This article treats the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (JBA) 3rd person singular pronoun נוֹלָא nolā, attested four times in the vast rabbinic corpus: three times in the Babylonian Talmud and one time in Tractate Sofrim. First, it is shown that the form is epicene, as it can have both masculine and feminine antecedents. Second, the four attestations reveal a specialized meaning for the form, to wit, ‘this-one’ or ‘that-one’ (as opposed to the other one) when there are specifically two items under discussion. Which is to say, the form נוֹלָא nolā is not used for simple ‘he’ or ‘she’ or ‘this’ or ‘that’, for which JBA and other Aramaic dialects have familiar and widely attested forms. Third, the article proposes that the form is borrowed from the Hurro-Urartian family, well known for its epicene pronouns. See, for example, Hurrian anni=lla, ani=lla, etc., Urartian i=ne=lə, ina=ne=lə, etc. Even though these forms are plural forms, while נוֹלָא nolā is a singular form, comparative evidence demonstrates that when pronouns are borrowed from one language to another, they at times may jump person and number.

The vast majority of the lexical items registered in Michael Sokoloff’s magisterial dictionaries of the various Aramaic dialects of late antiquity have a clear meaning and a clear etymology. Nonetheless, occasionally one encounters a word that defies one or the other, or at times even both. One such item is the word נוֹלָא nolā, attested in the Babylonian Talmud (henceforth B.), Bava Meṣi’a 67a, and (to the best of my knowledge) only three other times (see anon).

Sokoloff’s entry reads as follows: “נוֹלָא n. (uncertain) sg. אַתִּי וּנוֹלָא אַחֵי you and . . . are kinsmen BM 67a(14),” with the additional note (in smaller font) “Perh. a PN.” 1 For secondary literature, Sokoloff cited a) Moshe Beer, The Babylonian Amoraim; b) Shelomo Morag on the vocalization as preserved in a Cairo Geniza document; and c) the Yemenite oral tradition as recorded by Yosef ʿAmr.

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Abbreviations may be found in the SBL Handbook of Style, https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/voices.uchicago.edu/dist/2/96/files/2016/06/the-sbl-handbook-of-stylesblhs-2f93p03.pdf.

1. Michael Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan Univ. Press, and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2002), 735 (henceforth: DJBA). Technically, this entry is no. 2 בֶּן, since no. 1 בֶּן is the well-known word ‘loam’.

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The latter two references, as indicated, treat the vocalization only, which we repeat here as הָנָוְלָה in the former, and as נַוֶּלָא in the latter.2 For Beer’s treatment, see below, nn. 16–17.

Additional information regarding נוּוֶלָא (henceforth, when transliterated, simply nawla) was provided by Theodore Kwasman in his review essay of Sokoloff’s DJBA in the pages of this journal,3 including the different readings from the various manuscripts, though in general that information has little or no bearing on the present treatment. Nonetheless, for the sake of completeness, herewith: 4

את ונוולא אחי (edd., Es, F, V23);
את ונוולא אחי (Es);
את ונוולא אחי (M);
את ונוולא אחי (H).

To place the phrase in its larger context, I present here the relevant section of the Talmudic discussion, divided into sense-units: 5

A serviceable translation, from the (first) English version of the Steinsaltz Talmud project, follows: 7

A certain woman said to a certain man, “Go [and] buy land for me from my relatives.” He went [and] bought [it] for her. He [the seller] said to him: “If I will have money, will you return it to me?” He said to him, “You and she [i.e., Nawla] are relatives.” Rabba bar Rav Huna said: Whenever someone says, ‘You and she [i.e., Nawla] are relatives’, [the seller] relies [on this], and does not completely decide and sell.


4. The sigla (see DJBA, 58) are as follows: Es = Escorial (Madrid) G-I-3; F = Florence II-1-8; H = Hamburg 165; M = Munich 95; V23 = Vatican 115. All of the manuscripts available at the Saul and Evelyn Henkind Talmud Text Databank of the Saul Lieberman Institute of Talmud Research of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (https://www.lieberman-institute.com/) read similarly. In addition to the afore-cited ones, these include Vatican 117, Cremona (Archivio di Stato 33, 35, 57–58, 79–85), and Krakow (Jagiellonska Universtyet Jagiellonski, Biblioteka Fr 1203, 1544).

5. I cite the text from MS Hamburg 165 = Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 19 (165) (Gerona, 1184), which in turn serves as the basis for the presentation at Ma’agarim (https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/). Note that the relevant form (indeed phrase) appears twice, with variant spelling: יאָט וָנֵוֶלָא אָחִי and יאָט וָנֶוֶלָא אָחִי.

6. According to Ma’agarim (see previous note), the Talmudic text is cited several centuries later in a responsum by R. Joseph ibn Abitur (d. 1024), per MS Montefiore (London) 98, with the same expression in place, albeit with minor variation: יאָט וָנוּוֶלָא אָחִי.

The reader will notice that the key word נוֹוֶלָא nawla (2x) is rendered ‘she’ here. 8

Kwasman further observed, “Rashi (ad loc.) states that the Geonim considered נוֹוֶלָא to be a personal pronoun with the meaning ‘he or she’. Rashi himself interprets the word as a personal name.” 9 Herewith Rashi’s original Hebrew comment: ﹈א נוֹוֶלָא ﹈רָא אֲנַהְוָא—ראה ההוא שלום אֲנַהוּ בֵּין בֵּין בֵּין אֱמוָרָה יִשָּׁרְא אַל עֶדָב בֶּין עֶדָב כַּהֲנַגְוָה מַלֵּקַה אַל אַחְבָּה אֵז אַחְבָּה בֵּין בֵּין בֵּין בֵּין בֵּין בֵּין בֵּין אָמוֹרָה שֶׁבֶם. To repeat, per Kwasman’s summary (see above), Rashi learned from Geonic sources that the key word נוֹוֶלָא is an Aramaic pronoun used for either masculine or feminine, that is, it may serve for either ‘he’ or ‘she’. 10 This analysis, accordingly, informs the above translation with ‘she’. Rashi’s own understanding of our term as a proper noun (אָמוֹרָה שֶׁבֶם (אנ) is reflected, for example, in the Soncino translation, “You and Nawla, he replied, are relatives.” 11

The same information is conveyed in the commentary section of the Steinsaltz Talmud project (whose translation appears above), as follows: “The word נוֹוֶלָא—translated as ‘she’ in our commentary—appears nowhere else in Talmudic literature, and its etymological derivation is obscure [emphasis added]. In our translation and commentary, we have followed the Geonic tradition, which reports that נוֹוֶלָא is the Aramaic pronoun for the 3rd person of indeterminate gender (‘he’ or ‘she’ in English). Rashi gives this explanation, but also suggests that נוֹוֶלָא might be a proper noun, i.e., the name of the woman who wanted to buy the land.” 12

Kwasman’s final contribution to our subject is his astute reference to B. Giṭṭin 68b (in a sugya dealing with Solomon and Ashmedai) as presented in the Cairo Geniza fragment C.U.L. T-S F1(1).31, fol. 1r, lines 21‒22. 13 The standard wording (e.g., ed. Vilna) is as follows: 

One day, he was standing alone (with him), he said to him 15

But the Geniza fragment reads: 16

8. See also in the afore-cited translation available at www.sefaria.org, with the following: “You and she [טָנָבָלָה] are relatives” (with the bracketed item in the original).
10. It is tempting to consider the possibility that Rashi’s specific source may be R. Ṣemaḥ ben Palṭoy, Gaon of Pumbedita (872–890) (and great-grandfather of Sherira Gaon), especially since his comments on the word נוֹוֶלָא were incorporated into Šiṭṭa Mequbbeṣet of R. Bezalel Ashkenazi (sixteenth century). Moreover, tradition holds that R. Ṣemaḥ compiled a dictionary of the Babylonian Talmud, though nothing of said work has been preserved. Though I must emphasize: my nod to R. Ṣemaḥ here is merely a case of “thinking aloud”; if anything, the notion is made less likely by the fact that this sage actually understood the passage slightly differently.
14. The manuscripts available at the Lieberman Institute database (see n. 4 above) all read similarly. These include Munich 95, Arras 889, Vatican 130, Vatican 140, Bologna (Archivio di Stato Fr. ebr. 145), and Bazzano (Archivio Storico Comunale Fr. ebr. 10, 21).
15. One presumes that “with him” is to be understood here, since Solomon addresses Ashmedai. This is stated explicitly in the Geniza fragment version.
16. The same information is conveyed by Moshe Beer, The Babylonian Amoraim: Aspects of Economic Life (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan Univ. Press, 1974), 48 n. 93 (Hebrew)—though Beer (in the days before Geniza documents were as readily available as they are today in the digital age) a) cited the passage from a secondary source, and b) cited it with a slight change, using ﹈נוולא instead of ﹈נוֹוֶלָא. The comment in the Steinsaltz Edition (see above) that נוֹוֶלָא in B. Baba Meẓi’a 67a is the only attestation in Talmudic literature does not take this Cairo Geniza document into account. Nor does it consider the next example, based on a reading known to the Geonim.
One day, he and he sat in the house, he said to him:

Clearly, this reading demonstrates that the form נוואל is an epicene pronoun (per Rashi’s first suggestion) and not a proper noun (per his second suggestion). Note that in B. Bava Meši’a, the antecedent of נוואל is a woman, while in B. Gitin 68b, the antecedent of נוואל is a man.

Our third attestation, at B. Nidda 25b, is known to us only indirectly. The standard reading (e.g., ed. Vilna) is as follows:18

אמר רבי זעירא זכה בה רב ביבי בשמעתיה דאנא ונוואל הוה יתיבנא קמיה דרבי יוחנן

R. Ze’ira said, ‘Rav Bibi merited [that his ruling/tradition/etc.] was heard [i.e., accepted]. As I and he were both sitting before Rabbi Yoḥanan, . . .

But the Geonim knew of a different reading, as follows:19

אמר רבי זירא זיכה בה רב ביבי בשמעתיה אנא ונוואל יתיבנא קמיה דרבי יוחנן

Minor differences aside (as occurs when any two textual witnesses are compared), note the use of אנא ונוואל “I and he” in this version, instead of the standard reading אנא הוא “I and he,” with the form נוואל in place, with a masculine antecedent (to wit, R. Bibi). To repeat, we know of this reading only indirectly, but it is an early one (to wit, Geonic) of great significance.

In sum, based on a survey of all witnesses to the Babylonian Talmud, we can aver that the corpus of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic texts attested to three instances of נוואל nawla.

A fourth attestation occurs in Tractate Sofrim 11:3, as transmitted in Bodleian MS Oppenheim 726 (= Neubauer, no. 370.12), fol. 211v.20 Note that the framework and indeed the entire tractate are in Hebrew, but in this particular passage the conversation is couched in Aramaic. Moreover, although the context of Tractate Sofrim is situated in the Land of Israel (as opposed to Babylonia),21 in this passage, the episode is set specifically in the synagogue of the Babylonians (either in Sepphoris or Tiberias, the two great rabbinic centers in the Galilee),22 where, one may assume, the dialect of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic could be heard.23

17. Beer, Babylonian Amoraim, 48–49, concurred, as he rendered the Aramaic phrase אתה הוא אחים into Hebrew as “you and she are relatives” (lit. ‘brothers/siblings’).
18. The manuscripts available at the Lieberman Institute database (see n. 4 above) all read similarly. These include Munich 95, Vatican 111, Vatican 113, and Modena (Archivio Storico Comunale 24).
20. The manuscript is available online at http://bav.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/digitized-items-hebrew-manuscripts > MS Oppenheim 726 > fol. 211v (= image 428/476).
22. Stuart S. Miller, Sages and Commoners in Late Antique ʾErez Israel: A Philological Inquiry into Local Traditions in Talmud Yerashalmi (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 163 n. 47.
23. Rav ʾUlla is presumably ʾUlla II, who traveled back and forth between Eretz-Israel and Babylonia (see Strack and Stemberger, Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, 96), in which case R. Yose would be either Yose II bar Zabda or Yose bar Abin (ibid.); see further n. 26.
24. Reading with MS Oppenheim 726 as presented at Ma’agarim, with punctuation, etc., added.
R. Yose would command Rav 'Ulla, the hazzan (overseer) of the synagogue of the Babylonians: When there is one Torah, let it (הירש) be behind the parokhet (curtain). And when there are two, you should carry one and bring one.

Here the form appears as נוֹלָא, but there can be no doubt that the same morpheme is intended. Once again, our form serves as an epicene pronoun, in this case with a feminine antecedent, the word שֶׁוֶּרֶד, 'Torah', with reference to a single Torah scroll.

Apparently unaware of the form נוֹלָא, most manuscripts of Tractate Sofrim read יֹלָה, אָחוֹרי פרוכתא (vel sim.)" let him roll it behind the parokhet." This reading presumably arose due to the obvious connection between rolling and a Torah scroll—though one may wonder how such action could be accomplished behind the parokhet. Regardless, the rule of lectio difficilior provides some primacy to the reading נוֹלָא in Bodleian MS Oppenheim 726.

The context of the four passages cited here—three from the Babylonian Talmud proper and one from Tractate Sofrim (one of the so-called “minor tractates” thereto)—allows us to reach the true understanding of the form, as intimated by Kwasman already. The form נוֹלָא is an epicene 3rd person pronoun, serving as the equivalent to Hebrew הוא/היא, English 'he, she, it', German 'er, sie, es', etc.

But what is the source of the form נוֹלָא nawla? Are we able to establish an etymology? Especially in light of the comment in the Steinsaltz Edition highlighted above: “and its etymological derivation is obscure.”

The two great lexicographers of rabbinic literature in the nineteenth century, Jacob Lewy and Alexander Kohut, each proposed an etymology for נוֹלָא nawla, though to my mind neither is convincing. First, Jacob Lewy, in his monumental Neuhebräisches und Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim, interpreted the word as a common noun meaning ‘Freigebige, Wohlwollende, Edle’, with a nod to Arabic ناملأ, English ‘he, she, it’, German ‘er, sie, es’, etc.

Henceforth, we are content to use the spelling נוֹלָא (nawla) (here סְפִּירָה) as the name of a demon (or a category thereof) in the Aramaic magic bowls. For one such example, see Scheuern magic bowl 2053/237, line 8, published as JBA 45 in Shaul Shaked, James Nathan Ford, and Siam Bhayro, *Aramaic Bowl Spells: Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Bowls*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 204‒7, esp. 206. As the editors indicate, the JBA form appears to be a reflex of Mandaic niula ‘tormentor, etc.’, for which see E. S. Drower and R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 297‒98. In any case, the form has no relationship to the JBA pronoun form נוֹלָא discussed herein.
formation. Though he also presented the view expressed above, with reference to Rashi and the earlier Geonic literature, using the German glosses ‘jene, jener’. 32 Alexander Kohut, in his comprehensive ‘Arukh ha-Shalem (Aruch Completum), proffered the Hebrew glosses אַרְוֻךְ הַשָּׁלֵם, וַאֱלֹהִים אַרְוֻךְ הַשָּׁלֵם along with the German glosses ‘er, sie; der, die andere’. 33 Toward the end of the entry, Kohut turned his attention to the source of this word, with reference to two Iranian languages, “Afghani” (نارل) and “Zend language” ( zendan); by the former, presumably he meant Pashto, 34 and by the latter, presumably he intended Avestan. 35 Kohut’s proposed etyma include Pashto nor ‘other, another’, 36 and Avestan nara ‘man’, nāiri ‘woman’, 37 to which he added the following information: nal נאל, הוא, היא—בהקשר של השבטים מסייר בָּלֶם ל—in general, Avestan and Old Persian display gender distinction in the personal pronouns and deictic/demonstrative pronouns; 41 and d) the syllable structure of the proposed words does not align (e.g., nar vs. nawla).

33. Alexander Kohut, Sefer ʿArukh ha-Shalem = Aruch Completum (Vienna: Menorah, 1926), 5.323.
34. Note, incidentally, that Persians refer to Pashto as “Afghani.”
35. While some Zend glosses, comments, etc., are written in other Iranian languages, the majority are expressed in Avestan. For a brief discussion on how the term “Zend language” developed, along with the ensuing confusion, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zend.
36. For which see Henry Walter Bellew, A Dictionary of the Pukhto or Pukshto Language (London: Thacker, 1867), 167 (s.v. nor). While not cited explicitly, one may imagine that this dictionary served as the source for the Pashto term mentioned by Kohut.
37. For which see Ferdinand Justi, Handbuch der Zendsprache (Leipzig: F.C.W. Vogel, 1864), 167–68 (s.v. nar), 170 (s.v. nāira); cited by Kohut, Sefer ʿArukh ha-Shalem = Aruch Completum, 5.323.
38. For Kohut’s words, see Sefer ʿArukh ha-Shalem = Aruch Completum, 5.323. For the nod to Ossetian, see Justi, Handbuch der Zendsprache, 168.
40. One is less concerned with the proposed Old Persian words nar ‘man’ and nāira ‘woman’ as nouns, since the process of grammaticalization could be applied here. Parallels occur in Ethiopian Semitic languages, for example, Tigrinya nassu ‘he’ (based on nāfs ‘soul’), Amharic arsu ‘he’ (based on kārs ‘belly’), and Argobba aksu ‘he’ (based on kārs ‘belly’), in addition to other forms within the personal pronoun paradigm. For discussion, see Edward Lipiński, Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 305; Aaron Rubin, Studies in Semitic Grammaticalization (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 23–24; and Grover Hudson, “Arabic rs Pronouns,” in He Bitaney Lagge: Studies on Language and African Linguistics in Honour of Marcello Lamberti, ed. Luca Busetto et al. (Milan: Qu.a.s.a.r., 2011), 55–66. That said, the crucial difference must be noted: in the cited cases from Ethiopian, the grammaticalized noun is a native feature of the lexis. Kohut’s proposal would require the borrowing of and the grammaticalization of an Iranian element to explain שור.
41. See conveniently Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “Avestan and Old Persian Morphology,” in Morphologies of Asia and Africa, ed. Alan S. Kaye (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 2: 937–39. True, later Iranian languages, including Pahlavi and Modern Persian, lack the gender distinction, so that ‘he/she/it, etc.’ is all the same form, but none of the forms is remotely similar to nawla.
Where, then, might our word come from? My proposal is to look to Hurrian and Urartian, well known for their epicene pronouns. In both languages one finds 3rd person plural deictic pronouns with the requisite consonants and syllable structure (at least, as best as one can determine). The relevant forms are provided in Fig. 1 (which includes, since it may be relevant, the Hurrian 3rd person plural independent pronoun, in the absolute state; note that the corresponding Urartian form is not attested).  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>deictic pronouns</th>
<th>Hurrian</th>
<th>Urartian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(plural, absolutive)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrative</td>
<td>anni=lla</td>
<td>i=ne=lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anaphoric, proximity</td>
<td>andi=lla</td>
<td>[Urartian uses a single form; see below]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anaphoric, distance</td>
<td>ani=lla</td>
<td>[Urartian uses a single form; see below]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anaphoric (without the above distinction)</td>
<td>[Hurrian uses two distinct forms; see above]</td>
<td>ina=ne=lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd plural independent pers. pron. (absolute)</td>
<td>mane=lla</td>
<td>[not attested]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. Chart of 3rd person plural deictic pronouns

Now, I am the first to admit to several problems. First, none of the forms in Fig. 1 equates precisely with nawla (the presumed Aramaic realization of the word, as implied on several occasions above). Secondly, the forms with the closest phonological match are the deictic pronouns, and not the independent pronoun form. Thirdly, and most importantly, all of the forms listed there are plural forms, whereas nawla is used as a singular. Fourthly, can one truly posit a borrowing from Hurro-Urartian into Aramaic? Let us address each of these issues ad seriatim.

1. As is well known, when a lexeme or morpheme is borrowed from one language to another, the form in the receiving language may not be a precise representation of the original form, but rather an approximation thereof. To take two examples from the domain of pronouns, culled from the data included in the important article “Pronoun Borrowing” by Sarah Thomason and Daniel Everett, note that the Pirahã 1st person pronoun /hi/ derives from Nheengatu /ši/, while the “Pirahã [3rd person pronoun] /hi/ is also a reasonable nativization of the Nheengatu (or Tenharim) third-person pronoun /ahe/.” In both cases, the...

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42. The information in Fig. 1 is culled from the two chapters by Gernot Wilhelm, “Hurrian” and “Urartian,” in The Ancient Languages of Asia Minor, ed. Roger Woodard (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008), 81–104 (at 95), and 105–23 (at 114), respectively. See also Mauro Giorgieri, “Schizzo grammaticale della lingua hurrica,” La parola del passato 55 (2000): 220–21.

phonetic match is not perfect, as explicated further by Thomason and Everett. In addition, in the case of Hurrian and Urartian, we must recall that we are dealing with languages written in the cuneiform script (which was not designed for said languages), with all of the attendant difficulties in determining precise pronunciations of individual words. The transcriptions presented in Fig. 1 are, to a great extent, mere conventions.

Should the reader prefer to see something more specific than the general notions just mentioned, one may wish to propose several potential paths during the course of borrowing, such as:

a) mane=lla > *name=lla > *nawe=lla > נוֹוָלַ֖א nawla; or
b) ina=ne=lə > *ina=me=lə > *ina=we=lə > נוֹוָלַ֖א nawla.

In these two posited paths, in the first step, one sees either metathesis of /m/ and /n/ (in the first instance), or dissimilation of /n/ > /m/ (in the second instance), presumably generated by the presence of the following /l/ in these forms; while in the second step one sees bilabial interchange, /m/ > /w/, akin to what occurs in Late Babylonian.

2. The relationship between deictic pronouns and personal pronouns is well known. Indeed, in a broad array of Semitic languages, the 3rd person independent pronouns are used for far deixis; see, for example, Hebrew באִיֵּוָם הַהוּא (208x in the Bible, e.g., Gen. 15:18) בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא "on that day" (PREP=DEF.ART=3MS.pRON). 45 For an example in the opposite direction, note that “Strait Salish makes use of a set of deictic roots that function syntactically as third person pronouns,” 46 which otherwise are lacking in the language (spoken in the region of the waterways of Washington State [U.S.A.] and British Columbia [Canada]).

Moreover, and most significantly, in each of the four attestations of נוֹוָלַ֖א nawla in Aramaic, note that this pronoun stands in relationship to another person or entity:

B. Bava Mešia 67a—“he and this-one” (fem.), or perhaps “he and that-one” (fem.), that is, the female relative engaged in the land purchase;

B. Giṭṭin 68b—“he and this-one” (masc.), or perhaps “he and that-one” (masc.), that is, the second individual (as indicated above, not a person but rather Ashmedai!) who serves as interlocutor;

B. Nidda 25b—“I and he” (masc.), that is R. Ze'ira, who narrates the episode, and R. Bibi, his colleague;

Sofrim 11:3—“it” (fem.), with reference to the single Torah scroll, with a presumed second Torah scroll not present; though the passage continues with reference to two Torah scrolls.

As such, נוֹוָלַ֖א nawla in its four attestations does not come to replace the standard Aramaic pronoun(s), but rather appears to fill a morpho-syntactic slot with a very specific use, to wit, ‘this-one’ or ‘that-one’ when there are two items under discussion. 47 Kohut appears to have recognized this more than 130 years ago, with his inclusion of ‘der, die andere’ amongst his

44. These two possible paths were suggested to me by my colleague Charles Häberl, though any number of reconstructions could be offered.
45. Lipiński, Semitic Languages, 318–20. For Arabic, Ge‘ez, Mehri, etc., which use separate forms (that is, not the 3rd person pronoun forms), see pp. 322–23.
47. To state the obvious, note that נוֹוָלַ֖א serves only as the nominative, and is thus not related to the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic dative particle -לָא, -לָא, -ליָא, which has a totally different origin. See Matthew Morgenstern, Studies in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, Based upon Early Eastern Manuscripts (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011),
glosses (see above). Or to put this in other terms, the form אָנוּלָא never appears for simple ‘he’ or ‘she’ or ‘this’ or ‘that’, but rather, as indicated, only when it stands for one of two people or one of two items present.

For a somewhat analogous situation, note that Colloquial Jakartaan Indonesian borrowed the Hokkien Chinese 1st person singular pronoun gua ~ gue, with the native form aku now restricted for more intimate settings. Which is to say, the two pronouns, one native, one borrowed, are both present in the language, but they fill distinct semantic-syntactic slots. See also the subtle influence that Greek asserted on deixis in Rabbinic Hebrew, resulting in two different forms evincling distinct deictic scopes.

3. On the problem of the proposed Hurro-Urartian etyma as plural forms, whereas אָנוּלָא serves as the singular, note that once again all manner of unexpected shifts may occur during the borrowing process, including with pronouns. In their afore-cited article, “Pronoun Borrowing,” Thomason and Everett present the striking case of two apparently unrelated non-Austronesian (so-called ‘Papuan’) languages of New Guinea that share first- and second-person pronouns, but with reversed meanings: Kambot borrowed the Iatmul word for ‘I’ in the meaning ‘you’, and the Iatmul word for ‘you (feminine)’ as ‘I’.

4. Finally, there is the question of whether or not a Hurro-Urartian lexeme/morpheme possibly could have entered Aramaic. While our Hurrian sources primarily date to the second half of the second millennium BCE, our latest Urartian sources date to the end of the seventh century BCE—coeval with the downfall of the Assyrian Empire. During this latter period, Aramaic already was widely in use in Mesopotamia, as evidenced by the Assur ostracon, the hundreds of Aramaic docketts on cuneiform tablets, and the numerous Aramaic loanwords that entered Akkadian during this period. The point being: the geographical and chronological attestations of Aramaic and Urartian overlap during the Neo-Assyrian period.

In addition, one may ask: Are we to assume that Hurrian and Urartian, or other (unattested) languages from the same family simply died out at the time of our latest sources? By “other (unattested) languages,” I refer to the proposal by Igor Diakonoff and Sergei Starostin
that connects Hurrian and Urartian to modern Eastern Caucasian languages. Should such a view be accepted, it is clear that Hurro-Urartian and Aramaic interconnections may have persisted well beyond the Neo-Assyrian period.

Let us recall that Hurro-Urartian words did penetrate Semitic languages in ancient times. While not directly relevant to the present discussion, we have a profusion of Hurrian loan-words in Ugaritic, one Hurrian word in the Bible (that is, אֲרוֹנָה ‘lord, king’ < Hurrian iwre-ne ‘lord, king’), and one Urartian word (that is, כִּיוֹר ‘basin’ < Urartian kiuru ‘basin’), though possibly mediated via Akkadian.

Perhaps more germane, given the timespan involved, is the following item, attested at two points on the timeline separated by about 1200(!) years: Hurrian kirenzi/*kirezzi ‘proclamation’, attested in Nuzi Akkadian ca. 1350 BCE, and later only in Aramaic and Rabbinic Hebrew as the root כ-ר-ז k-r-z ‘proclaim, announce’ (Dan. 3:4 as the noun ‘herald’; Dan. 5:29 as the verb ‘announce, proclaim’; Middle Aramaic dialects as both noun and verb; in Tannaitic sources as the Hiphʿil verb; etc.).

More relevant still, since it stems from the domain of grammar (as opposed to lexicon), is the proposal by Chaim Rabin to understand the four enigmatic l-forms in Gen. 23 preceding the imperative:

| Gen. 23:5–6 | ול שְׁמָעֵנוּ אֲדֹנִי
| Gen. 23:11 | ול אֲדֹנִי שְׁמָעֵנִי
| Gen. 23:13 | ול שְׁמָעֵנִי
| Gen. 23:14–15 | ול אֲדֹנִי שְׁמָעֵנִי |


57. For the historical background of the word, attested in 2 Sam. 24 (and in the parallel text in 1 Chron. 21), see Gary A. Rendsburg, *Hows the Bible Is Written* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019). 447.

58. As posited first by Johannes Friedrich, “Zum urartäischen Lexikon,” *Archiv Orientali* 4 (1932): 66–70. For the most recent treatments, see Paul Mankowsi, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 65–66; Hayim ben Yosef Tawil, *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew* (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2009), 161; and Benjamin J. Noonan, *Non-Semitic Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2019), 121. Note that the word כִּיוֹר occurs in Aramaic, but only in Jewish and Samaritan dialects (see *CAL*, s.v. *<kywr>*); hence one concludes that the route was not directly from Urartian or Akkadian into Aramaic, but rather through Hebrew.

59. CAD K, 404.

60. BDB, 1097; *HALOT*, 1902.

61. *CAL*, s.v., *<krz>*; <krwz>.

62. Maʿagarim, s.v., *<kzw>*.

as reflexes of the Hurrian -l- infix used for a series of non-indicative moods (modal, optative, conditional, desiderative). In this particular case, the biblical author has adopted a Hurrian morpheme for stylistic purposes, in order to represent the speech of the Hittites (and in one case, Abraham, who assumes this characteristic trait of his interlocutors’ speech in his own speech). The proposal is based on the notion, accepted by many scholars (the present writer included), that the Hittites of the Bible are actually Hurrians, resident in the southern portion of the land of Canaan (as in this case, which takes place in Hebron). 66

Also from the domain of grammar, specifically phonology, is the theory of E. A. Speiser regarding the origin of spirantization, first in Aramaic and then in Hebrew. Unfortunately, Speiser mentioned the Hurrian impetus for this phonetic shift within Hebrew and Aramaic only in a general survey, and never, to the best of my knowledge, developed the hypothesis in any sustained fashion. Moreover, as far as I am aware, no one has carried the mantle of this suggestion forward. 68 Hence, Speiser’s suggestion must remain only that, a bare suggestion, awaiting further examination. 69

Finally, note the spelling וֶרֶת in 1QIsa 37:38, with its retention of the /a/-vowel as reflected in the cuneiform spelling Urartu, as opposed to Elephantine. 70 MT אֶרֶץ (pausal: אֶרֶץ), with the series of /a/-vowels, presumably as the Masoretic default. Even
though our Urartean sources end in the sixth century BCE, the Qumran scribe was heir to the proper pronunciation with /u/ in the first syllable, even at a distance of about four centuries. 71

In light of all that has been stated here in the four enumerated points, there should be no objection to positing the borrowing of a Hurro-Urartian morpheme into Aramaic, even if the term נולא nawla appears only sporadically in relatively late material, that is, Babylonian Jewish Aramaic of the Sasanian period (with an echo amongst the Babylonian Jews who lived in the Galilee, per Tractate Sofrim 11:3). 72 To my mind, a Hurro-Urartian source for Aramaic נולא nawla, the 3rd person epicene pronoun (either personal or deictic) attested four times in the corpus of rabbinic literature, with a specific morpho-syntactic scope, remains the best explanation for this rare morpheme. 73

71. For further discussion, including the issue of the initial letter he (as opposed to ʾaleph), see E. Y. Kutscher, The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll: 1QIsaa (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 102–3.

72. For an example of a loanword that appears in the receiving language centuries or even a millennium-plus after the lending language died out, see Hezy Mutzafi, “Some Lexicographic and Etymological Notes on ‘A Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dictionary’,” Aramaic Studies 9 (2011): 311–12, with reference to Syriac qūṭī ‘spider’ (attested for the first time in the tenth century CE) and Neo-Aramaic (Zakho Jewish dialect) qota/qo’ṭa ‘spider’, derived from Akkadian qē ettūti, *qū ettūti ‘cobweb’ (comprised of qū ‘web’ + ettūti ‘spider’ (gen.). For parallel phenomena, see above, n. 63.

73. Naturally, I wondered if there is any latter-day resonance of Aramaic נולא nawla in Neo-Aramaic dialects. A survey of the relevant grammars and dictionaries (from the pens of Eleanor Coghill, Steven Fassberg, Jared Greenblatt, Charles Häberl, Otto Jastrow, Geoffrey Khan, Hezy Mutzafi, Yona Sabar, et al.) reveals none, however. Sidebar comment: Various Neo-Aramaic dialects also have epicene 3rd person pronouns and deictic pronouns, though most likely this situation results from Sorani Kurdish and/or Turkish adstratum influence. For examples, see Geoffrey Khan, A Grammar of Neo Aramaic: The Dialect of the Jews of Arbel (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 81, 84–85; Hezy Mutzafi, The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Koy Sanjaq (Iraqi Kurdistan) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 60, 64; and Steven E. Fassberg, The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Challa (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 35, 42. In similar fashion, I wondered if the form seeped into Iraqi Arabic, where once again the answer is apparently in the negative, at least based on the information present in Wallace M. Erwin, A Short Reference Grammar of Iraqi Arabic (Washington, DC: Georgetown Univ. Press, 2004); and Mohamed Maamouri, The Georgetown Dictionary of Iraqi Arabic: Arabic–English, English–Arabic (Washington, DC: Georgetown Univ. Press, 2013).