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Analytical and synthetic genitive constructions in Old, Imperial and Epigraphic Middle Aramaic*

Giulia Francesca Grassi

Introduction

As is well known, the most ancient strategy for the expression of adnominal possession (“genitive”) in Aramaic is the “construct state” construction (hence CS), 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 (hence AGC), formed by inserting the genitive particle <zy> /*ḏī/, later *dy*, *d*⁻¹ between the head and the modifier – a variant of this construction uses a

*The present paper is a 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 at the University of Marburg on the basis of financial support from the Hessian Ministry for Science and Arts through the LOEWE programme.

¹ This particle is commonly used to introduce relative subordinate clause from Old Aramaic onwards (cp. DNWSI, pp. 310-311), and it introduces sometimes also declarative sentences. On the functions of the determinative-relative pronoun *ḏū in the Semitic languages, see e.g. Pennacchietti 1968; Huehnergard 2006; Retsö 2009. For its (vast) use in Modern South Arabian, see Simeone-Senelle 2003. *Zy* is the standard form in Old Aramaic and in Imperial Aramaic, where the form <dy> is extremely rare (cp. Folmer 1995, pp. 49-56; Muraoka – Porten 1998, p. 3; note that *dy* is the usual spelling in Biblical Aramaic), and does not occur in my sample. In Epigraphic Middle Aramaic, the old form *zy* occurs in Nabatean, together with *dy*; *dy* and *d*⁻ are both attested in Palmyrene (where the latter is much less common, and not attested in my sample) and Hatran; *d*⁻ is the usual form in Early Syriac and Jewish Palestinian (where *dy* is attested in one the most ancient text in my sample).

proleptic pronoun suffixed to the head noun. The use of the AGC becomes more and more common in the course of the centuries, with a different frequency in the various dialects, while it is extremely rare in the first written attestations of the language that we possess up to now. However, the spread of the AGC is not a linear process, as it is sometimes assumed. If in Classical Syriac and in several Modern Aramaic dialects the AGC is by far the dominant construction (sometimes the only one)², the CS persists, for example, in Classical and Modern Mandaic³.

The aim of this paper is to investigate what happened before Classical Syriac, *i.e.* when, where and how the AGC emerged and spread in the epigraphic material of the first 1400 years of Aramaic. In particular, the aim is to detect the eventuality of:

semantic differences in the use of the two constructions (synthetic construction *vs.* analytical construction);

- differences determined by the genre of the text;
- influences in the origin and/or in the development of the analytical attribute marking;
- independent internal developments of the analytical attribute marking in the different dialects;

² For Syriac see *e.g.* Nöldeke 1904, p. 162; for North Eastern Neo Aramaic (NENA) dialects and ʿuroyo, see *e.g.* Khan 2007, pp. 302-303; Jastrow 1997, pp. 357-358; Jastrow 1992, p. 42. In NENA the particle is sometimes attached to the head, and frequently assimilated: cp. Jastrow 1997, pp. 357-358; Khan 2007, p. 302, who suggests that the particle is reanalyzed as inflection of the head. In Western Neo-Aramaic the genitive syntagm is not expressed by the particle *d-*, but by the enclitic particle *-l* (with variants) attached to the head noun (cp. *e.g.* Jastrow 1997, pp. 339-340; Arnold 1990, pp. 301-302).

³ See *e.g.* Macuch 1965, pp. 390-392; Häberl 2009, pp. 132-133 and 152; the analytical genitive compound with *d-* (<*d*>), attested in the Classical language, is retained in Neo-Mandaic only in frozen and archaic expressions (Macuch 1989, p. 74; Häberl 2009, p. 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, p. 74; Häberl 2009, p. 134).

- chronological and/or geographical factors in the development and use of the analytical attribute marking.

In order to do that, 2464 genitive constructions have been collected from 398 texts, mainly epigraphs, but also papyri and parchments, from Old Aramaic to Epigraphic Middle Aramaic (Palmyrene, Nabatean, Hatran, Early Syriac, Jewish Palestinian), *i.e.* from the 9th century BC to the 4th century AD, with very few examples of texts dated to the 5th and 6th century AD. Biblical Aramaic and the texts from Qumran have been included in the database of the LOEWE project, but they are not considered in this article, and they are not part of the 2464 occurrences of the sample.

The *corpus* includes all the Old Aramaic inscriptions, including Samalian⁴, a sample of Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian docketts, several documents from Egypt, inscriptions from Asia Minor, Teima, Nerab, Persepolis, Wadi Daliyeh, the Assur ostrakon, some ostraka from Idumaea, the incantation text from Uruk, the edicts of Aśoka, Palmyrene and Hatran inscriptions, Nabatean, Jewish Palestinian and Early Syriac inscriptions and papyri⁵. Of course, it is a sample of texts, and the corpora are not

⁴ Deir Alla has been excluded for its bad conservation. It should be noted that the GAC does not seem to be attested in Deir Alla, nor in Samalian (see below).

⁵ The texts have been taken mainly from the following corpora, with comparisons: Old Aramaic with the exception of Bukān: Martínez Borobio 2003; Bukān: Lemaire 1998 and Fales 2003; Neo-Assyrian tablets: Fales 1986 and Hug 1993; Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: Porten – Yardeni 1986-1999; Murašu Archives: Delaporte 1912; Inscriptions of Teima: Beyer – Livingstone 1983; Beyer – Livingstone 1990; Schwiderski 2004; Texts from Persepolis: Bowman 1970; Schwiderski 2004; Wadi Daliyeh Papyri: Gropp *et al.* 2001 (DJD XXVIII); Ostraka from Idumaea: Ephʿal – Naveh 1996; Edicts of king Aśoka: Davary – Humbach 1974; Miscellaneous Inscriptions (Assur ostrakon, Inscriptions from Nerab, Decree Law of Beyruth, Sefire, Inscription of Tell Es-Saʿidiyeh, Inscriptions from Asia Minor (Saraidin, Daskyleion, Bahadirli, Xanthos, Sardis, Lion Weight from Abydos, Arebsun, Ostrakon of Arad): mainly Schwiderski 2004; Incantation Text from Uruk: Geller 1997-2000; Palmyrene: PAT; Nabatean: Cantineau 1930-1932, II (the number which follows the sigla Cantineau is the page

analyzed in their entirety, with the exception of Old Aramaic; however, the texts have been chosen with the aim of including every region, dialect, genre, and date, in order to have a reliable sample. Extensively damaged texts are usually avoided⁶, and the restored occurrences of the two constructions have not been considered, unless the restoration was partial and certain.

It is important to note that the study is focused on the alternation of the two constructions when two (or more) nouns are involved; that means that the cases in which the modifier is expressed by a pronoun, either directly suffixed to the noun or attached to the analytical syntagm *zy l-*, have not been included⁷.

The genitive constructions/chains, have been collected in a database containing the following files:

- Text identification;
- Text type;
- Date;
- Provenance;
- Dialect;
- Text;
- (Eventual) parallel text (if a bilingual inscription, or a translation);
- English Translation;
- Construction type (construct state or analytical construction);
- If analytical construction, eventual presence of definite article in the head and/or the modifier, and of the proleptic pronoun on the head

number); Healey 2009; Hatran: Aggoula 1991; Beyer 1998; Jewish Palestinian: MPAT; Early Syriac: Drijvers – Healey 1999.

⁶ This is not always possible with IA, since some entire stocks are badly preserved, *e.g.* the Samaria Papyri.

⁷ As regards the Aramaic texts of the Achaemenid period, these cases are fully considered by Folmer 1995.

Of the 2464 Genitive constructions, only 304, *i.e.* 12,3 %, contain at least one AGC (there are chains in which there are several AGCs, or chains with mixed construction, some analytical, some synthetic – I have not considered each element separately).

This low percentage shows that the CS is dominant in the *corpus*; however, the number of the AGCs is different in each dialect. In addition, other relevant factors are the provenance of the text, its date, language contact, and the frequency of the head noun, even if not all these factors do play a role in each phase of the language.

Old Aramaic

The evidence is scanty⁸; the CS prevails by far in all the texts, and it is attested in a limited number of inscriptions. Moreover, many of the most ancient occurrences of *zy* as *nota genitivi* (and not as a relative particle) are highly problematic, and it is sometimes far from certain if this is the correct interpretation. The only inscription in which the AGC is indisputably attested is the most ancient one, Tell Fekheriyye, to which a very short inscription from Ḥazor, dated to the 9th century BC, may be possibly added.

TF, Line 1: *dmwt? zy hdysfy*, “the image of Hadd-yiṯṯ”

TF, Line 13 (twice): *mlk gzn wzy skn wzy ?zrn*, “king of Guzana, and of Sikani, and of ?Azran”

TF, Line 16-17: *mn m?ny? zy bt hdd mr?y*, “From the tools of the house of Hadad, my Lord”

⁸ For a more exhaustive discussion on the evidence in Old Aramaic, see Grassi forthcoming a. This article was already submitted to the *Annali dell’Istituto Orientale di Napoli* when I received the drafts of the not yet published article by Renaud Kutý on the same topic (Kutý forthcoming). I am grateful to Dr. Kutý for giving me the possibility of reading his interesting article before its publication. Unlike Kutý, who considers Old Aramaic also the Aramaic of the Neo-Assyrian dockets, Old Aramaic is here understood as restricted to the early centuries of the Aramaic language, from its first attestations (end 10th-beginning 9th BC) to the end of the 8th century BC.

TF, Line 23: *šbt zy nrgl*, “rod of Nergal”

Hazor: *š? zy l[...]*⁹.

The occurrence of the AGC in Sefire and Bukān has been suggested, but it is not undisputable: in Sefire 1A the restoration by Degen, [*hdd zy h]lb*, has been almost universally accepted, but the restoration *hdd hlb*¹⁰ – rejected by Degen because *hdd*, being determined (proper name), could not be the *regens* in a construct state – should not be disregarded and is even more likely: actually, the compound DN + PN is attested in Old and Imperial Aramaic: cp. e.g. the parallel case *hddskn* in Tell Fekheriye (line 1)¹¹, and the legend *hdd mnbg* (“Hadad of Manbiḡ/Hierapolis”) on the silver coins from Hierapolis (4th century BC)¹². As regards Sefire 3, the syntagm in lines 7-8: *kl mlky? zy shrtv*, usually translated as “all the kings of my vicinity”¹³, has been for a long time considered the only example of AGC in Old Aramaic before the discovery of Tell

⁹ Cp. also the ostrakon found in Tell Es-Saʿidiyeh (Jordan), which seems to have a construction close to the one from Hazor. The ostrakon, dated to 700 BC ca, runs: [*š]šry? zy [...]*, “the barley of...”. 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* (cp. Hug 1993, pp. 14 and 95).

¹⁰ Proposed by Bauer (1932-1933, p. 5).

¹¹ See STF, pp. 57-58.

¹² See Ronzevalle 1940, p. 17, who states that “l’usage sémitique exigerait la formule courante *hdd zy skn*”. Actually, in Imperial Aramaic the construction DN + *zy* + Place Name is more common in such cases (see Folmer 1995, p. 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 *lapsus*: 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). Kutv (forthcoming), who also considers the restoration with the construct state more likely in Sefire 1A, adds examples of the construction Divine name + toponym in the construct state from the Aramaic documents of the Neo-Assyrian period.

¹³ Cp. Degen 1969, p. 89; KAI II, 224, p. 264; Lemaire – Durand 1984, pp. 119 and 145; Fitzmyer 1995, pp. 136-137 and 149-150; Schwiderski 2008, p. 601.

Fekheriye. However, the suggestion already made by Kaufman in 1974, who thought that the particle *zy* is a relative pronoun, and *shrt* (f. pl.) a preposition, plus personal pronoun *-y*, “around me”¹⁴, should not be disregarded, since this would be the only occurrence of an AGC in the whole inscription, and *srhh* is attested also as preposition in later phases of the language: in Samaritan, *shrh* is attested both as noun (f.), “surrounding”, and as a preposition “round about”¹⁵, and in the official Targumim, *shrnwt?*, “surrounding” is attested in the construct state (*shrnwt*) as a preposition, “round about”¹⁶. Moreover, the first part of the sentence runs *wkl mlky? zy shrty ʔw 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 shrty* is parallel to *kl zy rhm h? ly*, a syntagm in which we find again (a) *kl*, (b) *zy* used as a relative particle, and (c) a preposition followed by

¹⁴ The pattern * $\bar{d}\bar{v}$ + prepositional clause is common in the Semitic languages. It is usually considered an (elliptic) relative sentence (for Aramaic, see e.g. Degen 1969, pp. 129-130; Segert 1975, p. 327; Bauer – Leander 1927, p. 356; Cantineau 1935, pp. 130-131; Nöldeke 1904, pp. 289-290); 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, p. 280). Some doubts about the interpretation of this pattern as a relative sentence seem to be implied in Muraoka’s description of this construction in Imperial Aramaic (Muraoka – Porten 1998, pp. 244-245) and in Syriac (Muraoka 1997, p. 72).

¹⁵ DSA, pp. 579-580. It is worth noting that the Hebrew translations provided are resp. *sbybh* and *sbyb*.

¹⁶ Jastrow 1903, p. 972. This preposition translates Hebrew *sbybt*. The first example can be found in the Targum Onqelos (Ex. 7: 24; cp. Sperber 1959, p. 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; cp. Sperber 1962, p. 343): *shrnwthwn qbrhwn*, “their graves (are) round about them”, parallel to Hebrew (with singular suffix pronoun) *sbybwtyw qbrwtyw*, “his graves (are) round about him” (22), and *sbybwtyw qbrth/qbrwtyh* (resp. 25 and 26), “her graves (are) round about him” (25). The same Aramaic translation is provided in 23 and 24 for Hebrew *sbybwt qbrth*, “round about her grave”.

suffix pronoun *-y*: it is thus quite tempting to think that the two syntagms were meant to be syntactic parallels.

As regards Bukān, particle *zy* occurring in line 5, *lhldy zy bs/zʕtr*, is usually considered to be a relative particle, and the following *b-* as preposition “in”, “to Ḥaldî, who is in *zʕtr*”. Ḥaldî is the well known main Urartian god, but the reference to *zʕtr* is unclear: André Lemaire, following the first editor, suggests to consider it a transcription of Akkadian *Izirtu*. However, as Lemaire himself points out, and as Fales stresses¹⁷, the equivalence is rather problematic from a phonological point of view¹⁸. Moreover, the reading of <*z*> is doubtful¹⁹ – Fales proposes a reading <*s*>, Teixidor a reading <*m*>²⁰ –, and the expression *zy + b + place name* is not attested in Old Aramaic²¹. Thus, Fales suggests to consider *zy* a *nota genitivi*, and *bsʕtr* a place name or a personal name, “Ḥaldî (god) of *bsʕtr*”. The problem with this interpretation is that we have no occurrences of such a construction in Old Aramaic besides the above-mentioned *[hdd zy hl]b* in Sefire, which is restored.

Even some occurrences in Tell Fekheriyye are doubtful: *zy* in lines 13 and 23 have been interpreted sometimes as nominal

¹⁷ Lemaire 1998, p. 21; Fales 2003, p. 137.

¹⁸ The methathesis *rt>tr* is extremely rare, and the absence of Akkadian *ḫ/aleph*-sign in every transcription of the name *Izirtu* makes it difficult to justify the presence of the *ʕayin* in Aramaic (Fales, *ibid.*; see also Sokoloff 1999, p. 111, note 36; Ephʕal 1999, p. 120).

¹⁹ Both KAI⁵, 320, p. 79 and Schwiderski 2004, p. 83 accept the reading *zʕtr*.

²⁰ *lhldy zy bmttr*, “Haldi qui est à MTTR (Muşasir)” (1999, pp. 119-120), Muşasir being the city of the main temple of god Haldi. To explain the rendering with <*t*> of the second /*ʕ*/ in Muşasir, he suggests “une dissimilation en deux temps: *mʕ(>ʕ)ʕ(>ʕ)r*, puis *mʕʕ(>ʕ)r > mʕtr*” (p. 121). However, this interpretation is highly problematic both palaeographically and phonologically (cp. Fales 2003, pp. 136-137).

²¹ See Fales, *ibid.* However, relative *zy* followed by preposition *b + common noun* is attested (see e.g. Sefire IB, 33: *?lhdy ʕdyʔ zy bsprʔ znh* or Sefire C, 17: *mly sprʔ zy bnʕbʔ*). On the pattern *ḏv̄ + prepositional clause*, see note 14 and the section devoted to Imperial Aramaic.

demonstrative, the first one replacing the word “king” (“the king of Guzana, and *that of* Sikani, and *that of* ʔAzran”)²², the second one replacing the word “illness”: (“that (*i.e.* the illness ascribed to) of Nergal”²³).

In his article, Kutý suggests four factors, which may have determined the choice of the AGC: the difference of determination between the head and the modifier (*šbt zy nrgl*), the focus (*dmwt? zy hdys?y*; possibly *kl mlky? zy šhrty*), the fact that the genitive is a genitive of origin (*kl mlky? zy šhrty*), and the presence of the same construction in Akkadian (*mn m?ny? zy bt hdd mr?y*). Even if some of them are convincing, four different factors in order to explain four AGCs are too many. As already said, in the first and particularly in the third constructions *zy* is not necessarily a genitive particle. As regards *šbt zy nrgl*, it may be also pointed out that Tell Fekheriyye does not always have the article when expected, and this is one possible case, even if doubtful²⁴. The idea that the AGC is used in *mn m?ny? zy bt hdd mr?y* because of the Akkadian parallel is not entirely convincing, because the Aramaic text is not a copy of the Assyrian one, and several Assyrian influences may be found in constructions which do not have an Akkadian parallel. Apart from the use of particle *zy* when Akkadian does not have the correspondent *ša*, we may notice, for example, the anomalous construction in which *kl* (with resumptive pronoun) follows the name to which it refers, typical of Akkadian, but extremely rare in Old Aramaic, where it usually precedes it²⁵.

²² Cp. Lipiński 1994, pp. 52-53 and 62.

²³ Fales 1983, pp. 247-248, particularly note 65; 1986, p. 83, note 139. 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, pp. 17-18; Geller 2001-2002, pp. 53-54; Heeßel 2000, pp. 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.

²⁴ Kaufman 1982, p. 148.

²⁵ Cp. Kaufman 1982, pp. 152-153.

Apart from the doubts about the exact nature of particle *zy* in the syntagm *kl mlky? zy shrty*, Kutý's observation about the fact that the particle *zy* is possibly chosen here instead of the particle *mn* is very interesting. As Kutý notes, the particle *zy*, when used as a genitive particle, appears frequently for indicating provenience, both in the Neo-Assyrian tablets and, as studied by Folmer²⁶, in the documents of the Achaemenid period. Also in my sample of Imperial Aramaic inscriptions, the use of *zy* for expressing provenience is well attested (see below).

As regards the importance of focus, this seems to be doubtful: actually, *dmwt? zy hdysšy* is at the very beginning of the inscription, but also the semantically equivalent *šlm hdysšy* is in focus, while *kl mlky? zy shrty* (if a genitive) is not, the focus of the phrase being on the freedom of passage.

The evidence is admittedly too scanty to draw positive conclusions about the use of the AGC, but some general observations may be made: as already observed, it does not seem that the syntagm in the AGC is in focus, as it does not seem that the choice of the AGC is conditioned by lexical and morphological factors, as number, gender, animacy, or the like: feminine and plural nouns are attested, as well as animate and non-animate nouns.

What can be tentatively suggested is that there seems to exist a correlation between the AGC and the definite article: on the one hand, the term involved in the AGC does often have the definite article, in inscriptions which do not use it frequently; on the other hand, the dialects (if Aramaic) and the inscriptions in which the definite article is not attested (Deir Alla, Samalian, Tel Dan) the AGC is not attested.

This can hardly be considered a coincidence, since the use of the definite article in Old Aramaic is not as common as it is in later dialects. In particular, in Tell Fekheriye, apart from the two above-

²⁶ Folmer 1995, pp. 318-319.

mentioned cases, the determinative article occurs only two more times, in *dmwt?* (line 15), and in *qlqlt?* (line 22), and it never occurs in the *nomen rectum* of a construct state. 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. Generally speaking, the modifier in the construct state is in the Semitic languages the term which is morphologically most marked (an exception is *Gəʕəz*, another partial exception Tigre)²⁷, and it may be said that “il sintagma genitivale allo stato costruito è una struttura essenzialmente asimmetrica sia sul piano morfologico che sul piano accentuale”²⁸. The use of the analytical construction makes the head “free”, and creates a genitive syntagm which is morphologically more balanced.

Another possible factor which could have facilitated the emergence of the AGC is perhaps the loss of morphological cases. Of course, this suggestion is speculative, because there is no positive evidence about it, nor the possibility of establishing if Old Aramaic still retained the morphological cases or not. It is usually said that Old Aramaic did not have case morphemes, and this may be likely, but, as is well known, there are still traces of them in Samalian²⁹. If Aramaic had just lost (or was in the process of losing) morphological cases, it was in a favorable condition for the development of an alternative construction for the expression of adnominal possession, since the loss of the morphological genitive

²⁷ Cp. *e.g.* Pennacchietti 1984, p. 270; Dillmann 1899, pp. 288-289; Raz 1983, p. 35.

²⁸ Pennacchietti 1984, p. 270.

²⁹ See *e.g.* Dion 1974, pp. 227-228

in the modifier of the CS reduces automatically the formal connection between the two nouns. It might be observed that in Arabic the emergence of the AGC follows the loss of the morphological cases³⁰.

An Akkadian influence in the emergence of the construction has often been suggested, and it is likely, although not proved³¹: it may be noted that if *zy* is a *nota genitivi* in Tell Es-Safidiyeh and in Ḥazor, the attestations of such a construction would not be limited to the part of the Near East most exposed to the Assyrian influence. In any case, this influence would not be without reinterpretation, as it is clear from the fact that in the bilingual text of Tell Fekheriyye there is no exact correspondence between the Akkadian AGCs and the Aramaic AGCs but in one case (the Aramaic text actually uses the AGC more frequently than the Akkadian one). Moreover, the eventual Akkadian influence is not incompatible with the possibility of factors which could have facilitated its use by Aramaic.

*Imperial Aramaic*³²

In Imperial Aramaic, the construct state is still by far more common than the AGC, even if its distribution is not homogeneous: the analytical constructions has only 152 occurrences³³ (150 with particle /*ḏī/, 2 with particle š- from Akkadian *ša*) out of the 934 genitive constructions/chains of the sample, *i.e.* the 16,3 % ca. Of these 152 occurrences, 23 have

³⁰ Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996, esp. pp. 261-262.

³¹ Cp. *e.g.* Garbini 1956, p. 271; Kaddari 1969, pp. 104-105; Kaufman 1974, p. 130; Fales 1986, p. 83.

³² IA is here meant *stricto sensu*, *i.e.* 7th BC – 3rd BC.

³³ That does not mean that construct state occurs only in the remaining 782 genitive constructions: except for one case in which the modifier precedes the head (see note 38), which is neither an AGC nor a CS, there are several cases in which the genitive chains is mixed, *i.e.* contains both synthetic and analytical constructions.

indubitably the head marked by the suffix proleptic pronoun (15,1% of the AGCs).

Chronology, Geography, Style and Genre

An interesting study about the opposition between these two constructions, particularly focused on the determination of the nouns involved, was made by Kaddari in 1969; he considered a dialect that he called “Imperial Aramaic”, but that indeed contained documents in Imperial and in Middle Aramaic, including Biblical Aramaic³⁴. In his study, he individuates two main factors in the distribution of the two constructions, chronology and style: “Chronologically, the later the document, the greater are (sic) the number of *zī (dī)*-phrases in it; and stylistically, the closer the language to the official one, the more *zī (dī)*-phrases it contains”³⁵. However, this statement is true from a broad air-view (the AGC is almost non-existent in Old Aramaic, while it is very common in Modern Aramaic), but it is not entirely true if we have a closer look at the documents in Imperial Aramaic³⁶ – in which the construct state, as already mentioned, is globally by far more common.

Actually, among the most ancient documents (7th BC), the Neo-Assyrian – Aramaic texts, the occurrence of the AGC is very high: out of 64 genitive constructions/chains, 22 contain at least one AGC (34,37 %) ³⁷. On the other hand, in later texts, such as the Aśoka edicts (3rd century BC) and the Idumean ostraka, the occurrence of

³⁴ That means that the *corpus* considered here does not match exactly with Kaddari’s *corpus*.

³⁵ Kaddari 1969, p. 103.

³⁶ An attenuation of Kaddari’s position is expressed by Muraoka – Porten (1998, p. 229, note 951).

³⁷ I have considered 38 Aramaic texts on clay tablets (36 from Fales 1986, 2 from Hug 1993), the ostrakon from Assur and two fragmentary texts (Hug 1993, p. 19). Fales 30 and, perhaps, 37 contain the occurrences of *š* (< Akkadian *ša*) to express the analytical genitive construction.

the AGC is very low: none in the former³⁸, 3 out of 59 (5%) in the latter – we may add that one of them is attested in one of the two documents dated to the 5th and not the 4th century BC in the *corpus* edited by Ephʿal and Naveh³⁹.

The Mesopotamian origin of a text is often connected to a rather high number of AGCs, while its Western provenance is often (once again, not always) characterized by a relatively low number of AGCs. In Imperial Aramaic, we can compare for example the different frequency of the AGCs in the Aḥiqar papyrus from Elephantine: the AGCs are 6 out of 35 in the Aḥiqar story (17%), 1 (doubtful) out of 48 in the Aḥiqar Proverbs (2%)⁴⁰, which are written in a Western and archaic dialect⁴¹. The text which contains the highest percentage of AGCs is the Aramaic translation of the inscription of Behistun, in which an AGC is contained in 12 of the 16 genitive constructions/chains of the inscription (75%). Similarly, the Aramaic inscriptions on the Neo-Assyrian docketts, as already stated, do show a rather high percentage of AGCs, and the Neo-Babylonian texts seem to have the same tendency⁴², while Idumean ostraka a very low one (see above).

We may add, however, that there are exceptions, since, for example, the AGC is quite well attested in the Aramaic documents from Asia Minor (5th-4th century BC), which are relatively far from

³⁸ Certain genitive constructions are attested only in Aśoka V and VI; they are seven: six construct states, and one interesting case in which probably the modifier precedes the head (this would be the only case in my *corpus*): *šryryn šqq*, “Straße der Getreuen” (Davary – Humbach 1974, pp. 11-12).

³⁹ Ephʿal – Naveh 1996. From this *corpus*, I have considered 21 ostraka.

⁴⁰ Only the visible occurrences have been considered. The reference edition is Porten – Yardeni 1993, pp. 24-53 (C1.1).

⁴¹ Lindenberger 1983, p. 19; Kottsieper suggests a provenance from Anti-Lebanon or the region of Damascus, and a date between the 8th and the 7th century BC (1990, resp. pp. 245 and 241).

⁴² I have considered 14 tablets from the Murašu archive (5th century BC): 20 genitive constructions/chains are attested, of which 8 contain at least a GAC.

direct Akkadian influences. The most ancient text, a funerary inscription from Sultaniye Köy, dated to 500 BC ca, contain in fact 2 AGCs out of 2 genitive constructions (no CS). The dedicatory text from Saraidin (5th c. BC) shows one construct state and one chain with a CS and an AGC. The Daskyleion inscription (second half 5th c. BC) contains one AGC out of two genitive constructions, the Bahadırli inscription (first half 4th c. BC) two out of three, the Sardis bilingual text (348 BC) two out of five, the Lion Weight from Abydos (Mysia; 5th – 4th c. BC) one out of one, the Arebsun inscription (5th – 4th c. BC) three out of four; however, the trilingual inscription from Xanthos (4th c. BC) shows no AGC and 7 construct states/chains.

On the contrary, the AGC is not attested in a later Aramaic text (3rd – 2nd century BC), the famous incantation in cuneiform script from Uruk, although this document, which contains several construct states, is influenced by Akkadian⁴³.

That means that both the geographical and the chronological factors play a role which is not always easy to explain. Unfortunately, the same can probably be said for the role played by genre and style, even if it is in some cases detectable. For example, in the (few) literary texts we possess, the number of the *zy*-constructions is admittedly different: as already noted, in the Aḥiqar story they are 6 out of 35, in the Aḥiqar Proverbs 1 (doubtful) out of 48, in the copy of the Behistun inscription 12 out of 16, and in the Story of Ḥor bar Punesh 2 out of 13. However, the two narrative texts seem to show a similar percentage (17% and 15,4%), while Behistun is influenced by Akkadian, and the Aḥiqar Proverbs, as already mentioned, are written in a Western dialect.

In the letters, if we take into consideration four stocks, Hermopolis (A2), Private Letters (A3), the Yedanyah archive (A4) and

⁴³ See e.g. Geller 1997-2000, with detailed commentary. It is worth noticing that the syntagm *si-ip-pa-a di-a-ba-ba-a?* (line 2), is translated by Geller as “threshold which is on the gate”, but considered a “periphrastic genitive” (p. 136): see below.

Arsames letters (A6)⁴⁴, the following occurrences of the *zy*-construction may be seen: 1 out of 45 (2,2%), 6 out of 49 (12,2%), 18 out of 101 (17,8%), 5 out of 26 (19,2%). That means that in the official letters (A4 and A6) the number of the AGCs is higher and similar.

It has been suggested by Kaddari that the closer is the language to the official one, the more *zy*-phrases it contains. The problem is on one hand that we cannot exactly define from a linguistic point of view what the “official” style is; the second is that, if we assume – as it is usually done – that the official language is the language of the official documents as opposed to the private ones, this “rule” may be partially true for Egypt, but not for other regions. For example, in Asia minor the private inscriptions show, as already seen, a high frequency of AGCs, while the most official document, the text from Xanthos, show no AGC at all. Other examples of official texts without AGCs are the edicts of king Aśoka.

Elements such as chronology, geography and style might affect the percentage of the AGCs in the documents, but it does not seem that they always – and with the same proportion – do it.

Focus, Semantic and Lexical Aspects

An important study by Margareta Folmer integrates these observations by Kaddari, considering mainly the semantic aspect of the nouns involved, disregarded by him, with a particular attention given to animacy, and to the presence of the proleptic possessive pronoun in the analytical construction (of course, this construction with proleptic pronoun is used only in the possessive function of the genitive relationship, and it is not attested in the known Old Aramaic inscriptions). About the possessive relationship, she states that inalienable possession is expressed

⁴⁴ In the fourth stock (A6), I have included only documents number 1, 4, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15; in the third stock (A4), document number 8 is not included, because it is the second draft of document 7. The abbreviations and the numbers follow Porten – Yardeni 1986.

more frequently with the construct state, and alternatively with the AGC with proleptic pronoun. In particular, the constructions in which the head noun is a kinship term, the construct state is preferred, but the AGC with the proleptic pronoun is well attested, mostly with the less common kinship terms, and in the texts of Eastern provenance⁴⁵. This is reflected in my sample, where the common words *br* and *brh*, “son” and “daughter”, are attested respectively 255 and 11 times, in the AGC respectively only 6 times and once. Two occurrences of the word *br* and the only occurrence of the word *brh* in the AGC are undefined, because they are not referred to particular sons/daughters, but to any of them: *br wbrh zy yznyh*, “any son or daughter of yznyh” (B2.10, line 13, and *bnn zy yzn*, “any of the sons of yzn” (B2.10, line 17)⁴⁶. The other four occurrences of *br* in the AGC do show the proleptic pronoun (A6.4, line 2; C2.1, col. 7, line 37 (Behistun); Saraidin, lines 2-3; Teima 27, lines 4-5), as well as the other kinship terms, if they are not in the construct state: *ḡht nbwšh*, “sister of nbwšh” (A2.2, lines 5-6), but also *ḡth wḡnth zy byl*, “sister and wife of Bel” (Arebsun, l. 2); as regards *ḡnth*, in Arebsun there is also the much discussed *ḡntt zy byl mlk?*, possibly “wife of Bel the king” in line 3⁴⁷; the other occurrences of *ḡ(n)th* are in the CS: *ḡtt hwdw*, “the wife of hwdw”, *ḡtt hwšš*, “the wife of hwšš”, *ḡtt yslḡ*, “the wife of yslḡ” (A4.4, line 5), and *ḡntt by/[l]by*, “wife of the house/of

⁴⁵ Folmer 1995, esp. pp. 274-286 and 304-312.

⁴⁶ See also Folmer 1995, p. 274. The word *br* occurs without suffix pronoun (and without the article), even if expected, in three boundary stones from Armenia dated to the 2nd century BC (reign of Artaxias I, 189-160 BC), and not included in my sample (see Naveh 1970-1971). The short texts mention *ḡrthšsy mlk br zy zrytr*, “Artaxias, (the) king, son of Zariatr” (inscriptions A-C); a fourth inscription (D) has the CS, *br zrytr* (and *br ḡštrsr* in line 9); because of this, Naveh states that “it seems likely that the person who formulated text D knew Aramaic better than the one who set down the formula of inscriptions A-C” (p. 45). He notes also the absence of the determinative state. On these texts, see also Folmer 1995, p. 283.

⁴⁷ Of course, *ḡntt* looks like a CS, but followed by particle *zy* (so KAI II, p. 311). For the various interpretations, see DNWSI, p. 117 (*s.v.* ḡš).

my heart” (Arebsun, lines 8-9)⁴⁸; *ḥtnh zy nbšh*, “the son in law of nbšh” (A2.6, line 3); *ʔḥwhy zy ḥny* (A4.7, lines 18-19; the grapheme <y> in ʔḥwhy is written above); *ʔbwhy zy ʔsrḥʔdn znh mlkʔ*, “the father of this Esarhaddon the king” (C1.1, col. 3, l. 47), *ʔbwh zy ʔtwr klʔ*, “the father of the whole Assyria” (C1.1, col. 4, l. 55); *ʔmhm zy ḥlymyʔ ʔlh*, “the mother of these slaves” (B2.11, l. 13). About the use of the CS in order to express inalienability, and its alternation with the less common analytical construction with proleptic pronoun particularly with kinship terms, it may be observed that this same tendency seems to be attested in some Middle Aramaic dialects (see below).

As regards focus, Folmer states that “in some instances the element which has the internal structure of a *zy*- phrase is in focus”⁴⁹, a conclusion which agrees with the opinion expressed by Garr about Biblical Aramaic⁵⁰. However, it is not always easy to understand where the focus in the phrase is, especially in damaged or ambiguous texts, and sometimes the AGC does not seem to be in focus, while some synthetic constructions seem to be in focus. For example, in the Story of Ḥor bar Punesh (Porten – Yardeni, C1.2), in a broken context in line 1, the syntagm *ḥl tshrʔ zy mlkʔ*, “concerning/to the boat of the king” occurs, while in line 7 the word for “boat”, in this case *ʔlp*, is in the construct state, *lhš ḥwr b[r pwn]š ḥl ʔlpy mlkʔ*, “Ḥor, son of Punesh, pronounced a spell over the boats of the king”, in a passage in which the syntagm is actually important, because it makes clear what the spelled object is. The fact that the head is in the plural does not seem to be significant here, since the word *mlh*, “word” is attested in line 3 as the head of an AGC in the plural, *mlyʔ zy mlkʔ*, “the words of the king”.

⁴⁸ *[l]by* in KAI 264, “wife of my heart” (KAI I⁵, p. 64; II, p. 311); the reading *by* is considered sure by Lipiński 1975, pp. 180-181; cp. also Schwiderski (2004, p. 40 and 2008, p. 66).

⁴⁹ Folmer 1995, p. 311.

⁵⁰ Garr 1990.

Although it has been convincingly demonstrated that there are cases in which a construction is usually preferred to the other, in the majority of cases it is very difficult, as stated by Muraoka and Porten, to detect a clear functional opposition⁵¹.

Having a look on the following examples, that have been chosen, if possible, with identical or similar semantic components⁵², it can be noticed that both the constructions are used in the majority of the varieties of the logical and semantical genitive relationship⁵³.

1. Possessive:

hyl ʔtwr, “the army of Assyria” (C1.1, col. 4, line 55)

hylʔ zy mdy, “the army of Media” (C2 1:19)

ʔlpy mlkʔ, “the boats of the king” (C1 2:7)

tshrʔ zy mlkʔ, “the boat of the king” (C1 2:1)

2. Relational:

kmr šhr, “priest of šhr” (Nerab 1:1)

kmryʔ zy hnw b, “the priests of Khnw b” (A4 5:3)⁵⁴

⁵¹ Muraoka – Porten 1998, esp. p. 228.

⁵² The results in the first five genitive relationships seem to exclude a semantic factor in the choice of the analytical construction; note that semantics is relevant in later phases of the language: cp. Kutý 2007, p. 116.

⁵³ For the Aramaic of the documents from Egypt, cp. also Muraoka – Porten 1998, pp. 218-233.

⁵⁴ This couple, together with the previous *ʔlpy mlkʔ / tshrʔ zy mlkʔ* and the following *mlt mlk / mlyʔ zy mlkʔ*, is a good example of the fact that number does not seem to be relevant in the choice, as it happens, on the contrary, in the dialect of Targum Jonathan, in which the plural, whether in the head or the modifier, is usually expressed with the construct state when followed by anthroponyms and hieronyms (Kutý 2007, pp. 120-121; with the term “anthroponym” Kutý understands both real anthroponym, and “common nouns such as אב ‘father’; עבד ‘servant’; מלך ‘king’ (etc.)”: p. 117; see also Kutý 2010, p. 77).

ʔtt hwdw, “the wife of hwdw” (A4 4:5)

ʔhth wʔntth zy byl, “sister and wife of Bel” (Arebsun, 2)

3. Origin:

mlt mlk, “the word of a king” (C1 1:88)

mlyʔ zy mlkʔ, “the words of the king” (C1 2:recto 3)

4. Material:

lbš mšk 1, “1 garment of leather” (A2 4:8)

lbš 1 zy ʕmr, “1 garment of wool” (B2 6:7)

5. Partitive:

trʕ hyklʔ, “the gate of the palace” (C1 1, col. 3, line 44)

syryhm zy dššyʔ ʔlk, “the hinges of those doors” (A4 7:10-11)

However, in two genitive relationships it is possible to detect a difference in the use of the two constructions.

6. Appositive:

mdynt nʔ, “the province of Memphis” (A4 2:6)

yrh nsn, “the month of Nisan” (AssU 8, 6)

mt ʔkdh, “the land of Akkad” (Decree Law Beyruth)

7. Locational/Provenience:

bʕly yb, “the citizens of Elephantine” (A4 7:22)

ʔlhy tymʔ, “the gods of Teima” (Teima 1, 13)

qrqy ʔšwr, “the escapees of Assyria” (Assur Ostrakon, 18)

nbwšlm zy byt ʕdn, “Nabu-ušallim of Bit-Adini” (Assur Ostrakon, 14)

?rmy zy swm, “an Aramean of Syene” (B2 1:2)

?spmt br pptšwnyt mlh zy my? qšy?, “Espemet, son of Peftuauneith, boatman of the rough waters” (B2 2:11)

?rtmw zy klw, “Artemis of Koloe” (Sardis, 7)

The only genitive functions which seem to reflect a preference in the use of the construction are 6 and 7⁵⁵: on the one hand, in this *corpus* there is apparently no occurrence of the analytical genitive construction as appositive genitive; on the other hand, the two genitive constructions seem to have a quite different use in locational genitive, where the AGC is always used when:

- the head is a proper name⁵⁶;
- the head is an ethnonym;
- the head is a divine name⁵⁷.

That means that the AGC tends to be preferred when the head has a higher degree of definiteness. On the contrary, when the head is the word *?lh*, only the CS is attested in my sample, and the synthetic construction seems to be preferred in the cases in which the head is less definite.

⁵⁵ I do not consider here the genitive of location, which is apparently attested only with the GAC (see Folmer 1995, p. 321), because its two occurrences are doubtful: the papyrus of Abydos is possibly a forgery (Naveh 1968, pp. 321-324; cp. also Folmer 1995, pp. 781-782; Porten – Yardeni 1999, pp. 299-300; *contra* Grelot 1972, p. 340), and the reading of the inscription 2 from Wadi el-Hudi is problematic (D22.47: Porten – Yardeni 1999, p. 281).

⁵⁶ In *?spmt br pptšwnyt mlh zy my? qšy?*, the head is of course *mlh*, “boatman”, but his PN immediately precedes it.

⁵⁷ Note that in the dialect of the Targum Jonathan the GAC is usually preferred with anthroponyms and hieronyms (Kuty 2007, pp. 117-121; Kuty 2010, pp. 77-85); however, Kuty includes several common nouns under the definition of “anthroponym” (see note 54), and the common noun *?lh*, “god” among the hieronyms – however, *?lh* does not behave exactly as the DN *ywy*: Kuty 2007, p. 122; Kuty 2010, pp. 83-84.

Moreover, the AGC is frequently found as locative genitive, and Kutý suggests that the indication of provenance is one of the two main cases in which the analytical construction is used in the Neo-Assyrian docket⁵⁸; he adds that the head is always a proper name, and this seems to be the case also in several of the above mentioned examples.

Determination

The second case in which the AGC seems to be used in the Neo-Assyrian docket is the difference of determination between the head (undetermined) and the modifier (determined), as in the syntagms *ksp zy* PN, “money of PN” and *šřrn zy* PN, “barley of PN”, which, as observed by Kutý, contain a not-countable head. The cases with determined head are all restored in the head, or lack the modifier: Kutý quotes the syntagm *dnt ḥql[?]* *zy tty*, “deed of the field of Titi”, in which the ending is restored by Fales (Fales 1986, n. 10), and the above-mentioned ostrakon from Tell Es-Safidiyeh, which lacks the modifier, *[š]řry?* *zy [...]*, possibly “barley of [...]”. However, in the first case, the syntagm *dnt ḥql* means hardly “a deed of a field of Titi”, and the word “field” is countable. Moreover, the very same syntagm in the plural is found in Fales 37, where the particle *š* is used instead of *zy*, *[d]nt ḥqly?* *š[...]*, “deed of the fields of [...]”, while the second example of the occurrence of the particle *š* is actually undetermined from a morphological point of view, but logically it is determined: *šřt š řrdnbw*, “the marriage of řrdnbw” (Fales 30).

However, Kutý’s suggestion is tempting, and not-countable, undetermined words are mainly used in the AGC. It should be stressed that this would be, as far as I know, the only epigraphic dialect in which such a phenomenon occurs. In Old Aramaic, as already seen, the head is usually determined, as well as the modifier, and there are several cases in the texts from Egypt in which both the head and the modifier in the AGC are determined (apart from the cases with the proleptic pronoun), e.g. *byt?* *zy zkwr*,

⁵⁸ Kutý forthcoming.

“The house of Zakkur” (A3.8, 5), *khnyʔ zy yhw ʔlhʔ*, “the priests of Yahwe the god” (A4.3, 1), *kmryʔ zy hnwʔb ʔlhʔ*, “the priests of Khnub the god” (A4.5, 3), *ʕl mdbhʔ zy yhw ʔlhʔ*, “on the altar of Yahwe the god” (A4.7, 26), *ʔgwrʔ zy yhw ʔlhʔ*, “the temple of Yahwe the god” (A4.10, 8), *tmnhʔ zy ʔwsry ʔlhʔ*, “the perfect (one)/devotee of Osiris the god” (D20.5, 1: Carpentras stele). Outside Egypt, cp. e.g. *štr sʔt ʔrqʔ zy ʔryby*, “document of the rent of a plot (?) of ʔryby (Murašu 5), *[h]lkʔ zy šnt 6*, “the tax of the year 6” (Murašu 35), *smlʔ zy ʔdh*, “the stele of ʔdh” (Sultaniye Köy)⁵⁹. Syntagms with both the terms undetermined are also attested, mostly twith numerals: *ktn 1 zy ktn*, “one linen tunic” (A3.3, verso 11), *trʕn zy ʔbn 5*, “five stone gateways”, *ptkrn zy prš*, “statues of a horseman” (A6.12, 2), *zlwʕ 1 zy nḥš*, “1 jug of bronze” (B2.6, 13). Finally, there are several cases in which the head is undetermined, and the modifier determined, e.g. *dlgn zy mšryʔ*, “detachments of the Egyptians” (A4.5, 1), *ʔrmy zy swn*, “an Aramean of Syene” (B2.1, 2), *mlḥ zy myʔ qšyʔ*, “a boatman of the rough waters” (B2.2, 11; however, the boatman is also indicated by his name), *ʔrkdʔ zy mlkʔ*, “a builder of the king” (B2.6, 2).

As regards epigraphic Middle Aramaic, the nouns involved in the AGC are in the majority of cases both determined, e.g. in Palmyrene *kmryʔ dy hrtʔ*, “the priests of Hīrta” (PAT 2766), *šlmtʔ dy ʕty*, “the statue of ʕty” (PAT 0888), *grmtʔ dy ʔlksdrs*, “the secretariship of Alexander” (PAT 0259); also in the *genitivus materiae* the modifier is sometimes determined, e.g. *knwnʔ dy nḥšʔ*, “the brazier of bronze” (PAT 0298), *ktlʔ dy lbnʔ*, “the wall of bricks” (PAT 1919), *ʔstʔwʔ dy šyšʔ*, “the portico of marble”. There are also examples of two not-determined nouns, e.g. *ʔksys dy gmḥyn ʔrbʕʔ*, “a row of four niches” (PAT 0523), *bzqyn trtn dy ʕz*, “in two skins of goat” (PAT 0259, II, 26), *btʕwn dy ktb*, “by an error of writing” (PAT 0259, II, 98), *grmtʔws dy bwlʔ wdmws*,

⁵⁹ *Sml* is attested in Phoenician and Hebrew, with the meaning “image”, “statue” (cp. KB, p. 760; DNWSI, pp. 792-793); as observed by the first editor, the meaning “statue” is impossible in this inscription, which is a funerary stele (Altheim-Stiehl in Altheim-Stiehl – Metzler – Schwertheim 1983, pp. 11-12).

“secretary of the council and people” (PAT 0259, I, 2), and only two examples in the sample of one term determined and one undetermined, *mnwn tlt dy mšrt?*, “three portions of the cave” (PAT 1791), *lmdy? dy qstwn šr w[š]/t*, “per modius of sixteen sectarii” (PAT 0259, II, 69-70), the third one being restored, *šwn dy mš[h?]* (PAT 0259, II, 23 and 26). In Nabatean, the very few examples of AGC (see below) always have both the terms determined, as the many examples in Hatran and early Syriac, with the unique exception of two Greek loanwords in the Early Syriac parchment from Dura Europos, *bšrkywn dšntwnyn? šds?*, “in the archives of Antonina Edessa” (P1, 19) and *mn pyls dtrtššr?*, “of the tribe of twelve” (“of the twelfth tribe”; P1, 21). However, as regards Hatran and Syriac, it should be noted that the absolute state is extremely rare, and the determined form is the usual form of the noun⁶⁰. Also in the late Jewish Palestinian inscriptions the head and the modifier are determined, the only exception in my sample for Jewish Palestinian being the only occurrence of the AGC in the early documents, in which the head is not determined, and the modifier is determined, *lkswt [wl]m[z]wn d[y] yšwš*, “for clothing and for food of Jesus” (MPAT 62, 12).

To sum up, if Kutzy is right in claiming that in the Neo-Assyrian docketts the difference in the determination between the two nouns is crucial, this would be the only case in epigraphic Aramaic, demonstrating, once again, the lack of uniformity in the use of the AGC in the Aramaic dialects.

Two Peculiar Cases: the construction N1 + zy + Prep./(Adv.) + N2 and the dating formulae with zy

The use of particle *dī* in the periphrastic genitive construction is its main function as attribute marking. However, there is possibly another case in which this particle is used as attribute marking rather than as relative particle, even if it is not a certain one: the structure N1 + zy + prep./(adv.) + N2.

⁶⁰ For Hatran, see e.g. Caquot 1960-1963, p. 88.

This structure is common in the Semitic languages, and it is attested in Aramaic at a very early stage⁶¹. This construction is usually considered an elliptical relative clause; a major problem in this interpretation lays in the fact that such a sentence lacks both the verb and an overt subject, and relative clauses in Semitics usually require a resumptive pronoun⁶². This does not seem to be the case in Old and Imperial Aramaic, where the resumptive pronoun can be (and often is) omitted: in the Egyptian documents, the resumptive pronoun is used only in relative sentences in which the element connected to the antecedent is an indirect object⁶³. However, the suggestion that this construction should be considered a nominal attribute, *i.e.* an adnominal prepositional phrase⁶⁴, rather than an elliptical relative clause seems to be confirmed in IA by several occurrences of this construction without the particle *zy*⁶⁵.

In order to avoid differences, which might be possibly due to chronological, geographical and stylistic factors, scribal preferences *etc.*, I have chosen to consider mainly the occurrences of these parallel constructions in one document, namely the famous letter which was sent by the priests of the temple of Yahweh in Elephantine to Bagohi, governor of Judah in 407 BC (A4 7).

Here, two similar constructions can be found in lines 7-8 and 13:
 ?gwr? zy byb byrt?, “the temple (which is?) in Elephantine the fortress”

⁶¹ As early as the 8th century BC (Sefire): cp. Degen 1969, pp. 129-130; Fitzmyer 1995, p. 201.

⁶² Usually, not always. But, as Pat-El and Treiger observe, “resumptive pronouns are omitted much more frequently in relative clauses with a prepositional (or adverbial) predicate than in those with a nominal predicate (2008, p. 269).

⁶³ Muraoka – Porten 1998, p. 168. For the situation in Old Aramaic, cp. Degen 1969, pp. 129-130.

⁶⁴ Pat-El – Treiger 2008, p. 278.

⁶⁵ Muraoka – Porten 1998, pp. 244-245.

?gwr? zk byb byrt?, “that temple in Elephantine the fortress”⁶⁶

The fact that the use of *zy* seems to be optional might suggest that in the first construction the particle *zy* is a nominal attribute rather than a relative particle introducing a relative clause. However, this interpretation – which is rather tempting – has to face the fact that sometimes we do have a verb in these constructions, as in the following examples:

mzrqy? zy zhb? wksp wmdfimt? zy hwh b?gwr? zk, “the gold and silver basins and other things which were in that temple” (line 12)

fmwdy? zy ?bn? zy hwh tmh, “the stone pillars which were there” (line 9)

What is immediately clear, in these but also in several other examples, is the fact that the verb *hwh* occurs in this construction mainly in the past tense⁶⁷, and that may suggest that the verb *hwh* in the present tense is just omitted, and that *zy* is working as a relative particle. However, another possible explanation is that in these cases the verb in the past tense must be explicit because it contains the idea of anteriority. The two examples quoted above are part of the narration of the destruction of the temple of Yahweh by the priests of god Khnum, who demolished and pillaged it. That means not only that the events which are narrated in the text are all anterior to the letter, but also that these objects/architectural features were in the temple before its destruction, but they were no more there after it, whether destroyed or just taken away: the writers might have chosen the use of the past tense in order to stress the consequences of the destruction/plunder.

However, if other Egyptian documents are taken into account, it can be observed that the verb “to be” in the present/future tense is

⁶⁶ A similar example can be found in two contracts (same stock, different scribe): *lhn zy yhw ?lh? byb byrt?* (B3 11:1) and *lhn zy yhh ?lh? zy byb byrt?* (B3 3:1), “a servant of Yahweh the god in Elephantine the fortress”. Cp. also Muraoka – Porten, *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Cp. Porten – Lund 2002, p. 116.

also attested, although rarely. What is probably important is the fact that it is apparently attested in cases in which the verb has a value of future or jussive⁶⁸. In other words, the verb *hwh* is usually omitted only when, if recorded, it would be in the present tense, and it would have the value of present indicative. Under these circumstances, it is indeed quite hard to establish if the construction with the particle *zy* and without the verb is a relative sentence or an adnominal prepositional phrase.

We may add that the problem of defining the nature of this construction, whose explicit discussion is usually avoided, is often reflected in the translations and/or the comments to the Aramaic texts of various periods. On one hand, Muraoka and Porten, who do not seem to consider this construction a proper relative clause⁶⁹, but rather a “prepositional phrase”⁷⁰, translate it as a relative clause, and a syntagm as *si-ip-pa-a di-a-ba-ba-a?*, “” (Incantation in Cuneiform script from Uruk, line 2), is translated by Geller as “threshold which is on the gate”, but considered a “periphrastic genitive”, comparable to the expressions *syp? ddb?* and *sipa d-babh?*⁷¹; however, these two syntagms lack the preposition, and are proper genitive constructions, while the first one has the preposition, since the *-a-* between the particle *d-* and the definite noun *ba-ba-a?*, is, as noticed by Geller, “a dialectal form of the preposition ‘upon’”⁷². On the other hand, Lemaire and Durand, who restore a missing part of Sefire IA (lines 6-7) as *wm[ly? zy bspr? z]/nh*, that is with *zy* + preposition *b-* +Noun, translate the text as “Et comme pa[roles de cette inscription-]ci”, *i.e.* as a

⁶⁸ Cp. *e.g.* *bkl nksn zy yhwwn byn lmy wmt*, “in all the goods which will be between Anani and Tamet” (B3 3:11). Unfortunately, the texts are often badly damaged, and their interpretation is often not entirely clear (cp. *e.g.* D23.1, III-IV, line 9; B1 1:8; A5 1:3).

⁶⁹ Muraoka – Porten 1998, pp. 167-168.

⁷⁰ Muraoka – Porten 1998, p. 244.

⁷¹ Geller 1997-2000, p. 136, taken respectively from Levy 1924, vol. III, p. 562, *s.v.* *sp?* and Drower – Macuch 1963, p. 329.

⁷² 1997-2000, p. 136: *a-* (?-) < ?l < ?l: cp. Levias 1900, p. 50; DJBA, p. 71.

genitive construction, without any comment⁷³. This ambiguous attitude towards this construction is a clear indication of the difficulty of defining its exact nature.

Before turning to Middle Aramaic, I would like to briefly analyze another occurrence of *zy* as genitive particle, which is extremely rare in Imperial Aramaic, but relatively well attested in Palmyrene: the expression of the date.

In Imperial Aramaic, the date is not always expressed with the same formula; the most common construction, mainly found in the letters and contracts at Elephantine, is *b*Numeral /Month Name (alternatively *hw ywm* Numeral /MN/*lyrh* MN) *šnt* Numeral King Name, e.g. *b2 lksw hw ywm 10 lyrh mswrʕ šnt 19 ʔrthšš mlkʔ*, “On the 2nd of *kslw*, that is the tenth day of the month of *mswrʕ*, year 19 of the king Artaxerxes” (B2 7:1); *b20 lmrhšwn šnt 17 dryhwš mlkʔ*, “On the 20th of *mrhšwn*, year 17 of king Darius” (A4 7:30). Other structures are possible, e.g. *b5 ʔdr šnt 4 ʔrthš[šš mlkʔ]*, “On the 5th of *ʔdr*, year 4 of the king Artaxerxes” (WDSP7, 19)⁷⁴ or, without the day, *byrh sywn šnt ʕd ʔrthšš mlkʔ*, “in the month of *sywn*, first year of the king Artaxerxes”(Xanthos, 1-2) and *byrh ʔb zy šnt 16*, “in the month of *ʔb* of the year 16” (Teima 22, 3-4).

The last pair is interesting, because it shows the same elements, in the same order, once without particle *zy* and once with it. It is commonly assumed that a formal opposition is impossible here, and that in the first structure *šnt* X is appositive to *byrh* MN (and as apposition is translated above)⁷⁵. Beyer and Livingstone seem to think that the date in Teima is a relative clause with the lack of the preposition, since they translate the passage “Im Monat Ab

⁷³ Lemaire – Durand 1984, pp. 113 and 120. Cp. also p. 131.

⁷⁴ It is the only occurrence in the documents from Wadi Saliyeh of the numeral followed by the name of the month without preposition *l-*.

⁷⁵ Folmer 1995, p. 322.

construct state seems to be demonstrated in Semitics by cases such as *hdd skn* (“the Hadad of Sikan”: Tell Fekheriye), *gbšt bnymn* (“Gibeah of Benjamin”, mentioned in Samuel: cp. KB, p. 175), and *Ṭarābulus al-ġarb* and *Ṭarābulus aš-šām*, “Tripoli of the West” and “Tripoli of Syria”, *scil.* Tripoli of Libya and Tripoli of Lebanon (cp. DMWA, p. 649). As regards this construction, another possible case in Palmyrene of a proper noun used as *regens* in a CS is the one involving two anthroponyms in the expression of the patronymic, whose usual form is the well-known PN *br* PN, “PN, son of PN”. In Palmyra, there are several cases in which the name of the father follows immediately the name of the son, and they are usually found in bilingual texts, in which the Greek shows the usual patronymic form, with the name of the father in the genitive with the definite article following the name of the son. Since we have the Greek parallel text, it is sure that the name that follows is not a second name of the son, but the name of the father, and it is thus possible that the Greek formula has influenced the Palmyrene one, with the drop of the word *br*, and the use of the first proper name as *regens*. Some examples are: *br yrhy l[šmš] rfy* / *Ἰαπαίου τοῦ Πααίου* (PAT 0305; in this case it is not entirely clear what *lšmš* is); *br hyrn mt?* / *τοῦ Αἰρανοῦ τοῦ Μαθθα* (PAT 0276); *br nš? hl?* / *τοῦ Νεση τοῦ Αλα* (PAT 1976); *br zbdl? ydy* / *Ζαβδελα τοῦ Ἰαδδαιου* (PAT 0274); *br zbdl[h/?⁸⁰] ydy* / *Ζαβδιλα τοῦ Ἰαδδαιου* (PAT 1399).

Epigraphic Middle Aramaic

In Epigraphic Middle Aramaic⁸¹, the CS is still dominant: 246 of 1209 genitive constructions/chains contain at least one analytical genitive construction. That means that an AGC is present in 20,3% of the genitive constructions/chains attested in the sample collected from the dialects taken into account in this study, namely Palmyrene, Nabatean, Jewish Palestinian, Early Syriac, Hatran.

⁸⁰ *Zbdl[h]* is the restoration in PAT 1399; however, [?] is equally possible.

⁸¹ See also Grassi forthcoming b.

However, having a look on the single dialects, it can be immediately noted that the frequency is not always uniform: there are two dialects in which the percentage is slightly above 20%, *i.e.* Palmyrene (23,7%) and Syriac (24,6%), one in which it is slightly below, Jewish Palestinian (16,9%). However, we have also two dialects in which the frequency of the AGC is far from 20%: it is once above, in Hatran (36,4%), and once dramatically below, in Nabatean (2,3%).

This distribution might suggest that a geographical factor is possibly playing a role here: the highest occurrence of AGCs is in the most Eastern dialect, Hatran, and the percentage decreases toward the West. This is not surprising, since the same phenomenon was visible, as already seen, also in earlier phases of the language, even if it often plays a role which is neither predictable nor easy to define.

A second consideration is that the construct state is still by far more common than the analytical genitive construction, even in dialects which will be later characterized by the opposite tendency, such as Syriac, since the use of the construct state in Classical Syriac seems to be mainly (not exclusively) used with terms in tight unit and in the cases in which the head is an adjective or a participle; otherwise the AGC is predominant⁸².

The chronological factor, which is working in Syriac, does not seem to play always a role. It is perhaps significant in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, where the construction is attested just once in the most ancient texts (1st BC – 2nd AD), while it is much more frequent in the late texts from the synagogues and from burial caves and ossuaries. It is worth noting that the only AGC in the most ancient texts of the sample occurs in a context in which the CS was probably avoided because of the presence of two head-nouns: *lkswt [wl]m[z]wn d[y] yšwʕ*, “for clothing and for food of Jesus” (MPAT 62).

⁸² See *e.g.* Nöldeke 1904, pp. 161-162.

However, in Palmyrene the AGC is attested almost with the same frequency in the oldest and in the latest texts of the sample (given the high percentage of dated texts in Palmyrene, and the possible significance of the date in the frequency of the AGC, only dated texts have been chosen from this dialect⁸³), and in Nabatean two of the six AGCs in the sample are found in two of the oldest text, one dated to the mid 2nd century BC, one dated to the first half of the 1st century BC. Thus, as for Imperial Aramaic, it cannot be assumed that the later the document, the greater is the number of the AGCs in it.

A further question is if the genre of the document is significant for the use of the AGC. It can be safely stated that the AGC is attested in all sort of inscriptions, *i.e.* funerary, honorific, dedicatory, legal, and administrative texts, without significant differences in the frequency. However, in some official texts the number of the AGCs is very high. The most significant case is the Tariff of Palmyra. In the Tariff, an official bilingual (Aramaic – Greek) document dated 137 AD, and the longest extant text in Palmyrene, the number of the AGCs is extremely high. At least one AGC is attested in 40 of the 69 genitive chains of the text (57,9%). This is possibly due to the fact that the text is official in character, since the analytical construction does not seem to be opposed to the synthetic one for functional reasons, and there are parallel expressions, *e.g.* *ʔʕwn gml* (PAT 0259, II, 30) and *ʔʕwnʔ dy gmlʔ* (II, 36), “load of camel”.

However, there is possibly another explanation for this case, in which the nature of the head noun is involved: actually, with the exception of Nabatean, and of the Palestinian documents of the first two centuries AD, it might be observed that the CS is used with a limited number of head nouns in most dialects. In other terms, the CS is still frequent, more frequent than the AGC, just because it is used with head nouns which are very frequent.

⁸³ On the Palmyrene dated inscriptions see Taylor 2001.

Frequency and Inalienability

Having a look at the sample, it might be immediately noted that the following words show a strong – often exclusive – preference for the CS in Palmyrene, Early Syriac, Jewish Palestinian from the 3rd century AD, and, even to a greater extent, in Hatran (in which the number of nouns attested in the CS is very low): *br*, “son”, *brh* (CS *brt* or *bt*), “daughter”, *šnh*, “year”, *yrh*, “month”. There are no exceptions in Hatran; *brh* is usually attested in the CS in Palmyrene, but once in the AGC (PAT 1417), and in Jewish Palestinian it is attested once in the CS and once in the AGC (respectively MPAT A3 and MPAT A51); the word *br* is attested in the AGC once in Jewish Palestinian (MPAT A22; plural), and once in Early Syriac (Bs2). Note that in all these cases the AGC is the one with the proleptic pronoun (see below).

The other words which may be found as head nouns in the CS differ from dialect to dialect, even if some terms show similar preferences.

In Palmyrene, words which are found mainly in the CS are *bt*, “house” (mainly in composite words), and *rb*, “chief”, together with partitive terms, e.g. *bt šlm?*, “house of the eternity” (*scil.* “tomb”; PAT 0057; PAT 0465; PAT 0482; PAT 055), *bt qbwr?*, “house of burial” (PAT 1787), *bt gb?*, “cistern-house” (lit. “house of cistern”; PAT 1919), *bt nhr?*, “the house of slaughter” (PAT 2766); *rb šwq*, “head of the market” (PAT 0278), *rb hyl?*, “chief of the army” (PAT 292 and 293), *rb šyn*, “chief of the spring” (PAT 1919); *plgwt [m]lt? dh*, “half of this portico” (PAT 2766), *plgwt [tšw]n*, “half weight” (PAT 0259, II, 130), *p[l]gwt mnt[?]*, “half portion” (PAT 1791), *mnt klh*, “the part of the whole” (PAT 1791), *rbšwt qbr? dnh*, “a quarter of this tomb” (PAT 562). Also the word *?th*, “wife”, which occurs once as head noun is in the CS (*?t syšwn?*, “the wife of syšwn?”: PAT 658). Another word which usually (not always) prefers the construct state is *hyyn*, “life”, *hyy bnyhwn w?hyhw[n]*, “for the life of their sons and their brothers” (PAT 1561), *hyy bnwhy w?hwh*, “for the life of his sons and his brothers” (PAT 1929), *šl hyy zbd? bnwh*, “for the life of zbd? his

son” (PAT 1433)⁸⁴. The word *šlm/šlmh*, “statue”, which is very common in the texts, and followed by the name of the man/woman reproduced in it, is attested both in the AGC and in the construct state, with a majority of AGCs, and the already mentioned word *šwn*, “load”, is attested in the Tariff both in the CS and in the AGC. Other terms recorded in the CS in the Palmyrene sample, each attested twice, are *rbnw*, “term as leader” (*[b]rbnwt šyn?*, “in the term as curator of the spring”, PAT 1919; *brbnwt šyrt[?]*, “in the term as leader of the caravan”, PAT 0274; note that in both cases the construction is followed by *dy* + the name of the man in charge), *phd*, “tribe” (e.g. *mn phd bny [gdbwl]*, “from the tribe of the *bny [gdybwl]*”, PAT 2779; *mn phd bny myt?*, “from the tribe of the *bny myt?*”, PAT 0465); and *twḥy*, “decree” (*twḥyt bwl? wdms*, “decree of senate and people”: PAT 305; PAT 1378). The participle possibly shows a preference for the CS, even if the occurrences are not many: *dhl? ḥlhy? wrḥym? mdythwn*, “worshippers of the gods and lovers of their city” (PAT 0260), *rḥymy mdythwn wdḥly ḥlhy?*, “lovers of their city and worshippers of the gods” (PAT 0276), *mšly šlymy?*, “importers of slaves” (PAT 0259, II, 2), possibly *[mzbn]y nḥty?*, “vendors of garments” (PAT 0259, II, 57)⁸⁵.

In Early Syriac, words which show a preference for the CS are *ywm*, “day”, and, once again, *byt*, *ḥtth*, *ḥyyn*, e.g. *lywmt šlm?*, “to the days of eternity” (*scil.* forever; Am6, Am7); *bywm tmny?* *wššryn*, “on the day twenty-eight” (P2, I-II); *byt qbwr?*, “house of tomb” (As55; Am9; As16; As20), *byt šlm?*, “house of eternity” (Am1; Am3; Am5; Am6; Am7; As9); *ḥntt slwq*, “the wife of slwq”

⁸⁴ There are exceptions, even if not frequently: e.g. *[rb?] dy sp?*, “head of the praetorium (?)” (PAT 0278; the head noun is missing, and restored on the basis of the Greek text (τοῦ ἐπάρχου τοῦ ἱεροῦ πραιτωρίου), which provides also the likely meaning of the modifier: cp. PAT, p. 393); *plgh dqr?*, “half of the tomb” (lit. its half of the tomb”; PAT 0562); *šly* (sic) *ḥy? dy ḥmḥwn*, “for the life of their mother” (PAT 0364). In my sample, the word *bt*, “house”, is always found in the CS.

⁸⁵ In this respect, the behavior of Palmyrene is close to the Syriac New Testament and Classical Mandaic: cp. Joosten 1996, p. 54; Macuch 1965, pp. 390-391.

(As 19), *ʔtt ʕbšy*, “the wife of ʕbšy” (Am3; but cp. the AGC, with proleptic pronoun, in P2, line 11); *ʕl ʕyy bnwh[y]*, “for the life of his children” (Bs3), *ʕl ʕyy ʔbgr mry*, “for the life of Abgar my lord” (Am10). Words attested in the CS are *bʕl* in the lexicalized expression *bʕl dynh*, “legal adversary” (lit. “lord of the judgment”), *mrʔ* in the divine name *mrʕhʔ* (*mrʔ ʔlhʔ*, “lord of gods”: As31; As36), and its f. form in the expression *mrt by*, “lady of my house”, attested once (As55)⁸⁶, *ryš gwdʔ*, “head of the troop” (As10), *mlʔ*, “word” (P1, 15), *zbn*, “sale document” (P1, I), *mpq*, “end” and *mʕl*, “beginning” in the expressions *lmpqy tšry ʔhry*, “at the end of latter tšry” (P2, VII-VII and 13-14) and *lmʕly knwn qdm*, “at the beginning of former knwn” (P2, VIII and 14). Two more words are attested in the construct state in Am5, their meaning being not entirely clear: *šbr ʔhrytʔ wnrqd qdmytʔ*, perhaps “the sorrow of (his) offspring and mourns for his forefathers”⁸⁷.

In Jewish Palestinian, the words *ywm*, “day” (MPAT A52), *mr*, “lord” (*mry šwmyʔ*, “lord of heaven”: MPAT A42), *plgw*, “half” (*plgwt [dy]nr*, “half denar”) occur, once again, in the CS. Moreover, the expression *bryš yrḥ mrḥšwn*, “at the beginning of the month of mrḥšwn”, is close to Syriac *lmʕly knwn qdm* (see above). The words *tymy*, “value” (MPAT A2), and *spr*, “book” (MPAT A34) are also attested in the CS. The expression *mlk ʕlmh*, “king of the universe” manifests a preference for the CS in the synagogue of Ḥammāt Gadara (MPAT A26, A27 and A28), but it is recorded once in the AGC in the synagogue of Jericho (MPAT A34). Another expression attested in the CS is *lhrbn byt mqdšh*, “after the destruction of the temple (lit. “the house of temple”)", which occurs in Ghor eṣ-Šafi (ancient Zoorā), from three different (and not contemporary) inscriptions (MPAT A50, A51 and A 52, resp. dated 433 AD, 370 ca AD and 504 AD).

Also in Hatran the word *ʕyyyn* shows a preference for the CS; on the contrary, *bgn*, “curse”, is always found in the CS in the structure *bgn DN*, e.g. *bgn šḥrw*, “the curse of šḥrw” (H23). The

⁸⁶ Cp. also *mrt bytʔ*, “mistress of the temple” in Palmyrene (PAT 1929).

⁸⁷ Cp. Drijvers – Healey 1999, pp. 174-175; Healey 2009, pp. 241-242.

word *byt*, “temple”, is attested both in CS and in the AGC, but it can be said to demonstrate a preference for the CS. The word *ʔnth*, “wife” (H35: *ʔntt nšrʕqb*, “wife of nšrʕqb”), and, curiously enough, *kmrh*, “priestess” (H34: *kmrt [ʔ]šrbl*, “priestess of ʔšrbl”), both attested only once, are also found in the CS. As regards kinship terms, we may note that the other kinship term attested in the *corpus*, *ʔm*, “mother”, is attested in AGC: *ʔmʔ dy pʔgrybʔ*, “mother of the crown prince (?)” (H36). If we compare it with the other occurrences of kinship terms in AGC in the other dialects, we may observe the unusual lack of the proleptic pronoun (see below). Maybe the reason resides in the fact that the modifier is not a proper name, as it is in the other cases⁸⁸: in Early Syriac, the word *ʔm* is once attested as head noun without proleptic pronoun in the expression *ʔmʔ dmdyntʔ klhyn dbyt nhryn*, “Mother of all the cities of bt nhryn” (P2, line 5): also in this occasion the word is not followed by the name of the son.

All the other terms are recorded only in the AGC, and this may suggest that in Hatran the CS was no more productive, and retained only in an exiguous number of head nouns, while in the other three dialects the CS was possibly still productive, even if only to a certain extent.

It is interesting to notice that, together with the above-mentioned words *br*, *brh*, *šnh*, *yrh*, the terms *hyyn*, *ʔnth*, *ywm*, *plgw*, and *bt/byt* seem to show almost a global tendency to use the CS, even if not always exclusive. The majority of the head nouns seem to be well suited in the category of the “inalienable” (or “inherent”⁸⁹) nouns,

⁸⁸ For the doubtful Iranian term *pʔgryb* (usually spelled *pšgr(y)b*), see e.g. DNWSI, p. 946; Aggoula 1991, pp. 23-24; Beyer 1998, pp. 182 and 183. Cp. also *pšgrybʔ* in the Syriac inscriptions: Drijvers – Healey 1999, pp. 47-48.

⁸⁹ The term “inherence” is preferred by Seiler; according to him, “Semantically, this kind of representation implies more intimate POSSESSION: Prototypically, of ‘self’ to his kinsmen, his body parts, etc.” (1983, p. 5). According to other authors, the opposition would not be semantic in character (e.g. Nichols 1992, pp. 120-122; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001, p. 965; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2006, p. 767).

which includes mainly kinship terms and/or body parts, and, to a lesser extent, part-whole relations and few culturally significant items⁹⁰ (among them often the word for “house”, “dwelling”).

This general tendency in the adnominal possession is partially reflected in the Epigraphic Middle Aramaic dialects: we may notice the CS with the kinship terms *br*, *brh* *ʔnth*, in the relation part-whole (*plgw*, but in general partitive in Palmyrene), often with the word *byt*, “house”. Also the word *hyy*n, “life”, quite frequent in Epigraphic Middle Aramaic, is of course eligible as inherent possession⁹¹. Moreover, inalienable possession usually involves head-marking⁹², and it is usually expressed by a synthetic construction (opposed to an analytical construction for alienable): the construction expressing inalienability is usually shorter, less explicit and morphologically expressed, while the construction expressing alienability is longer, more complex and syntactically expressed⁹³.

In other Semitic languages, the situation is quite similar: in Eksell Harning’s study on the analytical genitive in Modern Arabic dialects⁹⁴, we find, as in the Middle Aramaic dialects discussed here, several different situations: some dialects do not have the

⁹⁰ Nichols, *ibid.*; Koptjevskaja-Tamm, *ibid.* Cp. also Seiler 1983, p. 13. It should also be stressed that, in the hierarchy kin terms/body parts > part-whole and/or spacial relations > culturally basic possessed items, “if an item is inalienable, then all the terms to the left are inalienable” (Koptjevskaja-Tamm, *ibid.*). In any case, kinship terms and body parts are “the very last categories gained by AGCs” (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996, p. 258). Cp. also Seiler 1983, p. 68, who seems however to notice some partial exceptions to this rule.

⁹¹ It should be stressed that body parts are absent in the sample.

⁹² Nichols 1992, p. 116.

⁹³ Cp. *e.g.* Seiler 1983, pp. 5-6 and 68; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001, pp. 965-966; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2006, p. 767.

⁹⁴ Eksell Harning 1980; her study was mentioned in Diem (1986, pp. 240-241), who correctly notices that she does not refer to the term “inalienability”; however, she states that “The centre of the SG sphere – from which the AG is excluded – consists of often intimate, mutual relations (...)” (p. 161).

AGC, but use only the CS, in other dialects the AGC is used sporadically, in others it is well attested, in others dominant⁹⁵. Once again, the CS is mainly used to express family relationships (and mutual relationships, *e.g.* friendship), partitive relations, body parts, and, interestingly, quite often periods of time⁹⁶ (cp. in the present *corpus šnh, yrh, ywm*). Also in Modern South Arabian and in Dahalik the CS is chosen to express “inalienable” possession, *i.e.* kinship terms and body parts; moreover, as in Middle Aramaic dialects (and later in Classical Syriac), it is used in compound words⁹⁷.

It may be suggested that in the epigraphic Middle Aramaic dialects considered in this chapter, as in Modern Arabic and Modern South Arabian, an opposition CS/inalienable *vs.* AGC/alienable is working, at least to a certain extent. The situation of these Aramaic dialects, although not entirely homogeneous, is possibly close to that of Maltese: in Maltese the distinction alienable-inalienable is associated with the introduction of the new analytical genitive construction and the fossilization of the old synthetic one (the CS), the same having probably taken place in several African languages⁹⁸. Actually, in Palmyrene, Early Syriac, Jewish

⁹⁵ Eksell Harding divides the classification in six levels: cp. esp. pp. 158-160.

⁹⁶ The situation is different in the various Arabic dialects, but the tendency to use the CS in these syntagms (and in few other cases) is clear.

⁹⁷ Simeone-Senelle 1997, p. 412 for Modern South Arabian; the topic is fully developed by Simeone-Senelle 2011, which includes also Dahalik. In Mahriyyōt (MSA) inalienable possession is usually expressed with the GAC, “unless one of the closed set of annexable nominals is involved” (Watson 2009, p. 243). The annexable nominals are *baʕl*, “owner”, *bar/bart*, “son/daughter”, *bīt*, “tribe/household; type”, *mant*, “area; type” and *sāʕat*, “hour” (p. 231). It is worth noticing that *bar/bart* cannot be used as head noun in the GAC (p. 232).

⁹⁸ See *e.g.* Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996, p. 261; cp. also Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2006, p. 767: “There is sufficient evidence that alienability splits often arise due to a grammaticalization processes that give rise to an opposition between an archaic, inalienable construction and the innovative, alienable construction”.

Palestinian, and, even to a greater extent, Hatran, the CS seems to have undertaken the way of a progressive fossilization, its use being restricted to few head nouns. This is also characteristic of the construction expressing inalienable possession, since the inalienable nouns tend to form a close set, frequently a small one, while alienable nouns constitute an open set⁹⁹. We may add that this close set contains nouns with a very high frequency, as is clear for example from the studies by Koptjevskaja-Tamm and Eksell Harning; in Maltese, the CS is as frequent as the AGC, in spite of the fact that the CS is almost exclusively limited to kinship terms and body parts¹⁰⁰. The frequency of the terms involved seems to play an important role: as noticed by Koptjevskaja-Tamm, “a high frequency of linguistic expressions favours the retention of archaic features”, and in this case the CS would be chosen for economy reason¹⁰¹. Actually, it has been suggested that the different structures used to express alienable and inalienable possession “may be due to economy rather than iconicity: inalienable nouns are possessed more frequently than alienable nouns”¹⁰². Among the ancient languages, a case in which the frequency of the head noun is likely responsible for the retention of the older, synthetic genitive construction is Luvian. In this language, the older construction, in which the morphological genitive is used to mark the possessor, is almost always substituted by the newer one, formed with a genitival adjective derived from the possessor, in the oblique case; on the contrary, the older construction is mostly retained in the nominatives and accusatives. However, the older, synthetic construction is retained even in the oblique case when the head noun of the genitive construction is one of the four most

⁹⁹ Cp. Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996, p. 253; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2006, p. 767.

¹⁰⁰ Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996, p. 264.

¹⁰¹ Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996, p. 264.

¹⁰² Croft 2003, p. 206.

frequent terms in the Luwian inscriptions, “son”, “child”, “name”, and “servant”¹⁰³.

An explanation in terms of frequency, and not only in terms of iconicity or semantic factors, fits better in the situation of Middle Aramaic, where classical inalienable/inherent terms such as “father” or “mother” are used in the AGC, and alienable terms such as “statue” and “load” are sometimes recorded in the CS, with a possible alternation with the AGC (Palmyrene). In these cases of alienable possession, we may wonder if the choice of the CS is simply due to their frequency: *šlm* (“statue”) is common in the Palmyrene inscriptions¹⁰⁴ (in Hatran, as we have seen, it is always in the AGC), and *tšwn* (“load”) occurs very often in the Tariff. On the opposite, the terms *ʔb* (“father”) and *ʔhh* (“sister”) are not common, and this would be the reason for which they do not occur in the CS. What is interesting to note is that they do not occur in the bare AGC either, but only in the AGC with the proleptic pronoun, which is quite rare in Palmyrene and Hatran (respectively 5,6% and 8% of the AGCs), and well attested but not frequent in Early Syriac (20,4%)¹⁰⁵.

In the Palmyrene sample, the words attested as head nouns with proleptic pronoun are *ʔb*, “father” (PAT 1929), *brh*, “daughter” (PAT 1417), possibly *ʔhth*, “sister” (PAT 1417¹⁰⁶), *šm*, “name”

¹⁰³ I would like to gratefully thank Miss Anna Henriette Bauer, M.A. (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen), to whom I am indebted for these remarks. See also Bauer 2011.

¹⁰⁴ Perhaps it is not by chance that the word *šlm* is the only one attested in the Palmyrene sample in the CS as head noun in one case of *genitivus materiae*, normally expressed with the GAC.

¹⁰⁵ The Jewish Palestinian inscriptions are not included here, because the ending of the emphatic (determinate) state (normally <-ʔ>) and the 3rd ms suffix pronoun (normally <h>) are both written <h>, and they are often impossible to distinguish. However, the above mentioned occurrence of the term *br* (pl.) in the GAC in MPAT A22 (*bnwh dhlp̄y*, “the sons of hlp̄y”) has indisputably the proleptic pronoun.

¹⁰⁶ “Possibly” because the particle *dy* is missing (and usually restored): *wʔhth <dy> hlp̄tʔ*, “the sister of hlp̄tʔ”.

(PAT 364 and 374)¹⁰⁷, and *plg* (PAT 562). The first three terms express kinship, the fourth, “name”, often occurs among inalienable terms, and the fifth, “half”, expresses part of a whole (*plgh dqbr?*, “half of the tomb”), and it is normally in the CS in Palmyrene. In Nabatean, the word attested with the proleptic pronoun is *hyyn*, often recorded in the CS (the other word attested in the AGC, *šlm*, has no proleptic pronoun). In Hatran, the words are once again *hyyn* (H139; H408; the word is commonly attested in the CS), *ym*, “day” (in the expression *ʕl ymth dy mn*, “against the days of anyone”, H23), *gnd*, “fortune” (*bgndhwn d-PNs*, “by the (lit. their) fortune of PNs”; H79), *br* (in the plural; H80); in Early Syriac *br* (Bs2), *ʔm* (Am3), *ʔnth* (P2), *dmyn* (pl.), “value” (P2), *gd*, “power/possession” (P2; P1, twice), *hrwryn* (pl.), “liberation” (P1, 3-4: *bšnt tlytn whd? dhrwryh dʔnʔwnyn? ʔds?*, “in the year thirty-one of the (lit. its) liberation of Antonina Edessa”).

It seems that this construction is restricted to few head nouns, which usually fit well in the category of inalienability¹⁰⁸.

It is worth noting that the use of the AGC with the proleptic pronoun instead of the CS for the less frequent kinship terms is already attested, as previously remarked, in Imperial Aramaic (see above). A similar situation regarding kinship terms may be seen in Targum Onqelos to Genesis and in Targum Jonathan to Samuel: the CS is preferred with *br*, *bt* and *ʔt?* as head nouns, while other kinship terms as *ʔb*, *ʔm*, *ʔh*, *ʔht*, and *ʔhb*, “uncle” show a preference for the AGC with proleptic pronoun¹⁰⁹. A totally

¹⁰⁷ Note that the term for “name” is often attested in the category of “inalienable” nouns (Seiler 1983, p. 13; Nichols 1992, p. 120).

¹⁰⁸ When one of these words is attested in another genitive construction, this construction is usually the CS. An exception is constituted by the word *ʔm*, mother, in the examples already mentioned in note 88.

¹⁰⁹ Kuty 2009, p. 95; Kuty 2010, p. 79. It is worth noting that the situation of these Targumim is different from the situation of the Epigraphic Middle Aramaic dialects: the CS is by far still dominant and productive, the use of the GAC is usually motivated, and the GAC with proleptic pronoun is extremely rare (Kuty 2010, pp. 73-74; Kuty 2009, p.

different situation may be observed in Targum Neofiti: the AGC without proleptic pronoun is the most common construction, and the AGC with proleptic pronoun is found with the words *br*, *brh*, *ʔb*, *ʔm*, *ʔh*, *ʔhh*, *ʔth*, *ʔmh*, “handmaid”¹¹⁰, *ʔpyn*, “face”, *byt*, *hyyh*, *yd*, “hand” *ym*, *šm*¹¹¹. The conclusion of Golomb is that “The situation with nouns expressing inalienable possession is very clear—Type A (*scil.* AGC with proleptic pronoun) is overwhelmingly the preferred expression of the genitive”¹¹². Similarly, in the Syriac New Testament, the AGC with proleptic pronoun “is regular when the first member is of the class of “inalienable” words: parts of the body, members of the family etc.”¹¹³; however, also the CS is still used “when the first member is of the class of “inalienable” words”¹¹⁴.

It seems that the use of the genitive constructions in the Epigraphic Middle Aramaic dialects continues and develops a tendency already present, at least in part, in Imperial Aramaic: the expression of inalienability shifts from the CS to the AGC with proleptic pronoun. The latter, which, as the construct state and as usual in the expression of inalienability, is head marked, slowly replaces the CS, which seems to be in these dialects barely productive, particularly in Hatran, and retained only with the most frequent nouns (often inalienable) and with fossilized expressions. Once established the dichotomy alienable/inalienable, the progressive fossilization of the CS has possibly favored the choice of another construction to express inalienability, the AGC with proleptic pronoun.

109). For a comparison with the situation of other Middle Aramaic dialects, see Kutay 2010, 115-120 and Grassi forthcoming b.

¹¹⁰ Golomb 1982, p. 299.

¹¹¹ Golomb 1982, pp. 300-301.

¹¹² Golomb 1982, p. 301.

¹¹³ Joosten 1996, p. 50.

¹¹⁴ Joosten 1996, p. 52.

The Exception: Nabatean

In Nabatean the situation is quite different. Of course, the occurrence of the nouns *br*, *šnh* and *yrh* is extremely high, but the construct state is still by far dominant also in constructions which do not contain these words. As we have seen, the AGC is attested in only the 2% of the genitive constructions/chains of the sample: there are 6 AGCs out of 254 genitive constructions/chains, and the suffix pronoun is recorded just once (16,6%), in the most ancient Nabatean text of the sample:

ʕl hywhy zy hr̄tt, “for the life of Aretas” (Cantineau, 43-44)¹¹⁵.

We may notice that the term *hyyn*, “life”, is used here in the AGC, while in Palmyrene it shows a strong preference for the construct state. However, the reason for this choice is unpredictable, and the term is found in Nabatean also in the construct state, e.g. *ʕl hyy hr̄tt*, “for the life of Aretas” (Cantineau, 5-6).

The term *hyyn* is found once in the CS, and once in the AGC in the following inscription, in which the choice of the AGC seems to be motivated by syntactical and clarity reason (the same head is used for two modifiers, which are moreover not contiguous):

ʕl hyy ʕbdt br r{r}bʔl mlk nbṭw dy ʔ[hy]y wšyzb ʕmh wdy gmlt
[wh]grw ʔhwth (Naḥal Ḥever Papyrus 2, 97 AD; Healey 2009, 11)

“Obodat, son of Rabbel the king, king of the Nabateans, who has revived and saved his people, and of Gamilat and Hagaru his sisters”.

¹¹⁵ The archaic form <zy> instead of <dy> is interesting; other archaic features are attested in this inscription (see Cantineau 1930-1932, II, p. 44). The persistence of the grapheme <z> for the original phoneme /ð/ is however attested only in the most ancient inscriptions, a proof that “The Nabatean language was not enslaved to the OfA (*scil.* Official Aramaic) forms, but updated itself in accordance with the developments in Middle Aramaic” (Morgenstern 1999, p. 137*).

The AGC is attested three times with the name *šlm* (two masculine, one feminine) as head:

dnh šlm? dy šbdt ?lh?, “This is the statue of the god Obodat” (Cantineau, 5-6);

[š]lm? zy rb?l, “statue of Rabbel” (Cantineau, 1-2);

d? šlmt? dy ššyšw, “This is the statue of ššyšw” (Cantineau, 14-15)

However, the same term is attested also in the CS:

šlm glšw, “statue of glšw” (Cantineau, 15-16)

The last occurrence of the AGC in the Nabatean *corpus* under study shows the plural word *?lh*, “sepulchers” as head noun: *?lh try gwħy? dy ħwšbw br npyw wšlg? wħbw bnwħy*, “these are the two sepulchers of ħwšbw son of npyw and (of) šlg? and ħbw his sons” (Cantineau, 29-30; Healey 1993, H2¹¹⁶).

As regards Nabatean, it can be safely said that the construct state is still the predominant construction; the AGC is attested, albeit rarely, but it is not always possible to determine the reason of the choice.

Generally speaking, Nabatean is often considered to be a “conservative” language, used as written language by an Arabic-speaking population, in a society thus characterized by bilingual

¹¹⁶ It is worth noting that this is one of the two GACs recorded in the *corpus* edited by Healey 1993, the tomb inscriptions from Madaʿin Salih. Moreover, the second occurrence of the GAC (*dnh kpr? dy škynt*, “this is the tomb of škynt”: H 23), not included in the present sample, is considered doubtful by Healey, who observes that there are several occurrences of the formula *kpr? dy l-* in the inscriptions, and suggest that “there may here be an ellipsis of l-” (p. 178). The formula *dy l-* (Cantineau 1930-1932, I, p. 63, “qui [est] à”) is well attested in Nabatean. For the constructions *dy* + preposition + noun, attested in many Aramaic dialects, and frequently considered elliptic relative clauses, but possibly adnominal attributions, see above.

diglossia¹¹⁷. According to Healey, “the conservative elements found in the inscriptions were preserved in scribal environment isolated from the ongoing development of the Aramaic language reflected more fully in other dialects”¹¹⁸. According to this view, the persistence of the CS might be seen just as a conservative feature. However, on one hand, “conservatism” alone is hardly responsible for the rarity of the AGC in Nabatean, since Imperial Aramaic, to which Nabatean is usually said to be close¹¹⁹, makes a more frequent use of the AGC than Nabatean. On the other hand, the “conservatism” of Nabatean, although undeniable in some features, seems to be tempered with innovations and features shared with later dialects¹²⁰, so that Nabatean is sometimes considered as more developed than Imperial Aramaic¹²¹. Moreover, the idea of an exclusively written language is scarcely tenable, mainly because of the huge amount of graffiti, which, as stressed by Millar, can hardly be seen as the product of a scribal class¹²². Perhaps, rather than a situation of bilingual diglossia, it was a situation of bilingualism, in which two languages were spoken, but just one was written.

Fergus Millar is probably right when he states that the problem of the ethnicity of the Nabateans is almost impossible to solve¹²³, but

¹¹⁷ For the concept of bilingual diglossia see *e.g.* Rogers 2005, p. 17. The term bilingual diglossia referred to the situation of Petra is used by Cook, who, however, rightly adds that it is impossible to know if Arabic was the sole spoken language, and that “Nabatean may have been spoken in Nabatea!” (1992, p. 20).

¹¹⁸ Healey 2009, p. 40. Already Cantineau considered Nabatean “une langue savante, à côté d’une langue vulgaire : l’arabe” and thought that “le nabatéen n’a été, pour une grande partie de la population qu’une langue écrite, usitée seulement pour les besoins du commerce et du gouvernement” (1930-1932, II, pp. 179-180).

¹¹⁹ Healey 2009, p. 38; Beyer 1986, p. 27.

¹²⁰ Morgenstern 1999; Healey 2009, pp. 38-39.

¹²¹ *E.g.* Garbini 2006, p. 210.

¹²² Millar 1993, p.402; *cp.* also Garbini 2006, p. 210, note 2.

¹²³ Millar 1993, pp. 400-405. The ethnicity of the Nabateans is still debated, although many authors consider them Arabs, and not

a study of the language would perhaps provide some answers about its nature: the assertion that Nabatean is close (or not) to Imperial Aramaic has never been proved, nor clearly and systematically explained¹²⁴. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that the only

Aramaeans, mainly because of their massively Arabic onomastics (see *e.g.* Healey 1989; cp. also Sartre 2001, p. 53: “Ils sont sûrement arabes, comme le prouvent leur onomastique et leurs cultes”; the idea goes back to Nöldeke 1863, esp. p. 705). Garbini (2006, pp. 209-210) considers the Nabateans Aramaeans, and not Arabs; according to him, the fact that Classical authors define the Nabateans “Arabs” is not useful to determine their ethnicity, since “presso gli scrittori classici gli arabi erano invece coloro che vivevano nella ‘*arabah*, la steppa desertica che solo in un secondo momento ha dato il nome all’Arabia”. Also Retsö is critical about the fact that the Nabateans are usually considered to be Arabs (2003, pp. 364-391; the chapter is significantly entitled “The Nabatean Problem”): he points out that “the identification of the Nabateans as Arabs can be seen as originating in texts dealing with the Roman conquest of Syria in 65-62 BC” (p. 370). He thinks that in Nabatea “Arabs and Nabataeans were essentially two distinct groups”, the latter subordinated to the former, and that the reign “was organized in two different states ort castes” (p. 382). However, Retsö’s chapter on the Nabateans seems to be quite confusing (see also the remarks made by Donner 2007, esp. p. 315). In any case, his argument that “the onomasticon is a very fragile ground upon which to build hypotheses of ethnicity. A comparison with the onomasticon in most modern European countries call for caution” is partially misleading. Caution is certainly due as regards Nabateans’ ethnicity, but the parallel with Modern Europe is hardly tenable: the “freedom” and the cultural and semantic opacity which characterize onomastics in Modern Europe have very few parallels in world history (cp. Cardona 1976, p. 133; Caprini 2001, p. 49; for the development of name giving in Europe, and the drastic changes occurred in the Twentieth century see *e.g.* Mitterauer 1993). Roman Syria is characterized by an onomasticon with strong variations from region to region, and there are very few names which are spread everywhere (see *e.g.* Sartre 1998, p. 557). Arabic onomastics is usually related to regions with an ethnically Arabic component: dominant in Southern Syria, it is by far less frequent in Northern Syria, apart from the cities with a strong Arabic population (cp. *e.g.* Zadok 1999).

¹²⁴ Brief but significant remarks about the differences between Nabatean and Imperial Aramaic may be found in Morgenstern 1999.

grammar of Nabatean was written by Jean Cantineau in the Nineteenth century, at the beginning of the Thirties.

In any case, the presence of Arabic influence on the language is undeniable, as it may be argued from the arabisms, mainly lexical, but also morphological, phonetic and, to a lesser extent, syntactical, which can be found in Nabatean¹²⁵. Thus, it is possible that the scarce use of the AGC is due to the influence of the early Arabic dialect they spoke (or they were in contact with), which had only the CS to express the genitive relation: as already mentioned, Arabic will develop the AGC much later, and not in all its dialects. A syntactic influence would be remarkable (and actually, as already noted, very few syntactic Arabisms have been recorded in Nabatean), because syntax is generally refractory to historical changes, and syntactic differences can be usually explained through language contact or linguistic areas¹²⁶.

Conclusions

At the beginning (9th-8th century BC) very few (sometimes doubtful) AGCs are attested; perhaps their emergence is due to Akkadian influence, which is however not clearly detectable. There is a partial correlation in the distribution of the AGCs and that of the definite article: the AGC appears only in the texts in which the definite article, in itself a recent innovation, is attested.

From the 7th century BC the number of the AGCs tends to increase, but the increasing is not uniformly distributed, and the CS is still by far dominant. The number of the AGCs is usually (but by no means always) higher in the Eastern texts, and in the texts which show Akkadian influences. However, there are exceptions, and a relatively high percentage of AGCs can be found also in texts from Asia Minor. The genre of the document may at times play a role:

¹²⁵ See *e.g.* Cantineau 1930-1932, II, pp. 171-172 (only one syntactic influence); however, O'Connor (1986) has drastically reduced the loanwords list made by Cantineau. See also Healey 1993, pp. 59-63.

¹²⁶ Cp. *e.g.* Hudson 1996, p. 44.

for example, the official letters from Egypt contain a higher number of AGCs than the private ones, but this is not true for every official document. As regards chronology, it does not seem to be always a significant factor, and also the function of the genitive does not seem to be crucial: both the AGC and the CS are used in the majority of the functions (possession, relation, origin, material, partitive); however, the CS is preferred for appositive genitive, and the AGC for indicating location and provenience.

As regards the expression of possession, there is a tendency to prefer the CS (and, to a lesser degree, the AGC with proleptic pronoun) when the head noun is inalienable. This tendency is further developed in most Epigraphic Middle Aramaic dialects (Palmyrene, Hatran, Early Syriac), in which the use of the CS is still dominant, but almost circumscribed to the cases in which the head noun is part of a close set of nouns, *e.g.* “son”, “daughter”, “year”, “month”. An exception is Nabatean, which has a very low percentage of AGCs, possibly due to Arabic influence. As in Imperial Aramaic, the Eastern origin of a text is often related to a higher number of AGCs.

On the one hand, it might be suggested that many factors are involved both in the emergence and the spread of the AGC in Aramaic. The distribution of the AGC is not chronologically uniform: contemporary dialects may show significantly different percentages of the AGC, and “innovative” and “conservative” varieties coexist in the whole period considered here. Also the use of the AGC, and the reasons of the choice between the AGC and the CS do not seem to have been the same in the various phases/varieties of the language. This may be seen as a further confirmation of the plurality of Aramaic, and of its nature as a dialect continuum¹²⁷.

¹²⁷ For the idea of a dialect continuum in Middle Aramaic, see *e.g.* Cook 1992. The study by Folmer (1995) clearly demonstrates that there is “a vast amount of diversity” (p. 756) also in Imperial Aramaic. Healey observes that “we need to banish the notion which has been endemic in

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that Aramaic shows tendencies which are well attested in other languages of the world, and it may be hoped to find it more frequently investigated in studies dealing with diachrony and linguistic typology.

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Abbreviations

DJBA M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, Ramat-Gan 2002.

DMWA H. Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, Wiesbaden 1979 (English translation by J. Milton Cowan of H. Wehr, *Arabisches Wörterbuch für die Schriftsprache der Gegenwart*, Wiesbaden 1952).

DNWSI J. Hoftijzer, K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, 2 vols., Leiden 1995.

MPAT J.A. Fitzmyer, D.J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*, Roma 1978.

PAT D.H. Hillers, E. Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, Baltimore – London 1996.

KB L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., Leiden 2001.

STF A. Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil, A.R. Millard, *La statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne*, Paris 1982.