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*Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in Its Greco-Roman Context*. By AARON MICHAEL BUTTS. Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic, vol. 11. Winona Lake, IN: EISENBRAUNS, 2016. Pp. xvii + 292. \$59.50.

Our Western culture is the outcome of a very fruitful symbiosis of a Levantine religion and Greek thought, and this intercultural, Near Eastern-Hellenistic encounter dates back more than two millennia and has over the years and to some degree affected almost every sphere of human activity. Thus, *inter alia*, constant engagement with religious literature in Greek had left easily recognizable traces in the local vernaculars of Middle Eastern Christians in the form of hundreds of Greek loanwords. The phenomenon is well known to every student of Syriac, for example, but—surprisingly—only very few (and somewhat eclectic) studies have been dedicated to the study of Greek-Syriac language contact. Aaron Butts’s new book *Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in Its Greco-Roman Context* aims to remedy this situation.

The book is divided into three sections dedicated to the methodological and historical background, loanwords, and grammatical replication, respectively. After a short introduction, Butts surveys in chapter two (pp. 11–24) various contact linguistic frameworks and opts for Van Coetsem’s typology of language contact, which categorizes the changes and expectable outcomes according to the linguistic dominance of the agents of change. Based on the scant “anecdotal evidence” (p. 38) that survives in historical sources, Butts establishes in chapter three (pp. 25–40) that the sociohistorical setting of Greek-Syriac language contact is best described as one of recipient language agentivity: The agents of change were in all likelihood Syriac-speakers who borrowed from Greek, in which they were less proficient. (Note that p. 26 n. 9, Brown 1989 is not listed in the bibliography. Read Brown 1971?)

The following one hundred pages are dedicated to the analysis of 800+ Greek loanwords from a corpus of pre-eighth-century Syriac texts (note that if the corpus indeed contained the NT [p. 47 n. 15], it is not restricted to “texts that were not translated from Greek”). Apropos, the issue of Greek-Syriac contact becomes even more complicated when one takes later periods into account, in which original Greek compositions were occasionally translated back into Greek from the Syriac, as happened, e.g., with the Syntipas tradition of the Aesopic fables.

While Butts’s analyses contain scores of examples, he does not include in the volume under review a full list of all the loanwords on which his work is based. Chapter four (pp. 43–63) introduces relevant theoretical concepts: Butts views the level of integration of a foreign word (often associated with the somewhat fuzzy terms *Lehnwort* and *Fremdwort*) as a continuum. Lack of morpho-syntactic integration or relative frequency may be used to distinguish loanwords from (single-word) code-switching. Greek also served as a channel through which words of other foreign origin, for example Latin, reached Syriac. On the other hand, some ultimately Greek words were loaned into predecessors of Syriac and are thus inherited in that language (and therefore do not attest to language contact in the period under discussion); these are assembled in appendix 1 (pp. 212–22). Note that A. Schall, “Zur griechischen Nebenüberlieferung im Syrischen,” in *FsKrotkoff* (1977): 237–46, has remarks on Greek in the early Syriac inscriptions.

Chapter five (pp. 64–96) surveys the representation of the Greek consonants and vowels in the Syriac alphabet. Correspondences are remarkably stable throughout the corpus, with seeming exceptions often harking back to Koiné Greek input forms. In some cases, the time-depth of the corpus enables

tracking the spelling of a loanword over time (as with *prh̄sy*<sup>9</sup> on p. 82), and some orthographic changes correspond to historical developments in the phonology of either Greek or Syriac. (Comment on p. 81, l. 6 from end: Syriac *p* was realized as a voiceless, not voiced, bilabial stop /p/.)

In chapter six (pp. 97–136), Butts treats the morpho-syntactic integration of the loanwords. Notable are non-nominative or plural input forms, and the erratic treatment of Greek case endings, which can be retained or dropped in order to arrive at a trilateral root. The root morphology of Aramaic also poses problems for the integration of Greek verbs, which are often accommodated as infinitives with an Aramaic light verb. Three Greek suffixes became (to some extent) productive in Syriac, but these are not direct transfers from Greek but rather inner Syriac analogical creations extrapolated from a given set of loanwords. (Comment on p. 132 n. 93: For Syriac *ʔlʔ* read *ʔlpʔ*.)

The second section of the book is dedicated to grammatical replication, i.e., a grammatical structure modeled on the source language. Grammatical replication may result in the creation of a new structure, but can have other effects as well, e.g., an increase in frequency of an existing pattern. This latter case is demonstrated for Syriac with the *nisba*-adjectives (pp. 140–44), which over time became much more common in Syriac due to the influence of Greek, which is heavy on adjectives (compared to Semitic languages).

Chapter eight (pp. 153–73) contains a detailed case study on grammatical replication: Syriac increasingly employed the copula *ʔiaw(hy)* in nominal sentences, thus replicating Greek sentences with the verb ‘to be’. Butts argues that Greek influence is responsible for the extension of the pattern beyond cases with prepositional phrase predicates and for its general increase in frequency (a list of references from the corpus is given in appendix 2). Incidentally, in this case, too, phonetic similarity might have facilitated the process (cp. pp. 175, 180 n. 21), for the Koiné pronunciation [sθ] for /st/ leads to near-homophonous first syllables in the Syriac and the prevalent Greek 3sg present indicative ἐστίν. Butts identifies only faint traces of the extended use in other Late Aramaic dialects. What is more, in the examples he quotes from contemporaneous dialects, the suffixed pronoun on the particle is only seldom endophoric, referring to an overt subject that precedes or follows in the same clause (8.27 [Mandaic], 8.36 [JPA], 8.40–41 [CPA]; the Mandaic example could be interpreted as extraposition, the JPA example is certainly one). In other words, the pronouns usually serve as subjects. The distinction might also be relevant for the Syriac data. (Comment on p. 165: Example (8.27) does not demonstrate the use of \*ʔiθay with a participial predicate in Mandaic.)

Chapter nine (pp. 174–94) looks at the conjunctive *den* (a short excursus is dedicated to its sibling *ger*), a native Aramaic particle shortened in Syriac to resemble the Greek δέ, which it mimics in syntax and meaning as well. (Comment on p. 189, example (9.22): The Samaritan Targum is a strictly literal word-for-word translation that cannot be used to establish the rules of Samaritan Aramaic word order.)

In the conclusion (pp. 195–211), Butts points to the main contributions of his study to relevant disciplines. Contact linguists will happily discover relatively certain examples for transfer of grammatical structure—not only loanwords—in situations of borrowing. The time-depth of Aramaic offers a unique opportunity to trace contact over a long period of time in a reasonably big corpus that allows for meaningful frequency analysis. Semitists and historians of the Late Antique Middle East can revisit their assessment of Greek-Syriac language contact, which seems to have commenced earlier than assumed by some. Furthermore, the attestation of grammatical replication in particular points to intensive contact for centuries.

However, the following comparison of the outcomes of Greek-Aramaic language contact in Syriac vis-à-vis other late Aramaic dialects is somewhat problematic. Using loanword type or token frequency to establish intensity of contact can be misleading: Samaritan Aramaic, for example, attests to only about seventy loanwords in the whole corpus, but Greek is clearly predominant in the inscriptions of Samaritan synagogues and must have been widespread even in the religious sphere; see C. Stadel and M. Shemesh, “Greek Loanwords in Samaritan Aramaic,” *Aramaic Studies* 16 (2018): 144–81.

The subject of Greek loanwords in JBA (p. 207 above) deserves a more nuanced discussion. It would be interesting to know how many of these loanwords are also extant in Rabbinic Hebrew, whence they could have reached the Aramaic of the Babylonian Rabbis. And—en passant—Krauss 1898 (referenced p. 95 n. 105, p. 98 n. 5 et passim) as a source for Greek loanwords in Rabbinic literature is outdated.

The PhD dissertation by Shai Heijmans, “Greek and Latin Loanwords in Mishnaic Hebrew: Lexicon and Phonology” (Tel Aviv Univ., 2013, in Hebrew), easily surpasses Krauss for the more restricted corpus of the Tannaitic Hebrew of the Mishnah. The Hebrew material is all the more important for comparison since Heijmans found evidence that the Greek words entered Hebrew via (local, Palestinian) Aramaic dialects.

In sum, Butts has written a very lucid presentation of the effects of Greek-Syriac language contact up to the seventh century. While his findings are not surprising to the specialist, he has succeeded remarkably well in putting the research on a more solid theoretical basis, making good use of studies from the field of contact linguistics. As a result, his work has much to offer to a diverse audience: Linguists interested in language contact will find precious examples of well-attested contact-induced changes over a long period of time, and historians of the Middle East may want to revise their conception of the roles of Greek and Aramaic during Late Antiquity.

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*Shipped but Not Sold: Material Culture and the Social Protocols of Trade during Yemen’s Age of Coffee.* By NANCY UM. Perspectives on the Global Past. Honolulu: UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PRESS, 2017. Pp. xiv + 198, illus. \$64.

Interest in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade network has grown in recent years with the recognition that this trade occurred in a global context in which goods were traded from Europe to the far reaches of Asia and the East African coast. One of the main stopping points along this network was Yemen, both the port of Aden on the southern coast and the later port of Mocha on the Red Sea coastal plain Tihama. The natural harbor of Aden was especially important during the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries, as explored in Roxani Margariti’s *Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life of a Medieval Arabian Port* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007). Mocha was a small and relatively insignificant port until the sixteenth century, but it became the major entrepôt for coffee in the service of the Zaydi imams in Yemen’s north. The historian Nancy Um, who has written an earlier study of Mocha, entitled *The Merchant Houses of Mocha: Trade and Architecture in an Indian Ocean Port* (Seattle, 2009), now tackles new ground with this volume, examining Dutch and British archives and travel accounts to go beyond the economics of trade to the social and diplomatic aspects of commodities.

The main argument guiding Um’s *Shipped but Not Sold* is that the value of commodities was not simply economic but “played ceremonial, social, and utilitarian roles in an intensely commercial society that was oriented to the sea in early eighteenth-century Yemen” (p. 1). Her approach builds on studies by a range of historians on the lives, ceremonial activities, and protocols of European merchants during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Indian Ocean. Her primary sources are from the archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the India Office Records housed in the British Library, as well as collections in a range of institutions. From these she is able to document the ceremonies surrounding the arrival of merchants and diplomatic trade commissions, the lives and commodities used by European merchants residing in Mocha, the nature of gifts to local authorities and the Zaydi imams, and European views of their trading partners.

The first chapter focuses on rites of entry for European merchant ships and on the life of resident European merchants in the Mocha trade. The archival material is supplemented by comments made by Carsten Niebuhr, the surviving member of the eighteenth-century Danish expedition to Yemen, and by the French account of Jean de la Roque about the arrival of a French ship in 1709. These sources describe a variety of “things” put into play, including flags, cannons, robes, textiles, horses, musical instruments, and containers for coffee and rosewater (p. 31). Flags were important to determine the nationality of the incoming ships, although pirates could easily put up a national flag. Um notes that three French ships arrived in 1737, each with different flags—French, English, and Dutch—to avoid