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A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

Some Gleanings from Pognon's ZKR Inscription

JAMES A. MONTGOMERY

PHILADELPHIA DIVINITY SCHOOL

THE learned French consul-general at Aleppo, M. Pognon, has again placed Semitic scholarship in his debt by a sumptuous volume containing 116 inscriptions, mostly Syriac, collected by him during a term of years in northern Mesopotamia and Syria.¹ And he has presented Biblical scholarship with the remains of a long Hebræo-Aramaic inscription, whose character and importance place it in the same category as the Senjirli inscriptions, while it offers more points of contact with the language, history, and religion of the Old Testament than do those monuments of more northerly Syria.² Pognon has provided his inscriptions with ample commentaries. I would offer some additional notes on the special inscription in question, that of "ZKR king of Hamath and La'ash."³

The remains of the monument in question consist of four blocks of stone, once constituting part of a monolith. The topmost stone exhibits in high relief the feet and a portion of the robe of a human figure; the upper portion of the stele has accordingly disappeared. From these remains of the figure, the discoverer calculates that the monument once possessed a height of at least 2.10 meters. The two inferior blocks present on their front a fragmentary inscription of 17 lines. The continuation of the inscription appears upon the

¹ *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la région de Mossoul*. Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1907(-8).

² Inscription No. 86, and Plates IX, X, XXXV, XXXVI.

³ Pognon will not tell where the inscription, found in 1908, was discovered, as he desires to reserve further explorations on the spot for himself. He gives the sole information that it was found about 200 kilometers from the Mediterranean.

narrow face of the left hand side of the four blocks, and we obtain here 28 partial lines of inscription; Pognon estimates that with the loss of the upper portion of the stele more than 30 lines are missing on the side. These are minimum figures for the extent of the inscriptions, as we do not know whether the monument was not of greater length than the present remains allow us to estimate.

The inscription on the face of the monument records how ZKR,⁴ king of Hamath and La'ash (?),⁵ was besieged when king of Hazrak (Hazarak, the Biblical Hadrak) by a coalition of probably seventeen kings, led by "Bar-hadad son of Hazael, king of Aram." The investment by the besiegers was so strong that the city appeared doomed, when ZKR took recourse to his god Beëlšamayn in supplication. The latter answered him "through seers and soothsayers," and promised him deliverance. The history of the deliverance is not given on the present remains, and it doubtless once appeared on the side of the missing upper fragments of the monument. What is left of this inscription on the side evidently described ZKR's extension and consolidation of his kingdom and his pious erection of numerous temples, and it concludes with the customary detailed imprecation against any who would lay sacrilegious hands upon the monument.

Fortunately, despite the present lacunæ at the ends of the lines, the inscription on the face is practically wholly recoverable. Despite Pognon's insight, some of these lacunæ call for further ingenuity in the restitution of the original, and I will consider first certain of these passages.

The first two lines are as follows :

----- [נ]צבא וי שם זכר מלך [ח]מת ולעש לאלור
 ----- נה זכר מלך חמת ולעש אש ענה אנה ו

At the end of the first line is a blank where at least four letters must once have stood, while the first letter of line 2 is almost obliterated. For the balance of this line Pognon

⁴ Pognon vocalizes "Zakir." "Zakar" is equally possible.

⁵ Dussaud, in a review in *Revue Archéologique*, 1908, i, p. 222 ff., identifies this place with the Luḫuti of the Assyrian records.

has not been at all successful in his interpretation. In his review of this new discovery, Dussaud would supply at the end of line 1 באשרא, and read the first word in line 2 ונה (the most likely reading for the initial character), i.e. "in this place." But this restoration leaves the following phrase, "ZKR king of Hamath and La'ash," hanging in the air. Lidzbarski suggests,⁶ as an alternative to Dussaud's reading, the possibility that the first word in line 2 is אנה, making the line read, "And I, Z. etc., was אנה ענה," the אנה being repeated after good Syriac idiom at the end of the sentence.⁷ But as we expect an expressed passage from the third person of line 1 to the first person of line 2, I would suggest that the lacuna contained a verb to the effect that the king wrote the following inscription: it is possible then that the reading was וכתבנה. The waw-consecutive idiom appears below in the inscription, and for this transitive use of כתב cf. lines 14, 15 of the second column. We are told then that ZKR both erected the stele and composed the inscription.

In line 2 the phrase אש ענה evidently means "humble man," as I observe Dussaud and Lidzbarski have already remarked. Dussaud regards ענה as the equivalent of the Biblical עני, "pieux," and draws some interesting conclusions in comparative religion from this appearance of a term so characteristic of the Old Testament piety. My own preference for the understanding of the word, adopted before seeing Dussaud's and Lidzbarski's reviews, is that it corresponds to the Hebrew עני, "poor," or "of humble origin."⁸ This statement agrees with the notable fact that ZKR gives no pedigree for himself, and was evidently a nobody. We may also recall how the Semitic kings were proud of boasting that their title to the throne came direct from Deity, and was not mediated through secular descent, even if they possessed royal birth.

⁶ In a review in *Literarisches Zentralblatt*, 1908, no. 18, col. 582 ff.

⁷ The blank at the end of line 1 may have contained an epithet of the preceding divine name אלוד. Oddly enough a blank appears again after the same word in col. ii, 24.

⁸ It is the Syriac passive participle of the Peal.

At the end of line 3 and the beginning of line 4 we have doubtless to read על דורך, as Dussaud and Lidzbarski have also observed. I would conclude that Hazrak was the beginning of ZKR's kingdom, and that the missing part of the stele gave an historical account of how he came to be king of the more important cities of Hamath and La'ash, from which he took his royal title.

In lines 4 f. we are told how Bar-hadad, king of Aram, formed a large coalition against ZKR. There follows the list of the kings; they are: Bar-hadad and his army; BRGŠ and his army; the king of Kûe, etc.; the king of 'Amk, etc.; the king of Gurgum, etc.; the king of Sam'al, etc.; the king of מלו (rightly identified by Dussaud with the Armenian city, Milid [Greek, Militene, the modern Malatia], known from the Assyrian annals), etc.⁹ A lacuna extending the length of a full line (in lines 7, 8) follows the naming of these seven kings. Then toward the end of line 8 appears the numeral שבעת, "seven"; the following word may be restored as מלכן, so that the end of line 8 would read, "and seven kings." I find by careful calculation, granting three letters to the name of each city, that we can fill up the lacuna in lines 7, 8, with the thrice-repeated formula, "and the king of X and his army." Adding together the seven specified kings, the seven unspecified kings in line 8, and the hypothetical three suggested for the lacuna, we obtain the sum seventeen, and this enables us to restore the numeral at the end of line 4 and at beginning of line 5, in the first element of which only the initial ש is preserved, to שבעת עשר; i.e. the coalition was composed of seventeen states. This disposes of Pognon's doubt, p. 160, whether we have to read in lines 4, 5, "thirteen" (a possible שלשא for תלתא), "sixteen," "seventeen," or "eighteen" (a possible שמניה for תמניה).

For the lacuna at end of line 2 and at beginning of line 3, I would suggest reading ויעדרני; Dussaud proposes והכבדני. A like lacuna in lines 11, 12 might be filled out with וידבר, if we may propose this Hebrew verb for our inscription;

⁹ See the maps presented by Dussaud; also the map in *KAT*².

Dussaud suggests ודודע. In the second column, line 21 f., I would suggest reading: [מן ישרה ב]ה ידה, "whoever will lay his hand upon it."

Below, in line 26, in the list of gods, the strange group of letters בעלע is to be interpreted by supplying ש in the following lacuna, which gives בעלעש; i. e. the Baal of La'ash; compare the Baal of Hermon, etc. The single writing of the final and the initial ל has its parallel in כרכב for בר רכב, in the Panammu Inscription, line 19, possibly in the Punic אדרמן, for אדר רמן,¹⁰ while the same phenomenon appears in a word which I now proceed to comment upon.¹¹

In the first column, line 5, appears the name of a king, ברנש, which Pognon quite naturally transliterates Bar-gaš, the second component being presumably some unknown deity, as in Bar-hadad. But another possibility is open: the word may stand, with the single writing of the ר (as in כרכב), for Bar-RGŠ. I would suggest that this second term represents an epithet of Hadad or some other storm-god, to be vocalized *raggāš*, "the Thunderer"; the name means then, "the Son of the Thunderer." Or, if it is preferred to understand the first element in this name and in Bar-hadad as the same as the deity known in the Assyrian as Bir,¹² we may obtain a verbal formation, Bir-regaš, "Bir has thundered"; cf. the Biblical רעמיה. The speculation on the name is of interest, because it brings us into touch with the obscure epithet *Boanipryes*, applied by Jesus, according to Mk. 3 17, to the brother apostles James and John, and interpreted by the evangelist as *υἱοὶ βροντῆς*, i. e. "sons of thunder," as from בני רנש. The term and its interpretation

¹⁰ Lidzbarski, *Handbuch d. Nordsem. Epigraphik*, p. 209 (where the author offers another but not so simple interpretation).

¹¹ It may be observed here that our inscription corroborates the Biblical spelling דודאל as against the rarer דודאל. The latter is a schoolmaster's spelling, and should not be given preference in the lexicons. In general the elder usage spelled compound names as one word; e. g. בידואל. For the manuscript spelling of this word, see Franz Delitzsch in his preface to Baer's text of Daniel, p. 7, and Berliner, *Targum Onkelos*, II, p. 144.

¹² For this and various forms, see *KAT*², p. 446; Jastrow, *Religion Baby-loniens u. Assyriens*, I, p. 146.

have produced much skepticism on the part of modern scholars, largely because there is no precedent for this particular expression.¹³ But our Aramaic word gives the desired precedent, and it may not have already disappeared from usage when Jesus, not without humor, applied it to his two apostles. There remains the doubt whether the root 𐤒𐤓 may be used of thunder. But there is no reason why the evangelist should have gratuitously offered an impossible interpretation¹⁴; such a meaning gives adequate interpretation of the name before us; and moreover, if the root refers to commotion rather than noise (though compare the connotations of 𐤒𐤓), it is to be borne in mind that the mythological ideas of the storm-god stress not so much the noise but the fury and onslaught of the heavenly war.

On the historical side, this inscription corroborates the Biblical name for the Damascene king Ben-hadad, which is but the Hebrew interpretation of Bar-hadad. The question now arises how are we to explain the Assyrian equivalent Bir-idri. But the Biblical tradition can no longer be rejected.¹⁵ Also, the Ben-hadad son of Hazael of 2 Ki. 13, and Am. 14, is now vouched for, and this disposes of skepticism concerning the Biblical datum, based upon the Assyrian reference to a Damascene king, Mari; thus Cheyne denies that Ben-hadad was the right name of Hazael's son.¹⁶ The reference to Hazrak-Hadrak must also cause a revision of critical views concerning the oracle in Zech. 91. The political importance of the north Syrian states disappeared with the Assyrian conquests in the latter part of the eighth

¹³ See the review of the theories in *Enc. Bib. s. v.*

¹⁴ It is another question whether Jesus himself applied the epithet; but I see no reason to doubt the gospel tradition. The peculiar Βαρρῆρες for Βερρῆρες, which is expected, is, I think, due to some popular Hellenistic etymologizing on the word; it was connected with the verb βόδω, "call." There is an interesting instance of a similar popular play upon a foreign word in the Prayer-Book Psalter, where "renegades" has become "runagates," — which is by no means a bad interpretation!

¹⁵ The name Bar-hadad appears more than once in the Syriac literature; see v. Baudissin, in Hauck's *Real-Encyclopädie*, vii, p. 284.

¹⁶ *Enc. Bib.* col. 532. May Mari be a Damascene title, "milord"? Cf. 𐤒𐤓.

century, and this oracle, with its association of Hadrak and Damascus, must reasonably be assigned to that period.

As for the exact date of the inscription, we have no sure data. Lidzbarski argues, from the references in the Assyrian eponym canon to campaigns against Damascus and Hatarik (our Hazrak) in the years 773 and 772, for that date approximately for the events recorded in the inscription. But the Biblical datum, 2 Ki. 13 28, makes Jehoash of Israel the deliverer of his nation from Damascus. As his son, Jeroboam II, died in 745, and is given a reign of forty-one years,¹⁷ Israel's success over Damascus is to be assigned to the first part of the century or earlier. Damascus submitted to Adad-nirari III in 803, and we may suppose that the upstart ZKR's rise was due to the support of Assyria in its movements and diplomacies preceding the suppression of Damascus. The approximate date of 800 is thus offered. Further, if we may trust the datum in 2 Ki. 14 28 that Jeroboam II "recovered Damascus and Hamath," we may argue that ultimately Israel was among the foes which brought about the fall of ZKR's dynasty.

The Assyrian reference to a campaign against Hatarik belongs to a later period, when the kingdom of ZKR or its successors had fallen away from the Assyrian alliance, this becoming more and more the political drift of the Syrian states as the century advanced. It may be observed here that Bar-hadad appears as "king of Aram," the common Biblical term for the Damascene state.¹⁸

With regard to the philology of the inscription Pognon is doubtless right in claiming that it is the earliest Aramaic inscription, for he holds, with Halévy, that the Hadad and Panammu Inscriptions from Senjirli cannot be regarded as characteristically Aramaic, although in the Building Inscription and the fragments from Senjirli the Aramaic type is fully expressed. We find here the emphatic state, in 𐤀 for the singular, in 𐤁 for the plural; the plural in 𐤂 (but

¹⁷ 2 Ki. 14 28.

¹⁸ This specific use of Aram suggests that the Aramaean state of Damascus formed an enclave among the Hebræo-Canaanitish states of Syria.

cf. the Moabite dialect); the pronouns **אנה**, **בן**, **דבני**, **אנה**, and **נה**; the relative particle **ו**. But other phenomena exhibit the language as composite, with a very large Hebrew or Canaanitish element. This appears most notably in the use of the imperfect with the waw-consecutive, which occurs in col. 1, line 11, *bis*, and line 13. On the other hand, perfects with waw are used indiscriminately in historical narration. It becomes a question then whether we may too easily criticise cases of failure to recognize the usual rules of syntax for the consecution of tenses occurring in elder books of the Old Testament (*e.g.* in 1 Sam. 1), as though they were scribal intrusions from a later age when that syntactical idiom was disappearing from the Hebrew.

On the lexical side, omitting roots and words common to the Hebrew and the Aramaic, we find that the vocabulary of the former predominates. As words characteristic of the Hebrew I would cite:

הלץ: in sense of Hebrew Piel, "deliver."

חרץ: "trench"; probably corroborating the much-doubted reading **חרץ** in Dan. 9 25; cf. Assyrian *ḫariṣu* and Talmudic **חרץ**.

מחנת: = **מחנה**, Is. 44 13.

מחנה: appearing in singular and plural with suffixes, **מחנתה**, **מחנתיהם**, hence feminine. In the Hebrew **מחנה** appears as feminine in Ps. 27 3, 1 Chron. 11 13, and the plural in **ות** occurs 13 times, along with masculine dual and plural forms. Also cf. **מחנת** in Panammu Inscription, and in the name of a Carthaginian suburb. We have probably to recognize two words in Hebrew, masculine and feminine, **מחנה** and **מחנה**, the latter to be read in the two Biblical texts cited.

מצר: = Hebrew **מצור**; the Syriac root has a different meaning.

נגע: in Hafel **דגע**, evidently in pregnant sense, "touch and remove."

נשא: Hebrew and Assyrian.

ענה: "humble" (at least in the Aramaic dialects the idea of lowliness appears only in reflexives).

רִים: the Hafel agrees in meaning with the Hebrew Hifil as against the Syriac Afel.

For כִּתַּב with double accusative, col. ii, lines 14, 15, cf. Is. 44 5. אִשׁ = אִשׁ, may not now, with the evidence of the Assouan papyri, be regarded as peculiarly Hebraic. The preposition אֶל, also occurring in the Hadad Inscription, is found in Aramaic elsewhere only in Papyrus Sachau. The accusative particle has the Phœnician spelling אִית.

Words belonging distinctly to the Aramaic are:

אֶרֶק: = Hebrew אֶרֶץ.

[א]ב: "midst" so Pognon suggests; but אֶבֶל might be read.

נִי: in נוֹה, "its midst."

קִדַּם: preposition.

Thus the Hebrew has the predominance over the Aramaic by nine words to four.

This large element of Hebraism in our inscription, more pronounced than in the Senjirli monuments, opens up a wide perspective of the linguistic connections of Israel with central Syria, and so also of their ethnological and political affiliations. The ideal of a Hebrew kingdom stretching as far as the Euphrates, 1 Ki. 4 21. 24, Deut. 1 7, had at least plausibility, even if it was not realized, and interesting light is thrown upon the political relations of a David or a Jero-boam II with the kingdom of Hamath, 2 Sam. 8 9, 2 Ki. 14 28. The latest Senjirli Inscriptions indicate the final triumph of Aramaism in northern Syria, and so we may argue that the farther back we may go, the closer will the language of all Syria be found to approximate to that of Canaan. There also appears to be still earlier evidence than that of our monument for the presence of Aramaic in Syria, even in Canaan; namely, from Egyptian sources. Professor W. Max Müller has offered testimony for the presence of Aramaic forms of place-names in Shoshenk's list of cities captured in Israel's land, and even one instance for an Aramaic name in the reign of Ramses III.¹⁹

¹⁹ *Asien und Europa*, pp. 170 ff., 284, 285, note 2. Notice especially the evidence for the Aramaic אֶרֶק and אֶבֶל.

Of great value and importance are the religious data of the monument. The god to whom the stele is dedicated is named 𐤀𐤋𐤓, which I doubt not is to be read El Ūr, or El Ūr.²⁰ The first element is the general Semitic word for god, and we have here a composite name exactly comparable to the Biblical El Shaddai and El Elyón. I will leave the discussion of the word to Dr. Clay, who has found in this divine name some agreeable corroboration of certain theories of his concerning the early religion of Syria.²¹ Why the stone is dedicated to this deity is not evident, except on the supposition that he was the local divinity, for the king's special divine patron is Beëlšamayn, to whom he prays in his hour of need, and who reassures him through seers and brings him the desired succor. In the list of deities at the end of the second column, where their vengeance is invoked against any perpetrator of sacrilege, so far as the text is preserved, Beëlšamayn takes precedence, then comes El[ūr], and after a lacuna of the space of three letters, the Sun and Moon (in this order unique in Semitic inscriptions, although it is the order observed in the Old Testament, *e.g.* Hab. 3 11; Ps. 148 3); then after another blank "the gods of heaven [and the gods of] earth,"—a most interesting distinction of deities; and finally the Baal of La'ash, as I have already proposed to read the broken word.

The appearance of Beëlšamayn, and his cardinal importance in the religion of the king, are facts of great importance for the moot question of the age and origin of that deity. This is the earliest appearance of the god in the monuments. On account of the lateness of the Phœnician texts in which Balsamem appears, F. Jeremias has suggested that he was introduced from the Greek theology: "Die Verehrung eines Ba'al, welcher ausdrücklich Himmelherr (Ba'al-šamēm) genannt wird, ist erst aus sehr später Zeit bezeugt und mög-

²⁰ Lidzbarski would read ALVR, and suggests a Hittite origin. Hartmann's reading in *OLZ*, 1908, col. 341, 𐤀𐤋𐤓 (which he understands as *il-wadd*) cannot be maintained, as 𐤋 and 𐤓 are very clearly distinguished in this inscription.

²¹ Dr. Clay's discussion will appear in a forthcoming volume entitled, *Amurru, the Home of the Northern Semites*.

licher Weise unter griechischem Einfluss aufgekommen." ²³ But the Cilician inscription published by the present writer, ²⁴ which is doubtless not later than the Persian period, and which contains the name, overthrows that hypothesis.

Lidzbarski has argued that the name came in under the influence of the Persian religion. ²⁴ But this view he has more recently abandoned, ²⁵ because of Esarhaddon's reference to a Phœnician god Balsameme. ²⁶ He now argues for a Hittite origin of the divine name, because of its occurrence as an epithet of the sun-god and the thunder-god among the deities invoked by the Hittite king in his treaty with Ramses II. ²⁷ But the Hittite origin remains to be proved, for the Egyptian monuments of the XVIIIth and XIXth dynasties show that the term was a current epithet for Canaanitish deities; thus Rešpu is called the lord of heaven, and 'Anat and 𐎧𐎠𐎫𐎠 respectively the lady of heaven. ²⁸

There is nothing in the name Baal which should confine it especially to a terrestrial deity, as Robertson Smith's argumentation leads the student to conclude. ²⁹ With the rapid retrogression in the dating of Beëlšamayn as a known god, it looks as if von Baudissin's position is the more reasonable one, that it is a term which goes back to quite primitive Semitic antiquity, — withal that that scholar goes too far in arguing that the terrestrial Baals were but local differentiations of the original celestial Baal. ³⁰ A "Lord

²³ In de la Sausseye, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, i. p. 232.

²⁴ *JAOS*, 1907, p. 164.

²⁵ See his essay, *Balsamem*, in his *Ephemeris d. nordsemitischen Epigraphik*, i. p. 250.

²⁶ *Ephemeris*, ii. p. 250.

²⁷ See *KAT*³, p. 357.

²⁸ This list can be seen in Müller, *Bündnisvertrag Ramses' II u. des Chettiter Königs*, *MVAG*, 1902, no. 5, p. 17.

²⁹ Professor W. Max Müller has kindly supplied me with these references; see Lanzoni, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, p. 483, and *Asien u. Europa*, p. 311 (where the hieroglyphed representation of the god is given), for Rešpu; Lanzoni, p. 139, for 'Anat; and *Asien u. Europa*, p. 315, note 3, for 𐎧𐎠𐎫𐎠.

³⁰ *Religion of the Semites*, 1880, p. 96.

³¹ See his article *Baal und Bel*, in Hauck's *Real-Encyclopädie*, especially pp. 828 f., 831.

of the heavens" does not imply in itself a higher and monotheistic religion; on the other hand, however, such a religion requires that kind of a deity as a stepping stone to higher stages.²¹ A Baal-saphon, "lord of the celestial north,"²² and probably Baal-zebul, "lord of the divine dwelling,"²³ offer ancient evidence for the existence of loftier ideas in connection with the term Baal than those which it has been the wont in recent years to associate with what has come to be regarded as a title peculiarly appropriate to a telluric deity.

If we grant any historic reliability to Gen. 14, we find a similar phrase in Melchizedek's blessing by "El Elyon, possessor of heaven and earth" (v. 19, cf. v. 22). And I am strongly inclined to think that in this fragment of ancient Canaanitish religion, as I believe it to be, in place of the unique and colorless form קנה, "possessor," once stood בעל שמים וארץ; El Elyon was Baal of heaven and earth. It is patent why Baal was later exchanged for an inoffensive term. And further, we may understand how this same name was originally acceptable to a possibly lofty Yahwism, for Yahweh might be identified with a Baal of the heavens.

Finally reference is due to one passage in our monument which throws light upon the religious practice of ZKR and his people. The Baal of heaven spoke to him, he tells us, ביד חזין וביד ערין, "through seers and" an evidently parallel class of diviners (col. i, line 12).²⁴ The first term is the good Biblical word that preceded nabi in popular use.

²¹ See Baentsch's remarks, *Allorientalischer u. israelitischer Monotheismus*, p. 75 ff.

²² Ex. 14 s; also the same name in Phœnicia, iii Rawlinson, 9, 27; Sargon's Annals, 234; and another instance cited in *KAT*², p. 357; also the Egyptian Ba'alat-saphon, Müller, *op. cit.*, 357.

²³ See Cheyne, art. *Baal-zebul* in *Enc. Bib.*

²⁴ These words are participles. חזין being written *plene*, in contrast to the other plurals, we may assume a diphthong, something like what is vouched for in the Biblical Aramaic; e.g. חזין, Ezra 4 is (see Kautzsch, *Gramm. des Biblisch-Aramäischen*, p. 80). For the trilateral form חזין, cf. the Ketib to Dan. 4: 5 s, חזלל, for Kerê, חזל, and see Nöldeke, *Syrische Grammatik*, § 21 D.

But who are the 𐤀𐤓𐤕? The participle must be connected with the Arabic root 'adda, "to count." Whether the Biblical-Aramaic 𐤀𐤓𐤕 and the Syriac 'eddānā, "a period of time, season," with the composite beth 'eddānā, "counting house," and the Hebrew 𐤀𐤓𐤕, "woman's period," should be directly referred to the root 𐤕𐤓,⁸⁵ or to the root 𐤕𐤓,⁸⁶ is open to question; but the Pe-Waw and Double-'Ayin roots have so often a common theme of thought, that the appearance of the root 𐤕𐤓 in the Aramaic is not strange. These persons, therefore, are literally "counters," and we have probably to identify them with astrologers.⁸⁷ Dr. Jastrow has pointed out to me that a similar phrase exists in the Babylonian, in (*amel*) *dupšār minḏti*, generally translated "the mathematicians," but for which the context requires a class of diviners.⁸⁸ These "people of numbers" are the same as our "counters." There is also a possible appearance of the word in the Old Testament. The father of the prophet Azariah, 2 Chron. 15 1, and another prophet in 2 Chron. 28 a, are named 'Oded, a name for which an etymology is wanting. May not the word have been an official title? Azariah was perhaps the son of an 𐤕𐤓, an astrologer, and the other may have only been known to tradition by the same official title. In process of time, with the obsolescence of the term and function, 𐤕𐤓 came to be interpreted as a personal name; the unnamed prophet became Oded, and the other was given an Oded for father. It is through a similar confusion that in 2 Chron. 33 19 "the words of the seers" became "the words of Hozai."

ADDITIONAL NOTE. — Since writing the above, I have found in the early Arabic geographer Ibn Khurdadhbih (ninth century) a reference to the town of Bal'ās as one of the districts of Ḥimṣ in Syria (see De Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, vi, p. 76; translation, p. 55). Yaḳūt also refers

⁸⁵ So Jensen, *Zeitschrift f. Assyriologie*, vii. p. 215.

⁸⁶ So for 𐤀𐤓𐤕 the New Hebrew Lexicon by Brown-Driver-Briggs.

⁸⁷ I had come to this conclusion before seeing that Dussaud had also reached it.

⁸⁸ The phrase occurs in a text of Nabonidus, *V. Rawlinson*, 65, 32 a; transliteration and translation *KB*, iii., part 2, pp. 110 f.

to the same place in his Geographical Dictionary as a district of Ĥimā, and under the title *Balās* specifies a town lying ten miles from Damascus — doubtless the same as Bal'ās (see Wüstenfeld, *Yacut*, I. pp. 722, 708; the later epitome *Marāsid* repeats Yaḳūt). This Bal'ās is to be identified with the 𐤁𐤏𐤏𐤃 of our text, i. e. with 𐤁𐤏𐤏 , the place coming to be called after its deity as in the case of the neighboring Baalbec. La'ash therefore lay between Ĥimā and Damascus, ten (long) miles from the latter place. Hamath and La'ash would then have been the northern and southern capitals of Zakar's kingdom.

A further note, suggested by my investigation of Yaḳūt, though somewhat far afield, may be of interest. He records another Balās lying between the Mesopotamian cities Wāsiḩ and Baqrā. In this place we may find the ancient Babylonian Lagash (= 𐤁𐤏𐤏), and suppose it, too, came to be named after its Baal. Baal-Lagash indeed would be parallel to the old local deity, Nin-girsu, i. e. Lord of Girsu, the latter being the name of one of the quarters of the city, and the district being called "the land of Nin-girsu" (see Jastrow, *Religion Babylonians u. Assyriens*, I, p. 56 f.). This identification shows that the old name Lagash survived into late Arabic times. I must leave it to others to pursue the attractive correspondence between the Mesopotamian and the Syrian La'ash (Lagash), and Ba'al-La'ash.