

THE USE OF *SYĀMĒ* AS A PHONOLOGICAL MARKER IN SYRIAC

AARON MICHAEL BUTTS

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

For J. F. ‘Chip’ Coakley
on his retirement

ABSTRACT

It is well established that the primary use of syāmē in Syriac is to mark the morphological category of plurality. This study explores a secondary use of syāmē as a phonological marker for a final mid front vowel in Syriac. This occurs most frequently with Greek words in Syriac that ended in -η, or more rarely -ε or -αι, in the Greek source. It is proposed that the phonological use of syāmē can also explain the regularity and consistency with which syāmē occur with the feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers.

It is well established that the primary use of *syāmē* ‘(lit.) placings’ in Syriac is to mark the morphological category of plurality.¹ The

* I would like to thank George A. Kiraz (Beth Mardutho: Syriac Institute) for discussing this paper with me as well as for adding several examples to those cited here. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewer(s) at *Hugoye* who provided useful feedback. Finally, I am especially grateful to Lucas Van Rompay (Duke University) for his helpful comments. Note the following abbreviation: CAD = *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago, 1956-).

singular noun ܡܠܟܐ /malkā/ ‘king’, for instance, is distinguished from the plural noun ܡܠܟܝܐ /malkē/ ‘kings’ in the consonantal script of Syriac by the *syāmē* on the latter.² This use of *syāmē* is attested already in the earliest Syriac manuscripts, such as London, Brit. Libr. Add. 12,150, which is dated to 411 CE.³ It should be noted that *syāmē* are not found in the Old Syriac inscriptions, e.g., ܒܢܝܝ /bnay/ ‘my children’ (As16 [201/2 CE]; ed. Drijvers and Healey 1999: 73-74), or in the Old Syriac documents, e.g., ܙܒܢܝܢ /zabnin/ ‘times’ (P1.7 [243 CE]; ed. Drijvers and Healey 1999: 73-74).⁴ While *syāmē* mark the morphological category of plurality in the vast majority of cases, this is not their only use in Syriac. Occasionally, *syāmē* function as a phonological marker for a final mid front vowel in Syriac.

The occasional use of *syāmē* as a phonological marker for a final mid front vowel is most common with Greek loanwords in Syriac that ended in -η in the Greek source, as in the following examples:⁵

¹ Brockelmann 1981: §11; Duval 1881: §66; Kiraz 2012: §225-234; Nöldeke 1904: §16; Segal 1953: 5. For the history of the term *syāmē* along with alternative designations, such as *nāqṣay saggiyānūtā* ‘points of plurality’, see Kiraz 2012: §225.

² As an aside, it should be pointed out that the ܟ in Syriac ܡܠܟܝܐ /malkē/ ‘kings’ is not fricativized in contrast to earlier forms of Aramaic where it is, as is reflected in Biblical Aramaic *malakīn* ‘kings’ (Ezra 4:20) < **malakīn* (see Rosenthal 1995: §51). This is due to an analogical development in Syriac whereby the plural base **malak-* was replaced by the singular base **malk-*.

³ A color image of this manuscript is available in Brock, Butts, Kiraz, and Van Rompay 2011: 457, where one can see several examples of *syāmē* marking plurality, e.g., ܡܠܟܝܐ /saggi’ē/ ‘much’ (col. 3, ln. 1). Jones (1998) has argued that many of the diacritical points after f. 40v of ms. Brit. Libr. Add. 12,150 were added secondarily; this does not, however, include *syāmē*, the use of which belongs to the original scribe (see at p. 439).

⁴ Jones 1998: 435; Kiraz 2012: §225.

⁵ In each of these examples, the singular is assured by the context – or, it is at the very least highly likely. It is tempting to add to this list ܬܝܡܝܐ (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1793-1794) > ܬܝܡܝܐ ‘price’ (Sokoloff 2009: 527), which is often written ܬܝܡܝܐ with *syāmē*. When written with *syāmē*, however, this word always seems to take plural agreement. Thus, ܬܝܡܝܐ is better analyzed as *plurale tantum*, probably on analogy to the semantically similar ܬܝܡܝܐ ‘price’ (Sokoloff 2009: 309), which is also *plurale tantum*. It should be

- (1) a. ἀνάγκη (Liddell and Scott 1996: 101) > ܐܢܐܢܐ
‘necessity’ in ܐܢܐܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ‘they fall
under the same necessity’ (Qiyore of Edessa, *Cause of the
Liturgical Feasts*, 103.20; ed. Macomber 1974).
- b. διαθήκη (Lampe 1961: 348; Liddell and Scott 1996: 394-
395) > ܕܡܕܢܐ ‘covenant’ in ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ
‘stranger to the heavenly covenant’ (*History of St. Cyriacus
and his Mother Julitta* according to the Syriac ms. at the
Library of the Royal Asiatic Society, f. 182r, ln. 10 [1569
CE]),⁶ in ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ‘Old Testament’ (Qiyore of
Edessa, *Cause of the Liturgical Feasts*, 20.26-21.1, 73.17,
92.17, 109.23, 171.6, 172.17-18; ed. Macomber 1974);⁷
ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ‘the words of this covenant’
(Jer. 11:6; Mosul edition).
- c. νομή (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1178-1179) > ܢܡܐ
‘pasture’ in ܢܡܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܢܡܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ‘the giving of the law
had spread out’ (Qiyore of Edessa, *Cause of the Liturgical
Feasts*, 171.12-13; ed. Macomber 1974).⁸
- d. πεντηκοστή (Lampe 1961: 1060) > ܦܢܬܝܚܝܫܬܐ
‘Pentecost’ in ܦܢܬܝܚܝܫܬܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ

noted that the latter may well be a loanword from Akkadian *damē* ‘blood money’ (CAD D 79, *sub* 2b), even though it is not included in Kaufman 1974, especially since the Akkadian form is also plural. For the association between ܢܡܐ and ܢܡܐ, see already Nöldeke 1904: §88 and Brock 1967: 422.

⁶ The singular is assured by the following adjective that does not have *syāmē* as well as by the witnesses of other manuscripts that have ܕܡܕܢܐ without *syāmē*, such as ms. Sachau 222 (1881 CE; ed. Bedjan 1890-1897: 3.272.21).

⁷ See also 94.14, 20; 146.20; 147.30; 162.21; 172.4.

⁸ See also 90.3; 150.26; 168.24; 171.13. Perhaps also ܢܡܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ‘because of the love of pleasures that spread among us’ (Ishaq of Nineveh, *Part 3*, 104.16; ed. Chialà 2011). The form ܢܡܐ may be singular in this case, since ܕܡܕܢܐ ‘to take’ plus ܢܡܐ ‘pasture’ forms a common idiom ‘to spread’ (Sokoloff 2009: 900). It is, however, possible that ܢܡܐ is plural in this example due to attraction to the plural verb. Regardless, the editor’s emendation (Chialà 2011: 104 n. 38) to ܢܡܐ without *syāmē* should be rejected.

- ‘what does this word “Pentecost” signify’ (Qiyore of Edessa, *Six Explanations of the Liturgical Feasts*, 160.4; 161.13; 162.4-5; ed. Macomber 1974).⁹
- e. σχολή (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1747-1748) > ܠܫܠܬܐ ‘school’ in ܠܫܠܬܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ‘the teachers of the community of the holy School of Nisibis’ (Qiyore of Edessa, *Six Explanations of the Liturgical Feasts*, 45.24; ed. Macomber 1974).¹⁰
- f. τροφή (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1827-1828) > ܠܫܠܬܐ ‘nourishment, support’ in ܠܫܠܬܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ‘nourishment, which is purity and freedom from suffering’ (Babai the Great, *Commentary on the ‘Gnostic Chapters’ by Evagrius of Pontus*, 468.14-15; ed. Frankenberg 1912).
- g. ὕλη (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1847-1848) > ܠܫܠܬܐ ‘matter’ in ܠܫܠܬܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ‘they introduce matter to the divine creation’ (Qiyore of Edessa, *Six Explanations of the Liturgical Feasts*, 20.18-19; ed. Macomber 1974).¹¹
- h. φυλακή (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1960) > ܠܫܠܬܐ ‘prison’ in ܠܫܠܬܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ‘when he was being guarded in the prison, he died’ (Yuhanon of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History*, Part 3, 158.22; ed. Brooks 1935).¹²

It should be noted that forms without *syāmē* are much more common for all of these words. Regardless, in each of the cases in (1), the *syāmē* serve as a phonological marker for a final mid front

⁹ See also 160.1; 162.7; 164.1; 165.8, 18; 187.20.

¹⁰ Becker (2006: 104-105 with n. 79 [on p. 243]; see also 2010: 93 n. 10) suggests that the phonological use of *syāmē* occurs in the title of the *Cause of the Foundation of the Schools*: ܠܫܠܬܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐ (ed. Scher 1907: 13), which he would render *The Cause of the Establishment of the Session of the School*. It should be noted that one manuscript reads ܠܫܠܬܐ instead of ܠܫܠܬܐ, which lends support to this argument; the title at the end of the text, however, has the plural ܠܫܠܬܐ (Scher 1907: 83.4; note, however, the lack of *syāmē*), which weakens the argument.

¹¹ The plural of this loanword only seems to be attested as ܠܫܠܬܐ (Sokoloff 2009: 335, 341).

¹² The plural cannot be absolutely ruled out in the context, even if the singular seems much more likely.

vowel. The writing of *syāmē*, thus, disambiguates the consonantal script of these Greek loanwords, which could be read with either final *-ā* or final *-ē*, in the same way as it disambiguates the consonantal script of many masculine nouns, e.g., singular ܡܠܬܐ /malkā/ ‘king’ vs. plural ܡܠܬܐ /malkē/ ‘kings’. The list in (1) is not exhaustive, but it would seem to provide enough evidence to establish that *syāmē* occasionally occur as a phonological marker for a final mid front vowel in Syriac reflecting *-η* in the Greek source.¹³

Syriac *syāmē* also serve as a phonological marker for a final mid front vowel with several Greek proper nouns that ended in *-η*, as in the following examples:¹⁴

- (2) a. Κρήτη ‘Crete’ > ܡܠܬܐ (Zeph 2:5, 6; Leiden edition).
 b. Σκήτη ‘Skete’ > ܡܠܬܐ (*History of Abba Marcus of Mt. Tharmaka*, according to ms. Yale Syriac 5, p. 36; ed. Look 1929: 1).

These cases are comparable to those cited in (1) in which *syāmē* disambiguate the consonantal script, which could be read with either final *-ā* or final *-ē*.

The use of *syāmē* as a phonological marker for final Greek *η* has implications for the pronunciation of *η* in the Koinē Greek of Syria and Mesopotamia. In Attic Greek, *η* was a long open-mid front /ɛ:/.¹⁵ Some Koinē dialects preserved *η* as an open-mid front /ɛ:/ into the Roman period, whereas others attest a merger of *η* with the high front /i/, which could be written either *ι* or *ει*.¹⁶ A few spellings in the Greek documents from Syria and Mesopotamia suggest that Greek *η* was at least beginning to merge to /i/ in this region by the Roman period.¹⁷ The use of *syāmē* as a phonological

¹³ Though many of these examples occur in Qiyore of Edessa’s *Six Explanations of the Liturgical Feasts*, the phenomenon is certainly not limited to this text.

¹⁴ See also ܢܝܢܘܗ ‘Nineveh’, possibly due to Greek Νινευή, in ms. Paris, Bibl. Nat. 56, f. 191v (ed. Van Rompay 2015).

¹⁵ Allen 1987: 69-75; Woodard 2004: 617.

¹⁶ Allen 1987: 74-75; Gignac 1976-: 1.235-242; Mayser 1970: 46-54; Palmer 1934: 170; 1945: 1.

¹⁷ See Welles, Fink, and Gilliam 1959: 47 as well as the following spellings from the P.Euph. documents: ܝܐ for ει (P. Euph. 11.24 [232]);

marker for final Greek η , however, suggests that some Syriac writers and/or scribes preserved a pronunciation of η as a mid front vowel well into the Roman period, since the Syriac masculine plural *status emphaticus* ending was never realized as a high front vowel but always as mid front. The preservation of a mid front pronunciation of Greek η in this area at this time can be corroborated by the representation of final Greek $-\eta$ by the voiceless glottal stop ' in Syriac, which would have represented a final mid front vowel, in contrast to spellings with a final palatal glide y , which would have represented a final high front vowel, e.g., ἀνάγκη (Liddell and Scott 1996: 101) > ܐܢܐܢܟܗ ‘necessity’ (Sokoloff 2009: 63). Thus, Syriac evidence suggests that Greek η was beginning to merge to $/i/$ in this region by the Roman period (representations of final $-\eta$ with Syriac y), though at least some Syriac writers and/or scribes preserved its mid front realization well into the Roman Period (representations of final $-\eta$ with Syriac ' and the occasional use of *syāmē* as a phonological marker).¹⁸

In addition to final Greek $-\eta$, *syāmē* more rarely serve as a phonological marker for final Greek $-\epsilon$. This is, for instance, the case with the writing of the personal name ܩܝܘܪܐ ‘Qiyore’ in the *Six Explanations of the Liturgical Feasts* by Qiyore of Edessa (1.1; ed. Macomber 1974). This Syriac name derives from Greek Κύρε , a frozen vocative of Κύρος ‘Cyrus’. Thus, in this case, the *syāmē* in

καθαροποιήσει for καθαροποιήση (P.Euph. 8.27 [251]); ὕστερέσει for ὕστερήση (P.Euph. 16.A.5 [after 239]). It should be noted that ει , which was a long close-mid front $/e:/$ in Attic Greek, had merged with ι as a high unrounded short $/i/$ by the Koinē Greek of the Roman and Byzantine periods (Allen 1987: 70; Gignac 1976-: 1.189-191, 235-262; Mayser 1970: 54-65; Palmer 1934: 170; 1945: 1). For this merger in the Greek of Syria and Mesopotamia, see Welles, Fink, and Gilliam 1959: 47; many additional spellings attesting this merger will also be found in the P.Euph. documents. The Greek P.Euph. documents are edited in Feissel and Gascou 1989; 1995; 2000; Feissel, Gascou, and Teixidor 1997. Images of these texts are available online at <<http://www.papyrologie.paris-sorbonne.fr/menu1/collections/pgrec/peuphrate.htm>>.

¹⁸ The present author is currently completing a study that uses Greek loanwords in Syriac as a witness to the Greek of Late Antique Syria and Mesopotamia (as so-called *Nebenüberlieferungen*).

ܠܝܡܠܟܐ mark the final -ε in ܟܝܪܥ. A similar use of *syāmē* occurs with the writing of the Greek aorist passive infinitive σφυρισθῆναι ‘to be struck with hammers, beat’ as ܠܝܡܠܟܐܝܢ with *syāmē* in Part 3 of the *Ecclesiastical History* by Yuḥanon of Ephesus (15.28; ed. Brooks 1935). In the *editio princeps*, Brooks proposed to emend this word by removing *syāmē*. This emendation is, however, unnecessary, since the *syāmē* here are a phonological marker for final Greek -αι, which had merged with Greek ε as a mid-front short /e/ by the Koinē Greek of the Roman and Byzantine periods.¹⁹

An interesting case of the use of *syāmē* for Greek -ε is found in the following passage from the anonymous tract on accents in Brit. Libr. Add. 12,138 (899 CE), which is the only surviving manuscript of the East-Syriac ‘Masora’:²⁰

- (3) Anonymous tract in East-Syriac ‘Masora’ (Brit. Libr. Add. 12,138 [899 CE])

ܕܠܝܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

‘Do not be afraid, Paul’ (f. 306v, ln. 17 = Acts 27:24)²¹

The *p* in ܕܢܝܢܐ has five points above it: a *quššāyā* point, an East-Syriac *ṣqāpā* with two points, as well as two additional points.²²

¹⁹ Allen 1987: 79; Gignac 1976-: 1.191-193; Mayser 1970: 83-87. For this merger in the Greek of Syria and Mesopotamia, see Welles, Fink, and Gilliam 1959: 47 as well as the following selected spellings from the P.Euph. documents: αἰωνημένης for ἐωνημένης (P.Euph. 6.17 [249]; 7.10 [249]); ἀναπέμψε for ἀναπέμψαι (P.Euph. 4.14 [252-256]); ἀσπάζομε for ἀσπάζομαι (P.Euph. 16.A.2 [after 239]); ἐγκαλοῦμε for ἐγκαλοῦμαι (P.Euph. 3.12 [252-256]; 4.12 [252-256]); εὐχομε for εὐχομαι (P.Euph. 16.B.7 [after 239]; P.Euph. 17.2 [mid-3rd]); κελεῦσε for κελεῦσαι (P.Euph. 2.15 [mid-3rd]); ται for τε (P.Euph. 9.27 [252]); ὑπόκειτε for ὑπόκειται (P.Euph. 2.14-15 [mid-3rd]); χέρειν for χαίρειν (P. Euph. 11.11 [232]).

²⁰ For this anonymous tract, see Segal 1953: 79. For a facsimile edition of the entire manuscript, see Loopstra Forthcoming. I would like to thank Jonathan Loopstra (Capital University) for sharing his work with me prior to its publication.

²¹ Translating Greek μὴ φοβοῦ Παῦλε ‘Do not be afraid, Paul’. It should be noted that both Segal (1953: 99 n. 1) and Kiraz (2012: §303) cite the folio as 303v.

Segal follows the author of the anonymous tract in interpreting these two additional points as a *rāḥtā* accent, which ‘joins two words closely together in a context to which a rising tone is suitable’ (1953: 98-99). A similar interpretation is found in Kiraz’s recent volume on Syriac orthography, where it is added that the two points are ‘not to be confused’ with *syāmē* (2012: §139). This analysis is, however, not without problems. The use of *rāḥtā* at the end of a word is found in a fair number of reliable examples.²³ In contrast, the use of *rāḥtā* at the beginning of a word is not so reliably attested. Following the anonymous tract on accents in Brit. Libr. Add. 12,138, Segal (1953: 99) provides three total examples, but comments that ‘in all these examples one of the two points may not be part of *rāḥtā* but a diacritical point’ (n. 7). Given the uncertainty over the use of *rāḥtā* at the beginning of a word, an alternative analysis of the two additional points in ܩܥܡܝܐ in (3) is in order. These two points could represent *syāmē* being used as a phonological marker. In this case, the *syāmē* would represent the final -ε in the Greek vocative Παῦλε.

If the *syāmē* in ܩܥܡܝܐ in (3) are analyzed as a phonological marker for final -ε, the Syriac vocalization with final *ptāḥā* would then be a secondary development. In his *Book of Splendors*, Bar ‘Ebroyo (d. 1286) explains that Greek personal names in Syriac that end in -os have a vocative in -e, e.g., ܦܐܘܠܝܐ (< Παῦλε) vocative of ܦܐܘܠܝܐ (< Παῦλος), and that those that end in -as have a vocative in -a, e.g., ܡܕܐܡܐ (< Μάμα) vocative of ܡܕܐܡܐ (< Μάμας).²⁴ He then provides the following comment about the derivation of such words in East Syriac:

²² The same five points appear with this letter in the version of this verse found on f. 275v, ln. 1 of Brit. Libr. Add. 12,138, which is not from the anonymous tract (303v-308v) but from the actual biblical samples.

²³ Segal (1953: 98-99), for instance, cites half a dozen.

²⁴ The Syriac is edited in Moberg 1922: 166.16-22, and a German translation is available in Moberg 1907-1913: 1.145. It should be noted that Bar ‘Ebroyo does not call these vocatives but diminutives (ܙܡܐ ‘*zāmā*).

- [illegible]

Thus, Bar 'Ebroyo states that the two Greek types *-as* and *-as* had been leveled to a single vocative in *-ā* in East Syriac by his time (the thirteenth century). The form **ܩܥܒܐ** in the East-Syriac 'Masora' establishes that this leveling had occurred already by 899, several centuries prior to Bar 'Ebroyo.²⁶ It is difficult to explain the discrepancy between the final *ʒgāḇā* given by Bar 'Ebroyo in his description of East Syriac and the final *ḡtāḇā* found in Brit. Libr. Add. 12,138.²⁷ It should, however, be noted that both final *ʒgāḇā* and *ḡtāḇā* are found for these forms in the later East-Syriac tradition; the Mosul Bible, for instance, has **ܩܥܒܐ** (Luke 1:3) ending in *ʒgāḇā* but **ܩܥܒܐ** (John 14:9) and **ܩܥܒܐ** (Acts 27:24) ending in *ḡtāḇā*.

Thus, it is proposed that the two additional points in ܩܕܝܬܐ – that is, those points that are neither the *quṣṣāyā* marker nor the East-Syriac *ṣqāpā* – are best analyzed as *syāmē*. This *syāmē* would have functioned as a phonological marker for final -ē before East Syriac leveled the two types of vocatives of Greek personal names (-e and -a) to a single type in -a/ā. After the leveling, the *syāmē* would not have been analyzable, since the final vowel was no longer mid front. This would have made it possible for *syāmē* in this case to be reinterpreted as a *rāḥṭā* accent, as they have been in the East-Syriac ‘Masora’ (Brit. Libr. Add. 12,138, f. 306v, ln. 17).²⁸

²⁸ It is from here, of course, that this analysis made its way into Segal 1953: 99 and more recently Kiraz 2012: §303.

Up to this point, all of the examples of *syāmē* functioning as a phonological marker for a final mid front vowel involve Greek words in Syriac. There is, however, a set of native Syriac words where *syāmē* also function as a phonological marker (or at least did originally): the feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers (11-19). The most commonly attested forms of the teen cardinal numbers are given in the chart in (5).

(5)

	with masculine nouns	with feminine nouns
1	ܒܝܚܬܐ	ܒܝܚܬܐ
2	ܐܘܚܬܐ	ܐܘܚܬܐ
3	ܠܚܬܐ	ܠܚܬܐ
4	ܐܘܚܬܐ	ܐܘܚܬܐ
5	ܬܡܬܬܐ	ܬܡܬܬܐ
6	ܡܠܬܐ	ܡܠܬܐ
7	ܡܚܬܐ	ܡܚܬܐ
8	ܠܡܬܬܐ	ܠܡܬܬܐ
9	ܠܡܬܬܐ	ܠܡܬܬܐ

In the manuscripts, there is a great deal of variation in the forms themselves as well as in which forms are written with *syāmē*.²⁹ Notwithstanding this, however, *syāmē* are most commonly found with the feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers. This is due to the fact that it is the feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers that end in *-ē*.³⁰ This final *-ē* is not etymologically related

²⁹ Brockelmann 1981: §157; Coakley 2002: 134; Muraoka 2005: §44; Nöldeke 1904: §148.

³⁰ So already Nöldeke 1904: §16 and Hetzron 1977: 186 n. 1.

to the Syriac masculine plural *status emphaticus* ending *-ē*.³¹ Thus, the feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers represent another

³¹ This is certain since the same ending is found with these forms in Biblical Hebrew, which does not of course have the Aramaic masculine plural *status emphaticus* ending *-ē*, e.g., *šlōš* 'ēsrē 'thirteen (FEM)', which is written in the consonantal script as *šlš* 'srh. The etymology of the *-ē* that occurs in the word for ten in feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers in Hebrew and Syriac continues to defy explanation. Traditionally, it was connected with the feminine ending **-ay* (see, e.g., Brockelmann 1908: §225Bdβαα [p. 412]; 249cβ [p. 489]; 1981: §106; Cowley 1910: §80L; Joüon and Muraoka 2005: §89l, 100e; Moscati et al. 1964: §12.33 [tentatively]; Wright 1890: 138; for the wider Semitic context of the feminine ending **-ay*, see the bibliography and discussion in Layton 1990: 241-249). One would, however, expect the feminine ending **-ay* to be realized as *-ay* in both Syriac and Hebrew, based on Syriac *salway* 'quail' (Sokoloff 2009: 1012; for additional examples, see Nöldeke 1904: §83) and on Hebrew *šaray* (Gen. 11:30), the earlier name of Sarah. Ugaritic evidence adds further difficulties to the traditional etymology that relates the *-ē* in the word for ten in feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers in Hebrew and Syriac to the feminine ending **-ay*. In Ugaritic, the word for ten in teen cardinal numbers is written as 'srh alongside 'sr and 'srt (Tropper 2000: §62.2). Given that the word for ten is also written with final *-h* in the feminine of these forms in Hebrew, it is likely that Ugaritic 'srh is cognate to the Hebrew forms as well as to the Syriac forms, where the *mater lectionis* will have been changed from *h* to ' (for this change in Syriac, compare the orthography of the feminine singular *status absolutus* ending, which is consistently *-* in Syriac but was *-h* in Old Aramaic [Degen 1969: §34] with Biblical Aramaic attesting both forms [Rosenthal 1995: §42]). The *-h* in Ugaritic 'srh cannot be a reflex of the feminine ending **-ay* because: 1. the feminine ending **-ay* is probably realized as *-y* in Ugaritic (Tropper 2000: §52.4 with the comments in Pardee 2003/2004: 176-177); 2. Ugaritic *h* never functions as a *mater lectionis* and is always consonantal in Ugaritic (Tropper 2000: §21.342.2; Huehnergard 2012: 21). Thus, while the analysis of the final *-h* in Ugaritic 'srh remains uncertain (Bordreuil and Pardee 2009: 36; Huehnergard 2012: 49; see the discussion in Tropper 2000: §62.201), the Ugaritic evidence casts further doubt on analyzing the ending *-ē* on the word for ten in feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers in Biblical Hebrew and Syriac as the feminine ending **-ay* (contra Joüon and Muraoka 2005: §100e, who doubt whether the Ugaritic evidence can be used to show that *h* in Hebrew 'srh was originally consonantal). It should be noted here in passing that Hetzron (1977) has proposed that the final *-ē* in these Hebrew and Syriac forms is – at least partially – the result of language contact with Akkadian. This is, however,

case in which *syāmē* (at least originally) serve as a phonological marker for a final mid front vowel in Syriac – this time with native Syriac words. The fact that *syāmē* are occasionally found with the masculine forms of the teen cardinal numbers, which do not end in *-ē*, as well as with other numbers, which also do not end in *-ē*, suggests that the phonological use of *syāmē* was secondarily reinterpreted as a morphological marker of plurality by at least some writers and/or scribes. This, however, represents a secondary development. The regularity and consistency with which *syāmē* occur with the feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers suggest that the origin of their use with numbers is to be found there, where they functioned originally as a phonological marker, and it is from there that they spread to other numbers.³²

The connection between *syāmē* and the end of a word is interestingly enough reflected in the orthography of the Syriac incantation bowls.³³ In contrast to the situation in Classical Syriac, *syāmē* often occur on the final *'ālap* in the Syriac incantation bowls, e.g., ܐܪܬܐ ܕܕܡܢܐ *'demon*s' (Hamilton 1971: 98a [*sub* ln. 12]).³⁴ The same

unlikely given what is known about the contact between these languages as well as about contact-induced change more broadly.

³² The result of such an extension can be illustrated by Christian Palestinian Aramaic, where *syāmē* are used with masculine and feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers as well as with many other forms of the numbers (for the forms, see Müller-Kessler 1991: §4.3.1).

³³ Syriac incantation bowls, also called 'magic bowls', are earthenware bowls that are inscribed with incantations in ink. The bowls are typically thought to stem from the late Sasanian period (sixth to seventh century), though both earlier and later dates have been suggested. Two scripts are attested in the Syriac bowls: Eṣṣrangela and a related script that is often termed 'Proto-Manichaean'. The language of the Syriac bowls differs in a number of ways from Classical Syriac (Van Rompay 1990). Collections of Syriac incantation bowls are available in Hamilton 1971: 98-164 as well as more recently Moriggi 2004: 235-294 (for the history of publication of Syriac bowls, see Moriggi 2004: 1-6, 47-48 with further references). The Syriac incantation bowls have parallels in Mandaic and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic.

³⁴ This feature is not mentioned in Hamilton 1971: 48-49 or Moriggi 2004. In addition, *syāmē* are unfortunately not marked in the texts in the appendix of Moriggi 2004, leaving this interesting difference between Classical Syriac and the language of the Syriac incantation bowls

orthography is found in the Syriac leather amulets edited by Ph. Gignoux (1987),³⁵ e.g., ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ ‘demons’ (Amulet 1, ln. 16). This orthography of writing *syāmē* on the last letter of the word indicates the close connection between *syāmē* and the phonology of the last syllable.

This study has aimed to shed light on a minor, but interesting orthographic feature of Syriac that is not recorded in the standard grammars, such as those of Duval (1881) and Nöldeke (1904): the occasional use of *syāmē* as a phonological marker for a final mid front vowel in Syriac.³⁶ This use of *syāmē* is due to a reanalysis of the relationship between *syāmē* and the ending *-ē* of masculine plural *status emphaticus* nouns, such as ܡܠܟܐ /malkē/ ‘kings’. Some writers and/or scribes re-analyzed what was originally a morphological marker of plurality in nouns such as ܡܠܟܐ /malkē/ ‘kings’ as a phonological marker for a final mid front vowel. This reanalysis enabled *syāmē* to be extended to non-plural words that ended in a mid front vowel, such as Greek words in Syriac that ended in *-η*, or more rarely *-ε* or *-αι*, in the Greek source as well as to the feminine forms of the teen cardinal numbers.³⁷

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, W. S. 1987. *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek* (3rd ed.). Cambridge.
- Becker, A. H. 2006. *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom. The School of Nisibis and Christian Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia*. Philadelphia.

indiscernible to the reader (*syāmē* are marked in Hamilton’s texts, even though they are written in square script).

³⁵ For this edition, see the review article in Wesselius 1991.

³⁶ This use was, however, noted by Van Rompay (*apud* Salvesen 1997: 245 n. 66), Becker (2010: 93 n. 10), and Kiraz (2012: §158).

³⁷ Following a similar development, *syāmē* occasionally function as a phonological marker for a final mid front vowel in Christian Sogdian texts (Sims-Williams, *apud* Kiraz 2012: §621).

- _____. "The Comparative Study of 'Scholasticism' in Late Antique Mesopotamia: Rabbis and East Syrians," *AJS Review* 34: 91-113.
- Bedjan, P. 1890-1897. *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* (7 vols.). Paris – Leipzig.
- Bordreuil, P. and D. Pardee. 2009. *A Manual of Ugaritic* (LAWS 3). Winona Lake.
- Brock, S. P. 1967. "Greek Words in the Syriac Gospels (*vet* and *pe*)," *Le Muséon* 80 (1967): 389-426.
- Brock, S. P., A. M. Butts, G. A. Kiraz, and L. Van Rompay. 2011. *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*. Piscataway.
- Brockelmann, C. 1908. *Grundriß der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*, Vol. I. *Laut- und Formenlehre*. Berlin.
- _____. 1981. *Syrische Grammatik* (13th ed.). Leipzig.
- Brooks, E. W. 1935. *Iohannis Ephesini. Historiae Ecclesiasticae. Pars Tertia* (CSCO 105). Louvain.
- Chialà, S. 2011. *Isacco di Ninive. Terza collezione* (CSCO 637-638). Louvain.
- Coakley, J. F. 2002. *Robinson's Paradigms and Exercises in Syriac Grammar* (5th ed.). Oxford.
- Cowley, A. E. 1910. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (2nd ed.). Oxford.
- Degen, R. 1969. *Altaramäische Grammatik*. Wiesbaden.
- Drijvers, H. J. W. and J. F. Healey. 1999. *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osroene*. Leiden.
- Duval, R. 1881. *Traité de grammaire syriaque*. Paris.
- Feissel, D. and J. Gascou. 1989. "Documents d'archives romains inédits du Moyen-Euphrate (III^e siècle après J.-C.)," *CRAI* 1989: 535-561.
- _____. 1995. "Documents d'archives romains inédits du moyen Euphrate (III^e s. après J.-C.). I. Les pétitions (P. Euphr. 1 à 5)," *Journal des Savants*: 65-119.

- _____. 2000. "Documents d'archives romains inédits du moyen Euphrate (III^e s. après J.-C.). III. Actes diverses et lettres (P. Euphr. 11 à 17)," *Journal des Savants*: 157-208.
- Feissel, D., J. Gascou, and J. Teixidor. 1997. "Documents d'archives romains inédits du moyen Euphrate (III^e s. après J.-C.). II. Les actes de vente-achat (P. Euphr. 6 à 10)," *Journal des Savants*: 3-57.
- Frankenberg, W. 1912. *Evagrius Ponticus*. Berlin.
- Gignac, F. T. 1976-. *A Grammar of the Greek papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*. Milan.
- Gignoux, P. 1987. *Incantations magiques syriaques*. Louvain.
- Hamilton, V. P. 1971. *Syriac incantation bowls*. Ph.D. Diss., Brandeis University.
- Hetzron, R. 1977. "Innovations in the Semitic Numeral System," *JSS* 22: 167-201.
- Huehnergard, J. 2012. *An Introduction to Ugaritic*. Peabody, MA.
- Jones, F. S. 1998. "Early Syriac Pointing in and behind British Museum Additional Manuscript 12,150," in R. Lavenant, S.J. (ed.), *Symposium Syriacum VII* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 256). Rome. 429-444.
- Joüon, P. and T. Muraoka. 1991. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Rome.
- Kaufman, S. A. 1974. *Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*. Chicago.
- Kiraz, G. A. 2012. *Turrāṣ Mamllā. A Grammar of the Syriac Language*. Piscataway.
- Layton, S. C. 1990. *Archaic Features of Canaanite Personal Names in the Hebrew Bible*. Atlanta.
- Liddell, H. and R. Scott (revised by H. Stuart Jones and R. McKenzie). 1996. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford.
- Look, A. E. 1929. *The History of Abba Marcus of Mount Tharmaka*. Oxford.
- Loopstra, J. Forthcoming. *An East Syrian Manuscript of the Syriac 'Masora' to 899 CE*. Piscataway.

- Macomber, W. F. 1974. *Six Explanations of the Liturgical Feasts by Cyrus of Edessa* (CSCO 355-336). Louvain.
- Mayser, M. 1970. *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit*, Vol. 1. *Laut- und Wortlehre*, Part 1. *Einleitung und Lautlehre* (2nd ed.). Berlin.
- Moberg, A. 1907-1913. *Buch der Strahlen. Die grössere Grammatik des Barhebraeus*. Leipzig.
- . 1922. *Le Livre des splendeurs. La grande grammaire de Grégoire Barhebraeus*. Lund.
- Moriggi, M. 2004. *La lingua delle coppe magiche siriache* (Quaderni di Semitistica 21). Firenze.
- Moscatti, S. et al. 1964. *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*. Wiesbaden.
- Müller-Kessler, Ch. 1991. *Grammatik des Christlich-Palästinisch-Aramäischen*, Part 1. *Schriftlehre, Lautlehre, Formenlehre* (Texte und Studien zur Orientalistik 6). Hildesheim.
- Muraoka, T. 2005. *Classical Syriac. A Basic Grammar with a Chrestomathy* (2nd ed.; PLO ns 19). Wiesbaden.
- Nöldeke, Th. 1904. *Compendious Syriac Grammar. Translated from the second and improved German edition by James A. Crichton*. Leipzig.
- Palmer, L. R. 1934. "Prolegomena to a Grammar of the Post-Ptolemaic Papyri," *JTS* 35: 170-175.
- . 1945. *A Grammar of the Post-Ptolemaic Papyri*. London.
- Pardee, D. 2003/2004. Review of Tropper 2000 (online version). *A/O* 50.
- Rosenthal, F. 1995. *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (PLO ns 5). Wiesbaden.
- Salvesen, A. 1997. "Hexaplaric Readings in Išo'dad of Merv's Commentary on Genesis," in J. Frishman and L. Van Rompay (eds.), *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation* (Traditio Exegetica Graeca 5). Louvain. 229-252.
- Scher, A. 1907. *Mar Barhadbšabba 'Arbaya. Évêque de Ḥalwan (VI^e siècle). Cause de la fondation des écoles* (PO 4.4). Paris.

- Segal, J. B. 1953. *The Diacritical Point and the Accents in Syriac* (London Oriental Series 2). London.
- Sokoloff, M. 2009. *A Syriac Lexicon. A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's Lexicon Syriacum*. Winona Lake – Piscataway.
- Tropper, J. 2000. *Ugaritische Grammatik*. Münster.
- Van Rompay, L. 1990. "Some Remarks on the Language of Syriac Incantation Texts," in R. Lavenant, S.J. (ed.), *V Symposium Syriacum 1988* (Orientalia Christiania Analecta 236). Rome. 269-281.
- . 2015. "L'histoire du Couvent des Syriens (Wadi al-Natrun, Égypte), à la lumière des colophons de la Bibliothèque nationale de France," in F. Briquel Chatonnet and M. Debié (eds.), *Manuscripta Syriaca. Des sources de première main* (Cahiers d'études syriaques). Paris.
- Welles, C. B., R. O. Fink, and J. F. Gilliam. 1959. *The Excavations at Dura-Europus. Final Report V, Part 1. The Parchments and Papyri*. New Haven.
- Wesselius, J. W. 1991. "New Syriac magical texts," *BiOr* 48: 705-16.
- Woodard, R. D. 2004. "Attic Greek," in R. D. Woodard (ed.), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages*. Cambridge. 614-649.
- Wright, W. 1890. *Lectures on the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*. Cambridge.