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### Sprache (language).

§ 1. Terminology. – § 2. Synopsis of the Ancient Near Eastern languages. – § 3. Language and culture.

§ 1. Terminology. “L.” is expressed in Sum. and Akk. by the word for “tongue” (eme/*lišānu*). Nouns derived from words for “to speak” are also used, e.g. *atwû*.

§ 2. Synopsis of the Ancient Near Eastern languages. *Fig. 1* gives a synopsis of the Ancient Near Eastern l. attested in texts or a substantial number of loanwords and/or personal names. L. almost exclusively known by name, e.g., Gutian (Gutium\* § 11) or Lullubaeian (Lullubum)\* § 7), are not included. “Date of attestation” refers to the period when texts were written, and not to the period when the l. was spoken in antiquity. “Area” refers to the core area where the l. was spoken and where most of the texts were written. The last column refers to a rough estimate of the size of the text corpora in words of text (after Peust 2000 and Streck 2010).

### § 3. Language and culture.

§ 3.1. *Concepts of the origin of different languages.* The Sum. epic *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* (ETCSL 1.8.2.3: 141–154; Mittermayer 2009, 122 f.) tells that in primeval times humanity addressed Enlil in a single l. But Enki “changed the speech in their mouth”, and thus people speak many different l. today. This passage belongs to the Sum. mythologem of a paradise (Para-

dies\* § 2) in primeval times (Streck 2002, 244 § 3.2.2.8). “A single language” actually represents a single peaceful rule of Enlil over the entire humanity (Uehlinger 1990, 409–503; cf. also Mittermayer 2009, 57–62 for a discussion of different interpretations of the passage).

§ 3.2. *Foreign languages as ethnic characteristic.* Foreign l. sometimes serve as ethnic characteristic. In most cases, it is simply stated that other countries or foreigners speak a different l. The sungod knows “all the lands which are varied (*šunnâ*) with regard to (their) l. (*lišānu*)” BWL 128: 49. In the NA period, “there are many (foreign) l. speakers in Nippur under the aegis of” the Ass. king, SAA 18, 192: 6'. In some cases, foreign l. are characterized as strange or difficult: ([Elam,] Subartu, Gutium, and Tukriš) “whose l. are crooked (*egrû*)” UET 1, 146 iii–iv 1–7, OB. Sargon II unites “peoples of the four (regions) (with) a foreign l., an unsmooth speech (*atmê lā mithurti*)” Fuchs, Sg. 43: 72.

For further references see CAD L 213 f. *lišānu* 4a, 4c.

§ 3.3. *Learning foreign languages.* Learning Sumerian was an essential task of Bab. scribes at least in the OB period (Schreiber\* A. § 9; Schule\* §§ 11.1, 11.2.2). After the OB period Sumerian partly lost its significance for the education of scribes (Schule\* §§ 12.2–3). Normally Hitt. scribes had only modest knowledge of Akkadian (Schreiber\* D. § 4). Monolingual (Sum. or Akk.), bilingual (Sum.-Akk.) or multilingual (e.g., Sum.-Akk.-Hurr.-Ug.) lexical and bilingual (Sum.-Akk.) grammatical texts (Lexikalische\* Listen; Grammatik\*) were used in scribal education. They show a certain knowledge of phonology, morphology, word formation and lexicon but hardly of syntax (Krebernik 2007, 46–53). Scribes sometimes used glosses to translate Sum. words in literary texts into Akk. (Glossen\* § 5.a) or to translate Akk. words in letters into Old Canaanite or Hurrian (Glossen\* § 5.b.2).

Language	Language family	Date of attestation	Area	Script	Size of text corpus in words of text
Akkadian (Eblaite, Babylonian, Assyrian)	East Semitic	2600–1 <sup>st</sup> cent. AD	Babylonia, Assyria, northern Syria; temporarily served as <i>lingua franca</i> and as administrative language throughout the Ancient Near East	cuneiform	ca. 10.200.000
Amorite	Northwest Semitic	2000–1200	middle Euphrates area, northern Syria, Babylonia	(cuneiform)	only personal names and loanwords, equivalent of ca. 12.000 words of text
Ugaritic	Northwest Semitic	1400–1200	area of Ugarit in northwest Syria	alphabetic cuneiform	ca. 40.000
Phoenician (including Punic)	Northwest Semitic	1000–1 <sup>st</sup> cent. AD	Byblos, Tyros, Sidon in northwest Syria	alphabet	ca. 10.000 (including Punic)
Hebrew	Northwest Semitic	1000–2 <sup>nd</sup> cent.	Israel	alphabet	ca. 300.000
Old and Imperial Aramaic	Northwest Semitic	9 <sup>th</sup> cent.–4 <sup>th</sup> cent.	Mesopotamia, Syria	alphabet	ca. 30.000
Sumerian	isolated	3200–1 <sup>st</sup> cent. AD	southern Babylonia	cuneiform	ca. 2.900.000
Proto-Elamite	?	3100–2900	southwest Iran	Proto-Elamite script	ca. 20.000
Elamite	isolated	2100–4 <sup>th</sup> cent.	southwest Iran	cuneiform	ca. 100.000
Kassite	isolated	1400–1200	Babylonia	(cuneiform)	? (only loanwords and names)
Hurrian	Hurro-Urartian	2000–1200	Anatolia, northern Syria, northern and eastern Mesopotamia	cuneiform	ca. 13.000
Urartian	Hurro-Urartian	9 <sup>th</sup> –7 <sup>th</sup> cent.	eastern Anatolia, Armenia	cuneiform, Urartian hieroglyphs	ca. 10.000
Hattic	isolated	1600–1200	Anatolia	cuneiform	ca. 500
Hittite	Indo-European, Anatolian	1600–1200	Anatolia	cuneiform	ca. 700.000
Luwian	Indo-European, Anatolian	1600–8 <sup>th</sup> cent.	Anatolia, northern Syria	cuneiform, Luwian hieroglyphs	ca. 3000 (cuneiform) + ? (hieroglyphs)
Palaic	Indo-European, Anatolian	1600–1200	Anatolia	cuneiform	ca. 500

Language	Language family	Date of attestation	Area	Script	Size of text corpus in words of text
Lycian	Indo-European, Anatolian	5 <sup>th</sup> –4 <sup>th</sup> cent.	southwestern Anatolia	alphabet	ca. 5.000
Lydian	Indo-European, Anatolian	5 <sup>th</sup> –4 <sup>th</sup> cent.	western Anatolia	alphabet	ca. 1.500
Old Phrygian	Indo-European	9 <sup>th</sup> –3 <sup>rd</sup> cent.	western Anatolia	alphabet	ca. 300
Mittanian	Indo-European, Indo-Iranian	16 <sup>th</sup> –14 <sup>th</sup> cent.	northern Mesopotamia	(cuneiform)	? (only loanwords and names)
Old Persian	Indo-European, Indo-Iranian	6 <sup>th</sup> –4 <sup>th</sup> cent.	southwestern Iran	Old Persian cuneiform	7.000
Median	Indo-European, Indo-Iranian	9 <sup>th</sup> –4 <sup>th</sup> cent.	western Iran	(cuneiform and Old Persian cuneiform)	? (only loanwords and names)

Fig. 1. Ancient Near Eastern languages.

People who were not scribes must also sometimes have known foreign l. However, the texts normally are silent on this matter. An exception is king Šulgi who boasts of speaking Amorite, Elamite, Subarian (Hurrian) and the unknown l. of Meluḫḫa\* as well as Sumerian (Schule\* § 11.2.1). The king of Mari in the OB period, Jašmaḫ-Adad\*, was accused by his father Šamši-Adad of not being able to speak Amorite (WZKM 97, 61: 6''f.), and in a partly damaged letter was apparently asked to learn Amorite (ibid. 69: 7 f.); Jasmaḫ-Adad exonerated himself saying "I need not learn to speak [Amo]rite any more (*lā watar*)" (ibid. 61: 10''). These texts show that it was expected that Jasmaḫ-Adad speaks the two most important l. of his realm, Akkadian and Amorite, and that he was learning the latter; however, as so often, his father was not content with his son's efforts.

Charpin/Ziegler 2007, 62 translate differently "Ohne Übertreibung, ich werde Amurritisch sprechen lernen". The proposed new interpretation relativizes some of their statements with respect to the Akk. speaking Jasmaḫ-Adad in an Amorite speaking milieu (ibid. 72f.).

§ 3.4. *Translating*. Professional interpreters (Sum. *eme-bal*, Akk. *targumammu* < ? Luw. *tarkumann(i)*- "Erklärung habend; Erklärer, Interpret"; Starke 1993) are relatively rarely attested and normally only for exotic l., presumably because most people who were in contact with foreigners had some knowledge of their l.s and did not need any interpreters. These interpreters have mostly native names (Gelb 1968, 103). L. and regions for which interpreters are explicitly attested are (see von Soden 1989; Ulshöfer 2000 and CAD T 229 f. for references): Gutium\* (§ 11), Meluḫḫa\* (§ 2), Marḫaši\*, Ḫuḫunuri (Ḫuḫnur\*), Martu\* (all OAkk. and Ur III), Ḫanigalbat\*, Kasite (both OB), Šubria (Hurrian?, MA), Mannean (Mannäer\* § 2, NA). From the contexts one can infer interpreters for Crete (Mari), Anatolian l.s (OAss.) and Egyptian (MB). An unpublished letter from Mari seems to refer to a man who speaks Akkadian, Amorite and Subarian (Hurrian) (CRRAI 38, 125 with n. 205; Streck 2000, 76 § 1.84; Charpin/Ziegler 2007, 62). A damaged letter from Mari reports that sev-

eral officials in the service of Šamsī-Adad\* were able to read Sumerian (Charpin/Ziegler 2007, 69 f.: 8–17). Negative evidence can also be inferred: when a messenger from Gyges of Lydia (Lydien\*) reached Assurbanipal in Ninive nobody could speak his l., which was “foreign (*nakrat*), and his speech (*atmūšu*) nobody could understand” (AS 5, 16 v 1–13; cf. Borger, BIWA 162 and 218 Stück 16).

*māpalū* in ARM 27, 116 probably means “spokesman” and not “interpreter”, see Streck 2000, 104; differently Charpin/Ziegler 2007, 59 n. 22.

Numerous bilingual and sometimes even trilingual texts are products of translation.

See Interlinearbilinguen\* (Sum.-Akk. bil. texts of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> mill.); Königsinschriften\* B. § 10 and Persien\*, Perser A. § 1 (Old Persian-Elam.-Akk. tril. royal inscriptions of the Achaemenid period); Literatur\* §§ 4.8.2k and 4.8.3 (Sum.-Akk. bil. incantations); Literatur\* bei den Hethitern p. 69 § 4 Ib, Ic (Hitt.-Akk. bil. literary texts) and p. 74 Id (Hatt.-Hitt. bil. rituals); Lugale\* § 2 (Sum.-Akk. bil. myth); Sprichwort\* § 3.1 (Sum.-Akk. bil. proverbs).

§ 3.5. *Language and literature.* As all literatures in the world Ancient Near Eastern literature (esp. but not exclusively canonical as well as monumental texts) frequently shows a deliberate use of l., resulting in rhetorical figures, the use of special words, archaic and archaizing l., etc.

See Königsinschriften\* B. § 11; Literatur\* p. 48 f. § 4; Literatur\* bei den Hethitern. § 3; Metrik\*; Poesie\* §§ 2.2–2.3; Krebernik 2007, 47 f. (knowledge of phonology deduced from literary texts).

*In general:* Edzard D. O. 1995: The Sumerian language, CANE 4, 2107–2116. – Gragg G. B. 1995: Less-understood languages of ancient western Asia, CANE 4, 2161–2180. – Gzella H. (ed.) 2009: Sprachen aus der Welt des Alten Testaments. – Huehnergard J. 1995: Semitic languages, CANE 4, 2117–2134. – Melchert H. C. 1995: Indo-European languages of Anatolia, CANE 4, 2151–2160. – Streck M. P. (ed.) 2007<sup>3</sup>: Sprachen des Alten Orients. – Woodard R. D. 2004: The Cambridge encyclopedia of the world’s ancient languages.

*Size of text corpora:* Peust C. 2000: Über ägyptische Lexikographie, *Lingua Aegyptia* 7, 245–260. – Streck M. P. 2011: Großes Fach Altorientalistik: der Umfang des keilschriftlichen Textkorpus, MDOG 142, 35–58.

*Articles on scripts in the RIA:* Hieroglyphen\*, hethitische; Hieroglyphen\*, urartäische; Keilschrift\*; Orthographie\*; Schrift\*.

*Articles on languages in the RIA:* Amorite: Name\*, Namengebung. E. Amurritisch. – Hattic: Hattier\*, Hattisch. – Hittite: Hethiter\*, Sprache. – Hurrian: Hurriter\*, Hurritisch. § 4. – Indo-European: Indogermanen\*. – Kaškaean: Kaškaer\* § 4. – Kassite: Kassiten\* § 8. – Luwian: Luwier\*, Luwisch, Lu(w)iya. – Lycian: Lykien\* § 4. – Lydian: Lydien\* § 4. – Median: Medisch\*. – Mittanian: Indogermanen\* § 3.2; Mittani\* § 6.2. – Palaic: Pala\*, Palaer, Palaisch. § 2. – Old Persian: Persien\*, Perser. A. – Philistaeon: Philister\* § 4. – Phoenician: Phönizien\*, Phönizier. § 4. – Phrygian: Phrygien\*, Phryger. A. – Proto-Elamite: Proto-Elamisch\*. – Semitic Languages: Semiten\*. – Sumerian: Sumer\* A. – Ugaritic: Ugarit\* B. Sprache und Schrift. – Urartian: Urartu\*.

*Language and culture:* Charpin D./Ziegler N. 2007: Amurritisch lernen, WZKM 97, 55–77. – Gelb I. J. 1968: The word for dragoman in the Ancient Near East, *Glossa* 2, 93–104. – Krebernik M. 2007: Zur Entwicklung von Sprachbewusstsein im Alten Orient, in: C. Wilcke (ed.), *Das geistige Erfassen der Welt im Alten Orient*, 39–61. – Mittermayer C. 2009: Enmerkar und der Herr von Arata (= OBO 239). – von Soden W. 1989: Dolmetscher und Dolmetschen im Alten Orient, in: L. Cagni/H.-P. Müller (ed.), *Aus Sprache, Geschichte und Religion Babyloniens* (= IVO 32), 351–357. – Starke F. 1993: Zur Herkunft von akkad. *talurgumannu(m)*, “Dolmetscher”, *WO* 24, 20–38. – Streck M. P. 2000: Das amurritische Onomastikon der altbabylonischen Zeit (= AOAT 271/1); id. 2002: Die Prologe der sumerischen Epen, *Or.* 71, 189–266. – Uehlinger C. 1990: Weltreich und “eine Rede” (= OBO 101). – Ulshöfer A. M. 2000: Sprachbarrieren und ihre Überwindung: translatorisches Handeln im Alten Orient, *HANEM* 3/2, 163–170.

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### Sprichwort (proverb).

§ 1. Introduction and definition. – § 2. Sumerian proverbs. § 2.1. Corpus. § 2.2. Terminology. § 2.3. Curricular use of Sumerian proverbs. § 2.4. Stylistic features of Sumerian proverbs. – § 3. Akkadian proverbs. § 3.1. Corpus. § 3.2. Terminology. § 3.3. Curricular use of Akkadian proverbs. § 3.4. Stylistic features of Akkadian proverbs.

§ 1. Introduction and definition. P., which stand on the junction of literature and reality, treat all aspects of life of all classes of society, quite often in a humor-