌝-⌜*mi*⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝	(10-14) May the king, my lord, be apprised

11) ⌜EN⌝-⌜*ia*⌝ *a*-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜ÌR⌝-⌜*šu*⌝ 12) ⌜TI⌝.L[A] ⌜*ḫal*⌝-⌜*qa*⌝ ⌜*iš*⌝-⌜*tu*⌝ 13) ⌜KUR⌝-⌜*ia*⌝ *u a-‹nu›-ma ia-nu* 14) ⌜*mi*⌝-⌜*im*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝ ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜*ia*⌝-⌜*ši*⌝ *15*) [*u*] ⌜*lu*⌝-⌜*ú* ⌝ ⌜*yu*⌝-⌜*wa*⌝-⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*a*⌝*r* ⌜LUGAL⌝ 16) ⌜ÉRIN⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝ ⌜*pí*⌝-⌜*ṭá*⌝-⌜*ta*⌝-⌜*šu*⌝ 17) *šu-nu* ⌜*ia*⌝-⌜*a*⌝-⌜*ti*⌝ 18) *tu-šu-ra!-ba-ni* 19) *a-na* URU.DIDLI.KI-*ni-ia* 20) *u lu*-⌜*ú*⌝ *i-ru-da-am* 21) LUGAL EN-*ia ki-ma ša* 22) A.A-*ia u* ⌜AB⌝!.⌜BA⌝-*ti*[-*ia*(*?*)]	concerning his servant. Lost are the provis[ions] from my land and n‹o›w I don't have anything. (15-22) So may the king send his regular troops. They can restore me to my cities and I will verily serve the king, my lord like my father and [my(?)] ancestors.

The body of the message, when Yapa'i makes his case, reverts to Canaano-Akkadian forms, even to refer to the Pharaoh. The word order in this section of the letter also shifts from SOV to VSO, which corresponds as well to a shift from MB to Canaano-Akkadian orthographies. The scribe uses the precative to refer to the Pharaoh in 10b (⌜*li*⌝-⌜*de*⌝-⌜*mi*⌝), but then transitions to use of the Canaano-Akkadian jussive in the next clause. The verb ⌜*li*⌝-⌜*de*⌝-⌜*mi*⌝ is formed based on the pattern of the Akkadian precative, a form not found in WS, where the *yaqtul-o* marks the jussive. However, as Rainey points out, this orthography is not standard Akkadian. In OB and OA, the precative of *idû* is written *lū īde,* whereas here we see the verb *idû,* which has a special status in Akkadian and is treated for the most part as a stative, treated as a *iprus* form: *lū īde*> *līde*.[716]

The verb [*u*] ⌜*lu*⌝-⌜*ú* ⌝ ⌜*yu*⌝-⌜*wa*⌝-⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*a*⌝*r* is a 3ms WS jussive that refers to the Pharaoh in the next clause. This is an Canaano-Akkadian orthography and features the retention of the intervocalic -

[716] The idiom *idû +ana*, with the meaning "to care for" may be a WS calque. It is listed in the *CAD* I/J (*idû* 2b:b'), 28, but appears to be mainly limited to the EA corpus: EA 60: 30; 155:21; 186: 6; 248: 21; 280: 36; 305: 23; RA 19 104: 24; 107: 15.

w-. This verb has no vocalic ending, which suggests that it is pattered on *yaqtul-o*. The use of the more Akkadian form in line 10b may have been a continuation of the more "formal" register of Akkadian used in the introduction, which also has MB verbal forms (e.g., *amqut*) and is VSO. By line 15, the scribe reverted to Canaano-Akkadian.

The form *tu-šu-ra!-ba-ni* is a *š* stem of the verb *erēbu*, which is Akkadian but the form is Canaano-Akkadian as it uses a *t-* prefix and *–a* suffix. In Akkadian these affixes are used to index the 2 person, yet the subject in this line is 3mp. Use of these affixes for the 3pm is, however, attested in other texts from WS speaking areas, in particular in the north. The form ***u*** *lu-*⌜*ú*⌝ *i-ru-da-am* is a derived form from the noun (*w*)*ardu* and is only used in the Periphery in the Canaanite Amarna Letters.[717] The verb "to serve" was generated from the noun "servant" in Akkadian. It appears in the Canaano-Akkadian corpus as a G (e.g., the form here *i-ru-da-am,* and as a D stem *a-na ur-ra-di* "to serve" in EA 294:20 and *ú-ra-du-šu* "I served him" in EA 257: 18). The third clause in the body of this letter shifts back to MB orthography for the first verb, but retains VSO word order.

Table 32 Code-Switching in EA 300: 23-28

EA 300: 23-28	
23) *u ša-ni-*⌜*tam*⌝ ⌜*él*⌝*-te*$_9$-⌜*né*⌝-⌜*mé*⌝ 24) ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *a-*⌜*wa*⌝-⌜*te*⌝⌜MEŠ⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝ EN-*ia* 25) ⌜*u*⌝ *iš-te*$_9$*-mu* [*a-na*] ⌜*a*⌝*-wa-*⌜*te*⌝⌜MEŠ⌝ 26) ⌜I⌝*Ma-i*[*a*] ⌜MÁŠKIM⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝ 27) EN-*ia* ^{d}[UTU] *iš-tu* 28) AN *ša*$_{10}$*-mì* DU[MU] ⌜^{d}⌝UTU(!)	(23-28) And furthermore, I am constantly obeying the words of the king, my lord, and I am obeying the words of Maya, the commissioner of the king, my lord, [the sun god] from heaven, the s[on] of the sun god.

[717] For attestations see *CAD* A/2 (*ardu*).

In the Canaano-Akkadian letters, *ša-ni-tam* is used in the metapragmatic framework to denote a shift to a new topic. In this case, Yapai'i reminds the Pharaoh that he has received his orders and is carrying them out. It is interesting that this MB form ⌜*él*⌝-*te*$_9$-⌜*né*⌝-⌜*mé*⌝ is in reference to the letter from the Pharaoh; the form *iš-te*$_9$*-mu*, which reverts back to Canaano-Akkadian orthography refers to a lesser Egyptian official. We also see the use of parallelism as a focusing device (lines 23-28) to highlight this section of the letter:

{New topic} *u ša-ni-*⌜*tam*⌝

{A}	{B}	{C}
⌜*él*⌝-*te*$_9$-⌜*né*⌝-⌜*mé*⌝	⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *a*-⌜*wa*⌝-⌜*te*⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝	⌜LUGAL⌝ EN-*ia*
⌜*u*⌝ *iš-te*$_9$*-mu*[*a-na*]	⌜*a*⌝-*wa*-⌜*te*⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝	⌜⌝*Ma-i*[*a*] ⌜MÁŠKIM⌝ ⌜LUGAL⌝ EN-*ia* ^{d}[UTU]

The syntax of this passage reflects WS influence, as both sentences are verb initial. In these lines, a distinction is made between the Pharaoh and his official. The form, *él*⌝-*te*$_9$-⌜*né*⌝-⌜*mé*⌝ comprises the Akkadian 1cs prefix e-, followed by a GTN stem of the verb *šemû,* which signifies an ongoing, or iterative sense that functions here as an emphatic, e.g., "I am continuously obeying." The MB form does not include the final indicative –*u* marker, but is what Rainey designates a "pure" MB form. The Canaanite scribe, however, retains the *št* in the verb *iš-te*$_9$*-mu* when referring to Maia.[718] This verb *iš-te*$_9$*-mu* is not an OB form *per se*, but is a "Canaanized" or "hybrid" verb, as it features the –*u* suffix, which marks the indicative. Also, the use of *i-* for the *aleph* of the 1cs vs. Akkadian which uses *a, u,* or *e*

[718] Rainey, *CAT* I, 42.

depending on the verbal root (e.g., *u* for *w*-initial verbs, or *e* for R1-weak verbs). Moreover, the verbal stem is based on the Akkadian perfect or is a Gt, yet the suffix –*u*, which is a Canaanite feature, which marks the tense indicates that it is a present indicative.[719]

This shift in code would not have been perceptible but to those familiar with the scribal code used between Egyptian and Canaanite cuneiform scribes. The shift here is not really linguistic; it is unlikely that the transition from Canaano-Akkadian to MB was original to the original Canaanite message; moreover, we cannot be sure that it was transmitted into the Egyptian version as such. Rather, we have a shift that is primarily orthographic —that is to say, this code-shift was meant for a scribal audience. This shift did have meaning in the context of diplomacy between these two polities. We see a transition from a lower register (i.e. an orthography used by a less prestigious scribal system) to a higher register of Akkadian when referencing to the Pharaoh. Also, we see the insertion of an MB orthography to focus the letter and emphasize the key passage which appears to be a reference to a letter sent from Egypt. Indeed, it is possible that the GTN form in line 23 is a direct quote from an Egyptian letter, asking for his continual obedience. Or, the scribe writing at a Egyptian center may have been inspired to mimic more Egyptian Akkadian orthography, and used this MB form as an emphatic to underscore Yapai's loyalty. In summary, the context of the letter determined the forms being used.[720] This passage is a statement of fealty to the Pharaoh and to his local representative Maia,

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[719] The Akkadian form for a present 1cs verb "I am listening" would be a G durative, *not* a perfect.

[720] In both sentences the verb "I have heard" is based on the shared east and west Semitic verbal root *šemû*. When the Pharaoh is the figure being obeyed, the verb appears to be modeled after the MB GTN verbal stem (an iterative stem in Akkadian), and moreover, it features the * *št*> *lt* shift characteristic (e.g., EA 300:23 *él*⌉-*te*$_9$-⌈*né*⌉-⌈*mé*⌉ "I am

which is reflected in the way that the verbs of listening/obedience shift depending on authority being addressed.

b. Code-switching in EA 378, a Sociolinguistic Analysis

Below I am replicating the transliteration and translation provided by Rainey of the section of EA 378 that features the transition to MB orthography.[721] My analysis of these forms, however, takes a more sociolinguistic approach.

Table 33 Code-Switching in EA 378

EA 378	
EA 378 — TRANSCRIPTION 01) [*a-na*] LU[GAL EN]-⌜*ia*⌝ DINGIR.MEŠ *i*[*a*] 10b *a-nu-ma* 11) *a-na-ṣa-ru-mì a-šar* LUGAL EN-*ia* 12) ⌜^{d}⌝UTU *iš*-⌜*tu*⌝ AN *ša*$_{10}$-*mì-i* 13) ⌜*ša*⌝ *it-ti*-⌜*ia*⌝ 14) *u gáb-bi mì-im-mì ša* 15) *ša-pár* LUGAL EN-*ia* 16) ⌜*a*⌝-*na ia-ši gáb-ba* 17) ⌜*lu*⌝-*ú ep-pu-šu-mì*	(10-17) Now I am guarding the place of the king, my lord, the sun god from heaven, which is in my charge, and as for every thing that the king, my lord, has written to me, I am verily doing it all.
18) [*u m*]*a-an-nu-mì a*-⌜*na*⌝-*ku* UR.GI$_7$ 19) [*u ma-*]*an-nu* ⌜É⌝-*ia* 20) ⌜*u*⌝ [*m*]*a*-⌜*an*⌝-*nu* ⌜URU⌝.⌜KI⌝-*ia* 21) [*u m*]*a-an-nu* ⌜*gáb*⌝-⌜*bi*⌝ 22) *mi-im-mì ša* ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*ba*⌝-*aš-ši* 23) *a-na ia-ši u a-wa-te.*MEŠ 24) LUGAL EN-*ia* ^{d}UTU ⌜*iš*⌝-*tu*	(18-26) [And w]hat am I, a dog, [and wh]at is my house, [and w]hat is my city, [and w]hat is everything that belongs to me, that I should not continually heed the words of the king, my lord, the sun god from heaven?

constantly obeying"). In the following line, when Maia, a lesser Egyptian authority, is referred to, the verb used is the standard 1cs *yaqtulu* form, which denotes ongoing action. Semantically, this form does not have the emphatic, iterative sense of the Akkadian GTN stem. The form *iš-te*$_9$*-mu* ("I am obeying") makes use of *i-* to denote the 1cs, which is used in Canaano-Akkadian as an equivalent to the 1cs *aleph* prefix in WS. This form displays an OB orthography, which is standard in Canaano-Akkadian whereby the sibilant is preserved before a dental rendering the form *-št-* as opposed to –*lt-* in MB (EA 300: 25 *iš-te*$_9$*-mu* "I am obeying").

[721] Rainey, "The Hybrid Language," 854-855.

25) AN *ša*$_{10}$*-mì-i ú-*⌜*ul*⌝ 26) ⌜*il*⌝*-te*$_{9}$*-né-em-me*	

Rainey views *a-na-ṣa-ru-mì, ša-pár,* and ⌜*lu*⌝*-ú ep-pu-šu-mì* to be "hybrid" verbs, whereas ⌜*il*⌝*-te*$_{9}$*-né-em-me* is MB. The shift to MB appears to be a strategy to emphasize Yapai's obedience. As he writes, "The MB Gtn Present is employed once again by a Gezer scribe in order to leave no doubt as to the sender's sincerity and steadfast obedience."[722] Rainey is right that this form punctuates the end of the letter with a dramatic declaration of allegiance to the Pharaoh: (19-26) "What is my house, [and w]hat is my city, [and w]hat is everything that belongs to me, that I should not continually heed the words of the king my lord, the sun god from heaven." Also, as Rainey writes, the GTN is rare in the Canaanite Amarna Letters, as such this verb is a marked form:

> [N]one can doubt the intrusiveness of two examples from the common MB/peripheral paradigm of present tense Gtn's with the *št* >*lt* shift: ⌜*il*⌝*-te*$_{9}$*-né-em-me* (EA 378: 26)and ⌜*él*⌝*-te*$_{9}$*-*⌜*né*⌝*-*⌜*mé*⌝ (EA 300: 25) in the same context! The scribes who wrote EA 261:10 [which features the Gtn *iš-te-nem-mu*], EA 300, and EA 378 all wanted to impress the pharaoh with the continuous faithful obedience of the city rulers for whom they were writing. So they chose the iterative Gtn to express their meaning. The later two scribes [of EA 300 and 378] even went so far as to use the *koine* form for the MB and peripheral dialects which they knew was employed by the Egyptian scribes.[723]

The GTN form at the climax of EA 300 appears to be a means of dispelling any doubts that Yapai' was not following orders. The above analysis, however, does not use the terminology appropriate to describe what is essentially code-mixing in writing. Any analysis of these forms must take into

[722] Ibid., 855.

[723] Rainey, *CAT* I, 42.

account that this is a diplomatic letter and the transition to an MB form would have only been accessed by cuneiform scribes.

c. EA 63: You Write Amqut, I Write Maqtati

Another interesting example of code-switching occurs in a letter from ʿAbdi-Aštarti of Gath (clay also from Tell eṣ-Ṣafi) to the Pharaoh. This form features both the 1cs Canaano-Akkadian suffix conjugation and the Akkadian preterite of the Akkadian verb *maqātu* "to fall." Both of these verbs are in the prostration formula in the introduction of this letter, which is unusual.

EA 63: 6 7 *ù* 7 *ma-aq-ta-⌜ti⌝ ⌜a⌝-⌜na⌝* ⌜GÌR⌝.MEŠ ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜I⌝⌜LUGAL⌝ ⌜EN⌝-⌜*ia*⌝⌜\⌝ ⌜*am*⌝-⌜*qú-ut*
"seven and seven (times) have I fallen; at the feet of the king, my lord, have I fallen."

The verbs in the introductory formulae tend to be frozen forms and retain standard MB orthographies, the two most common verbs being *qībi* "speak" (referring to the messenger) and *amqut* "I have fallen" (referring to the speaker)." The Canaano-Akkadian form **mqti* can be understood as an explanation or clarification gloss. However, why the scribe would deem it necessary to gloss one of the most common phrases in the Amarna Letters is something of a mystery. Surely the scribes transmitting this text would have been familiar with the standard verb *amqut*, or been able to determine what was meant from the context of the introductory formula. Though, if we consider the format of this line and the awkward spacing an elegant solution presents itself. This Canaano-Akkadian form is not a translation gloss for an Akkadian verb, rather, the form *amqut* appears to have been amended later on in the line.

Table 34 Code-Switching in EA 63[724]

Transcription	Translation	Signs per Line
01) [*a-na*] ˹ᵢ˺*šàr-ri* ˹EN˺-˹*ia*˺	Speak [to] the king, my lord, the message	6
02) ˹*qí*˺-*bí-ma*	of ʻAbdi-Ashta‹r›t, the servant of the king:	3
03) *um-ma* ᵢ*Ab-di-Aš-ta-‹ar›-ti*		8/9
04) ÌR ᵢ*šàr-ri*		4
05) *a-na* 1 GÌR.MEŠ ᵢ*šàr-ri* ˹EN˺-˹*ia*˺	**At the feet of the king, my lord, seven and**	10
06) 7 *ù* 7 *ma-aq-ta-˹ti˺ ˹a˺-˹na˺* ˹GÌR˺.MEŠ	**seven (times) have I fallen; at the feet of**	19
˹ša˺ ˹ᵢ˺˹˺*LUGAL˺ ˹EN˺-˹*ia*˺˹˺\˺ ˹*am*˺-˹*qú-ut	**the king, my lord, have I fallen.**	9/10
07) *ù a-wa-ti qa-ba šàr-˹ri˺ ˹EN˺‹-ia›*		7
08) [*a*-]˹*na*˺ *ia-ši ù iš-te-˹mu˺*	And the king, ‹my› lord, has spoken words	8
09) [*a*]-*wa-ti* ᵢ*šàr-ri* E[N-*ia*]	to me and I am heeding the words of the	4
10) [*iš*-]˹*te*˺-*mu ù*	king, [my] lo[rd]. [I] am heeding so [may]	8
11) [*li*-]˹*iš*˺-*te-mé* ᵢL[UGAL EN-*ia*]	the k[ing, my lord] heed my [wo]rds	7
12) [*a-wa*-]˹*ti*˺-*ia* [*i-nu-ma*]	[because]	6
13) [KÚ]R.NU ˹*da*˺-˹*na*˺- closed up *at* U[GU-*ia*]	hos]tility is strong a[gainst me].	
14) ˹*li*˺-˹*de*˺	May the king be apprised and may he be	3
15) ˹*ù*˺ ˹*yi*˺-˹*il*$_5$˺-˹*ma*˺-˹*ad*˺ (?)	informed.	5(?)
16) ˹ᵢ˺˹*šàr*˺-˹*ru*˺		3

The rest of the lines in this letter range between 2-10 signs per line; line 6 which contains the verbal forms in question has about 19 signs. The form ˹*am*˺-˹*qú-ut* was added on to the introduction as an afterthought. The scribe did a poor job of planning this section of the letter. The Canaano-Akkadian verb appears well written, whereas the Akkadian form is crammed onto line 6. This suggests that the original verb was actually the Canaano-Akkadian verb, whereas the scribe may have felt that its use in

[724] An online image and line drawing can be seen at the CDLI website: http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/search/search_results.php?SearchMode=Text&PrimaryPublication=EA+063&MuseumNumber=&ObjectID=&TextSearch=&requestFrom=Submit+Query.

the introduction was a breech of epistolary protocol, which necessitated a return to the standard form *amqut*.

The rest of the verbs in this letter are Canaano-Akkadian, which makes it unlikely that the recipient and/or the scribe/messenger delivering it would not have understood the form *maqtāti.* We then have a case of register shifting from a lower prestige but more familiar form, to a verb deemed more appropriate for the introduction to a letter to the Pharaoh. In this example, the scribe navigated between two forms of the same verb. It is not really accurate to view this as a shift in spoken language. We are really witnessing a shift between two different scribal systems that was dictated not by linguistic need, but by diplomatic protocol.

C. Oral-Poetic Style and Code-Switching in the Canaanite Letters

1. Use of Canaanite Parables and Metaphors as a Rhetorical Style

The Amarna Letters from Tyre, Byblos, Jerusalem, and Shechem employ a more sophisticated use of code-mixing. The scribes employ local expressions, metaphors, and proverbial sayings to enrich their letters. Van der Toorn suggests that these small formulaic phrases, based upon expressions drawn from oral culture, are a reflection of the local scribal curricula. A main part of scribal training entailed "collecting and memorizing of proverbs and sayings." Some of these sayings were then used in the Canaano-Akkadian letters and were marked using *Glossenkeilen*.[725] The texts below list the main

[725] Van der Toorn, "Cuneiform Documents from Syria- Palestine," 107-108.

WS parables/sayings in the Canaanite Amarna Letters.[726] Not only did scribes shift code in a key passage or sentence, they incorporated whole idioms from WS to enhance the appeal of these letters.

1. The Empty Field (Byblos Letters; Rib-Adda)

> EA 74: 13-19
> *ú-ul ta-qa-al-mi a-na* ÌR-*ka šum-ma/* [G]A.KAL *nu-kúr-tu*$_4$ *ša* ÉRIN.MEŠ GAZ UGU‹-*šu*› *ù*/DINGIR.MEŠ KUR-*k*[*a*]⌜TI⌝ *ga-am-ru*/DUMU.MEŠ-*nu* MUNUS.DUMU.MUNUS.MEŠ‹-*nu*›/GIŠ.É-*nu i*[-*n*]*a na-da-ni*$_7$ *i-na* KUR *Ia-ri-mu-ta/i-na ba-l*[*a*-]*ṭá* ZI-*nu* **A.ŠÀ-*ia aš-ša-ta/ ša la m*[*u*-]*ta ma-ši-il* ⌜*aš*⌝-*šum ba-li/* ⌜*i*⌝-*re-ši*[-*i*]*m***
>
> Do not be silent concerning your servant since the hostility of the *ʿapîru* troops against ‹him is great. And as the gods of yo[ur] land live, our sons and ‹our› daughters, (and) the wood of our houses are used up to make payment to the land of Yarimuta for the provisions to preserve our lives. **My field is like a wife with no husband for lack of a cultivator (or: cultivation).**
>
> EA 75: 10-17
> *ša-*⌜*ni*⌝-*tam* GA.KAL *nu*-KÚR *ša* ÉRIN GAZ.MEŠ/ U[GU]-*ia ga-am-ruga-am-ru* DUMU.MEŠ DUMU.MUNUS.MEŠ/GIŠ.[MEŠ] É.MEŠ *i-na* ⌜*na*⌝-⌜*da*⌝-*ni*/ [*i-na*] KUR *Ia-ri-mu-ta i-na*/›*i-na*‹ *ba-la-aṭ* ZI-*n*[*u*]/⌜**A.ŠÀ**⌝-***ia* DAM *ša la mu*-[*t*]*a/ma-ši-il*$_5$ *aš-šum ba-li.i-re-š*[*i-i*]*m***
> Furthermore, the hostility of the *ʿapîru* troops against me is great; our sons, daughters, household furnishings are used up to make payment [to] the land of Yarimuta for the provisions to preserve our lives. **My field is like a woman without a husband for lack of cultivator (or: cultivation).**
>
> EA 81: 33-41
> *ù mi-na ‹a-qa-bu-na› a-na* LÚ.MEŠ *ḫ*[*u-u*]*b*-[*ši-ia*]/ [*a*]-*nu-ma ki-ma* MUŠEN ša *i-na l*[*ìb-bi*]/ [*ḫu*]-*ḫa-ri* \ *ki-lu-bi ša-ak*-[*na-at*]/ [*ki*-]*šu-ma šu-nu i-na lìb-bi* U[RU *Gub-l*]*a*/ [**A.ŠÀ-**]***šu-nu* DAM *ša la mu-ta* ⌜*ma*⌝-⌜*ši*⌝-*il*/ [*aš-šu*]*m* ⌜*ba*⌝-⌜*li*⌝ *i-re-ši ga-am-ru*/ [DUMU.MEŠ-*šu-nu* MUNUS.]D[UMU].M[UNUS-*šu-nu*/GI]Š.MEŠ É.MEŠ-*šu-nu*/ [*i-na*] ⌜*na*⌝-⌜*da*⌝-*ni* [*i-n*]*a* ⌜KUR⌝

[726] The translations and transliterations are derived from Rainey's 2014 publication, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (*1*). I have taken the liberty of standardizing the translations. Also, I am providing the context as I seek to better understand what prompted the use of these local WS expressions. All of the notes about the clay origins of the tablets in this section are derived from Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay*.

⌜*Ia*⌝*-ri-mu-ta/* [*i-na*] *ba-la-aṭ* ZI-*šu-nu*
And what ‹shall I say› to the yeo[man farmers]? Now, like a bird that is situated in the midst of a cage, [th]us are they in the midst of the ci[ty of Byblos]**. Their [field] is like a woman without a husband [for] lack cultivator (or: cultivation)**; [their sons,] their [dau]gh[ters, the wood of] their houses are used up to make payment to the land of Yarimuta [for] the provisions to preserve their lives.

EA 90: 36-44
[*ù*]⌜*ga*⌝[*-am*]-⌜*ru*⌝ [DUMU.MEŠ]-⌜*nu* [DUMU.MUNUS]-*nu/* [GIŠ].⌜MEŠ⌝ [É].M[EŠ] ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜*na*⌝-⌜*da*⌝-[*n*]*i/* [*a-na*] ⌜KUR⌝ ⌜*Ia*⌝-⌜*ri*⌝-⌜*mu*⌝-[*t*]*a* ›⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝‹/ [*i-n*]*a* ⌜*ba*⌝-⌜*la*⌝-⌜*at*⌝ ⌜ZI⌝-[*n*]*u k*[*i-ma*]/ [MUŠEN *š*]*a* ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜*lìb*⌝-⌜*bi*⌝ ⌜*ḫu*⌝-[*ḫa*]-⌜*ri*⌝/ [*ša-a*]*k*-⌜*na*⌝-⌜*a* ⌝ *ki*-⌜*šu*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝ [*a-na-ku i-n*]*a/* [URU *Gub-*]*la* ⌜**A**⌝**.**[Š]À-***ia*** ⌜**DAM**⌝ ⌜***ša***⌝ ⌜***la***⌝-⌜***a***⌝/ [***mu-t***]***a*** ⌜***ma***⌝-⌜***ši***⌝-***il*** ⌜***aš***⌝-⌜***šum***⌝ ⌜***ba***⌝-⌜***li***⌝/ [***i-***]⌜***re***⌝-⌜***ši***⌝
[And] our [sons], our [daughters], the [furnishings] of the [hous]es are used up to make pay[ment to] the land of Yarimuta for the provisions to preserve our lives. L[ike a bird th]at is placed inside a cage, th[us am I i]n [the city of Gub]la. **My field resembles a wife without a [hu]sband for lack of a cultivator (or: cultivation).**

This expression occurs in four letters in conjunction with a description of the devastation that the payments to Yarmuta have exacted on Byblos and its people. There are several elements that suggest that this is a WS idiom. Marcus cites use of cognate terms in this passage, for example, *aššatu* (*aṯṯ* in WS) as opposed to *siniṣtu*/*siniltu* for wife. Also, the use of *bali-* after *aššum* is atypical of Akkadian, where the expected form would be *aššum lā*. Though *bl-* is also used this way in WS (see for example, the form מבלי־דעת "without understanding," in Is 5:13).[727]

The empty field metaphor is used to describe the barrenness of the land. The "wife" in this letter is really 'Abdi-Ḫeba, who lacks the power to provide for his people. In two cases (EA 81 and 90) it is joined with the "caged bird" metaphor, which expresses Rib-Adda's helplessness and isolation.

[727] David Marcus, "A Famous Analogy of Rib-Haddi," *JANES* 5 (1973), 281-286.

Marcus draws a parallel to a bilingual proverb in Sumerian and Assyrian that draws a similar comparison:[728]

> ERÍN NU.BANDA NU.ME.A A. ŠÀ ENGAR.RA IN.NU E EN.BI NU.NAM MUNUZ NITÁ NU.TUKU *ṣābu* [*ša lā lap*]*ut* [*tê*] *eq*[*lu ša l*]*ā ikkar*[*i*] *bītu ša lā bēli sinništum ša lā muti*
> Workers without an overseer (are like) a field without a plowman; A house without a master (is like) a woman without a husband.

As he writes, "both the field without a plowman and the wife without a husband are compared to institutions without leaders."[729] This seems true of the use of this type of metaphor in the Byblian letters, whereby the Pharaoh being appealed to "cultivate," i.e., to bring order to his land.

2. The Caged Bird (Byblos; Rib-Adda)

> EA 74: 42-48
> *ki-na-na ti-iš-ku-nu* NAM.‹NE›.RU *a-na be-ri-šu-nu/ù ki-na-na pa-al-ḫa-ti ma-gal ma-gal ›i-nu-ma‹.* [*i*]*-nu-ma ia-nu* LÚ *ša ú-še-zi-ba-an-ni.* [*iš*]*-tu qa-ti-šu-nu ki-ma* MUŠEN.MEŠ *ša.*⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *lìb-bi ḫu-ḫa-ri \ ki-lu-bi/*⌜*ša*⌝*-ak-na-at ki-šu-ma a-na-ku i-na/*⌜URU⌝ ⌜*Gub*⌝-⌜*la*⌝ ⌜*am*⌝*-mi-ni ta-qa-al-mi a-na* KUR-*ka* ***ki-ma*** **MUŠEN.MEŠ** ***ša/*** ⌜***i***⌝-⌜***na***⌝ ***lìb-bi ḫu-ḫa-ri \ ki-lu-bi/***⌜***ša***⌝***-ak-na-at ki-šu-ma a-na-ku i-na/***⌜**URU**⌝ ⌜***Gub***⌝-⌜***la***⌝ ⌜***am***⌝***-mi-ni ta-qa-al-mi a-na*** **KUR-*ka***
> Thus they have made an alliance among themselves and thus I am very much afraid because there is no man who can deliver me [fr]om their hand**. Like birds that are sitting in a cage, thus am I in the city of Byblos.** Why do you keep silent concerning your land?
>
> EA 78: 07-16
> [*lu*-]⌜*ú*⌝ *i-de šàr-ru* EN-*li* [*i-nu-ma*]/ [KAL.G]A *nu-kúr-tu*$_4$ *ša-a*/ [^{I}Ì]R-*A-ši-ir-*⌜*ta*⌝ UGU-*i*[*a*]/ [*ìl-t*]*e*$_9$*-qé* ⌜*ka*⌝*-li* URU.K[I.MEŠ-*ia*]/ [*a-nu-*]*ma* 2 URU.KI *ir-ti-*⌜*ḫu*⌝/ [*a-n*]*a ia-ši ù šu-nu* ⌜*yu*⌝[*-ba-ú*]/ [*la*]*-qa-a a-nu-ma* ***ki-ma*** **MUŠ[EN]/ [*ša*]** ***i-na lìb-bi ḫu-ḫa-r*[*i*]/ [*ša*]*-ak-na-at ki-šu-*[*ma*]/ [*a-na-k*]*u i-na lìb-bi*** **URU** ***Gub-l*[*a*]**
> [Ma]y the king, my lord be apprised [that] the hostility of [ʿAb]di-Ashirta against me is [sever]e. [He] has taken all [my] tow[ns]. Now (only) two towns remain [t]o me and these he [is seeking to t]ake. Now like a bird [that] is situated inside a cage, thus [am] I within the city

[728] The following is drawn from Wilfred G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 229.

[729] Marcus, "A Famous Analogy," 282.

of Byblos. [So] may my lord heed the wor[ds of] his [servant].

EA 79: 27-38
URU.KI.MEŠ *ša ir-ti-ḫu a-⌜na⌝* [*ia-ši*]/*ù tu-ba-ú-na la-⌜qa⌝-šu*[*-nu*]/*iš-tu qa-at šàr-ri yu-wa-š*[*i-ra*]/EN-*li* LÚ.MEŠ *ma-ṣa-ar-⌜ta⌝/a-na* 2 URU-*ni-šu a-di a-ṣí* É[RIN.MEŠ]/*pí-ṭá-ti ⌜ù mi-im-ma⌝/ yu-da-na-ni a-na a-⌜ka⌝-li-šu-nu/ ia-nu mi-im-ma a-na ia-ši/* ***ki-ma*** **MUŠEN** ***ša i-na lìb-b*[*i*]/ [*ḫ*]*u-ḫa-ri* \ *ki-lu-bi ša-ak-naat*/ [*ki-*]⌜*šu*⌝*-ma a-na-ku i-na*/ [URU] *Gub-la* KI**
There are two cities that remain to me and they are seeking to take th[em] from the control of the king. May my lord send garrison troops to his two cities until the coming forth of the regular t[roop]s and may something be given me for their food. I don't have anything. **Like a bird sitting in the midst of a cage, thus am I in the [city] of Byblos.**

EA 81: 33-41*
ù mi-na ‹a-qa-bu-na› a-na LÚ.MEŠ *ḫ*[*u-u*]*b*-[*ši-ia*]/ [*a*]*-nu-**ma ki-ma*** **MUŠEN ša** ***i-na l*[*ìb-bi*]/ [*ḫu*]*-ḫa-ri* \ *ki-lu-bi ša-ak*-[*na-at*]/ [*ki-*]*šu-ma šu-nu i-na lìb-bi* U[RU *Gub-l*]*a*/ [A.ŠÀ-]*šu-nu* DAM *ša la mu-ta ⌜ma⌝-⌜ši⌝-ìl/* [*aš-šu*]*m ⌜ba⌝-⌜li⌝ i-re-ši ga-am-ru*/ [DUMU.MEŠ-*šu-nu* MUNUS.]D[UMU].M[UNUS-*šu-nu*/GI]Š.MEŠ É.MEŠ-*šu-nu/* [*i-na*] *⌜na⌝-⌜da⌝-ni* [*i-n*]*a* ⌜KUR⌝ ⌜*Ia*⌝*-ri-mu-ta/* [*i-na*] *ba-la-aṭ* ZI-*šu-nu*
And what ‹shall I say› to the yeo[man farmers]? **Now, like a bird that is situated in the midst of a cage, [th]us are they in the midst of the ci[ty of Byblos].** Their [field] is like a woman without a husband [for] lack cultivator (or: cultivation); [their sons,] their [dau]gh[ters, the wood of] their houses are used up to make payment to the land of Yarimuta [for] the provisions to preserve their lives.

EA 90: 36-44*
[*ù*]⌜*ga*⌝[*-am*]-⌜*ru*⌝ [DUMU.MEŠ]-⌜*nu* [DUMU.MUNUS]-*nu/* [GIŠ].⌜MEŠ⌝ [É].M[EŠ] ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜*na*⌝-⌜*da*⌝-[*n*]*i/* [*a-na*] ⌜KUR⌝ ⌜*Ia*⌝-⌜*ri*⌝-⌜*mu*⌝-[*t*]*a* ›⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝‹/ [*i-n*]*a* ⌜*ba*⌝-⌜*la*⌝-⌜*at*⌝ ⌜ZI⌝-[*n*]*u* ***k***[***i-ma***]/ [**MUŠEN** ***š***]***a*** ⌜***i***⌝-⌜***na***⌝ ⌜***lìb***⌝-⌜***bi***⌝ ⌜***ḫu***⌝-[***ḫa***]-⌜***ri***⌝/ [***ša-a***]***k***-⌜***na***⌝-⌜***a*** ⌝ ***ki***-⌜***šu***⌝-⌜***ma***⌝ [***a-na-ku i-n***]***a/*** [**URU** ***Gub-***]***la*** ⌜A⌝.[Š]À-*ia* ⌜DAM⌝ ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜*la*⌝-⌜*a*⌝/ [*mu-t*]*a* ⌜*ma*⌝-⌜*ši*⌝-*ìl* ⌜*aš*⌝-⌜*šum*⌝ ⌜*ba*⌝-⌜*li*⌝/ [*i-*]⌜*re*⌝-⌜*ši*⌝
[And] our [sons], our [daughters], the [furnishings] of the [hous]es are all used up in pay[ment to] the land of Yarimuta for sustaining our lives. **L[ike a bird th]at is placed inside a cage, th[us am I i]n [the city of Gub]la;** my field resembles a wife without a [hu]sband through lack of a cultivator (or: cultivation).

EA 105: 6-13
ša-ni-tam ya-⌜am⌝-li-ik šàr-ru/a-na URU *Ṣu-⌜mu⌝-ra a-mu-ur/***URU** ⌜***Ṣu***⌝***-mu-ra ki-ma*** **MUŠEN** ***ša lìb-bi/ḫu***-[***ḫ***]***a-ri*** [\] ***ki-lu-bi ša-ak-na-at/ki-na-na*** ⌜***i***⌝***-ba-ša-at*** **URU** ***Ṣu-mu***[***-ra***]/ ⌜⌝DUMU.MEŠ ÌR-⌜*A*⌝*-ši-ir-⌜ta⌝ iš-tu qa-qa-⌜ri⌝/ù* LÚ.MEŠ ⌜URU⌝ ⌜*Ar*⌝*-wa-da iš-tu/⌜a⌝-ia-ba ⌜ur⌝-*

⌜*ra*⌝ *mu-ša* U[GU-*ši*]
Furthermore, may the king take council concerning the city of Ṣumur. Look, as for the city of Ṣumur, like a bird put inside a cage, thus is the city of Ṣumur. The sons of ʿAbdi-Ashirta from the land and the men of the city of Arvad from the sea, day and night they are against it.

EA 116: 17-24
ša-ni-tam mi-lik a-na URU *Ṣu-mu-*[*ra*]/***ki-ma*** **MUŠEN** ***ša i-na lìb-bi ḫu***[*-ḫa-ri*] \ ***ki-lu***[*-bi*]/⌜***ša***⌝-***ak-na-at*** *ki-na-na*/*i-ba-ša-at* KAL.GA *ma-gal* [*nu*-KÚR]/*ù* LÚ.MEŠ DUMU *ši-ip-ri š*[*a tu-ṣu-na*]/*iš-tu* E.GAL [*l*]*a-a ti*[*-l*]*e*[*-ú*]/*i-re-ba* [*a*]*-na* URU *Ṣu-mu-ra*/*mu-š*[*a*] *š*[*u-*]*ri-ib-ti-šu-nu*
Furthermore, take counsel concerning the city of Ṣumu[r]; **it is like a bird that is placed in a cage.** Thus [hostility] is exceedingly great. And the envoys th[at come forth] from the palace are [un]able to enter [in]to the city of Ṣumur. At night I in[s]erted them.

Again, all of the following examples are derived from the Byblian letters. In this expression, the Akkadian term *ḫuḫāru* "bird trap" is glossed with the WS term *klb*, or "cage."[730] Rib Adda is compared to a trapped bird in EA 74, 78, 79, and 90; the farmers of the city in EA 81, and the city of Ṣumur itself in EA 105 and 116, too, are trapped "like a caged bird." This figure of speech is also attested in Mesopotamian literature, most famously in Sennacherib's annals to describe the siege of Jerusalem whereby Hezekiah is caught like a "bird in a cage."[731]

As used in the Byblos correspondence, the metaphor of a caged bird is used to describe a state of isolation and inability to act or move.[732] Rib-Adda, the people of Gubla, and the city of Ṣumur are paralyzed by the aggressions of the ʿApiru and neighboring polities. The references to scarcity are an

[730] *CAD Ḫ*: 225.

[731] Regarding Hezekiah: "Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were his city's gate." See *ANET*, 287-288.

[732] For an analysis of the literary devices in the Rib-Adda letters see "Rib-Adda, Righteous Sufferer." In *Myth and Politics in Ancient Near Eastern Historiography.* Edited by Zainab Bahrani and Marc van de Mieroop (Ithaca: Cornell University Press; London: Equinox, 2004), 97-124.

appeal for supplies and for reinforcements, the implication being that the Pharaoh is the bird owner and is responsible for its (i.e., their) well-being. This expression is used to make the subtle argument that Rib Adda has not been idle, but is incapacitated by forces beyond his control. It is now upon the Pharaoh to intervene and deliver the "trapped bird" and thereby restore his lands to prosperity.

3. The Empty House (Byblos; Rib-Adda)

> EA 102: 8-13[733] (Byblos)
> *šá-ni-tam ti-de-mi/ i-nu-ma lam-da-ta uḫ-ḫu-ra-ta/a-ṣa a-na mi-ni*$_7$ *ta-šap-pár-ta/ù an-nu-ú i-na-an-na* ***ti-ir-bu/a-na*** **É-*ti re-qí*** *ga-mi-ir gáb-bu/ti-iḫ-ta-ti gáb-ba*
> Furthermore, know that, though informed, you have delayed in coming forth. Why did you write? And behold now, **you will enter into an empty house.** Everything is finished. I am completely devastated (?).

This letter is also a part of the Byblian correspondence, though it is addressed to an Egyptian official. This passage is critical of the lack of response from the Pharaoh. The delays have lead to the devastation of Byblos and any intervention at this stage is almost too late. The letter ends however with an appeal for troops and military action, which suggests the situation is not as dire as the dramatic introduction claims.[734]

The Ship at Sea (Jerusalem; 'Abdi-Ḫeba)
EA 288:

> *li-im-li-ik-mi* ⌜*šàr*⌝*-ri a-na* KUR-*šu/ḫal-qa-*⌜*at*⌝ KUR *šàr-ri gáb-ba-ša/ṣa-ba-ta-ni nu-kúr-tú a-na*

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[733] The formulation in EA 316 is quite different. It does not use the term *rīqu* and is not a statement about political devastation. Rather, Pu-Ba'lu was unable to send a gift because he did not have the means to do so: EA 316: 16-25 [*a-n*]*a* ˡ*ša-aḫ-ši-ḫa-ši-*⌜*ḫa*⌝ [EN-*ia*] /*um-ma* ˡ*Pu-*⌜ᵈ⌝⌜IŠKUR⌝ ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜2⌝ ⌜GÌR⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝-*ka*⌜*am*⌝[-*qú-ut*]/⌜*i*⌝-*ia-*⌜*nu*⌝ ⌜*mi*⌝-⌜*im*⌝-⌜*ma*⌝/⌜*i*⌝-[*n*]*a* ⌜É⌝-*ia i-n*[*a*]/ [*i*]-*re*[-*bi-*]⌜*i*⌝*a a-*[*na*] ⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*šu*⌝/⌜*u*⌝ ⌜*ki*⌝-*na-na la-*[*a*] *uš-ši-ir-*[*t*]*i*$_7$/KASKAL-*ra-*⌜*na*⌝ *a-na k*[*a-ta*]$_5$/*a-nu-ma i-*⌜*šu*⌝[-*ši-*]*ru*/ KASKAL-*ra-na dam-*⌜*qá*⌝-*ta*/ ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *ka-ta*$_5$ "[T]o the scribe of letters [of my lord], the message of Pu-Ba'lu: At your feet have I fa[llen]. There was nothing i[n] my house upo[n] my [e]nt[ering] it and therefore I did not send a caravan to y[ou]. Now I am preparing a nice caravan for you."

[734] The *CAD* cites a possible parallel: *ummānka ana ālim rīqim irrub* (YOS 10 42 iii 42:72; cited in *CAD* R, 372).

ia-a-ši/a-di KUR.ḪI.A *Še-e-ri* KI *a-di* URU *Gin*$_8$*-ti-ki-ir-*⌜*mi*⌝-⌜*il*⌝*/šal-mu a-na gáb-bi* ⌜LÚ⌝.MEŠ *ḫa-zi-a-nu-ti/ù nu-kúr-tú a-na ia-a-ši/ep-ša-ti e-nu-ma* LÚ *ḫa-pí-ri/*⌜*ù*⌝ *la-a a-mar* 2 IGI.MEŠ LUGAL/EN-*ia ki-i nu-kúr-tú/*⌜*a*⌝*-na muḫ-ḫi-**ia ša-ak-na-ti/e-nu-ma*** **GIŠ.MÁ** ***i-na lìb-bi*** **A.AB.BA**
May the king take counsel concerning his land. Lost is the land of the king, all of it. I am trapped! There is open hostility against me. From the mountains of Seir(?) to the city Gath-Carmel, all the city rulers are at peace, but there is war against me. I have become like an *ʿapîru* man and I cannot behold the two eyes of the king, my lord, because of the hostility against me. **I am situated like a ship in the midst of the sea.**

This letter is a part of the correspondence sent from Jerusalem. The use of a nautical metaphor here is interesting considering the geography of Jerusalem in the highlands. This expression is one of isolation and helplessness and presents a parallel to the "bird in a cage" metaphor in Rib-Adda's correspondence.

5. The Biting Ant (Shechem; Laba'yu)
EA 252: 13-31

ù i-li qa-bi/qa-ar-ṣí-ia \ ši-ir-ti/i-na pa-ni ILUGAL-*ma be-lí-ia* ⌜***ša***⌝***-ni-tam ki-i na-am-lu/tu-um-ḫa-ṣú la-a/ ti-ka-pí-lu ù ta-an-***⌜***šu***⌝*-*⌜***ku***⌝***/qa-ti*** **LÚ-*lì ša yi-ma-ḫa-aš-ši*/***ki-i a-na-ku i-ša-ḫatu/ú-ma a-nu-ta*$_5$ *ù/ṣa-ab-ta-at-mì* 2 URU-*ia/ša-ni-tam šum-ma ti-qa-bu/ap-pu-na-ma/nu-pu-ul-mì/ta-aḫ-ta-mu ù/ti-ma-ḫa-ṣú-ka/i-bi ú-ṣur-ru na*/LÚ.MEŠ *ša ṣaab-tu*$_4$ URU *‹ù›/ i-li šu-sú-mì a-bi-ia/ù ú-ṣur-ru-šu-nu*
My slander has been expressed (I have been slandered) before the king, my lord. **Furthermore, when ants are smitten, they do not just curl up, but they bite the hand of the man who smote them.** How I am being pressed at this time! And two of my towns have been seized. Furthermore, if you further command, "Fall down beneath them so they can smite you," I will verily keep watch on my enemy, the men who seized the town ‹and› my god, the plunderers of my father! And I will certainly keep watch on them!

This expression is unique to the Laba'yu corpus and only occurs in this letter. [735]

6. Heaven and the Underworld
EA 264: 06-25 (Gintu-Carmel; Tagi)

[735] Richard Hess, "Smitten Ants Smite Back: Rhetorical Forms in the Amarna Correspondence from Shechem," *In Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose*. Edited by J.C. de Moor and W. G. E. Watson. AOAT 42 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 95-111.

a-mur-mì a-na-ku ÌR *ša* ᶦ*šàr-ri /ù bu-i-ti*$_7$ *pu-ḫi-ir*/KASKAL.ḪI.A *i-na qa-at* LÚ-*ia/ ù ú-ba-an la-a me-ḫi-iṣ/la-a i-le-ú uš-šir*$_4$/KASKAL.ḪI.A-*ia a-na* ᶦ*šàr-ri* EN-*ia/ù ša-al* LÚ.MEŠ MÁŠKIM-*ka/šum-ma la ú-ba-an la-a me-ḫi-iṣ/* ŠEŠ-*ia ša-ni-tam/**a-mur ni-nu a-na ⌜mu⌝-⌜ḫi⌝-ka**$_4$/2 **IGI-*ia šum-ma ni-tel-lí/a-na* AN \ *ša-mì-ma šum-ma/nu-ra-ad i-na er-ṣé-ti*$_7$/ *ù* SAG.DU-*nu \ ru-šu-nu/i-na qa-te-ka** *ù an-nu-ú/i-na-an-na bu-i-ti*$_7$ *uš-šir*$_4$/KASKAL.ḪI.A-*ia i-na qa-at*/LÚ *tap-pí-ia a-na* ᶦ*šàr-ri*/\ EN-*ia ù yi-ìl-ma-ad/* ᶦ*šàr-ru* EN-*‹ia› i-nu-ma ur-ru-du/*ᶦ*šàr-ra ù i-na-ṣa-ru*

Look, I am the servant of the king and I sought to assemble a caravan in the charge of my man but he came within an inch of being smitten. I am unable to send my caravan to the king, my lord. So ask your commissioners whether my associate was not within an inch of being smitten.

Furthermore, look, as for us, my eyes are towards you.
If we should go up to heaven,
If we should go down to the underworld,
Then our head is in your hands.

And behold now, I sought to send my caravan to the king, my lord, in the charge of my colleague. So may the king, ‹my› lord be aware that I am serving the king and I am guarding.

This letter was written on behalf of Tagi; the clay corresponds to that around Gintu-Carmel.[736]

7. Light+ The Brick ("Gezer" Scribe; various rulers)
EA 266: 9-15 (Gintu-Carmel; Tagi)

⌜da⌝-ag-la-ti/ [k]i-ia-am ù da[-ag-la-]ti/ [ki]-ia-am ù ⌜la⌝-[a]/ [na]-mu-ur ⌜ù⌝/ [d]a-ag-la-t[i]/ [a-na] mu-ḫi* LUGAL [EN-*ia*]/ [*ù n*]*a-mur ⌜ù⌝/ [a-nu-]ma ša-ak[-na-ti]/ [pa-n]i-ia a-na u[r-ru-]/* [LUGA]L EN-*ia \u[d]/⌜ù⌝ ti-na-ma-šu* [SIG$_4$-]/ [*t*]*u \ la-bi-tu/ [i]š-tu ša-pal [tap-pa-te-ši]/ ⌜ù⌝ a-na-ku la-a/⌜i⌝-⌜na⌝-ma-šu iš-t[u]/ [š]a-pal* GÌR.MEŠ/ [LUGA]L EN-*ia

"I looked this way and I lo[oked th]at way but there was no [li]ght; then I [l]ooked [to]wards the king, [my lord,] [and there was [li]ght! So [no]w [I have] set my [fac]e to se[rv]e [the kin]g, my lord. And a brick may slip out [fr]om under [its mate] but I will not depart fro[m u]nder the feet of [the kin]g, my lord."

EA 292: 8-17 (Baʿlu-dāni, or Baʿlu-Shipṭi; Gezer)

da-ag-la-ti$_7$ *ki-ia-⌜am⌝/ù da-ag-la-ti*$_7$ *ki-ia-am/ù la-a na-mi-ir ù/da-ag-la-ti*$_7$ *a-na mu-⌜ḫi⌝*/LUGAL EN-*ia ù na-mi-⌜ir⌝/ù ti7-na-mu-šu* SIG$_4$-⌜*tu*⌝/*iš-tu šu-pal tap-pa-⌜te⌝-ši/ù a-na-ku la-a i-na-mu-šu/iš-tu šu-pal* 2 GÌR.⌜MEŠ⌝/LUGAL EN-*ia*

[736] Goren et al., 256-258.

> "I looked this way and I looked that way, but there was no light. Then I looked towards the king, my lord, and there was light. And a brick may fall out from under its partner but I will not depart from under the feet of the king, my lord.
>
> 296:9-22 (Ya'ṭiri or Yaḫtiru; Ashdod)
> *ša-ni-tam a-⌜mur⌝ a-na-ku* ÌR-*di/ša ki-it-⌜ti⌝* LUGAL EN-*ia/da-ag-la-ti ki-ia-⌜am⌝/ù da-ag-la-ti/ki-ia-am ù la-a/na-mi-ir ù da-ag-la-ti/a-na mu-uḫ-ḫi* LUGAL EN-*ia/ù na-mi-ir ù/ ti-na-mu-šu* SIG_4/ \ *la-bi-tu iš-tu/⌜šu⌝-pal tap-pa-ti-ši/ù a-na-ku la-a i-na-mu-šu/iš-tu šu-pal* GÌR.MEŠ/*šàr-ri be-li-ia*
> Furthermore, look, I am the loyal servant of the king, my lord. I looked this way and I looked that way, but there was no light. Then I looked towards the king, my lord, and there was light. And a brick may fall out from under its partners but I will not depart from under the feet of the king, my lord.

These two expressions are joined and reframed as a structural unit between the initial introductory formula and the bodies of the letters, thus serving as a second introduction.[737] It is likely that these two expressions were considered to be a unified formula, as they only occur together in this corpus. This suggests that the "light/brick" declaration of loyalty was actually a part of the local court language used at Gezer. This WS expression was then incorporated into the diplomatic missives sent to Egypt.

These three letters are all a part of the "Gezer" correspondence, in that they share affinities with the letters written by the scribes working for Gezer. Yet they are from different rulers. EA 266 is sent from Tagi and is sent from the area of Gintu-Carmel;[738] EA 292 is sent from Ba'lu-dāni, (or Ba'lu-Shipṭi) of Gezer and is sent from Gezer;[739] EA 296 is sent from Ya'ṭiri (or Yaḫtiru) and may have been

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[737] EA 296 includes an additional clause that is a declaration of loyalty: "Furthermore, look, I am the loyal servant of the king, my lord."

[738] See Goren et al., 257-258.

[739] Ibid., 271.

sent from the southern Canaanite coast, most likely Ashdod.[740] Knudtzon first observed a difference between the writing of EA 266 and the other Tagi letters; Vita identifies the scribe as that working for Milki-Ilu of Gezer, who was his father in law.[741] There are also paleographic similarities between EA 296 and the Gezer letters, in particular, EA 292-294; 296-297.[742] The letter may have been written by the scribe working for Gezer and then transported to Ashdod for delivery to Egypt. It seems then that the two metaphors in these letters were expressions known by the scribes of Gezer that were then incorporated into letters written for other rulers.

8. The Bronze Vessel (Baʿlu-dāni, (or Baʿlu-Shipṭi) and Yapaʿi of Gezer; Gezer)

EA 292 Baʿlu-dāni, (or Baʿlu-Shipṭi) of Gezer to the Pharaoh (Clay: Tel Gezer)

EA 292: 41-52

> *ša-ni-tam a-mur ip-ši/* [1]*Pé-e-ia* DUMU MUNUS*Gu-la-t*[i_7]*/ a-na* URU *Gaz-ri* MUNUS.GÉME-*ti*$_7$*/ ša* LUGAL EN-*ia ma-ni/* UD. KAMv.MEŠ-*ti yi-šal-la-l*[*u*]-⌜*ši*⌝*/ ù in*$_4$*-né-ep-ša-a*[*t ki-ma*]*/* ⌜*ri*⌝*-qí ḫu-bu-l*[*i*]*/* ⌜*a*⌝*-na ša-šu* ⌜*iš*⌝-⌜*tu*⌝*/* ⌜ḪUR⌝.⌜SAG⌝*/ ip-pa-ṭá-ru* LÚ.MEŠ *i-na* 30 KÙ.BABBAR.MEŠ *ù iš-tu/* [1]*Pé-e-ia i-na* 1 *me* KÙ.BABBAR.MEŠ *ù li-ma-ad/ a-wa-te.*MEŠ ÌR-*ka an-nu-ti*
> Furthermore, behold the deeds of Pe'ya son of Gulat[i] against the town of Gezer, the handmaiden of the king, my lord. How long has he been plundering it so that it has become like a damaged pot because of him. From the hill country men are ransomed for thirty (shekels of) silver but from Pe'ya for one hundred (shekels of) silver. So learn these words of your servant!

EA 297 Yapaʿi of Gezer to the Pharaoh (Clay: Tel Gezer)

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[740] Ibid., 292-293.

[741] Knudtzon, *El-Amarna Tafeln*, 1329, cf. 2; Vita, "Scribes and Dialects," 874; Ibid., "Das Gezer-Corpus von El-Amarna: Umfang und Schrieber," *ZA* 90 (2000), 71-72, Pl 12.

[742] Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*, 1346, cf. 1; Vita, "Scribes and Dialects," 874.

EA 297: 9-21

mi-im-ma ša qa-⌜*ba*⌝/LUGAL EN-*ia a-na ia-ši/iš-te-mé-šu ma-gal/*SIG$_5$*-iš ša-ni-tam ù/ in*$_4$*-né-ep-ša-ti*$_7$*/ki-ma ri-qí* URUDU \ *sí-ri/ḫu-bu-ul-li/*⌜*iš*⌝*-tu qa-at/*(Rev.) ⌜LÚ⌝.MEŠ KUR ⌜*Su*⌝*-te*.MEŠ/*ù a-nu-ma iš-te-mé/ sa-ri ša* LUGAL DÙG.GA-*ta/ù it-ta-ṣa-at/a-na ia-ši ù pa-ši-iḫ/lìb-bi-ia ma-gal*

Everything that the king, my lord said to me, I have heeded very carefully. Furthermore, so I have become like a damaged copper pot because of the men of the Sutû land. But now I have heard the sweet breath of the king, and it has come forth to me and my heart is very tranquil.

9. Strong Arm (*zuruḫ*) (‘Abdi-Ḫeba; Jerusalem) [743]

EA 286: 05-15

ma-an-na ep-ša-ti a-na LUGAL EN-*ia/i-ka-lu ka-ar-ṣi*!(MURUB$_4$)*-ya* \ *ú-ša-a-ru/*⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *pa-ni* LUGAL EN-*ri* ᶦÌR-*ḫé-ba/pa-ṭa-ar-mi a-na šàr-ri* EN-*šu/a-mur a-na-ku la-a* ᴸᵁ*a-bi-ia/ù la-a* ᴹᵁᴺᵁˢ*ú-mi-ia* \ *ša-ak-na-ni/i-na aš-ri an-ni-e/*⌜*zu*⌝*-ru-uḫ šàr-ri* KAL.GA/⌜*ú*⌝*-še-ri-ba-an-ni a-na* É ᴸᵁ*a-bi-ia/*⌜*am*⌝*-mi-nim-mi a-na‹-ku› e-*⌜*pu*⌝*-uš/*\ *ar-na a-na* LUGAL EN-*ri*

What have I done to the king, my lord? They are maligning me; I am being maligned before the king, my lord: “Abdi-Ḫeba has deserted the king, his lord.’ Look, as for me, neither my father nor my mother put me in this place. The strong arm of the king installed me in the house of my father. Why would I (of all people) commit a crime against the king, ‹my› lord?

EA 287: 14-28

a-mur KUR [UR]U *Gaz-ri* KI KUR URU *Aš-qa-lu-na* KI/*ù* URU *L*[*a-ki-s*]*i* KI *i-din-nu a-na ša-šu-nu*/NÍG.ḪI.A Ì.ḪI.A *ù mi-im-ma* \ *ma-aḫ-sí-ra-mu/ ù li-is-kín šàr-ri a-na* ÉRIN.MEŠ *pi-ṭa-ti ú/lu-ma-še-ra* ÉRIN.MEŠ *pi-*⌜*ṭa*⌝*-ti a-na* LÚ.MEŠ/*ša ep-pu-šu ar-na* ⌜*a*⌝*-na šàr-ri* EN-*ia/šum-ma i-ba-aš-ši i-na* MU *an-ni-ti*/ÉRIN.MEŠ *pi-ṭa-tu*$_4$ *ù i-ba-aš-ši* KUR.ḪI.A/ [*ù*] LÚ *ḫa-*⌜*zi*⌝*-a-nu a-na šàr-ri* EN-*ia*/ [*ù š*]*um-ma* ⌜*ia*⌝*-a-*⌜*nu*⌝ ÉRIN.MEŠ *pi-ṭa-tu*$_4$ *ia-*⌜*a*⌝*-nu-*[*m*]*i*/ [KUR.ḪI.]A *ù* LÚ.M[EŠ *ḫ*]*a-*⌜*zi*⌝-⌜*a*⌝-⌜*nu*⌝-⌜*ti*⌝ *a-na š*[*àr-ri*]/ [*a*]*-mur* KUR URU *Ú-ru-sa-lim* ⌜*an*⌝-⌜*ni*⌝-⌜*ta*⌝/ [*l*]*a-a* LÚ AD.DA.A.NI *la-a ú-mi-i*[*a*]/ [*n*]*a-ad-na-an-ni* \ŠU\ *zu-ru-uḫ* [*šàr-ri* KAL].GA/ [*n*]*a-ad-na-an-ni a-na ia-a-ši*

Look, the [cit]y state of Gezer, the city state of Ashkelon and the city of L[achi]sh have given to them bread, oil and whatever they need. So may the king give his attention to the regular troops and may he dispatch the regular troops against those who are committing treason against the king, my lord. If in this year there are regular troops then the king, my lord, will have territories and a city ruler, [but] if there are no regular troops, the king will have no [territorie]s or city rulers. [L]ook, neither my father nor my mother gave me this city state of Jerusalem. It was the [mig]hty arm of [the king] that gave it to me.

[743] *CAD* Z, 167.

EA 288: 7-15
‹a-mur› ḫa-an-pa/ša iḫ-nu-pu a-na mu-⌜ḫi⌝-ia/a-mur a-na-ku la-a LÚ *ḥa-zi-a-nu/*LÚ *ú-e-ú a-na šàr-ri* EN-*ia/a-mur a-na-ku* LÚ *ru-ʾì šàr-ri/ù ú-bi-il* GUN *šàr-ri a-na-ku/ia-a-nu-mi* LÚ.AD.DA.A.NI *ia-a-nu-mi/*⌜MUNUS⌝*um-mi-ia* ⌜*zu*⌝-*ru-uḫ šàr-ri* KAL.GA/⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*ak*⌝-⌜*na*⌝-[*an-ni*] ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ É LÚ.⌜AD⌝.⌜DA⌝.[A-NI]
‹Look›, it is infamy what they have done to me! Look, as for me, I am not a city ruler, (but rather) a soldier of the king, my lord. Look, as for me, a "companion" of the king and a bringer of the king's tribute am I. Neither my father nor my mother, (but rather) the strong arm of the king has placed me in my father's house.

This term is derived from the WS word "arm" (*zrʿ* in Hebrew).[744] The reference to the "mighty arm" as metaphor for power is well established in biblical literature, mainly to reference to YHWH (e.g., Ex 15:16 and in reference to Egypt in Ex 6:6 using the frozen expression בזרוע נטויה "with an outstretched arm"). Here is it used to describe 'Abdi-Ḫeba's dependency on the Pharaoh, who "established" his throne.

As van der Toorn suggests, the proverbial sayings in the Canaanite Amarna Letters and the Canaanite glosses offer a window into Canaanite scribal culture.[745] Areas with the most developed scribal apparatuses are those that incorporate these "local" WS idioms.[746] Moreover, it appears that the scribes on the receiving end of this exchange were expected to understand these idioms, which again attests to the continuity in Egyptian-Canaanite relations during the second millennium B.C.E., and the

[744] *HALOT*, 280-281.

[745] The following examples draw from an oral style of rhetoric: EA 288: 32-33 *ša-ak-na-ti/ e-nu-ma* GIŠ.MÁ *i-na lìb-bi* A.AB.BA "I am situated like a ship in the midst of the sea;" the Laba'yu Letter EA 252: 16-19 ⌜*ša*⌝-*ni-tam ki-i na-am-lu/tu-um-ḫa-ṣú la-a/ti-ka-pí-lu ù ta-an-*⌜*šu*⌝-⌜*ku*⌝/*qa-ti* LÚ-*lì ša yi-ma-ḫa-aš-ši* "Furthermore, when ants are smitten, they do not just curl up, but they bite the hand of the man who smote them."

[746] The above expressions occur in letters written by the scribes working at Byblos, and in the key centers in the central hill country (Jerusalem, Gezer, and Shechem).

face that these two groups knew each others spoken languages. The "oral" register of these expressions suggests that these letters were performed in a dramatic way. The scribes here include local idioms to create more personable and expressive messages.

2. Egyptianisms in an Amarna Letter From Tyre (*EA 147*)

a. Introduction

The Tyre Letters are unique in the Amarna corpus as they overtly reference the religious reforms taking place in Egypt and demonstrate knowledge of Egyptian religious and scribal culture that is not reflected in the rest of the Canaanite corpus. This is to the point that Albright proposed that the scribe was actually an Egyptian working in Tyre.[747] EA 146-155 were all sent from Abimilki of Tyre to Egypt and date to the end of Amenhotep IV's reign.[748] EA 147, in particular, offers insight into how such shifts within the Canaano-Akkadian letters may have served as an internal scribal code, or a message within the message. The scribe writing these letters appears to have been quite cosmopolitan and informed about cultural trends in Egypt.[749] There are numerous Egyptian calques in this passage and also Canaanite words that contribute to the lively tenor of this letter (see below).

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[747] Abright, "The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki, 196-203; focus on 196.

[748] Siddall, "The Amarna Letters from Tyre," 27.

[749] Other studies of the Tyre letters have similarly focused on the identity of the scribe. Stanley Gevirtz contended that the scribe was not necessary Egyptian, but may have beeb a Canaanite who was versed in Egyptian culture ("On Canaanite Rhetoric: The Evidence of the Amarna Letters From Tyre," *Orientalia* 42 [1973]: 162-177; focus on 177). Cecilia Grave contended that the identity of the scribe was not clear-cut, as there are many Canaanisms in this corpus. More recently Siddall has proposed that the Egyptianisms were intended for the Egyptian audience, in particular he views the references to Atenism as attempts to gain favor with the Pharaoh's staff. See Cecilia Grave, "The Etymology of the Northwest Semitic *ṣapānu*," *UF* 12 (1980), 221-229; "On the Use of an Egyptian Idiom in an Amarna Letter from Tyre and in a Hymn to the Aten," *OrAnt* 19 (1980), 205-218; "Northwest Semitic *Ṣapānu* in a Break-Up of an Egyptian Stereotype Phrase in Ea 147," *Or* 51.2 (1982), 161-182; Siddal, "The Amarna Letters from Tyre, 24-35.

b. Egyptianisms and Canaanisms

The classic work on Egyptianisms within the ʻAbimilki corpus is W. M. F. Albright's 1937 article, "The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki, Prince of Tyre."[750] Albright drew upon Ranke's study of the Egyptian words in the Amarna Corpus.[751] Gevirtz viewed many of the features to be Canaanite, with some Egyptian interference (e.g., the use of parallelism, the alternation between the prefix and suffix verbs, and the shift in person from 2nd to 3rd person in reference to the same subject); also, he understood the poems to be translated from Egyptian originals.[752] There are also some Canaanite idioms in this corpus, such as the use of *pašāḫu* to refer to the land being "at rest" in EA 147:12.[753] Overall, Gevirtz downplayed the Egyptian influence in this letter. He commented that the list

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[750] The classic work on Egyptianisms within the ʻAbdi-Milki corpus is Albright, "The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki," 190-203. Albright draws upon Herrman Ranke's study of the Egyptian words in the Amarna Corpus (*Keilschriftliches Material Zur Altägyptischen Vokalisation* [Berlin: Verlag der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, in Commission bei Georg Reimer, 1910], 19, 24-26).

[751] The following lexemes are Akkadian renderings of Egyptian words that were used in the Levant to refer to Egyptian military and administrative personnel: *wē*(*ḫ*)*u* from **wʻw* "soldier, officer;" *pawēra*(*i*) from **p3-wr*(*w*) "foreign captain, prince;" *uputi* from **wpwtî* "envoy." Ebeling added *akuni* "amphora" and *ḫpš* "arm, sword, strength." Albright's contribution was *panimu* from **bw-nb* "everywhere;" *arū* from **hrw*(*w*) "happy;" *quna* from **qny* "be valiant," though this last example is better analyzed as the WS root **kwn* "to prepare." Albright proposed that *yáyaya* was derived from **y3* in Egyptian as was in this context an "exclamation denoting approval." Gevirtz cites WS parallels such as *y'h* in Hebrew, *ya'e* in Syria, and *y'* in Punic, with the basic meaning "to be fitting, good." See Albright, "The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki," 196-197, cf. 4; see also Gevirtz, "On Canaanite Rhetoric," 176; See E. Ebeling, *Das Verbum Der El-Amarna-Briefe* (Leipzig, 1910), 78; Herrman Ranke, *Keilschriftliches Material,* 19, 24-26.

[752] Gevirtz, "On Canaanite Rhetoric," 162-177; focus on 177. As Siddall contends, some of these features, in particular the use of parallelism, are common in all Semitic languages and in Egyptian as well ("The Amarna Letters from Tyre," 26).

[753] Gevirtz, "On Canaanite Rhetoric," 162-177; focus on 176, cf. 51, and 177.

of Egyptian terms comprises mainly of technical terms and military titles and not an indication of the language of the scribe.[754]

Siddall's list of WS and Egyptian lexemes represents the most recent scholarship in EA 147. For Canaanisms he lists: *ṣa-pa-ni-šu* "his north wind" from *ṣpwn* in line 10 and *zu-ri-ya* "my back" from the root *ṣhr/ṣ'r* in line 39. The Egyptianisms are much more prevalent. He cites *ḫa-ab-ši* "strength, power" from *ḫpš* in line 12; *a-ru-ú* "happy" from *hrw* in line 28; *ya-a-ya-ya* from the repeated particle *y3*, which is an affirmation in line 38; and *nu-uḫ-ti* from *nḫt* "strength, might" in line 56. Though the term *nu-uḫ-ti*, which Siddall sees as an Egyptian gloss from *nḫt* "strength, might," can also be analyzed as a Canaanite gloss from the root *nwḫ* "peace, rest."[755] In light of the use of parallelism in this line, this is best classified as a Canaanism whereby both *nu-uḫ-ti* and *ba-ṭì-i-ti* are 1cs suffixed forms. That is, the ending –*ti* is a pronominal suffix and is not a part of the verbal root.[756]

c. Analysis of EA 147

The following analysis is not a comprehensive study of the language of this letter, but rather attempts to examine possible reasons for the shifts in code in the body of the message. I am marking

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[754] Gevirtz contended that the term *ḫapši* is not necessarily Egyptian (EA 147:12), and cites *ḫpṯ* possible parallel in Ugaritic. He concedes that *a-ru-ú* (Ea 147:28) is an Egyptianism, and *pa-ni-mu* may be as well ("On Canaanite Rhetoric," 176-177).

[755]Siddall, "The Amarna Letters from Tyre," 26.

[756] EA 147: 54b-56 *ù aš-šum* ZAG LUGAL/ *be-li-ia da-na-ti*/ \\ *nu-uḫ-ti* \\ *ba-ṭì-i-ti*
Siddall: "And because of the strong arm of the King, my Lord, I am trusting;" Rainey: "[A]nd because of the mighty arm of the king, my lord, I am at rest, I am confident." See Siddall, "The Amarna Letters from Tyre," 28; Rainey, *The El-'Amarnah Correspondence,* EA 147.

the glosses as well as the calques and idioms that are influenced by Egyptian and Canaanite to demonstrate how the scribe skillfully wove together several traditions to compose a persuasive letter. Egyptian features are marked in bold; Canaanite elements are underlined. Clauses that deal strictly with content (i.e., events related to Egypt and Tyre) are marked with a double line to demonstrate how the poetic languages frames key news.

Table 35 Code-Switching and Poetic Language in EA 147

EA 147	
Introduction (MB) 01) *a-na* LUGAL EN-*lí-ia* DINGIR.MEŠ-⌜*ia*⌝ ⌜^{d}⌝⌜UTU⌝-*ia*	(1-5) To the king, my lord, my deity, my sun god
Prostration Formula 02) *um-ma A-bi*-LUGAL ÌR-*ka* 03) 7 *u* 7 *a-na* GÌR.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*lí-ia am-qut* 04) *a-na-ku ep-ru iš-tu ša-pa-li* 05a) *ši-ni* LUGAL EN-*lí-ia*	The message of Abi-Milku, your servant: seven (times) and seven times I have fallen at the feet of the king, my lord. I am the dirt beneath the sandals of the king, my lord.
Pharaoh as Aten/ Pharaoh as Ba'al **05b) *be-li*** **06) ^{d}UTU *ša it-ta-ṣí i-na muḫ-ḫi*** **07) KUR *ma-ta-ti i-na u$_4$-mi ù u$_4$-mi-ma*** **08) *ki-ma ši-ma-at* ^{d}UTU *a-bu-šu* SIG$_5$** **09) *ša i-ba-li-iṭ i-na še-ḫi-šu* DÙG!(U).GA** **10) *ù i-sà-ḫur i-na ṣa-pa-ni-šu*** **11)** *ša it-ta-ṣa-ab gáb-bi* KUR-*ti* **12)** *i-na pa-ša-ḫi i-na du-ni* ZAG \\ *ḫa-ap-ši* 13) *ša id-din ri-ig-ma-šu i-na sa-me* 14) *ki-ma* ^{d}IŠKUR *ù* ⌜*tar*⌝-*gu$_5$-ub gáb-bi* 15) KUR-*ti* ⌜*iš*⌝-*tu ri-ig-mi-šu*	**My lord is the sun god who has come forth over all lands day by day according to the manner of the sun god, his gracious father, who has given life by his sweet breath and returns with his north wind**; of **whom all the land is established in peace by the power of (his) arm;** who has given his voice in the sky like Ba'al, and all the land was frightened at his cry.
Letter Body 1. Envoy Arrival/Sweet Breath Metaphor 16) *an-nu-ú iš-pu-ur* ÌR-*du a-na be-li-šu* 17) *e-nu-ma iš-me* DUMU KIN-*ri* SIG$_5$	Behold, the servant has written to his lord since he has heard the gracious envoy of the king who comes to his servant **and the sweet breath which has come forth from the mouth of the king, my**

18) *ša* LUGAL *ša i-kà-ša-ad a-na* ÌR-*šu*	**lord, to his servant — and his breath returns!**
19) *ù še-ḫu* DÙG.GA *ša it-ta-ṣí*	Before the arrival of the emissary of the king, my
20) *iš-tu* ^{UZU}*pí*.MEŠ LUGAL *be-li-ia*	lord, **breath was not coming back; my nose was**
21) *a-na* ÌR-*šu ù i-sa-ḫur še-ḫu-šu*	**blocked!**
22) *la-am kà-ša-ad* LÚ.KIN-*ri* LUGAL *be-⌜li⌝-ia*	**Look! now, when the breath of the king came**
23) *la-a i-sà-ḫur še-ḫu i-sà-kir*	**forth to ⌜me⌝, then I rejoiced greatly and daily,**
24) KA.MEŠ *ap-pí-ia a-mur i-⌜na⌝-an-⌜na⌝*	**day by day.**
25) *e-nu-ma it-ta-⌜ṣí⌝*	
26) *še-ḫu* LUGAL *a-na muḫ-⌜ḫi⌝-⌜ia⌝*	
27) *ù ḫa-ad-ia-ti ma-gal*	
28) *ù* \\ *a-ru-ú i-na u4-mi u ⌜u_4⌝[-mi-]ma*	(29-35) Because I rejoiced, the land did not attack, since I heard the gracious envoy
29) *aš-šum ḫa-dì-ia-ti la-a ti-⌜ši⌝-⌜ir⌝*	who is from my lord, then the entire land feared before my lord, **when I heard the sweet breath**
30) *er-ṣé-tu*$_4$ *e-nu-ma iš-me*	and the gracious envoy who came to me.
31) ⌜DUMU⌝ ⌜KIN⌝-*ri* SIG$_5$ *ša iš-tu be-⌜li⌝-⌜ia⌝*	
32) *ù gáb-bi* KUR-*ti pal-ḫa-at*	
33) *iš-tu pa-ni be-li-ia* ***e-nu-ma***	When the king, my lord said: "Be ready for the
34) *iš-me še-ḫu* DÙG.GA *ù* DUMU KIN-*ri* SIG$_5$	arrival of the great army," then the servant said:
35a) *ša i-kà-ša-dá-ni*	"Yea, yea, yea!" On my stomach and on my back I carry the word of the king, my lord.
2. Obedience to Orders/Military Envoy	
35b) *e-nu-ma*	
36) *iq-bi* LUGAL *be-li-ia* \\ ***ku-na***	
37) *a-na pa-ni* ÉRIN.MEŠ GAL *ù iq-bi*	**Whoever has obeyed the king, his lord and**
38) ÌR-*du a-na be-li-šu* \\ ***ia-a-ia-ia***	**serves him in his places, then the sun god comes**
39) *a-na muḫ-ḫi ga-bi-dì-ia muḫ-ḫi* \\ *ṣú-ri-ia*	**forth over him and the sweet breath returns from the mouth of his lord; but whoever has not**
Blessings and Curses	**heeded the word of the king his lord, his city is**
40) *ú-bal a-ma-ta*$_5$ LUGAL *be-li-ia*	**destroyed and his house is destroyed, his name**
41) *ša iš-me ⌜a⌝-na* LUGAL *be-li-šu ù*	**does not exist in all the land forever.**
42) *ú-ra-ad-šu i-na aš-ra-ni-šu*	
43) *ù it-‹ta›-ṣí* ^{d}UTU *i-na muḫ-ḫi-šu*	
44) *ù i-sà-ḫur še-ḫu* DÙG.GA *iš-tu* ^{UZU}*pí be-li-šu*	
45) *ù la-a iš-te-mé a-ma-ta*$_5$ LUGAL *be-⌜li⌝-šu*	
46) *ḫal-qá-⌜at⌝* URU-*šu ḫa-li-iq* É-*šu*	
47) *ia-nu šu-um-šu i-na gáb-bi*	
48a) KUR-*ti i-na da-ri-ti*	

48b) *a-mur*	
49) ÌR-*da ša iš-me a-na ›a-na‹ be-li-šu*	**Behold, the servant who has heeded his lord, his city is prosperous, his house**
50) *šul-mu* URU-*šu šul-mu* É-*šu*	
51) *šu-um-šu a-⌜na⌝ ⌜da⌝-ri-ti*	**prospers, his name is eternal.**
Pharaoh as Aten/ Bronze Wall Metaphor	**You are the sun god who has come forth over him(!), and a brazen wall set up for him;** and because of the mighty arm of the king, my lord, I am at rest, I am confident.
52) *at-ta* ^{d}UTU *ša ⌜it⌝-ta-ṣí i-na muḫ-ḫi-šu*!(WA)	
53) *ù du-ú-ri* ZABAR(UD.KA.BAR) *ša iz-qú-pu*	
54) *a-na ša-a-šu ù aš-šum* ZAG LUGAL	
55) *be-li-ia da-na-ti*	
56) \\ *nu-uḫ-ti* \\ *ba-ṭì-i-ti*	
Request for a Personal Audience	
57) *an-nu-ú iq-bi*	Behold, I have said **to the sun god the father of the king**, my lord, "When will I see the face of the king, my lord?"
58) ***a-na*** ^{d}**UTU *a-bi* LUGAL *be-li-ia***	
59) *ma-ti-mi i-mur*	
60) *pa-ni* LUGAL *be-li-ia*	

The most salient metaphors being appealed to here from Egyptian culture are the "breath of life" in lines 5-10, 19-21, 33b-35a, and 43-45, the "bronze wall" in line 53. Moreover, the references to the Aten suggest an awareness of the religious transition in Egypt. The curse language appears to be derived from Egyptian curses. The reference to the "house" not existing in lines 45-47 resembles curses dating to 7th century. With this understanding, *šumu* ("name" in Akkadian) in line 47 may be a calque for *rn* in Egyptian.[757]

References to the beneficial breath of the king are well attested in New Kingdom inscriptions,

[757] Albright, "The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki," 199.

in particular in the Hymn to the Aten column 7.[758] The references to the sun and solar imagery, too, suggest a first hand knowledge of Egyptian court culture. This appears to be a deliberate strategy by Abi-milki to draw upon Atenist theology to make his letters more appealing.[759] There is, for example, a clear parallel between EA 147: 5-15 and the Great Hymn to the Aten. Siddall understands the reference to Akhenaten as the sun in lines 5-6 *be-li* ^{d}UTU and the reference to Amenhotep III as the 'mark of the sun his father" in line 8 (*ki-ma ši-ma-at* ^{d}UTU *a-bu-šu*) to indicate a nuanced understanding of Atenism whereby "the pharaoh is both the sun *and* the son of the Aten."[760] There is also some overlap in the use of figurative language in lines 16-21, where the "breath" of the king refers as well to the arrival of an envoy from Egypt. This has a much more immediate and practical implication in the context of this letter, as the caravans from Egypt are what bring life to Abimilki. In lines 29-35, the arrival of the envoy dispels Abimilki's enemies and protects his interests. The scribe draws a comparison between the military reinforcements and supplies therein and the more abstract power of the Pharaoh to bestow life. The scribe reconfigured stock language drawn from Egyptian honorifics to advance Abimilku's interests.[761] The structure of this letter suggests that what Albright termed as "poetic" language did not merely serve an esthetic function. The metaphors and parallelism were used

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[758] For a discussion see Ronald J. Williams, "Some Egyptianisms in the Old Testament," *Studies in Honor of John A. Wilson, September 12, 1969*. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations 55 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1969), 93-98; see also Siddall, "The Amarna Letters from Tyre," 27.

[759] Ibid., 27.

[760] Ibid., 27.

[761] Albright sites parallels in the inscriptions of both Tutankhamun and Ramesis II ("The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki," 199).

to highlight the discussion of the arrival of an envoy from Egypt. The central message in this letter is that such envoys are vital to the fate of the city.

In this vein, Siddall's study of the Tyre corpus approaches the Egyptianisms and Canaanisms as a strategy to appeal to the Egyptian court. He views the scribe that wrote EA 147 to have been a Canaanite who shifted to Egyptian "for deliberate effect."[762] He posits a two-fold reason for the mixture of Canaanisms and Egyptianisms:

> (1) that the West Semitic linguistic aspects were placed in the letter to draw the attention of the Canaanites in the Egyptian administration at the first stage of the administration process and (2) that the Egyptianisms were included to win the favor of the pharaoh.[763]

The majority of verbs in the poetic sections are Akkadian and not Canaano-Akkadian, as such, the Canaanite forms would also have appeared as marked forms. We thus see an Akkadian base, peppered with both Canaanite and Egyptian features. As to the performance of the letters, the Egyptianisms would not have been apparent when the letter was read aloud in Egyptian. It appears that the scribes translating such messages would have made note of any Egyptian words when the letter was read to the Pharaoh. Siddall views the Egyptianisms to have been an effective tool to gain the Egyptian

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[762] The verbs in this letter are written in MB. For instance, there is a lack of use of PI for *yv-* to mark the verbal prefixes. However, there are also some distinctly Canaano-Akkadian forms. The scribes do retain *i-* to write the 1cs prefix as opposed to *a-* or *e-* in Akkadian; also the scribes use the Canaano-Akkadian jussive as opposed to the predicative, and they feature the suffix conjugation to mark the past, which is not normative in Akkadian. See Siddall, "The Amarna Letters from Tyre," 25- 26.

[763] Ibid., 30.

scribes' approval, whereas, Canaanisms served to "attract the attention" of Canaanites working at Tell el-'Amarna.[764]

Seen in this light, the Canaanisms, Egyptianisms, and MB orthographies in the Canaanite Amarna Letters functioned as a type of signaling to the cuneiform scribes working in Egypt. Use of Egyptian idioms (e.g., the Egyptianisms and references to aspects of Egyptian religion in the Tyre letters) served as a means of in-grouping with Egyptian scribes, whereas the Canaanite elements served as a "cultural identifier" aimed at Canaanite scribes working in Egypt. The "poems" in EA 147, too, were included to engage the Egyptian scribes receiving these letters. All of these shifts in language were aimed at gaining an audience with the royal court and ensuring that the Pharaoh's favorable response. Such a scenario is quite compelling as it explains as well the cross-pollination of scribal conventions, such as the presence of Egyptian Akkadian forms in some Canaanite Letters as well as Canaano-Akkadian features in letters from Egypt.

The following demonstrates the use of *Glossenkeile*n to mark Egyptianized forms as well as Canaanisms within the text.

Table 36 Egyptianisms and Canaanisms in EA 147

EA 147	Translation	Language
11-12: *ša it-ta-ṣa-ab*[765] *gáb-bi* KUR-*ti i-na a-ša-ḫi i-na du-ni* ZAG \\ *ḫa-ap-ši*	"of whom all the land is established in peace by the	Egyptian **ḫpš* "arm"

[764] Ibid., 30.

[765] This is from the Canaanite root **nṣb* "to stand, establish." Rainey proposes that is not transitive (contra Moran) but rather serves in a way similar to the Egyptian passive relative form ("A New English Translation of the Amarna Letters. Review of W. L. Moran *The Amarna Letters*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992," *Afo* 42/43 (1995-1996), 117); see also Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 233.

	power of (his) arm”	
27-28: *ù ḫa-ad-ia-ti ma-gal ù* \\ *a-ru-ú i-na u4-mi u* ⌜*u4*⌝[*-mi-*]*ma*	“Look! now, when the breath of the king came forth to ⌜me⌝, then I rejoiced greatly and daily, day by day.”	Egyptian **hrw*(*w*)
36: *iq-bi* LUGAL *be-li-ia* \\ *ku-na*	“When the king, my lord said: “Be ready”	Canaanite **kwn*
38*: a-na be-li-šu* \\ *ia-a-ia-ia*	“then the servant said: “Yea, yea, yea!”	Exclamation (emphatic) *Canaanite? * Egyptian? *y3* “yea, verily” (repeated in exclamation for emphasis)
39-40: *a-na muḫ-ḫi ga-bi-dì-ia muḫ-ḫi* \\ *ṣú-ri ú-bal a-ma-ta*$_5$ LUGAL *be-li-ia*	On my stomach and on my back I carry the word of the king, my lord	Canaanite (?) **zḫr >ṣu’ru, ṣūru* “back”[766] Akkadian? *ṣēru* “back, top, hinterland, open country, steppe”
55-56: *be-li-ia da-na-ti*\\ *nu-uḫ-ti* \\ *ba-ṭì-i-ti*	“I am at rest, I am confident.”	Canaanite: **nwḫ* “rest; to rest, be at rest” **bṭḥ* “to be confident, secure"*bṭḥ* to be confident, secure

Siddall views the glosses in the Tyre letters to be primarily used when “discussing a vital point of the letter,” whereas he views the Canaano-Akkadian lexemes to mainly refer back to Abi-Milki (noting the exceptions of *kuna* and *ṣapānu*).[767]

There is a cluster of Canaanite forms in EA 147: 35b-39. Most notably, the form *ku-na* is a WS verbal root that is purported to be a quote from the Pharaoh:

EA 147: 35b-39 *e-nu-ma iq-bi* LUGAL *be-li-ia* \\ *ku-na a-na pa-ni* ÉRIN.MEŠ GAL *ù iq-bi* ÌR-*du a-*

[766] *AHw*, 1115a; *CAD* Ṣ, 261b; Ug. *ṣr* (Gordon *Textbook* §19:1047); HALOT צֹהַר.

[767] Siddall, “The Amarna Letters from Tyre,” 26.

na be-li-šu \\ ia-a-ia-ia a-na muḫ-ḫi ga-bi-dì-ia muḫ-ḫi \\ ṣú-ri
When the king, my lord said: "Be ready for the arrival of the great army," then the servant said: "Yea, yea, yea!" On my stomach and on my back I carry the word of the king, my lord.

Canaanisms such as "*kûna*" were only marked forms in the confines of the tablet. Once it was freed of its clay constraints and translated into Egyptian, this word, unless translated in Canaanite, was not a marked form in the final version of this message. What we have here is essentially a rhetorical strategy that was visual and scribal but did not necessarily affect the "language" of the delivered message—unless of course the scribe interpreting this text relayed these nuances in their translation. Such "cues" were aimed at the scribes reading his text in an attempt to inform their translations. For example, the use of a Canaanite form in the speech of the Pharaoh would not have gone unnoticed by an Egyptian scribe, but would have drawn their attention to this pivotal passage.

Overall, the shifts between the various codes in this letter (e.g., MB, Canaano-Akkadian, Canaanite, and Egyptian) were not a reflection of the Akkadian "diamlect" of Tyre. They attest to the skill of the scribes working for Abimilku, who were able to craft letters that created a persuasive narrative. The shifts between Egyptian and Canaanite forms in this letter were aimed at both Canaanites and Egyptians working as the gatekeepers for access to the royal court. The glosses and poetic language in EA 147 frame the central message in this letter. Between flattering praise, the scribe was able to introduce a cry for help and a request for additional envoys from Egypt.

D. EA 369: A "Canaanite" Egyptian Amarna Letter?

1. An Introduction

EA 369, a letter from Amenḥotep IV to Milkilu of Gezer, that has Canaano-Akkadian elements,

sheds light upon diplomacy during this period between Egypt and Canaan. Moran viewed EA 369 to be "set apart" from the other Egyptian letters to vassals in Canaan.[768] This letter has become central in debates about the function of Canaano-Akkadian, its linguistic classification, and the identity of the scribes writing it.[769] Izre'el views this letter to be the work of either a Canaanite scribe working in Egypt or one of Milkilu's scribes who was temporarily stationed there. [770] Von Dassow views the WS forms in this letter to be the work of an Egyptian scribe, and thus evidence that Canaanite was the "shared code" between these two polities. She understands this letter to be evidence that Egyptian scribes could and did use what she describes as "Canaanite in cuneiform," and that Canaanite was "the

[768] Izre'el's analysis of the language of this letter is largely drawn from Moran. Izre'el views the addition of *ana* before *qabê*, in the introduction of EA 369, to be a reflection of the mother tongue of the scribes, which he argues, was not Egyptian. As he writes, "it shows that the scribe who wrote EA 369 considered it ungrammatical to have an infinitive form in the genitive case without a preposition preceding it. The form *qabê* (a genitive) without the preposition *ana* seems to be a calque from Egyptian. He also cites the two glosses in this letter as evidence that the language of the scribe was not Egyptian, but was Canaanite. He lists the following: non-Hittite ductus; the form *ultēbilakku,* which is written without the *št>lt* shift (it is typically *uštēbilakku*), the lack of the imperative *qibīma* in the introduction of the letter; also, the conclusion of EA 369 is unique in this corpus. Izre'el's cites paleographic differences between EA 369 and the other Egyptian Amarna Letters, e.g., *la, li, and ù*. See Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 366, cf. 1; also Introduction section 5; Izre'el, "The Amarna Glosses," 109-118.

[769] Von Dassow does note that their use of Canaanite in cuneiform was "sporadic" and that that Egyptian scribes used MB when writing to polities outside of this region. But, she does not really explain why it is that Egyptian scribes so rarely used this Canaanite code; also, her theory ascribes a language of reading to these letters for which there is no substantial evidence. Izre'el, contra von Dassow, views EA 369, to be best classified as one of the letters written by Milkilu's scribe. He views the Canaanite glosses as a personal note that the scribe included for his own use. In other words, this letter was written in Egypt by a Canaanite writing in a dialect of Canaano-Akkadian; this assumes that a Canaanite scribe traveled to Egypt to serve as Milkilu's personal scribe and ambassador of sorts. Von Dassow counters that it is improbable that the Pharaoh would have entrusted such a letter to a Canaanite scribe, rather than employ his own cuneiform scribe. She argues that an Egyptian scribe used these WS forms and that this example demonstrates that the Egyptian scribes on occasion used the Akkadographic system employed in the southern Levant. See von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 654-655; quote on 656, also cf. 34; Izre'el," The Amarna Glosses," 101-122; focus on 115-118.

[770] Ibid., 115.

spoken and written *lingua franca"* of Egypt's territorial holdings in the Levant.[771] A close examination of the clays, ductus, orthography, and language of this letter reveasl an interesting mix of "northern" (i.e., Egyptian) and southern (i.e., Canaano-Akkadian) features.

EA 369

07) *qa-du mi-im-ma a-na la-qé-e* 08) MUNUS.DÉ \ *ša-qí-tu*$_4$ SIG$_5$ 09) KÙ.BABBAR.ḪI.A GUŠKIN.ḪI.A GADA.MEŠ \ *ma-al-ba-ši*	"…with everything for the acquisition of beautiful female cupbearers, viz. silver, gold, linen garments…"
14) 40 ⌜KÙ⌝.BABBAR ŠÁM MUNUS.DÉ.MEŠ 15) *ù uš-ši-ra* MUNUS.DÉ.MEŠ 16) SIG$_5$ *da-an-ni-iš*	"Total: 40 female cupbearers. Forty (shekels of) silver is the price of one female cupbearer. So send very beautiful female cupbearers…"

The gloss *ma-al-ba-ši* is a Canaanite term, which Izre'el views as an indication that scribe's language was WS and not Egyptian.[772] Izre'el's analysis of MUNUS.DÉ \ *ša-qí-tu*$_4$ is a bit more complex. He proposes that women cupbearers were common in Egypt, whereas in Mesopotamia, besides the beer sellers or tavern workers (*Siduri* in *Gilgameš* comes to mind), women did not typically have this function. As such, when it came to writing about a female cupbearer the scribe was at a loss for how to render this distinction in cuneiform. He writes: "How would a scribes whose mother tongue is Egyptian or Canaanite write a letter to Canaan and specify his sovereign's demands in the Akkadian lingua franca? He would either borrow a word from his mother tongue or coin a neologism in Akkadian." He proposes that the scribe innovated the *ša-qí-tu*$_4$ as a gloss for MUNUS.DÉ.

[771] Ibid., 101-122; focus on 109-118; von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 654-655; for quote see 674.

[772] Izre'el, "The Amarna Glosses," 116.

This letter also has the lone example of a clear Canaano-Akkadian verbal prefix in a letter from Egypt. Interestingly enough, the subject of this verb is not a Canaanite ruler but is rather the god Amun: EA 339:28-32 *a-nu-um-ma yi-*⌜*ta*⌝*-din/* ^{d}*A-ma-nu* KUR *i-li-ti* / KUR *šap-li-ti ṣi-it* ^{d}UTU/*e-re-eb* ^{d}UTU *i-na šu-pa-al* / 2 GÌR LUGAL "Now Amon has placed the upper land, the lower land, (from) the coming forth of the sun god (to) the entering in of the sun god beneath the two feet of the king." The verb *yi-*⌜*ta*⌝*-din* is a Canaano-Akkadian preterite that makes used of the 3ms prefix *yv-* and is built from the Gt of the verb *nadānu* "to give." [773] This letter concludes with an Canaano-Akkadian form in conjunction with a reference to the Egyptian god Amun, and offers a nice example of the cross-cultural influence of Canaanite and Egyptian scribalism during this period.

Izre'el proposes a scenario whereby the Canaanite scribe writing this letter consulted with a more informed colleague and they concocted a spelling that would employ the logogram DÉ. This logogram is not really used to write *šāqû* but only appears as such in lexical lists. [774] The scribe then further glossed the sign with the word *ša-qí-tu*4, which he "intuitively formed" to be a female form of *šāqû.*[775] This explanation understand the scribes of Canaan to be scholars and grammarians, who consult lexicons and had a sufficient mastery of Akkadian to craft neologisms. This, too, presumes that they were concerned with producing the proper grammatical forms, which does not really fit the

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[773] For a list of Canaano-Akkadian elements that occur in the Egyptian Akkadian texts from Boghazköi see Cochavi-Rainey, *The Akkadian Dialect of Egyptian,* 201-207.

[774] There is an error in the writing of this sign in line 8, the first time that it occurs in this text. Izre'el takes this as evidence that the writer was not familiar with this sign form ("The Amarna Glosses," 117). See also *AHw* 1181a; *CAD Š* 1: 24b.

[775] Ibid., 117.

evidence from Canaan during this period. Also, it overlooks the fact that the face-to-face component of diplomacy would have filled in any gaps in context. Egyptians and WS speakers had interacted for over a millennium by this point. Those working between these two polities were most likely experts in each other's culture. Writing in LBA Canaan is best characterized by pragmatism and at times a desire to show off, but the scribes do not appear to be concerned with "proper" grammar and are even less concerned with adhering to the protocols of MB outside of the introductions of the letters. Izre'el concludes that the scribe must have been "a native speaker of another language than Egyptian," because the notion of a female cupbearer appears to have been a foreign concept, and required an explicative gloss.[776] This leaves a Canaanite at the Pharaoh's court that was permanently stationed there or one of Milkilu's own scribes.

Von Dassow, on the other hand, cites this letter as a proof text for her "Canaanite in cuneiform" theory. She views the Egyptian and Canaanite scribes to have "share[d] the same code," which she views to have been Canaanite. As she writes,

> The Canaanite words and glosses, together with the features of" hybridization"...indicate that the language the writers of these texts encoded in cuneiform was Canaanite, the same as the language in which their tablets were read by the scribes of Canaan and their counterparts in Egypt. The Canaanite cuneiform scribes used Akkadian not as a language but as a means of writing in cuneiform; in other words, they used cuneiform as an Akkadographic code for writing Canaanite." [777]

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[776] Ibid., 115; see also Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, xxviii, cf. 75.

[777] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 656.

Von Dassow analyses the same forms as Izre'el but arrives at radically different conclusions. That is, the Canaano-Akkadian forms are evidence that scribes working for Egypt "could and sometimes did employ the same system for encoding communication in cuneiform as the Canaanite scribes who wrote to Egypt, while the later sometimes used Egyptian in their turn."[778] The gloss *malbašu* for GADA.MEŠ, the WS verbal form *yi-ta-din* in EA 396: 9; 28, and the 2ms suffixed conjugation *na-ṣa-ra-ta* "you guard" in EA 99: 8, 367:4, and 370:5 are understood as evidence that the language of reading was Canaanite—not Egyptian or even Akkadian.[779] She goes on to argue that these two groups of scribes "share[d] the same code," and, moreover, that the language of the "texts encoded in cuneiform was Canaanite," and moreover, that the "*lingua franca* shared by the scribes of Canaan and their counterparts in Egypt" was Canaanite. [780]

2. A Sociolinguistic Analysis of EA 369

EA 369 does indeed present a conundrum as it has features that reflect both Egyptian and Canaano-Akkadian. Also, does not quite fit in with the rest of the letters from Egypt, or share their paleography or orthography. It is also distinguished from the Canaano-Akkadian letters, as it contains elements seen in the Akkadian produced in Egypt.[781] Vita ascribes this one letter to Scribe 2 of Gezer,

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[778] Ibid., 656.

[779] Central to her evidence is the example in EA 147 (from Tyre) that purports to quote the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh "speaks" using Canaano-Akkadian forms, the infamous example being the form *ku-na* "prepare," in EA 147:36: *iq-bi* LUGAL *be-li-ia* \\ *ku-na* "The King, my lord said "prepare!" This form is a 2ms imperative derived from the WS verbal root *kwn* (Ibid., 655).

[780] Von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 654-655; quote on 655.

[781] The clay in this letter was not examined in Goren et al.,'s petrographic study of the Amarna Letters.

and sets it apart from the rest of the Gezer corpus.[782] However, Mynarova's analysis of the introduction of the Amarna Letters classifies it with other Egyptian Akkadian letters.

EA 369: 1-5

01) *a-na* [1]*Mil-ki-li* ⌜LÚ⌝ URU *Gaz-r*[*i*]
02) *um-ma* LUGAL-*ma a-nu-um-ma ṭup-pa an-na-am*
03) *ul-te-bi-la-ak-ku a-na qa-bé-e*
04) *a-na ka-a-ša a-nu-um-ma*
05) *um-te-še-ra-ak-ku* [1]*Ḫa-an-ia*

"To Milkilu, ruler of Gezer; thus the king: Now, this tablet have I sent to you in order to say to you: Now I have dispatched to you Ḫanya…"

The introduction follows Mynarova's Type 18, which comprises of a two-part structure: 1) a heading and 2) a statement about the letter. This introduction is only found in EA 99, 367, and 370, all of which are letters sent from Egypt.[783] The use of *anumma* to begin the main message after the initial introductory statement is well attested in Babylonian letters and in the Egyptian and Canaano-Akkadian letters (e.g., EA 1:10; 367:6 [Eg.] and EA 201:9-11; 192: 5-6 (Can. Akk.).[784]

There are some other aspects about this letter that are worth considering. As Rainey notes, the Š of *wabālu*, seen in lines 3 (*ul-te-bi-la-ak-ku*) is very rare in the Canaanite Amarna Letters. It is better attested outside of Canaan, for example, in Egyptian Akkadian (e.g., EA 367:3; EA 369:3; and 370:3) and it occurs in the letters from Alashia (EA 35:20; 40:15), but only twice in the Canaanite Amarna

[782] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 82-83.

[783] Moran proposed that this introduction was a calque for an Egyptian letter introduction, which he compared to *jn.tw nk sš on n ḏd ḥn' ḏd* "He (I?) hereby sends (send?) this tablet to you, saying to you…" (*The Amarna Letters*, xxvii-xxviii, also xviii. cf. 75). See also Ricardo A Caminos and Alan H. Gardiner. *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 4, 7, 13-14.

[784] Rainey, *CAT* III, 152-153.

corpus.[785] Moran and Izre'el list the form *lt* as non-Egyptian Akkadian; however, as Cochavi-Rainey demonstrated, Egyptian Akkadian alternates between *št* and *lt* forms, which suggests that the orthographic conventions were in transition.[786]

The verb *muššuru* with the meaning "to send" may be influenced by Canaano-Akkadian; in Canaano-Akkadian *wuššuru*, with the retention of the intervocalic –*w*-, has this specific meaning. The root *muššuru*, which is the MB form of this verb, appears with the meaning "to send" in several letters from Egypt (e.g., EA 367:6 and 370:7). The form *um-te-še-ra-ak-ku* is thus semantically unique to the letters between Egypt and Canaanite polities. The form in EA 369:5 is best attested in the Egyptian Akkadian letters, which are based on the by form *muššuru*, versus *wuššuru.* However, the form *um-te-še-ra-ak-ku* in EA 369: 5 has an infix –*t*-, whereas this infix in Canaano-Akkadian is usually used in III-*w* verbs.[787] This form is thus best classified as an Egyptian Akkadian orthography.

The ventive in EA 369: 3 *ul-te-bi-la-ak-ku* and *um-te-še-ra-ak-ku* in line 5 is also attested in EA 367:3, 6-7, which is another "Egyptian" letter. However, Canaanite scribes also used the ventive from time to time, so this features is not clear-cut as being "Egypto" versus "Canaano-"Akkadian.[788] The

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[785] EA 267: 9, a letter of Milkilu of Gezer (Scribe 1 of Gezer) has the form *ul-te-bi-la*, which also features the shift *št*>*lt*; EA 88: 34:35, a letter from Rib-Adda of Byblos (Byblos Scribe 2), has the form *la yu-šé-bi-la,* which is written using a Canaano-Akkadian orthography with the *yv*- 3ms verbal prefix. See Vita, *Canaanite,* 75-83; 47-55.

[786] See for example, EA 162:61 *ul-te-bi-la-ak-ku* "he has sent to you," which is a letter from the Pharaoh to Aziru of Amurru; EA 367:3, a letter to Intaruta, the ruler of Achshaph has *uš-te-bi-la-ku* "I have sent to you."

[787] Rainey, *CAT* II, 152-153; see also 157-168.

[788] When the ventive occurs in a text from Canaan, Rainey tended to view it as an "Akkadianism," i.e., a shift to a non-Canaano-Akkadian orthography. For example, EA 267: 9-11 has a ventive in the phrase *a-*⌜*wa*⌝*-at ul-te-bi-la/* LUGAL EN-*ia* DINGIR.MEŠ-*ia/* ^{d}UTU-⌜*ia*⌝ ⌜*a*⌝-[*na*] *ia-ši*, "As for the word that the king, my lord, my deity, my sun god, sent t[o]

particle of negation *yānu* in EA 369: 17 is not attested in OB, but is used in MB and in the Canaanite Amarna Letters. It also appears in the Akkadian from Alashia (EA 34:26, 29), and in Egyptian Akkadian Letters (e.g., EA 1:20, 79, 81).[789]

EA 369 also features VSO word order, which is standard in WS and Canaano-Akkadian. See for example the following passage:

> EA 369: 24-27 *ù lu-ú ti-*⌜*i*⌝*-de i-nu-ma*/ *ša-lim* LUGAL *k*[*i-m*]*a* ^{d}UTU/ ÉRIN.MEŠ-*šu* ⌜GIŠ⌝.⌜GIGIR⌝.MEŠ-*šu*/ ANŠE.KUR.RA.MEŠ-⌜*šu*⌝ *ma-gal šul-mu*
> "And may you be apprised that the king is hale, l[ik]e the sun god; his army, his charity, his horses are all very well."

This departure from SOV word is characteristic of Canaano-Akkadian. It is, however, not unique to Canaan but is also attested in certain Egyptian Akkadian letters (e.g., EA 367: 22-24; 162: 78-79; and in this letter: EA369: 24-25). VSO word order also appears in the Amurru Amarna Letters that date to 'Abdi-Aširta's reign, and in the Canaano-Akkadian letters from Alashia.[790] It thus appears as a feature that was standard in WS and it influenced both Canaano-Akkadian trained scribes working outside of Canaan, as well as the Egyptian cuneiform scribes who corresponded with Canaanite polities. There are some aspects of EA 369, however, that distinguish the orthography of EA 369 from the letters of the southern Levant and suggest that this letter was written by a scribe trained in the Egyptian

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me." Rainey views this to have been written in a more Akkadian style in response to "just such a pharonic message" (*CAT* II, 202-203).

[789] EA 34 is written in a "Canaano-Akkadian" style and appears to be the work of a Canaanite trained cuneiform scribe working at Alashia. The presence of this feature in scribal circles all related to communication with Egypt (the letters of Alisha, Egypt, and Canaan), evince the cross-pollination of scribal conventions in Egypt's eastern territories, and moreover, suggest that this form was a part of the scribal *koine*. For a discussion of *yānu* see Rainey, *CAT* III, 201.

[790] Finley, *Word Order,* 94.

cuneiform tradition. For example, the writing, *an-na-am*, for *annûm* preserves mimation (versus *annâ*).[791] Also, the form *iš-pu-ra-ka* "he sent to you" (line 23) is described by Cochavi-Rainey as a "proper Akkadian subjunctive"[792]

Overall, EA 369 and EA 1 (an Egyptian Akkadian letter to the King of Babylon) form a unit in the Egyptian Amarna letters. Their non-Hittite influenced ductus sets these two letters apart from the other Egyptian Amarna letters that feature a ductus more typical of the Egyptian chancellery.[793] There is also a correlation between the word order and ductus of these two letters. EA 1 and 369 share "non-Hittite" ductus and also have VSO word order, whereas the rest of this corpus has a Hittite-like ductus and has SOV word order.[794] Böhl viewed this to be a reflection of the influence of the Egyptian substrate. However, the alternation in word order and use of VSO is better attributed to the influence of WS due to the long history of relations between these two groups. By the Taanach Letters of the 15th century B.C.E., Egyptian scribes had exposure to Canaano-Akkadian.[795] EA 369 and EA 1, then are seen

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[791] This is only otherwise attested in a letter from Ugarit (EA 45: 13) and in EA 237, a letter from Anaharat, which is attributed to Bayadi. For a discussion of this form see Rainey, *CAT* II, 95; Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 366, cf. 1; see also Vita, *Canaanite Scribes,* 72-73.

[792] See Cochavi-Rainey, "Canaanite Influence," 39-46; focus on 40-43; also *The Akkadian Dialect of Egyptian Scribes,* 201.

[793]See discussion in Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 50.

[794] Franz Böhl, *Die Sprache der Amarnabriefe mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kanaanismen* in *Leipziger Semitische Studien* 5/2 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1909) 78.

[795] The SVO word order is consistent in the Egyptian Akkadian letters sent to Hatti and is a reflection of the Egyptian substratum. The rare WS forms in the Bogazköi corpus of Egyptian Akkadian texts (such as in the treaty between Rameses II and Hattusilis III) are a reflection of this earlier period, or the presence of the WS speakers working for Egypt into the Ramesside Period. See Cochavi-Rainey, *The Akkadian Dialect of Egyptian Scribes,* 206-207.

as Egyptian Akkadian letters that were perhaps written by a different scribe and/or were influenced by Canaanite scribal traditions.

When we return to the debates about EA 369 and the implications that this letter has for our understanding of the Canaano-Akkadian system, we see that the same evidence is interpreted in drastically different ways depending on the scholar and their presuppositions about the language of reading of these letters. The challenge of understanding this corpus is ultimately one of methodology. The identity of the scribe that wrote EA 369 then revolves around the degree to which the language of the letter was the native/spoken language of the scribe and the degree to which Canaanite and Egyptian scribes influenced each other's writings. Of the Egyptian Akkadian corpus, the letters from the 14th century B.C.E. show more WS influence than those of the subsequent period.[796] This suggests that Canaanite scribes were also present in Egypt and/or worked for Egyptian administrators in the Levant (see also the discussion of EA 96). Cochavi-Rainey makes an interesting observation about the relative lack of WS features that presents a challenge to the theory that Egyptian scribes were writing in Canaanite. As she writes,

> In spite of all the correspondence between Canaan and Egypt and in spite of all the Canaanites that served in senior positions in the Egyptian bureaucracy, the prefix *yi-* penetrated in the texts written by Egyptian scribes only in this one instance.[797]

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[796] See Cochavi-Rainey, "Canaanite Influence," 39-46; focus on 40 93; also *The Akkadian Dialect of Egyptian Scribes in the 14th and 13th Centuries B.C.E.* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag: Ugarit-Verlag, 2011), 201.

[797] Ibid., 93.

The dearth of Canaano-Akkadian forms in Egyptian texts is striking. It appears that Egyptian scribes were familiar with Canaano-Akkadian and were able to understand it. They did on occasion reproduce it, but they overwhelmingly wrote to Canaanite polities in MB. This poses a challenge to von Dassow's theory that this Akkadographic code was comprehensive in the southern Levant. Moreover, as discussed above, there is a difference between code-switching in speech and in writing. Moreover, not all features of written language are alike. The presence of WS influence at a syntactical level, such as the use of the conjunction *u-* would not have been a marked form to the same degree as a lexeme marked by a *Glossenkeil*.[798]

When we consider Canaano-Akkadian as a lesser prestige scribal system, the occasional use of a marked WS forms (e.g., *yi-ta-din* or *ma-al-ba-ši*) that stood in opposition to the standard orthographies used in the rest of Egyptian Akkadian texts, were quite rare and mainly in the letters to Canaan. The letters sent to the other, peer and higher status polities (i.e., Hatti) were written in MB, with some influence from both the Egyptian substrate of the scribes as well as the idiosyncrasies developed in the scribal school(s) in Egypt. The presence of a spelling like *yi-ta-din* in an otherwise Egyptian Akkadian letters is not really a shift to Canaanite, but rather a shift in code, from an orthography employed in Egypt to a marked form used by the scribes working for Egypt's vassals.

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[798] Also, it is not always clear whether or not the word order of Egyptian Akkadian was the product of influence from their WS peers or the by-product of Egyptian linguistic interference. Use of *u-* as a conjunction in Canaano-Akkadian, in more complex clauses and in contexts uncommon in Akkadian, appears to have influenced Egyptian Akkadian. This influence appears to be limited to the generation of Amarna scribes as it is not in the letters sent to Hatti. Of the Boghazköi corpus, only the treaty between Rameses II and Ḫattusili III shows influenced of WS. She thus proposes that the scribe who drafted the Akkadian version of this bilingual treaty was Canaanite or trained in the WS scribal tradition. See Cochavi-Rainey, *The Akkadian Dialect of Egyptian Scribes,* 206; 210.

Forms such as *malbašu* and *yi-ta-din,* and other lexical interference would have been marked forms in the context of an otherwise Egypto-Akkadian text, and would have been noticed by the recipient scribes. These are best described as code-shifts in the context of a specific interaction between a Canaanite and an Egyptian cuneiform scribe. They do not indicate that the scribes at Tell el-'Amarna "thought" in Canaanite, when drafting a Canaano-Akkadian orthography, or that they considered themselves to be writing in Canaanite. Rather, they themselves used a higher prestige written Akkadian and from time to time they emulated the orthographies used in the letters from Canaanite polities. The presence of these forms is not a reflection of an underlying Canaanite language in a cuneiform guise but of a shift from one scribal code to another.

The orthography and style of EA 369 aligns best with Egyptian Akkadian, though, as I have demonstrated, this classification is not clear-cut. This letter demonstrates some influence of Canaano-Akkadian, as there was overlap between the written languages of the scribes working for Egyptian and Canaanite polities. Whereas von Dassow understands there to have been a common Canaanite *lingua franca*, I view these shared forms reflections of cross-influence at the scribal level. Scribes writing and receiving letters were influenced by the conventions used by their peers; skilled scribes were able to code-switch when deemed appropriate. That is, they borrowed a phrase or form that they associated with the Akkadian produced by their colleagues in Egypt and/or Canaan.

In the end, when EA 369 was translated and interpreted in Mikilu's presence, it would have be performed in the Canaanite dialect of the local court, and the shifts from MB to Canaano-Akkadian would have been imperceptible to all by the scribes/officials literate in this scribal system. Such

“shifts” were not for the benefit of Mikilu but for his scribe. The interference of WS in this letter is best described, not in terms of the influence of *spoken* language (i.e., the “mother” tongue) of this ancient scribe, but rather as the product of the cross-influence of two contemporary *written* scribal traditions used by cuneiform scribes engaged in ongoing correspondence.

E. Conclusion

Canaano-Akkadian served as a written medium of diplomacy with Egypt. Ultimately, the Canaano-Akkadian letters were deciphered and translated into Egyptian by either Canaanites working in Egypt, or by Egyptian officials familiar with this writing system. It also may have served internally as a written medium of communication between diverse Canaanite speakers, who presumably spoke a variety of Canaanite dialects—though the evidence for this is much more limited. The script had the benefits of ambiguity of cuneiform, and also when needed, included innovations from WS that served to guide the interpretation of the text and imbue it with a more local “flavor.”

Scribes were not transitioning between spoken “dialects” of Akkadian in these letters. A shift to a MB orthography, for example, from Canaano-Akkadian was a shift to a different scribal system or “code.” Such code-switching was not limited to the domain of linguistic expression, *per se*, but drew from multiple semiotic systems that were intrinsic to the scribal craft, which included syntax, graphemic, metalinguistic and/or metapragmatic signaling (i.e., the structural, and social cues that were embedded into the text), various registers of language, and the protocols of written diplomacy. This code was meaningful in the context of the written letter-artifact to both the scribe writing it and to the scribe interpreting and performing its contents. Yet, these layers of meaning were not

accessible to the actual recipients who did not read cuneiform. Unless the translator highlighted the marked MB forms in their own translations into Egyptian, such shifts would have been leveled upon translation.

Scribes working for Canaanite polities took advantage of the variant orthographies at their disposal and negotiated between "oral" and more "chancellery" styles of written expression. When they deemed it stylistically or contextually appropriate, Canaanite scribes reproduced standard MB forms, Canaanite lexemes and idioms, as well as Egyptianisms and cultural references. Code-switching in this corpus appears to have served a practical function related to the transmission, translation, and performance of these messages. The "deviant" or marked MB or Egyptian forms were not really a reflection of spoken language, but a manipulation of the scribal code used between Egyptian and Canaanite scribes to further the rulers' agendas.

Code-switching in this corpus, like that in speech, was socially and contextually conditioned. In EA 286, the shifts between MB (the written prestige language of Egyptian diplomacy), MA (the dialect best known by the scribe), and Canaano-Akkadian (the scribal code of the local court) were dependent upon the context, the subjects of the passage, and their rank. The more marked forms (e.g., the MA orthographies) were used to highlight key passages. Such shifts in orthography reflect very little about the speech act underlying this letter, as its content was most certainly articulated first in Canaanite, and subsequently delivered in Egyptian. The code-switching in the Jerusalem letters, for example, was the result of a scribe trained in one scribal milieu, who worked in a completely different scribal circle and adapted accordingly, all the while retaining core elements of his/her original scribal

training. Code-mixing was a communicative strategy used to accentuate key parts of these messages. The use of MB forms to refer to the Pharaoh and his officials was deemed appropriate as this was the "higher" register used by Egypt. Use of Canaano-Akkadian and WS forms in the direct speech of rulers like 'Abdi-Ḫeba reflected their subservient, foreign status. Canaano-Akkadian also served to enhance the expressiveness of their complaints and/or requests, which were couched in a more "oral" style of rhetoric. In cases where there is a MB orthography, we can assume a degree of familiarity with the spelling conventions employed Egypt and, moreover, a certain degree of confidence that the scribe reading this letter would understand the reason for more elevated form. Such shifts contributed somehow to the delivery of these messages by enhancing their persuasiveness and ultimately their success in getting the Pharaoh's attention. This use of code-switching is a testament to the innovation of the scribes working for Canaanite polities. They devised ways to communicate that transcended the language of the tablet. That is, they used the extent scribal conventions to enrich the metapragmatic framework of these letters. Unlike code-switching in speech, which is often spontaneous, code-switching in such highly redacted messages as these diplomatic letters appears to be much more conscious and strategic. The scribes writing these messages spent some time crafting them and transferring an oral speech in WS into Canaano-Akkadian. The MB forms served as a visual cue, the hope being that the scribe in Egypt reading this message would understand that this was the key part of the message, and thus properly translate it in their reading or translation of the letter. Such use of code-switching in these texts should be evaluated, not as a reflection of the phonology of the

Akkadian of the scribes or the local Canaanite courts, but as deliberate signaling strategies and part of a scribal code used between Canaanite and Egyptian Akkadian scribes.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Introduction: The Metalinguistic Awareness of the Ancient Scribe

The lack of overt references to language in the Canaanite Amarna Letters does not mean that we cannot speak about the scribe's metalinguistic awareness—we must just be cautious with the terminology that we use to describe such phenomena.[799] Canaano-Akkadian was a system of learned scribal behaviors that served a rather limited socio-political function. Yet, there are clues in the text about how the cuneiform scribes working in the Levant perceived their craft and their use of written language.[800] There are no overt references to translation; there are, however, a handful of the Amarna

[799] The term "metalinguistic awareness" refers to the ability to conceptualize of language and its parts in abstraction and use them as such. The followings offer some definitions used in recent scholarship. Jean-Emile Gombert described its use in linguistics as such: "Pour les linguistes, l'adjectif métalinguistique est dérivé du substantif métalangue et qualifie donc les utilisations de la langue pour référer à elle-même," (i.e., as the "use of language to refer to itself") ("Activités Métalinguistiques et Acquisition d'une Langue," *AILE* 8 (1996); see online http://aile.revues.org/1224); ibid., *Le Développement Métalinguistique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France; 1990). William E. Nagy and Richard C. Anderson define it as the ability "to reflect on and manipulate the structural features of language" ("Metalinguistic Awareness and Literacy Acquisition in Different Languages," in *Literacy: An International Handbook.* Edited by D. Wagner, R. Venezky, & B. Street [Boulder Westview Press, 1998], 155-160); F. P. Roth, et al. define it as "the ability to objectify language and dissect it as an arbitrary linguistic code independent of meaning" (Froma P. Roth, Deborah L. Speece, David H. Cooper, and Susan de la Paz, "Unresolved Mysteries: How Do Metalinguistic and Narrative Skills Connect With Early Reading?" *SED* 30: 3 [1996], 257-277, quote 258). Debra A. Myhill describes metalinguistic activity as "the explicit bringing into consciousness of an attention to language as an artifact, and the conscious monitoring and manipulation of language to create desired meanings grounded in socially shared understandings" ("The Ordeal of Deliberate Choice: Metalinguistic Development in Secondary Writers," In *Past, Present, and Future Contributions of Cognitive Writing Research to Cognitive Psychology.* Edited by V. Berninger [New York: Psychology Press/Taylor Francis Group, 2011], 247-274, quote on 250). Chris Pratt and Robert Greive define it as "[T]he ability to think about and reflect upon the nature and functions of language" ("The Development of Metalinguistic Awareness: An Introduction," in *Metalinguistic Awareness in Children*. Edited by W. E. Tunmer et al. [Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1984], 2–11; quote page 2); for a summary of scholarship see Li-Jen Kuo, and Richard C. Anderson, "Conceptual and Methodological Issues in Comparing Metalinguistic Awareness Across Languages," in *Learning to Read Across Languages*. Edited by A. Comp. et al. (NJ: Erlbaum, Lawrence, 2008), 39-67.

[800] Eleanor Robson, "The Production and Dissemination of Scholarly Knowledge," 562.

Letters that discuss the "reading" of these messages in postscripts.[801] The following analysis considers how the scribal marks and the use of glosses served as a guide to the proper interpretation and reading of these letters. I ultimately view such techniques as a means of underling the text visually (i.e., by carving into the tablet), graphemically (i.e., using combinations of logographic and syllabic signs), and linguistically (i.e., through the glosses, shifts in code, and non-Akkadian expressions). These strategies served as a type of metalinguistic commentary that was a key part of this scribal system.

The scribes writing these letters embedded the metapragmatic framework of the letters with clues about how they wished the letters to be performed (i.e., read aloud and translated at the Egyptian court). Such signaling functioned in a similar way to the paralinguistic strategies inherent to spoken communication, whereby non-linguistic signals (e.g., cadence, volume, body language, eye movement etc.) are semiotic and add meaning to an utterance. We thus see a parallel development in Canaano-Akkadian, whereby the scribes developed subtle strategies to add more nuance to their letters. A close analysis of the scribal marks in this corpus suggests that this layer of interpretive meaning was particularly developed in the scribal schools working in the Lebanese littoral and central

[801] For instance, EA 32, a letter from the ruler of Arazawa includes a postscript that requests that the Pharaoh's reply be written in Hittite. EA 286, a letter from Jerusalem asks that the scribe read the letter in a favorable way: EA 286: 61-64 [Postcript] [T]o the scribe of the king, my lord, thus 'Abdi-Ḫeba, your [ser]vant: 'Present eloquent words to the king, my lord; [al]l of the lands of the king, my lord, are lost!;'" EA 32:14-25 "The scribe who reads out this tablet, let EA the king of wisdom, and the Sun god of the gate house protect him in good will! Let them hold the(ir) hands in goodwill around you! [Postcript] You, scribe, write to me in good will and add (your) name thereafter. The tablets that are brought (here) keep writing (them) in Nešite (i.e. Hittite)."

highlands of the southern Levant. It included code shifting (e.g., use of MB, Canaanite, and Egyptian orthographies, idioms, and cultural references) as well as innovative uses of scribal marks.

The ways in which scribes used the paralinguistic markers in the texts (such as the use of registers to divide the sections of the text and *Glossenkeilen*) can be used to reevaluate the scribal map of this period. They should be considered along with the paleography, petrography, and orthography of this corpus to pinpoint scribal groups and individual scribes. For instance, some of the letters that Vita ascribes to one scribe/scribal school make different uses of scribal marks. [802] This suggests that perhaps, there were more scribes working for these various polities than the scribes in his study and that scribal marks, too, should considered as an "isograph" of scribal training during this period.[803]

I. Paralinguistic Signals and the "Grammar" of Writing System

Cuneiform texts were "read" in several ways that were not merely linguistic. Cuneiform is logo-syllabic and required analysis of logographic sequences that were polyvalent and could be used to represent words in any language. Proficiency in cuneiform also entailed an understanding of the scribal markers in the text, and how they worked to guide the reader. The present analysis approaches the use of scribal marks and glosses as a means of structuring and commenting on the text that drew upon existing cuneiform scribal conventions. However, rather than view these markers as having a

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[802] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 2015.

[803] Christopher A. Rollston proposed that this term be used to refer to features of writing that operate in a similar way to the "isoglosses" that are used to delineate spoken dialects ("Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence," *BASOR* 344 [2006]: 47–74; for discussion of the isographs that distinguish Hebrew and Aramaic see 59-61).

function that was merely structural or linguistic, I argue that they were a key part of the scribal code used between scribes working in the Levant, Eastern Mediterranean, and Egypt. The use of structuring devices and shifts in orthography in this corpus was used to communicate to the scribes at the Pharaoh's court and to provide clues as to how the letters should be read and/or performed. Such metapragmatic commentary was not limited to the original "language" of the text (which was Canaanite), or to the language in which it was written (Canaano-Akkadian), but could be conveyed in Egyptian as well.

A. Paralinguistic Strategies in Speech

In language, grammatical rules determine what linguistic forms are acceptable. Such conventions are safe guards to ensure intelligibility and to facilitate communication.[804] Grammar thus provides a guide for the interpretation of language. In the confines of a text, there are two sets of rules that govern textual interpretation: (1) the grammar of the language in the text, and (2) the conventions of the script and writing system. This second system comprises protocols regarding the layout, order, and orientation of the script and the placement of the written text. I argue that when we approach the Amarna Letters, we should analyze the scribal marks, shifts in code, and the use of glosses as a type of paralinguistic communication strategy, intended to add commentary about how these letters were to be "read."

Verbal communication is not merely linguistic but includes non-verbal means of expression.

[804] For example, the syntax of English dictates that a speaker should accept the sentence "Alice is a teacher," but reject *"Teacher a is Alice." The later is understandable, but is marked as having deviant syntax.

Erving Goffman argued that linguists should consider the social aspect of non-verbal, or non-linguistic strategies, as language cannot and should not be examined in a vacuum:

> That aspect of a discourse that can be clearly transferred through writing to paper has been long dealt with; it is the greasy parts of speech that are now increasingly considered. A wagging tongue (at certain levels of analysis) proves to be only one part of a complex human act whose meaning must also be sought in the movement of the eyebrows and hand. However, one we are willing to consider these gestural, nonwritable behaviors associated with speaking, two grave embarrassments face us. First, while the substratum of a gesture derives from the maker's body, the form of the gesture can be intimately determined by the microecological orbit in which the speaker finds himself [i.e., the "human and material setting"]...Secondly, the gestures the individual employs as part of speaking are much like the ones he employs when he wants to make it perfectly clear that he certainly isn't going to be drawn into conversation at this juncture. At certain levels of analysis, then, the study of behavior while speaking and the study of behavior of those who are present to each other but not engaged in talk cannot be analytically separated. The study of one teasingly draws us into the study of the other.[805]

In his classic 1969 sociological study, *Expression Games: An Analysis of Doubts at Play,* he described how there is a whole range of expression communicated by a speaker, and likewise interpreted by their audience, that is non-verbal yet essential to the interpretive process.[806] Such "'framing information" typically draws from paralinguistic cues such as intonation, facial gestures, and the like—cues that have an expression, not semantic, character.[807] He described "talk" in the following

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[805] Erving Goffman, "Social Interaction and Social Structure: 'The Neglected Situation," in *The Goffman Reader* " Edited by Erving Goffman, Charles C. Lemert, and Ann Branaman (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1997), 229-230.

[806] As Richard M. Harris and David Rubenstein write, a speaker's mastery of their linguistic system depends upon their ability to "give an appropriate semantic interpretation of 'reading' to every grammatical utterance," which is not limited to word units, but entails a whole range of semantic expression that goes beyond the words themselves ("Paralanguage, Communication and Cognition," in *Organization of Behavior in Face-to-Face Interaction* Edited by Adam Kendon, Richard M. Harris, and Mary R. Key [The Hague: Mouton, 1975], 259-260.

[807] E. Goffman, *Expression Games: An Analysis of Doubts at Play* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvanian Press, 1969), 9.

terms: "Talk is socially organized, not merely in terms of who speaks to whom in what language, but as a little system of mutually ratified and ritually governed face-to-face action, and social encounter."[808] "Talk" is intrinsically a social ritual, embedded into the cultural system of the speakers. This socio-cultural dimension determines the rules governing their interactions (e.g. the appropriate social cues for turn taking in a conversation). Goffman viewed this dimension of performance in spoken language as one of the key differences between speech and "writable statements," as the rules of "face-to-face interaction" are not limited to linguistic features but draw upon a larger semiotic system.[809]

Such non-linguistic, or paralinguistic aspects of communication are culturally relevant and should be considered part of a speech community's communicative repertoire.[810] The importance of the metalinguistic aspect of communication has led linguists to develop strategies to document such social behaviors in the field.[811] Alessandro Duranti discusses strategies that linguistic anthropologists

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[808] Goffman, "Social Interaction and Social Structure," 229-232.

[809] Ibid., 229-233.

[810] Today, linguists are able to capture this previously neglected dimension of human interaction by means of camera and film. For a discussion of body language in such "face-to-face" interactions, and the study of proxemics, i.e., "personal space," and the various strategies that linguistic anthropologists use to capture this dimension of communication, see the following classic works: Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (New York: Double Day, 1959); also Dane Archer, and Robin M. Akert, "Words and Everything Else: Verbal and Nonverbal Cues in Social Interpretation," *J Pers Soc Psychol* 35 (1977), 443–449; Michael Argyle, *Social Interaction* (New York: Atherton Press, 1970); Adam Kendon, Richard M. Harris, and Mary R. Key. *Organization of Behavior in Face-to-Face Interaction* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975).

[811] As Harris and Rubinstein advocated, "While linguistics has convincingly cast off writing's traditional mantle of supremacy, most of them had failed to perceive a more subtle bias which the earlier philosophies have also embodied: the assumption that words (more particularly, morphemes) and their pattern combinations are always, *a priori*, the PRIMARY bearers of meaningful concepts" (Richard M. Harris and David Rubinstein, "Paralanguage, Communication and Cognition," in *Organization of Behavior in Face-to-Face Interaction* [Adam Kendon, Richard M. Harris, and Mary R. Key; The Hague: Mouton, 1975], 251). Despite the trend away from privileging the written (and idealized) forms of language in

employ to provide a greater context for the space around their subjects. As he writes, "what humans say to one another must be understood vis-à-vis what they do with their body and where they are located in space."[812] Some scholars rely upon recording and video equipment, while others have developed novel transcription systems to account for the complex range of human behavior during a speech event. [813] For example, Charles Goodwin has developed a system of transcription that includes an analysis of the subjects' eye movement during a conversation, which he views as a key communicative strategy.[814] Edward T. Hall included the spatial orientation of the participants in his discourse analysis. He understands the ranges of physical space between speakers and their audiences

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the 1970's, which brought about a focus on speech, in particular, spoken vernaculars, the non-linguistics elements of speech and face-to-face expression have not consistently been examined.

[812] Alessandro Duranti, *Linguistic Anthropology* (Cambridge: New York, 1997), 145; for a discussion of the strategies developed see a more general discussion in 144-154.

[813] In this study, Charles Goodwin provides a detailed analysis of the body language of the participants, which includes a discussion of shifts in their gaze, and how it punctuated their speech and orientation towards their audience. In a conversation analysis of a dinner party in his 1984 article, "Notes on Story Structure and the Organization of Participation," he detailed the speaker's posture, and how her body movements and manipulation of the table objects (e.g., a glass of water and fork) corresponded to key moments in her narrative (e.g., a dangling fork signaled the beginning of her story). He concluded that these were strategies to engage her audience. See Charles Goodwin, "Notes on Story Structure and the Organization of Participation," In *Structures of Social Action*. Edited by Max Atkinson and John Heritage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 225-46.

[814] Eye movement demonstrates the speaker and audience's "orientation towards the other." Goodwin notes some general rules: When a speaker looks directly at an individual, this is a social cue requesting their attention and eye contact; a break in gaze, or a shift away from the speaker will usually prompt a break in the speaker's speech. This break will stall the story or thought being expressed, which signals to the audience that they need to pay attention; typically the audience shows a renewed interest by re-focusing their gaze at the speaker. Goodwin innovated a transcription method using dots and solid lines to mark points in the transcription when the participants shifted their gazes away from each other or when they made eye contact to capture this non-verbal aspect of face-to-face commination. In his innovative system of transcription, a solid line indicates that the party is looking at each other; no line indicates that they are not looking at each other; dots mark a shift from a gaze to a non-gaze; commas show that a gaze is being dropped; "x" indicates that it has reached the other party; the dashes in his system mark that the gaze arrived during a pause in the narrative flow. See Charles Goodwin, "The Interactive Construction of a Sentence in Natural Conversation," *Everyday Language: Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Edited by in G. Psathas (New York: Irvington, 1979), 229-237.

to be pregnant with meaning. According to this view, space is a "silent language" that contributes to communication.[815] To understand the physicality of face-to-face interactions and what space is appropriate (i.e., how the audience will interpret distance and/or a narrowing of the physical space between parties) depends upon the social codes that govern that particular speech community. Miscommunication occurs when two individuals that interact have different expectations for what is socially appropriate.[816]

There is then a non-linguistic dimension to communication that guides our linguistic performance and interpretation. Words offer the structure of communication, and yet the "facial and body modes, tones of voice, space regulation, tactile, and (as yet unstudied) olfactory systems" that work together in a cultural framework are a pivotal part of communication. Such paralinguistic signals are "an internalized system of symbolic representation, exhibiting a high degree of internal organization, and representing largely a product of social learning."[817] The nuances of human expression are often non-verbal and can be expressed by the tone of voice, a gesture, a pause, a

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[815] E. T. Hall writes: "Spatial changes give a tone to communication, accent it, and at times even override the spoken word. The flow and shift of distance between people as they interact with each other is part and parcel of the communication process" (*The Silent Language*, 180-182).

[816] For example, Hall describes cultural breakdowns in communication that arise when the speaker and audience are from different backgrounds and either party is perceived as "either distant or pushy in their use of space." He cites an antidote where he himself felt his personal space infringed by a visiting diplomat, who moved closer and closer to him during the course of their conversation. Hall experimented by moving closer and away from the speaker. He found that this shift in space disrupted the speaker's flow of communication; when he moved to what he himself considered to be a "comfortable" distance, the speaker seemed upset, as though Hall was disengaging from their conversation. He concludes from this interaction, that "not only is a vocal message qualified by the handling of space, but the substance of a conversation can often demand special handling of space" (Hall, *The Silent Language*, 180-182).

[817] Ibid., 252.

silence—yet, one that is has social meaning. These facets of communication are what enable an individual to participate in their community and to ensure that they are effective communicators. This layer of semiotic meaning, however, is what is missing from the written record, as the paralinguistic strategies of verbal commination tend to be left out of written language (be it an ancient tablet, or even a modern transcription of a conversation). Yet, as will be discussed, the Canaanite Amarna Letters included a metapragmatic commentary. The scribal marks, parallelism, code-switching, and use of glosses etc., in the Canaanite Amarna Letters are best examined as a parallel to the use of non-linguistic signals in speech.

B. Non-linguistic Communicative Strategies in Writing

When it comes to written communication, the non-verbal dimension of an utterance, such as the physicality of a speech act, are lost. Moreover, writing is inherently an impoverished medium of communication when compared to face-to-face communication, which offers the full range of human expression that engages sound, sight, and touch.[818] Writers must come up with strategies to encode a text to lead their audience to a proper understanding of the text using graphemic markings.[819] Yet,

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[818] John Lyons describes speech as the primary channel of communication, whereas writing is "secondary" as it undergoes an additional step from "phonic" to "graphic form," See ("Human Language," in *Non-verbal Communication*. Edited by Robert A. Hinde [Cambridge: University Press, 1972], 62-64).

[819] Some such strategies in modern writing include use of emoticons, fonts, diacritics, underlining, bold and highlighting, or the use of punctuation marks to convey emotion. These are all features that attempt to infuse a text with a writer's tone. Ultimately such strategies are more limited than the array of paralinguistic strategies available in face-to-face interactions. Even these symbols are ambiguous, and not always used in writing. Kruger et al.'s 1995 study of miscommunication in emails addresses the problem of the lack of such paralinguistic cues, such as "gesture, emphasis, and intonation," in writing. In particular, when it comes to humor or sarcasm, writing breaks down as "it is not uncommon for paralinguistic information to more than merely *supplement* linguistic information, but to alter it completely." As a part of this series of studies, participants were asked to both write and speak a series of sarcastic

even these non-linguistic written cues miss much of the nuances of speech, as "(t)he prosodic and paralinguistic features of speech are only crudely and very incompletely represented by punctuation and the use of italics, etc., in writing."[820] The challenge of the study of the ancient languages of the Near East is this lack of metalinguistic data about how the text was to be interpreted.[821]

A key difference between writing and spoken language is their different communicative aims. A common assumption is that speech is freer than writing, which tends to be approached as though a more formal register of language. Oral and literate discourse, however, are not two opposite poles of a continuum, but rather represent a range of sometimes overlapping communicative styles.[822]

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statements and to guess whether or not their audience would recognize the intended sarcasm. Throughout the studies, participants overestimated their ability to communicate their 'tone' via email; this overconfidence appears to be the cause of much of the miscommunication inherent in email exchanges as the writer and audience are both confident in their assessment of the written text. As his study suggests, much of miscommunication in written language arises from the participants' overconfidence in their ability to communicate with their audience, and to interpret a written message. See Justin Kruger, Nicholas Epley, Jason Parker, and Zhi-Wen Ng, "Egocentrism Over E-Mail: Can We Communicate as Well as We Think," *J Pers Soc Psychol* 89: 6 (2005), 926; 934.

[820] For a discussion of the differences between speech and writing from the perspective of non-verbal communication and the related strategies in writing and speech see Lyons, "Human Language," 49-85; quote on 64.

[821] As Cynthia L. Miller cautions, though modern linguistics and linguistic anthropologists have the luxury of having easily accessible "native speakers," though even native speakers are not always a useful resource. We should not assume that ancient Canaanites were able to analyze their own speech varieties or that non-literates would have been able to give insight into the writing system. Contact with such groups would, however, have provided useful information about the sociolinguistic context of language use and the social codes that governed interpersonal interactions, in other words, how these ancient communities perceived the social function of language ("Methodological Issues in Reconstructing Language Systems in Epigraphic Fragments," in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions: the Proceedings of a Symposium, August 12-14, 2001 at Trinity International University* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2004), 291-292.

[822] Deborah Tannen is dismissive of the contextualization theory, which differentiates oral communication as context based, and written communication as decontextualized communication. Rather, she describes the "cohesion hypothesis," as the process by which speakers and writers both adopt strategies to "establish cohesion," i.e., to communicate their attitudes about what is being expressed. As she writes, "(I)n writing, the features of nonverbal and paralinguistic channels are not available. A person may wrinkle his or her face up until it cracks while he or she writes, but this will not show up on the written page. He or she may yell or whisper or sing while composing sentences, but the

As Deborah Tannen argues, written and oral styles are not binary— writing can emulate speech and visa versa, rather the main differences are their communicative goals.[823] Writing tends to reflect a single stream of communication, and it often content-based.[824] A conversation, on the other hand, tends to be grounded in "interpersonal involvement."[825] The communicative styles associated with speech and writing are not monolithic, nor are they mutually exclusive. Speakers and writers are free agents who can adapt the necessary strategies needed to get their point across.

Tannen takes into consideration the different symbolic roles of these two mediums of expression, and how spoken and written language strategies inform each other. In the case of letters, for instance, which tend to be structured as a conversation (albeit a one-sided one), there can be considerable overlap between oral and written strategies. Letter writers often tend to mimic speech and employ rhetorical strategies associated with an oral register of language. The scribes working in

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words as they fall on the page will not reflect this. Therefore, in writing, the relationships between ideas and the writer's attitude toward them must be lexicalized." Tannen describes a key difference between speech and writing; such paralinguistic cues are not an organic part of writing, and thus, writing systems must come up with their own ways to code the writer's attitude about their text. Writing is a handicapped medium of expression; writers and readers are not necessarily part of the same society, time period, and do not always participate in a shared experience. See D. Tannen, "Oral and Literate Strategies in Spoken and Written Discourse, " in *Literacy for Life: The Demand for Reading and Writing*, Edited by Richard W. Bailey and Robin Melanie Fosheim (NY: The Modern Language Association, 1983), 79-80; quote on 41.

[823] As she writes, "Certainly it is just as possible and common to *write* a lot of nothing as it is to whisper sweet nothings with just as much satisfaction for all concerned" ("Oral and Literate Strategies," 82 for quote, see also 79-82).

[824] In conversation, a confused participant can ask for clarification, and a speaker can use their environment or paralinguistic cues to expand on their speech (e.g., by following up deixis with a gesture, e.g., "over there!," or the use of a tone of voice, speed of speech, or facial expressions to convey emotion). Writers do not have this luxury, thus, according to the "contextualization hypothesis," written communication is approached as "expository prose" that is decontextualized. However, Tannen contends that this is not the main difference between "oral" and "written" styles ("Oral and Literate Strategies," 82-83).

[825] Ibid., 82.

Canaan used a mix of "oral" and "scribal" strategies to further their chances of receiving an audience with the Pharaoh, (e.g., the oral- style parable of the "biting ant" EA 252 and the use of glosses as emphatics in EA 286 and 287).[826] Also, it is important to keep in mind that none of these messages operated in a textual vacuum, but were contextualized as they were processed, interpreted, translated, and performed for the Pharaoh and his officials (if indeed the message warranted this attention). These letters were mediated by literate professionals and, as such, the written tablets-artifacts were limited in scope to what needed to be expressed in writing. We can thus speak of the materiality of the text and scribal marks as semiotic system and a type of paralinguistic communication between scribes.[827] The Canaanite rulers may have dictated the linguistic "text" of the message, the writer, however, was ultimately the one that determined how to best structure it to appeal to the scribes and officials at the other end of these exchanges using a combination of linguistic and non-linguistic strategies.

According to this understanding, even the structural marks used to create these tablets (e.g., the appropriate use of space or words dividers to demarcate units of speech and the use of line

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[826] EA 252: 16-19 "Furthermore, when ants are smitten, they do not just curl up, but they bite the hand of the man who smote them."

[827] For example, cuneiform scribal culture entailed a distinct curriculum, replete with an education in Sumerian signs and literature, as well as in the various formulae for letters, the intricate rules of equivalences for raw materials, land, and livestock etc. The hallmarks of WS alphabetic culture, such as the use of ink and papyrus, scribal terminology, the use of the hieratic number system are all rooted in Egyptian, as opposed to cuneiform, scribal culture. Attaining alphabetic literacy required training in preparing and manipulating the requisite writing materials (e.g., ink, stylus, papyrus, parchment, ostraca, wood, or stone etc.), how to use them (the appropriate way to hold a stylus, the appropriate size, color, stance, orientation, and spacing of the letters), and the social conventions for each medium and genre of writing.

registers), were central to guiding the reader to a better understanding of the text. Some of these scribal strategies may have reflected a phonetic reality (e.g., the use of phonetic complements in Hittite and Canaano-Akkadian or "pronunciation" glosses [see below]). Others appear to have only contributed additional information about the way to read the text or added nuance that was never actually articulated (e.g., the use of lines to separate key sections of a letter or the use of *Glossenkeilen* and syllabic spellings following a logogram; the use of morpho-graphemic writing to show an underlying grammatical form; use of determinative and plural markers; and use of *–mi* as a direct speech marker).[828] Such strategies were paralinguistic in that they contributed meaning to the Canaanite Amarna Letters that was not necessarily phonological but still had meaning to the scribes writing and receiving these letters.

Another key aspect of the metapragmatic structure of these letters was the physical layout of the text, which was just as much a product of social protocol and scribal culture as the language of the message. For example, the identity of the sender and recipient are usually established in the beginning of the message, serving as a label for both the messenger and for the archivist storing the letters. The order in which these two parties were presented in the introductions of such diplomatic missives was also a reflection of social protocol.[829] Perceived breeches in protocol could be understood

[828] One such agreed upon convention entailed the knowledge of the proper graphemic segmentation at word and morpheme boundaries (e.g., affixing pronominal suffixes directly onto a written verb, and thus treating the entire verb and suffix chain as a unit vs. morphographemic writing which treats the suffix as an independent morpheme).

[829] In letters from Ugarit for example, when the sender is of superior or equal rank to the recipient (S≤R), the sender's identify comes first; in letters from someone of lesser to higher rank (R<S), the higher ranked recipient is introduced first. See, Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 2007; Sallly W. Ahl, *Epistolary Texts from Ugarit: Structural and*

as an insult or an act of defiance.[830] Such signaling suggests a high level of competence, as opposed to how these forms are generally viewed as a sign of scribal incompetence. Deviations from protocol in the introductions of the letters appear to have been a conscious strategy intended to provoke a reaction.[831] As will be argued here (and in Chapter Seven), the shifts in code in the Canaanite Letters and the use of scribal markers were intentional strategies and not a reflection of a lapse in scribal acumen.

C. The Amarna Letters as Mediated Texts

Canaano-Akkadian was a system of learned scribal behaviors that served a limited socio-

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Lexical Correspondence in *Epistles* in *Akkadian and Ugaritic* (Brandeis University: PhD dissertation, 1973).

[830] For example, EA 42, a complaint in a letter from Suppiluliuma may reflect such a breach in protocol: (15-22) "And now, as for your tablet that [you sent to me], why did [you magnify] your name over my name (*šum-ka e-li šum-ia am-mi-*⌜*ni*⌝[*tù-ra-ab-bi*])? And who nullified the good relations [between us]? Is the correct practice thu[s]? My brother, was it concerning peace [between us] that you wrote? And if [so, your name,] why did you exalt (*ù šum-ma* [*ki-na-an-na-ma šum-ka*] 21) *am-mi-ni*7 *tù-ra-ab-bi*)? And I] am consid[ered thus like] a corpse?

[831] Cuneiform scribes of both alphabetic and Mesopotamian traditions adhered to conventions about how to begin a letter that appear to have been pre-determined by the script that they were using. As many scholars (including Rainey, Izre'el, and von Dassow) have noted, the Akkadian direct speech particle *umma* is used as a noun in Akkadian and Canaano-Akkadian letters from the WS world. Deutscher describes a progression whereby *umma,* in the Old Akkadian and OB period, was used at the head of independent classes with the meaning "(this is what) X said;" in the OB Period it is used after verbs of speech, which he describes as a "bleaching of its semantic content." By the MB period, it is used as a marker of direct speech that no longer heads independent clauses but is appended to antecedent clauses (i.e., akin to a quotation mark which has metalinguistic but non-linguistic meaning). This appears to have evolved from a particle into a nominalized word for "message," corresponding to the use of the Ugaritic term *tḥm* in the letters from Ugarit. The question remains whether or not the Ugaritic formula was modeled after the Akkadian whereby *umma* was already thought of as a noun. Regardless of the origins of this usage, what is interesting is that the form *umma* becomes a fossilized term that occurs only in the introductions of the Canaanite Letters as a noun, but is not used in the body of the text as a quotative particle. This suggests that the formulaic language of the introductions were memorized expressions that had a different status than the content of the message. For a discussion of this term see Dennis Pardee, "The Ugaritic Word *tḥm,* 'Word, Message': History of Interpretation," *Sem Clas* 5 (2012), 17-28. Also, though never published Ahl's dissertation is the classic work on the letters at Ugarit (*Epistolary Texts from Ugarit*). For an early work see R. Marcus, "On the Genitive After *umma* in the Amarna Tablets," *JCS* 2 (1948), 223-224; see also Guy Deutscher, "The Grammaticalization of the Quotative Construction, " Chapter Five in *Syntactic Change in Akkadian: The Evolution of Sentential Complementation* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), focus on 81-85; quote on 85; also A. Rainey, *CAT* III, 174-180; von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," 645.

political function and was only used during Egypt's occupation of this region. There is evidence of the scribes' metalinguistic awareness in how they used their scribal craft, for example, to harness glosses, shifts to MB, and in the use of Canaanite and Egyptian idioms, and cultural references to accentuate these messages. The metapragmatic markings, such as the use of registers, to divide the sections of the text and *Glossenkeil* elucidate the training of each individual scribe. As will be discussed, some of the letters that Vita ascribes to one scribe/scribal school have different uses of scribal markers. This suggests that perhaps, there were more scribes working for these various polities than the scribes in his study.[832] Approaching Canaano-Akkadian as a scribal system elucidates the ways in which scribes commented on their own writings and informed the scribes working in Egypt how to best read these letters.

The graphemic system in cuneiform was in and of itself a semiotic system that offered commentary and insight into the metalinguistic awareness of the cuneiform scribe.[833] Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, discusses cuneiform as an inherently multilingual writing system, one that required an understanding that went beyond accessing the underlying language. As he writes,

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[832] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 2015.

[833] As Pietor Michalowski writes in his history of the *Enūma Eliš*, "…scholars have argued that Mesopotamian civilization was devoid of reflexive analysis, something that had to await the Greek world of Plato and his contemporaries. The difference lies somewhere else, however: not in the presence or absence of reflexivity but in the narrative techniques, which were used to express it. In Mesopotamia there was no metalanguage; reflexivity was part of the construction of the text itself" ("Presence at the creation." *In Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran.* Edited by T. Abusch et al. (Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1990] 381-396; quote on 387). This is also cited and discussed in terms of the metalinguistic awareness of the scribes in J. Cale Johnson, "Indexical Iconicity in Sumerian *belles lettres*," *Lang. Commun* 33 [2013], 45); for a discussion of the innovation of cuneiform scribes see Eleanor Robson, "The Production and Dissemination of Scholarly Knowledge," 553-576.

> The system of writing invented by the Sumerian was supposed to be applicable to Akkadian as well. In fact, writing was not invented for the purpose of writing language. Of course, writing is *closely related* to language, since the inventors were language-users after all, and since the whole point of writing was the notation of a message or order or aide-mémoire which at some point also will have had a linguistic expression. But this is not what writing intends to do: in its origin it simply intends to lay down the gist of the message rather than the message-as-such. Sequence, structuring and the form of the signs upon the bearer are not the only ways in which to achieve this goal: the format of the tablet itself and even the place where it is kept, can fill out the 'reading' of the tablet. Moreover, the signs themselves in their bureaucratically pre-ordained order contain only the essential and formalized 'hard facts' of the message.[834]

The text was "read" in several ways that included an analysis of the logographic sequences, and an understanding of the scribal markers as a guide to the transmission of the written text. The materiality of the text, too, was replete with semiotic meaning.[835] Cale Johnson also discusses the metalinguistic awareness of cuneiform scribes and ways in which the text was written to add commentary to the composition. This field of meaning was a reflection of their mastery of cuneiform, as the linguistic and graphemic puns functioned as a type of metalanguage, one accessed only by those trained in the writing system. [836] He thus interprets orthography and use of signs (in particular

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[834] Vanstiphout, "The Twin Tongues Theory, Technique, and Practice of Bilingualism in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Those Nations. Cultural Encounters within and with the Near East, Studies Presented to Han Drijvers = Commers/ICOG Communications* 2. Edited by H. L. J. Vanstiphout (Groningen: STYX, 1999), 150.

[835] Moreover, he writes, "This bilingualism, inherent in the writing system itself, leads to sumerographic shorthands on the one hand (mainly in technical texts), and on the other to a bottomless well of different 'meanings' and 'uses' of a system of signs which can not be said truly to contain all the secrets of the universe…" ("The Twin Tongues Theory," 141-159; focus on 154.

[836] For example, he cites the use of "sign-by sign exegesis" in ritual and scholarly texts that add layers of meaning accessed by the scribe (e.g., in the *Enūma Eliš* and "Bird and Fish, or in divination texts). Johnson's discussion of the way in which the text in and of itself served "as a performative embodiment of a ritual practice or an ideology" provides a novel way to approach the orthography and use of scribal marks. See Cale Johnson, "Indexical Iconicity in Sumerian Belles Lettres." *Lang. Commun.* 33 (2013), 2.

Sumerograms) as a reflection of the ways that the scribes viewed the text.[837]

The scribes mediating between ancient Near Eastern powers developed their own strategies for bridging the gap between the information communicated on the tablet, and the non-verbal dimensions of language that accompanied the original speech act.[838] Although we cannot speculate too much as to original spoken utterances, we can examine the messaging process to better understand the socio-political function of Canaano-Akkadian.[839] These letters were read, quite likely in a mediated literary event, whereby the scribes/officials able to read the cuneiform text provided a guided translation and interpretation. This type of reading can be understood as a performance, whereby the scribes bridged the cultural and linguistic gaps between the sender and addressee.

As Mynarova's study of the introductions of the Amarna Letters demonstrates, there was a range of prostration formulae.[840] Such formulae were a key part of epistolary protocol, and may also have been a central part of performance of these messages.[841] The physical references to body parts

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[837] Ibid., 26–49.

[838] For a classic work on messengers in the ANE see Samuel A. Meier, *The Messenger in the Ancient Semitic World*. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); from an Egyptological perspective see Michel Valloggia, *Recherche sur les "messagers"* (*wpwtyw*) *dans les sources Egyptiennes Profane* (Geneve/Paris: Librairie Droz, 1976).

[839] The Egyptian term for messenger, *wpwty*, is a substantive based on the noun *wpwt*, "message." For an analysis of this term and the role of the *wpwty* see Valloggia, *Recherche sur les "Messagers,"* 8-11.

[840] J. Mynarova, *Language of Amarna,* 2007.

[841] Jönsson describes such diplomatic signaling as a verbal and non-verbal skill: "For states, as well as individuals, 'body-language' complements and adds to verbal communication. In fact, both behavior and nonbehavior may constitute messages." He identifies three main aspects that underlined this system: "ritualize language and symbols, the quest for recognition, and concern with reciprocity." The formulaic language of deference and the attention to rank and title, or the use of familial addresses such as "father," "brother," or "son" were part of a deliberate strategy to ensure peaceful relations and created the illusion of intimacy between polities. The aberrations, such as in Laba'yu letters, when protocol

and to physical space in these letters suggests that the symbolic actions described in the introductions may have been performed when these messages were read at the Egyptian court. For example, the opening formulae typically include a version of the prostration formula, which describes the sender groveling at the feet of the Pharaoh.[842] Avrush analyzes this and the other version of this basic prostration formula in terms of what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson describe as "orientational metaphors," i.e., metaphoric language that frame power dynamics in terms of spatial orientation. A basic, and nearly universal, spatial metaphor is HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN. The prostration metaphor is based upon the play on power being up, whereas the subjected or lesser status party is down or low.[843] The variation in the prostration formulae and physicality of these expressions relate to the performance of these messages and were intended to make these letters stand out from the flood of other vassal letters from the Levant.

II. Scribal Marks and Glosses

Scribes and literate officials were the "gatekeepers" of diplomacy as they made the final

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abandoned and/or local idiomatic language surfaces in the form or sarcasm and complaint, marked a break down in relations and signaled a spat between rules. See Christer Jönnson, "Diplomatic Signaling in the Amarna Letters," *Amarna Diplomacy. The Beginning of International Relations*. Edited by Raymond Cohen, and Raymond Westbrook, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 2000), 191.

[842] EA 213: 1-9 "Speak to the king, my lord, my sun god, my deity, the message of Zittayara, your servant, the dirt at your feet, the mud on which you tread: At the feet of the king, my lord, my sun god, my deity, seven times and seven times, have I fallen on the belly and on the back."

[843] Kevin Avruch, "Reciprocity, Equality, and Status-Anxiety in the Amarna Letters," *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations.* Edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 154-164; focus on 157-159; 14-21; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live by* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 14-19; focus on 16.

determination of how to encode the language of the text, and in the case of incoming letters, how to translate them. Scribes were challenged with maintaining the appropriate degree of respect and deference to Egyptian officials and the Pharaoh, and yet advocating on behalf of their employers.[844] In the context of the Amarna Letters, the written codes and its respective formulae and protocols enabled relatively smooth communication between polities. Regional rulers relied upon their scribes to give them access to the international arena, and, in turn, their scribes relied upon diplomatic and scribal protocol to best advance the interests of their employers. Scribal marks were a key part of these letters, however, they tend to be analyzed in the narrow scope of a sentence or a clause. A more nuanced approach elucidates how such marks impacted the larger scope of a letter, and enhanced the experience of reading the text.[845] Also, the contexts in which scribal marks were placed suggests that they were used to complement, and at times underline, important passages.

Overall, Mabie understands these marks (which he terms "scribal auxiliary marks") to have served "to structure writing, clarify syntactical relationships, denote emphasis, provide punctuation-like information…in other word to *facilitate understandability*."[846] The scribal marks were not ancillary to the meaning of the tablet but were a central part of the Canaano-Akkadian scribal code. He

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[844] See also Geoffrey Berridge, "Amarna Diplomacy: A Full-fledged Diplomatic System," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations.* Edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 212-224.

[845] The key study of the scribal marks in this corpus is Fred Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes and the Mark(s) They Left: A Catalog and Analysis of Scribal Auxiliary Marks in the Amarna Corpus and in the Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts of Ugarit and Ras Ibn Hani," (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of California, Los Angeles, 2004).

[846] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," xxi.

describes a progression whereby scribal marks became increasingly central to cuneiform scribalism, culminating in a standardized system of both horizontal and vertical marks to structure a tablet and the use of *Glossenkeilen* between words to add lexical and structural clarification.[847] The use of scribal marks often worked in tandem with shifts in orthography to guide those on the receiving end to understand how to best relay the written message. Scribal marks could serve to organize the text's structure (e.g., to group together signs, or to direct the reader to the order of the text), whereas the *Glossenkeilen* or "glosses" added nuance to the language of the text.[848] They are best known as a means of clarifying the meaning of rare, ambiguous, or foreign word or to group together words separated by tablet lines. As will be addressed below, they also informed how the text was to be read.

A. A Summary of the Scribal Marks in the Alashian, Amurru, and Canaanite Amarna Letters[849]

The scribal marks in the Canaanite Amarna Letters can be used to distinguish different scribal

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[847] For example, administrative documents could include a tabulation section marked by a single or double horizontal line; legal texts laws were divided by single or double lines as well; in literary or hymno-poetic compositions horizontal lines could be used to divide the refrains or to mark off the colophon or scribal commentary etc.). Wedge marks, too, were used delineate sections of a text or to mark repetitions (i.e., "ditto") and to mark errors or to confirm tabulations in tables. The sign DIŠ, in particular was used to indicate the beginning of a line or section and also as a sentence divider. See Ibid., 24-27; 29-31.

[848] When the sign count was too large for a tablet line, scribes could use these marks to delineate the sentence units, or to enlarge a section by extending the concluding register to make room for a larger line division. Scribal marks could function in the sentence or unit, be used to comment on a word, as in the case of a gloss mark, or add to the larger structure of the text as a whole, or use combinations of these marks to structure the text. He cites the following Akkadian terms as evidence that the scribes themselves viewed these markers as a key part of the written text: *sadīru* "line, row, section;" *turru* (DUR) "band, paragraph;" *kibsu* "passage, paragraph;" *pirsu* "chapter, section of text in the tablet." He notes that the term *kibsu* is less certain. Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 22, cf. 18; 22-23.

[849] In Mabie's study, the four main marks presented in the Amarna Letters are the Single Horizontal Line (SH), Extended Horizontal Line (EH), the End of Text Single Horizontal Line (ETSH), and the Glossenkeil (GK).

communities and perhaps even individual scribes.[850] The following offers an update to his findings that consults more recent works on the identity of the Amarna scribes and the provenience of this corpus.

1. Alashia

In the letters from Alashia, Mabie notes that the majority of letters use scribal marks as in the letters from Babylonia, which comprise of use of single horizontal lines (SH) in the body of the letter to structure the text and one single horizontal line at the end of the letter to mark its conclusion (ETSH).[851]

Table 37 The Scribal Marks in The Akkadian of Alashia

Letter	Destination	"Dialect" of Akkadian	Scribal Marks
EA 33	EG	Canaano-Akkadian	3 SH 1 ETSH
EA 34	EG	Canaano-Akkadian	none
EA 35	EG	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian	11 SH 1 ETSH
EA 36	EG	Middle Babylonian	omitted
EA 37	EG	Middle Babylonian	No marks
EA 38	EG	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian	4 SH 1 ETSH
EA 39	EG	Canaano-Akkadian	2 SH 1 ETSH
EA 40	EG	Canaano-Akkadian	5 SH 1 ETSH

[850] For a discussion of scribal marks see also Marvin A. Powell, "Three Problems in the History of Cuneiform Writing: Origins, Direction of Script, Literacy," *Visible Language* 15/4 (1981), 419-441.

[851] Only EA 34 and 37 lack scribal marks; of these EA 34 is a letter written in a more "Canaano-Akkadian style; EA 37 is written in MB; EA 35, a Hurro-Akkadian letter lacks the ETSH.

RS 20.18	Ug	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian	Not examined
RSL 1	Ug	Peripheral Hurro-Akkadian	Not examined

Mabie concludes that the isolation of Cyprus explains the use of the standard Babylonian scribal marks, though as discussed in this study, the scribes writing these letters were from outside of Alashia. These were not "Alashian" scribes, but itinerant scribes or those stationed there to work for the local ruler. He views the lack of scribal marks in EA 34 to be reflective of the scribe who was most influenced by WS. He proposes that the scribe of EA 37, too, operated with "different scribal conventions," though this letter is written in MB, which would anticipate use of the standard scribal marks of the other letters.[852] There is no clear pattern regarding the use of scribal marks. The lack of a local scribal tradition supports the theory that the ruler of Alashia employed itinerant scribes to write letters on his behalf. The lack of scribal marks in EA 34 suggests that it may have been written by a different scribe than the other Canaano-Akkadian letters in this corpus that make use of scribal marks.

2. Amurru

Mabie notes use of SH, ETSH and *Glossenkeil* (GK) in the Amarna Letters from Amurru. Below, I am adding his analysis to a chart that delineates the scribes, rulers, and types of introductions used in order to elucidate any relationship between the scribes and the use of scribal marks in this corpus.[853]

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[852] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 87.

[853] Mabie includes EA 52-53, 55, 178, 189, 192, which are not letters from Amurru; he lists EA 167 and 171 as "probable," though these have since been included in the Amurru correspondence. He also omits EA 371, which is an early letter in this corpus. The above data is a revision and synthesis of the following studies, but uses the most recent evidence

Table 38 The Scribal Marks of the Akkadian of Amurru

EA	Scribe	Scribal Marks	Provenience	Introduction	Ruler
60	1	1 ETSH	Mountains east of Tripoli	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	ʻAbdi-Aširta
371	1	None *Damaged	?	*Introduction is broken	ʻAbdi-Aširta
61	2	None	Ardata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	ʻAbdi-Aširta
62	2	1 ETSH	Ardata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	ʻAbdi-Aširta

EA	Scribe	Scribal Marks	Provenience	Introduction	Ruler
156	3	2 SH 1 ETSH	Ardata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
157	3	6 SH 1 ETSH	Mountains east of Tripoli	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
158	5 (?)	7 SH 1 ETSH	?	Type 13: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration; 2. iii) greetings (inverted)	Aziru
171	5	1 SH 1 ETSH	Irqata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
170a/b	6	3 SH 1 GK	Irqata	Type: 8: 1) heading; 2) salutations 2:iii) greetings (inverted)	Aziru[854]

EA	Scribe	Scribal Marks	Provenience	Introduction	Ruler
169	6	1 SH	Irqata	Introduction is broken	Aziru (sent from Beti-Ili

available: Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 88-90; Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 1991; Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 2015; Mynarova, *Language of Amarna*, 2007; Goren et al., "The Expansion of the Kingdom of Amurru," 1-11.

[854] This is the famous "double letter" of the Amarna corpus; 170a is addressed from Baʻluya and Beti-ili to Aziru; letter 170b is addressed from Amur-Baʻalu to Rabi-ʾilu, ʻAbdi-URAŠ, Binana and Rabiṣidqi).

					or DU-Teššup)

EA	Scribe	Scribal Marks	Provenience	Introduction	Ruler
159	3	6 SH *Damaged	Ardata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
160	3	6 SH	?	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
161	3	6 SH	Irqata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
164	3	5 SH 1 ETSH	Irqata	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
165	4	6 SH	Ṣumur	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru
166	3	5 SH 1 ETSH	Ṣumur	Type 9: 9: 1) heading; 2) salutatinos2; 2. iii) greetings (inverted) 2. iv) extended greetings.	Aziru
167	3 (?)	6 SH 1 ETSH	Ṣumur	Introduction is broken	Aziru
168	4 (?)	1 SH *Damaged	Gaza	12a: 1) heading; 2) salutations; 2. v) prostration	Aziru

Mabie attributed the variety to the presence of different scribes working for Amurru. As he notes, the letters from the reign of ʻAbdi-Aširta do not use the SH, but only a single line at the end of the text. He suggests that either the scribe is Canaanite, or was trained in the southern Levant.[855] The use of only ETSH is a feature of the Canaanite letters, and further attests to Amurru's southern orientation during this earlier period. EA 156-158, 171, 164, 166, and 167, which date to the reign of Aziru, all use both SH

[855] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 89-90.

and ETSH, though they are written by different scribal hands (scribes 3, 4, 5, and 6) and are from different sites (which includes Ṣumur, an Egyptian garrison during this period). The scribal marks in this corpus suggest a closer orientation with Canaanite scribes early on; the inconsistency in scribal marks dating to the letters from Aziru's reign may reflect a period of transition in scribalism at Amurru, whereby the scribes gravitated increasingly to the scribal conventions of the north.[856]

3. The Canaanite Amarna Letters

Mabie's study of the letters from Canaan proper reveals some interesting trends. He describes the use of scribal marks to reflect a diversity of local scribal traditions, which he attributes to the "confluence of different lines of scribal influence" and to local innovation.[857] Scribal marks vary from city to city, though the four main scribal marks used are the Single Horizontal Line (SH), Extended Horizontal Line (EH), the End of Text Single Horizontal Line (ETSH), and *Glossenkeil* (GK).

Similar use of scribal marks evinces a common scribal training, which has implications for how the scribes conceived of these letters. For example, the majority of the letters from Canaan do not use scribal marks to isolate the verb of speaking (*qibīma*) in the introduction of the letters. Either the verb is unmarked, or it stands on its own tablet line. The following letters adopt the practice of

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[856] EA 170, which Izre'el attributed to a Hurrian or northern trained scribe, is the only Amurru Amarna letter with a gloss that marks a Hurrian term. EA 169, which Vita attributes to the same scribe as EA 170, does not make use of ETSH. Of the scribes of Amurru described by Vita, Scribe 1 and 2 are consistent in using SH but not ETSH, which groups them with the Canaano-Akkadian scribes. However, use of scribal marks in his groupings is not always consistent. This suggests that use of such marks was optional, or that Vita's categories may need reexamination. For example, Scribe 3, who is credited with the majority of Amurru Amarna Letters uses both SH and ETSH in EA 156, 157, 164, 166, 167 (?), but only SH in EA 160 and 161. For a discussion see Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 19-20; S. Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian,* 372; 383-384.

[857] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 100.

isolating the verb of speech in its own line, without the use of scribal marks.[858] Others use a SH to visually separate the introduction from the body of the message.[859] The use of EH to visually mark the verb of speaking (*qibīma*) in the introduction of a letter is rare in the Canaanite letters and appears to be linked to places with access to Egyptian military centers, such as Gaza (in the case of EA 63-64, and 281), Beth-Shean (in the case of EA 224), or Gezer, which had a more developed scribal tradition.[860] The presence of this type of scribal mark suggests a different scribal hand than that writing the rest of the letters from these polities.[861] Some scribes set the verb *qibīma* in its own line in the introduction of the letter (EA 257, 270, 273-275, 279, 281, and 295), which appears to be a regional practice.

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[858] This is a practice seen in the letters from Mesopotamia (Babylonian in EA 3, 9 and Assyria in EA 15), Syria (EA 183 and 195; Amurru in EA 157 (?); Beqa in EA 174-175; 198), but is most attested in the letters from the southern Levant. It occurs in letters from the Lebanese coast from Byblos (EA 69, 82, 87, 90, 102, 104 of Rib-Adda and EA 145 of Zimreddi of Ṣidon), and from the south EA 176, 200, 201-206, 209-211, 216-217, 200-221, EA 223, 229 (?) 232-233, 252, 257, 262, 266, 271, 274 (?), 276 (?), 278-280, 296, 339.

[859] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 100, cf. 100-101.

[860] It only occurs in EA 185 (Beqa [Mayarzana of Ḫasi]); 187 (Beqa [Šadêya]); EA 84 (Byblos [Rib-Adda]); 144 (Sidon [Zimredda]); 295 (Tyre [Baʿlu-dāni, (or Baʿlu-Shipṭi]) 63-64 (Abdi-Aštari of Gath); 227-228 (Hazor); EA 273 (vicinity of Gezer [Lady of the Lions']); 275 (vicinity of Gezer [Yaʿzib-Hadda]); 281 (Gath [Shuwardata]); and EA 224 (clay from Beth-Shean [Shum-Hadda of Shamʿôna]). The other letters with this type of scribal marking are the work of scribes trained in or near the northern Levant (e.g., Hazor, Beqa, Byblos, Sidon, and Tyre).

[861] Vita views EA 295 to be the work of a different scribe than the rest of the Tyre letters (EA 144-155) on paleographic grounds. He attributes EA 295 to Scribe 1 of Tyre on account of the different script used in this letter. He posits that this may be the work of a scribe before Abimilku (*Canaanite Scribes in the Amarna Letters*, 58-59). The use of EH in EA 295 confirms that this is a different scribe. EA 84, from Byblos, on the other hand is grouped together with other letters from this site (EA 87-88, 102, and 106) as the work of Scribe 2. However, the use of EH in this lone letter suggests that it may be the work of a specific scribe in this scribal school. Cochavi-Rainey also notes that EA 201-206 share the use of the orthography with EA 195, which is a letter of Biryawaza of Damascus: 7-*šu a-na pa-ni* / 7-*ta-an-ni am-qut* (*The El-Amarna Correspondence* (2), 1532-1533; see also Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay*, 218). EA 201-206 are written on behalf of different polities, however they do appear to be the work of the same scribe. Vita includes them together with EA 195 as the work of Scribe 5 of Mušina (*Canaanite Scribes in the Amarna Letters*, 28-29).

This diversity in how the scribes distinguished between the introduction and body of these letters indicates: 1) There were at least several different views about how to structure these letters, which attest to different pedagogical approaches; 2) Overall, in Canaan the introductions of the letters were perceived to be set off from the "real" message (typically the reported speech following the verb *qabû*).[862] This understanding also corresponds with the difference in the language in the introductions, which for the most part retains MB verbal forms (e.g., *amqut* and *qibīma*), whereas the rest of the verbs in these letters are Canaano-Akkadian. This suggests that the introductions were been understood logographically or as frozen formulae.

The Canaanite letters make frequent use of *Glossenkeilen*, though they were executed in different ways.[863] Overall, Mabie observed the following trends in the forms of the gloss markers. The double wedge downwards diagonal is mainly in the letters from Tyre; the double, independent wedge

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[862] The introductions may have been understood logographically. For the most part, they part retain MB verbal forms such as *amqut* and *qibīma*, whereas the rest of the verbs in these letters are Canaano-Akkadian forms.

[863] The slanted single wedge with a diagonal tail appears 139 times in 75 texts; it is the form used in 76.8% of all the Amarna texts that he examined. This form is mainly in the letters from the northern polities in Lebanon along the coastal littoral (Tyre, Byblos, Beirut, and Sidon etc.) and in the southern Levant. It occurs 183 times in the 93 texts that he examined. It also occurs once in a letter from Hatti in EA 41:4 and in a handful of letters from Syria and the Beqa (EA 183, 195, 185, and 363). The double wedge mark with a diagonal tail is much rarer and only occurs 24 times in 11 letters (13 % of the total marks). This form occurs in mainly in texts from Tyre, in one letter from Ugarit (E 48), in EA 82 from Byblos, and in EA 65, which is a Canaanite letter. It is also in EA 369 which is a letter to the king of Gezer from Egypt, but that has Canaano-Akkadian features. The use of two separate single wedge marks with a diagonal tail occurs only 14 times in 10 letters (7.7%) and is mainly in the letter from Amurru. It occurs three times in the Tyre letters, once in EA 196, a Syrian letter, and once in EA 227 from Hazor. It is also in EA 211, a letter of Zitriyara, though one written in Gaza and 238, which a letter from Tel Rekhesh. The single *Winklehaken* form only occurs in two letters: EA 256, the letter from Mut-Baʿlu of Pella (but not in Ea 255, the other letter from this ruler) and 306 from Shubandu, which was written in the Gaza-Ashkelon area. The use of a wedge that has an upwards, diagonal tail is only found in EA 299. This is a letter from Yapaʿi of Gezer, though the clays indicate that it was written at Gaza. For a description see Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 167-168; for a discussion of the clays in these tablets see Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay*, 273-274; 295-298; 306-307; 240-243.

marks are in the letters from Amurru and Tyre.[864] These two forms appear to be the standard ones used in the northern Levant. He also notes that of the few texts that use different gloss marks in the same letter, the majority of these letters are from Tyre. [865] The predominant form in the southern Levant is the single wedge mark with a diagonal tail.[866] Also, there is a clear difference between the use of scribal marks in Byblos and Beirut.[867] Overall, the letters from Byblos reflect a dearth of scribal marks and, what he describes as, a "resistance" to the use of scribal marks adopted elsewhere in the periphery.[868] The scribal marks in letters from Beirut, like the Akkadian from this city, correspond to MB, and make use of both the SH and EH line to mark the end of a section of text, or to inscribe the

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[864] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 168-169.

[865] EA 146, 148, 155, and 295 use different forms of the Glossenkeil and are letters from Abimilku. EA 146 features both the single and doubled wedge marks and the double *Glossenkeil*; EA 148, 155, and 295 use both the single and double wedge marks. EA 362 from Rib-Adda of Byblos uses both the single wedge diagonal and the DIŠ sign. EA 256 from Mut-Ba'lu of Pella uses both the single diagonal and the lone *Wincklehaken*. See Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 170.

[866] One aspect of his study that needs further development is his observation that the letters that fell along the coastal trade routes, such as Akko, Megiddo, and Ashkelon, make use of scribal marks more similar to the Amarna letters from Syria (i.e., follow the use of scribal marks in MB) are thus differentiated from those in less frequented areas. Ibid., 100, cf. 101.

[867] The one use of the DIŠ sign is in EA 362, which is a letter from Byblos. Ibid., 168.

[868] The scribes working in Byblos used *Glossekeilen* for lexical and structural purposes but shied away from use of horizontal lines. There are some anomalies, such as the use of EH in EA 84 to isolate the word *qi-bi-ma* in the introduction of the letter. Mabie cites that this letter has more Canaanite features that the other Byblian letters, which might suggest it was the work of another scribe working for this polity. EA 76, 120, and 140 also make use of the ETSH. Of these EA 140 is a letter from 'Ilu-Rapi', and may reflect a new scribe working at Byblos. Vita ascribes EA 84 to Scribe 2, who wrote EA 87-88, 102, and 106; EA 7 to Scribe 1 who wrote EA 50, 68, 71, 73, and 74; EA 120 to Scribe 8 who wrote EA 78-79, 82-83, 90, 100, 103-104, 107-108, 112-113, 117-125, 130 and 132; and EA 140 to Scribe 9, who wrote EA 86, 101, 139, and 140. However, if the scribal marks are to be seen as evidence of individual scribes, Vita's grouping should be re-examined. See Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 92-93; see also Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 47-54.

empty space at the end of the tablet line. The Tyre letters, like the Byblian letters, do not use scribal marks, but make use of *Glossenkeilen*, which groups this scribal tradition with Byblos.[869]

The letters from the Beqa display a range of scribal marks, though several letters are also devoid of any marking, like the letters in the southern Levant.[870] The scribes working for each polity appears to have had their own system. This aligns with geo-politics of this region, as the Beqa fell between the northern and southern Levant. The local polities were caught between the interests of Egypt and Hatti. This region also appears to have been in a scribal transition zone, which is reflected in the eclectic use of scribal marks.

The following is a summary of the key patterns in the use of scribal marks in the letters from the southern Levant.[871]

Table 39 Trends in the Scribal Marks of the Canaanite Amarna Letters

Polity	Observations
Hazor 227: EH (2); ETSH (1) GK (1) 228: EH(1); GK (1)	EH to isolate the verb of speech; ETSH; no use of SH (unlike the other Canaanite letters)
Akko 232: ETSH (1); GK (2) 233: SH (1); ETSH (1) EA 234: SH (1); ETSH (1); GK (1)	The Akko letters display a range of uses of SH, ETSH, and GK. This suggests multiple scribal hands.

[869] The lone exception is EA 295, which has 1 EH and is a letter from Baʿlu-dāni, (or Baʿlu-Shipṭi) to the Pharaoh, who Rainey proposes may have been Abi-Milki's predecessor. Vita classifies this lone letter as the work of Scribe 1 of Tyre. The difference may then be chronological as it is possible that EA 295 reflects an earlier phase in the Tyrian scribal school. Mabie lists this as possibly being a letter from Rib-Adda. Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 58; see, however, N. Na'aman, "The Origin and the Historical Background of Several Amarna Letters," *UF* 11 (1979), 673-684.

[870] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 97.

[871] The list here is based off of the letters analyzed in Mabie's dissertation that are linked to specific rulers and polities. Ibid., 100-127.

235: none 327: ETSH (1)	
Megiddo EA 242: none 243: SH (1); GK (1) 244: GK (4) 365: SH (1); GK (4) 246: SH (1) 247: none (damaged)	The texts from Megiddo for Biridiya only make use of SH and GK. Several letters have no scribal marks at all.
Pella 255-: none 256: GK (2)	The scribe working for this polity only uses GK, but makes no use of other scribal marks.
Shechem 252: SH (17); ETSH (1) ; GK (1) 253: ETSH (1) 254: none	This corpus is eclectic: EA 252 has 17 uses of SH, 1 ETSH and 1 GK; EA 253 has only one ETSH; EA 154 has no scribal marks at all. The use of SH in EA 252 is unusual. This is the famous "biting ant" letter. The lines appear to highlight the parable in lines 16-19. Lines 1-18 are underlined; the lines stop at line 16, which introduces the "ant" parable. Lines 20-21, which make the bold claim that Laba'yu is the "ant" in question, are underlined. It appears that the SH here is used for emphasis to mark the key argument in the text.
Gezer 267: ETSH (1) 268: ETSH (1) (damaged) 269: ETSH (1); GK (1) 270: EH (1) 271: ETSH (1) 292: GK (1) 293: none (damaged) 294: GK (1) 297: ETSH (1); GK (1) 298: ETSH (1) 299: ETSH (1); GK (1) 300: SH (1); ETSH (1) 378: none (damaged)	Only EA 300 has a SH; only EA 270 has EH; the rest either have no marks or have ETSH. 5 of the letters have GK. Vita groups EA 300 as the work of Scribe 3 of Ashkelon; EA 270 is grouped with the majority of letters from Gezer as the work of Scribe 1. The presence of this scribal mark suggests perhaps a different scribe in that scribal circle.[872]
Jerusalem	As Mabie notes, the Jerusalem letters do not use ETSH; also

[872] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 75-76.

285: none (damaged) 286: GK (5) 287: SH (2); GK (12) 288: GK (1) 289: none 290: GK (2) 291: none (damaged)	they use glosses for emphasis, lexical clarification, and structure.[873] EA 286 has 5 glosses; EA 287 has 12 glosses; EA 290 has 2 glosses; and EA 288 has 1 gloss. Of this corpus, only EA 287 makes use of SH; the rest of the letters do not have any scribal makers beside the use of GK. The SH in EA 287 occur at the end of line 63 to mark end of the letter to the Pharaoh, and the beginning of a postscript in lines 64-70. Then, at the end of line 70, there is another SH that concludes the first message in the postscript. The letter concludes in lines 71-78 with an added a request that the men of Cush be punished for attacking ʿAbdi-Ḫeba.
Ashekelon EA 320: ETSH (1) 321: SH (1); ETSH (1); GK (1) 322: ETSH (1); 323: none 324: none 325: SH (2); ETSH (1) 326: SH (2); EH (1); ETSH (1)	The Ashkelon letters feature a range of uses of SH and ETSH. EH is only in EA 326; only EA 321 has GK. The scribal marks here correspond to different scribes working at Ashkelon. Vita's analysis of the paleography of EA 325-326, confirms that they are the work Scribe 2, who also wrote EA 315 for Pu-Baʿlu of Yurza; EA 323 and 324 are also grouped together as the work of Scribe 1.[874] Mabie views EA 310, 321, and 322 to be the work of the same scribe.
Qiltu (Šuwardata) 278: ETSH (1) 279: EH (1); ETSH (1) 280: none 281: EH (2); ETSH (1) 282: SH (1); ETSH (1); GK (1) 283: SH (1); ETSH (1); 284: none (damaged) 366: SH (1); GK (3)	The texts from Qiltu present a range of scribal marks:[875] SH in EA 282-283 and 366; EH in EA 279 and 281; and ETSH in all but EA 280, 284, and 366. Only EA 282 and 366 have GK. Vita's more recent study attributes EA 278-280 to Scribe 1 of Gezer, EA 281-284 to Scribe 1 of Gath, and EA 366 to Scribe 4 of Gath.[876] In this case, there is some correlation between the scribal marks and Vita's categorization, though it is not conclusive. EA 278-280 do not make use of SH; EA 279 stands out as having EH; EA 282 and 283 have SH, but EA 281 and 284 do not; EA 282 has no scribal marks. This suggests either that different scribes with similar training wrote these letters, or that scribes were not consistent in their use of scribal marks.

[873] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes, 106-107.

[874] Vita's study does not examine EA 320 and 322 (*Canaanite Scribes*, 91-97).

[875] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 109-110.

[876] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 86-87.

Lachish 328: ETSH (1) 329: ETSH (1) 330: EH (2); ETSH (1) 331: none 332: none (damaged)	Of these letters, Vita proposes that EA 328 alone is the work of Scribe 1 of Lachish; Scribe 2 wrote EA 330 and possibly 331-332; EA 329, is the work of Scribe 3 of Ashkelon.[877] The scribal marks from Lachish show mainly use of ETSH and no glosses.
Ginti-kirmil 264: EH (6); ETSH (1); GK (3) 265: EH (1) 266: ETSH (1); GK (2)	Vita groups together EA 264-265 as the work of the Scribe of Ginti-kirmil. EA 266 is linked to Scribe 1 of Gezer; this letter is also singled orthographically as being in a different dialect in Vita's study. [878]
Šamḫūna 224: EH (1); GK (1) 225: none	Vita views these to be the work of two different scribes.[879] EA 224 is close in paleography to the scribe working at Megiddo. However, none of the Megiddo letters use EH.
Yurṣa 314: none 315: SH (2) 316: GK (1)	EA 316 includes a postscript, though it is not delineated by a scribal mark. Vita groups EA 314 and 316 (?) as the work of Scribe 1 of Yurza; EA 315 is the work of Ashkelon Scribe 5, and shares commonalities with EA 325 and 326 of Ashkelon, both of which make use of SH as a structural device.

A comparison between the use of scribal marks in Mabie's study and the scribal groupings in Vita's more recent analysis suggests that Vita's groupings may be further divided. It is likely that the differences in scribal mark within a sub corpus (e.g., the differences in the scribal marks in the Gezer letters) may be a reflection of different scribes that were trained in a similar manner.

In Mabie's study, several of the letters unattached to a specific polity. In order to present an update to Mabie's initial analysis, I have provided information when applicable for the letters that have been provenienced through petrography.

[877] Ibid., 96-97.

[878] Ibid., 75-85.

[879] Ibid., 71.

Table 40 The Scribal Marks in the Unprovinienced Letters from Canaan

Ruler: scribal marks	Clay	Scribe (Paleography)
‘Abdi-Ashtarti 63: EH (1) 65: EH (1); Gk (2) 64: SH (1); EH (1); ETSH (1); GK (3) 335: EH (2) (damaged)	63, 65: Gath[880] 64: Qiltu (eastern flank of Gath)[881] 335: Gaza- Ashkelon[882]	Vita attributes EA 63-65 and 335 to Scribe 2 of Gath. [883]
‘Abdi-na ruler of ? 229: none (damaged)	Qiltu (eastern flank of Gath)[884]	Scribe 3 of Gath[885]
202: none Amayashe of Byblos(?) or Bashan(?)	Bashan or Yarmuk Valley[886]	Scribe 5 of Mušiḫuna[887]
Ba‘lu-meher(?), the ruler of Gath-padalla 249: none (damaged) 250: GK (2)	249: Beth-Shean area (presumably the Egyptian garrison at Beth-Shean)[888] 250: not examined	Vita attributes EA 249 to Scribe 1 of Raḫābu and 250 to Scribe 1 of Megiddo. [889]
Yaṭiri	Ashdod[890]	Scribe 1 of Gezer [891]

[880] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 283-284.

[881] Ibid., 283-285.

[882] Ibid., 285-286; 295.

[883] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 86-89.

[884] Ibid., 283-286.

[885] Ibid., 86-87.

[886] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 216-221.

[887] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 28-36.

[888] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 249-250; also see discussion in Cochavi-Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence (2),* 1565.

[889] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 66-69; 69-71.

[890] Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay*, 292-293.

[891] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 75-84.

296: GK (2)		
ʻAbdi-Milki of Šasʻīmu 203: ETSH (1)	Bashan or Yarmuk Valley[892]	Scribe 5 of Mušiḫuna[893]
Artamanya of Ṣiri-Bashani 201: none	Bashan or Yarmuk Valley[894]	Scribe 5 of Mušiḫuna[895]
Ruler of Qanû 204 ETSH (1)	Bashan or Yarmuk Valley[896]	Scribe 5 of Mušiḫuna[897]
Ruler of Ṭūbu 205 none	Bashan or Yarmuk Valley[898]	Scribe 5 of Mušiḫuna[899]
Amayashe of Naṣība 206 ETSH (1)	Not examined	Scribe 5 of Mušiḫuna[900]
Intaruta of Akšapa 223 ETSH (1)	Carmel? Jatt? [901]	Scribe 1 of Akšapa[902]
Ṣurašar of Ginti-Ašna 319 ETSH (1)	Gaza area[903]	Scribe 1 of Ginti-ašna[904]

[892] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 216.

[893] For EA 201-206 see Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 28-36.

[894] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 216.

[895] For EA 201-206 see Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 28-36.

[896] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 216.

[897] For EA 201-206 see Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 28-36.

[898] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 216.

[899] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 28-36.

[900] Ibid., 28-36.

[901] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 252-255.

[902] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 62-64.

[903] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 302.

[904] This is the only letter from this scribe. Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 97-98.

Ayyab of Aštartu 364 ETSH (1); GK (1)	Aštaroth[905]	Scribe 1 of ‘Aštartu[906]

ETSH is the most common scribal mark in this corpus. Vita’s scribal groupings, however, do not always align with the use of scribal marks. For example, Scribe 5 of Mušiḫuna does not consistently use ETSH, which suggests that scribal marks were optional, or that there was more than one scribe that wrote these letters.

B. The Glosses in the Canaanite Amarna Letters

The use of glosses in the Amarna Letters present an interesting problem.[907] In Peripheral

[905] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay,* 218.

[906] Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 42.

[907] Studies that have examined glosses in peripheral Akkadian include: P. Arzi, “The ‘Glosses’ in the El-Amarna Tablets. A Contribution to the Study of Cultural and Writing Traditions Among the Scribes of Canaan Before the Israelite Conquest,” *Bar Ilan* 1 (1963), 24-57 (Hebrew); A. Gianto, “Amarna Lexicography: The Glosses in the Byblos Letters,” *SEL* (1995), 65-73: S. Izre’el, “The Amarna Glosses: Who Wrote What for Whom? Some Sociolinguistic Considerations,” *IOS* 15 (1995), 101-122; Ibid., “Vocalized Canaanite: Cuneiform-Written Canaanite Words in the Amarna Letters and Some Methodological Remarks,” In *DS-Nell* V, 1-2 (2003), 13-34; Joachim Krecher and Vladimir Souček, “Glossen,” *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* Vol. 3 (Berlin-New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), 431-440. Cord Kiihne, *Mil Glossenkeil markicrte fremde Worter in akkadischon Ugarittcxtcn, UF* 6 (1974), 157-67; *UF* 7 (1975), 253-260; Eberhard Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften Und Das Alte Testament*. Edited by Heinrich Zimmern and Hugo Winckler (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1903); R. Youngblood, *The Amama Correspondence of Rib-Haddi, Prince of Byblos* (*EA 68-96*) (Ph. D. dissertation., Dropsie College 1961); Kenneth L. Barker, *A Comparative Lexical and Grammatical Study of the Amama Canaanism and Canaanite Vocabulary* (Ph.D. Diss., Dropsie College 1969). Though dated, this work treats all the Canaanite glosses in the Amama letters. See also Von Dassow, “Gloss Marking and the Language of the Alalakh IV Texts,” *Paleography and Scribal Practices in Syro-palestine and Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age. Papers Read at a Symposium in Leiden, 17-18 December 2009*. Edited by E. Devecchi (Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten: Leiden, 2012), 201-216; Daniel Sivan, *Grammatical Analysis and Glossary of the Northwest Semitic Vocables in Akkadian Texts of the 15th-13th C. B.C. from Canaan and Syria.* AOAT 214 (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984), 179-295; W. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*; and Jacob Hoftijzer, Karel Jongeling, Richard C. Steiner, Bezalel Porten, A M. Moshavi, and Charles-F Jean. *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995); also S. Izre’el, “Review of J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling. Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions,” with appendices by R. C. Steiner, A. Mosak-Moshavi and B. Porten. I-II. (Handbuch der Orienatlistik, Erste Abteilung: Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten, 21.) Leiden: Brill; 1995,” in Shlomo Izre’el, Itamar Singer and Ran Zadok (eds.). Past Links: Studies in the Languages and Cultures of the Ancient Near East. *IOS* 18 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 421-429.

Akkadian, glosses are generally understood to clarify the order of the signs in a clause (e.g., when the lack of room on a tablet line necessitated that a word or sentence be split between two tablet lines). Glosses served a structural function in the text by marking the tablet with a visible demarcation that segmented the tablet and/or grouped together sign sequences (typically by means of one or two wedge shapes).[908] Also, glosses were a way to mark a word as being foreign or to denote a shift to a different orthographic tradition of Akkadian.[909] Lexical glosses, on the other hand, are understood to

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[908] Glosses at Ugarit comprise of two wedge marks (GAM) and have four main functions, according to Huehnergard. 1) Glosses can function as a word divider in an organizational capacity. He cites the use of gloss marks as a word divider in an Akkadian lexical list to separate the different readings of a logogram. Gloss marks serve to mark a word in a columned text that intrudes into the "wrong" column on the other side of the tablet (due to a lack of space); 2) Line Connector: Glosses can mark material (a word, or a larger semantic unit such as a sentence) as belonging to the preceding line; 3) Glosses occur after logograms to give the semantic value of the sign in another language. In the Akkadian of Ugarit, gloss marks were used to index Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Hurrian lexemes; and 4) Foreign Words. Huehnergard's categories 1-3 are the only cases when a gloss mark is used to highlight an Akkadian term, or a logogram. Gloss marks are also used to highlight foreign terms (i.e., non-Akkadian), the majority of which are in Ugaritic and are found in legal texts. Glosses are also used to provide lexical clarification or to structure a text. The following demonstrate the use of glosses to indicate the language of underlying a logogram: [*qa*]-*du* É GIBIL: *eš*$_{15}$-(*IŠ*)-*š* "new" (Akkadian); A.ŠÀ MUN^{MEŠ}: ZI-ṣú-ma (PRU 3 124:12) and A.ŠÀ MUN: ⌜ ZI-*ṣú-ú-ma* ⌝ (PRU 6 28 r. 2') for *ṢYṢ in Ugaritic (**ṣēṣu* or **ṣīṣu*, here the plural nominative * *ṣē/īṣuma*) "salt producing field" (Ugaritic); KI.BI.GAR.RA: *pu-ḫu-ga*$_{14}$-*ru—ši* (PRU 3 51f.:7). Huehnergard proposes that the Ugaritic gloss here is intended for the whole underlying phrase *eqel ṭabti* "salt field"; the form here is the nominative pl. *ṣē/īṣūma*. He only views the equivalencies between a logogram and an Ugaritic term as the "true" glosses and is dismissive of suggestions that gloss marks were also used preceding Akkadian lexemes, and in one case, an Ugaritic term. There is one lone example of a Hurrian gloss (É: *ku-na-ḫi* Ug. 5. 5:10, 20). For a comprehensive list and discussion see John Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription*, in *Harvard Semitic Studies* 32 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 204-208. Glosses were used at Emar in lexical lists to mark off the lexical entries as an organizational device; in ritual texts, glosses served to indicate irregular or variant lines in a text. As Yoram Cohen writes, "There is no need to associate Glossenkeils necessarily with West Semitic glosses, a modern habit induced by the Canaanite glosses of the El-Amarna Letters" (""The Second Glosses" in the Lexical Lists from Emar: West Semitic or Akkadian," In *Language in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 53rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (*Moscow, Russia, July 23, 2007*), vol. I/2, ed. Leonid Kogan, et al. *Babel und Bibel* 4 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 813-839; focuson 814, cf. 4. For a more general discussion of the forms and functions of glosses in Mesopotamia (including their use as word dividers in lexical lists) see Krecher and Souček, "Glossen," 431-440. Ilya Yakubovitch provides a summary of the use of *Glossenkeilen* in the Periphery in his recent publication: *Sociolinguistics of the Luvian Language.* Brill Studies in Indo-European Languages & Linguistics 2. (Leiden: Brill, 2010) see 468-469 for the main debates.

[909] Gianto described glosses as scribal marks used to elucidate the meaning of a text: "In general glosses are the scribe's brief remarks to indicate the correct understanding of an expression («translation gloss») and the correct reading

have disambiguated the meaning and/or grammatical form of a word underlying a logogram (e.g., logogram> underlying form used in the "reading" of the text [EA 136: 03 SAḪAR \ *e-pé-ri ša* 2 GÌR.MEŠ-*ka* "the dust beneath your two feet"]), or to clarify a rare lexeme spelled syllabically (e.g., syllabic Akkadian>syllabic Canaanite [EA 127: 34 ⌜*ù*⌝ ⌜*ša*⌝-⌜*ni*⌝-⌜*tam*⌝ ⌜*la*⌝ ⌜*ma*⌝-*ṣa-ku* \ *ṣí-ir-ti* "furthermore, I am not adequate (I am hard pressed)"]). Scribes could also use phonetic complements to disambiguate sign readings.[910]

The main debates regarding the use of glosses are 1) their purpose and how they contributed to the overall meaning of the letters, 2) whether the glosses were personal notes for the scribe writing the text, or were intended for other Canaanite scribes, or scribes working for Egypt, and 3) whether or

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of a logogram («pronunciation gloss») in the text he is writing. In frequently copied texts, various information and other hints about the choice of variants are often inserted as glosses. Translation glosses and pronunciation glosses are usually introduced by a wedge. Hence this wedge — called *Glossenkeil* — corresponds to an equal sign or a colon or brackets. In a number of cases the *Glossenkeil* indicates that a following word or expression or name is of foreign origin, much like the use of italics or underlined characters today" ("Amarna Lexicography," 65). In Peripheral Akkadian texts, glosses are first attested in the late 15th century to indicate Hurrian terms in the Akkadian texts at Alalakh; by the 14th century, Hurrian glosses are attested in the Akkadian of Qatna and they are frequent in the Canaanite Amarna Letters. In Hittite, only three glosses are attested before the Late Hittite Period; the rest of the glosses date to the period after the Hittite conquest of Syria. For this reason, Yakubovitch concludes that this scribal practice first appeared in Syria, and then spread to Anatolia and other parts of the Periphery. Glossenkeil are not used for Sumerograms or Akkadograms or words, but are nearly always used for Luvian words. Some suggest that these Luvian words were taboo, or that this marks a phase when Hittite had begun to die out. Yakubovitch, however, attributes this to code switching to a less formal register of language (*Sociolinguistics of the Luvian Language*, 6.4.1, focus on 468).

[910] The following presents a list of letters where the scribes use this alternative strategy to comment upon the reading of the text. EA 126: 03 GÌR.MEŠ BAD-*ia* 7 *u* 7 *am-qut*^{ut}; EA 184: 05 -08[*a-na* GÌR.MEŠ LUG]AL EN-*ia am-*^{qú}⌜*qut*⌝/ [. . .]*ia*/ [7 *ù* 7] *a-na* GÌR-*pí* LUGAL EN-*ia am-*^{qú}*qut*/ [. . .] GÌR-⌜*pí*⌝ L[UGAL] ⌜EN⌝-*ia*; EA 131:09) ÉRIN.MEŠ URU *Gub*^{ub}*-li di-ku*; EA 131: 14 URU.⌜KI⌝ ⌜*Gub*⌝^{ub}*-li* URU *be-li-ia*; *EA 362*: 26 *ni-nu-u*16 URU.MEŠ *Gub*^{ub}*-li*; 362: 28 ⌜*ṣa*⌝-*bat-mi šu-nu* URU.KI *Gub-li*; 362:32 ⌜URU⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝ ⌜*Gub*⌝^{ub}-⌜*li*⌝ ⌜URU⌝.⌜KI⌝ L[UGAL]; EA 129: 33 URU.⌜KI⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝ *Gub*^{ub}*-li ù mi-*[*na*]; EA 129: 43 [*šum-ma la-qú-m*]*i* URU.MEŠ *Gub*^{ub}*-li*; EA 255:09 KASKAL-*ra-ni.*ḪI.A; EA 255: 13 KASKAL-*ra-ni.*ḪI.A; EA 255: 18 KASKAL-]⌜*ra*⌝-⌜*ni*⌝⌜ḪI.A⌝; EA 255: 23 ⌜KASKAL⌝-*ra-na.*ḪI.A; EA 209:16 ⌜SAG⌝-⌜*qà*⌝-*di*; EA 330:08 *am*⌝-^{qú}*qut*. Use of this strategy appears to be a part of learned scribal curriculum; phonetic complements in the above examples appear in the same sign sequences and are otherwise quite rare in the Canaanite letters. The vast majority attestations are in the Byblian letters, which suggests that this was a scribal convention taught there.

not the language of the gloss was really the language of reading. Mabie's analysis of the glosses in the Canaanite letters further suggests that the glosses served an emphatic function to add nuance. When approached as a type of metapragmatic commentary, the glosses played a larger role in how the text was translated and/or read and performed than that of a mere linguistic guide.

1. A Summary

Mabie's dissertation on the scribal marks in the Amarna Letters delineates the following uses and frequency:[911]

Table 41 The Frequency of the Scribal Marks in the Levantine Amarna Letters

Function	Number of Occurrences: Total % in the Corpus	Geographic Analysis
Lexical Clarification Use: to clarify a foreign term; specify a reading of a logogram	118: 64.3%	Amurru: 6 Byblos: 19 Beirut: 8 Sidon: 2 Tyre: 16 Ugarit: 1 Syria: 5 Beqa: 2 Canaan (Area of Palestine): 35 Total Ashkelon: 1 Akko: 2 Megiddo: 5 Jerusalem: 6 Hazor: 1 Gezer: 4 Shechem: 1 Qiltu: 4 Unspecified: 4 Egypt (EA 369 the "Canaanite

[911] This is a simplified presentation of the materials in Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 173-176.

		Letter): 2 Undetermined Region and/or Sender: 20
Overflow Marker: Use: To group together words from a previous line of text, or a text line below when the signs do not all fit on the same tablet line.	25: 13.7%	Byblos: 4 Beirut: 4 Sidon: 1 Tyre: 1 Syria: 1 Beqa: 1 Canaan: 9 total Akko: 1 Megiddo: 4 Jerusalem: 2 Unspecified: 2 Undetermined Region and/or Sender: 4
Emphasis Marker Use: to emphasize a part of the text	11: 6.0%	Byblos : 1 Canaan: 10 Total 7 Jerusalem Unspecified: 3 Undetermined Region and/or Sender: 3
Direct Speech Marker Use: to mark a quote	6: 3.3%	Tyre: 3 Jerusalem: 1 (?)[912] Unspecified: 1 Undetermined Region and/or Sender: 1
Uncertain Usage Use: "unconventional use" (not damaged)	7: 3.9%	Hatti:1 Byblos: 1 Canaan: 5 Total Hazor: 1 Gezer: 1 Unspecified/ Misc. 3
Uncertain Usage Use: "unconventional use"	16: 8.8%	Byblos: 3 Sidon: 1

[912]Moran views the glosses in EA 286: 47, 62 and 297:27 (the first gloss) and 41 to mark breaks before a new sentence. See W. L. Moran, "The Syrian Scribe," 184, cf. 237.

(damaged)		Tyre: 5 Syria: 1 Canaan: 5 Total Jerusalem: 4 Unspecified: 1 Undetermined Region and/or Sender: 1

His analysis of the glosses concluded that 64.3% were used to clarify the meaning of the text, and served as "lexical clarifiers."[913] He notes however, that a number of letters, mainly from the north, do not use glosses to elucidate words in the text but use them as structural devices. He, like Gianto, has a more expansive understanding of how the glosses functioned, which includes those used for lexical clarification, overflow, emphasis, direct speech, and those with uncertain usage.[914] The "overflow marker" gloss serves a structural and not a lexical function. For example, in EA 64:16, the gloss mark groups together the EN-*ia* at the end of line 16 with the sentence in line 15.[915]

The following is a breakdown of the letters using a *Glossenkeil* as an "overflow" marker by their point of origin:[916] Canaan: 'Abdi-Ashtarti (Gath?): 64-65; Byblos: EA 89, 91, 101; Beirut: EA

[913] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 176.

[914] Ibid., 172-184.

[915] EA 64: 14-16 *ša-ni-tam a-wa-ti*/ *ša-pa-ar šàr-ri* {\ **EN-*ia*** placement based on overflow gloss}/ *a-na ia-ši*\ **EN-*ia*** (as written on tablet) "Furthermore, the king, my lord, wrote words to me." Original publication BB 33 and pl. 11 (copy, photo) http://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/lineart/P270918_l.jpg; http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/search/archival_view.php?ObjectID=P270918

[916] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 176-180.

137 (a letter of Rib-Hadda); Tyre: EA 154; Canaan/ Misc. EA 244 (now known as a letter of Biridiya of Megiddo; Jerusalem: EA 290 (written at Jerusalem; Beqa: EA 363 'Abdi-Aštarti; Undetermined: EA 238 (now known as a letter from Bayadi; clay from Tel Rekhesh[917] and 215 (now known as a letter from Bayawa; clay from the southern coast).[918] From this list, it appears that this maker was used primarily in the northern Levant.[919]

The use of a *Glossenkeil* as a quotative marker is quite rare.[920] Mabie cites this function in 6 letters, three of which are from Tyre. However, some of these examples can also be understood as the use of glosses to introduce a foreign language or to add emphasis to the text. The use of glosses for quotative purposes is the most ambiguous of his categorizations. Several of the examples that he cites appear to have a secondary function to add more nuance to the text and/or are related to its performance.

In the following example from the Tyre corpus, there is gloss mark before a direct quote, however, the "speech" being reported is not Akkadian or Canaano-Akkadian, but is WS.

> EA 154: 5b-10 ⌜*aš*⌝-*te-me*/ *ša* ⌜*iš*⌝-⌜*ta*⌝-*pár* LUGAL *a-na*/ ÌR-*šu* ⌜\⌝ ⌜*ia*⌝-*ku-‹un› e-mu-qí*/ ⌜*muḫ*⌝-⌜*ḫi*⌝ *Ia-wi ša iq-bi*/ LUGAL *šu-ut e-te-pu-uš*/ *ḫa-di-ia-ku ma-gal ma-gal*
> "I have heard what the king has written to his servant, "May my forces be rea‹dy› for (or: against) Yawi." What the king has said, that I have done. I rejoiced exceedingly (or: I am exceedingly happy)."

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[917] Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay*, 240-243.

[918] Ibid., 308.

[919] The exceptions are as follows: EA 290 is written by a scribe trained in the northern Levant; EA 244 is a letter written by Scribe 1 of Megiddo, the scribe (or scribal school) responsible for EA 242-248, 250, and 365. See Vita, *Canaanite Scribes*, 66-69.

[920] For a brief discussion see Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 181-182.

The form ⌜*ia*⌝-*ku*-‹*un*› is a jussive form the WS verbal root *kwn*, which is a verbal root prevalent in WS texts from the Lebanese littoral, in the first millennium B.C.E.[921] This gloss marked direct speech and flagged this verb as foreign, non-Akkadian speech. It also seems to have served an emphatic function as well, as it occurs in an emotionally charged section of this letter.[922]

EA 215, a letter from Bayawa (a ruler from the southern coast), makes interesting use of scribal marks. The scribe underlined each line of text from line 1 to line 9, which is on the reverse of the tablet (see below). Line 13 has a register under the first three signs of the first word; the scribe then drew a line across the blank space after the last word in the tablet in line 17, and employed an end of line mark to conclude the tablet.[923]

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[921] The verbal root *kwn* is a VS verbal root that is used as the particle of existence in Phoenician. For a discussion see Jo Ann Hackett and Na'ama Pat-El, "On Canaanite and Historical Linguistics: a Rejoinder to Anson Rainey," *MAARAV* 17.2 (2010), 182.

[922] In a similar usage, EA 224:8-9, a letter from Shum-Hadda of Sham'ôna that was written from the clays of Beth-Shean (i.e., the Egyptian garrison at this site) also does not appear to mark direct speech, but to highlight the fact that the grain being requested has been damaged. EA 224: 7-9 *i-nu-ma* ⌜*ša*⌝-*pár-mi/* LUGAL EN-⌜*ia*⌝ *a-na* ŠE.ḪI.A.MEŠ ⌜*duḫ*⌝-*ni/ \ mu-ḫu-ṣu* "Inasmuch as the king, my lord, has written for cereal grain, it has been destroyed." For the clay provenience see Goren, et al., *Inscribed in Clay*, 236-237.

[923] For publication information and image see http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/dl/lineart/P270945_l.jpg. The transliteration, which demarcates the lines on the tablet is from Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (*1*), EA 215.

Obv. 01) *a-na šàr-ri* EN-*ia*

02) ^{d}UTU-⌜*ia*⌝ DINGIR.MEŠ-*ia*

03) *um-ma* ^{I}*Ba-ia-wa*

04) ÌR-*ka* \ ⌜*ka*⌝-*ab-tum-ma*

05) *ù ša-ša-lu-ma*

06) 7 *ù ši-ib-e-ta-an*

07) *a-na* GÌR.MEŠ ⌜*šàr*⌝-*ri be-li-ia*

08) ^{d}UTU-*ia* DINGIR.MEŠ-*ia*

09) ⌜*am*⌝-*qú-ut lu-ú*

10) ^{I}*Ia-an-ḫa-ma*

11) ⌜*i*⌝-*ia-a-nu i*-⌜*na*⌝

Lo.ed. 12)[MU]-*ti a-ni-ti*$_{7}$

Rev. 13) [*ḫa*-]*al-qa-at*-⌜*ma*⌝

14) [*gáb*-]*bi* KUR.ḪI.A-*ti*

15) ⌜*i*⌝-*na* LÚ.MEŠ SA.G⌜AZ⌝.[K]I

16) *ù bu-lt-ṭi*

17) KUR.ḪI.A-*ka*

Table 42 The Scribal Marks in EA 215

EA 215: 1-9	
01) *a-na šàr-ri* EN-*ia* 02) ^{d}UTU-⌜*ia*⌝ DINGIR.MEŠ-*ia* 03) *um-ma* ^{I}*Ba-ia-wa* 04) ÌR-*ka* \ ⌜*ka*⌝-*ab-tum-ma* 05) *ù ša-ša-lu-ma* 06) 7 *ù ši-ib-e-ta-an* 07) *a-na* GÌR.MEŠ ⌜*šàr*⌝-*ri be-li-ia* 08) ^{d}UTU-*ia* DINGIR.MEŠ-*ia*	"To the king, my lord, my sun god, my deity, the message of Bayawa, your servant: On the belly and on the back, seven (times) and seven times at the feet of the king, my lord, have I fallen."

09) ⌜*am*⌝-*qú-ut lu-ú* 10) ˡ*Ia-an-ḫa-ma* 11) ⌜*i*⌝-*ia-a-nu i*-⌜*na*⌝ Lo.ed. 12)[MU]-*ti a-ni-ti*$_7$ Rev. 13) [*ḫa*-]*al-qa-at*-⌜*ma*⌝ 14) [*gáb*-]*bi* KUR.ḪI.A-*ti* 15) ⌜*i*⌝-*na* LÚ.MEŠ SA.G⌜AZ⌝.[K]I 16) *ù bu-li-iṭ* 17) KUR.ḪI.A-*ka*----------	"Should Yanḥamu not be here within this [yea]r, [al]l the territories will be lost to the *ʿapîru* men. So grant life to your lands."----------

The use of single lines to order the layout of the tablet appears to have worked to structure this letter. The gloss in line 4 is an internal structuring devise that delineates the introductory information and the prostration formula. The lack of underlining in lines 10-17 marks a break in the use of scribal markings and corresponds to the main the body of the letter. The use of a partial underline in line 13 under [*ḫa*-]*al-qa-at*-⌜*ma*⌝ "destroyed," appears to be a means of emphasizing this particular word in the text: "Should Yanḥamu not be here within this [yea]r, [al]l the territories will be lost to the *ʿapîru* men. So grant life to your lands."[924]

The use of the gloss in EA 286:62 also serves more than just a quotative function. Moran viewed it at a structural device to mark a pause in the letter and the start of a new sentence.[925]

> EA 286: 61-64 [*a-n*]*a* ⌜*ṭup*⌝-*šar* ⌜LUGAL⌝ EN-*ia um-ma* ˡ⌜ÌR⌝-⌜*ḫé*⌝-⌜*ba*⌝/ [Ì]R-*ka-ma* \ *še-ri-ib a-wa-ti.*⌜MEŠ⌝/ ⌜*ba*⌝-*na-ta a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia ḫal-qa-at*/ ⌜*gáb*⌝-*bi* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN-*ia*
> [T]o the scribe of the king, my lord, thus ʿAbdi-Ḫeba, your [ser]vant: "Present eloquent words to the king, my lord; [al]l of the lands of the king, my lord, are lost!"

This gloss mark, too, appears to have several functions. While it does delineate the direct appeal to the

[924] Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (1), EA 215.

[925] Moran, "The Syrian Scribe," 152.

scribe receiving this letter, which is framed as direct speech, it also separates the introduction of the postscript from the "mini" message contained therein, and serves a structural purpose as well. Also, in light of the fervent desire that the scribe present 'Abdi-Ḫeba's words in an eloquent way (as reflected in the postscript of this letter), this and the other glosses in lines 10 and 15 appear to be serving emphatic functions.

Some of the glosses as serving a purely metalinguistic function to highlight a section of text. Such glosses were used to provide information about how the letter was to be read and performed in Egypt.[926] The following is a list of the glosses that have an emphatic function followed by an analysis of the context of the glosses.

Table 43 The Emphatic Glosses in the Canaanite Amarna Letters

EA 129: 36-37 36) *a-nu-ma* ÉRIN.MEŠ *a-ṣa-at u ti-i*[*q-bu-na*] \ *ka-ma-m*[*i*] 37) ⌜*ka*⌝*-az-bu-tu*	"Now the regular troops have gone out," then th[ey are saying thus: 'Lies!'" *This gloss also serves as a structural device; it groups together the phrase "*ka-ma-m*[*i*] ⌜*ka*⌝*-az-bu-tu"* with line 36.
EA 64: 22, 23 20) *a-nu-ma* 21) 10 MUNUS.MEŠ ———————————— 22) \ *mé-ki-tu* ———————————————— 23) \ *ia-pa-aq-ti* ————————————	"Now ten women, ———————————— viz. of glass, ———————————————————— have I produced." ———————————— *This gloss adds clarification to the text. It specifies that the ten figurines are made of colored glass.

[926] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 180-183.

EA 65: 5 04) *a-na* ᶦGÌR.MEŠ EN-*ia* 7 *ù* 7 *mi-la* 05) \\ *ma-aq-ta-ti ù ka-ba-tu-ma ù ṣú-ú'-ru-ma* 06) *a-na* ᶦGÌR.MEŠ *šàr-ri* EN-*ia*	"Spe]ak [to the king, my lord; the message] of ʿAbdi-Aštarti your servant. At the feet of my lord seven and seven times \\ have I fallen both on the stomach and on the back, at the feet of the king, my lord." *The gloss here marks a Canaano-Akkadian verbal form, whereas the typical verb of prostration in this context is *amqut*.
EA 286: 10, 15, 47 09) *a-mur a-na-ku la-a* LÚ*a-bi-ia* 10) *ù la-a* MUNUS*ú-mi-ia* \ *ša-ak-na-ni* 11) *i-na aš-ri an-ni-e* 12) ⌜*zu*⌝-*ru-uḫ šàr-ri* KAL.GA 13) ⌜*ú*⌝-*še-ri-ba-an-ni a-na* É LÚ*a-bi-ia* 14) ⌜*am*⌝-*mi-nim-mi a-na‹-ku› e-*⌜*pu*⌝-*uš* 15) \ *ar-na a-na* LUGAL EN-*ri* 46) *ù le-ru*!(LU)-*ub ù la-mu-ur* 2 [IGI.MEŠ] 47) LUGAL EN-*ia* \ *e-nu-ma* LUGAL E[N-*ia*] 48) [T]I.LA ⌜*e*⌝-⌜*nu*⌝-*ma it-ta-ṣú-ú* LÚ.M[ÁŠKIM.MEŠ]	"Look, as for me, neither my father nor my mother put me in this place. The strong arm of the king installed me in the house of my father. Why would I (of all people) commit a crime against the king, ‹my› lord?" "… and that I may behold the two [eyes] of the king, my lord. As the king, [my] lo[rd], lives, whenever the com[missioners] come forth." *The glosses are emphatic and underscore ʿAbdi-Ḫeba's allegiance to the Pharaoh. The second gloss in line 47 marks a shift to the announcement of the arrival of the Pharaoh's officials.
EA 287: 27, 41, 52, 58 25) [*a*]-*mur* KUR URU *Ú-ru-sa-lim* ⌜*an*⌝-⌜*ni*⌝-⌜*ta*⌝ 26) [*l*]*a-a* LÚ AD.DA.A.NI *la-a ú-mi-i*[*a*] 27) [*n*]*a-ad-na-an-ni* \ŠU\ *zu-ru-uḫ* [*šàr-ri* KAL].GA 28) [*n*]*a-ad-na-an-ni a-na ia-a-ši* 40b-41 40b) *li-is-*⌜*kín*⌝ [*šàr-ri*] 41) ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *ša-šu-nu* \ *ta-za-qa-* ⌜*pu*⌝ [*gáb-bi*] … 52) [*ù* LÚ] MÁŠKIM *šàr-ri mu-še-ra* *an-ni-ka-nu*	"[L]ook, neither my father nor my mother gave me this city state of Jerusalem. It was the [mig]hty arm of [the king] that gave it to me." "May [the king] give his attention to them. [All] the territories are rising (in rebellion)] (or: "are being aroused to rebellion) at their doing." "I have dispatched [a caravan (or: caravans)] to

53) [KASKAL.ḪI]I.A *mu-še-er-ti a-na šàr-ri* EN-[*i*]*a* 54) [x L]Ú.MEŠ *a-si-ru* 5 *li-im* [KÙ.BABBAR] 55) [*ù*] 8 LÚ.MEŠ *ù-bi-li-mi* [KA]SKAL.ḪI.A *šà*[*r-ri*] 56) ⌜*la*⌝-*qí*-⌜*ḫu*⌝ ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜*ú*⌝-⌜*ga*⌝-*ri* \ *ša-de*$_4$-*e* 57) URU *Ia-lu-na* KI *li-de*$_4$-*mi šàr-ri* EN-*ia* 58) *la-a a-la-á'-e* \ *mu-še-ra* KASKAL 59) *a-na šàr-ri* EN-*ia aš-šum la-ma-de*$_4$-*ka*	the king, [m]y lord, viz. *x* number of prisoners and five thousand [(shekels) of silver and] eight caravaniers of the king. They were taken in the open territory of the city of (A)yalon. May the king be apprised; I am unable to send a caravan to the king, my lord. For your information!" *The glosses in line 27, and 56 provide Canaanite/Canaano-Akkadian equivalents. The glosses in lines 41, 52 and 58 are emphatic and they do not serve a structural or lexical purpose.

In EA 129: 36-37, the term *kzb* is WS, which suggests that the gloss mark may be signaling a local term for deception.[927] The glosses in EA 64 clarify the meaning of the logograms, and specifically request 10 *female glass figurines*, whereas Mabie views them to emphasize "some positive quality of the ten women being sent to the Pharaoh."[928] The gloss in EA 65:5 highlights the prostration formula and also marks a Canaano-Akkadian verbal form, which is unusual in the introduction of these letters. This was an aberration from epistolary protocol, as the verbs in the introductory formulae typically use MB orthography.[929] The variation in the introductions of the letters from

[927] In Arzi's analysis of EA 129, he understood the gloss to function as an emphatic working with the particle *kâmma-mi* "thus:" EA 129: 36-37 *a-nu-ma* ÉRIN.MEŠ *a-ṣa-at u ti-i*[*q-bu-na*]\ *ka-ma-m*[*i*]/ ⌜*ka*⌝-*az-bu-tu* (26-29) [. . .] very much, they are still talk[ing] about committing [grea]t [treason] and sin[ce the king has n[ot se]nt letters to the city [rulers], then they are seeking to commit [treason]. See Artzi, " The 'Glosses' in the El-Amarna Tablets," 134.

[928] See Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 180.

[929] We thus see *amqut* in the vast majority of letters rather than *mqt-ti*, which is the 1cs suffix form the Akkadian verbal root *maqātu*. Also, when we examine the rest of the letters from 'Abdi-Aštarti, it appears that the introduction was in flux. EA 63 makes use of both *maqtati* and *amqut*, though marks *amqut* with a gloss; also, *amqut* is placed at the end of the introduction following Akkadian word order which his SOV: EA 63: 05-06 *a-na* 1 GÌR.MEŠ ^{I}*šàr-ri* ⌜EN⌝-⌜*ia*⌝/ 7 *ù* 7 *ma-aq-ta*-⌜*ti*⌝ ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜GÌR⌝.MEŠ ⌜*ša*⌝ ⌜^{I}⌝⌜LUGAL⌝⌜EN⌝-⌜*ia*⌝⌜\⌝ ⌜*am*⌝-⌜*qú-ut* "At the feet of the king, my lord, seven and seven (times) have I fallen; at the feet of the king, my lord, have I fallen." EA 64 has neither *amqut* nor a gloss mark; the

‘Abdi-Aštarti suggests that the scribal system at Gath may have been in flux. It is also possible that the use of such a spelling was a deliberate strategy to distinguish this letter from the Pharaoh’s other correspondence.

EA 286 and 287 are letters that were written by the northern trained scribe working for ‘Abdi-Ḫeba of Jerusalem. The letters from Jerusalem make consistent used of glosses and *Glossenkeilen* to highlight key aspects of this corpus. Mabie proposed that the glosses in lines 10 and 15 are “intended to emphasize the statement (and hence the loyalty) of ‘Abdi-Ḫeba of Jerusalem in light of he slanderous report brought to the Pharaoh.”[930] These two glosses do not appear to have a structural or lexical function, but highlight the accusation brought against ‘Abdi-Ḫeba. The gloss in EA 286:47 marks a shift in topic and highlights the oath of loyalty, “as the king, my lord, lives.” The glosses in EA 286: 47, EA 287: 41, 52, and 58, too, are related to the context of the letter and underscore ‘Abdi-Ḫeba’s duress.[931] The term *zu-ru-uḫ* in EA 287: 27 ([*n*]*a-ad-na-an-ni* \ŠU\ *zu-ru-uḫ* [*šàr-ri* KAL].GA) is a WS gloss. The verb *ta-za-qa-*⌜*pu*⌝ in 287: 41 is not a lexical clarifier nor does it add to the structure of the letter; it serves as an emphatic. The glosses in lines 52 (*šàr-ri mu-še-ra* *an-ni-ka-nu*) and in line 58 (*la-*

Canaano-Akkadian verb is written *ma-aq-ti-ti as* opposed to *ma-aq-ta-ti* as in EA 63 and 65; EA 64: 04-07 *a-na* GÌR.MEŠ *šàr-ri* EN-*ia*/*ma-aq-ti-ti* 7 GÌR.MEŠ *šàr-ri* EN-*ia*/ *ù* 7 *mi-la-an-na*/ *ù ka-ba-tu-ma ù ṣú*!-*uḫ-ru-ma* “At the feet of the king, my lord (feet of the king my lord), have I fallen seven (times) and seven times, on the stomach and on the back.” EA 65 only has *ma-aq-ta-ti* and it is marked with a gloss mark. Vita credits EA 63-65 and 335 to the same scribe, Scribe 2 of Gath. The introduction to EA 335 is fragmentary, however, and EA 63-65 each have a slightly different prostration formula. EA 65 was written at Gath, but EA 64 appears to have been written from Qiltu (Keila). Vita argues (following Goren et al.,) that the scribe of EA 64 and 63, 65, and 335 are one and the same; he proposes that the scribe traveled to Qiltu to write this letter for ‘Abdi-Ashtari (Vita, Canaanite Scribes, 86-90).

[930] Mabie, “Ancient Near Eastern Scribes,”180.

[931] Ibid., 181.

a a-la-á'-e \ *mu-še-ra* KASKAL) are also emphatic. They mark the announcement of the capture of a caravan that 'Abdi-Ḫeba sent to Egypt.

C. Glosses as a Type of Metapragmatic Commentary

The traditional assumption is that *Glossenkeilen* marked words that the scribes considered to be foreign. Yet, this generalization does not always match the written evidence. WS lexemes occurs in the Canaanite Amarna Letters without the formal gloss markers;[932] also, in some cases, the underlying of language of the glosses are ambiguous, as Akkadian and WS have many shared roots.[933] There are also "pure" Canaanite lexemes that are embedded into the main matrix of the text that gloss logograms that should have been known to the scribes writing these letters.[934] The logographic system was ambiguous by its very nature. Glosses did serve as a means of providing nuance and a more personal touch, however, they were not strict guides to the reading and/or pronunciation of these

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[932] Izre'el classifies these "borrowings" as Canaanite-Akkadian was a distinct dialect from WS. For example, *'izirta* "help" (EA 87:13; 89:18; ZA 86: p.101 1.34) "must therefore be regarded not as an incidental intrusion of a Canaanite word but a borrowing into Canaano-Akkadian [as it appears more than once in the Byblos letters]." See S. Izre'el, "Vocalized Canaanite," 28.

[933] For example, KA: *pi-í* in EA 79:12; 145:9; 195:22; BA.UG$_5$: *mu-tu-mi* which retains the enclitic *–mi*, used in direct speech in Akkadian texts is an interesting example. Izre'el states that this is a "Canaanite enclitic," yet, this is actually the direct speech marker found throughout the Amarna corpus. If the glossed term is indeed Canaanite (*mōtu* vs. *mūtu*), then the scribe embedded the WS-ism into an Akkadian framework. For a discussion of this form see S. Izre'el, "Vocalized Canaanite," 28.

[934] For example, *kazbūtu* "lie" (EA 129:37) has a difference meaning in Akkadian (*kzb* denotes luxury in Akkadian) (*CAD* K: 614-617.). In EA 263: 24-25, the scribe uses both an Akkadian and a NWS gloss to clarify logograms: 24-25: LÚ.MEŠ \ *ma-ṣa-ar-ta/ ù* ANŠE.KUR.‹RA.›MEŠ \ ⌜*sú*⌝ ⌜*ú*⌝[*-sí-ma*] "[May my lord send to me] MEN [Sum.], i.e. *garrison troops* [Akk.] and EQUIDS [Sum], i.e. *horses* [NWS]." The term *ma-ṣa-ar-ta* is an Akkadian gloss for the Sumerogram LÚ.MEŠ, specifying that the ruler specifically wants the Pharaoh to send him troops (i.e., fighting men). In the next clause the local term for horse (*sws*) clarifies the Sumerogram ANŠE.KUR.‹RA.›MEŠ. Rainey also reconstructs this sequence in lines 27-28: [ANŠE.KUR.MEŠ]\ *s*[*ú-ú-sí-ma*]. In both cases, the glosses are parentheticals that provide additional information about military goods being provided, but are not strict translations of the logograms that preceed them.

letters. Glosses served more broadly as a type of metapragmatic commentary to structure the text and add information about its narrative flow.[935]

1. Gianto

Gianto's study of the glosses in the Byblos Letters identifies three main types: a) syllabic Akkadian that corresponds to a logogram (e.g., EA 79:12 KA: *pí-i* for "mouth"); syllabic non-Akkadian terms that correspond to a logogram (e.g., EA 74:20 ḪUR.SAG: *ḫa-ar-ri* "mountain"); syllabic Akkadian that corresponds to a syllabically written non-Akkadian term (e.g., EA 138:126 [*i*]*a-pu*: *ḫa-mu-du* "beautiful, desirable thing").[936] He includes more nuanced categorizations of the function of the glosses: Pronunciation, Equivalent, Individuating, Intensifying, and Indeterminate.[937] According to his classification, the simplest type of gloss is the "pronunciation gloss," which clarifies the logogram (e.g., EA 136:28 DÙG.GA: TU.KA "alliance," which would stand for the term *ṭābūtu* or "goodness").[938] Equivalent glosses expressed a relationship between Akkadian or non-Akkadian words written in

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[935] For example, the glosses in the Jerusalem Letters (e.g., EA 286: 62 and 289:36) do not seem to have a semantic function but serve to structure the message itself and guide the reader to the proper sequence of events. The gloss mark in EA 286: 62 separates the introduction of a postscript from the actual appeal; the gloss in EA 289:36 serves to group together the last three sign of a sentence, as the scribe ran out of room and wrote them underneath the preceding word.

[936] Gianto, "Amarna Lexicography," 66.

[937] He also identifies an "indeterminate" group, yet most of the glosses in this list can explained the four categories delineated above. For example, EA 136:16 BIL: *ma-ṣa-ar-ta*, which Moran suggested stood for *ḫamāṭu* "to hasten" in Akkadian, was used in this sentence to denote urgency: "Hasten to sent a garrison!" Rainey's new collation of this letter instead reads: LÚ.MEŠ UN \ *ma-ṣa-ar*-ta rendering the translation "Send me garrison of troops." EA 129:36-37, too, is best understood as an intensifying gloss: EA 129: 36-37*a-nu-ma* ÉRIN.MEŠ *a-ṣa-at u ti-i*[*q-bu-na*]\ *ka-ma-m*[*i*]/ ˹*ka*˺-*az-bu-tu* "then th[ey are saying thus: "Lies!" See Gianto, "Amarna Lexicography," 71.

[938] Rainey transliterates the second part of the gloss in lower case letters to show that *tu-ka* is actually a syllabic phonetic spelling of DÙG.GA. Böhl understood it to be phonetic spelling of the logogram (*Die Sprache der Amarnabriefe,* 85).

syllabic cuneiform and logograpically.[939] This type of gloss specified which word and/or semantic meaning was underlying the logogram. Individuating glosses narrowed in on a particular meaning of a logogram when the intended meaning was not the normal Akkadian value.[940]

Not all such glosses were followed by a formal *Glossenkeil*. For example, in EA 288: 59-61 (Jerusalem) BA.UG$_5$ is followed by an unmarked gloss: *ni-mu-tu$_4$* "we will die."

> EA 288: 59-61 *ù li-il-qé-a-ni/ a-na ia-a-ši a-di* ŠEŠ.MEŠ-‹*ia*› *ù* BA.ÚŠ/ ⌜*ni*⌝-⌜*mu*⌝-*tu$_4$ it-ti šàr-ru* EN-*nu* May the king dispatch a commissioner and let him take me to you (! error) with ‹my› colleagues; then we may die with the king, our lord.

In this case, the gloss clarifies the change in subject, as the previous lines makes reference to several people: the King, 'Abdi-Ḫeba in the 1st person, his brothers, and more generally his people; the syllabic spelling *ni-mu-tu$_4$* clarifies that the subject is the 1cp.[941]

The intensifying gloss, on the other hand, added emphasis to a message and was not necessarily linguistic. It marked the text, akin to an underline or the use of bold font.[942] This would have been

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[939] He includes EA 138: 26 EA 74: 19b -20 *ša i-na* Ḫ̱UR.SAG \ ⌜*ḫa*⌝-*ar-ri ù i-na a-ḫi a-ia-ab* " which are in the hills and seacoast." The logogram Ḫ̱UR.SAG is clarified by ⌜*ḫa*⌝-*ar-ri*, perhaps to distinguish the reading from *šadû*, which is a cognate in WS with the meaning of "field." See Gianto, "Amarna Lexicography," 67-68.

[940] In certain cases, glosses are used indicate a specific technical term or class of object or thing. For example, LÚMAŠKIM which has the general meaning of "commissioner" in Akkadian is glossed in several different ways in the Byblos letters: EA 131:21 LÚ.MEŠMAŠKIM: *ma-lik*MEŠ "councilors"; EA 262:69 LÚMAŠKIM: *sú-ki-na* "overseer"; EA 256:9 LÚ.MEŠ*ra-bi-ṣí : sú-ki-ni* "overseer"; EA 321:15 LÚMAŠKIM: LÚ*ra-bi-ṣí* (*ša šarri*) "commissioner of the king." In each case, the designation "commissioner" is qualified with a more precise title of the officials. Gianto, too, discusses of the use of glosses for translation ("Amarna Lexicography," 68-69).

[941] Ibid.

[942] In following example, the context is emotionally charged. The glosses appear to highlight the frustration of the sender: EA 82:52 *ta-ša-aš: na-aq-ṣa-šu* "I was distressed: I was angry;" EA 127:42 *is-*[*s*]*à-qú: ṣí-ir-ti* "I am being hard-pressed—I am besieged;" EA 138:130 (grain for my city) *i-ka-al: ḫa-ṣí-ri* "is held back: is withheld" (*ḫa-ṣí-ri* for **'aṣr*).

intended for the recipient scribe and highlighted a key part of the message. The majority of glosses in the Byblos corpus add commentary to nouns, as opposed to verbs, and when glosses are used for verbs, they tend to be "intensifying" glosses that serve as emphatics.[943] Gianto explains the use of glosses as a result of secondary language acquisition and scribal training, rather than the mere influence of the native Canaanite dialects of the scribes.[944] Peripheral Akkadian had a simplified grammar and a restricted lexicon, which streamlined communication, but was dry and overly formulaic letters. The scribes were at times dissatisfied with the "normal expressions" (i.e., the stock formulae) used in diplomatic missives and spiced their letters with glosses and more idiomatic language.[945] Seen in this light, the glosses appear to be a developed means of adding nuance to the letters beyond that of mere lexical clarification.

2. Izre'el

S. Izre'el views the glosses more as evidence for the language of reading underlying the text as well as the language of the scribes. [946] According to this view, the main language of the text was the

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[943] Gianto, "Amarna Lexicography, 73.

[944] Ibid., 72.

[945] Ibid., 72-73.

[946] Izre'el's lists three categories of WS lexemes in the cuneiform texts from Canaan (including the Canaanite Amarna Letters and other smaller corpora at sites such as Taanach and Kamid el-Loz), WS lexemes formally marked by *Glossenkeilen* with a Sumerian or Canaano-Akkadian equivalent (e.g., EA 245:10: EGIR-*šu: aḫ-ru-un-ú* "behind him"); NWS terms marked by a *Glossenkeil* but with no translation (EA 256:7 *ḫi-iḫ-bé-e* "he has hidden"); and NWS terms that are integrated into the text without *Glossenkeilen* or a translation (e.g., EA 287: 66, 69 *a-nu-ki* "I"). He omits lexemes that occur in glosses but are derived from non-WS languages. For example, in EA 147: 12, the Egyptian term *ḫpš* is glossed with ZAG: *i-na du-ni* ZAG \\ *ḫa-ap-ši* "by the power of (his) arm." In this case, he views the gloss to be an Egyptian term is aimed at an Egyptian audience. Izre'el's review of J. Hoftijzer et al., *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions,* is really an appendix of NWS lexemes left out of this work. The *DNWSI* only lists WS terms that were included in glosses, the

mixed Canaano-Akkadian dialect, whereas the Canaanite glosses were considered to be "foreign" (i.e., non-Akkadian words). For example, he understands the glosses in EA 369, a letter from Egypt to Gezer, as evidence that the scribe was a Canaanite. He interprets the gloss in EA 369: 8 MUNUS.DÉ \ *ša-qí-tu*4 SIG5 "beautiful woman-cupbearer," as a evidence that the language of the exchange between Egypt and Gezer was Akkadian, as opposed to Egyptian or Canaanite. The form MUNUS.DÉ \ *ša-qí-tu*4 creates a new equivalency for DÉ, which is only rarely equated with *šāqû* in lexical lists. He thus views MUNUS.DÉ \ *ša-qí-tu*$_4$ as an innovation for want of a better Akkadian term to express the gender of the cup-bearers. He views the gloss in line 9, KÙ.BABBAR.ḪI.A GUŠKIN.ḪI.A GADA.MEŠ \ *ma-al-ba-ši* "silver, gold, linen garments…," to be a reflection of the scribe's "mother tongue" which was Canaanite. He suggests that a Canaanite scribe wrote this letter in Egypt and then used the glosses to write notes to himself for when he was to read it to the court at Gezer.[947]

Izre'el's view that the Canaanite terms are "foreign" to the text, is a central point in his argument against von Dassow's "Canaanite in cuneiform" theory. For example, in EA 366: 11-the scribe glossed

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assumption being that only words considered by the scribes as WS were marked in glosses, whereas the WS lexemes integrated into the text were considered to be Canaano-Akkadian. Izre'el's emended list comprises of a wider range, including lexemes not marked by glosses. See Hoftijzer et al., *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* and S. Izre'el, "Review K. of Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions," 421-429; See also Sivan, *Grammatical Analysis and Glossary*, 179-295; and Izre'el, "Vocalized Canaanite," 29.

[947] Izre'el, "The Amarna Glosses," 116-118; Ibid., "Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 182-183.

Canaano-Akkadian verbs with Canaanite verbs, which he views as a confirmation that Canaanite was not the primary language of this letter:[948]

> EA 366: 11-15 *li-il-ma-ad šàr-ru* EN-⌜*i*⌝*a*/ *i-nu-ma* LÚ.SA.GAZ ⌜*ša*⌝/ *yi-na-aš-ši* \ *na-aš-ša-a*/ *i-na* KUR.KI.ḪI.A *na-da-an*/ DINGIR-*lu*$_4$ *ša šàr-ri* EN-*ia a-na ia-ši* "May the king, my lord, be apprised that as for the *ʿapîru* man who rose up in the territories, the god of the king, my lord, gave him over to me and I smote him."
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> EA 366: 24-28) *šu-ni-ma in*$_4$*-né-ri-ru* \ *na-az-a-qú*/ *i-na* 50 GIŠ.GIGIR.ḪI.A/ *a-na mu-ḫi-ia ù a-nu-ma*/ *i-ba-aš-šu it-ti-ia*/ *i-na nu-kúr-ti ù li-*⌜*it*⌝*-ru-uṣ* "The two of them, were called forth with fifty chariots against me and now they are at war with me.

Both *yi-na-aš-ši* and *na-aš-ša-a* are derived from the same verbal root *ns'*. However, the first verb is a Canaano-Akkadian form marked by the 3ms prefix *yv-* and a lack of vocalic ending, which marks this as having a preterite function. The second verb is a suffix form and a "pure" Canaanite verb. In line 24, *in*$_4$*-né-ri-ru* \ *na-az-a-qú* the second verb is an N stem that denotes the passive; it is a 3mp suffix form whereas *in*$_4$*-né-ri-ru* is an N stem preterite. As Izre'el suggests, this does suggest that the scribe viewed there to be a distinction between Canaano-Akkadian and Canaanite. As it is unlikely that a Canaanite scribe wrote a clarification gloss in Canaanite to an Egyptian audience, Izre'el proposes that the scribes also served as the messengers carrying these letters. Such glosses were scribes' personal notes written in their own languages.[949]

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[948] For example, Izre'el views the gloss EA 136:28 DÙG.GA: TU.KA "alliance," to be evidence that the logogram was read as an Akkadian word because the scribes working in Canaanite would not have distinguished between Sumerian and Akkadian. Also, he views the range of spellings for *eperu* "dust" in the glosses (*upri* in the Bashan versus *epri* in other parts of Canaan, as reflections of the pronunciation of this word in diverse Canaano-Akkadian dialects ("The Amarna Glosses," 192).

[949] As Izre'el writes,"[O]ne should not adhere solely to the accepted view of messengers sent with letters to be read by resident scribes in Egypt…The situation may have been more complex than that, allowing for other scenarios, such as messenger-scribes moving between Egypt and the Levant (The Amarna Glosses," 118). For example, he also cites the

3. Van der Toorn and Siddall

In order to explain the presence of Canaanite glosses in letters to Egypt, Van der Toorn argues (contra the traditional view) that the glosses were not intended for the receiving scribes. He considers it unlikely that an Egyptian official would need a Canaanite explanation for an Akkadian or Sumerian word. Rather, he proposes that they were notes intended to clarify the text of the message for the first reader of these letters, who was another scribe working for a local ruler who was assigned with checking his colleague's work.[950] L. R. Siddall proposes that the glosses were intended for Canaanites working at Tell el-ʻAmarna. He envisions a two-step process whereby the letters from Canaan first went through Canaanite scribes working for Egypt, and then upon approval, to Egyptian officials.[951]

4. Von Dassow

Von Dassow understands the Canaanites forms and glosses in the postscripts as evidence that Canaanite glosses were not linguistically intrusive (i.e., foreign)—but reflected the language

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Hurrian gloss in EA 170, which is a "double" letter from Amurru sent to Amorite dignitaries staying in Egypt. The first letter is from Baʿluya and Beti-ili: to Aziru, who is staying in Egypt during this period. The letter contains a Hurrian gloss of the Akkadian expression *pānīšunu ṣabat* "to seize their faces" (i.e., "to meet them"): EA 170: 10-13 EN-*ni ki-i-me-e te-le-é'-e-mi/ ù pa-ni-šu-nu ṣa-bat \\ zu-zi-la-ma-an/ ki-i-me-e i-na aš-ra-nu/ la ú-wa-aḫ-ḫé-ru-ka/ ù pa-ni-šu-nu ṣa-bat \\ zu-zi-la-ma-an* "Our lord, whenever you are able, meet with them so that they do not delay you there." Izre'el understands this as evidence that a Hurian speaking scribe wrote and delivered this letter to Egypt ("The Amarna Glosses," 106-107; 118).

[950] Van der Toorn imagines a procedure by which local rulers verified the content of the message before it was sent by having another scribe read its contents. The glosses were intended to clarify ambiguous aspects of the message for this third party. As he writes, "In order to facilitate the correct translation of his letter in the vernacular Canaanite, the writing scribe added glosses where he deemed them necessary or helpful, so as to make sure that his choice of words was faithfully presented before the king" ("Cuneiform Documents from Syria- Palestine," 2002).

[951] Siddall, "The Amarna Letters from Tyre," 85–99.

underlying this corpus. They would have been understood by both the reader and recipient[952] As she writes, "[T]hese glosses are evidence that the reader was expected to understand the text in Canaanite!"[953] The diverse uses of glosses, however, suggest that there was no direct correlation between the language of the written message, and that of "reading." Von Dassow's understanding of the glosses, like that of the Izre'el, focuses too narrowly on spoken language.

5. Analysis

The linguistic and/or cultural identities of the scribes writing and received these letters are not so clear-cut. There is no one-to-one equivalency between the language of a text and the native language of the scribe. The presence of Canaanite forms does not mean that the language of the sender was Canaanite, or *vice versa*. The language of the glosses does not necessarily indicate the language of reading or the "mother tongue" of the recipient scribe. As seen with the Alashia letters and the Jerusalem letters, scribes working away from the place of their scribal training were influenced by the scribal traditions of their employers. EA 369, for example, reflects aspects of both

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[952] Von Dassow is skeptical of both Izre'el and van der Toorns' views of the purpose behind the glosses. As she writes, "'While either Izre'el's or van der Toorn's explanations for the use of glosses could perhaps be true of particular cases, both are somewhat improbable and problematic, and neither accounts for the general practice of using words in a local language to gloss texts putatively written in Akkadian, including not only letters but texts written for local use (e.g., legal and administrative documents at Ugarit and Alalaḫ)." ("Canaanite in Cuneiform," 653). She is also dismissive of Izre'el's scribe-messenger, as some of the postscripts addressed to scribes working for Egypt also contain glosses (EA 286, 287, 288, 289, and 316). As she writes, "Evidently, then, the scribes on Pharaoh's staff who wrote to his Canaanite vassals could and sometimes did employ the same system for encoding communication in cuneiform as the Canaanite scribes who wrote to Egypt, which the latter sometimes used Egyptian in their turn. This stands to reason, and the sporadic use of Canaanite and Canaano-Akkadian by Egyptian scribe complements the argument developed on the basis of what the Canaanite cuneiformists wrote, for the two parties to the communication are shown to share the same code…Canaanite, not Akkadian, was the *lingua* franca shared by the scribes of Canaan and their counterparts in Egypt" (Ibid., 656; also cf. 35).

[953] Ibid., 654.

Canaano-Akkadian and Egyptian-Akkadian scribal conventions, which is expected from a scribe working for both audiences. Rather, these letters are a reflection of scribal training and innovative uses of that training to enhance the written communication between these polities. The above proposals assume that the glosses are meant as guides to the language of the text. Yet, glosses, in some cases, appear to relate to the content of the letters and are used to highlight the text rather than explain a problematic passage. When the glosses are seen as a part of the commentary on *how* to interpret the text, the issue of the language of utterance or of its final reading is less relevant.[954]

It is noteworthy that the glosses in EA 366 occur at dramatic points in Shuwardata's story:

> Ea 366: 11-28 *li-il-ma-ad šàr-ru* EN-⌜*i*⌝*a/ i-nu-ma* LÚ.SA.GAZ ⌜*ša*⌝*/* ***yi-na-aš-ši \ na-aš-ša-a****/ i-na* KUR.KI.Ḫ.I.A *na-da-an/* DINGIR-*lu*4 *ša šàr-ri* EN-*ia a-na ia-ši/ ù i-du-uk-šu ù* [*l*]*u-ú yi-il-ma-ad šàr-ru/* ⌜EN⌝-*ia* ⌜*i*⌝-⌜*nu*⌝-*ma iz-zi-bu-ni/ gáb-bi* ŠEŠ.Ḫ.I.A-*ia ù/ a-na-ku-ma ù* ᵢÌR-*Ḫe-ba/ nu-kúr-tu*4 *i-na* LÚ.⌜SA⌝.GAZ*/ ù* ᵢ*Sú-ra-ta* ⌜LÚ⌝ URU *Ak-ka.*KI*/ ù* I*In*4*-tár*!(AŠ+DA)-⌜*ú*⌝-⌜*ta*⌝ LÚ URU *Ak-ša-pa/ šu-ni-ma* ***in*4*-né-ri-ru \ na-az-a-qú****/ i-na* 50 GIŠ.GIGIR.Ḫ.I.A*/ a-na mu-ḫi-ia ù a-nu-ma/ i-ba-aš-šu it-ti-ia/ i-na nu-kúr-ti ù li-*⌜*it*⌝*-ru-uṣ*
> May the king, my lord, be apprised that as **for the *ʿapîru* man who rose up in the territories**, the god of the king, my lord, gave him over to me and I smote him. And may the king, my lord, be apprised that all my colleagues (brothers) have abandoned me and ʿAbdi-Ḫeba and I are at war with the *ʿapîru* man. But Surata, the ruler of Acco, and Intaruta, the ruler of Achshaph, **the two of them, were called forth** with fifty chariots against and now they are at war with me.

[954] Jack M. Sasson's study of the scribal errors in the texts from Mari provide insight into process by which a spoken message was transformed into a text. He proposes that scribes working at Mari did not dictate letters on sight, but rather created an outline with the main structure of the message. They then reconstructed its contents at a later date. Errors occurred during the oral transmission when the scribe misheard their employer, or were unable to fully reconstruct the verbal "text" of the message from memory; also such errors could arise when a scribe read a text to a colleague making another copy ("The Burden of Scribes," In *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen.* Edited by T. Abusch [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002], 211-228). Harry Hoffner views the corrections to certain Hittite letters (e.g., erasures, re-written portions, and above the line additions to the text) as evidence that the scribes read back the letter before it was sealed in an envelope. If there were corrections to be made, the scribe could make them on the spot. See Harry A Hoffner and Gary M. Beckman. *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 34.

The first gloss sets the stage for the emergence of the ʿApiru villain; the second concludes this episode, whereby Shuwardata's allies have abandoned him. He and ʿAbdi-Ḫeba now stand together against their mutual enemies. These glosses serve as more than lexical clarifiers. They direct the reader to the key complaint in this letter. It is also probable that marking these verbs indicated that they were meant to be performed with a heightened degree physicality, such as a gesture and/or rise in pitch for the reading of the verbs "rising" and "called."[955] The scribal marks, glosses, and in some cases, direct appeals to the scribes, were all a part of the metapragmatic framework of these letters, and a key part of the Canaano-Akkadian code that was understood by Egyptian cuneiform scribes.

The following gloss in EA 228 is also best understood as an emphatic meant to add depth to the letter, rather than to guide its pronunciation:

> EA 228: 17-25 [*a-n*]*a* ˡ*šàr-ri* EN-*ia*/ [*ù*] *li-iḫ-šu-uš-*⌜*mi*⌝/⌜\⌝*ya-az-ku-ur-mi*/⌜ˡ⌝*šàr-ri* EN-*ia/mi-im-ma ša/ in*$_4$*-né-pu-uš-mi*/UGU URU *Ḫa-ṣú-ra* KI/URU.KI-*ka ù*/UGU ÌR-*ka* [So] may the king, my lord, give thought to what is being done against the city of Hazor, your city, and against your servant."

It is doubtful that the scribe working at Hazor, which had a legacy of cuneiform scribalism dating into

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[955] Such an understanding of the glosses and scribal marks also elucidates why glosses occur in the postscripts of letters meant for scribes working in Egypt. The presence of a gloss in the postscript of EA 286, for example, appears to serve as a means of structuring a message to a scribe working for Egypt and also to serve as an emphatic: EA 286: 61-64: [*a-n*]*a* ⌜*ṭup*⌝-*šar* ⌜LUGAL⌝ EN-*ia um-ma* ˡ⌜ÌR⌝-⌜*ḫé*⌝-⌜*ba*⌝/ [Ì]R-*ka-ma* \ *še-ri-ib a-wa-ti.*⌜MEŠ⌝/ ⌜*ba*⌝-*na-ta a-na* LUGAL EN-*ia ḫal-qa-at*/ ⌜*gáb*⌝-*bi* KUR.ḪI.A LUGAL EN-*ia* "[T]o the scribe of the king, my lord, thus ʿAbdi-Ḫeba, your [ser]vant: 'Present eloquent words to the king, my lord; [al]l of the lands of the king, my lord, are lost!'" The postscripts echo a key message from the body of EA 286, which appears to be the part of the letter most important to ʿAbdi-Ḫeba. The gloss underscores the severity of his situation. The postscript in EA 316, a letter from Pu-Baʿlu of Yurza to the Pharaoh even addresses the head Egyptian scribe responsible for the Pharaoh's international correspondence by the Egyptian term for scribe, rendered ˡ*ša-aḫ-ši-ḫa-ši-*⌜*ḫa*⌝ for *sḫ-šʿ.t šʿ.wt*, which is the term "scribe" in Egyptian. This term is treated as a personal name, as it is fronted by a determinative: EA 316: 16-17 [*a-n*]*a* ˡ*ša-aḫ-ši-ḫa-ši-*⌜*ḫa*⌝ [EN-*ia*] / *um-ma* ˡ*Pu-*⌜d⌝⌜IŠKUR⌝ ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ ⌜2⌝ ⌜GÌR⌝.⌜MEŠ⌝-*ka* ⌜*am*⌝[-*qú-ut*] "[T]o the scribe of letters [of my lord], the message of Pu-Baʿlu: At your feet I have fallen." For a discussion see Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 348.

the MBA, needed to clarify the meaning of the verb *ḫašāšu* for the scribes working for Egypt. This gloss does not appear to be necessary to the translation of the letter, but served to underscore the final lines of this message and to reinforce the use of parallelism:

> EA 228: 17-25 [*a-n*]*a* ˹*šàr-ri* EN-*ia*/ [*ù*] *li-iḫ-šu-uš-*˹*mi*˺/˹\˺*ya-az-ku-ur-mi*/˹˺*šàr-ri* EN-*ia/mi-im-ma ša/ in*$_4$*-né- pu-uš-mi*/UGU URU *Ḫa-ṣú-ra*KI/URU.KI-*ka ù*/UGU ÌR-*ka*
> "Give thought, oh king, my lord, to what is being done to the city of Hazor, your city, [and] your servant."

This type of graphemic signaling transcended both the language of the original utterance and that in which it was translated serving as a comment on the metapragmatic framework of the text. Glosses were not merely pronunciation guides. They encoded additional information in the text that was not bound to the language on the tablet, but would still have informed its transmission. The forms *liḫsus* (an Akkadian 3ms precative) with *yazkur,* a Canaanite jussive 3ms, "may he remember" in EA 228 suggests that the scribes on the Egyptian end of the correspondence knew Canaanite or would have attributed special meaning to glossed lexemes. This does not mean, however, that the language of the written message was Canaanite.

The function of the glosses was not limited to translation but served to mark the text to guide the interpretation. For example, the scribe that wrote EA 287: 73 (˹*ú*˺-*ba-na la-a* GAZ \ *de*$_4$-˹*ka*˺-˹*ti*˺) glossed the Sumerogram GAZ with a Canaano-Akkadian verb. The gloss *de*$_4$-˹*ka*˺-˹*ti*˺ is patterned on the Akkadian verb *dâku* "to kill" but is presented as a 1cs suffixed form using the WS suffix –*ti*. Von Dassow's understanding presumes that the verb *de*4-˹*ka*˺-˹*ti*˺ is an

Akkadogram for another Canaanite verb. According to this view, the gloss comprises a logogram (Sumerogram) that is glossed with another logogram (an Akkadogram), which also is presumed to have had another underling verb in Canaanite.

This seems to be an overly complicated way to communicate. In the case of EA 228, if the language underlying the text was Canaanite, why take the trouble of offering a perfectly good MB form? Was the Canaanite scribes then merely showing off his Akkadian skills? Why would a Canaanite scribe writing on behalf of the ʿAbdi-Shullim of Hazor to the Pharaoh's court, a site with an extensive history of cuneiform scribalism, take the trouble to clarify a perfectly good Akkadian verb with its Canaanite equivalent? In the case of EA 287, why would the scribe gloss a logogram with yet another logogram? There appears to be more at stake as well in the use of glosses in the Jerusalem corpus than mere linguistic equivalences. In the above examples, the gloss is at a crucial part of the letter as appears to serve an emphatic function as well.

EA 136, a letter from Byblos, also features glosses that cannot be explained as simple Sumerian/ Akkadian> Canaanite equivalents:[956]

Table 44 The "Unnecessary" Glosses in EA 136

136: 3	SAḪAR: *e-pé-ri* "dust, dirt"	Equivalent Gloss
136: 28	DÙG.GA: TU.KA	Pronunciation Gloss[957]

[956] The examples listed include Gianto's assessment of these glosses ("Amarna Lexicography," 1995).

[957] This gloss is described as a syllabic spelling of the Sumerogram DÙG.GA. See Gianto, "Amarna Lexicography, 67; see also Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 217; cf. 5.

	"alliance of friendship"	
136: 18	LÚ.MEŠ UN: *ma-ṣa-ar-ta* "[Send me] garrison troops."[958]	Equivalent Gloss *Re-classified from Gianto's "Indeterminate Cases" category based upon Rainey's reading.

This one letter uses glosses in three different ways: to highlight the prostration formula, to mark the pronunciation of a logogram, and to clarify the type of envoy requested from Egypt.

This understanding of the glosses also best explains why they at times appear in the introduction of the letters, the very part of these letters that are couched in formulaic idioms that every cuneiform scribe, regardless of their training and/or linguistic background, would have been expected to know.[959] As Vita observes, some of the glosses are "unnecessary from a functional point of view," and are not lexical or structural and would have added little to the translation of these messages.[960] The glosses for "dust" in the introductions of the letters from Beirut (EA 136; 141; 143, Mušiḫuna (195), Yurza (316), and Aštartu (364) all appear to have another purpose in the context of

[958] This translation of EA 136 reflects that in Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (1); the older reading of this was BIL (for *ḫamātu* "hasten"), *ma-ṣa-ar-ta*, which is reflected in Moran's translation: "send *immediately* a garrison" (*The Amarna Letters*, 217; cf. 3). The term *maṣṣartu* is Akkadian (*CAD* M1, *maṣṣartu* 1b: 335), though root *nṣr* is common in WS (see *HALOT* 718; *CAD* M).

[959] For example: EA 141: 4-5 LÚ URU PÚ.ḪI.A ÌR-*ka ù* SAḪAR-*ra* \ *a-pa-ru ša* GÌR.MEŠ-*ka* "[the message] of ʿAmmunīra, the ruler of the city of Beirut, your servant, the dirt at your feet." The subsequent spelling in this letter shifts to *i-pí-ri* (e.g., line 12: *i-pí-ri ša* GÌR.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia*; line 17: *a-na* ÌR-*šu ù i-pí-ri ša* GÌR.MEŠ-*šu;* line 20 *i-pí-ri ša* GÌR.MEŠ-*šu*). See Gianto, "Amarna Lexicography," 68; cf. 20.

[960] See Vita, "On the Lexical Background of the Amarna Glosses," 279.

the introductions than that of mere lexical clarifiers.[961] As these forms are in the introduction of the letters, and it is unlikely that they are clarifying glosses.[962] Vita thus sees not relationship between the glosses in the above letters and a desire to disambiguate the text.[963]

For example, in the letters of ʻAmmunira of Beirut, the scribes gloss SAḪAR.RA "dust" in several ways: *a-pa-ru* (EA 141:4; 143:4) and *ḫa-pa-ru* (EA 143:11) and the Akkadian form *epiri*.[964] It is certain that the cuneiform scribes in Egypt would have understood SAḪAR.RA. It is not a rare logographic sequence and the expression "I have fallen/am falling into the dust" is a stock expression of deference. The practice of glossing SAḪAR.RA had little to do with translation, but was meant to influence the way in which this prostration formula was translated and/or acted out. Perhaps code-switching to Canaanite and marking the text with a *Glossenkeil* was a means of making the language of the introduction less formulaic, or meant to encourage the

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[961] In these letters, the term for "dust" is written in various ways as a gloss for SAḪAR.RA: EA 141 (4) *a-pa-ru;* 143:11 *ḫa-pa-ru;* 136: 3 *e-pé-ri*; EA 195:5 *ep-r*i; EA 316: 4 *ep-*[*r*]*i*; EA 364: 8 *a-pa-ru*. The Akkadian term is *eperu*; the WS form is **'aparu*. The forms *ḫa-pa-ru* and *a-pa-ru,* according the view the orthography reflects the pronunciation, would indicate that the underlying lexeme was the Canaanite form of this word. EA 136, 195, 316, and 364 omit the *auslaut* –RA. Ibid., 279.

[962] For instance, EA 143 uses the Sumerogram SAḪAR and does not provide a gloss, an indication that its meaning was understood; also, over 60 of the Canaanite letters use the term *eperu/'aparu* written syllabically without a gloss. Ibid., 279.

[963] As he writes, the gloss for IZI "fire" is also written in a variety of ways: Ḫazi: EA 185: 19, 32 IZI: *i-ša-ti*; Qades: EA 189: 12 ^{D}IZI^{MEŠ} *e-ša-te* (Note: this is ^{dI}ZI.MEŠ i_{15}-*ša-ti*$_{7}$ in Rainey's 2014 translation)*;* Amurru: Rs. 16.111:12 IZI *i-ša-ti;* Asheklon/Gaza: EA 306: 32 IZI^{MEŠ}: *i-ša-ti* He notes that this gloss does not seem to add anything to the meaning of the text. Other scribes omitted the Sumerogram and spelled "fire" syllabically (EA 55: 41; 151: 56; 174: 17; 363: 14) whereas other merely used IZI, including the scribes from Qatna (EA 53: 39) and Ḫazi (EA 186: 16, 31). See Vita, "On the Lexical Background of the Amarna Glosses," 281-282.

[964] These contexts call for a genitive, not a nominative case. Also as Gianto notes in EA 14: 12, 17, and 20, the scribe writes the proper genitive Akkadian form *epiri* in the actual body of the message ("Amarna Lexicography," 68).

Egyptian scribe to translate it in a more oral-poetic register of Egyptian. Again, the glosses in the introductions were not merely used to facilitate a word—for–word translation, but appear to have impacted the style of the delivery as well.

The glosses also served to frame reported speech in this corpus in a more "authentic" register, which was a strategy used to diffuse tensions by couching these letters in a more personable tenor of language. For example, the scribe of EA 147 introduced a Canaanite form as though a direct quote from the Pharaoh.

> EA 147: 35-40 *ša i-kà-ša-dá-ni e-nu-ma*/ *iq-bi* LUGAL *be-li-ia* \\ *ku-na*/ *a-na pa-ni* ÉRIN.MEŠ GAL *ù iq-bi*/ ÌR-*du a-na be-li-šu* \\ *ia-a-ia-ia*/ *a-na muḫ-ḫi ga-bi-dì-ia muḫ-ḫi* \\ *ṣú-ri*/ *ú-bal a-ma-ta*$_5$ LUGAL *be-li-ia*
> When the king, my lord said: "Be ready for the arrival of the great army," then the servant said: "Yea, yea, yea!" On my stomach and on my back I carry the word of the king, my lord.

Mabie views the glosses in EA 147: 35-38, as "direct speech" markers, however, the glosses appear to have a more complex function. They mark two lexemes that are "foreign" to Canaano-Akkadian and also serve as emphatics.[965] The first, *ku-na*, is from WS (**kwn*) and the second is from Egyptian *y3*. Also, the following line includes a gloss in WS (*ṣú-ri*). The code-switching and scribal marks in this passage highlight the "conversation" between the Pharaoh and Milkilu in such as way that suggests a more intimate relationship. The verb *ku-na* is not an authentic citation from an Egyptian letters, but rather a translation of a MB letter from the Pharaoh into the local language of the Tyrian court. The Egyptian letters constantly used the verb (Š) of *ešēru* in their letters to the Levant,

[965] Mabie, "Ancient Near Eastern Scribes," 179-182.

which would be the Akkadian equivalent to *ku-na.* Canaanite letters, too, are full of claims that the rulers have "heard" the message of the Pharaoh and are subsequently "preparing" using this same verbal stem. The form *ku-na* is not a genuine citation but is translation of *uššira* included here to enhance this section of the letter.[966] Rather than use the stock Akkadian verb, the scribe used a Canaanite imperative for emphasis. The use of gloss marks in the passage also creates a visual parallelism on the surface of the tablet. The direct speech and glosses are placed in succession as though a live "question and answer" session that reinforces the oral register of this exchange.

The scribe reframed this highly mediated interaction between Abimilku and the Pharaoh, who most likely never met face-to-face, as though an intimate conversation. The Pharaoh speaks in Canaanite and Abimilki responds in Egyptian. In both instances, the glosses are not a reflection of a change in the "real" language spoken by either Pharaoh or Abimilku. They are a scribal tool used to create dramatic tension, and perhaps even to indicate the way that this letter should be performed. As Liverani argued, the Pharaoh was not as invested in the petty concerns of his vassals as they would have wished. Such strategies were aimed at attracting the attention of the scribes and officials at the Pharaoh's court.[967]

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[966] EA 144: 19-21 *ù i-de/* LUGAL *i-nu-ma* ⌜*šu*⌝-*ši*$_x$(ŠE)-*ra-ku i-na/ pa-*⌜*ni*⌝ ⌜ÉRIN⌝.MEŠ *pí-ṭá-ti* LUGAL EN-*ia/ šu-*⌜*ši*$_x$⌝(⌜ŠE⌝)-*ra-ku gáb-ba ki-ma qa-bi* LUGAL "So may the king be apprised that I have prepared in anticipation of the regular troops of the king, my lord. I have prepared it all according to the command of the king, my lord."

[967] Mario Liverani, "A Seasonal Pattern for the Amarna Letters," In *Lingering over Words. Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*. Edited by Tzvi Abusch (Harvard Semitic Monographs 37; Atlanta: Scholars Press 1990) 337-348.

There is also the matter of the letters from Egypt that have the occasional "Canaanite" cuneiform form or gloss. They do not really support von Dassow's thesis that Canaanite was the *lingua franca* of the Egyptian empire. When the Egyptian scribes code-switch, they tend to use Canaano-Akkadian orthographies rather than pure Canaanite forms.[968] For example, EA 99:8, 367:4, and 370:5 make use of the 2ms Canaanite *qatal* as a past tense in the glossed expression: *ù uṣ-ṣur lu-ú na-ṣa-ra-ta*.[969]

> EA 99: 1-9 [*a-na* ˡX-X-*a*]*ṣ*-⌜*ma*⌝-⌜*a*⌝-⌜*nu*⌝/ [LÚ UR]U *Am-mi-ia*/ [*q*]*í-bí-ma u*[*m*]-*ma*/ LUGAL-*ma* ⌜*a*⌝-*nu-u*[*m-m*]*a*/ *ṭup-pa* ⌜*a*⌝-[*n*]*a*-⌜*a*⌝ *uš*!-*te-bi*!-*la-ku*/ *qá-bé-e* [*a-n*]*a k*[*a*]-*a-ša*/ ***ù uṣ-ṣu*[*r*] *lu-ú*/ *na-ṣa-ra-ta*** *aš-ru*/ LUGAL *ša it-ti-ka* [Sp]eak [to . . .a]ṣmānu, [the ruler of the ci]ty of ʿAmmiya: T[hu]s the king: T[hi]s tablet have I sent to you (to) speak to you, so guard! **Be on guard! May you be on guard** in the place of the king that is in your charge.
>
> EA 367: 1-5
> *a-na* ˡ*In-tar-ú-tá* LÚ URU *Ak-ša-pa*/ *qí-bí-ma um-ma* LUGAL-*ma*/ *a-nu-ma ṭup-pa an-na-a uš-te-bi-la-ku* ‹*a-na*› *qá-bé-e*/ *a-na ka-a-ša* ***ù uṣ-ṣur lu-ú na-ṣa-ra-ta***/ *aš-ru* LUGAL *ša it-ti-ka* Speak to Intaruta, the ruler of Achshaph; thus (spoke) the king: This tablet have I sent to you ‹to› say to you, "**Be on guard! May you be on guard** in the place of the king that is in your charge."
>
> EA 367: 11a-17 *a-wa-ta gáb-bá*/ *ša i-qáb-bá-ku ši-ma-aš-šu* SIG5-*iš dan-níš*/ *ù e-pu-uš* ⌜SIG5⌝-*iš dan-níš*/ *ù uṣ-ṣur* ⌜*uṣ*⌝-*ṣur la-a tá-mé-ek-ki*/ *ù uṣ-ṣur* ⌜*uṣ*⌝-*ṣur la-a tá-mé-ek-ki*/ ***ù lu-ú šu-šu-ra-tá*** *a-na pa-ni*/ ÉRIN.MEŠ *pí-ṭa-ti* LUGAL NINDA *ma-a-ad*/ GEŠTIN *gáb-bu mi-im-ma ma-a-*⌜*ad*⌝ "Every word that he says to you, heed it most diligently and

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[968] It is unlikely that the Canaanism in EA 147 (*ku-na*) is an authentic citation from an Egyptian-Akkadian letter. Of the Canaanite terms in EA 369, *malbašu* may be a technical term for a specific type of garment, whereas *yi-ta-din* "he gave" vs. Akkadian *ittadin*, appears to be a Canaano-Akkadian orthography. In both cases, the precise dialect of these lexemes is unclear; all that is known is that they were not considered to be MB, and were identified with the scribes of Canaan.

[969] I have standardized the translations here that are offered in Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* (1), 2014 and added EA 367: 14-15 as a point of comparison as it uses a similar, though not identical expression.

carry out most diligently. And guard! Be on guard! Do not be slack and **be on guard**! **May you be on guard** before the arrival of the king's regular troops, the bread being abundant, the wine (and) every supply being abundant."

EA 370: 1-6 *a-na* ˹*I-dì-ia* LÚ URU *Aš-qá-lu-*⌜*na*⌝⌜KI⌝/ *qí-bí-ma um-ma* LUGAL-*ma a-nu-*⌜*ma*⌝/ *ṭup-pa an-na-a uš-te-bi-la-ku ‹a-na›*/ *qá-bé-e a-na ka-a-ša ù* ⌜*uṣ*⌝-⌜*ṣur*⌝/ *lu-ú na-ṣa-ra-ta aš-ru* LUGAL/ *ša it-ti-ka* "To (Y)idia, ruler of the city of Ashkelon, speak: Thus (says) the king: Now this tablet have I sent to you ‹to› say, "**Guard, may you be on guard** in the place of the king that is in your charge."

The expression *ù* ⌜*uṣ*⌝-⌜*ṣur*⌝ *lu-ú na-ṣa-ra-ta* appears in three of the letters from Egyptian, which suggests that it was a stock expression.[970] EA 122, a letter from Byblos, cites this exact phrase and may be a more authentic citation of an Egyptian letter than that in EA 147.[971] The presence of the Canaano-Akkadian form *na-ṣa-ra-ta* does not indicate that an Egyptian scribe shifted in speech from a MB to a Canaano-Akkadian form. Rather, the combination of two juxtaposed verbs (in Akkadian and Canaano-Akkadian) from this verbal root functioned as an emphatic.[972]

There was also a layer of WS influence than can be seen in the deeper structures embedded in Egyptian-Akkadian, such as Canaanite influence on the Egyptian letters at the syntactical level (e.g.,

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[970] The form *uṣṣur* is a 2ms imperative from the root *naṣāru*; the form *naṣarāta* is a 2ms suffixed form. In Akkadian this is formally a stative, though one would expect the elision of the –*a*-: *naṣrata*. In WS, the suffix form becomes increasingly used as a finite verb to refer to a past or completed event. Here, however, the verb *naṣarāta* appears to have a jussive meaning and is combine with the particle *lū*.

[971] EA 112: 7-13 [*am*]-*qú-ut a-na mi-ni yi-iš-*⌜*ta*⌝-*pa-ru*/ [*š*]*ar-ru* EN-*li a-na ia-ši*/ *ú-ṣur-mi lu-ù na-ṣir-ta*/ *iš-tu ma-an-ni i-na-ṣa-ru-na*/ *iš-tu na-ak-ri-ia*/ *ù iš-tu* LÚ.MEŠ *ḫu-up-ši-ia*/ *mi-nu yi-na-ṣí-ra-an-ni* "Why does the [ki]ng, my lord, write to me: "Guard! May you be on guard!" From whom should I guard, from my enemies? And from my own yeomen farmers what (who) will protect me?"

[972] For this reason, Cochavi-Rainey suggests that it is may be a hybrid form whereby the scribes "intended to use the infinitive to strengthen the imperative but then added the second person suffixes." Such usage of an imperative followed by an infinitive absolute from the same verbal root occurs in biblical Hebrew for example (e.g., Judge 4:23; Is 6:9; 55:2; Jer 22:10; Job 13:17; 21:2; 37:2). See Cochavi-Rainey, *The Akkadian Dialect of Egyptian Scribes*, 94.

the use of *u* as a conjunction as in the Canaano-Akkadian letters).[973] Such features were not merely "scribal" but a reflection of sustained contact between the speech communities over millennia. This deeper layer of influence was not as marked in the text as interference at a lexical level (in particular those with explicit Canaano-Akkadian orthographies or marked by glosses); consequently, they would have had less of an impact on the translation of these letters. The more surface level interference, on the other hand were the product of direct scribal contact (i.e., the influence of learned orthographies used by Canaanite scribes). The Egyptians clearly had the upper hand in these exchanges, and only used such Canaanite/Canaano-Akkadian spellings sporadically for stylistic purposes—it is very unlikely that they considered themselves to be writing in Canaanite.

J. P. Vita's study of the Canaanite glosses provides a fresh perspective that prioritizes function over form. He understands such glosses as a part of a conversation between the scribes mediating between Egypt and the Levant. Vita further proposes that such glosses are most likely derived from the lexical lists used cuneiform training, and served as a showing off of sorts of their scribal education.[974] As he writes, "their *raison d'être* is of a more symbolic nature. An explanation can perhaps be sought in the training of the scribes, in the sense that these glosses could somehow directly reflect elements from the lexicographical education of the scribes."[975] Such "symbolic" use of

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[973] For a discussion of Canaanite features in Egyptian Akkadian see Cochavi- Rainey, "Canaanite Influence in the Akkadian Texts written by Egyptian Scribes," 39-46; focus on 44-46.

[974] Vita, "On the Lexical Background of the Amarna Glosses," 284.

[975] Ibid., 279-281.

glosses was perhaps part of an intellectual game used by scribes to demonstrate their skill set, one that enabled scribes to personalize their work and cultivate relationships with the scribes at the other end of this chain of communication.[976]

D. Conclusions

In conclusion, it appears that the texts from the southern Levant used glosses primarily for lexical clarification and for structurally purposes. However, in some cases, in particular in the letters from Jerusalem, the glosses add additional nuance to the text. Also, the distribution of scribal markers suggests a correlation between a more sophisticated use of gloss marks (i.e., for emphasis) and the more developed scribal schools, in particular, Tyre and Jerusalem. The polities that use the gloss mark structurally as "overflow markers" are also those from larger centers.[977] This suggests that the scribes working at and/or interfacing with the Egyptian garrisons in Canaan had a more developed scribal training.

Glosses and *Glossenkeilen* often complemented the code-switching in the text, many of which occurred in contexts of direct speech. These strategies served to visually demarcate the text and provided commentary that was metapragmatic. That is, it served as a nuanced guide to the translation and performance of these letters. These scribal strategies are best understood as a part of the overall

[976] For example, the scribe writing EA 185 uses the gloss IZI: *i-ša-ti* ("fire") in lines 19 and 32 but writes this term fully without the gloss in lines 24, 39, and 60. See Ibid., 282-283.

[977] This includes Byblos (EA 89; 91; 116; 123), Beirut (EA 137), Sidon (EA 144), Tyre (EA 155), Akko (EA 234), Megiddo (EA 244; 245; 365), Jerusalem, and Gath, and a lone letter from Bayadi, a ruler in the southern coast (EA 238), and a letter from a southern Canaanite ruler that was sent from Beth-Shean (EA 263).

scribal code used by scribes working as intermediaries between polities in the Levant and Egypt. When the glosses highlight direct or reported speech, the shifts from Canaano-Akkadian into Canaanite or Egyptian were not an indication of what was actually spoken, but served to animate the letter and demarcate a transition to a more "oral" register of language for dramatic purposes. Overall, the use of scribal marks and glosses contributed an additional layer of meaning to the text that was key its interpretation. They ensured that the scribes at Tell el-'Amarna would give special attention to the passages that warranted careful translation. Overall, such marks and the use of code-switching functioned in a way akin to the paralinguistic strategies of verbal communication mentioned early in this chapter. That is, they were at times non-linguistic, and yet central to communication. Also, such strategies were aimed at ensuring a favorable response from the Egyptian court.

CHAPTER NINE

Cuneiform and the WS Scripts in Egypt's Eastern Empire

I. Introduction

The emergence of Canaano-Akkadian in the southern Levant as a cohesive scribal system is best understood within the socio-political backdrop of Egypt's control of this region. The following examines the different roles that cuneiform and the Egyptian and WS scripts played in the southern Levant. Such a sociolinguistic approach elucidates how Canaano-Akkadian served as a written code used by non-Egyptian scribes to communicate with Egypt in its eastern empire. The "birth" and "death" of this scribal system were intrinsically bound to Egypt's military and administrative presence in the Levant.

A. "West Semitic" Writing in the Second Millennium B.C.E.

A closer examination of the different roles of the alphabetic and cuneiform scripts from the second millennium B.C.E. elucidates the role that Canaano-Akkadian had as a scribal code used in diplomacy with Egypt. The main branches of writing that were used in the WS speaking world, cuneiform and alphabetic writing, served dramatically different socio-political functions. Mesopotamian cuneiform was relegated to communication with outsiders, whereas the alphabetic scripts were used for inter-group writings.

The cuneiform produced in the Levant during the LBA can be divided into two main groups: 1) Mesopotamian cuneiform, of which Canaano-Akkadian was limited to areas controlled by Egypt and

MB was used in the northern Levant. Both of these traditions had their origins in MBA scribalism, though they evolved in radically different ways. The southern tradition was more conservative in some respects and preserved OB orthographies. It was, however, more innovative in other respects as it included local innovations that distinguished it from the Akkadian produced in the rest of the Periphery. 2) Alphabetic cuneiform was used mainly in the northern Levant in and around the city of Ugarit, though there are a handful of texts in the southern Levant in this script.

The difference in cuneiform and alphabetic scribal culture in the northern and southern Levant was geo-politically determined and the product of three main factors: 1) There was a hiatus in contact between the Syrian and Canaanite scribal centers at the end of the MBA. This had the effect of culturally isolating scribes in the southern Levant and resulted in the innovative, "mixed" WS and OB orthographies that characterize Canaano-Akkadian. Scribes working the northern Levant, on the other hand, updated their syllabaries to MB. 2) Egypt's heightened presence in the southern Levant catalyzed the relative standardization of Canaano-Akkadian and its adoption along the boundaries of Egypt's eastern territories. It thus evolved into *the* Canaanite cuneiform system of this period. 3) Egypt only used cuneiform for international matters, whereas the main political powers in the north (the emergent Hittite empire, the Mittani, and the Syrian kingdoms of the LBA) fully adopted cuneiform. Also, the scribal schools in the south only used this script in a limited capacity (mainly in communication with Egypt). As a result, the independent polities interacting with these northern powers, such as the rulers in the Beqa or of Amurru, were more immersed in cuneiform culture and had (by necessity) a more developed up-to-date scribal apparatus. The scribal schools of the southern

Levant and the southern Lebanese coast, on the other hand, dealt with Egypt, which had its own writing system and was less influenced by cuneiform culture. They were thus less immersed in contemporary cuneiform culture and retained archaic spellings as there was no need or cohesive effort to update their syllabaries to MB.

The cut off point between these two branches of cuneiform appears to be the buffer zone between Egypt and Hatti.[978] This scribal divide, however, also impacted the development of alphabetic technology in the Levant. During the LBA, two main alphabetic traditions co-existed: 1) the Proto-Canaanite and/or linear WS script in the southern Levant by the mid-16th century B.C.E., and 2) the cuneiform alphabet by the 14th century B.C.E. This script, referred to as "Ugaritic," is attested as a fully-fledged system in texts dating to the 13th century B.C.E.

To date, there is insufficient evidence that the alphabetic cuneiform script was widely adopted in the southern Levant. The overwhelming majority of alphabetic cuneiform texts are from the kingdom of Ugarit, where it was used for administrative and religious texts. Ugarit was a cosmopolitan urban center at the political and cultural crossroads of the Syria, Anatolia, Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean. Scribal culture at Ugarit was based in cuneiform writing, which may be why local scribes preferred a cuneiform rather than a linear alphabetic script. Scribes working for the kingdom of Ugarit thus used two cuneiform scripts, though for quite different purposes:

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[978] As discussed, Amurru falls into this transitional zone. The orthography of the Amurru Amarna Letters shifts away from "Canaano-Akkadian" to MB during the reign of Aziru, when this region allies itself with the Hittites against Egypt. See Finley, *Word* Order, 114-116.

Mesopotamian cuneiform was used for diplomacy and legal matters, whereas the alphabetic cuneiform script was used for local epistles, administration, and literature.[979]

The southern alphabetic script and/or Proto-Canaanite script, which is attested in the south is not evidenced at Ugarit. The southern alphabetic script was an ink-based, linear script and was more directly based on the type of early alphabetic writings attested at Wadi el-Hol and Serrabit el-Khadem. This early WS script was inspired by Egyptian scribal technology. By the same token, it does not appear that the northern alphabetic script was successful in the south, as the handful of alphabetic cuneiform texts from this region are limited to abecedaries and inscribed objects, i.e., to small, portable inscriptions.

Currently, there is no evidence that the institutions in the southern Levant adopted either alphabetic scripts during the LBA. The linear script, in particular, was unstandardized during this period and only appears on small, personal objects.[980] The scribes at Ugarit, on the other hand, fully embraced the basic principles of alphabetic writing and used their clay-based, cuneiform alphabetic

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[979] Dietrich and Loretz argue that the Canaanites migrated to the northern Levant and brought their alphabetic writing system with them. They subsequently founded a ruling dynasty at Ugarit that was founded on a trade economy. They incorporated their own writing system into the existing scribal apparatus and as a result the cuneiform alphabet was born. They propose that until the 14th century, Ugarit was first an alphabetic culture that later adopted cuneiform culture. Ugaritic was used for internal administration serving as a badge of identity and a symbol of the kingdom's WS culture, whereas Akkadian was retained for international matters. See Manfried Dietreich and Oswald Loretz. *Ugarit: Ein Ostmediterranes Kulturzentrum im alten Orient. Münster* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995); see also Manfried Dietrich, "Aspects of the Babylonian Impact on Ugaritic Literature and Religion," in *Ugarit, religion and culture*. Edited by N. Wyatt, W.G.E. Watson, and J.B. Lloyd (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 33-47.

[980] For a list of the Proto-Canaanite and early inscriptions found along the Phoenician littoral see Benjamin Sass, *The Genesis of the Alphabet and its Development in the Second Millennium B.C.* (New York: Wiesbaden, 1988), Table 2; for the alphabetic cuneiform texts from the southern Levant see Horowitz et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan*, 157-166.

script for economic, state, and religious matters and for more personal texts such as letters, inscribed objects and ritual and literary texts.[981] For this reason, Sanders credits alphabetic cuneiform as the first successful WS writing system, and Ugaritic as the first "vernacular" writing intended for a local audience.[982] Although there is no direct evidence that this script was created at this site, there is a preponderance of indirect evidence that Ugarit was the main locus of this writing system, if not the site where its was first developed.[983] The small corpus of alphabetic cuneiform texts in Canaan suggests that the cuneiform alphabet may also have been used along the Levantine coast as an interregional writing system between WS polities.[984] Ryan Byrne is slightly more cautious with the

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[981] To an untrained eye, alphabetic cuneiform is at the end of the day, cuneiform—as W. M. Schniedewind suggests, its resemblance to Akkadian (the prestige system of the LBA) was most likely a factor in its development (personal communication).

[982] Sanders writes, "The early alphabet was not universalizing [contrary to what many claim about alphabetic technology!], but particularizing—precisely the opposite from what we would expect from the conventional story of the alphabet. It would have been difficult, even impossible, to use this alphabet anywhere but home," Ibid., 56.

[983] The earliest systematized use of an alphabetic system for administration is actually found outside of the southern Levant at the northern coastal site of Ugarit and smaller sites in its immediate vicinity (e.g., Ras Ibi Hani). The vast majority of cuneiform alphabetic texts are from Ugarit; the longer version of this script, which includes three aleph signs, appears to have been developed for the local WS dialect. Also, this script disappears when the kingdom of Ugarit is destroyed.

[984] As Schniedewind et al. write, "It probably was not developed merely to encode the colloquial dialect of Ugarit, but also to serve as a regional diplomatic language in the Levant…Ugarit probably served as a regional center for training scribes; therefore, we might expect that scribal standards were developed at Ugarit" (*A Primer on Ugaritic: Language, Culture, and Literature* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 21). It seems likely that variants of the cuneiform alphabetic script were used regionally (most likely as a means of communication with northern WS speaking groups). The evidence of the use of this script from the southern Levant, however, is too small and too simple a corpus to argue that this script was widely used by local polities. It occurs on small objects and abecedaries, i.e., portable objects that may have had a magical and/or scholastic function. Some evidence includes *KTU* 2.38, an alphabetic cuneiform letter (or perhaps a copy) from the king of Tyre to the King of Ugarit, and several short alphabetic cuneiform texts from the southern Levant, including an abecedary from Beth Shemesh. See Wayne Horowitz, Takayoshi Oshima, and Seth L. Sanders, "A Bibliographical List of Cuneiform Inscriptions from Canaan, Palestine/Philistia, and the Land of Israel," *JAOS* 122: 2 (2002), 756.

alphabetic cuneiform evidence outside of Ugarit, which "*might*" be evidence for either Ugaritic scribes traveling outside of their region or for the use of this system outside of Ugarit.[985]

The epigraphic evidence attests to a several alphabetic scripts operating in the Levant during this period with relative degrees of standardization and success. Alphabetic cuneiform was not limited to Ugarit and it was used for other WS dialects. The few attestations of alphabetic cuneiform in the southern Levant deviate in order, sign repertoire, and in "linguistic makeup" from that employed at Ugarit; also, there were a range of signs that were used to represent different phonemes in diverse WS dialects.[986] The majority of alphabetic cuneiform were based on the Ugaritic script, which suggests that the alternative scripts and/or signs were not as successful. It is no surprise that the only standardized alphabet was the one that benefited from the political and economic stability provided by the kingdom of Ugarit, whereas the south, where the alphabet was not yet standardized, was plagued by political turbulence throughout the LBA.[987]

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[985] Ryan Byrne is slightly more cautious with the alphabetic cuneiform evidence outside of Ugarit, which "*might*" be evidence for either Ugaritic scribes traveling outside their region or for the use of this system outside of Ugarit. Moreover, he posits "both possibilities *might* presume, moreover, the anterior mobility of palace scribes in order to facilitate "first contact" with the Ugaritic writing system." He considers the variation in the southern alphabetic cuneiform corpus, which though small (the Beth Sehemesh abecedary, the Tabor knife, and Taanach 15) indicates that there was no true standard "to which these substrations cleave." He views these texts as evidence that this script was prestigious and that there were "manifold curricula" that extended to the lower-Galilee, the central highlands, and the Shephelah, though he concludes that there is insufficient evidence "to see any regional scribal integration beyond local prestige or the ad hoc" ("The Refuge of Scribalism in Iron I Palestine," *BASOR* 345 [2007], 12).

[986] Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*," 55-57.

[987] Use of this unique, local script at Ugarit for internal administration does not appear to have threatened the larger powers of this period. Ugarit was distant enough from Egypt and Hatti to be able to develop its own script, as opposed to its southern neighbors whose administrative endeavors were under direct Egyptian supervision. When Ugarit fell under Hittite control, it also does not appear as though the Hittites felt threatened by the use of a local script. As Astour points out, it is quite interesting that the scribes at Ugarit do not seem very interested in the Hittite language, as

In the southern Levant, the extensive administrative, palace, and personal archives, which have been discovered at Ugarit, have yet to be uncovered. Yet, the range of scribal traditions and scripts (i.e., the Proto-Canaanite script in the south and the short and longer cuneiform alphabets in the north) attest to competition between multiple alphabetic traditions during this period and what Sanders describes as a growing interest in capturing local vernaculars in writing. This trend comes to fruition in the Iron Age, which witnesses the rise of the first "vernacular" literatures.[988] In the LBA, alphabetic writing (in both the cuneiform and linear scripts) is only attested on small, prestige goods where it appears to have had a symbolic and perhaps ritual function as performative writing.[989] The act of writing in this script was understood to add to an object's value or power (e.g., the Tabor Knife inscription is a ceremonial object inscribed with a short cuneiform alphabetic inscription).[990]

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attested by the paucity of Hittite texts at Ras Shamra. He somewhat exaggerates the non-presence of Hittite texts, but overall the sprit of his point is well taken. Rather, they use Akkadian as their external language and their own local alphabetic cuneiform script for internal matters Michael Astour, "Ugarit and the Great Powers," in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*. Edited by Gordon D. Young. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 23.

[988] For a discussion of this phenomenon see Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*.

[989] Interestingly enough, writing does not appear to have been a part of Canaanite funerary rites during this period, as opposed to Egypt, where writing was quite central. In the Iron Age, much of the smaller inscriptions in this region appear in funerary contexts (e.g., Khirbet el-Qom and Silwan etc.), which suggests that there was a dramatic shift in the role of writing in ritual practice related to the more widespread use of local alphabetic scripts. The inscribed goods in non-Egyptian funerary contexts in Canaan are not true "funerary" inscriptions, but rather just inscribed objects re-purposed for burial (e.g., scarabs or other amulets). See Rachael T. Sparks, "Re-writing the Script: Decoding the textual experience in the Bronze Age Levant (*c*.2000–1150 bc)," In *Writing as Material Practice: Substance, Surface and Medium*. Edited by K. E. Piquette and R. D. Whitehouse, (London: Ubiquity Press, 2013), 86-88. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/bai.e.

[990] This and the other objects inscribed in this script are often grouped together into a "non-canonical" category of alphabetic cuneiform texts. This category is quite problematic as it assumes that the script at Ugarit was a regional standard to which all cuneiform alphabetic texts should be compared (and in this case found lacking), whereas this script may be the product of another scribal tradition, just one not as well-preserved in the material record. Or, it may reflect the use of this script for diverse WS dialects (e.g., as a script used to write the predecessor to Iron Age Phoenician, as in the case of the Sarepta inscription). For a discussion see Seth Sanders, "Alphabetic Cuneiform Texts," in Wayne Horowitz,

Unlike in Ugarit, there is no evidence that either the cuneiform or linear alphabetic script was standardized in the southern Levant during the LBA. This was a product of the socio-political role of writing. In Canaan, it appears that Egypt's preference for Canaano-Akkadian as a medium of communication, as opposed to a WS script, created a cuneiform scribal monopoly. That is, there was a digraphic situation whereby the "local" scripts (i.e., the linear and cuneiform alphabets) were only used in non-institutional settings, whereas Canaano-Akkadian, the one standardized scribal system, was that harnessed for regional administration in dealings with Egypt.

Egypt's presence in this region had a huge impact on the role of writing in Canaan during the LBA. Canaanite scribes used a lesser prestige cuneiform scribal system. They were not encouraged to use the Egyptian writing system for dealings with Egypt. They also did not use the available alphabetic scripts for institutional and diplomatic matters. Rather, the scribes working for the local courts were trained exclusively in Canaano-Akkadian, a scribal system whose *raison d'être* was to further Egypt's economic and military agenda in the region. The written evidence aligns with the fragmented political map of the period. That is to say, Egypt was the only regional entity sufficiently puissant to standardize a script in the southern Levant. However, Egypt was not invested in developing the WS alphabetic scripts, but instead harnessed Canaanite cuneiform as its administrative tool in the east.

Takayoshi Oshima, and Seth L. Sanders, *Cuneiform in Canaan: Cuneiform Sources from the Land of Israel in Ancient Times* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2006), 163-166; for the "non-canonical" alphabetic cuneiform texts and the use of this script for diverse WS dialects see Pierre Bordreuil, "L'inscription Phénicienne de Sarafand en Cuneiforms Alphabétiqes," *UF* 11(1979), 63-68; "Cunéiformes alphabétiques non canoniques I: La Tablette Alphabétiques Senestroverse RS 22.03," *Syria* 58 (1981), 301-310; "Cunéiformes Alphabétiques Non Canoniques II: A Propos de L'epigraphe de Hala Sultan Tekké," *Semitica* 33(1983), 7-15; also Edward Greenstein, "A Phoenician Inscription in Ugaritic Script?" *JANES* 8 (1976), 49-57. For a sociolinguistic discussion of the use of the cuneiform alphabet at Ugarit and in the southern Levant see Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 50-61.

The survival of the linear alphabet into the Iron I indicates that were groups in the southern Levant interesting in sustaining and developing this scripts for their own means. Yet, in the second millennium B.C.E., no local power was able to develop it to the degree that it was standardized in the north.[991] The distinction between the evolution of the northern and southern alphabetic scripts correlates with the borders of Egypt's geo-political influence in the Levant. Ugarit was subject to the whims of Egypt (even during its alignment with Hatti), its scribal traditions, however, were culturally oriented east toward Syria and Anatolia.[992] In the south, cuneiform scribes were much more isolated and interacted mainly with the Egyptian administrative system. They used a local cuneiform system to correspond with Egypt and in some cases, composed Canaano-Akkadian texts at Egyptian centers in the Levant. The chronology of Canaano-Akkadian and its distribution point to Egypt as the force orchestrating the training of scribes in this system and standardizing its use throughout this region.

The development of the WS alphabet, too, was very much impacted by Egyptian scribal traditions and technology—Egypt was after all the prestige culture in the south. The scribes and/or

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[991] Only in the 11th century, when this script is adopted along the Lebanese coast by the emergent "Phoenician" city states does it stabilize into a cohesive, standardized writing system. These coastal city-states catalyzed a new high prestige script––the linear alphabet became a symbol of power in a new political area. This script appears on monumental inscriptions, which served to display the pomp of local polities and rulers that arose out of the ashes of the LBA. In the Iron Age, the Phoenician script becomes central in trade, serving as a contact script between the diverse polities of the Levant and eventually the eastern Mediterranean. It is adopted into the Aramaic speaking world, and eventually becomes co-opted by successive eastern powers (the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian empires).

[992] Van Soldt argues that Akkadian was not actually spoken at Ugarit, but was only a written language; he proposes that scribes brought in as instructors from Syria, Hatussa, and Mittani. He attributes many of the "mistakes" in the Akkadian at Ugarit to the diverse Akkadian scribal traditions at the site ("The Akkadian of Ugarit: The Lexicographical Aspect," *SEL* 12 [1995], 205-206). For a discussion of the Egyptian inscriptions at Ugarit, see D. Pardee, "Ugarit Inscriptions," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East, Vol. 5*. Edited by Eric M. Meyers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 264-266.

innovators of the linear script used technologies derived from the Egyptian scripts, and in all likelihood, pedagogical techniques evolved from Egyptian scribal training.[993] Once this script spread, it adhered to the technological characteristics of Egyptian writing. Scribes in the southern Levant were trained in clay and stylus writing (i.e., cuneiform technology). Yet, their own alphabetic script remained an ink-based system, and as the evolution of the letters suggests, was written on papyri and other perishable materials as opposed to clay.[994]

B. A Closer Look at Egyptian Language and Script Ideologies Through the Evolution of the WS Alphabet

There is no explicit discussion of the written language used by Canaanite polities, however, there is some indication of Egyptian linguistic ideologies and their views about their eastern neighbors. Papyrus Anastasi I, "The Craft of a Scribe," a satirical letter dating to the reign of Ramses II, offers the best insight into the lives of the Egyptian officials working in the Levant. This text provides a detailed account of the duties of a *mahir*, a WS term for an officer responsible for reconnaissance and logistics.[995] Such military scribes were responsible for running Egyptian operations as well as acting as intermediaries between local leaders and the Egyptian throne. This text employs group writing to transcribe numerous NWS loan words, cleverly weaving local idioms and terminology into an

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[993] For a discussion of the impact of Egyptian scribal traditions into the Iron Age see Alan R. Millard, "The Knowledge of Writing in Late Bronze Age Palestine," in *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm — Proceedings of the 42th RAI*, Edited by K. van Lerberghe and G. Voet (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 317-326.

[994] William A. Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew* (New Haven: Yale, 2013).

[995] For a discussion of this position see Anson. F. Rainey, "The Soldier Scribe in Papyrus Anastasi I," *JNES* 26 (1967), 58-60.

Egyptian text.[996] The author of this work clearly had a well-developed knowledge of the region, its people, and the local languages, yet it is clear from the tenor of the comments that he considered the inhabitants of the east to be foreign and lesser than Egyptians.

Egyptian language ideologies are important to understanding why it was that the Egyptians themselves not use their writing system alphabetically, or, why it was that Canaano-Akkadian, and not Egyptian, was the written language of Egypt's empire in the east. Why, for example, did Canaanite polities take the trouble of having letters written in Akkadian at Egyptian centers, where there were presumably Egyptian scribes? The Egyptian writing system remained "the privilege of an elite group" and a "theocratic script," one that fostered a conservative and secretive scribal culture. [997] As Coulmas writes,

> Naturally this group, the clerks and priests of the royal household of the pharaoh, had no desire to endanger their status…It was in the best interest of those few to guard their privilege and make sure that writing was complicated and not readily available for everybody … Indirectly the social privilege of writing may well have contributed to the stability and conservatism of the Egyptian script whose development stopped short of the alphabet.[998]

Though this somewhat subversive (and Machiavellian) portrayal of Egyptian scribes is somewhat overstated, it is a truism that the Egyptian script was out of reach for most Egyptians and most certainly for the majority of foreigners working and/or living in Egypt.

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[996] See James P. Allen, "The Craft of the Scribe," in *The Context of Scripture*. Edited by William Hallo. 3.2 (Brill: Boston, 2003), 9-14; Thomas Schnieder, "Fremdwörter in der ägyptischen Militärsprache des Neuen Reiches und ein Bravourstück des Elitesoldaten (Pap. Anastasi I 23, 2-7)," *SSEA* 35 (2008), 181–205.

[997] For example, the Egyptian scripts retained about 500 logographic signs (which he terms pleremic), rather than simplified this system to make it more accessible. See Coulmas, *The Writing Systems of the World*, 70.

[998] Coulmas, *Writing Systems,* 70.

John Baines takes a more balanced view and characterizes the development of Egyptian writing as the product of a uniquely Egyptian *Weltanschauung*. Scripts and writing systems were a way of ordering and classifying the universe. The reluctance and/or lack of interest in spreading Egyptian writing was a reflection of Egyptian language ideologies. As he writes,

> Since decorum and writing define 'history,' reflect state formation, and constitute the Egyptian presentation of the ordered world, writing acquired great prestige in relation to the county and its boundaries. No explicit comment on such matters is presented, yet it is clear that Egypt, the largest centralized state of its time, was set off from its neighbors by its writing. The less powerful, closer neighbors were not literate, and powerful but distant states used a different script.[999]

It is no wonder that the Egyptian script (unlike cuneiform or even alphabetic writing) was not adopted by outside groups for writing their own languages, or for that matter, that Egypt's vassals in the east were not encouraged to adopt the Egyptian writing system.[1000]

Megiddo 5, a jar stopper inscribed with both a cuneiform and hieroglyphic inscription presents an interesting example of how these two administrative systems coexisted during this period.[1001] This object reads:

1. ^{m}*al-tu-un-šu*	PN
2. BANEŠ	keg

[999] John Baines, "Literacy and Ancient Egyptian Society," *Man* 18: 3 (1983), 576.

[1000] Only in the 3rd century B.C.E. are some signs used in the Meroitic alphabet. See Peter L. Shinnie, *Meroe: a Civilization of the Sudan* (*Ancient Peoples and Places*) (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 132-140; also see Reinhard G. Lehman, "27-30-22-26-How Manny Letters Needs an Alphabet?" in *The Idea of Writing: Writing Across Borders*. Edited by Alexander J. Voogt and Joachim F. Quack (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 44-47.

[1001] Horrowitz et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan*, 107-108.

This bottle stopper also contains an Egyptian hieroglyph on top (the most visible part) that was for used for classification. The cuneiform inscription on the lower half identifies the recipient in syllabic cuneiform (*^{m}al-tu-un-šu*) and the vessel's capacity using the Sumerogram BANEŠ "ca. 25 liters." This bottle stopper contains an Egyptian hieroglyph that was used for classification. In other words, it was marked in Egyptian on the upright part of the stopper that would be the most visible. The cuneiform inscription is on the lower half, which would have been much more masked, in particular, when the stopper was in use. The intersection of these two writing systems on this artifact attests to the symbiotic, yet separate nature of the scribal systems used by Egyptian and Canaanite administrators. Cuneiform was used by Canaanites and in Egypt's letters to Canaan; Egyptian, on the other hand, appears to have been more restricted in use to the operations in the Levant that were conducted by Egyptian officials.

Although much about the origins of Canaanite alphabetic writing is still quite murky, there is a general consensus that West Semitic speaking scribes developed a nascent script, one first attested in Egypt sometime in the first half of the second millennium B.C.E.[1002] One view is that the alphabet

[1002] The degree to which the inventors of the alphabet were literate or trained in Egyptian writing is debated. Darnell cites lapidary hieratic as the basis for the Wadi el-Hol inscriptions, and hieroglyphic writing for the Serabit el-Khadem corpus. He argues that the Wadi el-Hol graffiti date to the 18th century B.C.E., and thus predate the Serabit el-Khadem texts by about 300 years. Sass, on the other hand, argues that a "paleographic standstill" of 500 years between these early inscriptions and the more developed linear and cuneiform alphabets that surface in the Levant by the 13th century B.C.E. is untenable. Accordingly, he has re-dated the Wadi el-Hol and Serabit el-Khadem texts to the 14th century B.C.E., which closes this gap to a period of about 100 years. See Benjamin Sass, *The Genesis of the Alphabet*; Ibid., "The Genesis of the Alphabet and its Development in the Second Millennium B.C. Twenty Years Later," *KBN* 2 (2004), 147-166; Ibid., *The Alphabet At the Turn of the Millennium: The West Semitic Alphabet ca. 1150 - 850 B.C.E.: The Antiquity of the Arabian, Greek and Phrygian Alphabets.* Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, Occasional Publications 4 (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2005); Ibid., "Wadi el-Hol and the Alphabet," In *D'Ougarit à Jérusalem: Recueil d'études épigraphiques et archéologiques offerts à Pierre Bordreuil*. Edited by Carole

was developed by non-literate WS speakers who worked on the margins of Egyptian society.[1003] This group is seen as working in a predominantly manual, as opposed to an administrative capacity. Accordingly, these individuals are understood to have had an extremely limited grasp and/or access to Egyptian writing. Other scholars view the alphabet as ultimately being a learned, scribal product that required a substantial knowledge of the Egyptian writing system.

Orly Goldwasser first attributed the alphabet to WS miners and laborers working in Egypt, who only accessed the Egyptian script at the "iconic level." In other words, a main pillar of her thesis is that "the inventors were *illiterate* and *did not know to read of write Egyptian.*"[1004] She proposes that it was exactly this detachment from Egyptian writing that enabled this group to derive the early letterforms from Egyptian signs. According to her argument, they were not intellectually bound by the rules of written Egyptian and were thus free to innovate their own writing system. Their illiteracy was the catalyst that "pushed them to formulate new relations of sound and icon," i.e., to develop the acrophonic principle. Among her arguments for the "illiteracy hypothesis," she includes the fact that the early texts do not conform to the Egyptian conventions regarding the direction of writing and

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Roche (Paris: De Boccard, 2008), 193–203; John C. Darnell and C. Dobbs-Allsopp et al. *Two Early Alphabetic Inscriptions from Wadi el-Hôl: New Evidence for the Origin of the Alphabet from the Western Desert of Egypt*. *AASOR* 59: 2 (2006).

[1003] Orly Goldwasser, "An Egyptian Scribe from Lachish and the Hieratic Traditions of the Hebrew Kingdom," *TA* 18 (1991), 248-253; Ibid., "Canaanites Reading Hieroglyphs. Part I – Horus is Hathor? Part II – The Invention of the Alphabet in Sinai," *Ägypten und Levante* 9 (2006), 121-160; Ibid., "How the Alphabet was Born from Hieroglyphs," *BAR* 36:2 (2010), 38-51; see also Yohanan Aharoni, "The Use of Hieratic Numerals in Hebrew Ostraca and the Shekel Weights," *BASOR* 184 (1966): 13-19.

[1004] In a more recent rejoinder to C. Rollston, Goldwasser has since clarified her position for quote see O. Goldwasser, "The Miners Who Invented the Alphabet––A Response," *JAEI* 4:3 (2012), 12.

reading. For example, in Egyptian, the signs with faces or fronts should face the beginning of the text. However, even "non-literates" would have been able to observe the correlation between the direction of the anthropomorphic and animal heads and the start of a text—Egyptian writing was after all also central to Egyptian art. Inscribed objects using hieroglyphic and pseudo-hieroglyphics on Egyptian and Egyptianized goods were quite popular in the Levant in the second millennium B.C.E., (e.g., the numerous "Hyksos" scarabs dating to the Second Intermediary Period).[1005] The diversity in this early script (e.g., the variant letterforms, stances, and orders of the letters based upon a range of Egyptian hieroglyphic prototypes) do not necessarily indicate that these early WS writers were ignorant of Egyptian writing—such variation is a common feature of non-standardized writing systems. Also, the way in which the WS script diverged from its Egyptian parent script indicates that it was developed

[1005] Daphna Ben Tor associates the sudden influx of scarabs in Canaan in the early MBIIB with the rise of the Canaanite dynasty in the Delta (ca. early 17th century B.C.E.). Many of the scarabs are made locally and appear to have been the result of a market for small goods rendered in a Middle-Kingdom style. The errors and pseudo-hieroglyphs suggest that the local populations were interested in Egyptian writing, though only as an art form and symbol of Egyptian culture. They were able to access the signs perhaps on an iconic and/or pictographic level, but were not actually literate in this writing system. Interestingly, this trend was not prevalent in the northern Levant during the MBA. Ben Tor cites a dearth of scarabs dating to the Second Intermediary Period; the scarabs at Byblos all date the Middle Kingdom. She characterizes the rise of these scarabs as a product a Canaanite settlement in the Delta and the Hyksos control of the north of Egypt. Though, in the LBA, after the establishment of Egyptian control of this region (around the reign of Thutmoses III) locally made scarabs no longer appear. The scarabs in Canaan dating to the LBA are made in Egypt, though they are for the most part found in Canaanite funerary contexts as those of the MBA. The one exception are the Beth-Shean level IX scarabs that are locally made, yet of a different typology than the MBA scarabs. For a discussion see D. Ben-Tor, "Egyptian-Canaanite Relations in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages as Reflected by Scarabs," in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3–7 May 2009*. Edited by S. Bar, D. Kahn and J Shirley (Leiden: Boston, 2011), 23-43; Ibid., "The Relations between Egypt and Palestine in the Middle Kingdom as Reflected by Contemporary Canaanite Scarabs," *IEJ* 47 (1997), 162-189; *Scarabs, Chronology and Interconnections. Egypt and Palestine in the Second Intermediate Period.* OBO, *Series Archaeologica* 27 (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2007).

specifically for a WS audience to be distinct from Egyptian.[1006] Thre was a degree of intentionality and most likely ideology behind the departures from Egyptian writing.

A second group of scholars takes quite the opposite view. They propose that writing is an elite, specialized skill—as such, the early "inventors" of the alphabet must have had a relatively high degree of training in written Egyptian. The early alphabet is seen as a carefully crafted system rather than a more spontaneous innovation created by non-literates.[1007] Christopher Rollston contends that it is unlikely that illiterate, unskilled workers could innovate and sustain such a system without a mastery of the Egyptian writing system. He argues that the inventors were WS native speakers who held positions in Egyptian administration and were well trained in the Egyptian scripts.[1008]

None of the above explanations of the origins of the Proto-Semitic alphabet truly delve into why it is that this group developed their own writing system, how it was transmitted, and moreover, the sociolinguistic role that it played in the Levant. The need for a script "of their own" suggests that

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[1006] Also, if one views the evolution of the alphabetic script as a reaction to outside influence, or a the outgrowth of the need for a writing system that was accessible by marginalized groups, such divergence may have evolved as a means of differentiating the new "WS" system from its Egyptian parent script (i.e., the writing of their overlords).

[1007] The debates between Goldwasser and Rainey were mainly carried out over a series of blog posts and short articles on *BAR*'s website. Rainey countered that the alphabet was not invented by rural workers, but was a product of a sophisticated, urban environment. He proposed that it was most likely created by a Byblian elite stationed at Avaris or Memphis, who was skilled in both hieratic and hieroglyphs. See A. F. Rainey, "Review of 'The Origins of the West Semitic Alphabet in Egyptian Scripts," by G. J. Hamilton," *BASOR* 354 (2009), 83–86; A. F. Rainey, "Who Really Invented the Alphabet––Illiterate Miners or Educated Sophisticates?" 08/25/2010. < http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical artifacts/inscriptions/raineys-first-critique/.

[1008] For Goldwasser's response to Rollston see "The Miners Who Invented the Alphabet—A Response," *JAEI* 4:3 (2012), 9-22; for Rollston's view and quote see, "The Probable Inventors of the First Alphabet: Semites Functioning as rather High Status Personnel in a Component of the Egyptian Apparatus," *ASOR Blog*, 08/10/2010 <http://asorblog.org/2010/08/28/featured-post-by-christopher-rollston-the-probable-inventors-of-the-first-alphabet/.

the either this group not have access to the Egyptian scripts, or that they were too associated with Egyptian culture to be appealing in WS contexts. In the second millennium B.C.E., the WS scripts appear to have been in opposition to Mesopotamian cuneiform, which in the southern Levant was the script endorsed and regulated by Egypt. As such, the social role and evolution of the WS scripts were also informed by the role of writing and scribalism in Egypt's eastern empire.

The transmission of alphabetic technology during the second millennium B.C.E. is not articulated in the historical record (for example no texts described how it spread in this early period). Yet, it is clear from its distribution that it spread quickly along trade routes.[1009] The diversity of alphabetic scripts reflects an overall lack of interest in codifying a standard alphabet. Not only was there no state sponsor using this script, the manifold scripts descended from the Proto-Semitic script

[1009] Alphabetic writing appears to have spread along a north/south axis during the second millennium B.C.E. It appears in the South Arabian Peninsula, the southern Levant, and the northern coast (up to the coastal Syrian city of Ugarit). The number, letter order, and the forms of the South Arabian alphabet suggest a mid-second millennium B.C.E. date of transmission. The short alphabetic texts are attested in the Levant date to about this period as well, which suggests that the script may have been spread by merchants working along this great expanse. The first alphabetic texts in Egypt follow trade routes and the procurement of raw materials, more specifically, the caravan routes along Wadi el-Hol and the turquoise mines at Serabit el-Khadem. Likewise, the spread of the WS alphabet follows the extensive trade networks running southwards to the South Arabian Peninsula, along the Levantine coast, and across the Mediterranean. The distribution of the alphabet suggests that it served as a transnational script by merchants and mobile groups. The mercantile model best explains the diffusion of alphabetic technology, and moreover, the reason why it was not initially standardized or adopted by state institutions in the Levant and the Aegean, yet was able to survive and develop independently for half a millennium. Indeed, Gordon Childe proposed that this was the catalyst for the spread of the alphabet in the Iron Age: "It was in fact an international body of merchants who sanctioned by use the new conventions; it was their activity that diffused and popularized the system in the Iron Age." Gordon, V. Childe, *What Happened in History* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1942), 181-182. For a more updated analysis of the evolution of this script an international script in the Iron Age see Reinhard G. Lehman, "27-30-22-26-How Manny Letters Needs an Alphabet?," 44-47. For a more general discussion of the use of such scripts in the Mediterranean see Christopher M. Monroe, *Scales of Fate: Trade, Tradition, and Transformation in the Eastern Mediterranean Ca. 1350 - 1175 B.C.E.* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009).

attest to competing scribal traditions during this period.[1010] Only when WS polities are able to provide the infrastructure and political and economic stability needed to support a scribal apparatus does this script emerge as a standardized system (e.g., by the 14th-13th century in Ugarit and by the 11th century in Phoenicia).

This understanding of the sociolinguistic backdrop of the WS scripts is in line with how writing "works." Writing systems are ideologically charged and have a social/political/economic impetus. As Coulmas writes, the view that writing is a natural, organic development is quite "naïve." Rather, there are fundamental principles about the development of writing and the process by which an unwritten language is converted into its graphemic form. For a writing system to be successful it must have conventions (e.g., in script and orthography) and its conventions must be updated periodically, be it by organic developments or institutionally mandated reforms.[1011] A break in tradition affects the whole community of writers, as the introduction of a minute change can have symbolic meaning about the group's identity.[1012] Even a subtle change in script can be palpable in a society, especially in one with a long-established written tradition. For example, such a rupture with

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[1010] Goldwasser, "The Miners Who Invented the Alphabet," 12-13.

[1011] In the case of the Egyptian writing system, it is assumed that hieroglyphics were invented to satisfy a need to write as part of an "awakening historical consciousness," to record economic transactions to cope with an increasingly complex society, and for religious purposes. Coulmas' analysis of these three impetuses is quite cautious. As he states, the earliest "historical" texts date to 150 years after the advent of this technology; instead he posits that the earliest texts appear to relate to "economic necessities" and the "cult" (*The Writing Systems of the World*, 58-59).

[1012] For example, in the case of the simple removal of "*u*" in American Standard English Orthography (e.g., *colour*>*color*), or the shift from *centre*>*center*, which marked a break with continental and more pointedly, British orthography).

past conventions can have the effect of "mak[ing] a literary tradition practically inaccessible to subsequent generations of writing and readers."[1013] Scripts to not evolve without a significant community (which is often in the framework of an institution) providing the support and the impetus for the new set of principles to be passed down.[1014] The role of writing is inherently the product of the linguistic ideologies and identities of the community using, developing, and/or rejected the writing system.

The role of the WS scripts in the LBA are the second half of the discussion of the function of Canaano-Akkadian, as it too was a reflection of Egyptian and Canaanite language ideologies. Its emergence suggests a general unwillingness or reticence in Egyptian scribal culture to share this writing system with WS groups in Egypt and in the east. Another impetus for the "invention" of the Proto-Semitic alphabet was one of economic and cultural pragmatism, namely, a reaction to the need for a WS script. The most compelling scenario for the "invention" of the WS scripts is that the "Asiatics" working in Egypt who did not have access to cuneiform scribes and did not use the Egyptian script developed their own script to serve as a code for trade in inter-group communication. As such, the Canaanite linear alphabet— the one script that emerged successfully in the Iron Age Levant— was one that could be used by a plethora of WS speaking groups, as it was not tied to any particular

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[1013] Coulmas, *The Writing Systems of the World*, 242.

[1014] Though it is important to keep in mind that when we speak of writing and language in the context of the ANE, we should not "speak" of a community "speakers," as Coulmas does *per se*. Rather, we should approach the groups producing the corpus of ANE texts as a community of writers, as literacy was for the most part an elite technology that was not necessarily a reflection of what dialects were spoken contemporaneously (e.g., the sustained use of Sumerian in Mesopotamia well beyond its use as a spoken language) (Ibid., 242-243).

dialect or political power, nor dependent upon the institutional scribal systems of the LBA. This sociolinguistic backdrop also explains how and why this script was developed on the margins, and moreover, why it was not adopted by WS speaking institutions until much later. Use of cuneiform in Canaanwas sponsored by Egypt during the LBA; alphabetic technology, on the other hand, was unaffiliated with Egypt, and was thus unaffiliated with the WS scribal institutions working for local polities during this period, which were subservient to Egypt. In this way, this script remained unstandardized for nearly five hundred years until the period of relative political autonomy in the WS speaking world in the Iron Age.

C. The Spread of the WS Alphabet and the "Death" of Canaanite Cuneiform

The "death" of cuneiform writing at the end of the second millennium B.C.E in the southern Levant suggests that the political structures sponsoring this scribal system were tied to the palace complexes of the LBA. When Egypt declined in the southern Levant, there was no more use for cuneiform. The WS linear script emerged in this region as the new prestige writing system and was subsequently adopted by local WS polities. This has implications for how we understand the "death" of Canaano-Akkadian. If seen as a spoken language, we must presume the demise of its speakers. When approached as a scribal system, the shift to alphabetic technology marks a socio-political change whereby local rulers developed and used their own scripts and languages for administration. In other words, the end of the age of "Great Powers" marked a change in the role of the scribe and of the use of cuneiform in the Levant. Scribes developed their own local alphabetic scripts and shifted away from cuneiform, as the states forces sponsoring the cuneiform schools of the second millennium

B.C.E. no longer existed.[1015]

In the wake of the destruction of the palace institutions of the LBA there was simply no group in the Levant sufficiently powerful enough and/or invested enough in sustaining the alphabetic and Mesopotamian cuneiform scripts.[1016] The Iron I is not just a period where cuneiform disappears—this period marks the death knell of all cuneiform schools and scribal traditions in this region.[1017] This collapse was a result of the fall of the "great powers'" in the region, who were the institutions

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[1015] The disappearance of the script at Ugarit was a product of the collapse of the infrastructures sponsoring the scribal system at this site, and in the Levant more generally. Whisenant attributes the demise of this script in the Levant at the end of the LBA to three main causes: 1) Ugarit was only a regional power, and did not have a wide influence able to sustain and spread this script. 2) They failed to "create a sense of national identification" with their southern WS speaking neighbors. In other words, this script was not a symbol of more general WS culture, but remained a local badge of identity. 3) The linear alphabetic script was "better suited to the limited uses of writing" of the Iron I, as it was "easier" to use. Moreover, the Canaanites of the south did not have any "invested sense of national identity in the use of cuneiform writing." As such, there was no impetus to reconstruct the cuneiform scribal centers of the past. Though, according to this view script choice is reduced to a mere preference. In truth, the development and abandonment of writing systems is a bit more complex than a mere matter of "ethnic" and/or cultural identity, or facility of use. See Jessica N. *Writing, Literacy, and Textual Transmission: The Production of Literary Documents in Iron Age Judah and the Composition of the Hebrew Bible* (Ph.D diss., University of Michigan, 2008), 143-146. A. R. Millard attributes its decline to too few scribes and lack of use for this script ("The Last Tablets of Ugarit," *Le Pays d'Ougarit Autour de 1200 av. J.-C. Histoire et Archéologie*. Ras Shamra-Ougarit XI. Edited by Marguerite Yon, Maurice Sznycer, and Pierre Bordreuil (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1995), 119-124; quote on 122.

[1016] Byrne views the diversity in the early abecedaries as a reflection of the nature of scribal training during this period, where, as in Mesopotamia, diverse "schools" and scribal traditions co-existed. As he writes, "[N]ot until the Iron II emergence of state interests in scribal discourse did the necessary cultural apparatus appear to coax the refinement of this professional technology…The Iron IIB 'homogenization' of the Hebrew script speaks of scribal deference to an emerging ideal hand which served a political program. The early Iron age tells a different story, in which variant primers circulated in an environment with more circumstantial patronage of writing" ("The Refuge of Scribalism in Iron I Palestine," *BASOR 345* (2007), 6.

[1017] For an analysis of this period see M. Liverani, "The Collapse of the Near Eastern Regional System at the End of the Bronze Age: The Case of Syria, Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World," In *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*. Edited by Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and K. Kristiansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 66-73.

sustaining this script.[1018] The disappearance of cuneiform was not unique to the southern Levant—this script ceases to be used in the western Periphery.[1019] The wholesale rejection of the script associated with the "Great Powers" of the LBA may also have been in part ideological. It most certainly stemmed from a dramatic shift in the geo-politics of the region—quite simply, the powers that sustained the use of cuneiform in the Periphery throughout the second millennium B.C.E. no longer existed in the Iron Age. Egypt, the one power that remained intact, appears to be uninterested in regaining its former eastern empire and was less of a regional force during the Iron I (as demonstrated in Wenamun's humbling interactions with Canaanite polities along the Levantine coast). During this period, local groups in the Levant and Anatolia developed their own "native" scripts that were better suited for their local languages (e.g., the 22-letter alphabetic script in Lebanon and its daughter scripts, and Luwian hieroglyphs).

With Egypt's retrenchment and the demise of Canaanite cuneiform, the linear alphabet

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[1018] Whisenant is right, however, to caution against a tendency in scholarship to view the end LBA as a period when there was a complete breakdown in scribalism. As she argues, there is sufficient evidence to suggest some degree of continuity between writing technologies in the LBA and Iron I; in particular, there is the simple fact that the linear alphabet survives. Moreover, the legacy of Egypt's centuries of control in this region manifests in the scribalism and cultural memory of the monarchal period. There is sufficient evidence for "a continuity in the social categories using writing (elites) as well as a continuity with the alphabetic writing tradition already extant in Egypt, the western Sinai, and Canaan even before the "crisis years." Another continuity is the use of writing as a symbol of local identity and autonomy whereby "local elitist efforts to inject local ethnic identity into language symbols" was a carry over from the LBA. She proposes that the view that Iron Age culture marked a clean break with that of the LBA is suspiciously akin to the Israelite origins story of the biblical narratives, whereby a group (Israel) arrives *ex nihilo* in Canaan: "This sociohistorical model strikingly echoes a common narrative thread in the portrait of the Israelite settlement of Canaan as presented in the Hebrew bible. As related in the book of Joshua, the Israelites (after fleeing from Egypt through Sinai) invade Canaan, kill or drive out the inhabitants, and introduce their own social and political order to the land" (*Writing, Literacy, and Textual Transmission,* 119-120; quote on 120).

[1019] Even the emergent "Syro-Hittite" polities used the linear alphabet and hieroglyphic Luvian rather than the cuneiform of the preceding period.

flourished in this scribal vacuum, in part because it was available, and in part because it was a local technology unaffiliated with foreign polities. In the Iron Age, we see a radically different approach to writing. Emerging polities invested in local scripts and wrote in standardized *local* institutional languages. City-states along the Lebanese coast adopted a regional alphabetic script for trade that was unaffiliated with any one language or polity.[1020]

Ryan Byrne attributes the survival of the linear alphabetic script in the Iron I to its popularity with local elites and its prestige status. As he writes, "The survivability of the alphabetic *haute couture* in the centuries after the ebb of Canaanite cuneiform ironically hinged on its own irrelevance, i.e., in its relevance to those who could afford the *luxury*." In other words, this script survived precisely because, unlike cuneiform, it was not wedded to LBA institutions.[1021] Byrne views such elites to have been the only patrons and "refuge" for scribalism during this period.[1022] He argues the interest in

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[1020] This view is perhaps best expressed in Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*.

[1021] Although the earliest Byblian alphabetic texts are nearly all royal and ceremonial and written on hard surfaces, the shapes of the letters indicate that they were developed from ink technology. This suggests that the primary medium of writing (especially administrative writing) during this period was based on perishable materials such as papyrus. The coastal cities (e.g., Dor, Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, and Beirut) along the Lebanese littoral proved to be the heirs of the lucrative coastal trade networks of the LBA and emerged as regional powers by the 11th century B.C.E., filling in the power vacuum left by Egypt and the demise of the larger LBA regional powers. The WS linear alphabet is first attested as a standardized and institutionalized system along the Lebanese coast by the 11th century B.C.E. It first appears as a script adopted by the royal courts of the polities that made up the trade federation collectively referred to as "Phoenicia" in later periods. During this period, scribes working for state institutions rejected the prestige scripts of the second millennium and eventually adopted their own written languages and scripts for administration. For a discussion see Whisenant, *Writing, Literacy, and Textual Transmission,* 155-161.

[1022] For example, Byrne views the "elite" inscribed objects, such as the Iron I inscribed arrowheads, as examples of the high status of writing during this period ("The Refuge of Scribalism," 23).

writing during this period was its function a status symbol rather than a tool in administration.[1023] As such, the prestige value of the alphabet carried over into the cultural horizon of the Iron I. Scribes and literate individuals trained in this script were able to survive and pass on their training to a new generation, whereas those trained in cuneiform were essentially unemployable.

Jessica N. Whisenant, too, writes of this continuity in scribalism, though she takes a slightly different approach:

> (A)long with the undeniable disruption in the writing technologies of Palestine, there was also a certain degree of continuity in the sphere of writing and literacy: a continuity in the social categories using writing (elites) as well as a continuity with the alphabetic writing tradition already extant in Egypt, the western Sinai, and Canaan even before the 'crisis years.'[1024]

She views the writing in the LBA to already demonstrate the use of scripts and written language to "inject local ethnic identity into language symbols"—in other words, the choice of local writing systems was not a mere matter of convenience.[1025] Such scripts operated at a local level, at least in elite circles, as a badge of identity and admission into the local elite culture. The symbolic and/or ideological aspect of the use of writing in the southern Levant thus appears to have informed both the use of Canaano-Akkadian in dealings with Egypt and the restricted use of WS scripts for non-institutional writing. It also explain how and why the WS script survived into the Iron Age and was

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[1023] David boasts about having scribes (2 Sam 8:16-16; 20-:32-26), and yet, the focus is not their skill or the fact that they "represent a larger bureaucracy (or worse still, an Egyptian derivative)." Rather, the passage is more interest in the "accentuation of a status retained fashionable for the time," whereby the scribes are "less administrators than hagiographers" ("The Refuge of Scribalism," 23).

[1024] Whisenant, *Writing, Literacy, and Textual Transmission,* 120.

[1025] Ibid., 120-121.

subsequently adopted by local polities, whereas the script sponsored by Egypt died out.

D. Digraphia in LBA Canaan

The written exchanges between Egypt and Canaan during the LBA cannot be really be characterized as "diglossic," but as digraphic—as we may be dealing with a plurality of Canaanite dialects, various registers of Egyptian, not to mention both Canaano-Akkadian and MB, which may have not even been spoken.[1026] MB was the basis for the "high" variety of Akkadian used by Egypt; Canaano-Akkadian was the "low" variety used by the marginalized polities in the southern Levant under Egyptian control.[1027] What remains to be determined is how this local variety developed and whether or not it was imposed upon this region, or emerged independently and was then harnessed by Egypt—issues that have yet to be fully developed in scholarship.

Itamar Singer frames the issue of script choice in the second millennium as one of "competition" between the liner, cuneiform, and alphabetic scripts of the ANE and Eastern Mediterranean. Cuneiform had a pervasive hold on scribal systems in the Levant during the second millennium B.C.E., whereas in Egypt and the Aegean, cuneiform was never a serious competitor with the pre-existing writing systems (Egyptian and Linear B). The dependency on cuneiform in the Levant was catalyzed by a need to participate in the larger scribal culture of this period, which was cuneiform

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[1026] John DeFrancis, "Digraphia," *Word* 35:1 (1984), 59–66; Charles A. Ferguson, "Diglossia." *Word* 15 (1959), 325–40; Joshua A. Fishman, "Bilingualism With and Without Diglossia: Diglossia With and Without Bilingualism," *Journal of' Social Issues* 23.2 (1967): 29–38; Peter Hawkins, "Diglossia Revisited," *Language & Communication* 3:3 (1983), 219-232.

[1027] S. Izre'el views MB as a superstratum dialect that was of higher prestige than the Akkadian produced by Canaanite scribes ("Canaano-Akkadian: Linguistics and Socio-linguistics," 181).

based. Cyprus, on the other hand, which was part of the cultural horizon of the Mediterranean, "could 'afford' to prefer another cultural authority, that of a sister island."[1028] He understands Egypt's adherence to its own script, yet, its use of Akkadian to communicate with its foreign vassals to reflect a "snobbish" attitude towards their own writing system.[1029] The innovation of an alphabetic system appears to have been in part a response to the monopoly on writing by outside powers and a reaction to subjugation.[1030] Seen in this light, the alphabet was only able to succeed when cuneiform was no longer used by local institutions.

Rachael T. Sparks notes an increase in the number of inscriptions and a dramatic influx in the types of scripts attested during this region.[1031] She cites the use of Hittite hieroglyphics, Aegean writing, cuneiform, alphabetic cuneiform, Proto-Canaanite, and Egyptian hieratic, hieroglyphic, and cursive hieroglyphic, though much of this this corpus comprises smaller inscriptions on ceramic or stone objects.[1032] Overall, her analysis demonstrates an increase in epigraphic materials from this region, and

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[1028] Itamar Singer, "Cuneiform, Linear, Alphabetic: The Competition Between Writing Systems in the Eastern Mediterranean." in Mediterranean Cultural Interaction. Edited by Asher Ovadiah (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2000), 27.

[1029] Singer, "Cuneiform, Linear, Alphabetic," 23-32.

[1030] As Millard writes, "It is hardly surprising that the Canaanite alphabet gained its foothold only gradually in this context where two other writing systems (cuneiform and Egyptian) were well established and the monopoly of a privileged class" ("The Knowledge of Writing in Late Bronze Age Palestine," in eds. van Lerberghe, K.; Voet, G. in *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm — Proceedings of the 42th RAI*. Edited by. K. van Lerberghe and G. Voet [Leuven 1999], 317-326).

[1031] R. T. Sparks, "Re-writing the Script: Decoding the textual experience in the Bronze Age Levant (*c*.2000–1150 bc)." In: K. E. Piquette and Whitehouse, R. D. (eds.) *Writing as Material Practice: Substance, surface and medium.* Pp. 75-104. London: Ubiquity Press, 2013), 75-104. DOI: http:// dx.doi.org/10.5334/bai.e.

[1032] Sparks, "Re-writing the Script, 77, figure 2.

in particular, the dramatic rise in Egyptian inscriptions, which corresponded to a heighted Egyptian presence in the region. There is, however, no evidence that Canaanite scribes used the Egyptian writing system. Rather, it appears to have remained a hallmark of Egyptian identity, culture, and power.[1033] Such displays of power were accessible even to the non-literate, in part due to the highly pictographic nature hieroglyphic writing.[1034] Objects inscribed with the Egyptian scripts served as symbols of power and as reminders of an obligation to Egypt for multiple generations. As Sparks writes, "the popularity of scarabs and sacraboids meant that many Canaanites were able to come into close personal contact with Egyptian hieroglyphics and to develop a familiarity with the general appearance of the script, without necessarily developing any literary skills." In spite of the close contact between these cultures, the Egyptian script was perceived as a foreign, exotic script, which had a numinous and symbolic quality, but was never really matriculated fully into the local systems of administration.

Scholars, such as Millard, view the direct impact of Egyptian administration to extend to the

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[1033] The small number of hieratic texts is striking, yet not unsurprising as this script may have been also been written on perishable materials as well as on ceramics. There are several monumental Egyptian inscriptions that commemorate Egyptian military victories; such inscriptions were executed on local stones, mainly basalt which may have served as a counterpart to the use of granite in Egypt, by craftsmen trained in Egyptian writing. As Sparks writes, use of the Egyptian script on long-lasting materials were meant to express Egypt's power to local populations. She proposes that the stone's "durability may also have been a metaphor for the durability of pharaoh control in the region" (Sparks, "Re-writing the Script," 83-84).

[1034] She views smaller objects, such as inscribed commemorative scarabs, to have served a similar function as status markers and form of "textual name-dropping." The locally made scarabs do not demonstrate a high competency in Egyptian; to the contrary, much of the corpus does not make "sense" linguistically, but appears to use the basic forms of Egyptian hieroglyphics for its decorative and perhaps symbolic importance, as many scarabs appear to have a magical and/or apotropaic function (Ibid., 84). Indeed, as Sparks points out, most of the 'part of the popular appeal of this script may have been its mysterious quality, which lent inscribed objects a prestigious and magical air (Ibid., 93).

monarchal period in Israel and Judah. This presupposes that Canaanite scribes learned Egyptian to a limited degree, yet one sufficient enough to impact scribal education in the subsequent period.[1035] The requisite knowledge of Egyptian for the degree of influence attested in Iron Age texts would have been rather limited (as economic texts are usually the most basic to learn).[1036] Whisenant points to the 100 or so hieratic inscriptions as Ugarit as evidence that scribes at Ugarit were also trained in Egyptian.[1037] Yet, the claim that knowledge of Egyptian was widespread among the scribes working at Ugarit it an overstatement, as the presence of hieratic texts could very well be the work of Egyptians. Also, there is a difference between knowing the rudiments of a scribal system and being trained to the level of producing complex texts in that writing system; if indeed WS scribes were that component in Egyptian, why do we have a comprehensive record of letters between Egypt and WS polities in cuneiform? Also why were Canaano-Akkadian letters written and send to Egypt from Egyptian centers? Even at the latter stage of Egyptian control in the Ramesside Period, when Egypt "tightened" its grip on the region, the formal communication between Ugarit and Egypt appears is based in

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[1035] A. Millard, "The Knowledge of Writing in Late Bronze Age Palestine," in *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm* — Proceedings of the 42nd RAI, Edited by K. van Lerberghe and G. Voet (Leuven 1999), 317-326; A. Demsky. "The Education of Canaanite Scribes in the Mesopotamian Cuneiform Tradition," in *Bar-Ilan Studies in Assyriology*. Edited by Jacob Klein and Aaron Skaist (Jerusalem: Bar-Ilan Press, 1990), 157-170.

[1036] Orly Goldwasser, "An Egyptian Scribe from Lachish and the Hieratic Tradition of the Hebrew Kingdoms." *Tel Aviv* 18 (1991), 248-253; O. Goldwasser and Stefan Wimmer, "Hieratic Fragments from Tell el-Farah (South)." *BASOR* 313 (1999), 39-42.

[1037] See Whisenant, *Writing, Literacy, and Textual Transmission*, 138-139; for the Egyptian inscriptions at Ugarit see D. Pardee, "Ugarit Inscriptions." in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East, Vol. 5*. Edited by Eric M. Meyers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 264-266.

Akkadian, and not Egyptian.

Egypt's use of cuneiform was a by-product of entrenched scribal conventions in the international arena. As Whisenant writes, "In their diplomatic correspondence with their vassals in Canaan, the Egyptians were forced to concede to the old and widespread non-Egyptian tradition of letter-writing and of writing in general in Syria and Canaan by likewise conducting their international correspondence in the Akkadian language and script."[1038] This may be true for Egypt's peers, but it does not hold true for the south where Egypt had the upper hand. Rather, is seems the choice to write to Canaanite polities in Akkadian and to endorse Canaano-Akkadian was an administrative strategy to ensure the existence of a cohesive scribal system in Canaan, one that was intentionally not based on the Egyptian language.

Use of cuneiform in Egypt's territories enabled Egypt to consolidate its power in the region and to ensure that the smooth flow of goods from the Levant.[1039] Cuneiform scribalism in Canaan "reinforce[d] already existing markers for the use of writing and to create a whole series of new

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[1038] Whisenant, *Writing, Literacy, and Textual Transmission,* 140.

[1039] Sparks does not specially address Canaano-Akkadian as a unique system, but addresses more generally the use of cuneiform as opposed to alphabetic of Egyptian scripts. Her study conflates "language" and writing. For example, the "Sumerian" category is really a reference to logographic (or Sumerographic) writing, as at this point Sumerian was a scribal language, and not really "spoken" in the Periphery; also, the "Akkadian" produced in the southern Levant was not quite as straightforward. It would not have facilitated Egypto-Canaanite communication as much as use of Egyptian, or Middle Babylonian. As she points out, not only was the Egyptian writing system use for pragmatic administrative purposes, it was also used decoratively on a wide range of personal objects. The "market" for Egyptian and Egyptianized goods during this period, made Egyptian writing "much more visible to the local population than ever before." Yet, in spite of this cultural rapprochement, Canaanite scribes do not write the Pharaoh in Egyptian. See Sparks, "Re-writing the Script," 75-104.

audiences."[1040] A key task of the Egyptian administrative apparatus was to ensure a streamlined communication between Egyptian and Levantine officials. Akkadian, which was already used to some degree in this region, became instrumental in running Egypt's eastern empire.[1041]

Itzik Shai and Joel Uziel approach the question of writing in the Levant from a sociolinguistic perspective. They view the striking *lack* of inscriptions in the Levant during the second millennium B.C.E. as ideological. They propose that Canaanites "rejected" the Egyptian script, and, for the most part, writing in general until the Iron Age to differentiate themselves from their Egyptian and northern neighbors. In other words, rather than adopt a technology that would have facilitated trade, commerce, and centralized rule, they view Canaanite polities to have opted out of writing on ideological grounds because writing was "of great importance to Egyptians;" rejecting this technology was thus an expression of their resistance to Egyptian culture more generally.[1042] Though their work

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[1040] Sparks, "Re-writing the Script," 77.

[1041] Sparks cites the Taanach cuneiform materials as evidence for the use of Akkadian cuneiform for local governance by the 15th century. As she notes, the one exception to the Taanach cuneiform corpus is Taanach 15, which is an alphabetic cuneiform text written in a WS dialect that appears to be legal text, or a document of emancipation, based mainly on the lexeme *kpr*. The text T. 15 presents several problems: it is written left to right, unlike most of the alphabetic cuneiform corpus; it uses no word dividers; the paleography corresponds to that in the very small corpus of southern Levantine alphabetic cuneiform texts (e.g., the symmetrical *b* and *d* and use of *ṯ* for *š*). Moreover, this tablet is missing since at least sometime after 1964. R. T. Sparks, "Re-writing the Script," 77-78, 80. For a discussion of T. 15 see Horowitz *Cuneiform in Canaan,* 161-162.

[1042] They are dismissive of claims that WS speaking groups in the Levant did not have access to writing, or that Egypt prevented them from developing this technology but view the lack of writing as an active rejection of a technology that was associated with foreign cultures. They similarly understand the limited use of writing in the Middle Bronze Age was a rejection of Syro-Mesopotamian influence, and a means of "differentiating themselves" from the literate, scribal culture in the north. However, writing was not accessible to all of Canaanite culture but was an elite technology. The degree to which we can ascertain the social perception of writing and these various scripts is limited by the people using writing in the and the available materials that feature written texts in the material record (mainly durable mediums and artifacts). The absence of writing is more likely a reflection of the limited number of writers, the paucity of writing on

includes some interesting reflections on the symbolic nature of writing in the context of "core/periphery" dynamics, the problems with their approach are manifold and this study is founded on shaky reasoning.[1043] Their claim that since "writing was the foundation of Egyptian culture, illiteracy may have been perceived as a cornerstone of Canaanite identity," is problematic on several counts.[1044]

In the LBA, they posit that cuneiform was used, but only in the domains of administration; local writing was confined to the margins and was limited to the alphabet, a local writing system––one that reflected an "alternative way of life."[1045] However, there no evidence that Canaanites rejected writing as a technology. In fact, based on the diverse scripts in circulation, there was a concerted interest in experimenting with writing and scripts. Quite simply, there was no cohesive "Canaanite"

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durable media, and the happenstance nature of the archaeological of this period—the small number of texts does not mean that there was a cultural bias in all of Canaan against writing. Were it not for the Hebrew Bible, were would have a very limited evidence for writing in the Iron Age and Persian Periods as well. See I. Shai and J. Uziel, "The Whys and Why Nots of Writing: Literacy and Illiteracy in the Southern Levant During the Bronze Ages," in KASKAL 7 (2010), 67-83.

[1043] I. Shai and J. Uziel adopted a Marxist and Post-colonialist interpretation of this this period based upon the conflict between the oppressed and oppressor (in this case Canaanites vs. Egypt). They mainly seek to address "why hierarchal cultures in the southern Levant that came into contact with literate civilizations such as those in Egypt[t, Mesopotamia, and Syria did not always accept the forms of writing introduced to them by those cultures, in the third millennium BC, or utilized them only minimally, during the second millennium BC ("The Whys and Why Nots of Writing," 67). However, we simply do not have sufficient evidence to make projections about what Canaanites as a whole—if indeed we can group in all the various peoples in the southern Levant into this category—were thinking or feeling about Egypt's presence in the region. Moreover, the material culture of the Bronze Age suggests a range of attitudes about Egypt and Egyptian culture. There is evidence in the material culture that that Canaanite elites at certain sites with a long history of Egyptian presence and /or influence (e.g., Megiddo and Lachish) valued Egyptian goods and acquired a taste for Aegyptiaca (see for example I. Koch, "Goose Keeping, Elite Emulation and Egyptianized Feasting at Late Bronze Lachish," *TA* 41 [2014]: 161–179).

[1044] I. Shai and J. Uziel, "The Whys and Why Nots of Writing, 71.

[1045] Ibid., 77-78.

power able to standardize such a script until the emergence of the kingdoms of the Iron Age (e.g., the city-states in Phoenicia, Aram, Israel and Judah etc.). Also, the notion that local groups were rejecting the Egyptian language and script in order to "resist" Egyptian culture does not sufficiently consider material evidence—Egypt (in particular the Egyptian military) was perhaps not beloved by Levantine polities, but Egyptian culture enjoyed a prestige status throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages.[1046]

In light of the experiments in WS writing during this period, which include two alphabetic scripts (linear and cuneiform) and the development of Canaano-Akkadian, it does not appear that the politicians and bureaucrats of Canaan had an objection to writing as a technology. Rather, they were not sufficiently stable, powerful enough, or interested in investing their political capital to enforce a regional alphabetic script. Furthermore, this local script was still in its nascent sages during this period and lacked the prestige of cuneiform. Egypt's administrative policies are what informed both the use of cuneiform and relegation of the linear script to non-institutional use throughout the LBA.

This approach to Egyptian governance was a reflection of cultural ideas about foreigners and language. There is ample evidence that Canaan, though territorially Egypt's, was never considered a

[1046] Egypt's scribal culture was actually quite prestigious in the Levant––not only are the first experiments in alphabetic writing based on the Egyptian writing system, the scribal systems that emerge in the Iron Age retain elements of Egyptian scribal culture (e.g., use of the hieratic number system, Egyptian measurements, the use of ink-technology, loanwords, and, according to some Levantine historians, the "wisdom" stream(s) of tradition in Israelite written and oral culture).For example, the parallels between the *Wisdom* of *Amenemope* and *Proverbs* 22:17–24:22A. For a discussion of the Egyptian legacy in Israelite scribalism see R. Millard, "The Knowledge of Writing in Late Bronze Age Palestine," in *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm — Proceedings of the 42th RAI*, Edited by K. van Lerberghe and G. Voet (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 317-326.

cultural part of Egypt.[1047] Unlike Nubia, Canaan remained culturally on the outskirts of Egypt. Its population was considered forgein and as such they were ruled using a foreign writing system and script.[1048] The fragmented nature of Canaanite polities during this period indicates that there was no monolithic culture or local polity—the population of the LBA Levant was diverse and comprised of many factions that vied for power and Egypt's favor. Egypt's military and administrative apparatus is what bound together these disparate polities and provided the stability needed for the Caanano-Akkadian to emerge as a cohesive scribal system.

Conclusion

In summary, WS speaking scribes in the south were oriented towards Egypt. They evolved a linear alphabetic script based off of the Egyptian writing system. This script was used in the second millennium, however, because it was not sponsored by Egypt or any other state entity, it remained unstandardized and on the "margins" of institutional life. This presents a stark contrast to the way that alphabetic cuneiform technology flourished in the north at Ugarit. Canaano-Akkadian, on the other hand, was endorsed by Egypt and as such emerged in the mid 14th century as a standardized scribal system. However, it appears to have been tied to Egyptian administration and diplomacy and it disappeared as soon as Egypt declined in the east.

[1047] See for example, James K. Hoffmeier, "Aspects of Egyptian Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Dynasty in Western Asia and Nubia," In *Egypt, Israel, and the Ancient Mediterranean World: Studies in Honor of Donald B. Redford*, ed. G. N. Knoppers and A. Hirsch Probleme der Ägyptologie 20 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 121–141. See also Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty Before the Amarna Period," in The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt. Edited by Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2000), 218-271.

[1048] The "Asiatics" that take over the Delta in the Middle Bronze Age do their best to assimilate to Egyptian royal culture—they do no reject Egypt, rather, it is they who are rejected.

The WS alphabet and cuneiform scripts thus fulfilled two different sociolinguistic functions. Canaano-Akkadian was an official scribal system used in diplomacy with Egypt evolved from a foreign writing system. Although there were efforts to incorporate aspects of WS in this system, it appears to have been associated with Egypt's hegemony in the region. The WS alphabet, on the other hand, evolved from Egyptian scribal technology but was not used by Egypt or in interactions with Egypt and for this reason, it was not adopted by institutions in the south while Egypt controlled this region. It remained a script for personal use until the Iron I, when it became prestigious enough to be adopted by WS speaking polities.

CHAPTER TEN
Conclusion

The Canaanite Amarna Letters are best approached, not as a reflection of Canaanite and/or Canaano-Akkadian dialects, but rather as the product of a sophisticate scribal system, one that communicated on multiple levels and served a variety of socio-political functions. As a result of sustained diplomatic contact with Egypt, Canaanite scribes developed linguistic and paralinguistic strategies to add nuance to their letters in order to attract the attention of the Egyptian court. The shifts in tone, pauses to signal a change of topic, and the expressions of deference and defiance were ultimately expressed by the scribes, messengers, and/or court officials performing these letters at Tell el-'Amarna. As such, Canaanite cuneiform scribes innovated ways to add depth to these letters that would reflect the human element of communication, and make them stand out from the flood of letters from the Levant.

The Canaanite Amarna Letters transmitted a basic framework of communication comprising of the "text" of the letter. The tablet-artifacts were, in and of themselves, important symbols of sustained contact with Egypt in Canaan, (i.e., proof that the local ruler had the ear of the Pharaoh). The finer points of diplomacy were developed in oral communication during face-to-face interactions between the diplomats and/or scribes and messengers that delivered these letters. Also, each letter was in a sense a private communication between the writer and reader of these letters. That is, the scribes encoded the metapragmatic framework of these letters to better inform the scribes at Tell el-

‘Amarna how these letters were to be read/performed.

There were then at least four layers of communication for each letter:

1) Symbolic: The local ruler’s demonstrated their power to their own communities, peers, and rivals by sending a letter to the Pharaoh; 2) Diplomatic: These messages were framed as though ongoing conversations between Canaanite polities and the Pharaoh; 3) Scribal: The tablet was created a physical link between the cuneiform scribes working to facilitate diplomacy between Egypt and disparate Canaanite polities; 4) Performance: The officials composing and/or translating these messages to the Pharaoh controlled the transmission of these messages at the Egyptian court.

The innovative strategies in the more eloquent letters (e.g., from the hill country and the Lebanese littoral) indicate how important it was to make a good impression on the Egyptian court. Not only was diplomacy key to ensuring economic prosperity, it was vital in resolving conflict in the volatile political landscape of the Levant. Local rules had to know when to push for Egyptian aid, and yet, how to maintain a balance of power and retain their own sovereignty. The intermediaries between Egypt and its vassals were professional communicators, whose livelihood and status depended upon their ability to read the subtext of a situation and be persuasive in behalf of their own employers.

The fate of Canaano-Akkadian appears to have been tied to that of Egypt. It first appeared when Egypt intensified its presence in this region, and it vanished when Egypt was no longer invested in the south. Egypt controlled the region where Canaano-Akkadian was being produced. Furthermore, a significant amount of the Canaano-Akkadian corpus was written at Egyptian centers in the Levant.

In addition, non-Canaanite polities, such as Alashia and Amurru, too, used this scribal system to correspond with Egypt. Egypt appears to have fostered the use of Canaano-Akkadian system throughout the southern Levant. We are not looking at a modern colonialist enterprise, rather, this is the case of a well-established prestige culture, one that privileged its own writing system coming in contact with disparate rulers who spoke diverse dialects and had underdeveloped cuneiform scribal apparatuses, if any. The stringent nature of Egyptian ideologies about their language and writing system suggest that there was an effort to prevent the conquered from adopting the Egyptian writing system. Thus, the Egyptian court corresponded with their vassals in cuneiform as they did with other foreign entities. Canaanite scribes in return wrote to Egypt in their own local version of this scribal system, which became increasingly harnessed by Egypt as a means to ensure stability and ineligibility. Overtime, Canaanite and Egyptian cuneiform scribes became influenced by each other's scribal traditions, hence the code switching between Canaano-Akkadian, Egyptian, and MB, and the use of Canaanite and Egyptian idioms in both "Canaanite" and "Egyptian" letters.

Overall, approaching Canaano-Akkadian as a scribal system in the geo-political context of the LBA elucidates how this "language" was really a code used between scribes. This study has broader implications for other ANE corpora from this region as it challenges the presupposition that such texts should be analyzed as reflections of spoken strata of language. Rather, the argument here is that they should be analyzed first and foremost as writing systems, as speech and writing play different communicative roles in a given society. Writing systems tend to be sponsored by institutions, whereas spoken languages are owned by their community of speakers. When a political entity falls, the

speakers do not vanish into thin air—as long as that community survives, their language will survive.[1049] The written form of the language, which is typically dependent upon scribes, officials, and any other members of the society that perpetuate the writing system, will be much more directly affected by the collapse of state and/or religious institutions. The "death" of cuneiform in the West was a product of the deterioration of LBA administrative institutions and Egypt's gradual loss of territories, and not *per se* the death of a community of Canaano-Akkadian speakers.

[1049] Ultimately, in the case of the Iron Age WS scripts, Sanders attributes the breadth and scope of this standardization to Hebrew institutions, as he writes "Hebrew writing was not just a style, it was an institution." This is very much in line with what Bourdieu argues about linguistic standardization: "Integration into a single 'linguist community,' which is a product of the political domination that is endlessly reproduced by institutions capable of imposing universal recognition of the dominant language, is the condition for the establishment of relations of linguistic domination." The difference between a language and a dialect is then quite arbitrary—and is a matter of perception. See Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*: 131; Pierre Bordreuil, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1991), 46.

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