Otto Jastrow, *Lehrbuch der Ṭuroyo-Sprache* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011). Pp. xvi + 215; €39.

NAʿAMA PAT-EL, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN / THE SWEDISH COLLEGIUM FOR ADVANCED STUDIES, UPPSALA

The book under review is a reprint of Jastrow's 1992 grammar. The original book itself is a culmination of Jastrow's work on Central Neo-Aramaic dialects, including Mlaḥsô, the grammar of which he published in 1994 (*Der neuaramäische Dialekt von Mlaḥsô*). While Mlaḥsô was a discovery of Jastrow, Ṭuroyo was already known to the scholarly community. The original work on Ṭuroyo was conducted by Hellmut Ritter, whose massive five-volume work was published under the title *Ṭūrōyo; die Volkssprache der syrischen Christen des Ṭūr ʿAbdîn* (1967–1990). Ritter's work, however, is not easily accessible to students and those with only passing interest in the language. Jastrow himself also published a grammar of the Central Neo-Aramaic dialects in 1985 (*Laut- und Formenlehre des neuaramäischen Dialekts von Mīdin im Ṭūr ʿAbdīn*). Therefore, Jastrow's textbook has always been a welcome and much needed addition to the growing library of Neo-Aramaic dialects.

The book opens with a description of the area of Midən (or Midin) and its inhabitants. Beyond details about their lives and religion, Jastrow also briefly discusses their language in the context of other Aramaic dialects of the region. Finally, Jastrow suggests some further scholarly reading for the learner. Handbooks do not typically have bibliographies, but I suspect one would have been in order here, since so much has been published since the 1992 publication of this book. Jastrow's linguistic writing tends to be clear and accessible, and I think a short bibliographical list of relevant works could have made this volume more up-to-date.

Each chapter contains detailed grammatical descriptions, including clear and helpful paradigms and examples. It concludes with a list of new vocabulary, a number of sentences for practice translation, and a long original text from which the list of vocabulary is extracted. Each text is accompanied by textual notes to help with tricky phrases and nonstandard forms. The book concludes with a glossary and a key, with full translations of both drills and texts in the back of the handbook.

This method of learning while reading from the very beginning is common in the German system (which is also used outside Germany), but less so in the US, where such long texts are only introduced when students have mastered the essentials of the grammar. Having been educated in both systems, I see pros and cons for each. The system adopted by Jastrow will help an average student become accustomed to reading foreign texts, which is a reasonable expectation for most Semitic languages. The problem is that Ṭuroyo is not a written language. All the written texts we have were transliterated and parsed by Ritter and Jastrow. Thus students should rather become accustomed to the spoken language, if they wish to study it. This means more speaking and listening drills rather than reading and translating. Of course, Jastrow's grammar and textbook provide all the information needed, and I encourage interested students to work with both, but there is still a difference between knowing about emphatic sonorants or assimilation across morphemes and hearing them and being able to parse them on one's own.

Jastrow's continuous work and publication about grammatical aspects of Central Neo-Aramaic is essential to Aramaic studies and particularly to the study of the dialectology of this branch. Most of the scholarly attention is directed towards the Northeastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) dialects, but the Central group is fascinating and deserves to be carefully studied for a number of reasons. This group, for example, developed a fully functional definite article based on the demonstrative (Jastrow 1990; 2005; 2011:20, 25). This is particularly interesting because none of the NENA dialects has such an entrenched article, although in several of them the beginning of a system can be traced (Khan 2008). The development of a definite article in Central Neo-Aramaic has led to the movement of the attributive demonstrative to post-position, i.e., after its head noun, which is another feature distinguishing this dialect group from both Western and Eastern modern dialects.

However, scholarly interest in the Central dialects stems primarily from their relative grammatical conservatism. Jastrow previously noted that unlike NENA dialects, the Central dialects preserve internal passive, which are reflexes of passive or passive-reflexive participles in the pre-modern dialects (Jastrow 1996; 2011:133ff.).

While it is true that the Central dialects are conservative, Mlaḥsô seems more conservative than Ṭuroyo. Ṭuroyo deviates from Mlaḥsô in some very interesting features. One such feature is the marking of the genitive relation. As is well know, Middle and Late Aramaic dialects increasingly use the relative particle *də-* to mark nominal dependency instead of the construct which was more common, but not exclusive, in Old Aramaic. Additionally, we find such analytic genitives with a proleptic pronoun on the head noun in both eastern and western dialects, for example *b-ḥasd-eh d-mār-an* 'by the grace of our lord' (Christian Palestinian Aramaic). In the Central dialects one can find a clear descendent of this structure with a suffixed *-e* on the head noun, a reflex of the third masculine singular *-eh*. In Mlaḥsô, a pattern with this suffix still carries definite function. Since this suffix is not a pronoun anymore in Mlaḥsô, this function is probably a leftover from its predecessor.

> *em-e   də-kalo*
> mother.fs-E rel-bride.fs
> 'the mother of the bride' (Mlaḥsô)

Ṭuroyo has a similar pattern, but there the suffix is just a relic with no particular function. For definite genitives, there is need for an overt definite article (Jastrow 2011:42):

> *layl-e   d-u-ʾeḏo*
> night-E   rel-def.ms-festival
> 'the eve of the holiday' (Ṭuroyo)

In Ṭuroyo, nouns with external signs of definiteness, like a demonstrative or a possessive suffix, must also take the definite article (Jastrow 2011:58). In earlier Aramaic, of course, nouns with possessive suffixes were barred from taking the definite article, as was the case for other Central Semitic languages. Mlaḥsô allows for this pattern, but it is not obligatory and therefore less common than in Ṭuroyo (Pat-El 2012):

> *u-bayt-ayḏe*
> def-house-his
> 'our house' (Ṭuroyo)

(ə-)*brat-ezav*
(def-)daughter-his
'Our clothes' (Mlaḥsô)

This language has much to offer, particularly to scholars and students of Aramaic, but also to students of folklore and Middle Eastern religious minorities. Since most of the users of this book will likely be individuals with some background in pre-modern Aramaic, an index with grammatical terms would have been a great addition. Nevertheless, this book is highly recommended for scholars of Aramaic interested in the diverse, complicated and fascinating history of the Aramaic branch.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Jastrow, Otto. *Laut- und Formenlehre des neuaramäischen Dialekts von Mīdin im Ṭūr ʿAbdīn.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1985.

Jastrow, Otto. "Personal and Demonstrative Pronouns in Central Neo-Aramaic." In *Studies in Neo-Aramaic*, ed. W. Heinrichs. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990, 89–103.

Jastrow, Otto. *Der neuaramäische Dialekt von Mlaḥsô.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994.

Jastrow, Otto. "Passive Formation in Ṭuroyo and Mlaḥsô." In *Studies in Modern Semitic Languages*, ed. Sh. Izre'el and Sh. Raz. Leiden: Brill, 1996, 49–57.

Jastrow, Otto. "Der bestimmte Artikel im Aramäischen: ein Blick auf 3000 Jahre Sprachgeschichte." In *Studia Semitica et Semitohamitica: Festschrift für Rainer Voigt anlässlich seines 60. Geburtstages am 17. Januar 2004*, ed. B. Burtea, J. Tropper and H. Younansardaroud. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005, 137–150.

Khan, Geoffrey. "The Expression of Definiteness in North-East Neo-Aramaic Dialects." In *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting*, ed. H. Gzella and M. L. Folmer. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008, 287–304.

Pat-El, Naʿama. *Studies in the Historical Syntax of Aramaic.* Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012.

Ritter, Hellmut. *Ṭūrōyo; die Volkssprache der syrischen Christen des Ṭūr ʿAbdîn*. 5 Vols. Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1967–1990.