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BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

The Hebrew expression בָּאַמָּה after numerals

THE word אַמָּה 'cubit', when modified by a cardinal numeral, is treated in two ways in the Old Testament passages in which it occurs. It may follow the regular construction of a noun modified by a numeral, standing in singular or plural, or before or after the numeral like any other noun[1], e. g.,

אַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת 'four cubits' (Ezek. 43 14).

חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה 'fifty cubits' (Ezek. 40 21).

חֲמִשִּׁים אַמּוֹת 'fifty cubits' (Ezek. 42 2).

אַמּוֹת עֶשְׂרִים 'twenty cubits' (II Chr. 3 3).

Or the definite singular governed by the preposition בְּ may be used after the modifying numeral, e. g.,

אַרְבַּע בָּאַמָּה 'four cubits' (Exod. 26 2).

חֲמִשִּׁים בָּאַמָּה 'fifty cubits' (Exod. 38 12).

A similar construction with ba occurs in Ethiopic, though here it is not confined to the word for cubit, e. g. ba-'ĕmat (cubit), ba-saql (shekel), &c. (cf. Dillmann-Bezold, § 191, 1). Here this is apparently a circumlocution for an accusative of specification, perhaps due to a mixture of such an accusative after higher numerals (as in Arabic) with a prepositional phrase with בְּ used as an equivalent of a partitive genitive.[2] This theory, however, does not explain the article or the absence of such a construction with other nouns of measure in Hebrew.

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[1] Cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Heb. Gram.*[28] p. 453 ff. also my article on *Comparative Semitic Syntax, JAOS.*, vol. xxxii, p. 204 ff.

[2] Cf. König, *Syntax der Heb. Sprache*, Leipzig 1897, §§ 312 c, Anm.; 333 b; 279.

The Hebrew construction has apparently originated in an ellipsis, e. g., אַרְבַּע בָּאַמָּה‎, חֲמִשִּׁים בָּאַמָּה‎ stand in all probability for חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה בָּאַמָּה‎, אַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת בָּאַמָּה‎, meaning 'four cubits, fifty cubits, (measured) according to *the* cubit',—'*the* cubit' being the ordinary cubit אַמַּת אִישׁ‎.

That the preposition בְּ‎ may have the force here ascribed to it is shown by the expressions

בְּאַמַּת אִישׁ‎ '[measured] according to the ordinary cubit [a man's arm or cubit]' (Deut. 3 11).

בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ‎ '[counted] according to the sacred shekel' (Exod. 30 13 38 24; Num. 3 47 18 16).

[3] בָּאַמּוֹת‎ '[measured] in cubits' (Ezek. 43 13).

Nouns of measure and weight are quite frequently omitted, as assumed in the case of אַמָּה‎, אַמּוֹת‎ above, especially when followed by a noun of material or sort, e. g.,

עֲשָׂרָה שְׁקָלִים זָהָב — עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב‎ 'ten shekels of gold' (Gen. 24 22).

אֶלֶף שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף — אֶלֶף כָּסֶף‎ 'a thousand shekels of silver' (Gen. 20 16).

עֲשָׂרָה כִּכְּרִים לֶחֶם — עֲשָׂרָה לֶחֶם‎ 'ten loaves of bread' (I Sam. 17 17).

אַרְבָּעִים אַמָּה אֹרֶךְ — אַרְבָּעִים אֹרֶךְ‎ 'forty cubits in length' (Ezek. 46 22 *bis*; cf. 48 8 ff.).

While the exact form of expression which is assumed to be the source of such phrases as אַרְבַּע בָּאַמָּה‎ occurs nowhere in the Old Testament, in two passages we have closely analogous constructions, viz.,

תֵּשַׁע אַמּוֹת אָרְכָּהּ וְאַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת רָחְבָּהּ בְּאַמַּת אִישׁ‎ 'its length nine cubits and its breadth four cubits according to a man's arm or cubit' (Deut. 3 11).

וּבְיַד הָאִישׁ קְנֵה הַמִּדָּה שֵׁשׁ אַמּוֹת בָּאַמָּה וָטֹפַח‎ 'and in the man's hand a measuring rod, six cubits [long, measured] according to *the* cubit' + a palm [i. e. the sacred cubit, which — 1 ordinary cubit + 1 palm]' (Ezek. 40 5).

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[3] The use of the article with the plural after בְּ‎ is probably due to some analogy with the singular after בְּ‎, where the article is regularly used.

In the first example we have instead of בָּאַמָּה the phrase בָּאַמַּת אִישׁ, which is its equivalent, and in the second בָּאַמָּה וָטֹפַח, in which הָאַמָּה וָטֹפַח — 'the sacred cubit' stands in the same construction as הָאַמָּה 'the cubit'.

In the case of the noun of weight שֶׁקֶל, we have, on the other hand, one passage in which it is omitted before a designation of the kind of שֶׁקֶל, similar to the phrase בָּאַמָּה, viz.,

עֲשָׂרָה עֲשָׂרָה הַכַּף בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ 'each spoon [weighing] ten [shekels counting] according to the sacred shekel' (Num. 7 86).

Here the full expression would be

עֲשָׂרָה עֲשָׂרָה שְׁקָלִים" בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ.

The phrase בָּאַמָּה, therefore, may be regarded as an abbreviation for אַמּוֹת בָּאַמָּה or אַמָּה בָּאַמָּה after a numeral. Probably the ellipsis began in the later form, the repetition of the singular appearing especially superfluous.

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Hosea's Birthplace

According to Christian tradition, Hosea was born at *Belemoth* or *Belemon* (see Simson's *Hosea*, 1851, p. 2; Nowack's *Hosea*, 1880, p. ix; *cf.* EB 2126, 9; EB[11] 13, 784, n. 1).[1] Pseudepiphanius (RE[3] 5, 421, 16) says of Hosea: οὗτος ἦν ἐκ Βελεμωθ τῆς φυλῆς Ισσαχαρ; *cf.* Nestle, *Marginalien und Materialien* (Tübingen, 1893) II, p. 22, below. This place has never been identified, but it seems to be a corruption of *Ibleam* which appears in 1 Chr. 6 55 as בלעם and in Judith 8 3 as Βελαμων or Βαλαμων (*cf. ibid.* 4 4: Βελμαιν or Αβελμαιν, Βαιλμαιν, and in 7 3: Βελβαιμ, Αβελβαιμ). 𝔖 has in 8 3 בית בעלמון (EB 527). Hosea is said to have been an Issacharite, and *Ibleam* belonged to the district of Issachar (RE[3] 17, 426, 7). Josh. 17 11 and Jud. 1 27 do not prove that *Ibleam* was a Manassite town. It was included in the Plain of Jezreel, and the Plain was regarded as Issacharite territory. In Jud. 1 27 𝔊[V] has Βαλακ,

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[1] For the abbreviations see above, p. 41.