



A New Parallel to I Kings 18:28-29

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CRITICAL NOTES

A NEW PARALLEL TO I KINGS 18 28-29

I Kings 18 28-29 describes how the prophets of Baal, according to their custom (כְּמִשְׁפָּחָם), lacerated themselves with swords and lances, either as a result of or as an attempt to induce a "prophetic" frenzy.¹ Zech 13 6 probably contains an allusion to a similar practice among certain Israelite prophets,² but apart from these two passages the rite is never connected to prophecy in the OT.³ Elsewhere self-laceration (הִתְגַּרְר) appears merely as a sign of mourning, particularly in the context of funerary rites, though even here its pagan background led to the proscription of the practice.⁴ Thus the limited attestation of "prophetic" self-laceration in the OT and its total absence in contemporary inscriptions forced the commentators to turn to late hellenistic sources for convincing parallels to explain the behavior of the prophets of Baal.⁵

These late parallels are still significant, but now the excavations at Ugarit have provided us with a much earlier parallel. It occurs in an Akkadian wisdom text copied ca. 1300 B.C. but composed originally, according to Nougayrol, in the Old Babylonian or early Cassite period.⁶ The text, which is very similar to *Ludlul* in many respects, begins after an initial break by recounting the failure of the cultic experts to diagnose the sick man's problem. Then it proceeds to describe the preparations for burying the man. It is in this context that our line occurs:

aḥḥu'a (ŠEŠ-u2-a) *ki-ma maḥ-ḥe-e* [d]a-mi-šu-nu ra-am-ku
My brothers bathed in their own blood like (an) ecstatic(s).⁷

In his comments on this line Nougayrol refers to an Esarhaddon passage, though he notes it is not really parallel,⁸ but he does not cite either the Mari texts where the verb *maḥû* is used of the ecstatic trance of a prophet⁹ or our biblical passage. The

¹ According to the wording of the text the self-laceration precedes the ecstatic behavior designated by the verb הִתְגַּרְר, but one wonders if the prophets were not already a bit overwrought when they began cutting.

² See the commentaries.

³ I Kings 20 35-37 is sometimes quoted as an example, but it does not involve self-laceration, and the wounding of the prophet functions quite differently in that story.

⁴ Hos 7 14 (emended); Jer 16 6, 41 5, 47 5; Deut 14 1; and Lev 19 28 (וְשָׂרְטָה לֹא חִתְנוּ בְּבָשָׂרְךָ).

⁵ The references cited most often are Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* viii, 27-28, and Lucian, *De Dea Syra* 36, 50, but cf. R. de Vaux, "Les prophètes de Baal sur le Mont Carmel," *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth*, 5 (1944), pp. 7-20.

⁶ *Ugaritica V, Mission de Ras Shamra XVI* (1968), pp. 265-73, no. 162 (R.S. 25.460).

⁷ Line 11'.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 270.

⁹ For these texts see now W. L. Moran, "New Evidence from Mari on the History of Prophecy," *Biblica*, 50 (1969), pp. 15-56.

parallel to I Kings 18 28 is very close, however, since Nougayrol's new text, just as the biblical material, portrays self-laceration as a feature common to both ecstatic prophecy and burial rites.

Unfortunately the evidence does not allow us to pinpoint the specific geographical area in which this extreme form of ecstatic behavior occurred. While the text was preserved at Ugarit, the date of its original composition and the language in which it is written point toward a more easterly location for its place of composition and thus for the customs it describes. Moreover, the rather surprising absence of terms for prophet or prophecy in the fairly large Ugaritic corpus seems to exclude Ugarit as a place where ecstatic phenomena could provide material for such a comparison. The region from Aleppo to Mari, where ecstatic prophecy is attested in the Old Babylonian period, is more likely, but one should note that the term for ecstatic at Mari was vocalized differently, *viz.*, *muhhûm*, and so far there is little evidence at Mari of the extreme frenzy that self-laceration implies.¹⁰

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APOLLOS—APELLES

It is accepted that Priscilla of Acts is the same as Prisca of the Epistles, and *The Beginnings of Christianity*, IV, p. 221 b, suggests some three other examples where the same person has one form of a name in Acts and another in the Epistles.

Another example of this variety may be Apollos—Apelles. The same man is always Apollos in I Cor 1 12, 3 4, 5, 6, 22, 4 6, 16 12, and in our printed texts of Acts, 18 24, 19 1, but 'Απελλῆς is read there by \aleph^* 307 431 453 536 610 Didymus Ammonius Bo Arm Geo (Eth). If 'Απολλῶς is original throughout, it is hard to see why it was changed to 'Απελλῆς in Acts. On the other hand if 'Απελλῆς is original in Acts we can easily understand the assimilation of the name to the 'Απολλῶς of I Corinthians. This suggests that 'Απελλῆς is original in Acts, and we can add this difference to those between Acts and the Epistles, noted in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, IV. 'Απολλώνιος in D at Acts 19 1 is only 'Απολλῶς writ large. For the linguistic background of the two forms see Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I, pp. 124 f.

From the two forms of his name in tradition we may not be able to divine anything about the man himself, but in any attempt to treat the relation of Acts to the Epistles this difference in name must be taken into account.

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¹⁰ Moran, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–28