

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Contact between languages is a very old phenomenon which for instance can be traced back historically to the societies of ancient Mesopotamia. A letter (SAA XVIII 192) sent to Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, by Illil-bāni, the governor (*šandabakku*) of Nippur in southern Mesopotamia, between 664 and 661 B.C., and reporting on circumstances in the city, exemplifies this phenomenon. A passage on the reverse side of the letter (SAA XVIII 192 r.5'–8'), reads as follows:

*ardu u bēl maššarti ša šarri bēlīya akanna anāku / u lišānāti ma'dāti ina Nippur  
ina šilli šarri bēlīya / [[ši]]pirti šarri ušallam u ittīšunu / adabbub.*

I am the king my lord's servant and watchman here. There are many foreign language speakers in Nippur under the aegis of the king, my lord. I implement the king's order and speak to them.<sup>1</sup>

From this passage, we can with certainty infer that language contact and some degree of bilingualism must have existed in the ancient city of Nippur as a result of interaction between speakers of different languages.<sup>2</sup> The same phenomenon also existed, undoubtedly, in many other major or minor cities in ancient Mesopotamia and other parts of the ancient world, just as it is found in many large or small societies of our time as well.<sup>3</sup>

Language contact is simplest explained as “the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time.”<sup>4</sup> The most frequent outcome of extended language contact is change in the languages as a result of the influence that they exercise on each other. The most familiar type of such influence is the borrowing of words.<sup>5</sup> In our case, the borrowing of words represents the most explicit influence that was exerted on Neo-Assyrian, a dialect of the Akkadian language, by a cognate language, namely Aramaic, and Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian constitute the core theme of this study.

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<sup>1</sup> Here *lišānāti* is not rendered “informants,” see CAD (L, p. 214a s.v. *lišānu* mng. no. 4c).

<sup>2</sup> For studies dealing with multilingualism in the Ancient Near East, see S.L. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* (Chicago 2006).

<sup>3</sup> For studies dealing with bilingualism in ancient societies, see J.N. Adams et al. (eds.), *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text* (Oxford 2002).

<sup>4</sup> See S.G. Thomason, *Language Contact: An Introduction* (Edinburgh 2001), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 10. For definition of the term *borrowing*, see Section 1.1 below.

## 1.1 What is a loanword?

The term *loanword* refers to a *lexical item* (a *word* or a *lexeme* which is the smallest distinctive unit in the lexicon of a language) which was not originally part of the vocabulary of the language, but at some point in the history of that language was added both in form and meaning to the lexical inventory of the language by means of linguistic *borrowing* or *copying* from another language as a result of language contact. Thus, while a loanword points to the importation into a language of lexical material from another *source* language, it also points to historical contact between two languages whose speakers have at least some knowledge of both languages at a certain stage. Loanwords are described as the milestones of philology because they very often assist us in determining the dates of linguistic changes as well as shedding some light on the origins and the wandering paths of inventions and institutions.<sup>6</sup> Usually, loanwords undergo adaptation to fit the phonological system and morphological structure of the *borrowing* language, but sometimes they are adapted gradually or only in part.<sup>7</sup>

As for the term *borrowing*,<sup>8</sup> it is a general expression used in comparative and historical linguistics to refer to the process by which lexical items (or less commonly, some other linguistic features such as sounds, phonological rules, morphemes, syntactic patterns or semantic associations) that exist in a language or a dialect are *copied* or *transferred*<sup>9</sup> into another language or dialect<sup>10</sup> and become part of the vocabulary of the latter language or dialect. Despite the fact that any of the parts of speech may be borrowed, nouns constitute the most frequent loans. The broad sense of the definition of borrowing given above is used in this study.

In discussing the direction of borrowing, the designation *source* or *donor* language refers to the language from which a loanword was borrowed, whereas the designation *borrowing* or *recipient* language refers to the language into which the loanword was borrowed.

The motivation for borrowing words is either *need* or *prestige*.<sup>11</sup> A new term can be needed to express a new item or concept acquired from abroad, or can be used for prestige purposes when the foreign term is highly esteemed because it expresses a higher social status.

<sup>6</sup> See O. Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language* (Oxford 1948), p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> See D. Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics & Phonetics* (Malden 2003), p. 275 s.v. loan; P.H. Matthews, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* (Oxford 1997), p. 211 s.v. loan word; R.L. Trask, *A Dictionary of Phonetics and Phonology* (London 1996), p. 210 s.v. loan word.

<sup>8</sup> For lexical borrowing and the mechanisms of lexical interference, see D. Winford, *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics* (Malden 2003), pp. 29–60; U. Weinreich, *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems* (The Hague 1970), pp. 47–62. For concepts and issues in lexical borrowing, see M. Haspelmath, “Lexical Borrowing: Concepts and Issues,” in M. Haspelmath & U. Tadmor (eds.), *Loanwords in the World’s Languages: A Comparative Handbook* (Berlin 2009), pp. 35–54.

<sup>9</sup> For the term *transfer* or *transference*, see M. Clyne, *Dynamics of Language Contact* (Cambridge 2003), esp. p. 74, for earlier reference.

<sup>10</sup> See Trask, *ibid.*, p. 55 s.v. borrowing; Crystal, *ibid.*, p. 56 s.v. borrowing; Matthews, *ibid.*, p. 41 s.v. borrowing; D. Crystal, *The Penguin Dictionary of Language* (London 1999), p. 40 s.v. borrowing. Cf. S.G. Thomason & T. Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics* (Berkeley 1988), p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> See U. Weinreich, *Languages in Contact* (The Hague 1970), § 2.43.



There are other borrowing phenomena that are, to some extent, related to loanwords. Borrowing, as a phenomenon, is classified into two distinct categories: *material borrowing* and *structural borrowing*.<sup>12</sup> The former includes, for instance, the borrowing of sound-meaning pairs, i.e., loanwords. The latter includes the borrowing of syntactical and morphological patterns such as word order patterns and case-marking patterns, as well as loan translations (calques), i.e., the translation of the morphemes of the borrowed word item by item into equivalent morphemes in the recipient language. Another type of structural borrowing is loan meaning extension (semantic loan), where a meaning is copied from the donor language into the recipient language. Loan translation and loan meaning extension are sometimes classed together as loan shifts.<sup>13</sup>

This study is restricted to loanwords. However, also included in this study are semantic loans, which here refer to Neo-Assyrian words that share a common root with Aramaic, but have undergone an extension or change of meaning that can be attributed to the influence of Aramaic.

## 1.2 Definitions of other key terms

*Cognate*: The term cognate refers here to any one of two or more words that are similar in sound and meaning, i.e., similar phonologically and semantically, have developed from the same source, and are found in two or more dialects of a single language or in two or more genetically related languages as descendants of a common ancestor.<sup>14</sup> As two Semitic languages,<sup>15</sup> Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic are also cognates. This means that historically they are sibling-descendants of a postulated common ancestor, Proto-Semitic (PS).

*Culture word* (CW): Culture words almost always consist of nouns that belong to specific categories, such as plants and vegetable products, utensils, minerals, metals and wild animals, which are borrowed among many languages and designate a cross-cultural concept. According to Mankowski, “The term ‘culture word’ (*Kulturwort*), refers to a class of words marked by a high degree of mobility (thus recognizable at the same period in more than one language family

<sup>12</sup> See Y. Matras & J. Sakel, *Grammatical Borrowing in Cross-Linguistic Perspective* (Berlin 2007).

<sup>13</sup> See E. Haugen, “The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing,” *Language* 26 (1950), p. 219.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. D. Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics & Phonetics* (Malden 2003), p. 79; R.L. Trask, *A Dictionary of Phonetics and Phonology* (London 1996), p. 78; P.H. Matthews, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* (Oxford 1997), p. 58.

<sup>15</sup> The term “Semitic” languages was coined in 1781 by A.L. Schlözer, in J.G. Eichhorn’s *Repertorium für biblische und morgenländische Literatur* (vol. VIII, p. 161), in reference to the languages spoken by peoples included in Gen. 10:21–31; 11:10–26, among the sons of Shem (Sem). For a current definition of the term Semitic languages, and for the classification of the Semitic languages, see, among others, E. Ullendorff, “What is a Semitic Language?” *Or* 27 (1958), pp. 66–75; S. Moscati, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology* (Wiesbaden 1964), pp. 3–21; E. Lipiński, *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar* (Leuven 1997), pp. 23–94 (henceforth: Lipiński, *Semitic Languages*); J. Huehnergard, “Comparative Semitic Linguistics,” *IOS* 20 (2002), pp. 119–150; idem, “Semitic Languages,” in J.M. Sasson et al. (eds.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (Massachusetts 2006), pp. 2117–2134.

and in disparate geographical regions) for which no ultimate linguistic provenance can be assigned.”<sup>16</sup>

*Foreign word* (Fremdwort): A word or an expression which was taken over from a foreign language and, in contrast to a loanword, remains unintegrated in the sound system, spelling or inflection of the borrowing language and continues designating a foreign entity or object.<sup>17</sup>

*Ghost word* (cf. *Vox nihili*): A word or word form that in reality did not exist in the original language, but rather originated as a result of an error during the copying, analyzing or learning of the language, such as an editorial misreading, a printing error, or perhaps it was due to an ancient scribal mistake.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, when we consider a certain Neo-Assyrian word to be a “ghost word,” this means that the word in question originated by error; therefore, it does not exist in the extant Neo-Assyrian textual corpus.

*Semantic loan*: The meaning that a word takes under the influence of another language, whereby a reinterpretation of the original meaning and/or a meaning extension takes place.<sup>19</sup> In this study, semantic loans concern cognate words that may have undergone semantic change or extension of meaning by developing a new sense of the Neo-Assyrian lexical units under the influence of Aramaic.

### 1.3 Previous research on Aramaic loanwords in Akkadian

Several monographs have been dedicated to researching the Akkadian influences on other languages, primarily loanwords. The earliest is the work by Zimmern, who a century ago studied the Akkadian loanwords in different languages in a book titled, *Akkadische Fremdwörter als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluß*.<sup>20</sup> Much later, two doctoral dissertations on the subject were published, one by Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, which mainly consists of Akkadian loanwords in Aramaic,<sup>21</sup> and the other by Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*.<sup>22</sup>

Regrettably, no such comprehensive study has been dedicated to Aramaic loanwords in Akkadian, whether in general or in its Neo-Assyrian, Neo- or Late-Babylonian dialects in particular. The major impediment to undertaking such a

<sup>16</sup> See Mankowski, ALBH, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> See H. Bußmann, *Lexikon der Sprachwissenschaft* (Stuttgart 2002), pp. 226f s.v. Fremdwort.

<sup>18</sup> For the term “ghost word,” see M.A. Pei & F. Gaynor (eds.), *A Dictionary of Linguistics* (London 1960), p. 83 s.v. *ghost-word*. Cf. the term “ghost form,” in D. Crystal (ed.), *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages* (Cambridge 1992), p. 156; idem, *The Penguin Dictionary of Language* (London 1999), p. 135 s.v. *ghost form*.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. P. Durkin, *The Oxford Guide to Etymology* (Oxford 2009), pp. 136f; Bußmann, *ibid.*, p. 398a s.v. *Lehnbedeutung*.

<sup>20</sup> See H. Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluß* (Leipzig 1917), (henceforth: Zimmern, AF).

<sup>21</sup> S.A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (Chicago 1974), (henceforth: Kaufman, AIA). For additional Akkadian loanwords in Aramaic, see M. Sokoloff, “New Akkadian Loanwords in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic,” in Y. Sefati et al. (eds.), *“An Experienced Scribe Who Neglects Nothing”: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Jacob Klein* (Bethesda 2005), pp. 575–586.

<sup>22</sup> See Mankowski, ALBH.

study has been attributed to our limited knowledge about the Aramaic language during the period of language contact between Akkadian and Aramaic, i.e., the 1st millennium B.C.<sup>23</sup>

However, a preliminary study in this regard was carried out by von Soden, who took the first steps towards studying Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian and Neo- and Late-Babylonian in his three articles titled *Aramäische Wörter in neuassyrischen und neu- und spätbabylonischen Texten. Ein Vorbericht*, I–III.<sup>24</sup> Von Soden calls attention to the fact that a large number of the words treated in his own study were already included in Zimmern's book mentioned above.<sup>25</sup> He registered in his articles 240 possible Aramaic loanwords, of which 81 were considered to be borrowed into Neo-Assyrian.<sup>26</sup> Some of these 81 words were also considered to be loans in one or both of the other two dialects, i.e., Neo- and Late-Babylonian.

Nevertheless, von Soden's study has been criticized by Kutscher, who commented that "von Soden sometimes tends to view as A[ramaic] an Ak[kadian] lexeme without attempting to prove that it is indeed an A[ramaic] loan in Ak[kadian], and not vice versa."<sup>27</sup> Abraham and Sokoloff published a review of von Soden's list of Aramaic loanwords, in which they reduced the number of the proposed loanwords to slightly more than 40 certain and about the same number of possible loans.<sup>28</sup> They criticize von Soden's work on Aramaic loanwords saying that he frequently adduces Aramaic words without providing any reference to his sources, and that in many cases, especially concerning the Jewish Aramaic dialects, the words appear to either be non-existent or to have a different meaning.<sup>29</sup> They add that von Soden's suggested loanwords from Aramaic remain fraught with difficulties.<sup>30</sup> However, Abraham and Sokoloff's review has been described as being too pessimistic.<sup>31</sup> It is imperative to emphasize that Abraham and Sokoloff's review mentioned above is solely dedicated to treating the proposed Aramaic loanwords that are included in von Soden's articles. More recently, von Soden's research in this regard, for instance his attribution of many

<sup>23</sup> See P.-A. Beaulieu, "Aspects of Aramaic and Babylonian Linguistic Interaction in First Millennium BC Iraq," *Journal of Language Contact* 6 (2013), p. 360.

<sup>24</sup> See W. von Soden, "Aramäische Wörter in neuassyrischen und neu- und spätbabylonischen Texten. Ein Vorbericht, I–III," *Or* 35 (1966), pp. 1–20; *Or* 37 (1968), pp. 261–271; *Or* 46 (1977), pp. 183–197, (henceforth: von Soden, *Or* 35 (1966); idem, *Or* 37 (1968); idem, *Or* 46 (1977)).

<sup>25</sup> See von Soden, *Or* 35 (1966), p. 5. Cf. the critique by Abraham & Sokoloff, *Reassessment*, p. 24, n. 30.

<sup>26</sup> The words are: *akku, anēnu, anīna, aqqabu, ašūdu, buḥḥušu, durā'u, Eber nāri, egertu, gadiu, galū, garīštu, gazālu, gubbu, gumāru, ḥalābu, ḥālu, ḥanāpu, ḥangaru, ḥannū, ḥarurtu, ḥašābu, ḥilpu, ḥulūtu, ianūqu, im-magāni, izqātu, kanāšu, katāru, kirku, kuspu, la, lapān(i), laqā'u, madbar, (magāṭātu) magazzutu, maḥītu, maqartu, marāsu, muāšu, nakālu, napāšu, nasīku, nibzu, niklu, niqittu, paḥāzu, palū, pušku, qadduru, qallīlu, qapīru, qarābu, qarḥu, qarsu, qarūhu, qī'u, radāpu, ra'su, saḥaru, salītu, samādiru, samāku, sapāqu, saqālu, saḥūrānūtu, šallu, šāpītu, šappuḥu, šibtātu, šipirtu, šippirrate, šaḥu, šapānu, šapīnutu, šārītu, šullāmu, šūqāqu, tullumā, urbānu, zīqu.*

<sup>27</sup> See E.Y. Kutscher, "Aramaic," in T.A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current Trends in Linguistics*, 6. *Linguistics in South West Asia and North Africa* (The Hague 1970), p. 357.

<sup>28</sup> See Abraham & Sokoloff, *Reassessment*, pp. 22–76.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 22, n. 13.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>31</sup> See M.P. Streck, "Akkadian and Aramaic Language Contact," in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), p. 419 § 2.2.1.

innovations in Neo-Babylonian to Aramaic influence, has been criticized by Beaulieu for being “often without critical examination of the evidence or much consideration of historical linguistic methodology.”<sup>32</sup>

In any case, von Soden’s study, although important as a starting point for further research on Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian and Neo- and Late-Babylonian, requires revision and updating with existing Akkadian and Aramaic lexical tools, which have increased in number and improved.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, a large number of cuneiform texts have been edited and published since the late 1970s, some of which include lexicographical analyses that need to be incorporated into any up-to-date study of Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian and Neo- and Late-Babylonian. For the Neo-Assyrian texts, the situation has improved significantly with the series of new text editions issued by the *State Archives of Assyria* project (SAA), which not only contain many new Neo-Assyrian texts and improved editions of many old ones but also valuable Neo-Assyrian glossaries. Hence, not only is the corpus of the Neo-Assyrian texts available today larger than before, many of the previously edited texts have also been more accurately re-edited and commented upon by various scholars. In addition, the study of Neo-Assyrian grammar has recently been advanced by the publication of two valuable works, namely *A Sketch of Neo-Assyrian Grammar* by J. Hämeen-Anttila,<sup>34</sup> and *Grammatical Variation in Neo-Assyrian* by M. Luukko.<sup>35</sup>

Thanks to the advancements in lexicography and the increased Neo-Assyrian textual material at hand, it is now possible to interpret and evaluate some of the previous contributions to the study of Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian differently. Some of the proposed Aramaic loanwords can be rejected<sup>36</sup> and others will be corroborated on a much broader basis. It is also possible to identify additional Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian that have not yet been recognized.

## 1.4 The purpose and scope of the present study

This study has the following objectives:

1. To collect and analyze all words that have been previously proposed as Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian and are accepted as such in recent dictionaries, glossaries, and lexical studies, as well as in current Assyriological literature. Many of these are included in von Soden’s groundbreaking study,<sup>37</sup> but

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<sup>32</sup> See P.-A. Beaulieu, “Aspects of Aramaic and Babylonian Linguistic Interaction in First Millennium BC Iraq,” *Journal of Language Contact* 6 (2013), p. 361.

<sup>33</sup> See below, Section 1.5.

<sup>34</sup> See J. Hämeen-Anttila, *A Sketch of Neo-Assyrian Grammar* (Helsinki 2000), (henceforth: Hämeen-Anttila, SAAS XIII).

<sup>35</sup> See M. Luukko, *Grammatical Variation in Neo-Assyrian* (Helsinki 2004), (henceforth: Luukko, SAAS XVI).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. preliminary Z. Cherry, “Aramaic Loanwords in Neo-Assyrian: Rejecting some Proposals,” in M. Luukko et al. (eds.), *Of God(s), Trees, Kings, and Scholars: Neo-Assyrian and Related Studies in Honour of Simo Parpola* (Helsinki 2009), pp. 19–25, (henceforth: Z. Cherry, *Aramaic Loanwords in NA: Rejecting some Proposals*).

<sup>37</sup> See n. 24 above. Cf. Abraham & Sokoloff, *Reassessment*.

additional proposals made in more recent times remain scattered across a wide range of Assyriological publications. This study also intends to carry out further etymological investigation to identify additional Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian that may not have been recognized yet.<sup>38</sup>

2. To verify the validity of the previously proposed Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian by systematically scrutinizing the evidence (whether phonological, morphological, semantic or cultural/historical) upon which the items concerned were identified as loanwords, and based on this analysis, to make explicit whether this or that loanword hypothesis is acceptable or should be rejected.

3. To also investigate another type of borrowing that involves semantic loan,<sup>39</sup> i.e., a change in the meaning of an established native word to accommodate a new meaning acquired from a word in another language. As mentioned before, in the present study this applies to Neo-Assyrian words that may have undergone semantic change or extension of meaning by developing a new sense under the influence of their Aramaic cognates.

4. To present information, whenever possible, on the provenance, origin, genre and date of the Neo-Assyrian texts containing Aramaic loanwords, and to examine whether there are any patterns within the groups of the texts and the loanwords studied.

5. To shed light on the frequency of the Aramaic loanwords in the Neo-Assyrian texts. This includes words that are *hapax legomenon*, *dis legomenon* or *tris legomenon*. Also, to identify the Neo-Assyrian texts which include two or more different Aramaic loanwords.

6. To provide information on the semantic categories of the Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian.

7. To provide a phonological analysis of the Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian.

The present study does not investigate Neo-Assyrian loan-translations (calques) of Aramaic words and expressions, for example, the occasional use of the Neo-Assyrian preposition *ana* “to, for” as a *nota accusativi* on the model of the Aramaic proclitic ܐܢܐ.<sup>40</sup> Nor does the study investigate personal names, divine names, phraseology, or details of Neo-Assyrian syntax which might have been borrowed from Aramaic or influenced by it. These types of investigations

<sup>38</sup> For instance, S. Parpola proposes additional 28 possible Aramaic loanwords in NA (personal communication). The words are: *akê*, *bašā'u*, *būšīnu*, *gazāru*, *gerdu*, *gidlu*, *gulē'īnu*, *ḥalīdu*, *ḥarbutu/ḥarbūtu*, *ḥurbu*, *kakkišu*, *kandu*, *kurḥu*, *leḥmu*, *makaḥālutu*, *maqaḥtu(tu)*, *parāḥu*, *puršīnu*, *puṭuru*, *qamāru*, *qumbutu*, *sarābu*, *sarḥu*, *sādiu*, *šernu*, *tukku*, *tūbāqu*, *ziblu*. I am thankful to Prof. Parpola for sharing these words with me and for giving me the opportunity to analyze and discuss them in this study.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. P. Durkin, *The Oxford Guide to Etymology* (Oxford 2009), pp. 136f; H. Bußmann, *Lexikon der Sprachwissenschaft* (Stuttgart 2002), p. 398a s.v. Lehnbedeutung.

<sup>40</sup> See, for instance, the preposition *ana* in SAA XIX 41:8'. See also von Soden, *Or* 35 (1966), p. 13:73; idem, *Or* 46 (1977), p. 189:73; idem, GAG § 114e and 144c; Hämeen-Anttila, SAAS XIII, § 3.9.1; Luukko, SAAS XVI, § 6.6; M.J. Geller, Review of “A Sketch of Neo-Assyrian Grammar,” by J. Hämeen-Anttila, *BSOAS* 65 (2002), p. 563; Abraham & Sokoloff, *Reassessment*, p. 24, n. 25 and p. 38:114; Hackl, J., “Language Death and Dying Reconsidered: The Rôle of Late Babylonian as a Vernacular Language,” July 2011, p. 13, n. 58. Online 15/09/2022: <https://www.academia.edu>

deserve their own study. Nevertheless, Neo-Assyrian personal names are occasionally taken into consideration when they contribute to the discussion of the loanword.

Of course, Aramaic loanwords also occur in Neo- and Late-Babylonian dialects of Akkadian, but the study of this group of loanwords lies outside the scope of the present research; they are taken into account only when relevant to the discussion of Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian. Also, the Aramaic loanwords that are found in Standard Babylonian (SB) and Neo-Babylonian (NB) texts composed in Assyria are not treated in this study.<sup>41</sup> Words with Neo-Assyrian form, which occasionally occur in SB texts composed in Assyria, are not included in the vocabulary analyzed in this study.

No further collation of the Neo-Assyrian texts was undertaken for this study. Thus, all collations cited here were made by the editor(s) of the text(s) concerned and are considered reliable in so far as they are entered into the State Archives of Assyria Project's electronic database, Corpus of Neo-Assyrian Texts (CNA).

## 1.5 Material of the study

All known Neo-Assyrian texts,<sup>42</sup> with the exception of a few published only recently, have been entered into the electronic database of the State Archives of Assyria Project, Corpus of Neo-Assyrian Texts (CNA), which has the task of collecting all published and unpublished Neo-Assyrian texts in its electronic database.<sup>43</sup> Based on the present corpus, the Neo-Assyrian textual material consists of 9057 unique texts.<sup>44</sup> All the Neo-Assyrian textual material available in the Corpus of Neo-Assyrian Texts (CNA) has been utilized in this study for the purpose of identifying Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian.

The Akkadian lexical material consulted includes *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (CAD), which provides rich attestations for its entries and occasionally offers etymological commentaries,<sup>45</sup> and the other dictionary *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (AHw.), which provides

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<sup>41</sup> I intend to treat the Aramaic loanwords in SB and NB texts that were composed in Assyria elsewhere.

<sup>42</sup> For details on the Neo-Assyrian texts, see below pp. 25ff. s.v. Neo-Assyrian.

<sup>43</sup> See the State Archives of Assyria Project's electronic database, Corpus of Neo-Assyrian Texts (CNA), presently on server, 15-09-2022: [oracc.museum.upenn.edu](http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu). I am grateful to Prof. Simo Parpola of the University of Helsinki for granting me permission to access at a distance the State Archives of Assyria Project's electronic database, Corpus of Neo-Assyrian Texts (CNA), which I utilized for examining and enlarging the data used in this study.

<sup>44</sup> This information is based on the Corpus of Neo-Assyrian Texts (CNA). I am thankful to Dr. Robert Whiting for calling my attention to the fact that some of the Neo-Assyrian texts have been entered twice in the corpus, sometimes under the museum number and again under the publication reference, and also that there are texts in the corpus entered twice as a result of having been joined to other pieces (personal communication). Caution has been taken to ensure that no Neo-Assyrian textual attestation is cited more than once in the textual citation section under each headword discussed in this study.

<sup>45</sup> *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, 21 vols., (Chicago 1956–2011), (henceforth: CAD).

comparative etymological information.<sup>46</sup> In addition, *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (CDA),<sup>47</sup> which is in essence based on AHW., is consulted because it includes additions and occasional corrections to AHW., as well as incorporating the reviews of both CAD and AHW., harvested from Assyriological literature.<sup>48</sup> Also important is the *Assyrian-English-Assyrian Dictionary* (AEAD)<sup>49</sup> which focuses, among other things, on the vocabulary of the Neo-Assyrian dialect and seeks to present it as completely and accurately as possible. The dictionary contains about 13,000 Assyrian entries, of which the Neo-Assyrian words and phrases constitute ca. 50%, i.e., approximately 6,500 words.<sup>50</sup> All the updates on the Akkadian words treated in Assyriological literature, which are published in the word lists of the Register Assyriologie of the *Archiv für Orientforschung*, are taken account of, with an emphasis on the Neo-Assyrian material.

Advances in the field of lexicography also apply to Aramaic. In reference to Old and Official Aramaic, the *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* (DNWSI) is consulted.<sup>51</sup> Also consulted is the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* (CAL), a new dictionary comprising a major scholarly reference work of the Aramaic language which is currently in preparation by an international team of scholars and is available online.<sup>52</sup> CAL covers almost all dialects and periods of Aramaic and takes account of all modern scholarly discussion of the Aramaic language. In addition, other essential Aramaic dictionaries of different dialects and periods are consulted to collect the Aramaic words relevant to the discussion and analysis of the proposed Aramaic loanwords.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See AHW.

<sup>47</sup> J. Black, A. George & N. Postgate (eds.), *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (Wiesbaden 2000), (henceforth: CDA).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. vii, ix. For a bibliography of the reviews of CAD and AHW., until 2004, see Nili, pp. 301–304.

<sup>49</sup> See S. Parpola et al. (eds.), *Assyrian-English-Assyrian Dictionary* (Helsinki 2007).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

<sup>51</sup> J. Hoftijzer & K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, 2 vols., (Leiden 1995). It is important to note that many Aramaic words in DNWSI are considered loanwords in Akkadian based on von Soden's study mentioned above in n. 24.

<sup>52</sup> See CAL.

<sup>53</sup> The other Aramaic dictionaries utilized in this study are: G.H. Dalman, *Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Wörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud und Midrasch* (Frankfurt a. M 1901); A.J. Maclean, *A Dictionary of the Dialects of Vernacular Syriac: As Spoken by the Eastern Syrians of Kurdistan, North-west Persia and the Plain of Mosul* (Oxford 1901); F. Schulthess, *Lexicon Syropalaestinum* (Berlin 1903); J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford 1903); E.S. Drower & R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary* (Oxford 1963); R.A. Brauner, *A Comparative Lexicon of Old Aramaic* (Ann Arbor 1974); J.E. Manna, *Leksīqōn kaldāyā-'arbāyā* (Beirut 1975); T. Audo, *Šimṭā dā-lišānā sūryāyā*, I–II (Ann Arbor 1978); M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midraschic Literature* (New York 1989); C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Hildesheim 1995); A. Tal, *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic* (Leiden 2000); M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat-Gan 2002); idem, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods* (Ramat-Gan 2002); idem, *A Dictionary of Judean Aramaic* (Ramat-Gan 2003); idem, *A Syriac Lexicon* (Winona Lake 2009); idem, *A Dictionary of Christian Palestinian Aramaic* (Leuven 2014).

## 1.6 The methods used in identifying Aramaic loanwords

Identifying loanwords is a comparative process by which the lexicon of the recipient language and that of any possible candidate donor are examined and compared with each other to identify possible loans and the direction of borrowing.<sup>54</sup> When analyzing a potential loan from Aramaic into Neo-Assyrian, it is imperative to examine and compare not only the lexical data of Neo-Assyrian as the recipient language, and Aramaic as the possible donor language, but also the lexical data of other languages that were in contact with Neo-Assyrian.<sup>55</sup>

The task of identifying Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian (as also in Neo- and Late-Babylonian) is complicated because the two languages are cognates. Consequently, Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic share with the other Semitic languages some common features as regards their phonological, morphological and semantic systems, as well as a common basic vocabulary, which makes it often very difficult to reliably establish the origin of a possible inter-Semitic loanword.<sup>56</sup> In addition, for some few words that can be considered certain borrowings into Neo-Assyrian, there are several West-Semitic languages which can be possible donors, but at the same time we lack conclusive evidence as to whether the loanwords were borrowed specifically from Aramaic or from some other West-Semitic language. In this study such loanwords will be defined as either Aramaic or other West-Semitic in origin. However, the historical background indicates that the contact between speakers of other West-Semitic languages and Neo-Assyrian occurred mostly in the periphery of the Assyrian empire, and less often in Assyria proper, and it was much less intensive than the contact between Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic.

The designation West-Semitic languages refers basically to all Semitic languages other than Akkadian and Eblaite, which are classified as East Semitic languages. In this study, the designation West-Semitic languages is mainly used to refer to Northwest Semitic languages, of which Ugaritic, Hebrew, Phoenician and Aramaic constitute the major languages. The Northwest Semitic languages are classified by some scholars as a subgroup of the Central Semitic branch of the West-Semitic languages.<sup>57</sup>

The evidence required for the identification of loanwords may consist of one or several different elements of phonology, morphology and semantics, or the

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<sup>54</sup> See Mankowski, ALBH, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> For an overview of the languages contemporary with Neo-Assyrian in the ancient Near East, see G. Rubio, "The Languages of the Ancient Near East," in D.C. Snell (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Near East* (Malden 2005), pp. 79–94. For the lexica of the Semitic languages, see B. Podolsky, "A Selected List of Dictionaries of Semitic Languages," in S. Izre'el (ed.), *Semitic Linguistics: The State of the Art at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (Winona Lake 2002), pp. 213–221.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. M.P. O'Connor, "The Arabic Loanwords in Nabatean Aramaic," *JNES* 45 (1986), p. 215; Mankowski, ALBH, p. 5, n. 20.

<sup>57</sup> For more details, see Section 1.8 below. Cf. J. Huehnergard, "Semitic Languages," in J.M. Sasson et al. (eds.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (Massachusetts 2006), pp. 2117–2134; idem, "Features of Central Semitic," in A. Giamto (ed.), *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran* (Rome 2005), pp. 155–203.



existence of a cultural-historical claim attested with a given word studied. Together these constitute the most important factors that ought to be taken into consideration as much as possible in the process of identifying loanwords.

Hence, a word is identified as a loanword if its *phonetic shape, form and meaning* are similar to those of a word in another language from which it might have been borrowed through some kind of language contact, provided that there are no other reasonable alternative explanations for these similarities, for example that the word is a cognate.

In some cases the reasons behind the borrowing of a certain word can be helpful to understanding why the borrowing of that word occurred. These include, for instance, the need to designate something entirely new to the recipient language or to resolve a clash of homonyms in it, or the need for synonyms to increase the expressive capacity of the recipient language.<sup>58</sup>

It is important to point out that it is sometimes still difficult to recognize Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian because there are no phonological or morphological divergences that are characteristic of a candidate for a loan. In other words, the loanword has undergone adaptation, i.e., has been remodeled to fit the phonological and morphological structure of the words in Neo-Assyrian.<sup>59</sup> In such cases other criteria might be helpful in the process of identifying the loanwords. In the following, an account is provided for the methods used in this study to identify Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian.

### 1.6.1 Phonological criterion

Phonological criteria provide the strongest evidence for identifying loanwords and the direction of borrowing. If a word found in a language is incompatible with the phonological patterns of that language, for example if it has a sound which is not normally expected in the native words of that language, then we have an indication that the word in question is borrowed.<sup>60</sup>

#### 1.6.1.1 Comparative method applied to Semitic roots concerning their phonological correspondences

The information obtained from the phonological history of the languages belonging to the same family, in our case the Semitic language family, concerning the sound changes that they have undergone, provides evidence that is crucial for identifying intra-Semitic loanwords and the donor language.<sup>61</sup> In this study, we

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. U. Weinreich, *Languages in Contact* (The Hague 1970), pp. 47–60; C. Myers-Scotton, *Contact Linguistics: Bilingual Encounters and Grammatical Outcomes* (New York 2000), pp. 234–242.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. von Soden, *Or* 35 (1966), p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> See L. Campbell, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (Edinburgh 2004), p. 69.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 70.

apply the comparative method<sup>62</sup> to Semitic roots with regard to the sound changes they have undergone leading to some of the Proto-Semitic (PS) consonantal phonemes being represented by different phonetic shapes, which also vary sometimes in different periods, in the individual Semitic languages. In view of that, if at least one of the root phonemes of a certain Semitic word is expected to develop differently in Neo-Assyrian than in Aramaic and the word exists in both Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic, but the Neo-Assyrian word has the Aramaic form, then we have a strong indication that the word was borrowed from Aramaic into Neo-Assyrian.<sup>63</sup> Table 1 below signifies the relevant consonantal phonemes.

Furthermore, a sound change in Akkadian, known as *e*-coloring, is caused by the influence of certain consonants on the neighboring vowel *a*, resulting in the development *a* > *e*. This happens in syllables where *a* is adjacent to a glottal stop ʾ (hamza) that has developed from a PS \**h*, or \*ʿ, and sometimes even from a PS \**ġ*, when this ʾ occurs at the beginning or at the end of a syllable before itself being completely dropped.<sup>64</sup> This *e*-coloring can also be helpful in identifying loanwords. If a Neo-Assyrian word does not undergo an expected *e*-coloring, then there is a good chance that the word is a borrowing.

For example, the NA word *adê* n. “(vassal) treaty,” is considered to be a borrowing from Aramaic *ʿdy* n. “pact, treaty, treaty-stipulations.” The Aramaic word appears to be derived from the root ʾDY. On the other hand, there is no indication whatsoever of the preservation of ʾayin in first-millennium Akkadian, and no solid proof of any Northwest Semitic borrowing from an Akkadian word with an initial vowel being represented by /ʾ/.<sup>65</sup> Also, when NA words with initial vowel are borrowed into Aramaic, they are written with an initial aleph. Hence, the word is not a borrowing from Akkadian into Aramaic. In addition, the original Semitic voiced pharyngeal fricative /ʕ/ was already reduced in Akkadian and appears from about 2000 B.C. as a glottal stop ʾ (hamza). The latter, then, as a result of the reduction of /ʕ/, disappears totally, causing an *e*-coloring of the neighboring \**a*, i.e., an umlaut of *a* > *e*. In our case, the lack of *e*-coloring in the word *adê* also points to a borrowing into NA.

<sup>62</sup> For the comparative method (CM) as an instrumental tool for interpreting data in historical linguistics, see W.P. Lehmann, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (London 1994), p. 9 and pp. 141ff. See also *ibid.*, p. 142, for the linguists’ interpretation and use of the comparative method.

<sup>63</sup> See Kaufman, AIA, pp. 19f, for the opposite situation between Aramaic and Akkadian.

<sup>64</sup> See GAG § 9a, § 23c; S. Moscati, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology* (Wiesbaden 1964) § 8.54; J. Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian* (Atlanta 1997), p. 587; O. Rössler, “Zur Frage der Vertretung der gemeinsemitischen Laryngale im Akkadischen (ʿ = ġ)” in H. Franke (ed.), *Akten des vierundzwanzigsten internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses München 28. August bis 4. September 1957*, (Wiesbaden 1959), pp. 129–132; L. Kogan, “\**ġ* in Akkadian,” *UF* 33 (2001), pp. 263–298; B. Kouwenberg, “The Reflexes of the Proto-Semitic Gutturals in Assyrian,” in G. Deutscher & N.J.C. Kouwenberg (eds.), *The Akkadian Language in its Semitic Context: Studies in the Akkadian of the Third and Second Millennium BC* (Leiden 2006), pp. 150–176.

<sup>65</sup> See Kaufman, AIA, p. 142.

Table 1: The relevant consonantal phonemes<sup>66</sup>

PS	Akk.	NA	OAram. (spelling) <sup>67</sup>	Aram. ca. 500 B.C. <sup>68</sup>	Ug.	Heb.	Ar.	Eth. (Ge'ez)
*ʾ	ʾ/ø	ʾ/ø	ʾ	ʾ	ʾ	ʾ	ʾ	ʾ
*ʿ	ʾ/ø	ʾ/ø	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ
*d	z	z <sup>69</sup>	z	d	d/d	z	d	z
*ġ	ʾ/ø	ʾ/ø	ʿ	ʿ	ġ	ʿ	ġ	ʿ
*h	ʾ/ø	ʾ/ø	h	h	h	h	h	h
*ḥ	ʾ/ø	ʾ/ø <sup>70</sup>	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ
*ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ
*s	s	s <sup>71</sup>	s	s	s	s	s	s
*š	š	š <sup>72</sup>	š	s	š	ś	š	š
*š	š	s <sup>73</sup>	š	š	š	š	s	s
*š <sup>74</sup>	š	š <sup>75</sup>	q	ʿ	š	š	d	d
*t	š	š <sup>76</sup>	š	t	t	š	t	s
*t	š	š	š	t	t	š	z	š

<sup>66</sup> Cf. S. Moscati, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology* (Wiesbaden 1964), § 8.59; J. Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian* (Atlanta 1997), p. 590; Kaufman, AIA, p. 19; Lipiński, *Semitic Languages*, p. 150.

<sup>67</sup> See Moscati, *ibid.*, § 8.18.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Table 3 below.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* The Neo-Assyrian <s> is used to write West-Semitic <š> and vice versa. It has been observed by scholars, through the evidence of alphabetic transcriptions, that in Neo-Assyrian a written sibilant s must have been pronounced as /š/ and a written sibilant š must have been pronounced as /s/. In other words, this means that the Neo-Assyrian <s> = /š/ and <š> = /s/. Haupt points out that this fact was recognized by Hincks as early as 1857; see P. Haupt, “Some Assyrian Etymologies,” *AJSL* 26 (1909), p. 9. See also S. Ylvisaker, *Zur babylonischen und assyrischen Grammatik* (Leipzig 1912), § 5; I.J. Gelb, “Notes on von Soden’s Grammar of Akkadian,” *BiOr* 12 (1955), p. 103, § 29e; S. Moscati, *ibid.*, § 8.32; A.R. Millard, “ša ekalli – šgl – <sup>d</sup>sagale,” *UF* 4 (1972), p. 162; *idem*, “Assyrian Royal Names in Biblical Hebrew,” *JSS* 21 (1976), pp. 1–14; S. Parpola, “The Alleged Middle/Neo-Assyrian Irregular Verb \*našš and the Assyrian Sound Change š > s,” *Assur* 1/1 (1974), p. 4, n. 13; Kaufman, AIA, pp. 140f; E. Lipiński, “La correspondance des sibilantes dans les textes araméens et les textes cunéiformes néo-assyriens,” in P. Fronzaroli (ed.), *Atti del secondo congresso internazionale di linguistica camito-semitica* (Firenze 1978), pp. 201–210; F.M. Fales, AECT, pp. 61ff.; Hämeen-Anttila, SAAS XIII, § 2.1.1; Luukko, SAAS XVI, § 4.1.3. See the guidelines of the transcription system by S. Parpola, in K. Radner, *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, Vol. 1/I (Helsinki 1998), pp. xxii–xxv, esp. p. xxiv. In this study the š ≅ s interchange between alphabetic and NA cuneiform renderings has been left unmarked in transliterations and transcriptions to avoid confusion.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Table 3 below.

<sup>73</sup> S. Parpola (personal communication). Cf. Table 3 below.

<sup>74</sup> This interdental is in some scholarly literature transcribed with the symbol ḳ.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Table 3 below.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

### 1.6.1.2 Other phonological criteria

In certain cases the loanwords are not completely integrated into the phonological patterns of the recipient language, and therefore can be identified by their unusual shape, which violates the distinctive phonotactics of the recipient language. Hence, in etymological investigations, use can also be made of phonemic changes that occur in different Semitic languages due to the incompatibility of specific root consonants in certain position. An example is the phenomenon known as “Geers’ law,”<sup>77</sup> according to which triconsonantal roots originally containing two different emphatic radicals (*t*, *š*, or *q*) are not tolerated in Akkadian, but instead one of the emphatics dissimilates to its non-emphatic voiceless counterpart in accordance with the following gradation: *š*, *q*, *t*.<sup>78</sup> Thus, *t* becomes *t* in forms that also contain *q* or *š*; in forms that contain both *q* and *š*, the emphatic consonant that comes first dissimilates, i.e., *q* to *k* and *š* to *s*. So, while two emphatic consonants in the same root can be tolerated in other Semitic languages, any word in Akkadian and its dialects that does not adhere to the said law must be a borrowing. The following changes in the emphatic quality of the Akkadian root take place:

Table 2: Changes in the emphatic quality of the Akkadian root

PS root		Akk. root
* <i>q</i> – <i>š</i>	>	<i>k</i> – <i>š</i>
* <i>t</i> – <i>q/š</i>	>	<i>t</i> – <i>q/š</i>
* <i>q</i> – <i>t</i>	>	<i>q</i> – <i>t</i> <sup>79</sup>
* <i>š</i> – <i>q</i>	>	<i>s</i> – <i>q</i> <sup>80</sup>
* <i>q</i> – <i>q</i>	>	<i>k</i> – <i>q</i> <sup>81</sup>

For instance, the NA word *\*garīštu*/*\*girīštu* n. f. “round flat loaf of bread,” which is attested only in f. pl. form as *garīšāte*/*girīšāte*, is considered to be a borrowing from Aramaic *garīštā* n. f. “loaf of bread or cake.” The origin of the Aramaic word is considered to be the Semitic root \*QRŠ. If the NA *garīšāte* is derived from the root QRŠ, the form of the word, according to Geers’ law, is expected to appear as *krš* not as *grš*. Hence, the evidence points to a borrowing from Aramaic into NA.

Also helpful are the graphic renderings of non-Assyrian phonemes in Neo-Assyrian transcriptions of West-Semitic names, which can be used to corroborate the phonological conclusions drawn from other data. The following correlations

<sup>77</sup> See F.W. Geers, “The Treatment of Emphatics in Akkadian,” *JNES* 4 (1945), pp. 65–67; GAG § 51e. See also J.H. Greenberg, “The patterning of Root Morphemes in Semitic,” *Word* 6 (1950), pp. 162–181.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. GAG § 51e, where *š* before *q* becomes *s* in *sīqum* “narrow, tight” (cf. Ar. حَنِيق).

<sup>79</sup> See A. Ungnad, *Akkadian Grammar* (Atlanta 1992), § 21a.

<sup>80</sup> See GAG, *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> In Neo-Assyrian the dissimilation of two similar emphatics *q* may occur in some nouns, i.e., (*q...q* > *k...q*), e.g., *kaqquru* “ground.” See Hämeen-Anttila, SAAS XIII, § 2.2 and § 2.3, d).

duced by Parpola from *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (PNA), are important:<sup>82</sup>

Table 3: Graphic renderings of non-Assyrian phonemes in Neo-Assyrian transcriptions of West-Semitic names:<sup>83</sup>

W.Sem.	NA	W.Sem.	NA
/e/	<a> or <e/i>	/d/	<d> or <z>
/o/	<u>	/š/ <sup>84</sup>	<q>
/w/	<u> or <m>	/h/	<Ø> or <h>
/y/	<i>	/ḥ/	<h>
		/ʿ/	<Ø>, <'>, <q> or <h>
		/ġ/	<q> or <h>
		/s/	<š>
		/ś/	<s> or <lt>
		/š/	<s>
		/t/	<t> or <š>

### 1.6.2 Morphological criterion

The morphological criterion is also useful in identifying loanwords. As units, loanwords are usually not analyzable in the borrowing language, whereas their corresponding source words in the donor languages may sometimes be a complex or a phrase whose internal structure is lost after entering the recipient language.<sup>85</sup> For instance, the Akkadian word *malāḫu(m)* “boatman, sailor,” is considered to be a loan from the Sumerian word <sup>(lū)</sup>MÁ.LAḪ<sub>4/5</sub> “sailor,” which consists of two words, namely MÁ “boat,” and LAḪ<sub>4/5</sub> “to drive along.” Hence, the Sumerian word is a compound consisting of two morphemes, but its compound nature was no longer recognized when the word entered the Akkadian language as a monomorphemic word, i.e., *malāḫu(m)*, and consequently it was no longer analyzable by the native speakers of Akkadian. It stands to reason that if a word is attested in two languages and is phonologically and semantically similar, but as a unit is only analyzable as a morphological complex in one of the languages, then we have a good indication that the word was borrowed by the language where it is morphologically not analyzable as a complex unit, and where its

<sup>82</sup> See S. Parpola, “Guidelines of the Transcription System,” in K. Radner, *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, Vol. 1/I* (Helsinki 1998), pp. xxii–xxvii, esp. p. xxiv. Cf. F.M. Fales, “On Aramaic Onomastics in the Neo-Assyrian Period,” *OrAnt* 16 (1977): 41–68; idem, AECT, pp. 47–74.

<sup>83</sup> M.P. Streck points out that this Table conceals another important phonological criterion for the establishment of Aramaic loans in NA: the preservation of /ʾ/ (in certain environments), /h/, /ḥ/, /ʿ/ and /ġ/, phonemes lost in Akkadian (personal communication).

<sup>84</sup> Note that S. Parpola used /d/ which here is referred to by /š/.

<sup>85</sup> See M. Haspelmath, “Lexical Borrowing: Concepts and Issues,” in M. Haspelmath & U. Tadmor (eds.), *Loanwords in the World’s Languages: A Comparative Handbook* (Berlin 2009), p. 37.

internal structure instead was lost after the borrowing and it is conceived by the native speakers as a monomorphemic unit.<sup>86</sup>

In our case, a good example is the NA word *akê* “so,” which is borrowed from Aramaic הַכִּי “so.” The Aramaic word consists of the following compound: הַכִּי > הַכִּן > הַכִּי, i.e., the interjection הַכִּי “behold!” and the adverb הַכִּי “so, thus,” with elision of the final *n*. Here, the most explicit feature which points to a borrowing from Aramaic into NA is that the Aramaic source word is an analyzable complex, but as a single unit its internal structure was lost after entering NA. In other words, the Aramaic source word is a compound consisting of two morphemes, but its compound nature was no longer recognizable when the word entered NA as a monomorphemic word, i.e., *akê*.

Another Akkadian sound change which in turn affects the nominal pattern and is expected to provide evidence of borrowing, is the dissimilation of the initial *m* of the nominal preformative *m<sup>a</sup>/e-* (except for *mu-*) to *n* and its becoming *n<sup>a</sup>/e-* when prefixed to roots containing a labial radical according to the so-called “Barth’s law,”<sup>87</sup> giving rise to the following development: *maPRaS* > *naPRaS*, e.g., *\*markabtu(m)* > *narkabtu(m)* “chariot”; *\*mapharu(m)* > *napharu(m)* “total.” Hence, any noun in NA that has the pattern *maPRaS* instead of the expected *naPRaS* must be a borrowing into NA. A good example is the NA word *madbar* “desert,” which most likely is borrowed from Aramaic.

### 1.6.3 Semantic criterion

As for the semantic criterion, the meaning of the words and their cultural, geographical and ecological associations often provide clues helpful to identifying loanwords and revealing their origin and the donor language. In our study, as explained above, this concerns the Neo-Assyrian words that have cognates in Aramaic and may have obtained an extension or change of meaning by developing a new sense of the Neo-Assyrian lexical units under the influence of their Aramaic cognates. In other words, it involves the extension or change in the meaning of an established Neo-Assyrian word to accommodate a new meaning acquired from its Aramaic cognate. This is designated here as semantic loan.

### 1.6.4 Source words

An important reason for suspecting a word to be a loan is when the word lacks an etymology, i.e., has no source word or etymon in the language.<sup>88</sup> If a word has no

<sup>86</sup> See L. Campbell, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (Edinburgh 2004), § 3.5.2.

<sup>87</sup> See J. Barth, “Das Nominalpräfix *na* im Assyrischen,” *ZA* 2 (1887), pp. 111ff; W.C. Delsman, “Das Barth’sche Gesetz und Lehnwörter,” *UF* 11 (1979), pp. 187f; GAG § 31b and § 56b; Kaufman, AIA, p. 20.

<sup>88</sup> See M. Haspelmath, “Lexical Borrowing: Concepts and Issues,” in M. Haspelmath & U. Tadmor (eds.), *Loanwords in the World’s Languages: A Comparative Handbook* (Berlin 2009), p. 44; D. Crystal (ed.), *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages* (Cambridge 1992), p. 128 s.v. etymology.

reasonable etymology within Akkadian, but does have one in Aramaic, then there is a good chance that the word is borrowed from the latter. Hence, if a word is derived from a root attested in Aramaic but the same root is unattested in Akkadian, then we have a good indication that the word was borrowed from Aramaic into Neo-Assyrian. However, if the same root also exists in other West-Semitic languages, and there is no specific reason to attribute the source word to a specific West-Semitic language, then it is more likely that the word was borrowed from Aramaic, because the language contact between Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic was more intensive.

### 1.6.5 Chronology

As regards chronology, unlike native words, loanwords cannot be traced back to the earliest stages of the history of a recipient language. Of course, our judgment in this regard always depends on how much we know about the history of the recipient language. For the purpose of our study, it is important to know when the earliest Aramaic loanwords are expected to appear in the Akkadian cuneiform texts. Words that are already attested in Middle Assyrian or Middle Babylonian, i.e., prior to 1000 B.C., can hardly be of Aramaic origin because we do not have historical records that attest to language contact between the aforementioned dialects of Akkadian and Aramaic.<sup>89</sup> When there is attestation of a word in the Akkadian textual sources from the period before the first millennium B.C., it means that we have a *precedent* attested in Akkadian from the period prior to language contact between the Neo and Late dialects of Akkadian and Aramaic. As a matter of fact, the earliest record that we have for Aramaic comes from ca. 925 B.C.<sup>90</sup> Words, however, which are attested only in Neo-Assyrian and Neo- and Late-Babylonian texts, and are well known as Aramaic words, prove often to be Aramaic loanwords.

Nevertheless, inferences derived from this method are more useful when coupled with other information. Caution must be taken since many previously unattested words in older dialects of Akkadian that emerge first in Neo-Assyrian and/or in Neo- and Late-Babylonian texts could, in fact, be genuine Akkadian words that were known in the earlier dialects of the language but happened to have vanished from those older dialects and were only preserved in Neo-Assyrian and/or in Neo- and Late-Babylonian, or are only accidentally unknown to us so far. However, these new words could simply be new innovations, as new lexical items, produced by the Neo-Assyrian and Neo- and Late-Babylonian speakers/scribes and borrowed into other languages including Aramaic.<sup>91</sup>

Also, morpheme chronology, as an indicator of loanwords, is important in many etymological inquiries. According to the reconstruction of historical grammar, the more difficult reading of a word in a text is the stronger. That is to say, the word with the more unusual form in a text is expected to be the original.

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<sup>89</sup> See von Soden, *Or* 35 (1966), pp. 3f.

<sup>90</sup> See under *Old Aramaic* in Section 1.8 below and the references provided there.

<sup>91</sup> See von Soden, *Or* 35 (1966), p. 2.

For example, the independent first person plural nominative pronoun *nēnu* “we,” in Old Assyrian and *nīnu* “we,” in Old Babylonian is also attested as *anēnu* in Neo-Assyrian and as *anīnu* in Neo- and Late-Babylonian. In Aramaic the corresponding word is *ʾnḥn*. Accordingly, the expected reconstruction of the PS word would be *\*ʾnḥn*. Since the forms *nēnu/nīnu* are to be considered to be younger than *anēnu/anīnu* on the basis of morphemic development, the fact that *anēnu/anīnu* appears later from the point of chronological attestation can only be accounted for if they are considered to be a borrowing from Aramaic or from another Semitic language, if possible.<sup>92</sup>

### 1.6.6 Distribution of the words

The distribution of the suspected loanword is an important indicator in deciding the direction of borrowing.<sup>93</sup> When a word existing in Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic is suspected of being a loan, but the word is common in Aramaic, or is attested in most of its major dialects, but is not attested in the other dialects of Akkadian other than Neo-Assyrian, then the evidence points strongly to a borrowing from Aramaic.

If the word is only attested in one dialect of Aramaic, but has cognates with regular sound correspondences across the other West-Semitic languages, and at the same time is not attested in the other dialects of Akkadian other than Neo-Assyrian, then there is a good chance that the word is borrowed from Aramaic into Neo-Assyrian.

On the other hand, if the word is only found in Neo-Assyrian and a single dialect of Aramaic, the borrowing could be in either direction.

### 1.6.7 Criteria used in rejecting some previous proposals

A previous Aramaic loanword proposal can be rejected for one specific reason or a combination of different reasons. The criteria used in this study for rejecting some of the previously proposed Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian are as follows:

a) If there is attestation of the word in the Akkadian sources from the period before the first millennium B.C. This means that we have a precedent attested in the Akkadian textual sources from the periods prior to language contact between Akkadian and Aramaic i.e., in Oakk, OA, OB, MA and MB.<sup>94</sup>

b) If an Akkadian etymology is available, a loanword proposal is rejected, because then we have an Akkadian etymon as a source word.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> See the discussion below s.v. *anēnu*; I.J. Gelb, “Notes on von Soden’s Grammar of Akkadian,” *BiOr* 11 (1955), p. 100, § 14a.

<sup>93</sup> Kaufman, *AlA*, p. 21.

<sup>94</sup> See von Soden, *Or* 35 (1966), p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> See Section 1.6.4. above.



c) When the Neo-Assyrian word in question is a “ghost word.” This means that the word originated in error during the copying, analyzing or learning of the language, and does not actually exist in Neo-Assyrian.<sup>96</sup>

d) When the Aramaic word in question is a “ghost word.” Likewise, this means that the word originated in error during the copying, analyzing or learning of the language, and it does not actually exist in Aramaic.

### 1.6.8 Utilizing later forms of Aramaic in this study

In order to identify Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian, we have to compare the lexicons of these two Semitic languages. In the first place, we have to compare the lexicons of Neo-Assyrian with that of Old and Official Aramaic, because these two stages of Aramaic were contemporaneous with Neo-Assyrian during the period of Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic language contact. In other words, we are expected to analyze and establish the relations between single Neo-Assyrian lexical items and similar Aramaic lexical items that occurred in the documentation of the same age.

Unfortunately, the textual material of Old and Official Aramaic is relatively small and its lexicon is far from extensive.<sup>97</sup> In fact many later languages/dialects of Aramaic are textually better attested and lexically richer than Old or Official Aramaic. Classical Syriac, for instance, is considered to be the best attested and richest as regards lexical inventory. Therefore, scholars take into consideration lexical data of the later Aramaic languages/dialects in their efforts to identify Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian and Neo- and Late-Babylonian. Von Soden, for instance, made use of later languages/dialects of Aramaic in his effort to identify Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian and Neo- and Late-Babylonian.<sup>98</sup> Abraham and Sokoloff state that they give only limited weight to the fact that the Aramaic language in the period under consideration is only poorly documented.<sup>99</sup>

Nevertheless, objections based on chronological considerations are expected to be voiced against utilizing Aramaic languages/dialects later than Old and Official Aramaic to identify loanwords in Neo- and Late-dialects of Akkadian. An example is Oppenheim’s belief that the words *zakakātu* and *zūkū* “glass or frit,” are West-Semitic in origin and were borrowed into Akkadian, seeing that these words are “well known” in later Aramaic. On this, Mankowski writes: “The fact that the word was common in later Aramaic is of little weight in establishing the direction of the lexical borrowing.”<sup>100</sup> Another example is Kutscher’s criticism of von Soden’s suggestion that the form of the NA word *ḥannūu*, “this,” with the initial *ḥ*, is due to the influence of Aramaic *hānā* “this.”<sup>101</sup> Kutscher points out

<sup>96</sup> For the term “ghost word,” see n. 18 above.

<sup>97</sup> See von Soden, *Or* 35 (1966), pp. 1, 3.

<sup>98</sup> See von Soden, *Or* 35 (1966), pp. 1–20; idem, *Or* 37 (1968), pp. 261–271; idem, *Or* 46 (1977), pp. 183–197.

<sup>99</sup> See Abraham & Sokoloff, *Reassessment*, p. 23.

<sup>100</sup> Mankowski, ALBH, p. 53.

<sup>101</sup> See E.Y. Kutscher, “Aramaic,” in T.A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current Trends in Linguistics*, 6. *Linguistics in South West Asia and North Africa* (The Hague 1970), p. 357.

that *hānā* “this,” is not attested in Aramaic, but only in Syriac, and adds: “Therefore it is at least problematic whether the Neo-Assyrian (before 600 B.C.) *ḥanniu* owes its existence to the S[yriac] *hānā* (several hundred years later).”<sup>102</sup>

The fact is, however, that our knowledge of the vocabulary of Old and Official Aramaic is incomplete, and we only know a small fraction of all the words that existed in Old and Official Aramaic. This means that we will not be able, based on the lexical inventory of the Old and Official Aramaic available to us at the present time, to identify some Neo-Assyrian words that might have been borrowed from Aramaic. In an effort to overcome this obstacle, our study therefore also makes use of lexical data from the later forms of Aramaic, i.e., those languages/dialects that are subsequent to Old and Official Aramaic. This approach finds support in the internal reconstruction (IR)<sup>103</sup> method applied to the lexicon and semantic system of a (modern) language with no written records or known cognates. According to the internal reconstruction method, the characteristics of a language provide information about its past. The method involves the comparison of different forms found in the language under the assumption that they originated from a single regular form.

In our case, we assume that if a certain word is not attested in the extant textual material of Old and Official Aramaic, but it is widely distributed and attested in different Aramaic languages/dialects later than the Old and Official Aramaic, then it is very likely that the word in question existed in the period prior to that in which it is attested.<sup>104</sup> However, the lexical material obtained from the later languages/dialects of Aramaic should be treated with caution when identifying Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian. We must, for instance, take into consideration the possibility of innovation and development, such as neologism or semantic development, which might have occurred in the later dialects of Aramaic.

## 1.7 A short account of the developmental phases of Akkadian

Akkadian is the oldest attested member of Semitic languages known to us. It branched away from an assumed Proto-Semitic (PS) language earlier than its known sister languages. It is the language of the Akkadians, Assyrians and Babylonians of ancient Mesopotamia, which roughly corresponds to the territory of modern Iraq. The designation “Akkadian,” which in cuneiform sources occurs as *akkadattu/akkadītu* in reference to the language, is derived from Akkade, the capital of king Sargon and his dynasty (ca. 2334–2150 B.C.) in southern Mesopotamia. The language has occasionally also been called *aššūrītu* “Assyrian,” in both ancient and modern times. However, scholars now generally

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. See also Abraham & Sokoloff, *Reassessment*, p. 34:79. Cf. the discussion on the word *ḥannūu*, pp. 132ff below.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. L. Campbell, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (Edinburgh 2004), pp. 122–183; W.P. Lehmann, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (London 1994), pp. 162–174.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Kaufman, AIA, p. 21.

use the term Akkadian to designate all forms of the Akkadian language, and restrict the other two terms to indicating its two main branches. It is not possible here to cover every aspect of the Akkadian language; rather the purpose is to give a short account of the history and stages of development of the language.<sup>105</sup>

During the third millennium B.C., in Mesopotamia, the speakers of Akkadian lived alongside the Sumerians. The latter spoke Sumerian, a language attested in texts from about 3000 B.C. The Sumerian language is not related to Semitic languages, and it has not been identified as genetically related to any other known language family. The Sumerian language and culture left an indelible imprint on the Akkadian language and culture. For instance, the cuneiform writing system invented by the Sumerians was borrowed by the speakers of Akkadian, being slightly modified and adapted to write Akkadian. Many of the cuneiform signs were originally pictographs. In addition, the cuneiform signs often have multiple sound values and the value of each sign used is determined by the context. The writing system consisted partly of syllabic signs such as *a*, *ab*, *bab*, *baba*, etc., and partly of word signs or logograms which bear certain meanings such as “king” or “old.” The number of the cuneiform signs was reduced by ca. 2000 B.C. to about 600 signs.

A large number of all kinds of documents written in different dialects of Akkadian have been discovered. They include lexical lists in Akkadian and Sumerian; synonym lists; political, legal, economic and administrative documents; official and private letters; building inscriptions; royal and private dedicatory inscriptions; monumental texts both royal and private, such as funerary and votive inscriptions; edicts; memoranda; omen-texts; literary compositions in the form of magic spells and incantations; proverbs; love poetry and mythological poetry; wisdom literature; laments; hymns; and prayers.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> For a historical development of Akkadian, see R.I. Caplice, “Languages (Akkadian),” in D.N. Freedman et al. (eds.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary: Volume 4, K–N* (New York 1992), pp. 170–173; G. Rubio, “Falling Trees and Forking Tongues: On the place of Akkadian and Eblaite within Semitic,” in L. Kogan (ed.), *Orientalia: Papers of the Oriental Institute*, 3 (Moscow 2003), pp. 152–189; A. George, “Babylonian and Assyrian: A History of Akkadian,” in J.N. Postgate (ed.), *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern* ([London] 2007), pp. 31–71; R. Hasselbach, “The Affiliation of Sargonic Akkadian with Babylonian and Assyrian: New Insights Concerning the Internal Sub-Grouping of Akkadian,” *JSS* 52 (2007): 21–43; B. Kouwenberg, “Akkadian in General,” in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), pp. 330–340. For linguistic characteristics of Akkadian, see G. Bergstässer, *Introduction to the Semitic Languages: Text Specimens and Grammatical Sketches* (Winona Lake 1983), pp. 25–35; G. Buccellati, “Akkadian,” in R. Hetzron (ed.), *The Semitic Languages* (London 1997), pp. 69–99; M.P. Streck, “Babylonian and Assyrian,” in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), pp. 359–396; idem, “Akkadisch,” in M.P. Streck (ed.), *Sprachen des Alten Orients* (Darmstadt 2021), pp. 65–102; J. Huehnergard & C. Woods, “Akkadian and Eblaite,” in R.D. Woodard (ed.), *The Ancient Languages of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Aksum* (Cambridge 2008), pp. 83–152. J.-P. Vita (ed.), *History of the Akkadian Language. Vol. 1: Linguistic Background and Early Periods. Vol. 2: The Second and First Millennia BCE. Afterlife.* Handbook of Oriental Studies, Vol. 152/2. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2021.

<sup>106</sup> For a full survey of Akkadian texts and discussions of texts, see R. Borger, *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur*, 3 vols., (Berlin 1967–1975), which includes the bibliography of all Akkadian and Sumerian texts published in journals and monographs through the end of 1973. Further texts and discussions of texts published since 1973 appear in the “Register Assyriologie” of the periodical *Archiv für Orientforschung* (*AfO*), as well as in the annual “Keilschriftbibliographie” in the journal *Orientalia* (*Or*).

These records were mostly written on clay tablets which withstood destruction, unlike documents written on perishable material such as papyrus and parchment. For this reason and because of its abundance, the textual documentation written in Akkadian is considered to be the most extensive among any ancient Semitic language. The significance of the Akkadian language for comparative Semitic studies and for the knowledge of languages in general has been amply recognized in recent years.

Akkadian is closely related to Eblaite, the language of the ancient Syrian city of Ebla, which, according to some scholars, might be classified as an early dialect or sub-branch of Akkadian.<sup>107</sup> Both are usually classified as East Semitic. They are contrasted to all the other members of the family, which together form the West-Semitic group. The latter is divided in turn into two main subgroups, namely South Semitic, which consists of South Arabian and Ethiopian (Ge'ez and Amharic), and Central Semitic, which in turn is divided into two subgroups, namely North Arabian and Northwest Semitic. The latter includes Ugaritic, Canaanite (Hebrew and Phoenician), and Aramaic.<sup>108</sup> The most salient feature of the Semitic languages, in comparison with other inflected languages, is that the meanings of words are bound up with a "root," usually consisting of three, though less often two or four, consonantal phonemes or "radicals." Each root, on the other hand, has either a short or a long root vowel. The most conspicuous feature of Akkadian vis-à-vis other Semitic languages is its reduced phonemic inventory, which is probably due to Sumerian influence. In addition, Akkadian displays subject-object-verb (SOV) word order, again probably due to Sumerian substratum influence, whereas the usual Semitic word order is either verb-subject-object (VSO) or subject-verb-object (SVO).

Texts written entirely in Akkadian are attested from ca. 2350 B.C. The latest known datable Akkadian text comes from around 75 A.D., and consists of an astronomical almanac.<sup>109</sup> During its long history of attestation, it was natural for the Akkadian language to undergo changes and evolve. Accordingly, modern scholars generally divide the Akkadian language in its homeland into two major branches, Assyrian and Babylonian.<sup>110</sup> The two major branches and their different

<sup>107</sup> See M. Krebernik, "The Linguistic Classification of Eblaite: Methods, Problems, and Results," in J.S. Cooper & G.M. Schwartz (eds.), *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-First Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference* (Winona Lake 1996), pp. 233–249; J. Huehnergard & C. Woods, "Akkadian and Eblaite," in R.D. Woodard (ed.), *The Ancient Languages of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Aksum* (Cambridge 2008), pp. 83–152. Cf. J. Tropper, "Eblaitisch und die Klassifikation der semitischen Sprachen," in G.J. Selz (ed.), *Festschrift für Burkhard Kienast zu seinem 70. Geburtstag dargebracht von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen* (Münster 2003), pp. 647–657. For a description of the Eblaite and Sargonic Akkadian within the history of the Akkadian language, see M.P. Streck, "Eblaite and Old Akkadian," in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), pp. 340–359.

<sup>108</sup> Based on the evidence available on Semitic languages, scholars have been led to different classifications of the Semitic languages. See J. Huehnergard, "Semitic Languages," in J.M. Sasson et al. (eds.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (Massachusetts 2006), pp. 2117–2134; idem, "Features of Central Semitic," in A. Gianto (ed.), *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran* (Rome 2005), pp. 155–203.

<sup>109</sup> See M.J. Geller, "The last Wedge," *ZA* 87 (1997), p. 45.

<sup>110</sup> For the understanding that neither the Babylonian nor the Assyrian dialect is a direct, lineal descendant of Old Akkadian, see W. Sommerfeld, "Bemerkungen zur Dialektgliederung

stages distinguish themselves linguistically from each other and from Old Akkadian by a number of phonological, morphological and lexical differences.<sup>111</sup> Scholars distinguish different stages of the development of Akkadian as follows:

*Old Akkadian* (Oakk.) ca. 2400–2000 B.C.: The oldest stage of the Akkadian language is attested in personal names occurring in Old Sumerian texts of the Fara period, ca. 2600 B.C.<sup>112</sup> Texts written entirely in Oakk are only available from the time of the dynasty of Akkad (ca. 2350–2150 B.C.).<sup>113</sup> The writing system in this period was not yet able to express the Akkadian phonemes, as it would be modified to do later. For instance, distinguishing graphically between initially occurring homorganic voiced and voiceless stops, such as in the syllables *da*, *ta* and *ta*, was not yet possible because the same sign was used to express these syllables. Neither consonant doubling nor vowel length was normally expressed, and the aleph sign that later was used to represent the glottal stop in combination with a vowel was not yet developed. The importance of the Old Akkadian texts for historical linguistics as well as for comparative Semitic studies lies in the fact that they reflect early phonological and morphological distinctions of Akkadian that were lost in later periods; for example, the case endings generally include a final *-m* denoting the so-called “mimation.” The original Semitic diphthong *ai* was monophthongized and became *ē*, i.e., *\*baitum* > *bētum* “house,” and *au* became *ū*, i.e., *\*mautum* > *mūtum* “death.” Further distinctive features of Old Akkadian that later would no longer be productive are the use of the dual declension and the still uncontracted vowels, which would later undergo the process of contraction.<sup>114</sup> However, because of the relatively small size of the Old Akkadian corpus, many grammatical forms remain so far unattested.

*Old Babylonian* (OB) ca. 2000–1500 B.C.: This dialect is well attested, especially for the language of the laws of Hammurabi (1792–1750 B.C.). During the period of Hammurabi, and immediately before and after, a careful chancery style of writing Akkadian was established which left a lasting impression on the writing of royal and private inscriptions. Some Old Babylonian literary texts

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Altakkadisch, Assyrisch und Babylonisch,” in G.J. Selz, (ed.), *Festschrift für Burkhard Kienast: zu seinem 70. Geburtstag dargebracht von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen* (Münster 2003), pp. 569–586; idem, *Untersuchungen zum Altakkadischen* (unpublished Habilitation, Münster 1987).

<sup>111</sup> See GAG § 188–196, for the different characteristics of the main dialects of Akkadian.

<sup>112</sup> For an opinion on the place of Ur III Akkadian and its relationship with Old Akkadian, see A. George, “Babylonian and Assyrian: A History of Akkadian,” in J.N. Postgate (ed.), *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern* ([London] 2007), p. 42. For the understanding that Ur III Akkadian belongs to and represents an early level of the linguistic development of the Babylonian dialect of Akkadian, cf. M. Hilgert, *Akkadisch in der Ur III-Zeit* (Münster 2002); idem, “New Perspectives in the Study of Third Millennium Akkadian,” *Cuneiform Digital Library Journal* 4 (2003). Online 15/09/2022:

[https://cdli.ucla.edu/file/publications/cdlj2003\\_004.pdf](https://cdli.ucla.edu/file/publications/cdlj2003_004.pdf)

<sup>113</sup> See R.I. Caplice, “Languages (Akkadian),” in D.N. Freedman et al. (eds.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary: Volume 4, K–N* (New York 1992), p. 171.

<sup>114</sup> For the grammar of Old Akkadian, see I. Gelb, *Old Akkadian Writing and Grammar* (Chicago 1961); R. Hasselbach, *Sargonic Akkadian: A Historical and Comparative Study of the Syllabic Texts* (Wiesbaden 2005).

were composed in the so-called “hymn-epic dialect,”<sup>115</sup> which was to remain in use as the literary standard. Old Babylonian is generally considered the classical state of the Akkadian language. Three sub-dialects can be distinguished within Old Babylonian, namely the dialects of North and South Babylonian and the dialect of Mari.

The most salient features of Old Babylonian include the general preference for syllabic writing over logographic writing, and the fact that many signs that were in active use in Old Akkadian were no longer used. Double consonants were usually written out and new means were developed to represent the consonant aleph. The case endings generally include a final *-m*, as in Old Akkadian, denoting the so-called “mimation,” which in fact was nonfunctional and was dropped after the Old Babylonian period. The original Semitic diphthong *ai* was monophthongized as *ī*, i.e., *\*baitum* > *bītum* “house,” and *au* became *ū*, i.e., *\*mautum* > *mūtum* “death.”

*Old Assyrian* (OA) ca. 2000–1500 B.C.: Apart from a few royal inscriptions we know this dialect of Akkadian mainly from business documents, letters, and legal and economic documents which concern the business activities of Assyrian merchant colonies in eastern part of Anatolia, particularly from the site of Kanesh, modern Kültepe. Notably, the Old Assyrian dialect exhibits closer ties to Old Akkadian than does the Old Babylonian. Its writing system has a more limited inventory of signs than that of Old Babylonian and is more archaic in its external form. As in Old Akkadian, the initial homorganic voiced and voiceless stops are still represented by the same sign. A distinctive characteristic of the Assyrian dialect in all periods is the so-called Assyrian vowel harmony, whereby a short *a* in an open unstressed syllable is assimilated to the vowel of the following syllable. For example, the Babylonian word *išbatū* “they seized,” is written in Assyrian *išbutū*.<sup>116</sup> The original Semitic diphthong *ai* was monophthongized as *ē*, i.e., *\*baitum* > *bētum* “house,” and *au* became *ū*, i.e., *\*mautum* > *mūtum* “death.”

*Middle Babylonian* (MB) ca. 1500–1000 B.C.: Middle Babylonian is the dialect of Akkadian of the Kassite dominated Babylonia. It is somewhat sparsely attested compared with its predecessor and successors. It is for instance attested in inscribed boundary stones known as *kudurru*, which recorded the land granted by the king to his vassals. A salient feature of this dialect is its consonantal shifts; for instance, *š* before a dental becomes *l*, as in *ištēn* > *iltēn* “one”; in addition, the mimation was lost.<sup>117</sup>

In this period, Akkadian, particularly in its Babylonian form, was employed in international communications as a *lingua franca*. Texts written in Akkadian have been found in peripheral areas outside Mesopotamia in many sites such as Alalakh (Tell Aḩana); Hattusas, the capital of the Hittite empire (modern

<sup>115</sup> See W. von Soden, “Der hymnisch-epische Dialekt des Akkadischen,” *ZA* 40 and 41 (1931–1933), pp. 163–227 and 90–183; B.R.M. Groneberg, *Untersuchungen zum hymnisch-epischen Dialekt der altbabylonischen literarischen Texte* (Münster 1971).

<sup>116</sup> A thorough description of Old Assyrian is provided by K. Hecker, *Grammatik der Kültepe-Texte* (Rome 1968).

<sup>117</sup> For a detailed study of Middle Babylonian, see J. Aro, *Studien zur mittelbabylonischen Grammatik* (Helsinki 1955).

Boghazköy) in Turkey; Ugarit (Ras Shamra), Emar (Tell Meskeneh) and Qatna (Tell al-Mishrifeh) in modern Syria; the Egyptian royal archives of El-Amarna (ancient Akhetaten); the Elamite capital Susa; and the Hurrian center Nuzi near modern Kirkuk. All these texts betray the influences of the scribes' native languages.<sup>118</sup>

*Middle Assyrian* (MA) ca. 1500–1000 B.C.: This dialect is attested in a variety of genres, which include a set of harem decrees, tablets containing a Middle Assyrian law code, unique palace edicts that regulated conduct at the Assyrian court, and the Assyrian coronation ritual, all unearthed in the city of Assur. Distinctive characteristics of this dialect include consonantal shifts paralleling those of Middle Babylonian (for instance, *š* before a dental becomes *l*, as in *ištēn* > *iltēn* “one”) and loss of mimation. In contrast to Middle Babylonian, Middle Assyrian reflects the so-called Assyrian vowel harmony, and the initial *wa*- becomes *u*-. Many vowels are still uncontracted; in addition *qt* becomes *qī*.<sup>119</sup>

*Neo-Babylonian* (NB) ca. 1000–600 B.C.: This was the vernacular form of the southern dialect of Akkadian. It occurs mainly in letters, contracts, and economic, business and legal documents.<sup>120</sup> Monumental and literary texts were written in Standard Babylonian (SB). After the expansion of Assyrian hegemony over Babylonia and the destruction of Babylon by Sennacherib in 689 B.C., the Neo-Babylonian dialect was also employed at the imperial Assyrian court.<sup>121</sup> As in Assyria, during this period Aramaic started to gain a foothold in Babylonia and began replacing Akkadian as the vernacular language. Characteristic of NB is the confusion of the short-vowel endings, probably due to the influence of Aramaic.<sup>122</sup> Some changes in spelling conventions of NB are ascribed to the influence of Aramaic writing practices.<sup>123</sup>

*Neo-Assyrian* (NA) ca. 900–600 B.C.:<sup>124</sup> Around 900 B.C., the Assyrian branch of Akkadian reached the stage that is now designated as Neo-Assyrian.

<sup>118</sup> For further reading, see W.H. van Soldt, “Akkadian as a Diplomatic Language,” in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), pp. 405–415; D. Sivan, *Grammatical Analysis and Glossary of the Northwest Semitic Vocables in Akkadian Texts of the 15th–13th C.B.C. from Canaan and Syria* (Kevlaer 1984); J. Huehnergard, Review of “Northwest Semitic Vocabulary in Akkadian Texts,” by D. Sivan, *JAOS* 107 (1987), pp. 713–725. For references to works on different dialects of peripheral Akkadian, see A. George, “Babylonian and Assyrian: A History of Akkadian,” in J.N. Postgate (ed.), *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern* ([London] 2007), pp. 51–54.

<sup>119</sup> For a detailed study of Middle Assyrian grammar, see W. Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Grammatik des Mittelassyrischen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1971).

<sup>120</sup> For a study on an individual aspect of Neo-Babylonian, see M. Dietrich, “Untersuchungen zur Grammatik des Neubabylonischen. I. Die Neubabylonischen Subjunktionen,” in W. Röllig & M. Dietrich (eds.), *Lišān mithurti: Festschrift Wolfram Freiherr von Soden zum 19.4.1968 gewidmet von Schülern und Mitarbeitern* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969), pp. 65–99.

<sup>121</sup> The language of the Neo-Babylonian letters from Nineveh has been studied in N.R. Woodington, *A Grammar of the Neo-Babylonian Letters of the Kuyunjik Collection* (Ann Arbor 1985); J.M.C.T. Vaan, de “Ich bin ein Schwertklinge des Königs,” *die Sprache des Bēl-ibni* (Kevlaer 1995).

<sup>122</sup> See GAG § 192.

<sup>123</sup> See M.P. Streck, “Keilschrift und Alphabet,” in D. Borchers et al. (eds.), *Hieroglyphen – Alphabete – Schriftreformen. Studien zu Multiliteralismus, Schriftwechsel und Orthographieneuregelungen* (Göttingen 2001), pp. 77–97.

<sup>124</sup> For a bibliography of scholarly literature on Neo-Assyrian philology including monographs, articles and reviews dealing with Neo-Assyrian language and texts, see J. Hämeen-Anttila, “Bibliography of Neo-Assyrian (Post-War Period),” *SAAB* 1 (1987), pp. 73–92; K. Deller,

However, evidence from Assyrian provincial centers shows that the development of Middle Assyrian into Neo-Assyrian had already begun in the 11th century B.C.<sup>125</sup> Linguistic features anticipating Neo-Assyrian grammar and spelling are found in heavily Assyrianized Babylonian inscriptions belonging to Ashur-kettishir, who was king of Mari and a vassal of Tiglath-pileser I (1115–1077 B.C.).<sup>126</sup> From the same period a small archive of legal documents was unearthed at Giricano (ancient Dunnu-ša-Uzibi), located on the upper Tigris in south-eastern Turkey, and the language of the extant documents reveals a transitional dialect, part of which is already in Neo-Assyrian.<sup>127</sup>

The Neo-Assyrian texts come primarily from public archives and libraries excavated in Assyrian palaces, temples and private houses, and belong to the Neo-Assyrian period extending from ca. 900 B.C. to the end of the Assyrian Empire, ca. 600 B.C. However, texts written in this language stem overwhelmingly from the archives of the great institutions of state in the royal capitals Nineveh and Calah/Nimrud. The language is attested largely in letters; imperial, legal and administrative records; royal grants and decrees; officials' reports, particularly from astrologers and diviners; and oracular queries concerning state affairs. It was also used in treaties and loyalty oaths, and occasionally in literary compositions such as court poetry. Texts written in Neo-Assyrian are preserved in especially great numbers from the Sargonid era, particularly the period 721 to 645 B.C. Contemporary literary texts were composed in Standard Babylonian (SB). Even the Assyrian royal inscriptions of this period were written in Standard Babylonian except for a very few of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.), from whose time stems the earliest known text written in the Neo-Assyrian language and script.<sup>128</sup> This is an edict in which Ashurnasirpal II appoints Nergal-āpil-kūmū'a to supervise the transfer of the Assyrian capital from Assur to Calah.<sup>129</sup> The latest material written in Neo-Assyrian comes shortly after the fall of Nineveh and the demise of the imperial Assyrian power. It consists of some deeds of sale dated to the 2nd and 5th years

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"Bibliography of Neo-Assyrian – 1988 and Updates," *SAAB* 2 (1988), pp. 129–135; R. Mattila & K. Radner, "A Bibliography of Neo-Assyrian Studies (1988–1997)," *SAAB* 11 (1997), pp. 115–137; M. Luukko & S. Gaspa, "A Bibliography of Neo-Assyrian Studies (1998–2006)," *SAAB* 17 (2008), pp. 189–257; S. Gaspa, "A Bibliography of Neo-Assyrian Studies (2007–2012)," *SAAB* 19 (2011–2012), pp. 279–328. F.M. Fales, "Neo-Assyrian," in J.-P. Vita (ed.), *History of the Akkadian Language, Vol. 2, The Second and First Millennium BCE Afterlife* (Leiden 2021), pp. 1347–1395. For archaeological details on the majority of the excavation sites and the locations where the Neo-Assyrian archives and libraries were unearthed, and references to archaeological literature, see below, n. 137.

<sup>125</sup> For a study of the evolution of Middle Assyrian to Neo-Assyrian, see J.N. Postgate, "Middle Assyrian to Neo-Assyrian: The Nature of the Shift," in H. Waetzoldt & H. Hauptmann (eds.), *Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten* (Heidelberg 1997), pp. 159–168.

<sup>126</sup> See A. George, "Babylonian and Assyrian: A History of Akkadian," in J.N. Postgate (ed.), *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern* ([London] 2007), pp. 54f.

<sup>127</sup> See K. Radner, *Das mittelassyrische Tontafelarchiv von Giricano Dunnu-ša-Uzibi* (Turnhout 2004).

<sup>128</sup> See K. Rader, PNA 1/I, p. xii, n. 1. See also L. Kataja & R. Whiting, SAA XII 82 and 83. For a previous edition of SAA XII 82 and 83, see K. Deller & A.R. Millard, "Die Bestallungsurkunde des Nergal-āpil-kūmūja von Kalḫu," *BaM* 24 (1993): 217–242.

<sup>129</sup> The document was first published by Deller & Millard, *ibid.* For a re-edition of the document, see SAA XII 82, 83–84.



of the reign of the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 B.C.), which stem from the provincial capital Dur-Katlimmu (modern Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad), on the river Ḥābūr in northeast Syria,<sup>130</sup> as well as small group of documents related to the recording and distribution of provisions, which was found in the remains of an administrative archive from Nebuchadnezzar's South Palace in Babylon and is dated to the years 3–9 (or 3–6?) of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>131</sup> Some of the linguistic features that characterize Neo-Assyrian are as follows. Different vowels next to each other are now often contracted, but *ia*, *iu* and *ua* are still very often uncontracted. The consonantal combination *lt* (whether primarily or developed secondarily from *št*) becomes *ss*, for instance *aštapar* > *altapar* > *assapar* "I have sent."<sup>132</sup> In addition, *mt* becomes *nt* or *tt*. Probably under the influence of Aramaic, the preposition *ana* is often used as *nota accusativi*.<sup>133</sup>

Until now Neo-Assyrian texts have been unearthed at 28 different sites (see fig. 1 below). The majority of the texts were excavated in the Assyrian heartland, the northern part of today's Iraq, in the ancient cities and towns of Aššūr (Qal'at Sherqat), Nīnua (Kuyunjik and Nabi Yunus), Kalḫu (Calah/Nimrud), Dūr-Šarrukēn (Khorsabad), Imgur-Ellil (Balawat), Šibanība (Tell Billa), Tarbīšu (Sharif Khan), Bēt-Adad-erība (Tell Baqāq 2), and Zamaḥā (Tell al-Rimah). Other Neo-Assyrian texts were unearthed in the western provinces of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the sites of Ḥuzīrīna (Sultantepe), Gargamīs (Carchemish), Sam'al (Zinçirli), Tarzi (Tarsus), Gaziantep, Tušḫan (Ziyāret Tepe), Eğriköy (in the vicinity of Yeşil Hisar near Kayseri),<sup>134</sup> the surroundings of Mardin (Şariza, Erzen and Nabula, i.e., modern Girnavaz), Kullānā (Tell Tayinat), and Kazane Höyük in the vicinity of Urfa, all situated in Turkey, as well as at sites located in Syria such as Dūr-Katlimmu (Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad), Gūzāna (Tell Ḥalaf), Til-Barsip/Tarbusībi (Tell Aḫmar), Burmar'īna (Tell Shiukh Fawqāni), Kār-Aššūr-nāširapli (Tell Masaikh), Rasm et-Tanjara (Syrian Tell in the Ghāb), and Ma'allanāte.<sup>135</sup> From the State of Israel, Neo-Assyrian texts have been found in Gazru (Gezer, Gazara), Sāmīrīna (Samaria), and Tel Hadid.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>130</sup> These documents are now published jointly by J.A. Brinkman, F.M. Fales, H. Kühne, J.N. Postgate & W. Röllig, in *SAAB* 7 (1993), pp. 75–150.

<sup>131</sup> See O. Pedersén, "Neo-Assyrian Texts from Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon: A Preliminary Report," in M. Luukko et al. (eds.), *Of God(s), Trees, Kings, and Scholars: Neo-Assyrian and Related Studies in Honour of Simo Parpola* (Helsinki 2009), pp. 193–199.

<sup>132</sup> For grammatical studies of Neo-Assyrian, see S. Ylvisaker, *Zur babylonischen und assyrischen Grammatik, eine Untersuchung auf Grund der Briefe aus der Sargonidenzeit* (Leipzig 1912); K. Deller, *Lautlehre des Neuassyrischen* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Wien 1959); J. Hämeen-Anttila, *A Sketch of Neo-Assyrian Grammar* (Helsinki 2000); M. Luukko, *Grammatical Variation in Neo-Assyrian* (Helsinki 2004). For some characteristics of Neo-Assyrian, see GAG § 196.

<sup>133</sup> See above, p. 7 and n. 40.

<sup>134</sup> This is a Neo-Assyrian document of sale of fields found at Eğriköy near Yeşil Hisar, Kayseri, cited in V. Donbaz, "Some Neo-Assyrian Contracts from Girnavaz and Vicinity," *SAAB* 2 (1988), p. 6.

<sup>135</sup> The site of Ma'allanāte (Aramaic *m'lnh*), has not yet been identified, but the name of this city comes from an archive of clay tablets which was bought at the antiquities market, and according to the texts the archive originates from Ma'allanāte. The approximate location of the city is between Harran (Harrānu) and Gozan (Gūzāna), probably in the Balikh region. See O. Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East 1500–300 B.C.* (Bethesda 1998), p. 181; K. Radner, *Die neuassyrischen Privatrechtsurkunden als Quelle für Mensch und Umwelt* (Helsinki 1997), pp. 14f;

Almost all of the extant texts are written on clay tablets in cuneiform script and many are dated according to the eponym dating system, specifically the *limmu*-system, which makes it possible for modern scholars to assign a rather reliable dating to the texts. At present, the large majority of the Neo-Assyrian texts are published both in copy and reliable text editions.<sup>137</sup>

*Standard Babylonian* (SB) ca. 1500–600 B.C.: After the downfall of the Hammurabi dynasty (ca. 1995 B.C.), and during the Kassite period, Old Babylonian was considered to be the classical form of the Akkadian language, and Babylonian and Assyrian scribes began to compose texts in a new, standardized literary dialect, the so-called Standard Babylonian (in German *jungbabylonisch* (jB)), which was modeled on the Old Babylonian literary language. In contrast with Old Babylonian, Standard Babylonian exhibits the loss of mimation in noun and pronoun. The contraction of the vowel sequences *ia*, *ea* is normal, for example *qibiam* > *qibā* “say (m. sg.) to me”; *išmeā* > *išmā* “they (f. pl.) heard.” As for *š* it usually appears as *l* before the dentals *d*, *t* and *ṭ*. The initial *w* is lost, i.e., OB *wardum* > SB *ardu* “male slave.”<sup>138</sup> Standard Babylonian continued to be the language of almost all literary works and royal inscriptions until the end of the Akkadian literary production. The literature of the Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian periods, as well as a great majority of the Assyrian royal inscriptions, are written in Standard Babylonian. Other compositions in Standard Babylonian include hymns and poetic prayers, wisdom literature, omens, and exorcistic texts. The texts written in Standard Babylonian

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F.M. Fales, “The Use and Function of Aramaic Tablets,” in G. Bunnens (ed.), *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (Louvain 2000), p. 111.

<sup>136</sup> For an Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian period with a gazetteer and Overview Maps (1:2,000,000 scale) and Detail Maps (1:1,000,000 scale), see S. Parpola & M. Porter, *The Helsinki Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian Period* (Helsinki 2001). The *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* contains two maps of the Neo-Assyrian Empire: K. Kessler, “Assyria until 800 B.C.” *TAVO* B IV 10 (1987) at a scale of 1:2,000,000 as well as K. Kessler, “The Neoassyrian Empire (720–612 B.C.) and the Neobabylonian Empire (612–539 B.C.)” *TAVO* B IV 13 (1991) at a scale of 1:4,000,000.

<sup>137</sup> For archaeological details on the majority of the excavation sites and the locations where the Neo-Assyrian archives and libraries were unearthed, and references to archaeological literature, see O. Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East 1500–300 B.C.* (Bethesda 1998), pp. 130–181. See also K. Radner, “Schreiberkonventionen im assyrischen Reich: Sprachen und Schriftsysteme,” in J. Renger (ed.), *Assur – Gott, Stadt und Land: 5. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 18. – 21. Februar 2004 in Berlin* (Wiesbaden 2011), p. 394 n. 32 and p. 395, map (Abb. 4); idem, “An Assyrian View on the Medes,” in G.B. Lanfranchi et al. (eds.), *Continuity of Empire (?): Assyria, Media, Persia* (Padova 2003), p. 53, n. 43. Note that the excavation site number 29 in Radner’s map (Abb. 4) refers to *Choga Gavaneh*, the ancient tell of Islamabad near Kermanshah in Iran, but should be discarded and not considered among the find-spot of Neo-Assyrian texts because the tablets and fragments from that site are Old Babylonian in date. See G. Beckman, Review of “*Assur – Gott, Stadt und Land: 5. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 18.–21. Februar 2004 in Berlin* (Wiesbaden 2011), by J. Renger, *JAOS* 132 (2012), p. 168. For the number of excavation sites of the Neo-Assyrian legal texts and references to the edited Neo-Assyrian texts for each site, see K. Radner, *Die neuassyrischen Privatrechtsurkunden als Quelle für Mensch und Umwelt* (Helsinki 1997), pp. 4–18. For a bibliography of scholarly literature on Neo-Assyrian philology including monographs, articles and reviews dealing with Neo-Assyrian language and texts, see above, n. 124.

<sup>138</sup> For grammatical features of Standard Babylonian, see GAG § 191; J. Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian* (Atlanta 1997), pp. 595–598. The standard treatment of Standard Babylonian is by E. Reiner, *A Linguistic Analysis of Akkadian* (The Hague 1966).

increase markedly in number in the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. Assurbanipal library at Nineveh is a rich source of literature written in Standard Babylonian in particular from about 625 B.C. Important literary works such as the creation epic *Enūma eliš* and the longer and later version of Gilgamesh epic are written in Standard Babylonian, as are other narrative poems such as Anzû, Atram-hasis, and Etana. Although this dialect is quite distinct from the other contemporary dialects, i.e., Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian, language patterns of these dialects frequently intruded and influenced Standard Babylonian.

*Late-Babylonian* (LB) ca. 600 B.C.–A.D. 70:<sup>139</sup> There is no consensus among scholars concerning when this stage of Babylonian distinguished itself from Neo-Babylonian. However, the Babylonian language written during the period of Alexander the Great and his successors, as well as during the reign of the Seleucid kings and the Parthian dynasty of Iran, differs from the 7th-century language, for which reason it is designated by scholars as Late-Babylonian.<sup>140</sup> It is preserved largely in administrative records from Babylon which continued to be in use as late as the early 1st century B.C. From the Hellenistic period, the majority of the extant texts have astronomical content.

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<sup>139</sup> See a sketch of historical development of Akkadian, in G. Buccellati, *A Structural Grammar of Babylonian* (Wiesbaden 1996), pp. 1f. For a study of this dialect, see M.P. Streck, *Zahl und Zeit: Grammatik der Numeralia und des Verbalsystems im Spätbabylonischen* (Groningen 1995).

<sup>140</sup> See A. George, "Babylonian and Assyrian: A History of Akkadian," in J.N. Postgate (ed.), *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern* ([London] 2007), p. 61.

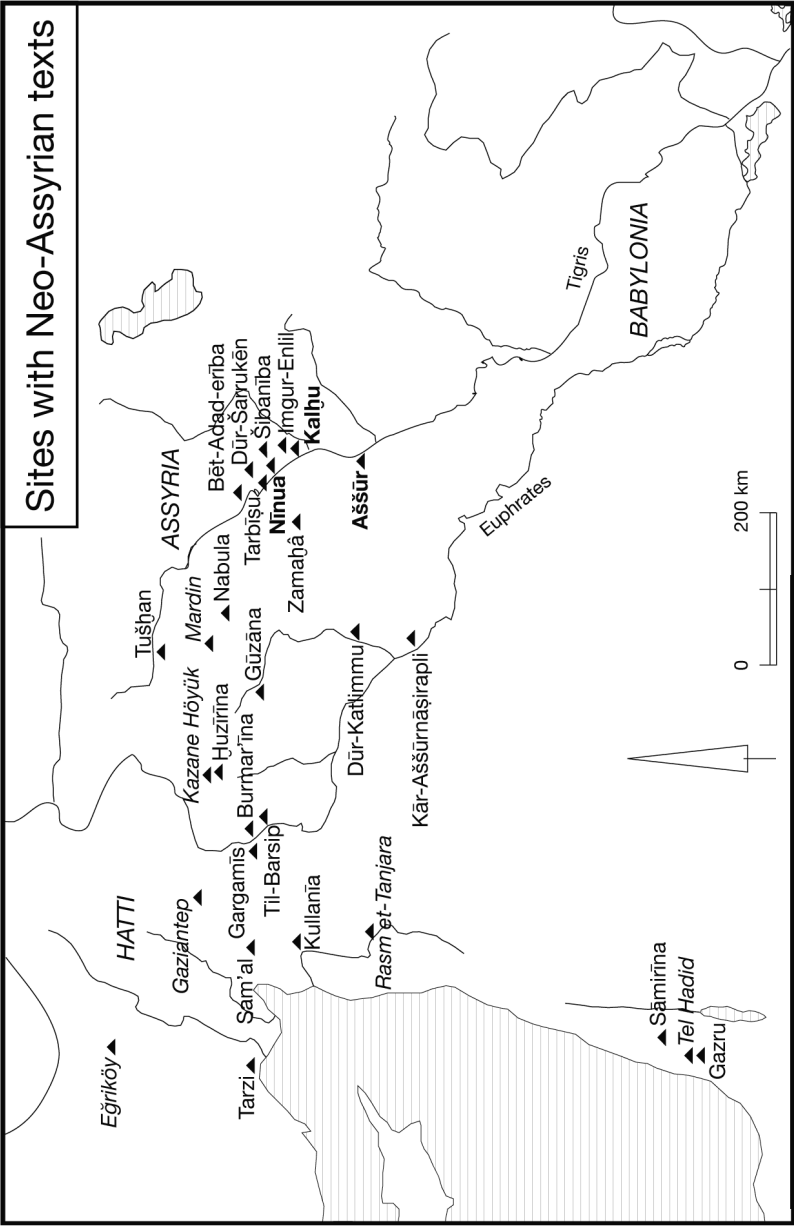


Figure 1. A map of the excavation sites with Neo-Assyrian texts.

## 1.8 A short account of the developmental phases of Aramaic

Aramaic belongs to what is usually called the Northwest Semitic subfamily. Besides Aramaic, this includes Hebrew, Ugaritic, Phoenician, Moabite, Ammonite and Edomite. Since the mid 1970s, however, following Hetzron's classification,<sup>141</sup> which was subsequently modified by other scholars, the Northwest Semitic languages have been considered to be a subgroup of Central Semitic, which also includes Arabic.<sup>142</sup> Central Semitic, in turn, is regarded as a branch of West-Semitic.<sup>143</sup> Aramaic is the best- and longest-attested member of the Northwest Semitic subfamily. It developed separately from its cognate languages and is first attested in the old Aramaic inscriptions from the early 9th century B.C., which mostly come from the independent Aramean city-states in Syria. The inscriptions were written in the Phoenician alphabet script, which the Arameans borrowed and slightly improved to suit their own language.

The extant Aramaic textual material is written on stone, leather, papyrus, ostrakon, or is incised or written in ink on clay tablets. The textual material consists of commemorative and dedicatory inscriptions, treaties, letters, contracts, official documents, seals, bills and legends written on weights.

However, from ca. 800 B.C. Aramaic became alongside Akkadian, the language of administration of the Neo-Assyrian empire. Later, it became the language of administration of the Neo-Babylonian empire as well. During the Achaemenid Persian empire, after Cyrus II conquered Babylon in 539 B.C., Aramaic became the main vehicle of communication in the empire.

The history of the developmental phases of Aramaic is somewhat problematic, because there is no generally accepted division of the different stages of the language. Nevertheless, the phases presented below are, for the most part, based on Kaufman's classification which better suits the purpose of our discussion, especially because it is adopted by the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon (CAL),<sup>144</sup> which is frequently cited below for extracting and verifying Aramaic lexical data. The different Aramaic dialects are divided into several periods and groups based on both chronology and geography as follows:<sup>145</sup>

<sup>141</sup> See R. Hetzron, "Two Principles of Genetic Reconstruction," *Lingua* 38 (1976), pp. 89–108.

<sup>142</sup> See J. Huehnergard, "Features of Central Semitic," in A. Gianto (ed.), *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran* (Rome 2005), pp. 155–203.

<sup>143</sup> See Huehnergard, *ibid.*, p. 162, fig. 3.

<sup>144</sup> See S.A. Kaufman, "Aramaic," in D.N. Freedman et al. (eds.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, K–N (New York 1992), pp. 173–178; *idem*, "Aramaic," in R. Hetzron (ed.), *The Semitic Languages* (London 1997), pp. 114–130; *idem*, "The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project and Twenty-First Century Aramaic Lexicography: Status and Prospects," in H. Gzella & M.L. Folmer (eds.), *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting* (Wiesbaden 2008), pp. 353–371. See also CAL.

<sup>145</sup> For further scholarly literature on history of the development of Aramaic, see J.C. Greenfield, "The Dialects of Early Aramaic," *JNES* 37 (1978), pp. 93–99; *idem*, "Aramaic and Its Dialects," in H.H. Paper (ed.), *Jewish Languages: Theme and Variations, Proceedings of Regional Conferences of the Association for Jewish Studies Held at The University of Michigan and New York University in March–April 1975* (Cambridge 1978), pp. 29–43; J.A. Fitzmyer, "The Phases of the Aramaic Language," in J.A. Fitzmyer (ed.), *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays* (Chico 1979), pp. 57–84; K. Beyer, *The Aramaic Language: Its Distribution and Subdivisions* (Göttingen 1986); J. Huehnergard, "What is Aramaic," *ARAM* 7 (1995), pp. 261–282; M.L. Folmer, *The Aramaic*

*Old Aramaic* (OAram.), ca. 900–600 B.C.: The first extant Aramaic texts come from the early first millennium B.C. They consist mainly of royal inscriptions connected to different Aramean city-states. The textual corpus of this period preserves the earliest known forms of the language and reveals minor dialectal differences corresponding roughly to geographic regions. The material evidence of this phase comes from Syria, southern Turkey, northern Palestine and Mesopotamia, and consists of Bir Hadad inscriptions, the Zakkūr inscription, the Sefire inscriptions, Nērab inscriptions, eight Bar-Rakkāb inscriptions, the Tell Halaf inscription, the so-called Assur Ostrakon, the Tell Fekherye Assyrian-Aramaic bilingual inscription on a statue, and the Deir ‘Alla fragmentary text from Jordan, as well as brief economic and legal texts and endorsements incised on clay tablets from Mesopotamia. However, during this phase the Aramaic-speaking people were scattered from Egypt to Lower Mesopotamia as a result of the deportation policies implemented by the rulers of the Neo-Assyrian empire.<sup>146</sup> Also during this period, from ca. 800 B.C. onward, Aramaic was utilized alongside Akkadian as the language of administration in the Neo-Assyrian

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*Language in the Achaemenid Period: A Study in Linguistic Variation* (Leuven 1995); Lipiński, *Semitic Languages*, pp. 61–70; J. Tropper, “Dialektvielfalt und Sprachwandel im frühen Aramäischen, Soziolinguistische Überlegungen,” in P.M. Michèle Daviau et al. (eds.), *The World of the Aramaeans III: Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (Sheffield 2001), pp. 213–222; G. Khan, “Aramaic and the Impact of Languages in Contact with it through the Ages,” in P.B. de la Peña et al. (eds.), *Lenguas en contacto: el testimonio escrito* (Madrid 2004), pp. 87–108; A. Millard, “Early Aramaic,” in J.N. Postgate (ed.), *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern* ([London] 2007), pp. 85–94; A. Lemaire, “Remarks on the Aramaic of Upper Mesopotamia in the Seventh Century B.C.,” in H. Gzella & M.L. Folmer (eds.), *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting* (Wiesbaden 2008), pp. 77–92; H. Gzella, “Aramaic in the Parthian Period: The Arsacid Inscriptions,” in H. Gzella & M.L. Folmer (eds.), *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting* (Wiesbaden 2008), pp. 107–130; O. Jastrow, “Old Aramaic and Neo-Aramaic: Some Reflections on Language History,” in H. Gzella & M.L. Folmer (eds.), *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting* (Wiesbaden 2008), pp. 1–10; S. Creason, “Aramaic,” in R.D. Woodard (ed.), *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia* (Cambridge 2008), pp. 108–144; F.M. Fales, “Old Aramaic,” in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), pp. 555–573; H. Gzella, “Imperial Aramaic,” in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), pp. 574–586; idem, “Late Imperial Aramaic,” in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), pp. 598–609; M. Folmer, “Imperial Aramaic as an Administrative Language of the Achaemenid Period,” in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), pp. 587–598; idem, “Old and Imperial Aramaic,” in H. Gzella (ed.), *Languages from the World of the Bible* (Boston 2011), pp. 128–159; Gzella, H., *A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam* (Leiden 2015). For an account of the research on Aramaic, see F. Rosenthal, *Die aramaische Forschung seit Th. Nöldeke’s Veröffentlichungen* (Leiden 1939); E.Y. Kutscher, “Aramaic,” in T.A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current Trends in Linguistics*, 6. *Linguistics in South West Asia and North Africa* (The Hague 1970), pp. 347–412; J.A. Fitzmyer & S.A. Kaufman, *An Aramaic Bibliography, Part I: Old, Official, and Biblical Aramaic* (Baltimore 1992); F.M. Fales, “Most Ancient Aramaic Texts and Linguistics: A Review of Recent Studies,” *Incontri Linguistici* 19 (1996), pp. 33–57.

<sup>146</sup> See S.A. Kaufman, “Aramaic,” in D.N. Freedman et al. (eds.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, K–N (New York 1992), p. 173; idem, “Aramaic,” in R. Hetzron (ed.), *The Semitic Languages* (London 1997), p. 114.

empire,<sup>147</sup> and was also used, at least in the West, as an international language of diplomacy in the final epoch of the empire.<sup>148</sup>

*Official Aramaic* (OffAr.), ca. 600–200 B.C.: During this period Aramaic spread throughout the territories conquered by the Neo-Babylonian empire, and under the rule of the Persian empire Aramaic spread from Upper Egypt to Asia Minor and eastward to the Indian subcontinent. Regrettably, only a small textual corpus is extant from this period because the vast majority of the administrative documents, records and letters pertaining to these empires were written on perishable material. Most of the Aramaic texts from this period come from Egypt, because the dry climate there helped preserve them from deterioration. The extant material consists of the correspondence of the Persian satrap of Egypt as well as the papyrus archives of the Jewish military garrison at Elephantine, which contain deeds of sale, marriage contracts and fragments of literary materials. The most characteristic feature of the language in this period is the emergence of a literary standard form of both the language and its orthography, which is usually designated by scholars as “Standard Aramaic.”

This phase of the language is also designated by some scholars as “Reichsaramäisch.” The label “Reichsaramäisch,” which is sometimes translated into English as “Imperial Aramaic,” was first coined in 1927 by Josef Markwart, a scholar of Iranian studies, especially for the sort of “chancery” Aramaic of the 7th century onward which was widely used in the Persian Empire.<sup>149</sup> Other scholars, however, have a different understanding of the term “Reichsaramäisch.” Fitzmyer, for instance, criticizes Markwart’s classification, saying: “But it seemed to suggest that the use of this sort of Aramaic began in the Persian period, whereas it was obviously in use already in the time of the Neo-Assyrian empire.”<sup>150</sup> Fales remarks: “In point of fact, the very concept of Imperial Aramaic as coinciding with the Aramaic of the Achaemenid empire is nowadays somewhat under fire, since it may be reasonably held that such a label should be already applied to the language during the late Assyrian period.”<sup>151</sup> Greenfield goes further by saying: “The Aramaic speaking peoples were in close contact with the

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<sup>147</sup> For the evidence on the use of Aramaic in Assyria proper, see Section 1.9 below. For the term Assyria proper, see n. 160 below.

<sup>148</sup> See Kaufman, *ibid*; M.L. Folmer, *The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period: A Study in Linguistic Variation* (Leuven 1995), p. 3, n. 16. A frequently quoted incident, supporting the view that Aramaic was most likely the customary language of diplomatic negotiations in the Neo-Assyrian empire in the West, is the appeal of the Judean nobles (2 Kings 18:26–28), to *rab-šāqê*, the envoy of Sennacherib, to address them in Aramaic. See H. Tadmor, “The Aramaization of Assyria: Aspects of Western Impact,” in H.-J. Nissen & J. Renger (eds.), *Mesopotamien und Seine Nachbarn: Politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im Alten Vorderasien vom 4. bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, 2 (Berlin 1982), pp. 451f, (henceforth: Tadmor, *Aramaization*); *idem*, “On the Role of Aramaic in the Assyrian Empire,” in M. Mori (ed.), *Near Eastern Studies Dedicated to H.I.H. Prince Takahito Mikasa on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Wiesbaden 1991), p. 422.

<sup>149</sup> See J.A. Fitzmyer, “The Phases of the Aramaic Language,” in J.A. Fitzmyer (ed.), *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays* (Chico 1979), p. 59.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*. See also *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 3 ANH–AZ (Jerusalem 1971), p. 266b s.v. Official Aramaic.

<sup>151</sup> See F.M. Fales, “Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Review of the Evidence,” *SAAB* 16 (2007), p. 100 and n. 18.

Assyrians, and eventually came under their rule; it was in the Neo-Assyrian empire that Aramaic became the *lingua franca*.”<sup>152</sup> A similar opinion is expressed by Folmer, who discusses Aramaic texts prior to the Achaemenid period, saying: “In the course of the 8th century B.C.E., a particular variety of Aramaic became the administrative language and *lingua franca* of the Neo-Assyrian empire.”<sup>153</sup>

It is of interest to mention here that in classifying Old and Official Aramaic, some scholars utilize additional labels such as “Assyrian Aramaic,”<sup>154</sup> for an Assyrian dialectal variety within Old Aramaic and the term “Mesopotamian Aramaic,” for the remnant of Aramaic from Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Mesopotamia.<sup>155</sup>

*Middle Aramaic*, ca. 200 B.C.–200 A.D.: In this phase and during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, Aramaic lost its position to Greek and ceased to be the administrative language of the Near East. This phase also reveals the emergence of local dialects of Aramaic. These dialects can be divided into two groups *Epigraphic* and *Canonical*. The epigraphic group includes Palmyrene inscriptions (Palm.), from Palmyra/Tadmor, Nabatean texts (Nab.), a group of inscriptions from Hatra, a smaller group of inscriptions from Assur. The canonical group includes the Aramaic portions of the biblical books of Daniel and Ezra (BA), Jewish Literary Aramaic (JLA), which includes the Qumran texts (QA), Palestinian Targumic Aramaic (PTA), and Legal Formulas of the rabbinic literature, as well as the Aramaic material written in the demotic script on papyrus Amherst 63, which includes, among other things, the lengthy story of the conflict between the Assyrian king Assurbanipal and his brother Shamashshumukin (Šamaš-šumu-ukīn).

*Late Aramaic*, ca. 200 A.D.–1200 A.D.: Under the second half of this period, Arabic replaced Aramaic as the spoken language of the vast majority of the Aramaic speaking people. The extant Aramaic textual material consists of an enormous literature and some sporadic inscriptions. This phase can be divided into three geographical groups: *Palestinian*, *Syrian* and *Babylonian*. The Palestinian group consists of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA), which includes Galilean Aramaic (Gal.), the dialect of the so-called Talmud Yerushalmi, as well as early midrashim of Palestinian origin; a small group of inscriptions of Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA); Samaritan Aramaic (Sam.), which includes two different translations of the Torah, and some literary/exegetical works. The Syrian group includes Syriac (Syr.), the liturgical language of Eastern Christianity (with Eastern and Western dialects), and is undoubtedly the best documented of

<sup>152</sup> See J.C. Greenfield, “The Aramaic Legal Texts of the Achaemenian Period,” *Transeuphratène* 3 (1990), p. 87.

<sup>153</sup> See M.L. Folmer, *The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period: A Study in Linguistic Variation* (Leuven 1995), p. 3. See also S. Parpola, “The Neo-Assyrian Ruling Class,” in T.R. Kämmerer (ed.), *Studien zu Ritual und Sozialgeschichte im Alten Orient / Studies on Ritual and Society in the Ancient Near East: Tartu Symposium 1998–2004* (Berlin 2007), pp. 261f.; H. Gzella, “Imperial Aramaic,” in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), p. 574.

<sup>154</sup> See Fales, *ibid*; idem, “Most Ancient Aramaic Texts and Linguistics: A Review of Recent Studies,” *Incontri Linguistici* 19 (1996), p. 53; idem, AECT, pp. 36f; R.A. Bowman, “Arameans, Aramaic, and the Bible,” *JNES* 7 (1948), p. 75.

<sup>155</sup> See Kaufman, AIA, pp. 8f.



all Aramaic dialects; Late Jewish Literary Aramaic (LJLA), which was utilized for the composition of Aramaic parabiblical and liturgical texts. The Babylonian group consists of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (JBA), used for Babylonian Talmud; and Mandaic (Ma.), the language of the Mandaeans.

*Modern Aramaic* (at the present time):<sup>156</sup> The richest textual corpus of “modern Aramaic” is that of the dialects of Aramaic, usually referred to collectively as Sūret.<sup>157</sup> It is the language of the indigenous Assyrians in Iraq, and parts of Iran, Syria, Lebanon and the Assyrian Diaspora. During the last century, a common literary dialect has emerged from different dialects of Sūret in Iran and Iraq. The Assyrians call it *lišāna aššūrāya/aṭūrāya ḥāta*, i.e., the modern Assyrian language.<sup>158</sup> Scholars usually designate the dialects of the Nineveh plain in Iraq and Urmia in Iran, as well as the dialects formerly spoken by the Assyrians in the Hakkari area in south-eastern Turkey, by terms such as Urmia, Eastern Neo-Syriac (ENS), Eastern Neo-Aramaic (ENA), or North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA). The other major dialects of modern Aramaic are those of the Ṭūr ‘Abdīn area in south-eastern Turkey, which are designated by terms such as Sūrayt/Ṭūrōyo, Western Neo-Syriac (WNS), or Western Neo-Aramaic (WNA).<sup>159</sup> The other dialects of modern Aramaic are the Aramaic that is still spoken in the town of Ma‘lula in Syria, which is heavily influenced by Arabic, and Mandaic, which at least until recently has been preserved in southern Iraq and neighboring areas in Iran.

## 1.9 Evidence of the use of Aramaic in Assyria proper

Among the earliest excavated evidence for the use of alphabetic script in Assyria proper<sup>160</sup> are some bilingual clay tablets unearthed by Layard in Nineveh. These

<sup>156</sup> See G. Khan, “Aramaic in the Medieval and Modern Periods,” in J.N. Postgate (ed.), *Languages of Iraq. Ancient and Modern* ([London] 2007), pp. 95–113.

<sup>157</sup> The designation itself i.e., “Sūret” must be very old. Most likely it developed very early from the ancient Assyrian/Akkadian term *aššūrītu* f. “Assyrian (language),” which most probably was pronounced as *\*assūrītu* in the Neo-Assyrian period. We know that in later periods the Aramaic script was also called “Assyrian writing.” See the discussion on pp. 54ff. below. See also S. Parpola, “National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times,” *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 18/2 (2004), pp. 5–22; R. Rollinger, “The Terms ‘Assyria’ and ‘Syria’ Again,” *JNES* 65 (2006), pp. 283–287.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. G. Khan, “The Language of the Modern Assyrians: The North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Dialect Group,” in Ö.A. Cetrez et al. (eds.), *The Assyrian Heritage — Threads of Continuity and Influence* (Uppsala 2012), pp. 173–199; idem, “Remarks on the Historical Background of the Modern Assyrian Language,” *The Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 21/2 (2007), pp. 4–11; Lipiński, *Semitic Languages*, p. 70; E.Y. Odisho, *The Sound System of Modern Assyrian (Neo-Aramaic)* (Wiesbaden 1988), pp. 3–22; K. Tsereteli, *Grammatik der modernen assyrischen Sprache (Neuostaramäisch)* (Leipzig 1978). Cf. R.C. Steiner, “Why the Aramaic Script Was Called ‘Assyrian’ in Hebrew, Greek, and Demotic,” *Or* 62 (1993): 80–82.

<sup>159</sup> See, for instance, O. Jastrow, “The Neo-Aramaic Languages,” in R. Hetzron (ed.), *The Semitic Languages* (London 1997), pp. 334–377; idem, “Neo-Aramaic Dialectology: The State of the Art,” in S. Izre‘el (ed.), *Semitic Linguistics: The State of the Art at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (Winona Lake 2002), pp. 365–377.

<sup>160</sup> Assyria proper, or the Assyrian heartland, covers the territory bounded on the east and north by the foothills of the Zagros Mountains, to the west by the steppes west of the river Tigris and to the

consist of deeds written in Neo-Assyrian, but also bearing alphabetic texts. In the early stages of Assyriology, Rawlinson used the Neo-Assyrian deeds bearing alphabetic annotations as a proof of the accurate decipherment of cuneiform.<sup>161</sup> Initially, the alphabetic annotations were identified by Rawlinson as “Phoenician,” but later they were classified by Nöldeke as Aramaic.<sup>162</sup>

The coexistence of the Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic texts has increasingly drawn the attention of scholars because they significantly illuminate these two Semitic languages and provide important information about the language contact that occurred between the two languages and about the people who spoke them.<sup>163</sup> The accumulated evidence for the use of Aramaic in the Assyrian Empire has been in focus in recent years. The evidence has gradually increased due to advances in the research and the progress made within the framework of excavations and archeology.

In comparison with the Assyrians, the Arameans are latecomers in the history of the ancient Near East. They are first mentioned in the inscriptions of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I (1115–1077 B.C.).<sup>164</sup> However, after examining the evidence at hand, modern scholarship has revealed the existence of a distinctive socio-cultural relationship between the Assyrians and the Arameans in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, i.e., during the period extending from the 9th century B.C., to the end of the Assyrian Empire around 612 B.C.<sup>165</sup> Today, scholars define different aspects of this relationship in terms such as, a “symbiosis of Aramaic and Assyrian writing systems,”<sup>166</sup> “Assyrian-Aramaic cultural symbiosis,”<sup>167</sup> “Aramaic-Assyrian fusion,”<sup>168</sup> and “Assyro-Aramaean amalgam.”<sup>169</sup>

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south by the Lesser Zab. Here lie the major Assyrian cities, Aššūr, Nīnua, Kalḫu, Dūr-Šarrukēn and Arbail (Erbil), the strategic centers of economic and political power. See K. Radner, “The Assur-Nineveh-Arbela Triangle: Central Assyria in the Neo-Assyrian Period,” in P.A. Miglus and S. Mühl (eds.), *Between the Cultures: The Central Tigris Region from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium BC; Conference at Heidelberg, January 22<sup>nd</sup>–24<sup>th</sup>, 2009* (Heidelberg, 2011), pp. 321–329.

<sup>161</sup> See A.R. Millard, “Some Aramaic Epigraphs,” *Iraq* 34 (1972), p. 131, n. 1.

<sup>162</sup> For references, see F.M. Fales, “The Use and Function of Aramaic Tables,” in G. Bunnens (ed.), *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (Louvain 2000), p. 92, n. 12.

<sup>163</sup> For language contact in general, see M.P. Streck, “Akkadian and Aramaic Language Contact,” in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), pp. 416–424.

<sup>164</sup> See E. Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (Leuven 2000), p. 35.

<sup>165</sup> See F.M. Fales, “Assyrian-Aramaic Cultural Interrelation: Older and Newer Results,” in L. Bachelot & F.M. Fales (eds.), *Tell Shiukh Fawqani 1994–1998, II* (Padova 2005), pp. 596–616. Cf. W. Röllig, “Aramäer und Assyrier: die Schriftzeugnisse bis zum Ende des Assyrischen Reiches,” in G. Bunnens (ed.), *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (Louvain 2000), pp. 177–186.

<sup>166</sup> See A.R. Millard, “Assyrians and Arameans,” *Iraq* 45 (1983), p. 101; Postgate, FNALD, p. 11, § 1.7. For the term “symbiosis of Aramaic and Akkadian,” see H. Tadmor, “On the Role of Aramaic in the Assyrian Empire,” in M. Mori (ed.), *Near Eastern Studies Dedicated to H.I.H. Prince Takahito Mikasa on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Wiesbaden 1991), p. 419; J.C. Greenfield, “*ana urdūti kabāsu* = כבש לעבד,” *StOr* 55:11 (1984), p. 261.

<sup>167</sup> See H. Tadmor, “Towards the Early History of *Qatālu*,” *JQR* 76 (1985), p. 45; P. Garelli, “Importance et rôle des araméens dans l’administration de l’empire assyrien,” in H.-J. Nissen & J. Renger (eds.), *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn* (Berlin 1982), p. 444; A.R. Millard, “Assyria, Aramaeans and Aramaic,” in G. Gershon et al. (eds.), *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded* (Leiden 2009), p. 212.

<sup>168</sup> See Tadmor, *Aramaization*, p. 458. For the term “Aramaic-Assyrian symbiosis,” see Y. Muffs, *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine* (Leiden 1969), p. 189; S.A. Kaufman, “An Assyro-Aramaic *egirtu ša šulmu*,” in M. de Jong Ellis, (ed.), *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of J.J. Finkelstein* (Hamden 1977), pp. 119, 127. For the term “Aramaic-Assyrian *koiné*,”

The evidence for the use of Aramaic in Assyria proper can be classified under two main categories, namely textual evidence and visual evidence. The examples for each category given below are not necessarily presented in chronological order, and are intended to be representative rather than comprehensive.

### 1.9.1 Textual evidence

Evidence for the earliest use of the West-Semitic alphabet in Assyria consists of individual letters in the form of graffiti in black ink or paint found on a number of bricks belonging to a glazed panel in the palace of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) at Calah/Nimrud. The letters were written by the masons in charge of decorating the palace, and were meant to aid in laying the bricks in a specific sequence. However, it is not possible, based on the letters' features, to conclude with certainty whether the letters were written according to the Aramaic or the Phoenician tradition.<sup>170</sup>

In most cases, the textual evidence consists either of Neo-Assyrian documents written in cuneiform, with a brief Aramaic text in their margins, or Neo-Assyrian tablets bearing a bilingual text, with the Assyrian written on one face of the tablet and the Aramaic on the other. The textual evidence also includes monolingual tablets written entirely in Aramaic.<sup>171</sup>

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see H. Tadmor, "Assyria and the West: The Ninth Century and its Aftermath," in H. Goedicke & J.J.M. Roberts (eds.), *Unity and Diversity. Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (Baltimore 1975), p. 43. For the term "Assyro-Aramaic symbiosis," see F.M. Fales, "Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Review of the Evidence," *SAAB* 16 (2007), p. 111.

<sup>169</sup> See A. Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, II* (London 1995), p. 493.

<sup>170</sup> See A.R. Millard, "The Graffiti on the Glazed Bricks from Nimrud," appendix in J. Curtis et al., "British Museum Excavations at Nimrud and Balawat in 1989," *Iraq* 55 (1993), pp. 35f; idem, "Aramaic Documents of the Assyrian and Achaemenid Periods," in M. Brosius, (ed.), *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions: Concepts of Record-Keeping in the Ancient World* (Oxford 2003), p. 231; F.M. Fales, "Assyrian-Aramaic Cultural Interrelation: Older and Newer Results," in L. Bachelot & F.M. Fales (eds.), *Tell Shiukh Fawqani 1994–1998, II* (Padova 2005), p. 603.

<sup>171</sup> The entire corpus of Aramaic epigraphs on clay tablets from Assyria (known until 1986) was re-edited in a monograph by F.M. Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period* (Rome 1986). See also idem, "Aramaic Epigraphy from Assyria: New Data and Old Issues," in A.M. Macir et al. (eds.), *Neo Perspectives on Aramaic Epigraphy in Mesopotamia, Qumran, Egypt and Idumea*, pp. 5–16. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021. However, Fales calls attention to the fact that the information provided in his monograph is rapidly becoming obsolete due to the considerable addition of texts of the same type which have been excavated since 1986. See F.M. Fales, "Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Review of the Evidence," *SAAB* 16 (2007), p. 99. Cf. the review of Fales' monograph by S.A. Kaufman, "Assyro-Aramaica," *JAOS* 109 (1989), pp. 97–102. See also A. Lemaire, *Nouvelles tablettes araméennes* (Geneva 2001). Cf. the review of Lemaire's monograph by E. Lipiński, "New Aramaic Clay Tablets," *BiOr* 59 (2002), cols., 245–259. For Aramaic epigraphs on clay tablets from Babylonia, see L. Delaporte, *Épigraphes araméens* (Paris 1912). For more details on this group of evidence, see F.M. Fales, "The Use and Function of Aramaic Tables," in G. Bunnens (ed.), *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (Louvain 2000), p. 92. See also W. Röllig, "Keilschrift versus Alphabetschrift: Überlegungen zu den Epigraphen auf Keilschrifttafeln," in P. Bienkowski, C. Mee & E. Slater (eds.), *Writing and Ancient Near Eastern Society: Papers in Honour of Alan R. Millard* (New York & London 2005), pp. 119–126.

Interestingly, the Neo-Assyrian records repeatedly contrast Assyrian scribes with their Aramean counterparts.<sup>172</sup> We find the terms *tuṣṣarru aššūrāya*, “Assyrian scribe,” and *tuṣṣarru armāya*, “Aramean scribe,” occurring in a variety of documents referring to officials in the imperial service. The two categories of scribes are, for instance, mentioned in a lexical text of the *lú = ša* series, i.e., the *Kuyunjik List* as, LÚ.A.BA KUR.*aš-šur-a-a* and LÚ.A.BA KUR.*ár-ma-a-a*.<sup>173</sup>

Although the logogram LÚ.A.BA is read *tuṣṣarru*, literally meaning “tablet writer,” it has been suggested that in Neo-Assyrian it most likely initially meant *a-ba-man*, namely “ABC-man; writer of the alphabet,” where *a* and *ba* represent the first two letters of the West-Semitic alphabet.<sup>174</sup> In quoting Parpola, Tadmor writes: “[T]he logogram LÚ.A.BA, scribe, should be interpreted as “ABC-man” and that it seems to have a western background, since it already occurs in Ugarit (J. Nougayrol, *Ugaritica* 5, 252, colophon to RS. 2o. 196 A, 1.2.).”<sup>175</sup> However, Deller points out that the Ugaritic syllabic alphabet begins with the syllables *a* and *be*, not with *a* and *ba*.<sup>176</sup>

Indeed, Aramean scribes were employed alongside Assyrian scribes in the Assyrian administration. They are occasionally referred to in administrative and economic documents as employees of the royal court. For example, the Aramean scribes are mentioned among other recipients of wine rations in the so-called “Nimrud Wine Lists” from the beginning of the 8th century B.C., as, LÚ.A.BA.MEŠ KUR.*ára-ma-a-a* “Aramean scribes,” (CTN I 21 r.8' = ND 10054 r.8').<sup>177</sup> Aramean scribes are also mentioned among Assyrian and Egyptian scribes<sup>178</sup> as recipients of wine rations, i.e., LÚ.A.BA.MEŠ KUR.*áš-šur-a-a* “Assyrian scribes,” LÚ.A.BA.MEŠ KUR.*mu-šu-ra-a-a* “Egyptian scribes,” and LÚ.A.BA.MEŠ KUR.*ara-ma-a-a* “Aramean scribes,” (CTN I 9 r.18–20 = ND 11048 r.18–20).

<sup>172</sup> See P.-A. Beaulieu, “Official and Vernacular Languages: The Shifting Sands of Imperial and Cultural Identities in First-Millennium B.C. Mesopotamia,” in S.L. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* (Chicago 2006), p. 188, n. 6.

<sup>173</sup> See M. Civil, et al. (eds.), *The Series lú = ša and Related Texts* (Rome 1969), p. 239, col. v 5–6. According to Wiseman, these two terms are functional rather than ethnic, see D.J. Wiseman, “Assyrian Writing-Boards,” *Iraq* 17 (1955), p. 13. Johns had earlier expressed a similar view, see C.H.W. Johns, *Assyrian Deeds and Documents*, Vol., II (Cambridge: Deighton Bell, 1901), p. 109. See also R.P. Dougherty, “Writing upon Parchment and Papyrus among the Babylonians and Assyrians,” *JAOS* 48 (1928), p. 129, n. 127. See also F.M. Fales, “Old Aramaic,” in S. Wenginger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), p. 557.

<sup>174</sup> See K. Deller, “Das Siegel des Schreibers Aššur-šumī-ašbat, Sohn des Rībāte,” *BaM* 13 (1982), p. 151. See also M.P. Streck, “Akkadian and Aramaic Language Contact,” in S. Wenginger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), p. 417, § 1.3. For a discussion of the reading and original meaning of the logogram LÚ.A.BA, see K. Radner, *SAAS* VI, pp. 80ff, with n. 426 and n. 427.

<sup>175</sup> See Tadmor, *Aramaization*, p. 459 (Postscript 3).

<sup>176</sup> Deller, *ibid*, p. 152.

<sup>177</sup> See J.V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Nimrud Wine Lists* (London 1972), p. 149.

<sup>178</sup> Three Egyptian scribes are mentioned in a list of court personnel from Nineveh (*SAA* VII 1 r. ii 3–6). Another Egyptian scribe bearing an Assyrian name, Šilli-Aššūr, is attested in a document from Nineveh (*SAA* VI 142:11–e.12, ca. 692 B.C.). See K. Radner, “Schreiberkonventionen im assyrischen Reich: Sprachen und Schriftsysteme,” in J. Renger (ed.), *Assur – Gott, Stadt und Land: 5. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 18.–21. Februar 2004 in Berlin* (Wiesbaden 2011), p. 386, n. 2.

In addition, there exists evidence of Aramean scribes serving as royal officials at the royal court of Nineveh. For instance, an Aramean scribe of the crown prince (7th century B.C.), IGI <sup>m</sup>ZALÁG--e-a LÚ\*.A.BA KUR.ár-ma-a-a šá 'A<sup>1</sup>--MAN “Witness Nūr-Aia (*or* Nūrāia), Aramean scribe of the crown prince,” (SAA XIV 205 r.13), acting as a witness for Nabû-šāpik-zēri who is acquiring some land in the town of Ša-Šillaia.<sup>179</sup>

Aramean scribes are also mentioned on other occasions, for example, when performing a legal transaction. We are aware, for instance, of an Aramean scribe from Nineveh (reign of Assurbanipal): <sup>m</sup>SUḪUŠ-i LÚ\*.A.BA ár-ma-[a-a] “Urbî, the Aramean scribe,” (SAA XIV 75:3), who, according to a witnessed memorandum, gave twenty sheep and fifty shekels of silver, (as) accounts.<sup>180</sup> Furthermore, an Aramean scribe from Nineveh (reign of Sennacherib), IGI <sup>m</sup>a-ba<sup>2</sup>-gu-ú LÚ\*.A.BA / KUR.LÚ\*.ar-ma-a-a, “Witness Abā-gû, Aramean scribe,” (SAA VI 127 r.3'–4'), acts as a witness for the “third man,” Atueḫu.<sup>181</sup>

An extant royal order of Sargon II (SAA XIX 154), from Calah/Nimrud (about 710 B.C.) addressed to a high ranking Assyrian official by the name of Aššūr-bēlu-taqqin, asking him to assemble all the Assyrian and Aramean scribes residing in the provinces, and provide them with armed escort so that they should proceed to record the tax contributions.<sup>182</sup> SAA (XIX 154:1–r.3) reads as follows:

[a-bat LUGA]L / [a-na] <sup>m</sup>aš-šur--EN-LÁ[L<sup>2</sup>] / LÚ\*.um-ma-nu ša É.GAL / lu-u LÚ\*.aš-šur-a'-a / lu-u 'LÚ\*.ar-ma'-a-a / ša a-na KUR TI.LA / a-na KUR-ka il-li-ku-ni-ni / LÚ\*.A--KIN.MEŠ-ni-ka / ina na-gi-u ga[b]-bu / ši-tap-par bé-et šá-nu-u-ni / gab-bi-šú-nu [p]aḫ-ḫi-ra / ina UGU-ḫi-iá še-bi-la-áš-šú-nu / [B]AD-ḪAL-lum LÚ\*.i-tú. 'u / 'i'-si-šú-nu pi-qid / [š]a 'URU.BÀD'--<sup>m</sup>EN--DINGIR-a-a / [ú]-še-ta-qu-ni-šá-nu-u-ni / [a]t-[t]a 'tu'-u-da-'a' / [UD.MEŠ] ša [É]Š.QAR e-ma-du / 'e'-tar'-ba-a-ni

[The kin]g's [word to] Aššūr-bēlu-taqq[in]: (As for any) scribes of the palace, whether Assyrian or Aramean, who have come to your land to revive it – send your messengers to the whole district, gather them all wherever they are and send them to me! Entrust them to [c]avalry and the Itu'u, who will make them pass through

<sup>179</sup> See also PNA 2/II (p. 968b s.v. Nūrāia, no. 10).

<sup>180</sup> See also PNA 3/II (p. 1358a s.v. Urbî, no. 2).

<sup>181</sup> Note that in SAA VI 127 r.3'–4', Kwasman and Parpola render LÚ\*.A.BA / KUR.LÚ\*.ar-ma-a-a as “Aramean palaca scribe.” Cf. Luukkoo, who interprets LÚ\*.A.BA / KUR.LÚ\*.ar-ma-a-a, differently, as “Aramaean scribe.” See M. Luukkoo, “The Administrative Roles of the ‘Chief Scribe’ and the ‘Palace Scribe’ in the Neo-Assyrian Period,” *SAAB* 16 (2007), p. 232, n. 23. See also PNA 1/I (p. 1a s.v. Abā-gû). For additional references to Aramean scribes, see: IGI <sup>m</sup>am-ma-a A.BA ár-ma-a “Witness Ammā, Aramean scribe,” SAA XIV 29 r.6; <sup>m</sup>SUḪUŠ-i LÚ\*.A.BA ár-ma-[a-a] “Urbî, the Aramean scribe,” SAA XIV 75:3; [IGI <sup>m</sup>sa<sup>2</sup>]-i-lu LÚ\*.A.BA URU.ar-ma-a-a “[Witness Sa<sup>2</sup>]ilu, Aramean scribe,” SAA XIV 153 r.8'; <sup>m</sup>PAB-bu-u LÚ\*.A.BA<sup>1</sup> KUR.ár-ma'-a'-[a] “Aḫabû, Aram[ean] scribe,” SAA XI 124 r. ii 4'; <sup>m</sup>PAB-AŠ LÚ\*.A.BA<sup>1</sup> ar'-[ma-a-a x x x] “Aḫu-iddina, Ar[amean] scribe [...]” SAA XII 63:19'; LÚ\*.A.BA.MEŠ KUR.ara-[ma-a-a] “Aramean scribes,” CTN I 13:12 (= ND 10027 + 10028).

<sup>182</sup> See F.M. Fales, “Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Review of the Evidence,” *SAAB* 16 (2007), p. 109.

Dūr-Bēl-ila'ī to me. Do [y]ou know that [*the days*] for imposing the [*i*]š*kāru* dues have [a]rrived?<sup>183</sup>

As for the term *sepīru*, which is rendered “scribe writing alphabetic script (mostly on skin)”<sup>184</sup> or “interpreter-scribe (of Aramaic),”<sup>185</sup> it appears only in Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian texts to indicate a scribe writing in the Aramaic alphabet. The word is considered to be a loanword from Aramaic in NB and LB.<sup>186</sup> In contrast, *sepīru* is not attested in Neo-Assyrian texts,<sup>187</sup> but its corresponding Aramaic term *spr*’, “scribe,” is attested in a corn loan docket from Assur dated 659 B.C. (reign of Assurbanipal), and written entirely in Aramaic, in which a reference is given to an individual from Assur, namely *knny spr*’, “Kanūnāyu the scribe,” who acts as a witness for Ilu-iqbi.<sup>188</sup>

The use of Aramaic notations or captions had become relatively common in Assyria during the course of the 7th century B.C., serving as labels to identify documents.<sup>189</sup> A good number of Neo-Assyrian legal documents have captions in Aramaic script incised on their edges giving a summary of the contents of the text of the legal documents, for example: *dnt 'rbłsr*, “Deed of Arbail-šarrat,” SAA XIV 29 s.1, or *'grt ksp' zy 'l zbn*, “Contract of the silver which is at the disposal of Zabinu,” SAA XIV 94 r.9–10, or *[l]q'h h' mn mt' hdd br nn[y] / [x]x h' x* “[*Bou*]ght from Matī'-Adda, son of Nan[ī ...]” SAA XIV 398 s.2–3 (see fig. 2 below).<sup>190</sup> It has been stated that these captions were used as memoranda for the sake of identifying the tablets quickly, or were intended for those who possessed

<sup>183</sup> Note that SAA XIX 154:3 (= ND 2356), renders the word LÚ\*.um-ma-nu “the specialists.” Cf. the previous editions of the same text, CTN V, p. 239; Postgate, TCAE, p. 370; Fales, *ibid.* (translation).

<sup>184</sup> See CAD (S, p. 225a s.v. *sepīru*).

<sup>185</sup> See AHW. (p. 1036b s.v. *sepīru*); CDA (p. 320b s.v. *sepīru*).

<sup>186</sup> See CAD, *ibid.*; AHW., *ibid.* See also M.P. Streck, “Keilschrift und Alphabet,” in D. Borchers et al. (eds.), *Hieroglyphen – Alphabete – Schriftreformen. Studien zu Multiliteralismus, Schriftwechsel und Orthographieneuregelungen* (Göttingen 2001), pp. 77, 90 n. 4; *idem*, “Akkadian and Aramaic Language Contact,” in S. Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook* (Berlin 2011), p. 417 § 1.3; R.P. Dougherty, “Writing upon Parchment and Papyrus among the Babylonians and Assyrians,” *JAOS* 48 (1928), pp. 109–135. Cf. H. Tawil, *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew* (Jersey City 2009), p. 266b s.v. *ספר*.

<sup>187</sup> See M.P. Streck, “Keilschrift und Alphabet,” in D. Borchers et al. (eds.), *Hieroglyphen – Alphabete – Schriftreformen. Studien zu Multiliteralismus, Schriftwechsel und Orthographieneuregelungen* (Göttingen 2001), p. 77. Cf. L.E. Pearce, “*sepīru* and <sup>LU</sup>A.BA: Scribes of the Late First Millennium,” in K. van Lerberghe & G. Voet (eds.), *Languages and Cultures in Contact at the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm* (Leuven 1999), p. 356.

<sup>188</sup> See PNA 2/1 (p. 603a s.v. Kanūnāiu, no. 33); V. Hug, *Altaramäische Grammatik der Texte des 7. und 6. Jh.s v. Chr.* (Heidelberg 1993), p. 23, no. AssU 4 r.6; M. Lidzbarski, *Altaramäische Urkunden aus Assur* (Leipzig 1921), p. 17, no. 4:13. Cf. M. Blasberg, *Keilschrift in aramäischer Umwelt: Untersuchungen zur spätbabylonischen Orthographie* (Köln 1997), § 3.4.2.1.

<sup>189</sup> See F.M. Fales, AECT; J.H. Stevenson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Contracts with Aramaic Reference Notes* (New York 1902). Mention should be made of the attestation of other writing media in Assyria proper, such as Hieroglyphic Luwian, which is demonstrated by the seven lead strips, found in a house in Assur, bearing private letters in hieroglyphic Luwian. See O. Pedersén, *ALA II*, pp. 98f; F.M. Fales, “The Use and Function of Aramaic Tablets,” in G. Bunnens (ed.), *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (Louvain 2000), p. 124, n. 184.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. Fales, *ibid.*, p. 214, no. 38.

little or no knowledge about reading cuneiform.<sup>191</sup> Some of the scribes were probably bilingual.



Figure 2. A Neo-Assyrian conveyance document from Nineveh (BM 123369 = SAA XIV 398 s.2–3), 7th century B.C., bearing an Aramaic caption on its left edge reading: [l]q<sup>2</sup>h h<sup>2</sup> mn mt hdd br nm[y] / [x]x h<sup>2</sup> x “[Bou]ght from Matī-Adda, son of Nan[ī ...].” From: J.N. Postgate (ed.), *Languages of Iraq: Ancient and Modern* ([London], 2007), p. 90.

From private archives, evidence for the use of Aramaic in Assyria proper in the 7th century B.C. is furnished by Neo-Assyrian legal documents in the shape of triangular lumps of clay formed around a knotted string and sometimes inscribed solely in Aramaic. These triangular-shaped tablets are usually referred to in English as “dockets.” They almost always bear text about a loan of corn, but may also concern a loan of silver, and are sealed with the seal of the debtor. Most likely, the dockets were once fastened by a string to a document made of perishable material, such as an Aramaic scroll of papyrus or a leather roll.<sup>192</sup> A different interpretation of the purpose of the dockets is provided by Fales, who suggests that the loan dockets were either hung around a debtor’s neck, as a sign of his obligation, or were attached to containers.<sup>193</sup>

An example from a private archive is a triangular corn loan docket (VA 7497) from the mid-7th century B.C., unearthed in Assur and written entirely in Aramaic (see fig. 3 below). It belongs to the archive of Aššūr-šallim-aḥḥē and records a loan of barley to Šēp-Aššūr.<sup>194</sup> The Aramaic text of the docket (VA 7497:1–r.4) reads as follows:<sup>195</sup>

<sup>191</sup> See S.J. Lieberman, “The Aramaic Argillary Script in the Seventh Century,” *BASOR* 192 (1968), p. 27; Postgate, *FNALD*, § 1.7; Fales, *ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>192</sup> For more details, and for the purpose of the corn loan dockets, see Postgate, *FNALD*, p. 5. See also K. Radner, *Die neuassyrischen Privatrechtsurkunden als Quelle für Mensch und Umwelt* (Helsinki 1997), pp. 26–30.

<sup>193</sup> See F.M. Fales, *AECT*, pp. 18–24. Fales bases his interpretation on a NA letter (SAA XVI 63:12–20 = CT 53 46) sent to Esarhaddon concerning crimes in Gūzāna. Some other scholars do not share Fales’s interpretation. See Radner, *ibid.*, p. 29; J.N. Postgate, “Middle Assyrian to Neo-Assyrian: The Nature of the Shift,” in H. Waetzoldt & H. Hauptmann (eds.), *Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten* (Heidelberg 1997), p. 161, n. 8.

<sup>194</sup> See PNA 1/I (p. 217a s.v. Aššūr-šallim-aḥḥē, no. 11); PNA 1/II (p. 329b s.v. Bēl-šarru-ušur, no. 15); PNA 2/II (p. 654a s.v. Lā-qēpu, no. 27); PNA 3/I (p. 1014a s.v. Qibīt-Issār, no. 13); PNA 3/II (p. 1258a s.v. Šēp-Aššūr, no. 24).

<sup>195</sup> See V. Hug, *Altaramäische Grammatik der Texte des 7. und 6. Jh.s v. Chr.* (Heidelberg 1993), p. 23, no. AssU 3. Cf. Fales, *ibid.*, p. 228, no. 48.

š'rn zi / 'srslmḥ / 'l sb'sr / 4 (homers) 8 (seah) / b'drn // yntn šhdn / blsr'sr / qby's / lqp

Barley belonging to Aššūr-šallim-aḥḥē, is at (the disposal of) Šēp-Aššūr. 4 (homers and) 8 (seah). He will give (back) at the threshing-floor. Witnesses: Bēl-šarru-ušur, Qibīt-Is(sār) (and) Lā-qēpu.

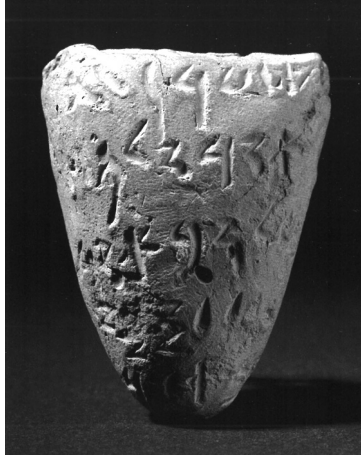


Figure 3. A triangular corn loan docket (VA 7497), from Assur, mid-7th century B.C., from the archive of Aššūr-šallim-aḥḥē ('srslmḥ), written entirely in Aramaic. It records a loan of barley to Šēp-Aššūr (sb'sr). From: B. Faist, "Sprachen und Schriften in Assur," in J. Marzahn & B. Salje (eds.), *Wiedererstehendes Assur: 100 Jahre deutsche Ausgrabungen in Assyrien* (Mainz am Rhein, 2003), p. 153.

In fact, there exists a Neo-Assyrian legal transaction from the royal court of Nineveh (SAA XIV 98 = ADD 129). This is a document bearing a text written in NA on its obverse, but whose reverse side bears a text written in Aramaic consisting of an almost complete translation of the NA text (see fig. 4 below). The document concerns a loan of barley belonging to the crown prince and was written in ca. 644\* B.C. The Assyrian text (SAA XIV 98:1–9) reads as follows:

5 ANŠE ŠE.PAD.MEŠ / ša DUMU-MAN ŠU.2 / <sup>m</sup>ta-qu-u-ni LÚ\*.2-u / ina IGI <sup>m</sup>ḥa-ma-tu-tu / ša URU.ḥa-an-du-a-te / ŠE.PAD.MEŠ a-na 1 ANŠE 5 BÁN-šá / tar-GAL-bi ITI.DUL / lim-mu <sup>md</sup>PA-MAN-PAB / 5 LÚ\*.ŠE.KIN.KUD.MEŠ

Five homers of barley belonging to the crown prince under the control of Taquni, deputy, at the disposal of Ḥamaṭutu from the city of Ḥanduate. The barley shall increase 5 seahs per homer. Month Tishri (VII), eponym year of Nabû-šarru-ušur. 5 harvesters.

On the reverse of the same legal document (SAA XIV 98 r.1–7), the Aramaic caption reads as follows:

š'rn s'nh zy / br mlk' 'l / ḥmtt mn ḥdwh / 5 b 7 w / ḥšdn 5 / l'm rbsrs / nbsr'sr



Deputy's barley which belongs to the crown prince is at the disposal of Ḥamaṭuṭu from Ḥadduwah. 5 according to 7 and 5 harvesters. Eponym year of the chief eunuch Nabû-šarru-ušur.<sup>196</sup>

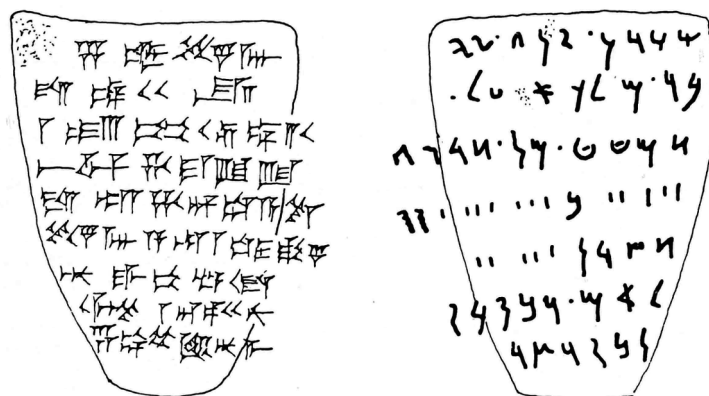


Figure 4. A bilingual Neo-Assyrian legal document (SAA XIV 98 = ADD 129), with two texts of almost identical content. From: F.M. Fales, AECT, pp. 135ff., no. 3 and pl. I, fig. 3.

The first excavated evidence attesting to the coexistence of Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic is a set of bronze lion-weights of Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.), unearthed by Layard at Nimrud in the middle of the 19th century of our era, and bearing denominations of weights incised in Assyrian and Aramaic (see figs. 5 and 6 below).<sup>197</sup> The inscriptions on the lion-weights are either bilingual or exclusively Aramaic. Another inscribed weight, in form of a duck bearing the well-known Aramaic notation *zy 'rq'* “(weight-standard) of the land,” has been unearthed in a recent excavation at Nimrud.<sup>198</sup>

<sup>196</sup> The translation is slightly different than that provided in SAA XIV 98.

<sup>197</sup> See Tadmor, *Aramaization*, p. 449. For the most recent re-edition of the bronze lion-weights, see F.M. Fales, “Assyro-Aramaica: The Assyrian Lion-Weights,” in K. van Lerberghe & A. Schoors (eds.), *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipiński* (Leuven 1995), pp. 33–55. See also C. Zaccagnini, “The Assyrian Lion Weights from Nimrud and the ‘mina of the land’,” in Y. Avishur & R. Deutsch (eds.), *Michael: Historical, Epigraphical and Biblical Studies in Honor of Prof. Michael Heltzer* (Tel Aviv 1999), pp. 259–265.

<sup>198</sup> See F.M. Fales, “Assyrian-Aramaic Cultural Interrelation: Older and Newer Results,” in L. Bachelot & F.M. Fales (eds.), *Tell Shiukh Fawqani 1994–1998, II* (Padova 2005), p. 599, n. 15. See *ibid.*, for weights in the shape of a duck, which are attested in the western provinces of the Assyrian empire.



Figure 5. A bronze lion-weight (BM 91230, 665.7 g), from Calah/Nimrud inscribed in Aramaic “2/3 of a royal mina.” Frontispiece of: T. Kwasman & S. Parpola, SAA VI.



Figure 6. Part of a set of bronze lion-weights (BM 91220–35), from the palace at Calah/Nimrud, ca. 730–720 B.C., mostly inscribed in Assyrian and/or Aramaic with a weight and a royal name. From: T. Kwasman & S. Parpola, SAA VI, p. xxiv.

Textual evidence indicates indirectly that correspondence between officials, as well as with the Assyrian king, was occasionally carried out in Aramaic. Several instances from the Assyrian royal correspondence bear witness to the use of Aramaic in communications alongside Akkadian. One case in point is the extant Neo-Assyrian letter (SAA XIX 23), from between 735 and 732 B.C., which was excavated in Calah/Nimrud and now is considered to be an introductory letter. In this letter, Qurdi-Aššūr-lāmur reports to the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 B.C.) that he is forwarding to the palace the *kanīku annītu armētu*, “this sealed Aramaic document,” which was sent by Nabû-šēzib from Tyre. The Aramaic document, which has perished, was most likely providing a fuller account in Aramaic of local events from inside Tyre.<sup>199</sup>

In an often-quoted Neo-Assyrian epistolary passage, from the Assyrian royal correspondence, found in the undated letter SAA XVI (99:10’), probably from

<sup>199</sup> See CTN V, p. 154, ND 2686 (= NL 13 = Iraq 17, 130); PNA 2/II (p. 879 s.v. Nabû-šēzib, no. 1). See the comments on this text by Tadmor, *Aramaization*, p. 452; H.W.F. Saggs, “The Nimrud Letters, 1952 – Part II: Relations with the West,” *Iraq* 17 (1955), p. 131.

time of Šamši-Adad V (823–811 B.C.),<sup>200</sup> a reference is made to *egirtu armētu*, “the Aramaic letter.”<sup>201</sup> The sender of the Neo-Assyrian letter mentions that the scribe Kabtî,<sup>202</sup> a servant of Aššūr-da’ in-aplu son of Shalmaneser (III) gave him “the Aramaic letter,” and that he in turn gave it to the king.

In a NA letter (SAA I 34 r.19’) from the reign of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), concerning the distribution of tribute and audience gifts, we learn that the palace scribe received two scrolls of papyrus: 2 *ki-ir-ki ni-a-ri* LÚ\*.A.BA–KUR “2 scrolls of papyrus: the Scribe of the Palace.” These were undoubtedly used for writing in the alphabetic script, i.e., Aramaic.<sup>203</sup> The term *kirku* in the sense of “scroll, roll” is actually an Aramaic loanword in NA and LB.<sup>204</sup>

Evidence for the use of scrolls, probably of leather, also comes from a report from Assur (SAA XIII 28) sent to the Assyrian king concerning gold and silver work for the temple of Sîn. The report mentions a *migli*, “scroll,” bearing the seal of Sîn-na’id. As a matter of fact, the word *miglu*, “scroll,” is itself an Aramaic loanword in NA.<sup>205</sup> SAA XIII 28 r.3–5, reads as follows:

ù 1 GÚ.UN KUG.UD *ina* KALAG-*te* / *mi-ig-li* NA<sub>4</sub>.KIŠIB *ša* <sup>md</sup>30–I GAL–SIMUG.KUG.GI / *ina* UGU-*hi*

Furthermore, there is one talent of silver by the heavy standard (= 60 kg) with a scroll (bearing) the seal of Sîn-na’id, chief goldsmith, attached to it.

In a frequently quoted passage from a royal letter written in Neo-Babylonian by the Assyrian king Sargon II (SAA XVII 2 = CT 54 10),<sup>206</sup> probably dating to ca. 710 B.C., and addressed to Sîn-iddina, an official from Ur,<sup>207</sup> we find that the

<sup>200</sup> See n. ad SAA XVI 99:8f, and the Introduction on p. XLV.

<sup>201</sup> Note that the passage *egirtu armētu* in CAD (E, p. 46a), is quoted from ABL 872:10, and is rendered “a letter in an envelope” (i.e., *armētu* is taken to be from *arāmu* “to cover a tablet in a case”). However, the same passage is not quoted under *arāmu* or *armu* in CAD (A/II, pp. 230, 292). On the other hand, the same passage is quoted in AHW., p. 69b, and is rendered “aramäisches Brief.” SAA XVI 99 is in congruence with AHW., in this matter. Cf. Tadmor, *Aramaization*, pp. 452, 463, n. 37.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. PNA 1/I (p. 178a s.v. Aššūr-da’ in-aplu); PNA 2/I (p. 593b s.v. Kabtî, no. 9).

<sup>203</sup> See Postgate, FNALD, p. 6. For more details on writing materials and languages used in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, see S. Parpola, SAA I, pp. xv–xvi; R.P. Dougherty, “Writing upon Parchment and Papyrus among the Babylonians and Assyrians,” *JAOS* 48 (1928), pp. 109–135.

<sup>204</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 2.1 s.v. *kirku*.

<sup>205</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 2.1 s.v. *miglu*.

<sup>206</sup> See, for instance, S. Parpola, “Assyrian Royal Inscriptions and Neo-Assyrian Letters,” in F.M. Fales (ed.), *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons, in Literary, Ideological, and Historical Analysis: Papers of a Symposium Held in Cetona (Siena) June 26–28, 1980* (Rome 1981), p. 123, n. 9; M.P. Streck, “Keilschrift und Alphabet,” in D. Borchers et al. (eds.), *Hieroglyphen – Alphabete – Schriftreformen: Studien zu Multiliteralismus, Schriftwechsel und Orthographieneuregelungen* (Göttingen 2001), p. 77; K. Radner, “Schreiberkonventionen im assyrischen Reich: Sprachen und Schriftsysteme,” in J. Renger (ed.), *Assur – Gott, Stadt und Land: 5. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 18. – 21. Februar 2004 in Berlin* (Wiesbaden 2011), p. 389; S. Görke, “Aramäischer Einfluss in Assyrien,” in M. Novák, F. Prayon & A.-M. Wittke (eds.), *Die Außenwirkung des späthethitischen Kulturraumes: Gütertausch – Kulturkontakt – Kulturtransfer* (Münster 2004), p. 327.

<sup>207</sup> See PNA 3/I (p. 1134a s.v. Sîn-iddina, no. 5).

official had asked permission to send the king letters written in Aramaic. The letter (SAA XVII 2:15–22), reads as follows:<sup>208</sup>

*k[i]-[i IGI LUG]AL maḥ-ru ina ŠÀ si-ip-ri / [KUR].ár-m[a-a-a lu-u]s-pi-ir-ma a-na LUGAL / [l]u-še-bi-la mi-nam-ma ina ši-pir-ti / ak-ka-da-at-tu la ta-šaṭ-ṭar-ma / la tu-šeb-bi-la kit-ta ši-pir-tu / šá [ ] ina ŠÀ-bi ta-šaṭ-ṭa-ru / ki-i pi-i a-gan-ni-tim-ma i-da-at / lu-ú šak-na-at*

‘If it is acceptable [to the ki]ng, let me write and send (my messages) to the king on Aram[aic] leather-scrolls’ – why would you not write and send me messages in Akkadian? Really, the message which you write in it must be drawn up in this very manner – this is a fixed regulation!

It is obvious from the king’s response above that the king firmly declines the request and insists that Sîn-iddina should write in Akkadian. It has been suggested by Parpola that tradition may have dictated that cuneiform was the proper medium of communication with Sargon II, and that the political administration of the Assyrian empire still preferred cuneiform writing above alphabetic.<sup>209</sup> It may also have been for security reasons, because intercepted Aramaic documents would have been easier to read.<sup>210</sup>

Another case in point is found in the undated letter SAA XVI (63:13–14), sent to Esarhaddon from the West, concerning crimes in Gūzāna. A passage in the letter reveals that two versions of the same list of taxes due from the provinces were composed, one in Assyrian and the other in Aramaic, a case of double registration.<sup>211</sup> The passage reads as follows: *šarap iškāri ša rā’ē ina libbi nibzi aššūrāya / ina libbi nibzi armāya issaṭarū* ‘They wrote the silver quota of shepherds on an Assyrian document (and) on an Aramaic document.’<sup>212</sup>

For Aramaic text written on ostrakon, potsherds used as writing materials, probably as a substitute for leather or papyrus, we have the so-called Assur Ostrakon (see fig. 7 below), which was sent from Babylon to Assyria.<sup>213</sup> This is a letter from the reign of Assurbanipal which was unearthed in a private house near

<sup>208</sup> Cf. Parpola, *ibid.*, p. 123, n. 9; *idem*, SAA I, p. xvi. Cf. SAA XVII, p. xv.

<sup>209</sup> See S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West* (Helsinki 1987), p. xvi.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> See F.M. Fales, ‘Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Review of the Evidence,’ *SAAB* 16 (2007), p. 108.

<sup>212</sup> See F.M. Fales, ‘The Tablets from Tell Shioukh Fawqani/Burmarina in the Context of Assyro-Aramaic Studies,’ in G. del Olmo Lete & J.-L. Montero Fenollós (eds.), *Archaeology of the Upper Syrian Euphrates, the Tishrin Dam Area: Proceedings of the International Symposium Held at Barcelona, January 28<sup>th</sup>–30<sup>th</sup> 1998* (Barcelona 1999), p. 628.

<sup>213</sup> See M. Lidzbarski, ‘Ein aramäischer Brief aus der Zeit Ašurbanipals,’ *ZA* 31 (1917/1918), pp. 193–202; *idem*, *Altaramäische Urkunden aus Assur* (Leipzig 1921), pp. 5–15; R.A. Bowman, ‘An Interpretation of the Asshur Ostrakon,’ in L. Waterman (ed.), *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire* (New York 1936), Part IV, pp. 275–282; A. Dupont-Sommer, ‘L’ostrakon araméen d’Assour,’ *Syria* 24 (1944), pp. 24–61; O. Pedersén, *ALA* II, N 23 and p. 114, n. 1; M.F. Fales, ‘Aramaic Letters and Neo-Assyrian Letters: Philological and Methodological Notes,’ *JAOS* 107 (1987), pp. 451–469; *idem*, ‘New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interference: The Assur Ostrakon,’ in F.M. Fales & G.F. Grassi (eds.), *CAMSEMUD 2007: Proceedings of the 13<sup>th</sup> Italian Meeting of Afro-Asiatic Linguistics, Held in Udine, May 21<sup>st</sup>–24<sup>th</sup>, 2007* (Padova 2010), pp. 189–204.

the western town wall of the city of Assur and is preserved in six fragments of a large white-glazed clay sherd written in ink in Aramaic.<sup>214</sup> It is not dated, but can be assigned from its historical context to ca. 650 B.C.<sup>215</sup> The letter was written by Bēl-ēṭir, a cohort commander who was active in Babylonia, for his “brother,” Pir’-Amurru in Assur, reporting on events in Babylonia during the Šamaš-šumu-ukīn revolt. This piece of evidence also attests to the use of Aramaic as a communication medium between Assyrian high officials in the Assyro-Babylonian area.<sup>216</sup>



Figure 7. The Assur Ostrakon (VA 8384), from ca. 650 B.C. From: M. Lidzbarski, *Altaramäische Urkunden aus Assur* (Leipzig, 1921), pl. I.

Another ostrakon (ND 6231), unearthed in 1957 at fort Shalmaneser in Calah/Nimrud, contains two lists, in Aramaic script, of West-Semitic proper names of men written on the convex and the concave sides of the ostrakon, attesting to the use of Aramaic script in the palace. It has been demonstrated that the two lists of names are the work of different handwritings and the paleographic evidence indicates with fair certainty that the two texts were written sometime between the years of 725 and 675 B.C. (see fig. 8 below).<sup>217</sup>

<sup>214</sup> For the findspot of Assur Ostrakon, see O. Pedersén, *ALA II*, pp. 113f.

<sup>215</sup> See PNA 3/I (p. 995b s.v. Pir’-Amurru); V. Hug, *Altaramäische Grammatik der Texte des 7. und 6. Jh.s v. Chr.* (Heidelberg 1993), pp. 19f., Assurbrief (AssB), l. 5.

<sup>216</sup> It is appropriate to mention that Aramaic writing is also found in Assyria proper on items that were acquired as booty or tribute from the western provinces of the Assyrian empire. Examples of such items are the well-known Nimrud bowls and ivory plaques. Cf. J.E. Curtis, & J.E. Reade (eds.), *Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum* (London 1995), p. 191; A.R. Millard, “Alphabetic Inscriptions on Ivories from Nimrud,” *Iraq* 24 (1962), pp. 41–51.

<sup>217</sup> See J.B. Segal, “An Aramaic Ostrakon from Nimrud,” *Iraq* 19 (1957): 139–145; W.F. Albright, “An Ostrakon from Calah and the North-Israelite Diaspora,” *BASOR* 149 (1958), pp. 33–36; A.R. Millard, “Assyrians and Arameans,” *Iraq* 45 (1983), p. 102.



Figure 8. The convex side of the Aramaic ostrakon from Calah/Nimrud (ND 6231), containing six lines of text written in Aramaic, ca. 725–675 B.C. From: J.B. Segal, “An Aramaic Ostrakon from Nimrud,” *Iraq* 19 (1957), pl. XXXIV, fig. I.

Still further evidence for the use of Aramaic in Assyria proper comes from the so-called bullae, round clay seals usually bearing an inscription written in Aramaic. It is generally assumed that these bullae might have been attached to official documents of papyrus.<sup>218</sup> For example, we have a stamp seal from Dūr-Šarrukēn (Khorsabad), from the reign of Sargon II, ca. 710 B.C., with a clearly Assyrian name of the owner (see fig. 9 below). The seal reads as follows: [l] pn'sr / [l]mr srs z' / srgn “[belonging to] Pān-Aššūr-lāmur, eunuch of Sargon.” Apparently, the owner of this stamp seal was a high ranking official at the Sargon's court.<sup>219</sup>

<sup>218</sup> This assumption was challenged by Herboldt, who argued that bullae functioned as labels attached to containers, see S. Herboldt, *Neuassyrische Glyptik des 8.–7. Jh. v. Chr.* (Helsinki 1992), pp. 16f. For examples of clay bullae fastened to jars from the Neo-Assyrian period, see J.N. Postgate, *The Governor's Palace Archive* (London 1973), nos. 233–235 and the commentary on p. 223.

<sup>219</sup> See M. Sprengling, “An Aramaic Seal Impression from Khorsabad,” *AJSL* 49 (1933), pp. 53–55; Tadmor, *Aramaization*, pp. 450, 461 n. 23; S.A. Kaufman, “The History of Aramaic Vowel Reduction,” in M. Sokoloff (ed.), *Arameans, Aramaic and the Aramaic Literary Tradition* (Ramat-Gan 1983), p. 53–54; idem, “Assyro-Aramaica,” *JAOS* 109 (1989), p. 97, n. 1; K. Watanabe, “Neuassyrische Siegellegenden,” *Orient* 29 (1993), p. 116; PNA 3/I (p. 983 s.v. Pan-Aššūr-lāmur, no. 4); Herboldt, *ibid.*, p. 170, Khorsabad 1, pl. 27, 3.

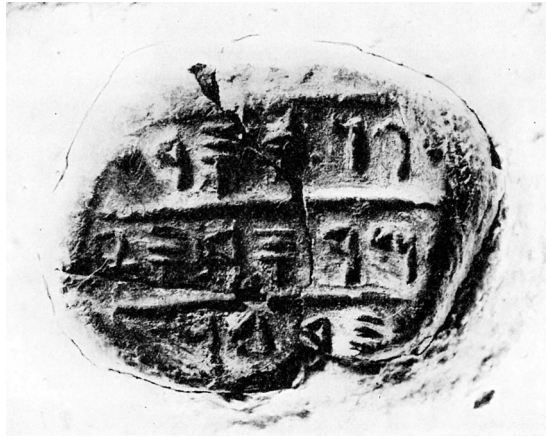


Figure 9. A clay bulla from Dūr-Šarrukēn/Khorsabad, representing a stamp seal of an Assyrian official and bearing inscription written in Aramaic: *[l]pn 'sr / [l]mr srs z' / srgn* “(belonging to) Pān-Aššūr-lāmur, eunuch of Sargon.” From: M. Sprengling, “An Aramaic Seal Impression from Khorsabad,” *AJSL* 49 (1932), p. 54.

The use of Aramaic is also implied in association with oracular queries placed before the god Shamash, the lord of the oracles, in an act of extispicy.<sup>220</sup> It seems that oracular queries were often joined with a papyrus document including the name of the petitioner (usually Esarhaddon) and/or other relevant details, as the cuneiform tablets often refer to “the man whose name is written on this *niāru* or *urbānu*,” i.e., “papyrus,” rather than “on this *tuppu*,” which would refer to a clay tablet. Most likely the information written on papyrus was in Aramaic. An attestation to the use of *niāru* “papyrus,” is found for instance in SAA IV (156:2): *[a-me-l]u šá MU-šú i-na ni-ia-a-ri an-na-a šá-aṭ-ru-ú-ma* “[the ma]n whose name is written on this papyrus.”<sup>221</sup> A reference for the use of *urbānu*, “papyrus,” for writing comes from SAA IV (108:3): *[ša] i-na Ū.ur-ba-an-ni an-ni-‘i’ šaṭ-ru-ma* “[wh]ich are written in this papyrus.” The papyrus documents referred to may have contained another kind of text written in Aramaic as well. Unfortunately, Aramaic queries written on papyrus, a perishable material, did not survive. An extant query, SAA IV (162:7’), written on clay tablet in Neo-Assyrian cuneiform, bears an Aramaic script, namely *nbwšlm ‘q[r]*, obviously the signatures of Nabû-šallim and Aqar-Aia, both diviners at the court of Nineveh from the reign of Esarhaddon.<sup>222</sup> It is quite interesting that although both diviners have Akkadian names they put their signatures on the clay tablet in Aramaic. Another query (SAA IV 58 r.8–11) asks Shamash whether Esarhaddon should send his messenger with an Aramean scribe. This also attests to the employment of Aramean scribes in the royal service. Of special interest in this genre of texts is a

<sup>220</sup> See H. Tadmor, “Assyria and the West: The Ninth Century and its Aftermath,” in H. Goedicke & J.J.M. Roberts (eds.), *Unity and Diversity. Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (Baltimore 1975), p. 43; I. Starr, *Queries to the Sun god: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria* (Helsinki 1990), p. 359a s.v. *urbānu* “papyrus.”

<sup>221</sup> For additional examples, see I. Starr, *ibid.*, p. 343a s.v. *niāru* “papyrus.”

<sup>222</sup> See Tadmor, *ibid.*

query (SAA IV 144:9) where the Assyrian and the Aramean scribes are listed successively: [LÚ.DUB.SAR].MEŠ *aš-šur*.KI-*a-a lu-ú* LÚ.DUB.SAR.MEŠ *ár-ma-a-a*, “the Assyrian [scribes], or the Aramean scribes.”

It is clear that during the 8th and 7th centuries B.C., the Assyrian scribes not only produced bilingual texts written in Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic, but also produced text written solely in Aramaic. It appears that the two scribes, *ṭupšarru aššūrāya* and *ṭupšarru armāya*, enjoyed equal prestige during the last two centuries of the Neo-Assyrian empire.<sup>223</sup>

From two cuneiform texts excavated at Nineveh and one cuneiform text excavated at Calah/Nimrud, we deduce that the scribes who wrote the texts were undoubtedly bilingual and spoke Aramaic as their first language. The first instance is a copy of the first tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh, which was produced for the library of Assurbanipal. In it we find that the scribe made a mistake of a sort only expected from an individual who spoke Aramaic as his first language.<sup>224</sup> The scribe erroneously utilized the cuneiform sign “lord” for writing the word “son,” due to the homophonic similarity between Aramaic *mar*’ (definite state: *mar*’*ā*), meaning “lord,” and Assyrian *mar*’*u* (construct state: *mār*) “son.”<sup>225</sup>

A rather similar lapse is found in a Neo-Assyrian letter (SAA I 220:3) sent by an official named Arīḫu during the time of Sargon II (ca. 721–705 B.C.) and concerning the corn tax of the Samaritans.<sup>226</sup> The letter was unearthed in Nineveh; originally it was probably dispatched from the province of Lāqê in the middle Euphrates region. SAA I 220:1–3 reads as follows: *a-na* <sup>md</sup>PA–BĀD–PAB / IM <sup>m</sup>*a-ri-ḫi lu* DI-*mu* / *a-na* ’DUMU’-*ia* “A letter from Ariḫu to Nabû-duru-ušur. Good health to my lord!” In NA the logogram DUMU normally denotes *mar*’*u* “son, boy.” However, rendering DUMU as “son, boy,” does not make sense in the context of this NA letter. Therefore, it is considered to be a slip, most likely due to the Aramaic influence, that the logogram DUMU denotes here the word “lord.”<sup>227</sup> A similar mistake is found in a NA letter (SAA XIX 13:3, 5) from the 8th century B.C., which was unearthed at Calah/Nimrud.<sup>228</sup> The semantic variation of DUMU, “son, boy” versus “lord,” has been explained a result of the homophonic similarity between the NA *mar*’*u* “son, boy” and the contemporary Aramaic word *mar*’ or *mar*’*ā* “lord.”<sup>229</sup>

The textual material provides another type of evidence attesting to the use of Aramaic alongside Akkadian in the heartland of Assyria. This kind of evidence consists of Aramaic loanwords that are found in NA, SB and NB texts excavated

<sup>223</sup> See R.P. Dougherty, “Writing upon Parchment and Papyrus among the Babylonians and Assyrians,” *JAOS* 48 (1928), p. 130.

<sup>224</sup> See S. Parpola, *The Standard Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh* (Helsinki 1997), p. 74, l. no. 242 (ms. D) // l. no. 265 (ms. A2); idem, “Assyrians after Assyria,” *JAAS* 12 (2000), p. 12; idem, “The Neo-Assyrian Ruling Class,” in T.R. Kämmerer (ed.), *Studien zu Ritual und Sozialgeschichte im Alten Orient / Studies on Ritual and Society in the Ancient Near East: Tartu Symposium 1998–2004* (Berlin 2007), pp. 265f. Cf. A.R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* (Oxford 2003), pp. 802f n. on l. 259.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> See PNA 1/I (p. 131a s.v. Arīḫu, no. 1).

<sup>227</sup> See the discussion in chapter 2.1 below s.v. *mar*’*u*.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.



in Assyria proper. Loanwords are a useful tool for detecting the vernacular used at the time of direct contact between the donor/source language and the recipient language. In our case, a particularly telling example is the Aramaic loanword *kiqillutu* “dung heap, dunghill, refuse dump,” which is attested in two NA legal documents (SAA VI 200:5; SAA VI 31 r.3), and in a NA letter (SAA X 294:15).<sup>230</sup> These NA texts originate from Nineveh. This loanword is coined along the lines of *qīqilta*, which is found in the later dialects of Aramaic.<sup>231</sup> In comparison, a more literary form of the same Aramaic word is found as *qlqlt*’ in the Old Aramaic of Tell Fekherye inscription.<sup>232</sup> Since a more colloquial form of this Aramaic word was borrowed into NA, it stands to reason that Aramaic was probably used alongside Akkadian as a spoken language in the Assyrian heartland.<sup>233</sup>

### 1.9.2 Visual evidence

The narrative reliefs of the Assyrian kings, beginning with Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.), portray scribes accompanying the army on campaigns.<sup>234</sup> However, from the time of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 B.C.), there are numerous depictions on the Assyrian palace reliefs of two scribes standing next to each other, holding different type of writing equipment, and in the act of writing. They are usually portrayed counting captives and recording booty.<sup>235</sup> One scribe is writing with a stylus on a clay tablet or on a wax-coated, ivory or wooden hinged writing board; the other scribe is writing with a pen or brush on papyrus or a leather scroll (see figs. 10–12 below).<sup>236</sup> One pictorial instance, namely the wall painting from Til-

<sup>230</sup> See the discussion in chapter 2.1 below s.v. *kiqillutu*.

<sup>231</sup> See J.C. Greenfield & A. Shaffer “Notes on the Akkadian-Aramaic Bilingual Statue from Tell Fekherye,” *Iraq* 40 (1983), p. 116.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. A. Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil & A.R. Millard, *La statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne* (Paris 1982), pp. 23f, l. 22 and p. 36; E. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics, II* (Leuven 1994), pp. 70f.

<sup>233</sup> See J.C. Greenfield & A. Shaffer, “*qlqlt*’, *tubkinnu*, Refuse Tips and Treasure Trove,” *AnSt* 33 (1983), p. 125.

<sup>234</sup> See J.M. Russell, *Sennacherib’s Palace without Rival at Nineveh* (Chicago 1991), pp. 28–31; K. Radner, “Schreiberkonventionen im assyrischen Reich: Sprachen und Schriftsysteme,” in J. Renger (ed.), *Assur – Gott, Stadt und Land: 5. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 18.–21. Februar 2004 in Berlin* (Wiesbaden 2011), p. 388, n. 12.

<sup>235</sup> The images representing Assyrian scribes in pairs also come from the reigns of Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.), Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), and Assurbanipal (668–627 B.C.). There are other similar images which are ascribed to the reign of Sinsharrishkun (ca. 627–612 B.C.). However, in the images from the reign of Assurbanipal, none of the two scribes is writing with a pen or brush on papyrus or a leather scroll. See J.M. Russell, *ibid.*, p. 706.

<sup>236</sup> For additional instances of this sort of visual evidence and a catalogue of illustrations of Neo-Assyrian scribes, see J. Reade “Visual Evidence for the Status and Activities of Assyrian Scribes,” in G.B. Lanfranchi et al. (eds.), *Leggo! Studies Presented to Frederick Mario Fales on the Occasion of His 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (Wiesbaden 2012), pp. 702–704 and 712–716; J.M. Russell, *Sennacherib’s Palace without Rival at Nineveh* (Chicago 1991), p. 321 n. 36. See also S. Parpola, “National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times,” *JAAS* 18/2 (2004), p. 9, n. 21. For the view that there is no attestation in the Neo-Assyrian textual material of the preparation of skin or leather for writing purposes, see F.M. Fales, “The Use and

Barsip (see fig. 12 below), provides additional detailed information by tinting brown the tablet held by one scribe, most probably to make it resemble a clay tablet, while the sheet held by the other scribe is tinted white, undoubtedly to resemble papyrus or leather.<sup>237</sup>

Messerschmidt concludes from these depictions of pairs of scribes on the Assyrian narrative reliefs that the official documents must have been produced in duplicate, one in cuneiform written on a clay tablet and the other in Aramaic alphabet written on papyrus.<sup>238</sup>

A different interpretation of the visual evidence has been put forward by Madhloom who has argued that the person holding a scroll was not a scribe but an artist preparing rough sketches that would be used as models for carving palace reliefs in Assyria.<sup>239</sup> He states that the Assyrian textual records clearly refer to an artist (*ēširu*) who is described as sketching on leather.<sup>240</sup> Tadmor, on the other hand, believes that conclusive evidence against Madhloom's opinion is furnished by a fresco from Til-Barsip (Tell Aḥmar), a major Assyrian administrative center in the western part of the Empire, which portrays two scribes facing the king, one writing on a tablet and the other on a sheet of papyrus (see fig. 10 below).<sup>241</sup>

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Function of Aramaic Tablets," in G. Bunnens (ed.), *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (Louvain 2000), pp. 123f, n. 181.

<sup>237</sup> See A.R. Millard, "Assyrians and Arameans," *Iraq* 45 (1983), p. 101. Cf. R.P. Dougherty, "Writing upon Parchment and Papyrus among the Babylonians and Assyrians," *JAOS* 48 (1928), p. 129.

<sup>238</sup> See L. Messerschmidt, *Zur Technik des Tontafel-Schreibens* (Berlin 1907), p. 6.

<sup>239</sup> See T.A. Madhloom, *The Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art* (London 1970), pp. 121f; idem, "The Influence of Foreign Societies as Shown in Assyrian Art," in J. Harmatta & G. Komoróczy (eds.), *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im Alten Vorderasien* (Budapest 1976), p. 385; idem, "*al-fannān al-ʿāšūrī yurāfiq al-ḥamalāt al-ʿaskarīyah*," in *Researches on the Antiquities of Saddam Dam Basin Salvage and Other Researches* ([Baghdad] 1987), pp. 245–248.

<sup>240</sup> See Madhloom, *ibid.* For other opinions relating to Madhloom's interpretation, see J. Reade, "Neo-Assyrian Monuments in Their Historical Context," in F.M. Fales (ed.), *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons, in Literary, Ideological, and Historical Analysis: Papers of a Symposium Held in Cetona (Siena) June 26–28, 1980* (Rome 1981), p. 162; idem, *Assyrian Sculpture* (London 1983), p. 34; idem, "Visual Evidence for the Status and Activities of Assyrian Scribes," in G.B. Lanfranchi et al. (eds.), *Leggo! Studies Presented to Frederick Mario Fales on the Occasion of His 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (Wiesbaden 2012), p. 711; U. Seidl, "Assurbanipals Griffel," *ZA* 97 (2007), p. 119. For textual evidence concerning drawings made on leather, see S. Parpola, "The Royal Archives of Nineveh," in K.R. Veenhof (ed.), *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers read at the 30<sup>e</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Leiden, 4–8 July 1983* (Istanbul 1986), p. 225, n. 18; SAA XV 136 r.15–18.

<sup>241</sup> See H. Tadmor, "On the Role of Aramaic in the Assyrian Empire," in M. Mori (ed.), *Near Eastern Studies Dedicated to H.I.H. Prince Takahito Mikasa on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Wiesbaden 1991), p. 420, n. 8.

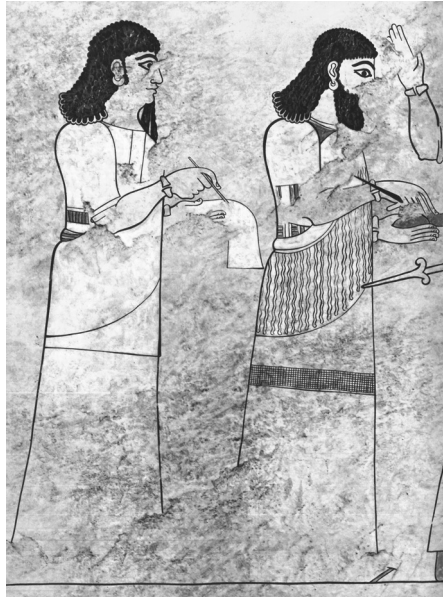


Figure 10. A fresco from Til-Barsip (Tell Aḥmar), ascribed to Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.), representing Assyrian scribes at the royal court. The scribe to the right is writing on a clay tablet, in cuneiform, in Assyrian, and the scribe on the left side is probably writing on papyrus, in alphabet script, in Aramaic. From: F. Thureau-Dangin & M. Dunand, *Til-Barsib* (Paris, 1936), pl. L.

According to Tadmor, the scene in the above-mentioned fresco is not associated with a military campaign abroad but with a ceremony at the Assyrian court, and therefore the person holding the sheet of papyrus must be a scribe recording the royal instructions in Aramaic.<sup>242</sup> Also opposing Madloom's interpretation, Fales has pointed out that the circumstances where an individual with a brush and a scroll stands next to a scribe writing in cuneiform frequently depict the act of registering booty, making it unlikely that he is an artist drawing sketches.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. For similar counterarguments to Madhloom's interpretation, see K. Watanabe, Review of "The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I, Letters from Assyria and the West," by S. Parpola, *BiOr* 48 (1991), p. 202; F.M. Fales, "Assyrian-Aramaic Cultural Interrelation: Older and Newer Results," in L. Bachelot & F.M. Fales (eds.), *Tell Shiukh Fawqani 1994–1998, II* (Padova 2005), p. 603, n. 40. Cf. J. Reade "Visual Evidence for the Status and Activities of Assyrian Scribes," in G.B. Lanfranchi et al. (eds.), *Leggo! Studies Presented to Frederick Mario Fales on the Occasion of His 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (Wiesbaden 2012), pp. 711f.

<sup>243</sup> See Fales, *ibid.*



Figure 11. A stone relief from Calah/Nimrud (BM 118882) depicting an Assyrian official and two scribes recording booty during one of the campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.). The scribe to the left is writing in cuneiform on a clay tablet or on a hinged writing-board, and the other is probably writing Aramaic in alphabetic script on leather. From: F.M. Fales & J.N. Postgate, SAA XI, p. 96.



Figure 12. A stone relief from the reign of Assurbanipal or later (BM 124596) depicting Assyrian scribes recording booty. The scribe to the right is writing Assyrian on a hinged writing-board in cuneiform and the scribe to the left is probably writing Aramaic on papyrus or a leather scroll in alphabetic script. From: F.M. Fales & J.N. Postgate, SAA VII, p. 126.

The textual/visual evidence and scholarly research reviewed above attest to the fact that Aramaic was indeed utilized alongside Akkadian in the Assyrian empire from the time of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 B.C.) onward.<sup>244</sup> It was recognized

<sup>244</sup> See R.A. Bowman, "Arameans, Aramaic, and the Bible," *JNES* 7 (1948), p. 75; H. Tadmor, "Assyria and the West: The Ninth Century and its Aftermath," in H. Goedicke & J.J.M. Roberts (eds.), *Unity and Diversity* (Baltimore 1975), p. 42; F.M. Fales, *AECT*, p. 44.

as a second official language alongside Akkadian, at least in the western provinces of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.<sup>245</sup>

The frequent Aramaic personal names attested in different Neo-Assyrian texts stemming from Assyria proper confirm the presence of Arameans in the heartland of Assyria during the first millennium B.C. We know, based on their occupational titles, that many of them held high positions within Assyrian society. It is certain that a large majority of those Arameans were originally deported to the Assyrian heartland. However, as the records reveal, many Arameans as well as other non-Assyrians assumed Assyrian names in the second generation and afterwards. Undoubtedly this happened for the purpose of prestige and as a result of the accelerated process of Assyrianization.<sup>246</sup> Nevertheless, based on the extant prosopographical data, Zadok has concluded that the predominantly Assyrian character of Assyria proper was maintained until the very end of the Assyrian empire.<sup>247</sup> On the other hand, the prosopographical data shows that the large majority of the population in the western provinces of the empire, namely the Gozan-Harran area, constituted of the bearers of West-Semitic names whereas the bearers of Assyrian names in the same area were only 30%.<sup>248</sup>

Geller believes that Aramaic was already widely spoken in Assyria during the Neo-Assyrian period.<sup>249</sup> Postgate remarks that by the 7th century the main records of corn and commodity transactions in Assyria were in Aramaic, but currency loans were recorded in Assyrian.<sup>250</sup> According to many scholars, it was in the Neo-Assyrian empire that Aramaic was first recognized as the second official language of a great power and became a *lingua franca*.<sup>251</sup>

Parpola states that the Assyrian rulers imposed Aramaic as a *lingua franca* through a carefully calculated policy aimed at unifying different nations and languages of the vast Empire to create a unified national identity.<sup>252</sup> He also points out that from the reign of Sargon and before we have a large number of letters received from provincial governors, but we completely lack this kind of

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<sup>245</sup> See H. Tadmor, "On the Role of Aramaic in the Assyrian Empire," in M. Mori (ed.), *Near Eastern Studies Dedicated to H.I.H. Prince Takahito Mikasa on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Wiesbaden 1991), p. 419; idem, *Aramaization*, p. 451; J.A. Fitzmyer, *A Wandering Aramaean: Collected Aramaic Essays* (Chico 1979), p. 59.

<sup>246</sup> See R. Zadok, "The Ethno-Linguistic Character of the Jezireh and Adjacent Regions in the 9<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> Centuries (Assyrian Proper vs. Periphery)," in M. Liverani (ed.), *Neo-Assyrian Geography* (Rome 1995), p. 278.

<sup>247</sup> See Zadok, *ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278. Cf. F.M. Fales, *Censimenti e catasti di epoca neo-assira* (Rome 1973), pp. 106f, and n. 90.

<sup>249</sup> See M.J. Geller, Review of "A Sketch of Neo-Assyrian Grammar," by J. Hämeen-Anttila, *BSOAS* 65 (2002), p. 563.

<sup>250</sup> See J.N. Postgate, "Middle Assyrian to Neo-Assyrian: The Nature of the Shift," in H. Waetzoldt & H. Hauptmann (eds.), *Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten* (Heidelberg 1997), p. 161.

<sup>251</sup> See the discussion above in Section 1.8 under Old Aramaic and Official Aramaic.

<sup>252</sup> See S. Parpola, "The Neo-Assyrian Ruling Class," in T.R. Kämmerer (ed.), *Studien zu Ritual und Sozialgeschichte im Alten Orient / Studies on Ritual and Society in the Ancient Near East: Tartu Symposium 1998–2004* (Berlin 2007), p. 262; see also idem, "Assyrians after Assyria," *JAAS* 12 (2000), pp. 1–16.

letters from the reigns of Esarhaddon and the later kings.<sup>253</sup> Parpola suggests that probably from the reign of Sennacherib the provincial governors switched to sending letters written in Aramaic on perishable material, such as papyrus or parchment, which is now lost forever.<sup>254</sup>

The status of Aramaic as an official language was maintained afterwards by the succeeding Babylonians and Persians. It is no wonder that we find in a LB tablet from the reign of Cyrus (Cyr. 364:16), a reference, in a broken context, to a scribe (of Aramaic), who most likely was an Assyrian from southern Mesopotamia as identified by the nominal pattern and the theophoric element in his name, and was employed in the royal service: <sup>m</sup>IGI-AN.ŠĀR-lu-mur <sup>l</sup>u-si-pi-ri ʾDUMU-LUGALʾ “Pān-Aššūr-lūmur, scribe (of Aramaic), of the son of the king.”<sup>255</sup> Interestingly, Pān-Aššūr-lūmur’s occupational title is not *ṭupšarru*, but *sepīru*, which means he was a scribe specialized in writing Aramaic.

Zadok states: “Aramaic texts were generally written in Aramean political entities before 720 B.C. Later on, with the final conquest of these entities by the Assyrians, Aramaic became the *lingua franca* of the Assyrian empire. Therefore, an Aramaic text in a given place after 720 B.C. is not necessarily an indication of the presence of Arameans there.”<sup>256</sup> Zadok iterates later saying:

Aramaic inscriptions appear in the Jezireh as early as the 9th century. Their number increases and their geographical distribution widens in the ensuing centuries. However, from the end of 8th century, Aramaic became a communication language in most parts of the Assyrian empire thereby ceasing to be an indication of the presence of ethnic Arameans. Hence most of the pertinent direct evidence ceases after the liquidation of the last Aramean polities in Syria towards the end of the 8th century.<sup>257</sup>

Brock expresses almost a similar view, stating: “Only in the early centuries of its recorded history has Aramaic been tied to a specific ethnic group, the Arameans, for it was soon adopted as a spoken or as a literary language (or as both) by peoples of many ethnic and religious backgrounds.”<sup>258</sup>

Prior to Zadok and Brock, Bowman described one of the aspects of the Aramaic language as follow:

Part of the difficulty in the study of Aramaic lies in the fact that the language is usually not definitely tied to any single national or ethnic group. Most Aramaic we

<sup>253</sup> See S. Parpola, “Assyrian Royal Inscriptions and Neo-Assyrian Letters,” in F.M. Fales (ed.), *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons, in Literary, Ideological, and Historical Analysis: Papers of a Symposium Held in Cetona (Siena) June 26–28, 1980* (Rome 1981), pp. 122f.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid. Cf. Fales, “The Use and Function of Aramaic Tablets,” in G. Bunnens (ed.), *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (Louvain 2000), pp. 123f.

<sup>255</sup> See R.P. Dougherty, “Writing upon Parchment and Papyrus among the Babylonians and Assyrians,” *JAOS* 48 (1928), pp. 118f, n. 56; J.N. Strassmaier, *Inscripfen von Cyrus, König von Babylon (538–529 v. Chr.)*, (Leipzig 1890), p. 216.

<sup>256</sup> See R. Zadok, “On the Onomasticon of the Old Aramaic Sources,” *BiOr* 48 (1991), p. 25.

<sup>257</sup> See R. Zadok, “The Ethno-Linguistic Character of the Jezireh and Adjacent Regions in the 9<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> Centuries (Assyrian Proper vs. Periphery),” in M. Liverani (ed.), *Neo-Assyrian Geography* (Rome 1995), p. 218.

<sup>258</sup> See S. Brock, “Three Thousand Years of Aramaic Literature,” *ARAM Periodical* 1 (1989), p. 11.

possess was not written by Arameans or within any particular Aramean state. The specifically “Aramean” kingdoms that we know were all relatively small and rather unimportant politically, and most of them were located in areas as yet but poorly worked by archeologists. The influence of the Aramaic language has been out of all proportion to the political importance of the people who spoke it, for Aramaic soon became a cultural element at home almost everywhere in the ancient world.<sup>259</sup>

In later periods the Aramaic script was called in Greek *Assyria grammata* “Assyrian characters,” in Demotic it was called *šh ’lšr* “script of Assyria,” and in Talmudic literature the term *ktāb ’aššūrī* “Assyrian writing” is used for the Aramaic form of the alphabet, i.e., the “square” Jewish script that replaced the ancient Hebrew script.<sup>260</sup> All this was, perhaps, due to the association of the Aramaic language and script with Assyria and the Assyrians.

The centuries’ long coexistence and language contact between Akkadian (Assyrian and Babylonian) and Aramaic led to a mutual influence between the two languages. They vied for dominance, and eventually Akkadian, the native language of Mesopotamia, was replaced by Aramaic which became the medium of communication in the entire ancient Near East.<sup>261</sup> Much later, in the same region, Aramaic met with a similar fate as that of Akkadian, and was ultimately replaced by Arabic in the wake of the Islamic conquest in the 7th century A.D.

## 1.10 The scheme for presentation of data

The analysis of the proposed Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian which is put forward in Chapter 2 is presented and arranged as follows:

### A. The order of the lemmata:

The headwords are listed in the order of the Latin alphabet and following the generally accepted convention by which the dotted letters (*š*, *ṭ*) follow the undotted letters, and *š* follows *ṣ*. The headwords are entered in bold character followed by other existing forms of the word entered in italics. They consist of the proposed Aramaic loanwords that are cited in their Neo-Assyrianized lexical forms as they appear in *Assyrian-English-Assyrian Dictionary* (AEAD),<sup>262</sup> and are generally listed in the nominative singular form of nouns. For *plurale tantum*, the

<sup>259</sup> See R.A. Bowman, “Arameans, Aramaic, and the Bible,” *JNES* 7 (1948), p. 66.

<sup>260</sup> See R.C. Steiner, “Why the Aramaic Script Was Called ‘Assyrian’ in Hebrew, Greek, and Demotic,” *Or* 62 (1993): 80–82, with references to previous discussions on this subject. See also J.C. Greenfield, “The Aramaic Legal Texts of the Achaemenian Period,” *Transeuphratène* 3 (1990), p. 88; R. Schmitt, “Assyria grammata und ähnliche: Was wußte die Griechen von Keilschrift und Keilschriften?” in C.W. Müller, K. Sier and J. Werner (eds.), *Zum Umgang mit fremden Sprachen in der griechisch-römischen Antike* (Stuttgart 1992), pp. 21–35; G. Rubio, “Writing in Another Tongue: Alloglottography in the Ancient Near East,” in S.L. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* (Chicago 2006), p. 51.

<sup>261</sup> See Kaufman, *AIA*, p. 2.

<sup>262</sup> See S. Parpola et al. (eds.), *Assyrian-English-Assyrian Dictionary* (Helsinki 2007).

lexical form is indicated as plural. In the case of verbs, the Neo-Assyrian infinitive is listed. Where a lexical form is reconstructed, an asterisk precedes it. Grammatical information, e.g., syntactic category, is provided immediately after the headword. The verbal stems are abbreviated as follows: The basic stem, *Grundstamm*, (G); the doubled stem (D); the causative stem or the Š-stem (Š); the passive stem or N-stem (N). A brief gloss follows on the same line as the headword. English translations are enclosed in double quotation marks, e.g., *durā'u* n. “arm, forearm”; definitions are enclosed in parentheses, e.g., *siprītu* (a textile).

## B. Attested forms and citations:

The attested Neo-Assyrian word form(s) of a proposed Aramaic loanword and its textual reference(s) are given immediately under the headword. They serve as the accumulated evidence of usage. Whenever possible, the textual citations and their renditions quoted in CAD, AHW., or von Soden's articles on Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian and Neo- and Late-Babylonian are replaced by the new editions of the same texts that appeared in SAA volumes I–XIX, or in other current Neo-Assyrian text editions appearing for instance in CTN, StAT, SAAB and BATSH. Detailed information is provided on the NA texts that include proposed Aramaic loanwords, to investigate whether there are any pattern(s) in the groups of texts and the loanwords studied. The relevance of geographical and chronological factors in the extant NA texts containing Aramaic loanwords can now be investigated. The information is presented in table format and is arranged in six columns containing the following details:

- (1) *Loanword*: This comprises all the forms attested for a given Aramaic loanword in NA. Since Neo-Assyrian employs cuneiform signs for writing, the transliteration of the attested forms cited is given sign-by-sign in the Latin alphabet following the conventions of the SAA series. The logograms are written in capitals.
- (2) *Reference*: This provides the textual references for the NA texts cited. As for the line numbering of the NA texts quoted, the method of line numbering in the SAA series and the State Archives of Assyria Project's electronic database, Corpus of Neo-Assyrian Texts (CNA), is followed. Texts that are royal letters are referred to as (RL).
- (3) *Provenance*: This indicates the geographical location where the NA text cited was excavated.
- (4) *Origin*: This indicates the geographical location where the NA text was initially written or composed (if known). Conjectural suggestions are given in italics. Unknown origin is marked (–).
- (5) *Genre*: This refers to the type of the NA text which contains an Aramaic loanword. For indicating the type of the NA text, the following abbreviations are used: (AD) administrative document; (AR) astrological report; (D) decree; (Inscr.) inscription; (L) letter; (LD) legal document;



(LL) lexical list; (LT) literary text; (MC) mystical & cultic; (P) prophecy; (R) ritual; (T) treaty; (TL) textile list; (WL) wine list.

- (6) *Date*: All the dates of the NA texts cited refer to B.C. In addition, the following abbreviations and symbols are utilized:

Adn	= Adad-nērārī III (810–783 B.C.)
Asb	= Assurbanipal (668–627 B.C.)
Asn	= Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.)
Esh	= Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.)
Sg	= Sargon II (721–705 B.C.)
Shalm. III	= Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.)
Sn	= Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.)
Tgl	= Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 B.C.)
PC	= post-canonical (648*–609* B.C.)
–	= not dated <i>or</i> date lost
*	= a reconstructed post-canonical date. <sup>263</sup>

### C. Assessment of the loan hypothesis:

The loan hypothesis is provided under the attested word forms and textual citations. A number of operators are utilized as follows: ( $\Rightarrow$ ) to indicate a loan direction; ( $=\triangleright$ ) to indicate a semantic loan; (;) to indicate independent co-receptors of a loan; (// //) to mark a previous loan hypothesis that is now considered false; [?] to indicate a possible but questionable loan.

### D. The source word:

All the Aramaic words from different Aramaic languages/dialects which may contribute to identifying the possible Aramaic source words borrowed into Neo-Assyrian are quoted for the sake of discussion and analysis of the loan hypothesis. The words include, when possible, Old Aramaic (OAram.), Official Aramaic (OffAr.), Nabatean (Nab.), Palmyrene (Palm.), Biblical Aramaic (BA), Jewish Literary Aramaic (JLA), Qumran Aramaic (QA), Palestinian Targumic Aramaic (PTA), Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA), Galilean Aramaic (Gal.), Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA), Samaritan Aramaic (Sam.), Syriac (Syr.), Late Jewish Literary Aramaic (LJLA), Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (JBA), Mandaic (Ma.), and Sūret (a.k.a. NENA).

### E. Discussion and analysis of the proposed loanword:

Discussions previously put forward by scholars which are pertinent to a proposed loanword, as well as any related controversy, are noted, analyzed and contrasted

<sup>263</sup> The sequence of *limmu* dating follows A. Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910–612 BC* (Helsinki 1994). The post-canonical (PC), eponyms are based on the provisional order by S. Parpola, in K. Radner (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, 1/I, A* (Helsinki 1998), pp. xviii–xxi.

with each other. The main objective is to present the evidence that leads to establishing or rejecting a proposed loanword as clearly and comprehensively as possible.

F. The translations of the Neo-Assyrian passages quoted:

If not clearly stated otherwise, the translations of the NA passages quoted in this study for the sake of discussion are the same as those given in SAA volumes I–XXI, or in other current Neo-Assyrian text editions appearing in CTN, StAT, SAAB and BATSH. Uncertain and conjectural translations are indicated by *italics*.