

author–subject index complement his monograph. Redd ultimately concludes: “While pragmatic or poetic *operations* may trigger postponement, the fact that postponement is allowable at all is due to the *process* of defamiliarization” (pp. 139–40, italics added). He thus appears intent upon maintaining a firm distinction between functional (pragmatic) versus formal (poetic) components of BH verse, and this makes reasonable sense for a categorical approach—even though he permits defamiliarization somehow to float above this dichotomy. Still, fostering further analytical dialogue between these two mutually informative dimensions of Biblical Hebrew poetry remains a desideratum for Hebraists that ought not to be unduly postponed.

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*A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam.* BY HOLGER GZELLA. Handbuch der Orientalistik, vol. 111. Leiden: BRILL, 2015. Pp. xv + 451. \$363.

In 2 Kings 18:26 and the parallel passage in Isaiah (36:11), Eliakim, who is majordomo to the Judean king Hezekiah, beseeches the Assyrian envoy to speak with him in *’ārāmīt* rather than *yəhūdīt*. Eliakim is not a linguist, so far as we know, and the distinction that he is trying to make is as much political as it is linguistic: speak the language of the kingdom of Aram-Damascus, which comprises the territories around Damascus and Aleppo, rather than that of the kingdom of Judea, in which we currently find ourselves. In Holger Gzella’s latest publication, we learn the story of how these two men came to speak this idiom as a common tongue, how Eliakim came to make his request, so strange on the face of it, and why any of this should matter to us, among many other things.

In the text as we have received it, this *’ārāmīt* might have referred specifically to what Gzella describes as the “Central Syrian Koine” (pp. 67–72), in addition to the standardized administrative and literary language that superseded it, likewise described as *’ārāmīt* in the biblical books of Daniel (2:4) and Ezra (4:8). The former book also describes *’ārāmīt* as the language of the “Chaldeans,” whom scholars posthumously elevated to the status of a nation state during the course of the early modern era, complete with a national territory (“Chaldea”), a national language (“Chaldaic”), and a national religion (“Chaldaism”), none of which could be said to have existed in any meaningful way outside of the minds of these scholars. For that reason, this same language was also described as Chaldaic, at least until Josef Markwart coined the term *Reichsarāmāisch* to describe it in 1927. How *’ārāmīt* was transmogrified into *Reichsarāmāisch* (or Achaemenid Official Aramaic as it is more generally known today) through the efforts of ancient states and modern scholars is an interesting but somewhat open question, and Gzella dedicates much of his account (pp. 105–211) to the *status quaestionis*.

Gzella is less evidently concerned with how something called “Aramaic” has become the subject of scholarly discourse, in the manner of some other cultural histories, and more with tracing the evidence for this phenomenon back into the historical record spanning from the early first millennium BCE to the advent of Islam. He nonetheless begins appropriately enough by furnishing us with some background (pp. 3–16), outlining those scholars whose authority precedes him, and from whom we have inherited such categories as Aramaic. In this regard, it ought to be noted that the use of this single term to signify the many languages that are the present subject of this discourse is a comparatively recent phenomenon. It and its cognates in other languages were vanishingly rare in the scholarly literature before the publication of Landau’s 1819 landmark *Rabbinisch-aramäisch-deutsches Wörterbuch*; plotting an *n*-gram, “Aramaic” surpasses “Chaldaic” in English-language scholarship only after 1858. In German, “Chaldäisch” still continued to be much more popular until 1882, when Kautzsch published his *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*. Nonetheless, this term continued to be popular in any language well into the early decades of the twentieth century.

In prior years, it was far more common to refer to the members of this category as distinct languages, as reflected by the fact that their study remains still quite atomized. Chief among these lan-

guages were Syriac, the language of the city of Edessa, which became a standardized literary and liturgical language for many of the region's Christians, and the aforementioned but now sadly deprecated Chaldaic, although it must be admitted that the referents of these names were seldom stable across ages and authors. The sixteenth-century discovery of living vernacular forms of these languages (no matter what we may call it/them) and the emergence of new texts in similarly different, but likewise evidently related languages provoked a reconsideration of the classification of these languages, although as Gzella notes, what constitutes Aramaic is still very much an open question (p. 22), and the relationships between all of its constituent members are still far from clear (p. 15). One thing is certain: this category is characterized by considerable linguistic variation "right from the outset" (p. 63).

Perhaps for this reason, a perennial theme in this work is growth towards a common idiom that eventually decays into regional variation, not merely once but repeatedly and regularly throughout the long history of these languages. This complicates not only the study of this phenomenon but also the ability of scholars to communicate its value to a broader audience, insofar as few specialize in more than one variety of Aramaic, and demonstrated competence in the entire span of its recorded history is vanishingly rare. Nevertheless, we persist in referring to everything under the blanket term "Aramaic" and its varieties as "Aramaic dialects," even when we acknowledge that we are dealing with a range of linguistic diversity no less broad than that of, say, the Romance sub-family of languages, to the extent that one can actually gauge such things.

Even so, reading Gzella's work, one cannot escape the feeling that we are living in an especially fluid phase of scholarship right now, and that some of the most interesting work actually lies ahead of us. Take, for example, Mandaic. In his landmark 1875 grammar, Nöldeke assigns various Mandaic literary texts to "older" and "younger" stages of the language, primarily on the basis of what he perceives as foreign elements (chiefly Arabic and Persian) in the latter. Macuch reclassified these as "Classical" and "Postclassical Mandaic," to which he added "Modern Mandaic" as a third category unknown to Nöldeke. This division has held to the present date, but it must be admitted that the term "Classical" is an uneasy fit for the stage(s) of the language represented by these texts. "Classical" languages, in the classical sense, are artificial idioms, the product of generations of elaboration by writers and grammarians, not all of whom are necessarily native speakers. Mandaic, on the other hand, is not like Standard Babylonian, or Middle Egyptian, or Classical Arabic, or Syriac; there is no evidence that the grammar of Mandaic was ever elaborated in this manner, and even the "purest" texts cited by Nöldeke are transparently the products of different hands working at different times and in different places, even if some of the distinctions between these hands have been subsequently blurred by copyists.

What allows us to conflate these products is a single script and the vaguest outline of a unified orthography—a *Dachsprache*, if anything, but only in retrospect, through the lens of the manuscript tradition. These texts in turn may have influenced what Nöldeke calls "Younger Mandaic" and what Macuch calls "Postclassical Mandaic" writing, but these are similarly the products of Mandaic speakers committing their own vernaculars to writing, rather than self-conscious attempts to emulate a fictive standard, because this is exactly how Mandaeans have always written their language. The process of standardizing what we today call "Classical Mandaic" only really began in 1875, and it continues up to the present date.

Speaking of Mandaic, I find myself not entirely convinced by some aspects of Gzella's presentation of that language. Specifically, I do not believe that the pre-nasalization of long consonants was as regular, productive, or as exceptional as he presents it (on pp. 121, 171, and 364). It is certainly true that Mandaic furnishes more evidence for this phenomenon than any other Aramaic variety; after all, what would the Mandaeans be without pre-nasalization of long consonants? (Maddaeans). As Gzella notes (p. 364), this feature is absent in Neo-Mandaic, apart from a few words inherited from the language of the religious literature. This observation alone should raise some serious objections. On a similar basis (the disappearance of the phenomenon from most post-Achaemenid languages) as well as the evidence of numerous counter-examples, he pushes back (p. 171) against Garr's characterization of this phenomenon as a productive sound change in Achaemenid Official Aramaic (see W. R. Garr, "Prenasalization in Aramaic," in *Studies in Semitic and Afroasiatic Linguistics Presented to Gene B. Gragg*, ed. C. L. Miller [Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2007], 97).

Similar counterexamples could be adduced for Mandaic, e.g., *bb* > *mb* \**qubbā* > **qumba** ‘dome’, alongside **quba**, but \**gabbārā* > **gabara** ‘hero’, never \*\**gambara*, \**habbārā* > **habara** ‘darkness’, never \*\**hambara*, and \**kubbā* > **kuba** ‘cup’, never \*\**kumba*; *dd* > *nd* \**madd‘ā* ‘knowledge’ > **manda** ‘gnosis’, alongside **mada**, but \**kaddābā* > **kadaba** ‘liar’, never \*\**kandaba*, and \**‘iddānā* > **edana** ‘time’, never \*\**endana*: *gg* > *ng* \**ittagar-* ‘he traded’ > **etangar** ‘he traded’, in which a new quadrilateral root  $\sqrt{t-n-g-r}$  has supplanted the original  $\sqrt{t-g-r}$ , but \**raggāgtā* ‘desire’ > **ragagta**, never \*\**rangagta*, and \**saggādā* > **sagada** ‘worshipper’, never \*\**sangada*; *zz* > *nz* (\**ʔ*)*ruz-* > \**ruzzā* > **runza** ‘rice’, but \**hazzāyā* > **hazaia** ‘seer’, never \*\**hanzaia*.

Apart from the evidence of the lexicon, the Mandaic verbal paradigms, and particularly those of the *D*-stem, fail to demonstrate that this sound change was ever regular or productive during any attested stage of the language, e.g., **mnazal** (< \**mnazzal*) ‘flowing’; **sadar** (< \**saddar*) ‘he arranged’; **zaban** (< \**zabban*) ‘he sold’, along with a deverbal noun, **zabanta** (< \**zabbāntā*) ‘selling’, never \*\**zambanta*. It is consistently absent from the contexts in which we might expect it, apart from those in which dissimilated forms derive from new quadrilateral stems. This suggests, to me at least, borrowings from another language in which the sound change was productive, morphographic spellings, a purely orthographic device to indicate consonant lengthening, or possibly some combination of all of the above.

Additionally, while I can only nod in agreement with his characterization of Mandaic as a form of Babylonian Aramaic, for that is undoubtedly the case, I cannot follow so far as to agree that “not even the earliest textual witnesses contain any grammatical forms, lexemes, or instances of subconscious syntactic interference that can unambiguously be associated with Western Aramaic at the exclusion of other Aramaic varieties.” Of course, the internal classification of Aramaic is still the subject of much scholarly discussion, as Gzella acknowledges (p. 370), and the (admittedly reasonable) condition that any features common to Mandaic and Western Aramaic exclude other Aramaic varieties effectively requires an argument from silence. (Undaunted, I shall attempt to make just such an argument from silence in a forthcoming article, to be published in this journal.)

Another excellent example of Aramaic speciation to which Gzella draws our attention (p. 13) is the rise of “identifiable linguistic varieties such as Jewish Palestinian or Jewish Babylonian Aramaic,” which is to say, further scholarly elaborations. Originally, the grammars of these varieties were based upon the printed documents that have been fixed and used for centuries by the communities of practice. More recent generations of scholars have deemed these grammars insufficient, since the printed documents are the product of a living tradition and often reflect this tradition rather than older palaeographic or epigraphic sources, which are chronologically more proximate to the original sources of the manuscript tradition. Accordingly, since the present grammars don’t reflect the features that the scholars might expect from these sources, they are seeking new older sources that reflect the features they would expect, to construct a new “fundament” or grammatical foundation that incorporates these expected features. This is serious work; one can almost picture the workers scurrying around in their hardhats, the MEN AT WORK and NO TRESPASSING signs posted to ward off interlopers, but what purpose will this work accomplish? For whom is this new classical standard now being elaborated? Certainly not the communities of practice; once it is elaborated, which community is going to sustain it?

Similar concerns emerge from practically every page of Gzella’s opus, whether we are talking about the emergence of Achaemenid Official Aramaic as a standard administrative and literary language, the typology of the family of dialects or languages to which it is related, or the grounds on which we identify and authenticate further linguistic varieties within that family (such as “Egyptian Aramaic,” the use of which he deprecates on p. 209). Writing about a similar phenomenon, Stephan Palmié (*The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion* [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2013], 6) notes, “All this may be taken to constitute a somewhat artificial set of problems. Sure, we might say, these conundrums relate to the well-known epistemic quandary of recursivity of scale and resolution. Obviously, the growth of knowledge always *eo ipso* implies a growth of ignorance. Map is not territory. As one scales downward from ostensible typographic clarity, pesky detail increases, boundaries desolidify, and complexities proliferate on different levels.” He might as well have been writing about Aramaic philology. This is a “cultural history” in a very different sense from that which Gzella intended, but glimpses of it do appear from time to time from the pages of Gzella’s monograph.

As a rule, reviews concern themselves with the work that has been accomplished, and not the work that could have been accomplished, and in the former regard Gzella demonstrates a magisterial control over a vast span of the history of this language, and the questions that motivate scholars to keep returning to it, frequently with a courageous indifference to social and professional considerations, as well as those that occasionally captivate a broader public: how long did Hebrew survive as a spoken language? just what was the language of Jesus? (For the answers to these questions and more, you'll have to read the book).

His contribution provides a solid foundation for the further study of the numerous issues it both adumbrates and illuminates in greater detail and is certain to become a standard reference. In addition, it will serve as an excellent introduction to the scholarship of the past century for scholars in allied fields, and particularly for sociolinguists interested in the phenomenon of the standardization of language and the ageless interplay between the vernacular and the literary. As dry as these subjects may occasionally seem to the uninitiated, Gzella is engaging in his presentation, and at times even a bit jocular (e.g., on p. 265 he dismisses the sporadic occurrence of isolated features that would appear in later years among texts we deem "Eastern Aramaic" with the proverb, "one sparrow does not make a summer," and on p. 286 he compares Aramaic dialectology to "playing piano with gloves on"). No other work comparable in its scope yet exists, at least not in the English language, and I am confident that it will stimulate and guide future inquiries into the phenomenon of Aramaic for years to come.

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*Non-Textual Marking Systems in Ancient Egypt (and Elsewhere)*. Edited by JULIA BUDKA; FRANK KAMMERZELL; and SŁAWOMIR RZEPKA. *Lingua Aegyptia, Studia Monographica*, vol. 16. Hamburg: WIDMAIER VERLAG, 2015. Pp. x + 322, illus. €59.

The richness and diversity of hieratic and hieroglyphic texts from the roughly 3600 years of continuous written tradition of Egypt's hieroglyphic, hieratic, and demotic scripts—not to mention the wealth of Coptic inscriptional material—can overwhelm the historian and archaeologist. As the editors of the volume under review observe, it comes as little surprise that only in the last ten years have volumes dedicated to "non-textual marking systems" in Egypt begun to appear with frequency (Haring and Kaper 2009; Andrásy, Budka, and Kammerzell 2009). The volume under review complements and expands upon those slightly earlier studies, presenting nearly two dozen articles under the headings "Methods & Semiotic," "Architecture & Builders' Marks," "Deir el-Medina," and "Pot Marks" (each with a short introductory overview). The subjects of the various contributions range in date from the Naqada III period to the Graeco-Roman era, with the majority dealing with material of New Kingdom date. The geographical range of the various studies covers the Nile Valley, including sites in the Delta (Tell el-Iswid), the Memphite region (Saqqara), Middle Egypt (Dayr Abu Hinnis, Abydos), the Thebaid, and Gebel Silsila. The parenthetical "and Elsewhere" in the title of the volume does not seem to apply, although the discussions contained within certainly have implications for understanding non-textual marking systems outside of Egypt.

One of the remarkable aspects of the study of non-textual marking systems is the diversity of media on which the ancient Egyptians recorded such systems: stone (natural rock surfaces, quarries, and ostraca), faience, ceramics, and mud brick. In one case, a pot mark may even be present on a papyrus: Andrásy's study of a pottery account from the Gebelein administrative papyri suggests that a large *mr*-hoe sign drawn between two sections of the account references a pot mark; this article provides a tantalizing piece of evidence for the oft-mentioned identification of pre-firing pot marks as part of the process of inspection at ceramic workshops. Nearly all of the articles in the volume under review are similarly attentive to the interdisciplinary nature of research into non-textual marking systems and pseudo scripts.