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# OT 706 Semitic Language Seminar

Bill T. Arnold

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## OT 706 Semitic Language Seminar

(Northwest Semitic Inscriptions)

Spring Semester, 2002

Instructor: Bill T. Arnold

**[Tentative: and will be updated in Spring 2002 before the beginning of classes.]**

### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the student, who already has a working knowledge of Biblical Hebrew, to the larger family group of Syro-Palestinian languages (traditionally known as “Northwest Semitic Languages”). The course is devoted to reading and interpreting texts designated as “Canaanite” (i.e., Hebrew, Phoenician and Moabite) in order to provide a wider linguistic and cultural context for the interpretation of the Old Testament.

### II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. To provide the student with a basic understanding of Northwest Semitic grammar and particularly Classical Hebrew.
- B. To improve student’s basic vocabulary of Classical Hebrew by exposure to cognate languages.
- C. To demonstrate the elementary principles of comparative Semitics through comparison of Epigraphic Hebrew, Phoenician, Moabite, and Biblical Hebrew.
- D. To provide the student with the broad linguistic, historical, and sociological contexts of the Old Testament, which is illustrated by these texts.

### III. COURSE PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

#### A. Method of Instruction

The course will have few lectures, primarily at the beginning to introduce and orient the student to the study of Epigraphic Hebrew and other cognate languages. Most of the course will assume a seminar format in which the group will examine grammatical principles of selected texts from the corpus of Northwest Semitic inscriptions, and students will present brief papers on selected topics related to the texts.

#### B. Textbooks

Required: Gogel, Sandra Landis. *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998.

Recommended: Parker, Simon B. *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions: Comparative Studies on Narratives in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Garr, W. Randall. *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000-586 B.C.E.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

- C. Assignments  
Students will be required to complete grammatical exercises and reading assignments throughout the course, and to participate in group discussions on the assigned readings.
- D. Seminar Papers  
Students will write three papers of 5-7 pages in length on selected topics relating to the texts assigned. These papers will be offered to the seminar in 15-minute presentations.
- IV. Student Evaluation
- |                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Class preparation and performance | 25% |
| Seminar Papers                    | 75% |
- V. Bibliography for Syro-Palestinian Languages (Reference #s are to the B. L. Fisher library).

Avigad, Nahman. *Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive*. Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University, 1976. CD5354 .A88

Avigad, Nahman, and Benjamin Sass. *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997.

Bange, L. A. *A Study of the Use of Vowel-Letters in Alphabetic Consonantal Writing*. München: Verlag UNI-Druck, 1971. PJ3019 .B3 1971

Bardowicz, L. *Studien zur Geschichte der Orthographie des Altthebräischen*. Frankfurt a. M., 1894.

Beyer, Klaus. *Altthebräische Grammatik*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969.

Bröno, E. *Studien über hebräische Morphologie und Vokalismus*. Leipzig, 1943. PJ4601 .B76

Cooke, G. A. *A Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions: Moabite, Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Jewish*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1903. PJ3085 .C7 1965

Cross, Frank Moore and David Noel Freedman. *Early Hebrew Orthography: A Study of the Epigraphic Evidence*. New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1952.

Daniels, Peter T. and W. Bright, *The World's Writing Systems*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Davies, Graham I. *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions: Corpus and Concordance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. PJ5034.8 .P3 D38 1991

Dearman, Andrew, ed. *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*. Atlanta: Scholars, 1989. PJ4149 .S7 1989

Donner, H. and Röllig, W. *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften I-III*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962-64. PJ3081 .D6 (on reserve)

Friedrich, J. *Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik*. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1951.

Gibson, John C. L. *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions I: Hebrew and Moabite Inscriptions*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1971.

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- Hackett, Jo Ann. *The Balaam Text from Deir 'Alla*. Chico, CA: Scholars, 1980.  
PJ5208.J63 H32 1984
- Halpern, Baruch, "The Stela from Dan: Epigraphic and Historical Considerations,"  
*BASOR* 296 (1994), 63-80.
- Harris, Zellig S. *A Grammar of the Phoenician Language*. New Haven, CT: American  
Oriental Society, 1936.
- Harris, Zellig S. *Development of the Canaanite Dialects: An Investigation in Linguistic History*.  
New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1939.
- Kaufman, Stephen A. "The Pitfalls of Typology: On The Early History of The  
Alphabet," *HUCA* 57(1986), 1-14.
- Layton, Scott C. "Old Aramaic Inscriptions: Literary Sources for The History of  
Palestine and Syria," *BA* 51.3 (1988), 172-189.
- Lidzbarski, M. *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik I-II*. Weimar, 1898. PJ3085 .L6  
1962.
- Lidzbarski, M. *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik I-III*. Giessen: Ricker, 1902-1915.
- Lidzbarski, M. *Kanaanäische Inschriften I-II*. Giessen, 1907.
- Sass, Benjamin, and Christoph Uehlinger, eds. *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest  
Semitic Inscribed Seals: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Fribourg on April 17-20,  
1991*. Fribourg: University Press/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,  
1993. CD5344 .S880 1993.
- Tombback, Richard S. *A Comparative Semitic Lexicon of the Phoenician and Punic Languages*.  
Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977. PJ4185 .T6 1977 (on reserve)
- Torczyner, N. H. (Tur Sinai). *Lachish I: The Lachish Letters*. London, 1938. DS110  
.T38 L2
- Tufnell, O. *Lachish III*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.
- Parker, Simon B. *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions: Comparative Studies on Narratives in  
Northwest Semitic Inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University  
Press, 1997. BS1171.2 .P27 1997 (on reserve)
- Renz, Johannes, and Wolfgang Röllig. *Handbuch der althebräischen Epigraphik*.  
Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995. (Band 1, Die Althebräischen  
Inschriften, Teil 1, Text und Kommentar; Band 2/1, Die Althebräischen  
Inschriften, Teil 2, Zusammenfassende, Erörterungen, Palaographie und  
Glossar; Band 3, Texte und Tafeln.) (on reserve)
- Richter, Wolfgang. *Grundlagen einer althebräischen Grammatik: B. Die Beschreibungsebenen.  
II. Die Wortfügung (Morphosyntax)*. St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1979; *III. Der Satz  
(Satztheorie)*. St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1980.
- Segert, Stanislav. *A Grammar of Phoenician and Punic*. München: C. H. Beck, 1976.
- Vaughn, Andrew G. "Paleaeographic Dating of Judaeon Seals and Its Significance  
for Biblical Research," *BASOR* 313(1999), 43-64.
- Wolters, Al. "The Balaamites of Deir 'Alla as Aramean Deportees," *HUCA* 59  
(1988), 101-131.
- Zevit, Ziony. "The Linguistic and Contextual Arguments in Favor of a Hebrew 3  
m.s. Suffix -Y," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 9(1977), 315-28.
- Zevit, Ziony. *Matres Lectionis in Ancient Hebrew Epigraphy*. ASOR Series, 2; Cambridge,  
MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1980.
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(1983), 1-16.