Advances in Biblical Hebrew Linguistics

Data, Methods, and Analyses

Edited by

ADINA MOSHAVI and TANIA NOTARIUS

Winona Lake, Indiana
EISENBRAUNS
2017

www.eisenbrauns.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Moshavi, A. Mosak (Adina Mosak), editor of compilation. | Notarius, Tania, 1967– editor of compilation.
Title: Advances in biblical Hebrew linguistics : data, methods, and analyses / edited by Adina Moshavi and Tania Notarius.
Description: Winona Lake, Indiana : Eisenbrauns, [2017] | Series: Linguistic studies in ancient West Semitic ; 12 | Based on papers presented at the 16th World Congress of Jewish Studies. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2016057813 (print) | LCCN 2016058890 (ebook) | ISBN 9781575064819 (cloth : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781575064826 (ePDF)
Subjects: LCSH: Hebrew language—Grammar
Classification: LCC PJ4556 .A38 2017 (print) | LCC PJ4556 (ebook) | DDC 492.45—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2016057813

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials. ANSI Z39.48-1984.♾™

Contents

Part 4
Syntactic Studies

Part 5
Applied Linguistics

Aramaic Influence and Inner Diachronic Development in Hebrew Inscriptions of the Iron Age

YIGAL BLOCH
University of Haifa

1. Introduction

In the study of the historical development of the Hebrew language in biblical times, Aramaic influence is normally considered a mark of the period starting with the Babylonian Exile (586 BCE).[1] The Hebrew Bible itself draws a scene of an Assyrian army standing near the walls of Jerusalem in 701 BCE, with its commander, the *rab šāqê*, speaking to the population of the besieged city in Hebrew and with the high officials of Judah who ask the Assyrian general: "Speak, please, with your servants Aramaic, for we understand it, and do not speak to us the language of Judah, in the earshot of the people who are on the wall" (2 Kgs 18:26 = Isa 36:11). An obvious implication of this description is that by ca. 700 BCE, Aramaic, used to a large extent as the language of administrative and international communication in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, was understood by the high officials in Judah but was not sufficiently known to the ordinary population which spoke Hebrew (the Bible's יְהוּדִית, "the language of Judah").[2]

Modern scholarship largely accepts this description insofar as the sociolinguistics and the historical linguistics of Hebrew in the biblical period are

Author's note: This article was written during my stay at the University of California, Berkeley on a research project financed by the United States-Israel Educational Foundation (USIEF). I am grateful to the USIEF for awarding me a Fulbright postdoctoral grant, which made this project possible.

1. An illustrative statement in this regard was made by Emil Kautzsch in his classical work on Aramaisms in Biblical Hebrew: "abgesehen von einen wenigen Beispielen (die überdies meist eine befriedigende Erklärung zulassen) ist ein Zweifelloser Aramaismus immer eine starke Instanz für die Ansetzung des betr. Abschnitts in exilischer oder nachexilischer Zeit" (Kautzsch 1902: 104).

2. For the spread of Aramaic in the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the 8th–7th centuries BCE, see Tadmor 2011: 186–94; Fales et al. 2005: 599–616; Millard 2009; Nissinen 2014: 276–82.

concerned. Thus, a recent study by Avi Hurvitz, while drawing attention to several categories of Aramaic linguistic influence in the Hebrew Bible which can be reasonably ascribed to the Preexilic Period, nevertheless reaffirms: "The common people, it would seem, neither spoke nor wrote Aramaic" in Judah before the Babylonian Exile (Hurvitz 2003: 27). Specific instances of the use of Aramaic linguistic features—commonly termed Aramaisms—in biblical books and passages of preexilic date can be explained, in Hurvitz's view, by considerations of literary style or geographic origin of the relevant works (Hurvitz 2003: 29–33).[3] It must be noted, however, that what Hurvitz ascribes to geographic origins—that is, the possibility that some literary works preserved in the Hebrew Bible were composed in the northern kingdom of Israel or even in other lands of the Near East, where Hebrew was not spoken—has also much to do with considerations of literary style employed by the authors and the editors of the biblical books. After all, the language of the biblical books is essentially Judean Hebrew, and even if some literary work in the Hebrew Bible was initially composed outside of Judah, it was eventually translated or adapted into Judean Hebrew. So, if such a work retains non-Judean linguistic features in specific instances, it is a reasonable assumption that those features were retained for some literary purpose.[4]

3. Specifically, Hurvitz singled out the following categories of preexilic Aramaisms in the Hebrew Bible: (1) linguistic elements of archaic origin, which, although more common in Aramaic than in Hebrew, were inherited by both languages from Proto-Northwest Semitic; (2) linguistic elements reflecting the Hebrew dialects of the kingdom of Israel, located to the north of Judah and susceptible to Aramaic influence throughout its history due to geographic proximity to the territories of southern Syria; (3) linguistic elements forming part of the speech of foreign characters where it can be assumed that Aramaic and Aramaic-like language was attributed to those characters in order to mark their foreignness; (4) linguistic elements appearing in the works of wisdom literature—a genre that enjoyed international circulation, so that the wisdom books in the Hebrew Bible may be assumed to possess some direct borrowings from Aramaic wisdom works of a preexilic date.

4. Of the four categories mentioned in the preceding note, the appearance of Aramaisms of category 3 is clearly motivated by considerations of literary style. The same pertains also to the appearance of Aramaisms of category 1, which should be properly considered as archaisms and which are used in Biblical Hebrew poetry due to the requirements of poetic parallelism and elevated literary style (as pointed out already by Driver 1953: 36). The occurrence of Aramaisms of category 2 may be ascribed to geographic reasons. However, even those books and chapters in the Hebrew Bible for which an origin in northern Israel is most likely—e.g., Hosea, Amos and the Elijah-Elisha cycle of stories in the book of Kings—are mostly written in a language that displays the same features as the rest of the Hebrew Bible, presumably written in the literary dialects of Judah (pre- or postexilic). For example, the supposedly Northern literary works in the Bible always employ the word שָׁנָה for "year," never שת as in the Samaria Ostraca. The general similarity of the language of the biblical books and chapters dealing with northern Israel to the rest of the Hebrew Bible was pointed out in detail by Schniedewind and Sivan (1996–97). It stands to reason that whatever the original form of the northern literary works, their inclusion in the Hebrew Bible was preceded by a significant editorial revision, in the course of which most of the northern linguistic fea-

The fact that the books of the Hebrew Bible constitute literature—that is, writings intended to be read, studied and copied on repeated occasions, without being confined to a specific situation of social or economic life—can be taken for granted. The literary nature of the biblical books and their scribal transmission through generations before the earliest-known manuscripts of those books were written down introduce many complicating factors into the study of Aramaic influence on the language of the Hebrew Bible.[5]

Such complicating factors do not affect the numerous alphabetic inscriptions, discovered at different sites within the territory of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Those inscriptions deal, almost exclusively, with matters of everyday life, which means that they were most likely written only once (without further copying) and are not suspect to employ sophisticated literary techniques. In addition, while the dates of composition of the biblical books can be, and often are, hotly debated, the dating of the alphabetic inscriptions discovered in the territory of Ancient Israel and Judah can be usually established with a precision down to a few decades, based on archaeological and paleographic criteria. This makes the inscriptions an invaluable tool for the study of the historical development of Hebrew and of other languages used in the ancient Levant. In particular, inscriptions dated to the Iron Age (ca. 1200–586 BCE) can be utilized in order to detect signs of possible Aramaic influence on the Hebrew language before the Babylonian Exile.

However, the possible contribution of the Iron Age alphabetic inscriptions to the question of Aramaic influence on Hebrew in the period preceding the Babylonian Exile is rarely if ever assessed by the scholars. Such an expert in ancient Semitic languages as Wolfram von Soden went so far as to declare that

---

tures—including features bearing resemblance to Aramaic—were eliminated, but some were retained for the purpose of preserving a northern flavor in the relevant texts. The same applies to the instances of Aramaisms of category 4 in the wisdom books of the Bible: the language of those books is basically the regular Judean Hebrew, and even if some wisdom fragments were translated from Aramaic, the translators' decision on where to retain the Aramaic linguistic elements and where to replace them with the regular Hebrew idiom would be affected by factors of literary style.

5. There is no doubt that in some instances, nonstandard features in the language of the biblical books were eliminated by ancient copyists who replaced them with more standard features. Consider, for example, the relative particle -שׁ, characteristic of northern Hebrew in the preexilic period, which was replaced by אֲשֶׁר in the Masoretic Text of Judg 6:13 but retained in the Qumran manuscript 4QJudg[a] (Schniedewind and Sivan 1996–97: 329). However, in the Masoretic Text of the story of Gideon (Judg 6–8), there are 44 examples of the relative particle אֲשֶׁר. Are all of them due to hyper-corrections by copyists, or did the original composer of the book of Judges introduce אֲשֶׁר into the text almost uniformly, leaving only occasional instances of -שׁ in order to retain the story's northern flavor (Judg 6:17, 7:12, 8:26, and perhaps some more original occurrences such as Judg 6:13)? No definite answer to this question can be given, which illustrates the difficulty of applying historical-linguistic analysis to a literary text copied and recopied through generations.

not a single Aramaic inscription predating the Babylonian Exile was found in the territory of Ancient Israel and Judah. Remarkably, this statement was made in a study dedicated to a specific aspect of possible Aramaic influence on Biblical Hebrew, and the alleged absence of Aramaic inscriptions was mentioned in order to deny the possibility of such an influence in the Preexilic Period.[6]

This study will demonstrate that Aramaic inscriptions were definitely written in the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River in the Iron Age (more specifically, between ca. 900 and 586 BCE).[7] This means that people speaking and writing Aramaic, from social strata well below the top tier of royal diplomats and officials, were present in the territory of Ancient Israel and Judah, or very close to it, and their language could and did influence the everyday Hebrew language of the relevant period. However, when considering the question of Aramaic influence on Hebrew, it should be borne in mind that some features common to both Hebrew and Aramaic in the period following the Iron Age could have developed in both languages independently, with the development in Hebrew preceding a similar development in Aramaic. This study will demonstrate several instances of such a development, which underscores the necessity of a nuanced approach to the study of Aramaic influence on ancient Hebrew and to the question of the diachronic development of Hebrew in the biblical period in general.

2. Aramaic Inscriptions in Ancient Israel and Judah

2.1. Israel

2.1.1. Aramaic Inscriptions from the Vicinity of the Sea of Galilee

The presence of Aramaic inscriptions on the northeastern outskirts of the territory that at certain times belonged to the Northern Kingdom of Israel is a

6. "Von besonderem Gewicht ist die Tatsache, daß man im Raum von Juda und Israel bisher zwar eine ganze Anzahl von leider fast durchweg sehr kurzen Inschriften und Ostraka in hebräischer Sprache gefunden hat, aus der Zeit vom Exil aber keinen einzigen aramäischen Text. Hätte es damals schon Aramäer in größerer Zahl im Lande gegeben, würden aramäische Ostraka kaum ganz fehlen" (von Soden 1991: 33).

7. The Aramaic inscriptions discussed in this study can be classified as Aramaic on linguistic grounds. For some additional Iron Age inscriptions from the territory of Ancient Israel and Judah, classification as Aramaic was proposed on paleographic grounds, that is, because their script looks graphically closer to the script of Aramaic inscriptions from Syria than to the script of Hebrew inscriptions from Palestine of the Iron Age (see Delavault and Lemaire 1979: 1–2 n. 1). However, the inscriptions in question are very short, with only a few letters and barely a single word ever preserved. As noted by Amihai Mazar, "in such short and fragmentary inscriptions . . . it is almost impossible to distinguish Phoenician from Hebrew, and Aramaic can be defined only when clear grammatical data are available" (Mazar 2003: 182). While Mazar's statement was made specifically with regard to inscriptions dated to the 10th–9th centuries BCE, it may pertain also to inscriptions of the 8th–7th centuries BCE, if those contain only a few letters. Hence, it appears possible to classify an inscription securely as Aramaic only on the basis of its linguistic features.

well-known fact. The royal stele from Tel Dan, erected apparently by Hazael, king of Aram-Damascus a decade or two after his rise to the throne in the late 840s BCE, is the most famous Aramaic inscription from this region.[8] Also noteworthy is an inscription round the base of a ceramic bowl, discovered at Tel Dan and reading לטב[ח]יא, "(belonging) to the coo[k]s," and an inscription on the shoulder of a large ceramic storage jar, discovered at Ein Gev on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee and reading לשקיא, "(belonging) to the cupbearers." Both inscriptions are dated, on archaeological and paleographic grounds, to the first half of the 9th century BCE (Gibson 1975: 5–6).

Of course, the inscriptions from Tel Dan and Ein Gev were most likely left there by officials of the kingdom of Aram-Damascus during a period when it succeeded in conquering both these sites. Hence, these inscriptions do not constitute evidence of Aramean presence within the territory of the ancient Kingdom of Israel. However, sites lying west of the Jordan River, in what must have been the core territory of Israel, have also yielded a couple of inscriptions that are most reasonably understood as Aramaic.

2.1.2. An Aramaic Potsherd from Hazor

In Hazor, a potsherd with the letters [. . .]שא זי ל[. . .] "[. . .] . . . of [. . .]" was discovered in Stratum IX, dated to the 9th century BCE (Naveh 1989). Although the text is fragmentary, the presence of the Aramaic relative pronoun זי is clear, and the preceding word may end with the Aramaic definite article -א.

Benjamin Sass raised the possibility that the population of Hazor in the 9th century BCE was Aramean (Sass 2005: 86–87). However, the meager 9th-century epigraphic finds from Hazor are not sufficient to substantiate this possibility.[9] The location of Hazor ca. 10 km west of the Jordan River, the fact that it was undoubtedly part of the Kingdom of Israel in the 8th century BCE (which Sass admits), and the mention of Hazor together with Megiddo and Gezer as cities built by Solomon in 1 Kgs 9:15—whether the biblical passage

8. The literature on the Tel Dan stele is vast, and some scholars date it to the reign of Hazael's son, Ben-Hadad III. In any event, the Aramaic language of the inscription and the conclusion that the stele was erected by a king of Aram-Damascus are not in doubt. For an up-to-date edition of the stele, see Aḥituv (2008: 467–73); and note the earlier literature cited there.

9. The 9th-century BCE epigraphic evidence from Hazor consists of a handful of potsherds (surveyed by Sass 2005: 85–86), most of which elude a specific linguistic classification (cf. n. 7, above). The potsherd with the letters [. . .]שא זי ל[. . .] is the only exception in this regard. In the words of Sass, "if a much larger sample similar in nature had been found, it might have constituted evidence for the non-Israelite character of Strata IX and VIII [at Hazor]. . . . With our mere five short, fragmentary texts it would be a mistake to claim this; it would be likewise a mistake to claim that Hazor IX–VIII *was* Israelite" (Sass 2005: 86). Of course, the paleographic finds from the 9th century BCE do not substantiate the Israelite identity of Hazor at the time; the conclusion concerning this identity rests on other considerations.

in question describes real deeds of Solomon or merely transfers to him the achievements of the Omride dynasty[10]—all these factors combined suggest that Hazor was an Israelite city in the 9th century BCE as well. The discovery of the potsherd mentioned above, which was obviously part of a larger original inscription, indicates that some people, for whom Aramaic rather than Hebrew was the preferred language of written (and probably also oral) communication, lived in Hazor in the 9th century BCE. This does not suffice to turn Hazor as a whole into an Aramean city, but it does suggest that the Israelite neighbors of the people who produced the Aramaic inscription communicated with them on the everyday level and could understand their language to some degree.

2.1.3. An Aramaic Inscription from Tel Reḥov

Another site that yielded an inscription that is likely to be understood as Aramaic is Tel Reḥov, located about 5 km south of Beth Shean and 6 km west of the Jordan River. Here, a number of alphabetic inscriptions were discovered during the past decade in archaeological strata dated to the 10th–9th centuries BCE (Mazar 2003; Mazar and Aḥituv 2011).[11] One of the inscriptions, incised on the upper part of a storage jar, reads נמש (?)לשקי (Mazar and Aḥituv 2011: 303).[12] In their discussion of the meaning of this inscription, Mazar and Aḥituv interpreted נמש as a personal name (well attested in other Iron Age Hebrew inscriptions) and connected the word לשקי with the inscription לשקיא on the

10. For the proposal that the monumental buildings belonging to strata X and IX in Hazor were built by the Omrides, see Finkelstein (1999: 60–61). Elsewhere, Finkelstein suggested that the author of 1 Kgs 9:15 "referred to the three most important lowland cities of the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century BCE, namely, Megiddo, Hazor, and Gezer, in order to justify his own pan-Israelite ideology that the great Solomon ruled from Jerusalem over the entire country, including the lands of the Northern Kingdom (though in the writer's time, the North had already been destroyed)" (Finkelstein 2007: 112). However, as pointed out by Amihai Mazar, the similarity of the city-gate architecture in the Iron Age IIA strata of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer does support the hypothesis that the gates of the three cities were built after a master plan promoted by a single political authority (Mazar 2007: 130–31). Be that authority Solomon, Omri, or Ahab, it seems likely that Hazor was an Israelite city by the 9th century BCE (if Solomon was responsible, Hazor would become Israelite already by the 10th century BCE at the latest).

11. The dates of the relevant strata are based on a 14C analysis (see Mazar and Aḥituv 2011: 307–9). Finkelstein analyzed the 14C data in a way that would be consistent with dating Stratum VI at Tel Reḥov to the late 10th century BCE, rather than the mid-10th century as maintained by Mazar; this would shift Strata V–IV of Tel Reḥov to the 9th century BCE (Finkelstein 2005: 308). This disagreement in dating is of no consequence for the argument made in this article.

12. In his 2003 publication of the same inscription, Mazar was somewhat reserved with regard to the reading of the inscription and refrained from a specific identification of the fourth letter, transliterating the text *lšq*[?] *nmš* (Mazar 2003: 179). However, already in that discussion Mazar adduced convincing considerations for identifying the fourth letter as *yod* (Mazar 2003: 179–80); and the same considerations were specified by Mazar and Aḥituv (2011: 303). Thus, the reading לשקי נמש is fairly certain.

jar from Ein Gev, which they interpreted as "(belonging) to the cupbearer, the chief butler." [13] The relevant inscription from Tel Reḥov belongs to Stratum IV and dates to the 9th century BCE; thus, it is roughly contemporary with the inscription from Ein Gev.

According to the interpretation of Mazar and Aḥituv, the noun for "cupbearer" in the inscriptions from both Ein Gev and Tel Reḥov would appear in the singular. However, as noted by John Gibson, the parallel between the inscription יא[ח]לטב from Tel Dan (where the noun is clearly in the plural) and the inscription לשקיא from Ein Gev suggests that in the latter inscription the noun should be also read in the plural: "(Belonging) to the cupbearers/butlers" (see Gibson 1975: 6). Similarly, it seems likely that in the inscription from Tel Reḥov, the noun שקי, appearing in the construct state, should be understood as plural: "(Belonging) to the cupbearers of Nimš."

For the purposes of linguistic classification of the inscription, the most important detail is the pattern of the noun שקי. In Hebrew, the noun for "cupbearer, butler" is מַשְׁקֶה, which is morphologically a hiphil stem participle of the verb *šqy*/*šqh*.[14] In contrast, in Aramaic the noun for "cupbearer" is morphologically a qal stem participle of the same verb.[15] The word שקי in the inscription from Tell Reḥov cannot be a hiphil participle of the verb *šqy* but

13. Heb. *lĕ-mašqê*, *lĕ-śar ham-mašqîm* (Mazar and Aḥituv 2011: 303; see there also for a convincing argument against the reading of the first three letters, לשק, as a separate word). The same connection between the inscriptions from Tel Reḥov and Ein Gev was drawn already by Mazar (2003: 180).

14. The noun מַשְׁקֶה, "cupbearer, butler" is attested in the singular in Gen 40:5, Neh 1:11, and (in construct) in Gen 40:1. It appears more frequently in the plural, in the collocation שַׂר הַמַּשְׁקִים, "chief butler" (Gen 40:2, 9, 20; 41:9; etc.). The feminine qal participle *šāqītu* (spelled *ša-qi-tu*$_4$) appears in the El-Amarna letter 369, l. 8, as a gloss to the Sumerian logogram DÉ (which generally means "to pour" or "one who pours"). However, the vocalization indicates that this gloss is in Akkadian, the basic language of the Amarna letters; a Canaanite form would be **šōqītu*, with the Canaanite shift **ā* > *ō*, and would be spelled with an initial *šu* sign (Izre'el 1995: 117). In Ugaritic, a noun *šqy*, "cupbearer" is attested, which may be a loan from Akkadian (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003: 840, s.v. *šqy* n.m.). However, it is difficult to make an inference from Ugaritic, a language for which the latest evidence dates to ca. 1200 BCE and which was spoken and written about 300 km north of the territory that would later become the kingdom of Israel, about the linguistic situation in the latter kingdom in the 9th century BCE.

15. Aramaic *šāqê*, *šāqyā'* is amply attested in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and in Syriac (Sokoloff 2002: 1173b; 2009: 1594a). In the epigraphic material, שקא, "irrigator" (a transferred meaning from "butler") appears in Palmyrene (Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 1186–87). Although these attestations are much later than the inscription from Tel Reḥov, the distinction between *mašqê* in Hebrew and *šāqê*, *šāqyā'* in Aramaic is systematic, that is, the first form is used exclusively in Hebrew, and the last two forms (*šāqyā'* being morphologically definite) are used exclusively in Aramaic. Hence, it would be difficult to assume that the form **šāqê* > **šōqê* was originally extant in Hebrew. Indeed, all the other inscriptions quoted in this section, from both Israel and the geographical vicinity of Judah, include linguistic features which are characteristic of Aramaic and are not attested in Hebrew, so it

appears to be a qal participle of the same verb. By this criterion, the inscription לשקי נמש should be classified as Aramaic. Like in the case of Hazor, this does not mean that the whole population of Tel Reḥov, or the majority thereof, was Aramean. What it does mean is that some courtiers writing, and probably also speaking, Aramaic resided at Tel Reḥov in the 9th century BCE, and their language would have a good chance of influencing the Hebrew speech of the northern Israelites living at this site or in its vicinity.[16]

2.2. Judah and Its Surroundings

The appearance of Aramaic inscriptions in the territory of the Northern Kingdom of Israel is, to some degree, expected, given the geographic proximity of this kingdom to the kingdom of Aram-Damascus. Moreover, the Aramaic inscriptions from Tel Dan and Ein Gev were probably written there when the two sites came under occupation of Aram-Damascus. The Kingdom of Judah was located far south of the region populated by the Arameans, so that the factor of geographic proximity cannot account for the discovery of Aramaic inscriptions in Judah or in the territories adjacent to Judah and not stretching farther to the north than Judah's northern border. Nevertheless, Aramaic inscriptions dating to the Iron Age were discovered in those territories as well.

2.2.1. An Inscribed Potsherd from Ashdod

One inscription apparently written in Aramaic appears on a potsherd discovered during the excavations of Ashdod, although not in its original archaeological context. The potsherd bears the inscription פחר [. . .] "[. . .], potter"; it was dated by the excavators, on paleographic grounds, to the third quarter of the 8th century BCE (Dothan and Freedman 1967: 84–85, fig. 26/4, pl. XV/8). The excavators proposed to restore the definite article *h-* in the break to the right of the preserved text, פחר[ה], and proceeded with the following lexical discussion:

> The root does not occur in Biblical Hebrew, but it does turn up in the Aramaic of the Bible (Daniel 2:41) in the form *peḥār*, "potter." The root occurs in one form or other in most of the Aramaic dialects; there are Arabic cognates as well. The Aramaic term is related to Akk. *paḫḫāru* "potter." On the basis of the evidence

would be difficult to consider those inscriptions as Hebrew (let alone to suggest that the relevant features were borrowed by Aramaic from Hebrew).

16. The fact that Nimš mentioned in the inscription from Tell Reḥov had at least one, and probably several, cupbearers suggests that he was an influential person, apparently availing himself of a small-scale entourage of courtiers serving him on festive occasions (perhaps even on a daily basis). Whether this Nimš was the founder of the clan from which sprung Jehu of Israel—an army commander who seized the throne in a prophetic-backed coup in 841 BCE—is a question that requires further consideration (for the possible understanding of the term *ben Nimšî* in Jehu's lineage as a reference to his clan, see Gray 1970: 540; Na'aman 2008: 213).

> at hand, we suggest that the jar (which was incised before firing) originally bore the name of the potter who made it as well as his profession, i.e., *happōḥēr*, "the potter," which may well have been the equivalent in the "Philistine" Canaanite dialect of Ashdod to Hebrew *yōṣēr* (cf. Jeremiah's visit to the potter's shop, Jer. 18). (Dothan and Freedman 1967: 85)

However, this interpretation of the potsherd inscription is problematic. According to the common scholarly view, Aramaic *peḥār* (and variant forms) are not merely related to Akkadian *paḫāru*, but are direct loans from Akkadian; likewise, Arabic *faḫḫār*, "potter," is not properly a cognate but a direct loan from Aramaic (*AHw*: 810a; Kaufman 1974: 79). Moreover, Akkadian *paḫāru*, "potter," appears to be not an original Semitic word but a loan from Sumerian BAḪÁR (*CAD* P, 21a–23a).[17] For this reason, although the noun *pḫr*, "potter," is attested in Ugaritic, it is not considered original to that language but rather a loan from Akkadian—or, more precisely, an indirect loan from Sumerian via Akkadian (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003: 670).[18]

In Canaanite languages, no form of *pḫr*/*pḥr* with the meaning "potter" (or the like) is attested.[19] Thus, it appears unjustified to restore the text of the Ashdod potsherd as פחר[ה], with the Canaanite definite article, or to ascribe this word to "the 'Philistine' Canaanite dialect of Ashdod," as done by Dothan and Freedman. It seems more likely that the word פחר on the potsherd is Aramaic and that the break to the right of the extant text had originally contained only the name of the potter who produced the vessel.[20] The potter would then be

17. This also explains why the second consonant of *paḫāru*, "potter" should not properly be geminated (*CAD* P: 53a; contrary to Dothan's and Freedman's transcription *paḫḫāru*).

18. Indeed, Ugaritic *pḫr* "potter" appears only in a couple of literary texts. The Ugaritic word for "potter" which appears in everyday documents is *yṣr*, cognate to Hebrew יוֹצֵר and Punic יצר (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003: 927–28; cf. *HALOT* 429a; Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 466).

19. Original **pḫr* would be spelled **pḥr* in a Canaanite language of the first millennium BCE (or later) due to the 22-letter inventory of the alphabet in which those languages were written and to the consonant mergers which affected them. For the same reason, the Aramaic spelling is also *pḥr*.

20. The space to the left of the letter ר on the potsherd is blank; thus, one cannot restore the Aramaic definite article א- at the end of the word. However, in Aramaic of the 6th–4th centuries BCE (Official Aramaic), in a construction where a proper noun stands in apposition to a common noun, the common noun may occasionally appear without the definite article (see Muraoka and Porten 1998: 249–50). Similar appositional constructions without the definite article might also appear in Old Aramaic, that is, in Aramaic of the first half of the first millennium BCE (cf. the proposal of Fitzmyer [1967: 61], according to which the phrase מלך רב "Great King" in the Sefire treaty inscription *KAI* 222B, 7, stands in apposition to the name of King Bar-Ga'yā, which should have appeared in the now-broken beginning of the line). One should also mention the inscription למרדכנדנאח בר מלך "(Belonging) to (and guaranteed by) Marduk-nādin-aḫi, son of the (ruling) king" on a bilingual Akkadian-Aramaic clay disc dating to 602 BCE, from the collection of Shlomo Moussaieff (Abraham 2012: 113–15). Abraham suggested that the absence of the definite article in בר מלך resulted from

an Aramaic speaker, probably a member of a population exiled by Sargon II (721–705 BCE) from southern Mesopotamia and brought to Ashdod.[21]

The paleographic criteria for the dating of the Ashdod potsherd point generally to the second half of the 8th century BCE. The ascription of the potsherd specifically to the third quarter of that century is more tenuous; and given the degree of imprecision inherent in paleographic dating, there seems to be nothing to preclude the possibility that the Ashdod potsherd dates to the last decade of the 8th century BCE.[22] For an Aramaic inscription, this kind of date—in the decade following the deportations of Sargon II—is much more likely on historical grounds.

2.2.2. An Ostracon from Tell el-Farʿah South

At least two more Aramaic inscriptions were discovered in the western Negev. One of them is an ostracon found by William Flinders Petrie at Tell el-Farʿah south—which Petrie identified as the biblical Beth-pelet, one of the tribal towns of Judah (Josh 15:27)—and published by Arthur Cowley (1929: 111–12, pl. v). Cowley proposed that the ostracon's "date may be guessed at about 300 B.C." (Cowley 1929: 111). However, Joseph Naveh revised Cowley's paleographic observation and concluded that the script of the ostracon "is the Aramaic script of the seventh century BCE" (Naveh 2009c: 120). The first line of the ostracon has only the letter כ preserved, but the text in the following lines (lines 2–7) can be read as follows:

[נפ]קת בי[ת] אמנך שבנ[יה . . .] לשבי ערביא [ב]ידה

> Expenses of the house of AMNK (*or* thy workman) Shebaniah the sum of . . . to Shebi the Arab in his hand. (Cowley 1929: 111)

the influence of Akkadian, which has no definite article. However, an Aramaic-speaking population in Ashdod in the late 8th century BCE would most likely come from Babylonia (see the following note), and their language would likely have experienced some measure of Akkadian influence as well.

21. For the deportations of foreign populations into Philistia by Sargon II, see Naʾaman and Zadok (1988). Although the initial wave of deportation to Ashdod must have taken place shortly after the conquest of that city in 712 BCE—thus before the campaigns of Sargon II in Babylonia, dated to 710–709 BCE—it is quite possible that in the following years, new groups of deportees, including those from Babylonia, were also brought to Ashdod. Sargon's Babylonian campaigns were directed mainly against the Aramean tribes in southern Babylonia (Lipiński 2000: 487–88), and Aramean populations would be likely deported to other regions of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the wake of those campaigns.

22. Compare the words of Dothan and Freedman (1967: 85): "On the basis of the above paleographical analysis, it is our judgment that the Ashdod inscription belongs to the second half of the eighth century BCE, but probably to the earlier rather than the later part of this period." The general date (the second half of the 8th century BCE) is clear; with regard to a more precise dating within this period—the third or the fourth quarter of the century—there is some room for doubt. Renz (1995: 122) accepted the final conclusion of Dothan and Freedman, dating the potsherd to the third quarter of the 8th century BCE, without noting the ambiguity of the precise dating admitted by these scholars.

The restoration of the Yahwistic name Shebaniah is doubtful (the theophoric element is missing in the preserved text), but the word ערביא is clearly a gentilic "Arab" with the Aramaic definite article א-. Thus, the ostracon can be classified as Aramaic not only on paleographic but also—and more convincingly—on linguistic grounds.

2.2.3. An Aramaic Ostracon from Tel Seraʿ

Another Aramaic ostracon from the western Negev was discovered at Tel Seraʿ and published by Cross (2003c: 160–61). The text of this ostracon reads as follows:

כסף שלח יש[. . .] זית עדרי[. . .] אהלן ברקן אצן בר רכב גנבי חנני

Silver: Yiš[maʿʾel?] sent [. . .]. Olives: ʿIdri[. . .]. Aloes: Baraqān[. . .]. *ʾṣn* bar Rākib. *gnby* Ḥannanî (Cross 2003c: 160–61)

The ostracon was dated by Cross, on paleographic criteria, to the early 6th century BCE (Cross 2003c: 161). The use of the plural ending -ן in the noun אהלן "aloes" (line 3), and especially the noun בר "son" (line 4), indicate that the language of the ostracon is indeed Aramaic.

In addition, a couple of other ostraca from the western Negev dating to the 7th–6th centuries BCE—an ostracon from Tell Jemmeh and another ostracon from Tel Seraʿ—were classified by Naveh and Cross as Aramaic on paleographic grounds (Naveh 2009b: 28–29; Cross 2003c: 159–60). However, since the relevant ostraca are very fragmentary, with only 5 to 7 clear letters preserved, adding up to isolated words which do not bear specific linguistic marks of either Aramaic or Canaanite, the classification of those ostraca as Aramaic cannot be considered certain for the purposes of this study (see above, p. 86 n. 7). Suffice it to say that Aramaic inscriptions were written in the western Negev in the 7th and the early 6th centuries BCE, as the ostraca from Tell el-Farʿah and Tel Seraʿ discussed above clearly demonstrate.

Did the western Negev belong to Judah at the time when the ostraca from Tell el-Farʿah and Tel Seraʿ were written? Probably not. Geographically, the relevant sites lie closer to the Philistine coastal cities than to the heartland of Judah.[23] Assyrian fortress buildings have been identified at Tel Seraʿ and Tell Jemmeh, which indicates an active Assyrian occupation of the region before the end of the Assyrian presence in the Levant sometime between 645 and 625 BCE (Oren 1993; Stern 2001: 21–26). Accordingly, Naveh proposed that "The

23. Nadav Naʾaman, in a detailed study dedicated to the extent of the kingdom of Judah at the peak of its power during the last century of its existence—in the reign of the King Josiah (640–609 BCE)—considered Beer-sheba as the westernmost major site of Judah in the Negev (Naʾaman 1991: 32). Petrie's identification of Tell el-Farʿah (south) with Beth Pelet of Josh 15:27 has been generally abandoned, and Naʾaman disavowed also the identification of Tell el-Farʿah with Shilhim (Josh 15:32) / Sharuhen (Josh 19:6), arguing that the site "was apparently located outside the borders of the Kingdom of Judah" (Naʾaman 1991: 30).

few seventh-century Aramaic ostraca . . . seem to indicate that the Assyrian garrison stationed in the Philistine towns wrote in Aramaic, which was the current language and script in the western provinces of the Assyrian Empire" (Naveh 2009b: 29).[24]

Of course, Assyrian garrisons would not exist as such by the early 6th century BCE, after the final destruction of the Assyrian Empire in 609 BCE. However, if Naveh was correct in his proposal that Aramaic-speaking garrisons were stationed by the Assyrians in the western Negev, then the descendants of the soldiers who belonged to those garrisons would still live in the same territory in the early 6th century BCE. Thus, the Aramaic ostracon from Tel Seraʿ, which dates to the early 6th century BCE, could be written by descendants of the soldiers brought to the western Negev by the Assyrians.

One way or another, the ostraca from Tell el-Farʿah and Tel Seraʿ, as well as the potsherd from Ashdod, demonstrate that groups of people writing and speaking Aramaic were present in an immediate geographic proximity to Judah in the 8th–6th centuries BCE. Contact on an everyday level between those groups and some part of the population of Judah, resulting in a certain measure of comprehension of Aramaic even by people of the lower social strata in Judah, would be quite possible.

3. Aramaic Influence and Internal Diachronic Development in Iron Age Hebrew Inscriptions from Judah

The discussion above has been concerned with the presence of Aramaic inscriptions, and hence also of Aramaic-speaking population groups, in the territory of Ancient Israel and in a close proximity to Judah during the Iron Age. An influence of the Aramaic speech of those groups on the Hebrew language, spoken by the majority of the inhabitants of Israel and Judah in the relevant period, would be plausible. But is there any actual evidence of this sort of influence, especially in the Iron Age Hebrew inscriptions from Judah, a land geographically removed from the main political center of the Aramean population in the southern Levant (Aram-Damascus)?

3.1. The Lachish Ostracon No. 3

One likely instance of Aramaic influence in an Iron Age Hebrew appears in the ostracon no. 3 from Lachish, which dates—like all the Lachish ostraca—to the last years or months of the kingdom of Judah, shortly before its destruction in 586 BCE. The Lachish ostracon no. 3 is a letter written by a certain

24. As mentioned above, Naveh classified not only the ostracon from Tell el-Farʿah (south) but also the ostracon from Tell Jemmeh and one ostracon from Tel Seraʿ (different from the ostracon discussed above) as Aramaic, on paleographic criteria. While this classification may be considered less than certain, Naveh's proposal concerning the origin of an Aramaic-writing—and probably also Aramaic-speaking—population in the western Negev in the late 7th century BCE is not affected thereby, because the existence of such a population is proven, at least, by the ostracon from Tell el-Farʿah.

Hoshaʿyahu to his superior, Yaʾush. The letter includes a passage in which Hoshaʿyahu denies an accusation of illiteracy:

> וכי אמר אדני לא ידעתה קרא ספר חיהוה אם נסה איש לקרא לי ספר לנצח וגם כל ספר אשר יבא אלי אם קראתי אתה ואחר אתננהו אל מאומה
>
> Now, that which my lord said, "You cannot read a letter"—as YHWH lives (so be I cursed) if anyone has ever tried to read me a letter. Also, any letter that reaches me—if I read it, I can later repeat it to the smallest detail. (Aḥituv 2008: 63, lines 8–13)[25]

What are the etymology and the grammatical form of the word אתננהו? The context seems to require a finite verbal form, and the initial א- appears to be the 1-s prefix of the prefixed conjugation.[26] The final הו- is then a 3ms object pronominal suffix, and the preceding -נ- seems best understood as an energic suffix.[27]

---

25. Reading and translation following Renz (1995: 417–18). With regard to the reading of the Hebrew text, the only difference between Renz and Aḥituv is the former's reading ואחר אתננהו אל מאומה in lines 12–13, as opposed to the latter's reading ועוד אתננהו אל מאומה (for a paleographic justification of the reading ואחר אתננהו אל מאומה, see Renz 1995: 414, 416 nn. a–b). With regard to the translation, Aḥituv translates Hoshaʿyahu's reply as follows: "As YHWH lives if anyone has ever tried to read me a letter! And as for every letter that comes to me, if I read it. And furthermore, I will grant it as nothing" (Aḥituv 2008: 63). This translation makes it appear as though the statement "if I read it" is part of the same negative oath as the preceding clause ("if anyone has ever tried to read me a letter!")—which is, of course, precisely the opposite of what Hoshaʿyahu claimed. Moreover, Aḥituv derives the form אתננהו from the verb *ntn* "to give," which is unlikely, as will be argued below. Therefore, the English translation provided here is not that of Aḥituv but an adaptation of the German translation by Renz. Cross (2003b: 130–32) proposed to translate לא ידעתה קרא ספר as "You did not understand it. Call a scribe!" (interpreting ספר as *sōpēr* "scribe," rather than *seper* "a written text, letter"). However, such an interpretation is unlikely (Schniedewind 2000: 160; and see the following note).

26. Cross (2003b: 132) proposed to read אתננהו as *ʾetnan* "fee" with the 3ms possessive pronominal suffix, and the following אל—as the negation particle *ʾal* (rather than the preposition *ʾel*). This yields אתננהו אל מאומה "his fee would be nothing at all." The referent of the pronominal suffix is ספר in the preceding sentence, which Cross consistently understood as *sōpēr*: וגם כל ספר אשר יבא אלי אם קראתי אתה ועוד אתננהו אל מאומה "And furthermore, any scribe who might have come to me, I did not summon him and, further, I would pay him nothing" (Cross 2003b: 130; note that Cross reads ועוד instead of ואחר before אתננהו, but see the preceding note). However, the resulting admission of Hoshaʿyahu that scribes would come to him occasionally, coupled with a denial that he ever called or paid them, does not look quite convincing. Furthermore, the noun *ʾetnan* is attested in Northwest Semitic only with reference to fee for acquiring sexual access to a woman—the fee of a prostitute in Biblical Hebrew (Deut 23:19; Isa 23:17; Mic 1:7; etc.), or a marriage gift given by a groom, which is the meaning of the cognate noun *itnn* in Ugaritic (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003: 122–23). There seems to be no justification for extending the meaning of the term *ʾetnan* to the professional fee of a scribe.

27. For the energic suffix *-n-* in Biblical Hebrew, see Rainey (1986: 10–12); Zewi (1999: 65–153). Normally, *-h-* of a third-person pronominal suffix assimilates to the preceding energic *-n-*, but exceptions are known (Exod 15:2; Deut 32:10; Jer 5:22; Ps 72:15).

This leaves two possibilities for the verbal root: *tnh*, "to tell, repeat," or *ntn*, "to give." However, while *ntn* is attested with the meaning "to report," this usage requires the addressee of the report to be mentioned after the preposition אל (or ל-), not the details of the report itself.[28] Rather, it appears more reasonable to derive the form אתננהו in the Lachish ostracon no. 3 from the verb *tnh*.[29]

Now, *tnh* (derived from Proto-Semitic **ṯny*) exhibits the consonant shift **ṯ* > *t*, which is characteristic of Aramaic. The instances of *tnh*, "to tell, narrate," in the Hebrew Bible (Judg 5:11; 11:40) appear to be loans from Aramaic, in texts which were probably originally composed in northern Israel.[30] If the same verb is used in the Lachish ostracon no. 3, it can be considered an example of Aramaic influence on the Hebrew language of the ordinary people in Judah before the Babylonian Exile.[31]

---

28. וַיִּתֵּן יוֹאָב אֶת-מִסְפַּר מִפְקַד-הָעָם אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ "Then Joab reported the numbers of the census of the population to the king" (2 Sam 24:9); וַיִּיטַב לִפְנֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁלָחֵנִי וָאֶתְּנָה לוֹ זְמָן "And it was pleasing for the king, and he sent me (on my mission), and I told him the time (of my planned return)" (Neh 2:6). The indefinite pronoun מְאוּמָה in Biblical Hebrew means "anything, something, nothing" (BDB 548b-49a; *HALOT* 539a), and can refer only to the details of Hoshaʿyahu's report about the content of a letter he read, not to an animate addressee of such a report. More generally, the semantic field covered by the verb *ntn* is very wide (BDB 678a–81b; *HALOT*: 733a–35a), but none of its meanings appears to fit the context of Hoshaʿyahu's protest about his ability to read any letter that would come to him.

29. This proposal was first raised by de Vaux (1939: 192) and accepted by Lemaire (1977: 103). Renz translated the clause ואחר אתננהו אל מאומה in a way which is based on the same interpretation: "kann ich nachher bis ins Detail wiederholen" (Renz 1995: 418), but in his discussion of the text mentioned the derivation of the form אתננהו from the verb *ntn* as "Alternativ—und wohl wahrscheinlicher" (Renz 1995: 415). As argued above, the derivation from *ntn* is actually less likely than from *tnh*.

30. In the first half of the first millennium BCE, Aramaic speakers would most likely still pronounce the first radical in *ṯny* as a voiceless interdental [*ṯ*]. However, as I observed in an earlier study, the speakers of Hebrew, lacking this sort of consonant in their language, would perceive, articulate and spell it as a voiceless dental plosive [*t*] (Bloch 2008: 21–22). In the same study, I proposed that the Aramaic verb *ṯny* was borrowed (as *tnh*) into the Hebrew of northern Israel in the specific sense "to tell, narrate," which the Hebrew verb *šnh*—the native reflex of Proto-Semitic **ṯny*—lacked (Bloch 2008: 22 n. 65). In the Lachish ostracon, *tnh* is used not with the meaning "to tell" but with the meaning "to repeat," which appears to be the basic meaning of this verbal root, derived from the Proto-Semitic biconsonantal base of the numeral "two," **ṯin* (see Lipiński 1997: 284). Thus, it seems that the borrowing of *tnh* into the Hebrew dialect reflected in the Lachish ostracon no. 3 took place independently of its borrowing into the Hebrew dialect(s) of northern Israel, reflected in Judg 5:11 and 11:40.

31. Hoshaʿyahu was apparently a lower rank civil or military officer, far removed from the high social strata of the Judean royal court and diplomatic service. The possibility of Aramaic influence on the writer of the Lachish ostracon no. 3 was mentioned by Schniedewind (2000: 161); but Schniedewind's identification of the nonexistent verbal root *tnn* "to repeat" (which is properly *tnh*) and his failure to recognize an energic *-n-* in אתננהו (cf. n. 27, above) impair his linguistic discussion.

3.2. An Ostracon of Occupations from the City of David

While the Lachish ostracon no. 3 has been known for about eight decades now, another inscription which probably reflects Aramaic influence on the Hebrew language of Judah before the Babylonian Exile was published relatively recently. This is a list of individuals and their occupations, recorded in an ostracon which was found in the excavations of the City of David in Jerusalem. Based on its archaeological context and on paleographic considerations, the ostracon has been dated to the 7th century BCE (Naveh 2000: 2–3; Aḥituv 2008: 26–27). The ostracon reads:

עמ]ס בן אחיאל הסרט סחבת [. . . י]הו בן חסדיהו הכנס כס[ף] [. . .]יהו [בן י]
[דעיהו הכנס [כסף

[ʿAmo]s son of ʾAḥiʾel, the rag shredder; [. . . ya]hu son of Ḥasadyahu the sil[ver] collector; [. . .]yahu [son of Ye]daʿyahu the [silver] collector. (Aḥituv 2008: 26)

The designation הכנס, "the collector," is, grammatically, the qal stem participle of the verb *kns*, "to gather." Jonas C. Greenfield discussed the verbs *kms* and *kns* in Hebrew, and *knš* in Aramaic, arguing that "in Hebrew *kms* is the earlier form of the root, and *kns* a later form" (Greenfield 2001: 845).[32] Greenfield considered *kns* as characteristic strictly of Late Biblical Hebrew—that is, of the language of the biblical books written during and after the Babylonian Exile—and thus faced a difficulty with regard to Isa 28:20: וְהַמַּסֵּכָה צָרָה מֵהִתְכַּנֵּס, "And the cover is too narrow to gather (= wrap) oneself (in it)." As observed by Greenfield, this verse "is generally recognized as being part of the Isaianic corpus" (that is, dating to the late 8th century BCE), and "It is surprising to find *kns*/*htkns* in so early a text" (Greenfield 2001: 845). Greenfield could find no better solution than to propose that originally the last word of Isa 28:20 read התכס, "to cover oneself," (from the verb *ksh*), and התכנס is a scribal mistake (Greenfield 2001: 845).

Recently, the verb *kns* was discussed by Aaron Koller, who argued that this verb developed from *kms* with the consonant shift *m* > *n* under the influence of Aramaic *knš* (Koller 2013: 157).[33] Contrary to Greenfield, who was puzzled by

32. *Kms* in Hebrew appears only in the qal passive participle כָּמֵס in Deut 32:34.

33. The main part of Koller's discussion of the verb *kns* is dedicated to the process through which this verb (in the *nipʿal* stem) acquired in Rabbinic Hebrew the meaning "to enter" (Koller 2013: 158–60). Koller's demonstration of this late semantic development of *kns* undermines the view of Theodor Nöldeke (approvingly cited by Blau 1998: 85) that *kns* "to enter" is an original Hebrew verb, which acquired the meaning "to gather" under the influence of Aramaic *knš*. Still, even though *kns* "to enter" (*nipʿal*) appears to have developed from *kns* "to gather" (rather than vice versa), the appearance of *kns* "to gather" in Hebrew is likely due to Aramaic influence. A spontaneous interchange between *m* and *n* in Semitic languages is attested chiefly in a word-final or root-final position (see the examples cited by Greenfield 2001: 35 n. 14); this is certainly not the case with *kms*/*kns*.

the unexpectedly early appearance of *kns* in Isa 28:20, Koller turned this verse into pivotal evidence for a supposedly early Aramaic influence on Hebrew:

> The Aramaic root may have a different etymology, but the meaning was close enough for the Aramaic root to influence the Hebrew one. It is possible that a popular etymology was at play here and drew the connection, after Aramaic became spoken among the Judeans, before the end of the eighth century BCE. (Koller 2013: 157)

Koller's proposal that Aramaic was spoken to a significant extent by the Judeans before the end of the 8th century BCE is daring; taken at face value, it runs contrary both to the biblical description of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in 2 Kgs 18:16 (= Isa 36:11) and to the common scholarly view of the historical development of Hebrew in the biblical period.[34] Given the inherent instability of dating the different books of the Hebrew Bible, it is indeed impossible to maintain with certainty that Isa 28:20 dates before 700 BCE. (Even if the thematically coherent passage Isa 28:14–22 belongs to the stratum of the First Isaiah, as opposed to Deutero-Isaiah or later editorial additions to Isa 1–39, it is quite possible that this passage was composed in the second half of the 7th century BCE).

However, the occurrence of the participle הכנס in the ostracon of occupations from the City of David indicates clearly that the verb *kns* was in use in Judean Hebrew before the end of the 7th century BCE.[35] If, as seems likely, the shift from *kms* to *kns* took place under the influence of Aramaic, Koller's assumption of a considerable familiarity of the inhabitants of preexilic Judah with Aramaic speech is borne out by the evidence of the ostracon, albeit for a period about a century later than Koller proposed.

Another remarkable feature in the ostracon of occupations from the City of David is its spelling of the participle הסרט, "the shredder (of rags)." The verb "to tear, shred" is attested in Akkadian as *šarāṭu* and in Arabic as *šaraṭa*, which suggests Hebrew *śrṭ* (rather than *srṭ*). Indeed, the verb *śrṭ* is attested in Biblical Hebrew, with the semantically close meaning "to incise, scratch, make gashes in oneself" (BDB 976a; *HALOT* 1355a–b). In his edition of the ostracon of occupations from the City of David, Aḥituv went so far as to argue that "this orthography with ס is further testimony to the fact that ס had lost its distinctive value (from the second millennium BCE) and was now substituted for שׂ" (Aḥituv 2008: 27; parentheses preserved).

Of course, whatever the phonological development of the phoneme /*s*/ itself, the distinction between /*ś*/ and /*s*/ was routinely maintained in the biblical period, which suggests that the two phonemes were articulated differently.[36]

34. This common view has been described in §1 above.

35. The use of the Hebrew definite article in the forms הכנס and הסרט demonstrates that the text of the ostracon is written in Hebrew rather than in Aramaic.

36. The distinction between the phonemes /*š*/ (spelled שׁ), /*ś*/ (spelled שׂ) and /*s*/ (spelled ס) in the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible is borne out by the fact that each of these pho-

The use of the letter ס to express the etymological /*ś*/ in the ostracon of occupations from the City of David is the earliest example of confusion between /*ś*/ and /*s*/, and as such, it is exceptional.[37]

A comparable situation pertains in the nonbiblical Dead Sea Scrolls, where the etymological /*ś*/ is spelled with ש over 1000 times, but in about 10 instances it is spelled with ס (Qimron 1986: 24). Articulation of the etymological /*ś*/ as [*s*] (a voiceless dental fricative) is reflected in Mishnaic Hebrew, and according to Qimron, "This change was already operative on BH, but is not often reflected in the orthography" (Qimron 1986: 29).[38] It is difficult to make generalizations from the single instance in the City of David ostracon concerning the extent of the articulation of /*ś*/ as [*s*] in Judah before the Babylonian Exile, but this articulation was clearly practiced by some Judeans.

Did the articulation of /*ś*/ as [*s*] result from Aramaic influence? Because the etymological /*ś*/ is articulated as [*s*] in those Aramaic dialects for which a continuous tradition of reading or speech exists, such a possibility might be appealing (as proposed, for example, by Bauer and Leander 1922: §14d). However, in Aramaic itself, the earliest evidence of a shift in the articulation of /*ś*/ to [*s*]—spellings of the etymological /*ś*/ with ס—is attested in the Elephantine papyri, which belong to the 5th century BCE.[39] This is two centuries later than the date of the ostracon of occupations from the City of David.

---

nemes exhibits regular sound correspondences to cognate words in other Semitic languages, whereby those correspondences are different from the regular sound correspondences of the other phonemes (Blau 1998: 70–71). In a number of instances, the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible spells the etymological /*ś*/ as ס, and the etymological /*s*/ as שׂ (Blau 1970: 114–25). Yet, while these spellings reflect some measure of confusion between the phonemes /*ś*/ and /*s*/, it is impossible to trace the confusion on this basis back to the biblical period: the confused spellings are relatively few (see Blau 1970: 23 n. 2), and could be introduced by scribes who copied the biblical books during the Second Temple period and in the Late Antiquity.

37. The only comparable instance in an Iron Age inscription is the word סדרת "colonnades (?)" in line 4 of the Amman Citadel inscription, dated to ca. 800 BCE (Aḥituv 2008: 357–58). This word is clearly cognate to Biblical Hebrew שְׂדֵרוֹת (1 Kgs 6:9; 2 Kgs 11:8, 15; 2 Chr 23:14). However, first, the Amman Citadel inscription is written in Ammonite rather than in Hebrew; and second, contrary to Aḥituv (2008: 361), who considers the form שְׂדֵרוֹת more original, comparative evidence from Akkadian and Geʿez suggests that the original Proto-Semitic root is **sdr*, not **śdr* (see *HALOT*: 744a, 1310a; Leslau 1987: 486b). Thus, Aḥituv's idea that the etymological /*ś*/ was spelled with the letter ס in order to avoid confusion with the phoneme /*š*/ (spelled with ש) cannot be accepted. The spelling שְׂדֵרוֹת in the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible is just an example of confusion between the original /*ś*/ and /*s*/ (see Blau 1970: 120; the doubts expressed by Blau concerning the etymology of Akkadian *sadāru* are dispelled by Geʿez *sadra* "to put in order, arrange").

38. Qimron's reference to Biblical Hebrew is based on those instances, in which the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible spells the etymological /*ś*/ as ס, and the etymological /*s*/ as שׂ (see above, n. 36).

39. In Aramaic inscriptions of the first half of the first millennium BCE (Old Aramaic), the etymological /*ś*/ is consistently spelled with ש—so much so that at least one scholar wondered "ob das *ś* sich erhalten hat oder ob es mit dem *š* zusammenfiel" (Segert 1975:

Thus, the extant evidence suggests that the shift in the articulation of the phoneme /*ś*/ from its original distinct articulation (probably as an unvoiced lateral fricative [*ɬ*])[40] to [*s*] took place in Hebrew independently from Aramaic, and began at an earlier date. The process came to a relatively wide expression in Hebrew in the last two centuries BCE (as attested by the Dead Sea Scrolls), but its beginning is attested as early as the 7th century BCE.[41]

3.3. The Arad Ostracon No. 40

Another inscription from Iron Age Judah, which is relevant for the question of Aramaic influence on Hebrew, is the ostracon no. 40 from Arad. The ostracon was ascribed by its excavator, Yoḥanan Aharoni, to Stratum VIII of Tel Arad, which dates to the 8th century BCE (Aharoni 1970: 29; 1981: 74 n. 1). Paleographic analysis of the ostracon suggests that it dates to the late 8th century BCE or later, but a more precise dating on paleographic grounds appears impossible (see Renz 1995: 145). Nadav Naʾaman proposed, based on the use of internal *matres lectionis* in the words אישׁ, "man," and יהודה, "Judah," (lines 7 and 13 of the ostracon), as well as on the historical situation reflected in the text (a conflict between Judah and Edom, with an imminent threat of Edomite attack on southern Judah), that the ostracon was written in the early 6th century BCE—the period of Stratum VI at Tel Arad—and that it was an intrusive find in the particular locus in Stratum VIII in which it was discovered (Naʾaman 2003: 199).

The text of the Arad ostracon no. 40 is damaged to a large extent; however, for most lines, the restoration is fairly certain. One sentence suggestive of Aramaic influence appears in lines 5–7 of the ostracon:

---

91). As observed by Takamitsu Muraoka and Bezalel Porten, this skepticism is unfounded, because if /*ś*/ had not been preserved as a distinct phoneme in Old Aramaic, the situation pertaining in the Middle Aramaic dialects (of the first millennium CE), where the etymological /*ś*/ is often spelled with ס and the etymological /*š*/ is consistently spelled with ש, would be impossible (Muraoka and Porten 1998: 6 n. 16). The spellings of the etymological /*ś*/ with ס are occasionally attested in the Elephantine papyri, but even there the common spelling of the etymological /*ś*/ is with ש (Muraoka and Porten 1998: 6–7).

40. For the original articulation of /*ś*/ as an unvoiced lateral fricative [*ɬ*], see Kogan (2011: 71–72), and the earlier studies cited there.

41. According to Qimron (1986: 29–30), the shift of the articulation of /*ś*/ to [*s*] in Hebrew was actually completed before the time when the Dead Sea Scrolls were written, which effectively eliminated /*ś*/ as a distinct phoneme (it coalesced with the phoneme /*s*/). In Qimron's view, some of the Dead Sea Scrolls reflect a further stage of the merger of different sibilants in Hebrew, whereby the phonemes /*š*/ and /*s*/ (the latter derived either from the original */*s*/ or the original */*ś*/) coalesced as well. The articulation of the etymological /*ś*/ as [*s*] is shared by all the reading traditions of the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible, but the fairly consistent spelling of the etymological /*ś*/ with ש (vocalized by the Masoretes as שׂ) indicates that /*ś*/ was largely retained in Hebrew as a separate phoneme at the time when the biblical books were composed, that is, before the Hellenistic period (see above, n. 36).

[וכתבת]י אל אדני [את כל אשר ר]צה האיש

[and I have writte]n to my lord [everything that] the man [wa]nted. (Aḥituv 2008: 142)[42]

In his major study on Late Biblical Hebrew in the book of Psalms, Avi Hurvitz pointed out that the original meaning of the verb *rṣh* in Biblical Hebrew was "to be content, pleased (with smth.)," and the meaning "to want, desire" developed only after the Babylonian Exile, under the influence of the cognate Aramaic verb *rʿy* (Hurvitz 1972: 73–74).[43] If this is true, then the Arad ostracon no. 40, in which the 3ms suffixed conjugation verbal form צה[ר] appears to mean "he wanted," would be another Iron Age Hebrew inscription reflecting Aramaic linguistic influence.[44]

However, caution is required. In Aramaic inscriptions of the first millennium BCE, the verb *rʿy* (and its earlier form, *rqy*) is attested only with the meaning "to take pleasure (in smb. or smth.), look favorable (upon smb.), be satisfied" (Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 1082–83, s.v.v. *rṣy*, 2; *rqy*$_1$).[45]

Likewise, cuneiform renderings of Aramaic names which appear to include forms of the verb *rqy*/*rʿy*—at least in the Neo-Assyrian sources (8th–7th centuries BCE)—can all be interpreted in a way that presumes for this verb the meaning "to take pleasure, look favorably."[46] A possible exception in this

42. Naʾaman (2003: 200) restores the verbal form at the beginning of the sentence as י[ודברת] "[And I have spoke]n." The uncertainty concerning this form is of no consequence for the present discussion.

43. It should be noted that the verb *rṣh* itself is not attested with the meaning "to want, desire" even in the postexilic books of the Hebrew Bible, but only in Rabbinic Hebrew. However, the noun רָצוֹן, derived from this verb, is used in late biblical books with the meaning "will, desire"—e.g., Ezra 10:11; Dan 8:4; Ps 145:19 (Hurvitz 1972: 74–78). This makes it possible to assume that the verb *rṣh* did acquire in Hebrew the meaning "to want" already in the early Second Temple period, and that this meaning is not attested in the Hebrew Bible simply by chance.

44. To be sure, the first letter of the word צה[ר] (which is the last letter in line 6 of the ostracon) is restored. However, no other restoration seems to make sense in the context, and the restoration צה[ר] has been universally accepted by the scholars who studied the ostracon (see Aharoni 1981: 71–72; Renz 1995: 147; Naʾaman 2003: 200).

45. The varying spellings of the verb *rqy*/*rʿy* are due to its origin as Proto-Semitic **rḏw* (BDB 953a; *HALOT*: 1280b–81a), where the phoneme commonly transcribed as /*ḏ*/ (based on the Arabic *ḍād*) was probably originally articulated as an emphatic lateral fricative [*ɬʼ*] (see Kogan 2011: 71–72; and the earlier literature cited there). The articulation of this consonant in Aramaic in the first millennium BCE was probably that of a velar or uvular affricate [*kxʼ*]/[*qxʼ*] (Steiner 1991: 1501; Kogan 2011: 99).

46. The limitation of the discussion here to Aramaic names in Neo-Assyrian documents—as opposed to cuneiform documents from southern Mesopotamia from the Neo-Babylonian period (8th–4th centuries BCE)—is due to the fact that a comprehensive up-to-date prosopography has been established for the Neo-Assyrian documents (Parpola, Radner, and Baker 1998–2011), but not for the Neo-Babylonian ones. The Aramaic names in the Neo-Assyrian documents, in which the verb *rqy*/*rʿy* is apparently used with the meaning

regard is the name Raḫi-Issār, from the 7th century BCE (Baker 2002), because the form *raʿî* (spelled *ra-ḫi*) is masculine, and the goddess Issār (Ištar) cannot be the grammatical subject of this form. Consequently, the form *raʿî* must be understood as a passive qal stem participle, and a translation "Desired by Ištar" is possible. However, a passive qal participle of *rqy*/*rʿy* can also mean "favored, accepted (by smb.)," and Raḫi-Issār may be interpreted as "Favored by Ištar." [47] In a similar vein, the verb *raqû*/*reʾû*, used in two Babylonian documents of the late 7th–6th centuries BCE as a loan from Aramaic, should be probably interpreted as "to be satisfied" rather than "to desire" (see Jursa 1994: 57; Jursa 1999: 191–92, line 14).

Clear evidence that the verb *rʿy* acquired in Aramaic, in addition to its original meaning "to take pleasure, look favorably, be satisfied," also the meaning "to want, desire" comes only with the appearance of the noun רְעוּת "will,

"to be pleased," are as follows: Abi-raḫî "The father is pleased" (Fales and Jursa 1998); Adda-raqî "Adda is pleased" (Lipiński 1998); Ammi-raqî "The paternal uncle is pleased" (Breckwoldt 1998). In these names, the form *raqî*/*raḫî* appears to be an active qal participle, with the preceding noun functioning as the grammatical subject. Hence, they should be properly transcribed with a long *ā*: *rāqi*/*rāʿī* (the lengthening of this vowel is not marked in the syllabic cuneiform spellings; the lengthening of the final vowel in the relevant verbal forms, which is marked, reflects the final radical *y*). As for the names Raḫī (Hunger 2002a) and Raḫiānu (Fuchs and Hunger 2002), the syllabic cuneiform spelling of those names does not make it possible to establish whether the forms of the verb *rqy*/*rʿy* employed in these names are active or passive. If the forms are active, the meaning of these names would be something like "The content/pleased/happy one," and if the forms are passive, it would be something like "The favored one" (cf. the following note). The translation of the names Raḫī and Raḫiānu as "desired" (specified in Hunger 2002a and Fuchs and Hunger 2002) is possible but neither necessary nor preferable to other possible translations. The same considerations apply to the name Raṣīʾ (Hunger 2002b). Interestingly, this name is spelled *ra-ṣi-iʾ*, which indicates that the second consonant was articulated as [*ṣ*] rather than anything approximating [*q*] or [*x*]. Nonetheless, the place of discovery of the document mentioning this name (Tell Ḥalaf, ancient Gozan) and its relatively early date (ca. 800 BCE) suggest that the bearer of the name was a speaker of Aramaic, rather than of some Canaanite dialect. Occasional shift of the etymological /*ḍ*/ to /*ṣ*/ in the vicinity of liquids (including *r*) is documented in Aramaic (Steiner 1977: 149–51; Kogan 2011: 100). Whether the name Raṣīʾ is to be understood as grammatically active ("the content/pleased/happy one") or passive ("the favored one"), the translation "pleasing" (specified by Hunger 2002b) does not seem appropriate. Finally, in the name Riḫi-Dādi (Hunger and Schmidt 2002), the first element may be the noun *rēᵉ*ʿ "friend," or a qal passive participle of the verb *rqy*/*rʿy* ("favored").

47. Comparable use of passive forms of the verb *rṣh* is attested in Biblical Hebrew: יְהִי רָצוּי אֶחָיו "May he be favored by his brothers" (Deut. 33:24); כִּי מָרְדֳּכַי הַיְּהוּדִי . . . וְרָצוּי לְרֹב אֶחָיו "For Mordecai the Judean (was) . . . and favored by the multitude of his brothers" (Esth 10:3). On the other hand, a translation of the name Raḫi-Issār as "Pleased by Ištar" (indicated by Baker 2002 as a possible alternative to the translation "Desired by Ištar") is inappropriate. If the meaning "to take pleasure, look favorably" is assumed for *rqy*/*rʿy* in this instance, the qal passive participle *raʿî* would mean that Ištar favored the bearer of the name, not that she pleased him.

desire," which is obviously derived from this verb. The earliest attestation of רְעוּת is in Biblical Aramaic (Ezra 7:18).[48] This is several centuries later than the date of the Arad ostracon no. 40. Hence, the semantic development whereby the verb *rṣh* acquired the meaning "to want" (in addition to its original meaning "to be content, pleased") appears to have taken place in Hebrew independently of Aramaic, and several centuries earlier.

Another sentence in the Arad ostracon no. 40, which is relevant for the question of Aramaic linguistic influence on Hebrew, appears in lines 14–15:

ידע מלך יהוד[ה כי אי]ננו יכלם לשלח את ה[. . .]

May the king of Juda[h] be apprised [that] we are [no]t able to send the [. . .] (Aḥituv 2008: 142)[49]

In a study of the semantic and syntactic development of the Hebrew verb *ykl*, which expresses the modal notion of ability and permissibility, Jean Margain pointed out that in Biblical Hebrew this verb is used only in finite forms, in the prefixed and suffixed conjugations, but is never used as a participle. On the other hand, in Rabbinic Hebrew, from the Mishnah onward, the verb *ykl* is used exclusively as a participle, regardless of its temporal frame of reference (Margain 1969–70: 50–52, 57–64). According to Margain, this development was caused by Aramaic influence.[50]

Indeed, in Biblical Aramaic, the verb *ykl* is used six times as a participle and only five times in finite forms.[51] The verb *khl*, which also serves to express the modal meaning of ability and permissibility, is used four times, only as a participle.[52] However, all the forms of the verbs *ykl* and *khl* appear in Biblical

48. The inference from the meaning of the noun רְעוּת that the verb *rʿy* in Aramaic acquired the meaning "to want, desire" by the time of the composition of the book of Ezra is similar to the inference from the noun רָצוֹן "will, desire" that the Hebrew verb *rṣh* acquired the same meaning in Hebrew of the early Second Temple period (see above, n. 43). In Aramaic, after the book of Ezra, the next attestations of the noun רעו(ת) "will, desire" appear in Judean Aramaic documents of the 1st–2nd centuries CE (Sokoloff 2003: 80a). The verb *rʿy* is attested with the meaning "to want, desire" in Jewish Palestinian and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the later centuries of the first millennium CE (Sokoloff 1992: 527b; 2002: 1090a).

49. As in the previous example from the Arad ostracon no. 40, the text is partly restored, but the restoration of the participial clause ננו יכלם לשלח[אי], "we are [no]t able to send" is fairly certain, and has been accepted by all the scholars who studied the ostracon (see Aharoni 1981: 71, 73; Renz 1995: 148; Naʾaman 2003: 200).

50. "Il était assurément facile, pour les bilingues, de calquer *ykwl* sur les equivalents araméens" (Margain 1969–70: 62).

51. Participles: יָכֵל (Dan 3:17; 4:34); יָכְלָה (Dan 7:21); יָכְלִין (Dan 2:27; 4:15; 6:5). Finite forms in the suffixed conjugation: יְכַלְתָּ (Dan 2:47); יְכִל (Dan 6:21). Finite forms in the prefixed conjugation: יְכַל (Dan 3:29); יוּכַל (Dan 2:10, apparently a Hebraism); תוכל (Qere תְּכוּל, Dan 5:16, 2×).

52. כָּהֵל (Dan 2:26; 4:15); כָּהֲלִין (Dan 5:8, 15).

Aramaic in the book of Daniel. This book, including its Aramaic sections, dates most likely to the Hellenistic period (late 4th–middle 2nd centuries BCE).[53]

In Aramaic documents belonging to the chronological stratum known as Official Aramaic (documents written during the Achaemenid rule over the Near East, between 539 and 330 BCE), the verbs *khl* and *ykl* are almost never used as participles.[54] Importantly, *ykl* is used in Official Aramaic in the prefixed conjugation with reference to the temporal framework of the present, similarly to the use of this verb in Biblical Hebrew.[55] In Aramaic documents belonging to an earlier chronological stratum—Old Aramaic (early 9th–early 6th centuries BCE)—*ykl* is not attested at all, but *khl* is used in the prefixed conjugation, with reference to the temporal framework of the future.[56]

Thus, the participial clause אי]ננו יכלם לשלח], "we are [no]t able to send," in the Arad ostracon no. 40 appears a few centuries before the earliest evidence for the use of the modal verbs *ykl* and *khl* as participles in Aramaic. It is still possible that Aramaic influence contributed to the complete syntactic shift in

53. The date of ca. 164 BCE is certain for chs. 7–12 of Daniel, which make obvious hints to Antiochus IV Epihanes and his persecution of the Jews (Collins 1992: 30). Of these, ch. 7 is written in Aramaic. The larger part of the Aramaic section of Daniel appears in chs. 2–6, which were probably written some time before chs. 7–12. However, these chapters also reflect a view of history, according to which "the Near East had been governed by a sequence of four kingdoms—Babylonia, Media, Persia and Greece" (Collins 1992: 30). This view could not have originated before the conquest of the Near East by Alexander the Great in 332–330 BCE. The narratives of Dan 2–6 may be a reformulation of some earlier stories about the Babylonian court, but in their present form they were most likely composed in the Hellenistic period.

54. For the grammatical forms of *ykl* and *khl* in Official Aramaic, see Hoftijzer and Jongeling (1995: 456, 489–90); for a discussion of the use of these verbs, see Folmer (1995: 371–76, 634–40). In fact, *ykl* never appears in Official Aramaic as a participle, and *khl* appears only once: לא כהל הוית בידי "I was unable (to use) my hands (to sustain myself)" (Porten and Yardeni 1986–99: B3.10, l. 17). Remarkably, the document in which this sentence appears is dated to 404 BCE—a late phase of the attested Official Aramaic.

55. The verb *ykl* in the temporal framework of the present in Official Aramaic: והן תכלן תהיתן לן תקם יתו ביד חרוץ בר בית‌אלשזב "And if you can bring us castor oil, let them bring (it) through Ḥarudj son of Bethelshezib" (Porten and Yardeni 1986–99: A2.5, lines 5–6). Although *ykl* appears here in a conditional clause, the clause expresses a real condition in the present. For the use of *ykl* in the prefixed conjugation (*yiqṭōl*) with reference to the temporal framework of the present in Biblical Hebrew, compare, e.g., וָאֹמַר אֲלֵכֶם בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר לֹא-אוּכַל לְבַדִּי שְׂאֵת אֶתְכֶם, "Then I spoke to you at that time, saying: 'I am not able to bear you by myself alone'" (Deut 1:9); וָאֶשְׁלְחָה עֲלֵיהֶם מַלְאָכִים לֵאמֹר מְלָאכָה גְדוֹלָה אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה וְלֹא אוּכַל לָרֶדֶת, "Then I sent messengers to them, saying: 'I am doing a great work, and I am not able to come down'" (Neh 6:3).

56. [ל]ישלח יד בברך] וליכהל ברי "And my son will not be able to raise a hand against [your] son" (*KAI* 222B, l. 25); [. . . ביר] ואכהל מי "And I shall be able (to drink) water [of the well]" (*KAI* 222B, ll. 33–34); [בך] (?) פלאכהל לאשלח יד[י "Then I shall not be able to raise a han[d against you]" (*KAI* 223B, l. 6). For an English translation of the relevant lines of the Sefire treaty, see Fitzmyer (1967: 17, 19, 81).

the use of the verb *ykl* in Rabbinic Hebrew, but the beginning of the development toward the use of *ykl* as a participle probably took place in Hebrew independently of Aramaic.[57]

4. Conclusions

To summarize the above discussion, the following points should be stressed. First, Aramaic inscriptions dating to the Iron Age (1200–586 BCE) have been discovered in the land of Israel, both in the territory of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Hazor, Tel Reḥov) and in a close proximity to the Southern Kingdom of Judah (Ashdod, Tel Seraʿ, Tell el-Farʿah south). This indicates that speakers of Aramaic were present in the territory of the kingdom of Israel in the 9th century BCE and in the vicinity of the kingdom of Judah between the late 8th and the early 6th centuries BCE. Linguistic contacts between those Aramaic speakers and the Hebrew-speaking populations of Israel and Judah, with a resulting influence of Aramaic on the everyday Hebrew speech and writing during the Iron Age, would be possible.

Second, two instances in the Iron Age Hebrew inscriptions from Judah appear to reflect Aramaic influence: the use of the verb *tnh*, "to tell, repeat" in the form אתננהו in the Lachish ostracon no. 3 (ca. 586 BCE) and the use of the verb *kns* "to gather," in the form of the participle הכנס, in the ostracon from the City of David in Jerusalem listing named individuals and their occupations (7th century BCE). In the first instance, we are dealing with a complete lexical borrowing from Aramaic. In the second instance, a blending of the original Hebrew verb *kms* and the Aramaic verb *knš* (both meaning "to gather") appears to be involved.

Third, other linguistic features of Iron Age Hebrew inscriptions, which might be understood as resulting from Aramaic influence, are the shift of the articulation of the phoneme /*ś*/ to [*s*], reflected in the participle הסרט, "the shredder" in the occupations ostracon from the City of David, the use of the verb *rṣh* with the meaning "to want," and the use of the modal verb *ykl* as a

57. It is likely that Rabbinic Hebrew developed out of a spoken dialect of Hebrew, which gained currency in Judah or in some nearby region in the Second Temple period and which was substantially different from the literary norm of the period, as exemplified by Late Biblical Hebrew and by the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls (for a discussion of the origin of Rabbinic Hebrew, see Talshir 2003: 262–64, 268–69, and the earlier literature cited there). In light of this, the use of *ykl* as a participle in the Arad ostracon no. 40 might be understood as a vernacular linguistic trait in Hebrew, different from the literary standard. However, even the latest possible date for the ostracon (ca. 586 BCE, according to Naʾaman) is more than half a millennium earlier than the earliest attestations of Rabbinic Hebrew. With very little evidence concerning the possible existence of different varieties of Hebrew, besides Late Biblical Hebrew and the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, in this intervening period, it is difficult to postulate any specific dialectal classification that would cover both the language of the Arad ostracon no. 40 and Rabbinic Hebrew while setting them apart from other varieties of the Hebrew language.

participle in the Arad ostracon no. 40 (dating between ca. 700 and ca. 586 BCE). However, all these features are more likely to reflect internal developments in Hebrew, which parallel similar developments that took place in Aramaic in a later period. The reason for this is that the earliest evidence for the occurrence of the relevant linguistic features in Aramaic dates a few centuries after the end of the Iron Age.

Fourth, remarkably, the linguistic features of the ostracon of occupations from the City of David and the Arad ostracon no. 40, mentioned in the preceding paragraph, find parallels in Late Biblical Hebrew, in the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and in Rabbinic Hebrew—different varieties of the Hebrew language attested centuries after the end of the Iron Age. The earliest clear evidence for the articulation of the etymological /*ś*/ as [*s*] occurs in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The modal verb *ykl* is used as a participle only in the Mishnah and the later Rabbinic texts. The verb *rṣh* is used with the meaning "to want" in Rabbinic Hebrew, but one can assume that it acquired this meaning already in an earlier stage of the Second Temple period, based on the use of the derived noun רָצוֹן, "will, desire," in the late biblical books. Had the relevant inscriptions not been found in a proper archaeological context, they might be suspected as forgeries based on their use of late Hebrew features.[58] However, given the undoubted Iron Age provenance of the inscriptions, one should rather conclude that the historical development of the Hebrew language in the biblical period was more complicated than the biblical books alone might suggest.[59]

Fifth, it should be noted that the likely instances of Aramaic influence in the Iron Age Hebrew inscriptions from Judah are a direct lexical borrowing (*tnh*, "to tell, repeat") and a lexical blending (*kns*, "to gather"). In contrast, the linguistic features which are attested also in Aramaic but probably developed in Hebrew independently and at an earlier date pertain to a deeper level of grammar and semantics: phonology (the articulation of the phoneme /*ś*/ as [*s*], which would lead to its merger with the phoneme /*s*/), syntax (the participial use of *ykl*), and a semantic extension (of the verb *rṣh* from the meaning "to be content, pleased" to the meaning "to want"). Lexicon is the level most sus-

58. The notion that the appearance of linguistic features characteristic of postexilic literary sources in an unprovenanced Hebrew inscription can be used as decisive evidence of the inscription being a forgery was rightly criticized by Ephʿal and Naveh (2009: 484 n. 12). Their criticism is partly based on the use of the form הכנס in the occupations ostracon from the City of David.

59. Linguistic features in the Iron Age Hebrew inscriptions, which are characteristic of the postexilic strata of the literary tradition of Ancient Hebrew, have been discussed by Sarfatti (1992) and Young (2003a). Both these discussions are impaired by the lack of distinction between linguistic features which are rare but existent in biblical books commonly considered to date before the Babylonian Exile, and linguistic features that are not attested at all in the preexilic biblical books.

ceptible to foreign linguistic influence in an instance of language contact.[60] It seems that, while the ordinary population of Judah experienced some contact with and influence from Aramaic-speaking groups between the late 8th and the early 6th centuries BCE, this influence was quite superficial—or, in other words, less penetrative than the Aramaic influence experienced by the speakers of Hebrew during and after the Babylonian Exile. Perhaps the high officials of Hezekiah, urging the Assyrian army commander to speak to them in Aramaic, could not be completely certain that no common soldier on the wall would understand that language. But they would have a good reason to assume that Judean soldiers capable of understanding Aramaic would be few and far between, and even those soldiers might not perform very well on their "Aramaic as a second language" test.

60. "A great deal, perhaps the majority, of lexical borrowing results from only marginal contact with other languages" (Winford 2003: 30). Cf., however, the objections of Weinreich (1966: 67–68) to attempts to establish degrees of influence of one language upon another in a situation of language contact.

References

Abraham, K.
2012 A Unique Bilingual and Biliteral Artifact from the Time of Nebuchadnezzar II in the Moussaieff Private Collection. Pp. 111–28 in *New Inscriptions and Seals Related to the Biblical World*, ed. M. Lubetski. SBL Archaeology and Biblical Studies 19. Williston, VT: SBL.

Aharoni, Y.
1970 Three Hebrew Ostraca from Arad. *BASOR* 197: 16–42.
1981 *Arad Inscriptions*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.

Aḥituv, S.
2008 *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period*. Jerusalem: Carta.

Baker, H. D.
2002 Raḫi-Issār. P. 1028b in vol. 3/1 of Parpola, Radner and Baker 1998–2011.

Bauer, H., and Leander, P.
1922 *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testamentes, I: Einleitung, Schriftlehre, Laut- und Formenlehre*. Halle: Niemeyer.

Blau, J.
1970 *On Pseudo-Corrections in Some Semitic Languages*. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.
1998 "Weak" Phonetic Change and the Hebrew *Śîn*. Pp. 50–103 in *Topics in Hebrew and Semitic Linguistics*, ed. J. Blau. Jerusalem: Magnes.

Bloch, Y.
2008 On Some Alleged Developments of the Proto-Semitic Phoneme /*t̲*/ in Iron Age Canaanite Dialects. *JSS* 53: 1–28.

Breckwoldt, T.
1998 Ammi-raqî. P. 106a in vol. 1/1 of Parpola, Radner, and Baker 1998–2011.

Collins, J. J.
1992 Daniel, Book of. Pp. 29–37 in vol. 2 of *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday.
Cowley, A.
1929 Two Aramaic Ostraca. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1929: 107–12, pls. 3–5.
Cross, F. M.
2003a *Leaves from an Epigrapher's Notebook*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
2003b A Literate Soldier: Lachish Letter III. Pp. 129–32 in Cross 2003a.
2003c Inscriptions from Tel Seraʿ. Pp. 155–65 in Cross 2003a.
Delavault, B., and Lemaire, A.
1979 Les inscriptions phéniciennes de Palestine. *Rivista di studi fenici* 7: 1–39, pls. 1–14.
Dothan, M., and Freedman, D. N.
1967 *Ashdod*, I: *The First Season of Excavations, 1962* (ʾAtiqot [English Series] 7). Jerusalem: Department of Antiquities and Museums.
Driver, G. R.
1953 Hebrew Poetic Diction. Pp. 26–39 in *Congress Volume, Copenhagen 1953*. VTSup 1. Leiden: Brill.
Ephʿal, I., and J. Naveh
2009 Remarks on the Recently Published Moussaieff Ostraca. Pp. 481–85 in Naveh 2009a.
Fales, F. M., and Jursa, M.
1998 Abi-raḫî. Pp. 12b in vol. 1/1 of Parpola, Radner and Baker 1998–2011.
Fales, F. M., et al.
2005 The Assyrian and Aramaic Texts from Tell Shiukh Fawqani. Pp. 595–694 in vol. 2 of *Tell Shiukh Fawqani 1994–1998*, ed. L. Bachelot and F. M. Fales. History of the Ancient Near East Monographs 6/2. Padua: SARGON.
Finkelstein, I.
1999 Hazor and the North in the Iron Age: A Low Chronology Perspective. *BASOR* 314: 55–70.
2005 High or Low: Megiddo and Tel Reḥov. Pp. 302–9 in *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating: Archaeology, Text and Science*, ed. T. E. Levy and T. Higham. London: Equinox.
2007 King Solomon's Golden Age: History or Myth? Pp. 107–16 in *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel*, ed. B. B. Schmidt. Atlanta: SBL.
Fitzmyer, J. A.
1967 *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire*. Biblica et Orientalia 19. Rome: Pontificial Biblical Institute.
Folmer, M.
1995 *The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period: A Study in Linguistic Variation*. OLA 68. Leuven: Peeters.
Fuchs, A. and H. Hunger
2002 Raḫiānu. Pp. 1028a–b in vol. 3/1 of Parpola, Radner, and Baker 2002.

Gibson, J. C. L.
1975 *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, vol. 2: *Aramaic Inscriptions Including Inscriptions in the Dialect of Zenjirli*. Oxford: Clarendon.
Gray, J.
1970 *I and II Kings: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Westminster.
Greenfield. J. C.
2001 Three Related Roots: *KMS*, *KNS* and *KNŠ*. Pp. 840–46 in *ʿAl Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology*, ed. S. M. Paul, M. E. Stone and A. Pinnick. Leiden: Brill; Jerusalem: Magnes.
Hertog, C. G. den; Hübner, U.; and Münger, S.
2003 *Saxa Loquentur: Studien zur Archäologie Palästinas/Israels, Festschrift für Volkmar Fritz zum 65. Geburtstag*. AOAT 302. Münster: Ugarit Verlag.
Hoftijzer, J., and Jongeling, K.
1995 *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*. HdO 21. Leiden: Brill.
Hunger, H.
2002a Raḫī. P. 1028a in vol. 3/1 of Parpola, Radner, and Baker 1998–2011.
2002b Raṣiʾ. P. 1034a in vol. 3/1 of Parpola, Radner, and Baker 1998–2011.
Hunger, H., and Schmidt, K. S.
2002 Riḫi-Dādi. P. 1052b–53a in vol. 3/1 of Parpola, Radner, and Baker 1998–2011.
Hurvitz, A.
1968 *Beyn lašon le-lašon: le-toldot lešon ham-miqraʾ bimey bayit šeni*. Jerusalem: Bialik. [Hebrew]
2003 Hebrew and Aramaic in the Biblical Period: The Problem of 'Aramaisms' in Linguistic Research on the Hebrew Bible. Pp. 24–37 in Young 2003b.
Izre'el, S.
1995 The Amarna Glosses: Who Wrote What for Whom? Some Sociolinguistic Considerations. *IOS* 15: 101–22.
Jursa, M.
1994 Zu AUWE 8, Nr. 89. *Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires* 1994/66: 56–58.
1999 *Das Archiv des Bēl-rēmanni*. Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul 86. Leiden: NINO.
Kaufman, S. A.
1974 *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*. Assyriological Studies 19. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Kautzsch, E.
1902 *Die Aramaismen im Alten Testament untersucht*. Halle: Niemeyer.
Kogan, L.
2011 Proto-Semitic Phonetics and Phonology. Pp. 54–151 in *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, ed. S. Weninger et al. Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft 36. Berlin: de Gruyter.
Koller, A.
2013 לבוא and להכנס: Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives on the Semantics of לבוא in Ancient Hebrew. *Leš* 75: 149–64. [Hebrew]

Lemaire, A.
1977 *Inscriptions hébraïques*, vol. 1: *Les ostraca*. Paris: du Cerf.
Leslau, W.
1987 *Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez (Classical Ethiopic)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
Lipiński, E.
1997 *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar*. OLA 80. Leuven: Peeters.
1998 Adda-raqî. P. 50a in vol. 1/1 of Parpola, Radner and Baker 1998–2011.
2000 *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*. OLA 100. Leuven: Peeters.
Margain, J.
1969–70 *Yakhol* et l'expression de la modalité "pouvoir." *Comptes rendus du Groupe Linguistique d'Études Chamto-Semitiques* 14: 47–64.
Mazar, A.
2003 Three 10th–9th Century BCE Inscriptions from Tēl Reḥōv. Pp. 171–84 in den Hertog, Hübner, and Münger 2003.
2007 The Search for David and Solomon: An Archaeological Perspective. Pp. 117–39 in *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel*, ed. B. B. Schmidt. Atlanta: SBL.
Mazar, A., and Aḥituv, S.
2011 Inscriptions from Tel Reḥov and Their Contribution to the Study of Writing and Literacy During the Iron Age IIA. *Eretz-Israel* 30: 300–316. [Hebrew]
Millard, A. R.
2009 Assyria, Aramaeans and Aramaic. Pp. 203–14 in *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded*, ed. G. Galil, M. Geller, and A. Millard. VTSup 130. Leiden: Brill.
Muraoka, T., and Porten, B.
1998 *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic*. HdO 1/32. Leiden: Brill.
Naʾaman, N.
1991 The Kingdom of Judah under Josiah. *Tel Aviv* 18: 3–71.
2003 Ostracon 40 from Arad Reconsidered. Pp. 199–204 in den Hertog, Hübner, and Münger 2003.
2008 Naboth's Vineyard and the Foundation of Jezreel. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33: 197–218.
Naʾaman, N., and Zadok, R.
1988 Sargon II's Deportations to Israel and Philistia (716–708 B.C.). *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40: 36–46.
Naveh, J.
1989 The Epigraphic Finds from Areas A and B. Pp. 346–47 in *Hazor*, vols. 3–4: *Text*, ed. A. Ben-Tor. Jerusalem: Magnes.
2000 Hebrew and Aramaic Inscriptions. Pp. 1–14 in *Excavations at the City of David 1978–1985*, vol. 6: *Inscriptions*, ed. T. D. Ariel. Qedem 41. Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology.
2009a *Studies in West-Semitic Epigraphy: Selected Papers*. Jerusalem: Magnes.

2009b Writing and Scripts in Seventh Century BCE Philistia: The New Evidence from Tel Jemmeh. Pp. 17–33 in Naveh 2009a.
2009c Published and Unpublished Aramaic Ostraca. Pp. 117–31 in Naveh 2009a.

Nissinen, M.
2014 Outlook: Aramaeans Outside of Syria, 1. Assyria. Pp. 273–96 in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria*, ed. H. Niehr. HdO 1/106. Leiden: Brill.

Olmo Lete, G. del, and Sanmartín, J.
2003 *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*, trans. W. G. E. Watson. HdO 1/67. Leiden: Brill.

Oren, E. D.
1993 Ethnicity and Regional Archaeology: The Western Negev under Assyrian Rule. Pp. 102–5 in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, June–July 1990*, ed. A. Biran and J. Aviram. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.

Parpola, S.; Radner, K.; and Baker, H. D., eds.
1998–2011 *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. 3 vols. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.

Porten, B., and Yardeni, A.
1986–99 *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Qimron, E.
1986 *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. HSS 29. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Rainey, A. F.
1986 The Ancient Hebrew Prefix Conjugation in the Light of Amarnah Canaanite. *HS* 27: 4–19.

Renz, J.
1995 *Die althebräischen Inschriften*, vol. 1: *Text und Kommentar*. Handbuch der althebräischen Epigraphik 1. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Sarfatti, G. B.
1992 Inscriptions from the Biblical Period and Rabbinic Hebrew. *Meḥqarim be-Lašon* 5–6: 41–65. [Hebrew]

Sass, B.
2005 *The Alphabet at the Turn of the Millennium: The West Semitic Alphabet ca. 1150–850 BCE, the Antiquity of the Arabian, Greek and Phrygian Alphabets*. Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology of the Tel-Aviv University.

Schniedewind, W.
2000 Sociolinguistic Reflections on the Letter of a 'Literate' Soldier (Lachish 3). *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik* 12: 157–67.

Schniedewind, W., and D. Sivan
1996–97 The Elijah-Elisha Narratives: A Test Case for the Northern Dialect of Hebrew. *JQR* 87: 303–37.

Segert, S.
1975 *Altaramäische Grammatik*. Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie.

Soden, W. F. von
1991 Gab es bereits im vorexilischen Hebräisch Aramaismen in der Bildung und Verwendung von Verbalformen? *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik* 4: 32–45.

Sokoloff, M.
1992 *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press.
2002 *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods*. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
2009 *A Syriac Lexicon: Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion and Update of C. Brockelmann's Lexicon* Syriacum. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias.
Steiner, R. C.
1977 *The Case for Fricative-Laterals in Proto-Semitic*. American Oriental Series 59. New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society.
1991 Addenda to *The Case for Fricative-Laterals in Proto-Semitic*. Pp. 1499–1513 in *Semitic Studies in Honor of Wolf Leslau on the Occasion of His Eighty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. A. S. Kaye. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
Stern, E.
2001 *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, vol. 2: *The Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian Periods, 732–332 BCE*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday.
Tadmor, H.
2011 The Aramaization of Assyria: Aspects of Western Impact. Pp. 179–203 in H. Tadmor, *"With My Many Chariots I Have Gone Up the Heights of Mountains": Historical and Literary Studies on Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel*, ed. M. Cogan. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.
Talshir, D.
2003 The Habitat and History of Hebrew during the Second Temple Period. Pp. 251–75 in Young 2003b.
Vaux, R. de
1939 Les ostraca de Lachis. *RB* 48: 181–206.
Weinreich, U.
1966 *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*. The Hague: Mouton.
Winford, D.
2003 *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Young, I. M.
2003a Late Biblical Hebrew and Hebrew Inscriptions. Pp. 276–317 in Young 2003b.
Young, I. M., ed.
2003b *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 369. London: T&T Clark.
Zewi, T.
1999 *A Syntactical Study of Verbal Forms Affixed by -n(n) Endings in Classical Arabic, Biblical Hebrew, El-Amarna Akkadian and Ugaritic*. AOAT 260. Münster: Ugarit Verlag.