

ADD. BIBLIOGRAPHY: R. St. John, *Eban* (1972); A. Ron (ed.), *Abba Even: Medina'i ve-Diplomat: Sefer le-Zikhro shel Sar ha-Huz le-She'avar* (2003).

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EBEN-EZER (Heb. אֶבֶן עֶזֶר). (1) Site of the Israelite camp facing the Philistine army at *Aphek before the battle in which the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam. 4:1). It is generally identified with Majdal Yābā, which was still known in the first century C.E. as Migdal Aphek. (2) Name of the stone set up as a victory monument by Samuel between *Mizpah and Shen after the Israelites had “pursued the Philistines and smote them, until they came under Beth-Car” (1 Sam. 7:11–12). Most scholars consider the two Eben-Ezers identical and locate it on the Israelite-Philistine border.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Albright, in: *BASOR*, 11 (1923), 7; Abel, Geog, 2 (1938), 309; *EM*, S.V.

[Michael Avi-Yonah]

EBER (Heb. עֶבֶר, *Ever*). (1) Great-grandson of *Shem, son of Noah and ancestor of Abraham (Gen. 10:21ff.; 11:14ff.; 1 Chr. 1:17ff.); presumably (but nowhere explicitly) intended as the eponymous ancestor of the *Hebrews (*Ivrim*). “All the children of Eber” (Gen. 10:21), a phrase which appears – possibly unintentionally – to include Arabian and other tribes as well as Israelite, may or may not be related to the term “Hebrews”; certainly there is no solid evidence that the Bible understood any but Israelites to be Hebrews. The names appearing in the genealogies of Genesis 10 and 11 are, as in other ancient West Semitic genealogies, personifications of tribes, nations, cities, and lands rather than individuals (see *Genealogy; *Nations, The Seventy). In view of this, many scholars consider the name Eber to be derived from Ivri, rather than vice versa, while others suggest that the term refers to the region known as *ever hanahar* (“beyond the river [Euphrates]”; Josh. 24:2; cf. Num. 24:24). Such usage of the name was facilitated by the fact that Eber was probably also the name of a clan or a personal name. (2) The head of a Gadite family (1 Chron. 5:13). (3 & 4) The heads of two Benjaminite families (1 Chron. 8:12, 22). (5) A post-Exilic priest (Neh. 12:20). (In nos. 2–5 some Hebrew and/or LXX manuscripts read עֶבֶד (*ebed*).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: A. Malamat, in: *JAOS*, 88 (1968), 165–8.

[Jeffrey Howard Tigay]

EBLA, archaeological site in northern Syria, present-day Tell Mardikh, located 35 mi. (60 km.) south of Aleppo and excavated by an Italian team of archaeologists starting in 1964. In the 1970s thousands of cuneiform texts dated to the second half of the 3rd millennium B.C.E. (in archaeological terms, EB IV, or Early Bronze Age IV) were discovered at the site. The language reflected in these texts was neither Sumerian nor Akkadian, two well-known languages of the period written in

cuneiform, but rather was determined to be a previously unattested language, called “Eblaite” by scholars.

Scholars continue to debate the specific date of these texts. The main issue is whether they are pre-Sargonic (i.e., from a time before the reign of Sargon of Akkad (2270–2215 B.C.E. according to one standard opinion)), or whether they are contemporary with the Sargonic period. The discovery of an object bearing the cartouche of the Egyptian pharaoh Pepi I is an important find – attesting to trade relations between Ebla and Egypt, though perhaps only indirectly, through the intermediation of Byblos (see below) – but unfortunately the date of Pepi I (and all the 6th Dynasty monarchs) is not fixed (2333–2283 B.C.E. is one approximation), and thus this artifact cannot help answer the chronological question definitively. The issue of whether the heyday of Ebla is pre-Sargonic or Sargonic hinges in the main on who or what caused the destruction of Ebla (well attested in the archaeological record) during this period. Was the city destroyed by Sargon, by his grandson Naram-Sin, or by accidental fire that simply could not be controlled? Without attempting a definitive answer to these questions, for our present purposes we will side with those scholars who view the Ebla texts as pre-Sargonic. Accordingly, we proceed with the statement that Eblaite is the earliest attested Semitic language, antedating the oldest Akkadian material by about a century, though perhaps by only a few decades.

Another scholarly debate concerns the exact identification of the Eblaite language. Some scholars hold that the language reflected in the Ebla texts is nothing more than a dialect or variation of Old Akkadian; according to this opinion it would be incorrect to speak of a separate language called Eblaite. Other scholars, meanwhile, hold that Eblaite is sufficiently distinct from Old Akkadian to merit the identification as a separate Semitic language. Among the latter, though, there is still no consensus: some hold it to represent an independent branch of Semitic to be called North Semitic, while others group Eblaite in the West Semitic branch. To be sure, there are quite a few lexical and grammatical links between Eblaite and the later attested Amorite (early second millennium) and Aramaic (first millennium), thus suggesting a Syrian *Sprachbund* incorporating these three languages. An important piece of evidence is the first person singular independent pronoun *ana ana* 'I, exactly as in Amorite and Aramaic (in contrast to Akkadian *anāku*).

The debate over the language is due in part to the nature of the texts written in Eblaite. The Eblaite texts use a very high percentage of Sumerograms, that is, words written as Sumerian signs though meant to be read as Eblaite words. Often, however, we do not know what Eblaite words lie behind these Sumerograms. For example, in the expression *si-in i-li-lu* A-MU DINGIR-DINGIR-DINGIR, appearing in an incantation text, we can understand the words to mean “to Elil father of the gods.” But the only Eblaite words that we learn are the preposition *si-in*, to be normalized as *sin*, “to,” and

the name of the deity *i-li-lu*, to be normalized as *ililu*, “Ilil” or “Elil.” The remaining words are A-MU and DINGIR-DINGIR-DINGIR, whose meanings are clear as “father” and “gods,” respectively. But these are the Sumerian forms. When the Eblaite scribe read this text aloud, he would have pronounced these words as their Eblaite equivalents. And while we can be almost certain that the former was based on the root *ab* and that the latter was based on the root *il* (as in all the Semitic languages), we lack the precise information in this case. When one multiplies this example several hundredfold, it becomes clear how scholars can differ over the issue of the exact identification of Eblaite.

Most of the Ebla texts were found in several rooms of Palace G from the 24th century B.C.E. (as per the statement above that the tablets are pre-Sargonic). The total number of texts is about 2,000 complete or nearly complete tablets and about 10,000 fragments. The discovery of this archive in 1974 came as a complete surprise to scholars. No one had imagined that a city in northern Syria might be home to such a literate culture. Even for the heartland of Mesopotamia at this time, the discovery of such a large archive would have been astonishing. Moreover, the previous scholarly consensus held that the Tigris and Euphrates valley at one end of the Near East and the Nile valley at the other end were the two great centers of culture, already in the third millennium B.C.E., but that the vast area in between, including Syria, was a cultural backwater, populated mainly by pastoralists with their flocks, with no great urban centers of the type found in Egypt or Mesopotamia. The excavations at Ebla and the discovery of this large archive changed everyone’s conception.

The corpus of Ebla texts includes a wide variety of documents. The greatest number by far are administrative texts, recording in great detail the activities of the palace, the economy of Ebla centered mainly on textile production and the growing of barley and other grains, the far-reaching trade with cities throughout Syria and Mesopotamia, and so on. The second group consists of texts of a historical nature; these include some important treaty texts. The best preserved of the treaty texts is a highly detailed pact with Abarsil on the upper Euphrates; it includes about two dozen articles regulating commerce, taxation, emissaries, and the like. The third group is made up of lexical texts, the most important of which are the bilingual dictionaries providing us with the Sumerian and Eblaite equivalents of hundreds of words. While these dictionaries do not give us the words in literary contexts, they provide us with very valuable information about the Eblaite vocabulary (see further below). Finally, there is a series of incantation texts (a line from one was quoted above). (There have been some reports about literary texts found at Ebla; but at present only one such text has been published, and that composition is a duplicate of a document known from Abu Salabikh in southern Mesopotamia.)

The administrative and historical texts reveal that Ebla had contacts with hundreds of cities throughout the region.

Many if not most of these cannot be identified with any confidence, but the toponyms that can be identified give us an indication of Ebla’s power and influence. Here we may mention important urban centers such as Gublu (= Byblos) on the Mediterranean (though not all scholars agree with this reading); Emar and *Mari, both on the middle Euphrates; and Kish, situated between the Tigris and Euphrates near Babylon; as well as KURki *la-ba-na-an*, “the mountain-country of Lebanon.” (When the Ebla tablets first were discovered, there were reports that the five cities of the plain listed in Genesis 14 appear at Ebla as well; but there is no substance to this claim.)

The quantity of materials appearing in the administrative texts is sometimes staggering. One text (ARET 2:20) gives a total of 548,500 barley measures distributed (and of this amount 360,400 appears in one line and 182,600 appears in a second line). Eblaite, in fact, attests for the first time in any Semitic language a word for 100,000, namely *ma-i-at* (obviously based on the pan-Semitic word for “hundred”; cf. Hebrew מאה).

The deities attested at Ebla are better known from later West Semitic sources than from East Semitic sources. Important gods are Dagan, Hadd/Baal, Rashap, Ashtar, Kamish, Malik, and Qura, as well as the sun and moon deities, though their Eblaite names are unknown since the Sumerograms UD (“sun”) and ITI (“moon”) respectively, are used consistently. (There is absolutely no validity to the claim (reported in the early days of Ebla studies) that Ya (a shortened form of Yahweh) appears in personal names.)

Of particular interest is the god Kamish: the name appears in the city name Kar-Kamish (Carchemish) in northern Syria; it is attested in the pantheon of *Ugarit on the Syrian coast from the Late Bronze Age, spelled alphabetically as *kmt* and syllabically as *ka-ma-ši* (= /kamāt/); and most prominently it appears much later as the national god of the Moabites, spelled כמוש and vocalized *kāmōš* in the Bible. Note, however, that in one passage, Jer 48:7, the name of the Moabite god occurs as כמיש in the Ketiv. While previous scholars typically assumed a confusion between *waw* and *yod* in the scribal transmission of this text, we now must consider another possibility, that the Ketiv in Jer 48:7 preserves an ancient alternative pronunciation, Kamish, harking back to the Early Bronze Age as attested at Ebla.

An important deity hitherto unknown is Qura (typically spelled Kura in Ebla studies), clearly a major god given the number of times the name occurs, including some prominent contexts. Apart from Ebla, we know nothing about this deity. The name resurfaces, however, about 3,000 (!) years later as the first element in the name of the angel Quriel, attested in Aramaic, Syriac, and Greek magical texts of the first millennium C.E. In one passage Quriel occurs as the father of a demoneess; this invites comparison with the demotion of *Baal, worshipped throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages as a major deity, but appearing in the New Testament as ruler of the demons in the form Baal-zebul.

Whenever a new Semitic language is uncovered, the natural tendency among Hebraists and Biblicists is to mine the new source for information that can help elucidate problems in the Bible and can supply cognates for Hebrew lexemes. Several examples of this process were noted above. The remainder of this entry will present additional instances of contributions from the study of Eblaite to the study of Hebrew (notwithstanding the temporal and geographical distances between Eblaite in third millennium northern Syria and Hebrew in first millennium southern Canaan).

A number of Hebrew words, which hitherto had no cognates within Semitic (see the standard dictionaries), now gain etyma from the Eblaite lexicon. Examples include the following: *ni-zi-mu* (to be normalized as *nizmu*), “a type of jewelry” ≈ נָזַם, “nose-ring, earring”; *a-a-tum* (to be normalized as *ayyatum*), “a type of bird” ≈ אֵיָה, “a bird of prey”; *bar-su-um* (to be normalized as *parsum*), “a type of bird” ≈ פָּרַס, “a bird of prey.” The first of these items appears in an administrative text; the latter two appear in the bilingual lexical lists as the Eblaite equivalents of Sumerian forms classified as birds due to the presence of the MUŠEN determinative.

The common Hebrew word for “cedar” is אֲרֵז, but a unique feminine form אֲרֵזָה occurs in Zephaniah 2:14. This now has a parallel in Eblaite *ar-za-tum*, presented in the bilingual dictionary as the equivalent of Sumerian GIŠ-NUN-SAL (the GIŠ determinative indicates a type of tree).

The above represents but a handful of Hebrew lexemes with parallels in Eblaite. In truth, however, the very large Sumerian-Eblaite dictionary (attested in multiple copies at Ebla) affords the scholar of ancient Hebrew much fodder for lexical exploration. We permit ourselves one further example here. The root גָּדַד, “cut, incise, divide,” yields the *hitpaal* form הִתְגַּדְּדוּ, “make incisions upon oneself” (Deut. 14:1; 1 Kings 18:28, etc.) and the noun גִּדְדוֹ, “troop” (cf. English “division” in a military sense). Cognates to this word occur in various Aramaic dialects (Biblical, Samaritan, Jewish Babylonian, Syriac). The verb *gadādu*, “separate off” occurs in Akkadian, but only in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian, and thus scholars conclude that the word is a borrowing from Aramaic. The bilingual dictionary from Ebla glosses Sumerian TAR-TAR with Eblaite *ga-da-dum*; since Sumerian TAR means “cut,” it is clear that Eblaite *ga-da-dum* represents an Early Bronze Age forerunner of later Hebrew and Aramaic דָּדַד.

We move now from the realm of lexicon to the realm of grammar, with one representative illustration. Already prior to the discoveries at Ebla, Francis Andersen opined that ancient Hebrew included a morpheme וַי-, that is, conjunctive *waw* + enclitic *mem*. Andersen’s insight was strikingly confirmed by the presence of *ù-ma* in Eblaite, composed of the same two elements. Biblical passages which include this morpheme are Gen. 41:32, Num. 23:10, Judg. 13:19, 1 Kings 14:14, Ezek. 48:16, 48:22 (twice), Amos 6:10, Nah. 2:13, Ps. 147:3, Ruth 4:5, Neh. 5:11. A study of these passages reveals that Hebrew וַי- has a specific syntactic function: it serves as an emphasizing conjunction to be translated “indeed, even, verily, yea.” The rec-

ognition of this form impacts most of all on the analysis of Ruth 4:5, where the phrase וַיִּמָּאֵת רוּת does not mean “and from Ruth” (note the *etnah* on the previous word), but rather is to be analyzed as the emphasizing conjunction וַי- followed by the direct object indicator אֵת and then the proper name רוּת, thus yielding a translation for the entire verse as follows: “Boaz said, ‘On the day you acquire the field from the hand of Naomi – ; verily, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased, I have acquired [reading with the Ketiv] to raise the name of the deceased on his estate.’”

Our last instance of the interconnections between Eblaite and Hebrew returns us to the world of magic. One of the incantation texts is directed against a demon named ḥa-ba-ḥa-bi, normalized as *ḥabḥabi*, who is bound and rendered powerless by the magician. This name is the reduplicated form of the demonic figure *Hby* attested in Ugaritic (Mesopotamian cuneiform has no symbol for [ḥ] and here substitutes [h]; where he gains the epithet “lord of the horns and tail,” that is, the traditional imagery of a devilish character), and appearing in the Bible in two passages in variant forms (one the basic form, the other with suffixed *-ōn*): חֲבִי in Isa 26:20 and חֲבִיּוֹן in Hab 3:4. The occurrence of *ḥabḥabi/hby/חֲבִי* in Early Bronze Ebla, Late Bronze Ugarit, and Iron Age Israel attests to the tenacity of magical praxes throughout the epochs (see also the discussion above concerning Qura and Quriel).

Finally, we may note that Ebla was rebuilt after the major destruction noted above and achieved a second floruit c. 2050–1950 B.C.E., that is, during the Ur III period. We possess very few Eblaite literary remains from this period, however. Most of our evidence comes from other sites, including, for example, references to Ebla in inscriptions of Gudea, famous ruler of Lagash, whose great building projects necessitated his men to travel to the region of Ebla in order to procure quantities of timber and stone.

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[Gary A. Rendsburg (2nd ed.)]

EBNER, MEIR (Meyer; 1872–1955), Jewish leader in Bukovina and Romania, active Zionist. Born in Czernowitz, he participated in the establishment of the Jewish national student association, Hasmonea, in 1891. He earned the degree of jurist doctor from the university in his native city. With the advent of Herzl, Ebner joined the Zionist Organization, attending the First Zionist Congress and many succeeding ones. He was active in Jewish affairs in Bukovina, at the same time

Corrigenda to “Ebla”

Encyclopaedia Judaica, 2nd edition, vol. 6 (2007), pp. 85-87

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NOTE: The encyclopaedia entry includes various errors, mainly dealing with the ancient language material, incorrect or omitted diacritics, and so on.

p. 85b, line 12 from bottom: replace *ana ana* (written doubly) with *ʿana*.

p. 86a, line 7: correct *ab* to *ʿab*.

p. 86a, line 8: correct *il* to *ʿil*.

p. 86b, line 8: correct KURkⁱ to KUR^{ki}.

p. 86b, para. 3, line 6: insert comma after (“moon”), before ‘respectively’.

p. 86b, para. 4, line 5: correct *kmt* to *kmṭ*.

p. 86b, para. 4, line 5: correct /kamāt/ to /kamāṭ/.

p. 87a, para. 2, line 6: correct *ayyatum* to *ʿayyatum*.

p. 87a, line 3 and line 9 from bottom: correct ן1- to -ן1.

p. 87b, line 3: correct *etnaḥ* to *ʿatnaḥ*.

p. 87b, line 4: correct ן1- to -ן1.

p. 87b, para. 2, lines 3-4: italicize ḥa-ba-ḥa-bi, thus *ḥa-ba-ḥa-bi*.

p. 87b, para. 2, line 6: correct *Hby* to *ḥby*.