

SEMITICA

WENINGER, S., et al. (ed.) — *The Semitic Languages. An International Handbook*. (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft, 36). Walter de Gruyter, Berlin & New York, 2011. (24,5 cm, IX, 1287). ISBN 978-3-11-018613-0. ISSN 1861-5090. € 329,-.

The present reviewer of this volume will quickly run out of adjectives of praise to describe the marvelous, monumental, and magisterial achievement found within the covers of this mighty and massive book (to use only words commencing with ‘m’). Stefan Weninger and his associate editors, Geoffrey Khan, Michael P. Streck, and Janet C. W. Watson, not only have conceived the brilliant project, which far surpasses comparable volumes in the scope of languages and topics covered, but have also assembled the best scholars in the world to produce the superb results.

Those who labour in the field of Semitic Studies are familiar with similar volumes already available, and hence this new volume invites comparison (fairly or unfairly) with the following: a) Robert Hetzron, ed., *The Semitic Languages* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998); b) Roger D. Woodard, ed., *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and c) the two volumes edited by Alan S. Kaye, *Phonologies of Asia and Africa* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997); and *Morphologies of Asia and Africa* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007). By definition, the Woodard volume is limited to the ancient Semitic languages; while the Kaye volumes treat only phonology and morphology, without entering into the domains of syntax and lexis, never mind areas further afield, such as sociolinguistics and the like.

The Hetzron book is the one that would come closest to the Weninger reference work, but the former does not compare in scope to the latter. To give two examples: a) this new work includes six essays covering 95 pages devoted to Akkadian, in contrast to a single chapter of 31 pages in the older; b) while an astonishing 17 essays spanning 201 pages

present Aramaic in all its varieties (ancient and modern), in contrast to but two chapters (one for ancient, one for modern) comprising 61 pages in the Hetzron volume.

All of the aforementioned works include grammatical sketches of the individual languages, as does the current work naturally. But what distinguishes the scope of the volume produced by Weninger and his colleagues is the array of additional essays, on such interesting topics as the interrelationship between Semitic and each of the other language families within the Afroasiatic phylum; the reconstruction of proto-Semitic phonology, morphology, and lexicon; and morphological and syntactic typology of Semitic (nine essays altogether; more on most of these anon).

And then there are such unexpected and fascinating articles on such sociolinguistic themes as “Akkadian as a Diplomatic Language” (Wilfred H. van Soldt), “Hebrew as the Language of Judaism” (Angel Sáenz-Badillos); “The Re-Emergence of Hebrew as a National Language” (Yael Reshef); “Imperial Aramaic as an Administrative Language of the Achaemenid Period” (Margaretha Folmer); “Syriac as the Language of Eastern Christianity” (Françoise Briquel Chatonnet); “Arabic as the Language of Islam” (Muhammad A. S. Abdel Haleem); “Creating a Modern Standard Language from Medieval Tradition: The Nahḍa and the Arabic Academies” (Dagmar Glaß); “Tigrinya as National Language of Eritrea and Tigray” (Rainer Voigt); and “The Role of Amharic as a National Language and an African *lingua franca*” (Ronny Meyer). These contributions should attract scholars from disciplines beyond linguistics (such as history, government, religion, sociology, anthropology, etc.).

As to the presentation of the individual languages themselves, the editors, wisely to my mind, have given each contributor considerable leeway in the presentation of his/her material. To be sure, the most widely studied classical languages are given the most comprehensive treatment – “Babylonian and Assyrian” (38 pp.), by Michael P. Streck; “Biblical Hebrew” (35 pp.), by Lutz Edzard; and “Classical Arabic” (30 pp.), by Jan Retsö. By contrast, other languages are presented with less depth, even though, in theory at least, there is a comparable amount of data which could be presented; thus, for example, “Ugaritic” (13 pp.), by Dennis Pardee; “Jewish Babylonian Aramaic” (11 pp.), by Michael Sokoloff; and “Tigre” (11 pp.), by Didier Morin. For another very long entry, this time for a modern language, here I may note “Amharic” (35 pp.), by Ronny Meyer.

Typically, these entries proceed as expected, through phonology, morphology (with ample paradigm charts, clearly presented), and syntax. Many (especially the longer ones) include a section on lexicon (something not normally found in comparable reference works), with attention to loanwords, distinct vocables which differentiate one dialect from related dialects, and other matters.

In a few instances, to be honest, one is disappointed to find not a grammatical sketch of a language, but rather more conversation about the given language than paradigm charts, convenient presentation of forms, and so on. Here I must single out “Phoenician and Punic” (ch. 21), by Wolfgang Röllig; and “Mishnaic Hebrew” (ch. 23), by Moshe Bar-Asher – notwithstanding the erudition shown in the latter especially. I will have more specific comments on these two contributions below.

Almost always the material is presented in transliteration, though there are exceptions, especially for many of the

Hebrew and Aramaic essays. When such occurs, the font is the standard Hebrew one, sometimes with transliteration accompanying the original, sometimes without – though “Christian Palestinian Aramaic” (ch. 33), by Matthew Morgenstern, includes several words in the Syriac-derived script, though I must comment that said font is not very attractive, and/or the typesetters faced spacing problems, producing the result of CPA words difficult to read at times. Happily, the Syriac alphabet chart (presenting all three styles [Sertō, Estrangelā, and Eastern/Nestorian]), just a few pages on (p. 641) is a model of clarity.

Of great value are the lists of references which accompany each chapter. Here again, it appears, the editors have placed no restrictions on the authors, as some of these lists comprise very comprehensive bibliographies. The longest of them (for a single language; see further below) attends the superb entry on “Arabic Dialects (general article)” (ch. 50), by Janet C. E. Watson; no doubt due to the amount of material surveyed in the article, the bibliography spans 17 pages!

Needless to say, this review cannot comment on each of the 74 individual entries to this work; nor would it be wise even to list them all here. To answer to the second of these remarks, I direct the reader to the publisher’s website, where the full Table of Contents is provided: <http://www.degruyter.com/viewbooktoc/product/175227>. As to the first remark, I here segue to specific comments on most (though not all) of the individual essays. As the reader will recognize, the majority of these are based on my own expertise in a specific subset of the Semitic languages (namely, Northwest Semitic), though I also will attempt to do justice to essays in other areas.

“*Semitic-Egyptian Relations*” (ch. 2), by Gábor Takács (pp. 7-18):

While this entry, understandably so, presents only “examples of the common Afro-Asiatic” pronominal system (p. 10), one particularly noteworthy item is missing, to wit, the existence of a 1st person common dual suffix *-ny*, known from Old and Middle Egyptian, with cognates in Eblaite and Ugaritic (further afield see also Homeric *vōit*). Happily, the Semitic forms are noted by Streck on p. 344 (see below). (The Modern South Arabian languages also have 1st person common dual pronouns [both independent and suffixed], but these are extensions from the 2nd person forms [see the chart on p. 1083].)

Oddly, given the author of the present entry and his role as editor of the article to be cited, missing from the References is: Aaron D. Rubin, “An Outline of Comparative Egypto-Semitic Morphology,” in Gábor Takács, ed., *Egyptian and Semito-Hamitic (Afro-Asiatic) Studies in Memoriam Werner Vycichl* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 454-486.

“*Semitic-Berber Relations*” (ch. 3), by Vermondo Brugnatelli (pp. 18-27)

By citing W. M. de Slane’s pathfinding essay of 1856, in which the author “highlighted a number of ‘points de ressemblance’ between Berber and Semitic” (p. 19), Brugnatelli gives the impression that said scholar was the first to identify such common elements. The reader may be interested to learn, accordingly, that Yehuda ibn Quraysh (9th century C.E.) noted not only the obviously close relationships between and among Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic (and thus may be considered the first comparative Semitist),

but this remarkable scholar also identified some shared features between Semitic and Berber.

“*Proto-Semitic Phonetics and Phonology*” (ch. 6), by Leonid Kogan (pp. 54-151):

The pagination given here is not a misprint; indeed, this chapter comprises 98 pages, which includes 21 pages of References. But beyond the sheer quantity of material conveyed, this essay is simply brilliant, allowing the reader to investigate in an easily accessible manner, with clear sub-headings throughout, every possible feature of Semitic phonology. As one example thereof, I invite the reader to peruse §1.3.3 “The lateral hypothesis” (pp. 71-80), with the entirety of the evidence clearly and succinctly presented.

One feature not noted, however, is the retention of /t/ in Ammonite and Gileadite (in all other Iron Age Canaanite dialects, /t/ > /š/), for which see my interrelated studies: “The Ammonite Phoneme /t/,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 269 (1988), 73-79; and “More on Hebrew *šibbōlet*,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33 (1988), 255-258 (the latter of which is cited by Kogan in a different context).

“*Reconstructive Morphology*” (ch. 7), by Stefan Weninger (pp. 151-178):

The editor of this volume contributes a solid essay, especially important because morphology “forms the backbone of Semitics as a historic-comparative linguistic discipline” (p. 152).

Weninger sidesteps one of the thornier issues, by presenting both views, though without taking sides, regarding verbal roots with weak radicals: “there has been a long and controversial debate... whether in a historical and/or deep-structural perspective they are better conceptualized as roots containing (semi-)consonants that in some environments appear as vowels (e.g. Voigt 1988), or rather as original bi-radical roots that have a secondary root-augment to regularize the morphology (cf. e.g. Kienast 2001, 64)” (p. 153). This reviewer inclines towards the latter explanation, but appreciates the author’s caution.

I agree strongly that the N-stem is a proto-Semitic feature (notwithstanding its absence in Aramaic and Epigraphic South Arabian), though in addition to the references provided, the reader should be directed to the exceedingly thorough study by Stephen Lieberman in the pages of this journal: “The Afro-Asiatic Background of the Semitic N-Stem: Towards the Origins of Stem-Afformatives of the Semitic and Afro-Asiatic Verb,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 43 (1986), 577-628 (cited only once in the entire large volume, on p. 363).

Weninger reconstructs proto-Semitic interrogative elements for ‘where’, ‘who’, and ‘when’ (p. 170), but by not listing ‘what’ in this section, he implies that this fourth interrogative should not be included. The evidence is rather clear, however, that ‘what’ constitutes yet another proto-Semitic interrogative, as witnessed by Amorite *ma-a*, Ugaritic *mn*, Amarna *ma-an-na*, Hebrew *mah*, Aramaic *mah*, Arabic *mā*, Gəʿəz *mənt(a)*, and further afield Egyptian *m*, Tuareg *ma*, Hausa *mē*. As seen, there is some fluctuation across the languages, with or without the element *-n* (perhaps due to contamination from the ‘who’ series, **man*), but one still may conclude that a proto-form existed within Semitic.

“*Proto-Semitic Lexicon*” (ch. 8), by Leonid Kogan (pp. 179-258):

With this essay we return to another tour-de-force by Kogan, presenting the most comprehensive treatment of the proto-Semitic (PS) vocabulary, adducing approximately 450 items from across the spectrum of semantic fields: the physical world, colours, plant names, animal names, body parts, food, etc. – along with corresponding verbs. Among the familiar items, **dam* ‘blood’ will serve as a good illustration (p. 214), as it is attested in every branch of Semitic (even if in Modern South Arabian a semantic shift has occurred, e.g., Mehri *dām* ‘pus’). Among the less familiar terms, note, for example, *š-ʿ-l ‘cough’ and *ʿ-t-š ‘sneeze’ (p. 231), the former attested from Akkadian to Geʿez and Amharic and points in between, the latter with a similar range (minus the Akkadian), including Mehri, Jibbali, and Soqotri.

At times, however, one must question the inclusion of certain terms in a chapter devoted to reconstructing the PS lexicon. In his attempt to be comprehensive, Kogan presents evidence which is less relevant and/or less compelling. For instance, while it is interesting to learn that **kam-at* ‘truffle, mushroom’ has reflexes in Akkadian, Arabic, and Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (p. 202), I would hesitate before claiming PS status for this vocable.

As another example, Kogan posits PS **b-r-m* ‘to be multicolored’, based on Akkadian *barāmu* ‘be multicolored’, Hebrew *bārōmīm* ‘two-colored fabric’, and Arabic *barīm* ‘rope in which are two colors’ (p. 199). Note, however, that the Hebrew term appears only in Ezekiel 27:24: a) the background is the mercantile activity of Tyre, with Assyria included amongst the trade partners (see v. 23); and b) Akkadian loanwords are commoner in Ezekiel than in most other biblical books, explicable by the fact that the prophet lived and wrote in Babylonia. (For discussion, see Harold R. [Chaim] Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic* [Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978], pp. 48-49, 93-94.) I would be very hesitant, accordingly, to claim ‘Hebrew’ status for the *hapax legomenon* *bārōmīm* ‘two-colored fabric’, especially without further internal Hebrew documentation for this word (note that the word is not attested in post-biblical Hebrew). And even if the lexeme was in common use in all three languages, Akkadian, Hebrew, and Arabic, would this be sufficient to posit a PS form? To be sure, the evidence constitutes a very thin thread on which to hang so much weight.

As a third example, let us consider Kogan’s analysis of the words for ‘flesh’ (p. 214). Because **bašar* ‘flesh’ reverberates from Hebrew and Syriac to Gafat and Gurage, but is not attested in Akkadian, Kogan postulates a proto-West Semitic (but not PS) form here. By contrast, *šīr ‘flesh’ “is restricted” (his term) to Akkadian, Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Hebrew, and yet Kogan presents this synonym as the PS one.

I offer here some desultory comments on a number of words and other issues treated by Kogan:

P. 183: On the question of Aramaic loanwords into Hebrew, Wagner 1966 is simply not a reliable source. For further details, see Avi Hurvitz, “The Chronological Significance of ‘Aramaisms’ in Biblical Hebrew,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 18 (1968), 234-240; with additional comments in Gary A. Rendsburg, “Aramaic-like Features in the Pentateuch,” *Hebrew Studies* 47 (2006), 163-176. An

up-to-date investigation into the question, based on a more rigorous methodology than that applied by Wagner, remains a desideratum.

P. 212: On the various words for ‘shark, sea monster’, see now Aaron D. Rubin, “Two Modern South Arabian Etymologies,” in Rebecca Hasselbach and Na‘ama Pat-El, eds., *Language and Nature: Papers Presented to John Huehnergard on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 67; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2012), 345-347. Though even with the relationship between the Akkadian and Modern South Arabian cognates, again one must question Kogan’s desire to deem the term PS.

P. 213: Can one really consider an onomatopoeic word such as **šaršar*, **šaršūr* ‘cricket’ to be PS? In any case, see also Hebrew *שָׁלָשָׁל* *šālāšal* ‘cricket, locust’ (Deuteronomy 28:42), perhaps a broken plural form.

P. 214: On **badan* ‘body, trunk’, see now Noam Mizrahi, “A Body Refigured: The Meaning and History of Hebrew *BDN*,” *JAOS* 130 (2010), 541-549, with evidence extending this lexeme from an ‘areal’ one (thus Kogan) to a PS one.

P. 223: The evidence for PS (thus Kogan) **šapar* ‘hair’ is exceedingly meagre, but if Ugaritic *xprt* ‘garment’ is to be incorporated into the picture, then so should its Mishnaic Hebrew cognate *מַעְפֹּרֶת* *ma‘pōret* ‘garment’ (attested 3x in the Tannaitic corpus).

P. 225: One will question Kogan’s alignment of the various Semitic words for ‘ankle, lower leg, etc.’. He reconstructs two separate forms: PS **kursV*’- based on Akkadian *kursinnu* and Arabic *kursū*’ (notwithstanding its meaning ‘wrist bone’ – see anon); and PS **kVšVl*’- based on Akkadian *kišallu*, Hebrew *qaršullayim*, JPA *kršwl*, and Syriac *kuršlā*. First, correct Hebrew *qaršullayim* ‘ankles’ to *קַרְסוּלַיִם* *qarsullayim* / *qarsullayim* (Mishna Hullin 3:7 [3:10] MŠ Kaufmann A50, the only attestation of the word in the absolute state in all of ancient Hebrew; elsewhere in construct or with pronominal suffixes), with *samekh*, not *šade*. Next, note that both JPA and JBA have *קַרְסוּל* *qarsūl* (also with *samekh*), though with the Yemenite tradition of the latter attesting to *קַרְסוּל* *qarsūl* (with *šade*) (consult the standard dictionaries by Michael Sokoloff for details). How to sort all this out? I would propose that the aforementioned words for ‘ankle, lower leg’ (save Akkadian *kišallu*, Arabic *kursū*’) are all cognates with Akkadian *kursinnu*, with various consonantal interchanges: *k/q*, *s/š*, *l/n*, perhaps all precipitated by the presence of /r/ in the word (see Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic*, p. 112). Akkadian *kišallu* most likely should be considered a byform, while Arabic *kursū*’ ‘wrist bone’ (cf. Syriac *karsū‘ā* ‘joint’) probably should be disassociated from the others, based on both the presence of /r/ at the end of the word and the slight semantic discrepancy.

P. 227: In addition to the cognates listed for PS **zibl*’- ‘dung, excrement’, note Mishnaic Hebrew *זֵבֵל* *zebel*, an exceedingly common word (attested 54 times in Tannaitic texts), and still in regular use today in modern Hebrew, with the meanings ‘manure, fertilizer, rubbish, garbage’. As these comments on Kogan’s database indicate, he has not paid sufficient attention to Mishnaic Hebrew (especially MH¹, that is, from Tannaitic texts), which greatly expands our knowledge of ancient Hebrew while it was still a living language (until c. 300 C.E.).

P. 232: Note that Akkadian *awīlu* ‘man’ has a congener in Hebrew *אָוִיל* *‘əwīl* ‘fool’, reflecting semantic specification (compare the well-known example of German *Tier* ~ English *deer*).

P. 237: Kogan states, within the sub-section devoted to the semantic field ‘slave’, “No etymology for Akk. *wardu*.” While most scholars seem to deny a connection to the common Semitic verb *w-r-d* ‘go down, descend’ (cf. Akkadian *arādu*), and notwithstanding the slightly different semantics involved, I mention this possible derivation nonetheless. The obvious analogue is *muškēnu* ‘commoner’, from the verb *šukēnu* ‘prostrate oneself, do obeisance’. Not that languages are this neat and tidy, but the parallel is rather striking.

P. 248: Kogan has done some excellent work of late on the common ground shared by the Ugaritic and Canaanite lexica; see “Genealogical Position of Ugaritic: The Lexical Dimension: Lexical Isoglosses between Ugaritic and Canaanite,” *Sefarad* 70 (2010), 7-50, 279-328. The vast amount of data collected in this two-part article is summarized in succinct fashion here on p. 248. Once more, if the Hebrew database is expanded to include Mishnaic Hebrew (see above), then even more shared items emerge. One of these I noted earlier (see re p. 223); another may be noted here: Ugaritic *ḥdrt* ‘lettuce’ = Mishnaic Hebrew *חֲזֵרֶת* *ḥāzeret* (see in detail Chaim Cohen, “The Ugaritic Hippiatric Texts,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 28 [1996], pp. 129-130). I have not devoted a specific article to the question of the classification of Ugaritic, though scattered throughout my publications is the implication, if not clear statement, that I consider the language to be part of the Phoenic sub-group of the Canaanite family (following H. L. Ginsberg, “The Northwest Semitic Languages,” in B. Mazar, ed., *The World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 1/2: *Patriarchs* [New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1970], 102-124, and using his terminology). Which is to say, given the *status questionis* summarized by Kogan, “Ugaritic is usually thought either to have a separate status in NWS (Huehnergard 1991b) or to belong to its Canaanite branch (Tropper 1994),” I hereby align myself with Tropper and, apparently, Kogan (who is more neutral in the current essay, but see his 2010 article cited above).

I conclude this evaluation of Kogan’s important chapter with words of praise for the concluding section, entitled “Lexicon and genealogical classification of Semitic” (pp. 242-249), with a very honest sub-section on lexicostatistics (p. 243). Kogan is correct that this linguistic approach has been much maligned, especially in Semitic studies; and yet it has much to offer, as Kogan so clearly demonstrates, especially when the results cohere so well with other methodologies used for genealogical classification.

One final note: nowhere does Kogan attempt, on the basis of all the data that he has collected, to establish the *Urheimat* of the Semites. I allude, of course, to parallel attempts (however they be judged) to establish the original homeland of the Indo-Europeans, based on the words ‘beech’, ‘wolf’, ‘bear’, etc., shared by most or all of the individual IE languages. In fact, there is no discussion of this point anywhere in this large volume, not by Kogan, nor by the other contributors – save for a side comment by Holger Gzella (p. 426) and a few sentences by Joachim Crass and Ronny Meyer (p. 1266).

“Phyla and Waves: Models of Classification of the Semitic Languages” (ch. 9), by John Huehnergard and Aaron D. Rubin (pp. 259-278):

While I may differ with my colleagues on an occasional issue, such as the classification of Ugaritic (see above), the present essay constitutes an excellent summary of the issues involved, taking the reader from the traditional taxonomy (based most recently on Alice Faber’s work) to the Robert Hetzron model to Huehnergard’s and Rubin’s adjustments to the latter. Its most significant contribution, however, is the clear demonstration of how the tree-model and the wave-model need to be integrated in order to produce a coherent picture based on the evidence.

“Morphological Typology of Semitic” (ch. 10), by Oren D. Gensler (pp. 279-302):

This essay and the next one are fine examples of the surprises awaiting the reader of this large volume. The editors are to be congratulated for conceiving of the very idea of such essays, which I do not believe are to be found elsewhere in the scholarly literature. Gensler is correct that “Definiteness seems not to have been a morphological category of Proto-Semitic” (p. 295), though Ugaritic should be mentioned alongside Akkadian as evidence thereto. On the question of whether the Semitic verbal forms, especially within the individual languages, indicate tense or aspect, the author “does not take any stand on this debate” (p. 296).

While it may be true that Semitic broadly does not distinguish between “alienable and inalienable possessive forms” (p. 290), some languages developed means to differentiate one from the other in certain contexts; see, e.g., W. R. Garr, “On the Alternation Between Construct and *dī* Phrases in Biblical Aramaic,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 35 (1990), 213-23 (as well as the next essay in the volume, p. 308, re ʾTuroyo).

“Syntactic Typology of Semitic” (ch. 11), by Michael Waltisberg (pp. 303-329):

The author includes a discussion on the four different types of genitive constructions, including the use of an analytical marker. His sole illustration of this type is Mishnaic Hebrew *haš-šəʿēla šel dan* ‘Dan’s question’ (p. 307). It would be appropriate to observe here that spoken Semitic languages are especially wont to use this method of expressing the genitive (as opposed to the construct, for example). See the convenient list of genitive exponents in Arabic dialects compiled by Watson (p. 865), e.g., Iraqi *māl*, Syrian *tabaʿ*, Egyptian *bitaʿ*, Jerusalemite *šet*, Yemeni *hagg*, etc.; along with Tigre *nāy*, Tigrinya *nay*, illustrated on pp. 1149 and 1168, respectively. See already Gary A. Rendsburg, “Parallel Developments in Mishnaic Hebrew, Colloquial Arabic, and Other Varieties of Spoken Semitic,” in Alan S. Kaye, ed., *Semitic Studies in Honor of Wolf Leslau*, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1991), 1270.

“Eblaite and Old Akkadian” (ch. 13), by Michael P. Streck (pp. 340-359):

This chapter includes a fine summary on the question of the position of Eblaite within the Semitic languages (pp. 350-352), with the views of Krebernik, Tropper, Fronzaroli, Huehnergard, and Edzard directly quoted – with the main issue being whether Eblaite is a self-standing East Semitic language or whether it should be classified as a dialect of

Akkadian. Streck follows the latter option, while noting that “some phonological and lexical features are probably due to Northwest Semitic or non-Semitic influence” (p. 351).

“Babylonian and Assyrian” (ch. 14), by Michael P. Streck (pp. 359-396):

This entry is superbly well organized, especially for the neophyte seeking information on the different historical stages of the main varieties of Akkadian (Old Babylonian, Neo-Assyrian, Peripheral Akkadian, etc.). A bonus is the convenient list of about 90 loanwords from Amorite into Old Babylonian, classified by semantic field (pp. 366-367).

While earlier scholars (cited by Streck) considered Nuzi *magannu* ‘gift’ to be a loanword from Indo-Iranian (via Hurrian transmission) (p. 377), this view should be abandoned in light of M. P. O’Connor, “Semitic **mgn* and its Supposed Sanskrit Origin,” *JAOS* 109 (1989), 25-32; the main evidence stems from the presence of the verb *m-g-n* ‘give, bestow’ in Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Hebrew.

Oddly, Streck plays down the amount of Aramaic influence in Neo-Assyrian with the following simple statement: “Aramaic loanwords also appear in Neo-Assyrian, e.g., *šārītu* ‘beam’ (< Aramaic *šārītā*), *ziqqu* ‘wineskin’ (< Aramaic *ziqqā*)” (p. 380). Obviously, the influence is far greater than this sentence suggests, though happily the reader learns more when he or she reaches pp. 419-420, in “Akkadian and Aramaic Language Contact” (ch. 17), contributed by the same author.

“Akkadian and Sumerian Language Contact” (ch. 15), by Gábor Zólyomi (pp. 396-404):

One of the paramount examples of Sumerian influence on Akkadian is not treated herein, to wit, the development of a self-standing conjugated verb ‘to have, to own’, namely, Akkadian *išū* (CAD [I/J], 289-293). The etymon is the Semitic particle *yiš* ‘there is, there are’, though based on the grammatical notion underlying Sumerian TUK ‘to have’. Akkadian alone amongst the Semitic languages created such a verb (conjugated in the preterite only, though also attested in the infinitive).

“Northwest Semitic in General” (ch. 18), by Holger Gzella (pp. 425-451):

This essay represents yet another excellent contribution to the volume, providing an overview not typically found in reference works. A few points, nonetheless:

The comment that “/m/ and /n/ interchanged frequently in the history of NWS” (p. 433) is an overstatement.

I am at a loss to understand the following: “It is uncertain whether the syllable structure CCVC has to be excluded for NWS (except for words beginning with a glottal stop, which always takes a vowel), as has often been suggested” (p. 435).

Gzella states that the longer form of the 1st person common singular independent pronoun is “*/anōkī/ (> ʾānōkī in Tiberian Hebrew) in the whole of Canaanite” (p. 436), but this is not the case in Moabite, where the orthography 𐤍𐤏𐤋 ʾNK reveals a pronunciation such as /ʾanōk/, since final *matres lectionis* are otherwise attested in the language.

“Phoenician and Punic” (ch. 21), by Wolfgang Röllig (pp. 472-479):

As intimated above, this chapter is a bit disappointing, without a single paradigm chart to guide the reader, for example. And then there are some misstatements. The author

implies that *d*, *t*, and *ḏ* are sibilants (p. 475), when in fact they are interdental. He also labels /ʃ/ and /ħ/ as laryngeals, along with /ʕ/ and /h/ (ibid.), though most scholars would consider the former pair to be pharyngeals (indeed, see in the present volume on pp. 29, 41-42, 54, 85, 337, 432, 524-525, 575, 612, 625, 633, 698, 712-713, 727, 873, 899, 922, 936, 938, 1003, 1077, 1079, 1117, 1145, 1154, 1166, 1192 – with a counterposition and explanation offered only by Retsö on p. 785 [see below]). Röllig implies that the use of Punic *šb* ‘in place of *šm* ‘hear’ may reflect spirantization (p. 476), though in fact this is due to labial interchange. He mentions the relative pronoun *š* or *š*, but he fails to note Byblian *z* ‘that, which’, with its cognates in Ugaritic and archaic Biblical Hebrew. A key work missing from the References is Charles R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (OLA 90; Leuven: Peeters, 2000).

“*Biblical Hebrew*” (ch. 22), by Lutz Edzard (pp. 480-514)

As indicated above, this chapter presents one of the most detailed treatments of any of the individual languages. As one who specializes in Biblical Hebrew, the present reviewer appreciates Edzard’s contribution all the more so. The following points, accordingly, are all very minor.

As far as I am aware, the term *anceps* is reserved for a phenomenon associated with meter; nouns that “can take both masculine and feminine gender” (p. 490) are called ‘epicene’ (at least according to one understanding of that term).

The phenomenon studied by Retsö 2006:26 (p. 491) was the subject of an earlier article by Daniel Grossberg, “Nominalization in Biblical Hebrew,” *Hebrew Studies* 20-21 (1979-80), 29-33.

The line spacing on the “Noun patterns in Biblical Hebrew” chart (pp. 492-493) needs adjustment. To take one example, the lines are displayed as follows:

*/CāCiC/: ʾōyēb ‘enemy’ ḥōmā(h) ‘wall’
(active participle; *nomen agentis*)
*/CūCaC/: šōšan ‘lily’ -----

The naïve reader may think that the line following the tag “(active participle; *nomen agentis*)” illustrates this usage, though obviously it is the one preceding that does.

Remaining with noun patterns for the moment: as one would expect, Edzard mentions noun “forms with a *t*-prefix... e.g. *təhillā(h)* ‘beginning’, *tiqwā(h)* ‘hope’, and also words of Aramaic origin, e.g. *talmīd* ‘pupil’” (p. 493). In general, scholars have not recognized that nouns with *t*-prefix are formed predominantly from weak verbal roots (see the above two examples, plus תורה *tōrā* ‘teaching’, תודה *tōdā* ‘thanksgiving’, תימן *tēmān* ‘southland’, תושב *tōšāb* ‘resident’, etc.). Nouns with *t*-prefix formed from strong verbal roots tend to occur under Aramaic influence, as illustrated by Edzard’s example תלמיד *talmīd* ‘pupil’. The same holds for nouns with the abstract ending *-ūt* (see p. 494); these too are frequently built from weak roots, especially “ל- (IIIy) roots (see Edzard’s example, גלות *gālūt* ‘exile’), though there are exceptions (such as the author’s second example, אלמנות *ʾalmānūt* ‘widowhood’).

The all-encompassing nature of this chapter is demonstrated by the fact that Edzard has included a sub-section on “Affirmation and negation” (p. 505). While some of the other language entries include the latter, no one else discusses the former.

“*Mishnaic Hebrew*” (ch. 23), by Moshe Bar-Asher (pp. 515-522):

As indicated above, this is one more instance of a language (or dialect) without a grammatical sketch. To my mind, this represents a lost opportunity, since to this day the only such description of Mishnaic Hebrew remains E. Y. Kutscher, “Hebrew Language: Mishnaic Hebrew,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (2nd ed.), vol. 8 (2007), 639-649, written in the late 1960s for the 1st edition of *EJ*, though still reliable, as noted by Yohanan Breuer in his brief addendum to the Kutscher essay (ibid., 649-650). The Weninger-edited volume, *Semitic Languages*, would have been the perfect place to present an essay such as the aforementioned, with simple paradigm charts, sample usages, and clear presentation – especially for those Semitists who would not know to consult *EJ* for a description of Mishnaic Hebrew (and other stages of the language). Instead, Bar-Asher, whom I hold in the highest esteem and from whom I have learned so much, has elected to present a scaled-down version of his larger essay, “Mishnaic Hebrew: An Introductory Survey,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 4: *The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 369-403 (which in turn appeared in earlier versions in Hebrew and French). I hasten to add that said article is required reading for my students, and many of the nuggets therein are repeated in the current essay, but a grammatical sketch from the pen of the master would have been preferable, in my estimation.

Both the aforementioned Kutscher and Bar-Asher articles should have been included amongst the References; also missing is Miguel Pérez Fernández, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

“*Hebrew as the Language of Judaism*” (ch. 25), by Angel Sáenz-Badillos (pp. 537-545); and “*The Re-Emergence of Hebrew as a National Language*” (ch. 26), by Yael Reshef (pp. 546-554):

I have nothing to add to these fine surveys, except to call attention to readers of this review the comment by Theodor Noeldeke, clearly the greatest Semitist of his generation, concerning the revival of Hebrew as a modern spoken language: “The dream of some Zionists, that Hebrew – a would-be Hebrew, that is to say – will again become a living, popular language in Palestine, has still less prospect of realization than their vision of a restored Jewish empire in the Holy Land” (“Semitic Languages,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition [1911], vol. 24, p. 622). Whenever I consider the remarkable story of modern Hebrew (both authors aptly use the word ‘unique’ to describe the revitalization [pp. 544, 546]), the words of the great master, penned slightly more than a century ago, echo in my mind. And while this tangential remark is not entirely relevant to the enterprise of this review essay, I thought it sufficiently of interest to Semitists, especially given the source, to call to the reader’s attention.

Aramaic section in general (chs. 27-43) (pp. 555-755)

Scholars specializing in other languages within Semitic will especially appreciate this 200-page treatment of Aramaic in all of its manifestations. No other Semitic language has the continued historical depth as a living language, attested for three millennia now. Even the varying terminology can be

mystifying for non-specialists, so that the 13 essays on individual varieties of Aramaic are most welcome (four additional essays on language use and language contact round out this section).

“*Old Aramaic*” (ch. 27), by Frederick Mario Fales (pp. 555-573):

The author presents a fine survey, both of the texts and of their grammar, though the present author would challenge the comment that “the language of DA [= Deir ‘Alla]... lead[s] in the main to a definite link with OA [= Old Aramaic]” (p. 559). Nowhere does he cite the opinion of Jo Ann Hackett, Joseph Naveh, Jonas Greenfield, and myself (see G. A. Rendsburg, “The Dialect of the Deir ‘Alla Inscription,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 50 [1993], 309-329; see col. 309, n. 6, for bibliographic references to the other aforementioned scholars), which links Deir ‘Alla to Canaanite. Moreover, his citation of John Huehnergard, “Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages,” in J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, eds., *The Balaam Text from Deir ‘Alla Re-evaluated* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 273-281, in defense of the Aramaic connection is misleading, since said author explicitly concluded that the language of Deir ‘Alla “need not be classified as a form or sub-branch of Aramaic or Canaanite, but rather as a representative, thus far unique, of another independent branch of the larger Northwest Semitic family” (p. 281).

“*Late Imperial Aramaic*” (ch. 30), by Holger Gzella (pp. 598-609):

Given the geographic spread of this particular variety of Aramaic – and the confusion that sometimes arises in the secondary literature regarding all of the sub-varieties mentioned below (not to mention further confusion in terminology, since some scholars refer to this grouping as “Middle Aramaic”) – I found this chapter to be an extremely useful summary of the various text corpora, each with slightly different grammatical forms. The uninitiated will benefit from the brief yet highly informative descriptions of Qumran Aramaic (and related material through the 2nd century C.E.), Nabatean, Palmyrene, Mesopotamian Aramaic (Edessa, Hatra, etc.), and post-Achaemenid Iranian Aramaic (reaching Afghanistan).

“*Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*” (ch. 31) and “*Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*” (ch. 36), by Michael Sokoloff (pp. 610-618; pp. 660-670):

I treat these two similar entries from the hand of the same author together. Each entry presents a very concise description of the two Jewish dialects, one western (Palestinian) and one eastern (Babylonian), with an inventory of the source material, clear paradigm charts, and brief comments on the vocabulary. The bibliographies, however, are not up-to-date; to mention just one omission, note the important article by Matthew Morgenstern, “Notes on the Noun Patterns in the Yemenite Tradition of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic,” *Revue des études juives* 168 (2009), 51-83.

“*Samaritan Aramaic*” (ch. 32), by Abraham Tal (pp. 619-628):

This is a fine example of an essay which ends with a short but valuable section devoted to the lexicon (p. 627). We learn that Samaritan Aramaic has a large number of voca-

bles which distinguish it from other, even closely related, Aramaic dialects. Two prime examples are אַכְד ‘still’ (instead of עוּד – though I think that עַד may be more appropriate here) and טַטְה ‘then’ (borrowed from Greek τότε; instead of אַדְיָ).

“*Christian Palestinian Aramaic* (ch. 33), by Matthew Morgenstern (pp. 628-637):

Above I stated that “the 13 essays on individual varieties of Aramaic are most welcome,” a point which is most apposite in the present instance – for Christian Palestinian Aramaic remains the domain of only very few scholars, indeed, it may be considered the step-child of Aramaic studies. Thus, for example, there is but a single reference to this dialect in the aforementioned Hetzron-edited volume and only two or three grammatical tidbits noted in the more comprehensive reference work by Edward Lipiński, *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997/2001). Matthew Morgenstern’s crisp contribution to the present volume provides readers (this reviewer included) with clear guidance on sources, phases of CPA, and selected grammatical features, with special attention to the realm of morphology. As another indication of the lack of attention to this dialect, note that there is still “no systematic study of CPA vocabulary” (p. 634), so that scholars still must rely on F. Schultheß, *Lexicon Syropalaestinum* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1903).

“*Syriac*” (ch. 34), by John F. Healey (pp. 637-652); and “*Mandaic*” (ch. 37), by Bugdan Burtea (pp. 670-685):

As is well known, these two Aramaic dialects comprise, along with the aforementioned Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (ch. 36), the dialect bundle of Eastern Aramaic in the centuries before the rise of Islam (though naturally they continued in use beyond the 7th century C.E.). The individual contributors all note the most important isogloss linking these three dialects, to wit, the 3rd person prefix-conjugation (masc.sg., masc.pl., fem.pl) in *n-/l-*, with the following distribution (see p. 646 for the clearest statement): *n-* in Syriac and Mandaic (with *l-* occurring less commonly in the latter); *l-* in JBA (with *n-* also occurring, though less frequently); and with *l-* also serving as the morphological element in Hatran, attested slightly earlier, c. 200 C.E. (see p. 605). For further details, including a survey of proposed explanations of this feature, along with the author’s own view, see Aaron D. Rubin, “On the Third Person Preformative *n-/l-* in Aramaic, and an Ethiopic Parallel,” *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 44 (2007), 1-28, not included in any of the References lists.

“*Western Neo-Aramaic*” (ch. 38), by Werner Arnold (pp. 685-696); “*Turoyo and Mlahsô*” (ch. 39), by Otto Jastrow (pp. 697-707); “*North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic*” (ch. 40), by Geoffrey Khan (pp. 708-724); and “*Neo-Mandaic*” (ch. 41), by Charles G. Häberl (pp. 725-737):

Due to my own lack of specialization in the modern Aramaic dialects/languages, I can hardly add much in the way of comment. My sole remark, accordingly, is the following: how wonderful that this volume not only includes these essays on modern Aramaic, but that each is contributed by the world’s leading expert on the individual variety. The four chapters are of approximately equal length, each one presents the data both with clarity and with copious paradigm charts, and the bibliographies are excellent.

“*Language Contact between Aramaic Dialects and Iranian*” (ch. 42), by Olga Kapeliuk (pp. 738-747):

The title of this chapter is a misnomer, since the article focuses almost solely on North-eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA), without reference to Neo-Mandaic (obviously, modern dialects further west are not relevant at all), and with only brief mention of the language contact between ancient Aramaic varieties and Old and Middle Persian. Thus, for example, a statement about “the amazingly high numbers of direct Kurdish loans and loan translations in *all* [emphasis mine] the Neo-Aramaic dialects” (p. 739) is incorrect. On the situation in Neo-Mandaic, the reader may turn back a few pages to p. 736. For examples of contact between Aramaic and Iranian in antiquity, see the masterful essay by E. Y. Kutscher, “Two ‘Passive’ Constructions in Aramaic in the Light of Persian,” in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Semitic Studies held in Jerusalem, 19-23 July 1965* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1969), 135-148; reprinted in E. Y. Kutscher, *Hebrew and Aramaic Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1977), 70-89.

“*Aramaic-Arabic Language Contact*” (ch. 43), by Stefan Weninger (pp. 747-755):

This concise and well-organized essay considers influences in both directions, from Aramaic to Arabic and from Arabic to Aramaic, in the realms of phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and writing systems. For a specific comment, see further below.

“*Ancient North Arabian*” (ch. 44), by Hani Hayajneh (pp. 756-782):

Nowhere in this essay does the author present the most basic facts about this language group, for example, its language classification, the number of inscriptions, etc. The following sentences are, unfortunately, not very helpful: “As the verbal and syntactical systems in ANA [= Ancient North Arabian] are still not clear, any conclusions regarding its linguistic affiliation remain ambiguous. Therefore, this chapter uses the label ‘South Semitic’ for ASA [=Ancient South Arabian] as well as ANA not in terms of their genetic affiliation, but of its geographic connotation” (p. 758). The unsuspecting reader may think that ANA is a precursor to Arabic, which of course it is not.

The truth is that ANA is exactly as one would expect it to be, given its location between the heartland of Arabic and the Northwest Semitic languages. One might have hoped for a comment to this effect, including some demonstrations of connections to the latter. Here I have in mind the definite article *h-* (occasionally *hn* in some Lihyanite/Dadanitic forms), the relative marker *ḏ-*, and the assimilation of vowelless /n/ to a following consonant, e.g., *bt* ‘daughter’. All of these are mentioned by Hayajneh, but the data are not fleshed out to create a picture (or at least a sketch thereof, given the limited information available), as I have attempted to do here ever so briefly (see also the remarks by Gzella on p. 426). The quantity of epigraphs reaches the tens of thousands, but I do not believe that a reader new to the subject will learn this fact from perusing this essay. By contrast, see below re “Ancient South Arabian” (ch. 63). Readers interested in a clearer presentation of Ancient North Arabian should consult M. C. A. Macdonald’s essay on “Ancient

North Arabian” (ch. 16) in the aforementioned Woodard-edited volume (pp. 488-533).

Two bibliographic additions: 1) When noting that Nabonidus settled in Taymā’ “for hitherto unclear reasons,” the author should cite Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, 556–539 B.C.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), esp. pp. 178-185, the standard work on the subject (true, this work is the product of a historian, but Nabonidus’s stay at the oasis site is raised by Hayajneh, and the issue remains of general interest); and 2) On the statement by Yariris king of Carchemish (8th century B.C.E.), that he could read four scripts, including the one of Taymā’, see not only Livingstone 1995, cited by Hayajneh, but also Jonas C. Greenfield, “Of Scribes, Scripts, and Languages,” in C. Bauvain, et al., eds., *Phoinikeia grammata: Lire et écrire en Méditerranée, Actes du Colloque de Liège, 14-18 November 1989* (Namur: Société des études classiques, 1991), pp. 173-185; reprinted in *Al Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology*, ed. by Shalom M. Paul, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 926-938 – especially since Greenfield was the first, to my knowledge, to correlate Yariris’ statement with Taymā’ (as duly noted by Livingstone in an addendum to his aforementioned article).

There is a pleasant bonus to this essay, though. Only here in the entire volume are photographs included, with seven images of ANA inscriptions, including two Šafaitic ones from the Northeastern Jordanian desert not previously published. Images enhance another standard work in the field, namely, Lipiński, *Semitic Languages* (cited above) – so it was nice to see photographs in this chapter, though one wonders why only here and not elsewhere in this edited collection.

“*Classical Arabic*” (ch. 45), by Jan Retsö (pp. 782-810)

As mentioned above, Retsö not only refers to /ʔ/ and /h/, along with /ʔ/ and /h/, as laryngeals, he defends this label by stating, “modern phonetic studies indicate that they are all articulated in the larynx” (with three references provided) (p. 785). This marks the first time that I have heard of such studies, and I suspect that other scholars (especially given the long list of page numbers above, from within this volume) will be similarly enlightened. I am not a phonetician, so I cannot judge the data, but Retsö’s comment is noteworthy. Incidentally, returning to a previous essay, commented upon above, it is perhaps for this reason that Kogan divides the Gordian knot and refers to all four phonemes as gutturals (pp. 109-114).

“*Arabic Dialects (general article)*” (ch. 50), by Janet C. E. Watson (pp. 851-896):

As intimated above, this entry constitutes a most convenient and extremely useful survey of the range of Arabic dialects. The author considers not only the question of geographical classification (that is, regional dialects such as Iraqi, Levantine, Egyptian, Maghrebi, etc.), but also the issues of lifestyle classification (mainly bedouin vs. sedentary) and communal classification (that is, religious divisions, based mainly on Haim Blanc’s pathfinding book *Communal Dialects in Baghdad* [1964], with attention to specific Muslim, Christian, and Jewish sub-dialects heard in the Iraqi capital). Watson issues an important corrective to those scholars (and here I include myself) who have relied

on older scholarship concerning the bedouin vs. sedentary classification. In the past, scholars have seen the former dialects as preserving grammatical features in a conservative fashion, with the latter dialects presenting a more innovative grammar. As we learn on pp. 868-870, however, the picture is far more complicated, and hence scholars should abandon this long-held approach. On the other hand, see the comment by Samia Naïm below.

The historical linguist will benefit greatly from Watson's survey of the data on "Arabic before the spread of Islam" (§6.1 = pp. 858-859) and her more detailed examination of "The relationship between ancient Arabic and the modern dialects" (§7 = pp. 859-862).

As illustrated above, re the genitive exponent, Watson's essay is peppered with linguistic markers (interrogative pronouns, the adverb 'now', copula use, etc.) characteristic of the different regional dialects.

Individual Arabic dialects section in general (chs. 51-55) (pp. 897-969)

Watson's general survey is followed by five chapters devoted to the broad categorizations of regional dialects: Arabia, Mesopotamia, Levant, Egypt and Sudan, and North Africa. By and large, these essays simply describe the regional dialects (with data regarding sub-dialects where relevant), without entering into questions of substrate and other matters from the realm of historical linguistics. Thus, for example, Samia Naïm registers the 3rd com.pl. independent pronoun *hanna*, *hannen*, etc., in Levantine Arabic (p. 927), but does not highlight the presence of /n/ (actually /nn/) in place of typical (i.e., both classical and other colloquials) /m/ in this form – almost undoubtedly the result of Aramaic substrate. Similarly, James Dickins mentions, as one would expect, the distinctive "Cairene /g/ standardly correspond[ing] to Standard Arabic /j/" (p. 937), but he does not refer to the Coptic substrate influence. As a third illustration, Christophe Pereira contents himself with the statement "These [North African] dialects display considerable substrate influence from Berber languages" (p. 955), without providing a single illustration, even while discussing at some length the matter of "Syllable structure and morphophonemics" (§2.4 = pp. 958-959).

For such matters, users of this volume will need to explore further. Happily, the first of these is noted by Weninger in ch. 43 (p. 749), though with some qualification. The third aforementioned issue, in turn, is the subject of an entire chapter, ch. 59, "Berber and Arabic Language Contact" (pp. 1001-1014), by Mohand Tilmantine (though to my mind the author could have treated this particular matter in more detail than is found on p. 1002). Nowhere, though, as far as I can tell, will the reader of this volume learn that Cairene /g/ is due to Coptic substrate.

To return to a topic discussed above, Naïm provides further insight into the question of bedouin vs. sedentary dialects, though with a slightly different summary statement than that provided by Watson: "Nevertheless, Bedouin dialects share a number of common features and are generally more conservative than the Sedentary dialects" (p. 921).

While both Watson (in ch. 50) and others refer to the urban-rural split within the sedentary classification, this issue rises most of all in Levantine Arabic, so that Naïm pays attention to different usages within these two communities, for example, the palatalization of *k > /č/ in the rural

type (thereby creating an isogloss with the bedouin type), versus the retention of /k/ in the urban type.

One further correction: Dickins writes that "Arabic progressively displaced Coptic, which probably became extinct by 1300 AD" (p. 935), though in fact the language was still spoken in some villages in Upper Egypt into the 17th century, and perhaps even beyond. See the survey of sources provided by Emile Maher Ishaq, "Coptic Language," *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (revised digital edition via Claremont Graduate University: <http://cdm15831.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/cce/id/520>).

"Ancient South Arabian" (ch. 63), by Peter Stein (pp. 1042-1073):

Above I noted that the less-than-optimal presentation of the Ancient North Arabian material (ch. 44) should be contrasted with the corresponding chapter concerning Ancient South Arabian. The two invite comparison, since each language bundle is comprised of four main languages/dialects, the scripts are closely related, and the source material emanates almost exclusively from inscriptions on rock surfaces and stone blocks. In the present chapter, as adumbrated above, the account of Ancient South Arabian and the presentation of the linguistic data are exceedingly lucid. As one would expect, given the much greater documentation, Stein uses Sabaic as the basis of the description, with asides to Minaic, Qatabanic, and Ḥaḍramitic as relevant.

Given my own particular interest in ancient Israel, I add here the reference to Yigal Shiloh, "South Arabian Inscriptions from the City of David, Jerusalem," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 119 (1987), 9-18 – with the rather striking discovery of three South Arabian inscriptions on potsherds dated to c. 700 B.C.E. While these epigraphs are extremely fragmentary, and thus add little or nothing to the grammatical description of Sabaic (and hence Stein may have opted not to mention them), they do speak to long-distance commerce between South Arabia and the Levant at an early period, which by itself should be of interest to anyone involved in Ancient South Arabian studies.

"Modern South Arabian" (ch. 64), by Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle (pp. 1073-1113):

The author does a fine job at sorting out the various languages and their dialects (and sub-dialects even), paying especial attention to the source of her information. Soqotri data, for example, are derived from the following: SAK (dialect of 'Abd-al-Kūri island), SDm (dialect of Deksam [western inland area]), SHo (dialect of Hadiboh [northern coast]), SHr (dialect of the Hagher mountain), SJms (Soqotri from Johnstone's manuscript notes, recorded in the author's copy of Leslau 1938), SL (Soqotri as presented in Leslau 1938), SNd (dialect of Noked [southern coast]), SQa (dialect of Qalansiya [far western coast]), SQaB (Bedouin dialect of Qalansiya), and SQb (dialect of Qadhub [northern coast]). This effort represents a dialectologist's dream! In the main, it appears that all Soqotri speakers can communicate with each other, though Simeone-Senelle adds that "many aspects of this dialectology require further investigation" (p. 1076). To provide one instance of dialectal difference, note SQb *hīṭah* / SQa *yētah* 'six' (f.).

The following sentence may mislead the uninitiated: "[Soqotri] is spoken in Yemen, on the island of Soqotra and the neighbouring islets of 'Abd-al-Kūri and Samḥa" (p.

1075). Obviously, Soqotri is spoken only on the island of Soqotra and the nearby isles, all of which belong to the Republic of Yemen, but not in Yemen (including Aden) itself, on the Arabian mainland.

Since this essay was written, two new grammars of Mehri have appeared: Aaron D. Rubin, *The Mehri Language of Oman* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); and Janet C. E. Watson, *The Structure of Mehri* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012).

Ethiopian section in general (chs. 65-74) (pp. 1114-1275):

Weninger begins this section with a concise survey of Ethio-Semitic (ch. 64; pp. 1114-1123), with a very helpful map on the last page. Individual chapters are devoted to Gəʿəz, Tigre, Tigrinya, Amharic and Argobba, Harari, and Gurage.

The knowledgeable reader will realize that Gafat is missing from this list. This language, now extinct, is referred to only in passing, with a nod to Rainer Voigt's brief entry in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* (vol. 2, pp. 650-651). While Voigt, in said entry, cites the basic work by Wolf Leslau, *Étude descriptive et comparative du Gafat* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1956), it would have been preferable to mention this fundamental study, based on Leslau's fieldwork with the last speakers of the language (it is cited in the entire volume only once, by Kogan on p. 141).

Question: if scholars are more and more in agreement that Gurage does not represent a single language or dialect cluster, why do reference works such as the one under review persist in treating this 'language' as a single unit? I am no expert on the subject, but more and more scholars accede to Robert Hetzron's assessment and taxonomy (or variations thereof), which links Eastern Gurage with Amharic, Argobba, and Harari, Northern Gurage with Gafat, and with Western Gurage remaining as its own dialect bundle (see Weninger, p. 1118; and with more detail Ronny Meyer on pp. 1221-1223). This holds no less for the contributors to the present volume, including its chief editor: "it is fundamental not to treat the Gurage cluster as a single unit" (p. 1118). Hence my question. Perhaps the traditional arrangement endures out of respect to the pioneers in the field, the three colossi Marcel Cohen, Wolf Leslau, and Hans Jacob Polotsky. I repeat: I am not an expert in the matter, but I continue to follow the discussions, as a course of interest – and thus I raise the question here.

The volume concludes with a single detailed index, "Terminological Index" (pp. 1277-1287). One final note: I found virtually no typos in this entire volume, a truly outstanding achievement given the amount of technical material contained herein. The editors and the publisher are to be congratulated, not only on this point, but in general for producing such an excellent resource for Semitists (and linguists generally), one not to be superseded for years to come.

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Rutgers University, New Jersey,
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Gary A. RENDSBURG

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