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## אלה מלי אחיקר • THE SAYINGS OF AHIKAR

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**Adapted from: A. Cowley, "Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century BC," Clarendon Press, 1923 (pp. 204–248).**

For a general background to the *Sayings of Ahikar* – aka the *Story of Ahikar* – see the introduction to our [parallel Armenian/English version](#) of the book. Here, we present an adaptation of A. Cowley's transcription, translation, and notes, for the ancient version found in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE Aramaic papyri discovered at Elephantine.

The Aramaic text for *The Sayings of Ahikar* comprises 11 sheets of papyrus, all more or less fragmentary, 3 of them with 2 columns. They contain a short narrative followed by a collection of proverbs, similar to those found in later versions. Lines 1–78, the narrative, are practically continuous but the story is unfinished. For the rest, the proverbs are disconnected and it is impossible to say if the sheets of papyrus are continuous or in order.

Works cited (by author's name) in the footnotes are as follows:

- D.H. **Baneth**, "Bemerkungen zu den Achikarpapyri," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung (OLZ)*, 1914, 248, & 295, 348.
- Robert Henry **Charles**, in, "Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament," Vol. II, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.
- J.N. **Epstein**, *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (ZATW)*, 1912, p. 128; 1913, pp. 222, 310 & *OLZ*, 1916, 204.
- Hubert **Grimme**, "Bemerkungen zu den aramäischen Achikarsprüchen," *OLZ*, 1911, 529.
- Mark **Lidzbarski**, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, Vol. III, 1912, p. 253.
- James A. **Montgomery**, "Some Correspondences between the Elephantine Papyri and the Gospels," *The Expository Times*, Vol. 4, 1913.
- Theodor **Nöldeke**, "Untersuchungen zum Achiqar-Roman," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (ZDMG)*, 67, 1913.
- Felix **Perles**, *OLZ*: 1911, 497 & 1912, 54.
- Eduard **Sachau**, "Drei Aramäische Papyrusurkunden." Berlin, 1908.
- Moshe **Seidel**, "Bemerkungen zu den aramäischen Papyrus und Ostraka aus Elephantine," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (ZAW)*, Vol. 32, Issue 4, p. 292.
- Friedrich **Stummer**, "Der kritische Wert der altaramäischen Ahiqartexte aus Elephantine," Münster, 1914.
- Harry **Torczyner**, "Anmerkungen zu den Papyrusurkunden von Elephantine," *OLZ*, 1912, 397.
- Arthur **Ungnad**, "Aramäische Papyrus aus Elephantine," Leipzig, 1911.
- A.J. **Wensinck**, *OLZ*, 1912, 49.

We have made minor adjustments to the formatting of Cowley's Aramaic text, in order to fit it into the tabular format; the original transcription can be found in a [separate file](#). We have also formatted [his translation](#) to align with the Aramaic text. Most of his footnotes have been included, along with a few additional notes, presented in **dark blue** text. In the 'sayings' sections, use of the large '+' character represents the 'end-of-proverb' markers in the papyri, which resemble a cross with a tick emanating from its centre, towards the upper right; this character cannot be represented in any of the standard Hebrew fonts.

## Column I (Sachau, plate 40)

אלה מ]לי אחיקר שמה ספר חכים ומהיר זי חכם לברה [..]	1 1	<i>These are the words of one named Ahikar, a wise and ready scribe, who taught his son . . .</i>
כזי] אמר ברא לם יהוה לי קדמת מל[ו]הי [רב]ה אחיקר וי]עט אתור כלה הוה	2 2	<i>For, he said, "Surely he shall be a son to me." Before his words, Ahikar had become great and had been counsellor of all Assyria</i>
וצב]ית עזקתה זי שנחאריב מלך אתו]ר ואמר אנ]ה לם בנן ל]א לי ועל עטתי	3 3	<i>and bearer of the seal of Sennacherib king of Assyria, and he said: I indeed had no sons and on my counsel</i>
ומלי הוה שנחאריב מלך אתור א]חר מית שנ]חאריב מ]לך אתור וקם שכן	4 4	<i>and words Sennacherib king of Assyria used to (rely). Then Sennacherib king of Assyria died and there arose</i>
אסרחאדן ברה והוה מלך באתור חל]ף שנחאריב א]בוהי ב]אדין] אמרת	5 5	<i>his son named Esarhaddon and became king in Assyria instead of Sennacherib his father. At that time, I said</i>

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- <sup>1</sup> This line is clearly the beginning of the text. The first words are probably אלה מלי (so Baneth), cf. Pr 24:23 and דברי (Pr 30:1, 31:1). Nöldeke proposes מחלי (cf. Pr 1:1), which would imply that the narrative is merely an introduction to the maxims. שמה ('by name') is a Persian idiom, frequent in this text. ספר חכים ומהיר is not only a scribe but a learned man (cf. Ezra 7:6). The end of the line is difficult to restore and none of the suggestions are convincing; the remains of the letter after לברה are not a ל or ז but part of ה or מ. One would expect some word to show that he was not really a son.
- <sup>2</sup> [כזי] is only a guess to fit the space; it will depend on the restoration of Line 1. יהוה is a future, not precative (יהוי). In מל[ו]הי, the הי are practically certain; the phrase seems to mean 'before this narrative begins'. [רב]ה ('had become great') is more probable than ענה (Baneth); It continues in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person with occasional quotations in the 1<sup>st</sup> person. The composition of these first lines is difficult, and one cannot be sure where the 1<sup>st</sup> person takes up the story.
- <sup>3</sup> In place of [וצב]ית (Epstein?), Perles has צבת; the י is certain and there is part of the foot of ב, so there is no doubt about the word. It is the Babylonian *sābit*, 'bearer' of the seal. On עזקתה, cf. Dn 6:18. אנ]ה is practically certain. The end seems to be required by ומלי in 1. 4. Note the Persian form אתור and the Assyrian שנחאריב.
- <sup>4</sup> We should not read ומלא (as Ungnad) for ומלי – to take it as 'full' (of years) seems impossible.
- <sup>5</sup> אסרחאדן (as Ungnad) is the Assyrian form. In ב]אדין], the ב is doubtful and the restoration uncertain. The line is long because שמה is written above ברה.

<p>שב [אנה ומן] ל[י יהוה] לבר אחר[י ל . . .  . . . מ] ותה [ומן יהוה  ל]ספר וצבית עזקת[ה לאס[רחאדן מלכא כזי  אנה הוית לשנחאריב  מלך] אתור אחר אנ[ה אחיקר לקחת נדן  שמה] ברה [זי אחתי ורביתה  וחכמתה וטבתא ה[שגית ו]ה[קימתה בב]ב  היכלא עמ[י קדם מלכא בגו  סגדוהי קרבתה קדם אסרחאדן מלך אתור  וחכמה מ]נדעמתא  ז[י שאלה אחר רחמה אסרהאדן מלך אתור  ואמר חין ש]גיאן לאחיקר יהוו  ס[פרא חכימא יעט אתור כלה זי הקים לברה  ולא בר [לה בר אח]תה  כזי כן אמר מלך את[ור נהנת וסגד]ת[ לם  אחיקר קדם אסרח[אדן מלך] אחור</p>	<p>6 6 “I am old and who shall be to me a son after me to . . . . .  . . . ? And who shall be  7 7 scribe and bearer of the seal to Esarhaddon the king, as I was to  Sennacherib,  8 8 king of Assyria?” Then I, Ahikar, took Nadin, as he was called, the son  of my sister, and brought him up,  9 9 and taught him and showed great kindness (to him), and set him in  the gate of the palace with me before the king among  10 10 his courtiers. I brought him before Esarhaddon king of Assyria, and  he told him whatever  11 11 he asked him. Then Esarhaddon king of Assyria loved him and said  “Long life be to Ahikar,  12 12 the wise scribe, counsellor of all Assyria, who set up as his son,  when he had no son, the son of his sister.”  13 13 When the king of Assyria had thus spoken, I bowed down and  made obeisance, I Ahikar, before Esarhaddon king of Assyria.</p>
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6 This line is too broken to be restored with any certainty (and so too Line 7); Baneth proposes, “I took my sister’s son, Nadin by name, . . .” but it seems too soon to introduce the adoption of Nadin, which ought to come just before Line 9. The vacant space may have had something like ‘to do my service’ (cf. Lines 17 & 21) but Cowley could not fill it up satisfactorily.

7 The opening ל is probable. See also #6.

8 The account of the adoption seems to come in most naturally here, beginning with אחר.

9 After וטבתא, a verb is wanting, and the tail of a ת is visible, but ה[שגית] is not a convincing conjecture. ה[קימתה בב]ב is from Line 23.

10 The word, קרבתה, means ‘I brought him specially to the notice of the king’. מ[נדעמתא] is no doubt right.

11 ש[גיאן] is probably right, with חין. If the fragment on the left is correctly placed, יהוו is probable; for, there are traces of הו on it. The 3<sup>rd</sup> person (therefore a name, לאחיקר, not לך, is required by הקים in Line 12.

12 Cowley here notes that the restoration is rather long (see #11).

13 The first letters remaining must belong to ור[את], which implies מלך preceding. Therefore, the king’s remarks ended with Line 12, and the

<p>וליומן אחרגן אנה א[היקר כזי ה[ז]ית אנפי  אסרהאדן מלך אתור טבן ענית  ואמרת קדם מלכ[א אנ]ה פלחת לשנה[אריב  מלכא אבוד [ז]י מלך הו[ה קדמי  . . . . .  . . . . . [וכעת הא</p>	<p><b>14</b> <b>14</b> <i>And in after days I, Ahikar, when I saw the face of Esarhaddon king of Assyria favourable, I answered</i>  <b>15</b> <b>15</b> <i>and said before the king, "I served Sennacherib the king your father who was king before you</i>  <b>16</b> <b>16</b> <i>. . . . . and now behold</i></p>
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beginning of this line must be the protasis of a new sentence of which the apodosis begins with נהנת.

**14** At the end of this line, there is nothing after ענית.

**15** ואמרת is required after ענית. אנה must begin Ahikar's statement of his case, which is continued in Line 17. פלחת is restored from 1. 17, but it does not quite fill the space.

**16** Only slight traces of this line remain; it must have formed the transition to Line 17.

## Column II (Sachau, plate 41)

17	17	שב אנה לא אכהל למפלה בבב היכלא [ולמעבד לך עבידתי	17	I am old. I cannot work in the gate of the palace <i>and do my service to you.</i>
18	18	ה]א נדן שמה ברי רבא והו יחלף לי ספר [ויעט אתור כלה והו	18	<i>Behold, my son, Nadin by name, is full-grown. Let him take my place as scribe and counsellor of all Assyria, and let him</i>
19	19	צבי]ת עזקה יהוה לך אף חכמתי וע[טתי חכמתה ענה אסרחאדן] יה]וה	19	<i>be seal-bearer to you. My wisdom also and my counsel I have taught him." Then answered Esarhaddon</i>
20	20	מל]ך אתור ואמר לי כותא למ [ברך ספר ויעט וצבית עזקה	20	<i>king of Assyria and said to me, "So indeed it shall be. Your son shall be scribe and seal-bearer to me</i>
21	21	יהוה] חלפין עבידתך הו יעבד [לי אחר אנה אחיקר כזי שמעת	21	<i>in your stead. He shall do your service for me." Then I, Ahikar, when I heard</i>
22	22	מלתא י]היבא אזלת לי לביתי [ושלה הוית בביתי וברי זנה	22	<i>the promise given, went away to my house and was resting in my house. And this my son</i>

<sup>17</sup> At least half of this column is lost. **בב** is Babylonian for the Aramaic **תרע**, as in Line 44. The restoration of the end is not by any means certain; cf. Line 21.

<sup>18</sup> Note that **נדן** is a short form of some Assyrian name, like Assurnadin-Apli (Ungnad). On **רבא**: the following **ו** shows that it is not an adjective, but a verb (so Baneth), 'is grown up', cf. Dn. 4:19, though one would expect **רבה**, as in Line 2.

<sup>19</sup> The beginning of the line is as Line 3. The restoration of the end must be right: **וע[טתי]** is the only possible word and **ענה אסרחאדן** is required by the beginning of Line 20; the only word that is doubtful is **חכמתה** but nothing belter suggests itself.

<sup>20</sup> Note that **כותא** is not a title (as Sachau), nor is it connected with 'Meskin Kanti' applied to Nabusumiskun in the Syriac and Arabic versions; it is simply an adverb, 'so', formed from **כות** ('like'). **יהוה** is above the line, which is consequently long. The end is from Lines 2 & 3. For **ברך**, we could perhaps read **הו**.

<sup>21</sup> **חלפין** ('in your stead') begins a new sentence. The end is probable if the beginning of Line 22 is right.

<sup>22</sup> Here, **י]היבא** (as Nöldeke) seems the only possible completion. **לי** is an ethical dative, as often with a verb of motion. **ושלה הוית בביתי** (from Dn 4:1) is only a guess. **ובהי וברי זנה** is required by Line 23.

זי רבי]ת והקימת בבב היכלא [קדם אסרהאדן מלך אתור בגו	23	23	whom I had brought up and set in the gate of the palace <i>before</i> <i>Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, among</i>
סגדוה]י אמרת הו טבתא יבענ]ה עלי לקבלזי עבדת לה אחר	24	24	his courtiers, I thought, "He will seek <i>my</i> good in return for that which I have done for him." Then
בר אח]תי זי אנה רבית עשת על]י באישתא אף אמר בלבבה	25	25	the son of my sister whom I had brought up, imagined against <i>me</i> evil and said in his heart,
לם [כאלה מ]ל[ן] אכל א]מר אחיקר זך שבא זי צבית עזקה הוה	26	26	"Surely such words as these can I say, "This Ahikar, the old man, who was seal-bearer
לשנחא]רי]ב מלכא אבוך [הו חבל מתא עליך כי יעט וספר	27	27	to Sennacherib the king your father <i>has corrupted the land against you,</i> for he is a counsellor and a skilful
חכים הו ועל עטתה ומל]והי הות אתור כלה אחר אסרחאדן	28	28	scribe and by his counsel and words <i>all Assyria was (guided).</i> " Then Esarhaddon
שגיא ירגש מלן שמע [כאלה זי אנה אמר לה ויקטל אחיקר אחר	29	29	will be greatly troubled when he hears words like these which I shall speak to him, and will kill Ahikar." Then

<sup>23</sup> Charles lacks 'whom I had brought up and'.

<sup>24</sup> In יבענ]ה], there is perhaps a trace of ה; Nöldeke and Lidzbarski propose י[בר] but it cannot be ר and more is needed to fill the space. [ה]יבענ]ה] seems probable as the contrast to עשת על]י] in Line 25; the rest is only a guess, cf. Line 52.

<sup>25</sup> Here, אח]תי] is certain; the trace of ח is fairly clear. עשת על]י] is required by ענ]ה] in Line 24; the rest depends on how Line 26 is filled up.

<sup>26</sup> Epstein and Nöldeke propose אכל [קרצי] ('he maligned'), continuing עשת על]י] in Line 25; then this line might begin לם [לכא]. However, there is a trace of ל before אכל, leaving room for a narrow letter like ן, and מלן is suggested by Line 29. If this is read, אכל must be 'I can', and אמר (future) is required after it. Then the 'words' following, as shown by Line 27, are addressed to the king.

<sup>27</sup> The restoration is partly from Line 36, which should repeat the terms of the accusation. ספר is required by חכים in Line 28. He was able to stir up the country against the king, because he had won its confidence by his wisdom.

<sup>28</sup> On ועל עטתה ומלוהי הות, cf. Lines 4, 43, & 55.

<sup>29</sup> Here, ירגש ('will be enraged') is still part of the statement of Nadin's contemplated plan, which must end in this line. Something is wanted to define מלן, not אלך, nor a relative clause, since either of these would require מליא; I have proposed כאלה here and in Line 26 ('words to this

. . . . . כזי ברי זי לא ברי ברא [עלי כדבתא זא . . . . .] 30 30 when my son who was not my son, had devised *this falsehood*  
 . . . . . 31 31 *against me* . . . . .  
 . . . . . ל 31 31 . . . . .

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effect') because Nadin need not be rehearsing the exact terms of his slander; however, the trace of a letter after שמע is certainly more like ז. Perhaps, after all, the relative did follow, rather incorrectly, and כאלה should be omitted.

30 Here, 'וכ' בדא follows Epstein; It might of course be [חתי] כרא written together as being one idea, like רכחילא – 'my son who was not my son (but) the son of my sister'.

31 This line (and the latter part of Line 30) must have described how he went to the king and made his charge but there is nothing to guide us in restoring the lacuna.

### Column III (Sachau, plate 42)

באדין התמלא חמא אס[רחארן מלך אתור ואמר	32	32	<i>Then was Esarhaddon king of Assyria filled with rage and said,</i>
יאתי לי נבוסמסכן ח[ד מן רבי אבי זי לחם אבי	33	33	<i>"Let there come to me Nabusumiskun one of the officers of my father, who ate the bread of my father."</i>
אכל אמר מלכא אחיקר[ תבעה אתר זי אנת תהשכח	34	34	<i>The king said, "You are to seek Ahikar (in) a place which you shall find</i>
ותקטלנהי[ הגלו [אח[יקר[ ר] זך שבא ספר חכים	35	35	<i>and kill him. Even if this Ahikar, the old man, is a skilful scribe</i>
ויעט כל אתו[ר למה הן יחבל מתא עלין אחר כזי	36	36	<i>and counsellor of all Assyria, why should he corrupt the land against us?" Then when</i>

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<sup>32</sup> This column is fairly complete on the left-hand side; the amount lost on the right is shown by Line 37, where the restoration is almost certain. After the short Line 43, the lines are slightly longer and there is a good deal of difference in length throughout the column. This line is restored from Dn 3:19. Baneth proposes ענה before אס[רחארן], which would require something else at the beginning.

<sup>33</sup> This line has been much discussed. It has been assumed that Ahikar is speaking and that, therefore, אבי is Ahikar' father; however, the words are clearly spoken by the king, and אבי is Sennacherib; for, ואמר in Line 32 must be 'he (Esarhaddon) said'. רבי is a plural form of רביא, used frequently of Nabusumiskun, it is from the Assyrian *rabû* (Ungnad), 'a great man' or 'officer', not 'youth' or 'page' (as Baneth). From Lines 46–50, it appears that Nabusumiskun had been in the service of Sennacherib and must have been a person of some age and dignity. Nabusumiskun must have been mentioned by name before Line 38, where his name first appears in the extant text, and there seems to be no other place than this.

<sup>34</sup> This line must begin with אכל, or אכלו; then, since the line goes on in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person (אנת), something (אמר) is required to introduce the change. The words to be restored after אכל are very uncertain but it seems necessary that Ahikar should be mentioned by name in the command.

<sup>35</sup> This line may begin with ותקטלנהי or with some phrase like that suggested above; the name of Ahikar can hardly have stood here as object to תהשכח, since it is used just afterward.

<sup>36</sup> The first ר is fairly certain; it is too broad for ו, as Nöldeke (ולמה).

37	37	כֵּן אָמַר מֶלֶךְ אֲ[תוֹר מִנִּי עִמָּה גְבוּן /  אַחֲרָנָן לְמַחֲזָה אִידָךְ	37	<i>the king of Assyria, had thus spoken, he appointed with him 2 other men to see how</i>
38	38	יִתְעַבֵּד אֲזֹל נָב[וֹסְמִסְכֵּן זָךְ רִבִּיא רִכָּב ב[ס]וֹסָה חַד קִלְיָ[ל]	38	<i>it would be done. This Nabusumiskun the officer went away riding on a swift horse of his,</i>
39	39	וּגְבָרִיא אֲלֶךְ] עִמָּה אַחֲרָ לִי[וֹ מִן אַחֲרָנָן תִּלְתָּה לָם	39	<i>and those men with him. Then, after three more days, indeed</i>
40	40	הוּ עִם גְּבָרָן א[חֲרָנָן זִי עִמָּה ח[זְנִי] וְאִנָּה מֵהֶלֶךְ בֵּין כְּרָמִיא	40	<i>he, with other men who were with him, saw me while I was walking among the vineyards.</i>
41	41	וּכְזִי חֲזָנִי נָב[וֹסְמִסְכֵּן רִבִּיא [זָךְ קָרָב] תָּא בְּזַע כְּתוּנָה הִילָל	41	<i>And, when this Nabusumiskun the officer saw me then he rent his clothes, lamenting,</i>
42	42	וְאָמַר אַנְתָּ הוּ] סְפָרָא חֲכִימָא וּבַעֲלָ עֲטָתָא טַבְתָּא זִי גְבָר	42	<i>and said, "Are you he, the skilful scribe, [the] giver of good counsel, who</i>
43	43	צְדִיק הוּהוּ וְע[ל עֲטָתָהּ וּמְלוּהִי הוּת אַתוֹר כֻּלָּא יִרְעֵךְ	43	<i>was a righteous man and by whose counsel and words all Assyria was (guided)?</i>

<sup>37</sup> In this context, למחזה is more probable than חזה לם (cf. Line 63).

<sup>38</sup> The beginning should be '(how) the order would be carried out'; perhaps יעבד or יתעבד. [אזל] or ואזל is wanted, taking רכב as a participle.

<sup>39</sup> The restoration here is certain; it is a short line.

<sup>40</sup> The lacuna in the middle of this line is difficult. Some word is wanted, like 'met/found me'; the letter before it is taken as פ by Nöldeke and Epstein, who complete it as פ[נעו] but this would require a complement לי פגעו (cf. Line 118), for which there is not room. If פנעני were possible, the space might perhaps allow it; then the line would have to begin הו עם גברן. However, the letter may be part of a ח, not פ at all, when the reading ח[זוי] or ח[זני] would be obvious.

<sup>41</sup> The reconstruction depends on the restoration of the middle of the line: Baneth's קרבתא is almost certain from the remains of the letters; it occurs in Lines 56 & 59, where the obvious meaning, 'battles' is clearly unsuitable. Baneth makes it an adverb from קרב ('near'), meaning 'soon' or 'then', used like אחר.

<sup>42</sup> The restoration at the beginning of the line is certain, since it must correspond to אנה הו in Line 46.

<sup>43</sup> Here, [צדיק] is only a guess; some word of the kind is required.

<p>ברא זי רבי]ת זי הקימת בתרע היכלא הו חבלך ותובא</p>	<p>44 44 <i>The son whom you brought up, whom you set in the gate of the palace, has injured you (?); he has ruined you, and</i></p>
<p>באישא הו קר]בתא דחלת לס אחיקר ענית ואמרת לנבוסמ]סכן</p>	<p>45 45 <i>an evil return is it." Then I, Ahikar, indeed was afraid. I answered and said to Nabusumiskun</i></p>
<p>רביא זך אף] אנה הו אחיקר זי קדמן שובך מן קטל זכי</p>	<p>46 46 <i>the officer, "(Yes, and) also I am that Ahikar who formerly saved you from an undeserved death</i></p>
<p>כזי שנחאריב] אבוהי זי אסרחאדן זנה מלכא חמר עליך</p>	<p>47 47 <i>when Sennacherib the father of this Esarhaddon, the king, was angry with you</i></p>
<p>למקטלך קרב]תא יבלתך לביתא זילי תמה הוית מסבל לך</p>	<p>48 48 <i>to kill you. Then I took you to my house. There I was supporting you</i></p>

<sup>44</sup> Here, *ת* [זי רבי] is necessary; the first word depends on the reading of Line 43. *תרע* is the proper Aramaic, for which *בב* is used in Lines 9 & 23. *ותובא* has been much discussed; Epstein proposes *בתא* [תב לתיובא דחלתא ר] but that is impossible and is in any case too long. Baneth makes it an adverb = *תוב* (as in i7, 912) = 'moreover'; see #41 for the form. It is probably only a noun from *תוב* and means 'recompense'.

<sup>45</sup> Here, *בתא* [קר] is Baneth's conjecture and is probable; however, it would make his *חובא* impossible; for, two adverbs of nearly the same meaning could not come so close together. Otherwise, we might restore *בתא* [באישא הי חו] ('the return is an evil return') but two consecutive *asyndeta* ... *דחלת ענית* would then be difficult.

<sup>46</sup> Note that *רביא* is the regular title of Nabusumiskun (cf. Lines 54, 56, &c). Some particle is wanted with the sense 'Yes, and also (it is I who)' but neither *אף* nor *לם* is quite satisfactory.

<sup>47</sup> For this line, Charles reads: *the father of the present king, Esarhaddon, (was angry) with you.*

<sup>48</sup> Here, *תא* [קרב] is again Baneth's reading, and it certainly suits the context; or we might read *תא* [למעבר באיש] – cf. Lines 50–51.

### Column IV (Sachau, plate 43, column 1)

<p>כאיש עם אחוהי והצפנתך מנה אמרת קטלתה עד זי לעד[ן א]חרן וליומן אחרנן שגיאן קרבתך קדס סנחאריב מלכא והעדית חטאיך קדמוהי ובאיש[תא] לא עבר לך אף שגיא סנחאריב מלכא רחמני עלזי החיתך ולא קטלתך כען אנת לקבלזי אנה עבדת לך כן אפו עבד לי אל תקטלני בלני לביתך ע[ד] ליומן אחרנן אסרחאדן מלכא רחמן הו כמנדע על אחרן יזכרני ועטתי יבעה א[חר] אנת תקר[בני עלוהי ויהחיני אחר [ענה] נבוסמסכן רביא ואמר לי אל תדתל לם תח[י]י אחיקר אבוה זי אתור כלה זי על עטתה סנחאריב מלכא וחיל אתור</p>	<p>49 50 51 52 53 54 55</p>	<p>49 50 51 52 53 54 55</p>	<p>as a man (deals) with his brother, and I hid you from him. I said, "I have killed him," until in after time, and many days after, I brought you before king Sennacherib and took away your offences before him, and he did you no evil. Moreover, king Sennacherib was well pleased with me that I had kept you alive and had not killed you. Now, according as I did to you, so do also to me. Do not kill me. Take me to your house <i>until</i> other days. King Esarhaddon is as kind as any man (?). Hereafter, he will remember me and desire my counsel. <i>Then</i> you <i>shall bring</i> me to him and he shall let me live." Then <i>answered</i> Nabusumiskun the officer and said to me, "Fear not." Surely <i>you shall live</i>, Ahikar, father of all Assyria, by whose counsel king Sennacherib and all the army of Assyria</p>
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- <sup>49</sup> Plate 43 contains parts of 2 columns; Column 1 evidently follows on from Plate 42 and Column 2 must follow Column 1. Column 1 is broad and well preserved in the earlier part.
- <sup>50</sup> Here, we spell סנחאריב with a ס as in Lines 51, 55, more correctly; the spelling with ש is due to the Assyrian confusion of ס and ש (Ungnad).
- <sup>51</sup> See #50 on the spelling of סנחאריב.
- <sup>52</sup> The word, אפו, is a mere strengthening of אף; in both forms, the addition is probably the pronoun, which has lost its proper meaning.
- <sup>53</sup> In place of כמנדע על אחרן, Torczyner reads 'bekanntlich', which does not seem probable; perhaps it means 'anyone' or 'a person'. כמנדע על אחרן would then be equivalent to כאיש עם אחוהי. However, על אחרן may be 'afterwards' (so Torczyner), as in Line 64, cf. Dn 4:5.
- <sup>54</sup> For this line, Charles reads: *will then present me before him, and he will suffer me to live. Thereupon answered Nabusumiskun and said to me, Fear not.*
- <sup>55</sup> The opening תח[י]י is no doubt right; Epstein and Nöldeke propose יי[אב] = 'patricius' and Baneth has יי[אנח] for יח = 'oh'. However, לם rather demands a verb here.

<p>56 כלא הוּו] קרבתא נבוסמסכן רביא אמר  לכנותה גבריא אלך תרין זי עמה  57 אנתם הצי]תו לם א[ף הקשי]ב[ו] עלי ואנה  אמר לכם עטתא [זילי] ועטה טנה הי  58 שניא] א[חר ענו גבריא] אלך תרין ואמרו ל]ה  אנת] ל]ם א[מר ל]נבוסמסכן רביא  59 זי [אנת] א[מר ואנחנה נשמע]נד קרבתא  [ענה נבוסמסכן ר]ביא ואמר להם שמעו לי  60 לם זנה [אחי]קר רב [וצבית עז]קה זי  אסרחאדן [מלכא ה]ו ועל עטתה ומלוהי  61 חיל [אתו]ר כלא הוּו אנחנה אל נקטלנהי [זכי  עלים חד] סריס זילי אנתן לכם  62 יתקטל בי]ן טוריא [אל]ה תרין חלף אחיקר  זנה וכז]י ישתמיע ג]ברן אחרנן מלכא [יש]לח</p>	<p>56 were (guided).” Then Nabusumiskun the officer said to his  companions, those two men who were with him,  57 “Hearken, indeed, and listen to me, and I will tell you <i>my</i> counsel,  and it is a good counsel  58 exceedingly.” Then answered those two men and said to him, “Tell  us indeed, Nabusumiskun the officer,  59 what you think, and we will listen to you.” Then answered  Nabusumiskun the officer and said to them, “Hear me,  60 indeed, this Ahikar was a great man and bearer of the seal to king  Esarhaddon, and by his counsel and words  61 all the army of Assyria, were (guided). Let us not kill him  undeservedly. A slave, a eunuch of mine, I will give to you.  62 Let him be killed between <i>these</i> two mountains instead of this  Ahikar; and, when it is heard, the king will send other men</p>
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56 Here, [כלא הוּו] is restored as in Line 61; there are traces of א and the final ו. קרבתא ‘then’ (Baneth) is simplest; Ungnad takes it as ‘battles’ and supplies הוּו עבדן.

57 The opening אנתם fits the space better than הוּו (זי עמה); the words following are fairly certain. We should read עלי and not עא (Ungnad), which is not a word, and there is a blank space before it. The ל and י have been run together.

58 Here, גבריא is certain and ענו is required before it. Of אחר, part of the ח remains. Of שניא, there is a trace of א; Epstein’s לי ואמרו is unsuitable.

59 The beginning of the line is Baneth’s restoration. From the traces of letters remaining, זי אנת אמר is almost certain; it appears to mean ‘what you think’, which is strange just after אמר in its ordinary sense. קרבתא is as in Line 56; the next words are necessary.

60 [וצבית] is probably right, cf. Line 3. In [מלכא ה]ו, the words must have been written wide apart to fill the space, but there is hardly room for [מלך אתור ה]ו.

61 The meaning, ‘were dependent on’ for הוּו is necessary here; it is plural agreeing in sense with חיל. Before סריס, Nöldeke supplies עלים, but the trace of a letter is more like ד than ס, and more is required to fill the space. [זכי] (from Line 46) is needed as a reason for not killing him.

62 Note that יתקטל is written above the line.

א[חרין פגרה זי אחיקר זנה למחזה אחר] יחזון  
פגר[ה זי סריסא זג]ה עלימא זילי 63 63 after us to see the body of this Ahikar. Then *they will see the body of this eunuch my slave,*

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63 א[חרין] ('after us', as Baneth) is fairly certain; Nöldeke & Epstein have א[חדין], when פגרה must be the object of למחזה, which is awkward. זג[ה] is written above the line.

## Column V (Sachau, plate 43, column 2)

64	עדזי על אחרן אסרחאדן [מלכא יזכר אחיקר ועטתה יבעה ויבאש	64	until afterwards Esarhaddon the king remembers Ahikar and desires his counsel, and grieves
65	עלוהי ולבב אסרחאדן [מלכא יתוב עלי ויאמר לרבוהי וסגרוהי	65	over him and the heart of Esarhaddon the king shall turn to me and he shall say to his officers and courtiers,
66	נכסן אנה אנתן לכס כמס] פר הלא הן לו תשכחון אחיקר ועטתא זנה	66	“I will give you riches as the number of the sand, if you find Ahikar.” And this counsel
67	טיבת על כנותה אלך ת]רין גבריא ענו ואמרו לנבוסמסכן רביא	67	seemed good to his companions, those two men. They answered and said to Nabusumiskun, the officer,
68	עבד לקבלזי אנת עשת [אל נקטלנהי ותנתן לן עלימא	68	“Do according as you think. Let us not kill him, but you shall give us that slave,
69	זך סריסא חלף אחיקר [זנה הו יתקטל בין טוריא אלך תרין	69	the eunuch, instead of Ahikar here. He shall be killed between these two mountains.”
70	בזך עדנא אשתמיע במ] דינת אתור לס אחיקר ספרא זי אסרחאדן	70	At that time, it was reported in the country of Assyria, saying, “Ahikar the scribe of Esarhaddon

<sup>64</sup> Less than half the width of this column is preserved, containing the beginnings of the lines. The restoration is from Line 53. **ויבאש** is from Dan. 6:1, ‘it shall be evil upon him’ (i.e., he will regret it).

<sup>65</sup> The restoration in this line is, of course, only a conjectural approximation.

<sup>66</sup> Here, [כמס] פר seems to be the only possible word, and this requires something like **הלא** after it. The rest of the line must contain the end of the speech, and the resumption of the narrative with a subject to **טיבת** in Line 67.

<sup>67</sup> The restoration probably right; it thus gives the length of the lines in this column.

<sup>68</sup> Restored from Line 61 but the line is short.

<sup>69</sup> Restored from Line 62 but, again, the line is short.

<sup>70</sup> An abrupt transition. We read **אשתמיע** for **השתמע** (this reading is clear). Nöldeke completes the line, [במ] **חא כלא לס**, and the rest much as here but rather too long.

מלכא קטיל אחר נבוס]מסכן רביא זך יבלני	71	71	the king is killed." Then Nabusumiskun, that officer, look me to his house and hid me, also
לבייתה והצפנני אף			
הוה מסבל לי תמה כ]איש עם אחוהי ואמר לי	72	72	he sustained me there as a man {deals) with his brother, and said to me
לחם ומין . . . .			. . . . "Bread and water
יסתבלון קדם מראי ה]ן . . . . .	73	73	shall be carried to my lord" . . . . .
סבל שגיא ונכסן שפ]יען יהב לי אחר	74	74	abundant sustenance (?) and (other) things in plenty. Then Nabusumiskun, that officer,
נבוסמסכן זך רביא			
אזל על אסרחאדן מלך] כא ואמר לה לקבלזי	75	75	went to Esarhaddon the king and said to him, "According as you commanded me, so have I done.
אמרת לי כן עבדת			
אזלת השכחת לאחיק]ר זך וקטלתה וכזי שמע	76	76	I went and found that Ahikar and killed him." And, when king Esarhaddon
זנה אסרחאדן			
מלכא שאל לגבריא ת]רין זי מני עם נבוסמסכן	77	77	heard this, he asked the two men whom he had appointed with Nabusumiskun and they said, "So it was, as
ואמרו כן הוה כזי			
אמר א[די]ן עד אסרחא]דן מלכא . . . . .	78	78	he says." Then as long as king Esarhaddon . . . . .

71 Restored from Lines 48–49, to which this passage is evidently related.

72 This line must contain a direct statement by Nabusumiskun to introduce יסתבלון – not a command, which would require יסתבלו. For כ]איש], Ungnad reads [ כע] and Epstein [זי]דיא; but כא is certain.

73 Here, מראי is 'my lord', i.e., you, Ahikar. ה]ן is rather more probable than ה[ם]. The line is difficult to restore.

74 Seidel takes סבל as a noun ('food') but it might be a verb – '(bread, &c.) he brought'. The restoration here is fairly certain.

75 Charles has: went to Esarhaddon the king (of Assyria), and informed him, saying, I went my way, (as directed).

76 Charles has: and I found Ahikar (walking in his vineyards) and I have put him to death. And do, O king, inquire of the two men whom you appointed.

77 This line is restored following Line 37.

78 This end of line does admit itself well to restoration. This is the end of the narrative part.

## Column VI (Sachau, plate 44)

<p>79 [מ]ה חסין הו מן חמר נער ב[ג]תא</p>	79	79	What is stronger than wine foaming in the <i>press</i> ?
<p>80 ברא זי יתאלף ויתסר ויתשים ארחא ברגלי]הי .. .</p>	80	80	The son who is trained and taught, and on <i>whose</i> feet the fether is put, <i>shall prosper</i> .
<p>81 אל תהחשך ברך מן הטר הן לו לא תכהל תהנצלכ]הי מן באישתא</p>	81	81	Do not withhold your son from the rod, if you cannot keep <i>him from wickedness</i> .
<p>82 הן אמחאנך ברי לא תמות והן אשבקן על לבבך [לא תחיה</p>	82	82	If I smite you, my son, you will not die; and, if I leave (you) to your own heart, <i>you will not live</i> .
<p>83 מחאה לעלים כא]יה] לחנת אף לכל עבדיך אל]פנא + איש זי</p>	83	83	A blow for a slave, rebuke for a maid, and for all your servants <i>discipline</i> . <i>A man who</i>

<sup>79</sup> At first sight, one would compare this saying with No. 8 in the *Syriac MSS*; so Nöldeke, who restores ב[י]תא and takes חמר נער as ‘braying ass’ – but this gives no construction. Baneth has ב[ו]תא, as in Line 90 (‘what is stronger ...? The burden’) but this meaning for בות is quite uncertain. Wensinck has ב[בי]תא, for which there is not room. חמר נער may also mean ‘fermenting wine’ (Perles) and this allows the simple restoration, ב[ג]תא. It is true this is a Hebraism; for, גת is not found in Targumim (though it is in Syriac) but there are other Hebraisms in this text – or are they common Semitic? The proverb must then have been ‘(there are various strong things but) what is stronger than wine foaming in the press?’ – alluding to the intoxicating effect of new wine. There is nothing after ב[ג]תא in this line.

<sup>80</sup> יתסר is more probably from אסר than from יאסר. The א is dropped as in לממר (perhaps) and למכל, and in later Aramaic. ארחא must mean a ‘fetter’ or something similar; in *Tg Onkelos* it (or אריחא) translates the Hebrew מוט, which is elsewhere used as a symbol of oppression. It must refer here to some form of punishment by tying the legs to a bar, or the stocks. The end must have been ‘shall prosper in later life’, or something of the kind (cf. Syriac 22, Armenian 14, and Arabic).

<sup>81</sup> Here, הן לו = אלו (cf. Pr 23:14 – משאול תעיל – ‘If you cannot keep him out of mischief, then beat him’).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Pr 23:13: The occurrence of the same idea in two consecutive lines in both places cannot be accidental. At the end, something short is wanted, like ‘you will not prosper’; cf. Armenian 14.

<sup>83</sup> Here, מחאה is a noun (Nöldeke, Wensinck). כא]יה] follows Nöldeke; Baneth and Sachau have [כא]סר, which is possible from the traces remaining but does not give a very good sense; ח is more probable at the end. In לחנת, the ל must be the preposition, therefore, not ‘concubine’ as in BA; the meaning, ‘maid-servant’, is required here for חנת. At the end something is wanted to introduce Line 84; if Lines 92–94 give the approximate width of the column, several words would be required here, since the line must apparently have read straight on.

<p>קנה עבד פר[יץ ו]אמה גנבה פ[חד] הו [הנעל]  לבייתה ו . . . .</p> <p>שם אבוהי זורעה בשם שרחותה + עקרבא  [יהשכח ?</p> <p>לחם ולא י[אכ]ל [עד י]חיה וע[ל]והי טב מן זי  יט[עמנהי]</p> <p>ל[. . . .] עבדת [. . . .] דם אילתא שגיאת  מסמ[. . . .]</p> <p>אריא יהוה מסמה לאילא בסתר סוידא והו  . . .]</p> <p>ודמה יאשר ובשרה יאכל הא כן פגעהם זי  [אנש]א + מ . . . אריה . . .]</p>	<p>84 84 buys a licentious slave (or) a thievish maid <i>brings anxiety into his house, and disgraces</i></p> <p>85 85 the name of his father and his offspring with the reputation of his wantonness. The scorpion <i>finds</i></p> <p>86 86 bread and does not <i>eat</i> in order that <i>he may</i> live, but it is too good for him to <i>taste</i>.</p> <p>87 87 . . . . . you have done . . . . . the blood of the hind . . .</p> <p>88 88 The lion devours (?) the hart in the secrecy of (his) den (?), and he . . .</p> <p>89 89 and will shed his blood and eat his flesh: so is the contact of <i>men</i>.  <i>From fear of the lion</i></p>
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84 [פר[יץ ו] is better than פר[יר] (as Epstein). אמה גנבה is certain, but a conjunction is necessary, either ו of which there is no trace, or או, for which there is no room. פ[חד] is uncertain and not very suitable. In הו, the ה is almost certain; after it, Ungnad reads ל but the upper stroke is really the tail of the ך in Line 83; we might read either [הנעל] or [על]. הו [הנעל]. At the end, a connexion with Line 85 is wanted; the lines all seem to be short before Line 89, so that either the column was narrower above than below, or the fragment attached to it from Line 89 onwards does not really belong there.

85 Charles does not include a translation for this line.

86 The form of this proverb is very uncertain; it seems to mean that the scorpion refuses bread because he cannot appreciate it, his natural food being insects and vermin. לחם ולא י[אכ]ל is probable; there is not room for יאכלנהי. The next word is very doubtful; there is a mark of a ל (but not high enough), but כל חיה ('he will not eat anything living') is unsuitable, because that is just what he does eat. Perhaps it is עי יחיה.

87 The (end of) this line is too broken to (properly) restore; [מסמ[ה], perhaps, as in Line 88.

88 For מסמה, Mr Hayes (privately) suggests a derivation from the Arabic for 'to scent', which would be suitable, but the participle (Pael) would be מסמם. The ה must be radical, so that we should have to assume a form סמה = סם = סוידא or סוירא no doubt means 'lair' or something similar but the word is unknown; Epstein's comparisons for this word and מסמה are unconvincing.

89 At the ends of Lines 89-94, Sachau joins on another fragment; it does not seem certain that it belongs here, nor how much is lost between the two pieces. It makes these lines much longer than the rest. After זי, Ungnad supplies א[אילתאו ארי], which is pointless. Nöldeke reads 'of the weak with the strong' and Seidel has א[אילתאו ארי], which is possible but too long if the following lines are rightly restored. The traces of

<p>שבק חמר ולא יסבלנהי ינשא בות מן כנתה  [וינ]שא מ[וב]לא זי לא זיל[ה]  וטעון גמלא יטעננהי + חמרא רכ[ן] לאתנא  [מן ר]חמתה וצנפריא [ג . . .]  תרתין מלן שפירה וזי תלתא רחימה  לשמש ש[תה] חמרא ויניקנהי כבש  חכמה [?]  וישמע מלה ולא יהחווה + הא זנה יקיר  [קדם] שמש וזי ישתה חמרא ולא  [יניקנהי]  וחכמתה אבדה [ו . . . נד] מן חזה + ..  שמ[ת] [.....]ינועממא [חכמתהם] אלהיא [ה] ..</p>	<p>90 90 the ass left <i>his burden</i> and will not carry it. He shall bear shame before his fellow <i>and shall bear a burden</i> that is not <i>his</i>,  91 91 and shall be laden with a camel's load. The ass made obeisance to the she-ass from love of her, and the birds . . .  92 92 Two things are a merit(?), and of three there is pleasure to Shamash: <i>one who drinks wine</i> and gives it (to others), one who restrains(?) wisdom . . .  93 93 and he hears a word and does not reveal (it). Behold, this is precious <i>before</i> Shamash. But one who drinks wine and does not give it to others  94 94 and his wisdom goes astray . . . . . who sees? . . . You have placed . . . . . the peoples their wisdom the gods . . .</p>
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the next word (נת . מ) are quite uncertain; it might be 'for fear of'. At the end, perhaps we need a word for 'burden'.

<sup>90</sup> Seidel reads 'he who neglects an ass and does not feed it', taking סבל as in Line 74. Baneth takes בות to mean 'burden', while Seidel and Epstein think it is 'shame' (cf. Ps 15:3). For [וינ]שא, Epstein has [זי יהנ]שא ('whom he makes to bear a burden'). Baneth has [זי יסבלנהי וינ]שא and, at the end, [זיל[ה] עם זילה] - i.e., a double burden. All very uncertain and obscure.

<sup>91</sup> רכ[ן] ('bowed to', as Epstein) is more probable with ל than רכב (Ungnad). In [מן ר]חמתה, there is some trace of מ. What the birds have to do with it one cannot guess; perhaps the fragment is not in place. The proverb must end with this line, since Line 92 begins a new sentence.

<sup>92</sup> Nöldeke thinks שפירה is a mistake שפירן; as it stands, it can only be a noun ('an ornament'); similarly, רחימה ('a pleasure'). שמש is the Babylonian god (*Smend*), the judge of right and wrong. ש[תה] follows Seidel; Nöldeke, & Grimme (cf. Line 93). For ויניקנהי, Seidel adduces an Arabic root for 'to vomit', and such a proceeding could hardly be pleasing even to Shamash; obviously, it must be connected with נק ('gives it (to others) to drink') but the form is difficult.

<sup>93</sup> וישמע is apparently not in the same construction as ויניקנהי (Line 92) but is used loosely in the sense of 'and one who hears'. יקיר must mean 'precious' and this clause sums up the preceding proverb. In [קדם], a trace of ם remains. וזי must begin the converse statement, /but he who'. In ישתה, the ה is not very probable. [יניקנהי] seems likely, but it makes the line long.

<sup>94</sup> For [נד] מן ח' [ו . . . נד], Ungnad reads מתחזה ו---ק.ר; after the mark of division (doubtful), Baneth restores עממא חכמתהם מן שמית . . . ('from heaven the nations (receive) their wisdom; the gods give it'). For the end, Ungnad and Nöldeke suggest חכמתה מן אלהיא ה; all very obscure.

## Column VII (Sachau, plate 45)

<p>95 אף לאלהן יקירה הי ע[ד לע]ל[מן לה] מלכותא          בש[מי]ן שימה הי כי בעל קדשן נשא[ה]          ב[רי] אל ת[ב]ט יתרא עד תחזה [כל מ]לה          זי[ ] תאתה על בלך כזי בכל אתר [עיני]הם          ואדניהם ל[הן] פמד אשתמר לך אל יהוה          טרפי[ר]          מן כל מנטרה טר פמד ו[על] זי ש[מע]ת          הוקר לבב כי צנפר הי מלה ומשלחה          גבר לא ל[קח]          מ[.]י אחדי פמד אחרי כן הנפק          [לאחו]ר בעדרה כי עזיז ארב פס מן          ארב מלחם</p>	<p>95 95 Even to gods is it precious, <i>to it for ever</i> belongs the kingdom, in heaven it is treasured up; for, the lord of holiness has exalted it.</p> <p>96 96 My son, do not chatter overmuch until you reveal <i>every word</i></p> <p>97 97 <i>that</i> comes into your mind; for, in every place are their <i>eyes</i> and their ears; <i>but</i> keep watch over your mouth, let it not be <i>your</i> destruction (?).</p> <p>98 98 More than all watchfulness, watch your mouth; and, <i>over</i> what you hear, harden your heart; for, a word is (like) a bird and, when he has sent it forth, a man does not <i>recapture</i> it(?).</p> <p>99 99 <i>Count</i> the secrets of your mouth, afterwards bring forth (advice) to your <i>brother</i> for his help; for, stronger is the ambush of the mouth than the ambush of fighting.</p>
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- 95 This line seems to refer to wisdom, in which case it is probably the continuation of Line 94. [ד לע]ל[מן לה] follows Baneth; [מי]ן follows Sachau & Baneth (cf. Line 94 &c).
- 96 This line might be read אל ת[לו]ט יתמא (as Ungnad) 'do not curse the day until you see (the night?)'; there is perhaps a trace of ל. But can [לוט] take an accusative? The usual word for 'curse' in these papyri is לחי. If ת[ב]ט as a jussive form is possible, and the blank space may be disregarded, it forms a good connexion with Line 97. יתרא is adverbial, cf. the forms עלא, בותא, and קרבתא. We read תחזה for תהחזה; it cannot be read תחזה as Nöldeke and Seidel. [כל מ]לה is required for Line 97. The rest of the line is blank, which is strange, if it reads straight on; the scribe must have omitted something illegible but ought to have left the blank at the beginning instead of the end of the line.
- 97 [זי] is most probable; the sentence cannot have begun thus, with a feminine verb. [הן]ל follows Epstein(?); Ungnad & Nöldeke have לוט, Baneth לצד, and Seidel למ. פמד is a nominative pendens, 'but as to your mouth, take heed'. [ר]פיטר is very difficult; it ought to mean 'ruining you' but it is a strange word to use, and in the plural.
- 98 [מע]תש is Grimme's restoration. הוקר is literally 'make heavy a (i.e., your) heart on (i.e. with regard to) what you hear'. Nöldeke and Grimme take משלחה as passive but it may equally well be active. [קח]ל (as Grimme) is not very satisfactory, 'does not catch it (again)'; Epstein proposes [בב]ל - 'a man without heart (i.e., sense)'.
- 99 There is no obvious word to restore [י.מני] ('count') would not fill the space; the י might be א. On אחרי (or אחדי), cf. perhaps the Syriac

- אל תכבה מלת מלך רפאה תהוי 100 100 Do not suppress the word of a king: let it be a healing to your brother. Soft is the speech of a king, (but) it is sharper and stronger than a *two-edged* knife.
- [לאחו]ך רכיך ממלל מלך שרק ועוזו הו מן סכין פמ[ין] 100 100 Do not suppress the word of a king: let it be a healing to your brother. Soft is the speech of a king, (but) it is sharper and stronger than a *two-edged* knife.
- חזי קדמתך מנדעם קשה [על א]נפי מ[לך] 101 101 Behold before you something hard: *in presence* of a king, do not delay. Swifter is his anger than lightning. Do take heed to yourself.
- אלתקום זעיר כצפה מן ברק אנת אשתמר לך אליח[ונ]הי עלא[מ]ריך ותהך [ב]לא ביומיד 102 102 Let him not *show* it at your words, so you go away before your time.
- לך
- קדמ[ת] מלך הן פקיד אשה יקרה הי 103 103 *In the presence* of a king, if (a thing) is commanded you, it is a burning fire; hasten, do it; do not put sackcloth upon you and hide your hands; *for*,
- עבק עבדה[י] א[ת]לתהן שק עליך ותכסה כפיך [כי] 103 103 *In the presence* of a king, if (a thing) is commanded you, it is a burning fire; hasten, do it; do not put sackcloth upon you and hide your hands; *for*,
- א[ת] מלת מלך בחמר לבבא + [למ]ה ישפטון 104 104 also, the word of a king is with wrath of heart. *Why* should wood strive with fire, flesh with a knife, a man with a king?
- עקן עם אשה בשר עם סכין איש עם [מלך]

אוחדחא, ('secrets'), parallel to ארב ('ambush'), as Montgomery. Baneth would omit it. הנפק (as Baneth) is certain; there is no suffix and, after it, there is just room for [לאחו]ר but the actual word is quite conjectural. מלחם is a mistake for מלחםה, a Hebraism.

100 In later Aramaic, תכבה means 'extinguish' but here, more generally, 'suppress'; Epstein and Nöldeke have תכטה (cf. Syriac קטא) but this gives no good sense. After רפאה, there is perhaps room for הי. [לאחו]ך is quite conjectural but a repetition of the word restored in Line 99 would be natural in this style. The rest of the line is a separate proverb.

101 [על א]נפי is probably right; Seidel's [קדם א]נפי is unlikely and too long.

102 יח[ונ]הי seems the only possible form – a Pael, as in Line 96, instead of the Hitpael(?) as elsewhere – 'let him (the king) not show it (anger)'. א[מ]ריך is more probable than אבריך ('to them that destroy you', as Epstein). The rest of the line is blank.

103 [קדמ]ת fits the space (Epstein has [מל]ת ..). לך is added above the line. הי (feminine) is attracted to the gender of אשה but הי (קרה) is correct as a masculine suffix. In עבדה[י], there is a trace of the י, therefore, not לעבק ('pace', as Nöldeke). In עבק, the ב is badly formed but can be nothing else. ותכסה is certain, not ותכוה as Baneth to suit the reading תהנשק. At the end of the line, we could perhaps read כי, to connect Line 104.

104 Here, בחמר, rather than בחמד, is suggested by the preceding proverbs, which are grouped more or less according to subject. Perles supplies אלהא (cf. Job 9:2, 25:4, Is 10:15, 45:9).

<p>105 טעמת אף זעררתא מררתא ו[טעמ]א חסין ולא איתי זי [מ]ריר מן ענוה רכיך לשן מ[לך]</p>	<p>105 I have tasted even the bitter sloe, and the <i>taste</i> was strong, but there is nothing that is more bitter than poverty. Soft is the tongue of a king</p>
<p>106 ועלעי תנין יתבר כמותא זי [ל]א מתחזה + בשגיא בנן לבבך אליחדה ובזעריהם [אלתבהת]</p>	<p>106 but it breaks the ribs of a dragon, like death that is not seen. In a multitude of children, do not let your heart exult; and, in the lack of them, <i>do not be ashamed</i>.</p>
<p>107 מלך כרחמן אף קלה גבה ה[ו] מן הו זי יקום קדמוהי להן זי אל עמה</p>	<p>107 A king is like the merciful (?): even his voice is high; who is he that can stand before him, except one who is like (?) him?</p>
<p>108 שפיר מלך למחזה כשמש ויקיר הדרה לדרכי ארקא בניח[א]</p>	<p>108 Glorious is a king to see, like Shamash, and precious is his sovereignty to those who walk on the earth in tranquillity.</p>
<p>109 מאן טב כס[ה] מלה בלבבה ו[הו זי] תביר הנפקה ברא</p>	<p>109 A good vessel hides a thing within itself, but <i>one that</i> is broken lets it go forth.</p>

<sup>105</sup> זעררתא (as Epstein & Nöldeke) is certain. מררתא must be an adjective, not a noun (as Wensinck). א[טעמ] is probable, since the א is fairly certain, rather than ו[אכל]ת or ו[בלע]ת (as Nöldeke); then, חסין must be 'strong', though it is not the word we should expect. Nöldeke and Perles have 'lettuces', to suit ו[אכל]ת. On מ[לך], cf. Line 100; Seidel's מן משא (cf. Pr 5:3, 25:15, Ps 55:22) is too long.

<sup>106</sup> Here, אלתבהת, or a similar verb, is required.

<sup>107</sup> For כרחמן, Grimme translates 'like the merciful' (i.e., God) but this hardly suits the general tenor of the proverbs. Seidel takes the כ as otiose. זי אל עמה, as in Lines 154 & 161, is a very difficult phrase; Nöldeke and Seidel translate 'he with whom God is' but the usual word is אלה or אלהיא, not אל (? Line 173); Grimme takes it as = Hebrew אשר לעמתו ('one who is his equal'). In Line 161, אלעמה is written as one word, which would imply that אל is the preposition but the translation is less suitable to that passage. The line ends here.

<sup>108</sup> Here, כשמש may be either 'like Shamash' or 'like the sun'. In the restoration of בניח[א], there is only room for one letter, and this restoration, following Nöldeke, is probably right: law-abiding persons will uphold the dignity of their king. Epstein proposes בניח[לוי] (Pr 31:8) but there is not room; though there is a slight space before ח, it must go with בני, since there is no word of two letters beginning with ח that would be suitable. The rest of the line is blank.

<sup>109</sup> In place of כס[ה], perhaps כ[סי] fits the space better. ו[הו זי] is almost certain; Baneth's ו[זי הו] does not fit the traces of letters so well; Perles' ו[מאן] would not fit at all. The line ends with ברא.

110 אריא אזל קרב לש[למה לחמרא] ל[ס] שלם  
יהוי לך ענה חמרא ואמר לאריא

110 The lion went near to *greet the ass* saying, "Peace be to you." The  
ass answered and said to the lion . . . . .

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<sup>110</sup> Nöldeke fills the lacuna with לש[לם חמר אמר] ל[ה], but there is hardly room and we should moreover expect חמרא (cf. Line 118), for which the space is still less adequate. חמר(א) is required by חמרא farther on, and perhaps we may read as printed. The answer of the ass is unfortunately lost, since clearly none of the other fragments join on to this – unless it were Line 79, where see note.

### Column VIII (Sachau, plate 46)

<p>111 נשאת חלא וטענת מלח ולא איתי זי יקיר מן [זפתא ?</p>	<p>111 I have lifted sand and carried salt, and there is nothing that is heavier than <i>debt</i>.</p>
<p>112 נשאת תבן ונסבת פרן ולא איתי זי קליל מן תותב</p>	<p>112 I have lifted chaff and taken up crumbs, and there is nothing that is lighter than (to be) a sojourner.</p>
<p>113 חרב תדלח מין שפין בין רעין טבן</p>	<p>113 A sword will trouble calm waters whether they are bad (or) good.</p>
<p>114 איש זעיר וירבה מלוהי מסרסרן לעלא מנה כי מפתח פמה מע[ל]ה</p>	<p>114 A little man, when he multiplies his words, they fly away(?) above him; for, the opening of his mouth . . .</p>
<p>115 אלהן והן רחים אלהן הו ישימון טב בחנכה למאמר</p>	<p>115 gods, and if he were beloved of (the) gods they would put something good in his palate to speak.</p>
<p>116 שגיאן [כ]וכב[י שמיא זי] שמהתהם לא ידע איש הא כן אנשא לא ידע איש</p>	<p>116 Many are the stars of heaven whose names man does not know; so, man does not know men</p>
<p>117 אריה [לא אי]תי בימא על כן יקראון לקפא לבא</p>	<p>117 There is no lion in the sea, therefore they call the . . . . lion(?).</p>

- 111 At the end of the line, there are traces of two letters, which do not fit Stummer's מגלה or מגרה ('exile'); they may be פת, which suggests זפתא - not the word we should expect.
- 112 Perhaps פרן is the plural of פר, from פרר (cf. פרור, 'crumbs'). ולא is repeated by mistake; the first is partly erased. תותב is simply the Hebrew תושב ('settler') and there is no need to make it an abstract noun as Grimme and Stummer.
- 113 Ungnad takes רעין as 'friends' and Nöldeke as 'shepherds', neither of which gives much point; the combination with טבן suggests that it may be a Hebraism, and the phrase a mistake for בין רעין בין טבן ('whether they be bad or good'), which might have a meaning. The rest of the line is blank.
- 114 This line is very difficult. וירבה must govern מלוהי and, to multiply words is a reproach, cf. Lines 96-97 &c, and Qo 10:14. מסרסרן apparently agrees with מלוהי; its connexion with עלא suggests that it is for מסרסרן. The meaning of the line is obscure.
- 115 The opening אלהן is probable. רחים אלהן ('beloved of the gods') follows Nöldeke & Epstein. למאמר is probable, though the א is badly formed.
- 116 The restoration may be regarded as certain. Perles omits זי.
- 117 אריה is collective (Ungnad). [לא אי]תי is quite certain from the traces remaining. לקפא is the only possible reading; Epstein suggests the meaning 'flood' and לביא = לבא - they call a flood 'lion' because it is thrown out of the sea and, therefore, is not in it. But this is too far-fetched.

<p>118 נמרא פגע לענזא והי עריה ענה נמרא ואמר לענזא אתי ואכסנכי משכי [ענת</p>	<p>118 The leopard met the goat and she was cold. The leopard answered and said to the goat, "Come, and I will cover you with my hide."</p>
<p>119 ענזא ואמרת לנמרא למה לי נסיכי גלדי אל תלקחן מני כי לא [ישא]ל</p>	<p>119 The goat <i>answered</i> and said to the leopard, "What have you to do with me, my lord? Do not take my skin from me." For, <i>he does not</i></p>
<p>120 שלם טביא להן למונק דמה + רבא אזל על אמ[ריא] . . . א . . .</p>	<p>120 salute the kid except to suck its blood. The master (?) went to the sheep . . . . .</p>
<p>121 אשתק ענו אמרי[א] ואמרו לה שא לך זי ת[נ]שא מנן אנחנה א[מריד]</p>	<p>121 I will be silent. The sheep answered and said to him, "Take for yourself what you will <i>take</i> from us. We are <i>your sheep</i>."</p>
<p>122 כי לא בידי אנ[ש]א מ[נש]א רגלהם ומנחתותהם מן בלע[ די אלהן] ל[כן] . .</p>	<p>122 For, it is not in the power of men to <i>lift</i> up their foot and to put them down without (<i>the</i>) gods.</p>

Another suggestion is that קפא derives from the Persian for 'boat', which makes the meaning no clearer. The root, קפה, means to float on the top of the water or to congeal, so that the noun might mean 'scum'.

- 118 Grimme takes עריה to mean 'cold'; ענזא is the emphatic form. At the end, ענת is required but it makes the line rather long.
- 119 נסיכי ('my lord') is certain; Sachau and others have כסיכי but that form is impossible. Then, למה לי must be a complete phrase: 'why (do you say that) to me' or 'what have I to do with you'. תלקחן is *short* not for תלקחנה (Sachau) but simply the energetic form governing גלדי. Note ל[ישא]ל (as Epstein & Nöldeke), not תשאל (2<sup>nd</sup> person), as there is no trace of the tail of ת; hence, כי introduces a comment on the answer of the goat.
- 120 טביא ('kid') is by an oversight for ענזא. רבא is doubtful; Sachau reads דבא ('the bear'), followed by others. Nöldeke prefers to take it for דאבא (זאב = דיבא), 'the wolf'; however, the sequel seems rather to require a human person here. אמ[ריא] is probable here and in the next line. For the lacuna, Baneth suggests '...lamb[s and said, give me one of you]' and takes אשתק (Line 121) as 'I shall be content'; this would be suitable, though it is difficult to see how the Aramaic would express it. The trace of a letter at the end seems to belong to an א, with a space before it – hence, beginning a new word.
- 121 אשתק can only be 'I am (will be) silent'; Perles proposes דבא שתק but nothing seems to be lost at the beginning. ת[נ]שא is certainly right (as Baneth), not עה [ב]ת as Ungnad, nor תבעא as Sachau. In א[מריד], the א is probable.
- 122 אנ[ש]א (as Baneth) is no doubt right (cf. Gn 41:44). ומנחתותהם is incorrect if רגלהם is singular but it is a natural *constructio ad sensum*. Nöldeke assumes a mistake for רגליהם. In ל[כן] [אלהן], there are traces of ן (or ך) and of כ (not לא as Epstein). Then, we must either supply a verb like 'we know' or suppose that כי (Line 123) is a mistake, due to the line above it, or that Line 123 is a repetition of the proverb in another form.

- 123 **כי לא בידיך מ[נש]א רגלך [ו]למנחתותה + הן** 123 For, it is not in your power to *lift* your foot and to put it down. If there goes forth good from the mouth of *men*, it is well;
- נפקה טבה מן פס א[נשא טב
- 124 **והן לחיה תנפק [מן] פמהם אלהן ילחון להם +** 124 And, if a curse shall go forth *from* their mouth, (the) gods will curse them. If the eyes of (the) gods are over *men*
- הן עיני אלהן על אנ[שא
- 125 **איש מצלח עקן בחשוכא ולא חזה כאיש גנב** 125 a man cuts (?) wood in the dark and does not see, like a thief who breaks into(?) a house and *escapes* (?).
- זי שתר בי וישת[מר] ?

123 [א[נשא] is a conjecture but probable; there is not room for much to complete the sentence, and טב is likely to have been repeated, as לחיה in Line 124.

124 Here, לחיה probably means 'curse'; elsewhere, it means 'evil'.

125 This line is very obscure. If God looks after men, a man may chop wood in the dark without harm to himself. This is strange enough, but why is he like a burglar? For מצלח עקן, Grimme reads 'passes through a wood' and Sachau has 'causes trees to grow'; however, to 'split' wood is an accepted meaning in Aramaic, and the other suggestions do not make the passage more intelligible. After כאיש, a זי is deleted. For שתר, Sachau says = סתר and Nöldeke & Epstein read 'breaks into'. Perles compares to 1S 5:9, where ישְתְרוֹ seems to mean 'burst out', of tumours (but the Jewish commentators connect it with סתר). He also compares Babylonian šutturu and Ez 5:12, where סתר is clearly 'destroy'. [וישת[מר] is more probable perhaps than [וישת[ר]; either the text is wrong, or some words are used in an unknown sense.

## Column IX (Sachau, plate 47, column 1)

<p>אלתדרג ק] שתך ואל תהרכב חטך לצדיק למה אלהיא יסגה בעדרה ויהתיבנהי עליך 126 . . . . . 127 . . . . . 128 . . . . . 129 . . . . . 130 . . . . .</p>	<p><i>Do not bend your bow and do not shoot your arrow at the righteous, lest God comes to his help and turn it back on you.</i></p> <p><i>... do, O my son, gather every harvest, and do every work, then you shall eat and be filled and give to your children.</i></p> <p><i>If you have bent your bow and shot your arrow at one who is more righteous than you, it is a sin in the sight of God.</i></p> <p><i>... do, O my son, borrow corn and wheat that you may eat and be filled and give to your children with you.</i></p> <p><i>A heavy loan and from a wicked man, do not borrow, and if you borrow, take no rest to your soul until</i></p>
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- <sup>126</sup> Nöldeke restores [ברי אל תנגד ק] שתך but there is not room for ברי; the natural word would be תנגד but, in Line 191, we have דרך, as in Hebrew and, in Line 128, a root ending in ג. This suggests דרג, a collateral form of דרך; as the same word was probably used here and in Line 128, I have restored תדרג. There is no trace of the ק; it may have been written, as in Line 128, at a distance from the ש. For the general sense, cf. Ps 11:2, 64:4-5. למה means 'lest'; cf. Ezr 4:22 (Ungnad). יסגה (Pael), as in Talmud, means 'goes' (Nöldeke, Perles, Grimme); the verb is singular with אלהיא plural, but perhaps this is only a mistake (so Perles) for אלהא and not as in Hebrew. On בעדרה, cf. Ex 18:4, Dt 33:26, Ps 146:5.
- <sup>127</sup> Probably, 3 or 4 letters are lost at the beginning of the line; if it were Hebrew, we should supply לעולם but there is no obvious word. הכצר is usually taken for הקצר ('gather harvest') (Grimme has 'labour'), cf. Line 101, כצפר for קצפר.
- <sup>128</sup> This line is parallel to Line 126, as 129 is to 127. For גת [הן דר], Nöldeke has דרכת but ג is clear. מן אלהן is difficult for 'as regards, in the sight of, God'. הד (or הר) must be a slip for הו; Grimme proposes to read הדיא ('from you is the arrow, from God is the direction') but, after הד, the papyrus is intact and blank. We should expect 'the arrow will be turned back upon you by God'.
- <sup>129</sup> For the beginning of this line cf. Line 127. זף דגנא (Epstein, Nöldeke, Grimme) is right; Sachau & Ungnad have זפרגנא, which Lidzbarski says means a 'quince', but he does not explain the construction.
- <sup>130</sup> לחה (as Epstein) is probable from the traces remaining (cf. Line 138). [אן הן] follows Nöldeke & Epstein. We should read שלין not שליו; it must be a plural abstract of שליא.

<p>131 ז[פתא [תשלם זפת] א חליה כ[זי חס]יר ומשלמותה ממלא [ב]י</p>	<p>131 you pay back the loan. A loan is pleasant when there is need, but the paying of it is the filling of a house.</p>
<p>132 כל זי תשמע תבחננ[הי באדניך כי חן גבר הימנותה [כי] שנאתה כדבת שפותה</p>	<p>132 All that you hear, you may try by your ears; for, the beauty of a man is his faithfulness; for, his hatefulness is the lying of his lips.</p>
<p>133 עלק[דמן כרסאא לכדבא . .] יט ועלא[חרן יה]נשנון ברבתה וירוקן באנפוהי</p>	<p>133 At first, the throne is set up for the liar but, at last, his lies shall find (him) out, and they shall spit in his face.</p>
<p>134 מכדב גזיר קדלהכבתולה תימנה זי [תחבא ?] לאנפין כאיש זי יעבד לחיתא</p>	<p>134 A liar has his neck cut, like a maiden of the south (?) who hides (?) (her) face, like a man who makes a curse</p>
<p>135 ומן אלהן לא נפקת +</p>	<p>135 that did not come forth from (the) gods.</p>
<p>136 אלתמאס] זי בערבך ול תרנג לכביר זי ימנע מנד</p>	<p>136 Do not despise that which is in your lot, and do not covet some great thing that is withheld from you.</p>

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- 131 The restorations are by Nöldeke and Epstein; they add זי at the beginning, but there is no room. [תשלם] is probably right but there is no trace of it. For ממלא [ב]י, Epstein reads 'payment of it fills the house', which gives no sense and is grammatically incorrect, as the subject is feminine, but perhaps not impossible in these texts. Nöldeke is better with 'the filling of a house'. The point is not obvious: Can it mean that the payment of a debt is liable to take everything you have in your house?
- 132 [כל] is probable, as there is a trace of ל. There is room for the restored words but they are not very convincing. Baneth's אלתשמענהי איש מכדב is less suitable and does not include the ל. In שנאתה [כי], there is a trace of כ; it looks like an alternative to what precedes, cf. Lines 122–123.
- 133 [יה]נשנון is certain, and there is just room for על . . יט . . (or אט . .) must be the predicate; no satisfactory restoration has been proposed. [ק]דמן (not שגרן as Sachau &c.) = Hebrew ישינו ('overtake'); the object is omitted, as probably in Line 82; or 'they shall overtake (i.e., find out) his lies'. רוקן is from רקק.
- 134 There is probably nothing before מכדב זי. זי is probably right; then there is room for a verb of 4 letters. In לאנפין, the ל introduces the object; we should expect 'her face'. The idea may be that the liar wears a mask, but is unsuccessful in his devices, like one who curses wrongfully. לחיתא is a curse, not an oath (as Epstein).
- 135 A mark at the beginning of the line looks as if the scribe wrote זי (or א) and erased it. ומן is quite clear. Note that the sign, +, (see the introductory notes) comes at the end of a proverb, not at the beginning of a new one. The rest of the line is blank.
- 136 [אלתמאס], or something equivalent, is required. ימנע is passive (Nöldeke). The rest of the line is blank.

137	אלחרבי] חיל ואל תהשנא לבבא	137	<i>Do not increase riches, and do not lead (your) heart astray.</i>
138	זי] לא יתרום בשם אבוהי ובשם אמה אלידנח שמ]ש עלוהי] כי גבר להה הו	138	<i>He who is not proud of(?) the name of his father and the name of his mother, let not the sun shine upon him; for, he is an evil man.</i>
139	מני] נפקת לחיתי ועם מן אצדק + בר בטני הגשש ביתי [ומ]ה אמר לנכריא	139	<i>From myself has my curse gone forth, and with whom shall I be justified? The son of my body has spied out (?) my house, and what can I say to strangers?</i>
140	ה]וה לי שהן חמס ומן אפו צדקני + מן ביתי נפקת חמת]א עם מן אקשה ואעפה	140	<i>There was a cruel witness against me, and who then has justified me? From my own house went forth wrath, with whom shall I strive and toil?</i>
141	רז]ידך אלתגלי קדם [רח]מיד [ו]אליקל שמד קדמיהם	141	<i>Your secrets do not reveal before your friends, that your name is not lightly esteemed before them.</i>

<sup>137</sup> [אלחרבי] is only conjectural (cf., e.g., D. 8:13–14, Ezk 28:5, Ps 62:11) but חיל [אלתהוי ד] would be possible. In חיל, there is an א at the end, which is erased. תהשנא as Hebrew שגה; Ungnad aptly compares Sirach 8:2 (Hebrew). The rest of the line is blank.

<sup>138</sup> [זי] follows Nöldeke and Epstein. There is probably room for שמ]ש עלוהי]: ‘Do not let Shamash rise upon him’ (i.e., be favourable to him). Nöldeke and Epstein have כי שמ]ש שה] but the space requires more letters, and ‘his sun’ is not very suitable.

<sup>139</sup> מני is probable from the traces: ‘From me went forth’, (i.e., was due to myself, so that I cannot demand satisfaction (אצדק) from anyone else).

<sup>140</sup> The opening ה]וה means ‘he (i.e. my son) was’; Nöldeke has [מן ביתי ה]וה but there is not room. DJOn "int? is ‘a malicious witness’ (Ungnad, cf. Ex 23:1, where it is associated, as here, with false reports, and Ps 35:11. For עם, Nöldeke has ועם but there is scarcely room. עפה is an alternative form of יעף (‘with whom shall I strive and weary myself?’, i.e., why should I weary myself by striving?).

<sup>141</sup> רז]ידך fits the space; Nöldeke reads as, ‘my son, your secrets’; Seidel has חטאידך. [ו]אליקל is required but there is no trace of the ו. The latter part of the line is blank.

## Column X (Sachau, plate 47, column 2)

<p>142 עם זי רם מנד אלתעבר בנ[צוי] ?</p>	<p>142 With one that is higher than you, do not go (?) to quarrelling (?).</p>
<p>143 עם זי אצי[ל] ועיז מנד [אלהשפט כי ילקח</p>	<p>143 With one that is a noble (?) and stronger than you, <i>do not contend; for, he will take</i></p>
<p>144 מן מנתך [ועל]זילה [יהוסף] ?</p>	<p>144 of your portion <i>and will add it to his own.</i></p>
<p>145 הא כן איש זעיר ועם [איש רב ישפט</p>	<p>145 Behold, so is a little man who <i>contends with a great man.</i></p>
<p>146 אלתהעדי מנד חכמתא ו] . . .</p>	<p>146 Do not remove wisdom from you, and . . . .</p>
<p>147 אל תסתכל כביר [וא]ל ידעך ח[כמתך</p>	<p>147 Do not be over crafty, and <i>do not let your wisdom be extinguished.</i></p>
<p>148 אל תחלי ואל] [יבלע]וד אלתמה [ואלירקון</p>	<p>148 Do not be sweet, lest they <i>swallow you up. Do not be bitter, lest they spit you out.</i></p>
<p>149 הן צבה אנת ברי זי תהוה [רם השפל נפשך</p>	<p>149 If you, my son, would be <i>exalted, humble yourself before God,</i></p>
<p>קדם אלהא</p>	<p>149 who humbles the lofty man and <i>exalts the humble man.</i></p>
<p>150 זי יהשפל לאיש רם (?) ו[ירים לאיש שפל</p>	<p>150 who humbles the lofty man and <i>exalts the humble man.</i></p>

- 142 In the 2<sup>nd</sup> column of this plate, the lines were probably shorter than in the 1<sup>st</sup>, but only the beginnings remain. A stroke after Lines 142, 144, 145, and 146 seems to divide the proverbs. Few sentences can be completed satisfactorily. In this line, in [בנ]צוי], the **צ** is probable; the word derives from נצה ('to quarrel').
- 143 Nöldeke rejects [ל]אצי but the **א** is probable; it might possibly be **ב**. Perles suggests כציר (for קציר) but does not explain it.
- 144 מנתך is from מנה ('weigh') - the traces following seem only to fit ועל [יהוסף] is only a possibility.
- 145 [איש רב ישפט] is only a conjecture.
- 146 The end of this line cannot be restored in any meaningful way.
- 147 תסתכל means 'be crafty'; Seidel compares to Qo 7:16-17. For ידעך, 'be extinguished' (as Ungnad) seems to be the only explanation, or we could read ירעך (cf. Line 43); The ח following is fairly certain. The masculine verb with a feminine subject following is not impossible, cf. Line 153.
- 148 In תחלי, the ח is badly formed and damaged Sachau and Ungnad read תדלי or תבלי, which give no sense. [יבלע]וד is fairly certain; there are traces of **ב** and **ע**. The end is restored from the *Armenian MSS*.
- 149 Note that the differing line length for the Aramaic and English text for Lines 148-149 here balance each other out.
- 150 רם suits the context but a longer word is required.

- 151 מה ילוטון ש[פו]ת [אנ]שא ל[א ילוטון אלהן] 151 How can the *lips* of men curse when (the) gods do not curse?
- 152 טב כבש . . . 152 Better is he that restrains . . .
- 153 נפשך אלירחם . . . 153 Do not let your soul love . . . .
- 154 ירפון המו להן זי אל עמה . . . 154 heal them, except one who is like him.
- 155 יהשחתון ידי ואל פמי ואל . . . 155 My hands shall destroy, and . . . .
- 156 יאפך אל פס אפכא וינסח לשנ[ה] 156 God (?) shall turn back the mouth of the unjust (?) and shall tear out *his* tongue.
- 157 עי[נין] טבן אל יאכמו ואדנין [טבן אל יסתתמו] 157 Good *eyes* shall not be darkened and *good ears shall not be stopped*,  
 ופס טב ירחם and a good mouth will love  
 158 כשיטא ויאמרנה 158 the truth and speak it.

151 מה ילוטון ש[פו]ת [אנ]שא (as Nöldeke & Epstein) is probably right. For the end, cf. Lines 134–135.

152 This line was probably something like Pr 16:32.

153 נפשך (feminine) is apparently subject of ירחם (masculine).

154 The sentence must have begun in Line 153. ירפון המו להן זי אל עמה is as in 1. 107, cf. Line 61.

155 The beginning of the sentence, containing the object, must have been in Line 154. For the masculine, verb cf. #153. אל must be the preposition. The meaning is obscure.

156 יאפך is for יהפך, following Nöldeke, who takes אל as 'God' and אפכא as a participle: 'God overturns the mouth of the perverse'. If אל is a preposition, it will be 'he shall turn retribution to the mouth...'.  
 157 יאכמו means 'be blackened' (i.e., darkened); masculine, again, as in Line 153. The restoration is probable, though merely conjectural.

158 כשיטא perhaps (as elsewhere כ for ק) = קשיטא ('truth'). יאמרנה seems to require פס in Line 157, after eyes and ears. The rest of the line is blank.

## Column XI (Sachau, plate 48, column 1)

<p>159 איש [שפ]יר מדדה ולבבה טב כק[שת]ה          חסינה זי מת[נגדה] בג[בר] איתי</p>	<p>159 A man excellent in character and whose heart is good is like a strong bow that is bent by a strong man.</p>
<p>160 הן לא י[עמד] איש עם אלהן ומה יתנטר עלאון          גוה</p>	<p>160 If a man does not stand with (the) gods, how shall he be saved by (?) his own strength?</p>
<p>161 . . . מן . . . שי בטן וזי לה אלעמה מן יהו[ה]          ד[אנהי]</p>	<p>161 . . . . . belly and that which is like it, who shall be judging him(?)?</p>
<p>162 . . . נה . . . ו אנשא ועממא עברו בהם ולא          שבקו המו ולבבהם [פתיח?]</p>	<p>162 . . . . . men, and peoples pass over them and do not leave them, and their heart is . . . .</p>
<p>163 לא ידע[ ] איש מה בלבב כנתה וכזי [יח]זה גבר          טב לגבר ל[חה] יזהר לה</p>	<p>163 A man knows not what is in the heart of his fellow and, when a good man sees an evil man he will beware of him,</p>

- 159 In this column, the lines are again very unequal in length. There is probably nothing before **איש**. For **שפ**[יר], another suggestion is **חסיד** but the trace remaining favours **פ** rather than **ס**. **מדדה** = **מדה**, with dagesh resolved, or rather with the double **ד** not yet represented by **ד**. Ungnad proposes **מדרה** ('his dwelling'), which is less suitable.
- 160 **י**[עמד] here is as it is used in the Aramaic of the time; Ungnad's **י**[שתמר] is impossible: The long stroke before **מ** is accidental, and the letter is **ע**. 'Stand with' = on the side of. **ומה** is the apodosis, introduced by **ו**.
- 161 The first letter visible is **מ** (probably). Perhaps the word before it is a participle, 'he who guards himself against'. Epstein assumes too much space at the beginning and reads **מ**[כב]שי ('secrets'). Ungnad has **שי**[אנ]. On **זי לה אלעמה** (Epstein's **לא** is impossible), cf. Lines 107 & 154; the fact that **אל** is written as one word with **עמה** suggests that it is the preposition. Also, the addition of **לה** here makes the translation, 'to whom God is with him', impossible; hence, **לעמתו** = **אלעמה** (as Grimme) is more probable. For **יהו[ה] ד[אנהי]**, Nöldeke's **אני**[טר]וה ('overthrow him') is impossible; the **ו** is certain but **ה** after it is doubtful, and the **ד** is quite uncertain. Epstein proposes **באנהי**, which he takes as 'in his strength'. A participle, **דאן**, is doubtful; in **דאנין** 7:25 is the *Ketiv* reading, **דינין** is the *Qere*.
- 162 This line is very difficult and the restoration quite uncertain. **עממא** must be plural (so Nöldeke); elsewhere, it is **עממיא**. **[פתיח]** (meaning unknown) appears best to fit the remaining traces. In **ולבבהם**, there is a trace of the **ם**.
- 163 **[לא ידע]** gives a suitable meaning. **[יזהר לה]** or something similar is required if the sentence ends with the line. Baneth proposes **בארחא**, continuing the sentence in Line 164.

<p>164 לא [ ילוה עמה ב[ארחא] ובעל אגר לא יהוה לה גבר טב [ע]ס ג[בר לה]ה</p>	<p>164 he will <i>not</i> accompany him on a journey and will not hire him – a good man with an evil man.</p>
<p>165 סג[יא שדר לרמנ]א [לם סניא לרמנא מה טב שג[יא] כבי[ד לזי נ]גע [באנ]ביך</p>	<p>165 The <i>bramble</i> sent to the pomegranate saying, “Bramble to Pomegranate, what is the good of <i>your many</i> thorns to him who touches your fruit?”</p>
<p>166 . . . ענ[ה] [רמנ]א ואמר לסניא אנת כל[ך] כבן עס זי נגע בכך</p>	<p>166 . . . the <i>pomegranate</i> answered and said to the <i>bramble</i>, “You are all thorns to him who touches you.”</p>
<p>167 צדיק אנשא בעדרה כלנטחוהי הוין</p>	<p>167 The righteous among men, all who meet him are for his help (?).</p>
<p>168 בית] רשיען ביום רוח תתחלל ובשהינן יצעון תרעיה כי בזיזת</p>	<p>168 The house of wicked men in the day of storm shall be destroyed (?); and, in calm (?) its gates shall fall (?); for, the spoiling of</p>
<p>169 צדיק המו] + עיני זי נטלת עליך ולבבי זי יהבת לך בחכמה</p>	<p>169 the righteous are they. My eyes that I lifted up on you and my heart that I gave you in wisdom,</p>

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- 164 לא (as Epstein) is certain. ב[ארחא] (as Baneth) is merely conjectural. אגר is either ‘roof’ (he will not be a co-tenant with him) or ‘wages’ (he will not employ him). The expegetical noun clause at the end is strange.
- 165 There is not room for more than יא[סג] at the beginning. לם is probable; the small fragment ought to be slightly bent upwards and there is not room for לם[ש] (as Nöldeke & Epstein) as well as the א of [לרמנ]א. For [יא]שג, Ungnad has [יא]שג but the ן is very doubtful; שגיא is a noun, ‘the multitude of’, as in Line 106. [לזי] follows Sachau; Ungnad has עס זי from Line 166, but there is hardly room. [באנ]ביך seems to be required but there is hardly room.
- 166 At the beginning of the line, there is space for about two letters – not אחר.
- 167 בעדרה (as Nöldeke & Epstein) is certain (‘the righteous among men’); Seidel has צריק אלהא (‘as for the righteous, God is his help’). הוין is as in Line 126. הוין is a participle of הוה (?) but we should expect the future; perhaps it is to be read otherwise, or the whole passage may be corrupt. The rest of the line is blank.
- 168 בית] seems to be required by תרעיה. Perles compares תתחלל to Jr 23:19 (Tg), ‘is profaned’, i.e., destroyed. ובשהינן is parallel to ביום רוח, or the antithesis of it. בזיזת apparently means ‘plunder’ or ‘prey’.
- 169 The restoration at the beginning of this line is merely conjectural and not very convincing. The rest of the line seems to belong to the series of reproachful sayings, at the end of the later versions.

<p>מאסת וי[הבת שמי בשרהו [הא] 170</p> <p>הן יאחדן רשיעא בכנפי לבשך שבק בידה אחר 171</p> <p>אדני לשמש הו</p> <p>י[לקח זילה וינתן לך 172</p>	<p>170 <i>you have despised and have turned my name into wantonness.</i></p> <p>171 <i>If the wicked takes hold of the skirts of your garment, leave (it) in his hand. Then approach (?) Shamash. He</i></p> <p>172 <i>will take his and give it to you.</i></p>
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<sup>170</sup> The (translation of the) beginning is conjectural but something of the kind is necessary. 'Set my name in wantonness' means disgraced it by wantonness. The rest of the line is blank.

<sup>171</sup> יאחדן is the energetic form (Nöldeke). לשמש הו was the Babylonian god of justice; it is written לשמש שהו by accident.

<sup>172</sup> The fragment containing יז is upside down in the facsimile. After לך, the line is blank.

## Column XII (Sachau, plate 48, column 2)

הקימני אלבצדיק עמד ל] מה	173	173	God set me up as a righteous man with you, <i>why</i> . . . .
ימותון שאני ולא בחרבי]	174	174	My enemies shall die, but not by my sword . . . .
שבקתך בסתר ארזא וסח]רת ?	175	175	I left you in a hiding place of cedar, and <i>you have gone about</i> . . .
שבקת לרחמיך והוקרת] שנאי	176	176	You have left your friends and have honoured <i>my enemies</i> .
רתא גבר זילא ידע מה י]	177	177	Pity (?) a man who knows not what he . . .
חכים ממלל כי מפתח פס ס]	178	178	A wise man speaks; for, the opening of the mouth of . . .
. . . . . 180-183] והי ש]	179	179 - 183	. . . . .
. . . . . נ]פלת ססא בערב]	184	184	. . . the moth fell into . . .
. . . . . מיאן]	185	185	. . . . .

- 173 The left-hand side of the column is lost and the lower half is too fragmentary for restoration. There is no evidence for the length of the lines, unless the restoration of Line 189 is right. Here, אל perhaps means ‘God’, though it is joined to בצדיק. In בצדיק ‘as a righteous man’, ב is circumstantial; Nöldeke has ‘by means of a righteous man’, i.e., Nabusumiskun. The line may have ended, “why have you plotted against me?” It would then belong to the second series of sayings.
- 174 שאני is a mistake (Sachau) for שנאי; in Line 206, it must be a different word. The line may have ended ‘for, God will avenge me’.
- 175 סתר means ‘a secret place’ (cf. Ps 91:1) hence, ‘abode’ or ‘home’. On [וסח]רת (Baneth) cf. D. 3:10-11.
- 176 This line goes with Line 175, as the side-stroke indicates. והוקרת follows Nöldeke; Baneth takes it as ‘hardened [your heart]’ and רחמיך as ‘piety’.
- 177 רתא is perhaps ‘pity’ (cf. Samaritan Aramaic ארתי) or ‘admonish’, as Syriac (Aphel).
- 178 For . . . ס, some propose [ס]פק (‘is enough’).
- 179 In Lines 179-183, no word is certain.
- 180 Here, Cowley’s transcription has only two letters at the beginning of the line (בא).
- 181 Cowley has no transcription for this line.
- 182 For Lines 181-183, Cowley has a single line of 6 widely-spaced dots.
- 183 Cowley has no transcription for this line.
- 184 The meaning of this line is obscure but (apparently) related to Line 186.
- 185 Note that Cowley has no translation for this very poorly-preserved line.

186	186	ת נחשא נפלת ססא]	186	Into a house (?) of bronze the moth fell . . .
187	187	נפשי לא תדע ארחה עלכן]	187	My soul does not know its path, therefore . . .
188	188	כפן יהחלה מררותא [ו]צהוה]	188	Hunger sweetens that which is bitter <i>and</i> thirst . . .
189	189	ישתבע כעס מן לחם ותתרוה [נפש עניה מן חמר	189	Let him who is vexed be satisfied with bread, and <i>the soul of the poor</i> be sated with wine.
190	190	אנשא . . . חלא . . . א	190	Men . . . . .

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<sup>186</sup> For ת . ב . , Sachau's בבית is improbable; it is more likely דברת; Nöldeke translates, 'into a house of bronze', an unlikely expression.

<sup>187</sup> נפשי is most likely from the traces remaining. תדע (or חרע) may be 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine. We should read ארחה rather than חא (as Ungnad).

<sup>188</sup> Cf. Pr 27:7.

<sup>189</sup> Cf. Pr 31:6-7.

<sup>190</sup> Note that Cowley offers a translation for only the 1<sup>st</sup> word of this line.

### Column XIII (Sachau, plate 49)

<p>חד דרך קשתה והרכב [חט]ה ולא] <span style="color: blue;">a 191</span> 191</p> <p>הן יפקד לך מראד מין למנטר] <span style="color: blue;">a 192</span> 192</p> <p>למשבק זהב בידך + אלת]ב <span style="color: blue;">b</span> מ ? פ ? <span style="color: blue;">a 193</span> 193</p> <p>א ולא יפשר <span style="color: blue;">a 194</span> 194</p> <p>קרב עלי ואל יאמר לך ר[חי]ק מני <span style="color: blue;">b</span></p> <p>שה ולא יע[. .] לה <span style="color: blue;">b 195</span> 195</p> <p>[עבד זי ברג]לה ארח ו[הו גנ]ב לא <span style="color: blue;">b 196</span> 196</p> <p>י[ת]קנה <span style="color: blue;">b</span></p> <p>ביתה עמה [נפק]ת [א]שה <span style="color: blue;">b</span> + ד . . . <span style="color: blue;">a 197</span> 197</p> <p>מ[ן אנ]פיז <span style="color: blue;">b</span></p> <p>[זי אלהא +] . . . . למ[ראה] . . קש בדינה <span style="color: blue;">b 198</span> 198</p> <p>כזי עבר לחי[תא] ל[מ]ראה <span style="color: blue;">b</span></p>	<p>One bent his bow and shot his arrow, and it did not . . . .</p> <p>If your lord entrust to you water to keep . . .</p> <p>to leave gold in your hand. Do not . . .</p> <p>come near to me, and let him not say, “Be far from me.”</p> <p>.....</p> <p>..... a slave on whose foot is a fetter and who is a thief should not be bought.</p> <p>..... his house with him, a fire went forth from before</p> <p>God. He who accuses his lord shall be entrapped in his lawsuit, as if he uttered a curse on his lord.</p>
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- 191** This plate consists of 4 fragments (indicated by the Latin letters in blue); no line is complete. Line 191. For דרך, in Lines 126–8, דרג appears to be used. There is a stroke after this line (cf. above, Lines 173–188). As this always starts from the first letter, there was nothing before חד.
- 192** Others complete, ‘and, if you keep it, your master may leave...’, and so Nöldeke. Perhaps rather, ‘keep it with care, so that afterwards he may be willing to leave’ (cf. Line 103).
- 193** In למשבק, the מ is badly formed but can be nothing else. According to Sachau’s arrangement, the end of this line is the beginning of the second fragment.
- 194** Cf. Syriac #31, #32, and Pr 2:57.
- 195** This text of this line is too unintelligible to offer a reasonable translation.
- 196** On ארח cf. Line 80.
- 197** The small fragments, ‘c’ and ‘d’ may belong here (see the arrangement in the [source text](#)). ביתה is fairly certain.
- 198** For קש . ., Baneth restores [מש קדם ש]מ. If the small fragments belong here, the line might be ‘he who brings an accusation against his master shall be entrapped (some part of יקש, a Hebraism) in his lawsuit...’.

. אבא הויה + צנפריא .	b 199	199	his lord	The birds . . .
. . . . . און על .				
. . . . . איש לחה זי יהנשג נ . . . . .	b 200	200	an evil man who overtakes . . .	
חזק [י]שלחנ[ד] למה תשתנה	b 201	201	you when he sends <i>you</i> , why should you be changed in his	
באנפוהי			sight?	
זי . . . . . דמו . . . . . אנפוהי עלדבר זי	b 202	202	his sight because	
מכרא . . . . . [ק]דמיד בחין קדם	b 203	203	before <i>thee</i> tested before	
חזק [י]שלחנ[ד] למה תשתנה	b 204	204	one to the wild ass, "Let me ride on you and I will feed	
אסבלנד			you."	
לך יהו[י] סבוליד וכסתד ואנה רכביד לא	b 205	205	keep for yourself your feeding and your saddle, but I will not	
אחזה			see your riding.	
בין בש[ר] ובין שאני בזק אל ינעל ברגלי	b 206	206	between flesh and shoe let him not put a pebble into my foot.	
הן + אליאמר עתירא בעתרי הדיר אנה	b 207	207	Do not let the rich man say, "In my riches I am glorious."	

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199 For **אבא הויה**, Baneth suggests **דאבא** and compares with Syriac #36.

200 In his transcription, Cowley adds, at the end of this line, two isolated letters (ה and ו) from fragment 'c'.

201 Seidel begins with לך ('go') but the first letter seems to have a tail, therefore not ל. The line must have been something like Line 192.

202 The text for lines 202–207 is contained entirely on fragment 'b'.

203 If **מכרא** = **מכר**, it ought to be **מנכר(א)** (Ungnad). **בחין** is probably from **בחון** ('test').

204 The restorations in this line are by Seidel and Baneth. The proposals for the beginning are not convincing. **לערדה** is more probable than **לערדה** (as in Line 126).

205 **לך יהו[י]** follows Seidel. The root, **סבל**, here and in Line 204, probably means 'support' (with food &c.); if so, **כסתד** is probably not 'fodder' (Ungnad, **כְּסָתָא**) but 'cushion' (i.e., saddle), Hebrew **כִּסֵּת**. **אחזה** is clear; Baneth read 'I will not accept your saddle' but the phrase is so strange that there must be some mistake.

206 **שאני** follows Perles, who compares Babylonian *šēnu* ('shoe'), and so Nöldeke; if so, **בין בש[ר]** is no doubt right.

207 On the use of + as the 'end-of- proverb' marker, see the introductory notes.

## Column XIV (Sachau, plate 50)

<p>a 208 אלתה]חוי לערבי ימא ולצידני ב[רא]</p> <p>b כי עבידתהם פרישה</p> <p>a 209 . . . חמרא הו זי יטעמנהי ומ[.]</p> <p>b הן י[נ]טרנהי</p> <p>a 210 . . . ד אמיר מית שאני וענת ו[לא]</p> <p>b י[דע] זי [י]אתה מן אחרוהי</p> <p>a 211 . . . ינסח ודם מן גלדי + רג . .</p> <p>b בכותא הן . ג . מן . . בלך</p> <p>a 212 . . . כן הי . ל . . . להן ז . . .</p> <p>b עויר עינין . . .</p> <p>a 214 . . . יאתה . . . לה . . .</p> <p>a 215 . . . עינין . . . מיא . . . d</p> <p>a 216 . . . עויל וחרש אדנין ל . . .</p> <p>a 217 . . . מן בטן ידע ברחרן ולא מ[ן]</p>	<p>208</p> <p>209</p> <p>210</p> <p>211</p> <p>212</p> <p>213</p> <p>214</p> <p>215</p> <p>216</p> <p>217</p>	<p><i>Do not show to an Arab the sea or to a Sidonian the desert; for, their work is different (?).</i></p> <p>He who treads out the wine is he who should taste it, and he who . . . he should guard it.</p> <p>..... and <i>I know not</i> what <i>will</i> come after it.</p> <p>... he shall tear out, and blood from my skin . . . . .</p> <p>.....</p> <p>..... blind in the eyes . . .</p> <p>..... he shall come . . .</p> <p>..... eyes . . .</p> <p>... a child and a deaf man, ears . . .</p> <p>... from the belly one (?) knows a noble person, and not from . . .</p>
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- 208 This plate consists of one large and 7 small fragments; little can be read on the facsimile. The arrangement adopted here is uncertain, as the text is too broken to give a sense. This line seems to mean, "Do not set a man to a task for which he is unsuited." פרישה is not very probable.
- 209 חמרא (as Baneth) is fairly certain; we should perhaps supply before it, 'he who makes'. For . . . ומ, Baneth has ומין but a participle is wanted.
- 210 The 1<sup>st</sup> half of the line is very uncertain and the sense is obscure.
- 211 For ודם (or ורם), Sachau has נדם, which Seidel takes as 'piece'.
- 212 The text of this line is very fragmentary and does not lend itself to translation.
- 213 The only text for this line is on fragment 'b'.
- 214 Only one word can really be translated for this line.
- 215 The text from the small fragment, 'd', is not translated.
- 216 עויל probably means 'a child' and חרש could be 'dumb person' or 'infant'. Cowley does not translate fragment 'c' (... בנן .. נ . . .).
- 217 If ברחרן is right, it may = Hebrew חורים, בר, as Sachau takes it. For this line, the only readable text on fragment 'c' is אן.

אל יקנה איש לא ב[ע]ולה ...	a 218	218	... do not let a man buy either a married woman ...
מתקנה ג[רה] כגרה ואנת[ה] כב <sup>f</sup> ...	a 219	219	... let a maid be bought as a maid, and a wife ...
נה...ית.....יא <sup>g</sup> כלא <sup>f</sup> ..ך עלו... <sup>h</sup>	a 220	220	.....
מה...מה..מן.....גנב <sup>g</sup> ..ה <sup>f</sup> ...	a 221	221	..... thief ...
זנה בית רעה נשק באשה ...	a 222	222	... this, the house of his neighbour caught (?) fire ...
רחמן .. מן בעל עד .....	a 223	223	... merciful ... owner ...

218 Cf. perhaps Line 84, but the reading is very uncertain. For ב[ע]ולה, Seidel has בזילה ('with his own money'). For this line, there is little text on fragments 'c' (... א ונ ...) and 'e' (לטב).

219 גרה is perhaps as restored in Mesha Line 16 ('maid'). At the end of the line (fragment 'f'), there is possibly [כב]תולה; fragment 'g' has no discernible text for this line and fragment 'h' has just a single letter (ש).

220 The text for this line does not lend itself to translation.

221 Cowley found only one translatable word in the text of this line.

222 Epstein reads נשקה אשה for the last 2 words.

223 For the text of this verse, James H. Charlesworth ("The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha," Volume 2, Yale University Press, 1985) has, "... [from] my friend[s] and from the lord of ..." (in a footnote).