

“WORDPLAY” IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN
TEXTS

SBL Press

ANCIENT NEAR EAST MONOGRAPHS

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TEXTS

by
Scott B. Noegel

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For my students: past, present, and future.

ישמע חכם ויוסף לקח ונבון תחבלות יקנה:
להבין משל ומליצה דברי חכמים וחידתם:

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Finally, I thank my wife Laurie Ramacci Noegel for her constant love and support. More than anyone, she knows my love for language.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Analecta Aegyptiaca
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, D. N., ed. <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ADAIK	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo
ADVGM	<i>Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt Graz: Mitteilungen</i>
AeLeo	<i>Aegyptiaca Leodiensia</i>
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
ÄgAbh	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen
AHw	von Soden, Wolfram. <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . Vols. 1–3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965–1981.
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
AIPHO	<i>Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AKSP	Aporemata, Kritische Studien zur Philologiegeschichte
ÄL	<i>Ägypten und Levante</i>
AL	<i>Anthropological Linguistics</i>
ALK	Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation
AM	<i>Adeva-Mitteilungen</i>
AMD	Ancient Magic and Divination
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs
ANESS	Ancient Near Eastern Studies: Supplement Series
ANETS	Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
AnS	Antiquités sémitiques
AnSt	<i>Anatolian Studies</i>
AO	<i>Acta Orientalia</i>
AOASH	<i>Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>

AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
AP	<i>Archiv für Papyrusforschung</i>
APAWPHK	Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historisch Klasse
ARM	<i>Archives royales de Mari</i>
ARMT	<i>Archives royales de Mari, Texte</i>
ArOr	<i>Archiv Orientální</i>
AS	Assyriological Studies
ASEA	<i>Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
ASEAS	ASAE Supplément
ASJ	<i>Acta Sumerologica</i>
ASTI	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
ATANT	<i>Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments</i>
ATD	Das Alte Testament im Dialog
AuOr	<i>Aula Orientalis</i>
AUS	American University Studies
BA	Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BagM	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i>
BAM	Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen
BARev	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BASP	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient
BCSMS	<i>Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies</i>
BDB	Brown, Francis, et al., eds. <i>The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon</i> . Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979.
BdE	<i>Bibliothèque d'étude</i>
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
BES	<i>Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BI	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BIFAO	<i>Le Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
BiOr	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies

BL	Bible and Literature
BM	<i>Beit Mikra</i>
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BPOA	Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo
BRLAJ	Brill Reference Library of Ancient Judaism
BS	<i>Boghazköi-Studien</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BSNESJ	<i>Bulletin of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BWL	Lambert, W. G. <i>Babylonian Wisdom Literature</i> . Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996.
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	Reiner, E., et al., eds. <i>The Chicago Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956–2010.
CANE	Sasson, J. M., ed. <i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i> . New York: Scribner’s, 1995.
CAT	Dietrich, M., Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. <i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places</i> . Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995.
CBOT	Coniectanea Biblica. Old Testament Series
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CBS	Museum siglum of the University Museum in Philadelphia (Catalogue of the Babylonian Section)
CCdE	<i>Cahiers Caribéens d’Égyptologie</i>
CdE	<i>Chronique d’Égypte</i>
CH	Collectanea Hellenistica
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
CL	<i>Cognitive Linguistics</i>
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
ColR	Colloquia Raurica
ConB	Coniectanea biblica
COS	Hallo, William W., and K. Lawson Younger Jr., eds. <i>The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World</i> . 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2016.
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
CRAIBL	<i>Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>

- CT* *Cuneiform Texts from the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*
 DAI/AK Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. Abteilung Kairo
 DAW/B Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin
 DDD Becking, Bob, Karl van der Toorn, and Pieter W. van der Horst, eds. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.
DE *Discussions in Egyptology*
DISO Hoftijzer, J., and K. Jongeling. *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*. Vols. 1–2. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
DL *DavarLogos*
 DMA Documenta Mundi-Aegyptiaca
DSD *Dead Sea Discoveries*
DULAT del Olmo Lete, G., and J. Sanmartín. *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*. Trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
EAJT *East Asia Journal of Theology*
 EAL Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte
 EC *Les Études Classiques*
 EI *Eretz Israel*
EncJud Berenbaum, Michael, and F. Skolnik, ed. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 2nd ed. Detroit, MI: Thompson Gale, 2007.
EncIs Hakeem-Uddee Qureshi, ed. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. 2nd ed. 12 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
 EPHE *École Pratique de Hautes Études*
 ETL *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*
ExpT *Expository Times*
 FAT Forschungen zum Alten Testament
 GCA *Gratz College Annual*
 GM *Göttinger Miszellen*
 GMS Grazer Morgenländische Studien
 GMTR Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record
 GTJ *Grace Theological Journal*
HALOT Baumgartner, Walter, and Ludwig Koehler, eds. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Vols. 1–2. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
 HANEM History of the Ancient Near East. Monographs
 HAR *Hebrew Annual Review*
 HdO Handbuch der Orientalistik
HebAbst *Hebrew Abstracts*
 HOS Handbook of Oriental Studies
 HR *History of Religions*

<i>HS</i>	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>HSep</i>	<i>Handbuch zur Septuaginta</i>
<i>HSS</i>	<i>Harvard Semitic Studies</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
<i>ICC</i>	<i>International Critical Commentary</i>
<i>IDB</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
<i>IDBSup</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JAIE</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections</i>
<i>JAGNES</i>	<i>Journal of the Association of Graduates in Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JANEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History</i>
<i>JANES</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>Jastrow</i>	<i>Jastrow, Marcus. A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature. New York: Pardes, 1950.</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>JIAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Institute of Asian Studies</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JJSS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies: Supplement Series</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JPOS</i>	<i>Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i>
<i>JQ</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSIS</i>	<i>Jewish Studies, an Internet Journal</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Periods</i>
<i>JSJSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series</i>

- JSNT* *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOT *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series*
JSRC *Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture*
JSS *Journal of Semitic Studies*
JSSEA *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities*
JThC *Journal of Theology and the Church*
JTS *Journal of Theological Studies*
KAI Donner, H., and W. Rollig. *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. Vols. 1–3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969.
KAR *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*
KB Koehler, L., and W. Baumgartner, eds. *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros*. Leiden: Brill, 1958.
KBo *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916–1923; Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1954–.
KUSATU *Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt*
LÄ Helck, W., E. Otto, and W. Westendorf, eds. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*. Vols. 1–7. Wiesbaden, 1975–1992.
LÄS Leipziger ägyptische Studien
LASM *Lingua Aegyptiaca. Studia Monographica*
LHBOTS *The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies*
LingAeg *Lingua Aegyptia*
LKA Ebeling, L. *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953.
LOT *Library of Oriental Texts*
LSJ Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. with a supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.
MÄS *Münchener Ägyptologische Studien*
MC *Mesopotamian Civilizations*
MCAAS *Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts & Sciences*
MelS *Melammu Symposium*
MIFAO *Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (IFAO) du Cairo (Berlin/Cairo)*
MoÄS *Monographien zur ägyptische Sprache*
MPIW *Max-Planck Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte*
MS *Mnemosyne: Supplement*
MSL *Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon*
NABU *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires*
NEA *Near Eastern Archaeology* [formerly *Biblical Archeologist*]
NT *Novum Testamentum*

<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBC	Orientalia biblica et christiana
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OC	Orientalia et Classica
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OIS	Oriental Institute Seminars
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
<i>OLP</i>	<i>Orientalia lovaniensia periodica</i>
<i>OLZ</i>	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>OM</i>	<i>Opera Minora</i>
OPOI	Orientalia: Papers of the Oriental Institute
OPSNKF	Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia</i>
ORA	Orientalische Religionen in der Antike
<i>OrAnt</i>	<i>Oriens antiquus</i>
<i>Orient</i>	<i>Orient: Journal of the Society for the Near Eastern Studies in Japan</i>
<i>OrSu</i>	<i>Orientalia Suecana</i>
OS	Oudtestamentische Studiën
<i>OT</i>	<i>Open Theology</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>OTP</i>	Charlesworth, James H., ed. <i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985.
OudMed	Oudheidkundige Mededelingen
PÄ	Problem der Ägyptologie
PALMA	Papers on Archaeology of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities
<i>PAPS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society</i>
<i>PEGLMBS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies</i>
<i>PGM</i>	Preisendanz, Karl, and Albert Henrichs, eds. <i>Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri</i> . Vols. 1–2. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1974.
PIASH	Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities
<i>PIBRs</i>	<i>Publications of the Israel Biblical Research Society</i>
PL	Papyrologica Leodiensia
<i>PLLS</i>	<i>Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Journal of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
POS	Pretoria Oriental Series
PPISVLK	Pictura et Poesis. Interdisziplinäre Studien zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Kunst
<i>PSBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology</i>

- R Rawlinson, H. C. *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*. Vols. 1–5. London, 1861–1884.
- RA *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*
- RB *Revue biblique*
- RdE *Revue d'Égyptologie*
- RdEG *Revue des Études Grecques*
- RdQ *Revue de Qumran*
- RdSO *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*
- RDSR Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual
- REG *Revue des études grecques*
- REJ *Revue des Études Juives*
- RINP Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
- RIA Ebeling, Erich, et al., eds. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*. Vols. 1–14. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928–2016.
- RO *Revue de l'Organisation internationale pour l'étude des langues anciennes par ordinateur*
- RTP *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*
- SAA State Archives of Assyria
- SAAB *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*
- SAACT State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts
- SABMD Scholae Adriani de Buck Memoriae Dicatae
- SÄK *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur*
- SAMD Studies in Ancient Magic and Divination
- SANE Sources from the Ancient Near East
- SAOC Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
- SAuK Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie
- SB Subsidia Biblica
- SBE Studies in Bible and Exegesis
- SBLMS Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
- SBTS Sources for Biblical and Theological Study
- ScrHier *Scripta Hierosolymitana*
- SEL *Studi epigrafici e linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico*
- Sem *Semitica*
- SemeiaSt Semeia Studies
- SIFC *Studi italiani di filologia classica*
- SJ *Studia judaica*
- SJOT *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
- SLTHS Siphut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures
- SOPFOS *Studia Orientalia Published by the Finnish Oriental Society*
- SSN *Studia Semitica Neerlandica*
- SSR *Studien zur spätägyptischen Religion*
- SSU *Studia Semitica Upsaliensia*

STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
STRT	Studia Theologica Rheno-Traiectina
<i>StTh</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
StudOr	Studia Orientalia
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TAPS	<i>Transactions of the American Philosophical Society</i>
TAUOP	Tel Aviv University Occasional Publications
TCL	<i>Textes cunéiformes du Louvre</i>
TCS	Texts from Cuneiform Sources
TCSV	Trends in Classics: Supplementary Volumes
TDOT	Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Translated by John T. Willis et al. 15 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006.
TIM	Zaybari, Akram, and J. J. A. van Dijk, eds. <i>Texts in the Iraq Museum</i> . Baghdad, Directorate General of Antiquities, 1964–.
TOA	Testi del Oriente Antico
TQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
TR	Theology and Religion
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TS	Texts and Studies Third Series
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
TSCPP	<i>Transactions & Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia</i>
UÄS	Untersuchungen zur ägyptischen Stilistik
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
UT	Gordon, C. H.. <i>Ugaritic Textbook</i> , AnOr 38, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965.
VAB	<i>Vorderasiatische Bibliothek</i>
VR	Visible Religion
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
<i>Wb</i>	Erman, A., and H. Grapow. <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i> . Vols. 1–5. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1926–1953.
<i>WdO</i>	<i>Welt des Orients</i>
WSEA	Wilbour Studies in Egyptology and Assyriology
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft

YNER	Yale Near Eastern Researches
YOS	Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
ZAH	<i>Zeitschrift für Althebräistik</i>
ZÄS	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
ZSG	<i>Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete</i>

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Ant. Rom.</i>	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Antiquitates Romanae</i>
b.	Talmud Bavli
BM	British Museum
CM	Cairo Museum
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
<i>Div.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Divinatione</i>
Gen. Rab.	Genesis Rabbah
<i>Inst.</i>	Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
<i>Inv.</i>	Hermogenes, <i>On Invention</i>
Fragm.	Fragments
l.	Line
LXX	Septuagint
m.	Mishnah
Mp	<i>Masora Parva</i>
MT	Masoretic Text. Based on K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., <i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983.
<i>Od.</i>	Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>
<i>Or.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Oratore</i>
P.	Papyrus
<i>Poet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Rhetorica</i>
PS	Proto-Semitic
RS	Ras Shamra
TT	Theban Tomb
y.	Talmud Yerushalmi

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This book has three intersecting goals. First, it aims to provide the tools necessary for a comparative, in-depth study of “wordplay” in ancient Near Eastern texts. Second, it aspires to establish comprehensive taxonomies for the many kinds of devices that scholars have labeled as “wordplay” and for their proposed functions. Finally, it seeks to establish a consistent terminology that will offer students and scholars of ancient Near Eastern languages a useful template for documenting and understanding the devices they discover, and scholars of other disciplines access to the sophisticated devices of ancient Near Eastern writers. This, I hope, will lead to greater precision and interdisciplinary dialogue.

The astute reader will notice that I have placed the term “wordplay” in quotation marks. It is my contention that the term is problematic for many reasons, which I discuss in chapter 1. Nevertheless, I find it heuristically useful in communicating to those outside the discipline what sorts of devices this book will examine, even if the devices differ in technique and their functions and social contexts appear alien.

Readers also will note that I have opted to use the word *texts*, in the title rather than *literature*. There are two reasons for this. First, one finds “wordplay” in texts of all kinds, including annals, letters, law codes, medical prescriptions, omen lists, and ritual descriptions. In fact, there appear to be no generic or chronological restrictions to the application of “wordplay” in the ancient Near East. A second reason is that the social background of textual production, which I discuss in the chapter 2, strongly suggests that many forms of “wordplay” have an illocutionary function. Thus “wordplay” is often as much a performative phenomenon as a literary one.

It is rather ironic that the presence of “wordplay” in ancient Near Eastern texts has been recognized for many years—in the case of the Hebrew Bible, for several centuries. Yet, large-scale publications on the phenomenon are rare. In addition, though we have benefitted from numerous articles on the subject, most have focused on select biblical passages rather than books. Moreover, until recently, most scholars were content merely to illustrate examples without

discussing their functions, generic environments, or literary and social contexts. Consequently, despite the long-standing recognition, it is fair to say that many aspects of “wordplay” in ancient Near Eastern texts remain largely unexplored.

Moreover, the disciplines represented in this study have long suffered from a vague, inconsistent, and, at times, even contradictory vocabulary that has done little to advance the study of the phenomena and all their permutations and effects. Consequently, many publications employ only the most basic terms for a number of devices that deserve individual attention. Thus, we find studies on alliteration that more accurately contain cases of homoeopropheron, homoioteleuton, parasonance, and the like, and publications on punning that ignore the visual register and do not distinguish devices of sound from those of meaning. It is my hope that this monograph will provide tools for advancing the comparative study of these phenomena with greater accuracy.

ORGANIZATION

I have organized the book’s contents to facilitate future research. In chapter 1, I discuss a number of difficulties that confront the contemporary study of “wordplay” in ancient texts such as the lack of a complete taxonomy and consistent vocabulary. After surveying some influential surveys on the subject with special attention to Biblical Hebrew, I offer a general description of the taxonomy I employ and I explain how it differs from previous proposals.

Chapter 2 addresses several methodological issues that confront the study of ancient “wordplay.” Here I begin by examining the issue of intentionality. I then treat the complicated topic of reception by asking for whom such devices were intended. This naturally leads to an examination of the social contexts of textual production. Afterwards, I discuss the importance that proximity and the role of memory play in making such devices effective. This chapter also considers the generative roles that different scripts play in the production and meaning of “wordplay,” and it outlines the importance of distinguishing lingual manipulation from grammaticality.

Chapter 3 provides a taxonomy for the many different functions that “wordplay” might serve based on proposals found in previous scholarship. I offer no theoretical framework for the taxonomy, as I am interested only in gathering what we currently know (or think we know) about the topic.¹ The chapter con-

1. The recent attempt by David M. Dalwood, “Solomon, God, and Sharon Walk into a Song: Dialoguing Polysemy in the Song of Songs,” *JHS* 17 (2017): 1–16, perhaps best embodies the opposite approach of using theory, in particular the ideas of Paul Ricoeur, to understand biblical polysemy. I do not feel we can apply theory to a topic for which we only have partial data. Moreover, as the following chapters will make clear, there is no one type of polysemy or paronomasia to which a single theory might apply. For useful

cludes with a brief discussion of the complexities that inform discussions of function.

In chapter 4, I offer a taxonomy for the many kinds of devices labeled “wordplay,” and I demonstrate each device, wherever possible, in Akkadian, Egyptian, Ugaritic, Hebrew, and Aramaic texts. Periodically, I cite epigraphic materials in other Semitic languages such as Moabite, Phoenician, and the language of Deir ‘Alla.² I offer even fewer examples from Sumerian texts due to

recent surveys on the variety of methods applied, see Chaim Cohen, “New Directions in Modern Biblical Hebrew Lexicography,” in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Chaim Cohen et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 441–73; Arthur Keefer, “Phonological Patterns in the Old Testament: A Century of Studies in Sound,” *CBR* 15 (2016): 41–64.

2. There has been an increasing appreciation among scholars for the literary sophistication of ancient inscriptions, especially in terms of style and structure. See, e.g., Jonas C. Greenfield, “Stylistic Aspects of the Sefire Treaty Inscriptions,” *AO* 29 (1965): 1–18; Greenfield, “Early Aramaic Poetry,” *JANES* 11 (1979): 45–51; Terence Collins, “The Kilamuwa Inscription: A Phoenician Poem,” *WdO* 6 (1971): 183–88; Hayim Tawil, “Some Literary Elements in the Opening Sections of the Hadad, Zākīr, and the Nērab II Inscriptions in the Light of East and West Semitic Royal Inscriptions,” *Or* 43 (1974): 40–65; Michael O’Connor, “The Rhetoric of the Kilamuwa Inscription,” *BASOR* 226 (1977): 15–29 (with some reservations on Collins’s study); Pierre Auffret, “Essai sur la structure littéraire de la stèle de Mésha,” *UF* 12 (1980): 109–24; William H. Shea, “The Carpentras Stele: A Funerary Poem,” *JAOS* 101 (1981): 215–17; Victor A. Hurowitz, “Literary Structures in Samsuiluna A,” *JCS* 36 (1984): 191–205; Hurowitz, “Some Literary Observations on the Šitti-Marduk Kudurru (BBSt. 6),” *ZA* 82 (1992): 39–59; Hurowitz, “ABL 1285 and the Hebrew Bible: Literary Topoi in Urad-Gula’s Letter of Petition to Assurbanipal,” *SAAB* 7 (1993): 9–17; Hurowitz, *Divine Service and Its Rewards: Ideology and Poetics in the Hinke Kudurru* (Beersheva, Israel: Ben-Gurion University Press, 1997); Hurowitz, “‘An Heir Created by Aššur’: Literary Observations on the Rassam Prism (A) of Ashurbanipal,” in *Politics as Literature: Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist*, ed. David S. Vanderhooft and Abraham Winitzer (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 223–68; Yitzhak Avishur, *Phoenician Inscriptions and the Bible: Select Inscriptions and Studies in Stylistic and Literary Devices Common to the Phoenician Inscriptions and the Bible* (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publication, 2000); Michael G. Hasel, “The Structure of the Final Hymnic-Poetic Unit on the Merneptah Stela,” *ZAW* 116 (2004): 75–81; Jan-Wim Wesseliuss, “Language Play in the Old Testament and in Ancient North-West Semitic Inscriptions: Some Notes on the Kilamuwa Inscription,” in *The Old Testament in Its World: Papers Read at the Winter Meeting, January 2003, The Society for Old Testament Study and at the Joint Meeting, July 2003, The Society for Old Testament Study and Het Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland en België*, ed. Robert P. Gordon and Johannes C. de Moor, *OS* 52 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 253–65; Aaron Schade, “A Text Linguistic Approach to the Syntax and Style of the Phoenician Inscription of Azatiwada,” *JSS* 50 (2005): 35–58; Schade, “The Syntax and Literary Structure of the Phoenician Inscription of Yehimilik,” *Maarav* 13 (2006): 119–22; Scott B. Noegel, “The Zakkur Inscription,” in *The Ancient*

our limited knowledge of Sumerian poetics. Jacob Klein and Yitschak Sefati explain:

A reliable analysis of Sumerian poetics, and especially the aspect of sound and word play, is hampered by the structure of cuneiform writing and our transliteration system, as well as by the fact that Sumerian literature was committed to writing by scribes whose mother tongue was Akkadian, and when Sumerian was no longer a spoken language.³

Despite our limitations, a number of important publications on Sumerian compositions have shown that scribes employed several of the devices examined here, so I would be remiss to leave them out.⁴ Nevertheless, for the most part, I

Near East: Historical Sources in Translation, ed. Mark W. Chavalas (London: Blackwell, 2006), 307–11; Gary A. Rendsburg, "Linguistic and Stylistic Notes to the Hazon Gabriel Inscription," *DSD* 16 (2009): 107–16; Mario Liverani, "Literary-Political Motifs in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: Measuring Continuity versus Change," in Vanderhooft and Winitzer, *Politics as Literature*, 269–84; Roland Enmarch, "Some Literary Aspects of the Kamose Inscriptions," *JEA* 99 (2013): 253–63.

3. Jacob Klein and Yitschak Sefati, "Word Play in Sumerian Literature," in *Puns and Pundits: Wordplay in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, ed. Scott B. Noegel (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2000), 25 n. 6.

4. See, for example, M. Civil, "The Anzu-Bird and Scribal Whimsies," *JAOS* 92 (1972): 271; Bendt Alster, "An Aspect of 'Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta,'" *RA* 67 (1973): 101–10; M. Civil, "Sumerian Riddles: A Corpus," *AuOr* 5 (1987): 17–35; Bendt Alster, "Paradoxical Proverbs and Satire in Sumerian Literature," *JCS* 27 (1975): 201–30; Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur: An-gim dim-ma*, AnOr 52 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976); Cooper, "Puns and Prebends: The Tale of Enlil and Namzitara," in *Strings and Threads: A Celebration of the Work of Anne Draffkorn Kilmer*, ed. Wolfgang Heimpel and Gabriella Frantz-Szabó (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011): 39–43; Adele Berlin, "Shared Rhetorical Features in Biblical and Sumerian Literature," *JANES* 10 (1978): 35–42; Robert Seth Falkowitz, *The Sumerian Rhetoric Collections* (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1980); Thorkild Jacobsen, "Abstruse Sumerian," in *Ah, Assyria: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph'al, ScrHier 33 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991), 279–91; Jacob Klein, *The Royal Hymns of Shulgi, King of Ur: Man's Quest for Immortal Fame*, TAPS 71 (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1981); Annette Zgoll, *Der Rechtsfall der En-hedu-Ana im Lied nin-me-sara*, AOAT 246 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1997); Klein and Sefati, "Word Play in Sumerian Literature," 23–61; Graham Cunningham, "In the Company of *ni*₂ 'Self' and 'Fear(someness)," in *Analyzing Literary Sumerian: Corpus-Based Approaches*, by Jarle Ebeling and Graham Cunningham (London: Equinox, 2007), 70–104; Bálint Tanos, "The Polysemy and Productivity of the Formative Element *nam* in Old Babylonian Literary Sumerian," in Ebeling and Cunningham, *Analyzing Literary Sumerian*, 250–72; Piotr Michalowski, "Where's A!? Humor and Poetics in the Hymn to the Hoe," in *Cuneiform Studies in Honor of David I. Owen on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Alexandra Kleinerman and Jack M. Sasson (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2010), 195–200.

have left Sumerian out of my final analysis.⁵ Hittite is beyond my ken and thus not represented, though I hasten to refer to Ahmet Ünal, who observes that “Hittite literature seems rather devoid of all kinds of sophisticated literary embellishments, eschewing, for instance, puns, puzzles, plays on words, riddles, any sort of poetry, verse, alliteration, paronomasia, and rhyme.”⁶

I have placed the chapter on taxonomy after the chapter on proposed functions, because it allows me to reconsider (and reorient) the proposed purposes for each of the devices by discussing the effect that each has on readers/listeners. Often, these effects offer insights that help to redefine what we mean by “function.”

I have based the taxonomy of devices again on existing scholarship in order to provide an up-to-date presentation of known examples, though in the interest of comparative study and greater exactitude I employ terms that are less culturally bound or disciplinarily idiosyncratic. I distinguish devices that involve meaning (polysemy) from those that involve sound (paronomasia) and note wherever possible when a device operates aurally and/or visually. As in chapter 3, my interest here is in surveying the devices that scholars already have discovered in order to develop a taxonomy from them, rather than offering examples to fit a preconceived theoretical model. This enables me to present a consensus of scholarship, even if some might dispute particulars. In several cases, I have adopted terms that are Greek in origin, because they accurately identify the devices and because they demonstrate that the devices are far more Eastern and ancient than their Greek usage might suggest (fig. 3). Throughout I have made no attempt to cite every scholar on every topic or every commentary for every passage, though I have labored to be as inclusive as possible in the bibliography. In many ways, I intend the book to serve as a reference work.

The fifth and concluding chapter synthesizes the preceding research. Here I discuss what the evidence tells us about patterns of preference and distribution, and the fundamental strategies that inform “wordplay” in ancient Near Eastern texts. I also propose a number of directions for future research.

TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

Since it would be impossible for those unfamiliar with the languages studied in this book to grasp many of its techniques without seeing them in transliteration,

5. On the difficulties confronting the study of Sumerian poetics, see Piotr Michalowski, “Ancient Poetics,” in *Mesopotamian Poetic Language: Sumerian and Akkadian*, ed. Marianna E. Vogelzang and Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, CM 6 (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1996), 141–53.

6. Ahmet Ünal, “Word Play in Hittite Literature,” in *Hittite Studies in Honor of Harry J. Hoffner Jr. on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Gary Beckman, Richard Beal, and Gregory McMahon (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 377.

I herewith provide a guide. For pedagogical reasons, I resist explaining the nature of the various writing systems until chapter 2.

In Egyptology and Assyriology/Sumerology, it is customary to publish in transliteration, unless it is the first time a text appears. In such cases, a hand-drawn copy and/or photograph of the text often accompanies the transliteration. In biblical studies, it is customary to cite the text in the original without a transliteration. However, since I intend to make this research accessible to those beyond biblical studies, I have provided both the original text and a transliteration for all Hebrew and Aramaic passages. When discussing Egyptian, I sometimes provide portions of the hieroglyphic text, because a particular device is difficult to appreciate without it, but I do so always with an accompanying transliteration.

Readers should be aware that our understanding of how some consonants were pronounced is an approximation based on comparative evidence and/or historical reconstruction—information that has emerged long after the transliteration systems were created. Consequently, in some cases there is something of a dissonance between the conventions used for teaching the sounds of a language and the way we believe phonemes actually were pronounced. I point this out periodically in the guide below. While this creates a potential for confusion, it is crucial for understanding the types of sound devices covered in the ensuing chapters. For those phonemes that are peculiar to English speakers, I have equipped the guide below with their equivalent representation in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).⁷ Of course, it is important to note that regardless of how one pronounces a consonant, we can assume that it had an alliterative effect when repeated in subsequent words.

SUMERIAN

Sumerian is a language isolate, which is to say, it has no known relatives. Moreover, the writing system was mnemonic, and so it was never intended to render pronunciation. The morphophonemics of Sumerian have been reconstructed from this imperfect mnemonic system in conjunction with lexical lists and Akkadian translations. Based on our current knowledge, we can say that the consonants represented in the script include: *b, b', d, g, ġ, h, ħ, k, k', l, m, n, p, r, ř, s, š, t, t', z*, though in standard transliteration practice, the post glottalized

7. Nevertheless, I have resisted employing the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) throughout the book for two reasons. First, each of the transliteration systems employed herein has a very long and intractable history in its discipline, and each continues to be the standard in publications. It only makes sense to retain these systems in order to make the research accessible to scholars within these disciplines. Second, whichever transliteration system I adopt inevitably will leave someone having to acquire it.

stops (*b*, *k*, *t*) are rendered simply *b*, *k*, *t*. The consonant *ġ* has been tentatively labeled a velar nasal or palatal. It can be seen in Akkadian translations that treat the sound as /ng/, as in the English word “sing” [IPA ŋ], and it is primarily represented by the syllabograms ĜÁ, ÁĜ, and MI.⁸ The consonant *ḫ* is pronounced like /ch/ in the Scottish “loch” but with more force [IPA x]. There is a lack of agreement on the consonant *ṛ*. It perhaps represents a consonantal cluster /dr/. I have added it here for the sake of completion, but I have not reflected it in the transliterations. The consonant *š* is pronounced like /sh/ in “sheep” [IPA ʃ]. Some phonemes, like /h/, and the additionally proposed values /g^w/ and /g^b/, only can be inferred from the comparative evidence and certain linguistic environments. I have not marked these in order to make the script as accessible as possible. Sumerian also contained short and long vowels: *a*, *ā*, *e*, *ē*, *i*, *ī*, *u*, *ū*, and possibly *o*, *ō*, though vowel length is usually inferred and not represented in the script. I have disregarded vowel length in the transliterations to simplify the sign values. There are various scholarly traditions on how to transliterate Sumerian. I have opted to capitalize Sumerian signs to differentiate them from Akkadian, which I italicize and place in lower case. Though Sumerologists sometimes employ H for the sound /h/, I have used Ĥ to avoid confusion with the consonant *h* found in other languages in this book.⁹

The two primary dialects of Sumerian are known as EME.ĜIR, the standard dialect, and EME.SAL, a much debated, perhaps literary dialect usually reserved for the direct speech of women and goddesses and the ritual activities of the so-called *gala*-priests.¹⁰ I shall refer to them periodically.

AKKADIAN

Akkadian is an East Semitic language that is represented mainly by two major dialects, Babylonian and Assyrian, though there also were many peripheral dialects. The language possesses the following consonants: *ʾ*, *b*, *d*, *g*, *ḫ*, *k*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *p*, *q*, *r*, *s*, *š*, *ṣ*, *t*, *t*, *w*, *y*, and *z*. All of these occur in English except four: *ḫ*, *š*, *ṣ*, and *t*. The *ḫ* and *š* are pronounced like their Sumerian counterparts; thus again, *ḫ* is like /ch/ in the Scottish “loch” [IPA x] but with more force, and *š* is like /sh/ in “sheep” [IPA ʃ]. The ancient sounds of the *ṣ*, *t*, and the third emphatic (*q*) are unknown, so scholars have adopted the convention of pronouncing them like *ts*, *t*, and *k*, respectively. John Huehnergard offers possibilities based on modern cognate languages:

8. The latter being the EME.SAL dialectal equivalent.

9. For those seeking deeper information on the Sumerian language, see Dietz Otto Edzard, *Sumerian Grammar*, HOS 1, The Near and Middle East 71 (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

10. EME.SAL means “thin” or “high-pitched” language.

The sounds corresponding to *q*, *ṣ*, *t* in the modern Semitic languages of Ethiopia and South Arabia are glottalized, that is, pronounced like *k*, *s*, and *t* with accompanying glottal closure and sharp ejection of air (*q* = [kʰ]; *ṣ* = [sʰ]; *t* = [tʰ]). In Arabic the phonemes corresponding to the Akkadian emphatics are pronounced as follows: *q* is articulated farther back than *k* (at the uvula); *ṣ* and *t* resemble *s* and *t*, respectively, but with a simultaneous constricting of the throat (pharyngealization).¹¹

Since Akkadian employs a syllabic script, vowels are represented. The vowels are /a/, /e/, /i/, and /u/, and they can be short or long. I leave short vowels unmarked and record long vowels with a macron.

EGYPTIAN

The consonants in the Egyptian language include: ʒ, ʔ, j, ʕ, w, b, p, f, m, n, r, h, ḥ, ḫ, ḥ, s, š, k, q, g, t, ṯ, d, and ḏ.¹² Many appear in English except: ʒ, ʔ, j, ʕ, ḥ, ḫ, ḥ, š, ṯ, ḏ. The dissonance between the conventional and actual pronunciation of consonants discussed above is especially noticeable in ancient Egyptian, a language that also underwent change over its more than three thousand year history.¹³ The conventional way of teaching the consonant ʒ is to treat it as an a-vowel, but it once sounded like /r/ or perhaps /l/. It lost its consonantal value around 1500 BCE. Meanwhile, the sign rendered *r* and usually pronounced as /r/ represented two different phonemes in early Egyptian: /r/ and /l/. When teaching the consonants ʔ and j, we typically pronounce the former like /y/ in "yes" and the latter, like /ee/ in "sleep." However, the former was a voiceless glottal plosive that sounded like the last sound in uh-oh, while the latter may have been similar to /i/. If the double reed leaf sign (𓂏) is used, it probably sounded like /y(a)/. The consonant ʕ too, we usually pronounce as an a-vowel, but it was a laryngeal fricative that was pronounced by emitting an *ah*-sound from very deep in the throat, as if gargling [IPA ʕ]. It is identical to the consonant ʕ found in Ugaritic, Hebrew, and Aramaic. The ḥ is pronounced like the voiced /ch/ in German "Ich," and it too appears in Ugaritic, Hebrew, and Aramaic as ḥ [IPA ħ]. The Egyptian ḫ [IPA x] is a much harder version of ḥ and is equivalent to the same sound in

11. John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, HSS 45 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 2.

12. I have opted to transliterate the sound /q/ as *q* rather than *k* in order to aid comparative study with the other languages that contain this phoneme.

13. For those seeking a more comprehensive linguistic approach to the Egyptian language, more information on the phonological changes that occurred over time, and an in-depth discussion of the different conventions for pronunciation that have emerged in Egyptology, see Carsten Peust, *An Introduction to the Phonology of a Dead Language*, MoAS 2 (Göttingen: Peust & Gutschmidt Verlag, 1999).

Akkadian and Ugaritic. The value of \underline{h} is less certain, but it appears to have been a lateral form of h , in some cases closer to the sound /s/, thus [IPA ç]. The consonant \check{s} is again like /sh/ in “sheep,” and is found in each of the languages in this book. The conventional way of teaching the Egyptian \underline{t} is to pronounce it like /ch/ in “chowder.” However, it sometimes renders Semitic /z/ and voiced /th/, so it probably was more of an /s/ sound. The consonant transliterated as \underline{d} is conventionally taught as the /j/ sound in “journey” [IPA j], but since it renders Semitic /z/ and all dental/sibilant emphatics, it was closer to /ts/. The consonants rendered as /k/, /g/, and /q/ are more complex than they might appear. In Old Egyptian, the three graphemes represent three distinct phonemes: /k/ renders an aspirate /k^h/ or a phoneme that later develops into an aspirate, /q/ and /g/ represent two non-aspirate phonemes the distinction between which is impossible to know. The phoneme /q/ was likely labialized, as was /g/, which was an allophone. In the Middle and New Kingdoms the consonants became even more complex. Carsten Peust explains:

So in total we have 5 or 6 phonemes: /k^h/, /k₁/, /k₁^w/, /k₂/, /k₂^w/ (or k₂^w), and /q/. They are rendered by only three different graphemes (or by four if we consider the marginal grapheme ḏ). Labialization is largely ignored in writing, and there is no sign to unambiguously indicate /q/.¹⁴

Indeed, the pronunciation of other consonants also changed over time. In particular, in Late Egyptian, we find the depalatalization of \underline{t} to /t/ and \underline{d} to /d/, though the latter change is not necessarily represented in the writing. The consonants t and r also were often not pronounced in a variety of linguistic environments (e.g., in final position), but remained in writing.¹⁵ Note too that the signs ḥ and ḥ (both rendered with s) were once separate sounds (i.e., /s/ and /ts/), but the two became allographs from the Middle Kingdom on, when they perhaps approximated the English /s/.¹⁶

Egyptian records no vowels, so Egyptologists reconstruct them mostly on the basis of Coptic. Since Coptic was written so much later than the texts covered in this book, we cannot know whether vowel change has occurred, so I have left assonance out of the study.

There are various methods of transliterating grammatical relationships in Egyptian texts. I have opted to employ a dot to mark the verbal past tense and an equal sign (=) for affixed verbal and nominal pronouns. I also mark feminine singular nouns, masculine and feminine plural nouns, duals, and some other

14. Peust, *Introduction to the Phonology of a Dead Language*, 114.

15. See Peust, *Introduction to the Phonology of a Dead Language*, 151–54.

16. On the various proposals of how these consonants were pronounced, see Peust, *Introduction to the Phonology of a Dead Language*, 126.

distinct elements of the language with a period. Thus, *hm.t* "wife," *ts.w* "phrases," *ntr.wt* "goddesses," and *t3.wj* "the Two Lands."

UGARITIC

The consonantal inventory for the Ugaritic language includes: *a, i, u, b, g, d, ḡ, h, w, z, ḥ, ḫ, ṭ, ṣ, y, k, l, m, n, s, ś, ṣ, ḡ, p, ṣ, q, r, š, t,* and *ṭ*. Do not be confused by *a, i, u*; Ugaritic does not record vowels. Instead, these are variations of the same *aleph* glottal plosive followed (or in some cases preceded, according to some) by an *a, i,* or *u* vowel. The sound of the consonant is identical to Hebrew and Aramaic *ʾ* (not to be confused with *ʿ* in each of them, which faces the other way). Because Ugaritic does not render vowels, we cannot delineate cases of assonance. As for the other consonants not found in English, I add: *ḡ, ḥ, ḫ, ṭ, ṣ, s, ś, ṣ, ḡ, š,* and *ṭ*. The consonants *ḥ, ḫ, ʿ,* and *š* are pronounced the same way as they are found in the languages discussed thus far. The problems that exist in ascertaining the true values of the emphatics *ṭ, ṣ, q,* in Akkadian are also realized in Ugaritic. Consequently, scholars regularly pronounce them as *t, ts,* and *k,* respectively. Thus, the only new consonants to introduce include: *ḡ, ṣ, s, ś, ḡ,* and *ṭ*. In Ugaritic, *ḡ* is a voiced sound that is pronounced like /th/ in "there" [IPA ð] and sometimes also can represent /d/. The *ṣ* is pronounced like /th/ in "thought" but with the jaw open [IPA ðʰ]. The sign *s* is not like *s* in English, but a heavy /ss/, as in "hiss," but articulated again with the jaw open [IPA ts]. The *ś* is identical to our *s* (as in "sun"), but readers might be unfamiliar with this transliteration. The *ḡ* is a richer, more guttural reflection of the consonant *ḡ*, and is produced as if saying the initial *g* in "gargle," while gargling [IPA ɣ]. The *ṭ* is pronounced /th/, as in "thank" [IPA θ].¹⁷

HEBREW AND ARAMAIC

Hebrew and Aramaic consonants are identical: *ʾ, b, g, d, h, w, z, ḥ, t, y, k, l, m, n, s, ʿ, p, ṣ, q, r, ś, š,* and *t*. All of these have been discussed already in conjunction with Ugaritic, except for *ʾ*. The phoneme *ʾ* is identical to the Ugaritic variants *a, i,* and *u*. It is a glottal plosive that one must distinguish from *ʿ*, which faces the opposite way. In Hebrew and Aramaic, the consonants *b, g, d, k, p,* and *t* also can be aspirated. Thus, when recorded, I have rendered their aspirated forms as

17. For a deeper treatment of the Ugaritic language, consult John Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription*, HSS 32 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987); Daniel Sivan, *A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language*, HOS 1, The Near and Middle East 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

ḥ, *ḡ*, *ḏ*, *k̄*, *p̄*, and *t̄*.¹⁸ In inscriptions and other texts in which aspiration is not recorded, I transliterate as if not aspirated. Note that while I transliterate every *ḥ* as *h* and every *y* as *ʿ*, evidence suggests that both consonants mask two potential phonemic values. The *ḥ* can represent *h* or *ħ* [IPA *ħ* or *x*], and the *y* can represent *ʿ* or *g̃* [IPA *ʕ* or *ɣ*]. In fact, the two sets of sounds, which are the same as those found in Ugaritic, were still articulated distinctly as late as 200 BCE, after which *ħ* merged with *h*, and *g̃* merged with *ʿ*.¹⁹ I raise this issue periodically throughout when the underlying phonemic values matter to a word's pronunciation and interpretation. As with Akkadian and Ugaritic, the ancient sounds of the consonants *t*, *s*, and *q* are unknown, so here too we adopt the convention of pronouncing them as *t*, *ts*, and *k*.

The reader should take care to note the difference between Hebrew and Aramaic *ḏ*, the Egyptian *ḏ*, and the Ugaritic *ḏ*, each of which differs. As I noted above, the Hebrew and Aramaic *t̄* similarly differs from the same transliteration signs found in Egyptian and Ugaritic.

Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic possess a notation system for recording vowels, which consists of a number of diacritical marks (Hebrew *ניקוד* *niqqūḏ* “pointing”), though it was added to the biblical text at a much later date (see chapter 2). Periodically, I refer to this system as the vocalized text or the pointed text. Hebraists will be able to understand which vowels correspond to which transliterations, and so I will not provide this correspondence here. For those unfamiliar with Hebrew and Aramaic, suffice it to note that I transliterate the vowels as follows: short (*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*), partial (*ə*, *ā*, *ē*, *ō*), and long (*ā*, *ē*, *ī*, *ō*, *ū*).²⁰ For those Hebrew and Aramaic texts that appear in inscriptions or elsewhere without vowels, I simply transliterate the consonants. I do the same for other Northwest Semitic scripts that do not record vowels.

For the few terms cited from medieval and modern Hebrew, I have followed the common convention to leave the Hebrew unpointed and to transliterate it without attention to vowel length, for example, *זוג מלים* *ziwwug millim* “word pairs.”

The chart below should help readers to distinguish the sounds of the consonants that one could potentially confuse when moving from language to language.

18. The fricativization of these letters occurred sometime around 400 BCE, possibly under Aramaic influence. See Gary A. Rendsburg, “Phonology: Biblical Hebrew,” in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. Geoffrey Khan (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 3:104–5.

19. See Rendsburg, “Phonology: Biblical Hebrew,” 104–5.

20. A note to Hebraists: I have elected to use *h* to transliterate cases of *matres lectionis* in final *he* forms and cases in which the consonant *h* is pronounced (with a *mappiq*), because I did not want the visual impression of the consonant marking a *matres lectionis* to be lost to readers unfamiliar with the script. Those wanting to see which of these cases an *h* represents in the transliteration can consult the adjoining Hebrew.

Fig. 1. Consonants in Each Language with Descriptions and IPA Alphabet

Consonant	Sumerian	Akkadian	Egyptian	Ugaritic	Hebrew	Aramaic
ʔ			l or r			
ʔ <i>aleph</i> — glottal plosive				<i>a, i, u</i> represent the consonant <i>aleph</i> plus the vowel <i>a, i</i> or <i>u</i> —as in the second syllable of uh-oh	as in the second syllable of uh-oh	as in the second syllable of uh-oh
ʕ <i>ayin</i> — laryngeal fricative			<i>ah</i> -sound, but from very deep in the throat as if gargling [IPA ʕ]	<i>ah</i> -sound, but from very deep in the throat as if gargling [IPA ʕ]	<i>ah</i> -sound, but from very deep in the throat as if gargling [IPA ʕ]	<i>ah</i> -sound, but from very deep in the throat as if gargling [IPA ʕ]
ḅ					aspirated <i>b</i> [IPA bʰ]	aspirated <i>b</i> [IPA bʰ]
ḏ			<i>ts</i> as in tse-tse fly [IPA sʰ]	<i>th</i> as in there [IPA ð]	aspirated <i>d</i> [IPA dʰ]	aspirated <i>d</i> [IPA dʰ]
ḡ	<i>ng</i> as in sing [IPA ŋ]					
ḥ				<i>g</i> as in gargle, while gargling (a more guttural form of <i>ayin</i>) [IPA ɣ]		

Consonant	Sumerian	Akkadian	Egyptian	Ugaritic	Hebrew	Aramaic
g̃					aspirated g [IPA g ^h]	aspirated g [IPA g ^h]
h			voiced <i>ch</i> in German Ich [IPA h]	voiced <i>ch</i> in German Ich [IPA h]	voiced <i>ch</i> in German Ich [IPA h]	voiced <i>ch</i> in German Ich [IPA h]
h̃	<i>ch</i> as in loch [IPA x]	<i>ch</i> as in loch [IPA x]	<i>ch</i> as in loch [IPA x]	<i>ch</i> as in loch [IPA x]		
h̄			uncertain-perhaps a lateral <i>h</i> , closer to <i>š</i>			
i			like the last sound in uh-oh			
j			like <i>ee</i> in weep [IPA j] or (if double reed sign) <i>y(a)</i>			
k̃					aspirated <i>k</i> [IPA k ^h]	aspirated <i>k</i> [IPA k ^h]
p̃					aspirated <i>p</i> [IPA p ^h]	aspirated <i>p</i> [IPA p ^h]
q		<i>k</i> with a glottal closure and sharp ejection of air [IPA k'] or <i>q</i> articulated farther back than <i>k</i> (at the uvula)		<i>k</i> with a glottal closure and sharp ejection of air [IPA k'] or <i>q</i> articulated farther back than <i>k</i> (at the uvula)	<i>k</i> with a glottal closure and sharp ejection of air [IPA k'] or <i>q</i> articulated farther back than <i>k</i> (at the uvula)	<i>k</i> with a glottal closure and sharp ejection of air [IPA k'] or <i>q</i> articulated farther back than <i>k</i> (at the uvula)
s				heavy <i>ss</i> , as in hiss, with the jaw open	heavy <i>ss</i> , as in hiss, with the jaw open	heavy <i>ss</i> , as in hiss, with the jaw open

Consonant	Sumerian	Akkadian	Egyptian	Ugaritic	Hebrew	Aramaic
<i>s</i>		<i>ts</i> as in tse-tse fly perhaps glottalized [IPA sʔ] or pharyn- gealized [IPA sʕ]		<i>ts</i> as in tse-tse fly perhaps glottalized [IPA sʔ] or pharyn- gealized [IPA sʕ]	<i>ts</i> as in tse-tse fly perhaps glottalized [IPA sʔ] or pharyn- gealized [IPA sʕ]	<i>ts</i> as in tse-tse fly perhaps glottalized [IPA sʔ] or pharyn- gealized [IPA sʕ]
<i>š</i>	<i>sh</i> as in sheep [IPA ʃ]	<i>sh</i> as in sheep [IPA ʃ]	<i>sh</i> as in sheep [IPA ʃ]	<i>sh</i> as in sheep [IPA ʃ]	<i>sh</i> as in sheep [IPA ʃ]	<i>sh</i> as in sheep [IPA ʃ]
<i>ś</i>				<i>s</i> as in sun [IPA s]	<i>s</i> as in sun [IPA s]	<i>s</i> as in sun [IPA s]
<i>t</i>			type of <i>s</i> sound renders Semitic /z/ and voiced /th/	<i>th</i> as in thank [IPA θ]	aspirated <i>t</i> [IPA θʰ]	aspirated <i>t</i> [IPA θʰ]
<i>t</i>		<i>t</i> with root of tongue retracted [IPA tʰ]		<i>t</i> with root of tongue retracted [IPA tʰ]		
<i>ʔ</i>				<i>th</i> as in thought, but with the jaw open [IPA θʰ]		