STUDIES IN WEST SEMITIC INSCRIPTIONS, I

STYLISTIC ASPECTS OF THE SEFIRE TREATY INSCRIPTIONS*

BY

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Inscriptions have a fortune of their own. One thinks of the Zakir stele discovered by Pognon some 60 years ago who even after publishing the stele, kept the place of its discovery secret for many years. There can be no doubt that he thereby hindered the potential uncovering of other parts of what has come down to us as a fragmentary but tantalizing inscription.¹ The Sefire inscriptions were first discovered in Northern Syria some thirty years ago but the proper publication by Prof. Dupont-Sommer was not possible until recent years.² Ronzevalle’s initial publication of the inscription was unsatisfactory³ but those who wrote on the inscriptions soon after — Cantineau, Friedrich and Lands-

* Based on a paper read at the XXVI International Orientalist Congress, New Delhi, January 1964. This paper has profited from the suggestions of Profs. Z. Ben-Hayim and E. Y. Kutscher of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

¹ Cf. H. Pognon, Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la region de Mossoul, Paris 1907, 156–58; and the still important, if outdated on many points, study of Lidzbarski, Ephemeris III, 1–11. The best recent translation remains that of F. Rosenthal, ANET² 501–02.

² A. Dupont-Sommer, “Une inscription araméenne inédite de Sirê”, Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth, XIII, 1956, pp. 23–41 (= Stele III); Les Inscriptions Araméennes de Sirê (Steles I et II), Paris, 1958. We are in agreement with many scholars that in these steles we have three copies of the same (or a very similar) treaty. But as fortune would have it each stele has preserved different parts of the treaty, and we may therefore treat the inscriptions as one long inscription.


¹ Acta Orientalia, XXIX
berger, Epstein, Driver and primarily Bauer advanced our understanding of the inscription. Rereading their articles with the hindsight gained with proper publication of the inscriptions may well serve as a warning to us against proposing a hasty emendation or a patently absurd interpretation. It is not surprising that in the wake of Dupont-Sommer's publication there has been a healthy resurgence of interest in the Sefire inscriptions so much so that it has become difficult to keep up with the articles that continue to appear.

This paper will not deal with what we admit to be very important aspects of these inscriptions — their historical relevance, the light that they shed on international relations in the eighth century B.C., or with problems of religious history. Our interest is philological and, more specifically, is in a study of the stylistic aspects of the Sefire inscriptions. This is a part of a study of the Aramaic inscriptions as a mirror of Aramaic literature. The following aspects of style: idiomatic usage, specific terminology and poetic technique will be dealt with.

1. *Idiomatic Aramaic.*

A. The treaty is remarkably rich in idiomatic expressions. Some of these are obvious and need no detailed explanation; the following have direct Hebrew equivalents.

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4 Cf. the bibliography, pp. 15–16 of Dupont-Sommer (1958) for exact references.
5 We shall call attention here only to the articles of J. Fitzmyer on Sefire III in *CBQ* 20, 1958, 444–76; and on Sefire I–II in *JAOS* 81, 1961, 178–222; and also to the note of F. Rosenthal in *BASOR* 158, 1960, 28–31.
6 For some of these aspects cf. M. Noth in *ZDFV* 27, 1961, 118–72; D. J. McCarthy, S.J., *Treaty and Covenant*, Rome 1963; D. R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets*, Rome, 1964. The two latter studies were not available to me when this paper was written.
7 A forthcoming study will deal with the Zakir inscription from this point of view.
8 The references given are not intended to be exhaustive. There are other idiomatic expressions not dealt with here.
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B. Many of these idioms have been identified by the scholars who have translated and commented upon the texts, although at times the idiomatic nature of the expression is hidden behind an all too literal translation. But, on the whole, they have not noticed that these idioms as used in Sefire can be matched stylistically with Biblical Hebrew usage. Three examples will suffice:

1) pqh ‘ynykm lḥzyh (I A 13) “open your eyes too see” — the Hebrew pqh ‘ynyym is also followed by r’h e.g. pqh ‘ynyk ‘n.
"open your eyes and see" — (II Kings 19,16; cf. II Kings 6,20).

2) *hskr linskrm bydy mh tb b'nyy "bd lhm* (III, 3) "hand them over to me, I shall do with them as I please" is matched by: *w't hnvw byybk k'twb wky{k b'nyybk l'swl hnw 'sh "and now we are in your hands, do with us as you please"* (Joshua 9,25). 9

3) Slightly more complicated is the following example:

In III, 5 the vassal is warned against telling a refugee who had fled his overlord *slw "l 'srkm "stay quietly at your place" while in III, 7 the same is expressed as *sbw l'hkkm "stay where you are"; these are obviously two synonymous idioms with only a slight shade of meaning dividing the two. In Zach. 7,7 we find the idioms combined in *bhym yrmlym ywsbt w'slh*, "While Jerusalem was dwelling safely and securely." There is no need to translate *ywsbt* as "inhabited" (RSV).

C. It may be noted that among the idioms listed two cast light on the usage of Biblical Hebrew:

1) A good example is *hsb sbgl*. The Hebrew equivalent *sb*b* sbwt (sby*)l* has engendered much discussion leading to articles and monographs. But from its usage in Sel. III, 24-25: *wkl* h*sbw l'hm sbgl by[t'by]... w'sbt l'yrm, etc., "and now the gods have restored my 'father's house'... and TL'YM has returned... " it is clear that *hsh sbgl* meant originally "restitution" or "restoration" — of territory, health (Job), or a people's position. In Biblical Hebrew the idiom underwent theological interpretation as *hsh sbgl/sbwt* "to restore a captivity" as it referred to the restoration of Israel to its land. 10

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9 These words of the Gibeonite envoys fit well their position as vassals surrendering to their sovereign. Y.M. Grintz dealt in detail with the 'legal' background of the Gibeonite pericope in Zion 26, 1961, 69–84. In the phrase from Joshua, ha-tob w'ha-yatar is a hendiadys.

10 Alongside of *yib* (by*sb* "to dwell tranquilly" Hebrew also knew *sb* with this meaning cf. *w'shdb* in Ps. 23,6 and *me'shba'a* by*salw* in Prov. 1,32 cf. Kimhi, *Shorashim* 372 s. v. *sb* and most recently M. Dahood, *Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Philology* (Rome 1963) 6. Dr. Henoch Yalon has treated this use of *sb* in detail in a Jerusalem lecture (Sept. 1963).

2) The second example is *nš* `l šplyn "to mention" (III, 14–15). This casts light on the unique biblical reference ubl *š* `l šmwl m `l šply "I shall not mention their (the gods') names" which as the Sefire instance shows, refers not to taking an oath, as this verse has been interpreted, but rather as the classic commentators have noted, simply to speaking of foreign gods. But there is still another contact with Biblical Hebrew usage, for *l lbb* is accompanied by *mr* "to say" in Jer. 3,16; by *zkr* (in the *nifal* "to be mentioned" in Is. 65,17; and by *swl* (in the piel) "to command" in Jer. 7,31; 19,5; 32,35. In Sefire III 14–15 slq *l lbb* and *nš* `l šplyn are matched.

D. The point of some of the Aramaic idioms is sharpened when comparison is made with Biblical Hebrew:

1) The vassal is put under oath to avenge the murder of his sovereign: `l l'lh wlm qn mn yd šn’y "you shall come and exact vengeance (literally: avenge my blood) from my enemies" (III, 11) but if a whole city is responsible the vassal is told *nkh tkwh bhrb "smite it with a sword"* (III, 12–13).11 We must compare *nkh tkwh bhrb* to the Hebrew hakkeh lēpî hereb which is used for the total annihilation of a city as can be seen in Deut. 13,16; Josh. 11,11; etc. An excellent example of a rebellious city which was treated this way was the priestly city of Nob: we’el Nōb `īr ha-kōhānîm hikkâh lēpî hereb me’rû we’ad îissâh me’olel we’ad yōneq we’sîr wa’loh nîr wa’sîh lēpî hereb (I Sam. 22,10).

2) The idiom *b’d *šm which occurs in wlm bzl wlm bdt *šmlm "and to smile and eradicate them"*12 (II B 7) is similarly clarified

11 The editio princeps reads *nkh tpuw*, but we follow Fitzmyer in amending this to *nkh tkwh*.

12 As to *bz*: Dupont-Sommer has gathered together various roots beginning with *b* and has pointed to Arabic َبِكَز‎ "to knead" as "exactement identique à notre *tār*" (Dupont-Sommer, 1958, 110). Nöldeke, however, has long since shown that this root was borrowed by Arabic from Ethiopic (Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft [Strassburg, 1910] 56–57). In our opinion *bz* is to the compared primarily with Mishnaic Heb. ֶבֶז "to crush (the skull, etc.)" (Jastrow 420) and Akkadian ṣ̪aḥī ̄ "to smash (with a mace); chop into pieces" (CAD "H", 9). The interchange of Aramaic š and Heb. ṣ, Akkadian ṣ̪ (→ *PS ƚ*?) is not a hindrance. There is no need to compare *bz* with Heb. ṣ̪ and Arab. َبَكَزَ (Rosenthal BASOR 158, 30). In this inscription *šm* (→ common Aramaic *šm*) is written with prothetic *aleph* as in the inscriptions from Zincirli.
when compared with 'bd śm found in the piel (Deut. 12,3) and kifl (Deut. 7,24).

3) In III, 17–18 we read whn yrb bry zy yšb 'l krs'y¹³ hdt 'ḥwh 'w y'brnh lšlh lšnk bnyhm "if my son, who will sit on my throne, will quarrel with one of his brothers or exile him do not interfere with them."¹⁴ The usage of šlh with lšn is elucidated by Ps. 50, 19–20.

pīkā šālaḥṭā berā'āh
āšōnkā laṣmid mirmāh
lešeb bē'āḥīkā lēdabber
bēben 'immēkā līṭten dopi.

In this verse šlh is used with peh which is in parallelism with lāšōn. Elsewhere, the tongue is compared to fire (Is. 30,27), to an arrow (Jer. 9,7), and to a sword (Ps. 57,5), with which the verb šlh is used. We may also note šlh bhn in umšalēaḥ mēlānim bēn 'ahim "stir up trouble among brothers" (Prov. 6,19).

E. A further group of idioms must be seen not only in the light of their Hebrew counterparts but also in terms of later Aramaic usage. Two examples will suffice:

1) 'st bbble (II B 5) is not simply "to think" but it rather has the pejorative sense of plotting against. The Hebrew equivalent is ḫš bbble as used in Zach. 7,10 and 8,17, while the Aramaic usage is preserved by the Targum to Is. 32,6: wблbhw mššla 'wns "and in their heart they plan iniquity", for the Masoretic Text's difficult mēlibbō yā'ašēh 'āwen.¹⁵ This pejorative sense is also evident in the use of 'št in (Elephantine) Ahiqar 1,25.¹⁶

¹³ The inscription reads khs'y but this surely an error.

¹⁴ We have translated y'brnh as "will exile (or remove) him". E. Rosenthal (BASOR 158,30) has proposed "will hate him" on the basis of Arabic 'rätz and Heh. 'ṭraḥ. However, if we compare the extant treaties, e.g. Esarhaddon Vassal Treaties II 336–52 which parallels the Sefer clause, it is clear that "exile" rather than "anger" or "hate" is required here.

¹⁵ Cf. too the Targum to II Sam. 20,15; Isa. 55,7; Jer. 5,26; Hos. 10,13. I plan to deal with yā'ašēh of Is. 32,6 and 'āšētā of Jer. 5,28 elsewhere.

¹⁶ CAP p. 212. In Dan. 6,4 'ṭšt means simply "planned" while in CAP 30,23 (p. 113) 'ṭšt means "take thought, consider".
2) \textit{w‘l tpmw b’sr\text{h}} (III 7) has been translated by Dupont-Sommer, Fitzmyer and Vogt\textsuperscript{17} as if \textit{šr\text{h}} meant "place". Rosen- that\textsuperscript{18} saw that \textit{b’sr\text{h}} is equal to later \textit{btr\text{h} (b’tr\text{h})} and proposed that \textit{w‘l tpmw b’sr\text{h}} means "do not turn after him". He compared Heb. \textit{pnh \text{yhr\text{y}}}. However an examination of BH \textit{pnh \text{yhr\text{y}}} shows that it is a rather literal expression meaning "to turn around" in order to see what is taking place (cf. Jud. 20,40; II Sam. 1,7; II Kings 2,24). But if we note that in Ugaritic \textit{at\text{r}} can mean "toward\textsuperscript{19}" and that \textit{pny btr} is used in the Targum for Heb. \textit{pnh \text{y}l} "to turn toward" in Lev. 19,4\textsuperscript{20} we can then combine Aramaic, Ugaritic and Hebrew usages and translate \textit{w‘l tpmw b’sr\text{h}} as "do not turn toward him".

F. Other idiomatic expressions have as far as I can ascertain their only parallel in Akkadian usage. We shall cite at this time only one example: \textit{b’y r’sy lhmlty} (III 10–11), literally, "to seek my head to kill me". Aramaic is usually straightforward: \textit{b’y lmqt\text{l} "to seek to kill" while Heb. uses the idiomatic bgs nps in which \textit{nps} means "life" or "person". The idiom \textit{b’y r’s} is best paralleled from Ugarit PRU IV 126,1. : an\text{a} m\text{u}\text{h\text{i} Amm\text{is}ta\text{mri mar\text{u} qaqqadı\text{s} u\text{b}t\text{a}’i "she sought only to harm Amm\text{is}t\text{a}m\text{r}i",} and from a fragmentary treaty from Kizzuwatna published recently by G. R. Meyer, which has a clause against supplying a refuge for someone who \textit{an\text{a} qaqqad b\text{è}l\text{î}su ippalus "looked at the head of his lord" (MIOF I, 114, 1. 6)}. Here too the idiom must mean "sought to do harm to the person of". The statement in Sef. is purposely explicit \textit{wyb’h r’sy lhmlty "he seeks my head to kill me".}

G. One idiom stands by itself in terms of its strangeness when translated into a European language — \textit{nsk l\text{hm} in w\text{lsk l\text{hm l\text{hm}}} (I B 38; III, 5, 7). Neither Heb. \textit{nsk "to pour out" nor Akkadian nas\text{ã}ku which has the added meaning "to throw" are of help

\textsuperscript{17} Vogt has rendered Sefire III into Latin in \textit{Biblica} 39, 1958, 269–74.
\textsuperscript{18} BASOR 158,29.
\textsuperscript{19} E. g. UM 49 II 6–9: l...l...aq\text{r}.
\textsuperscript{20} Cf. the Targums to Lev. 20,6; Deut. 31,20; Hos. 3,1.
here.\textsuperscript{21} 

\textit{wltisk lhm lhm} if translated "do not pour out — or throw down food for them" is meaningless unless one notes that Heb. \textit{ysq} in II Kings 4,40–41 and II Sam. 13,9 is used for serving a broth containing flour. 

\textit{nsk lhm} means simply "to provide with food". 

II. Legal Terminology. 

The inscription is naturally rich in terminology from the sphere of international law and court life. We shall mention in passing: \textit{šqr l}, \textit{šqr b}, \textit{mll mln lhyt}, \textit{hskr}, \textit{gvr 'dy}', \textit{šym 'dy}', \textit{nsr 'dy}', \textit{'bd 'dy' wftb'}, \textit{'bd nmmt}, \textit{šhd}, and \textit{ryb}. It need not be emphasized that this list does not exhaust the full scope of this particular aspect. 

A. The expressions \textit{šqr l} and \textit{šqr b} are known from the Hebrew Bible as terms for "breaking a pact or covenant". It is worth noting that the distinction made between \textit{šqr b} and \textit{šqr l} is true both for our inscription and for Biblical usage: 1) \textit{šqr b} is used in relation to the pact, covenant or treaty, e.g. \textit{šqrt b'dy'} (III, 7) — cf. \textit{wšld} \textit{šqqarnu bbrtèkà} (Ps. 44,18). As Moran has noted, we must now interpret Ps. 89,34 b: \textit{wšld} \textit{'dšaqgr b'čmànlī} as "I shall not betray my pact (with him)".\textsuperscript{22} In this verse \textit{'čmànlī} = \textit{'čmànlī} (cf. krt \textit{'čmànlī} in Neh. 10,1); 2) \textit{šqr l} is used in relation to the parties involved in the pact. In this inscription it can be the gods: \textit{šqrm lkl \textit{‘lx}, 'dy' zy bspr' zmhk} (III, 4); or the sovereign: \textit{[wbn yš]qr lbr g'yh} (II, A, 3) — cf. \textit{'im lisqor litlnī}, unnlqd (Gen. 21,22). 

B. \textit{mll mln lhyt} — literally "to speak bad words", actually "to stir up strife". From the linguistic side it is apparent that this phrase is based on Hittite \textit{idaluš meniysaš} "bad words" — a term found frequently in the Hittite treaties and Instructions with the same force.\textsuperscript{23} In Akkadian the usual term is \textit{awāle la damqāle} 

\textsuperscript{21} Against Rosenthall \textit{BASOR} 158,29, n. 3. To my knowledge \textit{nasåku} is not used for serving food. 

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Biblea} 42, 1961, 239; cf. already Fitzmyer \textit{CBQ} 20, 1958, 456. Dupont-Sommer in his study of Sefire III had noticed the distinction between \textit{šqr l} and \textit{šqr b}. The same distinction is not, however, true of other verbs implying unfaithfulness, e.g. \textit{kzb}; \textit{kzb l} in Ps. 89,26 but \textit{kzb b} in II Kings 4,16. 

(abutu la dēqtu) "not good words".\textsuperscript{23a} In the light of mll mlū llyl we must understand ‘āšer dibber fōb ‘al ha-melek said of the courtier Mordechai in Esther 7,9 as "he was loyal to the King".

C. hskr — is used as Bib. Heb. hasqēr in related contexts — for handing over fugitives. In Bib. Heb. both the piel and hifil occur while in the Sefire Inscription (passim) only the hafel is found.\textsuperscript{24} Bib. Heb. knows one instance of skr (wē-sikkartiʾ el niṣrayim be'yad 'ādōnīn qāšē Isa. 19,4) but this is possibly an Aramaism. Phoenician also has sgr in this meaning.\textsuperscript{25}

D. gsr 'dy' (I A 7) — cf. Bib. Heb. krt bryt passim), krt 'mnh (Neh. 10,1). The verb gsr of this idiom is preserved as gsr qym in which is found as a possible Targumic equivalent of krt bryt. In the Peshitta this idiomatic use is lost and has been replaced by 'aqūm qayāma or aqīn dawatiqa.

E. šyn 'dy' — in I A 7 we read, differing from the reading of Dupont-Sommer (accepted by Fitzmyer and others), šmwn 'dy' 'in. This idiom is the equivalent of Akkadian adē šakānu and Heb. šyn 'dwt.\textsuperscript{26} An interesting example is 'ēdēt biyūṭ ap sūmō "He (God) made a covenant (or pact) with Joseph (= Israel)" (Ps. 81,6).

F. nšr 'dy' (I B 7–8) — this term for "keep a pact, covenant", is the equivalent of Akk. adē naṣāru and Heb. nšr 'dwt as in Ps. 25,10 and Ps. 119,2.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{23a} Cf. Wiseman, Esarhaddon Vassal Treaties (Iraq XX 1958) 11. 73–74; 108–109, etc.

\textsuperscript{24} There is no need to take yskr of III 3 as a pact or afeł of skr. In my opinion this is simply a scribal error.

\textsuperscript{25} It is worth noting that skr (hafel or later afeł) is not known elsewhere in Aramaic unless Epstein is correct in associating Mandale skr with it (Ar. Or. 18, 1950, 168). The Biblical examples of hasqēr/sigēr "to hand over" are translated by mssar in the Targums and 'alem in the Peshitta. Phoenician sgr occurs twice in the form yskram in the Ezmun'azar inscription (GIS 1, 3, ii. 9,21). Harris considered the form to be yīlā (A Grammar of the Phoenician Language [New Haven, 1936] 49–50, 126) and was followed in this by Friedrich (Phönitische Puntische Grammatik [Roma, 1951]) 82. The form could just as well be piel.

\textsuperscript{26} For adē šakēnu cf. von Soden, AHabl 14 and Wiseman, I. c. 81, 83 ad 1. 12.

\textsuperscript{27} The references for adē naṣāru can be found in von Soden and Wiseman as in n. 26.
G. ‘bd ‘dy wšt’ (II B 2) — this term was recently elucidated by Moran who compared ūbātu and ūbātu (especially ūbātu/ūbutta epēšu) as used in treaty contexts in a variety of Akkadian documents. For the present we note the use of Bib. Heb. ūbāh in the handiadyō šēlōmām wašēbālām (Deut. 23,7) which is the sure equivalent of ūbātu u šūmmā.

H. ‘bd mrm — this is found in [wbn t]‘bd mrm ‘ly (III, 22) “and if you will deal treacherously with me”. The phrase ‘bd mrm casts light on ʾsh mrmn in umin hitḥabberōt ʾelōw yāʾāše mirmāh “and with those with whom he is allied he shall deal treacherously” (Dan. 11,23).

I. ʾshd — the meaning of the root as “to send a gift, tribute” in Bib. Heb. is clear, especially in treaty contexts as can be seen in the occurrences in I Kings 15,19 where it is found in conjunction with bryl, and in II Kings 16,8, in conjunction with other treaty terminology. The same is true for two verbal occurrences — Ezek. 16,33 and Job 6,22. Unfortunately the context of Sef. III, 28: nuṣḥdn k̡m̡h mlk zv . . . “and they (the Kings of Arpad) will send gifts to any King who . . .” is not clear, but it may be ventured that the reference is either to the kings of Arpad breaking treaty obligations to Kings of KTK by sending “gifts” to other kings or — and this is less satisfactory — to the duty of the vassal to send gifts to his sovereign at various occasions.

J. ryb (III, 17) — the term is too well known from its widespread use in Bib. Heb. to require comment beyond noting that it has its only cognate in Syriac.

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49 Assuming for umin hitḥabberōt an Aramaic original: uman ‘etḥabberā.

50 Ahaz called himself in appealing to Tiglath-pileser for help in the previous verse ‘abdekah ubinākah, both terms familiar from treaty contexts. Cf. the remark of O. Eissfeldt quoted in PRU IV, 48, n. 2.

51 In Ezek. 16, 26,28 Judah is allegorically accused of seeking unnecessary alliances with Egypt and Assyria.

52 Cf. Brockelmann, Lexicon Syriacum (Halle, 1928) 717 s. v. rāb.
III. Poetic and Literary Technique.

Of the various types of poetic techniques used in the Inscription the following examples may be noted:

A. The use of a grouped idiom:
1) bn l’m r bnsk
2) lmsl by b2
3) hns ysq ’l bbsk

B. The use of tristich parallelism:

C. Complimentary parallelism with the key words of the phrase then broken up:

Note that the verbs hpk and sgm of the first line are taken up separately in the following lines. The use of hpk and sgm for radical change is also found in Bib. Heb.

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32 This is naturally a form of complementary parallelism, but we have chosen this awkward heading for lack of a better term.
33 For rkh as “to have power over” outside Aramaic, cf. Phoenician rkh n’mt (Karatepe III, 6).
34 We have restored this line on the basis of Joh. 8,11. The appropriateness of *hm in the Sefer inscription was noted by Couvreur in Revue Biblique 66 (1959) 588. Jew. Aram. *ahwana is not cognate to *ahm. Cf. Löw, Flora die Juden s. v.
35 The word lb’ here means simply “good” and does not refer in itself to the treaty as Moran believes (see above n. 28). Changing “good” to “bad” or vice versa, is a common enough expression in Bib. Heb. e.g. Gen. 44,4; 50,20, etc.
D. Repetition of a set phrase for emphasis:

1) \( w\ddot{s}h^4 \) [\( m\dot{h}yn\)nq\( n\)m\( s\ddot{h} \)] \( w\ddot{h}yn\)nq \( t\)ym \( w'\)l \( y\ddot{s}b^4 \)
\( w\ddot{s}h^4 \) s\( s\ddot{h} \) y\( h\)yn\( q\)n \( t\) \( w'\)l \( y\ddot{s}[b^4 \)
\( w\ddot{s}h^4 \) s\( w\ddot{h}r \) y\( h\)yn\( q\)n \( g\ddot{l} \) \( w'\)l \( y\ddot{s}b^4 \)
\( w\ddot{s}h^4 \) s\( n \) y\( h\)yn\( q\)n \( m\ddot{r}w[l\) \( l \) \( y\ddot{s}b^4 \)
\( w\ddot{s}h^4 \) b\( k\ddot{h}r \) y\( h\)k\( n \) \( b\ddot{s}t \) l\( h\)m \( w'\)l \( y\ddot{h}rqn \) (1 A 21–24)

"And seven wet-nurses... [ ]^{37} and will suckle a lad and he will not be sated
And seven mares will suckle a foal and he will not be sated
And seven cows will suckle a calf and he will not be sated
And seven ewes\(^{38}\) will suckle a lamb and he will not be sated
And seven ... will go ....... and will not ........... ."^{39}

We note here the set phrase "seven X will suckle Y and he will not be sated". The first line is somewhat longer than the

\(^{37}\) I can make no sense of the verb \( m\ddot{s}h \) in this context nor propose a reconstruction. Those proffered (e.g. \( ym\ddot{s}h n \) \( s\ddot{h}yrn \) "will anoint their breasts") are meaningless in context.

\(^{38}\) It is not out of place to reiterate here the view that Early Aramaic \( \ddot{s}h \), which is cognate with Ugaritic \( \ddot{l}t \) and Aram. \( \ddot{l}t \) (Elephantine, Mandale), is to be kept separate from Heb. \( \ddot{s}h \), which is cognate with Ugaritic and Phoenician \( s \), Arab. \( \ddot{s}h \), and in all likelihood Akk. \( s\ddot{a}l\)\( u \). In PRU II 153 both \( s \) and \( l\ddot{t} \) occur in the same text. Cf. M. Held’s succinct remarks in JAOS 79, 1959, 174–75; B. Levine’s treatment and classification of various Ugaritic domestic animals in JCS 17, 1963, 105–11; and my remarks in Orientalia N. S. 29, 1960, 90–100. The concurrence of \( \ddot{s}h \) and \( m\ddot{r} \) naturally reminds one of Ugaritic \( k\ddot{b} l\ddot{t} \) \( l\ddot{m}\ddot{r} \) (UM 49 II 28–29). M. Dahood (CBQ 22, 1960, 73–75) has suggested that \( s\ddot{a}w \) of Is. 5.18 is to be vocalized \( \ddot{s}\ddot{d}\ddot{a} \) and translated "ewe". He has also noted a possible Hebrew occurrence of \( \ddot{m}\ddot{m}\ddot{r} \ddot{t} \) in Hosea 13,2 reading \( \ddot{m}\ddot{m}\ddot{r} \ddot{t} \) \( m\ddot{b}h \) into the MT's consonantal \( m\ddot{n}\ddot{y}n \) \( z\ddot{h}y\ddot{n} \) (Biblica 44, 1963, 296). In the new JPS translation of the Torah \( \ddot{l}m\ddot{m}\ddot{r} \ddot{s}\ddot{h}\ddot{f} \) (Gen. 49,21) is plausibly translated "lovely fawns".

\(^{39}\) I have not found a satisfactory explication of this line. [After this paper was written, E. Y. Kutscher suggested "And may his seven daughters (\( b\ddot{h}t \) ) go out in search of bread and not arouse passion." I now find that D. Hillers (cf. note 6 above, pp. 71–74) has reached a similar translation: "And may his seven daughters go looking for food but not seduce (anyone).""] A fine parallel from the Annals of Assurbanipal to the whole passage was pointed out by A. L. Oppen-
others, while the last line, although it diverges from the standard pattern, remains part of the unit by use of the number seven and the negative wʾl plus verb with the same morphemic pattern.

2) Another example is

\[ \text{wšb} \quad \text{šnn} \quad \text{yʾklt} \quad \text{ʾrbh} \]
\[ \text{wšb} \quad \text{šnn} \quad \text{lʾkl} \quad \text{lwʾh} \]
\[ \text{wšb} \quad [\text{šnn} \quad \text{ys}]q \quad \text{twy} \quad \text{ʾl} \quad \text{ʾpy} \quad \text{ʾrqh} \quad (\text{I A 27–28}) \]

"And for seven years the locust will consume
And for seven years the worm will consume
And for seven years TWY will cover the ground".\(^{40}\)

As in the previous example the last line both continues the pattern of the unit and diverges from it.

From Ugaritic literature we can quote a few stanzas in which repetition of a set phrase for emphasis is used. For example in UM 51 VI 47–54 there are four line pairs:

\[ \text{špq} \cdot \text{ilm} \cdot \text{krm} \cdot \text{yn}[n] \]
\[ \text{špq} \cdot \text{ilht} \cdot \text{ḥprt} \cdot \text{yn} \]
\[ \text{špq} \cdot \text{ilm} \cdot \text{alpm} \cdot \text{yn} \]
\[ \text{špq} \cdot \text{ilht} \cdot \text{arḥl} \cdot \text{yn} \]
\[ \text{špq} \cdot \text{ilm} \cdot \text{kḥlt} \cdot \text{yn} \]

\(^{40}\) In place of ysq one may also restore ypq. I do not know the meaning of TWY since "desolation" suggested by some is not in line with the parallels that can be quoted from Akkadian sources. An alternate approach to this line, if admittedly not entirely defendable from the syntactic point of view, would be to assume that TWY is a scribal error for thuy (cf. II A 6) and to further assume that [\ldots]t hides a noun of the fem. gender.
The basic element is $spq$ as the first word, $yn$ as the fourth; $ilm$ and $ilht$ alternate from line to line as the second word, while as the third word a new noun alternately masculine or feminine is introduced.

Another example from Ugarit may be cited from UM 49 V1 16–22.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{yl'n} & \cdot \text{kmmrm ml} & \cdot \text{'z} & \cdot \text{b'lj} & \cdot \text{'z} \\
\text{ynghn} & \cdot \text{kmmml ml} & \cdot \text{'z} & \cdot \text{b'l} & \cdot \text{'z} \\
\text{ynljn} & \cdot \text{kblum ml} & \cdot \text{'z} & \cdot \text{b'l} & \cdot \text{'z} \\
\text{ynsbhn} & \cdot \text{klsmm ml} & \cdot \text{ql} & \cdot \text{b'l} & \cdot \text{ql}^{12}
\end{align*}
\]

The structure of the unit, in line with the above remarks is clear. We may note that here too, as in the two examples from the Sefire inscription, the last line diverges from the formula. Most of the stanzas that Dr. S. E. Loewenstamm has analyzed in his study of the use of the "seven-day theme" in Ugaritic poetry also fit into the pattern discussed here.\(^{43}\)

I cannot quote an exact parallel from Biblical literature but it seems to me that the present text of Isa. 2,7–8:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{watimmâle'} & \cdot \text{'arşô kesep wəzâḥâb} \\
\text{watimmâle'} & \cdot \text{'arşô sîsîm} \\
\text{watimmâle'} & \cdot \text{'arşô 'êtilîm}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{wə'ên qeşeh ləṣrîtîw} \\
\text{wə'ên qeşeh lomerkôbîtîw} \\
\text{ləma'asî yādîw yîṣṭahîwū} \\
\text{lə'âser 'âsî wěslətîw}
\end{align*}
\]

must be considered a fragment from a longer, more detailed poem, which had among its poetic features the repetition of set phrases and morphemic patterns. Also, the repetitive elements such as hâbû YHWH and qôl YHWH of Ps. 20 — long since re-

\(^{41}\) We follow Gaster, Gordon and Driver in completing each line with $yn$. For translation cf. Ginsberg, ANET 134. If a different word, let us say $lr$ or $sk$ is to fill every other line then we would have two alternating patterns.

\(^{12}\) For translation cf. Ginsberg, ANET 141. Another example of the repetition of a set formula may be found in UM 62, 18–29.

cognized as Canaanite in ultimate origin — fit well into the above scheme.

E. Literary cliches shared with other West Semitic literature:

1) the number seven as the standard 'round number' (cf. D 1 above);
2) seven years as a period of dire events (cf. D 2 above);
3) the concurrence of 'rbh and twl'h cf. Deut. 28. 38, 39;
4) the use of yrq and ḫsr as signs of fertility in I A 28–29 and cf. Isa. 15,6 and elsewhere.⁴⁴
5) The remarkable parallel between w'l ylšm' ql knr b'rpd (I A 29) and Ez. 26,13; whšbty hmwn šgryk wqwl kmwyk l' yšm' 'wd.

There are still other literary elements which we have ignored in this paper. We have also not noted those elements which align this inscription with the Akkadian nárā tradition, or those elements which can be paralleled only by Akkadian material or shared by both the Akkadian and West Semitic traditions.

The question may now be raised — what information can be drawn from this inscription concerning the otherwise unknown Aramaic literary tradition of this early period — first that literary Aramaic was highly idiomatic in expression and preferred an idiomatic expression to a colorless phrase even in a legal document; second, that some of the literary techniques known from West Semitic literature (such as the Ugaritic texts and the OT) were regularly used in Aramaic; third, that it is likely that Aramaic inherited and used the literary cliches of earlier periods.

A study of the Zakir inscription which we have made will strengthen the above conclusions.⁴⁵

Appendix A.

After the above was completed I received H. Donner—W. Röllig Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften, Band 11, Kommentar (Wiesbaden, 1964). In most details their treatment of Sefire is

⁴⁴ Cf. Isa. 37,27, and for the curses quoted in B and D above cf. Hab. 3,17.
based on Dupont-Sommer and Fitzmyer but they have also made use of later discussions. We shall note here only their comments which impinge on our discussion above. We follow the order of the inscription rather than that of our treatment.

1) Sef. I A 7: D-R have noted (‘vielleicht’) the reading šnvw ‘dy’ ’ln but have not recognized its idiomatic nature (see above II E).

2) Sef. II B 7: D-R have also gathered together various ẖb-roots and have duly noted Akkadian ḫabāšu but by translating it in a general way as “zerkleinen” they have lost the precision which was gained in note 12 to I D 2.


Appendix B.

A recently published Ugaritic text (Rs 22.225) contains another example of the repetition of fixed phrases. The text was first published by Ch. Virolleaud and then studied by M. C. Astour. The text reads — in our division of the stiches — as follows:

1. (1) ‘nt ḫkt wšmrı’ (2) ṭp aḥḥ
2. wn’m aḥḥ (3) kṣmṣm
3. tspı šıḥı’ (4) ḥbl ẖrb
4. tṣ’l ḫnh (5) ḥbl ks
5. tpnn ‘n (6) ṭby ‘n bṭl
6. tpnn (7) ‘n mḥr ‘n pḥr (8) ‘n ḫr
7. ‘n ḫr (9) ṭḥr ḫb
8. ‘n pḥr (10) ṭḥr ḫb
9. ‘n mḥr (11) ṭḥr ḫb
10. ‘n ṭḥı’ (12) ṭḥy ḫb
11. ‘n ṭḥı’ (13) ṭḥı’ ḫb

[about two and a half lines missing]

Translation:

Anat went and . . . . . . . the beauty of her brother and the loveliness of her brother for it was very fair; she consumes his 'remains' without a sword, she drinks his blood without a cup; she turns looking at bly, looking at bll, she turns looking at mhr, looking at the assembly, looking at the "gate"; having looked at the "gate" she turned from the "gate", having looked at the assembly, she turned from the assembly, having looked at the mhr she turned from the mhr, having looked at the bly she turned from the bly, having looked at the bll [she turned] from the bll.

We have left mhr, bly and bll untranslated even though there is a degree of plausibility to Astour's "marché", "biens" and "richesse".  

2 For the present šuw is best left untranslated; Astour has translated tp as "tambourin", following Virolleaud's suggestion. In CRAIBL 1962 [1963] 94 n. 2 Virolleaud supported this translation with a reference to the unpublished RŚ 24.257. We will gladly admit our error upon publication and study of RŚ 24.257. For the present we derive tp from yph (Heb. ypḥ) with a t preformative similar to tsm(<yzm) in Keret 146, 292, 293.

3 As S. E. Loewenstein has noted in IEJ 13, 1963, 131, n. 7, it is quite plausible "to explain the verbal forms tsp and bll as 3 pl. masc. instead of sing. fem. and to render 'they had eaten and drunk', viz. some unspecified person had done so. Apparently, Anat finds her brother killed by Mot and wanders about in search of the murderer in order to avenge Baal". Even if one insists on tsp and bll being taken as 3 sing. fem. forms, there remains the strong possibility that the suffix -h refers to Anat’s own flesh and blood which she bit at in rage and fury over Baal’s death.

4 The "gate" as Astour has noted is the place of popular assembly and judgement. One may compare it to the Babylonian bābātu (cf. Bab. Jew. doyγ/math debāḥā), while the pḥr --- terrestrial and celestial --- was a seat of higher authority similar to the Babylonian puhrū.

5 The only other occurrence of mhr in Ugaritic known to me is PRU II no. 22 (p. 43) l. 8 w. κ λ. mhhr(?) which itself calls for explanation. Astour’s remark that ‘la racine mhr est courante en sémitique pour “vendre” et l’acadien mahārū signifie précisément “marché”, is not precise. It is mhr rather than mhr that can mean "to sell" in Hebrew and Ugaritic (if the mkrm of the lists are "merchants") while mahārū is "to come / be before, be opposite to, to receive". It is, as far as I can

2 Acta Orientalia, XXIX.
The repeated formula "n X IX ını was for the Ugaritic listener a cue that was intended to emphasize the seriousness of Anat’s actions.

ascertain, only in some dialects of Akkadian that maḫaru can mean “to buy”, but this occurs with kaspuki “silver”, i.e., “to receive money for” and then elliptically as “to buy”; so too maḫir “bought”. maḫaru is best defined with Ungnad (Glossar zu NRVU 80) as “Empfang”, then “Erwerb, Kauf”, and then “Kaufpreis” (Delitzsch HWB 404). Heb. mēḥir “exchange, price” fits well with this semantic group. From neo-Assyrian usage we also know a bāb maḫirī which is not a “porte de marché” but the gate where the price is announced and then a “market-place”. This might cast some light on the concurrence of bîr and mēḥr in our text. At best mēḥr might be “goods received” i.e. “possessions‘ and would be the same as Akk. makkaru and namkururu “possessions‘ (<mabaru “to acquire” cf. Syr. and Manu. mekar “to acquire a wife, be spouse” and note Heb. qnkh “(to buy” and Aram. qny “(to possess”). Astour has astutely compared bīy and bîr with bāšā and bašlítu of Idrimi (B. 73–74, 79): namkuršunu bāššūnu baššušunu. It would seem appropriate then to compare mēḥr with namkururu, and the three terms taken together would be a standard phrase. Since bāšā and bašlítu are from bǎšā “to be” (so rightly von Soden in AHOB, s. v.), we must assume either the existence of an otherwise unrecorded root bīy in Ugaritic or that the nouns bīy and bîr are loanwords from Akkadian.