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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS .....	285
◆ MADADH RICHEY, DAVID S. VANDERHOOF, AND ODED LIPSCHITS Two Private Babylonian Period Stamp Impressions from Ramat Raḥel .....	289
◆ ROBERT D. HOLMSTEDT On the Invention of the Alphabet .....	307
◆ ANDRÉ LEMAIRE AND ANAT MENDEL-GEBEROVICH Unpublished and Newly Read Aramaic Inscriptions from Samaria .....	337
◆ RICHARD C. McDONALD The Biblical Hebrew Third Person Pronoun in Verbless Nominal Clauses: The Separating Pronoun of Arabic or Pronominal Copula? .....	347
◆ NA'AMA PAT-EL AND AREN WILSON-WRIGHT The Subgrouping of Smalian: Arguments in Favor of an Independent Branch .....	371
◆ F. W. DOBBS-ALLSOPP AND DANIEL PIOSKE On the Appearance of Royal Inscriptions in Alphabetic Scripts in the Levant: An Exercise in “Historically Anchored Philology” .....	389
◆ MICHEL DE VREEZE The Late Bronze Deir ‘Alla Tablets: A Renewed Attempt towards Their Translation and Interpretation .....	443

PLATES FOR RICHEY, VANDERHOOF AND LIPSCHITS'  
"TWO PRIVATE BABYLONIAN PERIOD STAMP IMPRESSIONS" .....497

PLATES FOR LEMAIRE AND MENDEL-GEBEROVICH'S  
"UNPUBLISHED AND NEWLY READ ARAMAIC INSCRIPTIONS" .....499

PLATES FOR DOBBS-ALLSOPP AND PIOSKE'S  
"ON THE APPEARANCE OF ROYAL INSCRIPTIONS" .....505

PLATES FOR DE VREEZE'S "THE LATE BRONZE DEIR 'ALLA TABLETS" ....536



## THE SUBGROUPING OF SAMALIAN: ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF AN INDEPENDENT BRANCH<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The ancient kingdom of Sam'al was located in what is today the Turkish province of Gaziantep, about 50 km from the Mediterranean Sea. It flourished from 900–700 B.C.E. and is mentioned by the name Samāl (*sá-am-a-al*) in Old Akkadian economic documents and in the archives of the Neo-Assyrian empire, which briefly controlled this area before its final collapse.<sup>2</sup> Local inscriptions refer to the site by the name Yādiya.<sup>3</sup> A German expedition excavated Sam'al in the late nineteenth century and more recently the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago has undertaken further archaeological work there. The initial

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<sup>2</sup> Khaled Nashef, *Rekonstruktion der Reiserouten zur Zeit der altassyrischen Handelsniederlassungen* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1987): 18–20; Ariel M. Bagg, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der neuassyrischen Zeit*, Teil 1: *Die Levante* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007): 206–208; J. David Schloen, “The City of Katamuwa: The Iron Age Kingdom of Sam'al and the Excavations of Zincirli,” in *In Remembrance of Me: Feasting with the Dead in the Ancient Middle East* (V. Rimmer Herrmann and J. D. Schloen, eds.; Chicago: OI, 2014): 27.

<sup>3</sup> This name probably refers to the kingdom, not the city itself, according to David Schloen and Amir S. Fink, “New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Sam'al) and the Discovery of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele,” *BASOR* 356 (2009): 6–7.

excavation uncovered a number of inscriptions, two of which—the Panamuwa inscriptions (*KAI* 214 and 215)—were written in a previously unknown Semitic language, called Samalian in scholarly literature.<sup>4</sup> In 2008 the Neubauer expedition of the Oriental Institute unearthed a new text—called the Katumuwa inscription after the name of its author—in a Semitic language that resembles Samalian in many respects but has its own unique linguistic features. These unique features have led many scholars, including D. Pardee,<sup>5</sup> to argue that the Katumuwa inscription is unrelated to Samalian.

Since the initial discovery of the Panamuwa inscriptions, there has been a debate concerning the genetic affiliation of Samalian. Scholars have classified Samalian in essentially three different ways: as Aramaic,<sup>6</sup> as a separate Northwest Semitic language,<sup>7</sup> or as a mixed language, showing features of both Aramaic and Canaanite.<sup>8</sup> The recent discovery of the Katumuwa inscription, which shares many linguistic features with the older Samalian inscriptions, has reignited this debate. In this paper, therefore, we will argue that Samalian and the language of the Katumuwa inscription constitute a separate, Samalian branch of Northwest Semitic. Along the way, we will review and critique previous arguments for identifying Samalian as Aramaic or Canaanite as well as

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<sup>4</sup> For the history of excavations at the site and the context of the most recent inscription, see Schloen and Fink (n 3): 1–13.

<sup>5</sup> Dennis Pardee, “A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,” *BASOR* 356 (2009): 51–71.

<sup>6</sup> H. Louis Ginsberg, “Aramaic Dialect Problems,” *AJSL* 50 (1933): 1–9; Josef Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli* (Münster: Ugarit, 1993): 296; Stephen A. Kaufman, “Review of Segert *Altaramäische Grammatik*,” *BO* 34 (1977): 114. Holger Gzella calls it “close to Aramaic” (“Language and Script,” in *The Arameans in Ancient Syria* [H. Niehr, ed.; Leiden: Brill, 2014]: 74) and “Aramaic-like” (*A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam* [Leiden: Brill, 2015]: 74). See also André Lemaire, “Le dialecte araméen de l’inscription de Kuttamuwa (Zencirli, VIIIe s. av. n.è.),” in *In the Shadow of Bezalel: Aramaic, Biblical, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten* (A. F. Botta, ed.; Boston: Brill): 145–150; K. Lawson Younger, Jr., “A Study of the Preposition *b-* in Sam’alian Aramaic: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach with Ramifications for the Interpretation of the Katumuwa Stele,” in “*Like ‘Ilū Are You Wise*”: *Studies in Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures in Honor of Dennis G. Pardee* (H. H. Hardy II, Joseph Lam, and Eric D. Reymond, eds.; Chicago: OI, forthcoming): esp. 3 n. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Johannes Friedrich, “Zur Stellung des Jaudischen in der nordwest-semitischen Sprachgeschichte,” in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (H. G. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen, eds.; Chicago: OI, 1965): 428; John Huehnergard, “What Is Aramaic?” *Aram* 7 (1995): 282.

<sup>8</sup> Klaus Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984): 26 n. 1; Agustinus Gianto, review of Josef Tropper *Die Inschriften von Zincirli*, *Or* 64 (1995): 143–144.

advance new arguments for identifying the language of the Katumuwa inscription as Samalian.

## 2. THE ARAMAIC HYPOTHESIS

The majority of the literature on the Panamuwa inscriptions connects Samalian to Aramaic, either as an Aramaic dialect or as a closely related language. J. Tropper<sup>9</sup> identifies Samalian as early Aramaic based on the representation of the etymological ejective lateral fricative \*ʔ' as the grapheme <Q>,<sup>10</sup> the occurrence of the noun *br* 'son',<sup>11</sup> a conditional particle ending in *-n* rather than *-m*,<sup>12</sup> *qatīl* as the passive form of the suffix conjugation<sup>13</sup> and a number of other features.<sup>14</sup> P. Noorlander suggests that Samalian shared an ancestor with Aramaic based on the object marker *wt*, the demonstrative *znn* (in the Katumuwa inscription) and possibly the words *br* 'son' and *ḥd* 'one' (in the Panamuwa inscriptions).<sup>15</sup> And in the *editio princeps* of the Katumuwa inscription, Pardee identified the language of the text as an archaic Aramaic dialect based on the masculine plural ending *-n*; an assortment of what he identifies as shared vocabulary;<sup>16</sup> and the particle *wt*, which he connects to the Aramaic preposition *ləwāt* 'with, towards'.<sup>17</sup> R. C. Steiner likewise argues that the language of the Katumuwa inscription is an Aramaic dialect based on the use of <Q> to represent the reflex of \*ʔ', a feature that he calls "the crucial innovation that distinguishes Proto-Aramaic from Proto-Canaanite."<sup>18</sup> But, as J. Huehnergard has shown, none of the

<sup>9</sup> Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli* (N 6).

<sup>10</sup> For example, ʔrq < \*ʔarʔ 'earth' (KAI 214:5; 215:5).

<sup>11</sup> For example, *pnmw br qrl* (KAI 214:1).

<sup>12</sup> For example, *hnw* 'if' (KAI 214:29).

<sup>13</sup> For example, *qytl* "she was killed" (KAI 215:8).

<sup>14</sup> Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli* (N 6): 291–292.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Noorlander, "Sam'alian in its Northwest Semitic Setting: A Historical-Comparative Approach," *Or* 81 (2012): 232.

<sup>16</sup> For example, *nsb* 'stele' (K:1), √šwy D 'appoint' (K:12).

<sup>17</sup> Pardee (N 5): 68.

<sup>18</sup> Richard C. Steiner, *Disembodied Souls: The Nefesh in Israel and Kindred Spirits in the Ancient Near East, with an Appendix on the Katumuwa Inscription* (Atlanta: SBL, 2015): 160–161. More specifically, Steiner suggests that Proto-Semitic ejective lateral fricative \*ʔ shifted to the ejective uvular affricate \*kχ' in Proto-Aramaic but underwent different changes in the various Aramaic dialects.

features cited by Tropper, Noorlander, Pardee, and Steiner are diagnostic of Aramaic, with the exception of *br*.<sup>19</sup>

According to Huehnergard, Aramaic shows a number of innovations that distinguish it from the other Northwest Semitic languages:<sup>20</sup> the *fp* ending *-ān* on both nominal absolute forms and the prefix conjugation, *-awh(ī)* as the form of the 3ms suffix on plural nouns, the sound change *\*n > vr* in word-final position (i.e., *\*#Cn > #Cvr*),<sup>21</sup> and the aphaeresis of *ʾalep* in the word for ‘one’, *ḥad < \*ʾaḥad*.<sup>22</sup> There are also a number of weaker features, like the postpositive definite article written with the grapheme <𐤀><sup>23</sup> and the loss of the N stem.<sup>24</sup> The only conclusive Aramaic features attested in the inscriptions from Samʾal are the word *br* ‘son’, which occurs in the Katumuwa and Panamuwa inscriptions (*KAI* 214:1; *KAI* 215:1), and the word *ḥd* ‘one’ in the Panamuwa inscriptions (*KAI* 214:27; *KAI* 215:5). Both of these features are problematic. The word *br* does not occur as a stand-alone lexeme, but only as part of a patronymic, e.g., *pnmw br qrl* (*KAI* 214:1) and *pnmw br brsr* (*KAI* 215:1), making it difficult to tell whether *br* is in fact a part of the Samalian lexicon.<sup>25</sup> The aphaeresis of *ʾalep*, on the other hand, happened sporadically in other Northwest Semitic languages.<sup>26</sup> The word *ḥad* itself is attested in biblical Hebrew (*dibber ḥad ʾet ʾaḥad* “one spoke with the other,” Ezek 33:30) and Byblian Phoenician (*lhdy* ‘by myself, I alone’),<sup>27</sup> and

<sup>19</sup> Huehnergard, “What Is Aramaic?” (N 7): 268–272.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>21</sup> See also John Huehnergard, “Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages,” in *The Balaam Text from Deir ‘Alla Re-Evaluated* (J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, eds.; Leiden: Brill, 1991): 289; David Testen, “The Significance of Aramaic *r < \*n*,” *JNES* 44 (1985): 143–146; Aaron Rubin, “On Syriac *hārkā* and Aramaic *r < \*n*,” *JNES* 66 (2007): 123–124.

<sup>22</sup> While the first syllable of a word often undergoes phonetic reduction in Aramaic, this process does not lead to *ʾalep*-aphaeresis in any other word. Huehnergard, “What Is Aramaic?” (N 7): 266, suggests that the word ‘one’ was a clitic and, as a result, underwent further phonetic reduction than words with independent stress did.

<sup>23</sup> The Aramaic definite article *-ʾ* most likely resulted from a sound change (e.g., *\*kalbv-han > \*kalban > kalba* ‘the dog’), and as such is not as strong as other morpho-syntactic features. Aaron Rubin, *Studies in Semitic Grammaticalization* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005): 79–80.

<sup>24</sup> While loss cannot be used for subgrouping, as Robert Hetzron points out (“Two Principles of Genetic Reconstruction,” *Lingua* 38 [1976]: 96–97), the presence of the N-stem in a text excludes it from being Aramaic.

<sup>25</sup> See also the personal name *klmw br hy* in the Phoenician inscription from this area (*KAI* 24:1).

<sup>26</sup> Josef Tropper, “Samʾalisch *mt* ‘wahrlich’ und das Phänomen der Aphärese im Semitischen,” *Or* 61 (1992): 448–453.

<sup>27</sup> Jean Starky, “Une inscription phénicienne de Byblos,” *MUSJ* 45 (1969): 262.



while the biblical Hebrew example could be an Aramaism, the Byblian Phoenician one is likely indigenous. Both *br* and *hd* are thus weak indicators of a genetic affiliation with Aramaic, although they could reflect contact with Aramaic.

Additionally, a number of expected Aramaic features, such as the definite article  $\text{--}^{\text{c}}$ , the 3ms possessive suffix  $\text{--}awh(\bar{i})$  on mp nouns, and the fp absolute suffix  $\text{--}\bar{a}n$ , do not appear in these inscriptions. Samalian appears to lack a definite article of any kind. If it were Aramaic, we would expect a definite article on nouns modified with a demonstrative,<sup>28</sup> but this is not the case: e.g., *whgg̃t syd/r zn* “and the festal offering of this chamber” (K: 2);<sup>29</sup> *nšb zn* “this stele” (KAI 214:1).

The Aramaic form of the 3ms possessive suffix pronoun  $\text{--}hy$  (e.g.,  $\text{'}bhy$  / $\text{'abu:hi:}$ / [KAI 216:16]) does not appear in these inscriptions. Instead we find the expected Northwest Semitic ending  $\text{--}h$ : e.g.,  $\text{'bwh}$  / $\text{'abu:h/}$  (KAI 215:2). The fp absolute suffix  $\text{--}\bar{a}n$ , another important innovation of Aramaic, is also missing. In the Panamuwa inscription there are a number of fp absolute forms with  $\text{--}\bar{a}t$  rather than  $\text{--}\bar{a}n$ , such as  $\text{'mrt}$  “words” and *qyrt* “towns.”<sup>30</sup> And while there is evidence that feminine plural adjectives may have still retained the original suffix  $\text{*--}\bar{a}t$  in the earliest stages of Aramaic (*mln lhyt* “evil words” KAI 224:2), feminine plural substantives were always marked with  $\text{--}\bar{a}n$ .<sup>31</sup> In Samalian, by contrast, both substantives and adjectives carry the inherited feminine plural suffix  $\text{*--}\bar{a}t$ : e.g., *qyrt hrbt . . . qyrt yšbt* “ruined towns . . . inhabited towns” (KAI 215:4).

The Panamuwa and Katumuwa inscriptions also differ from Aramaic in preserving the N stem. Both P.-E. Dion and Tropper have identified a

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Rainer Degen, *Altaramäische Grammatik: Der Inschriften des 10.–8. Jh. v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1969): 83–84: “Die Determination eines Nomens tritt dadurch ein, daß es in den St. det. . . . gesetzt wird. Sie ist notwendig . . . wenn dem Nomen ein Demonstrativepronomen hinzugefügt ist.” Gzella (*Cultural History* [N 6]: 75) claims that the absence of this feature from Samalian is insignificant because the definite article “spread gradually during the early first millennium.” This claim is problematic for two reasons, however. First, contemporary Old Aramaic inscriptions all exhibit a definite article in  $\text{--}^{\text{c}}$  with the expected syntax; second, the definite article represented by a final glottal stop is shared by all attestations of Aramaic and is therefore considered one of the diagnostic features of the Aramaic family (Huehnergard, *What Is Aramaic?* [N 7]: 282).

<sup>29</sup> Following the translation of Steiner, *Disembodied Souls* (N 18): 130.

<sup>30</sup> Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli* (N 6): 204.

<sup>31</sup> Kaufman ([N 6]: 94) suggests that Aramaic maintained a morphological distinction between adjectives and substantives, or between predicative and attributive adjectives in the feminine plural, but unfortunately, there is not enough evidence to evaluate his argument. Crucially, however, this type of variation is only attested with adjectives, never substantives.

potential N stem verb in line 10 of the Panamuwa inscription ( $[n]hšb$ ).<sup>32</sup> The reading of this line, however, is uncertain with the most important consonant—the initial <N>—being restored. We think there is another possible case of N stem in these inscriptions. In line 2 of the Katumuwa inscription, there is a difficult lexical item *syr/d*, which Pardee translates as “chamber,” noting a possible connection to the root  $\sqrt{syr}$  ‘to turn away’. Other scholars have largely followed Pardee. In line 8, the same root appears, this time with a prefixed *n*-. As Steiner rightly notes, there is a semantic difference between these forms: *syr/d* refers only to the burial chamber, while *nsyr* refers to the entire funerary complex including the vineyard, as context makes clear.<sup>33</sup> The morphology of this form remains unclear. Pardee leaves it unexplained, while noting its peculiarity. Steiner suggests that the *n*- of *nsyr/d* is a vowel-less performative *m*-, which partially assimilated to a following alveolar *s* and became *n* similar to the change of the preformative  $*m > n$  in Akkadian (e.g., *namlaktum* ‘governed territory’, cf. Hebrew מַמְלָכָה ‘kingdom’).<sup>34</sup> The Akkadian sound change  $*m > n$ , however, is dissimilatory and only occurs in the vicinity of another labial. It would not apply in the case of *nsyr*. G. Mazzini and S. L. Sanders, by contrast, connect this form to the Epigraphic South Arabian noun *ms<sup>3</sup>wd* ‘assembly hall’ from the root  $\sqrt{swd}$ , but this proposal also relies on an ad-hoc sound change of  $*m > n$ .<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Paul-Eugène Dion, *La langue de Yaudi: Description et classement de l’ancien parler de Zencirli dans la cadre des langues sémitiques du nord-ouest* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Univ., 1974): 208–209; Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli* (N 6): 212.

<sup>33</sup> Steiner, *Disembodied Souls* (N 18): 140. The form in line 2 refers to the placement of the mortuary stele (*wšmt wth bsyr/d lmy* “I have placed it in my eternal chamber”), while the form in line 8 refers to the compound including the chamber and the vineyard (*wyhl lh nsyr/d znn wlv yql mn hyl krm znn* “[anyone] who comes into possession of this compound, let him take from the yield of this vineyard”).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 140. If Steiner is correct, then the shift of  $*m > n$  in *nsyr/d* would be an ad-hoc sound change, since other *m*-preformative nouns do not participate in this shift; see, for example, *msgrt* ‘jail’ (*KAI* 215:4).

<sup>35</sup> Giovanni Mazzini, “On the Problematic Term *syr/d* in the New Old Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,” *UF* 41 (2009): 505–507; Seth L. Sanders, “The Appetites of the Dead: West Semitic Linguistic and Ritual Aspects of the Katumuwa Stele,” *BASOR* 369 (2013): 38. While this proposal should not be dismissed lightly, it still fails to account for the difference between *syr/d* in line 2 and *nsyr/d* in line 8. Gregorio del Olmo Lete by contrast, relates *syr/d* to late Aramaic *sēd* ‘plaster’ and translates *syr/d* as ‘plastered chamber’ (“KTMW and His ‘Funerary Chapel’,” *AuOr* 29 [2011]: 309); but as Steiner notes (*Disembodied Souls* [N 18]: 130), Aramaic *sēd* comes from earlier  $*tāyd$ , not  $*sayd$  and would be written with an initial *šm* in the orthography of the Katumuwa inscription. Matthew Suriano suggests that *syd* refers to the small room in which the stele was discovered, but does not address the relationship between *syr/d* and *msyr/d* (“Breaking Bread with the Dead: Katumuwa’s Stele, Hosea 9:4, and the Early History of the Soul,” *JAOS* 134.3 [2014]: 395).

We would like to suggest a different solution, namely that the semantic difference between these forms reflects a difference in morphology: *syr/d* in line 2 is a substantive, while *nsyr/d* in line 8 is an N participle. Biblical Hebrew contains several similar pairs of words, where the same root shows two derivations, one a substantive, typically a *qatl* or *qatal* noun, with a concrete meaning, and the other an N participle with a more expansive meaning, which includes the semantics of the substantive. Compare, for example the root  $\sqrt{yld}$ , where the substantive  $\text{יָלֵד}$  means ‘child’, while the participle  $\text{יֹלֵד}$  refers to anything ‘born’;  $\sqrt{str}$ , where the substantive  $\text{סֵתֶר}$  means ‘secret’, while the N participle  $\text{סֹתֵר}$  refers to anything ‘hidden, unknown’; and  $\sqrt{ngp}$ , where the substantive  $\text{נִגַּף}$  means ‘plague’, while the N participle  $\text{נֹגֵף}$  refers to anything ‘stricken, adversely affected’. We suggest that the nouns *syr* and *nsyr* in the Katumuwa inscription exhibit a similar relationship: the form in line 2 is a substantive meaning ‘chamber’, vocalized perhaps as *sayr*,<sup>36</sup> while the form in line 8 has a more general meaning, perhaps ‘a complex’ or ‘a compound which includes a number of built structures’, and may be vocalized as *nasyar*.<sup>37</sup> We suggest that this latter form is an N participle.<sup>38</sup> If we are correct, then the Katumuwa inscription includes an N stem verb,<sup>39</sup> a linguistic feature that is absent from Aramaic. It is unlikely therefore that Samalian is an Aramaic dialect.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Common Semitic \**bayt-* > Hebrew *bayit*, Phoenician *bēt*. Potential cognates for this form include Ethiopic *sayr* ‘assembly, council, place of meeting’, and Aramaic *swyr* ‘a small hidden place’; Wolf Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge‘ez (Classical Ethiopic): Ge‘ez-English / English-Ge‘ez with an Index of the Semitic Roots* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991): 522; *DNWSI*, 780.

<sup>37</sup> Or *nasir* if Hebrew *nāsik* ‘prince’ is derived from  $\sqrt{swk}$ , though this is less likely. See John Huehnergard, “*Qātil* and *Qətil* Nouns in Biblical Hebrew,” in *Sha‘arei Lashon: Studies in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Jewish Languages Presented to Moshe Bar-Asher* (A. Maman, S. E. Fassberg, and Y. Breuer, eds.; Jerusalem: Bialik, 2007): 19–20.

<sup>38</sup> If *nsyr* is an N stem participle, then *syr* must have been a productive verbal root in Samalian or one of its linguistic ancestors. Unfortunately, however, it is difficult to find a Semitic root that fits the semantics of *syr/d* and *nsyr/d*. One possibility would be for *syr* and *nsyr* to derive from the motion verb *syr* ‘to go, walk’, which is attested in Modern South Arabian, Arabic, and Safaitic. There are several other examples of nouns denoting physical locations which are derived from motion verbs (Aramaic *karkā* ‘fortified city, enclosure’ from the root *krk* ‘to encircle’; Akkadian *limītu* ‘enclosure’ from the verb *lamū* ‘to move in a circle’).

<sup>39</sup> Of course, we cannot be certain that the N stem was productive in the language of the Katumuwa inscription. The noun *nsyr* could be a relic. Note, however, that the other Semitic languages which have lost the N stem do not preserve any relics of this verbal form, and that the correspondence between the N participle and the substantive proposed here is found in Hebrew, a language with a productive N stem.

In addition to these linguistic claims, some scholars have advanced non-linguistic arguments to support the identification of Samalian as Aramaic. A number of scholars have suggested that Arameans invaded or migrated to the region, but there is no material evidence to suggest that it was invaded and inhabited by Arameans, and it is not easily accessible to invasion from Upper Mesopotamia, where the Arameans were most powerful.<sup>40</sup> Instead, D. Schloen and A. Fink suggest that the residents of this town were an indigenous Semitic-speaking people, possibly of Amorite origin. The Aramaic inscriptions found at the site date to the latter half of the eighth century and reflect the use of Aramaic as the language of administration in Neo-Assyrian Empire.<sup>41</sup> Our suggestion, that Samalian is not an Aramaic dialect, but rather an independent Northwest Semitic language, strongly supports the proposal advanced by Schloen and Fink.

### 3. OTHER HYPOTHESES

The case for a Canaanite affiliation of Samalian is much weaker than the case for an Aramaic affiliation. The only Canaanite diagnostic feature found in the Panamuwa and Katumuwa inscriptions is the 1cs pronoun *ʾnky* in the Panamuwa inscription (*KAI* 215:19), but the strength of this form as a diagnostic feature is predicated on the Canaanite Shift. In other words, it is relevant for classification only in so far as it shows the effects of this sound change, i.e., \**ʾanākū* > *ʾanōkū* > *ʾanōkī*.<sup>42</sup> There are, however, no other indications that the shift was operative in the language of these inscriptions. In addition, other features—such as the D and C stem patterns *qittil* and *hiqtīl*, the generalization of 1cp *–nū* to subject and object positions, the shift of the perfect first-person singular suffix \**–tū* > *–tī*, the relative particle *ʾšr* and the systematic morphological and syntactic distinction between the infinitive absolute and infinitive construct—are all either absent or cannot be verified.<sup>43</sup> A relationship with Canaanite is, therefore, unlikely.

<sup>40</sup> Schloen and Fink (N 3): 9.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Naʾama Pat-El and Aren M. Wilson-Wright, “The Features of Canaanite: A Re-evaluation,” *ZDMG* 166 (2016): 42.

<sup>43</sup> For these features see Pat-El and Wilson-Wright (*ibid.*). Although the first three features are all vocalic and cannot be detected in the largely consonantal orthography of the Katumuwa and Panamuwa inscriptions, the relative marker always takes the form *z* or *zy* (/ *ḏi:* /) and never *ʾšr* in these texts. And while these inscriptions do not provide enough data to detect a systematic distinction between two forms of the infinitive, the infinitive of III-weak roots takes the form *qvtay* after prepositions (e.g., *l-bny* /li-bvnay/ and *l-bnʾ* /li-bvne:/ ‘to build’ in *KAI* 214: 10, 13, 14), which differs from the *qittāt* form found in the Canaanite

Noorlander, in a thorough and well-balanced study of the inscriptions from Sam'al, suggests that Samalian and proto-Aramaic shared a common ancestor.<sup>44</sup> If that were the case, however, then Samalian should show some of the shared features common to Aramaic and Canaanite, which share a common ancestor as we have argued elsewhere.<sup>45</sup> Yet none of the features that we have identified as Aramaeo-Canaanite (e.g., a direct object marker in \**'ayāt*, the *ṭōb lī* pattern, the G imperfect inflection of geminate verbs, and \**bayatt-* as the plural of \**bayt*) is attested in Samalian.<sup>46</sup> Given the available evidence, it is unlikely that Samalian shared an immediate ancestor with Aramaic. The most we can say, based on the evidence, is that Samalian shared an ancestor with Aramaeo-Canaanite at the Northwest Semitic level, a proposal that Huehnergard has already suggested and defended.<sup>47</sup>

#### 4. THE INDEPENDENT BRANCH HYPOTHESIS: A NEW PROPOSAL

Although earlier scholars, such as J. Friederich and Huehnergard have argued that Samalian does not share any diagnostic features with either Aramaic or Canaanite and is therefore an independent branch of Northwest Semitic, they did not propose any features that would distinguish Samalian from Common Northwest Semitic.<sup>48</sup> In this section, we will propose two such features: nasalized final vowels and an object marker in *wat*. Along the way, we will argue that the Panamuwa and Katumuwa inscriptions record the same language but employ different orthographic conventions for representing nasalized vowels.

The language of the Katumuwa inscription differs in two ways from the earlier Panamuwa inscriptions: it uses *-n* as the masculine plural morpheme (e.g., *krmn* “vineyards” line 4) instead of *-w* for the nominative (*'lhw* “gods” *KAI* 214:2) and *-y* for the oblique (*ymy* “days” *KAI*

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languages. Because the data are fragmentary, however, and may require reevaluation as more inscriptions come to light.

<sup>44</sup> Noorlander (N 15): 232.

<sup>45</sup> Na'ama Pat-El and Aren M. Wilson-Wright, “Features of Aramaeo-Canaanite,” *JAOS* 138.4 (2018): 781–806.

<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, the plural of \**bayt-* does not appear in the Katumuwa and Panamuwa inscriptions and the consonantal orthography of these texts makes it difficult to recover the imperfect inflection of geminate verbs. These inscriptions do, however, use the object marker *wt* (on which see below) instead of the Aramaeo-Canaanite object marker \**'ayāt*.

<sup>47</sup> Huehnergard, “What Is Aramaic?” (N 7): 275–282.

<sup>48</sup> Friedrich (N 7): 428; Huehnergard, “What Is Aramaic?” (N 7): 282.

214:9). In addition, it features the proximal demonstrative *znn* (e.g., *krm znn* “this vineyard” line 9), while the Panamuwa inscription uses *znh* (*KAI* 215:22). These differences have led some scholars to conclude that the Katumuwa inscription records a language other than Samalian. In his discussion of the Katumuwa inscription, Pardee states that “[t]he inscription would immediately be classified as Samalian were it not for the m.pl.abs. forms ending in {-n}.”<sup>49</sup> Steiner, by contrast, dismisses these differences as the result of complex linguistic and sociolinguistic factors. In the case of *znn*, he suggests that the final vowel of *znh* (/ðina:/ or /zina:/) became nasalized due to contact with the preceding consonant and that the final *n* of *znn* was an orthographic marker of nasalization. In the case of the plural morpheme, he argues that “Katumuwa or his scribe viewed the plural suffix *-n* as a sociolinguistic marker of standard Aramaic and used it to add prestige to the inscription.”<sup>50</sup> We believe, however, that there is a simpler way to account for the differences between the Katumuwa inscription and the earlier Samalian inscriptions: these texts use distinct orthographic strategies for representing nasalized final vowels.

The primary evidence for nasalized final vowels in Samalian comes from the consistent omission of word-final *-n* in the Samalian inscriptions. Final *-n* is absent from both the nominative and oblique forms of the inherited Northwest Semitic masculine plural morpheme *-ūn* and *-īn* (e.g., *ʾlhw* “gods” *KAI* 214:2; *ymy* “days” *KAI* 214:9). It has also disappeared from the long form of the prefix conjugation *yaktubūn* (indicative *thrgw* *KAI* 215:5), leading to an apparent merger of the long and short forms of this verbal conjugation (cf. jussive *ltgmrw* *KAI* 214:30). In addition, the conjunction *ʾzh* (215:2) may represent a third example of this loss, assuming that it is cognate with Aramaic \**ʾadāyin* and not Hebrew *אֲדַיִן*. This conjunction appears in the clause . . . *plṭwh ʾlh yʾdy mn šḥth ʾzh hwt bbyṭ ʾbwh* “The gods of Yaudi delivered him from destruction when it was in the house of his fathers” (*KAI* 214:2) where it has been interpreted as either a relative pronoun or an adverb.<sup>51</sup> Based on the morphology and syntax of the form, it is unlikely to be a relative pronoun. None of the other attestations of the relative shows a prosthetic *ʾalep*, and it is unclear why one would be needed if indeed this form were a fs relative pronoun, since its syllabic pattern would be CV: (\**dā*), not CCV. Furthermore, none of the languages which preserve the fs relative

<sup>49</sup> Pardee, “A New Aramaic Inscription” (N 5): 66.

<sup>50</sup> Steiner, *Disembodied Souls* (N 18): 153. This proposal is hard to accept, given the lack of Aramaic cultural influence in this area as noted by Schloen and Fink (N 3): 9.

<sup>51</sup> Tropper (*Die Inschriften von Zincirli* [N 6]: 193) identifies *ʾzh* as a relative pronoun.

pronoun exhibits a similar form. To overcome these problems, Tropper suggests an ad-hoc loss of  $-t$  in final position (e.g.,  $*dāt > *dā$ ), but such a change would have affected feminine plural nouns ending with  $-āt$  as well, yet such nouns retain their final  $-t$  in both Samalian inscriptions.<sup>52</sup> Instead, we suggest that  $ʔzh$  could have lost its final nasal element.<sup>53</sup>

The loss of final  $-n$  in these inscriptions has not been explained systematically. Tropper argues that the second and third plural verbal forms lost  $-n$  by analogy with the masculine plural nominal forms.<sup>54</sup> Agustinus Gianto suggests the opposite, namely that the final  $-n$  of the masculine nominal plural morphemes was lost by analogy with verbal forms, possibly as a result of contact with Canaanite dialects.<sup>55</sup> Both proposals are difficult to sustain, because it is unclear what environment would have led to an analogy between masculine plural nouns and second and third plural indicative verbal forms. Noorlander, by contrast, suggests that the final  $-n$  of the masculine nominal plural morpheme nasalized the preceding long vowel and then disappeared.<sup>56</sup> We find this proposal persuasive and believe that it can be expanded to cover all of the other examples of this phenomenon. In all of the cases cited here, word-final  $-n$  disappeared after a preceding long vowel, which suggests a conditioning environment in Proto-Samalian for the proposed sound change: long vowels followed by  $nun$  became nasalized long vowels in word final position (i.e.,  $v:n > \tilde{v}: / \_ \#$ ).<sup>57</sup> Significantly, the nasalized vowels that resulted from this sound change would have been phonemic: the jussive *yaktubū* “let them write,” for example, would differ from the indicative *yaktubū̃*: “they will write” only in terms of nasalization.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 193. While it is theoretically possible that such a loss affected demonstratives and nominals differently, it is difficult to see how the feminine singular relative particle could lose its final  $-t$ . Relative markers always appear in construct with a dependent noun or sentence and this is precisely the environment where final  $-t$  is preserved in Northwest Semitic (compare Hebrew *malkā* ‘queen’ versus *malkat-šəbā* ‘the queen of Sheba’).

<sup>53</sup> The spelling of Kilamuwa’s father’s name *hyʔ* (*KAI* 24:1) with a final  $-n$  in Shalmaneser III’s annals (e.g., *ha-ia-a-nu*) could also be an attempt to represent nasalization. For this text, see Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli* (N 6): 184.

<sup>54</sup> Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli* (N 6): 184.

<sup>55</sup> Gianto (N 8): 142.

<sup>56</sup> Noorlander (N 15): 224–225. Noorlander, concludes, however, that it is more likely that the nominal plural morphemes were lost by analogy to the suffixes of the imperfect. As we noted above, it unclear what sort of environment would have motivated this analogy, and none of the scholars advocating for this position has elaborated on the process.

<sup>57</sup> This process is quite common cross-linguistically. See, for example, L. C. Schourup, “A Cross-Language Study of Vowel Nasalization,” *Ohio State University Working Papers in Linguistics* 15 (1973): 190–221.



The opposition between nasalized and oral vowels would pose a problem when it came time to write Samalian using the consonantal alphabet, since alphabetic orthography lacked a way of indicating most vowels, let alone vocalic nasalization. To overcome this problem, we suggest that the scribe or scribes of the Panamuwa inscriptions simply indicated nasalized vowels using the *matres lectionis* for final long vowels. The scribe of the Katumuwa inscription took a different tack. As Greek transcriptions of Jewish Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew masculine plural nouns show, a final *-n* or *-m* could represent nasalization in alphabetic orthography: e.g., *mōdai* for *mwd(γ)‘yn*.<sup>58</sup> Qumran Hebrew also exhibits a similar phenomenon. In Peshar Habakkuk, for example, [עורי לא]בן דומה (col. 12:15) replaces עורי לאבן דומה (Hab 2:19); the final nasal in the Hebrew word אמתם (col. 3:4) is written above the line as a later addition; and the final word in the chapter, וְשֵׁד בְּהִמּוֹת יְחִיתָן (Hab 2:17), is written as יחתה (col. 12:1).<sup>59</sup> In addition, some words in Qumran Hebrew feature a non-etymological nasal consonant in place of or in addition to a final *mater lectionis*, especially in the Genesis Apocryphon, e.g., עומרם (21:24) instead of עמורה, and בעון (21:19) instead of בעו.<sup>60</sup> Taken together, these examples suggest that scribes could use nasal consonants to mark nasalized vowels.

Based on this comparative evidence, we suggest that the scribe of the Katumuwa inscription utilized word-final *-n* as an orthographic marker of nasalization similar to the use of final *-n* and *-m* in Jewish Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew. The difference between masculine nominal plural morphemes in the Katumuwa inscription and the other Samalian texts is thus one of orthography rather than morphology. This sound change can also explain the apparent difference between *znn* in the Katumuwa inscription and *znh* in the other Samalian texts. As Pardee and others have pointed out, the demonstrative *znn* finds its closest parallel in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic *dnn* and Targumic Aramaic *dənān*. This form consists of the proximal demonstrative *din*, which is attested in Samalian, the Katumuwa inscription, and Old Byblian (*KAI* 10:5), and the particularizing suffix *-ān*. Presumably, *znn* in the Katumuwa inscription came

<sup>58</sup> Steiner, *Disembodied Souls* (n 18): 142; Richard C. Steiner, “Hebrew: Ancient Hebrew,” in *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics* (1st ed.; 4 vols.; William Bright, ed.; New York: Oxford Univ., 1992): 2.112; Elisha Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986): 27–28; Ze’ev Ben-Hayyim, “Traditions in the Hebrew Language, with Special Reference to the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *ScrHier* 4 (1958): 210–211.

<sup>59</sup> See also דשא המזבח instead of דשן המזבח in (4QMMT B 31–32). We would like to thank Noam Mizrahi for pointing us to these examples.

<sup>60</sup> Qimron (n 58): 27–28. See Steiner, *Disembodied Souls* (n 18): 141–143, for additional post-biblical Hebrew and Aramaic examples.



from the same morphological material. Such a form would be subject to the Proto-Samalian sound change  $v:n > \tilde{v}:/\#$  and would become  $/\tilde{d}in\tilde{a}:/$  or  $/zin\tilde{a}:/$ , which would then be represented orthographically as  $znh$  in the Panamuwa inscriptions and  $znn$  in the Katumuwa inscription.<sup>61</sup> Again, the difference between the Katumuwa inscription and the Panamuwa inscriptions is one of orthography rather than morphology. If we are correct that all these inscriptions represent nasalized final long vowels differently, but are otherwise identical, then there are no obstacles to identifying the language of the Katumuwa inscription as Samalian.

Ultimately, the sound change we have proposed for Proto-Samalian constitutes a potential innovative feature distinguishing Samalian from the other Northwest Semitic languages. It is not a particularly strong feature, however, because a similar sound change occurs later in both Jewish Aramaic and Qumran Hebrew. Thus, this “Samalian shift” has about the same evidentiary value as the shift of word-initial  $w$  to  $y$  in Proto-Northwest Semitic—it is distinctive, but not decisive. It is also harder to detect than the Northwest Semitic shift since it requires orthographic alternation between  $-\emptyset$  and  $-n$  to be perceptible.

The object marker  $wt$  constitutes a more robust innovative feature characterizing Samalian.<sup>62</sup> This marker appears in *KAI* 214:28 and line 2 of the Katumuwa inscription, both times with a 3ms object suffix:

*wšmt wth bsyr/d' lmy* “I placed it in my eternal chamber” (K:2)

*wyqm wth bms't* “May he erect it in the middle” (*KAI* 214:28)

As Noorlander correctly points out, “the anomalous word initial  $/w/$  makes it likely that it was not originally the first sound, or, at least, not phonologically perceived as such . . . since word initial  $w$  shifted to  $y$  in Northwest Semitic.”<sup>63</sup> Given the regularity of the Proto-Northwest Semitic sound change  $w > y/\#\_$ , a relationship between Aramaic  $*y\tilde{a}t$  and Samalian  $wt$  is improbable. Instead, most scholars connect this form in Samalian to the Aramaic preposition  $l\tilde{a}w\tilde{a}t$  ‘with’, which is derived

<sup>61</sup> Steiner (*Disembodied Souls* [N 18]: 143) suggests that the final  $-n$  on Samalian  $znn$  could indicate a nasalized vowel, as in Galilean Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew, but concludes that “for now we cannot prove a direct link between Samalian 𐤆𐤍 and Jewish 𐤆𐤍, and, thus, we cannot exclude the possibility of independent development.”

<sup>62</sup> For a review of the literature on Semitic object markers see, Rubin, *Studies in Semitic Grammaticalization* (N 23): 91–110; Aren M. Wilson-Wright, “A Reevaluation of the Semitic Direct Object Markers,” *Hebrew Studies* 57 (2016): 7 n. 2; and Humphrey H. Hardy, “Whence Come Direct Object Markers in Northwest Semitic?” *JSS* 61 (2016): 302–304.

<sup>63</sup> Noorlander (N 15): 225 n. 50.

from a common Northwest Semitic root  $\sqrt{lw\bar{y}}$  ‘to join’.<sup>64</sup> We too suggest that the Samalian object marker developed out of the inherited preposition *\*liwāt* ‘with, together’ through a combination of semantic overlap and reanalysis.<sup>65</sup> Some verbs in Semitic, such as ‘to speak’ and ‘to fight’, can take either an indirect object governed by a preposition meaning ‘with’ or a direct object with little difference in meaning.<sup>66</sup> Compare the following biblical Hebrew examples:<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Pardee, “A New Aramaic Inscription” (N 5): 59; Noorlander (N 15): 225–226; Josef Tropper, “Lexikographische Untersuchungen zum Biblisch-Aramäischen,” *JNSL* 23 (1997): 114. Hardy advocates a different derivation in “Whence Come Direct Object Markers in Northwest Semitic?” (N 62): 299–318. He suggests that Samalian *w̄t*, Aramaic *\*liwāt*, and Hebrew *’ōt-*, all derive from the 3ms oblique independent pronoun *\*su’āti*, which could appear before direct objects, through a process of grammaticalization which refers to a change of more lexical morphemes (e.g., nouns and verbs) to become more grammatical (e.g., affixes and prepositions). We find this proposal to be highly unlikely for a number of reasons. First, the grammaticalization process must have happened in Proto-Northwest Semitic, where the default syntax is undeniably N-Dem. (noun-demonstrative). A hypothesized *\*\*Dem-N* (demonstrative-noun) order would be highly marked and unlikely to grammaticalize to a bleached grammeme, namely a chain which no longer carries a lexical meaning. Second, all of the sound changes proposed by Hardy to account for the development of the object marker in the various Northwest Semitic languages are ad-hoc and unmotivated, especially the retention of word-initial *w-*. Third, none of the intermediate stages in Hardy’s proposal are historically attested, not even as relics, and so there is no direct evidence for his claims. Fourth, Aramaic *\*liwāt* is not used to mark direct objects, except in Syriac, where this function most likely resulted from contact with Greek, as noted by Aaron Michael Butts, *Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in Its Greco-Roman Context* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2016): 144–147. Finally, arguing that *\*liwāt* is a secondary form of the pronoun challenges the whole idea of grammaticalization as a predictive tool, because it inverts the directionality of grammaticalization. A derivation of *\*liwāt* ‘with’ from  $\sqrt{lw\bar{y}}$  ‘be with’ (suggested by Tropper, “Lexikographische Untersuchungen” [N 64]: 114) is more likely, given that words with initial *w-* are not preserved in Northwest Semitic. For another discussion of the etymology of *\*liwāt* see Na’ama Pat-El, “The Etymology of Syriac *hwāt*: A Tale of Two Prepositions,” *JSS* (2020).

<sup>65</sup> This form is not attested outside Aramaic as a preposition, but the root and pattern are widely used in Northwest Semitic.

<sup>66</sup> The independent forms of the direct object marker and the preposition ‘with’ are identical; note, however, that in the examples here the marker is clearly *’ōt-* ‘direct object’, and not *’itt-* ‘with’.

<sup>67</sup> For the verb *דבר*, see also 1 Kgs 22:24 (= 2 Chr 18:23); Jer 5:5; Jer 35:2; Ezek 44:5. For *נלחם*, see also 1 Kgs 20:25. For *שׁכב* with a pronominal suffix, see 2 Sam 13:14. There are many more examples with the independent object marker, which is morphologically identical to the preposition ‘with’.

'WITH'	DIRECT OBJECT
<p style="text-align: center;">וְאַל-יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים</p> <p>“may god not speak with us” (Exod 20:19)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">דִּבֶּר אֶתֹּו אֱלֹהִים</p> <p>“god spoke with him” (Gen. 21:2)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">וַיִּלָּחֶם עִם-יִשְׂרָאֵל</p> <p>“he fought with Israel” (Exod 17:8)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">אַתֶּם נֹלְחָמִים אוֹתָם</p> <p>“you are fighting with them” (Josh 10:25)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">וְשָׁכַב עִמָּהּ</p> <p>“he had intercourse with her (forcibly)” (Deut 22:25)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ</p> <p>“he had intercourse with her (forcibly)” (Gen 34:2)</p>

As Wilson-Wright notes, this semantic equivalence led to the partial incorporation of the preposition *ʿitt* into the object marker (*ʿōt-*) paradigm in Hebrew.<sup>68</sup> We argue that a similar phenomenon underlies the development of the object marker in Samalian: at an earlier stage of the language, constructions like *\*nalham-hū* “he fought him” would have alternated with *\*nalham liwāt-hū* “he fought with him.” Over time Samalian speakers reanalyzed *liwāt* in the indirect construction as a complex preposition consisting of the inherited preposition *li-* and a separate preposition *wāt*, which they reinterpreted as an object marker on the basis of the direct construction: *\*nalham liwāt-hū* > *\*nalham li-wāt-hū* > *\*nalham wāt-hū* “he fought him.”<sup>69</sup> They then extended the use of *wāt* to other verb classes. If we are correct, this development is only attested in the Katumuwa and Panamuwa inscriptions and therefore constitutes an innovative diagnostic feature of this branch.

Given the geographic location of Sam'al and the presence of Akkadian, Phoenician, and Aramaic inscriptions at the site, some have suggested that Samalian reflects the effects of language contact, substratum influence, or mixing.<sup>70</sup> Noorlander concludes that Samalian is not a mixed

<sup>68</sup> Wilson-Wright (n 62): 10–11.

<sup>69</sup> Because *\*nalham li-wāt-hū* was semantically equivalent to *\*nalham-hū*, the dative preposition *li-* would appear redundant before a direct object and could be omitted. For a slightly different derivation see Wilson-Wright (n 62): 15.

<sup>70</sup> Jonas C. Greenfield, for example, suggests that Samalian was influenced by a substrate, but he does not identify possible substrate languages (“The Dialects of Early Aramaic,” *JNES* 37 [1978]: 94). Takamitsu Muraoka, on the other hand, argues that “it is perfectly legitimate to seek to account for part of the . . . alleged archaisms in terms

language but may have been under Canaanite influence.<sup>71</sup> There is, however, no evidence for foreign influence at the site.<sup>72</sup> The material culture is clearly Anatolian without any Aramaean or Canaanite elements.<sup>73</sup> The only evidence for Aramaean culture is the Barrakib inscription, which reflects the use of Aramaic as a lingua franca under the Neo-Assyrian empire, rather than the presence of native Aramaic speakers at Sam'al.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, as Schloen and Fink note, “the only reason to think that the new rulers of Sam'al were invading Aramaeans, rather than long-indigenous Semitic speakers who had been resident in the area for a millennium or more, is the linguistic classification of the Samalian dialect (used in a number of locally written alphabetic inscriptions) as a branch of Aramaic.”<sup>75</sup> The apparent multilingualism in Sam'al, it seems, is a symptom of the political situation in the area and not an indication that several different Semitic-speaking populations resided there. The linguistic evidence we have reviewed here corroborates the archaeological evidence and suggests that an indigenous Semitic-speaking population produced the Panamuwa and Katumuwa inscriptions.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The Katumuwa and Panamuwa inscriptions do not exhibit any diagnostic features which would connect them to either Aramaic or Canaanite, two other language families found in the region. In this paper, we have argued that these inscriptions contain features, such as the N stem, that are unattested in Aramaic. In addition, we have shown that these inscriptions exhibit at least two innovative features not found in other Northwest Semitic languages: nasalized final long vowels and a new object marker derived from the preposition *liwāt* through reanalysis. While the first feature has been suggested before for the prefix conjugation, we

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of Canaanitisms” (“The Tell-Fekherye Bilingual Inscription and Early Aramaic,” *Abr Nahrain* 22 [1984]: 107).

<sup>71</sup> Noorlander (N 15): 231.

<sup>72</sup> Schloen and Fink (N 3): 9.

<sup>73</sup> Eudora Struble and Virginia Herrmann, “An Eternal Feast at Sam'al: The New Iron Age Mortuary Stele from Zincirli in Context,” *BASOR* 356 (2009): 20. To cite one example, the style and layout of the inscriptions from Sam'al, including the Aramaic Barrakib inscription, is unique to the site.

<sup>74</sup> Schloen and Fink (N 3): 7. See also Gzella (*Cultural History* [N 6]: 74), who concedes that it is “less likely that the actual language situation was immediately affected by politically-motivated changes in the idiom used for public epigraphy.”

<sup>75</sup> Schloen and Fink (N 3): 9.

have argued that it is attested throughout the language and is the result of a regular sound change. We suggest therefore that Samalian is the language of both the Katumuwa and Panamuwa inscriptions and is a separate branch of Northwest Semitic.

Ultimately, our conclusion complements the arguments put forward by Schloen and Fink, who argue that the inhabitants of Sam'al were indigenous Semitic speakers and not Aramean immigrants. Schloen and Fink base their arguments on the archaeological evidence found at the site, as well as the location of the city far from the Aramean heartland. These arguments, in tandem with the proposal presented here, support the existence of a distinct cultural and linguistic Semitic community in Anatolia.

