Transcription of Semitic Consonants

In the transcriptions of Arabic, Aramaic, and Hebrew in this book, several phonetic symbols may be unfamiliar to you. These are explained below.

q A voiceless uvular stop
h A voiceless pharyngeal fricative: a strong h-like sound, pronounced with pharyngeal (throat) constriction
f A voiced pharyngeal fricative, usually regarded as the voiced counterpart of h
š An s-like sound found in Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Aramaic, the exact pronunciation of which is uncertain; perhaps palatalized
Č A dot below a consonant, e.g., t, indicates that the consonant is pronounced with the back of the tongue raised toward the velum. Such consonants are said to be velarized or emphatic.

a, a Ultrashort vowels, as in Biblical Hebrew τšma:n, lašqō:r