

THE COMPOSITION AND SOURCES OF SOME NORTHWEST SEMITIC ROYAL INSCRIPTIONS

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The study of the composition and sources of biblical literature has a long history, both glorious and inglorious. Except when one biblical text is the obvious source of another – as Kings of Chronicles – such sources are, of course, always hypothetical¹. Cuneiform literature, however, has proved fertile ground for demonstrating the existence of, and describing the use of, sources. The best known examples are found in the Gilgamesh tradition, studied notably by Jeffrey Tigay (1982) (who has drawn out the implications of his work for biblical studies), and the Assyrian royal inscriptions, in a number of studies by different scholars².

But what of the royal inscriptions from Syria-Palestine? Do they disclose their scribes' sources or techniques of composition? The question is important for appreciation both of the composition of the inscriptions and of the social world in which they were produced. But it is also of some value for our estimate of the scribal activity and social world of the courts in Samaria and Jerusalem. For that estimate, information gleaned from the Syro-Palestinian inscriptions provides a more likely model than that derived from the cuneiform documents. These inscriptions were written in the Northwest Semitic alphabet and languages and produced in the courts of Israel's and Judah's nearer neighbors – nearer not just geographically, but also culturally.

We have to admit at once, of course, that most of the Northwest Semitic royal inscriptions, unlike the Assyrian annals, exist in only one form. The exceptions are not helpful. The Tell Fekheriye inscription appears in both Akkadian and Aramaic on the front and back respectively of the skirt of a single statue. The essential content of both versions is the same, the differences being conditioned by the different languages and literary traditions. One is not a *historical* source of the other. The same may be said of the different versions of the Karatepe inscription, also a bilingual (Phoenician and Hieroglyphic Luwian). The three exemplars of the Phoenician are essentially identical. Apart from the few substantive adaptations to the different physical setting of the exemplars (on a statue of Baal as against at the city gate) there is nothing in the minor differences among them to suggest that they were not all carved from the same hand-written text. The scraps of inscriptions on three fragments of dolerite from Zinjirli, B4-6 in Tropper's new edition (1993), may be independent inscriptions or

¹ But not unrealistic, once a scribal tradition is established. See the comparative evidence laid out in Tigay 1985.

² E.g., Reade 1975; Tadmor 1977; Levine 1983, 63; Cogan, 1991; Tadmor 1997 (with further bibliography).

different versions of the better preserved inscriptions of Bir-Rākib or of one another, but the preserved text on each is insufficient to permit a judgment on the question.

But while we do not have material evidence of separate, earlier sources for any Northwest Semitic royal inscription, some scholars have noted that there is internal evidence to suggest strongly that there were shorter, earlier versions of some inscriptions. Others have remarked on the mixed genres of some inscriptions, without, however, attempting to explain how or why there has been a combination of two genres. In the present situation, when synchronic literary studies have become so popular, it is necessary to define carefully the criteria for proposing an earlier source for a given inscription. Several criteria are used in the following study, including differences of genre, language, style, topic, purpose, or ideology; two different introductions or repetition of introductory material; changes in titles, names, or historical situation referred to. The fewer criteria met, the less likely the hypothesis; the more met, the stronger the hypothesis.

This paper, then, reviews a few of these Syro-Palestinian royal inscriptions and attempts to answer the historical question: how were they composed? I submit that the answers here offered, while building on previous work, provide better explanations for some of the peculiarities of the inscriptions than others that have been proposed to date.

Perhaps the clearest and certainly the most generally accepted case of an inscription which discloses an earlier source is that from Tell Fekheriye. The original editors noted already that the inscription falls into two distinct parts, each saying essentially that such-and-such a king made and dedicated this statue to such-and-such a god, and each ending with curses on anyone erasing the king's name. The second part begins with a new introduction (Abou-Assaf, Bordreuil, and Millard 1981: 645-46; 1982: 67-68). But while the first part of the Akkadian has the traditional form of the Assyrian dedicatory inscription («to DN . . . RN» + verb + object), the introduction to the second part begins with a reference to the statue on which the inscription is carved: «The statue of Hadad-yith'I for/so that ... ». The Aramaic at the beginning of the first part conforms to West Semitic models («the statue of RN, which he set up ...») but at the beginning of the second part follows the Akkadian literally. Thus both Akkadian and Aramaic show a significant change in style from the first to the second half³. Finally, the second part states that the king made this statue «better than before». While it is clear from the layout of the present text that both parts were written as a single whole on the present statue, the first editors concluded that an earlier monument must have been the source of the first part. The author of the preserved inscription has re-used and supplemented this earlier version.

They found confirmation of this in the epithets of king and god. In the first part, the king designates himself «king of Guzan», but in the second part he is «king of Guzan and of Sikan and of Azran», reflecting an expansion of his territory since the

³ There are other differences between the two halves. The lengthy list of divine epithets in the first part is reduced to two in the second. The one curse of the first part is extended to several in the second, occupying more than half of that text. (Gropp and Lewis think that these curses all belonged to the earlier inscription – 1985, 56).

composition of the first part⁴. In the first part, the Akkadian version of one divine epithet reads: «Adad who dwells in Guzan»⁵. In the second part, both languages refer to «(H)adad, lord of Khubur, who dwells in Sikan», identifying the setting of the present inscription (Tell Fekheriye being the remains of Sikan), while also giving Adad an epithet, «lord of Khubur», that recognizes his wider realm (similarly Gropp and Lewis 1985, 56). Thus the Tell Fekheriye inscription re-uses an inscription originally dedicated in Guzan by the king of Guzan to the Hadad who dwelt in Guzan. This was re-used, supplemented, and updated in the inscription we now have, dedicated in Sikan by the same king – who now rules over Guzan, Sikan and Azran – to the same god, now dwelling specifically in Sikan but identified as the lord of the whole Khabur region. Thus the present inscription reflects the expansion of Hadad-yith'ī's (and Hadad's) realms.

Recently, however, Leonhard has argued against this historical reconstruction. Arguing from the standard form of Assyrian dedicatory inscriptions, he points out that the formulaic structure of such dedications demands certain elements in a fixed order – even if an account of military campaigns is inserted after the king's titles – ending with the verb «he dedicated» (here Akk. l. 15). Other concerns and information always come after that verb. It is also clear that the Aramaic version establishes the genre of the inscription by prefixing the standard West Semitic opening of dedicatory inscriptions to a close translation of the generic Akkadian form (even though that results in verbs referring to the dedication at both the beginning and the end – Aram. ll. 1 and 10). What is alleged to be the beginning of a second dedication, however, conforms to the pattern of neither West Semitic *nor* Akkadian dedicatory inscriptions. The text of neither language here signals a new dedication. Further, Akk. ll. 19-26 are not parallel to material in the first half of the inscription. Rather, the composer here gives new information about the statue and its placement – information that could not be included in the first half, which adheres to the formulaic dedicatory structure. Such additional information, placed after the basic dedication formula, is perfectly acceptable in Akkadian dedicatory inscriptions. Leonhard refers to the inscription on the Kurba'il statue of Shalmaneser III⁶ as a case very similar to the Tell Fekheriye inscription. There too, following the dedicatory formula, there is a reference to the making and setting up of the statue (ll. 36-38). Leonhard further notes a distinction in the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II between concern about preservation of the king's name by anyone restoring the inscription and concern about anyone (under any circumstances) erasing the king's name. In the case of the Tell Fekheriye inscription the former is expressed in Akk. ll. 19-20 and Aram. ll. 10-12 and the latter (referring not to the statue at all, but to the vessels of the temple!) in Akk. ll. 26-27 and Aram. ll. 16-17. Again, this is not repetition, but supplementation.

⁴ The Akkadian version consistently uses «governor» rather than «king».

⁵ The Aramaic version reads «Hadad who dwells in Sikan», which may be an updating of the original to refer to the present setting.

⁶ Original edition: Kinnier Wilson 1962; see now Grayson 1996, 58-61 (although his translation does not recognize «he dedicated» as the conclusion of the dedicatory formula).

In sum, both versions stress initially, and only initially, the genre of the inscription and then follow the standard form of Akkadian dedicatory inscriptions of the ninth century. Leonhard's argument seems persuasive as an analysis of the literary form of the inscription. But it does not address the differences in titles of god and king, which still present us with a contrast between two different locations and two realms of different scope. While conceding that the second half of the inscription is not a second dedicatory inscription, I would still want to claim that the supplementary materials, at least from Akk. l. 19 and Aram. end of l. 12 on, were added to an inscription which had been used elsewhere (in Guzan) earlier in Hadad-yith'ī's reign. Precisely because the dedicatory formula does not refer to the specific object being dedicated, a draft for a particular king and god might be used on more than one occasion with minimal or no changes – especially in the case of a provincial king/governor such as Hadad-yith'ī – but with additions appropriate to the particular location and stage in the donor's career.

II

A second inscription which previous scholars have suspected may be based on an earlier source is that of king Mesha of Moab⁷, although the case is probably weaker than the others considered in this paper. It is generally agreed that, after the introduction, this inscription consists of a section concerned with Mesha's campaigns against Israel, in which he reclaims Moabite territory northeast of the Dead Sea; a section concerned solely with his construction activities; and then another section concerned again with his military activity, this time southeast of the Dead Sea. Why are the military conquests not all treated together before the building section, as is customary in such inscriptions? One reason for their separate treatment could be that the campaigns to the south were conducted after Mesha had consolidated and recovered from his victories in the north, reinforced his position with his various building projects, and commemorated both victories and building projects in an earlier monumental inscription. Later, after completing the military campaigns on his southern border, he would have built the sanctuary in Qarho, and set up there a new inscription updating the earlier one to include his later military successes (as the Tell Fekheriyeh inscription reflects the larger territory of the king who commissioned it).

If we look more closely at the building section, we find that it treats of, first, at greatest length, Qarho, but with no reference to the building of a temple there (despite the reference to such a temple in the introduction to the inscription). Then, more briefly, it mentions the building of Aroer, Beth-bamoth, and Bezer. There is then in l. 28 a characterization of the men of Dibon, which I translate: «[and the me]n of Dibon were in battle array, because all of Dibon was a (palace) guard»⁸. Following this, Mesha states: «And it was I who ruled a hundred [] in the towns which I had annexed to the land» (ll. 28-29). This is where Segert surmised the earlier edition may

⁷ Segert 1961, 237; Smelik 1990; 1992; Smith 1991, 17-21. Smith has the distinctive view that the passages that use the «converted imperfect» (as against those using the perfect) «were based on older, now unattested Moabite inscriptions dating to an earlier point in the reign of Mesha» (19).

⁸ The alternative translation of the last word, *mšm'f*, «were subject» is a statement of the obvious – the people of every capital city were subject to their king! See Parker 1997, 155, n. 11.

have ended, and I am inclined to concur (recognizing, however, that this body of the inscription may have been succeeded by the usual curses). Before the next campaign narrative of the present inscription, however, there is one more sentence in which Mesha records his building of three temples. Smelik would see this also as part of the first edition.

I see three arguments for Segert's conclusion. First, ll. 28-29 look like a general conclusion concerning Mesha's reign. A summary statement about a king's rule is an appropriate conclusion to an account of his achievements. We find a similar conclusion in 2 Sam 8. After summarily recounting David's conquests in campaigns against the Philistines, Moabites, Arameans, and Edomites, the writer says: «Then David reigned over all Israel and exercised justice and right for all his people» (v. 15). Second, construction in the localities of two of the three temples mentioned in the following lines (Medeba and Baal-meon) was dealt with earlier in the campaign for Medeba (ll. 7-10). The fact that the temples were not mentioned together with the other construction projects following that campaign suggests that they were only completed some time later – after the hypothetical first edition of the inscription. Third, the reference to the building of these temples differs stylistically from what precedes. Previously, a verb is used for each of Mesha's building projects (twelve verbs, nine times *bnty*)⁹; here all three projects are objects of one verb (*bnty*). While none of these arguments would carry sufficient weight on its own, cumulatively they give some support to the hypothesis.

According to this hypothesis, an earlier inscription would have had a different beginning, referring to its original setting rather than to the sanctuary in Qarho, the setting of the present inscription; would then have recounted Mesha's campaigns against Israel in the north and his building activities up to the time of its composition, and would have concluded with a reference to his general rule over all his new territory (possibly with curses on anyone damaging the inscription). In updating this original, the composer of the present inscription provided the present introduction, referring to the building of the sanctuary in Qarho (absent, as noted, from the list of building projects in the central account of the construction of Qarho), added to the earlier list of building projects throughout the country the reference to the three temples in ll. 29-31, and then appended the story of Mesha's campaigns in the south. Finally, if the inscription ended with curses, as memorial inscriptions typically do, they would have appeared at the end of the inscription. On this construction, the present inscription preserves an account of military campaigns and building activities from an earlier memorial inscription. Most of this earlier inscription was incorporated in a new inscription in the recently constructed temple in Qarho, which brings the earlier work up to date by additions referring to more recent building achievements and military successes. This seems to me plausible, if not compelling.

Both these inscriptions (from Tell Fekheriye and Dibon) would have incorporated and added to an earlier inscription of the same genre. The inscription of Zakkur of Hamath and Lu'ath, found at Afis, is recognized to be of mixed genre, combining

⁹ Cf. the style of the building section of the Zakkur inscription: B 3-15.

features of both memorial and dedicatory inscriptions (Miller 1974, 11-12; Drinkard 1989, 149-52). But why does it take this form? A careful analysis suggests an answer to that question. The inscription begins: «Stela that Zakkur, king of Hamath and Lu^ʿath, set up for Ilu-Wer, his lord» (A1), and ends by invoking blessings on the king (though only three words from the end of these are preserved)¹⁰. At first sight, then, it appears to be a dedicatory inscription – a gift to the deity requesting a blessing in return. Apart from this introduction and conclusion, however, the inscription has the form characteristic of memorial inscriptions, beginning in l. A2 with «I am Zakkur, king of Hamath and Lu^ʿath», continuing with a general statement about the relation between Zakkur and the Lord of the Heavens (A2-4), a lengthy account of that god's rescue of him from a siege (A4-B3), a list of his construction projects (B 3-15), and concluding with curses (B16-28 [...]). In other words, it appears that the beginning and end of a dedicatory inscription lie around a memorial inscription. Further, while Ilu-Wer is the object of the dedication in the opening line, the Lord of the Heavens is the deity who made Zakkur king and gave him general support, and the one to whom he appealed and who saved him from the siege¹¹. The list of Zakkur's building activities mentions first Hadrach, the besieged city, then generally strongholds and temples throughout the land, and finally Apish (the town where the stela was found) and its temple. Here, says Zakkur, «I placed this stela before [Ilu-Wer]¹² and wr[ote on] it what I had accomplished» (B 13-15).

I would argue that the best explanation for these features is that our inscription contains a copy of an earlier memorial inscription, erected to commemorate the events in Hadrach. In this Zakkur introduced himself in the formal way characteristic of such inscriptions (A2), made a general statement about his dependence on the Lord of the Heavens (A2-4), and then recounted at length that god's deliverance of him from the siege (A4-B3). This memorial inscription probably also included the first part of the present building section, referring to Hadrach and the land in general (B3-10). It may have concluded with curses. Whether it was originally erected in Hadrach, we cannot say for certain, but we can say that it honored the king's patron, the Lord of the Heavens, and gave pride of place to the distinctive narrative of that god's deliverance of Zakkur from the siege of Hadrach.

Later, after Zakkur had completed his rebuilding of Apish and the temple to Ilu-Wer in that town, he had a dedicatory inscription prepared for this god, to be erected in his temple. It is introduced and concluded in the formal way characteristic of dedicatory inscriptions. But the persistent importance to the court of Zakkur's earlier deliverance and his dependence on the Lord of the Heavens compels the inclusion in this new inscription of that story – and with the story come also the opening lines of the earlier memorial inscription. The new inscription also includes the old building activities, which are now supplemented and concluded with the new construction of

¹⁰ The final blessing may be plausibly restored on the basis of the blessing at the end of the Azatiwada inscription.

¹¹ Greenfield has suggested that Ilu-Wer and the Lord of the Heavens may be 'equivalent' (1987, 69). While they may be equivalent in terms of divine types, there is clearly a consistent distinction between the king's patron, on the one hand, and the local god of Apish, on the other.

¹² Corresponding to the claim in l. A1.

Apish and erection of the present stele. The following curses speak now of damage to this stele placed before Ilu-Wer.

I conclude that this is a good example of the reuse of material from an older inscription in a new context. The Afis inscription preserves a story of the relations between Zakkur and his god, the Lord of the Heavens, by extracting it, together with its formal introduction, from an earlier memorial inscription, and incorporating it in a dedicatory inscription to Ilu-Wer, the god of a town that the king has just finished rebuilding¹³. In this case the present inscription makes use of an earlier inscription of a different genre.

IV

Miller writes that the Panamuwa inscription is «a good example of the combination of the literary characteristics of the memorial and dedication genres», citing the opening line and the concluding blessing for the latter, and the summary of his father's achievements for the former (1974, 11). But the case is not that simple. Unlike all other dedicatory inscriptions it is not dedicated to a deity, but to the speaker's father¹⁴. The introduction states that Bir-Rākib set it up for his father, and then introduces the story of his father's reign with the thematic statement: «Because of the right conduct of his father, the gods of Sam'al delivered my father Panamuwa from the destruction that occurred in his father's house, and Hadad stood by him.». This attributes to the gods in general and to Hadad in particular responsibility for, respectively, Panamuwa's deliverance from his enemies and success in his reign. The bulk of the inscription is then a long account of how Panamuwa became king (by procuring the assistance of the Assyrian king), of his achievements as king in the service of his Assyrian overlord, and of the great mourning, especially by the king of Assyria, that followed his death. Eventually there is a formal introduction of Bir-Rākib himself that is very similar to the standard opening of memorial inscriptions: «I am Bir-Rākib, son of Panamuwa. Because of the right conduct of my father and because of my right conduct, my lord Rākib-El and my lord Tiglath-Pileser set me on the seat of my father Panamuwa, son of Bir-Šūr» (ll. 19-20). In fact, this is almost identical to the opening of the one complete memorial inscription of Bir-Rākib that has survived (B1 1-7)¹⁵. In that inscription, Bir-Rākib goes on to boast of his building achievements and service with Tiglath-Pileser. But in the Panamuwa inscription he lists no achievements of his own, instead referring back immediately to his main purpose, the setting up of this monument for his father. This suggests that the inscription was prepared very early in his reign¹⁶. In ll. 19-20 the protocol for his own memorial inscriptions is here drafted

¹³ See further Parker 1997, 106-109.

¹⁴ Also it does not begin: «[object] which RN [verb]», but «this [object] RN [verb]».

¹⁵ In the Panamuwa inscription, Bir-Rākib has a shorter titulary and his father a longer one than in B1-7. The reverse emphasis in the latter is obviously appropriate for an inscription whose subject is Bir-Rākib's own achievements. References to inscriptions from Zinjirli are according to the edition of Tropper.

¹⁶ Since in his own memorial inscription (Tropper B1), Bir-Rākib still identifies himself as the servant of Tiglath-Pileser, that inscription must have been composed before 727 when the latter died. Our

for the first time in a context in which his only achievement is this account of his father's achievements. The inscription concludes with an appeal for the gods' blessing on Bir-Rākib. The one god singled out in his introduction of himself and in his final appeal for blessing is not the Hadad who «stood by» Panamuwa (l. 2), but Rākib-El, «the lord of the dynasty» (l. 22)¹⁷.

The inscription as a whole clearly addresses the question of the legitimacy of both father and son, claiming that they have enjoyed both divine and imperial sanction of their rule and that the father's rule and Assyrian overlordship have brought great benefits to the country. It appears to have been composed shortly after the son's accession to quash renewed questioning of the father's (and therefore the son's) legitimacy, perhaps by an anti-Assyrian party. Hence the commemoration of the father's achievements, the recognition of imperial support, the claim of divine support, and the formal introduction of the son as enjoying the ongoing favor of god and overlord. But the different parts of the inscription do not each in themselves share this general point of view.

I have shown elsewhere that the first part of the story of Panamuwa – the crisis in the kingdom and the personal threat to Panamuwa, his appeal to the Assyrian king, the latter's intervention on his behalf, and the resulting prosperity – follows a standard narrative pattern, visible in nucleo in ll. 7-8 of the Kilamuwa inscription and echoed in two narratives in the books of Kings: 1 Kgs 15:17-22 and 2 Kgs 16:5-9 (Parker 1997, 76-99). It is striking that in this account (and in all the analogous accounts I have just referred to) and throughout the rest of the account of Panamuwa's life and death, there is no reference to any deity. This is the story of Panamuwa's own accomplishments, with the external support only of the Assyrian king. As such it has its own selection of historical facts and moral judgments, its own structure of plot and rhetoric. The thematic statement in the introduction to the inscription offers a different interpretation of Panamuwa's life. Here and here alone, Bir-Rākib suggests that behind these events lies the intervention and favor of the gods¹⁸. Why this distinction in point of view¹⁹? The story of Panamuwa's life must have been sufficiently fixed and respected in plot, characterization, and point of view, that the composer of the inscription did not feel free to adapt it to Bir-Rākib's own present interpretation of it. Only in the introduction could he express this different view of causation and responsibility.

inscription must have been composed several years earlier, yet after Bir-Rākib's accession in 733/32. Cf. the conclusion of Tropper, who dates the inscription c. 732 (1993, 98).

- 17 «Rākib-El» is restored in Bir-Rākib's self-introduction, but the restoration is virtually certain, being based on the introduction to Bir-Rākib's own complete inscription (Tropper B1). The restoration at the end of l. 22 does not have such support from a parallel passage, but scarcely admits of any alternative in this context.
- 18 The final blessing also invokes the gods. And, as noted, when Bir-Rākib introduces himself formally toward the end of the inscription, he credits both his overlord and his god for setting him on the throne. But neither this synergistic view of his own accession, nor the initial crediting of the gods alone in the introduction of his father, appears in the story of his father's life.
- 19 Contrast the consistency between the role of the Lord of the Heavens in the introduction and narrative of the hypothesized memorial inscription preserved in Zakkur's inscription.

Here there are no grounds for proposing a previous inscription on which the present one is drawing. The only alternative setting is the oral environment of the court, surely the matrix of the other stories of the same type just referred to. This oral court story credits only the Assyrian king with Panamuwa's deliverance and success. But in Bir-Rākib's inscription, while the story is recounted in its integrity, the opening lines counterbalance this by giving sole credit to the gods, and the formal introduction of Bir-Rākib's own reign melds the two points of view, thus finally stating directly the ideology of the text as a whole (see further Parker 1997, 85-89). Panamuwa's more explicitly theological and pious account in the opening and concluding sections of the inscription is doubtless attuned to the religious and political allegiances of the wider audience to which the inscription is to be exposed.

V

The Eshmunazor inscription is a unique epitaph. It begins with the introduction of a speech by the deceased: «In the month of Bul in the fourteenth year of the reign of king Eshmunazor, king of the Sidonians, son of king Tabnit, king of the Sidonians, king Eshmunazor, king of the Sidonians spoke as follows» (ll. 1-2). This introduction of Eshmunazor's speech gives the date and identity of the deceased, the first two of the characteristic features of the epitaph as laid out by Müller (1975). The other typical features follow: the naming of the object in which the deceased is buried (l. 3) and of the person responsible for the burial place (l. 4). (In this case, as in some others, the latter is identical with the deceased.). Biographical data are rare in epitaphs, according to Müller, but here Eshmunazor tells us that he was an orphan, the son of a widow, and that he died young, «plucked away before my time» (ll. 2-3). There follow typical prohibitions, together with reasons for them (ll. 4-6), and finally curses (ll. 6-12). There are no blessings, but this element is seldom found (Müller). At this point, then, we have what amounts to a complete epitaph. But the author rounds off what he introduced as a speech by reiterating the autobiographical statement with which the speech opened: «I have been plucked away before my time», etc. (ll. 12-13), with the additional characterization of the young king as *nḥn* «pitiable». This *inclusio* reinforces the pathos of his early death, presumably providing an extra, moral incentive to respect the grave.

Three physical features of the inscription reinforce the integrity of this unit²⁰. First, it is at this point and here only that we find a major space between letters. All the other letters in the inscription are more or less evenly spaced, but here there is a space as long as that elsewhere occupied by between one and two letters (three or four according to Faber). It is reasonable to infer that the scribe was registering a significant shift of topic or genre at this point. Second, the letters after this space are consistently smaller than most of the letters in the text before it. Third, the shorter version of the inscription beneath the head of the figure on the end of the sarcophagus corresponds to this first unit of the longer inscription on the top of the sarcophagus – or, more precisely, this unit is inscribed on the end of the sarcophagus in six lines,

²⁰ For photographs of the inscriptions on the lid and on the end of the sarcophagus, see CIS I 3 Tab. II, 3A, 3C; Tab. III, 3G. CIS already recognized that the inscription fell into two discrete parts.

below which appears the beginning of a seventh line consisting of the first nine letters of the sequel that we find in the longer version. These nine letters are much smaller than those of the text above, occupying much less space than the first nine letters of each of the preceding lines. Together with the integrity of the shorter text as an epitaph (and of the speech with an *inclusio*), these features suggest either that the initial intention was to write only so much, or at least that the writer recognized that these first thirteen lines were complete in themselves²¹. The scribe began to write a supplement to the short version written on the end of the sarcophagus, but quickly abandoned his effort there and undertook to write the supplement on the lid, where we now have it.

In line 13, a different literary form begins, similar to the building section of royal memorial inscriptions (ʾnk bnty [Aramaic ʾn bnyt] «I built ...»). In this case, however, the deceased (a minor) and his mother are both introduced as the builders, and the verb appears in a relative clause: (ʾnk ... wʾmy ... ʾš bnn «I ... and my mother, ... are the ones who built ...» (or «it is I ... and my mother ... who built ...»)²². Not only is the mother introduced with name and titles, but also at this point the name and titles and patronymic of the king are repeated from l. 1. Why so much superfluous information? There is one new piece of information: here the ancestry of the king is extended to include his grandfather. But if this is pertinent, why was it not included in the opening lines of the inscription? Could the names and titles here be taken from another inscription, where they would have been essential introductory information?

The building accomplishments follow, just as in, and for the same purpose as in, a memorial inscription – except that they are attributed to both the king and his mother. Then comes another ingredient of royal memorial inscriptions: reference to external relations, here a gift of territory by the «lord of kings», the Persian emperor (ll. 18-20). Finally, as if recognizing the odd juxtaposition of epitaph and memorial inscription that he has now created, the scribe appends a prohibition composed of phrases from the prohibitions and curses of the first part of the inscription, the epitaph – again, as information, superfluous. The wording of the curses does not allow them to be interpreted as those typically concluding a memorial inscription, i.e., curses directed against anyone tampering with the record. These curses conform rather to those at the end of epitaphs, which are invoked on anyone violating the tomb. By repeating them here, the scribe encloses the memorial material and gives the whole an appropriate ending for an epitaph²³.

²¹ Pace Faber 1986, esp. 427-28. She finds Avishur's suggestion that the inscription as a whole is not a cohesive unit «contrary to sense and appearance» (426)! Writing of «an implicit and ill-defined typology» (429), she was evidently unaware of Müller 1975. At the same time, she admits that Miller «makes a convincing case» that the inscriptions of Mesha, Zakkur and Panamuwa «are composites of memorial ... and dedicatory inscriptions» (429 – although the main point of Miller's article is that Mesha's inscription is a typical memorial inscription!). But the question there, as here, is: why did the composers combine two different genres?

²² The text mistakenly reads ʾm for ʾš, as generally recognized.

²³ Similarly Donner and Röellig 1964, 21 and Avishur 1979 (who, however, regards the accounts of building activities and of the imperial gift of land as two discrete extracts from palace archives).

Could this 'memorial' section of the epitaph be taken from an actual memorial inscription written on a previously erected monument? There are reasons to doubt this. First, the characteristic opening of such inscriptions identifies the speaker in a nominal clause, and his accomplishments are then expressed in independent verbal clauses (cf. the nearly contemporary Yehawmilk inscription [Donner and Röllig 10; Gibson 25]). But here the speaker and his mother, complete with titles and genealogy, are the subject of a nominal sentence, whose predicate is the following relative clause(s): «I, king Eshmunazor, ... and my mother, ... are the ones who built ... » (ll. 15-16). This syntax is continued in the following account of accomplishments: *w'nḥn ʾš* ... «and we are the ones who ... » (or «and it is we who... » ll. 16-18). Thus the syntax differs from that of the standard opening of the memorial inscription. Second, such an inscription in Eshmunazor's name is unlikely, given the premature death of the young king. Memorial inscriptions generally reflect the achievements of a reign of some length (cf. the observations on the Panamuwa inscription above).

A more likely explanation why material so typical of memorial inscriptions is included in the context of an epitaph is suggested by the most striking feature of each: the prominence of the king's mother in the 'memorial' section and the *inclusio* emphasizing the premature death of the young king in the epitaph proper. In anticipation either of Eshmunazor's death or of his attaining his majority – and asserting his authority and diminishing hers – the queen mother may have planned to erect a memorial monument to achievements of the young king's reign, attributing them clearly to both him and herself. But with the king's death, it was too late for such a memorial inscription and the queen was evidently unable to issue such an inscription in her own name – perhaps another male had already claimed the throne. There was one avenue open to her to ensure that Eshmunazor's (and her!) accomplishments did not go unrecorded: she undertook to have the material for a memorial inscription appended to the one inscription that was now being produced, Eshmunazor's epitaph. The palatine scribes may already have prepared drafts of material for a memorial inscription as the royal projects were completed and the imperial grants made. In any case, they now achieve her purpose by connecting the account of the accomplishments of the king and his mother to the preceding material in the epitaph. They adapt the traditional opening of a memorial inscription («I am so-and-so») by putting the initial pronoun and the royal pair's names and titles in apposition as the subject of a nominal clause whose predicate is relative clauses describing their achievements («It is [we] who ... »). They mark the relationship of this to the preceding material with the particle *k*²⁴. They then round off the whole as an epitaph by adding an abbreviated reiteration of the prohibitions and curses of ll. 4-12.

²⁴ The same particle is used to introduce the reiteration of the autobiographical statements at the end of the epitaph proper (ll. 12-13). In both cases it seems to be used where there is no logical – or generically or traditionally established – reason why the new material should be added to what precedes. A partial modern analogy to the history reconstructed here would be the practice of today's newspapers: they prepare accounts of the achievements of famous people long before they die and then incorporate these in an obituary. In societies without a free press, the process would be even more like that envisaged here for Amo'ashtart.

In conclusion, the inscriptions of Hadad-Yith'ī from Tell Fekheriye and Mesha from Diban seem to incorporate earlier inscriptions of the same genre – dedicatory and memorial, respectively – updating them with additional material. The inscription of Zakkūr from Afis incorporates an old memorial inscription acknowledging the Lord of the Heavens and his past deliverance of the king in a new dedicatory inscription to Ilu-Wer. The inscription of Bir-Rākib dedicated to his father Panamuwa seems to incorporate a long court story of the achievements of his father with the support of the Assyrian king in an inscription now attributing his father's successes and his own succession to both Assyrian and divine support. Too new on the throne to produce an independent memorial inscription of his own, Bir-Rākib included in the latter part of his dedication to his father a model opening of such an inscription to establish his own status alongside that of his father. Since Eshmunazor died too young to have produced a memorial inscription of his own, the composer of his epitaph, working under his mother's auspices, included in it material for a possible memorial inscription in his and his mother's names, thus ensuring a record of their joint achievements.

These historical reconstructions both explain various odd features of the inscriptions we now possess and open up the world of scribal and political activity that lies behind them. So far as the reconstructions are historically plausible, they may be taken to illustrate the nature of such activity in all the states of Syria-Palestine – including Israel and Judah.

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