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A PAGANIZED VERSION OF PSALM 20:2–6 FROM THE ARAMAIC TEXT IN DEMOTIC SCRIPT

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INTRODUCTION

IN 1944, RAYMOND BOWMAN ANNOUNCED HIS DISCOVERY that the mystery papyrus of the Pierpont Morgan Library's Amherst collection, a demotic papyrus unintelligible to demoticists, was "An Aramaic Religious Text in Demotic Script." At the time, Bowman could not have been aware that precisely the same conclusion had been reached in 1932 by Noël Aimé-Giron in a letter to Herbert Thompson. In the same article, Bowman published his decipherment of a small part (four lines) of the text (a passage deciphered in part by Aimé-Giron in the above-mentioned letter), based on a transliteration and other materials supplied by C. F. Nims, and spoke of completing the task "some years hence perhaps" (Bowman, 1944:231). Since then, however, nothing more of this extraordinary text has been published, a fact bemoaned by at least one scholar (Kitchen, 1965:54).

About a year after Bowman's death in October 1979, C. F. Nims resumed work on the text, and in March 1981, R. C. Steiner joined him.² Since that

time, they have been working together to prepare the text for publication. The present article is the first fruit of this collaboration. The opportunity to publish it in a volume honoring our distinguished colleague Samuel N. Kramer is indeed a welcome one.

Before presenting the new and rather startling passage which is the subject of this article, it may be worthwhile to supplement and correct some of the information about the papyrus as a whole contained in Bowman, 1944. It is now known that the papyrus is no. 63 of the Amherst collection, and that it is one of the nineteen papyri "found together in an earthen jar near Thebes," several of which bear dates ranging from 139 to 112 BCE (Newberry, 1899:55).³ Similarly, one of the rare parallels to the peculiarly shaped $\frac{3}{3}$ of this text (γ) comes from Thebes in 98 BCE. It is likely, therefore, that our papyrus is from the late second century BCE—not the Achaemenid period as earlier believed (Bowman, 1944:219, 223, 230).

express his personal gratitude to Professors Gene Gragg, Carolyn Killean, and Erica Reiner for inviting him to come to Chicago, and to Professor Joshua Blau for giving him his first introduction to the papyrus.

³ Newberry's description of Nos. "XLVI–LXVI" reads as follows:

The following twenty papyri, several of which are dated to the second and first century B.C., were found together in an earthen jar near Thebes. One of them is written in Greek uncials and three others in Demotic with Greek docketts: the remaining sixteen in Demotic only. The demotic texts have not yet been examined . . .

There are a number of confusions in these sentences. The Pierpoint Morgan Library does not have any Papyrus Amherst LXVI, and if there were only twenty papyri, as

¹ The authors are listed in alphabetical order. C. F. Nims did the Egyptological work, and R. C. Steiner did the Semitic work and the actual writing of this article. Mention should also be made of the many scholars who answered questions or commented on drafts of this article: Zvi Abusch, Klaus Baer, Moshe Bar-Asher, Joshua Blau, H. Z. Dimitrovsky, Zvi Erenyi, Louis Feldman, H. L. Ginsberg, Moshe Greenberg, Jonas Greenfield, Carleton Hodge, George Hughes, Janet Johnson, Shmuel Klein, Leo Landman, Sid Leiman, Baruch Levine, Yochanan Muffs, Bezalel Porten, and Morton Smith. Their generous help is gratefully acknowledged.

² We are indebted to Mr. Peter Daniels for making this collaboration possible. R. C. Steiner would also like to

The papyrus is 350–60 cm. long and 30 cm. high, with 22 or 23 columns of varying width covering all of the recto and sixty percent of the verso. The number of lines per column (not counting two short columns) ranges from 17 to 24. All in all, there are about 290 well-preserved lines and about 132 poorly preserved ones, a total of 422 preserved lines. (These figures are based on excellent nineteenth-century photographs in our possession. The papyrus itself, only recently remounted in glass, has suffered losses since 1921, when Herbert Thompson made the hand-copy and transliteration which he later sent to Aimé-Giron.) The average number of words in the complete lines (assuming word divisions where a contemporary Aramaic scribe would have put them) varies from column to column. The lines in the passage below contain 7.1 words on the average, whereas the lines in col. XX contain 9.8. (In contrast, the Job Targum has around 338 preserved lines, the complete ones containing an average of 7.7 words; the Genesis Apocryphon has around 178 preserved lines, the complete ones containing an average of 16.7 words; and the Palmyra Tariff has 161 preserved lines, the complete ones containing an average of 7.8 words.) These figures suggest that pAmh 63 is the longest ancient copy of an Aramaic text ever found, but it must be admitted that the Genesis Apocryphon is such a close second that certainty is impossible.

The papyrus is a collection of cultic texts, mainly prayers, with a story at the end. With the exception of a few words here and there, the language of the entire papyrus is Aramaic. The script is a peculiar variety of demotic, many signs having a form met with rarely, if at all, outside of our text. The Aramaic values of many non-alphabetic signs (i.e. signs which in normal demotic texts do not represent single consonants) are still unknown.

It goes without saying that this script fails to express many of the contrasts expressed by the traditional Aramaic script (with the exception of the contrast between *h* and *h*, where the opposite is true⁴). Thus, dem. *t* stands for Aram. *t*, *d*, *t*; dem. *k*, *k* for Aram. *k*, *g*, *k*; dem. *s* for Aram. *s*, *z*; dem. *y* for Aram. *y*, *ʔ*;

dem. *r* for Aram. *r*, *l*—to mention only the clearest cases of polyphony. Since, in addition, vowels are generally unindicated (pace Bowman, 1944:223) and glottal stops are frequently elided, the renderings are highly ambiguous, some forms having dozens of possible interpretations.

Even when the scribe attempted to eliminate the ambiguity of his renderings, he did not always succeed. There are good reasons for believing that the scribe intended \bar{r} (𐤀/𐤁), unlike *r* (𐤂), to be an unambiguous rendering of Aram. *r* (cf. Bowman, 1944:222): (1) The sign is very complex (eight strokes vs. one stroke for *r*) and would hardly have been used by a scribe taking dictation⁵ unless it had some advantage over *r*. (2) The value of the sign in Egyptian is *r*ʒ “mouth”, yielding Coptic reflexes with *r* in all dialects except Fayyumic⁶ (in which *r* > *l*), in contrast to *r*, which is an alphabetic sign with two values (𐤂/𐤃 and 𐤄/𐤅) in demotic Egyptian. And, in fact, in the overwhelming majority of cases, dem. \bar{r} renders Aram. *r*. The problem is that in a small minority of cases (so far, around ten in all—two in our passage below), dem. \bar{r} seems to render Aram. *l*. These should probably be considered mistakes; however, since almost all of them involve a final radical, it may turn out that we are dealing with a conditioned sound change within Ptolemaic Egyptian Aramaic.

Comparison of the parallel (i.e. repeated) passages in the papyrus reveals that the scribe not infrequently omits letters (especially *c* and *r*) or misplaces determinatives (i.e. word-dividers)⁷ in one of the passages. The parallels in question are quite close together, often in the same column. The mistakes (especially the falsely divided words) and the use of determinatives show that the scribe frequently did not understand what he was writing and thus that he was not the author. The inconsistencies show that he was unable to recognize repetitions and hence that he was not writing from memory. The deviations from normal Aramaic orthographical practice show that he was not transliterating a written Aramaic text. It seems likely, therefore, that the scribe who first reduced this text to writing did so from dictation.

The peculiarity of the script mentioned above is matched by the peculiarity of the transliteration system adopted here. Several of the standard symbols have been modified with the aim of making this brain-

Newberry states, there cannot ever have been one with that number. Indeed, the Pierpoint Morgan does not have any Papyrus Amherst LXV either. Moreover, the dates on the Greek docketts are 139, 114, and 112 BCE, and the date on the Greek uncial papyrus is 112 BCE. Since these are the only dates which had been read, the statement about first-century papyri must also be erroneous.

⁴ See below.

⁵ See below.

⁶ We are indebted to Prof. Carleton Hodge for pointing out this exception.

⁷ For a similar phenomenon in a medieval Semitic text in Egyptian transcription, cf. Blau 1979:217–18.

teasing text more transparent to the Semitist: (1) \dot{y} is used instead of plain y to transliterate 𐤊𐤏 , in deference to the use of this sign to write both Aram. y and the Aram. glottal stop; (2) \dot{e} is used instead of plain e to transliterate 𐤍 , in deference to the use of this sign to write the Aram. glottal stop; and (3) \cdot is used instead of the overly prominent and distracting 𐤍 to transliterate the ubiquitous—but (pace Bowman, 1944:223) almost meaningless— 𐤍 .

An overline is used to indicate signs not used alphabetically in demotic texts. Demotic determinatives (used mainly as word-dividers in this text) are indicated by raised letters. The ones in our passage are:

^m—“man-with-his-hand-to-his-mouth,” used in Middle Egyptian after words indicating speech (as well as thought, emotion, silence, eating, etc.) but in our papyrus after almost *any* word, apparently because the word is the basic unit of speech (Bowman, 1944:220). Thus, in our papyrus, this sign has changed from a determinative of the signified into a determinative of the signifier.

^g—“god.”

^w—“seated woman,” a determinative whose use is not yet understood.

The linguistic contributions of the papyrus as a whole, which are enormous, will hopefully be dealt with in a separate article. For the purposes of the present article, it suffices to note that

- (1) the Proto-Semitic contrast of h with \dot{h} is perfectly preserved (cf. now Blau, 1982 for this contrast in the Ptolemaic Egyptian pronunciation of *Hebrew* as reflected in the LXX).
- (2) Aram. k (rendered by k , never h) and p (rendered by p , never f) have no spirantal allophones. The same is presumably true of b , g , d , t as well, but the dem. sound system lacks the phones needed to prove this directly, viz. v , γ , δ , θ .
- (3) Aram. š (rendered by $t + s$) is an affricate (cf. Steiner, 1982:57–9).
- (4) The Aram. glottal stop (rendered by \dot{e} and, less frequently, by \dot{y}) has vanished almost without a trace in medial and (of course) final position; in initial position, it is frequently elided as well, apparently via a sandhi rule.

Of the considerable number of passages in the papyrus which we have to some extent succeeded in deciphering during the past year, we have chosen to present here a seven-line passage from column XI, stretching from the section marker (dem. *sp* “remainder”) in the middle of line 11 to the section marker at the end of line 19 (a short line at the end of the column). The reason for publishing this passage first is the unusual degree of certainty about its meaning afforded by the discovery that it bears a striking resemblance to Ps 20:2–6. It is reasonable to expect that conclusions reached on the basis of this passage will constitute a firm foundation for future work on the papyrus.

TEXT

Papyrus Amherst Egyptian 63, Col. XI, lines 11–19

Psalm 20

Transliteration of Demotic Script

Semitic Interpretation

(11) $\dot{y}^c \cdot n \cdot n \cdot m \cdot \overline{\text{Hr}}^g \text{ b.m.tswr}\dot{y}^n \cdot m$ (12) $\dot{y}^c \cdot n \cdot n \cdot m \cdot \dot{e} \cdot t \cdot n \cdot \dot{y}^m \text{ b.mtswr}\dot{y}^n \cdot m$ $h \cdot \dot{y} \cdot k \cdot \dot{s} \cdot t^m \text{ b.}\dot{s} \cdot m \cdot \dot{y}^n \cdot g \text{ }^{(13)} s \cdot h \cdot \bar{r} \cdot m$ $\dot{s} \cdot r \cdot h \cdot m \text{ } \bar{t} s \cdot \bar{y} \cdot \bar{r} \cdot k^m \text{ } \bar{m} \bar{n} \bar{n} k \cdot r^m \cdot \dot{e} \cdot \bar{r} \cdot \dot{s} \cdot w$ $w \cdot \bar{m} \bar{n} \bar{t} s p \cdot n \cdot m \text{ }^{(14)} \overline{\text{Hr}}^g \dot{y} \cdot s \cdot c \cdot t \cdot n \cdot m$ $y^c n n \text{ Hr bms(w)ryn}$ $y^c n n \text{ }^2 \text{dny bms(w)ryn}$ $hy\text{-}\dot{k}\dot{s}t \text{ bšmyn Šhr}$ $\dot{s}l\dot{h} \text{ šyrk mn-}^2 \text{gr }^2 \text{rš}$ $wmn\text{-}\dot{s}pn \text{ Hr ys}^c \text{dn}$ (2) $y^c nk \text{ YYY bywm šrh}$ $y\dot{s}gbk \text{ šm }^2 \text{lhy Y}^c \text{kb}$ (3) $y\dot{s}l\dot{h} \text{ }^c \text{zrk m}\dot{k}\dot{d}\dot{s}$ $wm\dot{S}ywn \text{ ys}^c \text{dk}$ (4) $y\dot{z}kr \text{ kl mn}\dot{h}tyk$ $w^c \text{wltk ydšnh slh}$ (5) $ytn \text{ lk klbbk}$ $wkl \text{ }^c \text{štk yml}^2$ (6) $nrnh \text{ byšw}^c \text{tk}$ $wbšm \text{ }^2 \text{lhynw ndgl}$ $yml^2 \text{ YYY}$ $kl \text{ mš}^2 \text{lwtky}$ $\dot{y} \cdot m \cdot t \cdot n \cdot \dot{e} \cdot r \cdot n \cdot m \cdot \overline{\text{Hr}}^g \text{ k.br.b.n.}^m$ $\dot{y} \cdot m \cdot t \cdot n \cdot m \text{ }^{(15)} \dot{e} \cdot r \cdot n \cdot m \text{ mr}^m \text{ k.br.b.n.}^m$ $\dot{k}r^m \dot{y} \cdot c \cdot t \cdot s \cdot t \cdot m \cdot \overline{\text{Hr}}^m \dot{y} \cdot h \cdot m \cdot r \cdot \dot{y}^m$ $yntn\text{-}^2 \text{ln Hr kblbn}$ $yntn \text{ }^2 \text{ln Mr kblbn}$ $kl \text{ y}^c \text{št} \langle n \rangle \text{ Hr yhml}^2$ $\dot{y} \cdot h \cdot m \cdot r \cdot \dot{y} \cdot \overline{\text{Hr}}^g \text{ r}\dot{y} \cdot h \cdot m \text{ }^{(16)} s \cdot \bar{r} \cdot m \cdot \dot{e} \cdot t \cdot n \cdot \dot{y}^m$ $\dot{k}r^m \text{ m.}\dot{s}\dot{e} \cdot r \cdot b \cdot n \cdot m$ $yhml^2 \text{ Hr l}^2 \text{-yhsr}^8 \text{ }^2 \text{dny}$ $kl \text{ mš}^2 \text{l-lbn}$

.rb.kšt^m .rb.h.nt.^m .ḫ
 (17)ē.nh.n.^m mr^m ḫ.rh.n^w .ḫr^g ḫh^g
 .ḫ.n.^m ḫp.n.^m
 ḫ.c.n.n.^m (18)m.ḫr.byt.r.^m
 b^cr^g šmyn^g mr^m ḫb.r.k.^m
 r.h.sy.t^m (19)ḫk.^m b[.]r.k.t.k.^m

lbkšt lb-bhnt ʔl
 ʔnhn Mr ʔlhn ḫr YH
 ʔln ḫpn
 y^cnn mhḫ ʔl-Byt-ʔl
 B^cl šmyn Mr ybrk
 lḫsydyk brtkk

(7)^cth yd^cty ky hwšy^c
 YYY mšyhw . . .

TRANSLATION

Papyrus Amherst Egyptian 63, Col. XI, lines 11–19

Psalm 20

(11) May Horus answer us in ⁹-our troubles⁹

(2) May the Lord answer you in
time of trouble.

(12) May Adonay answer us in ⁹-our troubles⁹

May the name of the God of Jacob
keep you out of harm's reach

O Bow in Heaven, (13) Sahar.

Send your emissary from the temple of Arash,

(3) May He send you(r) help from the
Sanctuary

and from Zephon (14) may Horus sustain us.

and from Zion may He sustain you.

May Horus ¹⁰-grant us¹⁰ our heart's desire

May (15) Mar ¹⁰-grant us¹⁰ our heart's desire

May Horus fulfill (our) every plan

(4) May He accept the reminders of
your meal offerings and accept the
fatness of your burnt offerings.

(5) May he grant you your heart's
desire
and may He fulfill your every plan

(6) May we shout for joy at your
victory and in the name of our God
raise our banners.

¹¹May Horus fulfill—may (16) Adonay not withhold
(even) in part¹¹—every request of our hearts,
the request of hearts which you, O El, have tested.

May the Lord fulfill all of your
requests.

(17) We—O Mar, our god, Horus, YH, our god—
are faint.

May (18) El Bethel answer us tomorrow.

May Baal of Heaven, Mar, bless.

Upon your pious (19) ones are your blessings.

(7) Now I know that the Lord
will give victory to His
annointed . . .

⁸ Or: ʔl(y) ʔh(y) šr(y)

⁹ Or: Egypt

¹⁰ Or: our god grant

¹¹ Or: May Horus, (my) god, (my) brother, (my) prince,
Adonay fulfill

PHILOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

(11). $\ddot{y}^{\text{c}}n.n.^m = y^{\text{c}}nn$ “may he answer us,” corresponding to Ps 20 $y^{\text{c}}nk$ “may He answer you” with a *second*-person *singular* suffixed pronoun. Other examples of this difference are found in lines 14, 15, and 16. For its significance, see Discussion.

$\ddot{H}r^g = Hr$ “Horus.” This seems to be the only logogram in the papyrus which is used in its Egyptian meaning.

$b.m.tsw\ddot{r}^{\ddot{y}}n.^m = bms(w)r^n$ “in Egypt” or “in our troubles,” corresponding to Ps 20 $b\ddot{r}wm \ddot{s}rh$ “in time of trouble.” In view of the parallel from Ps 20 and parallels from other psalms, the latter alternative is clearly superior, although the former would have made good sense had the appeal for help been addressed to a god *outside* of Egypt rather than to Horus, especially in light of the reference in line 13 to sending an emissary. The w is in parentheses because a demotic sign identical to w is apparently used as a determinative in the papyrus. If it is a determinative here, then this is one of the many falsely divided words in our text. If it is a w , then this word is, as Prof. J. Blau has pointed out (personal communication), from the root $\ddot{s}wr$, attested as a by-form of $\ddot{s}rr$ in Hebrew (unless, of course, the meaning is really “in Egypt,” in which case this form is related to poetic Hebrew $M\ddot{s}wr$ “Egypt”). The etymologically distinct $\ddot{s}wr$ which means “besiege,” attested in Old Aramaic $m\ddot{s}r$ “siege,” would not be appropriate here even if Dahood (1966:127) were right in taking $\ddot{s}rh$ in Ps 20:2 to mean “siege” (ignoring the several allusions in that verse to Gen 35:3 which have been recognized by amoraic *daršanim* and modern scholars alike). Note that $m\ddot{s}r$ “trouble,” unlike $m\ddot{s}r$ “siege,” can only be Hebrew, for the reasons to be mentioned in the Discussion.

(12). $\ddot{e}.t.n\ddot{y}^m = \text{ʔ}dny$ “Adonay,” despite the absence of the god determinative. Its appearance in the middle of a series of first-person *plural* pronouns shows that it is used here in the absolute sense of “Lord,” not in the sense of “my lord” (cf. Fitzmyer, 1979:135 and the literature cited there). A vocalization $\text{ʔ}ādōnī$ “my lord” is likewise excluded by the neighboring pronouns and by the *consistent* spelling of the word (8x in cols. XI and XII) with dem. \ddot{y} at the end, the vowel \ddot{i} being only sporadically rendered by dem. \ddot{y} (e.g. $\ddot{t}s\ddot{y}.\ddot{r}.k = \ddot{s}\ddot{r}\ddot{s}k\ddot{a}$ in line 13 but $\ddot{e}\ddot{h}. = \text{ʔ}āhī$ “my brother” in XIX/15 and XX/4).

$h.\ddot{y} = h\ddot{y}$ “O.” This word is obviously the same as the one spelled $hw\ddot{y}$ in XIII/1 and (alongside hw) in XVI/16, whose distribution (both times after $\text{ʔ}nt$ “you” and before the name of a deity) confirm that it is a vocative particle. The fuller spellings show that it is also identical to Hebrew $hw\ddot{y}$, thus confirming the view of R. Saadia Gaon (1896:110–111) in his commentary to Is 18:1 that $hw\ddot{y}$, though normally scornful

or mournful, is also attested as a purely vocative particle with no emotive connotations. Such connotations presumably were a function of intonation rather than inherent in the meaning of the word.—The absence of a determinative here suggests that this word may sometimes have been proclitic, which for a grammatical morpheme would hardly be surprising.

$k\ddot{s}.t^m b.\ddot{s}.m\ddot{y}n^g = k\ddot{s}t b\ddot{s}myn$ “Bow in Heaven,” cf. $k\ddot{s}t.k^m b.\ddot{s}m\ddot{y}n^g = k\ddot{s}tk b\ddot{s}myn$ “your bow is in heaven” in XV/14. The next word shows that, in our passage at least, this is an epithet of the crescent moon.—The final n of $\ddot{s}myn$ probably marks this word as Aramaic rather than Hebrew, since the irregular Mishnaic Hebrew shift of final m to n is attested neither with this word (even in good manuscripts, according to Prof. M. Bar-Asher) nor at this period (judging from the silence of Qimron, 1976:281 and *passim*). The consistent use of the god determinative with this word in the papyrus (about 10 times) may have some connection with the Jewish use of “Heaven” as an appellation of God, e.g. Dan 4:23, I Macc 3:18–9, and throughout the Mishnah.

(13). $s.h\ddot{r}^m = \ddot{S}hr$ “Sahar,” the moon-god mentioned in Aramaic inscriptions and occurring as a formant of NA, NB, and LB names (Fales, 1978:95).

$\ddot{s}.r.h.^m = \ddot{s}lh$ “send,” corresponding to Ps 20 $y\ddot{s}lh$ “may He send.” The proto-root contains a pharyngeal h (cf. Ug. $\ddot{s}lh$ “send”), and that is precisely what the demotic rendering has, here and in the other renderings of this root in the papyrus.

$\ddot{t}s\ddot{y}.\ddot{r}.k^m = \ddot{s}yrk$ “your emissary,” corresponding to Ps 20 $\text{ʔ}zrk$ but certainly different from it, not so much because ʔ is missing (there are at least two certain cases of that in the papyrus) as because Aram. z is rendered by dem. s in this papyrus, not by $\ddot{t}s$.—In Hebrew, $\ddot{s}yr$ is a poetic synonym of $m\ddot{p}k$, and, like the latter, it can be an emissary of God or man. (The fact that five of the six Biblical instances of this word co-occur with the verb $\ddot{s}lh$ “send”—the same verb that we have here—supports our identification.) Akk. $\ddot{s}iru$ belongs here as well, although its connection with Heb. $\ddot{s}yr$ is not noted (and in fact is obscured) by *AHw* (which renders “Ass. militärischer Führer, Potentat”) and *CAD* (which renders “[foreign] chieftain”). Ms. J. Scurlock has pointed out (personal communication) that, according to Postgate (1974:124), the $\ddot{s}ir\ddot{a}ni$ are “usually mentioned as bringers of tribute” and “could when needed act as ambassadors on other matters as well.” Thus, the meaning “emissary” appears to be appropriate in Akkadian as well. In any event, both the meaning of the word and its late attestation (NA and NB) indicate that it is a borrowing, presumably from Northwest Semitic.—The correspondence between $-k$ “you, your” and Ps 20’s $-k$ is at first glance surprising. Elsewhere in this passage we find $-n$ “us, our” corresponding to Ps 20 $-k$, and we would therefore expect to find $\ddot{s}lh \ddot{s}yrn$ here. But what

would this phrase mean? "Send our emissary" does not make much sense. "Send us an emissary" might have been possible in an earlier period if, as is generally assumed (cf. Joüon, 1923:389), the language had a transformation which attached dative pronouns to the object of a verb rather than the verb itself (e.g. $\text{y}\bar{s}lh \text{ } ^c\text{zrk}$, generally taken to mean "may He send you help" rather than "may He send your help"). But this transformation must have been obsolete by the Hellenistic period; even in earlier periods, it may have been restricted to object-nouns derived from verbs, e.g. ^czr but not $\text{y}\bar{s}r$. It seems, therefore, that $\bar{s}lh \text{ } \text{y}\bar{s}rn$ was avoided because it made no sense.

$\bar{m}\bar{n}nk.r^m = mn\text{-}^2gr$ "from the temple," corresponding to Ps 20 $m\bar{k}d\bar{s}$ "from the Sanctuary." The n following the demotic negative $\bar{m}\bar{n}$ ($\bar{m}\bar{n}$ etymological $\bar{b}\bar{n}$) is one of the many phonetic complements in the papyrus. The absence of a determinative after $\bar{m}\bar{n}$ is also normal for this text and is reminiscent of the absence of a space after two instances of mn in the Ashur ostrakon (Gibson, 1975:100) and the presence of $m\bar{a}k\bar{k}ef$ after almost all of the instances of mn in Masoretic Aramaic and Hebrew. Egyptian Aramaic 2gr "temple," like Targumic 2ygrw "pagan altar" and Mandaic $^c\text{kw}r$ "pagan temple," is a borrowing of Akk. $ekurru$ (Kaufman, 1974:48). Its initial glottal stop is one of the many deleted (or, at least, unrepresented) glottal stops in this text.

$\bar{e}.\bar{r}.\bar{s}^m = *^2r\bar{s}$ "Arash," by far the most common toponym in this text but so far unidentified. It is the place where Mar's temple is located (VII/2), the place out of which Mar comes or has come (X/16). It goes without saying that this problem cannot be separated from the problem of $\bar{s}.\bar{w}\bar{r}$ (Shur? Ashur?), the place where Mar's consort's temple is located (VII/2). Alašiya in Cyprus, Biblical $^2ly\bar{s}h$, is ruled out by the spelling with \bar{r} , for, as noted in the Introduction, it is likely that the scribe intended it to be an unambiguous rendering of Aram. r . Nor can this spelling of the name with \bar{r} be a mistake, because it is the usual one, occurring at least ten times. The Ps 20 correspondence points to Jerusalem as a possibility, but that is even more difficult from the phonetic point of view. The Nabatean and Syriac form $^2wr\bar{s}lm$ does not go far enough toward alleviating this difficulty.—Since this is definitely a toponym, the Phoenician deity Aresh is also ruled out.

$w.\bar{m}\bar{n}\bar{i}sp.n.^m = wmn\text{-}\bar{S}pn$ "and from Zephon," corresponding to Ps 20 $wm\bar{S}ywn$ "and from Zion." That $\bar{i}sp.n.^m$ is a rendering of $\bar{S}pn$ "Zephon" is clear from its association with $b^c r^{\bar{s}} = B^c l$ "Baal" in VII/2 (Bowman, 1944:227fn) and XII/15, which parallels the association of Zephon with Baal in a wide variety of sources from Egypt, Israel, Ugarit, and Assyria (Eissfeldt, 1932; Albright, 1950). The initial t of $\bar{i}sp.n.^m$, which Bowman (op. cit.) considered a problem, is now known to be a common feature of renderings of \bar{s} in this

papyrus (cf. the examples in lines 11, 12, 13, and 15) and is only one of many pieces of evidence showing that the affricated realization of \bar{s} is much older than generally realized (Steiner, 1982).—It is entirely possible that the Zephon referred to here is not the original North-Syrian one but an Egyptian copy (Biblical Baal-Zephon and/or Hellenistic Kasion) located on the Mediterranean coast of either Sinai (Eissfeldt, 1932:39ff) or Egypt proper (Albright, 1950:12–3). The correspondence between $\bar{S}pn$ in our passage and $\bar{S}ywn$ in Ps 20 is reminiscent of the use of the former as an appellation of the latter in Ps 48:3 (cf. Eissfeldt, 1932:15–6; Lauha, 1943:44; Clifford, 1972:142–3) and may have some element of phonetic word-play in it.

(14). $\bar{H}r^{\bar{s}} = Hr$ "Horus." As pointed out in the Discussion, the association of Horus with Zephon here is quite unexpected and hence quite significant. The only parallel is of dubious validity: In Pelusium, the statue of Zeus Kasios—the Greek equivalent of Baal Zephon—was actually an image of Harpocrates (Eissfeldt, 1932:41–2).

$\bar{y}.s.^c.t.n.^m = ys^c dn$ "may he sustain us," corresponding to Ps 20 $ys^c dk$ "may He sustain you." The stem may be either kal as in the Hebrew parallel or $pael$ as in Biblical Aramaic. The imperative form $s^c dny$ "sustain me" in line 19 of the Behistun inscription contributes nothing to the resolution of this question.

$\bar{y}.m.t.n = ym\bar{t}^2n$ "may he cause to reach us" or $yntn$ "may he grant," corresponding to Ps 20 ytn "may He grant." The phonetic problem inherent in the latter alternative is greatly diminished by the existence of two clear instances of m for n in the papyrus, both before a dental stop: $\bar{m}\bar{n}mt.h.t.^m = mn\text{-}t\bar{h}t$ "beneath" in VI/10 and $t.k.m.^m \bar{r}\bar{e}.b.^m = d\bar{k}n d^2b^2$ "the beard of my father" in XI/5 alongside $t.k.n.^m \bar{e}.b.^m = d\bar{k}n ^2b^2$ "id." in XI/4 and other occurrences of $d\bar{k}n$ "beard" in XI/1,2,3. The contrast between the two was probably neutralized before dental stops in this dialect of demotic, and so for our scribe mt had the same realization as nt . The absence of a determinative after $\bar{y}.m.t.n$ (cf. $\bar{y}.mt.n.^m$ at the end of the line) suggests that $\bar{y}.m.t.n\bar{e}.r.n.^m$, like $yntn$ in the Ps 20 parallel, was one stress unit (cf. also $hw\bar{s}rln$ "send us" in the Ashur ostrakon, according to Gibson, 1975:100).

$\bar{e}.r.n.^m = ^2ln$ "our god" or "to us," corresponding to Ps 20 lk "to you." Only the former alternative is possible if $\bar{y}.m.t.n$ means "may he cause to reach us." For the latter alternative, one would have expected (if not $r.n.^m = ln$, then) $\bar{e}.r.y.n.^m = ^2lyn$, since diphthongs are never reduced in this text, but the fact is that in XII/2 we find $\bar{e}.r.k.^m = ^2lk$ with the meaning "to you" (not "your god"). These y -less suffixed forms are presumably due to analogy with (a) 2l , the y -less allomorph used when no suffix is present, and (b) l , the synonymous preposition which is y -less even when a suffix is present. It

should also be noted that $\text{ʔ}lhm$ “to them,” written without y , occurs very frequently (113x) in the Masoretic text of the Bible.

$k.br.b.n.^m = kblbn$ “according to [what is] in our heart = our heart’s desire,” corresponding to Ps 20 $kbbk$ “according to [what is in] your heart = your heart’s desire.” The preposition b “in” of $kblbn$ is present in the underlying structure of $kbbk$. This is shown by parallels like $k(kl) \text{ʔ}sr bbbby$ “according to (all of) that which is in my heart” (I Sam 2:35, II K 10:30), where the b is not transformationally deleted because it is not attached to the same word as k “according to” is. It *is* transformationally deleted in $kbbk$ (and in the very common $kymy-$ “as [in] the days of”) because of a constraint on the co-occurrence of prefixed prepositions. This constraint breaks down in Rabbinic Hebrew, and, as Prof. M. Greenberg reminds me, is by no means absolute in Biblical Hebrew either, cf. $kbrʔsnh$ “as in the beginning” (Ju 20:32, I K 13:6, Is 1:26, Jer 33:7, 11) alongside $krʔsnh$ “as [in] the beginning” (Deut 9:18).—The use of lb here, rather than lbb , may be due to the late date of our passage (a possibility suggested by Prof. M. Greenberg), but only if that usage is a purely Aramaic one, free of any Hebrew influence (e.g. from a Hebrew *Vorlage*). In most Aramaic dialects of the Roman and Byzantine periods (all Jewish and Christian varieties beginning with the Genesis Apocryphon and Onkelos, and Samaritan, cf. Tal 1980–81 *passim*), lb is the predominant form, lbb being rare or non-existent (Sokoloff, 1974:109). In earlier periods (Old Aramaic, Egyptian Aramaic, and Biblical Aramaic—Daniel), on the other hand, exactly the opposite is the case: lbb is frequently attested whereas lb is rare or non-existent (*loc. cit.*). Our passage, with four occurrences of lb but none of lbb , clearly belongs with the later material—unless there is some Hebrew influence here. In that unlikely event, lb would not be a sign of lateness (despite the fact that it is the only form attested in Mishnaic Hebrew), since lb is well-attested (alongside lbb) in all periods of Biblical Hebrew. It is interesting to note that the Job Targum, which is either contemporary with or later than our papyrus, exhibits a more archaic pattern, with one case of lb and one or two of lbb (Sokoloff 1974:109). This is not the only respect in which the Job Targum gives the appearance of being more archaic than our text. Could it be that we are getting a glimpse of the linguistic difference between oral Aramaic literature and written Aramaic literature? If so, we may soon be in a position to put an end to the debate concerning the date of the Palestinian targums.

(15). $\text{ʔ}.^{c}ts.t.^m = \text{ʔ}^cst$ “plan(s),” corresponding to Ps 20 $\text{ʔ}st$ “your plan.” Since “our plan(s)” is what the context requires, we must assume that the scribe has omitted final n or (as Prof. J. Blau suggests) that the final n of $kblbn$ is a double-duty suffix. The *beginning* of the form is also

puzzling. The word for “advice, plan” in Hebrew is $\text{ʔ}sh$, not ʔ^csh . It is true that the *root* begins with y , but initial- y roots do not normally retain their y in verbal nouns formed with the feminine ending, the only Biblical exception being $ybsyt$ “drying out.” And even in Mishnaic Hebrew, where this rule does not apply (cf. $yrydh$ “descent”, $y\text{ʔ}y^{\text{ʔ}}h$ “departure”, $y\text{ʔ}ybh$ “academy”, etc.), there is no ʔ^csh . Nor is anything similar known in Aramaic. Could it be that the ʔ is misplaced and that it renders the e or i which follows ʔ ? Note that this form can only be Hebrew because dem. ts is not attested as a rendering of Sem. t , which is what the Aram. cognate ($\text{ʔ}tt$, attested in V/3) contains; see also Discussion. Note also that $\text{ʔ}y\text{ʔ}$ (<Heb. $\text{ʔ}sh$) is attested with the meaning “plan” in Onkelos (not only in places where the *Vorlage* contains $\text{ʔ}sh$, cf. Nu 31:16) and, as Prof. J. Blau informs us (personal communication), with the meaning “council” in the Syro-palestinian version of the NT. At present, there does not seem to be any reason to posit a connection between these loanwords and the Hebraism in our text.

$\text{ʔ}h.m.r\text{ʔ}^m = yhm\text{ʔ}$ “may he fulfill,” corresponding to Ps 20 $yml\text{ʔ}$ “may He fulfill.” The stem can only be *hafel*, despite the fact that the *hafel* of $m\text{ʔ}$ “be full” is rare in Aramaic. The demotic final ʔ represents not historical ʔ (certainly quiescent by now, cf. Segert, 1975:294–5, esp. the form $tmly$) but rather final long \bar{e} .

$r\text{ʔ}h.^m s.\bar{r}.^m = \text{ʔ}l(y) \text{ʔ}h(y) \text{ʔ}r(y)$ “(my) god, (my) brother, (my) prince” or $\text{ʔ}^{\text{ʔ}}y\text{ʔ}sr$ “may he not withhold (even) in part.” The former alternative is supported by the determinative after $r\text{ʔ}h$, and by the following parallels (if the interpretations suggested here are correct): $r\text{ʔ}h.^m h\text{ʔ}^m = \text{ʔ}ly \text{ʔ}hy$ “my god, my brother” in XIII/8 (but $ly \text{ʔ}hy$ “for myself, my brother” fits the context just as well) and $m\bar{m}s.\bar{r}h.^m = mn-\text{ʔ}r(y)-\text{ʔ}hy$ “from (my) prince, my brother” in IX/8. Note also that $\text{ʔ}r$ is attested as a divine epithet in Palmyrene Aramaic, in Phoenician, and elsewhere in our papyrus (VII/7 and in the names of the main characters in the story). The latter alternative takes this to be one of the many falsely divided words in the papyrus: a D-stem of $h\text{ʔ}r$ “be lacking” (with parallels in Jewish Aramaic, Syriac, and Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew) plus proclitic ʔ “not” (as in early inscriptions and, at times, in the Masoretic vocalization). This interpretation is supported by the existence of a close semantic relationship—antonymy—between $m\text{ʔ}$ and $h\text{ʔ}r$ (cf. the relationship between $n\text{m}$ “give” and mn^c “withhold” in Apocryphal Psalm 155, lines 3–4: $w\text{m} ly \text{ʔ}t \text{ʔ}^{\text{ʔ}}ly, w\text{b}k\text{ʔ}ty \text{ʔ}l tmn^c mmny$ “and grant me my petition, and my request do not withhold from me.” Sanders 1964:67). The use of the negated antonym for emphasis is common—not rare—in Hebrew, as pointed out already by the medieval philosopher Joseph Ibn Kaspi (1906:66) in his commentary to Gen 24:16 (cf. the examples cited there plus Apocryphal Psalm 155, line 11: $zkwrny w\text{ʔ}l ts\text{ʔ}ny$ “remember me and do not forget me,”

Sanders, 1964:68).—The proto-form of *ḥsr* “be lacking” contains a velar *ḥ* (cf. Ug. *ḥsr* “id.,” Arab. *ḥasira* “incur a loss”); so does the proto-form of *ʔḥ* “brother” (cf. Ug. and Arab. *ʔaḥ* “id.”). Accordingly, the demotic rendering with velar *ḥ* is etymologically justified no matter which of the interpretations given above is correct.

(16). *m.šē.r.b.n.m* = *mšʔl-lbn* “the request of our heart(s),” corresponding to Ps 20 *mšʔlwtlyk* “your requests,” cf. also Ps 37:4 *wym-lk mšʔl lbk* “and may he grant you the requests of your heart.” Demotic *r* stands here for a geminate Semitic *l*.
.rb.kšt^m = *lbkšt* “the request” with *l* as accusative marker. For the parallelism between *bḳšh* and *mšʔl*, cf. the parallelism between *bḳšh* and *šʔlh* in Est 5:6,7,8; 7:2,3; 9:12 (all but two of the Biblical occurrences) and Apocryphal Psalm 155, lines 3–4, quoted above. Note that *bḳšh* (more specifically, its root) can only be Hebrew, for the reasons mentioned in the Discussion. And, though the root *bḳš* is old, the noun *bḳšh* (combining the Hebrew root with an Aramaic verbal-noun pattern) is late, first attested in Ezra and Esther (Hurvitz, 1965:226–7, 1972:59–60¹²) which suggests that this stich was added in the Persian or Hellenistic periods.

.rb.ḥ.nt.^m = *lb-ḥnt* “a heart to which you have shown favor” or *lb-bḥnt* “a heart which you have tested.” The latter alternative is far more idiomatic, for *bḥn* “test” is used with *lb(b)* “heart” a full six times in the Bible (Jer 11:20, 12:3; Ps 7:10, 17:3; Pr 17:3; I Chr 29:17; cf. also War Scroll 16:13; Yadin, 1957:352). It seems, therefore, that dem. *b* stands here for a geminate Sem. *b*.—The proto-form of *bḥn* “test” contains a pharyngeal *ḥ* (cf. Arab. *maḥana* “id.”); so does the proto-form of *ḥnn* “show favor to” (cf. Ug. *ḥnn* “id.,” Akk. *enēnu* “id.,” Arab. *ḥanna* “sympathize, pity”). Accordingly, the dem. rendering with pharyngeal *ḥ* is etymologically justified no matter which of the interpretations given above is correct.—It should be noted that both interpretations make *lb* the head of an asyndetic relative clause. (One could, of course, eliminate this construction here by construing *lbkšt lb bḥnt* as “you tested a heart’s request,” as Prof. J. Blau suggests, but this would be a rather exceptional use of *bḥn*.) This syntactic construction is quite common in Biblical poetry (cf. Peretz, 1967:80–84 and now Sappan 1981:162–5), but it is not to be found in post-Biblical literature (personal communication from Prof. M. Bar-Asher). Indeed, it was so foreign to the copyists of IQIs^a that they occasionally misunderstood it (Kutscher, 1959:33–4). It seems likely, therefore, that this stich was added before the Hellenistic period. Since we have already seen that the word *bḳšh* is post-exilic, we may conclude that the phrase *lbkšt lb-bḥnt* was added to this prayer during the Persian period.

¹² We are indebted to Prof. Y. Muffs for reminding us of this discussion.

.ḥ.n. = *ʔl* “El.” For the problem caused by the *ḥ* in this form, see Introduction. Note also the absence of a determinative here. With rare exceptions (in IX/2 and XI/8), words ending in *ḥ* do not take a determinative in the papyrus, apparently because *ḥ* has its own internal determinative.

(17). *ē.nḥ.n.^m* = *ʔnḥn* “we.” Elsewhere in the papyrus (XVI/4), the form *ē.nḥ.n.^m* = *ʔnḥn* is used. Perhaps the shorter form used here is to be viewed as a Hebraism rather than an archaism. The proto-form contains a pharyngeal *ḥ* (cf. Arab. *naḥnu* “id.,” Akk. *nīnu* “id.”), and that is precisely what the demotic rendering has, here and in XVI/4.

ḥ.rh.n.^m = *ʔlhn* “our god.” For the use of dem. *ḥ* to render the Aram. glottal stop, see Introduction.

ḥ.h.⁸ = *Yḥ* “Lord,” probably the doubly apocopated form of the tetragram, although it is not really certain that the absence of *.* at the end of this form is a reliable indicator of the absence of a vowel. At Elephantine, only the singly apocopated form (spelled *Yhw* in papyri and *Yhh* in ostraca) is attested. In magical papyri of the third and fourth centuries CE, the singly apocopated form (written *Iaw* in Greek and *Y^ch^co* in demotic) predominates, but the doubly apocopated form (written *Ia* in Greek and *Y^cḥ* in demotic) is also found. The sequence of Horus plus YH in our passage is reminiscent of the sequence Horus-the-falcon (Αρβαχ or Αρβηχ) plus *Iaw* (with one word intervening) in a magical text called the “Diadem of Moses” (Preisendanz, 1931:28).

.ḥ.n.^m = *ʔln* “our god.” For the problem caused by the *ḥ* in this form, see Introduction.

š.ḥ.pn.^m = *ʔypn* “faint, weary,” more likely a plural adjective or participle than a 1st person plural perfect. We can only guess at the reason for this faintness/weariness. It might be due to hunger and thirst (see Discussion), the lateness of the hour (see Commentary to *m.ḥḥ* immediately below) or the troubles mentioned in lines 11–12.

(18). *m.ḥḥ* = *mḥr* “tomorrow.” This interpretation was suggested by Prof. M. Greenberg. From the phonetic point of view it is excellent. The velar *ḥ* of the demotic rendering is in place whether *mḥr* is to be derived from an original **mʔḥr* “afterwards” (cf. Ug. *ʔaḥr* “after”, Arabic *ʔaḥīr* “last”) or to be connected with Akk. *maḥ(a)rū* “first, previous” from the root *mḥr* (cf. *KBHK* s.v.). Furthermore, the spelling with demotic *ḥ* (rather than *r*) supports this interpretation in two ways: (1) dem. *ḥ* normally represents Aram. *r*, not *l*, in the papyrus (see Introduction), and (2) words ending in *ḥ* do not normally take a determinative in the papyrus (see Commentary to *.ḥ* in line 16). On the psychological level, however, this interpretation raises a difficult question: Why would someone in distress ask to be answered “tomorrow”? Admittedly, no one but a magician would have the *chutzpah* to demand results “right now, quick, quick, in this hour and on

this day” (Preisendanz, 1931:201, cf. also *passim*), but what possible objection could there be to something on the order of “May He, answer . . . this day (*hywm hzh*)” (M Ta^canit 2:4) or “Answer us at this time and juncture (*b^ct wb^cwnh hz³t*)” (TJ Ta^canit chap. 2, hal. 2, 65c mid)? As Prof. Greenberg points out, the same question was asked about Pharaoh’s *lmhr* “tomorrow” in Ex 8:6 by R. Samuel b. Hofni (apud Ibn Ezra, 1976:55): *yn mnhg h³dm lbkš rk šyswr hmkh mmnw myd* “The usual practice is for a person to request that an affliction be removed from him immediately.”

In the case of our passage, a possible answer is that the prayer was recited at night, in which case the beginning of *mhr*—dawn—would have been only a few hours away. There is independent evidence for a nocturnal setting in lines 12–13 (see Discussion). And, as Prof. Y. Muffs points out (personal communication), there are several references to matinal salvation in Psalms (e.g. 30:6 and 46:6). In any event, Prof. Greenberg’s interpretation is supported by the similarity between the proposed *y^cnm mhr* “may he answer us tomorrow” and the last words of Ps 20: *y^cnnw bywm kr³nw* “may He answer us on the day we call,” a similarity pointed out to us by Prof. H. L. Ginsberg.

r.b³yt.r^m = *ʔl-Byt-ʔl* “El-Bethel.” That the initial dem. *r* is a rendering of Aram. *l* is suggested by the fact that it comes immediately after *ʔ* (which normally renders Aram. *r*) and thus seems to have been purposely chosen to contrast with it. The god Bethel, known from Elephantine and elsewhere (Eissfeldt, 1962; Kraeling, 1953:88–91; Porten, 1968:167–70, 328–30, and the literature cited there), occurs eight more times in the papyrus. The combination El Bethel, perhaps with a different meaning, is attested in Gen 35:7 and 31:13.

b^cr⁸ šm³yn⁸ = *B^cl šmyⁿ* “Baal of Heaven,” mentioned also in XVI/17 and XVII/3. See also Commentary to *b.š.m³yn⁸* in line 12.

ʔb.r.k.^m = *ybrk* “may he bless.” This verb can hardly govern *lḥsydyk* “YOUR pious ones”; like *ybrk* in XII/16, it must be absolute.

r.h.s³yt^m t³k.^m = *lḥsydyk* “to your pious ones.” This is one of the many falsely divided words in the papyrus. In this instance, however, the scribe seems to have suspected something was wrong. He originally wrote *r.h.s³yt^m t³k.^m* = *lḥsydyk*. Later, he corrected this by superimposing a second *t* on the . at the end of *r.h.s³yt^m*, producing *r.h.s³yt^m t³k.^m* = *lḥsydyk*. The proto-root seems to contain a pharyngeal *h* (cf. *Ασιδαῖοι* rather than ***Χασιδαῖοι* in I & II Macc¹³; the only

Arab. cognates which have been proposed are *ḥašada* “mobilize (troops)” and *ḥasada* “envy”) and that is precisely what the demotic rendering has.

r.h.s³yt^m t³k.^m b[.]r.k.t.k.^m = *lḥsydyk brktk* “upon your pious ones are your blessings,” cf. Ps 3:9 *l^cmk brktk* “upon your people are your blessings” and Deut 33:8 *lmyk w³wryk l³yš ḥsydyk* “your Thummim and Urim belong to your pious ones.” It is possible that some or all of these should be taken as jussives.

DISCUSSION

The striking similarity between this passage—embedded in a collection of pagan cultic texts—and Ps 20:2–6 raises the question of who borrowed from whom: Is our passage a pagan adaption of (a prayer based on) Ps 20 and hence of Jewish origin (ultimately, at least), or is Ps 20 a Jewish adaption of this pagan prayer or some earlier version of it?

That the former alternative is correct is shown by both onomastic and linguistic evidence. The most obvious Jewish elements in this prayer are the names YH and Adonay (not Adoni or Adon as in Phoenician). It is true that these Jewish names of God occur in third and fourth century CE magical texts which even Goodenough (1953:206–7) admits are pagan, e.g., the demotic magical papyrus of London and Leiden (Griffith and Thompson, 1921: *passim*). It is also true, as Prof. Jonas Greenfield notes (personal communication), that “YH . . . may very well occur in Ugarit and elsewhere” in the ancient Near East. But these parallels carry little weight. Even if they are not to be disqualified on chronological grounds, they are rendered irrelevant by an examination of the distribution of the divine names in question within the papyrus. The name YH occurs nowhere in the papyrus outside of our passage, and the name Adonay is limited to our passage and the column (XII) which follows it—a column which has Jewish material as well. In other words, divine names used by Jews occur

now Blau, 1982), it is not surprising that it too distinguishes *h* from *h*. Velar *h* is rendered by *χ* in *Ιεριχω* (9:50), *Χαλφι* (12:70) and presumably *Χεβρων* (6:65). Pharyngeal *h* is rendered by *Ø* in *Βαθρων* (9:50), *Αμμαους* (3:40, 9:50), *Αμαθ-* (12:25), *Ασωρ* (11:67), *Ιωαννης* (16:1,9), *Ονιας* (12:7), *Φινεες* (2:26). (For the etymology of these names, see Blau 1982 and *KBHK*. A dearth of names with *h* makes it impossible to determine whether the author of II Macc made this distinction as well.) Thus, the form *Ασιδαῖοι* shows that *ḥsyd* had a pharyngeal *h*.

¹³ Since I Macc is earlier than or contemporary with texts which distinguish *h* from *h* (our papyrus and those books of the Bible translated into Greek in the second century BCE, cf.

in and around a prayer strikingly similar to one used by Jews and are absent everywhere else. Can this coinciding of Jewish-sounding material be dismissed as a coincidence? Certainly, it is possible to explain away each Jewish-sounding feature in isolation; but the data have to be viewed as a whole and provided with a unified explanation. It remains to be seen whether any theory of pagan origin can meet that requirement.

Linguistic evidence points in the same direction. Alongside grammatical features and lexical items which, in the context of Northwest Semitic in the second century BCE, are symptomatic of Aramaic (e.g. the failure to assimilate *n* in *yntn*, the failure to delete *h* in *yhml^p*, the *-n* ending of *šmyn* and *šypn*, the words *šgr* and *šhr* or *Šhr*), we find lexical items which are unattested in Aramaic and/or exhibit non-Aramaic reflexes of Proto-Semitic phonemes: *mš(w)r* "trouble" < *šrr (> Aram. *šrr*), (*y*)*šh* "plan" < *wšl (> Aram. *yšl*), *bšš* "request" < *bšl (> Aram. ***bšl*). Of these, the first two (and the word *hsyd* "pious one," as well) are attested poorly, if at all, in Phoenician, but are very common in Hebrew. Thus, the language of our passage (and col. XII, but not the rest of the papyrus) contains a distinct Hebrew component—another sign of Jewish origin.

It is clear, then, that what we have here is a paganized Jewish text embedded in a collection of pagan prayers. There is nothing terribly surprising about this conclusion. At least since the publication of Goodenough's *Jewish Symbols* (1953:190–207), it has been well known that there are quite a few syncretistic Jewish-pagan texts preserved in collections of charms made by pagans (cf. also Gager, 1972:135–6). An even closer parallel is the Aramaic translation of Ps 114:3–6 and Ps 29:5, 9 found with additional Jewish material in two Mandaic religious works (Greenfield, 1981).¹⁴ Thus, the only thing remarkable about the pagan borrowing of Jewish (or syncretistic) material manifested by the Amherst papyrus is its pre-Christian date.

There can be little doubt, then, that the first half of Ps 20 (with deletions and additions, at least one of which¹⁵ can be dated to the Persian period) was recited as a prayer by Egyptian Jews in the Hellenistic period. This is a finding of great interest since there is no other unambiguous evidence for the liturgical use of Psalms outside of Judea in this period (personal

communication from Prof. L. Landman).¹⁶ We can even assert with reasonable confidence that already before this prayer left Jewish hands, it was used in public worship, for the original "you, your" of the psalm have been replaced here, wherever possible, by "us, our,"¹⁷ thus converting it from a priestly blessing into a communal prayer (cf. Heinemann, 1977:104–11, esp. fn. 9 on Mishnaic *yšnh štkm* "may He answer you" > Gaonic *yšnmw* "may He answer us" in the prayers for public fast-days). Since line 17 contains an instance of "we" which cannot easily be derived from an earlier "you," it is clear that the change to "us, our" must have preceded (or been simultaneous with) the addition of that line. And since that line contains a form of the tetragram, it must have been added while the prayer was still in Jewish hands. Hence, the change to "us, our" must also have been made while the prayer was still in Jewish hands.

On what occasion(s) was this prayer recited? Nothing remotely resembling a definitive answer can be given at this early stage; indeed, in view of the likelihood that we are dealing with diffusion from one group to another, it is not even clear that a single answer will suffice. Nevertheless, the content of the prayer and its immediate context provide some hints which may turn out to be of significance. Thus, in line 12, the crescent moon—vividly described as a "bow in heaven"—is addressed in the second person with a vocative particle and an imperative. This imperative (*šlh* "send") stands in marked contrast to the third-person jussives which precede and follow it and to the third-person jussive (*yšlh* "may He send") which corresponds to it in Ps 20. One gets the impression that the prayer was recited at night, with the crescent moon visible. (If this invocation of the moon were less isolated, one would be tempted to talk of a New Moon ritual.) We have already pointed out that line

¹⁶ The hymns sung by the Therapeutae according to Philo in *De Vita Contemplativa* §§80, 84 (cf. also §25 dealing with non-liturgical use) are not necessarily from Psalms (personal communication from Profs. L. Feldman and S. Leiman).

¹⁷ Prof. H. L. Ginsberg points out that this change may have been triggered by the presence of *yšnm mhr* "may he answer us tomorrow" in lines 17–18, corresponding to Ps 20 *yšnmw bywm kršnw* "may He answer us on the day we call." In other words, the change was designed to eliminate the difference between *yšnk* "may He answer you" at the beginning of Ps 20 and *yšnmw* "may He answer us" at the end.

¹⁴ We are indebted to Prof. Jeffrey Tigay for this reference.

¹⁵ See Commentary to *.rb.kšt^m* and *.rb.ḥ.nt.^m* in line 16.

18 (if it contains the word *mhr* “tomorrow”) may also hint at a nocturnal setting.¹⁸

A second hint about the *Sitz im Leben* of our prayer is provided by the passage which immediately precedes it. That passage seems to be a lament for a drought-stricken city. Despite the section divider separating these two passages (which, judging from other examples, need not indicate a sharp break), one gets the impression that the troubles mentioned at the beginning of the prayer are the ones mentioned in the preceding section. Now, we know from the Mishnah (Ta^canit 1:5–3:3) that during times of drought, public fast-days were proclaimed, and special benedictions were added to the Amidah. Each of these benedictions contains the phrase *hw^o y^cnh^o tkm* “may He answer you” (M Ta^canit 2:4)—a phrase reminiscent of the beginning of Ps 20. In one of the benedictions, that phrase is followed by *brwk t^h YYY h^cwnh b^ct s^rh* “Blessed art thou O Lord who answers in time of trouble” (loc. cit.), whose resemblance to Ps 20:2 is even more striking (although not quite as striking as its resemblance to Gen 35:3). Also reminiscent of Ps 20:2 is the quotation from Ps 120:1 at the beginning of another one of the benedictions: *t^l YYY b^srth ly kr^oty wy^cnmy* “to the Lord, in my trouble, I called, and He answered me” (ibid., 2:3).

Ps 20 itself is not mentioned in M Ta^canit, but it is mentioned in TJ Ta^canit (chap. 2, hal. 2, 65c top):

wlmh šmwⁿh s^rh? t^omr Rby Yhwš^c bn Lwy: kngd šmwⁿh s^rh mzmwrwt šktwb mr^ošw šl tylym c^d y^cnk YY bywm s^rh. t^om y^omr lk t^odm tš^ch s^r hn, t^omwr lw lmh rgšw lyt hy^o mnwn. mykn t^omrw: hmtpll w^oynw n^cnh s^ryk t^cnyt.

And why eighteen [benedictions in the Amidah]? R. Joshua b. Levi said: The correspond to the eighteen psalms from the beginning of the Psalter until “May the Lord answer you in a day of trouble.” If someone tells you there are nineteen, tell him that “Why do the nations rage” is not one of them (i.e. not a separate psalm). From here they said: He who prays and is not answered needs to fast.

This passage, taken together with the Mishnaic passages discussed above, suggests that there may have been a connection between Ps 20 and the public fast-days proclaimed in times of drought. Such a connection would support the idea that in pAmh 63,

the prayer derived from Ps 20 is connected with the lament for a drought-stricken city which precedes it.

This connection may even be hinted at in line 17 of the prayer: *t^onhn . . . s^cypn* “We . . . are faint.” Most occurrences of the word *s^cyp* “faint” in the Bible are associated with hunger and thirst. In our passage, hunger and thirst might be a result of the drought itself or a result of fasting—a response to drought mentioned already in Jer 14:12.

Which Jewish community transmitted Ps 20 to the redactors of pAmh 63? Since the papyrus was found near Thebes (presumably in or near a tomb in the Theban necropolis), in the same jar as a demotic papyrus (dated 115–114 BCE) recording the sale of land in Djēme (Medinet Habu, at the southern end of the Theban necropolis), and since one of the rare parallels to its peculiarly-shaped *ϣ* comes from Thebes (in 98 BCE), it is logical to think first of the Theban Jewish community, known from Greek ostraca of the second century BCE (Tcherikover and Fuks, 1957:3).

A second possibility is raised by the frequent mention (15x) of the Egyptian god Horus in our passage and col. XII (which, as mentioned above, is almost certainly also of Jewish origin). This fact is particularly significant because Horus is mentioned only two or three times in the rest of the papyrus (twenty or twenty-one columns) and because the other native Egyptian gods are apparently not to be found anywhere in it.

The infatuation with Horus displayed in these Jewish passages goes even further. It was accepted practice in Egypt, from the New Kingdom to Roman times, to identify Canaanite Baal with Egyptian Seth (Stadelmann, 1967:32–47¹⁹) and even to write *B^cr Dpn* “Baal Zephon” with the Seth determinative (Eissfeldt, 1963:40; Albright, 1950:7, 8); but in our passage (lines 13–14), the sacred precincts of Zephon—the home of Baal in Canaanite mythology and in our papyrus (VII/3 in Bowman 1944:227, and XII/15 immediately below)—are occupied not by Seth but by his arch-rival Horus. This fact and the appositional phrase (?) *B^cr^g mnšp.n^m . Ḥr^g = B^cl mn Špn Ḥr* “Baal from Zephon, Horus” in XII/15–16 seem to point to an identification of Baal with Horus, against the above-mentioned norm.

Where in the vicinity of Thebes did such fervent devotion to Horus survive into the Ptolemaic period? And where in the vicinity of Thebes did Aramaic

¹⁸ See Commentary to *m.ḥr* in line 18.

¹⁹ We are indebted to Prof. Yochanan Muffs for this reference.

speech survive into the Ptolemaic period? The answer to these two questions is the same: Edfu. Located sixty miles southeast of Thebes, Edfu was a leading center of Horus worship in ancient Egypt, whose influence increased during the Ptolemaic period (Alliot, 1949:833). Scenes and texts covering the walls of the great sandstone temple of Horus at Edfu show that the cult of the falcon-god was very vigorous there from the third century to the first century BCE (ibid., 834).

Edfu is also our leading source of Egyptian Aramaic documents from the Ptolemaic period. Aimé-Giron's list of such documents (1939:61) is now known to consist mainly of Edfu material (cf. Kraeling, 1953:14), and at least half of the samples of late fourth and early third century BCE Aramaic cursive given by Cross (1955:149fn) are from Edfu. Indeed, there seems to be a presumption, on the part of one specialist at least,²⁰ that late Egyptian Aramaic documents of unknown provenience come from Edfu.

Finally, Edfu was the home of an important Jewish community in antiquity, a community from which we have nine Aramaic tombstones of the Persian period (Kornfeld, 1973 and 1979; Degen, 1978b) and over 250 Greek tax-receipts of the Roman period (Tcherikover and Fuks, 1960:108–77; Kasher, 1978:151–4).

From the period which concerns us, the Ptolemaic period, we have about a dozen documents in Aramaic and Greek containing Jewish names (Degen, 1978b:60; Kornfeld, 1979; cf. Kraeling, 1953:14 and Cross 1955:149fn; Tcherikover and Fuks, 1957:210–11, 223, 254–5). A few facts about Jewish life in Edfu have been gleaned from these documents (Kasher, 1978:150), but whether or not there was a specifically Jewish quarter in Edfu during the Ptolemaic period comparable to the Jewish "delta quarter" there in Roman times remains controversial (ibid., 152).

Were the Jews of Edfu as polytheistic or syncretistic in their beliefs as those of Patros had been in the Babylonian period (cf. Jer 44:15–29) and as those of Elephantine had been in the Persian period (cf. Dupont-Sommer, 1945; Kraeling, 1953:84–8; Porten, 1968:173–9)? Did they themselves replace the psalm's

references to the God of Israel with references to the Egyptian god Horus, possibly as the result of a syncretistic fusion of the two? Or was the substitution made after the prayer left their hands, by Aramean pagans who wished to adapt the prayer for use in the cult of Horus (cf. Tigay 1976:376–7)? These are questions for which we have no answer at the moment.

Our final question is one that relates to the papyrus as a whole. Why was this collection of Aramaic prayers reduced to writing in demotic—rather than Aramaic—script? Indeed, why was it reduced to writing at all? Certainly, a major factor must have been the precarious situation of Aramaic in Egypt at the time. Bearing in mind that our papyrus is about a century and a half later than the latest Egyptian Aramaic documents in Aramaic script, according to Cross' dating of the latter (1955:149fn, 151), we may hypothesize that it was written for a priest whose Aramaic was so poor that he was able neither to memorize the liturgy nor to read it in Aramaic script. Like many American Jews today, he needed a phonetic transliteration into a familiar script. Thus, it hardly matters that our text may have been partially unintelligible even to native speakers of Aramaic with a good knowledge of demotic script. It was never meant to be intelligible. It was meant to enable an Egyptianized Aramean to continue the tradition of reciting prayers in Aramaic despite his ignorance of that language.

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²⁰ Cf. Degen's judgment that three late ostraca in the Austrian National Library "gehören vermutlich nach Edfu" (1978a:33) and his assignment of Cowley no. 81 to Edfu despite the fact that it was "bought . . . from a dealer at Luxor who believed [it] to have come from Kus" (Cowley, 1923:190) and the fact that it seems to speak of sending merchandise to Edfu (Grelot, 1972:13).

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