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source of scholarly interest as well as an evocative political symbol for Palestine's Jewish community.

Sukenik served as associated director of the excavations of Samaria/Sebaste under J. W. Crowfoot (1931–1935), but his greatest contributions to his discipline came in his work at the Hebrew University: appointed lecturer in Palestinian Archaeology in 1935, he helped establish the basic course of study and in 1936 established a National Museum of Jewish Antiquities there. Sukenik supervised numerous excavations (most of them conducted by Avigad) at sites including Hammath-Gader (1932), Tell Jerishe (1927–1950), Afula (1926–1937), and Hadera (1934). At Hadera, Sukenik made the first identification of the characteristic ceramic ossuaries of the Chalcolithic period.

Sukenik's familiarity with Hebrew scripts of the Hellenistic and Roman periods enabled him to recognize the early date and immense historical significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls, three of which he purchased for the Hebrew University in November–December 1947. His translation of and commentaries on the Thanksgiving Hymns, the Isaiah B Scroll, and the War Scroll were completed after his death by his son Yigael Yadin and Avigad.

[See also Beth Alpha; Dead Sea Scrolls; Samaria; and the biographies of Avigad, Crowfoot, and Yadin.]

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NEIL ASHER SILBERMAN

SUMERIAN. A linguistically isolated, extinct language, Sumerian is preserved only on clay tablets, in a considerable corpus of texts, written in cuneiform. The tablets, dating from about 2,800 to 100 BCE, have been found in excavations in Iraq and, to a lesser degree, in other areas of the Near East, most notably northern Syria, but also as far as Susa in Elam, Boğazköy in Anatolia, Palestine, and el-Amarna in Egypt.

Linguistic and Historical Background. The native name of Sumerian is *eme-gir* (Akk., *lišan šumeri*, "language of the Sumerians"). A dialect used by women is called *emesal* (Akk., *lurī*, "woman's language"). All attempts to connect Sumerian to known linguistic families have so far failed. Typologically, it belongs to the languages with a subject-object-verb order, postpositions instead of prepositions, and adjectives following the noun. The roots tend to be monosyllabic, but the language can be considered to have an agglutinative morphology—one in which a word may consist







of more than one morpheme, but with clear-cut morpheme boundaries.

From the beginning of historical times, Sumerian was in contact with languages of the Semitic family. It appears, in fact, that the early texts, largely logographic, could be read either as Sumerian or as Semitic. After 2,000 BCE, Akkadian, a Semitic language, became dominant and Sumerian was relegated to the status of a literary language. [See Akkadian.]

Phonology. The phonology of Sumerian can be reconstructed up to a point with the help of native syllabary tablets. The tablets provide a phonological definition of a word in terms of a set of basic syllabograms, as shown in the examples provided in figure 1. The basic syllabograms in the left subcolumn are the same ones used to write Akkadian, a Semitic language whose phonetic structure is better known. This allows an approximate reconstruction of the Sumerian words, although some phonological details are undoubtedly lost in the process. The resulting phonological inventory of Sumerian consonants is provided in table 1. There are some uncertain points, such as the exact nature of /h/ (glottal?), and /ʃ/ (interdental?). This Akkadian interpretation of the Sumerian phonological system quite possibly involves some degree of underdifferentiation. In its earlier stages, the writing system did not distinguish between voiceless and voiced stops. It is not known whether this type of simplification extended to other phonological features. There is also a tendency to simplify consonantic clusters in writing. The existence of glides or semivowels (*w, *y) is suggested by indirect orthographic evidence.

Structural conditions limit the coexistence of some consonants in the same root. For instance, in a root of the form C(onsonant)₁-V(owel)-C(onsonant)₂, the two consonants cannot be labial; if C₁ is /h/, C₂ cannot be a velar; if C₂ is /h/, C₁ cannot be nasal or velar. The consonant /r/ is almost never found as word initial.

The writing shows four vowels—a, e, i, and u—but there

sa-ar		šaṭāru	"to write"
si-ig		mahāšu	"to strike"
mu-ul		kakkabu	"star"
za-la-ag		namāru	"to shine"
di-gi-ir		īlu	"god"
lu-gu-ud		kurū	"short"

SUMERIAN. Figure 1. Sumerian syllabograms.

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- 1 SÜLEYMAN ERATALAY, Sümer dili'nin biçimbilimsel ve sözdizimsel yapısı, Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi, Yüksek Lisans, 2007