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CONTACT AND CONTEXT:

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BIBLE

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Abbreviations for Linguistic Glosses¹

1	first person	F	feminine
2	second person	INF	infinitive
3	third person	M	masculine
ABS	<i>status absolutus</i>	NEG	negation
ACC	accusative	OBJ	object
ACT	active	PL	plural
ADJ	adjective	PN	personal name
ADV	adverb	POS	possessive marker
ART	definite article	PREP	preposition
CON	<i>status constructus</i>	PRO	pronoun
CONJ	conjunction	PTC	particle
DOM	direct object marker	REL	relative
DAT	dative	SG	singular
DN	divine name		

¹ According to the Leipzig Glossing Rules

Abbreviations of Biblical Books¹

HEBREW BIBLE/OLD TESTAMENT

Gen	Genesis	Isa	Isaiah
Exod	Exodus	Jer	Jeremiah
Lev	Leviticus	Lam	Lamentations
Num	Numbers	Ezek	Ezekiel
Deut	Deuteronomy	Dan	Daniel
Josh	Joshua	Hos	Hosea
Judg	Judges	Joel	Joel
Ruth	Ruth	Amos	Amos
1 Kgs	1 Kings	Obad	Obadiah
2 Kgs	1 Kings	Jon	Jonah
1 Chron	1 Chronicles	Mic	Micah
2 Chron	2 Chronicles	Nah	Nahum
Ezra	Ezra	Hab	Habakkuk
Neh	Nehemiah	Zeph	Zephaniah
Esth	Esther	Hag	Haggai
Job	Job	Zech	Zechariah
Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Mal	Malachi
Song	Song of Solomon		

¹ Following the Society of Biblical Literature guidelines.

PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

Jub. Jubilees

1 En. 1 Enoch

Chapter 1: Introduction and Scope of the Project

I. Introduction

Language contact is part of the human experience. This linguistic interaction attests to encounters between people groups that encode the formation of identity, a process preserved in writing in many parts of the Hebrew Bible. The fact that contact between ancient Israelites and other ancient Near Eastern people groups resulted in foreign linguistic features in the Bible has been recognized since antiquity. For example, Theodore of Mopsuestia in the fourth century CE stated that

ܐܘܘܪܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܒܪܐܗܡ ܨܝܕܩܝܬܐ ܕܟܘܢܬܐ ܕܘܢܝܘܢܐ. ܘܕܥܝܪܐ ܨܝܕܩܝܬܐ ܨܝܕܩܝܬܐ ܕܥܒܪܐܗܡ ܨܝܕܩܝܬܐ ܕܘܢܝܘܢܐ.
ܘܕܥܝܪܐ ܨܝܕܩܝܬܐ ܨܝܕܩܝܬܐ ܕܥܒܪܐܗܡ ܨܝܕܩܝܬܐ ܕܘܢܝܘܢܐ.

“his (Abraham’s) language was corrupted through contact with the Canaanites.... For this reason, we say that the Hebrew tongue was comprised of many tongues. Yet it bears a great resemblance to Syriac.”¹

Theodore was aware of both the composite nature of Hebrew and the ability to trace its genealogical relatedness in some fashion to other Semitic languages such as Syriac. This recognition of both linguistic similarities and differences between these languages would, in many ways, augur the concerns of genealogical and contact linguists in modern times.² In the

¹ Lucas van Rompay, *Le Commentaire Sur Genèse-Exode 9,32 Du Manuscrit (Olim) Diyarbakır 22* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptorum Syri 205; Lovanii: In Aedibus E. Peeters, 1986), 69.

² For an excellent assessment of Theodore’s “rudimentary conception of historical and comparative linguistics” in this quote, see Yonatan Moss, “The Language of Paradise: Hebrew or Syriac? Linguistic Speculations and Linguistic Realities in Antiquity,” in *Paradise in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Views* (edited by Markus Bockmuehl and Guy G. Strousma; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 131-33. Theodore’s quote stems from an eighth century manuscript known as the Diyarbakir manuscript, an anonymous commentary that attributes the above thoughts to Theodore. Thus, the quotation is from centuries after his death (428 CE), and the question arises whether or not it can historically be attributed to the Antiochene Father. Moss is correct to ascribe this quote

ninth century CE, Isho‘dad of Merv likewise observed the influence of language contact in Babylon on Syriac and how this linguistic interaction was analogous to similar processes in Hebrew:

אלה הנהגוהו ק, אר חבנהו חבנהו קהו גנהו לענה. אנהו גנהו לענהו חבנהו חבנהו גנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו
 גנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו אנהו
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“It is after all not surprising that Hebrew is a composite of (several) languages, since we may ascertain that even Syriac has been altered and corrupted with the changing of times, and the duration of generations. [...] In fact, the Syriac language was especially corrupted in Babylon, because of the kings that carried each other (there) as captives, for the stranger and the immigrant never have a pure and polished language.”³

to Theodore, though he proves more the historical plausibility than actual authorship. Moss reaches his conclusions on interesting linguistic and historical grounds. The Hebrew in the time of Theodore was already mixed with Aramaic and close to being a dead spoken language. Thus, he contrasts a “pure and polished” (*שפה טהורה*) Syriac (the language originally spoken in paradise and still spoken in pristine form in Babylon from Theodore’s perspective) with the Canaanized and mixed form of Abraham’s Syriac. After Abraham moved to Canaan, this mixed language became a new language in his view, namely Hebrew. The Hebrew that Theodore knew was blended with Aramaic sufficiently for him to posit a historical background and reason for such mixing. Moss’ argument is likely correct, even though Theodore’s views on the nature of Syriac are perhaps more complicated than Moss acknowledges. For example, Robert C. Hill claims that while Theodoret of Cyrus knew Syriac from birth and it was an asset to his exegetical analysis of difficult or rare Hebrew words, Theodore, his mentor, “despised” the language (*Reading the Old Testament in Antioch* [Bible in Ancient Christianity 5; Boston: Brill, 2005], 8). Moss adeptly separates the issue of Theodore’s use of Syriac textual traditions (which he rarely consulted) and states that even though Theodore may not have had in-depth knowledge of Syriac (Hill agrees, stating that it was “unfamiliar” to Theodore), he nonetheless could support Syriac as the original language in paradise. For another discussion on the language of paradise, especially focusing on Dante’s conception of a new language and the loss of the *forma locutionis* (which Dante attempted to recapture and thus outdo Adam), see Umberto Eco, *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy* (translated by William Weaver; Italian Academy Lectures; New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 23-51.

³ Moss contrasts Theodore’s quote above with Isho‘dad’s sentiments. Whereas Theodore claimed that Syriac was a “pure and polished” language, Isho‘dad, as well as Theodore bar Koni in his *Book of Scholia* written in the middle of the eighth century, state that Syriac was also a mixed language. The historical realities of the ninth century brought to light the impetus behind this change of perception between Isho‘dad and bar Koni and the centuries earlier Theodore. By the ninth century, the spread of Arabic and its influence on Syriac would no longer make Theodore’s claim valid. Even though Isho‘dad and bar Koni also believed Syriac to have been the original language of paradise, they could not appeal to any existing “pure and polished” form of the language (Moss, “The Language of Paradise: Hebrew or Syriac?,” 133-34). Bar Koni states, in words similar to those of Isho‘dad:

dry land, and of plants.”⁴ On the other extreme, Assyriologists of later generations such as Benno Landsberger cautioned against comparative work when a culture had provided sufficient literary and linguistic information to be understood in its own context.⁵ William Hallo proposed a mediating position, arguing that similarities and differences should be observed in the juxtaposition of biblical texts with other ancient Near Eastern literature.⁶ Though Hallo’s approach has proven to be influential, he offered more of an openness towards meaningful divergences in comparative work and little in the way of methodological sophistication.⁷

The preceding outline of the development of what has become known as “the comparative method” in biblical studies is only a fragmentary presentation of the many twists and turns apparent in the study of the Hebrew Bible in its ancient Near Eastern milieu. An abiding interest remains in this approach to the Bible, evident in biblical studies itself as well as in the popular imagination pertaining to scholarly work that involves the archaeological, literary, and linguistic backgrounds of the Hebrew Bible. Regarding the former, Jeffrey H. Tigay’s edited volume *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* provides an exemplary precedent for comparative work, especially as it relates to critical claims concerning the Hebrew Bible. As Tigay states in the preface, rigorous foundations for examinations in the genesis and growth of the text should be based as much as is possible on verifiable and observable phenomena, which

⁴ Smith, *The Chaldean Account of Genesis* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1876), 67.

⁵ Landsberger, “Die Eigenbegrifflichkeit der babylonischen Welt,” *Islamica* 2 (1926): 355-72; *The Conceptual Autonomy of the Babylonian World* (translated by Thorkild Jacobsen, Benjamin R. Foster, and Heinrich von Siebenthal; Sources and Monographs, Monographs on the Ancient Near East; Malibu, California: Undena Publications, 1976).

⁶ Hallo, “Biblical History in Its Near Eastern Setting: The Contextual Approach” in *Scripture in Context* (edited by Carl D. Evans, William W. Hallo, and John B. White; Pittsburgh Theological Monograph 34; Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1980), 1-26.

⁷ See Chapter 2.

involve internal and external criteria.⁸ As such, not only are internal cues considered (narrative inconsistencies, doublets, legal contradictions), but weight is given to information from both textual traditions⁹ and neighboring ancient cultures.

The emergence of the study of ancient scribal practices, education, and social standing is also indicative of the use of sociological and historical backgrounds to anchor comparative work with the Hebrew Bible in more tangible, objective frameworks. Michael Fishbane's *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* represents an earlier exegetical consideration of the scribal influence on the canon as part of an internal dialogue that is continuous with rabbinic approaches to the Hebrew Bible.¹⁰ Recent studies on the role of reading and writing in the ancient Near East have also begun to influence the reconstruction of ancient Israelite and Judean scribes.¹¹ For example, Florian Coulmas' work *The Writing Systems of the World* is a socio-linguistic exploration of how writing systems influence language. Language cannot simply be understood as though vocabulary and morpho-syntax autonomously and linearly evolve. Rather, people use language and writing systems in ways that complicate simplistic models of development. Thus,

⁸ Tigay, "Introduction," in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism: With a New Foreward by Richard Elliott Friedman* (edited by Jeffrey H. Tigay; Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005), 1-20. See especially his discussions on analogues of composition relative to the critical reconstruction of the composition of the Pentateuch. These analogues may involve chronological and cultural closeness with the Hebrew Bible as well as data from later and, at times, from more distant cultures than ancient Israel.

⁹ See also Emanuel Tov's seventh chapter in *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, in which he discusses how some of the larger, "sizeable differences" preserved in the manuscript traditions are evidence of the origins and composition histories of the texts, issues traditionally belonging to literary/source criticism pertaining to authors/editors and not copyists. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (3rd edition; revised and expanded; Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2012), 283-326.

¹⁰ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1988), 19. See also Yair Zakovitch for a statement on the continuity between inner-biblical exegesis and postbiblical interpretation ("Inner-biblical Interpretation," *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism* [edited by Matthias Henze; Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012], 61).

¹¹ Abraham Geiger's work on scribal alteration of rabbinic and biblical manuscripts was foundational to Fishbane's analysis and preceded him by well over a century (*Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der innern Entwicklung des Judenthums* [Breslau: J. Hainauer, 1857]). More recently, Andrew Teeter has taken inspiration from both Fishbane and Geiger in his as yet unpublished dissertation ("Exegesis in the Transmission of Biblical Law in the Second Temple Period: Preliminary Studies," [PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2008]).

the use of writing systems, which is often a product of political and sociological circumstances, is also a factor that shapes the structure of language according to Coulmas.¹² These considerations have not been lost on biblical scholars, as William Schniedewind's work on canonization and Seth Sanders' evaluation on the development of Biblical Hebrew attest.¹³ Moreover, the value of socio-linguistic insights on the use of language and script for expressing communal identity and values forms the basis for Schniedewind's and Steven Weitzman's analyses of the pervasiveness of Hebrew at Qumran.¹⁴

The historical reconstruction of the social function and education of scribes has accompanied this focus in scholarship on writing systems and the uses of language and literature. The literature on scribes from various ancient Near Eastern empires and states *per se* (Assyria, Babylonia, Hittite, Egypt, Ugarit, etc.) is massive, and will not be reviewed here.¹⁵ Recent works such as Karel van der Toorn's *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*,¹⁶ Leo Perdue's *The Sword and the Stylus: An Introduction to Wisdom in the Age of Empires*,¹⁷ and Christopher Rollston's *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence*

¹² Coulmas, *The Writing Systems of the World* (Language Library; New York: B. Blackwell, 1989).

¹³ William M. Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew* (Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library; New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2013); *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); "Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999): 235-52; "Sociolinguistic Reflections on the Letter of a 'Literate' Solider (Lachish 3)," *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik* 13 (2000): 157-67; "Linguistic Ideology in Qumran Hebrew," in *Diggers at the Well: Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira* (edited by T. Muraoka and J. F. Elwonde; Boston, Massachusetts: Brill, 2000), 245-55; "Prolegomena for the Sociolinguistics of Classical Hebrew," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5 (2004), article 6; Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Traditions; Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

¹⁴ Weitzman, "Why Did the Qumran Community Write in Hebrew?," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119 (1999): 35-45.

¹⁵ A synthesis of scribalism in the Mesopotamian empires appears in Dominique Charpin's *Reading and Writing in Babylon* (translated by Jane Marie Todd; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010).

¹⁶ Van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹⁷ Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus: An Introduction to Wisdom in the Age of Empires* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008).

from the Iron Age¹⁸ examine the historical background of scribes from non-Israelite cultures, where training and social status are more apparent than in the biblical record. This historical grounding serves as an anchor for evaluating the role of scribalism in ancient Israel and its literature.¹⁹ David M. Carr has also exploited wider cultural studies of scribalism for his work *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* and, more recently, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction*.²⁰

The advantage of such background material is that it aids the scholar in reconstructing periods of history for societies that otherwise do not have much historically attested material. Indeed, information on scribes in ancient Northwest Semitic societies is sparse; however, reconstructing the historical conditions of scribalism based on better attested (though by no means exhaustive) accounts from Mesopotamia and Egypt risks obscuring cultural

¹⁸ Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age* (Archaeology and Biblical Studies 11; Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010).

¹⁹ The use of this ancient background for the reconstruction of the status of scribes in ancient Israel is sometimes at variance with the books which are more specialized on the surrounding cultures themselves. For example, Rollston states that he is “confident that scribes in both Mesopotamia and Egypt believed that the scribal vocation was a superb one. That is, the life of the scribe may have required arduous training, but the rewards were argued to be many, in terms of wealth and prestige” (*Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel*, 88). Rollston makes this claim in the process of arguing that alphabetic systems were not necessarily easy to learn and therefore more accessible in terms of broader literacy. Charpin makes the opposite argument about cuneiform, namely that it was more accessible than is commonly thought and that literacy in certain periods in Mesopotamia was more widespread than previously assumed. Regarding the social status of scribes in Mesopotamia, Charpin states that “there is no extant text from Mesopotamia that exalts the scribe at the expense of members of other trades, as happened in Egypt” (*Reading and Writing in Babylon*, 66). Charpin understands the role of the scribe in Mesopotamia as more of an artisan, praised for “manual dexterity” and not necessarily for intellectual acumen (*Reading and Writing in Babylon*, 66, 97). Moreover, he states that scribes likely had a variety of social statuses: some were of high social standing, but others did not achieve the wealth and prestige that Rollston seems to indicate were part of the results of training. Charpin cites a letter in which Yasitna-abum described the process he undertook to achieve the requisite training to become a scribe at the behest of Queen Iltani. The queen, however, did not support the newly minted scribe as much as she had promised and Yasitna-abum thus made known his displeasure at the discrepancy between his expectations and reality (*Reading and Writing in Babylon*, 97). In one sense, Rollston is correct that the perceived benefits of scribal education could entice students to the profession, thereby explaining why Yasitna-abum entered the profession. The reality, however, may have entailed more social stratification among scribes (some wealthy with prestige, others without such benefits). Additionally, Charpin claims that the picture of the social status of scribes in Mesopotamia remains incomplete (*Reading and Writing in Babylon*, 97).

²⁰ Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

distinctiveness in Israel and Judah. In other words, such studies potentially remake ancient Israel and Judah in the image of the larger scribal centers of the cultures that dominated and conquered the Levant. As Sanders notes, Carr and van der Toorn acknowledge the differences between Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Levant, but they also operate on an assumption: that “Mesopotamian and Egyptian written traditions, spanning thousands of years and hundreds of sites with dozens of local cultures, reflect a more or less uniform Near Eastern scribal culture.”²¹ Sanders further clarifies that we know so much about Mesopotamia and Egypt because they are “so different from Israel,” meaning that these were complex empires with economies that could support a vaster network of scribes than seems to have been available in Israel or Judah.²² Both Sanders and Rollston evaluate primarily the existing evidence for conclusions that can be made about scribalism in ancient Israel and Judah. Although Rollston makes comparative appeal, he does so sparingly and focuses most of his work on attested Israelite and Judean data.

Rollston and Sanders correctly advocate such internal foci for reconstructing the nature of scribalism in ancient Israel and Judah;²³ however, the reality remains that in some measure Israelite and Judean scribes had access to Mesopotamian traditions. Many of the debates about how strata within the Hebrew Bible interact with each other (the relationship of the D source to the E source) are also taking place with regard to external literature (the relationship of the Covenant Code to the Code of Hammurapi).²⁴ Much of this debate has centered on the work of

²¹ Sanders, *Invention of Hebrew*, 8.

²² Sanders, *Invention of Hebrew*, 8.

²³ For Sanders, the focus is the development of a vernacular and a literature that expresses the formation of a nation in that vernacular. He cites comparative evidence from the Neo-Assyrian Empire, claiming that this imperial rhetoric helped to shape this vernacular even as the literature written in this vernacular defined itself against the empire.

²⁴ An analogous linguistic relationship appears in Bernd Heine and Tania Kuteva’s work on grammatical replication. They claim that internal processes of grammaticalization are consistent with the results of certain types of contact induced changes, namely grammatical replication. See Heine and Kuteva, *Language Contact and*

David P. Wright, especially his book length work *Inventing God's Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Used and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi*.²⁵ The disagreements regarding putative similarities between certain biblical laws and the Laws of Hammurapi all pertain to issues of contact: was the contact oral or written? What are the genres of the Covenant Code and Code of Hammurapi, and does genre determine whether or not there is direct contact between the scribes who produced the Covenant Code and Akkadian literature and legal traditions? When would ancient scribes writing in Hebrew have had access to Akkadian sources, and how would these scribes, whose primary language was written alphabetically (a system very different from cuneiform), have learned, understood, and adapted foreign literatures and writing systems to their native conventions? The works of Otto Eckart and William Morrow are helpful in addressing these questions, although their focus is on the Book of Deuteronomy.²⁶ The foregoing examples are only indicative of a much larger debate about how Israel had contact with the literary material of Mesopotamia, a debate that is analyzed in extensive detail in the following chapters. All such matters of contact must be discussed in terms of the linguistic traces that interaction with an earlier source would have left.

III. Scope and Purpose of This Project

These linguistic traces, some more certain than others, are fundamentally important since they pertain to the aforementioned question of contact, and yet what remains lacking after these

Grammatical Change (Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1, 9, 11, etc. In other ways, external and internal evaluations of citation, contact, and rewriting in the Hebrew Bible have been discussed, especially techniques such as repetitive resumption, which is a redactional technique in both cuneiform documents and in D's reuse of legal material in the Covenant Code. See Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 19.

²⁵ Wright, *Inventing God's Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Used and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²⁶ See, for example, William S. Morrow's review of Otto Eckart's *Das Deuteronomium* ("Cuneiform Literacy and Deuteronomic Composition," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 62 [2005]: 204-13).

debates is a rigorous linguistic method for comparative work.²⁷ It is the purpose of this dissertation to bring such a linguistic theory to bear on the study of the Hebrew Bible in its ancient Near Eastern context. Doing so adds methodological sophistication to the study of the interaction between ancient Israelites and Judeans and the literature of the ancient Near East. This dissertation focuses on Akkadian and Aramaic literature, since contact is both historically and literarily defensible. The application of contact linguistics to the interface between biblical literature and Akkadian and Aramaic literature draws on both previously recognized as well as new examples. The insights gained from contact linguistics enhances the older data that have been presented for the case of linguistic and literary contact between ancient Hebrew scribes and Mesopotamian literature. These data in turn lead to new considerations and new data to evaluate. Indeed, contact linguists seek to describe not only the result of contact (such as loans and calques), but also the processes that lead to these results: is calquing produced through grammatical replication, leading to previously unattested grammatical possibilities in the replica language? Are there constraints to borrowing, such as stability gradients within a language and the extent of multilingualism in the society of the recipient language?²⁸ Are there typologies of language contact that can predict the results in a given sociolinguistic and sociohistorical context?

Before addressing the biblical data proper, I explore the history of the comparative method in biblical studies in chapter 2. Tracing this history in a much more comprehensive fashion than the few brief comments above is necessary for several reasons. First, even before

²⁷ For a more empirical approach to the literary aspect of borrowing which considers the role of differences between the same literary texts that existed in the periphery and center of Mesopotamian society, see Tigay, "On Evaluating Claims of Literary Borrowing," in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (edited by Mark E. Cohen, et al; Bethesda, Maryland: CDL, 1993), 250-55.

²⁸ See Chapter 3 for a more technical discussion, and for definition of some of the terms mentioned above.

the languages of the ancient Near East inscribed on tablets and monuments were discovered in modern times, exegetes sought to find the appropriate historical contexts in which to interpret various passages of the Hebrew Bible. Even a few ancient exegetes recognized that the time period in which a biblical narrative or law is presented was not necessarily the same as the historical time and place in which that passage originated. Questions about which time period is the correct era to place the composition of a passage and what historical and cultural circumstances led to the production of such texts are closely related to questions about broader cultural influences on the Hebrew Bible. Thus, at least for certain passages in the Hebrew Bible, comparative questions are closely bound with meaning. As briefly mentioned above, popular imagination regarding the historical backgrounds of the Hebrew Bible tacitly affirms this connection. Even in medieval times (as well as in the early days of Assyriology) these wedged-shaped writings fascinated the imaginations of European travelers. These people often speculated about the cultures that produced the cuneiform writings and how the Bible should be read in light of them.²⁹ Tracing the history of the comparative method in biblical studies highlights the importance of asking such questions in order to understand the meaning of a text.

Second, providing the history of scholarly attempts to compare biblical material with extra-biblical material reveals the need for introducing methodological sophistication and nuance into the enterprise. Many of the insights gleaned from the comparative method (as evaluating the literature of the Hebrew Bible in light of neighboring cultures has been termed) remain valid; however, this is the case in spite of the fact that no linguistic method currently informs the

²⁹ For a history of such travel accounts and the early attempts to understand cuneiform, see Robert William Rogers, *A History of Babylonia and Assyria* (2 volumes; New York: Eaton and Mains, 1910), 1:1-253. For a well-written account of the history of decipherment beginning from the early to mid-nineteenth century, see Morgens Trolle Larsen, *The Conquest of Assyria: Excavations in an Antique Land, 1840-1860* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

examination of the influence, if not direct contact, of ancient Near Eastern societies and literatures on the Hebrew Bible. Yet linguistic traces are often the bits of evidence that scholars attempt to marshal in order to prove that such comparison is warranted. A method is needed to account not only for the linguistic data but also for the socio-political factors that result in some form of contact between languages. Indeed, linguistic data cannot be understood adequately without also considering the historical forces that produce cultural, linguistic, and literary contact. Contact linguistics, in many of its forms, can provide such a methodological grounding for the comparative method in biblical studies. This section also includes an examination of linguistic studies between Hebrew, Aramaic, and Akkadian. While the authors of such studies have in a preliminary manner used contact linguistics, the use is often of outdated studies. These works still tend to focus on structural elements of contact exclusively, thereby ignoring historical and literary context, despite the fact that all of these are mutually informing and crucial to a study of the nature and extent of contact-induced change (see also the paragraph below).

In Chapter 3, contact linguistics is introduced as a method through which the data treated in this dissertation are examined. Since many biblical scholars are not familiar with the field, while few contact linguists are familiar with biblical studies, the basic components of contact linguistics and their relevance for biblical studies will be discussed. In the second half of this chapter, I address the historical evidence of contact between ancient Israel and Akkadian speakers and scribes, theories about how this contact occurred, and the literary representation of this contact in the Hebrew Bible. This involves the question of whether or not Aramaic served as a linguistic intermediary between literature in the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian literature. The assumption of Aramaic mediation is frequent in biblical studies, both implicitly and

explicitly, and has been a guiding theory for many debates regarding the nature of contact between the scribes who produced the Hebrew Bible and Akkadian scribes. There is, however, not only a dearth of Aramaic evidence for pre-exilic mediation but also positive evidence from Mesopotamian sources that Aramaic was not used for many of the genres of literature prior to the Persian period that are the likely *loci* of contact between biblical authors and Akkadian authors and scribes. Moreover, contact linguists have, in other studies, shown that the types of reasons cited for the assumption of an Aramaic intermediary are invalid. As shown throughout this dissertation, a comprehensive study of linguistic, literary, and historical data indicates that just as the sociological and political realities of Israel and Judah were dynamic and changed over time relative to Mesopotamian culture and empire, so also Israel and Judah's access to these traditions was equally dynamic. At times this access involved direct contact with Akkadian and at times contact with Aramaic. These considerations are important to proving the likelihood and extent of direct contact between ancient Israelites and Judeans and writers and speakers of Akkadian. Any study in contact linguistics must take historical contact, uses of literature, and sociological factors into account. The relationship between the Hebrew Bible and literature and language from surrounding ancient Near Eastern empires is no exception.³⁰

³⁰ Heine and Kuteva at times downplay the role of sociolinguistic factors in their study on grammatical replication, claiming that "there is evidence to suggest that social variables are largely irrelevant as determinants of contact-induced change— at least of the kind studied here" (*Language Contact and Grammatical Change*, 12-13). They cite a study conducted by Alexandra Aikhenwald to support their claim that sociolinguistic factors do not need to be addressed in their analyses, although Heine and Kuteva state that sociolinguistic variables, especially age, can (though not inevitably) be informative for contact-induced change (*Language Contact and Grammatical Change*, 28-29). Thus, Heine and Kuteva identify a limited explanatory role for sociolinguistic elements in contact-induced changes for grammatical replication. Aikhenwald and R. M. W. Dixon have stated elsewhere that linguistic hierarchies in contact situations are dependent on many different social variables ("Introduction," in *Areal Diffusion and Genetic Inheritance: Problems in Comparative Linguistics* [edited by Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon; New York: Oxford University Press], 14-16). Heine and Kuteva examine a phenomenon in contact situations which has an analogue in internal grammaticalization, and they may not need to appeal to the types of sociological profiles of separate communities as they come into contact since once the contact has taken place the contact-induced change then develops along regular, universal, and internally consistent lines. Sociolinguistic factors,

In the first part of chapter 3, I present a short history and explanation of the more theoretical components of contact linguistics. The concerns and developments within contact linguistics in some ways mirror those of comparative studies in the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, studies in contact linguistics have also taken the title “comparative method,” though independently of the same concerns and method in biblical studies.³¹ As previously stated, some researchers of the ancient Near East have begun to adopt contact linguistics as a method for exploring linguistic elements in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Akkadian. While studies between Biblical Hebrew and Akkadian have been slower to adopt this method, other scholars such as Mario Fales have fruitfully employed contact linguistic frameworks for describing contact-induced changes between Aramaic and Akkadian.³² Fales’ work will be discussed more in Chapter 4.³³ For the purposes of Chapter 3, however, the diversity of modes of contact-induced

however, are important for how and why such changes occur even if these very factors do not cause major distinctions between internal and external processes and procedures for language change in each type of contact-induced phenomenon. Moreover, Heine and Kuteva agree that sociolinguistic factors are involved in contact generally; they simply maintain that the kinds of linguistic changes they investigate are not socially determined. The relationship between sociolinguistics and contact linguistics is explored further in Chapter 3.

³¹ See Mark Durie and Malcolm Ross, *The Comparative Method Reviewed: Regularity and Irregularity in Language Contact* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

³² See also Holger Gzella’s work on later Hebrew dialects and Aramaic (“The Use of the Participle in the Hebrew Bar Kosiba Letters in the Light of Aramaic,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 6 [2006]: 90-98). See also Claudia A. Ciancaglini’s study of Iranian loanwords in Syriac (including some reference to Greek words loaned into Syriac), a study that makes some limited use of modern theories of contact such as the classic introduction to the field by Sarah Thomason and Terence Kaufman (*Iranian Loanwords in Syriac* [Beiträge zur Iranistik 28; Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2008]).

³³ Many of these works pertain to letters, legal, and administrative texts, though aspects of royal inscriptions will also be addressed. See F. M. Fales and J. N. Postgate, eds., *Imperial Administrative Records* (State Archives of Assyria 7, 11; Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press, 1992); Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period* (Materiali per il lessico aramaico 1; Studi semitici nuova 2; Roma: Università degli studi “La sapienza,” 1986); *Cento Lettere Neo-Assire: Translitterazione e Traduzione, Commento e Note* (Quaderni del Seminario di iranistica, uralo-altaistica e caucasologia dell’Università degli studi di Venezia 17; Venezia: Seminario di iranistica, uralo-altaistica e caucasologia dell’Università degli studi di Venezia, 1983); “Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Review of the Evidence,” *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 16 (2007): 95-122; “On *Pax Assyriaca* in the Eighth-Seventh Centuries BCE and Its Implications,” in *Isaiah’s Vision of Peace in Biblical and Modern International Relations: Swords into Plowshares* (edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook; Culture and Religion in International Relations; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 17-35; “New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interference: The Assur Ostrakon,” in *Camsemud 2007: Proceedings of the 13th Italian Meeting of Afro-Asiatic Linguistics: Held in Udine, May 21st-24th, 2007* (edited by

changes and the various manners of describing the many results of this phenomenon, as well as proposed constraints of contact-induced changes, serve as a necessary groundwork for two reasons. The first reason concerns the awareness among biblical scholars of the linguistic methods available for conducting more rigorous comparative explorations. Such a presentation confirms the results of Chapter 2, namely the need for biblical scholars, in both literary and linguistic examinations, to explore this field of linguistics more thoroughly than has previously been done. Indeed, biblical scholars could profit considerably from becoming better acquainted with the dynamic field of contact linguistics.

The second part of this chapter concerns the results of comparative examinations in biblical studies. The advances of the field of contact linguistics in the past forty years have major implications for how biblical scholars discuss contact. Certain changes in a recipient language tend to occur relative to the source language within sociological constraints. Contact linguists are correct to emphasize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to contact; however, the tendencies that they have observed and typologies that they have developed should inform biblical scholars in their assessments of what is or is not possible (or likely) in studying ancient Israel's and Judah's interaction with the literatures and languages of their ancient Near Eastern neighbors. Because many biblical researchers have a limited understanding of linguistic contact as a discipline and the theories, conclusions, and constraints that inform this discipline, such scholars have also limited their own research and conclusions regarding contact between ancient Israel and Judah and Mesopotamia. Indeed, contact situations are not monolithic, and there are many kinds of contact situations and contact-induced phenomena, as we shall see. In sum,

Frederick Mario Fales and Giulia Francesca Grassi; *History of the Ancient Near East Monographs 10*; Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2010), 189-204.

biblical scholars have not been aware of the array of contact situations, nor of the methodological rigor of describing these conditions, from a linguistic standpoint.

It should be emphasized: the goal of this dissertation is not to affirm every suggested example of contact between the Hebrew Bible and Akkadian or Aramaic. On the one hand, the limitations that some scholars have placed on the ability of an Israelite or Judean scribe to access Akkadian directly should be questioned. On the other hand, the history of comparative research between the Hebrew Bible and Akkadian or Aramaic writings has rightly been criticized for lacking methodological rigor.³⁴ The application of contact linguistics to data in the Hebrew Bible is one step towards providing a more reliable means of examination. Another methodological control to ensure that the comparative examination of linguistic material in the Hebrew Bible and Akkadian and Aramaic is to find analogues elsewhere in closely related ancient Near Eastern literature. Such material is presented in Chapter 4. Some general comments on the nature of contact and ancient Near Eastern studies are made, especially noting where scholars of the ancient Near East have asked contact-related questions that correlate with similar questions asked in contact linguistics proper.

Attention is placed on the nature of Aramaic and Akkadian contact for several reasons. First, the increased contact between these two languages correlates with the time of the composition and redaction of parts of the Hebrew Bible, providing chronologically appropriate analogues. Second, these are related Semitic languages, as Hebrew is related to both Aramaic and Akkadian. Third, the historical and linguistic contact, although still imperfectly known, is

³⁴ Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament: Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments 227; Kevelaer, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Berlag Butzon & Bercker, Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 37-85. See also the discussion of Shemaryahu Talmon's work in Chapter 2.

nonetheless better attested between these two languages than between Hebrew and Akkadian (contact between Hebrew and Aramaic is much better attested in later periods). These considerations suggest that contact is a dynamic process: at times, one language can be the source for contact and another could be the recipient; at other times, the relationship could be reversed. In many ways, contact situations depend on historical and sociological factors, and as these factors are dynamic and not static, so also linguistic and literary contact-induced changes are dynamic. This dynamism has often not been taken into account in studies of how the biblical authors had access to Mesopotamian literature.

When exercising this control, one must remember that all analogies are limited. There are major differences between how Aramaic and Akkadian speakers and writers interacted, on the one hand, and how Hebrew, Aramaic, and Akkadian speakers and writers interacted, on the other. Aramaic became a major vehicle for administrative, legal, and economic communication only in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian times, becoming more culturally dominant in the Persian period. Hebrew never attained such a status in any of the Mesopotamian empires. Moreover, Hebrew and Aramaic have their own extensive histories of contact. Scholars such as Klaus Beyer have posited that Aramaic became the spoken language for Jews around 400 BCE with Hebrew no longer used in conversation.³⁵ It is likely, however, that Hebrew was spoken in the Common Era, though, as discussed in this dissertation, Hebrew and Aramaic had a long history of contact prior to the period when Hebrew was eventually no longer spoken.³⁶

³⁵ Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 58. Edward M. Cook has provided an excellent response to Beyer (“The Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in the Targums,” in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism* [edited by Matthias Henze; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2012], 93).

³⁶ James Barr, “Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in the Hellenistic Age,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, volume 2: The Hellenistic Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 79-114. For studies of the relationship between the use of Hebrew and Aramaic in connection with political and ideological events in Palestine,

Nonetheless, with these limitations in mind, tracing the types and possible processes of linguistic contact that occur between Aramaic and Akkadian portrays some of the likely forms of contact of which one might expect to find traces in the Hebrew Bible. While sociolinguistic variables and constraints are a necessary consideration of contact situations, contact linguists also discuss whether or not universal constraints apply to any and all such interactions. For this reason, seeking analogies with a better documented contact situation may allow one to discuss more meaningfully lesser known contact situations of a similar chronological period given the possibility of such universal characteristics of contact-induced change.³⁷

Additionally, Chapter 4 provides the context of empire and language that allows for the historical and sociological reconstruction of what types of literature and language from Mesopotamia would be accessible to ancient Israelites and Judeans. Language contact between Aramaic and Akkadian is instructive not only for the sociological component of interaction between speakers and writers of these two languages, but it also reveals the manner in which these languages were used and employed within the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian Empires. These empires had significant encounters with ancient Israel and Judah, encounters that are recorded in the Hebrew Bible and shaped the identities of the people who ultimately produced and transmitted the Hebrew Bible. Studying Akkadian and Aramaic contact provides a surer reconstruction of what types of literature would have been in circulation in each language

see Seth Schwartz, "Language, Power, and Identity in Ancient Palestine," *Past & Present* 148 (1995): 3-47; Schniedewind, "Aramaic, The Death of Written Hebrew, and Language Shift in the Persian Period," in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* (University of Chicago Oriental Institute Seminars 2; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2006), 141-151; Steven E. Fassberg, "Which Semitic Language Did Jesus and Other Contemporary Jews Speak?," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 74 (2012): 263-80.

³⁷ See the notable contact linguist Thomason's concluding remarks in "Determining Language Contact Effects in Ancient Contact Situations," in *Lenguas en Contacto: El Testimonio Escrito* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2004).

during these times, and therefore how the authors and scribes of the Hebrew Bible had access to Mesopotamian traditions.

Chapters 5 and 6 examine the biblical, Akkadian, and Aramaic data. In this section, a variety of examples from selected parts of the Hebrew Bible are analyzed in order to show how certain elements may be understood as resulting from contact situations. The application of contact linguistics refines our understanding of how and when ancient Israelite and Judean scribes came into contact with Akkadian literature even as this perspective raises new issues to consider. It also highlights how scribal retelling of such literature left linguistic traces. Indeed, the two are often inseparable: literary reuse of foreign materials and the linguistic traces of such reuse can shed light on one another. Contact linguistics can provide a method for understanding the various manners and modes of engagement in which non-dominant societies (Israel and Judah) can utilize and incorporate the language and literature of dominant societies (Assyria and Babylonia).

The Hebrew material examined is limited to the Pentateuch (Chapter 5) and the Book of Isaiah (Chapter 6). Both of these sections of the Hebrew Bible have long been the locus of comparisons with Akkadian literature. As such they are ideal for initial explorations of applying contact linguistics as a framework for understanding the nature of the engagement of these texts with foreign literature and languages. The genres of the various sources of the Pentateuch and of the strata within the Book of Isaiah make them well suited for discussion of direct contact with Akkadian at times and Aramaic at other times. Moreover, some scholars have debated whether or not source criticism is compatible with or helpful for comparative studies with ancient Near

Eastern literature.³⁸ Since each source has been shown to have its own exegetical concerns and inter-texts, and each may have its own period of origin and sociological place of origin, it does justice to the four main sources of the Pentateuch (J, E, D, and P) to consider each one in its own right as having its own linguistic profile. In other words, simply because J and P both have a flood narrative, and because both flood narratives seem to have had some form of contact with broader ancient Near Eastern narratives of the deluge, does not mean that each source shows the same degree of linguistic and literary contact with the foreign texts. Allowing the linguistic data from each source to stand on their own can clarify and add precision to our understanding of the background and nature of each source.

It is hoped that this dissertation will provide this linguistic precision in the study of the nature of contact between ancient Israelite scribes and Mesopotamian literature as well as nuance the ways in which modern scholars assess the nature of such interaction. Moreover, this is not simply a study of linguistic forms loaned into the Hebrew Bible from Akkadian or Aramaic; rather, it is a study of the processes through which such contact occurs, what such processes tell us about the meaning of a given passage and the identity formation of the authors and scribes of the Hebrew Bible in the context of surrounding cultural and imperial systems. Contact linguistics is not designed to establish specific inter-texts between two documents written in different languages, and this study is not an attempt to speculate whether the author or authors of a given biblical text had a specific exemplar of an Akkadian text in mind. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this study clarifies likely avenues of transmission between Akkadian and Hebrew. Such avenues will include some of the classic examples that have been invoked in comparative study in the

³⁸ See the discussion of Samuel Loewenstamm's views in Chapter 5.

Bible. It is hoped that this study goes beyond previous analyses to explore the interplay between linguistics and literary studies.

Chapter 2: The Comparative Method: *Status Quaestionis*

I. Introduction

In a recent collection of essays, Marilynne Robinson states that “the grandeur of the Old Testament, and the fact that such great significance is attached to it, distracts readers from a sense of its unique communal inwardness.”¹ She claims that to most scholars, however, “it looks like objectivity to place God in the landscape of [a]ncient Near Eastern religion and regard the narratives in which he figures as if they were the mythos of any other ancient cult. But if the reader of such evidence about that landscape as exists is tendentious, nothing could be less objective. This has been the curse of this style of biblical scholarship since the eighteenth century.”² Robinson’s attempt to identify and attack anti-Semitic elements in critical scholarship is laudable, although at various points she misunderstands the nature and goal of source criticism.³ Still, the juxtaposition of the two quotations just selected reflects a real tension in the study of the Hebrew Bible.

This tension involves a delicate balance of perspectives. On the one hand, it is clear that the Hebrew Bible contains a variety of unique and novel ideas, as well as innovative perspectives on theology and history. The particular experiences of Israel and Judah as represented in the Hebrew Bible mean that a scholar cannot simply collapse the cultural and theological perspectives gathered there into the larger frame of general ancient Near Eastern thought. The

¹ Robinson, “The Fate of Ideas: Moses,” in *When I Was a Child I Read Books: Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012), 111.

² Robinson, “The Fate of Ideas: Moses,” 113.

³ She also misstates the date of such explorations of the Bible in the context of the ancient world. She mentions comparisons with Akkadian literature, which were not possible until midway through the nineteenth century, not the eighteenth century as she claims, though she also addresses her misgivings towards JEDP, which has roots earlier in the eighteenth century.

uniqueness of Israel and Judah suggests that one should allow for elements in the Hebrew Bible and its literary growth that are *sui generis* relative to other surrounding and contemporaneous cultures.

On the other hand, scholars have, to a certain degree, always been fascinated with the influence of external history and literature on the Hebrew Bible, and rightly so. Geography and political alignment make the reality of historical contact, exclusive of literary considerations, obvious. These historical factors, which are often mentioned directly in the biblical record, and the uncanny literary resemblances between biblical and other ancient Near Eastern writing have led to thorough examinations of the relationship between the Hebrew Bible and the literature of the neighbors of ancient Israel. Although this comparative focus became especially important after the decipherment of Egyptian, Akkadian, Sumerian, and the other ancient languages of the area, the question of the historical context of the biblical books in the ancient Near East has, in many ways, always been a question occupying biblical interpreters.

The following sketch of the history of comparative approaches to interpreting the Bible in light of the ancient Near East is not meant simply to reiterate the above dichotomy. The fact remains that the Bible both is and is not like other compositions from the ancient Near East, and many works have been devoted to surveying various aspects of this literary relationship.⁴ Rather, the following history is meant to accomplish two objectives. First, the interpretation and meaning of a biblical text often include comparative consideration, whether literary, linguistic, or cultural. In many cases, the meaning and rhetoric of a passage are lost, either wholly or partially, without

⁴ See, for example, John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic Press, 2006). In some sense, the three volumes of primary sources of the ancient Near East in translation titled *Context of Scripture* presupposes, in one sense, the desired use of these writings: not as a window into Akkadian or Sumerian compositions for their own sakes, but for the purpose of providing a wider context of the literary, historical, and cultural milieu of the Hebrew Bible.

asking such comparative questions. When the original meaning is lost, interpretive traditions⁵ often create new meanings by reanalysis. This process has an integrity of its own as an object of academic discipline, but the meaning discussed here pertains to origins to the degree that the concept is valid. While some might argue that “original meaning” is blurred and buried under layer upon layer of interpretive traditions, comparative work can help to place a text in its historical context of production and therefore recapture some of the primary rhetorical motivations of a passage.⁶ A brief example of this process may be cited from Gen 4:7.

הלוא אם-תיטיב שאת ואם לא תיטיב לפטח חטאת רבץ ואליך תשוקתו ואתה תמשל-בו:

“If you do well, will you not be lifted up? But if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you, however, must rule over it.”

⁵ By “interpretive traditions,” I mean traditions in the broadest sense, such as ancient versions, textual variants that have interpretive motivations, and the Masoretic pointing itself. For the reworking of the text in interpretive traditions, and the ways in which that reworking alters what the next generation considers to be the “original text,” see Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. See also Geiger, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der innern Entwicklung des Judenthums*. For the theological reworking of texts at Qumran, see Teeter, “Exegesis in the Transmission of Biblical Law in the Second Temple Period: Preliminary Studies.”

⁶ It should be noted that the rhetoric of a passage and author are not the same thing, and the above comments are an attempt to display an awareness of the distinction. Wayne C. Booth’s pioneering work in this area should be mentioned. For many texts, especially biblical works, the interpreter does not have access to the original authors, only texts that have been left behind by such authors and the subsequent transmitters of the text. It is an interpretive fallacy simply to equate the thoughts of a narrator or character in a text with the author without warrant or by assumption. For example, Mark Twain wrote *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, narrated by the fictional character Huck Finn. In this case, one can check reliable biographical details from the life of Mark Twain and be certain that Twain did not share many of the attitudes and perspectives of Huck Finn, even though the latter was a literary creation by the former. In the same way, much of the Book of Ezekiel is written in first person. One cannot be sure, however, that the narrator of the book shares the same attitudes and perspectives on every detail as the author of the book. Thus, Booth would speak of the implicit author of the Book of Ezekiel as the prophet in the narrative, an author whose characteristics and priestly dispositions towards holiness are informed and reconstructed by the rhetoric of the text itself. The author or authors of the text may or may not have shared the same opinions, and one cannot, therefore, simply attempt to construct the psychological profile or biography of the real prophet Ezekiel based on the text itself. Thus, Booth avoids the “intentional fallacy” but also avoids the equally egregious mistake of claiming that there is no inherent meaning in a text. There is meaning in a text, but the text itself serves as a guide. See Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Second Edition; Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 73-76.

Based on most English translations, one would expect the phrase “sin is crouching” to be some sort of predication, and the pointing of רָבִץ as a *Qal* indefinite active participle indicates that it stands in a predicative relation to the noun הַטָּאָה. Normally in this construction, the predicative adjective is not marked for definiteness, but agrees in gender and number. The noun, however, is feminine, and one would therefore expect the participle to be feminine (רָבִצָה or רָבִצָת). The ancient translators of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, called the Septuagint (or LXX),⁷ handled this grammatical problem by understanding the consonants הַטָּאָה not as a noun, but as the verb הִטָּאָה, and the consonants of רָבִץ not as a participle but an imperative, רָבִץ. Thus, the Greek equivalent of this Hebrew phrase reads ἡμαρτες ἡσύχασον and the meaning of the entire verse is altered as a result:

οὐκ ἔαν ὀρθῶς προσενέγκης ὀρθῶς δὲ μὴ διέλης ἡμαρτες ἡσύχασον πρὸς σὲ ἢ ἀποστροφὴ
αὐτοῦ καὶ σὺ ἄρξεις αὐτοῦ

“If you offer up correctly, but do not apportion correctly, have you not sinned? Be silent, to you shall be his turning, and you will rule him.”

The issue of the verse, then, according to the Greek, concerns the manner of one’s sacrifice. The entire meaning of the verse appears to be different from the Hebrew since this rendering puts הַטָּאָה and רָבִץ in separate clauses.

The grammatical and interpretive quandary has been resolved with a mixture of historical linguistics and comparative data. First, the historical base of רָבִץ, or *rōbēṣ*, in proto-Hebrew

⁷ For more on the LXX, see below.

could be reconstructed phonologically as *rābiṣu* (accounting for the Canaanite shift /ā/>/ō/, tonic lengthening of *i* to *ē*, and the loss of the case vowel of the verbal adjective, *-u*, between proto-Hebrew and Masoretic Hebrew). This reconstruction matches the consonantal and vocalic pattern of the noun *rābiṣu* in Akkadian.⁸ The word refers to a door-demon in Mesopotamian mythology, which had a juridical function, almost like a bailiff. Grammatically, therefore, חַטָּאת רַבִּץ is a nominal predication, which explains why רַבִּץ may be the predicate to חַטָּאת even though the gender of the two words does not match. The translation of the verse in Hebrew should read “Sin is a *rābiṣu* at the door,” meaning that, should Cain act poorly, his sin would convict him. The location of the *rābiṣu* is appropriate given its function in Akkadian literature, the grammatical issue is resolved, and the meaning of the passage is coherent in its historical context. Thus, comparative studies often prove essential in recovering original meaning.

A further example can provide evidence for the necessity of comparative studies in order to understand the original meaning of the text. The Tower of Babel Narrative in Gen 11:1-11 seems clear enough on what might be considered the plain reading of the text: the people constructing the tower were intent on making a name for themselves, and by building such a tower it seems as though they attempted to climb to the heavens on their own accord. This interpretation was the prevalent understanding of the passage, informing many exegetes and pastors to comment on the pervasive tendency of mankind to want to ascend to heaven and usurp

⁸ For more discussion, see Leo Oppenheim, “The Eyes of the Lord,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1968): 173-80. See also Pamela Barmash, *Homicide in the Biblical World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 15-16. Claus Westermann lists a variety of scholars prior to Oppenheim who had connected the Akkadian demon with this verse, though he does not mention Oppenheim (*Genesis 1-11* [translated by John J. Scullion, S. J.; Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1984], 299); translation of *Genesis* (3 volumes; 2nd edition; Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament 1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1976).

God.⁹ The reading makes sense in the context of the narrative, and this conclusion is logical without comparative knowledge concerning the construction and function of ziggurats in ancient Mesopotamia. The function of the tower, whether the structure was designed for people to go up from earth or deities to come down from heaven, changes slightly when one places this passage in the context of the ancient Near East. The tower was not built in order that only the people should ascend; rather, ancient ziggurats were constructed in order to entice the deity to descend as well and formed a sort of meeting place between heaven and earth.¹⁰ Moreover, the awareness that in Mesopotamian tradition it was the exclusive right of the deity to inaugurate the building of the temple frames the divine trespass of humanity in its attempt to construct the tower. This interpretation in light of the ancient ideology of temple construction suggests that the threat was not simply human ascension to the divine realm but the unacceptable mixing of heaven and earth through the desire for Yahweh to descend.¹¹ In one sense, the meaning has not changed given

⁹ See, for example, Calvin's exposition, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis, Volume 1* (translated by John King; reprint; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984), 323-26.

¹⁰ Hence the name of the Sumerian ziggurat Etemenanki means "House/temple of the platform between heaven and earth."

¹¹ Both Gen 2:4b-3:24 and Gen 11:1-11 are the product of the J source. The former shows the transgression of divine-human boundaries as Adam and Eve partake of divine qualities in the fruit, qualities which more properly are the domain of divinity. Genesis 2:4b-3:24 thus contains an etiology: humans are like gods in that they know good and evil, and therefore have some semblance of wisdom; they are not like gods in that humans cannot live forever. The eating of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil explains how humans are like deities, but the fact that Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden before eating the fruit of the tree of life explains how humans are different from gods. The Tower of Babel narrative in Gen 11:1-11 again shows this type of transgression. E. A. Speiser claims that a textual reference to the *Enuma Eliš*, and not an actual architectural reference to the ziggurat Etemenanki in Babel dedicated to Marduk, is in view in Gen 11:1-9, particularly since this ziggurat was only constructed during the reigns of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II, who reigned in the sixth century. This would be too late for the time of the J source, which likely originated a few centuries prior (*Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* [Anchor Bible 1; Garden City, New York, 1964], 75-76). Westermann rightly doubts Speiser's theory of a specific textual referent, though Westermann's attempt to separate the story from a Babylonian background is equally unconvincing (*Genesis 1-11*, 541). A better approach is Ronald Hendel's. According to him, Mesopotamian traditions are preserved in Gen 11:1-9. These traditions stipulate that it was the gods' prerogative and not humanity's to build a ziggurat, and this belief was combined with some architectural knowledge of the function of the ziggurat to play into the subversion of Mesopotamian themes in Gen 1-11 generally ("Genesis 1-11 and Its Mesopotamian Problem," in *Cultural Borrowings and Ethnic Appropriations in Antiquity* [edited by Erich S. Gruen; *Oriens et Occidens* 8; Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2005], 31-33).

information from the ancient Near East: in both understandings, humans committed a major transgression resulting in Yahweh's punishment. In another sense, however, the nature of the crime has been altered given the information from the ancient Near East.¹²

Many more examples of this kind of interplay between ancient Near Eastern backgrounds and the meaning of parts of the Hebrew Bible could be adduced. They illustrate a larger point, however, since they reinforce the need for comparative work to understand the Hebrew Bible.¹³ Scholars such as Shemaryahu Talmon have cast doubts on the need for external data when considering the nature and meaning of parts of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁴ While his criticisms have

¹² Another factor of the Babel story in Gen 11:1-11 that is clarified in light of comparisons with ancient Mesopotamia is the notion that the people spoke one language initially and that the spread of languages was the result of divine judgment. The phrase **שִׁפְהָ אֶחָת וּדְבָרִים אֶחָדִים**, literally “one speech and the same words,” and the subsequent confusion of speech in Gen 11:7-9 have been taken as an etiology for the creation of the world's languages. As discussed more extensively in Chapter 4, Akkadian *pām ištēn šuškunū*, “to impose/place one mouth,” is an idiom to describe unified political entities, either rebels unified against the empire or the resulting unity after the empire has squashed dissent. With this idiom in mind, Gen 11:1-11 could be describing a non-language oriented problem. The issue for Yahweh is not that all the people literally spoke one language. Rather, the issue is that they acted with one accord to accomplish great deeds without the consent of the deity. The idea that the Tower of Babel story, then, has anything to do with language *per se* is undermined by the knowledge of the Akkadian phrase since the major problem of the narrative is, instead, the political unity of mankind in the action of building a ziggurat. For more on this idiom, see Christoph Uehlinger, *Weltreich und “eine Rede”*: Eine neue Deutung der sogenannten Turmbauerzählung (Gen 11, 1-9) (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 101; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 453-92. See also Andrew Giorgetti, “The ‘Mock Building Account’ of Genesis 11:1-9: Polemic against Mesopotamian Royal Ideology,” *Vetus Testamentum* 64 (2014): 1-20.

¹³ To quote an article that will be discussed more fully later in this chapter: “As both Heraclitus and Saussure observed, meaning is constructed through contrast. All knowledge, indeed all intelligibility, thus derives from consideration of data whose differences become instructive and revealing when set against the similarities that render them comparable” (Lincoln and Christiano Grottanelli, “Theses on Comparison,” in *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars: Critical Explorations in the History of Religions* [Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2012], 121). This thesis, that comparison is a requisite of knowledge, is the first of “a few schematic observations concerning the goals, logic, and continuing appeal of comparatism, the very formidable obstacles it faces, its sorry historical record, and the reasons for its many failures.” Although their observations originate from concerns in a field other than biblical studies, many of their observations are relevant for the enterprise of comparing the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature. As a result, this article is considered in more detail later in this chapter.

¹⁴ Talmon, “‘Tabûr Hā’ārez’ and the Comparative Method,” *Tarbiz* 45 (1975), 163-77; “On the Emendation of Biblical Texts on the Basis of Ugaritic Parallels,” *Eretz-Israel* 14 (1978): 117-24; “The ‘Comparative Method’ in Biblical Interpretation- Principles and Problems,” *VTS* 29 (1977), 320-56. See Malul for a more general survey of criticisms, uses, and abuses of the comparative method (*The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 37-78). See also Alberto Soggins, “Ancient Israel: An Attempt at a Social and Economic Analysis of the Available Data,” in W. T. Claassen, *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F. C. Fensham* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 48; Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1988), 201-208.

refined the field, it remains that for the literature of ancient Israel, from smaller units such as words to larger blocks of material, comparative data are necessary for understanding the meaning of a text.¹⁵

Second, the following sketch of the history of the comparative method will attempt to show the need for theoretical buttressing of the discipline. That portions of the Hebrew Bible do not look unique have long been recognized, even before the period of the decipherment of ancient Near Eastern languages.¹⁶ Discerning whether these correspondences are extensions of ancient Israelite thought that were simply a part of the cultural milieu, and thus are native expressions of common themes, genres, and beliefs, or whether these overlaps are the result of direct contact with a foreign culture is a complicated matter. Indeed, contact linguists have paid special attention to the problem of contact-induced changes amongst genealogically related languages since the line between internal development and external influence from a closely related language is not always clear.¹⁷ To a certain degree, the same problem exists in biblical

¹⁵ Many works on the ancient history of Israel and Judah have large sections devoted to the political and military contact between these Levantine states and Mesopotamian kingdoms. See, for example, J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (second edition; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006). For a more concentrated history of ancient Israel and Judah in light of contact with other, especially Mesopotamian, ancient Near Eastern empires, see Nadav Na'aman, *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction, Collected Essays Volume 1* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2005).

¹⁶ So, for example, the need for many early Christian and Jewish authors to rebut the writings of Manetho was urgent because of the latter's use of Egyptian history and myths to attack Jewish and Christian beliefs. Manetho claimed that the founding of Jerusalem resulted from the expulsion of the Hyksos, and that Jerusalem was eventually populated when Osarseph, also called Moses, led a rebellion of eighty thousand lepers against Egypt with the help of these Hyksos kings now residing in Jerusalem. The Egyptians successfully expelled the lepers, who then fled to Jerusalem. This story exists in only Josephus' writings, who attempts to rebut Manetho's claims. See John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 108. For the problems of extracting history from the fact that Manetho's writings are only preserved in his opponents' records, see the extensive discussion and bibliography in L. H. Feldman, "Pro-Jewish Intimations in Anti-Jewish Remarks Cited in Josephus' 'Against Apion,'" *JQR* 78 (1988), 188-89 n 2. For general statements about the antiquity of the comparative method, including statements of comparative endeavors in Mesopotamia, see Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 3-4.

¹⁷ A conference at the University of Texas in Austin was devoted to this topic on April 21-22, 2012, which included papers on related languages from the ancient Near East such as Aramaic, Hebrew, and Akkadian. The papers are published in the *Journal of Language Contact* 6 (2013).

studies. The necessity for more robust methods in comparisons between the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East becomes apparent in light of the following historical sketch of this area of research. In recent studies, scholars have highlighted this need for methodological rigor when exploiting data from the ancient Near East to explain parts of the Hebrew Bible that seem to have been created under the influence of external cultures and literatures.¹⁸

These two considerations, the necessity of comparative work and the need for more methodological rigor when discussing connections between the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature, frame the following historical discussion in keeping with the purposes of this dissertation. The issue at hand is not whether comparisons between ancient Israelite literature and other cultures have been conducted well in the past. Indeed, many of the names discussed in the following pages were intellectual giants and their contributions have had enduring value. Rather, the concern of this dissertation is whether there is still improvement to be made in this area. Contact linguistics provides a theoretical grounding for exploring the linguistic phenomena in light of the use by ancient Israelites of texts and traditions of other cultures. This grounding is much needed as there does not exist yet a solid linguistic framework for exploring the sociolinguistic connections between ancient Israel and her ancient near Eastern neighbors.

II. Pre-modern Phases

While the decision to begin the following history of the comparative method in biblical studies in the pre-modern era may seem surprising, good reasons exist for examining comparative work even in antiquity. The quotations that appear at the beginning of Chapter 1 attest to the fact that, at least nascently, there was a sense of historical and linguistic awareness

¹⁸ Christopher Hays, "Echoes of the Ancient Near East? Intertextuality and the Comparative Study of the Old Testament," in Wagner, et al, *The Word Leaps the Gap* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2008), 20-43.

about the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in antiquity. In other words, contrary to some common misconceptions, according to which all ancient interpreters were merely concerned with philosophical or spiritual value of the Hebrew Bible, these interpreters were aware of the need to situate certain passages in a larger historical and cultural framework in order to understand them.¹⁹ That framework inevitably meant comparative work since so many biblical narratives themselves attest to foreign influence (the Exodus, various Assyrian and Babylonian invasions, and the activity of the Arameans in the region, to name a few examples).

The ancient interpreters did not have the resources for comparative work that would become available in modern times. Much, though by no means all, of their knowledge came from the Bible itself. Moreover, the critical allowance to place the composition of a narrative in a historical framework other than what its narrative setting claims it to be was, for the most part, not a possibility before the rise of historical criticism. There are notable exceptions to this observation such as Porphyry, who, in his polemics against Christians and Jews, was the first to set the composition of the Book of Daniel in the Hasmonean period. Nonetheless, these exegetes drew on what knowledge they had about ancient empires, whether from biblical, classical, or oral sources, to elucidate certain passages, thereby indicating the need for comparative data to explain parts of the Hebrew Bible. Although this consciousness of the cultural context and historical conditionedness of ancient Israelite literature was not the main

¹⁹ For a persuasive attempt to unlock the logic of patristic exegesis, as well as a discussion of many of the misconceptions of the guiding principles of Scriptural exegesis in the minds of ancient church Fathers, see John J. O’Keefe and R. R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005). Using the example of Theodoret of Cyrus, they state the issue well: “As we have noted, the idea that scripture refers to historical events is affirmed by the fathers. That they did not regard the historical events as the foundation for scriptural meaning did not prevent them from discussing historical references” (*Sanctified Vision*, 20). This concern for historical and philologically grounded exegesis was particularly emphasized in the Antiochene school of interpretation (Karlfried Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* [Sources of Early Christian Thought; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], 19-23; Hill, *Reading the Old Testament in Antioch*).

point of investigation for these interpreters (whose ultimate goal was often homelitic, spiritual/philosophical, or polemic),²⁰ one can see concerns that would persist even in comparative studies after the decipherment of Egyptian, Akkadian, and Sumerian many centuries later.²¹

Interpretations required recourse to languages and traditions other than Hebrew even as early as some of the ancient translations of the biblical texts (known as “versions”). Difficult Hebrew words, for which there was little contemporary knowledge, occasionally necessitated recourse to related Semitic languages such as Aramaic for explanation. This phenomenon does not bear witness to the comparative method in antiquity *per se* as far as literary qualities are concerned, but rather shows the seeds of an early form of comparative philology.²² Nonetheless, the appeal to other ancient languages for the meaning of certain words and passages in the Hebrew Bible is revealing. This linguistic recourse to related ancient Near Eastern languages would take on renewed focus with the decipherment of other, more culturally dominant languages such as Akkadian, thereby making accessible not only linguistic forms, but literary and cultural ones as well.

The Septuagint (or, LXX) already shows this Aramaic interference in its rendering of a few passages in the Hebrew Bible.²³ For example, Isa 53:10 contains the word **דָּכָא**, apparently

²⁰ O’Keefe and Reno, *Sanctified Vision*, 20.

²¹ See the brief comments in Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 3-4.

²² These two approaches, the comparative method of literary features between the Hebrew Bible and other ancient Near Eastern literature and comparative philology between biblical Hebrew and other Semitic languages, are often discussed in tandem by those critiquing the comparative method as a broader phenomenon. See Talmon, “The Comparative Method in Biblical Interpretation: Principles and Problems,” in *Literary Studies in the Bible: Form and Content, Collected Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), 35-48. As a result, they are linked also in this discussion.

²³ The LXX was a Greek translation, first of the Pentateuch then of the entire canon of Israelite scriptures, the Hebrew Bible. The locus of this translation was in Alexandria, the ancient intellectual center of Jewish scholars,

related to the roots דכה, דוך, and דכך. The general meaning is something along the lines of “crush,” often in the sense of oppression or wrongdoing. Although the form is not a particularly rare or difficult word, and occurs also in Isa 3:15 (דַּכָּאֵן), Isa 53:10 is rendered in the LXX in a manner that does not correspond to the expected meaning of the Hebrew. While the LXX version of Isa 3:15 is closer to the Hebrew (ἀδικεῖτε), the LXX version of Isa 53:10 differs in a telling manner.

MT Isa 53:10:

ויהוה חפץ דכאן החלי אמתשים אשם נפשו יראה זרע יאריך ימים וחפץ יהוה בידו
יצלח:

“But the LORD was pleased to crush him by sickness; if his soul offers itself as a guilt offering, he will see his seed prolong (their) days, and the pleasure of the LORD will prosper in his hand.”

LXX Isa 53:10:

Καί κύριος βούλεται καθαρῖσαι αὐτὸν τῆς πληγῆς ἐὰν δώτε περὶ ἁμαρτίας ἡ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν
ὄψεται σπέρμα μακρόβιον

“And the LORD desires to cleanse him from plague. If you can give (an offering) concerning sin, your soul will see a long-lived seed.”

and it began in the middle of the third century BCE. The author of the Letter of Aristeas relates much of the history of this text in mythical and legendary terms, though the basic narrative of the story (that Ptolemy II sponsored the translation which took place in Alexandria) are likely enough to be true. See H. B. Swete, *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1989), 1-28; reprint of *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914); Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (translated by Wilfred G. E. Watson; Boston: Brill, 2000), 35-66.

Although various differences are evident between the MT of this verse and the LXX, including different lengths and structures of the verse (note that the LXX verse is divided mid-clause, continuing into 53:11), the rendering of the Hebrew דכא by καθαρισαι is especially curious.

The former, meaning “crush,” is semantically different from the latter, meaning “to cleanse,” which requires explanation. Barr observes that the Greek translator could have “simply misread the text,” or perhaps connected the context with the Hebrew זכה (which means “purify”) which perhaps looked similar enough orthographically to דכא to warrant a translation of καθαρισαι.²⁴

The connection with Aramaic as an influence in the LXX rendering of this Hebrew word, however, is in the semantics of the root *dalet-kaf-aleph* in Aramaic. Although the root דכא in Hebrew is a by-form of דוך, דכה, and דך, all meaning “to crush,” it matches the consonants of an Aramaic root דכא, meaning “to purify.”²⁵ The thesis that the LXX in Isa 53:10 was influenced by Aramaic is further supported when one considers that the Targum to this verse is as follows:

Targum Jonathan to Isa 53:10

ומן קדם יוי הות רעוא למצרף ולדכאה ית שארא דעמיה בדיל לנקאה מחובין נפשהון
יחזון במלכת משיחהון יסגון בנין ובנן יורכון יומין ועבדי אוריתא דיוי ברעותיה יצלחון:

²⁴ Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament: With Additions and Corrections* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 54.

²⁵ Aramaic דכא and Hebrew זכה are related roots, the differences explained by normal phonological development. The /d/ in Aramaic and /z/ in Hebrew both go back to the proto-Semitic voiced inter-dental /d/. The difference between Aramaic כ and Hebrew כ can be explained as simply different *matres* expressing the final vowel of the contracted III-weak root, originally a /w/ or /y/.

“And from before the Lord it was a pleasure to refine and to cleanse the remnant of his people, in order to purify their soul from sins. They will see the kingdom of their messiah. Sons and daughters will increason and days will prolong.²⁶ The performers of the law of the Lord will prosper in his pleasure.”

Once again, there are differences from the MT in this version (notably language of a “kingdom,” מַלְכוּת, which is lacking in the Hebrew). The use of דָּכָא in the Targum for “to purify” bears enough semantic overlap with the LXX to posit a relationship in which the Greek translation of the Hebrew would have been influenced by an Aramaic translation. Many more examples of this sort exist; however, the point is that even in antiquity translators and interpreters (and the line between the two is never clear) used external data for explaining or rendering certain Hebrew words.²⁷ This appeal to related languages for linguistic or translational purposes is somewhat of a corollary to what would become the comparative method.²⁸ Inasmuch as linguistic comparison has ancient roots and was explored more fully with literary parallels after the decipherment of Akkadian but without a theory to unify these linguistic and literary connections, such ancient approaches are relevant for the discussion here.

²⁶ The translation above is a rendering of יִסְגֹּן and יִרְכֹּן as *peals*, or G-stems. Alternatively, יִסְגֹּן and יִרְכֹּן could be vocalized as *aphels*, or causative stems, resulting in the translation “They will increase sons and daughters. They will prolong days.”

²⁷ The translators of the LXX often chose roots that are in the normal semantic domain of דָּכָא (“to crush”) when it appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible; at times, however, the same interchange with the meaning “to cleanse” for this Hebrew root appears. See Job 19:2.

²⁸ Such concerns are more narrowly and properly the domain of comparative philology, which is similar to historical linguistics, namely the appeal to cognate languages for explanations of odd linguistic properties in a given language. This comparative work highlights lexemes and linguistic properties that may have been a part of the normal development of a language, even if such development is lost to modern interpreters. As Barr claims, however, comparative philologists are also concerned with loanwords from other Semitic languages, as well as non-Semitic languages. Thus, according to his definition, the domain of comparative philology overlaps not only with genealogical linguistics and historical linguistics, but with contact linguistics as well. Indeed, loanwords attest to cultural contact, be it direct or indirect. See Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 99-111; Lyle Campbell, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004), 62-84, 316-17.

The linguistic pursuit of comparative data to explain difficult or odd²⁹ Hebrew lexemes continued well into late antiquity and the Middle Ages. A few hints appear in rabbinic literature in which analyses of different dialects and languages led to a deeper understanding of a given verse. Often this process elucidated a difficult word that otherwise eluded clear interpretation. One such anecdote describes a scene in which a rabbi overheard his maid say:³⁰

שקולי טאטיתא וטאטי ביתא

“Take up the broom and sweep the house.”

The Jewish Palestinian dialect of Aramaic that the rabbi heard clarified for him the otherwise obscure word טאטאטיה in the passage in Isa 14:23:

וטאטאטיה במטאטא השמד נאם יהוה צטאות

“And I will sweep it with the broom of destruction, utterance of the LORD of hosts.”

Even in late antiquity correspondences were recognized between Aramaic and Hebrew. When an Aramaic word was known in one dialect, it could be applied to a difficult or unknown word in the Hebrew Bible with enlightening results.

Naturally, these correspondences were rudimentary, and could often be misleading. Incorrect suggestions for linguistic influence in a text from the Hebrew Bible could be especially fanciful when rabbinic connections used non-Semitic languages, such as Greek. Though farfetched, appeal to Greek often allowed the rabbis to draw from a larger linguistic base in order to deal with difficult texts. Such a case occurs in the *Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, in which the rabbis

²⁹ The oddity, from the perspective of later interpreters, stemmed either from the fact that a root was otherwise unattested in later dialects of Hebrew or from the fact that the meaning of a word in a certain context diverged from the normal semantic domain of that word.

³⁰ For this example, see Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 56.

struggle to understand the ethical implications of God demanding that Abraham make Isaac an unwitting sacrifice. The following quotation of Gen 22:7-8 provides the literary and ethical crux of the passage:

ויאמר יצחק אל־אברהם אביו ויאמר אבי ויאמר הנני בני ויאמר הנה האש והעצים
ואיה השה לעלה: ויאמר אברהם אלהים יראה־לו השה לעלה בני וילכו שניהם יחדו:

“Isaac said to Abraham, his father, ‘Father.’ He said, ‘I am here, my son.’ He [Isaac] said ‘Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?’ Abraham said ‘God will provide for himself a sheep for the burnt offering, my son.’ The two of them walked together.”

This passage and the larger chapter to which it belongs in the Hebrew Bible have fascinated interpreters for millennia, and the literary properties and ethical implications in this pericope have occasioned much discussion.³¹ For the purposes of language contact and the comparative method, the rabbis in the *Pesikta de Rab Kahana* claimed that the phrase **השה לעלה בני** in Gen 22:8 contained a Greek loanword: the Hebrew **שֶׁה**, /šeh/, was actually a loanword from Greek, the second person pronoun **σε**, “you.” The Hebrew word meaning “lamb” (**שֶׁה**) was not rare, but an appeal to comparative evidence in this case solved a hermeneutical and theological issue: with the Greek substituted for this one word, the rabbis could render the meaning of this phrase as

³¹ See James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 119-32; Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Culture* (translated by Willard R. Trask; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), 3-23.

אתה הוא הקרבן, “you are the sacrifice.”³² In this fashion, Abraham informed Isaac of his part in the sacrifice. Because Isaac continued walking along with his father, the reader can assume that he is no longer an unwitting participant, but rather both son and father are heroes of the story. Genesis 22 thus comes to be understood as expressing the faith of both Isaac and Abraham. Moreover, God is not sending an unaware child to his death, but rather a willing sacrifice, and a theological problem is thereby solved.

The aforementioned example of Gen 22:7-8 highlights how the interpretation can change when one proposes that a word in the narrative is a loanword.³³ The belief, in this case, was that the true meaning of a verse is revealed when the reader plugs in the translational sense of the foreign word into the narrative. The passage Gen 22:7-8 also highlights how a suggested loanword, if based on imprecise methods or reasoning, can lead to speculative suggestions and to connections in phonology, semantics, or other domains of language that are specious, albeit enticing. Indeed, one should perhaps not expect to find systematic reasoning based on abstract linguistic principles from ancient interpreters, especially as such principles would only be explicitly stated, and therefore used in a more systematic manner, centuries later.³⁴ For the purposes of this discussion, it is sufficient to observe that interpreters even in antiquity referred

³² For more on this example, see Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 57-58. For further examples of the use of Greek words to solve interpretive issues given difficult Hebrew words (unlike the Gen 22:7-8 instance above), see Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 57.

³³ In the case of Gen 22:7-8, and in other cases when ancient interpreters would appeal to non-Hebrew words in order to address a theological problem, a proposed loanword changes the sense of a passage to the benefit of the interpreters who were often non-systematic and working on a case-by-case basis. This style of interpretation, conducted in an apologetic or agonistic manner, therefore did not influence, for the most part, the lexicon of Hebrew in a significant fashion. Borrowed words and loanshift (when the meaning of a word in one language is altered on the model of a similar sounding or structured word in another language, as in the Greek $\sigma\epsilon$ for Hebrew שֶׁ) can, when conducted more systematically, influence the lexicon of the recipient language in such contact situations. See Ilse Lehiste, *Lectures on Language Contact* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1988), 19-27.

³⁴ For more on the increasingly explicit use of linguistic categories and abstract analysis of languages in the medieval period, see Barr (where he notes the increasing sophistication of Hebrew grammatical analysis into the medieval period), *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 64.

to data from outside the Hebrew Bible. Though ancient interpreters had ideas and vague notions of the relatedness of the Semitic languages (see Chapter 1), the idea of genealogical descent in modern comparative philology and historical linguistics was not a construct available to these exegetes. If a word was identified as Aramaic,³⁵ or even Greek, that word had to come from somewhere, most likely from some contact situation. Ancient interpreters did not feel the need to construct a cultural or sociological situation in which the author of Isa 53:10 (believed to be the eighth century prophet Isaiah, though in modern critical terms identified as the sixth century Second Isaiah) or Gen 22:7-8 (believed to be Moses, though in modern critical terms identified as the E source) would come into contact with Aramaic or Greek.

Not only did difficult words (or even known words but in otherwise difficult passages such as Gen 22:7-8) occasion comparative study in antiquity from a linguistic standpoint (albeit in a non-systematic manner), but certain words also were subject to cultural comparison. Where these terms revealed underlying conceptions that were at odds with later Judeo-Christian dogma, critics of these faiths, such as the pagan philosopher Porphyry, appealed to other religions to find an explanation for the presence of words and ideas in the Hebrew Bible. One of the central ideas that Porphyry explored in the Hebrew Bible was monotheism, particularly in comparison with other ancient polytheistic religions. Against the Jewish and Christian belief in one God, Porphyry explained that the Bible itself, both the New Testament and the Hebrew Bible, contained passages that could not be understood unless read through the polytheistic lens of the surrounding ancient civilizations. Not only did Moses speak of other gods, but according to Porphyry, many of these gods were known to the ancient Greeks:

³⁵ See Rashi's identification of כּפּוּר in Gen 6:14 as Aramaic, discussed in Chapter 5 below.

It is possible for me to show you that the much revered name of the gods is revered from the law itself since it cries out and admonishes the hearer with much reverence: “You should not slander the gods, nor curse the ruler of your people” (Exod 22:28).³⁶ For he does not mean by this any other gods than those considered without our own minds already, as we learn from such passages as: “Do not walk after other gods” (Jer 7:6), or again “If you go after and serve other gods” (Deut 13:3). Not only Moses but Jesus speaks not about men but gods and moreover about those who are held in honor by us. For he says to the people: “And now fear and serve him alone and put away the gods whom your fathers served” (Jos 24:14). And it is not concerning man but immaterial things that Paul says: “For there are those called gods whether on earth or in heaven, but we have one God and one Father of all things” (1 Cor 8:5). Thus you make a great mistake when you assume this God becomes angry when someone else is called a god, gaining the same title as himself. For even rulers in regard to their subjects, and lords in regard to their slaves, do not envy the same title. And it is not correct that God is more petty than man. Now enough about the fact that gods ought to be worshipped and exist.³⁷

³⁶ Robert Berchman cites the English versification, which is actually Exod 22:27 in the MT and LXX (*Porphyry Against the Christians* [Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition 1; Boston, Massachusetts: Brill, 2005]). It is interesting to note the difference between the MT and LXX here. The MT of Exod 22:27 is as follows: אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִקְלַל וְנָשִׂיא בְעַמֶּךָ לֹא תֹאָר. Most English translations render this verse as non-polytheistic since the formally plural noun אֱלֹהִים is also used as a common term for God, e. g. the Jewish Publication Society translation: “You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of thy people.” The LXX, however, differs significantly in a manner that plays well into Porphyry’s apologetic: θεοὺς οὐ κακολογήσεις καὶ ἄρχοντας τοῦ λαοῦ σου οὐ κακῶς ἐρεῖς. The noun אֱלֹהִים was translated as an explicit plural Greek noun θεοὺς (which could refer either to gods or to magistrates or other high-ranking members of society). More typically when the context indicates that this Hebrew noun referred to the Israelite God, the translators of the LXX use a singular noun, as in Gen 1:1 where אֱלֹהִים is rendered ὁ θεός.

³⁷ Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*, 217-18.

Porphyry opined from certain references to gods in the plural in some biblical texts that even Moses and Joshua (whom he calls “Jesus,” since Joshua in Greek is spelled the same as Jesus; perhaps Porphyry is here conflating the two to make a stronger attack against Christian uniqueness) believed in other gods. Not only did they believe in gods, but they believed in the same gods as other ancient cultures, even, according to Porphyry, many of the same deities that the Greeks themselves worshipped. Thus, the pagan philosopher took certain sections from the Bible that stood out against later monotheistic beliefs of Christians and Jews and placed them in the context of other ancient Near Eastern religious principles in order to make better sense of these passages.

Naturally, Porphyry was not making such comparisons objectively. Instead, he was involved in polemics against both Christians and Jews. In the process, he not only used comparative material to argue against the beliefs of Christians and Jews, but also set the authorship of certain biblical books in time periods other than what their narrative might otherwise indicate. In doing so, he would anticipate the historical-critical conclusions of later authors, such as the alternate dating of Deuteronomy, proposed by W. M. L. de Wette in the nineteenth century.³⁸

³⁸ Actual extant copies of Porphyry’s works seem to have been censored and destroyed, and scholars reconstruct their likely contents based on Christian writers who responded to his systematic arguments against the Christian faith. Many of Porphyry’s arguments were not only directed towards various beliefs of Christians, but against Christian and Jewish texts as well. Thus, Christian commentaries, such as Jerome’s commentary on the Book of Daniel, treat Porphyry’s arguments in an equally systematic manner in order to debunk them. Augustine cited Porphyry’s views on the problems of the dating and historicity of Moses, and therefore of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, as well as the historicity of Jonah (Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*, 58-59). De Wette himself would credit ancient authors such as Ptolemy, as well as medieval (Ibn Ezra) and scholars closer to his own day (Vatke) for serving as the impetus for his thesis that Deuteronomy was a pious forgery from the time of Josiah (622 BCE) and not from the time of Moses (*An Historical-critical Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament, Volume 2* [translated by Theodore Parker; Boston: C. C. Little and J. Brown, 1843], 161-64). It is not the case that Patristic exegetes had little or no historical consciousness and therefore responded merely with allegorical or spiritual counters to Porphyry’s historically laden criticism. See the discussion of the complex relationship between historical and other forms of interpretation in patristic exegesis, including a brief comment on Jerome’s

Much of Porphyry's attention in this regard was directed towards the Book of Daniel.³⁹ Some aspects of his criticism have interesting correspondences with later discoveries and critical theories. For example, Porphyry evidently concentrated at least a portion of his analysis on Daniel 4, the letter of Nebuchadnezzar, and his subsequent prayer. According to Porphyry, literary elements in these passages suggested that Daniel, a putatively 6th century prophet, could not have written them.⁴⁰ As would become evident, especially with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the prayer of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 did, indeed, have a separate existence. In the Qumran manuscript, the prayer is ascribed to Nabonidus, and the actions of this Babylonian king fit much closer with the madness attributed to Nebuchadnezzar in the Bible.⁴¹ Moreover, Porphyry noted that much of the Book of Daniel was based on historical memory in order to buoy the hopes of his fellow kinsmen.⁴²

From a comparative standpoint, Porphyry's educational background in ancient chronology allowed him to make astute observations about the Book of Daniel.⁴³ By making comparisons with Greek and Roman histories, many of which also included aspects of Egyptian and Mesopotamian history, Porphyry constructed arguments in support of the thesis that the

historical counter to Porphyry's historical criticisms, in Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* (Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity 1; Boston: Brill, 2004), 322.

³⁹ See P. M. Casey, "Porphyry and the Origin of the Book of Daniel," *Journal for Theological Studies* (1976): 15-33.

⁴⁰ Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*, 158.

⁴¹ The account in the *Prayer of Nabonidus* scroll from Qumran, or 4QPrNab, is from the first person perspective of the king, much like Dan 4, and contains many uncanny similarities. The words of the prayer in 4QPrNab are missing, and there are key differences between Dan 4 and 4QPrNab; however, the similarities have established a scholarly consensus that 4QPrNab is evidence of a process in which Dan 4 drew upon older sources. These sources were edited into the context of the Book of Daniel regarding the actions of Nebuchadnezzar, and therefore the name Nabonidus was changed to Nebuchadnezzar to fit literary context. See Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia 27; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 217-221. On the problem of reconstructing the fragments of 4QPrNab, see Frank Moore Cross, "Fragments of the Prayer of Nabonidus," *Israel Exploration Journal* 34 (1984): 260-64.

⁴² Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*, 165.

⁴³ Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*, 162-65. Many of the chronological arguments of Porphyry are preserved in the writings of Jerome (Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*, 15 n 26).

Book of Daniel was not written by a prophet in the sixth century predicting the future, but instead by an author situated in the Hasmonean era (second century BCE). Again, the pagan philosopher made observations that would become the cornerstone of modern critical work on the Book of Daniel. His means of arriving at this conclusion by appeal to the histories of other civilizations was a comparative approach. He juxtaposed the events as recounted in the book itself with the chronologies of other ancient cultures. The result, according to Porphyry, was that it made more sense to set the composition of the Book of Daniel in a later period, in Hellenistic and not Neo-Babylonian times. Porphyry's knowledge of the work of Callinicus, a near contemporary of Porphyry who wrote an extensive, multi-volume work on the history of Alexandria focusing on the Ptolemies, allowed Porphyry to create a cultural and chronological frame in which to analyze the Book of Daniel.⁴⁴ Not only did Porphyry understand the Greco-Roman historical background well, but he also wrote a world history, covering from the fall of Troy until the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius (268-70 CE).⁴⁵ Porphyry's comparison of the Book of Daniel to the details of this world history in order to provide an alternative date for the origin of the book as compared with the date evident from the narrative presentation prefigured, in many ways, the conclusions that critical scholars would reach on the basis of more

⁴⁴ This multi-volume work claims to be dedicated to Cleopatra, which is odd since Callinicus lived in the third century CE. The dedication is *πρὸς Κλεοπάτραν περὶ τῶν κατ' Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἱστοριῶν*. It is likely, however, that Cleopatra here is a reference to Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, who considered herself to be a descendent of Cleopatra. This coordination between Callinicus, who eventually was executed by Zenobia, and Porphyry is important as it makes clearer the circumstances and timing of Porphyry's fifteen volume work *Against the Christians* (ΚΑΤΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΩΝ). Given the likely time period in which Callinicus wrote his history of Alexandria, itself dependent on the time period of Zenobia's reign there and Callinicus' access to local stories and sources, Porphyry would not have had access to this work until the reign of the Roman emperor Aurelius. Though Aurelius did not sponsor an official persecution against Christians, he was well known to be hostile to the Christian faith, and it appears that he was the sponsor for Porphyry's work, which would for centuries thereafter become the most important and systematic work against the Christian faith. See Alan Cameron, "The Date of Porphyry's ΚΑΤΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΩΝ," *The Classical Quarterly Review*, 17 (1967): 382-84.

⁴⁵ Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*, 59.

detailed comparative work centuries later. The complexity of the composition of the Book of Daniel would become clearer once other ancient Near Eastern languages were deciphered in the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ It appears that parts of the book had origins in court tales that could have gone back to actual memories from the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods, even though the book was redacted in Hellenistic times and compiled in the second century BCE.⁴⁷ This knowledge of Greco-Roman sources, however, enabled Porphyry to make a comparative evaluation and arrive at a conclusion about the origin of the book in contradiction to the claims of the narrative.

Many more examples from antiquity and the Middle Ages could be cited. The authors from antiquity are illustrative for a variety of reasons. First, these authors did not have an explicit method on the basis of which to conduct comparative examinations.⁴⁸ The examples adduced above in which specific passages were explored bring to the fore the ways in which these ancient authors conducted comparative studies. Medieval exegetes continued pursuing allegorical and homiletical interpretation; but, nonetheless, they, like their ancient counterparts, paid due attention to history, even if this history was meant to point to something larger.⁴⁹ Whereas there

⁴⁶ See van der Toorn, "Scholars at the Oriental Court: The Figure of Daniel against Its Mesopotamian Background," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (edited by John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint; Boston: Brill, 2002), I: 37-54; Shalom Paul, "The Mesopotamian Background of Daniel 1-6," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (edited by John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint; Boston: Brill, 2002), I: 55-68; and John Walton, "The Anzu Myth as Relevant Background for Daniel 7?" in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (edited by John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint; Boston: Brill, 2002), I: 69-89.

⁴⁷ See Paul Alain Beaulieu, "The Babylonian Background of the Motif of the Fiery Furnace in Daniel 3," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128 (2009): 289-306.

⁴⁸ Because these ancient authors did not have an explicit method or stated principles of the development of the Hebrew Bible and its contact with other ancient cultures, it is necessary to discuss specific examples of their comparative approach to the text in a way that is not necessary with modern scholars whose assumptions and critical frameworks are, for the most part, stated. Ancient patristic authors had a notion of accommodation to historical processes, known as *συνκαταβασις*; however, this theory of historical accommodation did not lead to an attendant theory of comparative analysis.

⁴⁹ So Henri de Lubac: "For if the Spirit had wanted the history of those two ancient cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, to be preserved for us in the sacred books, it would be to show everyone by means of them two other, more

was no attendant systematic method derived to pursue comparative explorations of history, medieval Jewish exegetes did develop much more precise frameworks for comparative philological observations. Such linguistic categorization came often from the Arab tradition of grammarians, and led not only to appeal to Arabic in order to determine the semantic domain of difficult words in the Hebrew Bible but also to Aramaic. Examples include Maimonides (also known as Rambam), Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi), and Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam). In the eleventh century, Abulwalīd Merwān ibn Janāḥ developed a systematic grammatical classification of the linguistic parts of Hebrew (vowels, noun formation, verbs, etc.) which served as a basis for linguistic comparison with other Semitic languages.⁵⁰ David Kimchi (1160-1235) wrote a “Book of Roots,” a dictionary that also functioned as a tool from which scholars derived many comparative linguistic explorations with Aramaic words.⁵¹

The self-awareness of these medieval grammarians in organizing and comparing Hebrew to Arabic and Aramaic was certainly a step forward. However, the idea that the difficulty of some words in Biblical Hebrew, which necessitated an appeal to other languages, existed because such words were the result of contact-induced phenomena with other cultures preserved

enduring cities, which are of concern to us right now” (*Medieval Exegesis: Volume 2, The Four Senses of Scripture* [translated by E. M. Macierowski; Ressourcement; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000], 84). This approach to history was consistent as a first step in the four-fold sense of Scripture, a shared approach to the Bible in both Christian and Jewish circles. For an excellent modern Jewish examination of *PaRDeS* (or, *peshat*, the literal/historical meaning; *remez*, the allegorical meaning; *derash*, or the homelitical meaning; and *sod*, or the mystical meaning), see Fishbane, *Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁵⁰ Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 63.

⁵¹ Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 64. See especially his summation points on the Jewish grammatical study of Hebrew, particularly his second point on the comparative nature of much of this study in medieval times (*Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 64-65). See also Malul for brief comments on the role of this comparative philology in the middle ages with the history of the comparative method generally (*The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 3-4). For more on medieval Jewish grammarians and the comparative endeavors, see H. Polotzki, “Semitics,” in *The World History of the Jewish People: Volume 1, At the Dawn of Civilization* (edited by E. A. Speiser; New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1964), 99-111.

in the canon was not part of the intellectual world of these scholars. Moreover, an explicit method for literary comparison with works from the ancient Near East would have to wait the modern decipherment of languages like Egyptian and Akkadian.⁵² More comprehensive theories of contact, therefore, would not be possible until scholars in the modern period began exploring the place of these ancient Near Eastern documents in the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Nonetheless, as the preceding survey indicates, even ancient scholars appealed to external information from related languages and cultures to make sense of some portions of the Hebrew Bible.

III. Decipherment

The history of decipherment itself spans various time periods, encompassing both medieval fascination with ancient and lost civilizations as well as attempts to make the study of such ancient societies part of the larger project of emerging modernism.⁵³ In time, the study of civilizations from the ancient Near East became specialized disciplines. Indeed, nations such as Sumer, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and the Hittites were major producers of literature, even as these nations themselves were heirs to previous cultures. As such, the study of these cultures is based on vast numbers of data and no recourse to the Hebrew Bible is necessary in order to elucidate linguistic forms, literary traits, or political realities. The history of the discovery and the decipherment of the languages of these cultures, however, is very much relevant for biblical

⁵² It should be noted that even before Thomas Young and Jean-Francois Champollion fully deciphered the Egyptian hieroglyphs, medieval Muslim scholars Dhul-Nun al-Misri and Ibn Wahshiyya both had some measure of success in deciphering Egyptian in the ninth and tenth centuries CE. See Okasha El Daly, *Egyptology: The Missing Millennium: Ancient Egypt in Medieval Arabic Writings* (London: UCL, 2005), 57-74.

⁵³ For a history of Egyptian decipherment, including cultural background and fascination with Egypt in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, see Andrew Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For an account of the decipherment of the Mesopotamian languages, citing ancient travel accounts up to the nineteenth century, see Rogers, *A History of Babylonia and Assyria*, 1:1-253. For a history of decipherment of Akkadian focusing on the developments in the mid to late nineteenth century, see Larsen, *The Conquest of Assyria: Excavations in an Ancient Land, 1840-1860*.

scholarship. The motivation for the exploration of mounds in the Middle East began as a means of finding evidence to support details in the biblical record. The naïve adherence to the Hebrew Bible as a deposit of historical data to be checked externally has long since been challenged and abandoned in most areas of biblical studies.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, the underlying recognition that it was somehow necessary to understand these long-dead cultures in order to understand the Bible is still a fundamental aspect of studying texts from ancient Israel.

The modern story of decipherment of ancient Assyrian and Babylonian texts began with the fieldwork of Paolo Emilio Botta and Austen Henry Layard, who were responsible for some of the earliest and most successful excavations in the Middle East, though Botta's career as an archaeologist proved to be brief. Indeed, some of the earliest conversations they had about excavations involved finding the Nineveh mentioned in Old Testament books such as Jonah and Nahum.⁵⁵ Other sources fueled the early explorations, such as the accounts of Xenophon, who described large mounds of ruins on what likely were the cities of Nimrud and Mosul. Both Jewish and Islamic traditions contained stories of the areas of interest to Botta and Layard, stories that connected the mounds of earth to the biblical prophet Jonah, himself affiliated with the city of Nineveh. Influenced by a combination of sources, mostly the Bible or biblical traditions, Botta and Layard set out to excavate the mounds of earth and hopefully discover the Assyrian capital of Nineveh.

⁵⁴ With the exception of the most religiously conservative academics, most scholars accept the fact that discoveries from the ancient Near East through archaeology have complicated what the phrase "biblical history" means. See the passing comments on the archaeology and historicity of the Exodus in William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003), 8. See also the more expansive and nuanced discussion in Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: When Archaeology and the Bible Intersect* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2012), 22-24.

⁵⁵ Larsen, *The Conquest of Assyria*, 6.

Many motivations were behind the expansion of the scientific development of archaeology in the nineteenth century. European scholars had long been fascinated with Classical culture, and wealthy donors such as Stratford Canning gave money for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of Greco-Roman culture and its predecessors, such as Mausolos' funerary burial known as the Mausoleum, or the Elgin Marbles.⁵⁶ Canning also invested considerable amounts in Layard and Botta's expedition in Assyria in 1845, driven primarily by the desire to discover Assyria's pertinence for better interpreting the Old Testament, as well as to understand how Assyrian art fit in the line of development that many in Europe saw as culminating in the Greek style.⁵⁷

This interplay between Greek information regarding Assyria and biblical data continued until Akkadian was finally deciphered. Indeed, when Layard first discovered the Black Obelisk, he had no idea that the pictures and text contained references to Jehu, king of Israel. Instead, the pictures of elephants in the monument led him to suspect that the obelisk perhaps belonged to Queen Semiramis of Classical sources, a queen of Assyria whom these Greek authors claimed to have fought battles in India. Layard knew, however, that this identification was unlikely given that the reliefs showed pictures of kings, not queens. In this case, biblical sources were of no help until the syllabic cuneiform script was deciphered. At other times early in excavations, it was thought that certain mounds contained palaces and riches of kings known from biblical texts, and

⁵⁶ Larsen, *Conquest of Assyria*, 22, 68.

⁵⁷ Larsen, *Conquest of Assyria*, 68. For the many facets and motivations for using Mesopotamian backgrounds to study the Hebrew Bible, see also Peter Machinist, "The Road Not Taken: Wellhausen and Assyriology," in *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Buxenay Oded* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 130; edited by Gershon Galil, Mark Geller, and Alan Millard; Boston: Brill, 2009), 469-70.

the mounds at Kuyunjik proved Layard's hopes correct as they contained the palace of Sennacherib.⁵⁸

These early explorations garnered much publicity. The intellectual climate of the time was ripe not only for such discovery, but also for vigorous and often acrimonious debate about the implications and relevance of these finds for the meaning of the Old Testament. Though it was not a given before the decipherment of syllabic cuneiform that these finds would so drastically challenge biblical history, the venom with which these debates were conducted is indicative of what was at stake. In Germany, High Criticism and the beginnings of source-critical modes of examining the Hebrew Bible had already made strides (as well as historical-critical modes of studying the New Testament). In Layard's home nation of England, however, the debates were only beginning concerning the legitimacy of Higher Critical principles, the new geological timeline of the earth provided by Darwinism, and the relevance of the new antiquities that excavators such as Layard were discovering. These elements combined to create an especially contentious environment. As both Edward Hincks and Henry Rawlinson were publishing the initial stages of translations of these Akkadian documents in the 1850s, their importance became increasingly apparent. Eventually, the issue of who actually deciphered these texts became a matter of debate, though Hincks likely laid the foundation upon which Rawlinson would build much of his work, despite the reputation of the latter as the "Father of Assyriology."⁵⁹ Nonetheless, as Larsen states "these learned disputes, claims and counter-claims were of little interest to the public compared to the fact that the texts could now be read. People now discovered that the Assyrian texts really did contain information which was of vital

⁵⁸ Larsen, *Conquest of Assyria*, 30, 132, 220, 224, 296, 301, 320.

⁵⁹ Larsen, *Conquest of Assyria*, 325-326; Kevin J. Cathcart, "The Earliest Contributions to the Decipherment of Sumerian and Akkadian," *Cuneiform Digital Library Journal* 1 (2011): 1-12.

importance for the correct understanding of passages in the Old Testament.”⁶⁰ It was not only the material contained in these texts and the Bible that greatly interested scholars and laypeople, but eventually it became clear, at least to scholars, that there were many kings of Assyria not mentioned in the biblical record, new data that greatly influenced how people perceived the Bible as history. It became clear for many reasons that the Hebrew Bible was not simply a deposit of history, nor a historical checklist against which these excavations should be measured. The relationship of the Hebrew Bible and the various literary genres therein to history and surrounding cultures was drastically altered.⁶¹

The initial outcome of the decipherment of these texts became apparent in Smith’s famous work *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*.⁶² As evident in the title, the translation and analysis of the Akkadian texts was not simply a matter of understanding Assyrian and Babylonian texts on their own terms. In part, Smith contrasted his discovery and translation of these tablets with the works of Berossus.⁶³ This Babylonian priest’s work was preserved in the writings of later authors and it was one of the main sources to provide knowledge about the

⁶⁰ Larsen, *Conquest of Assyria*, 303.

⁶¹ As Brent Strawn notes, one of the earliest programmatic statements on comparative approaches in religious studies generally came from Friedrich Max Müller in a lecture in 1870, in which he urged scholars to step out of the confines of simply proving already accepted belief sets and moving towards knowledge based on comparison (“Comparative Approaches: History, Theory, and the Image of God,” in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen* [edited by Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards; Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study 56; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009], 118-119). Müller’s approach was more typological, comparing Buddhism, Islam, and other religious systems, rather than historical (see below for Malul’s distinction between typological and historical comparison). While this lecture was monumental for opening the door to comparative studies generally, it had less to do specifically with historical connections and contact, issues that came more to the fore with the publication of Akkadian texts, the implications of which were not completely known in 1870 when Müller gave his lecture.

⁶² Smith, *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*.

⁶³ Smith also utilized other information preserved in ancient writings, though Berossus was his main source.

history, texts, and religious life of ancient Mesopotamia.⁶⁴ In some texts Smith found remarkable correspondences, while in other Akkadian texts Smith discovered stories and information that Berossus had not preserved. The major basis of comparison, however, was with the Hebrew Bible. So close did Smith see the relationship between the Bible and the Mesopotamian myths that he was confident in asserting correlations between parts of the two corpora that, to modern sensibilities, appear extremely farfetched. For example, Smith observed that the serpent in Genesis 3, the נחש, simply appears in the narrative without any background information concerning the nature and history of this creature that proves to be so pivotal in the Fall of humanity. To round out the picture of this creature, Smith appealed to the Akkadian texts. Here, the “fragmentary account of the Fall in the inscriptions mentions the dragon Tiamat, or the dragon of the sea, evidently the same relation as the serpent [of Genesis 3], being concerned in bringing about the Fall.”⁶⁵ While the texts concerning creation and the flood narratives were subject to the most intense comparative analysis,⁶⁶ this quotation reveals much of Smith’s approach to comparative material: generally speaking, the Bible and Mesopotamian thought reflected the same culture and mind, and therefore shared literary conceptions to such a degree that terms derived from Judeo-Christian study of the Bible, such as “the Fall,” could just as easily be transferred to Assyrian and Babylonian texts. He even went as far as to restore broken passages in cuneiform tablets on the basis of supposed parallels in the Hebrew Bible.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ See G. P. Verbrugge and J. M. Wickersham, *Berosos and Manetho Introduced and Translated: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

⁶⁵ Smith, *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*, 87.

⁶⁶ Smith also examined other Assyrian and Babylonian fables and myths, some of which have little or no textual basis of comparison with the Bible.

⁶⁷ See, for example, the statements in the Introduction to this dissertation.

The type of approach practiced by Smith came to its ultimate fruition in the two lectures that Friedrich Delitzsch gave in 1902, although the latter came to a radical conclusion regarding the lasting value of the Hebrew Bible for Christianity.⁶⁸ For Delitzsch, his claim was that the Israelites and Judeans simply borrowed Assyrian and Babylonian stories. Moreover, in his view the identification of contradictions in the Hebrew Bible that he labeled “immoral” meant a radical reworking of the notion of revelation.⁶⁹ Combined with nationalistic feelings and anti-Semitism, Delitzsch asserted that the Germans should replace the notion of the Old Testament as divine revelation with the idea that God had been revealing himself to the Germans through their own folktales. In an attempt to aid this transition, Delitzsch even claimed to have found traces of the Aryan race in Assyrian reliefs.⁷⁰ In doing so, he stated that the superior literature and (in his view) morality of the Assyrians and Babylonians elevated this culture to such a level that this comparison would promote the replacement of the Old Testament as a revealed document with more advanced and evolved documents.⁷¹

The key point for this history of the comparative method is the manner in which Delitzsch conducted his argumentation. In order to devalue the Hebrew Bible by labeling it as derivative, he had to show how each Israelite institution, as much as was possible, was simply a poor copy of something from Babylon. In the process he observed many valid parallels and articulated some of the linguistic importance of comparative work between Akkadian documents

⁶⁸ Delitzsch, *Babel and Bible: Two Lectures on the Significance of Assyriological Research for Religion, Embodying the Most Important Criticisms and the Author's Replies* (translated by Thomas J. McCormack and W. H. Carruth; Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1903); translation of *Babel und Bibel: Ein Vortrag* (History of Religions Preservation Project; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1902).

⁶⁹ Delitzsch, *Babel and Bible*, 92-114.

⁷⁰ Delitzsch, *Babel and Bible*, 23.

⁷¹ See Delitzsch's appeal to the German Reformation as a model for continuing the work of refining German religion (*Babel and Bible*, 114).

and the Hebrew Bible.⁷² Delitzsch's zeal to make the latter derivative of Babylonian thought produced an impression that any element of the literature of ancient Israel or Judah should be, as much as is possible, paralleled with external ancient Near Eastern thought.

IV. *Gunkel, the Rise of Form Criticism, and the Myth and Ritual School*

The insistence upon examining the Hebrew Bible in light of Mesopotamian language and literature in Smith's and Delitzsch's work remains valid today, as the examples in the beginning of this chapter illustrate. Without a more precise and controlled method, and burdened with many of the assumptions of late nineteenth century notions of historiography, these studies produced massive literary juxtapositions with little reflection on how to distinguish a good comparison from a poor one. In some ways, the work of Hermann Gunkel was a first step towards finding more precise criteria for comparative work between the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature. It has often been stated that the difference between Wellhausen and his approach to the history of the religion of ancient Israel and Gunkel, the scholar who helped to pioneer form criticism, was that the latter had at his disposal the works of ancient Near Eastern cultures for a more thorough comparative basis.⁷³ While in some measure this assertion is true, there existed enough knowledge of ancient Akkadian literature for at least some preliminary comparative philology to occur in Wellhausen's time, even if he did not take full advantage of this burgeoning field.⁷⁴ For example, August Dillmann, an older contemporary of Wellhausen,

⁷² See, for example, Delitzsch's comments on the linguistic relatedness of Babylonian and Hebrew (*Babel and Bible*, 29). See also his linguistic connection between the goddess Tiamat in the Babylonian creation account and the Hebrew תְּהוֹמָה in Gen 1:2 (*Babel und Bible*, 45).

⁷³ For an excellent introduction to the basic concerns of the recognition of genres, or forms, that are the basis of form criticism, see John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 30-44.

⁷⁴ For a more thorough study on Wellhausen, Assyriology, and comparative studies, see Machinist, "The Road Not Taken: Wellhausen and Assyriology," 469-531.

already proposed a connection between the otherwise obscure noun 𐤎𐤍 (“mist”) in Gen 2:6 and the Akkadian noun *idum*, itself a loan from Sumerian ID, in his commentary on Genesis.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the divide between Wellhausen and Gunkel, and their legacies for comparative approaches in biblical studies, can be meaningfully separated by the systematic incorporation of comparative use of Mesopotamian literature.

Prior to Gunkel’s work, many scholars compared the Hebrew Bible to modern Arab tribes, using these tribes, their lifestyle, and their literature as a modern analogue to the tribes of ancient Israel.⁷⁶ These comparisons were based in large part on the belief that the development of these Arab tribes along the spectrum of nomadic societies to more urban, settled life roughly matched that of ancient Israel. With the decipherment of Akkadian, officially announced in 1857, literature contemporary to the Hebrew Bible and with uncanny similarities began to appear in publications.⁷⁷ The comparative material that the texts of this newly deciphered language provided was much more immediate in chronological and literary proximity to the Hebrew Bible than were the Arabic texts on which many of the earlier comparative approaches were based.

⁷⁵ The first edition of this commentary was published in 1875 and did not include this observation; the third edition was published in 1892 (*Die Genesis* [Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament 11; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1892], 115-16). Dillmann cites Delitzsch who, already in the 1880s, had determined a basic sense of the word in Akkadian, though Delitzsch had not connected the Akkadian word to Gen 2:6 (Delitzsch, *Akkadische Wörterbuch zur Gesamten bisher veröffentlichten Keilschriftliteratur: Unter Berücksichtigung Zahlreicher Unveröffentlichter Texte* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1887-1890], 122-23).

⁷⁶ For example, Wellhausen was not only one of the seminal biblical scholars of his day, but he also one of the more prolific scholars in Arabic studies. See, for example, his works *Der arabische Josippus* (Abhandlungen der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1897); *Das Arabische Reich und Sein Sturz* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1902). Wellhausen was also a major scholar in the field of New Testament. See Rudolph Smend, *Julius Wellhausen: Ein Bahnbrecher in Drei Disziplinen* (Themen 84; Munich: Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung, 2006). The results of his work on Arab tribes do not form a major part of his work in *Prolegomena*, but were indicative of the basic comparative approach of his day and did influence some of his conceptions of the development of the religion of ancient Israel. See Jeffrey Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses: Prophecy, Law, and Israelite Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁷⁷ The British Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Dublin in 1857, sponsored a proposal of four scholarly translations of the same text by Henry Rawlinson, Edward Hincks, W. H. Fox Talbot, and Jules Oppert. When those presiding had discovered that the independent translations of the same texts had a large amount of agreement, they pronounced that Akkadian had been deciphered.

While analysis of Arabic traditions in comparison with the Hebrew Bible produced lasting contributions in some areas (particularly in the Book of Song of Songs),⁷⁸ direct access to texts from the world of the Hebrew Bible revolutionized the comparative approach.

Gunkel's work represents the pivotal moment in this transformation of biblical studies.⁷⁹

While accepting the work of Wellhausen and the basic outlines of JEDP for the Pentateuch, his examination of Genesis and the Psalms in terms of genres (*Gattungen*) allowed for a somewhat controlled comparison between ancient Mesopotamian literature and the Hebrew Bible.⁸⁰ In other words, each psalm was classified according to its literary genre, and the corresponding genre from Mesopotamian culture provided the basis for comparison.⁸¹ A royal psalm from the Hebrew Bible, in this view, should therefore be interpreted in light of a royal hymn or other royal

⁷⁸ See the brief discussion in Roland Murphy, *Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or Song of Songs* (Hermeneia 22; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 39.

⁷⁹ As innovative as Gunkel was, some have argued that much of his work was different in degree, but not in kind, from other scholars of his day, such as Delitzsch (Matthew James Hamilton, Review of *Israel in Babylon: The Babylonian Influence on Israelite Religion* [2011 reprint], *Reviews in Religion and Theology* [2012]: 312). Gunkel wrote a piece in response to Delitzsch's lectures, often disagreeing using extreme (if not scathing) language (*Israel and Babylon: The Babylonian Influence on Israelite Religion* [Translated by E. S. B.; Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2009]). The disagreement was not on the extent of Israelite contact and indebtedness to Assyrian and Babylonian religion and thought, but whether that contact produced degenerated versions of the originals (Delitzsch) or innovative and unique Israelite thought that meaningfully diverged from Mesopotamian sources (Gunkel). The nature of the ancient contact as perceived in their respective views also differed inasmuch as Delitzsch proposed the contact to have originated in exclusively literary form with the Babylonian creation and flood accounts present before the authors of the biblical work, whereas Gunkel focused instead on the role of orality as the means of contact. In this latter sense, the debate between Delitzsch and Gunkel augured more recent disagreements regarding the relationship between the Bible and Mesopotamian literature. For example, Samuel Greengus argues that the parallels between the Bible and cuneiform literature occurred through oral means of transmission, whereas Wright argues for a more studied, scribal interaction through written works. See Greengus, "Some Issues Relating to the Comparability of Laws and the Coherence of the Legal Tradition," in *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law* (edited by Bernard Levinson; Journal for the Study of Old Testament Supplement Series 181; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 79-87; "Filling Gaps: Laws Found in Babylonia and the Mishna but Absent in the Hebrew Bible," *Maarav* 7 (1991): 149-71; Wright, *Inventing God's Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Reused and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi*, 3-7.

⁸⁰ Mark J. Boda, "Form Criticism in Transition: Penitential Prayer and Lament, *Sitz im Leben* and Form," in *Seeking the Favor of God* (3 volumes; edited by Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; Early Judaism and Its Literature; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006-2008), 1:182.

⁸¹ Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen, Übersetzt und Erklärt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1905); idem., *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (completed by Joachim Begrich; translated by James D. Nogalski; Mercer Library of Biblical Studies; Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1998); idem., *Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967).

literature from ancient Akkadian literature. Legends from the Book of Genesis, likewise, should be understood as made-up of units, each of which belonged to a genre.⁸² These genres would then be placed in the context of other genres in the ancient Near East for the purpose of comparison. As has recently been argued, the point was not so much to locate the date and social context of an individual text in ancient Israel, which itself then would be seen in the light of the ancient Near East; rather, the *Sitz im Leben* of the genre itself was the focus of comparative analysis, and knowing the situation of the genre in the life of Israel then helped the scholar interpret the text that matched the genre (whether or not the text itself ever had such a function).⁸³ This assessment of genres, or forms, in the ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible launched the critical approach to the Bible known as “form criticism.”⁸⁴

As helpful as the relationship between genre and *Sitz im Leben* was in Gunkel’s approach, some texts in the Hebrew Bible contained such similarities with ancient Mesopotamian literature that it appeared that the relationship was not merely in the genre category. Instead, direct contact of some sort could have produced the literary correspondences. For example, Morris Jastrow claimed a direct link between the J narrative of the flood and Babylonian deluge myths.⁸⁵ This statement is notable because it is the first observation (to my knowledge) that different strata of biblical documents show different levels of contact with

⁸² Gunkel, *The Stories of Genesis* (translated by John J. Scullion; edited by William R. Scott; Vallejo, California: BIBAL Press, 1994); translation of *Die Sagen der Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandhoeck und Ruprecht, 1901).

⁸³ Martin Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism in its Context* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 274; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 234-35.

⁸⁴ This method is not inherently inimical to source criticism, the critical approach that examines the literary strata, namely the four documents J, E, D, and P. Some scholars have posited a much stronger dividing line between the two methods than originally appeared in the work of Gunkel.

⁸⁵ Jastrow claimed the existence of many points of contact between P in Genesis 1 and the Babylonian epics of creation (though it is surprising that such a later stratum, committed to monotheism, would have retained so many pagan elements retained), but sees a reverse correlation in the Flood (J looks much more like Gilgamesh than P, and if scholars had only P, then no clear trace between the Babylonian epic and biblical sources could be discerned) (*Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions: The Haskell Lectures Delivered at Oberlin College in 1913 and Since Revised and Enlarged* [New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1914], 105; 359-60).

foreign literature (though I argue in Chapter 5 against his claim that P does not show any direct relationship with Mesopotamian flood narratives). The result, despite Gunkel's distinction, was to understand the Hebrew Bible as a shadow of any and everything in Mesopotamia. In other words, the larger text and its constituent units were collapsed, and any corresponding textual affinities in Mesopotamia meant that passages in the Bible were simply derivative of larger near Eastern culture.

A major figure who came next in the use of comparative material, Sigmund Mowinckel, bridged a number of schools of thought in his writing. Like Johannes Pederson and Ivan Engnell, Scandinavian scholars who focused on traditions of Israelite myth in the context of ancient ritual (thus pioneering, along with the British scholar S. H. Hooke, the "myth and ritual school" in biblical studies), Mowinckel placed great emphasis on the interpretation of Israelite literature in the context of the cultic services of the nation. Unlike these other Scandinavian scholars, who rejected the source-critical approaches of the previous generation, Mowinckel followed in his mentor's (Gunkel's) footsteps, adopting literary and oral explanations for his critical approach to the Hebrew Bible. Mowinckel's thesis of the seasonal cycles of the cult were, in many ways, heavily influenced by festivals of other ancient cultures, especially the New Year's Festival in Mesopotamia, known as the *Akītu* festival.⁸⁶ Though Mowinckel held views different from those of the myth-and-ritual scholars on the notion of divine kingship,⁸⁷ he reconstructed large parts of

⁸⁶ Johannes De Moor made similar suggestions about seasonal rituals in Ugaritic literature. See *The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Ba'lu, According to the Version of Illimilku* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 16; Kevelaer, Butzon & Bercker, 1971). For a critique of this proposal, see Mark S. Smith, *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 90-91.

⁸⁷ The myth-and-ritual school grew out of anthropological trends, the scholars of which advocated extensive comparison amongst societies and religious beliefs. The rise of anthropology in the nineteenth century heavily influenced this approach, and informed the debates as to whether ritual grew from myth or vice versa. See Robert Ackerman, "The Rise of Anthropology: Lang, Taylor, and Smith," in *The Myth and Ritual School: J. G.*

Israelite society on the basis of this Mesopotamian festival much like other scholars of this school. In his view, the psalms were part of cultic liturgy, the genres of which were part of the major autumn festival, the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the Israelite analogue of the celebration of kingship and the new year that was the *Akītu* in Mesopotamia. In addition, parts of the Pentateuch (such as J and E in Exodus 19-24) were texts that also celebrated the covenant between God and his people, a celebration that first existed as a cultic festival.

As seen in the works of Gunkel and Mowinckel, a related interest in using oral backgrounds and literary approaches to understand the Hebrew Bible in its ancient Near Eastern context became an essential part of the critical study of the biblical text.⁸⁸ While Mowinckel certainly went beyond Gunkel in many areas, his dedication of his study on the Psalms to Gunkel shows at least some affinity in their understanding of how the Bible should be studied in its ancient context.⁸⁹ Each in their own way advanced the study of the Hebrew Bible in the ancient Near East, and each used genre analysis to find corresponding forms in ancient Mesopotamia for comparative purposes. Nonetheless, a few weaknesses in the scholarship of Gunkel and Mowinckel are evident. First, the appeal to *Gattungen* can create false impressions. Not all the

Frazer and the Cambridge Ritualists (Theorists of Myth 2; New York: Garland Pub., 1991), 29-44. Mowinckel's closeness to the myth-and-ritual theorists was, perhaps, most evident in the reactions of Hooke to Mowinckel's critiques; Hooke stated that Mowinckel's attitude to the myth-and-ritual school was "like Saturn, devouring his own children." See Collins, "Foreward," in Mowinckel, *He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in the Old Testament and Later Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2005), xvii. For more on the myth-and-ritual school in biblical and Ugaritic studies, see Smith, *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century*, 82-85.

⁸⁸ For a monumental work on orality whose author both acknowledges her debt to Gunkel even though she departs from some of his assumptions about orality and simplicity, see Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996). Her work has influenced the recent scholarship of Carr (*Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature*, 3; *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction*, 22). It should be noted that R. E. Friedman's rebuttal of Niditch, especially of her critique of more traditional, text-based theories of the development of the Hebrew Bible, has not been addressed by Niditch or Carr. See Friedman, "Introduction," in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (2nd ed.; Edited by Jeffrey H. Tigay; Eugene Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005).

⁸⁹ Boda, "Form Criticism in Transition: Penitential Prayer and Lament, *Sitz im Leben* and Form," 182-83.

labels that modern scholars use for genres apply neatly to ancient texts; moreover, different cultures and authors can borrow, adapt, change, or subvert genres that operate in otherwise more stable manners elsewhere. To be fair, Gunkel observed what he termed “mixed genres,” which did not conform to one simple pattern.⁹⁰ To a certain degree, he recognized the complexities of attempting to pinpoint a genre for the sake of comparison. Nonetheless, his method often produced speculative and facile comparisons, the result of a lack of rigorous theory of contact in which these genres would have spread. The field of form criticism became much more concerned with the discovery of literary units and genres within the work of a biblical author, thereby leaving comparative work and morphing into a new field of literary studies known as “rhetorical criticism.”⁹¹

Mowinckel’s creative endeavors in many ways forged new grounds, but also extended far beyond what comparative data would allow. The literary parallels between the Hebrew Bible and ancient Mesopotamian literature became a means for him to propose the reconstruction of components of Israelite and Judean society for which there is no evidence. In other words, concern for seeking literary analogues, even in the hands of scholars like Gunkel and Mowinckel who believed that in many ways ancient Israel and Judah differed greatly from Mesopotamian societies, led to abuses and unwarranted extrapolations without methodological controls.⁹²

⁹⁰ Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (translated by Thomas M. Horner; Biblical Series 19; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 36-39; translation of volume 1 of *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch in gemeinverständlicher Darstellung*.

⁹¹ David L. Peterson, “Hebrew Bible Form Criticism,” *Religious Studies Review* 18 (1992): 29-33.

⁹² Samuel Sandmel, though writing about Qumran, Rabbinic literature, and the NT, also warned against abuses in comparative studies and introduced the term “parallelomania” in biblical studies (“Parallelomania,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 1-13).

V. *Conceptual Autonomy*

In response to what they took to be improper comparisons of Assyrian and Babylonian documents with biblical literature, Assyriologists began to question the need for comparative studies. Landsberger led this charge in writings that supported the notion of what he called *die Eigenbegrifflichkeit*, or “conceptual autonomy,” of individual cultures.⁹³ The idea was that Mesopotamian literature was sufficiently abundant that the need for the Assyriologist to make comparative use of the Hebrew Bible was not necessary. Indeed, he argued that a more methodologically sound approach was to examine a word, phrase, or piece of literature from Mesopotamia in its own right. Only then, in the unlikely case that appealing to external sources from related Semitic languages would be necessary, should the scholar engage in comparative study.⁹⁴

Landsberger’s approach became influential in biblical studies through the writings of Talmon.⁹⁵ His legacy can also be felt in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD)*, the glosses of which do not appeal, except in the rarest of cases, to external or comparative data. The definitions come from literary context and usages within Akkadian literature, and methodological errors such as Barr’s “totality transfer” (in which the semantics of a word in one

⁹³ Landsberger, “Die Eigenbegrifflichkeit der babylonischen Welt,” 355-72; *The Conceptual Autonomy of the Babylonian World*.

⁹⁴ “To strike the proper balance and so attain to rich and fully developed concepts of life is the common aim of both the specialist and the generalist scholar. Neither the narrowly conceived adjustments of the philologist who does not look beyond the pale of his own field, nor the shallow typologies of the comparative historian of civilization, who thinks he can make do with one abstract, formal pattern for all the various objectivizations of the human mind, can be allowed to prevail” (*Conceptual Autonomy*, 7). Many of Landsberger’s arguments were concerned with the newness of the discipline of Assyriology and the fact that scholars had not allowed sufficient time for Assyriologists to reflect on their data before appeal to biblical comparisons. Oppenheim, a colleague of Landsberger, argued for the existence of “acceptable” comparisons with the Hebrew Bible, in contrast to “haphazard” ones (*Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* [revised and completed by Erica Reiner; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977], 21-22).

⁹⁵ Talmon, “The Comparative Method in Biblical Interpretation,” 20. See also his collection of studies in which he considers the literary properties of the Bible from an exclusively internal and non-comparative approach (*Literary Motifs and Patterns in the Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays* [Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013]).

language is illegitimately forced on another word in a cognate language) are thereby avoided.⁹⁶ Thus, Landsberger and the *CAD* contrast with the approach of Landsberger's student Wolfram von Soden in his *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, since the latter cited comparative Semitic data in the lexical entries (though it may be debated to what extent he allowed the formal etymological data to influence his interpretation of the Akkadian).⁹⁷

Landsberger's conceptual autonomy, however, has created certain misperceptions. While those who belong to disciplines that have sufficient documentation to render comparative work unnecessary as a primary interpretive rightly avoid making appeals to external data unless warranted, the same luxury is not afforded to every language or field in ancient studies. The limited textual data from the time of ancient Israel and Judah, both in the Hebrew Bible and in inscriptional evidence, make it necessary at times to appeal to surrounding cultures for some sense of meaning (as long as the meaning derived from comparative study also makes sense in the literary context). Indeed, the presence of loanwords, both Sumerian and Aramaic (amongst other languages) in Akkadian makes it impossible, at least on occasion, to understand every lexeme that enters into a dialect of Akkadian on exclusively internal grounds. Given the similarities between the literature of the Hebrew Bible and cuneiform documents, and given the linguistic data in the Hebrew Bible that at times defy internal explanation, the scholar of the Hebrew Bible is not in a position to apply Landsberger's conceptual autonomy in an exclusive manner. It is certainly true that the ancient Israelites and Judeans had different conceptions of their world from those of the Mesopotamians, and that these differences influence shared stories such that the flood narratives in the Hebrew Bible differ significantly from Mesopotamian flood

⁹⁶ Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 218.

⁹⁷ Von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch: Unter Benutzung des Lexicalischen Nachlasses von Bruno Meissner* (3 volumes; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965-1981).

stories. Nonetheless, it is only through comparative examination that these differences, even amongst shared stories that show evidence of some sort of contact, become clear.

Misconceptions regarding Landsberger's notion of conceptual autonomy should also be addressed. Affirming conceptual autonomy does not dictate that comparative examinations should never be conducted. In an influential article on the term *annaku* in Akkadian, Landsberger appealed to Hebrew evidence, specifically the word **אֲנַח** in Amos 7:7, citing comparative philology in addition to exegetical context. He used this evidence to help solve an ambiguous and poorly understood word in Akkadian.⁹⁸ Moreover, he wrote an article analyzing Akkadian loanwords in Biblical Hebrew, a linguistic phenomenon that implies some form of contact.⁹⁹ Had his intent been to keep these worlds absolutely separate without any comparative philology or comparative examinations of literature, no such recourse to extra-Mesopotamian evidence would have been made.¹⁰⁰ Thus, Landsberger's guardedness against comparison when internal, systematic reflection of a language on its own terms has yet to be finished is well heeded; however, extreme isolation of linguistic and literary material for the sake of avoiding comparison is just as pernicious as the over-zealous attempts to fit Israel and Judah, or for that matter Assyria and Babylon, into a general "pan-Babylonian" mold by facile associations.

VI. *Hallo's Legacy*

William H. Hallo, a trained Sumerologist, attempted to provide a middle ground between similarities in putative parallels and differences that emerge when the texts in question are more

⁹⁸ Landsberger, "Tin and Lead: The Adventures of Two Vocables," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24 (1965): 285-96.

⁹⁹ Landsberger, "Akkadisch-hebräische Wortgleichungen," in *Hebräische Wortforschung: Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Walter Baumgartner* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 16; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 176-204.

¹⁰⁰ For brief comments on how "the effects of Landsberger's lecture" may have "gone beyond his ultimate intent," see Machinist and Piotr Michalowski, "Introduction: William Hallo and Assyriological, Biblical, and Jewish Studies," in *The World's Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres* (Boston: Brill, 2010), xxxi-xxxii.

thoroughly examined. In various articles, he observed that not only does the comparison of texts reveal information about the ancient societies that produced these documents, but that such comparative endeavor also makes the politics of the scholar more apparent. Thus, the study of the history of comparison is illuminating of biases in modern scholarship. These biases distort the comparative examination of texts, as the previous history has shown.¹⁰¹

As his response to such faulty methodology, Hallo embarked on what he termed the “contextual” approach. This approach examines the synchronic literary, cultural, and historical environs of the texts under consideration (which he terms the “horizontal” aspect) and their diachronic development (that is, earlier texts inform and “inspire” later texts that come into contact with these forebears of literary tradition). More importantly, for Hallo the comparative enterprise must include examination of both similarities and differences. In what seems to be an obvious statement, he points out that the previous history of scholarship has either overemphasized similarities between biblical and Mesopotamian sources (Delitzsch) or underemphasized the need for good comparative work (Landsberger). In one sense, the observation of differences *per se* is nothing new. Gunkel, in his reply to Delitzsch’s lectures, emphatically asserted that versions of stories in the Bible that parallel Mesopotamian writings differed in a variety of ways from their Akkadian counterparts.¹⁰² Gunkel’s assertion, however, never became part of a systematic approach to comparative work. Thus, Hallo’s balance between conclusions about similarities and differences in the process of comparison itself (and not just a general recognition as in Gunkel’s work) has been an important development.

¹⁰¹ William H. Hallo, “Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Their Relevance for Biblical Exegesis,” *Context of Scripture* 1: xxviii. See also his discussion of scholarly biases in the construction of Israelite history (“Biblical History in its Near Eastern Setting: The Contextual Approach,” 1-26).

¹⁰² The following quotation is indicative: “Accordingly the Israel tradition had by no means simply adopted the Babylonian, but on the contrary it transformed the story with the utmost completeness; a true marvel of world’s history, it has changed dross into gold” (Gunkel, *Israel and Babylon*, 33).

Hallo's contextual approach has had significant impact on the field of biblical studies. He edited, along with K. Lawson Younger, a three volume collection of primary sources of the ancient Near East. The title of this collection, *The Context of Scripture*, is the natural outgrowth of Hallo's contextual approach.¹⁰³ Moreover, many essays and books in the field now cite his perspective as foundational.¹⁰⁴ For all its helpfulness, however, Hallo's approach has some fundamental weaknesses. For example, despite his claim that his contextual approach achieves more scientific accuracy and objective results, it is not clear how the simple juxtaposition of texts with the intent of searching for similarities and differences actually constitutes a rigorous method. Such a method should be able to deliver repeatable results and include controls to ensure that a balance remains in place and to crosscheck, as much as is possible, results with other comparable situations which may be better documented. No such objectivity or methodological precision exists in his approach.¹⁰⁵

Hallo's argument that texts under comparison need to be placed in context raises further questions. How does one reconstruct a context?¹⁰⁶ Which context matters most: linguistic, literary, material culture, religious ideology, or do they all have equal weight? Hallo indicates that context constitutes geographical and chronological proximity of the texts under discussion. This statement, too, raises questions. Are there political motivations, cultural attitudes, or

¹⁰³ Hallo and Younger, eds, *The Context of Scripture* (3 volumes; New York: Brill, 1997-2002).

¹⁰⁴ See the collected essays in Mark W. Chavalas and Younger, *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2002). See also Walton's claim that methodological maturity in comparative studies between the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East began with Hallo (*Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 17-18).

¹⁰⁵ Strawn, "Comparative Approaches: History, Theory, and the Image of God," 121.

¹⁰⁶ Hallo examines the issue of context more thoroughly in "Biblical History in its Near Eastern Setting: The Contextual Approach," 3-4. Such considerations of material culture and political realities are equally important for comparative research, but Hallo instead concentrates exclusively on literary phenomena in "Compare and Contrast: The Contextual Approach to Biblical Literature," in *The Bible in Light of Cuneiform Literature: Scripture in Context III* (edited by William Hallo, Bruce William Jones, and Gerald L. Mattingly; Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 8; Lewiston, New York: E. Mellen Press, 1990), 1-30.

historical instances in which geographical considerations need to be more expansive than other situations? For example, Albrecht Alt claimed that geographical proximity was an important factor for the similarity between biblical and cuneiform law, and therefore that the likely arena for contact between ancient Israelite and Judean scribes and larger Mesopotamian literature was the Levant (see below).¹⁰⁷ According to him, biblical authors came into contact with Canaanite translations of these legal documents from Mesopotamia, a suggestion that has not been corroborated by textual finds. Eckart Otto, however, presupposes that Judean scribes in the eighth and seventh centuries possessed cuneiform literacy and were in direct contact with Mesopotamian literature, in which case the context for contact, and therefore comparison, is much more immediate.¹⁰⁸ How one would adjudicate which context, the Levant or Mesopotamia (or whether scribal traditions in both regions were sufficiently similar to minimize differences), is more appropriate is not specified in Hallo's approach. As Strawn has stated in his critique of Hallo, the nature of context is not always self-evident.¹⁰⁹ Nor does Hallo explore issues of contact, and how contact, or at least the possibility of contact, influences whether or not one is conducting a purely typological comparison or a comparison based on historical connection, whether direct or indirect.¹¹⁰ Context is something that scholars reconstruct, and therefore, as an

¹⁰⁷ Alt, *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (translated by R. A. Wilson; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 97.

¹⁰⁸ To my knowledge, Otto does not state this assumption, though his argument proceeds from it. See Morrow's review of Eckart's volume *Das Deuteronomium* (William S. Morrow, "Cuneiform Literacy and Deuteronomic Composition," 205).

¹⁰⁹ In this sense, the same critiques that Talmon applied to Barr regarding geographic and historical propinquity apply also to Hallo ("Comparative Method in Biblical Interpretation," 16-17).

¹¹⁰ For the distinction between typological and historical comparison, see the discussion of Malul below. Hallo briefly acknowledges the issues of contact and transmission of the material under comparison, but claims there are too many uncertainties involved to be sure of the nature of the contact; therefore, in similar fashion to modern literary studies, he claims that these issues of contact do not need to be explored in detail in order to conduct comparisons ("Compare and Contrast: Contextual Approach to Biblical Literature," 6-7). Even if, as he states, answers cannot always be forthcoming, the issue of some form of contact between biblical authors and Mesopotamian sources is certain (see Chapter 3). Some form of theory or framework for when and how the contact

interpretive act, it is something that should be demonstrated and defined and not simply assumed.¹¹¹ As influential as Hallo has been, comparative studies in the Hebrew Bible, particularly when issues of contact are at stake, still need methodological refinement.¹¹²

VII. *Legacy of Alt*

Perhaps one of the more pervasive assumptions about contact between biblical texts and other ancient Near Eastern societies has been the theory that ancient Israelites received their versions of these ancient Near Eastern texts via an Aramaic intermediary.¹¹³ It is useful to trace the history of this theory for a variety of reasons.¹¹⁴ First, while the assumption has some practical merit, it fails as a persuasive hypothesis until actual evidence can be adduced to support it. Second, it proves to be a revealing example of the benefits that contact linguistics can provide biblical scholarship, even when the former necessarily challenges some of the cherished beliefs of the latter. Third, it supports the foregoing account of the history of biblical studies as a discipline in need of a stronger theoretical framework of contact.

The beginnings of the theory of an Aramaic intermediary between Mesopotamian literature and biblical literature can best be traced to the work of Albrecht Alt. In his discussion of Hebrew law, particularly the similarities between the casuistic formulation and other Near Eastern legal phraseology, Alt explores the means through which ancient Israelites would have

occurs, and what evidences of this contact appear in the Hebrew Bible, should be a part of a rigorous comparative method.

¹¹¹ In the field of contact linguistics, issues of linguistic propinquity are considered alongside socio-linguistic information such as language attitudes, political relationships, and material culture.

¹¹² Other, less influential contextual approaches have been suggested. Simon Parker's work deserves mention. Though he has not had many followers and though his approach is a literary analogue to much of Barr's work on words and philology but applied to Ugaritic literature, his desire to connect literary and linguistic analysis in one comparative endeavor is laudable. See Simon B. Parker, "Some Methodological Principles in Ugaritic Philology," *Maarav* 2 (1980): 7-41.

¹¹³ See, for example, the brief discussion of the influence of Neo-Assyrian treaties on Deuteronomy 28, perhaps "via Aramaic translations" in Bernard M. Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 25 n 8.

¹¹⁴ For a more thorough linguistic and sociolinguistic examination of this theory, see Chapter 3.

been exposed to this common ancient juridical formulation.¹¹⁵ In this discussion, Alt does not propose a specifically Aramaic intermediary; he does, however, appear to prefer the idea of a Canaanite forerunner to the laws in the Hebrew Bible. While his thesis has surface plausibility, Alt, in this discussion, formulated a massive assumption which has become, to some scholars, a matter of necessity: the Israelites must have inherited their legal forms, and the literary and linguistic elements therein, through contact with Canaanites who lived in the region prior to Israel.¹¹⁶

Alt's hypothesis has merit. Historically, it has been proven that scribes were at work in the Canaanite city states. The Amarna letters of the fourteenth century BCE show not only the ability to write cuneiform, but also to articulate a dialect of Akkadian with strong, traceable elements of their own Canaanite language.¹¹⁷ With this corpus, the idea of positing other genres, such as law codes and legends, written in Canaanite dialects, which would later literarily and linguistically influence Hebrew (also a Canaanite dialect but only attested in writing in the first millennium BCE) seems reasonable. Indeed, treaties such as the Aramaic document Sefire may

¹¹⁵ Albrecht Alt, "The Origins of Israelite Law," in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 124-28; translation of "Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts," *Berichte über Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse 86* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934).

¹¹⁶ Alt himself admits that "we have at present no original sources for the study of Canaanite law, so that we are unable to follow these indications any further" ("The Origins of Israelite Law," 126).

¹¹⁷ The Amarna letters would prove to be another interesting case in contact linguistics. Much has already been done regarding the Canaanite substratum in relation to the Akkadian superstratum; however, much of this work has involved philological details without a linguistic theory in which to fit the details and develop typologies for language contact in ancient literary corpora. For an extensive study of Canaanite elements in the Amarna tablets, see Anson Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets: A Linguistic Analysis of the Mixed Dialect Used by Scribes from Canaan* (4 volumes; *Handbuch der Orientalistik, Nahe und der Mittlere Osten 25*; New York: Brill, 1996). See also Eva von Dassow, "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)* (2 volumes; Edited by Leonid Kogan, et al; *Bibel und Babel 4*; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 1:895-924.

have proven to be part of the Northwest Semitic legal and literary conversation of which ancient Israel was a part.¹¹⁸

Alt's perspective also has some major drawbacks. First, it provides an interesting assumption which, with accompanying data, would be more persuasive. Such data, however, are lacking. The corpus of the Amarna archives is composed mostly of letters, not law-codes and legendary materials, the main literary genres which have been used for comparison with the Hebrew Bible. Although the Sefire treaty constitutes a genre similar to that of some biblical texts, correlations from Akkadian literature prove to be stronger both on literary and linguistic grounds.¹¹⁹ Second, this assumption is built upon the idea that cultural and linguistic similarity, as well as geographical proximity, form a reliable predictor of whether and to what extent literary and, by extension, language contact has occurred.¹²⁰ Indeed, Alt is explicit about the rejection of Mesopotamia as the direct source for Israelite texts.¹²¹ He states that Mesopotamia

¹¹⁸ For the most recent study on Sefire in the context of scribal literacy during the time period of ancient Israel, see Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age*, 55-57. See also Fales, "Sefire," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie 12* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 342-45.

¹¹⁹ The treaty stipulations from Sefire occur in the context of an actual agreement, whereas the stipulations and nature of the Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon and Deuteronomy are more idealized. The curse formulations of Sefire and Deuteronomy 28 do show some similar formulations; however, these ties are not exclusive to Mesopotamian influence in other regards and do not form a bond between Sefire and Deuteronomy 28 such that one can simply reconstruct Canaanite versions of all Akkadian literature as Israel's access to the Mesopotamian world. Despite Morrow's claim, others have argued persuasively that Sefire itself is simply an Aramaicized version of a Neo-Assyrian treaty (Morrow, "The Sefire Treaty Stipulations and the Mesopotamian Treaty Tradition," in *The World of the Arameans* [3 volumes; edited by P. M. M. Daviau, John W. Wevers, and Michael Weigel; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 324-326; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001], 83-99; Simo Parpola, "Neo-Assyrian Treaties from the Royal Archives of Nineveh," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 183. As such, Deuteronomy, with its curse list in chapter 28 that looks uncannily similar to the Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon, and Sefire could well both be independent witness of pervasive contact with cuneiform literature and culture.

¹²⁰ If Alt is correct, then the situation would involve a variety of Canaanite dialects interacting since Hebrew is linguistically classified in the Canaanite family. In this case, dialectology, as pioneered by Peter Trudgill, would provide an interesting socio-linguistic framework for viewing any comparative evidence at hand. Unfortunately, such comparative evidence is lacking. For more on dialectology, see Trudgill, *Dialects in Contact* (Language in Society; New York: Blackwell, 1986); J. K. Chambers and Trudgill, *Dialectology* (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹²¹ Alt, "The Origin of Israelite Law," 124.

was too far away, and despite some similarities with biblical law, one should look closer to ancient Israel geographically and culturally (and, presumably, linguistically). From a geographic consideration, Alt's literary connection between Canaanites and proto-Israelites is a purely reconstructed model with little to no literary and archaeological data to support it.¹²² Moreover, much of Alt's hypothesis about Israelite contact with Canaanites and, therefore, the Canaanite influence on Israelite literature come from his reconstruction of Israelite origins from the "god of the fathers."¹²³ It is here that Alt becomes methodologically inconsistent: while he would prefer a closer chronological, geographical, and cultural parallel to Israel for explaining Israelite contact with wider ancient Near Eastern law, he has no problem appealing to Nabatean, Arabic, and Greek inscriptions, all of which are much later and from very different cultures (especially the Greek) than ancient Israel, to reconstruct early Israelite cultic practices pertaining to the "god of the fathers." The issue is not Alt's reconstruction *per se*; rather, the concern is with the reason he provides for his particular view of Israelite inheritance of Mesopotamian literary forms, the existence of alternative well documented and more plausible models for Israelite contact with Akkadian documentation (especially in the Neo-Assyrian period), and his own methodological inconsistency in this matter.

The problem with Alt's theory is that his attempt to create a socio-cultural context is entirely hypothetical, whereas there are proven cases of socio-cultural contact between ancient Israel and Mesopotamia from the eighth century onward, thereby making the latter a more

¹²² Of course, there is archaeological data for discussing the emergence of the Israelites in relationship to Canaanites, but much of this data was discovered after Alt's time. Moreover, these data on the early stage of Israelite emergence are primarily non-linguistic: there are no caches of documents or literary archives from what can be identified as "proto-Israelite." For more on the origins of the Israelites, see Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites, and Where Did They Come From?*

¹²³ Alt, "The God of the Fathers," in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 3-100.

concrete and testable case for studying language contact in the Hebrew Bible. Determining the psychology/religious nature of a hypothetical contact situation between reconstructed proto-Israelites and Canaanites is likewise tenuous. Without a concrete, testable socio-cultural context, and without a verifiable or falsifiable religious motive, Alt's main strength may lie in the "structural" (be that cultural or linguistic) similarity between Canaanites and Israelites (and, perhaps therefore, proto-Israelites). Geographic, chronological, and linguistic relatedness are important factors for comparative work and studies of language contact; however, they are not sufficient.¹²⁴ As Donald Winford claims, "for any given contact situation, predictions of contact-induced changes based solely on structural factors fail miserably."¹²⁵

Despite these weaknesses of Alt's theory, his legacy can still be discerned in biblical studies. Although Alt argued for the use of Canaanite literature generally as a bridge between Mesopotamian literature and parts of the Hebrew Bible, a different, though related, version of this argument has begun to appear more frequently. In recent years some scholars have argued for Aramaic (a non-Canaanite language, but still closely related to Hebrew in the Northwest Semitic family tree) intermediation between literary and linguistic forms in Biblical Hebrew and Akkadian. While Alt is not cited in much of this literature, his logic still pervades in a variety of formulations and much of this theory still operates with insufficient sociolinguistic

¹²⁴ Thomason states well the differences between linguistic and social predictors of contact situations: "We have also seen that certain social factors...set the stage for different linguistic outcomes. For example, if contact is intense enough...then typological distance is no barrier to extensive structural borrowing; to take another example, speakers' attitudes can trump expectations for types and degree of both externally and internally motivated change. In other words, in this domain social factors rule" ("Contact Explanations in Linguistics," in *The Handbook of Language Contact* [Blackwell Handbook in Linguistics; Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010], 46).

¹²⁵ Winford, *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics* (Language in Society 33; Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 10.

considerations.¹²⁶ More information about the sociolinguistic possibility of Aramaic intermediation between Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew appears throughout this dissertation, but it is sufficient in this review of the comparative method to state that a variety of factors undermine this theory, or at least for the reasons offered.¹²⁷

VIII. *More Recent Methodological Contributions to Comparative Studies*

In recent years, more works have appeared in which an attempt is made to critique the comparative method in biblical studies in order to refine and clarify its goals, aim, and various theoretical frameworks. The scholars who have written these studies have, in many ways, added precision to the process and results of interpreting the Hebrew Bible in light of ancient Near Eastern literature. What sets these works apart is their focus on theory. They seek to establish more exact frameworks for the comparative method through careful definitions and criteria of a more general nature (Meir Malul), the application of these definitions and criteria to specific examples of cultural contact (Feder), linguistic observations (Paul Mankowski), and the inclusion of literary theory (Christopher Hays). These recent developments are not confined to biblical studies alone, as Bruce Lincoln's recent collection of essays makes clear. While Lincoln's essays more properly relate to the field of History of Religions, the fact that comparing

¹²⁶ So Barr: "Contact with Accadian is also a possibility; it is somewhat less likely than Aramaic influence, because Accadian must have been to the average Israelite a much more strange and difficult language than Aramaic" (*Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 123). This assertion assumes complexity of "Accadian" relative to simplicity of Hebrew, which is problematic as linguistic and orthographic complexity and simplicity are extremely difficult to chart. One language might be more complex morpho-syntactically while another could be simpler in this regard but more complex pragmatically. See above for Thomason's observation about social factors that can override such facile statements on simplicity and complexity in contact situations.

¹²⁷ See Morrow and Hans Ulrich Steymans' arguments for Aramaic translations of Akkadian texts as the vehicle for Israelite and Judean contact with Mesopotamian literature. Morrow, "Cuneiform Literacy and Deuteronomic Composition," 203-13; Steymans, *Deuteronomium 28 und die adê zur Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons: Segen und Fluch in Alten Orient und in Israel* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 145; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 150-94 (esp. 191-94); Manfred Krebernik, "M. Weinfelds Deuteronomiumskommentar aus assyriologischer Sicht," in *Bundesdokument und Gesetz: Studien zum Deuteronomium* (Edited by G. Braulik; Herders Biblische Studien 4; Freiberg: Herder, 1995), 35-36.

biblical texts with texts of the neighbors of ancient Israel involves comparisons of different religions makes many of Lincoln's comments relevant. As will be evident, despite these methodological advances, and despite the linguistic focus of Mankowski's dissertation, a comprehensive and up-to-date socio-linguistic framework for comparative work is still lacking in biblical studies.

a. Meir Malul and His Legacy

Malul's examination of the comparative method is one of the more influential recent studies in this field, rightly lauded both for its conciseness and for its clarity. This work is worth quoting in detail because of the author's explicitly methodological reflections. Moreover, his exploration of kinds of comparison resembles similar methodological refinements of types of language contact discussed below in Chapter 3. As Malul states, his study "is interested in questions of methodology," and this interest leads to finding more objective criteria, criteria that lead to scientific, repeatable results.¹²⁸ The monograph is a valuable contribution to comparative studies, not only for the constructive aspects but also in his review of previous abuses of this field and how these abuses were the result of a lack of careful delineation of terms. Indeed, not all comparison is the same. Some comparison results from what he terms typological similarities and contrasts. This typology does not require historical contact; rather, typological comparison assumes that literatures from certain cultures may be fruitfully examined in relation to one another despite the absence of chronological overlap or physical/political contact. On the other hand, historical comparison posits actual contact of some sort, whether through direct interaction

¹²⁸ "These thoughts [in the monograph] include not only criticisms of some of the abuses in the application of the comparative method, but also constructive suggestions and recommendations in the form of methodological criteria for a judicious application of the method, leading, hopefully, to sound and repeatable conclusions" (Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Studies*, 7).

or through lines of transmission that may be hypothesized.¹²⁹ Because of the focus of much of biblical scholarship, which has emphasized historical connections, Malul does not concentrate on typological comparison. As he observes, however, failure to state clearly which type of comparison is being argued in any given case has often led to over-extended and speculative claims. Such distinctions, when carefully discussed and applied, can explain the abuses of previous comparative studies and prevent over generalizations and speculative conclusions in future works.¹³⁰

After providing a summary of the uses of the historical comparative method, Malul addresses common criticisms of the approach.¹³¹ His comments in this chapter largely focus on Talmon's arguments against comparative work. Malul adeptly shows that underlying motivations prompt scholarly positions, especially those who desire to maintain the uniqueness of biblical literature. Often these scholars are driven by apologetic, value-laden assumptions, namely that the religion and postulates of biblical literature are of a superior ethical and religious value than those of the corresponding ancient Near Eastern literature. Such scholars reason that comparative work is of little value since the ultimate sublime representation of ancient religion is

¹²⁹ Malul's discussion of both of these types of contact includes comments about movements in anthropology (*The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 15-16). Many of these movements, such as Diffusionism (which explains "the similarity of human phenomena as reflecting some underlying historical connection") and Evolutionism (which explains "the similarity as deriving from the unity of the human mind and man's unified ability of inventing it") have influenced many other fields in religious studies, such as the History of Religions. As a result, Lincoln's comments, otherwise meant to address his field of the History of Religions specifically, will also be pertinent to the comparative method in biblical studies (see below).

¹³⁰ Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 17-19.

¹³¹ The uses of comparative work are five-fold according to Malul: 1) to argue for actual, historical contact, whether direct or indirect, between cultures; 2) to elucidate or explain a phenomenon in one culture by recourse to another; 3) to appeal to similar or identical characteristics of one culture in order to prove the historicity and authenticity of another (such as arguing for the plausibility of the historicity of the Patriarchal stories in light of external evidence from similar or related cultures); 4) to date the text or tradition of one culture by comparison to another; and 5) to appeal to external data to show how one culture differs from its neighboring cultures (termed "the contrastive method"). See Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 21-36.

comprehensively and supremely expressed in the biblical record itself. As Malul states, however, the argument has shifted somewhat: the vast number of correspondences between ancient Near Eastern literature and the Hebrew Bible mean that scholars are no longer asking “Is there or is there not any historical connection between the Old Testament and the cultures of the ancient Near East”; instead, the question at hand is “What are the methodological criteria to be applied for comparing sources from the two cultures and for proving or disproving such a connection?”¹³² Other concerns have come to the fore, especially whether comparison would show the absolute uniqueness of the Bible, pushing this sort of scholarship in the direction of “contrastive studies.”¹³³ The motives behind this use of the comparative method remain confessional and conservative, resulting in Morton Smith’s label “pseudo-orthodox,” meaning that such scholars have an orthodox motivation for asserting the utmost uniqueness of the Bible, much like those who refuse to engage in comparative studies, but arrive at this stance precisely through analysis of Israelite literature in the context of the ancient Near East.¹³⁴ As Malul states, adopting a single perspective (either making no use of comparisons and therefore only considering internal data or using external data to show how unique the Bible is) skews the results of the investigation of the Hebrew Bible.

Two other closely related, and hence subject to the same type of criticism, aspects of the comparative method involve typological explorations and reconstructive suggestions to connect passages of the Bible to ancient Near Eastern literature.¹³⁵ In typological constructions, the scholar compares some part of the Hebrew Bible with a similar feature in another culture. In the

¹³² Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 40.

¹³³ Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 47-51.

¹³⁴ Morton Smith, “The Present State of Old Testament Studies,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969), 19ff.

¹³⁵ Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Studies*, 51-64.

reconstructive mode of comparison, the biblical passage may have tantalizing similarities to a text from another ancient culture, and the scholar will reconstruct a part of Israelite culture or literature to fill in the gap.¹³⁶ The logic of these modes of comparison is suspect inasmuch as both require leaps of analysis where no contact can be proven and risk making either only general (and therefore meaningless) examinations (in typological comparisons) or circular arguments (in reconstructive comparison).

The last two uses and abuses of the comparative method that have led to criticisms of the enterprise as a whole involve, according to Malul, attempts to compare incomparable phenomena as well as the use of comparison for the purposes of dating the biblical text. Regarding the first, Malul alleges that the comparison of texts of different genres has led to a certain amount of distortion in scholarship. While he is correct that a closer alignment of genres or of literary categories can reduce the level of speculation, one nonetheless should be aware that an ancient author could use or subvert a certain genre for rhetorical effect.¹³⁷ Thus, while comparison between like literary features and genres may be ideal, the interpreter should be open to allowing an author to be creative and use a literary work of one genre type for the sake of writing in a different mode or genre altogether.¹³⁸ The anchoring of parts of the biblical text to a certain period via comparative studies has also been open to criticism, especially as characteristics of biblical texts can often fit many different historical periods.¹³⁹ The motivations of some academics to use comparative studies in this manner is apparent when they opt for the earliest

¹³⁶ Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Studies*, 64-68. See the above discussion of Mowinckel (though Mowinckel is not mentioned in this section of Malul's work).

¹³⁷ Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Studies*, 68-75. See the above comments about Gunkel.

¹³⁸ Hays, "Echoes of the Ancient Near East?," 21. In fairness, Malul does nuance his discussion, such as on page 70 n 80.

¹³⁹ Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 75-78.

dating possible so as to confirm the historical veracity of a biblical passage when in reality (or in subsequent discovery) a much later date is possible, if not preferable.

After his critical analysis of the uses and abuses of the comparative method, Malul then turns to a constructive proposal for how the comparative method should function. Before beginning his main methodological discussion, he distinguishes between varying types of connection between texts for which the comparative method could be used. Making these variations explicit is helpful since many scholars do not clearly articulate which type of contact they have in mind for comparative analysis. The nature and type of contact determine the conclusions, or degree of certainty about conclusions, that may be reached.¹⁴⁰ These connections are: direct contact; indirect contact; a common source; and a common tradition.¹⁴¹

Malul offers two main guidelines, namely the need to establish correspondences that would support cultural contact against the possibility that the features under comparison are the result of parallel but non-overlapping developments. As Malul states, “one has first to prove the *possibility of influence or connection*, and only then may he proceed to check the significance of the similarities and differences on the basis of the test for coincidence *versus* uniqueness. Only after applying these tests, may one arrive at a final verdict one way or the other.”¹⁴² The corroboration of the nature of actual historical connection is the next part of his guidelines. Corroboration is also a methodological consideration that requires nuance. There can be corroboration that shows the possibility of a connection between texts, which is not the same as

¹⁴⁰ It will be made clear in the next chapter on contact linguistics more properly that a similar distinction of contact types influences the types of contact-induced phenomena linguistics tend to expect to occur in a given situation.

¹⁴¹ Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 89-91.

¹⁴² Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 97.

proof of the existence of connection.¹⁴³ The two styles of argumentation need to be clearly distinguished, as oftentimes scholars confuse the difference between possible and actual evidence, thereby leading to over-extended claims of contact and connection. Once one has proven to the best of one's ability that a feature is shared by two texts or cultures and is not the result of coincidence and has corroborated this connection with the possibility of contact, then one has met, according to Malul, a sufficient requirement to proceed with comparative work. Malul follows this section with his analysis of biblical law and ancient Near Eastern law as a test case for his comparative postulates, and his book then closes with a summary chapter.

As Malul states, the evidence for connection in ancient sources generally and in biblical sources specifically is sparse. This fact should condition what scholars expect to be able to establish in their studies. The problem that he addresses is scholars conducting comparative studies without due reflection on methodological principles, principles that should be grounded in "clear and objective scientific criteria."¹⁴⁴ In a certain manner, Malul has taken the viewpoints of critics of the comparative method into account, especially Talmon's insistence that the biblical data should be considered in their own context before conducting comparative work. Malul agrees, asserting that the same internally situated examination applies to the text or culture external to the Hebrew Bible, and only then can biblical and the external data be fruitfully compared. In supplementing the critiques of others into his own methodology, Malul gains objective insights into the comparative method.

As previously stated, many of Malul's insights have proven to be influential. Indeed, he helpfully delineates distinctions and nuances that have long failed to be expressed explicitly and

¹⁴³ Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 110-11.

¹⁴⁴ Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 155.

hence have not featured consistently in comparative studies. Moreover, he also establishes reasonable expectations for conducting comparative research, especially when working with ancient sources, which are not usually as abundant as is desirable. As a result, his methodological approach has been adopted by others. Yitzhaq Feder, for example, has recently taken as his primary criterion that of uniqueness as a corroboration of the possible flow of ideas and texts between cultures.¹⁴⁵

Feder uses Malul's method to examine possibilities of influence from Late Bronze Age Indo-European sources on the biblical text. The comparison between Indo-European societies and ancient Israel and Judah has precedents in the works of Gary Rendsburg and David P. Wright. It is useful to discuss these two scholars before returning to Feder since their works involve issues of linguistic and cultural contact. Rendsburg proposes contact in order to solve a long existing issue in Biblical Hebrew grammar.¹⁴⁶ The third person pronoun in the consonantal text when referring to a grammatically feminine entity often appears in the Pentateuch as **היא**,

¹⁴⁵ Malul carefully distinguishes between corroboration of possible contact and evidence of proof of connection, and clearly states that too often scholars confuse the two (*The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 111). Feder's statement that the second criterion is the "corroboration to prove the flow of ideas between cultures" is correct in a sense: Malul addresses the larger contextual consideration that ideas flowed between cultures as a way to corroborate the possibility that a specific matter under consideration also likely was part of this historical stream. The "right conditions" only prove the possibility of flow of a concept, but do not prove that the transmission under consideration actually occurred. At this point, Feder slips seamlessly into the argument that Kizzuwatnean rituals and biblical rituals in Lev 12 and 14 share a common tradition. Feder's use of the term "common tradition" harkens back to the same term used as one of the four types of connection in Malul's work. The nature of Feder's argument, however, is more complicated than his statement that corroboration proves "the flow of ideas between two cultures" would indicate. If the connection exists at a level of common tradition, then the flow is not simply between two cultures, but is a matter of shared concepts. See Feder, *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Rituals: Origins, Context, and Meaning* (Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series 2; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 115-43.

¹⁴⁶ Rendsburg, "A New Look at Pentateuchal *HW*," *Biblica* 63 (1982): 351-69. Rendsburg has written more disciplined and polished articles on the notion of how foreign characters in the biblical narrative talk, and how the biblical authors chose certain features of foreign languages to be a part of these characters' dialect. See "Linguistic Variation and the 'Foreign' Factor in the Hebrew Bible," in *Israel Oriental Studies XV: Language and Culture in the Near East* (edited by Shlomo Izre'el and Rina Drory; New York: Brill, 1995), 177-90. For a more recent dialectal approach to the *Kethiv* and *Qere* of **היא**, see Fassberg, "The *Kethiv/Qere* **היא**, Diachrony, and Dialectology," in *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew* (edited by Cynthia Miller-Naudé and Ziony Zevit; Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 8; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 171-80.

hw’, which one would expect to be vocalized *hū*’, but instead this pronoun has a vocalization **הוּ**, *hī*’. The problem is that Hebrew specifically, and Semitic languages generally, mark for gender in the third person pronoun. In Hebrew **הוּ** is masculine, and **היא** is feminine. The Masoretes did not alter the consonantal text, which they deemed to be too holy to change, but rather created a *qere perpetuum*, vocalizing almost all the pronouns written as **הוּ** that should refer to feminine nouns as **היא**.

The traditional solution for this phenomenon lies in an explanation based on the consonantal oddity of the development of Hebrew orthography.¹⁴⁷ The *waw*, or ו, and *yod*, or י, are *matres lectionis*, representing the long vowels *ū* and *ī* respectively. Since such long vowels were not originally part of the purely consonantal script, they are secondary in the third person pronouns. In this manner, the pronouns would have been originally written simply **הוּ**, *h*’, the distinction between the genders being preserved in the pronunciation but not in the script. At some point in the development of the Hebrew script after the *waw* and *yod* were inserted in this form, the two *matres* began to look very similar in script, and, as a result of scribal confusion, the *yods* in the form **היא** were simply mistaken and written as **הוּ**. Perhaps this confusion was localized and then spread to flatten all but eleven forms throughout the Pentateuch.¹⁴⁸

Alternatively, the distinction could have been lost in the consonantal development of one scribal tradition which then, through transmission, became the dominant manner of spelling the third person feminine pronoun. Whatever process may underlie the *qere perpetuum*, the result in the

¹⁴⁷ Rendsburg, “A New Look at Pentateuchal *HW*,” 351-52.

¹⁴⁸ Gen 14:2; 20:5; 38:25; Lev 11:39; 13:10; 13:21; 16:31; 20:17; 21:9; Num 5:13; and 5:14.

traditional explanation of this consonantal oddity stems from scribal confusion given the orthographic similarity between the *waw* and the *yod* in Hebrew script.

Rendsburg disagrees with this explanation and proposes a new solution based on cultural contact between Indo-European speaking tribes and ancient Israelites. He suggests that the pronoun was flattened to one form due to the influence of the Hittites, since Indo-European languages do not distinguish between genders in their third person pronouns. Under this linguistic influence, which must have, according to Rendsburg, taken place in the earliest layers of Biblical Hebrew, the Pentateuch shows marked influence from these Indo-European languages. As a result, Rendsburg dates the Pentateuch earlier than the Deuteronomistic History (Joshua through Kings), which consistently employs the orthographic distinction $\aleph\eta$ for the third person masculine pronoun and $\aleph\eta$ for the third person feminine pronoun. Rendsburg then draws the conclusion that his analysis undermines the source critical division of the Pentateuch into the sources JEDP, since D is, in certain schools, held to have also had a connection with the Deuteronomistic history; however, D has this *qere perpetuum* phenomenon, while Joshua through Kings do not, thereby destroying the putative critical connection. Moreover, he claims that the early nature of the form means that the traditional dating of P cannot be exilic or post-exilic, as many scholars claim.

Rendsburg's solution to the issue of the third person feminine pronoun in the Pentateuch has not attracted many followers for a variety of reasons.¹⁴⁹ It is noteworthy, however, that

¹⁴⁹ His historical reconstructions are extremely speculative. Moreover, there are many other linguistic principles for dating P to sometime between the immediately pre-exilic period and the exile. Even if he were correct that his observation is an early feature due to borrowing, he does not contend with other factors that linguistically lead to a later dating of P, though he has dealt with these points in a previous study "Late Biblical Hebrew and the Date of 'P'," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 12 (1980): 65-80. He leaves unexplored and unanswered why ancient Israelites would level the gender distinction of the pronoun in this one form

although he wrote before Malul's work on the comparative method, Rendsburg nonetheless implicitly follows Malul's guidelines: point out a unique characteristic between two cultures (the lack of consonantal distinction between genders in the pronouns in the Pentateuch and the lack of grammatical distinction for pronouns in Indo-European languages) and provide corroboration for the possibility of lines of transmission or historical contact (the appearance of Indo-European loanwords in some biblical passages and the mention of Hittites in biblical history). The lack of written historical confirmation between Israel, Judah, and Indo-European cultures like the Hittites necessitates careful argumentation as there are major gaps in the data regarding contact. In one sense, Malul's guidelines were met in Rendsburg's examination; in another sense, however, the lack of a more rigid socio-linguistic methodology than two broad criteria means that a scholar can still meet the objective standards of Malul and produce a speculative and undisciplined linguistic and cultural comparison.¹⁵⁰

Wright's work on Hittite ritual and Leviticus is representative of a much more detailed and disciplined comparative exploration between the Indo-European world and ancient Israel and Judah.¹⁵¹ Wright attempts to answer literary, cultural, and ritual issues in the Bible by recourse to Hittite texts. The problem explored in his work pertains to the manner in which the priest or

and not others, nor does he provide good motivation for why ancient Israelites would have leveled the gender distinction of the third person independent pronouns.

¹⁵⁰ Rendsburg's proposal amounts to influence at the level of an isolated grammatical category of gender. The third person pronouns in Hebrew clearly are not loans from Indo-European; rather, the influence happens at the level of an isolated grammatical unit and category (gender and the third person, in distinction from the second and first person, independent pronouns). While anything can be borrowed, borrowing tends to occur in certain socio-linguistic conditions at varying levels of intensity of contact. Rendsburg does not explore how different types and degrees of contact influence the nature of borrowing in different ways. Granted, many of these borrowing hierarchies were developed subsequent to Rendsburg's article, and these hierarchies are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. The point of these comments is to highlight the problem when a line of historical corroboration of contact (in this case, an extremely tenuous line) is presented and any and every linguistic element is deemed to be subject to borrowing without discussion concerning the type or process of borrowing according to socio-linguistic criteria.

¹⁵¹ Wright, "The Gesture of Hand Placement in the Hebrew Bible and in Hittite Literature," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106 (1986): 433-46.

another ritual participant lays hands on an object. Based on analysis of the biblical evidence, Wright concludes that the placement of two hands on an object “serves to designate who the recipient of the ritual action is, while the one-handed form serves to ritually attribute the offering animal and concomitant sacrificial acts to the one who performs the gesture.”¹⁵² The biblical text itself is silent and implicit about this distinction, though examination of the rituals themselves in which these two forms of hand placement occur confirms that this distinction, in its ritual effects, is valid. Moreover, by appealing to Hittite ritual texts where the one-hand gesture form takes on the same function of participant attribution, Wright is able to find a comparative situation in which he can confirm his conclusion regarding the biblical data. His evaluation seems to fit with Malul’s category of the typological nature of comparison, and Wright is much more responsible in his conclusions about the possibility of actual historical contact between ancient Israelites and Hittites. He makes clear that his study is not intended to affirm or establish such contact, nor does he attempt to corroborate historical streams of transmission.¹⁵³ Although he states that such contact is possible, more systematic analysis would be needed in order to rule out any possibility that the correlation is more than coincidence.

Feder’s dissertation is, in one sense, a means to provide this more systematic and robust analysis, arguing that one can place the blood rite in “Hurro-Hittite” texts and the biblical Priestly texts in a larger cultural pattern through which transmission of ritual meaning and action occurred.¹⁵⁴ His focus is more narrowly on the blood expiation rites in Hittite and biblical ritual,

¹⁵² Wright, “The Gesture of Hand Placement in the Hebrew and in Hittite Literature,” 433.

¹⁵³ Wright, “The Gesture of Hand Placement in the Hebrew and in Hittite Literature,” 446.

¹⁵⁴ Feder, *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Ritual: Origins, Contexts, and Meaning*, 243-72. It should be noted that the phrase “Hurro-Hittites” is Feder’s. It is used in this discussion in order to represent Feder’s argument, though it creates a misperception that Hurrians and Hittites were related (Hittites were Indo-European whereas Hurrian, though related to Urartian, does not belong to a known language family and is therefore a linguistic isolate).

though he adduces four other areas in which the similarities between biblical and Hurro-Hittite rituals provide a partial basis for making larger claims of cultural and ritual influence. By further anchoring the idea of transmission in evidence from Ugarit, where Semitic, Hurrian, and Indo-European (namely, Hittite) cultures came together, Feder claims that the contextual evidence is sufficient to be able to confidently corroborate a historical stream. In this stream, Kizzuwatnean rituals could move to northern Syria, such as at Ugarit, and then further down to the Levant. The combination of the proximity between ancient Kizzuwatna (where Hurrian texts in southern Anatolia show strikingly similar conceptions of the Hittite *zurki* ritual), the record of the presence of Hurrian rituals in Syria at Ugarit in the 13th and 12th centuries BCE, and the unique similarities of ritual in biblical and Hittite texts (not shared in Mesopotamian or Egyptian literature) makes this connection more secure. Feder carefully acknowledges that there exist a wide number of possible historical scenarios through which this material could move from Kizzuwatna to ancient Israel and Judah. He therefore states that no matter the reconstruction of the transmission process, his analysis remains valid.¹⁵⁵

Feder's study carries with it implications for the P source and the historical development of Israelite religion. If his reconstruction of the role of Hittite traditions in ritual texts in the Priestly source is correct, it could mean that, at least as far as the law in P is concerned, these Priestly rituals originated fairly early in Israelite tradition.¹⁵⁶ In this manner, he would have an additional historical anchor for reversing the traditional Wellhausen construction of Priestly law, which dictates that ritual and law in P was a stultified, later development within Israelite tradition. In Wellhausen's view, the narrative of the P source was created first. Later religious

¹⁵⁵ Feder, *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Ritual*, 247.

¹⁵⁶ Feder, *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Ritual*, 248-49.

sentiments became ossified and frozen in the legal matrices of Judaism as represented in the law code of P. The use of comparative material by Feder, however, would seem to corroborate the reversal of this scheme, namely that the legal material of P came first and only later were the narratives added to the Priestly legal and ritual material. This reversal is predicated upon contact with Hittite texts that later died out before the literary traditions of Israel and Judah congealed.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, datable references to the **תִּנְחַל**, or “sin/purification” offering, appear in 2 Kgs 12:17 and Hos 4:8, both of which support a dating of this offering in ancient Israel by the ninth and eighth centuries BCE. There are at least elements of Priestly law that originated quite early in Israelite history given that Lev 4:22-26 seems to presuppose a time of chieftain rule and therefore was presumably from a time well before the monarchy.

According to Feder, this earlier adaptation of Indo-European ritual phenomena was integrated and interpreted along the lines of developing religious conversations in ancient Israel. Thus, the process of imitation and then adaptation to local, native ritual conceptions (a parallel concept to imitation and adaptation in contact linguistics)¹⁵⁸ explains many of the additions that he claims to be able to spot in Priestly blood rituals over time. This adaptation of Indo-European traditions to biblical law in the P source raises implications for an earlier dating of P’s law relative to its narrative and also is an interesting possibility concerning contact. As discussed in more detail later in this dissertation, many of the narrative texts from P have been connected with Mesopotamian sources, such as Gen 1:1-2:4a and the Babylonian Creation Epic (or, Enuma Elish), or the flood account in P and the Gilgamesh and Atra-Hasis epics. The P source therefore

¹⁵⁷ As much as Feder is an adherent to Malul, he verges on one of the abuses that the latter discusses in his book, namely using the comparative method for dating. This use of the comparative method is especially tricky as rites and rituals can survive long after the culture that gave birth to them has died.

¹⁵⁸ See the issues of adaptation and imitation depending on language agentivity in contact situations in Winford, “Contact-induced Changes: Classification and Processes,” *Diachronica* 22:2 (2005): 373-427.

could have two different areas of contact: one in the ritual and legal world of the Indo-European Hittites (with perhaps some later influence from Mesopotamia) and another in the narrative and mythical world of Mesopotamian traditions.¹⁵⁹ This is not to suggest that all Israelite thought is therefore derivative, nor that it slavishly would follow its sources. Rather, as Feder suggests (as has Tigay), borrowing and foreign influence can be recognizable and yet needs to be intelligible within the borrowing community.¹⁶⁰

Additionally, this possibility raises the issue of different linguistic profiles given the direction of influence. One thing lacking so far in this sketch of the comparative method from Malul to Feder is a linguistically oriented approach that also takes into account the literary, historical, and cultural factors which Malul's approach is designed to handle so well. Even as Malul mentions loanwords as evidence of contact with Mesopotamian legal sources for the law of the goring ox (see below in Chapter 5 of this dissertation), he does not include in his discussion linguistic theories about borrowing. Moreover, the studies regarding Indo-European contact also have lacked a linguistic grounding for investigation. The exception is Rendsburg, who constructed a linguistic argument based on a problem of grammar in Hebrew and a proposed historical line of transmission. As noted, however, his thesis regarding the consonantal form of the third person feminine pronoun in Hebrew has not gained followers for a variety of reasons; moreover, although his argument includes linguistic data, it lacks a linguistic framework

¹⁵⁹ See, however, Bruce Wells' forthcoming work "Liability in the Priestly Texts of the Hebrew Bible," in *Sapientia Logos- A Journal of Biblical Research & Interpretation in Africa* (forthcoming), in which he compares the priestly legal material with Mesopotamian texts.

¹⁶⁰ See Tigay, "On Evaluating Claims of Literary Borrowing," 250-55. For more on the role of genre, its role in the comparative method, and its importance for understanding meaning in the biblical text, see also Kenton Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2005), 1-24, especially 3-5.

for explaining exactly how contact with Hurrians and Hittites would result in the particular phenomenon that he addresses.

Despite, then, the traces of a few Indo-European loanwords in the biblical text, linguistic data are not a major portion of Wright's or Feder's argument for contact. Rather, literary and cultural uniqueness and, in Feder's case, corroboration of a possible historical stream of transmission form the foundation of their comparative studies. The fact that contact, if it occurred at all, was indirect and the fact that these ritual traditions in P seem to have multiple layers of reworking may explain why linguistic arguments are lacking. Time and editing may have fully embedded Indo-European tradition and language within Hebrew idiom. The authors of P elsewhere, however, do not seem to hesitate to use rare vocabulary and loanwords,¹⁶¹ so other processes may be involved if contact was a reality. At issue in the legal and ritual texts from the P source are not linguistic comparisons since there does not seem to be evidence of Indo-European loanwords in these texts, but rather literary, cultural, and historical considerations.¹⁶² Feder's thesis remains intriguing, though the historical avenues for transmission are tenuous at best.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ The construction of Noah's ark in Gen 6:14-16 is a good example in P.

¹⁶² Although structural similarities between languages are not alone sufficient to predict contact situations and their outcome, such similarities often are important for easing contact (Thomason, "Contact Explanations in Linguistics," 39-40). These similarities can raise issues when the languages involved are genetically related, especially since, in some of these cases, determining features that result from internal developments versus contact with a related language can be difficult. Nonetheless, the structural dissimilarity of Indo-European relative to Semitic may explain why so few Indo-European words exist in the Hebrew Bible if there was contact with Hurrians and Hittites. These societies never had direct control or contact with ancient Israel, and any remnants of their languages would not have had lasting influence on the lexicon. Indeed, Chaim Rabin conducted the most extensive study on the possibility of Hittite words in the Hebrew Bible, making a list of approximately twenty-two examples ("Hittite Words in Hebrew," *Orientalia* 32 [1963]: 113-39). Only about seven or so of these proposed Hittite connections have stood the test of time, many of which are still disputed, or could be from other Indo-European languages from the first millennium such as Luwian (Harry Hoffner, "Hittite *Tarpis* and Hebrew *Teraphim*," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 27 [1968]: 67 n 44).

¹⁶³ The time gap between postulated instances of comparison means that this gap is likely to be filled by the reconstruction or exploration of possible intermediaries. Postulated Aramaic intermediaries between biblical and

While Indo-European loanwords do not figure significantly in many recent comparative studies of biblical texts and other texts from the ancient Near East, the same cannot be said about other Semitic languages, such as Aramaic and Akkadian. As explored earlier in this chapter, scholars have long made linguistic comments and observations regarding similarities and possible influences between Hebrew and Aramaic, as well as linguistic arguments based on Arabic. With the decipherment of Akkadian and more precise linguistic models and theories came more systematic explorations of the relationship between these languages. More specifically, the issue of loanwords has become a topic of research in recent years. Scholars in this area have concentrated on Akkadian influence on Aramaic as well as Akkadian influence on Hebrew.

Akkadian literature will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. The reason for these Aramaic intermediaries stems not from a historical or cultural gap between the Hebrew Bible and Akkadian literature; rather, scholars propose these gaps often due to assumptions about the difficult nature of the Akkadian script and the complexity of the language compared to what is supposedly a simple scribal administration in ancient Israel and Judah and an equally simple alphabet and language. Since Aramaic had more scribal prestige and international use but shared an alphabetic writing system and has structurally more closely related to Hebrew, it is hypothesized that Aramaic served as an intermediary between Hebrew and Akkadian literature. It is argued in the following chapter that this argument is invalid.

The foregoing comments are not meant to indicate, however, that linguistic intermediation is never a legitimate recourse to explain certain features of languages in antiquity. Nonetheless, political and imperial policy can overcome structural dissimilarities between languages and scripts, and the notion of a graded scale of linguistic complexity between two languages can be fraught with difficulty. Moreover, measuring complexity for linguistic phenomena like syntax and pragmatics poses major methodological difficulties.

Positing intermediation between historically non-overlapping similarities that seem, under close scrutiny, to be related phenomena, however, can be helpful. A case in point concerns the relationship between rabbinic law and Akkadian legal formulations. The separation in time between the two bodies of literature amounts to a few hundred years, and, since the contact must be indirect, literary and linguistic intermediation provide much more likely scenarios. As Yohanan Muffs claims, rabbinic and biblical covenant grants differ so much that the latter could not have been the source for the former. The similarity with Akkadian sources then suggests that a) it was borrowed “from an Aramaic reworking of Akkadian material, b) from an independent Greek source, or c) from a Greek source that derived the institution from an Akkadian source found in some Aramaic form...” (*Love & Joy: Law, Language, and Religion in Ancient Israel* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992], 162). In this case, one can plausibly construct and meaningfully discuss a literary and linguistic intermediary. As Muffs has also shown, Akkadian loanwords entered into the Aramaic lexicon and influenced much later Aramaic texts, such as Akkadian *etir*, “(payment) received,” which appears in Aramaic papyri from Elephantine in the fifth century, and then also in the Talmudic אִיטְרָא (or, עִיטְרָא). This Talmudic word was a mystery before Muffs noticed the connections, and the fact that the lexeme appeared in passages dealing with exchanges bolstered his case. The case between Iron Age Israel and Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian literature, however, is entirely different, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

b. The Comparative Method and Lexical Studies

Published in 1969, Yochanan Muffs' *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine* has served as a model for close and literarily sensitive examinations of linguistic influence.¹⁶⁴ Instead of handling a large number of legal formulations, he concentrates on the Aramaic term **טיב לבבי**. One might suppose from this limited data set that Muffs would be forced to draw limited conclusions. Instead, however, he conducts a study of this one legal formulation looking at each instance from Elephantine carefully and then offering a close historical, literary, and linguistic comparison with cognate terms in Akkadian and parallel phraseology in Egyptian. The result is a careful and well-balanced study that moves from exhaustive examination of one phrase to broader implications and avenues for the development of legal formulations. The focus on a limited data set considered from as many perspectives as possible is a model for comparative work and anticipates Lincoln's suggestions to improve comparative studies made decades later. In many ways, Muffs' work still sets a high standard for exploring literary and linguistic relations between ancient Near Eastern formulations and how to examine the nature and extent of contact on the basis of such data. Muffs' book appeared in 1969 before the flourishing of the study of language contact in the past few decades. Indeed, Muffs does not cite any contact linguists, such as Einar Haugen and Uriel Weinreich, who were writing and theorizing about the linguistic nature of contact before this time. The recent advances in contact linguistics would not have altered Muffs' thesis regarding Akkadian influence on Aramaic (nor of Muffs' claim regarding Aramaic influence on Akkadian and the manner in

¹⁶⁴ Muffs, *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine* (Handbuch der Orientalistik, Nahe und der Mittlere Osten 66; Boston: Brill, 2003). See also Gary Anderson's influential book on the history of sin, who frequently cites Muffs' volume (*Sin: A History* [New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009]).

which Aramaic at times functioned as an intermediary between Akkadian and Demotic legal formulations); rather, these studies would have supplied a theoretical underpinning for his work.

Stephen Kaufman also produced an influential volume dealing with Akkadian influence on Aramaic that was written before many of the advances in language contact in the past few decades.¹⁶⁵ Kaufman's study diverges from Muffs in that the former takes a more linguistic approach, looking at categories such as lexical influence and non-lexical influence (including phonology, morphology, and syntax), but sets no less high a standard in dealing with language contact in the ancient Near East. Kaufman's approach is to present a list of loans that can be most confidently identified on the basis of divergence from the normally expected phonological development of Aramaic and that can only be explained by the differing Akkadian phonology. Thus, given the historical linguistic trajectories of each individual language, to the extent that an Aramaic word contains a phonetically peculiar form not expected or explained by internal development, that form may be explained as a loan from Akkadian if the same phonetic feature is part of the natural development of the phoneme in the Akkadian language.

Kaufman's study contains many valuable and indispensable insights. First, he recognizes that the concept of a loanword is not a monolithic category. There are a variety of types of loans, and, though he does not discuss literary, historical, and cultural details in depth, one can assume from this diversity of loan types that such a pluriformity arises from the equally diverse types of contact situations that give rise to these loans. In this manner, Kaufman anticipated many of the contact studies that would appear in subsequent decades. Second, Kaufman clearly articulates his

¹⁶⁵ Stephen A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (Assyriological Studies 19; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). See his more recent return to the topic, "Languages in Contact: The Ancient Near East," in *Semitic Linguistics: The State of the Art at the Turn of the Twenty First Century* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 297-306.

method and criteria. Additionally, after he lists the various words, he then provides a summary section in which he neatly categorizes the various linguistic influences of Akkadian on Aramaic by linguistic category (phonology, morphology, etc.), and he includes the implications of such influence on the various dialects of Aramaic.

As Kaufman indicates in his “Preliminary Considerations,” there are many possible pitfalls in identifying loans between Akkadian and Aramaic. Short of phonological evidence, a variety of other conditions must be satisfied in order to identify a word as a loan from Akkadian into Aramaic. Implicit in this discussion is the need for a better linguistic theory of borrowing.¹⁶⁶ Kaufman states in a subsequent article, returning to this topic of language contact decades after his published dissertation, that the twentieth century has been a massively productive era for the study of language contact.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, contact linguists have, subsequent to Kaufman’s earlier study on the Akkadian influences on Aramaic, refined and continued to discuss the nature of borrowing, including loanwords. Much of this literature from contact linguistics is discussed in the following chapter. As exemplary as Kaufman’s dissertation was on the Akkadian influence on Aramaic, theoretical advancements in the past few decades should allow scholars to discuss new possibilities in terms of better defined socio-linguistically modes of language contact.

Several interesting points arise when one reads Kaufman’s return to the subject of language contact. First, he incorporates the more recent (in terms of the article in question) theory of grammaticalization. The theory is well suited to explain internal adaptations by

¹⁶⁶ Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, 15-19.

¹⁶⁷ Kaufman, “Languages in Contact,” 297.

speakers to create new grammatical structures and functions from pre-existing words.¹⁶⁸ The major work combining grammaticalization and contact would come a year after Kaufman's article.¹⁶⁹ Thus, he discusses the Akkadian infix *-ta*, which he claims is a lexical transformation from the reflexive to the perfect, as an example of grammaticalization, a "widely known" internal development in many languages. This process occurred, according to Kaufman, on the pattern of the "similar bifunctionality of the Sumerian verbal prefix *ba-*." His description of this process is similar to the work of Bernd Heine and Tania Kuteva's work on contact and grammaticalization (though the latter examine grammaticalization and contact generally, not Sumerian and Akkadian specifically).¹⁷⁰ According to these linguists, grammatical replication, in which one language imitates grammatical categories or structures of another language but on the basis of internally available linguistic elements, often looks like the normal internally motivated grammaticalization seen in many of the world's languages.

Second, Kaufman places special emphasis on the difficulties involved in the relationship between Hebrew and Aramaic. Indeed, the subject of contact between genetically related languages has become an important focus of research. It involves several topics, most notably determining which features in genetically related languages are a product of internal development or external contact, since the difference between genetically and structurally similar

¹⁶⁸ "Grammaticalization is defined as the development from lexical to grammatical forms and from grammatical to even more grammatical forms. Since the development of grammatical forms is not independent of the constructions to which they belong, the study of grammaticalization is also concerned with constructions and with even larger discourse segments. In accordance with this definition, grammaticalization theory is concerned with the genesis and development of grammatical forms. Its primary goal is to describe how grammatical forms and constructions arise and develop through space and time, and to explain why they are structured the way they are." (Heine and Kuteva, *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 2). More simply, grammaticalization examines the process by which a content word becomes a function word or grammatical constituent.

¹⁶⁹ Heine and Kuteva, *Language Contact and Grammatical Change*.

¹⁷⁰ As N. J. C. Kouwenberg states, however, the origin of this infix is still highly debated (*Gemination in the Akkadian Verb* [Studia Semitica Neerlandica 32; Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum], 72).

linguistic features is not always clear. The historical factors of the rise of Aramaic as a *lingua franca*, discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 and 4, also contribute to the complexities in the relationship between these languages, especially as Aramaic would also become influential in later Judaism.¹⁷¹

The one inner-Semitic contact situation that Kaufman does not address in this article is the relationship between Akkadian and Hebrew. Though the article was published in 2002, it was based on a paper presented in the late 1990s, and therefore Kaufman does not discuss Mankowski's 2000 Harvard dissertation on Akkadian loanwords into Hebrew.¹⁷² In essence, Mankowski's dissertation is an attempt to apply the same method as Kaufman's, i.e., comparing Hebrew and Akkadian phonology in order to create a list of loanwords from Akkadian. Whereas Kaufman lists other areas of influence between Akkadian and Aramaic, such as syntax, Mankowski limits his purview to loanwords. This application of historical linguistic principles appropriate to each language provides a rigorous method.¹⁷³ Indeed, when one considers loans from Akkadian into Hebrew, the prospect that some of these loans were mediated through Aramaic is a possibility. Recognizing this, Mankowski triangulates the distinctions between the

¹⁷¹ So, for example, the Hebrew Bible is mostly Hebrew, though portions of Ezra and Daniel were written in Aramaic. Additionally, attestation of Aramaic in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the eventual use of Aramaic for other sacred texts of Judaism, such as the Targums (Aramaic translations of the Bible, some of which show major influence from the Hebrew underlying text) and Babylonian Aramaic in the Gemara of the Talmud (the Talmud consisting of the Mishnah, written in Hebrew from the Tannaitic period, plus the Gemara; the Gemaras of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds differ), show the complexity of the relationship between Hebrew and Aramaic.

¹⁷² Paul V. Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew* (Harvard Semitic Studies 47; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2000). His original dissertation title, "Akkadian and trans-Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew," indicates the role played by Aramaic as a vehicle for such Akkadian loans into Hebrew (hence, "trans-Akkadian").

¹⁷³ Historical linguists such as Christopher Ehret use a similar method, combined with the close examination of material culture and a more controversial approach called glottochronology, to reconstruct historical events in African languages (*History and the Testimony of Language* [California World History Library 16; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011]). Chapter 3 of this dissertation includes a discussion of material culture relevant to language contact between biblical, Aramaic, and Akkadian texts, though glottochronology does not feature in this dissertation.

expected developments of phonemes within Hebrew, Akkadian, and Aramaic in his analyses whenever doubt exists regarding the precise origin of a Hebrew word. Kaufman did not need to posit such a triangulation in his study on the Akkadian influence on Aramaic since the historical record attests to direct contact between these languages. The use of Aramaic as a diplomatic language in Judah in the Iron Age in Assyrian dealings with this Levantine kingdom means that mediation is a possibility (though, as argued later, not for every literary genre and therefore Aramaic mediation is not an inevitability in each case of contact).

At various points in the study, however, Mankowski expresses doubt as to whether a word is a loan directly from Akkadian or mediated through Aramaic where the phonemic correspondences fit both Akkadian and Aramaic but the word is likely not originally Hebrew.¹⁷⁴ These doubts reveal the weaknesses of the limited scope of such studies built exclusively on the lexical and phonetic level. Mankowski offers no literary, cultural, or historical analysis in his study. One wonders whether some of the data that he presents as indeterminate could be handled with more certainty given more socio-linguistic data, such as the function of genres and literature in society, and historical considerations.

Another weakness of Mankowski's otherwise excellent study on Akkadian loanwords in Hebrew involves his extremely limited interaction with linguistic theory *per se*. Published in 2000, his dissertation only cites three contact linguists, two of whom published in the 1950s (Haugen and Weinreich). The third study, by Ilse Lehiste, is a small book that mainly reproduces class lectures on basic topics of contact linguistics. More up-to-date studies, such as those by

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, his discussion of כּפּר, a noun discussed in chapter 5 (*Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 71-73).

Sarah Thomason, Terence Kaufmann, and Frans van Coetsem, among others, receive no mention, despite the fact that all of their works had been published well before Mankowski wrote his dissertation. While interaction with these volumes would not have changed Mankowski's general conclusions, they could have added methodological precision and provided a more solid theoretical frame for his study.

A few more flaws in this study deserve comment. First, despite claims to providing a historical basis for contact, Mankowski's study contains nothing in the way of historical backgrounds or historical implications.¹⁷⁵ In fact, history in general is strikingly absent. Second, Mankowski does not consider the role of literary strata in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁷⁶ Although he provides a breakdown of biblical books and Akkadian loans contained therein, he does not engage at all in historical-critical strata. Such a consideration is, however, vital since it adds a diachronic perspective: Israelite and Judean contact with Mesopotamia changed over time, and one might find that the linguistic data change as well. Third, despite Mankowski's assertion that he is comprehensive in assessing all certain Akkadian loans, in reality his data are far from complete.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, what counts as certain is precisely the issue of debate.

¹⁷⁵ "Therefore, to identify a term as a loanword is to make a specific historical claim, and the principal methodological concern of this project is the determination of what counts as evidence for this claim" (*Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 9).

¹⁷⁶ Mankowski states that exegesis is not "directly" addressed in his study (*Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 13). Yet for certain examples, such a strong division between linguistic and literary study is both unnecessary and unhelpful.

¹⁷⁷ *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 9. For a list of thirteen previously suggested certain Akkadian loanwords into biblical Hebrew not covered in Mankowski or Zimmermann, see Victor Avigdor Hurvitz' review of Mankowski, "Review: Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew by Paul V. Mankowski," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122 (2002): 137-38.

As a follow-up to Mankowski's dissertation, Cory Ke Michael Peacock's recent dissertation attempts to address the lack of linguistic theory in Mankowski's study.¹⁷⁸ Peacock reexamined the lexical set of Akkadan loans, refining Mankowski's analysis at times by providing more literary context, and compared the "certain" loans from Akkadian into Hebrew with other lexical sets of loans, such as Akkadian loans into Aramaic, Aramaic loans into Hebrew, and Egyptian loans into Hebrew. This comparison highlights the sociohistorical situation of the Akkadian loans into Hebrew in which a large percentage of such loans refer to professional titles and the sorts of words that ancient Israelites and Judahites would need to interact with the surrounding imperial systems. While religious and other terms were loaned from Akkadian to Hebrew, these are few in number, and the limited set of loans reveals, according to Peacock, that the authors of the Hebrew Bible had a "purist" tendency, incorporating only those loans that were necessary for interaction with the Mesopotamian empires.¹⁷⁹

Peacock recognizes the diversity of contact situations involved between Aramaic, Akkadian, and Hebrew;¹⁸⁰ I take up the topic of contact diversity in Chapter 4 in this dissertation

¹⁷⁸ Peacock, "Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible: Social and Historical Implications" (PhD diss., New York University, 2013).

¹⁷⁹ "Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible," 391-92. Peacock's conclusions are consistent with another recently published dissertation by Dong-Hyuk Kim. Kim uses sociolinguistic theory to address recent debates on whether or not modern scholars can reliably separate early and late biblical Hebrew. For the purposes of contact, his use of Labov's distinction between changes from above and changes from below is important and supports Peacock. Changes from below tend to occur unnoticed by speakers and writers, usually due to spoken dialects. Changes from above, however, tend to be intentionally employed and consciously used, often for the sake of social prestige and can often involve borrowings from a foreign language. See Kim, *Early Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew, and Linguistic Variability: A Sociolinguistic Evaluation of the Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 156; Boston: Brill, 2013), 89-92; Labov, *Principles of Linguistic Changes, vol. 1: Internal Factors* (Language in Society 20; Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). Peacock's thesis that Akkadian loans were borrowed into the Hebrew Bible specifically reflecting necessary interactions with surrounding imperial systems (while more extensive loaning also did not occur as an intentional decision) conforms to Kim's conclusions. Kim claims that most changes to biblical Hebrew are changes from below (explaining why Akkadian did not influence Hebrew more extensively) and that borrowings are changes from above.

¹⁸⁰ "Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible," 319.

and arrive at somewhat different conclusions. I point out here several weaknesses to his approach. First, while he claims to provide a more historical analysis than Mankowski, Peacock gives little historical context for contact. Although Peacock draws sociohistorical conclusions from his lexical data sets, he provides no background other than a brief analysis of 2 Kgs 18-19.¹⁸¹ Second, his discussion of Aramaic and Akkadian contact is poorly researched and omits large numbers of data.¹⁸² Third, while Peacock provides more literary context in his discussion of biblical lexemes, he very rarely discusses literary strata and the implications of such diachronic analysis for the changing contact situations over time.¹⁸³ Fourth (and related), there may not be

¹⁸¹ Even Peacock's analysis of this text is weak at times. For example, he states that the "Rab-Shaqeh" is likely not an exiled Israelite since there would not be sufficient time between the exile (722 BCE) and Sennacherib's invasion as described in these verses (701 BCE) for such "career advancement" ("Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible," 18). Records indicate, however, that even in Sargon's time, immediately after 722 BCE, some Israelites were conscripted as elite charioteers, and a few of these already appear as leaders of these units. An individual named Sama may have been an Israelite, was a horse trainer, and was especially close to the royal family during Sennacherib's reign. The only other horse trainer of the royal family at this time was an Assyrian and high ranking eunuch, indicating that Sama may also have been a very high ranking official as well. See Stephanie Dalley, "Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II," *Iraq* 47 (1985): 31-48; Wright, *Inventing God's Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Used and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi*, 101. Therefore, it is possible that someone from Israel could have attained to something approximating the ranking of the Rab-Shaqeh, though it is by no means necessarily the case that the Rab-Shaqeh was an exiled Israelite.

¹⁸² For example, Peacock bases his analysis of Akkadian influences on Aramaic exclusively on Kaufman's dissertation. Excellent though it was, Kaufman's dissertation was written before the discovery of the Tell Fekheriyeh inscription, and so the pivotal role of this bilingual Akkadian-Aramaic text is not discussed in any detail in Peacock's dissertation (though it is mentioned briefly on one page). Moreover, Kaufman's dissertation analyzed Akkadian loanwords in a variety of earlier and later forms of Aramaic. To make historical and social claims on the basis of this list, as Peacock does, is misleading. The list represents data from over a millennia and a variety of different cultures that happened to use Aramaic. It indicates nothing about a particular contact situation since unrelated cultures over time that happened to use Aramaic are all lumped together, and Peacock's analysis therefore does not rely on valid analogies with the situation in biblical Hebrew. Peacock claims that "legal/administrative/political lexemes represent a small portion of the loanword vocabulary," but this analysis is misleading; it is only small because the sample set for such a claim is much too large. When looking at the Aramaic docketts from Neo-Assyria, the legal and administrative lexical influence is actually much larger (see Chapter 4). Fales', Wolfgang Röllig's, and Andre Lemaire's works on the hundreds of Aramaic docketts and tablets from the Neo-Assyrian period are not cited in Peacock's study, works that contain data that provide significant supplements to Kaufman's study. Finally, though Peacock explores the Akkadian lexical influence on Aramaic, he does not acknowledge the equally pivotal role of Aramaic lexical influence on Akkadian.

¹⁸³ Rather, for Peacock the Hebrew Bible is a purist document; however, some sources and books may reflect more purism than others. Historical records indicate that many people in ancient Israel and Judah were not purist at all as Peacock acknowledges ("Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible," 391), such as archaeological finds showing the worship of a variety of deities in Israel and Judah as well as Assyrian texts indicating the loyalty of the Judean king Manasseh. Moreover, Peacock also explains well that acceptance of some extent of external

as many loanwords from Akkadian as from Aramaic in Biblical Hebrew; nonetheless, there seem to be calques from Akkadian, as found particularly in parts of Isaiah.¹⁸⁴ One wonders whether the borrowing of such literary motifs and calquing from Akkadian would influence Peacock's thesis about linguistic purism. Fifth, Peacock does not incorporate any of Victor Avigdor Hurvitz's critiques of Mankowski, nor does Peacock cite this review or any of the additional "certain" loanwords that Hurvitz stated were lacking in Mankowski's original study.¹⁸⁵ Sixth, Peacock's analysis is sometimes linguistically weak.¹⁸⁶ Finally, Peacock is correct that scholars

influence is a necessary precondition to purism ("Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible," 392-93). Whether different layers in the Pentateuch or the different parts of Isaiah would reflect such divergent opinions is nowhere explored. This shortcoming highlights the weakness of a purely phonological approach to identifying loanwords. Mankowski did not include the example from Gen 4:7 cited at the beginning of this chapter (though it has been claimed to be a "certain" loanword) and Peacock omits it as well since he used Mankowski's list of words. The word for a demon in Gen 4:7 is argued as an Akkadian loanword on morpho-syntactic grounds and so escapes Mankowski's and Peacock's analysis. Yet one wonders what it would mean for the author of Gen 4:7 (the J source) to invoke a Mesopotamian demon without any aversion and for the Hebrew Bible to reflect purism in Peacock's scheme, particularly as he states that the authors of the Hebrew Bible were also religiously puristic ("Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible," 334).

¹⁸⁴ Mankowski explicitly states that he does not include calques or other types of contact-induced change (*Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 9). Peacock limits his data set to Mankowski's, and one wonders how reliable Peacock's assertions about the mechanisms of purism are given his replication of Mankowski's admittedly limited data.

¹⁸⁵ Peacock states that Mankowski does not claim to be exhaustive ("Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible," 1); yet Mankowski does claim to be "exhaustive in the positive sense of including all Biblical Hebrew words that have been proposed as Akkadian loans for which the Akkadian loan-hypothesis is certain or plausible" (*Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 9). Hurvitz's additional suggestions, missing in Mankowski and Peacock, are precisely these types of loans. See Hurvitz, "Review: Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew by Paul V. Mankowski," 137-38.

¹⁸⁶ Mankowski claims that Hebrew אָפֵר "plowman" is likely a loan from Akkadian to Hebrew mediated by Aramaic, partly because the lexeme is geographically distributed in both Eastern and Western Aramaic and because there is no Canaanite shift from $\bar{a} > \bar{o}$, as one might expect if it were a native Hebrew word (*Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 33). Peacock argues against this analysis, stating that native Hebrew words like אָפֵר from Proto-Semitic *dabar* show \bar{a} in the tonic position much like the word under discussion and that the Aramaic cognate ends in a \bar{a} , which should be retained in the Hebrew were it mediated through Aramaic ("Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible," 60-61). Peacock is confused here: Mankowski's reasoning is based on the expected a historical \bar{a} in Hebrew, whereas Peacock's example contains historical *a* (short) and only becomes long by a secondary, distinct process that is completely different, and irrelevant, to Mankowski's example. Moreover, the final \bar{a} in the Aramaic word is the emphatic ending (אָפֵרֵא) and therefore part of Aramaic inflectional morphology. Peacock seems to argue that this vowel is part of the root when he states "the Aramaic form ends in \bar{a} . Whereas short vowels in Akkadian are invariably dropped in Hebrew, a final long vowel would be retained, as evidence by numerous examples" ("Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible," 60-61). This vowel is not part of the root and so is, again, a completely different consideration and irrelevant to the discussion. Finally, geographic distribution of the lexeme

are over-reliant on Aramaic as a mediation of Akkadian loans and influence on the Hebrew Bible; however, his reasons for that claim at times are problematic.¹⁸⁷ As helpful as Peacock's dissertation is for supplementing Mankowski's work with more linguistic theory, much more work remains to be done.

The linguistically based comparative studies between Akkadian on the one hand and Aramaic (Kaufmann) and Hebrew (Mankowski and Peacock) on the other have laid excellent groundwork for additional study based on clearly stated criteria, involving a phonetically based approach for determining loanwords. From Mankowski's and Peacock's dissertations, in which it seems clear that Akkadian loanwords have on occasion entered the Hebrew lexicon without the need to posit an Aramaic intermediary, ancient Israelites may have had direct access to Akkadian sources. This conclusion raises other questions, including the time period when such contact likely occurred and the motivations behind the contact-induced change that may be apparent based on literary and genre considerations. Direct contact between Akkadian and Hebrew allowed the ancient Israelites to adopt and preserve linguistic phenomena in the literary traditions of Israel.

אֶזְרָא in Aramaic dialects do not prove that the word is a trans-Aramaic loan. Such distributional analysis, however, is extremely valuable linguistically as many features that are found in both East and West Semitic have been fairly reliably reconstructed to be present in Proto-Semitic (such as the *iparras* verbal form in Ethiopic and Akkadian) based on this argumentation (contra Peacock's dismissive attitude towards the value of geographic distribution generally).

¹⁸⁷ For example, at one point he implies that because (according to him) the time period for the transition of most Akkadian loans into the Hebrew Bible is during the Neo-Assyrian period, it is unlikely that Aramaic played a major factor ("Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible," 389-91). Nowhere in his dissertation does Peacock seem aware of the presence of hundreds of Aramaic docket and administrative texts during the Neo-Assyrian period (in the seventh century) and these texts do not factor into his analysis at all. He may be correct that Aramaic during this time played a limited role (as argued in Chapter 4 of this dissertation), but this limited role cannot simply be stated as a given during the Neo-Assyrian period; rather, given the changing sociolinguistic landscape during the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian periods, such a limited role is contested for the earlier period and needs to be proven more systematically than he does.

c. *Comparative Studies and the History of Religions*

The inclusion of these sociolinguistic factors would, of course, entail a much larger, compendious, and perhaps unwieldy study on the basis of the one hundred and six words that Mankowski examines (twenty-six of which were not actually loans). Any study of comparative material that includes linguistic, cultural, historical, and literary factors, then, should necessarily limit the number of items considered. An appeal to such selectivity appears in Lincoln and Grottanelli's recent essay on making religious comparisons.¹⁸⁸ Lincoln is a scholar of the History of Religions, a different discipline than biblical studies; however, the concerns of the field of the History of Religions are relevant for biblical studies generally and the comparative method in the Hebrew Bible specifically.¹⁸⁹

Lincoln and Grottanelli's arguments are worth considering due to their significance for understanding how research in biblical literature and its connections to surrounding cultures should be conducted. Comparison is necessary, since meaning is often best understood when differences are examined in light of similarities that allow for comparison in the first place.¹⁹⁰ Lincoln and Grottanelli acknowledge the distortion that can be inherent in comparative work. This distortion occurs when the provisional nature of comparative work is not recognized. Generalization necessarily results from comparison as the alternatives are either a) unrigorous and "unreflective" conclusions, or b) conclusions that only involve narrow and often petty

¹⁸⁸ Lincoln and Grottanelli, "Theses on Comparison," 121-30.

¹⁸⁹ Malul makes note of Jonathan Z. Smith's work on his comparative endeavors. See J. Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion 14; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

¹⁹⁰ Lincoln and Grottanelli, "Theses on Comparison," 121. As such, "meaning is constructed through contrast," a basic tenet discussed earlier in this chapter.

implications.¹⁹¹ Lincoln and Grottanelli claim that “strong” comparisons, or “wide-ranging comparisons,” on the basis of categories such as “the human mind,” “the collective unconscious,” or “totemism,” tend to be comparisons that reveal more about the researchers’ own interests and imagination than those of “historic, prehistoric, and/or transhistoric actuality.”¹⁹² They posit that comparative examples that involve larger numbers of data tend to become superficial.¹⁹³ Lincoln and Grottanelli claim that too often the different types of comparisons are focused on similarities and not on differences.¹⁹⁴ The authors argue that the real interest lies not in overly-generalized universal patterns but in variations and differences in how putative links and commonalities are identified in particular religions.¹⁹⁵ Regarding the genetic claim for comparisons, Lincoln and Grottanelli claim that these assertions rely on a reconstructed past, and therefore are highly tendentious, and can often involve claims of prestige (the glorious

¹⁹¹ Lincoln and Grottanelli, “Theses on Comparison,” 121. Lincoln and Grottanelli then offer two theses that explore the scholar’s own biases. They state that each scholar should recognize his or her own political interests when doing comparative work, interests that often condition the categorization and understanding of the compared materials. Additionally, they claim that collegial criticism is the only check against the often implicit use of a scholar’s own political and cultural viewpoint as a basis for comparison. On the important of such self-reflection in biblical studies and the place of biblical studies in religious studies, see Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses: Prophecy, Law, and Israelite Religion*.

¹⁹² Lincoln and Grottanelli, “Theses on Comparison,” 122. Indeed, many comparative categories were constructed for ancient Israel based on Mesopotamian evidence. At times, evidence from less distantly related (or non-related) tribal societies have often been imported in comparative studies in order to find in the Hebrew Bible what scholars want to find, not in order to examine what was actually significant. The broad categories utilized in this comparative work are problematic because vague or are non-native to the Hebrew text itself and thus lose meaning or value for understanding the Hebrew Bible.

¹⁹³ Moreover, they argue that the attempt to take these bits of data and to make them a “template” for lesser known or “familiar” situations can tend to be misrepresentative. While Lincoln and Grottanelli correctly assert that studies entailing as many examples as possible tend to be superficial even as they implicitly contain greater claims for certainty and authority, the idea that using better known situations to elucidate lesser known ones creates misrepresentations is not inevitably true. Indeed, in contact linguistics, where certain universals, or at least strong tendencies, can be observed, using well known examples of contact to shed light on lesser known contact situations can provide a helpful methodological control. One should take care to allow for differences between the greater and lesser known situations; however, one should not avoid extrapolation simply because the procedure has been abused. As discussed in the following chapter, contact linguists have indicated that using better known contact situations to explore possibilities for lesser known ones can be helpful as long as the limitations are adequately acknowledged.

¹⁹⁴ Lincoln and Grottanelli, “Theses on Comparison,” 122. This same critique of the comparative method has already been discussed in reaction to the Pan-Babylonian and “parallel-o-mania” trends in biblical scholarship.

¹⁹⁵ Lincoln and Grottanelli, “Theses on Comparison,” 122-23.

past).¹⁹⁶ According to these authors, comparisons can also at times result in value judgments of the borrowing culture, which would be presumably less original and authentic, relative to the borrowed culture, presumably superior in some fashion.¹⁹⁷

The last thesis is more constructive in nature. Lincoln and Grottanelli propose four ways in which comparative work should be conducted.¹⁹⁸ First, they suggest that such work should be conducted on the basis of a fairly small number of data points so that each datum can receive maximal treatment. Second, similarities and differences should be treated in equal measure. Third, each religion, text, or culture should be accorded respect without value judgments (like “superior,” “inferior,” etc.). Fourth, Lincoln and Grottanelli stipulate that social, historical, and political contexts should be considered as much as possible when comparing literary or religious texts. While points two and three have been incorporated well into the study of texts between ancient Israel and the ancient Near East, points one and four deserve more consideration in comparative examinations in biblical studies. As mentioned previously, the sheer volume of loans and catalogued linguistic data adduced in many previous studies is excellent and a worthy enterprise; however, the volume of data prevents more detailed synthesis of linguistic, literary, historical, political, and social observations in loanword studies, all of which are scholarly approaches that many of the comparative data warrant. In this dissertation, the principles that

¹⁹⁶ Again, the authors point out legitimate abuses in the field; however, in linguistics, scholars have developed reliable (as much as is possible) criteria for reconstructing the past on the basis of the presently available information from genetically related languages. The field of contact linguistics also aids in a verifiable, or at least plausible, reconstruction where details of genetic descent may not explain a feature, which instead is due to contact. Such contact can be hypothesized based on a variety of factors, including archaeology, historical records, and literary theory, to name a few. In both biblical studies and linguistics, reconstruction is at times a necessary enterprise given the paucity of data available.

¹⁹⁷ Lincoln and Grottanelli, “Theses on Comparison,” 123.

¹⁹⁸ Lincoln and Grottanelli, “Theses on Comparison,” 123.

Lincoln and Grottanelli propose are followed and an attempt is made to synthesize a wider variety of sociolinguistic information for each datum presented in light of contact linguistics.

This dissertation is intended to participate in recent trends to refine comparative studies of the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature by providing more sophisticated theoretical foundations. It is hoped that it not only avoids the pitfalls that Lincoln and Grottanelli mention, but that it also adds methodological sophistication and precision through the insights offered by contact linguistics. Other scholars, such as Hays, also have begun the work of integration of theory with the interpretation of biblical texts in their ancient Near Eastern contexts.¹⁹⁹ For example, Hays has contributed to the importation of intertextual theory into assessments of how to proceed in a comparative evaluation. Some of his work is valuable more for its theoretical discussion, less for the application of the methodological refinements to the biblical texts themselves. Even in this methodological work, a divide occurs between linguistic, literary, and socio-historical concerns, perhaps unnecessarily so. For example, Hays states that

“while strictly generic criteria may feel more secure to scholars with extensive linguistic training, comparative studies that overlook literary and sociohistorical questions (such as those laid out by Hays²⁰⁰) do not thereby avoid them but merely *presume certain conclusions without argument*. Rare indeed is the Old Testament text for which this is a safe way to proceed. Comparative scholars should be prepared to offer answers, however provisional, to these questions. They should also be as explicit as possible about their methods and criteria for identifying echoes, so that they are not left in the position of the

¹⁹⁹ Hays, “Echoes of the Ancient Near East?”

²⁰⁰ It should be noted that the Hays referred to in the quote is a different Hays, namely Richard Hays, from the author of the quote itself, Christopher Hays (who is Richard Hays’ son).

late Supreme Court justice Potter Stewart, who famously said of obscenity: ‘I know it when I see it.’”²⁰¹

Hays correctly asserts that there exists a great need for making method explicit in comparative studies. The foregoing comments in this chapter have followed along these lines, especially the discussion of Malul’s study in which he repeatedly asserts the need for making methodological assumptions clear. Hays creates an unnecessary dichotomy, though, in his statement about the linguistically oriented training on the one hand and literary and socio-historical observations on the other. The linguistic information and traces present in a text exist because of a pre-existing socio-historical condition or some form of literary engagement (whether the literary piece has a written background or oral background will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3). Because these factors are not mutually exclusive, a method for comparative work that relies on as many points of consideration as possible will provide a more comprehensive basis for understanding whether linguistic traces have any discernible correspondence to the socio-historical, cultural, and literary context. It is the purpose of this dissertation to provide such a broader basis of comparison, carried out from a specific linguistic perspective. The scope of the study of language contact makes it ideal to serve as a theoretical framework for comparative examinations between the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature.

Despite minor critiques, Hays’ approach is laudable in his desire methodologically to refine the comparative study of the Hebrew Bible with more rigorous literary theory. Indeed, his forthcoming volume on the comparative approach may be hoped to correct the lack of theoretical

²⁰¹ Hays, “Echoes of the Ancient Near East?,” 42.

refinement in some of his essays.²⁰² Moreover, as Hays states, other scholars have also helpfully incorporated theories of intertextuality in their analysis of biblical texts, such as Jeremy Hutton's study of Isa 51:9-11.²⁰³

IX. Conclusion

The foregoing sketch of the history of the comparative method in biblical studies provides a background for why the current study is timely. Many examples exist in the Hebrew Bible of texts which cannot be understood without appeal to external data. Moreover, when one does appeal to the external data, questions of method are manifold. What criteria are important, religious, literary, historical, linguistic, or all of these? Can one combine meaningfully these various components in a single study? If so, what theoretical principles should one apply in order to derive the best results? Can one test these results against external models and data sets to ensure as much objectivity and precision as possible?

In one sense, the answer to these questions, when dealing with limited amounts of data, must remain tentative. Scholarly knowledge of the extent of contact and the nature of the interaction between ancient Israel and her neighbors is constantly improving with increased data from archaeological fieldwork and through the use of refined methods of studying ancient texts. Even in light of such data and method, however, this survey of the history of the comparative study of the literatures of ancient Israel and Mesopotamia indicates that synthetic approaches incorporating sociolinguistic and contact-linguistic theory are still lacking. Because of this lack of methodological synthesis, many components of the biblical text are insufficiently explored. It is not enough simply to ask whether or not Gen 6-9 shows evidence of Mesopotamian influence;

²⁰² Forthcoming, 2014.

²⁰³ Jeremy Hutton, "Isaiah 51:9-11 and the Rhetorical Appropriation and Subversion of Hostile Theologies," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126 (2007): 271-303.

rather, one should explore the two strands that comprise this unit, namely the J and P sources. These sources were written at different times and with different socio-political realities. While Westermann and others have emphasized the distinction in these narratives in comparison to ancient Near Eastern sources (P follows one source here, another there, even as J seems to do something quite different at times relative to the Mesopotamian flood narratives), and while others have studied the linguistic profile of P, an integrated analysis of literary and linguistic features remains to be done.

Now that the need for more methodological rigor and integrative approaches to comparative approaches between the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature has been explained, it remains to examine more fully the methodological basis for the dissertation. The field of contact linguistics does not provide a set of magical formulas that will clear away all problems in the comparative study of the Hebrew Bible, nor will it create certainty about the relationship between Israelite and Mesopotamian texts. Indeed, at times it may make the connection more uncertain and complicate some of the simplistic assumptions that biblical scholars have made regarding contact. The next chapter presents this method in more detail. It includes a brief history of the discipline, a presentation of some of the major types of contact that scholars have identified, and a discussion of ongoing debates in the field. Finally, as a prelude to the study of biblical texts, the chapter includes the sociolinguistic data from ancient Israel that are part of the necessary background for conducting comparison by the method of contact linguistics.

Chapter 3: Contact Linguistics: Methodological Introduction and Sociolinguistic Considerations

The starting point for our theory of linguistic interference is this: it is the sociolinguistic history of the speakers, and not the structure of their language, that is the primary determinant of the linguistic outcome of language contact. Purely linguistic considerations are relevant but strictly secondary overall. Ultimately, the proposed structural constraints in chapter 2 fail because linguistic interference is conditioned in the first instance by social factors, not linguistic ones. Both the direction of interference and the extent of interference are socially determined; so, to a considerable degree, are the kinds of features transferred from one language to another.¹

Thomason and Kaufman begin their proposal for how language contact works in Chapter 3 of their *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics* with the text just quoted.

While this quotation refers to their previous chapter in which they discuss the failure of purely structural approaches to account adequately for contact-induced changes, in some ways it applies also to the previous chapter in this dissertation. Despite the advances in the study of the Hebrew Bible in the context of the ancient Near East, linguistic approaches have not fully integrated the sociolinguistic history of the ancient Israelites into their study. Accordingly, structural considerations having to do with the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Akkadian languages dominate

¹ Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988), 35. See also Weinreich, *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems* (preface by André Martinet; Linguistic Circle of New York. Publications, No. 1; London: Mouton and Co., 1964), 3.

implicitly or explicitly. To the extent that scholars have assessed issues of structure² exclusive of sociolinguistic criteria,³ or without theories of how these sociolinguistic backgrounds influence both the process and results of contact-induced change, their comparative approaches have not involved adequate data for providing a synthetic and linguistically sound method for analyzing contact.

The previous chapter provides a brief overview of comparative studies between biblical and ancient Near Eastern literature in order to show the need for a more rigorous and comprehensive linguistic method than has been used previously. This chapter lays the foundation for a sociolinguistic framework for conducting comparative studies. It contains three sections. First, it includes a history of the field of contact linguistics. This historical survey is intended to show that contact linguistics entails a comprehensive, sociolinguistic approach applicable to, and needed in, biblical studies. It requires an evaluation not merely of structural affinities or comparisons, but a wider array of sociohistorical information, the very types of considerations that have been analyzed in isolation in biblical studies, if at all. It is not enough to have linguistic and literary studies existing along parallel lines since it is putatively the very historical forces behind literary contact (oral or written) that gave rise to the linguistic data under consideration.⁴

² Such considerations are important. As Thomason states, one of the easiest types of structural interference to identify as a basis for loanwords resulting from contact involves the phonological innovations that are a part of features that transfer from the source into the recipient language (“Determining Language Contact Effects in Ancient Contact Situations,” 10). The issue is not whether or not such studies are necessary for a fully robust comparative study, but whether they are sufficient.

³ For the purposes of this dissertation, these sociolinguistic criteria would include the historical nature of the contact between ancient Israel and her Near Eastern neighbors, the politics involved in such contact, literary features of the texts under consideration, and uses of genres in the texts under comparison.

⁴ Thomason’s brief, but instructive, comments are relevant for the literary underpinning of linguistic contact in antiquity: “Consider the famous Gilgamesh Cycle, a Babylonian epic poem from the second millennium BCE: it originated as a Sumerian epic, spread to Babylonia and was translated and adapted into the Semitic language Akkadian there, and then spread to the Hurrians, the Hittites (who spoke the oldest attested Indo-European language), and other ancient Near Eastern peoples.... Its main importance is literary and cultural, but its spread

Current topics in contact linguistics are also discussed. While the field is a well-established area of study, it is necessary to provide a survey of issues in this branch of linguistics due to the unfamiliarity of biblical and ancient Near Eastern scholars with the discipline. A second, no less important, reason for this overview involves current debates in which terminology is still disputed. Providing this orientation to contact linguistics, then, clarifies what is meant by the use of terms in this dissertation and helps the reader to understand where this dissertation fits in the landscape of the study of language contact. Such questions in contact linguistics include: Are there typologies of contact? Are there hierarchies of borrowing? Can structure be borrowed directly, or is structural borrowing a result of heavy lexical borrowing? Are all languages, at some level, the result of contact?

Second, I address the issue of whether or not contact linguistics is applicable to ancient languages no longer spoken. Given the fact that some areas of linguistics, such as generative grammar, target synchronic data in the observation of language acquisition, it is not a given that a theory derived from direct observation of living speakers (as in some manner was the case with contact linguistics and the study of spoken creoles such as Gullah)⁵ can apply to dead languages preserved only in writing. Most contact linguists, such as Thomason, however, claim to be first and foremost historical linguists and therefore formulate linguistic theories that can be applied to historical situations given sufficient sociohistorical and linguistic information. As argued, the

obviously involved extensive language contact” (“Determining Language Contact Effects in Ancient Contact Situations,” 2).

In some ways, this sketch of the history of contact linguistics is a mirror image to the history of biblical studies. A more detailed version of the development of the study of language contact would show a trajectory of understanding all language change as genealogical (from the same family tree), to claiming all languages are mixed, and now more moderate approaches. Conversely, after the decipherment of ancient Egyptian and Akkadian, many biblical scholars wrote studies that were radically comparative (everything in the Bible was derivative of contact with ancient cultures), then radically non-comparative, and now more moderately comparative works.

⁵ Winford, *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics*, 1-2.

diachronic component of the study of language contact and the documentation preserved in ancient writing systems showing change over time make the study of language contact in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East a fitting data set.⁶

Since contact linguists take into consideration a wide array of sociolinguistic evidence, as a third section this chapter also includes such background information before further examining the linguistic data proper in the subsequent chapters. At times, it may not be necessary to know the history of a language and its speakers in order to establish some form a contact, or that loanwords have entered into a language, if the analysis of the language precludes that certain words are native lexemes on the basis of phonemic, syllabic, or other structural criteria.⁷ In the case of the Hebrew Bible, in which multiple streams of influence may have occurred, historical data play an important role. Therefore, I present a brief case for historical contact with Akkadian and Aramaic speakers on the one hand and the authors and scribes of the Hebrew Bible on the other. More specific sociohistorical background about the Akkadian and Aramaic contact situation is provided in Chapter 4, where such information is relevant for the data presented therein. In the third section of this chapter, I discuss the view from Israel and Judah's perspective, which in turn frames the linguistic data presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

It is often assumed that ancient Israel must have had access to Mesopotamian traditions through Aramaic documents because the Assyrian empire used Aramaic for the writing of certain genres and because Aramaic and Hebrew are similar structurally (see the comments on Alt, Steymans, and Morrow in Chapter 2 and Schniedewind in Chapter 4). This argument implies that

⁶ Coulmas has argued that any thorough linguistic, particularly sociolinguistic, study, ancient or modern, should necessarily include the study of written language. For him, the testimony of language in writing is simply indispensable for the field of linguistics, though it has been neglected through the legacy of Saussure. See Coulmas, *The Writing Systems of the World*.

⁷ See Thomason's comments on Hattic and Palaic, "Determining Language Contact Effects in Ancient Contact Situations," 10.

a language used for certain genres of communication could therefore be used for any genre and type of communication. Thus, because Aramaic was used for administrative and legal texts, it could also be used for the transmission of mythic and religious texts from the Assyrian and Babylonian empires into the Hebrew Bible. I provide more specific data concerning the preservation of texts in Aramaic and Akkadian in Chapter 4; because of the importance of this point for biblical studies, a brief survey of the evidence of ancient Hebrew writing is presented in this chapter. A description of the Aramaic intermediary theory is also presented in this chapter, particularly through the exegetical examination of the passage involving the רַב־שָׁקֶה, or *rab shaqeh*.

I. Introduction to Contact Linguistics

The recognition of language variation and contact in many ways has roots that are millennia old.⁸ The observation that language and dialectal differences are significant is attested in the Hebrew Bible in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 (especially 10:5) and in the famous example of the distinction between the words “Sibboleth” and “Shibboleth” in Judg 12:6. The perspective of ancient Judah that language change and contact could have major implications for

⁸ The phenomenon of language contact is evidenced already in Sumerian, the earliest known language (see also below). The earliest statement of a recognition of the effects of contact-induced changes that I have found is from Homer in the *Odyssey*:

ἄλλη δ' ἄλλων γλῶσσα μεμιγμένη. ἐν μὲν Ἀχαιοί,
ἐν δ' Ἐτεόκρητες μεγαλήτορες, ἐν δὲ Κύδωνες,
Δωριέες τε τριχάϊκες δίοι τε Πελασγοί

“Every language is mixed with others; there live Achaeans,
there great-hearted native Cretans, there Cydonians,
and Dorians dwelling in threefold location, and noble Pelasgians.”

One can also find similar statements attributed to Socrates as well as the Old-Oligarch (Pseudo-Xenophon). Speaking of the Athenians, Pseudo-Xenophon wrote in the fifth century BCE that “hearing every kind of language, they take something from each” (φωνὴν πᾶσαν ἀκούοντες ἐξελέξαντο τοῦτο μὲν ἐκ τῆς, τοῦτο δὲ ἐκ τῆς). Socrates claimed that “the Greeks, especially those living among the barbarians, have taken many words from the barbarians” (πολλὰ οἱ Ἕλληνες ὀνόματα ἄλλως τε καὶ οἱ ὑπὸ τοῖς βαρβάροις οἰκοῦντες παρὰ τῶν βαρβάρων εἰλήφασιν). For these references, see Mark Janse, “Bilingualism in the History of Greek,” in *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text* (edited by J. N. Adams, Mark Janse, and Simon Swain; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 333-34.

their group identity is particularly prominent in the Book of Nehemiah. An example of this change appears in Neh 8:8:

ויקראו בספר בתורת האלהים מפרש ושום שכל ויבינו במקרא

“They read in the book, in the law of God, clearly,⁹ and they gave insight and caused them to understand the reading.”

Scholars in the history of interpretation of this verse, especially in Jewish circles, understand this passage to refer to the loss of knowledge of Hebrew amongst the ancient Judeans, necessitating translation into Aramaic.¹⁰ An awareness of language mixing appears in Neh 13:23-24:

גם בימים ההם ראיתי את-היהודים השיבו נשים אשדודיות עמנויות מואביות ובניהם חצי מדבר אשדודית ואינם מכירים לדבר יהודית וכלשון עם ועם

“Also in those days I saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. Their children were speaking half in the language of Ashdod, and they could not¹¹ speak Judean, but according to the language of each people.”

This passage highlights the outcome of mixed marriages, namely a mixed language of half Ashdod (perhaps Philistian, similar to language attested in the Ekron inscription), half Judean.

⁹ The D-passive participle **מפרש** modifies **ספר**, meaning “it was explained” or even “an extemporaneous translation was made.” The syntax of the Hebrew is difficult, and the translation “clearly” is an attempt to render this idea. Other translations indicate this difficulty as well. The New Jewish Publication Society translation is “They read from the scroll of the Teach of God, translating it and giving the sense; so they understood the reading.” Here, “translating it” is the equivalent of **מפרש**, though, as pointed, the participle is passive and does not govern an object. Even if repointed to an active participle, no object is expressed.

¹⁰ It should be noted that Aramaic is not specifically mentioned in the passage, and that Targums, or Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible, in the proper sense would not occur until later. Interestingly, the word Targum is itself likely an Indo-European loanword (attested in Luwian) that appears in a variety of Semitic languages to mean “translation.” See Cook, “The Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in the Targums,” 93; M. Valério and I. Yakubovich, “Semitic Word for Iron as Anatolian Loanword,” 114.

¹¹ For an alternate translation “they refused to speak Hebrew,” see Ingo Kottsieper, ““And They Did Not Care to Speak Yehudit’: On Linguistic Change in Judah during the Late Persian Period,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B. C. E.* (edited by Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 95-124.

The narrator takes a negative view of this type of language mixing, as it was also a symptom of religious syncretism and compromise.

The foregoing passages make manifest the relevance of the connection between the awareness of linguistic change in Hebrew by the biblical authors and the modern study of contact linguistics to describe and evaluate the significance of these changes. Scholars who examined such phenomena at the beginning of the modern study of language contact tended to view language mixing in a negative light (much like the biblical authors quoted above), claiming that mixing represented lower and degraded (and therefore less pure) forms of language.¹² Linguists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have developed more nuanced views on the nature of mixed languages and language contact. Between ancient Israel and modern linguistics, one could plot thousands of comments and casual observations about loans, borrowing, language shift, and language death.¹³ Biblical scholars have only begun to explore the historical and sociological

¹² Winford, *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics*, 1-2.

¹³ The earliest systematic studies of linguistic contact began with nineteenth-century scholars studying creole languages. Even at this early stage, these scholars were aware of their indebtedness to earlier, sporadic comments and observations. Hugo Schuchardt, one of the first major scholars of creole languages, references G. Lucio, a scholar who in 1666 published a work in which he analyzed the contact between Croatian and Romance dialects in documents dating from the fourteenth century (Winford, *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics*, 6). It was in the nineteenth century, however, that language contact became a more focalized point of academic discussion. For example, the noted nineteenth-century linguist Müller denied the possibility of the existence of a truly mixed language outright (*Lectures on the Science of Language* [New York: Charles Scribner, 1862], 25, 28; cf. Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 1-2). His reasons for doing so stem from a deeply held conviction about the nature of language development and the threats that language contact, if given too much prominence, would have for the notion of inheritance in language change. In other words, the prevailing model of historical linguistics was one of genealogical classifications along a family tree. Language change, in this understanding, happens as languages evolve internally; traits that are innovations pass along clades in the family tree from mother languages to daughter languages. Though more recent linguistic studies have understood language change in biological and evolutionary terms (such as the work of Salikoko Mufwene, *Language Evolution: Contact, Competition, and Change* [New York: Continuum, 2008]), Müller rejected many of Darwin's theories of human evolution, and such a Darwinian development of humans played no role in his conception of language development. The advantages of this genealogical model are many. It allows for accurate assessment of the relatedness among languages and sound change, as asserted by many Neogrammarians who were somewhat contemporary with Müller. These formulations of Neogrammarian principles began in studies of Indo-European languages, a language group of which Müller was a student. It should be noted that there is no correlation between being a Neogrammarian linguist and the extreme claims of Müller about mixed languages. Indeed, Hermann Paul and Hugo Schuchardt were both foundational figures in Neogrammarian thought and yet actively

realities underneath the biblical texts that lead to language change and identity formation.¹⁴ The following brief introduction to contact linguistics focuses on the modern beginnings of the study

engaged in studying the effects of language mixing and creolization. See P. C. Sutcliffe, "Müller, Friedrich Max (1823-1900)," in *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (edited by Keith Brown; 2nd edition; Oxford: Elsevier, 2006), 367-69; R. Harris, "Modern Linguistics: 1800 to the Present Day," in *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (edited by Keith Brown; 2nd edition; Oxford: Elsevier, 2006), 204.

As Thomason and Kaufman and Winford have pointed out, Müller's claims concerning the internal development in language proved influential in the decades beyond his 1862 (reprinted in 1875) work. In the twentieth century, Antoine Meillet and Els Oksaar both proposed the priority of explanations of language change based on internal factors almost to the complete exclusion of external causation of development. Many modern linguists prefer to see internal reasons for language change as a primary explanation, and only in rare and extreme cases do they appeal to contact as an explanation for the development of a feature. Although internal explanations for change along solid historical linguistic reasoning is a solid basis for beginning a study of a development in a language, there exist peculiarities in the lexicon, morphology, phonology, and syntax of various language systems (if not all language systems) that defy such internal development. In these cases, external factors explain a number of features that are unexplainable by internal evolution.

Despite Müller's protests, other scholars in the nineteenth century spent much time and energy discussing externally motivated changes brought about through contact between speakers. For example, in 1881 W. D. Whitney published a direct response against Müller, highlighting the fact that contact can influence both lexicon and grammar (*Max Müller and the Science of Language: A Criticism* [New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892]). In his discussion of the borrowability of grammatical elements from one language to another, Whitney claims that such borrowings are a secondary extension of other borrowings such as lexemes and phrases. This assertion is similar to Winford's arguments more recently (see below). Moreover, Whitney was also one of, if not the first, linguist to construct a borrowing hierarchy. In it, he ranks grammar at the bottom of elements that can be borrowed, "in virtue of its being the least material and the most formal part of the language" ("On Mixture in Language," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 12 [1881]: 14).

A few years later in 1884, Paul examined the implications of contact for the genealogical classification of language. He even observed the influence of extra-linguistic factors which, in many ways, augured the concerns of sociolinguistics a century later. See his comments on the role of society and the interaction of the individual in group dynamics (such as religion, culture, and geography) as a means for understanding language change, *Principles of the History of Language* (translated by H. A. Strong; New York: Macmillan, 1889), 23, 25-26. Paul devoted a chapter to the topic of language mixing, in which he appealed to factors that would later become prominent in sociolinguistics. Additionally, in this chapter Paul focused on the role of the bilingual individual as a major center for the study of mixed languages, a notion upon which Weinreich would later expand greatly. While many of his observations contained foresights into linguistic research, a systematic analysis that sought to uncover the processes and types of contact (instead of the results) that lead to various linguistic outcomes would appear only decades later.

Major pioneers of creole and contact studies continued to emerge in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries before the advent of contact linguistics as a specialized discipline focusing on the linguistic processes behind such data in the 1950s. One such scholar was Hugo Schuchardt, often hailed as the first true creolist. Another linguist, Nikolai Trobetsköy, developed the first definition of a linguistic area, or *Sprachbund*, in the 1920s. Thus, the earlier period anticipated many of the topics later systematically explored in contact linguistics.

¹⁴ A recent example is Schniedewind's *A Social History of Hebrew*. This work is, however, weakened by numerous linguistic and methodological errors. For example, Schniedewind calls Sumerian "an Indo-European language," a claim that, while incidental to his overall thesis in the work, is nonetheless indicative of the types of errors in the book (*A Social History of Hebrew*, 15). Further, he creates a strong distinction between writing and the ability for script to represent phonetic realities (*A Social History of Hebrew*, 9-15 and throughout). While it is surely the case that writing does not always capture phonetic articulation of speech and Schniedewind is correct to explore the political nature of script in developing national identity, his rejection of historical linguistics is unsound. Most contact linguists are involved in sociolinguistic research and are also fundamentally historical linguists. Even though no writing fully captures speech and script and spelling can be politically motivated, writing can also, nonetheless,

of language contact. This history can be periodized into three main eras, starting with the pivotal moment in which contact linguistics became a specialized study occurring in the middle of the twentieth century with the contributions of Haugen and Weinreich. From this point in the history of the field, the main areas and topics of discussion in language contact became apparent. In the next section of this introduction, these topics, as well as some of the debates in the field, are presented. Finally, the relevance of these areas of study within contact linguistics needs to be brought into conversation with the Hebrew Bible. These three elements (history of contact linguistics, topics and debates in the field, application to the Hebrew Bible) form the orientation to language contact in this dissertation, after which sociolinguistic data pertinent to the discussion of language contact in the Hebrew Bible relative to Akkadian and Aramaic appears in the following chapter.

II. Brief History of Contact Linguistics as a Field of Study in Modern Times

a. Middle Twentieth Century: Contributions of Weinreich and Haugen

In general, the period of the middle twentieth century can be designated as the period in which a shift took place from the study of the results of language contact as conducted by creolists and some linguistic anthropologists to a desire to describe the processes behind such results. This change in focus had a major influence on how scholars analyzed contact-induced changes. The two scholars who best represent this transition are Weinreich and Haugen. They refined the study of language contact in a way that made the modern development of the discipline possible.

capture many aspects of the development of language over time, including phonology, which can aid the scholar in delineating dialects and contact-induced change.

In 1950 Weinreich completed his dissertation and then in 1953 he authored a follow-up volume that synthesized the dissertation and moved on to a more comprehensive project.¹⁵ His focus in these volumes is on the effects of language contact in the bilingual individual. Weinreich does not ignore social effects of language contact, particularly group factors such as identity and language attitudes that can create resistance to contact-induced changes; however, in order to move from the results of language contact to the processes that create these results he concentrates on the various psychological negotiations that the bilingual speaker makes. The study of these factors entails structural analyses of the languages involved, though the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic components of contact situations are particularly highlighted in Weinreich's study.

In the course of his analysis, Weinreich addresses the previous attempts to rank the borrowability or the likelihood of interference for different language domains, such as the works of Schuchardt and Whitney. In this interaction with previous scholarship, Weinreich in many ways expresses major issues that would become prominent in the study of language contact. For example, at the time of his writing Weinreich believed that there were some "algebra" type formulations for contact, though that possibility "does not mean that panchronic laws on the directions of interference are ready to be formulated."¹⁶ This desire to formulate and describe directionality of contact-induced change given sociolinguistic factors is one of the chief contributions of the works written by Thomason and Terence Kaufman as well as van Coetsem in 1988. Weinreich was already aware of the power of such "extra-linguistic" factors and

¹⁵ Weinreich's dissertation has only recently been published as *Languages in Contact: French, German, and Romansch in Twentieth Century Switzerland* (introduction and notes by Ronald I. Kim and William Labov; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: John Benjamins Publishing, 2011).

¹⁶ Weinreich, *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, 67.

devoted significant effort to discussing these influences. He states that “to predict typical forms of interference from the sociolinguistic description of a bilingual community and a structural description of its languages is the ultimate goal of interference studies.”¹⁷ Moreover, Weinreich asserts that “one can anticipate some of the aspects of the socio-cultural setting of language contact which are likely to be pinned down eventually as the ultimate extra-linguistic stimuli and resistance factors of interference.”¹⁸ This predictive component is one of the main factors of the modern study of language contact. Additionally, the analyses of language and social dominance in the works of van Coetsem and Lars Johanson are in some manner anticipated in Weinreich’s work.¹⁹ Finally, Weinreich’s discussion of literary and cultural values in relation to contact as well as identity formation in contact situations also anticipates many of the concern in this dissertation.²⁰

Haugen also makes the linguistic process of contact a focus of his research. He distinguishes between the effects of importation (in which a feature from a model or source language is loaned into a recipient or replica language without integration into the latter) and substitution (in which the feature of the model is altered or substituted on the basis of the recipient/replica language).²¹ For Haugen, this distinction plays a crucial role in understanding

¹⁷ Weinreich, *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, 86.

¹⁸ Weinreich, *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, 87.

¹⁹ For linguistic dominance, see Weinreich, *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, 75. For cultural and political dominance, see Weinreich’s discussion of social status in *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, 95.

²⁰ For issues of identity, see *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, 99, 117-19. The recent book on social identity and the development of the Hebrew language by Schniedewind could have benefitted from Weinreich’s insights, though Schniedewind does not cite any literature of the study of language contact. See Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew*. See also Weinreich on the mutual influence of languages in contact situations (much like the Aramaic-Akkadian contact analyzed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation), *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, 67.

²¹ Haugen, “Problems of Bilingualism,” in *The Ecology of Language* (edited by Anwar S. Dil; Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1972), 72-75; “The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing,” in *The Ecology of Language* (edited by Anwar S. Dil; Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1972), 82.

structural resistance to borrowing and the adoptability of linguistic features into the recipient language. Items that are imported tend to be for momentary needs. The opposite effect of substitution entails “entrenched habits” that are involved in speaking, “substituting themselves for whatever can be replaced in the imported item.”²² Since, on the one hand, structural features are such elements of repeated habit and, on the other, vocabulary is a feature that grows and changes over time even well after morphology, syntax, and phonology have been acquired, it makes sense that lexemes are much more easily imported and borrowed than foreign structural elements.

For Haugen, this distinction between importation and substitution was intricately connected to the sociolinguistic and extra-linguistic context of bilingual speakers. Any discussion of superstratum, substratum, or adstratum is purely hypothetical (“stratospheric”) unless it can be found “solidly on the behavior of living, observable speakers.”²³ Understanding sociolinguistic information increases the likelihood of predictability of outcomes of a contact situation. Moreover, Haugen clarified the types of loans that he saw as operative in this twofold scheme of importation and substitution. Loanwords constitute full importation of a lexeme or morpheme; loan blends involve partial importation and partial substitution; and lastly loanshifts entail full substitution of morphemes or lexemes in the recipient language.

In both Weinreich’s and Haugen’s work, there is a drive to understand how extra-linguistic information shaped the scholar’s ability to predict the linguistic outcome given a sociolinguistic situation. They focus on the process of contact in the mind of a bilingual. For Weinreich, this emphasis involves interdisciplinary research into the psychology of such

²² “The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing,” 97-98.

²³ “Problems of Bilingualism,” 59.

bilinguals. Both scholars sought to refine study of the types of contact-induced changes resulting from sociolinguistic information, a refinement that would influence subsequent scholarship of language contact.

b. Sociolinguistics, the Legacy of Thomason and Kaufman, and Genealogical Descent

A gap of a few decades exists between Weinreich and Haugen on the one hand and the more recent contact-linguistic theories on the other. The gap is partially explained by the rise of generative grammar, most famously expressed in the work of Noam Chomsky.²⁴ This approach concentrates on language acquisition in children and the use of universal linguistic structures of input that recursively generate maximal linguistic expressive output. Although some language contact studies are based on contemporary speakers of a language or child language acquisition,²⁵ and therefore focus on the observation of speech, much of the study of language contact is situated in the field of historical linguistics.²⁶ During the period in which generative grammar became prominent in the 1960s and 1970s, therefore, language contact received less systematic attention from linguists.²⁷

²⁴ Raymond Hickey, "Language Contact: Reconsideration and Reassessment," in *The Handbook of Language Contact* (edited by Raymond Hickey; Blackwell Handbook in Linguistics; Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 1; Pieter Muysken, "Scenarios for Language Contact," in *The Handbook of Language Contact* (edited by Raymond Hickey; Blackwell Handbook in Linguistics; Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 268.

²⁵ See, for example, Yaron Matras who examines a bilingual child Ben and his language acquisition to serve as psychological insight for the process of language contact (*Language Contact* [Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009], 9-40).

²⁶ Thomason, Heine, and Kuteva, all important contact linguists, consider themselves to be first and foremost historical linguists. Many volumes on historical linguistics include chapters on language contact. See Campbell, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction*, 298-321; Thomason, "Contact as a Source of Linguistic Change," in *Handbook of Historical Linguistics* (edited by Brian D. Joseph and Richard D. Janda; Blackwell Handbook in Linguistics; Malden, Massachusetts, 2003), 687-712.

²⁷ There have been some linguists who attempt to bridge generative grammar and language contact. See Karen P. Corrigan, "Language Contact and Grammatical Theory," in *The Handbook of Language Contact* (edited by Raymond Hickey; Blackwell Handbook in Linguistics; Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 120.

Beginning in the 1960s, foundational work in the area of sociolinguistics was conducted, of which contact linguistics was a part. The work of William Labov in particular provided a framework based upon which other branches of sociolinguistics, such as dialectology and contact linguistics, would build.²⁸ Labov systematized how people used language, including dialectal distinctions in pronunciation, to communicate group identity. The relation between dialect, language, and identity is particularly important in certain contact situations, and sociolinguists such as Peter Trudgill, whose focus of research is properly on dialectology, have made important contributions to the area of contact linguistics.²⁹

A combination of the influence of Haugen and Weinreich, the rise of sociolinguistics, and a return to issues of historical linguistics paved the way for systematic studies and theories on the nature of language contact. In the 1980s, two studies appeared written by scholars who attempted to synthesize contact-induced changes in languages and to derive therefrom comprehensible approaches that adequately describe the processes and results of language contact given sociolinguistic background information. The first was Thomason and Terence Kaufman's *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, published in 1988. Later the same year Franz van Coetsem published *Loan Phonology and the Two Transfer Types in Language Contact*.³⁰ While the latter is less well known and was received with less enthusiasm when it first

²⁸ Labov was himself a student of Weinreich, who supervised Labov's dissertation. For the influence of Weinreich on Labov, see Ronald Kim, "Uriel Weinreich and the Birth of Modern Contact Linguistics," in *Languages in Contact 2010* (edited by Piotr P. Chruszczewski and Zdzisław Wąsik; Wrocław: Philological School of Higher Education in Wrocław Publishing, 2011), 99-111.

²⁹ Trudgill, *Dialects in Contact; Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society* (London: Penguin, 2000); "Contact and Sociolinguistic Typology," in *The Handbook of Language Contact* (edited by Raymond Hickey; Blackwell Handbook in Linguistics; Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 299-319. See also Trudgill and Chambers, *Dialectology*.

³⁰ Van Coetsem, *Loan Phonology and the Two Transfer Types in Language Contact* (Publications in Language Sciences 27; Providence, Rhode Island: Foris Publications, 1988). Van Coetsem revisited the topic with minor variation in *A General and Unified Theory of the Transmission Process in Language Contact* (Monographien zur Sprachwissenschaft 19; Heidelberg: Winter, 2000).

appeared, it shares many characteristics with the former, has become more influential in recent years, and both therefore deserve to be discussed together.³¹

Thomason and Kaufman begin their study with a survey of previous approaches to language contact, and the failure of many of these approaches to predict the linguistic outcomes of language contact situations. Although the work of Weinreich was pivotal for understanding the processes behind contact-induced changes, he and others were not able to provide a sufficient model of predicting the results of linguistic exchange. In other words, Thomason and Kaufman asked the question “what types of outcomes should we expect given certain sociolinguistic circumstances?” The reason for the failure of previous models to predict linguistic outcomes of contact was that “these proposals ultimately arise from a conviction that...a language’s structure determines its subsequent development.”³² While affirming the importance of the structural makeup of languages for understanding contact-induced changes, Thomason and Kaufman construct predictive frameworks that also include the recognition of the fundamental importance that sociological factors have in contact situations.

Broadly speaking, Thomason and Kaufman construct a framework of two types of contact-induced change.³³ They call the first process “borrowing.” Generally, this form of

³¹ See the lukewarm review by Haugen, “Review: Loan Phonology and the Two Transfer Types in Language Contact by Frans van Coetsem,” *Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik* 58 (1991): 80-81. Van Coetsem draws attention to the similarities of his contact typology with that proposed by Thomason and Kaufman in “Review: Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics by Sarah Thomason; Terrence Kaufman; Lectures on Language Contact by Ilse Lehiste; Languages in Competition, Dominance, Diversity, and Decline by Ronald Wardhaugh,” *Language in Society* 19 (1990): 260-62. Thomason also perceived the resemblance: “The distinction between interference with and without imperfect learning is very similar to a distinction proposed independently, also in 1988, by Frans van Coetsem, specifically for phonology (see his book *Loan Phonology and the Two Transfer Types in Language Contact*)” (*Language Contact* [Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press, 2001], 95).

³² Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 34.

³³ They also discuss creolization, pidginization, and other processes of language mixing. They note that they are not the first to make such a twofold division; to the contrary, a few linguists before them have realized the

contact-induced change involves the transfer of a variety of levels of linguistic features depending on the intensity of the contact situation starting with non-core lexemes up to systematic structural transfer. For Thomason and Kaufman, then, borrowing refers “only to the incorporation of foreign elements into the speakers’ native language....”³⁴ In other words, it is the speaker native in the recipient language who actively incorporates the foreign elements into his or her language. In the corresponding process, called substratum interference or “language shift,” speakers of a language shift features of their native language into a target language (TL).³⁵ The outcome is that more deeply embedded parts of the native language (such as morphosyntax) are the first features that tend to be transferred to the TL. This phenomenon arises from a variety of sociological processes, though shift occurs especially as speakers of the source language have imperfectly learned these deeply embedded features and therefore transfer the desired form from the source language to the TL. The process is often unconscious.

Soon after the publication of Thomason and Kaufman’s volume, van Coetsem similarly described two types of linguistic transfer. In a more pronounced fashion, van Coetsem concentrates on the role of the individual speaker and his or her linguistic dominance. As a result, his approach has been termed psycholinguistic (though van Coetsem’s model is also sociolinguistic in its ability to capture changing social situations of linguistic dominance; see below).³⁶ His two forms of linguistic transfer are called “borrowing” and “imposition.”³⁷ Much like Thomason and Kaufman’s process with the same name, van Coetsem’s conception of

implications of this twofold process for predicting language contact scenarios. Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 42.

³⁴ Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 21.

³⁵ Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 38-39.

³⁶ Winford, “Contact-induced Changes: Classification and Processes,” 376.

³⁷ For a summary of van Coetsem’s scheme, see chart 19 in *Loan Phonology and the Two Transfer Types*,

borrowing involves initially the transfer of lexical items, since these items are less stable in a language system (which he calls “the stability gradient”). The major nuances in his scheme involve the role of linguistic agentivity as well as linguistic dominance. In this model, the agent of the contact-induced change is the speaker of the recipient language (RL), and the speaker’s dominant language is also the RL. In the other transfer type, imposition, the agent of change is a speaker (or speakers) of the source language (SL) whose linguistic dominance is also in the SL. The features transferred in imposition are those that are part of more stable domains in a language system (such as phonology).³⁸

c. *Recent Developments in Language Contact*

Winford employs van Coetsem’s framework and expanded the implications of this twofold scheme of language contact. In particular, he modifies the framework to make an argument that syntax and structure are not typically borrowed. Borrowing in Winford’s understanding includes lexical items, calques, and perhaps even in extreme cases morphology; however, he claims that syntax is not an independently transferable linguistic feature, but that syntactic contact-induced change occurs after massive loan translations and calquing of phrases, which carry such syntactic information. This process, however, then creates a situation of changing linguistic dominance. For example, he points out that the cases in Thomason and Kaufman’s work that are used to support syntactic and structural borrowing are not actual borrowings in the ways that Thomason and Kaufman, van Coetsem, or Winford would define the

³⁸ Thomason comes closer to van Coetsem’s conception of agency and SL dominance for the second type of contact-induced change in her first of two revisions of her initial proposal with Kaufman (“Contact as a source of Language Change,” 692). Even though this revision means that “shift” may not actually occur in the process that she previously labeled “shift-induced interference,” she retains the latter phrase to “avoid proliferating terms,” and laments that this revision “leaves us with no convenient and fully accurate term” for this process.

term (native speakers as the agents of borrowing).³⁹ Rather, Winford argues that such borrowing reflects a bilingual society that is no longer dominant in the RL, but rather that linguistic dominance has flipped and is now in the SL. In this manner, he reanalyzes all such structural transfer as cases of imposition and not borrowing.⁴⁰

Heine and Kuteva have provided counterevidence against Winford's thesis.⁴¹ They use an example from Malcom Ross' study of contact between Takia and Waskia.⁴² It is certain that Proto-Western Asiatic, the language family of which Takia is a part, had a determiner ("the") that preceded the noun; however, Takia developed a postpositioned determiner, based on the model of Waskia. The process through which this change occurred in Takia involved patterning the Takia near deictic morpheme, which follows the noun when used attributively, on the SL (or, "model language" to use Heine and Kuteva's terminology), namely Waskia. According to Heine and Kuteva, structural changes such as this example show that syntactic influence (in this case, through grammatical replication, though Takia also borrowed the SOV syntax from Waskia as an independent development) can occur without language shift attested as being a broader part of the contact situation. Since this situation does not involve shift, the example of the postpositioned determiner in Takia shows how structural borrowing can occur even without a (or, as a separate process from) change in word order: the Proto-Western Asiatic determiner was

³⁹ Winford, "Contact and Borrowing," in *The Handbook of Language Contact* (edited by Raymond Hickey; Blackwell Handbook in Linguistics; Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 179-181.

⁴⁰ Winford's argument leverages the dynamic character of van Coetsem's scheme. By placing emphasis on language dominance in defining agentivity, van Coetsem and Winford are able to better analyze changing contact situations, particularly as someone's "native" language may not be his or her dominant language throughout the person's life depending on issues of migration, colonization, and a variety of other sociolinguistic factors. The claim that syntax cannot be independently borrowed is uniquely Winford's thesis. Van Coetsem does not make this argument.

⁴¹ Heine and Kuteva, *Language Contact and Grammatical Change*, 157-59.

⁴² Ross would analyze this contact situation differently from Heine and Kuteva, calling it metatypy instead of grammaticalization (see below).

not simply placed behind the noun in Takia; rather, another lexeme that already fit into this postpositioned syntactic slot (the near deictic pronoun) was desemanticized through grammaticalization and modeled on the definite article in Waskia. This example shows, then, a clear case in which syntax is borrowed without language shift.

In their study of grammatical replication, Heine and Kuteva claim that none of the sociolinguistic factors that were important for Thomason and Kaufman in determining whether a borrowing or language shift situation occurred applied to their study of language change. In other words, the forms and types of grammatical replication that appeared made no difference whether (to translate their discussion into van Coetsem's terms) the agent of change was the RL or the SL.⁴³ Such a conclusion should not undermine the importance, however, of sociolinguistic and sociohistorical factors for understanding the types of contact-induced changes that occur in the twofold scheme of Thomason and Kaufman or van Coetsem.⁴⁴ While all contact linguists acknowledge that structures of languages are crucial for assessing what is more or less likely to occur in a contact situation, the sociolinguistic and historical context of any contact situation are also crucial for understanding the types of changes that occur and why. Nor does this role of sociolinguistic backgrounds undermine the fundamental role of historical linguistics, as Heine and Kuteva emphasize. Rather, this historical sketch of the discipline shows that the advances made in constructing a typology of language contact happened only after such sociolinguistic and historical background became a factor in linguistic study.⁴⁵ Some linguists, such as Johanson, pay special attention to cultural dominance and so use terms like "imposition" not

⁴³ Heine and Kuteva, *Language Contact and Grammatical Change*, 237-39, 260.

⁴⁴ Heine and Kuteva acknowledge that while grammatical replication (the object of their study) may not be dependent on sociolinguistic variables, the same does not hold true for all contact-induced changes (*Language Contact and Grammatical Change*, 260).

⁴⁵ This observation undermines Schiedewind's complete disregard for historical linguistics in *A Social History of Hebrew*.

simply as a linguistic but also a social factor (such as colonization, etc.) in describing language change.⁴⁶ This conception of imposition differs from van Coetsem's, but both scholars, in using this term, highlight the crucial role of sociolinguistic information.

In this section, a brief history of the field of language contact has been given. The difference in uses of the term "imposition" highlights the fact that there are many ongoing debates in this field. In the following section, these debates are presented in more detail. After a presentation of the major topics in the study of language contact and a brief discussion regarding the applicability of this field to ancient languages, the sociolinguistic background of Israelite and Judean contact with Akkadian and Aramean speakers is briefly given and shown to be a case of language maintenance and borrowing. This observation then informs the sorts of contact-induced changes we should expect to see in the Hebrew Bible.

III. Major Types of Contact and Debates in the Field

a. Borrowing and Language Maintenance

The two types of contact processes described above in Thomason and Kaufman's scheme as well as in van Coetsem's study involve the transfer of linguistic features from one language to another. The direction is therefore from a source language (SL) in which the features originate, to a recipient language (RL), the speakers of which incorporate those linguistic features into their language or dialect. In borrowing, the speakers who receive the foreign element are the ones who are doing the borrowing. It is often the case in this scenario that the language is not endangered, retains its identity, and does not converge with (or shift to) another language. As such, this

⁴⁶ Johanson, "The Dynamics of Code-Copying in Language Encounters," in *Language Encounters Across Time and Space: Studies in Language Contact* (edited by Bernt Brendemoen, Elizabeth Lanza, and Else Ryen; Oslo: Novus Forlag, 1999), 42.

process is often discussed alongside “language maintenance.”⁴⁷ As Thomason and Kaufman state: “Borrowing is the incorporation of foreign features into a group’s native language by speakers of that language: the native language is maintained but is changed by the addition of the incorporated features.”⁴⁸ In van Coetsem’s framework, the same process is described but through the ascription of agency and language dominance. The speakers are linguistically dominant in the RL and are the agents of change.⁴⁹

Words and phrases tend to be the elements first transferred in this process. That lexemes would be a primary locus of this type of contact-induced change is reasonable. Individual words and even phrases are less heavily embedded in a language’s system, and are therefore easily borrowed into another without creating a change in the borrowing language’s structure. The reasons for borrowing lexemes have typically been distilled to need and prestige, though other factors may be at work as well.⁵⁰ Even the notion of a basic “lexical borrowing” is somewhat simplistic: linguists have for decades found differences between pure loanwords, loan blends, loan coinages, loan shifts, and various other distinctions.⁵¹ Because not all borrowing happens with the same ease or levels of intensity of contact, hierarchies have been constructed as a means for understanding the correlation between linguistic data and sociohistorical factors. While these hierarchies are not new, they have been refined particularly since Thomason and Kaufman’s book. Their hierarchy has proven especially influential and a reliable basis from which others have constructed their own. Thomason and Kaufman’s borrowing scale is as follows:

⁴⁷ See the chart in Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 50.

⁴⁸ Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 37.

⁴⁹ The difference between agency through language dominance in van Coetsem’s system and the notion of “native” speakers is subtle but significant, particularly in cases of language attrition as argued by Butts (“Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in its Greco-Roman Context” [PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2013], 29-31).

⁵⁰ Weinreich, *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, 56-61; Matras, *Language Contact*, 149-53.

⁵¹ Winford, *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics*, 42-46.

Table 1:

Borrowing Scale:⁵²

Casual Contact	Category 1	Content words
↓	Category 2	Function words, minor phonological features, lexical semantic features
	Category 3	Adpositions, derivational suffixes, phonemes
	Category 4	Word order, distinctive features in phonology, inflectional morphology
	Intense Contact	Category 5

Beyond hierarchies that explore general linguistic features, hierarchies within hierarchies have been constructed. For example, it is not simply that conjunctions are borrowed at stage 2 of Thomason and Kaufman's layout, but Matras claims that even the borrowability of this linguistic feature has order.⁵³ Conjunctions (particularly connectors) have an implicational hierarchy. In the languages that Matras examined, words for "but" are borrowed more easily than "or," and no language borrows "and" but not "but" or "or." Thus, he constructs a hierarchy: but>or >and. Given computational analysis of various languages, Matras constructs hierarchies for a variety of domains in language, such as verbal structures, phonology, numerals, and other categories.

Although other linguists have constructed their own borrowing hierarchies⁵⁴ the most enduring and reliable is Thomason and Kaufman's. Many of the other hierarchies are refinements of their version, and as such Thomason and Kaufman's version will be the primary one referenced throughout this dissertation (others are discussed as relevant). Within Thomason

⁵² See Thomason and Kaufman for a more extensive discussion of what happens at each stage (*Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 74-76). For the summarized version of the scale presented above, see Matras, *Language Contact*, 156.

⁵³ Matras, *Language Contact*, 157-65.

⁵⁴ Matras, *Language Contact*, 156.

and Kaufman's scheme, anything can be borrowed given the right sociolinguistic environment. This assumption that any and everything can be borrowed has become a major topic of discussion, particularly by those scholars (such as Winford discussed above) who see the transfer of more deeply embedded features not as borrowing, but as part of shift or imposition. The line between language maintenance and shift can therefore be a blurry one, and van Coetsem attempted to create space in his 2000 publication by showing a third process (neutralization) in between borrowing and imposition, in which elements of both processes are at play.⁵⁵ This third form of contact-induced change is not evidenced in the data analyzed in this dissertation, and therefore does not factor into the following chapters.

Borrowing generally entails a sub-process called imitation and then adaptation. As Thomason and Kaufman (quoted above) show, borrowing (except under extreme conditions) entails maintenance of the language that does the borrowing. The foreign element enters as an imitation of a feature in the SL; however, the feature then becomes adapted or accommodated to the RL in some manner. For example, a word loaned into a language that has a case system will often show the case system of the RL as part of adaptation. Conversely, a loanword from a language with a case system borrowed into one without a case system will tend to be accommodated to whatever other inflectional pattern occurs in the latter as either a primary or secondary development.⁵⁶ Some languages develop ways of marking loans, such as the unique

⁵⁵ In his 1988 publication, neutralization was not presented so much as a third process, but rather as the state when borrowing and imposition are not clear. In the latter work in 2000, van Coetsem is clear that he believes that neutralization is actually a third type of contact.

⁵⁶ The manner in which adaptation occurs can be varied. For example, as Butts has shown (and as is cross linguistically consistent), Greek loanwords in Syriac are borrowed into the latter in the nominative singular, evincing the tendency for the most unmarked forms to serve as the basis for loans ("Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in its Greco-Roman Context," 187). The accommodation of Greek words in Syriac, however, is more complex. Some Greek words were accommodated with a Syriac ending, and as a result follow normal Syriac morphosyntax of state (absolute, construct, and emphatic). Greek words accommodated without a normal Syriac

grapheme /p/ in Classical Ethiopic that marks loans from Greek⁵⁷; nonetheless, these loans are still embedded in the morphology of Ethiopic.⁵⁸

b. *Language Shift and Imposition*

The converse process to borrowing is called imposition in van Coetsem's terminology, and the converse process to language maintenance is called language shift. Imposition appears most frequently in imperfect second language acquisition. In second language acquisition, the more embedded and marked features can often be the most difficult to learn. Therefore, when a speaker learns a second language and needs to express these subtle features but has not learned how to do so in the TL, he or she transfers these features from the dominant (or source) language to the TL.⁵⁹ Because language acquisition often involves lexical achievement at an earlier stage and lexemes are for the most part easier for a learner to keep separate between two languages, these features are less likely to be transferred. Vocabulary can be part of imposition, but structural transfer, such as phonology and syntax, is particularly prone to contact-induced change in SL agentivity. Winford provides examples, themselves based on a prior study by William

ending are left bare without the three states of Syriac; such words, however, have secondary derivations (adjectival, adverbial, etc., affixes) that operate occurring to the standard Syriac conventions, as one would expect of a fully incorporated noun ("Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in its Greco-Roman Context," 245).

⁵⁷ The name "Peter," loaned into Classical Ethiopic from Greek, is spelled ጸጥሮስ /p'ētros/, showing the grapheme ጸ, marking the loan. Within the clause, the name is treated morpho-syntactically like any other Ethiopic noun: ርአየ ጸጥሮስሃ, /rə'ya p'ētros-hāl, "he saw Peter," in which "Peter" takes the suffix /hāl/, marking proper nouns in the accusative slot.

⁵⁸ In this sense, borrowing is consistent with Carol Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame (MLF) theory of code-switching. In her theory, when a bilingual speaker engages in code-switching, one language acts as the matrix into which the second language is embedded in the speech. For her exposition of the MLF theory of code-switching, see *Dueling Languages: Grammatical Structure in Code-Switching* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); *Contact Linguistics: Bilingual Encounters and Grammatical Outcomes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); "Precision Tuning of the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model of Codeswitching," *Sociolinguistica* 18 (2004): 106-17. As Winford has suggested, the language that serves as the frame is the RL in van Coetsem's scheme and this theory would be consistent with the processes proposed above for borrowing. It is observations such as these that have led some linguists to ask whether or not code-switching is, in essence, some form of borrowing. Winford, "Some Issues in the Study of Language Contact," *Journal of Language Contact (THEMA)* (2007): 28.

⁵⁹ Thomason and Kaufman use the term "native" instead of "dominant." The distinction and implication between these two terms is discussed below.

Nemser, of the imposition of German syntax on English sentences. These sentences were spoken by native, or linguistically dominant, German speakers who were learning English.⁶⁰

Explain me something (based on German *Erklär mir was*)

You just finished to eat (based on German *Du hast gerade aufgehört zu essen*)

As these examples show, the native German speaker whose target language is English does not impose German vocabulary on his or her English utterances, but rather German syntax. English syntax differs from the German, and in cases where the German speaker does not have fluency or has imperfectly learned English, he or she imposes German syntax on the English utterance. As Nemser's study shows, vocabulary can be part of the transfer process in imposition, particularly semantic transfer when German and English lexemes look similar (using English "meager" to mean "thin" based on German *mager*). The primary linguistic features that undergo transfer in this process, though, are those that are more stable elements in a language system (features with a higher stability gradient in van Coetsem's terms).

The foregoing discussion of borrowing and imposition has included aspects of both Thomason and Kaufman's framework as well as van Coetsem's theory. In many ways, these approaches are very similar, as acknowledged by van Coetsem and Thomason.⁶¹ The primary difference is in the importance the terms "native" (Thomason and Kaufman) and "linguistic dominance" (van Coetsem). As Aaron M. Butts has noted, the distinction can be seen most clearly in language attrition, in which case van Coetsem's model proves to be more

⁶⁰ Winford, "Contact-induced Changes: Classification and Processes," 380; Nemser, "Language Contact and Foreign Language Acquisition," in *Languages in Contact and Contrast: Essays in Contact Linguistics* (edited by Vladimir Ivir and Damir Kalagjera; New York: Mouton de Gruyter), 352-53, 360.

⁶¹ See note above.

satisfactory.⁶² Attrition is an evolving process in which one language is lost or diminished in use in light of another, a development that some linguists see as largely overlapping with language shift.⁶³ The concept “native” to describe the contact situation is too rigid, especially as attrition shows that language dominance changes over time and therefore results in different types of language contact.⁶⁴ As Winford also shows, van Coetsem’s approach addresses dynamic issues involving linguistic competence, an aspect of language that can evolve. Simply because a person is a native speaker in one language does not mean that the same language will always be his or her language of dominance.

Second, another distinction is in the term used to describe SL agentivity. Thomason has acknowledged the unsatisfactory nature of the label “shift” or “interference through shift,” since shift is not necessarily involved in this form of contact induced change. In other words, there are linguistic situations in which the transferred features are consistent with SL agentivity, yet speakers do not “shift” to another language *per se*.⁶⁵ At the same time, van Coetsem’s terminology of “imposition” is problematic.⁶⁶ Although van Coetsem uses the term to describe the relationship between two linguistic systems within the mind of one bilingual speaker,

⁶² Butts, “Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in its Greco-Roman Context,” 29-30.

⁶³ The distinction is that some linguists consider attrition to be intragenerational, whereas shift is intergenerational.

⁶⁴ Languages used for community identity can still be conceived of as expressing “nativeness” in the sense of connecting users of that language to their heritage; however, this status is different from what Thomason and Kaufman mean by “native” when RL speakers are the agents of change. It should be noted that van Coetsem uses “native” somewhat interchangeably with the agent of change (RL agentivity is dominant/native in this language); however, functionally van Coetsem employs “native” in a much more dynamic, less constrained manner than Thomason and Kaufman.

⁶⁵ Thomason, “Contact as a source of Language Change,” 692.

⁶⁶ Winford notes that though “this term has failed to gain currency, his [van Coetsem’s] description of the change itself is quite insightful” (*Introduction to Contact Linguistics*, 16). See Hickey’s discussion of the merits and drawbacks of “imposition” (“Language Contact: Reconsideration and Reassessment,” 20).

imposition seems to imply outside forces involved in the contact situation.⁶⁷ Such outside forces, such as colonization, sociolinguistic pressure, and other forms of attitudinal factors, can be at work in a contact situation.

Johanson in particular has focused on sociolinguistic dominance relations, and used “imposition” in a similar fashion, though to describe two languages that are minority and majority languages (one weak, the other dominant).⁶⁸ His approach is similar to Ross’ in that each scholar identifies one language in this type of contact situation as an inner-community language of identity, and the other, dominant language as an inter-community language. Their approaches differ in that Ross’ study describes metatypical (or structural) contact-induced change without convergence of language systems, whereas Johanson’s framework is meant to be more integrative to describe all forms of contact-induced changes. Johanson’s framework is integrative in a fashion similar to van Coetsem’s and Thomason and Kaufman’s approach, though Johanson entirely avoids the term “borrowing,” and prefers instead “adoption” and “imposition” as the two main types of contact-induced changes.⁶⁹ The main weakness with Johanson’s approach is that it is based almost entirely on a social relationship of a dominant and a dominated language. Not every contact-induced change is an expression of such a power dynamic and the psycholinguistic aspects that are inherent in van Coetsem’s model and that make van Coetsem’s approach valuable are marginalized in Johanson’s scheme.

⁶⁷ Van Coetsem distinguishes between linguistic and social dominance, and concentrates his analysis on the former (*Loan Phonology and the Two Transfer Types in Language Contact*, 13); however, using the term “imposition” for SL agentivity theoretically obscures the distinction he wants to maintain.

⁶⁸ Johanson, “The Dynamics of Code-Copying in Language Encounters,” 37-62.

⁶⁹ Johanson avoids “borrowing” as a label since it implies that the RL takes a feature from the SL in a manner that implies that the SL no longer has it. See Hickey’s analysis of Johanson and these terms (“Language Contact: Reconsideration and Reassessment,” 20).

In this dissertation, I use the terms “borrowing” to describe situations of RL agency and “imposition” to describe SL agentivity with the caveat that imposition is part of a negotiation of languages within the mind of the bilingual speaker or writer and not necessarily an external social force. The advantage of using these labels is that the process described underneath can include aspects of social dominance but is not restricted to such consideration. Where examples and processes include social relations, such as matter and pattern borrowing (see below), or other, more specific language contact processes, such as code switching and grammatical replication in Chapters 5 and 6, these factors will be discussed in more detail in those chapters. The term “bilingual” is taken in the sense of Francois Grosjean’s work, namely that “bilingualism” is not co-terminus with “fluency,” and bilingualism can be more or less extensive, entailing varying levels of language competence.⁷⁰ “Transfer” refers to any linguistic feature (lexeme, morphology, phonology, syntax) that moves from one language to another as a part of the contact situation.⁷¹ “Interference” in this dissertation means a contact-induced change that may be a part of borrowing or imposition, but does not influence the RL permanently.⁷² For example, a loanword that does not become part of the enduring lexicon (a nonce borrowing) or a grammatical replication⁷³ of limited distribution count as interference.

⁷⁰ Grosjean, *Studying Bilinguals* (Oxford Linguistics; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); *Bilingual: Life and Reality* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁷¹ See the list and discussion of various terms in the study of language contact in Hickey, “Language Contact: Reconsideration and Reassessment,” 18-19.

⁷² Thomason uses the term “shift induced interference” to refer to one type of SL driven changes. This change involves specifically imperfect second language learning, and may not involve shift of an entire language group or population but only shift occurring on those instances when a speaker imperfectly attempts to render a construction or phrase in a second language. Such an occasional nature of interference should not be limited to shift instances. For example, nonce borrowings are also situations that involve limited incorporation of a foreign element in an RL due to RL agentivity.

⁷³ This term has also been used in a variety of ways, such as “structural borrowing,” though Heine and Kuteva, who wrote the most extensive analysis of the linguistic process, avoid “borrowing” as a label to describe the process. See Chapter 6.

c. Matter and Pattern Borrowing

Another concept to discuss is matter and pattern borrowing. Matras and Jeanette Sakel defined this process based on a large sample questionnaire in which a cross-linguistic data set was studied, including the sociolinguistic situations particular to each case.⁷⁴ They distinguished two types of borrowing. The first, called matter borrowing (often abbreviated MAT), refers to the process in which morphological material and phonology is borrowed from the SL and replicated in the RL. Lexical, morphological, and phonological borrowings fit this category. The second process, called pattern borrowing (often abbreviated PAT), denotes the situation in which organizational patterns and distributions are borrowed, but not the forms themselves.⁷⁵

In defining these two basic ways in which linguistic elements can be borrowed, Matras and Sakel also state that, while these processes can be distinct, they can also be combined making the distinction in some cases unnecessary. Sometimes matter borrowings can occur without pattern borrowings and vice versa; however, sometimes a matter borrowing will result in a pattern borrowing, such as calquing that leads to a change in word order. An example of this type of calquing appears in Chapter 4 in which Akkadian loan translations in Aramaic dockets lead to verb final word order, though this change did not spread in Aramaic and was confined to certain phrases and dialects.

⁷⁴ For information on the sample, see Matras and Sakel, "Introduction," in *Grammatical Borrowing in Cross-Linguistic Perspective* (Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 38; edited by Matras and Sakel; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), 1-13. As Sakel states, the concept of matter and pattern borrowings is well-represented in linguistic literature; however, the significance of these types of contact-induced changes had not been well-theorized until Matras and Sakel's work. Similar concepts, such as Haugen's "importation" and "substitution" (see above) come close, but Matras and Sakel are able to give clarity to these borrowing processes, both linguistically and sociolinguistically, given their large sample of languages, the cross-linguistic nature of these borrowing phenomena, and their careful encoding of the sociolinguistic situation in each case.

⁷⁵ For more on these types of borrowing, see Sakel, "Types of loans: Matter and Pattern," in *Grammatical Borrowing in Cross-Linguistic Perspective* (Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 38; edited by Matras and Sakel; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), 15-29.

The integration of matter and pattern loans also varies considerably in different cases of contact. At times, matter loans occur but with a different function in the RL. At other times, matter loans are so well integrated into the RL phonologically that “in some cases [it] makes them difficult to identify as loans without careful analysis.”⁷⁶ Pattern loans can involve grammaticalization, in which the pattern borrowed into the RL can shift native elements to correspond to features in the SL. For example, native elements in Yiddish pattern shift their grammatical meanings on the pattern of Slavic markers of aspect.⁷⁷ Cases exist in which, however, there are constraints on pattern loans. These cases involve languages that have highly fixed word order or rigid structural features. For example, an Austronesian language called Biak has a very fixed word order, and as such is resistant to pattern borrowings even as matter borrowings occur. This feature of the language makes it extremely difficult to integrate new patterns, and as such the loans that occur are matter borrowings.

In the sample that Matras and Sakel gathered, the relations between languages undergoing matter and pattern borrowing showed an overarching arrangement in which hierarchical relationships between languages were significant. The SL was a dominant language defined as a language of administration, a *lingua franca*, or the language another group speaking a dominated language has to, for some reason or another, learn. The dominated languages in Matras and Sakel’s survey show consistent evidence of matter and pattern loans. It is often, though not always, the case that the languages are part of a language area, or *Sprachbund*, which is a group of (often unrelated) languages showing convergence or isomorphism due to proximity

⁷⁶ Sakel, “Types of Loans: Matter and Pattern,” 17.

⁷⁷ Sakel, “Types of Loan: Matter and Pattern,” 17.

and prolonged contact.⁷⁸ Such convergence, however, is not always the case in matter and pattern borrowing. Indeed, the data presented in this dissertation does not show evidence of such a language area for the Akkadian-Aramaic contact situation, nor for the Aramaic-Hebrew contact situation. Matter and Pattern loans do not always happen in language areas, and the observation that such borrowing often occurs when the dominant language is used for administration or is a *lingua franca* fits well with the linguistic data in Chapters 4 and 6.

Degrees of bilingualism also influence the borrowing of matter and pattern loans. Higher levels of bilingualism increase the likelihood of pattern borrowings. In situations of increasing bilingualism, speakers of the RL can find the corresponding constructions in the SL that they would like to pattern. The ability to identify such equivalence and the ability to pattern the RL on the model of the SL is decreased significantly in less bilingual societies since speakers of the RL do not have the second language acquisition to correlate constructions and patterns in the SL. As such, the borrowings tend to be matter loans, and even these can be restricted. Sakel provides a case in the Vietnamese-Chinese contact situation.⁷⁹ Vietnamese had “massive contact” with Chinese, though the contact was almost exclusively written with very little oral exchange. Because there was little oral transmission and less bilingualism, the overwhelming majority of

⁷⁸ While systematic study of language contact did not begin until the 1950s and modern typologies did not appear until the 1980s, the concept of a language area was first defined in the 1928 by N. S. Trubetzkoy. See Trubetzkoy, “Proposition 16,” in *Actes du Premier Congrès International de Linguistes* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1928), 18. He offered an earlier, though much less cited, definition in 1923 (“Vavilonskaja bašnja i smešenje jazykov [The Tower of Babel and the Mixture of Language],” *Evrazijskij vremennik* 3 [1923]: 107-24). See also Brian D. Joseph, “Language Contact in the Balkans,” in *The Handbook of Language Contact* (edited by Raymond Hickey; Blackwell Handbook in Linguistics; Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 620-21. As part of Trubetzkoy’s discussion, he labeled a general category a “language group,” by which he meant languages that are connected by any series of systematic correspondences. As subgroupings of this general category, Trubetzkoy distinguished between a *Sprachbund* and a language family. The former consists of languages that have similarities in syntax, morphological structure (to a certain degree), a common set of culture words, and at times phonology, but dissimilarities in sound correspondences, phonological form, and no basic common vocabulary. Those languages that have similarities in these last three features are called language families in Trubetzkoy’s definition.

⁷⁹ Sakel, “Types of Loan: Matter and Pattern,” 19, 25.

contact-induced changes were matter loans. As argued in Chapter 5, a similar situation occurred between Hebrew and Akkadian. Certain biblical texts, such as the flood stories in Genesis 6-9, show matter borrowings (lexemes) that likely arose from contact with Akkadian literature.

The role of pattern borrowings in language contact situations in which an administrative language and a *lingua franca* is a part plays a crucial role in the following chapters. A comparable process of contact-induced change appears when analyzing how Akkadian, Aramaic, and Hebrew influence one another. For example, the Akkadian influence on Aramaic is similar to the Akkadian influence on Hebrew in that it is primarily lexical, with little (in the case of Aramaic) or no (in the case of Hebrew) structural change involved. The borrowings are matter loans, not pattern loans. The contact-induced changes from Aramaic to Akkadian and from Aramaic to Hebrew are different. Matter loans occur (such as lexical borrowings and even a morphological borrowing of the determined state from Aramaic to Akkadian); however, both Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew show evidence of borrowing patterns for certain constructions from Aramaic. Significantly, these pattern borrowings appear in the languages at precisely the same moment when evidence exists that Aramaic was functioning as an administrative language in those respective regions. The earliest administrative evidence of Aramaic in Mesopotamia comes from late eighth century BCE writings (mostly Akkadian texts that discuss the role of Aramaic) and from seventh century BCE Aramaic administrative docketts. It is during this period and following into the Neo- and Late-Babylonian periods that Akkadian begins to borrow patterns from Aramaic (see Chapter 4). For Judea, the first extra-biblical evidence of Aramaic used administratively is the Ahiab seal, dating to the Persian period (late sixth century, early fifth century BCE; see below for an analysis of 2 Kgs 18, the episode of the *Rab Shaqeh*, and why this

passage may not be evidence of Aramaic's function administratively in Judah at this time). It was during the Persian period that Biblical Hebrew also shows evidence of pattern borrowing (see Chapter 6). As such, both Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew undergo similar contact-induced changes from Aramaic, both under the influence of Aramaic as an administrative language and a *lingua franca*, though at different points in time.

*d. Mixed Languages and Rabbinic Hebrew*⁸⁰

While the relationship between Qumran Hebrew and LBH is discussed, rabbinic Hebrew plays less of a role in this dissertation. Proponents of an older theory posited that rabbinic Hebrew was a mixed language between Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic. This theory was based on the identification of Aramaic loanwords and morphological transfer into a dialect of Hebrew, presumably the biblical sort, which resulted in rabbinic Hebrew. In this case, rabbinic Hebrew would be a prime example of language contact. As Barr and Rendsburg have convincingly argued, however, rabbinic Hebrew constitutes a separate dialect of Hebrew. It cannot be placed in a continuum of language contact with Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic, nor can rabbinic Hebrew be claimed to be a result of this contact situation. None of the languages examined in this dissertation are the product of language mixing, nor do they contribute to such a process in the periods under consideration. As a result, this contact-induced change and the only possible example of it in Hebrew (the rabbinic version), which has been shown instead to be a distinct

⁸⁰ See Barr's comments on the distinctiveness between Biblical Hebrew, Mishnaic Hebrew (another term for Tannaitic, or early Rabbinic, Hebrew), and Aramaic (*Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 40-43). See also Rendsburg's characterization of Israel in antiquity as diglossic between the colloquial Mishnaic Hebrew and the literary language of biblical Hebrew (as well as Qumran Hebrew), "The Galilean Background of Mishnaic Hebrew," in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (edited by L. I. Levine; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1992), 225-40; "Parallel Development in Mishnaic Hebrew, Colloquial Arabic, and Other Varieties of Spoken Semitic," in *Semitic Studies in Honor of Wolf Leslau, Volume 2* (edited by Alan S. Kaye; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1991), 1265-77. According to Rendsburg, the first scholar to observe the colloquial, spoken nature of Mishnaic Hebrew was M. H. Segal in his *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927).

dialect, do not feature systematically here. Data from Mishnaic and other forms of rabbinic Hebrew are adduced to explore trajectories of Akkadian and Aramaic influence that appear (or do not appear) in other dialects of Hebrew. This approach highlights the uniqueness of forms in Biblical Hebrew where they are absent elsewhere in other dialects of the language and can provide methodological controls and useful comparison. This comparison is particularly useful when some features in Biblical Hebrew show distinct patterns in biblical citations in rabbinic Hebrew. As a whole, however, Rabbinic Hebrew does not play a systematic role.

IV. Can Language Contact Be Applied to Ancient Languages?

Given the discussion above, the answer might appear to be obvious. Yet the sparse attestation of some languages from antiquity seems to prevent assured results, particularly when the sociolinguistic background is not fully known. Moreover, developing linguistic subgrouping of relatedness can be a difficult task and, even when accomplished, distinguishing contact-induced changes from genealogical descent among related languages from antiquity can be especially difficult. Typological similarities between languages, similarities often (though not always) resulting from common descent, make it difficult to discern features due to relatedness in contrast to features shared due to contact-induced change.

The reality of language contact in the ancient world is beyond dispute. These contact-induced changes are easier to identify between non-related languages. For example, third millennium interaction between Sumerian speakers and Akkadian speakers is well attested, even if the directionality and reconstruction of all the cultural elements about this contact are uncertain; however, the syntactic and phonological similarities between the languages make it

sure that such contact occurred.⁸¹ Moreover, Akkadian and Sumerian influence on Hittite provides an interesting case of imperial conquest resulting in contact-induced change.⁸² Later in

⁸¹ On the one hand, it could be the case that Sumerian speakers transferred their syntax into Akkadian documents, resulting in the spread of verb-final syntax, a Sumerian feature, throughout Akkadian. Early evidence from the Abu Salabikh area, where writers with East Semitic names produced Sumerian documents, perhaps complicates this early reconstruction. In this case, the prosopographic information could suggest that Akkadian speakers borrowed Sumerian syntax, a form of borrowing that requires intense bilingualism. Such bilingualism was clearly the case in this early period. On the debates regarding Akkadian and Sumerian bilingualism through time, see Christopher Woods, “Bilingualism, Scribal Learning, and the Death of Sumerian,” in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* (edited by Seth L. Sanders; University of Chicago Oriental Institute Seminars 2; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2006), 91-120.

Even before Sumerian contact with Akkadian, Sumerian had already undergone a contact-induced change, at least in its lexicon. The Sumerian migration from lower Mesopotamia involved interaction with other people groups, and there are features of the Sumerian language that appear to be the result of contact-induced change. For example, the word Subartu meant “north” in Sumerian, but also came to mean “slave.” It likely comes from the people group called Subarian, who originally inhabited the region to the north of the Sumerians. As the Sumerians migrated, they used this people group as the lexeme for “north,” and also loaned their name to mean “slave,” indicating that there was possibly a conquest situation in which these people became subservient to the Sumerians. Michalowski has analyzed this phenomenon, arguing that even at this early stage “geographic terms are not neutral, objective, descriptive indexes of natural landscape, but are subjective and emotionally loaded elements of a semantic subsystem” (“Sumer Dreams of Subartu: Politics and Geographical Imagination,” 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; Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta 96; Leuven: Peeters, 1999], 305). This development is similar to the process whereby Old English *wealh* was a word for “Celt” and “foreigner,” but also became a word for “slave” (“wielen,” meaning “female slave, servant,” came from the same root), indicating, according to Hickey, the position of the Celts relative to “Germanic settlers” (“Language Contact: Reconsideration and Reassessment,” 8).

⁸² The Hittite script was borrowed from Akkadian, and scholars can trace the exact period in which the Hittites adopted the cuneiform tradition based on epigraphic comparisons of Akkadian discovered at Alalakh with Hittite cuneiform. The Hittite king Hattushili I conquered the region and destroyed Alalakh, and in the process deported Akkadian scribes. It is likely that, at this time, these Akkadian scribes were put into service in order to produce Hittite literature in cuneiform, and scholars can trace this process in the unique sign forms such as the logogram for “king,” LUGAL, which shows uncanny correspondence between Alalakh Akkadian and the same sign in Hittite. See sign 115 in Christel Rüster and Erich Neu, *Hethitisches Zeichenlexikon: Inventar und Interpretation der Keilschriftzeichen aus den Boğazköy-Texten* (Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten 2; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1989), 146-47. Compare this sign with the forms for LUGAL in John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian* (2nd edition; Harvard Semitic Museum Studies 45; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 567.

Moreover, Akkadian scribal conventions can also be seen in the use of logograms for genitive constructions: when no phonetic complement appears and logograms are used for genitive expressions, the standard Sumerian and Akkadian syntax occurs, as in É LUGAL, “house of the king.” The corresponding expression in Hittite is constructed with the genitive first, as in *ḥaššuwaš per*, literally “of the king house.” The latter was what the Hittites were pronouncing even when written in the Sumerian/Akkadian logographic system, as indicated in the Hittite syntax when phonetic complements are attached to logograms (as in LUGAL-*aš* É). See Theo van den Hout, *The Elements of Hittite* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), §1.6.2-3. Nonetheless, Sumerian and Akkadian scribal conventions remained in Hittite when writing the genitive construction using logograms: LUGAL KUR ^{URU} *Ḥatti*, “the king of the land of Ḥatti.” As a result of such contact, Sumerian and Akkadian literature such as Gilgamesh also became part of the Hittite corpus through this contact situation. See H. G. Güterbock, “A View of Hittite Literature,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 84 (1964): 108; Hoffner, “The Hittites and Hurrians,” in *Peoples of Old Testament Times* (Edited by D. J. Wiseman; New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 204; Friedrich Cornelius, *Geschichte der Hethiter: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der geographischen Verhältnisse*

time, in the Iron Age city of Carcemish, a local king named Yariris bragged about the many scripts and languages he mastered.⁸³ Even later, as Thomason states, “in the 5th century BCE, Herodotus (ca. 485-425 BCE) wrote what may be the very first report of contact-induced structural change (Book IV, ch. 117): ‘The Sauromatae speak the language of Scythia, but have

und der Rechtsgeschichte (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979), 104-5; Gary Beckman, “Mesopotamians and Mesopotamian Learning at Hattusha,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 35 (1983): 100; Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 383. For the implications of this scribal contact on dating Hittite literary traditions, see more recently van den Hout, “The Ductus of the Alalah VII Texts and the Origin of Hittite Cuneiform,” in *Paleography and Scribal Practices in Syro-Palestine and Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age* (edited by Elena Devecchi; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2012), 147-70.

Although this example of the use of logograms for genitive constructions is at the level of writing and although the contact-induced change did not enter into the spoken Hittite language, it reveals the awareness of Akkadian-Sumerian grammar embedded in the written expression of the native Hittite language. Indeed, many sentences in Hittite begin with a string of Sumero-Akkado-grams; because Hittite enclitics almost always are attached to the first word of a sentence, it is clear that Hittite scribes recognized the combinations and units of Sumero- and Akkado-grams that, together, represented the first Hittite word in the sentence. For example (the following is from van den Hout, *The Elements of Hittite*, §1.2):

IŠTU NAM.RA.ḪI.A=ma GU₄ UDU *anda ēppun*

“While I seized the oxen and sheep together with the population.”

The first part of the sentence consists of a few Sumero-Akkado-grams that constitute discrete lexemes in Sumerian and Akkadian. One therefore might expect, given the standard placement of Hittite enclitics, to have the following sentence:

IŠTU=ma NAM.RA.ḪI.A GU₄ UDU *anda ēppun*

However, this placement is not realized. Together the first few Sumero-Akkado grams constitute one Hittite word, and so the Hittite enclitic goes where this one Hittite word ends in the meaning of the phrase.

Hitt. **arnuwalit=ma* GU₄ UDU *anda ēppun*

This placement of the enclitic highlights an awareness of Hittite grammar and how it corresponds to the written Sumero-Akkado-grams. Such understanding of Akkadian, however, did not always occur in Hittite texts. Examples abound in which Hittite scribes did not accurately reflect the case system in Akkadian when using phonetic compliments to indicate nominal forms. For example, after the Akkadian preposition *ana*, “to,” the genitive construction is the correct grammatical form of the noun. See van den Hout, *The Elements of Hittite*, §2.6.

ana DINGIR-lim, “to the god”

In Hittite, however, one finds ungrammatical constructions with the nominative case indicated in the phonetic compliment, reflecting imperfect learning of this expression in Akkadian.

ana DINGIR-lum

⁸³ For more on Yariris historically, see J. D. Hawkins, “Some Historical Problems of the Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions,” *Anatolian Studies* 29 (1979): 153-67. The inscription reads: URBS-*si-ia-ti*|SCRIBA-*li-ia-ti* *sù+ra/i-wa/i-ni-ti*(URBS)|SCRIBA-*li-ia-ti-I a-sù+ra/i*(REGIO)-*wa/i-na-ti*(URBS)|SCRIBA-*li-ia-ti-i ta-i-ma-ni-ti-ha*(URBS) SCRIBA-*li-ti 12-ha-wa/i-’l*”LINGUA”-*la-ti-i-na* (LITUUS)*u-ni-ha*, “in the city’s writings, in the Suraeen writing, in the Assyrian writing, and in the Taimani writing, I knew twelve languages.” For the critical edition and translation, see Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions* (Untersuchungen zur indogermanischen Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft 8; 3 vols.; New York: Walter de Gruyter Press, 1999-2000), 1:130-33. Hawkins identifies the script of “the city” as Hieroglyphic Luwian. Assyrian is naturally Akkadian. Based on the use of *sù+ra/i* in another Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription from Carchemesh that more clearly designates a reference to the Urartians, Hawkins claims this reference in the Yariris inscription refers to the Urartian language as well. The Taimani writing could be connected to Assyrian KUR.*teman*, an Akkadian reference to an Aramean tribe in Upper Mesopotamia, and this last language in the Yariris inscription may, therefore, be Aramaic.

never talked it correctly, because the Amazons learned it imperfectly at the first' - a reference to the speech community that arose from the unions of the Amazons with the Scythian men.”⁸⁴

Countless further instances can be adduced. As these examples indicate, not only was language contact a reality, but ancient scribes (especially those versed in Akkadian and, later, Aramaic as a *lingua franca*) and elites were often aware of their literary and linguistic heritage to unrelated cultures, even as such literary and linguistic borrowings became embedded in local dialects and narratives. Despite the fact of contact, isolating the results and processes of the interactions between speakers and writers of different languages in ancient situations, however, is complicated given the inability to directly observe the circumstances.

a. *Written Contact and Ancient Languages: The Septuagint as a Case Study*

Despite this complexity, translations of prestigious or sacred texts provide examples of such contact-induced changes, particularly since esteem for an original text can lead to interference in the RL. The Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible that began with the first five books (the Pentateuch) in the third century BCE (the rest of the biblical books were translated in subsequent decades), provides just such a test case.⁸⁵ The LXX constitutes an especially interesting example: the translation technique for the Pentateuch did not show the same fidelity to the Hebrew as that of the later translated books (which reflects a religious adherence to literalistic translation), leading to contact-induced changes in the Greek translation of the later portions of the Hebrew Bible as compared to the Pentateuch. Even so, contact-induced changes in the LXX can be seen throughout. For example, because the Greek relative pronoun is marked for case and its syntactic role in the embedded clause is therefore

⁸⁴ Thomason, “Determining Language Contact Effects in Ancient Contact Situations,” 2-3.

⁸⁵ For more on the LXX, see Chapter 2.

clear, Greek largely has no use for resumptive pronouns. Non-biblical Greek uses such pleonastic pronouns only for non-restrictive relative clauses, in which case the pronoun presents new or non-delineated information.⁸⁶ For restrictive relatives clauses, in which the pronoun has a defined, presupposed referent, non-biblical Greek never uses pleonastic pronouns. The existence of such resumptive pronouns for restrictive sentences in the LXX to copy the Hebrew construction is an example of such contact-induced change. For example, in Lev 11:32 the relative clause is non-restrictive since any type of vessel is in view; as such, the appearance of the resumptive pronoun in Greek is in accordance with the tendency in the language generally and cannot be due to contact-induced change from the Hebrew:

כל-כלי אשר-יעשה מלאכה בהם במים יובא

kl	kly	'šr	y'sh	ml'kh	bhm		bmy
any	vessel	REL	is.done	work	PREP+PRO3MPL		PREP+water
ywb'							
be.brought							

“any vessel in which work is done in them will be put in water.”

πᾶν	σκεῦος	ὃ	ἐὰν	ποιηθῆ	ἔργον	ἐν	αὐτῷ	εἰς
any	vessel	REL	PTC	is.done	work	PREP	PRO	PREP
ὕδωρ	βαφήσεται.							
water	be.dipped							

“any vessel in which work is done in it will be dipped in water.”

⁸⁶ Janse, “Bilingualism in the History of Greek,” 363. See this chapter for the following examples.

At the same time, Gen 28:13 contains a restrictive relative clause, in which the land under discussion is a presupposed, specified land. Normal Greek syntax would indicate that this type of clause never had a resumptive pronoun; however, a pleonastic pronoun appears in the LXX under influence from the resumptive pronoun in the Hebrew:

הארץ אשר אתה שכב עליה לך אתננה

h'rs	'sr	'th	škb	'lyh	lk	'tnnh
the.land	REL	you	lie	PREP+PRO3FSG	PREP+2MSG	I.give.it

“As for the land upon which you lie, I will give it to you.”

ή	γη	έφ'	ής	σὺ	καθεύδεις	έπ'	αὐτης
ART-FSG	land	PREP	REL	PRO	you.sleep	PREP	PRO-FSG
σοι	δώσω	αὐτήν.					
PRO	I.wil.give	PRO					

“As for the land upon which you sleep, I will give it to you.”

Another syntactic marker of contact in the LXX occurs in the placement of enclitic pronouns. In Hebrew, object pronouns are often attached as suffixes on the verbal root. In Greek, the object pronoun cannot be attached to the verb and may be placed anywhere syntactically. In *koine* Greek generally, postpositioned pronouns are far from rare; nonetheless, the almost exclusive postpositioning of the enclitic pronoun in septuagental Greek in the later books of the Hebrew Bible to be translated (namely, the non-Pentateuchal books) may reflect adherence to the Hebrew syntax and be evidence of a contact-induced change in translation.⁸⁷ There are occasions

⁸⁷ Postposed enclitic pronouns occurred as a feature in the *koine* dialect; nonetheless, the almost exclusive postposed syntax of the later books in the Hebrew Bible, when stricter adherence to Hebrew was considered a theologically desirable translation technique, is disproportionate to the standard tendency to postpose enclitic

when the enclitic pronoun, however, is preposed in the LXX, and many of these follow a grammatical rule called Wackernagel’s law. This postulate entails the preposing of enclitic pronouns in Greek to second position when the first element in the clause is a “heavily accented” word.⁸⁸ The adherence to Wackernagel’s law creates different Greek and Hebrew syntax, as seen in Isa 43:4 in which the Greek enclitic pronoun is fronted because it is attracted to the independent pronoun “I” (ἐγώ):

אני אהבתיך

’ny	’hbtyk		
PRO-1s	I.love+OBJ-2ms		
“I love you.”			
ἐγὼ	σε	ἠγάπησα ⁸⁹	
PRO-1s	OBJ PRO-2SG	I.love	
“I love you.” (lit.- “I you love”)			

The fact that translators of many parts of the LXX worked according to this law and the fact that their translations adhered to this Greek idiom when the idiom forced a deviation from

pronouns in *koine* generally, and so may reflect the tendency to follow Hebrew syntax. See Janse, “Bilingualism in the Hebrew of Greek,” 381.

⁸⁸ Janse, “Bilingualism in the Hebrew of Greek,” 381.

⁸⁹ As Janse points out, the author of Rev 3:9 quotes this verse, yet puts the syntax in the order of the Hebrew (ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε) (“Bilingualism in the History of Greek,” 381). Following Wackernagel’s Law is therefore a tendency to reproduce this Greek idiom and not a mandated translation technique. See for example the alternation in Deut 31:6 and 31:8, in which the former verse shows adherence to Wackernagel’s Law (the enclitic pronoun is attracted to οὐ μή and οὐτε μή) but the latter does not (despite also having the same clause initial οὐτε μή):

Deut 31:6:

οὐ μή σε ἀνή οὐτε μή σε εγκαταλίπη

Deut 31:8:

οὐ ἀνή σε οὐτε μή εγκαταλίπη σε

לא ירפך ולא יעזבך

לא ירפך ולא יעזבך

the tendency to follow Hebrew syntax has been understood as evidence of the native proficiency of these translators in Greek. It has long been debated when Hebrew died as a spoken language, and it seems, at least for the translators of the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, that their ability to render subtle Greek idioms, such as Wackernagel's law, is indicative of linguistic dominance in *koine* Greek.⁹⁰

The use of the LXX as an entry into language contact in the Hebrew Bible is helpful for a variety of reasons. First, the examples above (and many more could be adduced) show how the Greek translation, juxtaposed with the Hebrew, reveals contact-induced change in the translation technique.⁹¹ Second, the examples from the LXX highlight the difficulty of reconstructing the process of language contact in ancient situations. The translators of the LXX attempted to be more literal in their rendering of the Hebrew, and, as a result, the contact-induced changes were almost certainly only at the level of the translation and not in the spoken Greek of the translators themselves. Despite the fact that the Hebrew and Greek can be compared to show the results of language contact, and that a somewhat reliable contemporaneous account exists of the translation work in the Letter of Aristeas,⁹² much is still unknown about this contact situation, particularly the status of Hebrew as a spoken language given the plausible dating of some of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Hebrew to the same period.

Nonetheless, the two linguistic observations above can be helpful in reconstructing the linguistic processes that went into the production of the LXX. The role of translation highlights the fact that the contact-induced changes, such as the resumptive pronoun, are at the level of

⁹⁰ Not only does the LXX contain evidences of linguistic dominance in Greek, but it also shows Aramaic interference of the translators' rendering of the Hebrew. See Chapter 2 and the discussion of Isa 53:10.

⁹¹ The Church Fathers were aware of the non-standard nature of the Greek of the LXX. See the comments in Janse, "Bilingualism in the History of Greek," 341-42.

⁹² Timothy H. Lim, *The Formation of the Jewish Canon* (Yale Anchor Bible Reference; New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2013), 74-93.

writing and cannot be reliably reconstructed for interference in the speech of the Alexandrian Jews responsible for this translation. Nonetheless, the ability for the translators to reproduce the Greek idiom according to Wackernagel's Law, as Janse argues, likely suggests that Greek was the dominant language of those producing the translation;⁹³ indeed, the very requirement for translation suggests that the Alexandrian *koine* dialect of Greek had become dominant in the speech community that needed to hear the LXX read at religious services. The resumptive pronoun shows a syntactic borrowing from the SL (Hebrew) into the RL (Greek), but by extension of a preexisting tendency in Greek: the allowance of resumptive pronouns in non-restrictive clauses in *koine* was extended to restrictive relative clauses as well under the influence of Hebrew syntax. The result is not the importation of a foreign syntactic structure in this case, but rather imitating the syntax of Hebrew through the extension of a preexisting grammatical feature in Greek. In one sense, this process is language maintenance, or borrowing, in its imitation of this foreign syntax from Hebrew; however, Greek adapts to this syntactic structure through the extension of its own native properties.⁹⁴

b. “Orality” and Contact: 2 Kgs 18 and the Rav-Shaqeh

Although still lacking in abundant documentation, the sociolinguistic background for Hebrew speakers and writers during the Iron Age, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian periods is sufficient for conducting studies in language contact. Outside much of the Hebrew Bible, other sources preserve documentation of contact between the Israelites and Judeans with Assyrians,

⁹³ In a more extensive contact analysis of the LXX, one would also need to include Aramaic in the analysis. See Chapter 2 and the example of Isa 53:10.

⁹⁴ These examples would not qualify as metatypy since metatypy is a diachronic process through time involving many areas of grammatical restructuring in a diglossic setting; the examples above are snapshots of contact-induced change in the translation process given the loss of Hebrew as a spoken language in the Jewish community in Alexandria.

Arameans, Babylonians, and Persians.⁹⁵ Evidence of this contact exists beginning in the ninth century BCE, including both military skirmishes and diplomatic visits to Mesopotamia itself. Despite the fact that this contact occurred relatively early in the history of Israel and Judah (since they only became nations approximately a century earlier), the language attested in extra-biblical inscriptions from the eighth-century on was Hebrew and the script was distinctive of that language.⁹⁶ This national script evolved from Phoenician and was related to the Aramaic script, which also independently evolved from Phoenician (though the Arameans themselves did not cohere into a national entity as such, see Chapter 4); nonetheless, according to Rollston, even at the earliest observable phases, Hebrew in the Iron Age was written with a unique script, likely evincing a national consciousness.⁹⁷ Only during the Persian period does a change in script type appear in Hebrew, namely a shift towards Aramaic script. This shift reflects a change in imperial administration under the Achaemenid Empire, and also shows contact-induced changes from

⁹⁵ For the primary sources from Mesopotamia dealing with interactions with Israelites and Judeans, see Mordechai Cogan, *The Raging Torrent: Historical Inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia relating to Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008); idem., *Bound for Exile: Israelites and Judeans under Imperial Yoke: Documents from Assyria and Babylonia* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2013). Many introductory textbooks as well as scholarly historical treatments of Israel and Judah deal with this political contact. See, for example, Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*. See also Dalley, "Influence on Israel and the Bible," in *The Legacy of Mesopotamia Legacy of Mesopotamia* (edited by Stephanie Dalley; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 57-83.

⁹⁶ There are fragments of Akkadian texts from Israel and Judah preserved during the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian periods, notably the remnants of a stele likely erected by Sargon II, the Neo-Assyrian king who was partly responsible for the downfall of Israel, in Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel. These are the only other fragments of non-Judean and Israelite script and language from the Levant during this period to my knowledge. The Akkadian texts in this area, however fragmentary, obviously have implications on language contact. See Wayne Horowitz, Takayoshi Oshima, and Seth Sanders, *Cuneiform in Canaan: Cuneiform Sources from the Land of Israel in Ancient Times* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2006), 115.

⁹⁷ See for example Rollston, who places the beginnings of a distinct Israelite script in the ninth century BCE in the Mesha inscription (written in Moabite, a language closely related to Hebrew) and in the early eighth century (Kuntillet 'Ajrud, circa 800 BCE; Samaria ostraca, circa 777-770 BCE) as compared to the Aramaic "national" script which is only attested beginning in the late eighth-century BCE ("national" is in quotations for the Aramaic script since there was no single Aramaic kingdom with a unified identity like Israel or Judah) (*Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age*, 42-46). Rollston concludes that Israel and Judah, therefore, had distinct scribal schools producing national literature in the ninth century, certainly by the eighth century.

Aramaic in the writing of Hebrew as well as administrative use of Aramaic generally.⁹⁸ As argued throughout the subsequent chapters, the sixth century BCE and the rise of the Persian Empire constitutes a watershed moment for language contact for the authors and scribes of the Hebrew Bible.

Yet events in the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries BCE would also bring Israelites and Judahites in close contact with the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires, political entities that used both Akkadian and Aramaic as a vehicle for cultural and political propaganda. The literary representation *par excellence* in the Hebrew Bible is in 2 Kgs 18:13-37, which has been adduced by many scholars as evidence of Aramaic mediation between Mesopotamian political propaganda and literature and the Hebrew Bible. A closer examination, however, reveals a much more complicated picture. The passage presents an “oral” exchange between an Assyrian ambassador and the leaders of Judah. The word oral is in quotation marks because of a few necessary qualifiers. The account in 2 Kgs 18:13-37, particularly 18:19-35, is oral in the sense that the narrative recounts a verbal exchange between a representative of Assyria and representatives of Judah. There is a contact-induced change in the Hebrew of the speech

⁹⁸ David Vanderhooft, “el-mēdīnā ūmēdīnā kiktābāh: Scribes and Scripts in Yehud and in Achaemenid Transeuphratene,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (edited by Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 529-544. The first inscription discovered in Judah written in Aramaic language and script is a seal dated to the late sixth or early fifth century BCE (Vanderhooft, “el-mēdīnā ūmēdīnā kiktābāh: Scribes and Scripts in Yehud and in Achaemenid Transeuphratene,” 538). It reveals itself to be Aramaic in the use of the emphatic state attached to פחה, or “governor”: פחוא // לאהיב, “(belonging) to Ahiab, the governor.” The double-line divider in the seal, however, shows lasting cultural influence from Hebrew inscriptions, which particularly contained this division technique in the Iron Age II period, as seen in the seal יהור // למלכיו, “belonging to Malkiyaw, Yehud.” Vanderhooft dates this Hebrew seal to the same time as the Aramaic Ahiab impression (“el-mēdīnā ūmēdīnā kiktābāh: Scribes and Scripts in Yehud and in Achaemenid Transeuphratene,” 538). The artifact is therefore evidence of the contact situation in Judah at this time. Schniedewind cites the Ahiab seal as an example of a shift to Aramaic in the Babylonian period (*A Social Hebrew of Hebrew: Its Origins Through the Rabbinic Period*, 131). Vanderhooft is persuasive, though, that the epigraphy dates the Aramaic seal to the Persian period (late sixth, early fifth centuries) and no earlier (“el-mēdīnā ūmēdīnā kiktābāh: Scribes and Scripts in Yehud and in Achaemenid Transeuphratene,” 538).

delivered by the *Rav-Shaqeh*⁹⁹ (analyzed below), a change that can be analyzed in terms of typologies presented above and that could, in theory, occur in speech. Nonetheless, the account is embedded in a literary tale, and the purpose of Hebrew (“Jehudite”) and Aramaic is to heighten tension and show the ability of Assyrian propaganda to use the local language and terrify the entire population.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, as has been shown, the Assyrian speech is full of literary motifs and turns of phrases that also appear in contemporaneous Assyrian royal inscriptions, inscriptions that, as far as the evidence indicates, were never translated into Aramaic to mediate propaganda to Western non-Aramaic speaking populations.¹⁰¹ The account describes a speech, and as such is labeled as an oral example of language contact; however, since the speech has a literary purpose in the narrative and since literary characteristics should prevent a facile correlation between 2 Kgs 18:19-35 and an actual speech, the label “oral” is necessarily qualified.¹⁰²

According to 2 Kgs 18:17, the king of Assyria, Sennacherib, sent his advisers to meet with Judean officials. It is indicated in verse 19 that the *Rav-Shaqeh* is the first to speak, and the

⁹⁹ This title is from the Akkadian *rab šāqî* (or spelled *rab šāqê* in the Assyrian dialect) and refers to a high ranking administrative official in the Assyrian empire. For attestations in Akkadian texts, see *CAD š* volume 2, 30-32.

¹⁰⁰ For an excellent discussion of the source divisions of the Sennacherib invasion story in 2 Kgs 17-19, the historical background of the *Rav-Shaqeh*'s letter-address in Assyrian art and rhetoric, and for the place of the *Rav-Shaqeh* in the theology of the Deuteronomistic History, see Machinist, “The Rab Šāqêh at the Wall of Jerusalem: Israelite Identity in the Face of the Assyrian ‘Other’,” *Hebrew Studies* 41 (2000): 151-68.

¹⁰¹ Cohen, “Neo-Assyrian Elements in the First Speech of the Biblical Rab-Šāqê,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 9 (1979): 32-48. For the lack of translation of Neo-Assyrian propaganda into Aramaic or into any other language than Akkadian, at least as far as current evidence indicates, see Fales, “Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Review of the Evidence,” 107. Fales also examined Assyrian letters to peripheral, Levantine states in which Assyrian propaganda (and threats) are used to sustain the *Pax Assyriaca* in similar fashion to what is found in the speech of the *Rav-Shaqeh* in 2 Kgs 18:19-35 and in First Isaiah's expressions of universal peace. See Fales, “On *Pax Assyriaca* in the Eighth-Seventh Centuries BCE and Its Implications,” 17-35.

¹⁰² It should also be noted that the Neo-Assyrian influence and reach into the peripheries of their empire may have had a role in the creation of literature written in the local vernaculars in the Levant in response to the imperial culture. See Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 120-22.

response of the Judean officials in verse 26 indicates that the Assyrian official approached and began the discussions in Hebrew.

2 Kgs 18:19:

ויאמר אלהם רב־שקה אמר־נא אל־חזקיהו כה אמר המלך הגדול מלך אשור מה הבטחון
הזה אשר בטחת:

“The *Rav Shaqeh* said to them, ‘Say to Hezekiah: Thus says the Great King, the King of Assur, “What is this confidence in which you trust?”’”

2 Kgs 18:26:

ויאמר אליקים בן־חלקיהו ושבנה ויואח אל־רב־שקה דבר־נא אל־עבדיך ארמית כי
שמעים אנחנו ואל־תדבר עמנו יהודית באזני העם אשר על־החמה:

“Eliakim son of Hilkiyah, Shevnah, and Joah said to the *Rav Shaqeh*, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it. Do not speak with us in Judahite (Hebrew), in the ears of the people who are upon the wall.”

This series of events is important for a variety of reasons. The fact that the Judean officials want instead to speak Aramaic is often deemed as evidence for the growing use of Aramaic as the *lingua franca*, and therefore the medium through which ancient Israelites had access to Mesopotamian literature. While the fact that the Judeans appeal to Aramaic may be evidence of this political reality, more striking is the fact that, according to the text, the Assyrian officials approach speaking the local language.¹⁰³ The only role of Aramaic in this passage is to prevent the people of Judea from hearing the Assyrian threats. As such, it may witness implicitly to the

¹⁰³ The fact that the Judeans have to inform the *Rav Shaqeh* that they know Aramaic (כי שמעים אנחנו) may mean that Aramaic was not normally the vehicle of political communications between Judeans and Assyrians.

fact of Aramaic as a *lingua franca*, but such a role is not the rhetorical purpose of the language in this passage.

The rhetorical exchange in 2 Kings 18, therefore, is evidence, at least in its literary presentation if not in history, of the aforementioned ability of the Assyrian propaganda machine to speak in the local language. Perhaps the *Rav Shaqeh* was a Judean expatriate or Israelite in exile who swore loyalty to Assyria and Sennacherib. Or, perhaps the Assyrian official's native language was either Assyrian (a dialect of Akkadian) or Aramaic and he was trained in Hebrew and other Levantine dialects for the mission at hand. Evidence exists, however, that the speech of the *Rav Shaqeh* contains evidence of interference from Akkadian, interference that points towards direct Akkadian-Hebrew contact.

The speech of the *Rav Shaqeh* follows with the relevant linguistic information underlined:

2 Kgs 18:19:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים רַב־שָׁקָה אֲמַרְוּנָא אֶל־חִזְקִיָּהוּ כֹה אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר מִה הַבְּטַחּוֹן
הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בְּטַחַת:

“The *Rav Shaqeh* said to them, ‘Say to Hezekiah: Thus says the Great King, the King of Assur, “What is this confidence by which you trust?””

2 Kgs 18:20:

אָמַרְתָּ אֶךְ־דְּבַר־שְׁפָתַיִם עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה לְמַלְחָמָה עִתָּה עַל־מִי בְּטַחַת כִּי מִרְדַּת בִּי:

“Do you think that a mere word of the lips are counsel and strength for war? Now, upon whom do you trust that you have rebelled against me?”

2 Kgs 18:21:

עתה הנה בטחת לך על־משענת הקנה הרצוץ הזה על־מצרים אשר יסמך איש עליו ובא בכפו ונקבה כן פרעה מלך־מצרים לכל־הבטחים עליו:

“Behold, you are trusting now upon the staff of this broken reed, upon Egypt, upon which, if a man supports himself, it goes into his hand and pierces it. Thus is Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all those who trust in him.”

2 Kgs 18:22:

וכי תאמרון אלי אל־יהוה אלהינו בטחנו הלוא־הוא אשר הסיר חזקיהו את־במתיו ואת־מזבחתיו ויאמר ליהודה ולירושלם לפני המזבח הזה תשתחוו בירושלם:

“But if you say to me, ‘in the LORD our God we trust,’ is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed? Moreover, he said to Judah and to Jerusalem ‘Before this altar you will worship in Jerusalem.’”

In the Hebrew, the verb “to trust,” or בטח, governs two prepositions, על and אל. The verb usually governs the preposition ב, as earlier in the chapter (such as 2 Kgs 18:5). This interchange between על and אל appears to be very similar to an identical interchange between the same prepositions in Aramaic. Aramaic portions in the Bible preserve this interchange,¹⁰⁴ and even later Biblical Hebrew (from the post-exilic period), which was heavily influenced by Aramaic, shows this substitution, likely as a result of language contact.¹⁰⁵ It has been suggested, as a result, that the alternation of these prepositions in 2 Kgs 18:19-22 is evidence that the *Rav Shaqeh* was a native Aramaic speaker, that the Judean appeal to Aramaic later in this chapter

¹⁰⁴ So various verses contain על where one would expect אל in biblical Hebrew. See Dan 2:24; 4:31; 6:7; 7:16; Ezra 4:11, 18, 23.

¹⁰⁵ See 1 Chr 12:23; 13:3; 2 Chr 15:4; and Neh 6:17.

shows that the Assyrian ambassador and Judean leaders must have known the language, and therefore that the language served as a medium between the Neo-Assyrian empire and Judah.¹⁰⁶

The claim is further extended that, in this analysis, there was little to no immediate knowledge of Akkadian in Judah, and that Judean scribes therefore did not have direct access or contact with Akkadian in using Mesopotamian traditions in the Hebrew Bible. Instead, all such influence was mediated through Aramaic.

There are problems both linguistically and culturally with this logic. Linguistically, it appears as though (based on the admittedly sparse corpus of Old Aramaic evidence) the two prepositions remained distinct in the dialects of Aramaic at which time the events of 701 BCE would have occurred. Extensive Hebrew-Aramaic contact did not occur until the sixth and especially in the fifth centuries.¹⁰⁷ If the authors of 2 Kgs 18:19-22 wrote the account shortly after the events of 701 BCE or attempted to relate a historical memory, then such a prepositional interchange does not reflect the state of Aramaic at that time, at least based on currently available evidence.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, many dialects of Aramaic in antiquity lost the preposition ܠ altogether, which was either replaced by ܠܐ or another construction to communicate directionality towards something (such as ܠ or ܠܐ in Syriac). Indeed, both the Targums and the Peshitta (the Syriac translation of the Bible) lack this very alternation of the preposition since, in these dialects, the particle ܠ ceased to be productive:¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew*, 79-80, 84, 120.

¹⁰⁷ Note, for instance, Rainer Degen's glosses 'l as "zu" and 'l as "gegen, auf," indicating the consistent semantic distinction in Old Aramaic (*Altaramäische Grammatik: Der Inschriften des 10.-8. Jh. v. Chr.* [Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 3; Mainz: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1969], 62).

¹⁰⁸ See the literature cited above for arguments for an early dating of 2 Kgs 18:17-35.

¹⁰⁹ Translations are not provided since they do not differ significantly from the Hebrew version above, nor would they make a difference for the purposes of the argument herein.

Targum Jonathan:

2 Kgs 18:19:

ואמר להון רבשקה אמרו כען לחזקיה כדנן אמר מלכא רבתנא מלכא דאתור מא רמצנא
הדין כאתרחיצתא:

2 Kgs 18:20:

אמרתא ברם ממלל ספון במילך וגבורא אעביד קרבא כען על מן אתרחיצתא ארי
מרדתא בי:

2 Kgs 18:21:

כען הא אתרחיצת לך על סמך קניא רעיעא הדין על פרעה מלכא דמצרים דאם יסתמיד
גברא עלוהי וייעול בידיה ויבזענה כין פרעה מלכא דמצרים לכל דמתרחצין עלוהי:

2 Kgs 18:22:

וארי תימרון לי על מימרא דיוי אלהנא אתרחיצנא הלא הוא דאעדי חזקיה ית במתוהי וית
איגורוהי¹¹⁰ ואמר לאנש יהודה וליתבי ירושלם קדם מדבחא הדין תסגרון בירושלם:

Peshitta:

2 Kgs 18:19:

אמרו להון רבשקה אמרו כען לחזקיה כדנן אמר מלכא רבתנא מלכא דאתור מא רמצנא

2 Kgs 18:20:

אמרתא ברם ממלל ספון במילך וגבורא אעביד קרבא כען על מן אתרחיצתא ארי

¹¹⁰ This word in the Targum (אגורוהי) is itself an Akkadian (*ekurru*) loan into Aramaic. The use of this word is an interesting deviation from the Masoretic Text. The Hebrew includes references to high places and altars that Hezekiah removed, whereas the Targum has high places and temples.

2 Kgs 18:21:

מִן־הַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר־בָּרְחוּ מִלְּפָנֵי אֲשׁוּרְבַּנֶּשֶׁת מַלְכֵּנוּ וְנִשְׁבְּחוּ אֱלֹהֵי־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם אֵל־גָּדוֹל וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּלְחָמוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּוֹתָרוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּפְלְאוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּרִים וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּימוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּפְלְאוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּרִים וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּימוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּפְלְאוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּרִים וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּימוֹת

2 Kgs 18:22:

וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּפְלְאוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּרִים וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּימוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּפְלְאוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּרִים וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּימוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּפְלְאוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּרִים וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּימוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּפְלְאוֹת וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּרִים וְעוֹשֶׂה־מִּסְתֵּימוֹת

In both the Targum and the Peshitta, the verb “to trust” governs the preposition *l* consistently.¹¹¹

Another, perhaps less likely, scenario would be that the *Rav Shaqeh*, speaking in Hebrew as the narrative suggests, reflects a dialect of Hebrew that was in turn becoming more and more influenced by Aramaic. The *Rav Shaqeh* would have understood himself to be speaking Hebrew (and therefore from his perspective the preposition interchange would have nothing to do with Aramaic). Rather, such a contact-induced change from Aramaic would have been influencing Hebrew in the sixth century (as attested in a similar interchange between these prepositions in the Book of Ezekiel), and the authors of 2 Kgs 18:19-22 would have placed such a version of Hebrew in the mouth of the *Rav Shaqeh* when composing the account over a century after the event in 701 BCE. Even in this scenario, such a proposition would not entail Aramaic mediation per se, but rather the expression of a later dialect of Hebrew (already showing Aramaic contact-induced changes) placed in the mouth of the Assyrian official.

¹¹¹ In both versions, the preposition *b* governs the verb “to trust” in 2 Kgs 18:5 much like the Hebrew, though the Peshitta uses a different verb in this verse, *בטח*, which can mean “to hope (in)” in the D stem, than in 2 Kgs 18:19-22. In the 2 Kgs 18:19-22 passage, the Targum and Peshitta also employ different verbs: the Targum uses the Gt form of *בטח* and the Peshitta has *בטח*, which, itself, is likely a loanword from Akkadian in various dialects of Aramaic. In a variety of dialects, a distinction in meaning results when the verb *בטח* governs the preposition *על* (“to rely on, trust,” as in Biblical Aramaic, Jewish Literary Aramaic [the Targumim], Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and Late Jewish Literary Aramaic) as opposed to the preposition *ב* (“to trust in,” Galilean Aramaic, Palestinian Targumic Aramaic), though the distinction in meaning is only slight.



In this fashion, calling the prepositional interchange in 2 Kgs 18:19-22 an Aramaism is far too general since such an alternation only works in certain dialects and in certain time periods. In fact, a contemporaneous use of a verb “to trust” in political texts with alternating prepositional complementation exists in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions. The similar use of “to trust” in Neo-Assyrian and 2 Kgs 18:19-22 was first discussed by Chaim Cohen, who listed a few Akkadian attestations.¹¹² All of his citations contain the verb *takālu*, which governs the preposition *ana* (“to”) plus a noun like *danānum* (“strength”), *emūqum* (another word for “strength”), or some other designation for enemy forces. In addition to the examples Cohen cites, other uses of the G-stem of *takālum* in the Neo-Assyrian period show that this verb also governs the preposition *eli*, “on, upon.” For example, an inscription from Esarhaddon states: *ša eli šadânīšunu dannūti taklūma*, “(the unsubmitive Cilicians) who trusted in their strong mountains.”¹¹³ Another inscription from Esarhaddon shows the prepositional interchange: *ana ṭēme ramānīšunu taklūma*, “they trust in their own plan.”¹¹⁴ In both cases, the verb *takālum* is in the same stem (G) and can take a prepositional complement *ana* or *eli* (corresponding to Hebrew ל or על). The same alternation holds true for the N-stem (*natkalum*). Again, two inscriptions from Esarhaddon show the interchange:

ana šadê maršūti ittakil, “he put his trust in the difficult mountains.”¹¹⁵

ša eli tâmti gallati ittaklūma, “(he) who put his trust in the rolling sea.”¹¹⁶

¹¹² Cohen, “Neo-Assyrian Elements in the First Speech of the Biblical Rab-Šāqê,” 39-42.

¹¹³ R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 9; Osnabruck: Biblio-Verlag, 1967), 51 iii 50.

¹¹⁴ Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien*, 42 i 34.

¹¹⁵ Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien*, 48 ii 67.

¹¹⁶ Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien*, 49 iii 23.

Other examples could be added from the Neo-Assyrian period.¹¹⁷ The above discussion shows that the same prepositional interchange that occurs in 2 Kgs 18 between **אל** and **על** also appears in contemporaneous Akkadian texts.¹¹⁸

It is the case, therefore, that an ambassador from Assyria was able to speak directly to the Judeans in their local language and without the need to appeal to Aramaic as an intermediary, at least in the literary world of 2 Kgs 18:17-35. Such an oral exchange in diplomacy attests to the possibility that contact was direct between Akkadian speakers and Hebrew speakers, perhaps mediated in the mind and speech patterns of a bilingual official, the *Rav Shaqeh*.¹¹⁹ There are two possibilities as to the background of this Assyrian official that could shed light on the processes behind this contact-induced change in the narrative in 2 Kgs 18:19-22. It has been suggested that the *Rav Shaqeh* was an exiled Israelite in the employ of the Assyrian Empire for his ability to speak Hebrew with the Judeans. In this case, the prepositional alternation is an example of RL agentivity (borrowing) and the contact-induced change could be a calque of the

¹¹⁷ See this line of argumentation in Mikhal Oren, “Interference in Ancient Languages as Evidenced by Governed Prepositions,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 58 (2013): 9-10.

¹¹⁸ For Akkadian calques in the preceding chapter (2 Kgs 17:9-11), see Ronnie Goldstein, “A Suggestion Regarding the Meaning of 2 Kings 7:9 and the Composition of 2 Kings 17:7-23,” *Vetus Testamentum* 63 (2013): 393-407. Goldstein identifies the *hapax* **וַיַּחַפְּאוּ**, traditionally translated as “to do (something) secretly,” as a loan from Akkadian *ḥepû*, “to break.” Since the context of 2 Kgs 17:9 has to do with public transgressions, the idea of doing secret things does not make semantic sense. The phrase **וַיַּחַפְּאוּ...דְּבָרִים**, then, would be a calque from Akkadian *ḥepû + dibbu*, “to break an agreement.” Further, the expression **לֹא כֵן דְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא כֵן** could be seen as a calque from Akkadian *dibbu ša lā kinnu*, “disloyal talk.” In this manner, the authors of the earliest layer of this chapter employ Neo-Assyrian covenantal phrasing to describe Israel’s lack of fidelity to Yahweh.

¹¹⁹ For a new proposal concerning the Hebrew **מִשְׁעֶנֶת הַקְּנָה הַרְצוּיָן** and Akkadian *kīma qanê ḥuṣṣušu*, see Victoria Gordon, “Heb. *kāne rāšūš* and Akk. *kīma qanê ḥuṣṣušu*,” *Babel und Bibel* 7 (2013): 627-34. Gordon presents reasons for and against seeing a direct relationship between the Akkadian and the Hebrew phrases, but decides that the evidence on phonological grounds combined with the “structural similarity” of the expressions weighs slightly in favor of an Akkadian borrowing into Hebrew. What she means by “structural similarity” is not clear. The phonological correspondence entails both the /š/ in the Hebrew and Akkadian words, as well as the hypothetical uvular realization of Hebrew /t/, making this phoneme sound like Akkadian /ḥ/ (“Heb. *kāne rāšūš* and Akk. *kīma qanê ḥuṣṣušu*,” 632-33). Both roots are rare in each language, and Gordon’s reasoning is intriguing though impossible to verify.

Assyrian phrases, particularly if the *Rav Shaqeh* spoke from a prepared set of statements translated from Akkadian. On the other hand, the *Rav Shaqeh* could have been an Assyrian who learned Hebrew for the purposes of negotiating in the local dialect. The prepositional interchange would then be substrate influence under SL agentivity: he would be imposing his native prepositional alternation of the verb “to trust” on Hebrew, his second language.

Much remains uncertain. If the account in 2 Kgs 18 is a reflection of an historical event, the personal background of the *Rav Shaqeh* is still unknown. As a result, the process of the language contact could either be RL agentivity or SL agentivity. This example not only highlights the importance of sociolinguistic background for contact situations, but also highlights the fact that the prepositional alternation in 2 Kgs 18:19-22 can be analyzed without need to posit a greater role historically or literary for Aramaic than has had in older biblical scholarship. The prepositional governance in this passage and in contemporaneous Neo-Assyrian inscriptions indicates that direct Akkadian-Hebrew contact may have occurred in the background of the *Rav-Shaqeh*'s speech (whether such a speech was historical or is simply a literary representation of an Assyrian).

V. Conclusion

In this chapter, the method for this dissertation has been discussed. The history of the field of contact linguistics and the issues currently debated are deemed relevant for the study of the Hebrew Bible in its ancient Near Eastern milieu. When the relevant sociohistorical background is explored, even though such information is not as abundant as desired, a better picture of the engagement by Israel and Judah with their ancient Near Eastern neighbors emerges. This background then helps us to understand, given the typologies of contact-induced

change discussed, which types of changes we should expect given Israelite and Judean interaction with Arameans, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians. Since the rise of Aramaic as a *lingua franca* during the Iron Age, Neo-Babylonian, and Achaemenid Periods is both an under-examined part of this debate (at least in detail) and since this background is vital for understanding language change in the Hebrew Bible, this contact situation is examined in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Setting the Sociohistorical Context: The Akkadian-Aramaic Situation

I. Language Contact and the Ancient World: Preliminary Considerations

The widespread use of Akkadian and then Aramaic as lingua francas in the ancient Near East makes these two languages prime loci for contact-induced changes, both as donors and as recipients. As Márquez Rowe observes, “Since Akkadian was not the native language in [Hattuša, Cyprus, Egypt, and elsewhere], this lingua franca was influenced by the spoken language of the scribes”- namely, via shift-induced interference, even if the scribes did not actually shift to Akkadian. [...] In all these cases the requisites for establishing contact-induced change can be met, in spite of the long-past period of contact, because all the languages involved have been extensively analyzed historically.¹

In spite of the considerable difficulties involved in the investigation of ancient language contacts, the future for this area of research is bright. [...] if we exercise due methodological rigor in testing hypotheses in this domain, we can at least be confident that we can show the difference between a well-supported hypothesis and a truly inconclusive result.²

As shown in Chapter 3, historical evidence exists for interaction between Israelites and Judeans on the one hand and the Neo-Assyrian, the Neo-Babylonian, and the Persian empires on the other. Not only did this contact happen during the exile of Israel and Judah (and the

¹ Thomason, “Determining Language Contact Effects in Ancient Contact Situations,” 11.

² Thomason, “Determining Language Contact Effects in Ancient Contact Situations,” 12-13.

subsequent restoration of the Judeans in the Persian period), but various kinds of earlier encounters occurred in the context of diplomacy and military skirmishes. The matter of which languages were involved in these interactions, however, remains a point of debate. In this chapter, the discussion is framed in light of the broader linguistic situation in Mesopotamia, which allowed for contact-induced changes between Aramaic and Akkadian.

This context is important for three reasons. First, the authors and scribes of the Hebrew Bible encountered a rapidly changing sociolinguistic scene in Mesopotamia. Any serious study in language contact in the Hebrew Bible needs to take into account first and foremost the language dynamics in this region. Second, this sociolinguistic background has not been extensively discussed in previous studies of language contact as regards the formation of the Hebrew Bible. The focus has often been on how to distinguish between Aramaic and Akkadian influence in the Hebrew Bible, since the languages involved are Semitic. Aramaic and Hebrew are both Northwest Semitic languages and therefore present difficulties for distinguishing contact-induced changes between them from language-internal developments within this branch of Semitic. Yet the analysis of the language situation within Mesopotamia and how this situation influenced the Levant during the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian times is instructive: this sociolinguistic reconstruction is essential for a better understanding of what languages Israelites and Judeans would have encountered when interacting with Mesopotamian empires over time. This analysis frames what sort of contact-induced changes we can reasonably expect to occur in the Hebrew Bible. Third, not all contact situations are equally well documented in the ancient world. Knowledge of the linguistic processes of better-known

instances (the Aramaic and Akkadian contact situation) may shed light on more difficult cases (the aforementioned languages relative to the Hebrew Bible).³

II. Scope and Aim of Chapter Four

As previously stated, the types of contact-induced changes observable in similar but better-attested situations may prove valuable in an analysis of lesser-known circumstances. In this chapter, one such better-known occurrence of contact-induced change from the time period of ancient Israel and Judah, namely the interaction between Aramaic speakers and writers and Akkadian speakers and writers, is examined. This analysis involves a consideration of literary and linguistic information from these texts and their genres as important factors for an assessment of the nature and extent of contact. While the influence of Akkadian on Aramaic finds parallels in ancient Israel's situation relative to the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian empires, the differences are also instructive. Aramaic eventually became an international *lingua franca* and influenced Akkadian in a way that Hebrew did not. Moreover, the population of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires eventually became bilingual in Akkadian and Aramaic, and the local dialects of Aramaic in the various outposts of the Assyrian Empire must have undergone contact-induced changes from Akkadian to one extent or another. This situation differs from the more isolated Iron Age Israel and Judah (though Aramaic would greatly influence Hebrew in the Persian period and beyond). These chronological and geographical distinctions are informative: they can elucidate what types of contact-induced changes one might expect if ancient Israelite and Judahite scribes were influenced by Aramaic or Akkadian. One of the reasons why some scholars deny the direct influence of Akkadian on Hebrew (or find it less

³ See Thomason's comments: "...the historical methods used for analyzing better-documented contact situations can be applied to ancient contact situations as well" ("Determining Language Contact Effects in Ancient Contact Situations," 1).

probable) is the view that the relative “difficulty” of the latter for ancient Israelites and Judeans compared to the former is so great as to make Aramaic a more likely intermediary.⁴ The sociolinguistic realities of the polities involved, however, are a more relevant predictor of the likelihood of contact than are structural linguistic properties alone.⁵ The bilingual Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian empires produced evidence of contact-induced changes in a manner that should contrast with the situation in ancient Israel and Judah, where such extensive bilingualism was never a reality.

Thus, a careful study of Aramaic and Akkadian in this period provides a helpful comparison and contrast to anchor the discussion in the following chapters in which Hebrew contact with Mesopotamian literature is examined. Understanding the nature of interaction between Akkadian and Aramaic requires a dynamic model to account for changing historical and social realities. In parallel fashion, a model for Hebrew contact with ancient Near Eastern literature requires a similar dynamism. Too often scholars are content with limited sociolinguistic frameworks. It is not enough simply to state that Akkadian and Aramaic had contact; rather, a more thorough study includes an analysis of what types of interactions are involved and what those types of encounters reveal about the underlying sociological processes. The contact situation between Akkadian and Aramaic, being well attested, can then provide a model by which one can set expectations for what a contact situation might look like between Hebrew, Akkadian, and Aramaic in the same time period. The sociolinguistic theory and

⁴ In this view, the structural differences between Hebrew and Akkadian are determinant. So Barr: “Accadian must have been to the average Israelite a much more...difficult language than Aramaic.” He therefore concludes that Aramaic was likely the mediating factor for the entrance of Mesopotamian language in the Bible (*Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 123).

⁵ Thomason, “Contact Explanations in Linguistics,” 35-39.

background presented in Chapter 3 is therefore buttressed with more extensive linguistic data in this chapter as well as in Chapter 5 and in Chapter 6.

One final note should be made about the analysis in this chapter. The following examination is about Akkadian and Aramaic language contact, which means that contact-induced changes can either flow directionally from Akkadian into Aramaic or vice versa. Excellent studies on the Akkadian influences on Aramaic have already been done, such as Stephen Kaufman's dissertation.⁶ As he states when returning to the subject over twenty-five years later, "since my own work on the influences of Akkadian on Aramaic, there has been relatively little new to report on...."⁷ Aramaic influence on Akkadian, however, is also crucial for understanding the sociolinguistic context in Mesopotamia. It has received less systematic attention, though isolated studies pertaining to one part or another of this linguistic process have appeared.⁸ The Aramaic influence on Akkadian therefore is an important component of the discussion below.

This chapter begins with the sociolinguistic background for Aramaic and Akkadian contact as well as a discussion of the linguistic features of Aramaic, an issue that has great implications for language contact. A regionally focused approach to Aramaic-Akkadian contact

⁶ Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*.

⁷ Kaufman, "Languages in Contact: The Ancient Near East," 302. He makes an exception with the Tell Fekheriyeh inscription, discovered after he published his book. See Kaufman, "Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh," *MAARAV* 3/2 (1982): 137-75. One could also add the Incirli trilingual inscription, though that text is brief and, in many ways, replicates information from the Tell Fekheriyeh inscription (especially with the Akkadian loanword *mt*, or "land," which appears in both Fekheriyeh and Incirli). Kaufman, "The Phoenician Inscription of the Incirli Trilingual: A Tentative Reconstruction and Translation," *MAARAV* 14.2 (2007): 7-26.

⁸ For example, see von Soden's three articles on Aramaic loanwords in Akkadian: "Aramäische Wörter in neuassyrischen und neu- und spätbabylonischen Texten. Ein Vorbericht. I (*agâ* - **mūš*)," *Orientalia* 35 (1966): 1-20; "Aramäische Wörter in neuassyrischen und neu- und spätbabylonischen Texten. Ein Vorbericht. II (*n - z* und Nachträge) (*)," *Orientalia* 37 (1968): 261-71; "Aramäische Wörter in neuassyrischen und neu- und spätbabylonischen Texten. Ein Vorbericht. III," *Orientalia* 46 (1977): 183-97.

in Mesopotamia during the Neo-Assyrian era is then given.⁹ Synthesizing the Aramaic and Akkadian influences on one another highlights the reality of dialectical factors in this period. The manner of the production and copying of Akkadian and Aramaic texts from the Neo-Babylonian and Persian eras and the implications of these texts for language contact and the Hebrew Bible are then examined. This diachronic analysis is essential for understanding the changing sociolinguistic background of these languages. This sort of dynamism is foundational for understanding language change in real time and cultures, and therefore for reconstructing what language contact was in the time of the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and the Persian empires. A linguistic synthesis of Akkadian and Aramaic contact-induced changes over time is then presented, focusing particularly on the Aramaic influences on Akkadian. Suggestions regarding the types of language contact at work in this situation are discussed and the implications of this information for biblical studies summarized in conclusion to this chapter.

III. *Historical Background for Contact*

The origins of the peoples who spoke Aramaic are largely absent in the written record. In the earliest references to these peoples, they are designated by the Akkadian term *ahlāmu*, meaning “nomad,” in the 11th century BCE during the reign of Tiglath Pileasar I.¹⁰ The Arameans

⁹ The periods of discussion are limited to Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian periods. Neo-Assyrian is especially important owing to the chronological importance of this era since it was during this time that scribes in Israel and Judah began to write their national histories.

¹⁰ See Bryce, *The World of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms: A Political and Military History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 163-80; Lawson K. Younger, “The Late Bronze Age/Iron Age Transition and the Origins of the Arameans,” in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five: Proceedings of the Symposium Ugarit at Seventy-Five held at Trinity International University, Deerfield, Illinois, February 18-20, 2005 under the Auspices of the Middle Western Branch of the American Oriental Society and the Midwest Region of the Society of Biblical Literature* (Edited by Lawson K. Younger; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 131-74; E. Lipiński, *The Arameans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 100; Sterling, Virginia: Peeters, 2000); Paul E. Dion, “Aramean Tribes and Nations of the First-Millennium Western Asia,” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (edited by Jack M. Sasson; 4 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1995), 2:1281-94. For an assessment of cultural, religious, and artistic expressions of the identity of various regional Aramean city-states in light of the ebb and flow of Assyrian hegemony, see Maria Grazia Masetti-Rouault, “Cultures in Contact in the Syrian Lower

are first attested as tribal groups which did not coalesce into a unified kingdom; rather, a number of Aramaean kingdoms developed, some of which left written records in various dialects of Aramaic. These kingdoms often coalesced with the so-called Neo-Hittite kingdoms in the northern Levant, resulting in states such as Zincirli, where Luwian, Phoenician, and Aramaic texts have been discovered. Because of the tribal organization of the Arameans and the fact that they did not congeal into a unified political entity, their language is attested as a variety of dialects.¹¹ It was not until the Achaemenid period, in the 6th and 5th centuries BCE, that a standard dialect was promoted by a single political entity (this dialect is known as Imperial, or Official, Aramaic; see below).

The control of the Neo-Assyrian Empire's over Syro-Palestine occurred in waves, the first major phase in the 9th century BCE, when king Jehu of Israel is shown on the Black Obelisk offering tribute to Shalmanassar III,¹² then most assertively from the 8th century on, beginning with the reign of Tiglath Pileasar III. Neo-Assyrian policy often, though not always, included deportation of local populations, moving them into the Assyrian heartland where they would be Assyrianized, while the conquered land would be colonized by mixed groups transplanted from Assyria and elsewhere. Such a policy is at the origins of the Samaritans, who were the result of deportation and population mixing when Assyria conquered Israel. As Assyrian kings expanded

Middle Euphrates Valley: Aspects of the Local Cults in the Iron Age II," *Syria* 86 (2009): 141-47. Other articles in this volume also deal with Aramean origins attested in regional archaeological research as early as the Late Bronze Age. For two recent surveys of Aramean history, culture, and language in antiquity, see Herbert Niehr, ed., *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (Handbook of Oriental Studies/Handbuch der Orientalistik 106; Boston: Brill, 2014); Angelika Berlejung and Michael P. Streck, *Arameans, Chaldeans, and Arabs in Babylonia and Palestine in the First Millennium B.C.* (Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien 3; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013).

¹¹ "...the Arameans never created an empire; therefore they never could propel their culture into a hegemonic position" (Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Official and Vernacular Languages," in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* [edited by Seth L. Sanders; University of Chicago Oriental Institute Seminars 2; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2006], 207).

¹² Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 292, 297, 330.

their territory and pursued this policy of deportation from the Levantine corridor (where in the northern regions various population groups spoke Aramaic), the imperial power needed an administrative language to deal with day-to-day interactions with its Aramaic-speaking subjects. These subjects were located both in the heartland of the empire, as a result of deportation, and on the peripheries of the empire (if they agreed to be loyal vassals, they were allowed to keep a local king on the throne, as in ancient Sam'al/modern Zincirli). In this fashion, Aramaic became a *lingua franca* organically and is attested as such in a variety of dialects (see more below); only in the Persian period was one dialect promoted to make communication more efficient.¹³

This situation created conditions that were ripe for language contact. A twofold system for writing technology developed, with cuneiform (Akkadian) mostly reserved for writing on clay, and parchment and papyrus for Aramaic. Speakers and writers needed words to describe these technologies, and so Aramaic, the very language that required these new (from the perspective of the Assyrians) materials, was the stock from which speakers and writers of Akkadian chose their loanwords. Terms for papyri rolls (*kirku*) and scrolls (usually parchment, *magallatu*) were loaned from Aramaic into Akkadian in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods.¹⁴

IV. *Scribes and Corroborating Evidence for Aramaic/Akkadian Contact*

The scribal background of bilingual parts of Mesopotamian society therefore provides a crucial window into language contact in Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian times, and

¹³ For a more details on the sources for Aramaean history in the Iron Age and on Aramaeans politics and the Assyrian conquest, see Hélène Sader, "History," in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (edited by Herbert Niehr; Handbook of Oriental Studies/ Handbuch der Orientalistik 106; Boston: Brill, 2014), 11-36.

¹⁴ For words for writing technology in Aramaic and their entrance into Akkadian, see Millard, "Words for Writing in Aramaic," in *Hamlet on a Hill: Semitic and Greek Studies Presented to Professor T. Muraoka on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (edited by M. F. J Baasten and W. Th. van Peursen; Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 118; Dudley, Massachusetts: Peeters, 2003), 351-55.

as such this background merits further consideration. The following comments are focused on the role of scribes in the Neo-Assyrian period since this period was the formation of such scribal contact and also the period for the formation of many Pentateuchal and Isaianic traditions and texts (see Chapters 5 and 6). Data for language contact between Aramaic and Akkadian occur in Neo-Assyrian depictions of scribal culture. These depictions are both pictorial and verbal, the latter in texts that describe imperial administration in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. Both lines of evidence show the increasing importance of Aramaic in Mesopotamia during these two centuries, even as the reliefs and texts also underscore the still limited, hence debated, use of Aramaic relative to Akkadian.¹⁵

Neo-Assyrian reliefs representing two scribes side-by-side first appear in the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (who reigned approximately 745-727 BCE) and occur elsewhere at various times in this period. For the most part, the pictorial depiction is somewhat standard: two scribes holding their respective instruments for writing stand close to items to be tallied, presumably as booty from war, while prisoners and other subjects are represented in the act of offering gifts to the Assyrian king. One scribe holds a tablet, called a “hard medium” for its durability, or perhaps a wax board for cuneiform, and the other scribe has a scroll, called a “soft medium,” for Aramaic. A variation on this scene appears in a relief from the time of Sargon II, in which this king is depicted as pitched in battle. In the midst of the fighting, two scribes holding different media for writing are shown receiving “instructions from a seated eunuch.”¹⁶ The importance of having records of administrative intake in both media, representing two different languages, was crucial enough to the operations of the empire for both scribes to be depicted as in or near the

¹⁵ See Beaulieu, “Official and Vernacular Languages,” 207-209.

¹⁶ Fales, “Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Review of the Evidence,” 108.

battle, hence as part of the military operation itself. The manner of representation of the two scribes indicates that one, wearing the typical Assyrian beard, was writing cuneiform (either on a clay tablet or on a wax board); the other, lacking this beard,¹⁷ was writing Aramaic,¹⁸ an identification further confirmed by 1) the absence of evidence of cuneiform script used on soft media,¹⁹ 2) the lack of any other language used for such purposes in the empire, and 3) attested uses of Aramaic for administration (see below). Textual support for this interpretation comes from a fragmentary text in Akkadian that contains lists of charioteers and horse trainers organized for war. At the end of this tablet, a scribe is identified: [...]*Urda-Nabû ʔupšarru [...]* *Ahabû ʔupšarru Armāya aḥḥē annûtē ummânī ša maššarti*, "...Urda-Nab[û, s]cribe [...] Ahabû, Arama[ean] scribe, these colleagues are scholars of the watch."²⁰

The texts (written in Akkadian) that mention Akkadian and Aramaic scribes alongside one another are especially illuminating for the social function and position of the two languages. For example, in the eighth century BCE, Sargon II commissioned all the scribes of Assyrian and Aramaic to be assembled for the purposes of gathering tax information throughout the empire:

¹⁷ For the role of beards in depicting Assyrians, see Irene Winter, *On Art in the Ancient Near East, Volume 1: Of the First Millennium BCE* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 34.1; Boston: Brill, 2010), 86.

¹⁸ Reade interprets this character as a war artist, not an Aramaic scribe ("Neo-Assyrian Monuments in their Historical Setting," in *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons in Literary, Ideological, and Historical Analysis* [edited by F. M. Fales; Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, Centro per le Atichità e la Storia dell'Arte del Vicino Oriente, 1981], 162). The fragment quoted above undermines this thesis.

¹⁹ So Parpola states: "Conspicuously, the Records [from the libraries of Assyria] make no mention of copies of texts on papyrus (*niāru*) or parchment (*mašku*), and this can be taken as an indication that traditional literary texts were not copied on such material (a fact also clear from other evidence)" ("Assyrian Library Records," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 42 [1983], 8). He further claims in a note: "There are no references to originals in colophons of Mesopotamian literary texts. Both materials [papyrus and parchment] seem to have been restricted to ephemeral use only and served as the writing material only for texts written in Aramaic" ("Assyrian Library Records," 8 n 26). See also Fales, "Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period," 105 n 48. This conclusion contradicts Millard's assessment in his article "Earliest Aramaic" (see below) of a large literary body of text written in Aramaic in Assyria during this time based on his understanding of the Ahiqar legend.

²⁰ Fales and Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration*, text 124. ¹ARAD¹-^dP[A¹²⁰ L]Ú.A.BA x[x x x] ¹PAP-bu-u LÚ.A.BA¹¹ KUR¹.ár¹-ma¹-a¹-^ra¹-[a] PAP an-nu-t[e] LÚ.um¹-ma¹-a¹-ni¹ š[a¹] EN.NUN¹

abat šarri ana Aššur-bēlu-taqqin ummānu ša ekalli lū Aššurāya lū Armāya ša ana māti uballiṭūni ana mātīka illikūninni mār šiprānīka²¹ ina nagiu gabbu šitappar bēt šanūni gabbīšunu pahḫira ina muḫḫija šēbilaššunu pēṭhallu Itu' u issišunu piqid ša Dūr-bēl-ila'a ušettaqūnišanūni atta tūdā ūmāti ša iškāri emādu ētarbāni²²

Royal order to Aššur-bēlu-taqqin. (As for any) scribe of the palace, whether versed in Assyrian (cuneiform) or in alphabetic script (*armāya*, or Aramaic), who have provided support for the land and have come to your land, send your messengers into all districts wherever they may be; gather them all up, and send them to me. With them, appoint cavalymen and Itu'eans, who will get them through to me to the city of Dūr-bēl-ila'a. Do you recognize that (the time) for imposing the *iškaru*-tax has come?

Later, during the reign of Esarhaddon in the seventh century BCE, a letter was dispatched to the king to complain of the misdeeds of such scribes:

šaniu ḫītašunu abūšu ša šarri bēlīja šarpu iškāru ša rē'ī ina libbi nibzi aššurāya ina libbi nibzi armāya issaṭaru ina libbi kišādī²³ ša Nabû-qāti-šabat masennu²⁴ ša rab ālānāte ša ṭupšarri nību ša šarpi ina libbi libānīšunu ina libbi unqi iktankū mā šumma šattu annītu lā iddinū mā imuttū kī ṭa' tu tanneppišūni unqāte issu libānīšunu ubtattiqu ikterru... lā ina ḫadūtē šū ubattiqu²⁵

(Now, for) a further crime of theirs. (During the reign of) the father of the king, my lord, they used to write the silver (tax) quota of the shepherds on an Assyrian document and on an Aramaic document, and to seal the amount of silver with the neck seals of the treasurer Nabû-qāti-šabat, the village manager, and the (city) scribe, with the words: “If they don't pay this year, they will die!” (But now,) since a bribe was made, they cut off the stamp seals and their neck seals, and threw them away.”

²¹ On this unique plural form in Neo-Assyrian, see *CAD*, vol. M, 263.

²² Mikko Luukko, *The Correspondence of Tiglat-Pileser III and Sargon II from Calah/Nimrud* (State Archives of Assyria 19; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2012), text 154. [*a-bat* LUGA]L [*a-na*] ¹Aš-šur'-EN-LÁ[L²] LÚ*.um-ma-nu ša É.GAL lu-u LÚ*.aš-šur-a'-a lu-u ¹LÚ*.ar-ma'-a-a ša a-na KUR TI.LA a-na KUR-ka il-li-ku-ni-ni LÚ*.A.KIN.MEŠ-ni-ka ina na-gi-u ga[b]-bu ši-tap-par bé-et šá-nu-u-ni gab-bi-šú-nu [p]aḫ-ḫi-ra ina UGU-ḫi-ia še-bi-la-áš-šú-nu [B]AD-ḪAL-lum LÚ*.i-tú-'u' i'-si-šú-nu pi-qid [š]a ¹URU.BÀD'-¹EN-DINGER-a-a [ú]-še-ta-qu-ni-ša-nu-u-ni [a]t-[t]a' tu'-u-da-'a' [UD.MEŠ] ša [É]Š.QAR e-ma-du' e'-tar¹-ba-a-ni

²³ This word is rarely written with the logograms UZU.GÚ. The logograms could also represent *libāni* for “neck,” though this word is usually UZU.SA.GÚ.

²⁴ The editors of the *CAD* understand this logogram instead as *abarakki* (vol. ʔ, 156).

²⁵ Luukko and Greta van Buylaere, *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon* (State Archives of Assyria 16; Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press, 2002), text 63. šá-ni-ú ḫi-ṭa-šú-nu AD-šú ša MAN EN-ia KUG.UD ÉŠ.QAR ša LÚ*.SIPA.MEŠ ina ŠĀ-bi ni-ib-zi aš-šur-a-a ina ŠĀ-bi ni-ib-zi ár-ma-a-a i-sa-ṭa-ru ina ŠĀ-bi UZU.GÚ šá ¹PA-ŠU.2-ša-bat LÚ*.IGI.DUB ša LÚ*.GAL-URU.MEŠ-te ša LÚ.A.BA ni-bu ša KUG.UD ina ŠĀ-bi UZU.GÚ-šú-nu ina ŠĀ-bi un-qi ik-ta-an-ku ma-a šum-ma MU.AN.NA an-ni-tú la i-di-nu ma-a i-mu-tú ki-i ṭa-a'-tú ta-né-pi-šú-nu-ni [un-qla-a-te TA* UZU.GÚ-šú-nu ub-ta-ti-qu ik-ter-ru [x x]-nu-um-ma la ina ḫa-du-te-e šu-u ú-ba-at-ti-qu

These texts are illuminating regarding the social function of the two languages for a variety of reasons. First, in the heartland of the empire no less than in the peripheries both languages were used in tandem for record keeping.²⁶ Second, combined with the pictorial evidence for dual scribes in the reliefs, these letters illustrate the equal administrative and legal status that the production of texts in the two languages had, as is argued elsewhere by Fales.²⁷

The limitations of such parity between the language groups are, however, crucial for understanding language contact. It was not the case that simply because Aramaic and Akkadian may have had a similar function in the areas of administration and legal procedure that such equality extended uniformly and inevitably into all other genres.²⁸ A letter from Sargon II

²⁶ See below for the Aramaic administrative texts from this period, which come from both the core of the empire (such as Assyria) and the periphery (such as Ma'allanāte).

²⁷ Fales, "The Use and Function of Aramaic Tablets," *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (edited by Guy Bunnens; Ancient Near Eastern Studies 7; Sterling, Virginia: Peeters Press, 2000), 89-124.

²⁸ It may have been the case that more Aramaic evidence existed in the form of epistolary texts written on potsherds; however, the only example of an Aramaic letter is the Aššur ostracon (also called the Bēl-ētir letter). This document contains multiple points of contact-induced change: *yšr* in the causative stem in line 2 could be a calque on Neo-Assyrian *šapāru* (the Aramaic means "to send," but could be modeled on the Akkadian here to mean "I write"); the enigmatic *klb* in line seven could be a loan from Akkadian *kallābu*, "auxiliary troops"; *zyt* in line 8 could be a loan from Akkadian *zittu*, a legal term denoting a "part, portion" of an inheritance; a general use of verb-final word order from Akkadian (*wmr'y mlk' pqd*, line 17) and the relative *zy* may have been used as a genitive on the basis of Akkadian *ša*. Not only linguistic, but literary features from Akkadian epistolary formulae appear in this text, and the degree to which this is the case has not previously, according to Fales, been recognized. When the letter is read thoroughly in light of such Assyrian epistolary conventions, however, many of the enigmatic portions become sensible. Such reliance on Assyrian linguistic and literary forms shows that even as Aramaic became more broadly accepted in the empire, its literary and linguistic expressions in the heartland of the kingdom were still derivative from Akkadian. So Fales: "if one reads the text in the light of the basic 'rules' which applied to contemporary Assyrian epistolography...an adequately comprehensible version may be reached" ("New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interference: The Assur Ostrakon," 194). Again, "...it seems that the socially dominant linguistic variety—Assyrian—represented the reference point for the overall textual framework, whether it concerned the formulaic sequences of legal deeds or the basic layout of a personal message to be communicated" ("New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interference: The Assur Ostrakon," 200).

The linguistic profile of the ostracon is peculiar. Its features are closer to later dialects such as Egyptian Aramaic. For example, the independent pronoun *hmw* functions as an accusative (line seven: *yhb hmw ly*, "[the king my lord] will give them to me") (Fales, "New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interference: The Assur Ostrakon," 194 n 28). For more on this feature of Aramaic as diagnostic, see Chapter 6. Because of the single attestation of an Aramaic letter from the Assyrian heartland, its peculiar linguistic profile, and therefore the limited conclusions that

includes a reprimand to a Babylonian official for having the audacity to write to the Assyrian king in Aramaic. Sargon quotes the official as having requested “(there are informers...) if it is acceptable to the king, I would write and send (the relevant information) on parchment sheets in Aramaic.”²⁹ Sargon responded “Why should you not write and send me messages in Akkadian? The very message which you are writing is drawn up in this way– let this be a regular standard!”³⁰ Whatever lay behind this strict reprimand, it shows that the use of Aramaic was not a given in every social situation, and its use was more contested than some scholars acknowledge.³¹

may legitimately be drawn from it, this text has not featured prominently in the main discussion of this chapter. More examples of this sort would be invaluable, particularly since letters can provide evidence for spoken dialects.

²⁹ [šá taš-pur-ra um-ma L]Ú.EME.MEŠ i-ba-áš-ši [ana LUGAL x x-k]a a-na pa-ni-šú il-lak-a-ni [um-ma] k[i]-[i IGI LUG]AL maḥ-ru ina ŠĀ si-ip-ri [KUR].ár-m[a-a-a lu-u]s-pi-ir-ma a-na LUGAL [l]u-še-bi-la. Normalization: *ša tašpurra umma ša lišānī ibašši ana šarri...ka ana pānīšu illakanni umma kī pān šarri maḥru ina libbi sipri Armāya luspirma ana šarri lušēbila.*

³⁰ *mi-nam-ma ina ši-pir-ti ak-ka-da-at-tu la ta-šaṭ-tar-ma la tu-šeb-bi-la kit-ta ši-pir-tu šà [] ina ŠĀ-bi ta-šaṭ-ṭa-ru ki-i pi-i a-gan-ni-tim-ma i-da-at lu-ú šak-na-at.* Normalization: *mināmma ina šipirti akkadattu lā tašaṭṭarma lā tušēbbila kitta šipirtu ša...ina libbi tašaṭṭaru kī pī agannītimma idat lū šaknat.* Manfred Dietrich, *The Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib* (State Archives of Assyria 17; Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press, 2003), text 2.

³¹ Fales provides an interesting theory about this letter, stating that the request to write in Aramaic was an attempt to send a cipher. He notes the official’s concern about informants and spies, and claims that the request to write in Aramaic could have been a desire to “encrypt delicate information” (“Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period,” 104-05 n 47). Fales does not provide any information on how exactly how that encryption would have worked unless writing in Aramaic was sufficient in itself to function as an encryption, though it is difficult to understand how simply writing in Aramaic qualified as a secret encoding of a message. An example from the Hebrew Bible shows how such a cipher could have functioned, called the “atbash” principle. The first letter of the alphabet, *aleph*, aligns with the last letter, *taw*, the second letter *bet* then aligns with the next to last letter (*shin*), and so forth. The writers of Jer 25:26 and Jer 51:41 use such a principle to discuss the downfall of the imperial capital Babylon. In Hebrew, the term would be **בבל**, *bbl* or *Babel*; however, in atbash the country is called **ששך**, *ššk*, or *Šešaḳ*. Intriguing though Fales’ thesis may be about Sargon’s letter, it is unclear why the Assyrian king, who was a usurper to the throne, would have been so cavalier about threats to his royal power. Fales correctly points out the oddity that Sargon refused this letter in Aramaic when other, late eighth century and seventh century correspondences to kings such as Esarhaddon did involve Aramaic.

This period of the eighth and seventh centuries in fact appears to be a time of many forms of epistolary communication with the king. Late eighth century letters to the Assyrian king from Phoenicia, for example, both came in Aramaic form (*ka-ni-ku an-ni-tú* KUR.ar-mi-tú PN T[A*] *lib-bi* URU.šur-ri <ú-s>i-bi-l[a] *ma-a, kanīku annītu* ^{KUR}Armītu PN *ištu libbi* ^{URU}Šurri *usībila mā* “PN sent this [the enclosed] sealed letter in Aramaic from with Tyre [saying...]”) as well as in duplicated Aramaic and Akkadian translation. As an example of the latter, one of the Nimrud Letters originated from Tyre in Phoenicia and reads as follows:

To summarize, the reliefs and textual evidence point to the reality of the use of Aramaic for administrative purposes in the Neo-Assyrian period. This administrative function for Aramaic was itself only possible (if not necessitated) by the mass deportation of Aramaic speaking peoples from the peripheries of the empire to the Assyrian heartland (see “Historical Background for Contact” above). Such contact between Aramaic speakers and writers and Akkadian speakers and writers created a sociohistorical background for linguistic transfer. The question, then, is not whether Aramaic gained prestige and influence over time and became the fundamental language for a variety of forms of communication. By the time of the Persian period a few centuries after the Neo-Assyrian era, such pervasive use of the language is clearly attested. Rather, the debate involves the extent of the use of the language for a variety of forms of literature at this early stage. The disagreement is relevant for the language-contact situation in Mesopotamia itself. Moreover, exploring Aramaic and Akkadian contact in Mesopotamia is informative for the linguistic and literary situation that Israelites and Judeans would have encountered when making

[a-na LU]GAL EN-ia AR[AD-k]a¹ qur-di-aš-šur-IGI ka-ni-ku an-ni-tú KUR.ár-mi-tú^{1D}PA-še-zib TA* ŠÀ-bi URU.šur-ri¹ ú-se-bi-l[a] ma-a ina É.GAL [l]u-[š]e-bi-lu-ši ina É.GAL [ú]-se¹-bi¹-la-še^{1r} hi¹-[r]u¹-mu: e-qu ša É-DINGER-ni.MEŠ-šú ša SAG URU.ši-du-u-ni i-ti-kis: ma-a a-na URU.šur-ri la-an-tú-uh¹ a-s¹a¹-par ú-sa-ag-li-ú-šú e-qu: ša i-ki-su¹-u-ni ina GÌR KUR-e š[u-tú] ha-ni-qi

ana šarri bēlīja uradka Qurdi-Aššur-lamur kanīku annītu armītu Nabû-šēzib issu libbi Šurri ussēbila mā ina ekalli lušēbilūši ina ekalli ussēbilašše Hīrumu ēqu ša bēt ilānīšu ša rēš Šiduni ittiki mā ana Šurri lantuh¹ assapar ussagliūšu ēqu ša ikkisūni ina šēpi šadē šūtu hanīqi

“To the king my lord, (from) your servant, Qurdi-Aššur-lamur. Nabû-šēzib sent this sealed Aramaic document from Tyre, which reads as follows: “It is well with the palace of Tyre; (it is well with) the palace of Ušše. Nergal-iddin was cutting down the *e-qu* of the shrine which is above Sidon. He said “I will send it to Tyre.” I wrote him and made him stop it. The *e-qu* which he had cut down is (now) secured at the foot of the mountain.” (Luukko, *The Correspondence of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II*, text 23)

The meaning of the Akkadian *e-qu* is somewhat uncertain, and most lexicons translate it as a “cult object” (so the *Assyrian Dictionary of Chicago* and the *Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*). According to Fales, however, this term in Akkadian shows interference from an underlying Aramaic translation, where Akkadian *e-qu* corresponds to Aramaic ‘q, a common term for “wood,” perhaps a “wooden planking” used in a cultic fashion. These two letters show the diverse fashion in which communication was happening. Sargon’s reaction to a request for Aramaic correspondence, then, could also be a response to a changing linguistic landscape and reveal the contested nature of forms of royal correspondence, which was perhaps not yet settled during his reign.

diplomatic visits or after their exile to Assyria and Babylon. A more precise linguistic definition of Aramaic at this time will also provide a better foundation for the use of language within the Assyrian Empire and the language choices available for diplomacy and administration as the imperial apparatus made its way into the Levant.

V. *A Linguistic Definition of Aramaic*

The history of the texts written in the Aramaic language and an account of the Arameans as tribal entities coming into contact with the Neo-Assyrian Empire have already been discussed. Yet such an analysis presupposes that scholars can accurately label a language “Aramaic.” This section provides a linguistic definition of Aramaic, and clarifies what is meant by “Aramaic” at any given time in the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian Periods. Such clarification of the linguistic realities is necessary for the examination of Aramaic and Akkadian contact and highlights issues at stake when discussing Aramaic as a vehicle for the mediation of Mesopotamian traditions that may be identified in the Hebrew Bible, particularly since some biblical scholars have misunderstood the development of this language.

The problems posed by the existence of various dialects of Aramaic in the first millennium BCE have been a matter of scholarly debate for some time. The discovery in the late nineteenth century of a peculiar language in the area of modern day Zincirli (ancient Sam'al) dating to the eighth century BCE provided a particularly striking example. The language displayed certain features of Aramaic, yet lacked other features associated with the language in contemporaneous inscriptions.³² This inscription complicated the picture of the early dialects of Aramaic and led H. L. Ginsberg to write a series of articles in which he attempted to argue that

³² The primary features peculiar to the new texts were: a diptotic case system in the plural and an absence of *-n* on these forms, an independent 1st person common singular pronoun (*nk*) different from other branches of Aramaic (*'nh*), and a definite direct object marker *wl*.

Sam'alīan (the version discovered at Zincirli) was a local dialect of Aramaic.³³ He further claimed that the early variety of dialects of this language only became standardized in the Babylonian or Persian periods. This standard form of the language would have originated in Mesopotamia and would likely have been based on a pre-existing dialect attested by the Assur ostracon (see above and below), and therefore retained characteristics of a dialect that he then labeled, appropriately, "Assyrian."³⁴ Although this dialect became the version that scholars call "Official Aramaic," Ginsberg held that its linguistic affinity with Levantine Aramaic was the result of the channels of administration and diplomacy from these Mesopotamian empires, beginning perhaps with the Assyrian administration, thereby showing dialectal contact.³⁵

Though taking issue with the classification of Sam'alīan as a dialect of Aramaic, John Huehnergard provided linguistic support for the dating of the Persian period as a pivotal time for the formation of the Aramaic language. In an influential article "What Is Aramaic?" he developed criteria for identifying a language as Aramaic.³⁶ Given the dialectal diversity of Old Aramaic, he compares thirteen diagnostic features inherent in the group of texts that make up the Old Aramaic corpus³⁷ with another set of thirteen diagnostic features shared by all, later classical

³³ See Ginsberg, "Aramaic Dialect Problems," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 50 (1933): 1-9; idem., "Aramaic Dialect Problems. II," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 52 (1936): 95-103; idem., "Aramaic Studies Today," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 62 (1942): 229-38.

³⁴ Ginsberg proposed a fourfold division of Aramaic dialects into official (or Assyrian), Kurdo-Mesopotamian, Ba'rīr, and Levantine Aramaic. He derived the label Ba'rīr to designate the dialect of Sam'al based on a reference to a people group mentioned in the Kilamuwa inscription written in Phoenician. The people in this class of society were the ones, according to Ginsberg, who spoke this dialect, and therefore he used their name to label it.

³⁵ Ginsberg does not, through this statement, indicate that such Aramaization is responsible for Mesopotamian traditions in biblical texts, though other scholars might use his views towards such ends.

³⁶ Huehnergard, "What is Aramaic?" *ARAM* 7 (1995): 261-82.

³⁷ 1) The still distinct Semitic consonants in the early period represented by different letters of the alphabet, but later written with other letters since the distinction was lost; 2) non-spirantization of stops, which may have occurred sporadically but which was mainly due to the mergers ascribed in 1), which occurred after Old Aramaic; 3) Proto-Semitic *n in "son" is *r, as in *br*; 4) "one" is written *ḥd*; 5) preservation of non-final short vowels; 6) loss of final, short vowels; 7) first person plural suffixes were written with a final -n, which may or may not have been

forms of the language (Biblical Aramaic, Targumic, Babylonian Talmudic, and Syriac).³⁸ These lists serve a variety of purposes for Huehnergard. First, of the thirteen features of classical Aramaic dialects and the thirteen of Old Aramaic inscriptions only six overlap and are common to both.³⁹ When one then uses these six features to gauge the place of Sam'alian (excluded from the consideration of the thirteen features in Old Aramaic), one finds that the latter is not a dialect of the former or even a sister language of the former, but rather Sam'alian is likely a sister dialect of "Proto-Aramoid" (to use Huehnergard's terminology), from which Proto-Aramaic and then Old Aramaic sprang.

Second, and more importantly for the purposes of this chapter, the thirteen features common to all classical forms of Aramaic do not appear together until the Persian period. These characteristics stem from "an early, but post-Old Aramaic, dialect." Indeed, "when Official Aramaic appears on the scene, the dialectal diversity of the Old Aramaic period essentially disappears; this is not to say that there is not variation in Official Aramaic, but there was now

followed by a vowel; 8) third person singular suffix on plural nouns written *-wh*, which could represent a vocalization *-awhi* with or without the final vowel; 9) a distinct absolute and construct form, but a marginally distinctive emphatic used in syntactically determined slots (such as after demonstrative and relative pronouns); 10) feminine plural ending *-n*, likely representing *-ān*; 11) some use of *qatāl* for the G-stem infinitive instead of the *m*-performative patterns characteristic of later dialects; 12) likely development of I-y prefix conjugation forms along the lines of I-n forms; 13) presence of internal passives, but absence of the N-stem conjugation.

³⁸ 1) Common set of consonantal mergers of formerly distinct phonemes; 2) "post-vocalic spirantization of non-doubled, non-emphatic stops"; 3) words "son/daughter" and "two" have *r* instead of *n*; 4) numeral "one" is *had* instead of Proto-Semitic **aḥad*; 5) "unstressed short vowels in open syllables undergo reduction or syncope"; 6) anaptyctic *i* vowel breaking up final consonant clusters; 7) first person plural suffix *-nā*; 8) third person masculine singular suffix on plural nouns *-awhi*; 9) three developed states (absolute, construct, and emphatic, with the emphatic retained as a marker of definiteness in Western Aramaic dialects but lexicalized and semantically "unmarked" in Eastern Aramaic and Syriac); 10) feminine plural suffix of the imperfect *-ān*; 11) G-stem infinitive (*pə'al*) marked with a prefix *m*-; 12) some I-y forms (such as *yəda* ' "to know," and *yəlēb* "to sit") form prefix conjugations with a doubled middle radical, much like I-n verbs; 13) fientive verbs form passive constructions through a prefixed *-t*, as in a fientive G-stem verb becoming a passive tG.

³⁹ 1) **r* in the words for "son," "daughter," and "two" instead of the Proto-Semitic **n*; 2) the form of *had* for "one"; 3) the use of *-'* to mark definiteness; 4) the use of *-awhi* (or some form) to mark third person singular suffixes on plural nouns; 5) *-ān* as the "feminine plural verbal and nominal ending"; 6) lack of an N-stem. Huehnergard notes that some of the characteristic just listed have "uncertain origin," and their value for making diagnostic decisions may be "limited" (Huehnergard, "What is Aramaic?" 275).

certainly a standard dialect which was more or less successfully reproduced.”⁴⁰ Huehnergard does not claim that Official Aramaic itself does not contain diversity, as Ginsberg had already noted.⁴¹ Further studies have revealed that Official Aramaic contains linguistic variation⁴² and shows evidence of contact-induced changes at the earliest stages.⁴³ Moreover, this standardization likely masked variation in the ongoing spoken varieties of Aramaic, such that the variation that Huehnergard states “disappeared” reflects the fact that the diversity no longer appeared in the written record. Nonetheless, the “simplifications and reductions of allomorphy” in written, Official Aramaic are characteristic of standardized dialects backed by imperial administration, akin to similar changes in Akkadian and Arabic.⁴⁴

This linguistic picture of early dialects finds its correlation in history, as the origins of the Arameans as tribes appear to be as diverse as the origins of the early dialects of the language itself.⁴⁵ Holger Gzella has further contributed to the study of Aramaic dialects by showing that even in later stages after such standardization Imperial Aramaic underwent changes due to contact. He argues that understanding the long history of the language at any point requires a strong orientation to cultural history in addition to linguistic data.⁴⁶ Gzella’s thesis is that although Official and Eastern Aramaic are different forms of the language, the heritage of

⁴⁰ Huehnergard, “What is Aramaic?” 272-73.

⁴¹ “The official idiom is nearly always more or less locally colored...” (“Aramaic Dialect Problems,” 9 n 29).

⁴² M. L. Folmer, *The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period: A Study of Linguistic Variation* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 68; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Department Oosterse Studies, 1995). See also Folmer’s brief but helpful description of Aramaic in various time periods and the texts attested therein (*The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period*, 3-6).

⁴³ See for example Mark J. Geller’s study on the role of Persian influence on the beginning stages of Official Aramaic in the use of the participle in the latter (“Persian Influence on Aramaic,” in *Ancient Iran and Its Neighbors: Studies in Honor of Prof. Józef Wolski on Occasion of his 95th Birthday* [Edited by Edward Dabrowa; Electrum 10; Kraków: Wydawn, Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2005], 31-39).

⁴⁴ Huehnergard, “What is Aramaic?” 273.

⁴⁵ Younger, “The Late Bronze Age/Iron Age Transition and the Origins of the Arameans,” 131-74.

⁴⁶ Gzella, “The Heritage of Imperial Aramaic in Eastern Aramaic,” *Aramaic Studies* 6 (2008): 85-109.

Official Aramaic can still clearly be seen in Eastern Aramaic through contact between these dialects in a post-Alexander the Great world. More specifically, the creation of Hellenistic culture produced in wide parts of the Aramaic speaking and writing society the desire to express their non-Greek identity. Such a desire to express a separate identity was the catalyst for Eastern Aramaic writers to adopt Imperial/Official Aramaic features in their texts.⁴⁷ Thus, cultural history and imperial domination come into play in understanding language change, and these factors even influence how one classifies dialects.

The foregoing discussion of Aramaic is important for a variety of reasons. First, the complexity of Aramaic dialects, particularly those dialects that existed before the Achaemenid Empire, has not always been recognized in biblical scholarship. The multi-faceted nature of the dialect situation before the standardized of the language means that one can speak of “Aramaic” only in the loosest sense prior to the Persian period (since the language is attested as regionally distinct versions prior to this time). Even after the Persian period, the dialectal situation remains an important factor. Given this fact, when scholars appeal to Aramaic mediation of Mesopotamian traditions in the Neo-Assyrian period without qualification, their frame of reference is not clear. The model that some scholars advocate, with the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires promoting the transmission of Akkadian texts in a variety of genres (epic, scientific, legal, royal inscriptions, etc.), assumes a cultural and political process for which scholars such as Huehnergard and Gzella find linguistic evidence only centuries (see below). The

⁴⁷ Gzella, “The Heritage of Imperial Aramaic in Eastern Aramaic,” 107. Gzella’s theory is plausible, though it could also be the case that those writing early forms of Eastern Aramaic adopted older features before developing their own particular version of the language. Gzella’s thesis, however, has the advantage of incorporating known cultural tensions between Greek culture and Aramaic speakers and writers in the Near East. Nonetheless, his suggestion remains tentative.

available evidence points to a concerted imperial effort of disseminating Mesopotamian texts of a variety of types in the Aramaic language only in the Persian period.

The analogy with the Greek situation under Alexander is apt. The Macedonian king promoted one dialect of Greek, known as *koine*, as the means for communicating with his vast empire, consolidating administration, and controlling military movements through the unification of the transmission of commands. As a result, the Greek texts from the Levant known today are written in this language. According to Huehnergard and Gzella, only in the Achaemenid period does Aramaic undergo a similar process. This fact means that scholarly reconstructions of large-scale transmission of Akkadian to Aramaic in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods are, at best, simplistic (see below for the linguistic data); at worst, they are anachronistic.

Second, the foregoing definition of Aramaic allows for the fact that, although Aramaic in the pre-Achaemenid period consisted of a variety of dialects, certain texts began to make their way into Aramaic in the Iron Age II period, either by translation or by the production of independent texts in Aramaic (heavily influenced by underlying Akkadian literary forms).⁴⁸ Examining this situation clarifies the complexities of pre-Achaemenid Aramaic, and leads one to expect, at a preliminary level, that language contact with Akkadian during the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods occurs between local dialects of Aramaic and Akkadian. Such a reasoned hypothesis (explored more linguistically below) raises the question of why scholars insist on a different situation in Israel and Judah. Based on the models of language contact

⁴⁸ Fales concludes regarding the Assur Ostrakon: “In a nutshell, then, the Assur ostrakon would seem to provide us with a partially similar picture to that deriving from the legal documents of this age: a specific “one-to-one” rendering into Aramaic of the stylemes and vocabulary of contemporary Assyrian letters was available to the Aramaya scribes, and it was as such easily understandable to a certain part of the population of the empire. More in general, it seems that the socially dominant linguistic variety- Assyrian- represented the reference point for the overall textual framework, whether it concerned the formulaic sequences of legal deed or the basic layout of a personal message to be communicated” (“New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interference: The Assur Ostrakon,” 200).

between Akkadian and Aramaic, one would expect Akkadian contact in Israel and Judah to happen with the local language, namely a form of Hebrew.⁴⁹

Both of these points highlight the inadequacies of the presentation of the Mesopotamian situation by many biblical scholars, particularly when language contact is concerned. An example of such a misunderstanding of what Aramaic is during its various phases appears in Schniedewind's article, "Aramaic, the Death of Written Hebrew, and Language Shift."⁵⁰ He claims:

⁴⁹ Whether such contact occurred with northern or southern dialects of Hebrew is another matter. The debate regarding the existence of identifiable strands of northern Hebrew in the biblical text is a separate issue outside of the purview of this dissertation. The outcome of this debate does not alter the conclusions of this dissertation.

⁵⁰ Schniedewind, "Aramaic, the Death of Written Hebrew, and Language Shift in the Persian Period," 138. See also Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 65. The influential nature of Schniedewind's article and argument can be seen in the work of Morrow. Morrow argues against Levinson's interpretation of Sargon's inscription (see below), which Levinson argues is a statement of the spread of Akkadian literacy. Instead, according to Morrow, "the reference is probably to encouragement of the use of Aramaic in the Neo-Assyrian empire; cf. William Schniedewind, 'Aramaic, the Death of Written Hebrew, and Language Shift in the Persian Period,' in S. L. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing, Origins of Culture* (Oriental Institute Seminars 2, Chicago 2006), 138-9." Morrow attempts to leverage Schniedewind's article for a more pronounced use of Aramaic in the Neo-Assyrian times as a way to reconstruct Aramaic as a medium of Mesopotamian influences in the Hebrew Bible generally. He claims that 2 Kgs 18:26 shows that the Western part of the empire relied on Aramaic for administration, yet the appeal to Aramaic in this passage is not for administrative purposes, nor is it the Neo-Assyrian representative who appeals to Aramaic. Moreover, he confidently states that Assyriologists disagree with biblical scholars on the nature of cuneiform literacy in the Levant at this time, the former being more skeptical of cuneiform literacy in Israel and Judah because of the complexity of the writing system relative to the more simplistic alphabetic scribal culture. Yet he too easily divides Assyriologists and biblical scholars into camps. Dalley, a prominent Assyriologist, has argued that there may have been cuneiform literacy in the Levant at this time, and Charpin has claimed that some cuneiform literacy, enough to read and write basic cuneiform, may have been much less inaccessible in this area, albeit his examples are from the Mari archives a millennium earlier than the Neo-Assyrian era. See Dalley, "Occasions and Opportunities (1)," in *Legacy of Mesopotamia* (edited by Stephanie Dalley; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 26-27; Charpin, *Reading and Writing in Babylon*, 61-63; Morrow, "'To Set the Name' in the Deuteronomic Centralization Formula'," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 55 (2010): 377-78 (esp n 54). Lastly, Morrow's claim that a copy of the Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon (VTE), which shows correspondences with Deuteronomy, likely reached the Levant in an Aramaic form is now rendered doubtful by the discovery of a copy of VTE in Akkadian (cuneiform) in the northern part of the Levantine corridor, at Tell Tayinat, just north of modern Israel. See Jacob Lauinger, "Some Preliminary Thoughts on the Tablet Collection in Building XVI from Tell Tayinat," *The Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 6 (2011): 5-14; "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 64 (2012): 87-123; Timothy P. Harrison and James F. Osborne, "Building XVI and the Neo-Assyrian Sacred Precinct at Tell Tayinat," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 64 (2012): 125-43. For a recent argument against a relationship between Deuteronomy 28 and VTE, see Spencer Allen, "Rearranging the Curses in Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty," *Die Welt des Orients* 43 (2013): 1-24.

The emergence of the Aramaic language as a lingua franca in the ancient Near East begins in the eighth century B. C. with the spread of the Assyrian empire.... The Assyrian empire adopted Aramaic as the imperial language as part of their political strategy for integrating the western provinces into the empire. In the Dûr-Sharrukîn cylinder inscription, the task of linguistic unification is given to the Assyrian monarch Sargon, who ruled from 722 to 705 B. C.

Schniedewind then quotes from this Sargon cylinder. It is significant that he provides an English translation (not the Akkadian) from D. Luckenbill, a problem with Schniedewind's analysis that is discussed below. His assessment of the linguistic situation continues:

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

Before the eighth century B. C., the Aramaic "language" is known in a variety of dialects. Indeed, the classification of these many dialects has been one of the chief occupations of Aramaic scholars (Huehnergard 1991, 1995). The empire, however, succeeded in standardizing the Aramaic language, and the new literary standard— usually classified by scholars as "Imperial Aramaic" or "Official Aramaic"— served a succession of empires (Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian) from the seventh century until the fourth century B. C.⁵¹

Following Schniedewind's logic, the unification of the dialects began under Sargon in the Neo-Assyrian period, in the late 8th century BCE. He then cites Huehnergard's article regarding the linguistic diversity of dialects in Aramaic prior to the 8th century BCE (as discussed above). A major problem exists, however, with Schniedewind's use of this study. Huehnergard makes it clear that the official implementation of one dialect of Aramaic did not occur until the Persian

⁵¹ Schniedewind, "Aramaic, the Death of Written Hebrew, and Language Shift in the Persian Period," 138-39.

period, a process that began in the mid-6th century BCE at the earliest.⁵² It is the language of this period that scholars label Imperial or Official Aramaic.⁵³ Schniedewind's use of this term for the 8th and 7th century appears to be an attempt to leverage the quotation from Sargon into an extended claim for Aramaic influence at a much earlier time period, earlier even than the scholars whom he cites would claim.⁵⁴

It is important to notice that Schniedewind cites the English translation of D. Luckenbill.⁵⁵ This translation, however, is outdated and does not accurately render the Akkadian idiom underneath. The Akkadian is as follows:

*ba'ulāt arba 'i lišānu aḥītu atmê lā mithuri āšibūt šadî u māti mala irte 'û nawirti ilānī bēl gimri ša ina zikir Aššur bēlīja ina mēzez šibirrija ašlula pā ištēn ušaškinma ušarmâ qerebšu*⁵⁶

⁵² It could have been the case that the dialect attested in the Assur Ostrakon was the version of the language used for this purpose. In other words, the Achaemenid Empire could have selected the dialect as represented in this ostrakon as the basis for their imperial communications, thereby unifying the means of official communication in the empire.

⁵³ Fales has argued that "Imperial Aramaic" is a label that should be applied earlier in time, but his reason (namely, that the Assyrian Empire used a form of Aramaic for administrative purposes) is too general and vague to be persuasive, particularly in light of the linguistic evidence (which he does not discuss). See Fales, "Between Archaeology and Linguistics: The Use of Aramaic Writing in Painted Characters on Clay Tablets of the 7th Century BCE," in *XII Incontro Italiano di linguistica camito-semitica (afroasiatica) (Medioevo romanzo e orientale. Colloqui 9; Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2007)*, 141-42. As shown below, the linguistic data shows that there was no one imperial form of the language used throughout the empire (as was the case in the Achaemenid Empire despite some variation) during the Neo-Assyrian period. Rather, regional variation appears even in dealings between the Neo-Assyrians local populations, such as at Ma'allanāte (see below). This conclusion is consistent with the claim in Chapter 3 of this dissertation that the Assyrians employed the local Judean dialect of Hebrew when conducting their negotiations in 2 Kgs 18:17-35.

⁵⁴ Fales uses this inscription for similar purposes as Schneidewind, though comes short of identifying a language agenda involving the spread of Aramaic in its rhetoric. Nonetheless, he believes that this inscription attests to Sargon's "effort at unifying the idioms of the many peoples involved in the building of the new capital city of Dur-Šarruken." Fales then sees an analogy with the biblical Tower of Babel story, where such linguistic unity (ultimately undermined by the deity) is a factor in a building campaign ("New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interference: The Assur Ostrakon," 189 n 3). Younger sees in Sargon's statement an expression of sponsored instruction of either Assyrian or Aramaic, or some other common language, across the empire for the purpose of encouraging submission to the king of Assur ("The Deportation of the Israelites," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 [1998]: 224).

⁵⁵ D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, Volume 2: Historical Records of Assyrian from Sargon to the End* (Reprint; New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).

⁵⁶ *ba-'u-lat ar-ba-'i li-šā-nu a-ḥi-tu at-me-e la mīt-ḥur-ti a-ši-bu-ut KUR-i ù ma-a-ti ma-la ir-te-'u-u ZÁLAG DINGIR.MEŠ EN gim-ri ša i-na zi-kir^dAš-šur EN-ia ina me-zez ši-bir-ri-ia áš-lu-la pa-a 1-en ú-šá-áš-kin-ma ú-šar-ma-a qé-reb-šú.* For a score, see Andreas Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad* (Göttingen: Cuvillier Verlag, 1994), 72.

Subjects of the four regions, (having) strange tongues, of non-harmonious speech, dwellers of mountains and lands, as many as the light of the gods, lord of all, guides, whom, by the order of Assur my lord, with the power of my scepter, I plundered. I made them act in concert (*pâ ištēn ušaškin*), and I settled them in its (Dur-Sharrukin's) midst.

The phrase Luckenbill translates as “I made them of one mouth,” and therefore the phrase that Schniedewind exploits to argue his point about the use of Aramaic at this time, is *pâ ištēn ušaškin*. Luckenbill's translation renders this phrase woodenly and literally, and Schniedewind utilizes this translation to construct an argument about the imperial use of Aramaic. Indeed, the following sentence of this inscription mentions that the king “dispatches” scribes and administrators as royal representatives, eager and willing Assyrians who train the provinces likewise to fear Assyrian power (through fear of the Assyrian gods and king). This immediate context may indicate that Sargon intends to describe a linguistic process of consolidation and unified communication in this inscription. Since Aramaic clearly became the means for such administrative imperial unification in the Persian period, Schniedewind appears to use this inscription to claim a much earlier beginning to this process in the Neo-Assyrian period.

Several factors undermine Schniedewind's take on Luckenbill's translation of this text. First, the overall context of the inscription has little or nothing to do with linguistic realities or imperial implementation of linguistic unification. Rather, the rhetoric of the inscription begins with diverse people groups who speak with different tongues and are made to speak with “one mouth.” The gods, because of the king's religious fidelity, then allow the king to expand his empire and rule securely for the rest of his days, into “old age.” The problem addressed in this inscription, then, is not one of a diversity of languages, but rather a fractured political reality with competing agendas and strife due to the diversity of people groups, synecdochally described

through “strange tongues.” These groups are then made to agree with one another and live peacefully. It is this political process (not a linguistic agenda) that is set forth in this inscription.

Not only does the rhetoric of the passage undermine Schniedewind’s use of Sargon’s inscription to claim a much earlier political implementation of Aramaic as an imperial language, but the parallel uses of the phrase *pâ ištēn šušunu* also reveal a political, and non-linguistic, connotation behind this idiom.⁵⁷ The editors of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* define this phrase as an expression meaning “to make act in unison.”⁵⁸ Attestations begin in the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I in the Middle Assyrian period:

pâ ištēn lu ultaškinšunu, “I made (the conquered lands) act in concert.”⁵⁹

The following description of these nations bringing tribute to the king is particularly significant: there is no sense of linguistic importance in the phrase quoted above, but rather the idiom describes a political reality. Another inscription from the Middle Assyrian period from Tiglath-Pileser I indicates the same situation.⁶⁰

The first occurrence of the phrase in Neo-Assyrian times appears in the inscriptions of Adad-Nirari II (conventionally also said to be the first king of the Neo-Assyrian period),⁶¹ and other references appear in writings from Ashurnasirpal, Tiglath-Pileser III, and Sargon, thereby evincing a wide distribution of the phrase in the period under consideration. The Middle

⁵⁷ Wright correctly translates this idiom in the Sargon inscription, though in the footnotes he is more ambivalent about its meaning and does not examine the data cited above or their significance for what the inscription is or is not communicating (*Inventing God’s Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Used and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi*, 101 n 102).

⁵⁸ CAD, š, volume 1, page 141.

⁵⁹ Ernst Weidner, *Die Inschriften Tukulti-Ninurtas I. und seiner Nachfolger* (Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 12; Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970), 28 (text 16).

⁶⁰ E. A. Wallis Budge and L. W. King, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria: The Cuneiform Texts with Translations, Transliterations, etc., from the Original Documents in the British Museum* (London: Order of Trustees, 1902), 83.

⁶¹ Otto Schroeder, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur Historischen Inhalts: Zweites Heft* (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 37; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1922), 56 (text 84 line 100).

Assyrian attestations of the phrase are much too early to be a statement of linguistic unification of the empire through the imposition of Aramaic. Both the earlier and later appearances of the idiom (including the Sargon inscription) appear in similar literary contexts: rebels of some sort from various factions and kingdoms within the empire rise up in accord with one another (having “one mouth”) or are pacified (or conquered), resulting in peace and unification of the empire, all parties therefore having “one mouth.”

A parallel construction exists using *ēdu*, “individual, solitary, single,” instead of *ištēn* in the expression.⁶² The different phrasings are synonymous, used in similar literary contexts with similar meaning. For example, an Old Babylonian extipicy text states *mātum kaluša pūša ana wēdim iššakkan*, “the whole of the land will be of one mind” (more literally, “as for the whole of the land, its mouth will be made one/single”). This early attestation contains the phonology of the Old Babylonian *wēdum*, which preserves the initial /w/ (later lost), and the use of the N-stem (or medio-passive stem) of *šakānum* instead of the Š-stem (or causative stem) of the same root as attested in the Sargon inscription above. Another example of the phrase from a later period in the Neo-Assyrian era also happens in an inscription from Sargon: *GN GN₂ ... ittija ušbalkitma pā ēda ušaškinma*, “GN1 caused GN2 to rebel against me, and made them act unanimously.”⁶³

Despite Schniedewind’s efforts to explain the situation otherwise, Aramaic is not simply a group of dialects only prior to the 8th century BCE; rather, the “language” remains a group of dialects down to the 6th century BCE, during the time when much of the language contact between the scribes and authors of the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia was happening. The

⁶² CAD e, 37.

⁶³ Hugo Winckler, *Die Keilschrifttexte Sargons: Nach der Papierabklatschen und originalen* (2 vols.; Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1889). For the cuneiform, see 1:31 (line 34). For the transcription and translation, see 2:102-103.

linguistic information that Huehnergard and Gzella provide for a Persian period beginning of such a standardization of Aramaic dialects harmonizes well with the historical information, and the Neo-Assyrian evidence that Schniedewind adduces does not indicate an earlier, 8th century BCE historical locus for this phenomenon. Despite this standardization, linguistic variation continued even during the Persian period.

This example indicates how a misunderstanding of what Aramaic is and how the various empires (Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian) used it creates misperceptions about its role relative to Akkadian. It further encourages a reliance on the role of Aramaic mediation of Mesopotamian texts and traditions at a much earlier period than is warranted.

VI. *Akkadian and Aramaic Textual Attestation*

Just as misunderstandings of the nature of Aramaic have led to overextended and generalized (if not also anachronistic) claims for the language, so also misperceptions abound in biblical scholarship of the attested use of Aramaic, particularly in the Neo-Assyrian period. As argued more extensively in this section, Aramaic was only used for limited purposes in the Neo-Assyrian period. This usage sheds light on what Israelites and Judeans would have encountered in a language contact situation in the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian periods. I examine the linguistic data for contact between Aramaic and Akkadian during this era, showing the extent and limitations of contact-induced changes. Then, I discuss what these documents reveal about language and the use of genre. Finally, a few statements are offered concerning what this textual evidence can tell us about the contacts that enabled the scribes and authors responsible for the Hebrew Bible to assimilate various Mesopotamian traditions.

a. *Aramaic Epigraphs from the Assyria: Dockets, Colophons, and Legal Texts*

i. *Types of texts*

The Aramaic evidence from Assyria is of three types. First, there is a small but growing number of clay tablets with only Aramaic written on them. Second, there is also a small number of bilingual Aramaic/Akkadian tablets. Third, there is a much larger number of clay docket inscribed in Aramaic and of Aramaic colophons on cuneiform (Akkadian) texts. The script on the documents is linear Aramaic, and the dockets often are perforated for attachment with a string to a cuneiform text. The Aramaic written on both the dockets and the colophons summarized the contents of the cuneiform document and provided ease of access: the scribe could quickly reference the Aramaic docket or colophon (which was presumably easier to read in alphabetic script than the more complicated cuneiform), determine the contents of the tablet based on the summary, and either pull the tablet for use or leave it where it was stored if it was not the desired text. Hundreds of such Aramaic dockets and texts with Aramaic colophons have been discovered in a variety of archives, attesting to the wide practice of using Aramaic as a quick reference language for accessing tablets inscribed in Akkadian.⁶⁴

ii. *Provenance*

The provenance of these Aramaic texts is often uncertain given their frequently fragmentary state and the fact that many were not discovered during controlled excavations. Collections from regular excavations include those found at: Nineveh, Kalḫu (modern Nimrud),

⁶⁴ The trifold division above is from Fales. According to him, these Aramaic texts from Assyria are of three general categories: 1) terse (one to two line) summaries of a corresponding Akkadian tablet (the Aramaic in the form of a docket or colophon); 2) a small number of bilingual tablets with an Akkadian text and an Aramaic translation; and 3) very few monolingual Aramaic tablets. These texts are exclusively juridical or administrative in nature, with the possible exception of one or two apotropaic Akkadian/Aramaic bilingual texts. See Fales, "Between Archaeology and Linguistics: The Use of Aramaic Writing Painted on Clay Tablets of the 7th Century BC," 148-49.

Assur, Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana), Tell Šēḫ-Ḥamad (ancient Dur-katlimmu), Tell Aḫmar (ancient Til Barsip), Tell Shioukh Fawqani, and Ma'allanāte. Regionally these texts can be subdivided: those from the Assyrian center (Nineveh, Kalḫu, and Assur), and those from the western provinces that became part of "Assyria proper" (all of these documents date to the seventh century BCE).⁶⁵

Because the Aramaic texts are mostly summations or translations of Akkadian tablets (even the few monolingual tablets are derivative of Akkadian linguistic and literary forms), contact-induced changes occur with some frequency. Despite the reality of language contact, the Aramaic regional dialect represented in the dockets is manifest. The Aramaic dialect is firmly Mesopotamian.⁶⁶ Even in these smaller inscriptions during the Neo-Assyrian period, dialectal features appear, as shown above, which militates against a monolithic understanding of the language during this time.

iii. *Loanwords and Loan Translations*

These legal texts, dockets, and colophons show numerous loanwords and loan translations, from Akkadian to Aramaic. Such contact-induced change is to be expected given the derivative nature of the legal texts and the nature of the dockets and colophons as summations of the Akkadian text to which they were attached. For this reason, Kaufman suggests that there are "a large number of loanwords" in this material, though he quickly qualifies the situation. Some of these putative loans could simply be transliterations of the Akkadian into Aramaic; therefore, he doubts their status, as abundant as they might be, as true "loanwords." If scribes who were literate only in the alphabetic Aramaic and illiterate in the

⁶⁵ Fales, "Use and Function of Aramaic Tablets," 102.

⁶⁶ Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, 156.

cuneiform were responsible for the legal texts, dockets, and colophons, and if the Akkadian lexical elements are only transliterations of the contexts of the cuneiform tablets but not true lexical borrowings into Aramaic, then a much smaller amount of the lexical influence in these texts from Akkadian to Aramaic can be posited. Kaufman then lists only four true, certain loans from Akkadian into Aramaic: *skl*, “vizier”; *l'm*, “eponym official”; *kdm*, “gold- and silversmith”; and perhaps *dnh/t*, “valid tablet.”⁶⁷

Fales suggests, however, that Kaufman’s approach is too restrictive, especially given the dynamic interchange between Aramaic and Akkadian in this period. In other words, it is not simply a matter of Aramaic writers who have lost fluency or literacy in Akkadian. As argued below, the lack of dockets on certain text types may actually show continued Akkadian literacy amongst the scribes compiling the same archives. Instead, Fales claims that there is mutual interchange in the contact situation. Aligning the Aramaic and Akkadian data that go beyond phonology and etymology allows for a much better perspective on this dynamic situation and reveals more contact and interaction between the languages than Kaufman suggests. For example, Fales divides the lexical information from these dockets into six groups: 1) words for writing and documents;⁶⁸ 2) words for titles and professional functions;⁶⁹ 3) topographical data;⁷⁰ 4) legal jargon;⁷¹ 5) weights, measures, and amounts;⁷² and 6) general vocabulary.⁷³ Groups 1, 2,

⁶⁷ Kaufman, *Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, 156.

⁶⁸ *grt*, (construct state) “deed”; *dnt*, (absolute and construct state) “conveyance text”; *htm*, “seal”; *spr* I, “scribe”; *spr* II, “deed.”

⁶⁹ *hzn*, “mayor”; *hšd*, “harvester”; *l'm*, *lm*, “eponym”; *mlk*, “king” (in *br mlk*’, “crown prince); *mšn*, “steward”; *skl*, “minister, vizir”; *snh*, “deputy”; *zy qdm byt*, “household overseer”; *rbsrs*, “chief eunuch”; *rbšqn*, “chief cupbearer.”

⁷⁰ *dr*, “threshing-floor”; *'m* II, “boundary-marker”; *'rq*, “land, town”; *byt*, “estate”; *hql*, “field”; *kpr*, “village” (in toponyms); *krm*, “vineyard”; *mt*, “region, province” (in toponyms); *thm*, “boundary.”

⁷¹ *'hz*, “to take, to acquire legally”; *'št*, “marriage”; *dn dbb*, “lawsuit and litigation”; *hbl*, “interest”; *ṭ'm*, “to decide”; *yšb*, “to go back, to return”; *lqh*, “to take (into custody)”; *ntm*, “to give, to give back”; *qrb*, “to be close, at hand”; *rby*, “to grow (said of interest)”; *rhn*, “to pledge”; *rsh*, “(offerings of) first-fruits; *šql* II, “to pay.”

⁷² *zww*, “half-shekel”; *ksp*, “amount, silver”; *mnh*, “mina”; *šql* I, “shekel.”

and 4 show the most concentrated correspondences between Aramaic and Akkadian both in terms of roots and semantic equivalences, whereas the other groupings of lexical items can either be attributed to general Semitic or West Semitic vocabulary stock. This collation reveals the limitations of one-sided considerations of contact, as well as exclusively phonological considerations in identifying lexical influence. In category 1, the docket contains the Aramaic word for “deed” (*'grt*), which was loaned into the matching Akkadian tablet (showing Aramaic influence on Akkadian), while the word *dnt* meaning “conveyance text” is likely an Akkadian loanword into the Aramaic texts and also appears in the corresponding cuneiform texts. Moreover, extensions in the lexical semantics of the Aramaic words are especially marked in the juridical grouping (group 4), which, combined with the direct loans from Neo-Assyrian (loans that Fales claims have not been previously recognized), show a considerable amount of Assyrian influence on the Aramaic of the dockets and colophons. The extensive influence in this juridical grouping is especially significant since legal texts represent the “‘heart’ of the overall lexicon of our epigraphs....”⁷⁴ There is, then, a general alignment in these texts between literary genre (legal) and lexical loans (legal terminology).

Lexical influence also occurs in loan translations. Fales states that group 6 contains the least obvious Assyrian influence and lacks loans partly because there is no technical connection to the contents of the Akkadian documents; however, such Aramaic lexemes were used to express Akkadian concepts in calques. (See also below where syntax and calquing are discussed together.) Such calquing also appears in the usage of prepositions. Fales claims that the Aramaic

⁷³ *'h*, “brother”; *'m l*, “mother”; *'mt*, (construct state) “handmaid, female slave”; *'nš*, “people”; *br* (pl. *bnw*), “son”; *brt*, (construct state), “daughter”; *hyy*, “life”; *yd*, “hand”; *yhb*, “to give”; *ywm*, “day”; *yrh*, “month”; *lbb*, “heart”; *qn'*, “sheep”; *šhd*, “witness”; *šwm*, “to place”; *š'rn*, “barley.”

⁷⁴ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 97.

preposition *b* takes on the instrumental nuance in economic contexts of exchange. He attributes this meaning to Akkadian influence of *inalana*,⁷⁵ though the same use of the preposition *b* in Hebrew (1 Kgs 10:29; Num 18:16) appears to be a native construction. Given its independent use in Hebrew one could just as easily claim that the *b* in the Aramaic dockets is common Semitic; therefore, this feature is not a sign of Akkadian influence despite's Fales' claim otherwise.

Nonetheless, the preposition *l* likely reflects Akkadian influence. In several dockets, this preposition means "to," in the sense of "(debited) to," likely a loan translation from the Akkadian *ina pān(i)*.⁷⁶ As Fales points out, this Akkadian expression had a technical use in legal contracts, and it seems as though this technical connotation was borrowed into the semantics of the Aramaic *l*.⁷⁷ In this case, however, Akkadian influence is not certain. This preposition appears in Ugaritic, though there the Akkadian equivalent is *eli* (spelled logographically as UGU).⁷⁸ Because *l* has this meaning in a variety of Semitic languages over time, this usage is likely simply a facet of the meaning "upon," and its appearance in these contexts in the dockets could well be native Aramaic. In these documents, the preposition also has its usual semantic domain in Aramaic, but this usage finds itself in expressions calquing Akkadian: *mn l mn yšb* in Aramaic is a loan translation from Akkadian *mannu ina muḥḥi manni ibballakatūni*, "whoever returns in suit against another."⁷⁹ While Aramaic *l* was used in phrases to calque Akkadian *ina*

⁷⁵ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 84.

⁷⁶ For the reflex of this phrase in biblical and early Jewish texts, see Simeon Chavel, "The Face of God and the Etiquette of Eye-Contact: Visitation, Pilgrimage, and Prophetic Vision in Ancient Israelite and Early Jewish Imagination," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 19 (2012): 1-55.

⁷⁷ The literary context assures this meaning of the preposition *l*, as the name of the debtor follows. In one case, the name of the creditor follows the preposition, but Fales claims that this example could be due to scribal error as it makes no sense. Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 85.

⁷⁸ This use of the preposition is common: *ttm ksp l yrmm*, "sixty (shekels) of silver (debited) to Yarimānu" (RIH 84/04); *mit ksp l bn rqn*, "one hundred (shekels) of silver (debited) to Binu-Raqdānu" (RIH 84/33). Other examples could be cited.

⁷⁹ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 85, 254.

pāni in the sense of “(debited) to” and to translate Akkadian *ina muḥḥi*, Aramaic *qdm* (“before”) translates both of these meanings as well as *ina pāni* in the sense of “in front of.” Aramaic *qdm* is also used in the calque of Akkadian *ša muḥḥi bīti* (Aramaic *zy qdm byt*), “he who is before the house,” in which the usual sense of the preposition in Aramaic is utilized for this Akkadian title.

iv. *Verbs and the Verbal System*

While nouns and particles show lexical influence from Akkadian, it seems that there was much less contact-induced change in verbs in these texts. Lexically, the semantic extension of Aramaic verbs in legal terms and jargon due to Akkadian influence appears in category 4) of Fales’ lexical groupings, but in none of the other fields. In terms of morphology, no discernible contact-induced change occurs. Fales claims that a use of *lqh* in one text is likely a passive construction (given the use of the following preposition *mn*), influenced by a corresponding Akkadian verb; however, internal passives may have been operative in a variety of dialects of this period, and so an internal passive of *lqh* could equally be a native Aramaic expression.⁸⁰ Another expression, an Aramaic perfective G-stem preceded by *hn* (*lh*), may be a “reflex of the *šumma* + preterite construction” in Neo-Assyrian.⁸¹ Otherwise, the use of verbs in the Aramaic texts fits legal formulae known elsewhere in the West Semitic world and can easily be seen as native to Aramaic tradition.

v. *Syntax*

Syntactically, these texts also provide a variety of examples of language contact. Although Fales includes the expanded use of the Aramaic relative pronoun *zy* in his section discussing morphology, one could just as easily analyze the expansion of the word in an

⁸⁰ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 87; Huehnergard, “What is Aramaic?” 272.

⁸¹ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 87.

examination of syntactic contact-induced change. For example, this relative pronoun, used exclusively as such in Old Aramaic (with the exception of the bilingual Akkadian-Aramaic inscription from Tell-Fekheriye, discussed later), takes on the function of marking a genitive construction in many of these Mesopotamian Aramaic legal texts, docketts, and colophons likely under the influence of Akkadian *ša*.

Relative function: *'grt ksp' zy 'l zbn*, “contract of the silver which is (debited) to Zabīn.”⁸²

Genitive function: *š'rn zy br mlk'*, “barley of the crown prince.”⁸³

The fact that the genitival use of the relative pronoun is common in Semitic is a complicating factor for Fales' analysis.⁸⁴ The mere use of the relative pronoun in genitive constructions cannot be adduced as evidence *per se* of a contact-induced change from Akkadian. The distribution and frequency of its occurrence in Mesopotamian Aramaic,⁸⁵ however, makes it likely that the use of the relative in genitive constructions reflects Akkadian influence, in which such genitive constructions are a primary function of the relative pronoun. A more overt form of this influence appears in two Neo-Assyrian docketts, in which the Akkadian genitive marker (*ša*) was borrowed directly.⁸⁶ These borrowings constitute a phonological peculiarity since lexemes with the sibilant

⁸² Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 185.

⁸³ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 151.

⁸⁴ The genitive use with the relative also appears in Ugaritic: *tqḥ mlk' lmk drkt dt dr drk*, “you will take your eternal kingship, (your) sovereignty of generation to generation” (literally, “(your) sovereignty, the one of generation of generation”; *ḥry...d k n'm 'nt n'mh*, “Ḥurra...whose beauty is like Anatu's” (Pierre Bordreuil and Dennis Pardee, *A Manual of Ugaritic* [Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 3; Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 2009], 30, 68).

⁸⁵ In this fashion, Mesopotamian Aramaic contrasts with Old Aramaic, where the relative is never used as a genitive. These examples from Old Aramaic are attested in texts further away regionally from Mesopotamian (such as the Levant).

⁸⁶ *št š' rdnb'w'*, “the marriage of Urad-Nabu”; *[d]nt ḥqly' š []...*, “deed of the fields of []...” Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 84. According to Fales may also account for the initial /š/ appearing at the beginning of one of the Neirab Aramaic inscriptions; however, Kaufman is correct that

/š/ borrowed from the Neo-Assyrian into Aramaic and Hebrew in this period are rendered as /ś/.

These relative pronouns in the docketts are an exception, which may also shed light on שלמנים in Isa 1:23 (see Chapter 6), as well as the title רב שקה, which also appears in Aramaic docketts from the Neo-Assyrian times as *rb šqn*.⁸⁷

Regarding word order, Fales states that the Aramaic attested in these docketts has a much looser syntax than attested in other Aramaic dialects. Since the dialect of the docketts and colophons falls into the category of Mesopotamian Aramaic, he concurs with Kaufman's similar assessments about the syntax of this dialect.⁸⁸ Yet, instead of ascribing this lack of rigid word order to general Akkadian influence (Akkadian was SOV after contact with Sumerian; Aramaic was originally VSO), Fales suggests that such looseness correlates to the attempt to render Akkadian expressions into Aramaic. Thus, the syntax in this case is not an independent influence or borrowing, but rather happens as a result of loan translations, or large-scale calquing.

Examples of phrases in the docketts, colophons, and legal texts include:⁸⁹

1) <i>l'm</i>	<i>rbšrs</i>	<i>nbsršr</i>
eponym.year	chief.eunuch	PN

this letter is part of the name of the person commissioning the inscription, a name already recognized in the 19th century in cuneiform sources.

⁸⁷ In this example, Mankowski shows himself to be over-reliant on a phonological criterion that does not take into account the evidence from the Neo-Assyrian docketts. Because Akkadian /š/ in *rab šaqê* is preserved in Hebrew, Mankowski claims that the loan occurred through Babylonian sources; however, the retention of /š/ in both the relative pronouns and in the title *rb šqn* in Neo-Assyrian docketts shows that while this phonological criterion that Akkadian /š/ in Neo-Assyrian becomes Hebrew and Aramaic /ś/ and Akkadian /š/ in Neo-Babylonian remains Hebrew and Aramaic /š/, notable exceptions occur.

⁸⁸ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 88.

⁸⁹ The following examples are consolidated from Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 88-90; "New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interference: The Assur Ostrakon," 192-93; Lemaire, *Nouvelles Tablettes Araméennes* (Hautes études orientales 34; Moyen et Proche-Orient 1; Genève: Droz, 2001); "Remarks on the Aramaic of Upper Mesopotamia," in *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting* (edited by Holger Gzella and Margaretha L. Folmer; Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission Band 50; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 85-87.

“in the eponym year of the chief eunuch, Nabû-šarru-ušur”

This phrase copies the adverbial usage of the Akkadian *limmu*, which is otherwise expressed *bl'm* in Aramaic (corresponding to Assyrian *ina limme*). The text of the phrase quoted above is from Nineveh, though the *limmu* formulation appears in many of these Mesopotamian Aramaic texts from a variety of regions.

- 2) *ḥt'* *mn*□*h'*□ 5 [+3 *šqln* *ksp'* (?)] [*mn*(?)]
- one mina eight shekels silver from
- '□*ḥwh* *b'nwh'* *'hz* *'m't'<'>'*
- brothers+POS 3FSG sons+POS 3FSG he.purchased the.slave.woman

“For one mina (?), eight shekels of silver (?) he purchased the slave woman from her brothers (and) sons.”

This phrase is from a text from Nineveh. Although the passage is fragmentary and contains uncertain readings, the verbal component, *'hz*, is clearly at the end of the clause (under the influence of Akkadian verb-final syntax) and its semantics map onto technical, Akkadian juridical language (*laqā'u*), as mirrored in the cuneiform tablet itself.

- 3) *šnn'd* *dnt* *lqh*
- PN tablet he.took

“Sin-na'id has taken (his) tablet.”

The text is from Assur. This clause shows verb-final syntax, though a particular Assyrian phrase may or may not underlie the Aramaic. Fales has suggested tentatively *šābit danniti/tuppi/egirti* (note that the Akkadian participle *šābit* is

syntactically in construct with the object *danniti/tuppi/egirti*, and therefore not a perfect correspondence with the Aramaic morphosyntax).⁹⁰ Interestingly, the docket that contains this phrase also has a variant syntactic form with a more fronted verb that maps more closely to the expected Aramaic, albeit with a preposed subject:

šmšdlh yhb š'ry'
 PN he.will.give the.barley

“Šamaš-dalaḥi will give the barley (back).”

4) *mn qrb mn□h□[m] /š'r' yntn*
 PRO is.close PREP+3MPL the.barley he.will.give

“whoever is closest among [them] will give (back) the barley”

The verb appears in final position in this “clause of repayment” as a calque from the Akkadian *ša karmūni ušallam*. The text is from a tablet from Guzana. Much like the previous example, the docket in which this example appears also contains a clause in which the Aramaic order verb-object occurs:

hn lh ntn š'ry'
 PTC PREP+3MSG he.gives the.barley

“If he gives the barley to him....”⁹¹

As mentioned previously, this latter phrase also possibly shows Akkadian influence in calquing the *šumma* + preterite construction.

⁹⁰ An alternate analysis, *contra* Fales, is to understand *šabit* as a permansive with transitive function, in which case the Akkadian and Aramaic are more linguistically aligned. On this form in Akkadian, see Huehnergard, “‘Stative,’ Predicative Form, Pseudo-Verb,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 47 (1987): 215-32.

⁹¹ Rather than as a preposition phrase, the *lh* could be taken as an additional particle connected with *hn* to heighten the “hypothetical” nature of the clause as in *hn lw* in Imperial Aramaic (Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 242).

5) *mn l mn yšb*
 PRO PREP PRO he.returns

“whoever returns (in a lawsuit) against another....”

This example (from a tablet of unknown provenance) is mentioned above in the section concerning prepositions and semantics. Its verb-final syntax suggests Akkadian influence, but once again through the calquing of a phrase (*mannu ša ina muḥḥi manni ibballakkatūni*, “whoever will revolt against whomever else”).

Elsewhere in the docket in which this phrase appears, Aramaic syntax occurs. A variant of this expression appears in a text published in 2001 likely from near Harran or Carchemish:⁹² *mn l mn ythpk*, “whoever turns against another.” This clause contains the only attested example of the verb *hpk* in the Aramaic language, a verb otherwise common in Semitic. The root cannot be a loan from Akkadian, as the voiceless glottal fricative, *h*, in Akkadian was lost at a much earlier stage, merging with *ʔ*. The Akkadian cognate, therefore, is *abāku*, showing both the loss of the *h* and the voiced bilabial *b*. Were it a direct loan into Aramaic, one might expect the initial glottal stop and voiced bilabial to be a part of the root since these phonetic options were available to the Aramaic writers, who instead used the historic West Semitic form.

6) a) *ḥyy šhr wḥyy mlkʔ*
 life DN CONJ+life the.king

“(by) the life of Sehr and the life of the king”

b) *ḥyy mlkʔ w dwh*

⁹² Lemaire, *Nouvelles tablettes araméennes*, 25.

life the.king CONJ+loyalty.oath+POS 3MSG

yb 'mh *bydh*

it.will.seek+OBJ PREP.his.hand

“the life of the king and his loyalty oath will hold him responsible.”

The first phrase (a) lacks a verb (therefore Fales lists it separately from the above examples), but is related to a second (b), longer phrase. These clauses occur in texts from Tell Shioukh Fawqani. These phrases are a calque (in abbreviated and full form) from the Akkadian *balātu ša šarri ša mār šarri ina qātā<šu> uba 'uni*, “the life of the king (and) of the prince will hold him responsible.” The second, longer Aramaic version differs from the Akkadian slightly. The shorter Aramaic phrase is from a docket in which another calque from Akkadian appears (the previously mentioned *mn l mn yšb*). The longer Aramaic phrase has a verb in penultimate position, not final position but certainly postposed relative to typical Aramaic verb initial syntax and more in line with Akkadian.

7) *brb 'h* *yrbh*

PREP+one-fourth it.will.increase

“it will increase by one-fourth”

The Aramaic is a loan translation of Akkadian *ana rabitišu irabbi*. Both languages use the same verbal root in the same syntactic position (following Akkadian verb final position). The clause is widely attested in Mesopotamian Aramaic.

8) *ksp'* *hšlm* *yhb*

the.money ADV INF.entirety it.was.paid

“the money was paid in its entirety”

This phrase is in an acquisition clause in an Assyrian and Aramaic legal contract likely from the region of Nineveh (this city is mentioned elsewhere in the tablet). The Aramaic clause calques the Akkadian *kaspu gammur tadin*, showing a corresponding verb final positions in accordance with Akkadian syntax. Elsewhere in Akkadian, the verbs *šullumu* (D-stem, “to pay in full”) and *nadānum* appear as a verbal hendiadys. The same verb *š-l-m* (though in the causative stem) and the Aramaic semantic equivalent of Akkadian *nadānum*, *yhb*, appear in the Aramaic phrase, even though the same hendiadys does not occur in the corresponding Assyrian tablet.

9) 'mt h zrpt lqht
slave.woman that-F she.is.purchased she.is.acquired

“the slave woman is purchased and acquired”

This example also comes from the same legal text as example 8, and the corresponding Akkadian is *amtu šuatu zarpat laqi'at*.⁹³ The same asyndetic verbal hendiadys appears in both Aramaic and Akkadian, both appearing in the final position of the clause in each language.

10) 'l brky 'šr nnwh yśm
PREP lap DN Nineveh he.wil.place

“He will place (it) on the lap of (the statue of) Issar of Nineveh.”

⁹³ Karen Radner, *Die Neuassyrischen Privatrechtsurkunden als Quelle für Mensch und Umwelt* (State Archives of Assyria Studies 6; Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 1997), 343-44.

The clause is from the same tablet as examples 8 and 9. This Aramaic phrase corresponds to Akkadian *ina burki Issar āšibat*⁹⁴ *Ninua išakkan*. Issar is the Assyrian spelling of Ištar, the goddess of love and war (later Venus). Much like this example, an Aramaic tablet in the Brussels Museum contains the phrase *ksp zy ḥrqy rsh zy 'šr 'rb 'l*, “silver, belonging to Ḥ-RQY⁹⁵ (as an offering of) first-fruits for Ištar of Arba'il,” both texts spelling Assyrian Ištar, Issar, as Aramaic 'šr.⁹⁶ Both the Assyrian and Aramaic place the verb in final position, in accordance with standard Akkadian syntax.⁹⁷

11) <i>ygrh</i>	<i>dyn</i>	<i>wlyrqh</i>	<i>bh</i>
he.may.incite	a.lawsuit	CONJ+NEG+he.will.prevail	PREP+3MSG

“He may incite a lawsuit, but he will not prevail.”

These phrases come from a tablet likely from the area of Harran (based on onomastic evidence in the text that corresponds with other names from that region). The Aramaic parallels an Akkadian phrase *ina dēnišu idabbubma lā ilaqqe*. Both the Akkadian and the Aramaic consist of two clauses in a legal text. The first Akkadian

⁹⁴ Fales normalizes this word as *ašibat*; however, such normalization is impossible as it breaks the rule in all Akkadian dialects that two short, open syllables cannot stand together. This normalization would be like a stative, but then the word should be *ašbat*. Instead, I have normalized the word as a participle, which is consistent with the signs in the Akkadian and other uses of this verb with Ištar (^D*Ištar Uruk...āšibat atmanu ḥurāši*, “the Ištar of Uruk...who lives in the golden cella [driving a chariot drawn by seven lions],” *CAD A* volume 2, 496).

⁹⁵ This name is vocalized (^a)*ḥ(ī)-raqī*, the latter root from *rḏy. See Fales, “Assyro-Aramaica: Three Notes,” *Orientalia* 53 (1984): 66-67.

⁹⁶ On the phonology of Aramaic sibilants and Neo-Assyrian sibilants, see Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 61-65.

⁹⁷ Sandra Richter’s claim that the idiosyncratic meaning of the root *š-k-n* in Deuteronomy to mean “place, set” is due to the Neo-Assyrian Akkadian semantic domain of the same root was based largely on the parallel texts of the Akkadian/Aramaic bilingual Tell-Fekheriye. The Akkadian text has *š-k-n* where Aramaic has *š-y-m*, and Richter claims the latter is the more usual verb “to place” in West Semitic (and therefore Hebrew). The distinction in this bilingual is suggestive that the appearance of *š-k-n*, therefore, as “to place” in Deuteronomy is due to a contact-induced change with Akkadian. The correspondence between Neo-Assyrian *išakkan* and Aramaic *yśm* in the calque above would be another datum for Richter’s thesis. See Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: Pšakkēn šmō sām in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 318; New York: de Gruyter, 2002), 202-203.

clause is verb final, as is the second clause (albeit the second clause merely consists of a negative particle and a verb). The Aramaic, in this case, does not follow Akkadian syntax, having verb initial placement in both clauses.

- 12) *ksp'* *šlšn* *lmr'wh* *yhb/yšb*
the.silver 30.times PREP+owners+POS 3MSG he.will.give/return
“He will give back the silver 30 times to its owner(s).”

This phrase belongs to a restitution clause and parallels the Akkadian *kaspu ana 30.MEŠ ana bēlī/ēšu ūtāra*.⁹⁸ Both the Aramaic and Akkadian have verb-final syntax, in accordance with the expected Akkadian order. The Aramaic version of this clause ending in *yhb* is in the same tablet as 8, 9, and 10.

- 13) *'wrh* *swsyn* *ḥwrn* *ybl* *lb'l* *ḥyrn*
a.team horses (dual) white (dual) he.will.bring PREP+DN Ḥīrân
“He will bring a team of two white horses to Baal of Ḥīrân”

This clause is in an Aramaic text likely from the area around Harran and Carchemish (the same text as example 5 with *ythpk*), since *b'l ḥyrn* is similar to a toponym in Assyrian records that locates this place in the region of Adana. Though there is no corresponding Akkadian phrase, the verb is placed after the subject as per Akkadian syntax, though prior to the indirect object.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ The nominative in Akkadian historically was marked *-u*, the accusative *-a*; in later dialects such as Neo-Assyrian, however, both the nominative and accusative were written *-u* (hence, *kaspu* above is the object of the verb). See Huehnergard and Christopher Woods, “Akkadian and Eblaite,” in *The Ancient Languages of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Aksum* (edited by Roger D. Woodard; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 107.

⁹⁹ This clause looks similar to the phrase in KTMW lines 3-5, where a series of offerings are made (*ybl l-*). In these examples, however, the word *ybl* is the noun “ram,” since otherwise the gods listed would not receive their own offerings, which is standard protocol in such lists. Dennis Pardee, “A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 356 (2009): 61.

- 14) *'wrh swsyn [l]šhr wqryt zhb lnkl*
 a.team horses PREP+DN CONJ+city gold PREP+DN
yntn wlyrqwn bh
 he.will.give CONJ+NEG+he.will.take.pleasure PREP+3FSG

“He will give a team of horses to Sahar and a gold city¹⁰⁰ to Nakal, and he will not take pleasure in it!”

These clauses are almost identical to example 11, with the exception of the final *-n* on the verbal form. The first clause is verb final. The text is likely from the region of Harran.

- 15) *'wrh swsyn ḥwrn yhb [l]šhr*
 a.team horses white he.will.give PREP+DN
wlyrqh bh
 CONJ+NEG+he.will.take.pleasure PREP+3FSG

“A team of two white horses he will give to Sahar and he will not take pleasure in it!”

These phrases are similar to both example 13 (with *yhb* instead of *ybl*) and examples 11 and 14. The first clause has a verb postposed, though in both phrases the indirect object appears in the final syntactic slot. This text was likely from the region of Harran from near the end of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.¹⁰¹

- 16) *r'š' ḥšlm w'bdy' zrpw*
 the.sum has.been.paid CONJ+slave (dual) they.have.been.purchased

¹⁰⁰ This phrase is also attested in an Akkadian text from Ugarit, *ālu ḥurāšu*, as well as a rabbinic text from Rabbi Aqiva, עיר של זהב. The text from Ugarit gives the weight of gold implied in this section for one “city of gold” as 1,935 kilograms. Lemaire, *Nouvelles Tablettes Araméennes*, 37.

¹⁰¹ This region was a holdout of Neo-Assyrian power even during the final stages of the empire.

“The sum has been paid and the two slaves have been purchased.”

The first clause is similar to example 8 and also corresponds to Assyrian *kaspu gammur tadin*. This text, including the second clause, also is similar to example 9, which has both *hšlm* and *zrp* as part of the legal formulation. These phrases are from the same texts as 5 and 13.

In all of these examples, only phrases 3, 11, 14, and 15 have an Aramaic clause that diverges from Akkadian syntax (phrase 6b has a slight divergence, though the Aramaic verb is still significantly postposed). Examples 11, 14, and 15 are clearly part of common legal phraseology, and are similar enough to qualify as fixed expressions or linguistic constructions. Moreover, examples 14 and 15 have one clause with a verb in final position, and the other clauses in examples 14 and 15 have a postposed verb. Otherwise, the syntactic influence of Akkadian in Aramaic through these loan translations is apparent.¹⁰² In verbless sentences in Mesopotamian Aramaic, the subject always precedes the predicate as in Akkadian (unless the subject is a pronoun, in which case the pronoun appears second); however, this syntax is also Aramaic, and the subject/predicate syntax in verbless clauses in these texts is therefore a native Aramaic construction.¹⁰³

If Fales is correct, then his conclusions would be in accord with Winford’s theory of syntactic borrowing: it is not an independent category (at least at first), but rather comes into a language through other means, such as loan translations of larger phrases that have syntactic information embedded in them. In this manner, syntactic borrowing mostly occurs when

¹⁰² “..it would seem as if a consistent, and “one-to-one,” rendering into Aramaic of all structural aspects of the Neo-Assyrian legal tradition had been progressively prepared” (Fales, “New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interferences: The Assur Ostrakon,” 193).

¹⁰³ Stanislav Segert, *Altaramäische Grammatik (mit Bibliographie, Chrestomathie und Glossar)* (Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1975), §7.3.3.3.1.

mediated through extensive lexical borrowing and loan translations.¹⁰⁴ His thesis is debated amongst linguists,¹⁰⁵ and even though such a process may be operative in these examples, it does not mean that Winford's theory holds true in every case. Nonetheless, since in most of the examples above Aramaic word order can be shown to correlate with an Akkadian cognate phrase, it seems that the syntax in these texts is more reflective of calquing than the incorporation of syntactic change as an independent structural borrowing.

vi. Morphology

Despite influence on the lexicon and syntax, the morphology of Mesopotamian Aramaic in the Neo-Assyrian period resisted morphological interference from Akkadian. According to Fales' assessment, pressure is possibly seen in the Aramaic *'nš*, usually meaning "man, person, individual" but in these texts meaning "people" at times, influenced through the use of the *plurale tantum nīšū* in Akkadian.¹⁰⁶ He claims that the singular form of this Aramaic word may appear with a collective meaning as a result of influence from the parallel Akkadian term. Fales may be over extending the data at this point. In biblical texts, for example, the cognate אָנָשׁ is singular in form though used collectively. This phenomenon could simply be common Semitic.¹⁰⁷

Aramaic words found on the tablets such as *'rblsr*, *hdwh*, *'glh*, *rsh*, and *m'lnh* have normal, feminine absolute endings in Aramaic. Their Akkadian corresponding words, *Arba'il-*

¹⁰⁴ "In most cases, such transfer is mediated by lexical borrowing, in other words, structural elements come along with lexical borrowings, and may end up becoming part of the RL system" (Winford, "Contact and Borrowing," 175).

¹⁰⁵ Heine and Kuteva, *Language Contact and Grammatical Change*, 158.

¹⁰⁶ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Periods*, 82.

¹⁰⁷ One could argue for Fales' proposal based on Aramaic contact with Hebrew given that the collective use of this lexeme (and according to some its use everywhere) in biblical writings tend to appear in later texts; however, the distribution is not clear-cut and the lexeme appears in other Semitic languages such as Ugaritic (and so could be common Semitic and not due solely to Aramaic influence in the Hebrew Bible).

šarrat, *Ḥanduate*, *Ekallāte*, *rešēti*, and *Mallanate* show the expected Akkadian form of the feminine marker *-t*. One exception may occur in the word *dnt*, which is syntactically in the absolute state and yet marks the feminine form like Akkadian (*-t*) and not the other Aramaic forms shown above (*-[V]h/-[V]∅*).¹⁰⁸ Fales claims that this feminine marker is only a possible exception to the normal Aramaic feminine marking attested above. Because the word is often part of a legal phrase in Aramaic, *dnt lqh*, itself a calque from an underlying Akkadian expression used elsewhere in legal texts (see above).¹⁰⁹ The nominal form, then, would be an extension of its use in loan translations.

An interesting example of morphological reanalysis may occur, however, in the Aramaic *rbšqn*. This title corresponds to the Akkadian title *rab šāqē*. The title in the Akkadian is singular, and appears in 2 Kgs 18 in the Hebrew Bible (see Chapter 3) as רַב שָׂקֵה, also a singular. The Aramaic form *rbšqn*, however, shows the plural absolute ending *-īn*. Although Fales has little to say linguistically about the difference, one could see underlying this distinction a reanalysis of the Akkadian form based on the Assyrian oblique plural ending *-ē*, itself perhaps borrowed into Aramaic, where it appears mostly in later, Eastern dialects. Thus, the long */ē/* at the end of the Akkadian *rab šāqē* could be understood as a plural ending to an Aramaic scribe who knew this variety of plural marking, and such a scribe would then analyze the Akkadian as a plural and translate it into the corresponding plural absolute form in Mesopotamian Aramaic attested in these dockets. The use of the absolute is facilitated in the phrase in which this title occurs, *mt rbšqn*, which was likely a proper noun referring to a specific land (note the Akkadian loan *mt*,

¹⁰⁸ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 67.

¹⁰⁹ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 79-80.

from *mātum*, for land).¹¹⁰ If such a place was a proper noun, then no emphatic ending (which marks definiteness in this early period) is needed and the absolute state was therefore employed, though this suggestion is speculative.¹¹¹

vii. *Texts from Assyria and Beyond: A Comparative Basis*

The discussion above of the features of the contact situation between Aramaic and Akkadian attested in documents from Assyria is instructive for a variety of purposes. The dialect of these texts is clearly distinguishable from the other examples of Aramaic during this period. Excluding for a moment the Aramaic/Akkadian bilingual from Tell-Fekheriye, the rest of the Old Aramaic corpus from this period contains only three certain Akkadian loanwords,¹¹² and no forms of grammatical influence occur from Akkadian.¹¹³ Although some form of Akkadian contact occurred with speakers and writers of Levantine Aramaic as the Assyrian Empire became more and more dominant in this region in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, such limited contact-induced phenomena are indicative, given the admittedly small amount of evidence available in the Old Aramaic corpus from this region, of limited contact with Akkadian.¹¹⁴

When initially discovered, the Akkadian-Aramaic bilingual from Tell-Fekheriye seemed to show a significant number of contact-induced changes in the Aramaic text, particularly in the

¹¹⁰ Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 174-175.

¹¹¹ See the similar *bmtkdy*, “in the land of Akkade,” see the Aššur ostrakon, line 2.

¹¹² *snb* from Akkadian *šinepu*; *srs* from Akkadian *ša rēši*; *mšr* from Akkadian *mišru*. All three loans are words typically used in political contexts. Kaufman discusses a few more possibilities, though he is doubtful about most of them (*Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, 152-54).

¹¹³ John C. L. Gibson identifies *ʾrsth* as an Akkadian loan in one of the Nerab inscriptions, and claims that line 11 of this same inscription shows a verbal form that conforms to Geer’s law in Akkadian, indicating Akkadian phonological influence (Aramaic *yqtlwk*, which should be *yqtlwk*) (*Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions, Volume II: Aramaic Inscriptions Including Inscriptions in the Dialect of Zincirli* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975], 94). However, this dissimilation also occurs in a Bar-Rakib text that otherwise displays no Akkadian influence, and could just as easily be a factor of dialect than external, contact-induced change. Scott C. Layton and Pardee, “Literary Sources for the History of Palestine and Syria: Old Aramaic Inscriptions,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 51 (1998): 183.

¹¹⁴ Or at least with “spoken Akkadian,” according to Kaufman (*Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, 154).

course section at the end of the inscription. The verb forms in this section are precatives marked by the *l-* prefix (*lšm, lhwy, lʒrʿ, lʿhʒ, llqṭw, lʿpn*), analogous to similar Akkadian constructions. These *lamed* preformatives in Aramaic, however, are likely retentions from Proto-Semitic and not contact-induced changes from Akkadian.¹¹⁵ Elsewhere, the Aramaic of Tell-Fekheriye shows Akkadian influence. The use of the relative pronoun *zy* in Aramaic for genitive constructions on the model of Akkadian *ša* is the first attestation of this contact-induced change in Aramaic. As Kaufman notes, in three out of four uses of *zy* as a genitive, the corresponding Akkadian does not have the genitive *ša*, suggesting that this contact-induced change had perhaps already occurred in Aramaic before the commissioning of this inscription.¹¹⁶ Additionally, the syntax consisting of noun + *kl* + resumptive pronoun is extremely rare in Old Aramaic, and may be based on the parallel Akkadian phrasing (such as *matāti kališina*, “all the lands”).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ The morpheme existed in North-West Semitic (Aramaic, Ugaritic), in Proto-Central Semitic (in Arabic), and in East Semitic (in Akkadian), and can likely be reconstructed, therefore, as a Proto-Semitic feature. Huehnergard, “Asseverative *la and Hypothetical *lu/law in Semitic,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983): 569-93; Aaron D. Rubin, “On the Third Person Preformative *l-/n-* in Aramaic, and an Ethiopic Parallel,” *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 44 (2007): 14-15. At most, the use of this morpheme, but not its existence, might be conditioned by Akkadian contact. Perhaps Akkadian influence on Aramaic occurs in the elision that follows this morpheme in both languages, a historic feature in Akkadian, whereas in Ugaritic and Arabic the morpheme is not followed by elision with the prefix conjugation. The development of the form in Aramaic would be *li* (precativ) + *yaqtul* (prefix conjugation) > *liyaqtul* > *līqtul* (where the triphthong **-iya* > *-î* as in the stative Aramaic pattern “he drank” **šatiya* > **šatî* > *šî* [pretonic reduction of short /a/ in an open syllable] > *ʿešî* [as it appears in Syriac with the prothetic *aleph*]). The *līqtul* Aramaic form, in this case, could be influenced by the Akkadian precativ form *liprus* (historically **la* + **yaprus* > **la* + *yiprus* > **la* + *iprus* > *liprus*, for 3rd person forms, *luprus* for 1st person common singular). Compare the non-elided forms in Ugaritic and Arabic. In Ugaritic, this particle can appear before a jussive (*ltbrkn, /la-tVbarrikū-nī/*, “let them bless me”), preterite (*ltn.pnm, /la-tattinū panīma/*, “they set (their) faces,” or “they headed for”), and imperfective (*lyhpk, /la-yahpuku/*, “he will indeed overthrow”) (Huehnergard, *An Introduction to Ugaritic* [Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012], 78). It occurs before jussives in Arabic as well (*li-naʿxuḏ-hā*, “let us take it”) (W. M. Thackston, *An Introduction to Koranic and Classical Arabic* [Bethesda, Maryland: Ibex Publishers, 2000], §46.2).

¹¹⁶ Kaufman is stronger in his assertion that this use of the relative pronoun in Aramaic is from Akkadian; see the section above in which I discuss the possibility that this usage of the relative is native to Aramaic and not due to a contact-induced change.

¹¹⁷ Kaufman, “The Tell Fakhariyeh Inscription,” 152-53.

Several loanwords from Akkadian appear in the Aramaic of Fekheriye (*mt*, *tnwr*, *mwtn*, *gwgl*, and *'dqwr*). Akkadian calques and analogical formations are much more abundant: *'l*¹¹⁸ *zy qdm hwtr* (based on Akkadian *eli maḥri ušātir*, though Akkadian attestations elsewhere are written *eli ša maḥri ušātir*); *r'y* and *mšqy* (Old Aramaic masculine singular nouns do not end in *-y* elsewhere; these forms may be feminine absolutes with the archaic *-ī* endings on analogy with the Akkadian feminine forms of the same roots); *tšlwth* (on the basis of Akkadian *tešlītu/tašlītu*; Aramaic does not elsewhere have a *t-* preformative form of this root); *knn* (a D-stem formed verb patterned on the Akkadian D-stem *kunnu*, “to set up (a stela, inscription).” A series of clauses in three lines of the Aramaic in the middle of the inscription closely calques the Akkadian. This section also shows word order change in Aramaic from Akkadian, placing the verb in final position (underlined in both the Akkadian and Aramaic):¹¹⁹

Aramaic: *wlm 'n 'mrt pmh 'l 'lhn w'l 'nšn tytb*, “in order that the utterance of his mouth might be sweet to gods and men....”

Akkadian: *qibīt pišu eli ilī u niši tubbi*, “to make his utterance sweet to gods and men....”

Aramaic: *dmwṭ' z't 'bd*, “he made this likeness....”

Akkadian: No corresponding Akkadian

Aramaic: *'l zy qdm hwtr*, “he made it better than before.”

Akkadian: *eli maḥri ušātir*, “he made (that image) better than before.”

Aramaic: *qdm hdd ysb skn mr' ḥbwr šlmh šm*, “Before Hadad, resident of Sikani, lord of the Habur, he placed his image.”

Akkadian: *ina maḥar ^DAdad āšib ^{URU}Sikāni bēl ^{īD}Ha-bur šalamšu izqup*, “Before Adad, resident of Sikani, lord of the Habur, he erected his image.”

¹¹⁸ This use of *'l* instead of the expected *l* does not constitute independent evidence of the early alteration between these prepositions since the choice of *'l* could simply be the product of imperfectly rendering the Akkadian phrase.

¹¹⁹ Perhaps there is a rhetorical reason for such calquing. The first half of the text is very similar to Akkadian royal inscriptions, and the second half has been linked to West Semitic curse formulary. By beginning the second half with such Akkadian influenced phrasing and syntax, the composers of the inscription perhaps were melding the two influences together. Perhaps the content of the lines, which are benedictions for *hdys'y* (whose image was on the inscription), were a factor as well. Maybe these benedictions seem weightier taken from the prestigious Akkadian than they would appear if phrased in the local Aramaic dialect.

Otherwise, the Aramaic word order is consistently S-V-O (occasionally S-O-V-adverb). The Akkadian word order, however, is consistently S-O-V. The Aramaic word order in this inscription does not directly reflect the Akkadian version with the exception of the lines mentioned above.

The types of contact-induced changes found in the Mesopotamian Aramaic texts are not found in the Old Aramaic texts with a few exceptions from Tell-Fekheriye. The influence from calquing in three lines of the latter inscription is similar to the word order influence seen in the calques from the Mesopotamian Aramaic texts; however, the calquing in Tell-Fekheriye could also be isolated loan translations and not a more general feature of language contact. The Aramaic of Tell-Fekheriye shows the use of *zy* in genitive constructions, also much like the Mesopotamian Aramaic texts. Although conclusions must be tentative since the corpus of Old Aramaic is so small, it is telling that no other Aramaic text from this period shows similar contact-induced changes from Akkadian. Geographically, Fekheriye, where this bilingual inscription was discovered, is situated between the heartland of Assyria and the Levant. Fekheriye is only two kilometers from Tell Halaf, where some of the Aramaic texts in the Mesopotamian dialect (dating to some two centuries after the inscription from Fekheriye)¹²⁰ were excavated. Such regional influence is apparent even in the Mesopotamian texts themselves. Within these texts, local legal traditions begin to appear alongside Akkadian-influenced Aramaic further away from the Assyrian capitals (Assur, Kalḫu, and Nineveh) and more towards the

¹²⁰ This estimate of two centuries is based on Rollston's epigraphic analysis of a ninth century date for the Tell-Fekheriye inscription (*Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age*, 39).

western edge of the Assyrian Empire, particularly at Tell Shioukh Fawqani and Ma'allanāte.¹²¹ The Ma'allanāte texts contain Akkadian calques, such as *'l qdm DN* meaning “to enter in judgment before (a deity)” based on Assyrian *ina IGI^DIM URU.Gu-za-na iq-ṭar-bu*, “(they) entered in judgment before Hadad of Guzana” (note that the Aramaic maintains verb-initial syntax in this phrase). Otherwise, Aramaic legal terminology, such as the verb *'yr* (“to give in exchange”) and the nouns *qṣh* (“total”), *š'r* (“remainder”), and *bdl* (“substitute”), appears at Ma'allanāte that has no known correspondence to Neo-Assyrian terminology and does not occur in Aramaic in contemporaneous, pre-Achaemenid documents. Given the onomastic evidence at Ma'allanāte, such a presence of local traditions makes sense.¹²²

It is clear from a comparison of dialects, then, that regional variants of Aramaic and the extent to which they were influenced by Akkadian are noticeable. Again, limited data warrant tentative conclusions, and future discoveries may alter the picture. However, based on current evidence, one cannot simply claim (as Schniedewind and others have) that imperial policies of linguistic unification under Aramaic had already started in the late eighth century BCE. Moreover, those scholars, such as Morrow, who appeal to Aramaic as a conveyor of Mesopotamian traditions in the Iron Age have a methodological problem: Mesopotamian Aramaic is not the same as Aramaic attested in the Levant during this time, so it is not clear what linguistic reality forms the basis for such a theory. The Tell Fekheriye inscription and the local legal traditions at Ma'allanāte, expressed in distinct vocabulary, show the importance of

¹²¹ Fales, “The Use and Function of Aramaic Tablets,” 107-114.

¹²² Lipiński claims that Assyrian elements in personal names from this region are rare (*Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Personal Names, Volume III* [Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 200; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2010], 273).

considering regional attestations and dialects in history, a nuance missing in this model. Another problem for the thesis of Aramaic intermediation is the issue of genre.

b. *Legal Texts, Genre, and Limits of Contact*

The foregoing comments indicate the extent of contact-induced change: Akkadian influenced Mesopotamian Aramaic in Assyria at a variety of levels, and Aramaic at least influenced Akkadian at the level of the lexicon (such as the loan *'grt* into Akkadian from Aramaic). Despite this mutual influence, some areas of language domains remained intact and were not subject to contact-induced changes, such as inflectional and derivational morphology. In this fashion, the contact situation may be described as Thomason and Kaufman's category three in their five stages of language contact (with category five as the most intense; see Chapter 3).¹²³

Not only were there limits to the grammatical information borrowed between languages in the Mesopotamian Aramaic texts, but, as Wolfram Röllig has shown, there were also literary categories in these archives that lacked dockets or colophons in Aramaic. A study of these kinds of archival documents is informative. If one simply analyzes the texts with dockets and colophons, then it is easier to conclude that there was limited cuneiform literacy on the part of the scribes who archived the tablets. As Röllig points out, however, even in such archives that contained dockets attached to legal texts, no Aramaic dockets are ever found attached to literary texts:

Die Deutung der Epigraphs als 'Ordnungsmittel für Nicht-Keilschriftkundige' erklärt auch das Phänomen, dass solche Beischriften auf Tontafeln mit literarischen Texten, die ja häufig einen langen Kolophon tragen, nie zu finden sind, auch wenn es sich angeboten hätte, hier ebenfalls Inhaltsangaben in aramaischer Sprache und Schrift zu machen. Die Schreiber, die solche Texte verwendeten, waren selbstverständlich noch voll und ganz

¹²³ Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 74-75.

mit der Keilschrift vertraut und brauchten keine 'modernen' Hilfsmittel.¹²⁴

As he claims, it is surely significant that so many dockets were discovered at Nineveh, Kalhu, and Assur, centers of administration of the Assyrian empire. That such dockets were attached to legal and administrative texts is suggestive of the language situation of the empire: the population governed by such an administrative apparatus must have also been Aramaic speaking to a certain degree, showing the importance of Aramaic in the heart of the empire.

To draw from this fact the conclusion that Aramaic at this stage had become the purveyor of any type of literature or text, such as scientific or religious literature, particularly the sorts of correlations that one finds in the Hebrew Bible (creation myths, epics texts, royal inscriptions, etc.), overextends the nature of the case. Röllig's observation complicates the picture significantly. There were opportunities to place Aramaic dockets on such prestigious literary texts, yet no such text had an Aramaic summary, or any Aramaic notation, appended to it. These literary texts, then, seemed to be set apart during the Neo-Assyrian period in archival considerations, even as the population may have been increasingly bilingual in Aramaic.

Elsewhere Röllig states:

Das bedeutet aber andererseits, dass durch die aramäischen Dokumente in Assyrien eine gewisse soziale Stratifikation der Leserschaft nachweisbar ist. Vom Berufsstand der Schreiber wissen wir ja, dass es neben den assyrischen solche für aramäische und für ägyptische Sprache (und Schrift) gab. Die "epigraphs" machen es zumindest wahrscheinlich, dass es über den Schreiberstand hinaus eine weite Verbreitung der gegenüber der Keilschrift unkomplizierten aramäischen Konsonantenschrift gab, die- wie

¹²⁴ "The interpretation of the epigraphs as 'a means of ordering for lack of cuneiform expertise' explains also the phenomenon that such inscriptions on clay tablets are never found with literary texts, which so often carry a long colophon, even though it might have appeared apposite to provide summaries in the Aramaic language and script in these cases as well. The writers who used such texts were naturally fully familiar with cuneiform and needed no 'modern' tools." Röllig, "Keilschrift versus Alphabetschrift Überlegungen zu den *Epigraphs* auf Keilschrifttafeln," in *Writing and Ancient Near Eastern Society: Papers in Honour of Alan R. Millard* (edited by Piotr Bienkowski, Christopher Mee, and Elizabeth Slater; Old Testament Studies 426; New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 124.

Ostraka immer wieder belegen- zuweilen etwas unbeholfen geschrieben wurde, aber doch im täglichen Gebrauch recht zweckmässig war. Sie wurde aber offenbar nicht- oder nicht ausschliesslich- von der Schicht der Bevölkerung verwendet, die an der Überlieferung “literarischer” Texte interessiert war. Denn von dem reichen Schrifttum Assyriens in akkadischer Sprache ist nichts auch aramäisch überliefert. Selbst die Überlieferung der Sprüche des Weisen Ahiqar setzt erst in achaimenidischer Zeit ein und ist, selbst in der Rahmenerzählung mit assyrischem Kolorit, keine genuin assyrische Dichtung. Es ist aber wohl kein Zufall, dass nach dieser Überlieferung- und bestätigt durch einen spätbabylonischen Text- Ahiqar, seinem Namen nach ein Aramäer, “Siegelbewahrer” Sanheribs war und auch noch in der Zeit Asarhaddons eine einflussreiche Person am assyrischen Hof blieb. Somit war schon ein Teil der assyrischen Oberschicht aramäischen Ursprungs und wir dürfen vermuten, dass sie bereits das Aramäische als Umgangssprache benutzen, auch wenn als Literatursprache weiterhin das Assyrische Verwendung fand, bis es bald nach dem Untergang des Reiches 614/612 ebenso wie Keilschrift erlosch.¹²⁵

This stratification of readership during the Neo-Assyrian Empire would have corresponded exactly to the social situation that Judean scribes encountered when Manasseh’s envoy arrived in the imperial heartland (see Chapter 3). Whatever oral stories existed that eventually crystalized into literary texts in Aramaic, such as Ahiqar,¹²⁶ the literary situation of Neo-Assyria was such that the prestigious texts of Mesopotamia at that time continued to be transmitted in Akkadian, not in Aramaic, even as Aramaic speakers were becoming prominent members of society. The

¹²⁵ “But that means, on the other hand, that, through the Aramaic documents in Assyria, a certain social stratification of readership is detectable. From the profession of the writer we know well that there was, next to the Assyrians, such (stratification) for the Aramaic and Egyptian languages (and script). The epigraphs at least make it likely that there was, concerning the scribal profession, a further spreading of the uncomplicated consonantal script opposite cuneiform, which- as ostraca repeatedly demonstrate- was sometimes awkwardly written, but in daily use was quite practical. But it was apparently not, or not exclusively, used by the layer of the population who were interested in the tradition of literary texts. For, from the rich literature of Assyrian in the Akkadian language, nothing in Aramaic was handed down. Even the tradition of sayings of the wise one, Ahiqar, begins first in the Achaemenid period and is, even in the framework story with Assyrian color, no genuine Assyrian literary work. But it is probably no coincidence that, in accordance with this tradition, and affirmed through a late Babylonian text, Ahiqar (his name in accordance with that of an Aramean) was a ‘keeper of the seal’ of Sennacherib and, even still in the time of Esarhaddon, remained an influential person in the Assyrian court. Thus, there was already a part of the Assyrian upper class those of Aramaic origin, and we may assume that they already employed Aramaic as their colloquial language, even if as a literary language on top of that Assyrian was used, until it waned soon after the fall of the empire in 614/612 (as did cuneiform).” Röllig, “Aramäer und Assyrer: Die Schriftzeugnisse bis zum Ende des Assyrerreiches,” *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (Edited by Guy Bunnens; Ancient Near Eastern Studies 7; Sterling, Virginia: Peeters Press, 2000), 185-86.

¹²⁶ See below. This text may even have West Semitic origins and may not be representative of any form of Mesopotamian literature. Therefore, it would not count as an example of Mesopotamian literary traditions that entered into the West Semitic world, and therefore may not be an appropriate analogy to the case with the Hebrew Bible adopting Mesopotamian influence through Aramaic.

distribution of docketts on cuneiform tablets supports this thesis, and biblical scholars have not yet fully appreciated the implications of this distribution for the contact situation of the scribes and authors responsible for the Hebrew Bible. An Israelite in exile or a Judean sent to pay homage to the Neo-Assyrian king would not have found literary texts written indiscriminately in Aramaic or Akkadian, as though either language presented an equal possibility of literary conveyance. Rather, the distribution would have been more limited. The literary correspondences the Hebrew Bible shares with Mesopotamian literature should reflect this pattern of language contact in pre-exilic texts.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ The onomastic evidence from colophons in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods attests to this stratification. For the Neo-Assyrian period, scholars from many areas of the empire visited the royal court (see Radner, “The Assyrian King and his Scholars: The Syro-Anatolian and Egyptian Schools,” in *Of God(s), Trees, and Scholars: Neo-Assyrian and Related Studies in Honour of Simo Parpola* [edited by M. Luukko, S. Svärd, and R. Mattila; StudOr 106; Finnish Oriental Society: Helsinki, 2009], 221-38). Despite this international scholarly presence, an overwhelming majority of the names in Akkadian texts show Akkadian etymologies. Ran Zadok approximates that thirty percent of the names on colophons in the Neo-Assyrian period were non-Akkadian, most (if not all) Aramaic. These texts are legal in genre only. Even into the Neo-Babylonian period, the prosographic evidence suggests a stratified scribal society, even as Aramaic became a more and more pervasive spoken language (particularly because the Chaldeans in Babylon were an Aramaic-speaking people). Zadok claims that in this late period, over ninety-seven percent of the scribal names attested are of Akkadian origin. In temple archives, only two to four percent of the names are non-Akkadian. The reason, Zadok claims, is that “cuneiform writing was confined to the urbanite Babylonians, who can be easily identified due to the fact that all of them bore surnames in addition to their Akkadian names and their fathers’ names... (“The Representation of Foreigners in Neo- and Late-Babylonian Legal Documents (Eighth through Second Centuries B.C.E.),” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* [edited by Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2003], 483-84). To the best of my knowledge, not one name on a colophon of a literary or scientific text from the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian eras is non-Akkadian.

This distribution not only confirms the stratification discussed above, but it has implications for language contact between Akkadian and Hebrew in the biblical corpus: this distribution means that there is no evidence for the literature of prestige in Akkadian of being recorded or copied by anyone with a West Semitic name in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods in Mesopotamia, yet this literature finds clear correspondences in pre-exilic and exilic biblical texts. No record exists of translations being produced and sent to the peripheries of the empire. It could be more likely, then, that for epic texts such as Gilgamesh or scribal texts such as the Code of Hammurabi, direct, literary contact occurred between an Israelite or Judean visiting or exiled to Mesopotamia, trained in some manner of cuneiform (though not a copyist or scribe for the empire), and it would be through such literacy that contact-induced changes appear in the Hebrew Bible. Another possibility is the oral exchange of these stories, perhaps instigated by one of these Akkadian scribes who knew Hebrew. In either case, the contact would be direct, as there is no evidence of Aramaic or other West-Semitic people copying or handling literary, epic, or scientific texts from Mesopotamia in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods. A contrasting situation likely occurred at Ma'allanāte, an Aramaic-speaking site on the periphery of the empire, where few Akkadian names are attested in any of the documents in a region with a solid Aramean identity (Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Personal Names, Volume III*, 273).

The examination of Aramaic legal texts, dockets, and colophons from Assyria is important for a variety of reasons, especially given how reflective they are of both linguistic and literary facets of Mesopotamian society (and the interaction between linguistic and literary). These dockets provide a pivotal data set for the language situation in Mesopotamia between Aramaic and Akkadian. The data are sufficient to allow for drawing linguistic, literary, and historical conclusions. Nonetheless, some scholars claim that there existed a much wider distribution of literary texts in Aramaic. Given the materials used in writing Aramaic, which were typically papyrus and later parchment, these scholars believe that such Aramaic documents would have long since perished,¹²⁸ and that similar corpora of literary texts would have existed in Akkadian and Aramaic. It would simply be the case that the materials on which Aramaic was written has disappeared and with them the vantage point for reconstructing the full extent of the literary use of this language.

Fales has provided a counterargument to these views. On the one hand, he argues that the information from the dockets and from other Aramaic legal texts from the Neo-Assyrian period indicates that these Aramaic legal texts were conceived of as having equal authority as

¹²⁸ These reconstructions of perished evidence of writing serve as Fales' examples of overextended claims for the use of Aramaic on soft media (see below). Greenfield appeals somewhat to this view when he states that "the perishability of the material used for Aramaic has meant that conclusions are based on chance survivals and fortunate finds. For Mesopotamia proper, we must rely on the sparse information that may be gathered from the Aramaic endorsements on cuneiform texts and on short texts found on a variety of other minor objects" ("The Dialects of Early Aramaic," 99). Greenfield argues well for the importance of the Aramaic dockets, hence the emphasis in this chapter on their linguistic, literary, and historical value. Millard is much more extensive, and speculative, in his claim about Aramaic literature. Based on the *Wisdom of Ahiqar*, attested in fifth century manuscripts at the earliest, which recalls stories and wisdom from an Aramean in the Neo-Assyrian court, Millard reconstructs an entire corpus of Aramaic literary texts in the Assyrian and later periods ("Early Aramaic," in *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern* [edited by J. N. Postgate; London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2007], 91). Although there are linguistic reasons for situating parts of *Ahiqar* in the Neo-Assyrian period, the evidence has also been disputed. See more below. Moreover, the earliest manuscript derives from the Achaemenid period, and reconstructing an entire body of literature based on this one piece of evidence is speculative, especially given the counterevidence indicated below. Parpola and Postgate are more responsible in their reconstructions of this "lost layer" of writings, the former arguing for more extensive Aramaic presence in correspondence between provincial governors and kings after Esarhaddon, the latter for "commodity contracts from the reign of Sargon or earlier."

corresponding Akkadian legal texts. On the other hand, Fales does not claim that the two languages had equal prestige in all literary forms, or that Aramaic, because of its parity in the legal sphere, became the conveyor of any and every literary genre. Rather, this parity remained distinctive of the legal texts.¹²⁹ Earlier research had been tentative to rely too much on “soft” media now disappeared, according to Fales.¹³⁰

Recognizing that his acceptance of the parity of Akkadian and Aramaic legal formulations could be used in support of the broader thesis, Fales offers three reasons against reconstructing large bodies of “lost” writing on soft media for the Neo-Assyrian period. First, he points out that there is no language of text production on soft media in the Akkadian documentation available to us. Were such a large gap of writing simply lost, one might have expected a trace of the production of the materials used to convey Aramaic to have survived in economic or other descriptions in cuneiform texts or the Aramaic that has survived. No such description exists, indicating that text production on these materials was more limited than the theory of massive numbers of lost documents would require, much less a theory of wide-scale translation of cuneiform texts into Aramaic. Although the determinative KUŠ (as in KUŠ.SAR) was used for scribes writing on parchment or papyrus in the alphabetic script, expressing the fact that they wrote on soft media, no such determinative was used for the materials themselves or for documents written on them in the Neo-Assyrian period, suggesting that the usage was not as

¹²⁹ Other lines of evidence show the increased official acceptance of Aramaic. For example, fifteen bronze statuettes of lions were discovered at Nimrud. These statuettes have Aramaic epigraphs written on them indicating the dimensions of each lion. In addition to these Aramaic markings, official cuneiform (Akkadian) appears on the statuettes with the king’s name. These examples show a non-overlapping use of the two languages, even as the use of Aramaic on these statuettes seems to have been approved and sanctioned by the state given the accompanying Akkadian. See Fales, “Assyro-Aramaica: The Assyrian Lion-Weights,” in *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Liniński* (edited by K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors; Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 65; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Department Oriëntalistiek, 1995), 33-55.

¹³⁰ Fales, “Use and Function of Aramaic Tablets,” 123.

common as some would claim. Second, the term for “papyrus,” *niāru*, “appears in a limited number of contexts,” indicating the limited use of this soft medium. Third, other, hard media of writing such as ostraca were likely used more than is recognized, and so soft media did not provide the only means beside the clay tablets for setting down Aramaic in writing. This last point should be qualified, however, since ostraca were also limited in their use of genres (letters, etc., but not attested in the Iron Age for scientific, religious, or epic literary texts).¹³¹

Millard has recently countered Fales’ cautions concerning the widespread use of soft media for writing in the alphabetic script during this time.¹³² Much of Millard’s view rests upon the discovery of sixty-one tablets with Aramaic annotations on them from Tell Šēḥ Ḥamad.¹³³ Of these sixty-one annotated tablets, thirty-one of the tablets have notes written on ink. This ink-based writing attests to the existence of pens and brushes, and, according to Millard, “the scribes were unlikely to have made pens and ink only for writing notes on cuneiform tablets or potsherds....” Millard concludes that “those epigraphs surely attest a wider use of ink for writing on flexible surfaces.”¹³⁴ Moreover, the missing references to text production on perishable surfaces also does not persuade Millard of the absence of the large-scale use of soft media for writing. As he states, ostraca were also not mentioned in other texts.

Millard presents a thoughtful critique, but is not convincing in this matter. While ostraca were certainly used to write Aramaic in the Neo-Assyrian period, they, too, are not well attested.

¹³¹ Fales, “Use and Function of Aramaic Tablets,” 123-24.

¹³² Millard, “Assyria, Arameans, and Aramaic,” in *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Buxenay Oded* (edited by Gershon Galil, Mark Geller, and Alan Millard; Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 130; Boston: Brill, 2009), 203-14.

¹³³ For a critical edition with hand drawings of the cuneiform and alphabetic texts, see Radner, *Die Neuassyrischen Texte aus Tall Šēḥ Ḥamad: Mit Beiträgen von Wolfgang Röllig zu den aramäischen Beischriften* (Berichte der Ausgrabung Tall Šēḥ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu 6; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2002). See especially the summary comments by Röllig concerning the Aramaic texts (22-23).

¹³⁴ Millard, “Assyria, Arameans, and Aramaic,” 209-10.

Moreover, no scholar reconstructs the large-scale use of ostraca in Mesopotamia, even as Fales grants that they were used more than our current evidence suggests. Fales would argue the same for soft media, simply not to the extent that Millard would argue. Ostraca are therefore not a good counterexample.

Regarding Millard's first point, he could be correct that such ink usage implies large-scale writing on soft media, but there are other, equally (if not more) likely scenarios, and Millard's conclusion from the Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad finds does not necessary follow from the data. Rölliġ claims that many of the Aramaic notations on the cuneiform tablets show no sign of being scratched on a dry surface. In other words, these Aramaic notations were added when the clay was still wet and a scribe could easily use a stylus to form Aramaic lettering.¹³⁵ The tablets that contain ink notations from Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad do not also have scratched notations. As a result, the peculiar use of ink in these cases could just as easily be explained as a secondary form of notations for these tablets: they would have already dried, and the ink would, in this case, be a secondary application necessitated by a dried tablet. Indeed, painted cuneiform may have had a similar function. At least two clay tablet from Assurbanipal's library contained ink, but the ink section was limited exclusively to the colophon and not indicative of a larger industry of cuneiform written on soft media.¹³⁶ On the other hand, ink is attested for cuneiform on clay at Mari and Old Babylonian Sippar and Larsa. Yet, the use of ink in these cases does not

¹³⁵ Rölliġ, "Keilschrift versus Alphabetschrift," 123-24.

¹³⁶ See Julian Reade for a photograph ("Archaeology and the Kuyunjik Archives," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* [edited by Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te İstanbul 57; Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te İstanbul, 1986] 217. It appears that some colophons were added secondarily in ink to texts brought to Assurbanipal's library from elsewhere. See Jeanette C. Fincke, "The Babylonian Texts of Nineveh: Report on the British Museum's *Ashurbanipal Library Project*," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 50 (2003): 140 n 211; S. J. Lieberman, "A Mesopotamian Background for the So-Called *Agadic* 'Measures' of Biblical Hermeneutics?" *Hebrew Union College Annual* 58 (1987): 217.

necessitate the parallel existence of cuneiform on soft media.¹³⁷ Though Aramaic was certainly written in parchment and papyrus for administrative purposes, the mere existence of ink on clay, as the cuneiform shows, does not necessitate the corresponding existence of large-scale text production on soft media.¹³⁸ Thus, the Aramaic ink summaries and colophons on the thirty-one tablets from Tell Šēh Ḥamad should also not form the basis for an assumption that Aramaic was set down extensively on soft media.¹³⁹

A second archive of painted Aramaic from the Western periphery of the Assyrian Empire was discovered at Tell Shiukh Fawqani.¹⁴⁰ Two forms of Aramaic incisions can be detected: one incision type pertains to clay tablets prepared for cuneiform with Aramaic incised on the tablet while it was still damp, the signs being cleaner and deeper than in the second type. In this second type, the signs are more shallowly incised, and the signs have a “plump” appearance. The explanation for the shallow type are either that these colophons were added after the tablet had begun to dry, or, perhaps, that a different form of stylus, one coated with ink, was used when the clay was still damp, producing a less precise form of engraving.¹⁴¹ Either way, the ink notations

¹³⁷ In fact, Parpola argues that there is direct evidence against the possibility of cuneiform on soft media until the Persian period or later. See notes above.

¹³⁸ Jonathan Taylor, “Tablets as Artefacts, Scribes as Artisans,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture* (edited by Karen Radner and Eleanor Robson; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 17-18.

¹³⁹ Seals with names on them from Mesopotamian archives, used to enclose writing in soft media, are certainly indicative of numerous perished Aramaic documents; however, Millard’s appeal to ink writing is not persuasive. Though many Aramaic documents have now perished as attested by these seals, Millard overestimates what can be reasonably reconstructed and ignores the data of genre limitations presented above.

¹⁴⁰ For the critical edition, see Fales, Radner, Cinzia Pappi, and Enzo Attardo, “The Assyrian and Aramaic Texts from Tell Shiukh Fawqani,” in *Tell Shiukh Fawqani: 1994-1998. II* (edited by Luc Bachelot and Frederick Mario Fales; History of the Ancient Near East VI/2; Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, 2005), 595-694.

¹⁴¹ The former explanation may be more likely. There is a third grouping of tablets from Tell Shiukh Fawqani that contains a blank space of four to five lines on the reverse of Akkadian legal tablets. Judging from the legal texts from Nineveh (which contain Akkadian written throughout), it is precisely at this point of the legal text (based on its formulaic nature) that one would expect a colophon. Therefore, the texts from Tell Shiukh Fawqani written in Akkadian but with this space of four to five lines blank at the bottom may be evidence for the addition of Aramaic colophons in ink after the tablet had dried. No such shallow, incised writing is evident. The twenty cuneiform texts from a private archive at Tell Aḥmar, which is near Tell Shiukh Fawqani, show a similar

from Tell Šēḥ Ḥamad, to the best of my knowledge, do not have such a shallow incision, but rather have ink painted on a flat surface, suggesting its secondary application much like the painted cuneiform in colophons from Assurbanipal's library. Moreover, the texts from Tell Shiukh Fawqani show a consistent distribution: none of the monolingual texts (though these are few in number) have any trace of ink written on them, suggesting that ink was only used for docketts and colophons for cataloguing purposes and that there was no independent Aramaic literature unattached to cuneiform that existed in ink.¹⁴² In any case, these examples of painted Aramaic come from the periphery of the empire where the local population naturally was more fluent in Aramaic. Such evidence cannot be assumed, therefore, to be indicative of the text production of the empire as a whole, much less evidence of mass produced writing on soft media at this time.

VII. Texts and Translations

It is worth emphasizing that Fales, of course, does not argue that soft media did not exist in the Neo-Assyrian period. The reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II show clearly that such media were used in Neo-Assyrian administration, as do bullae, which were attached to texts writing on soft media. The question, rather, is to what extent such media were used, and how much one can reconstruct given the lack of direct and indirect evidence. Other scholars, such as Dominique Charpin and Paul-Alain Beaulieu, have discussed the use of language and literature in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods. They provide evidence that certain genres,

phenomenon. Fales, "Between Archaeology and Linguistics: The Use of Aramaic Writing in Painted Characters on Clay Tablets of the 7th Century BC," 152-53.

¹⁴² Fales further claims that, in many of the sites where Aramaic was spoken and written in the Euphrates valley, clay would be a much more abundant and economically accessible medium for writing than parchment or papyrus. Moreover, in the reuse of clay tablets, particularly at Tell Shiukh Fawqani, a precursor to the same process on parchment and papyrus attested in later periods (i.e., palimpsests) may be seen (though the reuse of clay tablets generally probably goes back to the origins of writing in clay). See Fales, "The Use and Function of Aramaic Tablets," 110.

such as scientific and religious texts, were not translated into Aramaic in these periods. Charpin, for example, cites the Verse Account of Nabonidus, which contains the following lines:¹⁴³

- 8') GUB-zu ina UKKIN ú-šar-ra-hu r[a-man-šú]
ittazizzu ina puhri ušarrahu ramānšu
 He (Nabonidus) was standing in the assembly praising himself:
- 9') en-qé-ek mu-da-a-ka a-ta-mar k[a-ti-im-tú]
enqēk mudâka âtamar katimtu
 "I am wise, I am learned, I have seen what is hidden.
- 10') mi-hi-iš GI.DUB-pu ul i-de a-ta-mar n[i-šir-tú]
mihîš qanṭuppi ul îde âtamar niširtu
 I do not know the stroke of the stylus, but I have seen what is secret.
- 11') ú-šab-ra-an ^dil-te-ri kul-lat ú-ta-[ad-da-a]
ušabrân Ilteri kullat ûtaddâ
 Šehr caused me to see it. He made known everything,
- 12') U₄.SAKAR ^da-num ^dEN.LÍL.LÁ šá ik-šu-ru A.DA.P[Á]
iškar Anum Ellil ša ikšuru Adapa
 such as the series (Enūma) Anu Enlil, which Adapa compiled.
- 13') UGU-šú šu-tu-qa-ak kal né-me-q[u]
elišu šûtuqāk kal nēmēqu
 I surpass it in all wisdom."
- 14') i-bal-lal par-ši i-dal-la-ah te-re-e-ti
iballal parši idallah tērēti
 However, he (Nabonidus) mixes up rites and muddles oracles.

¹⁴³ Charpin, *Reading and Writing in Babylon*, 257 n 26. Another text from Nabonidus' time period either corroborates the view of the Verse Account in its negative portrayal of the king or, conversely, offers a view of the king in a positive light. The difference hinges on the value of one sign. The text as originally published reads: [...] x [x] x *tup-pi*^{MEŠ} *iškar*(ÉŠ.GÁR) UD AN ^DEN.LÍL.LÁ ^{G1}*pi-sa-an ul-tu bābili*(TIN.TIR)^{K1} *a-na nap-lu-su*
^{[L]U}*tupšarru*^{MEŠ} *ú-bil-lu-nu ma-ḥar-šu la še-mu [l]a i-di lib-bu-uš ma-la qa-bé-e-šu*, "...tablets of the series "When Anu, Enlil," the scribes brought the baskets of tablets from Babylon to look at, but they were not read (lit. heard) in his presence so that he did not understand what it meant." The implication is that Nabonidus could not read the tablets himself. The sign for "ma" in *ma-la* in line 6 looks very similar to the sign "ba," and Machinist and Hayim Tadmor have argued that the sign epigraphically, in fact, looks much more like "ba." This reading produces the word *bala*, "without," changing the last two lines to mean "they were not read; no one understood them without his (namely, Nabonidus) telling (them)." In this fashion, Machinist and Tadmor claim to find positive traditions concerning Nabonidus to counter the negative one of the Verse Account above. See Machinist and Tadmor, "Heavenly Wisdom," in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press, 1993), 149.

For a scholarly edition of the Verse Account of Nabonidus, see Hans Peter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonaid von Babylon und Kyros' des Grossen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstehenden Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe und Grammatik* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament: Veröffentlichungen zu Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments 256; Ugarit-Verlag: Münster, 2001), 563-78 (esp. 569-70 for the lines cited above). Thanks to my colleague Paul Gauthier for discussing this text.

Many fascinating aspects of this text are apparent. First, this is a satirical account of Nabonidus and a critique of his knowledge of Akkadian religious traditions. In making this critique, a subtle reference to Gilgamesh may exist in lines 9 and 10, which refer to hidden and secret things. The Standard Babylonian version of this epic was titled *ša nagbu imuru*, or “he who saw the deep,” and began with many of the same conceptions of peering into hidden and secret things that the Verse Account also describes.¹⁴⁴ Even as the Verse Account satirically places supposed knowledge of Babylonian religious traditions in the mouth of Nabonidus, it also critiques his understanding of such knowledge by claiming that Nabonidus was illiterate and that he mixes up “rites and muddles oracles.” The specific phrase for literacy, *mihis qantuppi*, is, according to Charpin, a description of writing that is exclusive to cuneiform literature, and the illiteracy ascribed to Nabonidus is therefore not general illiteracy but illiteracy of Babylonian religious traditions, which were preserved solely in Akkadian. Thus, despite the fact that Aramaic was widespread for many genres of the period, religious texts continued to be transmitted in Akkadian and “to confess one had not mastered that writing system amounted to admitting one did not have direct access to the Mesopotamian religious tradition.”¹⁴⁵ Beaulieu has made similar arguments on different grounds, claiming that despite the growing influence of Aramaic as a spoken vernacular, Akkadian was still the language of official identity in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires.¹⁴⁶

It was not until the Persian period, as documented by Sanders, that cuneiform scientific literature was translated into Aramaic. Sanders, in a forthcoming work, cites examples of

¹⁴⁴ For the connections between Gilgamesh, textual preservation, and Gen 6:14, see Chapter 5.

¹⁴⁵ Charpin, *Reading and Writing in Babylon*, 257 n 26.

¹⁴⁶ Beaulieu, “Official and Vernacular Languages,” 208.

scientific literature copied on to a *magallatu*, itself a loanword from Aramaic into Akkadian, all of which date to the second half of the first millennium (Persian period to Greco-Babylonica).¹⁴⁷

The examples are as follows:

- 1) From the birth omen series *šumma izbu*, from Borsippa (find spot and precise date unknown, though a good argument for the Hellenistic period can be made):¹⁴⁸

EGIR-šu ina KUŠ ma-gal-lat GABA.RI-e BAR.SIB.KI šá-ṭi-ri

arkišu ina magallat gabarê Borsippa šaṭir

“its sequel is written on a leather scroll, an exemplar from Borsippa.”

- 2) From omens concerning the appearance of Mercury (dated to the last part of the first millennium BCE, and therefore Persian Period or later):

5' [...] šá KUŠ ma-gal-lat GABA.RI E^{ki} šá-ṭ[ī-ir...]

5' [...] *ša magallat gabarê Babil šaṭir*

[...] of a leather scroll, copy of Babylon, written by [...]

- 3) The third example is from a commentary on the omen series *šumma ālu* (dated to 100 BCE):

tuppu ša arkišu...ina KUŠ magallat Babili [šaṭir...]

“the tablet of its sequel...is written on a scroll of leather, an exemplar from Babylon”

¹⁴⁷ Sanders, Forthcoming 2014.

¹⁴⁸ Texts of such canonical Mesopotamian traditions existed at Borsippa from Neo-Babylonian times; however, this tablet shows a peculiar conflation of such omen rituals and series that has good analogue in the conflation of traditional materials during the period of Greco-Babylonica. In this period, Mesopotamian traditions showed amazing continuity with the past, but also were adapted, catalogued, and conflated under influence of Hellenistic libraries. This conclusion would be consistent with the use of Mesopotamian traditions by kings such as Antiochus I, as seen in his cylinder inscription also discovered at Borsippa. At any rate, this exemplar does not precede the Neo-Babylonian period. See Amelie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White, “Aspects of Seleucid Royal Ideology: The Cylinder of Antiochus I from Borsippa,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 112 (1991): 71-86; Goldstein, “Late Babylonian Letters on Collecting Tablets and the Hellenistic Background- A Suggestion,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69 (2010): 199-207.

Two of the three references clearly date to a time around the Persian Period or later, and the first example, though undated, likely fits this chronology as well. The use of the scroll, as argued more extensively in Chapter 3, is significant. During the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian Periods (and beyond as well, perhaps), writing technology, language, and script were to a large extent correlated. In other words, with the exception of the Aramaic tablets examined above, clay tablets were mostly used for cuneiform script and the languages preserved in that script (Akkadian and Sumerian)¹⁴⁹ and scrolls (of papyrus or leather) and ostraca were used for alphabet script and Aramaic.¹⁵⁰ The scribes of the different writing traditions (cuneiform/Akkadian and alphabet/Aramaic) had overlapping jurisdiction in legal and administrative matters, but the use of Aramaic in epic, scientific, cultic, and “canonical” literature seems to have been a product of the Persian Period.¹⁵¹

This chronological division of the preservation of Mesopotamian literary traditions in Aramaic is also consistent with the first attested case of an Aramaic literary text, namely Ahiqar, the earliest manuscript of which dates to the fifth century BCE. This text is particularly important, as scholars such as Millard have used it as an example of literature circulating in Mesopotamia in Aramaic on perishable materials in the Neo-Assyrian period. Linguistic evidence from the text of Ahiqar indicates that the Aramaic therein may originate from a text which comes from earlier than the Persian Period. The dating of the fifth century BCE manuscript is assured given that it was written on a palimpsest, the outer stratum of which

¹⁴⁹ There is a later example of Aramaic written in cuneiform (an incantation text from Uruk), but it dates later than the Persian Period (Seleucid Period) and therefore is not relevant for the formation of the Hebrew Bible as understood in this dissertation. See Chapter 3 for more information on the dating of the biblical texts considered.

¹⁵⁰ Other languages are attested in alphabetic script in the Neo-Assyrian records, but they are extremely scant and cannot be used as a major factor of preservation of major literary records.

¹⁵¹ In addition to Fales, cited above, see Raymond P. Dougherty, “Writing upon Parchment and Papyrus among the Babylonians and Assyrians,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 48 (1928): 109-35; D. J. Wiseman, “Assyrian Writing-Boards,” *Iraq* 17 (1955): 13.

contains the Aramaic literary work, the lower stratum containing a tax record that can be dated comfortably within the fifth century BCE. The masculine plural emphatic ending in lines 94 and 162 provide a linguistic clue which suggests an older form of Aramaic may underlie the fifth century BCE text. This ending is written - ʿ, likely pronounced /-ēʿ/.¹⁵² This plural form is one of the few hallmarks of Eastern Aramaic that can be confidently placed in an older time period, in the seventh century BCE. The masculine plural emphatic marker /-ēʿ/ in Old Aramaic was replaced by the older form /-ayyāʿ/, written -yʿ, in Official Aramaic.¹⁵³ Thus, a later prose framework written in Official Aramaic has the masculine plural emphatic ending /-ayyāʿ/. The framework was composed to surround the older proverbs, a conclusion that can also be argued based on literary grounds.¹⁵⁴ The form in question is ʿmmʿ,¹⁵⁵ the doubled /m/ of which is indicative of the plural form of this word. This doubling is distinctive, making this form different from the ending /ʿ/ with a single /m/ (ʿmʿ), which would be the masculine singular emphatic form (ʿammāʿ). As this masculine plural emphatic marker /ēʿ/ was a diagnostic feature of Old Aramaic, it seems that Ahiqar bears evidence of an ancient strand of the language.

¹⁵² Gzella suggests this ending itself may be a simplification of an unattested *nisbe* ending *yahūdāyayyā, which would have contracted to the attested yahūdāyēʿ. At any rate, this form of the masculine plural emphatic ending in Aramaic already occurs in Neo-Assyrian spelling such as *til-le-e /tillē/*. Gzella, “The Heritage of Imperial Aramaic in Eastern Aramaic,” 101.

¹⁵³ It may sound counter intuitive to say that /-ayyāʿ/ was older than /-ēʿ/, since the former is used in Official Aramaic, a younger form of the language than Old Aramaic, which used the latter. The two forms, however, are not related. The form /-ēʿ/ was likely a borrowing into Aramaic from Assyrian, and /-ayyāʿ/ was likely the original, older Aramaic form. The normal rules of contraction and sound change in Aramaic do not allow one to derive /-ēʿ/ from /-ayyāʿ/. The doubled /-yy/ does not reduce in Aramaic, and /-ay/ would not reduce to /-ēʿ/, but to /-ê/. The latter two phonological developments remain distinct in later dialects of Aramaic (such as in the Western tradition of vocalization), the /ê/ becoming /ī/, and /ē/ staying the same. The persistent distinction of these sounds in Aramaic, originating from different sound changes, is further indication that /-ayyāʿ/ is not related to /ēʿ/.

¹⁵⁴ Other wisdom texts, such as the Book of Job, also perhaps were compiled using a similar process, though this case is debated. First Isaiah may end with the prose account of Hezekiah in Isa 36-39 as a similar literary bracketing, thereby providing historical context for the oracles of the prophet.

¹⁵⁵ If the plural marker were /-ayyāʿ/, then the form should be ʿmmyʿ, as in KAI 224: 10.

This datum raises the issue of whether Aramaic was the conveyer of literary traditions previous to the Achaemenid era, and therefore whether Aramaic can be said to be an intermediary of Mesopotamian traditions to ancient Israel and Judah. Assuming that the masculine plural emphatic form on 'mm' is a truly archaic element,¹⁵⁶ the conclusion above that it was not until the Persian period that Mesopotamian scholastic and scholarly texts were transmitted in Aramaic seems tenuous. Yet the distinction between pre-Persian period textual transmission on the one hand and Persian period and later use of language in these genres on the other remains for a variety of reasons. First, it is not clear where the story of Ahiqar originated and developed, and therefore it may not be Mesopotamian.¹⁵⁷ Second, the text of Ahiqar shows a significant number of "Canaanisms" and a lack of any Akkadian features. Were Ahiqar simply a transmitter, interpreting Mesopotamian literary forms to the periphery, one might expect to encounter linguistic traces of Akkadian or literary elements originating uniquely in Assyria. These features are absent.¹⁵⁸ Third, as many scholars have argued, a unified and organized scribal school and dialect of Aramaic does not appear until the Persian period (see above). As pervasive as Aramaic influence was in the Neo-Assyrian period, to promote Ahiqar as a typical example of the transmission of Mesopotamian texts to the Levant (as Millard does) is claiming

¹⁵⁶ Kottsieper does not think that this form is a plural noun in the emphatic state, but rather a singular noun with a spontaneously geminated *mem*. His reasons are due to poetic parallelism: the form is in parallel with a singular noun (with collective meaning, 'nš' "humankind"), and contextually, therefore, Kottsieper claims that 'mm' is also singular. The ending -' would therefore not be problematic since it would be a normal emphatic ending on a singular noun. See his discussion in *Die Sprache der Ahiqarsprüche* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 194; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 118-21.

¹⁵⁷ Beaulieu and Kottsieper argue that the earlier section that contains this form (the proverbs) originated from the West Semitic world, in southern Syria, and only the later frame reflects the Official Aramaic dialect and could have come from Mesopotamia. In this case, Ahiqar cannot function as an example of how Mesopotamian literature circulated in the Neo-Assyrian period, particularly because the linguistically older section from that era does not originate from Mesopotamia itself. Beaulieu, "Official and Vernacular Languages," 191 n 12; I. Kottsieper, *Die Sprache der Ahiqarsprüche*, 245-46. One cannot draw firm conclusions on how a text like Ahiqar could have functioned to transmit Mesopotamian traditions from the heartland of Assyria to ancient Israel and Judah.

¹⁵⁸ Gzella, "The Heritage of Imperial Aramaic in Eastern Aramaic," 101 n 56; Kottsieper, *Die Sprache der Ahiqarsprüche*, 320-24.

too much for the text and assumes too much of a unified sense of Aramaic scribal culture in the Neo-Assyrian period. Rather, it seems that new compositions of a literary or scientific nature in the Neo-Assyrian period could be written and transmitted in Aramaic, but prestigious scholarly literature in Akkadian during this period continued to be transmitted solely in Akkadian.¹⁵⁹

Another consideration of Aramaic and Akkadian text preservation in the Neo-Assyrian period involves royal rhetoric, a particularly important aspect of language contact from the perspective of the Hebrew Bible, as evidenced in 2 Kgs 18 (see Chapter 3). While scribes in the Neo-Assyrian period clearly used Aramaic for writing in support of imperial administration, the imperial rhetoric attested in the peripheries of the empire remained in the language of prestige, namely Akkadian.¹⁶⁰ Even in the case of a Neo-Assyrian king propagating royal propaganda among local populations speaking Aramaic or another language besides Akkadian, evidence

¹⁵⁹ Local traditions and legends were likely transmitted orally by Aramaic-speaking peoples. There is evidence from Philo of Byblos that the Phoenicians likewise had such local stories that are not preserved in writing. Philo, who lived in the late first century or early second century CE, claimed that he was faithfully transmitting the stories from Sanchunyatón, a source who, according to Philo, lived during the time of the fall of Troy (Late Bronze Age). Philo's retelling of Sanchunyatón's Phoenician myths heavily edited and shaped the originals for the purpose of addressing issues more germane to Philo's own time than to the Late Bronze Age (a phenomenon also apparent in the Hebrew Bible). The claim above pertains to Mesopotamian correspondences to the Hebrew Bible and the ability to reconstruct what was and was not available to Israelites and Judeans given that Israelites and Judeans had repeated contacts with Assyrians and Babylonians beginning in the ninth century BCE. For the Philo of Byblos, see Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos: A Commentary* (Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain t. 89; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981); Harold W. Attridge and Robert A. Oden, Jr., *The Phoenician History, Philo of Byblos: Introduction, Critical Text, Translation, Notes* (Catholic Biblical Quarterly 9; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981).

¹⁶⁰ Fales, "Multilingualism," 107: "Theoretically at least, then, the propaganda effort of the Assyrians in still unsubmissive regions- an effort of which we are aware through the already quoted speech of the *rab shaqeh* as well as from Neo-Assyrian letters- could well have benefited from the redaction of official inscriptions in local languages and scripts, and especially in Aramaic. In practice, however, no such inscription on durable media has yet been discovered, i.e., the Assyrians have not left us any explicitly multilingual political utterance, such as the later Achaemenian empire; and, on the negative side, it must be recalled that, e.g., the stelae of Tiglath-pileser III found in Iran as well as that of Sargon discovered in Cyprus bear exclusively Akkadian texts." One might add that Neo-Assyrian kings deposited stelae exclusively in Akkadian even in submissive areas such as Sam'al. These comments are consistent with the examination of 2 Kgs 18 in Chapter 3, in which the narrative describes the ability of the *rab-shaqeh* to speak the local language directly; no translation of the imperial ideology and desire was given in Aramaic, despite the request of the Judeans to speak in Aramaic. Even though the use of language in 2 Kgs 18 is for a literary purposes (namely, the direct communication of imperial threat in the local language), whatever historical value that may exist behind the text attests to Neo-Assyrian policy to speak the local language and not a need to rely on written or verbal communication through Aramaic as a linguistic vehicle.

exists that kings still deposited royal inscriptions in the latter language. For example, on Cyprus, where there is no evidence that the local populations had any knowledge of Akkadian, Sargon II erected a stele in Akkadian. Later, in ancient Sam'al, Esarhaddon erected a stele with an inscription in Akkadian, despite the fact that the local population was well versed in at least two or three dialects of Aramaic. Two of these local exemplars of Aramaic texts dictated by Bar-Rakib, a loyal vassal of the Neo-Assyrian suzerain, were in a dialect of Aramaic that may have functioned as an attempt to appeal to Assyrian culture and curry favor. One could argue that, if this example is a case of appeal to the empire through language,¹⁶¹ it may be indicative of the growing role of Aramaic in Mesopotamia. It remains, however, that it is an example of the periphery appealing to the central power; when the central power made its claims of authority and dominion, it retained the use of Akkadian even when the local population (perhaps except for certain elites)¹⁶² had no knowledge of this language.¹⁶³

A final avenue of Aramaic and Akkadian language contact to consider involves the oral background of contact-induced change. Written evidence is the most concrete and verifiable means through which one can examine language contact in ancient situations. It also seems, however, that oral transmission was involved in the Akkadian and Aramaic interactions. For example, in a recent study on legal traditions, Andrew D. Gross has proposed that Aramaic legal formulations show literary and linguistic influence from Middle Assyrian laws and deeds,

¹⁶¹ Greenfield, "The Dialects of Early Aramaic," 95.

¹⁶² Younger, "Deportation," 219-24.

¹⁶³ The example of the Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon (VTE) deposited in cuneiform at Tayinat, which had a non-Akkadian speaking population, is indicative of such a process. See Lauinger, "Some Preliminary Thoughts on the Tablet Collection in Building XVI from Tell Tayinat," 5-14; "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary," 87-123; Harrison and Osborne, "Building XVI and the Neo-Assyrian Sacred Precinct at Tell Tayinat," 125-43.

formations that are not evidenced in first millennium Akkadian.¹⁶⁴ Thus, it appears that some of the Aramaic legal characteristics developed through the oral transmission of cuneiform texts.¹⁶⁵ This oral background, however, does not alter the conclusions derived here based on the written record; in fact, it supports the dynamic and changing picture of Akkadian relative to Aramaic presented in this chapter. Indeed, in Gross' study of Aramaic legal innovation, he found a piece of evidence that the relationship reversed between these two languages as Aramaic linguistically and literarily became more dominant in the expression of Mesopotamian law: a cuneiform warranty clause in a text from Lower Mesopotamia set down in the Neo-Babylonian dialect of Akkadian attests terms which parallel closely many elements of Aramaic warranty clauses. Either this Akkadian phrasing was inherited from much earlier texts (with a notable gap of several centuries during which such phrasing is not attested in Neo-Assyrian and would, therefore, have been transmitted orally), or (perhaps more likely) the Aramaic formulation became dominant enough to be the model for the Neo-Babylonian text.

In sum, despite the later, pervasive appearance of Aramaic in a variety of genres, a limited use of the language is evident in both the center and the periphery of the empire in the Neo-Assyrian period, the very era of the development of many biblical texts and traditions that show contact with Mesopotamian traditions. Scholars reconstructing the wide-scale, pervasive uses of Aramaic in this early period, given the evidence available, therefore provide anachronistic analyses. Given the limited uses of the language in Mesopotamia particularly in the Neo-Assyrian period, and given the restricted conveyance of Mesopotamian traditions in this

¹⁶⁴ Even here in this transmission, dialects and regional considerations make the correspondences apparent. Many of the parallels with first-millennium Aramaic phraseology occur in peripheral Akkadian texts, and even here the genres are significant: as Gross shows, warranty and satisfaction clauses have phrasings unique to the literary forms, and in this manner one can better correlate cuneiform correspondences.

¹⁶⁵ Given the oral character of such vows, oral transmission makes sense. Gross, *Continuity and Innovation in the Aramaic Legal Tradition* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 128; Boston: Brill, 2008), 2.

language, suggestions that Israel and Judah had contact with a wide variety of texts in Aramaic in this era appear overextended. The lexical and structural evidence for Aramaic and Akkadian contact reveals an evolving process of linguistic and literary influence that is instructive for language contact as evidenced in the Hebrew Bible.

VIII. *Lexical and Structural Contact Induced Changes*

Kaufman's study of the Akkadian influences on Aramaic illustrates the relationship between lexical and structural contact-induced change. He concludes that Akkadian influenced Aramaic morphologically in the development of the *l-* asseverative prefix in some dialects and perhaps the *-ē*' masculine plural emphatic ending in Eastern Aramaic (though he claims that this morpheme more probably resulted as an analogical extension of the *-ē*' ending on plural gentilic forms).¹⁶⁶ Syntactically, Akkadian likely influenced Aramaic in the genitival use of *zy* and of proleptic suffixes.¹⁶⁷ This latter syntactic structure then became rarer in Akkadian, but much more frequent in Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian dialects through the reintroduction of the form due to Aramaic influence through a boomerang effect.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, Mesopotamian Aramaic may have a freer word order due to Akkadian influence, though this feature may not have occurred independently of loan translations.¹⁶⁹ Kaufman examines other proposals for morphological and syntactic contact-induced changes, but finds the influence mainly limited to these foregoing factors.

¹⁶⁶ Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, 126-28. The *l-* prefix was not itself a morphological loan, but was a retention in Aramaic from Proto-Semitic; however, its spread in various Aramaic dialects may have been encouraged by the similar form in Akkadian. See the note above, in which the importance of the elision of the prefix conjugation forms with the precative *lamed* is discussed.

¹⁶⁷ Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, 130-32.

¹⁶⁸ The Babylonian Talmud and Mandaic also have an interrogative particle that may have entered into these dialects through Akkadian.

¹⁶⁹ See comments above on whether or not such word order reflects independent borrowing of syntax or whether it is due to calquing.

a. *Lexicon*

In many ways, it is not surprising that structural changes in Aramaic due to Akkadian are fairly infrequent or hypothetical given the profile of lexical borrowings. Kaufman calculates the Imperial Aramaic borrowing of verbs from Akkadian as three percent of total borrowings. In this dialect, another four percent consists of “verb-noun complexes” (both borrowed as a calque). Compared to the nouns, which make up ninety-one percent of the lexical borrowings, such verbal influence in Imperial Aramaic is extremely small. The same situation occurs in Eastern Aramaic: verbs account for six percent of the borrowings, verb-noun complexes for two percent, and ninety percent of the borrowings are independent nouns. Given this borrowing profile, one would expect a very small amount of the morpho-syntax and more deeply embedded linguistic features of Aramaic to be influenced by Akkadian.¹⁷⁰ Based on computational calculations of a variety of contact situations, Yaron Matras claims that nouns are borrowed much more easily than verbs, which makes sense.¹⁷¹ Verbs are morpho-syntactically embedded in a language system in a way that nouns are not. More verbal borrowings often correlate with increased structural change, all of which attest to more intense contact situations. It seems as though the Akkadian influences on Aramaic were notable, though not reflective of a contact situation that would produce widespread structural transfer.

¹⁷⁰ Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, 168-70.

¹⁷¹ See Matras’ discussion of borrowing hierarchies, *Language Contact*, 153-65. According to Muysken, a hierarchy of borrowing is as follows (from most likely to least): nouns>adjectives>verbs>prepositions>coordinating conjunctions>quantifiers>determiners>free pronouns>clitic pronouns>subordinating conjunctions (“Halfway between Quechua and Spanish: The Case for Relexification” (*Historicity and Variation in Creole Studies*; Edited by Arnold Highfield and Albert Valdman; Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1981), 52-78.

The Aramaic influence on Akkadian, however, is different. As a comparison, Kaufman's statistical analysis of von Soden's work on Aramaic loans into Akkadian reveals a brief¹⁷² though significantly different picture.¹⁷³ Kaufman calculates that verbs account for twenty-four percent of loans from Aramaic into Akkadian,¹⁷⁴ whereas nouns account for sixty-six percent of the contact-induced change in the lexicon. Moreover, it seems that most of the verbs are borrowed in the Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian periods.¹⁷⁵ This observation is significant for a variety of reasons.¹⁷⁶ First, it appears that diachronically most (if not all)¹⁷⁷ verbs in the list

¹⁷² The analysis is brief, though provisional, since von Soden's study is old and, as Kaufman asserts, noted Aramaisms in Akkadian have yet to be thoroughly studied. As Kaufman also claims, however, von Soden's study is based on a large enough sample size that general accuracy of the numbers is likely.

¹⁷³ Von Soden's list represents a maximal approach to Aramaic loans in Akkadian. The *CAD* identifies far fewer Akkadian words from Aramaic. Kathleen Abraham and Michael Sokoloff provide a minimal list of forty Aramaic loans into Akkadian ("Aramaic Loanwords in Akkadian- A Reassessment of the Proposal," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 52 [2013]: 22-76).

¹⁷⁴ The study of Aramaic loans into Akkadian needs more refinement. Beyond the traditional correspondence between syllabically written Akkadian and Aramaic, one also finds Aramaic terms loaned as part of alternative names for toponyms, as the Ḥābūr region was also called by an Aramaic name *Magdālu*, meaning "observation point, tower" (Hartmut Kühne and Andreas Luther, "Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu/Magdalu?" *Nouvelles assyriologiques breves et utilitaires* [1998]: 106-109; Fales, "Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period," 110). Akkadian uses of logograms can also, at times, reflect loans from Aramaic. For example, logographic GAB.DI could reflect Aramaic *gb dy*, "(by) the side of," and logographic É-TU₅ reflects syllabic *tuanu*, itself from Aramaic *twn*, "inner room, room, chamber" (Radner, *Die neuassyrische Privatrechtsurkunden als Quelle für Mensch und Umwelt*, 277 n 1555; Fales, "*tuanu*: an Aramaic Loanword in Neo-Assyrian," *Nouvelles assyriologiques breves et utilitaires* 116-117 [2003]: 103; "Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period," 110). Even onomastics may have reflected loan translations: the name Nergal-šarru-ušur appears in Aramaic as *'ṯrsršr*. Aramaic *sršr* in this name is the same as šarru-ušur in Akkadian, whereas *'ṯr* is a loan from Akkadian *iṯhuru*, "emblem, standard," used in the Aramaic name to designate Nergal, the Assyrian god of military might (Fales, "Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period," 110 n 67).

¹⁷⁵ For a summary of some lexical innovations, including Aramaic loans, in the Neo-Babylonian dialect, see M. P. Streck, "Innovations in the Neo-Babylonian Lexicon," in *Languages in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings 53rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Moscow and St. Petersburg, July 2007* (edited by L. Kogan, et al; Bibel und Babel 4; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 647-660.

¹⁷⁶ Kaufman's comments on page 169 of *Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* are appropriate, though stated without a linguistic framework.

¹⁷⁷ Based on a collation of words that the editors of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* identify as Aramaic, only one verb for certain occurs in Neo-Assyrian texts as a regular lexeme, the verb for "to go into exile, to deport" (listed in the causative, *šin* stem, *šuglû*, and clearly related to the West Semitic word for "to exile" as found throughout this branch). Parpola disagrees, and instead ascribes this root in all its derivational properties as authentically Assyrian (*AEAD*, 29). Another example may apply, *marāsu*, which the editors of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* define as "to squash." The verb appears once in Akkadian in the Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon; however, the edition of this text cited in the dictionary (Wiseman's publication) agrees with the translation "to squash," but assigns the verb to the root *marāšu*, which is Akkadian, and Wiseman transliterates the signs for the verb *li-im-ri-iṣ-ku-nu*. The sign for *iṣ* can also be read *is*, which would produce the root that *CAD* and von Soden identify, and is a

entered into Akkadian in the Neo-Babylonian period and later. This conclusion is consistent with Kaufman's statement that "it should now be fairly clear that the major period of contact starts later, lasts for a shorter period of time, and is of a different nature from that which scholars have previously surmised."¹⁷⁸

A second significance involves not only the period, but the sociolinguistic factors underlying this pattern of contact. Prosopographic information from the Neo-Assyrian period reveals that most of the personal names were still of Akkadian derivation; however, in the Neo-Babylonian dialect it seems that the names reflected in the texts (though importantly not the names of the scribes themselves) and the spoken language are increasingly Aramaic.¹⁷⁹ Some scholars have surmised that the dominant spoken language of this period was Aramaic, even as Akkadian continued to function in some manner as a prestige language.¹⁸⁰ Given the fact that linguistic dominance in Mesopotamia was increasingly Aramaic particularly in the Neo-Babylonian period, such a profile of lexical borrowings that included numerous verbs makes sense. The transfer of more deeply embedded lexical items such as verbs are indicative of this process, and the following structural observations of Aramaic influence on Akkadian supports this thesis as well. A discussion of the linguistic processes at work follows the presentation of more data.

common Aramaic root. This verb, however, only appears once in the Akkadian corpus. Parpola, however, identifies it as a primary Akkadian root that only takes on secondary meanings due to Aramaic influence (*AEAD*, 60). Finally, the verb *radāpu* has been suggested as an Aramaic loan into Akkadian, attested in Neo-Assyrian; others, however, view this root as genuine Akkadian (Streck, "Akkadian and Aramaic Contact," *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* [edited by Stefan Weninger; Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft 36; Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011], 419).

¹⁷⁸ Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, 169-70.

¹⁷⁹ Even as an overwhelming majority of scribes writing texts still bore Akkadian derived names, other names mentioned in these texts are increasingly of Aramaic origin.

¹⁸⁰ Beaulieu, "Official and Vernacular Languages," 194.

b. Phonology

Phonologically, Akkadian roots with two emphatic consonants inherited from Proto-Semitic dissimilate one of the two (**qaṣārum*>*kaṣārum*, “to bind”), a process known as Geer’s Law. Often Aramaic loans into Akkadian conform to this rule; however, variant spellings exist that highlight the external origin of the word. For example, the Neo-Babylonian verb *qaṭû* “to approach” breaks this rule, and the verb comes from a well-attested Aramaic root *q-ṭ-y*. The word for “wood chopper” presents a number of phonological issues. As a loan from Aramaic into Akkadian, it shows both conformity to Geer’s law, and some variants also ignore this dissimilation (spelled *qettā`u* [*qé-et-ta-u*], and *qaṭṭāyu* [*qá-aṭ-ṭa-a-a*, or *qá-ṭa-a-[a]*; see also *qāṭû* for a “woodcutter”).¹⁸¹

This root presents another phonological problem for Akkadian. The Aramaic root is *q-ṭ-`*; however, Akkadian lost ` much earlier in its development. At times, Aramaic roots loaned into Akkadian undergo the same phonological process as originally occurred when the voiced pharyngeal fricative was lost in Akkadian: Aramaic *s-`-d* becomes Akkadian *sêdu*, “to support,”¹⁸² showing the expected vocalic coloring *a>e* with the loss of the pharyngeal fricative. At times, however, Akkadian does not render the voiced pharyngeal fricative: Aramaic *q-ṭ-`* becomes *qettā`u* (*qé-et-ta-u*), with the penultimate /a/ remaining /a/; Aramaic `r`, “land,” becomes Akkadian *a-ra*.¹⁸³ These examples of phonological contact-induced change in Akkadian

¹⁸¹ Streck, “Akkadian and Aramaic Language Contact,” 420.

¹⁸² Although Streck identifies this verb, attested in Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian, as a loan from Aramaic, the *CAD* volume *s* makes no such suggestion.

¹⁸³ The voiced pharyngeal fricative in Aramaic can also be represented by a voiceless velar fricative *ħ* (Aramaic *mā`ā*>Akkadian *māħat*, “half-shekel”; Akkadian *ħišarû*, “tithe,” may be from Aramaic `š-r) or by a voiceless glottal stop ` (Akkadian *ak-ta-ra-a`* from Aramaic *k-r-`*). Streck, “Akkadian and Aramaic Language Contact,” 420.

from Aramaic show interference due to specific loans, but did not result in widespread phonological adaptations in Akkadian.¹⁸⁴

c. *Morphology and Syntax*

A few morphological and syntactic contact-induced changes from Aramaic to Akkadian may have occurred as early as in the Neo-Assyrian period. For example, in most Akkadian dialects, predicative adjectives are formed through the use of the stative (*paris*) forms of verbal roots. When a predicative adjective appears in a normal adjectival pattern (*parsu*), it very rarely occurs in the nominative. A few cases in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian period, however, show the predicate adjective in the nominative case, which has been ascribed to Aramaic influence.¹⁸⁵

ḥassi u putqudu atta “you are wise and circumspect”

šalmu šū, “it is safe”

DNF *paqtú šī*, “Ishtar is slight”

These examples could provide early evidence of syntactic, contact-induced change between Aramaic and Akkadian. Aramaic did not have separate forms for the predicative and attributive adjectives, and, modeled on the lack of morphological distinction in Aramaic, Akkadian similarly used the same form (*parsu*) for both the predicative and attributive adjective.¹⁸⁶

Further syntactic contact-induced change in Aramaic is evident in the use of the preposition *ana* as the *nota accusativi* under the influence of the parallel use in Aramaic of the

¹⁸⁴ For example, Aramaic contact-induced changes did not result in the reintroduction of the voiced pharyngeal fricative in Akkadian.

¹⁸⁵ See Kouwenberg, *The Akkadian Verb in its Semitic Background* (Languages of the Ancient Near East 2; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 166. The adjective used predicatively is typically in the stative form, *paris*. When appearing in the nominative with the predicate function outside of possible Aramaic influence, the adjective is typically substantized (*kēnum anāku*, “I am an honest person”) or followed by an enclitic particle such as *-ma* (*bīt mārtika damqumma*, “the house of your daughter is excellent”).

¹⁸⁶ Huehnergard, “What is Aramaic?” 269.

preposition *l* to mark the object of the verb.¹⁸⁷ An earlier use of *ana* in Akkadian to mark the accusative appeared in the Neo-Assyrian period; however, this usage was limited to contexts in which the subject and object could be confused,¹⁸⁸ and was therefore syntactically conditioned within this particular dialect and cannot be ascribed to external causation from Aramaic. This syntactic property may have eased the transition of the same preposition in Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian to mark the accusative with *ana* due to certain Aramaic influence during this latter period. Given the semantic correspondence of *ana* in Akkadian and *l* in Aramaic as two prepositions meaning “to,” however, it is easier to ascribe this marking in later dialects of Akkadian as direct Aramaic influence. Indeed, this Aramaic preposition as well as its compound form *lpny* meaning “before,” were borrowed directly into Akkadian as *la* and *lapān*, marking a dative relationship (“to, towards; before”) with respect to the noun that these particles governed.¹⁸⁹

Word order also underwent contact-induced change increasingly through time. In the Neo-Assyrian period, this process began to occur; however, it was not until the Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian periods that the increasing influence of Aramaic word order can be seen.¹⁹⁰ Whereas Akkadian syntax had been verb final since its very early contact situation with Sumerian, in the later periods and dialects verb initial syntax (which is usual in Aramaic, VSO) becomes more common:

paleḥ issu pān bēlīja- “he is afraid of my lord.”

tammar rīmūtka- “you will see your gift”

¹⁸⁷ Von Soden, *Grundriss der Akkadischen Grammatik (GAG)* (Analecta Orientalia 33; Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1995), §114e, 144c, 145g, and 192b.

¹⁸⁸ Such confusion arose in Neo-Assyrian since the accusative case (historically *-a*) collapsed with the nominative (*-u*), resulting in non-genitives having the same case vowel.

¹⁸⁹ *GAG*, §114e, 115l.

¹⁹⁰ *GAG*, §130c, 192c, 193a.

As previously mentioned, the use of the proleptic suffix is attested in Akkadian dialects dating to the Old Babylonian period. Its use, however, decreased significantly such that it was not a productive part of the language in the early part of first millennium BCE. By the Neo-Babylonian period, however, constructions such as X *maršu ša* Y appear with much more frequency, likely a result of contact-induced change from Aramaic (X *bārēh dī* Y, a construction previously introduced into Aramaic likely *via* an earlier contact situation with Akkadian).

The same trend appears in morphology. Over time, Aramaic exerted more and more influence, attesting to the increased linguistic dominance of this language. In the Neo-Assyrian period, some of this morphological pressure begins to appear. For example, in most Akkadian dialects, the first person plural independent pronoun is either *nīnu* or *nēnu*. In the later periods (starting in the Neo-Assyrian era and later), this independent pronoun occasionally is written with an initial ʾ under influence from the Aramaic pattern (Akkadian ʾ*anēnu/i*, based on Aramaic ʾ*ānaḥnā*).¹⁹¹ This patterning of a core vocabulary item in Akkadian is indicative of a contact situation that was increasing in intensity over time.

By the Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian periods Aramaic had influenced Akkadian verbal morphology and the verbal system in limited, though notable, ways.¹⁹² Regarding morphology, Akkadian dialects historically had a marker to connote precativity, *lū*. This marker could be used with the stative in Akkadian to express “a desired state,” or with the jussive to express “a desired action.”¹⁹³ The former construction involved the particle of the precative standing alone before the verb (*lū balṭāta*, “may you be in good health”), while the latter

¹⁹¹ GAG, §41i/j, 192b.

¹⁹² So Streck “Borrowed verbs are always fully integrated into the AK [Akkadian] inflectional system and form the AK [Akkadian] tenses and verbal systems” (“Akkadian and Aramaic Language Contact,” 420).

¹⁹³ Richard Caplice, *Introduction to Akkadian* (with the collaboration of Daniel Snell; 3rd revised edition; Studia Pohl 9; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1988), 40.

construction consisted of the particle appended directly to the verb through crasis (*lukšud*, “may I attain”; *limḥaṣ*, “may he strike”). In later Akkadian dialects (Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian), the latter form of the precative ceased to be productive. Instead, the normal perfective form occurred (*akšud*, *imḥaṣ*). The reason for this lack of marking was likely due to Aramaic influence. In Aramaic, the prefix verbal conjugation, which is historically formally similar to the Akkadian perfective conjugation, expresses imperfectivity; after Old Aramaic and with most root forms even in Old Aramaic, this form generally merged with the jussive with the result that the same form can have a jussive sense without a special prefix marking (*ʿektub*).¹⁹⁴ The loss of the precative marker on the perfective in Akkadian in the late dialects is, therefore, likely due to Aramaic influence; however, according to M. P. Streck, this contact-induced change is the one area in which Aramaic influenced Akkadian’s verbal system.¹⁹⁵

Influence on Akkadian’s verbal morphology in late dialects also occurs. Historically, Akkadian had a form to express both the perfective and imperfective third person (for masculine and feminine subjects): perfective: *iprus* for masculine, *taprus* for feminine; imperfective: *iparras* for masculine, *taparras* for feminine. In the Babylonian dialect, however, this distinction was lost, leading to common third person forms *iprus* and *iparras*. This common form differs from Aramaic, which distinguishes masculine and feminine in the imperfective conjugation: masculine: *yiktub*; feminine: *tiktub*. This distinction appears in Late-Babylonian third person feminine forms, which use *ta-* as a prefix due to Aramaic contact. Therefore, this dialect of

¹⁹⁴ Biblical Aramaic, however, sometimes lacks a final *nun* on plural endings to express a jussive sense.

¹⁹⁵ Streck, *Zahl und Zeit: Grammatik der Numeralia und des Verbalsystems im Spätbabylonischen* (Cuneiform Monographs 5; Groningen: STYX Publications, 1995), 245-47.

Akkadian reproduces the same grammatical distinction as Aramaic, perhaps by employing a preexisting variant present in other Akkadian dialects.¹⁹⁶

Finally, an interesting morphological contact-induced change in the noun occurs in Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian. Akkadian has no definite article. For example, the word *kaspum* could mean “(a piece of) silver,” an indeterminate amount, or “the (piece of) silver” (or “the silver”), a determined/definite amount. Through a process of grammaticalization, Aramaic historically developed its definite article through the post-positioning of a demonstrative pronoun that became an enclitic, often called the “emphatic state,” which in earlier dialects of Aramaic expressed definiteness (**kalbV-han* “the dog” > **kalban* > *kalba* ’ > *kalbā*).¹⁹⁷ Later dialects of Akkadian occasionally borrowed this morpheme to form their own determined state (*kaspā*, which von Soden translates as “*das Silber*”).¹⁹⁸ This innovation did not spread, and may have been syntactically conditioned.¹⁹⁹ Von Soden claims that it appears most often at the end of a sentence or clause, and this example may therefore be a case of interference that does not enter the dialect or language more broadly, but nonetheless registers as a contact-induced change when

¹⁹⁶ GAG §75h, 193b. Another area of interference from Aramaic in Akkadian verbal forms may also involve phonology. In roots with a first consonant *aleph*, such as *elûm*, a prefix form would normally be *têlli*, in which the *aleph* is syncopated inter-vocally. Forms in Late-Babylonian such as *te-’i-il-li* show the preservation of the *aleph*, perhaps due to Aramaic influence. GAG §97s.

¹⁹⁷ Some Aramaic dialects, and especially latter forms such as Syriac, did not use the emphatic ending to connote definiteness; rather, this marker was simply lexicalized. For its historical development, see Aaron Rubin, *Studies in Semitic Grammaticalization* (Harvard Semitic Studies 57; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 79.

¹⁹⁸ Formally, *kaspā* looks identical to the noun plus a first person possessive suffix, “my silver.” Other examples include: *ana tēmānāta šuṭurannāši* “issue instructions to us”; *ana tēmānāta lusanniqšunūti* “I will question them about the instruction.” The *-a* on *tēmanāta* is identified by the editors of the *CAD* as an accusative marker (vol. T, 91); however, the case system in Aramaic had already likely disappeared, and this form is therefore more likely a plural with an emphatic ending. After the preposition *ana*, either the genitive (for singular nouns) or oblique (for plural) should appear, but not an accusative *-a*. If the *-a* marked the accusative, it would reflect the breakdown of the Akkadian case system, which is entirely possible in this late period; however, the analysis of the *-a* as an emphatic ending from Aramaic is much more likely as it is attested elsewhere in this period.

¹⁹⁹ The use of the emphatic state in Old Aramaic was likewise syntactically conditioned, occurring especially before demonstrative and relative pronouns (Huehnergard, “What is Aramaic?” 270).

it appears.²⁰⁰ Although the case system in Akkadian had already largely disappeared,²⁰¹ the process of adding the Aramaic emphatic article to the end of Akkadian words in later dialects perhaps facilitated the erosion of the case system as this ending replaced the final short vowels in the Akkadian nominal morphology.²⁰²

IX. *The Linguistic Processes of Akkadian/Aramaic Contact*

Many of the data presented in this chapter have led Fales to argue for the possibility of a blended language based on what he terms “Assyro-Aramaic symbiosis.”²⁰³ He hypothesizes that it is reasonable to suppose that a mixed dialect was developing, one that he theoretically coins “Assaramian.”²⁰⁴ Fales builds this theory on the information above as well as (a mis-)reading of Sargon II’s inscription (discussed previously). By symbiosis and “mixed idiom,” Fales seems to propose a form of convergence of Akkadian and Aramaic given the social situations that required legal texts, dockets, and colophons with Aramaic summaries of Akkadian texts, and letters written in Akkadian and Aramaic.

The linguistic and sociohistorical data in this chapter suggest a different process of language contact than Fales’ theory. Rather than “symbiosis” and “mixed idiom,” Fales would be on safer ground to call the process simply mutual interference, whereby contact-induced change in this situation can come from either Akkadian or Aramaic as the source language. His use particularly of the phrase “mixed idiom” and his positing of a hypothetical “Assaramian” dialect assume that a common language emerged from the situation, a process often resulting from

²⁰⁰ *GAG*, §63g, 192b.

²⁰¹ Case distinctions were already lost in many forms of the noun with a pronominal suffix attached.

²⁰² On the other hand, the use of the emphatic ending in Akkadian is not so extensive and systematic that it can be said to encourage this process of the loss of case vowels in Akkadian generally.

²⁰³ Fales, “Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period,” 111.

²⁰⁴ Fales, “Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period,” 111; “New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interference: The Assur Ostrakon,” 189 n 3.

convergence.²⁰⁵ Such a convergence would involve extensive borrowings in verbal morphology bringing the two languages closer to each other; no such borrowing of verbal morphemes occurs.²⁰⁶ Nominal morphemes are borrowed, but either sporadically, as in the emphatic Aramaic ending - ' in Akkadian, or limited to dialects, as in the emphatic masculine plural Eastern Aramaic ending -ē', borrowed from Akkadian. Moreover, in certain spheres of literature and society, such as prestigious cuneiform texts and as indicated in the prosopographic information of scribes writing Akkadian in the Neo-Babylonian times (who had overwhelmingly Akkadian names), the languages were kept more or less separate in certain social domains despite the close administrative interaction of Aramaic and Akkadian scribes. Positing a mixed language does not do justice to these factors and a more precise linguistic process can be suggested.

The contact situation appears to be that of language shift, with the increased population of Aramaic speakers becoming progressively dominant, and therefore representing a larger percentage of the population more fluent in this language than in Akkadian.²⁰⁷ More Akkadian

²⁰⁵ Matras' definition of convergence in phonology is illustrative: "By definition, convergence increases the similarities between the phonological inventories of the two languages" (*Language Contact*, 230). For Matras, on the one hand convergence is simply the result of the efficient elimination of communication hurdles when negotiating the selection of forms available in a language and attempting to exploit an array of expressions using what is available in a bilingual situation (*Language Contact*, 5). Such a process involves the increasing similarity of languages through pattern replication (*Language Contact*, 234-74). The result is two languages converging in a pattern not evident in the Aramaic-Akkadian situation. Whereas Mesopotamian Aramaic may show more significant contact-induced changes from Akkadian in the seventh century, other dialects show less change, and the changes evident in Akkadian from Aramaic do not result in a convergence of languages as such.

²⁰⁶ That later Akkadian drops the precativ form on analogy to the prefix-imperfect in some dialects in Aramaic that express volativity without this suffix is not a borrowing of a verbal morpheme, but a reshaping on analogy to Aramaic, and therefore does not qualify here. So also the use of the *t* prefix in Akkadian prefix conjugations for the third person feminine singular: it is not a borrowing from Aramaic, but a patterning on the basis of Aramaic.

²⁰⁷ See Chapter 3 on the description of these linguistic processes. For an argument that Akkadian undergoes a shift towards Aramaic, see Beaulieu, "Aspects of Aramaic and Babylonian Linguistic Interaction in First Millennium BC Iraq," *Journal of Language Contact* 6 (2013): 358-78. Beaulieu offers an excellent analysis of the data, much of which (independently) overlaps with the data discussed in this chapter; however, as Beaulieu himself notes, the means through which Akkadian becomes more like Aramaic is often through linguistic features inherent in Akkadian itself and not through the widespread borrowing of structural/morphological forms from Aramaic. A more precise definition of the linguistic process than he offers (namely, shift and convergence) is therefore required.

speakers also began to use Aramaic in this process, with these speakers becoming increasingly dominant in Aramaic over time. In these circumstances, structural elements become the linguistic features that are transferred in contact-induced change. Some element of this process may be at work; however, even though roughly thirty percent of the scribal names in cuneiform/Akkadian legal texts in the Neo-Assyrian period were non-Akkadian, an overwhelming majority of scribal names writing Akkadian otherwise were etymologically Akkadian, and scribes of literary texts have exclusively (as far as I am aware) Akkadian names. The portion of the scribal population in Mesopotamia writing Akkadian, then, remained distinct through the Neo-Babylonian period, perhaps into the Late-Babylonian period as well (and beyond). Another process may also be at work.

A development known as matter-pattern borrowing, introduced in Chapter 3, may be the underlying process of change between these two languages.²⁰⁸ As discussed in Chapter 3, these are two types of borrowing that can occur separately or in tandem with one another. Matter borrowing refers to the incorporation of morphological material and phonological shapes from the SL to the RL, such as loanwords and morphological borrowings. Pattern borrowing, however, denotes the process in which the RL restructures or copies patterns from the SL without borrowing the actual forms themselves. Pattern borrowing differs from convergence in that convergence often results in a common language or in two languages becoming increasingly similar. Rather, in pattern borrowing organizational features of parts of the RL change, mapping onto the pattern of the SL, but the morphemes involved may remain distinct from the SL and SL does not necessarily change itself, or at least in the same ways as the RL. The sociolinguistic situation behind matter and particularly pattern loans involve a dominant language (often a

²⁰⁸ Sakel, "Types of Loan: Matter and Pattern," 15-29.

language of administration or a *lingua franca*) and a dominated language, the dominant language functioning as the SL and the dominated language functioning as the RL. For pattern borrowing to occur, higher levels of bilingualism need to be present so that those speakers of the RL can identify the features of the SL and incorporate those patterns in the RL. Non-sociolinguistic constraints can be involved, such as rigidity of word-order, in which case the language with such rigidity will be more likely to have matter loans than pattern loans.

The legal documents, docketts, and colophons from the Assyrian heartland may show some variation of both matter and pattern borrowing in Mesopotamian Aramaic. The calquing in these documents from Akkadian results in verb final word-order, which is a combination of matter (lexical) and pattern (word-order) loans working together; however, the pattern loans in this case did not spread to the language, and were mostly restricted to these documents or other documents in which Akkadian was being calqued. The most traceable influence of Akkadian on Aramaic as a language in a variety of dialects involves matter loans (lexical). There is little structural contact-induced change in Aramaic from Akkadian.

The case of Akkadian borrowing features from Aramaic, however, is different. It is clear that, in the Neo-Assyrian to the Neo-Babylonian periods, Akkadian was a language of identity for a tradition of cuneiform texts, a tradition that may extend even to the Hellenistic period in southern Mesopotamia.²⁰⁹ It is also clear that Aramaic became an increasingly important language for communication in the Mesopotamian empires, resulting, ultimately, in the use of Aramaic as an administrative language in the Assyrian heartland and the use of Imperial Aramaic

²⁰⁹ Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, "Aspects of Seleucid Royal Ideology: The Cylinder of Antiochus I from Borsippa," 71-86; Goldstein, "Late Babylonian Letters on Collecting Tablets and the Hellenistic Background- A Suggestion," 199-207; Zadok, "The Representation of Foreigners in Neo- and Late-Babylonian Legal Documents (Eighth through Second Centuries B. C. E.)," 471-589; Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1979), 100-101.

as a *lingua franca*. This situation resulted in more bilingual situations, the precondition for pattern borrowings. Given the lexical borrowings presented above and the increasing structural change based on Aramaic patterns especially in the Neo-Babylonian and later periods, one can discern both matter and pattern borrowings occurring in these periods. The lexical borrowings began in the Neo-Assyrian period, and intensified in the Neo-Babylonian dialect of Akkadian, during which time structural influence from Aramaic also began to increase. As mentioned above, no phonological innovation occurs in Akkadian due to Aramaic contact-induced change (though some form of interference occurs in the violation of Geer's Law).

In this manner, the Aramaic influences on Akkadian can be viewed not as *ad hoc* borrowings due to a generally increasing bilingual society or simply a diglossic situation, but rather can be defined as a specific sociolinguistic process. Given the evolving role of Akkadian in the first millennium, allowing it to have its own linguistic process relative to Aramaic does the most justice to the linguistic and sociohistorical data. Using vague terms like "symbiosis," which might indicate that the influence of Akkadian on Aramaic has to be essentially reciprocal to the influence of Aramaic on Akkadian, does not adequately represent their changing status relative to one another over time. Instead, viewing the Aramaic influence on Akkadian as part of Matras and Sakel's matter and pattern borrowing explains the data well: Akkadian borrowed matter in terms of lexemes as well as occasionally a determined state from Aramaic since Akkadian lacked a definite article; the morphosyntactic influence for the most part seems to be patterning, in which native Akkadian elements were used to create distinctions and model patterns on the basis of Aramaic without actually borrowing Aramaic morphemes. Matras and Sakel have found this process to be true cross-linguistically when the dominant language functions administratively or

as a *lingua franca*. This was certainly the case with Aramaic relative to Akkadian, even as the latter retained a prestigious role religiously and culturally for the Babylonian elites.

X. Conclusion

This chapter contains both sociohistorical and linguistic information, for understanding the contact situation between Aramaic and Akkadian in history and through time requires such a synthesis. This sociohistorical background highlights both the reality of language contact between Akkadian and Aramaic in the Iron Age II and later periods, even as there were linguistic and literary constraints conditioned by social factors. Though one can generalize and discuss “Akkadian” and “Aramaic” trends over time in some fashion, the actual nature of contact occurs in the form of dialects, and studies that ignore this facet cannot do justice to the complexity of the situation. Moreover, attempts to place Imperial Aramaic at an earlier period in time to downplay these dialectal considerations, particularly based on Sargon’s famous inscription, fail to persuade.

In the context of the following chapters, this sociolinguistic portrait of parts of a dynamically bilingual Mesopotamian society is particularly foundational for understanding language contact in the Hebrew Bible. It is the historical, linguistic, and sociological situation outlined above that would have been the reality for an Israelite or Judean in Mesopotamia, either brought there for diplomatic purposes or by exile. This information therefore also provides a sociolinguistic background for the chapters that follow. Additionally, the contact-induced changes discussed in this chapter provide a historical counterpart, both in similarities and differences, to the types of contact-induced changes in the Hebrew Bible, which occurred in different circumstances though during the same time period as the contact situations discussed in this chapter. Lastly, allowing the Akkadian influences on Aramaic to have their own process

relative to Aramaic influences on Akkadian is instructive: contact situations are dynamic, and many types of changes can be involved even when only two languages are at play.

Often biblical scholars approach language contact in the Hebrew Bible without such nuances, expecting Akkadian and Aramaic influence to take the same form. Chapters 5 and 6 build on the work of this chapter to show that two different types of contact processes are involved in the Hebrew Bible relative to Akkadian and Aramaic. The contact situation between Akkadian and Hebrew was much more like the Akkadian influences on Aramaic (without structural transfer), whereas the Aramaic influence on Hebrew was more like the Aramaic influence on Akkadian (also with notable differences). Because the Akkadian influence on Hebrew does not involve morpho-syntax or phonology, and therefore is more difficult to distinguish from Aramaic influence on purely structural grounds, the sociolinguistic background of what was and was not transferred between Akkadian and Aramaic literarily and linguistically during the time of the formation of the Hebrew Bible is all the more important.

Chapter 5: Language Contact in the Pentateuch

“A possible rival for the earliest report of contact-induced change, also involving mixed marriages, is in the Old Testament of the Bible, in Nehemiah 13:23-24: “In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people.”¹

I. Introduction

The Bible records political interactions between Israel and her ancient Near Eastern neighbors in many passages. For example, to know that Israel had contact with Assyria, all one has to do is to read the Book of Isaiah or the latter portions of 2 Kings. The pericope 2 Kgs 18:17-35, examined in Chapter 3, has been one of the most discussed passages in the Bible in this regard. While this contact is described explicitly in texts such as the Book of Isaiah (see Chapter 6), the Pentateuchal sources contain linguistic traces of contact-induced change from Mesopotamian sources as well, even though Mesopotamian empires (Assyria, Babylon, Persia) do not figure prominently in the narrative.² Determining the literary and linguistic nature of contact in the Pentateuch, however, is much more complicated. These books are the result of the compilation of four sources, literary documents that developed over time in changing circumstances in the life of the nations of Israel and Judah. It was also during this time of the creation and compilation of the Pentateuch that the bilingual situation in Mesopotamia changed and Aramaic became increasingly influential. If there is evidence of contact in these Pentateuchal

¹ Thomason, “Determining Language Contact Effects in Ancient Contact Situations,” 3.

² Genesis 1-11 has a broadly Mesopotamian geographical orientation, but transitions to the Levant and Egypt in Genesis 12, the settings of much of the remainder of the narratives in the Pentateuch. See Hendel, “Genesis 1-11 and Its Mesopotamian Problem,” 23-36.

sources with the various empires in Mesopotamia that concurrently came to prominence, one would expect the biblical data to be influenced by the bilingual situation of the two possible source languages, Akkadian and Aramaic. As a result, the sociolinguistic background in Chapter 4 is particularly important for setting the stage for the analysis in this chapter as well as in Chapter 6.

Given the difficulties of tracing this contact, one would expect scholars to be more reflective about method. With the exception of some of the studies discussed in Chapter 2 (Kaufman, Mankowski, and Peacock), linguistic method has often been missing in the debate concerning how Israel and Judah came into contact with Mesopotamian sources. It is refreshing when explicit statements on how and why scholars reconstruct language contact in the Hebrew Bible appear, though they often bring to the fore the difficulty of tracing ancient Israel and Judah's interaction with her neighbors. For example, Kaufman's assumption that Israelites and Judeans would not have had significant, direct contact with Akkadian since Israelite and Judean language and writing systems (and therefore scribal ability) are too simple compared to the more advanced Akkadian scribes has rightly been questioned.³ Perceptions of simplicity and complexity of languages and writing systems are much too general to be persuasive from a linguistic perspective.⁴ Indeed, evaluating simplicity versus complexity of languages and writing systems is fraught with difficulties.⁵ These difficulties make the simple assumption of Aramaic

³ Peacock, "Akkadian Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible: Historical and Social Implications," 316.

⁴ See Niek Veldhuis on cuneiform literacy (and also on Japanese and Chinese as having highly "complex" writing systems, yet also high rates of literacy) ("Levels of Literacy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture* [edited by Karen Radner and Eleanor Robson; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011], 71).

⁵ For recent linguistic studies on complexity and theories that contact situations lead to linguistic simplicity, see Östen Dahl, *The Growth and Maintenance of Linguistic Complexity* (Studies in Language Companion Series 71; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004); Matti Miestamo, Kaius Sinnemäki, and Fred Karlsson, *Language Complexity: Typology, Contact, Changes* (Studies in Language Companion Series 94; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008);

intermediation between the scribes of the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian literature on the basis of purely structural considerations too facile and general to be helpful for any given passage. While language A might be simpler than language B morphologically, language A might be more complex pragmatically. Each category of linguistics needs to be considered in this manner. As a result, a general statement such as Barr's that "Accadian must have been to the average Israelite a much more...difficult language than Aramaic" may be true in some sense;⁶ however, it is in need of too much qualification to serve as an adequate basis for assuming that Aramaic was the means whereby ancient Israel and Judah gained access to Mesopotamian literature.

As argued in Chapter 2, more rigorous and systematic analysis of language contact in comparative studies of the Hebrew Bible is needed. That framework was presented in Chapter 3, along with sociolinguistic factors that provide the extra-linguistic context for the linguistic and literary information presented in the following chapters. In Chapter 4, I examined language contact between Aramaic and Akkadian (a complex situation that changed over time with the shifting underlying sociological, literary, and cultural realities in Mesopotamia). The Aramaic and Akkadian contact situation is revealing for a variety of factors: first, it is a fairly well attested contact situation and can provide a control for what to expect in other, lesser documented but

Wouter Kusters, *Linguistic Complexity: The Influence of Social Change on Verbal Inflection* (Landelijke Onderzoekschool Taalwetenschap 77; Netherland Graduate School of Linguistics: Leiden, 2003); John H. McWhorter, *Linguistic Simplicity and Complexity: Why Do Languages Undress?* (Language Contact and Bilingualism; Boston: DeGruyter, 2011). The work of Thomason and Kaufman anticipated this theory of contact leading to simplicity in their work *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 22. They claim that there is no necessary correlation between a language contact situation and one or other languages developing more unmarked (hence, simplified) features. Thomason restated her conviction, questioning the linguist's ability to develop comprehensive measure of simplicity or complexity, in a paper delivered in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Chicago on May 12, 2011 (paper title: "Does Language Contact Simplify Grammars?").

⁶ Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 123.

nonetheless analogous situations such as Akkadian, Aramaic, and Hebrew contact in the Bible; and second, it reveals the dynamic nature of contact situations, a dynamism often overlooked in scholarly discussions of Israelite and Judean access to Mesopotamian literature.

In this chapter, I present evidence for language contact traceable in one section of the Hebrew Bible, the Pentateuch, with Akkadian and Aramaic language and literature. Two aspects of language contact are important to emphasize. First, a study of language contact in the Hebrew Bible should take into account scribal practice as well as documented evidence of linguistic interference due to contact between people of various languages. Languages do not come into contact in isolation of people. Chapters 3 and 4 included some of the sociolinguistic and sociohistorical background of language contact (historical record of interaction, linguistic evidence of Akkadian and Aramaic contact, etc.). This background frames much of the analysis and the historical claims in the following discussion. As the data in this chapter and in Chapter 6 indicate, the transition between the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, on the one hand, and the Persian period, on the other, was pivotal for Israelite and Judean access to Mesopotamian traditions. The changes in scribal culture in the Persian period, as pointed out already by Menahem Haran, reflected changing historical circumstances, all of which are factors in language contact as well.⁷

Second, literary and linguistic evidence, which are often examined separately, should be kept together in a study of language contact, as the following examples from the Pentateuch

⁷ Haran, "Book-Scrolls at the Beginning of the Second Temple Period: The Transition from Papyrus to Skins," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 54 (1983): 111-22.

demonstrate.⁸ At times, the data may not offer definitive conclusions about when and where the contact occurred; however, presenting plausible solutions can move the discussion forward and provide more clarity and nuance to the discussion of how Israelites and Judeans gained access to Mesopotamian traditions than has existed previously. Diachronic evaluations are essential in any critical study of many parts of the Hebrew Bible, all the more so for sections such as the Pentateuch and the Book of Isaiah (see Chapter 6). Yet, as Hurvitz has noted, this diachronic dimension from a literary perspective has been lacking in linguistic studies of language contact in the Hebrew Bible.⁹ The fundamental recognition of the growth of the Pentateuch over time originated from literary observations. Incorporating the study of individual sources in which the linguistic data appear with theories of language contact keeps the reality of the different literary portrayals of Israel's stories in the Pentateuch in view. Moreover, this synthesis promotes the examination of how contact changed over time according to the different needs, views, and literary portrayals of the various Pentateuchal sources. Before presenting the linguistic data, I

⁸ The two are kept separate, and rightly so when the author's interest is more narrowly linguistic. For a recent linguistic study, see Paul J. Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*. There are authors who incorporate both elements in their study of the Hebrew Bible in the ancient Near East, but without an explicit linguistic methodology *per se*, such as the works of Shalom Paul. In the case of Paul, whose work is excellent and has included many contributions to the field, his lack of linguistic method has resulted in idiosyncratic terminology, such as "inter-dialectal equivalents" between Hebrew and Akkadian, a vague phrase that leaves many questions unanswered, such as whether the equivalence is due to contact or mutually independent inheritance. Moreover, Hebrew and Akkadian are not "dialects" relative to one another, a fact that Paul knows but which is obscured in his phrasing. See, for example, many passages (such as his comment on 2:9) in *Amos* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1991).

⁹ See his review of Mankowski (cited above). Hurvitz himself is an exception. See, for example, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (Cahiers de la Revue Biblique 20; Paris: Gabalda, 1982). See more recently, though less influential, Rick Wright, *Linguistic Evidence for the Pre-Exilic Date of the Yahwistic Source*. For Isaiah, see Paul, "Signs of Late Biblical Hebrew in Isaiah 40-66," in *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew* (edited by Cynthia Miller-Naudé and Ziony Zevit; Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 8; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 293-99. Linguistic diachrony, particularly the distinction between Early Hebrew, Standard Biblical Hebrew, and Late Biblical Hebrew, has been particularly debated recently. See Ian Young, R. Rezetko, and M. Ehrensverd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts* (2 vols.; London: Equinox, 2008). See the responses in Cynthia Miller-Naudé and Ziony Zevit, eds., *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew* (Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 8; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2012).

offer a brief survey of the state of source-critical approaches to the Pentateuch, which in turn forms the basis of viewing language contact as part of the literary and historical backdrop of the Pentateuchal sources. The data discussed are representative rather than exhaustive. I focus on analyzing the selected data as thoroughly as possible given the literary and historical-critical issues involved; however, in the final section, a more comprehensive assessment of the language contact situation appears, incorporating the findings of other studies into the diachronic, Neo-Documentarian perspective of the Pentateuch presented in this chapter.

Finally, I synthesize the data presented in this chapter within the framework of language contact outlined in Chapter 3. This approach, at least in a preliminary fashion, can form the foundation for a more thorough comparative study of the Hebrew Bible and other ancient literature. Along the way, I address the difficulties that face the scholar when attempting to ask how ancient Israel and Judah had access to Akkadian literature. I conclude with some observations about what contact-induced changes in the Hebrew Bible can tell us about language and society under the shadow of the Mesopotamian empires.

II. *Critical Approaches to the Pentateuch: A Brief Overview*

A full overview of the state of the study of the Pentateuch would be too lengthy for the purposes of this dissertation. Indeed, volumes, both old and new, have been dedicated to tracing the history of critical scholarship on the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁰ A summation of

¹⁰ For overviews of scholarship on the Pentateuch, see J. Estlin Carpenter and G. Harford-Battersby, *The Hexateuch according to the Revised Version: Arranged in its Constituent Documents by Members of the Society of Historical Theology*, Oxford (2 volumes; New York: Longmans Green, 1900); J. Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1992); Rudolf Smend, *From Astruc to Zimmerli: Old Testament Scholarship in Three Centuries* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); Ernest Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (New York:

the current state is necessary, however, for a few reasons. First, it lays the groundwork for the diachronic approach to language contact mentioned above by setting the context for the synthesis between linguistic and literary examination. Second, it makes clear the methodological assumptions of the following analysis and why such assumptions are reasonable. Such methodological explicitness is necessitated given the debates in the field, particularly between the Neo-Documentarian approach and European models of source criticism.¹¹

As shown in Chapter 2, a few pre-modern scholars, even in antiquity, recognized that the Bible contained both contradictions and indications that the historical production of those texts dated from a period different from the events described therein. For example, Porphyry, in the third century CE, argued for the production of the Book of Daniel in the second century BCE, which itself narrates stories based in the sixth century BCE. Various scholars in the medieval period also made observations that would later influence critical thinkers in the modern era, though systematic theorization of the historical sources that comprised the Pentateuch did not occur until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹² Beginning with Jean Astruc, the search for

Oxford University Press, 1998); Anselm C. Hagedorn, "Taking the Pentateuch to the Twenty-First Century," *The Expository Times* 119 (2007): 53-58; Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (translated by Pascale Dominique; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2006); Joel Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library; New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2012). Given that many of the critical approaches to the Pentateuch began with the study of Genesis, Ska's article on the history of the study of this book is also helpful for understanding the history of scholarship of the Pentateuch as a whole ("The Study of the Book of Genesis: The Beginning of Critical Reading," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* [edited by Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Peterson; Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 152; Boston, Massachusetts: Brill, 2012], 3-26).

¹¹ For a volume with both of these perspectives represented, see Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, and Baruch J. Schwartz, eds., *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

¹² See De Wette's acknowledgement of ancient and medieval exegetes for his own critical theory concerning the date of Deuteronomy (*An Historical-critical Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament, Volume 2* [translated by Theodore Parker; Boston: C. C. Little and J. Brown, 1843], 161-64).

literary stages that preceded the final compilation of the first five books of the Bible was conducted in earnest.¹³

Many influential thinkers and scholars could be cited in this history. For the purposes of recent developments in source criticism, two scholars from the nineteenth centuries deserve note. Hermann Hupfeld most clearly articulated the method for distinguishing sources behind the final form of the Pentateuch.¹⁴ His approach prioritized narrative continuity by focusing primarily on the unique historical claims of each source. In other words, though some scholars had given priority to lexemes that they assumed belonged to one source or another, or other scholars divided sources based on the distribution of divine names, Hupfeld focused primarily on plot and narrative development. In doing so, he solved many problems of his time in the critical study of the Bible, particularly the twofold revelation of Yahweh's divine name in Exodus 3 and Exodus 6. This problem had not been solved either by simple ascription of lexical items as "belonging" to one source or another, nor was use of the divine name an adequate criterion for division: previous to Hupfeld, both Exodus 3 and Exodus 6 were thought to belong to the same source. Instead, Hupfeld, basing his analysis on narrative continuity, was able to identify each chapter as belonging to different stories. In this manner, the sources that would become known as E and P were identified (in addition to the previously known J).¹⁵

¹³ Ska, "The Study of the Book of Genesis," 18.

¹⁴ Hupfeld, *Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung* (Berlin: Verlag von Wiegandt und Grieben, 1853). He has mostly been remembered as solidifying the earlier observation of D. Ilgen that the then labeled "E" source was really two distinct sources, which later became known as E and P (Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch*, 7). His theory of redaction and focus on the unique historical claims and plot development of each source, however, were equally insightful and have become foundational for the Neo-Documentary approach (Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch* [Forschungen zum Alten Testament 68; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009], 13-19; idem., *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, 56, 111-13).

¹⁵ Hupfeld did not solve all of the problems related to the E source, and many scholars continue to debate its very existence. The main methodological error, which Hupfeld himself made, dominating research in this source from the beginnings of scholarship has been to assume that the identification of this source should be made beginning with Genesis and moving through subsequent books in the Pentateuch. As Baden has pointed out,

A second scholar from this early period who merits attention for his relevance for recent debates is Dillmann. In his essay concerning the compilation of the Hexateuch, much of which (Deut 1:1-32:47) is known as the D source (hence JEDP), he observed that D uses other source material, namely J and E; however, contrary to some other theories in which J and E was combined early (prior to D), Dillmann observed that D never quoted J and E as a conflated document.¹⁶ Rather, when a story elsewhere in the Pentateuch represents the conflation of J and E, D never uses the material in such a conflated manner. Instead, D uses J and E completely separately. Thus, Dillmann suggested that J and E had not yet been combined as of the composition or editing of the D source (in the seventh century BCE).¹⁷ His insights were overshadowed by Julius Wellhausen's view, who espoused the theory that the difficulty of separating the J source from the E source meant that both were combined very early, certainly prior to D, and that J and E likely were composed in connection with one another. Martin Noth and, more recently, Frank Moore Cross expressed theories similar to Wellhausen's.¹⁸

however, it is a better method with this source to begin where large narrative and legal material ascribable to E can be discerned (such as Exodus and Numbers) and move on from there (*The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 115-16).

¹⁶ This essay appears at the end of an exegetical handbook on Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. See Dillmann, *Die Bücher Numeri, Deuteronomium und Joshua* (Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament 13; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1886), 671-90.

¹⁷ "Aus dem Dt. kann ein Beweis für die Existenz eines BC vor dem ABC auch nicht gezogen werden. Denn zwar ist wohl richtig, dass D in seiner Geschichtsdarstellung sich an B u. C anschliesst; aber schon S. 609f. ist gezeigt, dass D den B u. C noch als besondere Schriften vor sich hatte, während ein sicherer Beweis dafür, dass er BC als Ganzes benützte, nicht geführt werden kann" ("From Deuteronomy, a proof for the existence of a EJ before PEJ also cannot be drawn. For indeed it is probably correct that D in its representation of history is connected to E and J; but yet it is shown on page 609ff that D had before it E and J yet as separate writings, while a sure proof that he used EJ as a whole cannot be shown") (*Die Bücher Numeri, Deuteronomium und Joshua*, 679; see 609-11 for Dillmann's exegesis leading to this conclusion). Dillmann uses the old nomenclature ABC for P, E, and J, respectively. For an independent exegetical exploration of some of the passages discussed in Dillmann (such as Deut 1:9-18 and Deut 10:1-5), see Baden, "Deuteronomistic Evidence for the Documentary Theory," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (edited by Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, and Baruch J. Schwartz; Forschungen zum Alten Testament 78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 327-44; *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, 106-88. Baden is much more expansive and systematic in his exploration of D's relationship with J and E than Dillmann's brief, three-page exposition.

¹⁸ Noth therefore posited G, a common source (*Grundlage*), that lay behind J and E. See Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (translated with an introduction by Bernhard W. Anderson; Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey:

Nonetheless, Dillmann's suggestion regarding the relationship between J, E, and D received new support in Joel Baden's dissertation, a work that also included renewed emphasis on narrative continuity for division similar to the method of Herman Hupfeld. Baden's approach is in line with the Neo-Documentarian perspective on the development of the Pentateuch. According to this view, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible are the result of the compilation of four independent literary sources (J, E, D, and P), and the reconstruction of these sources is a literary solution to a literary problem (the presence of contradictions and redundancies in the biblical narratives and laws).¹⁹ Like Hupfeld, the primary means of distinguishing these sources involves the recognition that each tells a different story; therefore, the unique narrative claims of each document and the ability to find narrative continuity within each source is the basis for separating J, E, D, and P. Like Dillmann, and contrary to the legacy of Wellhausen that dominated biblical scholarship for decades, Neo-Documentarian scholars believe that J and E remained separate sources until combined with P at one moment of redaction.²⁰ The only discernable organizing principle of this editing process of the four independent sources in the Neo-Documentarian view is chronology.

Prentice-Hall, 1972), 38 (originally published as *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1948]); Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), 124 n 38. Cross' influence can be seen in John Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 61; and Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1997).

¹⁹ See Baden's online essay, "The Re-Emergence of Source-Criticism: The Neo-Documentary Hypothesis," n. p. [cited May 2012]. Online: <http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/bad368008.shtml>.

²⁰ Dillmann proposed that J, E, and P were compiled as JEP before D was added, and in this way differs from Neo-Documentarians who, instead, argue that J, E, D, and P were all combined at once. See a summation of Dillmann's views on the Pentateuch in George L. Robinson, "August Dillmann [Obituary]," *The Biblical World* 4 (1894): 246-51. Baden is reliant on Dillmann's Genesis commentary, in which Dillmann shows that the same redaction process for JE also holds true for JEP, indicating that JE was not redacted, at least as far as the Genesis evidence is concerned, prior to the coming together of JEP. This line of reasoning indicates that JEP came together at one moment. See Dillmann, *Genesis Critically and Exegetically Expounded* (translated by William B. Stevenson; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1897), 19-22; Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, 37-40.

An alternate explanation of the development of the Pentateuch has taken root in European scholarship. In the mid-twentieth century, Gerhard von Rad and Noth began to explore individual traditions that lay behind the written sources.²¹ Thus, while not denying the individual sources themselves, these scholars attempted to show that creeds and traditions of ancient Israel and Judah developed over time, and that these smaller units can still meaningfully be isolated and discerned in the production of the Pentateuch. These tradition units were not themselves part of the written evolution of the biblical texts, but for the most part were oral. Rolf Rendtorff, however, in a seminal study in 1977 attempted to show the failure of literary sources such as J, E, D, and P to explain the development of the Pentateuch over time.²² His reasoning was that it was impossible to start with these smaller tradition units and arrive at the production of continuous narrative sources. In making his argument, Rendtorff pressed the work of von Rad and Noth into a mold that their research was never intended to fit: Rendtorff assumed that the tradition units were written. By equating small units of tradition with reconstructed literary units, the sources for analysis proliferated and limiting them to four, independent, continuous narratives was deemed impossible. Thus, the hopelessness of the task of reconstructing J, E, D, and P for Rendtorff was a byproduct of his pressing von Rad and Noth's conceptions of oral traditions into small written units, a transformation of tradition analysis that the originators of this discipline never suggested or intended.²³

²¹ Von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch (and Other Essays)* (translated by E. W. Trueman Dicken; introduction by Norman W. Porteous; London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966). Originally published as *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1958). See note above for Noth.

²² Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch* (translated by John J. Scullion; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 89; Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1990). Originally published as *Das Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 147; New York: de Gruyter, 1977).

²³ Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 53-55, 63.

Nonetheless, Rendtorff's legacy in European scholarship has been pervasive.²⁴ Though not all such scholars seek the smallest literary unit in their analysis, many European scholars nonetheless have posited many sources and thus have found it difficult, if not impossible, to construct four continuous narratives underlying the compiled Pentateuch. Narrative continuity is particularly debated. For example, Konrad Schmid has denied any narrative continuation between Genesis and Exodus prior to the P source.²⁵ For him, as for many other European scholars, there is no J and E source. Rather, the non-P material in Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers consists of fragments, which came together over time through supplementation. In this view, one can find theological statements or supplemental means of organizing the text over time, and these statements form the basis for finding the latest addition to a given passage.

There are scholars who do not fit neatly in either Neo-Documentarian or European approaches;²⁶ nonetheless, these two scholarly camps have garnered the most attention in recent

²⁴ Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 54-55.

²⁵ Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible* (Siphut 3; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2010) (originally published as *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999); "The So-Called Yahwist and the Literary Gap Between Genesis and Exodus," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (edited by Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 34; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 29-50; *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (translated by Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2012), 79-84; "Genesis and Exodus as Two Formerly Independent Traditions of Origins for Ancient Israel," *Biblica* 93 (2012): 187-208.

²⁶ Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction*; John van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992); idem., *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994); idem., *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1997); idem., *The Yahwist: A Historian of Israelite Traditions* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013); Wright, *Inventing God's Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Used and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi*. Wright, though not a Neo-Documentarian himself, is nonetheless responsible for coining the term "Neo-Documentarian" at a meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature to describe this theory of the development of the Pentateuch (Stackert, "Distinguishing Innerbiblical Exegesis from Pentateuchal Redaction: Leviticus 26 as a Test Case," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* [edited by Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, and Baruch J. Schwartz; Forschungen zum Alten Testament 78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011], 370 n 3).

publications, and so they are the focus of discussion here. There are notable agreements. For example, most scholars in both camps would agree on the identification of the P and D sources. The combination of these sources comprises a large section of the Pentateuch. Nonetheless, the disagreements regarding J and E are significant and point to deeper divergences between the two groups of scholars. For European scholars, the connection between law and narrative in P and D, perhaps not original but nonetheless existing in redaction, does not extend to the same connection in the source that Neo-Documentarians label E. Even though there is basic agreement between these camps about the verses to be ascribed to P and D, what constitutes a source, given that the same criterion is not extended to E and J from the European perspective, is still a fundamental difference.

Despite objections, the Neo-Documentarian view of the development of the Pentateuch provides the most satisfactory explanation for the final state of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. In contrast to Schmid and Rendtorff, Baden has convincingly shown that narrative continuity can be found throughout the Pentateuch in four distinct sources that align with J, E, D, and P.²⁷ Moreover, understanding the unique historical claims of each source and seeing the rhetorical connection between law and narrative in E, D, and P allow for a surer reconstruction of source material behind the compiled Pentateuch. For example, Bernard Levinson has shown that the legal material in D rhetorically combats the legal vision cast in the Covenant Code, the law code traditionally ascribed to E (though Levinson does not endorse the view that the Covenant Code belongs to E).²⁸ The narrative material in D also betrays awareness of the narrative material

²⁷ Baden, "From Joseph to Moses: The Narratives of Exodus 1-2," *Vetus Testamentum* 62 (2012): 133-58; "The Continuity of the Non-Priestly Narrative from Genesis to Exodus," *Biblica* 93 (2012): 161-86.

²⁸ Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*.

in E and, to a limited extent, J.²⁹ By tracing these literary relationships, then, some form of J, E, and D as independent sources can be reasonably reconstructed. In a similar manner, the Holiness Legislation (H), a supplement to the Priestly source, subverts the legal visions of the Covenant Code and the D source even as H depends on its source material literarily in order to craft a new “super law” from its predecessors.³⁰ Once the relationship between the legal codes is established and once narrative connections to the law codes are seen, then, by following the narrative logic created by the legal rhetoric (at least in E, D, and P; J has no law³¹) and attendant literary portrayal of Israelite history, one can arrive reasonably at four sources.

This logic is not at the level of proof for the existence of J, E, D, and P. No manuscript “P” has been discovered. Manuscript evidence in other portions of the Bible as well as in the compilation of the Gilgamesh Epic, however, attest to similar processes at work as the Neo-Documentarians suggest for the individual sources of Pentateuch.³² Nonetheless, the arrival at J, E, D, and P as reconstructed sources behind the first five books of the Hebrew Bible is a literary solution to a literary problem created by the various divergent elements in the Bible as we know it. The task of the biblical source critic is to reconstruct the literary material that went into the compiled Pentateuch preserved in the Hebrew Bible as it existed immediately preceding the editing of this corpus. External models and models from other parts of the Hebrew Bible are indicative and helpful, but not determinative; rather, the internal literary evidence of the Pentateuch is determinative for what sources are reconstructed for the Pentateuch. It is not a

²⁹ Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 129-36.

³⁰ Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah: Literary Revision in Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 52; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

³¹ Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 77.

³² The Gilgamesh analogy works less well for the Neo-Documentarian view of the compilation of the four sources. See the various essays in Tigay, ed., *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

claim that other, variant forms of J, E, D, and P did not exist. Instead, Neo-Documentarians attempt to reconstruct only the specific versions of each source that went into the compiled Pentateuch.³³

An example of how the relationship between law and narrative and the role of unique historical claims aids the scholar in reconstructing J, E, D, and P can be seen in the Covenant Code. This block of legal material consists of Exod 20:23-23:19. The material contained therein is coherent, lacking laws that directly subvert other laws. As a result, while some scholars posit additions and growth to this section of the Bible,³⁴ most claim that Exod 20:23-23:19 as it exists forms a complete legal unit called the Covenant Code. Within this legislation, there is no role for priests, not even in the sacrificial laws. Instead, anyone can sacrifice at any holy spot (Exod 20:24). This permissiveness contradicts Deuteronomy 12, in which Moses stipulates that sacrifices should only take place at the holy site that God chooses, as well as Leviticus 1-7 and 17, in which priests take a central mediating role in sacrifices. In Leviticus 17, these sacrifices are only to take place at the altar at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Thus, if anyone can sacrifice anywhere according to Exod 20:24, anyone can take on the role ascribed to priests, which according to Leviticus 1-7 and 17 is the sole prerogative of a specific priestly line delineated as the descendants of Aaron in Exodus 28-29 in P and Numbers 18 in H. Moreover, in Exod 20:24 anyone can keep the portions allotted solely to priests in Deuteronomy 18 for themselves. In this fashion, the statement in Exod 19:6 that all the people are a nation of priests is consistent with Exod 20:24 but inconsistent with Numbers 18 (which belongs to the same

³³ In this manner, Carr's critique of the Neo-Documentarian movement misunderstands the nature and goal of what Neo-Documentarians are attempting to accomplish (*The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 114-17). See Stackert's response to Carr's criticisms, *A Prophet Like Moses: Prophecy, Law, and Israelite Religion*.

³⁴ See the various essays in Levinson, ed., *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law: Revision, Interpolation, and Development* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 181; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994).

source as Leviticus), in which only descendants of Aaron can be priests, and Deuteronomy 18, in which any Levite can be a priest. Moreover, the entire nation is sprinkled with blood in Exod 24:8, part of which was also sprinkled on an altar according to Exod 24:6. This ritual indexed objects to one another, establishing a vital connection between them.³⁵ The entire nation is indexed to the altar in portions of Exodus 24, consistent with the conception that all the nation of Israel is a kingdom of priests in Exod 19:6 and consistent with the lack of any mention of a specific priestly class in the laws of Exod 20:23-23:19. This indexing contrasts with the priestly ordination in Leviticus 8-9 in which only the descendants of Aaron are indexed to the altar, which itself is consistent with Leviticus 1-7 and 17 as well as the genealogical criterion for priesthood in Numbers 18.³⁶ Thus, narratives in Exodus 19 and 24 are intricately connected with the laws between them in contrast to other laws and narratives of the Pentateuch that portray entirely distinct historical claims of who priests were and who had access to the altar.³⁷ This

³⁵ Feder, *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Ritual: Origins, Context, and Meaning*, 45, 150; William K. Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

³⁶ Richard E. Averbeck fundamentally misrepresents and misunderstands source criticism and misreads these texts in “Pentateuchal Criticism and the Priestly Torah,” in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* (edited by James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary; Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012), 151-180. The example of indexing the leper in Leviticus 14 is not support for a connection between this rite and the blood sprinkling in Exodus 24, thereby obliterating the distinction between the P source (the former) and the E source (the latter). In Leviticus 14, the leper is indexed “before the Lord,” which could mean the altar or the camp generally. In Leviticus 14, the context of the passage, in which the leper previously dwelt away from the people in Leviticus 13, indicates that it is an indexing to the community in view in this ritual since the leper has gone from experiencing symptoms of death to being cured and reintegrated to the community. Thus, the leprosarium in 2 Kgs 15:5 is possibly the same term for the dwelling of Mot, the god of death at Ugarit (בֵּית הַפְּשִׁית; KTU 1.4 VIII 7, *bt hpt*), though the Ugaritic term could also simply mean “place of seclusion” (Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith, *Stories from Canaan* [second edition; Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 2012]; Pardee, “The Ba‘lu Myth,” in *Context of Scripture* [edited by William Hallo and Lawson K. Younger; 3 volumes; Boston: Brill, 2003], 1: 263). The ceremony in Leviticus 14 is the reintegration and indexing of the leper to the community of Israel and has nothing to do with the covenant ceremony in Exodus 24 and the ordination ceremony in Leviticus 8-9.

³⁷ If one kept expanding this line of logic, then the statement in Exod 25:22 that God told Moses he would give laws to Israel without acknowledging any of the previous laws in Exod 20:23-23:19 (nor why God should give another set of laws given that the ceremony in Exod 24:6-8 should have sealed and made binding Exod 20:23-23:19 without any need for more legislation) clearly indicates another source. In this case, Exod 25:22 belongs to the same source as the laws in Leviticus.

logic of narrative separation, moving backwards to Genesis, results in a picture of the patriarchs erecting altars at a variety of holy sites, consistent with Exod 20:24 but in contradiction to the patriarchal stories belonging to the same source as Leviticus 17. For this latter source, sacrifice only begins at Sinai in Leviticus 17, and none of the patriarchal stories belonging to this source contain any trace of an altar or sacrifice. Such activity belongs only to the priests.

In this fashion, one law code and story (portions of Exodus 19, all of Exodus 20:23-23:19, and portions of Exodus 24) belong to the E source, while another (Exod 25:22, Leviticus, Numbers 18) belongs to P, and a third (Deut 1:1-32:47) belongs to D (J does not have a law code).³⁸ Even Wright comes to a similar division of the narrative belonging to the Covenant Code though he does not want to call the narrative section belonging to this law “E” because of the contested nature of this source.³⁹ What this coincidence reveals is that similar methods produce similar results, even if details on occasion differ. It also confirms the logic presented above since even those not committed to labels for some sources such as “E” still arrive at

³⁸ It was long thought that Exod 34:18-26 was the “J Decalogue,” a portion of the law code that once belonged to the J source. Since Shimon Bar-On’s article in 1998 it has become widely recognized that Exod 34:18-26 is secondary and a post-deuteronomistic harmonized collection of laws. See Collins for the view that it is sometimes ascribed to J (*Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 134). See Bar-On, “The Festival Calendars in Exodus XXIII 14-19 and XXXIV 18-26,” *Vetus Testamentum* 48 (1998): 161-95.

³⁹ Wright attempts to reconstruct a narrative belonging to the Covenant Code, called CCN (Covenant Code Narrative). He acknowledges that the end result has significant overlap with what many scholars call E. In fact, every verse that he claims was once part of CCN is part of what Neo-Documentarians reconstruct as E. Wright’s CCN is as follows: Exod 3:1, 9-15, 21-22; 13:6; 19:2b-3a, 9a, 16aβγb, 17, 19; 20:18-20*; 24:3-8* (where * indicates that portions of these sections belong to CCN; *Inventing God’s Law*, 356). Though not claiming that they belonged to CCN, Wright nonetheless connects Exod 1:22-2:10, which tells of Moses’ birth and rescue from the Nile, with the Legend of Sargon and the Covenant Code’s use of the Laws of Hammurabi. The passage Exod 1:22-2:10 is also ascribed to E by Neo-Documentarians. Neo-Documentarians would add more verses to Wright’s list (Exod 19:2b-9a as a whole belongs to E, not simply 19:2b-3a and 9a); nonetheless, the overlap is more than coincidence: when Wright applies the criterion of narrative continuity, he derives E. When he departs and uses other criteria such as vocabulary (which, at best, is a secondary and corroborative factor in source division), his results are less certain. For example, when exploring the significance of the verb עָנָה, “afflict,” as a datum for connecting narrative to the Covenant Code, he lists Exod 1:11-12 along with Exod 3:9. The latter, he claims, was part of CCN, though he states that this is so because Exod 3:9 connects with Exod 3:10-15, all of which forms part of a narrative leading to the Covenant Code. Regarding Exod 1:11-12, he admits that the results are less certain (“not all of these verses need to have been present in CCN,” *Inventing God’s Law*, 336).

similar conclusions. This discussion is not meant to be a comprehensive defense of the Neo-Documentarian perspective; rather, it is intended to show the logic behind this hypothesis and the defensibility of it as a framework for the following examination of linguistic data.

The source-critical analysis offered by the Neo-Documentarian viewpoint is relevant and necessary for a contact linguistic study on the Hebrew Bible for a variety of reasons. First, each source has its own rhetoric and logic. As a result, it is possible that the authors of each source would have borrowed literary material or used foreign words (which had perhaps already entered into the lexicon independently) for different reasons. Each contact-induced change should therefore be considered in the context of its source to see if there are reasons specific to the source for using foreign data. The case of the Covenant Code above is a key example. Studies have shown that this law code has some relationship to ancient Near Eastern law in Mesopotamia. More recently Wright has argued that there is a specific relationship with the Laws of Hammurabi, contact that can be traced to around 710-640 BCE.⁴⁰ If there is contact between the Covenant Code and Mesopotamian law, and if there is a connection between narrative and law in this source (called E) to further the legal vision of the Covenant Code relative to other law codes, then understanding how contact functions in this biblical source on its own terms is essential. The same observation applies to each source. Second, although Neo-Documentarians are primarily interested in literary and not historical reconstruction, relative chronology does play a role. For example, it is clear that D uses J and E, thereby making J and E relatively older than D. Moreover, for a variety of reasons, scholars place the composition or

⁴⁰ Wright, *Inventing God's Law*, 343-44. Part of Wright's argument entails the use of the Sargon Birth Legend, a story in circulation during these decades (and it seems only in these decades) in the Neo-Assyrian period, in the Book of Exodus. Since Wright believes that the narrative connected with the Covenant Code uses literary motifs from this legend as a device to frame Moses' birth story, he dates the interaction between the authors of the Covenant Code and the Laws of Hammurabi to this period as well.

redaction of D in the seventh century BCE.⁴¹ This diachronic perspective on biblical texts may have explanatory power in contact-induced changes in E and D as well as the other sources, and will be even more important in the treatment of Isaiah in Chapter 6.

III. Gen 6:14

One of the classic examples of literary contact between Mesopotamia and the biblical record is provided by the flood narrative. If one were to find a trace of contact-induced changes in the Hebrew Bible from Akkadian, such a widely distributed story as Atra-ḥasis or Gilgamesh would likely prove to be an ideal case.⁴² Genesis 6-9 provides such an example. While all scholars agree that this passage in the Hebrew Bible reveals interaction with ancient Near Eastern epics, the exact linguistic nature of this interaction is still disputed. Indeed, Gen 6-9 contains numerous odd lexemes, which raises the issue of linguistic traces of contact given the literary similarities that Gen 6-9 shares with Atra-ḥasis and Gilgamesh. An examination of Gen 6:14, which contains a few of these odd words, reveals much about the nature of language contact.⁴³

6:14:

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ תֵבַת עֲצֵי גֹפֶר קִנִּים תַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָהּ תִבָּה וּכְפַרְתָּ אֹתָהּ מִבַּיִת וּמִחוּץ בַּכֶּפֶר:

⁴¹ For example, see Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 116-46.

⁴² For a brief discussion of this text and a brief review of comparative issues and perspectives, see Tigay, "On Evaluating Claims of Literary Borrowing," 251-52.

⁴³ For a similar analysis of Gen 6:14-16, see John Day, *From Creation to Babel: Studies in Genesis 1-11* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 592; New York: T & T Clark, 2014), 113-22. A complete draft of the present chapter was completed before the publication of Day's book, and the data and results were mined independently despite the similarities. Moreover, the context and purposes of analyses are different: his project consisting of various studies pertaining to Genesis 1-11 whereas the focus of this project and the following discussion is one of language contact.

“Make for yourself an ark of gopher-wood. Make the ark with *qinnim*,⁴⁴ and cover it inside and out with pitch.”

6:15:

וזה אשר תעשה אתה שלש מאות אמה ארך התבה חמשים אמה רחבה ושלשים
אמה קומתה:

“This is how you will make it: 300 cubits for the length of the ark, 50 cubits its breadth and thirty cubits its height.”

6:16:

צהר תעשה לתבה ואל-אמה תכלנה מלמעלה ופתח התבה בצדה תשים תחתים
שנים ושלשים תעשה:

“Make a skylight for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above. You will set a door in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks.”

Some biblical scholars, such as Samuel Loewenstamm, prefer to see the odd lexemes in Gen 6-9 as derivative of an older inner-Hebrew epic tradition.⁴⁵ That tradition would have been poetic and thus the lexical inventory of Gen 6-9 would contain archaic and odd words due to the use of archaic and infrequently attested words in Hebrew poetry generally. Other scholars, such as Barr quoted above, as well as Morrow, M. Krebernik, and others, posit an Aramaic intermediary between many biblical texts and Mesopotamian literature. This hypothesis is based on the claim that the structural similarities and the relative simplicity of the alphabetic writing

⁴⁴ See below for the meaning of this word.

⁴⁵ Samuel L. Loewenstamm, *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 204; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Bercker, Neukircher Verlag, 1980), 116-21.

system make Aramaic an ideal candidate to serve as an intermediary between Hebrew and Akkadian literature.⁴⁶

Both of these arguments contain assumptions that contact linguists have shown to be false. Regarding the structural similarities, Winford, Thomason, and Kaufman agree that a study based exclusively on structural similarities is flawed, as such similarities in isolation are poor predictors of the likelihood of contact.⁴⁷ Conversely stated, Thomas and Kaufman claim that structural divergences between languages are by no means necessarily constraints for contact-induced changes. Power relationships, such as Neo-Assyrian imperial policy, can overcome such structural similarities. Indeed, linguistic elements in Gen 6:14 suggest that a phrase has been loaned into Hebrew from Akkadian. The verse is as follows:

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי גִפְרִית קִנִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת הַתֵּבָה וְכִפַּרְתָּ אֶתָּה מִבַּיִת וּמִחוּץ בְּכֹפֶר

This verse contains many notable linguistic features, some of which will be discussed later. For the purposes of analyzing the nature of contact, however, it is sufficient to focus on the phrase **וכפרת... בכפר**. This verb plus prepositional phrase is unique not only in Biblical Hebrew, but in any dialect of Hebrew (ancient or modern). The G-stem of **כפר** and the noun **כפר** meaning “pitch” do not appear in inscriptional, biblical, rabbinic, or medieval Hebrew in the semantic domain of the phrase in Gen 6:14.⁴⁸ Were the source of such odd lexemes an older

⁴⁶ On the fact that alphabetic writing systems are actually more complex than most scholars claim, see Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age*, 92-95.

⁴⁷ Winford, *Introduction to Contact Linguistics*, 9-10; Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, 15.

⁴⁸ The root does appear in broken and fragmentary texts in Old and Official Aramaic and Nabatean, but not with any of the meanings of the biblical text. The verbal root, which could either be the G or D stem, appears once and seems to mean “to pardon or give compensation,” but the context is broken and this meaning is far from certain; the substantive means “village” or “tomb,” the latter being a possible Greek loanword into Nabatean.

Hebrew epic poem as Loewenstamm suggests,⁴⁹ one might expect some vestige of semantic equivalence to have survived into other forms of Hebrew. No such vestige exists.⁵⁰ These considerations open the possibility that this phrase comes from another source.

Two possible sources exist. Both a noun in the *qutl* pattern from *k-p-r* meaning “bitumen” and a G-stem form of a corresponding verb exist in Aramaic and Akkadian. In Aramaic, the noun *kuprā* appears in both Syriac and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic meaning “bitumen.” The first scholar who, as far as I am aware, noticed a possible Aramaic connection, was Rashi in the eleventh century. He states:

זָפֶת בְּלִשׁוֹן אֲרָמִי, וּמִצִּינּוֹ בְּתַלְמוּד כּוּפְרָא (שַׁבַּת סז). בְּתִיבְתּוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה עַל יְדֵי שִׁהּוֹי הַיָּמִים
תַּשִּׁים דִּי הָיָה בְּחֹמֶר מִבְּפָנִים וְזָפֶת מִבְּחוּץ, וְעוֹד, כִּי שָׁלָא יִרְיַח אוֹתוֹ צְדִיק רִיחַ רַע שֶׁל זָפֶת.
אֲבָל כֵּאֵן מִפְּנֵי חוּזְקַת הַיָּמִים זָפֶתָהּ מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ.

“The word כּוּפְרָא means ‘tar’ in the Aramaic language. We have found (a related word) in the Talmud, כּוּפְרָא, used for ‘tar.’ Regarding the ark of Moses, because the waters were tranquil, it was sufficient for (Moses’ ark) to be coated with mortar on the inside and tar on the outside. Furthermore, Moses’ ark did not have tar on the inside as did Noah’s so

⁴⁹ Loewenstamm follows Cassuto on this suggestion. See Loewenstamm, *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures*, 115. Loewenstamm provides comparative evaluations, but only from the basis of a supposed Hebrew epic literary source, and he attributes any odd linguistic elements of Gen 6-9 to this hypothetical older tradition. He claims to save the text for comparative work by arguing against a source-critical approach even as this line of argumentation forces him to posit a tradition in which all linguistic oddities are subsumed in a hypothetical Hebrew tradition, thereby preventing any comparative linguistic analysis.

⁵⁰ The authors of biblical Hebrew lexica claim that the verb is a denominative from the noun; however, G-stem denominatives are somewhat rare (though an interesting parallel appears in Exod 2:3, discussed later). According to the contact linguist Muysken, a hierarchy of borrowing is as follows (from most likely to least): nouns>adjectives>verbs>prepositions>coordinating conjunctions>quantifiers>determiners>free pronouns>clitic pronouns>subordinating conjunctions (“Halfway between Quechua and Spanish: The Case for Relexification,” 52-78). Verbs rank relatively high on this list and, given the Akkadian data, one could also appeal to this use of the G-stem of *k-p-r* in Akkadian as a loan.

that that righteous one, Moses, should not smell the foul odor of tar. But here, because of the force of the water, he tarred it inside and out.”⁵¹

Rashi’s insights were brilliant inasmuch as he could explain the odd word in Gen 6:14 and why this word diverged from the marine sealants used on the other **תַּבֵּה** in the Hebrew Bible, namely Moses’ basket in Exod 2. His linguistic reasoning was astute given the evidence available to him. There are other Talmudic references to **כּוּפְרָא** in addition to the tractate he cites.⁵² The word is nonetheless rare in Aramaic, and the time period is late. Additionally, Rashi’s reasoning aligns **כּפֶר** in Gen 6:14 with Hebrew **זָפֶת** in Exod 2:3 on the assumption that **זָפֶת** was the outer coating in Exod 2:3 and **חֶמֶר** the inner coating. The E source in Exod 2:3, however, makes no such outer-inner distinction in terms of the two materials used. Rashi’s concern is to preserve Moses from smelling foul, and he thus assumes that the Hebrew word he knows as “pitch,” namely **זָפֶת**, was the material used to coat Moses’ **תַּבֵּה** on the outside.⁵³ It is not clear that Rashi’s definition of **זָפֶת** and the material conceptualized in Exod 2:3 are the same. Indeed, two targums (Pseudo-Jonathan and Neofiti) use the other substance of Exod 2:3, the **חֶמֶר** as the translation of **כּפֶר** in Gen 6:14 (**ח[ו]י[מ]רא**), which also appears in the J source in Gen 14:10 and is a common Mishnaic Hebrew term for “pitch.” Rashi’s comments are instructive and ingenious, even as they appeal to sparse data and do not adequately align the Hebrew data to Aramaic.

⁵¹ Rashi, *Bereishis Genesis: The Sapirstein Edition* (Art Scroll Series; Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1999), 69.

⁵² The only use of *k-p-r* applied as a sealant for a boat appears in this tractate, and it is the best literary parallel to Gen 6:14; the uses of the noun in the other tractates do not match literarily as well.

⁵³ A similar logic appears in **בראשית רבה**, chapter 31, section 9.

Moreover, the verb *k-p-r* in the G-stem in Aramaic means “to wipe off,” but never “to wipe on,” as the semantics of Gen 6:14 dictate. This association with wiping off is so strong in Aramaic that the verb eventually adopted the meaning “repudiate, deny.” There is one expression, כּפּרָא דודי, in which the noun may mean “a smearing on,” but this noun is limited to this one phrase, and the underlying action involved is uncertain.⁵⁴ Additionally, there are no known uses of the verb *k-p-r* in the G-stem with the noun *kuprā*. The Targums and other Aramaic versions use *kuprā* at times but employ different verbs (*h-p-w/y*, *š-w-ʿ*, or *ṭ-h-w/y*) when describing Noah’s action of “smearing on.”⁵⁵

וְתַחֲפִי יְתָה מְנִיו וּמְבָרָא בְּכּוּפְרָא (Targum Onkelos)

וּתִישׁוּעַ יְתָה מִן גִּיו וּמְבֵרָא בְּחִימְרָא (Targum Pseudo Jonathan)

וּתִשׁוּעַ יְתָה מִלְגּוּא וּמִן לְבַר בְּחִמְרָא (Targum Neofiti)

ܘܬܝܫܘܥܝܬܗܢܘܢ ܡܢ ܕܘܝܘܢܘܢ ܘܡܒܪܐܢܘܢ ܒܚܝܡܪܐܢܘܢ (Syriac/Peshitta)

טַחֲיִיָּה בְּכּוּפְרָא (Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 51a; Gitṭim 69b)

Thus, while the semantic domain of the noun in Aramaic is consistent with Gen 6:14, when one considers the evidence of the phrase וּכְפַרְתָּ...בְּכּוּפְרָא, the verbal constituent of the Hebrew of this verse does not match the known usages of the verb in Aramaic.

⁵⁴ Sokoloff directs the reader’s attention to a parallel action in Akkadian, *diqāra takappar*, “you shall wipe the pot clean”; however, this action in Akkadian is clearly one of wiping off, in which case Sokoloff’s phraseological parallel is contradictory with his suggestion earlier in the entry that the noun is related to Akkadian *k-p-r*, “to wipe on” (*A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002], 597).

⁵⁵ It is certainly the case that Hebrew influences the Aramaic of the Targums, as perhaps evidenced by the noun for “pitch” above; however, generally the Targums did not “purse that etymological fancy in translating which might have led to a preference for a word like the Hebrew where such could be found,” adhering more to native Aramaic phrasing (Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 52).

The attestation of the noun and verb from *k-p-r* in Akkadian cohere with the two forms of the root in Gen 6:14 much better than do the Aramaic terms. Not only does the G-stem verb of Akkadian from *k-p-r* mean “to wipe on,” a close fit to the same verb in the same stem in Gen 6:14, but there are at least three attestations, from a wide geographic area and time period, of the verb and noun appearing in the same sentence. Examples include:

(various medications) *eli šinnēšu takappar* (Medicinal text, perhaps from the

Namburbi texts, Standard Babylonian, late 8th-late 5th century BCE)⁵⁶

“You shall wipe (various medications) on his teeth.”

daltu ša abulli šaknat uppu sikkūru epšu BI BI (?) [K]A? S[A (?) T]A(?) kupru kapru

(from Nimrud/Kalhu, Neo-Assyrian period)⁵⁷

“The door of the gate is set, the socket (and) bar⁵⁸ made, the drainage openings coated with bitumen.”⁵⁹

ištu šaplānu adi eliš ESIR.UD.DU.A kapir elēnu ESIR.UD.DU.A ESIR kapir (from

Mari)⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Franz Köcher, *Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1963), 30:13.

⁵⁷ H. W. F. Saggs, “The Nimrud Letters, 1952- Part VI,” *Iraq* 25 (1963): 74-75.

⁵⁸ In one other text, the SAG.KUL (the logographic rendering of *sikkūru*) is adorned with a winged representation of the Deluge monster (*abūbu mupparšu*).

⁵⁹ Given the usages of **קָפַר** and **קָפַר** as bitumen and tar water sealants in Exod 2:3, and given that at least the former term has an extensive usage in a variety of dialects in Hebrew, it appears that **כָּפַר**, with no such attested history in the Hebrew language, matches this usage in Akkadian well. Ancient Hebrew thus had at least one native term for “pitch” which functioned as a water sealant (namely **קָפַר**; the origin of the word **קָפַר** is obscure). That a different word for such a sealant appears in Gen 6:14 that has a direct cognate in Akkadian used in similar functions (as a water sealant) is significant. Contact linguists discuss a variety of notions for borrowing, the two most prominent (among many other factors) being need and prestige. Though in one sense, Hebrew, having **קָפַר**, did not need to borrow this word from Akkadian, literary facts discussed later in this chapter indicate how **כָּפַר** could still be a need-based borrowing.

⁶⁰ G. Dossin, et al, *Textes Divers: A l’occasion du XXXe anniversaire de la découverte de Mari* (Archives Royales de Mari; Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1964), 27:7f.

“from the base upward (the *igum* structure) is smeared with *ittû*-bitumen, the upper part is smeared with *kuprum* bitumen.”

(if a house) ESIR ESIR.UD.DU.A SIG₄ AL.ÛR.RA IM.BABBAR IM.GÚ *kapir* (a building text)⁶¹

“(if a house) is coated with *ittû*-bitumen, *kupru*-bitumen, baked bricks, gypsum (or) mud plaster....”

Thus, the linguistic properties of **וּכְפַרְתָּ...בַּכֶּפֶר** in Gen 6:14 have much closer and more precise analogues in Akkadian.⁶² Additional evidence in this line of reasoning comes in the Akkadian word *kāpiru*, referring to a caulker (one who applies a substance such as bitumen) as well as a tool, perhaps the means of applying such material. The presence of *kuprum* in both

⁶¹ C. J. Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, Volume 40* (Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum 40; London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1927), 2:47.

⁶² The main linguistic difficulty, according to some, of adopting this phrase as a loan from Akkadian into Hebrew involves whether or not the G-stem of *k-p-r* is a denominative or whether it constitutes a separate root from the D-stem *kuppurum* in Akkadian (von Soden proposed the former, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch, Band I*, 443; Landsberger proposed the latter in *The Date of the Palm and its By-products according to the Cuneiform Sources* [Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 17; Graz, 1967], 30-34). According to some, if the noun is primary and the verb denominative, then the noun would be loaned directly from Atra-ḥasis or Gilgamesh and the verb formed by analogy to a known Akkadian phrase. The reverse, however, would decrease the likelihood that the phrase is a direct borrowing into Hebrew according to some. The relationship between the noun and verb in Akkadian is only marginally relevant for Gen 6:14. That the noun exists in both Atra-ḥasis and Gilgamesh in the same literary context and that the verb and noun are used together centuries prior to the writing of Gen 6:14 means that the author of the biblical flood story could have had access to both the noun and its use with the verb. From a biblical author's point of view, whether or not *k-p-r* was a denominative verb may have had no impact if he simply knew the noun from his source text and the noun plus verb from other literary contexts. Moreover, comparatively speaking, a good case can be made that *k-p-r* in the G-stem is a denominative in Akkadian. It is the only Semitic language that uses this stem with this root for “to smear on.” It is easier to explain this particular semantic property in Akkadian by appeal to a denominative relationship to the noun (which exists in a variety of Semitic languages, including Arabic and Aramaic) than to posit another proto-Semitic verbal root which survived only in Akkadian.

Atra-ḫasis and Gilgamesh denoting one of the building materials of the ark also more directly assures the tie to Akkadian as a source language.

This observation has implications beyond the one phrase in Gen 6:14. Indeed, Klaus Westermann has observed that *hapax legomena* in Gen 6-9 could indicate a foreign source for this text.⁶³ The noun כִּפֹּר in Gen 6:14 is one such word in his list. What he does not observe, however, is that all of the *hapax* he discusses fall in the P source and not the J source.⁶⁴ Another disputed example of Akkadian influence is less linguistically marked in this series, but is literarily intriguing. Edward Ullendorff suggested reading קִנִּים instead of קָנִים. His argument was based largely on internal linguistic and literary grounds (though he adduced some comparative Semitic data to further his thesis).⁶⁵ Ullendorff first points to the sequence of verses 14, 15, and 16. The introductory phrase in Gen 6:15, וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָהּ, or “this is how you will make the ark,” is fitting for the following dimensions and architectural features. The previous verse, Gen 6:14, contains details for the material, except for 6:14b, where the texts

⁶³ Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 420.

⁶⁴ Indeed, whether one follows one of the more standard divisions as in the models of Friedman, Collins, or Schwartz or another, these lexemes only occur in the P source. See Schwartz, “The Flood Narratives in the Torah and the Question of Where History Begins” (*Shai le-Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, its Exegesis and its Language*; Edited by Moshe Bar-Asher, at al; Jerusalem: Bialik, 2007), 139-54; Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2003), 42ff. Westermann is often adept at noting that J and P could have separate literary traditions, and that P at times shares a literary tradition closer to Atra-ḫasis and at times closer to Gilgamesh (an observation that also applies to J). See *Genesis 1-11*, 384-458. He does not discuss the importance of the linguistic data, however, and what these data mean for language contact. Often Westermann seems to work from the same assumption as Loewenstamm that these lexemes reflect an older Hebrew epic and not direct literary contact with a foreign source. For a recent source critical and comparative approach, see Irving Finkel, *The Ark Before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood* (London: Houghton and Stodder, 2014). Finkel’s source division, however, is incorrect. He is correct to assign the description of the ark, as in Gen 6:14-16, to P; however, he mistakenly assigns all of the bird releasings to J and the sacrifice at the end of the flood to P (presumably because P is generally concerned with sacrificial offerings, as in Leviticus) (*The Ark Before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood*, 221-22). See below for more on why the sacrificial offerings at the end of the flood do not belong to P.

⁶⁵ Ullendorff, “The Construction of Noah’s Ark,” in *Is Biblical Hebrew a Language? Studies in Semitic Languages and Civilizations* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1977), 95-96.

reads קָנִים. One might expect, on literary grounds, for this section of 6:14 to contain materials, as in the rest of the verse, since such a detail of “compartments” fits much better in the other architectural features of Gen 6:16. Moreover, the translation “compartments” for קָנִים does not make good semantic sense.⁶⁶ Everywhere else in the Hebrew Bible, the noun קָן in the singular, means a bird’s “nest.” Additionally, the idea of a compartment for each animal might be better rendered by the distributive construction, a reading that Philo suggested (קָנִים קָנִים).⁶⁷ Based on these difficulties, Ullendorff proposed to change the vocalization from קָנִים to קָנִים. This meaning, “reeds,” makes literary sense, and also has parallel constructions (though with different words for “reeds”) in Job 9:26 (אֲנִיּוֹת אֲבָהּ, “ships of reed”) and Isa 18:2 (כְּלֵי גִמְאָה, “vessels of bulrushes”). Given the additional background information that boats were often constructed with wood and reed as a binding and sealing agent, then such a reading makes good sense in Gen 6:14.

If one follows Ullendorff’s suggestion, one may also have a literary parallel to Atra-ḥasis and therefore external grounds for the emendation:

qá-ne-e gáb-bi lu bi-nu-us-sà, “may its structure (be) entirely of reeds.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ As Ullendorff states, this translation itself may be due to influence from the Babylonian narrative. The Babylonian narrative, however, does not actually contain a word for “compartments.” The narrative only states that the interior of the arks was to be sectioned off into nine parts. The word “compartments” was often added in older translations of Gilgamesh based on the contextual reading, and this misinterpretation itself may have influenced translation decisions to make קָנִים, which should read “nests,” mean “compartments.”

⁶⁷ The versions and medieval interpreters are likewise unhelpful, translating literally “nest” (LXX reads νοσσιας) or “dwelling” (Neofiti and Onqelos both have מְדוּרָה). Rashi uses the distributive in his explanation: מְדוּרִים מְדוּרִים לְכָל בְּהֵמָה וְחַיָּה, “a dwelling for each animal and living thing.”

⁶⁸ W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-Ḥasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 126-27.

If this emendation is accepted in Gen 6:14, then one not only has a strong parallel to Atra-ḥasis, but an inner-Hebrew problem is also resolved. The context of the verse in Gen 6:14 deals with materials for the ark, which gives way to a description of dimensions in 6:15 and then structural plans in 6:16. The one detail which is out of this place is in Gen 6:14, namely the קָנִים. If one emends, however, to קָנִים, then Gen 6:14 consists entirely of a list of materials, namely a wood type, reeds, and pitch.

Two arguments have been given against this emendation. First, from a literary point of view, Westermann argues that the P source is following the Gilgamesh epic at this point.⁶⁹ While there is a parallel literary construction in Atra-Ḥasis epic, Westermann claims that there is no corresponding phrase in the Gilgamesh epic, and therefore rejects this emendation. For similar reasons, E. A. Speiser also rejected it stating that the only notion of “reed” working in tablet XI referred to a hut where the Flood hero received wisdom from the god Ea, but this use of “reed” is different, having nothing to do with the construction of the boat, this construction functioning rather more like a Tent of Meeting.⁷⁰ Second, Loewenstamm has also presented arguments against this emendation. His disagreement is at a semantic level: if this proposed correction to the text is correct, then the Hebrew seems to indicate a command to build the ark entirely of wood and also entirely of reeds.⁷¹ As a command to build the ark is concerned, Loewstamm claims that the directions are unclear. Therefore, it would make little sense to emend the passage to קָנִים since it would result in an unintelligible text.

⁶⁹ Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 420.

⁷⁰ Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 52.

⁷¹ Loewenstamm, *Comparative Studies*, 115-16.

The first counterargument to this emendation is not convincing on further text critical grounds. At the time of Westermann's writing, no full-scale critical edition of the Gilgamesh epic had yet been published. With George's recent publication, however, a much better picture of the textual history of Gilgamesh appears. In light of the critical edition of this epic, the emendation in Gen 6:14 has an interesting literary counterpart in a manuscript of Gilgamesh, called "c₁" in George's edition of the epic. This manuscript allows for a surer reconstruction of tablet XI, lines 50-56, in which those constructing the boat are a carpenter (^{LÚ}*naggāru*), a reed-worker (^{LÚ}*atkuppu*), and a rich person carrying pitch (*šarû naši kupra*). An Old Babylonian manuscript of Atra-Ḫasis shows the same order in a much more fragmentary section: *na-ga-[ru]*, *at-ku-up-[pu]*, and *ku-up-ra*. While these elements are in this order but spread across 6 lines in Gilgamesh, they appear in contiguous lines in Atra-Ḫasis. This grouping is significant for the above proposal in Gen 6:14 since, if קניץ is repointed to קניץ, then all three elements would appear in this verse as well in the same order.⁷² Manuscript evidence exists in both of the major Mesopotamian flood accounts, both of which are literarily (according to Westermann) used at various points in the P narrative. If P uses Gilgamesh literarily at this point in the story, therefore, manuscript c₁ indicates that the emendation in Gen 6:14 still has merit.

Loewenstamm's argument against this emendation is likewise not convincing. First, his thesis has internal weaknesses. He claims to reject Ullendorff's proposed emendation, but what

⁷² George points out an Old Babylonian letter in which the carpenter and reed-maker are addressed to make a cargo ship, indicating that even if the dimensions for the ship in Gilgamesh, Atra-Ḫasis, and Gen 6:15 are absurd, the materials out of which the craft was built did have a foundation in historical ship-building. The text reads ^{LÚ}*naggārū(nagar)*^{MEŠ LÚ}*malāḫu*(MÁ.LAḪ₅)^{MEŠ} *ù atkuppu*(AD.KID)^{MEŠ} ...*našpakam*(MÁ.Ī.DUB) *līpušū*, "let the carpenters, shipwrights and reed-workers...build a cargo-boat." See George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Cuneiform Texts, Volume II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 880-881. He discusses the similarities between Gilgamesh and Atra-Ḫasis, but does not discuss the connections made above to Gen 6:14.

he seems actually to mean is that he rejects Ullendorff's reasons for the proposal. At the end of his discussion, Loewenstamm states that he, too, believes that קניִים should be read as קניִים, which is odd since he presents his perspective as more of a rejection of Ullendorff's proposed emendation generally. Ullendorff's emendation is an attempt to read the verse as a cohesive unit and find a better literary structure, and while Loewenstamm agrees that קניִים should be read as קניִים for the semantic reasons that Ullendorff provides, Loewenstamm offers a different solution to the text. He claims that the verse is not the product of a single source originally, but rather that there existed originally two different flood stories within P, one in which the boat was made completely of reeds and the other in which the boat was made entirely of wood. This claim is related to Loewenstamm's second argument against Ullendorff's proposal. According to Loewenstamm, if the verse is emended as Ullendorff suggests, then a plain reading of the verse would not make sense: God would be commanding Noah to make the ark entirely out of wood, and entirely out of reeds. As a result, the semantics involved in the emendation, which, as mentioned before, Loewenstamm also views as inevitable, dictate that Gen 6:14 is evidence for smaller units of narrative within P, each telling a different story.

Two lines of response can be presented to Loewenstamm's suggestions. First, it must be granted that the Hebrew of Gen 6:14 is not entirely clear. Other examples of uses of the verb עשה as it appears in Gen 6:14 seem to conform to Loewenstamm's claims. In the one other example (to my knowledge) of עשה used in consecution of an imperative plus an imperfective, in Exod 25:19, the material is uniform, as per Loewenstamm's suggestion. In this verse, God commands Moses to fashion the cherubim out of the same material as the mercy seat, and no

change in materiality is in view, as it would be in Gen 6:14 if Ullendorff's emendation is accepted. Moreover, the altar law in Exod 20:24-25 also seems to indicate that עשה used as a description of construction without any modifier (such as "make an altar partly of earth, partly of stone") denotes that the material is uniform throughout.⁷³ In other words, the phrase מזבח לי in Exod 20:24 means "You shall make an altar (entirely) of earth for me," and the phrase ואם מזבח אבנים תעשה לי means "But if you make for me an altar (entirely) of stones...."

The construction in Gen 6:14, however, differs from these examples grammatically. The object of the construction in Exod 20 is an altar, which can be either of wood or stone. The altar is modified by the genitive of specification. The grammatical construction in Gen 6:14 is one of an accusative of material. Though most of the examples wherein the complementation is that of the accusative of material seem to involve a singular material, there are examples that indicate that composite materials can be governed by עשה, such as Exod 26:31, 36; and 2 Chr 3:14. These verses are admittedly different in structure: in Gen 6:14 the verb is repeated, whereas in Exod 26:31, 36; and 2 Chr 3:14, one verb עשה governs the materials for making the curtain and screen (of the tabernacle and temple). While this difference is significant, the examples in Exod 26:31, 36; and 2 Chr 3:14 perhaps leave open the possibility that constructions based on the accusative of material can refer to a structure with composite materiality.

If the examples from Exod 26:31, 36; and 2 Chr 3:14 are not convincing, there is another perspective from which one can respond to Loewenstamm's thesis about the grammatical

⁷³ My thanks to Nathan Mastnjak for bringing these verses to my attention.

difficulty in Gen 6:14. As mentioned before, a fragment from the Atra-Ḥasīs epic states that the boat should be made with its structure “entirely of reeds” (*qá-ne-e gáb-bi*). This fragment seems to expand some of the directions as they appear in the fuller account in the manuscript tablet C, column i. If it is part of the same basic story, then Atra-Ḥasīs is being told to make a boat, the structure of which is to be entirely of reeds, but then in execution of the construction of the boat other materials such as wood and pitch are also used as part of the boat. In other words, if this manuscript, dated to the Middle Babylonian Period,⁷⁴ attests to instructions where the boat is commanded to be made “entirely” of reeds, but also entails other materials as well, then a verse such as Gen 6:14 could contain the same literary conceit as its source text (or texts).

These remarks have consequences for source criticism. In much of the discussion around Gen 6-9 and Mesopotamian flood stories, Gen 6-9 have been treated somewhat as an aggregate. The linguistic data presented, however, may reveal that the P source has a marked linguistic trace of its interaction with the Mesopotamian flood stories. Some scholars, such as Loewenstamm, have argued that a source division prevents one from doing an adequate comparison with epic traditions and cognate stories of the flood. He claims that words such as **מבול**, **כפר**, **גפר**,⁷⁵ **צהר**, **טרף**, and **יקום** should be understood as coming from an earlier epic Hebrew source. It

⁷⁴ G. A. Barton, “Hilprecht’s Fragment of the Babylonian Deluge Story (Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, Series D, Volume V, Fasc 1),” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 31 (1911): 37-46; E. I. Gordon, “Review of *The Flood and Noah’s Ark* by André Parrot,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 75 (1956): 336.

⁷⁵ Hendel has suggested that the word **גפר**, the origins of which are obscure, was chosen perhaps because it rhymes with the word for pitch, **כפר** (“Genesis 1-11 and Its Mesopotamian Problem,” 26). Hendel may be correct, but why sound play, especially given the lack of any other examples of such sound play in the Priestly source, should be a motivating factor for P is a mystery. It may be the case that either or both of the words were chosen for the sake of punning, a known factor in code switching (Peter Auer, “The Pragmatics of Code-Switching: A Sequential Approach,” in *One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching* [edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 120).

should be noted, however, that three words in his list, גפר, כפר, and צהר, are *hapax legoumena*, have no ready internal explanation within the development of the Hebrew language,⁷⁶ and only belong to the P source, whereas יקום and טרף occur elsewhere in the HB (even if they are rare) and can be explained as deriving from Hebrew itself.⁷⁷ Despite

⁷⁶ The most difficult word in this list to connect with Akkadian is צהר as Akkadian does not have /h/, which merged with /ʾ/ and lost its consonantal quality early in the history of the language. A possible cognate appears in Amarna Akkadian, namely *zuḫru*, meaning “back,” which, if related to the word in Gen 6:16, may have been extended to mean “roof.” The nominal pattern matches צהר, but the reflex of /ḫ/ should be /h/ in Hebrew, not /h/. Another problem occurs in that /z/ in Akkadian should correspond to /z/ in Hebrew, not /s/. The spelling of this root in Amarna, however, reveals that neither the first consonant (which was variously spelled with /š/) nor the middle element was stable. Perhaps regional variations existed in a Canaanite word that could have manifested themselves in later, biblical Hebrew צהר. One finds the following spellings: *zu-uh-ru-ma* (from Akko); *šú-uh-ru-ma* (in letters from Abdi-Aširte, Šubandu, and Šuwardatta); *š[ú]-ru-ma* (from Šuwardatta); and *šú-ri-ia-ri-ia* (from Tyre). This instability leaves open the possibility for a dialect to preserve a somewhat related form which developed later into צהר, the form seen in Gen 6:16.

Indeed, the variant spellings could be substrate influence in that these Canaanite dialects, which did not have /ḫ/ as a phoneme in their native dialect, rendered an Akkadian word variously, sometimes with /ḫ/, sometimes without. Thus, *šūru*, or *šu'ru* (the editors of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* list both as a root heading) could have been a Canaanite attempt to render a non-Canaanite word related to Akkadian *sēru*. Ugaritic also has a root *zr*; however, this root does not provide an immediate solution for the appearance of צהר since one would have to explain the appearance of /h/ in Hebrew, which is lacking in the Ugaritic spelling of the cognate term *zr*. It could be the case, though, that the Ugaritic word was historically **zVhr*, with the /ḫ/ contracting. Expanding /h/ elements appear as affixes on some Hebrew nouns (such as אלהים) and infixed in Aramaic (Hebrew *rūš* to Aramaic *rhaš*, “to run”). In any case, the forms of this word listed above also contain an enclitic *-ma*, which syntactically functions differently, and therefore is likely unrelated to, the Akkadian connective *-ma*. H. D. Hummel sees the *-ma* on the various forms listed above as related to the enclitic *mem* in early Northwest Semitic, especially in Hebrew (“Enclitic *Mem* in Early Northwest Semitic, especially Hebrew,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76 [1957]: 90). One might argue on the basis of the above evidence that an oral line of transmission, imperfectly rendering the guttural /ḫ/ to Hebrew /h/, existed; such a change in the phonology of the guttural, however, could also occur in writing on analogy to the change in other gutturals such as /ḫ/>/h/, in Assyrian and Babylonian, though admittedly a change from /ḫ/ in cuneiform spelling to /h/ is more extreme. See Richard C. Steiner, “Ḫ>H in Assyria and Babylonia,” in *A Common Cultural Heritage: Studies on Mesopotamia and the Biblical World in Honor of Barry L. Eichler* (Edited by Grant Frame, et al; Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press, 2011), 195-206.

It should be observed that the translators who produced the Peshitta also had trouble with this word, which evidently had no direct Syriac cognate. This word used was *zwēdnē*, meaning “clearstory, base,” and Steven Kaufman proposed that it, too, was an Akkadian loanword from *samētu*, which was perhaps pronounced /zwēd/ in Assyrian. Thus, an inexact phonological correspondence between Syriac and Akkadian also appears in Syriac if this is truly a loanword from Akkadian.

⁷⁷ יקום could be related to קום. The root טרף may be more difficult to explain. It could either derive from the verb טרף, meaning “to tear, rend,” and so its presence in Gen 8:11 could refer to a fresh twig, in the sense of being freshly torn by the dove, a connection which Brown, Driver, and Briggs accept. Kohler and Baumgartner propose a separate root טרף related to Arabic “to be fresh,” and related to an Amharic word for “sprig, branch.” While such a separate root is possible, it is not necessary to explain Gen 8:11.

Loewenstamm's assertion to the contrary, isolating distinct sources can help define the nature of linguistic contact, which is different in the P source and the J source. Thus, source division, when linguistically informed, can aid comparative studies, and contact-induced changes can highlight these aspects when one has divided the sources.

These considerations of linguistic data and source division remain no matter how one divides the sources and no matter how one reconstructs the social world of the Priestly source. Regarding the former, a few different divisions of sources of Gen 6-9 exist among scholars.⁷⁸ No matter which model one chooses, however, the foregoing linguistic comments regarding the difference between P and J remain. Moreover, there are various scholarly reconstructions of the historical provenance of the Priestly source. Again, no matter whether one chooses a late monarchic, exilic, or post-exilic date, there is heavy Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian influence throughout the Levant. A fuller account of P in Gen 6-9 shows that while Akkadian linguistically influenced this source, borrowing is not slavish; thus, the narrative of P diverges from Mesopotamian flood stories in the matter of sacrifice, which does not begin in P until Sinai. Such a divergence, however, does not mean that P did not use a foreign source text.⁷⁹

Questions still exist about the connection between Gen 6:14 and Akkadian: for example, could כִּפֵּר have entered into Hebrew, and the G-stem verb *k-p-r* developed as a denominative on

⁷⁸ For example, in *Who Wrote the Bible?*, Friedman claims that the J source texts are Gen 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 7, 10, 12, 16b-20, 22-23; 8:2b-3a, 6, 8-12, 13b, 20-22, and the P verses are Gen 6:9-22; 7:8-9, 11, 13-16a, 21, 24; 8:1-2a, 3b-5, 7, 13a, 14-19; 9:1-17. Schwartz divides Genesis 6-9 differently: J is 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 7-8a, 10, 12, 16b-17a, 23; 8:2b-3a, 6, 8-12, 13b, 20-22, whereas P is 6:9-22; 7:6, 8b-9, 11, 13-16a, 17b-22, 23; 8:1-2a, 3b-5, 7, 13a, 14-19; 9:1-17. I would divide slightly differently from Schwartz, identifying a J narrative in Gen 6:5-8, 9b; 7:1-5, 7-8a, 10, 12, 16b-17a, 23; 8:2b-3a, 6, 8-12, 13b, 20-22 and a P narrative in 6:9a, 9c-22; 7:6, 8b-9, 11, 13-16a, 17b-22, 24; 8:1-2a, 3b-5, 7, 13a, 14-19; 9:1-17. See Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, 246; Schwartz, "The Flood Narratives in the Torah and the Question of Where History Begins," 143-47 (in Hebrew).

⁷⁹ See Tigay, "On Evaluating Claims of Literary Borrowing," 254-55.

analogy to **הִמָּר** and its G-stem verb in the J source in Gen 14? This suggestion might, though perhaps not necessarily, imply P’s knowledge of the linguistic construction in J. For other reasons, I do not think this relationship exists between P and J. Even if **כִּפָּר** entered as an isolated noun, which exists in both Aramaic and Akkadian, and if the verb is not evidence of contact-induced change, the geographical distribution of the noun in Aramaic is instructive. The use of the noun **ܟܦܪܐ** in Syriac is mostly attested in biblical texts and texts related to the church, which are in turn influenced by the Bible. On this basis, one might argue that the Syriac usage is not an independent witness to this word as originally Aramaic. As far as I am aware, the only other Aramaic dialect in which this noun exists and is used in non-biblical contexts is the Babylonian dialect. While many of the attestations of this dialect are from a later period, around the time of the Talmud (sixth century BCE), the literature and language of the period have been tied to Akkadian language and literature from centuries earlier. This allows for the conclusion that the noun for “pitch” from the root *k-p-r* was not a native Aramaic word. In this case, the word would have to have been borrowed from Akkadian into Aramaic and then into Hebrew through the translation of epic and scientific scribal literature; yet, as the sociolinguistic discussion of preservation of such epic and scientific texts in Mesopotamia in Chapter 4 in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods makes clear, there is reason simply to cut out the middle-man (Aramaic) in this scheme. Our conclusions regarding genre and how certain languages were used for certain genres have implications on whether or not **כִּפָּר** in Gen 6:14 entered into Hebrew via Akkadian or Aramaic, as do some of the data presented later in this chapter. It seems that, at least from the view of the Assyrian and Babylonian heartlands, this noun may be traced from Akkadian into Hebrew without need of Aramaic as a linguistic

intermediary. The ample contact between ancient Israel and Judah, especially during the reign of kings such as Manasseh, and Assyria and Babylon provides a historical context for such contact-induced change (see Chapter 3). In the case of a widely retold story such as the flood, various streams of transmission could be involved; however, in no case is it necessary that Aramaic versions of this story functioned as a means of Israelite and Judean access to Mesopotamian literature and thought.

Excursus: Contact, Borrowing, and Streams of Tradition

It has been remarked that it is often difficult to distinguish in the biblical texts between internal development and evolution resulting from contact. Lena Sofia Tiemeyer has presented arguments in favor of the hypothesis that many of the literary borrowings from Mesopotamia in Second Isaiah also have parallels within the Hebrew Bible. These correspondences cannot, therefore, be identified securely as traces of foreign contact according to Tiemeyer, much less evidence that Second Isaiah was written in Babylonia as some scholars claim.⁸⁰ Tiemeyer overextends and overemphasizes an either/or approach to contact. In fact, linguistic and literary borrowings have multiple sources, both internal and external. Her analysis highlights, however, the crucial role of streams of tradition and the difficulty of pinpointing precise and definitive means through which these traditions have travelled over time. The analysis of Gen 6:14 reveals traces of contact-induced change and literary borrowing from a Mesopotamian tradition even as the relation between this verse and the general stream of tradition reflected in these shared stories shows different degrees of embedding in local narratives.

⁸⁰ Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40-55* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 139; Boston: Brill, 2011), 84-107.

Two inferences may be drawn from this observation. First, not only does P have distinct narrative flow, logic, and details as compared with J in Gen 6-9, but its direct engagement with Mesopotamian flood traditions in Gen 6:14-16 is also entirely independent from J's use of Mesopotamian traditions. This observation calls into question the assertion that Jastrow made almost a century ago. He argued that, although P showed many more correlations in its creation story than J (itself surprising since, according to Jastrow, P is late), a reverse relationship occurred in the flood story in which J contained a much closer relationship than P to the Akkadian.⁸¹ Jastrow went as far as to claim that if modern scholars only had the P narrative, then no clear traces of Mesopotamian correspondence could be discerned. The evidence above undermines this thesis and shows how traditions preserved in P have ancient roots, as argued on other grounds by Haran and alluded to more recently in a work by Baden.⁸² The recently published Akkadian "Ark Tablet," in which animals enter into a coracle two-by-two much like the P story, also shows general connection between P and Mesopotamian flood myths.⁸³

⁸¹ Jastrow, *Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions: The Haskell Lectures Delivered at Oberlin College in 1913 and Since Revised and Enlarged*, 105; 359-60.

⁸² Baden has argued in brief (without drawing out all the implications) for a pre-722 BCE date of P. His claim is dependent on the use of the words **גוים** and **גוים** in Gen 17:6, 16; and 35:11. The promise in Gen 17 is given to Abraham, and the nations and kings could include both descendants from Isaac and Ishmael; however, the promise in Gen 35:11, made in the same terms, can only refer to the descendants of Jacob. Since the word for "nation" (**גוים**) always refers to national entities and since the promise is to more than one nation, one could argue that the narrative in P presupposes the existence of both Judah and Israel in its conception of the promise. In this manner, at least parts of P would necessarily be pre-exilic (before 587 BCE) if not pre-722 BCE (before the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel). It makes little sense to make a promise of land inheritance to a kingdom that no longer exists. See Baden, *The Promise to the Patriarchs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 110. On other grounds, namely situating Hezekiah's reforms in the ideological world that found its literary expression in P, Haran has also argued for a pre-exilic setting for P that is at home in the world of ancient Israel. See Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1985).

⁸³ Finkel, *The Ark Before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood*, 190-97. Here again Finkel does not divide sources well. He attributes Gen 7:1-3 and all of 7:7-9 to J, in which case J has a composite tradition of both seven pair of clean animals and a pair unclean as well as a tradition of two-by-two. In reality, however, 7:9 in its entirety belongs to P (see source analyses above), in which case only P has the instructions for two-by-two. It is consistent that J in Genesis 6-9 makes a distinction between clean and unclean, whereas P makes no such distinction since those categories would only be revealed later at Mt. Sinai. It is also consistent that J has seven pairs of clean animals and a pair unclean animals go on board the ark, whereas P only has a pair of animals. Perhaps Finkel divides

The parallel of pairs of animals in the Ark Tablet and P raises a second issue. Although P borrows from some form of an Akkadian flood story source text in Gen 6:14-16, it does not do so slavishly, and P's reason for having animal pairs is an integral part of its own plot development. For example, whereas Utnapishtim sacrifices immediately to the gods after the flood, the narrative constraints in P prevent any sacrifice from occurring at all until the Sinai legislation provided later, in Leviticus. Instead, a concession for eating meat is given in Gen 9:2-3, but without any hint that such meat eating qualifies as a sacrifice *per se*. This ending of P's flood story clarifies, then, the חַמַּס that was given as the cause of the flood in Gen 6:11-12:

וַתִּשְׁחַת הָאָרֶץ לְפָנֵי אֱלֹהִים וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ חַמָּס׃ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וַהֲנִה נִשְׁחַתָּה כִּי-
הִשְׁחִית כָּל-בָּשָׂר אֶת-דַּרְכּוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ׃

“Now the earth was marred before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold- it was marred, for *all flesh* had corrupted their way upon the earth.”

This violence pertains to massive bloodshed and meat eating, resulting in animals killing people, people killing animals, and people killing people, in other words “all flesh.” Against the instructions of the deity to eat plants in Gen 1:29-30, such meat eating qualified as a severe infraction on the sanctity of life.⁸⁴ While God allows humans to eat animals after the flood, he is clear in Gen 9:5 that animals are not to kill humans nor humans kill other humans. This logic in P, implicit in Gen 6:11-12, is made explicit in the retelling of the flood in *Jub. 5:2*:⁸⁵

sources in the manner that he did so that the correlations between the Ark Tablet and both traditions of biblical flood stories would be more pervasive; however, the result is poor source criticism.

⁸⁴ Schwartz, “The Flood Narratives in the Torah and the Question of Where History Begins,” 152-54.

⁸⁵ For text and translation, see James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text* (2 vols.; Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 510-511; Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Scriptores

ወልህቀት ፡ ዐመፃ ፡ ዲበ ፡ ምድር ፡ ወኩሉ ፡ ዘሥጋ ፡ አማሰነት ፡ ፍኖታ ፡ እምሰብእ ፡
 እስከ ፡ እንሰላ ፡ ወእስከ ፡ አራዊት ፡ ወእስከ ፡ አዕዋፍ ፡ ወእስከ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ ዘያንሶሱ ፡
 ውስተ ፡ ምድር ፡ ኩሎሙ ፡ አማሰኑ ፡ ፍኖቶሙ ፡ ወሥርዓቶሙ ። ወአኅዙ ፡ ይትባልዑ ፡
 በበይናቲሆሙ ፡ ወዐመፃ ፡ ልህቀት ፡ ዲበ ፡ ምድር ፡ ወኩሉ ፡ ኅሊና ፡ አእምሮ ፡ ለኩሎሙ
 ፡ እንላ ፡ እመሕያው ፡ ከመዝ ፡ እኩይ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ መዋዕለ ።

“And lawlessness increased on the earth and all flesh corrupted its way, alike men and
 cattle and beasts and birds and everything that walks the earth- all of them corrupted their
 ways and their orders, and they began to devour each other, and lawlessness increased on
 the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of all men (was) thus continually evil.”

This passage in Jubilees has been thought to be related to (and perhaps influenced by) a similar
 passage in *1 En.* 7:1-6.⁸⁶

ወባዕዳን ፡ ኩሉ ፡ ምስሌሆሙ ፡ ወነሥኡ ፡ ሎሙ ፡ አንስተ ፡ ወኅረዩ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ ለለርእሱ ፡
 አሐተ ፡ ወወጠኑ ፡ ይባኡ ፡ ኅቤሆን ፡ ወተደመሩ ፡ ምስሌሆን ፡ ወመሀርዎን ፡ ሥራያተ ፡
 ወስብዐታተ ፡ ወመቲረ ፡ ሥርው ፡ ወዕፀው ፡ አመርዎን ። ወእማንቱስ ፡ ፀንሳ ፡ ወወለዳ ፡

Aethiopic 87-88; Lovanii: E. Peeters, 1989), 1:29, 2:32. For a recent translation and commentary, see Kugel,
 “Jubilees,” in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture* (3 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish
 Publication Society, 2013), 1:306.

⁸⁶ Michael Segal claims that *Jub.* 5:2 is an addition inspired by *1 En.* 7:3-6. The reason for the addition is
 that the editors of Jubilees wanted to take the condemnation of the giants and their cannibalism and extend this
 transgression to humankind generally as a basis for a universal flood. In that manner, these editors of Jubilees were
 able to implicate mankind in this sin, and “a justification was provided for the flood” (*The Book of Jubilees:
 Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology, and Theology* [Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 117;
 Boston: Brill, 2007], 118). What Segal does not discuss is that 1 Enoch already has a justification for sending a flood
 against humans, in 1 Enoch 8, a condemnation of human violence (simply without consumption). Given Jubilees’
 dependence on 1 Enoch elsewhere, if *Jub.* 5:2 is dependent on 1 Enoch then it is curious that the editors of Jubilees
 did not adopt the explanation for human culpability already apparent in 1 Enoch 8. Segal does not explain why
 cannibalism among the giants is a more suitable extension and explanation for human culpability and the flood than
 the reason already provided in 1 Enoch 8. He offers no discussion of 1 Enoch 8 at all. Moreover, Segal claims that
 “in the biblical story there is no hint of cannibalism,” which is true; however, there is a possible implication in Gen
 9:1-17 that improper meat eating (humans eating animals, animals eating humans) was a cause of the flood. The
 account in *Jub.* 5:2 could indicate this form of improper meat consumption and not cannibalism *per se*.

ረዐይተ ፡ ዐበይተ ፡ ወቆሞሙ ፡ በበጃጃበእመት ፡ እለ ፡ በልዑ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ ጻማ ፡ ሰብእ ፡
 እስከ ፡ ስእንዎሙ ፡ ሴስዮተ ፡ ሰብእ ። ወተመይጡ ፡ ረዐይት ፡ ላዕሌሆሙ ፡ ይብልዕዎሙ ፡
 ለሰብእ ። ወወጠኑ ፡ የአብሱ ፡ በአዕዋፍ ፡ ወዲበ ፡ አራዊት ፡ ወበዘይትሐወስ ፡ ወበዓሣት ፡
 ወሥጋሆሙ ፡ በበይናቲሆሙ ፡ ተባልዑ ፡ ወደመ ፡ ሰትዩ ፡ እምኔሃ ። አሜሃ ፡ ምድር ፡
 ስከየቶሙ ፡ ለዐማፅያን ።

“And they took wives for themselves, and everyone chose for himself one each. And they began to go in to them and were promiscuous with them. And they taught them charms and spells, and showed to them the cutting of roots and trees. And they became pregnant and bore large giants, and their height [was] three thousand cubits. These devoured all the toil of men, until men were unable to sustain them. And the giants turned against them in order to devour men. And they began to sin against birds, and against animals, and against reptiles and against fish, and they devoured one another’s flesh and drank the blood from it. Then the earth complained about the lawless ones.”⁸⁷

There are differences, however, between these traditions of meat eating and violence that may indicate that Jubilees drew its inspiration by inference from the biblical version of the story rather than from borrowing from 1 Enoch 7. For instance, in 1 Enoch the devouring is attached to the gluttony of the giants, an insatiable appetite that consumes the earth. It is the giants, however, that do the consuming, never the animals that consume humans or the giants in turn. In 1 Enoch 8, mankind unleashes violence and lawlessness, but such transgressions have nothing to do with

⁸⁷ Miryam T. Brand, “1 Enoch,” in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture* (edited by Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman; 3 volumes; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2013), 2: 1369-70. For a text edition and translation, see Michael A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments* (2 vols; New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

consumption. In Jubilees, however, the story of the giants is confined to *Jub.* 5:1. In *Jub.* 5:2, the people and the animals, all living things, are guilty of lawlessness through mutual consumption, a storyline much closer to the logic of P in Gen 6:11 and 9:1-17 than 1 Enoch. Naturally, the authors of Jubilees would have had no awareness of the modern reconstruction of P; however, their concern for retelling Israel's history from the beginning of the world in light of Levitical law may have heightened their awareness for retelling components of the narrative that align with that legislation. In this case, the logic of Gen 9:1-17 is read back into the beginning of the flood and what is implicit in P and in the compiled Pentateuch (that lawlessness causing the flood is related to improper meat consumption, including animal consumption of humans) becomes explicit in the retelling.

For the Gilgamesh Epic, the possibility that an animal could consume a human is part of the process of population control suggested by the god Ea as an alternative to another flood after the deluge recounted in tablet XI:

ammaku taškunu abūba / nēšu litbamma ništ liṣaḥḥir

*ammaku taškunu abūba / barbaru litbamma ništ liṣaḥḥir*⁸⁸

“Instead of your bringing on us a flood, let a lion rise up to diminish the human race!

Instead of your bringing up a flood, let the wolf rise up to diminish the human race!”

For P, such a solution for warding off another flood is impossible, and therefore this animal behavior becomes the rationale for the deluge instead of a means for preventing another flood.

⁸⁸ *am-ma-ku taš-ku-nu a-bu-ba / nēšu* (UR.MAḪ) *lit-ba-am-ma ništ* (ÛG.MEŠ) *li-ša-aḥ-ḥi-i[r]* / *am-ma-ku taš-ku-nu a-bu-ba / barbaru* (UR.BAR.RA) *lit-ba-am-ma ništ* (ÛG.MEŠ) *li-ša-[ḥi-ir]*

Rather, the prevention policy is a promise, or **ברית**, in Gen 9:9-17. This reworking is cleverly refashioned for P's narrative purpose, in which humans progress from vegetarians in Gen 1 to meat eaters in Gen 9 and ultimately to sacrificial worshippers in Leviticus.⁸⁹ Thus, while borrowing is more explicit in the details for the construction of the ark in Gen 6:14-16, the priestly narrative elsewhere in the flood story shows the transformation of Mesopotamian themes for the unique narrative claims of this source. This local adaptation of the flood story in P, then, is in complete accord with other local adaptations of Gilgamesh written centuries earlier in the Middle Bronze Age, as evidenced in George's manuscript c₁ cited above, the fragment of Gilgamesh discovered at Megiddo, and the local traditions and summaries of this epic from the Hittite capital Hattusha (though P was by no means that old).⁹⁰

This stream of tradition reflected in Gilgamesh, P, Jubilees, and 1 Enoch would even appear later in Jewish tradition in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the Book of Giants, preserved in Aramaic fragments, Gilgamesh is mentioned twice, as is Gilgamesh's foe Humbaba.

4Q530 Giants 2 ii:

[וע]לו כל חברוהי ו[אן]היה אחוי אנון ז[מ]א זי אמר לה גלגמיס וח[ו]בבס אפחא ומתאמר
ד[ין] על נפשה .

⁸⁹ Jacob Milgrom, "A Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17:11," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90 (1971): 149-56.

⁹⁰ For the Megiddo version, see George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Cuneiform Texts, Volume 1*, 339-47; Y. Goren, et al, "A Provenance Study of the Gilgamesh Fragment from Megiddo," *Archaeometry* 51 (2009): 763-73. This version of the epic shared local scribal conventions of preservation with some of the versions found in the Neo-Assyrian library of Assurbanipal, particularly in marking poetry by leaving blank spaces between lines (George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Cuneiform Texts, Volume 1*, 351). Various corruptions in the Megiddo text as well as the Hittite paraphrases show that these versions may have been poorly understood in places and have had a long existence outside of Babylonian-speaking provinces (George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Cuneiform Texts, Volume 1*, 25). For the text and translation of the Middle Babylonian fragments of Gilgamesh from Hattusha, see George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Cuneiform Texts, Volume 1*, 306-26.

“All his companions entered and Ohyah declared to them that which Gilgamesh said to him. Hobabish opened (his) mouth and announced judgment against his (Gilgamesh’s) soul.”

4Q531 Giants 22:

[ואדין ג]לגמיש אמר [ח]למכה []של[ם]...].

“Then Gilgamesh said ‘your dream is well....’”

In this case, there is no mention of a flood, though some shadow of narrative events from Mesopotamian epic may appear in these Qumran scrolls.⁹¹ Both Gilgamesh and Humbaba are transformed into giants; nonetheless, this transformation shows a form of the stream of transmission, a stream that may not reflect linguistic contact (unlike Gen 6:14) even as the adaptation of Gilgamesh and Humbaba is both fully identifiable as originating from Mesopotamia and yet fully incorporated into the ideology of a Second Temple Jewish document.

IV. *Exod 15:11*

An example of a phrase that has occasioned varying translations due to a possible contact-induced change occurs in the famous Song of the Sea in Exodus 15. The entire chapter

⁹¹ In 4Q530, it seems that the antagonism between Gilgamesh and Hobabish is thematically consistent with their roles in the Mesopotamian versions. The role of dreams in 4Q531 is also reminiscent of the cuneiform epic. The fact that it is not Gilgamesh but Ohyah who has the dream in 4Q531 and the fact that Gilgamesh laments a defeat in battle are both possible reversals from the Mesopotamian versions of the legend. Matthew Goff, “Gilgamesh the Giant: The Qumran *Book of Giants*’ Appropriation of *Gilgamesh* Motifs,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 16 (2009): 221-53. Loren Stuckenbruck offers a different translation of the section of 4Q531 above: “Gilgamesh, tell us your dream...” (Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary* [Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 63; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997], 164). More recently, he has modified his translation slightly: “[and then Gi]lgamesh said: ‘Your dream [] pea[ce?]’” (“The Book of Giants,” in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture* [3 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2013], 1:234). Contextually, a few lines later it is clear that Ohyah is the giant who had a vision, not Gilgamesh (Goff, “Gilgamesh the Giant,” 240-41).

has been subject to much analysis due to the peculiar features of its poetry. It has been argued to be one of the oldest examples of Hebrew since the language of the song contains many archaic features.⁹² On the other hand, some scholars prefer to see the chapter as a late composition.⁹³ They claim that the putative archaic features are actually archaisms (elements of language that attempt to sound old by using older forms, though they actually are late, such as modern usage of the Old English “ye” as a definite article) and that such a late date is further buttressed by literary features such as the reference to a sanctuary. The proponents of a late date of this chapter claim that this sanctuary is actually a reference to the Jerusalem temple, and therefore would be monarchic or later and certainly not from pre-Solomonic times as proponents of the earlier dating argue. In this manner, careful reflection on linguistic and literary properties of texts together can clarify debates in biblical studies.⁹⁴ In this case, a contact-induced change in Exod 15:11 and an archaic linguistic element in Exod 15:6 converge and indicate an older date for this text. A presentation of the archaic element in Exod 15:6 is offered first before the external data is examined.

As has been recently argued, Exod 15:6 contains a datum that converges with other previously existing lines of argumentation concerning the age of the poem of the Song at the

⁹² See E. Zenger for an overview of suggestions for dating this song (“Tradition und Interpretation in Exodus xv 1-21,” in *Congress Volume, Vienna 1980* [Edited by J. A. Emerton; VTSup 32; Leiden: Brill, 1981], 456-60). For a fuller list of bibliographic information for those proposing an early date to the psalm (such as William F. Albright, David Noel Freedman, and Cross), see Butts, “A Note on *ne’ dārî* in Ex 15:6,” *Vetus Testamentum* 60 (2010): 170-71 n 16.

⁹³ M. L. Brenner, *The Song of the Sea: Ex 15:1-21* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991).

⁹⁴ In this fashion, the examination of contact-induced changes in biblical Hebrew can help in the dating of texts without falling into the abuse of the comparative method in Malul’s discussion (using comparative data for apologetic purposes of dating biblical texts early for the sake of ideological commitments). In some cases, like Exodus 15, the data indicate an earlier date; in other cases, like later strata in Isaiah (see Chapter 6), the data indicate a later date.

Sea.⁹⁵ The poem itself belongs to the J source, a source that often incorporates poetry into its narrative accounts.⁹⁶ The story of the J source and the Exodus recounts God's acts to punish Pharaoh and Egypt through a series of plagues and to secure Israel's freedom. At the Sea of Reeds, God intervened to effect his plan of salvation for his people, consistent with his intercession in the plagues.⁹⁷ The J narrative in Exodus 14 tells of God's intercession to confuse the Egyptians and to draw them to the sea. God pulled back the water of the shoreline through a mighty wind and dried the coast (14:21). He used a pillar of fire and cloud to cause the Egyptians, in their disarray and confusion, to flee into the sea (14:24-25, 27), and God then allowed the water to return thereby swallowing up the Egyptian army.⁹⁸

The poem in Exodus 15 likely dates to a time preceding the composition of this source, whatever century that may have been.⁹⁹ It is sufficiently embedded in the J narrative, and

⁹⁵ See Butts, "A Note on *ne'dārî* in Ex 15:6," 167-71.

⁹⁶ See Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 123-36; Steven P. Weitzman, *Song and Story: The History of a Literary Convention in Ancient Israel* (Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), 15-36; Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 28.

⁹⁷ This nature of the plagues as intercession leading to freedom in J contrasts with the use of the plagues in the P narrative. It is not clear whether or not the plagues in P were ever meant to have an effect. It seems as though God in the P narrative, instead, uses the plague as a simple display of his power, but it is not clear whether the goal and aim of that display of power was meant to deliver Israel out of Egypt. Rather, the killing of the first-born, which may not have been counted as one of the plagues in the P narrative, was intended to be the one act that accomplished Israel's departure from Egypt. For more on the P plagues, see Stackert, "Why Does the Plague of Darkness Last for Three Days?: Source Ascription and Literary Motif in Exodus 10:21-23, 27," *Vetus Testamentum* 61 (2011): 657-76.

⁹⁸ The story of the walling of the waters of the Sea of Reeds, so familiar from the movie *The Ten Commandments*, is actually from the P narrative. The J account tells a different story. The J source may have a story of the walling up of waters, but this story, if J continues into the book of Joshua, occurs at the walling up of waters at the crossing of the Jordan River, not at the crossing of the Sea of Reeds. It is debatable, however, whether or not J continues into Joshua. There are, of course, those who doubt J is a continuous narrative at all. There is not space to rehearse this debate. See, however, the book devoted to the European perspective on this subject, *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation*. See the Neo-Documentarian response in Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 45-81.

⁹⁹ Proposals concerning the period of origin of J vary. Von Rad assigned the work to the time of Solomon in the tenth century BCE ("The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch, and Other Essays* [translated by E. W. Trueman Dicken; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966], 166-204). Others do not attempt such precise dating beyond arguing for a relative chronology that J was simply prior to D (Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, 247). Van Seters claims that J is later than D and that J was written in the sixth century BCE (see most recently *The Yahwist: A*

sufficiently continuous with it over against the P narrative in Exodus 14, that it certainly belongs to the Yahwistic source; at the same time, narrative disjunction exists, making a distinction evident.¹⁰⁰ This observation, combined with the linguistic data, indicate that Exodus 15 stems from a much older poetic source.

The linguistic data have become a topic of much discussion. There are various elements of the language of the chapter that indicate its older origin. For example, there is a class of verbs in Biblical Hebrew that end in the letter *hē*' (without a *mappiq* to make this *hē*' a consonant). These verbs are from an older class that ended in *-y* or *-w*, which has collapsed and the *hē*' is written as a *mater lectionis* for the resulting vowel. The *-y* as a consonant has otherwise only persisted in the G-stem passive participle. There are forms of these verbs in Exodus 15, however, that retain this *-y*.¹⁰¹ Moreover, there are old forms of pronominal suffixes in this poem, ending in *ננו*.¹⁰² Many scholars have argued, though, that these features are explainable as archaisms,

Historian of Israelite Traditions). Carr has pointed out that van Seters' version of the Yahwist (as well as Christoph Levin's) are so different from what has been meant by that label historically in scholarship that van Seter's J and the J of classical source criticism are two different things ("What Is Required to Identify Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections between Genesis and Exodus? Some General Reflections and Specific Cases," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* [edited by Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 34; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006], 160 n 2). As argued earlier in this chapter, the D source, which may with some confidence be dated to the seventh century BCE, uses the J source; as a result, J must be older than the seventh century BCE. Yet, in light of the contact-induced change in Exod 15:11 (see below), Exodus 15 could not be prior to the ninth century BCE when Israelites and Judeans were beginning to have contact with the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The archaic feature in Exod 15:6 may have been from a period even prior to the ninth century; yet the contact-induced change and the form of Exodus 15 as incorporated in J must be from the ninth or eighth century.

¹⁰⁰ For example, the language in Exod 15:10 of the enemy sinking like lead seems to indicate that the Egyptians pursued the Israelites on boat; however, no such battle exists in Exodus 14 (the narrative description the events memorialized in verse in Exodus 15).

¹⁰¹ Exod 15:5: יכסימו.

¹⁰² Exod 15:5 (יכסימו), 7 (יאכלמו), 9 (תמלאמו; תורישמו), 10 (כסמו), 12 (תבלעמו), 15 (יאחזמו), and 17 (תבעמו; תבאמו). One could also list the relative pronoun *זו* (15:13, 16) as another of these archaic features.

forms that were known to later writers as sounding old and therefore used in a poem that was meant to sound old even if its actual composition dated from a later time.¹⁰³

A form נֹאדַרִי in Exod 15:6, however, provides evidence of an archaic form that is otherwise unattested in any Hebrew literature as an archaism. At issue is the –y at the end of the word, which has been interpreted variously. It is clearly not a first person singular pronominal suffix by context. It could be a *yod compaginis*, a feature that occurs in other parts of the Hebrew Bible. This –y sometimes marks a construct or bound relationship, sometimes when the second element begins with a preposition.¹⁰⁴ While the *yod compaginis* may account for the –y in Exod 15:6, another grammatical explanation not only accounts for the *yod* but also for what נֹאדַרִי modifies.

One possibility is to understand the form נֹאדַרִי as modifying יְמִינְךָ, “your right hand.”¹⁰⁵ The problem, however, is that the word יְמִינְךָ is feminine, but formally נֹאדַרִי has

¹⁰³ See Joseph Lam for a similar phenomenon in Psalm 2 and for bibliography concerning language and dating Psalm 2 with reference to the archaic נוֹ, which occurs five times in this psalm (“Psalm 2 and the Disinheritance of Earthly Rulers: New Light from the Ugaritic Legal Text RS 94.2168,” *Vetus Testamentum* 64 [2014]: 43 n 32). Gesenius called these features in Exodus 15 “artificial,” particularly the suffix –נוֹ, and Brenner has found the features above in clearly later texts (Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* [edited and enlarged by E. Kautzsch; 2nd English revised edition; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910], §91.L.3; Brenner, *Song of the Sea*, 35 n 2). For the circularity of Brenner’s literary argumentation, see Walter Brueggemann, “Review: The Song of the Sea: Ex. 15:1-21 by Martin L. Brenner,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112 (1993): 126-28.

¹⁰⁴ This feature can also appear as a *waw compaginis*, the element marking the bound relationship being –w. Some philologists originally thought the –y and –w to be markers of case vowels. The distribution, however, does not jibe with the data. For example, the nominative case in Proto-Semitic (as attested in inflected Semitic languages such as Akkadian and Classical/Qur’anic Arabic) was –u, which would be represented by the grapheme –w in Hebrew. The example רַבְתִּי in Lam 1:1 contradicts this thesis. The word clearly modifies עֵיר, which is in the nominative. One would expect רַבְתִּי if the ending represented a case vowel. Instead, it simply marks a connected relationship of some kind. See David Robertson, “The Morphemes –y (–ī) and –w (–ō) in Biblical Hebrew,” *Vetus Testamentum* 19 (1969): 211-23.

¹⁰⁵ For more on this matter and for the first argument that the –y is an archaic feminine feature, see Butts, “A Note on *ne’ dāri* in Ex 15:6,” 167-71.

been understood to be masculine. An alternate understanding of the –y on נֹאדָרִי resolves this issue. There is Semitic evidence that –y could have been an archaic marker of feminine forms. In Hebrew, a marker with –y is preserved in imperfective, second person feminine singular forms (יקטלי), as well as in Akkadian in the imperfective, second person feminine singular forms (*taprusī*); however, the –y attached to substantives could have had a different vowel, such as שָׁרִי. In this manner, the participle form can modify the noun יְמִינְךָ without any discrepancy of gender. This thesis also retains the parallelism in the verse, in which יְמִינְךָ functions as the subject of the second colon (יְמִינְךָ יְהוּה תִרְעַץ אוֹיֵב, “your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy”). This parallelism is matched by נֹאדָרִי as a predicative participle in the first colon (יְמִינְךָ יְהוּה נֹאדָרִי בְכַח).¹⁰⁶

Moreover, this datum could support arguments for the antiquity of this chapter. This feminine marker is otherwise unattested in Hebrew besides the preservation in the forms mentioned above and has not been a feature identified in archaized Hebrew writings. As often occurs with archaisms, such features, when used in later texts by later authors for whom such grammatical elements are not productive, are poorly understood and, therefore, used incorrectly.¹⁰⁷ Yet, not only does נֹאדָרִי correctly modify a feminine noun, but the unmarked

¹⁰⁶ Tania Notarius claims not to find any predicative participles in Exodus 15, though she states that נֹאדָרִי in Exod 15:6 is “one dubious case” (*The Verb in Archaic Biblical Poetry: A Discursive, Typological, and Historical Investigation of the Tense System* [Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 68; Boston: Brill, 2013], 111).

¹⁰⁷ For example, the dual suffix form (אֵיִם, *-ayim*) was not actively productive during biblical Hebrew, occurring mostly on words for body parts that appear in pairs (ears, feet, eyes). In some texts, the dual form is attached to a plural form, an ungrammatical construction that, in effect, doubly marks the noun for some form of

form in Exod 15:11, נָאֲדָר, correctly modifies a masculine noun (יְהוָה, Yahweh), revealing that whoever wrote this chapter could still use the forms correctly. While not determinative in itself, this grammatical observation is suggestive that Exodus 15 is archaic and not archaizing.

A calque from Akkadian in Exod 15:11 may provide another line of evidence for the antiquity of this song. Here again literary clues undergird the identification and analysis of a contact-induced change, a change that itself supports the datum of Exod 15:6 and an earlier dating of this poem. Exodus 15:11 is as follows:

מי כמכה באלים יהוה
מי כמכה נאדר בקדש
נורא תהלת עשה פלא

“Who is like you among the gods, O LORD?
Who is like you, powerful in holiness,
nora’ tehillot, doer of amazing things!”

Shawn Zelig Aster has suggested Akkadian influence, *puluḫti melamme* (“fear of (my) terrifying radiance”), in the phrase נורא תהלת, a phrase that does not yield an easy translation into English because it does not conform to standard Biblical Hebrew imagery.¹⁰⁸ Aster observes that the phrase is a juxtaposition of “fearfulness” and “praise” in a way that does not render a consistent picture, and he cites the varying translations such as the more literal New Jewish Publication Society (“awesome in splendor”) to the more idiomatic New English Bible (“worthy

plurality (בין החומות, “between the two walls,” 2 Kgs 25:4; Isa 22:11; Jer 39:4; 52:7). This example illustrates how older forms no longer productively used in a language can be misused at a later time.

¹⁰⁸ For his discussion of this passage, see Aster, *The Unbeatable Light: Melammu and Its Biblical Parallels* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 384; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012), 255-57.

of awe and praise”). As Aster points out, even Ibn Ezra asked what the juxtaposition of these two ideas could mean.

The first word in this phrase, **נִרְאָה**, is from a common root in Hebrew meaning “to fear.” The conjugation of this verb in the medio-passive N-stem often has the sense of result, a semantic category that, with this particular root, can connote potentiality. Thus, the participial form as attested in Exod 15:11 often means “one who is to be feared,” in the sense of “one who contains the potential to be feared.”¹⁰⁹ Understood in this sense, Aster overplays the need to appeal to external data to explain the semantics of this participle, as when he finds a parallel construction in Job 37:22, namely **נִרְאָה הוֹרֵר**, or “one with the potential to be feared with respect to majesty.” This literal and awkward translation in Job is nonetheless sensible: God is to be feared, and that fear is qualified in terms of his glory or majesty, an attribute that God has elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. As Aster says, this phrase alone does not prove a calque; rightly, he depends on literary context as well as other studies that have shown that much of the book of Job relies on Neo-Babylonian juridical language.¹¹⁰ In this manner, though Aster cannot prove that the phrase is a calque from Akkadian *puluḫti melamme*, he rightly explores the possibility of a loan translation given other factors in this section of the Book of Job.

Aster is on more solid ground, however, in Exod 15:11, a passage that may provide support for his analysis of Job 37:22.¹¹¹ The context of Exod 15:11 is clear: the deeds of the Lord and his attributes are being commemorated. As Aster states “[t]he context of the verse does not

¹⁰⁹ T. O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 177.

¹¹⁰ F. Rachel Magdalene, *On the Scales of Righteousness: Neo-Babylonian Trial Law and the Book of Job* (Brown Judaic Studies 348; Providence, Rhode Island: Brown Judaic Studies, 2007).

¹¹¹ Aster, *The Unbeatable Light*, 248-51.

suggest any reference to praise. It speaks about Divine supremacy and the deeds of wonder which demonstrate this.”¹¹² Aster does not note that there are a few other passages which may use the word תהלה as a shorthand for “a praiseworthy deed,” which might make more sense in Exod 15:11, thereby alleviating some of the semantic problems; however, in those passages it is someone else who is offering such praise to God for his deeds, which is why this root can be used in these literary contexts.¹¹³ The deeds are qualified as a תהלה in these other passages because it is someone else who is responding in this manner to something God did in the past. In Exod 15:11, however, this word is something that God himself has (as an attribute) and that secures his success in acting on Israel’s behalf.

A solution may be found in appealing both to internal and external data. Internally, the evidence comes from a passage in Hab 3:3, a verse that has both הוד and תהלה coordinated, the two terms under discussion from Job 37:11 and Exod 15:11. The noun תהלה in Hab 3:3 seems to defy normal semantic domains for this word. The noun is parallel to הוד, and both terms refer to an attribute that emanates from God that ultimately covers and fills the earth. The תהלה of God could be the praise that others give him, but the literary context of the verse is the focus of an attribute that God possesses, and not the praise or what others say or do for God, which belongs more properly in Hab 3:2a at the very beginning of the psalm. Given the description of light, list of divine attributes, and effects emanating from his presence that are described in Hab 3:4-5, תהלה in Hab 3:3 may derive not from the D-stem verb הלל but rather from the C-stem

¹¹² Aster, *The Unbeatable Light*, 255.

¹¹³ Isa 60:6; 63:7; Ps 78:4.

of a root with the same consonants, itself from a different meaning.¹¹⁴ The C-stem verb means “to shine,” and in Hab 3:3 the noun תהלה could be constructed from his root, meaning “gleam, radiance.” It might be argued that this noun formation does not match the verbal morphology as, at least in Akkadian, nouns of the *taprist* pattern (or *taqtil(a)t* in the convention often used in Hebrew and Comparative Semitic analysis; in the case of geminates, such as the root הלל, *taqillat*) are derived from D-stem, not C-stem, verbs. One might better understand the relationship between the C-stem of הלל to the noun תהלה as a noun based on this verb, but patterned after a pre-existing noun meaning “praise,” especially as the concept of praise and radiance could be conceived of as close enough to establish a link. Or, one could derive the noun from the C-stem verb as an abstract noun, much like the relationship between the C-stem of ירה “to teach” and the abstract noun תורה, “a teaching.”¹¹⁵ At any rate, the verb “to shine” and the noun תהלה, formally identical to a separate noun and often misinterpreted in Hab 3:3 as “praise,” are likely connected. The appearance of the noun in Hab 3:3 and in Exod 15:11 is perhaps significant: the former verse is part of a chapter that some scholars consider to be one of the oldest Hebrew poems in the Bible.¹¹⁶ If Habakkuk 3 is indeed archaic, then it is a correlation

¹¹⁴ The D-stem of הלל has a more common East and West Semitic basis. Akkadian has a cognate verb, *alalum*, whereas the C-stem הלל may only have a cognate in Arabic.

¹¹⁵ This formation is more properly denoting the action of the verb (as opposed to m-preformatives, which denote the concrete place or thing, more rarely abstract nouns). See Bruce Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §5.6c-d. The noun of course eventually became understood as a concrete noun referring specifically to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.

¹¹⁶ J. J. M. Roberts argues that Habakkuk 3:3-15 was part of the original text of Habakkuk, but that the author of the book adopted an “ancient hymn” that preserved these archaic features; therefore, the hymn is older than the composition of the book itself in Roberts’ view (*Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary* [Old Testament Library; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 1991], 148). According to Roberts, some of the text critical issues in Habakkuk 3 may be the result of its antiquity and the fact that the transmitters of the text (if not

of internal data that is significant for conclusions about the antiquity of the song in Exodus 15 (though the converse argument concerning Habakkuk 3 would not influence the results of this analysis of Exodus 15).

Externally, Aster finds proof from Mesopotamia that the concept of a “terrifying radiance,” otherwise unattested in biblical rhetoric, fits with the Akkadian conception of *melammu*. Whereas he is appropriately reticent on the question of whether or not Hab 3:3 and the usage of radiance in that verse is testimony to internal development or external influence from Mesopotamia, he states more strongly that Exod 15:11 reveals this Akkadian influence. In this example, the external link is secured by the qualifier **נורא**, resulting in a literary motif prominent in Akkadian and Sumerian literature, but otherwise absent in the Hebrew Bible. This contact-induced change is apparent through a literary motif that calques this Mesopotamian idea, showing how linguistic analyses of foreign influence must take into account literary context. How this Mesopotamian image entered into the text of the Hebrew Bible is difficult to assess. It is interesting that the Targums consistently render **תהלה** with **תושבחן** (“praise”), including the example in Exod 15:11.¹¹⁷ This data from the Targums might, with caution, be taken as evidence that the words and images of the terror of God’s radiance in Exod 15:11 do not come from Aramaic but from Akkadian. Moreover, the genres in Akkadian in which the literary motif is preserved are cultic hymns and royal inscriptions, the type of ideologically embedded texts that, as argued in Chapter 4, were not translated into Aramaic (at least by Assyrians) until the

the author of Habakkuk himself) did not fully understand the language (*Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary*, 84).

¹¹⁷ The Targum Jonathan has the same rendering in Hab 3:3, making explicit that the praise consists of words of others spoken to God (**אמרי תושבחתיה**), also showing no knowledge of the sense of radiance from **תהלה** in this verse.

Achaemenid era. In the case of Exod 15:11, it is likely that contact with Akkadian phrasing and the Assyrian literary motif of a terrifying radiance has resulted in an image in the Song of the Sea in which the God of the Israelites is imagined in these foreign terms, but historicized in an event peculiar to Israel's history.

V. *Exod 21:35*

Another *locus classicus* for Mesopotamian influence on the Hebrew Bible, and therefore a strong candidate for locating contact-induced change, is in biblical law codes. Correspondences in the biblical law codes and cuneiform documents have also been a particularly debated topic in recent years.¹¹⁸ This debate involves many facets of argumentation, from literary and legal theory to source and form criticism. Linguistic features are an important aspect of the larger literary debate, as evidenced especially in Exod 21:35.¹¹⁹ This verse contains a verb that, according to Malul, could be evidence of language contact (discussed more below). Yet this datum has been largely unnoticed in the debates surrounding the Covenant Code and legal collections from the ancient Near East. While Malul successfully connects this verse with the Mesopotamian tradition in the Laws of Eshnunna 53 and especially the Code of Hammurabi 250-252, he does not further triangulate evidence from Aramaic. This triangulation is important: at issue is not simply whether or not the Covenant Code (of which Exod 21:35 is a part) shares

¹¹⁸ As indicated in Chapter 2, the roots of this debate are much older, originating in some ways from Alt's classic study on the development of Israelite law. See, for example, Wright, "The Laws of Hammurabi as a Source for the Covenant Collection (Exodus 20:23-23:19)," *Maarav* 10 (2003): 11-87; idem., "The Laws of Hammurabi and the Covenant Code: A Response to Bruce Wells," *Maarav* 13.2 (2007): 211-60; idem., *Inventing God's Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Used and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi*; Wells, "The Covenant Code and Near Eastern Legal Traditions: A Response to Wright," *Maarav* 13.1 (2006): 85-118; Greengus, *Laws in the Bible and in Early Rabbinic Collections: The Legal Legacy of the Ancient Near East* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011). See more recently Anselm C. Hagedorn and Reinhard G. Kratz, eds., *Law and Religion in the Eastern Mediterranean: From Antiquity to Early Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹¹⁹ For Malul's linguistic analysis, see *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies*, 140-41.

language and assumptions from the broader ancient Mesopotamian world. The question, rather, is how ancient Israel and Judah gained access to this Akkadian literature, and whether it was accessed directly from cuneiform sources or whether one needs to posit a linguistic mediation through Aramaic. Nor does Malul exhaust the linguistic evidence, which is presented below.

The laws pertaining to the goring “ox”¹²⁰ in Exodus are as follows:

וכי־יגח שׁור את־אישׁ או את־אשה ומת סקול יסקל השׁור ולא יאכל את־בשרו ובעל
השׁור נקי: ואם שׁור נגח הוא מתמל שלשם והועד בבעליו ולא ישמרנו והמית אישׁ או אשה
השׁור יסקל וגם בעליו יומת: אם־כפר יושׁת עליו ונתן פדיון נפשו ככל אשר־יושת עליו: או
בן יגח או בת יגח כמשפט הזה יעשה לו: אם־עבד יגח השׁור או אמה כסף שלשים שקלים
יתן לאדניו והשׁור יסקל: ¹²¹ וכי־יגף שׁור־אישׁ את־שׁור רעהו ומת ומכרו את־השׁור החי
וחצו את־כספו וגם את־המת יחצו: או נודע כי שׁור נגח הוא מתמול שלשם ולא ישמרנו
בעליו שלם ישלם שׁור תחת השׁור ומת יהיה־לו:

“If an ox gores a man or woman and he/she dies, the ox will be stoned and its flesh will not be eaten. The owner of the ox will not be liable. If the ox is a habitual gorer from the past, and its owner had been warned but has not guarded it and it kills a man or a woman,

¹²⁰ Or, “bull” more properly, though “ox” as a label for the animal in this passage and other ancient Near Eastern laws has become the term of choice for academic discussions, and so is used here.

¹²¹ A few verses from the Hebrew are missing here (21:33-34). Some argue that the laws pertaining to the opening of a pit are insertions in a section that otherwise reads coherently as belonging exclusively to laws pertaining to the goring ox. Whether or not these verses are original or an addition does not influence this study one way or another. The issue here is whether linguistics and literary studies can be a means for understanding the nature of contact with Mesopotamia and whether or not such contact was mediated through Aramaic. See Wright, “The Compositional Logic of the Goring Ox and Negligence Laws in the Covenant Collection [Ex 21:28-36],” *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 10 (2004): 93-142.

the ox will be stoned and its owner will also be put to death. If a ransom is placed upon him, he will give a redemption for his life according to that which is placed on him. If it gores a son or a daughter, according to this law it will be done to him (the owner). If the ox gores a male slave or a female slave, he (the owner of the ox) will give to their owner 30 shekels of silver and the ox will be stoned. If a man's ox gores the ox of his neighbor such that it dies, they will sell the living ox and divide the money. They will also divide the dead ox. Or, if it is known that the ox is a habitual gorer previously and its owner has not guarded it, he will certainly pay ox for ox, and the dead one will be his.”

The section pertaining to the laws of the goring ox in the Code of Hammurabi 250-252 (which on other literary grounds shows uncanny relationship to the Covenant Code¹²²) is as follows:

250: *šumma alpum sūqam ina alākišu awīlam ikkipma uštamīt dīnum šū rugummām ul išu*

“If an ox gores a man while moving through a street and causes (his) death, that case has no basis for a claim.”

251: *šumma alap awīlim nakkāpīma kīma nakkāpû bābtašu ušēdīšumma qarñīšu la ušarrim alapšu la usanniqma alpum šû mār awīlim ikkipma uštamīt 1/2 mana kaspam inaddin*

“If the ox of a man is a habitual gorer, and the authorities of his city quarter make known to him that it is a known gorer, but he does not blunt (?) its horns and does not control his

¹²² The Covenant Code is typically defined as the set of laws in Exod 20:19-23:33.

ox, and that ox gores a member of the *awīlum* class and causes (his) death, he (the owner) will give 30 shekels of silver.”

252: *šumma warad awīlim 1/3 mana kaspam inaddin*

“If it is the slave of a man (who is fatally gored), he shall give 20 shekels of silver.”

The various points of comparison between the Covenant Code in Exodus 21-23 and the Code of Hammurabi, as well as other law codes of the ancient Near East,¹²³ cannot be discussed in detail at this point as it is beyond the purview of this dissertation and such issues have been discussed extensively elsewhere.

The first linguistic feature of this section to discuss occurs in verse 28. The Masoretic Text has the verb נָגַח, from the root *n-g-ḥ*, the usual word in Hebrew for goring.¹²⁴ The verse describes a first time incident, which contrasts with the following verse 29 in which the ox is called a נֶגַח (naggāḥ). This word is based on a common form in Semitic, the *qattāl* pattern which often connotes a person who habitually does the act implied by the semantics of the verbal

¹²³ The phrasing of laws 250-251 of Hammurabi’s code is similar to the pre-existing Law of Eshnunna 53-54. The latter, for reference to Hammurabi’s law 251 above, is:

53: *šumma alpum alpam ikkimma uštamīt šīm alpim balṭim u taḥḥi alpim mītim bēl alpim kilallan izuzzu*
“If one ox gores a(nother) ox and causes its death, both ox owners shall divide (between them) the price (realized from the sale) of the live ox and the value of the dead ox.”

54: *šumma alpum nakkābema babtum ana bēlīšu ušēdīma alapšu la paširma awīlam ikkimma uštamīt bēl alpim 2/3 mana kaspam išaqqal*

“If it gores a slave and causes (his) death, he shall pay 15 shekels of silver.”

For a full critical edition of the Laws of Eshnunna, see Albrecht Goetze, *The Laws of Eshnunna* (Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research 31; New Haven: Department of Antiquities of the Government of Iraq and the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1956).

¹²⁴ The Samaritan Pentateuch differs in this section, using a different verb for goring (יָכַח and מָכַח instead of נָגַח and נֶגַח). This version also adds elements to make the issue of goring pertinent not only for oxen, but any bovid (בְּהֵמָה). Such expansions are typical of the Samaritan Pentateuch and do not reflect likely original meanings.

root (hence “habitual” in the translation above). The same pattern based on a different root appears in the Hammurabi laws, *nakkāpu*. The pattern is common to many languages, and is not itself reason to posit contact. One might even question contact given the different roots used in Hebrew and Akkadian. The semantics of the verb for goring in Exod 21:35, according to Malul, is a significant factor, however, in showing that some form of contact likely occurred. Whereas throughout the laws of the goring ox in the Book of Exodus the verb for goring is *n-g-ḥ*, in Exod 21:35 it is נָגַח, from the root *n-g-p*, cognate with the root used in the cuneiform sources.

This one occurrence is enough to suggest the possibility of contact. When one considers how the verb in Exod 21:35 is used semantically compared to the other appearances of the verb in the Hebrew Bible, the oddity of Exod 21:35 and the justification for appealing to external data for an explanation of this verse become clear. As seen below, correlating the roots with Aramaic is more difficult; in fact, neither root exists in Syriac, the most abundant lexical source for ancient Aramaic, the root used to translate goring in Hebrew- נָגַח- being translated by Syriac ܢܘܚܐ (*d-q-r*). The Akkadian *n-k-p* is equivalent in semantics with the Hebrew root *n-g-ḥ*. The Hebrew *n-g-p*, however, is different than Hebrew *n-g-ḥ* semantically. The former is more closely related to the conception of striking and hitting and not piercing; moreover, as Malul states the former never has an animal as its subject except in this verse.¹²⁵ The latter root, however, is used for piercing done by animals (as in Deut 33:17) and at times by other entities, such as the horns on an altar (1 Kgs 22:11). Malul claims that the Hebrew נָגַח was a replacement for the Akkadian *n-*

¹²⁵ Malul does not relate these roots to later, rabbinic usage, but in Tannaitic Hebrew it is clear that these roots do not overlap, thereby confirming his thesis. In Tosefta B. Kam. I, 9, נָגַח and נָגַח are listed as separate, distinct activities of goring and striking (or pushing).

k-p, and that נגף in Exod 21:35 was left from the more original Akkadian phrasing by “some careless accident.”¹²⁶

The use of this verb for goring may be due to accident, but it also may shed light on the history of the text and its scribal preservation. The appearance of the root *n-g-p* occurs after a few verses (21:33-34) that may be an interpolation into the laws of the goring ox. It is speculative, but if Malul is correct that the verb in Exod 21:35 shows an underlying Hebrew version with the action of goring matching more closely to the Akkadian laws, then it may be evidence that the switch to נגח happened after the interpolation of Exod 21:33-34 into the section of the law of the goring ox. The scribe or copyist who had this *Vorlage* perhaps did not immediately register the switch of the topic back to the laws of the goring ox after the interpolation, thereby leaving the one odd verb for “to gore” in Exod 21:35.

Another implication that Malul does not explore is the unique morphology of the G-stem of נגח of the Exodus laws and how this morphology may have implications for contact-induced change. The unique semantics of נגף may indicate contact with Akkadian, but the verbal morphology of נגח may as well. In all other attested cases of this root in Biblical Hebrew, throughout a wide range of biblical texts dating to various periods, this root occurs in the D-

¹²⁶ Malul, *The Comparative Method*, 141. The change from /k/ in Akkadian to /g/ in Hebrew might seem somewhat odd. Both consonants are velars, but Hebrew has the sound /k/ in Akkadian, and it is unclear why this consonant would become voiced to /g/ in biblical Hebrew. A similar change, however, from /k/ in Akkadian to /g/ also occurs in Aramaic. In Cowley 30 and 32, the term for temple is אנורה (not היכלא), a loan from Akkadian *ekurru*, itself a Sumerian loanword meaning “temple.” The sound shift from /k/ in Akkadian to /g/ in loans therefore has precedent and is perhaps not that odd since voicing and devoicing of certain consonantal classes such as velars can occur within a language as well as in loans between languages. For more on the phonology of the loan in Exod 21:35, see below.

stem. The only exception is in the laws of the goring ox in the Book of Exodus, in which the verb occurs in the G-stem and with the same semantics as in Akkadian. The use of the verb in Rabbinic Hebrew also confirms this distribution: in Tannaitic texts, the G-stem seems to be used mostly, if not exclusively, in reference to the laws of the goring ox, whereas the D-stem has a much broader application and yet overlaps semantically with the G. This later Hebrew may have inherited this distribution from the biblical texts, and the biblical texts may show this distribution owing to Akkadian influence. If this thesis is correct, the D-stem would represent the regular, transitive usage of the verb in Hebrew, and the G-stem, isolated to the Covenant Code in the Book of Exodus, conforms to the G-stem of the verb for goring in the Akkadian texts, *n-k-p*. This hypothesis is far from certain, but it would make sense of the distribution of verbal morphology in the biblical text and further connect the biblical passage with its source texts, texts that are linked already on literary grounds but would, in this view, also show marked linguistic contact.

Malul has rightly stressed this Akkadian background of the phrase in Exod 21:35 and has provided a thorough analysis establishing this connection between biblical and cuneiform literature.¹²⁷ He leaves unexamined, however, how such a connection was made. It is known that, during the Iron Age, many Akkadian legal texts were beginning to be translated into Aramaic, which was becoming the vernacular of the age (see Chapter 4). As such, Andrew Gross has recently shown the literary indebtedness of these Aramaic legal phrases to contemporaneous, as well as more ancient, Akkadian jurisprudence.¹²⁸ This Akkadian influence, according to his study, is manifest even in later Aramaic traditions. If this close adherence to the Akkadian phrasing holds true for the origin and development of Aramaic law, one might expect to find the

¹²⁷ On the weaknesses of his more general theoretical framework for comparative studies, see Chapter 2.

¹²⁸ Gross, *Continuity and Innovation in the Aramaic Legal Tradition*.

same correspondence between later Aramaic renderings of Exod 21:35 as one finds in the Hebrew and Akkadian texts. In a majority of the cases, this correspondence does not exist.

Targum Onkelos:

וארי יגוף/יגח תור דגבר ית תורא דחבריה וימות ויזבנון ית תורא חיא ויפלגון ית כספיה
ואף ית דמי מותא יפלגון:

“If the ox of a man gores the ox of his companion and it dies, they will sell the live ox and divide its monetary equivalent, and also divide the value of the dead one.”

Targum Jonathan:

וארום יגוף תור ית תורא דחבריה וימות ויזבנון ית תורא חיא ויפלגון ית דמיה ואף ית
דמי מותא יפלגון:

“If an ox gores the ox of his companion and it dies, they will sell the live ox and divide its value, and also they will divide the value of the dead one.”

Targum Neofiti:

וארום יגש תורא דגבר ית תורא דחבריה וימות ויזבנון ית תורא חיה ויפלגון ית כספיה
ואף ית הנייתה דמיתה יפלגון:

“If the ox of a man gores the ox of his companion and it dies, they will sell the live ox and divide its monetary value, and they will also sell the benefit of the dead.”

Relevant for this examination of Exodus are issues relating to the presence of an Aramaic treaty from Sefire as well as the laws mentioned above and in Chapter 4 translated from Akkadian into Aramaic.¹²⁹ The Sefire treaty was discovered from this site in western Syria in 1930 on three stone stelae, dating to the middle of the 8th century. The stelae record a treaty¹³⁰ between Mati'ilu (spelled *Mt'-'l* in the inscription) and Bar-Gayya (spelled *Br-g'yh*). Historical correlation with the Akkadian Neo-Assyrian treaty of Aššur-nērārī, which mentions a *Mati-'ilu* from the same area, confirms many elements of the Aramaic treaty. The debate concerns the stipulations and covenant ideas found in the Book of Exodus and especially whether the Book of Deuteronomy attests to Aramaic influence or whether one can posit direct contact with Akkadian sources.

The issue from a literary perspective is also connected with genre, particularly if these law codes were considered scholarly and religious/ideological texts which, as argued previously, were preserved and maintained in Akkadian in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods. In other words, do the law codes in the Hebrew Bible, such as the Covenant Code in Exodus, represent something closer to real, binding stipulations, in which case mediation through Aramaic may be a possibility (as in the dockets discussed in Chapter 4)? Or are they idealized blends of law and treaty, the type of genre examined in more depth in Chapters 3 and 4 such as the Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon (VTE)? If the Covenant Code is more like the latter, then direct contact with Akkadian is an increased likelihood. An exemplar of VTE was discovered in the Levant, in a Neo-Hittite site where the inhabitants spoke Luwian and Aramaic.¹³¹ This exemplar

¹²⁹ For a summary of information on this inscription, see Fales, "Sefire," 342-45.

¹³⁰ The Aramaic word for treaty, 'd-y, is used. For more on the linguistic nature of this word and its relationship to Akkadian, see Chapter 4.

¹³¹ Lauinger, "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary," 87-123; Fales, "After Ta'yinat: The New Status of Esarhaddon's *ADĒ* for Assyrian Political History," *Revue d'Assyriologie* 106 (2012): 133-58.

was written in Akkadian, a language that, to the best of our knowledge, was not well known at the site. A similar occurrence is the situation of one of Sargon II's stele, made in Mesopotamia, written in Akkadian in cuneiform, but erected in Cyprus. As far as scholars are aware, there was no large scale bilingualism in Akkadian at these sites at all. Yet, due to the symbolic significance of Akkadian cuneiform writing and the political statement that these monuments made to the literati of the local population, which may have been proficient to some degree in Akkadian, the prestige language was chosen to express these texts.

Evidence from comparative studies is indicative that legal features of E were not practiced, and that its law code in Exod 20-23 represents an idealized form of law. Whether or not E was responding specifically to the Code of Hammurabi, it shows clear literary knowledge of ancient Near Eastern law codes, many of which were themselves idealized representations of law and not practiced.¹³² The D source responds to E in a similar fashion as E may be responding to the Code of Hammurabi or some other ancient Near Eastern law code.¹³³ The implications of genre for the discussion of contact are important. An adequate assessment of prestigious languages, languages in which certain types of literature were produced and preserved, is an essential part of examining the literary underpinnings of a scribal contact situation.¹³⁴ If a genre was preserved in one language for ideological reasons, then mapping that ideology and its implications for how other authors could have had access to it is important. In this case, the laws

¹³² Paul, *Studies in the Book of the Covenant in the Light of Cuneiform and Biblical Law* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 18; Leiden: Brill, 1970).

¹³³ For D's use of VTE, see Levinson, "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty as the Source for the Canon Formula in Deut 13:1," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 130 (2010): 337-47; "But You Shall Surely Kill Him!" The Text-Critical and Neo-Assyrian Evidence for MT Deuteronomy 13:10," in *Bundesdokument und Gesetz: Studien zum Deuteronomium* (Edited by G. Braulik; Freiburg: Herder, 1995), 37-63. For D's reaction to the Covenant Code, see Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*.

¹³⁴ For more, see Chapter 3 and 4.

of the goring ox in the Covenant Code are part of a genre of idealized law that has more in common with the Code of Hammurabi than with actual law such as the dockets discussed in Chapter 4 and with real agreements between two political parties such as the Sefire treaty. If this is the case, then the external influence and contact-induced changes evident in the Covenant Code may be ascribed to Akkadian and not an Aramaic intermediary.

This conclusion does not mean that the author(s) of the E source borrowed slavishly from Mesopotamian traditions. As Wright and Levinson have argued, the laws are uncannily similar to ancient Near Eastern law codes, but the theological voicing according to which the Israelite deity instead of the king promulgates the law is a radical innovation by the biblical authors.¹³⁵ The evidence for borrowing in Exod 21:35 reflects conversation between scribes producing prestige texts, even as the rhetoric of the recipient language embeds the foreign elements into native Israelite and Judean theology and traditions.¹³⁶ This conversation, both from a linguistic and a generic perspective, likely involved direct contact of an Israelite or Judean scribe with an Akkadian text.

Determining when this contact occurred in this case involves converging lines of evidence. Wright has argued from a variety of literary factors that the Covenant Code was composed in direct response to the Laws of Hammurapi, and that this contact occurred specifically between 710-640 BCE.¹³⁷ The above analysis provides no basis for proving or disproving this thesis specifically. Whether or not the Covenant Code had such direct interaction with the Laws of Hammurapi is particularly debated, and the Akkadian lexeme *nakāpu* appears

¹³⁵ Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel*, 26-27.

¹³⁶ On the parallel between literary adaptation and grammatical adaptation in borrowing, see below.

¹³⁷ Wright, *Inventing God's Law*, 343-44.

in a variety of Mesopotamian laws pertaining to the goring ox. The lexeme *per se*, therefore, cannot be used to support or undermine Wright's thesis about the Covenant Code's relation to Hammurapi; however, if the word in Exod 21:35 is a loan from Akkadian, Wright's time period for contact could be supported phonologically.

Mankowski has shown that the way in which the voiceless velar /k/ is loaned from Akkadian into Hebrew is "one of the clearest means of discriminating donor dialects...."¹³⁸ Intervocalic /k/ in Neo-Assyrian becomes /g/ in Biblical Hebrew, whereas intervocalic /k/ in Neo-Babylonian remains /k/ in Biblical Hebrew. Examples include the following forms:

Neo-Assyrian > Biblical Hebrew:

šakin > סָכַן, Isa 41:25; Jer 51:23, 28, 57; Ezek 23:6, 12, 23; Ezra 9:2; Neh 2:16;

4:8, 13; 5:7, 17; 7:5; 12:40; 13:11.

issi ekalli > שָׁנַל, Ps 45:10; Neh 2:6.

Neo-Babylonian > Biblical Hebrew:

zakahūtu > זָכַחַת, Job 28:17.

From this perspective, the semantic interference in the root נָגַף (/nāgāp/) could be explained as loaned from Neo-Assyrian /nakāpu/, showing the expected intervocalic voiceless velar interchange. If this analysis is correct, however, it would imply the borrowing from a form not attested in the Akkadian law codes as they appear above, but rather a borrowing from a form of

¹³⁸ Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 155.

the root in which the velar is intervocalic and not doubled. When medial *-kk-* appears in loans from Neo-Assyrian, it remains as in Hebrew אֶכָּר (Isa 61:5; Jer 14:4; 31:24; 51:23; Joel 1:11; Amos 5:16; 2 Chr 26:10, from Akkadian *ikkaru*) or the gemination is lost as in נִכְתָּ (2 Kgs 20:13; Isa 39:2, from Akkadian *nakkamtu*).¹³⁹ In Mankowski's analysis, then, the form of the velar in the law code *ikkipma* in Akkadian would be expected to be retained in any dialect. Given the inflectional morphology of verbs, perhaps the borrowing occurred on the basis of an Akkadian form in which this doubling did not occur (which happens due to the assimilation of the first /n/ in the root). It could also be the case that both *ikkaru* and *nakkamāti* were loaned in the Neo-Babylonian period since both roots are well attested for that period. In this fashion, the phonological distinction disappears in velars of loans in the Neo-Assyrian versus Neo-Babylonian dialects of Akkadian.

VI. *Synthesizing the Data: A Perspective from Contact Linguistics*

As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars have analyzed comparative data in explaining biblical texts since antiquity. The examples examined above have in the past been the object of such

¹³⁹ There are arguments for the word נִכְתָּ coming from either Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian. In Neo-Assyrian, the Akkadian *nakkamtu* became *nakkantu*, which would explain the preservation of the /t/ in the loan in Hebrew (*mt > nt > tt* preserved in the Hebrew form). In Neo-Babylonian, a different phonological development occurs that does not appear in the Hebrew form: *mt > nd*, from which one would expect /d/ in the Hebrew form (נִכְדָּ). Kaufman therefore argues for Neo-Assyrian as the time for the loan. Haupt has another view: the plural form in Neo-Babylonian would be *nakkamāti*; intervocalic /m/ > /w/ in Neo-Babylonian yielding *nakkawāti*; the triphthong *-awā-* commonly reduces to /ō/ in biblical Hebrew, which would produce the loan נִכְתָּ. The LXX manuscript evidence suggests that the Hebrew is a singular, in which case the Neo-Babylonian theory may not be as persuasive; however, as Mankowski points out, IQIsa^a indicates that a plural reading may also have support. Nonetheless, the precise dialect of origin in Akkadian for this loan remains uncertain. See Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 102. It should be noted that Mankowski identifies אֶכָּר as a possible trans-Aramaic loan since the /ā/ in Hebrew has not become /ō/, which one might expect if the Akkadian is *ikkāru* as Mankowski claims; however, the editors of the CAD list the lexemes as *ikkaru*, without /ā/, in which case the root could just as easily be directly from Akkadian. Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 33.

study, but new perspectives and information have been incorporated in this chapter. In some cases, I have suggested new possibilities previously not discussed in order to account for linguistic peculiarities in the biblical text, citing Akkadian and Aramaic linguistic and literary forms. In this section, I connect the data discussed above with a cumulative picture of loans in the Pentateuch as well as contact linguistic theory. The loans in the Pentateuch are analyzed in accordance with their sources in order to develop a borrowing profile for each literary stratum. Doing so allows for the synthesis of linguistic and literary observations in service of drawing historical, political, and sociological conclusions about the nature and source of Israelite and Judean contact with Mesopotamian traditions. Not all issues involved in this contact are certain; however, connecting the biblical data with sociolinguistic models can clarify details and provide a better foundation for exploring how linguistic and literary data reveal political and religious interaction between Israel and Judah, on the one hand, and the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires, on the other. This approach aids in the recovery of the strategies and means through which Israel and Judah crafted their identities in relation to the intellectual currents and political powers that surrounded them.

a. Borrowing Profile

As stated previously, while there have been many lexical studies of borrowing in the Hebrew Bible, none has focused on the diachronic sources that make up various parts of this compiled work. Table 1 lists proposed Akkadian loans mostly from Mankowski and supplemented by the additional suggestions in Hurvitz' review of Mankowski as well as other proposals gathered from various scholarly works. Each source is indicated, as well as where the loans occur elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

Table 2:

Loans in the Pentateuch:			
Verse	Word	Source	Elsewhere in the HB
Gen 2:6	אֵד	J	Also Job 36:27
Gen 4:7	רִבֵּץ	J	Marked syntactically
Gen 6:14	כִּפֹּר	P	
Gen 18:6	סְאִים	J	Also elsewhere (2 Kgs 7:1, 16, 18; 1 Kgs 18:32; 2 Kgs 7:1, 16, 18; 1 Sam 25:18)
Gen 19:11	סְנוּרִים	J	Also 2 Kgs 6:18
Gen 28:12	סְלָם	E	
Gen 30:27	נַחֵשׁ	J	Hurvitz claims this loan could be an Aramaism of Akkadian background (see below)
Gen 35:16	כְּבֵרֵת אֶרֶץ	E	2 Kgs 5:19; also below, Gen 48:7
Gen 36:39	מְטָרֵד	P	Gen 36:39; 1 Chr 1:50
Gen 37:36	סְרִיס	E	
Gen 40:7	Alternate reduction for plural construct of above	E	
Gen 41:43	אֶבְרָךְ	E	Status uncertain; possible loan
Gen 48:7	כְּבֵרֵת אֶרֶץ	P	2 Kgs 5:19; also above, Gen 35:16- in E and P
Gen 49:21	אִמְרֵי שֵׁפֶר	J	Hurvitz claims this phrase is from Akkadian; Rendsburg claims it is an Aramaism (see below)
Gen 49:22	בִּן־פֶּרֶת	J	
Exod 1:11	מִסְכָּנֹת	J	Also in 1 Kgs 9:19; 2 Chr 8:4, 6; 16:4; 17:12
Exod 5:14	שֹׁטֵר	J	Variety
Exod 7:11	מִכְשָׁפִים	P	Variety
Exod 7:19	אָנָם	P	Variety
Exod 8:1	אָנָם	P	Variety
Exod 12:4	מִכֶּסֶׁ	P	Variety
Exod 15:11	נֹרָא תְהִלַּת	J*	In J, from a pre-existing poem
Exod 15:15	אֵילֵי מִוָּאב	J*	See 2 Kgs 24:15 for possible Akkad loan; perhaps explains here, too
Exod 21:35	וִיגֵף	E	

Table 2 (continued)

Exod 22:17	מכשפה	E	
Exod 24:6	אנן	E	Doubling of /g/ reflects Aram, not Akkadian (which doubles the /n/)
Exod 27:3	מזלג	P	See Exod 38:3; Num 4:14; 1 Sam 2:13, 14; 1 Chr 28:17; 2 Chr 4:16
Exod 28:19	שבו	P	See Exod 39:12
Exod 30:23	דרור	P	Could be a loan adaptation (not semantically directly related)
Exod 30:34-38	סמים	P	
Exod 38:3	מזלג	P	
Exod 39:12	שבו	P	See Exod 28:19
Lev 11:7	חזיר	P	See Deut 14:8 below
Lev 11:35	כיר/כירים	P	
Lev 25:10	דרור	P	Isa 61:1; Jer 34:8, 15, 17; Ezek 46:17
Lev 27:23	מכסת	P	See above
Num 4:14	מזלג	P	
Num 7:3	צב	P	Here and Isa 66:20
Num 11:12	אמן	E	Albright suggested meaning like <i>ummânu</i> in Akkadian; Mankowski disagrees
Num 31:28	מִקְס	P	
Num 31:37	מִקְס	P	
Num 31:38	מִקְס	P	
Num 31:39	מִקְס	P	
Num 31:40	מִקְס	P	
Num 31:41	מִקְס	P	
Deut 1:15	שטר	D	Variety
Deut 8:9	מִסְכָּנֹת	D	Could be the case in Exod 1:11 that "storehouses" is actually this word, "forced labor"; see below

Table 2 (continued)

Deut 14:8	חזיר	D	See elsewhere (esp. Lev 11:7). The pattern (with pretonic reduction of the vowel) and even cultural significance could both be indication of Aram influence; but, given propensity of pretonic short /u/ to reduce in Hebrew, could just as easily be Akkadloan. Status uncertain
Deut 18:10	מכשף	D	See Exod 7:11 above; could be that the loan was dysphemistic, used to offer negative connotation
Deut 32:17	שרים	D	Also Ps 106:37; status uncertain

By source, the loans are mostly concentrated in the P source. J and E contain approximately the same number, and the D source contains the smallest number of certain loans (see more below). The list above is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather an initial glimpse into language contact from a diachronic perspective. As is clear from the list, many of the loans are not unique to the Pentateuchal sources. The examples analyzed above from P and E (Gen 6:14 and Exod 21:35, respectively) are unique in that they have a marked relationship with prestige texts from Mesopotamia and are not found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible or any known dialect of Hebrew.¹⁴⁰ The exegetical discussion for each proposed loan therefore becomes more

¹⁴⁰ Another proposal for connecting a Hebrew lexeme with a prestigious Akkadian source text appears in Eckart Frahm's "Warum die Brüder Böses planten Überlegungen zu einer alten *Crux* in Asarhaddons 'Ninive-A'-Inscription," in *Philologisches und Historisches zwischen Anatolien und Sokotra: Analecta Semitica in Memoriam Alexander Sima* (Werner Arnold, et al, eds.; Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2009), 27-49. Frahm makes the connection between the literary motif in Esarhaddon's Nineveh Prism A, which tells of Esarhaddon's rise to power despite being the youngest son and the jealousy of his older brothers, and Gen 37:1-11, the story of Joseph where sibling rivalry is also important. Both stories use the root *q-n-*' (*ri-id-du qí-nu* UGU ŠEŠ.MEŠ-*ia it-ta-bik-ma* in Nin. A1, i 23, ויקנאו בו אחיו in Gen 37:11); however, given the facts that this root is common in both languages and that it shows no unique shading of meanings in either passage, it is not so literarily marked as to prove a connection, Frahm's thesis is intriguing and possible, but difficult to trace beyond the remarks that he provides. As further literary context, both stories also involve the father rebuking the youngest son for his aspirations, yet retaining affection despite this rebuke:

important. Given the sociolinguistic background of the source texts from Mesopotamia as well as the background of the political genres for Exod 15:11, both the interpretive issues as well as the sociohistorical and sociolinguistic discussion from Chapter 4 are particularly important for understanding these contact-induced changes and the language situation in the ancient Near East that gave rise to them.

b. The D source and Loans

Perhaps the most remarkable fact apparent from the table above is the rarity of loans in the D source. This observation is surprising given the proposed literary influence from VTE in the formation of this source, leading many scholars (also with some reference to Josiah's reforms

Nin. A1, i 29-31: *pa-áš-ru lib-bi AD-ia šá la DINGIR.MEŠ ú-ze-en-nu-u KI-ia šap-la-a-nu lib-ba-šu re-e-mu ra-ši-šu-ma a-na e-peš LUGAL-ti-ia šit-ku-na IGI.II-šu*, “They alienated the well-meaning heart of my father against me, against the will of the gods, (but) deep down he was compassionate and his eyes were permanently fixed on my kingship” (Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)* [Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011], 12)

Gen 37:10-11: וְנִעַרְבּוּ אִבְנָיו...וְאִבְנָיו שָׁמַר אֶת־הַדָּבָר, “His father rebuked him...yet his father kept the matter in mind.”

Nonetheless, there is no sign of clear linguistic contact, and these motifs could have arisen in both sources without literary contact, as enticing as the connections are. Moreover, Gen 37:9-10 clearly presupposes that Rachel, Joseph's mother, is still alive, which is only true in J (Baden, *Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, 72). It is also the case that the dreams, as in Gen 37:10, and the tunic motif are exclusive to J (Baden, *Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, 39). In contrast, Gen 37:11b belongs to E. In Gen 37:3, Jacob loves Joseph more than his brothers since Joseph was a son of Jacob's old age. Jacob gives Joseph a tunic in Gen 37:3b as a sign of such affection, and Gen 37:4-10 recounts the brothers' observation of their father's love for Joseph and the dream episode based upon which the brothers intensify their hatred and Jacob rebukes Joseph. The brothers' jealousy in Gen 37:11a is a continuation of this story of rivalry. The statement in Gen 37:11b that Jacob “observed the matter” (שָׁמַר אֶת־הַדָּבָר) is unexpected and incongruous as part of the preceding story, but Gen 37:11b makes perfect sense when connected with Gen 37:2 in which Joseph tattles on his brothers and Jacob (in 37:11b) keeps a note of it. Therefore, Gen 37:11 belongs to a different story, namely the E source. Since Gen 37:10 and Gen 37:11 belong to different sources, they cannot be part of a unified literary reflection of Esarhaddon's Nineveh Prism A. For this source division, see Schwartz, “How the Compiler of the Pentateuch Worked: The Composition of Genesis 37,” in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (edited by Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Peterson; Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 152; Boston: Brill, 2012), 263-78.

in 622 BCE) to posit a 7th century BCE date for this source.¹⁴¹ This profile for the D source has a number of implications.

First, the correlation of loans in D relative to other sources is significant. D does not contain many independent traces of Akkadian loans. There may be exceptions, as in Deut 32:17¹⁴² and, perhaps most notably, in the rhetoric of “setting the name” through the use of the root שָׁכַן, which has been proposed to be evidence of a contact-induced change.¹⁴³ Nonetheless, given that the source has identifiable literary traces of contact with Mesopotamian treaty traditions one might ask why D does not also show independent linguistic evidence of contact with Akkadian.

Two arguments may be raised against this interpretation. First, although D’s literary form shows the features of a treaty, the content of the narrative and laws appears to be the product of an inner-Israelite debate concerning Yahweh’s legal vision and revelation for an audience well-versed and concerned with prestige texts written in Hebrew. As discussed previously in this chapter, the authors or compilers of D used both J and E as their source texts. The main rhetorical thrust in D is an attempt to subvert the legal vision in E, particularly the law of sacrifice.¹⁴⁴ This undermining of E’s permissive attitude toward sacrifice entails a working in D of other legal stipulations in E. For example, in E any altar can serve as a sanctuary for a suspected murderer; in D, there is only one city where sacrifice is permissible, and as such the

¹⁴¹ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*; R. Frankena, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy,” *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 14 (1965): 122-154.

¹⁴² Deuteronomy 32:1-43 is part of a poem that likely predates D but was taken up by D and incorporated into this source (Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, 137-38).

¹⁴³ Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: l’sakkēn šmô šām in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*. See, however, Morrow’s rebuttal of Richter’s thesis (“‘To Set the Name’ in the Deuteronomistic Centralization Formula,” 365-83).

¹⁴⁴ Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*.

law of sanctuary is reimagined (instead of an altar, a suspected murderer can flee to a designated city).¹⁴⁵ In rewriting J and especially E, D reuses terms, a practice that at times cites significant phrases lemmatically for the purposes of reworking its source texts for its own ends. A number of the Akkadian loans in D can be attributed to this lexical reuse.

D and E share two Akkadian loans. First, in Deut 1:15 the title שׁוֹטֵר appears in the retelling of the story of the appointing of elders. This section of Deuteronomy conflates two elder appointment stories, both in E.¹⁴⁶ In this particular context, the story from Numbers 11 is retold in Deut 1:15, and that retelling includes the Akkadian loanword in the source text. For D, therefore, the lexeme is simply part of the script of the story that the authors use, and the borrowing has, for D's purposes, simply entered into the Hebrew lexicon. The same could be true for the loan of מִכְשֵׁף in Deut 18:10, though in this case Deut 18:10 is not a simple retelling of a story or law in E. In Deut 18:10 a list of prohibited activities for accessing the divine is given, a list that does not have a precise correlation in E. Nonetheless, the proscription of sorcery, מִכְשֵׁף, in Exod 22:17 could mean that Deut 18:10 used this term from its source text in E; however, given this term's existence in P, a source independent from D (neither betrays knowledge of the other), it is more likely that the lexeme in Deut 18:10 was, for the authors or compilers of this text, simply part of the Hebrew lexicon whatever its origin may have been.

¹⁴⁵ Stackert, "Why does Deuteronomy Legislate Cities of Refuge? Asylum in the Covenant Collection (Exodus 21:12-14) and Deuteronomy (19:1-13)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125 (2006): 23-49.

¹⁴⁶ For more details, see Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 82-102.

The example of the loan in Deut 8:9, however, is more complicated. The lexeme **מִסְכֵּנִת** could come from the well-known Akkadian *muškēnum*, meaning “a poor person.”¹⁴⁷ In this case, the word in Deut 8:9 means something like “poverty,” the verse being a description of the abundance of food that will await the Israelites in the Promised Land if they are obedient in contrast to such poverty. The verse is surrounded by warnings not to forget Yahweh’s deliverance of Israel from the land of Egypt where they were slaves (8:11-14) as well as reminders of the deity’s provisions of manna in the wilderness for the Israelites to eat (8:3 and 16). The manna story only appears in the J and P sources (Exodus 16), and it seems that this section in Deuteronomy is borrowing from J specifically.¹⁴⁸ If this is the case, then the loan in Deut 8:9 might find a parallel in Exod 1:11, which is from the J source. In Exod 1:11, the Israelites build **מִסְכְּנוֹת עָרֵי** for Pharaoh. As Speiser pointed out, the word **מִסְכְּנוֹת** in this context is usually translated as “storehouse,” also a loan from Akkadian; however, as Speiser argued this word does not fit the context.¹⁴⁹ Rather, a meaning for the word that deals with Israelite hardship seems more appropriate, and as a result Speiser suggested that **מִסְכְּנוֹת** in Exod 1:11 was related to the abstract *muškēnūtu*, meaning “cities (built by) forced labor for Pharaoh.” Against this reading, as Mankowski points out, is the fact that the root in Akkadian never means “forced labor.”¹⁵⁰ However, there are some Akkadian texts with close meanings, despite

¹⁴⁷ This word is cognate to Arabic *maskin*, and from Arabic the word was loaned into French *mesquin*, meaning “base, shabby, paltry.”

¹⁴⁸ There is no indication that D knows P, though the phrase **זָכַר אֶת נִקְבָּהּ** in Deut 4:16 has occasioned some comment about the possibility that D was expanded on the basis of P (Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 321-22; Baden, *Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, 289 n 11).

¹⁴⁹ Speiser, “The *muškēnum*,” *Orientalia* 27 (1958): 27.

¹⁵⁰ Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 99.

Mankowski's protest.¹⁵¹ Moreover, the image of cities built by the enslaved Israelites for the Pharaoh does fit the context of Exod 1:11 well. If this meaning underlies the word in Exod 1:11, then the rhetoric in Deut 8:9 could be referencing J's description of the hardship in Egypt (mentioned later in the same chapter in Deuteronomy) as a foil for the abundance of life in the Promised land (subject to the obedience of the Israelites). This suggestion remains uncertain, however, given that Deut 8:9 is not part of a retelling of Exod 1:11, as much as Deuteronomy 8 may borrow from J generally.

Second, the language of D shows evidence of the reuse of key words in E's legislation, even as it couches strategic phrasing in a literary form borrowed from Akkadian treaty traditions. Perhaps the best example is D's use of the definite article in Exod 20:24.¹⁵² In the Exodus passage, the definite article takes a distributive function, which is a rare use of this particle. The phrase **בכל-המקום** would typically mean "in all the place." In this context the definite article, however, is distributive, meaning "in any place." This construction occurs infrequently, but it appears in Gen 20:13 and Deut 11:24. Gesenius claims that Exod 20:24 is simply a later, dogmatic correction of the text to align it with the theology of Deuteronomy; however, the examples in Gen 20:13 and Deut 11:24 have no such need for ideological alignment yet require a distributive function of the definite article. Finally, the quotation of Deut 11:24 in Josh 1:3, in which the latter does not have the definite article yet has the same distributive meaning, is,

¹⁵¹ For example, Speiser cites a Middle Bronze age example in which the Hittite king Suppiluliuma warns a vassal that disobedience will result in the vassal being put in the state of a subject peasant (*ilāni*^{MES} *annūtum ... muškinnūta u errēšūta liddinkunūši*, "may these gods ... reduce you to the status of subjected peasants," "The *muškēnum*," 26).

¹⁵² Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*, 32-33.

according to Levinson, evidence that כָּל (“all”) plus the definite article can have a distributive function.¹⁵³

In both this example and throughout the legal revision of the E source, the language of D reflects established usage: the authors or compilers of D use the language of this source text to cast their ideological agenda. While the vehicle through which this vision is presented is of Assyrian origin, namely the treaty genre, and while this literary form might lead one to expect more linguistic traces of contact-induced change, a source-critical approach to D and its source text explains this phenomenon well.

c. *Contact Zone*

One of the major factors in a contact linguistic study is establishing a contact zone. This idea has major implications for biblical studies and theories about Israelite and Judean contact with Mesopotamian literature. Often languages in biblical studies are conceived of as reified entities, as though abstract linguistic systems known as “Hebrew,” “Aramaic,” and “Akkadian” had autonomous interactions and exchanges. Yet languages are only spoken or written by people, and people live in space and time and have vested interests in communication. Politics, power relationships, and national identity are all bound up in the use of language. Thinking in terms of regional zones shifts the discussion from hypothetical conceptions and abstract understanding of language to the idea that language is used by people in space and time, and that political, social, and religious realities shape how language is used in that space and in that time.

Contact zones can be distinguished from another concept called a linguistic area. Broadly defined, a linguistic area is when linguistic features are shared over time causing some form of

¹⁵³ Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*, 32-33.

convergence or structural change (such as metatypy) due to contact. The concept of a contact zone is more general, and highlights the regional significance of language contact in which a variety of contact-induced changes can occur. While it is certainly the case that Assyrian power extended to this area during the composition of at least some of the sources that comprise the first five books of Hebrew Bible, no such isomorphism in the Pentateuch exists towards either Akkadian or Aramaic in Biblical Hebrew. The southern Levant during this time, therefore, is not part of a linguistic area. The expectation that contact with Akkadian can only be shown if there is widespread morpho-syntactic influence in Biblical Hebrew or if there is evidence of massive cuneiform literacy in the Levant at this time does not mean, however, that there was not a contact zone. Moreover, these assumptions reveal a misunderstanding of what sort of changes are possible even if the Levant was not part of a linguistic area.

Additionally, it has often been assumed that Aramaic would have been the means of transmission of these Mesopotamian traditions to the Levant throughout the existence of ancient Israel and Judah, and would therefore have provided the vehicle for the transmission of these traditions into the Hebrew Bible. Implicit in this view is that Aramaic has to be the source since no archives of cuneiform literature or signs of cuneiform scribal activity have been discovered in the Levant after the Late Bronze Age, i.e., at the time when the Hebrew Bible began to develop. Such a deposit of Akkadian does not need to exist in the Levant, however, if one shifts the geographic focus of the contact to Mesopotamia itself. As argued in Chapter 4, the relationship between Akkadian and Aramaic was itself dynamic in this region in the Iron Age down into the Persian period, with certain features, both linguistic and literary, being adapted, changed, and borrowed in both languages over time, depending on the intensity and nature of contact. In

similar fashion, the authors of the Hebrew Bible reveal a dynamic process of contact with the Mesopotamian empires linguistically and literarily. Conceptualizing language contact in terms of geopolitical boundaries and sociological and sociolinguistic realities allows one to place the linguistic features that are transferred from one language to another in a broader perspective. Such a geographical conception of contact through a broader understanding of contact zones can also refine our understanding of the motivations behind borrowing. Linguistic and literary contact between the Levant and Mesopotamia at this time may therefore have been real, even if the language of the biblical authors did not undergo the same kinds of contact-induced changes as the Arameans kingdoms to the north and east.

d. Agentivity and Motivations for Borrowing

As discussed in Chapter 3, since the 1980s and 1990s contact linguists have studied the notion of agency, and particularly whether or not one can determine a broad scheme of contact-induced phenomena on the basis of attested sociolinguistic data. In other words, the linguistic data transferred from one language to another will differ depending on whether the recipient language (RL) or source language (SL) is the agent of contact. Even amongst those linguists who agree on this basic division of data, many other questions remain. I presented a more systematic and thorough presentation of the linguistic theory in Chapter 3. For the purposes of this chapter, however, the basic distinction between RL agentivity and SL agentivity suffices to explain the biblical data presented above.

In the scenario of RL agentivity, the first linguistic categories that tend to get borrowed are lexical items and loosely embedded structural features, and only in more intense cases of

contact does borrowing involve morphology and syntax. In the case of SL agentivity, the elements transferred tend to be primarily syntax and morphology (more deeply embedded linguistic features) and, only in more extreme cases, lexemes. In all the cases of language contact described above, the data are consistent with borrowing, in other words RL (in this case, Hebrew) agentivity.¹⁵⁴

This scheme clarifies the underlying processes of this contact in Israel and Judah. Another term used for RL agentivity is “language maintenance,” signifying that while borrowing occurs in contact situations, it does not influence the identity or basic structure of the language that does the borrowing. This outcome means that borrowers imitate the foreign item, but then embed that contact change into the framework of the RL. This process is as true linguistically as it is literarily: literary borrowing between the authors of the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian literature does not mean that the Hebrew Bible is any less Israelite or Judean, as some former critical scholars supposed.¹⁵⁵ Rather, according to the theory of borrowing and language maintenance, speakers and writers who borrow foreign features have the agency to mold both language and literature to native concerns and concepts. The linguists referenced in Chapter 3 refer to this process of embedding linguistic features into native languages as a twofold process of RL agentivity: imitation of the foreign word, phrase, or linguistic feature, and then adaptation into the matrix of the RL. In SL agentivity, also called “language shift” or “imposition,” the process is the reverse: adaptation of the RL to the SL matrix is the primary means of contact-induced change. For the biblical record, it is the former, not the latter, situation that occurs

¹⁵⁴ The case of Hebrew mapping the verbal morphology in Exod 21:28-36 does not break this observation. The Hebrew may be using the G-stem as in Akkadian, but the G-stem in Exod 21:28-36 is still molded according to standard biblical Hebrew morphology.

¹⁵⁵ See the debate between Delitzsch and Gunkel presented in Chapter 2.

linguistically relative to Akkadian as the above-cited data indicate (the situation with Aramaic in later periods is different). As a result, those scholars (such as Morrow) who demand that morpho-syntactic features of Akkadian be present in Biblical Hebrew in order for there to have been direct contact misunderstand the nature of how contact-induced changes occur. Literarily, linguistic items that are borrowed are incorporated into the basic narrative and rhetoric of each biblical author.

Moreover, language agency is a dynamic process. In other words, contact situations change over time, involving different degrees of intensity and different languages as underlying sociological, political, and religious factors also change. As seen in Chapter 4, social changes over time are evident in the contact-induced changes visible in Akkadian and Aramaic, and the borrowings, as such, vary according to the extent of bilingualism and the different social situations. This dynamism has often been overlooked in biblical scholarship, especially in statements that too broadly and statically propose that Israel and Judah only had access to Mesopotamian literary traditions through direct contact with Akkadian or through Aramaic intermediation. The data discussed above suggest that the process of contact was much more dynamic, involving stages of less intense contact with Akkadian, with specific influence from law codes and other scholarly literature on the E source and the flood traditions in the P source, with Aramaic mediation and more intense Aramaic contact in later periods.¹⁵⁶ By the time of Second Isaiah (discussed in Chapter 6), writing after a tragic conquest situation during, or after, exile in the Babylonian heartland, a different nature and intensity of contact occurred. The data from the Pentateuch in this chapter indicate that the contact situation between Hebrew and

¹⁵⁶ This more intense contact resulted in Aramaic portions of Ezra and Daniel during this later period.

Akkadian was much closer to the contact-induced changes from Akkadian to Aramaic examined in Chapter 4. The situation over time changed, particularly as Judean exiles lived in Babylon during a time of intense language contact, as is well attested in the Murashu archives, which date to the fifth century BCE (Persian period) and consist of Aramaic and Akkadian documents from the house of a Jewish family in Babylonia.

An understanding of contact as a dynamic process allows for each author of the various biblical sources and books to have experienced a contact situation appropriate to (as best one can reconstruct) the time periods in which they wrote. Incidentally, this observation also has implications for comparative studies. As Hays has pointed out in a recent methodological essay, form criticism has too often focused on matching texts from the biblical books to texts from ancient Near Eastern cultures from a genre perspective, with possibilities of contact addressed subsequently. He makes the claim regarding the apostle Paul's use of the Hebrew Bible: the materials that Paul utilizes and to which he alludes are not of the same genre as his epistles, even though the implicit, and at times explicit, expectations of form critics dictate that matching and correlating similar genres is the appropriate means for discussing comparisons and contact.¹⁵⁷ In the case of P and E, such genre similarity is apparent: the authors of both Gen 6:14 (P) and Exod 21:35 (E) used terms borrowed from literary genres in Akkadian similar to those of their own narratives (flood story and law code). Yet the biblical authors fully incorporate linguistic and literary borrowing into native Israel and Judean narratives that diverge from their Mesopotamian sources. To anticipate the discussion in Chapter 6, linguistic data presented in the Book of Isaiah show that while the authors write in the literary forms of a prophet, the forms borrowed originate

¹⁵⁷ Christopher B. Hays, "Echoes of the Ancient Near East? Intertextuality and the Comparative Study of the Old Testament," 35.

from a literature that does not correlate to a prophetic genre. A more nuanced and accurate picture of language contact takes into account the rhetoric of each author and allows for the argument of each writer to determine more or less likely textual references and contact situations.

Indeed, the motivations for borrowing words and phrases are as dynamic as are the social needs and issues of the writers of the biblical texts. For the Priestly authors, they construct a narrative of the history of Israel from the beginning of the world to the verge of entrance to the Promised Land. Central in this story is the construction of the Tabernacle and the laws that Moses receives therein. Of special interest are the laws concerning sacrifice, which are to take place only on the altar at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. This Priestly focus drives much of the narrative (none of the patriarchs in P construct an altar for sacrifice since sacrifice should only happen in the Tent of Meeting under Priestly auspices) including the flood narrative: secular slaughter for meat is granted after the flood, but not sacrifice since sacrifice will only be possible after the giving of the law at Sinai. In this narrative, P also shows a special interest in the orderly construction of space. It is for this reason that the creation of the world is described in such an orderly fashion in Gen 1:1-2:4a, as are the instructions for the building of the Tabernacle in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40. Yet there is no archaeological or biblical evidence that ancient Israelites had much, if any, knowledge of shipbuilding. Given the fact that the priestly authors told a flood story as part of its history, and given the interest in details of construction, it would make sense for the authors of P to need to borrow the instructions for the building of a large ship such as the ark. This is a need-based borrowing, one of the major categories of contact-induced change under RL agentivity that linguists have discussed. Although Hebrew has another word for

“pitch,” **הַמָּר**, and even though this word was used for a marine sealant in the E source for the basket in which Moses was placed, the narrators of P use **כִּפֹּר** because it is used in the construction of a large ship. The Israelites and Judeans would have had little interaction with such structures except from their knowledge of the flood stories of other cultures. Given their geographical isolation from the coast and ports for ships,¹⁵⁸ they needed to borrow terms to describe the elements involved in the construction of the ark.¹⁵⁹ Access to such texts could have been the result of oral or written legacy from the Middle Bronze Age, during which time there is evidence of Gilgamesh having been copied at Megiddo. Precisely when such borrowing occurred is impossible to know for certain. Given the formation of the Pentateuchal sources during the Neo-Assyrian period, when Israelites and Assyrians were coming into contact and when the Standard Babylonian version of the Gilgamesh Epic was a widely copied text in Mesopotamia, written contact during the eighth century BCE or later cannot be ruled out.

Borrowing in E and Deutero-Isaiah is different. In each of these sources, the borrowing involves a broader argument. As Wright and Levinson have claimed, the Covenant Code is given by the Israelite God, which is a major innovation relative to the other law codes of Mesopotamia. In the latter, the deities (such as Shamash, the Babylonian god of justice) give a form of inspiration to the kings, who then dictate the laws. This is a subtle argument on the part of the E source: God is the king of Israel, and Israel needs to follow God’s justice and not the whims of earthly political figures. The borrowing in Exod 21:35 is not itself a linguistic datum that

¹⁵⁸ Late Bronze Age Ugarit and Iron Age Philistia and Phoenicia would have been the major maritime centers. Indeed, the Phoenician city of Byblos was called by that name because it was the center of importing papyrus into the Levantine region. Given the need for papyrus as a writing material, the port city was called Byblos based on the Greek βιβλίος, which is in turn the basis for the English word “Bible.”

¹⁵⁹ Such a marine sealant was not a natural resource available in the Levant, whereas this material was abundantly available in Mesopotamia.

supports the rhetoric of the E source, but rather seems to be a scribal oversight that reveals a contact with the very Mesopotamian sources against which the authors of E are arguing.

In a similar fashion, First Isaiah and Second Isaiah, like the E source, are rhetorically shaped relative to Mesopotamian literature, religion, and society directly, arguing against the enticements of these pagan cultures. Each Isaianic source argues for a different vision of Israel, which is, in the first case, under the shadow of Neo-Assyrian threat or, in the second case, returning (or perhaps has already returned) to its land in the Persian era. The texts against which it is engaged involve Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian royal propaganda, subverting these themes in its argument that Israel and Judah should not be too involved in the political world of these empires; instead, they should place complete reliance in their own deity. In other words, these authors borrow the prestige of the Mesopotamian texts in order to subvert them and challenge the authority of the empires.¹⁶⁰

In each case examined in this chapter, the motivations vary according to the situations of the authors, and these motivations in turn qualify how we understand the nature of contact. As presented in Chapter 3, contact linguists discuss need, prestige, and simplification (in convergence) as motivations for borrowing. While these categories work broadly for each of the cases mentioned above, deeper literary and rhetorical analysis proves beneficial for understanding why a borrowing was needed or perceived as prestigious, and what, in turn, each author did to such borrowings within their individual works.

¹⁶⁰ This stance towards Mesopotamian empires is nuanced in Isaiah 44-45, in which Cyrus king of Persia is welcomed and given divine legitimacy as a “messiah.” For a comprehensive historical study of Isaiah and the various empires and periods during which the book was composed, see Andrew T. Abernathy, et al, eds, *Isaiah and Imperial Context: The Book of Isaiah in the Times of Empire* (Pickwick Publications: Eugene, Oregon, 2013).

e. *Orality and Writing*

It is not intended to argue that Israelites and Judeans who composed and edited the Pentateuch had no knowledge of Aramaic. The regional and geographic factors, as well as the political alliances between Aramean states and Israel, indicate that some knowledge of Aramaic existed in Israel and Judah. The geography and the motivations for borrowing Aramaic in the Pentateuch may converge in how characters in the biblical narrative from foreign lands in Aram or the north generally are described and quoted using Aramaic-like features.

Rendsburg has written extensively on the “foreign factor” in biblical texts, and all of his arguments will not be rehearsed here.¹⁶¹ The concern is the use specifically of Aramaic features in Biblical Hebrew texts from the Pentateuch. He finds that most of these features are grouped around the speech of foreigners, particularly those from Aram such as Laban. Rendsburg labels this device as style-switching, though it overlaps significantly with code switching in linguistic study. His article is significant not only for identifying this strategy as a way for biblical authors to render the speech patterns of foreigners, but also how such switching betrays knowledge of Aramaic. Examples include the following:¹⁶²

From Genesis 24:

Gen 24:3, 7 (J): אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם, “God of heaven”¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Rendsburg, “Aramaic-like Features in the Pentateuch,” *Hebrew Studies* 47 (2006): 163-76.

¹⁶² Some of the following examples are “Aramaic-like” without having a Hebrew correlations and identified as such because of their presence in other Aramaic texts, whereas examples

¹⁶³ The phrase only appears in these verses in pre-exilic biblical texts. The post-exilic texts are Ezra 1:2; Neh 1:4, 5; 2:4, 20; and Jonah 1:9. The phrase also appears in Achaemenid era Aramaic texts (אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיָא) such as Cowley 30, 32, and 38.

Gen 24:3 (J): **לֹא תִקַּח**, “that you not take”¹⁶⁴

Gen 24:17 (J): **הִנְמוּאֵינִי** (from **נָמַא**), “let me drink”¹⁶⁵

Gen 24:20 (J): **וְתָעַר** (from **עָרָה**), “she (quickly) poured”¹⁶⁶

Gen 24:21 (J): **מִשְׁתַּאֵה** (from **שָׂאָה**), “(the man was) gazing”¹⁶⁷

Gen 24:38 (J): **אִם־לֹא**, “but rather”¹⁶⁸

Gen 24:53 (J): **מִגְדָּנוֹת**, “choice gifts”¹⁶⁹

From Genesis 30-31:

Gen 30:11 (J): **גֹּדַר**, “fortune”

Gen 30:20 (J): **זָבַד**, “supply, give”¹⁷⁰

Gen 30:35 (J): **תִּישִׂים**, “he-goat”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁴ Rendsburg claims that this is a calque from Aramaic **לֹא־תִקַּח**, instead of the Hebrew **אִם**, in the oath formula.

¹⁶⁵ The translation renders the permissive use of the causative stem. One would expect Hebrew **שָׁקַח** in the causative stem, as used elsewhere in this chapter.

¹⁶⁶ Either **צָקַח** or **רִיקַח** in the causative stem are standard in biblical Hebrew.

¹⁶⁷ Rendsburg lists this as an Aramaic-like feature; however, Westermann has proposed that the root is really from **שָׂאָה**, a common Hebrew verb meaning “to regard, gaze,” the form in Gen 24:21 being a text-critical error (*Genesis 12-36*, 467).

¹⁶⁸ The expected Hebrew is **כִּי אִם**.

¹⁶⁹ One would expect **מִגְדָּנוֹת** in Hebrew.

¹⁷⁰ Instead of Hebrew **נָתַן**.

Gen 30:37 (J): לֹזֶז, “almond”¹⁷²

Gen 30:38 (J): וַיִּהְיוּ מְנוּנִים, “they conceived”¹⁷³

Gen 30:38, 41 (J): רִהְטִים, “trough”¹⁷⁴

Gen 31:7, 41 (J): הִחֲלִף and מְנִים, “exchange” and “times,” respectively¹⁷⁵

Gen 31:9 (J): וַיִּצַל, “he took away”¹⁷⁶

Gen 31:16 (J): הִצִּיל, “he took away”

Gen 31:23 (J): וַיִּדְבֹק, “he overtook”¹⁷⁷

Gen 31:28 (J): לֹא נִשְׁתַּנִּי, “you did not allow me”¹⁷⁸

Gen 31:39 (J): וַנִּגְבַּתִּי, “I was robbed”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷¹ While Rendsburg is correct that this noun is more frequent in dialects of Aramaic than in Hebrew, an Akkadian cognate also exists (*taššu*) and the noun may not be an Aramaic-like feature.

¹⁷² Instead of biblical Hebrew שָׁקַד.

¹⁷³ The verb has an Aramaic 3rd person feminine plural form, which in biblical Hebrew would be וַתִּהְיוּ מְנוּנִים.

¹⁷⁴ This noun shows the expanding *heh* characteristic of Aramaic forms of Hebrew verbs, particularly with the root here, *r-h-t*, which corresponds to Hebrew *r-w-ṣ*.

¹⁷⁵ In Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, this verb הִחֲלִף is used with the sense of “exchange” for money and wages, whereas the only sense of the verb in the Hebrew Bible along these lines is in this verse. The word מְנִים only occurs in these verses in the Hebrew Bible, but the root is common for “to count” in Aramaic (much more so than in Hebrew).

¹⁷⁶ This verb usually means “to save” in biblical Hebrew.

¹⁷⁷ One would expect וַיִּשָּׁן in biblical Hebrew, as in Gen 31:25.

¹⁷⁸ The verb נִשְׁתַּנִּי usually means “to leave” in biblical Hebrew. This use of the verb is a calque from Aramaic שִׁבַּק.

From Genesis 49:

Gen 49:14 (J): גֵרֶם, “bone”¹⁸⁰

Gen 49:21 (J): אֲמֵרֵי־שֹפָר, “lambs of beauty”¹⁸¹

From Numbers 22-24:

Num 23:7 (E): הַרְרֵי, “mountains”¹⁸²

Num 23:9 (E): יִתְחַשֵּׁב and צְרִיִם, “be considered” and “mountains”¹⁸³

Num 23:10 (E): מוֹת יֹשְׁרִים, “death of the upright”¹⁸⁴

Num 23:23 (E): נִחֵשׁ, “divination”¹⁸⁵

Num 24:6 (E): נִטְוֶה, “stretched out”¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁹ Rendsburg analyzes this form as an inflected participle, as occurs in later Jewish Palestinian Aramaic; however, one could easily reanalyze the form as a feminine passive participle with the *yod compagnis* attached. Enclitic *yod* could be attached to the head of a construct phrase (Robertson, “The Morphemes –y (–ī) and –w (–ō) in Biblical Hebrew,” 211-23). In this case, this form would not count as an Aramaic-like feature.

¹⁸⁰ In place of Hebrew עֲצָם.

¹⁸¹ In Hebrew, “lamb” is usually שֶׁה, not אֲמֵר, and “beauty” is יָפָה.

¹⁸² This noun has a plural form with the reduplicated ר, much as occurs with the noun עָם which in biblical Aramaic and late biblical Hebrew (influence by Aramaic) also has reduplicated forms in the plural (עַמְמֵיָא in biblical Aramaic and עַמְמִים [Neh 9:22] and עַמְמֵי [Neh 9:24]).

¹⁸³ The t-stem of יִתְחַשֵּׁב functions as a passive voice as in Aramaic. The noun צְרִיִם in the a-line of the bicolon for “mountains” would typically be הַרְרִים in Hebrew. Rendsburg also argues that the Aramaic cognate טוֹרִים is evoked in this verse: the older spelling of Aramaic ט /t/ was צ /s/.

¹⁸⁴ Rendsburg argues (following M. Kister) that this phrase is the opposite of מוֹת לַחַה in the second Aramaic Neirab inscription.

¹⁸⁵ The more typical biblical Hebrew root is קָסַם.

Num 24:7 (E): מַלְכָּת, “kingdom”¹⁸⁷

From Deuteronomy 33:

Deut 33:14 (J): יָרַחִים, “months”¹⁸⁸

Deut 33:15 (J): הַרְרֵי, “mountains”¹⁸⁹

Deut 33:21 (J): וַיָּתָא, “he came”¹⁹⁰

Deut 33:23 (J): דְּרָוּם, “south”¹⁹¹

Though unexplored in his article, it is also significant that this switching into Aramaic-like features in the chapters that are the focus of his study mostly occurs in the J source with some switching occurring in E. Rendsburg claims that much of Deuteronomy does not contain the same switching with Aramaic features, a claim consistent with the comments above regarding D

¹⁸⁶ The *yod* is retained in this III-weak verb as in Aramaic but unlike Hebrew.

¹⁸⁷ The word מַלְכָּת is the Aramaic word for “kingdom,” whereas in Hebrew it is מַמְלָכָה.

¹⁸⁸ Rendsburg argues that this word is an Aramaic-like feature since biblical Hebrew would normally have חֳדָשִׁים. If the Gezer Calendar is viewed as Hebrew, in which יָרַח means “month,” then this word cannot count as an Aramaic like feature. As has been shown, however, the Gezer Calendar is more plausibly Phoenician. See Pardee, “A Brief Case for Phoenician as the Language of the ‘Gezer Calendar,’” in *Linguistic Studies in Phoenician* (edited by Robert D. Holmstedt and Aaron Schade; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 226-46.

¹⁸⁹ See comment on Num 23:7.

¹⁹⁰ The root וָתָא is often seen as Aramaic influence, as Rendsburg argues for this verse; however, see Barr for the argument that this word is authentically Hebrew, appearing often enough to only differ in distribution between Hebrew and Aramaic (which perhaps raises doubts as to whether or not it counts as an Aramaic-like feature) (*Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 121).

¹⁹¹ In pre-exilic texts, the more usual words for “south” in Hebrew are יָמִין, תֵּימָן, and נֹגֵב.

and Akkadian. He finds some switching in priestly legislation.¹⁹² Nonetheless, almost all of his data come from J and E.¹⁹³

The source-critical implications are striking. Many scholars have argued that E was northern in origin and J from the southern tribes.¹⁹⁴ That E would contain Aramaic-like features is hardly surprising given its putative origin from the northern kingdom, which had alliances with Aramean kingdoms. The presence in J of Aramaic features is somewhat surprising.¹⁹⁵ For the purposes of this study, the fact that such switching into Aramaic features occurs in narratives in which foreigners near that region speak provides an interesting correlation with evidence from Gen 6:14 and Exod 21:35. There appears to be a distinction between speech and writing in the use of Aramaic and Akkadian. When wanting to evoke the foreignness of a biblical character who hails from a region near Aram, the biblical authors use a form of Biblical Hebrew that

¹⁹² His evidence in the Holiness Code for style switching is less secure. For example, he claims that the verb עָשָׂה in Lev 25:21 is Israelian and therefore from the north (“Aramaic-like Features in the Pentateuch,” 175); however, the same verb form (though from a different root), עָשָׂה appears in the Siloam Tunnel inscription from Jerusalem, a southern city. How the verb in Lev 25:21 qualifies as northern, and how Rendsburg can leverage this linguistic data (among other lines of argument), is uncertain.

¹⁹³ Rendsburg states that his analysis is, he believes, comprehensive. Many of his observations overlap with data in Max Wagner’s work, a source often consulted for Aramaic influence in the Hebrew Bible (*Die Lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch* [Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 96; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1966]). Wagner’s study, however, suffers from a lack of method. The author has been criticized for being overly zealous in finding Aramaic features, and for failing to distinguish between rare Biblical Hebrew features that correspond to Aramaic, features that both languages share, and true Aramaic influence. See Rainer Degen, “Review: *Die Lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch*,” *Oriens* 21/22 (1968/1969): 386-91; Shelomo Morag, “Review: *Die Lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92 (1972): 298-300. Hurvitz’ review is more positive, yet also contains criticism along the same lines (“Review: *Die Lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch*,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 19 [1969]: 182-83).

¹⁹⁴ For the foundational nature of the profile of J as southern and E as northern, see Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 112. Whether or not J and E can be so neatly distinguished geographically is a major topic in source criticism, and it is not intended here to solve the issue or enter the debate. Rather, the comments above are offered simply because they cut across this regional dissection traditionally argued for the two sources and show that J is just as adept at reproducing foreign features as E. It is left to others to argue whether or not these data are significant for the regional provenance of J and E.

¹⁹⁵ The most comprehensive study of the language of J is Wright, *Linguistic Evidence for the Pre-Exilic Date of the Yahwistic Source*. In his examination, Wright finds no evidence of the types of contact-induced changes from Aramaic that would be suggestive of a post-exilic dating for this source.

contains code switching into Aramaic-like language. This tendency may indicate the oral nature of the background of such contact. Given that prestige texts were not available in Aramaic in Mesopotamia until the post-exilic period, when such pre-exilic biblical authors made use of scholarly, written sources, the evidence indicates that such contact was with Akkadian. More systematic study should be done; however, at a preliminary level these observations support the thesis that Israelite and Judean access with scholarly, literary material from Mesopotamia in pre-exilic times was through some form of contact with Akkadian (even if the exact nature and time is not possible to determine). Aramaic contact-induced changes can be seen in the Pentateuch, but the fact that these changes are largely limited to the speech of persons identified as foreign may indicate the oral nature of such contact. If this assessment is correct, these examples have little or no bearing on Israelite and Judean access to Mesopotamian literature.

VII. Conclusion

The data examined in this chapter show that all borrowings attested from Akkadian fall under the category of the lexeme. The implications of this distribution of the linguistic data have often been marginalized because the contact-induced changes are not as pronounced in areas of the structure and phonology of the language, which are linguistic categories that are easier to trace from SL to RL. Yet if the literary, sociopolitical, and sociolinguistic analyses from Chapters 3 and 4 are added to the consideration, then lexical borrowing gains added significance.

From the perspective of the Pentateuchal data, lexical borrowings occur in texts in the Bible that correspond to scholarly or political literature of the ancient Near East. Other genres, such as epistolography, lexical lists, and lists of conquered items, are lacking in the Pentateuch

(whereas they are abundant in Mesopotamian literature). Where such genres occur, such as the letters to the Persian king in the Book of Ezra, the linguistic situation on the ground and the genre converge. At the time of Ezra, clear lexical and structural evidence exists that the linguistic and literary situation was changing both in the Levant and in Mesopotamia.¹⁹⁶ The Book of Ezekiel may present a changing awareness of foreign language and tongues. In Ezek 3:5-6, the prophet makes a distinction between unintelligible speech and the speech that the prophet will deliver. This word for unintelligibility, עִמּוּק, also appears in Isa 33:19, a chapter in the Book of Isaiah that “is generally regarded as late,” perhaps in the Neo-Babylonian period, just after the prophet Ezekiel.¹⁹⁷

These verses in Ezekiel and Isaiah attest to a growing awareness of other languages, and, after decades of exile, a mixing between local languages such as Aramaic and Hebrew likely occurred in the spoken language as evidenced in the verses from Nehemiah that were quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The linguistic evidence from the Pentateuch and the archaeological discoveries in the Levant from the Iron Age suggests that no such bilingualism occurred at this earlier period. Those who argue against direct contact between scribes producing Akkadian literature and the scribes of the Hebrew Bible appeal to these data, preferring to posit Aramaic versions as intermediation between Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian texts and the national literature of Israel and Judah.

¹⁹⁶ See the citations from the Book of Nehemiah in Chapter 3, the argument in Chapter 4, and the data in Chapter 6.

¹⁹⁷ Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 80.

As argued above, this alternative hypothesis ignores several features of the process whereby these prestigious texts, with their many correspondences in the Pentateuch, were preserved and transmitted in Mesopotamia. If the area of contact was in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian heartland, then the factors of literary production presented in Chapter 4 need to be considered when making claims about how Israel and Judah had access to Mesopotamian literature. This alternative hypothesis also suffers from an overly narrow definition of bilingualism. The assumption is often made that Israel and Judean scribes would have needed to have fluency in both the language and writing system of Akkadian in order to have direct access to cuneiform traditions. Under this definition, however, the Aramaic intermediary hypothesis also fails. Indeed, there is no evidence of widespread bilingualism, in this conception of the word, of Aramaic in Israel or Judea at this time period either. The request of Judeans to speak Aramaic in 2 Kgs 18:26 (repeated in the literary parallel in Isa 36:11) attests to the political need for some measure of fluency in this language, but does not mean that scribal and literary traditions were equally fluent (see Chapter 3 for an analysis of this passage). The texts from the earliest periods of Hebrew writing attested until the Babylonian exile show that Hebrew scribes used an independent and different letter formation from Aramaic scribes at the same time (see Chapter 3). This fact reveals that although both Aramaic and Hebrew ultimately owe their alphabets to the Phoenicians and although Hebrew and Aramaic scripts would likely have been mutually intelligible in a way that may not have been true of cuneiform, one cannot assume bilingualism and scribal similarity between Hebrew and Aramaic simply because their scripts look alike. The independence of scripts and scribal traditions must be respected, and this independence indicates that one cannot simply assume bilingualism between Hebrew and

Aramaic scribes and speakers simply because the languages and scripts are more closely related than Akkadian. Indeed, given the increasing spoken bilingualism of Akkadian and Aramaic in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian heartlands, the unintelligible language of Isaiah 33 and Ezekiel 3 could just as easily have been Aramaic. What is needed, then, in this debate regarding Israelite and Judean contact with Mesopotamian literature is a more sophisticated concept of bilingualism and language contact that can take into account the changing linguistic situation over time. Such a diachronic picture of language contact is evident in the various layers of the Book of Isaiah, which is the focus of Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Language Contact and the Book of Isaiah

I. Introduction

While contact-induced change from Mesopotamia was involved in the development of the Pentateuchal sources over time even though the Mesopotamian empires did not feature prominently in the narratives and laws, the Book of Isaiah contains rhetorically explicit references to Assyria, Babylon, and Persia. As a result, this book has also been a locus of comparative research with Akkadian and Aramaic texts and linguistic data. The situation in Isaiah differs, however, in that the composition and editing of the book spans pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic periods in a manner much more explicit than the Pentateuchal sources. Moreover, the types of contact-induced changes in the layers of the Book of Isaiah attest to the shifting linguistic landscape of the ancient Near East in a manner different from the Pentateuch.

In this chapter, I present the state of the study of the Book of Isaiah. Much like the Pentateuch, the theories of the development of the Book of Isaiah are pertinent for the chronological development of certain portions of the text, and therefore influence how one understands language contact in the layers of this work. Second, I examine a selection of linguistic data. Given the complex nature of the composition of the book over time, during which periods the linguistic situation in Mesopotamia was increasingly dominated by Aramaic, the examples reflect this same changing historical circumstance. Third, I discuss a comprehensive view of loans in Isaiah. This collection of data raises the problem of creating a coherent theory of literary and linguistic contact, particularly as some of the literary methods of finding strata show divergent results from the linguistic evidence of the Akkadian dialects involved in the early

portions of Isaiah. Finally, the data from the various parts of the Book of Isaiah are put in a comparative trajectory with the development of Biblical Hebrew. The portions of Isaiah written during the exile and afterward show a drastically different contact situation in Mesopotamia and the Levant than existed previously. This diachronic change, the beginning of which appears in Isaiah, also affects later parts of the Hebrew Bible. In this last section, I place these contact-induced changes in the context of post-exilic Hebrew. The linguistic framework for understanding this situation can best be described as matter and pattern borrowing. This sociolinguistic situation sets the changes in Biblical Hebrew in contrast to other dialects of this language, such as Mishnaic and other forms of rabbinic Hebrew, which show evidence instead of language shift.

II. *The Critical Study of Isaiah*

The Book of Isaiah has been one of the most studied and influential books of the Hebrew Bible. Its role in the formation of early Judaism and Christianity is apparent in the number of manuscripts of the book among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which proportionally is close to the number of references to the book in the New Testament.¹ Its foundational place in understanding the Bible as a whole is manifest in how early interpreters exploited their knowledge of this book to envision Israelite and Judean history more generally.² The retelling not only of prophecies but

¹ See Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book: Interpretations of the Book of Isaiah in Late Antiquity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006); VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (2nd edition; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 48.

² See, for example, how Theodore of Mopsuestia and other early Christian interpreters made the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE, as recorded in Isaiah 36-39, the typological moment for the destruction of all God's people. Thus Sennacherib becomes the archetypal enemy of Israel and Judah in Theodore's interpretation and exegetical comments and is even blamed for the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. See Bradley Gregory, "The Sennacherib Error" in Theodore of Mopsuestia's Commentary on the Twelve Prophets: Light from the History of Interpretation," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 3 (2009): 213-26. See also the various essays in Isaac Kalimi

also of important events in the life of Israel and Judah in parts of the book provides a historical context for the oracles therein and underscores the role of the prophetic books as deposits of Israelite and Judean history in prophetic schools. Additionally, the liturgical reading of the Book of Isaiah to commemorate different events in Judah is ancient, evincing the deep-rooted practice of interpreting this text in light of history. For example, on the ninth of the month of Av, when the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (approximately 586 BCE) is remembered, traditional synagogue liturgical practice includes the reading of Isaiah 40.³ The critical view that Isaiah 40 was composed in light of this event and that it was part of a different collection of oracles and literary material than Isaiah 1-39, however, did not appear until the nineteenth century. As in the study of the Pentateuch, it was during this time that critical approaches to the biblical text more generally were becoming acceptable objects of scholarly pursuit.

The most influential scholar in the systematic study of Isaiah from a critical perspective was Bernard Duhm.⁴ Duhm followed in the path of Abraham Kuenen and Wellhausen in his source-critical approach to the text of Isaiah.⁵ In seeking a historical context in which he could

and Seth Richardson, *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History, and Historiography* (Culture and History in the Ancient Near East 71; Boston: Brill, 2013).

³ Paul, *Isaiah 40-66: Translation and Commentary* (Eerdmans Critical Commentary; Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2012), 127-28. For a commentary on the Haftarah, or liturgical reading, of this section, see Fishbane, *Haftarah: The Tradition Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation, Commentary by Michael Fishbane* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 278-84. For Fishbane's thoughts on the Book of Isaiah as a whole, see *Haftarah*, 528-39.

⁴ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia: Übersetzt und Erklärt* (Handkommentar zum Alten Testament 23; Göttingen, Vandenhoeck, & Ruprecht, 1892). Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (revised and enlarged; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 98; Jacob Stromberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Isaiah* (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 8.

⁵ Hays, "The Book of Isaiah in Contemporary Research," *Religion Compass* 5 (2011): 549. See especially the relationship between Graf, Duhm, and Wellhausen, the latter of whom was afraid that Duhm would extrapolate Graf's and Kuenen's insights to the Pentateuch before Wellhausen himself got the chance to do so (Rudolf Smend, "The Works of Abraham Kuenen and Julius Wellhausen," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. III:1: The Nineteenth Century* [edited by Magne Sæbø; Bristol, Connecticut: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013], 445). See Duhm, *Die Theologie der Propheten als Grundlage für die innere*

reconstruct the original sayings of the eighth century BCE prophet Isaiah, Duhm separated a core of the book as belonging to this time period, namely Isaiah 1-39. The rest of the book could be situated in two time periods: Isaiah 40-55 belonged to the exilic period (just before the Persian emperor Cyrus decreed that the Israelites could return to Jerusalem), and Isaiah 56-66 originated during the post-exilic period (when the restoration of the land was a reality and the Temple was about to be, or in the process of being, rebuilt). For Duhm, not only did these three sources represent three different time periods of origin, but their composition and editing were entirely distinct from one another. Because each section was composed by a separate author in a distinct time period, there were no cross references and literary connections between the different parts. Rather, each section represented a distinct moment in the development of Israelite thought and religion, each author grappling with Israelite history and the development of monotheism during the pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic periods.

In addition to the advent of source-critical approaches, the decipherment of cuneiform and the access to primary sources from ancient Mesopotamia also proved to be momentous for understanding the development of Isaiah.⁶ Perhaps no example illustrates this connection better than the Cyrus Cylinder.⁷ This document was written in Akkadian by priests of Marduk in Babylon. It is a piece of ancient political propaganda: these priests of Marduk were shunned by the most recent Neo-Babylonian king, Nabonidus, who favored instead the cult of the moon god

Entwicklungsgeschichte der israelitischen Religion (Bonn: Marcus, 1875); Wellhausen's review of Duhm, *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* (1876): 152-58.

⁶ For a recent comparative study on First Isaiah, see Matthijs J. De Jong, *Isaiah Among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 117; Boston: Brill, 2007).

⁷ For more details and for the history of research in comparison with Isaiah, see the notes below.

Sin. The priests of Marduk, dissatisfied with the state of affairs,⁸ appealed to the Babylonian people on behalf of Cyrus. The specifics of this document and its importance for understanding various texts in the Book of Isaiah are discussed below; however, this example is an illustration of the watershed that was the decipherment of cuneiform for understanding the development of the Book of Isaiah. The uncanny relationship between the Cyrus Cylinder and the title of Cyrus as the Lord's anointed (or, Messiah, משיח) and his role in Isa 44:28-45:19 connects this literary section in the Hebrew Bible historically with similar events in Babylon during the transition from the Neo-Babylonian to the Persian period. The rhetorical connection between Isa 44:28-45:19 and the Cyrus Cylinder establishes that these verses in Isaiah were written well after the life of the eighth-century prophet.

Another datum in this comparative endeavor, but more linguistic in nature, is the use of wordplay across languages. For example, in Isa 10:8, which appears in a section that many scholars date to the Neo-Assyrian period, the prophet states:

כי יאמר הלא שרי יחדו מלכים

“For he says, ‘are not my commanders all kings?’”

⁸ Their dissatisfaction could have arisen both out of self interest and out of a general discontent: changing temple systems often caused chaos in ancient societies since these systems functioned as a means for taxation and income redistribution. A similar situation occurred under Akhenaten in Egypt, who promoted the cult of Aten at the expense of Amun and other Egyptian deities. The result was financial chaos, and the old system of cults reemerged quickly after Akhenaten's death. See Jacobus van Dijk, “The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (edited by Ian Shaw; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 310-11.

The word שַׂר /sar/, “commander,” is a well attested, native lexeme in Biblical Hebrew and also appears in Hebrew inscriptions.⁹ In both Hebrew and Aramaic, the word for “king” is based on the root מֶלֶךְ, while in Akkadian the word for “king” is *šarru*, which, in the Neo-Assyrian dialect, would have been pronounced /sarru/. The pun in Isa 10:8, in which commanders are likened to kings, only works if the author was aware of this word in Akkadian in the Assyrian dialect.¹⁰

Both the source-critical and comparative approaches in research on the Book of Isaiah have continued to flourish. Duhm’s basic threefold division has been questioned, but remains in many ways a point of departure for critical examinations.¹¹ At one end of the spectrum, European approaches have focused on finding more layers and accretions to the text. In this manner, the same method as was apparent in the European approach to the Pentateuch has also been a component of European scholarship on the Book of Isaiah.¹² Examples of this approach include Otto Kaiser and Jacques Vermeylen, and the results have created widely divergent theories about the time period and geographical origins of the texts.¹³ For example, Vermeylen’s

⁹ The historic, proto-Hebrew base of this lexeme was /šarru/. The *qametz gadol* in the masculine, plural construct is evidence that the /r/ was historically doubled since this vowel is retained in the propretic position, a syllable position in which /a/ would normally reduce. Thus, the historic form of this word in Hebrew was strikingly similar to the Akkadian *šarru*, particularly the Neo-Assyrian realization of the word *sarru*, though this historic correspondence would have been unknown to the writer of Isa 10:8 since there is no indication that Hebrew at this time had a productive case system that would yield the similarity.

For the inscriptional evidence, see Lachish 3, line 14; Mešad Ḥashavyahu 1, line 1.

¹⁰ Machinist, “Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983): 734-35.

¹¹ For a more thorough examination of many of the following scholars, see Hays, “The Book of Isaiah in Contemporary Research,” 549-66.

¹² Hays, “The Book of Isaiah in Contemporary Research,” 549.

¹³ Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (translated by R. A. Wilson; Old Testament Library; London: S. C. M. Press, 1972); *Isaiah 13-39: A Commentary* (translated by R. A. Wilson; Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1974); Jacques Vermeylen, *Du Prophète Isaïe à L’apocalyptique: Isaïe, I-XXXV, Miroir D’un Demi-Millénaire D’expérience Religieuse en Israël* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1977-78).

reconstruction of the layers in Isaiah 1-35 creates a five-hundred year span for the writing and compilation of these texts.¹⁴

Though some European approaches have focused primarily on the identification of layers, other European and non-European scholars have identified both layers in the Book of Isaiah as well as editorial connections across the sections that unify the book. For example, Ulrich Burges has retained the threefold division of a First, Second, and Third Isaiah as a means to organize three core oracles around which many other additions and layers have been added.¹⁵ Nonetheless, for Burges and others there is still an overarching redactional focus on issues such as who qualifies as an Israelite and related themes of inclusivity and exclusivity of foreigners. Such an editorial concern is sensible given the centuries during which the book was composed and compiled: the northern kingdom of Israel and southern kingdom of Judah both went into exile, and returnees to Judah were forced to navigate identity in a land filled with foreigners.

Other scholars have maintained broadly the threefold distinction of Duhm but advocated a redactional process known as *Fortschreibung*.¹⁶ The foremost proponent of this theory has been H. G. M. Williamson.¹⁷ Williamson has argued that the additions in First Isaiah are not distinct later accretions. Rather, these additions are the work of later authors who were aware of and interacted with earlier traditions. These later additions then became part of the text itself, resulting in a new block of traditional material for another author's interpretive engagement

¹⁴ Hays, "The Book of Isaiah in Contemporary Research," 549.

¹⁵ Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt* (Herders biblische Studien 16; Freiburg: Herder, 1998).

¹⁶ See also an explanation of this process in the Book of Daniel, Matthias Henze, "The Use of Scripture in the Book of Daniel," in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism* (edited by Matthias Henze; Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 280.

¹⁷ Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction*.

through *Fortschreibung*. For Williamson, the primary example of such a process can be seen in the relationship between First and Second Isaiah: Second Isaiah is not a distinct body of literature, but had the same editor as Isaiah 1-33, or the core of First Isaiah. According to this model, the thesis of Duhm that the three blocks of Isaianic material were independently written and edited without any intrinsic relationship is invalid.

More recently, the question has been raised of the origin of Duhm's Third Isaiah. As Hays has pointed out, this section has received considerably less attention in scholarly research.¹⁸ Part of this paucity of research stems from the undermining of the distinct existence of this section as a layer independent from Second Isaiah. The first sustained argument against Second and Third Isaiah was Benjamin Sommer's work. In a published volume based on this dissertation, Sommer argues that the use of First Isaiah, parts of Jeremiah, and other sections of the Hebrew Bible (such as the P source) is so similar in all of Isaiah 40-66 so as to render unnecessary any attempt to divide this block of material into two literary units.¹⁹ Moreover, the historical presuppositions of the sections do not differ in time or to such a degree as to warrant the distinction between a Second and a Third Isaiah. Since Sommer's study, other influential scholars have also adopted this theory of only two major literary blocks. For example, Shalom Paul's recent commentary on Isaiah 40-66 makes no division between 40-55 and 56-66.²⁰

The debate regarding the layering of Isaiah continues without any sense of unanimity on the horizon. The scholarly positions range widely, from the belief that there is a plethora of

¹⁸ Hays, "The Book of Isaiah in Contemporary Research," 557.

¹⁹ Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Contraversions: Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998).

²⁰ Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 5-12. See also his article on the language of the latter part of Isaiah (though he claims that his arguments in this study are irrelevant for the debates concerning the existence or non-existence of a distinct Third Isaiah) ("Signs of Late Biblical Hebrew in Isaiah 40-66," 293-99).

literary fragments with few (or no) larger literary divisions in the text of Isaiah to the retention, at least heuristically, of First, Second, and Third Isaiah, to, finally, the thesis that Isaiah 40-66 constitutes one source. Nonetheless, there are several areas of scholarly consensus. First, most scholars agree that some portion of Isaiah 1-33 originated with an eighth century BCE prophet or prophetic school. Passages from this section match events of the time such as the Assyrian invasion of 701 BCE or the Syro-Ephramite war of 735 BCE. While scholars debate the extent to which material from Isaiah 1-33 can be traced back to the eighth century, and while even this early material may have been further edited by pre-exilic scribes, there is broad (even if not universal agreement) that some portion of this section can be traced back to an eighth-century context, if not the prophet himself.²¹

Second, despite the antiquity of much of First Isaiah, most scholars find elements in Isaiah 1-39 that are additions and supplements. For example, Isa 6:13 contains the phrase “holy seed,” זרע קדש, which seems to be an explanatory gloss on the “stump” mentioned earlier in the verse.²² The only other occurrence of “holy seed” in the Hebrew Bible is in Ezra 9:2, a late text in which the returnees after the Babylonian exile express concern that the remnant of God’s chosen people is being diluted through mixed marriages. Because of the correlation between the remnant of returnees after the exile and the language of the stump in Isa 6:13, many scholars see the clarification concerning the stump, or מצבת, as a “holy seed” as a late addition to this verse. These additions occur in smaller sections like this example, as well as in larger passages such as Isaiah 13 (discussed below).

²¹ See Stromberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Isaiah*, 21-24.

²² For more on this example, see Stromberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Isaiah*, 18-19.

Even with this broad agreement, though, there are still areas of major disagreement. One such section is the “apocalypse” of Isaiah 24-27. On the one hand, this group of chapters is clearly a later addition; on the other hand, there is no consensus when it was added, and philological approaches to the text have not been able to connect Isaiah 24-27 to the time period of Isaiah 40-66 with any measure of certainty.²³ Another example is the Oracles Against the Nations section in Isaiah 13-23. Most scholars believe the oracle against Babylon to be a later addition. The region of Babylon was little more than a backwater province of the Assyrian empire and without serious imperial ambition until after the time of the eighth-century prophet. As another example, some scholars view the various discontinuities in the oracle against Tyre as evidence of the text having been updated, whereas others see the variation in language as a rhetorical device.²⁴

Related to this discussion of additions in Isaiah 1-39 are chapters 35-39.²⁵ Most scholars believe that the story of Sennacherib’s invasion in Isaiah 36-37 was added on the basis of the parallel story in 2 Kings 18-19 (see Chapter 3), though the precise relationship between these two sections is still uncertain. Additionally, there is some agreement that Isaiah 34-39 links the first section of the book (Isaiah 1-33) to the second section (Isaiah 40-66). Some scholars have speculated that Isaiah 34-35 form a sort of apocalyptic literature akin to Isaiah 24-27, though this label is not uniformly agreed upon for Isaiah 34-35. Therefore, despite the presence of original,

²³ Hays, “The Date and Message of Isaiah 24-27 in Light of Hebrew Diachrony,” in *Formation and Intertextuality in Isaiah 24-27* (edited by J. Todd Hibbard and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; Ancient Israel and Its Literature 17; Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 7-24.

²⁴ For an argument for rhetorical purpose in Isaiah 23, see Reed Lessing, *Interpreting Discontinuity: Isaiah’s Tyre Oracle* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2004). For a survey of the options and an argument that Isa 23:1-14 is pre-exile whereas Isa 23:15-18 is post-exilic (late Neo-Babylonian or early Achaemenid), see Goldstein, “A Neo-Babylonian Administrative Term in Isaiah 23:18,” *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 18 (2012): 240-41.

²⁵ Stromberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Isaiah*, 20.

eighth-century material in Isaiah 1-39, there were additions and supplements added to this section of the book at a later time. Some of these verses, as shown later, contain evidences of contact-induced change that are indicative of the post-exilic, later period.

Lastly, it is clear from the evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls that the text of Isaiah was still in flux, especially in minor ways, into the Hellenistic period. For example, in the Masoretic Text of Isa 40:6 a voice cried out, and another individual is narrated in the third person as responding (וְאָמַר מִה אֶקְרָא). The LXX has an alternate reading according to which the individual responding is in the first person (ἐἶπα), and 1QIsa^a has a variant that agrees with the LXX (וְאָמַרְהָ). Other cases further display this flux. The threefold-repetition formulas in the Masoretic Text of Isaiah are often reduced to two. In the Masoretic text, there is a contrast between רַע, “evil,” and שְׁלוֹמִים, “peace” in Isa 45:7, whereas the same verse in 1QIsa^a has a contrast between רַע and טוֹב, “good.” In Isa 40:12, Yahweh measures the waters in the MT (מֵיִם), whereas 1QIsa^a has Yahweh measure the waters of the sea (מֵי יָם). As VanderKam notes, the difference is minor, only involving the repetition of a *yod*, and arguments can be made for the originality of either; however, the manuscript from Qumran has in its favor the literary motif of “elements of nature” throughout the verse (such as the sky, dust of the earth, and hills and mountains).²⁶ These examples indicate that the process of text stabilization was ongoing into the Hellenistic period, even after the major literary units had already congealed.

²⁶ VanderKam, *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 10-11; P. W. Flint and E. Ulrich, eds., *Qumran Cave 1: II, The Isaiah Scrolls* (2 vols.; Discoveries in the Judean Desert 32; Oxford: Clarendon, 2010), 2:125.

In sum, Duhm's threefold division still holds for many scholars, but only heuristically. Other sections within these divisions, such as Isaiah 40-48, have garnered scholarly attention.²⁷ While the blocks of material such as Isaiah 1-39, 40-55, and 56-66 have remained convenient divisions, they no longer go unquestioned. In addition to the studies noted above, a great many philological works on Isaiah have been published, though with varied success and on disparate topics. Comparative examinations have continued to appear, and many of these promise to make the most progress in the study of the book; however, these studies have not yet marshalled unanimity regarding the compositional layers of the Book of Isaiah.²⁸

The foregoing discussion of the literary history of Isaiah sets the stage for the ensuing study for the following reasons. First, as argued in Chapter 4, the linguistic landscape of the ancient Near East changed drastically between the eighth and fifth centuries, the time period during which the Book of Isaiah was composed. This changing situation is evidenced linguistically in the varying layers in the book and should be kept in mind when analyzing contact-induced changes. The evolving landscape of language contact means that such stratification reflects different modes of engagement in ancient Near Eastern thought and life by

²⁷ Simeon Chavel, forthcoming.

²⁸ See Michael L. Barré and his philological study on Hezekiah's hymn, *The Lord Has Saved Me: A Study of the Psalm of Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:9-20)* (Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 39; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005). For studies on the historical background of the book with a philological approach, see Zevit, "Philology and Archaeology: Imagining New Questions, Begetting New Ideas," in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place* (edited by Barry M. Gittlen; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 35-42. Other background studies have shown that, though they did not undergo later editing, the Assyrian accounts of conquest at the time of the composition of Isaiah were also ideologically composed and rhetorically shaped in a similar manner as the Book of Isaiah (Younger, "Recent Study on Sargon II, King of Assyria: Implications for Biblical Studies," in *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations* [edited by Mark W. Chavalas and K. Lawson Younger; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2002], 288-329). See also Baruch Levine, "Assyrian Ideology and Biblical Monotheism," *Iraq* 67 (2005): 411-27; Roberts, "The End of War in the Zion Tradition: The Imperialist Background of an Old Testament Vision of Worldwide Peace," in *Character Ethics and the Old Testament: Moral Dimensions of Scripture* (edited by M. Daniel Carroll R and Jacqueline E. Lapsley; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 119-28; Michael B. Dick, "Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cult Image," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (edited by Michael B. Dick; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 1-53; "Worshipping Idols: What Isaiah Didn't Know," *Biblical Research* 18 (2002): 30-7.

the authors of Isaiah. Taking this dynamic sociolinguistic reality into account allows for laying the foundation for conclusions that situate the linguistic data according to the historical realities that confronted Israelite and Judean scribes. As they came into contact with changing Mesopotamian empires, they embedded this contact in sacred writings such as Isaiah and navigated their identity (or identities) in the shadow of imperial policies. The following survey of language contact in Isaiah incorporates the study of both the literary strata in the book and the sociolinguistic and sociohistorical background of these layers.

Second, the most important distinction for the following discussion is between the pre-exilic and the post-exilic sections of Isaiah. The study of language contact does not, however, shed light on whether Isaiah 40-66 should be considered one literary composition or whether it should be divided into a Second and Third Isaiah. The post-exilic additions to Isaiah 1-39 and the entirety of Isaiah 40-66 reflect the historical and linguistic backdrop of the rise of Aramaic as a *lingua franca* and its increased influence in the Levant. As indicated in the following discussion, the pre-exilic portions of Isaiah 1-39 reflect a different sociolinguistic context.

III. *Isa 2:10, 19, 21*

In an article dealing with the transmission of Neo-Assyrian claims of empire to Judah in the late eighth century BCE, Aster reconstructs three stages of political contact between the Assyrian empire and the kingdom of Judah between 743 and 701 BCE.²⁹ His study consists of an analysis of both non-written evidence (palace art) and written evidence (administrative and royal inscriptions). Aster concludes that “Aramaic would have formed the main linguistic medium for

²⁹ Aster, “Transmission of Neo-Assyrian Claims of Empire to Judah in the Late Eighth Century BCE,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* (2007): 1-44.

this dissemination [of Neo-Assyrian propaganda], but we cannot ignore the possibility that some members of the court, through contact with the Assyrian scribes who resided within a day's walk of Jerusalem, became proficient enough in Akkadian and cuneiform to access simple written texts themselves.”³⁰ Thus, despite an excellent analysis of literary and material evidence, Aster's stance on the linguistic evidence is agnostic. As argued in this dissertation, however, such linguistic ambivalence is unwarranted. Even if full certainty in this regard cannot be achieved, sociolinguistic and linguistic information can render lines of transmission more or less probable. A case in point, discussed by Aster, is Isa 2:10, 19, and 21.³¹ As he claims, these verses show evidence of Akkadian influence, though his analysis is less linguistically and comparatively thorough than it could be. A comparison of his views with Aramaic data and other linguistic data reveals that these verses likely show direct contact with Akkadian. An analysis of these verses will shed light on how such contact occurred.

The verses are as follows:

Isa 2:10:

בוא בצור והטמן בעפר מפני פחד יהוה ומהדר גאוונו:

“Enter into the rock, and hide yourself in the dust from before the fear of the LORD and from splendor of his majesty.”

Isa 2:19:

³⁰ Aster, “Transmission of Neo-Assyrian Claims of Empire to Judah in the Late Eighth Century BCE,” 44.
³¹ Aster, *The Unbeatable Light*, 209-214. See also Aster, “The Image of Assyria in Isaiah 2:5-22: The Campaign Motif Reversed,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 127 (2007): 249-78.

ובאו במערות צרים ובמחלות עפר מפני פחד יהוה ומהדר גאווה

“And they will enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the dust from before the fear of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty.”

Isa 2:21:

לבוא בנקרות הצרים ובסעפי הסלעים מפני פחד יהוה ומהדר גאווה

“...to enter in clefts of the rocks and the crevices of the crags from before the fear of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty.”

A number of peculiar semantic and grammatical components characterize these verses.

Specifically, the word translated as “fear,” פחד, when governed by the verb “to go, enter,” בא, and the preposition מפני, should refer to something other than what the literary context indicates.

When any verb of fleeing (such as בא [when used as a verb of flight instead of a verb of movement generally], ברח, נוס, or סתר) is used with מפני, the object of the preposition is always the “force or person that causes the flight, never the feeling of terror itself.”³² In other examples, such as Jer 35:11 and Jer 48:44, the object of the preposition is the source of fear or terror that induces the flight. In other verses in which פחד יהוה appears, however, it is a sensation that people have, but not an object that they flee (as in the parallel phrase יראת יהוה), whereas in Isa 2:10, 19, and 21 the fear of the LORD is an object of terror from which the enemies flee, not the feeling that the individual’s themselves have.

³² Aster, *The Unbeatable Light*, 210-11.

If פחד יהוה in Isa 2:10, 19, and 21 is interpreted in line with these observations, an uncanny correlation can be made according to Aster with Neo-Assyrian military campaigns and the Akkadian nouns *puluḫtu* and *melammu*, as well as the verbal root *p-l-ḫ*. Examples include:

- 1) From Shalmaneser III (Kurkh Monolith Annals, against the Bīt Adini):

*ina pān namurrat kakkēja melammē bēlūtija iplaḫma ālēšu umaššir ana šūzub
napšātīšu^{1D} Puratti ēbir*

“He became afraid in the face of the terrifying appearance of my weapons, the *melammu* of my lordship. He abandoned his cities and crossed the Euphrates to save his life.”

- 2) Annals of Ashurnasirpal II:

*ina pān melammē bēlūtija iplaḫūma, ālānīšu dūrēšunu uššerū ana šūzub napšātēšunu
ana šadī matni šadī danni ēlū*

“They took fright in the face of the *melammu* of my lordship. They abandoned their strong cities. In order to save their lives, they went up to Mount Matnu, a strong mountain.”

- 3) Sennacherib’s third campaign (against Sidon):

pulḫi melammē bēlūtija iḫupšuma ana ruqqi qabal tām̄tim innabit

“Fear of the *melammu* of my lordship overwhelmed him and he fled far into the midst of the sea.”

4) Sennacherib's third campaign (against Hezekiah):

šū Ḫazaqiau pulḫi melammē bēlūtīja išḫupšuma

“As for Hezekiah, fear of the *melammu* of my lordship overcame him.”

According to Aster, the correlation between פחד and *puluḫtu*, often denoting a fear that emanates from the king or a deity and that causes enemies to flee, and הדר גאנו and *melam bēlūti*, a radiant attribute of the king or deity that also causes panic and flight, shows that Isaiah is borrowing from an Akkadian phrase. This loan translation in Hebrew then reverses the Neo-Assyrian royal campaign propaganda: it is not the fear of the Mesopotamian king that causes flight, but rather it is Yahweh who emanates a powerful radiance that causes his enemies, including these Neo-Assyrian kings, to flee.

The issue of transmission, however, remains. How did the scribes who wrote this portion of the Book of Isaiah gain access to this Akkadian phrase? Was it directly from Akkadian, through written cuneiform, or perhaps through oral transmission? Or was it from an Aramaic translation? During the Achaemenid era, royal inscriptions such as Darius' Behistun text were translated into local languages, and an Aramaic text of this inscription was discovered at the Jewish colony of Elephantine.³³ Syriac evidence indicates that derivations of the root ܩܕܠ function similarly to the Akkadian concept of *puluḫtu* and *melammu*, and this Aramaic root was

³³ The text was originally published in 1911 by E. Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militär-Kolonie zu Elephantine: Altorientalische Sprachdenkmäler des 5. Jahrhunderts vor Chr.* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911). For general comments and conclusions about the Aramaic version of the Behistun inscription, see Folmer, *The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period: A Study in Linguistic Variation*, 741-42. For a recent edition of part of the text, see Jan Tavernier, “An Achaemenid Royal Inscription: The Text of Paragraph 13 of the Aramaic Version of the Bisitun Inscription,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 60 (2001): 161-76.

also used to translate פחד in the Targums and the Peshitta to Isa 2:10, 19, and 21.³⁴ For example, the abstract noun derived from this Aramaic root, ܕܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ, means “grandeur, majesty,” and is used as a term of respect for royalty. It can be used to describe a divine attribute of Christ, one that instills reverence and fear. Instances include:³⁵

- 1) Text from the Syriac version of *Julian the Apostate* (royal use of the lexeme):

ܕܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ ܕܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ ܕܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ

“The revered and praised name of your majesty”

- 2) Text from the Narrative of the Barbarian Christopher and His Companions (religious use of the word in reference to the Christian God):

ܕܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ ܕܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ ܕܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ

“Look for us out of your majesty, my Lord!”

The Aramaic root could therefore connote a feeling of fear in correspondence with the Hebrew root פחד but also a royal and divine attribute along the lines of the Akkadian terms.

The semantics of the Syriac passages indicate that Aramaic could, in theory, convey the Akkadian idea of *puluhtu* and *melammu*. There is evidence, however, that the Hebrew in Isa 2:10, 19, and 21 is the result of direct contact with Akkadian, possibly through oral transmission

³⁴ The relevant phrases in the Targum Jonthan are יי יעלון...מן קדם דחילא יוי ומזיו יקריה. In the Peshitta, the phrases are ܕܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ ܕܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ ܕܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ (these are from Isa 2:10; the other verses only differ in verbal morphology of the root ܢܫܠܐܘܬܐ).

³⁵ For these citations, see Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon: A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's Lexicon Syriacum* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 290.

or at least playing with the sounds of the Akkadian phonology. It is important first to recognize the peculiar arrangement of prepositions in Isa 2:10, 19, and 21 in the phrase **מִפְּנֵי פֶחֶד יְהוָה** **וּמִהֲרֵר גְּאֹנֹו**. Aster is correct to recognize **מִפְּנֵי** as a possible calque on the Akkadian *ina pān*, which can mean “in the presence of,” or “from before.” He does not discuss, however, the following **מִן**. In Hebrew, when a verb governs a coordinated phrase with the first element beginning with **מִפְּנֵי**, the second element always begins with the same preposition.³⁶ The same parallel happens when a verb governs a coordinated phrase with the first element beginning with the preposition **מִן**.³⁷ It is never the case, however, that the first element is governed by one of these prepositions and the second by the other, particularly when the same action (fleeing from something) is in view.³⁸

An explanation for such an alternation of prepositions is needed. It may be that Aster is partially correct: there is a calque from Akkadian in these verses, but it is limited to **מִפְּנֵי פֶחֶד**, corresponding to *ina pān puluḥti* in Akkadian (“from before [my] fearful radiance”). This would explain the otherwise unattested alternation of prepositions since only the first half of the verse would have originated through linguistic contact. However, the literary connections that he proposes with Isa 2:10, 19, and 21 (the imagery of rocks and crags into which enemies flee and

³⁶ See Jer 4:26: **וְכָל עָרָיו נִתְצוּ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ**, “all its cities were laid to ruin before the Lord, before his fierce anger.” See also Jer 44:22; Isa 21:15.

³⁷ See Gen 5:29: **יִנְחַמְנוּ מִמַּעֲשֵׂנוּ וּמִעֲצָבוֹן יְדֵינוּ**, “he will bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands.”

³⁸ The only possible exception to my knowledge is Hos 2:4, in which one verb governs **מִפְּנֵי** and **מִבֵּין**, “from between,” but in this case **מִן** acts as a compound preposition in both cases, which is not the case in Isa 2:10, 19, and 21. In the latter, there is no clear distinction in meaning or action between **מִפְּנֵי** and **מִן**.

the correlation between **הָרַר גִּאֲנוּ** and *melam bēlūti*) and Neo-Assyrian military rhetoric indicate that the verse as a whole has some connection to Akkadian literature. The connection may also exist as a sound play with Akkadian phonology. By constructing the second part of the coordination in the phrase **מִן מִפְּנֵי פַחַד יְהוָה וּמֵהָרַר גִּאֲנוּ** with the inseparable preposition **מִן** in its contracted form **מִן**, the phones /m/ and /p/ play a prominent phonetic part in producing this Hebrew utterance.³⁹ This phonetic realization may call to mind the phrase *ina pān puluḫti u melamme* in Akkadian, the consonants of **פַּחַד** matching more or less closely some of those in *puluḫtu*⁴⁰ and the contracted **מִן** (/mē/) in Hebrew before **הָרַר גִּאֲנוּ** calling to mind the /me/ in *melammu*. This suggestion is admittedly speculative; it does, however, provide a solution to the curious arrangement of prepositions in this verse. Moreover, it has been suggested elsewhere that parts of Isaiah attempt to mimic (and mock) the sounds of Akkadian.⁴¹ If the latter is true, and if such is the case in Isa 2:10, 19, and 21, then it may show an awareness of the sounds of Akkadian and imply some sense of orality of transmission of Neo-Assyrian military rhetoric. Naturally, a reader familiar with the phonology of a language can also play with sounds in writing without needing to have the original phrase upon which the play is made transmitted orally to him or her. Nonetheless, if Isa 2:10, 19, and 21 is making a sound play on Neo-Assyrian military rhetoric and if, as shown in Chapter 4, Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions were erected in

³⁹ The /u/ sound is generated by the juxtaposition of the Hebrew conjunction /w/, probably pronounced /wə/ during this period (though later in rabbinic times pronounced /və/, also signified phonetically as /bə/), next to a bilabial /b/, /m/, or /p/, which is a regular sound change in Hebrew and therefore meaningless and cannot be correlated meaningfully to the Akkadian conjunction /u/.

⁴⁰ The consonant /p/ appears in both roots; both **פ** in Hebrew and /ḫ/ in Akkadian are gutturals; both **פ** in Hebrew and /t/ in Akkadian are dentals (voiced and voiceless respectively).

⁴¹ See the example of Isa 10:8 above. See also Dick, “Foreign Languages and Hegemony,” *Bibel und Babel* 4 (2007): 1137-46.

the Levant without aid of Aramaic translations, then it leaves the door open for such direct transmission from Akkadian, a form of transmission that has been argued for on other grounds.

Excursus: Isa 2:10, 19, and 21, Contact-Induced Change, and Diachronic Approaches

If Aster is correct in identifying Isa 2:10, 19, and 21 as a contact-induced change in the Biblical Hebrew, then the usual explanation for the development of these verses in Biblical Hebrew needs to be reconsidered. In an influential article, Williamson examined various theories regarding these verses, almost all of which entail some theory of literary supplementation over time. Williamson argued for his own reconstruction as a solution for the growth of Isa 2:18-21. If, however, the above analysis of Isa 2:10, 19, and 21 is correct, then the peculiarities of these verses can just as easily be ascribed to language contact and the basis for Williamson's diachronic analysis is undermined. I will present a brief summary of Williamson's position before arguing that a contact approach to these verses is more satisfactory.⁴²

The problem in Isa 2:19 is apparent when put in connection with the preceding verse, 2:18:

והאלילים כליל יחלף

“As for the idols, the entirety (of them) will pass away.”

The transition to 2:19 is jarring: the idols in this verse are modified with a singular verb, whereas in 2:18 the verb is plural. Moreover, Williamson claims that the notion that the subject of the

⁴² Williamson, “A Productive Textual Error in Isaiah 2:18-19,” in *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman* (edited by Yairah Amit, et al; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 377-78.

verb in Isa 2:19 is a general “they” who move is harmonistic and therefore untenable in a critical reading of the verse.⁴³ Instead, the reference in the text as it exists is to idols; however, how can an idol move by itself? Williamson argues that the last part of Isa 2:18 and the first part of 2:19 were originally **יחלפו בא**, “(idols) pass away. Go...!” The address shifts between a verb that has idols as its subject (**יחלפו**) and an imperative, thereby changing addressees and matching the imperative verb in 2:10 (**בא**) with 2:19. By dittography, the text in 2:18-19 was altered to **יחפלו** **ובא**, and the second verb was changed to match the first, **יחלפו ובאו**. This is the form of Isa 2:18-19 from the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1QIsa^a. The verses were altered once more, and the first *wāw* was dropped by haplography, resulting in its current form, **יחלף ובאו**.

For Williamson, this proposal explains the development of the text. In its current form, the transition between Isa 2:18 and 19 does not make sense since idols are fleeing into caves, which is difficult to understand. Early interpreters of the text grasped this difficulty and added Isa 2:20-21 as a commentary on how Isa 2:18-19 would be possible:

Isa 2:20-21:

ביום ההוא ישליך האדם את אלילי כספו ואת אלילי זהבו אשר עשו־לו להשתחות לחפר
 פרות ולעטלפים: לבוא בנקרות הצרים ובסעפי הסלעים מפני פחד יהוה ומהדר גאונו
 בקומו לערץ הארץ:

⁴³ Williamson, “A Productive Textual Error in Isaiah 2:18-19,” 377 n 5.

“In that day,⁴⁴ a man will cast his idol of silver and his idol of gold which he has made for himself to worship to the moles⁴⁵ and the bats, to enter in the clefts of the mounts and the crannies of the crags, before the fear of the Lord and the splendor of his exaltation when he rises to terrify the earth.”

Williamson argues that this diachronic process resulted in Isa 2:18-21 as it exists. The interpolation, because it was a later addition, was itself influenced by other biblical texts, namely Exodus 32-33. Williamson claims that Isa 2:21 (בנקרות הצרים) contains phrasing borrowed from Exod 33:22 (בנקרת הצור), but that this correspondence “is not particularly significant in itself.”⁴⁶ More significant, according to him, is the allusion to the Golden Calf episode (Exodus 32) in Isa 2:20-21. Only because Exod 33:22 is in the same literary context as Exodus 32 is Exod 33:22 lumped together with the use of the Golden Calf narrative.⁴⁷

Several problems may be identified in Williamson’s proposal. The Qumran text, according to his theory, is still in the process of change. Yet already the explanatory interpolation of Isa 2:20-21 was part of the text. The Hebrew could just as easily be repointed in the Masoretic Text so that Isa 2:19 begins with an imperative, making the transition between Isa 2:18 to 2:19 smoother and rendering the need to understand Isa 2:20-21 as a gloss less urgent. Less likely, the reference to idols moving could be based on the belief that the deity inhabited the carved image and, upon the Lord’s arrival, such deities leave their idols in fear and the remaining images, as a

⁴⁴ The phrase “in that day” (ביום ההוא) often marks a secondary addition in biblical texts, though some scholars rely too much on this phrase to indicate later supplements. Blenkinsopp refers to this expression, which appears throughout the book, as an insertion of prose commentary on oracular poetry (*Isaiah 1-39* [Anchor Bible 19; New York: Double Day, 2000], 194).

⁴⁵ Translating חפרפרות, “bat,” instead of חפר, “to dig,” and פרות, “moles.”

⁴⁶ Williamson, “A Productive Textual Error in Isaiah 2:18-19,” 379.

⁴⁷ Williamson, “A Productive Textual Error in Isa 2:18-19,” 379, 384-85.

result, are worthless and to be discarded as per Isa 2:20-21.⁴⁸ It is more likely that Isa 2:19 forms a bracket with Isa 2:10. The rhetoric in between refers to the effect of Yahweh's majesty, which causes lofty men in Isa 2:17 (אֲנָשִׁים) to flee. The plural verb in Isa 2:19 could refer to these men. The nearest referent would be idols in Isa 2:18; however, the logical referent is the men in Isa 2:19, though the referent is gapped, a process that finds precedents in Biblical Hebrew (though some scholars also argue that Isa 2:18 is an insertion).⁴⁹

An objection to Williamson's theory involves the lumping together of the narratives of the Golden Calf and Yahweh's theophany to Moses (Exodus 32-33). These narratives belong to different sources (the Golden Calf is E and Yahweh's theophany to Moses, of which Exod 33:22 is a part, is J), sources that would only have been combined after D (since, as shown in Chapter 5, D contains references to separate J and E sources). It could be the case that the author of Isa 2:20-21 knew a combined J and E, but this kind of knowledge could only have occurred in the exilic or post-exilic period after the sources had been edited together. Williamson provides no clarification for when the addition of Isa 2:20-21 was added.

More significantly, Williamson downplays the role of Exod 33:22. Yet connecting the theophany of Yahweh, including the reference to the deity's כְּבוֹד, in Exod 33:22 is especially relevant for understanding Isa 2:20-21. Given the fact that the rhetoric in Isa 2:10 and 2:19 and the grammatical peculiarities therein are the result of a calque of Neo-Assyrian royal rhetoric,

⁴⁸ For the fact that prophets and prophetic schools identified the image of the deity with the deity itself, at least in rhetoric, see Dick, "Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cult Image," 1-53.

⁴⁹ See, for example, Ellen van Wolde's discussion based on Givón's research that the more definite the referent is grammatically, the more it can be anaphorically gapped ("The Verbless Clause and its Textual Function," in *The Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Approaches* [edited by Cynthia L. Miller; Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 1; Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 1999], 332).

these verses were composed as a unity and form an envelope around the intervening verses. If Isa 2:20-21 is an explanatory interpolation, then this supplement reveals that those who added it were aware of the background of the Neo-Assyrian rhetoric that produced the contact-induced change. In Exod 33:22, Moses flees the כבוד, or “glory,” of Yahweh by hiding in cliffs and crags (בנקרות הצרים). It has been shown that this word כבוד is a calque of *melammu* in much of the Book of Isaiah, a phenomenon similar to the use of פחד to calque *melammu* in Isa 2:10, 19, and (as argued above) 21.⁵⁰ If Isa 2:20-21 was written to explain Isa 2:19 and if the author of Isa 2:20-21 knew Exod 33:22 (which is difficult to prove given the sparse data), then it is exegetically significant (in contradiction to Williamson) that the interpolator choose to use phrasing from Exod 33:22, where this same glory was on display.

Whatever the relationship to Exod 33:22, the connection between Isa 2:10, 2:19, and 21 suggests that those who added Isa 2:21 were aware of the rhetorical backgrounds of the verses being supplemented if not also the contact-induced changes that led to the composition of Isa 2:10 and 2:19 in the first place. However, it may also undercut the thesis that Isa 2:21 was a later addition: this verse hardly constitutes an explanation given the fact that the author or authors of Isa 2:21 replicated the same construction in Isa 2:10 and 19, a construction otherwise unattested anywhere else in Biblical Hebrew. If Isa 2:10, 19, and 21 were written as a unity, the rough transition between 2:18-19 could be explained in one of two ways. First, the idols could be said to flee metaphorically, much like they are said in Isa 57:13 to save people in distress (in Second

⁵⁰ See Weinfeld for a brief observation of the similarities in Isa 2:10-21 and Exod 33:22, though the implications for the diachronic development of Isa 2:10-21 are left unexplored (*Normative and Sectarian Judaism in the Second Temple Period* [Library of Second Temple Studies 54; New York: T & T Clark, 2005], 83-84). For Weinfeld’s earlier work on *melammu* and כבוד, see “האל הבורא בבראשית א’ ובנבואת ישעיהו השני” (“God the Creator in Gen. 1 and in the Prophecy of Second Isaiah”), *Tarbiz* 37 (1968): 105-32.

Isaiah's mocking rhetoric). The singular verb at the end of Isa 2:18 could have resulted from haplography with the *wāw* beginning 2:19. More likely, however, the subject of the singular verb in Isa 2:18 is not **אֱלִילִים**, but rather **כְּלִיל**, and the verse is numerically sensible as it exists.

Second, the *wāw* at the beginning of Isa 2:19 could have been misplaced from the end of 2:18 and the verb **בֵּאוּ** in 2:19 could be reanalyzed as a plural imperative, matching the mood of the verb in Isa 2:10 as well. In this reading, the transition between 2:18-19 would be less jarring, obviating the need to explain 2:20-21 as an interpolation.

IV. Isa 13:14

As stated previously, the idea of an anti-Assyrian polemic in the book of Isaiah is, in many ways, part of the rhetoric of the book even on a plain reading. The only explicit mention of Sargon II, who along with Shalmaneser V was responsible for the destruction of the northern Kingdom of Israel, in the Hebrew Bible occurs in Isa 20:1. Moreover, the nation Assyria is mentioned dozens of times in First Isaiah, though Assyria is never mentioned explicitly in Isaiah 40-66, a fact that becomes of interest when attempting to locate the historical provenance of the latter section of the book. Not only Assyria, but Babylon also functions as the subject of prophetic critique, especially in Isa 13, which contains the oracles against Babylon. That these nations figure prominently in this book conforms to what is thought to be the historical background of the various layers within Isaiah: Assyria was a focus when it was a historical threat, and Babylon and Persia likewise are only the focus of attention when they were historically relevant.

The content of the oracles in Isa 13 are consistent with a time of significant interaction with Babylon proper, and not Assyria. This observation raises the question as to whether or not Isa 13 should be considered as part of First Isaiah or Second Isaiah. Evidence exists from a variety of factors that Isa 1-39 also contains redactional elements identifiable with Second Isaiah.⁵¹ Chapters such as Isa 13 fit well with this thesis. The chapter describes an oracle against Babylon, and a linguistic feature in Isa 13:4 (as far as evidence is available), namely the *hapax* מִפְּקֶדָה, indicates that this chapter fits squarely in this conception of a Second Isaiah. Not only is this verse consistent with the role of Babylon in Second Isaiah, but the manner in which this author engaged with his cultural world fits the model of language maintenance known from contact linguistics. This model not only explains the linguistic phenomenon apparent (namely, a loanword), but also the relational type that produced it. I summarize below previous studies of the Mesopotamian background of Second Isaiah in order to connect the discussion presented at the beginning of this chapter to Isaiah 13 specifically and to give historical plausibility for the connection between this chapter and Second Isaiah. Then, I analyze the literary context of Isaiah 13 in order to elucidate the importance of Isa 13:4 for this study. Finally, I discuss Isa 13:4 in light of an Akkadian text which sheds light on a loanword in this verse.

Since the late 19th century, scholars have recognized Mesopotamian influence on Second Isaiah. In 1898, R. Kittel was the first to observe the relationship between the Cyrus Cylinder and Isa 44:28 and 45:1.⁵² More recently, Lisbeth Fried has claimed that the same political process that was involved both in Egypt with Udjahorresnet, an Egyptian collaborating with the

⁵¹ See above. For a survey on recent scholarship of Isaiah and the attempt to read Isaiah as a whole generally and Isa 1-39 specifically (as well as a refutation against such reading strategies), see Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction*, 1-18.

⁵² Kittel, "Cyrus und Deuterjesaja," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 18 (1898): 149-64.

Persians, offering Cambyses and Darius the title “Pharaoh,” and in Mesopotamia with the priesthood of Babylon allowing Cambyses to participate in the Akitu festival is also present in Second Isaiah.⁵³ The ascription of local titles of royalty, namely the Judean title and conception of the משיח to Cyrus in Isa 44-45, was part of the same politically motivated process of petitioning for local acceptance of a foreign king, a political ploy also evident in the Cyrus Cylinder itself.⁵⁴

While much of the discussion of Mesopotamian backgrounds in Second Isaiah has been limited to Neo-Babylonian and Persian texts, Paul has also drawn attention to the presence of literary motifs and phraseology characteristic of this section of Isaiah in common with Mesopotamian texts from the Neo-Assyrian period.⁵⁵ The similarities involve conceptions of divine legitimation of kings, descriptions of materials for temple and palace building, and prenatal divine selection in Assyrian royal inscriptions and Second Isaiah. This last motif had a long life in Assyria, attested from Aššur-rēš-iši I (1132-1115) to Nabonidus (556-539). An example from Ashurbanipal’s reign is instructive. In one such royal inscription, Ashurbanipal states:

⁵³ Fried, “Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45:1,” *Harvard Theological Review* 95 (2002): 373-93.

⁵⁴ The internal issues of the monarchy and social problems in Judah and Babylon that led to local voices supporting a foreign king has a possible anthropological parallel in the notion of the “stranger king.” This theory was developed to explain why indigenous support for colonialization could be rational based not on external force solely but also on dissatisfaction with pre-existing social situations in the local population. See Marshall Sahlins, “The Stranger-King: Or Dumézil among the Fijians,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 16 (1981): 107-32; David Henley, “Conflict, Justice, and the Stranger-King: Indigenous Roots of Colonial Rule in Indonesia and Elsewhere,” *Modern Asian Studies* 38 (2004): 85-144.

⁵⁵ Paul, *Divrei Shalom: Collected Studies of Shalom M. Paul on the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 11-22.

*anāku Aššurbanapli binû⁵⁶ Aššur u Bēlet...ša Aššur u Sin bēl agî ultu ūmē rūqūti nibit
šumīšu izkuru ana šarrūti u ina libbi ummīšu ibnû ana rē'ût māt Aššur*

“I, Assurbanipal, am the creation of Aššur and Bēlit... whom Aššur and Sin, the lord of the crown, already in the distant past had called by name for ruling, and who had created him in his mother’s womb for shepherding Assyria.”

This notion occurs repeatedly in Second Isaiah. Two such examples are Isa 49:1 and 49:5:

יהוה מבטן קראני ממעי אמי הזכיר שמי

“The LORD called me from the womb; from the belly of my mother he caused my name to be mentioned.” (Isa 49:1)

ועתה אמר יהוה יצרי מבטן לעבד לו

“Now the LORD, who molded me from the womb to be his servant, says....” (Isa 49:5)

Although the correspondence between the Mesopotamian and Isaianic passages are obvious, it seems that the Mesopotamian background was not the only influence on the prophet. Jeremiah’s use of this motif, as in Jer 1:5, indicates that this trope was in existence in other ancient Israelite literature, even as Second Isaiah transformed both the Mesopotamian and Jeremian notion of prenatal calling of an individual into the idea of the prenatal destiny of a nation. Thus, Second Isaiah could have had two sources of influence, inner-biblical and extra-biblical, perhaps attesting to the widespread use of several tropes. Although the Persian textual evidence is fruitful for comparative purposes with Second Isaiah given their historical contemporaneity, the

⁵⁶ A slight discrepancy exists in the reading of this word. Streck reads *binûtu*, but translates the word as though it were in construct (“Ich (bin) Assurbanipal, das Geschöpf Aššurs und der Bēlit...”). Michael Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Nineveh’s II* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1916), 2:1-5. The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, volume B, however, lists the word from this text as *binû*, and therefore formally in construct.

influence of other extra-biblical texts from earlier eras on Second Isaiah is difficult to trace, even though earlier texts from Neo-Assyria were still in existence and preserved through this later period.⁵⁷

The appearance of **מפקד** in Isa 13:4 may constitute such a datum. As previously stated, the context of the passage involves Yahweh's judgment against Babylon. The first verse announces the oracle. In the next verse the deity commands the waving of the banner (**נס**) in a manner evoking martial imagery. In 13:2-3, language of mustering and calling forth to arms is apparent. The ones doing battle seem to be humans, as **גבור** is normally used of humans; however, this noun can also be applied to lions, God, and angels (Ps 103:20). A dramatic description of the ones gathered for battle appears in Isa 13:4a. The word **מפקד**, a D-stem participle, then occurs in Isa 13:4b. A common explanation for this form is that it is simply an intensive extension of the G-stem, mainly synonymous with the G-stem meaning "muster" and therefore continuing this idea as present in Isa 13:2-4a.⁵⁸ As will be seen later, however, another translation is likely. The action then ensues in Isa 13:5, and the hosts who will do battle effect a cosmic trip to arrive at their target for destruction. The title **שדי** and proper name **יהוה** appear in Isa 13:6, and further description of the devastation appears in the following verses. It becomes evident in Isa 13:10 and 13 that this destruction and its agents are as much heavenly in

⁵⁷ That Akkadian influence appears in First Isaiah makes sense; not only does much of the rhetoric focus on Assyria, but the story of Sennacherib's invasion in Isa 36-39 directly recounts the Assyrian king's invasion of Judah and includes an Akkadian title, **רב שקה**, or *rab šāqē*. For more on this episode, see Chapter 3.

⁵⁸ Stuart Creason, "PQD Revisited" (*Studies in Semitic and Afroasiatic Linguistics Presented to Gene B. Gragg*; Edited by Cynthia Miller; *Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 60; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007), 39.

description as earthly. Thus, Yahweh's hosts executing his destruction, while ultimately referring to the Medes as stated in Isa 13:17, metaphorically express cosmic dimensions.

With this cosmic nature of the destruction of Babylon in mind, a new proposal of the odd occurrence of the D-stem participle of פקד in Isa 13:4 may be offered. Given Assyrian and especially Babylonian astronomical arts, the use of cosmic language in the oracle against Babylon may point to an intentional rhetorical ploy by the author of Second Isaiah. In this context, the use of מפקד has a Mesopotamian background. It is the only occurrence of this root in the Hebrew Bible in the D-stem.⁵⁹ The suggestion of the lexica that it be translated as “muster” on the basis of the G-stem does not match comparative data. Indeed, the D-stem of *p-q-d* in Akkadian does overlap semantically with the G-stem, but not for the meaning of “muster.” Explanations of the Hebrew מפקד in Isa 13:4 on the basis of Akkadian uses of the D-stem may better explain its appearance in Second Isaiah.

One possibility is to explain the D-stem in Isa 13:4 as related to the meaning of *puqqudu* in Akkadian, meaning “to order.” In this case, the rhetoric of the passage in Isaiah would be as follows: mustering (Isa 13:2-4a), commanding or ordering (Isa 13:4b), and then execution of the orders unto destruction (Isa 13:5ff). Yet a more likely suggestion is that Second Isaiah is using the late Neo-Assyrian title *mupaqqudu riksi*, “one who administers the bands (of the cosmos),” in Isa 13:4b.⁶⁰ This title appears in a consecration text of the temple of the god Sin from Harran

⁵⁹ It occurs twice in the passive D (Isa 38:10 and Exod 38:21), so some internal factors may explain the active D-stem in Isa 13:4 since, in theory, the attestation of the passive provide evidence of a native active form. Nonetheless, the D-stems (active and passive) for this root are extremely rare compared with the other stems and the sole occurrence of the D active perhaps shows the confluence of both external and internal explanations for the form.

⁶⁰ The divine title for the deity in Isa 13:6 may also provide contextual support for another use of a divine title in Isa 13:4b.

(north of Israel and Judah, possibly the setting of part of the Abraham story in the Book of Genesis). The inscription is from Assurbanipal (reigned 668-627 BCE), and the title appears in a list of deities in which it perhaps applies to Enlil and Ea.⁶¹ The text is:⁶²

*itti Šamaš uštātuma ušaršadu kussû palû ukannu...[enq]ūti ša ena inaššû u izakkaru rubû
paliḫšu...Enlil u Ea mušetiḫ udī šut šamê eršetim mupassisu ittāti...id elāt šamê
mupaqqidu riksīšun....*

“(He who) meets with Šamaš and establishes the throne, gives permanence to the dynasty...(in) wisdom he lifts he who is displaced and to name (as king) the prince who fears him.... Enlil and Ea, he who alone can pass. As for heaven and earth he destroys signs.... (Concerning) the heights of heaven, he administers their cosmic bands....

Additional support for the hypothesis that this title emanates from authors of Akkadian is that its occurrence seems only to appear at a time period subsequent to First Isaiah. While it also appears a few decades prior to Second Isaiah, this appearance fits at least into a relative chronology in which it is plausible that the author of Second Isaiah could have had knowledge of the title. In this fashion, the peculiar use of the D-stem in Isa 13:4 could be explained as a loan word from a Mesopotamian title for deities. This observation also explains the variations in morphology, as compared with the G-stem פקד in Isa 13:11:

ופקדתי על-תבל רעה ועל-רשעים עונם והשבתי גאון זדים וגאות עריצים אשפיל:

⁶¹ The phrase is *e-lat šamê mu-paq-qī-du rik-si-šū-un*. See Theo Bauer, *Das Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals* (Assyriologische Bibliothek 1-2; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1933), 42.

⁶² [...it-t]i ^DŠamaš uš-ta-tu-ma ú-šar-šá-du ^{GIS}kussû palû-ú ú-kan-nu [...en-q]u(?)-ti šá e-na i-na-áš-šú-[u] u i-zak-ka-ru rubû pa-liḫ-š[u] [...^DEn-l]il u ^DÉ-a mu-še-tiḫ ú-di šu-ut šamê eršetim mu-pa-as-si-su ittāti^{MES} [...]d e-lat šamê^e mu-paq-qī-du rik-si-šū-un [...š]a(?) a[šū-š]ú nam-ri i-na-aṭ-ṭa-lu šu-ut šaplāti^{MES}

“I will afflict evil against the world and against the wicked their iniquity; I will put an end to the presumption of the insolent, and I will lay low the pride of the tyrants.”⁶³

The stems are different because the first reflects foreign linguistic influence, while the G-stem in 13:11 retains normal morphology and semantics as expected in Biblical Hebrew for this root. Thus, a later Isaianic author, perhaps Second Isaiah, may be borrowing themes and in Isa 13:4 a divine title from Assyrian culture in order to unleash these very elements against the Babylonians. The Targum uses a different lexeme, **ממני**, meaning “appoint” in Aramaic or “ordain” in the Galilean dialect, even “array against” with an adversative **על**; nonetheless, the highly productive D-stem of **פקר** in a wide variety of Aramaic dialects and the late period of composition for Isaiah 13 leaves open the exact means through which this phrase in Isa 13:4 went from Akkadian into Hebrew.

This example from Isa 13:4 is consistent with the models of contact linguistics when speakers from the recipient language are the trigger for contact-induced changes. In this case, the loaned word from Akkadian matches the morpho-syntax of Hebrew, a key feature of language maintenance. Moreover, just as the morphology of the Akkadian word adapts to Hebrew morphology (hence the standard Hebrew vocalic reduction pattern in the prefix of the D-stem participle), a later Isaianic authors also adapts the ideology embedded in the title *mupaqqidu* (*riksi*) to his own ideology. This title belongs to Yahweh who will unleash the elements of the universe, which he administers against the Babylonians, who, ironically, were masters at studying these very cosmic elements.

⁶³ The word for “tyrant” is from the root **ערץ**, which, in its verbal form, has the meaning “to instill terror.” Given the calquing of the Akkadian *melammu*, a terror-inducing presence of the emperor, in the Hebrew **כבוד** throughout Isaiah the use of **עריץ** in a passage pertaining to a Mesopotamian king may be significant.

V. *Isa 45:14*

Isa 45:14 contains traces of contact-induced change that may have led to scribal alteration of the verse. While an interpreter can make some sense of the text as it exists, scholars have suggested a slight emendation. The observation that the verse includes a loan phrase is the basis for this emendation, and, once emended, the literary background and rhetoric become clearer. This passage is also instructive because it is an example of how considerations of genre and linguistics can clarify and aid the study of language contact and the transmission of literature and language from Mesopotamia to the Hebrew Bible.

The verse is as follows:

כה אמר יהוה יגיע מצרים וסחר־כוש וסבאים אנשי מדה עליך יעברו ולך יהיו אחריך
ילכו בזקים יעברו ואליך ישתחוו אליך יתפללו אך בך אל ואין עוד אפס אלהים:

“Thus says the LORD: the wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush and the Sabeans, *anshe-middah*, will come over to you and be yours. They will follow after you, they will come over in chains and they will bow down to you. They will plead with you ‘Surely God is with you, and there is no other beside him!’”

While the versions are mostly in agreement with the Masoretic Text (though the Targum Jonathan diverges a little), Naphtali Tur-Sinai and Paul have argued that the phrase **אנשי מדה** provides evidence of language contact in this verse.⁶⁴ The *nomen rectum*, **מִדָּה**, *middah*, in

⁶⁴ Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 265; Naphtali H. Tur-Sinai, *Peshuṭo shel-Miqra: Perush la-Setumot shebe-khitve ha-Qodesh, III* (Jerusalem: Qiryat Sefer, 1962), 1:121.

Hebrew typically means “measure” or “length,” and is related to the geminate verb *m-d-d*. In Isa 45:14, this word could be understood in relation to its *nomen regens* as a genitive of specification, leading to the common translation “men of measure/stature.” This phrase as it appears in Isa 45:14 would seem to fit normal usage in Hebrew, as **אִישׁ מִדָּה** appears in several verses (1 Chr 11:23; 20:6; perhaps in 2 Sam 21:20 and 23:21, the parallel passages). The singular *nomen regens* with the plural **מִדּוֹת** (*middot*) occurs in Jer 22:14, **בֵּית מְדוֹת** (“a spacious house”). The only other attested appearance of a plural *nomen regens* with **מִדָּה** occurs in Num 13:32, where, because the *nomen regens* is plural, the *nomen rectum* is also plural, resulting in the construction **אֲנָשֵׁי מְדוֹת**. On this basis, the editor of Isaiah in Biblia Hebraica Kittel⁶⁵ proposed an emendation from *middah* to *middot* also in Isa 45:14. In fact, the great Isaiah scroll (1QIsa^a) preserves this very reading, **אֲנָשֵׁי מְדוֹת** in Isa 45:14.⁶⁶

This proposed emendation is not itself sufficient evidence to seek external explanations for understanding this phrase. The verse makes some sense on its own: various people groups from African empires will come and pay homage to Israel, and these people are great in stature. The use of **אֲנָשֵׁי מְדוֹת** may call to mind the conquest of Canaan and reverse the report of the spies in Num 13:32: “men of stature” will no longer be a hindrance in Israel’s ability to claim Yahweh’s promises, but now will come and serve the nation and proclaim Yahweh’s glory. It should be noted that while Second Isaiah may have some relation to P, and that Num 13:32 is not

⁶⁵ This was an earlier version of the standard academic text of the Hebrew Bible.

⁶⁶ Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered too late for incorporation in Biblia Hebraica Kittel and Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, but will be added in Biblia Hebraica Quinta (forthcoming).

only non-P but takes a view of the conquest radically different from that of P and H,⁶⁷ Isa 45:14 is nonetheless intelligible and could perhaps be read in this background.⁶⁸

As Paul observes, however, a slight emendation, not to מַדְדָה but to אֲנָשִׁי, fits the context better and calls to mind the political world of Second Isaiah. The emendation involves placing the א of אֲנָשִׁי after the ש and repointing the ש as a ל. If one replaces the semantics of Hebrew מַדְדָה with Akkadian *maddattu*, then the phrase reads נִשְׂאֵי מַדְדָה, meaning “those bearing tribute.” The Hebrew equivalent would be נִשְׂאֵי מִנְחָה, as in 2 Sam 8:2, and because Hebrew scribes did not understand the second word in Isa 45:14, they altered the first to make sense of the passage. Paul’s suggestion to emend fits the literary context better. These nations would be bringing their wares as tribute to Israel in similar fashion to reliefs that appear from the Neo-Assyrian to the Persian periods. It should be noted that the victory stele of Esarhaddon includes not only these African nations in its reliefs, but also the phrase “king of the kings of Egypt, Paturisu, and Kush” which became part of his “standard titulary” according to John Malcom Russell.⁶⁹ The phrase נִשְׂאֵי מַדְדָה maps perfectly to the Akkadian phrase *nās maddatte*. Paul suggests, however, that this contact-induced change is not direct from Akkadian, but rather this Akkadian phrase entered into Hebrew through Aramaic.

⁶⁷ For the varying perspectives on the conquest in the different Pentateuchal sources, see Schwartz, “Reexamining the Fate of the ‘Canaanites’ in the Torah Traditions,” in *Sefer Moshe, The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical Judaism* (edited by Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, and Shalom M. Paul; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 151-70.

⁶⁸ Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 132-51, 168.

⁶⁹ John Malcom Russell, *The Writing on the Wall: Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Royal Inscriptions* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 9; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1999).

The question arises: how does Paul know that Aramaic was the linguistic medium through which this phrase entered into Hebrew? He seems to assert this role for Aramaic rather than prove it. As Mankowski has shown, there are a significant number of Akkadian loanwords in the Book of Isaiah, many of which may be direct loans into Hebrew without positing Aramaic mediation.⁷⁰ It is helpful to remember that certain genres of literature were copied into Aramaic beginning with the Neo-Assyrian period, and that economic texts were chief among these documents (see Chapter 4). This historical and cultural datum supports Paul's thesis. Problems remain, however, with Paul's suggestion. For example, while Isa 45:14 matches perfectly the verb and noun in Akkadian, Aramaic usage attests to different verbs used in coordination with the noun (יָהַב) even though נָשָׂא exists as a native lexeme. While not necessarily a problem for Paul's thesis, it should still be noted that the form in Biblical Aramaic is twice מְנַדְּהָ and twice מְנַדְּהָ, the latter showing the spontaneous dissemination of gemination by nasalization, and it is clear that the Hebrew of Isa 45:14 is, at least, not being influenced by the nasalized form. It is this form, מְנַדְּהָ, that made its way into Tannaitic Hebrew as a loanword from Aramaic, as in the introduction of Esther Rabbah, Genesis Rabbah section 64, and various passages in the Mishnah (*Nedarim* 62b; *Baba Bathra* 8a).⁷¹

I think that Paul is correct, and further support of Aramaic influence in this verse exists, but this influence becomes clear only after disagreement with him concerning another word in Isa 45:14, namely זְקִיִּים. He claims that this word is an Akkadian loanword, though this time he

⁷⁰ Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 174.

⁷¹ Paul mentions this datum in another piece, but does not fully incorporate it into this proposal mentioned above. See his article "Signs of Late Biblical Hebrew in Isaiah 40-66," 295.

does not appeal to Aramaic as a linguistic intermediary. Indeed, the word also appears in Jer 40:1, 4; Nah 3:10; and Psalm 149:8, and one could argue that the lexeme entered into the Hebrew language previously and was simply a word for “fetter” that Second Isaiah used. Therefore, the case of contact with מַדְרָה is irrelevant, in this understanding, with how זְקִים entered into the Hebrew lexicon.

The case of זְקִים, however, is not that simple. Paul’s proposal has two main weaknesses: first, the Akkadian source is, he claims, *iš qātī*, meaning “wood of the hands.” What he does not notice, however, is that this Akkadian phrase evidently fell out of use according to the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* sometime during the Neo-Babylonian period and was replaced by *šāt qātī*. If this replacement is true, then Second Isaiah and Jeremiah would be writing around the time *iš qātī* fell out of use. This problem with Paul’s loanword hypothesis is not fatal as even terms that are replaced by others can survive as archaic expressions in a language; nonetheless, it is at least a complicating factor for Paul.

More serious is the second problem with Paul’s hypothesis. Connecting זְקִים with *iš qātī* has the advantage of being able to explain the existence of the alternate form of זְקִים in Jeremiah 40 which contains a prothetic aleph (אֶזְקִים), matching this aleph with the initial /i/ in *iš qātī*. But this connection creates more problems than it solves. For example, no other Akkadian loanwords beginning with a vowel come into Hebrew with an optional prothetic aleph. In fact, this aleph on variant forms of זְקִים has good inner-Hebrew explanations. Nouns that begin with a sibilant,

such as עֲרֵב , often take a prothetic aleph, a process that is an attempt to “reshape the stem.”⁷² In addition, it is difficult to explain the loss of the /t/ in *qātī* and the gemination of the /q/ in קִיִּי (which cannot be the /t/, partly because /t/ does not assimilate to a /q/ in Hebrew or Akkadian, and partly because it would involve an unexplained loss of a long /a/ vowel in Akkadian). Moreover, there is a spelling of this phrase as one word, *išqāti*, which shows the dissimilation of the emphatic /š/ next to the emphatic /q/. Neither spelling, *iš qātī* nor *išqāti*, offers an adequate phonetic explanation for the corresponding /z/ in Hebrew קִיִּי . One would expect a /š/ in Akkadian to correspond to a /š/ in Hebrew and Aramaic, or, if from the Proto-Semitic lateral emphatic, then it would correspond to /š/ in Hebrew, but /ʿ/ or /q/ in Aramaic.

The traditional explanation, as found in Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner’s *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, is probably correct in essence, but in need of serious qualification.⁷³ Koehler and Baumgartner suggest that the Hebrew noun קִיִּי is an Akkadian loanword from *sinqu*. The problem is that no such Akkadian noun exists. Every combination of alternative spellings due to polyphony of the signs in cuneiform writing (sí can be spelled zi, and so forth) still yields no results for a noun. Koehler and Baumgartner cite an influential study of the role of Akkadian in various Semitic languages written by Heinrich Zimmern. Zimmern does not list a noun *sinqu*, but he does list the verb *sanāqu*, which Koehler and Baumgartner also list.⁷⁴ This verb, meaning “to check,” was very well attested, and although

⁷² Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §5.6.e.

⁷³ Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Boston: Brill, 1994), 1:277-78.

⁷⁴ Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluss* (2nd edition; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1917), 35.

one should remain cautious, the frequency of the verb in a variety of Akkadian dialects from Old Assyrian onward would indicate that there very well could have been at some point a noun formed on the basis of this verb.⁷⁵

A problem still remains with this proposal. An Akkadian /s/ should come into Hebrew also as /s/, but the Hebrew and Aramaic noun (זִנְקָא) begin with a /z/. In order to understand how this phonetic change could take place and its implications for language contact, it is helpful to look by analogy to another Akkadian word in Hebrew, *simānu* in Akkadian and זִמְנִי in Hebrew and Aramaic. This Akkadian loan shows the same mismatch as זִמְנִי and the Akkadian verb *sanāqu*. In the case of Akkadian *simānu*, it was once proposed that this was itself a Persian loanword; however, it is now attested in Old Babylonian texts, which clearly indicates that it has a solid origin in Akkadian.⁷⁶ It is likely that the Akkadian *simānu* came into Hebrew twice, once directly from late Babylonian, in which dialect it was pronounced /siwānu/, coming into Aramaic and Hebrew as the month name זִמְנִי. This form is the expected word if the Akkadian lexeme were borrowed directly into Aramaic and Hebrew. The second entrance involves the sibilant interchange from the voiceless /s/ to the voiced /z/ and the preservation of /m/. This sibilant interchange cannot be explained by regular sound change if the word was simply part of the Proto-Semitic stock inherited into Aramaic and Hebrew, nor is this the expected correspondence if the noun was loaned directly into Aramaic and Hebrew from Akkadian. Rather, it appears that Old Persian borrowed the Akkadian *simānu*, which appeared as *jamāna* (the initial affricate /j/ pronounced more like a /z/), and as Mankoski and Walther Hinz have observed, Old Persian

⁷⁵ A *siniqtu* of unknown meaning occurs in a lexical list.

⁷⁶ Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 54.

words beginning with /j/ are consistently borrowed into Aramaic as /z/.⁷⁷ In this fashion, the sound change of 𐤆 from the Akkadian root *sanāqu*, though irregular if the loan occurred directly from Akkadian into Aramaic and Hebrew, is regular if Old Persian mediates the loan into Aramaic, which is then borrowed into Hebrew. This Aramaic word appears in a variety of dialects from a variety of regions and time periods, such as Palmyrene, Syriac, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and Jewish Aramaic (showing both the assimilation of the *nun*, 𐤍 and dissimilation of the *nun*, 𐤎). The abundant existence of this root in Aramaic and the few forms in Biblical Hebrew might show the analogous sound transformation above, perhaps via a sound change from Aramaic into Hebrew.

A second, more parsimonious transmission process can also be reconstructed. If one imagines the manacles are leather bonds, then one can trace an Aramaic loan into Akkadian and Hebrew. In this case, the Aramaic attestations above are indicative of a primary Aramaic noun, also attested as *zq* in Official Aramaic and Palmyrene. Zimmern had previously connected this Aramaic noun as loaned from Akkadian into Aramaic, glossing the Akkadian as a “hose (Schlauch).”⁷⁸ Noting the time periods attested in Akkadian (exclusively in the Neo-Assyrian period), the editors of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD)* indicate a reversed relationship, namely that *ziqqu* in Akkadian (meaning “wineskin,” or a leather container of some sort) is likely an Aramaic loan.⁷⁹ If the position expressed in the *CAD* is accepted, then the later occurrences of 𐤎 in Aramaic meaning “fetter” refer to leather strips, and this word for leather material was

⁷⁷ Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 54-55; Hinz, *Altiranisches Sprachgut der Nebenüberlieferungen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975), 142ff.

⁷⁸ Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluss*, 34.

⁷⁹ *CAD Z*, 129.

loaned into Akkadian for wineskins made of leather. This noun was then loaned into Hebrew, a hypothesis that aligns the Aramaic, Akkadian, and Hebrew data linguistically in a more parsimonious manner than other suggestions. Moreover, it would mean that the comparative data cited in *HALOT* mixes lexical data that should instead be kept separate: they cite Aramaic *zq* with Akkadian *sanāqu*, but Akkadian *sanāqu* would be an unrelated root. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the proposed semantic overlap between *sanāqu* and the Aramaic evidence is far from certain: the meaning “to be fastened” for this verb in Akkadian (the supposed link between the Akkadian and Northwest Semitic data) is not well attested and the action underneath the verb is unclear.⁸⁰

While uncertainties remain with this suggestion, the thesis that **נִקַּח** is evidence of Aramaic influence in Isa 45:14 is consistent with Paul’s suggestion that **נִשְׂאֵי מַדְרָה** is also evidence of Aramaic mediation of Mesopotamian traditions. The context of the chapter, dealing with Cyrus and Yahweh’s appointment of him to do the deity’s will, has been already exhaustively compared with the Cyrus Cylinder rhetorically by Fried and others. It was consistent with Achaemenid policy to translate royal inscriptions and decrees into local languages, as is evidenced from the Cyrus Cylinder’s exemplar in Akkadian, perhaps written by the Babylonian priests of Marduk, and the Aramaic translation of the Behistun inscription found in Elephantine. Aramaic portions of Daniel and Ezra, as well as passages such as Neh 8:8 and 13:23-24, attest to this language change in post-exilic Yehud around the time Isa 45:14 was composed.

⁸⁰ *CAD S*, 140.

VI. *Isa 23:18*

A similar contact-induced phenomenon has recently been suggested by Ronnie Goldstein,⁸¹ who may have found evidence of an Akkadian loan into Isa 23:18. The text as it stands is fairly sensible: at the reconstitution of Tyre after God's judgment, the deity will change the city's fortunes, resulting in an abundance of food and fine clothing (מכסה עתיק). The word עתיק is unique in the Hebrew Bible, and its meaning is based on a semantic extrapolation from two other words derived from the same root, but which are likewise poorly attested.⁸² The word מכסה appears in Isa 14:11, where it clearly means covering and is from a well attested root, *k-s-h*, in Biblical Hebrew. The literary context in Isa 23:18 pertains to items of transaction and how these will benefit Tyre, of which the influx of fine clothing to the city could be one such benefit. Goldstein has argued, however, that an Akkadian loan underlies this phrase, which was poorly understood by Hebrew speaking scribes and therefore led to a textual error. According to Goldstein, the text was originally מכסה העתיק, or "an abundance of taxes," a calque from the Akkadian *miksu šūtuqu*, a common expression for the collection of "an abundance of tolls."⁸³ This understanding would provide a parallel for the other word of "abundance," שבעה, with the loaned relative העתיק. This expression could come through Aramaic, as *mks* for "tax" occurs in Imperial Aramaic during the Persian period, perhaps contemporaneous with the origin of this passage according to Goldstein, and the root of the verb *ʿ-t-q* in Aramaic, though usually

⁸¹ Goldstein, "A Neo-Babylonian Administrative Term in Isaiah 23:18," 239-249.

⁸² The words are עתיק (as opposed to עתיק in Isa 23:18) and עתיק.

⁸³ Goldstein, "A Neo-Babylonian Administrative Term in Isaiah 23:18," 243.

meaning “to become old,” can have the idea of “to progress,” close to the sense of becoming abundant. One might argue against Goldstein that the Akkadian *miksu* refers to a toll tax levied on the shipment of goods (often slaves) and paid to the crown, and no such sense of a “toll” is manifest in Isa 23:18. The Aramaic designates a tax generally, borrowing the word from Akkadian but broadening its semantic domain (even as the Akkadian phrasing experienced a widening of its domain in this period according to Matthew Stolper).⁸⁴ Given the abundant attestation of the lexeme in Aramaic and its paucity in Biblical Hebrew, one might argue that Hebrew scribes gained access to the Aramaic version of this Akkadian loan.

There is evidence that the translators of the Septuagint likewise understood Isa 23:18 along similar lines. The Greek is:

καὶ ἔσται αὐτῆς ἡ ἐμπορία καὶ ὁ μισθὸς ἅγιον τῷ κυρίῳ οὐκ αὐτοῖς συναχθήσεται ἀλλὰ τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἔναντι κυρίου πᾶσα ἡ ἐμπορία αὐτῆς φαγεῖν καὶ πιεῖν καὶ ἐμπλησθῆναι εἰς συμβολὴν μνημόσυνον ἔναντι κυρίου

“And her business and wages will be holiness to the Lord. Not for them will it be gathered but for those dwelling before the Lord, even all her business, to eat and drink and be filled, and for a contribution, a memorial before the Lord.”

As J. Ziegler and A. van der Kooij suggest, the addition to the end of Isa 23:18 in the LXX, μνημόσυνον ἔναντι κυρίου “a memorial before the Lord,” is likely based on Num 31:54.⁸⁵ The

⁸⁴ Stolper, “Registration and Taxation of Slave Sales in Achaemenid Babylonia,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 79 (1989): 85. The notion of a *miksu* in Akkadian as a toll tax or custom dues tends to refer to physical goods that function as a tax or the place where those taxes are stored, the latter notion of storage being the exact opposite of what the first part of Isa 23:18 describes. In this manner, the image in this verse is a reversal of the *miksu* from Tyre’s perspective in a sense like Haggai 2:7: no storage of wages will occur in Tyre, but such wages will be given to those dwelling before the LORD (namely, the priests in Jerusalem) and such riches will be stored there.

⁸⁵ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaias* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1934), 116-17; Van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre* (Boston: Brill, 1998), 72-75. As Goldstein points out, Van der Kooij is more specific in his translation of the LXX: “for a (regular) contribution/tax a memorial before the Lord.”

only occurrences of **סִבְּבָה** in the Hebrew Bible appear in Isaiah (as a reconstruction) and in the Book of Numbers. Thus, the exegetical addition in the LXX of Isa 23:18 could be a way of glossing, according to Ziegler and van der Kooij, what the phrase εἰς συμβολήν meant, itself a translation of a rare loanword in Biblical Hebrew. The gloss of this word in the LXX was likely caused by a number of factors. First, the lexeme ἡ συμβολή was extremely polyvalent. In Classical literature, it could mean “the coming together of two parts,” as the constituent elements of the word suggest (συν, “with,” plus a nominal form from the verb βαλλω, “to throw”). In Xenophon, the term referred to a juncture, the end point at which two things meet and come together. In this sense, ἡ συμβολή shows partial overlap with the Greek ὁ τέλος, the more common word for “the end.” This semantic overlap is significant and is discussed more below. In the LXX, this sense of the lexeme appears in the construction of the Tabernacle in Exod 26:4-6, 10; 28:32; and 36:25-27.

Second, the word ἡ συμβολή, because of the notion of “coming together,” was a term for a commonly shared meal, often in the sense of a covenantal context. This sense of the word appears in the LXX in Prov 23:20 in a saying against being a drunkard and staying too long in the company of glutinous feasts, the latter described using ἡ συμβολή. The covenantal nature of this idea was also expanded to include the charges associated with deals and contracts, as evident in Sir 18:32. Given the polyvalent nature of this lexeme, a gloss signifying a more precise definition of the use of the word in the LXX of Isa 23:18 is sensible.

This motivation for clarity in the gloss is related to a second point. The word **סִבְּבָה** is used a number of times in the Hebrew Bible. A few interesting elements about its distribution are apparent. As seen in the chart of Akkadian loans in Chapter 5, all of the occurrences of **סִבְּבָה** are

in the P source. This fact is consistent with the argument that the latter sources in Isaiah, particularly Second Isaiah, were heavily influenced by the P source.⁸⁶ More pertinent to the discussion of the gloss in LXX in Isa 23:18, in all of the appearances of **זָכַר** in the Hebrew Bible the LXX renders the Hebrew using the Greek ὁ τέλος. As previously indicated, the words ὁ τέλος and ἡ συμβολή have semantic overlap. The use of the latter as a translation for **זָכַר** in Isa 23:18 is appropriate; nonetheless, because the Greek correspondence of this word was typically ὁ τέλος, the translators of the LXX felt the need to add the gloss μνημόσυνον ἔναντι κυρίου, “a memorial before the Lord,” to the unusual, though intelligible, ἡ συμβολή.

As previously mentioned, this gloss connects Isa 23:18 with Num 31:28, 37, and 41, all passages ascribed to the P source. There is also a connection to Exod 30:16. Only Exod 30:16 and Isa 23:18 contain the phrase μνημόσυνον ἔναντι κυρίου, “a memorial before the Lord.”⁸⁷ As discussed above, this phrase in the LXX in Isa 23:18 served as a gloss, indicating that the translators of the LXX understood the last part of the verse to be an economic term, namely **זָכַר**. In similar fashion, the context in Exod 30:16 is economic, referring to a half-shekel donation that each member of Israel is to give as a memorial to the sanctuary for atonement on their lives.⁸⁸ The verse is as follows in the MT and the LXX:

⁸⁶ Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 132-51, 168.

⁸⁷ An alternate phrase μνημόσυνον ἔναντι τοῦ θεοῦ in Exod 28:29 is close to the phrasing discussed above, but has no discernable connection literarily to the context in Isa 23:18.

⁸⁸ The memorial component of this half-shekel offering is made explicit in Exod 38:27-28. In these verses, the silver collected from the census (Exod 38:25-26) was collected and molded into architectural features of the Tabernacle. In this manner, the silver was a tangible memorial, becoming a permanent fixture (in the literary world of the construction of the Tabernacle; such a construction likely never existed), reminding the Israelites of the fact that they were ransomed by the deity.

ולקחת את-כסף הכפרים מאת בני ישראל ונתת אתו על-עבדת אהל מועד והיה

לבני ישראל לזכרון לפני יהוה לכפר על-נפשתיכם:

καὶ λήμψη τὸ ἀργύριον τῆς εἰσφορᾶς παρὰ τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ δώσεις αὐτὸ εἰς
κάτεργον τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου καὶ ἔσται τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ μνημόσυνον ἕναντι
κυρίου ἐξιλάσασθαι περὶ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν

“You will take the atonement money from the children of Israel, and you will give it for the service of the Tent of Meeting. It will be for the children of Israel a memorial before the LORD to make atonement for your souls.”⁸⁹

The word for the payment is different in the Hebrew and Greek in Exod 30:16 from that in Isa 23:18. Despite this distinction, the overall context of economic transactions and of the priestly and cultic service aligns these two verses. In light of the fact that the only times that *μνημόσυνον ἕναντι κυρίου* appears in the LXX are Exod 30:16 and Isa 23:18, one can see how the former might have provided a basis for the latter as a gloss in addition to the aforementioned verses from the Book of Numbers (which also include the lexeme **מִכָּס**). Thus, in addition to the evidence adduced by Goldstein, Ziegler, and van der Kooij, one can also cite Exod 30:16 as a passage that influenced the gloss in LXX of Isa 23:18. The gloss in the latter verse was necessitated in the LXX due to the aforementioned reasons, and it provides text-critical evidence that the MT of Isa 23:18 should be **מִכָּס**, an Akkadian economic term, and not **מִכָּסָה**.

If Goldstein is correct, then this phrase would be another example of a contact-induced change that resulted in scribal error; moreover, it would provide another example, along with Isa

⁸⁹ There is not meaningful difference between the LXX and the Masoretic Text.

45:14, of administrative and economic language from Akkadian and Aramaic that entered into Hebrew. Goldstein analyzes the reconstructed form as **מכס העתיק**, and gives one possible rendering as a superlative, “a most abundant tax.” However, Biblical Hebrew does not mark elativity by morphology. Rather, Biblical Hebrew forms elatives, such as absolute superlatives, through syntax. Examples include:

הַכֵּל הַקְּבָלִים

“futility of futilities,” “utter futility” (Qoh 1:2)

עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים

“a slave of slaves,” “an abject slave” (Gen 9:25)

צְבִי צְבָאוֹת

“most beautiful” (Jer 6:28)

Lexical items in Hebrew, such as **מְאֹד** and divine names, can also be juxtaposed to a word to connote superlativity:

טוֹב מְאֹד

“very good” (Gen 1:31)

עוֹן...גָּדוֹל בְּמְאֹד מְאֹד

“the sin...is *exceedingly* great.” (Ezek 9:9)

“A mighty prince” (Gen 23:6)

גִּן יְהוּדָה

“a splendid garden” (Isa 51:3)⁹⁰

Not only do the biblical writers form absolute superlatives and elatives syntactically and lexically, but Northwest Semitic languages generally express absolute superlatives and elatives similarly.⁹¹ Non-Northwest Semitic languages, however, have morphological means of expressing superlatives and elatives through constructions based on the C-stem pattern. Classical Arabic, for example, uses the pattern *'aqtala*, based on the C-stem, to express superlatives.⁹² More relevant for the purposes of Goldstein’s thesis about Isa 23:18 is the construction in Akkadian, in which the elative is also formed in the C-stem. For the verb *marāṣum*, meaning “to be(come) sick,” the C-stem form *šumruṣum* means that one is “very/extremely ill.”

If Goldstein takes Isa 23:18 to include an absolute superlative form, then it must have come from Akkadian since neither Hebrew nor Aramaic form elatives morphologically. The form still may have come from Aramaic into Hebrew, and given the late, Persian period for the gloss such a transmission through Aramaic is likely;⁹³ however, the origin of the word would still

⁹⁰ These examples of the superlative (as well as many more syntactic constructions for forming superlatives) are found in Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §14.5a-d.

⁹¹ See, for examples, Bordreuil and Pardee, *A Manual of Ugaritic*, 34-35.

⁹² Classical Arabic has three ways of forming the elative, all of which involve this morphological pattern based on the C-stem. The most common involves this pattern used in absolute (non-construct) state. The other two, rarer elative constructions involve the adjective in the *'aqtala* pattern in construct with either a definite plural noun or an indefinite singular noun.

⁹³ See Chapter 3, in which Persian era evidence for Aramaic administrative writing in Judah is presented.

be from Akkadian. The form **העתיק** would not be a calque. The word is not loaned into a native Hebrew phrasing. Nor would the form be a loanword, since it should come into Hebrew with the Akkadian phonology and pattern. Instead, this form would attest that someone knew Akkadian well enough to be able to identify what the parallel construction is in Aramaic or Hebrew. The borrowing, in this case, is a morphological pattern and may be a case of grammatical replication. Grammatical replication usually involves more extensive forms of bilingualism, and this morphological borrowing did not influence the entire language;⁹⁴ however, the phrase pertains to legal and economic language, terms that would have been pervasive in exilic and post-exilic Mesopotamia and the Levant. Given that these terms had an extensive history of contact between Akkadian and Aramaic,⁹⁵ it is not unreasonable to suppose that the phrase had enough common currency that either an Aramaic speaker transformed the adjective into Aramaic and then it came into Hebrew, or perhaps it came directly into Hebrew by a Hebrew speaker.

A more likely scenario is that the form in Isa 23:18 is a comparative superlative. Comparable superlatives are formed most often with a definite article (*ha-*) attached to an adjective, such as in the description of David as the “youngest son,” **הקטן** (*ha-qqātān*) in 1 Sam 16:11. They can also appear as the “first term of a definite construct chain,” as in **קטן בניו**, “the youngest of his sons” in 2 Chr 21:17.⁹⁶ The form in question in Isa 23:18 is likely this construction (an adjective plus a definite article), a construction that, in this case, simply

⁹⁴ See the discussion of “spontaneous replication” and how such replications catch on in a language (Heine and Kuteva, “Contact and Grammaticalization,” in *The Handbook of Language Contact* [edited by Raymond Hickey; Blackwell Handbook in Linguistics; Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010], 88). As they state, replication usually occurs a matter of pragmatics and semantics, not syntax, as the example in Isa 23:18 indicates.

⁹⁵ See Chapter 4.

⁹⁶ See Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §14.5c.

expresses abundance. This option has in its favor a simpler contact scenario: there is no attempt to render a morphological equivalence between languages and no grammatical replication. Moreover, grammatical replication normally influences constructions in a language generally, whereas this form is isolated in known Hebrew dialects. Rather, the phrase would simply be part of a calque, as Golstein claims.

If Goldstein is correct that **מכסה עתיק** should read **מכס העתיק** and that this phrase is part of a later insertion into Isa 23:18, then this verse matches similar rhetoric in Isa 45:14. It is consistent with a wider picture of Second Isaiah and later additions that many of the borrowed elements pertain to economic terminology.⁹⁷ This phrase in Isa 23:18 would represent a semantic and a morphological borrowing from Akkadian (perhaps mediated by Aramaic) that was misunderstood since it is not a native Hebrew rendering of the superlative. This misrecognition resulted in a text-critical situation in which the scribe changed the text to a more comprehensible Hebrew phrase. This example could be indicative of grammatical replication, the use of a linguistic feature of Akkadian (morphological marking of the superlative) replicated into Hebrew (which has no such native morphological marking of elativity).

VII. Loans and Literary Layers in Isaiah

The following chart is a comprehensive picture of identified Akkadian loans throughout the Book of Isaiah:

⁹⁷ Goldstein, forthcoming.

Table 3:

Loans in Isaiah						
Verse	Word	Meaning	First Isaiah (FI) or Second Isaiah (SI)/Third Isaiah (TI)?	Loan?	Other Attestations	Other Notes
Isa 1:3	אָבוּס	Manger	FI	Uncertain	Prov 14:4 (?); Job 39:9	
Isa 1:23	שְׁלֵמָנִים	gratuity; tribute	FI	Yes	Only here	The sibilant is an issue: shin in Hebrew should be <i>samekh</i> or <i>sin</i> if it is from Assyrian; Mankowski says the sibilant points to a Neo-Babylonian loan. See below.
Isa 3:19	שָׂרָה	Bracelet	FI	Likely not	Only here	The gender difference between Hebrew and Akkad is perhaps an obstacle for the loan theory.
Isa 13:12	כָּהָם	Gold	SI/TI/Late	Yes	Ps 45:10; Job 28:16, 19; Job 31:24; Lam 4:1; Cant 5:11; Dan 10:5; Prov 25:12	From Sumerian KUDIM to Akkad to Egyptian to Biblical Hebrew (though the transmission beyond Akkad is a guess).

Table 3 (continued)

Isa 18:2	צִיר	envoy; messenger	FI	Yes	Jer 49:14; Prov 13:17; 25:13; Isa 63:9; Isa 57:9	NA and NB; see below with Isa 57:9; Isa 63:9- could these passages be using PI and its language with intertextual reference? Like Deut?
Isa 19:3	אֲטִים	Ghost	FI	Yes	Only here	Sumerian <i>GIDIM/KITEM</i> , to Akkadian <i>eṭimmuleṭimmu</i> .
Isa 20:1	תַּרְתָּן	field marshal	FI	Yes	Here and 2 Kgs 18:17	Hurrian to Akkadian to BH
Isa 22:15	סִכְן	Steward	FI	No	1 Kgs 1:2, 4	The word and form are native, though the semantic overlap with Akkad <i>šaknu</i> could be evidence of contact-induced change.
Isa 22:24	אִבְן	Basin	FI	No	Cant 7:3; Exod 24:6	The lexeme could be a loan from Aramaic. The passage is in a section that has evidence of latter supplementation. No evidence from the lexeme that Aramaic served as mediation for Mesopotamian traditions.

Table 3 (continued)

Isa 23:10	מַחֲוֹז	Harbor	FI?	Maybe	Ps 107:30	The verse has מַחֲוֹז, restraint, but it has been suggested to be “harbor” on text critical grounds.
Isa 24:9	זַפֵּת	Bitumen	FI	Uncertain origin	Exod 2:3	
Isa 35:7	אָגָם	swamp, pool	DI/TI/ Late	Yes	Isa 41:18; Ps 107:35; Ps 114:8; Exod 8:1; Isa 42:15; Jer 51:32; Exod 7:19	Sumerian AGAM, Akkadian <i>agammu</i> , BH/Aram
Isa 37:24	קִרְוֹשׁ	Cypress	Later addition to FI	Mankows ki- no; Paul and Machinist - yes	Common elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.	Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs show Assyrian interest in cypress trade that extended to the Levant. Mankowski doesn't like loan hypothesis because it does not match how Neo-Assyrian sibilants tend to be loaned into West Semitic.

Table 3 (continued)

Isa 37:38	שָׂרְאֻזָּר	PN	Later addition to FI	Name loaned	2 Kgs 19:37; Zech 7:2	In 1QIsaa, the /u/ in Akkadian name is short, but spelled with mater in the Qumran manuscript showing the retention of the Assyrian spelling <i>Šarra-ušur</i> .
Isa 39:2	נֶכֶת	treasure house	Later addition to FI	Yes	2 Kgs 20:13	
Isa 41:18	אָנָם	swamp, pool	SI	Yes	See above	
Isa 41:25	טִיט	(potter's) clay	SI	Yes	Common elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible	Akkadian>Biblical Hebrew. The use of potter's clay here, according to Mankowski, is perhaps connected to technical term in Akkadian.
Isa 42:15	אָנָם	swamp, pool	SI	Yes	See above	
Isa 44:14	אֵרֶן	a kind of tree	SI	Likely not	Only here	Vocalization difference between Hebrew and Akkadian (<i>erēnu</i>) make it difficult to posit as a loan.
Isa 47:9	קְשָׁפִיד	Sorcery	SI	No?	Variety	See Pentateuch
Isa 47:12	קְשָׁפִיד					

Table 3 (continued)

Isa 47:15	סַחֲרִיָּךְ	Sorcerer	SI	Yes	Only here	See Held, <i>Eretz Israel</i> 16 (1982): 79, 85 n 111
Isa 49:2	see Isa 22:6					
Isa 57:9	צִיר	see above	SI/TI			
Isa 57:20	טִיט	see above	SI/TI			This verse could be evidence of SI using FI.
Isa 61:1	דְּרוֹר	Liberty	SI/TI	Yes	Lev 25:10; Jer 34:8, 15, 17; Ezek 46:17	All of the other texts come from sections of the Hebrew Bible the Sommer claims Second Isaiah knew.
Isa 61:5	אֶפְרַיִם	Plowman	SI/TI	Yes	Amos 5:16; Jer 14:4; 31:24; Joel 1:11; 2 Chr 26:10	Given the common use in Jeremiah and Second Isaiah, it is possible that this lexeme is further evidence for the latter's use of the former.
Isa 62:10	No		SI/TI			
Isa 63:9	צִיר	see above	SI/TI			LXX translation indicates that could be from this root, though it is pointed צָר in the Masoretic Text.
Isa 65:4	חֲזִיר	Swine (See Pentateuch chart)	SI/TI			
Isa 66:3	Ditto	Ditto	SI/TI			

Table 3 (continued)

Isa 66:17	Ditto	Ditto	SI/TI			
Isa 66:20	צָבִים	Wagon	SI/TI	Yes	Num 7:3	The connection with Num 7:3 could be indication of SI/TI knowing P.

This chart for the most part shows a non-controversial allotment of linguistic data. With one exception, the Akkadian loans and the dialects involved match the time periods when the texts are thought to have been written according to literary and historical criteria. The most difficult datum is Isa 1:23, שלמנים. This lexeme is from a section that most scholars would date to First Isaiah in the Neo-Assyrian period.⁹⁸ If this word was loaned into Hebrew during this period, however, the expected sibilant is ש, not ש, as in the example of שר in Isa 10:8 discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Another example is the personal name שרִאָצָר in Isa 37:38, which reflects the Neo-Assyrian period (a later addition to First Isaiah). The name in Akkadian was Šarra-ušur, the sibilant /š/ in Akkadian being rendered in Isa 37:38 as expected if the name was loaned during the Neo-Assyrian period. Historically, the word was originally written שלמנים, and the pointing of the sibilant as a shin /š/ could be secondary through its association with the common Hebrew word שלום. In this case, Isa 1:23 would not pose a problem for harmonizing linguistic and literary examinations.

⁹⁸ This dating holds even if Isaiah 1 generally was placed at the head of the book out of place, before another superscription in Isa 2:1, which itself may have begun a section of First Isaiah at one point. Stromberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Isaiah*, 22.

It is more likely, however, that the loan of sibilants from Neo-Assyrian into West Semitic generally and Biblical Hebrew specifically is messier than scholars such as Mankowski have allowed. For example, he dates the loan of the title **רַב שֶׁקֶה** into Biblical Hebrew to the Neo-Babylonian period since the /š/ should become /s/ or /ʃ/ in Biblical Hebrew due to the Neo-Assyrian dialect.⁹⁹ One of the Aramaic docketts discussed in Chapter 4, however, clearly shows evidence that Akkadian *rab šaqē* could be loaned into West Semitic with the preservation of the /š/ (*rb šqn*). This datum complicates the sibilant pattern expected for contact-induced changes, but nonetheless indicates that in some manner /š/ could be preserved as a loan into West Semitic from Akkadian during the Neo-Assyrian period. By extension, the /š/ in **שְׁלֹמֹנִים** may, therefore, be consistent with a Neo-Assyrian time period for the loan even if it complicates the picture concerning the phonology of borrowings in the Neo-Assyrian era.¹⁰⁰

VIII. Isaiah's Oracles Against the Nations, Dialectal Representation, and Language Contact

The problem of aligning the literary and the linguistic data finds a connection in the Oracles Against the Nations. In these chapters in the Book of Isaiah, linguistic elements of the Hebrew are an attempt to render the foreign speech of the nations in the Syrian Desert. Tur-Sinai, Kaufman, and Rendsburg have all proposed some form of an attempt to render the foreign speech in this section.¹⁰¹ The most obvious example in Isaiah occurs in Isa 21:11-14:

⁹⁹ Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 136.

¹⁰⁰ The same logic would indicate that **בְּרוּשׁ** could also have been loaned during the Neo-Assyrian period.

¹⁰¹ Rendsburg, "Linguistic Variation and the 'Foreign' Factor in the Hebrew Bible," 181-82; N. H. Tur-Sinai, "ארמית: השפעת הארמית על העברית של המקרא," *Encyclopedia Miqra'it* 1 (1965), col. 594; Kaufman, "The Classification of the North West Semitic Dialects of the Biblical Period and Some Implications Thereof," in

משא דומה אלי קרא משעיר שמר מה-לילה שמר מה-מליל: אמר שמר אתה בקר
וגם-לילה אם-תבעיון בעיו שבו אתיו: משא בערב ביער בערב תלינו ארחות דדנים:
לקראת צמא התיו מים ישבי ארץ תימא בלחמו קדמו נדר:

“An pronouncement of Dumah: one calls to me from Seir, ‘Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?’ The watchman replied, ‘morning came, also night. If you will inquire, inquire; come back again.’ In the steppe a pronouncement: in the thicket of the steppe (or, Arabia) you will lodge, o caravans of the Dedanites. To the thirsty bring water; o inhabitants of the land of Tema, meet the fugitive with bread.”

In this section, various lexemes and morphological forms betray an attempt to render a version of Hebrew that reflects foreign speech, specifically the speech of the Aramaic- and Arab-speaking populations in this area. Lexically, the following, which are rare in Hebrew but much more common in Aramaic and Arabic, have been tagged: **בעה** and **אתה**. Both appear in Hebrew, but the former only means “seek” here in Hebrew (whereas that meaning is common throughout Aramaic). Morphologically, the form of the III-*hē*’ verbs contain a *yod*, the historic third consonant of this root. In Hebrew, this consonant contracts and one would expect forms like **אתו**, **התו**, **בעו**, and **תבעו**. Instead, the forms contain the *yod*, which is much more common in

Aramaic, as is the *nun* on the imperfective form (though the *nun* is also an occasional feature of Biblical Hebrew still awaiting systematic explanation): אתיו, התיו, בעיו, and תבעיון.¹⁰²

A further foreign feature may be present in Isa 21:11. The phrase מַה-מַּלִּיל could mean “what of the night?” This translation requires analyzing the elements of the utterance as the interrogative מַה, the preposition מִן, and the rare, poetic spelling of “night,” לַיִל.¹⁰³ Rendsburg rejects this meaning, and instead thinks that the phrase is indicative of another foreign element. The usual word for night occurs in the previous clause of the verse (לַיְלָה), and the alternation, according to Rendsburg, is unnecessary. Against Rendsburg, however, may be the fact that the rare, poetic form of “night” appears more in Isaiah than in any other book, all but one occurrence in the same literary section of the Oracles Against the Nations (Isa 15:1; 16:3; 21:11; and 30:29, the one appearance not in the Oracles Against the Nations). Poetic variation often occurs in repetition. It is also difficult to go from the Hebrew to Rendsburg’s translation of this alternative, “what do you say?” The form מַלִּיל as pointed is a D-stem, third person perfective form, not a second person. He could repoint the verb to make it an imperative, but that repointing still does not arrive at his translation. Nonetheless, Rendsburg’s observation is astute and the pun may work on multiple levels: as a meaning for “night” as well as a sound play on “speak.” The example of foreign punning, as also in Isa 10:8, is indicative of how adept the writers of this book were at using language on multiple levels.

¹⁰² Rendsburg cites the Aramaic form *yhywn*, which has both the retention of the *yod* as well as the paragogic *nun*.

¹⁰³ The LXX is completely different for this verse: τὸ ὄραμα τῆς Ἰδουμαίας πρὸς ἐμὲ καλεῖ παρὰ τοῦ Σηῖρ φυλάσσετε ἑπαλξεις, “The vision of Idumea. He calls to me out of Seir, ‘Guard the battlements!’” The dialogue is in the first person in Isa 22:12 in the LXX (instead of the third person in the Hebrew), and there is no mention of “night” in the LXX of Isa 22:11.

Michael B. Dick has also suggested attempts to reproduce and to mock Assyrian and Egyptian speech in sibilant patterns in Isaiah.¹⁰⁴ He points to a Neo-Assyrian text that describes the speech of foreign people as like a chirping of birds:¹⁰⁵

From Ashurnasirpal II: *madattu ša māt siparmena ša kīma sinnišāti šabrūni amḥur*

“I received the tribute of the (people of the) land of Siparmena who chirp like women.”

In similar fashion, Isa 28:10-13 contains a situation in which the prophet turns the table on his detractors from Samaria. They had mocked his speech, and now he proclaims that God will send the Assyrians, a people of unintelligible and unfamiliar speech, against them (בלעני שפה)
ובלשון אחרת
“with mocking lip and a strange language”). In this fashion, the repetitive description of the Assyrians in Isa 28:13 could also be an evocation of their speech, not in an attempt to render the phonology of Assyrian or Aramaic *per se*, but as a satirical representation of what these foreigners sound like:

והיה להם דבר-יהוה צו לצו צו לצו קו לקו קו לקו זעיר שם זעיר שם

whyh lhm dbr-yhwh šw lšw šw lšw qw lqw qw lqw z'yr šm z'yr šm

“And the word of the Lord will be to them precept by precept, precept by precept, line by line, line by line, there a little and there a little”

As Dick points out, the Babylonian bird-call text contains onomatopoeic renderings of bird calls, in which velars and sibilants are prominent, inviting the phonological comparisons between

¹⁰⁴ Dick, “Foreign Languages and Hegemony,” 1140-41.

¹⁰⁵ The Akkadian verb *šabāru* refers to the chirping of birds.

the collocation of consonants in Isa 28:13 and foreign speech. The phrase in Isa 18:2 and 18:7 referring to the Egyptians, גוי קן קן, may not only be an intensified adjectival construction (through reduplication), but it could also refer to this speech perception, as perhaps in the use of sibilants in Isa 18:1 (צלצל, ṣlṣl). Again, the authors of Isaiah show themselves to be adept at using language for rhetorical ends. In this case, phonology and rhetoric work together in the representation of foreign speech. Contrasting with the evidence from Isa 21:11-14 in which actual foreign features may be present in the Hebrew text, the sound play in Isa 28:13 and 18:1-2 and 7 does not indicate an actual awareness of the phonology of the respective languages (though the pun in Isa 10:8 may be evidence of some knowledge of Assyrian phonology). Instead, the uses of sound play in Isa 28:13 and 18:1-2 and 7 show the authors' ability to represent foreign speech in the literary conventions of the day, using the derisive rhetoric of chirping.

The Book of Isaiah thus contains evidence of sound play and punning employed in rhetorical sections aimed at foreign nations. The sound play did not result in phonological transfer from a SL into Biblical Hebrew as the RL. Nonetheless, the convergence of sound play and paronomasia in certain literary sections, the rhetoric of which was aimed at foreign nations, shows a strategic use of foreign languages. This savvy use of foreign languages is suggestive of the extent of language contact during the composition of the various layers of the Book of Isaiah, both in the Oracles against the Nations (some of which may have been written later) and in Isa 18:1-2, 7, and 28:13 (which were directed at Neo-Assyrian imperial ambition).

IX. Isaiah, Language, Identity, and the Development of Biblical Hebrew

In the previous sections, I have presented linguistic data for contact-induced change and borrowing in the Book of Isaiah. Such borrowings have been lexical, phraseological (such as calquing), and structural. The distinction between First Isaiah and later accretions has been in some sense significant. The correspondence between Isa 2:10, 19, and 21 and Assyrian imperial rhetoric is striking. Given the language that the rhetoric took in international diplomatic situations, and given the lack of evidence from Aramaic, it seems that there could have been direct Hebrew-Akkadian interaction. Other examples, such as Isa 13:4, show that later authors could continue to reference earlier inscriptions and imperial displays of power and rhetoric. Nonetheless, a major shift occurred in the ancient Near East linguistically. The outlines of this situation were presented in Chapter 4 from the perspective of the Mesopotamian heartland, in which Aramaic became more dominant administratively, culturally, and linguistically, a dominance reflected in contact-induced changes in Akkadian. These changes were described as being part of a process known as matter and pattern borrowing. As argued in this section, the contact-induced changes in later strata in the Book of Isaiah are evidence of a similar process between Hebrew and Aramaic. Understanding this process in Biblical Hebrew not only plots the linguistic developments in later strata of the Book of Isaiah in historical perspective, but also allows for a more precise dialectal comparison between later Biblical Hebrew, Qumran Hebrew, and Rabbinic (or, Mishnaic) Hebrew.

As discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, matter and pattern borrowings are contact-induced changes that often are specific to certain sociolinguistic contexts. For pattern loans, the sociolinguistic context involves higher levels of bilingualism in speakers of a dominated

language, often a language of community identity, who also learn an inter-community language, usually for administration or as a *lingua franca*. Matter and pattern loans can happen together, though not always (see the example of Biak in Chapter 3); however, pattern loans only tend to occur in communities with higher levels of bilingualism. Such facility in the SL is required in order to identify the construction patterned in the RL. The patterning itself does not involve the transfer of forms (such as morphemes); that transfer occurs in matter loans. Pattern borrowing is therefore not a lexical or structural borrowing, nor is it necessarily indicative of shift; rather, it involves reordering. As shown in Chapter 4, many of the contact-induced changes in Akkadian based on Aramaic conform to this process. The sociolinguistic background is consistent with pattern borrowing, and the structural reordering makes use of distinctions within the Akkadian language to arrange more closely to Aramaic.

The examples in Isa 13:4 and 45:14, as elsewhere in Second Isaiah and other later supplements to the book, are evidence of lexical loans from Aramaic. The example in Isa 23:18 reveals that later additions to the book include calquing based on Akkadian perhaps mediated through Aramaic. More direct Aramaic influence can be seen structurally in the later strata of Isaiah in a number of ways. Some of these ways have previously been identified as structural elements of Late Biblical Hebrew generally; however, upon closer examination the structural changes are seen to be owing to contact with Aramaic.

In a recent article, Paul lists some of these structural features in the Book of Isaiah as examples of Late Biblical Hebrew.¹⁰⁶ Most of the article focuses on lexical properties of later portions of Isaiah; however, he discusses three syntactic features that indicate that Isaiah 40-66

¹⁰⁶ Paul, "Signs of Late Biblical Hebrew in Isaiah 40-66," 294-95.

are from a later strata, identifiably later as seen in the development of the language. The first of these syntactic elements is the use of the infinitive absolute instead of a finite verb. Paul's point requires clarification. The infinitive absolute form in other Northwest Semitic languages, such as Phoenician, could function as a finite verb at an early stage in the language. In both the Kulamuwa inscription and the Karatepe Phoenician-Luwian bilingual inscription the infinitive absolute acts as a finite verb with the first person and, in the latter, carries forward the main line of the narrative.¹⁰⁷ In earlier Biblical Hebrew, the infinitive absolute also had a volitive function, replacing the imperative, as seen in the Sabbath commandments in the Pentateuch.

Exod 20:8:

זְכוֹר אֶת-יּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ

“Remember the day of Sabbath to keep it holy.”

Deut 5:12:

שָׁמֹר אֶת-יּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ

“Observe the day of Sabbath to keep it holy.”

The infinitive absolute in Hebrew and northwest Semitic used to replace a finite form, therefore, is not a late feature *per se*. Rather, a distinction should be made: the infinitive absolute without a conjunction is not necessarily a late feature; it does appear, however, that an infinitive absolute with a conjunction as a continuation of a preceding finite verb is a feature of Late Biblical

¹⁰⁷ W. Randall Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000-586 B.C.E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985; repr., Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 183.

Hebrew. The reason for this development was likely the “disappearance of the *waw*-consecutive forms in late Hebrew.”¹⁰⁸ Many of Paul’s examples of this construction in late Biblical Hebrew have a conjunction preceding the infinitive absolute, which in turn serves as the continuation of a finite verb. Of Paul’s two examples from Isaiah, Isa 42:20 somewhat matches this pattern, though it is a verse with text critical issues:¹⁰⁹

(ראית) [ראות] רבות ולא תשמר פקוח אזנים ולא ישמע:

“Seeing (or: You have seen) many things, but you do not observe; opening the ears, but he does no listen.”

If the *ktiv* is the preferred reading, then the infinitive absolute is following a finite verb; however, there is no conjunction preceding פקוח, so this example is not a perfect match. The other verse from Isaiah in his list, 59:4, has been explained linguistically otherwise.

אין קרא בצדק ואין נשפט באמונה בטוח על-תהו ודבר-שוא הרז עמל והוליד און:

“No one speaks justly; no one pleads honestly. They rely upon emptiness, they speak vanity, they conceive mischief and they give birth to trouble.”

¹⁰⁸ Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §35.5.2a.

¹⁰⁹ Paul is inconsistent in his discussion of this verse. In one publication, he prefers the infinitive absolute ראות as the best reading, claiming that it functions in lieu of a finite verb. In his commentary on Isaiah 40-66, however, Paul states that the infinitive absolute functions as a participle, which is not a finite verb and an altogether different syntactic function of the infinitive absolute. Waltke-O’Connor, 597.

According to some, the infinitive absolutes in this verse are quasi-adverbial or even interjections, functioning to render an exclamatory point “in hurried and animated speech.”¹¹⁰ Thus, Paul’s first category of late structural features in Isaiah 40-66 may be evidence for the lateness of this section of the book, though his presentation of the data requires significant qualification.

Paul’s two other syntactic categories for late Biblical Hebrew in Isaiah 40-66 are more certain. He connects one of these two features with Aramaic, namely the “syntactic construction of **היה** plus a participle.”¹¹¹ As true as this thesis is, the category of overlap with Aramaic is more specific than Paul describes. More narrowly, Aramaic influence occurs with the use of **היה** plus the participle to render perfective constructions. Other uses of **היה** plus the participle exist in pre-exilic texts and do not seem to be related in any way to Aramaic influence.¹¹² As Joüon notes, the similar periphrastic construction in Aramaic was a construction of “durative or frequentative action (cf. Dan 5:19)” and was “also employed, very freely, for an instantaneous or unique act.”¹¹³ Examples from late Biblical Hebrew in which this Aramaic influence can be seen include:

Neh 13:5:

וּשְׁם הָיוּ לְפָנִים נִתְּנִים אֶת־הַמְּנַחָה

¹¹⁰ Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §35.5.2a. Paul almost arrives at this adverbial sense as well in his commentary, stating that the role of the infinitive absolutes in this verse is to indicate a “constant and continual manner of behavior” (Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 500).

¹¹¹ Paul, “Signs of Late Biblical Hebrew in Isaiah 40-66,” 294.

¹¹² For example, in Exod 19:11, which belongs to the pre-exilic E source (see Chapter 5), the construction **היה** plus the participle renders the participle as an adjective with **היה** as an independent verb: **והיו נכנים ליום** **השלישי**, “And be ready on the third day.” See other pre-exilic uses and examples in Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §37.7.1.

¹¹³ As quoted in Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §37.7.1.

“And they had formerly stored the grain offerings there.”

Esth 6:1:

ויהיו נקראים

“And they (the chronicles) were read.”

Neh 13:22:

ואמרה ללויים אשר יהיו מטהרים ובאים

“Then I commanded the Levites that they were to purify themselves and come.”

The same linguistic construction, possibly showing Aramaic influence, also appears in a later section of Isaiah. In Isa 59:2, this perfective use of היה plus the participle occurs:¹¹⁴

כי אם־עונותיכם היו מבדלים בינכם לבין אלהיכם וחטאותיכם הסתירו פנים מכם משמוע

“But your iniquities *have made a separation* between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.”

Whether part of Second or Third Isaiah, this verse would have been written at a time when Aramaic was having great influence through the ancient Near East. This construction became a feature not only of late Biblical Hebrew, but also of other dialects of Hebrew as well (as Paul

¹¹⁴ This construction could also reflect long-term duration, meaning “but your iniquities make (continually) a separation between you and God...” If this is the case, then no Aramaic influence should be claimed for this verse.

indicates). It appears often in Rabbinic Hebrew as well as Qumran Hebrew, two other dialects analyzed further below.

Lastly, Paul discusses the use of the finite verb with an object suffix in contrast to the use of the definite direct object marker with a suffix. In other words, in older, Classical Hebrew the definite direct object marker **את** often takes suffixes. In later Biblical Hebrew, however, the object suffixes tend to be attached directly to the verb. Paul provides examples from both the Book of Kings (written in Classical Hebrew with suffixes on the definite direct object marker) and the Book of Chronicles (in which the verb takes the object suffix directly):

2 Kgs 9:28	2 Chr 22:9
ויקברו אתו	ויקברוהו
“and they buried him”	“and they buried him”

2 Kgs 14:20	2 Chr 25:28
וישאנו אתו	וישאנוהו
“and they brought him”	“and they brought him”

In Isaiah 40-66, this trend is particularly noticeable. By Paul’s count, this section of the book has over three hundred verbal forms with the object directly attached to the verb, including the following forms:

Isa 53:3-4: **השבנוהו**, “we (did not) esteem him”

Isa 55:5: ידעוך, “they (did not) know you”

Isa 57:12: יועילוך, “they will (not) profit you”

Isa 57:13: יצילך, “let them deliver you”

Paul claims that only five occurrences of the definite direct object marker with a suffix, as is common in Classical Biblical Hebrew, appear in Isaiah 40-66:

Isa 41:16: תפיץ אתם, “(the tempest) will scatter them”

Isa 42:9: אשמיע אתכם, “I will tell you (of new things)”

Isa 50:1: מכרתי אתכם, “I have sold you”

Isa 65:3: המכעיסים אותי, “they provoke me”

Isa 65:12: ומניתי אתכם, “I will destine you”

To his list of these five verses, another five examples of this phenomenon in Isaiah 40-66 could be added:

Isa 43:22: ולא־אתי קראת יעקב, “You did not call upon me, o Jacob!”

Isa 57:11 (x2): ואותי לא זכרת...ואותי לא תיראי, “you did not remember me...you do not fear me.”

Isa 58:2: וְאוֹתֵי יוֹם יוֹם יִדְרְשׁוּן, “they seek me daily.”

Isa 61:1: יַעַן מָשַׁח יְהוָה אֹתִי לְבָשָׂר עֲנִוּיִם, “because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.”

These additional occurrences of this construction bring the total in Isaiah 40-66 to ten.

Nonetheless, the construction is still comparatively rare, particularly given the hundreds of examples of the preference for attaching the object suffix directly to the verb. Paul’s observation is somewhat complicated by the relative paucity of the forms of the definite direct object marker with suffixes in Isaiah 1-39. Nineteen such forms appear in this section, not a statistically significant distinction between the ten forms in Isaiah 40-66 for itself to indicate the lateness of Isaiah 40-66. Nonetheless, as discussed previously, many parts of Isaiah 1-39 are themselves late additions or redactional layers, the product of the author or authors of Isaiah 40-66, so perhaps one should not expect a major difference in this linguistic feature between these sections of the book.

Paul does not connect this feature of Isaiah 40-66 to Aramaic influence. In another study, however, Na’ama Pat-El has pointed out that the loss of the definite direct object with pronominal suffixes can be attributed to language contact with Aramaic.¹¹⁵ She does not discuss the later layers of Isaiah, but rather on the Book of Chronicles, and some of her examples were included in Paul’s study of Isaiah for comparative measure. Previous to Pat-El’s study, other scholars such as Robert Polzin observed the drastically reduced use of the definite direct object

¹¹⁵ Pat-El, “Syntactic Aramaisms as a Tool for the Internal Chronology of Biblical Hebrew,” in *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew* (edited by Cynthia Miller-Naudé and Ziony Zevit; Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 8; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrans, 2012), 245-63.

marker with pronominal suffixes in the Books of Chronicles.¹¹⁶ It has been estimated that these forms occur only one hundred and fifty times in these books when there is no parallel in the Books of Kings. All but three of these one hundred and fifty occurrences, however, are syntactically obligatory. In other words, the verb in all but three cases is doubly transitive. The first object is added to the end of the verb. Since Biblical Hebrew does not have a construction with two object suffixes added to a verb, the only other placement for second object is through the construction with the definite direct object marker. Examples of this phenomenon in which, syntactically, the definite direct object marker must be employed include the following:

1 Chr 8:8: מן-שלחו אתם, “after he sent (or, his sending) them away”

2 Chr 12:5: אתם עזבתם אתי, “you have abandoned me.”

In the first case, the verb governs two objects, one suffixed on the verb and the other indicated with the definite direct object marker. In the second case, the verb is a second person plural form, a verbal form that only rarely takes a suffix throughout the Hebrew Bible. Pat-El lists the only three occasions in which the Chronicler uses the definite direct object marker optionally:

2 Chr 8:2: בנה שלמה אתם, “Solomon built them.”

2 Chr 24:25: כי-עזבו אתו במחליים, “for they left him with (many) diseases.”

2 Chr 28:23: הם מעזרים אותם, “they help me.”

¹¹⁶ Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976).

The use of the definite direct object marker in 2 Chr 8:2 and 2 Chr 28:23 is consistent with its use in Mishnaic Hebrew. In the latter dialect, the definite direct object marker is used with III-weak verbs and with participles. Moreover, this particle also appears in Mishnaic Hebrew when the object is fronted syntactically before the verb, obviously preventing the object from being verbally suffixed. Many of the examples above from Isaiah also follow these three criteria for the use of the definite direct object marker (Isa 43:22; 57:11 [x2]; 58:2; 61:1; 65:3, 12).

The similar diminishing role in both Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew has previously not been explained as a function of language contact. Pat-El's study, however, has shown that the disuse of the same particle in Aramaic over time can shed light on the similar phenomenon in Biblical Hebrew due to contact-induced change. In Aramaic, the definite direct object marker appears in Iron Age inscriptions as *'yt*, or, if Samalian is a dialect of Aramaic (see Chapter 4), as *wt*. The latter in Samalian form took pronominal suffixes as evidenced in the Hadad inscription (line 28). A similar form, *yt* (vocalized *yāt*), also took pronominal suffixes. These particles with pronominal suffixes, however, do not appear in Official Aramaic texts (with one possible attestation) and only once in the limited corpus of biblical Aramaic does *yāt* have a suffix (Dan 3:12; as Pat-El and Polzin indicate, even in the Hebrew of Daniel there is not one instance of *'et* with a pronoun, though there are twenty-two occurrences of the verb with an object suffix). Several dialects of Aramaic reused this particle for various purposes, but for many dialects it ceased to function as an object marker.¹¹⁷ Instead, in Official Aramaic an innovation of

¹¹⁷ According to Pat-El, the Peshiṭta has only a few occurrences of *yt*, and the form was lost on interpreters who took it to be a verb of being, equivalent to *'t*, an unrelated word ("Syntactic Aramaisms as a Tool for the Internal Chronology of Biblical Hebrew," 253).

the preposition *lamed* was made in which it began to function as the object marker. This *l-* marking the object was already an occasional feature of Akkadian, but perhaps spread due to Aramaic influence (see Chapter 4). A similar use of the *lamed* appears in Biblical Hebrew, at times perhaps reflecting Aramaic influence in later verses, such as Isa 53:11:

יְצַדִּיק צְדִיק עַבְדִּי לְרַבִּים

“with righteousness my servant makes many righteous”

As Paul claims, the *lamed* in this verse is typically understood as marking the direct object,¹¹⁸ though other explanations have been offered, such as the *lamed* of benefit (“he justified the righteous one for the benefit of the many”). There are some peculiarities to this distribution in Hebrew, particularly since many of the verbal forms that govern the *lamed* marking an object are in the causative (*Hifil*) stem. The congruence of this particular stem for a majority of these cases may indicate more than simply Aramaic influence for some of the attestations; nonetheless, the data exist in the later period of Biblical Hebrew with verbs that are not in the causative stem such that, for many examples, Aramaic influence may have been involved.

In this fashion, there was clearly some contact-induced change between the loss of the direct object marker in Aramaic and a later (yet similar) loss of the same particle in Biblical Hebrew (whatever the precise role of the *lamed* as an object marker played in Biblical Hebrew). This Aramaic influence on Hebrew could be seen as part of a process of pattern borrowing. There is no evidence of convergence between Aramaic and Hebrew, or of convergence of Biblical Hebrew to Aramaic, in the sense that Biblical Hebrew would have borrowed inflectional

¹¹⁸ Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 412.

or derivational morphology or core vocabulary so as to place the former on a linguistic spectrum in which it was evolving towards the latter.¹¹⁹ In later forms of Rabbinic Hebrew, particularly the Pesikta de-Rav Kahana, one can trace such a convergence;¹²⁰ however, it has been convincingly shown that Rabbinic Hebrew was a different dialect from Biblical Hebrew, indicating that each variety could have had different levels of contact-induced change over time in exposure to Aramaic.

The Biblical Hebrew evidence, in this regard, more closely resembles the situation of Qumran Hebrew, the dialect of Hebrew preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the past decade of research, scholars have asked why a community (or communities) that likely spoke Aramaic nonetheless wrote their communal religious texts in Hebrew. Scholars have posited a variety of sociolinguistic reasons for this phenomenon.¹²¹ Regardless of which theory is preferred, the sociolinguistic situation at Qumran was likely as follows: one language functioned for identity defining and communicating who is “in” (a version of Hebrew), and the other functioned as a *lingua franca* in the region (Aramaic). This is precisely the situation with the linguistic data presented above for Isaiah 40-66, Late Biblical Hebrew, and Qumran Hebrew as well. Such an alignment is not an argument that Qumran Hebrew is simply a later extension of Late Biblical Hebrew; whether or not such a relationship exists between these dialects is not the point. Rather,

¹¹⁹ Pat-El does not refer to pattern borrowing, but her comment on Aramaic influence of causal subordination (*b-dyl d-*) on biblical Hebrew (בשל ל-/בשל אשר) is apt: “All of the elements of the preposition and conjunction shown above in Jonah and Qoheleth are original Hebrew features, but their new structural configuration as well as the causal function are the result of language contact” (“Syntactic Aramaisms as a Tool for the Internal Chronology of Biblical Hebrew,” 258).

¹²⁰ The often used introduction of Scriptural citation (דכתיב, which consists of the Aramaic subordinator ד and כתב inflected as an Aramaic passive participle) is just such an example, replacing the earlier Mishnaic ככתוב.

¹²¹ See Schniedewind, “Linguistic Ideology in Qumran Hebrew,” 245-55; idem., “Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage,” 235-52; Weitzman, “Why Did the Qumran Community Write in Hebrew?” 35-45. Eibert Tigchelaar has a forthcoming response to these proposals.

post-exilic Hebrew reflected in the Bible and the sectarian manuscripts from Qumran both remain identifiably Hebrew even these dialects show both lexical¹²² and pattern borrowing¹²³ from Aramaic.¹²⁴ As shown in the case of Isaiah 40-66 and Late Biblical Hebrew, typological restructuring of the use of the definite direct object on the pattern of Aramaic's loss of the same particle is also part of this contact situation and is consistent with pattern borrowing.¹²⁵

Significant for this observation is the fact that such pattern borrowing often happens when the dominant language (Aramaic) is a language of administration. The first example of Aramaic used as an administrative text in the ancient Levant is the Aḥiab seal, in which the title of “governor” has the Aramaic emphatic state ending - ʾ. It was also during this period that the Jewish colony in Elephantine, whose writings are preserved in Aramaic, communicated with temple authorities in the Levant in Aramaic about the construction of a temple at the Egyptian colony when a prior one was destroyed. The very temple authorities in the Levant, only a few decades prior still in the Achaemenid period, communicated with Persian official in Aramaic concerning the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple (Ezra 4:7). The extra-biblical, biblical, and linguistic evidence converge to show that the pattern borrowings in Late Biblical Hebrew from Aramaic are indicative of Aramaic's role in the Levant as an administrative language and *lingua franca* in the Persian Period and later, but not before. While some measure of bilingualism

¹²² Elisha Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Harvard Semitic Studies 29; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2008), §600.

¹²³ Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, §400.01; §400.12.

¹²⁴ Raymond's assessment that Aramaic influence on Qumran Hebrew seems “marginal” is correct in a sense: matter borrowings, as in morphological and grammatical elements, are more limited, and it certainly is the case that Aramaic influence may vary from scribe to scribe (*Qumran Hebrew: An Overview of Orthography, Phonology, and Morphology* [Resources for Biblical Study 76; Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014], 231-32). Nonetheless, pattern borrowing, which is more subtle, may suggest contact-induced change at points, a topic not addressed in his work.

¹²⁵ Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, §400.08.

certainly existed in the Levant prior to this time (see the example of the *Rav-Shaqeh* in Chapter 3; see the discussion of the representation of foreign speech in the Pentateuch, a kind of code-switching, in Chapter 5), the foregoing analysis may indicate that such an official role for Aramaic in the Levant did not come into being until the Persian period.

X. Conclusion

The linguistic data cited and discussed in this chapter present a picture of the development of Hebrew through the Book of Isaiah. I set this development in the context of broader changes occurring in Late Biblical Hebrew. The goal has not been to use contact to enter into the debates of identifying Standard or Late Biblical Hebrew. Instead, the data have been analyzed from the perspective of the changing contact situation evident in the ancient Near East more generally and how this larger cultural and political situation affected ancient Israel and Judah as the succession of Mesopotamian empires cast their shadows on the Levant. In this manner, the contact-induced changes in the layers of Isaiah are windows into historical, political, and sociological realities of the people who wrote the Hebrew Bible. The identification of the contact-induced changes in Hebrew as matter and pattern borrowings explains not only the linguistic data but also highlights how much Hebrew had developed as a language of identity.¹²⁶

On the other side of the exile, an event that eradicated the nation itself, such nationalistic hopes had to be rechanneled through new political realities. Moreover, the administrative use of Aramaic that had begun in the Neo-Assyrian times (see Chapter 4) became a part of daily existence in the Levant by the Achaememid period. As the language of imperial administration,

¹²⁶ The beginnings of this process have been explored in the writings of Sanders, in which the language in the Iron Age became a vehicle for creating a national literature, and therefore for creating a national consciousness. See Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*.

it was necessary for inter-group communication. The land formerly belonging to the nation of Israel was inhabited by many population groups after various Neo-Assyrian imperial policies altered the demography of the area (2 Kgs 17:24). The Judeans taken into exile were exposed to a variety of new cultures and people groups and they encountered an increasingly Aramaic-speaking society in Babylon. Inter-community communication would have become increasingly important even as the necessity of maintaining inner-community identity would become more pressing in light of such population mixing. Evidence of this linguistic reality and the anxiety of maintaining cultural and religious identity is particularly apparent in Nehemiah 13, in which the role of language is important (13:23-24), as examined in Chapter 3 and as seen in the quotation at the head of Chapter 5. The concept of pattern borrowings especially in the strata of the Book of Isaiah is, therefore, vital for understanding the history of the people who produced the Hebrew Bible and their evolving contact with Mesopotamian languages and literature.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

I. Contact and History

Language contact is a human phenomenon in the truest sense. It involves real interactions and forces of history. From that perspective, an analysis of language contact in history inevitably involves the study of the literary documents that allow scholars to reconstruct a narrative of the past in which speakers and writers of different languages came into contact. For example, this dissertation began with quotations from Late Antiquity about the original language of paradise. The authors of these texts believed that some form of Syriac was the original language due to historical circumstances from their own period. Centuries earlier, the author of the book of Jubilees offered a different opinion in *Jub.* 12:25-27:

ወይቤለኒ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ አምላክ ፡ ፍታሕ ፡ አፋሁ ፡ ወእዘኒሁ ፡ ይሰማዕ ፡ ወይንብብ ፡
በልሳኑ ፡ በልሳን ፡ እንተ ፡ ታስተርኢ ፡ እስመ ፡ አዕረፈ ፡ እምአፈ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ ውሉደ ፡
ሰብእ ፡ እምዕለተ ፡ ድቀት ፡ ወፈታሕኩ ፡ አፋሁ ፡ ወእዘኒሁ ፡ ወከናፍሪሁ ፡ ወአጎዝኩ ፡
እትናገር ፡ ምስሌሁ ፡ ዕብራይስት ፡ በልሳነ ፡ ፍጥረት ፡ ወነሥአ ፡ መጻሕፍተ ፡ አበዊሁ ፡
ወጽሑፉት ፡ እምንቱ ፡ ዕብራይስጥ ፡ ወደገሞን ፡ ወአጎዝ ፡ ይትመሀሮን ፡ እምአሜሃ ፡ ወአነ
፡ አየድዖ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ ዘይሰአኖ ። ወተምሀሮን ፡ ስድስተ ፡ ወርህ ፡ ዝናም ።

“Then the Lord God said to me: ‘Open his mouth and his ears to hear and speak with his tongue in the revealed language.’ For from the day of the collapse it had disappeared from the mouth(s) of all mankind. I opened his mouth, ears, and lips and began to speak Hebrew with him—in the language of creation. He took his fathers’ books (they were

written in Hebrew) and copied them. From that time he began to study them, while I was telling him everything that he was unable (to understand). He studied them throughout the six rainy months.”¹

The author (or authors) of the Book of Jubilees claim that Hebrew was the original language of creation, was lost for a time after Babel, and then was revealed again to Abraham.² This imaginative and mythical retelling of Hebrew as a revitalized language is consistent with, and perhaps only possible because of, the historical circumstances of the third and second centuries BCE in the Levant when this book was written. During this time, the collapse of the Persian Empire had allowed for a resurgence of Judean nationalism and, with it, a resurgence of Hebrew as an official and administrative language in this area, as seen in various coinages of this era.³ This nationalism would have its ultimate expression in the Hasmonean dynasty as well as the series of rebellions in the Roman era.

This revitalized Hebrew, however, was not a pristine language; nor was it fully concordant with the Hebrew of earlier periods. It instead evinced contact-induced changes from Aramaic (as seen at the end of Chapter 6). This example illustrates well the argument of this dissertation: history influences the development of language, and the history of people groups is often reflected in their languages. In this manner, contact linguists such as Thomason emphasize

¹ VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 1:76-77; 2:73-74.

² Of course, this argument for Hebrew as the language of creation appears in much later sources as well. VanderKam observes that the Byzantine era historian George Synkellus was aware of this belief as reflected in Jubilees (*The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 2:73): ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ λαλῶν τῷ Μωϋσῆ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὅτι τὸν Ἀβραάμ ἐγὼ ἐδίδαξα τὴν Ἑβραϊδα γλῶσσαν κατὰ τὴν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς κτίσεως λαλεῖν τὰ πατρια πάντα ὡς ἐν λεπτῇ κείται Γενέσει, “the angel speaking to Moses said to him, that ‘I taught Abraham the Hebrew language according to which all the forefathers customarily spoke from the beginning of creation,’ as found in little Genesis” (“little Genesis” was how George knew what modern scholars call the Book of Jubilees; Synkellos, *The Chronology of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* [translated with an introduction and notes by William Adler and Paul Tuffin; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002], 139).

³ For the historical and social implications of these verses in Jubilees in Hellenistic Judaism, see Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins Through the Rabbinic Period*, 170-71.

the foundational role of history and historical linguistics for understanding any contact-induced change. As argued in this dissertation, the scholarly supposition of Aramaic intermediation of Mesopotamian literature throughout Israel and Judah's history does not sufficiently take into account these factors and does not capture the linguistic and historical circumstances of Mesopotamia and the Levant.⁴ These circumstances were dynamic. A model of language and literary contact to explain comparative material between the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian literature should be sensitive to the changing realities involved in the production of these texts over time.

II. *The Legacy of Structuralism*

In studying the historical processes of language contact in the Hebrew Bible, scholars should be as comprehensive in their assessments as possible. However, studies focus either on too narrow of a data set (loanwords exclusively), have little to no theoretical grounding in Contact Linguistics, or have too little concern for the details and nuances of languages in history. The logic in these works is often as follows: Hebrew and Aramaic are more closely related languages than Hebrew and Akkadian; ancient Israelites and Judeans had more rudimentary scribal schooling than Akkadian scribes; evidence exists of transmission of Akkadian texts into Aramaic; therefore, Aramaic functioned as a medium through which Mesopotamian texts became known to the authors of the Hebrew Bible in any given historical period. As such, one can still trace the strong structuralist linguistics influence in biblical studies.

⁴ See Morrow's comments in his review of Wright's *Inventing God's Law* ("Legal Interactions: The *Mišpāṭim* and the Laws of Hammurabi," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 70 [2013]: 330-31). The use of Sefire and Tell-Fekheriye to extrapolate a general theory of Aramaic intermediation of Mesopotamian literature and law to Israel and Judah is radically non-historical. Each of these texts involved Akkadian interaction with the local version of Aramaic and therefore cannot be used to hypothesize widespread linguistic intermediation for such an early period. As shown in Chapter 4, such a pan-Aramaic template for contact does not match the data from Aramaic docketts or the sociolinguistic realities of the use of Aramaic in Neo-Assyrian times.

A similar problem existed in linguistics, one that may also be encountered in biblical studies. Ferdinand de Saussure famously states that real experiences and comprehension in time are not important factors for understanding the formal system of a language. He claims that his “definition of a language presupposes the exclusion of everything that is outside its organism or system- in a word, of everything known as ‘external linguistics.’”⁵ In Saussure’s conception, “external linguistics” includes the history and political forces that speakers and writers of a language experience. Further, where loanwords exist in a language due to contact,

“a loan-word no longer counts as such whenever it is studied within a system; it exists only through its relation with, and opposition to, words associated with it, just like any other sign. Knowledge of the circumstances that contributed to the development of the language, generally speaking, is never indispensable. [...] In any case, separation of the two viewpoints [internal versus external linguistics] is mandatory, and the more rigidly they are kept apart, the better it will be.”⁶

Though important, historical factors are not necessary for, and indeed should be kept separate from, analysis of a linguistic system.

Related, writing systems should, according to Saussure, be kept separate from understanding the individual languages. Though the linguist is responsible for studying all languages including ancient languages, and as a result must contend with the fact that his or her access to language will be mediated by writing, Saussure claims that the distinction between writing and language is essential for understanding a linguistic system. The importance of

⁵ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (translated by Wade Baskin; edited by Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy; New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 20; translation of *Cours de linguistique generale* (Paris: Payot, 1949).

⁶ Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 22.

writing systems should be acknowledged, but the real import of linguistics is the study of speech, how it can be reconstructed (with or without writing systems), and, as such, writing has a secondary, if not marginal, role to play. Indeed, for Saussure writing can be detrimental to studying language, since “writing obscures language; it is not a guise for language, but a disguise.”⁷ Moreover,

“the tyranny of writing goes even further. By imposing itself upon the masses, spelling influences and modifies language. This happens only in highly literate languages where written texts play an important role. The visual image leads to wrong pronunciations; such mistakes are really pathological.”⁸

For Saussure, then, writing either hides the true language underneath, and is therefore deceptive (especially to those who want to study historical languages), or it can change language. These changes in languages, then, are not a part of the true development of the system, but rather deviations because of the imposition of writing.

Both of these features (the role of historical and political forces in shaping language as well as the relationship between writing, speech, and language change) have reflexes in biblical studies that this dissertation has attempted to address. The first has been part of an explicit argument sustained throughout the previous chapters: history and literature are indispensable for understanding the development of the Hebrew language, especially Akkadian and Aramaic contact-induced changes. Previous linguistic studies in Biblical Hebrew, particularly those analyzing contact-induced changes, have been drastically unhistorical and unlitrary in their

⁷ Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 30.

⁸ Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 31.

approach.⁹ Phonological cues, which are extremely important, have become the almost exclusive means through which loans have been assessed. With such a small corpus as that of Biblical Hebrew, this criterion makes sense: it is testable and has led to quantifiable results. The focus on phonology, however, has left behind key pieces of evidence from a historical and literary perspective, evidence that in turn should influence how we understand and reconstruct contact-induced changes in the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, many of these studies have lacked a linguistic perspective.¹⁰ Though linguistic theory has not been absent from the study of Biblical Hebrew,¹¹ studies of contact-induced phenomena have been sadly deficient in matters of theory (with the exception of Peacock; see Chapter 2).

The lack of historical grounding in linguistic studies recapitulates many of Saussure's structuralist arguments, even if by unintentional and unconscious processes, in the course of the development of the academic study of the Hebrew Bible and of Biblical Hebrew. Part of the lack of historical information in linguistic studies is surely practical. To include thorough historical backgrounds for literary, political, and material remains would result in unwieldy tasks for those

⁹ Ginsberg's reaction that "it behooves the linguist to describe and classify real languages and dialects as they are, not as they might have been if they had never been subjected to foreign influence" in his review of Franz Rosenthal's *Die Aramäische Forschung seit Th. Nöldeke's Veröffentlichung* reflects this tension ("Aramaic Studies Today," 234).

¹⁰ Cory Michael Ke Peacock, Frank Polak, and Dong-Hyuk Kim have been exceptions on the sociolinguistic side, though with varying degrees of success. See Polak, "Style is More than the Person: Sociolinguistics, Literary Culture, and the Distinction Between Written and Oral Narrative," in *Biblical Hebrew Studies in Chronology and Typology* (edited by Ian Young; New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 38-103. See Carr's critiques of Polak's use of sociolinguistic theory to find diachronic layers in Biblical Hebrew (*The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction*, 126 n 56). See also Kim, *Early Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew, and Linguistic Variability: A Sociolinguistic Evaluation of the Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*. See also Polak's assessment of Kim's work in *Review of Biblical Literature*, July, 2013.

¹¹ Joseph L. Malone, "Wave Theory, Rule Ordering, and Hebrew-Aramaic Segholation," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91 (1971): 44-66. See also Robert Hezron on principles for archaic heterogeneity, morphological innovations, and the genetic subclassing of languages ("Two Principles of Genetic Reconstruction," *Lingua* 38 [1976]: 89-108). See also the work of Robert Holmstedt in applying generative grammar to biblical Hebrew ("Issues in the Linguistic Analysis of a Dead Language, with Particular Reference to Ancient Hebrew," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 6 (2006): 1-21; "The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew: A Linguistic Analysis," PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2002).

scholars attempting to be comprehensive in their analysis. As a response to this problem, I have provided fewer passages for detailed inquiry in this dissertation, even as, in doing so, I hope to create more space for discussion of historical, literary, and theoretical studies of the examples examined herein. The inadequacies of a simple structuralist linguistic approach have become apparent in linguistics generally. Such inadequacies are particularly evident in the analysis of a text such as the Hebrew Bible, which involves a complex array of issues. Comparative and contact studies of the biblical text should take into account its long history of transmission and the historical context of its authors, interacting with other and more dominant ancient Near Eastern cultures. The production of the biblical books entailed diachronic processes of compilation that result in stratification of texts from different periods and regions in ancient Israel and Judah. The historical narrative in the text is an ideological portrayal of Israel's and Judah's past that was meant to create a sense of identity in a particular political crisis but which also creates tension with the results of modern archaeology. These are only a few factors involved in a critical study of the Hebrew Bible. Studies that are essentially linguistically structuralist are insufficient to analyze these facets of biblical literature. The linguistic system must, of course, be analyzed on the basis of internal considerations; but, the language must also be treated as a means of access to the experiences of Israel and Judah in history. Understanding the role of contact with other cultures in that history is of great value for the study of the Hebrew Bible.

The examples in this dissertation supply further confirmation that Saussure's structuralist views are too restrictive. First, despite his claim that loanwords simply become part of an internal system to be analyzed on its own terms and binaries, nonce borrowings and code

switching examples such as Gen 6:14 indicate otherwise. Although the lexeme כפר phonologically and morphologically matches Biblical Hebrew grammar, its one-time use in this verse cannot be explained purely on internal grounds. Rather, an appeal to other ancient Near Eastern flood narratives elucidates its appearance in this verse. The same could be claimed for the verb נגף in Exod 21:35, which matched a known Hebrew verb elsewhere but underwent a semantic expansion through contact with other ancient Near Eastern texts.

Second, the examples in Isaiah show that the function within texts of contact-induced change is only understandable in light of real political and historical events. In the shadow of shifting Mesopotamian empires (Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian), the language of the various strata in the Book of Isaiah reflects the experiences of the Judean community that was threatened, exiled, and then restored to its homeland. The linguistic contact evident in the biblical record attests to the struggle to find an identity and to connect current experiences with the past. Even if this contact does not change the conception of the development and genetic subclassing of Hebrew as a language, the examples in Isaiah attest to the beginning of a very real structural change in the language starting in the Neo-Babylonian period: while contact with Akkadian sources remains at the level of borrowing/language maintenance due to recipient language agentivity, the contact situation with Aramaic, though initially similar, underwent a drastically different process later in time.

This difference has not been well observed and explained linguistically by biblical scholars. Yet the distinction is a real one: the literature of the Hebrew Bible that developed during the Iron Age II period was formed at a time when Akkadian remained a literarily prestigious language, even as it was also increasingly supplanted by Aramaic as the spoken

language in Mesopotamia. In Chapter 4, this dynamic process has been traced from the linguistic evidence unearthed in Mesopotamia. In a similar fashion, Hebrew eventually declined owing to increased contact with Aramaic, the first stages of which are evident in the Isaianic record. This process is best described as matter and pattern borrowing. As argued in this dissertation, these historical and political circumstances cannot be divorced from a linguistic study of contact in the ancient Near East and the Bible. Saussure's view of language is inadequate for understanding the full history of Biblical Hebrew, especially in such parts that require "external linguistic" factors to make sense of "internal linguistic" data (to use Saussure's terms).

III. Scribalism, Orality, and Contact

If the scribes of Israel and Judah did not have archives of Akkadian tablets at their disposal in the Levant and even if such scribes were not fluent in Akkadian, it is not the case that direct contact could not have occurred. The changes resulting from contact with Akkadian that were studied in Chapter 5 would not require extensive, bilingual contact. Additionally, as argued in Chapter 4, contact between Akkadian and local dialects of Aramaic suggest that there is no monolithic Aramaic template for Assyrian political propaganda and language contact. As suggested by the analysis of 2 Kgs 18-19, there was a memory of the 701 BCE invasion of Judah by the Assyrians under Sennacherib according to which the Assyrian envoys initiated their threats in "Judahite," or the local language, and not in Aramaic. The reaction of the Judeans was not surprise because the Assyrians were breaking protocol, nor was the Judean appeal to Aramaic indicative of how the Assyrians would normally communicate in history (as much as such a petition might be an expression of the beginnings of the function of Aramaic as the *lingua franca* at this time). Rather, the Judean appeal to use Aramaic has a literary function to highlight

the effectiveness of the Assyrian war propaganda in using the local language and the ensuing fear and terror that such direct use of Hebrew would have on the local population.

The passage in 2 Kgs 18-19 encodes the oral discourse between the Judeans and Assyrians in writing, and therefore is related to the second, and implicit, problem in biblical studies that this dissertation seeks to address. Much as Saussure made too strong of a distinction between language and writing systems, so also biblical scholars have fallen prey to unnecessary and linguistically unmerited distinctions, attempting to distinguish between the oral and the written origins of much of biblical literature. Sociolinguistic studies such as Frank Polak's have made excellent advances in characterizing speech in the biblical text in order to assess the imitation of oral communication. Nonetheless, the diachronic distinctions he makes (texts that sound oral are older and have simpler syntax, whereas longer nominal chains of texts are later and part of literary circles) have been shown to be false.¹² Additionally, Susan Niditch has helpfully reminded biblical scholars of the need to take orality in the transmission and origin of the biblical record seriously.¹³ In doing so, however, she overplayed her argument in using her theory of orality to attempt a response against the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch (JEDP), as R. E. Friedman has observed.¹⁴

These overly rigid divisions between the text and the spoken background of the Hebrew Bible are analogous to the distinction between writing systems and language that Saussure attempted to maintain. Coulmas rebutted not only Saussure but also Saussure's enduring legacy in general linguistics. As Coulmas has claimed, writing is inescapable, and while not the same

¹² Polak, "Style is More than the Person: Sociolinguistics, Literary Culture, and the Distinction Between Written and Oral Narrative," 38-103; Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction*, 126 n 56.

¹³ Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature*.

¹⁴ Friedman, "Introduction" (pages not numbered).

thing as speech, the very dependency on writing for the study of speech patterns and the communication of the results of these studies shows how pivotal writing systems are for the understanding of language even if writing is not language itself. As Coulmas claims, writing is a system for “the materialization of language”:¹⁵

...the invention of writing is the answer to the limitations of speech to the here and now. Thus, by acquiring a written form, the expressive power of a language is realized to a greater extent than speech only. ...both written and spoken language are forms of language. ...it can be argued that both speech and writing draw on the same expressive potential of language but in so doing make different selections.¹⁶

Both speech and writing, therefore, are necessary for the study of language, even if in different ways.

In a similar manner, the divide between oral and written registers (to use Niditch’s terms) in the Hebrew Bible may in some sense represent not two different modes of studying the origins of the Hebrew Bible, but rather two different, though often overlapping, poles on one spectrum of literature. On the one hand, this application to biblical studies may be limited. The nature of the evidence forces the scholar to access this literature through writing, since such writing is the only medium through which this literature is available. On the other hand, the analogy is useful since it is a reminder not to make too stark a contrast between orality and literacy. Recent studies such as Niditch’s and Carr’s helpfully introduce renewed emphasis on orality and memory in the origin and preservation of many biblical stories; however, their strident stance against theories of literary production (JEDP generally in Niditch’s case and Neo-Documentarianism in Carr’s case)

¹⁵ Coulmas, *The Writing Systems of the World*, 272.

¹⁶ Coulmas, *The Writing Systems of the World*, 272-73.

result in misunderstandings of the positions against which they are arguing.¹⁷ As has been pointed out in Niditch's case, many of her criteria for finding the "oral register" of biblical texts have also been used to discover literary, authorial artistry (such as repetition, used both in Niditch's work as well as in Robert Alter's work on literary, authorial artistry in written works).¹⁸ As John Van Seters observed, "one may note the survival of formulae, epithets, and repetition over many centuries in texts...that are hardly dependent upon oral performance."¹⁹ Rosalind Thomas has articulated a similar argument for the literature of ancient Greece.²⁰ According to Thomas, many of the criteria that Niditch adduces to find an "oral register" are not the sole property of orality, nor necessary and sufficient criteria for finding such a register in written texts.

Synchronic and diachronic complexities enter into the picture here as well, complexities unconsidered in Niditch's work. For example, Greek historiography in the fifth century arose in the context of a largely oral society, and one may certainly claim an oral background for the origins of these works; however, historiographers in the Hellenistic period had access to these works in written form.²¹ Additionally, both Ruth Finnegan and Gregory Nagy have found evidence of contemporaneous composition of oral and written texts in performance, or oral performances based on previously existing written compositions.²² In these cases (Nagy focuses

¹⁷ Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word*, 110-117; Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 111-17.

¹⁸ Van Seters, "Review: Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature by Susan Niditch," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118 (1998): 436-37; Robert C. Culley, "Review: Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature by Susan Niditch," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 717-18; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (revised and updated; New York: Basic Books, 2011).

¹⁹ Van Seters, "Review: Oral World and Written Word," 437.

²⁰ Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 29-51.

²¹ Van Seters, "Review: Oral World and Written Word," 437.

²² Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (revised edition; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 15; Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance, and Social Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 52-87.

on Homeric epics, Finnegan on cross-cultural comparative studies), the relationship between the written and the oral is much more complex than Niditch would have it seem.

In this fashion, social and political histories are foundational for understanding the development and uses of language.²³ Much like the relationship between writing and speech, the connection between orality and literacy is not just a divide that, through the unfortunate circumstances of history, is fossilized in writing. Rather, orality and writing are overlapping ends on the spectrum of literature. It is not the case, though, that the distinction is irrelevant. As indicated in Chapters 5 and 6, Akkadian contact visible in the Pentateuch and in First Isaiah shows an awareness of a foreign source text; whether the historical basis of the change was literary or through the oral transmission of the text, the locus of comparison and access to a meaningful contrast of a term in its Akkadian and biblical context happens through an understanding of the use of the item within its literary and historical setting. The Aramaic contact-induced changes in Second Isaiah and later show a different, less literarily embedded character, and as such may be indicative of a more oral background of contact than apparent in the Akkadian situation (though written contact was surely a factor, too). Finally, the representation of foreign speech in the Pentateuch and Isaiah through Aramaic-like feature is also witness to the role of orality and contact. Nonetheless, since “oral register” (to use Niditch’s phrase) and literary artistry overlap so well in the written material available to us, attempts to create criteria to separate the two from each other too starkly can create false impressions.

²³ See Matras’ “functionalist” approach to language contact, which is based on a more general functionalist approach to language in which language is used to communicate or achieve something, to function in real space and time. In other words, “such a perspective rests on a view of language as social activity and of communication as goal-driven. Consequently, it views speakers as actors who use language in order to achieve goals, and it attributes the selection of entire codes and of individual structures of language— constructions, word-forms, intonation, and so on— to goal-oriented activity.” Matras, *Language Contact*, 3.

The foregoing studies in the linguistic theory of language contact have brought to the fore the question of how Mesopotamian traditions became a part of the Hebrew Bible. The historical record of contact, in particular the linguistic information from Mesopotamia, indicates overlapping yet distinct processes of language change in the Hebrew Bible. Both Akkadian and Aramaic were borrowed into Biblical Hebrew as a function of recipient language agentivity, which makes distinguishing which language was the origin of contact more difficult since the same process is in play. With additional historical information and linguistic analysis, however, one can better define the processes through which this contact occurred.

The concerns for both a more rigorous combination of historical and linguistic approaches to ancient Hebrew as well as a softening of the overly wrought distinction between writing and orality is also apparent in a recent work by Steven D. Fraade. He claims that understanding multilingualism in Palestine in Late Antiquity is not simply a matter for philosophical or theological interests (one might also add that it is not solely for linguistic reasons either); rather, a comprehensive understanding of multilingualism and language use has “direct practical consequence.”²⁴ In other words, such studies properly carried out are not isolatable to one or another facet of society, but instead can provide glimpses into the historical realities of the peoples and societies being studied. Additionally, Fraade states that attempting to get insight into the lives of people behind ancient texts through recapturing oral usages of language, or “spokenness,” in contrast to written language, is a mistaken approach. Rather, attempting to find a sense of orality behind rabbinic texts is “reductive,” and “neither the most

²⁴ Fraade, “Before and After Babel: Linguistic Exceptionalism and Pluralism in Early Rabbinic Literature,” *Diné Israel* 28 (2011): 33. See also his “Language Mix and Multilingualism in Ancient Palestine: Literary and Inscriptional Evidence,” *Jewish Studies* 48 (2012): 2; “Rabbinic Views on the Practice of Targum, and Multilingualism in the Jewish Galilee of the Third-Sixth Centuries,” in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (edited by Lee I. Levine; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 253-86.

important question to ask, nor the one most susceptible to being answered.”²⁵ Fraade seeks to appreciate the “variety of linguistic expression” of which such “spokenness” is a part.²⁶

The historical period in which Fraade situates his study is in Late Antiquity in Palestine, when Greek and Latin would have been part of the multilingual situation in this region. Yet contact between Hebrew and Aramaic is also an essential part of his examination: it is clear from the Dead Sea Scrolls and Mishnaic Hebrew that Hebrew was still an actively used language, yet it is also clear from indications in the New Testament,²⁷ as well as from later rabbinic writings, that Aramaic was the language in use for daily conversation in the Levant. The issue for Fraade is to describe how these two Semitic languages related to one another by real people in time. He finds the decision as to whether Hebrew or Aramaic was more “native” or “vernacular” during this period to be an unhelpful dichotomy. Instead, he opts for the framework that Max Weinreich proposed, namely “internal Jewish bilingualism.” By this term, Fraade highlights “the interpenetration of the two ‘Jewish languages,’ even as they function in separate, but overlapping and variable, discursive domains.”²⁸

I have sought to show in this dissertation that a similar internal bilingualism occurred in Mesopotamia, and so any contact study between the authors of the Hebrew Bible and

²⁵ Fraade, “Language Mix and Multilingualism in Ancient Palestine,” 6.

²⁶ See the similar sentiments expressed above on the notions of orality and writing in the origins of biblical literature. See Ska for a brief statement about the risks, if not impossibility, of rediscovering oral traditions behind a written text, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 181. See also P. S. Kirkpatrick, *The Old Testament and Folklore Studies* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 62; Sheffield, England: Sheffield University Press, 1988). For a mediating view, see A. F. Campbell, “The Reported Story: Midway between Oral Performance and Literary Art,” *Semeia* 46 (1989): 77-85.

²⁷ In Mark 5:41, Jesus says *ταλιθά κουμι*, a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic **תליתא קומי**, “little girl, rise!” When Jesus cries out “my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” in Matt 27:46 and Mark 15:34, “my God” in Mark (Ἐλωὶ) and “you have forsaken me” (σαβαχθαυνί) in both Mark and Matthew are clearly Aramaic forms (**אלוהי** and **שבחתני**, respectively), not the Hebrew found in Ps 22:2 which Jesus is quoting (**אלי** and **עזבתני**).

²⁸ Fraade, “Language Mix and Multilingualism in Ancient Palestine,” 6.

Mesopotamian thought and literature in the Iron Age (when such contact is well attested) needs to take into consideration both Aramaic and Akkadian (the languages of Mesopotamia). Previous biblical studies have tended to focus on Aramaic mediation of such traditions because of linguistically structuralist assumptions. On occasion, the authors of these studies make passing appeal to the Sefire treaty and the fact that some documents were translated from Akkadian into Aramaic. Yet a historically informed sociolinguistic approach to this contact situation shows that these assumptions are false and that the history of interaction between these languages is much more complex than has been acknowledged. It would be equally erroneous to focus solely on Akkadian loanwords over against those from Aramaic. During the Iron Age II period onward, one can understand contact between the authors and scribes responsible for the production and preservation of the Hebrew Bible on the one hand and scribes from Mesopotamia on the other only in light of an increasingly bilingual Mesopotamian society.

One of the implications of this historical approach to language contact lies in the spectrum of diachronic frameworks. In other words, Fraade's observation and study charts a historical moment further down the chronological spectrum than that presented in this dissertation; nonetheless, the contact situation presented in this study is part of a period that evolved into the time of Fraade's analysis. The start of this Aramaic and Hebrew contact situation in which features of the former were transferred to the latter occurred in and especially after the Babylonian exile. As seen in Chapter 5, the pre-exilic biblical authors were able to mimic the speech of Arameans, though the time period in which Aramaic began to influence Hebrew as a language system was in the Babylonian and particularly the Persian eras. Such a historical moment of intense contact means that texts such as Second Isaiah are particularly

important since they bear witness to the initial stages of this interaction. This dissertation provides linguistic explanations and frameworks for the process of contact between various dialects of Hebrew and Aramaic that ultimately lasts until Late Antiquity, at which time Hebrew ceased to function as a vernacular, only to be revived in modern times. The beginnings charted in this study find their historical endpoint around the time under examination in Fraade's study.

The chronological spectrum just delineated (from the Babylonian exile to Late Antiquity) for the contact situation between Hebrew and Aramaic has been generally recognized. What has been missing, however, has been a framework for understanding the development of the languages over time. I have attempted to show in this dissertation that matter and pattern borrowing is an appropriate framework for understanding the Aramaic-Hebrew contact situation within the biblical period, from the first loan words and phrases in Second Isaiah to the more pervasive structural influence in the Book of Chronicles, well documented in Pat-El's recent study.²⁹ The point, then, in understanding this contact-induced trajectory is not simply at the level of the lexeme or morpheme, valuable though such information may be. When seen in this framework, the relationship between Hebrew and Aramaic, starting in Second Isaiah and then becoming clearer in Chronicles, allows this multilingual situation to be situated in a perspective that coheres with data from other periods, discussed in detail in Fraade's work.

This dissertation has thus sought to define and explain the contact situation between the authors of various parts of the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian languages. By incorporating the existence of literary strata in the biblical texts, one can correlate the linguistic data with the better known bilingual situation in Mesopotamia in order to chart how Mesopotamian traditions, literature, and language entered into the Hebrew Bible. This diachronic approach takes seriously

²⁹ Pat-El, "Syntactic Aramaisms as a Tool for the Internal Chronology of Biblical Hebrew," 245-63.

the changing linguistic landscape of the Mesopotamian heartland as the context for the contact-induced changes seen in the Bible. Moreover, the Akkadian and Aramaic contact situation, both in the periphery of the empire in Syria and in the Mesopotamian core (Assur, Babylon, and Persia) provides a solid historical background for tracing these changes. The work of Fraade analyzed above is an excellent reminder that this contact situation was ongoing and did not stop in the Persian period.

IV. *Language Contact and the Study of the Hebrew Bible*

A final implication of this study is the role of other forms of critical analysis of the biblical text along with linguistic studies. For a variety of reasons, methods of study of the Hebrew Bible are often kept separate. Sometimes such a division of labor results from the limitations of academic study; the complicated history of the text and the many issues involved in understanding its history and development necessitate some element of specialization. Yet if no scholar in the modern era can master all of the languages, theories, primary texts, and secondary literature that have become part of studying the Bible, over-specialization has sometimes kept the methodological approaches to biblical studies unnecessarily separate. The recent work of Levinson, for example, provides a welcome synthesis of higher criticism and reception history of the biblical text, two areas of study that have oftentimes existed independently in the academic study of the Hebrew Bible.³⁰ Levinson's book adeptly shows how historical criticism of the Hebrew Bible and the study of the reception history of the biblical text are mutually informative of one another and how insights from one approach can greatly aid the other. Indeed, while each method, approach, and time period of study deserves its own domain

³⁰ Levinson, *A More Perfect Torah: At the Section of Philology and Hermeneutics in Deuteronomy and the Temple Scroll* (Critical Studies in the Hebrew Bible 1; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013).

and independent inquiries, this dissertation has been an attempt to emphasize the value of combining historical, literary, and linguistic perspectives on key texts and issues. The result of considering a few biblical texts from a multiplicity of disciplinary angles has provided both a nuanced understanding of how language contact occurred in the various sources of the Pentateuch and Isaiah and an appraisal of the text-critical alterations that resulted when such contact-induced changes were misunderstood in the transmission of the text.³¹ Such an approach views language contact as a linguistic phenomenon that has implications both for Higher (historical-critical) and text criticism. Language contact changed over time as attested in the various strata of the biblical texts, and over time some of the contact-induced changes functioned as interference and were not borrowed more permanently into the general Hebrew language of the time. As such, those transmitting and preserving the text occasionally altered nonce borrowings that were not recognizable as Hebrew words or grammatical constructions. Such alterations are apparent either in ancient versions that attempt to make sense of the Hebrew text, in textual variants within the Hebrew manuscript tradition, or in grammatically/semantically irregularities in the Hebrew text (often resulting from scribal attempts to turn a foreign word or phrase into something closer to Hebrew idiom). The study of reception history is also fruitful inasmuch as ancient commentators were puzzled by certain phrases, at times claiming that a word or construction was unknown in Hebrew.

Such an interdisciplinary approach, combining Contact Linguistics with various methods of biblical studies, necessarily limits the number of texts that can be examined in a study.

Moreover, more concentrated and technical studies on any given area of linguistic contact

³¹ For the role of linguistics in the text-critical analysis of the Hebrew Bible, see Robert D. Holmstedt, "The Nexus between Text Criticism and Linguistics: A Case Study from Leviticus," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132 (2013): 473-94. See also Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*.

beyond loanwords, such as calquing and code switching, will help to provide a more complete picture of language contact in the Hebrew Bible. It has been the goal of this dissertation to be selective in the data considered to facilitate more comprehensive (literary, historical, text critical, and linguistic) analysis and more suggestive conclusions for lines of transmission and contact between Israel, Judah, and Mesopotamia. I draw conclusions from the evidence available and the most reasonable inferences given the state of the field. The thesis of this dissertation is thus both testable and falsifiable. The examinations herein and the conclusions drawn from them can be tested with future works and assessed in light of the increasing numbers of data from the ancient Near East. Even if the trajectories and frameworks prove to be incorrect— even if, for example, it is discovered that Aramaic had more of a mediating role for certain Mesopotamian genres and texts in the Hebrew Bible and that Akkadian was more influential even later in the post-exilic period than examined in this study— it is still hoped that the combination of linguistic data, historical critical perspectives, and contact-linguistic (as well as sociolinguistic) theory has moved the field forward beyond previous assumptions and linguistically structuralist constraints.

The comparative approach through literary and language contact is, in this manner, the correlate in written texts of conclusions reached about pre-historical complex societies. As Geoff Emberling has argued, “Civilizations themselves are not self-identifying groups.”³² In other words, identity is often forged in contrast to another entity, and identifying distinct societies in pre-historical periods is not simply a matter of collating the presence or absence of technologies,

³² Emberling, “Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives,” *Journal of Archaeological Research* 5 (1997): 308. For the use of this principle for studying the archaeology of early Israel, see Avraham Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (Approaches to Anthropological Archaeology; Oakville, Connecticut: Equinox, 2006).

but rather how material remains (which are often shared between cultures) were used in distinctive ways. In a similar manner, the contact between Israel and Judah on the one hand and Mesopotamia on the other produced shared linguistic and literary phenomena, even as Israel and Judah embedded these features in their own unique narratives. It is hoped that a more extensive analysis of other texts of the Hebrew Bible in this fashion will confirm the conclusions of this dissertation. If so, then a comprehensive picture would begin to emerge of the biblical authors' evolving engagement with Mesopotamian traditions to forge and craft a unique identity in light of dominant cultures and imperial systems.

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