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# Wandering Arameans: Arameans Outside Syria

Textual and Archaeological Perspectives

Edited by  
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Cover illustration: Bronze Horse Frontlet from the Heraion of Samos, Greece,  
with an inscription of Hazael, from the Samos Archaeological Museum.  
Photograph by Aren M. Maeir.

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## Abbreviations

For abbreviations see: Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (RGG), 4th edition; Theological Realenzyklopädie (TRE), abbreviations, 2nd revised and enlarged edition, compiled by Siegfried M. Schwertner; Lexicon of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology ([www.rla.badw.de](http://www.rla.badw.de)).

## Foreword

The present volume contains the updated versions of the papers presented at the workshop "Wandering Arameans: Arameans Inside and Outside of Syria", held at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Leipzig in October 2014. The intention of the workshop was to explore Aramean cultures and their impact on their neighbors, including linguistic influence. The idea was to address some of the primary desiderata in current research on the Arameans and so to build a basis for a project proposal submitted to the Minerva Foundation on this and related topics, to be implemented at the University of Leipzig and Bar-Ilan University. The workshop brought together scholars from these two institutions, as well as from the University of Würzburg. In addition to the papers presented at the workshop, we invited four additional contributions to broaden the scope of our endeavor (Greer, Sergi, Gzella, and Younger).

The volume is divided into two sections:

- I. Syria and Palestine
- II. Mesopotamia and Egypt

This division reflects the areas in which one sees the presence of Arameans or of their language, Aramaic, in the first millennium BCE.

One of the outcomes of this workshop was that the "Aramean question" is a broad and complex field that touches on many issues (e.g., the presence of ethnical markers, the category of ethnicity in general, history, settlement patterns, archaeology, epigraphy, religion, and sociology) that calls for interdisciplinary work at a highly specialized level. In this perspective, it became clear that future research has to start from the following assumption: Arameans (including the Aramaic languages) in Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Egypt cannot be treated as a single entity but have to be carefully distinguished. The contributions of this volume show that identifying "Arameans" and defining pertinent identity markers are difficult tasks. The interactions between the Arameans, including the Aramaic languages, and their neighbors were complex and depended on the specific cultural and historical circumstances.

As a result of the 2014 workshop we decided to limit further research to the interaction between the Aramean states in Syria and the states in Palestine from the end of the 2nd to the late 1st millennium BCE. Correspondingly, we put the focus of the projected Minerva Center on the following preliminary working question: can the rise, flourishing, and decline of Aram and Israel, as independent political entities, be attributed to their autonomous decision making or to their interdependency – or to a combination of both factors? Thus, the articles of the first part of this volume became the foundation for our current research, which will be continued within the framework

of the *Minerva Center for the Relations between Israel and Aram in Biblical Times* (RIAB; [aramisrael.org](http://aramisrael.org)).

We are grateful to the authors of the papers in this volume for their contributions from their particular fields of expertise and their inspiring comments and discussions during the workshop. In addition, we want to thank Prof. Michael P. Streck as the editor-in-chief of the “Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien” for accepting our volume into this series. We want to thank Felix Hagemeyer and Philipp Roßteuscher for collecting and editing the essays. We are particularly grateful to Vivian-Sarah Klee, who took on the laborious task of putting the pieces together and of creating the indices. We wish to express our thanks to all our helping hands. Last but not least, our thanks go to the Minerva Foundation and the *Minerva Center for the Relations between Israel and Aram in Biblical Times* that supported the publication process financially.

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