STUDIES IN WEST SEMITIC INSCRIPTIONS, I

STYLISTIC ASPECTS OF THE SEFIRE TREATY INSCRIPTIONS*

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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 unsatisfactory[3] but those who wrote on the inscriptions soon after — Cantineau, Friedrich and Lands-

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[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sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la region de Mossoul*, Paris 1907, 156–58; and the still important, if outdated on many points, study of Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris III*, 1–11.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, *ANET*² 501–02.

[2] A. Dupont-Sommer, "Une inscription araméenne inédite de Sfiré", *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth*, XIII, 1956, pp. 23–41 [= Stele III]; *Les Inscriptions Araméennes de Sfiré* (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.

[3] S. Ronzevalle, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* XV, 1930–31, 237–60.

berger, Epstein, Driver and primarily Bauer advanced our understanding of the inscription.[4] 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.[5]

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.[6] 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.[7] The following aspects of style: idiomatic usage, specific terminology and poetic technique will be dealt with.

I. *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:[8]

[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.

	Aramaic	*Hebrew*
1.	*hwh l'ḥrn*	*hyh l'ḥr*
	III, 24	Deut. 24, 2
2.	*yšb ltḥth*	*yšb tḥtyw*
	III, 7	Exod. 16,29
3.	*nqm dm mn yd*	*nqm dm mn yd*
	III, 11	II Kings 9,7
4.	*nś' 'l śptyn*	*nś' 'l śptym*
	III, 14–15	Ps. 16,4
5.	*hskr byd*	*hsgr byd*
	III, 2	I Sam. 23,11
6.	*slq 'l lbb*	*'lh 'l lb*
	III, 14	Jer. 3,16
7.	*'bd mh ṭb b'yny*	*'śh 'l 'śr ṭwb b'yny*
	III, 3	II Sam. 19,38
		'śh kṭwb b'yny
		Est. 3,11
		'śh hṭwb b'yny
		II Kings 10,5
8.	*pqḥ 'yny'*	*pqḥ 'ynym*
	I A 13	II Kings 6,20
9.	*hšb šybt*	*hšb šbwt/šbyt*
	III, 24	Jer. 33,7
10.	*šlḥ yd b*	*šlḥ yd b*
	I B 25	Exod. 22,7–10
11.	*šlḥ ml'k*	*šlḥ ml'k*
	III, 8	I Kings 20,2

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) *pqḥw 'ynykm lḥzyh* (I A 13) "open your eyes too see" — the Hebrew *pqḥ 'ynym* is also followed by *r'h* e. g. *pqḥ 'ynyk*

wr'h "open your eyes and see" – (II Kings 19,16; cf. II Kings 6,20).

2) *hskr thskrm bydy mh ṭb b'yny 'bd lhm* (III, 3) "hand them over to me, I shall do with them as I please" is matched by: *w'th hnnw bydyk kṭwb wkyšr b'ynyk l'šwt lnw 'šh* "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 *šlw 'l 'šrkm* "stay quietly at your place" while in III, 7 the same is expressed as *šbw lṭḥṭkm* "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 *bhywt yrwšlym ywšbt wšlwh*, "While Jerusalem was dwelling safely and securely." There is no need to translate *ywšbt* 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 *hšb šybt*. The Hebrew equivalent *šwb/hšb šbwt* (*šbyt*) has engendered much discussion leading to articles and monographs. But from its usage in Sef. III, 24–25: *wk't hšbw 'lhn šybt by[t'by] . . . wšbt tl'ym*, etc., "and now the gods have restored my 'father's house' . . . and TL'YM has returned . . . .", it is clear that *hšb šybt* meant originally "restitution" or "restoration" — of territory, health (Job), or a people's position. In Biblical Hebrew the idiom underwent theological interpretation as *hšb šbyt/šbwt* "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-ṭōb wĕha-yašar* is a hendiadys.

[9a] Alongside of *yšb* (/*šlw*) "to dwell tranquilly" Hebrew also knew *šwb* with this meaning cf. *wĕšabtī* in Ps. 23,6 and *mešūbāh* /*šalwāh* in Prov. 1,32 cf. Kimḥi, *Shorashim* 372 s. v. *šwb* and most recently M. Dahood, *Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Philology* (Rome 1963) 6. Dr. Henoch Yalon has treated this use of *šwb* in detail in a Jerusalem lecture (Sept. 1963).

[10] Cf. for literature W. H. Halladay, *The Root ŠUBH in the Old Testament* (Leiden, 1958) pp. 108–115, and N. H. Tur-Sinai in the Ben-Yehuda *Thesaurus* vol. 14, p. 6828 s. v. *šĕbūt*.

2) The second example is *nś' 'l śptyn* "to mention" (III, 14–15). This casts light on the unique biblical reference *wbl 'ś' 't šmwtm 'l śpty* "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 commentaries have noted, simply to speaking of foreign gods. But there is still another contact with Biblical Hebrew usage, for *'lh 'l lb* is accompanied by *'mr* "to say" in Jer. 3,16; by *zkr* (in the *nifal*) "to be mentioned" in Is. 65,17; and by *ṣwh* (in the *piel*) "to command" in Jer. 7,31; 19,5; 32,35. In Sefire III 14–15 *slq 'l lbb'* and *nś' 'l śptyn* 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: *'t t'th wtqm dmy mn yd śn'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 bḥrb* "smite it with a sword" (III, 12–13).[11] We must compare *nkh tkwh bḥrb* to the Hebrew *hakkeh lĕpī ḥereb* 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: *wĕ'el Nōb 'īr ha-kōhănīm hikkāh lĕpī ḥereb me'īš wĕ'ad 'iššāh me'ōlel wĕ'ad yōneq wĕšōr waḥămōr wāśeh lĕpī ḥereb* (I Sam. 22,19).

2) The idiom *'bd 'šm* which occurs in *wlḥbztm wl'bdt 'šmhm* "and to smite and eradicate them"[12] (II B 7) is similarly clarified

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

[12] As to *ḥbz*: Dupont-Sommer has gathered together various roots beginning with *ḥb* and has pointed to Arabic حَبَزَ "to knead" as "exactement identique à notre חבז" (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 *ḥbz* is to the compared primarily with Mishnaic Heb. *ḥbs* "to crush (the skull, etc.)" (Jastrow 420) and Akkadian *ḫabāšu* "to smash (with a mace); chop into pieces" (*CAD* "H", 9). The interchange of Aramaic *z* and Heb. *s*, Akkadian *š* (= PS *ś*?) is not a hindrance. There is no need to compare *ḥbz* with Heb. *ḥpz* and Arab. حَفَزَ (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 šm* found in the *piel* (Deut. 12,3) and *hifil* (Deut. 7,24).

3) In III, 17–18 we read *whn yrb bry zy yšb 'l krs'y*[13] *ḥd 'ḥwh 'w y'brnh ltšlḥ 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 *šlḥ* with *lšn* is elucidated by Ps. 50, 19–20.

pīkā šālaḥtā berā'āh
ūlšōnkā taṣmīd mirmāh
tešeb bĕ'āḥīkā tĕdabber
bĕben 'immĕka titten dopi.

In this verse *šlḥ* 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 *šlḥ* is used. We may also note *šlḥ byn* in *umšalleaḥ mĕdānīm bēn 'aḥim* "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) *'št blbb* (II B 5) is not simply "to think" but it rather has the pejorative sense of plotting against. The Hebrew equivalent is *ḥšb blbb* as used in Zach. 7,10 and 8,17, while the Aramaic usage is preserved by the Targum to Is. 32,6: *wblbhwn mt'štyn 'wns* "and in their heart they plan iniquity", for the Masoretic Text's difficult *wĕlibbō yā'āśeh 'āwen.*[15] This pejorative sense is also evident in the use of *'št* in (Elephantine) Ahiqar 1.25.[16]

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[13] The inscription reads *khs'y* but this is surely an error.

[14] We have translated *y'brnh* as "will exile (or remove) him". F. Rosenthal (*BASOR* 158,30) has proposed "will hate him" on the basis of Arabic غَبَرَ and Heb. *'ebrāh*. However, if we compare the extant treaties, e. g. Esarhaddon Vassal Treaties ll. 336–52 which parallels the Sefire 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 *ya'āśeh* of Is. 32,6 and *'āšetū* of Jer. 5,28 elsewhere.

[16] *CAP* p. 212. In Dan. 6,4 *'āšit* means simply "planned" while in *CAP* 30,23 (p. 113) *'t'št* means "take thought, consider".

2) *w'l tpnw b'šrh* (III 7) has been translated by Dupont-Sommer, Fitzmyer and Vogt[17] as if *'šrh* meant "place". Rosenthal[18] saw that *b'šrh* is equal to later *btrh* (*b'trh*) and proposed that *w'l tpnw b'šrh* means "do not turn after him". He compared Heb. *pnh 'ḥry*. However an examination of BH *pnh 'ḥry* 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 *aṯr* can mean "toward[19] and that *pny btr* is used in the Targum for Heb. *pnh 'l* "to turn toward" in Lev. 19,4,[20] we can then combine Aramaic, Ugaritic and Hebrew usages and translate *w'l tpnw b'šrh* 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: *b'y r'šy lhmtty* (III 10–11), literally, "to seek my head to kill me". Aramaic is usually straightforward: *b'y lmqtl* "to seek to kill" while Heb. uses the idiomatic *bqš npš* in which *npš* means "life" or "person". The idiom *b'y r'š* is best paralleled from Ugarit PRU IV 126,1. : *ana muḫḫi Ammistamri maruṣ qaqqadišu ubta'i* "she sought only to harm Ammistamri", and from a fragmentary treaty from Kizzuwatna published recently by G. R. Meyer, which has a clause against supplying a refuge for someone who *ana qaqqad bēlišu ippalas* "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 purposively explicit *wyb'h r'šy lhmtty* "he seeks my head to kill me".

G. One idiom stands by itself in terms of its strangeness when translated into a European language — *nsk lḥm* in *wltsk lhm lḥm* (I B 38; III, 5, 7). Neither Heb. *nsk* "to pour out" nor Akkadian *nasāku* which has the added meaning "to throw" are of help

[17] Vogt has rendered Sefire III into Latin in *Biblica* 39, 1958, 269–74.
[18] *BASOR* 158,29.
[19] E. g. UM 49 II 6–9: *l...l...aṯr*.
[20] Cf. the Targums to Lev. 20,6; Deut. 31,20; Hos. 3,1.

here.[21] *wltsk lhm lḥm* if translated "do not pour out — or throw down food for them" is meaningless unless one notes that Heb. *yṣq* in II Kngs 4,40–41 and II Sam. 13,9 is used for serving a broth containing flour. *nsk lḥm* 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: *šqr l, šqr b, mll mln lḥyt, hskr, gzr ʿdy', śym ʿdy', nṣr ʿdy', ʿbd ʿdy' wṭbt', ʿbd mrmt, šḥd,* and *ryb*. It need not be emphasized that this list does not exhaust the full scope of this particular aspect.

A. The expressions *šqr l* and *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 *šqr b* and *šqr l* is true both for our inscription and for Biblical usage: 1) *šqr b* is used in relation to the pact, covenant or treaty, e. g. *šqrt bʿdy'* (III, 7) — cf. *wĕlō' šiqqarnu bibrīteka* (Ps. 44,18). As Moran has noted, we must now interpret Ps. 89,34 b: *wĕlō' 'ăšaqqer be'ĕmūnātī* as "I shall not betray my pact (with him)".[22] In this verse *'ĕmūnāh* = *'ămānāh* (cf. *krt 'ămānāh* in Neh. 10,1); 2) *šqr l* is used in relation to the parties involved in the pact. In this inscription it can be the gods: *šqrtm lkl 'lhy ʿdy' zy bspr' znh* (III, 4); or the sovereign: [*whn yš*]*qr lbr g'yh* (II, A, 3) — cf. *'im tišqor līulnīnī ulnekdī* (Gen. 21,22).

B. *mll mln lḥyt* — literally "to speak bad words", actually "to stir up strife". From the linguistic side it is apparent that this phrase is based on Hittite *idaluš memiyaš* "bad words" — a term found frequently in the Hittite treaties and Instructions with the same force.[23] In Akkadian the usual term is *awāte la damqāte*

[21] Against Rosenthal *BASOR* 158,29, n. 3. To my knowledge *nasāku* is not used for serving food.

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

[23] Cf. E. von Schuler, *Hethitische Dienstanweisungen* (Graz, 1957 [*AfO* Beiheft 10]), p. 14, no. 24, ll. 45–52; J. Friedrich, *Staatsverträge*, passim.

(*abulu la dēqtu*) "not good words".[23a] In the light of *mll mln lḥyl* we must understand *ʿăšer dibber ṭōb ʿal 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. *hasgēr* 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.[24] Bib. Heb. knows one instance of *skr* (*wĕ-sikkartī ʾet miṣrayim bĕyad ʾădōnīm qāšeh* Isa. 19,4) but this is possibly an Aramaism. Phoenician also has *sgr* in this meaning.[25]

D. *gzr ʿdy* (I A 7) — cf. Bib. Heb. *krt bryt* passim), *krt ʾmnh* (Neh. 10,1). The verb *gzr* of this idiom is preserved as *gzr qym* which is found as a possible Targumic equivalent of *krt bryt*. In the Peshitta this idiomatic use is lost and has been replaced by *ʾaqīm qəyāma* or *aqīm dəyatiqa*.

E. *śym ʿdy* — in I A 7 we read, differing from the reading of Dupont-Sommer (accepted by Fitzmyer and others), *śmw ʿdy ʾln*. This idiom is the equivalent of Akkadian *adē šakānu* and Heb. *śym ʿdwt*.[26] An interesting example is *ʿēdūt biyhōsep śāmō* "He (God) made a covenant (or pact) with Joseph (= Israel)" (Ps. 81,6).

F. *nṣr ʿdy* (I B 7–8) — this term for "keep a pact, covenant", is the equivalent of Akk. *adē naṣāru* and Heb. *nṣr ʿdwt* as in Ps. 25,10 and Ps. 119,2.[27]

[23a] Cf. Wiseman, *Esarhaddon Vassal Treaties* (*Iraq* XX 1958) 11. 73–74; 108–109, etc.

[24] There is no need to take *yskr* of III 3 as a *pael* or *afel* of *skr*. In my opinion this is simply a scribal error.

[25] It is worth noting that *skr* (*hafel* or later *afel*) is not known elsewhere in Aramaic unless Epstein is correct in associating Mandaic *skr* with it (*Ar. Or.* 18, 1950, 168). The Biblical examples of *hasger/sigger* "to hand over" are translated by *məsar* in the Targums and *ʾašlem* in the Peshitta. Phoenician *sgr* occurs twice in the form *ysgrnm* in the Eshmunʿazar inscription (*CIS* I, 3, ll. 9.21). Harris considered the form to be *yifʿil* (*A Grammar of the Phoenician Language* [New Haven, 1936] 49–50, 126) and was followed in this by Friedrich (*Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik* [Roma, 1951]) 82. The form could just as well be *piel*.

[26] For *adē šakānu* cf. von Soden, *AHwb* 14 and Wiseman, l. c. 81, 83 ad l. 12.

[27] The references for *adē naṣāru* can be found in von Soden and Wiseman as in n. 26.

G. *'bd 'dy' wṭbt'* (II B 2) — this term was recently elucidated by Moran who compared *ṭābtu* and *ṭābūtu* (especially *ṭābūta/ṭābutta epēšu*) as used in treaty contexts in a variety of Akkadian documents.[28] For the present we note the use of Bib. Heb. *ṭobāh* in the handiadys *šəlōmām wəṭōbātām* (Deut. 23,7) which is the sure equivalent of *ṭābtu u sulummû*.

H. *'bd mrmt* — this is found in [*whn t*]*'bd mrmt 'ly* (III, 22) "and if you will deal treacherously with me". The phrase *'bd mrmt* casts light on *'šh mrmh* in *umin hitḫabbərūt 'ēlāw ya'ăśeh mirmāh* "and with those with whom he is allied he shall deal treacherously" (Dan. 11,23).[28a]

I. *šḥd* — 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 *bryt*, and in II Kings 16,8, in conjunction with other treaty terminology.[29] The same is true for two verbal occurrences — Ezek. 16,33 and Job 6,22.[30] Unfortunately the context of Sef. III, 28: *wyšḥdn klmh mlk zy* . . . "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.[31]

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[28] W. L. Moran, "A Note on the Treaty Terminology of the Sefire Stelas" in *JNES* 22, 1963, 173–76. I do not, however, believe that *ṭbt'* in IC 19–20 means "treaty". For my discussion of this passage see below.

[28a] Assuming for *umin hitḫabberūt* an Aramaic original: *uman 'eltḫabberū*.

[29] Ahaz called himself in appealing to Tiglathpileser for help in the previous verse *'abdekā ubinkā*, both terms familiar from treaty contexts. Cf. the remark of O. Eissfeldt quoted in PRU IV, 48, n. 2.

[30] In Ezek. 16, 26.28 Judah is allegorically accused of seeking unnecessary alliances with Egypt and Assyria.

[31] 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:[32]

1) *hn t'mr bnbšk* *wt'šl blbb[k]* (II B 5)
2) *ltmšl by bz'* *wltršh ly 'ly[h]* (III, 9)[33]
3) *hn ysq 'l lbbk* *wtš' 'l šptyk* (III 14–15)

B. The use of tristich parallelism:

w'l ypq hṣr
wlytḥzh yrq
wly[šgh] 'ḥwh (I A 28–29).[34]
With which may be compared:
ki yābeš ḥāsīr
kālā deše'
yereq lō' hāyāh (Is. 15,6).

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

'hpk ṭbt' w'śm [t]lḥyt[35]
bywm zy y'bd kn
yhpkw 'lhn 'š' h' wbyth wkl zy bh
wyśmw tḥtyth t'lyth (I C 19–24).

Note that the verbs *hpk* and *śym* of the first line are taken up separately in the following lines. The use of *hpk* and *śym* for radical change is also found in Bib. Heb.[36]

[32] This is naturally a form of complementary parallelism, but we have chosen this awkward heading for lack of a better term.

[33] For *rśh* as "to have power over" outside Aramaic, cf. Phoenician *rš'l n'ml* (Karatepe III, 6).

[34] We have restored this line on the basis of Job. 8,11. The appropriateness of *'ḥw* in the Sefire inscription was noted by Couroyer in *Revue Biblique* 66 (1959) 588. Jew. Aram. *'aḥwana* is not cognate to *'aḥā*. Cf. Löw, *Flora die Juden* s. v.

[35] The word *ṭbt'* 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.

[36] Note the interchangeable use of *śym* and *hpk* in Isa. 41,18 and Ps. 114,8. For the breakup of stereotype phrases in Hebrew poetry Cf. E. Z. Melamed in *Studies in the Bible* (*Scripta Hierosolymitana* 8, 1961) ed. C. Rabin, 115–53.

D. Repetition of a set phrase for emphasis:

1) *wšbʿ [mhy]nqn ymšh[ ] wyhynqn ʿlym wʾl yšbʿ*
wšbʿ ssyh yhynqn ʿl wʾl yš[bʿ
wšbʿ] šwrh yhynqn ʿgl wʾl yšbʿ
wšbʿ šʾn yhynqn ʾmrw[ʾl yš]bʿ
wšbʿ bkth yhkn bšṯ lḥm wʾl yhrgn (I 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 *mšḥ* in this context nor propose a reconstruction. Those proffered (e. g. *ymšḥn šdyhn* "will anoint their breasts") are meaningless in context.

[38] It is not out of place to reiterate here the view that Early Aramaic *šʾh*, which is cognate with Ugaritic *ṯʾt* and Aram. *tʾt* (Elephantine; Mandaic), is to be kept separate from Heb. *śeh*, which is cognate with Ugaritic and Phoenician *š*, Arab. *šāt*, and in all likelihood Akk. *šuʾu*. In *PRU* II # 153 both *š* and *ṯʾt* 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, 99–100. The concurrence of *šʾh* and *ʾmr* naturally reminds one of Ugaritic *klb ṯʾt limrh* (UM 49 II 28–29). M. Dahood (*CBQ* 22, 1960, 73–75) has suggested that *šāwʾ* of Isa. 5,18 is to be vocalized *šāʾā* and translated "ewe". He has also noted a possible Hebrew occurrence of *ʾimmār* in Hosea 13,2 reading *ʾimmārē-m zabḥi* into the MT's consonantal *ʾmrym zbḥy* (*Biblica* 44, 1963, 296). In the new JPS translation of the Torah *ʾimrē šāfer* (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 (*bnth*) 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 *w'l* plus verb with the same morphemic pattern.

2) Another example is
wšbʿ šnn y'kl 'rbh
wšbʿ šnn t'kl twlʿh
wšbʿ [šnn ys]q twy ʿl 'py 'rqh (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:

špq · ilm · krm · y[n]
špq · ilht · ḫprt · [yn]
špq · ilm · alpm · y[n]
špq · ilht · arḫt · [yn]
špq · ilm · kḥṯm · yn

heim in *ANET* 300, n. 16a. It should be noted that the Assurbanipal text refers also to treaty breaking.

This curse is repeated at the beginning of the badly damaged Sef. II A. All that can be surely restored is the penultimate line of this unit: [*wšbʿ 'zn yhy*]*nqn gdh w'l yś*[*bʿ*] "and seven nanny-goats will suckle a kid and he will not be sated" (II A 2–3). I think that Dupont-Summer, Fitzmyer and the others who have dealt with these lines have assumed too much when they restore in the previous lines—of which only *w'l yśbʿ wšbʿ* remain—and the last line of the unit—of which not a letter remains—the wording of the parallel curse unit in I A 21–24. The following *šbʿ šnn* unit (II A 5–7) is patently different from the *šbʿ šnn* unit (I A 27–28) that is to be discussed next.

[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 *thwy* (cf. II A 6) and to further assume that [..]q hides a noun of the fem. gender.

špq · ilht · ksat · [yn]
špq · ilm · rḥbt · yn
špq · ilht · dkrt · [yn][41]

The basic element is *špq* 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 VI 16–22.

yt'n · kgmrm mt · 'z · b'l · 'z
yngḥn · krumm mt · 'z · b'l · 'z
ynṯkn · kbṯnm mt · 'z · b'l · 'z
ymṣḫn · klsmm mt · ql · b'l · ql[42]

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:

watimmāle' 'arṣō kesep wəzāhāb
watimmāle' 'arṣō sūsīm
watimmāle' 'arṣō 'ĕlīlīm

wə'ēn qeṣeh lə'ōṣrōtāw
wə'ēn qeṣeh ləmerkəbōtāw
ləma'aśe yādāw yištaḥăwu
la'ăšer 'āśū 'eṣbə'ōtāw

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 *hābū lYHWH* and *qōl 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 *trt* or *škr* is to fill every other line then we would have two alternating patterns.

[42] For translation cf. Ginsberg, *ANET* 141. Another example of the repetition of a set formula may be found in UM 62, 18–29.

[43] *Tarbiz* 31, 1962, 227–235.

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 *ḥṣr* as signs of fertility in I A 28–29 and cf. Isa. 15,6 and elsewhere.[44]
5) The remarkable parallel between *w'l ytšm' ql knr b'rpd* (I A 29) and Ez. 26,13: *whšbty hmwn šyryk wqwl knwryk 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 *narû* 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 II, 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.
[45] Cf. provisionally my remarks in *Lešonenu* 27/28, 1964, 311–312.

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 *šmw '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 *ḥb*-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.

3) Sef. III 3: D-R refer in passing to *sgr* in the *Genesis Apocryphon* 22.17 — this is surely a Hebraism. For other Hebraisms in the *Genesis Apocryphon* cf. Kutscher *Scripta Hierosolymitana IV* (1957) 15.

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) *ʿnt hlkt wšnwt* (2) *tp aḥh*
2. *wnʿm aḥh* (3) *kysmsm*
3. *tspi širh* (4) *lbl ḥrb*
4. *tšt dmh* (5) *lbl ks*
5. *tpnn ʿn* (6) *bṯy ʿn bṯt*
6. *tpnn* (7) *ʿn mḫr ʿn pḫr* (8) *ʿn ṯǵr*
7. *ʿn ṯǵr* (9) *ṯṯǵr ṯṯb*
8. *ʿn pḫr* (10) *tpḫr ṯṯtb*
9. *ʿn mḫr* (11) *tmḫr ṯṯb*
10. *ʿn bṯy* (12) *tbṯy ṯṯb*
11. *ʿn bṯt* (13) *tbṯt* [*ṯṯb*]

[about two and a half lines missing]

[1] C. Virolleaud, "Un nouvel épisode du mythe ugaritique de Baal" *CRAIBL* 1960 [1961] 180–86; M. C. Astour, "Un texte d'Ugarit récemment découvert et ses rapports avec l'origine des cultes bachiques grecs" *RHR* 164, 1963, 1–15. In a paper read at the XXVI International Orientalist Congress, New Delhi, January 1964, Prof. Marvin Pope also commented on this new text.

Translation:

Anat went and . . . . . the beauty of her brother[2]
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;[3]
she turns looking at *bṯy*, looking at *bṯt*,
she turns looking at *mḫr*, looking at the assembly, looking at the "gate";[4]
having looked at the "gate" she turned from the "gate",
having looked at the assembly, she turned from the assembly,
having looked at the *mḫr* she turned from the *mḫr*,
having looked at the *bṯy* she turned from the *bṯy*,
having looked at the *bṯt* [she turned] from the *bṯt*.

We have left *mḫr*, *bṯy* and *bṯt* untranslated even though there is a degree of plausibility to Astour's "marché", "biens" and "richesse".[5]

[2] For the present *šnwt* 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 RŠ 24.257. We will gladly admit our error upon publication and study of RŠ 24.257. For the present we derive *tp* from *ypy* (Heb. *yph*) with a *t* preformative similar to *tsm*(<*ysm*) in *Keret* 146, 292, 293.

[3] As S. E. Loewenstamm has noted in *IEJ* 13, 1963, 131, n. 7, it is quite plausible "to explain the verbal forms *tspi* and *tšt* 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 *tspi* and *tšt* 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 *bāblu* (cf. Bab. Jew. *dayyānē debābā*), while the *pḫr* – – terrestrial and celestial – – was a seat of higher authority similar to the Babylonian *puḫru*.

[5] The only other occurrence of *mḫr* in Ugaritic known to me is *PRU II* no. 22 (p. 43) l. 8 *w. kl. mḫrk*(?) which itself calls for explication. Astour's remark that 'la racine *mḫr* est courante en sémitique pour "vendre" et l'accadien *maḫiru* signifie précisement "marché"', is not precise. It is *mkr* rather than *mḫr* that can mean "to sell" in Hebrew and Ugaritic (if the *mkrm* of the lists are "merchants") while *maḫāru* is "to come / be before, be opposite to, to receive". It is, as far as I can

The repeated formula *ʿn X lX tṯb* was for the Ugaritic listener a cue that was intended to emphasize the seriousness of Anat's actions.

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ascertain, only in some dialects of Akkadian that *maḫāru* can mean "to buy", but this occurs with *kaspu* "silver", i. e., "to receive money for" and then elliptically as "to buy"; so too *maḫir* "bought". *maḫīru* is best defined with Ungnad (*Glossar zu NRVU* 86) as "Empfang", then "Erwerb, Kauf", and then "Kaufpreis" (Delitzsch *HWB* 404). Heb. *mĕḫīr* "exchange, price" fits well with this semantic group. From neo-Assyrian usage we also know a *bāb maḫīri* 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 *tġr* and *mḫr* in our text. At best *mḫr* might be "goods received" i. e. "possessions" and would be the same as Akk. *makkuru* and *namkuru* "possessions' (< **makāru* "to acquire" cf. Syr. and Mand. *mekar* "to acquire a wife, bespouse" and note Heb. *qnh* "to buy" and Aram. *qny* "to possess"). Astour has astutely compared *bṯy* and *bṯt* with *bāšû* and *bašîtu* of Idrimi (ll. 73–74, 79): *namkurīšunu bāšêšunu bašîtušunu*. It would seem appropriate then to compare *mḫr* with *namkuru*, and the three terms taken together would be a standard phrase. Since *bāšû* and *bašîtu* are from *bašû* "to be" (so rightly von Soden in *AHwb, s. v.*), we must assume either the existence of an otherwise unrecorded root *bṯy* in Ugaritic or that the nouns *bṯy* and *bṯt* are loanwords from Akkadian.