The Amarna Letters from Canaan

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HISTORICAL SETTING

The Amarna letters are named after the site in Middle Egypt where they were discovered. Tell al-Amarna, or ancient Akhetaten, was the city chosen by Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV) to be his capital when he left Thebes.

By the fourteenth century BCE, the Egyptian Empire was dominating the Levant up to the borders of the Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni. This was an age of turbulence and disorder in the Levant. Both the Mitannian kingdom and the more remote political powers, like Assyria and Babylonia, maintained good relations with the Egyptians. But another dominant power was rising to threaten the northern borders of the Egyptian Empire. These were the Hittites, who, in the course of the Amarna period, had gained enough power to attract to their side the important strategic area of the Amurrite (Amorite) state. Peace and political tranquillity did not prevail within the Asiatic territories of the empire. Power struggles erupted among the local city chieftains and between leading personalities of individual cities. Moreover, a class of outsiders known by their West Semitic label *'apiru* (or *habiru*) further complicated the political situation by encouraging diverse populations to rebel against their own leaders.

Resident commissioners, who could be either Egyptian or Canaanite, supervised the country on behalf of the pharaoh from a number of principal cities in Canaan. These commissioners did not have complete authority over the leaders of the Canaanite city-states; for these city-state leaders tried to plead their cases directly to the pharaoh in exchanges of letters with him. This correspondence forms the bulk of the tablets that now constitute the Amarna corpus.

The tablets themselves became known to the scholarly world thanks to an accidental discovery, probably in 1887. According to the reported history of the find, we owe their initial discovery to a peasant woman who was digging among the ruins of the ancient site for compost to cultivate her field. After this woman sold some tablets she had found to an interested client, the local inhabitants started digging the place, and managed to find many more tablets. These tablets eventually found their way to antique dealers and to museums. Following the original discovery, systematic excavations yielded some further tablets. There are now about 380 texts and fragments preserved in diverse museums, mainly in Europe and in Egypt.

An important part of the Amarna corpus is letters sent into the Egyptian court by Egypt's vassals in the Levant. Other letters were sent on behalf of the kings of Babylonia, Assyria, Khatti, Mitanni and Alashiya (Cyprus), and from minor princes and rulers of the Near East. In addition, some copies or drafts of letters sent from Egypt

on behalf of the Egyptian king have been preserved. The find includes not only letters but also some material of use to Egyptian students learning Akkadian.

THE CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

Although Egypt had a written and an epistolary tradition as ancient as that of Mesopotamia, the correspondence of the Egyptian court, both for its international affairs and with its vassals in southwest Asia, was conducted not in the language of the Egyptian Empire, but in the Akkadian language and in the Akkadian cuneiform script (two of the Amarna letters were written in Hittite; one in Hurrian). Perhaps the internal correspondence of the Egyptian Empire with its vassals was not written in Egyptian script or language because of the esoteric character of the Egyptian linguistic, scriptural, and cultural lore. Another probable reason is that there was an old and widespread non-Egyptian tradition of letter-writing and of writing in general in Syria and Palestine.

Cuneiform writing in the regions of Syria and Palestine is documented from the third millennium BCE. At Ebla (modern Tell Mardikh in Syria), cuneiform documents in Sumerian and Semitic languages were written in the third millennium for internal administration. Byblos (modern Jubayl), a coastal city well represented in the Amarna archive, has yielded a cuneiform document of the third millennium. Second-millennium sites outside Mesopotamia are even more bountiful in this respect. The Old Babylonian dialect of the Akkadian language became the norm for written communication throughout the entire Near East. Akkadian, or rather one of its branches called Peripheral Akkadian, served during the second millennium as the *lingua franca*, the diplomatic and trading language, of the ancient Near East.

Peripheral Akkadian was, in effect, much more than a language used for intercultural communication. Until relatively late in the second millennium, in many of the societies of western Asia, it was the main language used to preserve knowledge and information; for some of these cultures, in fact, it may have been the only language they wrote. Thus, administrative documents in cities like Emar (modern Meskene) and Alalakh (modern Tell Atchana) were written mainly in Akkadian, and no written document in the local languages has so far been recovered. The "autobiography" of King Idrimi of Alalakh is written in this peculiar form of Akkadian. (See "Autobiographies in Ancient Western Asia" below.) In the Syrian coastal city of Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra), the local language began to be written (alongside Akkadian) only after an alphabetic writing system using wedges impressed on clay tablets had been developed. Even after written forms were developed for local languages of Anatolia, Syria, and Canaan, Akkadian still served as a common administrative language. From Hazor in northern Canaan, a legal suit formulated in Akkadian has been recovered. In Hebron of southern Canaan, a list of sheep, also written in cuneiform, has been unearthed. Spreading outward from Mesopotamia, Akkadian served not only as a vehicle for diplomatic relations but also as a transmitter of Mesopotamia's ancient cultural heritage. All over western Asia, scribes were trained using literary texts in Akkadian and sometimes also in Sumerian. To varying extents, the Sumero-Akkadian culture was assimilated throughout the entire Near East.

By the time of the Amarna period, people of the eastern Mediterranean regions had been bilingual—in some regions multilingual—for centuries; they wrote Mesopotamian languages, but conversed in their local languages. It is not surprising, therefore, that Sumero-Akkadian culture penetrated the West Semitic dialects in both language and style. Beside words such as "chair" (Akkadian *kussī-*, Sumerian GU.ZA, Aramaic and Arabic *kursi*, Hebrew *kissē*), "sailor" (Sumerian MÁ.LAH$_4$, Akkadian *malāḫ-*, Hebrew *mallāḥ*), "palace" (Sumerian É.GAL, literally: "big house," Akkadian *ekall-*, Hebrew *hēkāl*), or "price" (Akkadian *maḫīr-*, Hebrew *meḥîr*), a significant number of technical terms were taken directly from Akkadian, and occasionally also from Sumerian: "scribe" (Sumerian DUB.SAR, Akkadian *ṭupšarr-*, Aramaic, and via Aramaic also Hebrew, *ṭipsār*); "written document, letter," later "book" in Hebrew (*sēper*, which recalls Akkadian *šipr-*, denoting "sending" of persons, messengers, and messages). From the latter root,

Hebrew also possesses the more regular and ancient term for "scribe," namely *sōpēr*.

STYLE, PHRASEOLOGY, IDIOM

As is common for correspondence in most cultures, Amarna letter-writing was formulaic. The Amarna scribes inherited, and occasionally adapted, conventions of correspondence derived from Mesopotamia. The conventions of written correspondence were rooted in oral exchanges of information.

Formulaic structure and conventions reflected the social status and stratification of the respective correspondents. For example, in these letters, a man with a lower status would always address his superior by the title "my lord." Kinship terminology was used metaphorically to indicate the relative social status of the respective correspondents. Terms of address like "father," "son," "brother," and "family" are common in the letters. Aziru of Amurru addresses Tutu, an Egyptian official to whom he is not related, as follows: "To Tutu, my lord, my father: Message of Aziru, your son, your servant: I fall at the feet of my father. May all be well with my father" (EA 158).

Later in the same letter, Aziru finds it suitable to emphasize the familial, respectful relationship that, in his view, should exist between the two correspondents: "Look, you are my father and my lord, and I am your son. The lands of Amurru are your lands, and my house is your house. Whatever your request may be, write here, and I shall indeed give your entire request."

A Letter of Ammunira of Beirut to the Pharaoh (EA 141)

Say to the king, my lord, my sun,
my divinity, the breath of my life:
Message of Ammunira,
Man of Beirut, your servant, the dust (gloss: *ʿaparu*) of your feet:

I fall at the feet of the king, my lord, my sun, my divinity,
the breath of my life, 7 and 7 times.
Furthermore, I have heard
the words of the tablet of the king, my lord,
my sun, my divinity, the breath of my life,
and the heart of your servant,
the dust of the feet of the king, my lord,
my sun and my divinity, the breath of my life, rejoices
very much, since the breath of the king, my lord,
my sun, my divinity, went out
toward his servant, the dust of his feet.

Furthermore, that the king,
my lord, my sun, wrote to his servant,
the dust of his feet:
"be prepared for
the troops of the king, your lord"—
I have heard very well,
and now I am prepared
with my horses and
with my chariots and with
everything
that there is with
the servant of the king, my lord, for
the (arrival of) the troops of the king, the lord.
May the troops of the king, my lord, my sun, my divinity,
smash the head of his enemies,
and may the two eyes of your servant watch
the life (= victory) of the king, my lord.

Furthermore, behold: The ⟨troops⟩ of the king, the lord,
my sun, my divinity, the breath of my life,
will treat his servant favorably.
Now, I am the servant of the king, the lord,
and the stool of his feet.
Here I guard
the city of the king, my lord, my sun,
the breath of my life,
and its wall (gloss: *ḥōmītu*)
until I see with (my own) two eyes
the troops of the king, my lord
. . .

This obsequiousness is conventional for people making requests. Thus, Abdikheba of Jerusalem addresses even the scribe of the Egyptian king as his "lord" when, in a postscript to a letter to the pharaoh, he asks the scribe in Egypt to "bring good words to the king," that is, to present his case favorably before the pharaoh.

Formulaic phrases and sentences, whether in opening addresses or in the body of a letter, harmonize with the transmitted message, the correspondents tending to use suitable formulas that advance their immediate purposes. The correspondence mostly rehearses either of two recurring general themes. The first includes a variety of requests of the pharaoh, for example, to send goods and slaves or to prepare for a forthcoming Egyptian military campaign. The second includes the complaints or requests of Egyptian vassals for help against the rulers of neighboring cities, marauders, or the pharaoh's own commissioners. In the correspondence from the north, the threat of the rising Hittite Empire and of its allies from within the immediate vicinity is commonly bemoaned.

According to the Amarna letters from Palestine, the authority of some of the loyal and sincere vassals of the Egyptians in Canaan was progressively weakening. The most loyal, Ribhaddi (Rib-Haddu), ruler of Byblos in northern Canaan, fled to Beirut when his own people joined Aziru, the king of the rising state of Amurru. (Ironically, toward the end of his career, Ribhaddi was put back on the throne by none other than his—and the pharaoh's—bitterest enemy, Aziru of Amurru.) Ribhaddi's large correspondence with the Egyptian court is full of detailed complaints regarding his depressing situation, such as: "Why are you (the pharaoh) silent (and do not speak)?"; "all my cities have been captured"; "all the countries have joined the Apiru"; "there is war against me." Likewise, Abdikheba of Jerusalem states: "May the king take counsel concerning his land! All the land of the king is lost!" (EA 188).

Such sentences are so common to many of the Amarna letters and are couched in so similar a style that we can label them formulaic. Perhaps they were even taught as traditional epistolary material at Canaanite cuneiform scribal schools. It seems, then, that Canaanite scribes during the Amarna period were constrained in their linguistic usage by reliance on learned phraseology and epistolary patterning.

An illustration of this condition is available in a letter from the Egyptian king to the rebel Aziru. Full of accusation and threats, this letter was probably the last the pharaoh sent to a king who had transferred his allegiance to the Hittites. While the letter conveys to Aziru the pharaoh's anger, it also desperately seeks to bring Aziru back, to use a commonplace of the time, "under his feet." As is usual in letters from the pharaoh, a terminal formula ends this letter too, using the third person with reference to the pharaoh by his own scribes: "You should know that the king is wholesome like the sun in heaven. His numerous troops and chariots, from the upper land to the lower land, from the east (literally: rising of the sun) to the west (literally: setting of the sun), are very well" (EA 162).

Earlier in this letter, the pharaoh reminds Aziru of his former promise of loyalty to Egypt: "Have you not written to the king, your lord, thus: 'I am your servant like all the loyal (or: former) mayors who were in this city?' " Indeed, Aziru did once write such an admission. However, even then, Aziru never really intended to stand behind his words.

Once learned and absorbed, the tradition of cuneiform letter-writing permanently affected the compositional styles of Syria and Palestine. The scribes of Ugarit wrote letters in their own language that drew heavily on Akkadian phraseology. Letters written in first-millennium northwest Semitic languages such as Aramaic and Hebrew, although not entirely devoid of native formulas, generally exhibit contemporary epistolary conventions absorbed from Mesopotamian or Egyptian letter writing. In contrast to the majority of the Hebrew and Aramaic letters of the first millennium, the only Phoenician letter known to us (found at Saqqara in Egypt; sixth century), and possibly one of the Hebrew letter-fragments from Wadi Murabba'at near the Dead Sea (possibly early seventh century), still retain much of the older, basically Mesopotamian, epistolary style of the second millennium. This formulaic convention has further been adapted for dedications in some Hebrew (Kuntillet Ajrud) and Phoenician (Sarepta) traditions.

The Akkadian *lingua franca* that was used in Egypt and in Canaan is permeated with ele-

A Letter of the Pharaoh to Milkilu of Gezer (EA 369)

Amarna letter 369 is a copy of a letter that was to be sent from the pharaoh to Milkilu, ruler of the city-state of Gezer in southern Palestine. In this letter, Milkilu is asked to send the pharaoh forty "very beautiful women-cupbearers." These women served drinks at banquets, and—as we learn from other documents as well—Canaanites were sent to the Egyptian court to serve in this capacity.

To Milkilu, Man of Gezer:
Message of the king: I herewith send you this tablet
to say
to you: I herewith
send you Khanya,
the ⟨inspector of⟩ the stables of the troops,
with everything (needed) to take
beautiful woman-cupbearers (gloss: *šāqītu*):
silver, gold, clothing (gloss: *malbuši*),
carnelian, all (kinds of precious) stones, ebony chairs,
likewise, everything beautiful.
Total of 160 *diban* (an Egyptian measure of weight).
Total: 40 women-cupbearers,
40 (shekels of) silver (being) the price of (each) woman-cupbearer.
So send women-cupbearers
very beautiful,
that there will not be any one deficient
among them,
so that the king, your lord
will say to you:
"This is good,
conforming to the order
that he had sent you."
You should know that
the king is wholesome like the sun.
His army, his chariots,
his horses, are very well.
Now, Amon (Amun) has placed
the upper land
(and) the lower land, the east (literally: rising of the sun)
(and) the west (literally: setting of the sun), under
the two feet of the king.

In this letter, some linguistic features suggest that it was not written by an Egyptian scribe, but by a Canaanite one. Additionally, it is exceptional among the Amarna letters from Egypt in that it includes glosses in two languages: Akkadian and Canaanite.

How would a scribe whose mother tongue is Canaanite write a letter to Canaan in a foreign language (Akkadian) and still make sure that the pharaoh's specific requests were understood if he lacked a term conveying their exact meanings? He would either borrow a word from his mother tongue or coin a neologism in Akkadian. In many cases, he would offer them as glosses translating Sumerian logograms. In this letter, the scribe seems to vacillate between the choices, finally resorting to one of each. In one case he took an Akkadian word, *šāqû* "cupbearer," and coined its feminine counterpart, namely *šāqītu*, a term otherwise unattested in Akkadian literature. In the second case, he turned to his own Canaanite dialect when he wrote: *malbašu* "clothing."

ments borrowed from native linguistic systems. It can be shown that in the Akkadian documents, written as well as received by the pharaoh or by his officials, there are several idioms or phrases that are conventional to Egyptian letter-writing. For example, Aziru of Amurru assures the Egyptians that he intends to arrive in Egypt promptly by using the following wording: "I shall arrive in peace, so that I may see the face of my lord, the beautiful (one)." Many centuries later, Aramaic letters found at Hermopolis in Egypt exhibit similar phraseology in their complimentary addresses: "I bless you before Ptah, that he may let me see your face in peace."

Among the Egyptian idiomatic conventions is the reference to the pharaoh's orders or message that uses the word "breath" (Akkadian *šāru* or *šēḫu*, Egyptian *ṯ'w*) in the often-repeated phrase, "the breath of the king." The following is an example taken from a letter sent by Aziru of Amurru: "My country and my brothers, the servants of the king, my lord, and the servants of Tutu, my lord, are very very glad, since the breath of the king, my lord, has come to me" (EA 164).

Another phrase is "the strong arm of the king," used by the scribes of Jerusalem and Tyre. The following is a well-known citation from a letter

Abdikheba of Jerusalem sent to the pharaoh: "The land of Jerusalem—neither my father, nor my mother gave (it) to me; the strong hand of the king gave (it) to me." The word for "arm" is written with a Sumerian logogram (ŠU, for Akkadian *qātu*), which, in its broader sense, means "hand." The scribe, demonstrating his awareness of the expanded meaning, specified its meaning by glossing this logogram with the Canaanite word for "arm," namely, *zorō*ᶜ (spelled *zu-ru-uḫ;* compare Hebrew *zĕrōa*ᶜ).

Although Akkadian, like other Semitic languages, uses "hand" in the sense of "authority," in the letters written in Tyre it is employed in a way that betrays Egyptian usage. Here are examples (EA 147, 149):

> —Here I guard Tyre, the principal city, for the king, my lord, until the strong hand of the king comes out toward me, to give water for me to drink and wood for my heating.
> —If the strong hand of the king comes, it will kill them.
> —My lord is the sun(-god)
> Who sets out upon the lands day after day,
> . . .
> Who sets the whole land in tranquillity by the strength of his hand (gloss: *ḫapši*),
> . . .

The Egyptian word *ḫapši* or "strong hand" (in Egyptian writing: *ḫpš*) explains the Sumerian logogram ZAG, denoting "right (hand)." The third example, in fact, is a plan that strings a series of Egyptian stereotypical sentiments. Indeed, the Tyre letters attest so many egyptianisms as to suggest that the scribe who wrote them was a speaker of the Egyptian language who seems also to have had intimate knowledge of Egyptian literature.

ECHOES OF AMARNA: CULTURAL SYNCRETISM IN THE BIBLE

The Mesopotamian metaphor "right hand," itself molded by the Egyptian notion of "strong hand," is recalled in the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 15:6): "Your right hand, O Lord, is majestic in strength; your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy."

Perhaps the most conspicuous comparison between Amarna speech-forms and Biblical Hebrew verses may be found in the following statements, cited from a letter from Aziru: "What else should I seek? I seek the beautiful face of the king, my lord," and from the Hebrew Bible (Psalms 27:8): "'Come,' my heart has said, 'seek my face.' I will seek your face, O Lord."

Another example may be extracted from a letter of a son of Aziru to the pharaoh, while Aziru was detained in Egypt (EA 169):

> You can give me life,
> and you can put me to death.
> I look at your face:
> it is you who are my lord.

The rhythmic nature of this passage suggests that it depends on a common saying, which could definitely have been taken from indigenous colloquial sources. A similar idea, no doubt deriving from the same cultural stock, is available in biblical poetry (Deuteronomy 32:39):

> See then that I, I am He.
> There is no god beside me.
> I put to death and I keep alive,
> If I wound, I will heal:
> No one can rescue from my grasp.

While both the divine pharaoh and the god of Israel are perceived as having the capability of healing, that would not be the case with the king of Israel. Nevertheless, Jehoram, king of Israel, falls back on this concept when he is quoted as saying (2 Kings 5:7): "Am I god to kill and to make alive?"

Another example is the following, cited from a letter from Tagi, ruler of Gath-Carmel in central Palestine, to the Egyptian king (EA 264):

> Whether we ascend to heaven (gloss: *šamêma*),
> whether we descend to earth—
> our head (gloss: *rōšunu*) is in your hands.

Because of its rhythmical nature and metaphoric idioms, this statement too seems to rely on a

popular saying. It may be noteworthy in this respect that two key words of this saying, namely "heaven" and "our head," were glossed with Canaanite words. Two biblical verses are comparable to this passage:

If I climb up to heaven, you are there:
If I make my bed in Sheol, again I find you.
(Psalm 139:8)

If they dig down to Sheol,
From there shall my hand take them;
If they climb up to heaven,
From there will I bring them.
(Amos 9:2)

CUNEIFORM LEARNING AND THE SPREAD OF MESOPOTAMIAN CULTURE TO THE WEST

Phrases and metaphors, proverbs and similes, are capable of straightforward transfer between societies in contact. Linguistic structures, and especially the internal units of the individual words, that is, the syntax and the morphology of a language, are less easily transferred. Yet, even in the domain of the most intricate linguistic structural strata, namely its sentence structure

A Letter of Baʿlushiptu of Gezer to the Pharaoh (EA 292)

This letter is a typical example of Canaanite letters to the pharaoh, where a local ruler informs the Egyptian king of the fulfillment of his demands, and also applies for help against mischiefs he has been suffering from both local bandits and the pharaoh's own officers. In his endeavor to submit obediently to the pharaoh, his master, the scribe uses especially elaborate prostration formulas which draw their phraseology from local practice.

Say to the king, my lord,
my divinity, my sun:
Message of Baʿlushiptu, your servant,
the dust of your two feet:
I fall at the feet of the king, my lord,
my divinity, my sun, seven times
(and) seven times.
I looked here
and I looked there,
and there was no light; yet
I looked at
the king, my lord, and there was light.
A brick may move off
from beneath its companion;
but I shall not move off
from beneath the two feet of
the king, my lord. I have heard
the words that the king,
my lord, wrote to his servant:
"Guard your commissioner
and guard the towns of
the king, your lord." Here
I guard and
listen day
and night to the words of
the king, my lord. May the king,
my lord, be informed regarding his servant:
There is war against me
from the mountain, so I built (gloss: *banītī*)
one place—its name is Mankhatc—
to prepare for
the troops of the king, my lord,
and, behold, Maya took it
from my hands, and installed
his commissioner therein.
So order Reʿanap,
my commissioner, that he return
the town to me, so that
it be prepared for
the troops of the king, my lord.
Furthermore, note the deeds of
Piʾiya, son of Gulate,
against Gezer, the maidservant
of the king, my lord: How many
days does he rob her!
Hence she has become like
a damaged pot
because of him. From
the mountain
people are redeemed for 30 (shekels of) silver,
but from
Piʾiya for a hundred (shekels of) silver. Be attentive to these words of your servant!

and word formation, the language used for the Canaano-Egyptian correspondence has undergone numerous mutations. Peeling away, one by one, the cultural, literary, and linguistic layers in the Amarna material allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1. There is a correlation between the provenance of a letter and its linguistic structure. In general, the farther south in Canaan an Amarna letter originated, the more remote is its language from Akkadian, and the closer it is to the Canaanite vernacular of that region. Thus, a scribe of Amurru, who was located just north or northeast of the Canaanite city Gubla (Byblos)—although making much usage of local phraseology and idioms—would use a language which is very much like other Akkadian dialects, of both the western periphery and the core of Mesopotamia. By contrast, a scribe working for the ruler of Gath in southern Palestine uses cuneiform script to write a language which, in its grammar (rather than its lexicon), is almost wholly Canaanite.

2. Toward the second half of the second millennium, schools of Akkadian of various traditions were widespread all over the ancient Near East. There is ample evidence that such schools existed throughout the western Mesopotamian periphery from Khatti in the north, through Ugarit and Emar, to Egypt in the south. In all these schools, direct contact with contemporary Mesopotamian and other major centers of cuneiform learning resulted in a relatively continuous renewing of the linguistic resources. This is suggested by the very nature of the Peripheral Akkadian dialects attested in cuneiform tablets from that period, as well as by the nature of the educational cuneiform material found in the respective sites.

In contrast, the linguistic data drawn from the Canaanite Amarna letters show stagnation and reliance on older Akkadian layers. One may therefore wonder whether the cuneiform schools which are known to have existed in Palestine at about the same period were indeed used to educate local scribes in contemporary Akkadian. The bulk of evidence allows us to suppose that the Canaanite scribes were taught not (or not only) contemporary Akkadian, but mainly the mixed language they were using. Indeed, Canaano-Akkadian, or to coin a suggestive label, "Amarnaic," seems to have been an institutionalized diplomatic language. Indeed, a letter in Amarnaic written on a clay cylinder from Tagi of Gath-Carmel to Lab'aya of Shechem, discovered at Beth-Shan, proves than Amarna Akkadian was the vehicle also for internal communication.

3. The emergence of such a language, and especially its institutionalization, suggests restricted contemporaneous contacts with the Mesopotamian core. This observation is supported by historical data. The area of Syria and Palestine represented by letters written in Amarnaic, that is, the land of Canaan, was part of the Egyptian Empire of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and, especially from the time of Thutmose III, was—at least with regard to independence in terms of cultural politics—virtually isolated from the northern political and cultural powers with which it had been in contact before. This detachment from Mesopotamia proper and from the less remote centers where Akkadian was used allowed the surfacing of local linguistic and cultural affinities. In turn, these cultural traits resulted in the emergence of a unique corpus of cultural-linguistic artifacts such as the Amarna letters, thus allowing us a glance not only into the history of Syro-Palestine during the Amarna period, but also into its linguistic, its sociolinguistic, and its cultural life.

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