A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL LIST OF CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS FROM CANAAN, PALESTINE/PHILISTIA, AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL

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The area of study of this paper, unlike Egypt to the west, and Syria and Mesopotamia to the north and east, has yet to produce a proper archive of cuneiform texts, although archaeologists and others have discovered around ninety cuneiform objects over the past century or so. Yet, due to the uneven pace of discovery and changing political and academic realities in the region over the years, no attempt has ever been made to study these cuneiform objects as a group, and the last published list of the relevant material was that of K. Galling in Textbuch zur Geschichte Israels in 1968. At present not only is there no comprehensive edition or bibliography of the cuneiform texts in our corpus, but there is not even an accurate list, leaving the materials largely inaccessible to most scholars.

Our current project, “Cuneiform in The Land of Israel and Canaan,” is intended to answer this need. The main goal of the project is the publication of a book that will include an introduction to the topic, editions of the inscriptions with philological notes, indexes, new handcopies, and photographs. We present here the first fruits of our endeavors: a bibliographical list of our corpus with a brief summary of our findings to date.

INTRODUCTION

TODAY WE ARE ABLE to place eighty-nine objects in our corpus. These range from well-known texts such as the Taanach letters, which have been studied and translated a number of times (Taanach 1–2, 5–6), to mere scraps of clay, and include texts belonging to a wide variety of genres, including literature, royal inscriptions, letters, administrative texts, inscribed cylinder seals, lexical texts, mathematical texts, omens, and a magical/medical text.

Also participating in various stages of the project were DeLafayette Awkward, Yehudah Kaplan, Ralf Rothenbusch, Yoav Shor, and Peter Stein. The authors wish to thank numerous scholars and others who freely gave their time and support to the project. We cannot thank them all by name here, but special thanks are due to Osnat Brandel of the Israel Museum, Ornit Ilan at the Rockefeller Museum, and Gary Beckman of the University of Michigan for facilitating the study of tablets in museum collections. The project is funded in part by Israel Academy of Sciences, Humanities; and the Israel Science Foundation. Abbreviations are as in The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD). In addition, note: BAR = Biblical Archaeology Review; BN = Biblische Notizen; NEAEHL = The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in The Holy Land; SAAB = State Archives of Assyria Bulletin.

More than a third of the inscribed objects come from three sites: Taanach (17), Hazor (15), and Aphek (8). Samaria has yielded six objects, including late fourth-century coins, while Megiddo has yielded five, but only one cuneiform tablet. No other site has provided more than four items. In fact, a majority of the items have been recovered as the result of controlled archaeological research, a number are chance finds; for

1 The territories administered by the State of Israel and by the Palestinian Authority.
2 Galling (1968): 13–14, 61. More recently van der Toorn (2000) discussed some of the materials. Earlier, Demsky (1990) considered many of the texts from the second millennium. A number of scholars have compiled lists over the years for their personal use. We would like to thank N. Na’aman of Tel-Aviv University and D. Pardee of the University of Chicago for sharing information with us.
3 Cuneiform in Canaan and the Land of Israel.
4 Samaria 5–6.
5 The rest are inscribed cylinder seals.
example, the Megiddo Gilgamesh tablet (Megiddo 1) was discovered by a kibbutz shepherd on his rounds with his flocks.6

Items in our corpus date to both the first and second millennia B.C., with the earliest texts being those from Hazor, which can be associated with the archives of Mari and the Middle Bronze II cities of Syria. A few other items may also date to the Middle Bronze Age—or to the late Middle and/or early Late Bronze Ages. Just over half of the tablets can be dated with certainty to the Late Bronze Age, in many cases on the basis of clear epigraphic and linguistic similarities to the fourteenth-century Amarna archive in Egypt. A smaller number of texts date to the first millennium, including roughly fifteen belonging to the Neo-Assyrian period. A few isolated texts date to the Late Babylonian, Persian, and/or Hellenistic periods. Unlike the situation in Babylonia, we as yet find no evidence at all for the transcription of Greek or Aramaic into cuneiform characters.7

Most of the texts are written in Akkadian of one type or another, ranging from the standard Akkadian of the Mesopotamian homeland to local “creolized” Akkadian with West Semitic features. The West Semitic local language(s) are directly represented in our corpus in lexical lists, glosses, and three texts inscribed in a “southern” version of the alphabetic cuneiform script dating to the Late Bronze Age best known from Ugarit.8 A few academic texts and short inscriptions on cylinder seals are written in Sumerian, and one text, a fragment of a Persian-period royal inscription, preserves some Elamite.9

The texts also include a wide variety of personal names representing diverse languages and cultures, including Babylonian/Assyrian, Hurrian, Egyptian, Indo-Iranian, and various West Semitic languages including Hebrew.10

As an appendix we offer entries for five items in hieroglyphic Hittite, but do not collect objects inscribed in Egyptian or linear alphabetic scripts.11

Most of the objects are clay cuneiform tablets, but the corpus also includes other inscribed objects such as the aforementioned cylinder seals, two inscribed fragments of clay models of sheep livers, a clay jar stopper, an inscribed bronze ringlet, and stone stelae. The items themselves are today to be found in diverse settings, ranging from the collections of The Israel Museum, Rockefeller Museum, and Institute of Archaeology of The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, to private and museum collections in Tel-Aviv, Istanbul, Chicago, and Ann Arbor. The present location of some items still escapes us. Some of the objects have already been the subject of intense study while others remain unpublished.

The comprehensive re-edition and study of these documents provokes certain basic questions, many of which will be addressed in our book as well as in further articles under preparation by the participants in the research project.12 For example, Why was there cuneiform in Canaan? How was it used and by whom? In what way does the cuneiform record reflect the linguistic, political, and social history of the region in the Bronze and Iron Ages? The present contribution is meant simply as a basic resource to fill a long-standing need.

LIST OF CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS13

Below we provide an entry for each of the objects, arranged by site. These entries typically include a list of primary editions and studies for each object. “Primary editions” offer transliterations and translations from the original texts, and usually handcopies and/or photographs. “Studies” present additional epigraphic, linguistic, and historical observations, etc.14 Unless otherwise noted, the language of the texts is Akkadian or one of its dialects.15 When possible we also date the objects,16 and indicate those held in museum or other public collections.

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6 See Goetze and Levy (1959): 121.
7 See Geller (1997).
8 Bet Shemesh 1, Taanach 15, Tabor 1.
9 Sepphoris 1.
10 Note, for example, Gezer 4: 1: "ma-tan-ia-u for Natanyahu.
11 See below, p. 761.
1. Tel Aphek


Aphek 4: Fragment (location unknown). Primary publication: Rainey (1976): 139 (photo, pl. 10, no. 1). Date: Late Bronze Age.

Aphek 5: Fragment (location unknown). Primary publication: Rainey (1976): 140 (photo, pl. 10, no. 2). Date: Late Bronze Age.


Aphek 8: Administrative fragment (location unknown). Primary publication: Owen (1981): 15 (photo, pl. 2, no. 2). Date: Late Bronze Age.

2. Ashdod


3. Ashkelon


4. Beer Sheva


5. Ben Shemen


6. Bet Mirsim


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18 Most likely a lexical fragment or school tablet preserving Sumerian and Akkadian entries.
19 In the caption of the photograph, read “Old Babylonian” for “Early Babylonian.”
21 The three fragments come from at least two separate originals. Tadmor (1971) Fragments I and III are from Area A and are written in the same script. Tadmor (1971) Fragment II is from Area G and is written in a different hand.
22 For a Hebrew edition of the stele fragments, see Tadmor (1967).
23 See also Na’aman and Zadok (2000): 181.
24 Some items belonging to the Israel Antiquities Authority Objects are on deposit at the Rockefeller Museum.
7. Bet Shean


8. Bet Shemesh


9. Gezer


10. Tel Hadid


26 End of the Middle Bronze Age or beginning of the Late Bronze Age.
28 No copy of the tablet has ever been published. Pinches (1904): 230–31, and Macalister (1912) present type-set cuneiform renderings of the text.
29 For early studies of the tablet, see Conder (1904): 400–401; (1905): 74; Johns (1904a): 237–44; (1904b): 401–2; Sayce (1904): 236–37.
30 As with Gezer 3, no copy of the tablet has ever been published. Pinches (1904): 230–31 and Macalister (1912) present type-set cuneiform renderings of the text.

25 The articles by Dietrich and Lorenz give some further general bibliography. The photograph in Grant (1933): 4 is the first and best witness to the tablet, since the tablet was damaged immediately afterwards. See Albright (1934): 18: “The surface has suffered considerably since the photograph published in the Bulletin [BASOR 52: 4] was made by Grant.” Later photographs such as Grant (1934): pl. 20 were made after the tablet had already been damaged. Courtois (1969): photo pl. facing p. 79 gives a color photograph of the damaged tablet.
15. Hazor


16. Hebron


31 For the Hebrew version, see Yadin et al. (1959): 108–9.
32 The reading of the personal name on the vessel (Is-me-
AAddu) was first noted by W. Albright apud Yadin (1957): 122.
33 For the possibility that the two fragments belong to the same original model, see Landsberger and Tadmor (1964): 208–9.
35 Hebrew version, Yadin et al. (1961b): same pages. The impressions were found on two separate objects.
36 We thank Oded Golan of Tel Aviv for offering us access to the tablet.
37 Hazor 14–15 were recovered in the 2000 excavations.
17. Tell el-Hesi

Comment: This letter has been assigned the El-Amarna number EA 333, and has long been treated as if it were part of the Amarna Archive. A comprehensive bibliography is available in Moran (1992): 356–57.38

18. Tell Jemmeh

Tell Jemmeh 1: Clay cylinder seal (Smithsonian Institution). 
Primary publication: unpublished. 
Date: Middle Bronze Age.

19. Jericho

Jericho 1: Administrative tablet (Rockefeller Museum). 
Primary publication: Smith (1934): 116–17 (photo, pl. 43, no. 1; copy, 117). 
Date: Late Bronze Age.

Jericho 2: inscribed cylinder seal (Rockefeller Museum). 
Primary publication: Porada (1965): 656–58 (photo, pl. 15, no. 2; copy, 656, fig. 304, no. 1). 
Date: Middle Bronze Age.

Primary publication: Amiet (1955): 409–10 (photo, pl. 5, no. 2). 
Date: Middle Bronze Age.

20. Tell Keisan

Tell Keisan 1: Administrative fragment (École Biblique, Jerusalem). 
Primary publication: Sigrist (1982): 32–35 (photo, pl. 5 A; copy, 33). 
Date: Most likely Late Bronze Age.40

21. Khirbit Küsyi

Khirbit Küsyi 1: Fragment (Israel Antiquities Authority). 
Primary publication: unpublished. 
Date: Neo-Assyrian.

22. Megiddo

Megiddo 1: Gilgamesh fragment (Israel Museum). 
Date: Late Bronze Age, Middle Babylonian period.

Megiddo 2: Cylinder seal (Rockefeller Museum). 
Primary publication: Guy and Engberg (1938): 184, page facing pl. 90, no. 8 (copy); pl. 90, no. 8 (photo). 
Studies: Parker (1949): 6, no. 3 (photo, pl. 1, no. 3); Limet (1971): 70–71, no. 4.11; Collon (1987): 60–61, no. 246 (photo); NEAEHL, 1010 (photo); Gallig (1968): 13, 5a. 
Date: Late Bronze Age. 
Comment: Sumerian.

Megiddo 3: Cylinder seal (location unknown). 
Primary publications: Schumacher (1908a): 143 (photo); (1908b): pl. 46a (copy); Nougayrol (1939): 142–43, no. III (TM. 2) (copy, pl. 12). 
Date: Late Bronze Age, Middle Babylonian period. 
Comment: Sumerian.

Megiddo 4: Cylinder seal (Rockefeller Museum). 
Primary publication: Loud (1948): pl. 160, no. 6 (photo and copy). 
Date: Late Bronze Age.

Megiddo 5: Pottery label (Rockefeller Museum). 
Primary publication: Lamon and Shipton (1939): pl. 72, no. 18 (photo), page facing pl. 73, no. 18 (copy). 
Date: Late Bronze Age.


40 We read dŠA.ZU [b]é-li-ni ARḪUS TUKU.ḪA, “May Marduk, our Lord, show mercy.” G. Loud reports in the primary edition that I. Gelb believed the seal to be a forgery.
23. Mikhmoret


24. Tell En-Nasbeh


25. Tell Qaqun


26. Samaria


27. Sepphoris


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44 Tell En-Nasbeh is almost certainly ancient Mizpah.
45 The stela fragment will be published by E. Weissert, who reports that the text describes Esarhaddon’s campaign to the Sinai Desert. See also Na’aman and Zadok (2000): 181.
46 S. Paley (written communication).
47 The objects from Sepphoris below are all listed in the field log and so must have been present on site at the time of the excavations.
48 The dates of Sepphoris 2–4 are uncertain. None of the fragments is large enough to provide a representative repertoire of signs for dating purposes. Beckman (1997): 82 assigns different dates to the different fragments, although Sepphoris 2–4 were reconstructed from materials held in common at the Kelsey Museum.
28. Shechem


29. Shephela


30. Taanach51


53 For the latest on the dating of the Taanach texts, see Rainey (1999): 153*–56*. 

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49 The same copy appears in both articles and also in Albright (1956): 102.
50 The later part of the Middle Bronze Age or early part of the Late Bronze Age, but certainly before the time of the Amarna archives.
51 Below we follow the numbering system established in Hrozý (1904–1905). The seventeen items are Taanach 1–4, 4a, 5–8, 8a, 9–15. Also see Edzard (1985): 251; van der Toorn (2000): 98; Gallling (1968): 14, A 8a; NEAEHL, 1431–32.
52 For the reading of the name, see Weippert (1998):16.


55 Maisler joins this fragment to 8; see n. 54 above.

APPENDIX: HITTITE HIEROGLYPHIC MATERIAL


Megiddo 6: Hieroglyphic Hittite stamp seal (The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago). Primary publications: Loud (1948) pl. 162, no. 7 (photo); Singer (1995): 91–93 (photo, 92). Date: Late Bronze Age.


56 A is a reprint of Yeivin’s photo; B is a new photograph.
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*Kedem* 2: 32–41 [Hebrew, English summary p. viii].


