‘TO HEAR AND TO ACCEPT’: A WORD-PAIR IN THE TELL FAKHARIYAH BILINGUAL INSCRIPTION

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This paper takes as its starting point the Akkadian word-pair *šemû*(*m*) // *leqû*(*m*), common to Mesopotamian literature, and the pair *šmʾ* // *lqḥ*, relatively uncommon in Northwest Semitic texts. Noting that the sole instance of the pairing of *šmʿ* // *lqḥ* in Old Aramaic occurs in the Tell Fakhariyah bilingual — though the ‘cognate’ pair is absent from the parallel Akkadian inscription — a modest contribution to the debate surrounding the much hypothesized Aramaic literary tradition will be put forward. The corpus of Old Aramaic texts is rather limited and no literary work has yet come to light within the Old Aramaic texts from the Cis- and Transjordan, save for the rather fragmentary and difficult inscription from Tell Deir ʿAlla. However I shall argue that the presence of this traditional Hebrew and Akkadian word-pair in the Tell Fakhariyah inscription is evidence of an Aramaic literary tradition as early as the ninth century BCE. Crucial to this interpretation is the recognition that this instance of the pairing is not a translation from the Akkadian text of the bilingual but an independent occurrence.

Word-pairs, also called fixed- or parallel-pairs, are one of the more important building blocks in the construction of the poetic parallelism that characterized ancient Semitic literature. Initially discerned primarily in Ugaritic and Hebrew poetic texts, word-pairs have also been identified in Phoenician sources, despite their basically non-literary nature,[1] and in Akkadian and Aramaic texts.[2] As some word-pairs are attested in multiple literary traditions across the ancient Near East, it is possible to connect particular pairs and so to identify local peculiarities or diachronic developments; while some of these pairs may be explained as the expected developments of any of the languages concerned (for example the pairing heaven/earth common across the ancient Near East),[3] others are of a less natural nature and therefore provide evidence of a specific literary tradition. Though all loan-word research in

[1] See Y. Avishur, ‘Word Pairs Common to Phoenician and Biblical Hebrew’, *UF* 7 (1975), 13–47.

[2] In poetic materials, word-pairs are defined as couples of corresponding words that occur in the parallel lines of a poetic text. In prose, typically word-pairs occur next to one another, with the conjunction *wə-*, ‘and’, connecting the two elements. The criteria of recognition for such pairs usually dictates that (1) these must belong to the same grammatical class; (2) occur in parallel lines; and/or (3) occur frequently together in the biblical text; see W.G.E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (London 2007), 128.

[3] In this respect, extensive lists of apparently parallel pairs, such as that of Dahood, who identifies 608 word-pairs shared between Hebrew and Ugarit, should be treated with caution; see M.J. Dahood, ‘Ugarit-Hebrew Parallel Pairs’, in *Ras Shamra Parallels: The Texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible* (Rome), I (1972): 73–382; II (1975): 3–39; III (1981): 3–206. On the other hand, the contrary position of K.J. Baranowski who, on the basis of psycholinguistic word association tests, stresses the essentially arbitrary nature of biblical word-pairs, is similarly overstated; cf. K.J. Baranowski, ‘Word Pairs’, in G. Khan (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* (Leiden 2013), III: 1007–8.

the ancient Semitic languages is inherently speculative and provisional due to the genetic relationships and the long periods of influences shared by the languages concerned, the identification of pairings of concepts provides a firmer ground with which to posit the sharing of a common literary tradition than do single words alone.

The foremost secondary work which one must consult when exploring Semitic word-pairs is the exhaustive treatment of Yitzhak Avishur,[4] where word-pairs are listed according to frequency of occurrence in each literary tradition. Thus the pairing of Heb. *šm'* // *lqḥ* features in the section of pairs common only to Hebrew and Akkadian literatures, which gives the 'cognate' pair of *šemû*(*m*) // *leqû*(*m*). This pair appears in two similar connotations: (a) to hear something and to deduce therefrom; or (b) to hear the plea and accept the prayer.[5] This combination is relatively uncommon in Biblical literature, appearing on only nine occasions.[6] We meet this pairing in an intra-colon parallelism, so:

> Hear (*š^{e}ma'*) my son and accept (*w^{e}qaḥ*) my words
> that the years of your life may be many (Prov. 4:10).
>
> But they did not listen or turn their ear;
> They stiffened their necks and did not obey (*šômēa'*) or accept (*qaḥat*) correction (Jer. 17:23).
>
> They turned their backs to Me, not their faces;
> though I have taught them persistence,
> they do not give heed (*šōm'îm*) or accept (*lāqaḥaṯ*) rebuke (Jer. 32:33).
>
> Go say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem:
> 'Will you not receive (*ṯiqḥû*) the instruction to hear (*lišmō^{a}'*) my words?' (Jer. 35:13).
>
> Son of man, accept (*qaḥ*) into your heart all my words that I speak to you;
> Hear them (*šema'*) with your ears (Ezek. 3:10).[7]

We also find the pair as a parallelism in a bi-colon:

> This is the nation that did not *obey* (*šām^{e}'û*) the voice of the Lord their God
> and did not *accept* (*lāq^{e}ḥû*) discipline (Jer. 7:28).
>
> *Hear* (*š^{e}ma'nāh*), O women, the word of the Lord,

[4] Y. Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1984).

[5] Ibid, 517.

[6] Although Avishur provides only six examples: Prov. 4:10; Jer. 7:28; 9:19, 32:33, 35:13; Ps. 6:10.

[7] As can be seen from these examples, the pair usually appears in the order *šm'* // *lqḥ* (on seven occasions: Prov. 4:10; Jer. 7:28, 9:19, 17:23, 32:22; Zeph. 3:2; Ps. 6:10) rather than *lqḥ* // *šm'* (on only two occasions: Jer. 35:13; Ezek. 3:10). Thus in the JPS translation of Ezek. 3:10, the translators reverse the order of the pairing, providing the reading 'Mortal, listen with your ears and receive into your mind all the words that I speak to you'. Given that the order *lqḥ* // *šm'* is also found in Jer. 35:13, and given that this order is also found in Mesopotamian literature, this textual emendation is unnecessary.

Let your ears *accept* (*w^e^tiqqaḥ*) the word of his mouth (Jer. 9:19).

She has *listened* (*šām^e^'āh*) to no voice
She has *accepted* (*lāq^e^ḥāh*) correction (Zeph. 3:2).

And once more as a simple parallelism:

The Lord *has heard* (*šāma'*) my supplication
the Lord *accepted* (*yiqqaḥ*) my prayer (Ps. 6:10).[8]

Far more common is the pairing in Akkadian literature, where it appears in relation to prayer and supplication (cf. Ps. 6:10). Avishur lists four instances of the pairing, culled from CAD, and heedless of the relative chronology in which the instances occur. His first example is taken from the Mari texts, most of which derive from the last fifty years of Mari's independence, *c*. 1800–1750 BCE:

šēmi ikribī[9] he who *listens* to vows
lēqi unnēnim *accepts* prayers.[10]

This is also found in reverse order, in a Late Babylonian text from the eighth century:

leqū unnēni who *accepts* prayers
šēmu teslīti and *hearkens* to petitions.[11]

Another late example, from the Neo-Assyrian period, is found in the annals of Ashurbanipal, from the Rassam Cylinder:

unninnīa *ilqû* they (the gods) *accepted* my supplications
išmû zikir šaptīa *listened* to my words.[12]

Avishur's final example stems from an expanded verse from the 'Prayer of the Raising of the Hand'[13] to Ištar, a Neo-Babylonian text:

amurinnima bēltī *leqī* unnēnīa View me my mistress *accept* my pleas
kīniš naplisīnima *šēmī* teslīti View me with good eye *hear* my prayer.[14]

While Avishur chose his examples primarily from the later periods of Akkadian literature, these are but a few of the texts that demonstrate the pairing in question. Both of the Akkadian lexical items *leqû*(*m*) and *šemû*(*m*) are found from the Old Akkadian period

[8] The scarcity of the pairing in the Psalms is surprising when considering its prevalence in Akkadian liturgical texts (cf. n. 10). See also Prov. 19:20, 'Listen (*š^e^ma'*) to advice and accept (*w^e^qabbēl*) correction', where *qabbēl* looks very much like an Aramaism — indeed, this is the verb used in the Targums as the common translation of *lqḥ*.

[9] While the Akkadian term *ikribu* is often used as a generic term for prayer (see CAD I/J, 62, 65–6), due to its distinctive employment in certain divinatory ritual texts it can also designate the specific kind of prayer of the diviner, and hence may be taken to signify a ritual setting. In any case, it is frequently employed alongside our word-pairing.

[10] G. Dossin, 'L'inscription de foundation del laḫdun-Lim, roi de Mari', *Syria* 32 (1955), 1–28 (12).

[11] W.G.E. Lambert, 'Literary Style in First Millennium Mesopotamia', *JAOS* 53 (1968), 123–32 (125).

[12] M. Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Nineveh's* (Leipzig 1916), II: 34.

[13] See L.W. King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation* (London 1902), lxxv–lxxx.

[14] E. Ebeling, *Die Akkadische Gebetsserie und Herausgegeben„Handerhebung": von Neuem Gesammelt i*, (Berlin 1953), 132.

onwards,[15] and together the pairing is attested on multiple occasions.[16] That this well attested Akkadian pairing crops up occasionally in the Hebrew Bible is worth considering. The affinity of these pairs may point toward a direct influence, an inter-language borrowing, or a common literary tradition that gave rise to the pairing. Yet the question of affinity between a Hebrew and Akkadian pair is more problematic than the question of affinity between pairs from the other languages Avishur discusses, that is, between Aramaic and Hebrew, Ugaritic and Hebrew, or Phoenician and Hebrew. The latter languages are all Northwest Semitic and share common characteristics, whereas Akkadian is an East Semitic language that differs from the Northwest Semitic languages in a number of characteristic ways. Geographically speaking, East Semitic is also more remote from Hebrew than its Northwest Semitic neighbours. This is clearly a problem which bothered Avishur, who chose to explain many of the pairings common only to Hebrew and Akkadian as 'natural parallels' resulting from the commonality of etymological identity between Akkadian and Hebrew: pairs which parallel body parts, or the pairing of heaven/earth as discussed above. Nevertheless, Avishur recognizes that there are pairs whose parallel is inexplicable except by positing a common literary tradition.[17]

However there is an important instance of this pairing missing from Avishur's list, which relates to neither Hebrew nor Akkadian, and which raises several interesting interpretative possibilities. The pairing of *šmʿ* // *lqḥ* also occurs in the Old Aramaic portion of a bilingual cuneiform-alphabetic inscription dating from the ninth century BCE, the Tell Fakhariyah bilingual.[18] It is worth exploring the provenance of this inscription in detail, as aspects of its interpretation have proven to be somewhat controversial. Discovered by accident in 1979, the statue hails from Tell Fakhariyah, long identified with ancient Sikkānu known from Assyrian sources, and confirmed by the inscription itself, which states that the statue was set 'before Hadad who dwells in Sikkān', and gives the West Semitic name of the city as *Skn.* The inscription was first edited by A. Abou-Assaf,[19] and a year later was fully re-

[15] See CAD L, 131a; and CAD $Š_2$, 277a.

[16] See, e.g., CAD A_1, 214; CAD I/J, 65 (three examples); CAD K, 579; CAD L, 136; CAD R, 165–6; CAD S, 393; CAD $Š_2$, 284; CAD T, 342; CAD U/W, 163 (four examples) and 164; and CAD Z, 113.

[17] Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs*, 522. This particular problem was also of concern to H. Tawil in his Akkadian lexical companion for Biblical Hebrew, thus he asks 'if a particular semantic development can be traced in two Semitic languages, does this indicate a calque or simply parallel independent development? Does the presence of similar idioms in different Semitic languages indicate an inheritance from Proto-Semitic, some kind of Semitic way of viewing the world, or simply borrowing?'; H. Tawil, *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew: Etymological-Semantic and Idiomatic Equivalents with Supplement on Biblical Aramaic* (Jersey City 2009).

[18] See KAI 309.

[19] A. Abou-Assaf, 'Die Statue des HDYSʿY. König von Guzana', *MDOG* 113 (1981), 3–22.

edited by the latter along with P. Bordreuil and A.R. Millard.[20] The anthropoid statue depicts Had-Yiṯʿī, governor of Gozan,[21] and the front skirt of the image has a 38 line Assyrian[22] inscription whereas the back skirt has a 23 line Old Aramaic inscription, with the last two lines of the text running over the hem of the skirt, and paralleling the Assyrian text.[23] Abou-Assaf was able to date the statue on stylistic grounds to the period from Ashurbanipal II to Tiglath-pileser III (i.e., 883–727 BCE), preferring the earlier part of that period[24] — and surely from an art-historical perspective, the statue as a whole is comparable to other ninth century figures. This dating was later confirmed by Millard writing along with Abou-Assaf and Bordreuil, who identified Sassu-nūrī, the father of Had-Yiṯʿī, with the Assyrian eponym of 866.[25] Certainly the cuneiform ductus and orthography are at home in ninth century monumental script,[26] while the identification of Sassu-nūrī to the historical referent of the same name seems highly plausible: thus the date proposed in the *editio princeps* has been largely accepted by subsequent commentators, with varying degrees of tentativeness.

Nevertheless, the palaeography and orthography of the Old Aramaic text differ significantly from previously known Old Aramaic inscriptions, and there are certain grammatical differences as well. The stance of some of the Aramaic letters (*waw*, *lamed*, *mem*, *nun*, *ʿayin*, *ṣade*) may argue for an earlier dating. The use of *samek* to indicate etymological /ṯ/, is also surprising,[27] though this should be considered an orthographic, rather

[20] A. Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil and A.R. Millard, *La Statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-arameénne* (Paris 1982); this monograph was preceded by a preliminary report by P. Bordreuil, A.R. Millard and A. Abou-Assaf, 'La Statue de Tell Fekheryé: la première inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne', *CRAI* 125 (1981), 640–55.

[21] In the Assyrian text the inscription's author is referred to as the governor of Gozan, but in the Old Aramaic version he is styled as 'king'. While this surprising equivalence throws some controversy onto our previously rather more clear cut understanding of the relationship between province and vassal state, Kaufman has found in this apparent difficulty an additional support for the dating of the statue to the last decades of the ninth century: noting on the one hand that it is inconceivable that an independent ruler would refer to himself as a mere 'governor' if that were not truly the case, he argues on the other that we have no reason to assume that for a governor to call himself 'king' of his province (in his native language, at least) was by any means unusual; thus the inscription must date from a period when Gozan was an Assyrian province, and not an independent kingdom; see S.A. Kaufman, 'Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh', *Maarav* 3 (1982), 137–75 (140).

[22] As in most royal inscriptions the dialect of the Akkadian is Babylonian, however Assyrianisms occur throughout, cf. *ipaššṭūni* (l. 28), *bēssī* (l. 29), *apiāte* (l. 35), etc.

[23] That the Assyrian inscription dominates the front of the image, while the Old Aramaic is placed on the back, is indicative of the relative importance of the Assyrian text. Moreover, the Assyrian text was inscribed first, with the scribe miscalculating the space needed for his Old Aramaic text and therefore he had to run on beyond the border of the figure's skirt.

[24] Abou-Assaf, 'Die Statue des HDYS'Y'.

[25] Abou-Assaf, Bordreuil and Millard, *La Statue de Tell Fekherye*, 103 (e.g. Šamaš-nūrī: in Neo-Assyrian, /š/ was pronounced /s/, while intervocalic m was lost).

[26] Orthographic features (such as LID-*ú* for *rēmēnû* [probably rather *rēmēn'û*] in line 6 and SAG for /*šak*/ in line 17) have been interpreted as features associated with Assyrian texts dating from the time of Aššurnaṣirpal II; see Abouu-Assaf, Bordreuil, Millard, *La Statue de Tell Fekherye*, 22; J. Huehnergard, 'Review of La Statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-arameénne, by A. Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil A.R. Millard', *BASOR* 261 (1986), 91–5 (91).

[27] See for example the orthographic practice found in the Sefire inscriptions.

than a phonological, peculiarity.[28] The incidence of medial *waw* and *yod* for /ū/ and /ī/ respectively, while not necessarily contradicting the classic thesis of F.M. Cross and D.N. Freedman,[29] shows that this orthographic phenomenon emerged much earlier than previously anticipated. On the basis of these apparent peculiarities, scholars such as J. Naveh have pushed the dating of the inscription back into the end of the second millennium.[30] Yet as we have seen, the art-historical orientation of the figure, along with the Assyrian inscription and the historical referents found therein, all point toward a ninth century provenance for the statue. It makes better sense therefore to account for the idiosyncrasies of the Old Aramaic inscription by the peripheral location of Gozan-Sikkānu from the point of view of the Canaanite script: developments elsewhere and which scholars thus far have considered to be normative may not yet have reached this area. The possibility of intentional archaism must also be considered, and in this context it may indeed be relevant that the Akkadian inscription has an archaic orientation — from top to bottom in columns running from left to right — despite its essentially good Neo-Assyrian orthography and ductus. Moreover sections of the curse portion of the inscription point toward the first, and not the second, millennium; these curses show strong topical similarities with the Sefire and Bûkan inscriptions,[31] both from the mid eighth century.

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[28] On etymological t̲, see A. Lemaire, 'L'incident du sibbolet (Jg. 12,6): perspective historique', in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux an l'honneur de M. Mathias Delcor* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1985), 275–81 (esp. 281).

[29] See F.M. Cross and D.N. Freedman, *Early Hebrew Orthography* (New Haven 1952) for the classic thesis that the Hebrew system of representing vowels by certain consonants (known in this usage as *matres lectionis*) in either medial or final position came about through the borrowing of an Aramaic orthographic practice, where final *matres lectionis* had occurred from the ninth century onward, while internal or medial *matres lectionis* appear only from the late eighth and early seventh century BCE.

[30] J. Naveh, 'The Date of the Tell Fekherye Inscription', *Shnaton* 5–6 (1982–3), 131–41 (in Hebrew); a revised English language edition is published as idem, 'Proto-Canaanite, Archaic Greek, and the Script of the Tell Fakhariyeh Statue', in P.D. Hansen et al. (eds), *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia 1987), 101-13.

[31] As has often been noted by commentators, Sefire provides a strong parallel: '[and should seven rams cover] a ewe, may she not conceive; and should seven nurses anoint [their breasts and] nurse a young boy, may he not have his fill; and should seven mares suckle a colt, may it not have its fill; and should seven ewes suckle a lamb, [may it not be sa]ted; and should seven hens go looking for food, may they not kill (anything)!' (KAI 222 A.21–4); and 'should seven mares suckle a colt, may it not be sated; and should seven cows give suck to a calf, may it n]ot have its fill; and should seven [ewes suckle a lamb, may it not be sated; and should seven goats suck]le a kid, may it not be sated; and should seven hens go looking for food, may they not kill (anything)!' (KAI 223 A.1–3); noted by J.C. Greenfield and A. Shaffer, 'Notes on the Akkadian-Aramaic Bilingual Statue from Tell-Fekherye', *Iraq* 45 (1983), 109–16 (111); M.J. Geller, 'Review of La Statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne, by Ali Abou-Assaf, Pierre Bordreuil, and Alan R. Millard', *BSOAS* 46 (1983), 545–6 (546); D.M. Gropp and T.J. Lewis, 'Notes on Some Problems in the Aramaic Text of the Hadd-Yithʿi Bilingual', *BASOR* 259 (1985), 45–61 (85, n. 8); and V. Sasson, 'The Aramaic Text of the Tell Fakhiryah Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual Inscription', *ZAW* 97 (1985), 86–103 (101). However we also find parallels at Bukân ('May seven cows suckle a single calf and it not be satisfied, and may seven women bake in a single oven and not fill it' [KAI 320 5–9]); the Treaty of Aššur-nerari V with Mati'-ilu, King of Arpad ('may one thousand houses become one house, may one thousand tents become one tent' (SAA II, 2.VI 3–4); and in the Hebrew Bible, so Lev. 26:25–6: 'ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven and bring back your bread by measure, then shall you eat and not be satisfied'; and Deut. 28:38: 'Though you take much seed out to the field, you shall gather in little'.

However even when accepting this later dating the bilingual inscription still raises questions about the extent of the Aramaic-Assyrian symbiosis already in the early Neo-Assyrian period. The last third of the eighth century saw the appearance of Aramaic as the *lingua franca* of the ancient Near East. While some commentators have supposed that Aramaic was 'discovered' by the Assyrians only during their military activity in the West and as a corollary to this, that the language caught on suddenly, in the last century or so of the Assyrian empire,[32] others — noting the long period of contact between Assyrians and Aramaeans prior to the official adoption of the Aramaic language — argue instead that Aramaic had actually infiltrated Mesopotamia prior to the conquest of the West. Aramaean scribes, for example, are mentioned in Assyrian records as early as 786 BCE, half a century before Tiglath-pileser III conquered the Syrian Aramaean state.[33] Though it was not until a century following the Tell Fakhariyah inscription that the Aramaic-Akkadian symbiosis was officially recognized and Aramaic became the second language of the empire alongside Akkadian, when the territories west of the Euphrates were conquered, we must now reconsider the possibility that bilingualism was current in the western periphery of Assyria (the bulk of the population of which consisted of Aramaeans) from at least the mid ninth century onward.

Thus the primary interpretative lines of investigation for the Tell Fakhariyah bilingual have concerned the dating of the inscription and the orthographic and palaeographic peculiarities of the Old Aramaic therein invoked; and the consequences of the bilingual for our understanding of the Assyrian-Aramaean symbiosis in the early part of the first millennium. Accepting the consensus dating, this examination of the word-pair *šm'* // *lqḥ* in the Old Aramaic inscription aims at a modest contribution to the debate surrounding the much hypothesized Aramaic literary tradition. The corpus of Old Aramaic texts is rather limited — alphabetic writing being most commonly written with ink upon perishable papyrus or leather rather than inscribed as cuneiform had been on more hardy clay or stone — and no literary work has yet come to light within the Old Aramaic texts from Syria, except for the rather fragmentary and difficult inscription from Tell Deir ʿAlla.[34] Scholars instead have to make do with the literary features that may be observed in Old Aramaic inscriptions of other genres, be these royal inscriptions, stelae, treaties, or letters. The oldest actual example of Aramaic literature in book or scroll so far recovered is the Proverbs of Aḥiqar, found among the papyri

[32] For example B. Mazar, 'The Aramean Empire and Its Relations with Israel', *BA* 25 (1962), 98–120 (esp. 113).

[33] For example A.R. Millard, 'Assyrians and Arameans', *Iraq* 45 (1983), 101–8.

[34] On this inscription see especially the articles collected in J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij (eds), *The Balaam Text from Deir 'Alla Re-Evaluated* (Leiden 1991).

from the island of Elephantine at Aswan, home of a Judaeo-Aramaean military colony.[35] Epigraphic study has dated the manuscript to the late fifth century BCE. Nevertheless the text appears to be composite: the framework of the story is written in early Standard Literary Aramaic with Eastern linguistic colouring; the Proverb section is written in the Mesopotamian dialect and is Western.[36] Additionally, its language provides hints that the original story probably dates back to the sixth and seventh centuries BCE. The close Aramaic-Assyrian connections of the story give evidence of a Syrian background, despite its Egyptian archaeological context.[37] While scholars have thus been able to posit that this literary tradition was circulating already in the seventh century, our access to this is limited by the scant textual evidence that has survived antiquity. I argue that the presence of the traditional Hebrew and Akkadian word-pair *šm'* // *lqḥ* in the Tell Fakhariyah inscription provides further evidence of an Aramaic literary tradition, indeed as early as the ninth century BCE. Crucial to this interpretation is the recognition that this instance of the pairing is not a translation of a cognate pairing from the Akkadian text of the bilingual but is an independent occurrence.

Indeed, that the Old Aramaic text adjures that Had-Yiṯʿī's 'prayer may be *heard* (*lmšm'*) and that his utterance may be *acceptable* (*mlqḥ*[38])' (ll. 9–10), when uncritically considered, seems unproblematic: an Akkadian traditional word-pair has simply passed into the Old Aramaic translation of an Assyrian text. Indeed, the word-pair stems from a part of the inscription that is generally considered to be an original Akkadian inscription. But these infinitive Peal verbal forms[39] *do not* translate the Akkadian 'cognate' paring of *šemû* // *leqû* in

[35] Later versions of the text exist in Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic and Arabic; Aḥiqar is also familiar from the book of Tobit (1:21–2; 2:10; 11:19; 14:10).

[36] For the term 'Mesopotamian Aramaic', see S.A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (Chicago 1974), 8–9.

[37] H. Niehr suggests that the convergence of Hurrian-Luwian and Mesopotamian wisdom traditions in these proverbs localize the collection's source to region of Bit Adini, especially in its capital city of Til Barsip, bearing in mind that the Assyrians made Til Barsip an administrative center, see *Aramäischer Aḥiqar* (Gütersloh 2007), 13; idem, 'Religion in den Königreichen der Aramäer Syriens', in C. Bonnet and H. Niehr (eds), *Religionen in der Umwelt des Alten Testaments, II: Phönizier, Punier, Aramäer* (Stuttgart 2010), 187–324; and idem, 'Religion', in H. Niehr (ed.), *The Aramaeans in Ancient Sy*ria (Leiden 2014), 127–203 (135–6); generally against a south Syrian localization is M. Weigl, 'Compositional Strategies in the Aramaic Sayings of Ahikar: Columns 6–8', in P.M.M. Daviau et al. (eds), *The World of the Aramaeans III: Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (Sheffield 2001), 22–82 (28), and idem, *Die aramäischen Achikar-Sprüche aus Elephantine und die alttestamentliche Weisheitsliteratur* (Berlin 2010), 37–9.

[38] In the three instances in which the root *lqḥ* occurs in this inscription (Peal infinitive *lmlqḥ*, l. 10; Peal third person masculine singular vetitive [with *'l*] *ylqḥ*, l. 17; Peal third person feminine singular vetitive [with *'l*] *tlqḥ*, l. 18), *l* appears in the orthography where we might otherwise expect assimilation. Non-assimilated forms also occur twice in Sefire (cf. KAI 222 B.35), although elsewhere at Sefire the *l* is always assimilated (KAI 222 A.42, B.27; cf. also the assimilated form *yqḥw* in the Hadad inscription, KAI 214 12). The presence of both non-assimilated and assimilated forms at Sefire, with no apparent difference in usage, suggests that we understand the *l* both at Sefire and here as morphological writing, and not sporadic assimilation of the *l* (see Gropp and Lewis, 'Notes on Some Problems in the Aramaic Text of the Hadd-Yithʿi Bilingual', 50).

[39] Here this inscription agrees with later dialects of Aramaic in forming its Peal infinitives with *mem*-preformative. As well as *lmšm'* and *lmlqḥ*, we also have *lm'rk* (ll. 7, 14) and *lmld* (l. 9). This is unique to this text in Old Aramaic; elsewhere the infinitive is simply *ktb* (cf. Sefire, KAI 222). The only other possible exception to the standard formation of infinitives without the *mem*-preformative typical of the later dialect is

the parallel Assyrian text: the equivalent adjuration 'that my prayer may be *heard* (*šemê*), that my utterance may be *accepted* (*magāri*)' (l. 14) is a semantic but not etymological-lexical equivalent.[40] In order to better understand the translation technique of this bilingual inscription, issues of genre must be considered in detail; the genre of a given inscription is an extremely important determinant of language choice, and the variations in bilingual texts may often be explained along the conventions of presentation which obtained in the given languages.

The importance of genre in determining the choices of the translator in a bilingual inscription has been felicitously described by D.G.K. Taylor, who argues that

> [t]here are numerous examples of bilingual inscriptions where the two texts are not dramatically different, and yet it is clear that each is an independent product conforming to accepted conventions.

Thus Taylor rejects the idea that one version of a bilingual inscription must be primary and the other a translation of it: citing *PAT* 0297, a bilingual funerary inscription in Greek and Palmyrene, Taylor is able to show that the two versions adhere to separate formulaic structures traditional in the two languages, thus the Greek opens with the name of the honourand in the accusative, whereas the Aramaic has the traditional opening formula, 'This is the statue of…'[41] On the other hand, if there is an exact correspondence between the two texts, it may indeed be the case that one of the versions has imposed structures upon the other which are alien to the traditions of the language in which it was written. An argument often advanced is that *both* models are at work in the Tell Fakhariyah inscription, according to the dual nature of the inscription: the text comprises *two* original compositions, one primary in Akkadian and one in Old Aramaic, and each of which inflict structures upon the paralleled translation which are not normal in the other language.

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lmšlḥ in the Sefire inscriptions (KAI 222 B.34), however this is controversial: while A. Dupont-Sommer (*Les Inscriptions araméenes de Sfiré [stèles I et II]* [Paris 1958], 62) reads the verb in this way, and is followed by J.A. Fitzmyer (*The Aramaic Inscription of Sefire* [Rome 1967], 18) and H. Donner and W. Röllig (*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* [Weisbaden 1966], 42), R. Degen reads *lyšlḥ* (*Grammatik der Inschriften des 10.-8. Jh. v. Chr.* [Wiesbaden 1964], 15), and is followed by Kaufman ('Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh', 151); R. Zadok ('Remarks on the Inscription of HDYSʿY from Tell Fakhariya', *Tel Aviv* 9 [1982], 117–29 [122]); and A. Lemaire, *Les Inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré et lÀssyrie de Shamshi-ilu* (Genève 1984), 123 and 139.

[40] In ll. 17–18, the two further instances of *lqḥ* in the Old Aramaic text, the Akkadian once again does not provide the expected 'cognate' *leqû* but rather gives another semantic equivalent, *imaḫḫaršu*. The use of Aramaic *lqḥ* to render Akkadian *maḫāru* or *magāru* (receipt and not active taking) is found in two other early Aramaic inscriptions, cf. Hadad (KAI 214 2): *mt yhb l'lhy wmt yqḥw mn ydy* ('verily, [I] gave to the gods and they receive them'); and Sefire III (KAI 224 2): *wymll mln lḥyt... wlqḥ mly' mn ydh* ('and he will speak evil words [about me?]… and you will receive them'). For the connection between 'hear' and 'obey', compare the use of *šm'* in the Mesha Stele (KAI 181 28).

[41] D.G.K. Taylor, 'Bilingualism and Diglossia in Late Antique Syria and Mesopotamia', in J.N. Adams et al. (eds), *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text* (Oxford 2002), 298–331.

The apparently double aspect of the inscription was noted already in the *editio princeps*,[42] and most subsequent commentators have also pointed out the evidently composite character of the text.[43] According to this interpretation, the text may be divided into two originally separate texts, one following the other without a break, the first in the Akkadian version from ll. 1–18 and in the Aramaic from ll. 1–12, and the second from ll. 19–38 in the Akkadian, and ll. 13–23 in the Aramaic. Alongside this division often comes the observation that the first inscription appears to draw from standard Mesopotamian conceptions, while the latter half seems apparently more West Semitic in origin.[44] What to make of this observation, however, has found no consensus interpretation. S.A. Kaufman repeats the interpretation of the editors, who argue that the statue is a replacement for an earlier one that comprised only the first inscription ll. 1–18 // 1–12 — and certainly that the second part of the inscription refers to making 'this statue better than (any) before' (ll. 23–4 // 15) seems to fit this interpretation. Both versions, in his opinion, are Akkadian in origin, and thus the Aramaic is a translation.[45] Noting the aforementioned division between the highly traditional Mesopotamian epithets in ll. 1–18 // 1–12, and the curses of ll. 19–38 // 13–23 which have no direct Mesopotamian equivalent, D. Pardee and R.D. Biggs argue that the Akkadian of the first section was original, while in the latter text the Aramaic was the primary source text;[46] this interpretation is followed by J.C. Greenfield and A. Shaffer.[47] While D.M. Gropp and T.J. Lewis do accept that the second part of the inscription is laden with West Semitic formulas,

[42] Abou-Assaf, Bordreuil and Millard, *La Statue de Tell Fekherye*, 68, following their original statement in Bordreuil, Millard and Abou-Assaf, 'La Statue de Tell Fekheryé', 647.

[43] For example J.C. Greenfield and A. Shaffer, 'Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh', *Maarav* 3 (1982), 137–75 (158); Kaufman, 'Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh', 158; A.R. Millard and P. Bordreuil, 'A Statue from Syria with Assyrian and Aramaic Inscriptions', *BA* 42 (1982), 135–41 (137); Greenfield and Shaffer, 'Notes on the Akkadian-Aramaic Bilingual Statue from Tell-Fekherye', 109; E. Peuch, 'Review of La Statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-arameénne, by A. Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil and A.R. Millard', *RB* 90 (1983), 594–6 (594); F.M. Fales, 'La double bilinguisme de la statue de Tell Fekherye', *Syria* 3 (1985), 233–50; J.C. Greenfield and A. Shaffer, 'Notes on the Curse Formulae of the Tell Fekherye Inscription', *RB* 92 (1985), 47–59 (49); Sasson, 'The Aramaic Text of the Tell Fakhiryah Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual Inscription', 87; E. Lipiński, 'The Bilingual Inscription from Tell Fekherye', in *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomasticons II* (Leuven 1994), 15–82 (33).

[44] The distinction between an 'East' and 'West' Semitic curse tradition originally goes back to observations made by S. Gervitz on the differences between the formulation of curses in Akkadian and Hebrew, see 'Curse Motifs in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East', Ph.D. dissertation (University of Chicago 1959); idem, 'West Semitic Curses and the Problem of the Origins of Hebrew Law', *VT* 59 (1961), 137–58; and idem, 'Curse', in G.A. Buttrick (ed.) *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville 1962), I: 749–50. Gervitz was followed in this distinction by W. Schottroff, *Der altisraelitische Fluchspruch* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969), 25–68, who developed these observations to argue that Israel possessed a unique curse tradition which reflected their nomadic origins. This division between East and West Semitic curses has become something of a truism in the literature, but it is worth noting that the primary concern that drove both Gervitz and Schottroff was to stress the uniqueness of the biblical tradition in the face of an ancient Near Eastern context.

[45] S.A. Kaufman, 'Review of La Statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-arameénne, by Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil, A.R. Millard', *JAOS* 104 (1984), 571–3 (572).

[46] D. Pardee and R.D. Biggs, 'Review of La Statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-arameénne, by Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil, A.R. Millard', *JNES* 43 (1984), 253–7 (256).

nevertheless they reject the view that this part of the inscription is a translation of an Aramaic original, arguing instead that the engraver of the inscription had used as an exemplar a previous Akkadian dedicatory inscription from Hadad's temple in Gozan, intending to adapt his new inscription to its destination in Sikkānu, but inadvertently copying the first 19 lines of his exemplar too slavishly.[48]

Whatever the compositional process, it is generally accepted that the Tell Fakhariyah bilingual consists of two inscriptions which essentially say the same thing in two different styles, the first in a good Mesopotamian style (ll. 1–18 // 1–12) and the second in West Semitic (ll. 19–38 // 13–23). Our word-pair stems from the former section, and it is obvious in this part of the Aramaic text that many Akkadian lexemes have been imposed upon the Aramaic translation.[49] Yet this is not the case in the instance of our word-pair. Though we have little access to it, the Aramaic scribe has drawn from what would have been a traditional stock of word-pairs in Aramaic in order to compose his translation.

That the Old Aramaic literary tradition consisted of a far more sophisticated corpus than the remnants to which we currently have access may be corroborated by the importance which Aramaic as a documentary language was later to have in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods. Indeed, this was such that by the Neo-Babylonian period it had become necessary for a special term, *sepīru*, borrowed from Aramaic, to denote the bilingual Akkadian-Aramaic scribe, written sometimes phonetically (*se-pi-ru*), and sometimes ideographically (A.BAL, lit. 'one who converts or transposes').[50] Though we have little material evidence of it, already in the ninth century Old Aramaic was an increasingly urbane literary language, remnants of which can also be seen in the evocative and poetic language used in the curse sections of the inscriptions of Sefire[51] and Bûkan,[52] and of course also here in the Tell Fakhariyah inscription. The use of a traditional word-pair here further corroborates this: we must reckon with a far earlier Aramaic scribal culture than has hitherto been recognized.

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[47] Greenfield and Shaffer, 'Notes on the Akkadian-Aramaic Bilingual Statue from Tell-Fekherye'.

[48] Gropp and Lewis, 'Notes on Some Problems in the Aramaic Text of the Hadd-Yithʿi Bilingual', 55.

[49] For example, in this section the noun *gwgl* is a loanword from Akkadian *gugallu*, 'water controller' (cf. VTE l. 440): the medial *waw* indicates that the Aramaic speakers were hearing *gūgal*, the short final vowel having dropped; see J.P. Hyatt, *The Treatment of Final Vowels in Early Neo-Babylonian* (New Haven 1941), 56–7. Gropp and Lewis have emphasized that *'dqwr* is a loanword from Akkadian *adagurru*, with the meaning of a container used for libations of beer, wine, or milk (Gropp and Lewis, 'Notes on Some Problems in the Aramaic Text of the Hadd-Yithʿi Bilingual', 48). Another Akkadian lexeme occurring in this part of the Aramaic text is *mt*, 'land', in l. 5 (from Akk. *mātu*[i]); while the incidental enclitic mem in *šmym*, 'my name' (l. 11), might also be a contact induced phenomenon.

[50] Cf. J. Lewy, 'The Problems Inherent in Section 70 of the Bisutun Inscription', *HUCA* 25 (1954), 169–208 (191–9).

[51] See KAI 222–4.

[52] See KAI 320.

Can we reconstruct how this Old Aramaic pairing came about? Earlier I suggested that parallel word-pairs in separate literary traditions may point toward a direct influence, an inter-language borrowing, a common literary tradition, or simply that this pair is a 'natural parallel' resulting from the commonality of etymological identity between the Semitic languages in question. That our pair can be shown to have featured in Akkadian, Hebrew and Aramaic traditions suggest that it may indeed be a natural pairing in all three traditions, resulting from the logical equivalence between 'hearing' a command or plea, and 'accepting' or 'obeying' it. Alternatively, we might suppose that the pairing is evidence of an influence from the Mesopotamian world into the Aramaic literary tradition, and certainly plausible vectors of transmission may be hypothesized, given the Aramaic-Akkadian symbiosis that the Tell Fakhariyah inscription itself attests to already in the ninth century. Thus it could be suggested that at a time prior to the composition of the Tell Fakhariyah bilingual, this Akkadian word-pair passed into the Aramaic scribal tradition through literary contact, by which it eventually made its way into our inscription as the Aramaic scribe drew upon now conventional idioms and pairings in the composition of his translation.[53] This might also provide a solution to the difficultly which Avishur had in his discussion of word-pairs exclusively attested in Hebrew and Akkadian, due to the relative distance between the Mesopotamian literary tradition and language from the Hebrew: thus this pair found its way into Hebrew discourse not through interaction with Akkadian traditions but through Aramaic, Aramaic and Hebrew both being Northwest Semitic languages written in an alphabetic script.[54] Again, transmission this way seems plausible: texts such as the Sefire inscriptions depict treaties between small neighbouring Aramaean polities, according to the matrix of the contiguous political relations that existed in the Iron Age Levant. The Israelites and Judaeans too would have likely found

[53] See also the early interchange between Akkadian and Aramaic verbs 'to kill' (*daku* > *qatalu*) in the Assyrian scribal practice of the tenth century: H. Tadmor, 'Towards the Early History of qatalu', *JQR* 76 (1985), 51–4.

[54] Contact with Aramaic speakers is reflected in the language of the Hebrew Bible itself. So-called 'Aramaisms' in Biblical Hebrew have long been used to categorize a text displaying such linguistic features as evidencing 'Late Biblical Hebrew' (so Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, etc.). This differed from the apparently 'purer' and without foreign-influence 'Classical Biblical Hebrew', found in (ostensibly) earlier books such as the Pentateuch and Joshua through to 2 Kings. While texts commonly grouped together as examples of 'Classical Biblical Hebrew' certainly have less Aramaic lexical items than 'Late Biblical Hebrew', this could be understood as a conscious effort to avoid Aramaic forms and constructions on the part of the Biblical writers: it is often the tendency of new states to express their new nationhood by means of a distinct national language (see C. Rabin, *A Short History of the Hebrew Language* [Jerusalem 1973], 29.). This can also be seen by the use of Aramaizing Hebrew in some passages of the Bible to characterize foreigners (A. Hurvitz, 'The Chronological Significance of 'Aramaisms' in Biblical Hebrew', *IEJ* 18 [1968], 234–40). This indicates that pre-exilic writers could write in that style, yet avoided it as bad form when placing words into the mouths of their Hebrew characters. Indeed, 2 Kgs 18:26 shows that the elite of Israel in the eighth century were considered to have been conversant in Aramaic, though this is apparently avoided in Classical Biblical Hebrew prose. Further evidence of the existence of an Aramaic stratum in Hebrew is found in G.R. Driver's investigation of Hebrew poetry. He finds that much of the distinctive colouring of Hebrew poetry is related to Aramaic, giving a long list of Hebrew

themselves coming up against Aramaean neighbours time and time again, and indeed this is something we actually see depicted in the Biblical books of Kings. Nevertheless, such a reconstruction goes beyond the bounds of the available evidence.

This paper has considered the occurrence of the Old Aramaic word-pair *šm'* // *lqḥ*, previously thought to have only been attested in Hebrew and Akkadian traditions. Noting that although this pairing stems from a part of the inscription usually considered to be an Aramaic translation of an originally Akkadian text, it nevertheless does not find an exact lexical equivalence in the Akkadian version of this inscription. Thus it was hypothesized that this instance of a traditional word-pair in an Aramaic document provides evidence of a larger Aramaic literary tradition to which we no longer have access, present already in this early period in the ninth century BCE. An increasingly sophisticated scribal tradition existed which the Aramaic scribe could call upon in the construction of his translation. Though we lack material evidence for this tradition, hints such as this word-pair, suggestive of the development of literary and poetic techniques, along with the curses found both in this bilingual inscription and in the Aramaic inscriptions found at Sefire and Bûkan, provide limited access to a once great institution.

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words whose poetic parallels are attested in Aramaic (G.R. Driver, 'Hebrew Poetic Diction', *VTSup* 1 [1953], 26–39). This could be particularly instructive in light of our word-pair.