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## Two Notes on the Kalamu Inscription

1. In the Hebrew inscription of King Kalamu, c. 850 B. C., found at Zenjirli in the far north of Syria, published by von Luschan in *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli*, iv (1911), and first interpreted by Littmann (*SB* of the Berlin Academy, 1911, 976 ff.), occurs a phrase the sense of which is clear, although it is somewhat variously interpreted. The royal inscriber relates how he effected peace between the two castes of his subjects, the MuŠKaBiM, apparently the "depressed" element, and the Ba'RiRiM, or "barbarians," apparently the ruling class of invaders. Of the former he says: "I took hold of the Muškabim by the hand, and **המת שת נכש כם יתם באם**." This Littmann translates, understanding **נכש** as **נמש**: "sie haben (mir) gegeben Vertrauen wie das Vertrauen einer Waise bei der Mutter." Lidzbarski, *Eph.* 3, 218 ff. (1912), renders: "so daß sie (mir) eine Gesinnung zeigten, wie die Gesinnung der Waise zu ihrer Mutter." Torrey, *JAOS* 35 (1917), 365 ff., pursues a different grammatical construction, regarding **שת** as first person (**שתי**): "I gave them affection (for me) like the affection of the fatherless for his mother." But the interpreters of the passage have not recognized a Biblical parallelism, namely in Ps. 131 3:

**אם לא שיתי דומתי נמש כנמל עלי אמו**

"I have *composed* and silenced my soul like a weanling by his mother." The verb **שית** in Kalamu is entirely identical in meaning, I take it, with **שהה**, in the Ps., = "set, settle, compose." Torrey speaks of Kalamu's "whimsically humorous, almost jocose" vein; and we may also remark the note of pathos, which recurs again in one of the tenderest passages of the Bible. The pathetic appears also in the Phoenician inscriptions, e. g. that of Eshmunazar, where the king speaks of himself as "cut off untimely," and laments himself, according to the favorite interpretation of an obscure passage, as "an orphan, son of a widow."

2. In the same text there occurs twice a perplexing vocable: l. 5, **הלפניהם**, and l. 10, **הלפנים**. In the first case, after reciting that four named predecessors accomplished nothing (**בל פעל**), the king boasts that "what I have done **על**

הַלְּפָנִים." Littmann and Lidzbarski translate identically, "did not do the predecessors." They agree in eliminating the second ה, emending from the case in l. 10, while Lidzbarski offers the dubious suggestion that it may be a phenomenon like the South Arabic vowel-letter ה. Both assume a unique *nisbe*-form from the preposition לְפָנֵי. The only comparable case might be פָּנִים < פָּנִימָה < פָּנִימִי. Torrey interprets more sensibly: "that which I accomplished no one (even) of their predecessors had done," i. e. the predecessors of the kings just named. He appears tacitly to agree with the earlier interpreters in regard to the alleged *nisbe*-formation, but then he allows a noun with the article and in construction with a suffix. (For such possible cases see Gesenius-Kautzsch, § 127, i, where probably all the cases are corrupt, with the exception of the articulated ppl. governing the acc., as in Arabic.)

But grammatical simplification can be had by regarding the article as a relative particle, "who were before them." This use of the article appears in Biblical Hebrew; but only with the perfect of verbs, (*ib.* § 138, i. k). But this use of the article with a nominal predicate appears in Arabic; see Wright, *Arab. Gr.*, I, § 343, Rem. c. And I must think that some such sense of the article underlies the well known Arabic syntax of the "qualificative" phrase (*ib.* 2, pp. 283f.); e. g. *ra'aitu Zaidan al-hasana wajhuhu*, "I saw Z. the one (who) handsome is his face" (in all such cases with the weakening of the relative sense of the article, so that the adjective is attracted in case, but not in gender, to the antecedent). That is, the demonstrative element *h* played, to a limited extent, the same part as the similar demonstratives, *z* in Hebrew, *d* in Aramaic, *š* in Akkadian and Old Hebrew.

I confess I do not know what to make exactly of the second occurrence of the vocable: "I sat upon the throne of my father לְפָנֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַלְּפָנִים," translated generally, "in presence of the preceding kings." Does this mean that he took position before the Manes of his predecessors? "Those who were before" should be spelt *defective*, הַלְּפָנִים. We expect "who were before me." Is there an error induced by the earlier case?

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