NOTES ON SOME SYNTACTICAL IRREGULARITIES IN TEXT B OF THE ZADOKITE DOCUMENTS

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Text B of the Zadokite Documents, which, like Text A of the documents, affects a Biblical style, exhibits syntactical peculiarities in the use of the tenses. These peculiarities may have a bearing on the relationship of the text to Text A and are in any case relevant to the elucidation of the historical circumstances to which the two texts refer. The irregularities alluded to are curiously intermingled with fluent and correct Biblical idiom, thus suggesting a possible dependence, at least in part, on some anterior, stylistically superior, text. Where parallel passages are found in Text A, they do not deviate from normal Biblical usage. The following remarks cover, it is believed, all the instances of irregular use of the tenses found in Text B.

Text B.
Example 1B.

\[ w'm mhnw \ y'sbw \ kwhq \ y\ b'r\ s \ y h \ b'h \ y \]
\[ mqrn wlygw \ n'sym \ kmnbg \ htrwh \]
\[ n'sym \ wlydwp \ bnym \ wlyk'w \ 'l \ py \ wlydwp \ bnym \ wlyk'w \ 'l \ py \ htrwh \]
\[ (xix, 2-4) \]

Text A.
Example 1A.

\[ w'm mhnw \ y'sbw \ ksrk \ b'r\ s \ wlygw \]
\[ n'sym \ wlydwp \ bnym \ wlyk'w \ 'l \ py \ htrwh \]
\[ (vii, 6-7) \]

If the apodosis in 1B is taken to begin with \( \text{wlygw} \) the imperfect with \( \text{y} \) prefixed could yield the meaning: '... and they will (thus) walk' etc. The union of the \text{waw} with the verb would in this case express the consequence or purpose of an antecedently enunciated obligation to marry and to beget children. If, on the other hand, the apodosis is taken to begin with \text{wlyk'w} the \text{waw} prefixed to the imperfect would appear to have a demonstrative force, while the verb would be a jussive = 'then let them walk' etc. The construction in 1B is, however, decidedly awkward on either interpretation 1). In the first case \( \text{lm'n} \)

1) S. R. Driver in A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew (= Travels), Oxford, 1892, at p. 176 cites only Gen. xiii 9 and 2 Sa. xii 8 as examples of an
ythlkw or perhaps even whthblkw, while in the second bthlk (or: blk) ythlkw or l py htrmh ythlkw would accord with Biblical usage. The parallel in Text A, though it follows normal Biblical usage, is not free, as is sometimes also the case in the OT, from an ambiguity as to the beginning of the apodosis.

Text B.
Example 2B
b’bbt ’l ’t bršwnym . . . w’bb ’t b’bbt ’l ’t bršwnym . . . ’bb ’t bb’ym
hb’jm ’hryhm
(hix, 29-30)

Text A.
Example 2A.

The tenor of 2B and of its immediate sequel indicates that w’hb must be taken in a past sense and can only be, therefore, the perfect with waw-conjunctive. This leaves the causal protasis unresolved and well-nigh meaningless, as the following translation shows: ‘because of the love of God of the forefathers . . . and he loved them that came after them’. This syntactical aberration suggests that b’bbt may have been taken over from an anterior document and correctly equated with y’n ’hb, w’hb in the apodosis apparently doing duty for gm ’hb or lkn ’hb. The parallel in Text A is impeccable Biblical Hebrew. 1)

Text B.
Example 3B
wśwn’ wmt’h ’l ’t huny hhys whrb
’pw bm whkl hblkym ’hryhm wkm’t pt hzh lkl bm’s hmwt ’l wz’hbm
wzpwn bšrywt lhm.
(hix, 31-33)

Text A.
Example 3A
wbśwn’y (= wbśwn ’w) ’t huny hbws
(=hhys )hrb ’pw wkmšpt hzh lkl
hm’s hmwt ’l wz’hbm
hbws’s hmwt ’l wz’hbm wzpwn
bšrywt lhm.
(vii, 18-19)

imperfect with ḫ prefixed at the beginning of an apodosis in a conditional sentence. But see also 2 Ki. xviii 23 (Is. xxxvi 8); Is. xix 20; Je. v 1 and 2 Ch. vii 14. Cf. the present writer’s “Conditional Constructions in the Isaiah Scroll” in V.T. vol. vi, No. I, 1956, p. 69 ff. esp. pp. 78-79.

Assuming that the imperfect with weak waw begins the apodosis in example 1B, the question arises whether the tense might not be due to the influence of Arabic (cf. W. Wright, Arabic Grammar, Cambridge, 1951, vol. II, p. 346c). While the present writer is not qualified to pursue the matter, he wishes to point out that the irregular tense-constructions in examples 2B, 3B and 7B can hardly be accounted for by the usage of late Hebrew, the waw prefixed to the verbs having a peculiar demonstrative force not unlike that of ḫa in Arabic, though the tenses may be different.

1) The construction in 2A is found in the OT in 2 Ch. ii 10, (Dt. vii 8 has m’hbbt) and with bhn’t in Dt. i 27. In Ge. xxix 20; 1 Sa. xviii 3; xx 17 and 1 Ki. x 9 the apodosis is introduced by an imperfect with strong waw.