SHORT NOTES

"THE MESSIAHS OF AARON AND ISRAEL"

In the Manual of Discipline (1QS)\textsuperscript{1),} the expression \textit{mršîhê 'ahârôn weyîśrâ'êl} occurs, translated by several prominent scholars "the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel" \textsuperscript{2).} It is not the purpose of this article to review what has been written on this passage in particular or on the matter of two Messiahs in general. Rather, it is my intention to raise the question of the syntax of the expression, and the light it throws on the interpretation.

As a backdrop for my remarks, let me present one of several possible interpretations of the expression "the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel". Millar Burrows, in his splendid though popularized book \textit{The Dead Sea Scrolls}, says: "The Manual of Discipline, in fact, speaks of not one but two coming Messiahs ... The two Messiahs may be supposed to represent the king and the high priest of the future. In that case it seems rather strange that the royal Messiah is expected to be from Israel instead of Judah. Possibly, however, 'Israel' is used in a comprehensive sense for the whole people, and 'the Messiah of Israel' means the lay Messiah, so to speak, while 'the Messiah of Aaron' is the priestly Messiah" \textsuperscript{3).}

It is recognized that the Semitic languages in general, and Hebrew specifically, tend to resist the use of a single \textit{nomen regens} in annexion with two or more genitives. The Kautzsch-Cowley Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, for example, says: "The language also prefers to avoid a series of several co-ordinate genitives depending upon one and the same \textit{nomen regens}" \textsuperscript{4).} He lists eight examples of excep-

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1) The following symbols have been used: 1QS, Manual of Discipline; 1QM, Order of Warfare (or the War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness); IQSa, the Rule of the Congregation (or 1Q28a); CD, the Damascus Document from the Cairo Genizah.


tion to this rule, perhaps implying that these are the only, or the major, exceptions. Jouon, whose discussion of the construct state is, in my opinion, fuller than that of Gesenius, says: “It is not necessary to repeat the nomen regens before each genitive. The repetition or lack of it depends on the sense, style, and the custom of each period.” To support the last part of this statement, Jouon points out that “vessels of silver and vessels of gold and vessels of bronze” in 2 Sam. viii 10 is written “vessels of gold and silver and bronze” in 1 Chron. xviii 10.

That we can not with confidence decide this point of syntax on the basis of lateness of text should be apparent both from a study of the Biblical texts in which Gesenius’ exceptions are found and from comparative grammar. In Old Babylonian, for example, the expression bel samu a iršîtim “Lord of Heaven and Earth” is an exact parallel of qdnh šām’dûm wa’ârešt “possessor (or creator) of Heaven and Earth”. I might offer numerous examples of this syntactical phenomenon from my class notes in Old Babylonian, Ugaritic, and other Semitic languages, but such multiplication of proof is unnecessary. The standard grammars recognize that the usage is found; the only point at issue is, when is it used?

The answer is suggested in a footnote in Gesenius: “In almost all these instances the two (or three) genitives form one closely connected whole”. In the expression “creator of Heaven and Earth”, it is obvious that the writer or speaker is not specifying that the creator created two things, namely heaven and earth, but rather that the creator is the source of all things. “Heaven and earth” is a universalism, a single expression. Likewise, one category is intended in the expression “the mouths of babes and sucklings”, or again, “men of blood and deceit”. The study of the syntax of the following clause is instructive: “the life of your sons and your daughters and the life of your wives and the life of your concubines”. “Sons and daughters” is a single category, i.e., children. But “wives and concubines” is not a single category, and the use of a single nomen regens

2) Loc. cit., n. 5.
4) Gen. xiv 19.
5) Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar, 128a, n. 3. I would say: “In all these instances.”
6) Ps. viii 3 (MT).
7) Ps. v 7.
8) 2 Sam. xix 6 (MT).