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FREDERICK MARIO FALES and GIULIA FRANCESCA GRASSI, *L'aramaico antico: Storia, grammatica, testi commentati, con un'appendice paleografica di Ezio Attardo*. Forum Editric Universitaria Udinese, Udine 2016. Pp. 315. Price: €35.00 paperback. ISBN: 978-88-8420-891-0.

This volume is a welcome addition to the growing number of books on the epigraphic material in Old Aramaic, the earliest stage of Aramaic, known principally from lapidary inscriptions of the ninth-eighth centuries BCE. Although *L'aramaico antico* is designed to be an introduction to this area of Semitic studies, there is much here that will interest experienced scholars as well.

The book is divided into two main parts. The introductory section (pp. 13–61) contains chapters on the historical context (by Fales), Old Aramaic phonology and morphology (by Fales) and morphosyntax and syntax (by Grassi). The larger second section presents the texts in transliteration, with translation and philological commentary (by Grassi, in collaboration with Fales).

The selection of texts is interesting, with a number of previously unanthologized texts:¹ the Tell Halaf 'altar' inscription (*KAI* 281, pp. 65–8), the Aramaic portion of the Tell Fekherye bilingual (*KAI* 309, pp. 69–81), the Ninurta-Belu-Ušur inscriptions, i.e., the lion statue inscriptions from Arslan Tash, first published in 2009 (pp. 82–8; a footnote gives the sad news that the lion statues kept at Raqqa have been destroyed by ISIS), the Bar-Hadad Melqart stele (*KAI* 201, pp. 89–91), selections from the Sefire stela (*KAI* 222–4, pp. 92–122), the Zakkur inscription

¹ In this review, the following bibliographical abbreviations are used: *KAI* = H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften, Band 1, 5. erweiterte und überarbeitete Auflage* (Wiesbaden 2002); *CIS* = *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum, pars secunda* (Academia Inscriptionum et Litterarum Humaniorum 1888, 1893); *TSSI* = J.C.L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions. Volume 2: Aramaic Inscriptions, including inscriptions in the Dialect of Zanjirli* (Oxford 1971).

(*KAI* 202, pp. 123–31), four short inscriptions bearing the name of Hazael, one of which (from the Heraion of Samos), is provided with commentary (*KAI* 311, pp. 132–5), the Tel Dan inscription (*KAI* 310, pp. 136–43); the Bukan stele (*KAI* 320, pp. 144–50); the first combination of the Deir ‘Allā plaster text (*KAI* 312, pp. 151–8); the ‘scepter’ inscription of Kilamuwa, found on a small gold cylinder (*KAI* 25, pp. 159–65); the Panamuwa I inscription, lines 1–31 (*KAI* 214, pp. 166–91); the Barrākib inscription for Panamuwa II (*KAI* 215, pp. 192–203); the KTMW inscription discovered in 2008 (pp. 204–13); the inscriptions of Barrākib (*KAI* 216–21), with commentary on the so-called *Bauinschrift* (*KAI* 216, pp. 214–20). Some lines from the recently deciphered Ördek-burnu Samalian inscription are treated in the section on the KTMW text (p. 212).

The penultimate chapter deals with short texts, most consisting of only one or two words, including the minor texts of Deir ‘Allā; the Tell Halaf alphabet; graffiti, bullae and ostraca from Hamat (*KAI* 203–13); assorted weights from Hamat and Qarqar; Nimrud bronzes and ivories; the bronze cup from Olympia (*CIS* II 112); three Luristan bronze vessels (*TSSI* 11–12); a bronze ‘astral cup’ of questionable authenticity; inscriptions on fragmentary pottery from Galilee (*TSSI* 3–4); the Emar stone; and a number of seals (pp. 221–44). The final chapter is ‘Testi di dubbia ascrizione all’Aramaica’, epigraphs where the philological evidence is ambiguous or unclear regarding the assignment of the text to Aramaic. These include a fragmentary limestone statue in the Amman museum, two new fragments from Zinjirli, each containing only one complete word, three amulets from Zinjirli (one with a proper name, the others with signs that may or may not be graphemes; these texts have been treated more recently in Jessie DeGrado and Matthew Richey, ‘An Aramaic-Inscribed Lamaštu Amulet from Zincirli’, *BASOR* 377 [2017]: 107–33), the ‘shield garnish’ inscription with a name and title, from a private collection, possibly originally from Zinjirli; some small inscriptions from Italy; a cup fragment from Tel Zeror with a fragmentary word and personal name; a clay tube from Nineveh with a personal name; the Nimrud ostrakon containing six lines of personal names (not given in the text); and a scepter from Khorsabad with a single personal name (*CIS* II 50).

There is little of philological interest in the texts treated in the final two chapters, and it might have been better to include more lines from the longer texts than to treat this scanty material at length. The Sefire texts are not given *in toto*, consisting of IA, IIC, and most of III (lines 4–27), and only Combination A of the Deir ‘Allā plaster text is included. The Hadad (Panamuwa I) stele lacks lines 4–7 and 32–4, and the Panamuwa II stele lines 11–22. Of the eight inscriptions of Barrākib, only the *Bauinschrift* (*KAI* 216) is provided with full text and commentary. Although the omitted material is often lacunose and difficult, it arguably deserved more attention than the terse and unrewarding (and sometimes unprovenanced!) items treated in the final chapters.

At the end of the book, there is an ‘Appendice paleografica’, authored by E. Attardo, tracing the development of the Aramaic script through two styles, monumental and cursive, with five paleographical tables. This is followed by a bibliography, line drawings of most of the texts (which will be useful for students learning the letter forms), and a map showing the locations of the Aramaic states in the period treated.

The book therefore contains a great deal of material, and will be an excellent resource for both students and specialists. As with any detailed treatment of ancient and sometimes difficult texts, the authors sometimes put forward readings and

interpretations that are debatable, or fail to note relevant studies. This is inevitable even in worthy books, and the following discussion of some of these should not detract from the generally high estimate the book deserves.

P. 43: The change of etymological **t* > *t* is assumed to account for the spelling of the word *tnn* ‘smoke’ in the Bukan stele. However, it is not probable that *tnn* < **tnn*, despite a long-standing assumption that it is cognate to Hebrew *šn*, Arab. *ʿtn*. The early aphaeresis of *ʿayin* is very unlikely; in fact the appearance of the spelling *tnn* in the Bukan stele (instead of **šnn*) is a good argument *against* the derivation **ʿtn* > *tn* > *tnn* > *tnn*.

P. 44: With regard to the defective writing of unaccented final long vowels, the authors might have cited E. Cook, ‘The Orthography of Final Unstressed Long Vowels in Old and Imperial Aramaic’, *Maarav* 5–6 (1990), 53–67.

Pp. 46–7, 57: The morphology of the verb is described as an opposition of ‘congiunzione a prefissi’ and ‘coniugazione a suffissi’, with a further long and short opposition in the former. This terminology is not consistently used, however, and the prefix-conjugation is generally called ‘imperfetto’ and the suffix-conjugation ‘perfetto’. In the commentary, these terms are not used rigorously. Jussive forms are sometimes called ‘imperfetto’ (e.g., *ʿhslk*, Zakkur A 14 [p. 129], *yhpkb*, Bukan, l. 11, *yhbʿhy*, Bukan, l. 13, *ybrg*, Hadad, l. 26 [preceded by *ʿl*, elsewhere called ‘vetitivo’], *yšwy*, KTMW, l. 12, etc.). The preterite form, which is morphologically a short variety of the prefix-conjugation, is called variously ‘imperfetto con valore preteritale’ (p. 140) or, on the same page, ‘imperfetto usato con valore di perfetto’. A consistent use of ‘imperfetto’ for the long prefix conjugation, ‘iussivo’ for the short prefix form with volitive meaning, and ‘pretérito’ for the narrative preterite would have been preferable.

Pp. 74–5: In the Tell Fekheriye inscription, the forms *mʿrk*, *mld*, *mšmʿ* and *mlqb* are all taken to be G stem infinitives, although it is recognized that the other words in the same construction (*hyy*, *kbr*, *šlm*) should be construed as nouns in the construct state. Probably the *maqal* forms are also nouns, *nomina actionis* of a type that developed into the *m-* prefixed G infinitives of later Aramaic.

P. 81: The authors propose that the words *mwtn šbt zy nrgl* in the Fekheriye inscription refer to three illnesses, ‘la peste, l’épidémie, la malattia di Nergal’. The phrase *zy nrgl* is considered as a possible calque of an Akkadian construction, and the problematic lack of conjunctive *w-* is due to the influence of the parallel Akkadian text, which lists three illnesses without a conjunction. However, the Akkadian parallel does not mention Nergal, as the authors note. The proposal is unconvincing and unnecessary.

P. 85: It is suggested that the form *qmt* on one of the Arslan Tash lions (line 3) is a D-stem perfect. This is unlikely since the D-stem of hollow verbs in Aramaic either is expressed by reduplication of the final radical (in which case the form *qmmt* is expected) or by use of consonantal *yodh* for the middle radical (yielding the form *qymt*). Moreover, the semantics of the D-stem, as the authors admit, are not in favor of this parsing. If the verb translates Akkadian *ulziz* in the cuneiform parallel (which is by no means certain), it may be a mistake for causative *hqmt* (as appears in line 9). The same problem comes up with *qm* in the Hadad inscription, l. 30, which the authors again take as somehow transitive (p. 190).

Pp. 101–2: The different solutions to the crux of the curse in the Sefire IA stela, line 24, are thoroughly canvassed, and the following translation offered: ‘E che le sue sette figlie vadano per un pezzo di pane e che non siano desiderate (?)!’ (following A. Lemaire). It is unfortunate that this (generally accurate) translation is not

argued for in detail. In particular, the meaning of the last word, the verb *ybrgn*, is properly derived from the root *rgg* ‘desire’, and not *brg*, ‘kill’, but in context must mean something like ‘to consider something desirable > be satisfied with something’. There is a probable parallel in the KTMW inscription, lines 10-11, *ybrg bnbšy*, ‘may he be satisfied with my soul’ (although there the authors translate as ‘compia il sacrificio’, p. 205, with a parsing from *brg*, ‘kill’).²

p. 129: Restoring the Canaanite verb *ydbr*, ‘he spoke’, in line 11 of the Zakkur inscription, is certainly incorrect.

p. 139: The tG or tD form [*bb*]/*tlhmb* in the Tell Dan inscription, l. 2, is called ‘riflessivo’, but since the subject of the sentence was not fighting himself, the term ‘reciproco’ would have been better.

p. 145: In the discussion of the root *hns* in the Bukan stele, l. 1, the authors might have cited D. Talshir, ‘On the Use of אנס in Aramaic and Hebrew’, *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls 3* (Jerusalem 2005) (in Hebrew).³

Pp. 156–7: The authors opt for the reading *tpqy* instead of *tpry* in the Deir ‘Allā text, l. 6, translating *tpqy skry šmyn* as ‘Che tu rompa i catenacci del cielo’ — parsing the verb as 2nd fem. sing. jussive < *pqq* (**pḏd*). However, this does not go together well with the following plea to bring ‘darkness and not splendor, obscurity and not light’, even if ‘breaking the bolts of heaven’ is a metaphor for a downpour of rain. A more likely parsing — if the reading is accepted — is from *pqq*, ‘to stop up, plug’, yielding ‘stop up, lock up heaven’.

P. 220: The hesitation to accept the form *by* as the proper singular absolute form of the word for ‘house’ (Barrākib, l. 16) is unwarranted: this is the normal absolute form in Aramaic, as all recent lexicons recognize.

Finally, there are a number of minor typos in the Aramaic transliterations: *sm’l* instead of *šm’l* (p. 25), *Hadad-yi’r* instead of *Hadad-yith’r* (p. 32), Syriac *DANA* for *HANA* (p. 54 n. 103), *pḥw* for *pḥw* (p. 100), *šrq* for *šqr* (p. 102, twice), *kmlkt* for *kmlkt* (p. 103, twice), *mng’rnt* instead of *mng’rnt* (p. 108 n. 163), *lms’l* for *lms’l* (p. 118), *hzy* for *hzy* (p. 129), *w’* for *w* (p. 179), *rby’* for *rb’y* (p. 217).

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