Šimaʕ-ʔila-ʕanê(m) 'Listen, o god, to the humble!'*

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The name of the Numḫean king of Kurda, written *Si-ma-aḫ-i-la-a/ḫa-ni-e-(im)* etc. in the Old Babylonian Mari archives, has resisted a convincing interpretation until now. After an analysis of the numerous various spellings, the writer suggests an Amorite name, exceptionally consisting of three elements, *Šimaʕ-ʔila-ʕanê(m)* "Listen, o god, to the humble!"

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The Numḫean king of Kurda *Šimaʕ-ʔila-ʕanê(m)* is well known from the Old Babylonian Mari texts.[1] The following spellings are attested for his obviously Amorite name.

1) *Si-ma-aḫ-i-la-ḫa-ni*[*-e*] (ARM 27, 15:3).

2) *Si-ma-aḫ-i-la-a-ni-e* (FM 2, p. 210, No. 117:7, 10, 16, 21, 32, 40, 44, 52, 54; p. 216, No. 118:5, 7′, 20′; FM 3, p. 237, No. 69:2; ARM 26/2, 463:7; 465:12).

3) *Si-ma-i-la-ḫa-ni-e-im* (ARM 10, 5:4, 5). Wrongly booked in Gelb 1980, No. 5544 as *Si-ma-i-la*.

4) *Si-ma-aḫ-i-la-ni-e-im* (FM 2, p. 206, No. 116:48).

5) *Si-ma-aḫ-i-la-ni-e* (FM 3, p. 237, No. 71:2; p. 239, No. 77:2; p. 240, No. 80:2).

6) *Si-ma-aḫ-i-la-ni* (FM 3, p. 243, No. 89:2, No. 90:2).

7) *Si-ma-ḫi-i-la-a-ni-e* (FM 3, p. 251, No. 104:5).

8) *Si-ma-ḫi-la-ni* (FM 3, p. 242, No. 88:2; p. 243, No. 91:2, No. 92:2).

9) *Si-ma-ḫi-la-ni-e* (FM 3, p. 250, No. 98:2; p. 252, No. 105:2).

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[1] See Birot 1964:53–55; Birot 1972; ARM 16/1, 180; Eidem 1994; Lafont 1994; Duponchel 1997:212–215; ARM 28, 162; Durand 2000:433; Kärger 2013 chapter 5.4.3.3, 5.4.6.

10) *Si-ma-aḫ-la-a-ni-e* (*RA* 66, 115:21, 117:11).

11) *Si-ma-aḫ-la-a-ni* (*RA* 66, 133:4).

12) *Si-ma-aḫ-la-ni-e* (ARM 13, 29:15, 20; *RA* 66, 115:5, 7; 117:28; 118:7, 18).

13) *Si-im-ḫi-la-a-ni-e* (FM 3, p. 248, No. 95:20′). The same spelling is attested in line 17′ of the text, read by Duponchel in his edition (p. 245) *Si-im-⌈aḫ⌉-*; cf. the photo on p. 246.

14) *Si!?-im!?-ḫi-(i?-)la-ni-e* (FM 3, p. 241, No. 84:2). The name was read by Birot 1964:54, n. 1 and Dossin 1972:112 as *Su-uḫ-ḫi-la-né-e*. Gelb 1980 No. 5660 quotes it as *Su-mu?-ḫi-la-ni-e* (with emendation of *uḫ* to *mu?*). ARM (16/1, 180) offers a reading *Su-uḫ-ḫi-i-la-ni-e* with an extra *i*. In his edition, Duponchel (1997:241) has *Sú-uḫ-ḫi-la-né-e*, i. e., *sú* instead of *su* and without an extra *i*, but quotes an emendation to *Sú-<ma->aḫ-ḫi-la-ni-e* proposed by J.-M. Durand. On the other hand, Durand (2000:433) corrects the name to *Si!-im!-ḫi-i-la-né-e*.

15) *Su?-ma-aḫ-i-la-a?-ni-e* (*RA* 66, 120:7). Although the copy indeed shows *Su-*, the name is probably to be emended to *Si!-ma-aḫ-*. If correct, the spelling is the same as No. 2.

16) *Su-mu-ḫa-la-ni-e* (*Syria* 41:54, n. 1 = Dossin 1972:112 = *RA* 66:133 below (without reference) = Gelb 1980:638, No. 5656 = ARM 16/1, 180, No. 4). The text was not edited by Duponchel (1997). If the reading is correct, the scribe seems to have made several mistakes: he changed *la* and *ḫa* and perhaps interpreted the first part of the name as *śumu* 'name,' a well-attested name element in the Amorite onomasticon.

17) *Si-ma-aḫ-i-la-a-ni* (*RA* 66, 112 (without reference) = Gelb 1980, No. 5536). Not quoted elsewhere.

18) Fragmentary spellings:
    Si-ma-aḫ-i-l[a-…] (FM 3, p. 236, No. 68:2);
    Si-ma-[…] (ARM 28, 162:3).

Leaving aside the problematic, dubious and fragmentary spellings of Nos. 14–18, we can draw the following conclusions.

A) In the spellings 1–12 the vowel of the second syllable appears as /a/. In spelling 13 the vowel is missing. Since the same spelling shows a different syllable structure, the absence of the vowel can be explained as the relatively frequent but facultative elision of the vowel when two short open syllables follow one another (Streck 2000:161–163, §§ 2.21–24): */ŚimaḪi-/ > /ŚimḪi-/. In the spellings 7–9 the vowel is preserved /ŚimaḪi-/.

B) In the spellings 1–2 and 4–13 the third consonant appears as Ḫ but in spelling 3 as Ø. The interchange of Ḫ- and Ø-spellings excludes the phoneme /ḫ/ and speaks for /ḥ/, /ʿ/ or /ġ/, less likely for /ʾ/, /h/ (Streck 2000:231–253).

C) In the spellings 1–6 the third syllable appears as *i* which most probably stands for /ʾi/ (although /hi/, /ḥi/, /ʿi/ and /ġi/ are not totally excluded). The spelling *ḫi* in 8, 9 and 13 can be explained as elision of post-consonantal /ʾ/.[2] The spelling *ḫi-i* in 7 is mixed morphographemic-phonetic; such spellings often occur at the border between two name elements.[3] In the spellings 10–12 the syllable is missing, apparently because of a shortening of the unusual long name.

D) Spellings 1 and 3 show *ḫa* as fifth or sixth sign of the name. Spellings 2, 7, 10, 11 and 13 have an extra *a* instead. In view of the *ḫa*-spelling the sequence *la-a* cannot simply render a long /ā/. Rather it must stand either for a separate syllable, or for a contracted vowel /â/ resulting from elision of an intervocalic consonant. The spellings 4–6, 8, 9 and 12 have neither *a* nor *ḫa*; here the intervocalic consonant was clearly elided, followed by vowel contraction. *ḫa* may principally stand for /ḫa/, /ʾa/, /ha/, /ʿa/, /ḥa/ or /ġa/ (Streck 2000:231–253); however, /ḫ/ is, of course, never elided between vowels, and with repect to /ḥ/ and /ġ/, I don't know of any examples in Amorite names. Elision of intervocalic /h/ is only known from Alalaḫ (ibid. 243, § 2.167). Thus we are left with /ʾ/, whose elision in intervocalic position is well attested (ibid. 236–238, §§ 2.150–151), or with /ʿ/; a frequent example of /ʿ/ between two /a/-vowels is the Amorite name element *ba-al* 'lord,' which probably stands for */baʿal/ > /bâl/.

E) In the spellings [1], 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 13 the last syllable occurs as *ni-e*, in the spellings 3 and 4 as *ni-e-im* and in the spellings 6, 8 and 11 as *ni*. The mimation excludes that we are dealing with an oblique plural[4] or a suffix of the first person singular /-ī/. The spellings with *e* either denote a genitive singular of a root III-infirmae[5] or mark the assimilation */-(i)ya/ > /-ê/ or rather /(i)yi/ that occurs in Amorite names and in the Akkadian of

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[2] Also designated as "sandhi"-spelling; Streck 2000:238f., § 2.153.
[3] Streck 2000:239, §§ 2.20, 2.155.
[4] See Streck 2000:307f., § 3.75 for the alleged ending */-īm/.
[5] See Streck 2000:295–298 for the genitives *ra-me-e(-em)* and *ka-zi-e(-im)*.

Mari (Finet 1956:8–10).[6] The spellings with simple *ni* are defective for either genitive /-nê/ or accusative */niya/ > */niyi/ > /-nê/ or /-nî/.[7]

Gelb (1980:32, 356, 529) analyzed the name as *Śimaʕ*, imperative of 'to hear,' particle (preposition? precative/affirmative?) *la* and pronominal suffix *nie* (1. person plural? only occurring in this name). Besides the unclear suffix *nie*, this analysis neither explains *ḫa* (spellings 1, 3) nor *a* (spellings 2, 7, 10, 11, 13) nor *i/ḫi* (spellings 1–9, 13) nor *im* (spellings 3, 4) and can be excluded but for the first element *śimaʕ*.

Dossin (1972:112), followed by Durand (1997:417), translated the name as 'Joie des dieux' and Durand (2000:433) as 'Joie de mes dieux.' According to Dossin and Durand, the first element of the name corresponds to Hebrew ŚMḤ. However, Hebrew Ḥ in this root derives from Proto-Semitic /ḫ/,[8] not /ḥ/, and the spellings exclude the phoneme /ḫ/ (see B, above). Furthermore, a construct state *śimaḫ is hardly to be expected from a QiTL noun, given that the construct state of the QaTL noun *ʕabdu* 'slave' is never *ʕabad but always *ʕabdu*. This interpretation also leaves *ḫa* (1, 3) and the mimation (3, 4) unexplained. Furthermore, the frequent plene spelling *la-a* for long /ā/ in the suffix /ān/ would be suspicious.[9] The spelling *ni-e* is neither expected for the oblique plural (*ilānē; thus Durand himself in 2000:433) nor for the possessive suffix of the 1. person singular which in Mari Akkadian never becomes *ê* (see Finet 1956: 25f.). Structurally, a name 'Joy of the gods' would be without parallel in the regens (see Streck 1998:129, § 4.3 for genitive names), and '(my) gods' as nomen rectum is not attested elsewhere. For all these reasons, Dossins and Durands interpretation can also be safely excluded.

So what does the name of the king of Kurda mean? Although almost all Amorite names show only one or two elements (Golinets 2010b:606–609), I suggest that the name exceptionally consists of three elements. Due to elliptic formulation (Rechenmacher 2012:48), names with three elements are generally rare in the Northwest Semitic onomastica; e. g., the Amorite name *Yaśmaʕ-hadda* 'Hadda has heard' (ARM 16/1, 231)

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[6] This phonetic development is normally described as */iya/ > /ê/, see GAG § 16k. For the probably more exact phonetic interpretation */iya/ > /iyi/ see Streck 2000:187f., § 2.79.

[7] See Streck 2000:188, § 2.80 and Finet 1956:9 for this development.

[8] See, e. g., HALAT 1243; Gelb 1980:32; Streck 2000:324, § 5.13.

[9] Finet 1956:65f. doesn't mention a single plene spelling for the -ān-plural in Mari.

leaves out the object, either the prayer or the supplicant. However, in the Akkadian onomasticon names with three elements are sometimes attested, especially in later periods, e. g., *Šamaš-šemē-ikribašu* 'DN, hear his prayer!' (YOS 13, 531:23).[10]

The first element of the name is with Gelb 1980 certainly the imperative of the root ŚMʕ 'to hear,' *Śimaʕ*. The second element can hardly be anything else than the very frequent Amorite name element *ʔila* 'god.' So far this analysis is proved by the occurrence of the two-elements-name *Si-ma-aḫ-ni-i-la* (ARM 23, 623:46) and *Ši-ma-aḫ-ni*-DINGIR (ARM 7, 49) envelope 5′ meaning 'Hear, o god!'[11]

The third element of the name is either a genitive of a root III-infirmae, ending in /-ê(m)/ and dependent on *ʔila*, or an accusative of a root III-infirmae, ending in */-iya(m)/ > /-ê(m)/ or /-iyi(m)/ and dependent on *Śimaʕ* (see E, above).

An interpretation 'Hear, o god of X!' suggests that X denotes a specification of *ʔila*. We can think of a geographical name, designating a city or region related to the god as, e. g., Ištar-of-Akkade etc. The only geographical name known which somehow resembles the third element of the name is *Ḫanû(m)*.[12] A closer look, however, reveals that an interpretation of the name as 'Hear, o god of the Ḫanûm!' is impossible for four reasons.

1) The first consonant of *Ḫanû(m)* is always written Ḫ and never appears as Ø as in our name.

2) The genitive singular has always /î/ and never /ê/: *Ḫa-ni-i-im* (ARM 16//1, 14).

3) We expect a plural and not a singular (note the mimation, see E, above).

4) A deity 'God-of-the-Ḫanû(m)' is nowhere attested.

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[10] See CAD Š₂ 285 s. v. *šemû* 3b 3′, Old Babylonian.

[11] *Pace* Streck 2000:223f., § 2.126 with n. 2, and Golinets 2010b:608, -*ni*- in both names is neither the pronominal suffix accusative 1. singular 'me' nor to be read *ì* but is rather the affirmative particle /na/, for which see Streck 2000:304f., § 3.70, and Golinets 2010a:446–448. This particle also occurs with the imperative *šūb*, see Golinets 2010a:448 for *Šu-ub-na*-DINGIR (ARM 16/1, 198) and *Šu-ub-ni*-DINGIR (ARM 21, 395 ix 27; 22, 262 i 8), 'Turn, o god!' Note that in the latter name /na/ also becomes /ni/ before /ʔi/.

[12] See Durand (2000:433), commenting on the spelling *Si-ma-i-la-ḫa-ni-e-im*: 'Sima-ila, le Bédouin,' a translation which is, however, already syntactically difficult since we would expect a nominative *ḫanûm* instead of the genitive.

Another possibility for an interpretation of the name as 'Hear, o god of X!' is provided by the text FM 8, 16:8 where a god ᵈ*Il-ḫa-an-ni* is attested once. Probably the same god occurs in the geographical name É-*ḫa-a*[*b*]-*du*-DIN[GIR-*ḫ*]*a-ni*, -DINGIR-*ḫ*[*a-ni*] (FM 2, 37:8, 24). Durand (2005: 70)[13] derives the element *ḫa-*[*an*]*-ni* from the root ḤNN 'to be graceful' and translates 'Dios-es-mi-gracia' or 'Dios-de-gracia' (Durand 1995: 227).[14] However, this god is hardly found in the name of the king of Kurda: the /n/ is never spelled doubled, the last vowel is certainly long and the frequent spelling *la-a* or *la* for (elided) /ḫ/ is suspicious.[15]

Thus we are left with the interpretation of the name as 'Hear, o god, the X.' The word order imperative–vocative–object is an extension of the word order imperative–vocative of names with only two elements,[16] e. g., *Kūn-ʔila* (ARM 16/1, 140, cf. Streck 2000:273, § 3.20) 'Be firm, o god!', *Šūb-ʔila* (ARM 16/1, 198) 'Turn, o god!'

What can we expect as object of hearing in a personal name? The answer to this question can only be given by the Akkadian onomasticon in which, as was mentioned above, contrary to the elliptic names of North-West Semitic onomastica, objects and other verbal adjuncts are sometimes explicitly mentioned. Akkadian personal names with *šemû*, *maḫāru* or *leqû* as predicate have either different words for "prayer" as object[17] or the pious supplicant as in *Šimē-nāda* 'Listen to the pious!'[18]

The orthography favors /ʔ/ or /ʕ/ as first consonant (see D, above), /n/ as second and /y/ or /w/ as third consonant (see E, above). The only root which fits both the orthography and the supposed meaning of the name is ʕNW/Y 'to be/remain poor, depressed, humbled,' attested in Ugaritic, Hebrew, Phoenician, Jewish Aramaic, Old South Arabian and Arabian.[19]

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[13] See already previously Durand 1995:227.

[14] If the derivation from ḤNN is correct the name probably means 'Graceful-God' rather than 'God-of-grace'; see Streck (2000:324, § 5.13) for *ḫinn* 'grace' and ibid. (322, § 5.9) for *ḫann* 'graceful.' In all cases the name is syntactically genitive (in FM 8, 16:8 *bāb Ilḫanni* 'gate of I.'), which might explain the /-i/ at the end.

[15] See Streck 2000:246, § 2.170: in Mari /ḫ/ is normally spelt Ḫ; see also E, above: no examples for the elision of intervocalic /ḫ/ are known.

[16] See Golinets 2010a:106–108, 259f., 281, 297.

[17] Stamm 1939:167, AHw. 1212 s. v. *šemû* G 8a and CAD Š₂ 285 s. v. *šemû* 3b 3′.

[18] CAD Š₂ 285 s. v. *šemû* 3b 3′.

[19] DLU 172; HALAT 809 s. v. ʕ*ānāw*, 810 s. v. ʕ*ānî*. Neither the root ʕNY 'to answer' (DLU 172f.) nor the root ʔNY 'to sigh, groan' (DLU 85) fit the supposed meaning of the name.

In the Bible, both *ʕānāw* 'humble' and *ʕānî* 'poor'[20] occur as object of god's hearing:[21] see for *ʕānāw* Psalm 10:17, for *ʕānî* Psalm 34:7 and Job 34:28 (see also *ʕᵒnî* in Gen 16:11).

Thus I suggest an interpretation of the name as *Śimaʕ-ʔila-ʕanê(m)* or *Śimaʕ-ʔilânê(m)* < **ʕanīya(m)* 'Listen, o god, to the humble!'

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[20] The relation between *ʕānāw* and *ʕānî* was much discussed in Old Testament studies: see, e. g., Gerstenberger 1989:259–265. HALAT 809 s. v. *ʕānāw* draws the conclusion: "kommt im Sinn *ʕānî* nahe und ist nicht grundsätzlich von diesem unterschieden."

[21] References courtesy N. Wasserman.

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