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### The Emergence of the Genitive Analytical Construction in Aramaic\*

As is well known, the most ancient strategy for the expression of nominal subordination (genitive) in Aramaic is the construction known in Semitic linguistics as ‘construct state’, in which the subordination of the modifier to the head is expressed by the morphological shape of the head, and the creation of a prosodic unity between the two nouns. However, in many Aramaic dialects, this construction can be replaced by an analytical construction, formed by inserting the genitive particle <zy> /\*dī/, later *dy*, *d-* between the head and the modifier (Cf. DNWSI: 312-13). This second strategy becomes more and more common through the centuries,<sup>1</sup> with a different frequency in the different

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\* The present paper is the first result of the project *The grammar and use of attribute marking in the history of Aramaic*, directed by Prof. Stefan Weninger and Dr. Michael Waltisberg as part of the project cluster *Konstanz und Wandel in der Sprache: Theorie und Empirie* (Stability and Change in language: theoretical and empirical approaches), held in the University of Marburg on the basis of financial support from the Hessian Ministry for Science and Arts through the LOEWE program. Many thanks are also due to Prof. F.M. Fales (University of Udine, Italy) for his friendly and constructive suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> The analytical construction with *d-* is more frequent than the synthetic one already in Classical Syriac (cf. Nöldeke 1898: 155; Muraoka 1997: 61), and it is the commonest one – sometimes the only one – in Eastern Neo-Aramaic, both in several North Eastern Neo Aramaic (NENA) dialects, and in Ṭuroyo (cf. e.g. Khan 2007: 302-3; Jastrow 1997: 357-58; Jastrow 1992: 42; in NENA the particle is sometimes attached to the head, and frequently assimilated: cf. Jastrow 1997: 357-58; Khan 2007: 302, who suggests that the particle is reanalyzed as inflection of the head). However, that the process is far from being linear may be seen, among several other examples, by the persistence of the construct state both in Classical and Modern Mandaic (Macuch 1965: 390-92; Häberl 2009: 132-33 and 152), where the genitive analytical compound with *d-* (<d>), attested in the Classical language, is retained in Neo-Mandaic only in frozen and archaic expressions (Macuch 1989: 74; Häberl 2009: 153; the other strategy for the expression of the genitive compound in Neo-Mandaic, the *ezāfe* construction, is borrowed from Persian, with a different frequency in the various dialects: Macuch 1989: 74; Häberl 2009: 134). In Western Neo-Aramaic the genitive syntagm is not expressed by particle *d-*, but by the enclitic particle *-l* (with variants) attached to the head noun (cf. e.g. Jastrow 1997: 339-40; Arnold 1990: 301-2).

dialects, while it is extremely rare in the first written attestations of the language that we possess up to now. Curiously enough, many of the most ancient occurrences of *zy* as *nota genitivi* (and not as a relative particle<sup>2</sup>) are highly problematic, and it is sometimes far from clear if this is their correct interpretation.

The aim of this paper is to collect all occurrences of the genitive analytical construction in Old Aramaic, looking for a possible coherence in its use. It should be stressed that ‘Old Aramaic’ is here understood as restricted to the early centuries of the Aramaic language, from its first attestations (end 10<sup>th</sup>-beginning 9<sup>th</sup> BC) to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BC). The testimonials of the language during these centuries, although few in number, are spread all over the Near East, from present-day Israel to Azerbaijan; for this reason alone, a view of Old Aramaic as a monolithic variety is hardly tenable. It is still debated whether the division between an Eastern and a Western branch of the language was effective as early as the ninth century BC, but certainly a number of differences among the texts mark phonology, morphology, syntax.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in the light of the scanty evidence we have up to now, it should be kept in mind that the results (or just the observations) which follow are not necessarily to be considered valid for Old Aramaic in its entirety.

### *Tell Fekheriye*

The long and well preserved bilingual (Akkadian – Aramaic) inscription found in 1979 at Tell Fekheriye (Northern Syria) is the most ancient extant Aramaic document, and its discovery has thrown new light on the oldest and least attested stages of the language. The inscription commemorates the dedication of a statue to the god Hadad by Hadd-yiṭī, king of Gozan, and it can be divided in two parts both in the Akkadian and in the Aramaic text: the first part (Aramaic 1-12a; Akkadian 1-18) is deeply rooted in the Akkadian tradition, while the second (Aramaic 12b-23; Akkadian 19-28) is much more imbued with Aramaic models (cf. *e.g.* Lipiński 1994: 33-34).<sup>4</sup>

For our purpose, this text is crucial, since it provides the only certain tes-

<sup>2</sup> The particle is commonly used to introduce relative subordinate clause from Old Aramaic onwards (cf. DNWSI: 310-11). On the functions of the determinative-relative pronoun \*ḏ in the Semitic languages, see *e.g.* Pennacchietti (1968) and Huehnergard (2006).

<sup>3</sup> It may be added that also the paleography of the inscriptions is sometimes significantly different. For a summary of the major proposals on the different phases of Aramaic, see *e.g.* Ferrer (2004: 65-85). Doubts about the possibility of defining clear boundaries between the different chronological phases and between Eastern and Western Aramaic are expressed by Garbini, Durand (1994: 48).

<sup>4</sup> According to Fales (1983), the text is characterized by the use of two different dialects both in the Akkadian and in the Aramaic part: the first part of the inscription would use a standard and literary variety (Standard Babylonian / Early Standard Aramaic), while the second part would be permeated by dialectal peculiarities (Neo-Assyrian / Mesopotamian Aramaic).

timonials of the existence of the analytical genitive compound in Old Aramaic. The occurrences of *zy* as *nota genitivi* are usually considered to be five:

Line 1: *dmwt' zy hdys'y*, «the image of Hadd-yiṯ»

Line 13 (twice): *mlk gzn wzy skn wzy 'zrn*, «king of Guzana, and of Sikani, and of 'Azran»

Line 16-17: *mn m'ny' zy bt hdd mr'y*, «From the tools of the house of Hadad, my Lord»

Line 23: *šbt zy nrgl*, «rod of Nergal»

However, at a closer examination, not all the occurrences of *zy* seem to have had the same syntactical function: *zy* is surely a *nota genitivi* in line 1 and in line 16-17. As regards line 1, we may notice that it is the only line which has no Akkadian equivalent (the Akkadian text runs *ana<sup>d</sup> Adad*, «to Adad»); for that reason, and for the fact that it would be the only occurrence of *zy* as *nota genitivi* in the first part of the inscription, it has been suggested that this line was belatedly added by the writer of part B as «phrase-‘cadre’, avant de recopier l’inscription A» (Fales 1983: 244). As regards the occurrence of *zy* as *nota genitivi* in *mn m'ny' zy bt hdd mr'y*, it is worth noting that this is the only case in which the *zy*-construction – and all the period – has an exact counterpart in Akkadian (*libbi unūte ša bīt<sup>d</sup> Adad bēliya*; stressed by STF: 56).

The case for line 13 and line 23 seems to be different. In *mlk gzn wzy skn wzy 'zrn*, *zy* may be interpreted also as nominal demonstrative, replacing the word ‘king’ («the king of Guzana, and *that of* Sikani, and *that of* 'Azran»); cf. Lipiński 1994 : 52-53, 62). However, it would be rather difficult to explain the choice of such a redundant construction, with the use of two conjunctions, to express a simple genitive relation, which could have been much more easily rendered in the construct state (as in the Akkadian text: *sakin māti<sup>āl</sup> guzani<sup>āl</sup> sikani u<sup>āl</sup> zarani*, «governor of Guzana and Sikani and Zaran»),<sup>5</sup> the proof that the construct chain was already in use in this Aramaic inscription is given by the occurrence of such a construction in line 2 (*gwgl šmyn w'rq*, «the canal-inspector of heaven and earth»<sup>6</sup>). We may add that the construction *mlk/mlk' + zy* (genitive particle) + Place Name is attested nowhere else in Old and in Imperial Aramaic: in these cases, the construct state is by far the most common strategy; the constructions *mlk/mlk' + b-Place Name*, *mlk + l-Place Name* and *mlk + 'l + Place Name* are attested only in a few instances.<sup>7</sup>

The expression *šbt zy nrgl* is usually translated as «rod of Nergal», since the word *šbt* is used in the Old Testament as an instrument of divine punishment (STF: 37; cf. BDB: 986-87). However, this word has no other occur-

<sup>5</sup> According to the first editors, «[...] la meilleure explication de ce tour redondant est d’y voir un désir de souligner l’extension du pouvoir de Ha-dad-yis’i» (STF: 57).

<sup>6</sup> In Old Aramaic, cf. also *kl ?lhy rḥbh w?dm[h]*, «all the gods of the steppe and of the soil» in Sefire 1A, 10.

<sup>7</sup> See the list provided by Schwiderski (2008: 508-14). Generally speaking, the construction *mlk + zy* as *nota genitivi* seems to be unknown in Old and Imperial Aramaic, the only possible exception being the debated occurrence of *zy* as genitive particle in Sefire (see below).

rences in Old and in Imperial Aramaic,<sup>8</sup> and it occurs exactly in the part of the text in which the Assyrian inscription has the word *šibtu*, «epidemic, plague» (CAD, Š/II: 387-88).<sup>9</sup> It is hard to believe that the two versions were not meant to be in strict parallelism; it thus seems likely that Aramaic *šbt* was a straightforward loan from Akkadian *šibtu*, and that *šbt* and *zy nrgl* should be considered two different elements, as suggested by Fales; in his view, *zy nrgl* is a calque of the Akkadian construction *ša + DN*, *i.e.* an independent lexical unit (Fales 1983: 247-48, esp. n. 65; 1986: 83, n. 139). Following this view, we would have three illnesses mentioned in both the texts: Assyrian *di'u šibtu diliptu*, «disease (affecting the head), plague, sleeplessness», Aramaic *mwtm šbt zy nrgl*, «plague, epidemic, that (the illness ascribed to) of Nergal».<sup>10</sup> The lack of the conjunction *w-* in the Aramaic text is quite striking, but the asyndetic construction might be due to the Akkadian influence: and in fact the entire expression seems to be deeply dependent on the Akkadian text.

In this inscription, on the other hand, the construct state is used frequently: there are eleven attestations of the construct state in which the first element is a noun (*mlk gwzn*, «king of Gozan», three times), *mr' ḥbwr* («lord of the Ḥabūr»), *'mrt pmh* («the word of his mouth», twice), *bt hdd* («house of Hadad»), *šlm hdys'y* («statue of Hadd-yiṭ»), *gwgl šmyn w'rq* («the canal-inspector of heaven and earth»), *gwgl nhr klm* («lord of all the rivers»), *br ssnwry* («son of Sāsnūrī»), one in which the first element is a divine name (*hddskn*), and perhaps six in which the first element is a participle (*mhnht 'sr*, «who sends down riches»; *ntn r'y wmsqy*, «who gives pasture and watering-place/drinking»; *ntn šlh w'dqwr*, «who gives goods/water/solid offerings (?) and ritual containers»,<sup>11</sup> *m'dn mt klm*, «who makes all the countries prosperous»; *ysb skn*, «the dweller of Sikan», twice).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The meaning *virga* is attested in Syriac (Th. Syr., cols. 4029-4030), together with the meaning *tribus*, 'tribe', recorded also in Biblical Hebrew (Ezra 6:17; cf. KB: 1990), and by far the most common in Middle Aramaic (cf. DJPA: 534; DJBA: 1102; DSA: 863-64); cf. also 'beating' in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (DJPA: 534, s.v. *šbt* # 2), and 'chastisement' in Samaritan (DSA: 864).

<sup>9</sup> In a Neo-Assyrian votive text, Nergal is called *bēl šibtī* (CAD, Š/II: 388).

<sup>10</sup> In Mesopotamian medicine, illnesses were often ascribed to the gods, whose touch/hand (*qāt GN*; logog. ŠU + GN) was considered to be the cause of the disease (see *e.g.* Fales 2010: 17-18; Geller 2001-2002: 53-54; Heeßel 2000: 49-54, where a list of the involved deities – and among them Nergal – is provided). Interesting parallels between Babylonian and Greek medicine can be found in Geller (2001-2002).

<sup>11</sup> The interpretation of this passage is highly debated, particularly the meaning of the first term, *šlh*, while the second is likely the transcription of Akkadian *adaqurru*, a ritual vessel for liquids (see *e.g.* DNWSI: 17; Fales 1982: 80-83; Kaufman 1982: 164; Zadok 1982: 117-18; Muraoka 1984: 111, n. 20; Lipiński 1994: 56; Martínez Borobio 2003: 199-200).

<sup>12</sup> In the parallel Akkadian text, the participle is followed by a genitive (cf. Muraoka 1984: 116, n. 133).

*Sefire1*

The three steles from Sefire (a village located 25 km SE of Aleppo) report the treaties made by a north Syrian ruler in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (*ante* 740 BC).<sup>13</sup>

In Sf. I A, line 10, Degen (1969: 89) proposes the restoration [*hdd zy ḥ]lb*, accepted by Lemaire and Durand (1984: 113, 132) and by Lipiński (1975: 26),<sup>14</sup> however, the restoration *hdd ḥlb* (proposed by Bauer 1932-1933: 5) – rejected by Degen because *hdd*, being determined (proper name), could not be the *regens* in a construct state – should not be disregarded: actually, the compound DN + PN is attested in Old and Imperial Aramaic: cf. *e.g.* the parallel case *hddskn* in Tell Fekheriye (line 1; STF: 57-58), and the legend *hdd mnbḡ* («Hadad of Manbiḡ/Hierapolis») on the silver coins from Hierapolis (4<sup>th</sup> century BC).<sup>15</sup>

We may add that this would be the only case of a genitive analytical construction in an inscription (Sefire 1A) which contains forty construct states/construct chains.

*Sefire3*

Before the discovery of the stele from Tell Fekheriye, the only occurrence of *zy* as genitive particle in Old Aramaic was considered to be the one occurring in the third stele of Sefire, in lines 7-8: *kl mlky' zy šhrty*, usually translated as «all the kings of my vicinity» (cf. Degen 1969: 89; KAI II: 264, no. 224; Fitzmyer 1995b: 136-37, 149-50; Schwiderski 2008: 601; cf. also Dupont-Sommer 1958: 130, «tous les rois de mon entourage»).

However, as suggested by Kaufman (1974: 130, n. 74), the particle *zy* in this construction can be also interpreted as a relative particle if we consider word *šhrty* not as a noun, *šhrh*, «vicinity», plus possessive pronoun *-y*, «my», but as a preposition, *šhrt* (f. pl.), plus personal pronoun *-y*, «around me».<sup>16</sup> In this second

<sup>13</sup> For the historical problems related to these inscriptions, see *e.g.* Lemaire, Durand (1984), with references to previous studies.

<sup>14</sup> Martínez Borobio (2003: 283) accepts this restoration, but he does not mention it among the cases of *zy* used as genitive particle (*ibid.*: 126).

<sup>15</sup> See Ronzevalle (1940: 17), who states that «l'usage sémitique exigerait la formule courante מלכא דא זי מלכא». Actually, in Imperial Aramaic the construction DN + *zy* + Place Name is commoner in such cases (see Folmer 1995: 320). However, Folmer's statement that «a *zy* phrase with two proper nouns» and «*hdd zy skn*» are attested in Tell Fekheriye is obviously a mistake: this construction does not occur in Tell Fekheriye nor in other Old Aramaic inscriptions; the only possible (but unlikely) exception is the stele from Bukān (see below).

<sup>16</sup> The pattern \**d̄v* + prepositional clause is common in the Semitic languages. It is usually considered an (elliptic) relative sentence (for Aramaic, see *e.g.* Degen 1969: 129-30; Segert 1975: 327; Bauer, Leander 1927: 356; Cantineau 1935: 130-31; Nöldeke 1898: 278); however, it has been recently – and quite convincingly – proposed that it can be also interpreted as «an apposition to its antecedent which functions as an ad-nominal attribute» (Pat-El, Treiger 2008: 280). Some doubts about the interpretation of this pattern as a relative sentence seem to be implied

case, the preposition would be similar to Hebrew *sābīb* (Kaufman 1974: 130, n. 74) a word which can be used both as a noun, ‘surroundings’, ‘vicinity’, and – more frequently – as a preposition ‘around’ (BDB: 686-87) it is worth noting that the form *s<sup>e</sup>bibôt* (f. pl.) is by far the most frequent with a pronoun.<sup>17</sup>

The root SHR usually has the meaning of «going around (mainly for commercial purpose)», «to trade», «to beg».<sup>18</sup> It is worth noting that in Old and Imperial Aramaic, the word *shrh* is never attested, save in this passage.<sup>19</sup> In Samaritan, *shrh* is attested both as noun (f.), «surrounding», and as a preposition «round about»,<sup>20</sup> *shrt'*, «neighborhood» is attested in the Tosefta (Jastrow 1903: 972), while in the official Targumim, *shrnwt'*, «surrounding» is attested in the construct state (*shrnwt*) as a preposition, «round about» (*ibidem*),<sup>21</sup> these meanings do not seem to be recorded elsewhere in Jewish Aramaic, nor in Mandaic, nor in Syriac. In the Aramaic texts of Tobit at Qumran, the verb *shr* means «to encounter», and it is followed by a pl. noun whose meaning is «encounters» (*[l'] yshrwn shrthw[n]*).<sup>22</sup>

Since the exact meaning of *shrt'y* is far from being certain, and since prepositions formed on *shr* are attested, albeit rarely, Kaufman's suggestion should not be disregarded. Moreover, in Sefire 3 this would be the only case of genitive analytical construction against 37 construct states/construct chains, and it is hard to understand why this construction should be used here. It may be noticed that the first part of the sentence runs *wkl mlky' zy shrt'y 'w kl zy rhm h' ly*, «and (as regards) all the kings of my vicinity/who are around me or anyone who is a friend of mine». This means that *kl mlky' zy shrt'y* is related to *kl zy rhm h' ly*, a syntagm in which we find again (a) *kl*, (b) *zy* used as a relative

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in Muraoka's description of this construction in Imperial Aramaic (Muraoka, Porten 1998: 244-45) and in Syriac (Muraoka 1997: 72).

<sup>17</sup> Joüon, Muraoka (2000: 346). Lipiński (1975: 55) seems to accept Kaufman's suggestion, since he translates the passage «all the kings who are around me»; however, a different translation, «all the kings of my vicinity», is provided in Lipiński (1994: 52).

<sup>18</sup> For Aramaic, cf. e.g. Th. Syr.: 2593-2594; DJPA: 372; DJBA: 798; Drower, Macuch (1963: 320, s.v. SHR II). Actually, Gibson (1975: 47 and 53) suggests for this passage a translation «any of the kings with whom I have trading relations».

<sup>19</sup> See DNWSI: 783, s.v. *shr<sub>h</sub>*, ‘vicinity’. Similar words attested in Imperial Aramaic are *shr<sub>1</sub>* and *shr<sub>3</sub>*; the former is restored, the latter means probably ‘bowl’ (*ibid.*: 782).

<sup>20</sup> DSA: 579-80. It is worth noting that the Hebrew translations provided are resp. *sbybh* and *sbyb*.

<sup>21</sup> It is worth noticing that this preposition translates Hebrew *sbybt*. The first example can be found in the Targum Onqelos (Ex. VII, 24; cf. Sperber 1959: 100): *shrnwt nhr'*, «round about the river», parallel to Hebrew *sbybt hy'r*. The second example, with plural suffix pronoun, is in Targum Jonathan (Ez. 32, 22, 25 and 26; cf. Sperber 1962: 343): *shrnwthwn qbryhwn*, parallel to Hebrew *sbybwt<sup>yw</sup> qbrwt<sup>yh</sup>* (with singular suffix pronoun). The same Aramaic translation is provided in 23 and 24 for Hebrew *sbybwt qbrth*.

<sup>22</sup> 4QTobit<sup>b</sup> ar, frg. 4i, line 14 (see Fitzmyer 1995a: 44, 47). For verb *shr*, see also 4QPapTobit<sup>a</sup> ar, frg. 13, line 4 (*ibid.*: 18).

particle, and (c) a preposition followed by suffix pronoun *-y*: it is thus quite tempting to think that the two syntagms were meant to be syntactic parallels.

### *Hazor*

The inscription on a sherd found in Ḥazor, and dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, runs, according to Naveh and Lipiński, *š' zy l* [...]. The inscription is problematic: considered to be Aramaic by Naveh (1968: 70; 1970: 13) and Lipiński (1994: 87, 89), it has been interpreted as Phoenician by Delavault and Lemaire.<sup>23</sup>

Lipiński suggests that *š'* should be considered a short form for *š'ry'*, «barley».<sup>24</sup> It is hard to accept the occurrence of *zy* as a genitive particle – so rare in Old Aramaic – in such a peripheral region as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC; however, it is even more difficult to consider *zy* as a relative particle («the barley which (belongs) to (common name or proper name)»), since the construction *zy* + *l*-Proper Name/Common Name is not attested, as far as I know, in Old Aramaic.<sup>25</sup> We may also notice that in the Aramaic inscriptions on clay tablets dated to the Neo-Assyrian period (7<sup>th</sup> century BC), the usual formula uses *zy* or *l* between the word 'barley' and the name/the title of the owner.<sup>26</sup>

At Tell Es-Sa'idiyeh (Jordan), we find an occurrence which seems to be close to the one from Ḥazor. An ostrakon dated to 700 BC runs: [*š'* *ry'* *zy* [...]], «the barley of...» (Hug 1993: 14). Unfortunately, the text is broken, and it is impossible to reconstruct the missing words, but it is likely that *zy* should be interpreted here as *nota genitivi* (so Hug 1993: 95). It is interesting to notice that in the Aramaic tablets of Neo-Assyrian period (dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC), the word occurs consistently as *š'm* (absolute state), and never as *š'ry'* (emphatic state).<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Delavault, Lemaire (1979: 10, no. 14, plate V, reading [*m*]*š' z šl*[*m?*]). However, it is difficult to accept a reading <š> for the letter after <z>, which seems to be clearly engraved, and very different from the first letter, which is indisputably a <š>.

<sup>24</sup> The use of abbreviating a word by writing its first and its last letter is rather common (see e.g. Lipiński 1994: 89, n.18).

<sup>25</sup> It is not recorded either in the Aramaic documents from Egypt (cf. Muraoka, Porten 1998: 216-17). In Old Aramaic, the construction *zy* + *l*-suff. pron. is, on its turn, extremely rare (the only occurrence being *zy ly* in Sefire III, 2; among the early Imperial Aramaic inscriptions, cf. *zy lk* in Nerab 1, 14).

<sup>26</sup> There are two other Aramaic inscriptions from Palestine dated to such an early date, and both of them contain only the particle *l* followed by a common name in the emphatic state: *lšqy'*, «(belonging) to the cupbearer», and *lṭb[h]y'*, «(belonging) to the butchers», respectively from 'En Gev and Tel Dan/Tell el-Qāḍi (see Naveh 1968: 70, n. 9; 1970: 13; Lipiński 1994: 87).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. e.g. Fales (1986: 147-48, 150-52, 225-33, 246-48, nos. 7, 9, 46, 47, 48, 49, 55). *š'ry'* *zy hnm* (Khnum being a divine name) can be found in the Aramaic documents from Egypt (Porten, Yardeni 1999: 182, D7.39: 3-4).

*Bukān*

Another doubtful attestation of *zy* as *nota genitivi* occurs on the inscription found in 1985 in Bukān, in western Azerbaijan, and dated to the mid- 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. The two fragments of the inscription were published together for the first time in an article in Persian in 1996 (Bashshash-Kanzagh 1996; *non vidi*), and the inscription has since received further studies.

In line 5, we find *hl̄dy zy bs/z'tr*, where *zy* is usually interpreted as a relative particle, and the following *b-* as preposition «in», «to Ḥaldī, who is in z'tr». Ḥaldī is the well known main Urartian god, but the reference to *z'tr* is unclear: André Lemaire, following the first editor, suggests to consider it a transcription of Akkadian Izirtu. However, as Lemaire (1998: 21) himself points out, and as Fales (2003: 137) stresses, the equivalence is rather problematic from a phonological point of view.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the reading of <z> is doubtful<sup>29</sup> – Fales proposes a reading <s>, Teixidor a reading <m><sup>30</sup> –, and the expression *zy + b + place name* is not attested in Old Aramaic (Fales 2003: 136-37).<sup>31</sup> Thus, Fales suggests to consider *zy* a *nota genitivi*, and *bs'tr* a place name or a personal name, «Ḥaldī (god) of bs'tr». The problem with this interpretation is that we have no occurrences of such a construction in Old Aramaic besides the above-mentioned [*hdd zy hl̄*]b in Sefire, which is restored. Once again, it cannot be ruled out that *zy* was used here as *nota genitivi*, but this solution is, at best, extremely doubtful. In the stele, seven construct states/chains are attested.

*Summing up the Evidence*

As we have seen, almost all the occurrences of *zy* as *nota genitivi* are doubtful, the only sure ones being two out of the five supposed occurrences in Tell Fekheriye. Analytical attribute marking is extremely rare in Old Aramaic, and – as has long been suggested – its emergence was likely due to Akkadian influence:<sup>32</sup> the Akkadian particle *ša* (CAD Š/I: 1) «which», «who», «that of»

<sup>28</sup> The metathesis *rt>tr* is extremely rare, and the absence of Akkadian *h̄*/aleph-sign in every transcription of the name Izirtu makes it difficult to justify the presence of the 'ain in Aramaic (Fales 2003: 137; see also Sokoloff 1999: 111, n. 36; Eph'al 1999: 120).

<sup>29</sup> Both KAI<sup>5</sup>: 79, no. 320 and Schwiderski (2004: 83) accept the reading *z'tr*.

<sup>30</sup> *hl̄dy zy bmt̄r*, «Haldi qui est à MṬTR (Muṣaṣir)» (Teixidor 1999: 119-20), Muṣaṣir being the city of the main temple of god Haldi. To explain the rendering with <t> of the second /s/ in Muṣaṣir, he suggests «une dissimilation en deux temps: mṣ(>t)ṣ(>t)r, puis mṭt̄(>t)r > mṭ̄r» (*ibid.*: 121). However, this interpretation is highly problematic both palaeographically and phonologically (cf. Fales 2003: 136-37).

<sup>31</sup> However, relative *zy* followed by preposition *b + common noun* is attested (see e.g. Sefire IB, 33: 'lhy 'dy' zy bspr' znh or Sefire C, 17: mly spr' zy bnšb'). On the pattern *d̄v̄ + prepositional clause*, see n. 16.

<sup>32</sup> However, it is interesting to note that, if *zy* is a *nota genitivi* in Tell Es-Sa'idiyeh and in Ḥazor,

(often without antecedent), «of» may be safely considered the model of Aramaic *zy* (cf. e.g. Garbini 1956: 271; Kaddari 1969: 104-5; Kaufman 1974: 130; Fales 1986: 83). Apart for the extreme case of a direct loan in two Aramaic tablets from Nineveh, where Akkadian *ša* is rendered with Aramaic *š*, (Fales (1986: 83-84, nos. 30 and 37)<sup>33</sup> a direct influence of Akkadian is clearly detectable in the Aramaic clay tablets from the Neo-Assyrian period, since the use of *zy* as *nota genitivi* corresponds to the use of *ša* in the Akkadian texts. Curiously enough, the dependence on the Akkadian text is not effective in the most ancient bilingual text we have, i.e. in Tell Fekheriye, where, as already observed, *ša* occurs in the parallel Akkadian text only once. Once that the relative 'independence' in the use of *zy* as *nota genitivi* in Tell Fekheriye is established, the question is, if its use shows any regularity.

For Biblical Aramaic, it has been suggested by Garr (1990: 219) that the alternation between construct state and *zy* construction is not arbitrary. According to him, «the construct phrase conveys incidental, subordinate information. The *dī* phrase expresses contrastive or important, verse-internal information»; his view is accepted by Folmer (1995: 311) regarding Imperial Aramaic in general: «I have the impression that in some instances the element which has the internal structure of as *zy*- phrase is in focus».<sup>34</sup>

In Old Aramaic, this does not seem to be the case; the coexistence of syntagms as *dmwt' zy hdys'y* and *šlm hdys'y* in Tell Fekheriye seems to exclude this possibility, not only because of their semantic similarity, but also because the two syntagms are in a similar position: both are clearly important, both are at the very beginning of a long period, both are the direct object of a verb at the end of the period. As regards the second certain occurrence, *m'ny' zy bt hdd*, we may note that it is difficult to consider it the focus of the clause, which runs *mn yld šmy mn m'ny' zy bt hdd mry' mry' hdd lhmh wmw' l ylqh mn ydh*, «whoever will remove my name from the vessels of the temple of Hadad my lord, may Hadad my lord not accept his food and his water from his hand». The focus of the clause is by no means on the vessels of the temple, as it is, on the contrary, in the similar expression *m'ny' dy-bt-'lh'*, «the vessels of the temple of god» found in Biblical Aramaic (Ezra 5:14).<sup>35</sup> If we turn to the

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the attestations of such a construction would not be limited to the part of the Near East most exposed to the Assyrian influence.

<sup>33</sup> The interpretation of the *š* as loan-word from Akkadian *ša* in *ššnzrbn* and *š'gbr* in the steles from Nerab (see e.g. Cooke 1908: 186-91, esp. 187, insc. 64 and 65; Kaddari: 105, n. 13) seems to be extremely unlikely; *šnzrbn* and *š'gbr* are two Akkadian names containing divine name Sin (Kaufman 1970), and the traces before *šnzrbn* are likely «scores on the relief and not [...] a second faded *ψ*» (Gibson 1975: 96; cf. also Kaufman 1970). Moreover, particle *zy* occurs in the first stele (line 14: *zy lk*), and the use of both the particles in the same inscription is rather improbable.

<sup>34</sup> Muraoka, Porten (1998: 228) state: «it does not seem to us always possible to establish clear *functional* opposition between the two structures».

<sup>35</sup> See Garr (1990: 219). We may notice that «the vessels of the temple of god» which occur in

(doubtful) occurrence in Sefire, the situation is even more puzzling, since the genitive analytical compound (if such) occurs only once, and it does not bear any crucial information: *mlky' zy šlrty* is actually at the beginning of the sentence, but the focus is clearly on the freedom of passage.

Another observation by Garr (1990: 219) is that «the members of *dī* phrases tend to be more individuated. In construct phrases, they tend to be nonindividuated». The evidence on this count is admittedly scanty and confusing; however, at a bird's-eye view on all the possible occurrences, some general remarks are in order: 1) apart from *šbt zy nrgl*, in which *šbt* is in the absolute state (but see above for the strong possibility that *šbt* and *zy nrgl* should be considered two independent lexical units), all the occurrences have a determined head; 2) all the (visible) occurrences have a determined modifier, which, in many cases, is or contains a proper name – or is likely to be one (Ḥazor).

Taking into consideration only the visible heads, we may add that they are usually determined by the use of the postpositive article -' (*dmwt'*; *m'ny'*; *mlky'*; *š'*; cf. also [*š*]'*ry'* in Tell Es-Sa'idiye),<sup>36</sup> the only exceptions being the divine name *hldy* in Bukān, and the construct state *mlk gwzn* in Tell Fekheriye (both being moreover doubtful occurrences of the use of *zy* as *nota genitivi*).

Now, all this may hardly be considered to be a coincidence, since the use of the definite article in Old Aramaic is not as common as it will be in later dialects. In particular, in Tell Fekheriye, apart from the two above-mentioned cases, the determinative article occurs only two more times, in *dmwt'* (line 15),<sup>37</sup> and in *qlqlt'* (line 22), and it never occurs in the *nomen rectum* of a construct state. According to Kaufman (1982: 148), «the emphatic state has still not developed into a true determinate state», since we would expect the use of the emphatic state in some more cases: as he notices, the absolute state instead of the emphatic occurs in syntagms with *kl*,<sup>38</sup> and in self-determining nouns,<sup>39</sup>

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the construct state in Ezra 6:5 (*m'ny bt-'lh'*), and which are considered by Garr as less important in the context than the vessels in 5:14, are more important in their context than the vessels mentioned in Tell Fekheriye. In Daniel (5:23), cp. *m'ny' dy-byth*, where the possessive pronoun is referred to *mr'-šmy'*.

<sup>36</sup> It is interesting to notice that the two indisputable occurrences of this construction are both determined (*dmwt'*; *m'ny'*). For the discussed and problematic origin of the definite article in Semitic, see e.g. Rubin (2005: 65-90, esp. 79-80 for Aramaic), with further bibliography. The Aramaic definite article is originally suffixed to the noun; in the Indo-European languages, the suffixed article occurs in North Germanic languages (e.g. Danish), Rumanian and Albanian (cf. Himmelmann 2001: 836).

<sup>37</sup> *dmwt' z't*, «this image»: the article is here construction-bound, since the names before demonstratives are always definite in Old Aramaic (see Degen 1969: 84, 90); this is the only occurrence of a demonstrative in the inscription, and it is a peculiar one, since the other Old Aramaic inscriptions have *z'* as f. form (cf. Degen 1969: 59; Kaufman 1982: 147).

<sup>38</sup> *mt kln* (line 3), *'lhyn klm*, *nhr klm* (line 4) (Kaufman 1982: 148); cf. also Muraoka (1984: 94-95). The syntax of *kl*, «all» (*kl* + resumptive suffix pronouns), is unusual in Tell Fekheriye, if compared to other Old Aramaic inscriptions; it can represent another Akkadian influence (Kaufman

while he ascribes the case of *šbt* to a possible Akkadian influence (Kaufman 1982: 148, n. 27). Even if the emphatic state has not still fully developed, it seems undeniable that it was used with a certain degree of coherence, since the cases in which it does not appear when expected can be ascribed to two particular conditions – the exception of *šbt* seems to confirm the dependence of the last Aramaic period on the Assyrian one. That means that the article was already – even if not perfectly – integrated into the syntax, and that it was used on purpose. As regards the relation between the analytical attribute marker and the determined article, we may also observe that in the dialects in which the determinative article is not attested – Samalian, Deir ‘Alla, Tel Dan<sup>40</sup> – the use of *zy* as *nota genitivi* is not found. The absence of such a construction in Samalian has been considered to be accidental,<sup>41</sup> and the same suggestion seems to be implied in Lipiński’s considerations about the dialect of Tel Dan (Lipiński 1994: 87). However, the evidence we have – admittedly too scanty to draw positive conclusions – suggests a correlation between the emergence of the determinative article and the emergence of the genitive analytical construction in Aramaic.

A possible confirmation might be seen in the fact that in Old Aramaic *zy* as *nota genitivi* is never found together with a proleptic pronoun: the construction head-poss. pron. + *zy* + modifier (e.g. *brh zy PN*, lit. «his son of PN»), which will be increasingly frequent in later stages of the language, does not seem to be attested before the end of the 6<sup>th</sup>/beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (in the documents from Egypt; cf. Muraoka, Porten 1998: 233-34). As suggested by Kaddari (1969: 113), there is probably a correlation between the increasing use of the proleptic pronoun and the loss of determination in the article:<sup>42</sup> when the article

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1982: 152-53). The only other occurrence in OA is in Sefire (IA, 5): *’rm klh*. Another peculiarity is that in two cases resumptive suffix pronouns are plural, while the noun they refer to is apparently singular (*mt kln*, *nhr klm*): for possible explanations see Kaufman (*ibid.*: 152-53).

<sup>39</sup> *šmyn w’rq* (line 2), *’lh rḥmn* (line 5), *mr’ rb* (line 6), *gbr* (line 12). Cf. also Degen (1969: 83).

<sup>40</sup> As is well-known, the ‘Aramaicity’ of the first two dialects is highly disputed: Samalian and the dialect of Deir ‘Alla are not considered to be Aramaic by some scholars (see e.g. Huehnergard 1995, with further bibliography); as regards the inscription of Tel Dan, it may be noticed that it has been suspected to be a forgery (Garbini 1994), even if its authenticity is now accepted by the majority of the scholars (see for a recent discussion Hagelia 2009).

<sup>41</sup> «Il se pourrait, croyons-nous, qu’au huitième siècle et dans l’aire araméenne le pronom déterminative n’ait été employé que rarement comme “*nota genitivi*” [...]. Cela étant, le silence de H et P pourrait facilement n’être qu’accidentel» (Dion 1974: 235-36; H and P are the sigla of the inscriptions of King Panamuwa I for Hadad (H) and of king Barrākib for Panamuwa II (P)). *Contra* Muraoka (1984: 102).

<sup>42</sup> Kaufman (1974: 131-32) observes that this construction is particularly frequent in Neo and Late Babylonian, and that its introduction in Aramaic is probably due to Babylonian influence. This construction is predominantly used in languages without definite article: another Semitic language without article, Classical Ethiopic (Ge‘ez), makes an extensive use of pronouns in order to determine a noun (see Dillmann 1899: 375-79, § 172); cf. also Lambdin (1978: 234-35). Amharic has probably developed its definite article from this strategy of Ge‘ez (cf. e.g.

was considered to be deprived of its original function, it was replaced by another definiteness strategy.

Thus, we may ask ourselves whether the alternation between construct state and analytical compound was motivated on a syntactic level, *i.e.* if the use of *zy* should be intended, at its very beginning (or, more reductively, in the dialect of Tell Fekheriye), to be the syntactical ‘reaction’ of the language to the introduction of the definite article. Once introduced, the article had to be properly integrated into the syntax, and the construct state for the expression of the genitive compound was no more sufficient, mainly because of its morphological rigidity.<sup>43</sup> In a second stage of the process, the use of *zy* as *nota genitivi* was extended, and, as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, we can find it mostly after indefinite names in the Aramaic tablets of the Assyrian Empire. However, it seems that the genitive analytical compounds tended to be preferred, at least in some dialects, when the elements of the compounds were determined: it is perhaps not by chance that the construction with determined head + determined modifier is the only one represented in all the Aramaic varieties studied by Kaddari.<sup>44</sup>

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Weninger 2001: 1766). Articles derive usually from demonstratives (cf. *e.g.* Himmelmann 2001), but a derivation from other sources, and among them possessive pronouns, is attested, although quite rarely (*ibid.*: 839).

<sup>43</sup> As already mentioned, the *nomen rectum* of a construct state is never determined by the article in the inscription of Tell Fekheriye, where however the modifier is once morphologically determined by the suffix pronoun -h (*'mrt pmh*). Generally speaking, the modifier in the construct state is in the Semitic languages the term which is morphologically most marked (an exception is Ge'ez: cf. Pennacchietti 1984: 270; in Ge'ez, the construct state is indicated by adding the ending -a to the head: cf. Dillmann 1899: 288-89; Lambdin 1978: 23; in another Ethiopian language, Tigre, the definite article may be added to the modifier or to the modifier and the head: cf. Pennacchietti 1984: 270; Raz 1983: 35); thus, it may be said that «il sintagma genitivale allo stato costruito è una struttura essenzialmente asimmetrica sia sul piano morfologico che sul piano accentuale» (Pennacchietti 1984: 270). The use of the analytical construction makes the head ‘free’, and creates a genitive syntagm which is morphologically more balanced. Another factor might possibly have facilitated the introduction of the analytical construction: the loss of the morphological genitive. Actually, the loss of morphological cases seems to be responsible for the emergence of the genitive analytical construction in Arabic (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996: 261-62), since the simple juxtaposition of the two nouns makes the formal connection between the head and the modifier weak, giving «impetus to the introduction of a more explicit periphrastic construction» (*ibid.*: 262). Old Aramaic seems to have lost the morphological cases, and it is worth noting that Samalian, which, as already observed, does not show a periphrastic genitive construction, retains trace of the case endings (see *e.g.* Dion 1974: 227-28).

<sup>44</sup> Namely, Behistun inscription, Aḥiqar of Elephantine (both the story and the proverbs), Elephantine Papyri (Cowley’s edition), Genesis Apocryphon, Ta’anit Scroll, Letters of Bar-Kosba, Antiochus Scroll, Targum Onqelos, Biblical Aramaic.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCES

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- CAD *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago 1956-.
- DJBA M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*. Ramat-Gan 2002.
- DJPA M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*. Ramat-Gan 1990.
- DNWSI J. Hoftijzer, K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, 2 vols. Leiden 1995.
- DSA A. Tal, *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic*, 2 vols. Leiden 2000.
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## SUMMARY

As is well known, the most ancient strategy for the expression of adnominal possession in Aramaic is the synthetic construction known in Semitic linguistics as 'construct state'; however, in many Aramaic dialects, this construction can be replaced by an analytical construction, formed by inserting the genitive particle <zy> /\*dī/, later *dy*, *d-* between the head and the modifier (hence GAC). This second strategy becomes more and more common through the centuries, while it is extremely rare in the first written attestations of the language that we possess up to now; moreover, many of the most ancient occurrences of *zy* as *nota genitivi* are highly problematic. The aim of this paper is to collect and to discuss all the possible occurrences of the genitive analytical construction in Old Aramaic (10<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century BC), looking for a possible coherence in its use. The evidence is too scanty to draw positive conclusions, but it might be observed that the

choice of the GAC does not seem to be conditioned by lexical and morphological factors, as it does not seem that the GACs are necessarily in focus. There is possibly a correlation between the GAC and the definite article: on one hand, the terms involved in the GAC do often have the definite article, in inscriptions which do not use it frequently; on the other hand, in the dialects and the inscriptions in which the definite article is not attested (Deir 'Alla, Samalian, Tel Dan) the GAC is not attested.

*Keywords:* Aramaic, adnominal possession, epigraphy.