

BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

The Hebrew expression **אַמָּה** 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 noun¹, e. g.,

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

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

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

אַמָּת 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 בְּאַמָּה 'four cubits' (Exod. 26 2).

חֲמִשִּׁים בְּאַמָּה '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-'emat* (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.

¹ Cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Heb. Gram.*²⁶ 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, §§ 812c, Anm.; 838b; 279.

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

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

בְּאַמָּת 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).

בְּאַמּוֹת³ '[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 שֶׁקֶלִים זָהָב — עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב 'ten shekels of gold' (Gen. 24 22).

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

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

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

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

תִּשַׁע אַמּוֹת אַרְכָּה וְאַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת רְחָבָה בְּאַמָּת אִישׁ 'its length nine cubits and its breadth four cubits according to a man's arm or cubit' (Deut. 3 11).

וּבְיַד הָאִישׁ קָנָה הַמִּדָּה שֵׁשׁ אַמּוֹת בְּאַמָּה וְטַמָּח '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).

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

In the first example we have instead of **בְּאַמָּה** the phrase **בְּאַמָּתַי אִישׁ**, which is its equivalent, and in the second **בְּאַמָּה וְנִטְמָה**, in which **הָאַמָּה וְנִטְמָה** — ‘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 **בְּאַמָּה**, viz.,

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

Here the full expression would be

עֲשָׂרָה עֲשָׂרָה שֶׁקֶלִים בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ.

The phrase **בְּאַמָּה**, therefore, may be regarded as an abbreviation for **אַמָּה בְּאַמָּה** or **אַמָּתַי בְּאַמָּה** 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; EB¹¹ 13, 784, n. 1).¹ Pseudepiphanius (RE⁸ 5, 421, 16) says of Hosea: *οὗτος ἦν ἐκ Βελεμωθ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰσσαχαρ*; 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 **בְּלַעַם** and in Judith 8 3 as **Βελαμων** or **Βαλαμων** (cf. *ibid.* 4 4: **Βελαμων** or **Αβελμων**, **Βαιλων**, and in 7 3: **Βελβαιμ**, **Αβελβαιμ**). S has in 8 3 **בֵּית בַּעֲלָמֹן** (EB 527). Hosea is said to have been an Issacharite, and *Ibleam* belonged to the district of Issachar (RE⁸ 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 **ס**^v has **Βαλακ**,

¹ For the abbreviations see above, p. 41.