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## THE ARAMAIC LANGUAGE

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IN the course of a previous article (vol. XIV, pp. 114—115) I have proposed a new interpretation of the Assyrian *Addi-îtri*, which does not involve the equation that † had already become 7 in Aramaic as early as the 9th cent. B. C. On this interpretation, however, *Addi-îtri* should be rendered "Adad-(is)-my salvation," not "Adad-saved," on the analogy of *Nabû-tukulti* "Nebo-(is)-my-trust."<sup>1</sup> This assumes the existence of a noun *îtru* 'safety,' 'salvation' from *eîêru* 'to save,' formed like *igru* 'hire' from *agâru* 'to hire.'

There is another indication, Dr. Cowley has pointed out to me, over and above the proofs previously adduced (*ibid.*, pp. 112—118), that the Aramaic of the *papyri* is in a stage of transition. This is the insertion of 7 as a *litera prolongationis* in the later period: for example, the name Darius is spelled in the first period  $\text{דַּרְיָוֹש}$  *Darâyûš* (in no. 1, dated 495 B. C.), but in the second period  $\text{דַּרְיָוֹשֵׁת}$  *Darayawâ(h)ûš* (in nos. 20—32, dated from 420 till 408 B. C.) or  $\text{דַּרְיָוֹשֵׁת}$  *Darayâ(h)ûš* (in no. 30, dated 408 B. C.).<sup>2</sup> Similarly there occurs the noun  $\text{בֹּוֹת}$  'shame' beside the verb  $\text{בִּוְתַת}$  'was ashamed' (in *Alûqar*, which is put somewhere between 430 and 400 B. C.),<sup>3</sup> thus confirming my theory that 460—400 B. C. were the years of transition.

This fact, in its turn, has an important bearing on the history of the divine name *Yahweh*, in that it confirms Dr. Cowley's

<sup>1</sup> Tallquist, *A. P. N.*, p. 162b.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. *Behistun*, l. 37, which is dated about 420 B. C. by Cowley (*Aram. Pap.*, p. 260).

<sup>3</sup> Cowley, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

theory of its transmission. For he has already made it tolerably certain that the early form of the name had no medial *h*, which came in at a later period as a *litera prolongationis*. On the Samaritan *ostraka* it is found (though only in proper names) in the form יָ *Yāw*; later, in order to ensure the correct pronunciation with long *ā* the vowel-letter ה was inserted, giving rise to the form יהַ *Yā(h)w*, which occurs in the Egyptian *papyri*. Almost simultaneously, however, with its insertion as a *litera prolongationis* the nature and purpose of this ה were misunderstood, so that יהַ *Yā(h)w* came improperly to be read and, in consequence, generally pronounced *Yahw*. This became יהַ—*Yāhū* or *Yēhō*—in proper names (just as *saḥw* 'swimming' became *sāḥū*); but in the independent form it was assimilated, under the influence of a religious interpretation and the Hebrew dislike for words of this form, to a verb הָלַח and thereby acquired another ה as a vowel-letter to support the final vowel.<sup>4</sup> If this explanation is correct, the practice of inserting ה for this purpose must have grown up considerably earlier among the Hebrews than among the Aramaeans, not long after 900 B. C.; for E's explanation of the divine name (in Ex. 3 14) implies the presence of ה in it, as also does the derivation of יהַ 'priest' proposed below (on p. 325).

This theory of the development of the name *Yahweh* receives striking confirmation from the cuneiform inscriptions. In the period of the kings, from the 9th to the 7th cents. B. C., the form is always *Yau* or *Ya'u*—that is, *Ya* with the Assyrian termination *-u(m)*; but in the later period, in the texts found at Nippur which belong to the reign of Artaxerxes I (c. 464—424 B. C.) and Darius II (c. 423—405 B. C.)—*viz.* to the period which the Aramaic *papyri* prove to be one of transition—it has become *Yāhū*—at the beginning of proper names.<sup>5</sup>

This theory explains also how verbs יָעַ became הָעַ in late Aramaic: for example, how יָעַ (found at Zinjirli on an inscription dated c. 745—727 B. C.)<sup>6</sup> became הָעַ 'ran' and יָעַ became הָעַ

<sup>4</sup> Cowley in the *Journ. of the Royal Asiatic Soc.*, 1920, pp. 177—183.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. G. R. Driver in S. R. Driver's *Genesis* (1926), pp. 439—440.

<sup>6</sup> Cooke, *N. S. I.*, no. 68, l. 6.

בהת 'was ashamed.' An original בת *bāth*<sup>7</sup> came to be written בהת *bā(h)th* to preserve the long vowel and this was afterwards mispronounced *b<sup>h</sup>ath* or *b<sup>h</sup>eth*, as though the ה was a proper consonant. It is almost possible, indeed, to say, when this took place; for בות 'shame' stands side by side with בהת 'was ashamed,' as already stated, in one of the *papyri*. Similarly, as Dr. Cowley has suggested to me, the late Hebrew קהל 'assembly' is derived from (*qā(h)l*<) *qāhal* 'called' and may so be connected (through *qāl* 'called') with קול 'voice.'<sup>8</sup> Possibly, too, this principle will allow the Hebr. פהן 'priest' to be referred to the ו פון, which appears in Ass. *kānu* III i 'to do homage.' For the general principle may have been at work in the Semitic languages long before it found particular application in Hebrew and Aramaic.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Hebr. נחם 'was ashamed' (the *ō* being peculiar to Hebrew); the form נח is only found in the noun נחם 'shame' (Cowley, *Aram. Pap.*, *Al.*, l. 90).

<sup>8</sup> Cp. טול > טול 'circumcised,' אברהם > אברהם 'Abraham' (a misinterpretation of *Abhrā(h)m*), and בני (Ezr.-Neh.) > בנהי (Aram. *pap.*) 'Bigh-wāy' (Cowley).

## CORRECTION

On p. 113, l. 13 the form which actually occurs in the *papyri* is not זכה but masc. זך and fem. זכי (Cowley, *op. cit.*, p. 285 b); and on l. 17 it should be added that זי occurs in the *papyri* only in the form זילכי 'thine' (fem.) in one document (no. 13, ll. 7, 11, 16), dated in 447 B. C., which falls in the period of transition.