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A FEW REMARKS ON THE ARAMAIC TREATIES FROM SEFIRE

1. INTRODUCTION

Although these treaties have been the subject of many studies, a number of unsolved problems remains. In this study a few of these problems will receive attention by evaluating proposals and offering a few new solutions.

2. I SEFIRE A 12-14

Because of the damage to the text at the end of lines 12 and 13 and the beginning of lines 13 and 14, any interpretation of this passage depends on a reconstruction of the damaged parts. A fairly general reconstruction is as follows (cf. Fitzmyer 1967:14, Gibson 1975:28 and Donner & Röllig 1962-64.1:41):

12 ... שהדן כל אלהי כחך ואלהי אר
13 [פר] פקחו עיניכם לחזיה עדי ברנאיה [עם מחעאל מלך]
14 [ארפד]

A possible translation is: Witnesses are all the gods of KTK and all the gods of Arpad. Open your eyes to look at the treaty of Birgayah with Mati'el, the king of Arpad.

The main problem with this interpretation is the word לחזיה in line 13. It is usually explained as a Pa'el infinitive of חזה (cf. e.g. Fitzmyer 1967:40 and Gibson 1975:38). The Pa'el of this verb does not appear in other Old Aramaic texts. Gibson (1975:38 & 98) and Fitzmyer (1967:40) are of the opinion that it does occur in Nerab ii:5. The form מחזיה occurs there and is explained as a Pa'el participle. Donner & Röllig interpret it as a Pe'al participle with the interrogative particle *hm* prefixed (1962-64.2:276). Gibson (1975:98) does not accept this proposal, stating that the Pa'el results in a better syntactical construction (cf. also Brauner, 1974:186 & 187). It is, however, not convincing to use one problematic instance to explain another. Donner & Röllig (1962-64.2:246) take לחזיה as a Pe'al infinitive, with ending ה. In Biblical Aramaic the verb בנה has the form למבניה for the Pe'al infinitive in Esra 5:9.

Lipinski evades this problem with a different reconstruction and division of the words (1975:26-28):

12 ... שהדן כל אלהיא אלן כל אלה
13 [יא] פקחו עיניכם לחזי העדי ברניה [ישלם מחעאל מלך]
14 [ארפד]

In the damaged section at the end of line 12 this reconstruction has one letter less than the other one. In line 13 it has 38 letters, against the 36 of the other proposal. Leaving the shorter line 12 out of consideration, the other lines from 1-12 have 38, 39 or 40 letters per line. Lipinski takes לחזי as a Pe'al infinitive and the ה as an interrogative particle introducing an indirect question. His translation is as follows (1975:49):

Witnesses are all [these] g[ods]. [O all ye gods!] Open your eyes to see if [Mati'el, king of Arpad, does fulfil] the treaty of Bar-Ga'ya!

The first sentence then concludes the list of gods and the second serves as an introduction to the curses. The main problem with this proposal is the use of ה as an introduction to an indirect question. Lipinski's sole reference to the use of this particle in the Aramaic literature is to Genesis 4:18 in Targum Onqelos, depending on the Hebrew. In Biblical Aramaic ה is never used to introduce an indirect question. In the Aramaic inscriptions in KAI (=Donner & Röllig, 1962-64) ה occurs three times, in the Ashur ostrakon (KAI 233:12 (2x) & 19). In all three instances it is used for a direct question. Brockelmann (1961:529, 660) has no reference to the use of this particle in indirect questions in Aramaic. This makes Lipinski's proposal questionable. Biblical Aramaic has examples of the Pe'al infinitive of *verba tertiae* ה or ' without מ as prefix after the preposition ל (e.g. לבנה in Esra 5:3,13) and of the Pe'al infinitive with the ending יה (Esra 5:9), with prefix מ. It is possible that both these irregularities appear here. Brauner (1974:186) has examples of the Pe'al infinitive without מ in Old Aramaic (e.g. KAI 214:10: לבני and KAI 233:8: לאמר). Lipinski's proposal at the end of line 12 and the beginning of line 13 merits consideration.

3. I SEFIRE A 29-30

Different proposals have been made for the reconstruction of the damaged section at the end of line 29 and the beginning of line 30. Gibson's proposal is: והמן חעקה ויללה (1975:30, 40). For והמן he refers to Isaiah 13:4, but adds that the word is not found in any other Aramaic dialect. In the Targum it is a direct translation of the Hebrew המון. He states that Brekelmans (1963) restored המון צעקה. This is, however, not the case (cf. Brekelmans 1963:225-228). Brekelmans' proposal is: המיה צעקה. It is clear that Gibson did not use Brekelmans' paper, but used Fitzmyer's reference to that article (1967:48). Fitzmyer's reference is confusing, but he refers only to what Brekelmans said about צעקה. Gibson prefers ו to צ, because this form is more common in later Aramaic than the form with צ (1975:40). It is however possible that the form with צ appears in II Sefire A:8-9. Therefore it is probably best to read צ here as well.

As regards Brekelmans' proposal, the remarks of Degen (1969:11 n.52) and Lipinski (1975:29) should be kept in mind. It is probably best to read: והמן צעקה ויללה. Brekelmans has המיה, but the construct state is preferable.

4. I SEFIRE B 7-8

A new reconstruction for this passage is put forward:

7 ... ומע[די]א[ל]ן א[מר]ן שמי[ן] ועדי[א]
8 [א]לן כל אלהי[א] יצרן

A translation could be as follows: and concerning this treaty heaven commanded that all the gods should safeguard it. The use of the copula ו to subordinate a second sentence to the first, is well-known in Old Aramaic (cf. Degen 1969:104). The use of אמר to denote a command is also well-known.

This proposal entails the use of שמיך as the name of a god as in I A 11. The verb יצר occurs also in I C 15 and 17.

Lipinski's proposal (1975:33) accepts a different reading of consonants in two instances, but this is not easy to verify from the photographs.

5. II SEFIRE C 7-8

The interpretation of this section is quite complex, but the text is quite clear:

7 ... ויאמר ל
8 זי לידע אנה אגר

The different interpretations can easily be deduced from different proposed translations of this passage:

Fitzmyer (1967:83): "... and say to someone who does not understand, 'I shall reward (you) indeed,' ..."

Gibson (1975:44-45): "... and says to someone who does not know, I (wish to) hire a workman, ..."

Donner & Röllig (1962-64:2.259): "Und (wer) spricht zu dem, der nichts weiss: 'Ich habe Angst, Angst' ..."

Fitzmyer takes the first אגר as a Pe'al infinitive, emphasising the second, a Pe'al imperfect. Veenhof's interpretation is basically the same (1963:142-144). Gibson takes the first as an active participle and the second as a passive participle. Donner & Röllig take both as Pe'al imperfect of a verb גור.

ידע is also interpreted differently. Gibson takes it as a Pe'al imperfect of ידע (cf. 1975:45), Fitzmyer as a participle (1967:91) and Donner & Röllig as a perfect (Röllig 1962-4.2:263). When the first ga is taken as an active participle (Gibson), אנה must be its subject.

According to all the interpretations referred to above, אנה must be linked to the verb following on it. The verb is either a participle or an imperfect.

To help solve this problem, the use of the independent personal pronoun in conjunction with verbs in the Aramaic inscriptions was investigated. A number of examples were found by making use of the concordance of Aufrecht & Hurd (1975).

In all the instances of the pronoun used as subject of a participle, the pronoun follows the participle. In KAI 261:6, 226:5 and 261:5 אנה occurs after the participle and ה in 233:19. Where the pronoun is used in conjunction with a perfect, it occurs more frequently before the verb. Examples with אנה can be found in KAI 216:19; 202 B:3; 202 A:13 and 264:7. There is only one example in the Sefire treaties of אנה in conjunction with a perfect (KAI 222 C:2). In this instance it is placed after the perfect.

ה is used once with a perfect in these treaties. In this instance it also follows on the verb (224:20). ה also occurs once, also in these treaties (224:24). In this instance it precedes the verb. The general pattern is therefore that the personal pronoun precedes the perfect. The only two exceptions to this rule are in the Sefire treaties. In the case of the pronoun used in conjunction with an imperfect, the rule is again that it precedes the verb (cf. KAI 202 A: 13 & 14; 259:2; 222 B:32 & 224:11). The two exceptions to this rule again appear in the Sefire treaties, in KAI 223 B:5 (אנה) and 223 C:6 (ה). The pattern emerging from these examples is that in the case of a pronoun used in conjunction with a participle, the participle precedes the pronoun. In the case of the perfect and the imperfect, the pronoun precedes in most instances, with exceptions limited to these treaties.

The occurrences of the pronoun with verbs can be summarised as follows in a table:

	Pronoun preceding	Verb preceding
Participle total	-	4
Sefire	-	-
Perfect total	5	2
Sefire	1	2
Imperfect total	5	2
Sefire	2	2

Excluding the case under discussion, eighteen instances of the personal pronoun used in conjunction with verbs occur in the Aramaic inscriptions in KAI. In ten instances the pronoun precedes. In all these instances the verb is a perfect or an imperfect. In eight instances the verb precedes. In four the verb is a participle, and the other four are in the Sefire treaties, the only exceptions to the rule regarding pronouns with the perfect or imperfect.

Taking this into consideration, it is probable that the pronoun in II Sefire C:8 must be linked to the preceding verb. This is the case with all the other occurrences of אנה used in conjunction with a verb in these

treaties. It is also the case with all other pronouns used in II Sefire. If the pronoun must be linked to the preceding verb, ידע must be a participle.

A possible translation would then be: and says to someone whom I do not know: 'I want to hire a hireling'. The first אנה is then taken as a Pe'al imperfect and the second as a passive participle.

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