BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

The Hebrew expression גזר after numerals

THE word גזר ‘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.,

גזר נפר ‘four cubits’ (Ezek. 43 14).
גזר נפר ‘fifty cubits’ (Ezek. 40 21).
גזר נפר ‘fifty cubits’ (Ezek. 42 2).
גזר נפר ‘twenty cubits’ (II Chr. 3 s).

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

גזר נפר ‘four cubits’ (Exod. 26 2).
גזר נפר ‘fifty cubits’ (Exod. 38 12).

A similar construction with ב occurs in Ethiopic, though here it is not confined to the word for cubit, e.g. ב-טר (cubit), ב-סאכ (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 ב 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.

The Hebrew construction has apparently originated in an ellipsis, e. g., מַחֲמַת יָדוֹ יְהֵוָּא, meaning ‘four cubits, fifty cubits, (measured) according to the cubit’—‘the cubit’ being the ordinary cubit וַיְהֵוָּא.

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

כְּסַפֶּר מַחֲמַת יָדוֹ יְהֵוָּא [measured] according to the ordinary cubit [a man’s arm or cubit] (Deut. 3 11).

כְּסַפֶּר כַּסַּפֶּר יְהֵוָּא [counted] according to the sacred shekel’ (Exod. 30 13 38 24; Num. 3 47 18 16).

כְּסַפֶּר יְהֵוָּא [measured] in cubits’ (Ezek. 43 19).

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

כְּסַפֶּר יְהֵוָּא מַחֲמַת יָדוֹ יְהֵוָּא [measured] according to the ordinary cubit יִנְבַּע [a thousand] ‘ten shekels of gold’ (Gen. 24 22).

כְּסַפֶּר יְהֵוָּא כְּסַפֶּר יְהֵוָּא [counted] according to a man’s arm or cubit יַנְבַּע ‘a thousand shekels of silver’ (Gen. 20 16).

כְּסַפֶּר יְהֵוָּא מַחֲמַת יָדוֹ יְהֵוָּא [measured] יִנְבַּע ‘ten loaves of bread’ (I Sam. 17 17).

כְּסַפֶּר יְהֵוָּא מַחֲמַת יָדוֹ יְהֵוָּא ‘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 מַחֲמַת יָדוֹ יְהֵוָּא occurs nowhere in the Old Testament, in two passages we have closely analogous constructions, viz.,

כְּסַפֶּר יְהֵוָּא מַחֲמַת יָדוֹ יְהֵוָּא ‘its length nine cubits and its breadth four cubits according to a man’s arm or cubit’ (Deut. 3 11).

כְּסַפֶּר יְהֵוָּא מַחֲמַת יָדוֹ יְהֵוָּא ‘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).

The use of the article with the plural after ו is probably due to some analogy with the singular after ו, where the article is regularly used.
In the first example we have instead of ידוע the phrase ידוע ליהו, which is its equivalent, and in the second ידוע ליהו, in which ידוע ליהו — 'the sacred cubit' stands in the same construction as ידוע 'the cubit'.

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

שֵׁלֶחְן בְּשֹׁרְנוּת הַרְשֵׁפֹּת ידוע 'each spoon [weighing] ten [shekels counting] according to the sacred shekel' (Num. 7:88).

Here the full expression would be

שֵׁלֶחְן בְּשֹׁרְנוּת הַרְשֵׁפֹּת ידוע.

The phrase ידוע, therefore, may be regarded as an abbreviation for ידוע ידוע or ידוע ידוע 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 113, 784, n. 1).² Pseudoepiphanius (RE 5, 421, 16) says of Hosea: ὁ υἱὸς ἤτοι ἐκ Βελημῶν 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 בֵּיתֵל and in Judith 8:2 as בֵּלָאָה or בֵּלָאָה; (cf. ibid. 4:4: בֵּלָאָה or בֵּלָאָה, בֵּלָאָה, and in 7:1: בֵּלָאָה, בֵּלָאָה). It has in 8:3 בֵּלָאָה בֵּי (EB 527). Hosea is said to have been an Issacharite, and Ibleam belonged to the district of Issachar (RE 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 § has בֵּלָאָה.

² For the abbreviations see above, p. 41.