

sees quickly a common relationship not only in grammar but also in orthography. Hebrew and Arabic are the chief Semitic languages alive today.

In the last few years Ugaritic has practically displaced Arabic as the chief Semitic language studied to illustrate or understand Hebrew. The Ras Shamra literature has alerted the scholarly world to the concept that Hebrew was not just an Arabic dialect. The Ebla materials are pushing this to a further degree. Who knows? Perhaps someday we may conclude Hebrew to have been the proto-tongue and mother to all these other tongues.

b. Literature

--The Ras Shamra texts (Ugaritic) came into light after 1929. Probably the significance of these will be modified with further work on the Ebla materials. But this ancient language has produced a goodly amount of significant material for the background of the Semitic language culture.

--Pre-Babylonian material for Hebrew is slight:

The Gezer calendar....

The Samaritan ostraca

The Siloam inscription

Monastic period seals, handles,

and a few more fragments for a very small total.

--From the captivity period we have the Lachish Ostraca and a rather large amount of Aramaic work

--From the captivity and onwards literary fragments of Hebrew multiply but are sparse in comparison with others. A few notes are found in the Nash papyri and a few fragments from the Elephantine period.

--In the early Christian era, the apocryphal books of the Old Testament age indicate in some places, a Hebrew original but our best copies are in Greek.

--The Qumran materials are otherwise noted in this syllabus. They provide more Hebrew text material than all the rest of the remnants put together. Much of it is in the form of copies of parts of Scripture but some letters and non biblical books and materials are also seen. With this at a later date we also have some bar Cochba material as well.