

Benjamin D. Suchard

benjamin.suchard@ugent.be

<https://kuleuven.academia.edu/BenjaminSuchard>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/benjamin-suchard-31a00a136/>

Last updated: 11 April 2025

SUMMARY

Historical linguist with a specialization in Semitic and a background in Indo-European. My research focuses on Biblical Hebrew, Middle Aramaic, and comparative Semitics. I have over a decade of experience teaching graduate and undergraduate students; topics include introductions to various Semitic languages and their literatures and linguistic methodology.

POSITIONS

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 2025–2028 | Postdoctoral researcher, AlUla Inscriptions Analysis Project, Ghent University |
| 2019–2020,
2022–2025 | Postdoctoral researcher, project: ‘But They Could Not Read the Writing: The Biblical Aramaic consonantal text, its reading tradition and their mutual interaction’, KU Leuven, funded by a senior postdoctoral fellowship, Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) |
| 2023 | External contributor to G. Khan (ed.), <i>The Oxford Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> (in preparation; Oxford: Oxford University Press), University of Cambridge |
| 2019–2022 | Postdoctoral researcher, project: ‘Nabataean Aramaic and Pre-Islamic Arabic’, Leiden University, funded by a Veni grant, Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) |
| 2017–2018 | Postdoctoral researcher, project: ‘The origins of the Biblical Aramaic reading tradition’, Leiden University, funded by Stichting Studiecentrum voor Judaïca en Hebraïca Dr L. Fuks |
| 2017–2018 | Lecturer in Linguistics, Leiden University |
| 2016–2018 | Managing Editor, <i>Arabian Epigraphic Notes</i> |
| 2016–2017 | Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic, Leiden University |
| 2012–2016 | PhD Candidate in Linguistics, Leiden University |

EDUCATION

- 2012–2016 PhD in Linguistics *cum laude*¹, Leiden University. Dissertation: *The development of the Biblical Hebrew vowels*. Supervisors: H. Gzella and A. M. Lubotsky
- 2010–2012 MA in Linguistics (Research) *cum laude*², Leiden University
- 2009–2010 Propaedeutic diploma in Philosophy, Leiden University
- 2007–2010 BA in Comparative Indo-European Linguistics *cum laude*², Leiden University
-

SELECTED GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 2023 Cuijpers-Opdenakker Annual Prize (Netherlands Institute for the Near East & Ex Oriente Lux), best article on the Ancient Near East written by a junior scholar in the Netherlands, for ‘The Greek in Daniel 3: code-switching, not loanwords’, €1,000.
- 2019 Innovational Research Incentives Scheme Veni, Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), €250,000 (11% of proposals funded).
- 2019 Senior postdoctoral fellowship, Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO), 3 years fulltime salary and material costs (precise amount not specified; 26% of proposals funded).
- 2017 Postdoctoral grant, Stichting Studiecentrum voor Judaïca en Hebraïca Dr L. Fuks, €30,000 (exceptional grant).
-

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

- forthcoming ‘Hebrew’, in B. Kortmann et al. (eds), *The Spread of World Languages* (Berlin: De Gruyter).
- forthcoming ‘Semitic **ilāh*- and Hebrew אֱלֹהִים: from plural “gods” to singular “god”’. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*.
- forthcoming ‘The language of the inscriptions, from Nabataean to the Qur’an’, in A. Al-Jallad & A. Bdaiwi (eds), *The many pasts of the Arabic script* (Riyadh: King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies).
- forthcoming ‘The Aramaic script: an overview’, in A. Al-Jallad & A. Bdaiwi (eds), *The many pasts of the Arabic script* (Riyadh: King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies).
- 2025 ‘The varying size of the Sodom coalition in Genesis 14’, in A. Bakker et al. (eds), *Missing Pieces: Essays in Honour of Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar* (Leiden: Brill), 544–559.

¹ I.e. dissertation judged as best 5% and an excellent defence.

² I.e. all grades higher than 6/10, weighted average higher than 8/10, and an excellent thesis.

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS (cont'd)

- 2025 'Sound change in the Hebrew reading tradition', in L. van Beek (ed.), *Language change in Epic Greek and other poetic traditions* (Leiden: Brill), 229–240.
- 2025 '[The shape of the teen numerals in Central Semitic](#)', in A.D. Hornkohl et al. (eds), *Interconnected Traditions: Semitic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures—A Festschrift for Geoffrey Khan*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Open Book), 611–629.
- 2024 '[The Old Aramaic “feminine” suffix -t as an accusative case marker](#)'. *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 174.1, 54–76.
- 2024 '[Another Akkadianism in Ezekiel \(and Daniel\): לבש כדים = labiš kitê “clad in linen”](#)'. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 144.1, 163–165.
- 2023 '[Two more contexts for Ge'ez *u > u and three for *a > ə](#)'. *Afrika und Übersee* 96, 96–110.
- 2023 '[Proto-Semitic existentials: *yθaw and *laθθaw](#)'. *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 49.2, 65–87.
- 2023 '[What can Nabataean Aramaic tell us about Pre-Islamic Arabic?](#)' *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 34.1, 158–172.
- 2022 '[The origin of the Ethiosemitic verb hlw “to be present”](#)'. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 142/3, 699–704.
- 2022 '[Historical \(in\)accuracy and linguistic archaism in Daniel 5](#)'. *Biblica* 103/2, 213–226.
- 2022 '[Aramaic Daniel. A textual reconstruction of Chapters 1–7](#)'. *Studia Semitica Neerlandica* 73. Leiden: Brill.
- 2022 '[The Greek in Daniel 3: code-switching, not loanwords](#)'. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 141/1, 121–136.
- 2021 '[A valediction to Moses W. Shapira's Deuteronomy document](#)'. *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 78/3–4, 364–387.
- 2021 '[Biblical Hebrew ׀ and Biblical Aramaic אִתִּי followed by non-verbal clauses as markers of polarity contrast](#)'. *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 47/1, 61–78.
- 2021 B.D. Suchard & F.J. Groen, '[\(Northwest\) Semitic sg. *CVCC-, pl. *CVCaC-ū-: broken plural or regular reflex?](#)'. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 84/1, 11–7.
- 2021 '[The reconstruction of the Proto-Semitic genitive ending and a suggestion on its origin](#)'. *Studia Orientalia Electronica* 9/1, 66–82.
- 2021 '[The origins of the Biblical Aramaic reading tradition](#)'. *Vetus Testamentum* 71, 105–119.
- 2020 '[Phonological adaptation and the Biblical Aramaic and Biblical Hebrew reflexes of *i and *u](#)', in A.D. Hornkohl & G. Khan (eds), *Semitic vocalization and reading traditions* (Semitic Languages and Cultures; Cambridge: Open Book), 171–189.

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS (cont'd)

- 2019 [*The development of the Biblical Hebrew vowels*](#). *Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics* 99. Leiden: Brill.
- 2019 ['Sound changes in the \(pre-\)Masoretic reading tradition and the original pronunciation of Biblical Aramaic'](#). *Studia Orientalia Electronica* 7, 52–65.
- 2018 ['The vocalic phonemes of Tiberian Hebrew'](#). *Hebrew Studies* 59, 193–207.
- 2018 [M.G. Kossmann & B.D. Suchard, 'A reconstruction of the system of verb aspects in proto-Berbero-Semitic'](#). *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 81/1, 41–56.
- 2017 ['A triconsonantal derivation of the *lamed-he* paradigm'](#). *Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt* 22, 205–221.
- 2017 ['The origin of *s³ in the Hadramitic and Modern South Arabian third person feminine personal pronouns'](#). *Journal of Semitic Studies* 62/1, 69–76.
- 2016 ['The Hebrew verbal paradigm of hollow roots: a triconsonantal account'](#). *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 166/2, 317–332.
-

BOOK REVIEWS

- forthcoming Review of A.D. Hornkohl, *Diachronic Diversity in Classical Biblical Hebrew*, in *Brill's Journal of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics*.
- forthcoming Review of A.D. Hornkohl, *The Historical Depth of the Tiberian Reading Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, in *Brill's Journal of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics*.
- forthcoming Review of Z. Cherry, *Aramaic Loanwords in Neo-Assyrian. 911–612 B.C.*, in *Bulletin of the American Society of Overseas Research*.
- 2023 [Review of H.H. Hardy II, *The Development of Biblical Hebrew Prepositions*](#), in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 80.3–4, 362–375.
- 2023 [Review of L. Kogan & M. Krebernik \(eds\), *Etymological Dictionary of Akkadian*, vol. 1](#), in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 118.1, 8–10.
- 2023 [Review of N. Posegay, *Points of Contact: The Shared Intellectual History of Vocalisation in Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew*](#), in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 68/1, e6–e11.
- 2022 [Review of M. Brose, *Perfekt, Pseudopartizip, Stativ: Die afroasiatische Suffixkonjugation in sprachvergleichender Perspektive*](#), in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 79/3–4, 347–351.
- 2022 [Review of L. Grestenberger et al. \(eds\), *Ha! Linguistic Studies in Honor of Mark R. Hale*](#), in *Journal of Historical Syntax* 6/19.
- 2021 [Review of R. Hasselbach-Andee \(ed.\), *A Companion to Ancient Near Eastern Languages*](#), in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 78/3–4, 477–482.

BOOK REVIEWS (cont'd)

- 2020 [Review of L. Edzard, M. Sartori, & P. Cassuto \(eds\), *Case and Mood Endings in Semitic Languages: Myth or Reality?*, in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 65/2, 641–645.](#)
- 2019 [Review of P.H. Kelley, *Biblical Hebrew. An Introductory Grammar*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 76/1–2, 145–150.](#)
- 2018 [Review of G. del Olmo Lete, *Studies in Common and Comparative Semitics: Selected Papers*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 75/3–4, 366–370.](#)
- 2018 [Review of G. Goldenberg, *Further studies in Semitic linguistics*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 75/3–4, 359–362.](#)
- 2018 [Review of L. Edzard & J. Huehnergard \(eds\), *Proceedings of the Oslo–Austin workshop in Semitic linguistics*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 75/1–2, 149–153.](#)
- 2018 [Review of A. Butts \(ed.\), *Semitic languages in contact*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 75/1–2, 144–149.](#)
- 2017 [Review of L. Edzard \(ed.\), *The morpho-syntactic and lexical encoding of tense and aspect in Semitic. Proceedings of the Erlangen workshop on April 26, 2014*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 74/5–6, 621–625.](#)
- 2015 [Review of N.J.C. Kouwenberg, *The Akkadian verb and its Semitic background*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 72/5–6, 712–719.](#)
- 2014 [Review of J. Huehnergard, *An introduction to Ugaritic*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 71/5–6, 803–806.](#)
- 2014 [Review of D. Pardee, *The Ugaritic texts and the origins of West-Semitic literary composition*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 71/3–4, 513–515.](#)
- 2014 [Review of E. Vernet i Pons, *Origen etimològic dels verbs làmed-he de l'hebreu masorètic*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 71/3–4, 515–518.](#)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

BA LEVEL

Biblical Hebrew (grammar and reading texts)

Introduction to Comparative Semitics

Cultural History of Aramaic

Introduction to Classical Ethiopic

Reading Source Texts: The Inscriptions from Zincirli/Nabataean Aramaic

Linguistic Panorama of the Middle East

Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Creation and Flood Myths

Introduction to Historical Linguistics

Introduction to Morphology

Introduction to Proto-Indo-European Morphology

MA LEVEL

Historical Grammar of Hebrew

Advanced Biblical Hebrew Grammar

Commentary in Antiquity (Peshar and Midrash)

Syriac

Nabataean Aramaic

Classical Ethiopic

EXTRACURRICULAR COURSES (SUMMER SCHOOLS ETC.), ABRIDGED

Introduction to Jewish Aramaic

Introduction to Epigraphic Northwest Semitic

CERTIFICATIONS

2018 Basic Teaching Qualification, Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University

2012 Active Learning and Didactic Skills, Bureau Coaching Hoger Onderwijs

INVITED TALKS AND CONFERENCE ORGANISATION

- 2025 'Masoretic Biblical Aramaic: a typically Rabbinic reading tradition'. Co-convenor of a panel on Semitic reading traditions, 35. Deutscher Orientalistentag, FAU Erlangen, 8–12 September.
- 2025 '[Rethinking the Proto-Semitic stative](#)'. Rethinking Proto-Semitic, Philipps-Universität Marburg, 2–3 April.
- 2023 '[The Ethiosemitic imperfective and Modern South Arabian](#)'. Groupe Linguistique d'Études Chamito-Sémitiques, Paris, 29 June.
- 2023 '[Partial preservation of the Semitic case system in Old Aramaic \(9th–8th c. BCE\)](#)'. Philipps-Universität Marburg, 6 June.
- 2023 'Arabic in the Nabataean papyri'. The history of the Arabic script: new discoveries and developments, Leiden University, 26 April.
- 2023 'Where does the *a*-vowel in *melachim*-type plurals come from? A case of ancient vowel epenthesis'. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 11 January.
- 2022 '[Resolving conflicts between the *ktiv* and *qre* dialects in Biblical Aramaic](#)'. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament seminar, Oriel College, University of Oxford, 7 November.
- 2022 '[The Biblical Aramaic tense-aspect-mood system: a new synthesis](#)'. Workshop on Late Biblical Hebrew syntax, Bar-Ilan University (online), 13–15 June.
- 2022 '[The phonology of Biblical Hebrew: sound change and allophony in a dead language](#)'. Linguistics seminar, Chinese University of Hong Kong (online), 1 March.
- 2021 '[Judean influence on Nabataean Aramaic?](#)'. Early Career Researchers Workshop on Aramaic as an international language and cultural bridge, Hebrew University (online), 14 September.
- 2020 '[Biblical Aramaic active verbs read as passives](#)'. Convener of the online [Semitics Twitter Corona Conference](#), hosted by Leiden University, 31 March. Originally to be held as an invited presentation at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome (workshop cancelled).
- 2018 '[Sound changes in the Biblical reading tradition and the original pronunciation of Biblical Aramaic](#)'. Groupe Linguistique d'Études Chamito-Sémitiques, Paris, 29 November.
- 2018 'How did the first rabbis read the Bible? Linguistic evidence for a first-century CE fixing of the reading tradition'. Probevorlesung for the position of professor (W2) of Hebrew Linguistics (2 invited candidates), Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg, 13 July.
- 2018 '[Phonemicization of free variation: the reflexes of *i and *u in Biblical Aramaic and Biblical Hebrew](#)'. Workshop on Semitic vocalization and reading traditions, University of Cambridge, 4 May.

SELECTED CONFERENCE TALKS

- 2024 B. Suchard & I.J. Bunis, '[Biblical Hebrew הלוא זהו זאֵרֶאֱלֶה and medial deixis demonstratives](#)'. International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, VU Amsterdam, 28 July–1 August.
- 2024 '[Genesis 14 and the E source](#)'. International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, VU Amsterdam, 28 July–1 August.
- 2023 '[Revelation as performance: anchoring in Daniel 7–12](#)'. Groningen-Leuven-Oxford Dead Sea Scrolls and Hebrew Bible meeting, University of Groningen, 27–28 March.
- 2022 '[Who spoke Nabataean Aramaic?](#)' 34. Deutsche Orientalistentag, Berlin, 12–16 September.
- 2020 '[The Greek words in Daniel 3: Code-switching, not loanwords](#)'. Virtual Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (Aramaic Studies section), 29 November–11 December.
- 2019 B. Suchard & J. Groen, '[Sg. *CVCC-, pl. *CVCaC-ū: broken plural or regular reflex?](#)'. *In absentia*, 47th North Atlantic Conference on Afroasiatic Linguistics, Paris, 24–26 June.
- 2018 '[Targum Onqelos and the Biblical Aramaic reading tradition](#)'. Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (Aramaic Studies section), Denver, CO, 17–20 November.
- 2018 '[The origins of the Biblical Aramaic reading tradition: Tracking three features through time and space](#)'. 13th Mainz International Colloquium on Ancient Hebrew, 2–4 November.
- 2016 '[hallo from the other side: presentatives in Semitic and Egyptian and the Ethiosemitic verb “to be”](#)'. 44th North American Conference on Afroasiatic Linguistics, Austin, TX, 13–14 February.
- 2015 '[A triconsonantal derivation of the lamed-he paradigm](#)'. 12th Mainz International Colloquium on Ancient Hebrew, 30 October through 1 November.

SELECTED DEPARTMENTAL TALKS

- 2024 '[New insights into the Aramaic of Daniel and Ezra](#)'. Research Unit Biblical Studies, KU Leuven Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, 18 October.
- 2023 'Remnants of the Semitic case system in Old Aramaic'. Leiden University Summer School in Languages and Linguistics evening lecture, 18 July.
- 2018 '[The Arabianisms in Isaiah's prophecy against Dumah](#)'. Farewell symposium for Ahmad Al-Jallad, Leiden University, 25 May.
- 2014 '[Phonological reanalysis in Modern South Arabian](#)'. Leiden Indo-European Symposium, 31 October.

POPULARIZING TALKS/PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA APPEARANCES

- 2025 A. Aksu & B. Suchard, ‘De Nabateeërs’ [The Nabataeans] (2 parts + bonus episode), [Oudheid](#) (podcast). 19 Februari–2 March.
- 2025 Research featured in [Humanity’s Last Exam](#) (Example 5), an AI benchmark.
- 2024 Quoted in in ‘[Te koop voor een miljoen dollar: de oudste inscriptie van de Tien Gebo-den \(maar er zit een verkeerde tussen\)](#)’ [On sale for one million dollars: the oldest inscription of the Ten Commandments (but one of them is wrong)]. *NRC*, 17 December.
- 2024 Quoted in ‘[Van runderkop naar A: hoe in duizend jaar ons alfabet ontstond](#) [From ox head to A: how our alphabet was born over one thousand years]’. *NRC*, 29 November.
- 2024 ‘[Biblical Hebrew and Benjamin Suchard](#)’. *A Language I Love Is* (podcast). 3 March.
- 2023 @KEDEMChannel (YouTube), ‘[Semitic languages – A full introduction](#)’ | [With Dr. Benjamin Suchard](#). Uploaded on 29 December.
- 2023 ‘*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Nieuwe inscripties uit Israël*’ [New inscriptions from Israel]. Studiedag Vereniging Hebreeuws, 6 December.
- 2022 S. Poulsen and B. Suchard, ‘*España og små gnavere*’ [*España and small rodents*]. *Mål og Mæle* 43.3, 2–4.
- 2022 @ReligionForBreakfast (YouTube), ‘What was the REAL Name of Jesus?’ ([feat. Dr. Benjamin Suchard](#)). Uploaded on 29 September.
- 2021 H. Gzella, [Aramaic. A history of the first world language](#). Translation by B.D. Suchard. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- 2017 ‘[Wet of willekeur? De ontwikkeling van de Bijbels Hebreeuwse klinkers](#)’ [Rules or randomness? The development of the Biblical Hebrew vowels]. *Alef Beet* 26/2, 3–10.
- 2017 ‘De ontwikkeling van de Oud-Hebreeuwse klinkers’ [The development of the Ancient Hebrew vowels]. Jewish congregation Bendigamos Amsterdam, 14 January.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND PHD SUPERVISION

- 2024 Member of Camil Staps's examining committee. Dissertation: 'The persistence of space. Formalizing the polysemy of spatial relations in functional elements'. Leiden University.
- 2017–present PhD supervisor (*copromotor*) of Jorik Groen, topic: the semantic field of movement in Biblical Hebrew, Leiden University/VU Amsterdam.
- 2024 Co-editor alumni magazine, KU Leuven Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies
- 2022–2023 Member permanent teaching committee, KU Leuven Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies
- 2022–2023 Student ombuds, KU Leuven Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies
- 2021 Member of Christian Canu Højgaard's doctorate committee. Dissertation: 'Roles and relations in Biblical law. A study of participant tracking, semantic roles, and social networks in Leviticus 17–26'. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- 2019 Jury member for the University of Amsterdam's Modern Hebrew translation contest
- 2016–2017 Member of Hekmat Dirbas's doctorate committee. Dissertation: 'Thy Name is Deer. Animal names in Semitic onomastics and name-giving traditions: evidence from Akkadian, Northwest Semitic, and Arabic'. Leiden University.
- 2013–2016 Contributor to Brill's *Linguistic Bibliography*, Hebrew and Semitic sections.
- 2012–2015 Hebrew and Aramaic consultant for the Edward Lhwyd Correspondence Project.

LANGUAGES

Native command of English and Dutch. Good command of Italian, German and French, good passive command of Biblical Hebrew and some Modern Hebrew. Also acquainted with Ugaritic, Phoenician and other epigraphic forms of Canaanite, other forms of Hebrew (Qumran, Rabbinic, Samaritan), Aramaic, Classical Arabic, Classical Ethiopic, Akkadian, Ancient North Arabian, Ancient South Arabian, Modern South Arabian, Middle Egyptian, Sumerian, Ancient Greek, Latin, Sanskrit (Vedic and Classical), Hittite, Gothic, Old Irish, Old Icelandic, Lithuanian, and Finnish.