

NOTES ON THE ARAMAIC SECTIONS OF HAVDALAH DE-RABBI AQIBA

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One of the interests of our dedicatee, Professor Tapani Harviainen, is early Jewish magical literature, especially Aramaic magic bowl texts. He has written a series of articles on both the linguistic features of these texts and their religio-cultural background.

The study of early Jewish magic has been greatly benefited by the publication of a large number of new texts over the past two decades. This includes, *inter alia*, a significant number of magic bowl texts and a variety of magical texts from the Cairo Genizah. This rapidly growing material may now be compared with the texts published earlier and, consequently, a better understanding of early Jewish magic and its relationship to related magical traditions is attainable. Equally important are the improved possibilities of studying the Aramaic and Hebrew idioms of the era. In the light of the new material, for instance, the different varieties within Babylonian Jewish Aramaic may be better understood.

In early Jewish magical literature, Hebrew and Aramaic are commonly used side by side. Many texts include both Hebrew and Aramaic sections, or a text that is written in one of these also includes at least some words in the other.

The magic bowl texts were written in Aramaic in the Talmudic and Geonic periods.¹ Hebrew is only used in biblical quotations and in some stereotyped phrases and words. The type of Aramaic that is overwhelmingly represented in these texts is a conservative variant in comparison with standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic. In my study of the peculiarities of this Aramaic dialect,² the close connection between this dialect and the Nedarim type of “non-standard” Babylo-

¹ The practice of writing Aramaic incantations on clay bowls flourished in Mesopotamia between the 5th and 8th centuries C.E. See e.g. Hunter 1995: 61; 1996: 220.

² Juusola 1999b.

nian Talmudic Aramaic became apparent.³ In addition to the bowl texts, Aramaic is the main language in the Jewish amulets from Palestine. These, however, attest to a Palestinian dialect.⁴ Furthermore, Aramaic is used alongside Hebrew in many other early Jewish magical texts, notably in *Ḥarba de-Moshe* and *Havdalah de-Rabbi Aqiba*. The latter was published posthumously by Gershom Scholem in 1980–81, and the former has lately been re-edited by Yuval Harari.⁵

As with many other early Jewish magical works, *Havdalah de-Rabbi Aqiba* (henceforth HdRA) is a composite, whose date and place of origin are hard to determine unequivocally.⁶ It is evident that various elements of the text were inserted at different times and in different places, the final literary form of the text possibly being received in Southern Italy during the Geonic period. According to Scholem, the basic elements of the work, notably those in Jewish Aramaic, go back to the Babylonia of the Geonic period, or even earlier.⁷ The Aramaic parts – in some cases only short sentences and words – are found in most sections or paragraphs of the work, as divided by Scholem in his publication.⁸ The most important in this respect are sections 2, 4, 5, 8, and 11. It is possible that each of the Aramaic parts is of different origin and was, perhaps, incorporated at different times. Given that Scholem is correct in his assumption and the Aramaic sections of the text originate from Babylonia in the Geonic period or even earlier, they are roughly speaking contemporary with the Aramaic bowl texts. Scholem, who paid attention to evident textual similarities, already noted the close connection between the Aramaic parts of HdRA and the bowl texts. In this paper, the salient features of the language of the Aramaic sections of HdRA are analyzed and compared with the Aramaic of the bowl texts.

SPELLING AND PHONETICS

The fem. sg. ending in the absolute state and the ending of the determinate state are both spelled א-. Only a few exceptions occur: מילה (2:8); שמייה (3:1 and else-

³ Originally noted by Tapani Harviainen (1983). Christa Müller-Kessler and Theodore Kwasman have lately employed the term “Standard Literary Babylonian Aramaic” to describe the main dialect of the bowl texts (Müller-Kessler & Kwasman 2000: 159).

⁴ See the sketch in Naveh & Shaked 1985: 33–34.

⁵ Harari 1997. Scholem published the text of *Havdalah de-Rabbi Aqiba* (according to MS Oxford-Bodley 1531) in Tarbiz (= Scholem 1980–81) and also included critical notes and a Hebrew translation of some parts of the text. In addition to his main source (i.e. MS Oxford-Bodley 1531), Scholem took into account a variety of other MSS and other sources.

⁶ For a general review of early Jewish magical literature, see Alexander 1986; Schäfer 1990.

⁷ Scholem 1980–81: 249.

⁸ In this paper, I follow the division of the text applied by Scholem in his publication. In the MS, the text appears as a whole without divisions (see Scholem 1980–81: 247–248).

where);⁹ עגלה (8:13).¹⁰ Only if the word ends with *'aleph* is the ending regularly marked with *he*, e.g. קדמאה (3:2); תליחאה (3:4); מאה (5:23). In the bowl texts, *א-* predominates, but *ה-* also commonly occurs.¹¹

The latter *'aleph* is sometimes employed to mark *ā* in medial position, e.g. לבאביי 'to my entrance' (5:2); לאבאשא לי לקבלי (8:12-13).¹² As in the bowl texts, the trait is common with fem. pl. determinate state endings (see below).¹³

As is the regular practice in the bowl texts, too, the final *bet*, *mem*, *nun*, *resh*, and *taw* are maintained, e.g. חוב (5:32);

מידעם (5:20); תחבטלון (2:9); אתון (2:1); אמרית (5:20); דאימר (8:21). Exceptions (all of them concerning the final *nun*) are דניכולו (for ניכולון in 5:14); 'their words' (for מילוליהון in 5:17); and ויהפכו (for ויהפכו in 11:17).¹⁴

The letter *yod* sometimes appears in a place where one would expect a *shwa mobile* to occur in a vocalized text, e.g. איתיתון 'you came' (5:11, 12);¹⁵ וגיפחון (5:14); מישרניכון (5:9).¹⁶ Parallel instances are well attested in the magic bowl texts and also appear in some other traditions within Babylonian Jewish Aramaic.¹⁷

In two cases (באני 'built' in 5:1, 6),¹⁸ the letter *'aleph* is apparently used with the same function.

In accordance with the bowl texts, the laryngeals and pharyngeals are mainly maintained in the script. Some instances indicating weakening of the laryngeals and pharyngeals are, however, attested, e.g. אידרית 'I returned' (5:8).¹⁹

⁹ Note, however, שמה in 8:20.

¹⁰ לישיני כלישן עגלה 'my tongue is like a heifer's tongue'. עגלה may, of course, be Hebrew, but there are no other Hebrew words in the immediate context.

¹¹ According to Müller-Kessler and Kwasman, *א-* is used in "koiné Babylonian Aramaic", whereas there is fluctuation between *א-* and *ה-* in standard bowl Aramaic (Müller-Kessler and Kwasman 2000:160). This is very possible, but apparently too early to take as fact. Note that Müller-Kessler and Kwasman use the term "koiné feature" somewhat differently than is the case in my discussion in Juusola 1999b: 21ff. For the koiné features in the bowl texts, see below.

¹² באשא is an *'afel* infinitive from the root באשא.

¹³ See Juusola 1999b: 31–32.

¹⁴ If not a Hebrew form!

¹⁵ Cf. איתו 'they came' in a bowl text published by Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked (text no. 13 line 21 in Naveh & Shaked 1985).

¹⁶ An error for מישרניכון, as noted by Scholem. מישרניכון (*pa^cel* participle from the root שדר with 2nd p. pl. suffix) is well attested in the bowl texts.

¹⁷ See Juusola 1999b: 44ff.

¹⁸ *Pe'al* passive participles from the root בני.

¹⁹ אידרית stands for איתהרית. It also testifies to the assimilation of the *h*-infix (see below).

INDEPENDENT AND SUFFIXED PERSONAL PRONOUNS

The only Aramaic independent personal pronouns attested in HdRA are the 1st p. sg. אַנָּא 'I' (5:1; 8:3) and 2nd p. masc. pl. אַתּוּן 'you' (8:20). In the bowl texts, both אַנָּא and אַנָּה appear and אַתּוּן is standard for the 2nd p. pl.²⁰ In addition, one encounters some instances of the 1st p. sg. enclitic personal pronoun -נָא, e.g. מִשְׁבַּעֲנָא וְאַסְרֵנָא 'I adjure and bind' (2:6).

As for suffixed forms, a number of instances occur. In the 3rd p. masc. -וּהִי is mostly employed with masc. pl. nouns and -יָהּ with sg. nouns, e.g. וּמִן כָּל גּוּפִיָּהּ וּמִן גִּידוּהִי וּמִן גְּרִמּוּהִי וּרְיִשִּׁיָּהּ וּבִשְׂרִיָּהּ וּדְמִיָּהּ וּמִן אִיבְרוּהִי 'and from his whole body, and from his tendons, and from his bones, his head, his flesh, and his blood, and from his limbs' (4:22–23). This is even more conservative than in the bowl texts, where -יָהּ is also common (alongside -וּהִי) with masc. pl. nouns.²¹ Once -וּיָ, typical of Western Aramaic,²² appears with a pl. noun: גִּידוּי 'his tendons' (5:24).²³

In most other persons, too, the forms with sg. nouns appear without *yod*: the 2nd p. sg. suffix is always spelled -ךְ (and not -יךְ) and the 3rd p. fem. sg. -הּ (and not -יהּ), e.g. לְמַדִּינְתָּא דְאַתִּיתוּן מִינָהּ 'to the city where you came from' (5:13). Further, the 3rd p. masc. pl. is -וּהוּן with sg. nouns (e.g. לְבֵיתְהוּן 'to your home' in 5:13) and -וּהוּן with masc. pl. nouns (e.g. גִּידֵיהוּן in 5:17; בְּמֵאנֵיהוּן in 8:5; אֲפִיְהוּן in 11:2).

The exception to the general rule is the 1st p. sg., where there is the suffix -אִי/-יָ with sg. nouns: בֵּיתָאִי 'my house' (5:1); לְבָאבֵי 'to my entrance' (5:2); חֲרַעָאִי 'my gate' (5:3); וְאַרְעָאִי 'and my land' (7:25). The same form also appears with the preposition עַל: אֲתוּן עַלְאִי 'they came against me' (8:4); דְּמִשְׁמַשׁ עַלְאִי 'that serves me' (7:24). The suffix *-ay* is the form originally used in Aramaic with masc. pl. forms and with those prepositions, such as עַל, which follow their model in this respect. In standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic, the distinction between the suffixed pronouns originally used with masc. pl. nouns and those used with sg. nouns has been neutralized. Consequently, *-ay* may also be used with sg. nouns. The characteristic spelling is with *ʿaleph* (אִי-). Thus, such instances as בֵּיתָאִי in our text follow standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic usage.

²⁰ As opposed to standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic אַתּוּ and Geonic Aramaic אַתּוּן. See Juusola 1999b: 75ff.

²¹ See Juusola 1999b: 81ff. That in the actual spoken vernacular the classical system had disintegrated (cf. Standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic) is further indicated by the fact that in a bowl text published lately by J. B. Segal (2000) וּהִי- occurs with a pl. *feminine* noun: וּלִיבְנֹתָהּ 'and for his daughters' (016A:9).

²² Fassberg 1990: 114ff.

²³ If not a scribal error for גִּידוּהִי.

Alongside אַ- and יי-, י- also appears with sg. nouns, e.g. כפומא דאריא לישוי פומי פומי כפומא דאריא 'may my mouth be like the mouth of a lion, my tongue like the tongue of a heifer' (8:13); גופי 'my body' (4:22); לעלמותי (8:4). The ending אַ- also occurs in the bowl texts with masc. sg. nouns, but this is exceptional.²⁴

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

The forms attested in HdRA agree very much with the bowl texts, דין, הדין, and דנן are employed for masc. sg. and הדא for fem. sg.: ובשמא רבא הדין 'with this great oath and with this great name' (6:11–12); דין רוא 'this is the secret' (8:1, 8); רז רזייה דנן 'this secret of the secrets' (?) (8:1).²⁵ דנן also appears in the phrase מן יומא דנן ולעלם 'from this day and for ever' (5:24) that is frequently met with in the bowl texts, too. In the pl. there occurs האילין: קדישיא האילין 'in the name of these holy names' (13:3). אילין also appears as a minority form in the bowl texts; האילין here is most likely a hybrid Aramaic-Hebrew form or a highly conservative Aramaic variant.

NOUNS

The ending of the masc. pl. absolute state is ין-, e.g. חרשין ואיסורין וכיובין וטירופין (4:13–14). The form typical of standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic, with apocopation of the final *nun*, is exceptional, e.g. חרשין בישין ועובדי 'evil sorcerers and mighty works' (5:3–4).

The most apparent deviation from the standard bowl dialect is the form of the masc. pl. determinate state, which in HdRA is almost always יא-/יא- (probably *-ayyā*), e.g. אתון אתיא קדישיא (2:1); לילייה (3:2); דמלכייא (3:17).²⁶ Some instances of י- are found, e.g. טלני (2:7); פתכרי (4:16); וזיהררי (4:19).

In the bowl texts, the ending יא-/יא- is rare except for some words; the regular ending is standard Babylonian Jewish Aramaic י-.²⁷

The fem. pl. absolute state is not found; the fem. pl. determinate state is אאא-/תא-, e.g. ואסתראתא (4:17); ופנוואתא (4:19); חרשאתא (4:20); ואיסקופאתא (5:2); וחרשייתא (6:15, 11:5); שמהתא (13:3).

In the masc. pl., the absolute state is far more commonly used than is normal in Babylonian Jewish Aramaic, e.g. ועובדין תקיפין (5:28–29); מלכין ושלטונין (8:10). As has already been noted, the ending of the fem. pl. absolute state is totally

²⁴ Juusola 1999b: 83.

²⁵ For the demonstrative pronouns in the bowl texts, see Juusola 1999b: 101ff.

²⁶ The spelling ייה- occurs with שמה (3:3). Note also the name חופריא חוסניה (?) in 4:23.

²⁷ Juusola 1999b: 144.

unattested. The same trait is typical of the bowl texts: even though the masc. pl. absolute state is common, in the fem. pl., the determinate form (תא-/אתא) clearly predominates.²⁸ No explanation is known to me.

In the sg. the absolute state is also common, e.g. מילה בישא (2:8); ופגע רע (7:15); חכים לחכים ימסור יתיה; (8:3); על רוח ושיד (2:6). The majority of sg. nouns are, however, in the determinate state, e.g. באלהא רבא (8: 1); דין רוא (8: 1); ואלבש זיוא בשבועתא רבא הדא ובשמא רבא הדין (5:33); ולכל שמא דאית ליה (8: 13–14); כסוסיא דנורא (6:12–13); במדברא (8:14); בארעא (8:21) In accordance with the bowl texts, the masc. pl. absolute state seems to be especially common in the lists of spirits and demons. One might possibly suggest that the frequency of the absolute state masc. pl. (i.e. ין-) may be connected with the similarity of this form to the corresponding Hebrew form (in Mishnaic Hebrew). The appearance of Hebrew and Aramaic side by side in our text supports this possibility. Note the following mixed Hebrew-Aramaic sentence from paragraph 8 which clearly illustrates this possibility כן נתפרק ונשתיזב מיד מלכין ומיד שלטונין ומיד סנאין ובעלי דבבין ומגזירות קשות ומצריכות (8:15–16).

In line with the bowl texts, absolute and determinate forms fluctuate without any evident reason, as may be noted by comparing the following instances: כל נשי וכל זיקין ומזיקין ומרוביא ונזחין (11:4–5); כל חרשייא וחרשייתא (4:13); כל חרשין בישא (2:8); ונזהין וטהיא ופתכרי ואסתתא (4:16–17). Note also חרשיא ליפשרון in 5:26 as opposed to the parallel חרשין in 5:28. The noun may appear in the absolute state, while the attribute is in the determinate state: וברוך דיכרא ונקיבתא (4:17–18).

Alongside analytical constructions with the particle δ , the classical construct state construction is still used to indicate the genitive: וכל עובדי חרשיא וחרשאתא 'all the works of sorcerers and sorceresses' (4:20–21).

VERBS

In the perfect the conservative variants predominate. Note the following instances: סליקית מלילית ואמרית 'I went up, spoke and said' (5: 8);²⁹ כפתית יתהון 'I tied them' (8:4); מלילו ואמרו 'they spoke and said' (5: 5);³⁰ עלחון 'you came in' (5: 9).³¹ Parallel forms are the norm in the bowl texts. Two instances of specifically Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic 3rd p. masc. pl. forms are attested: ונקוב יתהון מן 'and they perforated them in their nostrils and hung them' (11:1–2). The pattern קטול (i.e. נקוב) and the pattern identical to the corresponding sg.

²⁸ For the use of different states in the bowl texts, see Juusola 1999b: 134ff.

²⁹ 1st p. sg. with the final ת-, as opposed to standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic.

³⁰ 3rd p. masc. pl. with the final י- maintained in the script.

³¹ 2nd p. pl. with the final י-.

form (i.e. תלי) also exceptionally occur in the bowl texts.³² In addition, one encounters two instances of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic 3rd p. masc. pl. forms, with the final *nun*: אתון חרשין בישין ‘evil sorcerers came’ (5:2–3); גלון ‘they revealed’ (11:1).³³

The imperfect prefix of the 3rd p. masc. sg./pl. is either -י or -לנ. Only -י appears repeatedly in paragraphs 4 and 6, e.g. יתרחקון ויתגערון ויתרחמון (6:11) By contrast, all three appear in paragraphs 5 and 8 (with many instances) and both -י and -נ appear in 11, e.g. נישתון (5:15); נזחא (5:2); וניפילון (5:18); וליסופון (5:18); ליהוי (5:19); ליפרשון (5:26); ליפרקון (5:27); ויתכסא (5:16); יימר (5:20); יאמרון (5:21); ימסור (8:3); הוא יתבר (11:3). The vacillation between various imperfect prefixes is typical of the bowl texts as well. It seems, however, that -נ and especially -ל are relatively more frequent here than is normal in the bowl texts.³⁴

The *n*-infix in *etpe^el/etpa^eal* forms is occasionally assimilated, as is typical of Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic: אידרית לאיגרא ‘I went back onto the roof’ (5:8);³⁵ איכמרו (5:9);³⁶ ועובדיהון ליפרקון ‘and may their deeds fall apart’ (5:26).³⁷ Normally, however, *n* is maintained in the script, e.g. ויתכסא (5:16); ונתהפכון (5:28); לא מיתמסר ולא איתקרי (6:11); יתרחקון ויתגערון ויתרחמון (8:2).

In the imperative, pl. forms are attested. All the forms appear with the final ו, e.g. אזילו ‘go’ (5: 11). The trait is in accordance with the bowl texts.

The infinitives of the derived stems are generally considered good “markers”, indicating dialectal differences and boundaries between various Aramaic dialects. HdRA here presents a complicated picture, even though only a few forms are found. The occurrences are as follows:

די קיימין לקבלן למבאשא לן (8:9);³⁸ רוא דנן למישויבא ‘this secret is for saving’ (8:9);³⁸ איתהדרית למשיבא יתי (11:4);³⁹ די קיימין לאבאשא לי לקבלי ‘who stand opposite us doing us evil’ (11:4);³⁹ די קיימין לאבאשא לי לקבלי ‘who stand opposite me doing me evil’ (8:12–13).⁴⁰

³² See Juusola 1999b: 163ff.

³³ One should note, however, that the 3rd p. masc. pl. with the ending ון- is probably found in the bowl texts, too (Juusola 1999b: 168ff.). These occurrences may imply that the ending was employed in some sub-dialects of Babylonian Jewish Aramaic, too. Its appearance in Mandaic, alongside other forms, also supports this possibility (see below).

³⁴ In the bowl texts, -י is the preferred prefix both in the sg. and pl. (Juusola 1999b: 179).

³⁵ The 1st. p. sg. perfect form אידרית stands for איתהדרית.

³⁶ Probably *etpe^eel* or *etpa^eal* imperative from the root כמר. On the possible meaning, see Scholem 1980–81: 21 n. 70.

³⁷ ליפרקון is probably *etpe^eel* or *etpa^eal* from the root פרקן.

³⁸ Infinitive of the quadra-radical root שינ. Cf. למשיבא יתי in Targum Neophyti (Gen. 32:3) (see Sokoloff 1990: 546).

³⁹ באשא is an *af^eel* infinitive from the root באשא.

⁴⁰ The instance is basically parallel to that in 11:4 (see above). אבאשא is likewise an *af^eel* infinitive from the root באשא.

The form *qattālā*,⁴¹ that is the classical pattern in Aramaic, whereas both

mqattālā, typical of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic.⁴² In the bowl texts, like many other varieties of Aramaic, different patterns are used side by side, the most common variants being standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic *qattōlē* and *qattālā*.⁴³ To the best of my knowledge, Palestinian Jewish Aramaic forms with the *m*-prefix are unattested in the bowl texts published so far.

OTHER FEATURES

As in the bowl texts, *ית* is used to indicate the direct object: *חכים לחכים ימסור יתיה* (8:3); *כפתית יתהון* 'I tied them' (8:4); *אנא חנוך בר ירד כתבית יתיה* (8:3); *אנא חנוך בר ירד כתבית יתיה* 'I tied them' (8:4); *ונקוב יתהון מן נחיריהון ותלי יתהון* 'and they perforated them in their nostrils and hung them' (11:1–2).

אית ('there is/are') is used as the predicator of existence, as opposed to standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic *איכא*, e.g. *אית לי* (5:2); *אית ליה* (5:22). The trait is shared with the bowl texts.⁴⁴

The indefinite pronoun equivalent to English 'something' is *מידעם* (5:20), as opposed to standard Babylonian Talmudic *מידי מידעם*. *מידעם* is standard in the bowl texts as well.

As in the bowl texts, the preposition equivalent to English 'before' is spelled *-קדמ-*, as opposed to standard Babylonian Talmudic *-קמ-*, e.g. *קדמיהון* (8:14). Further, the preposition equivalent to English 'on' is always *על* (e.g. *על אפיהון* 'and the wind blows on their faces' in 11:2), in accordance with the bowl texts and as opposed to standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic *-א-*.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, one may state that the Aramaic parts of HdRA are written in a conservative type of Aramaic similar to the bowl texts. Furthermore, both HdRA and the bowl texts also include standard Babylonian Talmudic variants alongside the more conservative forms. At least some parts of HdRA were possibly originally typical bowl incantations that were incorporated into the Hebrew text. Here one could point out, for instance, the incantation in section 6 (beginning with *יתרחקון*)

⁴¹ This is the *pa^cel* form; the corresponding form of the *ʿafel* would be *ʿaqtālā*.

⁴² See Tal 1983: 214.

⁴³ Juusola 1999b: 220ff.

⁴⁴ Juusola 1999b: 148–149.

in line 11). This does not necessarily mean that exactly the same version of any part of the text was actually used in any bowl text. That is only to say that they stem from the very same Aramaic magical tradition. The salient linguistic features that the bowl texts and HdRA have in common may be enumerated as follows:

- (1) The tendency to maintain final *bet*, *mem*, *nun*, *resh* and *taw*.
- (2) The pharyngeals and laryngeals are mostly maintained in the script.
- (3) The letter *yod* occasionally appears as a counterpart of *shwa mobile*.⁴⁵
- (4) The occurrence of conservative suffixed pronouns (e.g. a distinction is maintained between יה- and יהי- for the 3rd p. masc. sg.) alongside those familiar from standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic (e.g. the use of יא- with masc. sg. nouns).
- (5) Conservative demonstrative pronouns, such as דנין, דנן, and דאן.
- (6) The frequent use of the absolute state, especially in the masc. pl. (i.e. ין-) but the curious absence of the fem. pl. absolute state.
- (7) The preference for conservative forms in the perfect as against standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic variants.
- (8) The vacillation between the imperfect prefixes -י, -נ and -ל for the 3rd. p. masc. sg./pl.
- (9) Other conservative features held in common with the bowl texts, such as תי as an object marker and אית as a marker of existence ('there is/are').

Many more could be added. Note, for instance, that the participle marker אק, that is at least rare in the bowl texts, is unattested here. In some cases standard Babylonian Talmudic forms are more common in HdRA than in bowl texts. In the imperfect, the prefixes -ל and -נ are proportionally more common than in the bowl texts, and the same goes for standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic perfect patterns (notably קטרל).

As regards the counterpart of *shwa mobile*, HdRA presents an interesting picture. On the one hand, *yod* may appear as the reflex of *shwa* – in accordance with the bowl texts – and on the other, ^{aleph} is curiously used with the same function (only twice). The latter counterpart may reflect an ultra-short (or short) *a*-vowel that appears as the main reflex of *shwa* in the Yemenite reading tradition of Babylonian Jewish Aramaic. Note that in the Yemenite reading tradition, the vowel *i* also appears alongside the main reflex.⁴⁶ Thus both counterparts (*yod* and ^{aleph}) in HdRA may well reflect actual pronunciations in the Geonic period. Of

⁴⁵ This, of course, is not a conservative feature, even though it is shared with the bowl texts.

⁴⁶ In the Yemenite tradition, *i* only appears in the 3rd p. masc. imperfect prefixes. See Morag 1988: 91ff.

course, this is most uncertain, given that only two instances with *ʿaleph* are present.

Most Babylonian Talmudic forms in HdRA that differ from the main bowl dialect nevertheless also appear in the bowl texts, even though as minor variants. It is clear that the bowl texts do not represent only a single dialect, and often forms of apparently different dialectal origin appear intermingled in the same text. Most interestingly, the first bowl text of a standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic character has recently been published by Christa Müller-Kessler and Theodore Kwasman.⁴⁷ This impression of “multi-dialectalism” is made even stronger by so-called *koiné* features that frequently appear in the bowl texts. These *koiné* features are, for example, typical Mandaic features that appear in a Jewish Aramaic bowl text or *vice versa*.⁴⁸ The *koiné* features most likely reflect mutual (textual and conceptual) borrowings between Jewish, Mandaic and Syriac (Christian?) magical traditions. By contrast, they probably do not imply that there was a common shared vernacular (supradialectal language), which would have consisted of Jewish Aramaic, Syriac and Mandaic features (*koiné* in the linguistic sense).

The most striking difference between HdRA and the bowl texts is the ending of the masc. pl. determinate state, which is *ⲥ*- in HdRa, but normally *ⲩ*- in the bowl texts. Furthermore, HdRA presents some typically Palestinian Jewish Aramaic features that are rarely if at all met with in the bowl texts. These include the 3rd p. masc. pl. perfect ending *ⲓ*- (with the final *nun*) and the derived state infinitive pattern with prefixed *mem*. The masc. pl. determinate state ending *ⲥ*- (*-ayyā*), noted above, could of course be included in this list, since the parallel form is standard in Palestinian Jewish Aramaic.⁴⁹ The fact that the spelling in the Palestinian tradition is *ⲥ*- makes Palestinian influence unlikely. There are, besides, other possibilities for interpreting this form in HdRA. Firstly, it may be understood as an archaism. Secondly, since the ending *ⲥ*- also appears in some bowl

⁴⁷ Müller-Kessler & Kwasman 2000. Even some other texts published earlier contain more standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic features than is normal in the bowl texts (see Juusola 1999b: 253). The fact that standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic and Mandaic are in many respects close to each other sometimes makes it difficult to be certain if a given feature in a Jewish Aramaic bowl text is a standard Babylonian Talmudic feature or a Mandaic *koiné* feature. Even in the text published by Müller-Kessler and Kwasman there are elements that – as the publishers rightly point out – suggest a Mandaic *Vorlage*. Thus, the question, to what extent standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic features in the magic bowl texts are actually Mandaic textual influences is rather difficult to answer.

⁴⁸ The term Eastern Aramaic “*koiné*” was introduced by Tapani Harviainen (Harviainen 1978). It is apparent that Mandaic features (especially lexical) played a major role in this “*koiné*” (see Harviainen 1978; 1981; Müller-Kessler 1998; 1999). For the *koiné* in the bowl texts, see also Juusola 1999b: 21ff. It seems that scholars have used the term in slightly different senses.

⁴⁹ See e.g. Dalman 1905: 189ff.

texts in both Jewish Aramaic and Syriac (!) and is moreover standard in Mandaic (including Mandaic bowl texts),⁵⁰ one could argue that it is one of the *koiné* features (probably of Mandaic origin) that penetrated into the (Jewish) Aramaic magical tradition.⁵¹ This possibility is, however, rendered less likely by the rarity of the form in the bowl texts. Yet one cannot totally exclude it. Besides, the 3rd p. masc. pl. perfect ending ַן- is also attested in the bowl texts and, importantly, in Mandaic. Hence, there remains a possibility that some “Western” features in Jewish Aramaic magical texts (bowl texts and HdRA) actually originate from a Mesopotamian *koiné* tradition, with a heavy Mandaic influence. At least for the time being, it seems, however, more likely that the majority of “Western” features are either archaisms or actual Western influence. In the case of HdRA Western Aramaic forms may imply something about the redaction process, which the text has undergone. Note that Ḥarba de-Moshe, another early Jewish Aramaic magical text, also attests to both Eastern and Western linguistic features, a fact which probably reveals a long and complicated textual history. It is equally possible that Palestinian features were already present in that Aramaic tradition in the Geonic Mesopotamia represented in the Aramaic parts of HdRA. Importantly, Palestinian influences (magical terms, formulae etc.) in the magic bowl texts were already detected by Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked.⁵²

The basic linguistic similarity of the Aramaic parts of HdRA to Jewish Aramaic magic bowl texts is one more indication that an essentially conservative type of Aramaic predominated in Jewish Aramaic magical literature. Interestingly, a similar kind of linguistic conservatism seems to prevail in the Aramaic parts of Harba de-Moshe, too. In line with HdRA, Ḥarba de-Moshe (henceforth HdMO) is a work of composite character, whose provenance and date are uncertain.⁵³ Some scholars argue that HdMO is of Palestinian origin, while others believe that it originated in Babylonia. Since HdMO testifies to both Palestinian and Babylonian linguistic features, in both theories of its origin, linguistic criteria have been used as evidence. The Geonic period is probably the most likely dating. No linguistic study of HdMO has been made, but it is evident that in many respects its Aramaic sections tally with both the bowl texts and HdRA or with either of them. The following siglosses that they have in common are easily detectable:⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Yamauchi 1967: 95.

⁵¹ See Juusola 1999a: 86, where, however, a different interpretation is given.

⁵² Naveh & Shaked 1993: 20ff.

⁵³ See Harari 1997: 52ff.

⁵⁴ The instances are enumerated from Harari's recent edition of the text (Harari 1997).

- (1) A tendency to maintain final consonantal elements, e.g. עינין (XV:3); מדעם (XIX:16); עליהון (XVI:10); קאים (XXIII:12); תוב (XXI:20).⁵⁵
- (2) Conservative independent personal pronouns and demonstrative pronouns, e.g. ואינון קטלין (XXII:22); הדין קבלא (XVI:15); ההוא זיתא (XVII:3); אינון אילני (XIX:7); אילין עובדיא (XXIV:15–16).
- (3) Fluctuation between the conservative and Talmudic model with suffixed personal pronouns. For instance, in keeping with the bowl texts, both והי and יה- appear with the preposition על, e.g. עלוהי (XVII and *passim*); עליה (XVIII:6 and *passim*).
- (4) The masc. pl. absolute state (י-) is frequent.
- (5) In the masc. pl. determinate state both יא- and י- occur, e.g. דטלפחי דמיא (XVII:15); והוא קטיל ית גברי (XXIII:7); סוסיא (XX:10); קדישייא (XXIII:17); ולמלאכייא (XXV:3).
- (6) In the 3rd p. masc. sg./pl. imperfect prefix י- strongly predominates, e.g. ויסחי XVI:9; וידבק (XVII:1); יתחבל (XX:8).
- (7) In the infinitives of the derived stems both *qattālā* and *qattōlē* appear in line with the bowl texts, e.g. ולסכרא פומא XV:3; למללא (XX:24); לאשבועי (XVIII:2); לאמרועי (XXI:13).
- (8) ית as a common object marker, e.g. לאהדורי יתהון (XVIII:18); ושחוט יתיה (XX:12).
- (9) ליכא and איכא as opposed to לית and אית.

Apart from these standard features, one may also note that the characteristically Syriac demonstrative pronoun האנא is attested in HdMO:⁵⁶ סב קשיתא דהאנא שיראה (XXI:20–21). This is of importance, since the same form also occurs in some (Jewish Aramaic) bowl texts.⁵⁷ The appearance of this form in HdMO is an additional piece of evidence for the preservation of some Babylonian *koiné* elements (in this case of Syriac origin) in Jewish magical literature. Even though the Aramaic used in HdMO, of course, deserves a study of its own, it is clear on the basis of these tentative notes that it basically follows the linguistic model of the bowl texts and of HdRA. In all of them – with some differences – archaic features and more developed features familiar mainly (but not entirely) from standard Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic vary, with the predominance of the former. It is highly interesting that a conservative idiom is indeed so commonly used in Jewish Aramaic magical texts, in a genre where, more than perhaps anywhere else, one would expect a *Volksprache* to be employed. Not much is known of Jewish Aramaic magical literature prior to the Talmudic and Geonic periods. The

⁵⁵ Exceptions are found, e.g. תו (for תוב) in XIX:18.

⁵⁶ Note the *plene* spelling here.

⁵⁷ Juusola 1999b: 115–116.

overall conservative linguistic character of the texts from these periods, however, suggests a long-standing literary tradition. One may also assume that the archaic Hochsprache gave a solemn impression in the magical rites, which were the original context. Perhaps even the demons would appreciate this!

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