BOOK REVIEWS

Holger Gzella and Margaretha L. Folmer, eds., *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting*, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Mainz. Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission. Band 50 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008) Pp. vii + 388. Hardback.

AARON MICHAEL BUTTS UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, IL 60615, USA

In the last several years, volumes dealing with the historical and linguistic contexts of both Akkadian and Hebrew have appeared.[1] Thanks to the book under review, the Aramaicist can now boast of a similarly conceived collection of studies devoted to the historical and linguistic setting of Aramaic. This volume contains most of the papers that were presented at the conference *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting* in Oegstgeest (near Leiden), August 24-27, 2006. It includes 20 contributions, the authors and titles of which are: Otto Jastrow, "Old Aramaic and Neo-Aramaic: Some Reflections on Language History" (1-10); Agustinus Gianto, "Lost and Found in the Grammar of First-Millennium Aramaic" (11-25); Edward Lipiński, "Aramaic Broken Plurals in the Wider Semitic Context" (27-40); Steven E. Fassberg, "The Forms of 'Son' and 'Daughter' in Aramaic" (41-53); Na'ama Pat-El, "Historical Syntax of Aramaic: A Note on Subordination" (55-76); André Lemaire, "Remarks on the Aramaic of Upper Mesopotamia in the Seventh Century B.C." (77-92); Jan Joosten, "The Septuagint as a Source of Information on Egyptian Aramaic in the Hellenistic Period" (93-105); Holger Gzella, "Aramaic in the Parthian Period: The Arsacid Inscriptions" (107-130); Margaretha L. Folmer, "The Use and Form of the *nota objecti* in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic Inscriptions" (131-158); Abraham Tal, "The Role of Targum Onqelos in Literary Activity During the Middle Ages" (159-171); W. Randall Garr, "The Determined Plural Ending *-ē* in Targum Onqelos" (173-206);

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[1] G. Deutscher and N. J. C. Kouwenberg, eds., *The Akkadian Language in its Semitic Context. Studies in the Akkadian of the Third and Second Millennium BC* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2006); Steven E. Fassberg and Avi Hurvitz, eds., *Biblical Hebrew in its Northwest Semitic Setting. Typological and Historical Perspectives* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006).

Renaud J. Kuty, "Remarks on the Syntax of the Participle in Targum Jonathan on Samuel" (207-220); John F. Healey, "Variety in Early Syriac: The Context in Contemporary Aramaic" (221-229); Wido van Peursen, "Language Variation, Language Development, and the Textual History of the Peshitta" (231-256); Craig Morrison, "The Function of *qṭal hwā* in the *Acts of Judas Thomas*" (257-285); Geoffrey Khan, "The Expression of Definiteness in North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Dialects" (287-304); Werner Arnold, "The Roots *qrṭ* and *qrṣ* in Western Neo-Aramaic" (305-311); Olga Kapeliuk, "The Perfect Tenses in Urmi Neo-Aramaic" (313-334); Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "Classical Syriac, Neo-Aramaic, and Arabic in the Church of the East and the Chaldean Church between 1500 and 1800" (335-351); Stephen A. Kaufman, "The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project and Twenty-First Century Aramaic Lexicography: Status and Prospects" (353-371). The volume concludes with a brief epilogue by the editors, Gzella and Folmer, followed by useful indices of modern authors and subjects.

As is clear from their titles, the papers span the full chronological attestation of Aramaic from its reconstructed proto-history to Old Aramaic to Syriac to Neo-Aramaic. To the volume's credit, Neo-Aramaic features in a number of papers including several that are not dedicated specifically to it. The field of Neo-Aramaic, after all, has great potential for new discoveries, many of which may also be relevant for the earlier history of Aramaic. The papers are all philological or linguistic in nature and cover a wide range of topics within the field of Aramaic studies. Among the many thought-provoking papers, the contributions of Healey, van Peursen, Morrison, and Murre-van den Berg should be singled out as of particular interest to Syriac studies. In her contribution, Murre-van den Berg discusses the socio-linguistic history of Syriac from the 16th to 18th centuries with particular reference to the relationship between Syriac, Neo-Aramaic, and Arabic within the Church of the East and the Chaldean Church. This study is an important contribution to a time period of Syriac (and Aramaic more generally) that has been too long neglected in scholarship. Building upon an earlier study,[2] Morrison discusses the function of *qṭal hwā* in the 'Acts of Judas Thomas' arguing that in independent clauses it is basically restricted to narrative discourse (where it often marks a

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[2] Craig Morrison, "The Function of *qṭal hwā* in Classical Syriac Narrative," in A. Gianto, ed., *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran*, Biblica et Orientalia 48 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2005), 101-131.

caesura) while the basic *qṭal* is used to recount past events in direct speech. The contributions by both Healey and van Peursen discuss linguistic variety within early Syriac. Placing Syriac within its broader Aramaic context, Healey argues that the variation between *y-* and *n-* in the prefix of the 3ms prefix-conjugation in the Old Syriac inscriptions is probably not simply due to diachronic change, but rather it may be a reflection of different varieties of Syriac in the first several centuries of the Common Era. Van Peursen also argues for linguistic variation within early Syriac, but draws his evidence from the textual history of the Old Testament Peshitta. Van Peursen's study is of particular importance since it provides a number of useful observations for investigating linguistic variation while concurrently negotiating issues of translation technique. Both of these papers build upon the growing body of literature – initiated by the influential study of Lucas Van Rompay[3] – that argues that Syriac was never entirely homogeneous, but rather contained varying degrees of linguistic variation throughout its long history.

While space prohibits a summary of the other contributions, I would like to take this opportunity to comment on a few points raised throughout the volume:

- p. 2. Jastrow states that, "During the emergence of Aramaic or in the earliest stage of Old Aramaic, the velar fricatives *$*x$ and *$*\dot{g}$ merged with the pharyngeal fricatives *$*ḥ$ and *$*ʿ$, respectively." Nevertheless, it is now clear on the basis of, *inter alia*, papyrus Amherst 63, which records Aramaic in Demotic script, that Proto-Aramaic *$*ḫ$ (= Jastrow's *$*x$) and *$*\dot{g}$ were preserved much later in Egyptian Aramaic.[4] Thus, *$*ḫ$ and *$*\dot{g}$ were similar to the interdentals *$*\delta$, *$*\theta$, and *$*\theta'$ and the laterals *$*ɬ$ (= traditional *ś*) and *$*ɬ'$ (= traditional *ḍ*), all of which were preserved in Early Aramaic and only later in the history of Aramaic merged with other phonemes.

- p. 30-31. Lipiński rejects interpreting *ʾdqwr* (Tell Fakhariya, l. 3) as a loanword from Akkadian *adag/kurru* 'libation vessel' because (1) the word does not occur in the parallel passage of the Akkadian inscription; (2) "it fails to explain the presence of the long vowel *ū*,

[3] Lucas Van Rompay, "Some Preliminary Remarks on the Origins of Classical Syriac as a Standard Language," in Gideon Goldenberg and Shlomo Raz, eds., *Semitic and Cushitic Studies* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 70-89.

[4] See Joosten's contribution in this volume (p. 97-99) and especially Richard C. Steiner, "On the Dating of Hebrew Sound Changes (*$*\underline{H} > Ḥ$ and *$*\dot{G} > ʿ$) and Greek Translations (2 Esdras and Judith)," *JBL* 124 (2005), 220-267, esp. 234-237 with literature cited therein.

indicated by *w*...". The second argument is not convincing since there are other examples in which a short vowel in Akkadian is represented with a *mater lectionis* in a loanword in the Aramaic of Tell Fakhariya, e.g. Akkadian *gugallu* > Aramaic *gwgl* 'canal inspector' (l. 2, 4). As for the first argument, it is unclear to me why the lack of *adag/kurru* in the Akkadian version of the inscription would preclude *ʾdqwr* from being an Akkadian loanword. If anything, it strengthens the interpretation of *ʾdqwr* as a true *Lehnwort* and not simply a *Fremdwort*.

- p. 64. Pat-El states that "in all later dialects, we consistently find the indefinite relative followed by the relative particle *d-*". In Nabataean Aramaic, however, there are not only cases with *d(y)* such as *mn dy lʾ yʿbd kdy ʿlʾ ktyb* … 'whoever does not do as is written above …', which Pat-El cites, but there are also examples without it, such as *wmn yʿbd kʿyr dnh* … 'and whoever does other than this …'.[5] Based on Pat-El's study, it may be concluded that Nabataean examples without the relative particle *d(y)* are the result of language-contact with North Arabian, where the indefinite relative is used without a relative pronoun.

- p. 152-154. To Folmer's overview of the *nota objecti* in Old Aramaic, one can now add the occurrence of *wt-* plus the third person pronominal suffix in the recently discovered inscription from Zincirli (l. 2) in an archaic dialect of Aramaic.[6]

- p. 174, n. 8. Following a personal communication of A. Tal, Garr proposes that the ending on Samaritan Aramaic *slwy* 'quail' may be related to the determined plural ending *-e* (written *-ē* by Garr) in Targum Onqelos. Nevertheless, since this noun appears to be feminine in Aramaic (see Syriac *salway* in Exod 16:13), it is preferable to follow Nöldeke in analyzing the ending as a remnant of the old feminine ending **-ay*.[7]

These comments are in no way meant to detract from the overall quality of papers in this volume, which is generally quite high, but rather are intended to contribute to the on-going discussion of the history and development of Aramaic. This reviewer for

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[5] J. F. Healey, *The Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions of Madaʾin Salih*, JSS Supplement 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), H5.8. For additional example, see H4.4; H16.4, 5, 6; H31.2; H33.2; H34.10; H36.7; H37.3.

[6] The *editio princeps* will be published by D. Pardee in *BASOR*.

[7] Theodor Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar. Translated from the second and improved German edition by James A. Crichton* (London: William & Norgate, 1904), §83.

one is grateful to the editors and contributors for this important collection of papers devoted to Aramaic.