Csaba Balogh

The Stele of YHWH in Egypt

The Prophecies of Isaiah 18–20 concerning Egypt and Kush

THEOLOGISCHE UNIVERSITEIT VAN DE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN
IN NEDERLAND TE KAMPEN
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THE STELE OF YHWH IN EGYPT
THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH 18–20 CONCERNING EGYPT AND KUSH

DE STÈLE VAN JHWH IN EGYPTE
DE PROFETIEËN IN JESAJA 18–20 OVER EGYPTE EN KOESJ

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

TER VERKRIJGING VAN DE GRAAD VAN DOCTOR IN DE THEOLOGIE,

OP GEZAG VAN DE RECTOR DR. C.J. DE RUIJTER,

HOOGLERAAR IN DE THEOLOGIE,

ZO GOD WIL IN HET OPENBAAR TE VERDEDIGEN

OP VRIJDAG 11 SEPTEMBER 2009

TE 15.00 UUR IN DE AULA VAN DE THEOLOGISCHE UNIVERSITEIT,

BROEDERWEG 15 TE KAMPEN

door

Csaba Balogh

Aan Gyöngyi,
Benjámin en Efraim

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Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca / Klausenburg)   13 juli 2009

Csaba Balogh

Table of Contents

Abbreviations[1]

AÄ	*Apokalyptik und Ägypten. Eine kritische Analyse der relevanten Texte aus dem griechisch-römischen Ägypten.* Edited by A. Blasius & B. U. Schipper. Leuven, 2002
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
ABC	*Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles.* Grayson, A. Kirk. Locust Valley: J. J. Augutin, 1975
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary.* Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AcOr	*Acta orientalia*
AEL	*Ancient Egyptian Literature.* M. Lichtheim. 3 vols. Berkeley, 1971–1980
ÄF	Ägyptologische Forschungen
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
ÄHG	*Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete.* J. Assmann. Zürich, 1975
AHw	*Akkadisches Handwörterbuch.* W. von Soden. 3 vols. Wiesbaden, 1965–1981
ANET	James Prichard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955)
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOB	*Altorientalische Bilder zum Alten Testament.* Edited by H. Gressmann. Berlin, 1927
AOT	*Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament.* Edited by H. Gressmann. 2nd ed. Berlin, 1927
ARE	*Ancient Records of Egypt.* Edited by J. H. Breasted. 5 vols. Chicago, 1905–1907. Reprint, New York, 1962
ArEL	*Arabic-English Lexicon.* E. W. Lane. 8. vols. London, 1863–1893. Reprint, New York, 1955–1956
ASV	American Standard Version
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AThD	Abhandlungen zur Theologie und Dogmatik
ATM	Altes Testament und Moderne
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAfO	Beihäfte zur *Archief für Orientforschung*
BAL	*Babylonisch-assyrische Lesestücke.* R. Borger. Rome, 1963
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient

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[1] Page numbers are referred to as follows: in dictionaries, *CAD* 124, in lexicons, *LdÄ* 4:125, in text editions *COS*, 1.303 (page 303 from vol. 1, while *COS* 1.23 means text nr. 23 from vol. 1).

BDB	*A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Edited by F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. Oxford, 1907
BES	*Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar*
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BEvT	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BibSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BIWA	*Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals*. R. Borger. Wiesbaden, 1996
BJS	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BL	*Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testamentes*. H. Bauer and P. Leander. Halle, 1922
BH	Biblical Hebrew
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Edited by K. Ellinger and W. Rudolph. 4th ed. Stuttgart, 1990
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BNB	Biblische Notizen Beihefte
BO	*Bibliotheca orientalis*
BOT	De Boodschap van het Oude Testament
BTAVO	Beihefte zur Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Edited by I. J. Gelb et al. Chicago, 1956–
CAL	*The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* (http://cal1.cn.huc.edu)
CANE	*Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Edited by J. M. Sasson. New York, 1995. Reprint, Peabody, 2000
CBOT	Coniectanea Biblica. Old Testament Series
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CDA	*A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*. J. A. Black, A. George, and N. J. Postgate. Wiesbaden, 2000
CDD	*The Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Edited by J. H. Johnson. Chicago, 2001 (http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/cdd)
CdÉ	*Chronique d'Égypte*
CDG	*Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez*. W. Leslau. Wiesbaden, 1991
CDME	*A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. R. O. Faulkner. Oxford, 1962
COS	*The Context of Scripture*. Edited by W. H. Hallo and K. L. Younger. 3 vols. Leiden, 1997–2002
COT	Commentaar op het Oude Testament
CRBS	*Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*

CSD	*A Compendious Syriac Dictionary: Founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith*. R. Payne Smith and J. Payne Smith. Oxford, 1903. Reprint, Eugene, 1999
CTN	Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud
D	*Hebrew Syntax*. A. B. Davidson. Edinburgh, 1901
DAW	*Deutsch-Akkadisches Wörterbuch*. T. R. Kämmerer and D. Schwiderski. Münster, 1998
DB	*A Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by J. Hastings. 5 vols. Edinburgh, 1919. Reprint, Peabody, 1988
DCH	*The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Edited by D. J. A. Clines. Sheffield, 1993–
DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. Horst. 2nd ed. Leiden, 1999
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DJPA	*A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*. M. Sokoloff. 2nd. ed. Baltimore, 2002
DJBA	*A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods*. M. Sokoloff. 2nd. ed. Baltimore, 2002
DLU	*Dicctionario de la lengua ugarítica*. G. del Olmo and J. Sanmartín. 2 vols. Barcelona, 1996–2000
DNWSI	*Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscripions*. Edited by J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling. 2 vols. Leiden, 1995
DSA	*Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic*. A. Tal. 2 vols. Leiden, 2000
DTTM	*Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature*. M. Jastrow. New York, 1996
EA	El-Amarna tablets
EB	*Encyclopaedia Biblica*. Edited by T. K. Cheyne and J. S. Black. London, 1899–1903
ÉB	Études bibliques
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
EQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
EÜ	Einheitsübersetzung
ETL	*Ephemerides theologiae lovaniensis*
EvTh	*Evangelische Theologie*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FHN	*Fontes Historiae Nubiorum: Textual Sources for the History of the Middle Nile Region between the Eighth Century BC and the Sixth Century AD*. Edited by T. Eide. 3 vols. Bergen, 1994
FO	*Folia orientalia*
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FzB	Forschungen zur Bibel
GAG	*Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik*. W. von Soden. 3rd ed. Rome, 1995

JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JPOS	*Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JS	*Journal for Semitics/Tydskrif vir Semitistik*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JSSEA	*Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities*
JSSM	Journal of Semitic Studies Monographs
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften.* H. Donner and W. Röllig. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden, 1966–1969
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KEHAT	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHCAT	Kurzer Handcommentar zum Alten Testament
KHw	*Koptisches Handwörterbuch.* W. Westendorf. Heidelberg, 1965–1977
KS	*Historisch-kritisches Lehrgebäude der hebräischen Sprache. Syntax.* F. E. König. Vol. 2/2. Leipzig, 1897
KV	Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LdÄ	*Lexikon der Ägyptologie.* Edited by H. W. Helck and E. Otto. 7 vols. Wiesbaden, 1972–1992
L	*Grammatica van het Bijbels Hebreeuws.* J. P. Lettinga. 9th ed. Leiden, 1991
LS	Brockelmann, C. *Lexicon Syriacum.* Repr.; Hidlesheim, 1982
MC	Mesopotamian Civilisations
MGWJ	*Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*
MH	Mishnaic Hebrew
MIFAO	Mémoires publies par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire
MittSAG	Mitteilungen der Sudanarchäologischen Gesellschaft
MVEOL	Mededeelingen en verhandelingen van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap Ex oriente lux
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NBD	*New Bible Dictionary.* Edited by J. D. Douglas. 3rd ed. Leicester, 1996
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NCW	*Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim.* J. Levy. 4 vols. Leipzig, 1876–1889
NEAEHL	*The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land.* Edited by E. Stern. 4 vols. Jerusalem, 1993
NEB	Neue Echter Bibel
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament

NIDOTTE	*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis.* W. A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, 1997
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NSKAT	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar / Altes Testament
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OEANE	*The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Archaeology in the Near East.* Edited by E. M. Meyers. New York, 1997
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensia analecta
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
Or	*Orientalia* (NS)
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.* Edited by J. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York, 1983–1985
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studieën
OTWSA	*Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika*
PIBA	*Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association*
PIOL	Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain
PNAE	*The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.* Edited by S. Parpola. Helsinki, 1998–
PPANE	*Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East.* Edited by M. Nissinen. Atlanta, 2003
PPD	*Phoenician-Punic Dictionary.* Ch. R. Krahmalkov. Leuven, 2000
PW	*Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft.* Edited by A. F. von Pauly and G. Wissowa. 49 vols. Stuttgart and Munich, 1894–1997
QD	Quaestiones Disputae
QH	Qumranic Hebrew
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RdQ	*Revue de Qumran*
RBén	*Revue Bénédictine*
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyria Periods
RSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAB	*State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAT	Die Schriften des Alten Testaments
SBAAT	Stuttgarter Biblische Aufsatzbände. Altes Testament
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature. Dissertation Series
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature. Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature. Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SGKAO	Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients

SH(C)ANE	Studies in the History (and Culture) of the Ancient Near East
SI	Summary Inscription (of Tiglath-pileser III)
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SMS	*Syro-Mesopotamian Studies*
SO	Studia Orientalia
SOTSMS	The Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series
TA	*Tel Aviv: Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University*
TCT	Textual Criticism and the Translator
THAT	*Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament.* Edited by E. Jenni and C. Westermann. 2 vols. Munich, 1971
ThQ	*Theological Quarterly*
ThR	*Theologische Rundschau*
ThRef	*Theologia Reformata*
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum
TSSI	*Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions.* J. C. L. Gibson. 3 vols. Oxford, 1971–1982
TT	*Theologisch Tijdschrift*
T&T	Tekst en Toelichting
TUAT	*Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments.* Edited by O. Kaiser. Gütersloh, 1984
TUVGH	Texte und Untersuchungen zur vormassoretischen Grammatik des hebräischen
TWAT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament.* Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. 10 vols. Stuttgart, 1970–
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
var.	variant
VL	*Esaias.* Vol. 12 of *Vetus Latina.* Edited by R. Gryson. Freiburg, 1987–1997
VS	Victory Stela of Piye
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTS	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
VF	*Verkündigung und Forschung*
WÄS	*Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache.* A. Erman and H. Grapow. 5 vols. 4th ed. Berlin, 1982
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WdO	*Die Welt des Orients*
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WO	*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax.* B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor. Winona Lake, 1990
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archeologie*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZÄS	*Zeitschrift für die ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

<small_caps>Isaiah 18–20 as the Subject of This Study</small_caps>

This is a study of Isa 18–20, three chapters in the so-called Isaianic prophecies concerning the nations, Isa 13–23(24–27).[1] Beyond being located close to each other in this literary corpus, there is at least one common element that ties these three chapters together: Isa 18–20 deal with two neighbouring countries of the Nile, Kush and Egypt respectively. The two lands were politically closely related in the era of the prophet Isaiah, so that addressing them in proximity to each other should not be surprising in a book set in the period of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa 1:1). Through a detailed analysis of the three chapters I hope to contribute to a better understanding of the collection of prophecies on the nations in the book of Isaiah and, more remotely, of the wider phenomenon of prophecies concerning the nations, so prevalent in the Hebrew Bible.[2]

Sections of these three chapters captured the attention of scholars writing with various concerns, differing focus, adopting a diversified methodology. But a comprehensive study concentrating on Isa 18–20

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[1] For the diverging views concerning the delimitation and designation of this corpus, see section 1.2. and Chapter 3.

[2] Two marginal interpretations may be noted here, but they shall not be taken into consideration any further in this study. In an article on Isa 18, Winckler located Kush in Isa 18:1 not in Africa, as scholars usually do, but in southern Mesopotamia (cf. Gen 10:8–12), connecting Isa 18 with the Chaldaean embassy of Merodach-baladan from Isa 39 (H. Winckler, "Das Land Kus und Jes. 18", in *Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen* [Leipzig: Verlag von Eduard Pfeiffer, 1892], 146–56). Winckler's interpretation of כּוּשׁ as an Asian nation is discussed shortly in Excursus 1. Although כּוּשׁ may occasionally refer to southern Mesopotamia, this investigation follows the widely adopted view that the land of Kush mentioned in Isa 18:1 is to be localised in the Nile valley.

A second opinion to be left out of discussion is König's interpretation of Isa 17:12–14 as a prophecy focusing on the fall of Egypt and thus thematically related to Isa 18–20 (König, 197–98). Yet König's identification of the unnamed group of many nations in Isa 17:12–14 with Egyptians does not rest on convincing arguments, so that later interpreters generally pursued a different exegetical trace.

has not yet been made.³ Insofar as Isa 18–20 is part of a collection of prophecies concerning various nations, the analysis of these chapters necessitates a survey of previous research on Isa 13–23 as a whole. At the same time, the methodological divergences in the background of studies devoted to Isa 13–23 can barely be understood without a concise assessment of the larger frame of this collection, the book of Isaiah.

1.1. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH AS THE CONTEXT OF ISAIAH 13–23

The Hebrew prophets in general and particularly the book of Isaiah have received unparalleled attention by biblical scholars. The prophet Isaiah is in many respects the archetype of an artist. His untimely words condensed in a textual form underwent a troubled history of reception in the generation of the prophet with convictions largely opposing his own—at least according to the classical reconstruction of Isaiah's person and his audience. But for those staring at his visions from distant miles of time and thinking, his legacy has become one of the most productive traditions of the Bible. Isaiah's words continue to delight readers from the most ancient tradents of the prophet's writings, through various communities of post-exilic Judah, the Diaspora, the early Christians, to readers and scholars of our days.

Attempts to summarise current studies on the book of Isaiah have been quite numerous, just like the methods applied and the results achieved.⁴ It is here neither possible, nor necessary to enter into details. A short overview of the most significant tendencies is, however, impor-

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³ The three chapters were discussed from a specific angle in an article by A. Niccacci, "Isaiah xviii-xx from an Egyptological Perspective", *VT* 48 (1998) 214–38. For essays on different parts of Isa 18–20, see section 1.2. below. For studies on other pericopes of Isa 13–23, see Chapter 3 and the Bibliography.

⁴ For overviews on Isaiah-research since the 1980's, see, for instance, A. G. Auld, "Poetry, Prophecy, Hermeneutic: Recent Studies in Isaiah", *SJT* 33 (1980) 567–81; R. Kilian, *Jesaja 1-39* (EdF 200; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983); C. Hardmeier, "Jesajaforschung im Umbruch", *VF* 31 (1986) 3–30; J. J. Schmitt, *Isaiah and His Interpreters* (New York: Paulist, 1986); M. A. Sweeney, "The Book of Isaiah in Recent Research", *CRBS* 1 (1993) 141–62; Idem, "Reevaluating Isaiah 1–39 in Recent Critical Research", *CRBS* 4 (1996) 79–114; H. G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 1–18; M. E. Tate, "The Book of Isaiah in Recent Study", in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (eds. J. W. Watts & P. R. House; JSOTSS 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 22–56; Berges, 11–46; U. Becker, "Jesajaforschung (Jes 1–39)", *ThR* 64 (1999) 1–37, 117–52; P. Höffken, *Jesaja. Der Stand der theologischen Diskussion* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004).

tant in order to situate the present study in the field of biblical scholarship. The summary below will focus on a few themes prevailing in these discussions. Though overlaps exist, and additional refinements are necessary, the issues to be discussed may be labelled as historical, literary and theological in nature.

1.1.1. HISTORICAL RESEARCH ON THE BOOK OF ISAIAH AND ITS PROBLEMS

The problem that concerns us here is the nature of relationship between the text of Isaiah and the historical reality it supposedly represents. The superscription in Isa 1:1 places the book in the context of the second half of the 8th century, the era of the kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. While reading Isaiah against this historical background was rather common until the 18th century (with the exception of a few voices questioning the proper place of Isa 40–66), due to various factors, such as the developments in historical science and philosophy, as well as the emergence of literary criticism, scholars became increasingly sceptical regarding the historicising superscription of the book of Isaiah. As a result of this, the previous scholarly consensus concerning the historical background of the book came to be fragmented almost beyond recognition, a development which has caused much disillusionment in some circles. It has furthermore been recognised that irrespectively of their original historical context, written prophecies have continued to play a decisive role in later reading communities as well. For these reasons some interpreters questioned the legitimacy and indeed adequacy of a hermeneutical approach which focuses merely on the (primary) historical situation behind the Isaianic text.

Nevertheless, despite a marked shift of attention from historical issues towards literary analysis in present day scholarship, there is still a great deal of interest in the historical study of Isaiah. Most commentators consider it significant to sketch the history of the late 8th century as a background against which the Isaianic prophecies can be properly placed and understood.[5] Moreover, historical questions play an ex-

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[5] H. Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern. Die Stellung der klassischen Propheten des 8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. zur Außenpolitik der Könige von Israel und Juda* (VTS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1964); P. Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah", *JAOS* 103 (1983) 719–37; F. Gonçalves, *L'expédition de Sennachérib en Palestine dans la littérature hébraïque ancienne* (PIOL 34; Louvain-la-Neuve: Université de Louvain, 1986); Ohmann, 12; S. A. Irvine, *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis* (SBLDS 123; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990); M. A. Sweeney, "Sargon's Threat against Jerusalem in Isaiah 10.27-32", *Bib* 75 (1994) 457–70; A. Schoors, "Historical Information in Isaiah 1–39", in *Studies in the Book of*

tremely significant role in many redaction critically oriented studies essentially dealing with the composition of the book of Isaiah in a diachronic perspective. Historical considerations are significant reference points when dating texts and editions to different periods. As pointed out recently by De Jong, prophecy in general, as an ancient Near Eastern phenomenon, has strong (albeit not always clear) connections with historical realities under which it is born.[6]

Adopting a historical approach to the text of Isaiah is not free of problems, however. One may note some prominent difficulties in discussions concerning the historical interpretation of Isaianic texts.

(a) Not every text contains historically verifiable information. Certain passages addressing social criticism, for instance, which hold mostly no historical clues regarding their date (e.g., Isa 5:22–23; 10:1–2; 28:7–10), would fall pray to a determined pursuit of accurate historical positioning of prophecies.[7]

(b) Despite significant discoveries in the field of archaeology, our knowledge of ancient history is still full of gaps. The prophetic activity of Isaiah in the 8th century is usually discussed in relation to three or four major periods in Near Eastern history:[8] (1) 734–732 B.C., the threat of Aram and Israel (Isa 7); (2) 723–720 B.C., the fall of the Northern

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Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A. M. Beuken (eds. J. van Ruiten & M. Vervenne; BETL 132; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 75–93; W. R. Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies* (SHCANE 18; Leiden: Brill, 1999); M. J. de Jong, "Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies" (Ph.D. diss., Leiden, 2006).

[6] De Jong, "Isaiah", 147–218.

[7] Some put forward the view that social criticism may in fact be part of the Assyria-related dispute aiming to bring political opponents of the prophet Isaiah into discredit, and thus also related to the times of the uprising (cf. De Jong, "Isaiah", 96–97, 187–189; O. Backersten, *Isaiah's Political Message: An Appraisal of His Alleged Social Critique* [FAT2.29; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008]). Two objections may question this, however. First, parallels from ancient Near Eastern prophecy suggest that prophets may have been concerned with justice in social administration without any direct relationship with issues of warfare or political alliances. Second, the number and the wide range of functions of the leading personalities implied in this criticism (e.g., priests in 28:7, or leaders of a lower rank, who are unlikely to have exerted direct influence on the decisions of higher political circles) questions that the dispute of the prophet could be reduced to a matter of discrediting one's political opponents.

[8] See e.g. W. Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik* (Munich: Kaiser, 1976); F. Huber, *Jahwe, Juda und die anderen Völker beim Propheten Jesaja* (BZAW 137; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1976); J. Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk bei Jesaja. Eine Untersuchung zur biblischen Theologie* (Leiden: Brill, 1988); De Jong, "Isaiah", 147–91.

Kingdom;[9] (3) 711 B.C., the fall of Ashdod (Isa 20); (4) 705–701 B.C., the anti-Assyrian rebellion of Judah and its allies and the punitive campaign of Sennacherib (Isa 36–37). Although the significance of prophetic activity increased during times of political crisis, there may have been other moments, insufficiently documented, but still experienced as critical by the prophet's contemporaries.

(c) Prophetic utterance may have been delivered before an event. Biblical scholars of the 19th and early 20th century believed that post-eventum utterance of oracles was a general way of prophesying. But Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy on Tyre (Ezek 29:18–20), as well as countless examples from non-biblical prophetic texts suggest that other criteria must be considered for dating Isaianic texts than simply comparing the events mentioned in prophecies with the actual historical facts.[10]

(d) It is difficult to locate vague historical references in prophetic texts on a specific time scale. The siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 598 and 587 may have been experienced in a way similar to the Assyrian threat of 701. In the same manner, Egypt supported Judah on different occasions, creating parallel potential historical backgrounds for prophecies. Therefore, the question which of these situations (if any) is implied by a prophetic text calls for an open-minded historical inquiry.

(e) It is possible that the primary historical background of a text is overwritten by a secondary context of a later audience, so that it becomes difficult to differentiate between multiple historical contexts.[11]

(f) In some cases scholars observe a tendency of placing texts written at a later date in an earlier historical situation. This is most evident in narrative texts as Isa 36–39, but other cases must also be seriously considered.[12] For instance, while many exegetes believe that Isa 7:1–17 was composed during, or shortly after 733, a few argue that it actually derives from the (post-)exilic period.[13] The connections between Isa

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[9] Apart from the fall of Samaria, some scholars emphasise the Judaean impact of Sargon's campaign to Gaza in 720. Cf. Sweeney, "Sargon's Threat", 457-70; K. L. Younger, "Sargon's Campaign against Jerusalem – A Further Note", *Bib* 77 (1996) 108–10; De Jong, "Isaiah", 161–64.

[10] Kilian (126–27) assumed that the prophecy concerning the deportation of Egypt and Kush in Isa 20:4–6 probably referred to the deportation by Esarhaddon in the 7th century, and considered Isa 20 accordingly a post-eventum text. But Duhm (148) argued that Isa 20 was a genuine Isaianic prediction, exactly because it had never actually come to be fulfilled.

[11] This phenomenon is called telescoping, on which see Beuken, 27.

[12] On this aspect see also the remarks of E. Ben Zvi, "History and Prophetic Texts", in *History and Interpretation: Essays in Honour of John H. Hayes* (eds. M. P Graham et al.; JSOTSS 173; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 106–20.

[13] Kaiser, 20; Kilian, 162, 203–4; U. Becker, *Jesaja—von der Botschaft zum Buch*

36–39 and 7:1–17 are recognised on both sides, but with regard to the direction of influence, scholars arrive to contradictory conclusions.

(g) It is possible that certain texts are modelled on earlier prototypes to a greater or lesser extent. For example, the Moab prophecy of Jer 48 cites Isa 15–16 several times in a new historical context.[14] The question is how far these citations account for the historical background of later compositions?

(h) Texts looking historically informative may in fact be stereotypical. Isaiah 14:24–25 is sometimes related to the defeat of Assyria in 701 (Isa 36–37). Yet others consider the imagery of 14:24–25 too conventional (cf. Jer 28:2–4) to allow so far reaching historical conclusions.[15]

(i) The limits of poetry and history are not always easy to draw. In a study on Isa 10:28–32 Sweeney argued that this text reflects on a campaign of Sargon II in 720 B.C.[16] He believed that the list of place names inform the historically oriented reader about the route of the Assyrian military. Leaving the historical probability of an Assyrian attack against Jerusalem in 720 behind,[17] obviously the word plays in 10:28–32 put the artistic sensitivity of the interpreting archaeologist on trial.[18] This literary language urges the reader to be more cautious in historicising poetic texts (cf. Mic 1:10–15; Zeph 2:4).

(j) There is an ongoing debate between scholars with regard the historical value of names such as Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, or Edom. While Assyria is taken to refer to the historical empire of the 8th–7th centuries in most cases,[19] the pair Assyria and Egypt is argued to stand for the Seleucid and Ptolemaic Empires. Babylon is often assumed to serve as a chiffré for the personified evil, not less than Edom that is also presumed to function as a nickname for the late Nabatean kingdom.

(FRLANT 178; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 21–60.

[14] C. Balogh, "Oude en nieuwe profetie. De rol van de profetische traditie in de volkenprofetieën", in *Wonderlijk gewoon. Profeten en profetie in het Oude Testament* (ed. G. Kwakkel; Barneveld: De Vuurbaak, 2003), 120–24.

[15] On the different views concerning Isa 14:24–27, see section 3.4.2.1 below.

[16] Sweeney, "Sargon's Threat", 457–70. See also Younger, "Sargon's Campaign", 108–10; De Jong, "Isaiah", 162–63.

[17] For the historical problems related to this interpretation, cf. section 2.3.1.4. below. The theological problem with this interpretation is that it implies that Isa 10:28-32 is a post-eventum description of the Assyrian campaign, which is questionable, as is also the detachment of vss. 33–34, predicting the fall of Jerusalem, from the preceding verses. For this sense of 10:33–34 see, e.g., G. C. I. Wong, "Deliverance or Destruction? Isaiah x 33–34 in the Final Form of Isaiah x-xi", *VT* 53 (2003) 544–52.

[18] E.g. נָדְדָה מַדְמֵנָה, עֲנִיָּה עֲנָתוֹת, חָרְדָה הָרָמָה, מָלוֹן לָנוּ, עָבְרוּ מַעְבָּרָה.

[19] Cf. De Jong, "Isaiah", 33, including note 238.

(k) Some studies inquiring into the historical realities behind sections of the book of Isaiah occasionally downplay textual complexities or entirely ignored them. They assume that biblical texts are not much different from other compositions of the Near East, where the phenomenon *Fortschreibung* is either unknown, or exceptionally limited.[20] Yet if one reckons with the composite literary character of the Isaianic prophecies, with relocations, recontextualisations, insertions, augmentations, and other scribal phenomena, those will undoubtedly influence the historical interpretation of individual texts.

1.1.2. LITERARY RESEARCH ON THE BOOK OF ISAIAH AND ITS PROBLEMS

In the second half of the 20th century, previously neglected avenues opened before scholars. The fresh element in this approach is circumscribed in overviews of Isaiah-studies as a shift of attention from the person of the prophet to the book named after Isaiah. This change of perspectives coincided with changes in the field of hermeneutics where emphasis came to fall on the role of the reader of ancient texts in constructing meaning. The consequence of these developments was a fragmentation of methods and—above all—results, so that the aspiration for a coherent interpretation of Isaiah seemed again to have faded away irrevocably in favour of individual visions. On this colourful palette of Isaiah studies these individual visions tend to overshadow the common interest of those in search for an old fashioned historical reality behind the work of the prophet Isaiah.

Since the end of the 19th century, scholars usually treated Isa 1–66 as consisting of three more or less independent parts, as the works of three different authors, First, Second and Third Isaiah. The connection between these three parts was explained in rather mechanical terms. At the same time, inside the First Isaianic corpus, the prophecies presumed not to have derived from First Isaiah were identified only in a negative way as non-Isaianic, and were dated to the exilic or post-exilic periods. The emergence of tradition criticism created in some circles a new view on Isaiah. Scholars began to recognise not only an "Isaianic" flavour in "inauthentic" words, but also connections and parallels between various

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[20] So, for instance, R. L. Schultz, "How Many Isaiah's Were There and What Does It Matter? Prophetic Inspiration in Recent Evangelical Scholarship", in *Evangelicals and Scripture: Tradition, Authority and Hermeneutics* (eds. V. Bacote et al.; Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 168. Cf. J. H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982); Idem (ed.), *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985). See, however, De Jong, "Isaiah", 300–34.

parts of the book of Isaiah, topped later in the formulation of an Isaianic-school-theory in influential works of Mowinckel.[21] Nevertheless, many exegetes identifying intertextual connections in Isaiah have found the model of a prophetic circle increasingly inadequate to explain the development of the book. Some raised the question whether one can so easily isolate one part of the book without harming the other. By the end of the 20th century many exegetes agreed that neither part of Isaiah could be fully explained on its own. In other words, in the development of Isa 1–39 one can not only detect the hands of tradents working independently from the authors of Isa 40–66, but the authors of Isa 40–66 may also be responsible for the present form, organisation, and to a certain extent even the content of Isa 1–39.[22] Considering these developments, doubts whether Isa 1–39 would have ever existed as an independent book, have been formulated repeatedly.[23]

In early critical Isaiah research the prophet and his own words were highly esteemed, but those responsible for the preservation and augmentation of the Isaianic tradition were regarded as mere epigones of a genius master.[24] Mowinckel has already questioned the legitimacy of this approach. With the shift of attention from prophet to book, the literary, methodological and theological concerns of these anonymous followers, responsible for the preservation of the book of Isaiah over the centuries, began to intrigue the interpreters of the book more than ever before. The face of the epigone student dimmed away providing space for the eloquent scribe with talents comparable to that of his spiritual teacher.

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[21] Mowinckel argued that the Deutero- or Trito-Isaianic character of Isa 34–35 can be explained by the direct contacts with the circle of Proto-Isaiah. Cf. S. Mowinckel, *The Spirit and the Word: Prophecy and Tradition in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002; a slightly edited version of Mowinckel's *Prophecy and Tradition*, Oslo, 1947, by K. C. Hanson), 61–63, 138.

[22] For two earlier attempts, cf. L. J. Liebreich, "The Compilation of the Book of Isaiah", *JQR* 46 (1955–56) 259–77; 47 (1956–57) 117–38; J. Becker *Isaias—der Prophet und sein Buch* (SBS 30; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1968). For more recent visions, see, e.g., P. R. Ackroyd, "Isaiah i–xii: Presentation of a Prophet", in *Congress Volume* (eds. J. A. Emerton et al.; VTS 29; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 16–48; O. H. Steck, *Bereitete Heimkehr. Jesaja 35 als redaktionelle Brücke zwischen dem Ersten und Zweiten Jesaja* (SBS 121; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk), 1985; W. A. M. Beuken, "Jesaja 33 als Spiegeltext im Jesajabuch" *ETL* 67 (1991) 5–35; Williamson, *Book*; C. Balogh, "Blind People, Blind God: The Composition of Isaiah 29,15–24", *ZAW* 121 (2009) 48–69.

[23] R. Rendtorff, "Zur Komposition des Buches Jesaja", *VT* 34 (1984) 319; Sweeney, 41.

[24] Beyond Duhm, Cheyne, Procksch, and other contemporaries, this belief pervades some more recent works as well. Note Becker, "Jesajaforschung", 5.

Despite some critical points on which many scholars seem to agree, there remain essential details still in wait of further clarifications. One can distinguish between two types of literary approaches of the book of Isaiah, usually labelled as synchronic and diachronic.

In the field of Isaiah studies and commentaries, one is faced with a list of works approaching the book of Isaiah not merely as a whole, but also as one written with a unified concept. This reading is often characterised by a reduced awareness of, or even total disinterest in historical matters, such as the evolution and growth of the book through the centuries. The arguments for this final form (or holistic) reading derive not once from disillusionment concerning diachronic approaches.[25] It is assumed that Isaiah is "a unified work composed in the post exilic period", dated to the 5th century B.C.[26] Differences among final form readers do exist, however. For Watts the reader of the book is the 5th century Jew, but for Conrad it is the present reader.[27] By interpreting the text of Isaiah as an artwork void of authorial intentions (Conrad), or the vision as a modern theatre scene (Watts), biblical scholarship tends to become an art instead of science, produced by artists rather than scholars, requiring unbounded imagination sooner than pertinent knowledge.

Those who look for more in the book of Isaiah than pure artistic satisfaction may consider most of these studies inspiring, but ultimately unconvincing (after all art need not convince anyone). The fact that these readings do not account for the complexities of the text would disappoint those who find no delight in easily passing over textual difficulties. There is more to the meaning of a text than the final form, and everyone who strives to understand something of the formation of the book of Isaiah will find this approach a hermeneutical blind alley.

The diachronic literary analysis of the book of Isaiah promises more, but its success is dependent on a whole list of factors. Presumptions and premises play here, too, an important role. Following Wildberger and

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[25] Cf. Watts, xxiii on the "invaluable worth" of Wildberger's commentary, but one that "does not succeed in presenting an understandable interpretation of the book", one that would "come alive for the reader or student".

[26] Miscall, 11; Watts, xxxii; E. W. Conrad, "Reading Isaiah and the Twelve as Prophetic Books", in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (eds. C. C. Broyles & C. A. Evans; VTS 70; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 3–17.

[27] Cf. E. W. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 31. Conrad notes that the text as an object to be studied in its own right needs no reference "to external factors such as author intention and historical background" (27). On the other hand, Watts devotes a few pages to reconstruct the historical and social realities of the community reading Isaiah in the 5th century (Watts, xxix–xxxii).

Vermeylen,[28] one may distinguish between two trends.

First, it is assumed that the book is the product of different authors and groups of the post-exilic period. These circles inherited several short sayings from the 8th century and in subsequent redactional stages they were expanded to their present form. This trend is highlighted by names such as Kaiser, Kilian and Becker. Dating presumably non-Isaianic words to (very) late periods is not new. In this regard significant overlaps can be observed with the older commentaries of Duhm and Marti. However, the degree to which these three scholars ascribe words to Isaiah and to later writers differs considerably, although they all tend to assign a much smaller amount of text to the 8th century prophet than it is commonly done.[29] While Becker gives a redaction critical overview of this process trying to bring various redactional stages in connection with each other, Kaiser and Kilian essentially deal with small textual units without working out a consistent scheme for the development of the book. According to Kaiser, many prophecies derive from writers impressed by the image of the prophet Isaiah appearing in Isa 36–39, supposed to represent the work of the Deuteronomistic historian.

Second, a larger group of scholars assumes that the present form of the book is the result of gradual growth (*Fortschreibung*) that may have begun with the prophet and continued through the centuries by reinterpretations and recontextualisations. Exegetes believe to be able to trace back a significant amount of texts of this long post-Isaianic tradition to major moments from Jewish history, such as the days of Manasseh and Josiah (7th century, Assyrian era),[30] the Babylonian threat and the fall

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[28] Wildberger, 1529–36; J. Vermeylen, "L'unité du livre d'Isaïe", in *The Book of Isaiah—Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (ed. Idem; BETL 81; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), 17–26.

[29] For Kaiser the basic core is: 1*, the woes of 5:8ff, and a small part of Isa 28–31 (*Jesaja 1–12*, 19–27; *Jesaja 13–39*, 1–4). Later he also included 8:1–15*; 14:29–32*; 17:1–3 and 18:1–2* on this list. These independent prophecies were collected at the beginning of the 5th century and were influenced by the Deuteronomistic reception of Isaiah (Isa 36–39). Sections were added to the book until as late as the 2nd century B.C. Kilian takes his start from describing Isaiah as a prophet of doom (Isa 6). He attributes texts to Isaiah which coincide with this prophetic image. From Isa 13–23 he regarded 17:1–6*; 22:1b–3.12–14.15–18 as Isaianic. He dates 7:1–17 to the post-exilic period, as a text modelled on 36–39 (162, 203–4). According to Becker, Isaiah was essentially a prophet of salvation. Complying with this view, the core of the Isaianic collection is supposed to have consisted of 6:1–8*; 8:1.3–4*(16*); 17:1b–3; 18:1–2*; 20:3–4*; 28:1*.3.7b–10 (*Botschaft*, 286; "Jesajaforschung", 131).

[30] The first and most influential study that worked out the thesis of a 7th century edition in details is H. Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte in der Josiazeit. Israel und*

of Jerusalem (587 B.C.), the fall of Babylon (539 B.C.), and beyond in the Persian and Hellenistic periods.[31]

Not all of those working with these assumptions agree on the role of Isa 40–66 in the redaction of 1–39. While many believe that the entire book holds the key to understanding 1–39,[32] some still prefer to treat Isa 1–39 more or less independently from the rest of the book.[33]

There is also a third group of studies difficult to include under either the synchronic or the diachronic approaches. It may have implications for both, depending on its conclusions. It concerns articles or detailed studies with an intertextual concern, usually tracing a certain motif, theme, or catchword in the book, intending to highlight connections that the final readers of the book of Isaiah allegedly observed.[34]

Bringing the different views above in discussion with each other exposes their strengths and weaknesses. It is important to emphasise the heterogeneous character of literary approaches, which means that the problems appearing in one part of these studies may not be applicable to the other. The list below is neither generalising nor exhaustive.

(a) In reading Isaiah as an ancient book, we are far removed from the context in which it was interpreted by its primary audience. As a consequence, every reconstruction of the social, historical and religious

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Assur als Thema einer produktiven Neuinterpretation der Jesajaüberlieferung (WMANT 48; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1977).

[31] Contemporary with the dissertation of Barth is the study of J. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique. Isaïe, I-XXXV, miroir d'un demi-millénaire d'expérience religieuse en Israël* (ÉB; 2 vols.; Paris: Gabalda, 1977–78). Vermeylen also reckons with a 7th century edition of the book, but his goal is to reconstruct its development from the beginnings to the final phase.

[32] Cf. note 26 above. According to Sweeney, a 6th century edition of the book of Isaiah would have included the chapters 2–32*.35–55.60–62. Williamson believes that Deutero-Isaiah was responsible for among others 2:2–4; 8:21–23a; 11:11–16; 12, as well as for the relocation of 5:25–29. Steck ascribed Isa 11:11–16; 13:5–16; 24–27*; 30:18–26 (?); 34:2–4; 51:1–8.11–16; 52:3–6 (?); 62:10–12 to after the death of Alexander the Great (*Heimkehr*, 80).

[33] In a subsequent refinement of his previous study, Vermeylen argued that Isa 1–39 is framed according to the so called "eschatological" model, as those presumably followed by the Greek version of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, namely judgment on Judah (1–12), on the nations (13–27) and salvation to Israel (28–35) (Vermeylen, "L'unité", 28–34). See further Chapter 3 of this study.

[34] Rendtorff points to common concepts like מִשְׁפָּט/צְדָקָה, קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל, צִיּוֹן, יֵשַׁע/יְשׁוּעָה, etc. ("Komposition", 295–320). See also K. Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOTSS 65; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989); Z. Kustár, *"Durch seine Wunden sind wir geheilt". Eine Untersuchung zur Metaphorik von Israels Krankheit und Heilung im Jesajabuch* (BWANT 154; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002).

background remains to a large extent speculative, reason for which cau-
tion and self-control is a basic requirement. When reading different
studies arguing each for different literary connections between various
parts of the book, it becomes doubtful whether all these (often con-
tradictory) literary connections could be considered intentional allu-
sions. Without disregarding their importance, it seems that the pursuit
of motifs or allusions often leads to results with little practical useful-
ness. The significance of these discoveries in view of the composition of
the book of Isaiah is rarely worked out in a consistent manner.[35]

(b) What is a book? Undoubtedly, significant connections exist be-
tween various parts of the book of Isaiah. Still, the question is how far
these connections must necessarily lead to treating Isa 1–66 as one
book. After all, what do we mean by a book? It is this ultimate question
that Barton has made the subject of a short, but insightful and provoca-
tive inquiry.[36] He partially built his conclusions on an earlier paper of
Benjamin Sommer,[37] who contested that the holistic approach to Isaiah
would be congruent with the Jewish view of a book, as implied by many
literary critics. In contrast to this, in rabbinic exegesis Isaiah functions
"not as a book but as a collection of verses and pericopes".[38] Do we not
when pointing out plots, concentric, chiastic, mirroring, antithetic, etc.
structures impose a book model on the scroll of Isaiah that it actually
never intended to represent? It is commonly agreed that our conception

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[35] A point also made by H. G. M. Williamson, "Synchronic and Diachronic in
Isaian Perspective", in *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Method in Old
Testament Exegesis* (ed. J. C. de Moor; OTS 34; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 219–20,
and Berges, 16. Rendtorff argued that the question עַד־מָתַי אֲדֹנָי in the Isaianic
call narrative (6:11) is "open" to an answer that will be given in the second
part of the book ("Jesaja 6 im Rahmen der Komposition des Jesajabuches", in
*The Book of Isaiah—Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures, unité et com-
plexité de l'ouvrage* [ed. J. Vermeylen; BETL 81; Leuven: Peeters, 1989], 73–82).
But how this openness would materialise in the composition of the book of
Isaiah is a question which remains likewise open.

[36] J. Barton, "What Is a Book? Modern Exegesis and the Literary Conventions
of Ancient Israel", in *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel* (ed. J. C. de Moor; OTS
40; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1–14.

[37] B. D. Sommer, "The Scroll of Isaiah as Jewish Scripture, Or, Why Jews
Don't Read Books", *SBL Seminar Papers* 1996, 225–42.

[38] *Apud* Barton, "Book", 4. Barton writes: "… rabbinic exegesis regards Isaiah
as a 'book' in the sense that there is a scroll called 'Isaiah', but not in the sense
that Isaiah is a literary work with beginning, middle, and end, and internal
coherence, as we expect in a 'book' in our literary sense. By saying that there is
a book called 'Isaiah', rabbinic commentators do not imply that it possesses
unity of theme or closure in its literary form, only that there is a collection of
verses and paragraphs written by Isaiah and gathered together in one place."

of what an author is differs significantly from the view of the ancients. Is this not valid also for our vision of what a book was in antiquity? Moreover, how should we imagine the reading process? How should we suppose ancient readers recognised the rich connections between different catchwords and metaphors that modern exegetes signalise, many of which can only be detected by reading backwards?

(c) Although the relationship between the three divisions of Isaiah is evident, questions remain with respect to this book-like structure. (1) First, what kind of relationship ties the three parts together? There are highly significant connections between Isaiah on the one hand and Amos, Micah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel on the other. Yet these connections are insufficient to treat them as one book.[39] Does the mere proximity of Isa 40–66 lend additional and sufficiently strong support to these chapters to conclude that they form a literary unit with the first part of the book, i.e. a unit with a defined structure and perspective? (2) Second, it is more than curious that superscriptions and other text-structuring division markers (often related with editorial activity) are so richly represented in the first part of the book, but are almost entirely absent in the second and third (e.g. בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא). (3) Third, it appears that there are themes taken over from First Isaiah into the third part of the book only, but are absent in the second.[40] How does this relate to treating the three parts as one book? (4) Fourth, the second and third part of Isaiah is also grown out of independent prophecies, much like Isa 1–39. It is often on the level of independent prophecies that the connections with First-Isaianic texts are established. This suggests that intertextual allusions are not necessarily the work of the final editors, but those rather function at the earlier level of individual prophecies. In one word, the relationship between the three divisions of the book is evident, but what this exactly implies for the development of the book as a whole still needs further research, as a book model with a highly sophisticated structure can inadequately explain the difficulties.[41]

(d) Perhaps the most often applied method in dating texts in literary and redaction critical studies is the evaluation of the vocabulary and of lexical parallelisms. This practice is not free of problems, however. (1) First, when dating texts, scholars often look for the vocabulary that

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[39] Cf. also G. I. Davies, "The Destiny of the Nations in the Book of Isaiah", in *The Book of Isaiah—Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures, unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (ed. J. Vermeylen; BETL 81; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 119.

[40] See, for instance, מִשְׁפָּט/צְדָקָה, הַר צִיּוֹן. Cf. L. Boadt, "Re-Examining a Preexilic Redaction of Isaiah 1–39", in *Imagery and Imagination in Biblical Literature: Essays in Honor of Aloysius Fitzgerald, F.S.C.* (eds. L. Boadt & M. S. Smith; CBQMS 32; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 2001), 178–79.

[41] Cf. D. Carr, "Reaching for Unity in Isaiah", *JSOT* 57 (1993) 76–77.

those share with other passages. The premises concerning the date of one pericope guide the conclusions regarding the date of the related text. Difficulties arise, however, due to disagreements on the date of the reference passage. (2) Second, it is even more important how conclusions are drawn from lexical parallelism. The appearance of the term אֶרֶץ in Isa 14:26 and 18:3 is taken by some as implicitly giving a universalistic (and consequently post-exilic) flavour to those poems. Furthermore, others regard the term עֵצָה in 14:26 as an evidence of a late link with wisdom literature, considering the author a sage or a scribe.[42] But is it legitimate to draw so far reaching conclusions based on virtually neutral terminology? In many cases the parallelism with other texts seems to be based on much insignificant (including stereotypical) material. This also means that not all vocables appearing in later books of the Old Testament necessarily mean that earlier text using them should likewise be dated as late. (3) Third, what kind of dependence (if any) does lexical parallelism presuppose? The results are evaluated almost generally in terms of contemporariness without accounting for the possibility that the two texts may be separated from each other by decades or even centuries.[43] If there is any relationship, what exactly is the direction of influence?[44] (4) Fourth, consistency is much necessitated. For while in one case the lack of "Isaianic" vocabulary would account for the spurious nature of a text, for other authors the appearance of Isaianic elements would be an indication of questionable origin.[45]

(e) Scholars often feel tempted to ascribe similar methods to the

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[42] See, e.g., W. Werner, *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Vorstellung vom Plan Yahwes* (BZAW 173; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988).

[43] E.g., Werner's discovery of the "plan of YHWH"-motif in late texts of the Bible leads him to conclude that virtually every text containing this motif is contemporary and late (Werner, *Plan Yahwes*). See further also the observations of Hardmeier, "Jesajaforschung", 14–16; H. G. M. Williamson, "In Search of a Pre-exilic Isaiah", in *In Search of Pre-exilic Israel* (ed. J. Day; JSOTSS 406; London: Continuum, 2004), 191–95.

[44] Becker detected connections between Isa 10:5–11* and 36:18–20; 37:10–13. From this he draws his conclusion that Isa 10 was influenced by Isa 36 and 37 (Becker, *Botschaft*, 209; Idem, "Jesajaforschung", 130). Note also the opposing views in dating Isa 7:1–17 in relation to Isa 36–39 in Becker, "Jesajaforschung", 124, and J. Barthel, *Prophetenwort und Geschichte. Die Jesajaüberlieferung in Jes 6–8 und 28–31* (FAT 19; Tübingen: Mohr, 1997), 63.

[45] The lack of Isaianic names for God assumed to be typical for Isaiah leads Wildberger to conclude that Isa 14:4–23 is spurious (542). However, on Isa 19 Kaiser comments (83): "Die zahlreichen Rückgriffe auf andere Stelle unseres Buches zeugen nicht für Jesaja als ihren Autor, sondern die Arbeit eines in den Gedanken des Buches lebenden Frommen." (cf. also Kilian, 120).

same author. E.g., from the connections between Isa 21 and 22, Zapff concluded that Isa 21 was written in view of 22. He thought similarly about the relationship between Isa 22 and 23. He believes that Isa 21 and 23 were probably composed and inserted on their present place by the same author.[46] But why should these connections imply common authorship? Is it impossible that Isa 21 and 23 were written independently from Isa 22 and were inserted exactly on this place because of concepts appearing in all these texts, regarded later as binding themes or connecting catchwords?

1.1.3.   THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON THE BOOK OF ISAIAH AND ITS PROBLEMS

The relationship between literary and theological issues is so strong that discussions of one aspect unavoidably implicate the other. In reconstructing the development of the book of Isaiah, scholars are strongly influenced by preconceptions concerning the theology of authors and editors. The question whether Isaiah was a prophet of judgment only, or a prophet of salvation, or a combination of both is ultimately the vision that would define which particular passages would be attributed to whom in the long history of the Isaianic tradition. On the other hand, the reconstruction of the theological views is to a large extent based on texts from the book, placing the exegete in a position where it becomes extremely difficult to avoid the real dangers of circular reasoning.

(a) *Isaiah as a prophet of doom.* Isaiah—as most prophets of his era named in the Bible—is most generally recognised to have proclaimed messages of judgment. Indeed some authors, such as Kilian, describe Isaiah as exclusively a prophet of doom. According to this opinion, Isaiah did not simply summon his people to repentance, but he predicted unavoidable doom.

This view of the prophet gives a consistent picture and leads to a hermeneutical key which may help scholars to reconstruct a literary history of the book. Nevertheless, significant questions remain. Does this consistency comply with the activity of the real prophet Isaiah? Is it not too idealistic and one-sided to assume that regardless of internal (the prophetic mind, the prophet's commission) and external factors (historical situations, identity of the audience, reception of the prophetic word), Isaiah always (for more than four decades!) and everywhere proclaimed the same message of doom? In answering these questions one may refer to the evidence provided by the book of Isaiah, as well as the

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[46] B. M. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie – Jes 13 und die Komposition des Jesajabuches. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der Redaktionsgeschichte des Jesajabuches* (FzB 74; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1995), 295–96.

broader religious context in which these texts were born.

In describing Isaiah exclusively as a prophet of judgment, the commission narrative in Isa 6 often plays an important role. Yet how central is Isa 6 for the theology of the whole book of Isaiah? Insofar as it is considered a retrospective summary, this may certainly give a rough picture of how the message of the prophet was ultimately received.[47] At the same time, the paradigmatic elaboration of the theme of Isa 6:9–10 in the story of Ahaz where the *positive* message of the prophet is observed with reluctance and obvious lack of enthusiasm, may mean that even this, on the first sight somewhat curious commission in 6:9–10, does not exclude fairly positive messages of exhortation (cf. Isa 8:1–4). Furthermore, the commission narrative is concerned with the nation (עַם) as a whole. It should not be surprising, therefore, that a restricted circle in 8:11–17 is addressed with a completely different message. Obviously, the message of Isaiah cannot be viewed independently from the reception of its audience. Finally, there is some sense of ambiguity in the closure of Isa 6 itself. Regardless whether 6:13b is a later elaboration, this text predicts the future as one of salvation after judgment.

As for the broader religious context, we have a significant amount of extra-biblical sources to conclude that the phenomenon of prophecy existed in Canaan as well as elsewhere in the Near East. The prophets whom we meet in this context are almost exclusively prophets of salvation for the primary audience (mostly the king), and prophets of judgment so far as foreigners are concerned. Therefore, the fact that prophecy of salvation *could* have been delivered before the king or otherwise by an 8th century prophet is beyond discussion. The only question is whether the prophet Isaiah, too, prophesied salvation.

(b) *Isaiah as a prophet of salvation.* Uwe Becker and more recently M. J. de Jong argued that Isaiah should not be seen as an exceptional figure, but as one among the ancient Near Eastern prophets, who much like those cared for the well-being of the state and the nation. He obviously uttered prophecies of salvation in front of the king and the people threatened by foreigners (e.g., Isa 8:1–4; 17:1–3). Indeed, he was a prophet of salvation rather than doom.[48] Becker maintained that the

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[47] The question whether Isa 6:9–10 should be regarded as a commission or as a retrospective conclusion in view of the prophet's experience, received a lot of attention. Hardmeier cuts a long discussion short arguing that however it may have been, the present recorded form of Isa 6:9–10 is indeed a retrospective view on history ("Jesajaforschung", 23–24, 28).

[48] In contrast to Becker, De Jong does not maintain that Isaiah was merely a prophet of salvation. He did utter threatening oracles against specific groups (political and religious leaders) (see De Jong, "Isaiah", 38; cf. also note 71 below). Yet Isaiah always supported "the state" and never predicted that Judah

historical narratives describing the prophet as announcing deliverance are closer to reality than the image of the messenger of doom, reconstructed from the book, which was rather a post-587 adaptation of an earlier picture of Isaiah.[49]

While Becker and De Jong argue convincingly that salvation prophecy forms a constitutive part of the Isaianic message, their dealing with critical prophecies presents some important difficulties.[50] Becker's late dating of passages written in a critical tone, such as Isa 30:1–5 or 31:1–3,[51] is very problematic.[52] Moreover, their argumentation in assigning a late date to prophecies of doom often lacks convincing exegetical support and leads to some arbitrary conclusions.[53]

Placing Isaiah alongside other prophets of the Near East hardly requires any excuse. Yet clearly, we do not only find a critical potential in extra biblical prophecy itself,[54] but this corpus also convinces us that these critical words may have been uttered by the same prophets, who otherwise predicted salvation, against the same audience, to whom they proclaimed deliverance on other occasions.[55] In fact, the ambiguity of

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with its inhabitants would collapse in a political cataclysm.

[49] Becker, *Botschaft*; Becker in M. Köckert, U. Becker and J. Barthel, "Das Problem des historischen Jesaja", in *Prophetie in Israel* (eds. I. Fischer et al.; ATM 11; Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2001), 117–18. So also De Jong, "Isaiah", 34, 62.

[50] For discussions of Becker's view, cf. W. Dietrich, "Jesaja - ein Heilsprophet?", *ThR* 64 (1999) 324–37; Barthel in Köckert, et al., "Problem", 125–36; Williamson, "Pre-exilic Isaiah", 198–99.

[51] Becker, *Botschaft*, 245–263.

[52] See, however, De Jong, "Isaiah", 70–75 and section 4.3.2.1.

[53] For example, Becker accepts Isa 6:1–8 as Isaianic. But in order to fit his scheme, he drops vs. 5aβb, the reference to "the people of unclean lips", which would sound as a critical remark in the mouth of a prophet of salvation (cf. Becker, *Botschaft*, 88–89). Furthermore, as Barthel also noted, from a form critical point of view it is unlikely that a call narrative such as Isa 6 could come to an end in vs. 8, without presenting the actual prophetic commission (Barthel in Köckert, et al., "Problem", 128).

[54] See especially M. Nissinen, "Das kritische Potential in der altorientalischen Prophetie", in *Propheten in Mari, Assyrien und Israel* (eds. M. Köckert & M. Nissinen; FRLANT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 1–33; De Jong, "Isaiah", 209, 239.

[55] Esarhaddon's succession treaty warns against prophets (*ragimmu*), ecstatics (*muḫḫû*), or inquirers of the divine word (*mār šāʾilu amat ili*) who could incite to rebellion against the king (SAA ii 6:116–17; *PPANE* 102). This may refer to the same prophets that otherwise predicted him success. The ambiguity of the message and its reception are related (cf. *PPANE* 1:13–28). See also De Jong, "Isaiah", 239: "The same prophetic voice that encouraged and legitimised the king, could also formulate demands on him, or even choose the side

the prophetic message is implied in Mic 3:5, for instance, where Micah accuses some of his contemporaries that they lead the nation of YHWH astray by proclaiming peace to those feeding them and war against those who do not. The contrast of שָׁלוֹם and מִלְחָמָה in this text is exactly what prophecy of salvation and prophecy of doom is about (cf. Jer 28:9).[56]

De Jong's thesis that Isaiah militated for the well-being of the Judaean state is too vague to explain the exclusion of certain texts from the Isaianic repertoire, especially those critical about the king (Ahaz), as well as the people of Judah and Jerusalem.[57] The definition of what "well-being" means can be anything but objective. For Isaiah's opponents, the Judaean nationalist leaders, including their supportive prophets (who were also part of the same system as Isaiah was),[58] caring for the well-being of the state meant being free from Assyria and being free from unnecessary tribute expenses.[59] Irrespectively whether or not one considers these conflicts between Isaiah and the Judaean leaders and their prophets as ideologically motivated, the pure existence of these conflicts underlines just how indefinable and how subjective the issue of "the well-being of the state" is.

De Jong pays insufficient attention to the strong, or—one could even say—exclusive royal focus and royal ideology of the Assyrian prophecies in comparison to the Isaianic material, which was not preserved in royal archives and has also a broader interest in the life of Judah in general.[60] He rightly observes that "prophets were part of a system, which means that they spoke and acted for the benefit of social and cosmic stability".[61] But this prophetic function does *not* exclude threatening criticism against this system. Such criticism is indeed not

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of his adversaries."

[56] (Post-)exilic texts also clearly emphasise the divergence between prophets who proclaim salvation and the messengers of doom standing in constant antagonism with them before 587 B.C.

[57] See his concise analysis of selected texts in De Jong, "Isaiah", 41–130.

[58] Cf. Isa 28:7b–10, which is attributed to Isaiah by De Jong, "Isaiah", 185–86.

[59] Indeed, I believe that the unpreserved prophecies supporting the anti-Assyrian uprising and policy of Judah would provide a better parallel to the New-Assyrian prophecies than the Isaianic texts. The collapse of the Judaean state may explain why it was the Isaianic critical prophecies and not the anti-Assyrian and pro-rebellion prophecies of his adversaries which were passed on to later generations. But it is difficult to explain why critical words were composed and given into the mouth of Isaiah after 587, when he had always strived for the preservation of his nation.

[60] See De Jong, "Isaiah", 270, where he discusses some differences between the Judaean and Assyrian societies.

[61] De Jong, "Isaiah", 239.

the prediction of irrevocable doom (i.e. not an *ex eventu* prophecy), as it was sometimes assumed,[62] but by criticising Judah and Jerusalem, or its king, Isaiah was simply protecting the society which he was part of "by revealing a threatening disaster" that he wished to avoid, and by this he "was only doing his job".[63]

Later editors of the book of Isaiah were undisturbed not only by a prophet who proclaimed salvation (as Becker noted), but also by an Isaiah, who pronounced *both* judgment and salvation (cf. Isa 38:1.5). In the time of these authors (7th–6th century?) this seems to be a rather normal phenomenon, which raises the question how far this ambiguity is irreconcilable with an 8th century prophet like Isaiah?[64]

Finally, if "the outcome of 701 was disastrous for Judah", since "a great part of Judah's territory had been ravaged",[65] then these events must have presumably had a much deeper influence upon the Isaianic

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[62] This is rightly questioned by De Jong, "Isaiah", 251. Cf. also R. G. Kratz, "Das Neue in der Prophetie des Alten Testaments", in *Prophetie in Israel* (eds. I. Fischer et al.; ATM 11; Münster: LIT Verlag 2001), 19 (cf. also 21), who argues similarly: "Das drohende oder herbeigesehnte Unheil ist noch nicht als göttliches Strafgericht zu sehen, das den natürlichen Verkehr zwischen Gott und Volk unterbricht. Es fordert vielmehr die Anrufung Gottes heraus, der Unheil von seinem Volk abwendet und es auf die Feinde lenkt".

[63] De Jong, "Isaiah", 238. Curiously and somewhat confusingly (with respect to the principal thesis of his book), a similar interpretation is given also by De Jong on the prophecy of Mic 3:12, cited by Jer 26:18: "because of you Zion (!) will be plowed as a field". De Jong notes on this text that "in announcing disaster the prophet did not stand in opposition to the establishment, but served the interest of king and state" ("Isaiah", 263). While this example underlines that the fulfilment of the prophetic pronouncement of doom is conditional, it was rather supposed to threaten the leaders and urge them to change their policy, yet, at the same time, Mic 3:12 is also a clear case of a prophecy of judgment which predicts the collapse of the state and its inhabitants.

The main thesis of De Jong that Isaiah was a prophet supporting the state has become overemphasised due to the fact that he started his analysis from, and focused his attention too narrowly on a one-sided description of Isaiah by some scholars as free of the system, and as a lonely fighter of his time, as representative of a "unique" form of prophesying (cf. "Isaiah", 20–24, 250).

[64] Based on extra-biblical evidence, De Jong rightly questioned the either/or approach to the issue of judgment and salvation. However, he goes too far to conclude that "the categories of *Heilsprophetie* and *Unheilsprophetie* are better abandoned from descriptions of prophecy in the ancient Near East" ("Isaiah, 239"). The categories *prophet* of judgment and salvation may be abandoned (the one need not be played off against the other), but not the *prophecy* of judgment and salvation as global designations of the content of utterances.

[65] De Jong, "Isaiah", 177.

tradition than Becker and De Jong apparently admit.

(c) *The ambivalence in the message of Isaiah*. The strong, albeit one-sided argumentations regarding the theological view of the historical Isaiah mentioned above should both be taken seriously, however. Basically two models have been proposed to deal with the dichotomy of salvation and judgment in the prophecy of the 8th century Isaiah.[66]

First, it is argued by some that prophecy of salvation must be regarded as implicit criticism, as *Gegenwartskritik*. This means that ambiguity is in fact only apparent and not real, so that the image of Isaiah as a prophet of judgment can be sustained.[67] It is doubtful, however, that texts like Isa 8:1–4 were meant to be read as implicit criticism. Moreover, salvation prophecy in its Near Eastern form lacks critical elements.

Therefore, scholars more often explain the ambiguity with the help of a chronological scheme assuming that the message was modified in time according to the historical situation, the reception of the audience, or the changing attitude of Assyria.[68] For example, Høgenhaven argued that 722 B.C., the year when Israel fell, was decisive for the thinking of the prophet. Isaiah, who had formerly proclaimed salvation, became from that moment a messenger of judgment.[69] De Jong emphasises the role of the audience by maintaining that Isaiah uttered promises of salvation for his people and king when the welfare of the state was threatened by external enemies (e.g. in Isa 10:5-15), but also messages of judgment (but only) against the leaders and royal advisors whose domestic and foreign policy posed a threat to the security and well-being of the country.[70]

Even if the ambivalence of the Isaianic theology cannot be solved so simply,[71] it is important to reckon with it in each individual case.

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[66] Cf. Becker, *Botschaft*, 11–12; Köckert in Köckert, et al., "Problem", 107–11.

[67] So, for example, H.-J. Hermisson, "Zukunftserwartung und Gegenwartskritik in der Verkündigung Jesajas", *EvTh* 33 (1973) 54–77. Cf also Barth, *Jesaja-Worte*, who found this supported by Isa 1:21–26, the *Denkschrift*, and 28:14ff.

[68] Dietrich, *Politik*; G. Fohrer, "Wandlungen Jesajas", in *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Texten und Themen* (BZAW 155; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1981), 11–23.

[69] Høgenhaven, *Gott*, 111.

[70] So already Barthel in Köckert, et al., "Problem", 132.

[71] It is questionable whether a great distinction can be made between the criticism against the leaders responsible for the political decisions (which De Jong assumes were authentic Isaianic prophecies) and the criticism of the king and part of the Judaean society supporting these leaders and their policy (which he considers post-587 insertions). The ordinary people of Jerusalem had to be convinced, too, to support an anti-Assyrian uprising, for this also implied war and fighting in case of a retributive Assyrian campaign. This means that the critical words addressed to the leaders were also directed against those support-

Becker's tendency to exclude this possibility by arguing that such an approach makes the message dependant on the person of the prophet rather than the book,[72] should be seriously questioned. Salvation and judgment are not necessarily contradictory as already noted above. Diviners (in general) in the Near East could deliver both positive and negative messages, in conformity with the occasion. And indeed, the diviners were expected to tell what had been revealed to them from time to time. If Becker's remark that Assyrian texts were *Gelegenheits-prophetien*,[73] prophecies of occasional character, is taken seriously in case of biblical prophecies as well, it makes the changes in the message of Isaiah even more related to the occasion.[74] Therefore, considering internal and external factors, these pronouncements must be analysed individually and should not be rejected from the outset as non-Isaianic.

(d) A final remark concerns the theological factor in the process of edition of the book. In dealing with intertextual connections between various passages, it is common to reconstruct their date based on the parallelism of theological ideas. This is again a problematic point. (1) As reports testify, the pre-exilic era was not free of conflicts between different groups and opposite voices. The question is therefore whether reconstructed editorial layers experienced as contrasting, such as assigning Assyria a positive or a negative role, automatically imply consecutive dates, as often assumed. Or is it also possible that anti-Assyrian prophecies derive from prophets contemporary with Isaiah and were included later into the Isaianic collection?[75] (2) How far do similar theological views imply a common date for parallel passages? Does the motif of the plan against the entire earth (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ) in Isa 14:26 point to common authorship with the similarly focused Isa 13, dated in the post-exilic period?[76] Strikingly, the foreign nation prophecies of Jeremiah contain additions of salvation prophecies (46:26; 48:47; 49:6.39), which look very similarly, yet derive from different eras.[77] A closer example from Isaiah is the divine name קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל appearing in the 8th century,

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ing them, and vice versa. Nevertheless, Isa 8:11–17 does suggest that the message of Isaiah differentiates between various audience groups.

[72] Becker, *Botschaft*, 11.

[73] Becker in Köckert, et al., "Problem", 118.

[74] So also Barthel in Köckert, et al., "Problem", 132.

[75] Becker questions whether the *Völkerkampf*-motif (Isa 8:9–10; 17:12–14) is conceivable in a 7th century setting ("Jesajaforschung", 128–29). However, reckoning with various groups in Judah, including those related to the cult, from where this motif is supposed to originate, his objections sound artificial.

[76] For this rather common way of arguing, cf., e.g., Zapff, *Prophetie*, 292.

[77] Only Jer 49:39 appears in the LXX, which is assumed to go back to a Hebrew text version which is older than the MT.

as well as in later texts. (3) As noted, Isa 36–39 suggests that not long after Isaiah died he was received as a prophet who had delivered anti-Assyrian prophecies. The question is not only how far this later interpretation may correspond to the "real" Isaiah, but also whether the apparently conflicting Isaiah-traditions should be interpreted in terms of dialogue or debate between more or less contemporary groups militating for different ideologies,[78] or rather as a recontextualisation of earlier judgment messages that under other circumstances may have even been interpreted as implicit promises of salvation.[79]

1.2.   THE CORPUS ISAIAH 13–23(24–27) IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

After presenting dominant tendencies, results, problems and perspectives of previous scholarly inquiries into the book of Isaiah, I shall focus now on research conducted on the literary, theological and historical setting of one segment of this book, namely Isa 13–23.[80]

Ancient and modern scholars alike agree that the structure of the book of Isaiah—for the sake of compatibility with early critical research on the book, I refer to Isa 1–39 only—is very complex. Mowinckel observes "eine sehr große Planlosigkeit" in the composition of Isa 1–35.[81] Karl Marti's description of the book as "eine kleine Bibliothek prophetischer Schriften" (xvii) sounds less desperate, but hardly more promising. Attempts to simplify this complex structure to an assumed three level stratification of judgment on Israel, judgment on the nations, salvation to Israel argued to parallel other prophets (LXX Jeremiah, Ezekiel)[82] are widespread, but the convenience of this model remains questionable.[83]

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[78] On the nations as a theme in Isaiah, Davies notes: "… on this matter there are harsh contradictions between 'positive' and 'negative' passages, and the book is more like a billboard on which different political parties or religious groups daub their slogans one on the top of the other…" ("Destiny", 98–99). Berges also writes: "Das Jesajabuch in seiner Endgestalt ist ein 'eingefrorener Dialog' zwischen verschiedenen jüdischen Gruppen in nachexilischer Zeit, die um die Bedeutung des Zion für sich und die Völker kämpfen." (47).

[79] This latter possibility is strongly implied by Jer 26:18–19 assuming that piety can *turn* prophecies of judgment into prophecies of salvation. Cf. also Isa 6:11–13 that leaves the door open for post-disaster salvation prophecies.

[80] The proposed order, literary, theological and historical, reflects the predisposition of recent research, which takes its starting point from literary issues.

[81] S. Mowinckel, "Die Komposition des Jesajabuches. Kap. 1–39", *AcOr* 11 (1933) 269–70.

[82] E.g. Vermeylen, "L'unité", 32–33; Zapff, *Prophetie,* 301–2; O. Kaiser, *Der Gott des Alten Testaments. Theologie des Alten Testaments. Teil 3: Jahwes Gerechtigkeit* (UTB 2392; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 82.

[83] On the problems of this division, see e.g. O. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte*

On the one hand, the book contains significant speeches of judgment against Judah not only in Isa 1–12, but also in 13–23 and beyond. On the other hand, pronouncements of salvation are scattered throughout the book, including Isa 1–12 and 13–23, not only in the section following Isa 23. Neither Isa 24–35(36–39) nor 28–35(36–39) can be treated as the expected "third part", not to mention as a salvation prophecy. At best these could be labelled as miscellaneous material. The idea of Wildberger that Isa 13–23 was included between Isa 12 and 24 (28) simply in order to occupy a middle position as similar collections of Jeremiah (LXX), Ezekiel, or Zephaniah, without any particular motivation,[84] does not sound convincing either for structure oriented readers.

> In contrast to older views which treated Isa 24–27 as an independent booklet inside the Isaianic collection (cf. Isa 34–35), recent scholars tend to regard Isa 13–27 as one literary composition.[85] Some observe a close relationship between Isa 24 and 13 believed to underline this unity.[86] The function of the songs in 24–27 is supposed to be similar to the song of Isa 12, also closing a previous unit.
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> As it shall be discussed below, we encounter several editorial concepts in the present organisation of the book of Isaiah. The main concern of 13–23 is in the first instance the nations in general. Given that subcollections of prophecies in Isa 13–23 commonly begin with a מַשָּׂא-heading, it goes without saying that this collection can form a unit in itself, as also do the הוֹי prophecies in Isa 28–33.[87] At least from this perspective the collection would not be harmed if it was analysed separately from Isa 24–27. On a further editorial level one may talk about some kind of "unity" between Isa 24–27 and 13–23. One may detect a certain degree of intentionality in placing Isa 24–27 after 13–23, hence establishing Isa 13–23 as the context in which 24–27 would be interpreted. The ending of the first collection in Isa 12 with a song is here possibly editorially paralleled by the songs of Isa 25–27.[88]

Testament (3rd. ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1964), 410; P.-M. Bogaert, "L'organisation des grands recueils prophétiques" in *The Book of Isaiah—Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures, unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (ed. J. Vermeylen; BETL 81; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 147–53.

[84] Wildberger, 1562.

[85] E.g. Berges, 139; Seitz, 118–19; Beuken, 21.

[86] E.g. Vermeylen, "L'unité", 30–31; Seitz, 118; Berges, 143–44.

[87] Cf. G. Stansell, "Isaiah 28-33: Blest Be the Tie that Binds (Isaiah Together)", in *New Visions of Isaiah* (eds. R. F. Melugin & M. A. Sweeney; JSOTS 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 68–103; C. Balogh, "'He Filled Zion with Justice and Righteousness': The Composition of Isaiah 33", *Bib* 89 (2008) 478–79.

[88] The psalm of Hezekiah in Isa 38:9–20 could be the closing song of deliverance of the third section beginning in 28:1. Note the key term יֵשַׁע in Isa

In Isaiah-studies, the text of Isa 24–27 is considered the result of a complex literary growth.[89] It is assumed that in its present location following the prophecies on the nations this pericope deals with the fall of 'Babylon', the personification of the world rising against YHWH. Nevertheless, some parts of Isa 24–27 suggest that the unnamed city was originally Jerusalem (or Samaria?).[90] The term הָאָרֶץ that appears often in this section is ambiguous and can refer to both 'land' and 'world'. This provided an opportunity for the once Judah/Israel-centred text to be reinterpreted in a universal perspective. In what follows, I shall confine myself to the analysis of the earlier collection, Isa 13–23 without denying their relationship with Isa 24–27.

There is hardly any doubt for exegetes, both old and new, that from a literary point of view Isa 13–23 was designed to be a collection of certain types of prophecies. Zapff formulated two important questions that every literary investigation of this corpus has to address. First, what kind of collection is Isa 13–23? Is the name of prophecies concerning foreign nations suitable for this section of the book of Isaiah? Second, if Isa 13–23 was designed to be a collection, how can we explain the divergences in the superscriptions inside this corpus?[91]

While Isa 13–23 is often considered as a collection of foreign nation prophecies, and as such compared to similar parts in other prophetic books, some questioned the suitability of this designation because certain prophecies, like Isa 22, do not address foreign nations in the way that most other prophecies do. Moreover, other sections of Isa 13–23 have a Judaean audience rather than a foreign nation in view.[92] Kaiser tried to solve this difficulty by assuming that the insertion of Isa 22 on its present place was a later development in the formation of the book. It was the work of a proto-apocalyptic author, who regarded Isa 13–23 as the description of the universal judgment in which the whole world will undergo.[93] Wildberger, on the other hand, assumed that among prophecies on the foreign nations, Isa 22 presented Judah as one of those nations, in this sense following the literary structure of Amos 1–2 in which the prophecies against foreign nations are closely connected with the

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38:20, also attested in the song of 25:9 and יְשׁוּעָה appearing in 12:2.3; 25:9; 26:1.18. ישע may allude to the name of Isaiah, the author of the book.

[89] Höffken, *Stand*, 127.

[90] The sins mentioned in Isa 24:5 (עָבְרוּ תוֹרֹת חָלְפוּ חֹק הֵפֵרוּ בְּרִית עוֹלָם) allude to the nation of the Torah and the covenant (cf. 2 Kgs 17–18). The destruction of 'the city' is presented as the fulfilment of the prophecy against Israel in Isa 17:6 (cf. 24:13). Further references to Isa 17 appear in Isa 27:6–11 (cf. 3.4.2.4).

[91] Zapff, *Prophetie*, 279.

[92] Hayes & Irvine, 221; Ohmann, 60; Berges, 139.

[93] Kaiser, 119.

prophecies against Israel.[94] The relationship between Judah and the foreign nations, as well as the logic behind the collection in 13–23 still remains a further topic in the study of this book.

Discussions concerned with the formation of Isa 13–23 unavoidably stumble upon the differences in editorial markings of subsections of this collection. The frequently appearing מַשָּׂא-superscription is recognised as a significant connecting motif for the composition, whatever its origin may have been. But two important differences exist. First, while some superscriptions are formed according to the model מַשָּׂא + geographical name (Isa 13:1; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 23:1), others are obviously not of this type (21:1.11.13; 22:1), and even more distantly removed is Isa 14:28. Second, many individual prophecies either possess a different superscription (20:1) or none at all (14:24; 17:12; 18:1; 22:15).

Being aware of the dangers of oversimplification, one may distinguish between two tendencies in studies explaining the formation of Isa 13–23. On the one side, we find authors in whose view Isa 13–23 was composed from several text-blocks. On the other side, we have authors who maintain that this corpus has grown out from a basic core of Isaianic texts by continuous expansion with new material. The two approaches are occasionally combined.

Considering the differences in the system of superscription, Duhm delimited two small collections inside Isa 13–23: 14:28–20:6 (excluding 17:12–18:7) and 21–22+30:6–7, connected by a later redactor, and supplemented with the prophecies on Babylon (13:1–14:23) and Tyre (23). This same editor may have been responsible for attaching the מַשָּׂא-headings before the prophecies outside Isa 21–22. At an even later stage, 14:24–27 and 17:12–18:7 were inserted on a free space that the editor had found on this location, with no particular theological concern. The process lasted until as long as the 1st century B.C.[95]

A similar distinction between two subcollections, 21–22 and 15–20.23, is promulgated by Sweeney, but he dates the corpus much earlier. Isaiah 21–22 is derived from the 8th century, while 15–20.23 comes from the Josianic era, when the book appeared for the first time.[96]

In his study devoted to Isa 13–23, Jenkins argued that its final form is the result of a well-defined editorial arrangement. The collection contains prophecies from various periods, but it is not a ragbag of varied ma-

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[94] Wildberger, 809. Cf. also P. R. Raabe, "Why Prophetic Oracles Against the Nations", in *Fortunate the Eyes that See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday* (eds. A. B. Beck et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 239. On the prophecies of Amos, see 3.3.1. below.
[95] Duhm, 12–13.
[96] Sweeney, 215.

terial. The unity of the collection is expressed by the superscriptions as well as by grouping the oracles. Jenkins distinguishes between a collection against the neighbouring states, Philistia, Moab and Damascus (Isa 14:28–17:11) and one against the great powers, Kush, Egypt and Babylon (Isa 18–21). He believes that both of these smaller collections open with an oracle affirming the security of Zion (14:32; 18:7), and conclude with the description of an assault against Zion (17:12–14; 22:1–14). He excludes 13:1–14:23 and 23 from this scheme, while regarding 14:24–27 as a prelude to the prophecies concerning the nations.[97]

Moving beyond the limits of diachronic analysis, Berges' investigation into Isa 13–23 is started with an emphatic claim for a unified reading of 13–27. He pointed to a structure that divides the prophecies on the nations in two: 13–19 and 21–27. The section in the middle is the symbolic act of Isaiah in 20:1–6, actually an unusual text in this corpus. He pointed to five מַשָּׂא-superscriptions before Isa 20, and another five following it.[98] He noticed that 19:16–25 ended with six בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא expressions, just as 25:9–27:13 also contained six such formulas. Both collections begin with a prophecy on Babylon. Unfortunately, the reader is not informed why other בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא formulas (17:4.7.9; 20:6; 22:8.12.20. 25; 23:15) were not counted in this structuring, nor how exactly the—in his interpretation—anti-Babylonian prophecy in Isa 24 fits in this "disciplined chaotic" (Berges' term) structure of two sections beginning with one Babylon-oracle each.

In his diachronic redaction-critical scheme, Berges reckoned with Isaianic words enriched successively with other foreign nation prophecies from the period of the fall of the late New Babylonian kingdom.[99] The present form of the redaction goes back to an author in the Persian era. Eventual insertions of prophecies from the Hellenistic period are not excluded, but in his view those did not alter the overall structure of the composition. Berges reckoned with several major editorial revisions. Important among these are the (1) *Babylonisierung* (Babylon oriented redaction) and (2) *Zionisierung* (Zion oriented redaction) of the prophecies on the nations. These redactional layers show significant connections with later parts of Isaiah, as well as with other prophetic books

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[97] A. K. Jenkins, "'The Hand Stretched Out over All the Nations': A Study of the Presentation of the Isaiah Tradition in Is. 13-23". (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, London, 1985); Idem, "The Development of the Isaiah Tradition in Isaiah 13-23", in *The Book of Isaiah—Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures, unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (ed. J. Vermeylen; BETL 81; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 237–51. Cf. also Fischer, 136.

[98] Berges, 141–45. Cf. also Höffken, *Stand*, 123; Beuken, 19, 23–24, 40–41.

[99] Berges, 145. The primary collection, warning Manasseh against anti-Assyrian alliances, included 14:28–32*; 17*; 18*; 19*; 20*; 22* (149).

(e.g. Zechariah). (3) Berges notes the somewhat unique tone in Isa 19:16–25, which in contrast to Zion centric passages militates for individual YHWH-nations. (4) The scope of a following redaction is the wicked and the just in the perspective of the kingship of YHWH in Zion.

This theory of the successive expansion of earlier material is rooted in the studies of earlier scholars. Mowinckel explained the development of 13–23 in relation to its larger context, Isa 1–39. The first (A: Isa 6:1–9:6) and second (B: Isa 1) parts of the book of First Isaiah were expanded in the pre-exilic period by a third block (C: Isa 2ff) that also included authentic Isaianic prophecies which now appear in 13–23, such as 14:28–32; 17; 18; 20; 22. Because most of the prophecies on the nations were originally located in "the middle" of this C section, and because three other prophetic books also follow this pattern, the editors placed these prophecies here, distilling a new collection, Isa 13–23.[100]

Fohrer reckoned with an original Isaianic collection (14:24–27.28–32; 17:1–6; 18; 20; 22:1–14; 15–19) supplemented later by prophecies of various nature. The original collection was organised geographically, but this model was distorted by other prophecies introduced in this collection in the 5th century, when the מַשָּׂא-headings were composed.[101]

Wildberger distinguishes between authentic prophecies and other texts which appeared in a separate collection prior to being included in the Isaianic corpus. At some stage (in the exile) these originally independent prophecies were related to Isaiah and supplemented by the authentic material of Isaiah on the nations. The election of the prophecies to be included in the newly forming book was rather accidental.[102] According to Wildberger, the redactional process did not end with a first edition. The date that he assigns to Isa 19:16–25 suggests that this went on long after the exilic era.

The view that Isa 13–23 is formed as a constantly developing collection of prophetic words is the driving force behind the work of Vermeylen discussing the formation of the book of Isaiah. He reckons with a primary collection of Isaianic words continuously expanded from the 7th century to the Hellenistic period.[103]

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[100] Mowinckel, "Komposition", 278.

[101] Fohrer, 1:177.

[102] Wildberger, 1559–62.

[103] Vermeylen, 1:346–47. Vermeylen's scheme is this: (1) Isaianic: 14:24–25a.28–32*; 17:1–3*.4–6*; 18:1–2.4; 22:1b–3.7.12–14.15–18. (2) around 678: 14:26; 17:12–14a; 23:1–4; (3) Josianic additions: 22:19–23; (4) Deuteronomistic redaction: 17:9–10a; 19:1–4.11–15; 20:3; 22:4.8–11; (5) early 5th century: 13:1–22 and 24:1–13.18b–20 were added together with other universalistic passages: 15:1–8; 16:1.3–4a.6–12; 18:3.5–6; 19:5–10; 21:1–9*; 21:11–12a.13–15; 22:5–6; 23:13.15–16* (including the systematic addition of the מַשָּׂא-super-

Zapff basically follows Vermeylen with some modifications concern-
ing the provenance of individual passages.[104] The earliest form of the
book with its superscription in 14:28*[105] contained in his view prophe-
cies warning against anti-Assyrian alliances. In this edition, Isa 22 was
directly followed by the prophecies in 28–31. Isaiah 14–22* was not a
collection against foreign nations. The judgment on the nations was
part of Isaiah's vision regarding the impending doom of Judah. As for Isa
18, which is not included on his list of primary Isaianic prophecies,
Zapff adopts the two blocks model of Jenkins who distinguished between
prophecies against the neighbours and the great powers. Zapff argues
that at a later stage, Isa 14:25b–27 with its allusions to the former parts
of the book divided this early book of Isaiah into two parts: a former sec-
tion against Judah and a latter against the entire world. The original
scope of the collection, warning against anti-Assyrian alliances, was re-
interpreted as a collection of utterances against the nations in general.
This collection began with Isa 13 and ended either with 21, continued
in 22 and the prophecies in 28–31, or 23. Zapff hesitates concerning the
role of Isa 18, 21, 23, and to a certain extant Isa 20, and faces problems
in explaining the different superscriptions of 21:1.11.13; 22:1.

The theological function of individual prophecies and their primary
historical setting is less debated. In case of the Isaianic core, the widely
held opinion is that these prophecies were spoken out in the context of
anti-Assyrian alliances in the late 8th century. The nations addressed
participated in the revolt against Assyria. Isaiah was the advisor of the
king in international affairs, whose prophecies on the nations were sup-
posed to have served as implicit warnings against those rebelling against
Assur, the staff in the hand of YHWH.[106] But opinions concerning the
theological function and historical setting of subsequent collections and

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scriptions); (6) the pious and the wicked redaction (late): 14:3–4a.22–23 (and
the inclusion of the earlier song 14:4b–21); 14:27.30; 15:9; 16:2.13–14;
17:2b.3b.7–8.14b; 19:16–17; 21:2b.10.12b.16–17; 22:24–25; 23:15*.17–18. (7)
Hellenistic period: 14:1–2a?; 16:4b–5; 17:10b–11 (anti-Samaritan polemic);
18:7; 19:18–25. This *Fortschreibung*-model appears with some modifications by
Clements (4–7; Isaianic nucleus: 14:28–32, 17:1–6; 18:1–6; 20:1–6).
[104] Zappf's list is this: (1) Isaianic core: 14:28–29.31; 17:1–3; 20*; 22*; (2) As-
sur redaction (7th century): 14:24–25a; (3) shortly before 587: 15–16*; 19*;
22:8b–11; (4) late exilic: 13:1a.17–22a; 14:25b–27; 21:1–10; possibly 23* (at
this stage was composed the מַשָּׂא-superscription system); (5) post-exilic:
14:4b–21 (originally independent); 18 (? cf. 296); (6) universalistic redaction:
13:1b–16; (7) individual additions: 19:18–25 (Zapff, *Prophetie*, 286–99).
[105] The original form of 14:28 was בִּשְׁנַת־מוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אָחָז (*Prophetie*, 286, 289).
[106] For this rather generally shared opinion, cf. Clements, 4–7; Sweeney, 216;
Zapff, *Prophetie*, 286; Berges, 149, etc.

expansions of these prophecies differ significantly. Moreover, some recent studies argue that prophecies on the nations have preserved little if any historically valuable information and should be seen as theological productions of a later age. By defining the foreigner, authors reveal their hidden aspiration: the search for a new post-exilic Israelite identity.[107]

To sum up, the studies above make it clear that for the research of Isa 13–23 one may distil two important conclusions. (a) First, there is wide scholarly consensus with respect to the existence of an Isaianic core of prophecies concerning the nations. This means that we need to look closely at the individual prophecies as those were uttered in their original historical and theological context. (b) Second, most scholars also agree that Isa 13–23 contains texts from later periods (including updates and reinterpretations), which suggests that primary passages continued to function in later contexts as authoritative and appealing as they had originally been. Moreover, the fact that these prophecies were collected and received a proper place inside the book of Isaiah means that for later communities reading Isaiah this secondary context and meaning was of uttermost importance. Therefore, to consider that the reconstruction of a presumed original form of prophecies exhausts their entire function in Isa 13–23 and inside the book of Isaiah means not do justice to the present form and location of those prophecies.

1.3.   Isaiah 18–20 in the Collection of Isaiah 13–23

The three chapters in Isa 18–20 figure among those that have induced wide-ranging disagreements in the study of Isa 13–23. Below, I shall reflect briefly on specific problems related to these three chapters.

1.3.1. The Prophecy in Isaiah 18

Isaiah 18 is considered an extremely obscure prophecy in the Isaianic collection. Its ambiguous metaphors, vague references and encrypted message not surprisingly led to basically contradicting interpretations, though scholars generally agree that it deals with the nation Kush, living south of Egypt.

The second half of the 8th century was a transitional era in the history of all nations of the Near East. In Egypt this era was marked by the emergence of the 25th Dynasty, with rulers originating from the land of Kush, a territory formerly under Egyptian authority. In Assyria, Tiglath-pileser III needed vast material and human resources to keep his ever growing empire running. The small nations of the Levant gradually be-

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[107] Cf., e.g., Ch. Fischer, *Die Fremdvölkersprüche bei Amos und Jesaja* (BBB 136, Berlin: Philo, 2002).

came the victims of an insatiable Assyrian appetite. In the view of these kings, the only possibility for survival and maintenance of national independence was the formation of alliances with other nations threatened by Assyria. The chief supporter of this anti-Assyrian movement was expected to be Egypt and Kush, expected to provide the resources to hold up the Assyrian war machine. Isaiah 18 is most often assumed to be one of Isaiah's prophecies formulating his vision on these coalitions.

From a historical point of view, four different dates have been assigned to Isa 18. Some believe that the messengers of 18:2 are identical with the embassy of Hoshea, king of Israel, sent to So, king of Egypt.[108] Rarely, Isa 18 is dated to 720, when Egypt offered help for the revolting Gaza.[109] Others connect the prophecy to the revolt of Ashdod (713–11 B.C.), and place the oracle either before the rebellion or during it.[110] A fourth group of scholars believe it was the events in preparation of Sennacherib's attack in 701 that inspired this prophecy.[111]

The literary research on Isa 18 concentrated on two problems. First, regarding textual integrity, most scholars are sceptical concerning vss. 3 and 7 and consider them late additions.[112] Second, the literary reading of Isa 18 aimed at finding explanations for its place in the collection of Isa 13–23. For the unusual absence of a מַשָּׂא-heading in 18:1, typical for most prophecies of Isa 13–23, exegetes proposed three explanations. Some connected Isa 18 with 17:1–14 and treated 17:1–18:7 as one literary unit.[113] Others believe that the lack of a superscription would betray the later insertion of Isa 18 into a collection that already possessed such

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[108] In 728 or 724 B.C.; cf. Marti, 151; König, 198; Sweeney, 257. See Hayes & Irvine, 253, 258 and Niccacci, "Isaiah xviii-xx", 226, dating this before 720.

[109] N. K. Gottwald, *"All the Kingdoms of the Earth": Israelite Prophecy and International Relations in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 162.

[110] Procksch, 237 (the year 713 B.C., before the Assyrian victory); Fohrer, 1:221–22 (around 713 B.C.); Ridderbos, 133–34 (shortly before 713 B.C.); H. W. Hoffmann, *Die Intention der Verkündigung Jesajas* (BZAW 136; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974), 65; Clements, 163 (between 720–713 B.C.); Oswald, 360 (around 711 B.C.); J. J. M. Roberts, "Isaiah's Egyptian and Nubian Oracles", in: *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past: Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite history in Honor of John H. Hayes* (eds. B. E. Kelle & M. B. Moore; T & T Clark: Edinburgh, 2006), 205. On dating the Ashdod events, cf. 2.3.2.2.

[111] Donner, *Israel*, 123–24; Wildberger, 690; Gonçalves, *Sennachérib*, 145; De Jong, "Isaiah", 183.

[112] Wildberger, 681, 696–97. In his commentary Kaiser viewed the entire prophecy a post-exilic composition (Kaiser, 76; cf. also Kilian, 118; Zapff, *Prophetie*, 296). Later, however, he admitted that 18:1–2 may be authentic (Kaiser, *Gott*, 120; cf. Becker, *Botschaft*, 276–77; De Jong, "Isaiah", 114–15).

[113] Cf. Sweeney, 254.

superscriptions. In this 18:1–7 is either considered a unit in itself, or connected to 17:12–14.[114] Even others assume that Isa 18 appears at a crucial point in the prophecies on the nations, namely at the heading of a subcollection of 13–23, which would explain its peculiar form.[115]

As to the theological evaluation of Isa 18, it is part of the prophecies concerning the nations. Many believe that these types of prophecies contain important information regarding the political view of the prophet Isaiah, but opinions differ on significant details of the text, for instance whether it proclaims the fall of Assyria or Kush, as well as the theological function of Isa 18 as part of Isa 13–23.[116]

1.3.2. THE PROPHECY IN ISAIAH 19

The prophecy against Egypt in Isa 19 possesses its own מַשָּׂא-superscription. This chapter is often analysed as consisting of two different texts divided according to the judgment-salvation category. Several essays deal with 19:16–25 as an independent utterance.[117] The sequence judgment followed by salvation is well-known in Isaiah. Since the text of Isa 19 perfectly corresponds to this pattern, it remains a significant question whether such an independent treatment of 19:16–25 can be justified. On the other side stand those who treat 19:1–25 not only as an editorial unit, but also as one prophecy written by the same author.[118]

From a historical perspective, most scholars are convinced that Isa 19 has, at least partially, a concrete historical situation in view.[119] The description of Egypt as a land of chaos overtaken by a tough master (19:1–4) corresponds in the view of many exegetes with the situation of the late 8th century.[120] Although Cheyne relates Isa 19:1–15 to the 7th

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[114] Kaiser, 75; Zapff, *Prophetie*, 296.

[115] Fischer, 136; Jenkins, "Isaiah Tradition", 239. Cf. Hayes & Irvine, 258, who believed that Isa 18 was originally followed by the הוי-utterances in 28–33.

[116] For Isa 18 as an anti-Assyrian speech, cf. Vitringa, 870; Gesenius, 586; Delitzsch, 352–53; Dillmann, 167; Duhm, 138; Cheyne, 112; Gray, 308; Von Orelli, 76; Schmidt, 120; Procksch, 242; Fischer, 138; Van Hoonacker, 106; Kissane, 207; Young, 1:477; Donner, *Israel,* 126; Motyer, 161; Blenkinsopp, 311. Reading it as an anti-Kushite text, cf. Fohrer, 1:206; Wildberger, 690; Kaiser, 78; Clements, 165; Dietrich, *Politik,* 129; Kilian, 119.

[117] See the studies of Feuillet, Vogels, Schvindt, Deissler, Schenker, Krašovec, Wodecki, Sedlmeier, and Kustár in the Bibliography.

[118] Cf. Delitzsch, 240; Ridderbos, 137–38; Young, 2:48; Oswald, 247; Ohmann, 75–77; Hayes & Irvine, 263; Niccacci, "Isaiah xviii-xx", 214–38.

[119] Gray, 320; Wildberger, 704; Hayes & Irvine, 258–63.

[120] Procksch, 246 (713 B.C.); Fischer, 140 (711 B.C.); Kissane, 210; Wildberger, 707–8 (720–715 B.C.); Hayes & Irvine, 258; Sweeney, 271, 275 (724 B.C.); Schoors, 118 (705–701 B.C.); Ohmann, 75; Niccacci, "Isaiah xviii-xx", 226.

century,[121] this text it is most often ascribed to a much later age. It is believed to reflect post-exilic views on Egypt in the Persian or Hellenistic era, largely different from Isaiah's visions in Isa 18; 20; 30 and 31.[122]

The Isaianic origin of 19:16–25 is almost generally rejected, though a few exegetes find a suitable historical background for this remarkable text in the 8th century as well.[123] Apart from an occasional dating to the 7th century,[124] 19:16–25 is generally believed to derive from the late post-exilic Persian era,[125] or the Hellenistic period.[126]

The original literary coherence of Isa 19 is debated even among those reckoning with an 8th century setting. Isaiah 19:1–15 is allegedly composed of three speeches, 19:1–4.5–10.11–15. The middle section is argued to disturb the description of political turmoil in 19:1–4 and 11–15, which may form a coherent unit.[127] Scholars also disagree on the unity of 19:16–25. This passage is often viewed as a gradual composition of subsequent utterances.[128] The literary relationship between Isa 19:1–15 and 16–25 is mainly defined following the usual model of judgment prophecies extended by prophecies of salvation.

Isaiah 19:16–25 has been especially popular among exegetes because of its astonishing theological view on non-Israelite nations. Many have dealt with the question how this theology interferes with the Old Testament, but less attention has been given to 19:16–25 as a part of prophecies concerned with foreign nations, as well as part of a book in general fascinated with foreign nations.[129] Berges observes a striking dif-

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[121] Cheyne, 114.

[122] Duhm, 140–41; Fohrer, 1:226; Kaiser, 82; Höffken, 144; Kilian, 120.

[123] Hayes & Irvine, 262–65; Niccacci, "Isaiah xviii-xx", 214–38; Roberts, "Oracles", 206. Cf. note 118 above.

[124] H. Gressmann, *Der Messias* (FRLANT 43; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1929), 208; Sweeney, 270, 272 (around 671 B.C.).

[125] J. F. A. Sawyer, "'Blessed Be My People, Egypt (Isaiah 19.25)': The Context and Meaning of a Remarkable Passage", in *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (eds. J. D. Martin & Ph. R. Davies; JSOTSS 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986), 59; Berges, 166–67.

[126] Kaiser, 86; Höffken, 159.

[127] T. K. Cheyne, "The Nineteenth Chapter of Isaiah", *ZAW* 13 (1893) 127–28; Marti, 155; Procksch, 244; Vermeylen, 1:322; Wildberger, 703–4. De Jong, "Isaiah", 115–16 considers only 19:1b–4 authentic.

[128] Notably 19:16–17+18–25 (e.g., Kilian, 123; Sweeney, 270–71) or 19:16–17+18–22+23–25 (Procksch, 249; Schoors, 121). Some assume that each בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא introduces independent units (Fohrer, 1:211; Kaiser, 86; Höffken, 146; Blenkinsopp, 318). Others, while reckoning with additions, assume they ultimately derive from the same author (Duhm, 144; Wildberger, 730; W. Vogels, "L'Egypte mon peuple – L'universalisme d'Is 19, 16-25", *Bib* 57 [1976] 497).

[129] Davies, "Destiny", 97–120.

ference between the universalistic picture of 19:16–25 and other descriptions of the future of the nations, waging the conclusion that 19:16–25 is in itself a unique editorial layer in the book of Isaiah.[130]

Isaiah 19:1–15 is not less significant from a theological point of view, especially because one of its key motifs, the plan of Yhwh, is a theme pervading the entire collection of 13–23. The relationship between the Isaianic view on Egypt in Isa 30–31 and Isa 19 is another important aspect that has bearing on the debated question of its origin.

1.3.3. The Prophecy in Isaiah 20

Strictly speaking, Isa 20 is a narrative text. Its prophetic character is provided by three elements: by its present position in a prophetic book, by its description of a symbolic action, and by the prophetic oracle cited in 20:3–6. Apart from a few exceptions,[131] the prophecy is usually dated to the period mentioned in its superscription, namely in the time of the revolt of Ashdod against Assyria in 713–711 B.C.

The difficult phraseology of Isa 20:1–2 led some scholars to assume that one of the two verses was the work of a later glossator, just as further expressions or entire verses from 20:4–6 are occasionally ascribed to this unnamed protagonist.[132] Several scholars even believe that the prophecy addressed originally Philistia, and was transformed into an anti-Judaean prophecy only at a later stage.[133]

Although rarely addressed, it is a significant question, why the salvation prophecy in Isa 19 is followed again by a text predicting the fall and deportation of Egypt and Kush. The answer of Kilian is that Isa 20 was included in the collection at a date earlier than the salvation prophecy of 19:18–25.[134] Yet the question remains, why it was not placed after the last section (Isa 20) predicting the collapse of the kingdoms of the Nile.

The anti-Egyptian theological view of the prophecy is considered to overlap with texts such as Isa 30 and 31. But it is striking that a prophecy against Egypt and Kush is also supposed to function as a warning for others, as both made explicit in the text and implied by its context.[135]

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[130] Berges, 164–71.

[131] Kaiser, 96–97 (he refers somewhat enigmatically to a possible connection with the fall of Jerusalem and the role of Egypt around 587); Vermeylen, 1:324–25 (Deuteronomistic?); Sweeney, 272 (Josianic redaction).

[132] Cf. Becker, *Botschaft*, 277 (vss. 3–4 are Isaianic); De Jong, "Isaiah", 116–18.

[133] E.g., Procksch, 258; Donner, *Israel*, 115; Kaiser, 95; Clements, 173–74.

[134] Kilian, 127.

[135] The minimal text (20:3–4*) to which Becker arrives is void of anti-Judaean elements (cf. 20:5–6; Becker, *Botschaft*, 277–78), and it is presumed to support his general thesis that Isaiah was essentially a salvation prophet who prophe-

1.4. THE PURPOSE AND OUTLINE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The previous overview has made it clear that the problem of Isa 13–23 is twofold. On the one side, attention must focus on the function of the prophecies in their original setting, so far as this can be reconstructed from a literary, theological and historical point of view. On the other side, another similarly important aspect in the study of these originally independent texts is the context of the developing collection Isa 13–23, which, as modern hermeneutics has recognised, plays an intriguing role in defining the meaning of its constitutive passages.

Though thematically related, Isa 18–20 is a text block that reaches beyond the delimitation provided by the מַשָּׂא-superscriptions. Because the superscriptions of Isa 13–23 are of utmost importance in understanding the formation of this corpus, Isa 18–20 offers a particularly helpful cross-section for the study of Isa 13–23. Moreover, due to the alteration of judgment, salvation, judgment (Isa 19–20), as well as the relationship of Isa 18–20 with other Egypt-related texts beyond Isa 13–23, chapters 18–20 may be supportive in finding the location and theological function of the prophecies on the nations inside the book of Isaiah and their importance for later reading communities.

The primary purpose of this study is to answer the question: What is the role of Isa 18–20 in the formation of Isa 13–23? How can a better understanding of the development of Isa 18–20 from its original to its present form facilitate deciphering the composition and function of the corpus Isa 13–23? In view of this, the problems to be discussed may be subdivided into literary, theological and historical matters:

(a) *Literary questions.* What can we say about the literary integrity of the prophecies of the three chapters? How do these prophecies relate to their context? What can we say about authorship in different stages of the formation of these texts?

(b) *Theological questions.* What is the theological concern of the individual prophecies? How (if) is the sense of earlier prophecies modified by possible later additions? In what sense does the present literary context play a role in forming the meaning of the prophecies? What is their relationship with the views expressed in other Egypt-related prophecies of the book and the prophecies concerning the nations?

(c) *Historical questions.* What is the historical background of the prophecies in their earliest form? So far as it can be reconstructed, what is the historical background of those responsible for the collection(s) in which Isa 18–20 appear?

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sied doom against foreign nations only.

The purpose of this study, to determine the role of Isa 18–20 in forming Isa 13–23, divides this investigation into three main parts. Chapter 2 gives an overview of essential historical developments that could have provided the background of the prophecies to be discussed. In line with previously mentioned considerations regarding multiple historical situations pervading prophetic passages, this chapter will focus on the available and presumably relevant historical data concerning Egypt and Kush in the 8th–6th centuries. Chapter 3 concentrates on the literary and theological context of Isa 18–20. This context is explored on two levels. First, attention is turned towards the collections of foreign nation prophecies in the Bible, similar to Isa 13–23, as a framework expected to provide some analogies and partial answers with regard to the formation and theology of Isa 13–23. The second part of Chapter 3 will offer a concise analysis of the individual prophecies in Isa 13–17.21–23. The problem addressed here is how the individual prophecies and subcollections of Isa 13–17.21–23 facilitate our understanding of the development of this collection. Chapter 4–6 give a detailed study of Isa 18–20. Each chapter ends with an evaluation of the texts from literary, theological and historical perspectives. A concluding Chapter 7 will give a synthesis of the principle results of this inquiry.

1.5.   METHOD AND TERMINOLOGY

The present study is written as part of a larger programme of the Biblical Studies Research Group of the Theological Universities of Kampen and Apeldoorn, entitled "Historical Processes and Revelation". This research programme is concerned with the historical-literary aspect of biblical texts, on the one side, and the relevance and religious function of these texts for the Christian faith, on the other side. Its hermeneutical starting point is that the historical-literary character and the divine revelatory and religious nature of the Biblical texts should both be taken seriously and accorded to sufficient attention.

This study on Isaiah 18–20 concurs fully with the aim and hermeneutical context of this larger programme. However, for the sake of more clarity concerning the position and hermeneutical methodology adopted by the present author, it may be helpful to translate these rather general concepts into some concrete notions having special relevance for the book of Isaiah.

Even more emphatically than in case of biblical texts in general, prophecy is the word of God dressed in a human garment and delivered by way of human instruments. This symbiotic presence of divine and human elements in prophetic literature urges the reader to take the text both as historically interpretable and as religiously binding.

The analysis below is impregnated with the basic hermeneutical

concept that so far as prophetic revelation has YHWH, the God of Israel, as its ultimate source, the divine authority of prophetic texts cannot and may not be made dependent on the person by whom the message of God is revealed.[136] H. M. Ohmann also takes this position in his commentary on Isaiah, emphasising that canonical authenticity is not connected to the person of the prophet, but to the inspiration by God's Spirit.[137] If the authority of prophetic texts does not depend on their human author, this further means that the issue of human authorship can be dealt with critically in a historical perspective.

The problem is not so simple, however. In a recent article R. L. Schultz underlines that "there is no inherent reason why the Spirit of God could not have inspired any number of writers and editors",[138] such as is the case of the Psalms or the Proverbs. Nevertheless, he is still reluctant to accept the implication of multiple authors in the process of the composition of the book of Isaiah, because "the involvement of multiple prophets is *not* acknowledged in the text".[139] In some discussions concerning authorship, the reference of the New Testament to Isaianic citations as deriving from "the prophet Isaiah" is seen as additional evidence for accepting the eighth century prophet as the sole author of the entire book.[140] The problem of the authorship of the text of Isaiah can thus be reduced to two significant points: the claim of the inscription in Isa 1:1 and of the interpretation of the New Testament references.

But how should Isa 1:1 be interpreted? Does it exclude other authors from the process of the formation of the book of Isaiah? After all, what does the inscription חֲזוֹן יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶן־אָמוֹץ אֲשֶׁר חָזָה עַל־יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלִָם בִּימֵי עֻזִּיָּהוּ יוֹתָם אָחָז יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה mean? If this verse is taken in a strict sense, it causes problems on four significant points. First, חֲזוֹן, 'vision', as

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[136] Schultz argues that authorial inspiration is the "*traditional* evangelical doctrine of Scripture" (Schultz, *Isaiahs*, 161; my emphasis), but even in evangelical scholarship, there are many exegetes who do not adopt this view. And that is not without reasons, for in the New Testament, the divine authority (inspiration) of the Old Testament texts is connected to the text rather than to its human author (cf. 2Tim 3:16; Hebr 3:7; 1Pt 1:20–21).

[137] Ohmann, 10: "de canoniciteit staat of valt niet met de person van de profeet, maar met de inspiratie door de Heilige Geest". See also H. M. Ohmann, "Hoofdpunten uit het slot van het boek Jesaja", *De Reformatie* 68 (1992–1993) 854; W. S. LaSor et al., *Old Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 378.

[138] Schultz, *Isaiahs*, 161.

[139] Schultz, *Isaiahs*, 161 (author's emphasis).

[140] E. J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 205–7; Young, 3:539–40: "If the New Testament ascribes Isaianic authorship to the book, the question is settled."

a genre definition (cf. Isa 2:1), is an unsuitable term for the entire book of Isaiah. The book is a compendium of varied material, including disputation speech (Isa 3:13–15), parable (Isa 14:4–21), prayer (Isa 26), hymn (Isa 12), narrative (Isa 20; 36–39), etc. In order to cover all these different genres of the book, חָזוֹן needs to be understood in a much broader sense. Second, the thematic delimitation of the prophetic material in the form of עַל־יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלָם can again only be understood as a global reference, so far as the book of Isaiah also includes texts concerning (עַל) Israel (i.e. the Northern Kingdom) and the foreign nations.[141] Third, the term חָזוֹן, which appears in the heading, tends to claim that somehow the book of Isaiah needs to be read as a large unified whole, as *one* book.[142] Yet, at the same time, for the exegete it is more than obvious that the unity implied by the title חָזוֹן differs significantly from a structure that a modern reader would anticipate in a book. Fourth, we have biblical analogies to the inscription in Isa 1:1, which suggests that other authors cannot be excluded to have worked on a literary work with such a heading. Despite the inscription מִשְׁלֵי שְׁלֹמֹה in Prov 1:1, it is clear that several authors have collaborated on the book of Proverbs (Prov 30:1; 31:1; cf. also 25:1). Considering the fact that the genre, thematic definition and structural unity of the superscription in Isa 1:1 are to be understood in a wider rather than in restricted sense, and taking into account the above mentioned analogy from Proverbs, one is tempted to conclude that the appearance of Isaiah as the author of the vision, or the circumscription of the time interval covered by the book can—or even should—be seen as a more global or relative assertion, too. חֲזוֹן יְשַׁעְיָהוּ appears to claim nothing more than that the book takes its origin with and preserves the legacy of Isaiah, the prophet of the eighth century, without excluding eventual later compositions or actualisations of the Isaianic prophecies for and by later generations.[143]

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[141] Note also the other superscriptions in Isa 2:1 and 13:1.

[142] The organisation of the prophecies in Isaiah is indeed based on the assumption that this composition somehow forms a book with some kind of structure. This function of חָזוֹן as a superscription of a book can be compared to that of the מַשָּׂא, also attested as the designation of both a specific prophetic pronouncement (e.g., Isa 19:1; 23:1) or a book (cf. Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Mal 1:1).

[143] One may also add here that quite a few conservative scholars have problems in relating Isa 40–66 to the eighth century (e.g., Ohmann, 9). At the same time, however, it is also clear that Isa 40–66 is supposed to be read as a composition belonging to Isa 1–39 (see discussion above). This ambiguity, namely that, on the one hand, Isa 1–39 and 40–66 are both subjected to the superscription in Isa 1:1, and that, on the other hand, it is historically and linguistically improbable to date Isa 40–66 to the same period, underlines again, in my view, a more dynamic understanding of Isa 1:1.

In this sense, one has to disagree with Schultz that "the one-Isaiah position may be the only one that takes the book's own claims seriously".[144] While other authors are not explicitly acknowledged by Isa 1:1, they are not excluded either, and indeed, based on the above noted analogies, they are even anticipated.

Concerning New Testament references in Isaianic citations, it can be seriously doubted whether these references can be taken as indications of Isaianic authorship. In my view, such allusions may be considered citation formulas when referring to a particular book. "The prophet Isaiah" in this context gives the *literary* reference of the texts mentioned, simply following a standard with which the New Testament audience was acquainted. Therefore these cases cannot and should not be used for what they have not been written for, namely to settle disputes concerning the genetic origin of Old Testament passages.[145]

Reckoning with multiple nameless authors working on the composition of the book of Isaiah does not, however, imply that the secondary texts are theologically undervalued or in any way considered less important than the original Isaianic prophecies. So far as the divine authority of biblical compositions is connected to the texts rather than the authors, from a religious point of view, subsequent additions to the book of Isaiah have the same significance as the work of the eighth century prophet.[146] The later additions to the texts of Isaiah (whether in form of short comments or longer compositions) aim—under the same divine

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[144] Schultz, *Isaiahs*, 153. Strangely or rather confusingly, Schultz reckons with the possibility that other authors (who he calls editors or group of editors) *contemporary* with Isaiah may have "legitimately frame[d] and order[ed] Isaiah's oracles, adding brief explanatory comments" (*Isaiahs*, 167). But he disputes that any nameless exilic prophet could have been implicated in composing the book of Isaiah. It appears that Schultz has more problems with *later* additions than with other authors being involved in this process, which, however, questions his striving to understand Isa 1:1 literally.

[145] Ohmann, "Hoofdpunten", 856. In the Old Testament we also find such citations, but without concrete references to the name of the book or the author from whom these citations derive. See below.

[146] Cf. G. Kwakkel, "Redactionele handen?", *De Reformatie* 80 (2004–2005) 838. Some conservative authors are keen to emphasise the role of the disciples of Isaiah, or an "Isaiah school" in acclaiming authority to secondary additions (so, e.g., Ohmann, 9–10; Ohmann, "Hoofdpunten", 857; Schneider, 17–18; this latter is also discussed by Schultz, *Isaiahs*, 156). There are two problems with this opinion. First, it is difficult to prove the existence of an Isaianic school so long after the death of the "father" Isaiah. Second, even more importantly, this view once again makes authenticity dependent on the human factor, namely the author, instead of the scripture.

authority—to translate and actualise the ancient message to a new generation. In this sense the inner development of the book of Isaiah can be compared to the process through which various texts from Isa 15–16 were taken over by the prophecy against Moab in Jer 48, and commented upon in a new situation.[147] The literary form of this actualisation of eighth century prophecy could not only take on this latter shape (transferring the Isaianic words to a new book), but these actualisations could have also been added to the primary text.[148]

The book Isaiah is a complex composition of prophecies from different periods. From a methodological point of view two important aspects should be pointed out which help the modern reader to differentiate between texts belonging to various periods: the actuality and the predictive or non-predictive character of the prophecy. (1) So far as prophecy is primarily uttered and/or written to one specific audience, it has to make sense for that primary audience, it has to be a word spoken out on the right occasion.[149] At the beginning of critical scholarly research on the Bible, one of the most important reasons to detach Deutero-Isaiah from the first part of the book was a direct reference to Cyrus in Isa 45. The question is not so much whether it is conceivable that a prophet predicts the name of a Persian ruler about 200 years before the king emerges, but rather how such a prophecy could have had any relevance for and determine the life of people living in the eighth century. (2) Furthermore, it is true that predictive prophecy as such has become a victim of the rationality of the Enlightenment era. It is true that the negative attitude towards the predictive element in prophecy has proven to be unfounded in subsequent scholarship. Nevertheless, the ultimate view that Deutero-Isaiah cannot derive from the eighth century has been underlined on more solid linguistic and theological grounds.[150]

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[147] Balogh, "Oude en nieuwe profetie", 117–37. Note that these Isaianic texts appear in the Jeremianic context without any reference to the author cited, as if they would all be the work of Jeremiah. This also suggests that authorship was interpreted differently in antiquity than it would be today.

[148] See Balogh, "Isaiah 33", 477–504; Balogh, "Blind People", 48–69.

[149] Cf. Ohmann, 10; Ohmann, "Hoofdpunten", 855.

[150] For instance, the most important problem with the Cyrus-text in Isa 45:1 is not that it is far too concrete to derive from the eighth century, but, more significantly, that it is *not* a prediction about a coming ruler, but rather an admonition to an already present ruler, as most of the prophecies in Isa 40–55 (cf. also Ohmann, "Hoofdpunten", 855–56; Childs, 290). It is therefore not only unfair but even misleading when conservative scholars try to present the rejection of the Isaianic authorship of Isa 40–66 (or indeed any other text) in critical scholarship as a matter of one's rational attitude towards predictive prophecy (see, e.g., Schultz, *Isaiahs*, 161–63). It is likewise misleading to conclude

While I am convinced that prediction is an important element in prophecy,[151] I consider that even prediction has to be relevant for the primary audience of the prophet.

In concordance with the hermeneutical presuppositions presented above, let me define here a few key terms used in this study. By "author" I designate the person responsible for the composition of a certain text, be it Isaiah or another person working with Isaiah's prophetic legacy. "Editors" or "redactors" are those responsible for editing and organising the prophecies in collections at some stage during its composition.[152] It cannot be excluded, however, that from a historical point of view the terms "author" and "editor" occasionally overlap each other. By "edition" I refer to the book of Isaiah in whatever stage on its way to its final form. The term "theology" does not only refer to what particular texts tell us about God, but it primarily circumscribes the focus, main idea, or message of a certain text,[153] without any further implications regarding other ideas in Old Testament (such as conformity or contradiction with those), or the eventual derivation of these ideas from particular groups of Israel's society.

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from recent attempts to underline the literary unity of the book of Isaiah in modern critical scholarship as implicit proofs of "the evangelical truth" (so, e.g., Schultz, *Isaiahs*, 154–55: "critical scholars are moving in a more conservative direction"; "much has been written by non-evangelicals [*sic!*] scholars…that offers further support for the one-author position" [170 note 71]; cf. also 167, 169). While these discussions underline the unity of the Isaianic *tradition*, they also strongly emphasise *authorial* disunity.

[151] See section 1.1.3. above. Naturally, prophecy is much more than prediction. Several texts may have been formulated in relation to an already accomplished event (e.g., lamentations). Due to the dynamics of the Hebrew verbal system, it is often difficult to decide whether the prophet wants to predict something yet to come, or to describe something which has already been accomplished. It appears that the texts analysed below make no use of the literary form of quasi-prophecy—a genre otherwise well-known in the literature of the Near East—which is formulated as a prediction but is in fact a post-eventum description. This form of prophesying is often referred to as *vaticinium ex eventu.*

[152] Cf. Kwakkel, "Redactionele handen?", 837–38, 848.

[153] "Zion-theology", for instance, means that particular view according to which Zion, the royal city of YHWH is an inviolable and indestructible fortress. "Universalistic theology" refers to the idea behind certain texts concerning YHWH's dealing with the nations of the earth.

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

Deconstructing Royal Steles of the Near East

EGYPT AND THE NEAR EAST
IN THE NEW ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN PERIODS

This chapter focuses on the political history of the Near East in the 8th–6th centuries, concentrating especially on Egypt (including the Egypto-Kushite empire) of the 25th–26th Dynasties in its interaction with Canaan, in the sphere of influence of the changing dominant powers of Assyria and Babylon. Naturally, in a study devoted mainly to Hebrew literary records supposedly originating in this era, mapping up a possible historical background for these literary compositions can only take in a subordinate place. It is here impossible to deal in detail with numerous problems which historians face.[1] In view of the setting of the book of Isaiah in general, and particularly chapters 18–20, not all aspects of the ongoing historical research are important. For this reason, scholarly literature will be used selectively, though I shall be aiming to do right to the variety of opinions so far as they are considered relevant.

Despite the fact that we are confronted with a history in no lack of uncertainties and periodically revealing surprises urging us to revise our descriptions based on limited and contentious historical data, there is hardly any doubt that intricacies of this more or less scantily documented period have greatly influenced the biblical literature.

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[1] See for instance J. Yoyotte, "Les principautés du Delta au temps de l'anarchie libyenne", *Mémoires publies par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire* 66 (1961) 121–81; K. A. Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology and the Hebrew Monarchy. Critical Studies on Old Testament Monarchy, I", *JANES* 5 (1973) 225–33; F. Gomaà, *Die Libyschen Fürstentümer des Deltas, vom Tod Osorkons II. bis zur Wiedervereinigung Ägyptens durch Psametik I* (BTAVO B6; Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1974); K. A. Kitchen, "On the Princedoms of Late-Libyan Egypt", *CdÉ* 52 (1977) 40–48; M. L. Bierbrier, *Genealogy and Chronology of the Late New Kingdom (c. 1300-664 B.C.)* (London: Warminster, 1975); J. K. Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role in the Events of 701 B.C. in Jerusalem", in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* (eds. A. G. Vaughn & A. E. Killebrew; SBLSS 18; Atlanta: SBL, 2002), 219–34; K. A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period* (2nd ed.; London: Warminster, 1986), and numerous other studies cited in this overview below.

A significant question that we need to address ahead of this chapter is the delimitation of the period that will be considered in the concise historical overview below. While the upper end of this time frame can be justified by what is vaguely known about an historical Isaiah, beginning his prophetic activity sometimes during or after the reign of king Uzziah of Judah, the lower end of this era is open to debate. The prophecies that will be dealt with in the following chapters are dated between the 8th–6th centuries, corresponding to the New Assyrian and New Babylonian eras, with some parts argued to have been written even much later in the Persian or Hellenistic periods. Due to the fact that the greater part of these texts is most often assumed to have been composed in the 8th-6th centuries and in order to limit the extent of this chapter, the overview below will concentrate on the Assyrian and Babylonian periods, leaving eventual later historical contexts to be dealt with when discussing the background of Isa 18–20 in more detail.

2.1.   Lower and Upper Egypt in the Third Intermediate Period

During the New Kingdom (1550–1070) Egypt was blessed with marvellous rulers, great pharaohs whose famous achievements are distilled in the literary and archaeological records of this period, supplying firsthand information for all those admiring them or intending to dispute their significance in human history. The case is different with the heirs of Egypt's New Kingdom glory. Gradually, this splendour becomes overshadowed by tiny interests of local rulers of a different ethnic origin, with a dissimilar cultural background, all claiming legitimacy to a throne they were rarely worthy to inherit.

The preservation—not to mention the increase—of wealth and political stability that the great pharaohs of the 18th and 19th Dynasty managed to achieve is placed as an uncomfortable burden upon the shoulders of the last Ramessides. The last century of the New Kingdom is characterised by both external and internal political turmoil, which the pharaohs were frequently unable to contend with. Egypt's rulers followed each other in a quick succession, most of them exerting authority for less than a decade. Between 1185–1070 not less than nine Ramesses claim to be "the king of Upper and Lower Egypt", a title that increasingly looses its real political significance.

At the end of the New Kingdom, Egypt's main enemies were the Sea Peoples of the Mediterranean, but the incursion of Libyan tribes into the Eastern Delta from at least as early as the reign of Seti I, has by this time become an even more significant issue of state security. Ramses III (1186–1154) was a skilled military leader, and Egypt came out as victorious from both conflicts. Yet Ramses III integrated the subjugated Libyan warriors into his own army, a policy that ultimately became fatal for

the Egyptian throne. What the Libyans were unable to attain by power, they gradually achieved by peace: they took over the Delta through intermarriages and land grants gained for their military accomplishments.[2]

At the same time, the forces cohering Egypt's inner political powers, the pharaonic palace and the Amun-temple of Thebes, began to weaken by the day, a process speeded up by the large scale corruption of royal officials. In order to quell the disturbing conflict between Amenhotep, the high priest of Amun, and Ramesses XI (1101–1070), Nubian forces are called in to Upper Egypt. But at this stage every effort to prevent the disintegration of Egypt has already come too late. Herihor and Pinudjem I, high priests of Thebes, turn themselves into kings of Upper Egypt, taking up pharaonic titulature, writing their names in royal cartouches.[3]

In the north, Tanis and Memphis become the centre of the new 21st Dynasty. The friendly relations with Thebes are articulated in form of intermarriages and building activities. By this time, however, the Libyan military aristocracy takes over Memphis and Tanis, extending its influence even to Amun's dominion, Thebes. Iuput, son of Shoshenq I (945–924), the first pharaoh of the 22nd Dynasty, becomes the high priest of Thebes, and in a short time a real king of the whole Upper Egypt. The relationship between Tanis and Thebes during the latter half of the 9th century deteriorates significantly around the question to whom the chair of the high priest should be assigned, a conflict that contributed to the split up of the Delta. Pedubast I (818–793), the first pharaoh of the 23rd Dynasty, enjoyed the support of Thebes over against Shoshenq III (825–773) of the 22nd Dynasty.[4] By the end of the 8th century a further 24th Dynasty of Libyan origin claims royal titulature in Lower Egypt (Sais), a house that will eventually survive the Nubian period.

This split up of power has led to a real decentralisation in the African country. By the time the Kushite Piye appears in Egypt around 728, the country is fragmented among more than a dozen kings, princes and chiefs of the Mashwash (a Libyan tribe).[5] Though it may seem as such, it has been argued that this political situation should not be character-

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[2] A. Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East. c. 3000–330 BC* (Routledge History of the Ancient World; London: Routledge, 1995), 2:626–27; L. Kákosy, *Az ókori Egyiptom története és kultúrája* (Budapest: Osiris, 1998), 170; J. Taylor, "The Third Intermediate Period (1069–664 BC)", in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (ed. I. Shaw; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 339.

[3] For a time table of the rulers of this period, see Appendix 1.

[4] Manetho calls the 22nd Dynasty Bubastite, because it originated from Bubastis, while the 23rd Dynasty is called Tanite, deriving from Tanis, but seating in Leontopolis (Tell-Moqdam) (Kitchen, *Period*, 128–30).

[5] Cf. Piye's Victory Stele (*FHN* 1.9); see also R. G. Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt's Nubian Rulers* (London: Rubicon, 2000), 191–95.

ised as chaotic or anarchic, as sometimes assumed. It should be empha-
sised that the 22nd–24th Dynasties were formed by kings of Libyan ori-
gin. In their circle, one may speak of a certain level of acculturation and
adaptation to Egyptian traditions,[6] but the Libyans clearly retained a
significant measure of authentic tradition that can be distinguished from
native Egyptian elements. Their names were Libyan, even after several
generations. Libyan statues and funerary objects preserved large lists of
genealogies, atypical for Egyptian pharaohs and characteristic to non-
literate societies of nomadic or semi-nomadic origin.[7]

This ethnic background essentially distinguishes Libyan rulers from
former New Kingdom Egyptian pharaohs at least in two respects. First,
the decentralised form of government is strongly related to a different
view on the role and place of royal relatives in administration. While in
the New Kingdom royal kinsmen were often excluded from administra-
tive and military positions, sons and relatives of Libyan rulers were
given considerable power. Second, the offices of administrative, military
and religious leaders have now become as a rule hereditary, facilitating
the emergence of a powerful local aristocracy gaining increasingly more
independence. The inevitable fragmentation of the political structures
that followed these developments was not, however, regarded as a re-
gress. The marriages of king's daughters to other virtual throne contend-
ers and the rare references to internal conflicts between these rulers are
but two substantial proofs how far this social and political structuring
had been regarded rather normal even by Egypt's "pharaohs", satisfied
with nominal titles in "a federation of semi-autonomous rulers". Taylor
may be right when arguing that "decentralisation was not only accepted
but institutionalized as a form of government", in line with the semi-no-
madic background of the Libyan society.[8] This internal situation was
particularly favourable for the powerful Nubian kings of Napata com-
mitted to extend their dominion towards the north.

2.2.   THE PRELUDE TO THE EMERGENCE OF THE 25TH NUBIAN DYNASTY

Throughout history, Egyptians had always been interested in countries
bordering their homeland, and on various occasions they succeeded to
make them their vassals. Beside the Levant, Egypt's attention was fo-

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[6] In some cases this adaptation hardly exceeds the limits of epigonism (cf. the
royal titulatures), or is realised in obvious ignorance of the intellectual back-
ground of these traditions (as is the case with burial customs; see Taylor,
"Third Intermediate Period", 347–49, 364 for some significant examples), in
strong contrast to the acculturation of the Nubian rulers.
[7] Taylor, "Third Intermediate Period", 340–41.
[8] Taylor, "Third Intermediate Period", 345.

cused on Nubia, the southern neighbour,[9] for at least three reasons. First, Lower Nubia, the Nubian Desert between the Nile and the Red Sea was one of the important suppliers of gold. Second, Nubia, the country alongside the Nile, represented the corridor to the exotic supplies of central Africa, even after the 18th Dynasty, when Egypt began trading with central Africa on the Red Sea. Third, Kush was generally regarded as a legitimate Egyptian sphere of influence.[10]

The evidence on the early history of Kush is not abounding, especially in the region south of the second Nile cataract, Upper Nubia. Plundering expeditions are mentioned already in the Early Dynastic period. There are signs of peaceful relationship based on trade from the 4th Dynasty; even as late as the Second Intermediate Period (1650-1550), Kerma Nubians appear as strong trading partners or powerful enemies of the Egyptian kings.[11] During Egypt's imperial age, many pharaohs campaigned against the land of Kush (some on even more then one occasion), and some of them managed to install vassals in the conquered territories. Around 1460, in the time of Thutmose III (1479–1425), Kush came under Egyptian control up to the 4th cataract, and the city of Napata, founded by Thutmose III, became the southernmost centre of Egyptian administration.[12]

This time Nubia is headed by a leader appointed by Egypt, the overseer of the southern countries, king's son (viceroy) of Kush (*sꜣ nswt n Kš*), who was responsible for the civil government, tributes, taxes and gold mines. In terms of administration, this meant that Nubia economically as well as politically became part of Egypt. Simultaneously with the establishment of Egyptian control in the region, a process of Egyptianisation was on the move, especially among the elites of Kush.

From Thutmose IV (1401–1390) to Ramesses III (1186–1154) almost every pharaoh had to deal with rebellions in Kush. Though still under Egyptian control, the administration gradually weakened from the time of Ramesses IX (1125–1107), and a further decline of power is observable during the 21st–23rd Dynasties.

The history of Kush in the 11th–8th centuries remains rather obscure. Some argued that the withdrawal of Egypt from Nubia resulted in

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[9] For related geographical issues, cf. Excursus 1.

[10] W. Y. Adams, "The Kingdom and Civilisation of Kush in Northeast Africa", *CANE*, 778; D. O'Connor, *Ancient Nubia: Egypt's Rival in Africa* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 1993), 59.

[11] J. Bourriau, "The Second Intermediate Period", in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (ed. I. Shaw; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 209.

[12] L. Török, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan–Meroitic Civilisation* (HdO 1/31; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 92–94.

a collapse of the administrative and political structures.[13] As a conse-
quence, Nubia came to be dominated by ethnically diverse rivalising
chiefdoms. It is likely that violence characterised the early years of the
Kushite state.[14] The internal battle was won by the chiefdom of el-Kurru
(near Napata), which took over the power between the third cataract
and the Butana region, including the trade routes of central Africa.[15]

The first king (rather than chief) from el-Kurru known by name was
Alara, of whom only his name survived.[16] Alara was followed by Kashta
(ca. 760–747), who expanded the borders of the el-Kurru Dynasty to
Lower Nubia, beyond the second cataract, and perhaps even into Upper
Egypt. On a fragmentary stele from Elephantine Kashta is called "King
of Upper and Lower Egypt, […], Son of Re, Lord of the Two Lands".[17]

The political effects of this evolution, the emergence of a new king
in Kush, will be felt not only by the people inhabiting the lower Nile
Valley, but also by the entire Near Eastern world. The once exotic land
of Kush in descriptions larded with marvelous accounts of Hebrew and
Assyrian writers, the people at the fringes of the then known world,
come surprisingly close in terms of political relationship in the second
half of the 8th century, shortly after Tiglath-pileser III ascended the
throne of Assyria, turning his face toward the lands of Amurru and
Hatti. The foreign policy of the Kushite kings of the 8th–7th centuries
will play a prominent role in the background of every political move of
the tiny kingdoms south-west of Assyria, so often reflected upon by the
prophets of Israel and Judah.

2.3.   THE PHARAOHS OF THE 25TH DYNASTY AND ASSYRIA

The successors of Kashta, the kings Piye, Shabaka, Shabataka, Taharka,
and Tanutamani are reckoned among the pharaohs of the 25th Dynasty
(also called the Napatan Dynasty). The available historical information
from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period is scarce, so that opinions differ
in establishing the precise length of the regnal years of these kings.[18]

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[13] Török, *Kingdom*, 111. But see O'Connor, *Nubia*, 59, 61.

[14] Morkot, *Black Pharaohs*, 156–57, 161; Török, *Kingdom*, 126.

[15] Morkot, *Black Pharaohs*, 154; Török, *Kingdom*, 111–12, 127–28.

[16] According to O'Connor, he may originate from Upper Nubia, or even fur-
ther south (*Nubia*, 68). Alara was not the "dynasty founder". Cf. Török, *King-
dom*, 124; K.-H. Priese, "Der Beginn der kuschitischen Herrschaft in Ägyp-
ten", ZÄS 98 (1970) 23; N. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford:
Blackwell, 1992), 334; K. Jansen-Winkeln, "Alara und Taharka: zur Geschich-
te des nubischen Königshauses", *Or* 72 (2003) 154–55.

[17] Priese, "Herrschaft", 17, 21; Jansen-Winkeln, "Taharka", 156–57.

[18] For the chronological data see the literature cited in note 1 and additionally

2.3.1. Piye (748–717 b.c.)[19]

Piye,[20] the successor of Kashta, was crowned in the Amun temple of Napata. He adopted the five titles titulary modelled on Egyptian pharaonic prototypes.[21] On the Sandstone Stele originating from his third regnal year, Piye declares himself the legitimate ruler of Egypt, who personally installs kings and deprives them of their office.[22] Asserting the title "king of Upper and Lower Egypt", Piye still seems to have accepted the political situation he had found in the lower Nile land, a country divided between various local kings and chiefs, save that they acknowledged his supremacy and paid tribute to him.[23] Early during his rule, Amenirdis I, the daughter of Kashta, was adopted to fill the important office of God's Wife of Amun at the temple of Thebes,[24] inheriting this function from Shepenwepet I, daughter of Osorkon III (787–761).

There remain obscure details concerning Piye's 15 years of rule fol-

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D. Kahn, "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25", *Or* 70 (2001) 1–18; D. B. Redford, "A Note on the Chronology of Dynasty 25 and the Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var", *Or* 68 (1999) 58–60), and Excursus 2. The following regnal dates have been suggested:

Pharaohs	Kitchen	Redford	Depuydt	Kahn
Piye	747–716	737–712	728–706	747–721
Shabaka	716–702	712–697	705–692	721–706
Shabataka	702–690	697–690	692–690	706–690
Taharka			690–664	
Tanutamani			664–656	

[19] For 717 b.c. as the last year of Piye's reign, cf. Excursus 2.

[20] His name was formerly read as Piankhy (*P-ʿnḫ-y*). But some text name him *Py(ꜣ)* (without the *ʿnḫ* element; cf. J. Leclant, "Pi(ankhi)", *LdÄ* 4:1047 note 1), so that today "Piye" is more frequently used. A few scholars believe that his name may have been pronounced as "Piye" in Kush and "Piankhi" in Egypt (Kákosy, *Egyiptom*, 206; Morkot, *Black Pharaohs*, 169).

[21] Piye was probably the son of Kashta (*FHN*, 1.45). On the Egyptian royal titulary, see P. Kaplony, "Königstitulatur", *LdÄ* 3:641–59.

[22] See R. H. Pierce, "Sandstone Stela of Piye from the Temple of Amûn at Napata", (*FHN* 1.8:57). Another fragment of a stele (R. H. Pierce, "Fragments of a stela of Piye (?)", *FHN* 1.10) may contain further evidence of Piye's presence in Egypt in his 4th regnal year (see comments of Török in *FHN*, 1.118–19).

[23] Cf. ln. 5 of the Sandstone Stele, reflecting on what would happen if one failed to show up with gifts (*inw*) (Priese, "Herrschaft", 28).

[24] *FHN*, 1.46–47; Török, *Kingdom*, 148. This significant office of the 8th century "emerged from the function of the New Kingdom great royal wife as priestess of the royal cult and vehicle of legitimate succession in the quality as mother of the king" (Török, *Kingdom*, 147). The importance of this office increased with the decline of power of the Theban high priest during the 22nd Dynasty (Kákosy, *Egyiptom*, 203; Taylor, "Third Intermediate Period", 360).

lowing the erection of the Sandstone Stele. We know that he returned
to Nubia and Amenirdis I received the power in Upper Egypt. But Egyp-
tian sources are silent on how Egyptians reacted to Assyria's expansion,
particularly Tiglath-pileser III's conquest of Gaza.

2.3.1.1. EGYPT AND THE ASSYRIAN SOURCES OF TIGLATH-PILESER III

Some of the details are illuminated by the Assyrian records. In 734 Ti-
glath-pileser III (744–727) initiated a military campaign against the
(south-) west with the purpose to control the trade of the western coun-
tries.[25] In this connection the cuneiform inscriptions mention Hanunu,
king of Gaza, fleeing to Egypt before Tiglath-pileser. The Assyrian ac-
counts are silent on the name of the pharaoh to whom Hanunu fled, but
we may assume that it was Shoshenq V (767–730), the king of the East-
ern Delta region. Hanunu returns shortly afterwards, and he is reha-
bilitated and reinstalled in his office by the Assyrian king.[26] Whether
his flight to Egypt was an attempt to gather further military support is
difficult to tell. At any rate, Egypt's 22nd Dynasty ruler did not seem-
ingly want to be implicated militarily in the new political situation
posed by Assyria's military on its border.

Two of Tiglath-pileser's Summary Inscriptions mention a *bīt kāri*,
"custom office" or "quay"[27] in connection with Gaza, established after
the return of Hanunu.[28] The precise role of this Assyrian centre at Gaza
is debated, but it may be related to the Assyrian economic policy. Ti-
glath-pileser's *bīt kāri* was an economically important source of income

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[25] See H. Tadmor, "Philistia under Assyrian Rule", *BA* 29 (1966) 87–88.
Tiglath-pileser III's first campaign against the lands of Amurru and Hatti
appeared in 738 B.C., when Menahem of Samaria appears as one of his tribu-
taries (Annals 13*:10; 27:2; Iran Stele III A:5).

[26] For the Hanunu-episode see SI 4:8'–15' (*ITP*, 140–41); SI 8:14'–19' (*ITP*,
176–79); SI 9:rev. 13–16 (*ITP*, 188–89). Under the entry of year 734 B.C.,
Tiglath-pileser's 12th *palû*, the Eponym Chronicle writes: *ana māt*(KUR) *Pilišta*,
"against Philistia" (A. Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire: 910–612
B.C.* [SAAS 2; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1994], 44).

[27] For *bīt kāri*, see Tadmor, "Philistia", 87–88; I. Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs:
Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent 9th–5th Centuries B.C.* (Jerusalem:
Magnes, 1982), 102 note 340.

[28] Cf. SI 4:14' (*ITP*, 140–41); SI 9:rev. 16 (*ITP*, 188–89). Though the section
of the text preceding *bīt kāri* is broken, it was argued that the broken section
contained the city name Ḫazūtu (Gaza; cf. H. Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur
in der Sargonidenzeit* [FRLANT 129; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982], 327), or
"his (Hanunu's) (royal?) city" (Tadmor, *ITP*, 189, reads the final sign as *šú*,
possibly from *ālāšu*, "his city", or *āla šarrūtīšu*, "his royal residence"?).

for the royal treasury.[29] Gaza was the southernmost royal city of Canaan, with important connections to Egypt and the Arabian world.[30] Given the importance of this centre, the Arabian Idibi'ilu is set up by Tiglath-pileser III as a "gatekeeper" (*atûtu*) facing Egypt (*ina muḫḫi māt Muṣri*).[31] This strategy expresses a concerned awareness of the important role of Egypt, the neighbour of Canaan, tribute bearer of Assyria.

For the following two years, Tiglath-pileser's 13th and 14th *palû* (regnal year) (733–732), the Eponym Chronicles[32] mention two success-

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[29] The objective of this *bīt kāri* must have been broader than horse-trade with Egypt, as proposed by S. Dalley, "Foreign Chariotry and Calvary in the Armies of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II", *Iraq* 47 (1985) 46. See H. W. F. Saggs, "Nimrud Letters, 1952 – Part II", *Iraq* 17 [1955] 127–30, Plate XXX, 150; J. N. Postgate, *Taxation and Conscription in the Assyrian Empire* (Studia Pohl Series Maior 3; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974), 390–91; Tadmor, "Philistia", 88; M. Elat, "The Economic Relations of the Neo-Assyrian Empire with Egypt", *JAOS* 98 (1978) 26–27. A striking insight into how these offices functioned can be gained from Nimrud Letter ND 2715, dated to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, possibly 738–734 B.C. Lns. 1–25 read (Postgate's translation):

> "*Qurdi-aššur-lāmur* to the king: With regard to the ruler of Tyre, of whom the king said that I was to speak kindly to him—all the quays (*kārāni*, pl.) are open to him, (and) his subjects enter and leave the quay-houses (*bīt kārāni*, pl.) as they wish, (and) sell and buy. Mount Lebanon is at his disposal, and they go up and down as they wish, and bring down the wood. I levy taxes (*miksēšu amakis*) on anyone, who brings down the wood, and I have appointed tax-collectors over the quays (*kārāni*) of all Mount Lebanon, and they keep a watch on […]. I appointed a tax-collector over those who come down to the quays which are in Sidon, but the Sidonians chased him off. Then I sent the Itu'aeans into Mount Lebanon, and they made the people grovel. Afterwards, they sent to me, and they brought the tax-collector (back) into Sidon. I made a statement to them, that they might bring down the wood and do their work with it, (but) that they were not to sell it to the Egyptians or to the Philistines, or I would not allow them to go up to the mountain."

The letter illuminates the important function of (*bīt*) *kārāni* (on the difference between *bīt kāri* and *kāru*, cf. Saggs, "Nimrud Letters", 129). In the *kāru* tax is collected, *miksē kāri nebiri*, "taxes from dues on quay and crossing" (Postgate, *Taxation*, 131–32), but people were also able to buy and sell here.

[30] On the southern border of Canaan, cf. N. Na'aman, "The Brook of Egypt and Assyrian Policy on the Border of Egypt", *TA* 6 (1979) 74–77.

[31] SI 7:6'; SI 13:16'. The term "Arabian" (*Aribi*) in Assyrian inscriptions includes the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the nomads of the Syrian Desert and the Sinai. The installation of Idibi'ilu is mentioned in relation to the revolt and defeat of Mitinti of Ashkelon in 733, apparently a supporter of Rezin of Damascus (cf. Annals 18:8'–13'; 24:12'–16'). On Idibi'ilu, see also Eph'al, *Ancient Arabs*, 215–16.

[32] Millard, *Eponyms*, 45. The eponym was a dating system in which each cal-

ful campaigns against Damascus and one against the Arabian queen,
Samsi (Annals 23:18'). Several other Arab tribes, Massa, Tema, Saba,
Hayappa, Bazanu, Hatte, Idiba'ilu, who dwell on the border of the west-
ern lands (*ša mişir matāti ša šalum Šamši*), hearing "the heroic deeds" and
the "fame" of the Assyrian king, made supplication to him.[33] The refer-
ence to Idibi'ilu, the gatekeeper, suggests that the southern neighbours
of Gaza have already been loyal to Assyria. SI 8:22' mentions Siruatti,
the Me'unite,[34] with his territory located "at the foot of Egypt" (*šapal
māt Muşri*), who might have surrendered voluntarily.

Despite increasing tensions at its border, these texts do not refer to
contacts with Egypt. The silence may, however, be only apparent, and
should probably be ascribed to the fragmentary character of the Annals
and other inscriptions. In fact, Egypt is probably the country mentioned
in partially broken sections of three Summary Inscriptions:[35]

> *SI 8:20'–21'*
> […] had not submitted [to the kings], my predecessors and who had
> not sent (them) any message, [heard about] the conquest of the land of
> […] the terrifying radiance of Assur, my lord, overwhelmed him,] and
> fear sized him. [He sent me] his envoys (*şirāni*) to do obeisance […][36]

> *SI 9:rev. 23–25*
> [… who] had not submitted to the kings, my predecessors, and [had
> never sent them any message] […] heard about [the conquest of the
> land of Hat]ti. The terrifying radiance of Assur, my lord, [overwhelmed
> him] [and fear sized him; he sent his envoys] to my presence, to Kalah,
> [to do obeisance.]

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endar year was named after one of the high officials of the state, like the king
(*šarru*), his commander-in-chief (*turtannu*), the chief cupbearer (*rab šāqê*), the
palace herald (*nāgir ekalli*), the chamberlain (*masennu*), the governor (*šakin
māti*) of a certain city(state). Subsequently, various legal, literary, etc. docu-
ments written in a particular year were dated according to the eponymate
(*līmu*) of the official of that year (cf. Millard, *Eponyms*, 1, 8).

[33] SI 4:19'–34'; SI 7:rev. 1'–6'; SI 8:24'–27'; SI 9:rev. 17–22; SI 13:3'–16'.

[34] For the Assyrian *Mu'unaya*, cf. biblical מָעוֹן in Judg 10:12; 1 Chr 4:41; 2 Chr
20:1; 26:7. See further Eph'al, *Ancient Arabs*, 91.

[35] Cf. *ITP*, 178, 190; N. Na'aman & R. Zadok, "Sargon II's Deportations to
Israel and Philistia (716–708 B.C.)", *JCS* 40 (1988) 43. Kitchen assumes that
these texts refer to either Shoshenq V or Osorkon IV (*Period*, 372–74).

[36] The claim of Tiglath-pileser III may be exaggerating, as the inscription of
the Assyrian king, Assur-bel-kala (1074–1057), refers to a tribute from an
unnamed Egyptian (?) king (*šar māt Muşri*) (cf. Elat, "Economic Relations",
21–22). Epigraph 3 of the Black Obelisk of Salmaneser III (828–827) also
mentions the tribute of *Muşri* brought to Salmaneser (COS 2.113F).

SI (Annals fragment?) 13:1'–2'
[…] [… he sent] to Kalah befo[re me to do obeisance].

The initial signs on the clay tablets SI 8 and 9 are broken, as well as the initial signs and the previous lines of the bas relief SI 13. The section in SI 8 is preceded by the Hanunu-story, and followed by the submission of Siruatti, the Me'unite, Egypt's eastern neighbour, and by the defeat of Samsi and the Arabians. In SI 9, the cited account is preceded by the conquest of the North (Aram, Phoenicia, Israel), Gaza and the Arabian queen, Samsi, and is followed by a short mention of Tyre, Tabal, and possibly the Arabian tribes at the eastern border of the Amurru-lands. The geographical organisation of SI 8 strongly suggests that the broken section of the cited text refers to Egypt and its king.[37] Though the ordering and content of SI 9 is different, the similarities in language with SI 8 favour the same view. SI 13 is possibly a text of a different category. Some regard it as part of the Annals rather than belonging to the Summary Inscriptions.[38] This inscription is very fragmentary at the lines of most interest here. The arrival of the emissaries of an unnamed king to Calah (Nimrud) is followed by the defeat of Samsi, queen of the Arabs, the submission of the Arabian tribes, the appointment of Idibi'ilu, and the replacement of Peqah with Hoshea. If SI 13 presents the events in historical order, this would help us to date the encounter with the supposedly Egyptian king to 734–733.[39] Following the Egyptian chronology of Kitchen, the king of Egypt of this inscription may be identified with the ruler of the 22nd Dynasty of the eastern Delta, Shoshenq V (767–

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[37] This is more likely than the suggestion of Eph'al that this text would refer to Ahaz, king of Judah (*Ancient Arabs*, 30 note 80). This unnamed king "heard about the conquest of the lands of Hatti" (which in the Assyrian texts also includes Philistia), suggesting some distance from those lands. In Sargon's texts Egypt and Gaza appear close to each other on similar occasions (e.g. Cylinder Inscription 19–20). On Ahaz, king of Juda, see SI 7: rev. 11'.

[38] See Tadmor, *ITP*, 198. The problem is caused by the place of the Idib'ilu-story. The Annals mention this event after the Ashkelon section (Annals 18:8'–10'; 24:12'–16'). In this inscription, Idib'ilu appears together with the Arabian tribes, seemingly in a geographical ordering. However, the Israel-account, notably the replacement of Peqah (in 732; cf. Saggs, "Nimrud Letters", 147; *ITP*, 277), follows here the Arab wars, which is exceptional for a geographical texts like the Summary Inscriptions, which generally follow a north-south rather than south-north direction. Moreover, with regard to the Peqah-story, Tiglath-pileser refers to his previous wars (*ina girretēya maḫrāte*) to *Bīt-Ḫumria* in contrast to present (or recent) events (SI 13:17'–18'). This again suggests SI 13 intends to order the events historically.

[39] Tadmor, *ITP*, 156.

730), or else (less likely) with Osorkon IV (730–715).[40] The Assyrian expansion to Philistia and the Sinai posed a danger in the first place for the eastern Delta, and not for the other rulers geographically more isolated on the African mainland.

A further text that might allude to the era of Tiglath-pileser and his relationship with Egypt is Nimrud letter ND 2765 containing a list of Western tributaries of the Assyrian king.[41] Egyptian emissaries (ṣirāni) appear with the ambassadors of Gaza, Judah, Moab, and Ammon at Kalah (Nimrud) from whom the Assyrian king received 45 horses as a tribute (madattu). Gaza alone brought 24 horses. Further mention is made of Edom, Ashdod and Ekron, after which the text breaks off.

The appearance of the name of Egypt as one of the tribute bearers was the most important reason why this text was dated to Sargon's reign and not Tiglath-pileser's.[42] It was argued that Tiglath-pileser III demarcated his territory by setting up a stele at the borders of Egypt (SI 8:18'; cf. SI 7:4), and placed Idibi'ilu as gatekeeper in front of Egypt (SI 7:6'; SI 13:16') suggesting that Egypt have fallen outside the Assyrian control by his time. However, these arguments are not yet enough to prove that ND 2765 belongs to the Sargonid perod. For Sargon's territory reached from Rashu on the Elamite border to Egypt, which he likewise did not consider part of his empire (cf. Tang-i Var 29–36). Further, the governor of Kalah (Nimrud), Marduk-remanni, mentioned as the expeditor of the letter is known to have owned this title during Tiglath-pileser III

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[40] On the Victory Stele of Piye, Osorkon is called the king of Perbast (Bubastis) and Ranofer (lns. 19, 114). The geographical borders of Ranofer are uncertain, but Redford assumed it probably encompassed the environs of Tanis, the region between Sile and Bubastis. Cf. D. B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 336 note 75.

[41] Cf. Saggs, "Nimrud Letters", 138–39. See also SAA 1.110; *COS* 3.96. Cf. also SI 7:rev. 7'–13' for a similar list of tributaries (= *COS* 2.117D).

[42] SAA 1 included the text among the correspondences of Sargon with the West. Younger dated the letter between 720 and 715 (cf. *COS* 3.96; K. L. Younger, "Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant at the End of the Eighth Century B.C.E.", in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* [eds. A. G. Vaughn & A. E. Killebrew; SBLSS 18; Atlanta: SBL, 2002], 238), Tadmor to after 716 ("Philistia", 92–93), Postgate to 716 (cf. R. Mattila, "Marduk-remanni", *PNAE* 2/II:21). Roberts proposed a date later than 715 (J. J. M. Roberts, "Egypt, Assyria, Isaiah, and the Ashdod Affair: An Alternative Proposal", in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* [eds. A. G. Vaughn & A. E. Killebrew; SBLSS 18; Atlanta: SBL, 2002], 271 note 22), and Saggs argued for 712 (Saggs, "Nimrud Letters", 152–53). On the difficulties in assigning a date to these letters, see S. Dalley, "Recent Evidence from Assyrian Sources for Judaean History from Uzziah to Manasseh", *JSOT* 28 (2003–2004) 388.

according to *CTN* 2.108.[43] The special emphasis on Gaza in ND 2765 is also significant, particularly when related to the Hanunu-episode, so that dating it in the time of Tiglath-pileser should not be excluded.

2.3.1.2. PIYE IN EGYPT

From the year 728 B.C., Piye's 21st regnal year, originates a famous military record, the Great Triumphal Stele (or Victory Stele). Despite the well recognised literary character of the inscription,[44] the narrative it preserved is a significant source for the reconstruction of the political history of both Kush and Egypt in the second half of the 8th century. By this time the Libyan prince, Tefnakht I of Sais, managed to gain control over several fortresses of Lower Egypt and marched with his troops towards Upper Egypt. The chiefs of Upper Egypt sent to Piye requesting help (lns. 2–5). Piye first commanded his garrison already stationing in Upper Egypt to attack, but later he took over the command himself. After celebrating the New Year festival in Napata, he headed towards Hermopolis, where he met his troops. He stopped shortly at Thebes to attain the Opet festival of Amun (lns. 25–30). Hermopolis surrendered quickly. Nimlot, king of Hermopolis reacknowledged the authority of Piye (lns. 31–69). While still in Hermopolis, the king of Heracleopolis, Peftuaubast assured Piye of his loyalty. Sailing still further to the north, three more cities decided to open their gates and treasury before the Nubian king (Per-Shekhem-kheperre, Mer-Atum, Itj-tawy), saving the life of their inhabitants. Following the advice of Tefnakht, in spite of a peace-proposal of Piye, Memphis, "the Balance of the Two Lands", decided not to surrender. Before the arrival of Piye, however, Tefnakht left the city with the promise to gather additional troops from the Delta. Memphis was defeated and many of its inhabitants slain or captured (ln. 96). The news of the fall of Memphis urged three rulers of the Delta, Iuput II of Leontopolis, Akanosh of Sebennytos, Pediese of Athribis to bow their heads before Piye (ln. 100). In Heliopolis (*'Iwnw*) Piye visited the temple of Re and Atum-Khepri and there he met Osorkon IV, king of Ranofer and Bubastis. It was obvious that no significant counter-power could be formed, so that Tefnakht also conceded defeat. Al-

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[43] Mattila, "Marduk-remanni", *PNAE* 2/II:21. In 713 Nimrud has a new governor, Assur-bani (cf. Millard, *Eponyms*, 47), which can be a date *ante quem* for the letter. But we do not know when Marduk-remanni was replaced.

[44] Cf. Grimal, *Egypt*, 335; Török, *Kingdom*, 161–62. For the text see N. Grimal, *La stèle triomphale de Pi('ânkh)y au Musée du Caire (JE 48862 et 47086- 47089). Études sur la propagande royale égyptienne* (MIFAO 105; Caire: IFAO, 1981); R. H. Pierce, "Great Triumphal Stela of Piye, Year 21" (*FHN* 1.9); M. Lichtheim, "The Victory Stela of King Piye (Piankhy)" (*COS* 2.7).

though he did not appear in person before Piye, he sent an embassy announcing his submission (lns. 126–39). Following the surrender of several other chiefs of the Delta, Piye returned to Napata with a great booty. The four rulers,[45] Iuput II (Leontopolis), Osorkon IV (Tanis), Peftuaubast (Heracleopolis), Nimlot (Hermopolis), are explicitly mentioned to have been left in office as Piye's administrators of Upper and Lower Egypt. According to ln. 30 of the inscription "the awesomeness of his majesty reached the Asiatics (*Stjw*), every heart trembling at him". The language of the inscription is rather conventional, but not necessarily unrealistic.

Egyptian sources are silent about the events following Piye's return to Napata. We have evidence of building operations in Napata in his later years. He probably never again returned to Egypt, but continued to rule from Napata, granting considerable freedom to his Egyptian vassals.

2.3.1.3. ISRAEL AND EGYPT BEFORE THE FALL OF SAMARIA

A much discussed event of Israel's history is connected to the reign of Piye and happened shortly after his Egyptian campaign. According to 2 Kgs 17:4, king Hoshea of Israel, the Assyrian vassal, looked for help in Egypt to escape his master, Salmaneser V.

> But the king of Assyria caught Hoshea in an act of treachery (קֶשֶׁר), for he had sent envoys אֶל־סוֹא מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם and he had not paid the tribute to the king of Assyria, as in previous years. The king of Assyria arrested him and put him in prison.[46]

A vast ammount of scholarly literature aimed to solve the riddle of אֶל־סוֹא מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם. In ancient translations סוֹא appears as the name of a king of Egypt. Because no Egyptian king named So has ever been recovered by historians, scholars proposed a variety of other solutions.[47]

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[45] Called kings (*nswt*), but only Piye is *nswt-bity*, "king of Upper and Lower Egypt", and *pr-ʿ3*, "pharaoh" (cf. Török, *Kingdom*, 162).

[46] In later inscriptions of Sargon II, Samaria appears without a king, and its inhabitants are accused of consorting together with a hostile king "not to do service nor to bring tribute" (*ana lā epēš ardūti u lā našê bilti*) (Nimrud Prism D iv 25–26; cf. 2 Kgs 17:3: וַיְהִי־לוֹ הוֹשֵׁעַ עֶבֶד וַיָּשֶׁב לוֹ מִנְחָה). That hostile king was Ilubidi/Yaubidi of Hamath (cf. Great Display Inscription 33–36).

[47] A summary of various opinions and a detailed discussion with earlier literature can be found in D. L. Christensen, "The Identity of 'King So' in Egypt (2 Kings xvii 4)", *VT* 39 (1989) 140–53; J. Day, "The Problem of 'So, king of Egypt' in 2 Kings xvii 4", *VT* 42 (1992) 289–301; A. R. W. Green, "The Identity of King So of Egypt—An Alternative Interpretation", *JNES* 52 (1993) 99–102; B. U. Schipper, "Wer war „Sōʾ, König von Ägypten" (2 Kön 17,4)?", *BN* 92 (1998) 71–84.

One can discern the following philological interpretations: (1) Some identify So with Osorkon IV, considering סוֹא a shorter form of *Wsrkn* (Kitchen, Schipper). (2) Others argue that סוֹא refers to the city Sais, emending the text to אֶל־סוֹא אֶל־מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם (Albright), or to סוֹא אֶל־מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם (Ginsberg). The Egyptian king is identified with Tef-nakht of Sais. (3) Others saw here a reference to the Egyptian *pꜣ sꜣw(w)*, 'the Saite', also apparing in the Greek name of a later king of Sais: Neche*pso*, "Necho, the Saite" (Redford). (4) Some connect סוֹא with the Horus name of Tefnakht, *Siꜣ-ib* (Sayed), or Piye, *Smꜣ-tꜣ.wj* (Green). (5) Even others argue that So is a title, a Hebrew transcrip-tion of the Egyptian *nswt*, 'king' (Donner, Krauss, Na'aman).[48]

As a brief evaluation of these opinions, we may note the following. (1) Foreign kings with abbreviated names appear occasionally in the Bible (cf. Pul for Tiglath-pileser III in 2 Kgs 15:19), but it is a question whether סוֹא can also be the abbreviated form of *Wsrkn* (known as *Šilkanni* in Assyrian texts). Kitchen argued to have found such an abbreviated Egyptian form of the name of Osorkon III as *isi* or *ini*.[49] (2) As for explaining סוֹא as a place name, this interpretation requires emendations in the Hebrew text which reaches beyond textual support, and it is historically also problematic (see below). (3) It is unlikely that סוֹא can mean 'the Saite'.[50] (4) No pharaoh appearing in the Bible is always called by his personal name (Shoshenq, Taharka, Necho, Apries). Why should סוֹא be an exception? (5) "Pir'u, king of Egypt" appears in Sargon's text, where Pir'u (= pharaoh) is treated as a personal name. There is also a predilection in the Book of Kings for using foreign titles as personal names (1 Kgs 11:19; 2 Kgs 18:17) which may corroborate the assumption that סוֹא preserved a rank (*nsw*, 'king') rather than a personal name.[51] However, Schipper argued that the Egyptian term *n(j)sw.t*, cannot be abbreviated as [*n*]*sw.t*, for the stress falls here on the first syllable. *n(j)sw.t* was known in this form to the Hebrew authors as well, as תַּחְפְּנֵיס in 1 Kgs 11:19 exemplifies.[52] Although Von Beckerath mentions the Greek names Αμονρα**σο**ντηρ or Αμονρα**σω**ντηρ (*Jmn-Rꜥ* [*n*]*sw-nṯrw*, "Amon-Re, king of the gods"),

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[48] Earlier studies equated So with Sib'e, an Egyptian field marshal mentioned in the Assyrian texts of Sargon. Sib'e has later proved to be an incorrect read-ing for Re'e. Cf. R. Borger, "Das Ende des ägyptischen Feldherrn Sib'e = סוֹא", *JNES* 19 (1960) 49–53.

[49] K. A. Kitchen, "Egyptian Interventions in the Levant in Iron Age II", in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors, from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* (eds. W. G. Dever & S. Gitin; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 126.

[50] For the arguments, see Schipper, "Wer war", 81–82.

[51] Cf. אֲרַוְנָה in 2 Sam 24:18 *pass.* with the Hurrian/Hittite 'lord' in *HALOT*.

[52] תַּחְפְּנֵיס is the Hebrew form of the Egyptian *tꜣ-ḥm.t-nsw.t*, 'the wife of the king', i.e. 'the queen' (cf. Schipper, "Wer war", 80).

which would support such abbreviations,[53] yet the Greek forms can also be considered the result of secondary contractions, dictated by pronunciation difficulties. (6) As a further possibility, one may also reckon with a textual error in the Hebrew text, as suggested by the LXX transcription, Σηγωρ, which is phonetically speaking a few steps closer to Egyptian *Wsrkn*.[54]

Apart from these philological investigations, it remains to be seen with whom King So can be identified historically. Though pursuing different philologies, many connect this person to the Egyptian city Sais and its king, Tefnakht.[55] But as it was noted long ago, this is not very likely.[56] There is much to recommend for the identification of So with Osorkon IV, ruler of Bubastis and Ranofer.[57] The 22nd Dynasty was geographically the closest neighbour of Canaan. When Jeroboam fled from Solomon, he arrived at the court of Shoshenq I (1 Kgs 11:40), one of the predecessors of Osorkon IV. Though the balance of power may have been altered in subsequent centuries, the contact between Canaanite states and Egypt leads us back repeatedly to the territories of the 22nd Dynasty (cf. Isa 19:11.13 and 30:4).[58]

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[53] J. von Beckerath, "Über chronologische Berührungspunkte der altägyptischen und der israelitischen Geschichte", in *"Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf". Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient. Festschrift für Oswald Lorenz* (eds. M. Dietrich & I. Kottsieper; AOAT 250; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), 96.

[54] G. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 674.

[55] See for instance Christensen, "Identity", 147–53; Day, "So", 299; P. Galpaz-Feller, "Is that So? (2 Kings xvii 4)", *RB* 107 (2000) 338–47; Kahn, "Tang-i Var", 14; Von Beckerath, "Berührungspunkte", 96. Green's derivation of סוא (vocalised as *Siwaʾ*) from *Simaʾ*, the assumed Horus-name of Piye (Green, "Identity", 107–8), rests on the phonetical change *m > w*, which is only attested in Babylonian, but it is strange to Egyptian. Egyptian *m* became either מ or נ in Hebrew (cf. Y. Muchiki, *Egyptian Proper Names and Loanwords in North-West Semitic* [SBLDS 173; Atlanta: SBL, 1999], 262). Some even dispute that the Louvre stele on which the Horus name *Smꜣ-tw.j* appears should be attributed to Piye (cf. Török in *FHN*, 1.47, 49, 51–52).

[56] Cf. Kitchen, *Period*, 372–75; Schipper, "Wer war", 76–79.

[57] For Ranofer, as probably the region between Sile and Bubastis, cf. note 40 above. Schipper writes: "er (Osorkon IV) stand inner-ägyptisch gesehen am Rande des Geschehens, außerägyptisch jedoch im Mittelpunkt der Ereignisse" ("Wer war", 78; Idem, *Israel*, 152–53).

[58] The alabaster vase from Samaria inscribed with the name of Osorkon II (874–850) also speaks for the diplomatic relations between Israel and the 22nd Dynasty (cf. Kuhrt, *Near East*, 2:628). Schipper noted that from the thirteen Egyptian place names that appear in the Old Testament, nine are located in the Eastern Delta. The cities of Memphis, Thebes and Aswan are located in the south. No city is mentioned in the Western Delta, the empire of Tefnakht

The most important argument that scholars mention against the identification of So with Osorkon is his lack of sufficient power when compared with Piye or Tefnakht.[59] However, that may exactly be the reason why Egyptian help failed to arrive as expected. At least we possess no information that it did.[60] Though not as powerful as Tefnakht, the rulers of Tanis and Bubastis still seemed to have owned enough power in the eyes of the despaired Israel, who refused to observe the world through the eyes of its critical prophets. Tefnakht may have been the mightiest ruler of the Delta, it is geographically still difficult to imagine how he could have come to Israel's aid across the country of Osorkon IV without the implication of Osorkon himself.

2.3.1.4. EGYPT AND KUSH IN THE EARLY YEARS OF SARGON (721–715)

Significant information concerning the role of Egypt between 721–715 can be derived from the Assyrian sources of Sargon II, which can be divided into (a) iconographical and (b) textual records.

(a) Several reliefs from Room V of Sargon's palace at Khorsabad (Dur-Sharrukin) represent Assyrians fighting with Egyptians. Slab 2 Lower Register depicts the battle of Raphia, an Egyptian city defended by Nubians.[61] Slab 4 Lower Register is the snapshot of the battle between the Assyrians and the Egyptians beside a river, perhaps the Brook of Egypt. At the centre of the relief appears a Nubian warrior facing two Assyrian soldiers on horseback.[62] One of these is perhaps even Sargon II himself accompanied by one of his eunuchs, while the Nubian is most likely Re'e, his Egyptian match. Slab 5 Lower Register represents the conquest of Gibbeton, the northern city of Philistia, apparently defended by Nubians.[63] Slab 6 depicts the conquest of Ashdod, defended

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(Schipper, "Wer war", 79 note 35).

[59] Cf. Redford, *Egypt*, 346–47.

[60] The connection between an uncertain tradition in Diodorus i 45.1–2 regarding an "Arabian" campaign of "Tnephachton, father of Bocchoris the wise", with 2 Kgs 17:4 remains more than doubtful (contra Redford).

[61] N. Franklin, "The Room V Reliefs at Dur-Sharrukin and Sargon II's Western Campaigns", *TA* 21 (1994) 264 Fig. 3, 265; J. E. Reade, "Sargon's Campaigns of 720, 716, and 715 B.C.: Evidence from the Sculptures", *JNES* 35 (1976) 99–102, esp. 100; N. Na'aman, "The Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria (720 BC)", *Bib* 71 (1990) 218 note 37.

[62] Franklin, "Reliefs", 265, 266 Fig. 4; cf. SAA 4, 96 Fig. 31.

[63] Franklin, "Reliefs", 267 Fig. 5. The capture of Gibbeton and Ekron is assigned to the year 720 by Reade, "Sargon's Campaigns", 95–104 and K. L. Younger, "Recent Study on Sargon II, King of Assyria: Implications for Biblical Studies", in *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations* (eds. M. W. Chavalas et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 293, 316. Tadmor ("Cam-

by hooded bowmen, and deported Ashdodites appear on Slabs 8–9 Lower Register. Slab 10 preserved the Assyrian siege of Ekron.[64]

It is remarkable that the Egyptian soldiers that Sargon's scribes mention in connection with the Gaza-campaign are in fact Nubian warriors on the reliefs (Slabs 2, 4, 5). While Sargon describes himself in several inscriptions as the subjugator of Egypt at Raphia, alluding to his first campaign to Philistia in 720,[65] yet the Egyptians of Raphia appear as Nubians on the pictures, suggesting that the Assyrian scribes of Sargon did not always distinguish between Nubians and Egyptians. Above all, this iconographical evidence emphasises a prominent Kushite presence in Egypt and beyond even after the return of Piye to Napata.

(b) The Egyptian presence in Canaan is also highlighted by the literary sources of Sargon. Unfortunately, dating some events in these records remains problematic due to two factors: the nature of the sources and the differences and inconsistencies between various accounts.[66]

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paigns", 83 note 243) and Wäfler (*Nicht-Assyrer neuassyrischer Darstellungen* [AOAT 26; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1975], 29–30, 33–34) disputed the Nubian identity of the warriors and dated the event pictured on this slab to 712, but their view is less convincing.

[64] Franklin, "Reliefs", 268–70 Figs. 6–8. Ekron on Slab 10 is placed after the conquest of Ashdod in 711. This may suggest that Ekron was captured during the raid of 711 (or less likely 713) and not in 720, when Gibbeton fell (contra Reade, "Campaigns", 101; Younger, "Assyrian Involvement", 242–43; see also the discussion of the "Azekah Inscription" below). Ekron may have been one of the Philistine states, to which the Ashdodites had sent their messengers according to Sargon's inscriptions, as Gath/Gittaim and Ashdod-Yam were also taking their share in the rebellion of 711 (see below).

Gibbeton (Slab 5) and Ekron (Slab 10) are not mentioned in the Annals of Sargon during his campaign of 720, neither during his later campaign(s) against Ashdod (see, however, below the "Azekah Inscription"). On the other hand, Ashdod-Yam and *Gimtu* (Gath or Gittaim; cf. Tadmor, "Campaigns", 83 note 242 and 2 Sam 4:3; Neh 11:33) are mentioned in the inscriptions, but do not appear on the walls (cf. on this J. M. Russell, *The Writing on the Wall: Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions* [MC 9; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 111–12, 141–42).

[65] Cylinder Inscription 19; Pavement Inscription 4 38–39.

[66] Scholars usually divide the Assyrian literary sources into annalistic literature (dates according to regnal years, *palûs*) and a different, rather heterogenious type of literature that does not follow a chronological pattern, but assumed to be geographically structured. As Fuchs and Tadmor recognised, however, geography played a significant role in the Annals (Tadmor, "Campaigns", 36; *ISK*, 379), and chronology imposed certain limitations on the geographical ordering of the events on the Great Display Inscription (*ISK*, 383; cf. *ITP*, 118).

The problem of inconsistencies appears on two levels. First, annalistic ac-

Nevertheless, these sources are significant. The most important inscriptions of Sargon from 721–715 are the Khorsabad Annals, the Great Display (Summary) Inscription, the Assur Prism, the Nimrud Prism.[67]

a. The Khorsabad Annals
17–18 (Among the events of Sargon's *rēš šarrūti*)
[I opened the sealed] *kāru*[68] [of Egypt, and] I mingled together [the people of Assyria and Egypt]. I made them trade with each other.

53–57 (In the 2nd regnal year [*palû*] of Sargon, i.e. 720)
[…] and Re'e, his (i.e. the king's) commander-in-chief (*turtānu*), came to his (Hanunu's) assistance, and he marched against me to make war and battle. In the name of Aššur, my lord, I inflected a defeat on them. Re'e fled alone like a shepherd whose flock had been stolen, and he disappeared.[69] I sized Hanunu with the hand; and I brought him as a prisoner to my city Aššur. I razed, destroyed, and burned Raphia. I carried off 9033 inhabitants together with their great property.

123–125 (In the 7th regnal year [*palû*] of Sargon, i.e. 715)
From Pir'u, the king of the land of Egypt, from Samsi, the queen of the land of Arabia (and) from It'amra, the Sabaean, the kings (*šarrāni*) beside the sea and the desert, I received as tribute gold, (etc…)

b. The Assur Prism lns. 1–11 (VA 8424 II' and 79-7-8,14,1)
(In Sargon's 5th regnal year [*palû*], relates the deportation of people from an unknown region to the Brook of Egypt)

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counts differ in assigning one specific campaign to a certain regnal year of Sargon. On the Assur Prism, the *palû*-dates of the scribes precede with one year the dates found in the Khorsabad Annals (Tadmor, "Campaigns", 31; A. Fuchs, *Die Annalen des Jahres 711 v. Chr. nach Prismenfragmenten aus Ninive und Assur* [SAAS 8; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998], 81–96). The differences can sometimes be explained by two calendar systems, following an ascension or non-ascension year dating (*rēš šarrūti* = 1st *palû*), or by the fact that the 1st *palû* was reckoned as the year 720, when Sargon conducted his first campaign (he ascended the throne in Dec. 722/Jan. 721).

Second, ideological factors influenced the sequential presentation of events. The authors of the Khorsabad annals were keen to fill up the gaps of those years in which there was no campaign led by the Assyrian king, as in 722–721, Sargon's ascension and first regnal year, and 712–711 (*ISK*, 379–80).
[67] For editions and translations, see Tadmor, "Campaigns"; *IKS*; Fuchs, *Annalen*; Younger in *COS* 2.118A–J; Borger in *TUAT*, 1.378–87; G. Frame, "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var", *Or* 68 (1999) 31–57.
[68] Younger rendered "borders" following Borger, *TUAT*, 1.383 note 33b. See, however, Fuchs, *IKS*, 88 and the discussion of *bīt kāri* above (2.3.1.1.).
[69] *Rēʾê*(SIPA-ʾe) *kī rēʾê*(SIPA) *ša ṣēnāšu ḫabta edanuššu ipparšidma*. Borger recognised the word play on the name of the *turtannu* (*Rēʾê*) and the Assyrian word 'shepherd' (*rēʾû*) (see Borger, "Sib'e = סוא", 49–53).

Together with […] and sheep [I deported?…] from the [land of…] in the land that […] on the border of the city of the Brook of Eg[ypt, a district which is on the shore of] the Western Sea I settled them. I assigned th[em into the hands of my official administrator] the sheikh of the city of Laban […]. As for Shilkanni, king of Egypt (*šar māt Muṣri*) that [lies far away], the fear of the splendour of Aššur, my lord […ov]erwhelmed him; and he brought to me as his present 12 big horses, the like of which is not to be found in the land of [Assyria].

c. Great Display Inscription lns. 25–27
Hanunu, king of Gaza, together with Re'e, the commander-in-chief (*turtānu*) of Egypt, marched against me to do war and battle at Raphia. I inflicted a decisive defeat on them. Re'e became afraid at the noise of my weapons, and he fled, and his place was not found. I captured Hanunu, the king of Gaza with my own hand. I received the tribute of Pir'u, the king of Egypt (*Pir'u šar māt Muṣri*), Samsi, the queen of Arabia, It'amar, the Sabean: gold, herbs of the mountain, horses and camels.

d. The Nimrud Prism (D) lns. iv. 42–49
I caused the awe-inspiring splendour of Aššur, my lord, overwhelm the people of the land of Egypt and the Arabians; at the mention of my name their hearts palpitated, (and) their arms collapsed. I opened the sealed *kāru* of Egypt, and I mingled together the people of Assyria and Egypt. I made them trade [with each other].[70]

Sargon's first conflict with Egypt involved Hanunu, king of Gaza, who was supported by the Egyptians. The battle at Raphia ended with the triumph of the Assyrians and the deportation of 9033 people from Raphia (Annals 53–57).[71] Whenever Sargon emphasises his triumph over Egypt in later inscriptions, he has in view the events of 720. The cuneiform texts assign a central role to Egypt (*māt Muṣri*) in this battle, a term which, as we have seen on the reliefs, also includes the Kushites.

Without making any connection with the Raphia-episode, dated to the ascension year (*rēš šarrūti*) of the king, the Annals of Khorsabad refer to the opening of the sealed *kāru* of Egypt, where Sargon mingled the Assyrians and Egyptians, and let them trade together.[72] It is most unlikely that the opening of the sealed *kāru* took place in 722, as the

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[70] For three shorter texts note referring to this period (esp. the battle at Raphia against Egypt and Gaza), note The Tang-i Var Inscription 23, The Pavement Inscription 4 38–41 and The Cylinder Inscription 19–20.

[71] Raphia was an Egyptian city, the last station before reaching Gaza (*pꜣ Knꜥn* for the Egyptians), the first city of Canaan (cf. Na'aman, "Brook of Egypt", 75). Cf. Gen 10:19; 1 Kgs 4:21–24; 1 Chr 4:40.

[72] Fuchs identifies this *kāru* with Tiglath-pileser's *bīt kāri* (ISK, 88; contra Elat, "Economic Relations", 26 note 41), in the Raphia-Gaza area.

Annals would suggest.[73] There are other more attractive alternatives. (a) First, one may date this affair to 720, just after re-establishing order on the Egyptian border.[74] The opening the *kāru* possibly sealed by the Philistines might have triggered Sargon's campaign in 720.[75] (b) Tadmor may be right, however, that the aversive encounter with Re'e in 720 provides a less suitable background for the Egypto-Assyrian trade mentioned in the Assyrian texts. Alternatively, Tadmor connected the opening of the *kāru* of Egypt to 716, the year when, according to the Assur stele, Sargon received the gift of Shilkanni (Osorkon IV) king of Egypt.[76] However, the Assur Stele is silent on the opening of a *kāru*. (c) As a third possibility, following the story about the repopulation of Samaria, the Nimrud Prism gives an account about the *kāru* in the context of the submission of Egyptians and Arabs.[77] The Khorsabad Annals (which dated the opening of the *kāru* to 721) also refer to the tribute of a *Pir'u šar māt Muṣri*, "Pir'u, the king of Egypt", and the tribute of the Arabians[78] in the seventh *palû* of Sargon, which corresponds to the year 715, i.e. one year later than the Shilkanni-episode of the Assur Prism.

> It is sometimes argued that Shilkanni, king of Egypt, of the Assur Prism and Pir'u, king of Egypt, in the Khorsabad Annals and the Great Display Inscription refer to the same person, so that one of the two dates is considered erroneous.[79] If true, the earlier origin of the Assur Prism would plead for the year 716 as the correct date.[80] However,

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[73] Cf. also C. J. Gadd, "Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud", *Iraq* 16 (1954) 181; Tadmor, "Campaigns", 35–36.

[74] So Gadd, "Nimrud", 181; A. Spalinger, "The Year 712 B.C. and Its Implications for Egyptian History", *JARCE* 10 (1973) 96 note 7.

[75] The sealing of the Assyrian customs houses was a first step to throw off the yoke of vasalhood (cf. Elat, "Economic Relations", 27).

[76] Tadmor, "Campaigns", 35, 78; Idem, "Philistia", 92. See further Eph'al, *Ancient Arabs*, 107–8; Younger, "Recent Study", 312. The identification of Shilkanni with Osorkon IV is widely accepted. Cf. E. F. Weidner, "Šilkan(he)ni, König von Musri, ein Zeitgenosse Sargons II. Nach einem neuen Bruchstück der Prisma-Inschrift des assyrischen Königs", *AfO* 14 (1941–44) 44–45; Tadmor, "Philistia", 92; Spalinger, "The Year 712", 96; Schipper, *Israel,* 156.

[77] The submission of the Arabs also appears in the Assur Prism. II. d (VA 8424 i') 21–22 mentions the deportation of a nation to the Brook of Egypt, and the installation of the sheikh (*qēpu*) of Laban over against the Egyptian border (Fuchs, *Annalen,* 57 note 23). Yet these Arabians of the Sinai are different from those located further to the east (queen Samsi and It'amra, the Sabaean).

[78] Similarly the Great Display Inscription and the Cylinder Inscription.

[79] Kitchen, *Period,* 551–52 (but see 144); Tadmor, "Campaigns", 35; Fuchs, *Annalen,* 131; Roberts, "Egypt", 269, 279.

[80] The Annals were written around Sargon's 15th regnal year (707), before the completion of the royal palace. The Assur Prism dates from 711 at latest.

there were plenty of other occasions when Sargon could have received
tribute from Egypt. The scene does not necessarily imply that the kings
Pir'u and Shilkanni are identical. One may assume that, so far as Shil-
kanni is concerned, the name (= title) Pir'u is deliberately avoided,
since he was not the pharaoh (*Pir'u*) of Egypt, but Shabaka was.[81] The
fact that Shabaka, the black pharaoh, is called *Pir'u šar māt Muṣri* is
not strange, since Re'e, the Kushite figure pictured on Sargon's relief
scene, was also called the field marshal *of Egypt* on the inscriptions.[82]

Pir'u šar māt Muṣri reappears in the Nineveh Prism (cf. 2.3.2.2.), in
the accounts of the year 711. It is argued that the Nineveh Prism de-
rives from the same literary tradition and was probably written in the
same year as the Assur Prism.[83] Yet in the year 711, when the Nineveh
Prism mentions *Pir'u šar māt Muṣri*, it knows nothing about Shilkanni,
mentioned by the contemporary Assur prism. Working with the hy-
pothesis that Pir'u king of Egypt in 711 is identical with Pir'u in 715 in
the Annals, this would again suggest that Pir'u and Shilkanni refer to
two different individuals: Shilkanni is Osorkon IV, Pir'u is Shabaka.

What does the mingling of the Egyptians and the Assyrians mean in the
context of Sargon's *kāru*-scene? The Assur Prism (lns. 1–11) relates the
repopulation of this region following the battle at Raphia with other
people of unknown origin, from territories conquered by Sargon. One of

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[81] Cf. Kitchen, *Period,* 144 (but see 551–52); Younger, "Recent Study", 314
note 78; Younger, "Assyrian Involvement", 241. The identification of *Pir'u*
with Bakenrenef of Sais (H. von Zeissl, *Äthiopen und Assyrer in Ägypten. Bei-
träge zur Geschichte der Ägyptischen „Spätzeit"* [Ägyptologische Forschungen 14;
Glückstadt & Hamburg: J. J. Augustin, 1955], 12; Tadmor, "Campaigns", 84,
Spalinger, "The Year 712", 96–97; Von Beckerath, "Berührungspunkte", 97;
Christensen, "Identity", 151) causes chronological problems.

For *Pir'u šar māt Muṣri*, cf. biblical פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם in 1 Kgs 3:1; 9:16; Isa
36:6; Jer 46:17; Ezek 29:2; etc. See also Φερος in Herodotus' *Hist.* ii 111.

[82] In Sennacherib's texts, the *Kushite* field marshal is called the commander of
the king of Meluhha. Later inscriptions of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal make
even clearer ethnic distinctions. The Kushite ruler is called "the king of Kush"
(but not Meluhha!), or "king of Egypt and Kush", but not "the king of Egypt".
However, in these cases we are already in the post-invasion era, when Assyrian
scribes were familiarised with the inner Egyptian geo-political situation, unlike
during Sargon's reign (contra Spalinger, "The Year 712", 100; Idem, "Egypt
and Esarhaddon: An Analysis of the First Invasion of Egypt", *Or* 43 [1974]
320–24; H.-U. Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens* [ÄAT 27; Wies-
baden: Harrassowitz, 1994], 1:9; Redford, "Chronology", 59 note 10; Roberts,
"Egypt", 279). If Egyptian kinglets are called "kings of Egypt" by the Assyrians,
why could *the* Nubian pharaoh not bear this title? I argued in Excursus 2 that
"the king of Meluhha" to whom Yamani fled is located in Upper Egypt, while
Shabaka is generally assumed to have ruled in Memphis.

[83] Fuchs, *Annalen,* 3–4.

the stereotypical formulations that accompany Assyrian deportation accounts and reorganisations of provinces is that the king "counted those (deported) people as Assyrians" (cf. RIMA 3 A.0.103.1:iv 7–8). It is probably these "Assyrians", who are mingled here with the Egyptians.[84]

The Nimrud letter ND 2765 mentioned above in connection with Tiglath-pileser III (2.3.1.1.) has been argued to date to Sargon's reign, between 720–715 B.C. If this dating is correct, it should be included here as further evidence referring to tributes (*madattu*) brought to Assyria by Sargon's subordinates in the West, and another confirmation that bringing tribute by an Egyptian king does not necessarily imply that Sargon was in Philistia in 715. The Egyptian tribute could have also been delivered to Assyria by way of Egyptian emissaries.[85] Egypt appears in the list alongside Judah, Philistia, Ammon, Moab and Edom.[86]

2.3.2. SHABAKA (717–703 B.C.)

Shabaka[87] was the son of Kashta and a brother of Piye.[88] Shabaka ascended the throne in Napata, but in his second year we already meet

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[84] Archaeological evidence from Tell Jemmeh, Tel Sera, Tel Abu-Seleimeh testify for Assyrian-type administrative and military bases in this region (Na'aman, "Brook of Egypt", 80–83, 85; J. A. Balkely & J. W. Hardin, "Southwestern Judah in the Late Eighth Century B.C.E.", *BASOR* 326 [2002] 44, 51). Particularly interesting are the ostraca with Old Iranian and Kassite names at Tell Jemmeh, suggesting that the people living here were deported by Sargon from the Zagros region (cf. Na'aman & Zadok, "Deportations", 36–46).

[85] Shilkanni's tribute in 716 may have been offered to the king in Philistia during the reorganisation of the region of Nahal Musur (cf. Assur Prism 1–7).

[86] Nimrud Inscription ln. 8 calls Sargon *mušakniš māt Yaūdu ša ašaršu rūqu*, "the subduer of Judah, which lies far away" (*COS* 2.118I). The Nimrud Inscription (to be distinguished from the Nimrud Prism) originates from 717 or early 716 (Fuchs, *Annalen*, 83; K. L. Younger, "The Nimrud Inscription", *COS* 2.118I; Idem, "Assyrian Involvement", 237–38). This suggests that Judah may have been a vassal of Sargon around 716. Roberts ("Egypt", 271) is probably right that this title of Sargon does not necessarily allude to an actual campaign against Judah, contra M. A. Sweeney, "Sargon's Threat against Jerusalem in Isaiah 10,27-32", *Bib* 75 (1994) 457–70 and K. L. Younger, "Sargon's Campaign against Jerusalem – A Further Note", *Bib* 77 (1996) 108–10.

[87] In Greek Σαβάκων (Herodotus, *Hist.* ii 137; W. G. Waddell, *Manetho* [LCL 350; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940], 167). For the Egyptian name(s) of Shabaka, cf. J. Leclant, "Schabaka", *LdÄ* 4:499.

[88] Cf. Török, *FHN*, 1.121. According to some scholars, the succession of kings was collateral (brother followed brother) rather than patrilinear (son followed father) (cf. Török, *Kingdom*, 168). For other opinions and the complexity of this problem, see D. Apelt, "Bemerkungen zur Thronfolge in der 25. Dynastie", *Meroitica* 12 (1990) 23–31, esp. 28–30.

him in Lower Egypt. Debates concerning the date of his ascension to the throne of Nubia have not yet been settled.

> In 701 Taharka was leading the Egyptian army. As it will be discussed below, he was summoned to Lower Egypt by Shabataka, Shabaka's successor (Kawa Stele IV and VI), which means that Shabataka was seating on the throne by 701 at latest. The Karnak Nile level inscription of Shabataka suggests that he appeared in Egypt (Thebes) as a pharaoh after three years of rule in Napata, which means Shabataka was king in 703 already. Since the highest attested regnal year of Shabaka is 15,[89] he must have ruled from 717 at latest.
>
> In the year 706, the inscription of Sargon II from Tang-i Var presents *Šapataku* as *šar Meluḫḫa*, "Shabataka, king of Kush". Based on this inscription, Kahn dated the ascension of Shabaka to around 721.[90] I have discussed the implications of this new text in Excursus 2, concluding that this evidence is open to other interpretations as well. In relation to Sargon's Annals and Display Inscriptions, dating Shabaka's ascension to 717 seems to be more reasonable.

After taking over the throne in Egypt in his second year, Shabaka executed Bakenrenef, son of Tefnakht, and regained control over the territories formerly dominated by Sais. Though the local dynasties had not been extinguished, the power was centralised in the hands of Shabaka.

An important change in the policy of Shabaka constituted the transfer of royal capital to Egypt in 716. While Kashta and Piye reigned from Napata, Shabaka chose Memphis, "the balance of the two lands", Upper and Lower Egypt, as the centre of the dominion. So it was easier to exert control on the vassal kings of the Delta and to face the rapid expansion of the New Assyrian kingdom towards the West.[91] Shabaka may have even planned to re-establish Egyptian hegemony in Canaan, which would have been almost impossible from Napata.[92]

Unfortunately Egyptian sources do not provide much evidence concerning Shabaka's external policy. On a scarab dating from the early years of his reign, Shabaka is represented as follows:[93]

> He (Shabaka) has slain those who rebelled against him in the South and the North (*Šmꜥ Mḥw*), and in every foreign country (*ḫꜣst nb*). The

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[89] I.e. he reigned minimal 14 complete calendar years. The last inscription is dated 84 days before the completion of his 15th regnal year (see Kahn, "Chronology", 5 note 22; cf. Kitchen, *Period*, 165 note 341; Török, *FHN*, 1.122).

[90] Kahn, "Chronology", 6. Cf. also Jansen-Winkeln, "Taharka", 153 note 23.

[91] Despite the conflict of Shabaka and Bakenrenef, there is no indication that Piye would have lost control after his return to Napata (Török, *FHN*, 1.122). The prominent Nubians presence in Philistia testifies rather for the contrary.

[92] Adams, "Kush", 779.

[93] R. H. Pierce, "Commemorative scarab of Shabaqo", *FHN* 1.14:5–10.

> Sand-Dwellers (ḥrw-šꜥy) who rebelled against him are fallen down through fear of him. They come of themselves as prisoners. Each one has seized his fellow among them, because he (Shabaka) has performed benefaction for his father (Amun), so greatly does he love him.

The Sand-Dwellers alludes to the eastern neighbours from the Sinai.[94] If real, the conflict described here may indirectly testify for Assyrian presence in the area.[95] Those defeated may have been Arabians, tributaries and "gatekeepers" of Sargon. Or the text may eventually allude to a conflict between Sinaites and Egyptians on a smaller scale. Anyway, the eastern borders of the 22nd Dynasty are claimed as pharaonic territory.

2.3.2.1. JUDAH, EGYPT AND ASSYRIA ON THE EVE OF 711 B.C.

The appearance of Shabaka at the eastern borders of Egypt between 715–712 coincides with an increasing Assyrian military presence in Canaan. This may safely be concluded from the problematic narratives of Isa 36–39 and 2 Kgs 18–20, as well as the Assyrian inscriptions mentioning the aftermath of the rebellion of Azuri, king of Ashdod.

It is striking that although Assyrian kings leading campaigns against Canaan are mentioned by name in 2 Kings, the name of Sargon, whose army has visited the region several times,[96] was not preserved in any verse of 2 Kings. Isaiah 36:1 (2 Kgs 18:13) maintains that Sennacherib, king of Assyria captured the fortified cities of Judah in Hezekiah's 14th year. Hezekiah began to rule most certainly between 728–725,[97] which

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[94] Kitchen, *Period*, 379; Török, *FHN*, 1.125.

[95] Some express doubts concerning the historical value of such "vague" claims (Morkot, *Black Pharaohs*, 209; Roberts, "Egypt", 267). Yoyotte pointed out how far this text is anchored in a traditional royal phraseology. Cf. J. Yoyotte, "Plaidoyer pour l'authenticité du scarabée historique de Shabako", *Bib* 37 (1956) 457–76 ; Idem, "Sur le scarabée historique de Shabako. Note additionnelle", *Bib* 39 (1958) 206–10. The terms "south", "north", "every foreign land", "Sand-Dwellers" can have geographical significance (Upper Egypt, Lower Egypt, Sinai), but it is also part of a well-known literary tradition.

[96] Cf. Nimrud Inscription calling him "the subduer of Judah" between 720 and early 716, the meeting with Shilkanni in 716, the Pir'u-story in 715 and two more appearances between 713 and 711, during the Ashdod-campaign.

[97] Though the precise beginning of Hezekiah's reign is still subject of discussion, the view that his rule should be counted from 715/714, promoted once by Albright, and followed by J. Bright, A *History of Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 261; E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000), 173–76; Roberts, "Egypt", 270–71 note 20, and others, has proven to be unconvincing. Cf. A. K. Jenkins, "Hezekiah's Fourteenth Year: A New Interpretation of 2 Kings xviii 13–xix 37", *VT* 26 (1976) 284–98; G. Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (SHCANE 9; Leiden:

sets the 14th year of the king to 715–712, shortly after Pir'u, king of Egypt (identified above with Shabaka) presented his tribute to Sargon.

But why would the biblical author ascribe events from Sargon's days to Sennacherib? One of the possible explanations is that the author merged two events into one. Such telescoping of subsequent events appears just a few lines earlier in 2 Kgs 17–18, where the author again made no distinction between two subsequent sieges of Samaria (by Salmaneser V and Sargon II).[98] Moreover, it is also possible that during the Assyrian campaign in Hezekiah's 14th year, Sennacherib was one of Sargon's officials entrusted with the army.[99] Portraying Sennacherib as king during in 715–712 may be an anachronism, as it also was the case with Taharka, "the king" of Kush in 701 (2 Kgs 19:9 | Isa 37:9).

The redactional problems of the text of Isa 36–39 and 2 Kgs 18–20 have been examined in a great number of studies.[100] It may suffice here

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Brill, 1996), 99–101. Hezekiah's ascension should be dated between 728–725, possibly 727 (cf. Galil, *Chronology*, 99 note 3). A more precise conclusion is dependent on one's dating of the fall of Samaria and the interpretation of 2 Kgs 17:5–6; 18:9–10. See Na'aman, "Conquest of Samaria", 206–25; B. Becking, *The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archaeological Study* (SHANE 2; Leiden: Brill, 1992); J. Goldberg, "Two Assyrian Campaigns against Hezekiah and Later Eighth Century Biblical Chronology", *Bib* 80 (1999) 377; Galil, *Chronology*, 104; Younger, "Recent Study", 289–94. We have no convincing evidence for a coregency of Ahaz and Hezekiah. For a detailed discussion of the problem, cf. Galil, *Chronology*, 98–107.

[98] The narratives were partially written several decennia after the events (cf. 2 Kgs 19:36–37). Other parts of the story bear clear signs of an even later authorship. Cf. Jenkins, "Fourteenth Year", 289; N. Na'aman, "New Light on Hezekiah's Second Prophetic Story (2 Kgs 19,9b-35)", *Bib* 81 (2000) 393–402.

[99] Cf. Becking, *Fall*, 54. Sennacherib, a prominent Assyrian functionary, appears as the expeditor of a letter describing the receipt of tribute from Azuri of Ashdod, the king who rebelled a few years before the deportation of Ashdod in 711 (Tadmor, "Campaigns", 79 note 211; Idem, "Philistia", 93). Nebuchadnezzar as crown prince was also the leading his father's army.

[100] See e.g. B. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (SBT 3; London: SCM Press, 1967), 69–103; K. A. D. Smelik, "Distortion of Old Testament Prophecy: the Purpose of Isaiah xxxvi and xxxvii", in *Crisis and Perspectives: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Polytheism, Biblical Theology, Palestinian Archaeology and Intertestamental Literature* (ed. A. S. van der Woude; OTS 24; Leiden: Brill, 1986), 93–128; C. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 47–72, 195–96, 116–20; F. Gonçalves, *L'expédition de Sennachérib en Palestine dans la littérature hébraïque ancienne* (PIOL 34; Louvain-la-Neuve: Université de Louvain, 1986); Gallagher, *Campaign*, 143–261; etc. Isa and 2 Kgs perhaps go back to a common text. A discussion of this problem goes, however, beyond the scope of this study.

to say that the complex text of 2 Kgs 18–19 and Isa 36–37 presents two accounts on the siege of Jerusalem, 2 Kgs 18:17–19:9a.36–37 (B1) and 2 Kgs 19:9b–35 (B2).[101] The reference to Hezekiah's 14th year in 2 Kgs 18:13 and Isa 36:1 may suggest that some events described in these records go back to 715–712, possibly 713.[102]

This view may find further support in a distinctive story of Hezekiah in Isa 38 (2 Kgs 20). According to the account of Hezekiah's healing, YHWH promised him recovery from a deadly disease and 15 more years to live. In the same promise he assured Hezekiah that he would rescue Jerusalem from the (unnamed!) Assyrian king (Isa 38:5–6; 2 Kgs 20:6). The historical background behind this story is open to debate, but it corroborates in any case the events of Hezekiah's 14th year as recorded in the previous chapter.[103]

Likewise, Hezekiah's encounter with the embassy of Merodach-baladan (Marduk-apla-iddin) in 2 Kgs 20:12–19 can only be placed before 701, most likely between 722–710, when Merodach-baladan was the ruler in Babylon. He returned to southern Mesopotamia for a short 9 month in 703, but never thereafter.[104] Second Chronicles 32:31 connects the visit of the Babylonian embassy to the sign given to the sick Hezekiah, which also places the story of his healing in Isa 38 in the pre-703 period, so that the liberation from the Assyrian king in Isa 38:6 (2 Kgs 20:6) has little to do with the events of 701.

Assuming that 2 Kgs 18–20 is based on historically reliable material, it would throw new light on Hezekiah's policy during the years 715–711 B.C.[105] Hezekiah is often argued not to have taken part in the rebellion

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[101] Cf. the two descriptions of Samaria's fate in 2 Kgs 17:5–41 and 18:9–12.

[102] Contrary to earlier opinions (e.g. Bright, *History*, 282–87) it was pointed out that Sennacherib only campaigned once in Canaan. See A. Spalinger, "The Foreign Policy of Egypt Preceding the Assyrian Conquest", *CdÉ* 53 (1978) 39–41; F. J. Yurco, "The Shabaka-Shebitku Coregency and the Supposed Second Campaign of Sennacherib against Judah: A Critical Assessment", *JBL* 110 (1991) 35–45.

[103] Roberts questions the reliability of 2 Kgs 20:6 ("Egypt", 270–71 note 20), assumed to be based on 2 Kgs 18:1. He argued that because résumés like 2 Kgs 18:1 differ sometimes in the versions, this synchronisation points to a late "intensive redactional activity that took place on the Hebrew text after the separation between MT and the Hebrew *Vorlage* behind the O[ld] G[reek]." However, in this particular case, the LXX and the MT fully agree.

[104] J. Reade, "Mesopotamian Guidelines for Biblical Chronology", *SMS* 4/1 (1981) 2; A. Millard, "Babylonian King List", *COS* 1.134; Idem, "The Babylonian Chronicle", *COS* 1.137.

[105] Additional support for a limited campaign of Sargon II between 715–711 is deduced from the disputed "Azekah inscription". The "Azekah inscription" is a literary text of an uncertain date retelling a Palestinian campaign of an Assyrian king, according to some of Sargon's in 720 (E. Frahm, *Einleitung in die Sen-*

incited by Ashdod.[106] Yet if 2 Kgs 18:13 and 20:6 are taken seriously, Assyria's actions against Judah in Hezekiah's 14th year are explained by Hezekiah's involvement in the political affairs of neighbouring Canaanite states. Another text, 2 Kgs 18:7b–8 relates Hezekiah's anti-Philistine and anti-Assyrian policies. His attitude towards Philistia depended on the relations between Philistia and Assyria. Hezekiah supported Philistia in its rebellion against Assur, but set up a siege against it as soon as it became loyal to Assyria, as the events prior to 701 make this clear.

On what occasion could Sargon, the king of Assyria have appeared in Judah? Roberts argued for 720 or 715. Becking believes this has happened around 715 coinciding with the tribute of Pir'u, king of Egypt. Jenkins looked for a date on the eve of the fall of Ashdod (just before 712/711).[107] In view of the 14th year, both 720 and 715 are too early. According to the Assyrian inscriptions the city Ashdod, led by its king, Azuri, rebelled against Assyria.[108] Azuri sent messengers to neighbours,

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nacherib-Inschriften [BAfO 26; Vienna: Institut für Orientalistik, 1997], 229–32; cf. Tadmor, "Campaigns", 83; *ISK*, 314–15) or around 712 (G. Galil, "A New Look at the 'Azekah Inscription'", *RB* 102 [1995] 321–22; Goldberg, "Two Assyrian Campaigns", 363, 369–70). Other scholars believe it was an inscription of Sennacherib written shortly after 701 (N. Na'aman, "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God' on His Campaign to Judah", *BASOR* 214 [1974] 25–39; Yurco, "Coregency", 40; Younger, "Assyrian Involvement", 239–40, 243). The inscription mentions the reception of tribute during the campaign (ln. 18), the capture of Azekah, Hezekiah's stronghold, and the siege of another Philistine royal city, most likely Ekron (Younger, "Assyrian Involvement", 239 note 14). Ekron appears on the reliefs of Sargon II at Khorsabad probably in connection with 711 (see 2.3.1.4.). But Ekron was also the major player in 701. The description of the reception of tribute from "all the kings of Amurru" complies with the annals of Sennacherib retelling his Palestinian campaign (cf. Tadmor, "Campaigns", 82). Though some common elements with Sargon's letter to the God Assur commemorating his eighth campaign can be recognised in this inscription (Tadmor, "Campaigns, 82"; Galil, "Azekah Inscription", 328), it also parallels Sennacherib's literary texts (cf. Tadmor, "Campaigns", 82).
[106] Cf. recently Younger, "Assyrian Involvement", 243; Roberts, "Egypt", 282.
[107] Roberts, "Egypt's Role", 275; Becking, *Fall*, 54 (for a tribute of Azuri to Sennacherib, see note 101 above); Jenkins, "Fourteenth Year", 294.
[108] This event is recorded on the Nineveh Prism fragments Sm 2022, II' and K 1668+ IV' (Fuchs, *Annalen*, 44–46, 73–74), in the Annals 241–253 (*ISK*, 132–35, 326; *COS* 2.118A), on the Great Display Inscription (*ISK*, 219–22, 348–49; *COS* 2.118E), on the Display (Summary) Inscription of Room XIV (*ISK*, 76, 308; *COS* 2.118F). A short account is also found on the Tang-i Var relief 19–21 (Frame, "Tang-i Var", 40; *COS* 2.118J). The existent fragments of a stele of Sargon II found in Ashdod do not contain any reference to this event (Z. J. Kapera, "The Ashdod Stele of Sargon II", *FO* 17 [1976] 87–99).

hostile to Assyria. The Assyrian king retaliated, replacing Azuri with his brother, Ahimiti. This rebellion of Azuri and the installation of Ahimiti should be dated to after 715. Since the final battle against Ashdod in 711 took place early that year, and since according to the chronicles 712 was a peaceful year for the Assyrian army (see 2.3.2.2.), we may safely date the rebellion of Azuri and the short-lived rule of Ahimiti to 713. That date coincides with Hezekiah's 14th year.

Although the Assyrian inscriptions mention the quelling of a rebellion in Ashdod in 713, we find no Assyrian reference to campaigns against Judah in this period.[109] That should not, however, be surprising. The Nimrud Inscription is also very concise making the Assyrian king "the subduer of Judah" between 720–716, without revealing further details. The Assyrian chronicles of 713 were concerned primarily with Ashdod and Azuri, not with Judah. This specific focus, as well as the deliverance of Hezekiah from the Assyrians (Isa 38:5–6) are probably the reasons why the sole account of a limited Assyrian campaign in 713 was only preserved in this rewritten version of the Bible.

2.3.2.2. THE FALL OF ASHDOD IN 711 B.C.

The Nineveh Prism mentions that after replacing Azuri with Ahimiti, Sargon imposed a tribute on the Ashdodites. But after the Assyrians retreated, the Ashdodites chased off Ahimiti and elevated the "illegitimate" Yamani to the throne.[110] Sargon sent his troops against the city and Ashdod was captured, its inhabitants deported. In this context the Nineveh Prism refers to the background of the revolt of Yamani:[111]

> To the kings of the lands Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab, those living by the sea (cf. Isa 20:6), bearers of tribute (*biltu*) and gifts (*tāmarti*) to Assur, my lord, (they sent) words of falsehood and treacherous speech to incite enmity with me. To Pir'u, king of Egypt (*Pir'u šar māt Muṣri*), a prince, who could not save them, they brought their presents (*šulmānu*), and they implored his help (*kitru*).

Though Shabaka's name does not appear here, his scarab inscription, as well as the account of *Pir'u* in the year 715 in the Annals mentioned

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[109] Except perhaps the "Azekah inscription" mentioned above.

[110] The Khorsabad Annals 246 calls him *Yadna* instead of *Yamani*, the name used in all other inscriptions. There is some dispute whether this would refer to Yamani's ethnic origin (i.e. "the Greek" or "the Cypriot"; cf. Tadmor, "Campaigns", 80 note 217). Cf. *ʾkyš* (= Ἀχαιος; 1 Sam 21:11), son of Padi (COS 2.42), the ruler of Ekron in the 7th century. Note biblical פִּינְחָס, כּוּשִׁי, etc.

[111] Nineveh Prism fragments Sm 2022, II' and K 1668+ IV' (Fuchs, *Annalen*, 44–46, 72–74; Younger, "Recent Study", 313–14). The citation corresponds to lns. 25–33 of K 1668+ IV'.

above suggest that *Pirʾu šar māt Muṣri* of the Nineveh Prism refers to this Kushite king. Egypt was expected to help the rebels, but for one reason or another, these expectations remained unfulfilled. *Pirʾu šar māt Muṣri* could not help, or at least he does not appear to have done so. Ashdod was captured,[112] but its king, Yamani managed to flee.

In view of Isa 20 discussed later in this study, it is important to clarify in which year Ashdod fell. Two dates have been proposed: 712 and 711.[113] The date 712 is based on a combination of Assyrian and biblical references. According to Isa 20:1, the campaign against Ashdod was led by the תַּרְתָּן, and not Sargon himself. Scholars noted that the Eponym Chronicle contains the phrase *ina māti*, "in the land", for the year 712, believed to refer to the location of the king. Fuchs, however, noted that in 706, when Sargon himself stayed at home, but a campaign against Karalla was led by his officers, the Eponym Chronicle made explicit mention of these.[114] Applying the same literary principle to the entry of the year 712 would suggest that it was not only the king, who stayed at home in that year, but so did his army, too.

Fuchs' suggestion is also supported by the conventions used in the Eponym Chronicles. According to Millard, the position and the goal shortly mentioned in the Eponym Chronicles in connection with certain regnal years (i.e. the references with *ina* and *ana*) mark the position of the Assyrian royal army and not the king.[115] Therefore, when the Eponym Chronicle adds *ina māti* to the entry of the year 712, this means that both the king and the royal army were residing at home. Shortly, the fall of Ashdod cannot be dated to 712, but must be assigned to the

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[112] Gath or Gittaim (*Gimtu*) and Ashdod-Yam (and possibly Ekron) also fell during this Assyrian campaign.

[113] For the year 711, see W. Helck, *Geschichte des alten Ägypten* (HdO 1/1/3; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 238 and cf. Fuchs below. For the year 712 see Tadmor, "Campaigns"; Spalinger, "The Year 712", 95, 97.

[114] *šarru ina māti rabûti ina Karalli*, "the king in the land, the nobles in Karalla" (Millard, *Eponyms*, 48). Cf. also the year 710: *ana Bīt Zēri šarru ina Kiši biʾedi*, "(the army) to Bit-Zeri, the king delayed in Kish" (Millard, *Eponyms*, 47). Tadmor assumed that the Khorsabad Annals ascribed campaigns to the year 711 in order to fill the gaps of that year. But as Fuchs noted, it would be strange that the Annals first displaced the Ashdod campaign from 712 to 711, to fill the gap of 712 with other campaigns from 711 (*ISK*, 381).

[115] Millard, *Eponyms*, 5. Note for example that during the reign of Salmaneser III, the years 830 and 829 are marked in the Eponym Chronicle as *ana māt Uraṛti* and *ana māt Unqi* respectively (Millard, *Eponyms*, 30). The Black Obelisk of Salmaneser makes it obvious that both of these campaigns were led by the Assyrian field marshal, Dayyan-assur (cf. RIMA A.0.102.14, 141b–146a, 146b–156a; see also Millard, *Eponyms*, 5; Fuchs, *Annalen*, 86).

year 711 instead, as it is actually done in the Khorsabad Annals.[116]

Sargon claims to have defeated Ashdod personally. Because Isa 20:1 referring to this event knows only about the *turtannu* of Sargon laying siege to Ashdod, the king's contention may be, as often, ideologically motivated. But it is also possible that during the campaign in 711, Sargon was indeed present on the battlefield, but he was engaged in the siege of other cities in the area (cf. Isa 37:8).

When the news of the approaching Assyrian army had reached him, Yamani left Ashdod and fled to *šar māt Meluḫḫa*, "the king of Meluhha", in Upper Egypt (Thebes?). As I pointed out in Excursus 2, the localisation of the king of Nubia in Upper Egypt rather than Memphis is historically significant. For this means that *šar māt Meluḫḫa* is not identical with *Pirʾu šar māt Muṣri* (Shabaka), who was residing in Memphis at that time. The king of Nubia (*šar māt Meluḫḫa*), who extradited Yamani shortly afterwards is identified in the Tang-i war text as ᵐ*šá-pa-ta-ku-*⌈*u*⌉ *šar māt Meluḫḫa*, "Shabataka, king of Meluhha (Nubia)".

Why did Yamani flee to the far south? The Assyrian scribes are keen to emphasise, on the one hand, the power of the Assyrian army, but they encrypt, on the other, its inability to capture the fugitive Philistine. They maintain that Yamani went to the far south of Egypt, close to the border with Nubia, i.e. so far as he could from Assyria, to an inaccessible place, i.e. to where it was impossible to follow him, where he lived "like a thief", i.e. in hiding (Great Display Inscription 109–10). He was extradited in the end by "Shabataka, the king of Meluhha".[117] This momentary concession of the Kushite king, Shabataka, before the Assyrians, attests to an opportunistic, rather than a consistent policy.

2.3.3. Shabataka (703–690 b.c.)

Shabataka[118] probably ascended the throne first as co-regent with Shabaka, a kind of viceroy of the southern provinces, a form of government modelled on the earlier Egyptian viceregnal administrative system (cf.

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[116] The Nineveh Prism assigns this campaign to the 9th *palû*, jumping over the years when there have been no campaigns (721, 712) (Fuchs, *Annalen*, 87).

[117] The extradition is not mentioned in the Nineveh Prism from 711. The verb *wašābu* (Tang-i Var 19) suggests that Yamani lived in Upper Egypt for a certain period prior to his extradition. All other texts, the Display Inscriptions, the Khorsabad Annals, and the Tang-i Var Relief come from 707–706 b.c. It was probably shortly before this date that Yamani was handed over.

[118] Manetho calls him Σεβιχὼς, Shabaka's son (cf. Waddell, *Manetho*, 167; A. Leahy, "Tanutamon, son of Shabako?", GM 83 [1984] 44; Török, *FHN*, 1.121–22, 127; Idem, *Kingdom*, 169). However, his genealogy is uncertain. Onasch assumed he was the nephew of Shabaka and a son of Piye (*Eroberungen*, 1:10).

Excursus 2). Following the death of Shabaka in about 703 B.C., Shabataka reigned as sole ruler until 690 B.C.[119]

The time of Shabataka is characterised by a paucity of historical monuments. His highest preserved regnal year is 3,[120] but scholars generally assume that he was much longer on the throne.[121] Early during his reign, Shabataka probably installed Taharka as his army leader, a position traditionally held by the crown-prince.[122]

Before the discovery of the Tang-i Var inscription, scholars considered that Shabataka was anti-Assyrian compared to his predecessor. This assumption was mainly based on his militant royal names.[123] Based on the Tang-i Var text, however, Kahn maintained that Shabataka pursueded an Assyria-friendly strategy.[124] Such an either-or approach may not grasp the real nature of the problem. The nomenclature of Shabataka was based on the titulary of other pharaohs, most importantly Thutmose III.[125] It remains therefore a question whether and how far stereotypical, archaising, or in the best case programmatic royal titles can serve as historical evidence.[126]

The extradition of Yamani, in the context of which Shabataka's name is mentioned in the Tang-i Var Inscription, does not reveal any deeper motivation behind this political move. Being subordinated to Shabaka, the pharaoh of Egypt in Memphis around 707, Shabataka might have even followed the orders from the capital. The situation is,

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[119] The Karnak Nile level inscription from Shabataka's third year connects his appearance as a king in Thebes with the inundation of that year. This does not mean that Shabataka was crowned in Thebes in his third year of reign, but that he only went to Egypt in his third year (701 B.C.), dating his enthronisation as sole king of Egypt and Kush to 703. Cf. Török, *FHN*, 1.128–29; J. von Beckerath, "Ägypten und der Feldzug Sanheribs im Jahre 701 v. Chr.", *UF* 24 (1992) 5; Idem, "Berührungspunkte", 98–99; Yurco, "Coregency", 35–45; Schipper, *Israel*, 215.

[120] R. H. Pierce, "Karnak, Nile level record, Year 3 of Shebitqo" (*FHN* 1.17).

[121] These assumptions rely on Manetho's history preserved by Eusebius (accrediting 12 years of reign to Shabataka) and Julius Africanus (attributing 14 years to this king) (cf. Waddell, *Manetho*, 167).

[122] Török, *Kingdom*, 170.

[123] See Grimal, *Egypt,* 346; Török, *Kingdom*, 169; Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role", 229–30. Note particularly Shabaka's *Nebty* name, ꜥ-šfjt-m-tꜣw-nb(w), "Whose-renown-is-great-in-all-lands", and his Golden Horus names, ꜥ-ḫpš ḥwj-pḏt-9, "Whose-strength-is-great, Who-smites-the-Nine-Bows" (a symbolic name for the foreign countries), and Ḥrw-ḥr-nḫtw, "Satisfied-with-victory" (*FHN* 1.17).

[124] Kahn, "Tang-i Var", 8.

[125] See Török, *FHN*, 1.126–27.

[126] Cf. W. Barta, "Anmerkungen zur Chronologie der Dritten Zwischenzeit", GM 70 (1984) 11 note 13.

however, different with the events from 701.

The death of Sargon in 705 causes upheaval on the Levantine coast. Sidon, Ashkelon and Ekron are among those committed to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Sennacherib's inscriptions assign a prominent role to Hezekiah, who disposed Padi, king of Ekron, a loyal Assyrian, and shut him up in Jerusalem. Moreover, 2 Kgs 18:7–8, which may also allude to this period, mentions Hezekiah's anti-Assyrian actions explicitly.[127]

As we have seen above, the biblical sources referring to Sennacherib's attack in 2 Kgs 18–20 present major historical and literary critical problems. Those may contain telescoped accounts of events from different periods. At any rate, the incident of 701 pervades these accounts, in which a certain role is assigned to Egypt. So far as 2 Kgs 18:19–21.23–24 and 2 Kgs 19:9 permits us to conclude, Hezekiah looked forward to Egyptian support.[128] The significant military participation of Egypt suggests that it may have even been the masterminder behind this revolt.

It is difficult to restore the order of events in Sennacherib's campaign due to chronological difficulties in the sources, biblical and non-biblical alike.[129] According to the Annals of Sennacherib, first Assyria defeated the Egyptian forces at Eltekeh, arriving in support of Ekron.[130]

> The kings of Egypt[131] and the bowmen, chariot corps and cavalry of the king of Kush assembled a countless force and came to their (the Ekronites') aid. In the plain of Eltekeh they drew up their ranks

[127] Hezekiah defeated the Philistines until Gaza and captured some of their cities. The kings of Ashdod, Ekron (Padi), and Gaza had been loyal to Assyria, so that his actions may have been directed against those unwilling to participate in the rebellion. It is likely that Padi was handed over to Hezekiah in order to save the city Ekron from the Judean king, otherwise the imprisonment of Padi in Jerusalem rather then in Ekron with the other pro-Assyrians (mentioned by Sennacherib) is difficult to explain. Some of the 46 cities that Sennacherib took away from Hezekiah, giving them to his loyal vassals, may have been among those previously conquered by Judah.

[128] For Hezekiah's active role see Spalinger, "Foreign Policy", 35; Younger, "Assyrian Involvement", 253; Roberts, "Egypt", 272; contra Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role", 233–34; Dalley, "Recent Evidence", 393–98.

[129] Cf. Tadmor, "Philistia", 96–97; Childs, *Assyrian Crisis*, 12–18; Gallagher, *Campaign*, 9–20, 91–142; Younger, "Assyrian Involvement", 249, 256–58.

[130] Cf. M. Cogan, "Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem", COS 2.119B. A detailed discussion of the account of the third campaign appears in Gallagher, *Campaign*, 91–142; Younger, "Assyrian Involvement", 246–62.

[131] Most versions read here *šarrāni*(LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni*) *māt Muṣ(u)ri*, "kings of Egypt". The sg. *šar māt Muṣ(u)ri*, "king of Egypt" (cf. *BAL*, 67–68) is a scribal error. The king of Meluhha (sg.) must refer to the Kushite pharaoh, Shabataka, absent in the battle (contra Spalinger, "Foreign Policy", 39 note 3).

against me and sharpened their weapons (…) The Egyptian chario-
teers and princes,[132] together with the charioteers of the Kushites, I
personally took alive in the midst of the battle.

As the inscription implies, beside the pharaoh of Kush, local dynasties
were still reigning in the major cities of Egypt. The biblical account of
the events in 701 (Isa 37:9) adds that Taharka, the Kushite com-
mander-in-chief, the would-become pharaoh of Egypt and Kush, was
marching ahead of the/an Egyptian army.[133] Though Sennacherib claims
victory over the Egyptian troops at Eltekeh, this battle, so far as Egypt is
concerned, may have been less decisive than it reads.[134]

From Eltekeh the Assyrians marched to Jerusalem. Isaiah 36:6.9 re-
fers to support from Egypt that Hezekiah relied upon. The image of
Egypt as the "broken reed" (מִשְׁעֶנֶת הַקָּנֶה הָרָצוּץ), if related to 701, may
suggest that Egypt had already been crushed by Assyria.[135] On the other
hand, Isa 37:9 mentions the approaching Egyptian army shortly before
the Assyrians left Jerusalem. The Assyrian sculptures of the siege of La-
chish apparently indicate Nubians punished by the Assyrians.[136]

Herodotus tells a story about a miraculous defeat of "Sennacherib the
king of the Arabs and Assyrians" (*Hist.* ii 141), which some scholars
connect to Isa 37:36 (cf. *Ant.* 10:14.17–18). However, in Herodotus
the battlefield is located at Pelusium, the Assyrians are defeated and
the war is fought by ordinary Egyptians, details alluding to later
Egypto-Assyrian conflicts. Sethos of Herodotus is perhaps Taharka.[137]

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[132] *marʾū*(DUMU.MEŠ) *šar/šarrāni*(LUGAL.MEŠ) *Muṣuraya*, "princes of Egypt"
(lit. "the sons of the Egyptian king/s"). One of Sennacherib's relatives by mar-
riage is *Šušanqu*, a name popular during the Dynasties 22 and 23 (Onasch,
Eroberungen, 1:15). He is *ḫatnu šarri*, the kings son-in-law (less likely brother-
in-law), perhaps one of the Egyptian princes taken captive at Eltekeh, and
married later with Sennacherib's daughter. It is known that Libyan rulers often
named their children after the grandfather (Priese, "Herrschaft", 19), so that
Šušanqu may be the (eldest?) son of Osorkon IV, grandchild of Shoshenq V.

[133] For Taharka called "the king of Kush" (מֶלֶךְ־כּוּשׁ), see Kitchen, "Hebrew
Monarchy", 230–31; Idem, "Egypt, the Levant and Assyria in 701 BC", in
Fontes atque pontes. Eine Festgabe für Hellmut Brunner (ed. Manfred Görg;
ÄAT 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983), 251–52.

[134] Gallagher, *Campaign*, 121; Younger, "Assyrian Involvement", 258.

[135] For *qanû kaṣāṣu*, "broken reed" as a symbol for the defeated enemy in Assy-
rian literature, cf. Younger, "Assyrian Involvement", 258.

[136] Dalley, "Evidence", 391; cf. Kitchen, "701 BC", 248–49.

[137] Taharka's name has been found in a chapel of Seti I (Sethos), near a Path
temple in Memphis, and one of his steles was set up here as well (Onasch,
Eroberungen, 1:10). According to Herodotus, Sethos, the tough handed ruler,
was followed by Psametik (I). *Hist.* ii 147, 151 comply strikingly well with

A similar conflation of events appears in *Hist.* ii 152 assigning the name Sabacos to the Aithiopian king who killed Nechos, the father of Psametik I. We know that the Kushite monarch in question was Tanu-tamani, son of Taharka. The similarities with the death of Bakenrenef, son of Tefnakht of Sais, allegedly killed by Shabaka may have been the cause of the problem here. Given these difficulties, I doubt that the story of Herodotus can be used to conclude anything on the relation-ship between Shabataka and the Delta rulers, as Spalinger believed.[138]

2.3.4. TAHARKA (690–664 B.C.)

The genealogy of Taharka is unclear.[139] According to Kawa Stele IV (*FHN* 1.21) he was 20 years old when Shabataka summoned him to Egypt along with other princes. This text makes mention of the army of the pharaoh in their company, so that some scholars assume that Taharka was called to Lower Egypt to lead the battle against Sennach-erib in 701.[140] As the commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army he was the appointed crown-prince of Shabataka.[141]

With Sennacherib engaged in wars with Babylon, and Esarhaddon with Elam, the years 690–674 reflect a period of prosperity, intensive trade with the Asian countries, and building activity in Egypt and Kush. Taharka's influence in Canaan increased considerably during these years. Esarhaddon's campaigns against the West and against Egypt were probably aimed to stop the expanding power of Egypt in Canaan.[142]

Line 16 of the Karnak inscription of Taharka reads as follows:[143]

(O Amun) let me do with your gift (*inw*) from the land of Khor (*Ḫꜣr* = Syro-Palestine) which is turned away from you (…)

It is not entirely clear what *inw* refers to in this place. Yurco maintained that Egyptian *inw* may designate any kind of goods, like free-will gifts,

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texts of Assurbanipal, notably Prism E 40–55.

[138] "Foreign Policy", 36 note 1, 38 note 1; cf. also Kitchen, "701 BC", 245.

[139] He is believed to have been the son of Piye (Török, *FHN*, 1.131), a brother of Shabataka (Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:10), or a remoter relative of Piye, who might have been his uncle (Von Zeissl, *Äthiopen*, 30–31). Kawa Stele IV (*FHN* 1.21:16–20) and VI (*FHN* 1.23:22–23) maintain that Taharka was the grandson of Alara's sister (cf. Török, *FHN*, 1.175–76).

[140] Kitchen, *Period*, 157–58; Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role", 230. The objection that he was too young in 701 (Morkot, *Black Pharaohs*, 211), is based on the misin-terpretation that the stele would have been built in his 20th year.

[141] Török, *Kingdom*, 170; Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role", 231.

[142] Spalinger, "Foreign Policy", 42.

[143] R. H. Pierce, "Taharqo, inscription in the peristyle court north of Pylon VI of the Amûn Temple in Karnak", (*FHN* 1.26). The text is dated to after 684, more precisely to 675/674 by Spalinger, "Foreign Policy", 43.

trade goods received from foreigners, and tributes delivered by vassals.[144] Bleiberg's detailed study on this term concludes that *ìnw* refers to "an official gift exchanged between the king and a wide variety of people, both Egyptian and foreign", by which the Egyptian king "was claiming that his increased status was recognised throughout the world", without implicitly "asserting that he ruled an area".[145] At any rate, Assyrian inscriptions describing the situation prior to Assyria's war with Egypt, mention close connections between Tyre, Ashkelon and Egypt.[146]

2.3.4.1. TAHARKA AND ESARHADDON

In order to secure the political and economic influence of Assyria, Esarhaddon appears in 679 at Arza, the border city of Egypt, near Nahal Musur.[147] Two years later he conquers Sidon. Its king, Abdi-Milkutti, is decapitated, the inhabitants of Sidon deported, and the country resettled with captives from other parts of the empire. Two cities originally belonging to Sidon, were given to Ba'al, king of Tyre (cf. SAA 2 5).

The first military conflict with Egypt took place in 674 B.C. The Babylonian Chronicle (iv 16) reports that in the 7th regnal year, on the 5th of Addaru, the Assyrian army was defeated in Egypt (*ABC* 1 iii 16). Ba'al, king of Tyre, threw off the yoke he had taken up two years earlier. Esarhaddon punished him for his unfaithfulness, yet he spared his life.[148]

A first attempt of the Assyrians to invade Egypt was ward off by the Kushites in 674.[149] Three years later in 671 the massive force of Esarhaddon sets out towards Egypt once again. With Arabian help the Assyrians traverse the Sinai desert and arrive before the gates of Egypt (Migdol). The description of the journey through the Sinai desert closely resembles Deut 8:15; Isa 30:6, as well as Herodotus, *Hist.* ii 75, iii

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[144] Yurco, "Coregency", 43–44. Cf. Schipper, *Israel,* 219–20.

[145] E. Bleiberg, *The Official Gift in Ancient Egypt* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 114.

[146] According to *IAKA* §57:7–8, Ba'al of Tyre relied on Taharka. Queries of Esarhaddon to the sun-god suggest that Esarhaddon was worried because of the help of Egyptian (and perhaps Kushite) troops in his planned campaign against Ashkelon (SAA 4 82:rev. 1'–4'). Cf. also *FHN* 1.24:20–21 mentioning Asian people, Mentiu-nomads (*Mntjw*) installed in the service of Amun.

[147] Probably identical with Tel Jemmeh (cf. Na'aman, "Brook of Egypt", 72–73). Tiglath-pileser and Sargon built their *kāru* (*bīt kāri*) in this region.

[148] *IAKA* §76 dates this before the second campaign to Egypt, §71 rev. after it.

[149] A relief fragment from the temple of Gebel Barkal show Assyrian forces defeated by Egypto-Nubians. Dating this text to the 25th Dynasty is certain, but further chronological information is lacking. Redford considered it to derive from Taharka's period (Redford, *Egypt,* 356–57 note 185).

107–9 and Strabo, *Geogr.* xvii 1.21:[150]

> On my tenth campaign Assur [encouraged me] [...] and directed my attention towards the lands of Magan [and Meluhha], which people call Kush and Egypt. When the command of Assur, my lord came to my ears, my soul rejoiced. I let camels come from all the kings of Arabia and let them carry the goatskins (cf. *Hist.* iii 9). A march route of 30 double hours I advanced in 15 days through huge sand bulks. (...) A march route of four double hours in a journey of two days I trampled upon two-headed serpents [... whose sight] meant death, and I marched on. A march route of four double hours in a journey of [two days] [...] green [snakes] flattering with wings (...).

The residence of Taharka, the royal city of Memphis, fell before the Assyrians. The Babylonian Chronicle relates these events as follows:

> In the 10th regnal year, in the month of *Nisannu*, the Assyrians marched to Egypt. On the 3rd, 16th and 18th of *Du'uzu* (June/July)—three times—there was a bloodbath in Egypt.[151] On the 22nd day Memphis, the royal city was captured. Its king abandoned (it), but the sons of his brother[152] were captured. It was plundered, its people were robbed, its possession taken away.

The description of the invasion of Egypt is preserved in several versions. The Zendjirli Stele provides one of the most detailed accounts.[153]

> (...) (Among the troops) of Taharka, king of Egypt and Kush, accursed by their great gods, from Išhupri so far as Memphis, his royal city, on a distance of 15 days, every day and without ceasing I greatly massacred them. He himself I wounded five times with my arrowhead, with an incurable wound. Memphis, his royal residence, I surrounded, conquered, demolished and tore down in half a day by way of (making) breaches, gaps, and ladders; I destroyed, demolished and burnt it in fire. His wife, his concubines, Ushanahuru, his crown prince, and his

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[150] *IAKA* §76. See Robert Rollinger, "Herodot (II 75f, III 107-109), Asarhaddon, Jesaja und die fliegenden Schlangen Arabiens", n.p. [cited 3 Dec. 2005]. Online: http://www.achemenet.com/ressources/souspresse/annonces/Rollinger FliegendeSchlangen.pdf.

[151] Version BM 75977 (iv 3') of the Babylonian Chronicle mentions here that the Assyrians plundered Egypt and deported their gods. The Assyrian Chronicle 26 only mentions one battle on the 3rd of *Tašrītu* (September/October).

[152] The text *mar'ē*(DUMU.MEŠ) *aḫēšu*(ŠEŠ-*šu*) is to be rendered as "the sons of his brother" and not "his sons and his brother". Grayson, *ABC*, 85 and Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:19 believe that the omission of the suffix after DUMU.MEŠ was an error. This text may be important, however, in relation to the Kushite royal traditions in which nephews played a significant role.

[153] *IAKA* §65:37–53; *ANET*, 293; Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:24. For the importance of this inscription for Isa 19, see the exegesis.

other sons and daughters, his possessions, his property, his horses, his calves and his flocks without number, I carried away as booty to Assyria. The root of Kush I tore out, and I left nobody in it to praise me. In the whole land of Egypt I installed anew kings (*šarrānu*), administrators (*pāhātū*), governors (*šaknūtū*), treasury officials (*rab kārē*), prefects (*qīpānu*) and instructors (*šapirū*).[154] I established regular offerings (*sattukku*) and cultic offerings (*ginû*) for Assur and the great gods, my lords, forever. I imposed upon them tribute and obligation of my lordship, every year continually. I let a stele be made with my name, and the praise of the heroism of my lord, Assur, my mighty deeds (that I accomplished when I was) walking in reliance upon Assur, my lord, and the victorious achievements of my hands I let be written on it. I let [it] be erected to the wonderment of all the enemies forever after.

The invasion of Egypt was a shocking incident for the African continent, legitimising Esarhaddon to expand his title list by some new elements: "king of the world, king of Assyria, governor of Babylon, (…), king of the kings of Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt and Kush".[155]

Assyrian texts of Esarhaddon allude at, and later texts of Assurbanipal mention explicitly that Esarhaddon changed the names of Egyptian cities into Assyrian names.[156] Esarhaddon was eager to see the "root of Kush" removed from Egypt. He underlined the legitimacy of the Assyrian presence in Egypt by introducing himself as the liberator of Egypt.[157] Esarhaddon did not alter drastically the local Egyptian political arrangement.[158] Later texts of Assurbanipal mention 20 kings over Egypt installed anew by his father, who in a treaty ceremony committed themselves to serve their new master.[159] Necho (I), the king of Memphis and Sais appears on the first place among these kings. He seems to have been chosen by Esarhaddon as the most prominent Egyptian leader.[160]

Two years after Egypt's reorganisation, in 669 B.C., Esarhaddon directs his troops once again towards Egypt. It is hard to find other moti-

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[154] For these titles, see Spalinger, "First Invasion", 311–15.

[155] E.g. *IAKA* §8:2–7; §24:2–3; §44:1–5; etc. A similar formulation, "king of kings of Tilmun, Makan and Meluhha" appears in *IAKA* §53:27–29.

[156] *IAKA* §64:25 (Sais = *Kār-bēl-mātāti*); Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:30–37 (discussion of Bu 91-5-9,218), 94–95; *BIWA*, 211 (Assurbanipal's Prims E iii 16–17). As an act of subordination, this practice is also known from Sargon.

[157] Cf. Spalinger, "First Invasion", 325. Later texts of Assurbanipal reflecting on the anti-Assyrian uprising of Egyptian kings mention the "good deeds" (*ṭābtu*) of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal towards the Egyptians (*BIWA*, 211).

[158] Spalinger, "First Invasion", 316. For Philistia cf. Tadmor, "Philistia", 95.

[159] For the list, cf. Prism A i 90–109 and Prism C ii 87–92.

[160] Sais was previously the centre of the dynasty of Necho, but Memphis was the royal capital (*āl šarrūti*) of the whole of Egypt.

vation for a third campaign, had it not been the intention to prevent Taharka to reconquer Memphis after Esarhaddon had left the country.[161] This third campaign is only preserved in a short sentence of the Babylonian (iv 30–33) and Assyrian Chronicles (28–34). On the 10th of *Araḫsamna* (October/November) Esarhaddon got sick and died underway to Egypt.

2.3.4.2. TAHARKA AND ASSURBANIPAL

It was left to Assurbanipal, Esarhaddon's son and successor, to finish the work begun by his father and drive out Kush from Egypt definitely. His army set feet on the African continent first in 667, the earliest record of which is preserved on Assurbanipal's Prism E.[162] After recounting the achievements of his father, Assurbanipal describes how his army arrived to Egypt and overcame the defence of Taharka at Kar-Banitu (Pelusium). From Pelusium the Assyrians marched to Memphis and captured it. Taharka fled to Thebes, which the Assyrians were unable to confine this time. Assyria might have even been defeated.[163]

Assurbanipal did not show up on the battlefield in person. According to the inscriptions, the Assyrians were supported by 22 vassal kings of the Mediterranean islands and the seacoast, including Ba'al, king of Tyre, and Manasseh, king of Judah, mentioned at the top of the list,[164]

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[161] Cf. Török, *Kingdom*, 182. Under the entry for the year 668, the first regnal year of Assurbanipal, the Assyrian Chronicle contains a fragmentary reference to Taharka and Necho, both designated as "king of Egypt". This possibly refers to the period before the ascension of Assurbanipal (cf. Prism E 28ff; contra Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:29, 148, who relates it to after Esarhaddon's death).

[162] Cf. Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:94–97; *BIWA*, 177–80, 210–12.

[163] Von Zeissl, *Äthiopen*, 44. According to Prisms C and A (i 87–89) Taharka "left Memphis, and fled to Thebes in order to save his life. That city I conquered I led my army inside and let them settle there". In contrast to the opinion of Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:150 and Schipper, *Israel*, 223 note 148, *ālu šuātu* "that city", namely the one that the Assyrians have conquered and stationed their army within it, refers to Memphis and not Thebes. For this sense of *ālu šuātu* see also Prism A ii 36–38 (cf. Von Zeissl, *Äthiopen*, 43).

[164] The list of participating kings appears on Assurbanipal's Prism C ii 37–67. Prisms E, A, and LET 29'–33' only mention the involvement of the 22 kings giving no further details. The list of Assurbanipal's Prism C is similar to the one found on the Nineveh Prism B of Esarhaddon, which also mentions 12 kings of the sea-shore (*šarrāni ša kišādi tâmtim*), among others Manasseh, king of Judah, and 10 Cypriote kings in connection with the king's building operations at Kar-Esarhaddon, on the Phoenician coast (*IAKA* §27:54–76). Military contingents of the land of Amurru supplying the Assyrian forces during the invasion of Philistia and Judah in 701, also appear in the "Azekah inscription"

as well as by the kings of Egypt (LET 31'–32'). This military undertaking is presented as a support offered to Egyptian vassal kings, who were obliged to leave their cities after the return of Taharka to Egypt.[165]

An important turning point in Egypt's history appears after the Assyrian troops leave Egypt. Though Egyptians were obviously treated in a different manner than the Kushites, the Assyrian presence is their country was still experienced as a burden. This we may infer from Assurbanipal's prisms writing on the rebellion of the Egyptian kings.[166]

> Afterwards, Necho, Sarru-lu-dari, and Paqruru,[167] kings whom my father has installed in Egypt, transgressed the treaty sworn by Assur and the great gods, my lords, and broke their oath. They forgot the good deeds of my father, their heart planned evil (*ikpudū lemuttu*), they talked false speech, and discussed profitless counsels (*milik lā kušīri imlikū*) among themselves as follows: "If they drive out Taharka from Egypt, how then can we stay?" They sent their messengers to Taharka, the king of Kush, to make a treaty and peace (*ana šakan adê u salīme*) saying: "Let us make peace with each other, and let us agree with each other. We shall divide the land among ourselves, so that there is no other (*šanûmma*) lord among us." (Prism E iv 29–46)

The plan failed to work, however. The messengers despatched to Kush were captured by the Assyrians. Necho, Sarru-lu-dari and probably other kings, too,[168] were taken as prisoners to Nineveh. Charged with breaking

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ln. 18', and later in Babylonian times (cf. D. S. Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* [HSM 59; Atlanta: Scholars, 1999], 97). Jewish soldiers appear in the Egyptian army of Psametik I (?) in a war against Kush and in the army of Cambyses, when he invades Egypt (cf. Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates 13).

[165] Prism C ii 85–100; Prism B i 87–95; Prism A i 90–116.

[166] Fragment 82-5-22,10 (*BIWA*, 26–27); Prism E iv 29–80. Prism A i 118–ii 6; C ii 105–130; LET 37'–69'. An oracle inquiry was also preserved concerning the rebellion led by the three kings (SAA 4 88; Starr's reconstruction of the broken lines 2, 17–18 of this inscription erroneously suggests that the events took place in Esarhaddon's time, but cf. Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:151). Spalinger assumed that the rebellion of the Egyptian kings took place during the siege of Thebes ("First Invasion", 319), which is, however, unlikely. The inquiry SAA 4 88 points out that an Assyrian army supposed to quell the rebellion in Egypt detached from Assyria only after several inquiries to Shamash. The rebellion was directed against the contingent permanently posted in Egypt (Von Zeissl, *Äthiopen*, 43–44; Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:152–53).

[167] The three names appear only in Prism E, LET 37', and the fragment 82-5-22,10 4'. Prism A i 118 mentions no names, only *šarrāni annûti*, "those kings".

[168] According to Prism A i 130 and ii 5–7, all 20 kings of Egypt were taken to Nineveh. Prism C iii 6–9 only mentions Necho and Sarru-lu-dari, while Prism B ii 3–6 refers solely to Sarru-lu-dari being taken to Nineveh. While Prism A

their treaty sworn before "Assur, king of the gods", the rebels could not escape punishment. The inhabitants of Sais, Mendes, Pelusium and some other cities (Pisaptu and Athribis?)[169] were cruelly massacred.

Yet king Necho was pardoned. Assurbanipal reestablished him in his vassal kingship, dressed him up in royal garment, and sent him back to Egypt in a noble company alongside a permanent Assyrian representative. Necho's son, *Nabû-šēzi-banni*, the later Psametik I, was given the throne of Athribis, in accordance with the Egyptian tradition.[170]

2.3.5. TANUTAMANI (664–656 B.C.)

Following the death of Taharka, the Kushite throne was taken over by Tanutamani. His intention was to reconquer his predecessors' former dominion, Egypt.[171] He was first crowned in Napata, then in Thebes. The oracle promised him that

> […] the land shall be given to you in its breadth and its length, there being none other who would share it with you. (Dream Stele 5–6)

In reality, however, the beginning of Tanutamani's reign overlaps with that of Necho I and his son and successor, Psametik I, who refused to acknowledge Tanutamani as the legitimate king of Egypt.

Tanutamani's so-called Dream Stele recounts the last days of the Kushite dominion in Egypt. The stele is most certainly modelled on the

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is generally considered a late and less reliable account, we have some evidence that Assurbanipal's actions were directed against several rebellious kings. Paqruru is mentioned several times as one of the rebellious kings. Moreover, the Assyrian texts assign the throne of Athribis later to Necho's son, *Nabû-šēzi-banni*, while in earlier lists *Bukunraniʾpi* occupied the same position (Prism C ii 85–109; A i 90–95). This latter was apparently removed from the throne. Among the rebellious cities later punished by Assurbanipal, Mendes is also mentioned, whose king, *Puyama* is likewise not named whith Necho, Sarru-lu-dari and Paqruru. SAA 4 88:5–7 and rev. 6–9 leaves the possibility open that Assurbanipal's chief eunuch, *Ša-nabû-šû*, sent to Egypt, will be attacked by Sarru-lu-dari, Necho, or by any other Egyptian.

[169] Prism C ii 130–iii 5; Prism A i 134–ii 4. Prism A also adds "and the other cities" (cf. note above). Prism B i 95 refers to Tanis (*Ṣaʾnu*) instead of Pelusium (*Ṣeʾnu*), which might be a scribal error (*BIWA*, 214).

[170] In the Egyptian tradition the ruler of Athribis was the hereditary prince (*iry-pʿt*) of Egypt (Kitchen, "Princedoms", 45; Spalinger, "First Invasion", 320).

[171] Tanutamani appears in Assurbanipal's inscriptions once as son of Shabaka (Prism A ii 22), other times as son of Taharka's sister (Prism B ii 10; Prism C iii 28; LET 71'). It is possible that Shabaka married Taharka's sister (cf. Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:19, 108, 155). On the parentage of Tanutamani, cf. A. Leahy, "Tanutamon, son of Shabako?", GM 83 (1984) 43–45.

great Victory Stele of Piye, though it turned out to be less impressive.[172] The text recounts how after receiving royal legitimacy from the Amun temples of Napata and Thebes, Tanutamani reached Memphis apparently without any significant opposition. This means he was acknowledged as pharaoh by the governors of Upper Egypt.[173] Memphis and Sais were defeated. Necho died and most Delta princes surrendered.[174] Tanutamani reinstalled them in their office.[175] The text ends with the report of tributes being brought by Egyptian vassals to Memphis:

> The southerners [Upper Egyptians] have been sailing northwards, the northerners [Lower Egyptians] southwards, to the place where his majesty is [Memphis], with every good thing of South-Land (*Tꜣ-Šmꜥ*) and every provision of North-Land (*Tꜣ-Mḥw*) to propitiate his majesty's heart (Dream Stele 41–42).

The text is silent on encounters with Assyrians so that it may have been composed shortly before the decisive battle took place. According to the Assyrian scribes, Tanutamani made Memphis (*Mempi*) and Heliopolis (*Ūnu*) to his strongholds (Prism A ii 23; Prism B ii 12). But when the Kushite king was announced that the Assyrian troops from Nineveh reached the border of Egypt, he left Memphis (Prism B ii 21) and went to Thebes.[176] The same kings who kissed the ground before Tanutamani shortly before (Dream Stele 32) are reported to have kissed Assurbanipal's feet when he (his general) stepped on Egyptian soil (Prism B ii 24).

Memphis and Heliopolis were captured.[177] Assurbanipal's generals followed Tanutamani to Thebes on a journey of a month and ten days through narrow passes. Egypt's most famous city shook at the battle cry of foreign soldiers in a manner that became famous in the ancient world (Nah 3:8–9). The Assyrians sacked the metropolis from its possessions, and returned with a large booty to Nineveh. Tanutamani managed to

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[172] Cf. Török and Pierce in *FHN* 1.29 and Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:129–45.

[173] "South-land is yours, size for yourself North-land" (Dream Stele 4–5).

[174] A vague reference to Necho I's death may be found in Dream Stele 2: "who crosses the Great Green [the Nile] after him who has attacked him, who makes an end to him who has attacked him" (cf. also lns. 17, 24–25). A most interesting figure among the kings accepting the overlordship of Tanutamani is Paqruru, ruler of *Pr-Spdw*, whom we have already encountered earlier in the rebellion against Assurbanipal. He appears here as a spokesman on behalf of the other subordinate rulers.

[175] Török, *Kingdom*, 186.

[176] The city is called *Neʾ āl šarrūtīšu*, "Thebes, the city of his kingship" (LET rev. 4) and *āl dannūtīšu*, "his stronghold" (Prism A ii 35; previously mentioned in connection with Taharka, cf. LET 34'). Cf. Excursus 2.

[177] The fall of Heliopolis is mentioned in Prisms F i 50 only. However, other inscriptions also know Heliopolis and Thebes as the two Kushite strongholds.

escape to Kipkipi,[178] but this was the end of the Kushite rule in Egypt. As Adams wrote, "the region [Kush] thereafter was no longer of interest to Egyptian, Assyrian, or Hebrew chronicles".[179]

2.4.   The 26th Saite Dynasty and the Babylonian Empire

The Assyrian presence in Egypt and the favour of the Assyrian kings towards the Saite dynasty obviously influenced the later history of the African country. Necho, the king of Sais was a descendant of Tefnakht, the tenacious adversary of Piye, while the son of Tefnakht, Bakenrenef, was (according to Manetho) executed by Shabaka. Though the Saite monarchs were not particularly delighted with the Assyrian presence in Egypt, their common pursuit to free Egypt from the Kushite kings kept them united.

Necho I derived from a Libyan family with militant past and significant political achievements. His prominent role among the other Delta chiefs was recognised by Assurbanipal when he elevated him above the other leaders. Necho's control of the Delta did not last for long, however. He probably died in the war with the Kushites. His son, Psametik followed him on the throne.

2.4.1. Psametik I (664–610 b.c.)

Psametik I stepped beyond the borders established by his father and he gradually took over the dominion over the entire Egypt. Though he counted his regnal years from 664, the date of the fall of Thebes, his real power in Upper Egypt could take its start only when his daughter, Nitokris I, was adopted as God's Wife of Amun Elect at Thebes in 656 b.c.

To drive out Tanutamani from Egypt, Psametik cleverly profited from Assyrian support (cf. *Hist.* ii 152), including the military of Assyrian vassals. The Letter of Aristeas (§13) refers to Judaeans brought into Egypt by Psametik for his war against "Aithiopians". In case this late writing is historically sound, we have more convincing arguments to opt for Psametik I than II as the king who levied the Judaean forces.[180] As Sauneron & Yoyotte argued, the Letter may allude to Judaeans brought into Egypt in view of the war conducted against Tanutamani with As-

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[178] Possibly a city in Nubia (Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 1:148).

[179] Adams, "Kush", 780. In Ezek 30:9 כּוּשׁ בֶּטַח, "the confident Kush(ites)" refers to a country (militarily) supporting Egypt. This is obviously not the power any more that it has once been.

[180] S. Sauneron & J. Yoyotte, "Sur la politique des rois Saïtes", *VT* 2 (1952) 131–33; B. Porten, "Settlement of Jews at Elephantine and the Arameans at Syene", in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (eds. O. Lipschits & M. Oeming; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 459.

syrian support in 664. As noted above, in 667 the soldiers of Manasseh participated actively on the side of Assyria. These Judaeans were probably also brought into the Egypt when Psametik I, the Assyrian ally, planned to expel Tanutamani. In this connection Diodorus Siculus refers to auxiliary troops from "Arabia" helping Psametik I against the kings of Lower Egypt (*Diod.* i 66). On a stele of Psametik I from 656 he explicitly refers to a settlement of Shasu in the nome of Sais.[181]

References to the external policy of Psametik I are, however, very limited. The Assyrians had no interest in a strong centralised power in Egypt, so that the increasing authority of Psametik probably led to a conflict between the pharaoh and the Assyrian overseers and garrisons stationing in Africa. Assyrian historians do not recount what exactly happened in Egypt after Thebes fell and Tanutamani was expelled from the country. But a significant episode may be hidden behind the short story of Assurbanipal's Prism A ii 114, mentioning King Gyges of Lydia, allied with *Pišamilki* (Psametik), king of Egypt, both driven by anti-Assyrian sentiments.[182] Gyges was punished by Assurbanipal, but it would have surpassed the capacities of the Assyrian king to send an army against Egypt as well. Assurbanipal's power had become dispersed in heavy wars with Babylon and Elam. He was seemingly unable to participate actively in Egyptian affairs ever after he had left the country.[183]

However, Assurbanipal did not abandon all Levantine regions under his authority at once. Na'aman argued that the repopulation of Samaria ascribed to a man called אָסְנַפַּר in Ezr 4:10, often identified with Assurbanipal (but cf. 4:2!), is a proof of this, not less than the accounts of war against some cities of the Tyrean state (Ushu and Acco) around 644

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[181] Sauneron & Yoyotte, "Politique", 135. Herodotus, *Hist.* ii 30 mentions a garrison at Mareon over against the Libyan border.

[182] Von Zeissl may be right that Herodotus' description of Ionians and Carians arriving in Egypt in Psametik's time (*Hist.* ii 152) are to be viewed in connection with this reference of the Assyrian annals (Von Zeissl, *Äthiopen*, 50).

[183] It is strange to suggest that Psametik I would have remained a faithful ally of Assurbanipal throughout this period, as done by R. Nelson, "Realpolitik in Judah (687–609 B.C.E.)", in *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method* (ed. W. H. Hallo et al.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 183–84; N. Na'aman, "The Kingdom of Judah under Josiah", in *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction* (ed. N. Na'aman; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 366, 368; Ahlström, *History*, 751. Against Ahlström one should note that the possible Egyptian siege of Ashdod in 635 was not an attempt to preserve the city under Assyrian dominion, as he suggested. Psametik intended to bring a former Assyrian ally under his jurisdiction. The note that *Pišamilki* "threw off the yoke" of Assyria (Prism A ii 114), can hardly mean anything else but a total detachment from his former vassal overlord.

B.C.[184] The rebellion of Babylon in 623 was certainly the most important prelude for the destruction of Nineveh, but it seems that political troubles drove out Assyria from the southern Levant by around 640, a date that in Judah coincides with the emergence of King Josiah.[185]

Egypt's influence in the Levantine region began to increase as the Assyrian forces departed. Psametik succeeded to build a powerful army with the help of Libyan, Greek, Phoenician, Aramaean, Samarian, and Judaean mercenaries. The establishment of the military colony of Elephantine is connected with his expansionary policy. He wished to guard the southern borders of his country from Nubian incursions.[186]

It is difficult to tell exactly when the Judaean and Aramaean contingent were placed at the southern border. Porten connects the establishment of the Judaean colony at Elephantine with the disobedience of Manasseh as retold in 2 Chr 33:1–13. In his interpretation, sending Judaean troops to Egypt was the unorthodox move of Manasseh for which he was punished by the Assyrian king.[187] However, many other scholars question the historical reliability of the Chronist's story. It is also possible that these troops have been stationing for some time in Egypt, and were merely relocated to the southern border shortly after Tanutamani was expelled from the country.[188]

The next occasion we meet Assyria together with Egypt, is on the eve of the fall of Nineveh. But by now the picture is drastically changed. In the battle against Babylon in 616, Egypt reappears as an ally and supporter of Assyria. With their forces joined, "the army of Egypt and the army of Assyria went after the king of Akkad as far as Gablini, but they did not overtake the king of Akkad. They withdrew." (*ABC* 3:10–11). The reason behind this may have been the threat posed by the Medes of Cyaxares on the north. The city of Assur was captured by the Medes in 614, Nineveh fell before the joined forces of Babylon and Media in 612. King Assur-uballit II, ascends the throne of Assyria in Harran. The

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[184] Na'aman, "Josiah", 362–63.

[185] Vanderhooft, *Empire*, 67.

[186] Cf. Herodotus *Hist.* ii 30. Grimal, *Egypt*, 355; Kitchen, *Period*, 405–6. The Elephantine Papyri speak of חילא יהודיא, "Judaean troop" on the Elephantine Isle and חילא סונכניא, "Syenian troop", of Aramaean origin, in the city of Syene (Porten, "Settlement", 456).

[187] Porten, "Settlement", 460–61. The Second Serapeum Stele of Psametik I seems to allude to Phoenicia under Egyptian authority, while the same is suggested for Philistia by archaeological investigations (cf. Schipper, *Israel*, 231).

[188] For biblical allusions to Judaean settlers in Upper Egypt, see Isa 11:11; 49:12 (cf. 1 QIsaª); Jer 24:8; 43–44. For extra-biblical evidence (Statue A 90 from Louvre; Papyrus Berlin 13615; Papyrus Amherst 63), see Sauneron & Yoyotte, "Politique", 131–36; Porten, "Settlement", 459–66.

forces of Akkad and Media met with the Assyrians supported by their Egyptian allies at Harran in 610. The war ends with the fall of Harran and the defeat of the Assyro-Egyptian coalition (*ABC* 3:61–62).

2.4.2. NECHO II (610–595 B.C.)

In 609 a renewed force of Assyria and a large Egyptian army now led by the son of Psametik, Necho II, attempts to recapture the city of Harran from the Babylonians. The Nineveh Chronicle is fragmentary on this point, but apparently Assyria was ultimately defeated by the army of the king of Akkad who came to the aid of Harran (*ABC* 3:66–69).[189] For a short period, Carchemish has become the stronghold of Egyptian forces supporting Assyria. The army of Nabopolassar led by Nebuchadnezzar, the crown prince, occupied the city of Kimuhu on the Euphrates, stationing an Akkadian garrison inside the city. In 606 the army of Egypt captured Kimuhu and defeated the Akkadian troops. A few month later, Nebuchadnezzar met the Egyptian army again at Quramatu, and they managed to defeat the Babylonians (*ABC* 4:24–26). The crucial battle took place in 605 at Carchemish, close to the Egyptian residence. According to the Babylonian Chronicle (5:1–7), despite the large army supported by foreigners (cf. Jer 46:5), Egypt was crushed completely.

The support of Assyria by Egypt is not to be explained by the fact that Egypt would still have been a vassal of Assur. Rather Egypt regarded the weakened Assyria as a buffer zone withholding the ever growing power of Babylon and the Medes. In his pursuit for extending his dominion, the pharaoh was supported not only by its older mercenaries, Put and Kush, and the Lydian forces of Anatolia, but also by the states of Canaan, including Judah.[190] This means that Egypt-related prophecies of Jeremiah apparently written in this period (cf. Jer 46), were of great importance for a Judaean audience as well.

It appears that after Assyria retreated from Egypt, and the country was freed, it took a relatively short time that Egypt again turned towards adopting the external policy of New Kingdom pharaohs. It made every effort to consolidate its power in the Canaanite territories, former vassal states of Assyria, including Judah.[191] According to 2 Kgs 24:7, soon after

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[189] A. Hjelt, "Die Chronik Nabopolassars und der syrische Feldzug Nechos", in *Vom Alten Testament: Karl Marti zum siebzigsten Geburtstage gewidmet* (ed. K. Budde; BZAW 41; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1925), 142–47; Ahlström, *History*, 759.

[190] Ahlström, *History*, 760–61; A. B. Lloyd, "The Late Period (664–332 BC)", in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (ed. I. Shaw; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 372.

[191] Redford, *Egypt*, 441–69; Ahlström, *History*, 763; Schipper, *Israel*, 230.

the death of Jehoiakim, the king of Babylon took everything that be-
longed to the king of Egypt, מִנַּחַל מִצְרַיִם עַד־נְהַר־פְּרָת, "from the Brook of
Egypt to the River Euphrates". This implies that this territory was par-
tially considered to have been part of the pharaonic domain.

The implication of Egypt in the policy of the kings of Judah (among
others) creates a complex picture of the last years of this country's his-
tory. The reforms of Josiah, not free of anti-Assyrian elements, may
have been supported by Egypt.[192] At one stage Josiah may have realised,
however, that being the vassal of Egypt makes not much difference to
being subordinated to Assyria, especially if one assumes that he had
some ambitious plans concerning territorial expansion. Josiah's meeting
with pharaoh Necho II at Megiddo (2 Kgs 23) may be seen against the
background of his more or less loudly formulated political tendency to
abandon the bondage of Egypt and gain more independence.

The account in 2 Kgs 23 is short and enigmatic. Nelson argues that
Josiah was killed not in a battle, but as a result of a misunderstanding on
his part and treachery on Necho's.[193] Nevertheless, Nelson leaves the
question unanswered why Necho would have acted this way, especially
in his reconstruction of the politics of those days with Josiah, Egypt and
Assyria forming a close partnership with each other.[194] Na'aman alsso
favours the view that there was no battle at Megiddo, only a personal
encounter between Josiah and the Egyptian ruler.[195] His question, why
Josiah would have chosen such a remote place to encamp against Necho
II, is thoughtful, but his assumption that this meeting would have been
merely a personal encounter between Necho and Josiah at such a re-
mote location is also strange. In 2 Kgs 23:29, the author uses neutral
terminology (וַיֵּלֶךְ...לִקְרָאתוֹ), which may be interpreted either ways.[196]

In the interpretation of 2 Chr 35:20–24, Josiah clearly appeared
with an army on this occasion and intended to stop the pharaoh from

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[192] Ahlström strongly believes that Josiah was an Egyptian vassal, who supplied
the army of Psametik I with his own soldiers. The city of Mesad Hashavyahu
on the Mediterranaean coast, often assumed to have belonged to Josiah, seems
to have been one of the mixed garrison forces of Psametik, harbouring Judaean
as well as Greek soldiers (cf. Redford, *Egypt*, 444–45), comparable to the south
Judaean city of Arad that also included Greek mercenaries of the Egyptian
pharaoh (Na'aman, "Josiah", 368, 373–74; Ahlström, *History*, 767, 769).
[193] Nelson, "*Realpolitik*", 188.
[194] That Josiah would have "remained an Assyrian vassal […] and that he was
part of the Egyptian-Assyrian alliance" (Nelson, "*Realpolitik*", 189) is based on
highly debatable texts. See further discussion below at 4.2.3.
[195] Na'aman, "Josiah", 379–84.
[196] Cf. Gen 32:7; Judg 14:5; 1 Sam 17:48; 23:28; 1 Kgs 20:27, used in hostile
sense, with Gen 14:17; 24:65; 2 Kgs 8:9; 2 Kgs 16:10; etc.

marching in support of Assyria (2 Chr 35:20–24). Hjelt believes that Josiah's act can be explained with his strong anti-Assyrian feelings.[197] However, since Assyria has long disappeared from the stage of Canaan, it could have hardly been considered a serious threat to Josiah. The doom was rather believed to come from Egypt. It is possible that Josiah expected that the emergence of Babylon would hold back the ever widening Egyptian control of Canaan, a threat to future dreams of Josiah, and would lead to the liberation of Judah, as well as the neighbouring territories. His act was first of all anti-Egyptian, and only implicitly anti-Assyrian.[198]

A similar essentially anti-Egyptian policy is pursued by Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, chosen by the עַם־הָאָרֶץ after the death of his father (2 Kgs 23:30). The choice of a leader pursuing anti-Egyptian policies may be an implicit evidence for the national feeling of the עַם־הָאָרֶץ. But this "electorate" (עַם־הָאָרֶץ) may also form a contrast to the later enthronisation account that expressed pharaonic and not national consent. Jehoahaz was removed just three month after he ascended the throne. Necho II imprisoned him in Riblah of Hamath, and took him to Egypt. A tribute of 100 talents of silver and X (10?) talents of gold was imposed on the country (2 Kgs 23:33).[199]

The new king of Judah, Jehoiakim (Eliakim), another son of Josiah, was chosen by Necho. Except for the three years of nominal servanthood under the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiakim has always remained loyal to his Egyptian overlord, and always counted on its support. The same was essentially the case with Jehoiachin, his son, and Zedekiah, his brother, installed by Nebuchadnezzar.[200]

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[197] Hjelt, "Feldzug Nechos", 145.

[198] Cf. Redford, who describes Josiah as heir of Hezekiah's pro-Babylonian policy (*Egypt*, 448). See also A. Malamat, "The Kingdom of Judah between Egypt and Babylon: A Small State within a Great Power Confrontation", in *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F.C. Fensham* (ed. W. Claassen; JSOTSS 48; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 120.

[199] Arad Ostracon 88 (*HAHE*, 1.302–304; *COS* 3.43M) that mentions the emergence of a king in Judah (?) is dated by some to the Jehoahaz era. This text also mentions troops and refers to the king of Egypt. But unfortunately both the dating and the meaning of the text remains uncertain and can be of little historical value here. Malamat restored it as if it were a prophecy addressed to Josiah, commanding him to go up against the king of Egypt (Malamat, "Judah", 121), a reading which is, however, very conjectural.

[200] Several ostraca from the fortress of Arad (notably 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 17) refer to Cypriots (soldiers) posted there under the command of the Judaean Eliashib. These were probably mercenaries levied by Egypt and sent to guard the southern borders of Judah, its vassal, against the Edomites. The texts

The Babylonian Chronicle records Babylonian campaigns against the Hatti-lands for five consecutive years. In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar ascends the throne of Babylon. In the same year he musters a large army to the land of Hatti (Canaan) bringing a vast tribute from the territories formerly under Egyptian authority (*ABC* 5:obv. 12–13). In 604 Ashkelon fell to the enemy, and a tribute of Hatti is mentioned for the years 603 and 602 (*ABC* 5:obv. 15–rev. 4). A desperate letter written by one of the Philistine vassal kings, Adon, also derives from around this period. Adon, probably a king of Ekron, reports on the approach of the Babylonians, who already captured Aphek, and appeals to Egypt's support.[201] King Jehoiakim of Judah has also become a vassal of Babylon during these days, for a period of three years (604;[202] cf. 2 Kgs 24:1).

The year 601 is again a crucial moment in the history of Egypt and its Canaanite allies. The Babylonian army encounters pharaoh Necho II at the entrance of Egypt, but the battle seems to have remained undecided and Babylon needed to retreat.[203] The anti-Babylonian parties considered this the best moment for revolting against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had to stay home to consolidate his power in 600, but retaliation did not fail to show up. In 599 the Babylonians went to the land of Hatti and from there they plundered the Arabians of the desert (perhaps the Moabites and Ammonites in the first place; *ABC* 5:rev. 9–10). According to 2 Kgs 24:2 Chaldaean, Aramaean,[204] Moabite and Ammonite forces were sent against Judah during the later years of Jehoiakim. This event may be dated to 599. In 598, on the second of Adar Jerusalem was captured. The newly elected Jehoiachin was deported.

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come either from Jehoiakim's or Zedekiah's period, both of whom were famous for their sympathy and loyalty towards Egypt.

[201] B. Porten, "The Identity of King Adon", *BA* 44 (1981) 63–52; *TUAT* 1.632–34. The identification of the city of Adon with Ekron was first suggested by Porten, and is also accepted by Malamat, "Judah", 122–23. Tadmor believes it may have been either the king of Ashkelon or of Ashdod ("Chronology of the Last Kings of Judah", *JNES* 15 [1956] 229 note 21).

[202] Malamat, "Judah", 124; N. Na'aman, "Nebuchadnezzar's Campaign in the Year 603 BCE", *BN* 62 (1992) 44.

[203] One of Nebuchadnezzar's texts describes his dominion as "from the land of Egypt (*ištu māt Miṣir*) to the cities of Hume, Piriddu, and Lydia" (Vanderhooft, *Empire*, 87, 98). But as with Sargon II, this title does not imply that he would have actually occupied Egypt.

[204] Ahlström, *History*, 785 note 3, prefers to read אדם instead of ארם, but the Aramaean contingents are well-attested in the Chaldaean army (see Jer 35:11; cf. also comments on Isa 22:6 in 3.4.2.8. below). The LXX of 2 Kgs 24:2 contains Συρίας, and the same may have stood in Jer 42:11 (= 35:11 in the MT), now reading Ἀσσυρίων.

Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah on the Judaean throne, the king who proved to be unfaithful in keeping his promises as a Babylonian vassal.

2.4.3. THE FINAL YEARS OF THE 26TH DYNASTY

When Necho II died in 595, his successor, Psametik II (595–589 B.C.), ascended the throne of Memphis. The dawn of a new independence day was believed to have had arrived again in 594. Babylon was striving heavily to put an end to a conflict estranging it from its former ally, Elam. The war against Elam and other internal instabilities convinced the countries of the west to step on the road of rebellion.[205] In 592 Psametik II waged war against the southern neighbour, Kush, where he may have been supported by Canaanite troops.[206] One year later he marched along the Mediterranaean coast to Byblos, an event celebrated as a major achievement.[207]

According to Lachish ostracon 3 (lns. 14–16), dated to around this period, a certain Konyahu, son of Elnatan, the commander of the army (שר הצבא) was sent to Egypt.[208] Though the context does not clarify his mission, it certainly reflects on the political commitments of the two allies, as does the prophetic criticism of Jeremiah (2:18.36–37; 37:5–10) and Ezekiel (16:26; 17; 23:19–21.27). However, Psametik II died before getting the chance to fulfil his promises to his Canaanite allies. It was left to his son, Apries (Hophra; cf. Jer 44:30) (589–570 B.C.), to harvest the fruits of his father's sowing. For the Babylonian retaliation did not fail to show up. In 587/586 Jerusalem was burned down, Zedekiah was deported to exile. Many of those who remained in the country under the guidance of governor Gedaliah, appointed by Nebuchadnezzar, were forced to flee shortly after a complot against the governor, backed by the anti-Babylonian parties and neighbouring countries, such as Ammon and Egypt, ended with the murder of the pro-Babylonian Gedaliah (Jer

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[205] Jeremiah 27 reports of a rebellion prepared at the court of Jerusalem by Zedekiah being supported by Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Tyreans and Sydonians. The political reality aluded to in this text remains unsure; especially the absence of Egypt from this list is strange. Spalinger suggested that Psametik II may have instigated this anti-Babylonian conference (A. Spalinger, "Psammetichus II", *LdÄ* 4:1170), but evidence in this regard is lacking. The Jeremianic text makes no mention of a date. The בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלֶכֶת יְהוֹיָקִם in Jer 27:1 is a later addition (it is absent from the LXX). Jer 27:12 mentions King Zedekiah.

[206] The causes of this war are not clear, but the strong anti-Kushite feelings and the reminiscences of former memories certainly played a role here.

[207] Grimal, *Egypt,* 362; Redford, *Egypt,* 464. Malamat ("Judah", 126) dates the Palestinian campaign to 591 B.C.

[208] An individual called Elnathan, son of Achbor is said to have descended to Egypt at the command of Jehoiakim, according to Jer 26:22.

40–41). This departure of the remnants of Judah to the country of the enemy of Babylon appears in the background of harsh prophecies both against the fugitives and against the land of Egypt (Jer 43–44).[209]

The ever safe haven of foreign deserters, Egypt, seemed to offer secure shelter against Babylon, but the internal turmoil in the country caused serious problems for Pharaoh Apries. Chief among these was the rebellion of foreign garrisons at Elephantine and the later conflict between the Greek and Carian armies and the national army of Egypt, dissatisfied with the generous pharaonic support accorded to foreigners. In the account of Herodotus (*Hist.* ii 161) this conflict ended with the replacement of Apries by Amasis (Ahmose; 570–526 B.C.).[210]

The Babylonians wasted more than a decade in front of Tyre. Egypt offered strong naval backing for its Phoenician ally. In the view of the prophet Ezekiel, Egypt was supposed to come as a well deserved recompense for this Babylonian military effort (Ezek 29:17–20; cf. Jer 43:8–13). Nebuchadnezzar himself may have believed so as well, for in 568 he marched against Egypt for one last time.[211] But as in 601, this war ended again with the retreat of the army of Akkad.[212]

The late Egyptian empire of Amasis played a significant role in the history of the Anatolian kingdoms, threatened by the growing might of Babylon's former ally, Media. With Egyptian support, Lydia was able to hold the Medians back until 546. In 529 Cambyses took over the throne from his father, Cyrus. In 526 pharaoh Amasis died. His son and successor, Psametik III, was unable to prevent the Persians of Cambyses invading Egypt. In later historiography 525 was a decisive moment for Egypt. With the help of the Arabians, Cambyses and his army managed to traverse the Sinai desert. He defeated the Egyptians at the Pelusiac

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[209] The cities mentioned by Jer 44:1 are located in Lower Egypt (Migdol, Tahpanhes, and Memphis), some already known as the settlement of foreign mercenary troops (for Tahpanhes/Tell Defenna, cf. Redford, *Egypt,* 441; Lloyd, "Late Period", 372–73). But Jer 44:1 also names Upper Egypt as the location of the fugitives. Most of Ezekiel's anti-Egyptian prophecies are also dated to 588–586 (cf. Ezek 29:1; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1.17).

[210] Grimal, *Egypt,* 363; Lloyd, "Late Period", 373.

[211] Ezekiel's prophecy is dated to Jehoiachin's 27th year of captivity, i.e. 571 B.C., three years before the actual campaign.

[212] A late Neo-Babylonian fragmentary tablet from Nebuchadnezzar's 37th year (VAB 4 206 [=BM 33041], *ANET,* 308) may refer to this encounter with the Egyptian pharaoh, whose name can apparently be restored as [*a-ma*]-ˈaˈ-*su šar*(LUGAL) *mi-ṣir*. The same text refers to Kushite (*Kuša*), Libyan (*Puṭu*) and Greek (*Yaman*) participation in the army of Amasis. See also D. J. Wiseman, *Nabuchadrezzar and Babylon* (London: Oxford University Press, 1985), 39–40; Vanderhooft, *Empire,* 88.

branch of the Nile (*Hist.* iii 10). Egypt and its allies surrendered and the African country became a satrapy of the Persian Empire, with Cambyses as the first on Manetho's list of the pharaohs of the 27th Dynasty.[213]

2.5. CONCLUSION

The two hundred years of history reviewed here concerning the relationship between the rulers of Egypt and the Near East, in particular Assyria, Babylon, and the small states between, reveals a complex picture on the political map of those days, problematic to understand not only for modern historians, but sometimes even for those responsible for weaving the web of world history. We observe that in many respects inner political decisions of the countries are to a great extent influenced by the intricacies posed by the adopted policies of foreign nations, affecting the economic development of neighbouring regions. In this sense, the moves taken by the great players of the world had an immediate impact on the life of smaller nations committed to survive and preserve independence, on the one hand, and use the best of their wisdom to profit from mighty neighbours, on the other.

It comes as no surprise then that the prophets of Judah and Israel address the royal house and the larger audience in matters related to foreign nations. Particularly Egypt, the neighbouring country with which Israel shares many centuries of common history, received the focus of these prophets. It is to be expected that some events, considered to be worthy of mention by Egyptian or Assyrian scribes, will play a role in the formation of Hebrew prophecies as well. In what sense this could have been the case with Isaiah is the question of the following chapters.

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[213] On the first Persian conquest of Egypt, see G. Posener, *La première domination Perse en Egypte* (Cairo: IFAO, 1936); E. Visser, "Cambyses en Egypte", *JEOL* 9–10 (1944–48) 337–54; P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000; English translation by Peter T. Daniels), 50–61; E. Cruz-Uribe, "The Invasion of Egypt by Cambyses," *Transeuphratène* 25 (2003) 9–60.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

Reconstructing the Broken Stele of YHWH

THE (FOREIGN) NATION PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH 13–23 AS CONTEXT FOR ISAIAH 18–20

Isaiah 18–20 are included in a collection usually called prophecies concerning the (foreign) nations (Isa 13–23). The purpose here is to investigate questions related to Isa 13–23 as a literary and theological corpus, both as a unit and as a collection of distinctive prophecies. This chapter is divided into four main sections. After preliminary remarks with regard to terminological issues connected to text-types appearing in Isa 13–23 (3.1.), I shall devote brief attention to the theological aspects of foreign nation prophecies in the Old Testament (3.2.). The third part of this chapter will focus on literary collections of foreign nation prophecies in the Hebrew Bible resembling Isa 13–23 (3.3.). The fourth section (3.4.) will concentrate on Isa 13–23 as a whole, followed by a concise examination of its smaller units and its individual prophecies (13–17.21–23) from a literary, theological and historical viewpoint. Based on the investigation of this chapter, the closing pericope (3.5.) gives a preliminary vision concerning the function of Isa 13–23.

3.1.   PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Many prophecies of the Old Testament are concerned with nations other than Israel and Judah. These texts attested to a larger or smaller extent in every prophetic book with the exception of Hosea,[1] were in some cases collected into a larger corpus,[2] but they may also appear out-

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[1] Utterances with similar concern also appear outside the prophetic corpus (cf. Ps 2; 60; 89:23–24 [cf. 89:20]), so that it is sometimes difficult to see the difference between texts that are now included in נביאים אחרונים and those appearing elsewhere, e.g. in the Psalms (cf. Isa 18:7; Mic 2:1–4 and Ps 86:9; Isa 18:7 and Ps 68:32; etc.). It is not always easy to draw the boundaries between prophecy and cultic poetry. Similar prophecies were preserved with their historical context in 2 Kgs 3:16–19; 19:20–34 (‖ Isa 37:21–35). See on these texts J. H. Hayes, "The Oracles against the Nations in the Old Testament: Their Usage and Theological Importance" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1964), 122–53.

[2] Isa 13–23; Jer 46–51; Ezek 25–32; Am 1–2; Zeph 2:4(1)–2:15.

side such collections.[3] Some of the prophetic books are entirely devoted to this topic (Nahum, Obadiah). Jeremiah is called "a prophet to the nations" (נְבִיא לַגּוֹיִם; Jer 1:5). This description of Jeremiah should not be seen in comparison with other prophets, but in view of his book, in which the nations are so richly represented. As Jer 28:8 emphasises, the foreign nations were a permanent theme of the traditional prophetic message. Because Israel and Judah were constantly involved in cultural, political, and economic contacts with their neighbours, this specific focus of the prophets hardly comes as a surprise.

At the first sight it may not cause a problem to recognise these literary compositions. Yet when we search for a definition for foreign nation prophecies, or typical formal characteristics, it soon becomes clear that prophecies dealing with nations are by far not as uniform as their commonly applied designation would suggest. Some of these compositions deal exclusively with the fate of a foreign country,[4] while others are included in a prophecy which is otherwise directly addressed to a Judaean audience.[5] Some of these prophecies, or sections of prophecies, address particular nations by name,[6] others refer to גוֹיִים or עַמִּים.[7]

> There is already disagreement whether this last mentioned category of prophecies addressing nations in general should be included among the foreign nation prophecies. Fechter for instance defined foreign nation prophecies as "die Art von Texten (…) deren inhaltlicher Schwerpunkt das Geschick *konkreter*, nicht-israelitischer Völker ist und die *vorwiegend in größeren Komplexen* als Sammlungen begegnen."[8] However, prophecies addressed to the nations in general, or to more than one nation, have also been included in collections of foreign nation prophecies (cf. Isa 17:12–14), which suggests that the distinction Fechter makes had no influence on the editors or redactors of prophetic books. The fact that prophecies concerning the nations may

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[3] This can be the case even in books in which such collection existed (cf. Isa 7:5–8; 8:4.9–10; 10:5–34*; 25:10–12; 30:31; 33:1–12; 34; 47; Jer 9:24–25; 12:14–17; 43:8–13; Ezek 21:28–32; 35; 38–39).

[4] E.g., Isa 19:1–15; 21:1–10; 23; Jer 46:1–12; 46:13–24.25–26; 49:23–27; etc.

[5] In other words, one should rather speak of utterances concerning foreign nations in the context of prophecies dealing with Israel and Judah. E.g., Joel 2:20 in 2:18–27; Joel 4:19 in 4:18–21; Mic 4:11–12 in 4:8–14; Mic 5:4–5.14 in 5:1–8.14; Hag 2:22 in 2:20–23; Zech 2:13 in 2:5–17; etc.

[6] In this address one or more nations may be included (cf. Ezek 25:1–5.6–7; Am 1:3–5 on the one hand, and Ezek 25:8–14; Joel 3:4–8; 4:19; Zeph 2:8–10).

[7] Cf. Isa 17:12–14; Joel 4:1–3.9–17; Hag 2:22.

[8] F. Fechter, *Bewältigung der Katastrophe. Untersuchungen zu ausgewählten Fremdvölkersprüchen im Ezechielbuch* (BZAW 208; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992), 2 (my emphasis).

appear individually casts additional doubt on the practical usefulness
of Fechter's definition. It is neither broad enough to include all the
relevant texts, nor precise enough to explain why it excludes others.

One of the criteria that scholars mention with regard to the delimita-
tion of these texts is that foreign nation prophecies should either address
the nation(s) in a direct way, i.e. using the second person form, or they
should be concerned with the present or future fate of foreign people.[9]
This means that texts like Am 3:9; 6:2; 9:7; Isa 5:26–30; Jer 2:16; Hab
1:5–11 can be excluded. In most cases, however, the fate of Judah or Is-
rael is so strongly interwoven with the foreigners that it is difficult if not
impossible to trace the boundaries between texts concerned with Israel,
on the one hand, and the nations, on the other.[10]

Isaiah 45:1–13 contains a prophecy addressed to the foreign king,
Cyrus, the anointed one of YHWH. This oracle is rarely considered a
prophecy on foreign nations, yet I wonder whether there is any signifi-
cant formal difference between Isa 45:1–13 and Isa 14:4–23, Ezek 28:1–
10, or 32, addressed to foreign kings and included among foreign nation
prophecies. In comparison to Isa 45:1–13, 14:4–23 may be considered an
inverted royal oracle, or at least in some sense related to this type.

Concluding, prophecies concerning foreign nations run parallel with
prophecies addressed to Israel and Judah. This means that the foreign
nation prophecies do not constitute a distinctive genre inside the pro-
phetic literature.[11] They may not differ from prophecies addressed to
Judah and Israel, except for the change in addressees in some cases.[12]

In English language studies these "types" of prophecies are known as
"oracles against the nations", "prophecies against foreign nations", "for-
eign nation oracles". This variety is also reflected in German as "Fremd-
völkersprüche", "Völkerorakeln", "Fremdvölkerweissagungen", "Hei-
denorakeln".[13] The applied terminology should meet the following re-

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[9] Cf. Fechter, *Bewältigung*, 1 note 3; B. Huwyler, *Jeremia und die Völker. Unter-
suchungen zu den Völkersprüchen in Jeremia 46-49* (FAT 20; Tübingen: J. C. B.
Mohr, 1997), 2.

[10] Note for instance texts in which the fate of a nation becomes determined by
Israel, who appears as an agent of YHWH in his dealing with the nations. Cf. 2
Kgs 3:16–19; Isa 11:14; 14:1–4; cf. also Ps 2; 110.

[11] Cf. Hayes, "Nations", 301; Fichter, *Bewältigung*, 2. The term *Gattung* is
adopted by Y. Hoffmann, *The Prophecies against Foreign Nations* (Tel-Aviv: Tel-
Aviv University, 1977); Idem, "From Oracle to Prophecy: The Growth, Crys-
tallization and Disintegration of a Biblical Gattung", *JNSL* 10 (1982) 75.

[12] Compare Jer 51:41–43 with Jer 6:22–24.

[13] P. Höffken, "Untersuchungen zu den Begründungselementen der Völkerora-
kel des Alten Testaments" (Ph.D. diss., Bonn, 1977), 387–88 note 3; Huwyler,
Jeremia, 1–2.

quirements: (a) These prophecies contain not only judgment speeches, but also promises of salvation, even if some of those may come from a secondary stage of text formation.[14] (b) Since not each one of these prophecies complies with the oracular type of literature (though some of them may), it is better to use the name "prophecy" instead of "oracle", unless we talk about a specific collection or type of text conforming to this latter.[15] The term adopted in this study is "foreign nation prophecies", abbreviated as FNPs.

3.2.   THE FOREIGN NATION PROPHECIES AS THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

3.2.1.   THE BACKGROUND OF PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE NATIONS

As long recognised, prophecy in general has many connecting ties with the ancient world. The FNPs are one of the connection lines. The wider Near Eastern background of the FNP is documented in the biblical story of Balaam, the Aramaic prophet (Num 23:7) hired by Balak, king of Moab, to curse Israel before entering Canaan. Balaam's mantic-magic prophecies and activities against a foreign nation, Israel, may be related to the FNPs known from the time of the "classical" prophets.

Beyond the Balaam-texts, two significant archives, the Mari texts from the 18th century B.C. and the texts from the royal library of the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal from Nineveh from the 7th century B.C., confirm that FNPs appear with relative frequency outside the Bible. These extra-biblical texts not only offer a glimpse into the process of text formation from the oral stages to the written and edited form of the text, but they also provide significant information on the historical background of these prophecies that may help us to understand biblical FNPs where this information is often lacking.[16]

The prophecies from Mari are addressed to king Zimri-lim indirectly by way of letters sent from various cities under or even outside his authority.[17] Occasionally these prophecies are presented as oracles given to inquiries,[18] but some were uttered without specific questions addressed to the gods, either in a cultic setting (*PPANE* 18) or otherwise (*PPANE* 18:1–14). Several important aspects in these prophecies may help us to

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[14] Cf. also J. B. Geyer, "Another Look at the Oracles about the Nations in the Hebrew Bible. A Response to A. C. Hagedorn", *VT* 59 (2009) 82.

[15] Cf. Fechter, *Bewältigung,* 2–3; Huwyler, *Jeremia,* 2.

[16] The recent edition of these prophecies by M. Nissinen (with contributions by C. L. Seow and R. K. Ritner), *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (WAW 12; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), gives a convenient overview and bibliography regarding the texts to be cited below.

[17] For a detailed discussion, cf. Höffken, "Begründungselementen", 340–63.

[18] See for instance *PPANE* 9:29–50; 24:8–18; 38:24–39.

understand the biblical variation on this theme.

Concerning the addressees, it is striking that while FNPs were probably also uttered in the presence of the king, several texts were given in the absence of the actual addressee, Zimri-lim. Many of these letters were sent from one of the towns, by one of the king's officials. Some of these oracles were spoken in public, others told only personally to the royal official responsible for delivering the letter. Not only the primary addressee, Zimri-lim, was absent when these prophecies were delivered, but so was also the enemy. The enemy appears sometimes addressed in the second person form, in other texts it is spoken of in the third person.[19] The enemy threatening Zimri-lim is often addressed through its king, but a few prophecies also mentions the enemy nation.[20]

The FNPs of Mari function as salvation oracles for Zimri-lim in times of war. Generally the king is the focus of these prophecies, which is explainable from the provenance of these tablets from royal archives.

Considering their form, in view of the biblical prophecies it is also striking that proclamations of the destruction of the foreign "nations" were recorded on the same tablet with other prophecies dealing with various aspects of Zimri-lim's personal, social or administrative life (*PPANE* 4). Furthermore, the tablets may contain *collections* of oracles uttered by different prophets on the same nation (*PPANE* 19).

The prophecies of the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal come close to the prophecies from Mari in many respects.[21] They are similarly focused on the Assyrian king, they represent foreign nations or kings as enemies, etc. At the same time, the prophecies addressed to Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal have much more to say on theological issues, such as the relationship between the king and the deity, an issue rather infrequent, though not totally absent in the Mari prophecies (*PPANE* 17:31–34).

Assyrian prophetic texts differ from the letters of Mari in the sense that those tell us less about the social context of the prophecies. Refer-

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[19] For the first cf. *PPANE* 10:17–20; 17:15–17; 19:6–18, for the second see *PPANE* 4:32–43; 5; 7:11–19; 20:11–16; 38:9–39.

[20] For the former, cf. *PPANE* 19:15–18, for the latter, cf. *PPANE* 10:17–20; 19:8–10; 38:32–39.

[21] For Assyrian prophecies, cf. also S. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA 9; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997); M. Nissinen, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources* (SAAS 7; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998); M. Weippert, "'König, fürchte dich nicht!' Assyrische Prophetie im 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr.", *Or* 71 (2002) 1–54; M. J. de Jong, "Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies" (Ph.D. diss., Leiden, 2006).

ences to the context appear mainly in inscriptions recording the cam-
paigns of the king.[22] Likewise, it is striking that in *PPANE* 85 Esarhad-
don is spoken of in the third person. The message regarding the defeat
and destruction of Melid, Cimmer and Ellipi is addressed in a second
person form to the Assyrians (*marʾē māt Aššur*), but the colophon men-
tions that the oracle was read out before the king (*PPANE* 85 ii 32).

The Assyrian texts are usually much longer and adopt a language full
of metaphors and comparisons only sporadically attested in the Mari
prophecies. In the archives of Esarhaddon these oracles were often col-
lected in a corpus with utterances of different prophets, given on various
occasions.[23] A remarkable collection is *PPANE* 93 with the superscrip-
tion *dibbī ša* [*Elam*]*āyi*, "words concerning the Elamites", containing dis-
tinctive oracular utterances collected based on thematic coherence.

In connection with the type of prophecies that are not cast in the
form of a messenger speech common in Mari and the New Assyrian arc-
hives, note should also be made of the so called execration texts from
Egypt. The biblical Balaam referred to above does more than only speak
out with regard to the fate of a certain nation. He also performs ritual
acts in order to influence the fate of the enemy nation. Such types of
rituals appear frequently in Egypt in the context of war between Egypt
and its enemies.[24] Pots and figurines inscribed with the names of nations
under Egyptian authority or nations threatening Egypt's sovereignty or
its ruler were broken symbolising the fate of these nations. So far as Isra-
elite prophecy in Deut 18:9–22 is presented as a substitute for all kinds
of mantic, including execration, curse, witchcraft, magic,[25] these Egyp-
tian texts may have some value in studying biblical FNPs. However,
contrary to the suggestion of some scholars, the relationship between
Israelite FNPs and execration and mantic practice is rather superficial.[26]

With regard to ancient Near Eastern FNPs it may be concluded that

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[22] E.g., *PPANE* 100 iii 4–7; 101; cf. also *PPANE* 137 A 11–17.

[23] *PPANE* 68–77; 78–83.

[24] G. Posener, *Princes et pays d'Asie et de Nubie: textes hiératiques sur des figurines
d'envoûtement du Moyen Empire* (Bruxelles: Fondation Égyptologique Reine
Élisabeth, 1940); Hayes, "Nations", 83–86, COS 1.32.

[25] Note also Joseph, Moses and Daniel, the Israelite prophet-like figures, each
surpassing in his way the skills of foreign magicians, proclaiming not only the
superiority of YHWH above other gods, but also the pre-eminence of Israel's
prophets above other nations' diviners. Cf. Isa 19:11–15; 47:12–14.

[26] Bentzen argued that Am 1–2 was closely related to Egyptian execration texts
(A. Bentzen, "The Ritual Background of Amos i 2–ii 16", in *Oudtestamentische
Studiën* [ed. P. A. H. de Boer; vol. 8; Leiden: Brill, 1950], 85–99). For a critical
review, see J. Barton, *Amos's Oracles against the Nations: A Study of Amos 1.3–
2.5* (SOTMSS 6; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 12–14.

the foreign nations addressed appear always as enemies of war, or potential threats to the security of a country. Furthermore, these oracles have a specific historical setting within which they functioned as consolation for the empire and its king under threat.[27]

3.2.2. The Biblical Prophecies Concerning Foreign Nations

The Near Eastern background sketched above for the prophecies dealing with foreign nations forms an adequate starting point when approaching thematically related prophecies from the Old Testament. The ancient literary corpus of prophecies from Mari and Assyria provides an interpretive pattern that may occasionally be helpful for analysing biblical prophecies. On the other hand, the comparison of biblical material with the Near Eastern prophetic legacy makes it more obvious in what direction the biblical tradition moves away from the common cultural background, enabling the reader to focus on and appreciate its peculiarities.

The interest of various scholars through which the biblical FNPs have been approached is different, and any attempt to overview a history of research should be aware of this.[28] Beside cases where only individual FNPs receive the focus of attention, mostly without significant reflection on the character of these texts connecting them to other FNPs, inquiries into collections of FNPs are often reduced to one particular book. In most of these cases, research has been governed by literary, redaction critical or historical interests.

So far as investigation concentrated on the theological specificum of FNPs in relation to other themes of the prophetic literature, it was often assumed that these texts functioned primarily as salvation oracles in the Israelite community. Through this looking glass of critical scholarship, FNPs, like other salvation oracles, were sometimes thought to express a narrow minded nationalism far removed from the idealised picture of the "great" judgment prophets, inspired men of God, and as such they were considered inauthentic and late.[29] Others attempted to prove quite the contrary, that FNP was the most ancient form of prophecy, but still

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[27] De Jong, "Isaiah", 202–4, 211–13. With a similar function we also find prophecies concerning foreigners in Greek literature, though these are more distant relatives of biblical FNPs. Cf. A. C. Hagedorn, "Looking at Foreigners in Biblical and Greek Prophecy", *VT* 57 (2007) 432–48.

[28] For discussions of previous research on the FNPs, cf. Hayes, "Nations", 14–38; Höffken, "Begründungselementen", 12–36; D. L. Christensen, *Prophecy and War in Ancient Israel: Studies in the Oracles against the Nations in Old Testament Prophecy* (Berkeley: Bibal, 1989), 1–9.

[29] F. Schwally, "Die Reden des Buches Jeremia gegen die Heiden: XXV.XLVI-LI untersucht", *ZAW* 8 (1888) 177–216.

connected in their function with the prophecies of salvation.[30] This is, however, an oversimplification of the pluriformity in the function and theology attested in this group of texts. By far not all of these prophecies were written with a spirit inflamed by hatred towards other nations. Reventlow also recognised this, and he considered the prophets to be essentially cultic functionaries proclaiming both salvation and judgment, on Israel and the nations. He denied any difference between FNPs and other prophecies addressed to Israel. He believed that both forms of prophesying were rooted in Israel's covenant festival.[31]

Attempting to fill in a gap in the research of FNPs on the level of the entire Hebrew Bible, the second half of the 20th century has brought to the public several dissertations and monographs addressing the subject in general.[32] The results of these studies differ in a few respects, not least because of the scholar's varied interests and the methods applied.

Hayes considers these oracles impregnated by the holy war ideology of Israel, but he goes beyond these limits when he searches for real life backgrounds at the royal court, in the foreign political relations of Israel and Judah (including treaties with foreigners), or public services of lamentation.[33] Hayes connected FNPs outside the prophetic corpus, in 2 Kings, Lamentations, and Psalms, with this last group. But as he pointed out, these prophecies provided on occasions of national laments are on their turn also related to a foreign enemy.[34] Thus for Hayes two situations emerge as potential historical backgrounds of these prophecies: the context of war or imminent threat from an enemy (e.g. 2 Kgs 19:20–34) and royal oracles (the promise to rule above nations; e.g. Ps 2). Hayes also tries to trace a development of the FNPs from the war oracle stage in the pre-classical prophecy period, through judgment prophecy in the pre-exilic and exilic prophetic books, to eschatological and apocalyptical judgment scenes in post-exilic prophetic literature in which the nations do not appear any more as "concrete, historical actualities but are the powers of the world to which reference is made in general terms."[35]

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[30] So Gunkel and Gressmann (cf. Hayes, "Nations", 21–24, 26–27).

[31] H. G. Reventlow, *Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos* (FRLANT 80; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 65.

[32] C. Schmerl, *Die Völkerorakel in den Prophetenbüchern des Alten Testaments* (Würzburg: Richard Myr, 1939); Hayes, "Nations"; B. Margulis, "Studies in the Oracles against the Nations" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1966); Christensen, *Prophecy*; Höffken, "Begründungselementen"; Hoffmann, *Nations*.

[33] Cf. Hayes, "Nations", 39–170; Idem, "The Usage of Oracles against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel", *JBL* 87 (1968) 81–92.

[34] Hayes, "Nations", 124, 128.

[35] Hayes, "Nations", 300.

Mapping up the development of FNPs was set as a task in Christensen's study on this topic. His thesis is on many points similar to Hayes': he observes a historical development in FNPs from war oracle to oracles of salvation in the early post-exilic era. Christensen maintains that Am 1–2 and Jer 46–51 form two poles in this history of transformations. Amos 1–2 signalises the conversion of war oracle to judgement speech against the nations of the idealised Davidic empire, while Jer 46–51 attests to the transformation of judgment speech on the national foes of YHWH to the preservation of the people in the exile and their restoration in Zion.[36]

Like previous studies, Hoffmann's work on the FNPs envisages the development of this corpus. He spends much effort to pointing out common characteristics in FNPs. Taking Amos, the most ancient classical prophet as a starting point, he traces six common characteristics in FNPs.[37] Hoffmann assumes that Amos 1–2 derives from the 8th century prophet and maintains accordingly that in the earliest form of FNPs (which he called doom prophecies against the nations) these six characteristics were present.[38] Other FNPs may contain only a few of these features, and are of later origin. Hoffmann denies that these texts could be related to the cult, but he argues that close connections exist with oracles uttered before battles. He believes the function of the FNPs as salvation oracles addressing Israel is a late exilic development. In the post-exilic period the names of Edom, Babylon and to some extent the name of Moab tend to loose their qualities as specific ethnic designations and become a *chiffre* for evil in general.[39]

A radically different view is taken by J. B. Geyer, who argues that "the oracles were not intended to be read in a historical context though they may have been thought relevant to (changing) historical cuircumstances."[40] He emphasises the prominence of mythological motifs and lamentation, as well as the importance of the liturgical setting of these FNPs, especially the significance of the Day of Atonement and the New

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[36] Christensen, *Prophecy*, 15. Other exilic works, such as Ezekiel or Deutero-Isaiah, fall outside the interest of Christensen.

[37] (1) The prophecy is concerned with one distinctly named foreign nation; (2) it proclaims calamity for the nation; (3) this is a historical (not eschatological) calamity; (4) the causes of the calamity are explained; (5) there is no hint to the deliverance of Israel; (6) the future is presented as irreversible and not as a warning (Hoffmann, *Nations*, i; Idem, "Oracle", 77–78).

[38] He included here Isa 14:3–23.28–32; 15–16; 19:1–15; 21:1–10.13–17; 23; 47; Jer 46–51; Ezek 25–32; Nah 2:4–3:19 (Hoffmann, *Nations*, ii).

[39] Hoffmann, *Nations*, iv.

[40] J. B. Geyer, *Mythology and Lament: Studies in the Oracles about the Nations* (Society for Old Testament Study Series; Hants: Ashgate, 2004), 5.

Year festival.[41] He maintains that the FNPs "show signs that they are related to the tradition of the cosmic battle between the deity and the forces of chaos. The 'nations' are an aspect of this order (or disorder) and are to be brought into line in the same way as aberrant Israel, whose faults were corrected through the ritual of the Day of Purgation."[42] Gayer wages the daring suggestion that "we have been mistaken in thinking that ON-IJE [i.e., the FNPs of Isa, Jer and Ezek] are prophetic utterances, unless perhaps they emanate from cult prophets. Although ON-IJE now stand within prophetic books, they do so without any real ascription as to when they were uttered, on what occasion or to what purpose."[43] Instead of prophetic involvement, Geyer attributes a more significant role to other cultic functionaries, such as the high priest.

The purpose and methods of the study of Höffken are different. His approach is thematic rather than a phenomenological. His goal is to analyse the reasons and motivations for judgment in the FNPs. In this he differentiates between (1) reasons related to Israel / Judah,[44] (2) speeches of arrogance, (3) universal (general) motivations, and (4) motivations pertinent to the foreign nations. By this systematisation Höffken makes an attempt to define a temporal scheme of the motifs deriving from an earlier or a later period. He concludes that the thematic variation suggests that the situations in the background of these prophecies were different. Some functioned in the context of military-political affairs, while others are rooted in the cult.[45]

These works focusing on FNPs in general are valuable contributions in pointing out common forms, themes and traditions in the background of these prophecies. But, as in case of form criticism, their strength is at the same time their weakness. The extensive analysis makes it impossible to dig deeper into the investigated texts to take into account questions of literary critical nature, as well as to give merit to the particularities of individual compositions, as a glimpse into detailed literary critical investigations in comparison with the works mentioned above makes this clear. Moreover, as Beentjes noted, these studies give little attention to the setting of the FNPs in the context of particular books.[46] One must agree therefore with Huwyler that it is not meaningful to drive the

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[41] Geyer, *Mythology*, 5, 117–147; Geyer, "Another Look", 83.
[42] Geyer, "Another Look", 83.
[43] Geyer, "Another Look", 86.
[44] (a) military and political threat against Israel / Judah; (b) the motifs of invective, mockery, or malicious delight in the fate of Israel / Judah.
[45] Höffken, "Begründungselementen".
[46] P. C. Beentjes, "Oracles against the Nations: A Central Issue in the 'Latter Prophets'", *Bijdragen* 50 (1989) 205.

research of FNPs further on this broadly set path.[47] Though it is important not to loose sight of the general frame, more attention needs to be given to the particularities of individual books and individual prophecies, and to the FNPs as literary compositions meant to be heard and read in situations other than their original *Sitz im Leben*.

3.3.   COLLECTIONS OF FOREIGN NATION PROPHECIES IN THE BIBLE[48]

The literary structure of the prophetic books and the logic behind it is one of the hotly debated topics in present day prophetic research. The central importance of Isa 13–23; Jer 46–51; Ezek 25–32; Am 1–2; Zeph 2:4–15 has been pointed out repeatedly.[49] The fact that these prophecies are now found in one place in five different prophetic books is not a coincidental development but the result of editorial planning. In view of the formation of Isa 13–23, I shall dwell here shortly on problems related to (a) the individual collections of FNPs, (b) the books as their wider context, and (c) their relationship beyond the book.

> (a) What is the reason for collecting these prophecies? What characteristics bind the individual texts together? Is the collection a static corpus of pre-existing utterances gathered with a consistent editorial view, or we find traces of rearrangements and enhancements based on various editorial criteria?
>
> (b) What is the concept behind the localisation of these collections inside the prophetic books?
>
> (c) How far does the editorial elaboration behind the collections follow a concept common to other books, and how far are these collections book-specific?

3.3.1.   FOREIGN NATION PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF AMOS

(a) Most scholars consider the FNPs of the book of Amos the oldest literary condensation of its type. Amos 1:3–2:5 enumerates seven nations, all in the neighbourhood of Israel. None of the great nations, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, appears here, suggesting that the scope of the author is

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[47] Huwyler, *Jeremia*, 34.

[48] Although FNPs also appear outside these collections, those texts are less relevant in view of the primary purpose of this study as formulated in §1.4.

[49] J. Vermeylen, "L'unité du livre d'Isaïe", in *The Book of Isaiah—Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures, unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (ed. J. Vermeylen; BEThL 81; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 28–34; P.-M. Bogaert, "L'organisation des grands recueils prophétiques" in *The Book of Isaiah—Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures, unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (ed. J. Vermeylen; BEThL 81; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 147–53; Beentjes, "Central Issue", 203–9.

not to represent the judgment of the entire world, but rather to place Israel in the context of its neighbours.

All prophecies are set according to a more or less common literary pattern, filled with a different content in case of each one of the nations. There are, nevertheless, three oracles that slightly differ from the others in their form and in a greater degree in their scope. This is one of the reasons why these three prophecies are often considered to be later additions to an earlier corpus consisting of four prophecies on the nations and one against Israel in 2:6–16*.[50]

(b) In its present context the collection of FNPs opens the book of Amos. The central core of the book, the prophecies against Israel (Am 3–6), should be related to the prophecies against the nations. After denouncing the nations, the prophet suddenly turns to reprove Israel in similar words (2:6–16). A prophet uttering words against foreign nations, especially enemies, was probably not unusual in the prophet's world. This corresponds to the expectations of the audience concerning a good prophet. The decisive point in Amos appears exactly when he turns to Israel in a similar tone and with a comparable message of judgment, as he did with the foreign nations, not knowing YHWH.[51]

However, the fact that this formally related Israel prophecy in Am 2:6–16 appears now as a finale of Am 1–2 does not mean that Am 2:6–16 was composed as a closure for Am 1:3–2:5 from the very beginning. Arguments derived from the text of the prophecy, as well as from the book, suggest that rather the opposite was the case.[52] It is therefore more probable that the FNPs of the book of Amos were meant to form the subsequent introduction to the prophecies against Israel, especially Am

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[50] The three prophecies are those on Tyre, Edom and Judah. For discussions, cf. H. W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 2. Joel und Amos* (BKAT 14/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1969), 170–71; Barton, *Oracles*, 22–24; B. Gosse, "Le recueil d'oracles contra les nations du livre d'Amos et l'histoire deutéronomique", *VT* 38 [1988] 22–40; J. Jeremias, *Der Prophet Amos* (ATD 24/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 10–11.

[51] On this "surprise technique", see Barton, *Oracles*, 3–7; Jeremias, *Amos*, 8. A similar technique is used in Am 3:3–6.8 and 5:18–20.

[52] The numerical sayings ("for three transgressions of GN, and for four…") in the FNPs find their real sense in the prophecy against Israel, which enumerates all transgressions, while in the FNPs one finds mainly only one wrongdoing mentioned (Jeremias, *Amos*, 8; cf. also A. S. van der Woude, *Amos–Obadja–Jona* [T&T; Kampen: Kok, 1997], 25). To be more precise, it seems that the prophecy against Israel mentions not four (so Jeremias and Van der Woude), but 4 + 3 = 7 sins (some of which in synonymous parallelism, but note Am 2:7cd), just as Am 2:14–16 describes seven forms (3 + 3 + 1) of how punishment will affect the nation.

2:6–16*, or perhaps even to the entire corpus of judgments on Israel in Am 3–6. This means that Am 2:6–16* is actually older than the FNPs, and that these latter were deliberately composed for their present location. This history of composition may partially explain formal dissimilarities, for instance why the section on Israel (Am 2:6–16*) does not actually have an ending similar to the other prophecies.[53]

As noted above, formal criteria and diverging content and theology in three prophecies led many exegetes to conclude that at one stage, Amos' FNPs consisted of four oracles introducing the fifth prophecy on Israel. This literary structure of five formally related texts is important. For some scholars argued that this introductory section of the book of Amos, had an editorial parallel, a mirror text in the vision reports of Am 7–9*, likewise containing five formally related visions. The prophecy against Israel in Am 2:6 and the FNPs probably allude to these visions when maintaining that averting punishment by way of prophetic intercessory prayer (as in Am 7–9) would be impossible.[54]

To conclude, at a certain stage in the history of the book five formally similar prophecies might have formed the first part of the scroll and five similar visions closed the collection of prophecies in Am 3–6, the central core, containing the speeches of Amos against Israel. The process of the development of the book did not stop here, however. By expanding the FNPs to include seven nations the parallelism with the last section of the book was abandoned in favour of a different editorial concept. Likewise, the collection of five visions has lost its original structure by the insertion of explanatory oracles and narratives.[55]

The fact that the prophecy against Israel is the culmination of the FNPs reflects the theological view that Israel, the only one, the people

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[53] The prophecy on Israel in Am 2:6–8.14–16 with its seven transgressions may also be a summary of the prophets own message scattered throughout Am 3–6 (cf. also Jeremias, *Amos*, 21). Such summaries have been commonly argued to appear ahead of the collection of the Isaianic prophecies, in Isa 1.

[54] For further discussion, see Wolff, *Amos*, 184; J. Jeremias, "Völkersprüche und Visionsberichte im Amosbuch", in *Prophet und Prophetenbuch: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 65. Geburtstag* (eds. Volkmar Fritz et. al; BZAW 185; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1989), 82–97; Idem, *Amos*, xix, 8–9. The vision reports are now interrupted by a narrative and several oracular sayings. But Jeremias believes that, regardless of their genuinity, these texts blurring the once symmetric structure have been inserted on this place at a later stage.

[55] I do not exclude that the enlargement of the FNPs to seven, which distorted the parallelism with the five visions, is the work of the same editors who inserted the Amos narrative in the context of the visions. The editorial concept exposed in later texts of Am 1–2 is often connected to the Deuteronomists (cf. Wolff, *Amos*, 137–38, 184–85; Gosse, "L'histoire deutéronomique", 22–40).

singled out by Y<small>HWH</small> from among other nations, has become like one of
the foreigners, reason for which it will share their fate. This idea behind
the structuring of the FNPs and prophecies on Israel in Am 1–2 finds its
explicit formulation elsewhere in the book, notably in the programmatic
text of Am 3:2, as well as in 6:2 and 9:7. Amos 3:(1b)2 probably, 6:2
and 9:7 most certainly are editorial texts, reflecting on the formation of
the collection of Amos-prophecies.[56] Organising the seven FNPs accord-
ing to the theology that "Israel has become like one of the nations" may
have been the work of the author(s) behind Am 3:2; 6:2; 9:7, possibly
linked to the Deuteronomists.[57]

This arrangement of the book was evident at latest before 539, but
in its threefold organisation (Am 1–2* / 3–6* / 7–9*) Amos may have
already been known in the pre-exilic era,[58] possibly not long after 721,
when following the deportation of Israel and the fall of Samaria it had
become clear how Israel has turned out to be just one among the na-
tions, one single line of cuneiform text on a victory stele of Sargon II.

(c) As for Am 1:2–2:5 in relation to other FNPs, one may note sev-
eral common concepts, such as the symbolic use of the number seven,
the geographical ordering of the nations in the neighborhood of Israel,
the literary growth of the collection of FNPs. Likewise, the prophecies
in Amos present close internal formal similarities which can also be rec-
ognised to a lesser extent in texts from Jer and Ezek. At the same time,
it is unique to this collection that the FNPs of Amos appear ahead of
prophecies against Israel, forming an introduction to those. Both the
relation to the Amosian prophecies against Israel and the resemblances
with the vision reports of Amos underline the fact that these FNPs are
book-specific, i.e. supposed to be read and heard from the very begin-
ning in the context of the entire literary work called the book of Amos.

3.3.2. F<small>OREIGN</small> N<small>ATION</small> P<small>ROPHECIES IN THE</small> B<small>OOK OF</small> J<small>EREMIAH</small>

It is common to believe that the books of Isaiah, (the Greek version of)
Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zephaniah show a threefold structure in which
the editors followed a so-called eschatological scheme: (1) prophecies
against Israel, (2) prophecies against the nations, (3) salvation to Is-

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[56] E.g., Wolf, *Amos*, 212–13; Jeremias, *Amos*, 85, 89; S. M. Paul, *Amos* (Min-
neapolis: Fortress, 1991) 100–1. For the literary connections between Am 1–2
and 3:2, see Barton, *Oracles*, 36.

[57] Cf. Jeremias, *Amos*, 32 note 10.

[58] The question is whether Amos' "Israel" is used in a historical sense as refer-
ing to the Northern Kingdom after 721, or in a theological sense, i.e. it also
includes Judah, as it is the case aftert the exilic literature and after. The name
of Judah appears only sparingly (cf. Am 1:1; 2:4–5; 7:12).

rael.[59] However, if implemented consistently, this hypothesis requires so serious concessions that its ultimate usefulness must be questionined.

In Jeremiah the problems related to the edition of the book and the place of the FNPs therein are complicated by the different versions, represented by the LXX and the Hebrew texts, most importantly the MT.[60] The divergence between the MT and the LXX is considerable on every level. First, the MT contains passages that are absent in the LXX, a phenomenon also known for other parts of the book. Second, the order of the nations in the collection of FNPs differs considerably in the two editions. This is a typical feature of the Jeremianic FNPs, not attested elsewhere in this book. Third, in the Greek version of Jeremiah, the FNPs are placed in the "middle" (following Jer 25:13), while in the MT they are attested in a "final" position closing the book of Jeremiah. Nevertheless, none of the two versions of Jeremiah corresponds to a so-called eschatological stratification. The FNPs in the LXX are followed by various prophetic narratives and judgment speeches concerned with Judah that can hardly be labelled as salvation prophecy.

(a) As in Amos, the collection of FNPs in Jeremiah appears to be the product of literary growth. This is not only evidenced by verses that are present in the MT and absent from the LXX (e.g. Jer 48:45–47), but also by more general considerations.[61] In most prophecies (Jer 46–49)

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[59] E.g., K.-F. Pohlmann, *Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel (Ezekiel)* (ATD 22/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 19, 33; J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 107; Idem, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 168; O. Kaiser, *Der Gott des Alten Testaments. Theologie des Alten Testaments. Teil 3: Jahwes Gerechtigkeit* (UTB 2392; Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 82. For the problems, cf. O. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (3rd ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1964), 410; Bogaert, "L'organisation", 147–53.

[60] On the Jeremianic collection of FNPs, cf. especially Huwyler, *Jeremia*. Cf. also G. Fischer, "Jer 25 und die Fremdvölkersprüche: Unterschiede zwischen hebräischem und griechischem Text", *Bib* 72 (1991) 474–499; J. D. W. Watts, "Text and Redaction in Jeremiah's Oracles against the Nations", *CBQ* 54 (1992) 432–47; B. Gosse, "La place primitive de recueil d'Oracles contre les Nations dans le livre de Jérémie", *VT* 74 (1994) 28–30; C. J. Sharp, "'Take Another Scroll and Write': A Study of the LXX and the MT of Jeremiah's Oracles against Egypt and Babylon", *VT* 47 (1997) 487–509; H. G. L. Peels, "'Drinken zùlt gij!' Plaats en betekenis van de volkenprofetieën in Jeremia 46-51", *ThRef* 44 (2001) 205–20; M. Haran, "The Place of the Prophecies against the Nations in the Book of Jeremiah", in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (S. M. Paul & E. Ben-David; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 699–706.

[61] Cf. K. Seybold, *Der Prophet Jeremia. Leben und Werk* (UTB 416; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), 120–28.

the rod of YHWH's hand raised in judgment against the nations is Baby-
lon, the enemy from the north (cf. Jer 27). But most scholars maintain
that the anti-Babylonian prophecies in Jer 50–51 reflect another per-
spective on history which is commonly assumed to derive from a differ-
ent source.[62] Beside Jer 50–51, the genuinity of the Elam prophecy (Jer
49:34–39) has also been questioned, though that remains unclear, and
some still regard it as authentic.[63] The rest of the prophecies also con-
tains material ascribed to various post-Jeremianic editorial traditions,
but in most of those scholars have found an authentic core.[64]

It is helpful to look at the system of superscriptions of the prophecies
in the collection Jer 46–51 noting the differences and similarities be-
tween the LXX and the MT.

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[62] E.g., R. P. Carroll, *Jeremiah* (OTL; London: SCM, 1986), 815–16; R. E.
Clements, *Jeremiah* (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox, 1988), 264, 267; Sey-
bold, *Jeremia*, 121. Though T. Smothers argues for the contrary (G. L. Keown
et al., *Jeremiah 26–52* [WBC 27; Waco: Word, 1995], 357–64), he ultimately
fails to explain fundamental theological difficulties. The problem cannot be
solved simply by *dating* prophecies which assign a positive, neutral or negative
role to Babylon to different years in the career of Jeremiah. Jer 28:1–2 dates
the incident in which the anti-Babylonian parties are harshly criticised to 594
B.C, but the same date is assigned to the prophecies against Babylon in Jer 50–
51 in Jer 51:59. One may wonder whether presupposing a different *audience* (in
Jerusalem and in the diaspora respectively) could explain the diverging accent
of Jer 50–51 with respect to other sections of the book. Yet the imagery of the
exiled Judah and the superpower Babylon in Jer 50–51 fits the post-587 era
better than the early days of the New Babylonian state of Nebuchadnezzar (cf.
Jer 50:33 for instance).

Jer 50–51 appears to be an anthology of several prophetic oracles, some of
which were inspired by other biblical texts (such as Isa 13–14). In its present
form Jer 50–51 is a written composition and one may wonder whether it has
ever existed in any other previous form (cf. 51:59–64).

[63] H. G. L. Peels, "God's Throne in Elam: The Historical Background and Lite-
rary Context of Jeremiah 49:34-39", in *Past, Present, Future: The Deuterono-
mistic History and the Prophets* (eds. J. C. de Moor & H. F. van Rooij; OTS 44;
Leiden: Brill, 2000), 216–29.

[64] E.g., Seybold, *Jeremia*, 127–28; Huwyler, *Jeremia*, 267. The number of literal
citations or allusions to other parts of the book, or other prophetic books,
strikes the reader of Jer 46–51.

TEXT (JER)	HEADING
46:1 MT	אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא עַל־הַגּוֹיִם
26:1 LXX	–[65]
46:2 MT	לְמִצְרַיִם +h(istorical) d(ata)
26:2 LXX	τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ + hd
46:13 MT	הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יהוה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא+ hd
26:13 LXX	ἃ ἐλάλησεν κύριος ἐν χειρὶ Ιερεμιου + hd
47:1 MT	אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל־פְּלִשְׁתִּים+ hd
29:1 LXX	ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀλλοφύλους
48:1 MT	לְמוֹאָב
31:1 LXX	τῇ Μωαβ
49:1 MT	לִבְנֵי עַמּוֹן
30:17 LXX	τοῖς υἱοῖς Αμμων
49:7 MT	לֶאֱדוֹם
30:1 LXX	τῇ Ιδουμαίᾳ
49:23 MT	לְדַמֶּשֶׂק
30:29 LXX	τῇ Δαμασκῷ
49:28 MT	לְקֵדָר וּלְמַמְלְכוֹת חָצוֹר
30:23 LXX	τῇ Κηδαρ βασιλίσσῃ τῆς αὐλῆς
49:34 MT	אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל־עֵילָם+ hd
25:14 (20) LXX	[ἃ ἐπροφήτευσεν Ιερεμιας ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη] τὰ Αιλαμ (+ hd)
50:1 MT	הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יהוה אֶל־בָּבֶל אֶל־אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים בְּיַד יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא
27:1 LXX	λόγος κυρίου ὃν ἐλάλησεν ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνα

As it is clear from this table, the book of Jeremiah contains basically three types of superscriptions: (1) the shortest type is the ל-type heading, supplied with historical data in Jer 46:2. The ל-type heading is attested further in Jer 23:9 (prophecies concerning false prophets). (2) The second type of heading appearing three times in this collection is the אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה-type (further only in Jer 1:2 and 14:1). (3) The הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יהוה-type is attested twice in the MT of Jer 46–51, and nowhere else in the Old Testament. The heading type (1) is rendered consistently in the LXX of Jeremiah. The rendering of type (2) differs in all three cases, even in passages outside Jer 46–51. Type (3) may be the same in both MT and LXX in Jer 46:13, but they differ again in Jer 50:1. This correspondence and divergence between the LXX and the MT may suggest that the ל-type heading that appears ahead of most FNPs belongs to an earlier stage of the text of Jeremiah, while the other two types, particularly type (2) is editorial.

Beyond conclusions drawn from differences in superscriptions and headings, the development of Jer 46–51 is evidenced by other texts as

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[65] The absence of this heading in the LXX is to be explained by the different order of the prophecies in the Greek version.

well. So Jer 25:13 refers to a scroll containing prophecies עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם (cf.
Jer 46:2), and 36:2 mentions a book (מְגִלַּת־סֵפֶר) dated to the same year,
i.e. the fourth year of Jehoiachim (605 B.C.), and one with a similar con-
tent (עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל־יְהוּדָה וְעַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם).[66] This scroll with warnings to
Israel, Judah, and the nations did not include the prophecies against
Babylon and Elam, deriving from a different date according to their su-
perscriptions.[67] The epilogue in Jer 51:59–64 treats the Babylonian
prophecies as a distinctive book (סֵפֶר). If Babylon and Elam are re-
moved from this 605 edition of the סֵפֶר עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם, we are left with a
collection of seven prophecies. With the exception of the cumbersome
introductory line of the Philistine oracle, this collection is composed of
prophecies with the לְ-type heading as seen in the table above.

Why seven nations? The explicitly formulated theology behind the
choice of this symbolic number appears in Jer 25:11, a verse that is con-
sidered to be strongly related to the FNPs: this entire earth (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
הַזֹּאת; Jer 25:11; cf. 25:29)[68] will become a desolate ruin, and the nations
will serve Babylon for seventy years. In this introduction the nations
from the north (Babylon) are the representative of YHWH. Israel amidst
the neighbouring nations (כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה סָבִיב; Jer 25:9) will not be
treated differently. Through the nations from the north, identified in
the MT of Jer 25 with Nebuchadnezzar and its army, YHWH will exert his
dominion on all the nations in every direction. This collection of seven
was expanded with a prophecy against Elam positioning the seat of
YHWH amidst the easternmost nation (49:38) known to Judaeans.

The internal organization of the prophecies in the LXX and the MT is
different. Most scholars present the two versions as alternative readings,
one more original than the other.[69] Watts, however, maintained that
the LXX and MT need not be contrasted as competitive readings, but
each one must be evaluated in its own right.[70]

To investigate the differences in the internal ordering of the prophe-
cies in the MT and LXX, we need to look again at the different super-

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[66] This date coincides with Nebuchadnezzar's first year of reign (Jer 25:1). This
is not insignificant, as he will be the protagonist of the "book" Jer 46–49.

[67] Jer 36:2 and 45 connects the prophecies against Israel, Judah and the nations
to the person of Baruch, while the Jer 51–52 are related to Seraiah (51:59; for
Seraiah as a "second" Baruch (his brother?), cf. Carroll, *Jeremiah,* 749 and Sey-
bold, *Jeremia,* 35). Babylon does not appear in the LXX on the list of the na-
tions to drink from the cup of wrath in Jer 25:18–26 (32:4–12).

[68] הָאָרֶץ may have a double sense in 25:11: "country" and/or "world".

[69] Carroll, *Jeremiah,* 759; W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia:
Fortress, 1989), 313; Haran, "Place", 702.

[70] Watts, "Text", 432–47.

scriptions. We find four different dates in the collection of FNPs:[71]

Country	MT	LXX	Date
Elam	49:34	25:20	598 B.C.
Egypt	46:2	26:2	605 B.C.
Babylon	51:60	28:60	594 B.C.
Philistia	47:1	29:1	"before the pharaoh smote Gaza" (605 B.C.?)[72]

What is striking in this list is that exactly these four historically dated prophecies appear as the first four oracles in the LXX. These superscriptions not only diverge from the headings of the other prophecies, but exactly in case of these introductory sentences the MT and LXX differ from each other. The order of the prophecies in the LXX is not chronological, but it is probably based on formal criteria: prophecies with dating superscriptions come first, followed by texts with a ל-type heading. The order of the prophecies in the MT follows the list of the nations in Jer 25:18–26 (32:4–12) more closely. The organisation of the prophecies in the MT is apparently based on chronological criteria. One may assume with Jer 25:1 and 36:2 that the undated prophecies were all delivered in the same year with the Egypt-prophecy (605 B.C.).[73]

The order of the undated prophecies also differs in the two versions, but it remains a question to what extent this holds any theological significance.[74]

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[71] Jer 49:28 (LXX 30:23), but this is not a dating formula.

[72] The prophecy has been dated variously to 609, 605, 601, from which 605 is the most likely (cf. H. J. Katzenstein, "'Before the pharaoh conquered Gaza' (Jeremiah xlvii 1)", *VT* 33 [1983] 249–51; Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 314; Smothers, *Jeremiah*, 299–300). The LXX lacks the historical reference to the Pharaoh.

[73] Peels rightly argued that some prophecies correspond to earlier events than those mentioned in 46:2 ("Volkenprofetieën", 207 note 7). However, chronological ordering does not mean here a chronology based on the *actual* historical background of the prophecies (unlike e.g., Seybold, *Jeremia,* 122 believes), but a chronology *assumed* by the editors to fit the background of the oracles. And this assumed chronology we find explicitly mentioned in Jer 25:1; 36:2 and 46:1, all editorial texts. Following this concept of the redactors the texts may be considered chronologically organised. Note also that the editorial conclusion in 51:59 dates the anti-Babylonian prophecy to 594, while some verses refer to the destruction of the temple (50:28; 51:11).

[74] MT order: Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar; LXX order: Edom, Ammon, Kedar, Damascus, Moab. The order of the Greek is apparently geographical (Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 314). The Moab oracle, the final text in the LXX order, is closed in the MT (absent in the LXX) by an editorial verse: עַד־הֵנָּה מִשְׁפַּט מוֹאָב (Jer 48:47; cf. also Jer 51:64, also missing from the LXX). If this was the closure of a collection of prophecies, that would argue for the final position of

(b) The differences in the order of the nations mentioned, as well as the place of the collection of FNPs in the book as a whole has led some to believe that Jer 46–51 was added only at a late stage to the rest of the book of Jeremiah, circulating previously as an independent anonymous collection.[75] Watts is probably right, however, that the different organisation of the prophecies does attest to a once independent collection of FNPs that happened to find its way to both textual traditions. The divergences rather reflect differing views of two separate editorial traditions (MT and LXX). It is remarkable that Jer 25:1 and 36:2 mention prophecies spoken to Israel and Judah in the same collection with the prophecies on the nations. Moreover, as it was pointed out, the system of superscriptions in the FNPs fits well the book of Jeremiah, underlining again the view that the FNPs as a collection never circulated as an independent book detached from the other prophecies of Jeremiah.

What is the theological concern of the two textual traditions in localising the collection of FNPs in the book? The key text in this regard is provided by Jer 25:29 (LXX 32:29): if Jerusalem, YHWH's own city is about to be brought down by a disaster, how could the nations go off unpunished? Indeed, they will not, for a sword will devour all the other countries as well. In other words, the punishment of the nations is the extension of the punishment on Judah.

This is what the organisation of the FNP in this book expresses. Jeremiah does not have a three level structure (judgment on Israel, judgment on the nations, salvation on Israel), but a two level structure: judgment on Israel *and* on the nations. These two levels are evident at least in the present form of the MT: Jer 1–45 describes the judgment on Judah, encompassing the whole 40 year period of activity of Jeremiah, from 627 (Jer 1:1) to 587, the fall of Jerusalem. This book is connected to the person of Baruch (Jer 36; 45). This book of judgments on Judah ends with a vision on the fall of Egypt (Jer 44:29–30), the nation that appears in Jer 46 as the first among the foreigners to be denounced.

It may be suggested that it is not so much the place of the collection of FNPs that is the real problem in discussing the structure of the book of Jeremiah in the two versions. The FNPs have always belonged to the book, and their localisation on different places in the MT and the LXX does not contest this view. At stake here is rather the extent of the judgment prophecies on Judah, and especially the role of the chapters 26–45 in this. It is in the localisation of Jer 26–45 that the LXX and the MT essentially differ about. While MT most naturally considered not

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the Moab text (as in the LXX). But this phrase denotes the closure of the Moab prophecy alone, and not an entire collection.

[75] See discussion in Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 313; Watts, "Text", 432–34.

only Jer 2–24,[76] but also 26–45 to be part of this book of judgment prophecies of Jeremiah (supposed to be written by Baruch),[77] the LXX followed a different lead. It is striking that many of the chapters in Jer 26–45 appear with a heading that dates them according to a particular year of a king. I have noted above that the differences in the dating superscriptions of the FNPs in Jer 46–51 may give the explanation for the organisation of the two text blocks in the Greek version of the FNPs: one block with a historical dating and another one without such dated superscription. Is it possible that the localisation of Jer 26–45 in the LXX should be explained by a similarly formal concept? It is noteworthy that Jer 26–45 contains mainly narratives concerning the prophet Jeremiah, i.e. texts formally different from the utterances in Jer 2–24.[78] In making editorial decisions, the Greek authors were seemingly more reliant on literary factors (form and genre) than content. The concern of the MT on the other hand is rather thematic, and gives comparatively less attention to literary matters and formal similarities.

(c) The primary collection of the FNPs of Jeremiah (dated to 605), is similar to Am 1–2 in some respects.[79] It contains prophecies against the neighbouring nations amidst of which Israel lived. It enumerates seven nations, expressing totality, the entire encircling world that shall become subservient to Nabuchadnezzar, the servant of YHWH. A further expansion adds the idea of YHWH's world dominon (Jer 49:38). The theology of the MT of Jeremiah with the judgment on Babylon in the final position is not without parallels, as the same thought frames Isa 1–12 and 28–33, both proclaiming judgment on Judah and Israel by way of a foreign nation ultimately subdued by YHWH. The superscriptions are,

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[76] Jer 1 presenting the prophet as concerned with both Judah and the nations should probably be seen as the introduction of the entire book, including the FNPs (cf. Seybold, *Jeremia*, 121).

[77] The many similar words (דְּבָרִים רַבִּים כָּהֵמָּה) that have been added to the scroll of Jeremiah burned by King Jehoiakim (Jer 36:32) may indirectly allude to such concept. For the possible significance of this narrative for the history of the book of Jeremiah, see Y. Hoffman, "Aetiology, Redaction and Historicity in Jeremiah xxxvi", *VT* 46 (1996) 185–89; Sharp, "Another Scroll", 507–8. Though I admit that Jer 36 speaks in favour of the development of the book of Jeremiah (i.e. the internal organisation of Jer 26–45), the view of Sharp that this story would indirectly recognise the shorter scroll (LXX) as authoritative is doubtful, not least because this scroll was burned according to Jer 36:23.

[78] Jer 26–45 is treated as a distinctive block in Jeremiah research (cf. Duhm's biography source and Mowinckel's source B in Seybold, *Jeremia*, 20–21).

[79] There are direct allusions to a relationship between Amos and Jeremiah (cf. Jer 49:1–6 and Am 1:14–15). Jer 25:30–38, the epilogue of the FNPs in the LXX, is particularly close to Am 1:2, the starting point of the FNPs of Amos.

however, rather book specific, and this is also valid for many particular expressions in the individual prophecies. The motivation for the judgment on the nations in Jer 25:29 is also particular to this book.

3.3.3. FOREIGN NATION PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

In its present form Ezek 25–32 contains prophecies against seven foreign nations: Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt. In this final version the prophecies against Tyre and Egypt are considerably longer than the others. According to the editorial headings the two are composed of seven editorial subunits each, and the two reflect a similar literary structure.[80]

(a) The nations can be divided into two groups: neighbouring small countries (Ezek 25–28: Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon) and Egypt (Ezek 29–32). This differentiation is underlined in the theological construction of the collection: the small nations appear as rejoicing at the fall of Judah (Ammon, Moab, Tyre), or even actively taking part in its destruction (Edom, Philistia). But Egypt is the unreliable supporter of Judah. The prophecies on the neighbouring nations are organised following a geographical concept (from east turning southwards).

TEXT	NATION	HEADING
25:1	Main heading	וַיְהִי דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
25:3	Ammon	כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה
25:8	Moab	כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה
25:12	Edom	כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה
25:15	Philistia	כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה
26:1	Tyre	וַיְהִי + date + הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
26:7	Tyre	כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה
26:15	Tyre	כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה
26:19	Tyre	כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה
27:1	Tyre	וַיְהִי דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
28:1	Tyre	וַיְהִי דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
28:11	Tyre	וַיְהִי דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
28:20	Sidon	וַיְהִי דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
29:1	Egypt	וַיְהִי + date + הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
29:17	Egypt	וַיְהִי + date + הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר

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[80] On the FNPs of Ezekiel, see H. van Dijk, *Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre (Ez. 26,1-28,19): A New Approach* (BibOr 20; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968); L. Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles against Egypt: A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29–32* (BibOr 37; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1980); Fechter, *Bewältigung*; M. Alonso Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles against Tyre: Historical Reality and Motivations* (BibOr 46; Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2002); V. Premstaller, *Fremdvölkersprüche des Ezechielbuches* (FzB 104; Würzburg: Echter, 2005).

30:1	Egypt	וַיְהִי דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
30:20	Egypt	וַיְהִי + date + הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
31:1	Egypt	וַיְהִי + date + הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
32:1	Egypt	וַיְהִי + date + הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
32:17	Egypt	וַיְהִי + date + הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר

The grade of uniformity in the title lines of the prophecies of Ezek 25–32 is impressive, despite some variations. The beginning sentence וַיְהִי דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר appears only ahead of the collection and in the Tyre- and Egypt-prophecies. כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה as the beginning of a prophecy is rare outside Ezekiel,[81] but it is very frequent in this book. The same is true of the וַיְהִי דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי-formula.[82]

The four prophecies in Ezek 25 have a more or less homogeneous literary structure[83] suggesting that they are part of the same subunit. Something similar was also claimed for 26:2–7 and 28:20–23, the Tyre- and Sidon-prophecies.[84] This view is possible for the Tyre-text, but debatable for 28:20–23.[85] It is often overlooked though that the prophecy against Egyptians in 29:6b–9a—less likely in 29:9b–12—also contains a similar structure.[86] One may assume that the editors of Ezek 25–32 reworked here an earlier list containing more or less uniformly structured

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[81] Only in Isa 49:22 (?); Ob 1 (cf. Isa 22:15). Although the כֹּה אָמַר-formula appears elsewhere in the Tyre-prophecy (Ezek 26–28), it does not always serve as a text-delimiter (e.g., 27:3; 28:2.6.12.22). In 28:25 כֹּה אָמַר introduces a new section, but that is not a part of the Tyre-collection (see below). In the Egypt-prophecies (Ezek 29–32) כֹּה אָמַר is used in a variety of ways. כֹּה אָמַר may belong to the text (cf. 29:3.8.19; 30:2; 31:10.15?; 32:3.11), or apparently function as a closure, as the נְאֻם-formula (cf. 30:6.10.13). Once or twice כֹּה אָמַר may introduce a new expansion (29:13; 31:15?), but in both cases the text is related and subordinated to the previous passages, so that it is hard to consider them individual prophecies, as those headed by וַיְהִי + date + הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר.

[82] Only in Jer 1:4.11; 2:1; 16:1; Zech 6:9. As a formula inside a prophecy, cf. Jer 13:3.8; 18:5; 24:4; Zech 4:8. Cf. Jer 32:6.

[83] יַעַן / reproof of a word or deed against Israel / לָכֵן / "recognition formula".

[84] M. Dijkstra, *Ezechiël II* (T&T; Kampen: Kok, 1989), 24, 27.

[85] The Sidon oracle is different from the rest and it may have been added to arrive at a collection of seven nations (cf. Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 125). The Tyre-prophecy is similar to 25:2–6, but it also presents differences such as the absence of the usual introductory כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה, the use of יַעַן אֲשֶׁר instead of יַעַן. In case this was part of an earlier collection (Ezek 25)—which is theoretically possible—it was reworked to fit its present position. Cf. below.

[86] The fact that 29:6b–9a was originally distinct from the former prophecy is beyond question (see Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 128; M. Dijkstra, *Ezechiël II*, 70–71). The closing "recognition formula" appears in 29:9a. In the Tyre- and Egypt-prophecies it is only these two short prophecies that denounce the nations because of their attitude towards Israel.

prophecies over Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre (?), and Egypt.

The two major parts of the present collection (neighbouring nations and Egypt) are delimited by a specific introduction and a specific closure. The introduction בֶּן־אָדָם שִׂים פָּנֶיךָ אֶל ... וְהִנָּבֵא עֲלֵיהֶם appears ahead of significant units in the book of Ezekiel. For the present case the most important are 25:2; 28:21; 29:2.[87] Ezekiel 25:2 is not only the introduction to the Ammon prophecy, but to a collection (whatever its outer limits may be). Ezekiel 28:21 introducing the Sidon prophecy may provide additional evidence for the later insertion of this text in the present collection. The Egypt corpus begins with an introduction similar to the one found ahead of the neighbouring nations (29:2).

The specific closure of the two great blocks of Ezek 25–32 appears at 28:24(25–26) and 29:16(21). The section on the neighbours is concluded by וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה עוֹד לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל סִלּוֹן מַמְאִיר וְקוֹץ מַכְאִב מִכֹּל סְבִיבֹתָם הַשָּׁאטִים אוֹתָם וְיָדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי אֲדֹנָי יהוה (28:24). Following a rather uniform imagery, the nations appear here as pricking briers and piercing thorns. This conclusion is followed by a salvation prophecy on Israel promising it safety and security, who—unlike the foreigners—will recognise YHWH through his merciful dealing with them. A similar verse appears in the second section on Egypt at 29:16 concluding that וְלֹא יִהְיֶה־עוֹד לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִבְטָח מַזְכִּיר עָוֹן בִּפְנוֹתָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְיָדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי אֲדֹנָי יהוה, followed in 29:21 by a related salvation prophecy promising a different glory for Israel than Egypt was.[88] Egypt is presented as the trust of Judah during the Babylonian threat (29:6) which would become an insignificant state (29:14). In contrast to this, YHWH "will cause a horn to grow" to Israel, i.e. its strength and glory will be someone else than Egypt.

Now, the problem with Ezek 29:16.21 is that it does not appear at the end of the Egypt section but somewhere in the middle. But the localisation of Ezek 29:16.21 is not incidental. In the shifting editorial concepts of the book formal and thematic considerations played an important part. Ezekiel 29:13–16.21 is at any rate later than the previous 29:6b–12 to which it has been attached.[89] So far as it envisages a different future for Egypt than the following prophecies do (Ezek 30–32), it is probably later than those as well. One may assume therefore, that Ezek 29:13–16.21 was placed on its present location due to thematic consid-

[87] See Ezek 6:2; 13:17; 21:2.7; 35:2; 38:2. This phrase appears only in the book of Ezekiel (against false prophets, Jerusalem, Edom-unit, Gog-unit).

[88] Ezek 29:21 probably belongs to 29:13–16, the salvation prophecy with which it has more common points than the preceding 29:17–20.

[89] Ezek 30:23.26 also mentions the dispersion of the Egyptians, so that 29:13–16.21 probably derives from a still later date than 30:20–26. Ezek 29:13–16.21 reflects on 29:6b–12 (note the 40 years of captivity motif, Egypt as supporter of Judah, etc.).

erations and direct relationship with the prophecy it follows. From a literary-chronological point of view, however, and following the concept of its author, Ezek 29:16.21 is indeed a conclusion similar to 28:24–26.

The prophecies against Tyre and Egypt are disproportionately long in comparison with the utterances against other nations. Both small collections of seven pericopes contain, on the one hand, utterances against a nation (Tyre: 26:1–6.7–14; Egypt: 29:6b–16.21; 29:17–20; 30:1–19), supplemented by elegies on its fall (Tyre: 26:16–21; 27:1–36; Egypt: 32:17–32). On the other hand, both collections include prophecies against the king (Tyre: 28:1–10; Egypt: 29:1–6a; 30:20–26; 31:1–18), and elegies on the fall of the king (Tyre: 28:12–19; Egypt: 32:1–16). The organisation of the prophecies against Tyre appears to be thematic in the first instance (first the city, then the king) and formal in the second (first prophecies, then elegies). In case of Egypt formal criteria seemingly played an important role, but the chronological headings must have surely imposed some limitations. The Tyre-corpus contains one single date only, while the organisation of the prophecies in the Egypt-unit is based on chronological considerations.[90]

(b) In the book of Ezekiel we find several explicit references to the nations surrounding Judah, so that the organisation of the FNPs according to geographical principles (Ezek 28:24.26) fits this theology of the larger context of the book (cf. 5:5.6.7.14.15; 36:3.4.7.36).

The structure mirrors the close connection between the FNPs and the prophecies on Israel in Ezek 1–24. The two text blocks are probably built (as the MT of Jeremiah) on chronological considerations. The prophecies in the first section of the book are dated between the 5th–10th years of king Jehoiachin's captivity, encompassing a 5 year period.[91] The dated prophecies concerning the nations are placed between the 10th–12th years of the same king. A turning point appears again in the important verse Ezek 33:21, giving the date 5/10/12 for the fugitive's report to Ezekiel on the capture of the city Jerusalem.[92] The conclusion

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[90] An unsurprising exception is the prophecy in Ezek 29:17–20.

[91] On the chronological problems, cf. W. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel* (BKAT 13/1–2; Neukirchener: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969), 40–45, 562; M. Dijkstra, *Ezechiël I* (T&T; Kampen: Kok, 1986), 21, 32; Idem, *Ezechiël II*, 15.

[92] Dijkstra considers the 12th year a correct date assuming that the news on the fall of Jerusalem arrived to Ezekiel more than one and a half year later (*Ezechiël II*, 103). Zimmerli believes that the correct reading is "year 11 of Jehoiachin's captivity" (*Ezechiel*, 810–12). The year 12 may be deduced from a combination of the data from 2 Kgs 25:1–3 and Ezek 24:1–2. According to 2 Kgs 25 the siege of Jerusalem lasted from the 9th year of Zedekiah (10/10/9; cf. Ezek 24:1–2) to his 11th year (9/4/11). The latter date actually corresponds to 9/4/12 in Ezekiel's dating system, so that we have to reckon with less than half a year

is that the prophecies concerning Judah and the foreign nations stretch *together* over a period of 7 years, a number with a symbolic value.[93]

Beyond the recognition of the two text blocks, respectively the prophecies against Judah and the FNPs, it is believed that Ezek 33–48 forms a collection of salvation prophecies. The problem is more complicated, however, since Ezek 33 does not fit the scheme of a salvation prophecy. Moreover, Ezek 35 again contains a prophecy against Edom, and other FNPs appear in Ezek 38–39. Therefore we lack a coherent section of salvation prophecies concerning Israel in this book as well.

Ezekiel 33, which closes the judgment speeches against Judah and the nations, is a very significant chapter in the book from a compositional viewpoint.

> Contrary to assumptions that Ezek 33:21–33 would have originally belonged to Ezek 1–24,[94] this entire chapter can be adequately explained on its present place. Ezek 33 is the conclusion to the previous set of prophecies rather than the introduction of a new section. It reflects on important passages from the book, especially Ezek 3, 18 and 24. The function of Ezek 33 is threefold. First, in view of the judgment accomplished with the fall of Judah and the nations, it concludes the entire prophetic activity of Ezekiel in the light of Ezek 3:16–21. Ezekiel is not to blame for the doom that has come upon Judah, for he fulfilled his task of a watchman. The prophet has saved his life (3:21; 33:9). Second, neither is YHWH to blame for what happened with his people (18:25.29; 33:17). Third, the only one to be held responsible for the course of the events is Israel itself. For not only was it unfaithful to YHWH (33:25–26), but it also failed to heed the warning (33:30–33).

It is striking that we find no prophecy explicitly addressed against Babylon in this collection. This empire appears even in the latest dated sec-

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period from the fall of Jerusalem to the arrival of the messenger.

[93] The activity of Jeremiah, presented as a second Moses in his vocation report (Jer 1), is dated to a period of fourty years, from the 13th year of Josiah in Jer 1:1, i.e. 627 to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 (cf. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy*, 135).

Note also the number seven in Ezek 3:15–16. Ezekiel had been sitting dumb for seven *days* among the exiles when the revelation came to him at the end of the seven day period. The motif of dumbness appears at different key locations in the book (3:15.26; 24:27; 29:21; 33:22). Its interpretation has caused many troubles (cf. R. R. Wilson, "An interpretation of Ezekiel's dumbness", *VT* 22 [1972] 91–104). Since the key chapter, Ezek 33 (one of these places) is strongly connected with Ezek 3, and since in the context of Ezekiel one day may stand symbolically for one year (cf. 4:6), it is tempting to relate the seven day dumbness in 3:15 with the seven year dumbness in 33:22, and the seven year period of the prophecies in Ezek 4–24.25–32.

[94] Dijkstra, *Ezechiël I*, 21; Idem, *Ezechiël II*, 21, 95.

tion of the book (Ezek 29:17) as the tool in YHWH's hand in punishing the nations. However, it is highly probable that Ezek 21:33–37, a prophecy now addressed against Ammon should be seen as an oracle originally addressed against the "sword" of YHWH, i.e. Babylon.[95]

Outside the collection of FNPs we also find a prophecy against Edom in 35:1–15, similar to 25:12–14.[96] Ezekiel 35:1–15 begins as a new section, but it forms a diptych with the following prophecy of salvation addressed to Israel (36:1–15). A further prophecy against the nations appears in Ezek 38–39 addressing Gog and his army (the Mediterranean islands; cf. 39:6) in seven prophecies introduced with the well-known formula כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה.[97]

(c) Compared to other FNPs, we observe that geographical factors, chronology, and the use of the number seven are important for Ezek 25–32. Its structure appears to be the result of a longer development. We have good reasons to believe that, like Am 1–2 and Jer 46–51, Ezek 25–32 was not only expanded on the level of individual prophecies (Tyre and Egypt), but also on the level of the collection (Sidon). At the same time, the vocabulary, expressions, superscriptions, motifs, chronology make us believe that Ezek 25–32 was intended to form part of this book from the very beginning and be read in relation to the prophecies on Israel (as Am 1–2 and Jer 46–51). Ezekiel's collection is also unique in distinguishing between the neighbouring nations and Egypt. Furthermore, the prophecies against Tyre and Egypt have been enlarged to form disproportionately large micro collections by themselves. The prophecy on Edom outside the collection in Ezek 35 connected with a prophecy on Israel in Ezek 36 reminds the reader of the similar organisation of the anti-Edom prophecy of Isaiah in Isa 34 and 35.

3.3.4. Foreign Nation Prophecies in the Book of Zephaniah

(a) Though the book of Zephaniah is relatively small, it contains a distinctive collection of FNPs addressing Philistia, Moab and Ammon, Kush, and Assyria. These prophecies do not possess headings, nor are they composed of uniform utterances as in Amos, but are mainly short texts, some hardly longer than one single phrase only.

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[95] For some arguments, cf. Dijkstra, *Ezechiël I*, 222–23; M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37* (AB 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 434, 436.

[96] Even its form is similar so far as it also makes use of the לְכֵן / יַעַן sequence (35:5–6.10–11) and the recognition formula (35:9.15).

[97] Discussing whether the "basic narrative" can still be assigned to the prophet Ezekiel (so Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 946; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 180–81) reaches beyond the interest of this chapter. It is clear, nevertheless, that this composition was also written for this book, adopting its typical phrases and formulas.

(b) Opinions differ regarding the extent of the collection. In his dissertation devoted to the FNPs of Zephaniah, Ryou argued that the book follows a tripartite structure: Zeph 1 contains judgment speeches against Judah and Jerusalem on the day of YHWH, Zeph 2:1–3:8 describes the implications of this day for the foreign nations, and Zeph 3:9–20 describes the salvation brought by YHWH.[98] Perlitt considered 2:1–3 to be an appendix to the judgment speech of Zeph 1, Zeph 2:4–15 a collection of FNPs, and Zeph 3 a salvation oracle.[99] Sweeney maintained that Zeph 1:2–18 formed the description of the day of YHWH, but a second major block, 2:1–3:20 was in his view a document supporting the reform program of King Josiah.[100]

In clarifying the formation of the book of Zephaniah, it is important to relveal the role of Zeph 2:1–3, 2:4, and 3:1–8. As Zeph 1 presented the day of YHWH approaching, 2:1–3 looks back to this previous proclamation of judgment arguing that repentance still is a way to avert punishment. Ryou correctly assumes that the particle כִּי in 2:4 gives the reason for the exhortation in 2:1–3.[101] The syntactic role of כִּי unavoidably leads to the question what function the FNPs could have in this book?

The editorial concept expressed in the organization of the FNPs of Zephaniah emerges from 3:6–7. It is argued here that the destruction of the foreign nations (in the past) was intended to serve as a *warning* before Judah came to be subjected to a similar fate.[102] This idea fits well a book addressing an audience cherishing the image of an impotent or inactive god (cf. 1:12). However, the pedagogical measures of YHWH did not lead to the expected results; Judah failed to return to his God.

If looking at Zeph 2:4–18 through 3:6–7 and reading the FNPs as warnings for Judah, one realises that Zeph 2:7.9b with its promises of salvation for Judah presupposes a different purpose.[103] This may plead for the later origin of Zeph 2:7.9b with regard to Zeph 3:6–7, but not necessarily what concerns its immediate context (see below).

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[98] D. H. Ryou, "Zephaniah's Oracles against the Nations" (Ph.D. diss.; Amsterdam, 1994), 285; cf. also Vermeylen, "L'unité", 32. Bogaert disputed the legitimacy of comparing Zephaniah with the Major Prophets ("Recueils", 148), but the short note on his reservations fails to convince.

[99] L. Perlitt, *Die Propheten Nahum, Habakuk, Zephaniah* (ATD 25/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 98.

[100] M. A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets* (vol. 2; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 494; cf. J. Vlaardingerbroek, *Sefanja* (COT; Kampen: Kok, 1993), 135.

[101] Ryou, "Zephaniah's Oracles", 27–27.

[102] Contra Perlitt, who believed that the FNP-cycle of Zephaniah was an expression of the universal rule of YHWH (*Zephaniah*, 123).

[103] Zeph 2:7 refers to the return from the exile. But it is exactly this exile that repentance would prevent (cf. 2:1–3).

As for the rest of chapter 2, this probably also passed through several stages of formation, before it came to be related with Zeph 3. Zephaniah 2:5–7 may have been imported from elsewhere and inserted into its present location after 2:4 based on a thematic relationship.[104] The הוֹי-cry in 2:5 usually appears at the beginning of oracles, so that one may argue that 2:5 had once been the introductory line of an oracle. The extent of the prophecy against Moab and Ammon also remains a problem. Zephaniah 2:11 referring to the "isles of the nations" (אִיֵּי הַגּוֹיִם) has little to do with Moab and Ammon; it should rather be related with the Philisteans of 2:4, both containing short utterances on the nations.[105] It might be that Zeph 2:11 was detached from 2:4, because the prophecies on Philistia and Moab-Ammon (2:5–10) had already been connected before entering Zeph 2:4.11–15.[106]

If the secondary prophecies in Zeph 2:5–7.8–10 are for a moment removed, than we are left with a small collection of short utterances against Philistia and the Mediterranaean isles, Kush and Assyria. What is interesting in this primary list of nations is not only that each one can be read as an account of the past judgment of YHWH (as presupposed by Zeph 3:8–9), but that this list is formed by contemporary representatives of the inhabitants of the earth, the sons of Noah in reverse order, Japhet (the Isles [and Philistia?]; Gen 10:2–5), Ham (Kush [and Philistia?]; Gen 10:6[.14]) and Shem (Assur; Gen 10:22). The devastation of the foreign countries left in the footsteps of YHWH approaching on his day (Zeph 1:14) was intended to serve as a warning for those questioning his implications in *recent* human history (Zeph 1:12). The status granted by the genealogical origin of Judah will provide no safety any more before the raging anger of YHWH. As an alternative interpretation, these nations may represent the entire earth subordinated to YHWH, from the Upper Sea (Mediterranaean and Philistia) to the Lower Sea (Assur) and the south (Kush), the perspective also reflected in the description of the world-wide dominion of the king of Ps 72:8–11.

At a later stage, the small collection of prophecies was expanded with Zeph 2:5–10, which loaned it a new shape. The nations that now appear are arranged in a geographical order: Philistia on the west, Moab

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[104] Cf. Ezek 25:15–17 and see Ryou, "Zephaniah's Oracles", 136, 298–99.

[105] On the connection between Zeph 2:11 and the oracle on the Philistines, cf. also Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, 2:517.

[106] Note the similarities in 2:7 and 9b noted above. Zeph 2:9b fits well its immediate context, Zeph 2:8–10 (as 2:7 also fits with 2:5–6), but the message of this entire prophecy differs from the reading imposed by Zeph 3:8–9 (warning for Judah). Moreover, it is difficult to read the Moab-Ammon prophecy as a description of the past, as Zeph 3:8–9 presupposes, but that is understandable if the oracle was not originally written for its present position.

and Ammon on the east, Kush on the south, and Assyria on the north.[107] In whatever direction the Judaeans look, they have the opportunity to see YHWH at work and hear his steps quickly approaching towards their homeland, and draw the necessary conclusions from it.

Judah failed to look at the history through the eyes of the author of Zeph 3:6–7, it did neither hear nor trust (cf. 2:1–3 with 3:2). This attitude caused the people of YHWH to be reckoned to the nations and be destroyed as one of those. Judah, as Israel in Amos, has become like one of the nations. The purpose of Zeph 3:1–7 is different from Am 2:6–16 in that it is a reflection on the past rather than a proclamation of the future. The future pronouncement begins in 3:8 only in a very different tone, already looking back from a post-587 period on the history of Judah. But we do find an interesting parallel to the redaction critical function of Zeph 3:1–7 in Isa 24–27. Isaiah 24–27 also following the FNPs in Isa 13–23, looks back to the history of "the city" (Jerusalem) already in ruins (Isa 24:12; 26:5; 27:10), lamenting with similar tears.

The section on the nations does not end with Zeph 3:8. Zephaniah 3:8 refers back to 1:18 and 2:1, announcing judgment not for Judah alone, but for the entire earth. The tone changes from Zeph 3:9. Instead of doom, it speaks of a future when all the nations, even from beyond the rivers of Kush,[108] will serve YHWH with purified lips.

> A further possible reference to the future fate of foreign nations appears in a subsequent extension of the book at Zeph 3:18, a verse famous for its problems. The text is usually taken to refer to Judaeans, but that hardly gives any sense to the present verse. It seems more convincing to interpret 3:18 as an allusion to reactions of foreigners grieving (יגה) at the feasting of Judaeans. In Zeph 1, the verb אסף appears as a *terminus technicus* for judgment; its sense is probably the same on this place. In 2:8 חֶרְפָּה describes the attitude of Moab and Ammon against Judaeans. It is possible that 3:18 again refers to the חֶרְפָּה of the same community of foreigners, arguing that their former insults will be

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[107] Ryou, "Zephaniah's Oracles", 326–27. The text enumerates nations both in the neighbourhood and far away, comparable to the perspective of the book (cf. Zeph 1:8 with 3:8). The geographical organisation is far more convincing than Berlin's suggestion, who believed that the text is modelled and reflects on the cultural antagonism of nomadic Semites and urbanised societies. Cf. A. Berlin, "Zephaniah's Oracles against the Nations and an Israelite Cultural Myth", in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday* (eds. Astrid B. Beck et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 175–84.

[108] The expression בַּת־פּוּצַי is most certainly a gloss (cf. Perlitt, *Zephaniah*, 140), reinterpreting the verse originally referring to foreign nations (cf. Isa 18:1.7) as a promise regarding the Jews in the diaspora.

turned as a burden upon them.[109] This verse is similar to Zeph 2:9b.

(c) In its present form, Zephaniah expresses the universal nature of judgment by similar geographical principles as the other collections, but this collection is closest in its theology to the FNPs of Isaiah. The relation between Zeph 3:1–8 and Isa 24–27 was already noted. This collection aims to answer how God is present in the world, a problem that bothers the audience of the book of Zephaniah (Zeph 1:12) as it does that of Isaiah (Isa 5:19). Further textual affinities between Isaiah and Zephaniah[110] may suggest that a more direct influence of Isaiah upon Zephaniah should not be excluded. Perhaps the most remarkable resemblance between the two collections is the setting of the FNPs against the background of the day of YHWH that shall come to both Judah / Israel and the nations and the use of the Upper Sea, Lower Sea motifs. To this I shall return in section 3.5. below.

3.3.5. CONCLUSION

The FNPs in the books of Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zephaniah mostly appear in collections. The other prophetic books that miss a distinctive collection of FNPs are either formed for the most part by prophecies concerning one particular foreign nation (Ob, Nah, Hab), or contain a limited number of oracles against one (Mic, Mal) or more (Joel, Hag, Zech) nations.

(a) These collections of FNPs are not formed by chance, nor piled up carelessly, but are the results of a well-planned, sophisticated, multifaceted editorial activity based on a theology rich in religious symbolism and artistic sense. Geographical concepts, temporal criteria, symbolic numbers have played a role in drawing these prophecies together.

On the level of the collections the editorial concepts of the redactors may enrich the original meaning and intention of the individual oracles. The primary historical background of (oral) prophecies provides one context for these text against which they can be interpreted. Making these prophecies part of secondary literary contexts may bring new meanings into view. The point of view of the authors and of later editors may not always coincide. This phenomenon partially explains the complexities in the literary form of these books.

A comparison of the MT and LXX versions of Jeremiah reveals that the FNPs were not a static corpus, but one that could have been enhanced, reorganised with different editorial concepts. Thus evidence speaks not for a late gathering of these texts, but rather in favour of the

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[109] The emendation of עָלֶיהָ to עֲלֵיהֶם is supported by the Targum.
[110] Cf. Zeph 3:9 | Isa 19:18; Zeph 3:10 | Isa 18:2.7; Zeph 3:12 | Isa 14:32.

reorganisation and expansion of early collections. Subsequent additions may have altered the concept of earlier editors.[111] The dynamic process of rereading and reformulation was influenced by changing audiences and hermeneutical situations.

(b) The investigation of these four prophetic books did not substantiate the claim that the books of Ezekiel, Zephaniah, or the LXX of Jeremiah would have been ordered following an eschatological scheme. It is nevertheless significant that the FNPs always form *dyptichs* with prophecies addressed to Israel. The prophecies against YHWH's own people are usually followed by pronouncements of judgment on the nations (Jer, Ezek, Zeph), but in case of Amos the nations precede Israel. The foreign nations are important only so far as they are related to Israel, the people of YHWH. This also underlines the fact that the collections were composed in view of the authors' own community.

(c) The theological emphasis of the collections may differ. In Amos the prophecy on the nations functions as a prelude to the prophecies on Israel, and to a certain extant this is also valid for Zeph 2:4–15. The announcement of judgment on the nations serves here as a warning for Israel. In Jeremiah the motivation for the judgment on the nations is the previous punishment meted out on Judah. In Ezekiel, the judgment on the nations is induced by their attitude towards Judah.

In some cases, however, we may presuppose that the editors were acquainted with collections of FNPs in other books. We find concepts overarching various compositions (chronological, geographical organization of prophecies, application of the symbolic number seven, day of YHWH theme), which may point to some interconnectedness between groups working on different books, even though it would go too far to ascribe all this editorial activity to one particular community.

Despite all these, the collections of FNPs are strikingly book-specific. They are not only well-situated inside these books, but authors and editors try to integrate superscriptions, headings, and other stereotypical phrases appearing elsewhere in the same book.[112] The uniformity is most noticeable in Amos, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. This book-specific character of the prophecies suggests that the collections of FNPs were not supposed to be read as distinctive texts, independent compositions, but always in relation to the books in which they now stand.

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[111] Note the expansion of Amos to seven prophecies, the reorganisation of the FNPs in Jeremiah, the additional texts and reorganisation of Ezekiel, etc.

[112] This is indeed striking in contrast to opinions that this redaction of the prophetic books could be the work of the same editors (Vermeylen, "L'unité", 32).

3.4. FOREIGN NATION PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

3.4.1. THE SUPERSCRIPTIONS AND THE STRUCTURE OF ISAIAH 13–23

In antiquity, the beginning and the end of a literary text was generally marked by a colophon. The colophons as superscriptions (and subscriptions) contained various informations about the published text (addressee, author / scribe, subject, chronological information, etc.). Colophons were used in order to preserve texts in the archives of royal or cultic libraries, but some were explicitly written to be read forth. In other words, some colophons were regarded as part of the message.

Most compositions of the ancient Near East preserved on clay tablets, potsherds, papyrus, or other material contained such superscriptions. Yet in contrast to this scribal practice, there is today a rather general feel of scepticism among Old Testament scholars regarding biblical superscriptions. This disbelief is motivated, on the one hand, by the fact that later editors of biblical books have composed such superscriptions themselves. On the other hand, the different literary history of the biblical texts in comparison to literature preserved on clay tablets also supported the scepticism. In fair treatment of biblical texts, however, all options should be left open. Dismissing superscriptions with the presumption that these should always be considered secondary,[113] is as unjustified as taking them at face value.

We have seen above that individual books preserving collections with prophecies on the nations do not possess a uniform superscription system. In Isa 13–23 we find ten headings that contain the word מַשָּׂא.[114]

Isa	מַשָּׂא-type
13:1	מַשָּׂא בָּבֶל אֲשֶׁר חָזָה יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶּן־אָמוֹץ
14:28	בִּשְׁנַת־מוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אָחָז הָיָה הַמַּשָּׂא הַזֶּה
15:1	מַשָּׂא מוֹאָב
17:1	מַשָּׂא דַּמָּשֶׂק
19:1	מַשָּׂא מִצְרָיִם
21:1	מַשָּׂא מִדְבַּר־יָם
21:11	מַשָּׂא דּוּמָה
21:13	מַשָּׂא בַּעְרָב
22:1	מַשָּׂא גֵּיא חִזָּיוֹן
23:1	מַשָּׂא צֹר

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[113] For Isa 13–23, cf. e.g., Wildberger, 1562; A. A. Fischer, "Der Edom-Spruch in Jesaja 21. Sein literaturgeschichtlicher und sein zeitgeschichtlicher Kontext", in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog. Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag* (vol.1; ed. M. Witte; BZAW 345; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 477.

[114] For the meaning of מַשָּׂא, cf. EXCURSUS 3.

One can distinguish here three types of headings. (a) Most headings are of the type מַשָּׂא + G(eographical) N(ame), introducing the prophecies on Babylon, Moab, Damascus, Egypt and Tyre. The first of these, מַשָּׂא בָּבֶל, is also extended by the phrase אֲשֶׁר חָזָה יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶּן־אָמוֹץ. Being the introductory prophecy of Isa 13–23, this extension should probably be understood as referring to the entire collection of 13–23 (cf. Jer 25:1–2; 46:1). Isaiah 13:1 can be compared with 1:1 and 2:1, which require the same reader orientation. However, in five other cases the headings of the prophecies are composed differently. (b) In Isa 14:28 מַשָּׂא is not connected to any GN. Moreover, this heading contains historical information close to what we find in Isa 6:1 and 20:1. (c) A further group of four superscriptions composed in a way different from both types mentioned above appears in Isa 21:1.11.13; 22:1. In these cases מַשָּׂא is followed not by a GN, but by cryptic designations of the addressees.[115]

> The meaning of the terms attached to מַשָּׂא in these superscriptions is debated. The prophecy headed by מַשָּׂא מִדְבַּר־יָם (21:1–10) is—at least in its present form—concerned with the fall of Babylon. Various theories emerged to interpret מִדְבַּר־יָם that I shall not attempt to sum up here.[116] One of the frequent suggestions is that מִדְבַּר־יָם is related to the Akkadian *māt tâmtī*, "the Sea Land", designating Lower Mesopotamia.[117] The fact that we find מִדְבַּר־יָם in Hebrew instead of אֶרֶץ־יָם is not a strong argument against this.[118] The differences may be explained from the character of this prophecy which deliberately avoids concrete

[115] Some argued that these superscriptions are formed by taking words or phrases out of the text of the prophecy (Procksch, 277; Kaiser, 5, 97 note 1; A. A. Macintosh, *Isaiah XXI: A Palimpsest* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980], 4; cf. also Wildberger, 764). This principle may comply with Isa 21:13 (מַשָּׂא בַּעְרָב). But in the three other cases one would expect מַשָּׂא מִמִּדְבָּר (cf. 21:1b) instead of מַשָּׂא מִדְבַּר־יָם, and מַשָּׂא בְּגִיא חִזָּיוֹן (cf. 22:5) instead of מַשָּׂא דּוּמָה. גֵּיא חִזָּיוֹן (21:11) does not appear in the following prophecy.
[116] See Wildberger, 763–64; B. Uffenheimer, "The "Desert of the Sea" Pronouncement (Isaiah 21:1 – 10)", in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (eds. D. P. Wright et al.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 677–79. The MT is supported by the Vulg. and the Syr. The LXX reads ἔρημος, "desert". 1QIsaᵃ has משא דבר ים.
[117] É. Dhorme, "Le désert de la mer" (Isaïe, xxi)", in *Recueil Édouard Dhorme. Études bibliques et orientales* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale), 1951, 301–4; Uffenheimer, "Pronouncement", 678–79; Sweeney, 280–81. Instead of *māt tâmtī* the Erra and Ishum Epic refers to Chaldea as *tâmtu* (iv 130).
[118] As assumed by Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 6; S. Erlandsson, *The Burden of Babylon: A Study of Isaiah 13:2–14:23* (CBOT 4; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1970), 82; D. S. Vanderhoofd, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (HSM 59, Atlanta: Scholars, 1999), 131.

language. Moreover, מִדְבָּר may already allude to the outcome of the prophecy: the Land of the Sea shall be turned into a "Desert of the Sea".[119] A similar concern seems to appear in Isa 21:11 as well.[120]

The superscription of the second oracle in Isa 21:11 is מַשָּׂא דּוּמָה. Because the name שֵׂעִיר appears in the text, 21:11–12 is often connected to Edom. דּוּמָה—that itself does not reappear in the text—is to be understood as an allusion to Edom (cf. LXX) by means of a word-play, דּוּמָה / אֱדֹם. The cryptic content of the prophecy gives further support for understanding דּוּמָה as a symbol rather than a place name.[121] דּוּמָה as a common noun derives from דום, 'to be silent'.[122] דּוּמָה appears as a synonym for the Sheol, the land of silence in Ps 94:17 and 115:17. The superscription would mean 'the silence oracle'. Whether this silence on a first level refers to the silence of the night (note לַיְלָה),[123] or to the lack of a revelation that could be given to the inquirers from Seir, or both, is difficult to tell. Other homonymous verbal forms may also be considered, like דמה I, 'to resemble' (Jerome understood דומה as *similitudine*), דמה III, 'to destroy'. In English one may consider the phonetic similarities between 'doom', 'dumb' and 'Edom'.

In the מַשָּׂא בַּעְרָב (21:13), the preposition ב is unique. It seems, nevertheless, that ב is syntactically unrelated to מַשָּׂא.[124] As in the pre-

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[119] Cf. Jer 25:12; 51:36–37. See Ibn Ezra and Qimchi *apud* Seitz, 167; Uffenheimer, "Pronouncement", 678–79; W. R. Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies* (SHCANE 18; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 39.

[120] It is interesting to compare מִדְבַּר־יָם in Isa 21:1 with Jer 50:22 which refers to Babylon as הָאָרֶץ מְרָתַיִם. Beyond being a geographical name of a territory belonging to Babylon (cf. *nār marrātu*, designating the area where the Tigris meets the Euphrates), it also functions as a symbol for a land מְרִי, 'stubborn', 'rebellious'. The same is possibly true for פְּקוֹד (פקד!) in the same verse line. Cf. W. Rudolph, *Jeremia* (HAT 12; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1968), 303.

[121] דּוּמָה is also the name of a city in the Arabian Desert alongside Massah, Kedar and Tema in Gen 25:14 (1 Chr 1:30), so that Isa 21:11–12 is often connected with this Arabian region (K. Galling, "Jesaja 21 im Lichte der neuen Nabonidtexte", in *Tradition und Situation. Studien zur alttestamentlichen Prophetie. Arthur Weiser zum 70. Geburtstag* [eds. E. Würthwein & O. Kaiser; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963], 59; Oswald, 397 note 1; Sweeney, 285; Fischer, "Edom-Spruch", 476–77). However, the city of Seir mentioned in Isa 21:11 reminds one of Edom rather than of a—in the Bible otherwise quite insignificant—Arabian site.

[122] Cf. דּוּמָם, 'quiet', 'silence' (Isa 47:5; Hab 2:19 [דומה in 1QpHab], Lam 3:26) and דּוּמִיָּה, 'silence' (Ps 22:3; 39:3; 62:2). See further דְּמָמָה (<דמה) 'calm' (1 Kgs 19:12; Ps 107:29; Job 4:16) and דֶּמָה (Ezek 27:32). In connection with foreign nations, note especially Isa 47:5 (Babylon) and Ezek 27:32 (Tyre).

[123] For דּוּמָם and חֹשֶׁךְ, see Isa 47:5, for דּוּמִיָּה and לַיְלָה, see Ps 22:3.

[124] I.e. this is a מַשָּׂא entitled "בַּעְרָב". Cf. EXCURSUS 3.3 and Syr. *mšqlʾ dʿrbyʾ*.

vious case, the meaning of ערב is here, too, ambiguous.[125] עֶרֶב) ערב)
may refer to the evening (cf. LXX and Vulg.) or the mixed Arabian
population (עֶרֶב; 1 Kgs 10:15; Jer 25:24; Ezek 27:21). Viewed through
Isa 21:16, the prophecy is concerned with the inhabitants of the Syr-
ian Desert, the Kederites, sons of Kedem (Jer 49:28).

   As we may conclude from the pericope, גֵּיא חִזָּיֹון the heading of Isa
22:1(.5) appears to be a figurative designation for Jerusalem.[126]

The symbolic language of the superscriptions is a common feature of the
four oracles.[127] In three cases (Isa 21:1.11.13; cf. 30:6) the metaphors in
the headings form an integral part of the message formulated in the
texts, and are not only loosely connected. This suggests that these head-
ings were recorded simultaneously with the prophecy. Isaiah 22:1 also
refers to the addressees in a symbolic way.

   Beside similarities in the title of the four oracles, one should note
the deep, mystical symbolism in the language of Isa 21, tying together
the three utterances of this chapter. A further common feature of Isa
21–22 is the visionary experience of the prophet and the frequent use of
first person formulas.[128] The oracles in 21–22 refer to the seer receiving
his revelation from YHWH.[129] Both Isa 21 and 22 refer to Elam (21:2 |
22:6), both portray the emotional implications of the revelation (21:3 |
22:4), in both texts eating and drinking precedes the danger (21:5 |
22:13), both texts mention fugitives of war (נדד; 21:14.15 | 22:3), and
both texts give a detailed military description of the enemy.

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[125] The superscription is absent in the LXX, but it is supported by all other ver-
sions and MSS. The character of the LXX version of Isaiah recommends more
caution in relying solely upon this textual witness (contra Gallagher, *Sennache-
rib*, 57). Isa 21:13–17 should be distinhuished from the previous prophecy, as
we shall see, so that a new superscription on this place is anticipated.

[126] A similarly symbolic מַשָּׂא superscription appears in Isa 30:6, though this
may be slightly different. In the phrase מַשָּׂא בַּהֲמֹות נֶגֶב, the term מַשָּׂא itself
seems to be ambiguous: מַשָּׂא may mean "pronouncement" against those going
down to Egypt for help, as well as "burden" of the beasts, i.e. the treasures peo-
ple transport on those beasts in order to obtain support for an alliance. Duhm,
12 and Eissfeldt, *Einleitung*, 419, 434, assumed that Isa 30:6 originally belonged
to the collection in Isa 13–23.

[127] Delitzsch, 245, and Young, 2:86, speak of a tetralogy. Sweeney argues that
Isa 21 must be taken as one "original unit" (277, 281, 284, 286; cf. also Fischer,
"Edom-Spruch", 478), which is strange given his assumption that the oracles
in Isa 13–23 are delimited by the superscriptions מַשָּׂא+X (Sweeney, 221, 254).
He confusingly terms 21:11.13 as demarcations of "textual subunits" (277;
21:1–4; 21:5–10; 21:13–15; 21:16–17 are also regarded by him as subunits).
Unlike Sweeney (278) assumes, 21:10 clearly concludes an individual oracle.

[128] Cf. 21:2.3.4.6.10.11.16; 22:4.14. 21:16 may be secondary (see below).

[129] 21:2.6.10.11.16; 22:14. The מַשָּׂא of 14:28–32 also refers to an inquiry.

From these common characteristics we may conclude that Isa 21–22 contains a distinctive collection inside 13–23.[130] These prophecies probably existed as a "collection" prior to being *inserted* into their present location. This editorial process may give explanation to several important questions on the composition of Isa 13–23, such as the two Babylonian prophecies, the appearance of a prophecy on Jerusalem and its official beside other texts on the foreign nations, the present location of Isa 23, and the differences in the superscriptions in Isa 13–23.

As noted above in section 1.2., scholars usually relate the two anti-Babylonian prophecies in Isa 13:1–14:27 and Isa 21:1–10 to two successive stages in the redaction of the book of Isaiah.[131] Nevertheless, it is not clarified why other texts which are likewise considered to be later additions were included to thematically related prophecies. In other cases, the prophecies concerning one particular nation were collected under one single heading in Isaiah (13–14; 15–16; 19–20), as well as in Jeremiah (e.g. Jer 50–51), or Ezekiel (Ezek 26–28; 29–32). It is more convincing therefore to assume that Isa 21–22 were not from the beginning supposed to form part of a collection of FNPs. They were seen as related to each other even before they came to be part of Isa 13–23.

The original unity of Isa 21–22 may also explain the unusual prophecy addressing Judah (Isa 22) in a collection mainly concerned with foreign nations. The FNPs in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or Zephaniah do not include a prophecy against Judah. A prophecy against Israel appears in Am 2:6–16, but there it forms a bridge to the second part of the book in Am 3–6. Isaiah 22 on its present location cannot be compared to this function of Am 2:6–16, not least because Isa 22 is followed by a prophecy against another foreign nation, Tyre. Moreover, Isa 22:15–25 with its prophecy against a court official is strange for any collection of FNPs.

The assumption that Isa 21–22 was inserted among an already existing מַשָּׂא collection also provides an explanation for the present place of the prophecy concerning Tyre (Isa 23). In my view, the prophecy concerned with Tyre originally followed the prophecy against Egypt (Isa 19[–20?]), as the two nations are also connected in Ezek 26–32, reflecting the close political and economical ties between the two nations.[132]

Similarly to other collections of FNPs, Isa 13–23 contains headings and superscriptions that are not of the main (מַשָּׂא) type (Isa 14:24; 16:14; 17:14; 18:1; 20:1; 22:15). These headings are important witnesses to the growth of the collection, but the relationship between those and the מַשָּׂא-type headings, whether subordinative or coordinative, requires

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[130] Duhm, 12–13, also takes 10:28–20:6 and 21–22+30:6–7 as two collections.
[131] So, for instance, Vermeylen and Jenkins.
[132] See on this section 5.3.1. below.

a more detailed analysis of the smaller collections of Isa 13–23.

3.4.2.   The Individual Compositions of Isaiah 13–23

The space allotted to this chapter and the specific focus of the present study, permit to delve into exegetical details regarding the composition of Isa 13–23 only so far as those are relevant for answering specific problems for Isa 18–20. In accordance with a rather general tendency in recent Old Testament scholarship, the final form of the text is taken as the starting point for this survey. Nevertheless, even if the reconstruction of the diachronic development of biblical texts is to a large extent dependent on (sometimes very divergent) personal considerations and exegetical insights, the question whether the final form corresponds to the original form must be considered seriously in each individual case. Pursuing this trajectory, I shall aim to answer the following literary, theological and historical questions:

(a) *Literary questions.* As we have seen above, Isa 13–23 contains headings that delimit further text blocks inside Isa 13–23. What can we say about the literary *integrity* of these delimited sections? How far is a holistic reading of these sections possible, and to what extent do we need to reckon with further originally individual prophecies? Taking into account the possibility that the final form of these passages was reached through several stages of textual development, what kind of possible *editorial principles* and strategies can we discern on this level of shorter collections?

(b) *Theological questions.* What is the theological concern of individual prophecies? Has recontextualisation caused any *shift in the meaning* of the text? How do the different editorial concerns *interact* with one other? What kind of *intertextual* connections appear among the prophecies in 13–23?

(c) *Historical questions.* What can we say concerning the authorship, date and historical *setting* of the prophecies and collections?

3.4.2.1. The Composition of Isaiah 13:1–14:27

The superscription מַשָּׂא בָּבֶל in Isa 13:1 delimits the following section as a prophecy concerning Babylon. The fact that the heading in 13:1 contains מַשָּׂא בָּבֶל should not narrow our perspective to treat אֲשֶׁר חָזָה יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶּן־אָמוֹץ as limited to Isa 13:1–14:27 only, for as Isa 1:1, 13:1 also introduces a new collection, the prophecies concerning the nations.

In its present form and context 13:1–14:27 is dealing with Babylon and Assyria.[133] The prophecy on Assyria in 14:24–27 contains no super-

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[133] Some exegetes delimit 13:1–14:23 as the first collection, excluding the

scription, which most likely means that it is subjected to the heading in
13:1. Evidently, 13:1–14:27 is an editorial and not an original literary
unit.[134] The thematic dissimilarity between the prophecies against Baby-
lon and Assyria delimits at least 14:24–27 as originally independent. In
general, scholars reckon with the following distinctive pericopes: 13:1–
22 (prophecy against Babylon); 14:1–4a (return of Israel); 14:4b–21 (la-
mentation upon the fall of a foreign king); 14:22–23 (oracle concerning
Babylon); 14:24–27 (prophecy against Assyria).

Isaiah 13:1–22 was regarded as a literary unit by many, a view living
on in some modern commentaries as well.[135] Yet arguments pleading for
unity hardly move beyond the recognition of "une grande unité de style
et de contenu" (Vermeylen). Some other scholars either distinguish an
earlier (anti-Babylon) prophecy from its later (universalistic) expan-
sions,[136] or assume that 13:2–22 is a collection of several originally inde-

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prophecy against Assyria in 14:24–27 (Kaiser, 5). Others regard 13:1–14:32 as
one unit (Sweeney, 221–22; Childs, 124). According to Sweeney the super-
scription in Isa 14:28 "does not correspond to the standard form of the title in
chs. 13–23". It should instead be treated like 20:1, as an "appendix" (Sweeney,
221–21). However, the superscriptions of Isa 21–22 also deviate from the
"standard forms", which brings further pluriformity of מַשָּׂא-type headings in
the range of possibilities. Isa 20:1 is different from 14:28 in the sense that like
the preceding Isa 19, chapter 20 is also concerned with the fate of Egypt. No
such thematic connection appears between Isa 13:1–14:27 and 14:28–32. With
other scholars, I regard 13:1–14:27 as the first מַשָּׂא-composition (K. Jeppesen,
"The *maśśāʾ bābel* in Isaiah 13–14", *PIBA* 9 [1985] 63–80; J. A. Goldstein,
"The Metamorphosis of Isaiah 13:2–14:27", in *For a Later Generation: The
Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism and Early Christianity* [eds. R.
A. Argall et al.; Harrisburg: Trinity, 2000], 78–88).
[134] Contra Goldstein, "Metamorphosis", 78–88. For the original unity of 13:1–
14:23 cf. Erlandsson, *Burden*; B. Gosse, *Isaïe 13,1–14,23 dans la tradition lit-
téraire du livre d'Isaïe et dans la tradition des oracles contre les nations* (OBO 78;
Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1988), 276; Watts, 195. Hayes & Irvine
treat 14:1–27 as a unit (226–35).
[135] Duhm, 112; Kissane, 154; Wildberger, 507; Vermeylen, 1:286–87; Sweeney,
231; Kilian, 95 (but cf. 100); Blenkinsopp, 276–77; Tucker, 155. For an over-
view, cf. also Zapff, *Prophetie*, 220–23.
[136] Zapff delimits an older anti-Babylon oracle, 13:1a.17–22a from 13:1b.2–
16.22b, in which universalistic tendencies appear, with Babylon as the personi-
fication of the evil (Zapff, *Prophetie*, 219, 227–39). Bosshard-Nepustil regards
13:2–8.14–16 as the primary layer (after 587), expanded by 13:1.17–22
(around 539), and later by the universalistic 13:9–13 (*Rezeptionen von Jesaia 1–
39 im Zwölfprophetenbuch* [OBO 154; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg,
1997], 91). Fischer distinguishes 13:2–5.7–8.14–16 (after 587), from two sub-
sequent expansions 13:1a.17.18b.19–22 (after 539) and 13:6.9–13 (date?; *Die*

pendent prophecies.[137]

Looking at Isa 13 diachronically, the particles הִנֵּה and הִנְנִי at 13:9 and 13:17 indicate two shifts in the text. הִנֵּה, when used independently in the Latter Prophets, often occurs at the beginning of a new prophecy.[138] When this is not the case, הִנֵּה signifies a logical step inside a textual unit.[139] In our case it is difficult to regard 13:9 as integral part of the previous prophecy for at least two reasons. First, no significant shift appears here, since the description of the day of YHWH commenced earlier continues after 13:9. Second, 13:9 presents the arrival of the day of YHWH as if it were new information to the reader, which in the present location is actually not the case (13:5–6). Similarly, הִנְנִי in 13:17 also marks off a text of a different origin than at least 13:2–8.[140] It appears therefore that 13:9 is the beginning of a prophecy that was originally independent from 13:2–8. As a conclusion, for the moment we should divide Isa 13 into two subsections: 13:2–8 and 13:9–22.

ISAIAH 13:2–8

Isaiah 13:2–8 is the first unit of the מַשָּׂא בָּבֶל collection. The prophetic address begins with a summons (שְׂאוּ־נֵס). The imperative that appears later in 13:6 (הֵילִילוּ) must have other persons in view.[141] Isaiah 13:2–8 describes the preparations for the day of YHWH in the context of which it refers to an unnamed enemy introduced as the consecrated ones (מְקֻדָּשַׁי), warriors (גִּבּוֹרַי) and weapons of YHWH's wrath (כְּלֵי זַעְמוֹ), commanded (צוה / קרא) to execute his anger (13:3). They arrive from a distant land (מֵאֶרֶץ מֶרְחָק), from the ends of the sky (מִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמָיִם). These warriors are often assumed to be divine beings, concluding that

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Fremdvölkersprüche bei Amos und Jesaja [BBB 136, Berlin: Philo, 2002], 75–99).

[137] Clements, 132–38 discerns the following pericopes in 13:2–22: 13:2–3 (Babylonian revolt against Assur, late 8th century), 13:4–5 (Babylon against the world, end of 7th century), 13:6–8 (Babylon against Jerusalem, after 587), 13:9–16 (eschatological reinterpretation of יום יהוה, 4th century), 13:15–16 (after 587), 13:17–22 (against Babylon, 545–538). He also held it possible that 13:2–3 and 4–5 were only fragments from larger prophecies.

[138] Isa 17:1; 19:1; 24:1; 30:27; Jer 6:22; 47:2; Am 8:11; 9:13; Nah 2:1; etc.

[139] Isa 28:2.16; 34:5; 35:4; 39:6; Jer 2:35; 5:14; Joel 4:7; Am 7:8; Hab 2:4; etc.

[140] For הִנְנִי as the beginning of a new prophecy, see e.g., Jer 46:25; 49:35; 51:1; as the beginning of a new section, cf. Jer 49:5; 50:18.

[141] Isa 13:6 may form a new beginning in the poem (cf. Isa 23:1), but it is not likely that 13:6–8 was independent from 13:2–5 (contra Clements, 134–35). Kaiser, 11 noted that 13:2–5 is written in qina-meter that obviously changes from vs. 6. This may mean that the summons to wail in vs. 6 refers to the lament in 13:2–5. Jer 4:5–8 serves with a further example for the relation between the summons to wail and the coming destruction of the enemy.

the scene evoked is that of a universal eschatological judgment.[142] It is more likely, however, that this army is formed by divinely commissioned human beings, for the expression מַמְלְכוֹת גּוֹיִם (13:4) is unsuitable for divine beings. The imagery of this conglomerate force coming from very far away complies with other descriptions of a historical, human foe.[143]

It is not made explicit here against whom this mighty army must perform as the weapon of YHWH's anger. There are two rather general allusions in this direction in 13:5 and 7. Isaiah 13:5 refers to כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, and 13:7 to כָּל־לְבַב אֱנוֹשׁ. So far as כָּל־הָאָרֶץ may mean both "the entire world" and "the entire country" this cannot really help us much further. That is also true of the impersonal formulations in 13:8. However, a clearer reference to those envisaged by the judgment is probably hidden beyond פִּתְחֵי נְדִיבִים in 13:2. פִּתְחֵי נְדִיבִים is most often assumed to be the name of the gate of a certain city. If this was the case, it would further corroborate the view that the judgment is to be performed on one city rather than the entire world. However, the plural form of פִּתְחֵי makes it unlikely that we deal here with the name of one specific city gate. It is also unlikely that several gates of a city would have been called "the gates of the nobles". As an alternative reading, it is possible to read פתחו instead of פתחי, and to take נְדִיבִים as the subject of the verb בוא.[144] The word נְדִיבִים, which may be just another name for the warriors (cf. Num 21:18), corresponds to the positive picture of the consecrated soldiers of YHWH in this text.

But whose gate is referred to here? Babylon's or some other nation's? Some scholars argued that 13:2–8 was formerly an anti-Judaean prophecy, in which Assyria / Babylon appeared as the nation from the ends of the earth as the punishing rod of YHWH, but which is subjected to judgment in the second part of the prophecy (13:9ff). The whole text was later reinterpreted as an anti-Babylonian speech.[145] If—and this is

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[142] Zapff, *Prophetie*, 237; Höffken, 128.

[143] Cf. Deut 28:49; Isa 5:26; Jer 6:22 (מִיַּרְכְּתֵי־אָרֶץ = מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ in Isa 13:5; cf. Deut 28:64; 30:4 and Neh 1:9). This nation comes from the far east (Ps 19:7), not the heaven (for which מִקְצֵה is superfluous). In Jer 1:15 (cf. 25:9) appears the great multitude of the north (צָפוֹנָה מִשְׁפְּחוֹת מַמְלְכוֹת) summoned (קֹרֵא) by God coming (וּבָאוּ) and setting up a throne before the ports of Jerusalem (פֶּתַח שַׁעֲרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם) (cf. Isa 13:2).

[144] The LXX seems to support reading פתחו, by vocalising פתח as an imperative, פִּתְחוּ (ἀνοίξατε). Following this consonantal text, but vocalising פֻּתְחוּ, would give a clearer reading, viz. "so that the nobles may enter his gate."

[145] Kissane, 154–55; Goldstein, "Metamorphosis", 78–88. Begg noted the "loose sitting" of Babylon in the whole of Isa 13–14, and argued for a later babylonisation of these prophecies ("Babylon in the Book of Isaiah", in *The Book of Isaiah—Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures, unité et complexité de*

significant—the superscription in 13:1 is later than 13:2–8, the view
that this passage referred to Judah is a possibility (cf. Jer 1:15). The pic-
ture of the enemy fits the Babylonian army. But the question is not only
how far 13:2–8 complies with the language and vocabulary of anti-
Judaean prophecies with Babylon as an enemy. Isaiah 13:2–8 has cer-
tainly many elements in common with prophecies against Israel and
Judah. But it is exactly this phenomenon of reapplication of passages
and borrowing of motifs that must be considered a warning for a seem-
ingly infinite scholarly imagination, which assigns meaning to texts
based on comparison of parallel motifs and traditions,[146] or assigns them
to the same author and date where and when the motifs appear again.[147]
To prove that when decontextualised 13:2–8 *can* sound like a prophecy
against Judah with Babylon as the instrument of judgment, is one thing.
To prove that 13:2–8 is actually such a case, is quite another.

I mention three arguments that may push this hypothesis a few steps
closer towards confirmation. First, it is quite unusual for a prophecy
against a foreign nation that the audience is addressed without any di-
rect reference to those concerned. If the heading in Isa 13:1 is secon-
dary, the only reference to the victims of 13:2–8 are כָּל־הָאָרֶץ in 13:5
and the impersonal allusions of 13:7–8. This phenomenon is, however,
characteristic to the speeches addressed to Israel and Judah. Second, the
expression כְּשֹׁד מִשַּׁדַּי in Isa 13:6 may be interpreted as a wordplay allud-
ing to the כַּשְׂדִים, Chaldaeans (13:19) as instruments of God (Jer 51:20–
23).[148] Third, the description of the enemy as belonging to many nations
may comply historically with the military of the later Persian Empire,
but much less with the army of the pre-539 Persia. These considerations
suggest that Isa 13:2–8 was originally an anti-Judaean prophecy, with
Babylon as the enemy of Judah.

But how could a prophecy proclaiming doom on Judah by the Baby-
lonians become an anti-Babylonian speech? This phenomenon is not
unknown in the Bible. "Media", as the unnamed enemy of 13:2–8, and
the destruction that it will cause to Babylon, is analogous to the damage
that Babylon as enemy had once brought upon Judah.[149] The idea ex-
posed here is close to the so-called theology of retribution, alluded to in
e.g. Isa 14:2; 33:1.4 (cf. Jer 50:15.29; Hab 2:8). Isaiah 10:16–19 and

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l'ouvrage [ed. J. Vermeylen; BEThL 81; Leuven: Peeters, 1989], 122).

[146] Cf. Goldstein, "Metamorphosis", 84–85, arguing that the similarity of the
city in Isa 13:20 with Nineveh in Zeph 2:13–15 would mean that Isa 13:20
proclaims the destruction of Nineveh.

[147] For this too often adopted method, cf. section 1.1.2. (d) above.

[148] We possibly find a similar wordplay in Isa 21:14 and 22:5–6 (cf. Bosshard-
Nepustil, *Rezeptionen*, 47 note 5).

[149] Compare, e.g., Jer 4; Zeph 1, where Babylon is described as an enemy.

10:28–34 provide two significant examples inside the book of Isaiah how originally anti-Israelite or anti-Judaean prophecies were reread as anti-Assyrian speeches by relocating the respective passages in the context of prophecies against Assur.[150] Another prophecy addressed primarily to Judah or Israel was readapted to the (most likely) Babylonian enemy in Isa 29:15–24.[151] This phenomenon can also be observed outside the book of Isaiah. The prophecy against Babylon in Jer 50:41–43 is almost literally the same as the anti-Judaean Jer 6:22–24. The enemy of Babylon will bear the characteristics of Babylon as the foe of Judah. כָּל־הָאָרֶץ in Isa 13:6 may once have stood for Judah (cf. Zeph 1:18), but it was reinterpreted as a reference to the Babylonian Empire, the victim of the day of YHWH.[152] It is important that the idea of reversal of fortunes is mentioned explicitly in the context of Isa 13, namely in 14:2, a verse commonly attributed to the redactors working on Isa 13–14.

ISAIAH 13:9–16.17–22

By arguing that Isa 13:9–16 was a prophecy independent from 13:2–8, I disagree with those who view either 13:9–13, or 13:9–16 as a literary expansion or elaboration of the previous day of YHWH theme.[153] The connection between 13:2–8 and 13:9–16 is established through the well-known "catchword-principle" of the editors, according to which two originally distinct prophecies are seen as related by a common word or expression that appears in both. The common expression is יום יהוה in 13:6 and 9, attested only here in Isaiah.[154]

The theological concern of 13:9–16 is the proclamation of punishment for the sinners (חַטָּאִים) and the wicked (רְשָׁעִים), and the an-

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[150] On the redaction-critical problems of Isa 10:5–34, cf. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung*, 413–14. Eissfeldt regarded 10:1–15.24–34 as the original anti-Assyrian prophecy (so also Hayes, "Nations", 197). But Isa 10:28–34 was originally a speech against Judah (cf. Mowinckel, "Komposition", 284; G. C. I. Wong, "Deliverance or Destruction? Isaiah x 33–34 in the Final Form of Isaiah x–xi", *VT* 53 [2003] 544–52), leaving 10:5–15.24–27 as the prophecy against Assur.

[151] See C. Balogh, "Blind People, Blind God: The Composition of Isaiah 29,15–24", ZAW 121 (2009) 48–69.

[152] See Zeph 1:18. Joel 1–2 refers to Isa 13 on several occasions, but it probably (re?)interprets the Babylon-specific passage in a way that it contains threats to Judah. Such reinterpretations are well-known in Joel (cf. Isa 2:4 and Joel 4:10).

[153] Clements, 135; Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen*, 71; Fischer, *Fremdvölkersprüche*, 91–99. The (often insignificant) lexical similarities between 13:9ff and its context referred to in Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen*, 71 note 1, should be ascribed to the common theme of the passages rather than to the direct influence of one text on the other.

[154] For connections with יום ליהוה צְבָאוֹת in Isa 2:12 see section 3.5. below.

nouncement of the humbling of the arrogance of the haughty (גְּאוֹן זֵדִים)
and the insolence of the ruthless tyrants (גַּאֲוַת עָרִיצִים). These motifs
contrast here with 13:3, according to which the agents of judgment are
rejoicing in the greatness of YHWH (עַלִּיזֵי גַּאֲוָתִי). As it was the case with
Assyria in 10:5, injustice related to hybris is the cause of Babylon's fall.

No addressee is named directly in 13:9–16. Nevertheless, "the earth"
(13:9), its wicked and tyrant inhabitants (13:11), the people fleeing
home to their own nations and countries in 13:14, seem to allude to an
empire that has taken others to exile, for which only Assyria[155] or Baby-
lon can come into consideration.[156]

Because 13:9–16 lacks concrete references, scholars often believe
that this text focusing on the destruction of the wicked in the world is
an eschatological universalistic reinterpretation of the previous 13:2–8,
assumed to be more deeply anchored in history.[157] Notwithstanding that
the references to הָאָרֶץ, the fading stars, constellations and heavenly
bodies (13:9–11) suggest that the coming judgment will have universal
consequences,[158] this poetic picture comes close to a day of YHWH-
tradition which was acquainted with these motifs in proclaiming par-
ticular, nation-specific, historical messages of doom.[159] The metaphori-
cal significance of cosmic elements distinguishes this text basically from

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[155] H. Grimme, "Ein übersehenes Orakel gegen Assur (Isaias 13)", *ThQ* 85
(1903) 1–11; Kissane, 154; Goldstein, "Metamorphosis", 78–88. Cf. Jeppesen,
"Isaiah 13–14", 69.

[156] Cf. Isa 48:20; Jer 50:8.16; 51:6.45; Zech 2:10.11. So Gray, 241. Kissane
(154) thought the fugitives were soldiers marching against Judah (13:4).
Procksch (189), Clements (136) and Zapff (*Prophetie*, 156) understand 13:14
in the sense that even fleeing away cannot save from YHWH's wrath. However,
this interpretation contradicts 13:15, which assumes that death will come
upon those who are found and not on the fugitives. Moreover, it is clear that
Jer 50:16–17, the earliest witness to this Isaianic text (note the imagery of the
scattered sheep, the devouring sword; cf. וְאִישׁ לְאַרְצוֹ יָנֻסוּ אִישׁ אֶל־עַמּוֹ יִפְנוּ) un-
derstood Isa 13:14 as referring to the flight of foreigners from Babylon.

[157] So, e.g., Kaiser, Clements, Zapff, Kilian, Bosshard-Nepustil.

[158] The universalistic aspect is emphasised by many scholars, e.g., Vermeylen,
1:288–89; Ohmann, 63; Kilian, 98; Blenkinsopp, 278–9.

[159] Jer 4:23–25.28; Ezek 32:7–8; Joel 2:2.10; Am 5:18–20; 8:9–10; Zeph 1:14–
16. For other day of YHWH motifs appearing here, cf. the nearness of the day of
YHWH (Joel 2:1 | Zeph 1:7.14 | Isa 13:6), the consecrated warriors (Zeph
1:7.14 | Isa 13:3), the summons to howl (Zeph 1:11 | Isa 13:6), wrath (Zeph
1:15 | Isa 13:3.5), fear (Joel 2:6 | Isa 13:7–8), the wealth that cannot save
(Zeph 1:18 | Isa 13:17). In descriptions of the day of YHWH Isaiah commonly
mentions earthquake, storm, tempest, flame, fire (cf. Isa 28:2; 29:6; 30:30).
According to Clements, these images are related to theophany (136). Note
also the cosmic motifs in Judg 5:4–5.20 (poetic text) and Josh 10:11–13.

apocalyptic literature, where the cosmic cataclysm is treated in a histori-
cal (not poetical) frame. One may even wonder whether the cosmic as-
pect of the judgment in Isa 13:10 is not somehow related to the famous
astrological knowledge of the nation addressed (cf. Isa 47:11–14).
Therefore on this level there is apparently no distinction between a his-
torical (13:2–8) and a cosmological-eschatological (13:9–13) judgment.

The view that the imagery of the wicked and sinful in Isa 13 would
be the product of ahistorical eschatology may likewise be questioned.
The prophecy of Habakkuk suggests that according to some theologians
of Judah, Babylon can take on the role of evil *par excellence*, just as As-
syria can become the prototype of arrogance. Both the imagery of the
wicked and the proud are rooted in wisdom literature where the arro-
gant one typifies the enemy, the anti-YHWH (compare Prov 23:11 with
Jer 50:34). The prophetic aspect in this representation is that the gen-
eral image of the wicked and arrogant enemy and the righteous humble
sufferer receives concrete historical and political contours.[160]

הִנְנִי in Isa 13:17 signifies the beginning of a new section in the
prophecy. It seems significant that 13:17–18 repeats ideas attested be-
fore in 13:15–16.[161] But unlike 13:9–16, Isa 13:17–22 cannot be treated
as an independent prophecy. עֲלֵיהֶם in 13:17 can only be understood in a
context in which the references are identified. Isaiah 13:17–22 may
have been an expansion of either 13:2–8 or 13:9–16.

The Isaianic authorship of Isa 13 has been questioned since the 18th
century. Isaiah 13 was interpreted as a unit, in which the reference to
the Medes and Babylonians in 13:17.19 played a key role. By reinter-
preting Isa 13 either partially or entirely as a prophecy concerned with
Assyria rather than Babylon in the first place, or by arguing that the de-
struction was ultimately caused by the Assyrians, scholars attempted to
save it from an ever growing list of non-Isaianic prophecies. The possi-
bility of Isaianic authorship can be taken into consideration for 13:2–8,
if the text originally described an Assyrian invasion of Judah. But as
noted above, it is more likely that the Babylonians threatening Jerusa-
lem feature behind this, implying a date somewhere on the turn of the
7th century. If 13:9–16 focuses on the fall of Assyria, an earlier date in
the 7th century date can be proposed. Yet it is more likely that 13:9–16
expects the fall of the Babylonian empire which would suggest a date
between the first campaign against Jerusalem and the early post-exilic
period. Verses 17–22 may derive from a time when the face of the en-

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[160] Hab 2 adopts the language of wisdom in describing the haughty, greedy and
unjust Babylon, as does Isaiah in portraying Judah's leaders (Isa 5:8–24).
[161] See רטש in 13:16 and 18, and cf. Kaiser, 11.

emy capable of defeating Babylon began to emerge from the shadow.[162] It is commonly agreed that the events connected to the fall of Babylon in 13:9–16 and 17–22 do not comply with the peaceful Perso-Median occupation of Babylon in 539 B.C. The question is whether this presupposes a date before 539, or whether we should look with others for later occasions that Isa 13 would allude to, such as the defeat of the revolting Babylon by Darius I in 521–520 or by Xerxes in 482.[163] It is well-known that eager expectations concerning the fall of Babylon were living on in the early post-exilic times as well (cf. Jer 50:28; Hag 2:6–7; Zech 1–2). However, turning one's former friend to an enemy is a frequent theme in prophecies (Jer 4:30; Ezek 16:31–41; 23:9.22–24). If this concept is referred to on this place, it is possible to date Isa 13:17 to a period when Media and Babylon were still befriended with each other, i.e. long before 539. At any rate, 13:22 assumes that the fall of Babylon still lies in the future.[164]

Concluding,[165] (a) Isa 13 is composed of three parts: 13:2–8 and 13:9–16 form two originally independent prophecies connected by the common day of YHWH theme, while 13:17–22 should be regarded as the *Fortschreibung* of either 13:2–8 or 13:9–16. Isaiah 13:2–8 probably referred once to Babylon as the nation of YHWH's wrath who he would bring up against his people, but its present context transforms it to an anti-Babylonian prophecy. The editorial principle underlying this process of recontextualisation is explicitly mentioned in 14:1–2. Isaiah 13:9–16 is universalistic insofar as it envisages the Babylonian Empire with the nations it included (cf. 13:9 with Isa 10:14). But it refers to a concrete historical nation, a concreteness underlined by its context, 13:17–22 (and 14:1–23) as well as the heading 13:1a, a nation, with geographical and temporal boundaries. With all these historicising additions it becomes difficult to detach 13:9–16 from a historical context and elevate it to the realms of eschatology.

(b) Isaiah 13 contains important themes that will intermittently reappear in further texts in 13–23. First, one observes the destruction of the whole earth (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ) by the army of YHWH placed in the context of his day. On its present position 13:2–8 sets the tone of destruction that is about to follow on all the nations, former tribute bearers of Baby-

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[162] In prophetic texts Persia is never mentioned as an enemy of Babylon, but rather Elam and Media (Isa 21:2), or Media alone (Jer 51:11.28).

[163] Gosse, *Isaïe*, 272 (Darius I); Vermeylen, 1:289–90 (Xerxes).

[164] For Isa 13 as a *pre-eventum* prophecy, cf. Clements, 136–37; Begg, "Babylon", 124–25; Sweeney, 231; H. G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's role in composition and redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 158; Vanderhoofd, *Babylon*, 125; Blenkinsopp, 277.

[165] Cf. the questions formulated at the end of section 3.4.2.

lon (13:14). Second, the motifs of haughtiness (צְבִי, גֵּאָוֹן, זֵד, גַּאֲוָה, תִּפְאֶרֶת) and wickedness (עָוֹן, רְשָׁעִים, רָעָה) appear as central in Isa 13:11.19. Babylon is the haughty one and the wicked in contrast to the agents of YHWH, who are rejoicing in YHWH's exultation. Third, history appears as governed by YHWH, who himself commands (צוה, 13:3) and leads (פקד, 13:4) his army to battle. Fourth, the imagery is filled with scenes of utter destruction (13:5.9.19–22) pared with a call to howl and wail (ילל, 13:6). Babylon is a dangerous place to stay, so that one is urged to take refuge (13:14–15). Fifth, the temporal aspect of the fulfilment of the prophecy is noticeable in 13:22.

(c) The dates of the three passages are uncertain. Isaiah 13:2–8 may derive from the late 7th or early 6th century. For Isa 13:9–16 and 13:17–22 this period may be extended to the exilic or post-exilic era.

ISAIAH 14:1–4A.4B–21.22–23

The introductory particle כִּי suggests that Isa 14:1–4a is a text composed for its present location to connect Isa 13 with 14:4b–23. Viewed through 14:1–2, the judgment of Babylon in 13:1–22 appears as the sign of YHWH's compassion for Israel. The poetic imagery in 14:1–2 reminds of sections from Isaiah and Zechariah.[166] The text shifts from a total de-struction of Babylon in Isa 13 to presenting it as a vassal in 14:2 (cf. 60:14). The theology of the reversal of fortunes from servitude to over-lordship as exposed in 14:1–2 probably derives from the same theologi-cal tradition as the other passages from Isaiah and Zechariah, ofted dated to the late exilic or early post-exilic period.[167]

Verses 3–4a are written in prose. The introductory וְהָיָה בְּיוֹם may suggest that we deal here with a further textual addition, though that is by no means certain.[168] Isaiah 14:1–4a as a whole reflects a coherent theology in adopting the vocabulary of Israel's pre-settlement-experience as known from the Torah. The text alludes to significant moments from the early history of Israel: its election (בחר; 14:1), the heavy slavery (הָעֲבֹדָה הַקָּשָׁה; 14:3), the foreigners that shall join them (cf. Ex 12:38), the return to the homeland, the rest (נוח; 14:1) in the land of YHWH (אַדְמַת יהוה; 14:2), the servants of God's nation (Jos 9:21; Isa 14:2). The king of the song who refused to set his prisoners free (Isa 14:17), reminds the reader of the Egyptian pharaoh.

Isaiah 14:1–4a functions like a bridge between the prophecies in Isa

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[166] Cf. Isa 11:11–16; 45:14; 49:22–23; 56:3.6; 60:10–16; 61:5–6; Zech 2:13–16. Note אַדְמַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ in Zech 2:16 and אַדְמַת יהוה in Isa 14:2, the phrase וּבָחַר עוֹד בִּירוּשָׁלָם (Zech 2:16 | 14:1). Zech 1–2 is possibly inspired by Isa 13–14.
[167] Sweeney, 232 (post-exilic); Williamson, *Book*, 165–67, 171–75 (exilic).
[168] For the unity of 14:1–4a, cf. also Zapff, *Prophetie*, 265–66.

13 and the song in 14:4b–21. Having described the defeat of the despot, Babylon (13), the victory is celebrated like in days of old on the Asian side of the Red Sea, by way of a song (14:4b–21). The sequence act of salvation followed by a song is frequent in Isaiah (cf. Isa 12; 25–27*; 38:9–20). Its most prominent example appears in 11:11–16 (new exodus) and 12 (a new "song of Moses"; cf. Ex 14–15).

Because 14:4b–20(21) does not depend on its context, it is generally believed that this passage was relocated from a different place.[169] For 14:4a, the song is a מָשָׁל, a paradigm, applicable to any person fitting the model it creates.[170] While the unity of 14:4b–21 is in general accepted,[171] its Isaianic authorship is less widely shared. The mythological imagery in 14:12–13 and allusions to deportations in 14:17 suggests that the addressee comes from between the Tigris and the Euphrates.[172] Nevertheless, from Tiglath-pileser III to Alexander the Great all major players in history have been named as potential protagonists.

> The most frequently mentioned figure among the Assyrian rulers, allusions to whom scholars argued to have discovered in Isa 14:19, is Sargon II, a contemporary of Isaiah.[173] Sargon died on the battlefield in 705 B.C., and he was not buried appropriately as a king. Connecting him to Isa 14 is intriguing, yet the number of remaining problems calls

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[169] Wildberger, 506; M. A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 244.

[170] For מָשָׁל as "paradigm", cf. R. M. Shipp, *Of Dead Kings and Dirges: Myth and Meaning in Isaiah 14:4b–21* (Atlanta: SBL, 2002), 34–43.

[171] Jeppesen hold it possible that the the passage was composed of independent text blocks: 14:4b–8, 9–11, 12–17, 18–21 ("Isaiah 13–14", 78 note 30). Blenkinsopp distinguishes two poems (14:4b–11; 14:12–21) but he enters in no details (285). It is, however, doubtful that these passages could have formed an independent prophecy. Some also argued that 14:5 and 20b–21 are later glosses (Fohrer, 1:174; Wildberger, 541; Kaiser, 29; H. Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte in der Josiazeit. Israel und Assur als Thema einer produktiven Neuinterpretation der Jesajaüberlieferung* [WMANT 48; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1977], 128; Clements 141; Zapff, *Prophetie*, 266–67; Blenkinsopp, 285; Fischer, *Fremdvölkersprüche*, 125–26). This assumption is based on the conviction that vs. 5 implies the direct action of YHWH, unexpected in such a song. Note however, that YHWH is actively present in the similar dirges of Ezekiel concerning the fall of Tyre (Ezek 28) and Egypt (Ezek 31–32). Moreover, 14:6 could hardly be the continuation of 14:4b. מַכֶּה in 14:6 connects this verse to מַטֶּה or שֵׁבֶט in 14:5 (cf. Isa 10:24; 14:29; 30:31), and not נֹגֵשׂ in 14:4b (contra Zapff, *Prophetie*, 266–67). For Isa 14:21, cf. also Ezek 32:31–32.

[172] Although Canaanite mythological elements may appear here (for a review, cf. Shipp, *Dead Kings*, 1–24, 67–79), I find it more likely that the text deals primarily with a Mesopotamian myth, viewed through the eyes of a Canaanite.

[173] E.g., Barth, *Jesaja-Worte*, 137; Sweeney, 232–33; Shipp, *Dead Kings*, 172.

this identification into question. Approaching the text in search of historical clues, one is perplexed to read in Isa 14:20 that the king "destroyed his land and killed his people", which would make little sense with Sargon.[174] Furthermore, הָשְׁלַכְתָּ מִקִּבְרְךָ in 14:19 is often rendered as "you were cast away from your grave", or "you were cast away without [having] your grave", under a heap of dead corpses. But one may also translate "you were cast out from your grave",[175] which dissolves some tensions with the previous verses in which the king is said to have already descended into the grave (14:9–11.15). In this latter part of the song emphasis falls upon a king thrown out not only by heaven (14:12), but even by the underworld because of his cruelty and wickedness. The author may not describe the specific circumstances under which Sargon II died (many details of which are still unknown today), but he pictures the king as a malicious ruler who even in death would find no rest. Being thrown down from heaven is paralleled by being thrown out by Sheol. As the first imagery is artistic, so must also be the second one. Indeed, some scholars argued for the possibility that the lamentation in 14:4b–21 gives an imaginative picture of a falling tyrant, in a language that may be prophetic-predictive (Zapff) or stereotypical (Blenkinsopp).[176] For another unburied Assyrian or Egyptian king, see Ezek 31:12–13; 32:4–6 (cf. Ezek 29:5).[177] Like the texts of Ezekiel, Isa 10:5–15.24–27, or 37:22–29, the kings of these texts represent typical characteristics of Assyrian monarchs in general rather than of a specific figure. The "sons" punished for the sins of the "fathers" (pl!) in 14:21, those not supposed to fill the earth with cities, are obviously not only royal descendants, but people of one nation.[178]

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[174] We know that Esarhaddon killed some of his high officials, and so did Sennacherib with aspirants to the royal throne. Sargon II also came to power amidst fightings between throne contenders. But that was common in ancient history, and far from "destroying his land and killing his people".

[175] Blenkinsopp, 284; S. Olyan, "Was the 'King of Babylon' Buried Before His Corpse Was Exposed? Some Thoughts on Isa 14,19", *ZAW* 118 (2006) 425.

[176] Kaiser, 28; Goldingay, 102; Zapff, *Prophetie*, 271; Blenkinsopp, 287. For the motifs of ascent, descent, Sheol, see Shipp, *Dead Kings*, 81–127.

[177] In Assyrian texts Sargon is called *šakin Ellil*, "the governor of Ellil". Gallagher assumes that Ellil is the same as הֵילֵל in 14:12, pleading for the identification of the king with Sargon (*Sennacherib*, 88–89). Accepting for the sake of the argument the philological connections between הֵילֵל and Ellil, it remains problematic that Sargon is called governor *of* Ellil. Isa 14:12 alludes not only to "a close association of Sargon with this particular god" (so Gallagher, *Sennacherib*, 89), but it identifies הֵילֵל with the king and associates him with שַׁחַר.

[178] The plurals רְשָׁעִים, מֹשְׁלִים (14:5) and מְרֵעִים (14:20) are not to be seen as redactional expansions universalising an earlier song (contra Barth, *Jesaja-Worte*, 127–28; Clements, 144; Zapff, *Prophetie*, 267–68). It is characteristic to the genre מָשָׁל that its language is impersonal, expressed here by the plural.

Attempts to identify the ruler with any specific king from Assyria or Babylon lead us on a false track. If read historically, we find contradictions between the text and the known historical facts: Isa 14:20, for instance, would present a problem with almost any Mesopotamian king. Therefore, the literary-mythological character of the text must be taken seriously. Stereotypical images like haughtiness, unnatural death and improper burial make this poem perfectly fit for a מָשָׁל.[179]

While the identity of the king(s) behind Isa 14:4b–21 remains undisclosed, the question is whether one can identify the nation behind the song with more proximity (Assyria or Babylon)? Anti-Babylonian feelings were clearly formulated from the turn of 7th–6th centuries (cf. the מָשָׁל in Hab 2:6–12), but the motif of haughtiness commonly appears in descriptions of both Assyria (Isa 10:5–15; Ezek 31) and Babylon (Isa 13:11.19; Hab 2:4), as do the motifs of plundering and injustice. Some scholars assume that the expression כְּנֵצֶר נִתְעָב in Isa 14:19 contains a wordplay on the name of נְבוּכַדְנֶ(א)צַּר.[180] However, one can also find the variant spelling נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר (cf. Akk. *Nabû-kudurrī-uṣur*) to this name in the Bible, so that this identification is questionable. Moreover, as I shall argue below, נֵצֶר can also be connected with Assyria.

The case for the Assyrian background of the song is stronger. First, the reference of the final verse in 14:21 to the building of cities alludes to an urbanised society that reminds us of the figure of the mighty city builder, Nimrod, in Gen 10:8–12, and beyond that of Mic 5:5, where Assyria is called the land of Nimrod. Second, a probable reference to Ishtar and the myth of her descent to the netherworld behind the imagery in 14:12 may again plead for the Assyrian origin of the protagonist king. Ishtar played an important role as the mother of the Assyrian king.[181] Third, it has been noted that close connections exist between 14:4b–21 and Ezekiel's song on the king of Egypt in Ezek 31. These

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[179] In contrast to Wildberger (542), Vermeylen (1:294), Kaiser (28), and Zapff (*Prophetie*, 271), I do not regard anonymity as a sign for a late date. Anonymity is in fact a common feature of the מָשָׁל-literature. Note that in the laments of Ezekiel over the kings of Tyre (Ezek 28:2–10.11–19) and Egypt (Ezek 31; 32:1–10.17–30) we similarly miss the proper names in the text of the lamentations.

[180] Ehrlich, 56; Gosse, *Isaïe*, 239; W. A. M. Beuken, "A Song of Gratitude and a Song of Malicious Delight: Is Their Consonance Unseemly", in *Das Manna fällt auch heute noch. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie des Alten, Ersten Testaments. Festschrift für Erich Zenger* (eds. F.-L. Hossfeld & L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger; HBS 44; Herder: Freiburg im Breisgau, 2004), 102.

[181] For Ishtar as the deity of dawn (שַׁחַר), cf. Shipp, *Dead Kings*, 76. It is common in Assyrian prophecies to refer to the king as raised up by his mother, Ishtar. For the Assyrian hybris-motif, cf. M. Köszeghy, "Hybris und Prophetie: Erwägungen zum Hintergrund von Jesaja xiv 12-15", *VT* 44 (1994) 549–54.

connections reach beyond formal similarities, namely that these texts use ancient mythology, and it is probable that Isa 14 influenced Ezekiel in a more direct way. If that is true, it is significant that in Ezek 31 it is Assyria and not Babylon who serves as a prototype for Egypt, suggesting that Ezekiel might have read Isa 14:4b–21 as an anti-Assyrian text.[182]

But what does an anti-Assyrian prophecy do on this place in the book of Isaiah? Can its eventual former position be determined with any degree of probability? I believe that we have a substantial amount of lexical and theological arguments in support of the view that Isa 14:4b–21 has once been part of an anti-Assyrian collection of the "previous" section of the book. I argued above that for the editors of Isa 13–14 the pre-monarchic experience of Israel, especially its Egypt-related past, provided the most important analogy to describe the new situation that it was about to experience. Now, it is striking to observe that this pre-monarchic, mainly Egypt-related past plays a similar role of analogy between past and present in the anti-Assyrian utterances in Isa 9–11.

> Three of these texts are especially important: Isa 10:20–23; 10:24–27 and 11:11–12:6. Isaiah 10:20–23 is a passage in the context of an anti-Assyrian prophecy, which is dealing with Jacob and Israel (10:20; cf. 14:1). It asserts that in the future Israel will not lean any more on the one who had struck them (מַכֵּהוּ), whom many identify with Assyria.[183] So far as 10:20–23 is widely recognised as a secondary interpolation on its present place, the anti-Assyrian context can hardly be regarded as a binding hermeneutical frame. If Jacob and Israel refer to the Northern Kingdom, מַכֵּהוּ cannot be Assyria, for the nation Israel was never supported by Assur. If Jacob and Israel alluded to Judah, identifying the smiting one with Assyria would also be problematic, for Judah never sought support from Assyria, who has smitten it. When Ahaz did so, Judah had not yet been smitten by Assyria; later Assyria appears as an enemy and not as a friend of Judah. Instead, the questionable support of Israel who had smitten it once should rather be identified with Egypt (Isa 31:1; cf. 3.4.2.4.).
>
> This is exactly how Egypt is remembered in the following verses 14:24–26, referring to Egypt and Israel's servitude in this country. The Assyrian yoke resembles Egyptian slavery. The humiliation of Assur will be similar to the defeat of the Egyptians.
>
> The third text alluding to Egypt and the exodus is Isa 11:11–12:6. These verses promise the restoration of the glorious country of the past

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[182] Zapff, who argued that Ezek 31 depends on Isa 14, dated Isa 14:4b–21 to the early post-exilic period (Zapff, *Prophetie*, 271–72). Yet Ezekiel's description of the fall of Egypt caused by Babylon can hardly be post-exilic.

[183] Cf. Delitzsch, 176; König, 150; Procksch, 171; Clements, 115; Young, 1:369; Oswald, 270. Watts assumed this verse referred to the Aramaean support to Pekah, or the Assyrian support to Hoshea (153).

with Ephraim and Judah living in peace and the surrounding nations subjugated as vassals. With their boundaries reaching from Egypt to Assyria, this is the restored Davidic kingdom. Its inhabitants will be brought home by YHWH dividing the sea of Egypt and the river Euphrates. The new splitting of waters will be followed by a new song of Moses (Isa 12) strongly related in its vocabulary to Ex 15. Exodus event and song of gratitude are connected as in Ex 14–15.

One can observe here close connections between the theologies in piecing together Isa 13–14 (14:1–4a) and Isa 10–12. It would require little imagination to read 14:4b–21 in relation with the boasting speech of the Assyrian king in 10:5–15; 14:4 can be considered an answer to the haughty speech of the Assyrian king in 10:5–15 (cf. also 37:22–35), as a secondary continuation of either 10:27, the verse originally closing the anti-Assyrian speech, 10:5–15, or of 11:10.

> One can observe close connections between 14:4b–21 and the anti-Assyrian texts in Isa 9–11. שֵׁבֶט נֹגֵשׂ in 14:4b reminds of שֵׁבֶט הַנֹּגֵשׂ in 9:3. מַטֶּה and שֵׁבֶט in 14:5 appear in 9:3; 10:5.15.24.26 (cf. 28:27; 30:32), in which Assyria is presented as מַטֶּה and שֵׁבֶט in the hand of YHWH (10:5.15), or as holding the מַטֶּה and שֵׁבֶט in its hands (10:24). The expression נֵצֶר נִתְעָב, "abhorrent offspring", may be the reversed image of the glorious מַטֶּה and שֵׁבֶט (cf. Ezek 15:3–5; 31:12). At any rate, the new monarch that shall take on the former role of Assyria is portrayed as the new sprout (נֵצֶר; 11:1), the new ruler of "the earth" (11:4.9), justly holding the staff (שֵׁבֶט; 11:4) of righteousness. Note also 14:8 showing similarities with another anti-Assyrian speech, likewise related to Isa 9–11, now localised at Isa 37:24 (37:22–35).

The closing verses, Isa 14:22–23, represent an oracular statement. It is commonly accepted that these short utterances do not belong to the previous poem, but they were added in view of the present context of the anti-Assyrian prophecy. The two short utterances are usually assigned to the author of 14:(1–2)3–4b.[184] However, the view of 14:2 and 14:22 is different with regard to what happens to the remnants of Babylon. Furthermore, Isa 14:21 deflects from the genre of the song and passes on the territory of a prayer-like imprecation looking out for a confirmation. As a divine answer to the summons in 14:21, the oracular utterance in 14:22–23 may contain exactly this confirmation, added in view of the whole anti-Babylonian prophecy in 13:1–14:21.

To conclude, (a) Isa 14:1–4a represents an editorial text looking back to Isa 13 and forward to 14:4b–21. The authors of this passage may be responsible for the present organisation of 13:1–14:23. In their view, the return of Israel from Babylon is a new exodus in which event and

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[184] Fohrer, 1:181; Zapff, *Prophetie*, 269.

song follow each other as in Ex 14–15. The new exodus will be even greater in the sense that Israel's plunderers will become its servants. Prominent in this passage is the concept of the reversal of fortunes.

Isaiah 14:4b–21 formerly belonged to the anti-Assyrian prophecies, probably following 11:10 in the late 7th century edition of Isaiah. As a result of an early post-exilic edition of the book, with the composition of Isa 11:11–12:6 and 13:1–14:23, this decontextualised prophecy came to be part of the anti-Babylonian collection. At this stage the first section of the book culminated in the defeat of Assyria and the return of the remnant from the four corners of the world, followed by the new exodus song, while the prophecy against Babylon was placed ahead of a second section, the judgment of the world. The editors responsible for the rearrangement and to some extent the composition of 13:1–14:23 may have been the authors of 11:11–12:6.[185] It is important that Jer 50–51 seemingly considers Isa 14:4b–21 an anti Babylonian prophecy, connected with its present context.[186]

(b) From a theological point of view, 14:4b–21 is the song on the fall of the wicked and arrogant despot. This theme determines the basic concept of the entire poem. Not only Israel, but the entire earth (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ; 14:7–8) appears here as rejoicing and resting peacefully, in contrast to the destruction, fear and howling in Isa 13. In contrast to other nations, Babylon will have no remnants (14:20–22).

The original concern of 14:4b–21 was possibly the fall of Assyria. The punishment of the sons for the sins of the fathers (14:21) suggests some distance from those who committed "the sins". But clearly, it required no substantial imagination to argue that the sons were actually the Babylonians, heirs of the Sargonid Empire and descendants of Nebuchadnezzar. This is the reason behind the present position of 14:4b–21 (cf. Jer 50:17–18).

(c) The prophecy in 14:4b–21, related to the anti-Assyrian prophecies of the other parts of the book, probably derives from the 7th century. The additions in Isa 14:22–23 and 14:1–4a may be dated to the exilic and post-exilic periods respectively.

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[185] Cf. the heading וְאָמַרְתָּ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא in 12:1 followed by a song as in 14:4a.

[186] Cf. Jer 50:23 | Isa 14:4; Jer 50:26 | Isa 14:22; Jer 50:29.31 | Isa 14:11–14; Jer 50:33 | Isa 14:17; Jer 50:34 | Isa 14:7. Note also that the authors of Jer 50:17–18 explicitly allude to the analogy between Assyria and Babylon. For other citations from Isa 13–14 appearing in Jer 50–51, cf. Erlandsson, *Burden*, 154–59; Goldstein, "Metamorphosis", 86 note 29; C. Balogh, "Oude en nieuwe profetie. De rol van de profetische traditie in de volkenprofetieën", in *Wonderlijk gewoon. Profeten en profetie in het Oude Testament* (ed. G. Kwakkel; Barneveld: De Vuurbaak, 2003), 130–33.

Isaiah 14:24–27

Isaiah 14:24–27 is a short anti-Assyrian oracle. It strikes the reader of the book that Assyria appears here for a second time after being denounced in Isa 10:5. What is the function of 14:24–27 on this place?

Isaiah 14:24–25 contains a brief oracular statement introduced by נִשְׁבַּע יהוה צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר. The passage presents the succession of historical events, the humiliation of Assyria and the end of Israel's servitude, as the fulfilment of YHWH's plans concerning the world.

Some of the motifs and expressions that appear here are common with other parts of Isaiah, especially 10:5–15.24–27. Assyria is the tool in the hand of YHWH in 10:5, whose thoughts (דמה) are different from the intentions of YHWH, as it purposes (חשב) to destroy many nations (10:7). Probably as a replica to the boasting speech of Assyria, YHWH swears in 14:27 that as he himself has designed (דמה) so will it stand, as he purposed (יעץ) so will it be fulfilled (קום). The removal of the yoke and the burden from the shoulders of Judah (14:25) is a close literary parallel to 10:24–27.[187] The plan concerning the earth (עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ הָעֵצָה הַיְעוּצָה) is similar to 10:23 (cf. 28:22). The hand stretched out (הַיָּד הַנְּטוּיָה) appears in the refrains of 5:25; 9:11.16.20.10:4. These interconnections have led scholars to conclude that 14:24–27 is the closing section of the anti-Assyrian prophecy in Isa 10.[188] However, it was suggested above that the conclusion of 10:5–15 appears in 10:24–27. Moreover, 14:24 seems to introduce a new and independent prophecy, which was not an integral part of any earlier prophetic speech.[189] Nevertheless, the common vocabulary does indeed suggest a close connection between 14:24–27 and Isa 9–11.

As for the unity of 14:24–27, it is sometimes assumed that 14:(25b) 26–27 is the expansion of an earlier oracle, 14:24–25(a).[190] The arguments mentioned in this regard range from metrical reasons (Wildber-

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[187] For עֹל, see Isa 9:3; 10:27; for סֵבֶל, see Isa 9:3.5; 10:27; for שְׁכֶם, see 9:3.5; 10:27; for סוּר, cf. 10:27.

[188] Procksch, 181; Vermeylen, 1:252–55, 296–97; Kaiser, 42; F. Huber, *Jahwe, Juda und die anderen Völker beim Propheten Jesaja* (BZAW 137; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1976), 47–48, 59; Gosse, *Isaïe,* 88; R. E. Clements, "Isaiah 14,22–27: A Central Passage Reconsidered", in *The Book of Isaiah—Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures, unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (ed. J. Vermeylen; BETL 81; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 256; Zapff, *Prophetie,* 290–91 ; U. Becker, *Jesaja—von der Botschaft zum Buch* (FRLANT 178; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 272.

[189] נִשְׁבַּע יהוה introduces a new oracle in Ps 110:4; Isa 62:8; Jer 51:14. In Am 8:7 נִשְׁבַּע יהוה is probably not introductory. The fact that in Isa 14:24 this formula probably designates the beginning of a new prophecy is underlined by לֵאמֹר.

[190] Duhm, 123; Wildberger, 566; Zapff, *Prophetie,* 293; Becker, *Botschaft,* 272.

ger) to theological presumptions concerning the eventual apocalyptic (Clements) or universalistic (Zapff) character of 14:26–27. Metrical arguments are not convincing, however, especially when each verse is metrically different. Likewise, עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ in 14:26 is not substantially more universalistic than 10:14.23. Duhm believed that the reference of the suffixes in 14:25b is unclear, reason for which he pleaded for the secondary origin of this verse line. However, since the present context of the entire prophecy is secondary, and we cannot moreover retrieve its original *Sitz*, Duhm's arguments are not convincing either. There is obviously a change in perspectives in 14:26. But whether this should necessarily lead to the conclusion that vss. 26–27 are further expansions of 14:25 must still remain a question. The whole passage consistently shares a common vocabulary reliant on other passages and this vocabulary is evenly distributed in these verses. Therefore, 14:24–27 might be considered the unified work of one author.

In order to clarify the present position of the text, we need to look at two significant motifs in 14:24–27 that also appear in Judah- or Israel-related contexts in Isaiah: the counsel purposed by YHWH (הָעֵצָה הַיְעוּצָה) and the hand stretched out (הַיָּד הַנְּטוּיָה) above the earth (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ). It appears that both motifs derive from these Judah- and Israel-related texts (5:19; 29:15; 30:1). Particularly important is 28:22 and its citation in 10:23, which pronounces a determined (חרץ) plan of YHWH (without using עֵצָה) against the entire *country* עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ (cf. 7:24). It is possible that כָּל־הָאָרֶץ against which the purpose of YHWH had first been announced by the prophet was reinterpreted in 14:26 as referring not to Israel or Judah alone, but the entire *world* under Assyrian control (cf. 10:14.23).[191] Isaiah 14:26 is close to the salvation prophecies in 7:5.7, where the plan (יעץ) of Damascus and Samaria is rejected with similar words (לֹא תָקוּם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה; cf. 14:24).

The motif of the hand stretched out (הַיָּד הַנְּטוּיָה) derives similarly from texts in which YHWH's hand was stretched out against Israel and Judah (5:25; 9:11.16.20; cf. 31:3). Isaiah 14:24–27 brings judgment to an end arguing that the עוֹד, 'yet', 'still' in earlier anti-Israelite / Judaean passages ultimately referred to the punishment of Assyria. This theology is concealed in the anti-Assyrian prophecy of Isa 10:12: "When YHWH has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria and his haughty pride." Isaiah 14:24–27 argues that the ultimate purpose of YHWH was not the punishment of his people (בְּעַמּוֹ; 5:25), but it had much wider implications (עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם; 14:26). This central passage, 14:24–27, theologically

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[191] For a similar reinterpretation of כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, cf. Zeph 1:18 and 3:8.

related to the anti-Assyrian-redaction of originally anti-Israelite texts,[192] forms a bridge between Isa 1–12* and the FNPs of Isaiah.

> In Isa 1–12* the author denounced Israel (and Judah) arguing that although the hand of YHWH had punished them, they failed to turn back to him (9:12). In the refrain section (*Kehrversgedicht*), 9:7–20, the motif of וְעוֹד יָדוֹ נְטוּיָה clearly refers to the Northern Kingdom. The series of utterances connect to each other here by a rather uniform structure: the prophet describes a judgment, followed by a sentence that his hand is stretched out still, i.e. more is about to come. The refrain is followed by the motivation of why more doom is to be expected. Isaiah 9:7–20 probably looks back to four Assyrian assaults against Israel (and Judah?), who has repeatedly failed to learn from the past.
>
> Despite attempts to treat all verses containing the יָדוֹ נְטוּיָה-refrain as one prophecy,[193] the uniform structure noted above is not characteristic to either Isa 5:25 or 10:1–4. Isaiah 5:25 appears as a summary of the preceding collection of הוֹי-words. The הוֹי-word in 10:1–4 is not the continuation of 9:20, but an independent text. The הוֹי-sentence in 10:1–2 shows similarities with Isa 5, just as the pronouncement of judgment in 10:3–4 (cf. 5:13–14). These may have indeed functioned once as anti-Israelite speeches. But in its present editorial framework the function of 10:1–4 is probably different. Following the prophecy against Israel in 9:7–20 and preceding a prophecy against Assyria the editors suggest that 10:1–4 should be read as the introduction to the anti-Assyrian prophecy in 10:5. Even though the original addressees were Israelites, the editors reinterpreted this text as anti-Assyrian passage, as it also happened with 10:16–19. Assyria appears here as the one who "makes unjust laws and issues oppressive decrees" (10:1), while those oppressed by them are the people of YHWH (10:2). Such presentation of the unjust (10:1–2) and proud (10:3) Assyria, as the one who will descend into the netherworld (10:4) is exactly what Isa 10:5–15 and the song in 14:4–21 are about.

In this editorial organisation, the hand stretched out against Israel in 9:20 is followed by a hand stretched out against Assyria in 10:1–4 and in the following prophecy in 10:5–15.24–27. Reflecting on the boasting speech of Assyria in 10:5–15 and on its promised fall in 10:24–27, Isa 14:24–27 brings the motif of outstretched hands even further. The fall of Assyria brings history to a culmination where no more surprises (no עוֹד-s) will follow.

Isaiah 14:24–27 is probably to be dated prior to the definitive fall of Assyria in 612/609 B.C. A few scholars would go as far back as the days of Sennacherib, observing in 14:25 a direct allusion to the events of

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[192] Cf., e.g., 29:7–8; 30:27–33; 31:4–5.8–9. Similarly De Jong, "Isaiah", 110.
[193] For a discussion, cf. Barth, *Jesaja-Worte*, 109–11; Clements, 60.

701.[194] As already mentioned (cf. 2.3.3.), the invasion of 701 was more complex than some readings of Isa 36–37 would suggest and the positive effects of these events could have been regarded that impressive only some time after 701. For this reason, it is more likely that 14:24–27 alludes to a future Assyrian defeat, possibly in the 7th century.[195]

Concluding, (a) we have no substantial arguments to question the unity of 14:24–27, but not much either in its support. Isaiah 14:24–27 appears as a central text for the present, as well as a possibly earlier (pre-Babylonian) edition of FNPs, which these four verses may have concluded. Through its overarching motifs, 14:24–27 serves as a bridge between the earlier section of Isaiah and and the collection of FNPs.

(b) The key theological concept appearing here is the plan of YHWH and his hand stretched out. Both motifs appear earlier in Isaiah, but one can observe a certain development. The plan against Israel and Judah revealed earlier is presented here as a far larger arrangement concerning all nations. The יָדוֹ נְטוּיָה-motif in 9:7–20 describes the judgment on Israel, in 10:1–4 the judgment on Assyria, while this motif culminates in 14:24–27 as an act with implications for the whole earth. After YHWH has finished his job in Jerusalem, he will punish Assyria, who has claimed rulership above the whole earth (10:12.14). This is the ultimate sense of his purpose, until that moment will his hand be raised.

This gives the explanation why 14:24–27 appears in the first מַשָּׂא of FNPs. The fall of Assyria will have universal consequences (עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ/ עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם). At the same time, it is possible that the collapse of the Empire explains the extensions of salvation prophecies concerning some nations of Isa 15–23. Significantly, Isa 14:18 (כָּל־מַלְכֵי גוֹיִם) probably also anticipates an early collection of FNPs, while 14:6–8 alluding to the positive effects of the collapse of Assyria on the nations, may implicitly testify for the existence of salvation prophecies concerning the nations.

When the anti-Babylonian prophecies in 13:1–14:4a were inserted the prophecies 14:4b–21 and 14:24–27 were detached from their earlier Assyrian context.[196] When Babylon took over the historical role of Assyria, and when 14:4–21 came to be part of this anti-Babylonian section by the insertion of 13:1–14:4a.22–23, Isa 14:24–27 was also integrated into this collection. The editors recognised its function as a bridge, explaining what the fall of the superpower would mean for the life of the

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[194] Duhm, 133–34; Fohrer, 1:182–83; Gosse, *Isaïe*, 92. Sweeney dated it to an alleged campaign of Sargon II in 720 B.C. on the shaky grounds of the similarity of vocabulary with 10:5–34, also dated by him to that period (233).

[195] So for 14:24–25(a) Clements, 146; Zapff, *Prophetie*, 293; Berges, 51.

[196] Isa 14:24–27 might have originally followed 14:4–21 in the earlier version as well. The oath in 14:24–27 can be read (similarly to 14:22–23 belonging to the Babylonian reinterpretation of Isa 14:4b–21) as the answer to 14:21.

other nations. In such context, Assyria may have been regarded second-
darily either as just another literary name for the Babylonian Empire,[197]
or as a prototype of Babylon (cf. Jer 50:17–18).[198]

The secondary literary connections of 14:24–27 with the Babylo-
nian-texts should not be underestimated. From the viewpoint of the fi-
nal editors of the book the terms כָּל־הָאָרֶץ (13:5; 14:7; 14:26), the motif
of the fall of the king and Assur on the mountain (13:2; 14:13; 14:25),
the plan of YHWH and his command to his chosen ones (13:3; 14:24)
played an important role. Isaiah 14:2 writes about "the land of YHWH",
possibly influenced by 14:25.

(c) Isaiah 14:24–27 may derive from the 7th century (before 609).

3.4.2.2. THE COMPOSITION OF ISAIAH 14:28–32

The second מַשָּׂא-heading in Isa 13–23 appears in 14:28, where it intro-
duces a speech against Philistia. The form of this heading is different
from the other superscriptions, suggesting that it is not dependent on
those.[199] Isaiah 14:28–32 was either regarded as part of the collection
because it contained מַשָּׂא, or it had already belonged to a primary col-
lection of FNPs. This may scatter some doubt in the garden of exegetes
convinced of the late origin of 14:28,[200] a conviction largely based on
the similar form of 6:1 and 20:1 (בִּשְׁנַת + a historical event). In these
texts the heading is an integral part of what follows. While it is possible
that 14:28 did not belong to the oral prophecy, it may have been part of
the first written version of this text. Putting aside this heading solely on
grounds of similarities with 6:1 and 20:1 is therefore questionable.[201] It is
not inconceivable that two prophecies originate similarly from the years
when kings Uzziah and Ahaz died. The death of the king was an event
significant enough in the life and politics of a country. If Isaiah indeed
received the opportunity to speak out in the year when Ahaz died, the

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[197] Kaiser, 42; Kilian, 106. The name of Assyria is thought to refer to the Se-
leucids in the apocalyptic reading of Isa 10:21–22 (Dan 9:26–27), but this
hermeneutical practice may be of earlier origin.

[198] Jeppesen, "Isaiah 13–14", 74; Blenkinsopp, 289.

[199] Otherwise we would expect here מַשָּׂא פְּלֶשֶׁת (with Jeppesen, "Isaiah 13–14",
76 note 9, contra Blenkinsopp, 292).

[200] Williamson argued that Isa 14:28 is similar to 6:1, suggesting that 14:28 was
the heading of an earlier collection of FNPs (*Book*, 163–64; cf. also Bosshard-
Nepustil, *Rezeptionen*, 118–19). But it is doubtful that the demonstrative pro-
noun in הַמַּשָּׂא הַזֶּה allows 14:28 to reach beyond the prophecy on Philistia.
The FNPs are determined not by the death of Ahaz, but by the fall of Assyria.

[201] Contrast the approach of Kaiser (6) and Fischer (*Fremdvölkersprüche*, 184),
who from the similarities between Isa 16:14 and 21:16, conclude that they
originated from the same period.

superscriptions in 6:1 and 14:28 would unavoidably look similar, with-
out the one being the mere copy of the other. The chance that we deal
here with an original dating is at least as real as the possibility that
14:28 is a later insertion. Even if 14:28 is a later editorial heading (cf.
20:1), it may have preserved valuable information. The standards that
apply to Isa 6:1 and 20:1 should also be valid in this case.

The text gives no further clues as to why 14:29–32 should be read
against the background of the death of king Ahaz. No Judaean anti-Phi-
listine raids are known to have taken place during the reign of Ahaz.
Hence it is unlikely that "the rod" that had beaten Philistia could have
referred to Ahaz.[202] It is far more likely that "the beating rod" (14:29)
here, too, alludes to an Assyrian king (cf. 9:3; 10:5.15.25; 30:32), as does
"the smoke from the north" (14:31). If the heading indeed refers to the
original setting of the prophecy, there is only one king who may come
into consideration, one whose death fell to the same year with the death
of Ahaz in 727 B.C. (cf. 2.3.2.1.), Tiglath-pileser III.[203]

Isaiah 14:28–32 is generally considered to be one unit.[204] Although
one may distinguish two short oracular utterances, 14:28–30 and 14:31–
32, yet הֵילִילִי in 14:31 can be read in relation to אַל־תִּשְׂמְחִי in 14:29 pro-
viding a rhetorical argument for the coherence of the pericope.[205]

Isaiah 14:30(a).32 are, however, often believed to be later additions.
Both verses contain references to "the poor" which is assumed to reflect
the spiritualised poverty-concept of post-exilic writers.[206] Nevertheless,
it is significant to note that 14:30a does not proclaim a Judaean invasion
of Philistia by the דַלִּים וְאֶבְיוֹנִים, in contrast to e.g. Zeph 2:6–7.9, but as-
sures secure dwelling in their own land. Kaiser, Barth, Berges and many
others rightly observed that not all Isaianic texts referring to "the poor"

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[202] Contra Sweeney, 234; Becker, *Botschaft,* 273. According to 2 Chr 28:18 it
was rather Philistia, who overcame Ahaz.

[203] For the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III against Philistia, cf. also 2.3.1. No
such campaigns are known from his follower, Salmaneser V (727–722). It is
therefore unlikely that the prophecy would allude to Salmaneser's death (con-
tra H. Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern. Die Stellung der klassischen Propheten des
8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. zur Außenpolitik der Könige von Israel und Juda* [VTS 11;
Leiden: Brill, 1964], 111–12; Clements, 148).

[204] E.g., Gosse, *Isaïe,* 93; Becker, *Botschaft,* 272–74.

[205] For a similar contrast between present joy and future doom, cf. Isa 22:1–14.

[206] Gosse, *Isaïe,* 93; Becker, *Botschaft,* 272; Fischer, *Fremdvölkersprüche,* 141; U.
Berges, "Die Armen im Buch Jesaja. Ein Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte des
AT", *Bib* 80 (1999) 160–62; Blenkinsopp, 293. Fohrer (1:184) drops 14:30a,
Barth the entire 14:30 (*Jesaja-Worte,* 14–15). Donner relocated 14:30a to after
vs. 32 (*Israel,* 110; cf. also Barth).

need to be dated late.[207] The prophecies against the "wealthy and pre-
sumptuous" (10:33; 28:1) trusting their fortune may have given rise to
the positive prophecies for the "poor and humble" trusting YHWH.[208] If
that is true, this also means that the "poverty concept" should be con-
sidered original not only when social injustice is explicitly mentioned,
for in some cases the criticism against the wealthy and arrogant may be
implicit. Those whom Isaiah addressed in political issues came from the
leading circles of Jerusalem. They were rich and—so far as they did not
listen to the prophetic word—even arrogant. Apart from that, it is also
worth considering whether the terms עָנִי, דַּל, אֶבְיוֹן referred to a state of
oppression rather than poverty. For it seems that the emergence of the
theological significance of the oppressed as an attribute of the people of
YHWH *as a whole* is related to the theology concerning the superpower as
the arrogant oppressor of God's nation (cf. 10:5–15; 25:4; 29:19–20), a
concept that may have originated with the anti-Assyrian prophecies of
the 7th century and stepped even more emphatically in the foreground
when Babylon became the cruel despot.[209]

　　The most important problem is to clarify the function and meaning
of 14:30a. Certainly, 14:30b can be read as the extension of 14:29, as
some argue. But is that reason enough to detach 14:30a from the con-
text? Isaiah 14:29–31 contains motifs and words that appear elsewhere
in Isaiah, most obviously in 11:1–9.[210] Isaiah 11:1–9 may also provide us

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[207] See Isa 3:14.15; 10:1–2 (cf. Kaiser, 44; Barth, *Jesaja-Worte*, 15; Berges, "Ar-
men", 160–61).

[208] This aspect implies a certain ambiguity in the Isaianic message (cf. 8:11–
15). Cf. also H. G. M. Williamson, "Hope under Judgement: The Prophets of
the Eighth Century BCE", *EQ* 72 (2000) 296–97. For Isaiah as a prophet of
salvation, cf. especially section 1.1.3.

[209] Cf. Balogh, "Blind People", 66. Note also עָנִי in Hab 3:14, a text probably
deriving from the monarchic period (cf. Hab 3:13), reused by the prophet for
his own situation in the Babylonian era. This terminology cannot even be con-
sidered exclusively biblical, for the Zakkur Stele refers to the one oppressed by
foreign powers as ʾš ʿnh (*DNWSI* 874). Sargon calls himself "der die Lastenbe-
freiung für Sippar, Nippur und Babylon festsetzte, der Beschützer ihrer schwa-
chen (*enšūtu*), der ihnen der Schaden ersetzte" (Tonzylinder 1:4; *ISK*). Sen-
nacherib is "prayerful shepherd, worshipper of the great gods, guardian of the
right, lover of justice, who lends support, who comes to the aid of the needy,
who turns (his thoughts) to pious deeds" (A1; D. D. Luckebill, *The Annals of
Sennacherib* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1924], 48; cf. also B1:1–2).

[210] Note especially צֶפַע (14:29) and צִפְעוֹנִי (11:8), and further יצא (14:29; 11:1),
שֹׁרֶשׁ (14:29.30b; 11:1), רעה (14:30; 11:7), רבץ (14:30; 11:6.7), דַּל (14:30;
11:4), עָנָו (11:4; 14:32), and אֶבְיוֹן (14:30). Though Becker also called attention
to some of these words (*Botschaft*, 273), strangely he left the parallelism of דַּל
(14:30; 11:4), עָנָו (11:4; 14:32) and אֶבְיוֹן (14:30) unmentioned.

the answer concerning the function of 14:30a. Isaiah 11:1–9 describes a world in which the snakes and vipers do not represent any danger for the security of the oppressed and helpless living under the authority of the king, the shoot of Isai. In 14:30a the author assures everyone, that the root (שֹׁרֶשׁ) of the snake and the seed (פְּרִי) of the winged viper will not harm the seed (בְּכוֹר, 'first-born') of the poor, but will destroy the root (שֹׁרֶשׁ) of Philistia. The image of the safe first-born (בְּכוֹר) among the snakes in 14:30a, is similar to the קָטֹן נַעַר in 11:6, or the יוֹנֵק and גָמוּל in 11:8. What the prophet proclaims here is a message of doom for Philistia and a message of salvation for Judah, corresponding to the attitude of Isaiah during the crisis of 732 B.C. (Isa 7–8). This may help us understand the second problematic verse of the pericope, Isa 14:32.

Isaiah 14:32 is probably an oracular response to inquirers, asking YHWH by the prophet, what they should answer to[211] the "messengers of the (foreign) nation" (cf. Isa 21:10.11–12). The messenger of YHWH urges those inquirers to place trust in God rather than Philistia. This message is well-suited to an audience preparing for war after the death of Tiglath-pileser and Ahaz, his Judaean ally. Philistia will be harmed by the snake, but the עֲנִיֵּי עַמּוֹ, "the needy of his people" will not get hurt as long as YHWH remains their trust (cf. Isa 7:9).[212] חסה (14:32) and בֶּטַח (14:30) are synonymous terms. The connections between Isa 14:32 and 28:16 cannot be negated.[213]

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[211] The text only gives sense if an implicit לְ is "inserted" before מַלְאֲכֵי־גוֹי. The plural מַלְאֲכֵי cannot be the subject of the singular verb. It would give no sense to assume that מַלְאֲכֵי־גוֹי referred to the Assyrian messengers in Isa 37:9–10 (contra Berges, "Armen", 162), not in a prophecy addressed against Philistia. The messengers from Isa 18:2 provide a better parallel. The fact that גוֹי appears in sg. suggests that it refers to one foreign nation, probably the Philistines.

[212] עֲנִיֵּי עַמּוֹ appears further only in Isa 10:2 (עֲנִיֵּי עַמִּי) and Ps 72:4 (עֲנִיֵּי־עָם), in both cases referring to a smaller group. Cf. also Isa 3:15. עֲנִיֵּי עַמּוֹ in Isa 14:32 may also allude to a limited addressee. Isa 14:30a motivates the hope in 14:32, so the two verses should not be separated (contra Berges, "Armen", 162–63).

[213] On Isa 28:16 see J. Dekker, *Zion's Rock-Solid Foundations: An Exegetical Study of the Zion Text in Isaiah 28:16* (OTS 54; Leiden: Brill, 2007). This verse may help us to understand why 14:32 is only concerned with the עֲנִיֵּי עַמּוֹ. In 28:16 the trust in YHWH also appears over against the arrogance, and pride of the leaders of the nation who know nothing of מִשְׁפָּט and צְדָקָה, i.e. exactly the group opposite to עֲנִיֵּי עַמּוֹ. The ambiguity in the message of Isaiah appears explicitly in Isa 8:12–14, also in the context of conspiracy.

Berges emphasised the connection between Isa 14:32 and Zeph 3:12–13. He argued that both texts reflect the same view and both were written in the post-exilic period (mid 5th century) ("Armen", 163, 174). However, further correspondences between Zephaniah and Isaiah (Zeph 2:8 | Isa 16:6; Zeph 3:10 | Isa 18:2.7) may suggest that Isa 14:28–32 was known to the author of

To conclude, (a) Isa 14:29.30b–31 may have once been an independent prophecy against Philistia. However, it is hard to find any convincing explanation for what purpose the summary of the oracle inquiry in 14:32 would have been added later. The reasons given above may serve to induce that such a hypothesis is unnecessary.

(b) Four key theological motifs appear in 14:28–32: first, the image of the vanished oppressor; second, the imperative not to rejoice but to wail (הלל; 14:31; cf. 14:29) in view of the coming destruction; third, the threat posed to Philistia that will not affect those who place their trust in Zion (this is the first text pointing to the central role of Zion in the FNPs, the place where threat and fear can be exchanged for trust and confidence); fourth, no remnants of Philistia will survive.

The present position of 14:28–32 as directly following the dirge and a promise of destruction of Assyria is important. For though 14:28–32 may be rooted in earlier history, it follows a prophecy referring explicitly to the fall of Assyria (implied by 14:30) that fits well the secondary purpose of the editors who relocated Isa 14:28–32.

(c) No serious grounds can be found against the originality of the superscription. Isaiah 14:32 makes most sense against the background of preparations for anti-Assyrian revolts. The message is at any rate consistent with the "Immanuel"-theology of Isa 7–8.

3.4.2.3. THE COMPOSITION OF ISAIAH 15–16

The two chapters of the prophecy concerning Moab are often analysed as one long poem.[214] Nevertheless, 16:13–14, which contrasts a prophecy that was spoken long ago (or in the past; מֵאָז) with the present message gives explicit evidence of textual growth. Isaiah 15–16 as a large composition can be divided into the following pericopes: 15:1–9; 16:1–5; 16:6–12; 16:13–14. Their internal relationship remains to be established below.

ISAIAH 15:1–16:5

Isaiah 15:1–9 describes a catastrophe in Moab that appears to have mainly affected its natural habitat. Some scholars argued that the main

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Zeph 2 and 3 and Zeph 3:12 may have borrowed ideas from Isa 14:32.

[214] W. Rudolph, "Jesaja xv–xvi", in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver* (eds. D. Winton Thomas & W. D. McHardy; Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 141; T. G. Smothers, "Isaiah 15–16", in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (eds. J. W. Watts & P. R. House; JSOTSS 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 82–83; Sweeney, 240–51; B. Jones, *Howling over Moab: Irony and Rhetoric in Isaiah 15-16* (SBLDS 157; Scholars: Atlanta, 1996).

body of this text was formerly a lamentation related to drought and fam-ine.[215] Isaiah 15:9(b), however, obviously alludes to war in Moab. This thematic change, as well as the word of YHWH in 15:9, unusual in a lamentation, has led some scholars to conclude that 15:9 is a later addi-tion.[216] Others argued that Isa 15 is a mixed composition (cf. Isa 14) ex-pressing irony, dressed in the garments of a lament.[217]

To be sure, natural disaster may appear in descriptions of enemy in-vasions, so far as destroying natural resources belonged to the often ap-plied war techniques in the Near East.[218] However, the severe draught in 15:6–7 does not appear to have been caused by humans. On the other hand, 15:1 alludes to destruction (שֻׁדַּד) and 15:9 to bloodbath caused by an enemy (מֵי דִימוֹן מָלְאוּ דָם).[219] It is therefore possible that an earlier lamentation song concerning a natural disaster (probably well-known to the audience) has been reapplied with prophetic purposes to predict a future destruction, an additional disaster in Moab by the hand of an en-emy. YHWH is about to bring more (נוֹסָפוֹת) upon Moab (i.e. more above the drought). Isaiah 15:1 and 15:9 was added to the text when the lam-entation was first adapted for the purposes of a prophecy.[220]

It is this second theme of a military attack against Moab that is picked up and discussed further in 16:1–5. The basic tone of 16:1–5 is quite different, not sparing the reader from surprises.

> The appearance of the mount Sela in Isa 16:1 is unexpected. Sela was located in Edom, in the neighbourhood of Bozrah, south of the Moab-ite border (but see Jer 48:24). Selah must be here one of the places to which the Moabites have fled from an attacker from the north.
>
> The precise meaning of כַּר, 'lamb', belonging to the ruler of the land (מֹשֵׁל־אֶרֶץ) in Isa 16:1 caused problems to ancient and modern ex-egetes alike. כַּר is in general assumed to refer to a real or imaginary tri-bute that the Moabites should have sent to Jerusalem, often related to 2 Kgs 3:4.[221] However, I find it most convincing to treat כַּר as a meta-phor for the dispersed Moabites, a picture that is further expanded in

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[215] Jenkins, "Development", 241; Blenkinsopp, 298.

[216] Rudolph, "Jesaja xv–xvi", 141; Clements, 151; Kilian, 110.

[217] Hayes & Irvine, 242; Jones, *Howling,* 107, 249–71.

[218] The invasion of a country by the enemy is sometimes pared with natural disasters (cf. Isa 32:9–12; 33:9; 37:30; Jer 14; Joel 1–2; Hab 3:17).

[219] חַלְצֵי מוֹאָב, "the warriors of Moab", paralleled by נַפְשׁוֹ in 15:4 should perhaps be חַלְצֵי מוֹאָב, "the loins of Moab" (cf. LXX; Rudolph, "Jesaja xv–xvi", 134).

[220] Cf. G. R. Hamborg, "Reasons for Judgment in the Oracles Against the Na-tions of the Prophet Isaiah", *VT* 31 (1981) 151, and see Isa 23 below.

[221] Cf. Rudolph, "Jesaja xv–xvi", 140; Smothers, "Isaiah 15–16", 76–77; Jones, *Howling,* 197–202. The sg. form of כַּר makes this highly unlikely.

16:2–4.[222] This metaphor was mostly inspired by the pastoral lifestyle
of the Transjordanian tribes, but it also fits the previous picture of de-
struction affecting grass, herbage and vegetation (15:6–7). כַּר refers to
the inhabitants of Moab, who find no pasture in Moab any more, and
are advised to take refuge in Judah to survive. כַּר as a symbol for the
Moabites that the ruler of the land of Moab (מֹשֵׁל־אֶרֶץ) was unable to
guard and feed, reminds us of similar pictures in the Bible, where God's
nation is compared to (scattered) sheep (צֹאן) and its leaders to rams
(אַיִל) or shepherds.[223] Following the destruction of Jerusalem, its in-
habitants are portrayed in Lam 1:6 as follows:

וַיֵּצֵא מִבַּת־צִיּוֹן כָּל־הֲדָרָהּ	From daughter Zion all her majesty departed,
הָיוּ שָׂרֶיהָ כְּאַיְלִים [כְּאֵילִים?]	her leaders have become like rams
לֹא־מָצְאוּ מִרְעֶה	that found no pasture,
וַיֵּלְכוּ בְלֹא־כֹחַ לִפְנֵי רוֹדֵף	and walked feebly before their pursuer.[224]

מֹשֵׁל־אֶרֶץ, the ruler of Moab, was unable to guard his flock before the
lion (15:9), his sheep have become dispersed like fugitive birds (16:2;
cf. 13:14). But neither does the Rock of Edom (סֶלַע), and the dry riv-
erbeds of Arnon provide secure shelter for the scattered ones of Moab.
The daughters of Moab (16:2) can only find security on the mountain
of the daughter of Zion. The new leader in Judah who like a true shep-
herd rules in the tent (אֹהֶל) of the shepherd David (16:5) will grant
them safety before the destruction (שׁוֹדֵד and שֹׁד in 16:4; cf. 15:1). The
final verse is close to Isa 4:2–6; 9:5–6; 11:1–5; and 32:1–2.

The salvation of Moab contrasts with 15:1–9. But 16:1–5 should be read
as an expansion of 15:1–9 (cf. 16:4 and 15:1). Although post-exilic con-
flict reports in the book of Nehemiah prove that visions concerning the
share of Moab in Judah's faith and future were divided, it is unlikely that
such a pro-Moab text would have received a place among the prophe-
cies that in its later redactional layers present a clearly anti-Moabite
colour (cf. 25:10–11), had it not already been part of an authoritative
prophetic tradition. Verse 5 refers to a ruler in Jerusalem, who lives in

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[222] Though Isa 16:2 is either dropped as a gloss (Kilian, 111), or relocated to
the previous poem (Fohrer, 1:188), it gives a good sense in its present location.
בַּת־צִיּוֹן in 16:1 and בְּנוֹת מוֹאָב in 16:2 presuppose metaphorical language.
[223] Cf. Ps 44:12; Isa 13:14; Jer 25:36; Ezek 34:6; Zech 11; etc. Cf. also עַתּוּד, 'he-
goat' (Isa 10:13; 14:9; Jer 50:8; Zech 10:3), or אַיִל, 'ram' (2 Kgs 24:15; Jer 25:34
and אֵילֵי מוֹאָב in Ex 15:15) as symbols for the leaders. Cf. Jer 51:40; Ezek 39:18.
For מֹשֵׁל as leader of animals / nations, see Hab 1:14.
[224] The reading אַיִל, 'ram' instead of אַיָּל, 'deer' is more likely (cf. LXX and see
note above). The verb רדף that refers here to the deportation of the in-
habitants of Jerusalem reminds the reader of a flock that is driven before a
shepherd, in which connection רדף is often used. Note that these "animals"
walk (הלך) before the "pursuer" and not flee from him (contra e.g. NRSV, NIV).

the "tent" of David.[225] The text is silent on Judaean expansions into Moabite territories. The reference to the vanished oppressor suggests that the enemy (Assyria?) does not any more affect the life of the people in the Jordan valley (cf. Isa 4:4; 10:12; 14:4b–27).[226] Dating 16:1–5 to the late 7th century means that the previous prophecy in 15:1.9 is related to an earlier Assyrian (?) campaign against Moab. This might have taken place in 644, but the exact date of the prophecy must remain a riddle of the future. These considerations suggest an even earlier origin for 15:2–8, on which 15:1.9 and 16:1–5 are based.

Isaiah 16:6–12.13–14

Even though some prefer to read Isa 16:6–14 as forming an original unit with 15:1–16:5, we find a clear break at Isa 16:6 dividing 16:6–12 from 16:1–5.[227] The content of the two prophecies is different. After the positive message addressing the fugitives of Moab, in 16:6 Moab is again accused of inappropriate attitude towards God's people, returning to the proclamation of judgment for Moab through a foreign enemy.

Isaiah 16:6–11 is generally regarded as another lamentation. However, 16:6 is obviously a text of different genre. Furthermore, the first person form הִשְׁבַּתִּי in 16:10 implies that YHWH is at word, typical for a prophecy rather than a lament song.[228] As in 15:9, it is possible that an ancient song has been reworked here to fit the purposes of a prophecy. The parallel text in Jer 48 contains even more prophetic elements. The בְּכִי יַעְזֵר, "the weeping of Jaezer" (16:9), may have been the title of the lamentation adopted here and expanded in a way that is typical for prophecy. The frame verses 16:6.12 may be the work of the same author, who transformed the song into a prophecy. Isaiah 16:12 with its allusion to 15:2 probably connects 16:7–11 to the former prophecy.[229] The pre-

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[225] Isa 16:5 is particularly close to 4:2–6; cf. סֻכָּה, לַיְלָה, הַר־צִיּוֹן, שְׁאָר, צֶמַח יהוה, מִסְתּוֹר, צֵל. The fact that the judge is placed in a "tent" in 16:5, need not necessarily allude to the post-monarchic origin of these verses (contra Berges, *Jesaja*, 164). The true shepherd reminds of David (contrast the bad shepherds of the *house* of David), tent is familiar in Moabite context, and the imagery parallels סֻכָּה in Isa 4:5. כִּסֵּא most likely refers to an existing royal throne.

[226] In contrast to JPS, NIV, NRSV, I assume to 16:4–5 to refer to the past.

[227] J. Høgenhaven, "The Oracles against the Nations in the Book of Isaiah: Their Possible Value for the Study of the History of Jordan", in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan VII: Jordan by the Millennia* (Amman: Department of Antiquities, 2001), 354; Kilian, 112. The radical transition in 16:6 cannot be explained in rhetorical terms (contra Jones, *Howling*, 263–64).

[228] The passive translation in the LXX suggests a niph'al reading. However, the most ancient witness of this text, Jer 48:33 also uses the hiph'il 1st pers. form.

[229] Note both the similarities and the antithesis in Isa 15:2 and 16:12.

diction of additional judgment in 15:9 provided a theological base for
the Moab-prophecy to be expanded.

The fact that 16:1–5 was attached to the first part of the prophecy
only, namely to 15:1–9, also makes it clear that 15:1–8 and 16:7–11 de-
rive from different sources and do not form an original literary unit.
Moreover, it is noteworthy that 15:1–8 is concerned with calamities af-
fecting pastures and waters (15:6–7), while in 16:7–11 the emphasis falls
on the vineyards of Moab (16:8–10). Yet by the time Jer 48 was com-
posed, 15:1–16:12 was already known in its present form.[230]

The final pericope, 16:13–14, alludes to the development of these
prophecies. An 'ancient' (or 'earlier'; מֵאָז; cf. Ezek 29:17–21) prophecy
is contrasted with a new revelation (וְעַתָּה). The chronological indi-
cation of 16:14 is similar to Isa 7:8 and 21:16.[231] Unlike 16:6–12, vss.
13–14 emphasise that judgment is about to appear *soon*.

Owing to Moab's role in the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24:1),
prophecies after the fall of Zion express strong anti-Moabite feelings.
The prophecy in 16:6–12 may date from this period, though the lamen-
tation to which 16:7–11 alludes may be older.[232]

To conclude, (a) Isa 15–16 presents an editorial unit with 15:2–8 as
a probable old song expanded by 15:1.9. This was supplemented by the
addition of 16:1–5 with a positive message concerning Moabite fugi-
tives. Isaiah 16:1–5 is not supposed to have served independently, but
only as an extension of the previous prophecy. Isaiah 16:6–12 trans-
forms the text again to a prophecy of judgment. This passage may go
back to an ancient song (16:9), but in its present form it certainly is a
prophetic-predictive text. According to 16:13–14, the judgment of

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[230] I.e. including Isa 16:1–2 (cf. Jer 48:28), 16:6 (cf. Jer 48:29–30), and 16:12
(cf. Jer 48:35). For the parallelism 16:1–2 | Jer 48:28, cf. König, 190; Gosse,
Isaïe, 108; Jones, *Howling*, 99–101; Balogh, "Oude en nieuwe", 123–24. The
absence of passages from 15:1–16:12 need not necessarily mean that the author
of Jer 48 was unacquainted with those (contra Gray, 271–72; Wildberger,
606). One reason for the selective citation is that Jer 48 is limited to sections
describing judgment, for which Isa 16:3–5 was less suited. Cf. Jer 48:5 | Isa
15:5; 48:28 | 16:1.2; 48:29.30 | 16:6; 48:31 | 16:7; 48:32 | 16:8.9; 48:32.33 |
16:10; 48:34 | 15:4.5.6; 48:35 | 16:12 (15:2?); 48:36 | 16:11+15:7; 48:37 |
15:2.3; 48:38 | 15:3. The view that Isa 15–16 was based on Jer 48 (Blen-
kinsopp, 297–98) cannot be sustained, neither is it likely that Jeremiah was
influenced by a text different from Isa 15–16 (contra J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB
21; New York: Doubleday, 1965], 322).

[231] Contra Kaiser, 6, and Fischer, *Fremdvölkersprüche*, 184, this formula has lit-
tle to do with apocalyptic, but it is typical for salvation prophecies.

[232] Cf. Rudolph, "Jesaja xv–xvi", 141–42; Smothers, "Isaiah 15–16", 83. How-
ever, a date in Jeroboam II's era (so Rudolph) cannot be proven.

Moab will appear very soon.

(b) In Isa 15–16 seven important themes appear comparable to other FNPs: first, the theme of destruction (שדד); second, the motif of howling (ילל) determining the basic tone of the greatest part of the passage; third, the vanished oppressor (16:4); fourth, 16:3 refers to a plan (עֵצָה) and counsel (פְּלִילָה) that should be taken concerning the refugees of Moab; fifth, Jerusalem with a ruler on its throne appears as a place of refuge for the Moabite fugitives; sixth, the motif of pride and haughtiness (גָּאוֹן, גֵּא, גַּאֲוָה, 16:6); seventh, the temporal aspect with regard to the fulfilment of the prophecy (16:14).

(c) The text does not present any clear clues concerning its authorship and setting. The greatest part of Isa 15–16 presupposes a pre-exilic background. The sound of hope in 16:1–5 may be connected to the fall or the departure of Assyria from Moab (cf. 14:4b–21.24–27). However, in 16:6 Moab appears as an enemy which may reflect the experience of Judah after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.

3.4.2.4. THE COMPOSITION OF ISAIAH 17(–18)

The fourth מַשָּׂא is connected to Damascus, but it is usually assumed that the main part of this text deals with Israel. Damascus appears for the last time in 17:3. Whether the following sections only have Israel in view or also the Aramaeans remains a question to be addressed below. The text is uneven on more than one point suggesting that in its present form Isa 17–18 is the result of a complex literary history implying the addition of originally unrelated prophecies, as well as the expansion of existing texts. Isaiah 17:1–11 can be structured as follows: 17:1–3; 17:4–6; 17:7–8; 17:9; 17:10–11. Many exegetes treat 17:12–14 and 18:1–7 as independent prophecies, but some include them in this literary unit.[233]

Isaiah 17:1–3 is delimited by the נְאֻם-formula. The style of the passage is poetic.[234] With the exception of a few voices, the unity of 17:1–3 is generally assumed to be original.[235] In 17:3 Damascus and Ephraim are

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[233] So Sweeney, 254; Childs, 136. For the details, see section 4.1.3.

[234] Note the parallelisms and the word plays מְעִיר | מֵעִיר (17:1), עֲרֹעֵר | עָרֶי (17:2).

[235] Because Aroer also appears as a Moabite city, Wildberger (639–40) and Clements (157) argue that Isa 17:2 is a reminiscence of the preceding Moab oracle. However, Aroer was a border city, once also possessed by Israel (Num 32:34; Deut 3:12; 4:48; Josh 13:9.16), defeated by Aram (2 Kgs 10:33), and captured by Mesha around 830 (Moabite stone ln. 26). On fluctuating borders in early states, cf. M. Steiner, "I am Mesha, King of Moab, or: Economic Organisation in the Iron Age II", in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan VII: Jordan by the Millennia* (Amman: Department of Antiquities, 2001), 328; G. L. Mattingly, "Moabite", in *Peoples of the Old Testament World* (eds. A. Ho-

connected, which suggests that the events of 734–732 play a role in the background of this prophecy.[236]

Isaiah 17:4–6 headed by וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא is delimited from the following passage by the נְאֻם-formula. The concern of this prophecy is the fall of Northern Kingdom. In attaching this individual oracle to the previous text, the editors may have been guided by the catchword כָּבוֹד (17:3.4). The theme presented in 17:4–6 is common with Isa 9:7–20, and especially the originally anti-Israelite 10:16–19.[237]

The metaphor in 17:4–6 alludes to a serious judgment as a result of which only gleanings of ears and fruits have remained (cf. 10:19). It is often assumed that this reflects the historical situation after the campaign of Tiglath-pileser III, when Israel had lost most of its 'glory'.[238] But the fall of Samaria during the subsequent raids of Salmaneser V or Sargon II, and the survival of a handful of Samaria's former inhabitants, would provide a more suitable background. It is not to be excluded though that in its original setting the prophecy was predictive rather than descriptive.

The following verses contain intermittent changes in perspectives underlining the fragmentary character of this literary unit. Isaiah 17:7–8 begins with the בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא formula. The focus of the author is not the threat of the Aram-Israel league, but the fate of the survivors. This verse which appears to be a cohortative note of hope, reminds one of Isa 10:20–21(22–23) in relation to 10:16–19.[239]

Isaiah 17:9 is also delimited by a בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא formula. After hope the prophecy returns to judgment. It pictures again deserted and abandoned cities and fortresses, exposing an inverted conquest of Canaan, in which Israelites appear as the victims of war. Israel forsakes its cities before the enemy, as its enemies have once forsaken their cities before them. This theology is familiar from e.g. 2 Kgs 21:9 (cf. Deut 28). Isaiah 17:9 is related to 17:2 by the verb עזב and to 17:6 by the rare noun אָמִיר (17:6).[240]

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erth et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 319, 326.

[236] Donner, *Israel*, 40–41; Gosse, *Isaïe*, 95; Clements, 157. The scepticism of Kilian (113–14) makes it impossible to assign any oracle of the book to the 8th century prophet. Based on Jer 49:23–27, Höffken argues that a post-Isaianic interest for Damascus should not be excluded (148). However, it is here the connection between Damascus and Israel which suggests an 8th century date.

[237] Note מִשְׁמָן (10:16 and 17:4), רָזוֹן (10:16) and רזה (17:4), כָּבוֹד (10:16 and 17:4), [יִשְׂרָאֵל] קָדוֹשׁ (10:17), בָּשָׂר (10:18 and 17:4). Cf. also the importance of the "remnant" motif in both 17:6 and 10:20–22.

[238] See 2 Kgs 15:29. Cf. Gosse, *Isaïe*, 95; Clements, 157.

[239] For YHWH as the creator of Israel, see especially Deut 32:15; Hos 8:14.

[240] The frequently proposed emendation of אמיר to אמרים (and החרשׁ to חום; cf. Fischer, 134; Wildberger, 637; Clements, 159) based on the LXX becomes

Isaiah 17:10–11 gives the motivation for the former prediction that will be fulfilled: Israel has forgotten his saviour and rock,[241] concretising the sin of this nation in foreign religious practices.

> Two other texts from Isaiah throw further light on the composition of 17:1–11: Isa 24:13 and 27:2–11. Isaiah 24:13 cites 17:6. Isaiah 24:1–12 contains a lamentation upon the קִרְיַת־תֹּהוּ, "city of chaos", probably alluding to Jerusalem (cf. 24:5.10.12). Isaiah 24:12 mentions the desolation in the town (בָּעִיר שַׁמָּה), probably seen by 24:13 as a situation parallel to 17:9. If this is true, we may assume that by the time 24:12–13 was composed, 17:1–11 was already known in its present form, i.e. containing both 17:6 and 17:9. This seems to be corroborated further by an even more intriguing text, 27:7–11.
>
> What seems to be an allusion to 5:1–7, Isa 27:2–6 contains a new vineyard song.[242] Further reference to 5:9.17 appears in 27:10, and to 5:13a in 27:11b. However, Isa 27 is also in dialogue with other passages from Isaiah, most notably Isa 17: אֲשֵׁרִים וְחַמָּנִים מִזְבֵּחַ (17:8; 27:9), (17:8; 27:9; only here in Isaiah), רבץ (17:2; 27:10), עזב (17:2.9; 27:10), סָעִיף (17:6; 27:10; appears only here), קָצִיר ('branch', 17:11;[243] 27:11; relatively rare, only here in the prophets). Furthermore, describing YHWH as Israel's maker and creator (וְיֹצְרוֹ עֹשֵׂהוּ; 27:11), can be compared to 17:7.10. The lexical and theological similarity is more than simple coincidence. The date of Isa 27 may provide a *terminus ante quem* for the present form of 17:1–11.

Concluding, (a) Isa 17:1–11 is complex unit composed of fragments connected by catchwords (כָּבוֹד, 17:3.4; אָמִיר, 17:6.9; עזב, 17:2.9). Some of the fragments may have originally been relocated here by the editors

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even less likely in view of these intertextual connections. The MT gives good sense so far as it compares the abandoned fortress cities of Israel built on mountains to forsaken mountain tops, i.e. fortresses with no inhabitants. The meaning of אָמִיר is synonymous with חֹרֶשׁ, probably referring to 'mountain area'.

[241] The language is very similar to the song of Deut 32 both in its description of God as a 'rock' and of the idolatrous practices of Israel (Deut 32:18).

[242] K. Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOTSS 65; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 87–123.

[243] The general translation of קָצִיר in 17:11 as 'harvest', 'crop', cannot be hold, for it gives no sense whatsoever. קָצִיר can only refer to grain harvest, but 17:10–11 is concerned with trees. Furthermore, נד used with קָצִיר, 'crop' is senseless. קָצִיר as 'branch' (cf. also Ibn Ezra, Qimchi, and JPS) on the other hand, hardly needs any explanation. נד (to be vocalised as נָד) is a qal perf. of נוד, among others meaning 'to shake', 'to sway' (see 1 Kgs 14:15; cf. the hitpolel in Isa 24:20), a synonym of נוע (see Gen 4:12.14; Isa 24:20), which is used with trees in Judg 9:9.11.13; Isa 7:2; Nah 3:12. I follow therefore the reading נָד קָצִיר, 'the brach will shake'.

as in Isa 10. The sequence judgment (17:1–6) followed by hope (17:7–8) and then again by judgment (17:9–11) also appears in Isa 15–16.

(b) The concern of 17:7–11 for religious sins suggests that this part of the prophecy focuses not on Israel's alliance with Damascus as in 17:1–3. It is rather a theological meditation on why "Israel" had to come to such shameful end. In comparison with the previous texts, we may underline the presence of the motif of remnant in 17:3.6, to some extent the motif of humiliation of the כָּבוֹד and מִבְצָר of Israel. The day of YHWH is possibly alluded at as יוֹם נַחֲלָה in 17:11.

(c) The appearance of Damascus in 17:1–3 suggests a date between 734 and 732, while 17:4–7 could be dated to around 721. Uncertain is 17:7–8, especially because of its predictive character, but it is probably not earlier than the 7th century, the era of major cultic reforms. Isaiah 17:9 and 10–11 might be based on earlier criticism against the Northern Kingdom, but its present location probably implies an exilic origin.

The literary and theological function of Isa 17:12–14 and 18:1–7, though strongly related with 17:1–11, will be discussed in 4.3.1.

3.4.2.5. The Composition of Isaiah 21:1–10

I argued above in 3.4.1. that Isa 21–22 forms a distinctive unit inside Isa 13–23. These prophecies contain headings composed according to a different concept than most of those that we have seen until now. In spite of the differences, the term מַשָּׂא appears to have served as the editorial guideline when Isa 21–22 was included into this corpus.

As it can be inferred from vs. 9, 21:1–10 is directed against Babylon. The language of this prophecy is difficult and its precise meaning is not always easy to grasp. Some scholars attribute the abrupt style of this text to ecstatic prophetic experience,[244] others explain its complexity as the result of redactional activity,[245] or assume that 21:1–10 is composed of several oracles.[246]

Editorial activity may certainly cause problems for modern readers to

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[244] Galling, "Jesaja 21 ", 56.

[245] Macintosh, *Palimpsest.* Bosshard-Nepustil also distinguishes between a *Grundschicht* from 587 (21:1.2abα.3–5.6.8–9a) and an expansion from around 539 (21:2bβγ.7.9b–10; 2bβ: עֲלִי עֵילָם צוּרִי מָדִי; 2bγ: כָּל־אַנְחָתָה הִשְׁבַּתִּי) (*Rezeptionen*, 24–42). Like W. H. Cobb (*apud* Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 69), Bosshard-Nepustil argues that originally the prophecy had nothing to do with Babylon, but proclaimed doom for Jerusalem (*Rezeptionen*, 33–36; cf. Kaiser, 6). He identifies מִדְבַּר־יָם with the southern desert of Judah, and observes a relationship with the exodus tradition (*Rezeptionen*, 36). However, the author heaps up his premises in a manner that they ultimately fail to convince.

[246] Höffken wondered whether Isa 21 could be divided as 21:1–5.6–10 (163).

understand ancient texts. Yet in this particular case most scholars pay insufficient attention to the character of the prophecy, explicitly de-scribed as a חָזוּת קָשָׁה, "hard vision" (21:2). The genre of חָזוּת legitimises the use of a heavily metaphorical language that is ultimately responsible for most interpretive problems. Reckoning with a *visionary* character rich in symbolism and taking into consideration that this vision has been recorded subsequently as a *report*, urges us to exert more caution in making conclusions regarding the integrity of Isa 21:1–10.

In accordance with the observations above, one should make a dis-tinction between two levels in this text. On the first level, in the real world of the prophet and his audience, the prophet reflects on an in-quiry (or concern) formulated by his community. The second person לָכֶם in 21:10b implies that the prophecy was uttered in front of a public troubled by what was going on in its world.[247] Beyond that, however we can discern another level, the vision of the prophet, in which six differ-ent roles are assigned to various actors: the attacking nation (Elam and Media), the attacked nation (Babylon), the oppressed nation (Judah), Yhwh, the seer, and the lookout in 21:6–9.

What is the sense of the vision? Isaiah 21:1b reports the arrival of a yet unnamed agent. This enemy from a terrible land is compared to storm winds in the south.[248] According to 21:2 the reason behind the arrival of this unnamed nation is that "the treacherous (בּוֹגֵד) deals treacherously and the destroyer (שׁוֹדֵד) destroys". Then we hear the summons of Yhwh to Elam and Media to lay a siege, suggesting that these two nations are the unnamed agent(s) of 21:1b. But who is the threacherous one? בּוֹגֵד and שׁוֹדֵד also appear in Isa 33:1. Because this verse is thought to describe Assyria, some authors would like to believe that בּוֹגֵד and שׁוֹדֵד in 21:2 also refer to Assyria.[249] However, even if As-

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[247] Cf. Ezek 12:21–25 for an inquiry, or Hab 2:1–3 reporting on a personal en-counter with Yhwh, common also in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

[248] Scholars in general delimit the cola's of 21:1b as follows: כְּסוּפוֹת בַּנֶּגֶב לַחֲלֹף / מֵאֶרֶץ נוֹרָאָה / מִמִּדְבָּר בָּא (e.g., BHS). However, the problem with this is that the qal inf. לַחֲלֹף does not give sense. חלף + ב is not attested, but חלף + מִן is well-known (1 Sam 10:3). I suggest the following division: כְּסוּפוֹת בַּנֶּגֶב / לַחֲלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ נוֹרָאָה / מִמִּדְבָּר בָּא, "like whirlwinds in the south, about to pass on from the desert, (so) it comes from a fearful land". The enemy is not assumed to have come from the south (contra, e.g., Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 7; cf. Jer 4:11), it is only compared to southern winds. For the imagery applied here, cf. also Isa 5:28; Jer 4:13 (סוּפָה); Jer 4:11; 49:39; Hab 1:11 (רוּחַ; for חלף in connection with רוּחַ, 'wind', see also Job 4:15). See also Isa 25:4; 27:8; 28:2; 29:6.

[249] Cf. Erlandsson, *Burden*, 92; Hayes & Irvine, 274; J. Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk bei Jesaja. Eine Untersuchung zur biblischen Theologie* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 145; Ohmann, 79–81; Gallagher, *Campaign*, 40. For the relationship between

syria is the threacherous destroyer in Isa 33:1 (which is debated) this
text does not necessarily have to govern our reading of Isa 21:2, because
the imagery of 21:2 also complies with Babylon.[250] If בּוֹגֵד and שׁוֹדֵד al-
luded to Assyria here, the name of Babylon in 21:9 would come as a sur-
prise. It is therefore more likely that the threacherous destroyer of 21:2
is Babylon. The Elamites and Medians are summoned to put an end to
the sighing of YHWH's nation, caused by Babylon.[251]

Isaiah 21:5–9 is also not free of troubling details,[252] but the main
lines are reasonably clear. In 21:6 the prophet is told to go and post a
lookout (מְצַפֶּה) and announce what the lookout will see. Who is this
lookout? Another *ego* of the prophet?[253] I believe that מְצַפֶּה is a different
actor, who only appears *in the vision* of the prophet. In his vision, the
prophet hears God telling him to install a lookout. What the lookout
tells the prophet is also part of the vision. We observe here a vision (of
the lookout in 21:7–9) in a vision (of the prophet of 21:1–9).[254] The
outcome of the vision is clear: Babylon is fallen. It has become YHWH's
"threshed one", "the product of YHWH's threshing floor".[255]

Isa 21:1 and 33:1, see C. Balogh, "'He Filled Zion with Justice and Righteous-
ness': The Composition of Isaiah 33", *Bib* 89 (2008) 493–94.

[250] Cf. Vanderhoofd, *Babylon,* 130 note 37. See, e.g., Jer 6:26; Hab 1:13. Like
the seer of Isa 21, Habakkuk also observed the lack of "righteousness" in his
world (Hab 1) and he was depressed by his experience; he was sighing and
groaning in front of YHWH in favour of his oppressed people.

[251] אַנְחָתָה should probably be אַנְחָתָהּ, "her (Judah's) sighing" (as many MSS,
Vulg. and the Syr.; cf. *HUB*). Hayes & Irvine argue that Isa 21:2 refers to
Babylon's sighing under the Chaldaean oppression, as one of Sargon's text
claims (275). However, the Assyrian text refers to Sargon acting in favour of
Babylon, while Isa 21 is concerned with the fall of the city.

The interpretation of 21:2 in the sense that the Elamites and Medians
would be Babylon's allies rather than enemies (so Gallagher and Sweeney) is
problematic. The imperative to Elam (עלה) can only be interpreted as 'to go up
(against)' in offence and not in defence (cf. Jer 46:9.11; 50:21; Nah 2:2; with
Blenkinsopp, 326, contra Macintosh, *Palimpsest,* 14–16; Sweeney, 277, 281).

[252] One of the notorious problems is the meaning and reference of צָפֹה הַצָּפִית
in 21:5. Galling emended the phrase to be a description of the enemy prepar-
ing for battle ("Jesaja 21", 57). But it is more likely that it is a citation of the
Babylonians rejoicing before the fall of the city (cf. Isa 22:13; Dan 5).

[253] Galling, "Jesaja 21", 57.

[254] This complex structure also appears elsewhere in vision reports and descrip-
tions of personal encounters between YHWH and a prophet. Micah saw Israel
scattered on the mountains and heard in vision as YHWH told him to send the
people home (1 Kgs 22:17).

[255] מְדֻשָׁתִי וּבֶן־גָּרְנִי refers to Babylon after "the threshing" (judgment) of YHWH
(so also Sa'adya, Ibn Ezra, Qimchi *apud* Macintosh, *Palimpsest,* 37; cf. Jer

Isaiah 21:1–10 is dated to between the 8th–3rd centuries.[256] Despite several detailed attempts to connect 21:1–10 to the eighth century,[257] significant problems remain with this proposal.[258] The same is also true for a date as close to the accomplishment of 1QIsaᵃ as possible.[259] The prophecy gives most sense in a context where Babylon is a really threatening historical power, that is, in the New Babylonian era.[260]

> Is it possible to reconstruct roughly the background of this prophecy? In 21:1–10, Elam appears as a still significant power in the East, a status it increasingly looses after 596 B.C. In later texts only Media is mentioned as a foe of Babylon (Isa 13:17; Jer 51:11.28). Elam descended to the Sheol (Ezek 32:24).[261] The year 596 may serve as a *terminus ante quem*. In the late pre-exilic age we observe a division among the prophets concerning Babylon's role in YHWH's plan. Jeremiah pro-

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51:33) and not to Judah as some would argue (Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 38; Hayes & Irvine, 276; Gallagher, *Campaign*, 46).

[256] For an overview of arguments, cf. Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 63–102.

[257] Erlandsson, *Burden*, 92; Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 105–6; Hayes & Irvine, 272–74; Sweeney, 279–83; Gallagher, *Campaign*, 21–50.

[258] The main argument for dating 21:1–10 to the 8th century was the presumed connection between בּוֹגֵד and שׁוֹדֵד and Assyria, which is, as mentioned, doubtful. So far as Babylon is concerned, the description of Babylon as בּוֹגֵד and שׁוֹדֵד and as an enemy of Elam and Media would not fit the 8th century.

Some argued that the feelings of the prophet would be inopportune if the nation condemned was Babylon (cf. Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 20; Sweeney, 278–79; Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen*, 24, 25 note 2; Gallagher, *Campaign*, 24). However, the prophet's feelings do not express sympathy, not even empathy (cf. Isa 16:11; Jer 4:19?), but they are the consequences of the "harsh vision". A causative translation of מִשְּׁמֹעַ ("*because of* hearing") and מֵרְאוֹת ("*because of* seeing")—which I favour above "so that I cannot hear", "so that I cannot see"—strengthens this assertion. According to 21:4 it was the vision that was unbearable to the prophet (cf. Hab 3:16; Dan 4:2; 7:15.28; 8:27). The cruelty of the vision also proclaims a negative message towards Babylon.

[259] Kaiser reckons with earlier poetry from before 539 (6), yet as he approaches towards the end of Isa 21 in his commentary, he becomes increasingly sceptical of a real historical setting (Kaiser, 105). Kilian also inclines to a very late date, but his reasoning is circular (128). Both scholars assume that Babylon could have functioned as a chiffre for world empires, but they fail to prove that in Isa 21 this actually was the case. It is also unconvincing to relate this oracle to the post-Cyrus era (contra Fischer, "Edom-Spruch", 480–81). Babylon would hardly appear then as בּוֹגֵד and שׁוֹדֵד, causing the groaning of God's people.

[260] It is perhaps not negligible that the name of YHWH that appears at the end of the oracle, יהוה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, appears once in 2 Sam 7:27 (‖ 1 Chr 17:24); Isa 37:16; Zeph 2:9, but 32 times (!) in the book of Jeremiah.

[261] Cf. Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 106–7.

claims that Babylon is the tool in the hand of YHWH—a view also shared by the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 17). Beyond the famous clash between Jeremiah and Hananiah (Jer 27–28), in which the radically differing visions concerning the role of Babylon come to light, we find a nuanced view of Babylon in the book of Habakkuk. Habakkuk does not question the fact that YHWH has used Babylon to accomplish his plans (Hab 1:4–11), but he wonders whether Babylon still plays the role that YHWH has assigned to it. This vision of Babylon, the servant of YHWH (Jer 27:6), probably born in the aftermath of the invasions of Nabuchadnezzar in the land of Hatti (cf. 2.4.2.), is confirmed by YHWH in Hab 2, proclaiming judgment on his former agent. In this chaotic era, still before the decisive battle in 587, other prophets may have thought similarly to Habakkuk, as Ezek 12:21–25 also suggests that people were expecting prophecies—probably addressed against Babylon—to be fulfilled. Strikingly, it is exactly the book of Habakkuk that contains so significant similarities with the prophecy in Isa 21:1–10.[262] As argued, אַנְחָתָהּ refers to Judah under oppression, a situation cognate with the background of Habakkuk. The prophecy presupposes a date after the Babylonian invasion of Canaan (after 604), but probably before 587. Many scholars connect anti-Babylonian prophecies to the actual fall of the city in 539 (in case they reckon with a *post-eventum* prophecy) or date it to the eve of 539. However, the question what would happen to Babylon intrigued people of Canaan from the turn of the 7th century onwards. It is therefore most attractive to date 21:1–10 to the late pre-exilic period, possibly immediately after the invasion of Babylon in 598 and before the final defeat of Elam in 596.[263]

To conclude, (a) the difficulties in interpreting 21:1–10 are not caused by literary evolution, but they derive from its complex nature as a report of a vision (narrative-descriptive text) given before an audience.

(b) The lack of motifs common with the other prophecies of Isa 13–

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[262] Both Hab and Isa 21 are a מַשָּׂא-oracle and a vision (Hab 2:1–3; Isa 21:2); cf. also the description of Babylon in Hab 1:2.13 and Isa 21:2, the reaction of the prophet in Hab 3:16 and Isa 21:3–4, the watcher in Hab 2:1 and Isa 21:6. On Habakkuk and Babylon, see Vanderhooft, *Babylon*, 152–63.

[263] Höffken, 163 argued that 21:1–10 is written from a Judaean (and not Babylonian) perspective. For a helpful discussion on the political scene and the presence of Elam and Media as adversaries of Babylon, cf. Vanderhooft, *Babylon*, 132–34. Elam was a supporter of Babylon against Assyria prior to its fall, but became its enemy after Babylon had begun to expand towards the East (*ABC* 5:rev. 16–20). So Jer 49:34–39 records Elam in conflict and losing the battle in a prophecy dated to 597/596. Cf. H. G. L. Peels, "God's Throne in Elam: The Historical Background and Literary Context of Jeremiah 49:34–39", in *Past, Present, Future: The Deuteronomic History and the Prophets* (eds. J. C. de Moor & H. F. van Rooij; OTS 44; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 216–29.

20.23 may be an additional argument for the different origin of Isa 21:1–10 with respect to the other מַשָּׂא prophecies (cf. 3.4.1.).

(c) The imperialistic picture of Babylon in Isa 21 (שׁוֹדֵד, בּוֹגֵד), presenting its former friends and allies, Elam and Media as enemies, suggest that 21:1–10 may have been composed around 597 B.C.

3.4.2.6. THE COMPOSITION OF ISAIAH 21:11–12

The short prophecy in Isa 21:11–12 is written in an ambiguous style. As argued earlier in 3.4.1., the concern of the prophecy is the country of Edom. Modern readers disagree on whether the prophet intends to formulate a positive or a negative message concerning this land, or simply intends to say that he has no message to tell at all.

Isaiah 21:11–12 abounds in textual difficulties. It appears to be an inquiry formulated in Seir. The שֹׁמֵר, 'watcher', probably the prophet,[264] is addressed two questions. The expression מַה־מִלַּיְלָה may mean "what (has remained) from the night", in other words "how long is still night out there?",[265] but it may also be rendered as "what from the night", i.e. "what should we expect from the night?", or "what do you, prophet, see in your night visions?" לַיְלָה may eventually also function as a metaphor for distress (cf. Isa 5:1; 17:14; 60:2). The second part of the question is less clear. מַה־מִלֵּיל may duplicate the former question, so that it could be considered a mere phonetic variation of the first question. Rendsburg, however, argued that מַה־מִלֵּיל derives from Aramaic מלל, 'to speak', so that מַה־מִלֵּיל could be translated as "what did he (YHWH) say?".[266]

The 3rd person formulation in 21:12 is in striking contrast to the beginning of this text as a first person report. The sentence אָתָה בֹקֶר וְגַם־לָיְלָה is an ambiguous prophetic answer. The verb אָתָה can perhaps refer to the future: "the morning will come and so will the night". But what does this utterance mean? Galling argues that the prophet was not allowed to give a more precise answer, but on the right moment YHWH would reveal his will. That is why he urged the inquirers to come back again.[267] I believe that the ambiguous answer of the prophet is a proper response to the ambiguous question of those from Seir. The prophet seems to suggest that the formulation of the question is either not right, or not clear. The situation reminds us of a similar inquiry addressed to Jeremiah in Jer 23:33–40. Jeremiah gives likewise no answer to the ques-

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[264] Cf. צֹפֶה in Ezek 3:17, מְצַפֶּה in Isa 21:6 and שֹׁמְרִים in Isa 62:6; Jer 51:12.

[265] For other temporal interpretations, cf. Gray, 357; Galling, "Jesaja 21", 60.

[266] G. A. Rendsburg, "Linguistic Variation and the 'Foreign Factor' in the Hebrew Bible", *IOS* 15 (1995) 181–82; cf. Gallagher, *Campaign*, 52. בעה (cf. Ob 6) and אתה are also seen as Aramaisms, adopted in a dialogue with foreigners.

[267] Galling, "Jesaja 21", 59–60; cf. Sweeney, 285.

tion מַה־מַשָּׂא יהוה. Though the exact reasons behind his refusal of the term מַשָּׂא are unclear,[268] it is nevertheless obvious that Jeremiah wished the inquirers formulated their questions in another way (Jer 23:35–36). That may also be the point in the answer of the prophet of Isa 21:12. "You ask me about the night how long it will be dark. What do you mean by מַה־מִלַּיְלָה? Now, the morning will come, and so will the night, too. If you seriously want to inquire then inquire, come again.[269]" This answer may be in connection with the fact that the inquirers (the really important persons) cry out *from Seir* (21:11), and do not appear personally in front of the prophet. The situation behind this prophecy, whether Edomite messengers actually visited the prophet, or sent letters, or the whole scene is visionary, is difficult to tell.[270]

If it is right to argue that the prophet does not proclaim any specific message towards the inquirers from Seir, Isa 21:11–12 should be considered a peculiar case inside the FNPs that in general contain messages of doom towards the nations, in some cases supplied with prophecies of salvation. This text does not seem to reflect the aftermath of any particular Assyrian, Babylonian or Persian campaign. The inhabitants of Edom often received the attention of the world empires, so that it would be difficult to suggest any specific date based on historical presumptions. The similarities with the content of the prophecy in 21:1–10 is the only reason why I am predisposed to date it approximately to the same era.[271]

3.4.2.7. THE COMPOSITION OF ISAIAH 21:13–17

מַשָּׂא בַּעְרָב introduces a prophecy concerning the inhabitants of the southern Syrian Desert, the far eastern neighbours of Judah, and the inhabitants of northern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Though the text contains problematic passages, its message is rather obvious.

> The expression בַּיַּעַר בַּעְרָב is probably a play on words, a frequent poetical device of these prophecies. The meaning of בַּיַּעַר is unclear. While the idea of sleeping in the forest is known from Ezek 34:25, יַעַר, 'forest' is unsuitable for a desert region. Some assumed יַעַר referred to the 'oasis' in the desert (cf. Jer 46:23?), but יַעַר is quite consistently

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[268] See on this text EXCURSUS 3.

[269] שׁוּב + verb expresses here the repetition of an action (in this case אתה).

[270] Medieval Jewish exegetes were seriously troubled by a prophet giving answers to inquirers from Edom (Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 41–42).

[271] The lack of anti-Edomite feelings so characteristic to the post-exilic period may support this hypothesis as an additional argument (Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 133), though one must be aware that even after the exile, Edom may appear in a favourable light (cf. יֹשְׁבֵי סֶלַע in Isa 42:11; see also Galling, "Jesaja 21", 60).

used for 'forest'.[272] It is possibile to emend בַּיַּעַר to בְּעִיר. The nomad fel-
lows of Dedan, the Kederites, who appear later in this prophecy, are
told to live in the cities and villages of the desert.[273] בַּעְרָב may also be
vocalised as בְּעֶרֶב, 'in the evening'. The ambiguous meaning allows a
secondary metaphorical interpretation.[274] As a further option, בערב
may be a geographical term (cf. לין + בַּעֲרָבָה; 2 Sam 17:16).

Dedan and Tema, two nations of northern Arabia addressed in Isa
21:13–14, also appear side by side in Jer 25:23, but the related FNPs in
Jer 49:28–33 only mention the Kedarim. In Isa 21:13b the author high-
lights the conditions of the Arabians (Dedanites), who lay down peace-
fully in their cities in contrast to their northern brothers, who flee from
before the sword and battle. The caravans of Dedan and the inhabitants
of Tema are summoned to bring water and bread to the fugitives. This
means that neither Dedan, nor Tema are affected by the judgment that
has overcome their northern brothers. The summons קִדְּמוּ נֹדֵד in 21:14
is possibly a word play on בְּנֵי־קֶדֶם, "sons of the East", designating here
those living to the north of Dedan and Tema. This name is used as a
synonym of קֵדָר, attested later in this prophecy (cf. Jer 2:10; 49:28).

The unity of Isa 21:13–17 is debated. Based on similarities with the
closing verses of the Moab prophecy in 16:14, some scholars regard Isa
21:16–17 as a secondary expansion.[275] The wide ranging lexical connec-
tions between the two texts allude to direct influence. The phrase כִּי כֹה
אָמַר יהוה אֵלַי may introduce a further expansion of the prophecy (cf. Isa
8:11; 30:15), but need not necessarily do so (cf. Isa 18:4; 21:6). In case
the community undergoing judgment were the sons of Kedem referred
to by a word play in 21:14 (and not the safely living Dedan and Tema),
21:16–17 may be considered to be an update to the previous vision ex-
tending the judgment proclaimed earlier in 21:13–15 to the whole of
north-eastern Arabia, to which the term Kedar may also refer.[276] The
theology of 21:16–17 is similar to 15:9b, arguing that even the remnants
would be reduced in number.

The relationship between 21:11–12 and 21:13–15(16–17) is unclear.
The tradition to regard them as a unit is quite old (cf. LXX). The fact

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[272] Although Eccl 2:5–6 mentions יַעַר in connection with פַּרְדֵּס, both words
probably refer to royal forests rather than to an 'oasis' (cf. Neh 2:8).
[273] Cf. Isa 42:11: מִדְבָּר וְעָרָיו חֲצֵרִים תֵּשֵׁב קֵדָר. For לין + ב + place in Isa 21:13, cf.
Gen 19:2; 31:54; Josh 4:3; 6:11; Judg 19:11; Sol 7:12.
[274] Cf. LXX, Vulg. For לין + בְּעֶרֶב, cf. Gen 32:14.22; Josh 8:9 (בַּלַּיְלָה).
[275] It is also argued that 21:13–15 is poetry and 21:16–17 prose (Galling, "Jesaja
21", 62; E. A. Knauf, "Kedar", ABD 4:9; Blenkinsopp, 329–30).
[276] For Kedar, cf. I. Eph'al, The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fer-
tile Crescent 9th–5th Centuries B.C. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), 223–27, Knauf,
"Kedar", 9.

that Jer 49:8 and Ezek 25:13 mention Dedan in connection with Edom
was seen as corroborating the unity of these pericopes.[277] Nevertheless,
as we have seen in 3.4.1., the tradition to treat 21:13 as the beginning of
a new oracle has a stronger support in ancient witnesses. Despite exe-
getical difficulties, it is clear that 21:12 closes a section which cannot
have been originally followed directly by a verse like 21:13.[278] This testi-
fies for the distinctive origin of the two pericopes.

It is difficult to date Isa 21:13–15.16–17. The Arabians of the Syrian
Desert were constantly involved in conflicts with Assyrian and Babylo-
nian kings. Nabonid conquered and lived about a decade in the region
of Tema. Because the prophecy in 21:13–15 does not presuppose the fall
of Tema and Dedan, at least these three verses should perhaps be dated
to the pre-Nabonid era.[279] Nothing more precise can, however, be de-
duced from the oracles. The remaining 21:16–17 with its similarities
with the Moabite prophecy is intriguing, but the direction of influence
cannot be determined. Nevertheless, these similarities attest to editorial
work on Isa 13–23 even after Isa 21–22 was added to Isa 13–20.23.

3.4.2.8. THE COMPOSITION OF ISAIAH 22

As noted in 3.4.1., the prophecy against the Valley of Vision in Isa
22:1–14, and especially against Shebna in 22:15–25, is surprising in a
collection of FNPs. The book of Isaiah is unique not only in including a
prophecy against Jerusalem among those addressed to foreign nations,
but even more significantly by addressing specific Judaean officials in
the context of this collection. As suggested earlier, the presence of Isa
22:1–14 in Isa 13–23 should be attributed to the fact that Isa 21 and
22:1–14 already formed a unit prior to becoming part of Isa 13–23. Can
this hypothesis also explain the presence of Isa 22:15–23 in the FNPs?

First, it is significant that Isa 22 contains a divine name appearing
with relative frequency in Isaiah, in comparison to other books of the
Bible: אֲדֹנָי יהוה צְבָאוֹת is attested in 3:15; 10:23.24; 22:5.12.14.15; 28:22,
and further in Ps 69:7; Jer 2:19; 46:10; 49:5; 50:25.31 (mainly the FNPs
of Jer!). Comparable to this is also הָאָדוֹן יהוה צְבָאוֹת, appearing only in
Isa 1:24; 3:1; 10:16.33; 19:4 in the Bible. These names of YHWH appear
in prophecies following each other in 3:1.15 and 10:16.23.24.33. Obvi-
ously neither Isa 3, nor 10:5–34 is an original literary unit. It seems that
in both cases, these specific divine names played a significant role in the
process of locating oracles close to each other. The same was probably

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[277] Cf. Gallagher, *Campaign*, 50–55.

[278] By the time Jer 49 was composed, Isa 21:11–15(16–17?) may have already
formed a literary unit (cf. Macintosh, *Palimpsest*, 131–37).

[279] Nebuchadnezzar campaigned against the Arabians in 599 (*ABC* 5:rev 9).

the case with Isa 22, where אֲדֹנָי יהוה צְבָאוֹת appears four times. Second, it is not less important that the two prophecies in Isa 22 begin with the questions מַה־לָּךְ and מַה־לְּךָ respectively. These catchwords may have also served as editorial guidelines when connecting 22:1–14 and 22:15–25. Third, Isa 22:2–3 envisages the capture of Judah's *leaders* by the enemy. In the final form reading, 22:15 elaborates on this theme, concretising the prediction of 22:2–3 on one particular leader. Fourth, 22:14 ends with the prediction that the iniquity of the Judaeans will not be forgiven until they die. Strikingly, 22:15–25 begins with the tomb cutting of Shebna. These literary and thematic considerations may explain the linking of Isa 22:1–4 to 22:15–25, as well as the presence of Shebna in the FNPs.

ISAIAH 22:1–14

While most scholars consider Isa 22:1–14 a coherent passage, a few argue that it bears signs of expansions. For metrical reasons, Duhm regarded 22:1–8a and 22:8b–14 as two different texts with distinctive concerns.[280] Duhm believed that the first part of 22:8b–11 got lost. He assumed that 22:9b–11a was a still later addition to the second speech. Kaiser (following Marti) considered 22:1b–4.12–14a the Isaianic layer which was extended around 588 by 22:9–11a, and even later by 22:5–6 ("proto-apocalyptic").[281]

Among significant uncertainties related to the text, the temporal connotations of various verbal forms weigh heavily in discussions concerning the unity of 22:1–14. The question is whether the prophet refers to a recent past experience (such as the aftermath of 701, or the Babylonians siege in 598 or 587), or he predicts the fall of the city (before 701/598/587). Both the future and past-related interpretations of the prophetic word have their advocates in the exegetical literature.[282]

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As in Isa 21:1–10, it is significant to recognise that one can distinguish two different temporal dimensions in 22:1–14. On the one hand, we see a prophet faced with an audience rejoicing and feasting, eating and drinking (22:13). His message to this people is that YHWH will not forgive their present attitude and they will perish according to the revelation that he has received. This stage is set in the present and looks out

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[280] Duhm, 157; cf. Procksch, 276.

[281] Kaiser, 114, 118–19; cf. also R. E. Clements, "The Prophecies of Isaiah and the Fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.", *VT* 30 (1980) 430.

[282] For interpreting 22:1–14 as an account of already accomplished past events, cf. NRSV, JPS, Alexander, Dillmann, König, Kaiser, Wildberger (except for 22:14), Schoors, Watts, etc. For interpreting 22:1–14 as predictive prophecy, cf. NIV, Knobel, Duhm (22:1–8a), Procksch (22:1–8a), Young.

towards the future. On the other hand, there is a different scene in which people are climbing up to the roofs. War, victims, exile, and weeping is seen and heard on this second stage. Clearly, these two scenes cannot be viewed on the same temporal level. The contrast between the two stages is explicitly signalised in the text by מַה־לָּךְ אֵפוֹא, "what happened to you *now*" and וְהִנֵּה in 22:13.[283]

Recognising these two temporal levels on which the actions of 22:1–14 take place, answers most problems related to the interpretation of this prophecy. In comformity with these observations, one may distill the verses referring to the present of the prophet, i.e. the actions in the real world, as including 22:4.12–14. However, 22:1–3.5a(5b–9a?) belong to a description of a future event, alluded to in 22:14.[284] This second temporal dimension about a dark future is actually a pre-eventum vision (not an already accomplished historical reality) which the prophet utters to his yet rejoicing audience.[285] The vision of future doom is addressed to people who have no insight in what is going on, who celebrate when time is ripe for lamentation.

The prophet foresees the presently rejoicing nation as wailing and mourning its captives. In contrast to what a city usually (and now) full of joy would do (מַה־לָּךְ אֵפוֹא; 22:21b), the people of the vision climb up on the rooftops.[286] The feelings of sorrow of the seer prophet (22:4; cf. 21:3–4) correspond to the approaching calamities. In vision he sees vic-

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[283] וְהִנֵּה in 22:13 cannot refer here to the past (contra NRSV, JPS). Verse 14 can only be understood as a prediction that still needs to be accomplished.

[284] Those who make no distinction between vision (future) and the reporting of the vision (present), assume that Judah was feasting *after* a partially lost battle (e.g., Kaiser, 113). However, Duhm (157) rightly argued that a loss such as the one described in 22:2–3 could have hardly been celebrated by the people.

[285] The fact that we deal with a vision on this place, complies well with the title of this prophecy as concerning the Valley of Vision (גֵּיא חִזָּיוֹן). גֵּיא חִזָּיוֹן is perhaps a symbolic (not real) name for Jerusalem and Judah (Delitzsch, 254; Ohmann, 83; cf. Joel 4:2.12.14). For Jerusalem as inhabitant of the valley, cf. also Jer 21:13. As an ominous title, גֵּיא חִזָּיוֹן may appear in deliberate contrast to the people which cannot *see* the approaching judgment (cf. 22:8a below and Oswald, 405). Jerusalem, usually called Mount Zion, is called here a valley. גֵּיא חִזָּיוֹן may also refer to the valley of the (current) vision to be soon filled with soldiers (22:5; cf. עֵמֶק in vs. 7).

[286] Climbing up on the roofs (22:1) is not an expression of joy after the enemy retired (contra Gray, 364; Procksch, 278; Fohrer, 1:249; Kaiser, 115; etc), nor an attempt to hide oneself from the enemy (contra Beuken, 251), but it alludes to a desperate attitude of weeping for the dead and captives (cf. Isa 15:3; Jer 48:38), i.e. it resonates with the prediction in 22:12. According to Sargon II's texts, the old men and women of Urartu were weeping on the roofs after the Assyrians devastated their country (cited by Beuken, 251 note 99).

tims that are fallen not by sword, or killed in battle, but captured without a bow, while trying to flee away. All those in the city were captured without getting the chance to flee away.[287]

Following the description of the effects of the judgment of YHWH, after vs. 4 the prophet turns to give the background information for 22:1–3, i.e. the events leading to this sorrowful episode. He proclaims a day of terror that his audience is not reckoning with now (22:5a).

The precise role of the following verses, 22:5b–8a remains a question. If this description of Shoa, Elam, Aram and Kir attacking the city belongs to the same vision as 22:1–3.5a, it will have significant consequences for dating our passage.

> קַר in 22:5 is probably chosen because of its multiple meanings: קַר, 'shout' (cf. Ugaritic *qr*), קִיר, 'city[wall]', and the geographical name, Kir.[288] שׁוֹעַ may also mean 'cry' if read as שׁוּעַ (cf. Job 30:24; 36:19), but it also appears as the name of a people, perhaps part ("son") of the Assyrian military contingent of the Babylonian army in Ezek 23:23. It is likewise chosen deliberately as an ambiguous term. אָדָם should perhaps be read as אֲרָם as in Zech 9:1.[289] In its present form אָדָם is senseless. It cannot mean 'horsemen', as אָדָם פָּרָשִׁים is usually rendered, for that would require either אַנְשֵׁי [הַ]פָּרָשִׁים, בַּעֲלֵי [הַ]פָּרָשִׁים (2 Sam 1:6), or simply פָּרָשִׁים. אָדָם cannot substitute אִישׁ in such cases. Unclear is whether פָּרָשִׁים is to be vocalised as פֹּרְשִׂים (cf. app. BHS; "Aram *spreads out* with chariots"), but it is noteworthy that a few MSS have וּפָרָשִׁים. Isaiah 22:5–6 can be translated as follows: "Kir cries out[290] / and Shoa to the hill, / Elam takes up the quiver, / Aram [comes] with chariots [and] horsemen" (cf. Ex 14:9), / and Kir uncovers the shield."

It is problematic to place these verses in an 8th century context. Al-

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[287] Isa 22:3 is a difficult sentence. Preferring to avoid emendations, I structure the text as follows: מֵרָחוֹק / כָּל־נִמְצָאַיִךְ אֻסְּרוּ יַחְדָּו / מִקֶּשֶׁת אֻסָּרוּ / כָּל־קְצִינַיִךְ נָדְדוּ־יַחַד בָּרָחוּ, "all your rulers have fled together, / (but) were captured *without* a bow, / all those found inside were captured together, / *without* away fleeing (i.e. without getting the chance to flee away; מֵרָחוֹק = רָחוֹק + מִן)". For the privative function of the preposition מִן, cf. JM §133e; §157; WO §11.2.11e. The verse lines are obviously built in a formal relationship with each other.

Some believe that Isa 22:3 refers to death caused by famine (Knobel, 150–51; Alexander, 380). But the context only mentions people fled and taken captive, or others taken captive in the city. חָלָל does not imply death in itself, but may also be rendered as 'wounded', or perhaps even 'victim' (Job 24:12).

[288] *bTaʿan* 29a understood קִיר as referring to persons, namely YHWH.

[289] Cf. 2 Kgs 16:9; Am 1:5; 9:7 (cf. Gallagher, *Campaign*, 66 note 180). The tribes שׁוֹעַ and פְּקוֹד were Aramaic. The Taylor Prism i 45 (*BAL*, 2.63) describes Sennacherib's wars with Aramaean tribes, among others the Puqudu.

[290] Or: "tears down" (?) (Num 24:17), or: 'attacks' (from קרה I; Deut 25:18).

though we know that some Aramaeans in Lower Mesopotamia were defeated by the Assyrians (cf. 2 Kgs 16:9), the Elamite contingent in the Assyrian army does present a problem. The Elamites were allies of Babylon and they were constantly at war with Assyria during this period until about 596 B.C. The image of such international force corresponds better with the Babylonian army. The charioteers and horse riders of Aramaeans and various other nations appear in Ezek 23:23–24:

> [I shall stir up against you] the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans, Pekod,[291] Shoa and Koa (פְּקוֹד וְשׁוֹעַ וְקוֹעַ), and all the Assyrians (כָּל־בְּנֵי אַשּׁוּר) with them, handsome young men, all of them governors and commanders, chariot officers and men of high rank, all mounted on horses. They will come against you with weapons (?), chariots and wagons and with a host of people. They will take up positions against you on every side with large and small shields and with helmets. I shall turn you over to them for punishment, and they will punish you according to their standards.[292]

The enemy presented in Isa 22:5b–6 fits the mixed Chaldaean military that threatened Judah at the turn of the 7th–6th centuries better. It is unlikely that 22:5b–6 derives from the 8th century and it is more convincing to relate these verses to the period before 596, the year when the friendly relations between Elam and Babylon deteriorated seriously.

Verse 7 may belong to either 22:5b–6 or 5a.[293] However, there is intense discussion concerning the meaning and role of 22:8a. Isaiah 22:8a is somewhat ambiguous and this ambiguity may have also influenced the literary formation of this prophecy. How is the taking away of the covering of Judah understood? It is often assumed that this verse refers to exposing Judah before the enemy.[294] With this sense, Isa 22:8a fits the previous vs. 7, mentioning the arrival of the enemy, before whom Judah is supposed to be exposed.

However, removing the covering can also be interpreted not as laying Jerusalem bare, but as removing a blindfolding covering (מָסָךְ; 2 Sam 17:19; cf. Isa 25:7) from the eyes of Jerusalem which prevented it to observe the breaches in the walls of the city of David.[295] It appears that

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[291] פְּקוֹד appears in Jer 50:21 as suffering under the judgment against Babylon.
[292] For Aramaean and Elamite tribes as Babylonian allies, cf. W. Pitard, "Arameans", in *Peoples of the Old Testament World* (eds. Alfred Hoerth et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 223–24.
[293] The dangling wayyiqtol וַיְהִי in 22:7 is unusual for poetic sections (cf. Duhm, 160; Kaiser, 117). 1QIsaᵃ has והיה here 22:7, which appears often (e.g., Isa 8:8).
[294] Cf. Isa 47:2–3; Jer 13:22.26. Cf. Young, 2:97. Duhm emended מָסָךְ, 'covering' to מַסָּד, 'fundament' (cf. Mic 1:6), but this emendation is hardly necessary.
[295] Knobel, 152–53; Delitzsch, 257; König, 218; Procksch, 281.

this second interpretation of 22:8a is presupposed by 22:8b–11. YHWH removes the covering from the face of Jerusalem so that it may realise its weaknesses. Yet instead of recognising YHWH behind the events and turning to him (22:11b), Judah takes its own initiative to repare the breaches in the wall. The language of 22:11b–c is close to later texts in Isaiah (including Deutero-Isaiah).[296] Through the looking glass of 22:11, the measures taken by YHWH have brought no satisfactory results. As Israel failed to recognise YHWH as the one who had punished it, and return to him (Isa 9:12; 17), so Judah did not recognise YHWH in its judgment either (Ezek 23:11.31).

It is clear that not all these events can be dated to the same period. For Isa 22:8b–11 sounds as a retrospective description of past events and as a reproach addressed to Jerusalem. This is obviously a different understanding of the situation than the one presupposed by 22:1–5a.(5b–7).12–14, which proclaims an imminent future judgment on the Valley of Vision.[297]

This reading has significant consequences for our understanding of 22:1–14. For it means that one can not only distinguish 22:1–5a.(7–8a).12–14 from 22:5b–6(7–8a), an expansion in the early New Babylonian period, but one may recognise a further exilic text looking back on the past of Judah reproaching its blindness as the cause of its present situation. What we see here is that the motif of the removing of Judah's covering in 22:8a originally understood as the exposure of Judah before the enemy has been reinterpreted by the author of 22:8b–11 as the removing of a blindfolding covering. This reinterpretation of the earlier motif provides the explanation for the different focus of 22:8b–11 in comparison with the earlier prophecy.[298] This interpretation also fits well the title of the prophecy as addressing the Valley of Vision.

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[296] Isa 37:26 contains a close parallel to Isa 22:11b–c: מִימֵי / לְמֵרָחוֹק אֹתָהּ עָשִׂיתִי קֶדֶם וִיצַרְתִּיהָ עַתָּה. Note the fem. suffixes that appear in both texts. In 22:11 these suffixes can also be related to the city, but not so in 37:26, where they refer to the historical events. These verses are closely related to 46:10; 48:3.5.

[297] Driver noted that if 22:5b was read as an account of past events, the measures taken in 22:9b would be incomprehensible. It is not likely that a city wall would be repaired during the war, when the valley is full of soldiers, an interpretation required if 22:5b was read as a past narrative. Nor would the acts described in 22:10–11 comply with the feasting of the community in 22:14. Emerton passed over this difficulty too easily (J. A. Emerton, "Notes on the Text and Translation of Isaiah xxii 8–11 and lxv 5", *VT* 30 [1980] 442).

[298] A similar reinterpretation of the blindness theme appears in Isa 29:15–24. See on this Balogh, "Blind People", 48–69. The blindness of the people is one of the favourite motifs of the book of Isaiah (see e.g., Isa 5:12; 6:9.10; 9:1; 17:7–8; 28:7; 29:15.18; 29:23; 30:10.20; 32:3; 35:5; 42:18–25; 50:10).

Isaiah 22:12 can be connected to the inauguration of the day of judgment either in 22:5a or 22:8a. On the day of tumult and trampling, Jerusalem will be summoned to lament and to mourn. Isaiah 22:13–14 contrasts the present tumult and sphere of joy with what is required in view of the coming judgment, and performed (22:4) as an ominous sign by the seer prophet.

The analysis above gives the contours of the historical background of the different parts of 22:1–14. In earlier exegetical research the prophecy is often related to the days after Assyria retreated in 701.[299] Others place it immediately before that campaign.[300] Procksch and Oswald dated the prophecy to around 711 when Ashdod was captured.[301] Alexander dated it to the days of Manasseh, when he was taken to Assyria.[302] Young asserted that the prophecy predicted the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon, but was written by Isaiah.[303] Recently it has become common to view 22:1–14 as telescoping events from 701 and 587.[304]

As mentioned earlier, the nature of the prophecy as anticipatory vision of the future is significant when intending to recover the historical events behind the text. If 22:1–5a.(7–8a).12–14 provides the snapshot of a rejoicing Judaean community before its collapse, the ground under the foot of the curious historian becomes increasingly shaky. The most we can say is that this basic layer is well-suited to the time of Isaiah. The Chaldaean contingents threatening Judah mentioned in 22:5b–6(7–8a) (cf. 2 Kgs 24:2), with Aramaean and Elamite support point to the early New Babylonian era in the pre-596 period. It is interesting that during the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem in 598 Judaean leaders were taken away, so that this situation may have been considered the fulfilment of the earlier vision of 22:2–3. Isaiah 22:8b–11 reflect on the

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[299] Kaiser, 116; Gray, 364; Fohrer, 1:249; Schoors, 130; Wildberger, 813; Clements, "Fall of Jerusalem", 429.

[300] Dillmann, 197–98; Watts, 281, 284; Gallagher, *Campaign*, 66–72. Gallagher's reading of Isa 22:1–14 is quite peculiar. He assumes that 22:1–8a refers not to Jerusalem, but to Babylon, the city welcoming Sennacherib in 704 after his defeat of Merodach-baladan II in the battle of Kish. His conclusions are mostly hanging on the present location of Isa 22, following a prophecy against Babylon (as he reads Isa 21). Strangely he assigns a similar date to Isa 21 (Babylon fallen) and Isa 22 (Babylon rejoicing). Among other problems, his interpretation of Isa 22 as a vision, yet also conforming to precise historical realities, remains confusing (*Campaign*, 73 note 207).

[301] Procksch, 277; Oswald, 408.

[302] Alexander, 379.

[303] Young, 2:88.

[304] This opinion already formulated by Calvin and Vitringa was subsequently adopted among others by Clements, Oswald and Bosshard-Nepustil.

Babylonian invasion, reproaching Judah not to have been vigilant in spite of God's warnings. The description of Jerusalem's fortification suggests some distance from the actual events, and it complies well with Deutero-Isaianic disputes concerning the role of Israel's blindness in explaining its present situation, namely the Babylonian exile.

Concluding, (a) the present position of a text against Jerusalem in the context of the FNPs is the result of editorial work. As for the integrity of 22:1–14, it was suggested above that we should distinguish between an earlier layer, 22:1–5a.(7–8a)12–14, expanded by 22:5b–6(7–8a) and 22:8b–11 respectively. In case of 22:8b–11, the reinterpretation of the removal of the covering of Judah played a significant role.

(b) The themes prominent elsewhere in Isa 13–23, like the plan of YHWH, the motif of hybris, the remnants, etc., do not appear in 22:1–14. Instead of security in Zion, 22:9a emphasises the insecurity of the city of David. This lack of common subjects is telling. In inserting Isa 22 into the present collection, the מַשָּׂא-titles and the day of YHWH theme in 22:5a may have been considered as a lead by the editors.

(c) The primary prophecy, 22:1–5a.(7–8a)12–14, may go back to Isaiah. The first expansion, 22:5b–6.(7–8a), probably derives from the time shortly before 596. A second addition in 22:8b–11, partially modifying the topic of the prophecy, bears the signs of the Babylonian exile.

ISAIAH 22:15–25

Isaiah 22:15–25 is concerned with two individuals from Jerusalem: Shebna and Eliakim ben Hilkiah. It was argued above that this prophecy was connected with 22:1–14 before including it in Isa 13–23.

> Shebna is called הַסֹּכֵן and אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַבָּיִת. Both titles present him as the highest official of the royal court. Eliakim, son of Hilkiah is supposed to become the heir of his office, after Shebna is shamefully replaced and deported to a foreign country. The name Shebna is also attested in Isa 36:3.11.22; 37:2,[305] and scholars usually identify the two figures. This identification is, however, problematic. In Isa 36–37 Shebna is called a סֹפֵר, 'scribe', and Eliakim, son of Hilkiah is אֲשֶׁר־עַל־הַבָּיִת. The widespread speculation that Shebna may have been degraded to the scribe of the court[306] lacks any support. It is doubtful whether degrading governor to a scribe can be considered a real historical possibility. Unless we assume that סֹפֵר is a wrong variant for סֹכֵן, it remains difficult to identify the two persons.

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[305] שֶׁבְנָא is rendered consistently with א in Isa, but appears twice with ה in 2 Kgs 18:18.26. Its original form was probably שבניהו (cf. Wildberger, 836–37).
[306] Knobel, 156; Wildberger, 836; Willis, "Historical Issues", 64–65; P. K. McCarter, "The Royal Steward Inscription" (COS 2.54).

There remain two further options. First, one may assume that the expression עַל־שֶׁבְנָא אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַבָּיִת is as a gloss attached later to the prophecy.[307] This is a serious possibility derived from the rather irregular syntactic structure of Isa 22:15.[308] However, even assuming that Isa 22:15c was a gloss, we are left with the question why it was this name the editor filled in the text?[309] It seems likely that the name of Shebna appeared in a superscription or on the margin. Second, it is important that the name Shebna appears on a seal in Louvre לשבניו עבד עזיו, "Belonging to Shebnayaw, servant of Uzziyaw" (COS 2.70R). Shebna is called an officer, eventually of king Uzziah of Judah.[310] Another text (KAI 1.191B; COS 2.54) is the well-known Silwan inscription, found on a grave hewn from a rock in the Kidron Valley. The first sentence of this inscription reads: זאת ,יהו [קרבת...]אשר על הבית, "This is [the tomb of …]yahu, who is over the house". Kyle dated the inscription paelographically to between the end of the 8th and beginning of the 7th century (COS 2.54). Since Eliakim the steward from Isa 36–37,[311] does not bear a Yahwistic name, the possessor of this grave may have been his predecessor, Shebna also appearing in Isa 22:15.[312]

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[307] Cf. Duhm, 163; Fohrer, 1:253; Wildberger, 833; Clements, "Fall of Jerusalem", 432.

[308] It is unusual that אֶל־הַסֹּכֵן הַזֶּה is followed by another sentence seemingly an explanatory gloss (cf. however Isa 36:6).

[309] Fohrer suggested that the name of Shebna was filled in from Isa 36–37, "den man dort bereits zum bloßen Schreiber degradiert sah" (1:253). But how did these editors know that Shebna in Isa 36–37 was an officer removed from the post of royal overseer if 22:15 had nothing to do with him?

[310] The seal bears Assyrian style images. Cf. S. Dalley, "Recent Evidence from Assyrian Sources for Judaean History from Uzziah to Manasseh", JSOT 28 (2003–2004) 389.

[311] For Eliakim's family one may mention the seal with the inscription of "Belonging to Yehozarah, son of Hilqiyahu, servant of Hizqiyahu" (COS 2.70R).

[312] The fact that Shebna hews his grave high in the rock (Isa 22:16) does not mean that this inscription cannot have belonged to him (contra Wildberger, 838). מָרוֹם may also refer to a highly placed grave in the Kidron Valley. The fact that this was the necropolis of old Jerusalem makes it probable that Shebna also prepared his grave there, beside the others (note the question of the prophet: "whom do you have here" in 22:16; cf. Gen 25:8.17; 49:33). It is striking that the second half of the inscription only mentions a maid servant buried in the same chamber. Apparently he had no relatives, which complies well with 22:16a–b. The peculiar form of 22:16c–d may also suggest that Isaiah cited a proverb on this place, which was only secondarily applied to the situation of the royal steward.

Even if Shebna in the inscriptions is different from the person in Isa 22:15, it may suggest that the name Shebna was not so uncommon that it would require us identifying Shebna in Isa 22:15 with the person of Isa 36–37. Note the

The literary unity of 22:15–25 is a matter of debate. Isaiah 22:15–19 is concerned with the person of Shebna to whom the prophet proclaims his fall and deportation. Then 22:20–24 sets forth with the emergence of the new steward, Eliakim, son of Hilkiah. Isaiah 22:25 portrays the collapse of Eliakim. The question whether all these words have been spoken out (cf. 22:15) on one occasion is often answered negatively by exegetes, and not without reasons. The least disputed is 22:25, which—as generally accepted—would not be a foreseeable conclusion to the pronouncement on the election of Eliakim. Those who argue for the contrary must make some unwarrantedly daring assumptions that failed to convince even some of the least critical scholars.[313]

Some exegetes maintain that a division can also be established between 22:15–19 and 22:20–23, or 22:15–18 and 22:19–23.[314] It is noted that 22:19 contains a prophecy formulated in first person form in contrast to 22:15–18. Further, the removal of Shebna from his office in 22:19 forms an anti-climax to 22:17–18, which mentions his exile.[315]

The interchange of the first and third person forms should not, however, necessarily lead to the conclusion that 22:15–18 is earlier than the rest of the prophecy. In 22:19 both the first and third person forms appear in two parallel verse lines. One argument that would point towards a possible unity of the passage is related to the genre of 22:15–23 as a destitution oracle, which not only mentions the removal of an unfaithful official, but in some cases also clarifies the identity (though not the name) of the newly elected.[316]

Nevertheless, I must admit two problems that cannot be overbridged by this interpretation. First, even though 22:19 is not necessarily in logical contradiction with 22:17–18, the text still sounds strange in its place suggesting that it was a subsequent addition to the previous verses.[317]

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inscription *lnrʾ šbnʾ*, "belonging to Nera, (son of) Shebna" on a private type impression among the *lmlk* stamps of before 701 (Lubetski, "Beetlemania", 24).

[313] So, e.g., Knobel (159) and Dillmann (207), who following Rashi and Qimchi, assume that the closing verse(s) refer again to Shebna and not Eliakim. König argued that 22:24–25 should be interpreted as a conditional prediction: "Should it be that…" (221–22). However, 22:24 and 25 appear as two syntactically unrelated sentences (cf. also J. T. Willis, "Historical Issues in Isaiah 22,15-25", *Bib* 74 [1993] 67 note 24).

[314] For the first view, see Wildberger, 840, 844, though he also considered 22:19 secondary compared to 22:15–18. For the second view, cf. Duhm, 163.

[315] Duhm, 164; Wildberger, 840, 844.

[316] Note, e.g., 1 Sam 15:28–29; 1 Kgs 11:31; 14:7–14; Isa 3:1–5.

[317] The harsh formulation of 22:19 mentioning the "pushing away" of Shebna from his office and "crushing" or "ruining" him (הרס) in his post, does not allow us to assume that he was simply assigned a "lower" office of a scribe, as sug-

Second, Shebna is predicted to be thrown away and go to exile. If this prophecy is read as a pre-eventum text, then Shebna is still in office and he must first go into exile. The prediction implies that *by that time* Eliakim will be alive and well, which is quite strange. It is more likely that the prediction that Shebna will go to exile should not be isolated from other prophecies of Isaiah which envisage the same future for an entire nation. The deportation of Shebna, similarly to the deportation of Amaziah in Am 7:17, is related to the fate of Judah. Assigning Eliakim the function of overseer over the palace would sound strange in a context where Judah is also exiled, leading us to conclude that 22:19 and following should be detached from the previous verses.

There are two possibilities to explain 22:19–24. If the prophecy is concerned with the person of Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, the text may have functioned similarly to the dynastic oracles. In the Near East the installation of officers was more than a political endeavour, and prophets and mantici usually joined other dignitaries in the process of inauguration.

However, further considerations suggest that this was probably not the case. Isaiah 22:19–24 is not an independent oracle addressed to Eliakim on the ceremony of his promotion. It can only be understood in the context of the prophecy against Shebna, the text that was written years before. The motifs of 22:19–24 are also directly related to the previous verses. Eliakim is obviously presented as an anti-type of Shebna. For example, Shebna is called קְלוֹן בֵּית אֲדֹנֶיךָ, "disgrace of your master's house" (22:18), while Eliakim is כִּסֵּא כָבוֹד לְבֵית אָבִיו, "throne of honour of his father's house" (22:23). In contrast to the usual interpretation of this text, I believe אָב does not refer to the ancestor father, nor the family of Eliakim, but to the king (Gen 45:8; 2 Kgs 5:13; Isa 9:5; cf. also 1 Mac 11:32). בֵּית אָבִיו is in this sense a synonym of בֵּית אֲדֹנֶיךָ (22:18) and בֵּית־דָּוִד in which Eliakim will become the overseer (אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַבַּיִת). This implies that 22:24 belongs to 22:19–23 and is not an independent addition. Isaiah 22:24 does not speak of nepotism in the dynasty of Eliakim, as often understood.[318] It says that everything, important and less important affairs of the royal house will rest on the shoulders of Eliakim, as the previous verse ascribes him authority over the palace.

Wildberger noted that the firm place (מָקוֹם נֶאֱמָן) that is assigned to this ruler, reminds one of the dynastic promises addressed to David in 2

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gested by exegetes who understood 22:19 in relation to 36–37 (cf. Duhm, 164; Wildberger, 840). Not only is the historical possibility of such a destitution unlikely, but being the scribe of a king was still a very significant position at the royal court, incongruent with the fall of Shebna proclaimed in Isa 22.

[318] Delitzsch, 263; Fohrer, 1:255; Schoors, 137; Willis, "Historical Issues", 67.

Sam 7.[319] The relationship between Shebna and Eliakim is similar to the one between Saul and David, or Abiathar and Zadok. What we find here is more than a text concerned with just one particular person in the monarchic administration of Judah: it attests for the divine establishment of and support for a dynasty of royal overseers (servants?) in Judah after the 8th century.[320] If so, 22:19–24 probably derives from the 7th or early 6th century, certainly composed before the final deportation of Judah in 587. It provided the divine foundations for the presence of the family of Eliakim in the Judaean administration.

In relation to the previous passage, 22:19–24 functions similarly to 8:23–9:6.[321] The final vs. 25 with its typical בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא introduction was written in view of the collapse of this dynasty, possibly in the early exilic period. הַמַּשָּׂא may allude ambiguously to the superscription in 22:1, so that 22:25 considered 22:15–24 the fulfilment of the speech concerning the deportation of the leaders mentioned in 22:3.

> It has been noted that the status of Eliakim, the new אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַבָּיִת is presented as *very* significant. Particularly important is here Isa 22:23: וּתְקַעְתִּיו יָתֵד בְּמָקוֹם נֶאֱמָן וְהָיָה לְכִסֵּא כָבוֹד לְבֵית אָבִיו, "I shall fasten him as a peg in a sure place and he shall be a throne of honour to his father's house". The two symbols, יָתֵד and כִּסֵּא, may appear in relation to kings. However, the fact that Eliakim would become such a 'throne' is surprising. Is this because there was no throne any more in Judah? Zechariah 10:14 probably also uses יָתֵד as a royal symbol. Is it possible that Isa 22:19–25 refers to a functionary that had to fulfil the duty of a king? The prophecy might then be connected to the person of Gedaliah, the last overseer of Judah, whose origin can be traced back to at least three generations as fulfilling important tasks at the royal court (2 Kgs 25:22).[322] With king Jehoiachin as the legitimate heir in captivity, for a short period of time, Gedaliah had to fulfil the office of the king in Judah. We know from 2 Kgs 25:25 that at least the party of Elishama, of royal origin (מִזֶּרַע הַמְּלוּכָה), was not particularly delighted with his assignment by the Babylonians as a leader, which may explain the importance of the claim of 22:19–24 in Gedaliah's time.

Concluding, (a) Isa 22 can be divided into two subsections: 22:1–14 (Jerusalem) and 22:15–25 (leaders). There are numerous links between the two sections (themes and catchwords) that may have led to an early connection of the two prophecies. As it was the case with 22:1–14, the

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[319] Wildberger, 845.

[320] For suggestions in this direction, cf. Wildberger, 846.

[321] Cf. the common imagery of the two texts: הַמִּשְׂרָה עַל־שִׁכְמוֹ (9:5) and מַפְתֵּחַ עַל־שִׁכְמוֹ (22:22), and the importance of David in both passages.

[322] A bulla from Lachish, "Belonging to Gedalyahu, overseer of the royal house (אשר על הבית)" (COS 2.70D), is most likely related to the same person.

pericope 22:15–25 is also composed by an early text 22:15–18, expanded subsequently by 22:19–24, and by another exilic update, 22:25.

(b) From a theological point of view, it is important to mention the motif of כָּבוֹד in (22:18.23.24), as well as the theme of hybris (22:16). The day of judgment will be the day of humiliation for Jerusalem (22:1–14), including its most prominent figures (22:15–18).

(c) From a historical point of view, 22:15–18 probably goes back to the 8th century prophet, but 22:19–24 comes from a later period. If—as argued—the persons in view here are the descendants of Eliakim rather than Eliakim himself, then 22:19–24 may be dated to the late 7th century or early 6th century, but most likely before 587.

3.4.2.9. THE COMPOSITION OF ISAIAH 23

Isaiah 23 is concerned with Tyre, a city with a history interwoven with the past of Israel. This text belongs to the most difficult passages in Isa 13–23 presenting a real challenge to the interpreter even on places where the reading is fairly clear. Almost every verse of the prophecy is open to more than one ways to structure and interpret it. Though it is not necessary to take a position here with regard to every text critical issue, some do have implications for the present study of Isa 13–23.

The unity of Isa 23 is almost generally recognised as secondary. Isaiah 23:1–14 is concerned with the collapse of Tyre, while 23:15–18 predicts its re-emergence as a merchant nation whose profit will be devoted to YHWH. The fact that these two texts were written with different concerns is well-recognised. More than that, the coherence of 23:1–14 has been subject to debate, too. Reason for this is the assumed change in the addressees of 23:1–14. It is argued that in its earlier stage Isa 23 was a prophecy concerned with Sidon, but it was later reinterpreted as a prophecy against Tyre, a rereading which has left its marks on the composition.[323] Other scholars consider 23:1–14 to be directed against the whole Phoenician coast.[324]

The problem of literary unity of 23:1–14 is therefore closely linked with the identity of the addressees of these verses. Two questions need to be discussed here: the meaning of the geographical name Sidon and the identity of those addressed in the second and third person form.

As for the first question, the name Sidon may be used with two distinctive meanings. It may refer to the city Sidon, but it may also designate southern Phoenicia, as evidenced by Israelite, Phoenician, and

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[323] Kaiser, 132; Vermeylen, 1:342.
[324] Knobel 163–64; Delitzsch, 265; Dillmann, 210; Wildberger, 860. Fohrer argued that vss. 1b–4 were directed against Sidon, vss. 6–9 against Tyre, and vss. 10–14 against Phoenicia (1:258). See, however, Isa 23:5.12.

Greek sources.[325] In Isa 23, Sidon is not the name of a city, but of the territory of southern Phoenicia, including the cities of the Tyro-Sidonian kingdom (23:2.4.12).

> For a certain period, Tyre was the centre of the Sidonian kingdom, which included the territory between the cities of Dor in the south and Sidon in the north. The inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III make no mention of Sidon as an independent country. A few years later, Sargon II's inscription mentions a "Shilta" of Tyre, a loyal Assyrian vassal. Since *šlṭ* may mean 'ruler', "Shilta" could be a title rather than a personal name (cf. Pir'u of Egypt).[326] For the first time in the annals of Sennacherib we find Sidon in the position formerly occupied by Tyre. The accounts of Sennacherib's third campaign mention *Lulī šar* URU *Ṣidunni*, "Luli king of (the city) Sidon". What is the meaning of Sidon here? There are two options. First, Sidon may be used as the name of a territory, southern Phoenicia. Luli of the Assyrian chronicles may be identical with Ἐλουλαῖος mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* ix 283–87). Since in the *Antiquities* Ἐλουλαῖος appears as a king ruling in Tyre,[327] URU *Ṣidunni* could refer to the country of Sidon.[328] In this case, the territory of Luli included the entire region in other texts ascribed to Tyrean kings: beside Great and Small Sidon, Ushu (Old Tyre), Akku, Zariptu (both given to Ba'al, king of Tyre by Esarhaddon), Mahalliba (the fortified city of Hiram during Tiglath-pileser III; *COS* 2.117F). As a second possibility, Sidon may be the name of the city Sidon. It is possible that the title "king of Sidon" is deliberately chosen by the Assyrian scribes instead of the earlier "king of Tyre", because Sennacherib failed to capture Tyre. *Tuba'alu*, the vassal king he installed as Luli's "successor", is also called the king of Sidon (cf. *BAL*, 2.67). Bunnens assumes that it is this Assyrian policy which led to a split-up

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[325] The father of Jezebel, Ethba'al I, is called in 1 Kgs 16:31 "the king of the Sidonians" (מֶלֶךְ צִידֹנִים), even though he was ruling in Tyre. The same can be observed in the 8th century. Tiglath-pileser III refers to Hiram II (738–730) as the king of Tyre, while the same king is called king of the Sidonians (*mlk ṣdnm*) on a Phoenician inscription (W. A. Ward, "Tyre", *OEANE* 5:248).

[326] N. Na'aman, "Sargon II and the Rebellion of the Cypriot Kings against Shilta of Tyre", in *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 118–28.

[327] This may be corroborated by Sennacherib's Bull Inscription 4 (*BAL,* 2.69), according to which Luli took flight *ultu qereb* URU *Ṣurri*, "from inside the city Tyre". Ἐλουλαῖος / Luli may be identical with "Shilta" (contra Na'aman, "Shilta", 125). If Tyre was ruled by another pro-Assyrian "Shilta", a contemporary of Luli, as Na'aman suggested, the act of Sennacherib, nominating a new king as his vassal, and entrusting him the entire mainland region of the former Tyrean kingdom, would be quite strange.

[328] The determinatives URU, 'city' and KUR, 'land' may occasionally be interchanged. URU *Yaḫudu* (Judah) is also attested in the Assyrian inscriptions.

of the former Tyro-Sidonian kingdom.[329] Sidon becomes the centre of pro-Assyrian government, while the island Tyre retains its independence. In the early years of Esarhaddon, we meet a rebellious, but later submissive king of Tyre (Ba'alu) and another anti-Assyrian king of Si-don (Abdi-milkutti), who will be decapitated. Abdi-milkutti's former territories are entrusted to Tyre again.

As for the second question, it catches the sight of the attentive reader that in Isa 23 one can distinguish between those addressed in the second person form and those spoken of in the third person.[330] For the second person (vocative) form, cf. אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ (23:1), יֹשְׁבֵי אִי (23:2.6), מַלְאוּךְ (23:2), צִידוֹן (23:4), לָכֶם (23:7), בַּת־תַּרְשִׁישׁ (23:10). Tyre, whose fall is pictured in the prophecy, is referred to quite consistently by the third person form suffixes, prepositions and verbs: שֻׁדַּד (23:1), לָמוֹ (23:1),[331] יְבִלוּהָ רַגְלֶיהָ (23:7), קַדְמָתָהּ (23:7), אָמַר (23:4),[332] וַתְּהִי (23:3), תְּבוּאָתָהּ (23:3), סֹחֲרֶיהָ (23:7), כְּנַעֲנֶיהָ (23:8), (23:8). The metaphors מָבוֹא (23:1; emended text), עַלִּיזָה (23:4),[334] מָעוֹז הַיָּם (23:4), יָם (23:2),[333] עֹבֵר יָם | סֹחַר צִידוֹן

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[329] G. Bunnens, "L'histoire événementielle partim Orient", in *La civilisation phénicienne et punique. Manuel de recherche* (ed. V. Krings; HdO 1/20, Leiden: Brill, 1995), 230.

[330] An exception probably appears in 23:12, where Tyre is addressed in the second person, which is, however, a particular case. It is here not the prophet but YHWH who is speaking to Tyre, which means that this text, a citation, belongs to another rhetoric level. In principle, בְּתוּלַת בַּת־צִידוֹן can refer to both Sidon and Sidon's (=Phoenicia's) "daughter", i.e. Tyre. With צִידוֹן as the name of the country (Phoenicia), 23:12 resembles constructions like בְּתוּלַת בַּת־יְהוּדָה (Lam 1:15), בַּת־כַּשְׂדִּים (Isa 47:1; cf. there בְּתוּלַת בַּת־בָּבֶל). The expression "virgin daughter of Sidon (Phoenicia)" may be compared to inscriptions on later Phoenician coins which refer to Sidon as 'mṣr, "the mother of Tyre".

[331] On the translation of 23:1, see my note below. The fact that the name Tyre is avoided at the beginning presents no problem when the prophecy originally contained a superscription. Note also that 23:1–14 is interpreted as a prophecy on Tyre in 23:15–18.

[332] This is a 3rd fem. sg. form, just like the suffix of the previous תְּבוּאָתָהּ. "She (Tyre) has become a profit for the nations." "Merchant of the nations" would require the vocalisation סֹחֵר גּוֹיִם (cf. Knobel, 164). Tyre itself as a profit would explain why its destruction would be experienced by others as a serious loss.

[333] As a problematic term one should note מַלְאוּךְ in 23:2. The reading of this verse is notoriously difficult. For the Massoretic עֹבֵר יָם מִלְאוּךְ, "the one who crosses over the sea has filled you" (= 1QIsa[b], cf. Vulg., Syr., *Tg. Isa.*), 1QIsa[a] has עברו ים מלאכיך, "your messengers crossed over the sea", while 4QIsa[a] has עברו ים מלאך. The differences in 1QIsa[a] and 4QIsa[a] suggest that these variants are textual corrections rather than representatives of a more reliable textual tradition. The reading of the MT does give sense in the present form (cf. JPS: "once thronged by seafarers"; see also A. van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre: The*

(23:7), נִכְבַּדֵּי־אָרֶץ (23:9), מֵעֹז (23:10), מָעוֹז (23:11?.14), all refer to Tyre. The city Tyre is destroyed and deported to a far off land. But the direct addressees of the text are not identical with those undergoing judgment. The second person message is addressed to Tyre's former friends and mates, summoned as *witnesses* to moan, wail, be ashamed,[335] cross over to, or go through their own land.[336] The verbs used here underline the presumption that these witnesses are different from those deported by the enemy. This distinction between Tyre and its friends, larger Phoenicia, the Mediterranean region and Egypt, is essential to understand this text, and it offers a fairly consistent pattern for reading this prophecy.

The phrase כִּי־שֻׁדַּד מִבַּיִת in 23:1 can be translated as "for it is destroyed so that no house is left", with מִן interpreted as privative.[337] The sentence מִבּוֹא מֵאֶרֶץ כִּתִּים can only mean: "so that one may not come (or: no one can enter) from the land of Kittim".[338] However, this translation leaves נִגְלָה־לָמוֹ unexplained. The same is true if מִבּוֹא is connected

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Septuagint of Isaiah XXIII as Version and Vision [VTS 71; Leiden: Brill, 1998], 21). It becomes, however, significant here that עֹבֵר יָם refers to the Tyrean seafarers (just like סֹחֵר צִידוֹן), while the sg. 2 suffix in מָלְאוּךְ refers to יֹשְׁבֵי אִי, the inhabitants of the coastland (Phoenicia / Sidon), addressed in the second person. This structuring also means that וּבְמַיִם רַבִּים goes with the following verse, 23:3, as follows: וַתְּהִי סְחַר גּוֹיִם / קְצִיר יְאוֹר תְּבוּאָתָהּ / וּבְמַיִם רַבִּים זֶרַע שִׁחֹר.

[334] This name resonates with *Uzu* in Amarna (*EA* 148:11.30; 149:49; cf. *Ušu* in Assyrian), and ṭ in Egyptian, the name of Old Tyre. Cf. also מִבְצַר־צֹר in Josh 19:29; 2 Sam 24:7. For יָם מָעוֹז הַיָּם in 23:4, cf. עַל־יְאוֹר עַל־פִּי יְאוֹר in Isa 19:7.

[335] For shame as "the experience of having one's trust betrayed", cf. R. Lessing, "Interpreting Discontinuity: Isaiah's Tyre Oracle" (Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary St. Louis, 2001), 195–96. Tyre is the trust of Phoenicia (23:8).

[336] The emendation of עֹבְרִי אַרְצֵךְ to עִבְדִי אַרְצֵךְ, "till your land" (cf. 1QIsaᵃ, LXX) is unlikely, for אֶרֶץ cannot substitute אֲדָמָה (Van der Kooij, *Tyre*, 197). Since 23:6 refers to crossing over to Tarshish, and 23:12 to Kittim, the same may also be applied here. Crossing or wandering through the homeland (Isa 15) is an act of mourning. The summons is not ironical in 23:6, nor in 23:10 (contra Kaiser, 134), for Tarshish itself is not going to fall. Cf. Isa 47:2.

[337] Cf. Isa 7:8; 17:1; Van der Kooij, *Tyre*, 21, 195. מִבַּיִת can also be translated as "from the house", i.e. from the "family" to which the "ships" of Tarshish together with other Phoenicians belong. מִבַּיִת may also mean "inside" (cf. Gen 6:14; Ex 25:11; 1 Kgs 6:15), but that does not seem to fit the present context.

[338] Cf. 1 Sam 25:33; Isa 24:10. The temporal translations "when they came from the land of Kittim" (NRSV), "as they came from the land of Kittim" (JPS; Procksch, 295; Schoors, 138; Kaiser, 130; Wildberger, 855) would require the preposition ב or כ and the 3rd masc. pl. suffix at the end of the infinitive (for בְּבֹאָם, see 1 Sam 16:6; 18:6; 2 Chr 20:10; Ezr 2:68; Ezek 44:17.21; 46:10; for כְּבֹאָם, see 2 Kgs 6:20; Jer 41:7).

to the previous verse line.[339] It is more convincing to read here מָבוֹא,
'entrance', which can be related to מֵאֶרֶץ כִּתִּים as "the entrance (har-
bour) from the land of Kittim". מָבוֹא may refer to Tyre as the harbour
city (as in Ezek 27:3) when one comes from the sea, i.e. from the land
of Cyprus (Kittim).[340] It is highly unlikely that נִגְלָה־לָמוֹ referred to the
revelation of news to Tyrean seafarers, as this passage is usually ex-
plained.[341] גלה means here 'to lay bare', namely the harbour city, Tyre,
before the enemy, using an imagery well-known from Mic 1:6 in con-
nection with Jerusalem (וִיסֹדֶיהָ אֲגַלֶּה, "I laid bare its fundaments") or
from Ezek 13:14 (נִגְלָה יְסֹדוֹ, "its foundation will be laid bare"). This in-
terpretation offers a good parallel to שֻׁדַּד (also pass. in sense as נִגְלָה).[342]
לָמוֹ in this case would not refer to the enemy, nor to the assumed sea-
farers, nor to the Tarshish-ships, but to Tyre: מָבוֹא [...] נִגְלָה־לָמוֹ, "the
entrance / harbour [...] was laid bare to them", or plainly: "their har-
bour was laid bare". Tyre is transformed into a bare rock, an idea also
appearing in the anti-Tyrean prophecy of Ezek 26:4.14 (לִצְחִיחַ סָלַע).
Isaiah 23:1 should therefore be rendered (literally) as: "Wail you, ships
of Tarshish, for it was destroyed so that no house is left; the entrance
(harbour city) from the land of Kittim was laid bare to them."

While 23:1–7.10.14 calls Tyre's friends to lament on the destruction of
the city, the verses (5?).8–9.11–13 also give a theological explanation
for the course of events.[343] In a language familiar from 14:24.26–27 and
19:12.16–17 these verses proclaim that it was the plan of YHWH that
came to be fulfilled here: he, i.e. YHWH, not Tyre, stretched out his arm
over the sea, he made kingdoms quake, he gave command (cf. Isa 13:3;
2 Sam 17:14) concerning Canaan to destroy its fortresses. The term כְּנַעַן
in 23:11 can have multiple meanings. It is not impossible that it desig-
nates here the Mediterranean land strip from Phoenicia to Philistia.[344]
The fate of Tyre is only a small section of a larger plan involving its

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[339] "It is destroyed so that no one can enter inside (מִבַּיִת)". Van der Kooij in-
terprets מִן in both cases as privative: "it is laid waste, so that there is no house
to enter any more" (*Tyre*, 21, 195). However, his English translation would
require *לָבוֹא. מִבַּיִת מִבּוֹא means "so that there is no house so that no one
can enter" (double negation). Isa 24:10 is different (contra Van der Kooij).
[340] In Ezekiel's prophecy, Tyre is localised עַל־מְבוֹאֹת יָם (cf. Assurbanipal's
Prism A ii 48–50). Note also that the gate of Jerusalem leading to the land of
the tribe of Benjamin was called שַׁעַר בִּנְיָמִן (Jer 37:13).
[341] E.g., Knobel, 163; Kaiser, 133; Young, 2:123; Wildberger, 870; Lessing,
"Tyre", 190. As Young noted, נגד instead of גלה would be anticipated.
[342] Cf. 2 Sam 22:16, and ערר in Isa 23:13 and ערה in Hab 3:13; Ps 137:7.
[343] Vermeylen, 1:342–43 treated 23:9.11.13 (but not 23:8.12) as expansions.
[344] Cf. Jer 47:4; Ps 83:8; 87:4 mentioning Phoenicia with Philistia. Sennach-
erib's Taylor Prism ii 48–55 refers to the destruction of Tyre in the context of
the tributes brought by other Canaanite kingdoms, subjugated by Assyria.

neighbouring countries. But in 23:8 the merchants of Tyre are called
כִּנְעָנֶיהָ, "her merchants", so that כְּנַעַן may refer to Tyre as Canaan *par
excellence*. In this announcement the prophet cites Y‍HWH directly.

Isaiah 23:5.13 are often believed to be later interpolations into the
poem.[345] Both verses are difficult and caused much dilemma in assigning
them a proper meaning and place in the line of thought of the poem.

> Isaiah 23:5 is puzzling. What does כַּאֲשֶׁר־שֵׁמַע לְמִצְרָיִם יָחִילוּ כְּשֵׁמַע צֹר
> mean? Phrases introduced by כַּאֲשֶׁר are usually followed by a verb.
> However, Isa 26:9 provides an example where this verb is implicit, and
> this may also be the case in 23:5. If so, there are two possibilities to in-
> terpret this verse. (1) "When the news (comes) to Egypt, they will wail
> as Tyre (wailed when) the news (arrived to them)." Egypt as an out-
> sider, but in close contact with Tyre (23:3), fulfils a role similar to the
> other witnesses. This may be compared to Assyrian inscriptions which
> present the fear of a nation hearing the destruction of the other. Sar-
> gon's Nimrud Prism (ln. 35) writes about the fear of the Cypriots hear-
> ing Sargon's deeds in the lands of the Chaldaeans and Hittites as "their
> hearts palpitated, fright fell upon them". (2) A further possibility is to
> regard שֵׁמַע לְמִצְרָיִם as a genitival construction, "the news of / concern-
> ing Egypt". In this case the meaning of Isa 23 would be altered to: "As
> they were wailing (יָחִילוּ) on the news concerning Egypt, so (will they
> be wailing) on the news concerning Tyre."[346] If we presuppose that the
> verb חיל in both vss. 4 and 5 is used in the same sense,[347] and if we
> consider that Tyre is consequently spoken about in the third person in
> this prophecy, then 23:5 may be interpreted as follows: as one (Egypt /
> Tyre) was wailing when one heard the news of Egypt's advancing de-
> struction (cf. Isa 19), so would one (Tyre) be wailing on the news of
> Tyre's approaching calamity. This reading would fit vs. 4 well, which
> described Tyre as the one who has never wailed.

Verse 13 is argued to be crucial in placing this prophecy in history. This
verse holds the key(s) to our highly difficult and enigmatic text. Not
surprisingly this is the most controversial passage of the entire peri-
cope.[348] Isaiah 23:13 cannot be understood without the preceding vs. 12.

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[345] Kaiser, 131, 134; Wildberger, 860–61.

[346] Cf. Luther *apud* Alexander, 396.

[347] In 23:4 Sidon (Phoenicia) is summoned to be ashamed of what Tyre (מָעוֹז
הַיָּם) had to say: "I have never laboured (לֹא־חַלְתִּי), never given birth, never
raised youths, or reared maidens". The sentence can hardly refer to childless-
ness (contra Alexander, 395; Delitzsch, 265; Kaiser, 134; Oswald, 431). Tyre is
presented as a young woman, a virgin (cf. בְּתוּלַת בַּת־צִידוֹן, "the virgin daughter
of Sidon [i.e. Phoenicia]" in 23:12) who has not yet experienced the pain of
giving birth (חיל). The childbirth imagery metaphorically represents a city in
anguish before the enemy.

[348] For details, see e.g., Lessing, *Tyre*, 127–31.

Isaiah 23:12 cites YHWH and addresses Tyre directly as the "virgin daughter of Sidon (Phoenicia)". The syntax of כִּתִּים קוּמִי עֲבֹרִי is unusual. The emphatic position of כִּתִּים designating a possible destination of בְּתוּלַת בַּת־צִידוֹן becomes clear when 23:12 and 13 are read together.

In its present form 23:13 refers to the destruction of the land of Chaldea by the Assyrians. The reference to Chaldea is, however, unusual. Several solutions have been proposed to make sense of הֵן אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה [אַשּׁוּר]. One of the frequent suggestions is to treat זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה אַשּׁוּר as a gloss ("it was the Chaldaeans, not the Assyrians"[349]) which corrected expectations that Assyria would destroy Tyre. This interpretation is difficult, however. Such a gloss explicitly questioning a previous prediction in favour of a new interpretation would be strange in the Bible. Furthermore, while the syntax of the phrase זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה אַשּׁוּר can be interpreted as "this is the people, it was not Assyria" (cf. 2 Chr 18:32), the remaining יְסָדָהּ לְצִיִּים would have no connections in this verse. It is more likely that the sentence division should be localised between אַשּׁוּר and הָיָה. Without emendations and glosses, the expression זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה can be interpreted in two different ways.

(A) If one renders זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה as "this (is the) people[350] (that) *is no more*" (i.e. ceased to exist),[351] the destruction of Chaldea is assumed to have been caused by the Assyrians. "They (the Assyrians) rose up their (?) siege towers and demolished its palaces; it (Assyria) turned it into a desert."[352] Why speak of the destruction of Chaldea in the context of a prophecy against Tyre? The LXX provides an attractive way to interpret the passage. Key to the interpretation of the Greek translators is that they understood הֵן not as an interjection, but a signifier of a *conditional clause* (which is grammatically possible): "If (ἐὰν) you went to Kittim, there would be no rest for you; if (הֵן) to the land of Chaldea, even that is laid waste by the Assyrians and there would be no rest for you (either), for its walls are fallen". In this rather paraphrasing translation, 23:12b and 13 are seen as related verses. In 23:12b–13, Tyre, the daughter of Sidon, is offered two alternatives to "escape" the disaster. Plan A: Flee to Kittim, but you will not be safe there. Plan B: Look, the land of Chaldea, but Assyria has utterly destroyed it, too. The land of Kittim in the west and the land of Chaldea in the east (cf. Jer 2:10)

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[349] Alexander, 399; Gray, 394; Berges, 158; Gallagher, *Campaign*, 74.

[350] For זֶה הָעָם, "this people", cf. Rendsburg, "Linguistic Variation", 185.

[351] For this sense of לֹא הָיָה, observe Isa 15:6; Jer 14:5 (cf. לֹא־הָיָה דֶּשֶׁא with כִּי־אֵין עֵשֶׂב in 14:6; for אֵין = לֹא הָיָה, see also Dan 8:4.7); Ob 16 (?).

[352] In this case the verbs and suffixes referring to Assyria, are masc. (sg. and pl.) in contrast to the fem. suff. referring to אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים. So the subject of הֵקִימוּ and עֹרְרוּ (pl.) may be the Assyrians (cf. also Van der Kooij, *Tyre*, 31; Lessing, "Tyre", 185 note 26). בַחוּנָיו is a difficult word, but is assumed to refer to the *siege* towers of the Assyrians, not the watch towers of those under siege.

offer no way to escape from the hand of YHWH. The destruction of Tyre is unavoidable, as restated in 23:14.

(B) If זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה is rendered as "this (is the) people (that) *was not* (before)", we must assume that 23:13 refers to the destruction of two different cities: "Look, the land of Chaldaeans!—This people that was not, Assyria had destined it (the land of Chaldea) to the desert animals.—They (the Chaldeans) raised up their (?) siege towers and demolished her (Tyre's) palaces; they turned her into a desert."

Isaiah 23:13 can be interpreted without often proposed emendations or accounting for glosses. The destruction of Chaldea by the Assyrians that this verse mentions either performs as an illustration for the future fate of Tyre, or explains the sudden emergence of Chaldea threating the nations of Canaan in its power zone.

As mentioned earlier, the prosaic ending, 23:15–18, is mostly considered as a secondary addition to the previous poem. Isaiah 23:14 forms an inclusio with 23:1. Furthermore, 23:15–18 is demarcated by וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא, an expression syntactically independent from the following phrase (cf. Isa 22:20; Hos 1:5). The message of this pericope is also different from 23:1–14. These verses mention that after 70 years, according to the days (?) of one (?) king,[353] the fate of Tyre shall evolve in accordance with the song of a (the?) prostitute.[354] Tyre shall return to its former life as a prostitute and ply her job with the kingdoms of the earth. The motif of 70 years destruction also appears in Jer 25:11; 29:10 (cf. 2 Chr 36:21; Dan 9:2; Zech 7:5), where it ends the captivity of Israel and the nations with the visitation (פקד) of Babylon (cf. Jer 29:10). It is striking that the 70-year-motif is also attested in the description of Esarhaddon's reconciliation with Babylon, the principle city of Chaldea (also mentioned in 23:13) (cf. *IAKA* §11 Episode 10).

Isaiah 23:18 is a rather shocking closure: the prostitute Tyre's incomes (סַחְרָהּ and אֶתְנַנָּהּ) will be holy to YHWH (קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוה), i.e. devoted to those working in the cult (cf. Deut 23:19). One must disagree with Fohrer that this verse propagates a "perverse Frömigkeit" (1:263), caring only for its profit and not interested in the future fate of Tyre. Tyre is delivered (פקד) by YHWH (23:17), he will restore it to its former

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[353] Or rather in the days of a king, i.e. reading בִּימֵי instead of כִּימֵי?

[354] Isa 23:15 may refer to an actual song about a prostitute (for כְּשִׁירַת הַזּוֹנָה, cf. שִׁירַת דּוֹדִי in Isa 5:1), so that the author compares the life of Tyre with the life of a forgotten prostitute. This interpretation is supported by several parallel elements in the prophecy: as Tyre is forgotten for 70 years (23:15), the prostitute is forgotten and remembered (23:16); as the prostitute receives its reward (אֶתְנַנָּה), so also the city Tyre after it is remembered; as the prostitute will resume her job (זנה), Tyre will resume its former trading activity.

life, a rather positive message concerning "the prostitute" Tyre. The fact that Tyre's income is brought to YHWH and is accepted by him as a gift (קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוה), connects this text with similar pronouncements of the Old Testament, the so called "tribute texts", such as Ps 45:12; 72:10; Isa 18:7; 19:18–22; 60:6.13 (!); Hag 2:7.

In search of a date for Isa 23 we face again the important question whether the prophecy is a pre-eventum prediction, or a post-eventum retrospection. Isaiah 23:1–14 is commonly believed to account of past events.[355] The search for a historical background can have full legitimacy only if we assume that the text refers to a past situation.[356] However, 23:5.12b–13 only make sense if the text is considered predictive. The summons to wail (ילל hiphʻil) also appears generally in prophetic descriptions of calamities in the future.[357] The predictive character of the text is also supported by negative evidence. We cannot find any moment in history that would fully comply with the details of this prophecy. No Assyrian or Babylonian king ever managed to destroy Tyre; that is the isle Tyre, the stronghold of the sea.[358] This was only achieved much later by Alexander the Great.[359] If for זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה in 23:13 the translation "this is the people that *is* no more" is followed,[360] the destruction of Chaldea by the Assyrians (23:13), may be a historically illuminative, though not a particularly specific detail.

> Tiglath-pileser III waged war against the Chaldaeans early in his reign. Following these events, Tyre took part in the rebellion of 734–33 and was punished by Assyria.[361] Yet the effects of the Chaldaean wars of Tiglath-pileser III seem to have been less impressive as 23:13 would imply. Sargon II's peaceful Chaldaean and Tyrean relations do not give a suitable setting either for Isa 23. Although Assurbanipal is known to have punished Baʼal, king of Tyre in around 662, his anti-Chaldaean campaigns are more than a decade later than this affair

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[355] Fohrer, 1:257; Wildberger, 861; Clements, 192.

[356] Contra Lessing, *Tyre*, 284, 263–64; Sweeney, 308.

[357] Cf. Isa 13:6; 14:31; Jer 4:8; 25:34; 48:20 (cf. 48:16); 48:39 (cf. 48:40–42); 49:3 (cf. 49:1–2); 51:8; Ezek 21:17; 30:2; Zeph 1:11; Zech 11:2. Note also that Ezekiel's prophecy on Tyre, although set as a lamentation of past events, clearly points towards the future (cf. Ezek 29:18–20). But see Joel 1:5.11.13.

[358] Attempts to soften the meaning of שדד in 23:1.14 by Sweeney and Lessing are not convincing.

[359] Duhm, 166; Fohrer, 1:258; Kaiser, 132, date Isa 23 to Alexander's era. For the problems with this view, see Wildberger, 864; Lessing, "Tyre", 247 note 82.

[360] See solution (A) in the excursus on 23:13 above.

[361] N. Naʼaman, "Tiglath-pileser III's Campaigns against Tyre and Israel (734–732 BCE)", in *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 56–59.

with Tyre, which would again be incongruent with 23:13.

    There are two more probable options. First, 23:1–14 may have been written during the early reign of Sennacherib, perhaps shortly before 701.[362] Before his campaign to Canaan, Sennacherib waged heavy wars with the Chaldaeans. His texts report massive destruction and deportations of Chaldaean population (*BAL*, 2.65–66), complying well with 23:13. His Chaldean campaign was followed by a march against the kingdom of Tyre and Luli, its ruler, as mentioned above (Taylor Prism ii 34–64; *BAL*, 2.67). The mainland kingdom fell, though the isle Tyre was saved. Luli found "rest" in Kittim. These details do not present a problem if the prophecy is dated before 701.

    Second, 23:1–14 can be dated to Esarhaddon's era. Sennacherib assigned the mainland territories of the Tyrean kingdom to Tuba'ilu, whose successor, Abdi-milkutti rebelled against Esarhaddon (677). Though he fled to the sea (Kittim?) he was captured and decapitated. Sidon was transformed into an Assyrian province. Part of its former territory was given to Ba'al I, king of Tyre, who may have also been among the rebels, but surrendered in time to Esarhaddon. We hear again of a rebellion of Ba'al in connection with Esarhaddon's later campaign to Egypt (674/671?). He appears as an ally of Taharka, for which he is punished, but his life is ultimately spared. Esarhaddon reports to have taken away the cities and possessions of Ba'al. Esarhaddon pursued a Chaldea-friendly policy, but 23:13 may refer Sennacherib's anti-Babylonian campaigns in his later years.[363]

To conclude, (a) Isa 23 can be divided into two pericopes: 23:1–14 is a call to lament, in which some theological comments appear. Isaiah 23:15–18 appears to be a later expansion of the previous prophecy.

    (b) The common motifs with the rest of the FNPs are: the wailing (ילל); the humiliation of the rich and powerful kingdom; the fulfilment of the purposes and plans of YHWH (צוה), stretching out his hands not on earth only, but also on the sea; Tyre will be restored, but its glory and wealth will be given to YHWH in Zion.

    (c) If 23:1–14 is considered one literary unit, and if זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה in 23:13 is rendered as "this is the people that is no more", 23:1–14 could be dated to 703–671. If זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה is translated as "this is the people that was not before", the date of the prophecy should be lowered to the era of Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Ezek 26). The literary parallels of 23:15–18 suggest that this expansion derives from the late Assyrian or the New Babylonian period, depending also on the dating of 23:1–14.

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[362] Sweeney, 306–8; Lessing, "Tyre", 251, 254–56.
[363] Wildberger (866) dated 23:1–14 to 671.

3.4.3. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS TO ISAIAH 13–23

Isaiah 13–23 is built around ten מַשָּׂא-headings. This system of super-
scription is only a superficially applied frame, for the collection bears
the signs of a longer process of development (cf. 16:13–14). One can
discern three different מַשָּׂא-superscriptions (e.g. 13:1; 14:28; 21:1) sug-
gesting that the texts brought together represent at least three editions.
The typical superscription of Isa 21–22 and the internal thematic con-
nections between these prophecies, as well as the events of 598 and 587
as common historical backgrounds in (re)reading these prophecies sug-
gest that 21–22 had already been related before the two chapters came
to be inserted among the other prophecies of Isa 13–23 in the exilic era
(cf. 21; 22:25). The independent origin and later addition of Isa 21–22
explains the occurrence of two anti-Babylon prophecies in Isa 13–23
and the prophecy concerning Jerusalem and two royal court officials.

The individual מַשָּׂא-collections also show various signs of editorial
work. As in other collections of FNPs of the Old Testament (cf. 3.3.),
most מַשָּׂא-prophecies of Isaiah are composed of more than one utter-
ance. Beyond these macro-collections, most individual prophecies have
their own redactional history which may or may not predate their inser-
tion into the collection of FNPs (e.g., 15:1–9; 16:1–5; 22:1–25). The
connection between individual prophecies of the מַשָּׂא-collection is pro-
vided by thematic resemblances, catchwords, or other theological edito-
rial considerations.[364] Some passages may derive from an originally anti-
Judaean context, subsequently reapplied against the enemies of the peo-
ple of YHWH (cf. Isa 13:1–8). This editorial theology, namely the idea
that YHWH will change the fate of Israel and its enemies, appears in a
redactional passage, Isa 14:1–4a.

When speaking of a development, I disagree with those who believe
that the prophecies of Isa 13–23 have only been collected at a relatively
late date. It seems that the book of Isaiah parallels other similar works in
that it contained an early collection of FNPs. A reference to this may be
observed in the shift from judgment prophecies to prophecies of hope
(cf. 14:28–32; 15:1–16:5; 17:1–8; 23) and then back again to judgment
(16:6–14; 17:9–11). It is striking that the judgment to hope sections
seem to be related to an Assyrian scene, and presuppose the weakened
power or collapse of imperial influence in *Eber Nāri*. Key to this hy-
pothesis was the appearance of two originally Assyria-related prophecies
embedded in a passage against Babylon, 14:4b–21 and 14:24–27. Both
seem to have once been connected more closely with the anti-Assyrian
speech in Isa 10:5–15.24–27. The judgment on Assyria not only brought
a former anthology of prophecies against Israel and Judah to a close, but

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[364] E.g., the יוֹם יהוה in Isa 13, or the divine name אֲדֹנָי יהוה צְבָאוֹת in Isa 22.

it probably also opened an early collection of FNPs (cf. 14:24–27), forming a bridge between the two sections. The overarching theme in this primary arrangement of the book was the reiterated motif of the raised hand of YHWH first against his own people (Isa 9:7–20), then against Assyria (10:1–4), which had implications for all nations under Assyrian dominion (14:24–27), reiterated at the end of the collection in 23:11. To this pre-exilic edition of FNPs may have belonged most of Isa 14:4b–21.24–27.28–32; 15:1–16:5; 17:1–8; 23 (for Isa 17:12–20:6 see Chapters 4–6). The judgment against Assyria once opening the collection explains the allusions to the vanished oppressor in a context where the Judaean monarchy is still supposed to be standing (16:4; cf. 14:29).

In Isa 10:5–15 the Assyrian king appears as a world ruler, boasting with his actions against different foreign nations. In view of the editors, these foreign nations allude to those mentioned in Isa 13–23*. כָּל־הָאָרֶץ in 10:14 that Assyria has taken over, is echoed in 14:26. The staff raised by the hand of the Assyrian king in 10:5.15, is paralleled by the raised hand of YHWH in 14:26–27 (cf. 5:25; 9:11.16.20). YHWH makes use of Assyria against the nations (23:8–9.11), but he cancels the plans of the king of Assur as soon as he disagrees with him (cf. 10:7; 14:24–27).

The second shift from prophecies of salvation to judgment (16:6–14; 17:9–11) presupposes the exilic context, and may be considered a post-587 and probably post-exilic expansion to the earlier anthology of FNPs. The individual prophecies are mostly older, however, related to the Babylonian period. The central concern of this edition is the day of YHWH and its effect on all the presumptuous of the earth. This edition is related to Persia, who takes over the role of Assur as the tool in the hands of YHWH. At this stage the prophecy on Babylon comes to introduce the new collection of FNPs. The inclusion of 11:11–16 referring to the return of the exiles and a song of deliverance (Isa 12) delimit 1–12 from the collection on the nations.[365] The former prophecies on Assyria have been partially reinterpreted as referring to Babylon, who is viewed not as a new nation in history, but as just another throne contender on the mountain of God (14:13).

יום יהוה appears in the book of Isaiah only in 13:6.9 and 2:12 (יוֹם לַיהוה צְבָאוֹת).[366] In this edition of the book, this motif relates Isa 2:6–21(22) and 13. Isaiah 2:6–21(22) functions as an editorial introduction to a book which placed the prophecies against Israel and Judah and the

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[365] Note that Isa 11:11 refers to a second time when YHWH will raise his hand (יוֹסִיף אֲדֹנָי שֵׁנִית יָדוֹ), which possibly alludes to the well known earlier organising motif of the book, but used now in a positive sense.

[366] Cf. Isa 10:3; 13:13; 17:11; 22:5; 30:25; 34:8.

prophecies against the nations in the context of the day of YHWH.[367]
According to 2:6–21, the day of YHWH has implications not only for
Israel and Judah, but also for the nations in general. The text mentions
the cedars of Lebanon, the oaks of Bashan (2:13), and the ships of
Tarshish (2:16; cf. 23:1), propagating a flavour of foreignness. In 2:6 the
people of YHWH are presented in relation to other nations: Israel has
become like the western Philistines and the sons of the East. On the day
of YHWH the house of Jacob shall be punished with the judgment of
those nations (cf. also Isa 10:9–11). The central event of the day of
YHWH in Isa 2 is the humiliation of the exalted ones, and the exaltation
of YHWH in judgment. This humiliation of the proud is also a central
theme in the FNPs of 13–23. The prophecy against the presumptuous
Assyria (Isa 10.14) and later Babylon (Isa 13–14) inaugurates the collec-
tion that comes to an end by emphasising again the fall of "all honoured
of the earth" (23:9; cf. 2:22). The use of impersonal terminology in 2:6–
21 and Isa 13 is in this perspective even more striking.[368] The day of
YHWH motif connects the Isaianic FNPs with Zephaniah, where the
same theme provided the organising principle of the book (cf. 3.3.4.).

Allusions to the day of YHWH also appear in 17:11 (יוֹם נַחֲלָה) and
22:5 (יוֹם מְהוּמָה וּמְבוּסָה וּמְבוּכָה לַאדֹנָי יהוה צְבָאוֹת). It is therefore possible
that the insertion of 21–22 is related to the day of YHWH edition of the
FNPs, which added 13; 14:1–4a; 16:6–12 (16:13–14?; cf. 21:16–17);
17:9–11 to the former pre-exilic collection of FNPs.

The historical background of individual prophecies varies greatly.
Some undoubtedly go back to the 8th century, but others derive from
the late 7th century (not necessarily after the fall of Nineveh), the early
6th century, the post 587-period, or from after the exile. Explicit sup-
port for the idea that the nations are addressed in relation to anti-
Assyrian alliances appears thus far only in the prophecy on the Phil-
istines, Isa 14:28–32.

3.5.   ISAIAH 13–23 AS A STELE OF YHWH

Concerning the organisation of the prophecies in the collection, the
view that those would follow each other in chronological order cannot
be sustained. The individual passages derive from very different periods.
In the present version of Isa 13–23 the prophecies are framed by an ini-
tial oracle on Babylon and a closing text on Tyre. Kaiser regarded Isa 23
as a late appendix following the prophecy against Jerusalem in Isa 22,

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[367] Cf. Hamborg, "Reasons for Judgement", 157.

[368] Cf. אָדָם, אִישׁ, הָאָרֶץ in the two texts. Note also the motif of wealth that can-
not save from the wrath of YHWH in 2:7.20 and 13:17.

which in his opinion once closed the collection.[369] However, as it was discussed above, there are other reasons why Isa 22 was included into 13–23. Therefore the opinion of Delitzsch and Oswald is more attractive, namely that Tyre as the economic power of the world in the west forms a fitting closure for a collection beginning with Babylon (or earlier with Assyria), the military power of the east.[370]

The intertextual connections between the opening Isa 13–14 and the closing Isa 23 reach even further. The revelation of YHWH's plan against the world and his purpose concerning all the nations uttered in the first מַשָּׂא (14:24–27) comes to a close with the reiteration of this purpose and plan in the last מַשָּׂא (23:8–9.11). The hand stretched out through and against the world ruler in 10:5 and 14:26–27, is paralleled in 23:11 by confirming that "he (YHWH) stretched out his hands and made kingdoms shake, he has given command concerning Canaan to destroy its fortresses". In the present context Canaan may have a much wider significance, possibly symbolising all the small kingdoms of the Levantine region (much like the New Assyrian *māt Ḫatti*). Reading Isa 23:13 mentioning the destruction of Chaldea or by Chaldea[371] is a fitting closing accord in a collection beginning with Assyria and Babylon.

The image of Assyria (Babylon and Media-Persia), the presumed judge and ruler of the entire world (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ; 10:14) ahead of a collection of FNPs places the whole corpus in the context of a genre that is particularly related to the Assyrian kings, though other examples also appear: the royal stele literature. The motifs connecting Isa 13–23 to this type of literature are significant. It is likely that the editors deliberately followed this genre in putting together this corpus of FNPs.

As for these motifs, the Assyrian royal steles usually begin with a reiteration of the world dominance of the Assyrian monarchs.[372] On the inscriptions of great rulers, like Salmaneser III, Tiglath-pileser III, Assurbanipal and others, this introduction is often followed by long accounts and proofs of the historical reality behind this ideological claim, i.e. descriptions of the campaigns against the kings of the four quarters of the world. What we find in Isa 13–23 with prophecies describing the destruction of different nations can be considered the replica of an Assyrian stele. Comparably to the Assyrian style, it evidences the dominion of YHWH above all the nations subjugated by Assyria / Persia. Assyria is not the ruler, but merely one of the nations under his dominion,

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[369] Kaiser, 133.
[370] Delitzsch 264; Oswald, 427.
[371] See the excursus on Isa 23:13 above.
[372] Cf. RIMA 3 A.0.102.1:1–9; A.0.102.2:i 5–10; A.0.102.5:i 1–6; A.0.102.14: 15–17; A.0.103.1:i 26–33; A.0.104.1:1–9; A.0.105.1:1–2; *IAKA* §21:1–14; etc.

a staff in his hands.

Assyrian rulers often maintain that their weapon or scepter was given to them by Assur. Shalmaneser III says (RIMA 3 A.0.102.5: i 6–ii 1): "At that time Assur, the great lord called [my name for shepherdship of] the people, he crowned (me) with the exalted crown, [he…] my dominion, (and) placed in my hands the weapon, scepter, (and) staff appropriate for (rule over) the people." Similarly, ln. 28 of Sargon II's Tang-i Var inscription maintains: "With the power and strength by the great gods, my lords, who raised up my weapons, I cut all my enemies."[373] Isaiah 10:5 should be understood against this background; YHWH as the universal ruler claims to have handed over the power to the king of Assyria. YHWH appears in the position of the Assyrian god Assur. The way Isaiah portrays YHWH in 6:3, by whose glory the whole earth is filled, is similar to how RIMA 3.A.0.102.11 refers to the god Assur, "whose glory covers the earth" (*ša melammūšu māta katmu*) (Left Edge ii 3).

The overarching theme of these prophecies, the hand stretched out above the nations may also be inspired by Assyrian texts and iconography. On relief inscriptions and steles the Assyrian king appears sometimes in standing position with one hand holding a staff (cf. Isa 10:5) and the other hand raised.[374] Assurbanipal's Prism A ix 103–104 retells how the king raised his hand against the Arabians, "the hands that I used to raise against my enemies". The allusion to the raised hand of YHWH in 14:26–27 and 23:11 alludes to this portrayal of the Assyrian king, as the sole ruler of the nations of the Assyrian empire.[375]

The prophecy on Babylon and Tyre also forms a pair in the sense that Babylon (and its predecessor, Assyria) refers to the distant nation in the East, while Tyre with its Mediterranean colonies represents the ends of the world in the West, all subjected to the rule of YHWH (cf. Isa 24:15). This geographical setting reminds the reader again of the intro-

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[373] RIMA 3 A.0.102.1:11–12; 57'–58'; A.0.102.2:i 13; *IAKA* §65:30–34; etc.

[374] See for instance the relief of Sargon II from Tang-i Var (G. Frame, "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var", *Or* 68 [1999] 33, 55), Sargon's Basalt Stele from Cyprus (*AOB* 117 Tafel LIX), or Esarhaddon's Nahr-el Kelb relief (*AOB* 146, Tafel LXV). Nabonid's Harran Stele H1 i 39–44 speaks of Ishtar, the mistress of war, who stretched out her hand so that the kings of the land of Egypt, the Medes, the Arabs, and all the enemy kings sent emissaries inquiring for the well-being of King Nabonid (*INBK*, 490, 497).

[375] On presenting YHWH in parallel with the Assyrian king as a well-known feature of the 7th century Hebrew literature, see also S. Parpola, "Assyria's Expansion in the 8th and 7th Centuries and Its Long-Term Repercussions in the West", in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors, from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* (eds. W. G. Dever & S. Gitin; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 104–5.

duction of Assyrian steles, where the king presents himself as ruler of a world, which is often expressed by the stereotypical formula "from the Upper Sea (Mediterranaean) to the Lower Sea (Persian Gulf)", sometimes followed by a geographical summation of his entire territory:

> Sennacherib, great king, mighty king, king of the universe (*šar kiššati*), king of Assyria, king of the four corners of the world (*šar kibrat erbetti*) (…) God Assur, the great mountain, has provided me an unpared kingdom (…) from the Upper Sea on the West (*tâmti elēnīti ša šalam Šamši*) to the Lower Sea on the East (*tâmti šapliti ša ṣīt Šamši*). Every black headed people (i.e. the humanity) he has put under my feet (…). (Taylor Prism i 10–16).

> Assurbanipal, the great king, the legitimate king, the king of the world, king of all the four rims, king of kings, prince without rival, who rules from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea and has made bow to his feet all the rulers and who has laid the yoke of his overlordship (upon them) from Tyre, which is in the Upper Sea and Tilmun, which is in the Lower Sea, and they pulled the straps of his yoke. (Warka Cylinder of Assurbanipal, *ANET*, 297).[376]

This world-wide setting of the FNPs convinces the reader of the collection that YHWH is the ruler of the earth, not Assyria, Babylon, or Persia. History is not simply the course of events unforeseeable and uncontrolled, but the realisation of a plan of YHWH, a plan now revealed on the stele of YHWH, in Isa 13–23.

> Isaiah 2:6–22, the possible introduction to the day of YHWH edition, can also be related to the Assyrian stele-literature. The appearance of the majesty of YHWH (פַּחַד יהוה וּמֵהֲדַר גְּאֹנוֹ) that will cause the people to flee to the mountains (2:10.19.21) reminds the reader of the frequent references to the *melammu* (or *puḫi melammē*) of the god Assur that spreads dread among the enemies of the Assyrian king chasing the people into the mountains (e.g. RIMA 3 A.0.102.14:78–79, 151; A.0. 102.16:221–22; A.0.102.17:43–44). The same is true of the motif of excessive wealth that will not save the life of people (Isa 13:17). Assyrian inscriptions often refer to rulers of cities overcome by the fear of Assur and saving their lives by paying fabulous tributes of silver, gold, etc. (RIMA 3 A.0.102.14:134–35; A.0.102.16:219–20).

The question is whether we should reckon with the direct influence of

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[376] These motifs are also known to the Biblical authors (Ps 72:8; Zech 9:10), as well as to Babylonian and Persian kings. For the Babylonian literature, see the Etemenaki Cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar in Vanderhoofd, *Babylon*, 36–37, the Harran Stele of Nabonid in *INBK*, 499 [iii 18], the Adad-guppi Stele in *INBK*, 511 [i 40–44]. A Persian example is Cyrus' Cylinder inscription.

Assyrian literature on the forming of the collection 13–23, or there may
have been other possible mediators for this tradition? Though the fea-
tures noted appear most often in Assyrian literature, the parallelisms
pointed out can also be found in the inscriptions of some Babylonian
and Persian kings. The Cylinder Inscription of Cyrus the Great, proba-
bly familiar for Israel (cf. Ezr 1:1), also presents King Cyrus in words
similar to the Assyrian steles, as ruler of the entire world, from the
Lower Sea to the Upper Sea (*TUAT*, 1.408–9). Nevertheless, it is
commonly assumed that the Cyrus Cylinder was modelled on Assur-
banipal's inscriptions, so that its ideological language is after all Assyr-
ian.[377] We remain with two options: (1) shaping Isa 13–23 according to
the form and language of royal steles comes from the later "day of
YHWH"-edition of the FNPs. (2) But it is also possible that a previous
concept of an Assyrian stele-like edition (7th century) was known to
the editors framing the book by "the day of YHWH"-theme (6th cen-
tury), and they adopted this earlier concept even for the later edition of
this book. It was perhaps the realisation of these literary features charac-
teristic to stele-literature that motivated the editors to insert Isa 21–22
before and not after Isa 23.[378]

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[377] Cf. M. Dandamayev, "Assyrian Traditions during Achaemenid Times", in
*Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian
Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995* (eds. S. Parpola & R. M.
Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 44; see also
Parpola, "Assyria's Expansion", 105.
[378] Note especially the Upper Sea/Lower Sea frame.

Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

The Land(s) of Riddles

ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH 18

In line with the purpose of this study outlined in the Introduction, Chapters 4–6 focus on the question how Isa 18–20 clarifies the forma‑ tion and function of the collection Isa 13–23. The answer on this ques‑ tion presupposes a thorough exegetical analysis of Isa 18–20. Each one of Chapters 4–6 begins with (1) a translation followed by text critical and semantic notes which are followed by (2) a detailed exegetical verse‑by‑verse analysis of the three texts. Every chapter is closed with (3) a synthetic evaluation of the exegetical results in the light of the previous parts of this study, looking at the literary, theological and his‑ torical aspects of the Isaianic prophecies under scrutiny.

Chapter 18 of Isaiah is a thematically coherent prophecy. In the view of the great majority of scholars, Isa 18 is concerned with the Afri‑ can nation of the Kushites living south of Egypt, who in the 8th century (the era of Isaiah) invaded Egypt and ruled it for almost a century. Be‑ yond this widely shared general opinion, however, many details of the text are unclear mainly due to lexical uncertainties. Not surprisingly, scholars disagree on essential points in how Isa 18 is precisely related to the land of Kush that appears in 18:1b and how it is connected to the people of Israel or Judah. The clarification of the text and translation is therefore essential for making any further conclusions based on this prophecy. The most important questions related to Isa 18 are: Who are the messengers in 18:2? To which nation are they sent? Whose destruc‑ tion and humiliation is predicted in 18:5–6?

The thematic coherence of 18:1–7 does not necessarily mean that the literary unity of this prophecy should be taken as granted. Indeed, the authenticity of almost every verse has been variously questioned at some point in the exegetical literature. However, because literary argu‑ ments brought into discussion are largely reliant on the interpretation of individual verses as parts of this prophecy, as well as decisions concern‑ ing the central message of Isa 18 as a whole, this literary problem can be addressed more adequately after a detailed treatment of the prophecy.

Beyond the often doubted literary integrity of Isa 18, scholars also noted its loose connections with the מַשָּׂא דַּמֶּשֶׂק in Isa 17:1, treating Isa 18 frequently as a (misplaced) part of the מַשָּׂא מִצְרַיִם beginning in Isa

19. A few exegetes still find Isa 17 a more suitable context, however. Is there any justification for the present position of this prophecy? How this can be related to the formation of Isa 13–23?

Being part of the Isaianic tradition of prophecies concerned with the land on the Nile, one may ask how Isa 18 relates to other prophecies in Isaiah concerned with Egypt and how it functioned as a prophecy concerning the nations. How (if) was its original purpose modified after it was included into the present collection?

For the most part Isa 18 is dated to the Isaianic era, but doubts surround the origin of vss. 3 and 7, whose eschatological tone points in the view of many exegetes to the "universalism" of the post-exilic period. Moreover, there is disagreement concerning the occasion that would fit the prophecy most.

4.1.   TRANSLATION WITH TEXT-CRITICAL AND SEMANTIC NOTES

1a   Woe[a] to the land of [b]the two-winged beetle[b],
1b   which is beyond[c] the rivers of Kush,
2a   [d]the one sending[d] emissaries on the sea,
2b   and in [e]papyrus-vessels[e] upon the waters.
2c   Go[g], swift messengers,
2d   to the nation tall[f] and bald[g],
2e   [h]to the people[h] [i]more fearful beyond it[i],
2f   a nation mighty[j] and [k]treading down[k],
2g   whose land the rivers divide[l]
                    (or: whose country is the riverbed[l]).
3a   All you inhabitants of the world and those dwelling on earth:
3b   when[m] the signal is raised on the mountains, look[n],
3c   and when[m] the horn is blown, listen[n]!
4a   For thus spoke YHWH to me:
4b   ""I shall stay quietly and watch[o] on[p] my place[q],
4c   like[r] scorching[s] heat [t]on the (night)mist (or: daybreak)[t],
4d   like[r] [u]a cloud of dew[u] [v]in the heat[v] of the harvest[w]."
5a   For before the harvest, when budding[x] is over,
5b   and the blossom [y]develops to[y] an [z]unripe berry[z],
5c   he will cut off the shoots[a] with pruning hooks,
5d   and the tendrils[b] he will remove and hew away.
6a   They will be left altogether to the birds of prey of the mountains
6b   and to the beasts of the earth.
6c   And the birds of prey will summer upon them,
6d   and all the beasts of the earth will winter upon them.
7a   At that time [c]will bring[c] tribute[d] to YHWH of hosts,
7b   the people tall and bald,
7c   [e]and indeed the people[e] more fearful beyond it,

7d   a nation mighty and treading down,
7e   whose land the rivers divide
                     (or: whose country is the riverbed),
7f   to the place of the name of YHWH of hosts, mount Zion.

1   a   הוֹי. In ancient and modern renderings הוֹי is translated either as 'woe (to)!',[1] or as an emphatic vocative interjection 'ho!', intended to catch the attention of the audience.[2] Assumptions concerning the connotation of הוֹי have far reaching consequences for understanding the basic character of Isa 18 (promise, reproach, or threat). Many exegetes argue that הוֹי cannot introduce a threat here because the prophecy does not contain any threat against those addressed in 18:1. On this point, argumentations easily become circular, since our interpretation of the addresses of subsequent threats in the prophecy is largely dependent on presuppositions concerning the meaning of הוֹי in 18:1.

Several studies have been published on the so-called הוֹי-prophecies,[3] which were, however, mostly concerned with the original setting of the הוֹי-cry, and little attention was given to the syntactic structure of the הוֹי-formulas.[4] Considering the syntax of הוֹי, we arrive at four different groups of הוֹי-texts:

(1) To the first group belong texts, in which הוֹי is directly related to a following noun or participle, which function as the subject, with the addressee in the *third person* form, as can be inferred either from the use of the suffixes or the verbal forms. The הוֹי-sentence functions here as a verbless clause. To this belong Isa 1:4; 5:8.11.18.20.21.22; 10:1.5; 17:12; 28:1; 29:1.15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1;[5] 45:9.10; Jer 22:13; 23:1; Ezek 34:2; Am 5:18; 6:1; Mic 2:1; Nah 3:1; Hab 2:6.9.12.15.19; Zeph 2:5; 3:1; Zech 11:17 and most probably Zeph 3:18b as well (cf. LXX). The impersonality does not mean that the prophet had no par-

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[1] Cf. LXX; Vulg.; Syr., *Tg. Isa.*; Von Orelli, 74; König, 198; Fischer, 136–37; W. Janzen, *Mourning Cry and Woe Oracle* (BZAW 125; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 60–61; Clements, 164; Watts, 245; Blenkinsopp, 308.

[2] Ibn Ezra, 85; Gesenius, 572; Dillmann, 164; Marti, 147; Gray, 309; Young, 1:474; H. Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern. Die Stellung der klassischen Propheten des 8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. zur Aussenpolitik der Könige von Israel und Juda* (VTS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1964), 124; Schoors, 116; Clements, 164; Sweeney, 257; Motyer, 160.

[3] E. Gerstenberger, "The Woe-Oracles of the Prophets", *JBL* 81 (1962) 249–63; G. Wanke, "אוֹי und הוֹי", *ZAW* 78 (1966) 215–18; R. J. Clifford, "The Use of HÔY in the Prophets", *CBQ* 28 (1966) 458–64; J. G. Williams, "The Alas-Oracles of the Eighth Century Prophets", *HUCA* 38 (1967) 75–91; H. W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 2. Joel und Amos* (BKAT 14/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1969), 284–87; Janzen, *Mourning*; H.-J. Krause, "hôy als prophetische Leichenklage über das eigene Volk im 8. Jahrhundert", *ZAW* 85 (1973) 15–46; Wildberger, 182–83; H.-J. Zobel, הוֹי, *TWAT* 2:383–88; D. R. Hillers, "*Hôy* and *Hôy*-Oracles: A Neglected Syntactic Aspect", in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (eds. C. L. Meyers & M. O'Connor; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 185–88.

[4] Exceptions to a certain measure are the studies of Wolff and Hillers.

[5] In Isa 33:1 appears a combination of second and third person forms.

ticular audience in view, but that this is addressed indirectly.[6]

(2) In a second group of texts similarly the *third person* form is used, but הוֹי is connected to the subject by a preposition. These texts are close to (1): Jer 48:1; 50:27; Ezek 13:3.18. הוֹי is here syntactically and semantically similar to אוֹי, which almost always appears with a preposition (לְ).

(3) A third group includes texts where הוֹי is an independent particle, casually doubled as a summons or an exclamation. In these cases, it is not the impersonal or third person form that is used, but the *second person* instead, consistent with the vocative: Isa 1:24; 55:1; Jer 30:7; 47:6; Zech 2:10.11.

(4) A fourth group, which is syntactically related to the previous one, is formed by those texts, where הוֹי is a mourning cry, by which the deceased is addressed in the *second person* form, with הוֹי, 'ah' functioning as a vocative: 1 Kgs 13:30; Jer 22:18; 34:5.

When arguing for the "neutral" translations 'oh', or 'ah' in Isa 18:1, exegetes have pointed to group (3). That is exactly the problem. For syntactically speaking Isa 18:1 belongs to group (1), in which case the translation 'woe' is evident. Where this was questioned (e.g. Isa 17:12), it was done on grounds similar to 18:1. Concluding, הוֹי should be rendered as 'woe' in Isa 18:1.

There is also a noteworthy contextual factor. הוֹי is always a cry with negative overtones, related either to a disastrous, depressing past or present, or, more frequently, it introduces an unfortunate future. It is not a cry of encouragement, as *HALOT* suggested for Isa 18:1; 55:1; Zech 2:10. Although in Isa 55:1 and Zech 2:10 encouragement does appear, this idea is expressed using the imperative of הלך (Isa 55:1) and נוס (Zech 2:10), and not by the interjection הוֹי itself. הוֹי is rather a cry caused by the psychological impact of an existent (Isa 55:1) or virtual realisation of an approaching (Zech 2:10) calamity.

b-b צִלְצַל כְּנָפָיִם. Scholars widely disagree on the meaning of this expression. צלצל—if left unvocalised—appears six times in the Old Testament.[7] Lexicons generally distinguish four semantic domains: צְלָצַל, 'whirring'; צִלְצָל, 'spear', 'harpoon'; צְלָצַל, 'whirring locust', 'cricket'; צֶלְצְלִים, 'cymbal' (musical instrument of percussion). The last meaning is the least disputed (2 Sam 6:5; Ps 150:5), even if the type of musical instrument it refers to remains unidentified (cf. LXX κύμβαλα). In Deut 28:42 צְלָצַל refers to an insect causing agricultural disaster. In Job 40:31 צִלְצָל is often translated as 'spear', 'harpoon'. However, the rendering πλοῖον, "boats" in the LXX, suggests that צלצל may refer to a kind of boat.[8] Even if the ultimate sense of צלצל remains uncertain, its semantic field is in most cases delimited by the context. This does not seem to be the case in Isa 18:1, however. Exegetes have sought to implement here all possible meanings of this word.

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[6] Contra Hillers, "*Hôy*-oracles", 186, explaining הוֹי-texts as vocatives ("o, you who").

[7] Deut 28:42; Isa 18:1; Job 40:31; 2 Sam 6:5; Ps 150:5 (2x).

[8] G. R. Driver, "Difficult Words in the Hebrew Prophets", in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy: Presented to Professor Theodore H. Robinson by the Society for Old Testament Study on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1950), 52–53; J. V. K. Wilson, "A Return to the Problems of Behemoth and Leviathan", *VT* 25 (1975) 11.

On the top of this semantic difficulty, 1QIsaᵃ has צל צל as a variant form in 18:1. Kutscher believes that the word division here is intentional and the author might have had צֵל in mind.[9] This reading is supported by Aq.'s σκιὰ σκιὰ πτερύγον, and Jerome's *umbra umbra* appearing in his commentary. It is quite improbable, however, that these texts represent a more reliable textual variant, and should rather be considered corrective attempts to give sense to an enigmatic phrase.

Regarding the translation of צלצל the following proposals stand out:

(a) land of the whirring (of) wings

צלצל כְּנָפַיִם is often translated as "whirring wings".[10] In this interpretation צלצל is etymologically connected to צלל, 'to tingle', 'to quiver', used to express the tingle of ears (1 Sam 3:11; 2 Kgs 21:12; Jer 19:3) or of lips (Hab 3:16; cf. נוע + שָׂפָה in 1 Sam 1:13). צלצל is regarded as an onomatopoeic noun, or as a pilpel infinitive form of צלל. JM §59c–d maintains that in most verbs of this kind "the repetition of two consonants signify repetition of an action, often in quick succession".[11] According to Yannay, the reduplication often means the "intensification and strengthening of the action connoted by the triradical".[12]

Cognates of the Hebrew צלל appear in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (צלל), Arabic (ṣalla, ṣalṣalla), and Syriac (ṣal), all with the meaning 'to ring', 'to tinkle'. The reduplicated form צלצל appears in post-biblical Hebrew צלצל 'to tinkle', 'to whir' and Aramaic צלצל, 'to clap', 'to shout'.[13]

The idea that the wings produce a sound by touching one another appears in Ezek 3:13 (cf. Ezek 1:24; 10:5), though here expressed by *קול כנפים, "the sound of wings".[14] Many commentators assume that צלצל כְּנָפַיִם alludes to the rich fauna of the Equatorial region, particularly the insects with the metallic clang of their wings.[15] Others consider the whirring wings to be a metaphor for the Kushite's running speed.[16] Sym. translated צלצל by ἦχος, 'noise', 'sound'.[17]

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[9] E. Y. Kutscher, *Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1 Q Isaᵃ)* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 279.

[10] See BDB; RSV; NIV; Gray, 306; D. M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 30–31. Cf. Cheyne's (110) "land of the clang of wings", and German "Land des Flügelgeschwirrs" (Duhm, 137; Marti, 147; König, 198; Procksch, 238; Kaiser, 74).

[11] See also I. Eitan, "La répétition de la racine en hébreu", *JPOS* 1 (1920) 174–77; I. Yannay, "Augmented Verbs in Biblical Hebrew", *HUCA* 45 (1974) 71–95.

[12] Yannay, "Augmented Verbs", 75.

[13] *NCW* 4:195; *DTTM* 1286; *DJPA* 466 (מצלצלת בכפיה, 'she clapped with her hands').

[14] Note the Akkadian *salālu* (G) in *kappi*(PA) *šumēlišu islil*, "flutters its left wing", and the D form in *kappīšu*(PA.MEŠ-šu) *usallilma uṣi*, "flaps his wings and leaves" (CAD *s* 88; CAD *k* 185). However, the relationship between Hebrew צלל and Akkadian *salālu* is not clear (cf. late Hebrew and Samaritan סלל, 'to swing', and biblical Hebrew זלל).

[15] Cheyne, 160; Duhm, 137; Condamin, 125; König, 198; Schoors, 116–17; Kaiser, 76.

[16] Goldenberg, *Curse*, 31.

[17] Probably connecting צלצל to צליל and late Hebrew צללה, 'noise', 'chattering'. ἦχος renders הָמוֹן in the LXX of 1 Sam 14:19 and Jer 51:16 (MT). See הָמוֹן in Isa 17:12.

(b) "Land of the shadow of wings"

Some regard צלצל as a reduplication of צֵל, 'shadow', expressing intensification ('deep shadow'), or dual ('double shadow'; cf. פִיפִיוֹת, 'double edged'). This is followed by the Syr. [ʾrʿ] dṭllʾ dknpʾ, "land of the shadow of wings". The metaphor is thought to refer to Kush shaded by mountains (symbolised as wings; Vitringa) or by the migrating birds gathering above the country (Rashi). However, the intensified form of צֵל is צֶלְלוֹ in Job 40:22 and צִלְלֵי in Jer 6:4.

Dillmann connected the translation 'double shadow' with Strabo's description of the Equatorial region. In his *Geography* (ii 5.37) Strabo recorded that "in all the regions that lie between the tropic and the equator the shadow falls in both directions, that is toward the north and toward the south" (according to the seasons, not at the same time). The inhabitants of these regions are called ἀμφίσκιοι, and are distinguished from the regions of the ἑτεροσκίοι or περισκίοι.[18] However, adopting this explanation for Isa 18:1 would leave כְּנָפַיִם unexplained.

(c) "land of the winged cymbal"

In the Vulg. צלצל כְּנָפַיִם is rendered as *cymbalum alarum*, "winged cymbal". This interpretation was followed by Lowth and Bochart, who believed that Isa 18:1 referred to the Egyptian instrument 'sistrum' (cf. מְנַעַנְעִים in 2 Sam 6:5 in the Vulg.). However, צלצל as a musical instrument appears always in pl. Moreover, it is also difficult to explain כְּנָפַיִם in connection with this musical instrument.

(d) "land of the winged boat"

Based on Job 40:31, צלצל is often related to some kind of boat, with כְּנָפַיִם assumed to be its sails. This translation proposed by the LXX (πλοίων πτέρυγες) was later followed by Theod., *Tg. Isa.* (ספינן) and many recent commentators.[19] The LXX is supported by צלצלא, 'boat' in Egyptian Aramaic.[20]

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[18] For the division of the celestial zones in antiquity, see the notes of H. L. Jones in his translation of Strabo, *Geog.* ii 2.3.

[19] Driver, "Difficult Words", 56; Kissane, 205; Wildberger, 678–79; Oswald, 359–60.

[20] In Scroll III B 2:24 we find: אופצרתא עב[דו ע[ל צלצלא ודגיתא , "the reckoning which was made about the sailboat and the fishing boat" (cf. also Scroll III B 2:18; 3:31; B. Porten & A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: Literature, Accounts, Lists* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993], 3:194–204). צלצלא may have been a boat with a protecting deck on board. Cf. בית ספינתא in the Elephantine documents, as well as Akkadian *bīt eleppi*, "Aufbau auf dem Deck des Schiffes", "Kajüte" (A. Salonen, *Die Wasserfahrzeuge in Babylonien nach šumerisch-akkadischen Qellen (mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der 4. Tafel der Serie* HAR-ra=ḫubullu). *Eine lexikalische und kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung* [Societas Orientalis Fennica viii.4.; Helsingforsiae: Societas Orientalis Fennica, 1939], 96–98), as well as *ṣilli eleppi*, *ṣaluli eleppi*, rendered by Salonen as 'Schattendeck (des Schiffes)' or 'Schirmdach' (awning) to protect the sailors from sun and rain (Salonen, *Wasserfahrzeuge*, 98; cf. מְכַסֶּה in Ezek 27:7). See also S. Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie* (GGWJ; Leipzig: Gustav Fock, 1910–1912), 2:341. The Aramaic ספינא, Hebrew ספינה, 'ship' (Jon 1:5) is also related etymologically to the verb ספן, 'bedecken', 'täfeln' (Salonen, *Wasserfahrzeuge,* 19; Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie*, 2:339 and note 208, on p. 680), which is one of the meanings of צלל as well.

(e) "land of the winged beetle"

Several scholars argued that צלצל should be equated with the creature from Deut 28:42, most likely a 'beetle'.[21] In that case צְלָצַל כְּנָפַיִם can be compared to עוֹף כָּנָף (Gen 1:21; Ps 78:27) and צִפּוֹר כָּנָף (Deut 4:17; Ps 148:10). The dual form of כָּנָף in Isa 18:1 is striking.[22]

From the long list of solutions (c) can be excluded. The main problem with the interpretations (a) and (b) is that these formations and meanings are otherwise unattested in biblical Hebrew. Granting that כְּנָפַיִם metaphorically refers to the sails of a ship solution (d) would become possible, though that is also without precedents. Further arguments discussed in the exegesis support translating צלצל כְּנָפַיִם as 'two-winged beetle' (e).

c   מֵעֵבֶר לְ. Although in many cases מֵעֵבֶר לְ undoubtedly means 'on the other side of', scholars often translate מֵעֵבֶר לְנַהֲרֵי־כוּשׁ in 18:1 as "alongside/in the region of the rivers of Kush".[23] The alternative translation intends to solve an alleged geographical difficulty in 18:1. נַהֲרֵי־כוּשׁ, "the rivers of Kush" are identified with the two main branches of the Nile river in Sudan, the White and the Blue Nile, as well as the Atbara, a tributary of the Nile. It is argued that the Kushite Empire of the time of Isaiah with its capital at Napata was located to the north of these branches of the Upper Nile, which would be incongruent with 18:1 if מֵעֵבֶר לְ is translated as 'on the other side of'. However, as noted in EXCURSUS 1, the available archaeological data does not support the assumption above concerning the extent of the Kushite kingdom. It is, moreover, questionable that מֵעֵבֶר לְ allows the translation "alongside of".

עֵבֶר appears around 70 times in the Bible in different syntagmatic constructions, most often with geographical connotations as in Isa 18:1.[24] In some geographical texts the English rendering 'the other side' is problematic so that

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[21] Fohrer, 1:203 ("geflügelte Grille"); Kilian, 118 ("Heuschreckenschwärme"); Schöring in Delitzsch, 350 ("winged beetle"); M. Lubetski, "Beetlemania of Bygone Times", *JSOT* 91 (2000) 15–26 ("winged beetle"). Delitzsch and Cheyne referred to the *tzetze-fly*, which does not fit Deut 28:42, however.

[22] The most detailed study of this translation is the article of Lubetski. An A.D. 6th century medical text (*Book of Medicines*) written by Asaf Harofeh identifies צלצל with the Syriac ḥbšwšyt̠ and Arabic *kunfusā*, both related to the Judaeo-Aramaic חיפושית, 'beetle'. Cf. E. ben Yehuda, *Thesaurus totius hebraitatis et veteris et recentioris* (New York: Yoseloff, 1960); Lubetski, "Beetlemania", 14. Asaf Harofeh mentions צלצל הבתים שאין לו כנפים, "a house beetle that has no wings". Another poetic text cited by Ben Yehuda (*Thesaurus*, 5507) may serve as a further important reference. The text, speaking of a natural disaster, contains an enumeration of plagues caused by different kinds of insects: כרם מתולעת לקש מארבה מגד מצלצל נפש מבהלה שובע מסלעם, "the vine (has been destroyed) by the worm, the second growth by the locust, the fine fruit by the צלצל, the spirit (?) by the disaster, and the abundance by the grasshopper".

[23] B. Gemser, "*Beʿēber hajjardēn*: in Jordan's Borderland", *VT* 2 (1952) 352; Wildberger, 678–79; Watts, 244; Motyer, 161.

[24] A few times this geographical aspect is missing. These cases are of little relevance here. Gemser ("*Beʿēber hajjardēn*", 351) fails to distinguish between different contexts. This influences his conclusions concerning the interpretation of Isa 18:1.

some believe that עֵבֶר is a neutral term, and that its meaning is in no connection with the position of the speaker.[25] However, those texts in which the English 'other side', 'opposite side', 'beyond' is regarded as problematic, can be grouped into three categories: (a) texts which compare *two opposite* sides, banks, etc.; (b) texts in which the expression עֵבֶר or one of its forms appears as a *standard terminology*; the term is used here regardless of the position of the speaker; (c) it is problematic to decide from what/whose *perspective* עֵבֶר is used.

For (a) note for instance Num 32:19, where the adverbial specifications הָלְאָה and מִזְרָחָה are added not because the term עֵבֶר is undetermined in itself (as Gemser assumed), but rather to clarify which 'other side' is meant. When opposite sides of a river are compared, עֵבֶר can refer to both sides. But this does not justify a neutral translation in texts where this opposite aspect is missing. עֵבֶר is like the Hebrew demonstrative pronoun זֶה, 'this', which also changes its meaning when used reciprocally (cf. 1 Sam 14:4).

For (b) the most prominent example is עֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן, which is used to designate the Transjordan area, from whatever perspective. Cf. Num 32:32; Deut 3:8; 4:46.47. Probably also Isa 8:23 (cf. 2 Kgs 15:29).

For (c) note Josh 5:1 and 9:1, where it is a question from which perspective 'beyond' is used. It must be noted that translating 'beside' would be inadequate on these places, for a neutral connotation would not fit the purpose of the author, who communicates geographical information on this place. The question is not whether עֵבֶר means 'beyond', but rather from which perspective this is meant? Does the author write in view of a Babylonian community? Does he identify himself with the people moving across the Jordan?

Hebrew language possesses several prepositions and adverbs for 'beside': עַל, 'beside' (Ex 2:5; Num 22:5), אֵצֶל, 'side', 'beside' (1 Kgs 20:36; Neh 4:12), עַל שְׂפַת, "beside", "on the bank of" (Gen 41:3.17; Ex 2:3; Deut 2:36), עַל יַד, "on the river-side" (Ex 2:5; Jer 46:6; Dan 10:4), עַל גְּבוּל, "in the border of" (Num 22:36; cf. also 34:12), כִּכַּר, 'territory', 'region' (Gen 13:10.11.12; Deut 34:3), קָצֶה, 'side', 'end', 'border' (Num 34:3; Josh 3:8.15), גָּדְיָה, 'river bank' (Josh 3:15; Isa 8:7). The meaning 'other / opposite side', is covered only by עֵבֶר.

מֵעֵבֶר לְ, the expression in Isa 18:1 that particularly concerns us now, is syntactically similar to מִקֶּדֶם לְ (Gen 3:24; 12:8; Num 34:11), מִנֶּגֶב לְ (Num 34:4; Josh 15:3), מִצָּפוֹן לְ (Josh 8:11; 15:6; Ezek 8:5), מִחוּץ לְ (Lev 14:8; 24:3; Num 35:27), or adverbial constructions מֵהָלְאָה לְ (Gen 35:21; Jer 22:19; Am 5:27), מִמַּעַל לְ (Ex 28:27; Lev 11:21; Isa 14:13), מִסָּבִיב לְ (Num 16:24). The referential point is provided by the word attached to לְ. These related expressions make a neutral translation for מֵעֵבֶר לְ even more unlikely.

Concluding, in most cases where עֵבֶר appears, the translation 'other side', 'opposite side' or the adverbial 'beyond', 'on the other side' is evident. עֵבֶר has a clear geographical and topographical undertone. That such a biased expression (in a geographical sense) could have become a neutral expression in other related cases, is doubtful. A neutral meaning would be impossible or superflu-

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[25] Gemser, "*Beʿēber hajjardēn*", 350; J. P. U. Lilley, "By the River-Side", *VT* 28 (1978) 165–71; H.-P. Stähli, עבר, *THAT* 2:203; H. F. Fuchs, עבר, *TWAT* 5:1031.

ous on most occasions. Specifically the syntagmatic construction מֵעֵבֶר לְ can only be translated as "on the other side of", "opposite to". How this fits Isa 18:1, will be discussed in the exegesis.

2 **d-d** הַשֹּׁלֵחַ. הַשֹּׁלֵחַ is masc. in form, despite אֶרֶץ in vs. 1 which is fem. This apparent syntactical incongruence has led some exegetes to restructure the lines of vs. 2. The JPS relocated 2ab after 2fg. Such an arbitrary change in the structure of the text is not necessary. The masc. form of הַשֹּׁלֵחַ is to be explained by the fact that it refers to the signified of אֶרֶץ, that is the inhabitants of the land, and not the signifier itself.[26] Other commentators assume that אֶרֶץ functions as a masc. noun.[27] A third option is to correlate the הַשֹּׁלֵחַ with כּוּשׁ from the previous verse line: "beyond the rivers of Kush, who is sending".[28]

e-e כְּלִי־גֹמֶא. כְּלִי־גֹמֶא is the name of the papyrus vessel used by the inhabitants of the Nile valley. The terminology is partially Egyptian. גֹמֶא is derived from the Eg. qmꜣ, 'rush', 'reed', 'papyrus'.[29] The LXX translated וּבִכְלֵי־גֹמֶא as καὶ ἐπιᵟ τολὰς βυβλίνας, "and papyrus letters". Exegetes suggested various reconstructions to the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX: סִפְרֵי or כִּתְבֵי, or even וּכְבֵלִי־גֹמֶא, from כבל, 'to bind', 'to fold'.[30] The most reasonable explanation is, however, given by Döderlein and Schleußner, who emend the Greek text as καὶ ἐπὶ στολαῖς βυβλίναις, "and on papyrus-equipments".[31] στολή, 'equipment', 'armament' is a synonym of σκεῦος (σκευή) attested in Aq., Sym. and Theod.

f מִמְשָׁךְ. The following verse is full of enigmatic terms and *hapax legomena*. The qal form of משׁך is usually rendered in lexica as (1) 'to seize' and (2) 'to draw', 'to pull', 'to stretch out'; 'to carry along'.[32] The passive translation of the

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[26] Cf. Dillmann, 165, Marti, 148.

[27] Gesenius, 577; BDB; *DCH*. Cases similar to Isa 18:2 appear in Gen 13:6 (אֶרֶץ is the subject of the masc. נשׂא; but cf. the Samaritan Pentateuch נשׂאה); Isa 37:11 (‖ 2 Kgs 19:11), where the masculine suffix in לְהַחֲרִימָם has its reference in כָּל־הָאֲרָצוֹת (cf. also אוֹתָם in Isa 37:12); Isa 66:8 (חיל in hophʿal masc. is connected to אֶרֶץ); Ezek 21:24 (where the masculine אֶחָד is used with אֶרֶץ).

[28] Procksch, 238. Names of countries and cities are usually feminine in Hebrew. See, however, GKC §122i; JM §134g; see Num 20:20; Isa 3:8; 19:1.

[29] *WÄS* 5:37; *HALOT*. Cf. Demotic *qm*, Coptic *kam*, Egyptian and Samaritan Aramaic גמא, Ethiopic *gōmʿē*. Muchiki argued that the Hebrew and Aramaic forms are more closely related to the Egyptian *gmy* attested since the New Kingdom, overlapping with *qmꜣ* (*WÄS* 5:170). The Egyptian *gmy* ceased to be used in the Egyptian at some time but *qmꜣ* survived in the Demotic and Coptic (Y. Muchiki, *Egyptian Proper Names and Loanwords in North-West Semitic* [SBLDS 173; Atlanta: SBL, 1999], 241).

[30] So Harmer, followed by Gesenius, 579. Donner considered the LXX more reliable than the MT when he dropped the preposition בְּ in the MT (*Israel*, 122). Cf. also Isa 39:1 ἐπιστολὰς καὶ πρέσβεις and 2 Kgs 20:12 βιβλία rendering סְפָרִים.

[31] Cf. Gesenius, 579, where he unconvincingly argued against this reconstruction.

[32] GesB 468–69; BDB 604; *HALOT*. Torczyner defended only one sense, 'to seize', 'to grasp', 'to hold'. He maintained that 'to draw', 'to pull' is a late development of משׁך in post-biblical Hebrew (H. Torczyner, "משׁך eine mißverstandene hebräische Vokabel", *MGWJ* 33 [1889] 401–12). His views are not convincing, however, since the verbal parallels of משׁך support the translation 'to draw', 'to pull'.

puʻal part. in Isa 18:2.7, '(to be) drawn out' is in general accepted, but opinions differ on both the derivation and the exact meaning of the text. מְמֻשָּׁךְ is most often explained to refer to physical appearance: it is a nation 'drawn out', i.e. tall.[33] Some others understand 18:2.7 to refer to Israelites, and translate 'up-rooted', 'pulled out'.[34] Vitringa considers that מְמֻשָּׁךְ describes the geographical characteristics of the country and render accordingly "extended nation".[35] Hitzig believed that the verb משׁך alluded to the long life of the Ethiopians as also mentioned by Herodotus (*Hist.* ii. 17, 22–23; iii 20). Lubetski & Gottlieb believe that beyond the connotation 'tall', מְמֻשָּׁךְ also means 'bow drawers'.[36]

The puʻal part. of משׁך appears only once more in Prov 13:12 in a different context mentioning תּוֹחֶלֶת מְמֻשָּׁכָה, "deferred/delayed hope". In lack of suffi-cient parallels for the puʻal, I shall look at the qal form, assuming that the for-mer is the passive of the latter.[37] One should probably distinguish between a more general transitive and a more rare intransitive meaning. The intransitive meaning, 'to draw up', 'to depart', appears in Judg 4:6 (with לקח as in Ex 12:21); 20:37.[38] The transitive form—which is more important for the present case, since the puʻal requires an object—means: (1) 'to seize', (2) 'to draw', 'to pull'; 'to carry along'. Looking at משׁך from a syntagmatic point of view, the object of the verb may be human (Gen 37:28; Judg 4:7; Job 24:22; Sol 1:4; Ezek 32:20; Hos 11:4), animals (Job 40:25), a bow (1 Kgs 22:34; Isa 66:19), a yoke (Deut 21:3), the evil (in metaphorical sense; Isa 5:18).[39]

מְמֻשָּׁךְ in 18:2 is best understood as a passive form of משׁך with a person as object. Some of the translations mentioned above are incongruent with this criterion. Being a passive, מְמֻשָּׁךְ cannot mean "bow drawer". Furthermore, משׁך can have this sense only in relationship with קֶשֶׁת, 'bow' (1 Kgs 22:34; Isa 66:19). A similar objection applies to the proposal of Hitzig (prolonged life). The approach of Vitringa can be justified from a geographical perspective, but it is difficult from a grammatical point of view, since משׁך should refer to אֶרֶץ rather than to גּוֹי. The parallel מוֹרָט referring to the appearance of the nation would also question the geographical interpretation of מְמֻשָּׁךְ. The assumption

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[33] Cf. ἔθνος μετέωρον in the LXX, and see further Delitzsch, 351; Gray, 312; Young, 1:476; Kaiser, 77; Wildberger, 689; Blenkinsopp, 308; Goldenberg, *Curse*, 32.

[34] So the Vulg., Syr. and several medieval Jewish commentaries.

[35] Vitringa, 846–47; cf. Lowth and Dathe in Gesenius, 581.

[36] M. Lubetski & C. Gottlieb, "Isaiah 18: The Egyptian Nexus", in *Boundaries of the Ancient Near Eastern World: A Tribute to Cyrus H. Gordon* (eds. M. Lubetski et al.; JSOTSS 273; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 373–74. Cf. also H. Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte in der Josiazeit. Israel und Assur als Thema einer produktiven Neuinterpre-tation der Jesajaüberlieferung* (WMANT 48; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1977), 13 note 46.

[37] The niphʻal stem (Isa 13:22; Ezek 12:25.28) should also be translated as passive to qal (DCH 5:524–25). Cf. Isa 13:22 niphʻal and Prov 13:12 puʻal.

[38] Less probable is Job 21:33, where אָדָם may perhaps be the object of משׁך.

[39] In some less important cases abstract objects are connected to the verb משׁך, 'to hold on'; 'to prolong', 'to extend': 'years' (Neh 9:30 [unlike *HALOT*; H. Ringgren, "משׁך", *TWAT* 5:60; DCH 5:524 §16]), 'kindness' (Ps 36:11; 109:12; Jer 31:3), 'anger' (Ps 85:6). With יוֹבֵל, 'horn', משׁך means the prolonging of its sound (Ex 19:13; Josh 6:5).

that מְמֻשָּׁךְ refers to the physical stature of the nation finds further support in post-biblical Hebrew. *b. Ketub.* 10b provides us the sentence: "(the rain) gives beauty and enlargement (ממשיך) to the fruits". In *b. Ber.* 54b we find: "his teeth were prolonged" (משכי שיניה), in both cases picturing the size of the object.[40] See further the exegetical discussion.

g   מוֹרָט. מוֹרָט is supplemented by the preformative מ (ממורט) in 1QIsa[a] and several Massoretic manuscripts. Both forms should be evaluated as pu'al participles. Occasionally the preformative מ may be missing (GKC §52s). The pu'al participle of מרט was translated as '(a nation) plucked out' or 'torn', when it was assumed to refer to Judaeans.[41] In his Thesaurus Gesenius pleaded for the rendering *glaber,* 'naked' (GesThes 820). Others believe מוֹרָט meant 'polished', or 'smooth-skinned', referring to the shining dark-coloured skin salved with oil, following Herodotus' description of the Ethiopians.[42]

The qal and pu'al forms of מרט appear 14 times in different constructions. מרט is translated 'to tear out', 'to make bare' when the object of the verb is the hair, beard, or a person.[43] On the other hand, when the verb is used in connection with some kind of metal object, it should be rendered as 'to polish', 'to burnish'.[44] Etymological cognates of מרט also give us a similar picture.[45] Given that the objects of the verb in Isa 18:2 is a nation (people), מרט must refer to the baldness of this nation and not a shining appearance. The rendering 'bald' is supported furthermore by the Talmudic evidence, where ממורט is used for the bald nazirite (*b. Nazir* 46b; *b. Yoma* 61b; cf. also המורט in *t. Nazir* i, 6).

h-h אֶל־עַם. This is dropped in the LXX, which is not a more reliable variant,[46] but derives from difficulties in making sense of the MT.

i-i מִן־הוּא וָהָלְאָה. One can discern a temporal and a geographical interpretation of this *hapax legomenon.* Assuming מִן־הוּא וָהָלְאָה has a *temporal* meaning

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[40] משך in *Tanh.* Noah 13 is substituted in another version with גדל (cf. Goldenberg, *Curse,* 189-90), which suggests that the two verbs can be used as synonyms.

[41] Cf. Vulg., Syr., and most medieval commentators. *Tg. Isa.* has אניסא ובזיזא [עמא], which is hardly a translation of מְמָשָׁךְ וּמוֹרָט [גוֹי], since the same phrase also renders קַו־קָו וּמְבוּסָה. The word pair is imported from Isa 17:14 seen as related to Isa 18.

[42] Knobel, 123; Delitzsch, 351; Cheyne, 111–12; Gray, 312; Procksch, 239; Young, 1:476; Hayes & Irvine, 255; Fohrer 1:205; Kaiser, 74, 77; Wildberger, 689; Watts, 245.

[43] Ezr 9:3 (cf. Job 1:20; Ezek 27:31); Neh 13:25; Isa 50:6; Ezek 29:18. See also the niph'al form (functioning as passive to qal) in Lev 13:40.41.

[44] 1 Kgs 7:45; Ezek 21:14.15.16.33.

[45] Concerning the first construction, see Akkadian *marāṭu, muruṭṭu,* 'to rub', 'scratch' (foot or finger) (CAD *m* 276–77). In relation to the second, cf. Egyptian Aramaic מרט, 'pull out' (of wool) (*DNWSI* 693), Biblical Aramaic מרט (Dan 7:4), Syriac *mrṭ,* 'to pluck', 'to pull', 'to tear out' (hair, feather, vegetables). In the Syr. of Mic 1:6 *mrṭ'* equates קָרְחָה, 'baldness' (*CSD* 301; *LS* 404). The Targumic Aramaic מרט renders קָרְחָה, 'baldness' in Deut 14:1 and Isa 15:2. For the verbal form cf. *Tg. Onq.* for Lev 21:5, *Tg. Jon.* for Jer 16:6 and Ezek 27:31. Cf. also the parallelism מרט | קרח in Ezek 29:18. In post-biblical Hebrew the pi'el has a meaning similar to qal (*DTTM* 841).

[46] Contra Clements, 165.

scholars translated "from this time and onward", or "since its existence".[47] Fol-
lowing the more widely accepted *geographical* reading, scholars translate "from
here/there and beyond", or "everywhere".[48] Kissane and Marti regard מִן־הוּא as
a corruption of some other word or a geographical name.[49]

Both of the main interpretations fall short of sufficient grammatical
support. The expression מִן X וָהָלְאָה appears several times in the Old Testa-
ment, generally in this form.[50] מִן X וָהָלְאָה is attested in both temporal and
local sense.[51] Irrespective of both senses, הוּא in Isa 18:2 is problematic. הוּא
cannot have a temporal aspect. Moreover, מִן always requires a different noun
in order to express time (e.g. יוֹם). This is also evident in Nah 2:9, where the
expression מִימֵי הִיא was argued by Gesenius to support a temporal translation
in Isa 18:2.[52] הוּא can also hardly be the predicate of the subordinated sentence,
so as to permit us a translation "from its/his existence onward".

Likewise the local/geographical understanding of מִן־הוּא וָהָלְאָה is difficult.
To express a local aspect, the adverb שָׁם is required by מִן (cf. 1 Sam 10:3). Can
שָׁם be substituted for הוּא to yield a similar sense? In support of this presump-
tion scholars mention 1 Sam 20:22.37. In 1 Sam 20:22.37 מִמְּךָ וָהָלְאָה indeed
means "further than you", or "beyond you". מִן־הוּא may be the emphatic form
of מִמֶּנּוּ (cf. the Syr. *mnh wlhl* and JM §143j). In Samuel [מִמְּךָ] וָהָלְאָה is the
predicate of the nominal sentence ("[the arrow] *is* beyond you"). However, if
we transfer this function to Isa 18:2, we should translate אֶל־עַם נוֹרָא מִן־הוּא
וָהָלְאָה as "[go] to the fearful nation, *which is* beyond it", where "it" (הוּא) refers
to something different from עַם נוֹרָא. Concluding, we deal here not with one
but with *two different* nations, one described in 18:2d and the other one lo-
cated beyond this nation (vs. 2e-g). This is an important point for the exegesis.

Although most readers adopt a geographical interpretation, only Gesenius
and Young arrive at the conclusion that Isa 18:2 deals with two nations here.
Gesenius' exegesis at this point is rather messy, but he translates: "und zu dem
furchtbaren Volke weiter jenseits". Young has: "to a people terrible even far-
ther than that one".[53] This might also be the background of the LXX: τίς αὐτοῦ
ἐπέκεινα probably means "which is beyond it".[54]

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[47] Cf. the Vulg. (*post quem non est alius*); *Tg. Isa.* (מבכין והלאה, "from now and further
on"); Saadia and Lowth (Gesenius, 583); Vitringa, 848; Cheyne, 111; Ehrlich, 68;
equating מִן־הוּא with מֵאֲשֶׁר הוּא (cf. one Kennicott manuscript according to *HUB*).

[48] Sym. (μεθ᾽ ὃν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπέκεινα); Ibn Ezra, 85; Dillmann, 166; Von Orelli, 74–75;
Schmidt, 119; Schneider, 288; Wildberger, 680; Clements, 165; Blenkinsopp, 308.

[49] Kissane, 206; Marti, 148.

[50] Cf. also מֵהָלְאָה לְ in Gen 35:21; Jer 22:19; Am 5:27; Ezek 43:27 uses בְּ instead of מִן.

[51] For the temporal usage, cf. Lev 22:27; Num 15:23; 1 Sam 18:9; Ezek 39:22, for local
usage, see Num 32:19; 1 Sam 10:3; 20:22.37.

[52] Gesenius, 581–82; GKC §103m. If we read Nah 2:9 according to its present vocalisa-
tion, the temporal aspect is assured by יוֹם and not by הִיא. This text is, however, un-
clear (cf. K. Spronk, *Nahum* (COT; Kampen: Kok, 1999), 127–28; A. Pinker, "Nine-
veh – An Isle is She", *ZAW* 116 [2004] 402–5).

[53] Gesenius, 582; Young, 1:476.

[54] αὐτοῦ can be masc. as well as neutral (referring to ἔθνος). Cf. also the Greek of 1
Sam 20:22.37: ἀπὸ σοῦ καὶ ἐπέκεινα. It is also possible, however, that the LXX trans-

Some scholars understood הוּא to be identical with עַם נוֹרָא, rendering וְהָלְאָה עַם נוֹרָא מִן־הוּא by "a nation feared from/by itself and beyond". But that neither gives any sense, nor is it possible grammatically. In the often mentioned 1 Sam 20:22, מִמְּךָ וָהָלְאָה is paralleled by מִמְּךָ וָהֵנָּה, "hither from you" (20:21). In both examples the referential point (מִמְּךָ) and the reference (הַחִצִּים) are different entities, which means that one has to distinguish in Isa 18:2 between the persons behind הוּא and עַם נוֹרָא in 18:2.[55]

There is a further possibility to take מִן as a comparative particle:[56] "go (…) to the people (even) *more* fearful (than that one) and further beyond (it)".[57]

Concluding, הוּא in vs. 2d refers to one nation and vs. 2e–g introduces a different people, a fearful one living further away. The additional אֶל, as well as the emphatic וּמ' in vs. 7 (on which see note **k-k**) also favours the assumption that the author distinguished between two nations. Cf. the exegetical section.

j קַו־קָו. The oriental Ketiv and 1QIsaᵃ suggest the reading קַוְקָו. Root repetition in Hebrew can take both forms, but the reduplication written as one word is more frequent in case of verbs, while superlatives of adjectives and adverbs are in general written separately both with and without a maqqeph.[58]

Tg. Jon. understood Isa 18:2 as a description of Israel. The words אניסא ובזיזא also appear in Isa 17:14.[59] It is unclear how the Syr. arrived at 'm' mškr, "dishonoured/shameful nation". The LXX connected קַו to the Hebrew קוה, 'to hope', rendering ἔθνος ἀνέλπιστος, "hope*less*, desperate nation".[60] The Vulg. translated (*gentem*) *expectantem*, while Aq. (ἔτνος) ὑπομένον, "enduring [nation]" (cf. the LXX of Ps 40:2). Later authors derived the meaning of קַו־קָו from קַו, 'measuring line', 'cord'.[61] Qimchi believed גּוֹי קַו־קָו וּמְבוּסָה referred to "a nation trampled *little by little*", referring to the Israelites. Ibn Ezra understood גּוֹי קַו־קָו to mean "a nation line by line", referring to the intellect of the child, who is taught gradually.[62] Others, like Delitzsch translated קַו by 'command', arguing that the Kushites were a commanding nation.[63] Still others take the repetition קַו־קָו as a reference to the unintelligible speech of the nation in Isa

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lated מִי־הוּא instead of מִן־הוּא, "who/which is beyond it?", a rhetorical utterance; cf. Sym.: μεθ ον ουκ εστιν επεκεινα.

[55] See also מִן + הֵנָּה in Num 14:19 and Ps 71:17.

[56] GKC §133ab; JM §141g; Young, 1:476 (rejecting this option); Alexander, 344.

[57] Cf. the Syr.: 'm' dḥyl' mnh wlhl, "a nation more fearful *than* that one and beyond".

[58] See Eitan, "Répétition", 171–86. For the other group of texts cf. Gen 25:30; Deut 16:20; Judg 5:22; 1 Sam 2:3; Prov 20:14; Eccl 7:24 (see also Eitan, "Répétition", 173). Divided root repetition also appears in nouns or adverbs possessing an iterative sense.

[59] H. R. Boer, "Etude sur le sens de la racine QWH", *OTS* 10 (1954) 233.

[60] The use of the negative form in Isa 18:2 is particularly striking, but note ἐλπίζον in Isa 18:7 and also 28:10.13.

[61] In 1QH i 28 and Sir 44:5 קַו probably means 'verse meter' (cf. *HALOT*).

[62] Ibn Ezra, 85.

[63] Delitzsch translated "command upon command" (351). Cf. also Von Orelli, 75; Ridderbos, 134. Vitringa took the same position, although he regarded vs. 2d to be a description of the many commandments and "superstitions" of the Egyptians (849–50).

18. Interpreting קַו as an unintelligible sound is based on Isa 28:10.13.[64]

> In his study on Isa 28:10.13 Emerton discussed various views dealing with Isa
> 28:10.13.[65] It is clear, however, that 28:10.13 gives no support for explaining
> קַו as an onomatopoeic expression in an unintelligible speech. First, such in-
> terpretation is particularly difficult for זְעֵיר שָׁם, used in the same line with קַו
> and צַו. Second, the preposition לְ cannot be explained in an onomatopoeic
> expression. Therefore, in view of 28:14 it is more probable that 28:10.13 cited
> Isaiah's opponents, the scoffers who do not want to listen to the prophet's
> words. In their mockery these people typify the Isaianic message as צדקה and
> משפט (28:17), as "always commandments, and always rules". In my view, קַו in
> this text stands for 'measure', 'gage'.[66] In addition, it must be pointed out that
> קַו לְקָו in 28:10.13 is different from the reduplicated form in Isa 18:2.7.

To conclude, bringing קַו in connection with קוה in the sense of "a nation of
hope", i.e. one of great expectations in whom others put their trust as the LXX
and Vulg. probably infer, can be explained historically from the political role
of Egypt and Kush as the hope of the small states of the Levant (cf. Isa 20:6).
However, in view of the following מְבוּסָה, the derivation of קַו־קָו from Arabic
qawiya, 'to be strong', 'to be mighty' (cf. *qūwat*, 'strength', 'might') is more
attractive.[67] The reduplication should be interpreted as a sign of superlative: "a
nation of might", i.e. "a mighty nation" (cf. Akkadian *dandannu*, 'very strong').

k   מְבוּסָה. This lexeme appears once more in Isa 22:5 as יוֹם מְבוּסָה. The verb
בוס means 'to trample down'.[68] גוֹי מְבוּסָה in 18:2 could be translated "a nation
of trampling down" interpreted as an epexegetical genitive.

Driver argued that מְבוּסָה as a fem. adverb cannot be attached to a masc.
noun (גוֹי). He suggested the reading מְבַסֶּה, 'contemptuous'.[69] However, a verb
בסה, 'to be contemptuous' is inexistent in biblical Hebrew.[70] The present form
of the MT is supported by LXX (καταπεπατημένον), Aq. (συμπεπατημένον), Vulg.
([*gentem*] *conculcatam*). Moreover, מְבוּסָה is not an adjective, but a noun con-
structed with גוֹי. In Isa 22:5 the same fem. form appears with the masc. יוֹם.

l   בְּזָאוּ. בְּזָאוּ is derived from a verb בזא, sometimes identified with בזז, 'to
spoil', 'to plunder'.[71] According to the interpretation of *Tg. Isa.*, 18:2 refers
here to Israel, "the nation robbed and plundered, whose land the gentiles

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[64] Fischer, 138; Donner, *Israel*, 122; Hayes & Irvine, 255; Goldenberg, *Curse*, 35–36.

[65] J. A. Emerton, "Some Difficult Words in Isaiah 28.10 and 13", in *Biblical Hebrew,
Biblical Texts: Essays in Memory of Michael P. Weitzman* (eds. A. Rapoport-Albert & G.
Greenberg; JSOTSS 333; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 39–56.

[66] Contra Emerton, "Some Difficult Words", 44.

[67] Knobel, 124; BDB; Gesenius, 585–86; Alexander, 344; Cheyne, 112; Dillmann, 166;
Marti, 147; Duhm, 137; Gray, 317; Procksch, 239; Van Hoonacker, 105; Kissane, 206–
7; G. R. Driver, "Linguistic and Textual Problems: Isaiah I–XXXIX", *JTS* 38 (1937)
46; Wildberger, 680; Schneider, 290; Kaiser, 74; Watts, 243–44; Blenkinsopp, 308.

[68] Ps 44:6 (נגח ǁ); 60:14; 108:14; Isa 14:19.25 (שבר ǁ); 63:6. Cf. Ezek 16:6.22 (hitpaʿel).

[69] Driver, "Isaiah I–XXXIX", 46.

[70] Cf. Syriac *bsʾ* and Palestinian Aramaic בסי.

[71] Cf. some manuscripts, Vulg., Syr., *Tg. Isa.* For בזז see Isa 10:2.6; 11:14; 17:14; etc.

plundered". נְהָרִים was interpreted as a symbol for the gentile nations. This does not fit the context of the prophecy, however. It is also unconvincing to relate בזז (= בזא) to the Nile inundations of Egypt. This natural phenomenon was considered profitable and advantageous by the Africans, unlike the negative term בזז would suggest. The same objections apply to those who connect בזא to Arabic *bazza*, 'to carry away (by force)'.[72] It is more convincing for Isa 18:2.7 to connect Hebrew בזא to Aramaic בזי/בזא, 'to perforate'; 'to divide', 'to split'.[73] This connection gives a clear translation for these two verses: "whose land is split by the rivers".[74]

There is a noteworthy textual variant in 1QIsaᵃ, which reads בזאי instead of בזאו in both Isa 18:2 and 7. בזאי appears once more in 1QHᵃ xvi 14–15 in a similar syntagmatic relationship: ואני הייתי ל[ב]זאי שוטפים נהרות. In this text בזאי was connected with בזה and rendered as 'mockery' by García Martínez & Tigchelaar,[75] to בזז, 'to plunder' by Mansoor,[76] while Maier left the word untranslated.[77] The interpretation provided above for Isa 18:2.7 may also throw new light on the background of 1QIsaᵃ, as well as on 1QHᵃ xvi 14–15. בזאי may stand for 'riverbed',[78] where the sediment is deposited (cf. 1QHᵃ xvi 14–15 and xvi 4!). If the reading בזאי from 1QIsaᵃ is followed for Isa 18:2.7 this would yield the translation: "(to the people…) whose land is the riverbed (בזאי נהרים)". The imagery is well suited for the Kushites and Egyptians inhabiting the small fertile strip alongside the Nile, living almost literally on the river sediment (cf. 1QHᵃ xvi 14–15). The inhabitants of Egypt are called "the valley dwellers" in Piye's Victory Stele (*FHN* 1.9:158, *COS* 2.7:158).

The reading of 1QIsaᵃ is unattested in other Hebrew manuscripts. However, it cannot be excluded that the translation of the LXX in vs. 7 (which is more accurate than vs. 2) goes back to such a variant. The sentence ὅ ἐστιν ἐν μέρει ποταμοῦ τῆς χώρας αὐτοῦ is close to 1QIsaᵃ. *HUB* suggests that the LXX gives a geographical exegesis in Isa 18:2.7. But that is not necessarily the case.

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[72] *ArEL* 198; Fohrer, 1:205; L. Köhler, "*Bāzāʾ* = fortschwemmen", *ThZ* 6 (1950) 317.

[73] *NCW* 1:205; *DTTM* 153; *DJBA* 194.

[74] בזא is basically identical with בזע (Cheyne, 112; Dillmann, 167; Procksch, 239; Wildberger, 680), also attested in the Official Aramaic (*DNWSI* 149). For the א / ע change cf. also Hebrew גמא / גמע, פתע / גמע, פתאם / פתאם, גאל / געל, אגם / אגם, עגם / עגם, etc. See further Syriac *bzʿ*, 'to cleave' (*CSD* 40, *LS* 64). The Hebrew counterpart of בזע / בזא is בקע. Cf. Hab 3:9 (נְהָרוֹת תְּבַקַּע־אָרֶץ); Job 28:10; Ps 74:15 and also Num 16:31; 1 Kgs 1:40. The *Tg.* and Syr. sometimes render the Hebrew בקע by בזע and *bzʿ* respectively.

[75] "But I had become a mockery of the raging torrents (for they threw their mire over me)"; F. García Martínez & E. J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1:181; cf. Vermes: "and I was despised by tumultuous rivers" (G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* [London: Penguin, 1997], 279).

[76] "And I have become robbed by the scourging rivers" (*The Thanksgiving Hymns*, [Leiden: Brill, 1961], 155).

[77] J. Maier, *Die Qumran-Essener: Die Texte vom Toten Meer* (München: Reinhardt, 1995), 1:90. S. Holm-Nielsen, (*Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran* [Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1960], 152–53 note 29) expresses some doubts concerning the reconstruction of the letter ב. Yet this reading is generally followed by scholars.

[78] Cf. the Aramaic בְּזָא and בְּזָאֵי 'cleft', 'breach', also in the ground.

μέρος, 'part', 'border', 'side' frequently renders the Hebrew קָצֶה, a synonym of בזאי. קצה also means 'break off' or 'divide', like Aramaic בזא above (2 Kgs 10:32; Prov 26:6). The LXX probably translated בזאי by μέρος, used with rivers in Josh 3:8.15 (cf. Num 34:3; Josh 13:27). The Greek version of Isa 18:7 is: "(a nation) which is on the brink of the rivers of his region".

3 m כְּנְשׂא and כִּתְקֹעַ. Some scholars argue for a modal interpretation of כְּ: "as if (wie wenn) one raised a sign, look!".[79] The purport of this interpretation would be that the audience of the prophet should listen as if/when someone raised a sign or blew a horn. However, in examples where כְּ is translated as 'as if/when', the action in the comparison and the act compared are expressed by two identical verbs,[80] so that one would expect here כִּרְאוֹת...תִּרְאוּ, or כִּנְשׂא...תִּשְׂאוּ, but in no way כִּנְשׂא...תִּרְאוּ. The preposition כְּ introduces here a temporal sentence (GKC §164g; JM §166m).

n תִּרְאוּ and תִּשְׁמְעוּ. Blenkinsopp translated: "when … you will see it" etc.,[81] which is problematic in two respects. First, he does not take into account that these verbs are used without any objects. Second, Blenkinsopp dismisses the emphatic position of תִּרְאוּ and תִּשְׁמְעוּ. The introductory line of vs. 3, which functions as a vocative, requires that we consider תִּרְאוּ and תִּשְׁמְעוּ as imperatives (GKC §107n; JM §113m).

4 o-o אֶשְׁקוֹטָה וְאַבִּיטָה. Some exegetes favour the rendering: "I will quietly look down",[82] but as argued below, this is improbable because of the comparison.

p בְּ. נבט can be transitive ("to look at") or intransitive ("to look [around]"); cf. Ps 13:4; 33:13; 80:15; etc.). The object of the transitive form may appear with or without a preposition.[83] The construction אַבִּיטָה בְּ in Isa 18:4 has been interpreted in two different ways. Those who consider נבט transitive, render it with בְּ as "to look upon/at".[84] Others take נבט to be an intransitive and assume that בְּ is semantically similar to מִן, "from".[85] It is, however, more attractive to

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[79] Ibn Ezra, 85; Alexander, 345; Von Orelli, 75; König, 199; Young, 1:474.

[80] Cf. רָאִיתִי...כִּרְאֹת (Gen 33:10), יִלָחֵכוּ...כִּלְחֹךְ (Num 22:4), כִּנְפֹל...נָפַלְתָּ (2 Sam 3:34), וְאָשִׁיבָה...כְּשׁוּב (2 Sam 17:3), כִּרְאוֹת...תִּרְאֶה (Job 10:4). Cf. Ps 66:10; Isa 7:2; Zech 13:9.

[81] Blenkinsopp, 308.

[82] E.g., Gesenius, 587–88; Duhm, 138; Procksch, 240; Blenkinsopp, 308; WO §34.5.1a.

[83] With the preposition אֶל (Ex 3:6; Isa 8:22; 22:8.11; 51:1.2.6; 66:2; Jon 2:5; etc.), לְ (Ps 74:20; 104:32; Isa 5:30), עַל (Hab 2:15), אֶת (Isa 5:12), and sometimes בְּ (Num 23:21; Ps 92:12). Without the preposition: Ps 119:15.18; Lam 3:63; Am 5:22; Hab 1:3.

[84] E.g., LXX; Qimchi; Duhm, 138. See also Ibn Ezra, 86, identifying מָכוֹן with the temple in Jerusalem at which YHWH shall look (with care).

[85] For מִן, cf. Ps 33:13; 80:15; 102:20; Isa 63:15. See further *Tg. Isa.*; Gesenius, 587; Procksch, 236; Lubetski & Gottlieb, "Isaiah 18", 376 note 63. It has been argued that the interchange between בְּ and מִן would be a feature common to Semitic languages (G. Schuttermayr, "Ambivalenz und Aspektdifferenz: Bemerkungen zu den hebräischen Präpositionen ב, ל und מן", *BZ* 15 [1971] 37–39). This view was challenged by Zevit, who called attention to the idiomatic use of these prepositions (Z. Zevit, "The So-Called Interchangeability of the Prepositions *b*, *l*, and *m(n)* in Northwest Semitic", *JANES* 7 [1975] 103–12, esp. 110–11).

explain בְּ primarily as the preposition required by the verb שקט (and not נבט): "I will stay calm in my place and watch".

q   מָכוֹן. Aq. translated מָכוֹן by *firmament* (according to Jerome), the LXX by πόλις, '(fortified) city', identifying the place with Jerusalem. מָכוֹן probably means "place", "site" in most texts, including Isa 18:4.[86] The translation "base", "fundament", applicable in some cases,[87] is semantically close to the fem. מְכוֹנָה, 'place', 'foundation'.[88] מָכוֹן is synonymous with מָקוֹם, though lacking the geographical connotation of the latter.[89] מָכוֹן is not '(God's) throne'.[90]

r   כְּ. Some translate one or both of these sentences temporally.[91] It is more convincing, however, to regard כְּ as comparative.[92] כְּ can be used in temporal sense only before an infinitive, but not with a noun.[93] While חֹם could be considered an infinitive, עָב is a noun. See further the exegesis.

s   צַח. צַח derives from צחח, 'to shine', 'to glow', or it may be related to צחה, 'to be dry', 'to be thirsty' (*HALOT*). Jer 4:11 mentions רוּחַ צַח, "scorching wind", alluding to the dry, hot wind from the desert.[94] Sol 5:10 refers to one's appearance as צַח וְאָדוֹם (cf. Lam 4:7). In Isa 32:4 צַח probably derives from a different root. Its meaning, 'clear' ("to speak clearly") may be related to the Old South and Classical Arabic *ṣḥḥ, "to be healthy".

Eitan and Barr connected צַח to the Arabic *ḍiḥḥ* and Ethiopic *ḍaḥāy*, 'sun'.[95] However, צַח does not appear among the Hebrew terms used to designate the sun.[96] Some scholars regarded צַח to be an ancient Canaanite month name, supposed to be roughly identical with the month August.[97] But the reading of the text on which this assumption is based was questioned by Lemaire.[98] Trans-

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[86] Ex 15:17; 1 Kgs 8:13.39.43.49; 2 Chr 6:2.30.33.39; Ps 33:14; Isa 4:5.

[87] Ps 89:15; 97:2; 104:5; Ezr 2:68; Dan 8:11.

[88] 1 Kgs 7:27; Ezr 3:3; Zech 5:11; etc.

[89] Compare 1 Kgs 8:13 and Deut 12:5.11.14.18.21; 14:23.24; 16:6; 31:11; 1 Kgs 8:29.30. See further Ps 104:5 | Job 9:6; Dan 8:11 | Jer 17:12 (Ps 24:3).

[90] Contra Lubetski & Gottlieb, "Isaiah 18", 376. Ps 33:14 (cf. שָׁמַיִם in 33:13); 89:15 ("foundation *of* your throne [כָּסֵא]"); 97:2 do not support this assumption.

[91] E.g., Gesenius, 588; Delitzsch, 352; Von Orelli, 75; Blenkinsopp, 308.

[92] Dillmann, 167; Gray, 313, 318; Wildberger, 678.

[93] This has been contested by Gesenius, who pointed to כָּעֵת הָרִאשׁוֹן in Isa 8:23 (588), allegedly supporting his idea. However, כְּ is formed here as a contraction of בְּ + כְּ (cf. Isa 9:3, where כְּיוֹם מִדְיָן is the same as בְּיוֹם מִדְיָן; כְּ + see GKC §118u; JM §133h). The syntax of Isa 8:23 clearly points towards the comparative aspect of כְּ (see כְּ + sentence 1 and וְ + sentence 2 [כָּעֵת הָרִאשׁוֹן...וְהָאַחֲרוֹן] to be rendered by "as [in the beginning] … so [in the end]"; cf. Isa 8:23 to 9:1).

[94] Cf. צינה רוח צפון, "the coolness of the north-wind" in Sir 43:20; cf. Prov 25:23.

[95] I. Eitan, "Contribution to Isaiah Exegesis (Notes and Short Studies in Biblical Philology)", *HUCA* 12–13 (1937–1938) 65; J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 334.

[96] שֶׁמֶשׁ, חֶרֶס, poetical חַמָּה (Isa 24:23; 30:26; Sol 6:10; cf. חֹם in Isa 18:4), אוֹר.

[97] A. J. Soggin, "Zum wiederentdeckten altkanaanäischen Monat צח", *ZAW* 77 (1965) 85, followed by Kaiser, 74; Lubetski & Gottlieb, "Isaiah 18", 377.

[98] A. Lemaire, "Note épigraphique sur la pseudo-attestation de mois 'ṣḥ'", *VT* 33

lating צַח חֹם as 'glowing heat', or 'scorching heat', makes most sense for 18:4.

t-t עֲלֵי־אוֹר. אוֹר in combination with עַל is problematic. אוֹר usually means 'light',[99] but some felt free to render 'sunlight' or 'sunshine'.[100] Others explain אוֹר as 'herbage'.[101] Still others see a relationship between Hebrew אוֹר and Arabic *'ary*, 'rain', or 'dew'.[102] The Syr. rendered *'al nhr'*, reading עַל־יְאוֹר, 'on the Nile'.[103] All these suggestions take some aspect of the comparison to legitimise their interpretation. Limiting myself to a brief note on these proposals the following can be said in defence of the translation presented above.

The version presupposed by the Syr., is not supported by other witnesses, or by the parallelism. The identification of אוֹר as 'herbage' in general, or a specific type of plant is uncertain (cf. Isa 19:7). Contextually, אוֹר as a kind of plant also fails to explain the comparative aspect of this sentence in relation to the previous verse line, and it would similarly corrupt the parallelism.

Taking אוֹר to mean 'light' is a more convincing solution. Nevertheless some unintelligible translations like "above the sun(light)", or "because of the sun", should be excluded. אוֹר is frequently connected to the morning, designating the morning light after the night, specifically the dawn, or early morning. The expression עַד־אוֹר הַבֹּקֶר, lit. "until the morning becomes light" (qal inf.) is common.[104] Moreover, אוֹר may have a connotation similar to בֹּקֶר even used on its own.[105] The question is, of course, whether it is possible to use אוֹר

(1973) 243–45.

[99] φῶς (καύματος μεσημβρίας), 'light of noonday heat' (LXX), (*meridiana*) *lux* (Vulg.), "above the light" (Gray, 314;), "beim Licht" (Procksch, 240). Cf. Young, 1:477; Fohrer, 1:205; Kaiser, 74; S. Aalen, אוֹר, *TWAT* 1:165; Schoors, 117; Watts, 243.

[100] שֶׁמֶשׁ (*Tg. Isa.*), Gesenius, 588; Marti, 149; Cheyne, 112; Duhm, 138; Van Hoonacker, 106; Fisher, 138; Kissane, 203; Penna, 180; Wildberger, 691; Blenkinsopp, 308.

[101] Cf. אֹרָה, 'herb' (2 Kgs 4:39). This interpretation is followed by Rashi; A. Elmaleh, *Nouveau dictionnaire complet hébreux-français* (Tel-Aviv: Yavneh, 1950), 1:93 ("comme une chaleur pure sur *l'herbe*"); Alexander, 345; and the NIV.

[102] *b. Ta'an.* 7b, Judah ben Karish, Saadya (*apud* Gesenius, 588); Vitringa, 861; Eitan, "Contribution", 65; Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 321.

[103] Cf. also E. Baumann, "Zwei Bemerkungen", *ZAW* 21 (1901) 266–68; Lubetski & Gottlieb, "Isaiah 18", 377–78.

[104] Judg 16:2; 1 Sam 14:36; 25:34.36; 2 Sam 17:22; 2 Kgs 7:9. In all cases אוֹר is a qal inf., syntactically equivalent to עַד־יֵאוֹר הַבֹּקֶר (niph'al impf.), or עַד אֲשֶׁר יֵאוֹר הַבֹּקֶר (see JM §124k). Cf. also Gen 44:3; 1 Sam 29:10; 2 Sam 23:4; Mic 2:1.

[105] Cf. *DCH* 1:161. In Judg 19:26 לִפְנוֹת הַבֹּקֶר, "before the morning" is paralleled by עַד־הָאוֹר, "until daybreak" (cf. עַד־הַבֹּקֶר and כַּעֲלוֹת הַשַּׁחַר in the previous verse). In Job 3:9 אוֹר is used with שַׁחַר (cf. Job 41:10; Isa 58:8; Hos 6:5 [6:3–4!] and also Isa 60:1.3). This sense of אוֹר as 'daybreak' is also evident in Neh 8:3, a text which differentiates various stages of a day: מִן־הָאוֹר עַד־מַחֲצִית הַיּוֹם, "from early morning until midday" (cf. Neh 7:3). Some would argue that this is how אוֹר should be translated in Isa 26:19 as well (cf. J. Day, "אוֹרֹת טַל in Isaiah 26 19", *ZAW* 90 [1978] 265–69, esp. 267–68; see however below). Debated texts are Job 24:14 and Mic 7:9. A similar meaning of אוֹר, 'daybreak' is attested in post-biblical Hebrew (*NAW* 1:45; *DTTM* 32; cf. לאוֹר, "upon daybreak" [*b. Pes.* 2b], בִּיאַת אורו, "the entrance of his daybreak" [*b. Ber.* 2b]. In Akkadian *urru* means 'early morning', 'daybreak' (see also the expression *šāt urri*, "third

in the sense of 'morning' or 'daybreak' with the preposition עֲלֵי? Emending עֲלֵי to עַד would certainly be much easier to translate, but we lack concrete evidence for such scribal error.[106] Nevertheless, it seems that the function of עַל can sometimes overlap with בְּ[107] in semantically similar constructions. עֲלֵי־אוֹר could thus mean "upon daybreak", the implications of which will be discussed in the exegetical section.

But it is also possible to regard אוֹר as a synonym of טַל. Although the evidence for interpreting אוֹר as 'rain' is inconclusive,[108] אוֹר can most certainly mean 'dew' or '(night) mist'. In addition to the Arabic *ʾary* noted long ago by exegetes,[109] one should also mention Ugaritic *ʾar*, (a certain type of) 'dew' or '(night) mist', which appears in close connection with *ṭly* (טַל).[110] אוֹר with the meaning 'dew' or '(night) mist' probably also appears in Isa 26:19.[111] For further discussion, see the exegesis.

u-u עָב טַל. Blenkinsopp dropped the common translation, "a cloud of dew", and rendered vs. 4d as "while the dew covers the ground at the time of the vintage", assuming that עָב can be a verb meaning 'to cover'.[112] However, when עָב does not refer to 'cloud', it appears only as an architectural term, probably denoting 'beam' (cf. *HALOT*). Blenkinsopp's concise explanation of 18:4 does not enlighten the background of his rather free translation of this verse. The unconventional rendition of Lubetski & Gottlieb, "there will be a heavy rain in the heat of harvest",[113] fails to deal with the comparative aspect signalised by כְּ. Moreover, their translation of עָב טַל as "heavy rain", lacks convincing philological support. עָב does not mean 'heavy' or 'thick',[114] and טַל is not

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watch of the night", literally "that of the dawn"). *urru* can also refer to the "day" as opposite to night (*mūšu*).

[106] עֲלֵי־אוֹר might be a corrupted form of עַד יֵאוֹר, "until the dawn breaks". For the עַד / עַל scribal error, see 1 Chr 5:16; Ezek 41:17, and probably Ps 19:7 and 48:11 (cf. *BHS*).

[107] 1 Sam 25:8 (עַל־יוֹם טוֹב); Job 3:4 (עָלָיו | יוֹם); 18:20 (עַל־יוֹמוֹ); Jer 47:4 (עַל־הַיּוֹם).

[108] In Job 37:11, one of the texts commonly referred to in this respect (cf. the Targ.), אוֹר does not mean 'rain'. Gesenius, 588–89 pointed to similarities between עֲנַן אוֹרוֹ in Job 37:11 and עֲנָנוֹ אוֹר in 37:15. אוֹר is used in Job 37:15 in connection with the verb יָפַע, 'to shine forth', suggesting that אוֹר rather refers to 'lightning', as it is usually interpreted (cf. Job 36:30.32; 37:3.15.21). This is further strengthened by the fact that the verb פוּץ hiphʻil that appears in Job 37:11 with אוֹר is also used with בָּרָק, 'lightning' in Ps 18:15. Moreover, if אוֹר referred to rain in Isa 18:4, the preposition אַחֲרֵי would be expected instead of עֲלֵי.

[109] See note 102 above.

[110] ʾar (Aru) appears in relation to the weather-god Baʻal, as well as *ṭly* in KTU 1.3 i 22–25: "Baʻalu sees his daughters, eyes Pidray, daughter of Aru, even Tallay (*ṭly*), daughter of Rabbu (cf. רְבִיבִים, '[spring] shower' or 'mist')." See also KTU 1.3 iii 5–8.

[111] J. Barth, *Etymologische Studien* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1893), 60, notes this sense of אוֹר in relation to Isa 26:19. Barth compares טַל אוֹרֹת formally to גֶּשֶׁם מִטְרוֹת or גֶּשֶׁם מָטָר in Job 37:6.

[112] Blenkinsopp, 309.

[113] Lubetski & Gottlieb, "Isaiah 18", 378.

[114] A verb עבב, 'to be thick' appears only in post-biblical Hebrew (*DTTM* 1034), and is probably a derivate of עָב in Jer 4:29, where it may mean "thicket" (cf. BDB). Nei-

'rain'.[115] טַל, means 'dew' (e.g. Job 20:19; Hos 6:4; 13:3), appearing frequently in connection with the dawn (Ex 16:13; Ps 110:3; Isa 26:19).

The expression עבי טל appears in 1QM xii 9–10: ופרשנו כעננים וכעבי טל לכסת ארץ וכזרם רביבים להשקות משפט לכול צאצאיה, "our horsemen are like clouds, and like clouds of dew that cover the earth, like rain shower that sheds justice on all its sprouts". עבי טל is paralleled here by ענן. Similarly, in the Aramaic Targum of Job 38:28 and in 11Q10 xxxi 6, the Hebrew אֶגְלֵי־טָל is rendered by ענני טלא. See ענן טל in Sir 43:22 and cf. also *Tg. Isa.* at 18:4.

v–v בְּחֹם. The MT is supported by the majority of manuscripts, including 1QIsa[a] and *Tg. Isa.* However, twelve manuscripts, the LXX, the Syr., and the Vulg. suggest reading בְּיוֹם instead of בְּחֹם. Jerome's commentary on Isaiah implies that he was aware of both variants: *quomodo nubes roris in die messis* ([בְּיוֹם] קָצִיר) *et in ferventi aestate* (בְּחֹם) *gratissima est.* The resemblance of יו and ח explains the textual corruption, but it is hard to say which one of the two readings was the original. The construction בְּיוֹם קָצִיר appears once more in Prov 25:13, but בְּחֹם קָצִיר also gives a good sense. In order to avoid repetition, the LXX used to "correct" words that appear double in a parallelism,[116] which means that the evidence of the LXX does not lead us further. בְּחֹם is preferable contextually, but בְּיוֹם also gives a good sense.

w–w קָצִיר. קָצִיר is occasionally rendered as 'vintage' instead of 'harvest',[117] the usual meaning of קָצִיר. Isa 16:9 and 17:11 are considered to be exceptions which support translating 'vintage' in 18:4. However, קָצִיר in Isa 17:11 has nothing to do with either 'harvest', or 'vintage', but it means 'bough' or 'branches' (cf. 3.4.2.4.). In Isa 16:9 it is possible that קָצִיר is a textual error for בָּצִיר, 'vintage', attested in Jer 48:32, the literary parallel of Isa 16:9.

5 x פֶּרַח. The verbal form פרח means 'to bud', 'to sprout', 'to blossom'.[118] In Gen 40:10 פרח designates a stage in the development of the grapes: "as soon as it budded (פרח qal part.), its blossom shot forth (עָלְתָה נִצָּהּ) and the clusters

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ther can עָב הֶעָנָן in Ex 19:9 be interpreted as "thick cloud" (contra Lubetski & Gottlieb). עָב is here a noun and not an adjective. For this well-known Hebrew construction of intensified forms, see מְטַר־גֶּשֶׁם (Zech 10:1), עָבֵי שְׁחָקִים (2 Sam 22:12; cf. Ps 77:18), etc.

[115] The Targum "translated" מְטָל as מטרא in Hag 1:10. As commentators note, the verb כלא, to which מְטָל is coupled in Hag 1:10 cannot have an intransitive sense. The reading of *Tg. Hag.* is just one among the emendations, perhaps influenced by Deut 11:17. Other commentators identify טַל with the 'night mist' (Cheyne, 113; Gray, 314; Oswald, 358). רְסִיסֵי לַיְלָה in Sol 5:2 possibly means 'night mist'.

[116] See I. L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of Its Problems* (MVEOL 9; Leiden: Brill, 1948), 69.

[117] Gesenius, 588–89; Procksch, 240; Blenkinsopp, 308. The rendering 'vintage' for קָצִיר in vs. 5 is even more general (Vitringa, 862–63; Gesenius, 589; Duhm, 139; Von Orelli, 75; Dillmann, 167; Penna, 181; Schmidt, 120; Kissane, 207; Blenkinsopp, 311).

[118] In syntagmatic relationship with עֵשֶׂב, 'grass' (Ps 92:8), דֶּשֶׁא, 'grass' (Isa 66:14), שְׁתוּלִים, 'plant' (Ps 92:14), ראשׁ, 'weed' (Hos 10:4), of trees (Ps 92:13; Hab 3:17), עָלֶה, 'leaf' (Prov 11:28), חֲבַצֶּלֶת, 'crocus' (Isa 35:1), שׁוּשַׁן, 'lily' (Hos 14:6), etc.

ripened into grapes". In this case פרח is used to describe a phase before blos-soming. Sol 6:11 mentions the time of budding of the vine in the spring, when everything is fresh green and the pomegranates are in blossom. Similar is Sol 7:13, where פָּרְחָה הַגֶּפֶן is paralleled by the opening of buds (הַסְּמָדַר פִּתַּח), and the blooming (נצץ) of the pomegranates. Likewise in Hos 14:8 the verb פרח refers to the budding of the vine. According to Rüthy כְּתֹם־פֶּרַח in Isa 18:5 indicated the period after the involucres (Blütenhülle) split open.[119]

y-y גֹּמֵל [יִהְיֶה]. 1QIsaᵃ contains the variant reading ובסור גמול, probably reflecting an Aramaic orthography בְּסוֹר גָּמֹל.[120] גמל appears in Num 17:23 in גמל שְׁקֵדִים, "to ripen almonds" (so *HALOT*). Further parallels are the Arabic *kamala*, 'to be whole', and the Akkadian *gitmalum*, 'perfect'. Some suggested that the Ugaritic *gml* would also mean 'ripe fruit', but this is a *hapax legomenon* (*DLU* 147). Arguably, גמל may be related to Hebrew גמר, 'to come to an end' (Ugaritic *gmr*, 'to be complete', Akkadian *gamārum*, 'to complete').

z-z בֹּסֶר. The reading בסור (בְּסוֹר) in 1QIsaᵃ, is probably an Aramaic form.[121] בֹּסֶר appears in Job 15:33 specifically related to the vine (גֶּפֶן), as well as in the proverb cited in Jer 31:29.30 and Ezek 18:2. בֹּסֶר probably means the '(unripe) berry'.[122] The LXX translated ὄμφαξ, 'unripe grape', once also rendering חֹמֶץ in Prov 10:26 (cf. Sym. for Jer 31:30). חֹמֶץ in late Hebrew is the same as אפונים, "Kichererbse".[123] Rashi identifies בֹּסֶר in 18:5 with גֵּרוֹעַ 'formation of kernels' (cf. *b. Pes.* 53a). בֹּסֶר is well-represented in cognate Semitic languages.[124]

a זַלְזַלִּים. זַלְזַלִּים is a *hapax legomenon* in the Old Testament. Wildberger related זַלְזַלִּים to זלל argued to mean 'to (idly) move'. He concluded that we deal here with the lengthy, idly moving fruitless sprouts that were cut off so that the vine yields more fruit.[125] זלל can indeed mean 'to shake', 'to quake', in the niph'al. However, this does not prove that זַלְזַל would refer to the loosely hanging fruitless twigs of the vine tree. Høyland Lavik believes that זַלְזַל is the term for those parts of the wine, through which it attaches itself, here used in a political sense.[126] Rüthy considered זַלְזַל as a mere phonetic variant for סַלְסִלָּה

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[119] A. E. Rüthy, *Die Pflanze und ihre Teile im biblisch-hebräischen Sprachgebrauch* (Bern: A. Francke, 1942), 69.

[120] Kutscher, *Isaiah Scroll*, 203.

[121] Kutscher, *Isaiah Scroll*, 201.

[122] I. Löw, *Die Flora der Juden* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1881; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1973), 1:77–78; G. Dalman, *Brot, Öl und Wein* (vol. 4 of *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1935), 303; O. Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 110 note 13.

[123] Löw, *Flora*, 2:429. Note אפונים גמלונים and אפונים שופים, according to Löw to be rendered by "big and small אפונים".

[124] Cf. Arabic *busr* or *bisr*, 'unripe datteln', Syr. *besrē*, and Aramaic בּוּסְרָא, with similar meaning. The lexeme *busra'* also appears in an Aramaic-Persian glossary (Frahang-i-pahlavik) with the meaning 'vine'. See also *HSED* 73–74.

[125] Wildberger, 692.

[126] M. Høyland Lavik, *A People Tall and Smooth Skinned: The Rhetoric of Isaiah 18* (VTS 112; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 184.

appearing in Jer 6:9.[127] If this explanation is accepted, זַלְזַל must be a fruit-bearing branch of the vine.

I consider it more likely, however, that זלל is related to Hebrew דלה, 'to dangle', Arabic *daldala*, 'to sway', 'to dangle'. The Hebrew derivate דָּלִית is a possible synonym of זַלְזַל. דָּלִית appears in a metaphorical sense in four different prophecies, denoting the fruit-bearing branches of the vine.[128] Cognates to the Hebrew דָּלִית are the Demotic *dr* (variants *drdr*, *dnn*), as well as the Coptic *dal* all meaning 'branch', 'stick'.[129]

b נְטִישָׁה. נְטִישָׁה also appears in Jer 5:10 (similarly with סור hiph'il) and 48:32 denoting the spreading branches of vine (cf. ǀ Isa 16:8 שְׁלֻחוֹת, 'shoot').

7   **c-c** יוּבַל. For a discussion on the vocalisation יוֹבַל, see note **e-e** below.

d שַׁי. שַׁי appears in Ps 68:30 and 76:12 as 'tribute', 'gift',[130] synonymous with מִנְחָה (cf. Zeph 3:10 citing Isa 18:7). שי also appears in Aramaic on the Zend-jirli-Stele: שי להדד ולאל ולרכבאל ולשמש, "a gift to Hadad, El, Rachabel, and Shemesh",[131] designating gift offerings to the gods. Cf. Ugaritic *ṯy* in *KTU* 2.13: 14–15 and *KTU* 2.30:13–14: *ṯy . ndr . iṯt*, "tribute, vow, generous gift".[132]

e-e עַם...וּמֵעַם. The present form and vocalisation of the MT is difficult. Scholars often understood 18:7 as if the people would be brought *as* a tribute to Jerusalem.[133] This is, however, improbable in the context (see the exegesis) and it cannot explain the preposition מִן. Most often exegetes include an additional preposition before עַם in vs. 7b: "a tribute will be brought (יוּבַל) *from* a people (מֵעַם) tall and shaved…" (cf. also LXX, Vulg., 1QIsaᵃ).

In the translation above I followed a different proposal of Lubetski & Gottlieb, to take 'ומ as an emphatic conjunction with ו and enclitic מ.[134] The

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[127] Rüthy, *Pflanzen*, 60–61. Cf. also Dalman, *Brot*, 301. סַלְסִלָּה appears only once, and its meaning is debated. It is sometimes translated as 'basket' (cf. the LXX, the Vulg.; see also the Aramaic סל, 'basket').

[128] Jer 11:16; Ezek 17:7.23; 19:11; 31:7.9.12. For a discussion on דָּלִית see Immanuel Löw, *Aramäische Pflanzennamen* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1936; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1973), 65; Dalman, *Brot*, 301; Rüthy, *Pflanze*, 56–57. Dalman noted the Arabic *dālie*, the name of the lying vine (Dalman, *Brot*, 314), a term that Delitzsch also mentioned in relationship with the Hebrew זַלְזַל (Delitzsch, 353).

[129] WÄS 5:577; J. E. Hoch, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 389–91; CDD *d* 66–67; Lubetski & Gottlieb, "Isaiah 18", 379.

[130] Some reconstruct שַׁי in Gen 49:10: שִׁילֹה > שַׁי לֹו. The reading of this text remains controversial, however. שַׁי also appears in post-biblical Hebrew (*DTTM* 1556).

[131] *KAI* 214:18; *COS* 2.36:18. שי might appear in *KAI* 215:6 (damaged context).

[132] It is striking that Ps 76:12 mentions נדר and שַׁי in one place. For *iṯt* as 'generous gift', cf. G. R. Driver, "Ugaritic and Hebrew Words", *Ugaritica* 6 (1969) 181–84.

[133] Delitzsch, 353–54; Blenkinsopp, 309, with reference to Isa 49:22; 60:4.9; 66:20.

[134] Lubetski & Gottlieb, "Isaiah 18", 382. This grammatical phenomenon was pointed out in Hebrew by Andersen, subsequently reinforced by evidence from the Eblaite texts, discussed in three articles in *Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language* (eds. C. H. Gordon et al.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987), by C. H.

rendering of the emphatic conjunction is "and also", "and indeed" (like וְגַם).
Lubetski & Gottlieb interpreted the verb יבל as a hophʻal form, as in the MT.
But that would imply that the foreign nation itself will be brought as a tribute
to YHWH, which is unlikely. Taking ʻמו as an emphatic conjunction and vocal-
ising the verb as יוֹבֵל (hiphʻil) (cf. Syr.) would perfectly fit the context.

4.2.   EXEGETICAL SECTION

4.2.1. VERSES 1–2B

1a   Woe to the land of the two-winged beetle,
1b   which is beyond the rivers of Kush,
2a   the one sending emissaries on the sea,
2b   and in papyrus-vessels upon the waters.

Isaiah 18 begins with a הוֹי-cry determining in advance the basic tone of
this prophecy as a judgment speech. As mentioned in the notes above,
it is often believed that הוֹי is merely a sign of the vocative in a prophecy
intended to offer a gleam of hope and express compassion and assure the
people of YHWH's intervention in their conflict with Assyria. The
Egypto-Canaanite anti-Assyrian alliance that is assumed to figure be-
hind the address lines of Isa 18 is promised that it is not their efforts, but
YHWH's intrusion that will bring victory against Assyria. Beside syntac-
tical objections against a neutral rendering of הוֹי mentioned above, it is
difficult to reconcile this view with the description of the people of the
land of the beetle later in this prophecy as "a nation mighty and tread-
ing down". If Isa 18 was delivered to offer hope, one would anticipate
here a desperate audience in need of such message of assurance. The
heroic people of 18:1–2 need no compassion, no exterior divine help. A
frequent scene of judgment oracles in general, including הוֹי-speeches, is
the reversal of fortunes.[135] Evoking threat on a land as confident as this
land of beetle is probably also envisioned by this prophecy.[136]
    The country in 18:1 is called אֶרֶץ צִלְצַל כְּנָפָיִם. As Lubetski argued, in
Isa 18:1 (cf. also Deut 28:42) צִלְצַל referred to the *scarabeus sacer*, the
'holy beetle' a prominent pharaonic symbol.[137] In its original setting the

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Gordon, "*WM*- 'and' in Eblaite and Hebrew", 1:29–30; C. Wallace, "*WM*- in Nehe-
miah 5:11", 1:31; G. A. Rendsburg, "Eblaite Ù-MA", 1:33–41).

[135] Cf. Janzen, *Mourning Cry*, 35, 49.

[136] Høyland-Lavik, who also interprets הוֹי as the sign of the vocative ('ah!'),
acknowledges that Isa 18 is an oracle of doom. Yet she argues that 18:1a does
not reveal the identity of those under judgment (*Isaiah 18*, 48–49). However,
it is characteristic to prophetic הוֹי-cries of doom in general that they make it
obvious in the first introductory line to whom the הוֹי refers.

[137] Lubetski & Gottlieb, "Isaiah 18", 364–84; Lubetski, "Beetlemania", 15–26.
The beetle as a royal symbol was also adopted by the Kushite pharaohs of

scarab beetle represents the sun-god with the sun disk (symbolised by the dung ball). The fact that nation-specific elements appear in such prophecies is not surprising.[138] The scarab as an Egypt-related motif was well-known in Canaan. Many scarab amulets have been recovered in excavations. Illustrations of two- and four-winged beetles on seal impressions, or other objects were discovered in Phoenicia, Judah, and Ammon. For the present case the most intriguing archaeological find is the seal impression of King Hezekiah with his autograph and a two winged beetle symbol, as well as numerous scarab-seal impressions on the so-called *lmlk-*jars from Judah, from the end of the 8th century.[139]

The addressee of the present prophecy is assumed to be the land of Kush. The problem with this interpretation is that this land of the two-winged beetle reaches "*beyond* the rivers of Kush". Scholars understand נַהֲרֵי־כוּשׁ as a global designation of the Blue and White Niles, the two main sources of the Nile, and eventually the Atbara, one of its tributaries in present day Sudan.[140] At the same time, it is often maintained that Kush of the 8th century did not extend beyond the meeting point of the Blue and White Niles, inducing exegetes to render מֵעֵבֶר לְנַהֲרֵי־כוּשׁ as "alongside the rivers of Kush". This translation is, as argued, not supported by Hebrew (cf. note **1 c**). Moreover, this cannot make sense of the plural form "rivers", which sounds strange for a country settled, as believed, alongside one single river only, namely the Nile. However, we have substantial archaeological evidence to maintain that in the 8th century the land of Kush extended beyond the Blue and White Niles, even if the greatest part of the Kushite Empire was located on the main branch of the Nile River (cf. EXCURSUS 1). The problem may be more easily solved if we assume that 18:1 describes the land of the two-winged beetle as reaching *even beyond* the rivers of Kush,[141] i.e. the furthest rivers of the earth known to the author, without actually drawing the northern borders of the country. This impressive empire on the Nile also fascinated the Assyrians of the 7th century.[142] The very same Afri-

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Egypt. See D. O'Connor, *Ancient Nubia: Egypt's Rival in Africa* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 1993), Plate 12.

[138] Cf. Jer 46:7–8 (cf. Isa 8:7); Ezek 29:3; 32:2. Note also *PPANE* 93 describing Elam as a snake, one of the well-known symbols of this country.

[139] See Figure 3 in Appendix. For the historical significance of the metaphor of the two-winged scarab in 18:1, see section 4.3.3. below.

[140] See Figure 1 in the Appendix.

[141] Cf. Schoors, 116: "het land dat zich uitstrekt *tot over* de rivieren van Koesj".

[142] In the Assyrian inscriptions of Esarhaddon, the dominion of Taharka, the Kushite king, is described as Lower Egypt (*māt Muṣur*), Upper Egypt (*māt Paturisi*), and Kush (*māt Kūsi*) (*IAKA* §57:8–9; §65:37–38).

can country is described in 18:2 as divided by (?) the same waters.[143] "The land of the two winged beetle" is primarily an Egyptian (and not Kushite) symbol, adopted subsequently by Kushite pharaohs.

Should we assume that a Hebrew prophet was aware of these rivers on the African mainland? Do we deal here with accurate geographical data concerning the African landscape? What information could have been the available to the prophet? There is only one more text in the Bible mentioning a river related to Kush. According to Gen 2:13 one of the rivers of Eden, Gihon encircled all the land of Kush.[144] It must be mentioned that Egyptians considered the Nile of Egypt and the Nile of Kush as two distinct rivers both originating at Aswan from the subterranean ocean Nun.[145]

> On the Famine Stele, an Egyptian pseudoepigrapha from the Ptolemaic period, with a narrative set in the Old Kingdom, King Djoser asks the chief lector-priest of Imhotep: "In which place is Hapy[146] born? Which is the town of the Sinuous one? Which god dwells there?" (COS 1.53:4) The story tells how the priest disclosed to the king "the hidden wonders, to which the ancestors had made their way." (COS 1.53:5–6). He says: "There is a town in the midst of the deep, surrounded by Hapy, Yebu (Elephantine) by name (…) seat of Re when he prepares to give life to every face. Its temple's name is 'Joy-of-life', 'Twin-caverns' is the water's name, they are the breasts that nourish all.[147] It is the house of sleep of Hapy (…) Khnum is the god [who rules] there."[148] (COS 1.53:6–9). It is Khnum who "holds the door bolt

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[143] The suggestion of Höffken, 153, to regard the nation beyond the rivers of Kush as Egypt from a Kushite perspective does not solve the problem (strictly speaking, Egypt was not located beyond Kushite rivers), nor does this correspond to the interpretation of the rest of the prophecy as proposed below.

[144] The land of Kush in Gen 2:13 was localised variously east of Mesopotamia, in Eastern Anatolia, or in Arabia, but the identification of Kush with Nubia is still the most convincing. The river Gihon encircling Kush is identified in the LXX with שִׁחוֹר, (part of) the Nile (cf. Jer 2:18 and Sir 24:27). Cf. M. Görg, "Zur Identität des Pischon (Gen 2,11)", in *Aegyptiaca – Biblica. Notizen und Beiträge zu den Beziehungen zwischen Ägypten und Israel* (ÄAT 11; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991), 13–15; Goldenberg, *Curse*, 20-21.

[145] "The two caves (*qrtj*) of Elephantine" are mentioned in an inscription of Seti I (*ARE* 3.171); The Book of Dead (149 14:4); The Famine Stele (*AEL* 3.97, COS 1.53); The Dream Stele of Tanutamani (*FHN* 1.29:11); etc. Cf. K. W. Butzer, "Nilqellen", *LdÄ* 4:506–7.

[146] Hapy was the name of the deified Nile.

[147] In Egyptian iconography, Hapy is represented as a man with two breasts.

[148] Khnum was the "god of the cataract region and chief of Nubia" (COS 1.53:23). Further sections of the text are also interesting in view of the biblical descriptions of the rivers Gihon and Pishon: "There is a mountain massif in its

in his hand, and opens the gate as he wishes" (*COS* 1.53:9), opens up
the well so that Hapy can inundate the fields (*COS* 1.53:20).

Classical authors were likewise aware of this tradition of two distinctive
rivers,[149] but their description of the land beyond Egypt is full of legen-
dary elements. Though the prophet may have received some informa-
tion of geographical nature,[150] Isa 18 should not be considered a geo-
graphical text. It abounds in theologically significant symbols, dealing
with a nation, on the edge of the most distant horizon of the author.[151]

The strange land extending beyond the rivers of Kush is sending his
messengers on sea and waters. In most cases the participial form (הַשֹּׁלֵחַ)
of the הוֹי-sentences makes the reason of a woe-cry explicit. Some exe-
getes assume יָם refers to the Mediterranean Sea,[152] while in view of oth-
ers יָם designates the Nile river.[153] Convincing arguments urge us to fol-
low the second view. First, if part of the nation referred to in Isa 18 is
located in the south, it is expected that in describing their movement in
a verse built on parallelism the prophet first refers to their travel on the
Nile. Second, the fragile papyrus vessels were not seagoing ships, capa-
ble to sail on still waters and rivers only.[154]

But can יָם refer to the river Nile? Some texts in the Old Testament

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eastern region, with precious stones and quarry stones of all kinds, all the
things sought for building temples in Egypt, South and North, and stalls for
sacred animals, and palaces for kings, all statues too that stand in temples in
shrines (*COS* 1.53:11–12)." The region is rich in all kinds of plants and flow-
ers, in various kinds of (precious) stones (*COS* 1.53:14–17; cf. Gen 2:12).

[149] Homer *Odyss.* 4.477; Herodotus *Hist.* ii 28; Diodorus i 32.1; Pliny *Nat. Hist.*
vi 65. Cf. E. Honigmann, "Nil", *PW* 17.1:556–66.

[150] It is striking that the term used for the rivers of Kush is not יְאֹרִים, the name
of the Nile in Hebrew (see below), but נְהָרִים, which may suggest an awareness
of the distinction between the Kushite and Egyptian Niles mentioned above.
For Pishon and Gihon as the "two rivers" of Egypt, see also R. S. Sadler, *Can a
Cushite Change His Skin: An Examination of Race, Ethnicity, and Othering in the
Hebrew Bible* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 24–25.

[151] For Kush as the most distant southern corner of the earth, see Goldenberg,
Curse, 23-25. For remote nations, cf. Deut 28:49; Ps 72:10; Isa 5:26; Joel 4:8;
Hab 1:8; etc. Marti, 147; Duhm, 137; Gray, 311; Ehrlich, 68; Donner, *Israel*,
121, argued that Isa 18:1b is secondary. But I wonder how they are so sure that
the prophecy is addressed to Kush if the only information in this regard is con-
sidered to be secondary. Geographical definitions (rivers, cities, mountains)
are regularly used by the prophets when speaking about foreign nations.

[152] Clements, 164; Hayes & Irvine, 254; Watts, 244; G. Pfeifer, *Ägypten im
Alten Testament* (BNB 8; Munich, 1995), 15; Blenkinsopp, 309.

[153] Gesenius, 577; Dillmann, 166; Marti, 148; Gray, 311; Kaiser 76.

[154] Dillmann, 166; Gray, 311; Young, 1:475; Penna, 179; Kaiser, 77.

allow such an interpretation. No-Amon (Thebes) is described by Nah 3:8 as built by the Nile, with waters as her wall and the יָם as her rampart.[155] In this text יְאֹרִים,[156] מַיִם and יָם refer to the Nile encompassing this city. In another text, Ezek 32:2, יָם is the dwelling-place of the dragon, the symbol of the pharaoh.[157] The relationship of Ezek 32:2 and 29:3 suggests that יָם in Ezek 32:2 refers to the Nile, just like יְאֹרִים in Ezek 29:3. Nevertheless, this imagery is poetic, symbolic rather than literal, which means that this connection between יָם and the Nile has no implications for the semantic field of יָם. Moreover, this poetic usage of יָם is restricted to the river Nile.[158]

> It is noted that the Arabic name for the Nile is *al-Baḥr-n-Nīl*.[159] Since *baḥr* means 'sea' in Arabic, this is assumed to support the connection between יָם and the Nile. However, יָם and *baḥr* belong to two different languages, with different semantic fields. It is more helpful to compare Hebrew יָם and Arabic *yamm*, associated with the Red Sea and eventually with the Nile.[160] *yamm* appears in the Qur'an (Sur 20:39; 28:7) in allusions to the salvation of the baby Moses. But it remains unclear whether the Qur'an really has the Nile in view here.[161]
>
> By analysing a comprehensive list of Egyptian texts containing the Canaanite loanword *ym*, Vandersleyen argued that *ym* should be considered a reference to the Nile and not the sea, or Egypt's lakes, as previously thought.[162] Although the arguments of Vandersleyen do not

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[155] Cf. Esarhaddon's description of the Mediterranean kingdoms (*IAKA* §57).

[156] Before the dam at Aswan was built, the Nile had had three riverbeds and formed several islands in the Theban region (cf. Spronk, *Nahum*, 154–55).

[157] Cf. Ex 7:9; Deut 32:33; Ps 74:13; 91:13; Job 7:12; Isa 27:1; 51:9.

[158] יָם in Isa 21:1 and Jer 51:36 do not refer to the Euphrates. The lower region of the Euphrates in Babylon is called "the Sea land" (*māt tâmtu*) in Babylonian and Assyrian sources (cf. Isa 21:1). In Jer 51:36 יָם and מָקוֹר are the two extremities of the Euphrates, יָם designating the Persian Gulf into which the Euphrates is emptied. The parallelism of this verse is at any rate no argument for taking יָם to mean the same as "river". In Isa 11:15 יָם is clearly an allusion to the Red Sea of the exodus story (see Josh 15:5; 18:19 for לְשׁוֹן יָם־מִצְרַיִם). The parallelism does not necessarily require an identification between יָם and נָהָר (cf. Ps 24:2; 66:6; 80:12; 89:26; 114:3.5; Job 14:11; Nah 1:4; Hab 3:8; Zech 10:11). That is also true of Isa 19:5, where יָם may refer to the lakes, marshes or seas of Lower Egypt (see below).

[159] Cf. *al-Baḥr al-Azraq*, Blue Nile and *al-Baḥr al-Abiyad*, White Nile.

[160] *yamm* is probably an Aramaic loanword (S. Fraenkel, *Die aramäischen Fremdwörter im arabischen* [Leiden, 1886], 231).

[161] Cf. R. Bell, *A Commentary on the Qur'an* (JSSM 14; Manchester: University of Manchester, 1991), 2:44.

[162] C. Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our, w3ḏ wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil* (Bruxelles: Connaissance de l'Égypte Ancienne, 1999), 87–128. Gauthier

always convince,[163] some of his examples must be taken seriously.[164] In the worst case, the texts cited by Vandersleyen may serve as evidence that Lower Egypt and especially the Delta region abounded in inner lakes that might have been termed *ym* / יָם by Hebrew prophets.[165]

On the level of literary speech, Herodotus (*Hist.* ii 97) compares the inundating Nile to the Mediterranean Sea. Going beyond this comparison, some Classical authors connect the Nile to the Primeval Ocean, admitting that in doing so they follow Egyptian traditions.[166] In Egypt the inundating Nile is associated with the all-encompassing and underground water, Nun. The river is personified as the god *Ḥꜥpy*. In a hymn deriving from the Middle Kingdom *Ḥꜥpy* is described as the one "sprung from earth", "dwelling in the netherworld, he controls both sky and earth" (*AEL* 1:204–10; *ÄHG*, 500–6). According to Coffin Text Spell 318 "the Nile came into being in the limits of the earth". *Ḥꜥpy* is "the Nile-god in the great flood which flows for the Nile".[167] Concluding, there is sufficient evidence outside the Bible regarding the connection between the Nile and the sea, which may be explained by the unique natural characteristics of this river.

צִיר is a New Assyrian loanword, derived from *ṣīru*, connected by scholars to the formally identical adjective, 'first-rank', 'outstanding'. This probably indicates that *ṣīru* was a special, high-ranking emissary, and not a simple messenger, also implied by the logogram form LÚ.MAH.[168]

(ibid, 93) also believes that *ym* is "non seulement la mer, mais aussi toute espèce d'étendue d'eau, fleuve, bras de fleuve, canal, lac, étang, marais".

[163] See especially the criticism of J. F. Quack, "Zur Frage des Meeres in ägyptischen Texten", *OLZ* 97 (2002) 453–63.

[164] Cf., e.g., *pꜣ ym n wsỉr*, "le fleuve d'Osiris" (Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our*, 93), *pꜣ ym n Qbte*, "the Nile of Coptos" (101; see, however, Quack, "Frage", 461), Papyrus Harris 500, 2, 7–8 (104; but this may refer to a lake as well, cf. Quack, "Frage", 462), Papyrus Lansing 14,1–2 (104), etc. Making proper distinction among various genres is essential for interpreting *ym* (Quack, "Frage", 454).

[165] Note also the Kushite lake *ym n Niy*, "the *ym* of Niy", somewhere around Gebel Barkal (A. H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* [London: Oxford University Press, 1947], 1:162*–63*; Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our*, 108).

[166] Cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* ii 21, *Diod.* i 12.6 ("the Egyptians consider Oceanus to be their river Nile, on which also their gods were born"), 19.4 ("the river in the earliest period bore the name Oceanê, which in Greek is Oceanus…"), and 96.7 ("now he [*i.e.* Homer] calls the river 'Oceanus' because in their language the Egyptians speak of the Nile as Oceanus").

[167] R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts* (3 vols.; Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1973–78). Cf. also Spells 362, 820 and *ARE* §743.

[168] See Tadmor, *ITP*, 178 note 21'. For the Babylonian and Assyrian messenger designations, see Samuel A. Meier, *The Messenger in the Ancient Semitic World* (HSM 45; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988). *Pace* P. V. Mankowski *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew* (HSS 47; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 132 note

The title *ṣīru* is given by Assyrians mainly to foreign (non-Assyrian) officials.[169] The task of the *ṣīru* is to represent the king of his country or city. They often bring tributes to the Assyrian court as foreign representatives.[170] The place of the *ṣīru* is by the commander-in-chief (*turtannu*), the bodyguard (*qurbūtu*), the representatives of the king (*qēpu*), the interpreter (*targumannu*), or the crown prince.[171] SAA 5 168:r.4 even claims that the *ṣīru* gave orders to the commander-in-chief. This evidence underlines the fact that the Assyrian *ṣīru* referred to a special ambassador of a king. The Hebrew צִיר loaned from Assyrian probably has a similar semantic coverage.

The papyrus boat is known as the most ancient Egyptian craft.[172] It was made of rush available around waters (cf. Ex 2:3). Job 9:26 refers to these papyrus boats as אֳנִיּוֹת אֵבֶה considering them fast moving vessels. Such boats were used for fishing, but they were also helpful in the rocky waters of the Upper Nile region. These vessels—also known outside Egypt[173]—are called "rafts" or "raft-boats" in the nautical literature.[174] For sea waters Egyptians used other types of ships.[175] From the Egyptian

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489. *mār šipri* is the general Akkadian term for messenger (cf. Hebrew מַלְאָךְ).

[169] Generally *ṣīrāni*(LÚ.MAH.MEŠ) *ša māt*(KUR) GN, "envoys of the land of GN" (e.g., SAA 5 40:r.2–3; 5 75:4). Cf. LÚ *ṣi-ra-ni-e ša* PN in *ABL* 1117:6.

[170] Cf. SAA 1 32:17ff (?); 33; 110:r.4–17; SAA 5 171; SAA 7 58:20–24.4–16; 127; SAA 11 32; 36:15; 92 (?).

[171] SAA 1 110:r.15–17; SAA 5 171:1–5; SAA 11 31.

[172] J. Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1969) 5:493–94; S. Wachsmann, *Seagoing Ships and Seamanship in the Bronze Age Levant* (London: Chatham Publishing, 1998), 9.

[173] For the ancient Mesopotamia (*elep urbati*), see Salonen, *Wasserfahrzeuge*, 70, 143–44; M.-C. de Graeve, *The Ships of the Ancient Near East (c. 2000–500 B.C.)* (Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1981), 89–93. For ancient India see *Diod.* ii 17:5 and for ancient Ceylon, Pliny's *Nat. Hist.* vi 24:82.

[174] L. Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 12; De Graeve, *Ships*, 91; Wachsmann, *Seagoing Ships*, 9. In ancient iconography passengers are often depicted as standing upon these rafts (De Graeve, *Ships*, 92; cf. ἐπί in the Septuagint).

[175] Vandier, *Manuel*, 5:493–510. For descriptions of seagoing ships see Vandier, *Manuel*, 5:659 and Wachsmann, *Seagoing Ships*, 14. Pliny maintains (*Nat. Hist.* vi 24:82) that the inhabitants of Ceylon used papyrus boats on the sea. However, the type of vessel used for navigation is determined by several factors like sea navigability, available technology, and sailing techniques. Pliny's text suggests that the inhabitants of Ceylon were not acquainted with other types of ships at that time. On the other hand, he mentions that these people "only use four month in the year for voyages, and they particularly avoid the hundred days following midsummer, when those seas are stormy" (*Nat. Hist.* vi 24:83). Egyptian nautical technology was developed enough not to risk the life

Delta, one travelled to Canaan through the Way of Horus (Ex 13:17).

In order to understand who these messengers are, and what their possible task may have been, we need to analyse Isa 18:2c–g. The evaluation of the relationship between Isa 18:1–2b and 2c–g has led to differing opinions concerning the message of the whole prophecy. These will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.2.   VERSES 2C–G

2c   Go, swift messengers,
2d   to the nation tall and bald,
2e   to the people more fearful beyond it,
2f   a nation mighty and treading down,
2g   whose land the rivers divide
                    (or: whose country is the riverbed).

The "swift messengers" (מַלְאָכִים קַלִּים) is coherent with ancient portrayals of good emissaries. Beside faithfulness, trustworthiness, and eloquence, speed is their frequently valued quality.[176] Who are the addressees of these verses? Are the מַלְאָכִים in vs. 2c identical with the צִירִים in vs. 2a? What is the destination of the messengers?

It is generally assumed that צִירִים and מַלְאָכִים are identical, but opinions differ as to the identity of the speaker (commissioner) addressing the messengers in 18:2c–g, as well as the destination of the messengers. In the view of most exegetes, the description of 18:2d–g points to the Kushites as the messenger's destination, although other opinions also appear.[177] The commissioner of the ambassadors is supposed to be the Hebrew prophet of Isa 18 or the Kushite king. As the semantic analysis of 18:2d–g has made it clear, the nation(s) described must indeed be African(s). If the צִירִים and מַלְאָכִים are identical, this means that they receive their commission in a foreign country, Judah, from YHWH through his prophet, just before leaving for their homeland.

However, several exegetes make a distinction between צִירִים and מַלְאָכִים. While they admit that צִירִים refers to Kushite ambassadors,

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of special royal ambassadors with fragile and commutable papyrus vessels. Cf. the stories of Sinuhe (COS 1.38) and Wenamun (COS 1.41).

[176] Meier, *Messenger*, 25.

[177] Cheyne, 111; Dillman, 166; Duhm, 137; Von Orelli, 74; Gray, 311; Schmidt, 119; Procksch, 239; Van Hoonacker, 105; Schneider, 289; Schoors, 117; Wildberger, 689; Blenkinsopp, 309–10. Rarely the destination is considered to be Assyria (Janzen, *Mourning Cry*, 60–61; Barth, *Jesaja-Worte*, 13; Hayes & Irvine, 254; Watts, 246), the Medes (Kissane, 206; Oswald, 361), or even Israel (Targum; Jerome; Rashi; Qimchi; Motyer, 162).

מַלְאָכִים are assumed to be Israelite/Judaean messengers,[178] soldiers of the Assyrian king,[179] or divine heralds.[180] The most serious argument for distinguishing between צִירִים and מַלְאָכִים is that the commissioner uses the verb הלך instead of שׁוּב in addressing the מַלְאָכִים. Furthermore, one wonders why, if מַלְאָכִים were identical with the Kushite צִירִים, the prophet describes their destination as if it were an unknown land in 18:2d–g. It is further argued that Ezek 30:9, supposed to allude to Isa 18:2, would support interpreting מַלְאָכִים as divine messengers.

These arguments are not, however, as compelling as they seem. We have sufficient evidence that הלך and שׁוּב may be used as synonyms.[181] The fact that we deal here with a rhetorical text, and considering that the audience is among others Judaean, the stylised characterisation of 18:2d–g is hardly surprising. The commissioner introduces the foreign nation for his compatriots not specifically for the מַלְאָכִים. As for Ezek 30:9, whatever its meaning and its relationship with Isa 18:2, this latter should not impose any limitation on interpreting the original sense of Isa 18:2.[182] This of course is no proof yet that צִירִים and מַלְאָכִים are identical. Nevertheless, the view that מַלְאָכִים would be Judaeans or Israelites is not convincing. For why would Judaeans or Israelites be sent to Kush, when the messengers of the Nile land arriving there can also deliver the news on their return? Nor is it likely that מַלְאָכִים denotes Assyrian soldiers, as Vermeylen thought.

However, the suggestion that מַלְאָכִים would allude to divine couriers is intriguing. Isaiah 18 reminds the reader of a scene known from the story of Micaiah ben Imlah in 1 Kgs 22. When the prophet Micaiah appears in front of the leaders of the allied forces, and he is asked about

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[178] Kissane, 206; Oswald, 361; Sweeney, 261 (an Israelite, not Judaean, emissary is sent to king So of Egypt, not Kush), Blenkinsopp, 309–10.

[179] Vermeylen, 1:318.

[180] Barth, *Jesaja-Worte*, 13; Janzen, *Mourning Cry*, 60–61; Clements, 164–65.

[181] Gen 42:19; Num 22:13; 1 Sam 8:22; 2 Kgs 1:6 (לְכוּ שׁוּבוּ; cf. Hos 6:1); Am 7:12. הלך may accentuate that they have to leave (Beuken, 165 note 57).

[182] The view that in Ezek 30:9 the messengers (מַלְאָכִים) sent from before YHWH (מִלְּפָנַי יהוה) to terrify the unsuspecting Kushites would be divine beings, is questionable. These messengers make use of ships (בַּצִּים / צִי), which cannot be emended to אָצִים, 'urged' or רָצִים, 'running' (contra Janzen, *Mourning Cry*, 60; Barth, *Jesaja-Worte*, 14 note 48). The LXX on which the emendation is based (ἄγγελοι σπεύδοντες) was unaware of the meaning of צִי, as were also Aq. (ἐν ἐτιείμ; *siim* according to Hieronymus), Sym. (ἐν ἐπείξει), and Theod. (ἐσσὶμ). While these versions translated ב, the unknown word was merely transliterated. ἐσσὶμ is the contracted reading of ἐν οἴμ. Cf. also L. Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles against Egypt: A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29–32* (BibOr 37; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), 69–70.

the outcome of the battle, the prophet gives an answer that in many respects parallels Isa 18. In his vision Micaiah saw YHWH on a throne and heard him (1 Kgs 22:19–20) proclaiming the fall of Israel on the mountains. These auditory and visionary elements reappear in the Isaianic report (18:4). In the Micaiah-story the heavenly court receives special emphasis, in particular those who stand at YHWH's service (1 Kgs 22:19–23).[183] Given the similarities between Isa 18 and 1 Kgs 22 (cf. 4.3.1.1.), it is possible that Isa 18:2c–g is part of the prophet's reported vision. Consequently, the מַלְאָכִים may be the participants of the heavenly court. By reporting what YHWH told them to do, the prophet actually delivers an encoded message to his audience. This message is, however, as clear as Michaiah's prophecy was to Ahab and his allies. After all, the commission addressed to the מַלְאָכִים is the same as that which the Kushite צִירִים must report to their homeland master, making the distinction between צִירִים and מַלְאָכִים in 18:2 practically irrelevant.

Following the interpretation of מִן־הוּא וָהָלְאָה proposed above, one needs to distinguish between two different group of peoples in 18:2. The ethnological information that we obtain from the Bible regarding the inhabitants of the African continent is restricted (cf. EXCURSUS 1). Beside לוּבִים and פוּט that probably fall outside the horizon of Isa 18, the Old Testament is acquainted with מִצְרַיִם, (Lower) Egypt, פַּתְרוֹס, Upper Egypt (Isa 11:11), Kush (כּוּשׁ), and Seba (סְבָא; Isa 43:3; 45:15). Isaiah 45:15 describes Sabaeans (and probably the Kushites) as "men of stature" (אַנְשֵׁי מִדָּה).[184] The same physiological characteristics stroke Herodotus, writing that

> "these Ethiopians to whom Cambyses sent them, are said to be the tallest and fairest (μέγιστοι καὶ κάλλιστοι) of all men. Their way of choosing kings is different from all others, as are all their laws; they deem worthy to be their king that townsman whom they judge to be tallest and to have strength proportioned to his stature" (*Hist.* iii 20).

Some regarded the resemblances between the two texts more than coincidental and tend to interpret the word pair מְמֻשָּׁךְ וּמוֹרָט in 18:2 as the Hebrew counterpart of μέγιστοι καὶ κάλλιστοι.[185] But while Herodotus' concern is to present a sympathetic picture of the Ethiopians to his readers,[186] the prophet's intention with 18:2 is, as we shall see, different.

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[183] For similar cases, cf. M. S. Kee, "The Heavenly Council and its Typescene", *JSOT* 31 (2007) 259–274.

[184] Cf. Num 13:32; 2 Sam 21:20; 1 Chr 11:23; 20:6.

[185] Dillmann, 166; Schmidt, 119; Van Hoonacker, 105.

[186] *Hist.* is firmly rooted in the classical tradition portraying Ethiopians as handsome and pious. See, e.g., Homer's *Il.* 1.423–24; 23.205–7; *Od.* 1.22–24; 4:84; 5:282.287. Cf. also L. Török, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Na-*

The stature of the inhabitants of the Nile valley increases travelling towards the south. The terminology of 18:2d points to (Upper?) Egypt (or eventually Kush). Physiologically these nations were tall of stature and their hairless body (face and occasionally the head) was equally remarkable for full bearded Judaeans.[187] The nation beyond the one mentioned in 18:2d, even more fearful and powerful, whose land is divided by rivers, or whose country is the riverbed (18:2e–g), refers to the Kushites (or eventually Sabaeans), the nation of the Upper Nile valley.

Similar accounts of mighty foreign nations in the Bible fulfil two different rhetorical purposes: the intention is either to proclaim YHWH's judgment upon such famous people,[188] or they appear as tools of punishment in announcements of YHWH's sentence on a different nation.[189] The rhetorical function of 18:2d–g complies with the first option, an interpretation corroborated by the following verses of the prophecy.

4.2.3. VERSES 3–6

3a   All you inhabitants of the world
3b   and those dwelling on earth:
3c   when the signal is raised on the mountains, look,
3d   and when the horn is blown, listen!
4a   For thus spoke YHWH to me:
4b   "I will stay quiet and watch on my place,
4c   like scorching heat on the (night)mist (or: daybreak),
4d   like a cloud of dew in the heat of the harvest."

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patan-Meroitic Civilisation (HdO 1/31; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 69–73.

[187] According to Gen 41:14, Joseph was shaved before entering the pharaoh's palace. Lisbeth S. Fried argues that the pharaonic palace was considered a temple, so that those entering it should have been pure like a priest ("Why Did Joseph Shave?", *BAR* 33.4 [2007] 36–41). When Sinuhe returns to Egypt from Retjenu, he was clothed in royal linen, he was "plucked" and his hair combed. In Egyptian iconography the Egyptians and Nubians are represented as beardless people, in contrast to their neighbours (Vandier, *Manuel,* 3:110–11, 4:574; W. Helck, "Fremdvölkerdarstellungen", *LdÄ* 1:317; J. Vercoutter, "L'image de noir dans l'Egypte ancienne (dès origines à la XXVe dyn.)", in *Africa in Antiquity: Meroitica* 5 [1979] 19–22; A. Leahy, "Ethnic Diversity in Ancient Egypt", in *CANE,* 226–27; cf. Herodotus *Hist.* ii 36; iii 12). Self representations of the Kushite king of the 25th Dynasty (748–656) display a dark-brown body colour and a face of the Upper Nubian physical type, while "for non-royal representations Twenty-Fifth Dynasty monumental art in Kush adopted the Egyptian New Kingdom iconography of the exaggeratedly tall, slender Nilotic type" (Török, *Kingdom,* 37). A distinctive hair dress typifies the Kedarites in Jer 9:26; 25:23; 49:32.

[188] 2 Chr 16:8; Isa 10:5–15.24–27; 14:5–21; 17:12–14; 23:1–14; Ezek 28–32.

[189] Deut 28:49–50; Isa 5:26–30; 13:3–5; Jer 4:13; 5:15–17; 46:23; Hab 1:6–11.

5a   For before the harvest, when budding is over,
5b   and the blossom develops to an unripe berry,
5c   he will cut off the shoots with pruning hooks,
5d   and the tendrils he will remove and hew away.
6a   They will be left altogether to the birds of prey of the mountains
6b   and to the beasts of the earth.
6c   And the birds of prey will summer upon them,
6d   and all the beasts of the earth will winter upon them.

Isaiah 18:3 reveals that the concern of the prophet is much larger than just Judah. The way YHWH is about to step into history would have implications reaching far beyond the interests of one single nation. The place of this verse in the prophecy has been questioned on different occasions (cf. 4.3.1.2.). However, in one sense this worldwide perspective is anticipated, so far as according to the foregoing verse the messengers are sent to the most distant nations of the earth known to Israel.

Blasting horn and raising signals appear often (but not exclusively) in military accounts.[190] For this reason, Clements maintains[191] that in 18:3 these motifs are not a sign of "an impending battle, but an emphatic assertion that YHWH is announcing his plans to the world". However, in the present context it is not the summons itself (vs. 3c–d), but the looming events (vss. 4–6) that will request the attention of the audience. Blenkinsopp pointed to other texts where נֵס is related to the beginning of the repatriation of the Jews from the diaspora. This he assumed could also be the case in Isa 18.[192] Nevertheless, the issue of repatriation is not the subject of this prophecy. Although the appearance of נָשָׂא נֵס and תְּקַע שׁוֹפָר in military context must not automatically lead to the conclusion that in Isa 18:3 the same is the case, from all available alternatives this provides the most acceptable solution. As soon as time is there, the moment signals are given, all eyes and ears should be opened (cf. Isa 6:9), for YHWH is going to make his final verdict history.

כִּי logically connects 18:4 to 18:3, but it may also function as an emphatic particle. The prophet describes the preparations in the heavenly realm for a war that the world is planning. According to the word he received, YHWH will stay calm (שׁקט) until the appropriate moment. This calmly sitting of YHWH reminds one of the above mentioned heavenly council type scenes. שׁקט also has a deeper significance. In Ps 83 the author asks God not to keep silent nor stay calm, when alliances of the neighbouring people threaten the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Accord-

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[190] Such sounds and signals may signify the beginning (Isa 5:26; 13:2; Jer 4:21; 6:1; 51:27) or end (1 Sam 13:3; 2 Sam 2:28; 18:16; 20:22; Jer 50:2) of a battle.
[191] Clements, 165.
[192] Blenkinsopp, 310.

ing to Ps 83, the attitude opposite to שקט is to actively intervene in the ongoing events (cf. Ps 68:2). In the background of Isa 18 there is much unrest. The whole world is in upheaval. Fast moving messengers in arrive to form strong alliances, an image highly contrasting with a God staying calm as in times of peace.[193]

This impression of quietness and calm is also underlined by the verb נבט (Hab 1:13). Here YHWH is not merely a spectator, but a concerned observer, following the events closely, in wait of the right moment to intervene.[194] A similar idea appears in Ps 33:13–19. In contrast, lack of concern, abandonment, or negligence is expressed in the Bible by turning away the face of someone, by not looking at.[195] Despite his calmness, the prophet notes that YHWH is not indifferent for what is going on.

God's מָכוֹן does not refer to the temple in Jerusalem, but to his heavenly dwelling (Ps 33:13–14; cf. 80:15; 102:20; Isa 63:15).[196] Several texts describe YHWH taking action in terms of leaving his dwelling place (Isa 26:21; Mic 1:3; Ps 68:2), and his rest by returning to his site (Hos 5:15).

The two comparative phrases of 18:4c–d were interpreted in different ways. The Targum explained both images in terms of God's blessing upon his people.[197] Some exegetes stress the natural character as well as the necessity of both heat in daylight and dew in time of harvest for the plants to grow and ripen. In the same way YHWH staying still will encourage the development of the plan of the Assyrians, whom he will ultimately defeat.[198] According to Duhm and Clements, the key concern of the comparison is YHWH's calmness, which is compared to the still clouds of dew in the sky, and the gleaming heat in sunshine.[199] Fohrer took the verb נבט as the key motif, arguing that just like clouds above are looking down upon earth, so does also YHWH.[200] Höffken points to the short term of the mentioned meteorological phenomena as the essence of the prophetic message.[201] For Schmidt the emphasis falls on YHWH distancing himself from the people.[202] This is also how Høyland Lavik interprets the simile of the dew that vanishes in the morning. In contrast to most exegetes, however, she considers the two similes se-

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[193] E.g., Josh 11:23; 14:15; Judg 3:11.30; 5:31; 8:28; 2 Chr 13:23; 20:30. שקט characterises a nation in times of peace.

[194] Vitringa, 859; Delitzsch, 353; Gray, 313.

[195] Ps 80:15; 91:8; 92:12; 102:20; Isa 5:12; 63:15; Lam 4:16; 5:1; Am 5:22.

[196] Cf. also Høyland Lavik, *Isaiah 18*, 133.

[197] Cf. also Jerome and Vitringa, 861–62.

[198] Dillmann, 167; Young, 1:477; Van Hoonacker, 106; Motyer, 162.

[199] Duhm, 138; Clements, 165.

[200] Fohrer, 1:205.

[201] Höffken, 154.

[202] Schmidt, 120.

mantically distinctive. In her view, the quietness and the *gazing* of YHWH is likened here with the intensity of the shimmering heat. Unlike the imagery of dew, the simile of the vibrating hot air alludes to the invisible yet real presence of YHWH in this world.[203]

The parallel use of the comparative preposition כְּ makes it unlikely that the two similes would refer to different things. Both meteorological images are related here with the idea of YHWH sitting calmly and looking down on earth, so that what they allude to must also be in semantic parallelism. Nevertheless, in biblical texts meteorological imagery can be applied with various purposes, different aspects of the metaphor can be exploited. For example, the metaphor of dew can be used in a negative or a positive sense, depending on the context. In Hos 13:3 the dew represents something that vanishes quickly. In Prov 25:13 the cold snow on the day of harvest is compared to the refreshing message of a faithful messenger. However, in Prov 26:1 the imagery of snow and rain in time of summer has negative connotations (cf. Prov 28:3).

It is difficult to interpret חֹם צַח, "scorching heat" as a positive experience.[204] The grammar of the comparative construction in 18:4 requires that either the verb שקט or נבט is taken as the key reference of the comparison. This means that ideas like the necessity of the phenomenon, its fresh and beneficial character, its short termed nature, its invisible and inevitable presence do not form the main concern of the association.

One of the possibilities discussed in the semantic notes is that the comparisons expand the imagery of God staying calm in his place: "like scorching heat on daybreak" and "like a cloud of dew in the heat of the harvest". The sense of the verse would be then that just like gleaming heat is staying calm on its "place" on daybreak for a while, until the sun rises to the top of the sky, and just like the cloud of dew is sitting still on its "place" in the heat of the harvest, waiting for the night or cooler days to moisture the ground, so is YHWH staying still in await for the right moment to step forward and take action. The two pictures are complementary: in the first the heat is staying calm in a cool weather, in the second the cool cloud of dew is resting when there is heat outside. The message is not one of neutrality, of not engaging oneself in the course of events. YHWH is looking forward to the crucial moment when he will

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[203] Høyland Lavik, *Isaiah 18*, 136.

[204] The dry heat (חֹרֶב), just like the storm (זֶרֶם), is considered as a symbol for the enemy of the people of God in Isa 25:4–5 (cf. also Isa 4:5–6; 30:30) or the people of God (28:2.17; 29:6). Against the enemy YHWH protects them as a cloud (or shadow; cf. Isa 4:6; 25:4) protects from scorching heat, and as a place of refuge (מַחְסֶה) protects against the storm.

not fail to take proper action, which is elaborated in vs. 5.

The second option mentioned above was to render "like scorching heat on the mist (moisture, dew), like a cloud of dew in the heat of the harvest", resulting in a parallelism which expresses the enmity and incongruence of these natural phenomena. Night moisture vanishes from the plants as soon as the glooming heat appears, and the fresh cloud of dew is the antidote against the heat of the harvest. Both lines refer to YHWH's antagonistic attitude towards the political plans of the people.

There is a change in the pronominal suffixes of vss. 4b–d and 5. While in vs. 4 YHWH is at word, he is referred to in the third person in vs. 5 (cf. 18:4a). The particle כִּי couples the two sentences together so that 18:5 develops the imagery of vs. 4 in a way that it appears as the comment of the prophet upon the word he has just delivered.[205] YHWH, referred to as "he", will remove the shoots and the branches of the vine.

Many exegetes interpret this text as referring to the second pruning of the vine, which took place between the harvest and the vintage. The purpose of the second pruning was to make the vine free of unnecessary shoots and leaves that would negatively influence the ripening of the grape clusters. Thus this action is considered beneficial for the vine.[206] However, the context makes this reading highly improbable. In Israel the vine blossoms before the harvest,[207] after which the berries begin to develop. The grapes begin to ripen around July and the vintage begins around August.[208] In the present prophecy of doom it is difficult to understand how the cleansing of the vine to yield more fruit would suit the idea of the prophet. Moreover, as argued above, נְטִישׁוֹת and probably זַלְזַלִּים designate the fruit bearing branches of the vine.[209] Cutting them off as in 18:5 will destroy the vine itself. Just at the time the harvest looks so promising, the time one can already estimate how abundant the vintage would be, when the berries are developed, at the last moment

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[205] Isa 5:7; 14:27; 21:16; 30:15; 31:4; Jer 4:3. Cf. W. Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik* (BEvT 74; Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1976), 128–29; Blenkinsopp, 311.

[206] Procksch, 241; Fisher, 138; Kaiser, 78; Wildberger, 692; Oswald, 362; Scheider, 291–92; Kilian, 119; Beuken, 169. The Gezer-calendar refers to the month of second pruning as ירחו זמר, which is placed between the harvest (ירח קצר [וכ]ל) and the month of summer fruit (ירח קץ) (*TSSI* 1:3; on זמר, see Lev 25:3.4; Isa 5:6).

[207] The harvest time extended from April until early June. See Sol 2:13.15 and L. Turkowski, "Peasant Agriculture in the Judean Hills", *PEQ* 101 (1969) 101.

[208] Depending on climatic characteristics of the region (cf. Dalman, *Brot*, 312–13; Borowski, *Agriculture*, 33–37). Qimchi describes the stages as follows: "when the vine drops its פֶּרַח, a נֵץ will come, and the נֵץ becomes בֹּסֶר, and the בֹּסֶר develops (גָּמֵל) slowly until it ripens into mature grapes (עֲנָבִים)".

[209] Cf. also Dalman, *Brot*, 301, 330; Rüthy, *Pflanze*, 59.

YHWH intervenes with unforeseen power and complete destruction.[210]

A similar motif of the destruction of the vine is used in Jer 5:10b, according to which the nations will destroy the vine-rows and strip away the branches (הָסִירוּ נְטִישׁוֹתֶיהָ) of the vine of Israel (cf. Isa 5:5). In Ezek 19:10–14 a fruitful vine full of branches is a symbol for Israel. God's anger burned its shoots and caused it to be uprooted.[211]

The destruction of trees, vineyards and orchards is a prominent theme in descriptions of Assyrian warfare.[212] Many of the Assyrian reliefs depict soldiers cutting off fruit-trees in conquered territories. An inscription of king Tiglath-pileser III describing the attack against Damascus and its king, Rezin, mentions that "his gardens, [grapevine]es, orchards I cut down. I did not leave a single one."[213] Likewise, Sennacherib mentions that when conquering the land Elippu, "their orchards I cut down, over their fertile land I poured out misery".[214] Isaiah 18:5 makes most sense against this background (cf. Isa 9:9).

Isaiah 18:6 transposes the imagery from the symbolic to the real world. The text does not refer to the cut tendrils, but to the dead bodies of those slain, around which the birds of prey will assemble.[215] The beasts will stay there for a long period of time, which implies a great number of dead (cf. Ezek 39:12). They will spend the summer upon them and the beasts of the earth will winter there. The word pair summer-winter expresses totality, i.e. "always", "through the whole year".[216]

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[210] Cf. Gesenius, 590–91; Duhm, 139; Dalman, *Brot,* 331; Kissane, 207; Young, 1:477–78; Fohrer, 1:206; Høyland Lavik, *Isaiah 18,* 167.

[211] Cf. Ps 80:9–14; Jer 49:9 (∥ Ob 1:5); Ezek 17:9–10.

[212] Chopping down trees was part of the retribution for resisting Assyrian aggression, but it also reflects an effective Assyrian war-policy of bringing a fortification to surrender by causing starvation (S. W. Cole, "The Destruction of Orchards in Assyrian Warfare", in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995* [eds. S. Parpola & R. M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997], 34–36). Cf. Deut 20:19; 2 Kgs 3:25.

[213] Annals of Tiglath-pileser 23 11'-12': *kirâte [karā]nu ṣippāte ša nība lā īšû akkisma ištēn ul ēzib* (*ITP,* 78–79). For reading *[karā]nu,* cf. W. R. Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies* (SHCANE 18; Leiden: Brill, 1999, 133. Cf. also SI 7 24: "I cut down the orchards and the sissootrees around the city walls, and did not leave a single one. I destroyed the date-palms, throughout his land. I ripped off their fruit and filled the meadows."

[214] D. D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Chicago: Chicago Oriental Institute, 1926), text B1 lns. 27–30.

[215] See Deut 28:26; 1 Sam 17:44; 2 Sam 21:10; Ps 79:2; Jer 7:33; 12:19; 15:3; 19:7; Ezek 29:5; 32:4; 39:4; Rev 19:17.

[216] Cf. Gen 8:22; Ps 74:17; Am 3:15; Zech 14:8. Contra Wildberger, 681–82, 693, this verse should be considered to be integral to the prophecy.

The intriguing question is to whom these verses refer? Who will be destroyed and left to the birds of prey? Most frequently it is presupposed that these verses refer to Assyria, although no argumentation is provided.[217] There are several reasons why this proposal is unlikely. First, Assyria is never mentioned in this prophecy. Second, as I argued in 18:1, the form of Isa 18 as a הוֹי-oracle is expected to proclaim doom for those in the addressing lines. Third, representing the nations of Isa 18 as glorious, fearful and strong (18:2) is only meaningful if the prophet foretells the fall of these great and mighty nations. Fourth, some also suggested that there is a word play in צֶלְצַל and זַלְזַל.[218] If that is right, it would give one additional reason to identify the addressees of 18:1 with those described in vs. 5.[219] Fifth, announcing judgment upon Egypt and Kush as the helpers of Israel and Judah is a common theme of Isaiah's oracles (cf. Isa 20:3–6; 30:1–17 and 31:1–5). It is therefore more likely that the nation denounced in the prophecy is not Assyria, but Kush and Egypt.[220] But beyond that, the fall of the Kushite kingdom had far reaching implications concerning all neighbouring states which choose to tie up their fate and future to the enticing might of this African kingdom.[221]

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[217] Vitringa, 870; Gesenius, 586; Delitzsch, 352–53; Dillmann, 167; Duhm, 139; Cheyne, 112; Gray, 308; Von Orelli, 76; Schmidt, 120; Procksch, 242; Fischer, 138; Van Hoonacker, 106; Kissane, 207; Young, 1:477; Donner, *Israel*, 126; Motyer, 161; Blenkinsopp, 311.

[218] Clements, 165; Hayes & Irvine, 256; Höffken, 142, Høyland Lavik, *Isaiah 18*, 170–71.

[219] Høyland Lavik argues that Isa 18 is designed in a particular way so as "to entrap the audience to think that somebody else will be judged and not themselves" (*Isaiah 18*, 20). This "rhetoric of entrapment", as she calls it (22), implies that it is not the land beyond the rivers of Kush that is judged in this prophecy, but Israel. However, the fact that the vine-imagery is generally related to the people of YHWH in the Bible (cf. Høyland Lavik, *Isaiah 18*, 156–61) does not mean that on this place it could not have a wider sense that included the nations from the rivers of Kush. Indeed, it is not so much a nation that is compared here to the destructed vine, but a developing *plan* of the nations. Nevertheless, the vine-imagery may have also evoked the memories of Isa 5, where Israel and Judah are described as the vineyard of YHWH.

[220] Cf. Fohrer, 1:206; Wildberger, 690; Kaiser, 78; Clements, 165; Dietrich, *Politik*, 129; Kilian, 119; Schneider, 291.

[221] The peculiar view of Sweeney that Isa 18 would proclaim judgment upon Israel (the Northern Kingdom) in relation to their embassy sent to Egypt (254, 257) depends on his contextual reading of this prophecy, namely its relation to Isa 17, an issue to be discussed below in further details.

4.2.4. VERSE 7

7a   At that time will bring tribute to YHWH of hosts,
7b   the people tall and bald,
7c   and indeed the people more fearful beyond it,
7d   a nation mighty and treading down,
7e   whose land the rivers divide
                    (or: whose country is the riverbed),
7f   to the place of the name of YHWH of hosts, mount Zion.

Verse 7 takes up 18:2 almost literally and inserts it into a new interpre-
tive frame, 7a and 7f. The question is how this tribute scene is to be
explained? Does it mean that after being subdued by the army of YHWH,
the defeated nations will bring tributes to Zion? Or are these tributes
rather expressions of gratitude towards YHWH, who annihilated the
enemies of this nation, a view that reappears from time to time in the
interpretive history of Isa 18? The answers are directly related to the
problem of literary integrity that will be addressed in the next section.

When 18:1–6 is fulfilled the nations will bring their tributes to Zion.
Mount Zion (הַר־צִיוֹן) is prominently represented in the Psalms and
Isaiah, most often with positive connotations.[222] This mountain is the
place where YHWH reigns (Isa 8:18; 24:23), to which he is committed to
defend, as a king protects his residence (Isa 29:8; 31:4). The formula
מְקוֹם שֵׁם־יהוה is rather unique. The emphasis on the name of YHWH
abiding in Jerusalem is particularly frequent in Deuteronomy and related
literature.[223]

4.2.5. CONCLUSION

Isaiah 18 should be read as a prophecy of doom addressed explicitly to
African nations of the Nile valley, the Egypto-Kushite Empire, with its
borders extending beyond the most distant rivers of the earth. This
country is typified as the land of the two-winged beetle, an Egyptian
(including Kushite) symbol recognised in the entire Near East. Isaiah
18:2 alludes to two nations, most likely Egyptians and Kushites. Their
emissaries (צִיר) sent to Canaan are commissioned to deliver a sombre
message for their master, the Kushite pharaoh. What the farthest na-
tions should hear, all the world should hear (vs. 3). From a distance the
God of Israel carefully attends every step they make, waiting for the

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[222] Ps 48:3.12; 74:2; 78:68; 125:1; Isa 4:5; 8:18; 10:12; 18:7; 24:23; 29:8; 31:4;
37:32 (| 2 Kgs 19:31); Lam 5:18; Joel 3:5; Ob 1:17, 21; Mic 4:7. The destruc-
tion of Mount Zion appears in Lam 5:18, and is implied in Ps 74:2; Isa 10:12.
[223] Wildberger, 696; Kaiser, 79. Cf. Deut 12:5.11.21; 14:23.24; 1 Kgs 8:16; etc.
The temple is called בַּיִת לְשֵׁם יהוה in 1 Kgs 3:2; 5:17.19; 8:17.20; Jer 3:17.

right moment to intervene (vs. 4). When the plans made with Judah come to the most promising phase (cf. the imagery of the developing vine), YHWH will subdue the mighty and fearful nations. Like a vine tree is destroyed shortly before the vintage (vs. 5), so will their common plan be subject to oblivion. This message is directly addressed to Egypto-Kushites, but indirectly to all those who expect their salvation from these people with a promising outward appearance. After the destruction, the land extending beyond the rivers of Kush will bring tribute to Jerusalem, the city where the King of Israel reigns.

4.3.   ISAIAH 18 IN CONTEXT

The purpose of this section is to evaluate the results of the exegesis above in the context of Chapters 2 and 3. This assessment concentrates especially on three main issues, literary, theological and historical. It aims to answer problems specifically related to Isa 18 as a whole according to the questions outlined in the introductory section 1.4. above.

4.3.1. THE LITERARY ASPECTS OF ISAIAH 18

4.3.1.1. THE FORM OF ISAIAH 18

I suggested above that Isa 18 reports on the entire process of prophetic visionary experience. The first two verses address concrete topics in the form of a short woe cry, further elaborated in vs. 3. The supernatural provenance of the utterance is provided in vs. 4: כִּי כֹה אָמַר יהוה אֵלַי. The divine revelation is followed by a prophetic elaboration in vss. 5–6. One may infer that behind the text the prophet is either asked to present his vision concerning a specific topic, or he gives his vision spontaneously, both of which are known from descriptive narrative texts in the Old Testament. As argued above, Isa 18 can be compared with 1 Kgs 22, which may highlight the original setting behind the utterance.

Common elements	1 Kgs 22	Isa 18
- the divine legitimation of the utterance	אֶת־אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר יהוה אֵלַי 22:14	כִּי כֹה אָמַר יהוה אֵלַי 18:4
- the mountain of judgment	Micaiah saw all Israel scattered on the mountains (22:17)	Isa 18:6 proclaims that "they" will all fall on the mountains
- description of the vision of the heavenly council	I saw YHWH sitting on his throne (22:19)	YHWH sitting calmly in his מָכוֹן (18:4)
- the heavenly beings at YHWH's service	רוּחַ and צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם (22:19)	מַלְאָכִים (18:2)
- the heavenly being(s)	22:20–22	18:2

	22:23	18:5–6
sent with a "message" to the earth		
- the prophetic com- ment on the vision		
- the address to all peo- ple, who are summoned as witnesses to the word	שָׁמְעוּ עַמִּים כֻּלָּם (22:28)	כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל וְשֹׁכְנֵי אָרֶץ (18:3)

4.3.1.2. THE INTEGRITY OF ISAIAH 18

Though some scholars find no difficulty in reading 18:1–7 as a coherent text, the literary integrity of this passage has often been questioned. In this section I will analyse the literary critical role of two verses, often regarded as later additions to the prophecy, vss. 3 and 7 respectively.

Several commentators consider 18:3 a later insertion.[224] Their most significant argument is that תֵּבֵל belongs to the vocabulary of late He-brew. Furthermore, Wildberger assumes that the expressions תְּקַע שׁוֹפָר and נְשָׂא נֵס appear in texts dated to the late post-exilic period.[225] Some authors also regard the perspective of Isa 18:3 as universalistic, a ten-dency often believed to characterise late biblical literature. Finally, in some readings, the location of 18:3 seems to interrupt the connection between vss. 2 and 4.

It would take much space to examine the date of all texts containing the lexeme תֵּבֵל and this procedure would always remain arbitrary and subjective, and the reasoning circular. A different approach to the texts in which תֵּבֵל appears leads to two important interrelated conclusions: the texts in question are always poetical and תֵּבֵל appears exclusively in parallel constructions.[226] The most frequent synonym of תֵּבֵל is אֶרֶץ. Po-etry and parallelism inevitably enrich the lexical material of a language with words that one would probably avoid in everyday speech. The most important question is not whether תֵּבֵל is a late term, but what alterna-tives were available for the poet to construct his parallelism?[227] The po-etic context adequately explains the use of תֵּבֵל in vs. 3.[228]

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[224] Marti, 148–49; Gray, 313; Fohrer, 1:205; Kaiser, 80; Wildberger, 681; Ver-meylen, 1:319; Clements, 165; Kilian, 118–19; Berges, 162–63.

[225] Isa 11:12; 13:2; 27:13 (cf. Wildberger, 681; Berges, 192–93).

[226] Synonymous parallelism: with אֶרֶץ (1 Sam 2:8; 1 Chr 16:30; Job 34:13; Ps 19:5; 24:1; 33:8; 77:19; 89:12; 90:2; 96:13; 97:4; 98:9; Prov 8:26; Isa 14:21; 24:4; 26:9.18; 34:1; Jer 10:12; 51:15; Lam 4:12; Nah 1:5), לְאֻמִּים (Ps 9:9), בְּנֵי אָדָם (Prov 8:31). Synthetic parallelism: 2 Sam 22:16; Job 18:18; 37:12; Ps 18:16; 50:12; 93:1; 98:7; Isa 13:11; 14:17; 27:6.

[227] While אֲדָמָה can have a similar meaning to תֵּבֵל, it is never used in semanti-cally comparable parallel constructions.

[228] תֵּבֵל appears to be an Akkadian loanword (tābalu, 'dry land', 'field'; cf. also

With regard to the late origin of תְּקַע שׁוֹפָר and נָשָׂא נֵס, Wildberger's suggestion would have some weight if there were other syntagmatic constructions, in which שׁוֹפָר and נֵס appeared. However, נָשָׂא is the verb generally used with נֵס[229] and שׁוֹפָר is attested exclusively with תְּקַע.[230]

As to the universalistic view of vs. 3, first of all it would be misleading to say that there is only one type of universalism in the Bible, the one which derives from the post-exilic period. It is hard to imagine that a political sphere created by an Assyrian empire, whose king generally introduces himself as the universal king and judge of the whole world (*šar kiššāte*), whom the god Assur submitted the entire world (*kippat erbetti*;[231] PPANE 85 ii 3)—a universalistic vision in the deepest sense of the word—would leave untouched the Hebrew prophets who so often talk about the initiatives of this world power. Indeed, it did not. In pronouncements of judgment of the Judaean prophets YHWH is standing behind this king of the universe (e.g., Isa 10:5). Each prophecy directed against a foreign nation is in itself an evidence of some kind of universal perspective.[232] The main issue problem is here rather that some exegetes assume that Isa 18:3 proclaims an end-time judgment on all the nations of the earth. But as argued, that is actually not the case. Similar texts in the Old Testament suggest a different *rhetorical* function for vs. 3.[233] Although the prophet addresses the whole world, his main concern is to deliver his message to those listening to him. They are not summoned to take action, but to look, listen, and witness (cf. 1 Kgs 22:28). Second, assuming that the prophet's audience is a multi-national community (cf. the צִירִים), including those living as far as the rivers of Kush, such a rhetoric address line is certainly on its place.[234]

Does vs. 3 dismantle the structure of the prophecy? That might be a matter of perspectives. Wildberger, for example, took vs. 4 to be the message that the Kushite embassy had to deliver to its homeland master, and following this scheme he argued that the insertion of vs. 3 disturbed the logic of the (original) prophecy.[235] The signalised problem is rather artificial, however. In 18:3 the prophet already announces the main point of his message: action will be taken in due time. The main concern of Isa 18 is not that YHWH will stay calm, but rather that he will

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abālu), attested in the Akkadian since the Amarna period.

[229] Isa 5:26; 11:12; 13:2; Jer 4:6; 50:2; 51:12; 51:27. רום in Isa 49:22; 62:10.

[230] Josh 6:4.8.9.13.16.20; Judg 3:27; 6:34; 7:18.19.20.22; 1 Sam 13:3; etc.

[231] Cf. Hebrew כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ in Job 37:3; 38:13; Isa 11:12; 24:16; Ezek 7:2.

[232] Cf. Duhm, 138; Donner, *Israel*, 124–25.

[233] E.g., Ps 2:10; 33:8; 49:2; Isa 1:2; Mic 1:2 (cf. 1 Kgs 22:28).

[234] Sargon's Hymn to Nanaya also summons the world as "Hear, o world (*sima kibrāti*), the praise of queen Nanaya!" (SAA 3 4:rev. ii 13').

[235] Wildberger, 690.

step forward at the right moment, the moment that vs. 3 anticipates.

Concluding, despite the unfaltering confidence of some exegetes,[236] there is no need, and more importantly no convincing evidence that would urge us to treat vs. 3 as a later addition. Isaiah 18:3 makes explicit what is implicitly there in the FNPs in general, namely that the implications of YHWH's judgment and salvation are far reaching; those are more than simply local interventions in the life of one nation of the world's history; the more so when the life and political affairs of that particular nation are inseparably linked up with the destiny of many others.

Isaiah 18:7 is more commonly viewed as a secondary attachment to the prophecy, mainly because it is argued to introduce a scene of salvation after judgment. Some contest this view, arguing that on the occasion of the defeat of Assyria the Kushites bring their tributes to YHWH.[237] However, according to the conclusion of the exegetical section above, this hardly corresponds to the intention of 18:1–6.

In this final form, the connection between 18:7 and the previous verses is established in two ways. First, מְקוֹם שֵׁם־יהוה is considered a synonym for מָכוֹן in 18:4. Second, the motif of the mountain connects this verse with the judgment scene of 18:6. It must be noted, however, that the viewpoint of vs. 7 is slightly different. As argued, מָכוֹן refers to YHWH's heavenly dwelling where he was seen and heard by the prophet.[238] Furthermore, the location where the judgment of 18:6 takes place is not identical to Zion.[239] Do these slight differences allude to the later origin of vs. 7?

Isaiah 18:7 contains an important motif well-represented in other sections of the book of Isaiah: foreign treasures will be brought to Jerusalem (cf. 23:18; 45:14; 60:5–16; 61:5–6). It must be noted that not all of these texts are written with the same concern. The interchange between YHWH and Zion in these texts is significantly more than simply a matter of style. The specific theme of 18:7, tributes brought to the king of Jerusalem, appears in royal psalms, especially Ps 72:10–15, as well as in cultic poems, like Ps 68:29–31, singing about the kingship of YHWH. Such tribute scenes have parallels in Mesopotamian literature. The New Assyrian kings generally accentuate the vast extent of their dominion

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[236] See., e.g., Kilian's "allerdings" und "eindeutig" (Kilian, 118–19).

[237] Knobel, 125; Dillmann, 170; König, 200; Procksch, 242–43; A. Feuillet, "Études chronologique des oracles qu'on peut dater", in *Études d'exégèse et de théologie biblique. Ancien Testament* (ed. A. Feuillet; Paris: Gabalda, 1975), 51; Oswald, 363. A text often related to Isa 18:7 is 2 Chr 32:23. This, however, seems to be a shortened conclusion to 2 Kgs 20.

[238] Although Wildberger (246) mentions that the heavenly and earthly sanctuaries of YHWH should be seen as complementary dwelling places.

[239] For the mountain as a place of judgment, see 1 Kgs 22:17 and Isa 14:25.

and their fame in the world by enumerating the vast tributes received from nations living on distant locations. Nations whom former kings have not even heard of, or whose place is far away (*ša ašaršu rūqu*) bring their gifts to Assyria.[240] It is striking to compare these encounters with nations on the peripheries of the Assyrian empire with the account of the African tribute to Zion in Isa 18:7.

> The Erra and Ishum epic summons the god Erra to show his might "so that those above and below quake (…), so that kings hear and kneel beneath you, so that countries hear and bring you their tribute (…)".[241] After Marduk is returned by a Babylonian king from exile and takes its place in his temple, he speaks as follows: "Then I carried myself back to my city Babylon and to the Ekursagil. I called all the goddesses together. I commanded: 'Bring your tribute, o you lands, to Babylon' […]". The Dynastic prophecy reads: "All the lands will bring tribute to him" (i.e. to the divinity).[242]
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> An account of Shalmaneser III from shortly after 841 B.C. retells how the Assyrian king crossed the Euphrates for the 16th time. He defeated Hazael of Damascus and erected his royal statue on Mount Ba'ali-ra'asi, a cape jutting into the Mediterranean Sea. Then we read: "At that time (*ina ūmešuma*) I received tribute from the people of Tyre, Sidon, and from Jehu of the House of Omri." (RIMA A.0.102.8 24"–27"). *ina ūmešuma* can be compared to בָּעֵת הַהִיא in Isa 18:7.

In view of this one must reevaluate the rather general opinion that Isa 18:7 would actually present an oracle of salvation concerning the Kushites. In the context of the destruction of the empire by Y HWH (through the mediation of Assyria?), 18:7 is rather a further expression of the subordination of the powerful Nile land to Y HWH, as well as a witness to God's empire reaching the most distant corners of the earth.

The fact that 18:7 fits its context so well may speak for the originality of 18:7, but need not necessarily do so. The main concern of 18:1–6 is the devastation of Egypt and Kush *and* those relying on them. But this means that on the day of its destruction, Kush will not be able to bring tributes to Y HWH in Zion, as one would expect if בָּעֵת הַהִיא in 18:7 is placed in the same historical situation as 18:6. The judgment scene of 18:6 (note the summer/winter motif) appears to be a permanent one. Moreover, other texts with similar message from the book of Isaiah suggest that the judgment on the Kushite kingdom is implicitly connected

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[240] See, e.g., the Shilkanni-episode of Sargon II on his Assur stele (2.3.1.4.).

[241] S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford World's Classics; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 287.

[242] Marduk prophecy ii 1ff (cf. i 23ff); Dynastic prophecy ii 17'ff in T. Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1991), 233–34, 239.

with the judgment on the people of YHWH. This implies further that it would be difficult to relate this scene concerning tributes brought to Zion would with the vision of Isaiah that "the helper will stumble and the helped one will fall" (Isa 31:3; cf. Isa 20), when placed in the same historical context. Nevertheless, from the perspective of a later editor, the thematic shift from the destruction scene to the tribute scene can be more easily explained. This also fits well the Assyrian stele-literature that, as was argued above, the collection of Isa 13–23 imitates.

4.3.1.3. ISAIAH 18 AND ITS CONTEXT

The function of Isa 18 as a whole on its present place is debated in discussions of the composition of Isa 13–23. Isaiah 18 has been recognised as an independent prophecy dealing with the Kushite kingdom. We are left to guess why, if this was the concern of the author, it was not included in the מַשָּׂא מִצְרַיִם or receive its own superscription. In section 1.2. I mentioned various opinions that try to make sense of Isa 18 in its present position. Duhm and Kaiser believed that the lack of individual superscriptions in 17:12–14 and 18:1–7 betray that these were inserted at a late date in an already established מַשָּׂא-collection. But they could give no explanation why a later editor did not attach individual superscriptions to the two texts, nor why it was exactly here that the two passages were inserted. Mowinckel, Fohrer and Vermeylen argued that a later addition of the מַשָּׂא texts was the reason for the distortion of an original Isaianic collection. According to Fohrer this earlier collection was organised geographically. Again, in a hazardous collection these scholars do not presuppose any specific editorial intention, so that the reader need not be surprised to find unevenness. Jenkins is more optimistic when he militates for two well-structured collections in Isa 14:24–22:25, namely 14:28–17:14 (the neighbouring nations) and 18:1–22:25 (great powers). The two collections begin by affirming the security of Zion (14:32; 18:7) and conclude with a description of an assault against it (17:12–14; 22:1–14). In the scheme of Jenkins Isa 18 appears on a special position, but he gives no explanation for the lack of a מַשָּׂא superscription on this point in the prophecy either. Furthermore, 21:11–17 distorts Jenkins assumption (and so do also 13:1–14:23 and 23). Despite the differences, on one significant point these assumptions agree: Isa 18 must be considered an individual prophecy, that is a unit with its own beginning and end. But what does this prophecy concerned with the collapse of the Egypto-Kushite kingdom do on this place?

As observed in section 3.4.2., every prophecy concerned with one particular nation received its proper place in one collection. They may have been originally independent texts (14:24–27; 16:6–12; 22:15–25), but they all belong to a מַשָּׂא collection from the point of view of the

final editors. The two undecided cases remain the two הוֹי-words, 17:12–14 and 18:1–7. Taking into account that all other prophecies belong to a מַשָּׂא collection, we should also consider this possibility for 17:12–14 and 18:1–7. Needless to say, the following discussion will not search for an original unity, but a unity from the viewpoint of the editors of 13–23.

Isaiah 17:12–14 contains a message of salvation for those endangered by the roar of many peoples. Most scholars argue that 17:12–14 has little to do with the superscription in 17:1 and should be interpreted as a distinctive הוֹי-prophecy against Assyria.[243] Others believe that it addresses the threatening nations in general (*Völkerkampf*-motif).[244] A new anti-Assyrian prophecy is here at any rate unexpected. Is there any relationship with the מַשָּׂא that addresses Damascus and Israel?

The tone of 17:12–14 parallels Israelite cultic poetry (Ps 46; 48; 83), but it can also be compared to Isa 8:9–10 (cf. also 29:7–8).[245] It is important that the enemy is not named in these texts, a feature that makes 17:12–14 suitable for being used against more than one specific enemy. Isaiah 17:12–14 may have once referred to the Assyrians (or Babylonians?) in its original context, or it may have even been written as a poem concerning all enemies of Zion. Whom does it refer to here? If the fall of a distinctive nation other than Israel or Damascus was predicted here, the editors would have probably signalled this by a superscription as it happened in each individual case elsewhere in Isa 13–23, or appended it to the respective collection (Assyria or Babylon). The fact that they did not compose a new heading, but instead connected 17:12–14 to 17:1–11 suggests that the enemy threatening "us" was understood to be the Aram-Israel alliance introduced in 17:1, Peqah and Rezin. It must be noted that Damascus named in the superscription, is known in Isaiah only as a nation threatening Jerusalem. Whatever was the original concern of 17:12–14, the editor placing this text here saw it as a promise concerning the failure of the Aram-Israel alliance.

The case with Isa 18:1–7 in the מַשָּׂא of Damascus is similar. Regardless the role of Kush in this prophecy, or its earlier function, on its present place 18:1–7 can be read as an essentially and primarily anti-Israelite text.[246] Further literary arguments corroborate these assumptions.

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[243] B. Gosse, *Isaïe 13,1–14,23 dans la tradition littéraire du livre d'Isaïe et dans la tradition des oracles contre les nations* (OBO 78; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1988), 96–97; Ohmann, 73; Clements, 161.

[244] Kaiser, 70; Kilian, 116–17.

[245] Cf. M. J. de Jong, "Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies" (Ph.D. diss., Leiden, 2006), 126.

[246] Cf. Isa 20 appearing in a collection concerned with Egypt, but with its primary concern the "shame" of the prophet's own people.

From the abundantly exploited plant imagery in Isa 17 and 18, Sweeney concluded that both 17:12–14 and 18:1–7 were written for their present context.[247] Even though his opinion concerning the origin of these two texts is not warranted,[248] the view that 17:12–14 and 18:1–7 need to be read in the context of the anti-Damascus and anti-Israel speech is basically sound. The clue for the present position and editorial meaning of 17:12–14 and 18:1–7 is to be found in the previous 17:1–11.

Isaiah 17:1–11 uses two related agricultural images to represent the future of Israel (and Damascus): the grain harvest (17:5) and the gathering of the fruits of (olive) trees (17:6). It is striking to observe that these two images are alluded at in 17:12–14 and 18:1–7. Isaiah 17:12–14 compares Israel and Damascus to the מֹץ, 'chaff' and גַּלְגַּל, 'wheel-plant' (cf. Ps 83:14). This image remembers the reader of the grain harvest and threshing to which 17:5 referred. According to 18:1–6, judgment is like cutting twigs before vintage time. Though the metaphor is not exactly the same as the olive harvest in 17:6 (this underlines again that Isa 18 was not written for its present context), the message of 18:4–6 is still impressive from the point of view of an editor who looked for a suitable text to express an idea similar to Isa 17:6. In both images the crop and the fruit (17:5–6) conveys a message of judgment. Israel and Damascus, the threat of Judah, will be blown away like chaff (17:13). The branches of Israel (as this context implies) will be cut down (18:5). This is what 17:9–11 predicted to happen with the seed and the twig 'on that day' of incurable pain. Isaiah 17:12–14 and 18:1–7 are editorial illustrations of the fulfilment of these earlier predictions and therefore, from the viewpoint of the present edition, they are integral parts of the מַשָּׂא דַמֶּשֶׂק. Allying with the Aramaeans against Assyria and Jerusalem (17:12–14) during Peqah and with Egypt (and Kush?) against Assyria (18:1–7) during Hoshea were two fatal steps of the Israelite policy ultimately leading to the deportation and destruction of the Northern Kingdom and its ally. In this reading, the messengers of 2 Kgs 17:4 may have been related to Isa 18:2. Isaiah 18:7 had probably been added to 18:1–6 shortly before the prophecy was included into its present context.

Concluding, although 17:12–14 and 18:1–7 are two originally independent prophecies with different concerns, relocated on this specific place, from the point of view of the editors, they appear as constitutive parts of the מַשָּׂא דַמֶּשֶׂק. In a contextualised reading, one should not treat them as two prophecies addressing nations different from 17:1–11,

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[247] Sweeney, 254, 260. Cf. also Beuken, 149.

[248] Blenkinsopp, 306–7, and Beuken, 149, 152, also contest the view that these texts would have been written for their present context. Agricultural imagery is very frequent in the prophets, including Isaiah (Isa 15–16).

but rather as illustrations for the fulfilment of the earlier prophecies of 17:1–11 to which they are connected through the two distinctive agricultural images: grain harvest and threshing (17:5 ǀ 17:12–14) and fruit harvest (17:6 ǀ 18:1–7) respectively. As to the link with Isa 19, on a literary level, the cloud standing still in 18:4 may be related to the swiftly moving cloud that brings judgment to Egypt in 19:1, in this final form being another example for the fulfilment of 18:4–6.

4.3.1.4. The Intertextual Connections of Isaiah 18

Three important texts need to be investigated in relation to Isa 18, viz. Isa 45:14; Ps 68:30 and Zeph 3:10. Clements asserted that Isa 18:7 was formulated in view of Isa 45:14, suggesting that 18:7 was added to the book later than Isa 40 and following.[249] Isaiah 45:14 is a prophecy addressing Zion with the promise that "the produce of Egypt, and the profit of Kush and the Sabeans, men of stature, will come over to you, will belong to you, and will follow you; they will come over in fetters. They will bow down towards[250] you, and they will pray towards you. Only in you is there a God, and nowhere else is there any divinity."[251] The function of Isa 45:14 in its present context is not totally clear,[252] but there seems to be a certain parallelism between YHWH's dealing with Cyrus in 45:1–13 and with Zion in 45:14.[253] The final sentence, 45:13, in which Cyrus reappears again, should perhaps be considered a closing utterance of the Cyrus-oracle (45:1–6?; note the suffix of הַעִירֹתִהוּ). Beyond the above noted parallelism, other important terms appear, which further emphasise the relationship between the Cyrus-prophecy and the utterance addressing Israel: מְחִיר, 'wage', 'value' and שֹׁחַד, 'gift', 'bribe', in vs. 13 and יְגִיעַ, 'produce' and סְחַר, 'profit' in vs. 14. The only other location in Isaiah where Egypt, Kush and Seba are mentioned is Isa 43:3, a prophecy which asserts that the three nations will be given to Cyrus as a ransom (כֹּפֶר) for Zion. In Isa 45 the prophet steps beyond this previous oracle and maintains that Cyrus will do the work for YHWH even without being paid, reason for which the profit of Egypt, Kush and Seba will be transferred to Zion; she will receive the tribute of

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[249] Clements, 166.

[250] For אֵלַיִךְ יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ, see Ps 5:8; 138:2. Cf. Isa 44:17.

[251] For וְאֵין עוֹד אֶפֶס אֱלֹהִים, cf. Isa 45:6; 46:9; 47:8.10; Zeph 2:12.

[252] For the details, cf. H. J. Hermisson, *Deuterojesaja. 45,8–49,13* (BKAT 11/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2003), 31–38.

[253] Note that God will subdue the nations before his anointed one (Cyrus) (vs. 1), he will level the hills in front of him (vs. 2), he will give Cyrus the hidden treasures (מַטְמֹן) (vs. 3), and engird him, so that all the nations of the earth may know that YHWH is God alone (vs. 6).

foreigners. If this reading is correct, the tribute scene of 45:14 can be understood as a parallel to the Cyrus-texts, i.e. as more or less independent from 18:7.[254] In 45:14 (cf. also Isa 60:3–17) many nations bring their wealth to Zion and not specifically to YHWH living in Zion as in 18:7. This concern with Zion and its people rather than YHWH or the king in Jerusalem distinguishes Isa 45:14 (and Isa 60:3–17) from 18:7.

The relationship between Isa 18:7 and Ps 68:30 is more significant from this point of view. The verse division of the MT in Ps 68:29–30 is probably erroneous and one should read זוּ פָּעַלְתָּ לָּנוּ מֵהֵיכָלֶךָ עַל־יְרוּשָׁלָ͏ִם, "so you have done to us from your temple in Jerusalem".[255] Psalm 68:30b, parallel to Isa 18:7, may be an independent sentence: "let the kings bring tribute to you". But it may also form a causal relationship with the former lines: "Because (אֲשֶׁר=זוּ) you have done this to us (…), kings will bring tribute to you." The appearance of the rare word שַׁי in Ps 68:30 (cf. Ps 76:12) and the Kushites and Egyptians bringing tributes to YHWH in 68:32 may point to a close relationship with Isa 18:7.[256]

The theme of Zeph 3:10 is also the tribute brought to YHWH. Despite arguments for the contrary, it is beyond doubt that Isa 18:1.7 influenced Zeph 3:10, and not vice versa.[257] This passage contains exact parallels to Isa 18: "From beyond the rivers of Kush, my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed ones, will bring tribute."[258] The sense of this sentence is modified in that it mentions tributes brought to Jerusalem by Jews. However, the expression בַּת־פּוּצַי is, as often argued, most likely a gloss. Through the purification of the lips of the nations, Zeph 3:9 opens the way to the engagement of foreign nations in the service of YHWH. By the time Zeph 3:10 was composed, Isa 18:7 was definitely part of the present prophecy. It may even be possible that Zeph 3:9 was formulated in view of Isa 19:18, and that 3:1–8 is modelled on Isa 24 following the

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[254] So also Blenkinsopp, 311. The connection with Isa 18 would be the mentioning of Egypt, Kush and Seba, confirming the exegesis of Isa 18:2, the allusion to the tall stature of the African nations, and their arrival as 'crossing over' (יַעַבְרוּ), which resonates with the geographical location מֵעֵבֶר לְנַהֲרֵי־כוּשׁ.

[255] For a discussion of this verse, cf. the commentaries.

[256] It is also possible that the metaphors in Ps 68:31 refer to Egyptians and their expansionary policy in Canaan. The term חַיַּת קָנֶה is particularly suitable for Egypt of the Delta marshes (cf. M. E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100* [WBC 20; Dallas: Word, 1990], 183). Egypt is the עֶגְלָה יְפֵה־פִיָּה, "beautiful heifer" in Jer 46:20, and its mercenaries עֶגְלֵי מַרְבֵּק, "fatted calves" in Jer 46:21.

[257] Kissane (208) and Berges (162) suggested that Isa 18:7 was built on Zeph 3:10. But Zeph 3:10 is clearly a combination of Isa 18:1.7, as noted by Wildberger, 695; Blenkinsopp, 311; L. Perlitt, *Die Propheten Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanja* (ATD 25; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 140.

[258] Note יבל, מֵעֵבֶר לְנַהֲרֵי־כוּשׁ, and מִנְחָה as a synonym to שַׁי.

FNPs.[259] If true, Zephaniah already read Isa 18 and 19 in relation to each other, as part of a collection of FNPs.

To sum up, the texts mentioning the tribute of the nations to Jerusalem do not all reflect a similar theology. In one case, the nations come to serve Zion and contribute with their wealth to the well-being of the city (Isa 45:14). Secondly, the tribute of foreigners is brought to YHWH, or his king in Zion (Ps 68:30; Zeph 3:10), an idea which is close to Near Eastern cultic and royal theology. The tribute scene so prominent in the second half of the book Isaiah, which puts the people of Zion at the centre, is probably a later development of this cultic and royal theology. This development is similar to the process by which the same author (Deutero-Isaiah) also adapted the language of former royal oracles so as to address the people of Zion in a way that was formerly typical for addressing a king (cf. *PPANE* 69 ii 5'–7'; 82 iii 24'–25').

4.3.2. THE THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ISAIAH 18

If not of a shift in meaning, one may certainly speak of a different emphasis that Isa 18 received in its present context. The exegesis concluded that this chapter concatenated a message against the Egypto-Kushite Empire with the one addressed to those relying on this power. By including Isa 18 in a prophecy against Damascus and Israel, the nation of Israel as the unspecified audience receives additional accent. I shall now look at the Kush-Egypt-orientation of Isa 1–39.

4.3.2.1. KUSH AND EGYPT IN ISAIAH 1–39

We find only two references to Kushites outside Isa 18.20 in the first half of the book of Isaiah. In Isa 11:11 Kush (with Lower and Upper Egypt) appears as one of the places from which the remnant of YHWH will return home. Kush is here restricted to the territory beyond Aswan.

Another more important role is assigned to Kush in Isa 37:9, where Taharka, the king of Kush (תִּרְהָקָה מֶלֶךְ־כּוּשׁ) appears as a potential supporter of Hezekiah. The development and integrity of the present form of Isa 36–39 is disputed, though there seems to be some agreement regarding the existence of two accounts, delimited as 36:1–37:9a.37–38 and 37:9b–36.[260] In the first the message of Sennacherib is presented by the cupbearer before the gates of Jerusalem, while in the second a letter of Sennacherib is handed over to Hezekiah by the messengers of the Assyrian king. Whether this text division can account for all problems

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[259] See sections 3.3.4. above and 4.2.2. below.
[260] Duhm, 258–59; Kaiser, 306–15; Clements, 278. Duhm and Kaiser consider 37:22–32 a further individual unit.

of the passage is a question that cannot be discussed here. It is, nevertheless, striking that at least in this final form 36:6 and 9 mention the support of Egypt (מִצְרַיִם) and its pharaoh (פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם) as one possible source for Hezekiah's confidence, while 37:9a assigns a similar role to Taharka, king of Kush. This suggests that in the present form of the narrative the names Kush and Egypt are used synonymously.[261]

The Egypt-related theology of Isa 36–37 is quite complex. On the one hand, the futile trust of Hezekiah in Egypt is alluded at, but only indirectly in the speech of the Assyrian official (36:6.9): Egypt is a broken reed that will pierce the hand of those relying on it.[262] The author of the story sympathises with this Egypt-view of the Assyrian cupbearer. Trusting Egypt is presented in 36:6 as an alternative to trusting YHWH in 36:7. Yet it is remarkable that YHWH does indeed make use of Egypt in order to achieve his plans to send the Assyrians home.[263] One need not be surprised that the Egyptian policy of Hezekiah is considered in a more nuanced way than elsewhere in the book of Isaiah. Apparently the narrator aims to portray Hezekiah as a king whose inclination towards Egypt cannot be eradicated from memories, but whose ultimate trust is presented as YHWH alone (cf. 37:1–4 and 37:14–20), a recognition that would explain why Judah turning to Egypt will be saved, while Israel turning to Egypt in 2 Kgs 17–18 will be deported.[264]

Further texts from the first part of Isaiah (outside the 18–20 section) mention only Egypt, but are silent about Kush.[265] The most important

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[261] On the commutability of כּוּשׁ and מִצְרַיִם, cf. section 2.3.1.4.

[262] This metaphor may have a double sense. On the one hand, the Egyptian term 'king' (*nsw*) means "that of the reed" (J. K. Hoffmeier, "Egypt As an Arm of Flesh: A Prophetic Response", in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Ronald K. Harrison* [ed. A. Gileadi; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988], 88). On the other hand, the term "broken reed" appears in Akkadian texts typifying the defeated enemy as *qanû kaṣāṣu* (K. L. Younger, "Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant at the End of the Eighth Century B.C.E.", in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* [eds. A. G. Vaughn & A. E. Killebrew; SBLSS 18; Atlanta: SBL, 2002], 258).

[263] The news that Sennacherib is supposed to hear according to Isa 37:7 that will cause them to return probably refers to the news of the approach of the Egypto-Kushite army. The text at 37:8–9 is difficult. Note that מֶלֶךְ־כּוּשׁ ׀ מִלְכִּישׁ and שָׁמַע ׀ וַיִּשְׁמַע in vss. 8 and 9 appear to be doubles.

[264] A negative deed and a positive Hezekiah-image also appears in Isa 39. According to Isa 9:12 Israel's collapse was caused not so much by its depraved morality, but by its repeated rejection of prophetic summons to return to God.

[265] For our case, allusions to Egypt in 7:18; 10:20.24.26; 11:11.15.16; 23:5; 27:12.13 are less significant. Isa 7:18 deals with Egypt rather than Kush (contra A. Niccacci, "Isaiah xviii-xx from an Egyptological Perspective", *VT* 48 [1998] 232). The sources of the Nile in Kush would not be called יְאֹרֵי מִצְרַיִם.

references beyond 36:6.9; 37:25 appear in two prophecies uttered against those relying on Egypt in Isa 30:1–5.6–17 and 31:1–3(4–5?). These were possibly two important literary sources for the authors of Isa 36–37 as well. The question is whether מִצְרַיִם in these texts is the name of the independent country (Lower Egypt, or Lower and Upper Egypt), or whether it alludes to Egypt as part of the Egypto-Kushite kingdom.

> While Wildberger believes that these texts reflect on Hezekiah's emissaries sent to Egypt on the occasion of the rebellion of Ashdod (713–711), they are more often dated to the 705–701 period, to the time of preparations for the war with Sennacherib.[266] The arguments for both suggestions are meagre. Wildberger's dating is based on the similarity of ideas with Isa 18 and 20, all brought by him in connection with 713–711. This, however, cannot provide a solid chronological support.[267] Clements' argument for the 705–701 period as the historical background is "the general context of chs. 28–29".[268] Yet this "general context" also contains a prophecy against the Northern Kingdom from before 722 B.C. (28:1–4). Moreover, this context is most likely built on literary considerations, as a collection of הוֹי-words, which tells us little concerning the actual date of the oracles it contains.
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> It is probable that at least part of 30:1–5.6–7.8–17 was addressed in its primary setting to an Israelite and not a Judaean audience.[269] The messengers appearing here are sent to the pharaoh of Egypt (מִצְרַיִם). But the city referred to is Zoan, a well-known major town in the Eastern Delta, and Hanes.[270] It is clear and strange at the same time that

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[266] Donner, *Israel*, 113; Clements, 243; J. Barthel, *Prophetenwort und Geschichte. Die Jesajaüberlieferung in Jes 6–8 und 28–31* (FAT 19; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1997), 278–79, 402.

[267] Wildberger, 1150–51.

[268] Clements, 243.

[269] Cf. Hayes & Irvine, 338–39; Hoffmeier, "Arm of Flesh", 88–89.

[270] Tanis was the "second capital", a northern Thebes during the 21st and 22nd Dynasties. Hanes (חָנֵס) is often connected to Heracleopolis Magna (Egyptian ḥt-nn-nswt), or Heracleopolis Parva (ḥn-n-stnj, Assyrian ḫininši) (Wildberger, 1154–55). Kitchen suggested that חָנֵס was the transcription of the Egyptian ḥwt-nswt, "the palace of the king" ("Hanes", *NBD* 504).

The formulation of the sentence does not preclude that חָנֵס is located somewhere else than צֹעַן, but it is more attractive to presuppose that the messengers from Canaan arrive to one city rather than to several places, especially if they look for the most important person. Now it is striking that one of the most prominent temples of צֹעַן, built by Shoshenq V (M. Romer, "Tanis", *LdÄ* 6:198, 202) was dedicated to the Egyptian god Khonsu (Ḫnsw). Khonsu was the son of Amun and Mut, who formed the Theban triad. Khonsu was originally the god of moon, but came to be known during the New Kingdom as "Khonsu the advisor", especially as a healing god of salvation and a helper in

Isa 30 makes no mention of Memphis, the royal capital of the phar-
aohs Shabaka and Shabataka. One may infer therefore that the mes-
sengers arrive to Egypt when the Eastern Delta is ruled by Osorkon IV,
dating our text to the pre-716 period (cf. FIGURE 1). So far as Isa 28:1–
4 addresses the Northern Israel one must leave this possibility open for
30:1–5 as well.[271] The summons to consult YHWH in taking decisions
was not only valid for Judah, but also for Israel (9:7.12).[272]

No historical clues help us to date 30:6–7. Its attachment to 30:1–
5 appears to be secondary, based on common thematic considerations.
The language of these passages is poetic, but not necessarily mytho-
logical.[273] The theological reasoning is that Egypt is an unreliable
source of confidence. It is רַהַב who sits still, a power that is not what it
seems to be.[274] The formulation of 30:8 suggests that the setting of
30:6–7 is Judah rather than Israel. The unity and provenance of 30:9–
17 remains a question. The name קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל would fit Israel, and so

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need (W. Helck & E. Otto, *Kleines Wörterbuch der Ägyptologie* [Wiesbaden:
Harrassowitz, 1956], 76). Given that the Isaianic text is concerned exactly
with looking for advise (עֵצָה; 30:1) and protection (מָעוֹז; 30:2), and because
נְסֹךְ מַסֵּכָה (30:1) probably refers to a cultic (?) act of sealing a covenant, inter-
preting חָנֵס as the name of this Egyptian god fits this context better than the
solutions proposed earlier. Isaiah criticises Israel for looking for salvation by
different gods.

[271] Isa 10:20 dealing with the remnants of Israel (the Northern Kingdom?),
may allude to this text. The verb שען is rarely used, and in Isa it appears only at
10:20; 30:12 and 31:1 (cf. מִשְׁעֶנֶת in 36:6).

[272] A recent study of R. G. Kratz argued that the term "Israel" in the book of
Isaiah did not refer to the Northern Kingdom with the exception of the texts
that explicitly dealt with Samaria as a threat for Judah ("Israel in the Book of
Isaiah", *JSOT* 31 [2006] 103–28). But Kratz's very selective use of scholarly
literature on Isaiah (and relying too often on the controversial study of Beck-
er) in dating the discussed passages makes most of his conclusions doubtful.

[273] Contra Clements, 245. Esarhaddon describes the route of his campaign to
Egypt in a language very close to Isa 30:6 (cf. above 2.3.4.1.).

[274] רַהַב הֵם שָׁבֶת is a problematic sentence, due especially to the plural הֵם that
some would like to emend to הַמָּשְׁבָּת (cf. Wildberger for a detailed discussion),
'the one who is stilled'. However, it is not likely that help would be asked from
a nation that has already been 'stilled' (i.e. defeated; *KTU* 1.3 iii 40 and 1.83:8
use a verb *šbm* [related to שָׁבֶת?] connoting the subjugation of the sea dragon,
tnn). As for the plural, מִצְרַיִם stands for the people, as also suggested by the
plural form יַעְזֹרוּ and by 30:6. The naming of Egypt may be a sarcastic imita-
tion of the Egyptian tradition of royal titulature in which the pharaohs often
appear as powerful (bulls, etc.). רַהַב alludes to a motif familiar to the audience,
the restless mythological sea monster (cf. Ps 87:4; as a synonym of תַּנִּין [cf. Job
7:12 with 26:12; Isa 51:9], see also Ezek 29:3; 32:2). רַהַב, the 'raging' sea sits
still (רהב, 'to be restless'; Ps 90:10; Prov 6:3; cf. Ps 138:3; Sol 6:5).

does also the description of a near to total destruction in 30:17 (cf. Isa 17:5–6). At any rate, the warnings concerning an alliance with Egypt against Assyria uttered to the Northern Kingdom retained their validity even after the collapse of Israel in 721 (cf. 2 Kgs 17–18).

If 31:1–3 is treated independently from the rest of the chapter, Isaiah's words may have been directed against either Israel or Judah. Isaiah 31:4 brings the former verses in connection with Jerusalem. Several exegetes read 31:4, just like 31:1–3, as essentially a message of judgment concerning Jerusalem.[275] However, there is a literary shift marker at 31:4. Moreover, the message of vss. 4 and 5 seems to form a parallelism: both deals with the protection of one's property (as a lion protects its prey, or the bird protects its nest against outsiders[276]). Therefore, 31:4–5, which refers to the protection of Jerusalem must be distinguished from 31:1–3. One possibility to retain the unity of the pericope 31:1–3.4–5 would be to presuppose that after proclaiming the fall of Samaria in 31:1–3, Isaiah emphasised at the same time that Judah will be saved (31:4–5), which may correspond to the message of the prophet Isaiah in the earlier part of his career. However, 31:4–5 and 8–9 can also be read together, representing the protection of Jerusalem in connection with the fall of Assyria, as also found elsewhere in the book.[277] Isaiah 31:6 is concerned with "the sons of Israel", rather than Judah. It summons them to return to the God, whom they had forsaken. It is not unlikely that this call is addressed to the "apostate" Northern Kingdom advised to return to YHWH (cf. Isa 9:12). This concern with Israel may suggest that 31:6(–7?) was a comment on 31:1–3 (earlier than vss. 4–5), which interpreted the woe as directed against the Northern Kingdom.[278] At a later date 31:4–5.8–9 were inserted into the poem. The ambiguous reference to YHWH, who will not cancel his words, but bring them to accomplishment in 31:2, may refer to earlier prophecies against the same audience, perhaps including 30:1–5, presumably also envisaging the Northern Kingdom in the first instance, as argued above.[279] In a secondary context, Isa 31 also func-

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[275] Barth, *Jesaja-Worte,* 83–84; Clements, 256–57; Barthel, *Prophetenwort,* 447–48; Y. Shemesh, "Isaiah 31,5: The Lord's Protecting Lameness", ZAW 115 (2003) 256.

[276] Duhm, 231; Kaiser, 251–52. For two different metaphors expressing the same idea, cf. also Isa 17:5–6; 18:4. A very similar picture of the deity appears in a prophecy addressed to Esarhaddon (*PPANE* 80:3'–10'): "I will stand [guard over you] (…) Like a winged bird over its fledgling I will twitter above you, going around[d yo]u, surrounding you. Like a faithful cub (a lion?; cf. Nissinen's note a) I will run around in your palace, sniffing out your enemies."

[277] Cf. De Jong, "Isaiah", 91–94.

[278] For בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל in Isaiah, cf. 17:3.9.

[279] The anti-Israel *Kehrversgedicht* in Isa 9:7–20, also emphasizes the validity of previous pronouncements of doom (cf. the outstretched-hand-motif in 31:2).

tioned as a warning against Judah, pursuing at times an external policy dangerously akin to that of Hoshea of Israel.

If the conclusions of the excursus above are right, then in some parts of Isa 30–31 מִצְרַיִם refers first of all to Lower Egypt, mainly the region of the eastern Delta, the sanctuary of hope of King Hoshea. But so far as these texts were later adapted to a Judaean context, מִצְרַיִם also signifies the Empire of the Egypto-Kushites.

4.3.2.2. KUSH AND EGYPT IN ISAIAH 18

The southern neighbour appears consistently in a negative light in two important aspects. Allying with Egypt represented a rebellion against Assyria, the vassal lord and the agent of YHWH, and thus indirectly against YHWH himself.[280] Egypt was wrongly esteemed as a source of confidence, the power on which Israel and Judah were tempted to rely, i.e., Egypt was believed to play the role of YHWH (Isa 30:2; 31:1.3; 36:6; cf. 2:22). Instead Isaiah repeatedly emphasises quietness and trust in YHWH (שקט hiph'il / אמן hiph'il in 7:14; בְּשׁוּבָה וָנַחַת / בְּהַשְׁקֵט וּבְבִטְחָה in 30:15) as the only way to escape the disaster, a motif that returns in Isa 18:4 as well.[281] The prophecies in 30:1–17 and 31:1–3 predict doom to Israel and Judah in the first instance, but they also hint at the destruction of Egypt (cf. 30:3.5; 31:3). The case with Isa 18 is presumably similar, with reversed emphasis.

Despite restricted evidence, the alliance with Kush and Egypt against Assyria seems to provide the most fitting background for Isa 18. The picture of the emissaries sent from the land beyond the rivers of Kush evokes a rather concrete, real life situation personally experienced by the prophet, an experience calling Isa 14:32 into mind. In these situations an oracle was expected by the political leaders, or provided spontaneously on the occasion of a gathering. The attitude of YHWH in 18:4–5 is a pertinent message pointing right at the hesitant heart of Judah's precipitate political attitude. The future holds no secrets for those who trust Egypt. When everything looks so perfect, when time is ripe, YHWH intervenes with surprising power and destroys both the helper and those helped.[282] According to this interpretation, Isa 18 can be compared in its primary context to the "oracles of war" (cf. 1 Kgs 22).

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[280] Cf. סרר, חַטָּאת (30:1) as treaty terminology in Hayes & Irvine, 338–39. In the same manner the unethical behaviour of Israel is rejected by Ezek 17.

[281] Cf. H.-W. Hoffmann, *Die Intention der Verkündigung Jesajas* (BZAW 136; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974), 73; Høyland Lavik, *Isaiah 18*, 146.

[282] In contrast to Dillmann, 167; Donner, *Israel*, 125; Clements, 165; Dietrich, *Politik*, 130; Blenkinsopp, 310, I doubt that Isaiah's words would propagate a policy of neutrality.

Nevertheless, the message of the prophet is predictive and it was supposed to serve as a warning, i.e., it does not exclude that doom is evitable if the Judaean policymakers change their minds.

The function of this passage did not end here, however. Beyond its primary setting, Isa 18 lived on as a memory stone for subsequent generations. In its present literary position in a collection addressed against Damascus and Israel, Isa 18 also serves as a legitimisation for the past. It presents the alliance with nations of the Nile-lands as the reason explaining the collapse of Israel. Isaiah 18 was supposed to fulfill this function in its present form, that is, including vs. 7. Verse 7 mirrors the initial lines of Isa 18, and it was not written in relation to its wider context, i.e. not as a closure of the מַשָּׂא of Isa 17–18.[283]

4.3.3. The Historical Aspects of Isaiah 18

As outlined in 1.1.1., as regards the problems related to the historical background of prophetic texts, the primary question is whether Isa 18 has anything to do with history, or it is merely a fictitious literary composition of a scribe? Though many elements of the text of Isa 18 are rather stereotypical, the account of the messengers from Africa is too specific to be regarded as part of a conventional literary language.

It is one thing to ascertain that Isa 18 is composed with a specific historical event in the background, but quite another to tell what that moment was. The amount of information that would enable us to place the prophecy at one particular historical moment is modest. I noted in 1.3.1. that Isa 18 was dated to four different periods: to the time of the revolt of Hoshea of Israel (728–724), to around 720, when Hanunu rebelled against Sargon, to the time of the Ashdod revolt (713–711), or before the campaign of Sennacherib against Canaan in 701. All these dates are deduced from the "ambassador-section" in 18:2, assumed to allude to negotiations preceding a rebellion against Assyria.[284]

However, given that 18:2 mentions ambassadors of the Kushito-Egyptians sent to Canaan, it is unlikely that this prophecy would have anything to do with the rebellion of Hoshea of Samaria, for 2 Kgs 17:4 only mentions Israelites sent to the eastern (?) Delta (cf. 2.3.1.3.). It invokes no alliance with the Kushites, or emissaries sent to Israel, while, as argued, Isa 18 does not seem to refer to Israelite messengers at all. For reasons to be discussed below, it is likewise improbable that Isa 18 would derive from 720, the year of Hanunu's rebellion.

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[283] This would question the view of Berges that 18:7 belongs to a consistent layer of Zion-texts of later editors filling up the book of Isaiah (159–64).

[284] Dating Isa 18 based on its present context (Sweeney, 256–57, 260; Wildberger, 690) is misleading, so far as this context is secondary.

The fact that the messengers arrive at the court of Judah may be a hint in the direction that the rebellion against Assyria is planned under Egyptian guidance in which Hezekiah is involved as a serious partner. From the few examples that ancient texts provide, one may conclude that it is the organiser of a rebellion who sends messengers to potential allies. Such was the case with Hoshea in 2 Kgs 17:4, attempting to gain support from Egypt. It happened similarly when Ashdod revolted in 711:

> To the kings of the lands Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab, those living by the sea, bearers of tribute and gifts to Assur, my lord, (the Ashdodites sent) words of falsehood and treacherous speech to incite enmity with me. To Pir'u, king of Egypt, a prince, who could not save them, they brought their presents, and they implored his help.[285]

It seems that during the year 711, Egypt (Kush) played a marginal role in the rebellion, being asked to participate and support Ashdod, as it did formerly with Hanunu, king of Gaza in 720. It is noteworthy that in 711 neither Tyre, nor any other Phoenician city appears among the rebels, which would be strange if Egypt had indeed organised this uprising. For in that case, Phoenicia, his devoted partner from ancient times both politically and economically, would have been among the first of those invited into the circle. As the Assyrians claim, the 711-year event was masterminded by the Ashdodite Yamani. However, the case was different on the eve of 701, when Egypt was more actively engaged with the foreign politics of neighbouring states, and, as Assyrian and biblical texts imply, massively present on the Canaanite battlefield.[286] Not surprisingly, Lulli, the Phoenician king of Sidon (= Tyre), the northernmost ally of this Egypt-led coalition, appears among the first to be subdued in the retaliatory third campaign of Sennacherib. It is most likely the formation of this anti-Sennacherib coalition, to which the Kushito-Egyptians invited Hezekiah by way of messengers, is spoken about in Isa 18:2. This interpretation of the events suggests that 18:1–6 was uttered in the years between 705 and 701, perhaps after Shabataka ascended the throne of the Kushite Empire, committed to smash the skulls of Assyria, threatening Egypt's political and economic interests in the region.

Another historical information beyond the ambassador-scene is provided by the symbol of the country addressed: אֶרֶץ צִלְצַל כְּנָפָיִם, "land of

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[285] Nineveh Prism (cf. 2.3.2.2.). The rebellious Lower Egyptian prince implores the help of Taharka, by sending messengers to him (cf. *BIWA*, 211, 213).

[286] Sennacherib mentions Egyptian kings (!) and Kushite forces (2.3.3.), obviously not meant to be just a subsidiary force for minor kings of Canaan. Cf. also B. U. Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten in der Königszeit. Die kulturellen Kontakte von Salomo bis zum Fall Jerusalems* (OBO 170; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1999), 206–7.

the two-winged beetle". As argued, the two winged beetle is in its origin an Egyptian symbol that was subsequently adopted by the Kushite rulers of the 25th Dynasty. Although the scarab symbol has been known in Canaan for centuries, it came to be increasingly appealing with the King Hezekiah of Judah, especially during the last quarter of his reign.

Several seals of Hezekiah, whose anti-Assyrian and pro-Egyptian policy is known, picture a two winged beetle, pushing the dung ball (the symbol of the sun) between its forelegs, with the inscription לחזקיהו אחז מלך יהדה, "belonging to Hizkiyahu, (son of) Ahaz, king of Judah".[287] Six bullae containing this impression are known, which according to Deutsch, go back to more than one royal seal. Two other bullae containing the same inscription have preserved another Egyptian symbol, a two winged sun-disk with two ankh signs on the left and right side of the symbol. Four(!)-winged beetles and two-winged sun-disks[288] appear on an enormous amount of jar handles containing the inscription למלך, "belonging to the king". These so-called למלך-jars dated by archaeologists to the late 8th century, supposedly functioned as storage jars of Hezekiah on the eve of his war with Sennacherib.[289]

The Judaean religious and political connotations of these symbols remain a question, but there is hardly any question that they were adopted as Egyptian motifs without mediators.[290] It is well-known that

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[287] For the seal of Hezekiah, cf. F. M. Cross, "King Hezekiah's Seal Bears Phoenician Imagery", *BAR* 25.2 (1999) 42–45, 60; Idem, "A Bulla of Hezekiah, King of Judah", in *Realia Dei: Essays in Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Edward F. Campbell, Jr. at His Retirement* (eds. P. H. Williams & T. Hiebert; Atlanta: Scholars, 1999), 61–66; M. Lubetski, "King Hezekiah's Seal Revisited: Small Object Reflects Big Geopolitics", *BAR* 27.4 (2001) 44–51, 59; R. Deutsch, "Lasting Impressions: New Bullae Reveal Egyptian-Style Emblems on Judah's Royal Seals", *BAR* 28.4 (2002) 42–51, 60, 62. The inscription of the seal of Ahaz is לאחז יהותם מלך יהדה, "Belonging to Ahaz (son of) Jehotam, king of Judah" (Cross, "Seal", 42).

[288] Sometimes erroneously identified as a flying scroll (cf. discussion in Deutsch, "Impressions", 49–50).

[289] D. Ussishkin, "Lachish", *NEAEHL* 3:909; A. Mazar, *Archaeology and the Land of the Bible: 10.000–586 B.C.E.* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 455–58; J. A. Balkely & J. W. Hardin, "Southwestern Judah in the Late Eighth Century B.C.E.", *BASOR* 326 (2002) 12–13.

[290] With Lubetski, contra Cross. Lubetski argued further that by adopting the scarab symbol by which the pharaoh expressed his rule in Upper and Lower Egypt, Hezekiah is presented as king of Judah *and* Israel ("Beetlemania", 24–26). However, while the scarab can be considered a royal symbol, the specific Egyptian design of monarchy, as consisting geographically of two countries, is not inherent in the symbol itself. The beetle symbolism also appears on a seal of "Manasseh, son of the king", most likely identical with the son of Hezekiah.

the ties with Egypt in the latter half of the 8th century were exception-
ally strong on every level. Hezekiah may not have imported the ideo-
logical background of the beetle symbol, but his choice for the scarab
and the winged sun-disk should not be considered a borrowing moti-
vated purely by aesthetic-decorative factors.[291] It is rather a further ex-
pressive token of the king's political orientation.[292] Isaiah 18:1 refers to
Kushite Egypt as the country of the two-winged beetle (אֶרֶץ צִלְצַל כְּנָפָיִם).
For a Judaean royal house which had adopted this as its omnipresent
symbol (note the למלך storage jar handles), the prophecy in Isa 18:1
must have sounded shocking and threatening at the same time, for the
doom announced for the land of the *scarabaeus sacer* was an omen fore-
casting the fall of the Judaean winged beetle.

To conclude, the historical information provided by Isa 18 is scanty,
but concrete reference to the arrival of messengers, as well as the beetle-
imagery of 18:1 suggest that 18:1–6 is best understood against the back-
ground of the final years of the Hezekiah-era, i.e. 705–701. This era is
characterised by a strong anti-Assyrian and implicitly pro-Egyptian
commitment. The prominence of the winged beetle disappears with
Hezekiah, as does also the role that the Kushites have played in the his-
tory of Judah.

The final verse of the prophecy does not hold much historical in-
formation. The claim of vs. 7 is, as argued, theological and need not be
historicised. The tribute to be brought to Jerusalem should not be his-
torically identified with a tribute given to Assyrians (or Persians), the
vicars of YHWH's rule above the nations. The situation behind the scene
does not go back to a concrete historical moment, but it may be com-
pared to passages from Near Eastern literature, such as the Erra and

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Four-winged beetle stamps are also known from various individuals from Ju-
dah: e.g., a certain Ahimelek living around 701 B.C. (Ussishkin, "Lachish",
3:909), and another official called Shaphat (Mazar, *Archaeology*, 507). The
winged beetle is also attested beyond the borders of Judah in Israel, Phoenicia
and Amon. Indeed, Hezekiah is explicitly called "king of Judah" on the seal
impressions. Detaching "Judah" from "king" in the upper part of the bulla in
the argumentation of Lubetski is unconvincing (cf. also Deutsch, "Impres-
sions", 50).
[291] With O. Keel & C. Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God in Ancient
Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992; translated by Thomas H. Trapp), 259, con-
tra Deutsch, "Impressions", 50–51.
[292] Another royal symbol of Assyrian origin, the eight-petalled rosette appear-
ing on royal jars from Judah in the 7th century, betrays the Assyrian connec-
tions of Judaean kings owing these rosette jars. Chemical analysis has shown
that these jars were made in the same production centre as the *lmlk*-jars (J. M.
Cahill, "Royal Rosettes: Fit for a King", *BAR* 23.5 [1997] 48–57, 68).

Ishum text, the Marduk prophecy, or the Dynastic prophecy mentioned above in 4.3.1.2.

As it happened with other Egypt-related prophecies, in some circles Isa 18 gained additional authority when Babylon stepped into the place of Assyria, facing Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and especially Zedekiah pursuing essentially similar policies as the ancestor king, Hezekiah (cf. Jer 26:18–19). Furthermore, as Zeph 3:10 shows, in the post-exilic period the message of this prophecy is sought not so much in the political sphere. It is regarded as a theological expression of YHWH's universal rule, exemplified by the arrival of foreigners at Jerusalem from the most distant regions of the flat planet. This hermeneutical development coincides with the reinterpretation of FNPs (both individually and as collections) as treatises on this idea of universalism which is, as argued not so far removed from its original Assyrian background, as it is often believed.

4.4.   ISAIAH 18 AND THE STELE OF YHWH (ISAIAH 13–23)

In section 3.5. I suggested that Isa 13–23 imitates the structure of Assyrian royal steles. These victory steles of "the great king" intend to proclaim for the world the supremacy of the Assyrian king above all nations of the earth by enumerating the subjugated countries and accounting the campaigns of the Assyrian army. Read in the context of the stele of YHWH (Isa 13–23), the King of kings, Isa 18 accounts a campaign against the most distant nations of the earth. As noted in 4.3.1.2., the fact that this stele also mentions nations from the furthest horizon of the empire, reminds one of a frequently attested idea of the Assyrian scribes substantiating their claim to the world dominion of the Assyrian king by presenting tribute-bearing nations "whose location is far away" (ša ašaršu rūqu). The tribute scene in Isa 18:7 is therefore particularly well-suited for this type of literature. Zion is the dwelling place of the King of Jerusalem. In such a context, the name of Jerusalem, מְקוֹם שֵׁם־יהוה, may also remind one of the names of Assyrian royal cities, such as Dur-Sharruken for instance, which was named after the Assyrian monarch, Sargon II ("The Fortress of Sargon"). It is here in Jerusalem, and not in Dur-Sharruken, nor in Nineveh, nor in Assur, where the tributes of these remote nations arrive.

The Hebrew צִיר referring to high-rank foreign ambassadors (18:2) complies with how the Assyrian semantic cognate, ṣīru, is used in similar contexts. Assyrian accounts of foreign military campaigns mention various war-techniques in capturing and destroying foreign lands. One of the frequent type-scenes is the destruction of orchards (4.2.3.). For the reader, the reappearance of this imagery in Isa 18:5 may draw a parallel between this prophecy and the Assyrian steles.

The worldwide perspective of Isa 18:3 addressing all nations of the earth is another motif which connects this prophecy to boasting contentions of Assyrian kings to have defeated and ruled the entire world, from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea (3.5.). The King of Isa 18 moves the boundaries of his empire beyond these seas: he subdued nations from beyond the rivers of Kush, the remotest zone of the planet. For an audience cherishing the idea of YHWH as a national and territorial deity, whose territory (and sphere of influence) has been diminished drastically by the incursions of the New Assyrian army, such a mighty presentation of the real boundaries of the kingdom of YHWH must have been appealing indeed.

There is also another aspect in Isa 18 that must be emphasised in relation to Isa 13–23. We have seen in 3.4.3. that the present composition is placed in the context of the יום־יהוה, which connects Isa 13–23 to Isa 2–12. The day of YHWH is a day that will affect many nations. An emphatic assertion behind this tradition is that the high and mighty ones will be humiliated and only YHWH will be exalted on that day (2:6–21). For the reader of Isa 18, the tall and mighty nations evoke this scene of the day of YHWH. Judah who does not cease "to trust man who has but a breath in his nostrils" (2:22), be it as big as a mighty Kushite, must not forget that YHWH will take away the object of its misplaced trust (cf. Isa 3:1).[293]

4.5.   CONCLUSION

The prophecy in Isa 18 addresses the Kushite Empire of the 25th Dynasty (Egypt and Kush) by way of its messengers sent to Judah. It proclaims the defeat of the Africans (and not Assyrians), typified as the land of the winged beetle. As this prominent symbol was also adopted by King Hezekiah, the judgment against the foreign nations contained an implicit message of warning for the Judaeans as well, recognised in other FNPs. The theological view of the Nile lands as a challenge to the faith finding rest in YHWH is consistent with Isaiah's other prophecies, including those against Egypt, Isa 30–31. In its wider context, Isa 13–23, the motifs of the tribute scene with distant nations arriving in Jerusalem in 18:7, the universal perspective of 18:3, and the destruction of the wine reminding of Assyrian warfare techniques, makes this prophecy particularly fit as part of the stele of YHWH. By presenting the humiliation of mighty warriors (18:2), Isa 18 is well-suited for the יום־יהוה edition of this book. As the later Zeph 3:10 implies, Isa 18 was also interpreted independently from its context, proclaiming YHWH's universal

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[293] The מַשְׁעֵן / מַשְׁעֵנָה in Isa 3:1 reminds of Egypt and Kush as a support, also described with similar terms in Isa 30:15; 31:1 (שען); 36:6 (מִשְׁעֶנֶת).

kingship presented in a tribute scene close to claims for universal rule of ancient Near Eastern gods and kings.

From a literary perspective, Isa 18:7 apparently derives from a date later than the rest of the prophecy. But despite some voices arguing for the contrary, 18:3 may be regarded as part of the original text. The primary function of Isa 18 was modified when it was connected to Isa 17. In the context of a מַשָּׂא against Aram and Israel, its implicit message against Israel, the people of YHWH, appeared more emphatically in the foreground.

As to the date of its composition, arguments taken from the prophecy, point to the years shortly before 701, when the Kushite pharaoh and his Egyptian subordinates successfully recruited Hezekiah for a battle against their common foe, Assyria.

Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

From Chaos to Covenant

ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH 19

Isaiah 19 bears the title: the Egypt-pronouncement. Its Egypt related message is clear, as is also for the most part the Hebrew text of the prophecy. However, two crucial verses have raised much controversy. First, עִיר הַהֶרֶס, which appears in most Massoretic manuscripts at 19:18 is most often considered an erroneous variant for עִיר הַחֶרֶס or עִיר הַצֶּדֶק. Second, a significant translational problem is caused by the phrase וְעָבְדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־אַשּׁוּר in 19:23. From a lexical point of view, the most obvious meaning of this phrase is "Egypt will serve Assyria". It is assumed, however, that this translation does not correspond to the context of a salvation prophecy in which it stands, so that scholars generally render this phrase as "Egypt will serve YHWH with Assyria". Both issues have far-reaching implications for understanding the prophecy, its theological concept, as well as the historical background of the text. Several other seldom-discussed expressions may be added to this list.

From a literary critical point of view, Isa 19 is considered a text with a long history of composition. Scholars observe a break between 19:1–15 and 16–25, but the literary integrity of both pericopes has been questioned on closer analysis. In the first unit, 19:1–15, vss. 5–10 are argued to distort the present structure. As for 19:16–25, opinions differ on how many stages of development one should distinguish in the formation of this pericope.

Theologically speaking, 19:1–15 or 19:1–17 is regarded as a prophecy of doom against Egypt, while 19:18–25 is believed to pronounce salvation for this nation. The function of this message of judgment is debated, and scholars vacillate between considering 19:1–15 a learned theological treatise and a prophecy delivered as implicit warning for Israelites or Judeans relying on the support of Egypt against Assyria. The "salvation prophecy" in 19:18–25 is believed to be an unparalleled utterance in the Old Testament, but others relate its universalistic theology to texts of the Persian or Hellenistic period.

While a few exegetes find nothing in 19:1–15, that would contradict Isaianic authorship and consequently an 8th century setting, others bewail the lack of any positive proof pointing to the Isaianic era. Except for a few marginal voices, 19:16–25 is generally dated to the post-

Isaianic, mostly post-exilic period, and the same is suggested by many scholars for 19:1–15 as well.

The analysis below will begin with a careful look at the text of the prophecy first in isolation from its context, then in relation to it. The methodological procedure is similar to the analysis of Isa 18 in the previous chapter.

5.1.   TRANSLATION WITH TEXT-CRITICAL AND SEMANTIC NOTES

1a   The Egypt-pronouncement[a]

1b   Look! YHWH is riding on a swift cloud
1c   and comes to Egypt.
1d   And the idols[b] of Egypt will tremble in front of him,
1e   and the heart of Egypt[c] will melt in its inside.
2a   And I shall [d]stir up[d] Egypt against Egypt
2b   and they will fight,
2c   each against his brother, and each against his neighbour,
2d   city against city, [e]kingdom against kingdom[e].
3a   And the spirit of Egypt [f]will be broken[f] in its inside,
3b   and its plan [g]I shall destroy[g].
3c   And they will inquire by the idols, and by the ʾiṭṭîm-spirits,
3d   and by [h]the ʾôb-spirits, and by the yiddĕʿônî-spirits[h].
4a   And [i]I shall deliver[i] Egypt into the hand of a tough master[l],
4b   and a powerful king will rule over them,
4c   utterance of the lord YHWH of hosts.
5a   And the water [j]will be exhausted[j] from the sea
5b   and the river will dry up and be parched.
6a   And the rivers [k]will stink[k],
6b   and [m]the streams of Egypt[m] [l]will grow lean[l] and dry up.
6c   The reed and the papyrus [n]will get mouldy[n].
7a   The sedge[o] [p][on the Nile,] on the brink of the Nile[p],
7b   and all the sowing[qt] of the Nile
7c   will be dried up, [r]driven away[r] and [s]be no more[s].
8a   And the fishermen will be moaning,
8b   and mourning all those casting hook in the Nile,
8c   and those, who spread nets upon the water languish.
9a   And [u]those working with combed[u] flax[v] [t]will be ashamed[t]
9b   and the weavers [w]will grow pale[w].
10a   And its pillars[x] will be crushed,
10b   all [y]those working for wages[y] [z]will be distressed[z].
11a   Ah, foolish are the officials of Zoan,
11b   [a]the wisest counselors of the pharaoh![a]
11c   [b]The counsel has turned out to be stupid[b].

11d   How can you say to the pharaoh:
11e   "I am (a son) of wise men,
11f   (a son) of ᶜeastern / ancient kingsᶜ"?
12   Where then are your wise men? ᵈLet them inform you and let you knowᵈ what YHWH of hosts has planned on Egypt!
13a   Silly are the officials of Zoan,
13b   and the officials of Noph deceive themselves.
13c   And ᵉthe cornerstones of its tribesᵉ have led Egypt astray.
14   And YHWH has mingled in it the spirit of perversionᶠ, so that they make Egypt stagger in all it is about to do, as the drunken
15   staggers in his vomit. ᵍAnd there is nothing that Egypt can doᵍ, ʰeither the head or the tailʰ, ⁱthe shoot or the stalkⁱ.
16   On that day Egypt will be like women, and it will shiver and tremble because of the raising of the hand of YHWH of hosts
17   which he raises against it. And the land of Judah will become a dizzinessʲ for Egypt, ᵏeveryone to whom one mentions it will trembleᵏ because of the plan that YHWH of hosts plans against it.
18   On that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt speaking the language of Canaan, and swearing to YHWH of hosts. ˡCity of destructionˡ ᵐwill be called each one of themᵐ.
19   On that day there will be an altar of YHWH in the midst of the
20   land of Egypt, and a stele of YHWH beside its border. And this will be a sign and a witness of YHWH of hosts in the land of Egypt.
       For they will cry to YHWH before their oppressors, and he will
21   send them a saviour and ⁿhe will striveⁿ and save them. And YHWH will make himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will recognise YHWH on that day. And they will ᵒprepare sacrifice and food offeringᵒ, and they will make vows to YHWH and they
22   will fulfil them. ᵖAnd YHWH will smite the Egyptians, but heal (them),ᵖ and they will turn to YHWH and he �q will respond their plea,�q and heal them.
23   On that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will go to Egypt and Egypt will go to Assyria, and the Egyptians ʳwill serve Assyriaʳ.
24   On that day Israel will be the third beside Egypt and Assyria,
25   blessing in the midst of the earth, ˢwhom YHWH of hosts will blessˢ saying:
           "Blessed be ᵗmy people, Egypt,
           and Assyria the work of my hands,ᵗ
           and Israel my inheritance."

1   **a-a** מַשָּׂא מִצְרָיִם. As outlined in EXCURSUS 3, מַשָּׂא is either derived from a verb נשׂא, 'to cry (out)'; 'to shout', or מַשָּׂא is a loanword from Akkadian.

b אֱלִילֵי. אֱלִילִים is related to אֱלִיל, 'vanity'; 'worthless' (GesB, *HALOT*). Note רֹפְאֵי אֱלָל, "worthless physicians" (Job 13:4), those who cannot help, a picture that is applied to foreign gods as well (cf. Hab 2:18). Because of its phonetic affinities with אֵל and אֱלֹהִים, אֱלִילִים is an ingenious wordplay on idolatry.[1] In connection to foreign deities, אֱלִילִים always appears in the plural.

c מִצְרַיִם. Some translators render the proper name מִצְרַיִם by 'Egyptians' (so already in the LXX). Although that is coherent with the meaning of the prophecy, it seems more appropriate to retain the name 'Egypt' in the translations. Not only is this closer to the Hebrew text, but it also coincides with what we find elsewhere in the FNPs where a particular nation is often personified and addressed accordingly in the second person singular. Of course, the same is also the case with texts addressed to Israel and Judah. 'Egyptians' is used whenever the verbs attached to this subject appear in the plural.

2 **d-d** וְסִכְסַכְתִּי. This pilpel form of סוך, probably means 'to incite', 'to provoke' (*HALOT*). The only other text in which סוך appears is Isa 9:10, where it parallels שׂגב pi'el, 'to exalt'. The Syr. and the *Tg. Isa.* both use the verb גרי, 'to incite' (cf. Hebrew גרה) in Isa 19:2. The LXX translates passively, but in similar sense, with ἐπεγείρω, pass. 'to be excited', 'awakened'. Aq. (στασιάζω, 'to rebel', 'rise against'), Sym. (συμβάλλω, 'to throw together'), and the Vulg. (*concurrere*, 'to be engaged in battle') all allow this meaning, although it is possible that the context inspired these translation. Different is Theod.'s συνταράσσω, 'to confound', 'disturb' and Qimchi's בלבול, 'to confound'.

e-e מַמְלָכָה בְּמַמְלָכָה. The LXX renders this by νομὸς ἐπὶ νομόν, "nome against nome", which is an adaptation of the prophecy to its Egyptian context.

3 **f-f** נָבְקָה. נָבְקָה is a niph'al form of בקק, even though its vocalisation would rather suggest a qal perf. form of נבק.[2] בקק appears rarely (with רוּחַ as its object only here). Presupposing a relationship between בקק / נבק and נבך, the verb is sometimes rendered in 19:3 as 'to be emptied out' (NRSV). This relationship is uncertain, however. In other contexts, the qal and pi'el forms of בקק mean 'to lay waste', 'to devastate'. The object of the verb is a country,[3] the vine,[4] and—of particular importance—עֵצָה (Jer 19:7) that appears in parallelism with רוּחַ also outside Isa 19:3. The translation 'to destroy', 'to devastate', 'to break off' is also supported by Sym., ῥήγνυμι, pass. 'to be broken' (corresponding to the Greek translation of בקע in the LXX), Theod., σχίζω, 'to break', 'divide', 'split' (also translating בקע in the LXX), the Vulg., *disrumpetur*, 'to break apart', 'to split', and Syr., *psq*, 'to be cut / broken in pieces'. בקק appears to be treated as a synonym of בקע. Less literal is the LXX (ταράσσω, pass. 'to be troubled', 'to be disturbed'), Aq. (πλαδάρομαι, pass. 'to become soft'), and *Tg. Isa.* (מסי hitpe'el, 'to melt away'). Yet none of these supports the translation 'to empty out'. Note רוּחַ with חבל, 'to destroy' (pu'al in Job 17:1), שבר, 'to break' (Ps 51:19; Prov

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[1] Cf. Hebrew כְּלִיל and בֹּל, עֲבְטִיט and עבט, etc.
[2] See GKC §67dd, BL §58t, Young, 2:17 note 10, and cf. Gen 17:11; Judg 5:5.
[3] Isa 24:1 qal | בלק, 'to lay waste'; 24:3 niph'al | זזב ni, 'to be plundered'; Jer 51:2 pi'el.
[4] Nah 2:3 | שחת, 'to ruin', 'to destroy'.

15:4; Isa 65:14), דכא, 'to crush' (Ps 34:19).

g-g אֲבַלֵּעַ. Lexical studies on בלע distinguish the meanings 'to swallow', 'to engulf'; 'to destroy'; 'to confuse'; 'to announce', though it is a question whether all these derive from one root allowing figurative senses (BDB; J. Schüpphaus, בלע, *TWAT* 1:659), or whether two (GesB), three (*HALOT*), or four homonymous roots (*DCH* 2:179–81) should be discerned.

The qal of בלע always denotes 'to swallow', 'to engulf' either literally, or in a metaphorical sense.[5] The pi'el of בלע, however, generally means 'to destroy', 'to devour', 'to strike', being often used in connection with verbs possessing these connotations.[6] The subject by which the action (בלע) is performed, or the object that it affects, makes it often impossible to render it otherwise.[7] Nevertheless, some texts suggest that the meaning 'to devour', 'to destroy' in pi'el is connected to the same root from which the qal 'to swallow' derives. So in Ps 21:10 the pi'el form of בלע appears in parallelism with אכל, where בלע may be rendered as 'to devour', 'to destroy', although with wrath / fire the translation 'to consume' is also admissible. In Eccl 10:12 שָׂפָה appears as the subject of בלע. The translation 'to swallow up' is inadequate.[8] Isaiah 25:7–8 emphasises that the object of בלע will cease to exist.[9]

In five other texts *בלע means 'to confuse'.[10] In this meaning בלע may be related to בלל, 'to confuse'.[11] The translation 'to perplex', 'to confuse' for בלע pi'el is supported by the parallelism in which בלע appears in some passages: תעה hiph'il ('to cause to err'; Isa 3:12), (לְשׁוֹנָם) פלג pi'el (Ps 55:10; cf. Gen 11:7). The pu'al may be rendered as a passive, 'to be perplexed', 'to be confused' (Isa 9:15), similar to the niph'al in Isa 28:7 (cf. תעה, שׁגה, 'to err', 'to stagger', פוק, 'to stagger'). The hitpa'el means 'to act like a perplexed'.[12]

Rendering בלע as 'to confuse', 'to perplex' (בלע II?) in Isa 19:3 would cause no problem, but the parallelism with בקק would also allow us translating 'to destroy'. For this sense עֵצָה + בלע could be compared to אבד qal + עֵצָה פרר,[13]

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[5] For the literal sense, cf. Gen 41:7.24; Ex 7:12; 15:12; Jon 2:1. For the metaphorical meaning, see Job 20:15.18; Ps 124:3; Prov 1:12.

[6] שׁחת, pi'el 'to ruin' (Lam 2:5; cf. 2 Sam 20:20 hiph'il), מות, hiph'il 'to cause to die' (2 Sam 20:19), הרס, 'to break down' (Lam 2:2).

[7] Cf. Lam 2:5 (אַרְמוֹן, 'palace'), 2:8 ("he restrained not his hand מִבַּלֵּעַ"). See also Hos 8:8, where Israel is compared to the useless vessel, suggesting that בלע in niph'al means here 'to be destroyed', what actually happened to a useless clay vessel (cf. Jer 19:11), and not 'to be swallowed up' (contra NRSV, NASB, NIV).

[8] The idea behind this verse is not that the lips of the fools will swallow up the fools themselves, but that the words of the fool shall destroy them.

[9] יְבַלַּע־אָוֶן in Prov 19:28 is difficult. *HALOT* connected this verse to a different root (בלע II, 'to report', 'to announce'). Schüpphaus (בלע, *TWAT* 1:659) emended יְבַלַּע to יַבִּיעַ (from נבע, cf. Prov 15:2.28). But יְבַלַּע־אָוֶן can also be rendered as "devours *with* iniquity".

[10] Ps 55:10; Isa 3:12 (pi'el), Isa 9:15 (pu'al), Ps 107:27 (hitpa'el), Isa 28:7 (niph'al).

[11] So *HALOT*. Note the relationship between בקע and בקק above.

[12] Ps 107:27 (cf. חָכְמָה) in parallelism with נוע, 'to tremble', חגג, 'to stagger'.

[13] אבד, 'to perish', 'to be ruined', 'to be destroyed'; cf. Deut 32:28; Jer 18:18; 49:7.

hiphʻil + עֵצָה,[14] עֵצָה + בקק (Jer 19:7), בער niphʻal + עֵצָה (Isa 19:11).[15] In Isa 19:3 both the destruction and the confusion of a plan would fit the context, but one cannot render "his plan I shall swallow up".

h-h אֹבוֹת וְיִדְעֹנִים. These two terms appear frequently in parallelism; in fact this is the only way that יִדְעֹנִי is attested.[16]

Despite significant studies, scholars still disagree on the meaning of אוֹב.[17] אוֹב is interpreted as referring (a) to the dead spirit, (b) to a cultic object, and (c) to the necromancer (LXX, Vulg.). It seems that none of these fits the context of *all* biblical texts involved. אוֹב appears in most cases as a cultic object, a statue related to the (spirit of the), but in some texts אוֹב may mean the deified spirit itself. Interpretation (c) is unlikely.[18]

אוֹב as a cultic object (possibly a small statue ?) was used in necromantic practices. In Lev 20:6 אוֹב appears with לִזְנוֹת אַחֲרֵיהֶם, an expression otherwise used in connection with foreign gods, i.e. idols.[19] The same may be assumed for Lev 19:31. The prohibition אַל־תִּפְנוּ אֶל־הָאֹבֹת וְאֶל־הַיִּדְּעֹנִים is related to אַל־תִּפְנוּ אֶל־הָאֱלִילִים וֵאלֹהֵי מַסֵּכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם (Lev 19:4). In 1 Sam 28:3 אוֹב appears with the verb סור hiphʻil, also used in connection with foreign gods, i.e. cult objects.[20] The same text calls the necromancer בַּעֲלַת־אוֹב (28:7), which refers either to proficiency in something,[21] or possession of an object[22]. In 1 Sam 28:8, the preposition בְּ ("by means of"; אוֹב + בְּ + קסם) also suggests that אוֹב was an instrument (cf. בָּאוּרִים in vs. 3). According to 2 Kgs 23:24, Josiah burned (בער pi'el) אֶת־הָאֹבוֹת וְאֶת־הַיִּדְּעֹנִים found in Judah. In 2 Kgs 21:6 (‖ 2 Chr 33:6) the verb עשה is used with אוֹב and יִדְעֹנִי (cf. Ex 34:17; Lev 19:4).

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[14] פרר hiphʻil, 'to break', 'to destroy', 'to frustrate'; 2 Sam 15:34; 17:14; Ezr 4:5; Neh 4:9; Ps 33:10; Isa 8:10; cf. also Isa 14:27; 44:25.

[15] It is interesting to mention the semantic similarities between בלע (qal 'to swallow up'; pi'el 'to destroy'; pi'el 'to confuse') and בער (qal 'to consume'; pi'el 'to devastate'; qal 'to be stupid'; niph'al 'to turn out to be stupid'). This suggests caution in delimiting different homonymous forms for בלע.

[16] Lev 19:31; 20:6.27; Deut 18:11; 1 Sam 28:3, 9; 2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24; 2 Chr 33:6; Isa 8:19; 19:3. אוֹב also appears separately (1 Sam 28:7.8; 1 Chr 10:13; Isa 29:4).

[17] For an overview, see J. Ebach & U. Rüterswörden, "Unterweltsbeschwörung im Alten Testament", *UF* 9 (1977) 57–70 and *UF* 12 (1980) 205–20, and J. Tropper, "Spirit of the Dead", *DDD* 806–9, with bibliographical references.

[18] The necromancer is called בַּעֲלַת אוֹב and שֹׁאֵל אוֹב (Deut 18:11; cf. 1 Chr 10:13; Ezek 21:26 [שֹׁאַל בַּתְּרָפִים]). Likewise the connection between אוֹב and Hittite *a-a-pí*, 'ritual pit' (H. A. Hoffner, "Second Millennium Antecedents to the Hebrew ʾôḇ", *JBL* 86 [1967] 385–401) is dubious.

[19] Ex 34:15; Lev 17:7; Judg 2:17; 8:33; Ezek 6:9; etc.

[20] Gen 35:2; Josh 24:14.23; Judg 10:16; 1 Sam 7:3.

[21] Joseph was a בַּעַל הַחֲלֹמוֹת, an "expert in (the interpretation of) dreams" (Gen 37:19). Babylon was בַּעֲלַת כְּשָׁפִים, "expert in sorcery" (Nah 3:4). The woman from Endor might have been an expert in using the אוֹב.

[22] For examples, see *HALOT* (בַּעַל I). Tropper compared בַּעֲלַת־אוֹב to the Sumerian lú gidim.ma, lit. "man of the spirit of the dead", and the Akkadian *ša eṭemmi*, "one of the spirit of the dead" ("Spirit of the Dead", 808). It is better, however, to relate the Sumerian and Akkadian expressions to the Hebrew אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה, or אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים.

In other texts אוֹב and יִדְּעֹנִי possibly refers to the dead spirit, or the spirit of necromancy. In Lev 20:27 אוֹב and יִדְּעֹנִי is said to be 'in' or 'with' (בָּהֶם) the necromancer men or women (cf. CD 12:2–3). In Isa 8:19 the אוֹב and יִדְּעֹנִי (pl.) are said to chirp (מְצַפְצְפִים) and moan (מַהְגִּים), probably alluding to the spirits (Isa 29:4).[23] The similarity between the deified spirit and a cultic statue has a parallel in (the) Ashera(s) or Baal(s) of the Old Testament, which can both refer to the god(dess) and the cultic objects. At any rate, 1 Sam 28:13 explicitly names the spirit of the dead Samuel אֱלֹהִים (cf. the Ugaritic *ilʾib*).

The difference between אוֹב and יִדְּעֹנִי is not obvious. Since יִדְּעֹנִי is always used in parallelism with אוֹב, the two strongly suggest some formal similarity with the אָרִים and תֻּמִים of which תֻּמִים is never used on its own. If—as some scholars argue—אוֹב is related to אָב ('ancestor'),[24] that aspect is less specific by יִדְּעֹנִי, which apparently derives from the verb ידע. In lack of sufficient data, we are but uncertainly groping in a poorly known field. In Isa 19:3 אוֹב and יִדְּעֹנִי may signify both the spirits of dead and cultic objects. Their connection with אָטִּים (cf. Akkadian *eṭemmu*) makes the first option more likely.

4   i-i סִכַּרְתִּי. The verb סכר is probably a phonetic variant for סגר. The piʿel and hiphʿil forms of סגר mean 'to give up', 'to deliver'.[25] *skr* is attested in Official and Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, as well as in Akkadian.[26] Ezekiel 30:12, possibly alluding to Isa 19:4, has מכר instead of סכר (cf. Deut 32:30), which was followed as an emendation by Greenfield.[27] The emendation is unnecessary.

5   j-j נִשְּׁתוּ. The verb נשׁת appears in Isa 41:17; Jer 51:30 (qal), and possibly Jer 18:14 (niphʿal). *HALOT* refers to Arabic *sanitu*, 'dry', 'arid' as a cognate. In Isa 19:5 the LXX connected נִשְּׁתוּ to שׁתה, 'to drink' (πίονται), but in Isa 41:7 we find ξηραίνω, pass. 'to become dry'. Cf. the Vulg. *arescet* (Isa 19:5 and 41:17).

6   k-k הֶאֱזְנִיחוּ. הֶאֱזְנִיחוּ is assumed to derive from the verb זנח with double

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[23] One of the Egyptian oracle techniques was to address a question to the statue of the divinity. Using different techniques the priests answered the questions of the inquirer from inside the statue, or from a secret chamber, but it was the statue that was believed to have spoken (cf. L. Kákosy, "Orakel", *LdÄ* 4:600–6). Isa 29:4 connects the sound with the dust (not the underworld, but the ground, or eventually the grave). Isaiah is probably speaking of the dead spirits believed to have emitted these sounds.

[24] Cf. Tropper, "Spirit of the Dead", 807.

[25] Deut 23:16; 32:30; Josh 20:5; 1 Sam 17:46; etc. Cf. the Phoenician Eshmunazor Inscription (*KAI* 14:21): *wysgrnm hʾlnm hqdšm ʾt mmlkt ʾdr ʾš mšl bnm lqṣtnm*, "may the holy gods deliver them to a mighty king, who will rule over them to destroy them". The parallelism with Isa 19:4 was also noted by Gray, 325 and J. C. Greenfield, "Scripture and Inscription: The Literary Rhetorical Element in Some Early Phoenician Inscriptions", in *ʾAl Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology* (eds. Sh. M. Paul et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 714–16.

[26] Cf. *thskrhm bydy*, "you must surrender them into my hands" (*KAI* 224:2; *yhskr lbry*, "he must surrender (them) to my son" (*KAI* 224:3; *DNWSI* 786); סכרית לגברא, "I closed up the man" (*DJPA* 378). Cf. also Akkadian *sekērum* (*sakārum*), 'to shut off', 'to block up' (*CDA* 320).

[27] Greenfield, "Scripture and Inscription", 715.

formative for the hiph'il, Hebrew ה (cf. 1QIsaᵃ is הזניחו) and Aramaic א.[28] The MT is confirmed by 4QIsaᵇ. Gesenius correlated the *hapax legomenon* זנח with the Arabic *zaniḫa*, 'to be rancid', *zaniḫ* and *saniḫ*, 'to stink',[29] which meaning comes close to צחן, 'to stink', attested in the nominal form צַחֲנָה, 'stench (of decay)' in Joel 2:20 and Sir 11:12.[30]

l-l דָלְלוּ. With 'river' or 'sea' as its subject, דלל appears only here. In other contexts דלל qal means 'to be tiny', 'to be little' (Ps 79:8),[31] the niph'al 'to become little' (Judg 6:6 niph'al, not qal). In Isa 17:4 דלל is paralleled by רזה, 'to become thin', 'to grow lean', an antonym of שמן, 'to become fat' (Num 13:20).

m-m יְאוֹרֵי מָצוֹר. Most scholars accept that the expression יְאוֹרֵי מָצוֹר refers to the rivers of Egypt. However, based on the ancient translations that were unaware of this meaning in Isa 19:6, as well as 2 Kgs 19:24 (∥ Isa 37:25), and Mic 7:12, from time to time challenging voices appear to this view. מָצוֹר is best known as 'siegework', 'fortification', to which the old translations occasionally allude in translating these four texts.[32] On other occasions מָצוֹר is derived from a different word, like אצר, 'to store up' (LXX of Isa 19:6; cf. Isa 39:6), צוֹר, 'Tyre' (Mic 7:12 in LXX; Syr.), מְצוֹלָה (2 Kgs 19:24 in Syr.; Tg.; Isa 37:25 in Tg.), צרר, 'to enclose' (2 Kgs 19:24 in Vulg.).

In modern exegetical literature, Calderone proposed to translate יְאוֹרֵי מָצוֹר as "channels of rock" or "cataracts".[33] He thought the original form of the expression was יְאוֹרֵים צוֹר, with enclitic מ, but his view failed to convince exegetes. Tawil identified מָצוֹר with mount *Muṣri* (Jebel Bashiqah),[34] at the foot of which Sargon II had built his famous city, Dur Sharruken (Khorsabad). This view is also problematic, especially in Isa 19:6. The Assyrian texts Tawil refers to in support of his thesis allude to agricultural activity in the region, while 2 Kgs 19:23 (bringing מָצוֹר in connection with the Assyrians) presupposes military activity. While מָצוֹר is not a usual name for Egypt, Akkadian texts also use different terms, not all of which can be ascribed to dialectic variations (cf. *Muṣur, Miṣir, Muṣri, Miṣri*). Given that the imagery of 2 Kgs 19:24 and Isa 37:25 is inspired by Assyrian texts, מָצוֹר may reflect the Assyrian terminology.

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[28] GKC §53p; WO §27.4c and note 30 on p. 445.

[29] Gesenius, 610.

[30] זנח was unrecognised by the ancient versions. The LXX left the word untranslated (just like קָמֵלוּ). ἐκλείψουσιν translates דָלְלוּ (cf. Isa 38:14) and not הָאֱזִינוּ.

[31] See also Jewish Babylonian Aramaic דלדל, 'to become degenerated / diminished' (*DJBA* 339). In Isa 38:14 דַלּוּ should be related to a different verb. Starting from the Syriac *dlʾ* (*CSD* 92), G. R. Driver arrived to the conclusion that דלל is an Aramaism, meaning 'to lift up' ("Linguistic and Textual Problems: Isaiah i-xxxix", *JTS* 38 [1937] 47). The sentence דַלּוּ עֵינַי לַמָּרוֹם in Isa 38:14 may have further parallels in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic. The verb דַלּוּ derives from דלה and not דלל (דַלּוּ should be corrected to דָלוּ), a cognate of the Aramaic דלי, 'to lift up' (*Yom.* 87a: דלי עיניה חזייה, "he raised up his eyes and saw him"; b. *BQam.* 117a: דלו לי גביני, "raise my eyelids up for me").

[32] Mic 7:12 in LXX; Vulg.; Syr.; Tg.; Isa 19:6 in Vulg.; Syr.; Tg.; 37:25 in Vulg.; Syr.

[33] P. J. Calderone, "The Rivers of 'Masor'", *Bib* 42 (1961) 423–32.

[34] H. Tawil, "The Historicity of 2 Kings 19:24 (= Isaiah 37:25): The Problem of *yeʾōrê māṣôr*", *JNES* 41 (1982) 197–200.

In Isa 19:6 and Mic 7:12 the Assyrian background of the name of Egypt is less evident, although as the exegesis of 19:6 shows, it belongs to the possibilities.

n-n קָמֵלוּ. In 1QIsaᵃ we find the variant reading וקמלו with a larger space before this word, clearly indicating the beginning of a new sentence. The subject of קמל is seemingly not קָנֶה וָסוּף as in the MT, but עָרוֹת of vs. 7. However, this reading gives no sense to קָנֶה וָסוּף. The MT is supported by 4QIsaᵇ. The LXX reformulated vs. 6. קָנֶה וָסוּף קָמֵלוּ appears as καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἕλει καλάμου καὶ παπύρου. The word ἕλος, 'marsh', 'meadow' corresponds to קמל.³⁵ The ו at the end of קמל was connected to עָרוֹת of the following verse (καὶ τὸ ἄχι).

The verb קמל appears only once more in Isa 33:9 in the phrase לְבָנוֹן קָמַל. In Syriac *qml* means 'to get mouldy' (CSD 508). In Aramaic *qml* appears in the Sefire inscription, as a plant disease (KAI 222A:31). In the Arabic *qamila* refers to a disease affecting plants after rain. In Akkadian *qummālu* (*qummānu*, *qummāru*) appears both as a skin complaint (a kind of rash) and a disease affecting grain and fruit.³⁶ In view of this, קמל is rendered as 'to get mouldy'.

7   o   עָרוֹת. In 1QIsaᵃ ע is a corrected letter.³⁷ Some explain this lexeme as a pl. form of עָרָה, 'bare place', related to the verb ערה or ערר, 'to be bare', 'to be naked'.³⁸ But in Hebrew 'bare place' is מַעֲרֶה (Judg 20:33; Nah 3:5), or עֶרְוָה, 'nakedness' (Gen 42:9.12). Moreover, the verbs יבש and נדף in vs. 7 do not make sense with a noun עָרָה, or עֶרְוָה as a subject. As Herz pointed out, it is preferable to relate עָרוֹת to the Egyptian ꜥr, 'bulrush', 'papyrus',³⁹ as long recognised by the LXX, Syr., and *Tg. Isa.*, later also by Saadyah and Qimchi. The LXX rendered עָרוֹת by ἄχι, a translation / transliteration of אָחוּ, 'sedge', 'grass', 'meadow' (Gen 41:2.18; cf. Job 8:11). In the Syr. עָרוֹת is interpreted as a water plant.⁴⁰ *Tg. Isa.*, which has ייבש רוביה דנהרא, also supports the view that עָרוֹת is a kind of plant.⁴¹

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³⁵ Cf. Isa 33:9. The Greek translator divided Isa 33:9 as קמל הָיָה הַשָּׁרוֹן.

³⁶ See W. von Soden, "Review of 'F.R. Kraus, *Briefe aus dem Britisch Museum*', *BibOr* 23 (1966) 54. In a word list *qummānu* is equated with *kibšu*, 'fungus', 'mould' (CDA 291 and CAD *q* 305). Cf. also Mandaic *qumānā*, 'mould'.

³⁷ A ה according to E. Y. Kutscher, *Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1 Q Isaᵃ)* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 508, 533.

³⁸ Vulg.; BDB 788; Ibn Ezra, 88; Gesenius, 610–11.

³⁹ N. Herz, "Isaiah 19, 7", *OLZ* 15 (1912) 496–97. See also T. W. Thacker, "A Note on עָרוֹת", *JTS* 34 (1933) 164; Y. Muchiki, *Egyptian Proper Names and Loanwords in North-West Semitic* (SBLDS 173; Atlanta: SBL, 1999), 252–53. For Egyptian ꜥr see *WÄS* 1:208. Cf. also ꜥr.t 'reed pen'; 'stalk' of a plant, flower; 'branch' of a tree (*WÄS* 1:208, *CDME* 45). Muchiki argued that עָרוֹת was an Egyptian loanword (*Proper Names*, 252–53). Note, however, the Akkadian *aru, eru, ḫaru*, 'branch' or 'frond' of (palm)trees; 'stalk' of a plant (cf. *artu*, 'foliage', 'branches' [*CDA* 25]). Unclear is whether עָרוֹת should be regarded a fem. sg., or a pl. form.

⁴⁰ *lwꜥ* is translated 'pondweed' in *CSD* 238, and 'Wasserlinse' by I. Löw, *Aramäische Pflanzennamen* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1881; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1973), 235–38.

⁴¹ ייבש רוביה דנהרא is translated by Chilton as "the greater part of the river will dry up" (*The Isaiah Targum* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987], 38. However, רוביה is the suffixed form of רוביא, 'fenugreek' or 'flax'. Cf. Löw, *Pflanzennamen*, 317; *DTTM* 1455–56.

עָרָה (or עָרוֹת) is a synonym of אָחוּ, גֹּמֶא, סוּף and קָנֶה (or more generally of יֶרֶק, דֶּשֶׁא, חָצִיר, עֵשֶׂב), describing Egyptian vegetation. It remains difficult to make a distinction between these terms that may also be overlapping.

p-p עַל־יְאוֹר עַל־פִּי יְאוֹר. The versions differ from the MT. Most modern exegetes consider the MT redundant. The following solutions must be considered:

(a) Accepting the present form of עַל־פִּי and translating יְאוֹר as 'Nile'
In Isa 19:7 פִּי was translated as 'source' (Vulg.) or 'round about' of the Nile (κύκλος LXX),[42] 'shore', 'border' (כיף *Tg. Isa.*).[43] Modern translators prefer 'brink', 'mouth' or 'edge' of the Nile. This sense of פִּי seems to appear in the geographical name פִּי הַחִירֹת (Ex 14:2.9; Num 33:7.8), regarded to mean "the mouth of the canal".[44] עַל־פִּי is sometimes used in this locative sense, i.e. "on the mouth / opening" of a well (Gen 29:2.3.8.10), a cave (Josh 10:27), or "on the brink" of the bronze sea (1 Kgs 7:31).[45]

(b) Assigning a different meaning to פִּי
Israelit-Groll explains פִּי as Egyptianism, the transliteration of the Egyptian masc. definite article *pꜣ*. פִּי יְאוֹר is a Hebraised form of the Egyptian *pꜣ-itrw*, 'the Nile'. According to Israelit-Groll, in Isaiah's time *itrw* was a general designation for waters, rivers and the arms of the Nile. In order to distinguish between the Nile and this general use, one had to add the definite article *pꜣ*. She believes Isaiah was aware of these conventions when he added פִּי on this place.[46] However, of the almost 50 verses containing some form of יְאוֹר, Isa 19:7 would be the only one where the assumed Egyptian definite article appears. יְאוֹר is the general (only?) designation for the Nile in the Bible, with or without the definite article. In pl. the definite article (הַ) is dropped, in sg. it was frequently retained, especially in narrative texts. It is also noteworthy that when loaned into Hebrew, Egyptian proper names and geographical names originally containing the definite articles *pꜣ* or *tꜣ* are always written as contracted.[47] The suggestion that פִּי יְאוֹר would be Egyptian is therefore highly unlikely.

The view of Kissane, 214, that ערות may be an erroneous form of עֲרֻגֹת, 'plantations', 'beds of spices' (Ezek 17:10) is inspiring (cf. also מִזְרָע), but very uncertain.

[42] κύκλος generally translates סָבִיב. Cf. סְבִיבַת הַיְאֹר, κύκλῳ τοῦ ποταμοῦ in Ex 7:24.

[43] Chilton translated כיפא as 'rock' (Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, 38). כיף may mean, however, 'shore', 'border' (*DTTM* 635; Josh 3:15; 4:18; Jdg 7:12; 1 Sam 13:5; Isa 8:7; 27:12; Jer 46:6; Ezek 47:6). Cf. the Akkadian *kappu*, 'edge', 'bank' (*CDA* 147).

[44] Cf. Akkadian *ḫirītu*, 'canal' (see also Muchiki, *Proper Names*, 233–34).

[45] Comparable to פִּי is שָׂפָה ('lip', 'edge', 'border'), also attested in the form עַל־שְׂפַת (Gen 41:3.17). שָׂפָה appears with הַיְאֹר (Ex 2:3), נַחַל (Deut 2:36), הַיָּם (Gen 22:17), the bronze sea (1 Kgs 7:23; cf. פֶּה in vs. 31). עַל־שְׂפַת is a synonym of עַל־יַד (cf. Ex 2:5). For פִּי, cf. Akkadian *pû* in *pī nāri* "the mouth of a river" (*AHw* 2:874), στόματι τοῦ νείλου, "the mouth of the Nile" in *Hist.* ii 154, 155.

[46] S. Israelit-Groll, "The Egyptian Background to Isaiah 19.18" in *Boundaries of the Ancient Near Eastern World: A Tribute to Cyrus H. Gordon* (eds. M. Lubetski et al.; JSOTSS 273; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 300–3.

[47] E.g., פַּתְרוֹס / *pꜣ-tꜣ-rsy* (see further Muchiki, *Proper Names*, the entries with *p* and *t*).

(c) Emending עַל־פִּי

To be sure, the present form of the Hebrew text does provide a meaningful phrase: "The rushes on the Nile, on the brink of the Nile". However, to exclude the oddly sounding repetition, Herz argued that עַל־פִּי must have been emended to עֻלְפוּ, a pu'al form of עלף, 'to faint'.[48] Somewhat similarly, Guillaume maintained that עַל־פִּי was a corrupted form of עַלְפֵי, the pl. cstr. of the Hebrew noun, *עָלְף, which Guillaume related to the Arabic *ʿlf, 'green or dry fodder for animals'.[49]

The verb עלף pu'al, 'to faint', is used of vegetation in Ezek 31:15.[50] The hitpa'el (Am 8:13; Jon 4:8) and pu'al (Isa 51:20) forms refer to persons. If emended, the verbal form of עלף would fit the context better than the noun. Isaiah 19:6c and 19:7a most probably form a parallelism: "the reed and papyrus will rot away / the sedge on the Nile will faint". The main problem here is that while there are differences among the old translations of 19:7, one can at least be certain that the *Vorlage* of each version contained the variant עַל־פִּי and not another verbal or nominal form. Of course, the textual corruption might have appeared at an early stage.

(d) Dismissing עַל־יְאוֹר as dittography

A further option is to abandon עַל־יְאוֹר as the result of dittography. That the *Vorlage* of the LXX did not contain עַל־יְאוֹר is possible, but not sure. The translators may have deliberately dropped יְאוֹר. At the same time, the Greek translation τὸ ἄχι τὸ χλωρὸν might suggest that the LXX rendered a different lexeme beside עָרוֹת. In the Old Greek χλωρός is the translation of יֶרֶק and עֵשֶׂב, and some other—for the present case less significant—terms (יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב, χόρτον χλωρὸν in Gen 1:30). It is possible that χλωρός renders יאר (without the *mater lectionis* and the preposition).[51] However, τὸ ἄχι τὸ χλωρὸν may also be considered a double translation of עָרוֹת, 'green rushes'. It is difficult to tell this with certainty.

It is similarly problematic to reconstruct the *Vorlage*, or the translation technique of the Vulg. in Isa 19:7. Jerome's *alveus rivi a fonte suo* contains two lexemes, *alveus* and *rivi*, that can both be equated with the Hebrew יְאוֹר. It is important, however, that neither of the two actually translate the MT in the form that we now know it. The preposition על on its first instance is dismissed.

The Syr. follows the MT closely, as do the available Qumran manuscripts.

(e) יְאוֹר as a lexeme with a different meaning

As noted above, there is a slight possibility that the first יְאוֹר (in עַל־יְאוֹר) was interpreted as χλωρός, 'green herbage' in the LXX. From other motives, Herz argued that just like עָרוֹת, so also יְאוֹר on its second appearance in Isa 19:7 should be understood as 'fruit'. יאור may be identical with ארת in 2 Kgs 4:39

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[48] Herz, "Isaiah 19, 7", 497.

[49] A. Guillaume, "A Note on Isaiah xix. 7", *JTS* 14 (1963) 382.

[50] In this text the emendation of עֻלְפֶּה to עֻלְפוּ is in general accepted, although the ה may also be retained as a suffix as in the LXX.

[51] We know יאר as a plant name from the Samaritan Targum (cf. *HUB* and see below).

and—he believed—in Isa 26:19.[52] In the Samaritan Pentateuch Targum the noun יאר is the translation of the Hebrew דֶּשֶׁא,[53] and formally similar lexemes with comparable connotations appear in other languages.[54] Taking יְאוֹר to refer to plants / herbage would fit the context of Isa 19:7, but given the formal difference between יְאוֹר and אוֹרֹ(ה) in 2 Kgs 4:39, the correlation remains uncertain. Moreover, this interpretation presupposes that עַל־פִּי is emended as a verb, which has already been questioned above.

Concluding, the reconstruction of vs. 7 remains uncertain. The versions do not follow the MT, but they also do not derive from a common *Vorlage*. The MT is supported by the most Hebrew manuscripts and it gives good sense, even if metrically outlined. A formulation that appears as slightly redundant for the modern reader has parallels in biblical poetry.[55]

q מִזְרָע. The LXX, the Vulg., and the Syr. all translate '(that) which is sown'. *Tg. Isa.*, on the other hand, has בית מזרע, "cultivated land".[56] This translation is supported by the Ugaritic *mdrʿ* (*DLU* 262), Phoenician *mzrʿ* (*PPD* 274), Arabic *mazraʿa* (*ArEL* 1226). If מִזְרָע is interpreted as 'cultivated land', 'sown land' (cf. *HALOT*), נדף and אין allude to עָרוֹת, and יבש to מִזְרָע. מִזְרָע, 'cultivated land' (and not 'cultivated soil') probably referred to the field including agricultural plants (a synonym of the more widely used שְׂדֵמָה). It is also possible that מִזְרָע as 'sowing' and 'sown land' do not exclude each other.[57]

r-r נִדָּף. It is uncertain whether it is indeed נִדָּף that the Greek translators had in mind (LXX ἀνεμόφθορον, 'destroyed by the wind' ?), or rather שדף niph'al (Gen 41:6.7.23.24.27). Guillaume argued that נדף should be connected to the

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[52] Herz, "Isaiah 19, 7", 496–97. אֹרֹת (αριωθ LXX), the pl. of אֹורָה / אֹור (A. E. Rüthy, *Die Pflanze und ihre Teile im biblisch-hebräischen Sprachgebrauch* [Bern: A. Francke, 1942], 38), probably designates some specific vegetable (Immanuel Löw, *Die Flora der Juden* [Leipzig: Engelmann, 1881], 2:228; "mallow" in *HALOT*), or vegetables in general. *b. Yoma* 18b identifies אֹורָה with גרגיר (*DTTM* 33). גרגיר was a plant with berries, which might explain its confusion with פַּקֻּעֹת in the story of 2 Kgs 4:39.

[53] In Gen 1:11.12 דֶּשֶׁא עֵשֶׂב is rendered as יאר עסב, and in Deut 32:2 עֲלֵי־דֶשֶׁא is rendered as יאר עלוי paralleled by עלוי עסב.

[54] Phonetic variants of אֹרֹת / אֹורָה as some kind of eatable plant appear in several languages. The proper relationship between these remains, however, unclear. Cf. Egyptian ʾú-r (var. ʾú-r-ja), 'bean' (*Papyrus Harris* i 55b.7; cf. W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962], 553), *iwrjt*, 'bean' (*WÄS* 1:56), Demotic *wrꜣ*, 'chick-pea' (Greek ἄραξ / ἄρακος; cf. *KHw* 275), Coptic *urō* / *arō*, 'bean' (*KHw* 11, 275; cf. West Chadic **ʾar-*, 'vegetable' in *HSED* 15). Ugaritic *ʾur* designates some kind of vegetable that is harvested and serves as food for people (paralleled by *šblt*, and *gml*; cf. *DLU* 47). See also the Akkadian *urû*, 'aromatics' (herbs) (*AHw* 1436; *CDA* 427).

[55] Cf. עַל־הַזָּקָן זְקַן־אַהֲרֹן in Ps 133:2, where זְקַן־אַהֲרֹן may specify עַל־הַזָּקָן, a function that עַל־פִּי יְאוֹר may also possess compared to the previous עַל־יְאוֹר. Note also Isa 23:4: כִּי־אָמַר יָם מָעוֹז הַיָּם לֵאמֹר.

[56] Cf. Akkadian *bīt mēreši*. Chilton's "a place where they sow" (*Isaiah Targum*, 38) is imprecise.

[57] Akkadian *zēru* means both 'seed' and 'sown land' (*CDA* 446; cf. also Isa 23:3).

Arabic *nazafa*, 'to dry up', 'to be exhausted'.[58] Although יבש appears in paral-
lelism with נדף (Job 13:25), the relationships with עָשָׁן, 'smoke' (Ps 68:3), and
הֶבֶל, 'breath', 'vapour' (Prov 21:6), make Guillaume's suggestion unlikely. The
three verbs of Isa 19:7 express the sequence of events. There is a certain se-
quential presentation in this verse: the green is dried up, driven away and is no
more.

s-s וְאֵינֶנּוּ. 1QIsaᵃ has ואין בו. The LXX dismisses וְאֵינֶנּוּ. The MT is supported by
4QIsaᵇ and the Vulg. *Tg. Isa.* adds here ולא יצמח, "and will not sprout".

9 **t-t** וּבֹשׁוּ. LXX translated וּבֹשׁוּ as καὶ αἰσχύνη λήμψεται. However, the nominal
translation of the Greek does not presuppose a different *Vorlage* (contra *HUB*
note 1). It is to be explained by the translation technique of the LXX of
Isaiah.[59]

u-u עֹבְדֵי פִשְׁתִּים. עֹבְדֵי פִשְׁתִּים is similar to the Mishnaic עושי פשתן, "flax-worker"
in *m. Kel.* 16:6 (*NHAW* 4:153; cf. עֹבֵד אֲדָמָה). פֵּשֶׁת or פִּשְׁתָּה[60] designates the
plant ('flax'; Ex 9:31; Josh 2:6) as well as the material made of it ('linen'; Lev
13:47; Deut 22:11).[61]

v שְׂרִיקוֹת. שרק means 'to card' flax. Post biblical references to this practice
speak of סריקת פשתן, "the carding of flax" (*b. Sotah* 46b; cf. *m. Sotah* 9:5). The
LXX and the Vulg. interpreted פִּשְׁתִּים שְׂרִיקוֹת as an adjectival construction
("combed flax"), adopted also in the translation above. פֵּשֶׁת is a fem. noun
which explains the fem. ending of שְׂרִיקוֹת (WO §14.2c). The Syr. and *Tg. Isa.*
treated שְׂרִיקוֹת as an independent noun, unrelated to פִּשְׁתִּים. The Syr. trans-
lated *wnbhtwn ʿbdy ktnʾ dsrqyn wzqryn lḥdwtʾ*, "the flax workers will be ashamed,
the carders (lit. "those carding") and the weavers of [?]". Similarly *Tg. Isa.* has:
ויבהתון פלחי כיתנא דסרקין ומחן מניה מצדן, "and the flax workers will be ashamed,
the carders and those weaving nets (cf. note w-w below) from it". The Syr. and
Tg. Isa. identify the workers (*ʿbdy* and פלחי) with *ktnʾ dsrqyn* and כיתנא דסרקין
respectively. Some scholars also treat שְׂרִיקוֹת as an independent noun meaning
'the carders (of flax)' (fem.), and include it in the second cola of vs. 9.[62]

However, שְׂרִיקוֹת is not a part. form that would mean 'carders'. The
present form of the MT gives good sense if the parallelism is recognised. Note
that עֹבְדֵי פִשְׁתִּים שְׂרִיקוֹת, "those who work with combed flax", refers to the end
users of the flax, i.e. the weavers, used in parallelism with אֹרְגִים.

w-w חֹרָי. In 1QIsaᵃ and 4QIsaᵇ we find חורו (חָוְרוּ, qal perf. of חור, 'to become

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[58] Guillaume, "Isaiah xix. 7", 382–83.

[59] Cf. חִיל as ὀδύνη λαμβάνει (Isa 23:5), הֶרֶד as φόβος λαμβάνει (Isa 10:29), זָלַל as τρόμος
λαμβάνει (Isa 64:2 MT).

[60] Cf. Löw, *Pflanzennamen*, 2:233.

[61] For a discussion of the synonyms (חוּר, בַּד, בּוּץ, שֵׁשׁ), see M. Elat, "The Economic
Relations of the Neo-Assyrian Empire with Egypt", *JAOS* 98 (1978) 31. The sugges-
tion of Eitan that פִּשְׁתִּים would be a loanword from Egyptian *šs*, Coptic *šens* (biblical
שֵׁשׁ), with the initial *p* corresponding to the Egyptian article *pȝ* is unconvincing ("An
Egyptian Loanword in Is 19", *JQR* 15 [1924–1925] 419).

[62] Penna, 184; Wildberger, 701.

pale'). בוש (qal impf.) in Isa 19:9a turns up in parallelism with חור (qal impf.) in Isa 29:22 as well,[63] making the reading of 1QIsaᵃ attractive: "and workers of combed flax will be ashamed, the weavers will grow pale".

Another option is to retain the variant attested in the MT. חוֹרִי as a *hapax legomenon* was related by some to חור, 'white linen' (Est 1:6; 8:15, used alongside תְּכֵלֶת, 'blue / purple linen').[64] Unlike פֵּשֶׁת, חוֹרִי only designates the textile made of the flax, but not the plant itself. All versions render a noun here and not a verb. The LXX treats חוֹרִי as a synonym for שֵׁשׁ and בוץ, rendering them by βύσσος. This meaning is also supported by the Latin *subtilia*, 'fine stuff'. The Targumic מצדן is an allusion to a related word חורא, 'net-work' (*DTTM* 439; cf. also אוהרה in *DTTM* 23).[65] The sense of the Syriac *ḥdwtʾ* is unclear.[66]

If the reading of the MT and the versions is accepted, vs. 9 can be rendered as "ashamed will be those working with combed flax / and the weavers of white linen" (LXX; Vulg.; cf. JM §121k), or "ashamed will be the flax-workers / the carders (fem.!) and the weavers of white linen" (*Tg. Isa.*; Syr.). The witness of 1QIsaᵃ, the parallelism of בוש and חור in Isa 29:22, as well as the frequent parallelism of verbs in the context of 19:9 (e.g. 19:8) make it also possible to translate "those working with combed flax will be ashamed / and the weavers will grow pale". This latter variant is adopted here with some hesitation.

10 x   שָׁתֹתֶיהָ. 1QIsaᵃ and 4QIsaᵇ contains שותתיה, regarded by Kutscher as the qal part. of שתת. He argued that the writer of 1QIsaᵃ thought that the MT form was Aramaic and converted it into a "normal" Hebrew qal part.[67]

As for the meaning of שָׁתֹתֶיהָ, some connect it to the verb שתה, 'to drink'. So Jerome treats שָׁתֹתֶיהָ as a technical term referring to Egypt's irrigation system, rendering *irrigua eius*. The parallel שכר Jerome believed was the phonetic variant of סכר, 'dam' (see below). The Syr. reformulated the phrase: *wntmkkwn kl dʿbdyn škrʾ lmštyʾ dnpšʾ*, "and all those preparing beer as drinking for someone will be humiliated". שָׁתֹתֶיהָ is not translated, but it is echoed in *lmštyʾ*. *lmštyʾ* is a common translation for both שתה and גמא (see below).

Others treat שָׁתֹתֶיהָ as a derivate of שתה, 'to weave', 'to spin', following the LXX (οἱ διαζόμενοι) and *Tg. Isa.* (cf. בֵּית שָׁתֵי).[68] This would require the vocalisation שֹׁתְתֶיהָ or שֹׁתִיתֶיהָ a qal part. fem. pl. But this fem. form is incompatible with the related masc. part. מְדֻכָּאִים. Some argued therefore that שָׁתֹתֶיהָ is derived from Egyptian, from a precursor of Coptic *štit*, 'weaver', an interpretation assumed to be supported by the previous verse.[69] However, 19:10a introduces a new idea, addressing a different group of the Egyptian society than 19:9.

Derived from שֵׁת, שָׁתֹתֶיהָ may be translated as "her pillars", contextually

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[63] Cf. Isa 24:6 with חורו in 1QIsaᵃ instead of חָרוּ as in the MT. However, חָרוּ as a derivate of חרה can be defended in this context (see Kutscher, *Isaiah Scroll*, 234–35).

[64] For the form of חוֹרִי, cf. KS §254e; GKC §86i; BL §62d'.

[65] Note the fishermen in 19:8 and בֵּית שָׁתֵי in 19:10.

[66] Kutscher, *Isaiah Scroll*, 235 note 1. The word may have been misspelled (*d* = *r*?).

[67] Kutscher, *Isaiah Scroll*, 203, 205.e

[68] *HALOT*; Eitan, "Egyptian Loanword", 419–20; Wildberger, 702. The derivate שְׁתִי appears nine times in Lev 13:48ff designating some kind of textile.

[69] *KHw* 333; Eitan, "Egyptian Loanword", 419.

well-supported. The verb דכא is used with יְסוֹד, a synonym of שֵׁת in Job 4:19. Moreover, in 19:13 the leaders of Egypt are called פִּנַּת שְׁבָטֶיהָ, "the corner-stones of her tribes". שֵׁת is a synonym of פִּנָּה. Both are used figuratively of persons (cf. also Ps 11:3?). Together with עֹשֵׂי־שֶׂכֶר, "those working for wages" (see below), שָׁתֹת forms a perfect parallelism providing a description of the entire Egyptian society, from its "top" to "bottom" (cf. Isa 19:15).

y-y עֹשֵׂי־שֶׂכֶר. The LXX and Syr. differ from the vocalisation of the MT in that שֶׂכֶר was translated by ζῦθος and škr² respectively, corresponding to the Hebrew שֵׁכָר, designating some kind of intoxicating drink. The Vulg. and *Tg. Isa.* relate this expression taking to Egypt's famous water-engineering skills.[70]

שֶׂכֶר appears only in Prov 11:18 meaning 'wage', 'reward'. שֶׂכֶר may be identical with the more frequent שָׂכָר. For the syntagmatic construction עֹשֵׂי־שֶׂכֶר, three important texts should be mentioned. First, Prov 11:18 reads: רָשָׁע עֹשֶׂה פְעֻלַּת־שָׁקֶר וְזֹרֵעַ צְדָקָה שֶׂכֶר אֱמֶת, "the wicked works for false earnings, but the one who sows righteousness (works for) a true reward". The expression עֹשֶׂה פְעֻלָּה is comparable to עֹשֵׂי־שֶׂכֶר in Isa 19:10. In Prov 11:18 עשׂה may be used elliptically as also related to שֶׂכֶר. Second, in Deut 15:18 שָׂכָר is connected to עבד: עֲבָדְךָ שְׂכַר שָׂכִיר, "he has served you for the wage of a hireling". Finally, Ezek 29:20 has: פְּעֻלָּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־עָבַד בָּהּ, "the recompense he has worked for". עֹשֵׂי־שֶׂכֶר is semantically identical with שָׂכִיר, 'wage-worker'.

z-z אַגְמֵי־נָפֶשׁ. The LXX translates double: λυπηθήσονται καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς πονέσουσιν. The Syr. *lmšty² dnpš²* ("as a drinking for anyone") derived אַגְמֵי from גמא hiph'il ('aph'el?), 'to give to drink'.[71] The Latin *ad capiendos pisces* might have been a mere explanatory addition to the previous עֹשֵׂי־שֶׂכֶר, *qui faciebant lacunas*, to which Jerome thought (אַגְמֵי־נָפֶשׁ) was a cognate. *Tg. Isa.* as well as the Vulg. may have been influenced by אֲגַם, 'reed-pool' in Ex 7:19. The LXX is closest to the point, interpreting אגם as 'to be angry', or 'to be distressed',[72] related to עגם with the same sense (cf. Job 30:25: נַפְשִׁיעָגְמָה).

11 a-a חַכְמֵי יֹעֲצֵי פַרְעֹה. 1QIsaᵃ has: חכמיה יועצי פרעוה. The fem. suffix refers to Zoan: "her wise men, the counsellors of the pharaoh". 4QIsaᵇ supports the MT.

In 19:11 חַכְמֵי is sometimes translated as a simple adjective (cf. LXX οἱ σοφοὶ σύμβουλοι, "the wise chancellors"). However, the word order hardly permits this.[73] Driver suggested the emendation of יֹעֲצֵי to יָעֲצוּ and changed the word order to חַכְמֵי פַרְעֹה יָעֲצוּ.[74] Wildberger proposed to delete יעצי as a dittography for עצה.[75] However, one can translate the MT in at least three differ-

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[70] Cf. *qui faciebant lacunas*, "those building pools (?)" and עבדין סיכרא, "those building dams" (cf. סכר I, סָכָר and סכור in *DTTM* 993 and *DJPA* 378).

[71] The א could have been interpreted in different ways: either as the sign of an 'aph'el, or of a prosthetic א as in the qal אֶשְׁתִּיו (Dan 5:3).

[72] Cf. Akkadian *agāmu*, 'to be angry', Syriac ²gm, 'to be depressed'.

[73] חַכְמֵי, or rather חֲכָמִים would have to follow יֹעֲצֵי פַרְעֹה in that case. Exceptions are few and of a different character (cf. WO §14.3.1b).

[74] Driver, "Problems", 40. Cf. *Tg. Isa.* rendering חכימיא דמלכוהי לפרעה and the Syr. ḥkym² dmlkyn lpr²wn, "the wise men who advise the pharaoh [a stupid counsel]".

[75] Wildberger, 702.

ent ways, retaining its present form. (1) The first option is to read the two constr. יֹעֲצֵי and חַכְמֵי as each forming a constructive relationship with פַרְעֹה. For poetical reasons the two words were connected without the ו.[76] (2) A second solution is offered by the Vulg. rendering חַכְמֵי יֹעֲצֵי פַרְעֹה as a sequence of constructive relationships, *sapientes consiliarii Pharao*, "the wise ones of the counsellors of the pharaoh". (3) A third option is to treat חַכְמֵי as an adjective, in a constr. relationship best rendered in English as a superlative: "the wisest counsellors of the pharaoh".[77]

b-b עֵצָה נִבְעָרָה. According to the present vocalisation, נִבְעָרָה is a niph'al part. fem. of בער, 'to turn out to be stupid'. In general 19:11bc is rendered as "the counsellors of the pharaoh give stupid counsel" (cf. Vulg.). Yet the absence of a verb 'to give' is here difficult to explain. The LXX treats עֵצָתָם נִבְעָרָה (!) as if it were in apposition: ἡ βουλὴ αὐτῶν μωρανθήσεται, "(the wisest counsellors of the pharaoh)—their counsel has become stupid" (cf. also Wildberger). Yet this translation lacks further support. Others argue that עֵצָה can also mean 'council' or 'advisory board',[78] a sense supposedly appearing in Qumran,[79] but unknown in the Bible.[80]

עֵצָה נִבְעָרָה can be parsed as an independent sentence with נִבְעָרָה the pausal form of the niph'al perf. נִבְעָרָה. In that case, as Wildberger also argued, נִבְעָרָה is not an attribute, but a predicate of עֵצָה.

c-c מַלְכֵי־קֶדֶם. קֶדֶם can be translated either as in a locative sense ('east'), or with a temporal meaning ('former', 'ancient'), on which see the exegesis.

12 d-d וְיַגִּידוּ נָא לָךְ וְיֵדְעוּ. The verb וְיֵדְעוּ is difficult. JPS assumes that this refers to the wise men of Egypt: "let them tell you, let them discover what the LORD of Hosts has planned against Egypt". If that was the case, one would expect וְיֵדְעוּ וְיַגִּידוּ, i.e. the wise must first disclose the plan for themselves prior of proclaiming it to the others. The sequence of נגד...ידע is well known in the Bible,[81] but in these cases the knowledge (ידע) is the consequence of the proclamation (נגד). If that was the intention of 19:12, one would find here וְיַגִּידוּ נָא לָךְ ותדע (נגד).

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[76] I.e. "the wise men (of the pharaoh) and the counsellors of the pharaoh". For חַכְמֵי עֶרֶשׂ יְצוּעָי, אֹהֶל בֵּיתִי, cf. יֹעֲצֵי (Prov 9:3), גַּפֵּי מְרֹמֵי קָרֶת (Ezek 6:11), תּוֹעֲבוֹת רָעוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ps 132:3), מְעוֹן בֵּיתֶךָ (Ps 26:8). Cf. Ibn Ezra, 89.

[77] Significant examples to mention here are: מִקְּטַנֵּי שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (1 Sam 9:21), גִּבּוֹרֵי חַיִל מְלֶאכֶת (1 Chr 9:13). Cf. also חַכְמוֹת שָׂרוֹתֶיהָ, "the wisest of her princesses" (Judg 5:29) and see further GKC §133h; Dillmann, 174; WO §14.3.3b. These examples suggest that the entity referred to as חַכְמֵי encloses a smaller circle than יֹעֲצֵי.

[78] Cf. H.-P. Stähli, יעץ, *THAT* 1:751.

[79] L. Ruppert, יעץ, *TWAT* 3:750–51; R. Bergmeier, "Zum Ausdruck עצת רשים in Ps 1:1, Hi 10:3, 21:6 und 22:18", *ZAW* 79 (1967) 229. However, cf. the more cautious view of J. Worrell, "עצה: "Counsel" or "Council" at Qumran?", *VT* 20 (1970) 69–74.

[80] Ps 1:1 is cited in support of this interpretation, but עֵצָה can stand here for, 'plan', 'advise' (against Bergmeier, "עצת רשים", 229–32). Cf. הלך בְּ, "to live according to", "to follow" in Ps 81:13; Jer 7:24; Mic 6:16 (with מוֹעֵצָה), Prov 28:26 (with חָכְמָה), Lev 18:4; 20:23; 1 Kgs 3:3; 6:12; (with חֹק and מִצְוָה), 2 Chr 6:16; Ps 119:1; Jer 26:4 (תּוֹרָה).

[81] Ruth 4:4; Job 11:6; Isa 41:22.23.26 (cf. Eccl 8:7; 10:14; Isa 40:21).

More likely, וְיֵדְעוּ should be emended to וְיֹד[יﬠ]וּ (hiph'il). This interpretation (apparently followed by the LXX ἐιπάτωσαν) requires only vocalic changes.

13 e-e פְּנַת שְׁבָטֶיהָ. The translation technique of the LXX (κατὰ φυλάς) is unclear. κατὰ possibly corresponds to a word different from פְּנַת, perhaps פֵּאָה, 'side', 'region' (Ex 27:12; Lev 13:41; Jer 9:26 MT), עַל־פִּי, or פְּנֵי (cf. Lev 4:6). However, it is also possible that the Greek version provides a free translation, also suggested by the dropped suffix of שְׁבָטֶיהָ. The Aramaic רבני פלכהא, "district chiefs" of *Tg. Jon.* suggests that שְׁבָטֶיהָ was understood to mean the nomes of Egypt (*DMTT* 1182). The Syr., on the other hand, rendered שְׁבָטֶיהָ by *šrbt'*, 'race', 'tribe', 'clan', 'family',[82] i.e. in the sense of a demographical entity. פִּנָּה is rendered in the Syr. as *zwyt'*, with the same meaning as in Hebrew.[83]

The metaphorical sense of פִּנָּה referring to the leaders of a community is known from other texts.[84] These parallel passages, as well as *Tg. Isa.* suggest emending פְּנַת to פִּנַּת, also favoured by the pl. form of the related verb, הִתְעוּ.

14 f עֹוְעִים. The meaning of this *hapax legomenon* is derived from the verb עוה, 'to do wrong', 'to pervert', 'to twist', 'to confuse'.

15 g-g מַעֲשֶׂה. וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה לְמִצְרַיִם מַעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה should be interpreted in this context as 'deed', 'achievement', 'action' in general. Egypt will not be able to do *anything*, i.e. to take actions to influence the course of history.[85]

h-h רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב. According to Donner and Ockinga רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב is an Egyptianism. Commenting on Isa 9:13, where the same expression appears, Donner assumed that רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב was the Egyptian counterpart of *tp*, 'head' and *ph.wy*, 'the end of a territory'. Similarly he argued that כִּפָּה recalls the scourge, the ensign of Egyptian pharaohs, and אַגְמוֹן refers to the "Wappenpflanze", the symbolic representation of Upper Egypt. According to Donner, רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב in Isa 9:13 referred to the diminishing territory of Israel and Judah.[86] Ockinga on the other hand argued that רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב is cognate to Egyptian *m ḥʒ.t r pḥ.wy*, "from the beginning to the end", referring to both ends of a geographical region.[87]

In spite of the claims of Donner and Ockinga, neither רֹאשׁ, nor זָנָב is used in a geographical sense. רֹאשׁ generally refers to leading personalities.[88] The same antonym רֹאשׁ / זָנָב appears in Deut 28:13 ("and YHWH will make you

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[82] *LS* 806. The lexeme *šrbt'* stands for מִשְׁפָּחוֹת in Gen 8:19; 10:31.

[83] *LS* 190–91. Cf. Job 1:19; Zeph 1:16; 3:6.

[84] See פִּנּוֹת הָעָם (Judg 20:2) and כֹּל פִּנּוֹת כָּל־הָעָם (1 Sam 14:38). Cf. Zech 10:4.

[85] For the formulation מַעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה, cf. Gen 44:15; Ex 18:20; Josh 24:31; Judg 2:7.10; 1 Sam 8:8; 1 Kgs 13:11; 2 Kgs 23:19; Eccl 3:11; 8:9.17.

[86] H. Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern. Die Stellung der klassischen Propheten des 8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. zur Aussenpolitik der Könige von Israel und Juda* (VTS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1964), 72–73.

[87] B. G. Ockinga, "*rōʾš wĕzānāb kippāh wĕʾagmôn* in Jes 9,13 und 19,15", *BN* 10 (1979) 31–34.

[88] E.g., Ex 6:14.25; Num 1:2.16; 4:2; Isa 7:8.9. Mic 3:1 addresses the leaders of Israel as רָאשֵׁי יַעֲקֹב (| קְצִינֵי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל). The Hebrew מִכַּף־רֶגֶל וְעַד־רֹאשׁ (cf. Job 2:7) in Isa 1:6 may be compared to רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב.

head and not tail") and 28:44 ("he will be the head, and you the tail"). These texts lead us to conclude that רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב probably refers to ranks on a political or social scale. The syntax of 9:13 hardly allows us a different explanation: "YHWH will cut off from Israel (מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל) head and tail". The fact that רֹאשׁ and זָנָב are the objects of כרת, and that the preposition מן is used here, make a geographic interpretation unlikely. The immediate context of 9:13 mentions the leaders and those led (9:15), the young and the old (9:16), which allude to an entire society.[89] The case is most likely similar with 19:15.

i-i כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן. Given that כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן appears in Isa 19:15 in the context of a prophecy related to Egypt, many considered this expression an Egyptianism.[90] Ockinga rendered אַגְמוֹן as 'papyrus', Egyptian w3ḏ (cf. Job 40:26; 41:12; Isa 58:5), and suggested the identification of כִּפָּה with sw.t, 'rush'. Then he maintained that the two plants, כִּפָּה and אַגְמוֹן evoke a common imagery designating Upper and Lower Egypt. Upper Egypt (šm'w) is symbolised by a "rush", Egyptian sw.t, which is also the determinative or logogram for Upper Egypt. Lower Egypt (mḥw) is symbolised by a papyrus plant, Egyptian w3ḏ, also used as a determinative or logogram.[91]

Although this is an attractive explanation fitting to the Egyptian context of Isa 19, we are left with several problems. As far as אַגְמוֹן is concerned, this word may be related to גֹּמֶא, 'papyrus', and could be considered as a phonetic variant to it.[92] However, גֹּמֶא corresponds to Egyptian qm3, which in Late Egyptian texts is equated with sw.t (and not w3ḏ) (WÄS 4:58). w3ḏ on the other hand designates the 'papyrus stalk' ('Papyrusstengel', WÄS 1:263), and it belongs to the same group as ṭwfy (Hebrew סוּף).

The identification of כִּפָּה is uncertain. Vocalised as כַּפָּה it denotes 'leaf', 'leafage'. כַּפֹּת תְּמָרִים in Lev 23:40, when compared to עֲלֵי תְמָרִים in Neh 8:15 suggests that this was the leafage of the palm tree used to build a booth. In post-biblical Hebrew כֵּיפָּה refers to the top branches / leaves of palm trees (DTTM 635). כַּפָּה is a cognate of the Akkadian kappu that may also mean 'branch (?)' of a tree'. With the vocalisation כִּפָּה the word is attested in Job 15:32 in connection with רענן, 'to blossom', 'to be luxuriant' (?), יוֹנֶקֶת, 'shoot', 'sprout' (Job 15:30), which may suggest that יוֹנֶקֶת and כִּפָּה are synonyms.[93]

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[89] Isa 9:14, a text in general considered a gloss, interprets רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב as referring to "elders and dignitaries" and "the prophet" respectively.

[90] So for instance Israelit-Groll, "Egyptian Background", 301. She argues that כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן was an abbreviation of the Egyptian ẖrd-n-k3p, "the title of commoners adopted by the palace" (like Moses). The word was no longer in use by the time of Isaiah, but Israelit-Groll argues this would prove that Isaiah was acquainted with Egyptian language and social institutions.

[91] Ockinga, "rō'š wĕzānāb", 32–33. Cf. WÄS 1:263.

[92] A different etymology is, however, also possible. Cf. Akkadian agammu, 'marsh', 'swamp' (Sumerian loanword [a g a m]), Jewish Palestinian and Babylonian Aramaic אגמא, and Syriac 'gm' with the same meaning.

[93] Cf. Akkadian kippatu, 'tendril', 'twining stem' (CDA 159). Similar to Job 15:32 is Job 8:16 (also using יוֹנֶקֶת instead of כִּפָּה; cf. Job 14:7–9; 18:16; Ps 52:8–10; Ezek 17:8–10; Hos 14:5–7).

A further difficulty with Ockinga's proposal is that כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן appears not only in an Egyptian context, but also in Isa 9:13, where its Egyptian background plays no role whatsoever. It seems therefore that in Isa 9:13 and 19:15 כִּפָּה has little to do with 'reed' or 'rush'.[94] כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן might refer to the lower part and upper part of a tree and, accordingly, the members of a society.

17 j לְחָגָּא. 1QIsaᵃ contains לחוגה and several manuscripts have לחגה. Gesenius regards the final א a reminiscence of Aramaic orthography.[95] The LXX has φόβητρον, 'terror', followed by the Syr. (swrdʾ) and *Tg. Isa.* (דחלא).[96] Aquila rendered (εἰς) γύρωσιν, 'circle'.[97] The Vulg. has *in festivitatem* (cf. חַג) according to some codices, but *in pavorem* or *in timorem* in other manuscripts.[98]

Some derive חָגָּא from an Arabic cognate noun meaning "refuge",[99] but this translation contradicts the negative connotation assumed by the context (cf. פחד). חָגָּא as 'terror' would fit the context, but no Semitic etymology can be given for this rendering. The LXX, the Syr., and *Tg. Isa.* are possibly based on the context of the prophecy, whether or not they are interdependent.

Phonetic cognates of חָגָּא in North-West Semitic appear rarely. *mḥgh*, 'territory' is attested in *KAI* 202B:5.[100] Aramaic *yḥgh* appears in *KAI* 278:5. This inscription was written on a basalt stele that probably functioned as a landmark. Unfortunately the limited context provides little clues for explanation, which has not surprisingly lead to very different interpretations.[101]

> This is the border (*tḥwm*) of *Krbyl* and *Kršy*, the cities (?) which belong to Kubaba of *Pšd/r*, who lives in Kaštabalay. Everyone who *yḥgh* this border before (*qdm*) Kubaba of *Pšd/r*, or someone else […]

חָגָּא in Isa 19:17 can perhaps be explained through Ps 107:27 and the Arabic *ḥajaʾa*, 'struck'.[102] In Ps 107:27 we read: וְיָנוּעוּ כַּשִּׁכּוֹר יָחוֹגּוּ, "they reeled and staggered like drunken men". The verb חגג / חוג is synonymous with נוע (Isa 19:1) and תעה (19:14), so that חָגָּא may mean 'dizziness', 'confusion'.

k-k כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יַזְכִּיר אֹתָהּ אֵלָיו יִפְחָד. For זכר hiph'il + אֵת see Ex 20:24; 1 Sam 4:18;

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[94] For an uncertain Akkadian cognate, cf. *kupû*, 'reed thicket' (?) (*CDA* 168).

[95] GKC §80h, 95d. Note also זְרָא in Num 11:20 and כְּלָא in Ezek 36:5. Duhm, 144 considers חָגָּא an Aramaism.

[96] Buhl assumed that חָגָּא was a misspelling for חרגָּא, 'terror' (cited in Marti, 156).

[97] γῦρον, 'ring', 'circle' is the translation of חוג in the LXX (cf. Job 22:14; Isa 40:22).

[98] Cf. A. Penna, "La Volgata e il manoscritto 1QIsᵃ", *Bib* 38 (1957) 383, *VL* 456–57. In his Isaiah-commentary Jerome writes: "… festivitate in hebraico legitur agga, quod interpretari potest et festivitas, unde et Aggeus in festivum vertitur et timor, quod significantius Aquila transtulit γυρωσιν, cum aliquis pavidus et tremens circumfert oculos et advenientem formidat inimicum".

[99] See Gesenius, 626; GesThes 445; Alexander, 355. *ḥgtʾ* is attested in Nabatean, with a suggested meaning 'protection', 'refuge', though this is uncertain (cf. *DNWSI* 348).

[100] Cf. also *DNWSI* 611. For *mḥgh*, cf. Heb. גְּלִילָה, 'district' and גלל, 'to whirl'. Cf. also כִּכַּר, as a derivate of כרר, which is also in connection with the idea of whirling around (so *HALOT*; cf. מְכַרְכֵּר, 'dancing' in 2 Sam 6:14.16).

[101] *yḥgh* was translated as 'to go around', 'to take refuge', or 'to encircle' (cf. *KAI*).

[102] Driver, "Textual Problems", 46.

1 Kgs 17:18; Isa 62:6. The meaning of the construction יַזְכִּיר אֶת is "to bring (it) to remembrance", "to (make) mention (of it)" (cf. Gen 40:14). The subject of זכר may be either determined or undetermined. If the subject (כֹּל) is determined, then so must also be the subject of יִפְחָד: the one who mentions Judah (to Egypt) is the one who trembles (cf. Ex 36:2; Lev 6:11; etc.).[103]

　　　If זכר has an undetermined subject, then כֹּל אֲשֶׁר cannot have a temporal sense as many commentators argue,[104] but it forms an ellipsis with אֵלָיו. In that case, the sentence can be rewritten as follows: *אֶל־כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יַזְכִּיר אֹתָהּ יִפְחָד, "everyone to whom one mentions (יַזְכִּיר) it (i.e. Judah) will tremble". As Dillmann also recognised, this second option fits the present context better.[105]

18 **l-l** עִיר הַהֶרֶס. For a detailed discussion on this problem, see EXCURSUS 4.

m-m יֵאָמֵר־לְאֶחָת. Discussions of Isa 19:18 concentrate on עִיר הַהֶרֶס. יֵאָמֵר־לְאֶחָת is almost unanimously rendered as "one of them will be called". The problem with this translation is that the other four cities introduced immediately before fall outside the horizon of the text. Why is only the name of one city mentioned and four other left anonymous? Although commentators assign little significance to this phrase, it holds the key to the interpretation of vs. 18.

　　　Translating יֵאָמֵר־לְאֶחָת as "one of them will be called" is only one option, and it even seems to be the wrong one. The meaning of יֵאָמֵר לְ, "to be told to someone", "to be called" is clear.[106] But as regards לְאֶחָד / לְאֶחָת, texts in which these are used with the preposition מִן, must be distinguished from texts without מִן, as the meaning varies according to the syntagmatic construction.

　　　(a) לְאֶחָד / לְאֶחָת with the preposition מִן
In cases where the preposition מִן appears, לְאֶחָד / לְאַחַת may have two meanings, undetermined and determined. The following texts may be mentioned as examples providing an undetermined meaning. In Lev 5:4–5 לְאַחַת מֵאֵלֶּה refers to someone who has committed a sin, "in (lit. from) anyone of these". לְאֶחָד מִבְּנֵי in Num 36:3 alludes to Israelite maidens who married "anyone of the sons of" other tribes of Israel. לְאֶחָד מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת מַטֵּה אָבִיהָ in Num 36:8 refers to an Israelite woman who had to marry "anyone from the clans of her father's tribe". Similarly לְאֶחָד מֵהֶם in Deut 28:55 means "anyone of them", i.e. the fellows of a certain Israelite. In Ezek 46:17 לְאַחַד מֵעֲבָדָיו means "anyone of his servants". As for cases with a determined meaning, in some texts לְאַחַת מִן /

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[103] GKC §143b, regarding פחד to refer to Egypt, but כֹּל אֲשֶׁר as the subject of זכר ("every one that mentions it [Judah] to it [Egypt], it [Egypt!] is afraid…"), is unlikely.

[104] Wildberger, 728 translated: "jedesmal wenn einer es vor ihnen erwähnt". אֲשֶׁר־כֹּל does not have such a temporal sense (certainly not without בְּ). Cf. also Gray, 332; König, 203 ("so oft auch immer man sie ihnen gegenüber in Erinnerung bringen wird…"); Ehrlich, 72; Procksch, 250; Kaiser, 85. Isa 2:14 does not support Gray's claim that כֹּל אֲשֶׁר can have a temporal significance, since there, too, כֹּל אֲשֶׁר means "all of that which".

[105] Dillmann, 176.

[106] Num 23:23; Josh 2:2; Ps 87:5 (not of Zion); Isa 4:3; 32:5; 61:6; 62:4; Jer 4:11; Hos 2:1; Zeph 3:16. Cf. the semantically similar קרא niph'al imperf. in Gen 2:23; 21:12; Prov 16:21; Isa 1:26; 32:5; 35:8; 62:4.12; etc.

לְאֶחָד refers to one specific person from a group, like לְאַחַד מֵהַנְּעָרִים, "one of the servants" of David (2 Sam 1:15), or לְאַחַד מִבְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים, "one of the (sons of the) prophets" (2 Kgs 9:1).[107]

(b) לְאֶחָד / לְאַחַת without the preposition מִן

There is a different group of texts—to which Isa 19:18 also belongs—where the preposition מִן is missing.[108] In these texts לְאֶחָד / לְאַחַת does not have the meaning "one of", but "each one", or "one by one".

שְׁנֵי הָעֹמֶר לָאֶחָד in Ex 16:22 means "each one of them two omers", or "two omers per person". Numbers 7:3 retells the offerings of Israel's twelve leaders. In this connection it mentions six carts and twelve oxen: one cart for every two of the leaders (עֲגָלָה עַל־שְׁנֵי הַנְּשִׂאִים), "and one ox for each one of them" (וְשׁוֹר לְאֶחָד). In Num 15:12 לְאֶחָד כְּמִסְפָּרָם alludes to how the various types of animal offers had to be similarly handled, "each one according to their number", i.e. the number of animals (cf. Num 15:11). In Isa 6:2 שֵׁשׁ כְּנָפַיִם לְאֶחָד means that "each one (of the seraphim) had six wings". According to Ezek 1:6; 10:14.21 "each one (of the cherubim) had four faces" (אַרְבָּעָה פָנִים לְאֶחָד) and "four wings each one of them" (אַרְבַּע כְּנָפַיִם לְאַחַת לָהֶם).[109]

We may conclude therefore that יֵאָמֵר־לְאַחַת in Isa 19:18 should be translated as "each one of those (cities) will be called…". This has significant consequences for the textual reconstruction of 19:18. In EXCURSUS 4 I mentioned some arguments against adopting the reading עִיר הַחֶרֶס, Heliopolis, i.e. a geographical name. Here it becomes clear that the grammar of vs. 18 makes such a reading even more unlikely. הַחֶרֶס would not provide a fitting translation, since not all five cities can bear the same geographical name. הַהֶרֶס is not only supported by textual witnesses, but is also grammatically the most likely.[110] For further discussion, see the exegesis.

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[107] There are many examples where אֶחָד + מִן is found without the preposition לְ, which follow the same pattern as the one outlined here, i.e. either mean "anyone of", or "one of" (Gen 2:21; 3:22; etc.). Note also that the preposition מִן can be substituted by a constructive relationship: אַחַד הָעָם (Gen 26:10) is the same as *אֶחָד מִן־הָעָם.

[108] The preposition is included in the Syr. at Isa 19:18: *wḥdʾ mnhyn ḥrs ttqrʾ*, "and one of them will be called ḥrs". Similar is also *Tg. Isa.*: חדא מנהון, "one of them".

[109] אֶחָד / אַחַת can have a similar sense as above without the preposition לְ (Ex 36:30; Judg 8:18; 2 Kgs 15:20). In a few cases לְאֶחָד should be translated differently (cf. 1 Kgs 3:25; Eccl 4:11; 7:27; Isa 27:12; Zech 11:17).

[110] Dillmann and Procksch shortly mention Bredekamp, to whom they ascribe the view that אחד could have had a partitive meaning, "each one". They reject his suggestion arguing that not all five cities can bear the same name (Dillmann, 177; Procksch, 250). However, if the name is not geographical, but symbolic-etiological ("city of destruction / ruin"), this counterargument loses its force (cf. Isa 48:2, where different persons are called by one symbolic name). Gray gave a short but unsatisfactory assessment of the translation "each one of them", rejecting it with the motivation that "in cases where one seems to have such a meaning … the distributive idea is suggested by repetition, or by a distributive preposition, or by the context" (Gray, 334). The repetitive use of אֶחָד / אַחַת forms a different group (as noted above) which I did not include to support my arguments. The distributive preposition (by which Gray probably meant

20 n-n וְרָב. One can discern three different interpretations of וְרָב. The present vocalisation suggests that the Massoretes understood רָב as a participle of ריב, 'to argue', 'to dispute'; 'to quarrel', 'to fight'. The Vulg. (*propugnator*, 'defender'; cf. Isa 63:1), Syr. (*dynʾ*, 'judge'), and *Tg. Isa.* (דיין, 'judge') treat רָב as a nominal form. This participial form is adopted in most translations and commentaries.[111] According to a second approach, the Massoretic וְרָב should be emended to וְרָב, i.e. a qal perf.[112] It remains doubtful whether the LXX translated a participial form, or a qal perf. consecutive, as suggested by Van der Kooij.[113] As a third solution, some render here 'chief', 'captain', vocalising רַב.[114]

The last option is the least likely, since רַב is never used independently. The strength of the first proposal is that מוֹשִׁיע is also a hiph'il part. As regards the first option, the part. of ריב appears in two further texts in Isa 45:9 ('the one who strives') and Jer 51:36 ('the one who pleads a cause'). According to this interpretation, רָב alludes to the same person as מוֹשִׁיע, i.e. to a person different from YHWH and sent by him, yielding the translation: "and he will send them a saviour (one who saves) and a petitioner (one who pleads their cause) and he will deliver them". Had this been the case, one would expect the word order *וְיִשְׁלַח לָהֶם רָב וּמוֹשִׁיע. In the exegesis, I shall plead for the second option as the most probable reading.

The textual variant for וְרָב in 1QIsaᵃ is וירד, which has been argued to be a deliberate correction coherent with the view of the Qumran community expecting a Messiah of the heavens, who would descend (ירד) upon earth (cf. Ex 3:8).[115] But since ירד is commonly used for "going down" to Egypt, it is also possible that the Qumranic text alluded to a מוֹשִׁיע of Judah (?) who will come to Egypt, perhaps even alluding to Onias III, who had built the temple at Leontopolis.[116] At any rate, this interpretation of 1QIsaᵃ also testifies for the verbal rather than the nominal interpretation of רב.

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the preposition מִן) also belongs to a different group as we have already seen. The subjective nature of Gray's third argument, "the context", makes any explanation possible, and it is therefore of little significance. Van Hoonacker also follows the translation "each one of them", though not entering into details (Van Hoonacker, 111, "Deux passages obscurs dans le chap. 19 d'Isaïe (vv. 11.18)", *RBén* 36 [1924] 306). Recourse to Egyptian in order to explain יֵאָמֵר־לְאֶחָת (cf. Israelit-Groll, "Egyptian Background", 301) is unnecessary.

[111] Gesenius, 656; Dillmann, 178; Von Orelli, 78; König, 205; Van Hoonacker, 112; Oswald, 373; Watts, 257.

[112] Duhm, 146; Marti, 157; Gray, 340, 342; Fischer, 145; Procksch, 253; Kissane, 214; Kaiser, 86; Wildberger, 729.

[113] A. van der Kooij, "The Old-Greek of Isaiah 19:16-25: Translation and Interpretation", in *VI Congress of the International Organisation for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Jerusalem 1986* (ed. C. E. Cox; SBLSCS 23; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 140.

[114] Ibn Ezra, 91 and Hitzig according to Dillmann, 178.

[115] So Wildberger, 729, followed by B. Wodecki, "The Heights of Religious Universalism in Is xix:16-25", in *"Lasset uns Brücken bauen"* (eds. K. D. Schunk et al.; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1998), 176.

[116] See EXCURSUS 4 on עִיר־הַחֶרֶס in Qumran; cf. H. Robert, "The Jewish Temple at Leontopolis: A Reconsideration", *JJS* 33 (1982) 440–41.

21 o-o וְעָבְדוּ זֶבַח וּמִנְחָה. The problem with this expression is that a preposition בְּ would be expected after עבד: *עָבְדוּ בְּזֶבַח וּבְמִנְחָה*, "they will serve (YHWH) with sacrifice and food offering" (cf. Josh 22:27; Isa 43:23). The case with עבד in vs. 23 is different and cannot be taken as a parallel example.[117] It is highly probable that עבד is an Aramaism here. עבד corresponds to Hebrew עשׂה, used in similar contexts.[118] The LXX probably understood the text this way.[119]

22 p-p וְנָגַף יהוה אֶת־מִצְרַיִם נָגֹף וְרָפוֹא. Instead of the inf. form, the versions render the noun נֶגֶף.[120] 1QIsaᵃ contains a niph'al 3rd pers. pl. ונרפו instead of the qal inf. ורפוא.[121] The LXX makes its translation of רָפוֹא parallel to the previous clause: καὶ ἰάσεται αὐτοὺς ἰάσει (*וּרְפָאָם רְפוּאָה), correcting the MT.[122] However, other examples make the text as found in the MT reliable, both in terms of syntax and meaning. The qal perf. with waw-consecutive is followed here by two infinitives. The second infinitive (רָפוֹא) is constructed in semantic antithesis with the first, with an adversative translation of the ו (GKC §113s). Similar examples appear in Gen 8:7 and Joel 2:26.[123] The phrase could be interpreted as: "YHWH will indeed smite Egypt, yet he will heal (them)". The formulation with a paronomastic and an adverbial infinitive expresses here the idea that YHWH's punishment will not be his final word, for he will also heal Egypt (WO §35.3.2d). Semantically נגף is not the verbal companion to the inf. of רפא; not the smiting will bring healing, as Wildberger and Kaiser argued.[124]

q-q נֶעְתַּר לָהֶם. While the qal (and hiph'il) of עתר means 'to plead', the niph'al acquires the sense 'to respond to a plea', 'to grant a plea'.[125]

23 r-r עָבְדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־אַשּׁוּר. The meaning of this phrase most at hand is "Egypt will serve Assyria", a rendering followed by all versions and a few exegetes.[126] But scholars often argue that the context speaking of salvation brought to the

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[117] Contra Alexander, 362 and Dillmann, 179.

[118] Ex 10:25; Num 15:3.8; Josh 22:23; 1 Kgs 12:27; 2 Kgs 5:17; 10:24; Jer 33:18 (cf. Gesenius, 656; Ehrlich, 72). Cf. the Aramaic ʿbdn hm qrbʾ, "they are preparing a sacrifice" (*DNWSI* 811), or the syntactically and lexically even closer Egyptian Aramaic text mnḥh wlbwnh wʿlwh lʾ ʿbdw bʾgwrʾ zk, "meal-offering, incense and sacrifice they do not offer in that temple" (*DNWSI* 811), or wqn twr ʿnz mqlw lʾ ytʿbd tmh, "sheep, oxen, goats will not be offered as burnt offering there" (*DNWSI* 815).

[119] Cf. ποιήσουσιν θυσίας (see Van der Kooij, "Old-Greek", 143).

[120] LXX πληγή, the Vulg. *plaga*, the Syr. *mḥwtʾ*, and *Tg. Isa.* מַחָא.

[121] Cf. 1 Sam 6:3; Ezek 47:9.11 with א, and 2 Kgs 2:22 without the א as in 1QIsaᵃ. Likewise Ezek 47:8 K וְנִרְפָּאוּ and Q וְנִרְפּוּ.

[122] So for the Greek text Van der Kooij, "Old-Greek", 144.

[123] In Gen 8:7: וַיֵּצֵא יָצוֹא וָשׁוֹב, "and it went to and fro"; Joel 2:26: וַאֲכַלְתֶּם אָכוֹל וְשָׂבוֹעַ, "you shall eat and be satisfied". See further 1 Kgs 20:37; Jer 12:17 (WO §35.3.2c–d).

[124] Wildberger, 727: "schlagen mit heilendem Schlag" and 743: "es ist ein Schlagen, das weh tut und zugleich zur Heilung führt", and Kaiser, 86. Note the connections between יצא and שׁוב in the parallel Gen 8:7 above.

[125] Gen 25:21; 2 Sam 21:14.25; 1 Chr 5:20; 2 Chr 33:13.19; Ezr 8:23. Cf. WO §23.4g.

[126] Ibn Ezra, 91; A. Schenker, "Jesaja 19,16-25: die Endzeit Israels rekapituliert seine Ursprünge", in *Studien zu Propheten und Religionsgeschichte* (ed. A. Schenker; SBAAT 36; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2003), 8–9; Sweeney, 270.

Egyptians does not favour such a translation. That is why most incline to treat
עבד as intransitive, with cultic connotations, i.e. to serve (worship) YHWH.

The problem with this proposal is first that עבד does not appear elsewhere
as an intransitive verb with the connotation 'to serve'.[127] Second, עבד אֶת al-
ways means "to serve (someone)", and not "to serve with". Even if this second
option was possible, there would remain a problem. עבד still lacks an object in
vs. 23, making it difficult to assume that this verse deals with the service of
YHWH. A third argument that makes the translation "to serve YHWH together"
unlikely is that עבד is not in itself a cultic term. One has to disagree with
Wildberger that the meaning of עבד would have undergone an evolution from
a transitive general to an intransitive cultic meaning.[128] The cultic aspect
needs to be made explicit. Especially in a context in which the world power,
Assyria, is referred to, it may be expected that the author formulated more
clearly, whether he indented this cultic meaning. How this translation affects
the meaning of the prophecy, needs a detailed treatment and I shall address
this problem in the exegesis.

Hayes & Irvine suggest a different translation of עבד אֶת, arguing that the
verb עבד should be understood in terms of "to work together" rather than in
terms of cultic worship.[129] Although עבד can mean 'to work', i.e. to exercise a
physical job,[130] אֶת is not used in such a context. It is even more questionable
whether עבד could mean 'to co-operate' 'to trade', as they interpret the present
passage.

25 **s-s** אֲשֶׁר בֵּרֲכוֹ. The 3rd masc. sg. suffix is difficult to interpret. If we assume that
it refers to Israel, it is strange that vs. 25 mentions all three nations as blessed
and not Israel alone. If it refers to אֶרֶץ in vs. 24, one would anticipate a fem.
form of the suffix. Exegetes propose emending בֵּרֲכוֹ to בְּרָכָה.[131] Others argue
that the sg. suffix reflects the idea that the three nations would become one.[132]

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[127] Job 36:11 is sometimes compared to Isa 19:25 (Gesenius, 656–57). In the phrase
אִם־יִשְׁמְעוּ וְיַעֲבֹדוּ יְכַלּוּ יְמֵיהֶם בַּטּוֹב the verb עבד appears without an object, and in relation
to God. Nevertheless, עבד does not seem to have the sense "to serve" (YHWH), but is
synonymous to שמע, 'to listen'; 'to obey'. עבד acquires here the meaning it usually
possesses when used without an object, namely 'to work' (cf. H. Ringgren, עבד, *TWAT*
5:988), or more specifically 'to perform' (cf. Num 4:26). The sense of the phrase is that
if "they" listen to what was told to them and perform what has been requested, they
will complete their days in prosperity. עבד has nothing to do with serving God in a
cultic sense. Job 36:11 is therefore different from Isa 19:21.

[128] Wildberger, 744. The noun עֲבוֹדָה that Wildberger mentions as a paradigm, assum-
ing that its sense evolved to designate the service of YHWH, is an inappropriate anal-
ogy. עֲבוֹדָה (like עבד) does not mean the service of YHWH only (cf. Gen 29:27; 30:26;
Ex 1:14). It simply means service, the nature of which is clarified by the context.

[129] Hayes & Irvine, 266.

[130] Ex 5:18; 20:9; 21:2; 34:21; Num 8:25; Deut 5:13; 28:39.

[131] Duhm, 147; Procksch, 254; Clements, 172. Instead the 3rd masc. suffix the LXX has
ἣν (εὐλόγησεν κύριος), which evidently refers to "the land" in vs. 24 amidst which
Israel shall become blessed (εὐλογημένος) (Van der Kooij, "Old-Greek", 151).

[132] Alexander, 365; J. F. A. Sawyer, "'Blessed Be My People, Egypt' (Isaiah 19:25): The

However, it is most convincing to relate the suffix to אֶרֶץ in the vs. 1. אֶרֶץ may occasionally connect to a masculine grammatical form (suffix, verb, etc.).[133]

Procksch interpreted אֲשֶׁר בֵּרֲכוֹ (בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ) בְּרָכָה as a *figura etymologica*, "der Segen, mit dem Gott gesegnet hat".[134] However, this would lead to further exegetical problems. Israel cannot be both the instrument and the object of blessing. אֲשֶׁר must refer to הָאָרֶץ and not בְּרָכָה.

t-t עַמִּי מִצְרַיִם וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי אַשּׁוּר. The LXX has: ὁ λαός μου ὁ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ὁ ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις, "my people which is *in* Egypt and *in* Assyria".[135] מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי was dismissed by the Greek text, and the introductory relative pronoun with the 3rd masc. sg. suffix (אֲשֶׁר בֵּרֲכוֹ) was rendered as ἥ, i.e. fem. sg. The Syr. and *Tg. Isa.* agree with the LXX in that they also relate this verse to Israel in the diaspora and not to the nations.[136]

5.2.   EXEGETICAL SECTION

5.2.1.   VERSES 1–4

1a   The Egypt-pronouncement

1b   Look! YHWH is riding on a swift cloud
1c   and comes to Egypt.
1d   And the idols of Egypt will tremble in front of him,
1e   and the heart of Egypt will melt in its inside.
2a   And I shall stir up Egypt against Egypt
2b   and they will fight,
2c   each against his brother, and each against his neighbour,
2d   city against city, kingdom against kingdom.
3a   And the spirit of Egypt will be broken in its inside,
3b   and its plan I shall destroy.

Context and Meaning of a Remarkable Passage", in *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (eds. J. D. Martin & Ph. R. Davies; JSOTSS 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986), 61; A. Deissler, "Der Volk und Land überschreitende Gottesbund der Endzeit nach Jes 19,16–25", in *Zion – Ort der Begegnung. Festschrift für Laurentius Klein zur Vollendung des 65. Lebensjahres* (eds. F. Hahn et al.; BBB 90; Bodenheim: Athenäum, 1993), 8.

[133] Cf. note d-d on Isa 18:2.

[134] Procksch, 254. cf. Gen 27:41; Deut 33:1.

[135] But not "among the Assyrians", as Van der Kooij ("Old-Greek", 151) translates (see already Brenton). ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις means "in Assyria" (cf. Tob 14:4 [S]; Hos 8:13; 9:3; Am 3:9). See on the other hand ἐν τοῖς Ἀσσυρίοις in Isa 19:24.

[136] A challenge to this interpretation of the LXX has been put forward by L. Monsengwo-Pasinya, "Isaïe XIX 16-25 et universalisme dans la LXX", in *Congress Volume: Salamanca 1983* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTS 36; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 204, but adequately refuted by Van der Kooij, "Old-Greek", 152–54. The LXX should not be treated independently from the Syr. and *Tg. Isa.*, which follow the same tradition considering *all* (not only Egyptian) Jews equal.

3c   And they will inquire by the idols, and by the ʾiṭṭîm-spirits,
3d   and by the ʾ ôb-spirits, and by the yiddĕʿônî-spirits.
4a   And I shall deliver Egypt into the hand of a tough master,
4b   and a powerful king will rule over them,
4c   utterance of the lord YHWH of hosts.

This prophecy chiefly concerned with Egypt[137] differs from Isa 18 in its form as well as its content. The name מִצְרַיִם appears not less than 26 times in Isa 19 (once as מָצוֹר).[138] Though it cannot be excluded that in 19:1–15 מִצְרַיִם alludes to entire Egypt, the two cities mentioned, Tanis (צֹעַן in 19:11.13) and Memphis (נֹף in 19:13), are located in the Delta.

In 19:1 God is stepped off his throne; he is on the move. The cloud is not standing still any more (18:4), but moving swiftly (עָב קַל), towards Egypt. The cloud serves here as YHWH's chariot (cf. Ps 18:10–11; 68:5;[139] 104:3) in which he rides. This description of a theophany makes Isa 19 a remarkable text inside Isa 13–23.[140]

Ever since the god Baal has become better known through the Ugaritic texts, many commentators took the opportunity to point to the Canaanite origin of the imagery in 19:1. One of the frequent titles of Baal is "the cloud rider", or perhaps even more appropriately, "the rider of the clouds" (rkb ʿrpt).[141] Without intending to discount the importance of this parallelism, a significant difference between the Hebrew and Ugaritic context of the imagery needs to be noted. In Ugaritic rkb ʿrpt is used as a title of Baal, often in parallelism with his other names. In the Bible, however, this is not a title of YHWH (contrast יהוה צְבָאוֹת). Riding on the cloud is an element of a theophany, attested with other

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[137] For Winckler's outdated theory that Isa 19:6–10 would deal with the land of Muṣri located somewhere in North Arabia, see A. Noordtzij, "Muṣri", Theologisch Tijdschrift 40 (1906) 378–403, 454–75, 41 (1907) 50–79, esp. 456–57.
[138] The dispersion of מִצְרַיִם in the first (vss. 1–15) and second (vss. 16–25) half of the chapter is balanced. As a comparison, the name of Moab appears 16 times in Isa 15–16 and 34 times in Jer 48.
[139] For the preposition בְּ note Gen 41:43 and 1 Kgs 22:35. עֲרָבוֹת is probably a phonetic variant to Ugaritic ʿrpt, 'cloud'. Based on Judg 5:4 and Isa 40:3, Green argued that interpreting עֲרָבוֹת in Ps 68:5 as 'desert' would also make sense (The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East [BJS 8; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003], 240, note 91). However, the pl. of עֲרָבוֹת appears only in geographical constructions like בְּעַרְבֹת יְרֵחוֹ (Jer 52:8); בְּעַרְבוֹת מוֹאָב (Num 22:1).
[140] Judg 5; 2 Sam 22:7–16; Ps 68:7–8; Isa 30:27–28; Mic 1:2–4; Hab 3:3–14.
[141] This expression appears 16 times in the Ugaritic texts (cf. R. E. Whitaker, A Concordance of the Ugaritic Literature [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972], 573). On this title of Baal, cf. N. Wyatt, "The Titles of the Ugaritic Storm-God", UF 24 (1992) 420.

poetical pictures, like YHWH stepping on the mountain hills, riding on
the winds, etc.[142]

Strategically and militarily, Egypt was located on favourable terri‐
tory, guarded by sea and desert from all powers of the East. This may
have given the country and its inhabitants an increased feel of security
(cf. Nah 3:8). It may be this feeling that Isa 19:1b contends. While
Egypt was fortified all around, the God of Israel arrives on the clouds
and enters the land without obstacles. Egypt's decline begins not by
outside intervention of an Asiatic country, but from within its inside
through confusion caused by YHWH in the divine and human world.[143]
As during the ten plagues when YHWH brought judgment on all the
gods of Egypt (Ex 12:12), Egypt's gods tremble in front of him.

Parallel to the feeble attitude of the gods of Egypt is their name:
אֱלִילִים, the noughts, the vanities. אֱלִילִים appears further in 2:8.18.20
(31:7) and 10:11.[144] אֱלִילִים is a theologically loaded term presenting for‐
eign gods as powerless, falling short of every characteristic of a real di‐
vinity. According to Ps 96:5 (∥ 1 Chr 16:26) there is a clear discrepancy
between אֱלֹהִים of Israel, who is in the heaven and man-made and hand‐
made אֱלֹהִים who cannot help and are not worthy of their name.[145]

Like their gods, Egypt's inhabitants will lose their courage when
YHWH arrives to Egypt. Their heart will melt (מסס) in fear.[146] Their
courage to any resistance will disappear. The literary topos of 19:1 is

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[142] Note also that this imagery is not constrained geographically to Canaan,
but is attested in the wider Near Eastern context. So Marduk appears as
mounting the storm-chariot in Enuma Elish iv 50–51. For a detailed discussion
see K. Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (SO 7; Helsinki: Societas Orientalis
Fennica, 1938), 175; M. Weinfeld, "'Rider of the Clouds' and 'Gatherer of the
Clouds'", *JANES* 5 (1973) 422–25. In the Ugaritic context *rkb ʿrpt* apparently
refers to Baal as the god of natural phenomena, particularly the master of the
rainy season (M. C. A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew De‐
scriptions of the Divine* [Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990], 598). This may be im‐
portant in view of Isa 19:5–7.

[143] Motyer thought that YHWH riding on a cloud in Ps 18:10–15 in the context
of a salvation would also imply that in Isa 19:1 YHWH arrives to rescue his
people from the "deadly threat" of Egypt "posing as a friend" (164). But the
motif of deliverance is not inherent to the motif of cloud-riding.

[144] Lev 19:4; 26:1; 1 Chr 16:26 (∥ Ps. 96:5); Ps 97:7; Ezek 30:13; Hab 2:18.
Ezek 30:13 was most certainly inspired by Isa 19. If the reading in Isa 10:10 is
correct (an emendation to הָאֵלֶּה is often proposed), אֱלִיל had better be inter‐
preted as 'vanity'. אֱלִילִים in connection with gods appears always in plural.

[145] Contrast Isa 36:19–20 and 37:12 with Isa 10:11, two apparently related text
with אֱלִילִים and אֱלֹהִים interchanged.

[146] The verb מסס appears in this sense also in Deut 1:28; 20:8; Josh 2:11; 5:1;
7:5; 2 Sam 17:10; Ps 22:15; Isa 13:7; Ezek 21:12; Nah 2:11.

very common in Near Eastern conquest accounts. According to the Vic-
tory Stele of Piye "the grandeur of his majesty attained the Asiatics and
every heart trembled before him" (*FHN* 1.9:30). Sargon's Nimrud Prism
iv 35 describes the Cypriots as "their hearts palpitated, fright fell upon
them".[147] On Taharka's defeat, Assurbanipal's scribes write:

> "Diesen (Taharka) befiel Schrecken und Furcht, und er verlor den
> Verstand" (Prism E Stück 10 1–2; *BIWA* 211). Again in Prism B i 80–
> 82: "Der Strahlenglanz (*namīru*) des Assur und der Istar warf ihn nie-
> der, und er verlor den Verstand (*illika maḫḫûttaš*, "became frenzied").
> Der Schreckensglanz meines Königtums (*melammê šarrūtīya*) überdeck-
> te ihn." (*BIWA*, 212–13).

Isaiah 19:2–4 is formulated in the first person. In Isa 18:4–5 we saw that
the oracle was introduced by the formula כִּי כֹה אָמַר יהוה אֵלַי. In Isa 19:2
the oracle has no such preamble, only possibly a closure in 19:4.

The arrival of YHWH in Egypt will cause chaos in the Egyptian pan-
theon and it will lead to a complete disintegration of the society, de-
scribed in four concentric circles: family life (אִישׁ־בְּאָחִיו), friendships
and wider family relationships (אִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ), community life (עִיר בְּעִיר)
and the entire country (מַמְלָכָה בְּמַמְלָכָה).[148] The language of the proph-
ecy on this point is again stereotypical. Conflicts among brothers,
friends, families, citizens, and kingdoms express distortion of spiritual
and moral harmony in human communities. Important closely related
examples appear in Isa 3:5 and 9:19–20 (cf. 5.3.1.2.).

> This imagery is not restricted to Isaiah or the Bible,[149] but it appears
> with relative frequency in other predictive texts from the Near East.[150]

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[147] C. J. Gadd, "Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud", *Iraq* 16 (1954)
191–92. In the same inscription (iv 44) Sargon portrays the fear of Egyptians
and Arabians as "their hearts palpitated, their arms collapsed".

[148] The LXX interpreted מַמְלָכָה as the Hebrew term for the Egyptian nomes. For
administrative divisions Hebrew has חֶבֶל (1 Kgs 4:13), פֶּלֶךְ (Neh 3:9), מְדִינָה
(frequent, only in late texts). מַמְלָכָה may allude to areas with a king as leader.

[149] The Old Testament also provides historical examples of such conflicts in
Judg 7:22; 9:23; 1 Sam 14:20; 2 Kgs 3:23; 2 Chr 15:6. For prophetic texts, cf.
Ezek 38:21; Hag 2:21; Zech 14:13. See further Mt 10:21; 12:25; 24:7.

[150] For the Mesopotamian evidence, cf. W. H. Hallo, "Akkadian Apocalypses",
IEJ 16 (1966) 231–42; R. Borger, "Gott Marduk und Gott-König Šulgi als
Propheten. Zwei prophetische Texte", *BibOr* 28 (1971) 3–24; T. Longman III,
Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study (Winona
Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1991), 167–78. In Babylonia, these prophetic compositions
show significant similarities with the omen-literature (A. K. Grayson & W. G.
Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies", *JCS* 18 [1964] 7). Some of these predictive
texts were recovered from archives of omen texts, probably belonging to librar-
ies of magicians (cf. H. Hunger & S. A. Kaufman, "A New Akkadian Prophecy

A most striking parallel is the Erra and Ishum Epic iv 130–36.[151]

And warrior Erra spoke thus:
> Sea (people)[152] shall not spare sea (people),[153]
> nor Subartian Subartian, nor Assyrian Assyrian,
> nor Elamite Elamite, nor Kassite Kassite,
> nor Sutean Sutean, nor Gutian Gutian,
> nor Lullubean Lullubean,
> nor country country, nor city city,
> nor tribe (*bītu*) tribe, nor man man, nor brother brother,
> and they shall slay one another.
> But afterwards a man of Akkad shall rise up,
> and fell them all, and shepherd all (the rest) of them.

Like Isa 19, this Akkadian text not only presents a turbulent society, but it also ends similarly to Isa 19:4. The antagonists on this list appear in the reverse order: kingdoms, cities, neighbours, families.

An Akkadian prophetic-predictive text called Text B describes the chaotic situation in Mesopotamia caused by a rebellion against a king of "Akkad", and his murder by a foreigner as follows: "City will rebel against city (*ālu itti āli*), tribe against tribe (*bītu itti bīti*), brother

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Text", *JAOS* 95 [1975] 371, 373).

Predictive literature is also known in Egypt. Some authors hesitate to assign Egyptian compositions the name prophecy, because those do not refer to divine inspiration (see J. C. Vanderkam, "Prophecy and Apocalyptics in the Ancient Near East", *CANE* 3:2084; J. D. Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997], 223–24; cf. also Nissinen in *PPANE*, 8–9). Over against this oversimplified view of prophetic literature, see N. Shupak, "Egyptian 'Prophecy' and Biblical 'Prophecy': Did the Phenomenon of Prophecy in the Biblical Sense, Exist in Ancient Egypt?", *JEOL* 31 (1989–1990) 5–41. Egyptian scholars (*ḫarṭibū*) and scribes (A.BA.MEŠ) appear at the Assyrian court in the 7th century (SAA 7 1 rev. i 12–ii 7), so that the relationship between these literary compositions may have been rather direct.

[151] The dates proposed for this text range between the 14th century B.C. (Von Soden) to the early 7th century B.C. (P. F. Gössmann Oesa, *Das Era-Epos* [Würtzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1955], 89). Dalley, whose translation is adopted above, favours a date in the 9th–8th centuries, assuming that older elements might have been included in the epos (cf. also L. Cagni, *L'epopea di Erra* [Studi Semitici 34; Roma: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, 1969], 37–45, esp. 44). Citations from this poem have been found on wall inscriptions of Sargon II and Merodach-baladan II, testifying for its popularity (S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989], 282).

[152] In the Akkadian text *tâmtim* probably alludes to *māt tâmti* in the south.

[153] The Akkadian text is constructed as a list of accusatives and nominatives (*subarta subartum aššura aššuru* [...] *mātu māta* etc.).

will put brother (*aḫu aḫāšu*) to the sword, friend will put a friend (*rūʾa rūʾāšu*) to the sword, abundance will depart."[154] Text B refers to the gods taking counsel with regard to the situation (ln. 19): "The great gods will consult one another (*mitḫāriš imtallikū*; cf. Isa 19:3b.11c) and send words to each other, they will restore the king's reign" (cf. ln 26). It is exactly this possibility that is taken away from the gods of Egypt in Isa 19:3. It is YHWH, who will install the new king.

Another Babylonian composition, Text A, likewise "predictive" in nature gives the exact regnal years of kings that ruled (southern) Mesopotamia.[155] During the reign of one of these kings, the text proclaims an Elamite attack against Akkad: "The sanctuaries of the great gods will be confused... There will be confusion, disorder, and unfortunate events in the land. The great will be made small." (ii 9'–14').

The Marduk Prophecy[156] contains a personal account of the god Marduk (cf. Erra in the text above), his deportation to foreign lands and his return to Babylon, with a large section of predictive material (ii 19–iii 30'). Marduk is presented as a god "roaming the lands" "from sunrise to sunset" (i 7–12), who went to Elam (i 22'; cf. Isa 19:1). He left chaos behind: *aḫu aḫāšu ikkal rūʾa rūʾāšu ina kakki irassib*, "brother consumes brother, friend strikes his friend with a weapon" (ii 3–4). After Marduk fulfilled his days in exile, he returned and "predicted" that "a king of Babylon will arise, and he will renew the house of announcement (…)" (ii 19). The restoration uses the reversed images applied earlier for portraying the chaotic situation:[157] "brother will love his brother" (iii 14'). In view of Isa 19, it is important to note the abundance in nature that the installation of a pious king will bring

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[154] Text B 15–16 (Grayson & Lambert, "Prophecies", 16–17). Cf. also ln. 26: *kussû kussâ idarris*, "one throne will overthrow the other".

[155] Cf. Grayson & Lambert, "Prophecies", 12–16; Longman, *Autobiography*, 152–63, 240–42. Suggestions concerning the date of composition of Text A reach from the turn of the first millennium (Longman, *Autobiography*, 154–62) to the 8th–7th centuries (F. M. Th. Böhl, "Religieuze teksten uit Assur (VI–IX)", *JEOL* 7 [1940] 416–17, 766), while Grayson & Lambert point out that the vagueness of the text makes every dating uncertain ("Prophecies", 9).

[156] On text and translation, cf. Borger, "Gott Marduk", 5–13, 16–20; Longman, *Autobiography*, 132–42, 233–35; COS 1.149. Cf. also Text D of Grayson & Lambert, "Prophecies", 22, a copy of the Marduk prophecy. The Marduk prophecy possibly derives from the time of Nebuchadnezzar I (1125–1104; Borger, "Gott Marduk", 21–22; Longman, *Autobiography*, 138–39).

[157] On this so-called "Sonst–Jetzt-Schema" in Near Eastern literature, cf. W. Schenkel, "Sonst-Jetzt. Variationen eines literarischen Formelelements", *WdO* (1984) 51–61; W. Westendorf, "Einst–Jetzt–Einst. Oder: Die Rückkehr zum Uhrsprung", *WdO* 17 (1986) 5–8; A. Blasius & B. U. Schipper, "Apokalyptik und Ägypten? Erkenntnisse und Perspektiven", *AÄ*, 286–94.

about (iii 1'–21'). A similar text is The Šulgi Prophecy.[158]

This type of literature is connected to the omen texts. One example from the birth omen series, Šumma Izbu i 82, may suffice to be mentioned here. According to this text a certain type of birth will have the result that the reign of Nergal (= Erra) will befall the land: "a fierce attack; there will be a mighty person in the land; pestilence; one street will be hostile to the other; one house will plunder the other."[159]

Description of reversed social order is common in the Egyptian literature as well. The Admonitions of Ipuwer (COS 1.42) mentions the chaos caused by the insurgence of foreigners into the Delta: "the man looks upon his son as his enemy", "the poor have become owners of wealth", "the noblemen are in mourning and the poor man is full of joy", "a men strikes his maternal brother", etc. (cf. COS 1.42:1.1–10.5). Even more significant in view of Isa 19 is The Prophecy of Neferti (COS 1.45). In an extensive passage (COS 1.45:20–71), Neferti, the lector priest of Bastet, bewails the turbulent situation depressing the land of Egypt.[160] It is particularly important in these descriptions that social anarchy is paralleled by a chaotic nature.

The metaphor of a heart melted in fear in Isa 19:3 is often connected to a crushed spirit. עֵצָה ,לְבַב and רוּחַ belong together,[161] but עֵצָה frequently receives a political overtone. In this situation, none can give intelligent advice. Assurbanipal reports as follows about his Egyptian campaigns and the counsel(lor)s of Egypt:[162]

> Afterwards, Necho, Sharru-lu-dari and Paqruru, kings whom my father has installed in Egypt, transgressed the treaty sworn by Assur and the great gods, my lords, and broke their oath. They forgot the good deeds of my father, their heart planned evil (*ikpudū lemuttu*), they talked false speech, and discussed profitless counsels (*milik lā kušīri imlikū*) among themselves […] (Prism E Stück 11 1–10; cf. Prism C ii 105–110; Prism B ii 3–6; *BIWA* 211, 213–214).

Perplexed Egypt will look for help by the gods, the ghosts, and the spirits of the dead. Egyptians were familiar with various techniques to inquire about the future, though their methods seem to have been less

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[158] See Borger, "Gott Marduk", 14–15, 20–21; Longman, *Autobiography,* 142–46, 236–37. Cf. Text C in Grayson & Lambert, "Prophecies", 19–20.

[159] E. Leichty, *The Omen Series Šumma Izbu* (Texts From Cuneiform Sources 4; Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin, 1970), 39.

[160] This text is set in the 4th Dynasty, but scholars assume it was written between 1990–1960. The single complete version dates from the 18th Dynasty.

[161] For לְבַב / עֵצָה, cf. Ps 20:5; 33:11; Prov 19:21. For רוּחַ / עֵצָה, cf. Isa 40:13. Cf. also S. Tengström, רוּחַ, *TWAT* 7:397–98.

[162] Cf. Isa 19:11; Jer 18:18; 49:7 with 1 Kgs 12:8; Ezek 7:26.

sophisticated and exhaustive than in Canaan or Mesopotamia.[163] Amon
was the lord of oracles, "who foresees the future before it happens"
(*FHN* 1.26). Oracles are known from the 18th Dynasty, but their ren-
aissance is placed between the Ramesside and the Saite era.[164] Frequent
contacts with Asia in this period perhaps account for Semitic influence.
One of the oracular techniques was to address a question to the divinity,
to which the statue of the god carried forwards or backwards gave a posi-
tive or negative answer. Most frequently the will of the gods was in-
quired by way of dreams. Necromancy is ubiquitous in the Semitic
world, but this practice was also known in Egypt. Kings Ahmose,
Amenophis I, Ramses II, are mentioned in connection with this form of
divination.[165] Letters were sent to dead relatives in order to settle family
disputes, assist in matters of everyday life, or mediate on behalf of the
living. Answers were expected by means of dreams.[166]

Isaiah 19:3 maintains that Egypt will exhaust all its spiritual re-
sources to gain insight.[167] During critical situations the gods and spirits
of another world assumed to have been responsible for everything what
happens on earth, were expected to make sense of history.[168] What is
hidden from the eyes of Egypt's inhabitants and their gods is revealed
through a prophecy to Judah.

In this chaotic situation, a hard master (אֲדֹנִים קָשֶׁה), a powerful king
(מֶלֶךְ עַז) will take over the rule over the country. As already observed
above, social and political disorder ended by the emergence of a new
king supposed to restore the order was a familiar literary *topos*. The Erra
and Ishum Epic foretells the advent of a man of Akkad who brings
peace after upheaval. The king of Babylon from the Marduk prophecy
leads history towards a promising future. In The Prophecy of Neferti,

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[163] L. Kákosy, "Orakel", *LdÄ* 4:600–6; J. F. Borghouts, "Witchcraft, Magic, and
Divination in Ancient Egypt", *CANE* 3:1775–85; Currid, *Ancient Egypt*, 219–
28. Cf. also Herodotus, *Hist.* ii 83.

[164] L. Kákosy, *Az ókori Egyiptom története és kultúrája* (Budapest: Osiris, 1998), 202.

[165] Kákosy, "Orakel", 4:603.

[166] Currid, *Ancient Egypt*, 222.

[167] Cf. also 1 Sam 28:5. The Hittite King Murshili requests information from
the storm-god in a dream, by means of an oracle, prophecy, or incubation ora-
cle (*COS* 1.60A rev. 41'–44').

[168] According to The Admonitions of Ipuwer, the chaotic situation will lead
Egyptians to look for god, but "the hot-tempered man says: 'If I knew where
god is, then I would serve him.'" In the description of a deep political crisis in Isa 8,
YHWH is said to have hidden his face from the house of Jacob (8:17). The prophet and
his sons with symbolic names are left as the only signs regarding the divine will (8:18).
Yet instead of looking at the signs, the people inquire by the dead (דִּרְשׁוּ אֶל־הָאֹבוֹת
וְאֶל־הַיִּדְּעֹנִים) on behalf of the living (8:19).

the disorder caused by foreigners will end when "a king will come from the south" (*COS* 1.45:58–59). In Isa 19:4, however, the arrival of the new king is not a comforting prediction (Isa 3:4.6–7). The new leader will be cruel and harsh,[169] expressing divine disfavour towards Egypt.

5.2.2. VERSES 5–10

5a   And the water will be exhausted from the sea
5b   and the river will dry up and be parched.
6a   And the rivers will stink,
6b   and the streams of Egypt will grow lean and dry up.
6c   The reed and the papyrus will get mouldy.
7a   The sedge [on the Nile,] on the brink of the Nile,
7b   and all the sowing of the Nile
7c   will be dried up, driven away and be no more.
8a   And the fishermen will be moaning,
8b   and mourning all those casting hook in the Nile,
8c   and those, who spread nets upon the water languish.
9a   And those working with combed flax will be ashamed
9b   and the weavers will grow pale.
10a   And its pillars will be crushed,
10b   all those working for wages will be distressed.

It is often assumed that the imagery of natural catastrophe has little to do with the scene of the previous verses. The details of this problem will be discussed in 5.3.1.1. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that in the "type" of literature that parallels our passage, the motifs of political prosperity or chaos in the human and divine worlds, the emergence of a king, and the welfare or regression in nature and economy are strongly connected. One of the above cited texts, viz. Text A ii 2'–8', mentions that

> A prince will arise, he will exercise kingship for eighteen years. The land will remain secure, fare well, and its people will experience prosperity. The gods will determine good things for the land, the winds will blow favourably. The […] and the furrow will yield its crops. Šakkan and Nisaba[170] will […] in the land. There will be rains and floods. The people of the land will experience joy. The prince will be defeated

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[169] Cf. קָשֶׁה in 1 Sam 25:3; 2 Sam 3:39. See further Ezek 21:36 (אֲנָשִׁים בֹּעֲרִים); 30:11 (עָרִיצֵי גוֹיִם); 31:11 (אֵיל גּוֹיִם); Dan 8:23 (מֶלֶךְ עַז־פָּנִים); etc. The theme is not typically Isaianic, but it appears here frequently in connection with Assyria, Babylon and Media (5:26–30; 8:7; 10:34; 13:11.17–18; 28:2; 30:27).

[170] The names of these two gods also appear in The Marduk prophecy (i 18ff). After Marduk had cut off the *nindabû*-offering, Šakkan (god of the beasts) and Nisaba (god of the grain) were caused to go away to heaven.

in a revolution.[171]

The emergence of another king will change the situation (ii 9'–18'). During the reign of a prince who will rule for 13 years, Elam will attack and defeat Akkad. This event is described as follows:

> The sanctuaries of the great gods will be confused. The defeat of Akkad will be decreed. There will be confusion, disorder, and unfortunate events in the land. The great will be made small. Another man whose name is not mentioned will arise. As a king he will size the throne and will put to death his officials. He will fill the lowland of Tupliaš, plain and level ground, with half the massive army of Akkad. The people will experience severe famine. (…)

Again, the restoration of the country will be followed later by abundance instead of famine, safety instead of disorder (iii 1'–8').[172] In these texts, calamity and prosperity are the direct results of what happens to the divinities of the land of Akkad. In Text A the disorder is introduced by the destruction of sanctuaries and the removal of regular offerings.[173] Welfare is directly related to the restoration of the demolished temples and the renewal of offerings. Isaiah 19:5–10 fits well in the frame of this vision of history subjected to and dependent on the mercy of the divinities. When Isa 19:1.3 state that YHWH will cause confusion in the divine world, the consequence of this disorder is reflected in the human sphere in lack of harmony, prosperity and abundance.[174]

Isaiah 19:5–10 is placed in an Egyptian context. The Nile was the source of life in Egypt that provided fertility for its agriculture.[175] Every

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[171] Grayson & Lambert, "Prophecies", 12–14; Longman, *Autobiography*, 240–41. A similar text appears in The Marduk Prophecy iii 5'–20': "Ningirsu will rule. The rivers will carry fish, the fields and plains will be full of yield. The grass of winter will last to summer. The grass of summer will last to winter. The harvest of the land will thrive. The marketplace will prosper. He will set evil aright. He will clear up the disturbed. He will eliminate evil. The clouds will be continually present. Brother will love his brother…" (Longman, *Autobiography*, 235; cf. Borger, "Gott Marduk", 17).

[172] Cf. also Text B 22–23 describing the arrival of Erra in the land, i.e. pestilence, famine, and starvation (Grayson & Lambert, "Prophecies", 17–18).

[173] Cf. also in the Admonitions of Ipuwer (COS 1.42:11.1–11.6).

[174] On The Famine Stele, god Khnum, the guardian of the caves of Elephantine, where the Nile takes its origin in Egyptian thought (cf. 5.1.2.1), is described as follows: "It is he who governs barley, [emmer], fowl and fish and all one lives on" (COS 1.53:10). For cosmic catastrophe as the result of divinities leaving their dwelling places, cf. J. F. Quack, "Ein neuer prophetischer Text aus Tebtynis (Papyrus Carlsberg 399 + Papyrus Psi Inv. D. 17 + Papyrus Tebtunis Tait 13 Vs.) (Tafel IX-XVI)", AÄ, 262 (Tebtynis Prophetic Text A 1,6).

[175] The close parallelism between Isa 19:5 (וְנִשְּׁתוּ־מַיִם מֵהַיָּם וְנָהָר יֶחֱרַב וְיָבֵשׁ) and

year, from June to September the Nile rose to up to eight times its original flow. In hymns Egyptians sang about the river bringing food and life to the country.[176] It was well known in most countries of the antiquity (Herodotus, *Hist.* ii 5), including Judah, that Egypt was dependent on the periodic inundation of the Nile.[177]

Egypt honoured its Nile River in a personified form as the god Hapy. Quite early in the Egyptian thought Hapy was connected with Nun, the primeval waters, and Osiris.[178] The king of Egypt was the guarantor of the fruitfulness of the river.[179] He may appear as the beloved of Hapy, or even Hapy himself. It was his task to cause the Nile to rise through cultic rituals and procession ceremonies (cf. COS 1.53:17–18; Ezek 29:3.8–10) and thus guarantee fertility and prosperity to the land.[180] Among other pharaohs, Taharka considered the abundant Nile as a favourable sign from the divinity regarding the legitimacy of his kingship.[181] After Egypt receives a cruel despot (Isa 19:4) this event will be followed in the nature by unfavourable "signs", such as the drying up of the Nile.[182]

The Prophecies of Neferti that combine social and natural turbulences give a picture from Egypt that is close to Isa 19:5–11. The cause of calamity is mentioned in lns. 25–26 and 51–54: Re, "the sun is covered and does not shine for the people to see, no one can live when the clouds cover (the sun)" (cf. Isa 19:1).

> The river of Egypt is empty, one can cross the water on foot. One will seek water for the ships to sail on. Its course has become a riverbank, a riverbank will be water (?) (…) Perished indeed are those good things, those fish ponds (where there were) those who clean fish, overflowing with fish and fowl. All good things have passed away. The land is burdened with misfortune because of those looking (?) for food, Asiatics roaming the land. Foes have arisen in the east, Asiatics have de-

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Job 14:11 (אָזְלוּ־מַיִם מִנִּי־יָם וְנָהָר יֶחֱרַב וְיָבֵשׁ) is striking. But the expressions יבש and חרב are commonly used with waters (Isa 42:15; 44:27; Jer 50:38; 51:36; Nah 1:4), and there is nothing peculiar in this expression that would suggest that Isa 19:5 cites Job 14:11 (contra W. Werner, *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Vorstellung vom Plan Jahwes* [BZAW 173; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986], 48).

[176] Currid, *Ancient Egypt*, 240–45.

[177] Cf. the more detailed descriptions of Tyre and Egypt in Ezek 25–32, likewise witnessing a thorough knowledge of these countries. See also S. Ahituv, "Egypt that Isaiah Knew", in *Jerusalem Studies in Egyptology* (ed. I. Shirun-Grumach; ÄAT 40; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 3–7.

[178] D. Bonneau, "Nilgott", *LdÄ* 4:486–87; Currid, *Ancient Egypt*, 242–43.

[179] B. B. Williams, "Nile, Geography", *ABD* 4:1115.

[180] Bonneau, "Nilgott", 4:486.

[181] *FHN* 1.26:9. See further Currid, *Ancient Egypt*, 243.

[182] The Nile is low on the death of Thutmosis III (Currid, *Ancient Egypt*, 244).

scended into Egypt (…) The land has perished, laws are destined for it, deprived of produce, lacking in crops (…) (COS 1.45)[183]

When the Assyrian king boasts to have conquered Egypt, he maintains that he dried up with his foot all the water channels of Egypt (יְאֹרֵי מָצוֹר; Isa 37:25 | 2 Kgs 19:24).[184] In his prophecy on Egypt, possibly alluding to Isa 19 (cf. 5.3.1.2.), Ezekiel combines the defeat of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar with the desiccation of the Nile (Ezek 30:10–12):

> I shall put an end to the wealth (הֲמוֹן; cf. Ezek 29:19) of Egypt through King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon. He together with his army, the most ruthless of the nations (עָרִיצֵי גוֹיִם), shall be brought to ravage the land (…) I shall turn the river channels (יְאֹרִים) into dry ground, and I shall deliver the land into the hands of evil men (רָעִים). I shall lay waste the land and everything in it by the hands of strangers (זָרִים).

In a prophecy directed against Babylon, likewise famous for its water resources, Jer 50:35–37 connects the judgment on the Chaldaeans and its princes (שַׂר), wise men (חָכָם), diviners (בַּד), warriors (גִּבּוֹר), etc. with the drying up of its waters (Jer 50:38).[185] Psalm 72; Isa 15:1-9; 24:4-12; 33:7–8; Jer 4:23-29; 12:4; 23:10, and Hos 4:3 give further evidence how Israel believed that political order was related to blessings in nature. These examples may suffice to convince one that chaos among the divinities, social disorder, foreign rule and natural disaster appear as various aspects of the same situation.

The wide range of terms designating the waters in Isa 19:5–6 (יָם, נְהָרוֹת, יְאוֹר) portray a total disaster in Egypt.[186] The gradually parching waters (יָבֵשׁ / חָרֵב / דָלַל) will stink throughout the land.[187] The lack of water will affect Egypt's entire ecosystem. Typical water plants like papyrus and reed, inseparably linked to the Egyptian landscape, the hieroglyphic symbols of Lower and Upper Egypt, will wither. The fields where agricultural plants would grow (מִזְרָע) will also dry up once the

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[183] See also H. Marlow, "The Lament over the River Nile—Isaiah xix 5-10 in its Wider Context", *VT* 57 (2007) 229–42. Cf. in the Ptolemaic era L. Koenen, "Die Apologie des Töpfers an König Amenophis oder das Töpferorakel", *AÄ*, 139–87, esp. 144 [P₂ 2, 7; P₃ 13, 18–19], 147 [P₂ 43–47; P₃ 72–79], 172–79 and Quack, "Prophetischer Text", 253–73, esp. 256–57 [Fragment A]).

[184] Contrast this with Deut 11:10.

[185] Note the wordplay in חֹרֶב אֶל־מֵימֶיהָ / חֶרֶב עַל־כַּשְׂדִּים. Cf. also Jer 51:36

[186] Most commentators consider יָם to refer to the 'Nile'. This opinion is based on the parallelism between יָם and נָהָר (cf. Isa 11:15). However, it is more likely that the prophecy enumerates all water supplies of Egypt, including its "sea(s)" (the Delta lakes, the Fayyum, the Yam Suph, etc.).

[187] The verbs יֶחֱרַב וְיָבֵשׁ appear together in Job 14:11; Isa 42:15; 44:27; Jer 51:36; Hos 13:15; Nah 1:4; cf. Jer 50:38; Zech 11:17 (read חֹרֶב).

desired Nile flooding stays away. The desiccation of the Nile will affect its fauna as well. There will be no fish in the rivers, and consequently no work and food for Egypt's anglers and those relying on their products. Egypt was world renown because of its textile industry. Water is, however, essential for growing and combing flax. Once the river is dried up Egypt's textile-workers will become unemployed. This change in nature will affect everyone from the most prominent ones of the society, the pillars of Egypt (שָׁתוֹת), to low rank wageworkers (עֹשֵׂי־שֶׂכֶר).[188]

5.2.3. VERSES 11–15

11a	Ah, foolish are the officials of Zoan,
11b	the wisest counsellors of the pharaoh!
11c	The counsel turned out to be stupid.
11d	How can you say to the pharaoh:
11e	"I am (a son) of wise men,
11f	(a son) of eastern / ancient kings"?
12	Where then are your wise men? Let them inform you and let you know what YHWH of hosts has planned on Egypt!
13a	Silly are the officials of Zoan,
13b	and the officials of Noph deceive themselves,
13c	and the cornerstones of its tribes have led Egypt astray.
14	And YHWH has mingled in it the spirit of perversion, so that they make Egypt stagger in all it is about to do, as the drunken staggers in
15	his vomit. And there will be no work that Egypt can do, either the head or the tail, the shoot or the stalk.

אַךְ marks off a new section in the prophecy. While the preceding verses focused primarily on Egyptians in general, 19:11–15, in a fictional monologue addresses the leading circles, already alluded to in 19:10 (שָׁתֹתֶיהָ). The prophet now turns to those who are supposed to know the solution in this situation. Yet even those who claim to have deeper insight into history fail to make sense of it and reveal the "plan" of YHWH.

The leaders of Egypt are called שָׂרִים, 'officials', 'chiefs', 'leaders', who are probably identical with חַכְמֵי יֹעֲצֵי פַרְעֹה, "the wisest counsellors of the pharaoh", appearing in parallelism in vs. 11b. They characterise themselves as בֶּן־חֲכָמִים and בֶּן־מַלְכֵי־קֶדֶם. The question addressed to Egypt's pharaoh in 19:12 suggests that the same group of leaders is named חֲכָמִים, while 19:13 refers to them as פִּנַּת שְׁבָטֶיהָ.

Questions emerge related to the possible Egyptian background of Isa 19:11–15. According to 19:11–13 the task of Egypt's leaders (שַׂר) is to give advise (יעץ). In Egyptian one of the terms for high rank officials is

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[188] For this terminology, cf. Isa 2:9.11.17; 5:15; 7:20; 9:13.15.16; etc.

sr.[189] There is, however, another word, *sr*, which means 'to foretell', 'to proclaim', 'to prophesy', that appears in Egyptian prophetic texts.[190] Could this mean that the prophet built his message on an Egyptian semantic ambiguity? It would be the task of Egyptian leaders (*sr*) to foretell (*sr*) the plan of YHWH. This is possible, but not certain. The task of some royal official advisors was to foresee the situation and propose preventive measures.

Although Egyptians were acquainted with the verb 'to prophesy' (*sr*) and the noun 'prophecy' (*srw*), they apparently possessed no distinctive term for 'prophet'. To foretell the future in Egyptian texts is connected to priests and sages.[191] It is this connection that makes sense of בֶּן־חֲכָמִים and חֲכָמִים in Isa 19:11–13. In the framework of The Prophecy of Neferti, the text that already provided some significant parallels to Isa 19, Neferti retells how, while sitting amidst his administrative council, King Snofru ordered them as follows:

> "…seek for me a son of yours who is wise, a brother of yours who is excellent, a friend of yours who has done a good deed, who will tell me some good words, choice formulations, which should entertain my majesty on hearing them" (COS 1.45:6–8).

When Neferti is brought in front of the king, he is told to speak not of things that had happened, but to foretell (*sr*) what was about to happen (COS 1.45:15–16). Neferti is introduced as "a sage (*rḫ-iḫt*) from the east" (COS 1.45:17),[192] called earlier "the chief lector priest", *ḥry ḥb*, an abbreviated form of *ḥry ḥb ḥry tp*, "chief celebrant of the ritual", later appearing as *ḥry tb* and *ḥry tm*, the Egyptian cognate of Hebrew חרטם.[193] In fact, all Egyptian works brought in connection with prophecy also belong to wisdom literature.[194] Papyrus Chester Beatty IV dating to the

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[189] 'Fürst', 'Herrscher' (*WÄS* 4:188); cf. Hebrew שַׂר. Egyptian *sr* is, however, composed of two syllables (cf. the Egyptian personal name *pȝ sr*, transcribed into Akkadian as *Pa-ši-ia-ra*), and is reconstructed as **sayyaraw* or **seyaro*. I am indebted to Dr. J. van Dijk, for calling attention to this issue.

[190] *WÄS* 4:189–90; Shupak, "Egyptian Prophecy", 25.

[191] Shupak, "Egyptian Prophecy", 25–28

[192] The eastern origin of Neferti is made explicit in the Egyptian text: "one belonging to Bastet…a child of the Heliopolitan nome" (COS 1.45).

[193] Shupak, "Egyptian Prophecy", 25 note 46; Muchiki, *Proper Names*, 245. חרטם appears in connection with foretelling the future in descriptions of Egyptians and Chaldaeans. In Gen 41:48 חַרְטֻמִּים and חֲכָמִים are specialists expected to reveal the pharaoh's dream. Unlike Joseph, the Hebrew "prophet", they cannot decipher it (41:24). חַרְטֻמִּים appear as opponents of the prophet Moses (cf. Ex 7:11 with חֲכָמִים, 'wise men' and מְכַשְּׁפִים, 'magicians'; 7:22; 8:3.14.15; 9:11). Cf. the Chaldaean חַרְטֻמִּים in Dan 1:20; 2:2.10.27; 4:4.6; 5:11.

[194] The Eloquent Peasant (COS 1.43); The Admonitions of Ipuwer (COS

19th Dynasty mentions eight classical Egyptian sages of ancient times, three of them also connected to Egyptian prophetic-wisdom texts: Hard-edef, Neferti and Khakheperre-sonb. Papyrus Chester Beatty IV links prophecy more explicitly with wisdom when it speaks of these ancients as "the sages (*rḫ-iḫt*) who foretold the future".[195] The connection be-tween wisdom and the foretelling of the future can possibly be related to a cyclic view of history. Sages who know the past and understand the present can announce the future.[196]

The Egyptian שַׂר and חֲכָמִים who are supposed to foretell the future cannot do so.[197] After recounting the natural disasters in Egypt, "the prophet" Neferti says: "No one knows the result, what will happen is hidden…" (COS 1.45:37).[198] Khakheperre-sonb complains similarly while meditating on the land in confusion. Though he utters criticism on the present situation, he finds no way out of the disorder: "none is wise (enough) to recognise it, none is angry (enough) to cry out" (COS 1.44: verso 3–4; cf. Hos 14:10). In Isa 19:11.13 the sages appear as fool (אֱוִיל), silly (יאל niph'al), deceived (נשא niph'al), misleading the people.

The rhetorical question addressed to Egypt's wise men fits the Egyp-tian traditions. Egypt's leaders maintain to be sons of wise man (בֶּן־חֲכָמִים), sons of eastern / ancient kings (בֶּן־מַלְכֵי־קֶדֶם). The relation-ship between שַׂר and חֲכָמִים was mentioned above. בֶּן־מַלְכֵי־קֶדֶם makes much sense in Egyptian context. The family background of an Egyptian sage holds the secret to his personality. The provenance of the sages is

1.42); The Complaints of Khakheperre-Sonb (COS 1.44). Cf. Shupak, "Egyp-tian Prophecy". Like Neferti, Khakheperre-sonb also appears as a Heliopolitan priest (COS 1.42: recto 1; but he is called an *wʿb*-priest [Shupak, "Egyptian Prophecy", 25]). According to The Famine Stele (COS 1.53), on a similar occasion when the Nile failed to arrive in time for seven consecutive years, King Djoser inquired for the causes by consulting the chief lector-priest of Imhotep (!).

[195] Shupak, "Egyptian Prophecy", 26. Cf. also The Instructions of Merikare (COS 1.35:69). For the connection between sages and prophecy, note also Hos 14:10 (cf. Khakheperre-sonb's complaint in COS 1.44: verso 3–4).

[196] R. Schlichting, "Prophetie", *LdÄ* 4:1122. This view was not typically Egyp-tian (cf. Grayson & Lambert, "Prophecies", 9–10).

[197] For the rhetoric of the passage, cf. Isa 47:12–13; Jer 8:8; 48:14; 49:7.

[198] Shupak's translation suggests that a similar idea of the inability to foretell future appears in ln. 26 of Neferti's prophecy (cf. COS 1.45:26). However, the line "I cannot foretell (*sr*) what has not yet come", should rather be rendered "I shall never foretell what is not to come" (so correctly Shupak, "Egyptian Prophecy", 27). It is striking that the final section of Neferti's prophecy ab-ruptly switches over from criticism of the present to announcement of a future redeemer king (COS 1.45:57–81), which suggests that the text was over-worked for political purposes (Kákosy, *Egyiptom*, 276).

usually mentioned in the presentation of their literary work. Semanti-
cally speaking, קֶדֶם in Isa 19:11 can be translated as 'ancient'. An Egyp-
tian prose narrative that makes mention of prophecy, Papyrus Westcar,
specifically refers to the *ancient* King Kheops and the magicians. Hard-
edef, one of the sons of pharaoh Kheops (cf. בֶּן־מַלְכֵי־קֶדֶם), appears in the
Chester Beatty Papyrus IV as one of the eight famous ancient sages, who
foretold the future.[199] Following this line of interpretation, Isa 19:11
questions the boasting of Egypt's sages who claim to derive from elo-
quent families from prehistoric times. Eventually, קֶדֶם may also be ren-
dered in the sense of 'former' (kings). This would mean that the advisors
of the pharaoh descend from earlier royal families.

   Although it is difficult to take a final decision, I incline to render
קֶדֶם geographically. The advisors of the pharaoh present themselves as
descendants of eastern kings. קֶדֶם does not refer to Arabian wise men
(like Job). Shasu Bedouins never appear in favourable light in Egyptian
texts, so that it would sound especially strange in the present context if
an Egyptian was boasting with his Arabian family tree. Rather קֶדֶם refers
to the eastern part of Egypt. Neferti, the famous sage, was presented to
the pharaoh as a coming from the *east*, from the Heliopolitan nome.[200]
This interpretation would fit the context of 19:11 particularly well. The
counsellors boasting in 19:11e–f must be identical with the officials of
Zoan, in the eastern Delta, presented as the wisest counsellors of the
Memphite pharaoh mentioned in 19:11a–b.

   Zoan (צֹעַן; Tanis) in 19:11.13, a relatively young city, was the capi-
tal of the 19th nome of Egypt in the Third Intermediate Period.[201] In
the Story of Wenamun it appears as the centre of Smendes and Tenta-
mun (21st Dynasty). For the kings of the 21st–22nd Dynasties Tanis

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[199] Shupak, "Egyptian Prophecy", 7–8. A similar tradition is also known from
Assyria, where "the scholars in the royal service were seen as the successors of
the mythical antediluvian sages, the *apkallu*" (M. J. de Jong, "Isaiah among the
Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of
the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies" [Ph.D. diss., Leiden,
2006], 242). The relationship between בֶּן־חֲכָמִים and בֶּן־מַלְכֵי־קֶדֶם may be illu-
minated further by a text of Assurbanipal's library, SAA 10 174:7–9: "Assur, in
a dream, called the grandfather (Sennacherib) of the king, my lord (Assurba-
nipal), a sage (*apkallu*). The king, lord of kings (Assurbanipal), is an offspring
of a sage and Adapa (= the ancestor of all sages): you have surpassed the wis-
dom of the Abyss and all scholarship."
[200] The sage's origin is also referred to in The Eloquent Peasant (COS 1.43 R 1–2).
[201] Greek Τάνις, Egyptian *Ḏꜥnt*, Assyrian *Ṣaʾnu*, today *San el-Hagar*. Cf. Num
13:22. Zoan was formerly erroneously identified with Avaris and Pi-Ramesse
(cf. W. Wycichl, "Ägyptische Ortsnamen in der Bibel", *ZÄS* 76 [1940] 91–93;
M. Romer, "Tanis", *LdÄ* 6:194–95).

seems to have functioned as a northern Thebes. Its important temples were dedicated to the principal deities of Thebes, and priestly function-aries bore titles known from Thebes. It was here in Zoan, where most kings of the 21st–22nd Dynasties were crowned, built their monuments and were buried.[202] On the Victory Stele of Piye, Zoan is probably in-cluded in the dominion of Osorkon IV, who appears as the king of Bub-astis (פִּיבֶסֶת; Ezek 30:17) and Ranofer. Esarhaddon mentions King Petubastet II (*Puṭubišti*) (re)appointed in Ṣaʾnu. The name of his prede-cessor, Gemenef-khonsu-bak, has been recovered from building blocks on the site of Tanis.[203] Zoan is one of the frequently mentioned Egyptian cities in the Old Testament (Num 13:22; Ezek 30:14). From here the exodus takes place (Ps 78:12.43[204]), and to Zoan Jews send their messen-gers (Isa 30:4; cf. 4.1.3.2.). Pharaoh Osorkon IV was among the tribute bearers of Sargon II (cf. Shoshenq V and Tiglath-pileser III in 2.3.1.1.). If anyone in Egypt was able to give advice to a pharaoh threatened by Asian (?) occupation (cf. Isa 19:4), then the eastern leaders of Zoan were certainly the favourites. Their age-old experience in dealing with foreigners has turned them to be the wisest counsellors of the pharaoh.

Noph (נֹף; Memphis),[205] "the balance of the two lands" (*mḫꜣt-tꜣwy*), in Isa 19:13 was the most important city of the Egyptian Delta. From ancient times, it often functioned as the capital city of Egypt. During the 8th–7th centuries, Memphis was the royal residence of Tefnakht, Bakenrenef, Shabaka, Shabataka, Taharka, Tanutamani, Psametik I.[206] The temple of Ptah from Memphis, *Ḥwt-kꜣ-Ptḥ*,[207] is the etymological precursor of Αἴγυπτος. In 19:13, Memphis is probably the seat of the un-named pharaoh of 19:12.

The term עֵצָה may have been used in 19:11 with various meanings. עֵצָה is connected to sages and wisdom literature, for which Egypt was famous (1 Kgs 4:30). But as we have seen, wisdom in Egypt acquires sometimes a prophetic nuance. Biblical יעץ probably refers to prediction in Num 24:14; Isa 45:21; Jer 38:15. עֵצָה may also have a political under-tone in Isa 19:11. עֵצָה and גְּבוּרָה are two important requirements for

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[202] Romer, "Tanis", 6:196. According to K. A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period* (2nd ed.; London: Warminster, 1986), 129, in Tanis were buried Sho-shenq II, Osorkon II, Takeloth II, Shoshenq III, and major building works are known from Osorkon II, Takeloth II, Shoshenq III and V.

[203] R. G. Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt's Nubian rulers* (London: Rubicon, 2000), 232, 274, 284–85.

[204] שְׂדֵה־צֹעַן, Egyptian *sḫt Dʿnt*, the place where the sea was split (Ps 78:13)?

[205] Egyptian *Mn-nfr*, Assyrian *Mimpi* or *Mempi*. In Hos 9:6 the name of the city is written as מֹף. For נֹף cf. Jer 2:16; 44:1; 46:14.19; Ezek 30:13.16.

[206] The seat of Necho I was Sais (cf. Assurbanipal's Prism A ii 16–18).

[207] Akkadian *Ḫikuptaḫ* (EA 84:37; 139:8), Ugaritic *Ḫkpt* (*KTU* 1.17 v 21, 31).

waging war (2 Kgs 18:20; cf. Prov 20:18). The role of Ahithophel in counselling David (יוֹעֵץ דָּוִד; 2 Sam 15:22) and Absalom gives a close parallel for 19:11–13. The advice of Ahithophel was regarded as a divine oracle (דְּבַר הָאֱלֹהִים; 2 Sam 16:23). Answering the prayer of David, YHWH turns Ahitophel's plan into foolishness. The expression סכל piʿel, 'to make foolish', 'to turn into foolishness' + עֵצָה in 2 Sam 15:22 is similar to עֵצָה נִבְעָרָה in Isa 19:11.[208]

In other contexts פִנָּה in 19:13 is used for the leaders of Israel's tribes (Judg 20:2; 1 Sam 14:38; Zech 10:4).[209] שֵׁבֶט may be the Hebrew term for the Egyptian nomes, its administrative divisions (cf. *Tg. Isa*), the leaders of which formed the advisory committee of the pharaoh.[210]

It was formerly told that YHWH had crushed the spirit of Egypt and destroyed its plans (19:3). Isaiah 19:14 reveals that YHWH mingled (מסך) in Egypt the spirit of perversion and twisting (רוּחַ עִוְעִים; cf. 1 Kgs 22:19–23; Isa 28:7; 29:9–10).[211] מסך is used in connection with drinking (Prov 9:5; Isa 5:22), a context that fits the images of staggering and confusion in our prophecy.[212] The verb עוה from which עִוְעִים derives means 'to turn something into the opposite', 'to pervert', 'to twist', likewise appearing in the context of wisdom (Prov 12:8). תעה hiphʿil is semantically close to עוה. The prophet reproaches the leaders that they lead Egypt astray (19:13.14). They make Egypt stagger as a drunken man (Job 12:25; Isa 28:7), twisting its paths. A similar charge is brought in against Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:9 | 2 Chr 33:9), leaders in general (Isa 3:12; 9:15; Jer 50:6), or prophetic advisors (Jer 23:13.32; Mic 3:5).

Verse 15 emphasises again the failure of Egypt to undertake anything. As mentioned in the notes, מַעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה may be simply put as 'to do anything'. מַעֲשֶׂה does not refer to specific jobs that Egypt would not be able to do, but it is probably a synonym of עֵצָה.[213]

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[208] סָכָל is the opposite of חָכָם (cf. Eccl 2:19; 10:12.14; Jer 4:22).

[209] Note also שָׁתֹתֶיהָ in Isa 19:10 and סֶלַע in Isa 31:9. Cf. στῦλος in Gal 2:9. Nothing would support the assumption of Niccacci that פִּנַּת שְׁבָטֶיהָ alluded to the symbolic name of Memphis (Noph), *mḫ3t-t3wy*, "balance of the two lands" ("Isaiah xviii-xx from an Egyptological Perspective", *VT* 48 [1998] 218).

[210] This advisory committee appears in the framework of The Prophecy of Neferti, in which the king asks it to find someone among their "sons" who is wise.

[211] Note, however, the semantic differences in Isa 19:14 and 29:10: מסך בקרב, "mix in/among" and נָסַךְ עַל, "pour out upon" respectively.

[212] It is possible that the imagery of YHWH's cup of wrath in Jer 25:15; Hab 2:16 is a further development of this idea (cf. Fohrer, 1:210; Höffken, 145), but the cup-of-wrath-motif does not yet appear in Isa 19.

[213] Cf. the relationship between עָשָׂה and עֵצָה in 2 Sam 16:20; 17:6; Isa 5:19. For מַעֲשֶׂה in the sense of עֵצָה, see J. Fichtner, "Jahwes Plan in der Botschaft des Jesaja", in *Gottes Weisheit. Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Ar-

רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן expresses totality. רֹאשׁ refers to the leaders and זָנָב to those being led.[214] A similar idea appears in the biographical inscription of Petosiris (tomb inscription nr. 81):[215]

> Since fighting had started inside Egypt,
> The South being in turmoil, the North in revolt;
> The people walked with 'head turned back',
> All temples were without their servants,
> The priests fled, not knowing what was happening."

The parallelism of כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן with רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב suggests that that the two expressions, deriving from the animal world and vegetation respectively, refer to similar things.[216] Eventually אַגְמוֹן may designate the 'stalk' over against the 'leafage'. If כִּפָּה has to do anything with כפף, 'to bend', 'to bow down', כִּפָּה may be a symbol for the elderly people. According to *DNWSI* 529, Jewish Aramaic כפי describes an elderly person. All this, however, is hardly more than speculation.

5.2.4. VERSES 16–17

16   On that day Egypt will be like women, and it will shiver and tremble because of the raising of the hand of YHWH of hosts that he raises
17   against it. And the land of Judah will become a dizziness for Egypt. Everyone to whom one mentions it (Judah) will tremble because of the plan that YHWH of hosts plans against it.

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא refers to a time when the predictions of Isa 19:1–15 will be fulfilled. Verses 16 and 17 have a similar structure: מִפְּנֵי תְּנוּפַת יַד־יהוה מִפְּנֵי עֲצַת יהוה צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁר־הוּא is paralleled by צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁר־הוּא מֵנִיף עָלָיו יוֹעֵץ עָלָיו. "Like women" and not a brave warrior, Egypt will tremble in front of its enemies (Nah 3:13; Jer 50:37; 51:30), in front of the raised hand of YHWH (תְּנוּפַת יַד־יהוה), in the manner the announcement of the Assyrian king raising his hand in Isa 10:32 was supposed to threaten Jerusalem.[217] The raised hand of YHWH is a familiar motif in Isaiah, al-

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beiten zur Theologie 2/3; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1965), 29.

[214] The two expressions appear in opposition to each other in Deut 28:13.44: Israel will become either head or tail. But the meaning is somewhat different in Isa 9:13 and 19:15.

[215] C. J. Chimko, "Foreign Pharaohs: Self-Legitimization and Indigenous Reaction in Art and Literature", *JSSEA* 30 (2003) 32.

[216] Cf. the LXX μέγαν καὶ μικρὸν in Isa 9:13 and ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος in 19:15. The Vulg. has *incurvantem et refrenantem*, "crooked and curbed" (cf. כפף / כפה).

[217] Although the word תְּנוּפָה appears in connection with sacrifices (Ex 29:24; Lev 7:30; etc.), in Isa 19:16 תְּנוּפָה is void of any ritual connotation. The object of the verb נוף is not an offering, but the hand of YHWH (cf. 2 Kgs 5:11; Job

though the verb used in this connection may differ.[218]

The expression אַדְמַת יְהוּדָה is unique. Constructions of country names with אֲדָמָה are rarely used, mainly because אֲדָמָה has the more specific meaning of "agricultural field".[219] So אַדְמַת מִצְרַיִם in Gen 47:20 refers to the agricultural fields of Egypt, rather than to the country Egypt. אֲדָמָה alluding to Israel as a country (אַדְמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל) is more frequent in the book of Ezekiel, while in other cases, suffixes attached to אֲדָמָה may express a similar geographical connotation.[220] In this connection, אֲדָמָה possibly denotes the homeland over against a foreign country (cf. Dan 11:9; Jon 4:2), which explains the word choice in Isa 19:17.[221]

The most disputed question of these verses is what exactly this threat is about? The formulation of Isa 19:17 does not assume a threat caused by Judah itself. Egypt will be afraid when hearing of Judah because it reminds one of the plan of YHWH against Egypt (עָלָיו).[222] Judah is implied only as far as it is associated with YHWH, the God of this land from the point of view of an Egyptian foreigner.[223]

31:21; Isa 10:32; 11:14; 13:2; Zech 2:13). תְּנוּפָה does not mean "the waving of hands like with an offering", but simply 'waving' or 'lifting up' (with Auvray, 191, contra Fohrer, 1:229; Wildberger, 732; Watts, 255; Deissler, "Gottesbund", 14). For the *figura etymologica* נוּף / תְּנוּפָה, cf. עֲשֹׂה / מַעֲשֶׂה, יעץ / עֵצָה (see also KS §329d).

[218] See especially נטה in 5:25; 9:11.16.20; 10:4; 14:26.27; 23:11. For the parallel sense of the two verbs, cf. Isa 11:15 and Ex 14:16.21.26.27, or Isa 10:32; 13:2 and Josh 8:19; Isa 23:11. For a discussion, see 5.3.2.2.

[219] H. H. Schmid, אֲדָמָה, *THAT* 1:58.

[220] Cf. Deut 29:28; 2 Kgs 17:23; 25:21; 2 Chr 7:20; Ps 137:4; Isa 14:1.2; Jer 12:14; 16:15; 23:8; 27:10.11; 42:12; 52:27; Ezek 34:13.27; 36:17.24; 37:14.21; 39:26.28; Dan 11:9; Am 7:11.17; 9:15; Jon 4:2; Zech 2:16; 9:16. The most frequent idea is the exile of Israel from its homeland (מֵעַל אַדְמָתוֹ), where the metaphor of uprooting reminds of the agricultural connotation of אֲדָמָה.

[221] The distinction between homeland and foreign country is common in the Ancient Near East. Cf. G. Steiner, "Der Gegensatz "eigenes Land", "Ausland, Fremdland, Feindland" in den Vorstellungen des Alten Orients", in *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn. Politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im Alten Vorderasien vom 4. bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (eds. H. J. Nissen & J. Renger; BBVO 1/2; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1982), 633–64.

[222] It is unlikely that עָלָיו would refer to the intentions of YHWH concerning the salvation of Egypt, as assumbed by J. Krašovec, "Healing of Egypt Through Judgment and the Creation of a Universal Chosen People (Isaiah 19:16–25)", in *Jerusalem Studies in Egyptology* (ed. I. Shirun-Grumach; ÄAT 40; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 298.

[223] Note the Victory Stela of Piye: "It is your valor that gives strength of arm; one is frightened when your name is called to mind" (*FHN* 1.9:15).

5.2.5. Verse 18

18   On that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt speaking the
        language of Canaan and swearing to YHWH of hosts. City of destruc-
        tion will be called each one of them.

Verse 18 is introduced again by the expression בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. In general Isa
19:18 is read as a salvation oracle concerning Egypt. As discussed in
Excursus 5, for most scholars this is the ultimate reason to uphold the
reading עִיר הַחֶרֶס instead of עִיר הַהֶרֶס. As far as this translation has be-
come unlikely from a text critical point of view, as well as from a seman-
tic point of view,[224] the question is how does עִיר הַהֶרֶס fit its context. Is
vs. 18 a salvation prophecy?[225]

Isaiah 19:18 mentions five cities in Egypt, speaking Canaanite and
swearing to YHWH of hosts. Is five a real or a symbolic number? Some
commentators argued for the literal sense of the "five cities". So Hitzig,
and following him Fohrer, believe that Jer 43:13 and 44:1 provides the
key for Isa 19:18. Jeremiah 44:1 mentions four locations with Jewish
(i.e. Canaanite speaking) inhabitants fled from Judah after the invasion
of Nebuchadnezzar, namely Migdol, Tahpanhes, Memphis and the land
of Pathros. Jeremiah 43:13 adds to this list בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ, as one of the places
in Egypt deemed to destruction, which Hitzig, Fohrer, and many other
authors understood as a reference to Heliopolis.[226]

There are several problems with this approach, however. First,
Jeremiah 43:13 is different from Jer 44:1. Jeremiah 43:13 belongs to a
prophecy, while Jer 44:1 describes real events. The two texts were com-
posed on different occasions. Second, while Jer 44:1 mentions places in
connection with Jewish residents, Jer 43 contains no allusion to Jews,
but it has the destruction of Egypt and the Egyptians in view. Third, בֵּית
שֶׁמֶשׁ in Jer 43:13 does not refer to Heliopolis, but to the temple of the
Egyptian sun-god.[227] Fourth, Jeremiah 44:1 mentions only three cities,
since אֶרֶץ פַּתְרוֹס, Upper Egypt, cannot be considered a city.[228] Fifth, the

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[224] Cf. note 18 m-m on יֵאָמֵר לְאֶחָת.

[225] It must be noted in advance, that if Isa 19:18 is regarded (as often) as an
independent addition to 19:1–17 and 19:19–25 (5.3.1.1.), then this latter can-
not determine the primary sense of 19:18.

[226] Fohrer, 1:230. Marti (156) believed that the five cities were smaller towns
along the Judean border. The *Pesikta De-Rab Kahana* 7:5 and *Pesikta Rabbati*
17:4 identified the five cities with No (= Alexandria), Nof (Memphis), Tach-
panes (Chupianas), עִיר הַהֶרֶס (עִיר הַחֶרֶס) and עִיר שֶׁמֶשׁ.

[227] Cf. the Vulg.; Aq.; Sym. מַצְּבוֹת בֵּית־שֶׁמֶשׁ ("the pillars of the house of the
Sun") in the MT is paired by בָּתֵּי אֱלֹהֵי־מִצְרַיִם, just as שָׁבַּר is paralleled by בָּאֵשׁ
יִשְׂרֹף. For מַצְּבוֹת בֵּית־שֶׁמֶשׁ, cf. also מַצְּבוֹת בֵּית־הַבַּעַל in 2 Kgs 16:20–27.

[228] That אֶרֶץ פַּתְרוֹס would specifically allude to the military colony at Elephan-

Egyptian diaspora was much larger than suggested by Jer 44:1.[229] One
may conclude that irrespectively of whether or not five is a real number,
it is unlikely that Isa 19:18 can be related to Jer 43:13 and 44:1.

With regard to the literal sense of the "five cities", Kissane came up
with a different solution. In his opinion, Isa 19:18 alludes to Josh 10 and
the first five cities conquered in Canaan. This conquest was the begin-
ning of a total occupation of Canaan. Here the "spiritual conquest" of
Egypt also begins with five cities. One of the five cities conquered by
Joshua was Jerusalem, the city of righteousness (Isa 1:26). Kissane as-
sumed this explains עִיר הַצֶּדֶק (which he accepted as the genuine reading
for עִיר הַהֶרֶס), the capital of the new Egypt in Isa 19:18.[230]

No doubt, the history of Israel plays a significant role in Isa 19:16–
25. Yet it is unclear how far one can draw an analogy between Josh 10
and Isa 19:18. The problem with Kissane's popular proposal is that Josh
10 is actually not the beginning of the conquest of Canaan, for three
other cities, Jericho, Ai and Gibeon have already fallen. However, if
Josh 10 was not the beginning of a conquest, how could it have served
as analogy for a spiritual conquest in Isa 19:18? Indeed, nothing except
the number five suggests any relationship between the two texts.[231]

Verse 18 does not provide any explanation why only five cities
would speak the Canaanite language. While five can be used in a literal
sense, in the Bible it can also acquire a symbolic significance. With this
latter meaning, five can be the *representative of a whole*. Joseph chooses
five of his eleven brothers to appear before the pharaoh on behalf of his
family (Gen 47:2). The idea of *totality* can be expressed by this num-
ber.[232] A representative number of five people can chase a hundred (Lev

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tine is questionable, not least because it there were more Jewish settlements in
Upper Egypt than Elephantine.

[229] V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1959;
repr., Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 284–86.

[230] Kissane, 218–19, followed by A. Feuillet, "Un sommet religieux de l'Ancien
Testament: L'oracle d'Isaïe xix (vss. 16-25) sur la conversion de l'Egypte", in
Études d'exégèse et de théologie biblique. Ancien Testament (Paris: Gabalda,
1975), 264–66; N. K. Gottwald, *"All the Kingdoms of the Earth": Israelite Proph-
ecy and International Relations in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Harper &
Row, 1964), 226; W. Vogels, "L'Égypte mon peuple – L'universalisme d'Is 19,
16-25", *Bib* 57 (1976), 503; S. Erlandsson, *The Burden of Babylon: A Study of
Isaiah 13:2–14:23* (CBOT 4; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1970), 78; Sawyer,
"Blessed", 59–60; Berges, 167–68; Wodecki, "Heights", 188–89.

[231] For the problems concerning עִיר הַצֶּדֶק, see EXCURSUS 4.

[232] The five kings of the Philistines represent the whole land (Josh 13:3; Judg
3:3; 1 Sam 6:16), the Midianites whom Israel has defeated had five kings
(Num 31:8), and five Amorite kings in Canaan have been overcome by Joshua

26:8), i.e. five may symbolise a *handful* over against a large number.[233]

Accordingly, the five cities of Isa 19:18 may represent the many thousands of Egyptian settlements, i.e. the entire land of Egypt, which according to the following verses will share the same experience.[234] A different possibility is to take into account the contrast between a large and a small number, as in Lev 26:8 or Isa 17:4–6. From the vast number of hundreds of Egyptian cities and thousands of villages, only five towns (a few) will be left as the result of the performed judgment described previously (cf. 2 Kgs 13:7). When Ezek 29 pronounces judgment over the Egyptians, it proclaims that Egypt's cities will be destroyed, its inhabitants scattered among the nations (Ezek 29:12). When they will be gathered after forty years (note the numeric symbolism), they will form "a small kingdom", מַמְלָכָה שְׁפָלָה (Ezek 29:14).

To conclude, while the number "five" can have a literal sense, it may also be understood symbolically. Strikingly the number five appears frequently in the Egypt-related Joseph-narratives (Gen 41:34; 43:34; 45:22; 47:2.24.26), so that it may have been chosen here deliberately in this Egypt-related prophecy. We know that the number five was significant in Egypt.[235]

How and why will these Egyptian cities speak Canaanite? Scholars who relate Isa 19:18 to Jer 43–44 believe that Isa 19 refers to Canaanite-speaking Jews of Egypt rather than to native Egyptians.[236] Yet, beyond the problems in connecting these texts with each other, as Motyer noted,[237] the religion of the immigrants of Jer 44 has little in common with the religion of those mentioned in Isa 19:18 (cf. Jer 44:15–30). Because Isa 19:18 is an extension of a previous prophecy concerned with

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(Josh 10:5). See further the use of "five" in 1 Sam 17:40; 21:3; 25:42.

[233] See also Judg 18:2.7.14.17; 2 Kgs 1:9.

[234] Herodotus mentions twenty thousand cities (*Hist.* ii 177), Diodorus Siculus eighteen thousand cities and important villages in "ancient times" and over thirty thousand in the time of Ptolemy Lagus (*Diod.* i 31) and Theocritus more than thirty-three thousand (*Theoc.* xvii 82–84). The numbers are exaggerated.

[235] Note the five titles / names of the Egyptian pharaoh (cf. U. Kaplony, "Königstitulatur", *LdÄ* 3:641–61), as well as the five principal elements making up a complete personality, akh, ka, ba, name, and shadow. The reign of the ideal king will last 55 years in the Potter's Oracle P₂ 39–40; P₃ 63–64 (Koenen, "Apologie", 146–47, notes 51, 52, 63, 82). Esarhaddon mentions that he wounded the Kushite king five times with his arrow (*IAKA* §57:9; §65:40).

[236] Cf. Duhm, 144–45; Marti, 156; Gray, 337; Von Orelli, 79; Procksch, 252; Fohrer, 1:230; Kaiser, 86; Schoors, 121; Clements, 171; Sawyer, "'Blessed'", 60; Höffken, 158; Blenkinsopp, 318; Tucker, 181.

[237] Motyer, 168.

Egyptians, I doubt that in מִצְרַיִם would have here a different meaning.[238]
The fact that Egyptians (not Judeans in Egypt) will turn to YHWH ap-
pears plainly in the closing verses (unlike e.g. in the LXX and *Tg. Isa*).

The name "Canaan" is used variously in the Bible, a full discussion
of which is here neither possible, nor necessary. The geographical Ca-
naan could include the whole region of the Mediterranean coast (Philis-
tines, Phoenicians), but it can also refer to the territories of Judah and
Israel on the left side of the Jordan. In view of אַדְמַת יְהוּדָה in 19:17, it is
possible that the language of Canaan is the language of Judah. Although
this name for Hebrew is rather unique,[239] it may be explained in relation
to the Egyptian element in this prophecy. This is how Egyptians referred
to the language spoken by Judeans.[240] The "language of Canaan" is not
the Aramaic, which was the common language in the Near East and not
specific to "Canaan".

In antiquity language is one of the important elements by which
ethnicity is defined (Gen 10:5.20.31).[241] According to Herodotus, the
Egyptians called everyone speaking a foreign language "barbarian",[242] so

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[238] Cf. also Penna, 188; Vogels, "Égypte", 496; W. Groß, "Israel und die Völker.
Die Kriese der YHWH-Volk-Konzepts im Jesajabuch", in *Der Neue Bund im
Alten. Studien zur Bundestheologie der beiden Testamente* (ed. E. Zenger; QD 146;
Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 159 note 14; Krašovec, "Healing", 299.

[239] For יְהוּדִית cf. 2 Kgs 18:26 (2 Chr 32:18); Neh 13:24; Est 8:9.

[240] Cf. Marti, 156. As for Canaan in Egyptian texts, on the Israel-stele of
Merneptah, Canaan (*pꜣ knꜥnꜥ*) is mentioned with Lidya (Anatolia), Hatti
(North-Syria), Ashkelon, Gezer, Yenoam (south of the Galilean Sea), Hurru
(Syria) (cf. COS 2.6). Opinions differ whether *pꜣ knꜥnꜥ* is the name of Gaza as
in other New Kingdom texts, or it designates the territory to the east of Phil-
istea, what has later become the land of Judah (J. K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt:
The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* [Oxford: Oxford UP,
1996], 27–29). But since the name Gaza (*gdt*) does appear in other texts of
Merneptah's time (cf. Hoffmeier, *Israel*, 45 note 21), Canaan may indeed refer
to a territory different from Gaza on this place. Others see a chiastic relation-
ship between Hurru and Canaan in this text, which would mean that the two
terms are geographically related. What concerns כְּנַעַן used in view of a foreign
nation, this can be compared to עִבְרִי, attested as an ethnic identifier when
speaking with or in the context of a foreigner (Ex 3:18; 5:3; 7:16; 9:1.13; 10:3).

[241] For language as ethnic identifier in Assyria, cf. C. Zaccagnini, "The Enemy
in the Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: The "Ethnographic" Description", in
*Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn. Politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im
Alten Vorderasien vom 4. bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (eds. H. J. Nissen & J. Ren-
ger; BBVO 1/2; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1982), 414–15.

[242] *Hist.* ii 158. The same is also true of most people of the Near East. For The
Story of Sinuhe as an example of how ethnicity and language played a role in
the life of an Egyptian, see K. L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel:*

that adopting a "barbaric" language sounds here the more striking.

There is nothing in Isa 19:18 that would suggest that Egypt opts for Canaanite from his own free will. This is rather a language *imposed* upon the Egyptians by an overlord. Isaiah 19:18 reminds of similar threats uttered to Israel for the case they disobey YHWH. In that instance they will have to listen to (and speak) a language they do not understand, that of an occupying force whose vassal the nation will become.[243] The adoption of the Canaanite language should therefore be seen as a political necessity after YHWH, the Canaanite-speaking overlord, has conquered the country.[244] That is, the adoption of the Canaanite language has no positive connotations here. This conquest of Egypt is presented in analogy with the conquest of Canaan by Israel (cf. 5.3.2.2.). The "language of Canaan" supposedly calls this past into remembrance.

The political aspect becomes particularly emphatic in the motif of swearing oaths to YHWH in Canaanite. Though some scholars pay little attention to this phenomenon,[245] two different prepositions can be used in connection with the verb שבע niph'al, with different connotations. נִשְׁבַּע בְּ means that the oath is made *by* (the life of) a particular person or concept.[246] The preposition לְ indicates the person *to* whom the oath is addressed.[247] Most scholars understand Isa 19:18 as a salvation oracle, in which the swearing of oaths implies that the Egyptians are converted to YHWH. However, it is not until 19:20b–21[248] that the text turns to articulate the favour of YHWH towards Egypt, by making himself known to them. The self-revelation of YHWH is essential to religion (cf. Ex 3, 6, etc.), so that one may speak of Egypt's adoption of the cult of YHWH only after he has made himself known to Egypt (19:21). If one can speak

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Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expression in the Hebrew Bible (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 78–79.

[243] Cf. Deut 28:49; Jer 5:15; Ps 114:1 (for לֹעֵז meaning a strange language see W. Weinberg, "Language Consciousness in the Old Testament", ZAW 92 [1980] 190); Ps 81:6; Isa 28:11; 33:19 (for נִלְעַג לָשׁוֹן, "obscure speech", the same as עִמְקֵי שָׂפָה also in Ezek 3:5.6, see Weinberg, "Language", 191).

[244] The suggestion of Motyer, 167, that the language-motif can be related to the confusion theme of 19:2–3 and Gen 11 is thought provoking, but it seems to me less likely than the political implications highlighted above.

[245] E.g., Deissler, "Gottesbund", 15; Berges, 168.

[246] So, e.g., נִשְׁבַּע בֵּאלֹהִים, "he swore by (the life of) God", i.e. uttered חַי יהוה (Jer 12:16; cf. Gen 21:23; 31:53; Lev 19:12; Deut 6:13; Isa 45:23; 62:8; etc.).

[247] E.g., נִשְׁבַּע לִי, "he swore to me" etc. (e.g., Gen 21:23; 24:7.9; 25:33; 26:3; Deut 9:5; Josh 9:19; Judg 15:12; for an oath between God and men as in Isa 19:18, cf. 2 Chr 15:14; Ps 132:2; Zeph 1:5). The LXX interpreted the expression נִשְׁבַּע ל as if it was נִשְׁבַּע בְּשֵׁם יהוה (cf. Van der Kooij, "Old-Greek", 135).

[248] Cf. Schenker's view of vs. 21 as "Achse und Wendepunkt" ("Jesaja 19", 6).

of a turning *point* in Isa 19:15–25, that comes no earlier than 19:20b, with YHWH's change of mind concerning Egypt, as we shall see below. For the moment, swearing to YHWH only means that Egypt has become his *vassal*, swearing allegiance to him in the same way as a nation occupied by the Assyrians or Babylonians would swear allegiance to the foreign overlord (Ezek 16:59; 17:13.16.18.19). Verse 18 merely proclaims YHWH's rule over Egypt, thus far without substantial positive effects.

It is therefore most likely that עִיר הַהֶרֶס still reflects the situation in which the previous prophecy of judgment reached its fulfilment. Note that עִיר הַהֶרֶס, "city of ruins" is an element in this prophecy that makes it clear that the threat of vss. 16–17 has actually become a reality. Isaiah 19:16–17 still sound like a prelude to a coming destruction, but עִיר הַהֶרֶס makes the reader conscious of the fulfilment of this prediction.

The cities overpowered by Assyrian kings are often compared to a ruined hill in Assyrian conquest accounts. Note the following text of Shalmaneser III's, in which he describes a campaign against the countries on the shore of the Mediterranaean Sea as follows:

> I captured the great cities of the Patinean. I overwhelmed the cities on the shore of the Upper Sea of the land of Amurru, also called the Western Sea, so that they looked like ruin hills (created by) the deluge (*til abūbe*). I received tribute from the kings on the seashore. I marched about by right of victory in the extensive area of the seashore. I made an image of my lordship [...] (RIMA A.0.102.1 73'–77')[249]

The idea that Egypt will submit itself to YHWH standing on the ruins of its cities is not unique. A notable example appears in Isa 25:2–3:

> For you has made the city a heap, / the fortified city a ruin.
> The palace of aliens is a city no more, / it will never be rebuilt.
> Therefore strong peoples will glorify thee, / the city (sg!) of ruthless nations will fear thee.

The destruction of the city of the ruthless nation will lead its inhabitants to praise YHWH on the ruins. They have missed the opportunity to do this before, so that their doom will learn them to fear YHWH. Likewise, Isa 19:18 tells us that YHWH will punish Egypt, he will take his plan through. The survivors will subject themselves as vassals to YHWH.

The fact that the cities of Egypt will be renamed and get a new identity, reminds one of a well-documented Assyrian policy. When a city was conquered, the king often changed its former name into Assyrian. Shalmaneser III renames Til-Barsip to Kar-Shalmaneser, Napiggu to Lita-Assur, Alligu to Asbat-la-kunu and Rugullitu to Qibit-Assur

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[249] Cf. P. Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image in First Isaiah", *JAOS* 103 (1983) 725–26.

(RIMA A.0.102.2 ii 34–35). Likewise, Sennacherib renamed the conquered city of Elenzash to Kar-Sennacherib (Rassam Cylinder ii 25–26). One of Assurbanipal's texts maintains that after conquering Egypt, Esarhaddon gave Assyrian names to Egyptian cities.[250] This aspect underlines again that Isa 19:18 presents Egypt as an overpowered vassal kingdom now under the royal jurisdiction of YHWH.

To conclude, Isa 19:18 cannot be considered a salvation prophecy. The five cities of Egypt will be destroyed and its inhabitants will have to submit themselves to YHWH, their new overlord, whose language they will have to learn and to whom they will have to swear allegiance.

5.2.6. Verses 19–22

19   On that day there will be an altar of YHWH in the midst of the land of
20   Egypt, and a stele of YHWH beside its border. And this will be a sign
      and a witness of YHWH of hosts in the land of Egypt.
      For they will cry to YHWH before their oppressors, and he will send
21   them a saviour and he will strive and save them. And YHWH will
      make himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will recognise YHWH
      on that day. And they will prepare sacrifice and food offering, and
22   they will make vows to YHWH and they will fulfil them. And YHWH
      will smite the Egyptians, but heal (them), and they will turn to YHWH
      and he will respond their plea, and heal them.

Isaiah 19:19 begins with another בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. In this section a shift takes place from the judgment to the salvation of Egypt. On the debris of Egypt's cities a new altar emerges, one built for YHWH (מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוה).[251]

Some believe that this altar was supposed to function only as a symbol without offerings, similar to the altar built near the Jordan in Josh 22:10.25.[252] Nevertheless, sacrifices are explicitly referred to in vs. 21.[253] The most important aspect of this text is, however, that a foreign altar could have functioned as a sign of submission, as it can also be inferred

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[250] For the ideology behind this Assyrian policy, cf. B. Pongratz-Leisten, "Toponyme als Ausdruck assyrischen Herrschaftsanspruchs," in *Ana sadî Labnâni lû allik. Beiträge zu altorientalischen und mittelmeerischen Kulturen (Festschrift für W. Röllig)* (ed. B. Pongratz-Leisten et al.; AOAT 247; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Butzen and Bercker, 1997), 325–43; I. Eph'al, "Esarhaddon, Egypt, and Shubria: Politics and Propaganda", JCS 57 (2005) 109–10.

[251] Ibn-Ezra mentions an early midrash which understood this reference negatively, as if the altar in Egypt referred to the slaughter of the Egyptians (90). Nevertheless, the texts mentioned in support of this interpretation (Isa 34:6; Jer 46:10; Ezek 39:17–20; Zeph 1:7), refer to sacrifice (זֶבַח) and not to an altar.

[252] Cheyne, 121; Procksch, 252.

[253] Feuillet, "Sommet", 267; Penna, 190; Young, 2:37; Groß, "Israel", 153.

from 2 Kgs 16:10–14. In a context echoing motifs common in Assyrian stele-literature,[254] it is possible to regard the altar of YHWH in Egypt as the symbol of Egypt's submission to YHWH (Egypt has become YHWH's territory) and the altar gifts as the tributes brought to the vassal overlord. When Esarhaddon conquered Egypt and established the rule of the god Assur in the country, he expressed Assyrian authority by installing leaders ahead of the nomes and cities and by changing the names of cities. Furthermore, we read (cf. 2.3.4.1.) that

> I established regular offerings (*sattukku*) and cultic offerings (*ginû*) for Assur and the great gods, my lords, forever. I imposed upon them tribute and obligation of my lordship, every year continually. I let a stele (*narû*) be made with my name, and the praise of the heroism of my lord, Assur, my mighty deeds (that I accomplished when I was) walking in reliance upon Assur, my lord, and the victorious achievements of my hands I let be written on it. I let (it) be erected to the wonderment of all the enemies forever after. (*IAKA* §65:48–53)

It appears that YHWH takes on here the role of god Assur from the Assyrian texts, to whom the offers are presented.

מַצֵּבָה can have a cultic function in the Bible (e.g. Ex 23:24; Lev 26:1), but that is not exclusive. מַצֵּבָה does not mean a '*cultic* pillar', i.e. a pillar located on a cultic place; the cultic connotation is not inherent to the word.[255] מַצֵּבָה also may be a memorial stele, demarcating a grave (Gen 35:20), or erected to commemorate a person or an event (2 Sam 18:18; cf. 1 Sam 15:2). In view of Isa 19:19 the story of Gen 31:43–54 is especially interesting. This text recounts the making of a covenant between Laban and Jacob. The מַצֵּבָה and a heap (גַּל) of stones set up on the border between the territories of Laban and Jacob are here the visible evidence of and witness (עֵד) to the treaty "that I shall not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm" (Gen 31:51–52).[256] The function of the מַצֵּבָה in Isa 19:19 is probably similar to this covenant stele of Gen 31. It has cultic dimensions as far as it is a stele of YHWH, but not because it would be venerated as a cultic object.

The Assyrian text of Esarhaddon cited above in connection with the altar also explains the function of the stele of YHWH (לַיהוה מַצֵּבָה) set up beside Egypt's border. The altar built for the god Assur in Egypt is sup-

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[254] Cf. the explanation of vs. 18 above.
[255] With Dillmann, 178; König, 204; Penna, 190; Schoors, 123; contra Duhm, 145; Wildberger, 740; Krašovec, "Healing", 299.
[256] In Josh 22 the altar built to be a witness concerning the religious connections of the Transjordanian tribes is placed on the border between the tribes on the two sides of the Jordan.

plemented by "a stele (*narû*) (...) with my name, and the praise of the heroism of my lord, Assur" written on it. When Assyrian kings conquered foreign territories and subdued a nation, they set up steles (*ṣalmu* or *narû*) commemorating campaigns and fixing covenantal regulations. These steles often appear in the border zones demarcating the expansion of the Assyrian empire.

> The stele is called *ṣalmu*, 'image', 'statue' (e.g. the stele demarcating the northern border in the land of Nairi beside the sea in RIMA A.0. 102.1:35), *ṣalam šarrūtīya* ("my royal image" in Aramaean territory RIMA A.0.102.1:63'; A.0.102.2 i 49), or *ṣalam bēlūtīya* ("my lordly image" along the Mediterranaean sea (RIMA A.0.102.1:76'). The kings Tiglath-pileser III (SI 8:16–17) and Esarhaddon are known to have set up steles on the border of Philistia with Egypt. Similar steles appear not only on the borders of the empire, but sometimes inside the conquered region, or even in the temple of the occupied nation (RIMA A.0.102.2 ii 62–63; RIMA A.0.102.16:285'). According to RIMA A.0. 102.10 iv 22–34, Shalmaneser III set up two steles in the land of Que, demarcating both the nearest and furthest cities of the land as Assyrian property. As for the content of the text on the stele, Shalmaneser III tells us that "I made manifest the heroism of Assur and the god Shamash for posterity, by creating a colossal royal statue of myself (and) writing thereupon my heroic deeds and victorious actions." (RIMA A.0.102.2 i 49–50; cf. *IAKA* §65:50–53 for Esarhaddon and Sennacherib's Rassam Cylinder ii 4–5). Elsewhere the stele establishes fame for eternity (RIMA A.0.102.2 ii 8) or praises Assur (RIMA A.0. 102.2 ii 44).[257]

After YHWH defeated Egypt and the country has become his vassal, the מַצֵּבָה demarcates the new territory of YHWH's kingdom. His rule is not confined to Judah any more, but it also includes Egypt, the new country that he has subdued.

To sum up, it is highly unlikely that מַצֵּבָה would have anything to do with the infamous Canaanite cultic object. מַצֵּבָה is a border stele, which functions in the same way as the Assyrian kings' *ṣalmu* or *narû*. The stele in Isa 19:19 may be related with the covenant made between

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[257] For secondary literature, cf. I. Winter, "Art in Empire: The Royal Image and the Visual Dimensions of Assyrian Ideology", in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995* (eds. S. Parpola & R. M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 359–81; S. Parpola, "Assyria's Expansion in the 8th and 7th Centuries and Its Long-Term Repercussions in the West", in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors, from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* (eds. W.G. Dever & S. Gitin; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 100–1.

Egypt and Yʜᴡʜ, implicitly Assur, possibly also celebrated with offer-
ings and festal meal as in Gen 31.[258] Above I suggested that Isa 19:18
describes a quasi campaign against Egypt in the course of which the Nile
land is subdued to the status of a vassal kingdom. The oath of Egypt in
19:18 is like the oath of a vassal uttered towards his overlord. The altar
and the stele is built for the conqueror God, Yʜᴡʜ.

In Isa 19:19 מַצֵּבָה is mentioned together with the altar of Yʜᴡʜ. It
is possible that the location of מַצֵּבָה near the borders (אֵצֶל־גְּבוּלָהּ) and
the altar amidst (בְּתוֹךְ) the land refer to different places. However, בְּתוֹךְ
may also have a similar connotation to בְּקֶרֶב and בְּ,[259] so that אֵצֶל־גְּבוּלָהּ
and בְּתוֹךְ could refer to the same place inside Egypt. As for the border
zone, אֵצֶל־גְּבוּלָהּ, the Assyrian scribes of Assurbanipal mention that after
the conquest of Lower Egypt, Esarhaddon counted the subjugated land
as the *new border* of his country (*ana miṣir mātīšu*).[260]

ליהוה in vs. 20 can be interpreted in two different ways. (a) The altar
and the stone is a sign "to(wards) / for Yʜᴡʜ" prepared by (?) the Egyp-
tians, in the way the Assyrian king prepared a stele for Assur, Hadad or
another god. (b) These objects are signs "belonging to / concerning
Yʜᴡʜ", witnessing about him towards Egyptians and others.[261] If the
altar and the stele are prepared by Egypt for Yʜᴡʜ, the מַצֵּבָה may be
placed on the common border of Judah and Egypt, as a sign for those
entering the country.[262] The problem with this reading, based on the
function of the border stone in Gen 31, is that in the Jacob narrative
the two territories remain essentially isolated properties of Jacob and

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[258] H. Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur in der Sargonidenzeit* (FRLANT 129;
Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 331–344, enumerates examples
of treaty ceremonies of Assyria and its vassals that included festal meals and
offers brought to the Assyrian gods as a sign of submission.

[259] Cf. *HALOT*; Van Hoonacker, "Deux passages", 302. Van Hoonacker's view
that the altar and the stele refer to the same object is, however, unconvincing

[260] Prism A i 60–62; Prism B i 61–62; Prism C i 13–15; cf. Isa 10:13. It is some-
times suggested that Isa 19:20 alludes to the temple of the Jewish colony of
Elephantine (B. Porten, "Settlement of Jews at Elephantine and the Arameans
at Syene", in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* [eds. O.
Lipschits & M. Oeming; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006], 461). Yet the con-
cern of Isa 19:19 with Egyptians would question this, although a stele set up in
the south remains a possibility (cf. 5.3.3.2.).

[261] For a discussion, cf. Monsengwo-Pasinya, "Isaïe XIX 16-25", 194–95. Cf.
Gen 9:13, where the rainbow as the sign of the covenant between God and the
world will remind both parties of the covenant (Gen 9:15–16). In Josh 24:27 a
stone (אֶבֶן) becomes a testimony (עֵד) against (בְּ) the people and God. See also
Isa 8:2 and 55:4 for witnesses testifying for/on behalf of Yʜᴡʜ.

[262] As assumed by e.g., Fischer, 144; Kissane, 220; Wildberger, 739.

Laban respectively. The second option is therefore more likely, viz. that the stele and the altar are signs and witnesses towards the Egyptians and others on behalf of YHWH, providing a close parallel to Esarhaddon's stele in Egypt, called *narâ šiṭir šumīya*, "a stele with my name written on it" (*IAKA* §65:50).

Isaiah 19:20b is the point, where the prophecy thus far describing judgment on Egypt turns into a prophecy of salvation. Egypt, as a vassal of YHWH, will experience the benefits of vassalship. From among the cities of ruins, Egypt will request help from YHWH, his new overlord.[263]

The conjunction כִּי in vs. 20b is not temporal,[264] but explicative or logically connective, explaining how the stele will function as a witness. Reminding the reader of Egypt's oppression, (19:1–15), YHWH shall head to the cry (צעק) of this people under oppression (לֹחֵץ) and he will send them a saviour.[265] God will plead their cause and he will save them. The language adopted here alludes to narratives from Israel's history, which is theologically important (5.3.2.2.).[266]

YHWH will fulfil the commitments of a vassal overlord in lending support to Egypt. The coming מוֹשִׁיעַ (not a מֶלֶךְ!) will bring salvation and not oppression, contrary to the figure of Isa 19:4. The emergence of a saviour in time of need is a motif overwhelmingly represented in Near Eastern literature, as we have seen above in 19:4,[267] but it is also known in the Bible (cf. 5.3.2.2.).

ריב means 'to quarrel', 'to dispute'; 'to strive', 'to fight' (but not in the sense of 'to wage war'). Among the more than a hundred appearances, ריב is related to conflicts between nations only in a few texts: Judg 11:25 (cf. Ps 35:1); 12:2 and perhaps 1 Sam 15:5. In these cases ריב designates the dispute (negotiation) preceding a battle. This is most clear in Judg 11:25 and 12:2, where ריב is used in connection with a debate concerning the ownership of Ammonite territories (Judg 11:13).

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[263] Philistia was delivered from a plague of YHWH in a similar way (1 Sam 5–6).

[264] Contra Gray, 340; Wildberger, 727; Oswald, 373; Van der Kooij, "Old-Greek", 139.

[265] The human character of the deliverer (מוֹשִׁיעַ) is emphasised by the LXX as ἄνθρωπον ὃς σώσει αὐτούς. σώτηρ is probably avoided because this was only used in connection with God in Isaiah (Van der Kooij, "Old-Greek", 141).

[266] The suggestion that Isa 19:19–20 would deal here with Jews in Egypt oppressed by Egyptians and ultimately delivered, is unconvincing. There is no reference to Jews in these verses. They have been brought into discussion only to explain the Canaanite language and the five cities of Isa 19:18.

[267] E.g., the figure of Ameni in the Neferti prophecy, or the unnamed figure that "wird Herr werden über jedes Land" in the Tebtynis Prophetic Text (Quack, "Prophetischer Text", 260 (E x+5), or the "gnädige König von Helios" in the Potter's Oracle (P₂ 40, P₃ 65–66) (Koenen, "Apologie", 146–47).

In 1 Sam 15:5 ריב quite likely marks the dispute taking place between Saul's army and the Amalekites preceding the military conflict described in the following verses. ריב in the sense 'to quarrel' or 'to dispute' preceding a war adequately explains this verb in Isa 19:20. A similar dispute before military conflicts was a common phenomenon in ancient and modern times. In this case, YHWH is the one disputing, linking this text to e.g. 1 Sam 24:16; Ps 18:44; Isa 63:1.

The cry for help of Egypt was motivated by desperation and fear from YHWH. Now YHWH will reveal himself to Egypt, and it will get to know him (Isa 37:20). The niph'al form of ידע is relatively rare.[268] In connection with a foreign nation, the idiom of this verse is unique. Most often, the nations recognise YHWH only as their judge.[269] Here Egypt will get to know YHWH as a deliverer (contrast Ex 5:2). With this positive meaning, the formula is only used in connection with Israel.[270] YHWH will reveal himself to Egypt as he has previously done to his own people. The parallel experience of Egypt and Israel is particularly interesting.[271] Egypt's history will bear all the hallmarks of the history of God's people. The way is paved here to becoming an עם יהוה (cf. 19:25).

The recognition of YHWH as God in vs. 21 means that the Egyptians will bring him offerings (עָבְדוּ זֶבַח וּמִנְחָה) and they will make vows and fulfil them (נָדְרוּ־נֶדֶר וְשִׁלֵּמוּ). The same reaction we also find with the travel mates of Jonah after recognising the power of YHWH and being delivered from the sea (Jon 1:16). By these offers and these vows, Egypt not only expresses its thankfulness towards YHWH for his deliverance, but beyond it, it commits itself to him concerning the future.[272]

The precise role of Isa 19:22 is disputed. This verse mentions the smiting and healing of Egypt, its turning to God, who listens to its prayers. What is meant by "smiting the Egyptians and healing them"? Is it concerned with the future or the past?

Punishment as the striking of YHWH and healing as restoration is a prominent motif in prophetic books[273] and well known in the exodus

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[268] Ex 6:3; 1 Kgs 18:36; Ps 76:2; Ezek 20:5.9; 35:11; 38:23.

[269] Ezek 28:22; 30:8; 32:15; 33:29; 39:6; see also Ex 7:5; 14:4.18.

[270] 1 Kgs 20:13.28; 2 Chr 33:13; Isa 45:3; 49:23; 60:16; Ezek 16:62; 20:42.44.

[271] Cf. Monsengwo-Pasinya, "Isaïe xix 16-25", 198; Kilian, 124–25; Goldingay, 120; Tucker, 181.

[272] H. Tita, *Gelübde als Bekenntnis. Eine Studie zu den Gelübden im Alten Testament* (OBO 181; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 2001), 204. For נֶדֶר in the Latter Prophets, cf. Jon 1:16; Jer 44:25; Nah 2:1; Mal 1:14.

[273] Cf. Jer 3:22; 30:17; 51:8–9; Hos 5:13; 6:1; 7:1; 11:3.14.4. See Z. Kustár, *"Durch seine Wunden sind wir geheilt". Eine Untersuchung zur Metaphorik von Israels Krankheit und Heilung im Jesajabuch* (BWANT 154; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002).

narratives. Isaiah also pictures the state of the disobedient Judah in terms of sickness and healing. According to Isa 6:10, seeing, hearing, turning back to YHWH (שׁוּב), and grasping the prophetic word, would bring healing (רפא) to God's people. A parallel message with Isa 19:22 appears in 1 Kgs 8:33–34 and a contrasting one in Isa 9:12.[274] נגף may refer to some kind of plague as a punishment bringing death (1 Sam 25:38; 2 Chr 13:20), to illness (2 Sam 12:15; 2 Chr 21:18), but it can signify military defeat as well, which gives most sense in Isa 19:22.[275]

A significant number of scholars understand the events of 19:22 as temporally following those previously described. YHWH will smite Egypt "to correct faults committed after its conversion to the true religion".[276] Others take it as a "purposeful discipline of the Lord in part of life under his care".[277] Yet a prophecy envisaging a bright future for Egypt leaves no room for the idea that they may turn away from YHWH again.[278] It gives most sense therefore if נגף is taken to refer to the punishment of YHWH that the Egyptians had to face in their past as described earlier.[279] The healing (רפא) of Egypt refers to their deliverance.

5.2.7. VERSE 23

23   On that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will go to Egypt and Egypt will go to Assyria, and Egypt will serve Assyria.

On the day when Egypt is healed, there will be a highway (מְסִלָּה)[280] between Egypt and Assyria (mentioned here for the first time), and the

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[274] See further the image of sickness and healing in Deut 32:39; Isa 30:26; 57:17–19; Jer 30:17; 33:6; Lam 2:13; Hos 5:13; 7:1; 11:3; 14:5. The term שׁוּב in connection with healing appears also in Jer 3:22; Hos 6:1.

[275] Deut 1:42; Judg 20:35; 1 Sam 4:3; 2 Chr 13:15; 14:11; Ps 89:24. For רפא with the sense of restoration, cf. Jer 30:17; 33:6; 51:8–9; Hos 5:13; 6:1; 7:1.

[276] Wade, 131; cf. Kissane, 220–21; Höffken, 159; Wodecki, "Heights", 184.

[277] Motyer, 169; cf. Z. Kustár, "Ein Gottesvolk – oder mehrere Völker Gottes? Ein Konzept aus der 'Peripherie' der biblischen Eschatologie" in *Europa, Minderheiten und die Globalisierung. Theologische Überlegungen zu der sich erweiternden Welt* (eds. E. Noort & W. Wischmeyer; Groningen, 2006), 29.

[278] Clements argues that punishment after conversion is inadequate "and seems to represent the work of an expansive editor, who felt that the Egyptians should not be let off without punishment" (Clements, 172). The problem with his reading is that the editor could have already seen the punishment of the Egyptians in the verses before.

[279] Cf. Gesenius, 656; Cheyne, 121.

[280] On this term, cf. D. A. Dorsey, *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1989), 228–34.

one will go to the other. There has always been a highway from Egypt to
Assyria (Gen 25:18). Why is this pronouncement then so remarkable?

Some authors see the מְסִלָּה-motif in connection with texts mention-
ing the return of Israel from the exile, or even connect it to this re-
turn.[281] However, מְסִלָּה is a neutral word, as are דֶּרֶךְ, or אֹרַח (cf. Num
20:19; Isa 7:3; 36:2). In diaspora-related texts, the preparation of a מְסִלָּה
means that God transforms chaos and desert into a place where his na-
tion can travel through without getting lost. In the desert, a place with-
out roads, one can get lost (Ps 104:4.40; Job 12:24; Isa 35:7–8). This
idea is farther removed from Isa 19:23, where the problem is not caused
by a chaotic desert or a sea that Egypt and Assyria would have to cross.
Chaos is related here to war and mutual hostility. When there is war,
travelling is unsafe, the roads become empty (Judg 5:6; Isa 33:8). Assyria
and Egypt have been opposing powers for a long time, but peace be-
tween them will turn the world into a safer place.[282] A מְסִלָּה between
Egypt and Assyria is the sign of peace (contrast 19:2–4). Peace is pic-
tured in a similar manner on the Dream Stele of the 7th century Ku-
shite king, Tanutamani, of course, recontextualised here to fit the Egyp-
tian circumstances, by turning donkeys into sailing boats:

> (And from that time on) the southerners have been sailing north-
> wards, the northerners southwards, to the place where his Majesty is
> (i.e. Memphis), with every good thing of South-land and every kind of
> provision of North-land (…) (*FHN* 1.29:41–42)

The perspective of vs. 23 is worldwide peace. Egypt and Assyria, the two
antagonists of the history will no more be the source of conflicts among
the nations. Motyer has called attention to the fact that 19:16–25 tends
to parallel ideas from 19:1–15 in an opposing way.[283] Instead of chaos
(vss. 1–15), the order will be restored, instead of cruel kings (vs. 4), a
just saviour will arrive, social disorder (vss. 2–3) will be replaced by
prosperity (cf. COS 1.45:58–71). The restored way between Egypt and
Assyria may be seen as the reversal of the chaos scene of 19:1–15.

עָבְדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־אַשּׁוּר is most often translated as "Egypt and Assyria
will serve (YHWH)". Nevertheless, as mentioned in the notes (23 r–r),
this curiously widespread agreement is regrettably based on theological
and literary critical premises rather than sound linguistic arguments. I
mentioned three crucial points that make this reading highly unlikely.[284]

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[281] E.g., Blenkinsopp, 319. מְסִלָּה is indeed frequently used in this sense (Isa
11:16 [cf. דֶּרֶךְ in Isa 51:10]; 40:3; 49:11–12; 62:10).

[282] Unlike Ehrlich, 73, I believe בּוֹא אֶל is a neutral term used in various ways
and it does not necessarily refer to international (royal) marriages.

[283] Motyer, 167.

[284] עבד is not intransitive, עבד אֶת always means "to serve someone", עבד is not

Does the context of vs. 23 cast any doubt on the translation "Egypt will serve Assyria", the reading most obviously supported by the MT and the versions? If it did not intrigue ancient interpreters (LXX; Syr.; *Tg. Isa.*), should this be a problem to us? Is the representation of the new world under "Assyrian" (cf. 5.3.3.2.) control difficult to be reconciled with the promised salvation of Egypt in the previous verses?

Several texts in the Old Testament suggest that this should not necessarily be the case. After the first invasion of Judah by the Babylonians, Jeremiah had to perform a symbolic act of bearing a yoke as a symbol of Babylonian subordination (Jer 27:2). The message attached to it was this: YHWH, the ruler of the whole world, sovereignly decided to whom he gave it (27:5). He chose to hand over all the lands of Judah, Tyre, Sidon, Ammon and Moab to his "servant", Nebuchadnezzar (27:6). The nation that did not serve the Babylonian king would be wiped out (27:8), but "any nation that will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I shall leave on its own land, to till it and dwell there" (27:11). According to this view, subordination to the Babylonian king warranted a prosperous future, relative though as it might be. Keeping peace with the dominant power secured by YHWH and living under its rule should not necessarily be considered a proclamation of judgment. On another place the prophet calls Cyrus the shepherd (Isa 44:28) and the messiah of YHWH (Isa 45:1), the man of his counsel (Isa 46:11), and the one whom YHWH loves (Isa 48:14). Although these texts are first of all "salvation" oracles about King Cyrus, Israel and the other nations under his patronage are obviously believed to experience a prosperous future life. In other words, it is not so terrible after all to serve a "servant of YHWH", at least not as long as the relationship between the dominant power and its subordinate is peaceful. As the last two verses of Isa 19 make it clear, Assyria whom Egypt will serve is not the harsh master any more (cf. 19:4), but a nation under the patronage of YHWH. That 19:23 does not concur with *certain types* of eschatological visions, is correct (cf. 5.3.2.2.), but that hardly legitimates emendation. It would rather question the appropriateness of the eschatological interpretation of 19:23.

5.2.8. VERSES 24–25

24 On that day Israel will be the third beside Egypt and Assyria, blessing
25 in the midst of the earth, which YHWH of the hosts will bless saying:
      "Blessed be my people, Egypt,
      and Assyria the work of my hands,

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a cultic term. Especially in a context where the world power is referred to one naturally expects further clarifications in order to avoid misunderstanding.

and Israel my inheritance."

Beside Egypt and Assyria mentioned earlier in Isa 19:23, Israel (re?)ap-
pears in vs. 24. The concern of the final two verses is the status of Israel
in this new world of peace, geographically located between the two ma-
jor players, Egypt and Assyria. The text is surely provocative, considered
by some unparalleled in its universalism.[285]

The location of Israel as third (שְׁלִישִׁיָּה) beside Egypt and Assyria is
remarkable.[286] While on other places the future is portrayed as an Israel-
centred world where the nations serve YHWH's chosen nation,[287] here
the three nations appear side by side: Egypt, Assyria, and Israel. Scholars
usually concentrate on the pronouncements concerning Egypt and As-
syria, elevated to the status of a YHWH-people. However, after 19:19–23,
this hardly comes as a surprise. Now the prophecy assigns a place to Is-
rael it never actually enjoyed: to be named in one breath with Assyria
and Egypt. All the other countries Moab, Ammon, Edom, Philistia,
Aram have vanished from the map of the future world.[288]

It is a question whether the name Israel, the third between Egypt
and Assyria has anything to do with the historical Judah, last mentioned
in Isa 19:16, or it is rather an Israel of the future. This verse reminds the
reader of the land promised to Abraham and realised in the empire of
David reaching from Assyria on the Euphrates to the Nile of Egypt, with
Moab, Ammon, Edom, Philistia, and Aram as its vassal kingdoms, ac-
cording to biblical historiography. In the history of Judah and Israel
from the 8th century, Egypt and Assyria were the two neighbours amidst
of which they made every effort to preserve national independence (Jer
2:18; Lam 5:6; Hos 7:11; 12:2). Egypt and Assyria were the instruments
of YHWH (Isa 7:18; 10:24; Zech 10:11), or the homes for God's nation
during captivity (Isa 27:12–13; Hos 9:3; 11:5.11; Mic 7:12; Zech 10:10).
Kilian rightly maintained that in Isa 19:24–25 Egypt and Assyria repre-
sent the whole world, the north and the south.[289] Israel between them,
the centre of the earth (cf. Ezek 38:12), will become a blessing for the
whole world. Far beyond being a tiny province or satrapy of a world em-

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[285] I. Wilson, "In That Day: From Text to Sermon on Isaiah 19:23–25", *Int* 21
(1967) 82; Groß, "Israel", 157.

[286] Cf. Clements, 172; Hayes & Irvine, 266.

[287] Isa 14:1–2; 49:23; 60:3.10.16; 66:12.

[288] A similar distinction between the neighbouring nations on the one hand,
and great powers on the other, appears in Isa 11:14. Judah's neighbours as
states subjugated to God's nation are distinguished from the more distant na-
tions Egypt and Assyria (Isa 11:15–16) that will be subdued by YHWH. How-
ever, Isa 11 mentions nothing concerning their subordination to Israel.

[289] Kilian, 125.

pire, it will enjoy the fame of the mightiest nations on earth.

Isaiah 19:24 obviously alludes to the promise of Gen 12:2–3, once given to Abraham, Israel's ancestor, who himself made this journey from "Assyria" (Mesopotamia) to Egypt and finally back to Canaan.[290]

> I shall make of you a great nation (אֶעֶשְׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל), and I shall bless you (וַאֲבָרֶכְךָ), and I shall make your name great (וַאֲגַדְּלָה שְׁמֶךָ), so that you will be a blessing (וֶהְיֵה בְּרָכָה). I shall bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I shall curse; and by you all the families of the earth will bless each other (וְנִבְרְכוּ בְךָ).[291]

The great nation (גּוֹי גָּדוֹל) that Abraham will become does not only refer to the increased number of his descendants, but also to political significance (cf. Deut 4:7.38; 9:1; Jer 6:22; 50:9.41), made even more explicit in וַאֲגַדְּלָה שְׁמֶךָ, "and I shall make you famous". This coheres with Isa 19:24 mentioning Israel as the third beside the two most powerful nations on earth. However, this power will not be misused at anybody's expense. The verse refers to peaceful cohabitation, as was Abraham's sojourn in Canaan. Blessing is "nation-friendly" and not militant.

What does it mean to be(come) a blessing? It is assumed that Israel will become the beneficiary,[292] the source,[293] or the channel[294] of blessing, through which blessing is poured out on the nations. A rarely mentioned fourth alternative is that the name of Israel will be mentioned in a blessing formula, such as "may you be prosperous like Israel".[295] Looking for the meaning of היה בְּרָכָה, Zech 8:13 may help us further:

> As you have been a cursing among the nations (הֱיִיתֶם קְלָלָה בַּגּוֹיִם), o house of Judah and house of Israel, so I shall save you (אוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם) and you will be a blessing (וִהְיִיתֶם בְּרָכָה).

The concept of becoming a blessing appears rarely in the Old Testament, but the antithetic idea of היה (לְ)קְלָלָה (Zech 8:13) is more frequent, especially in the Deuteronomistic sections of the Bible.[296] The table below gives an overview of the stereotypical language used here.

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[290] Cf. also Gen 18:18; 22:17–18; 28:14.

[291] The niphʻal form of ברך should better be rendered in the reciprocal sense and not as a passive, as usually done, which corresponds to the puʻal.

[292] εὐλογημένος in the LXX means "blessed", but not "blessing" as does the Hebrew בְּרָכָה (also in Gen 12:2; Van der Kooij, "Old-Greek", 149).

[293] Deissler, "Gottesbund", 11, 18.

[294] Groß, "Israel", 156; Wildberger, 745.

[295] H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 164; Groß, "Israel", 156.

[296] For קְלָלָה as the antonym of בְּרָכָה, cf. Gen 12:3; 27:12; Deut 11:26.29; 23:6; 30:1.19; Josh 8:34; Neh 13:2; Ps 109:17.

Text	Whom?	Verb?	To what?	To whom?
Num 5:21	unfaithful wife	נתן	לְאָלָה וְלִשְׁבֻעָה	בְּתוֹךְ עַמֵּךְ
Num 5:27	unfaithful wife	היה	לְאָלָה	בְּקֶרֶב עַמָּהּ
2 Kgs 22:19	the place and its inhabitants	היה	לְשַׁמָּה וְלִקְלָלָה	-
Jer 24:9	king, officers, fugitives to Egypt	נתן	לְחֶרְפָּה וּלְמָשָׁל לִשְׁנִינָה וְלִקְלָלָה	בְּכָל־הַמְּקֹמוֹת
Jer 25:18	cities of Judah, kings, officers	נתן	לְחָרְבָּה לְשַׁמָּה לִשְׁרֵקָה וְלִקְלָלָה	-
Jer 26:6	the temple	נתן	לִקְלָלָה	לְכֹל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ
Jer 29:18	Zedekiah, Jerusalem	נתן	לְאָלָה וּלְשַׁמָּה וְלִשְׁרֵקָה וּלְחֶרְפָּה	בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם
Jer 42:18	those fled to Egypt	היה	לְאָלָה וּלְשַׁמָּה וְלִקְלָלָה וּלְחֶרְפָּה	-
Jer 44:8	those fled to Egypt	היה	לִקְלָלָה וּלְחֶרְפָּה	בְּכֹל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ
Jer 44:12	those fled to Egypt	היה	לְאָלָה לְשַׁמָּה וְלִקְלָלָה וּלְחֶרְפָּה	-
Jer 44:22	the land of Judah	היה	לְחָרְבָּה וּלְשַׁמָּה וְלִקְלָלָה	-
Jer 49:13	Bozrah and all its cities	היה	לְשַׁמָּה לְחֶרְפָּה לְחֹרֶב וְלִקְלָלָה	-
Zech 8:13	Judah and Israel	היה	קְלָלָה /בְּרָכָה	בַּגּוֹיִם

These examples may convince us that becoming a curse (individually or collectively) does not mean that an individual or a community becomes a source of curse, nor that others would curse the respective individual or group. For Isa 19:24 this means that we may exclude the view that Israel is supposed to become the subject, source, channel, or mediator of the blessing. Becoming a blessing or curse means that a person or group will be mentioned in blessing or cursing formulas, songs, proverbs, or oaths, as an individual or a community with an (un)desirable fate.[297] The person who has become a מָשָׁל will be sang of, like in a prophet's songs.[298] The names of those who become a curse will be mentioned in curses,[299] as Jer 29:22 shows:

> And from them (the two false prophets) will take a curse (וְלֻקַּח מֵהֶם קְלָלָה) all the exiles of Judah in Babylon: "May YHWH make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon has roasted in fire."

Becoming a blessing (היה בְּרָכָה) means that an individual (Gen 12:2) or a nation (Isa 19:24) is mentioned in a blessing formula as people with a desirable fate as in Gen 48:20 (cf. Ruth 4:11–12):

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[297] Cf. K. N. Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in its Narrative Context* (BZAW 332; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), 170.

[298] Num 24:20.21; Isa 14:4; Joel 2:17; Hab 2:6; see also Ps 44:15; 69:12.

[299] Cf. Sodom / Gomorrah as cursed cities in Isa 1:9.10; 3:9; Jer 23:14; Lam 4:6.

So he (Jacob) blessed (וַיְבָרְכֵם) them (the sons of Joseph) that day, say-ing: "By you Israel will bless each other (בְּךָ יְבָרֵךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל),[300] saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh'" (…)

According to Isa 19:24, when blessing each other, the people from dif-ferent nations will utter the formula: "may DN (=YHWH?) make you like Israel!" This is indeed the fulfilment of a promise specific to Israel.[301]

In the famous blessing formula of 19:25 Egypt is called עַמִּי, "my peo-ple", the people of YHWH, a term usually reserved for Israel.[302] During its sojourn in Egypt, God distinguished Egypt and Israel, his people, and he treated them accordingly, one with judgment, the other with love (cf. Ex 8:21.22.23). In the future, Egypt will become the people of YHWH. Being the people of someone implies a strong (family) relationship (1 Sam 5:10; 15:30). As 1 Sam 26:19 makes it clear, the unity of worship (cf. Isa 19:19–22) means the unity of the nation.

Assyria is blessed as מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי, "the work of my hands", an expression attested in the Bible in connection with Israel.[303] Similarly to עַמִּי, this expression means ownership. YHWH has made Assyria, it is the work of his hands, it belongs to him. In Assyrian texts the king appears as the work (creation) of the hands of Assur (*binūt qātīšu*), or Mulissu, or Istar, a motif particularly favoured in texts written by Assurbanipal's scribes. Assurbanipal's coronation hymn celebrates his enthronisation with the words: "Assur is king – indeed Assur is king! Assurbanipal is the repre-sentative of Assur, the creation of his hands" (SAA 3 11).[304] Assurbani-pal's Prism A formulates similarly, when citing a dream revelation of Istar of Arbela: "I myself will walk before Assurbanipal, for the king is the creation of my hands" (v 100–1).[305]

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[300] Reading niph'al instead of pi'el. Cf. also note 290 above.

[301] According to Berges "Assur und Ägypten haben als eigenständige JHWH-Völker nicht nur Anteil an der ברכה, sie sind selbst ein Segen inmitten der Welt" (169). However, the point made in Isa 19:24 is not that Israel will be a third along Assyria and Egypt in the sense that not only Israel but Assyria and Egypt, too, will become blessings amidst the earth, for they themselves are "the earth", and Israel the blessing amidst them. The interpretation of "becoming a blessing" presented above would also contest Berges' opinion.

[302] Israel is first called עַמִּי in Ex 3:7. Cf. Ex 3:10; 5:1; 7:4; Isa 1:3; 3:15; etc.

[303] Cf. Isa 29:23 (= יְלָדָיו); 60:21; 64:7.

[304] Cf. Assurbanipal's Prism A vii 95–96.

[305] This is how Assurbanipal is addressed in many oracles of Mulissu and Istar of Arbela (Mulissu was the wife of Assur, a manifestation of Istar [of Arbela], with whom it is often united), as seen for instance in *PPANE* 94:5; 94:rev. 2 (= SAA 9 9:5; 9:rev. 2). In his prayer to the Lady of Arbela Assurbanipal says: "O Lady of Arbela! I am Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, creation of your hands, whom Assur, the father who made you, desired and whom he called by

The third nation mentioned in the blessing, Israel, is called Yhwh's inheritance (נַחֲלָה). This well-known theme of the Old Testament[306] emphasises Yhwh's ownership and possession of Israel. According to the much discussed Deut 32:8–9, when Elyon gave inheritance to the nations, when he fixed the boundaries of the nations according to the sons of El (cf. LXX: ἀγγέλων θεοῦ and Qumran version), Israel has become the inheritance of Yhwh.[307]

Should we search for a ranking on this list of the nations in the sense of prominence or divine favour? Some believe that נַחֲלָה is theologically more significant than עַמִּי and מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי, thus claiming a special position for Israel.[308] However, in view of Gen 48:20, the present order of the nations would rather suggest that Egypt is the most prominent in Isa 19:25. The one blessed first, will inherit a greater blessing (cf. Gen 27:36). Nevertheless, it is more likely that the list merely follows the order how these characters enter the scene of the prophecy, Isa 19. עַם and נַחֲלָה appear often in synonymous parallelism,[309] suggesting that the theological difference between the first and the last line of the blessing is minor or insignificant. This may also be true for מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי. All three terms include the connotation of ownership. Egypt is Yhwh's people, but so is also Assyria and Israel. Assyria is the work of his hands, but so is Egypt and Israel as well. Israel is his inheritance, but—why not—so is Egypt and Assyria, too. The threefold formula reminds of Num 6:24–26.

5.2.9. Conclusion

In Isa 19 a pronouncement of judgment against Egypt is gradually transformed into a prophecy of salvation. The exegetical analysis concluded that the turning point in this text appears in 19:20b–21 and not in vs. 16 or 18, as it is usually presupposed. The judgment on Egypt is presented in the form of a Yhwh-theophany (vs. 1), which will negatively effect the divine (vss. 2–3), natural (vss. 5–7) and social world of the land of the Nile (vss. 2–4.8–10). The leaders and wise men on which society relies are described in a way that strikingly resembles Egyptian perception of this upper stratum of the society (vs. 11). As vs. 4 makes it clear, beyond the divine dimension of Yhwh's arrival to Egypt, there is also a historical-human element that the prophecy hints at in the sup-

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name…" (*PPANE* 101:29–31 [= Prism B v 29–31]).

[306] Ex 34:9; Deut 4:20; 9:26.29; Ps 28:9; 33:12; 74:12; Joel 2:17; Zech 2:16.

[307] אַתָּה תִנְחַל בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם in Ps 82:8 may eventually reflect a similar view if תִנְחַל is vocalised as a hiph'il תַּנְחֵל.

[308] Duhm assumed that this text made Assyria and Egypt "Kinder zweiter Ordnung" (147). Cf. also Procksch, 254; Fischer, 146.

[309] Deut 9:26.29; 1 Kgs 8:51; Ps 28:9; 78:62.71; 94:5.14; 106:40; Isa 47:6; etc.

posed arrival of the unnamed tough master and powerful king. The ful-
filment of the ominous prophecy is alluded to in Isa 19:18, which men-
tions five cities of ruins, עִיר הַהֶרֶס, as those will be called. Especially vss.
18–20 expose a high degree of resemblance with Assyrian literature.
The swearing of allegiance, the speaking of a foreign language, the re-
naming of cities, the establishment of an altar and stele for a foreign
God in the land of Egypt, all reflect the view that Egypt has been sub-
dued as a vassal of YHWH. As for the turning point in the prophecy, the
change of mind of YHWH with regard to Egypt and the change of atti-
tude towards YHWH in case of Egypt appears with the revelation of
YHWH's name to the Egyptians. This is the only possible way to share
the benefits of being the vassal of YHWH. The experience of Egypt in
this respect (vss. 20b–22) is highly similar to that of Israel in the days of
Moses. When Egypt will be adopted in the family of God, to which its
human master (cf. וְעָבְדוּ in vs. 23), Assyria, "the staff in God's hands"
(Isa 10:5), and Israel also belong, peace will be restored on earth. The
earth will share the blessing of the one true Lord of the world.

5.3.   ISAIAH 19 IN CONTEXT

In the following section, I shall evaluate the results of the exegesis of Isa
19 in the context Chapters 2 and 3, following the lead of the set of
questions formulated in the Introduction (1.3.). Like in Chapter 4, the
discussion includes a literary, theological and historical evaluation.

5.3.1.   THE LITERARY ASPECTS OF ISAIAH 19

5.3.1.1. THE FORM, STRUCTURE, AND INTEGRITY OF ISAIAH 19

Isaiah 19 possesses its own מַשָּׂא superscription. In EXCURSUS 3, I ex-
pressed reservations concerning the view that מַשָּׂא would be a technical
term for a prophecy with uniform characteristics. מַשָּׂא may indeed be a
technical term for a solemn speech, but the compositions headed by this
formula diverge from each other to such a great extent that they cast
doubt on any claim concerning common structural elements in these
prophecies. Moreover, Isa 19, as other מַשָּׂא-titled prophecies, presents
similarities with texts that did not receive this heading.
    As for the structure of Isa 19, one should note: (a) the change of
third person form to first person form in 19:2; (b) the oracular formula,
נְאֻם הָאָדוֹן יהוה צְבָאוֹת, closing the section 19:2–4; (c) Isa 19:1–11.13.25b
is written as poetry, 19:12.14–15, as well as 19:16–25a is in prose; (d)
19:16–25 contains five בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא-formulas, typical for expansions; (e)
19:1–20a proclaim doom to Egypt, but this gradually gives way to a posi-
tive prediction towards the end of the prophecy (19:20b–25).
    These divergences make Isa 19 a difficult text for those who wish to

read it as an original unity written on one particular occasion.[310] Most exegetes, however, distinguish between either 19:1–15 and 19:16–25 or 19:1–17 and 19:18–25, as two distinctive text blocks.[311] Nevertheless, 19:(16–17)18–25 is not treated as an independent prophecy (as Isa 20), but as an expansion of 19:1–15(16–17), written for its present place.

Beyond the caesura at vs. 16 or 18, the coherence of the two great constitutive parts of Isa 19 has also been questioned. Isaiah 19:1–15 is usually divided into three subsections: 19:1–4.5–10.11–15: vss. 1–4 deal with YHWH's arrival to Egypt and the chaos caused in the life of Egyptians; vss. 5–10 describe the desiccation of the Nile and its consequence; vss. 11–15 present Egypt's leaders as incapable to deal with the situation. Lorentz considered these three sections of different origin brought together by a final author living in Egypt.[312] More often, however, the middle section of the prophecy is argued to be a secondary interpolation between 19:1–4 and 11–15.[313] The concern of 19:5–10 for nature and economy rather than politics is assumed to support this opinion.

It is indeed remarkable that the otherwise so frequent מִצְרַיִם does not appear in vss. 5–10 (though cf. מָצוֹר in 19:6b). Not less striking is the fact that 19:5–10 does not seem to reflect on the political chaos. It rather focuses on the decay of vegetation and the decline of economy. Nevertheless, we have already seen some arguments that support the integrity of 19:1–4.5–10. A few notes may be added here. First, the reference to typically Egyptian *realia* (e.g. the Nile) may explain why the name מִצְרַיִם is missing in 19:5–10. Second, the imagery of YHWH as riding on a cloud and arriving to Egypt (19:1) already introduces a divinity of the *nature*, of rain and drought (cf. Ps 104). The effects of his coming are portrayed in 19:5–10.[314] Third, in the Old Testament theophanies are often coupled with massive changes in nature.[315] Fourth, given that 19:1 describes YHWH's arrival in Egypt as a source of confusion among the Egyptian gods, the drying up of the Nile (Hapy) whose inundation is regarded as a divine gift of Nun, Amon, or Aton, may symbolise a fur-

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[310] Delitzsch, 240; Ridderbos, 137–38, 143; Young, 2:48; Oswald, 274–75; Hayes & Irvine, 263; Motyer, 167.

[311] For the former, see Gray, 318; Procksch, 244; Wildberger, 703–4; Schoors, 118. For the latter, see Watts, 255.

[312] O. Lorentz, "Der Ugaritische Topos *bʿl rkb* und die 'Sprache Kanaans' in Jes 19:1–25", *UF* 19 (1987) 110–11.

[313] T. K. Cheyne, "The Nineteenth Chapter of Isaiah", *ZAW* 13 (1893) 127; Marti, 155; Vermeylen, 1:322; Wildberger, 703; Clements, 168; Höffken, 143.

[314] YHWH's drying out the rivers and seas would sound like a historicised version of Baal's fight with Yam / Naharu in Ugarit. Baal (Seth) was particularly well-known in the eastern Delta (cf. Chimko, "Foreign Pharaohs", 21–22).

[315] Judg 5:4–5; 2 Sam 22:7–16; Ps 68:7–8; Mic 1; Hab 3.

ther aspect of this conflict among the divinities. Sixth, and most signifi-
cantly, as remarked in the exegetical section, the installation of a harsh
ruler, one rejected by humans and divines, is often paralleled by decay
in the natural habitat. In Egyptian religion, the person of the king
(pharaoh) is strongly connected to welfare in the land and the inunda-
tion of the Nile. This belongs to the basic Egyptian concept of m3ʿt, so-
cial order and justice, but the motif is not typically Egyptian (cf. Ps 72;
SAA 3 11). Seventh, Isa 19:10 mentioning the ordinary men (wage
workers) and the leaders (pillars) of Egypt forms an excellent bridge
between 19:5–10 and 11–15, which deals with these leaders in more
detail (in contrast to the ordinary workers of vss. 8–9).

Surely, in its present form vss. 5–10 never existed independently.[316]
Of course, the possibility that 19:5–10 was taken over as a fragment
from elsewhere cannot be excluded.[317] But even so, this interpolation
could have been the work of the same author who wrote 19:1–4.11–15.

Attention is required by the peculiar character of 19:2–4. These
verses contain a speech of YHWH in the first person with a typical oracu-
lar formula (נְאֻם הָאָדוֹן יהוה צְבָאוֹת).[318] This first person form may be con-
trasted with the third person forms in 19:1.12.14. Yet as we have seen in
Isa 18, such changes in person (with or without formulas making the
reader aware of the logical shift in the prophecy) seem to function in
connection with prophetic comments upon a received revelation. It
should not be excluded that Isa 19:2–4 with its first person formulation
and characteristic closure demarcates an earlier prophecy taken over
into Isa 19, but this view is, again conjectural. It is nevertheless impor-
tant that the name הָאָדוֹן יהוה צְבָאוֹת is typically Isaianic, appearing in
passages commonly ascribed to the 8th century prophet.[319]

When some scholars argue that Isa 19:15 is a gloss, they motivate
this by its prosaic form over against the rest of 19:1–14 assumed to be
poetry, as well as by the fact that 19:15 is a close parallel to Isa 9:13.[320]
However, if poetry is considered a sign of earlier origin, then 19:12 and

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[316] Höffken, 143. For the coherence of 19:5–10, cf. also Werner, *Plan Jahwes*,
40–41, 48–49; Sweeney, 269.
[317] Cf. 3.4.2.3. on Isa 15.
[318] Duhm (141), Lorentz ("Ugaritische Topos", 105) and Höffken (143) are
suspicious about the change of speaker in these verses. Duhm's laconic com-
ment that Isa 19 was not a fine piece of literary work provided sufficient ex-
planation preventing him to drive his thoughts further. Lorentz believed Isa
19:2–4 was an early commentary to 19:1, attached before the passage was
taken over and made into one text with the other two blocks by the final edi-
tor, 19:5–10 and 19:11–15 ("Der Ugaritische Topos", 111).
[319] Cf. Isa 1:24; 3:1; 10:16.33, and see discussion in 3.4.2.8. above.
[320] So Procksch, 248; Wildberger, 724–25; Clements, 169; Schoors, 120.

14 must also be regarded as secondary additions.[321] The parallelism of ideas is mostly absent in these verses (with the possible exception of vs. 15b). The connection with 9:13 will be discussed below (5.3.1.2.).

To conclude, Isa 19:1–15 most certainly forms a literary unit that also includes vss. 5–10. If the prose-poetry distinction is taken to be a sign of editorial intervention in the text of Isa 19, then vss. 12, 14–15 can be regarded as later additions, though this remains uncertain.

Opinions also differ regarding the coherence of 19:16–25. It is disputed whether 19:16–25 was attached as a unity to 19:1–15, or whether it was a collection of shorter passages divided from each other in time and possibly going back to different authors.[322] It is sometimes assumed that the subsequent expansions were intended to contrast and correct former theological viewpoints.[323] Others maintain that these verses contain gradually developing theological ideas culminating in the final verse.

> In delimiting sections of 19:16–25 ancient witnesses hesitate not less than modern exegetes. 1QIsaᵃ inserts division signs after 19:15.18. 21.23. At 19:17 the end of the verse and the end of the column coincide. The Aleppo Codex has delimitation markers after 19:17.18.22. 23. The Cairo Geniza manuscript gives section markers after 19:17.18. 23. Codex Sinaiticus marks the transition after 19:15.17.18.20.21.22. 23. The Syriac Codex Ambrosianus contains division markers after 19:17.18.22.23.25. It is noteworthy that 1QIsaᵃ, Codex Leningradensis and Sinaiticus consider the beginning of 19:16 a new section, while others do not. It is likewise important that 19:18 is delimited from the next verse in all variants. Some of these witnesses follow a strict logic in textual division. For example, 1QIsaᵃ usually marks off passages beginning with בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא,[324] a principle evident at 19:21, where בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא was regarded by the copyist as the beginning of a new section.[325]

[321] Lorentz, "Ugaritische Topos", 109, believes that 19:12b.14b–15 is prose.

[322] Exegetes distinguish two (19:16–17.18–25; Kilian, 123; Sweeney, 270–71; Kustár, "Ein Gottesvolk", 27), three (19:16–17.18–22.23–25; Procksch, 249; Schoors, 121), or five paragraphs (according to בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא; Fohrer, 1:211; Kaiser, 86; Höffken, 146; Blenkinsopp, 318). Some argue that 19:16–25 is composed by one author, eventually expanded in five steps (Duhm, 144; Wildberger, 730; Feuillet, "Sommet", 262; Vogels, "L'Egypte", 497; Berges, 165).

[323] Kaiser, 86; Kilian, 122.

[324] J. W. Olley, "'Hear the Word of Yahweh': The Structure of the Book of Isaiah in 1QIsaᵃ", VT 43 (1993) 32; O. H. Steck, Die erste Jesajarolle von Qumran (1QIsaᵃ) (SBS 173; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1998).

[325] On the critical value of these unit divisions, contrast M. C. A. Korpel, "Introduction to the Series Pericope", in Delimitation Criticism: A New Tool in Biblical Scholarship (eds. M. C. A. Korpel & J. M. Oesch; Pericope 1; Assen:

Whether 19:16–25 is one coherent text or the result of gradual growth, is largely dependent on presuppositions concerning the introductory בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, often assumed to start editorial sections in a particular prophecy. The question is, how does בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא function in this specific case?

As well-known, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא also appears in texts dealing with past events (e.g. Josh 8:25; 1 Sam 3:2; 2 Kgs 3:6). It has never been debated that in these cases בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא is integral part of the respective passages. While this is sometimes debated, I believe there is a connection between the usage of בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא in past accounts and in prophecies referring to the future. The most important factor in both cases is that בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא is used in *descriptive* texts, that is, in passages that describe events in temporal relation to each other, whether past, or future. It is important to observe the integral character of the בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא-texts in Ex 8:18 (Ex 8:16–19); Deut 31:17–18; 1 Sam 3:12 (3:11–14); 8:18 (8:11–18); 1 Kgs 22:25 (‖ 2 Chr 18:24). These examples appear outside the prophetic books, but are close to prophetic texts as known from the Latter Prophets.[326] Although the study of Munch on בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא[327] was rightly criticised on some points, his case that בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא should not be labelled automatically as a term introducing eschatological passages is strong.

In principle, in case of בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא-texts one should take into account at least four possible explanations: (a) בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא may represent a mere shift in the logical structure of a text without implying a secondary origin for the verse in which it appears. (b) בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא may function as a gloss, but not so the verse to which it was added. (c) As a related option, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא may not necessarily introduce an expansion of a previous

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Van Gorcum, 2000), 1–50, and E. Ulrich, "Impressions and Intuition: Sense Divisions in Ancient Manuscripts of Isaiah", in *Unit Delimitation in Biblical Hebrew and Northwest Semitic Literature* (eds. M. C. A. Korpel & J. M. Oesch; Pericope 4; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003), 279–307.

[326] In his detailed analysis of temporal transitions in prophetic texts, De Vries acknowledged that the verses mentioned above show "remarkable similarities in structure and function" with the "classical" prophecies, but he failed to take advantage of this observation (S. J. De Vries, *From Old Revelation to New: A Tradition-Historical and Redaction-Critical Study of Temporal Transitions in Prophetic Prediction* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 108–9).

[327] P. A. Munch, *The Expression bayyôm hāhūʾ: Is It an Eschatological Terminus Technicus?* (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1936). Cf. also A. Lefèvre, L'expression »en ce jour-là« dans le livre d'Isaïe, in *Mélanges bibliques rédigés en l'honneur d'André Robert* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1957), 174–79. De Vries arrived to a similar result: בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא does not necessarily allude to a redactional insertion in a text. But one has to disagree with him that בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא can only be considered integral when it does not appear at the beginning of a verse (*Old Revelation*, 17). The location of בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא may purely be a matter of syntax.

prophecy, but connect two originally independent prophecies. (d) Finally, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא may introduce a text that was entirely written as a reinterpretation of a previous prophetic passage.

A case like Isa 19:16–25, with six בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא-expressions following each other is not commonly attested in the Bible, but it should not be considered a unique phenomenon either. In theory, it is possible that several temporal transition markers follow each other without urging us to take each individual verse containing בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא as a secondary addition. There must be other more reliable arguments that would warrant such a conclusion. As part of a text of indisputable coherence, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא appears in successive verses in historical texts,[328] but also in prophecy. The integrity of Deut 31:17–18 cannot be questioned, yet here, too, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא is attested three times. The textual unity of similar prophetic passages in the Latter Prophets has been subject to debate. Most notable are Isa 7.18.20.21.23; 17:4.7.9; Hos 2:18.20.23; Zech 12:3.4.6.8.9.11; 13:1.2.4; 14:4.6.8.9.13.20.21. If—in order to avoid circular reasoning—we leave the expression בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא out of consideration, one possibility to discover the integrity of the respective verses would be to look at internal coherence and tensions.

These general observations may prove to be meagre when we wish to condense them into concrete literary critical conclusions in Isa 19:16–25. (a) Isaiah 19:17 mentions the land of Judah as a source of threat for the Egyptians, while in 19:24 the name of Israel appears as the third among the great nations of the earth. However, while the present day Judah is historically contrasting with the ideal future Israel in vs. 24, the two ideas may not necessarily be contradictory from a literary critical point of view. (b) We have a consistently developing line of thought in 19:16–25 with no contradicting elements. That each verse contains new ideas in comparison to the previous verses is most logical and hardly needs any justification. (c) Isaiah 19:22 with its allusion to the smiting and healing of Egypt might be considered to be a conclusion to 19:1–21, but that does not necessarily mean that vs. 21 was a closing verse. (d) There is no clear indication that 19:23 and 19:24–25 must be connected.[329] (e) It is also conceivable that the text retrospectively describes the history of Egypt from a historical point alluded to in 19:23. In that case, we need not imagine a year-for-year update of an oracle, for judgment is part of this past just like salvation.[330]

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[328] E.g., Judg 20:15.21.26.35.46 (5x); 1 Sam 6:15.16 (2x); 1 Sam 14:23.24.31 (3x); 2 Sam 18:7.8 (2x); 19:3.4 (3x).

[329] Contra Wildberger, 730, and Clements, 170, who consider Assyria and Egypt as a sign for the unity of these passages.

[330] Contra Sweeney, 270. His distinction between singular forms in 19:16–17

To conclude, it is unlikely that Isa 19:16–25 would contain five independent additions. Since no serious arguments speak against its coherence, I incline to treat 19:16–25 as a unity, but this question must ultimately be kept open.[331]

5.3.1.2. THE INTERTEXTUAL CONNECTIONS OF ISAIAH 19

The intertextual connections of Isa 19 provide additional insight into the literary history of our text. In relation to 19:1–15, particularly important are Isa 2:22–3:7.12 and 9:7–20. The common vocabulary and theme is illustrated in the following table:

ISAIAH 2:22–3:7.12		ISAIAH 19:1–15	
3:1	הָאָדוֹן יהוה צְבָאוֹת	19:4	הָאָדוֹן יהוה צְבָאוֹת
3:4	וְנָתַתִּי נְעָרִים שָׂרֵיהֶם וְתַעֲלוּלִים יִמְשְׁלוּ־בָם	19:4	וְסִכַּרְתִּי אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּיַד אֲדֹנִים קָשֶׁה וּמֶלֶךְ עַז יִמְשָׁל־בָּם
3:5	וְנִגַּשׂ הָעָם אִישׁ בְּאִישׁ וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ יִרְהֲבוּ הַנַּעַר בַּזָּקֵן וְהַנִּקְלֶה בַּנִּכְבָּד	19:1	וְנִלְחֲמוּ אִישׁ־בְּאָחִיו וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ עִיר בְּעִיר מַמְלָכָה בְּמַמְלָכָה
3:12	מְאַשְּׁרֶיךָ מַתְעִים	19:13	הִתְעוּ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם
3:12	וְדֶרֶךְ אֹרְחֹתֶיךָ בִּלֵּעוּ	19:3	וַעֲצָתוֹ אֲבַלֵּעַ
3:2; 3:4	the removal of the leaders (soldiers, judges, prophets, diviners, elders, captains, dignitary, counsellors, wise magicians, expert enchanters), incompetent leaders	19:3; 19:11; 19:13	the inability of deities on which diviners and magicians rely to do anything; foolish captains, incompetent leaders, wise men, counsellors, prominent and common people incapable to bring change
3:6; 3:7	citation of the words of the people and leaders	19:11	citation of the words of the leaders

ISAIAH 9:7–20		ISAIAH 19:1–15	
9:10	יְסַכְסֵךְ	19:2	סִכְסַכְתִּי
9:13	רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן	19:15	רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן
9:15	מְאַשְּׁרֵי הָעָם־הַזֶּה מַתְעִים	19:12	הִתְעוּ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם
9:15	וּמְאֻשָּׁרָיו מְבֻלָּעִים	19:3	וַעֲצָתוֹ אֲבַלֵּעַ
9:19; 9:20	אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו לֹא יַחְמֹלוּ אִישׁ בְּשַׂר־זְרֹעוֹ יֹאכֵלוּ	19:2	מִצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרָיִם אִישׁ־בְּאָחִיו

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and plural forms in 19:18–25 is also invalid. Cf. יֵאָמֵר (18), גְּבוּלָהּ (19), בָּא (23), יִהְיֶה (24), בֵּרֲכוֹ (25). For the interchange of sg. and pl., see also 19:1–15.

[331] Vogels deciphered a chiastic structure in 19:16–25 ("Égypte", 513): (a) curse (vss. 16–17) (b) peace (vs. 18) (c) covenantal promise (vss. 19–21a) (c') covenantal promise (vss. 21b–22) (b') peace (vs. 23) (a') blessing (vss. 24–25). But his scheme is often problematic, especially at 19:18 and 22.

<div dir="rtl">

מְנַשֶּׁה אֶת־אֶפְרַיִם

וְאֶפְרַיִם אֶת־מְנַשֶּׁה

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As noted in the exegesis, the name הָאָדוֹן יהוה צְבָאוֹת is rare and it appears only in the book of Isaiah. Outside these texts, בלע pi'el appears in Isa 1–39 only in 25:7–8 and תעה hiph'il is found elsewhere only in 30:28. סוך and רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן is found exclusively on these two places. The dispersion of the common vocabulary in 19:1–15 strengthens the literary critical conclusion of the previous section that at least 19:2–4.11–15 were not originally independent from each other.

The prophecies of Ezekiel concerning Egypt contain common elements with Isa 19, though some of these motifs are stereotypical.[332] The parallels are rarely literal, but it is characteristic to the book of Ezekiel that its allusions to other books are often thematic rather than literal. Most striking is Ezek 30:1–19.

ISAIAH 19:1–22		EZEKIEL 30:1–19	
19:1	עָב	30:3	יוֹם עָנָן
19:1	בָּא מִצְרַיִם	30:4	בָּאָה חֶרֶב בְּמִצְרַיִם
	נָעוּ אֱלִילֵי מִצְרַיִם	30:13	הַאֲבַדְתִּי גִלּוּלִים
			וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי אֱלִילִים מִנֹּף
19:4	סִכַּרְתִּי אֶת־מִצְרַיִם	30:12	מָכַרְתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּיַד־רָעִים
	בְּיַד אֲדֹנִים קָשֶׁה		
	נְאֻם הָאָדוֹן יהוה צְבָאוֹת	30:12	אֲנִי יהוה דִּבַּרְתִּי
19:5	נָהָר יֶחֱרַב וְיָבֵשׁ	30:12	נָתַתִּי יְאֹרִים חָרָבָה
19:10	הָיוּ שָׁתֹתֶיהָ מְדֻכָּאִים	30:4	נֶהֶרְסוּ יְסוֹדֹתֶיהָ
19:18?	עִיר הַהֶרֶס יֵאָמֵר לְאֶחָת	30:7	עָרִים נַחֲרָבוֹת

These similarities between the two texts suggest that the author of Ezek 30:1–19 was familiar with Isa 19:1–15, arguably even 19:1–22.[333] Ezekiel 29:13–15(16) also contains a prophecy of salvation for Egypt, although this is different from the salvation prophecy closing Isa 19, and closer to Jer 46:26b (missing from the LXX).

5.3.2. THE THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ISAIAH 19

Concerning the message of Isa 19, exegetes who sustain Isaianic authorship for (part of) this chapter argue that, like most oracles dealing with

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[332] See also L. Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles against Egypt: A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29–32* (BibOr 37; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), 174. The fact that a literary connection existed between Isaiah and Ezekiel is seen from the expression מִשְׁעֶנֶת קָנֶה in Ezek 29:6, alluding to Isa 36:6. Also the phrase יוֹם ליהוה in Ezek 30:3 appears only once more in Isa 2:12. True, Isa 2:12 has יוֹם ליהוה צְבָאוֹת, but צְבָאוֹת never appears in Ezekiel.

[333] As it was noted in 3.4.2.3., the selective citation of judgment passages can be one reason why the salvation prophecies of Isa 19:16–25 are missing.

Egypt, Isa 19 also criticises Judah on the subject of allying with Africa against Assyria (cf. 4.3.2.1.). By predicting the fall of Egypt, the prophet implicitly announces doom that awaits Judah.[334] Given that Isa 19 no-where refers to 8th century freedom movements, Kilian and Werner consider 19:1–15 an implicit salvation prophecy to Judah, presupposing in the background a later conflict between Judah and Egypt, although Werner admits that this is nowhere made explicit either.[335]

5.3.2.1. THE MOTIFS AND BACKGROUND OF ISAIAH 19:1–15

One of the returning motifs in 19:1–15 is עֵצָה in 19:3.11 (cf. vs. 17) and its verbal form יעץ in 19:11.12 (cf. vs. 17). While עֵצָה and יעץ appear outside the FNPs, we find them on key places in Isa 13–23.[336] Fichtner distinguishes between a plan of YHWH against his people (5:19; 30:1) and a plan against the nations (7:5; 8:9–10; 10:5–15; 14:24–27; 19; 23).[337] It is, however, more important to observe that beyond this divid-ing line the plan of YHWH is often formulated as a divine intention pre-vailing above human efforts; whether this appears in relation to Israel or a foreign nation is less important. The plan of YHWH is a counter-plan against human undertaking. As far as these human plans have con-crete—mostly political—objectives in view, the plan of YHWH is also related to his concrete historical manifestation in the near future. It refers to an occasional rather than a well-fixed, century long deter-mined, consistent and unchangeable divine project.[338]

The plan-motif also appears in this sense in the Assyrian inscrip-

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[334] Kissane, 210; Erlandsson, *Burden*, 76; G. R. Hamborg, "Reasons for Judge-ment in the Oracles against the Nations of the Prophet Isaiah", *VT* 31 (1981) 148; Sweeney, 271.

[335] Kilian, 122–23; Werner, *Plan Jahwes*, 52. Cf. also P. E. Dion, *Dieu universel et peuple élu: l'universalisme religieux en Israël depuis les origines jusqu'a la veille des luttes maccabéennes* (Lectio Divina 83; Paris: Cerf, 1975), 108, for 19:16–17, who mentions Isa 11:14; Mic 5:7; Zech 12:6 as related texts.

[336] עֵצָה appears in 14:26; 16:3 (further in Isa 1–39 in 5:19; 8:10; 11:2; 25:1; 28:29; 29:15; 30:1; 36:5), יעץ in 14:24.26.27; 23:8.9 (outside the collection in 1:26; 3:3; 7:5; 8:10; 9:5; 32:7–8). Note also the synonyms צוה, חשב, דמה, ex-pressing a similar idea (cf. Fichtner, "Jahwes Plan", 29–31). The view of Werner that all "plan of YHWH"-texts (e.g., Jer 49:20; 50:45; etc.) imply a common origin is contestable (see for instance his comments on, e.g., Isa 5:19, or 30:1–5 in Werner, *Plan Jahwes*, 20, 92–93).

[337] Fichtner, *Jahwes Plan*, 37.

[338] Somewhat similarly, cf. also G. Fohrer, "Wandlungen des Jesajas", in *Studien zu alttestamentlichen Texten und Themen* (1966-1972) (BZAW 155; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1981), 11–12. On the other hand, Isa 37:26; 46:10–11 presuppose a somewhat more enhancing view of the future.

tions. When Assurbanipal discloses the plans that his Egyptian enemies made he writes: "they (the three leaders of Egypt) talked false speech, and discussed profitless counsels (*milik lā kušīri imlikū*) among themselves […]" (cf. 2.3.4.2.). The contrast between the intentions of Egypt and YHWH in Isa 19:3.11.12 might be the theological expression of a historical conflict similar to the clash between Egypt and Assurbanipal.

As for the context of the עֵצָה-motif in the FNPs of Isa 13–23, one should note close formal similarities, such as the use of rhetorical questions in Isa 14:27; 19:12 and 23:8–9:

Isa 14:27	For YHWH of hosts has planned — who will annul it? His hand is stretched out — who will turn it back?
Isa 19:12	Where then are your wise men? Let them inform you and let you know what YHWH of hosts has planned on Egypt!
Isa 23:8–9	Who has planned this concerning Tyre? […] YHWH of hosts has planned this […]

It was argued in sections 3.4.1. and 3.4.2.9. that the connections between the prophecy concerning Egypt (Isa 19) and Tyre (Isa 23) were more evident before the insertion of Isa 21–22 into the present context. The ties between the two countries were particularly strong throughout history, and we know that they were allied against Assyria during the rebellion of 701, as well as during the reigns of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal. The stele of Esarhaddon from Zendjirli (*IAKA* §65) pictures Taharka, king of Egypt-Kush, and Ba'al, king of Tyre, kneeling before the colossal figure of Esarhaddon, who holds the two small-sized monarchs on ropes (FIGURE 4).[339] Isaiah 23:5 seemingly connects the destruction of Tyre with the destruction of Egypt. This Egypt / Tyre pair of prophecies in Isa 19 and 23 is paralleled by a similar structure (Tyre / Egypt) in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 26–28.29–32), which is—as we have seen—reliant on the book of Isaiah in many respects.

The presumption that Egypt appears as an ally of Israel or Judah in 19:1–15 is neither positively confirmed nor rejected by the prophecy. It may be implicitly there, hidden among the lines of the prophecy. The silence of 19:1–15 in this respect may be compared to Egypt-related prophecies of the Babylonian period. Egypt offered backing for the Judaean kings against Babylon, yet most prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel against Egypt fail to mention this in their prophecies.[340] The community reading or hearing 19:1–15 could have drawn from these passages the necessary conclusions for its relationship with Egypt even if the texts did not specifically refer to prohibited treaties.

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[339] Cf. also *AOB* 144 Tafel LXIII.

[340] E.g., Jer 46:1–12.13–23; Ezek 29:1–6a.9b–12.17–20; etc. Egypt as a false source of hope is mentioned in Jer 46:25–26a; Ezek 29:6b–9a.16.

The intertextual relationship between Isa 19:1–15 and 2:22–3:7.12 may point in this direction. One may presuppose that Isa 2:22–3:7.12 addresses Judah concerning political support from Egypt. Isaiah 2:22 questions the attitude of the people of YHWH in relying on man (הָאָדָם) instead of God, which is exactly the point made in Isaiah's early anti-Egyptian prophecies (31:3). מַשְׁעֵן וּמַשְׁעֵנָה in 3:1 (glossed by כֹּל מִשְׁעַן־לֶחֶם וְכֹל מִשְׁעַן־מָיִם) reminds one of Israel relying (שׁען) on Egypt (Isa 10:20; 30:12; 31:1). It is therefore possible to relate the two pericopes not only as literary compositions, but also in their theological intention. The probability that Isa 19 served as an implicit warning for the people of YHWH is real. If 19:1–15 is assumed to derive from the 8th century, this certainly gives the most sense of all available alternatives.

Otherwise, the text may also deal with Egypt's role in the unfolding plan of YHWH concerning the nations. At any rate, there is no positive support that Isa 19:1–15 would denounce an Egyptian threat against Judah, as Kilian and Werner presupposed. It is noteworthy that biblical prophecies concerning Egypt nowhere motivate the judgment on Egypt with their attempts to occupy Judah.

5.3.2.2. THE MOTIFS OF ISAIAH 19:16–25

In connection with Isa 19:16–26, we need to discuss two important theological questions. First, as I noted above, part of 19:16–25 seems to be constructed in allusion to Israel's past as known mostly from the Torah and the historical books, though occasionally other examples also appear. Second, the type of universalism that appears in 19:16–25 is particularly intriguing, and will be further investigated.

Where do theologically significant expressions from 19:16–25 appear in the Old Testament in a similar context?[341] The word חרד in 19:16 in the context of fear caused by Israel to foreigners appears in Judg 8:12, in the war of Gideon against Zebah and Zalmunna, in 1 Sam 14:15, in the war between Jonathan (Saul) and the Philistines. The deeds of YHWH will cause the isles and the ends of the earth to tremble according to Isa 41:5. The verb פחד in 19:16 is found in a similar context in Ex 15:16; Deut 2:25; 11:25; 1 Chr 14:17; 2 Chr 14:13; 17:10; 20:29; Est 8:17; 9:2; Ps 105:38; Jer 33:9; Mic 7:17. These texts emphasise that the secret of the nations' fear before Israel is its relationship with YHWH. Deuteronomy 2:25 is particularly interesting in connecting the fear of all nations under the sky with the report they hear about Israel as in Isa 19:17 (יִשְׁמְעוּן שִׁמְעֲךָ וְרָגְזוּ וְחָלוּ מִפָּנֶיךָ).[342]

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[341] Concordance-like comparison of the vocabulary of 19:16–25 is only meaningful if the parallel places provide a context similar to Isa 19:16–25.

[342] For other expressions for the fear of foreign nations, cf. Ex 1:12; 14:25;

The hand raised against the enemy (נוּף + יָד) (19:17) appears in Isa
10:32 (Assur / YHWH against Jerusalem); 11:15 (YHWH over the Euphra-
tes); and Zech 2:13 (against the nations). However, in Isa 19:16–17 the
motif of the hand raised is connected with the plan of YHWH (עֲצַת יהוה).
The same connection of the two motifs appears in Isa 14:26–27 as הָעֵצָה
הַיְּעוּצָה and הַיָּד הַנְּטוּיָה as well as in Isa 23:8–9.11. The motif of the hand
stretched out (נטה + יָד) is frequent in the Egypt stories (Ex 7:5.19;
8:1.2.13; 9:22; 10:12.21.22; 14:16.21.26. 27; cf. Josh 8:19).[343] The hand
stretched out is a returning theme of Isaiah, but it also appears in the
books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zephaniah.[344]

As noted in the exegesis, שְׂפַת כְּנַעַן may have been chosen because it
reminded a Judaean reader of his history, the conquest and the settle-
ment in the land. Canaan appears rarely after the book of Judges. When
it does, it either refers to Israel's past (Ezek 16:3; Hos 12:8), or to the
Phoenicians on the seacoast (Isa 23:8.11; Ob 20; Zeph 2:5).

Altars (19:19) were built to YHWH as a sign of devotion on different
occasions, e.g. by Noah (Gen 8:20), the patriarchs (Gen 12:7.8; 26:25),
Moses (Ex 17:15), Israel (Deut 27:5; Josh 8:30; 22), Gideon (Judg 6:24),
Samuel (1 Sam 7:17), Saul (1 Sam 14:35), David (2 Sam 24:25). Offer-
ing was the main issue for which Israel in Egypt asked permission from
the pharaoh to leave for the desert (Ex 5:3; 8:25–26). Allusions to sacri-
fices of foreigners appear in 1 Sam 6; 2 Kgs 5:17; Jon 1:16. As for the
function of the altar and the stele as a sign and witness, Isa 19:20a can
be related to Josh 22, with its altar built near the Jordan as a witness
(22:27.28.34) of the Transjordanians to the other tribes of Israel.

Nowhere is the literary parallel to Israel's history as strong as in Isa
19:20b–21.[345] The cry for help of Egypt (צעק) echoes Israel's cry (זעק)
before its Egyptian oppressors in Ex 2:23. Both צעק and לחץ appear to-
gether in Ex 3:9 (cf. Isa 19:20), where Moses (cf. מוֹשִׁיעַ in Isa 19:20), is
told: "The cry (צעק) of the Israelites has come to me. I have also seen
how the Egyptians oppress (לחץ) them." The verb נצל appears in Ex 3:8
and שלח in 3:10 (cf. Judg 6:14). The cry before the oppressors and the
call of a deliverer (judge / king) is particularly favoured by Deuteronomy
and related literature.[346] An interesting text is 2 Kgs 13:4–5, where Je-

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15:14–16; Deut 28:10; Josh 2:9–11; 5:1; 9:24; 2 Kgs 7:6; Neh 6:16; Ps 48:5–6.

[343] For נטה זְרֹעַ, cf. Ex 6:6; Deut 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 9:29; 11:2; 26:8; 1 Kgs 8:42; 2
Kgs 17:36; Ps 136:12. שלח יָד is used in, e.g., Ex 3:20; 9:15; (24:11).

[344] Against his people: Isa 5:25; 9:11.16.20; 31:3; Jer 6:12; 15:6; Ezek 6:14;
14:9.13; 16:27; Zeph 1:4. Against the nations: Isa 10:4; 14:26.27; 23:11; Jer
51:25; Ezek 25:7.13.16; 30:25; 35:3; Zeph 2:13.

[345] See also Vogels, "Égypte", 505–8.

[346] Note Deut 26:7 (לחץ / צעק); Judg 2:18 (נְאָקָה / לחץ / יֹשַׁע); 4:3 (לחץ / צעק);
6:7.9 (זעק / לחץ / נצל); 10:12 (יֹשַׁע / לחץ / צעק); Ps 106:42–44 (לחץ / נצל / רִנָּה).

hoahaz, king of Israel, prays to YHWH (חלה) before the Aramaean op-
pressors (לחץ). YHWH listens to him sending (נתן) Israel a deliverer
(מוֹשִׁיעַ), a foreign (!) king, the Assyrian Adad-nirari III.

The revelation of YHWH to Egypt calls Ex 3 into remembrance, but
this motif plays a continuous role in the dispute with the pharaoh (cf.
especially Ex 5:2). In the same manner, the service of YHWH in Isa
19:21 is close to the promise and sign (אוֹת) given to Moses in Ex 3:12.

The verb נגף (19:22) in connection with Egypt appears in the Exo-
dus narratives (Ex 7:27; 12:13.23.27; Josh 24:5), while YHWH as the
healer of Israel, who will not bring the diseases of Egypt upon his people
is found in Ex 15:26 (cf. Deut 28:27.35). Even though as argued נגף and
רפא allude here to being smitten and restored from the oppression of the
enemy, this connection to Israel's experience in Egypt is telling.

Israel becoming a blessing amidst the earth in 19:24 appears as the
fulfilment of a promise given to Abraham in Gen 12:3. The name of
Israel appearing in 19:24–25 as the third between Egypt and Assyria,
may call the land promised to Abraham into remembrance, reaching
from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates (Gen 15:18), fulfilled in the
days of David according to 1 Kgs 4:21.

This portrayal of Egypt's future based on Israel's past reminds the
reader of the book of Isaiah of a theology exposed in other passages of
this book that repeatedly construct the future on the analogy of the
past. Isaiah 8:23–9:6 mentions YHWH breaking the rod of the oppressor
of Israel, as it happened in the days of Midian, alluding to Judg 7. The
child ruler will reign in peace on the throne of David. Isaiah 10:20 al-
ludes to Israel's servitude in Egypt, which is called "the one who struck
them". Similarly, Isa 10:24.26 compares the defeat of Assyria to the de-
feat of the Midianites in Judg 7:25 and to the humiliation of the phar-
aoh by YHWH in the stories of Exodus. The exodus story also gives the
background of Isa 11:11–12:6, as does 14:1–4a, as we have already seen
in 3.4.2.1. One may also observe here a close relationship with the the-
ology of Assyrian salvation prophecies, which promise Esarhaddon that
"the future shall be like the past" (*urkīūte lū kî pānīūte*),[347] that is, as glo-
rious, as the past.

Since Isa 9–10 focus on the deliverance from the oppression of As-
sur, while Isa 11:11–12:6 on the return from the exile, one may con-
clude that this presentation of the future on the analogy of the past ap-
pears in both pre-exilic and post-exilic literature. Because the idea of
the new exodus is prominent in exilic and post-exilic literature, scholars

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לחץ appears again in a Deuteronomistic context in 1 Sam 10:18; 2 Kgs 13:22,
or otherwise in Am 6:14. Cf. also Ps 42:10; 43:2; 44:25.

[347] *PPANE* 71 ii 37'; cf. *PPANE* 79 i 17–18.

often tend to connect Isa 19:16–25 with post-exilic literature.[348] It is, however, important to note that at least the core of the story of Israel in Egypt is earlier than the exilic era. Furthermore, while the *deliverance* from Egypt does play a role of analogy in describing the return from Babylon for the exilic and post-exilic authors, Isa 19:16–25 has little to do with the deliverance *from* Egypt, i.e. a second *exodus*, and much more with the stories of Exodus (among others) as such. This means that Isa 19:16–25 is more closely related to Isa 9–10, than to 11:15–12:6.

There is a further important point in 19:20b–22 related to this concept of making use of historical analogies. The motif of deliverance is here composed in dialogue with its context, 19:1–15. The liberator of Isa 19:20 will save the Egyptians from the harsh master (אֲדֹנִים קָשֶׁה) of 19:4. This sounds like Ex 1:14 or Deut 26:6, which reminds of the hard service (עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה) of the Israelites in Egypt. If the authors themselves consider 19:20b–22 an elaboration of 19:1–15, then the method of this exposition is again closely paralleled in 8:23–9:6; 10:20.24.26 in which present (the raised hands of Assyria in 10:5–15) and past (the raised hands of Egypt, Midian) are related.

To conclude, the theological investigation of the motifs of Isa 19:16–25 has led thus far to two significant conclusions. First, Isa 19:16–25 makes use of expressions and words that remind the reader of Israel-related texts. By this presentation of the future of Egypt, the author underlines that Egypt will get to know YHWH in the same way as Israel did. Second, making use of the analogy of the past in order to present the future is characteristic to several pericopes in Isaiah, to which Isa 19:16–25 should also be related.

The second problem is the universalistic perspective of this prophecy. We have already seen in Chapter 4 that for many scholars universalism in the Bible calls into mind a concept of the exilic and post-exilic periods. That is why Isa 19:16–25 is most often dated to the Persian or Hellenistic era. Parallel texts mentioned include Isa 66:18–21; Jon 1:16; 3–4; Zech 14:20; Mal 1:11.[349] As a starting point, it must be emphasised that while the Babylonian captivity has facilitated the development of universalistic ideas (cf. Isa 40–55),[350] the idea of the supremacy of YHWH above the gods and the nations originated in an earlier period. To avoid unhelpful generalisations, it is better to define more closely the type of universalism that appears in 19:16–25 and relate it to other texts from the Old Testament. We are interested not so much in universalism in the sense of YHWH's universal rule, but in the direct rela-

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[348] Vogels, "Égypte", 496.
[349] Feuillet, "Sommet", 274–77; Schoors, 120–21; Berges, 167.
[350] A. Gelston, "The Universalism of Second Isaiah", *JTS* 43 (1992) 377–98.

tionship between foreigners and YHWH. The texts to be investigated can be subdivided into three groups.[351]

(a) *Foreigners acknowledging YHWH's awesomeness*. On different occasions, we find foreigners implicitly or explicitly acknowledging YHWH:[352] the Egyptians (Ex 8:19; 9:20.27; 10:7), the foreign travelmates of Jonah (Jon 1:16), Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:47; 3:28–33), Darius (Dan 6:24–27). These texts mostly deal with specific individuals or groups, rather than entire nations. A closer example to Isa 19 appears in 1 Sam 5–6, a story that proclaims the superiority of YHWH above the god Dagan, as acknowledged by the Philistines themselves. Essentially the same is suggested by Zeph 2:11 mentioning various nations bowing down before YHWH "each in its own place" (וְיִשְׁתַּחֲווּ־לֹו אִישׁ מִמְּקֹומֹו). The cause for this reverence of YHWH is, however, not a direct self-revelation of YHWH to those nations (cf. נֹודַע in Isa 19:21), but rather a show of his awesomeness and judgment on the national gods (cf. Ps 22:28–29; 95:3; 96:4; 97:9). In most cases, the recognition of YHWH (including bringing him offers) does not imply that the nations or persons will have a positive, long-standing relationship with YHWH. These stories confirm the superiority of YHWH to an Israelite audience rather than to foreigners. I doubt that this idea could be constrained to the exilic and post-exilic era. The concept of YHWH's superiority above the nations and their gods can be traced back to the pre-exilic period (cf. Isa 6:3).[353]

(b) *There is only one God, whom the foreigners also revere*. In a way related, yet still a different idea is formulated in Mal 1:11, a text often mentioned in connection with Isa 19:16–25. Malachi speaks of nations bringing offers to YHWH "in all places" (בְּכָל־מָקֹום). Though this is re-

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[351] I exclude from these passages the case of the queen of Sheba in 1 Kgs 10:9, who greets Solomon with a traditional formula יְהִי יהוה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּרוּךְ, as well as the case of Jethro in Ex 18, whose previous relationship with YHWH is unclear.
[352] On the topic of foreign worshippers of "national" deities, cf. D. I. Block, *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Theology* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 71–72.
[353] Despite the difficulties, Ps 82 is recognised as one of the most ancient psalms. Observe, however, 82:8, which presents YHWH (?) as the uppermost judge of the entire world (reminding of the Canaanite Elyon). Kraus notes that "der »Universalismus« in der Theologie der Psalmen nicht das Spätprodukt eines religiösen Entwicklungsprozesses innerhalb der Geschichte Israels, sondern vielmehr ein im Typos der Verehrung des »höchsten Gottes« bereits vorgegebenes Element der kanaanäischen Welt ist." (H. J. Kraus, *Psalmen* [5th ed.; BKAT 15; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978], 97). Am 9:7 is another striking example, which refers to concrete nations, whose history is governed by YHWH. This text parallels the exodus (!) of Israel with the exodus of the nations (cf. 3.3.1.). For the pre-exilic origin of Am 9:7, cf. A. S. van der Woude, *Amos–Obadja–Jona* (T&T; Kampen: Kok, 1993), 103–4.

garded as a proof of post-exilic universalistic thinking, two important aspects distinguish it from Isa 19:16–25. First, as the former group of texts, Mal 1:11 also appears in a polemic context, only in a reversed sense: Israel should learn to fear YHWH from the nations. Second, one wonders whether this foreign worship of YHWH should not be understood in the sense that in Malachi's argumentation YHWH is actually the God of the world *par excellence*, so that every sacrifice offered among the nations is implicitly brought to him. This inclusive monotheism may also be the idea behind the Jonah story, Jon 3–4. Whatever the theological concern of the book may be, that is certainly not to show openness towards foreign nations in the manner Isa 19:16–25 does this. While Jonah, serving the God of the Hebrews (1:9) is commissioned by YHWH, the name יהוה plays no role whatsoever in relation to the people of Nineveh. They are not YHWH-fearing nations, but god-fearing. They believe in אֱלֹהִים (Jon 3:5.8.9.10). They do not return to YHWH, they only leave their unethical past behind, without getting to know YHWH through revelation as in Isa 19:21.[354] Indeed, it seems to them most natural in which God's name Jonah predicts the destruction of Nineveh. YHWH is here the universal ruler of the world, related to the nations through creation (cf. Jon 1:9; 4:10–11), but not through covenant.[355] The same theological concept drives Jer 18:7–10, and, somewhat more distantly, Num 22–24 and Job.

(c) *In order to get to know YHWH one has to go to Israel*. The case of Rahab (Josh 2:9–13) and Ruth (Ruth 1:16) is also mentioned in connection with Isa 19:16–25. However, these texts can be considered universalistic only as far as Israel is the centre of the universe. The stories of Rahab and Ruth convince the reader that experiencing the benefits of belonging to YHWH is only realised by leaving former national and religious identities behind and joining the people of YHWH.[356] This is also the idea reflected in the story of Naaman (2 Kgs 5:15.17), and more importantly in the Israel-centred texts concerned with the nations (Isa 66:20–23; Jer 12:14–17; Zech 2:15–16; 14; etc.). Zephaniah 3:9, which in many respects stands close to Isa 19:16–25 is part of this group. It speaks about the gathering of the nations for judgment through which YHWH "will change the lips/speech of the nations into pure lips/speech

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[354] Contra Feuillet, "Sommet", 275.

[355] I doubt that Jon 3–4 would play any role in describing Assyria as "creation of my hands" in Isa 19:25, as Feuillet assumes. As argued in the exegesis, this literary topic connects our text to Assyrian literary-theological conventions, where the king appears as the creation of Assur's or Istar's hands. This does not allude to a creation *story*, but it expresses strong relationship with the divinity.

[356] This is the point where the presumed anti-Nehemianic-pro-Moabite-theory concerning the role of the book of Ruth becomes problematic.

(אֶהְפֹּךְ אֶל־עַמִּים שָׂפָה בְרוּרָה), that they may call on the name of YHWH and serve him with one accord (לְעָבְדוֹ שְׁכֶם אֶחָד) (לִקְרֹא כֻלָּם בְּשֵׁם יהוה)".
The vocabulary is close to Isa 19:16–25, suggesting that that may have been the source of Zeph 3:9, as Zeph 3:10 was also influenced by Isa 18:7 (cf. 4.3.1.4.). However, according to Zeph 3:10 the nations will worship YHWH in Jerusalem and not in their homeland as in Isa 19.

It must be clear by now that the often mentioned parallels for the theology of Isa 19:16–25 are unlikely to have played a role in the formation of this text. While the fear of YHWH is significant in 19:(1–15)16–20a, 19:20b introduces Egypt experiencing salvation in the way that only Israel has. YHWH will reveal his name to them and so they will honour him: not Elohim, but YHWH; not the creator of the world, but YHWH, who had smitten them, but healed and saved them; not in Jerusalem, but in their own land. Despite claims for the contrary, this type of universalism has no parallels in the texts mentioned above.

An essential point is that 19:16–25 does not present an eschatological scene with nations standing in front of the throne of YHWH but a scene set on historical soil, with actions that may have been part of a nation's *history*. This is a key issue in understanding the theological background of 19:16–25. The figure of the deliverer in 19:20 assumes that YHWH will act through human mediation, i.e., he will exercise his power and theocracy indirectly (cf. 19:4). This human involvement is absent in many texts describing Israel's future in the exilic or post-exilic period. Indeed, texts such as Isa 11:11–16; 25:6–9; 27:1.12 use a heavily metaphorical language, often with mythological undertones. Besides, another historical element is here the portrait of the future as determined by the supremacy of Assyria over Egypt (19:23).

These considerations turn our attention towards another type of literature, the royal psalms, which likewise speak about the reverence of foreigners in front of YHWH. Yet this time they worship him in front of the representative of his rule (Ps 2:10–11). An Israelite / Judaean king who is the ruler of the "world" (Ps 2:8; 45:17; 72:8–11; 110:6) is representative of a God who himself is the ruler over all nations. This concept has close connections with the Assyrian royal ideology and should most certainly be considered a pre-exilic response (whether an echo or retroversion depends on the situation) from Judah's theologians on that Assyrian ideology. According to Isa 10:5–15, Assyria is the staff in the hands of YHWH by which he punishes the nations in the same manner as Jeremiah considered Nebuchadnezzar the servant of YHWH (Jer 27:6) and Deutero-Isaiah recognised in Cyrus the messiah of Israel's God (Isa 45:1). In this view, YHWH actually takes over the role of the principle deity of the foreign nation, Assur, Marduk, or Ahura Mazda, so claiming

the right to be honoured as the God of the entire world.[357] He places his throne in the occupied territory (cf. Jer 49:38).

Although it is possible to argue that in Isa 19:19 Egypt serves YHWH directly by presenting him offerings, there is another option to read this text: Egypt serves YHWH in an indirect way by subjecting itself to his appointed servant and by presenting offerings on the altars prepared by the Assyrians, for instance. YHWH as the ultimate commissioner of the Assyrian king regards these offerings as actually presented to him. This explanation has the advantage that it makes sense in a world under Assyrian supremacy, without assigning a meaning to Isa 19:23 that is not supported philologically.

To conclude, the universalistic passages of the Old Testament present a great diversity that needs to be taken into account when comparing those with Isa 19:16–25. The way this prophecy speaks about the relationship between Egypt and YHWH, and the fact that it alludes to historic episodes in which humans are involved (19:20.23), by whom YHWH exerts his power, suggests that the Isa 19:16–25 is most closely related to the universalistic theology of the royal psalms.

> One of the foreign-nation-texts I consider more closely related to Isa 19:16–25 in its attitude towards the nations is Ps 87. Although many details of the text are still unclear, on one significant point exegetes agree: this Psalm speaks about Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, and Kush finding common roots in Zion with Judah. The reason why this Psalm is dated to after the exile is its openhearted universalism.[358] Yet why would Babylon, the symbol of evil, appear in a text so positive about the nations? Why would the author compare Zion with the dwellings (cult places) of Jacob (North Israel)?[359] This only makes sense in the pre-Babylonian period. Not surprisingly, the nations mentioned here have all (and only these) participated with Judah in the rebellion against Sennacherib in 701. This would explain why Assyria is excluded from the nations having something common in Zion,[360]

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[357] Shalmaneser III argues that "when Assur, the great lord, chose me in his steadfast heart and with his holy eyes, and named me for the shepherdship of Assyria, he put in my grasp a strong weapon, which fells the insubordinate [...]". (RIMA A.0.102.2 i 12). The same god he maintains "placed in my hands the sword, scepter, (and) staff appropriate for (rule over) the people", and that Assur and Ninurta "placed firmly in my hands all lands (and) mountains" (RIMA A.0.102.5 ii 1–2; cf. also A.0.102.9 15–17). Essentially the same is assumed by Esarhaddon according to his Zendjirli Stele (*IAKA* §65:30–37).

[358] Dion, *Dieu*, 107; Kraus, *Psalmen*, 767.

[359] Rahab (!) and Babylon cannot refer to the exiles (cf. Tyre, Philistia, Kush) and Jacob cannot allude to the Samaritans (contra Kraus, *Psalmen*, 767).

[360] Signalled as a problem by M. E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100* (WBC 20; Waco:

and it would comply with the fact that Egypt is called Rahab only by Isa 30:7 in the whole Bible.

5.3.3. THE HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF ISAIAH 19

The reconstruction of the historical background of prophetic texts is always problematic. As noted in the Introduction (1.1.1.), one of the basic questions that need to be clarified is whether we consider Isa 19 a prediction or a post-eventum prophecy? Since the two parts of Isa 19 have a different literary history, they will be analysed distinctively.

5.3.3.1. ISAIAH 19:1–15 AND HISTORY

There is much disagreement concerning the Isaianic authorship and consequently the 8th century origin of Isa 19:1–15*. Erlandsson claims that "vss. 1–15 are nowadays usually considered to be Isaianic",[361] while Becker argues that Isa 19 is almost unanimously considered non-Isaianic.[362] This diverging information about the *communis opinio* on the origin of 19:1–15 derives among others from a selective use of secondary literature, but it illustrates well two radically different opinions regarding the provenance of the prophecy.[363] It may be observed that scholars favouring an 8th century date for the prophecy rely mostly on historical arguments, while those contesting this do so from literary-theological considerations.[364] Since the presented literary critical arguments are insufficient to question the 8th century setting of the prophecy (cf. 5.3.1.), we need to look at what date the historical information favours the most.

According to Egyptologist, Donald Redford, Isa 19:1–15 gives a faithful picture of the historical situation in the 8th century Egypt.[365] From a historical point of view the following details may contribute to this picture: (a) Isaiah 19:2 speaks about a conflict among kingdoms (מַמְלָכָה) in Egypt. (b) According to 19:4, Egyptians will be handed over to a harsh lord (אֲדֹנִים קָשֶׁה) and a powerful king (מֶלֶךְ עַז). (c) We hear of leaders in Zoan (שָׂרֵי צֹעַן), who appear as the counsellors of the phar-aoh in 19:11. (d) Isaiah 19:13 mentions the leaders of Zoan and Noph

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Word, 1990), 388.

[361] Erlandsson, *Burden*, 76.

[362] U. Becker, *Jesaja—von der Botschaft zum Buch* (FRLANT 178; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 271.

[363] For further references, cf. section 1.3.2.

[364] E.g., the parallelism with Isaianic passages (Kaiser, 83; Kilian, 120), the lack of an "Isaianic style" (Dillmann, 170–71; Lorentz, " Ugaritische Topos, 103).

[365] D. B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 335.

(Memphis). Taken together these points may contribute to the recon-
struction of the historical background of the prophecy.

The inner-Egyptian conflict described by 19:2 is the most important
guide for dating this text to the 8th century.[366] As seen in Chapter 2,
19:2 complies well with the situation in Egypt in the third quarter of the
8th century. However, the following elements need serious considera-
tion before driving presuppositions further than vs. 2 permits. (a) It is
not certain that 19:1–15 is a post-eventum prophecy.[367] If it is read as a
predictive text ("I *shall* stir up Egypt against Egypt…"), then the 8th
century historical situation may (but need not) have served in the best
case as an inspiring *terminus post quem*. (b) As mentioned in the exege-
sis, the civil war type scene is so common in ancient literature that it
cannot be tied to one particular moment of Egypt's history. What we
can tell at most is that Isaiah seems to have favoured this motif (cf.
5.3.1.2.), and that being a literary topos does not in itself exclude the
possibility to being related to historical realities, as indeed the texts
cited in this connection often go back to ("predict") real historical
situations. (c) The scenario in 19:2 was not typical for the period before
the campaign of Piye in Egypt in 728, but it reappeared on different
occasions—note for example, the conflict between the princes of Lower
Egypt with Taharka and Tanutamani in the 7th century.

Despite all this, the expression מַמְלָכָה בְּמַמְלָכָה in an inner-Egyptian
context is striking. Unless this belongs to a stereotypical phraseology, it
may point to an era of relative independence for the Egyptian nomes
(מַמְלָכָה), which was the case during the Assyrian domination, when the
nome leaders were regarded as kings (*šarru*).[368]

The motif of chaos is followed by the installation of a harsh lord
(אֲדֹנִים קָשֶׁה) and a powerful king (מֶלֶךְ עַז). In identifying this individual,
scholars have exploited the possibilities provided by history, recognising
here Piye, Shabaka, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Cam-
byses, Xerxes, Artaxerxes II, III, or Antiochus III.[369] Some exegetes do

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[366] Currid, *Ancient*, 239; Sweeney, 271; Blenkinsopp, 314.

[367] Contrast Hayes & Irvine, 260 (*ex eventu*) with Procksch, 246 (*pre-eventum*).

[368] Inscriptions from the Persian period (The Statue-Inscription of Udjahorres-
net) or the transitional period between the second Perisan occupation and the
Macedonian rule (The Tomb Biography of Petosiris) also describe the arrival
of a ruler as the end of a chaotic era (Chimko, "Foreign Pharaohs", 32). How-
ever, these texts do not specifically allude to civil war, but to revolts against
oppression, or they tell about the country as the battle scene before a foreign
king restores the order.

[369] For Piye, cf. Hayes & Irvine, 260; A. Niccacci, "Isaiah xviii-xx from an
Egyptological Perspective", *VT* 48 (1998) 218. For Shabaka, cf. Currid, *Egypt*,
240. For Sargon II, cf. Procksch, 246; A. Feuillet, "Études chronologique des

not search for one specific person behind the text, but consider it a pre-diction.[370] That of course does not rule out that the author had one spe-cific king of his era in view, even if his name is not mentioned, as often in biblical prophecy. The following points need further consideration: (a) As noted in the exegesis, the installation of a ruler after a period of crisis appears as a widespread topic in Near Eastern texts. Yet again, this does not exclude that the prophet indeed envisages real events here. (b) A Judaean prophet and his audience had arguably a very limited knowl-edge about the Kushite kings in a period before the Kushites invaded Egypt, so that it is unlikely that he would have spoken here about a Ku-shite king as a harsh lord. Moreover, the Kushite kings have proven to be very Egypt-friendly in their policy. They appear as true Egyptian pharaohs in every respect and with a few exceptions, their good memory is preserved even in much later times.[371] Therefore the title harsh lord and powerful king would unlikely be given by a Judaean author to a Ku-shite pharaoh either before or after the Kushite occupation of Egypt. (c) Isaiah 19:11 mentions the leaders of Zoan as the wisest counsellors of the pharaoh. This means that there is one pharaoh in Egypt, advised especially by Zoan. This again excludes that Isa 19 would speak here of the first Kushite invasion of Piye (747–717), when there was no phar-aoh in Egypt with Tanite counsellors. As argued, the role of Tanis as a border town on the east is particularly significant. The emphasis on the eastern border probably means that the ruler conferred in 19:4 comes from Asia. (d) The rather general contour of the king would suite many foreign rulers. Assyrian and Babylonian kings were generally known as particularly harsh monarchs.[372] The Medians also appear as cruel ene-mies (Isa 13:17–18), but this period may be irrelevant for us if Ezek 30 is assumed to refer to Isa 19:1–15, as argued above (5.3.1.2.). Ezek 30 iden-tifies the harsh master with Nebuchadnezzar (Ezek 30:10),[373] which may be considered a *terminus ante quem* for Isa 19:1–15.[374]

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oracles qu'on peut dater", in *Études d'exégèse et de théologie biblique. Ancien Testament* (ed. A. Feuillet; Paris: Gabalda, 1975), 51. For Nebuchadnezzar, cf. Vermeylen, 1:321. For Cambyses, cf. Dillmann, 170–71. For late Persian rulers, cf. Kilian, 121 (Artaxerxes II, III, or Antiochus III).

[370] Kissane, 215; Penna, 184; Young, 2:16; Oswald, 368.

[371] Cf. Chimko, "Foreign Pharaohs", 23–28.

[372] The term אֲדֹנִים is particularly suited to the Assyrian king, Esarhaddon, who is called 'lord' rather than 'king' on his ascension treaty tablet fragments from Nineveh (S. Parpola, "Neo-Assyrian Treaties from the Royal Archives of Nineveh", *JCS* 39 [1987] 170–74). Though note אֲדֹנִים in Isa 26:13; Jer 27:4.

[373] Ezekiel refers to the Babylonians as רָעִים, זָרִים (30:12), עָרִיצֵי גוֹיִם (28:7; 30:11; 31:12; 32:12).

[374] Cambyses is also portrayed by Herodotus as a tough master, but this contra-

However, if מַמְלָכָה in 19:2 is taken to be more than a metaphor, we must go back several decades in history in order to find where this expression gets its historical meaning. מַמְלָכָה has increasingly lost its significance after Psametik I ascended the throne of Egypt in Memphis in 664 B.C.[375] The apparent lack of interest in cities beyond Memphis in this prophecy may be an additional confirmation for a date in a period after the takeover of Upper Egypt by Shabaka in 717 (2.3.2.). We may perhaps go one step further. Because the deliverance of Egypt into the hands of a harsh master is introduced as a new experience for Egypt, this means that the lower date may be set before the invasion of Esarhaddon in 671 B.C., provided that the prophecy is considered pre-eventum, or otherwise not long after this.

The city of Tanis, the wisest expert of Egypt in foreign affairs, flourished during the 22nd Dynasty. One of its kings, Osorkon IV, brought tribute to Sargon II in 716, probably on behalf of his master, *Pirʾu šar māt Muṣri*, whom as I argued should be identified with Shabaka (2.3.1.4.). Shoshenq V, Osorkon's predecessor, may have been the king who honoured Tiglath-pileser III around 734–733 in a similar way (2.3.1.1.). Tanis is the city to which the Israelites sent their messengers according to Isa 30:4. There is a gap in information concerning the role of Tanis after 716, but the sporadic references suggest that it preserved its significance for at least until the emergence of Psametik I (664–610). The names of three kings, Gemenef-khonsu-bak, Pedubast II (Sehetepi-benre) and Neferkare are known.[376] We possess little information about the city afterwards. The representation of the leaders of Tanis in 19:11 as descendants of ancient / eastern kings (בֶּן־מַלְכֵי־קֶדֶם) gives most sense for the 22nd Dynasty. This boasting not only corresponds to the realities of the Assyrian period, but it also complies with our information about Libyan kings who were particularly interested in genealogies.[377]

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dicts contemporary Egyptian sources (cf. Chimko, "Foreign Pharaohs", 28–33).
[375] The occasionally formulated opinion that the lack of reference to Kush in Isa 19 would allude to the pre-Kushite period (Wildberger, 707; Currid, *Ancient Egypt,* 239) is weak, for as we have seen in 2.3.1.4., Kushite pharaohs can be referred to as Egyptians in biblical literature as well as in Assyrian texts.
[376] Kitchen, *Period,* 129, 137, 153, 396. According to Kitchen, Pedubast II had connections with Memphis.
[377] J. Taylor, "The Third Intermediate Period (1069–664 BC)", in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (ed. I. Shaw; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 340–41. Note, however, prismfragment Bu 91-5-9, 218 (col. a ln. 6') describing the deportation of Taharka's relatives, which also mentions "the descendants of his father's house, sons of former kings" (*zēr bīt abīšu mārē šarrē maḫrūte*) in H.-U. Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens* (ÄAT 27; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 1:20.

Memphis, the other city mentioned in the prophecy was probably the seat of the pharaoh referred to in Isa 19:11. When a pharaoh ruled in Lower Egypt, Memphis was the pharaonic centre. The ascension of Shabaka in 717 B.C. (the first among the Kushite pharaohs to rule from Memphis) can be considered a *terminus post quem* for Isa 19:1–15.

Taken together, from the sporadic historical references in the prophecy we may safely conclude that 19:1–15 was composed in the period between 717–671 B.C., that is the period between the ascension of Shabaka in Egypt and the invasion by Esarhaddon in 671.

5.3.3.2. ISAIAH 19:16–25 AND HISTORY

The expressions בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא in Isa 19:16–25 introduce a series of predictive pronouncements. That does not exclude, however, that these pronouncements emerge from, and are related to very concrete and imminent historical situations. This is especially obvious in 19:23, where the described sobordinative relationship between Assyria and Egypt reflects on the political realities of the prophet's time, namely on a world increasingly subjected to Assyrian supremacy. Serving Assyria is presented here in a positive way, unlike other proclamations which envisage the destruction of this superpower. Further, the conclusion that we (partially) deal here with already evident historical situations is even unavoidable if 19:16–22, or 19:16–23, or 19:16–25 is regarded as one literary unit. For this implies that the author makes the transition from judgment to salvation writing at a moment that salvation is there and judgment has passed away. Finally, occasionally the text accords broad attention to specific details in a way suggesting that it describes actual historical circumstances.[378]

At the same time, strictly historically speaking, it is also true that the Egyptians never trembled on hearing the name of Judah, there never were "five" Canaanite-speaking towns in Egypt swearing to YHWH, there never was a YHWH-altar in Egypt, nor a stele dedicated to YHWH on its border, at least not in a literal sense. Questions may also arise concerning the commission of the liberator, and the pledges and offerings of the Egyptians. In the final two verses, we most obviously lift off from the ground where much could be told about historical realities.

The question is this: should Isa 19:16–25 be understood literally, or should we rather assume that looming historical realities are veiled here in a metaphoric prophetic language? In discussing the theological background of 19:16–25 (5.3.2.2.), I suggested that this text may be read in the sense that Egypt's history is explained from a Yahwistic point of view. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and whoever enters Egypt, does so under

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[378] Cf. Procksch, 254; Fohrer, 1:229 (for 19:18–22); Wildberger, 730.

the guidance of YHWH, just as his cloud chariot in 19:1 was drawn by flesh and bone Assyrian horses. If we approach this passage with these considerations in mind, there might be historical information here.[379]

As mentioned in 5.2.5. and 5.2.6. above, Isa 19 coincides with the texts of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal on some striking points.[380] Following the conquest of Egypt in 671, after Taharka is expelled from the country, we read the following account:

> I established regular offerings (*sattukku*) and cultic offerings (*ginû*) for Assur and the great gods, my lords, forever. I imposed upon them tribute and obligation of my lordship, every year continually. I let a stele be made with my name, and the praise of the heroism of my lord, Assur, my mighty deeds (that I accomplished when I was) walking in reliance upon Assur, my lord, and the victorious achievements of my hands I let be written on it. I let [it] be erected to the wonderment of all the enemies forever after. (*IAKA* §65:48–53)

With the conquest of Egypt, the country has become the property of Assur, the state god the Egyptians would have to honour, in the words of Esarhaddon, "for ever". In a prophetic view that regarded Assyria as the tool in YHWH's hand, such a text can indeed be connected with the altar and pillar scene of Isa 19:19. It only requires interchanging YHWH with the god Assur, the commissioner of the king according to Assyrian texts, which is exactly what happens in texts such as Isa 10:5–15.

Esarhaddon only succeeded to occupy Lower Egypt in 671, including

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[379] Working with the hypothesis that 19:1–25 is a coherent text, Hayes and Irvine (263–64) looked for historical moments in the 8th century that would comply with this text. It was argued that the threat caused by hearing the name Judah (19:17) can be found in 1 Chr 4:40–43, according to which the Simeonites in the days of Hezekiah drove away the sons of Ham (Meunites), identified with Egyptians. In a similar manner, the commercial centre of Sargon II in the neighbourhood of Gaza, and his mingling of Egyptians and Assyrians to trade together was supposed to explain Isa 19:23–25. Obviously, this is not the way the background of 19:16–25 can be reconstructed. This interpretation rests on a textual view and a translation (note particularly of 19:23 r–r) which is not followed here. Neither can I comply with the view that 19:16–25 partially or entirely refers to Judeans in Egypt is. As we have seen above, this explanation was motivated by the Canaanite language-theme in 19:18.

Those who date 19:16–25 to the Persian or Seleucid era, care little for the historical information in the text, and concentrate mostly on theological ideas.
[380] Isa 19:16–25 is dated to the 7th century by Gottwald, *"Kingdoms"*, 224–28 (between 660–609); R. Nelson, "Realpolitik in Judah (687-609 B.C.E.)", in *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method* (eds. W.H. Hallo et al.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 185 (era of Josiah, 627–622); Sweeney, 270, 272 (era of Manasseh, 687–642).

Memphis, "the balance of the two lands", the capital in the border zone between Lower and Upper Egypt. The Assyrian texts do not mention where his stele stood with his name written on it (*narâ šiṭir šumīya*; cf. מַצֵּבָה לֵיהוה in Isa 19:19), but it proclaimed for the world that Egypt belongs "to the border of Assyria" (*ana miṣir mātīšu*; Prism A i 60–62). מִצְרַיִם may designate Lower Egypt in contrast to Upper Egypt (פַּתְרוֹס), a distinction that has become characteristic in the period following the Assyrian occupation of Egypt (cf. EXCURSUS 1).

The oath sworn to YHWH may be considered the theological variant of the oath of Egyptian kings sworn to Esarhaddon and his god, who installed them in their office. The motivation of Assurbanipal's first Egyptian campaign is this: "Afterwards, Necho, Sharru-lu-dari, and Paqruru, kings whom my father has installed in Egypt, transgressed the *treaty sworn by Assur and the great gods, my lords, and broke their oath.*" (Prism E iv 29–36; *BIWA*, 211).[381] That the foreign language of the vassal overlord which they did not understand played a role in this ceremony, is beyond question, even if it was not the "Canaanite" language of YHWH in strict sense, as 19:18 maintains. One wonders, if the five cities are argued to be symbolic, why should "Canaanite" be literal?

The son of Necho, the crown prince Psametik (I), bears an Assyrian name (*Nabû-šēzi-banni*) in expression of Assyrian subordination (*BIWA*, 211, 214). The Egyptian kings appointed by Assyria are constantly referred to as servants (*urdu*) of Assyria. The cities occupied by Esarhaddon are given Assyrian names in expression of their status. As argued, this Assyrian practice may be reflected behind the renaming of the five Egyptian cities as "cities of ruins" in Isa 19:18.

Whether the five cities have been used symbolically, or 19:18 refers to five concrete cities will remain a riddle. Let it be noted, however, that according to the annals of Assurbanipal, the kings of five cities seem to have been implicated more than others in the rebellion against Assurbanipal, and they were severely punished thereafter: Isanti, the city of Paqruru, Sais, the city of Necho, Mendes, the city of Pyjama, Pelusium, the city of Sarru-lu-dari, and possibly Athribis, the city of Bukunranipi, who was replaced by Psametik I.[382]

Judeans were well-informed about these developments not only as

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[381] Cf. also Prism C iii 10–14: "From all of them (the rebellious kings), I had only mercy upon Necho and granted him life. I made (a treaty) with him (protected by) oaths which greatly surpassed (those of the former treaty). I clad him in a garment with multicolored trimmings, placed a golden chain on him (as the) insigne of his kingship, put golden ring on his hands; I wrote my name (phonetically?) upon an iron dagger (to be worn in) the girdle, the mounting of which was golden and gave it to him." (*ANET*, 295; *BIWA*, 214).

[382] Cf. 2.3.4.2. and Prism A i 130–ii 4 (*ANET*, 295; *BIWA*, 213–14).

neighbours, but also as eyewitnesses. Prisms C ii 37–67 of Assurbanipal mentions by name 22 kings of the seacoast who helped the Assyrian king on his first campaign against Taharka in 667. On the second place on the list we find Manasseh, king of Judah, providing the political counterpart of the theological claim in Isa 19:17.[383]

However, if Isa 19:16–25 refers to Egypt serving Assyria, how can we interpret the liberation of Egypt in Isa 19:20b–21? Does it refer to an Egyptian prince, who will throw off the Assyrian yoke and drive away the Assyrians? That is one of the possibilities that may comply well with the post-664 history of Egypt, when Psametik I took over the throne, and at some stage threw off the yoke and drove out the Assyrians (cf. 2.4.1). This would mean that 19:23 talking about the supremacy of Assur above Egypt is considered a later extension of the text, reflecting the Persian era after 525 B.C., when Cambyses ascended the throne of Egypt. This is a possible, but not the sole option.

Another alternative is to argue that the liberator of Egypt is not an Egyptian prince, but an Assyrian king. This interpretation has the advantage that it integrates 19:23 with the previous text, and does not need to assume that Assyria would be a *chiffre* for the later Persian Empire. But can this be supported from the context? We have seen that the harsh master and powerful king of 19:4 most probably alludes to an Assyrian king. How then can the deliverer also be an Assyrian? This can only cause problems if 19:1–25 is considered a text written at one moment. For if it was not, it cannot be excluded that the author behind 19:16–23 read the previous prophecy as an account of Egypt's pre-Assyrian era, under the dominance of Kushite pharaohs. It is particularly striking that 19:16–25 is strongly related to the ideology of the Assyrian texts on the issue of legitimacy of Assyrian domination of Egypt. Yet the same Assyrian texts also present the kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal as great liberators, to whom Egypt should be thankful in all ages. The texts of Assurbanipal constantly refer to "the good deeds" (*ṭabtu*) of his father or himself towards the Egyptians, while his military operation is presented as freeing Egypt from the Kushites. The scribes of Assurbanipal mention that after Necho is reinstalled following the rebellion, he becomes a particularly obedient vassal of Assurbanipal. Necho died in a battle against Tanutamani fighting for the recapture of Memphis. His son, Psametik I, enjoyed the military support of Assyria against the Kushites from 664 until 656, when he became the sole ruler of Egypt. As noted in 2.4.1., in his anti-Kushite battles, Psametik I was probably also assisted by Judaean contingents. In 2 Kgs 13:4–5, another

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[383] Isa 37:25 written in the post-Sennacherib era, also refers to the capture of Egypt by alluding to the desiccation of Egypt's rivers (יְאֹרֵי מָצוֹר).

Assyrian king, Adad-nirari III,[384] appears as the מוֹשִׁיעַ of Israel against the Syrians. Strangely, the name and provenance of both saviours remains unmentioned. From an author belonging to the Judeans, who have themselves supported Assyria in establishing its universal rule over Africa, such a theological accommodation is hardly surprising. It is moreover embedded in a decades-long prophetic tradition that considered the world power Assyria as the royal sceptre of YHWH.

To conclude, 19:16–23 presupposes the invasion of Egypt in 671 by Esarhaddon and seems to fit particularly well the early years of Assurbanipal.[385] If the saviour in 19:20b is identified with Psametik I, then 19:23 derives from the Persian period after 625 B.C. If the liberator is the Assyrian king (which I consider more likely), then the era of Necho or the early years of Psametik I (until about 650 B.C.) provide the most fitting context for at least 19:16–23. There is little historical information that would help us dating 19:24–25. Unless the Judah / Israel change is considered a too serious shift, it may be seen as a prediction pronounced on the same historical soil.

5.4.   ISAIAH 19 AND THE STELE OF YHWH (ISAIAH 13–23)

Isaiah 19 is particularly well-suited to be read in the context of a stele of YHWH. As 19:19 made it clear, this prophecy refers explicitly to a stele (מַצֵּבָה) set up in Egypt's borderland, which suggests that the author was acquainted with the use and function of such monuments. In the exegetical section, I mentioned many examples that this text shares with Assyrian literature, specifically with royal steles.

To sum up the most important themes, one should first mention the threat caused by YHWH approaching to Egypt (19:1; cf. also vs. 16). According to Assyrian texts, the arrival of the Assyrian king also causes hearts to palpitate and people to melt in fear. Similarly, the portrayal of Egypt loosing its mind before YHWH (19:3.11.13) reminds of the effects of the glory (*namrīru*) and awesomeness (*melammû*) of Assur which, according to Prism B i 80–82 of Assurbanipal, cause Taharka to become frenzied (*illika maḫḫûttaš*).

The motif of the plan against YHWH calls the Assyrian descriptions of rebellion of subordinated kings into remembrance. In this sense עֵצָתוֹ

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[384] Machinist, "Assyria", 721.

[385] Isa 23, which parallels Isa 19 in many aspects, refers to the restoration of Tyre after "70 years" in its final בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, a motif that also appears in Esarhaddon's texts in his description of the restoration of Babylon (*IAKA* §11 Episode 10). It may be noted in passing, that Isa 23:18 with its seemingly anti-Deuteronomian echo (cf. Deut 23:18), is just as striking as Isa 19:19's apparent pro-מַצֵּבָה stance that some likewise consider anti-Deuteronomistic.

אֲבַלֵּעַ ("his plans I shall destroy"; 19:3) can be compared to the account
concerning the "planned evil" (*ikpudū lemuttu*) and "profitless counsel"
(*milik lā kušīri*) of Egypts leaders against Assurbanipal (Prism E Stück 11
1–10). The related motif of the hand raised over the nations (19:17)
was already noted as a recurring theme in Assyrian literature (cf. 3.5.).
Isaiah 10:32 connects this posture explicitly with the Assyrian king.

The harsh lord and powerful king who will restore the order in the
land (19:4) reminds one of the ideological art of the *ṣalmu*-stele, most
likely familiar to the audience, which represented the Assyrian king as
an authoritative and powerful ruler.

The desiccation of the Nile (19:5–7) reappears in Isa 37:25 in a
speech cited from the Assyrian monarch. The Judaean author is obvi-
ously a master of Assyrian rhetoric. It is not only the expression יְאֹרֵי
מָצוֹר, which is of particular interest here, but also the fact that this
speech is specifically related to the post-Sennacherib era (Isa 37:37–38),
i.e., the age of the Egyptian campaigns of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal.

A long list of motifs typical to Assyrian stele literature appears in
19:18–22: the change of the name of the cities into Assyrian names;
comparing destroyed cities to ruined hills (cf. here עִיר הַהֶרֶס, "city of
ruins"), the swearing of allegiance to the vassal overlord; the establish-
ment of an altar to YHWH, the presentations of offerings and "tributes"
(זֶבַח וּמִנְחָה, vs. 21),[386] the erection of the stele (מַצֵּבָה) in the border
zone, the dedication of the stele to YHWH,[387] the offering of support
against the enemies by the benevolent overlord. These are clear indica-
tions that the author of these verses is familiar with the literary customs
and royal ideology exposed on Assyrian steles.

As for Isa 19 in the context of the יום יהוה-edition, the chaos caused
by YHWH among Egypt's gods, can be compared to Isa 2:18 (וְהָאֱלִילִים
כָּלִיל יַחֲלֹף; cf. 2:8.20). The inability of the Egyptian leaders to endure the
day of their visitation (19:11–14) is similar to 2:11–12.17.

5.5.   Conclusion

From a literary critical perspective, Isa 19 is formed by two text blocks,
19:1–15 and 19:16–25. Despite widespread assumptions, we have good
reasons and models to believe that 19:5–10 is integral to the text. It was
either composed simultaneously with 19:1–4.11–15, or derives from an
earlier source. The prose form of 19:12.14–15 was noted as an eventual
sign of subsequent addition to the rest of the prophecy, but those do not
basically modify the early sense of the utterance. It is clear that Isa

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[386] Cf. Esarhaddon's establishment of "regular offerings (*sattukku*) and cultic
offerings (*ginû*) for Assur and the great gods" in Egypt, as noted at vs. 18.
[387] Cf. Esarhaddon's *narâ šiṭir šumīya*, "a stele with my name written on it".

19:16–25 derives from a different time. Its linear structure may suggest it was included in one or at most two stages.

Though 19:1–15 does not mention this explicitly, predicting the fall of Egypt might have functioned as an implicit warning for a Judaean community. Only this can give sense if the prophecy is from Isaiah. Else, if it derives from a few decades later, its plan motif may suggest a theological reflection from a Yahwistic point of view on the broadening borders of the Assyrian empire.

Isaiah 19:16–25 writes a salvation history for Egypt modelled on that of Israel, with typical motifs drawn especially from Exodus and historical literature. This parallelism was argued to fit the 7th century expansions of the book of Isaiah, which also predict the near future of Israel on analogy of its past. Unlike most exegetes believe, the universalistic view propagated by 19:16–25 has no close parallels in post-exilic literature, but is mostly reliant on the idea that the Assyrian empire is the form through which the universal rule of YHWH manifests itself in the world. This perspective has made it possible to read Isa 19 in the context of the prophecies of the stele of YHWH.

As far as the available evidence allows us to conclude, Isa 19:1–15 can be dated to between 717 and 671, while 19:16–25 to the early years of Assurbanipal until about 650. Eventually, though not necessarily, 19:24–25 may come from after 525. Manasseh was the son of a father fascinated by Egypt, but he lived in an era when this friendship could have been maintained only under Assyrian supervision. This context inspired the author of Isa 19:16–23(24–25) to put pen on papyrus.

Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6

From Covenant to Chaos

ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH 20

The introductory phrase of Isa 20:1–6 ties the events it narrates, a sign act of Isaiah concerning Egypt and Kush, to a concrete historical period, the capture of Ashdod by the commander of Sargon II in 711 B.C. Although this focus on Egypt and Kush connects this text to Isa 19, its location among the FNPs remains unusual in several respects. First, Isa 20:1–6 is a narrative about Isaiah, referring to him in the third person only. Second, Isa 20 is delimited from the preceding prophecy by a new heading, but not one of the מַשָּׂא-type as in Isa 19:1 or 21:1. Third, Isa 19 ends with a pronouncement of salvation concerning Egypt. The renewed proclamation of judgment against this nation in Isa 20 is remarkable. The theological concept behind the present location of Isa 20 requires therefore further investigation.

Despite the short and relatively well-preserved text, several issues in this passage need clarification. First, one should note the cumbersome structure of the introductory sentence which presents the following verse as the message of YHWH spoken through Isaiah. However, the present form of vs. 2 and 3 referring to Isaiah in the third person raise the question in what way these can be connected logically to vs. 1. Second, the original relationship between the sign act of Isaiah and the fall of Ashdod is debated. Because 20:1 mentions the city Ashdod and 20:6 speaks about "the inhabitant of this coastland", many scholars believe that the symbolic action of the prophet was supposed to warn the Philistines originally, and that its connection with Egyptians and Kushites is a subsequent development. The question is whether we can find any support for the presumption that there has once been a more "original" *Sitz* for this sign act than the present narrative context. Third, it is unclear whether the "three years" refers to duration of the sign act, or the "three years" is part of the symbolism of the act itself (which may have been performed only on one occasion). Fourth, the text writing about Isaiah in the third person, presupposes a temporal distance from the actual events it narrates. It can be asked therefore to what extent the literary character of Isa 20 as a later narrative influenced the meaning and structure of a presumably earlier oral utterance and sign act.

The answers on this question have a direct bearing on the issue of

the literary integrity of Isa 20 often questioned in exegetical literature. From a theological point of view, it may be asked how this text functioned before an audience, what message it intended to convey? As for the historical background, the question is how the historical information retold in the narrative and the historical context in which the written version of the text came into being can be related with each other.

6.1.   TRANSLATION WITH TEXT-CRITICAL AND SEMANTIC NOTES

1   In the year when the *tartan*[b] came to Ashdod—[a]being sent by
2   Sargon the king of Assyria[a]—and he attacked it and took it, at that time YHWH spoke through[c] [d]Isaiah, son of Amos[d]. He said: "Go, and loose the sackcloth from your loins and take off the shoes from your feet." And he did so, walking naked and
3   barefoot. And YHWH said: "Just as my servant, Isaiah, [e]has walked naked and barefoot[e] [f]for three years (or: three years is)[f] as
4   a sign and a portent concerning Egypt and Kush, so shall the king of Assyria lead off the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Kush, young and old, naked and barefoot, [g]with the buttocks and
5   the genitalia of Egypt uncovered[g]. And they will be dismayed and ashamed of Kush, [h]their expectation[h], and of Egypt, their
6   pride. And the inhabitant of this coastland will say [i]on that day[i]: 'Look, this has happened to our expectation where [j]we had fled[j] for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria. How then shall we escape?'".

1   **a-a** בִּשְׁלֹחַ אֹתוֹ...אַשּׁוּר. Literally this would be "when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him" (cf. D §91a; GKC §115k). For further discussion, cf. the exegesis.

b תַּרְתָּן. The variant תורתן in 1QIsa[a] does not necessarily reflect a different textual tradition, but rather a different orthography particular to this scroll.[1]
תַּרְתָּן is a loanword from Akkadian (originally from the Hurrian).[2] The term represents a high military rank, like 'field marshal', 'commander-in-chief'. The Akkadian variant is spelled as *tartān, tartannu, tartānu, turtān, turtannu, turtānu*, which may vary even inside the same document.[3]

2   **c** בְּיַד. Modern readers observe inconsistencies in the logical structure of this verse. The preposition one would expect here is אֶל rather than בְּיַד, since the phrase that follows 20:2a is addressed *to* the prophet, and not *through* the prophet. The LXX solved this difficulty by rendering πρὸς. Some Hebrew

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[1] For the ◌ > ◌ change before the ר, see E. Y. Kutscher, *Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1 Q Isaᵃ)* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 122, 496–97.
[2] P. V. Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew* (HSS 47; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 151.
[3] R. Mattila, *The King's Magnates: A Study of the Highest Officials of the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (SAAS 11; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999), 110–11.

manuscripts also contain אֶל instead בְּיַד. Nevertheless, the MT is supported by the majority of ancient witnesses, including 1QIsaᵃ. These deviations from the MT are likely exegetical attempts to make sense of a confusing syntax.

Some modern commentators reject the emendation and explain the use of בְּיַד as referring to the symbolic action of Isaiah through which God spoke to the prophet's audience.[4] However, if it was the act of Isaiah that God spoke through, it still remains a question what the reference was of לֵאמֹר in the present context. Moreover, as I shall argue, we have other parallels to this syntax, where the motif of speaking through a symbolic act is missing.

According to Alexander, the use of בְּיַד could be explained by the fact that "what was said *to* the prophet was obviously said *through* him to the people".[5] However, one may question whether Isa 20:2 was indeed a message addressed through the prophet to the people. At any rate, the phrase immediately following בְּיַד still remains awkwardly connected.

Although Isa 20:2 is treated as such, the syntax of this phrase is not without parallels. Haggai 2:1–2 is another example:

> On the 21st day of the seventh month, the word of YHWH came through (הָיָה דְּבַר־יהוה בְּיַד) the prophet Haggai saying (לֵאמֹר): Speak to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, saying (לֵאמֹר)…

Here, too, one would expect either that the preposition אֶל is used, or that vs. 3 directly follows vs. 1, none of which is, however, the case.[6] In Ex 9:35 בְּיַד seems to stand for אֶל referring to a revelation of YHWH *to* Moses (cf. LXX and Ex 7:3–4), and not *through* him to others. In Num 27:23 בְּיַד also substitutes אֶל: "He [Moses] laid his hands upon him [Joshua] and commissioned him, as YHWH had spoken *through* (בְּיַד?; LXX τῷ) Moses." This verse refers to Num 27:18(–21), which contains a revelation to (not through) Moses (cf. also Deut 34:9). These texts suggest either that דבר בְּיַד, "to speak through" may actually function as דבר אֶל, "to speak to", or that בְּיַד and אֶל can sometimes be interchanged.[7] There is also a third possibility. In both 20:2 and Hag 2:1, דבר בְּיַד seems to have a broader context (related verses) in view. It is not unlikely that these introductions were written to bind together already existing literary units, and as such they postdate them, which might explain the logical break and the double superscriptions appearing in certain texts.[8] I shall return to this

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[4] Ehrlich, 73; Procksch, 257; Watts, 264; Höffken, 161; De Waard, 89; Barthélemy, 151.

[5] Alexander, 367.

[6] אֶל appears indeed in a text of Haggai from Wadi Murabba'at, but the support for the MT is stronger (cf. LXX and the *Tg.*). See further H. W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 6. Haggai* (BKAT 14/6; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), 51.

[7] Cf. further examples of the interchange of אֶל and בְּיַד in Jer 50:1: אֶל־בָּבֶל and בְּיַד יִרְמְיָהוּ, however Jer 49:34 (cf. 47:1) has אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ and אֶל־עֵילָם. Cf. עַל־הַגּוֹיִם in Jer 46:1. See also the awkward structure of Hag 1:1–4 with two introductions in vss. 1.3.

[8] See Jer 25:1 and 2; Jer 46:1 and 2; Hag 1:1 and 3. This broader view is likely the explanation for Hag 2:10–12, where אֶל־חַגַּי is used in the same manner as the earlier בְּיַד־חַגַּי. A revelation that is made *to* Haggai is still described as if it had taken place before a larger public (cf. vs. 11: "ask the priests", vs. 12: "and the priests re-

problem in the exegesis of vss. 2–3. Suffice it now to say that ancient authors were seemingly less bound by modern logic than one would presuppose.

d-d יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶן־אָמוֹץ. The Syr. added *nby'* after יְשַׁעְיָהוּ,[9] the LXX omitted בֶן־אָמוֹץ (cf. 2 Chr 26:22).[10] It should be observed that in superscriptions (Isa 1:1; 2:1 and 13:1), the book of Isaiah uses יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶן־אָמוֹץ without הַנָּבִיא, while in narrative sections in Isa 36–39 (2 Kgs 19–20; 2 Chr 32), the title הַנָּבִיא is most often added. Therefore, one may argue that the phrase יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶן־אָמוֹץ in 20:2 is consistent with the headings of the book of Isaiah. It is further interesting to note that in superscriptions, prophetic books only rarely refer to the prophets as נָבִיא. Instead נָבִיא appears in the third person narratives about the prophets.[11]

3 **e-e** הָלַךְ עָרוֹם וְיָחֵף. Qal perfect is used here for completed past action (JM §112c; WO §10.2.2d).[12] The previous verse makes it obvious that Isaiah had already performed the command of YHWH.

f-f שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים. The MT places the *atnaḥ* at the end of the previous וְיָחֵף thus signalising that שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים begins a new clause. The consequence of this text division is that Isaiah did not walk naked and barefoot for three years, but for three years, the symbolic act was a sign and a portent for Egypt and Kush. The translation would sound like this: "Just as my servant, Isaiah, has walked naked and barefoot—for three years this will be a sign and a portent for Egypt and Kush—so will the king of Assyria …".[13] This means that Isaiah performed the sign only once, but it was an effective symbol for the three coming years. The more widely held opinion is that Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years long, arguing that שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים logically belongs to what precedes the expression.[14] For a comprehensive analysis, see the exegesis.

4 **g-g** וְחֲשׂוּפֵי שֵׁת עֶרְוַת מִצְרָיִם. Procksch considered חֲשׂוּפֵי an Aramaism,[15] but I

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plied"). For אֶל instead of the expected בְּיַד, see, e.g., Jer 11:1; 21:1; Zech 1:1. In some other texts the later addition of an introduction either resulted in a double heading, or it has little to do with the immediately following passage to which it was attached (Jer 27:1[.2]; 32:1[.6]; 34:8[.12]; Ob 1; Zech 1:7; 7:1; cf. also Hos 1:2). Note also Josh 10:12 אָז יְדַבֵּר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לַיהוה) followed by an imperative addressed to שֶׁמֶשׁ and יָרֵחַ).

[9] See also Kennicott nr. 150 as well as 2 Kgs 19:2; 20:1; 2 Chr 26:22; 32:20.32.

[10] Note, however, Codex Vaticanus and the Lucianic recension, which also mention the "prophet".

[11] נָבִיא is absent in Jer 1:1. As part of a superscription נָבִיא is attested in Jer 25:2; 45:1; 46:1.13; 47:1; 49:34; 50:1; 51:59, remarkably concentrated ahead of a coherent section of foreign nation prophecies *and* Jer 45:1, which is the only heading, where a translation of נָבִיא appears in the LXX (= Jer 51:31). This is striking in view of countless other superscriptions elsewhere in the book with the name Jeremiah used without the qualifier נָבִיא. Otherwise נָבִיא is restricted to third person narratives about Jeremiah. See further Ezek 1:3; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1; Am 1:1; Obad 1:1; Jon 1:1; Mic 1:1; Nah 1:1; Zeph 1:1; Mal 1:1, all missing נָבִיא. הַנָּבִיא appears in Hab 1:1; 3:1; Hag 1:1.3, and Zech 1:1.7.

[12] Contra Procksch: "Wie mein Knecht Jesaia bloß und barfuß *geht* drei Jahre lang…".

[13] Cf. also Alexander, 368; Delitzsch, 242; Oswald, 382.

[14] E.g., Duhm, 148; König, 208; Schoors, 124; Wildberger, 748; etc.

[15] Procksch, 258. Delitzsch also kept the vocalisation (Delitzsch, 243).

follow here the often proposed emendation to חֲשׂוּפֵי (qal part. pass.).[16] Fur-thermore, עֶרְוַת מִצְרַיִם is regarded as a gloss, argued to have been inserted later into the text, but syntactically unconnected.[17] Wildberger took also וַחֲשׂוּפֵי שֵׁת as a later addition, arguing that the text should have mentioned Isaiah, too, as walking with buttocks uncovered in his sign act. Wildberger's reasoning is not convincing. עָרוֹם used in connection with Isaiah may mean he was totally naked, "with uncovered buttocks". Even if this was not the case, the explana-tion of the significance of this symbolic act may go beyond the actual perform-ance. As the originality of וַחֲשׂוּפֵי שֵׁת cannot be seriously questioned, so there is also no need to drop עֶרְוַת מִצְרַיִם as a gloss. Note that all other descriptions of the exiles in 20:4 appear in pairs: גְּלוּת כּוּשׁ | שְׁבִי מִצְרַיִם, נְעָרִים | זְקֵנִים, עָרוֹם | יָחֵף. The syntactic pair of חֲשׂוּפֵי שֵׁת is עֶרְוַת מִצְרַיִם.[18]

Scholars who try to make sense of עֶרְוַת מִצְרַיִם in its present location arrive to the translation "(with buttocks uncovered) to the shame of Egypt". This shows the influence of the rendering in LXX: ἀνακεκαλυμμένους τὴν αἰσχύνην Αἰγύπτου, "having exposed the shame of Egypt". αἰσχύνην generally stands for בֹּשֶׁת, but also for עֶרְוַת.[19] The Greek, however, is quite imprecise here.[20] עֶרְוָה in a construct state appears in Gen 9:22.23; Lev 18:7; 1 Sam 20:30; Ezek 23:29. עֶרְוַת מִצְרַיִם may be rendered as "the nakedness of Egypt". However, the phrase "*to* [an implicit לְ] the nakedness of Egypt" gives no sense here.

It seems a better solution to consider חֲשׂוּפֵי related to both שֵׁת and עֶרְוָה connected by an implicit וֹ. שֵׁת refers to the buttocks of Egypt, while עֶרְוָה to the front, the genitalia stripped off.[21] שֵׁת and עֶרְוָה form the pair of words that is so characteristic for the other expressions in the list of Isa 20:4. Accordingly, I render Isa 20:4 as: "with the buttocks and genitalia of Egypt uncovered".

5   **h-h** מַבָּטָם. 1QIsaᵃ reads מבטחם in 20:5, i.e. "their trust" (not so however in vs. 6, where 1QIsaᵃ follows the MT). It has been argued (cf. notes in HUB) that πεποιθότες in the LXX—which entirely reformulated vs. 5—also reflects מבטחם. Even if this was the case, the evidence is inconclusive. Except for Isa 20:5.6, מַבָּט appears once more in Zech 9:5, in a sentence similar to Isa 20:5. In Zech 9:5 most LXX manuscripts have παράπτωμα, 'sin', 'transgression', probably from מחטא (Ezek 14:13), but the Codices Alexandrinus and Marchalianus have ἐλπίς. Anyway, the semantic field of מַבָּט and מִבְטָח is closely related.

The Vulg. translated *spes*, 'expectation' supporting the MT. *spes* can render בֶּטַח (e.g., Isa 30:15), as well as מַבָּט (Zech 9:5). It is interesting, however, that *spes* as a translation of מִבְטָח only appears in the *Psalterium Gallicanum* (transla-

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[16] GKC §87g, §89d; Gray, 348; Wildberger, 748; Blenkinsopp, 321; etc.

[17] Procksch, 255; Fohrer, 1:216; Kaiser, 92; Clements, 175; Schoors, 125.

[18] The pair of חֲשׂוּפֵי שֵׁת is not עָרוֹם וְיָחֵף as suggested by Procksch, 258. Note also the parallelism in the constr. state endings in שְׁבִי מִצְרַיִם and חֲשׂוּפֵי שֵׁת on the one hand, and עֶרְוַת מִצְרַיִם and גְּלוּת כּוּשׁ on the other.

[19] Isa 47:3; Ezek 16:36.37; 22:10; 23:10.18.29; αἰσχύνην stands for מַעַר in Nah 3:5.

[20] The LXX probably omitted שֵׁת as it also did either שְׁבִי or גְּלוּת (cf. ἰσχίων in 1 Sam 10:4, which is however close to αἰσχύνην at least in form).

[21] For עֶרְוָה as referring to the genitalia (and not "nakedness" in general), see Gen 9:22.23; Ex 28:42; Lev 18:6; Isa 47:2; Lam 1:8; Ezek 16:8; etc.

tion of Jerome based on the Greek text).[22] However, this is not the case in his later translation of the Psalms from Hebrew.[23] Jerome apparently never rendered מִבְטָח by *spes,* which provides additional support for the MT of Isa 20:5.6.

The variant מבטם in 1QIsaᵃ does not mean that the copyists harmonised the two verses, as Blenkinsopp assumed. The uniform translation of Isa 20:4.6 in the versions, urges us to regard the MT as genuine.

6   **i-i**   בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. The expression is omitted in the LXX (cf. LXX of Isa 4:1), so that Procksch and Clements regard בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא in 20:6 as a gloss. Wildberger on the other hand defended its authenticity maintaining at the same time that it demarcates a verse added later to the previous vss. 1–5, as in Isa 19:16–25. On the assumed late origin of vs. 6, cf. 6.3.1.

j-j   נַסְנוּ. 1QIsaᵃ gives the reading נסמך, i.e. niphʻal impf. 1st pers. pl. of סמך (נִסָּמֵךְ) "we relied upon" (Judg 16:29; 2 Kgs 18:21; 2 Chr 32:8; Ps 71:6; Isa 36:6; 48:2). Although this would fit well the political situation in Egypt in the time of Isaiah (cf. 2 Kgs 18:21; Isa 36:6; see also Ezek 30:6), the verb סמך would require the preposition עַל (Wildberger) and it would make no sense with the adverb שָׁם. All versions support the MT, as also does a syntactical analysis of נַסְנוּ שָׁם in the context of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Gen 19:20; Ex 21:13).

The variant in 1QIsaᵃ may be a deliberate change, to be explained by the events of its time, especially the flight of Judeans to Egypt during Onias III. It had possibly no intention to criticise those who had fled to Egypt (נוס) with Onias, only the ones who relied upon them (סמך) (cf. above 5.1. note 20 n-n).

6.2.   EXEGETICAL SECTION

Isaiah 20 begins by providing historical coordinates to the symbolic act and prophecy of Isaiah. The formula בִּשְׁנַת followed by a detailed description is common in historical works and superscriptions, appearing twice more in the book of Isaiah as well (Isa 6:1 and 14:28).[24]

As we have seen in 2.3.2., the event mentioned in the superscription of 20:1 is one of the relatively well-documented stories of the ancient Near East. According to extra-biblical sources, Azuri's throne was assigned by the Assyrian overlord to his brother, Ahimiti. However,

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[22] Cf. Ps 39:5; 64:6; 70:5 and probably Ps 21:10 (MT hiphʻil part. of בטח) and Ps 118:9.

[23] Jerome translates *confidentia* (Ps 39:5; 64:6), *fiducia* (Ps 21:10; 70:5), *sperare* (Ps 118:8.9). In texts outside the Psalms, Jerome quite consistently rendered *fiducia* (also in Isa 32:18; exception is Prov 25:19, where he translated a participial form of בטח).

[24] E.g., Gen 7:11; 1 Kgs 15:28.33; 16:8; 2 Kgs 12:2.7; 17:6; Dan 10:1; Hag 1:1. The Assyrian system of dating mentioning an eponymous official was unknown in Judah, but in a way similar to the Eponym Chronicles, Judaean authors also dated according to important events of one particular year. I doubt that this form could be termed with Procksch as "das volkstümlichen Gebrauch" (256–57). See further Z. J. Kapera, "Biblical Reflections of the Struggle for Philistia at the End of the Eight Century B. C. Part II: Analysis of the Chapter xx of the Book of Isaiah", *FO* 12 (1981–1984) 279–80.

Ahimiti was dethroned by the inhabitants of Ashdod soon after his installation. His office was given to Yamani, probably not of royal blood. Sargon sent his field marshal (again) in 711 and removed the "illegitimate" anti-Assyrian Yamani, who managed to flee to Upper Egypt before the Assyrians captured the city. As the Assyrian scribes tell us, he was handed over shortly afterwards by the Kushite Shabataka.

The campaign against Ashdod is led by the commander-in-chief of Sargon II. Beside other New Assyrian high rank royal functionaries (nāgir ēkalli, 'palace herald', masennu, 'administrator', sartinnu, 'chief judge', rab šāqê, 'chief cupbearer', rab ša rēši, 'chief eunuch', etc.), the תַּרְתָּן (tartān) represents an official entrusted with the leading of the army. As a possessor of this status, the tartān owned vast provinces in the empire of his master.[25] He is charged with the distribution of booty among governors of subdued nations taking part in a military operation. On different occasions the tartān was entrusted to lead campaigns in the absence of the Assyrian king (e.g., RIMA 3 A.0.104.20:10).

The attack against Ashdod was apparently short and effective. The phrase וַיִּלְחֶם […] וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ in Isa 20:1 is common in descriptions of warfare, in military accounts with a successful outcome (Judg 1:8; 9:45; 2 Sam 12:26.29; 2 Kgs 12:18).

בָּעֵת הַהִיא (20:2), a common expression in biblical narratives, makes the connection between vss. 1 and 2 explicit. The role of 20:1 is to provide additional information on 20:2.[26] The temporal distance between the events and their recording cannot be deduced from this adverb. בָּעֵת הַהִיא may denote events in the remote (Judg 11:26; 21:14; 2 Kgs 8:22; 2 Chr 13:18) or recent past (Neh 4:16; 6:1; 13:21).

Isaiah 20:2b retells a personal encounter between the prophet and YHWH during which God orders the prophet to take off his sackcloth and his shoes and walk naked and barefoot. A short note in vs. 2 reports the performance of this commission.

It strikes the reader that Isaiah was wearing a sackcloth (שַׂק). Because sackcloth is often attested in connection with mourning rituals, some commentators believe that Isaiah was mourning for the fate of his nation.[27] Others assume that wearing the sackcloth may have itself been a symbolic act representing the future tragedy of Philistia or Judah.[28]

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[25] For instance Belu-lu-balat, the tartān of Samsi-adad V, is called "the governor of Tabitu, Harran, Huzirina, Duru, Qipani, Zallu, and Balihu". Samsi-ilu, the tartān of Salmaneser IV, is "the ruler of Hatti, Guti, and all Namri" (cf. Isa 10:8). See Mattila, Magnates, 114.

[26] Cf. 2 Kgs 16:5–6; 1 Chr 21:27–30. See further A. Niccacci, "Isaiah xviii-xx from an Egyptological Perspective", VT 48 (1998) 224 note 17.

[27] Cf. Slotki, 93; Oswald, 385; Blenkinsopp, 323.

[28] Wildberger, 757; Hayes & Irwin, 271. Bronner suggested that Isa 20 actually

Most commentators maintain, however, that שַׂק was the usual garment of a prophet.[29]

Sackcloth is worn in times of mourning (Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 3:31; Ps 30:12; Isa 3:24; Joel 1:8), tragedy (2 Kgs 6:30; 19:1.2; Est 4:1–4), fasting (1 Kgs 20:31.32; 22:27; Isa 58:5; Neh 9:1; Dan 9:3). In the prophetic literature, שַׂק is frequently connected to descriptions of lamentation related to a calamity.[30] Though the prophets may have occasionally worn a hairy type of robe from which they were recognised (2 Kgs 1:8; Zech 13:4; Mat 3:4), שַׂק cannot be related to this prophetic garment.[31] This means that the sackcloth worn by Isaiah before being taken off should be related with a sorrowful event either already experienced, or about to be experienced by the prophet or his nation. Interestingly, in Isa 22:4 Isaiah bewails the future destruction of his nation in anticipation of which he may have been wearing mourning clothes, symbolising the fate of a nation now rejoicing irresponsibly, but soon to weep and wail, tear out hair and put on sackcloth (22:12).[32]

Is this walking naked an act actually performed by Isaiah, or one only accomplished as a visionary experience? Is it possible to perform such a symbolic act in the climate conditions of wintertime? If it is, did he walk naked every time he appeared before the people or he did so only on certain occasions? Does the text mean naked or half-naked?

עָרוֹם expresses total or partial nakedness.[33] In both cases it symbolises shame (2 Sam 6:20). According to Isa 32:11, mourning implied first stripping off all clothes (ערר), including underwear, and girding oneself

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consisted of two different symbolic actions, one performed by a prophet walking in sackcloth, related to the replacement of Azuri in 713, and another one by removing the sackcloth, related to the events in 711 (L. Bronner, "Rethinking Isaiah 20", *OTWSA* 22–23 [1979–1980] 36). Bronner, however, goes too far in the interpretation of texts telling too little.

[29] Duhm, 148; Gray, 345–46; Ehrlich, 73; Eichrodt, 78; Ridderbos, 147; Hayes & Irwin, 271; Kaiser, 93; Schoors, 124; Watts, 264; Höffken, 140.

[30] Isa 15:3; 22:12; 32:11; Jer 4:8; 6:26; Ezek 7:18; 27:31; Joel 1:8.13; Am 8:10.

[31] Elijah, the prophet, is called אִישׁ בַּעַל שֵׂעָר in 2 Kgs 1:8, which probably corresponds to אִישׁ בַּעַל אַדֶּרֶת שֵׂעָר, "one with a hairy robe" (cf. Gen 25:25; *HALOT*). His אַדֶּרֶת, 'robe', which is often mentioned in the Elijah stories (1 Kgs 19:13.19; 2 Kgs 2:8.13–14) may denote any type of robe, including those worn by prominent people. It is rather the אַדֶּרֶת שֵׂעָר, "hairy robe", which seems to have been typical for the prophets (Zech 13:4). Extra-biblical texts make no distinction between a type of prophetic garment and the dressing of other persons (cf. *PPANE* 54, 55, 56, 58, 59).

[32] On this text, cf. 3.4.2.8. above.

[33] For the first, see Gen 2:25; Job 1:21; Eccl 5:15; Hos 2:3, for the second, 1 Sam 19:24 (?); Job 22:6; 24:7.10; Isa 58:7.

around the waists (חֲגוֹרָה עַל־חֲלָצָיִם) with sacks (cf. Gen 37:34; 1 Kgs 20:31; Jer 48:37).[34] If Isaiah was wearing such garment of mourning, he must have been totally naked when he took it off (cf. Mic 1:8–9). The oral message that was rendered to the symbolic action, namely that Assyria will deport the African captives totally naked, *as* symbolised by Isaiah, makes most sense if the prophet was indeed walking naked. It is exactly this aspect of nakedness in the comparison that is important to the symbolic act.

The question concerning the real life setting of this symbolic action is very significant in relation to the present passage. Scholars generally assume that the story goes back to a real performance, but König argued that the act of Isaiah had only been performed in a vision.[35] If König is right, many questions related to the sign act become irrelevant.

The fact that Isa 20 reports Isaiah obeying Yhwh's command (וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן) is not in itself a proof that Isaiah's act would have been performed in reality. A similar command to the prophet Jeremiah to take the cup of wrath from the hand of Yhwh and make all the nations drink from it, is likewise followed by a short description of the performance of the symbolic action (Jer 25:15–17). Yet this could hardly have meant a historical performance. It is not the symbolic action of the prophet that serves here as a message. It is rather the *description* of the symbolic act that is intended to catch the attention of the *readers*, or those listening to Jer 25. This may actually be the case with many (though not all) symbolic actions in prophetic literature. Some of those are not real historical events and deeds of the prophets, but functioned as symbols in a textually recorded form. As prophetic narratives, they contained a message addressed not to an audience from the time of the "enactment" of the symbolic action, but to a later generation.[36]

It is possible, or even probable, that Isa 20 is another case similar to Jer 25:15–17. The primary function of the story in Isa 20 is not to inform the reader on what actually happened around 711 B.C., but to con-

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[34] For מָתְנַיִם (Isa 20:2) as a synonym of חֲלָצָיִם (Isa 32:11), see Isa 11:5.

[35] König, 210.

[36] E.g., Jer 13:1–11 (note the temporal distance in 13:6); Ezek 4:1–17 (Ezekiel has to prepare and eat his food while being bound and unable to move [4:8–9]). Jer 18:1–10 reveals a theological message to the prophet, which would address later a different audience. Jer 19 contains the report of the prophet's personal experience, yet 19:14 presents it as an accomplished mission. Jeremiah's staying unmarried is a message that becomes theologically significant to the prophet (Jer 16:1–9) and to those reading the narrative in the future. The symbol is not a performed symbol that was seen, but one visualised in writing. Some of the symbolic action reports function in a way similar to the prophetic descriptions of visions (e.g., Am 7).

vey a message to a later audience living under similar circumstances. This reading makes most sense of the text as it now stands without abandoning verses in pursuit of a perfect historical localisation of every aspect of the actions described in the chapter (cf. 6.3.1.).

The (quasi?) enactment of the symbolic action is followed by its explanation. The prophet is called עַבְדִּי יְשַׁעְיָהוּ, "my servant, Isaiah", a term commonly applied to prophets in the Deuteronomistic literature or writings assumed to have been influenced by this theology.[37] It should, nevertheless, be noted that the Deuteronomists most often refer to the prophetic servants in plural, and in general, while Isa 20:3 mentions one specific servant by its personal name. This may suggest that Isaiah is not called an עֶבֶד on grounds of his prophetic vocation, but because of his specific relationship with YHWH.[38]

Speaking of Isaiah in the third person in 20:3 reminds one of a striking element in a similar performance of Ezekiel. Ezekiel tells us in a first person account that "Ezekiel will be a portent (מוֹפֵת) to you: you will do just as he has done." (Ezek 24:24). Ezekiel's text served for a later reading community, just like Isaiah's action. Unlike in Ezek 24, however, the pen is hold here in Isa 20:3 by a person different from the Isaiah.

With regard to the three years, Isa 20:3 is not entirely clear whether and in what sense this information plays a role in the story. The Massoretes and ancient Jewish commentators assume that the three years refer not to the length of the performance of the symbolic action, but rather to the length of the time that the once performed act would serve as a sign. Most commentators believe, however, that the three years allude to the duration of the prophetic act, and reckon these years between 713–711.[39] This explanation entails several difficulties. In a real life setting, walking around naked for three years is problematic. First, it is hard to imagine a prophet walking naked for three years and explaining the meaning of his act only at the end of the three years. Second, walking around naked for three years is difficult from a physical point of view. Of course, if the text is read as a literary composition from a later period, or if it is a vision only, these problems could have hardly caused any hermeneutical conundrum for a later audience.

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[37] E.g., 2 Kgs 9:7; 17:13; Jer 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 35:15; 44:4; Zech 1:6; Am 3:7.

[38] If that is true, closer parallels to Isa 20:3 are provided by texts (not only Deuteronomistic) that refer to single persons as servants of YHWH (Abraham, Caleb, Moses, Joshua, Israel, Eliakim, David, Job, etc.), but also prophets Ahijah (1 Kgs 14:18; 15:29), Eliah (2 Kgs 10:10), Jonah (2 Kgs 14:25).

[39] Duhm, 148; Gray, 342; Ridderbos, 147; Fohrer, 1:255; H. Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern. Die Stellung der klassischen Propheten des 8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. zur Aussenpolitik der Könige von Israel und Juda* (VTS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1964), 114; Clements, 173.

However, the Massoretic interpretation of the verse must also be seriously considered for the following reasons. First, Isa 20:2 raises the impression that the commission to Isaiah implies a onetime action. This is suggested by the simplicity of the narrative: YHWH commanded Isaiah to walk naked and barefoot, and he did so. Second, the book of Isaiah contains many similar temporal references in various other prophecies. This form of prophesying seems to have belonged to the basic message of the book of Isaiah (cf. Isa 7:8.16; 16:14; 21:16; 37:30; cf. 29:17). The striking point in these texts is that the idea of timing plays a role in the future fulfilment of the prophecy. This would mean that the "three years" in Isa 20:3 would refer similarly to the fulfilment of the message related to the symbolic action. In this case, שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים may be considered a parenthetic reference or a gloss to vs. 3b (cf. Isa 7:8b).[40] It may refer to a very near future and not necessarily to 36 month (cf. Jer 28:3).[41]

Another feature that brings Isa 20 close to the Isaianic tradition is the function of signs. Walking naked and barefoot is called a sign and portent (אוֹת וּמוֹפֵת) with regard to Egypt and Kush. Isaiah with his "sons" bearing symbolic names functioned as אֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים (8:18) for a generation unwilling to listen. During the reign of King Ahaz, the sign (אוֹת) also plays an important role in transmitting the divine message (Isa 7:11.14). In Isa 37:30 the events of the three years function as a sign (אוֹת) for Hezekiah. As a sign (אוֹת) regarding the redemption of the city from the Assyrian king, the shadow will go back ten steps on the dial (?) of Ahaz (מַעֲלוֹת אָחָז; Isa 38:8). Unlike his predecessor, Hezekiah asks for a sign (אוֹת) to rely on during his illness (38:22). Isaiah 38:8 gives the theological background of אוֹת in these narratives: יַעֲשֶׂה יהוה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֵּר, "YHWH shall carry out what he has promised".

Isaiah 20:4 explains the sign act. Here it becomes obvious that the nakedness of the prophet symbolises the nakedness of Egyptian and Kushite captives led away by the Assyrian king. The sentence חֲשׂוּפַי שֵׁת עֶרְוַת מִצְרָיִם emphasises that the Assyrians will take away the exiles totally naked, a practice confirmed by iconographic evidence.[42] נְעָרִים וּזְקֵנִים implies that the prophet envisages not only the deportation of captives of war, but the inhabitants of the land of Egypt and Kush.[43]

Hebrew אִי appearing in 20:6 means 'shore', 'coastland' (Isa 23:6; 66:19; Jer 25:22), but also 'isle' (Jer 47:4; Ezek 27:6). Most exegetes un-

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[40] Wildberger, 283, and Clements, 85, argue that the sixty-five years in Isa 7:8 may hint at the era of Esarhaddon or Assurbanipal in the 7th century.

[41] Duhm, 148, argued that Isa 20 remained unfulfilled, which was for him a major reason to consider the prediction authentic.

[42] Cf. *AOB* 128 (Tafel lvii) portrays captives taken away by Salmaneser V, totally naked apparently with their heads shaved, as also alluded at in Isa 7:20.

[43] For נְעָרִים וּזְקֵנִים, see Gen 19:4; Ex 10:9; Deut 28:50; Josh 6:21; Judg 7:11.

derstand 20:6 as an announcement of judgment against the Ashdodites, supposed to figure behind יֹשֵׁב הָאִי הַזֶּה. This interpretation implies that an earlier prophecy of Isaiah, which remained unfulfilled on the deportation of *Ashdod*, was rewritten later as a prophecy against Egypt.[44]

This view is problematic, however. Theoretically it is possible that the superscription of an oracle gives a secondary interpretation to a text (cf. Jer 47:1–7). However, in case Isa 20, we have no evidence that vs. 1 has previously existed in any other form. The problem is that while the exegetes mentioned above rely on the name of Ashdod appearing in vs. 1, yet, on the other hand, they assume that the information in vs. 1 mentioning that Ashdod has already fallen is a later addition. Nevertheless, merely the term הָאִי הַזֶּה in 20:6 hardly requires such a radical reinterpretation of Isa 20 and it provides insufficient support for this literary critical conclusion. The fact that the fall of Ashdod is mentioned in the superscription does not necessarily mean that the inhabitants of Ashdod would have played any further role in the prophecy at any time. If the events presented in the heading of the prophecy constitute the background of the symbolic act and explanation of Isaiah, then he has actually nothing to tell to the inhabitants of Ashdod any more.[45] Ashdod was transformed into an Assyrian province in 711. Isaiah is rather concerned with what the fall of Ashdod would involve for the future of Egypt, the supporter of every anti-Assyrian revolt west of the Euphrates. On the day when Egypt is led away, as the inhabitants of Ashdod had been exiled the days before, then the inhabitant of this coastland will say: "this has happened to them, we are the next on the list of Assyria".

We find three allusions to this audience in the two final verses: "they" (20:5), "the inhabitant of this coastland", and "we" (20:6). There is no doubt that יֹשֵׁב הָאִי הַזֶּה refers to Canaan, but focuses on the primary audience of the author, Judah itself.[46] The fate of the Philistines

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[44] Procksch, 258; Donner, *Israel*, 115; Kaiser, 95; Clements, 173–74; Schoors, 125; Sweeney, 266.

[45] Neither is Isa 20 a prophecy about capturing Egypt before Ashdod. Contra Gray, 342; Kaiser, 95.

[46] Burney argued that the יֹשֵׁב הָאִי הַזֶּה referred to the Philistine Yamani, whose name he understood as a *gentilicum*, alluding to the isle of Cyprus (C. F. Burney, "The Interpretation of Isa, xx 6", *JTS* 13 [1912] 423). The Cypriot origin of Yamani is, however, uncertain (cf. 2.3.2.2.). The plural אֲנָחְנוּ logically identified with יֹשֵׁב הָאִי would throw further doubts on the proposal of Burney.

Seitz, 144, believes that אִי refers here to the peoples of the coastland as in Isa 41:5; 42:4, "representing the nations at the limits of the known world". The difficulty with the suggestion of Seitz is that הָאִי הַזֶּה appears in sg. and not in pl. as would be expected in case it denoted nations far off. Of all occurrences אִי appears in sg. only in Isa 23:2.6 (Phoenician coast); Jer 25:22 (isle of Cyprus or

was closely linked to that of the neighbouring nations. As we have seen in section 2.3.2.2., Judah was at least tempted to participate in this war, being invited personally by the Ashdodite king.[47] The singular form of יֹשֵׁב makes most sense if it is linked with one specific audience, though that does not exclude that הָאִי implies more than one nation. It is striking that exactly that section of the Nineveh inscription of Sargon II that narrates the revolt of Philistia in 711, refers to Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab as *āšibūt tâmtim*, "those living by the sea" (cf. 2.3.2.2.). The fact that *āšibūt tâmtim* includes Judah as well is clearly seen from similar descriptions of this region by Salmaneser III and Esarhaddon.[48]

The fact that Judah must be reckoned to the audience of the prophecy is supported by lexical evidence in vss. 5–6. It was noted above at vs. 4 that אֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים reminds the reader of other narratives of Isaiah in which the sign functions as a means of communication between Isaiah and his people. As the sign of Isa 7:11.14 delivered a message to the Judeans under the threat of Damascus and Samaria, or as Isa 37:30 and 38:8 comforted the same community threatened by Assyrians, so the same people are warned here by the sign concerning (עַל) Egypt and Kush. The close relationship between these "sign-narratives" and Isa 20 is further strengthened by vss. 5–6. חתת in 20:5 is a synonym of ירא, which refers to the fear that the prophet intends to chase away in Isa 7:4 (cf. חתת in 7:8), so as to work comfort and belief in YHWH (אמן). Those in Isa 20 who refuse to rely on YHWH, whose pride (תִּפְאֶרֶת) and expectation (מַבָּט) is Egypt and Kush, will be dismayed and ashamed. The expression חַתּוּ וָבֹשׁוּ appears also in Isa 37:27 (‖ 2 Kgs 19:26).[49]

Quoting the words of others as found in Isa 20:6 reappears again in

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eventually Crete); 47:4 (isle of Crete). Another argument against the proposal of Seitz is the definite article ה and the demonstrative pronoun הַזֶּה.

[47] Though theoretically יֹשֵׁב הָאִי הַזֶּה would suite well the Phoenician coast (cf. Isa 23:2.6), the Phoenicians do not appear among the potential allies of Ashdod in 711. They enter into conflict with the Assyrians in the rebellion of 701.

[48] Salmaneser III refers to the "12 kings on the shore of the sea" (*12 šarrānu ša šiddi tâmdi*) (RIMA 3 A.0.102.6 iii 28; A.0.102.8:17', 33', 38'; A.0.102.10 ii 19' iii 2–3, 19), which also included King Jehu of Israel. In A.0.102.14:60–61, the kings of Hatti are mentioned separately as *šarrānu ša māt Ḫatti u aḫāt tâmti*, "the kings of the land of Hatti (Syro-Palestine) and the seashore". Other texts, such as A.0.102.14: 88 (cf. A.0.102. 16:78'–79', 152'–153') imply that *māt Ḫatti* and *aḫāt tâmti* refer to the same territory. Esarhaddon's Nineveh Prism includes Manasseh, king of Judah, among the "12 kings on the bank of the sea", *12 šarrānu ša kisādi tâmti* (*IAKA* §27 Episode 21:63). This gives sufficient evidence that Judah can be considered the addressee of Isa 20:6.

[49] For חתת and בוש, cf. also Jer 8:9; 17:18; 48:1.20. For בוש in Isaianic context, cf. Isa 1:29; 30:5, for חתת, see Isa 7:8; 8:9: 30:31; 31:4.9.

the Isaiah narratives in 7:5–6, where the prophet cites the plan of Peqah and Rezin concerning the destruction of Judah and the Davidic house. This literary device appears even more often in Isa 36–37 (36:4.7.10.15. 18; 37:10).[50]

Exegetes occasionally treat either of the vss. 5 or 6 as superfluous. It is argued that the message of one is merely the duplicate of the other, so that vs. 5 is regarded as a commenting gloss to vs. 6, or vice versa.[51] This contrast is, however, artificial. The emphasis of the two verses is different. After Kush and Egypt is taken away naked and barefoot, those relying upon them will feel the shame for the humiliation of their hope according to 20:5. Isaiah 20:6 brings this idea further by painting the consequences of the judgment on Egypt. The spiritual disillusionment (בּוֹשׁ) of the inhabitant of the coastland will have further implications. The deportation of Egypt becomes the threatening omen for all those hanging on this power whose glory is fading to history.

6.3.   ISAIAH 20 IN CONTEXT

6.3.1. THE LITERARY ASPECTS OF ISAIAH 20

Some authors have found various parts of Isa 20:1–2 difficult to reconcile with 20:3–4 preferring to treat vss. 1–2 as secondary. As noted in the exegesis, literary critical conclusions have been guided not only by textual difficulties implied by the syntax of 20:1–2, but also by premises concerning the message of the prophecy. Huber, for instance, thought that the symbolic act of the prophet Isaiah was warning against alliances with the Philistines against the Assyrians, arguing that the people must have been aware of the meaning of Isaiah's symbolic action already before Ashdod actually fell. Accordingly he reconstructed the original text by dropping vss. 1b–2: "In dem Jahr, als der Tartan nach Asdod kam, sprach Jahwe: Wie mein Knecht…".[52] Other scholars consider vs. 1 or vs. 2 a secondary interpolation.[53]

However, it was pointed out above that the form of the introductory sentence is not unique to Isa 20, and it can be understood perfectly in

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[50] A striking parallel to the these poetic question is found in the annals of Assurbanipal discussing the rebellion of Egyptian kings, Necho, Sharru-lu-dari, and Paqruru, who talk as follows: "If Taharka has been driven out of Egypt, how then can we stay?" (*BIWA*, 213; *ANET*, 215).

[51] For 20:5 as secondary, cf. Marti, 160; Fohrer, 1:234; Kaiser, 96; F. Huber, *Jahwe, Juda und die anderen Völker beim Propheten Jesaja* (BZAW 137; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1976), 107; Clements, 174–75; for 20:6 see Wildberger, 750.

[52] Huber, *Jahwe*, 107 note 92.

[53] For vs. 1, cf. Wildberger, 750. For vs. 2, see Duhm, 148–49; Marti, 160; Schmidt, 85; Fohrer, 1:234; Eichrodt, 77; Kaiser, 93–94; Vermeylen, 1:325.

its present form. Clearly, 20:3 as an explanation of the symbolic action would stand oddly in case 20:2 is removed. It is characteristic to the form of symbolic action reports that they also include the commission of YHWH addressed to the prophet, calling him to carry out the symbolic act. The main problem with dropping vs. 1 is that by doing this the text is stripped from its relation to the capture of Ashdod. Wildberger's assumption that the Ashdod-events (mentioned in 20:1) could have still constituted the background with some other more original heading in place of vs. 1, highlights the fragile nature of this presupposition.

It was suggested above that the apparent logical difficulties raised by the complex structure of 20:1–2, derive from the fact that Isa 20 is not contemporary with the events it narrates, but it originated later than those. Isaiah 20 reflects not (only) the reception of the symbolic act of Isaiah in 711, but it also addresses a different community. If these addressees belong to a later community living after 711 our attempts to recover a presumed original form are futile indeed. For while the theological viewpoint and vocabulary of the prophecy may comply with other prophecies in the book of Isaiah, it was only this final form in which this narrative has ever existed. One need not presuppose an original, logically consistent "Isaianic core" behind these verses.[54]

The form of 20:1–2 is close to other narratives in the book of Isaiah. The table below highlights similarities in these introductions, in which the appearance of וַיִּלָּחֶם בְּאַשְׁדּוֹד וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ is particularly significant.

Isa 7:1–2[55]	Isa 20:1–2	Isa 36:1–2
description of the situation		
בִּימֵי אָחָז [...]	בִּשְׁנַת	בְּאַרְבַּע עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה
עָלָה רְצִין [...] וּפֶקַח	בֹּא תַרְתָּן	עָלָה סַנְחֵרִיב מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר
יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם לַמִּלְחָמָה עָלֶיהָ	אַשְׁדּוֹדָה [...]	עַל כָּל־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה [...]
וְלֹא יָכֹל לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ	וַיִּלָּחֶם בְּאַשְׁדּוֹד וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ	וַיִּתְפְּשֵׂם
consequences		
וַיֻּגַּד לְבֵית דָּוִד [...]	דִּבֶּר יהוה בְּיַד יְשַׁעְיָהוּ [...]	וַיִּשְׁלַח מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר אֶת־רַב־שָׁקֵה

In all cases above, the introductory sentences mention the date of the events, the events, the persons and the places involved, *including* the success or failure of the operation. These similarities make it highly un-

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[54] Cf. the debates on whether בָּעֵת הַהִיא should refer to the beginning of the rebellion in 711 (Dillmann, 181; Gray, 345; Kissane, 204; Fohrer, 1:217).

[55] In Isa 7, J. Barthel also argued for the secondary origin of 7:1b in relation to the rest of the story (*Prophetenwort und Geschichte. Die Jesajaüberlieferung in Jes 6–8 und 28–31* [FAT 19; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997], 132–33). But the meagre motivations supporting his redaction-critical decision assuming a "historisch erläuternde Bearbeitung" (133–34, 155) are not convincing.

likely that 20:1–2 are edited secondary versions of an original text.

The later origin of either of the vss. 5 and 6 is based on the assump-tion of Fohrer that one verse would be merely a variant version of the other.[56] However, as noted in the exegesis above, the two verses have different functions in the present passage.

The reasoning of Kaiser and Wildberger for the secondary origin of vs. 6 is closely related to their interpretation of 20:1–2, namely that Isa 20 was delivered originally before the fall of Ashdod, and it was warning Philistia rather than Judah. In this sense, Kaiser argues that if the Philis-tines fled to Egypt, the Assyrians would have captured them there. Or else if they sent their messengers to Egypt, it would be strange that the Assyrians first deported Egypt and only after that they turned against Philistia.[57] Above I pleaded for the view that this symbolic act addresses the relationship of Judah (not Philistia) with Egypt after (not before) Ashdod was captured. Isaiah 20:6 cites the words of Judaeans. The ex-pressions יֹשֵׁב הָאִי הַזֶּה and אֲשֶׁר־נַסְנוּ שָׁם imply that those speaking do not live in Egypt, but rather in Judah. Therefore vs. 20 refers to request for help (and not asylum) from Egypt (cf. לְעֶזְרָה). There is further nothing unusual in the Assyrian practice of deporting Egypt and Kush, —i.e. the source of confidence—first, before actually turning against those relying upon them. Concluding, the arguments mentioned do not seriously challenge the unity of Isa 20:1–6.

The second problem to be addressed in this section is the place of Isa 20 in its present context. Critical studies examining the collection of FNPs in the book of Isaiah generally note the particular character of Isa 20 in comparison to other prophecies in the corpus. Its superscription is different from the מַשָּׂא-headings. Authors who assume that the מַשָּׂא superscriptions are secondary, consider Isa 20 part of an early collection of Isaianic FNPs.[58] According to Duhm, Isa 20 was the closing section of a first collection of prophecies, Isa 14:28–20:6, which was later con-nected to 21–22+30:6–7 by a redactor, who probably included the מַשָּׂא headings.[59] Berges regards Isa 20 as the middle of the FNPs (in his view Isa 13–27), dividing the collection into two text-blocks with five מַשָּׂא headings each.[60] According to Sweeney, Isa 20 is subordinated to the

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[56] Fohrer, 1:234.

[57] Kaiser, 95–96; Wildberger, 751.

[58] S. Mowinckel, "Die Komposition des Jesajabuches. Kap. 1–39", *AcOr* 11 (1933) 278; Fohrer, 1:177; Clements, 4–7; B. M. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie – Jes 13 und die Komposition des Jesajabuches. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der Redaktionsgeschichte des Jesajabuches* (FzB 74; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1995), 286–99.

[59] Duhm, 12–13.

[60] Berges, 141–45. Cf. also P. Höffken, *Jesaja. Der Stand der theologischen Diskus-*

מַשָּׂא superscription of Isa 19:1.[61]

In Chapter 3 we have seen that introductory lines of individual prophecies in Isa 13–23 are subordinated to the מַשָּׂא-titles. Presumably, Isa 20 is also adapted to this scheme. From a redaction critical point of view, Isa 20 is considered to be part of the מַשָּׂא מִצְרַיִם. If that is the case, the question is how a prophecy closed by a prediction on the prosperous future of Egypt (19:25) can be followed again by a text essentially negative about the fate of Egypt and Kush?

With regard to the connection between Isa 20 and 19:25, we have three options. (a) It is possible that the pattern of the judgment / salvation / judgment is due to the later interpolation of 19:18–25 between Isa 20 and 19:17.[62] (b) Another option would be to argue that 19:16–25 was added to 19:1–15 before Isa 19 as a whole was included into an already existing collection of FNPs containing Isa 20. (c) A third possibility is that Isa 20 was included later into Isa 13–23 than 19:1–25, following a different concept than that of the earlier collection of FNPs. The question that naturally emerges in reaction to the first solution (a) is why the salvation oracle(s) were not added after 20:6 if the salvation of Egypt was the ultimate goal of the final editors? If solution (b) was right, one may similarly ask why 19:1–25 with its salvation prophecy at the end was chosen to be included before and not after Isa 20:1–6? It appears that solution (c) gives the most coherent answer to the structure of the present מַשָּׂא מִצְרַיִם.

This alteration of judgment / salvation / judgment observable in the final form of Isa 19–20 cannot be treated as a particularity of these chapters, however. A similar structure appears in Isa 15–16, with a positive prophecy about Moab (16:1–5) supplemented by another negative prediction concerning its future (16:6–14). Despite this, scholars generally accept that מַשָּׂא מוֹאָב introduces the entire pericope Isa 15–16, and not just 15:1–16:5. Another possible case appears in Isa 17, where the prophecy of judgment is followed by a prophecy of hope (17:7–8), and then again by judgment (17:9–11). It was suggested in 3.5. that this sequence in the redaction of Isa 13–23 may perhaps be related to a specific editorial concept. The salvation followed by judgment may reflect the historical experience at the turn of the 6th–5th centuries. While 16:1–5 most likely dates to the late pre-exilic period, 16:6 seems to allude to the relationship with the Moabites following 587. In section 5.3. I maintained that the expansion of the salvation prophecy on Egypt in

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sion (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004), 123; Beuken, 19, 23–24, 40–41.
[61] Sweeney, 267, 272.
[62] Cf. Kilian, 127.

19:16–23(24–25) probably derives from the 7th century. Isaiah 19, like 15:1–16:5, was part of a primary collection of FNPs from the pre-exilic period, which did not yet include Isa 16:6–12(13–14); 17:9–11(12–18:7) and Isa 20. Regardless the date of composition of Isa 20 (see below), this was probably attached to the מַשָּׂא מִצְרַיִם at the earliest in the exilic period, with considerations differing from that of the redactors of the earlier collection of FNPs.[63]

As for the intertextual relationships of Isa 20, there are close connections between 20:5–6 and Isa 10:3. On a formal level, they both are formulated as rhetorical questions, with a common theological content and vocabulary: עַל־מִי (20:6), עַל־מִי תָנוּסוּ and (10:3) | אֵיךְ [נִמְלֵט] אָנָה and עַל־מִי | (10:3) תִּפְאַרְתָּם, (20:6) כְּבוֹדְכֶם, (10:3) | אֲשֶׁר־נַסְנוּ שָׁם לְעֶזְרָה | לְעֶזְרָה (20:5). The dispersion of the ideas parallel to 10:3 in 20:5–6 strengthens once again the coherence of 20:5–6. Note that 10:4a pictures the desperation of those threatened "to bow down as prisoners (כָּרַע תַּחַת אַסִּיר) or fall as those slain (וְתַחַת הֲרוּגִים יִפֹּלוּ)", in a way similar to the threat predicted in 20:4–6.[64]

It was noted above in the exegetical section that there are significant connections between Isa 20 on the one hand and the two other narrative complexes, Isa 7–8 and 36–39, on the other hand. First, the structure of the introductory verses in 7:1–2; 20:1–2 and 36:1–2 is similar. Second, the motifs or vocabulary used parallel each other in various cases. Note, for example, בִּשְׁנַת (20:1 | 6:1), יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶן־אָמוֹץ (20:2 | 37:2.21; 38:1), the motif of "three years", i.e. a limited period before judgment is accomplished (20:3 | Isa 7:8.16 [16:14; 21:16]; 37:30), אוֹת וּמוֹפֵת (20:3 | 7:11. 14; 8:18; 37:30; 38:7.22), חָתוּ וָבֹשׁוּ (20:5 | 37:27), the motif of trusting someone else instead of YHWH (20:5 | 7–8;

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[63] Cf. 6.3.2. below. This does not imply, however, that 16:1–5; 17:7–8; 19:16–25 should be traced back to exactly the same period. The role Assyria plays in 16:4 is clearly different from 19:16–25. Common to this 7th century edition is mainly the form of the compositions (judgment followed by salvation) and the positive attitude towards foreign nations, Egyptians and Moabites.

[64] Bosshard-Nepustil argued that Isa 20 is a "redactional text", i.e. a passage written for its present context, and not only relocated from elsewhere, in his view similar to Isa 14:28–32 (E. Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaia 1–39 im Zwölfprophetenbuch* [OBO 154; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1997], 120–25). However, his list of randomly selected and mostly irrelevant words that connect Isa 20 to many sections of Isa 1–39, can hardly support his hypothesis. His suggestion that the sackcloth of Isaiah in 20:2 could be explained from Isaiah's call to wail in 13:6, or that it should be related to the sackcloth of Jerusalem in 22:12 could be an example of how Isa 20:2 might have been interpreted in its final form, but it would go too far to assume that this indeed was in the mind of the author while composing Isa 20 (*Rezeptionen*, 122).

36–37), quoting the words of the audience (20:6 | 7:5–6; 36:4.7.10. 15.18; 37:10).

6.3.2. The Theological Aspects of Isaiah 20

Isaiah 20 is strongly related to and consistent with the view of Isaiah concerning the role of Egypt in the politics of Judah (cf. 4.3.2.1.). According to the present form of the text, the original sign act of Isaiah was supposed to warn his audience at the collapse of one of its key partners, Ashdod, not to fall prey to the political dispute between Assyria and Egypt. Egypt is עַם לֹא יוֹעִילוּ, "a nation that cannot profit them" (Isa 30:5.6), whose help is worthless, a sea monster that has been stilled (30:7). It is therefore unwise to interchange the glory (תִּפְאֶרֶת) given by YHWH (Isa 4:2) with the glory offered by Egypt (20:5), which is about to become their shame and disgrace (לְבֹשֶׁת וְגַם־לְחֶרְפָּה; 30:5).

There is, nevertheless, a difference between the function of the Isaianic sign act in 711, and the function of the narrative.[65] It was suggested above that Isa 20 only existed as a narrative in its present form. This means that projecting this pericope back to 711 has little relevance. It is not so much the message of the prophet Isaiah that should concern us here as is the meaning that the *recorded text* intended to communicate to a post-711 community. However, because historical questions play a significant role in defining the message and function of this text, one has to look at Isa 20 from a historical viewpoint first.

6.3.3. The Historical Aspects of Isaiah 20

I have devoted a longer section to the events concerning the fall of Ashdod in 711. As we have seen in 2.3.2., the biblical text is well-informed on the capture of this major city of Philistia. Among the many references to the "king of Assyria", this is the only place where the name of Sargon appears. The author also knows that the commander of Sargon II and not the king himself coordinated this campaign. Similarly, Isa 7 or 36–39 are also aware of the details of the political situation in the 8th century. This means that Isa 20, like the other texts just mentioned, is either based on a prophetic narrative or biographic material written not long after the events, or that other reliable sources (such as royal archives material) were available to the author.

Given the temporal distance that separates Isa 20 from the events it narrates, its primary concern should be considered theological. Like Isa

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[65] Wildberger, who aims to restore an Isaianic core in Isa 20, is only interested in the original function of the sign act of Isaiah (760), as are most other exegetes of this text.

7 and 36–39, chapter 20 is also written in the third person. References
to personal encounters with YHWH in the first person are not rare in the
book of Isaiah (Isa 6; 8; 18:4; 21:6; 22:14.15; 30:8; 31:4). Third person
narratives most likely come not directly from the prophet, but from
those responsible for the preservation of the Isaianic prophetic material.

By means of a narrative Isa 20 instructs the audience from a later
date on how to think about the prophet Isaiah, or how to adapt his ear-
lier messages to new historical circumstances. While the narrative in Isa
20 may go back to an event in real time and space, this is not of primary
importance. The signalised literary and logical irregularities in this pas-
sage can be reasonably explained by the temporal gap (בָּעֵת הַהִיא) be-
tween the recording of the present text and the events of 711. For the
later reading community these irregularities were subordinated to the
overall message of the *text* about Isaiah and his action. For them it was
less important how walking naked should be understood, what the sense
of the three years was, etc. Everything belongs to the (remote) past. It is
not the symbolic action itself that need to trouble the exegete, but the
textual symbol and the message it was intended to communicate. Years
ago the prophet Isaiah told that those relying on Egypt would be put to
shame. And this message remains valid in the days of the author of Isa
20, as long as the new generation also fails to revise its misconceptions
and overcome its blunders in foreign politics.

Given that Isa 20 addresses the attitude of Judah towards Egypt, one
should especially consider three distinctive periods in the history of
Judah in which the message of this prophecy sounded appealing. The
first is the preparation for war with Assyria on the instigation of Egypt
in the years preceding 701. In this pre-701 context, Isa 20 may have
warned against relying on a power that has recently proved to be so un-
faithful to its allies.[66] However, the close connections of Isa 20 with the
other third person Isaiah narratives, Isa 7 and 36–39, explicitly men-
tioned to have partially been written in the post-Isaianic era (cf. Isa
37:38), mean that 701 is probably a date too close to 711, so that the
setting of this text must be sought elsewhere.

The second option is to place Isa 20 in the 7th century, in the con-
text of the anti-Egyptian wars of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal. We
have seen that Judah was actively engaged in wars with Egypt and Kush
in this period on the side of Assyria (2.3.4.; 5.3.3.2.). The theological
function of Isa 20 in such context would not have been to warn against
an alliance with Egypt. So far as the limited historical evidence from
this period let us conclude, Manasseh remained a loyal Assyrian vassal.[67]

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[66] Cf. Clements, 174.
[67] The historical background of 2 Chr 33:11–13 is unclear, but nothing sug-

In that time, Isa 20 may have served as a proof for the authenticity of Isaianic tradition. After the deportations of Esarhaddon from Egypt, Isa 20 could have partially confirmed the fulfilment of earlier Isaianic oracles uttered in connection with Egypt (Isa 30; 31).[68] The difficulty with this view is twofold. First, it would presuppose a date similar to the one proposed for Isa 19:16–23(24–25) above, containing at the same time a hostile view on Egypt, which would be contrasting with the preceding text. Second, the ultimate concern of the prophecy for the salvation of "the seacoast" (Isa 20:6) is difficult to be explained in relation to this era.

A third and most likely option is to locate Isa 20 in the late kingdom of Judah, especially in the eras of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, all of whom were famous for their Egypt-reliant politics, an issue that Isa 20 addresses. In this context, Isa 20 may have served as a confirmation for the view of those contesting the pro-Egyptian policy of Judaean kings, even (especially) when their compatriots might have relied on the much more positive predictions about Egypt, such as Isa 19:25.[69] The history of the late pre-exilic period closely parallels the era of Isaiah. Indirect evidence suggests that the critical message of the prophets of the 8th century played an important role in forming the visions of prominent political and religious figures of the last pre-exilic generation. According to Jer 26:18–19, the prophecies of Micah of Moresheth addressed to King Hezekiah were supposed to serve as a warning for Jehoiakim to repent after hearing the harsh prophetic word, as his forefather had done. It cannot be excluded that the signalised parallelism between the stories of Ahaz and Hezekiah in Isa 7 and 36–39 was addressed to one of Judah's last kings to choose for himself a royal model to follow.[70] In the same manner, Isa 20 was supposed to serve as a warn-

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gests that the punishment of Manasseh would be the consequence of an eventual alliance with Egypt against Assyria, in the manner we see this with Ba'al, king of Tyre, or Gyges, king of Lydia.

[68] Sweeney dated the editorial inclusion of Isa 20 after 19:25 to the Josianic era, and argued that the judgment on Egypt was motivated by the fact that Egypt, as a faithful Assyrian ally in these years, "presented the most formidable obstacle to Josiah's plans for reestablishing the Davidic empire" (273). Yet exactly under such circumstances it would be strange for a contemporary of Josiah to claim that Assyria will deport Egypt, on whom Judah relied, when neither of the two claims had any political backing. Sweeney's other suggestion to ascribing the text to "opponents to Manasseh's policy of cooperation with Assyria and Egypt" (275), would also leave unexplained the antagonism between Assyria and Egypt in the text of Isa 20.

[69] On the warning character of Isa 20, cf. Clements, 173–74; Blenkinsopp, 322.

[70] For the intertextual relationship between Isa 7 and 36–39, cf. P. R. Ackroyd,

ing for some of these kings.

To conclude, while Isa 20 may go back to real historical events, preserving important details of the Assyrian campaign against Ashdod in 711, the ultimate concern of the narrative is the people of Judah during the final days of Jerusalem.

6.4.   ISAIAH 20 AND THE STELE OF YHWH (ISAIAH 13–23)

The biblical description of the fall of Ashdod is like the segment of an Assyrian stele. The mentioning of the name of Sargon II as well as the use of an Assyrian title, *turtānu*, evokes the sphere created by descriptions of the capture of cities on Mesopotamian steles. The wording of the report on the downfall of the Philistine city, וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ בְּאַשְׁדּוֹד וַיִּלָּחֶם, follows the well-known phraseology of Assyrian conquest account summaries.[71]

The reference to mass deportation of naked captives, young and old (20:4), hardly needs any further comment, so far as this is a ubiquitous motif in Assyrian historiography.

Another element reminding of the Assyrian steles is the denunciation of Egypt as an instigator and unreliable support. The motif of misplaced trust appears in texts like the following extract from a description of the campaign of Assurbanipal against Tyre:

> "In the course of my campaign I threw up earthwork (for a siege) against Ba'alu, king of Tyre who had put his trust upon his friend Taharka, king of Kush..." (*ANET*, 292).

On its present position Isa 20 has important connections with other FNPs, especially through the motif of the humiliation of "glory" and the frustration of human support, noted as one of the basic concepts behind Isa 13–23, especially related to the "day of YHWH"-edition. The motif of glory (כָּבוֹד) appears as תִּפְאֶרֶת in Isa 20:5. This humiliated glory, related to the timing of the fulfilment of the prediction (20:3), connects this text to 16:14 and 21:16. Of Moab Isa 16:14 writes that "the glory of Moab with all its wealth / multitude" (הָרָב כְּבוֹד מוֹאָב בְּכֹל הֶהָמוֹן)[72] will perish in three years, like the years of a hired worker. Even sooner, כָּל־כְּבוֹד קֵדָר, "all the glory of Kedar", will disappear (21:16). As all glories, of Chaldea (תִּפְאֶרֶת גְּאוֹן כַּשְׂדִּים; Isa 13:19), Moab, Aram, Israel, Ke-

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"Isaiah 36–39: Structure and Function", in *Studies in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 105–20.

[71] Cf. K. L. Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing* (JSOTSS 98; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990).

[72] For הָמוֹן in connection with Egypt, see Ezek 29:19; 30:4; 32:12; etc.

dar (כָּבוֹד; 16:14; 17:3.4; 21:16) and Tyre (גְּאוֹן כָּל־צְבִי; 23:9), the glory of Egypt will also vanish. Through its theme of humbling Egypt, as the תִּפְאֶרֶת of Judah, Isa 20 becomes part of a series of prophecies which emphasise the humbling and humiliation of the mighty ones, so that YHWH of hosts can be exalted "on that day" (Isa 2:11.17; cf. 3.5.). Since 13:19; 16:14; 21:16 apparently reflect an exilic setting, the inclusion of Isa 20 into the מַשָּׂא מִצְרַיִם may be connected with this "day of YHWH"-edition of the book of Isaiah.

6.5.   CONCLUSION

Isaiah 20 refers to a sign act of the prophet connected to the fall of Ashdod in 711. The intention of this sign act was not to warn the Ashdodites, but to reveal how after the fall of Ashdod, Egypt and Kush will also be deported. Implicitly this was threatening news for those inhabitants of Judah who expected their salvation from Egypt. Ultimately, it is Judah with whom the prophecy is concerned, who appears undercover in 20:6 as יֹשֵׁב הָאִי הַזֶּה.

The integrity of Isa 20 need not be questioned, neither is there any support to assume that this text is a rewritten (updated) version of a previous one. Its literary form reflecting on events from a temporal distance explains some irregularities that have formerly been regarded as signs of literary unevenness.

From a contextual point of view Isa 20 is part of the מַשָּׂא on Egypt. Although it was originally an independent text, it was located on this place by the editors of Isa 13–23 with a specific intention. The sequence of salvation on Egypt in Isa 19 followed by judgment in Isa 20 is not unique in Isa 13–23, but should be seen as related to an editorial technique and concept, which also appears in Isa 15–16 and 17. The concern of the editors is the day of YHWH which introduces the renewed collection of Isa 13–23, to which these judgment-after-salvation-texts can be related. Two significant motifs that Isa 20 exposes, the reliance of Judah on humans and the humiliation of glory, are prominent themes of the day of YHWH texts (cf. Isa 2:6–21; 13).

The view concerning Egypt that is ascribed to Isaiah in the narrative is consistent with other Isaianic texts. The historical information provided by Isa 20:1 is also confirmed by non-biblical tradition. However, the events of 711 are not the most important context in explaining the function of this narrative. Isaiah 20, as a warning against alliances with Egypt, must be related to the anti-Babylonian movements of the late pre-exilic period. Jeremiah 26:18–19 suggest that prominent ancient figures and prophecies often gained a new life and importance during this era.

Chapter 7

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

KUSH AND EGYPT ON THE STELE OF YHWH

The purpose of this chapter is to give a synthesis of the principal results of this study following the structural guidelines provided in section 1.4. The conclusions grouped under literary, theological and historical issues are supposed to answer the question how Isa 18–20 can be related to the process of formation of Isa 13–23. This chapter will conclude with a reflection on Isa 13–23 as a stele of YHWH.

7.1. ISAIAH 18–20 FROM A LITERARY PERSPECTIVE

Like most prophecies of Isa 13–23, the Egypt and Kush related pericopes are composed through several stages exhibiting the results of a complex redactional history, which is in all its stages related to the formation of the book of Isaiah.

7.1.1. THE LITERARY INTEGRITY OF ISAIAH 18–20

Despite uncertainties caused by the difficult text of Isa 18, the contours of this prophecy are reasonably clear. Isaiah 18 addresses a land stretch-ing to "beyond the rivers of Kush" (18:1; cf. 4.2.1.). This land is typified by a famous Egyptian symbol, the two-winged scarab (צְלְצַל כְּנָפַיִם) in 18:1, as well as by further physical and geographical characteristics in 18:2. Isaiah 18:2 presupposes more than one nation as addressee; it most likely includes Egyptians and Kushites of the Kushite-Egyptian Empire of the 25th Dynasty.[1] The prophecy is neither positive nor neutral re-garding the future fate of this empire of the Nile. הוֹי introduces a proph-ecy of woe, an ominous prediction on the fall of the people inhabiting the Nile valley.

   Except for 18:7, the literary integrity of Isa 18 should be considered safe (4.3.1.2.). Dropping 18:3 from the original prophecy does not rest on solid arguments. Neither its vocabulary, nor its present location in the prophecy, nor its world-wide perspective support the view that 18:3 is a later insertion. Verse 3 is not more universalistic than the FNPs in

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[1] Cf. 4.1. note 2 i–i and 4.2.2. As pointed out in EXCURSUS 1, biblical authors were aware of the heterogeneous population of the African continent.

general. Its universal view may be considered as a replica of the ideology promoted by Assyrian literature, in which the Assyrian king, portrayed in Isa 10:5 as the tool YHWH's hand, appears as the ruler of the entire earth (*šar kiššāte*). Moreover, the prophet's audience probably included foreign nations, among others Kushites, people from the southernmost territory on the world map of Judah from the Isaianic period, which may provide further arguments for the universalism of this prophecy.

The tribute scene in Isa 18:7 is a further expression of the world-wide expansion of the rule of YHWH, realised through the defeat of the African nations. This means that Isa 18:7 is not a salvation oracle concerning Kush and Egypt, as this text is usually interpreted. As the Assyrian kings expressed their universal kingship by referring to the tributes of nations located far away, so the tribute of Kush and Egypt in 18:7 underlines that YHWH is the king of the world, including the remotest parts of the earth.

Nevertheless, two arguments are assumed to support the secondary origin of 18:7 with respect to the rest of this prophecy. First, vs. 6 presupposes that the dead corpses of Kush and Egypt will be exposed permanently on the mountains,[2] in a way contrasting with the scene drawn in 18:7. Second, the judgment on Egypt and Kush implies according to other texts from Isaiah that Judah and Jerusalem would fall with its helpers (Isa 20; 31), which would be incompatible with the portrait of Zion in 18:7. Yet by the time Zeph 3:10 was composed, Isa 18 was already known in its present form, including vs. 7 (4.3.1.4.).

The literary critical investigation of Isa 19 has confirmed the view that 19:16–25 is later than 19:1–15. However, contrary to some assumptions, 19:5–10 is most likely integral to 19:1–15 (5.3.1.1.). The presentation of YHWH in 19:1 as riding on a cloud alludes to a divinity of nature, whose appearance (theophany) is often related to catastrophe and excessive natural phenomena (vss. 5–7). These changes in the physical world may also express the superiority of YHWH above Egypt's gods (19:1), held responsible for order and prosperity in Egypt's view of its world. The installation of a king unfriendly towards Egypt, contrary to the will of Egypt's gods is, as often, another possible source of disorder in society and nature. In case 19:5–10 comes from a different source it is probably earlier than 19:1–4.11–15, and it was included on its present location by the author of these pericopes. If the distinction between prose and poetry is allowed to play a role in discussing literary unity, the prosaic 19:12.14–15 might be considered a secondary interpolation.

With regard to the unity of 19:16–25, the repeated use of the formula בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא cannot be considered a reliable source for delimiting

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[2] Cf. the explanation of the winter-summer-motif in 4.2.1.3.

various stages in the literary development of this pericope (5.3.1.1.).
There is no contradiction among the utterances of vss. 16–25, but it
contains linearly developing ideas. It seems that the prophecy was writ-
ten by someone standing at the historical moment described in 19:23,
from which he looked back to the past, which was interpreted as both
doom and salvation (19:16–22), and made predictions concerning the
future (19:24–25). Eventually, 19:24–25 may be regarded as later expan-
sions of an earlier text, 19:16–23.

There can be little doubt concerning the literary integrity of Isa 20.
The awkward structure of 20:1–2 need not hint to a more original ver-
sion of Isa 20, which would have only contained part of these introduc-
tory verses, as often assumed. Scholars who consider part of 20:1–2 as
secondary pay insufficient attention to the fact that the irregular struc-
ture of 20:1–2 has significant parallels in the Bible and apparently re-
flects literary conventions different from those of modern readers (6.1.
note 2 c; cf. also 6.3.1.). Furthermore, the assumption that 20:1–2 must
be partially secondary is based on unwarranted premises concerning the
meaning and function of the symbolic act of the prophet Isaiah (namely
that this was supposed to have served as a warning against Philistia or
Judah before the campaign of Sargon II in 711, and not after it as stated
in 20:1), and the unsustainable conviction that יֹשֵׁב הָאִי הַזֶּה would refer
to the Philistines. Both interpretations are rejected in this study.

There is even less support for excluding either 20:5 or 20:6 from an
"original" Isaianic text. Some problems regarding the interpretation of
Isa 20 can be ascribed to the fact that this text is not contemporary with
the events it narrates, but derives from a later period (cf. 6.3.3.). In
rough lines, Isa 20 is a unified text dealing with the relationship be-
tween Judah (not Philistia) and Egypt, set in the aftermath of (not be-
fore) the actual fall of Ashdod in 711.

7.1.2. The Prophecies of Isaiah 18–20 in Their Literary Context

It is important to place Isa 18–20 against the background of the discus-
sion on the literary aspects of the FNPs in general and Isa 13–23 in par-
ticular. The literary analysis of biblical FNPs has made it clear (cf. 3.3.)
that these collections represent well-organised corpuses inside the bibli-
cal books in which they now stand. The principles of the editors can be
retrieved not only with respect to the present position of the various
collections of FNPs, but also regarding the organisation of utterances
against the different nations. It can be observed that in case there are
more prophecies addressed to one specific nation, those are collected in
one place (e.g. Jer 48; 50–51; Ezek 26–28; 29–32).

One can discern several concepts in book-level collections of FNPs,
leading to the conclusion that they have been composed during a longer

period and subsequently revised, enlarged and redefined according to new criteria imposed by later editorial groups. This is illustrated particularly well by the two versions of Jeremiah in the LXX and the MT.

The evidence derived from biblical collections substantiates the view that FNPs have not been gathered at a late stage in the redactional history of the book, but early collections have been expanded and reorganised on different occasions. The formation of book-level collections of FNPs cannot be detached from the development of the respective books. The concept that determines the collection of FNPs as a whole can also be found in the prophecies related to Israel. In other words, the nations do not function independently, but only in relation to Israel.[3] Moreover, the language, themes, motifs and expressions appearing in the FNPs are strikingly book specific. Yet, at the same time, certain themes and concepts reach beyond the borders imposed by individual books, presupposing that at some stage the editors in the background were working simultaneously on the legacy of several prophets.

The analysis of the larger literary context of Isa 18–20, the FNPs in 13–23, has led to the conclusion that the מַשָּׂא-superscription is the most important editorial guideline structuring the collection. In general מַשָּׂא introduces texts dealing with one specific nation. All other individual prophecies must be subordinated to this heading (14:24–27; 17:12–14; 18:1–7). That does not mean, however, that the מַשָּׂא-superscriptions all derive from the same period. Three distinctive types of מַשָּׂא-headings can be discerned (cf. 3.4.1.): (a) one that contains a geographical name attached to מַשָּׂא (13:1; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 23:1). (b) one that refers cryptically to the addressee (21:1.11.13; 22:1); (c) a distinctive type of superscription attested only in 14:28. These three types of superscriptions suggest there are at least three different concepts at work in the composition of Isa 13–23. Isaiah 21–22, with its specifically formed מַשָּׂא-headings, was inserted on its present location as an already existing independent collection. That explains also how Isa 23 came to be removed farther away from Isa 19, to which it was originally more closely related. Moreover, the previous existence of Isa 21–22 as a text-block clarifies why there are now two Babylon-related prophecies in 13–23, why we also find a prophecy against Jerusalem, and, quite strangely, oracles addressed to specific individuals from Jerusalem, unusual in other collections of FNPs.[4]

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[3] See, e.g., the location of the prophecies against the nations in Am 1–2 as the introduction to the prophecies on Israel and in relation to the visions at the end of the book (3.3.1.).

[4] If Isa 21–22 are removed from the FNPs, we are left with six מַשָּׂא-collections. It is striking that Isa 28–33 also contains six collections based on the introduc-

The מַשָּׂא usually delimits not a single prophecy, but a composition of several originally independent prophecies.[5] This recognition is most important for Isa 18 and 20. Isaiah 18 has often been considered a unity in itself. With the exception of a few scholars, it was analysed as a distinctive passage inside the FNPs of Isaiah, whether or not connected to the הוֹי-word in 17:12–14 (cf. 1.2. and 4.3.1.3.). Nevertheless, as other originally independent oracles are also subordinated to מַשָּׂא-collections, this was most likely the case with Isa 18 as well.

In general, in the מַשָּׂא-collections thematic links between subordinated passages, as well as connections based on catchwords play an important role.[6] Isaiah 17:1 is introduced as מַשָּׂא דַּמָּשֶׂק. However, Damascus is mentioned in the book of Isaiah only in relation to Israel (the Aram-Israel alliance) and the planned attack against Judah during Ahaz (Isa 7–8; cf. 4.3.1.3.). In this sense, the role of Damascus in Isa 17 is marginal or partial, and the prophecy is rather concerned with its ally, the Northern Kingdom, Israel. Whatever was the original concern of 17:12–14,[7] in its present location as part of מַשָּׂא דַּמָּשֶׂק this text should be read as a negative message concerning the Aram-Israel alliance (cf. Isa 8:9–10). The prophecy in 18:1–7 has undergone a similar reinterpretation when connected to Isa 17. Although freed from its context, Isa 18 should be read as a prophecy addressing the Kushite Empire of the 8th century, in its present context it rather functions as a prophecy against Israel, i.e. Samaria.[8]

There are significant connections between 17:12–14 and 18:1–7, on the one hand, and the previous 17:1–11, on the other, mainly in the agricultural imagery adopted by these texts. While 17:12–14 exploits the "grain harvest"-theme of 17:5, 18:1–7 does the same with the motif of fruit harvesting, appearing in 17:6. Although neither of the two texts was written for its present context, from the point of view of the redactors these motifs functioned as editorial guidelines in localising the prophecies. Making an alliance with Rezin of Damascus during the reign of Peqah (Isa 7–8), and sending messengers to Egypt by King Hoshea (2 Kgs 17:4) were the two most important events that had led to the destruction of the Northern Kingdom. Therefore, while the inclusion of

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tory interjection הוֹי (Isa 28,1; 29,1.15; 30,1; 31,1; 33,1). These two collections of prophecies remind one of the presupposed earlier form of Amos, containing five prophecies against the nations and five parallel visions (cf. 3.3.1.).

[5] Exceptions are Isa 14:28; 21:1.11. Cf. also EXCURSUS 3.

[6] Cf. יוֹם יהוה in Isa 13 (3.4.2.1.) or אדני יהוה צְבָאוֹת in Isa 22 (3.4.2.8.).

[7] This text is often considered an anti-Assyrian prophecy.

[8] Cf. this with the function of Isa 20, a text addressing Judah, in the context of prophecies concerning Egypt.

17:12–14 and 18:1–7 into its present place is late,[9] the two texts have been relocated here with much editorial care, and are in their final form subordinated to מַשָּׂא דַּמֶּשֶׂק in 17:1. That is, from the point of view of the final editors of the book of Isaiah, Isa 18 is essentially an anti-Israel prophecy and not one related to Isa 19–20.

The מַשָּׂא מִצְרַיִם in 19:1 includes the prophecy against Egypt in 19:1–15, with its expansions in 19:16–25 and a once independent prophecy in Isa 20. As mentioned, most מַשָּׂא delimit collections of different types of prophecies so that מַשָּׂא is mostly not one literary unit. The view put forward by Weis, Sweeney and Floyd that מַשָּׂא can be considered a composition with clearly traceable characteristics, is questionable.[10]

Although written on different occasions, 19:1–15 and 19:16–25 must be seen as related. Isaiah 19:16–25 was obviously composed as an elaboration of 19:1–15 and was never supposed to function independently from its context. The structure exposed here, judgment followed by salvation, also appears in Isa 15:1–16:5; 23:1–18 and possibly 17:1–8.

So far as its content is concerned, the position of Isa 20 in a מַשָּׂא מִצְרַיִם is less strange than the location of Isa 18 was in a מַשָּׂא דַּמֶּשֶׂק, because it explicitly refers to the deportation of Egypt and Kush. However, the reader is left to guess why Isa 20 returns to a negative message for Egypt after a positive prediction, such as 19:21–25. Assuming that 19:16–25 would have been added later than Isa 20 cannot adequately explain this problem. Neither can a possible later inclusion of Isa 19 on its present position elucidate this strange phenomenon (6.3.1.). Nevertheless, in two other examples in Isa 13–23 the prophecies of salvation are followed again by prophecies of judgment: in 15:1–16:5 and 16:6–12(13–14), and in 17:1–8 and 17:9–11 respectively. This means that from the point of view of the final editors, salvation is not the ultimate word of YHWH concerning Egypt.

Both Isa 19:1–15 and Isa 20 present significant book level intertextual connections to other passages beyond Isa 13–23. Especially striking is the relationship between Isa 2:22–3:7.12 and 19:1–15, 9:7–20 and 19:1–15 (5.3.1.2.), 10:3–4 and 20:4–6 (6.3.1.). These close literary ties can only be recognised if Isa 19 and 20 is read in the larger context of the book of Isaiah. This implies that the FNPs of Isaiah need to be correlated to prophecies addressing Israel and Judah. This relationship between prophecies concerned with the nations and those concerned with the people of YHWH is central to understanding the purport of the

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[9] With Duhm and Kaiser, against Mowinckel, Fohrer and Vermeylen.

[10] Cf. EXCURSUS 3. This view can also be uphold if the מַשָּׂא-titles are supposed to originate from an earlier stadium of Isa 13–23, i.e. before Isa 20 was added to Isa 19, etc.

FNPs. YHWH's dealings with the foreign nations should not be disconnected from his dealings with his own people.

What concerns Isa 18–20—so far as the limited analysis of Isa 13–23 allows to conclude this—I have found nothing in Isa 18–20 that would reflect on Isa 40–66 in the sense that the latter would presuppose the the former. Nonetheless, the lack of such connections may have an important bearing on the research of the formation of the book of Isaiah.

7.2.   ISAIAH 18–20 FROM A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The theological problems exposed by Isa 18–20 can be discussed from various perspectives. In line with the concern of this study, I shall look for the theological content of these prophecies from two viewpoints: the theological role of Isa 18–20 in the context of the book of Isaiah and the way Isa 18–20 function as FNPs.

7.2.1.   THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FROM AN ISAIANIC PERSPECTIVE

Taking the book of Isaiah as context, the image of the empire of Kush in Isa 18 is consistent with how the African nations appear in texts ascribed to Isaiah of the 8th century (Isa 30–31*) and the later tradition referring to the standpoint of the prophet concerning Egypt and Kush (Isa 20; 36:6; 37:9). In these compositions, Egypt and Kush is presented as the anti-YHWH, in whom the trust of Israel or Judah is misplaced. Israel and Judah, which places its trust in Egypt, will fall together with its helper (20:5–6; 30:3.5; 31:3). Isaiah 18 alludes to Kushite emissaries at the Judaean court, so that addressing the Africans in a prophecy of doom also implies judgment for Judah. As it was noted, the attitude of YHWH in staying calm (18:4), questioning the implication of Judah in the war against Assyria, reminds the reader of the political view of Isaiah promulgated in 7:14 or 30:15 (cf. 4.3.2.2.).

Unfortunately, it is less clear what could have been the purpose of Isa 19:1–15. There are no allusions to conflicts between Judah and Egypt in this text, so that it is difficult to regard this as an implicit salvation prophecy. Egypt is never criticised by the prophets because of its expansionary policy in Palestine territories. Further, the assumption that Isa 19:1–15 would criticise the anti-Assyrian alliance, in particular Judah, can also be neither confirmed nor refuted from this text. However, this option is the most likely possibility if 19:1–15 is dated to the Isaianic era and if the relationship between 19:1–15 and Isa 2:22–3:7.12 is taken seriously. If this text is dated to the 7th century, it may have functioned as an illustration for YHWH's plan concerning the nations (cf. 5.3.2.1.).

The expansion in 19:16–25 was most likely provided only in a writ-

ten form, so that it should be considered a prophetic treatise on Egypt's recent history in which 19:1–15 is taken as a starting point and provided with the necessary updates for the author's present readers. At any rate, the connections between the history of Israel and that of Egypt according to 19:19–22 are evident (5.3.2.2.). Egypt is going to be saved as Israel was delivered. The tradition referred to on this place is not only Israel's exodus experience, but its wider history. Isaiah 19:16–25 makes no reference to a new exodus (contrast 11:11–12:6), but it presents Egypt's future on the analogy of Israel's past, a theology which has close parallels in Isa 9–10 (cf. 5.3.2.2.).

As for Isa 20, there is no evidence that this text would have ever existed in a more original shape than its present form (6.3.1.). Being a narrative about Isaiah, written by another author, the theological concern of this text can be compared to other Isaiah narratives in Isa 7–8 and 36–37. This means that the message of Isa 20 should not be evaluated in relation to the 711 B.C. period in the first place, but it must be connected to a later audience (6.3.2.). The earliest might be Judah preparing for war in 705–701, but this date seems to be too early for the composition of Isa 20. Another option is that in the Esarhaddon or Assurbanipal era Isa 20 functioned as an example for the fulfilment of the Isaianic prophecies. A third option—in my view the most likely—is to consider this narrative as a model intended for the circle of one of Judah's late pro-Egyptian kings, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, or Zedekiah, whom it instructs through an earlier prophecy (cf. Jer 26:18–19). Isaiah 20 gives the theological bases for the standpoint of those groups in Jerusalem, who condemned Judah expecting its salvation from the Babylonians through Egypt.

As for these prophecies as part of a מַשָּׂא-collection, the theological focus of Isa 18 addressing the Kingdom of Kush and Isa 20 addressing Judah shifted partially as a result of the relocation of these passages in the context of the Damascus-Israel- and Egypt-collections respectively.

When summarising the theological role of Isa 18–20 in the context of Isa 13–23, one has to refer to the motifs of the plan and the raised hand of Yhwh, which play a prominent role especially in Isa 13–23, but also in the broader context of the book of Isaiah. The two motifs are connected in 14:26–27; 19:16–17 and 23:11, but most striking resemblances appear in 14:27; 19:12 and 23:8–9 (5.3.2.1.).

The motif of the hand raised by Yhwh originally connected two parts (focusing on Israel / Judah and the nations) of an earlier version of the book of Isaiah. The hand raised above Israel / Judah plays an important role in 5:25; 9:11.16.20, above Assyria in 10:4 and above the nations in 14:26–27. The judgment on Israel and Judah in the first part of the book is brought to a culmination point in the destruction of Assur

(cf. 3.4.2.1.). As soon as YHWH has finished his work in Jerusalem (Isa 10:12), he will punish Assyria, who has formerly removed the boundaries of many nations (10:13–14). YHWH will redraw the boundaries, which means that the fall of Assyria will have implications not only for Jerusalem, but for all other nations formerly bearing the Assyrian yoke. In this manner the hand raised above Assyria will ultimately bring a positive message to Jerusalem and the nations. It is probably this editorial point of view which explains the judgment to salvation transition in the prophecies in 13–23.[11] This edition of the book is more directly related to Isa 10, and contained the prophecies 14:4b–21.24–27.28–32; 15:1–16:5; 17:1–8; 19; 23 (cf. 3.4.3). The structure of these FNPs corresponds to the basic shape of a royal stele (see 7.4. below).

This primary editorial concern for the plan of YHWH and his hand raised by and against Assur as the motivation for a first collection of FNPs subsequently shifted to the theme of the "day of YHWH". This theme appears on key locations in the book of Isaiah, namely in 2:6–21, that is the introduction of the first part of the book, and 13:1–22, that is the first chapter of the present collection of FNPs. Allusions to the day of YHWH also appear in 17:11 (יוֹם נַחֲלָה), i.e. in the judgment after salvation section of 17:9–11, as well as in 22:5 (יוֹם מְהוּמָה וּמְבוּסָה וּמְבוּכָה), i.e. the microcollection Isa 21–22. This may mean that these redactors are responsible for the judgment-after-salvation-edition (cf. also 16:6–12 and Isa 20),[12] and the inclusion of Isa 21–22 into the earlier collection of Isaianic collection of FNPs. The humiliation of the proud ones, the destruction of human support and the exaltation of YHWH in judgment is the key concern of this edition (cf. 2:6–22; 20:6) (cf. 6.3.2.). The inclusion of Isa 17:12–14 and 18:1–7 in מַשָּׂא דַּמָּשֶׂק may have also been part of these editors' work. Their message essentially fits the focus of the "day of YHWH"-edition, reckoning with the destruction of "the many nations" (17:12–13), and the humiliation of the famous ones (18:2.7). This "day of YHWH"-edition of the book of Isaiah has close ties with the book of Zephaniah, which gives evidence to the same theological concept (cf. 3.3.4. and 3.4.3.).

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[11] Although this does not presuppose that the salvation enhancements have all been written by these editors. As I noted, the role of Assyria in Isa 19:23 is obviously different from the imagery of the vanished oppressor in 16:1–5, so that the two texts definitely derive from different periods.

[12] I am uncertain about 16:13–14, which seems to be still later (cf. 3.4.2.3.). Note the relationship with 21:16–17 (3.4.2.7.). Over against P. R. Raabe, "Why Prophetic Oracles Against the Nations", in *Fortunate the Eyes that See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday* (eds. A. B. Beck et al; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 245, neither Isa 16:13–14 nor 21:16–17 can be considered prophecies of (limited) salvation.

7.2.2. THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FNPS

Previous research on the function of FNPs has shown that prophecies concerning the nations are often related to situations of war (3.2.2.). Evidence speaks against the assumption that Isa 18 would be an implicit *salvation* oracle addressing Israel; rather the contrary is the case. Isaiah 18 conveys a negative message to a nation preparing for war (cf. 4.3.1.1.). There is no explicit hint that Isa 18 would be a prophetic response to an inquiry (cf. Isa 14:32), but that is a very real possibility. The message given to the mysterious messengers in 18:2 can be considered a response to an inquiry addressed to the prophet Isaiah by his public. The close connections with a similar oracular report in 1 Kgs 22 (cf. 4.3.1.1.) give additional support for this presupposition.

The case is probably different, however, with Isa 19–20. The manner in which Judah is implied in the pronouncement of judgment in 19:1–15 remains a question, but we find here no evidence for an oracle of war. The second part of this prophecy, 19:16–25 can clearly not be a war oracle and this is probably also true for Isa 20 (in its present narrative form). The political significance of Isa 20 should not, however, be underestimated. The three prophecies under discussion have provided no evidence that Isa 18–20 could in any way be related to an assumed identity-crisis in post-exilic Judaism.[13]

The presumed positive stance of Isa 18:7 and 19:16–25 towards the foreign nations is another aspect on which exegetes focus, unfortunately often without making proper distinctions between the different types of attitudes that these texts present towards foreign nations. Although many scholars relate Isa 18:7 to Deutero-Isaiah, especially 45:14 (occasionally even assuming that 18:7 would rely on Deutero-Isaiah), a closer analysis suggests that making Jerusalem instead of YHWH the main beneficiary of the tributes of foreign nations, essentially distinguishes the two texts. Isaiah 18:7 is closer to cultic poetry (cf. Ps 68:30) and royal oracles. On the other hand, the earlier message of the Zion-theology, with the human or divine king as its central figure, is reinterpreted in Isa 45:14 as applying to Zion (the people) instead, in full accordance with the theology of Deutero-Isaiah (cf. 4.3.1.4.).

As for the universalism of 19:16–25, this text is often connected with passages assumed to derive from the late Persian or Hellenistic periods, such as Isa 66:18–21; Jon 1:16; 3–4; Zech 14:20; Mal 1:11; etc. The sustainability of this view must be questioned, for 19:16–25 differs

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[13] Contra C. Fischer, *Die Fremdvölkersprüche bei Amos und Jesaja* (BBB 136; Berlin: Philo, 2002), who wished to treat FNPs in general (so at least Am 1–2 and Isa 13–16) as products of post-exilic authors searching for a clearly definable Jewish identity.

from these passages with regard to its universalistic view. Isaiah 19 exposes a different type of universalism. The revelation of the name of YHWH to Egyptians distinguishes Isa 19 from Jon 1 and other related texts, in which the foreigners' experience of YHWH is restricted to the fearful appearance of Israel's God. The Jerusalem-centred worldview of Isa 66:18–21 or Zech 14:20 is an essential difference between these texts and Isa 19:16–25. The inclusive monotheistic theology behind Jon 3–4 and Mal 1:11 is also absent from Isa 19:16–25 (5.3.2.2.). Isaiah 19:16–25 does not presuppose an eschatological scene in which the foreign nations stand in front of the throne of YHWH (contrast Zeph 3:8–9), but it is rooted thoroughly in a historical context, with Egypt and Assyria as historical powers, in a world order created by YHWH (cf. 5.2.7.). The human figure of the saviour in Isa 19:20 makes this text a historical example of the realisation of the indirect theocracy of YHWH on earth, incongruent with post-exilic expectations of the future. Presenting the future of Egypt in subordination to Assyria (19:23) is even more strongly rooted in historical soil. The type of universalism transcending Isa 19:16–25 is rather typical for the universalism of royal psalms.

7.3.   ISAIAH 18–20 FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In accordance with the problems noted in 1.1.1., especially the multiple historical applicability of literary texts, Chapter 2 presents the political history of Egypt and Kush through several centuries, revealing various situations which may have played a role in the formation of the prophecies in Isa 18–20.

The order of prophecies in Isa 13–23 does not correspond to their actual date of composition. This means that from the location of a prophecy inside Isa 13–23 one cannot conclude when it was written.[14]

It seems that Isa 18 with its concern for messengers sent by Kush is related to a specific moment in the history of the Near East. Although the revolt of Israel in 728–724 or of Ashdod in 713–711 was often suggested to constitute the background of the prophecy, there is more support to date this text shortly before 701. The messengers who arrive from Kush to Judah imply that the instigator and fomenter of the rebellion was the kingdom of Kush. This fact does not fit the historical circumstances in 728–724, when Israel sent its messengers to Egypt (cf. 2.3.1.3. and 4.3.3.), nor in 713–711, when the rebellion was initiated by Ashdod, in which the Kushites and Egyptians appear as marginal players only (cf. 2.3.2.). In the preparations for war against Assyria in 701, Kush and Egypt were engaged with a massive military force, also supported by

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[14] Contra Hayes & Irvine with regard to Isa 13–23, or Gallagher with regard to Isa 21–22.

Egypt's ancient ally, Phoenicia, who had remained neutral in all previous anti-Assyrian conflicts. Second, the metaphor by which the land extending beyond the rivers of Kush is addressed, the two winged beetle (צְלְצַל כְּנָפָיִם), is a symbol with double significance. It does not only identify the country of the pharaohs, but it indirectly addresses Hezekiah, who adopted the scarab as his royal symbol, a symbol well-known to archaeologists from seal impressions of this Judaean king. The winged beetle also appears in a slightly modified form on the *lmlk*-jar handles from the 705–701 B.C. period (4.3.3.).

A closer look at 19:1–15 suggests that this text derives from between 716 and 671 B.C. When scholars date these verse to the Isaianic era, they mostly rely on the conflict scene in 19:2 presenting the nomes of Egypt as fighting against each other. However, the language adopted here in the prophecy is stereotypical (cf. 5.2.1. and 5.3.3.1.). Neither is the imagery of the harsh lord specific enough to be identified with a concrete historical figure, even if it cannot be excluded that the author did have a historical figure in his mind. Attention was called for the fact that Isa 19:1–15 may be a predictive description of Egypt's near future. This would question the identification of the acts of the prophecy with historical facts. At the same time, the use of the term מַמְלָכָה in connection with the nomes for Egypt, presupposing kings as leaders, points to the Assyrian era, when the nomes were indeed subjected to the supervision of kings with a more or less limited power. As for the harsh ruler (אֲדֹנִים קָשֶׁה) and the powerful king (מֶלֶךְ עַז), it is unlikely that a Judaean would have referred here to the Kushites who had probably been unknown to them as a military power before they took over Egypt. In later times, however, the Kushites proved to be Egypt-friendly rulers. Consequently, the imagery in 19:4 would rather allude to Assyrian kings.[15] The principle role of the advisors from the eastern region of the Delta (19:11.13; cf. 5.2.3.) would confirm that the enemy is expected from the east rather than from the south. Isaiah 19:13 mentions one pharaoh probably seating in Memphis, with counsellors from Zoan. This information fits well the era after Shabaka, the first king who moved his throne to Memphis in 716. Since the deliverance of Egypt into the hands of a harsh lord is predicted as a new experience for the Egyptians, it was suggested that the prophecy probably predates 671, when Esarhaddon, king of Assyria invaded Egypt.

Isaiah 19:16–23 is not a prediction, but it describes actual historical events, which the author interpreted in a theological way. Key to under-

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[15] Although the image of the king would also comply with Babylonians or Perso-Median rulers, other considerations have led to the conclusion that Isa 19:1–15 must be earlier than the Babylonian era (cf. 5.3.1.2. and 5.3.3.1.).

standing this passage is the proper translation of 19:23. This verse pre-supposes a world in which Egypt is subservient to Assur, contrary to the most often followed interpretation of this verse, which considers this an expression of the common worship of YHWH by Assur and Egypt. This translation is not supported by the present form of the Hebrew text (cf. 5.1. note 23 r–r and 5.2.7.). The theological interpretation of the his-tory of Egypt involves that Egypt's experience with Assyria is presented here through the looking glass of an author, who still shares the view that Assyria is the tool in the hand of YHWH, and whatever Assyria brings about in Egypt is actually triggered by YHWH. In this way, the oath sworn to Assyrians can be understood as Egypt's commission to-wards YHWH, its offerings to Assyrian gods, as offerings given to As-syria's chief commissioner, YHWH, etc. (5.3.3.2.). If we unwrap the theological message of the Judaean author veiling the historical data, 19:16–23 can be placed well in the early years of Assurbanipal, with this Assyrian king regarded as the liberator sent by YHWH according to 19:20 (cf. 5.2.6. and 5.3.3.2.). This information complies with historical texts reporting about the Assyrian invasion of Egypt, and this way it becomes clear how a Judaean author could have had such a detailed insight into the history of Egypt. During the days of Manasseh, Judah provided the Assyrians its own contingent to "free" the Egyptians from Kushite rule. It is not surprising that this Egypt-experience of Judah has left its marks on the pages of the Bible.

Isaiah 20 complies with the facts known from 711 concerning the fall of Ashdod, and presents historical information that is unique in the Bible. This may suggest that the author of Isa 20 based his narrative on a reliable source. Nevertheless, the narrative in its present form derives from a much later period, written under circumstances similar to 711. It addresses a different audience, most probably one of the last kings of Judah, pursuing a dangerous pro-Egyptian policy under the imminent threat of a Babylonian invasion (6.3.3.).

7.4.   ISAIAH 18–20 AND THE STELE OF YHWH (ISAIAH 13–23)

In presenting the nations in Isa 13–23 as located between Babylon and Tyre, the Isaianic collection of FNPs apparently imitates the structure of Assyrian steles. These steles representing the Assyrian king as the sole ruler of the entire world (*šar kiššati*) enumerate the nations subjugated by Assur referring to them as inhabiting the planet between the Upper Sea (Medditerranaean Sea) and the Lower Sea (Persian Gulf). In this sense, Isa 13–23 is supposed to function as a kind of stele erected by YHWH in order to present his rule in the world.

The prophecies analysed more closely in this study, Isa 18–20, can therefore be read as sections on this stele of YHWH, which proclaim his

rule even beyond the remotest corners of the earth, "beyond the rivers of Kush" (Isa 18:2; cf. Zech 9:10). We find an explicit reference to a stele of Yʜᴡʜ (לִיהוה [...] מַצֵּבָה) erected in Egypt (Isa 19:19) that highlights the awareness of Judaeans of the function and meaning of these monuments.

There are a great number of references in the text of Isa 18–20, which make these prophecies suitable for being read in the context of such a stele. In Isa 18 the presentation of the tribute of a nation far away (vs. 7) reminds of Assyrian references to remote nations, whose place is far away (*ša ašaršu rūqu*), bringing tribute to the Mesopotamian king, which underlines the vast expansion of the Empire. The presentation of Jerusalem as the place of the name of Yʜᴡʜ (מְקוֹם שֵׁם־יהוה) parallels Assyrian customs of naming cities after the name of the ruling king (cf. Dur-Sharruken). The Hebrew term for messengers of foreigners (צִיר; vs. 2) corresponds to how the related Akkadian term (*ṣīru*) is used in Assyrian context, mainly as a designation for foreign high-rank emissaries. The destruction of the vine (vs. 5) alludes to a scene frequently described and iconographically represented in the context of Assyrian conquest accounts (cf. 4.4.).

As noted above, Isa 19:19 mentions explicitly a stele of Yʜᴡʜ set up in the region of Egypt's borderland. This prophecy is loaded with motifs appearing often on Assyrian steles. Yʜᴡʜ's arrival to Egypt will cause fear and disorientation among the Egyptians (vs. 1) similarly to the glory (*namrīru*) of the god Assur and his awesomeness (*melammû / pulḫi melammē*), among the enemies of the Assyrian king. The reference to the plans against Yʜᴡʜ (vss. 3.11.13) has its parallels in the evil plans and counsels that do not stand (*milik lā kušīri*) against Assur. The renaming of the occupied foreign cities as it appears in Isa 19:18 is also a frequent motif in Assyrian accounts. The form of the name עִיר הַהֶרֶס, "city of ruins" (vs. 18), is comparable to the Assyrian *til abūbe*, "ruin hill", the terminology used in connection with destroyed cities. The oath of Egypt and the foreign language that is imposed upon it reminds of the obligations of a vassal who swears allegiance to his overlord. The establishment of an altar to Yʜᴡʜ in Egypt and the erection of the stele (vs. 19) appears after the Assyrian conquest of foreign lands. The altar plays a role in the treaty ceremony in which the rights and obligations of the subjugated vassal are presented in a ritual context, and it serves as a religious expression of Assyrian subordination. The deliverance of Egypt from the hand of foreigners by its overlord reminds of the treaty obligations of the Assyrian king over against his subordinates (5.4.).

Isaiah 20 can also be read as if it were a segment on a conquest stele. It makes use of Assyrian terminology (*turtānu*) and its description of the fall of Ashdod (vss. 1) parallels the formulation of conquest accounts.

Furthermore, the deportation of city populations (vs. 4) is also a fre-
quently mentioned event on steles. Readers familiar with the Assyrian
steles also recognise the condemnation of alliances with Egypt against
Assyria (vs. 5–6).

The Assyrian term for 'stele' is *narû* or *ṣalmu*. The connotation of
the latter is more precise in that it refers specifically to a stele contain-
ing an image of the Assyrian king. This image of the king is often re-
ferred to as *ṣalam šarrūtīya*, "my royal image", or *ṣalam bēlūtīya*, "my
lordly image" (5.2.6.). Such steles were usually set up in important cities
or border regions and were used to demarcate the extent of the Assyrian
Empire.

Beyond this, however, the stele is far more than a border stone or an
instrument of political propaganda. In her study on Mesopotamian ste-
les, Zainab Bahrani argues that the *ṣalmu* is not a portrait of the king in
the modern sense, not his natural replica. The *ṣalmu* (which may con-
tain both image and text) is a representation of the person of the king.
She compares the function of the *ṣalmu* to that of the *šar pûḫi*, "the sub-
stitute of the king", who was supposed to take the place of the king for
the days for which omens predicted a dangerous fate for the Assyrian
monarch. By means of a certain ritual, this person, the substitute king,
who during the ritual ceremony is referred to as *ṣalmu*, is transformed
into a real king.[16] The royal stele representing the Assyrian king also
functioned like a substitute of the Assyrian ruler, taking his place in his
absence.[17]

The stele in Egypt commemorating the "heroic deeds and victorious
actions" of the god Assur and his king is presented here as a stele of
YHWH, because he and not Assur is the ultimate commissioner of the
Assyrian ruler. The king of Assyria is like a tool in his hand (Isa 10:5).
The basalt stele of Esarhaddon or Assurbanipal could have been
smashed into pieces by dissatisfied and rebellious Egyptian dependants,
obsessed by a life free of Asian control. The glory of the god Assur,

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[16] Z. Bahrani, *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylon and Assyria* (Phila-
delphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 129–30.

[17] Bahrani argues that "an integral part of all substitution rituals was the act of
naming. The image was first fashioned and then given a specific person's name
in order to function as a valid substitute for the person in question. (...) The
name was so consequential because Babylonian theological thought held the
basic doctrine that the naming of a thing was tantamount to its existence and
that a thing did not exist unless it was named. (...) The removal of the name
from the image could also invalidate that image as an immortalization of the
represented." (*Graven Image*, 179). Compare this with the stele of Esarhaddon,
referred to as *narâ šiṭir šumīya*, "a stele with my name written on it" (*IAKA*
§65:50) and the biblical מַצֵּבָה [...] לַיהוה in Isa 19:19.

which "covers the earth" (*ša melammūšu māta katmu*) (RIMA 3.A.0.102. 11 Left Edge ii 3) was shaded later by Babylon, the new servant of YHWH (Jer 27:6), and Babylon's awesomeness is surpassed by the glory of Cyrus, the anointed king of the Lord of Israel, Ruler of the world (Isa 45:1). The human instruments are constantly changing. He installs kings, and removes kings (Dan 2:21); stone steles emerge and are destroyed. However, for the reader of Isa 13–23, the inhabitant of a small satrapy of world empires coming and going, this stele of YHWH proclaims with unpaired awesomeness and irrevocable power, manifesting beyond the times of human generations:

קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ יהוה צְבָאוֹת
מְלֹא כָל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ
(Isa 6:3)

THE LAND OF KUSH

This excursus deals with geographical aspects of the land of Kush, but not the land of Egypt. The reason for this is that Egypt is a country in general much better known to biblical scholars. Insofar as geographical problems are important in Egypt-related text, those are discussed in the exegetical sections.

Kush was the name of the territory located alongside the Nile, south of ancient Egypt's southernmost city Aswan, beginning at the natural border created by the first Nile cataract. While this northern frontier is clearly documented, it is uncertain how far in the south the country extended.[1] In general, Kush is localised between the first and fifth Nile cataracts. However, there is evidence of Kushite presence as far south as the region of Butana, specifically the city of Meroë.[2] Objects with names of Shabaka have been recovered even as far as Sennar and Gebel Moya, in the region of the Blue and White Niles.[3]

Beside the name "Kush" deriving from Egyptian, in modern literature, the geographical area under discussion is also referred to as "Nubia", a name of uncertain etymology.[4] It is common to distinguish between Lower Nubia (between the first and second cataracts) and Upper Nubia (from the second cataract upwards). In order to avoid confusion with Abyssinia, the once frequent "Ethiopia", taking its origin in the works of classical authors, is to be avoided.

1. KUSH IN ANCIENT LITERATURE

Egyptian texts refer to their southern neighbour as *Tꜣ nḥsj*, "South-land",[5] *Tꜣ stj*, "Bow-land", and from the 20th century B.C. also as *Kš*.[6] Despite a more or

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[1] This lack of information concerning the southern border of Kush is to be ascribed to (1) the relative scarcity of archaeological data, (2) the substantially less excavations by archaeologists in the southern territories than in the region north of the fourth cataract, (3) and the character of the ancient Nubian state.

[2] A bronze statuette of Taharka was found in Meroë city and an Amun temple was also excavated in this region (L. Török, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilisation* [HdO 1/31; Leiden: Brill, 1997], 139, 157, 253–54). Meroë is at least as ancient, as the time of Piye (D. O'Connor, *Ancient Nubia: Egypt's Rival in Africa* [Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 1993], 68–69; Idem, "Meroë", *OEANE* 3:472; R. Morkot, *Black Pharaohs: Egypt's Nubian Rulers* [London: Rubicon, 2000], 2, 5, 155, 204). Meroë functioned as a government centre during the 25th Dynasty (Török, *Kingdom*, 129, 152, 232). For a map on Kush, cf. the Appendix.

[3] J. Leclant, "Schabaka", *LdÄ* 5:500; Morkot, *Black Pharaohs*, 7.

[4] O'Connor, *Nubia*, xii. Scholars propose a relationship between the Egyptian *nbw*, 'gold' (Coptic *noub*) and Nubia, presumably alluding to the Kushite gold mines. However, this name is also closely related to a population group, Noubai, which moved to the Nile region from Darfur and Kordofan (Morkot, *Black Pharaohs*, 2).

[5] In some texts *Tꜣ nḥsj*, "South-land", designates not only the inhabited strip along the Nile, but also the desert region, as far as the country of Punt, the south-eastern neighbour of Nubia (A. H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* [London: Oxford University Press, 1947], 1:74*; O'Connor, *Nubia*, 3).

[6] Written as *Kꜣz, Kꜣs, Kꜣš, Kšj. Kš* is the form occurring in New Kingdom texts. Cf. also

less uniformly applied terminology, the ethnic composition of this region was heterogenous. Geographically more sophisticated documents of the New Kingdom distinguish not only between the people of the eastern Nubian Desert and the inhabitants of the Nile valley, but also among different ethnic groups alongside the Nile. During Egyptian occupation, the land is often referred to by the derogatory term "wretched Kush".

In cuneiform literature the terminology regarding Kush also varies. The correspondences of el-Amarna refer to Nubia as *Meluḫḫa*[7] (which is also the name of a territory in the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf, frequently mentioned with Magan/Makan in Old Akkadian texts[8]) and *Kaši* (or *Kaša*).[9] Centuries later, the New Assyrian documents adopt both terms. The term *Meluḫḫa* reappears as the name of Kush in most documents of the New Assyrian age.[10] Unlike in earlier texts, from the time of Esarhaddon *Meluḫḫa*

Demotic *Kš* and *Ykš* and Meroitic *Qes* (K. Zibelius, *Afrikanische Orts- und Völkernamen in hieroglyphischen und hieratischen Texten* [BTAVO B/1; Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1972], 166–69; Török, *Kingdom*, 1–2). The term *Kš* evolved through history. It may stand for the whole Upper and Lower Nubia, or it may be applied to a much smaller region (with further geographical distinctions). Cf. Zibelius, *Völkernamen*, 165–69.

[7] Cf. EA 70:19; 95:40; 108:67; 112:20; 117:81.91.93; 132:57; 133:17.

[8] See, e.g., A. & S. Parpola, "On the Relationship of the Sumerian Toponym *meluḫḫa* and Sanskrit *mleccha*", *SO* 45 (1975) 205–38; D. Potts, "The Road to Meluhha", *JNES* 41 (1982) 279–88; W. Heimpel, "Das Untere Meer", *ZA* 77 (1987) 22–91; M. Liverani, "The Sargon Geography and the Late Assyrian Mensuration of the Earth", *SAAB* 13 (1999–2001) 70–71. Magan/Makan was the name of a country in the Oman region (western side of the Persian Gulf). Meluhha with its black inhabitants (cf. The Curse of Agade ln. 47) was probably located in the Indus valley (Parpola & Parpola, "*meluḫḫa*", 205–38; Potts, "Road", 280; Heimpel, "Meer", 29). The limited geographical knowledge of this period explains how the terminology related to the coasts of the Persian Gulf came to be used for Africa. Greek authors also related the Kushites in Africa and the inhabitants of India (cf. Liverani, "Sargon Geography", 71, 82; D. M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003], 211).

[9] EA 49:20; 127:22.36; 131:13; 133:17; 287:33.72.74 (see H. Klengel, "Das Land Kusch in den Keilschrifttexten von Amarna", in *Ägypten und Kusch* [eds. E. Endesfelder et al.; SGKAO 13; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977], 227–32). The identification of *Kaši* with *Meluḫḫa* is granted on the one hand by the similarity of contexts (cf. EA 127:22.36 | EA 95:40; 108:67) and suggested by a gloss in EA 133:17, where the scribe equated *Meluḫḫa* with *Kaši* (cf. Klengel, "Kusch", 228, though Klengel is more cautious in his conclusion). It is likely that *Meluḫḫa* was the Akkadian name of the country, while *Kaši* the Egyptian term (cf. *Mitanni/Naḫrima* in the Amarna letters). One should distinguish between *Kaši*, 'Kush', and *Kaššu*, the land of the Kassites. For this latter, see EA 76:15; 104:20; 116:71 mentioned with Mitanni. It is unclear whether *Kasi* in EA 288:35–36 (erroneously written as *ka*-PA-*si*), attested together with *Naḫrima*, should be seen as a designation for the Kassites (as the parallelism would suggest; cf. EA 133:16 with *Meluḫḫa* and *Kaši*), or whether it was indeed a name for Nubia (so Klengel, "Kusch", 231–32). The plural *awīlū*(LÚ.MEŠ) *mātāti*(KUR.KUR) *Kaši*, "the people of the lands of Kush" (EA 131:13) is strange.

[10] An exception may be *Meluḫḫa* in Assurbanipal's Prism A iii 100–104, speaking

referring to Nubia occurs sometimes with Magan/Makan designating Egypt.[11] As for the term *Kūsi*, although sporadic references appear during Tiglath-pileser III,[12] extensive evidence for the name Kush as *Kūsi* comes from the archives of Esarhaddon, where this name appears together with the earlier *Meluḫḫa*.[13] *Kūsi* was probably loaned into Assyrian from Egyptian or North-West Semitic, as an inscription of Esarhaddon would suggest:

> On my 10th campaign Aššur [encouraged me] (…) and directed my attention towards the lands Magan and Meluhha (…) which people call Kush and Egypt (*māt Kūsi u māt Muṣur*) (…) (*IAKA* §76:6–11).

The designation *māt Kūsi* appears in the standard tripartite division of the African countries Egypt and Kush, as *māt Muṣur*, "(Lower) Egypt", *māt Paturisi*, "(Upper) Egypt" and *māt Kūsi*, "Kush".[14]

For the classical geographers everything south of Egypt was Αἰθιοπία,[15] an exotic and highly idealised land, reigned by fair kings and populated by inhabitants famous for their righteousness.[16] Greek authors distinguished two types of Aithiopians: the Western Aithiopians in Africa and the Eastern Aithiopians

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about the rebellion of Babylon, assisted by Elam, Guti, Amurru and Meluhha, which corresponds geographically to nations all around Assyria, with Meluhha in the south.

[11] For Meluhha as Nubia, cf. e.g. Sargon II's Great Display Inscription 101–4; 109–10. Sennacherib's Oriental Institute Prism ii 78–80; Bull Inscription F 1 23–25. It should be mentioned that while Nubia is identified with *Meluḫḫa*, Egypt never appears as *Magan* in the inscriptions of Sargon II and Sennacherib. *Muṣur* as *Magan* is only attested from Esarhaddon's time, and even then only in standard expressions in the form: "I set up my face towards Magan *and* Meluhha".

[12] The Nimrud Wine Lists dated to 732 by Wilson seem to contain the earliest Assyrian reference to Kush and Kushites (J. V. K. Wilson, *The Nimrud Wine Lists: A Study of Men and Administration at the Assyrian Capital in the Eighth Century B.C.* [CTN 1; London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1972], 91, 93, 138; cf. also *muṣuraya*), assumed by Wilson to have been Nubians living in Western Asia.

[13] The Assyrian "Horse Reports" mentioning Kushite (*kusaya*) horses from Nineveh either derive from the time of Esarhaddon (S. Dalley, "Foreign Chariotry and Calvary in the Armies of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II", *Iraq* 47 [1985] 43; H.-U. Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens* [ÄAT 27; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994], 13 note 55), or refer to a different country in the Taurus Mountains (M. Elat, "The Economic Relations of the Neo-Assyrian Empire with Egypt", *JAOS* 98 [1978] 24–25).

[14] Mainly in the titles of Esarhaddon, as "king of kings, etc." (cf. *IAKA* §8:5–7; §24:3; §44:4–5; §57:8; §65:16; §67:6).

[15] It seems that Αἰθιοπία was originally a name for all countries of dark skinned people. Cf. C. Onasch, "Kush in der Sicht von Ägyptern und Griechen", in *Ägypten und Kusch* (eds. E. Endesfelder et al.; SGKAO 13; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977), 334.

[16] R. Pietschmann, "Aithiopia", *PW* 1:1095–96; Onasch, "Kusch", 334–35. Greek authors regarded them as the most ancient people (*Diod.* iii 2.1), a country with handsome and long living inhabitants (Herodotus, *Hist.* iii 20). Aithiopia was the land of gods (cf. the Egyptian *tꜣ nṯr*, "godly land", applied to Punt and Phoenicia), who protect the righteous inhabitants from foreign rule (*Diod.* iii 2.1). In later times the northern border of Aithiopia was moved farther south (Pietschmann, "Aithiopia", 1:1096).

in Asia.[17] Their relationship was defined according to skin colour, and followed the limited geographical knowledge of their times. We should bear in mind that these authors never actually visited Nubia, which explains their utopian descriptions.[18]

2.   KUSH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

כּוּשׁ is the most frequent name for Nubia in the Old Testament.[19] However, the identification of כּוּשׁ with Nubia is debated in several texts, because כּוּשׁ apparently also designates a region or a tribe south of Israel,[20] and it may also refer to the Kassites in Babylonia.[21]

According to 2 Chr 14:8.11–12, "Kushites" headed by a man (not a king) named זֶרַח attacked King Asa. Concerns about the historicity of this story have been reiterated several times, and a theological message pertinent to Chronicles was regarded as the most important reason for its inclusion among

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[17] See Homer, *Odyss.* i 22–23; Herodotus, *Hist.* vii 70; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* i 135. Herodotus describes the Asian Aithiopians as different from the Africans in their hairstyle and language. In the army of Xerxes the Asian Aithiopians appear with the group of the Indians, and they wear similar costumes. It is quite likely that *Meluḫḫa* of the Assyrian scribes and Αἰθιοπία of the Greek authors designate the same territories.

[18] W. Y. Adams, "The Kingdom and Civilisation of Kush in Northeast Africa", in *CANE*, 777.

[19] Gen 10:6.7; 2 Kgs 19:19; 1 Chr 1:8.9; 2 Chr 12:3; Est 1:1; 8:9; Job 28:19; Ps 68:31; 87:4; Isa 11:11; 18:1; 20:3.4.5; 37:9; 43:3; 45:14; Jer 13:23; 38:7.10.12; 39:16; 46:9; Ezek 29:10; 30:4.5.9; 38:5; Dan 11:43; Am 9:7; Nah 3:9; Zeph 3:10.

[20] In Hab 3:7 we actually find כּוּשָׁן, used in parallelism with מִדְיָן, but Egyptian texts refer to this territory suth of Judah as *Kws*. Ahituv argued that *Kws* (כּוּשָׁן) was the older name of Midian (S. Ahituv, *Canaanite Toponyms in Ancient Egyptian Documents* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1987], 85). The "Kushite" wife of Moses (Num 12:1) was not a Nubian woman (contra, e.g., J. D. Hays, "The Cushites: A Black Nation in Ancient History", *BibSac* 153 [1996] 397–401), but the very same Zipporah, the Midianite, whom we know from Ex 2:21 (cf. *b. Mo'ed Qat.* 16b; Goldenberg, *Curse*, 28). The legend of Moses' Nubian campaign and marriage with the king's daughter, preserved and perhaps augmented by Josephus (*Ant.* ii 252–53) originated in Hellenistic Jewish circles in Egypt (A. Shinan, "Moses and the Ethiopian Woman: Sources of a Story in *The Chronicles of Moses*", in *Studies in Hebrew Narrative Art through the Ages* [eds. J. Heinemann et al.; *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 27; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1978], 66–78).

[21] In Gen 10:8, Nimrod, the mighty hunter and builder of important Mesopotamian cities is the descendant of Kush, son of Kham. Gen 10:8–12 is often regarded as an insertion into the genealogy of the African Kush from a different source. The phonetic distinction between the Kushites (*Kaši* or *Kaša*) and the Kassites (*Kaššu*) in the Amarna letters is also very subtle. Berlin reckoned with a further reference to the Kassites (כּוּשִׁים) in Zeph 2:12 (A. Berlin, "Zephaniah's Oracles against the Nations and an Israelite Cultural Myth", in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday* [eds. A. B. Beck et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 180). Even though Mic 5:5 makes a connection between Nimrod and Assyria, there is no hint that כּוּשׁ would be a nickname for the Assyrians as she assumed (cf. 3.3.4.). Connecting כּוּשׁ in Gen 2:13 with the Kassites would lead to false results, too, for the land of the Kassites does not seem to fit the imagery of Gen 2.

the events from Asa's reign. Attempts to demonstrate the historicity of a Nubian campaign against Judah at this time, cannot stand the trial of history as far as it has been revealed to us up until now.[22] If we assume that the story of the Chronist is anchored in history (and there are some signs pointing in this direction), it would certainly be more plausible to argue that זֶרַח was also a Midianite-Kushite leader.[23] This may be concluded from the fact that tents, sheep and camels were taken away as booty from these "Kushites" (2 Chr 14:14), that these people were *settled* in the Gerar area (2 Chr 14:13–14), and that the name זֶרַח is well-attested in the region south of Judah.[24]

However, 2 Chr 14:9 mentions war chariots in the army of Zerach, which is difficult to reconcile with the warfare technique of a nomadic nation. Moreover, a later reflection on this campaign, 2 Chr 16:8, mentions *Libyans and Kushites* with war chariots as Asa's adversaries, which would again point to African rather than Midianite-Kushites. It is true, nevertheless, that Libyans only appear in this later account, but not in the original text (14:8.11.12).[25]

Two plausible explanations may be given to this problematic text. (1) First, the Chronist may have conflated here two different campaigns from the reign of Asa. In an inscription of Osorkon II (874–850; king Asa of Judah ruled between 911–870), he appears as the subduer of Upper and Lower Retjenu (Syro-Palestine) (*ARE* 4:372 [§749]). If this text refers to a campaign, one may assume that Osorkon used Kushite mercenaries in his war against Asa. This battle involving Nubian Kushite mercenaries and another semi-nomadic invasion from Gerar may have been combined in the Chronicler's story. (2) The second possibility is that the Chronicler makes no exact distinction between African Kushites and Midianite-Kushites. This may reflect a political reality in which the two were allied, eventually with Egypt, in a war against Judah (during Osorkon II?). The southern neighbours of Judah often appear in relation to Egypt (i.e. Africa). According to 1 Chr 4:40-41, part of the Sinai was inhabited by Meunite tribes (מְעוּנִים), which are described as descendants of Ham (חָם).[26] The territory south of Gaza (Nahal Besor) was

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[22] Cf. B. U. Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten in der Königszeit. Die kulturellen Kontakte von Salomo bis zum Fall Jerusalems* (OBO 170; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1999), 133–39. Schipper observed that the supporters of the African-Zerach-campaign were mainly Egyptologists, not aware of, or not accounting for the theological background of the Chronist as a historian (*Israel,* 133 note 108).

[23] So e.g. Y. Aharoni et al., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (3d ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1993), 93; Schipper, *Israel,* 138–39.

[24] זֶרַח appears as an Edomite name in Gen 36:13 (son of Rehuel, grandson of Edom), even as a captain (Gen 36:17). In Num 26:13 זֶרַח is a son of the southern Simeonites known to have inhabited the Gerar region (northern Sinai) and around the Seir, the later Amalekite (Gen 36:12, Amalek is the grandson of Edom) and Edomite stronghold (see 1 Chr 4:39–43; read גרר with the LXX instead of גדר, though cf. LXX 2 Chr 14:12–13).

[25] 2 Chr 16:8 may have been influenced by 2 Chr 12:3. Note also that cavalry is absent in 2 Chr 14:8, but present in 2 Chr 12:3.

[26] These Meunites appear in Tiglath-pileser III's inscriptions (cf. 2.3.1.1. note 33) and might be identical with עֲנָמִים in Gen 10:13, descendants of מִצְרַיִם son of חָם.

regarded as Egyptian territory. A tradition appearing in the Septuagint, which
has an Egyptian background and which is as old as Chronicles, seems to con-
firm this view. The gentilicum Αἰθίοψ, "Ethiopian" appears twice in the Greek
version of Ps 72:9; 74:14 (MT) as a translation of צִיִּים and לְעָם לְצִיִּים respec-
tively, which the LXX apparently understood as referring to desert-dwellers to
the east of Egypt. Note also that in the view of Josephus the τρωγλοδύτης,
which was the classical name for Bedouin tribes inhabiting the East African
coast and the Sinai, were the descendants of Abraham from Keturah (*Ant.* ii
213) and the Midianites were τρωγλοδύτης (*Ant.* ii 259).

A text similarly difficult, 2 Chr 21:16 mentions that YHWH stirred up the
spirit of הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים וְהָעַרְבִים אֲשֶׁר עַל־יַד כּוּשִׁים against king Jehoram of Judah. In
this case, too, it is unlikely that כּוּשִׁים would refer to Nubian Kushites. This is
both geographically and historically problematic. The expression עַל־יַד can be
translated in two ways. (a) It may have a geographical meaning, "near, beside,
in the neighbourhood of" (e.g. Josh 15:46). If this is what is meant here, כּוּשִׁים
can only refer to a people in the neighbourhood of Judah, closer to them than
the Arabians, as the text refers to both the Philistines and the Arabians as
bordered by the Kushites.[27] (b) Alternatively, עַל־יַד may mean that the Philis-
tines and the Arabians were on the side of the Kushites, i.e. politically allied
with them, or עַל־יַד may mean "under the command of", "entrusted to" (cf. 2
Chr 26:11). At any rate, the כּוּשִׁים mentioned here were a group located
somewhere on the Sinai, between Kadesh and Shur (Gen 20:2). The Chroni-
cler's explanatory phrase may have been inserted exactly in order to distin-
guish these Kushites from the Nubians.

People in Canaan came to be acquainted with the Nubian Kushites at
least as early as the Amarna period. Ezekiel 29:10 describes the northern bor-
der of Kush as Syene. Located in the distant south, Kush was the counterpart
of "the isle of nations" (Isa 11:11; Zeph 2:11–12). Despite occasional contacts
with Nubians, there is little information about them in the biblical literature.
In biblical descriptions of Kush and its inhabitants we recognise traces of tradi-
tional phraseology. As in the Amarna letters, the Kushites are known as mer-
cenaries in the service of Egyptians.[28] The Kushites appear as a nation with
black skin (Jer 13:23),[29] tall (Isa 45:14), and eventually swift footed.[30] It is

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[27] Cf. Philistines in Gerar in Gen 20:2; 26:1 with the Kushites of Gerear in 2 Chr
14:13. The enemies of Uzziah in 2 Chr 26:7 are the Philistines, Arabs living in Gur-
Baal, and Meunites, which may be related to Kushites as discussed above.

[28] 2 Chr 12:3; Jer 46:9; cf. also Ezek 38:5; Dan 11:43.

[29] Hays, "Cushites", 272–75.

[30] הַכּוּשִׁי in 2 Sam 18:21 *pass.* is probably a gentilicum (Schipper, *Israel,* 111) as the
definite article suggests. In a similar way *kusaya* is attested in Assyrian name lists and
administrative records, some of whom were high officials (Dalley, "Foreign Chariotry",
45–46). However, ethnicity plays no role in a common Egyptian name as *Pꜣ nḥsj*, "the
Kushite" (cf. E. Lüddeckens, "*nḥsj* und *kš* in ägyptischen Personennamen", in *Ägypten
und Kusch* [eds. E. Endesfelder et al.; SGKAO 13; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977],
283–91). פִּינְחָס (=*Pꜣ nḥsj*) is one of Aaron's grandsons (Ex 6:25), but hardly "an inde-
pendent confirmation of intermarriage with Cushites in Moses' family" (contra E.

striking to compare 2 Sam 18:21 about a Kushite (?) messenger with the description of the "Aithiopian" Troglodytes by Herodotus as πόδας τάχιστοι ἀντρώπον πάντων, "the swiftest runners of all men".[31]

3.   NUBIA: ITS PEOPLE AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

Though the Nilotic riverbed of Nubia was the most densely populated region south of Egypt, the population was not entirely restricted to this geographical area. The deserts on the East of Egypt were uninhabited, except for some oases, but the semi-deserts of Nubia were settled by (semi-)nomadic people.[32]

From an ethnological point of view, the lands south of Egypt present a much diversified picture. In lack of sufficient local archaeological and epigraphic material, our knowledge is practically limited to designations attested in Egyptian texts: Medja (*mḏ*ꜣ), Wawat (*wꜣwꜣt*), Irtjet (*jrṯt*), Setju (*sꜣṯw*), Yam (*jmꜣ* or *jꜣm*), Irem (*jrm*), Punt (*pwnt*)—to mention just the more significant ones—all refer to territories south of Egypt. Owing to population shifts, migration, and other factors the identification of these terms is often uncertain. Nations disappear, new groups appear in their place, or the name may refer to different people in different periods.

As a general term, *nḥsjw* is the name of those living south of the first cataract, especially in the Nile valley. In Egyptian execration texts of the Middle Kingdom, *nḥsjw* includes Wawat (*wꜣwꜣt*), the territory between the first two cataracts, the isle of Sai (*šꜣt*), and Kush (*kꜣš*), possibly centred at Kerma.[33]

The people of Medja (*mḏꜣjw*) inhabited the region between the Nile and the Red Sea.[34] The name, however, underwent a significant evolution so that the Medja appear later in Egypt as military and police force.[35] In texts from the New Kingdom, the land of Medja was formed by several chiefdoms. Survived names include *ꜣšq, wbꜣt-spt, brhm, ḫsꜣ*.[36] These people are regularly encountered with in the region of the Nubian gold mines (east of Wawat), and execration texts frequently mention them alongside Kush as hostile towards Egypt.[37] After

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Yamauchi, *Africa and the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004], 44).

[31] *Hist.* iv 183; cf. also Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* viii 16.4. Though Vycichl differentiates between the Troglodites of Herodotus and those of Heliodorus (see W. Vycichl, "Heliodors *Aithiopika* und die Volksstämme des Reiches Meroë", in *Ägypten und Kusch* [eds. E. Endesfelder, et al.; SGKAO 13; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977], 455), the similarities in their descriptions make his opinion unlikely.

[32] Cf. O'Connor, *Nubia*, xii.

[33] Zibelius, *Völkernamen*, 135; O'Connor, *Nubia*, 37–38; Idem, "The Locations of Yam and Kush and Their Historical Implications", *JARCE* 23 (1986) 39–40.

[34] The name appears often with *jmꜣ, wꜣwꜣt* and *jrṯt* (Gardiner, *Onomastica*, 1:73*–89*; Zibelius, *Völkernamen*, 133–37). Based on late New Kingdom texts, Gardiner argued that the *mḏꜣjw* also inhabited the desert west of the Nile (*Onomastica*, 1:85*–86*).

[35] O'Connor, *Nubia*, 42–43.

[36] Zibelius, *Völkernamen*, 134. Zibelius suggests that the name *mḏꜣ* is a general term for the "desert people", just like *nḥsjw* denotes inhabitants of the Nile valley in general.

[37] O'Connor, *Nubia*, 43. The Kushite viceroy is occasionally also called "the chief of the Medja" (*wr n mḏꜣj*; Gardiner, *Onomastica*, 1:86*).

the 18th Dynasty, Medja is connected with Punt.[38] Though references after the 20th Dynasty are scarce, the name *mḏȝj* appears as late as the Greco-Roman period. The connection between the Medja and the later African Bedja tribe proposed by some scholars, is disputed by others.[39]

Amu (ʿ*mw* or ʿ*m*) was important because of its gold and electrum reserves. It seems to designate the eastern desert somewhere in the neighbourhood of the 3rd cataract, perhaps bordering the land of Punt on the east and south.[40]

The location of *Irtjet* and *Setju* is disputed. Texts mention them in connection with Wawat and Yam. They should perhaps be localised between Wawat (Lower Nubia) and Yam, roughly corresponding to a part of Upper Nubia, between the second and fourth cataracts.[41] *Yam* was located even further south, possibly somewhere in the region of later Meroë. Yam is known to merchandise products of inland Africa, myrrh, ebony and panther skins.[42]

The country of *Irem* has been located south of the 5th cataract in the semi-arid or savannah regions. This territory attested in New Kingdom texts might be identical with Yam of the Middle Kingdom period and later Meroë.[43]

Some scholars locate *Punt* between Port Sudan and Tokar, moving far inland into savannah lands,[44] others more to the south in the region of the present day Eritrea;[45] even others assumed possible connections with the South-Arabian coast.[46] In Egyptian texts Puntites are sometimes localised towards sunrise,[47] in other texts towards the south.[48] Early Egyptian references are sporadic, but from the 18th–19th Dynasties we have detailed textual and

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[38] Gardiner, *Onomastica*, 1:78*–79*.

[39] See Gardiner, *Onomastica*, 1:80*–81*.

[40] G. Posener, "L'or de Pount", in *Ägypten und Kusch* (eds. E. Endesfelder et al.; SGKAO 13; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977), 339–41. A list of Ramses II locates Amu as a third region of the Upper Nile "depuit Napata jusqu'à Coptos" (Posener, "Punt", 340). In a Ptolemaic text, ʿAm is the neighbour of Punt (F. Hommel, *Ethnologie und Geographie des alten Orients* [Munich: C. H. Beck, 1926], 641).

[41] See O'Connor, *Nubia*, 32; Idem, "Yam", 35–39; cf. Zibelius, *Völkernamen*, 88–89, 153–54, who locates them more to the east around the second cataract. Both names cease to appear after the Middle Kingdom.

[42] O'Connor, *Nubia*, 32, 42; Idem, "Yam", 28–35; Zibelius, *Völkernamen*, 78–81.

[43] O'Connor, *Nubia*, 42 (Berber-Shandi Reach, Northern Atbara); Idem, "Yam", 50; Török, *Kingdom*, 128. Punt was accessible through Irem. Iconography indicates giraffes and rhinoceri as part of their fauna, and that the inhabitants of Irem were darker-skinned than the people of Punt (O'Connor, *Nubia*, 66; Zibelius, *Völkernamen*, 117).

[44] O'Connor, *Nubia*, 42.

[45] Posener, "Punt", 341; I. Shaw, "Egypt and the Outside World", in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (ed. Idem; Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2002, 324.

[46] Hommel, *Ethnologie*, 640 note 4, 647. Punt for Egypt was like Meluhha for Assyria.

[47] Cf. "Hymn of Amon" of Amenhotep III (*ARE* 2:361 [§892]), a relief of king Horemheb (*ARE* 3:20–21 [§37]).

[48] So on the obelisk of Hatshepsut: "my southern boundary is as far as the lands of Punt and […]" (*ARE* 2:134 [§321]). In the famous Amon hymn of the Second Intermediate Period (*COS* 1.25), Medja appears alongside Punt, seemingly in parallelism, perhaps suggesting that Punt and Medja were in the same direction.

iconographical evidence concerning expeditions to Punt. These descriptions portray this country as abundaning in myrrh and other luxurious goods. According to expedition accounts from the time of Hatshepsut, the Egyptians travelled by sea and land, i.e. that the inhabitants of Punt lived further off from the sea coast.[49] There is no inscriptional evidence for contact between Egyptian pharaohs and Punt after Ramses III.[50] But Punt reappears in the Ptolemaic period as a place of refuge for King Ptolemy XI.[51]

4.   THE LAND OF PUT AND SEBA IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Two other rather enigmatic places appearing in the Bible in connection with Kush and Africa are Put and Seba. In this section an attempt is made to clarify the geographical and ethnic background of these terms in relation to Kush.

The third son of Ham in Gen 10:6 (‖ 1 Chr 1:8) is named פוט. As a geographical name, פוט appears in Jer 46:9 as Egyptian mercenaries together with כוש and לוד. In Ezek 27:10, enumerating the commercial and military partners of Tyre, פוט is mentioned with לוד and פָּרַס (cf. Ezek 30:5 with כוש and לוד, as well as some other Mediterranean nations). פָּרַס, כוש and פוט also appear in the army of Gog.[52] In Nah 3:9, the defenders of Thebes are כוש וּמִצְרַיִם and פוט וְלוּבִים. The Greek version rendered פוט as Λίβυες in Jer 46:9; Ezek 27:10; 38:5 and quite likely also in Ezek 30:5. In Nah 3:9 this would have been problematic, so the LXX "translated" פוט as φυγή, 'flight'.[53] The Vg. follows the LXX, except for Nah 3:9, where it has 'Africa'.[54]

Though attempts have been made to connect biblical פוט to Egyptian *Pwnt*, this identification is philologically unlikely.[55] It is more convincing to

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[49] Posener, "Punt", 341. Some assume that Punt could have also been approached by sailing upwards on the Nile. Cf. Posener, "Punt", 341; Shaw, "Outside World", 324. The land of Punt probably covered a large geographical area.

[50] Papyrus Harris (*ARE* 4:77 §130). Cf. Hommel, *Ethnologie*, 640 note 3; Shaw, "Outside World", 324. There is a vague reference to "the myrrh of Punt" (*'ntj n Pwnt*) on Tanutamani's Dream Stela recounting the kings building activity (*FHN* 1.29:20), which may refer to Kushite trading with Punt, but it can also be a stereotypical phrase.

[51] Cf. Hommel, *Ethnologie*, 641.

[52] Ezekiel's picture of the army of Gog remembers us of Herodotus' description of the Persian army of Xerxes in *Hist.* vii 60–80.

[53] φυγή may be a Greek translation of an Egyptian word (cf. Coptic *pōt*, 'to run, to flee'; see W. M. Müller, "Put", *DB* 4:176). See, however, J. Simons arguing that an original *לפוט was read as פלט by the LXX ("The "Table of Nations" (Gen. X): Its General Structure and Meaning", in *Oudtestamentische Studiën* [ed. P. A. H. de Boer; Leiden: Brill, 1954], 10:183).

[54] There is one further case where the MT should perhaps be emended. Isa 66:19 mentions a distant nation פול alongside Tarshish, Lud, Tubal, and Yawan. The Greek transliteration (Φουδ, var. Φουθ; cf. Gen 10:6) suggests that the otherwise unknown פול should be read here as פוט. Cf. Müller, "Put", 4:176–77. See also Jdt 2:23 where Φουδ and Λουδ are plundered by the Babylonians. The Vg. dropped Φουδ and assumed Λουδ was Malta (*Melutha*).

[55] Müller, "Put", 4:176–77 cannot explain how Egyptian *nt* has become a ט. The final *t* in Egyptian—a feminine ending—is not supposed to appear in Hebrew.

follow the LXX here and render Put as Libya. The Greek translators may have been aware of a Libyan tribe (?) called *Pyd* or *Pwd* that is attested in Egyptian from the 10th century down to the Ptolemaic period.[56] The name Put is attested for Libya in inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings, Darius I and Xerxes I, mentioning the tribute bearing countries of the Persian Empire.[57]

Another name for Libya is לוּב (2 Chr 12:3; 16:8; Nah 3:9; Dan 11:43). לוּב derives from Egyptian *Rb(w)*, originally a tribe of the Libyan nomads. Tefnakht I of Sais was the chief of both the Libu and the Mashwash. In the time of Herodotus, Greeks called the whole (North) Africa Libya (*Hist.* ii 16).

While there is hardly any doubt that פּוּט is a general name for Libya in most texts, it is probable that in Nah 3:9 פּוּט alludes to a more specific geographical location. The geographical names appear here in pair: Kush and Egypt, Put and Libya. פּוּט may have once been the name of the southern Libyan region, perhaps even as far south as Kush. It is interesting that the desert on the west side of the Nile between the fourth and sixth cataracts is called the Bayuda desert (*Barrīyat al-Bayyūda*), the name of which can perhaps be connected philologically with Egyptian *Pyd/Pwd*, and biblical פּוּט.

The location of פּוּט in some cases in the far south is also supported by Egyptian texts. At least in one documented case, Egyptian *Pyd* is interchanged with *tꜣ ṯmḥ*, a name used for Libya.[58] However, *tꜣ ṯmḥ* was not only the western neighbour of Egypt. In a text mentioning the participation of *ṯmḥw* in the Egyptian army, they are not grouped with the northerners, but with the *nḥsjw*.[59] An important Old Kingdom text, The Autobiography of Harkhuf, records a conflict between the chief of Yam and the "Libyans" (*ṯmḥw*),[60] suggesting that *tꜣ ṯmḥ* stretched as far as the land of Yam, localised above somewhere in the later Meroë region.

Assuming that Put was (also) the western neighbour of Kush, clarifies some biblical references. The Persians, Lydians and Putians in the army of Tyre and Gog (Ezek 27:10; 38:5), are actually the remotest nations then known to the author in the three regions of the world: Asia, Anatolia and Africa. This interpretation would also fit Nah 3:9: Kush and Put appear as the southern helpers of Thebes, Libya and (Lower) Egypt as northerners.

The complex ethnic composition of the territories south of Egypt is also an important guide in looking for the location of the biblical Seba. In the lists of Gen 10:7, the firstborn son of Kush is called סְבָא. This name is distinguished from a phonetically similar שְׁבָא, who once appears as a grandson of Kush. In Gen 10:26, however, שְׁבָא is connected to Shem, and his son Joktan. In a third

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[56] Zibelius, *Völkernamen*, 113–14; K. A. Kitchen, *The Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 593 note 28. It is unclear whether Coptic *phaiat* (Bohairic) and *paiet* (Fayyumic) also refers to *Pyd*.

[57] See for instance the Naqš-i Rustam inscription of Darius I.

[58] For the synonyms, cf. Zibelius, *Völkernamen*, 114, for *tꜣ ṯmḥ*, see Gardiner, *Onomastica*, 1:114*–16*.

[59] Gardiner, *Onomastica*, 1:115*. Gardiner safely assumed that *ṯmḥw* was also the name of people inhabiting the southern oases, west of the Nile, in particular Khargeh.

[60] See Gardiner, *Onomastica*, 1:115*–16*; O'Connor, "Yam", 29.

list (Gen 25:3), שְׁבָא is the descendant of Abraham, from his wife Keturah. References indicate that שְׁבָא was located on the Arabian peninsula.[61]

סְבָא, however, alludes to a different geographical region. In Ps 72:10 the tributes and presents are brought to the king of Jerusalem from all the ends of the earth, Tarshish and the Mediterranean islands, Sheba (שְׁבָא) in southern-most Arabia and Seba (סְבָא). Not much can be inferred from this reference, except that Seba must be a land far removed from Judah.

According to Isa 43:3, Egypt, Kush and Seba are given as ransom for the king of Persia in place of Israel. The three names reappear in Isa 45:14, which mentions the product/property of Egypt, the gain/wealth of Kush and Seba, men of stature.[62] Since Egypt is on the list, the nations do not represent here the furthest corners of the earth. The high stature was a well-known charac-teristic of the inhabitants of the Upper Nile valley. These Sabaeans were lo-cated geographically somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Kushites.[63]

Ancient texts also know about an African Saba. (1) Strabo (*Geog.* xvi 4.8–10) mentions the town Sabai and the harbour Saba on the Eritrean Red Sea coast, close to the ancient location of Punt. (2) This is strikingly similar to another reference of Herodotus, who when describing the invasion of Egypt by Cambyses, gives the following account (*Hist.* iii 17): "After all these, Cam-byses planned to make three expeditions: against the Carthagians, against the Ammonians (inhabitants of Thebes, No-Ammon; cf. *Hist.* iii 25), καὶ ἐπί τοὺς μακροβίους Αἰτίοπας οἰκημένους δὲ Λιβύης ἐπὶ τῇ νοτίῃ θαλάσσαῃ, and against the long-living Aitiopians, inhabiting Libya (=Africa) near the 'sea of the south' (= the sea encircling the south)." It is these "Aitiopians", who are described later by Herodotus as "the tallest and most handsom of all people" (*Hist.* iii 20; cf. Isa 45:14, living at "the ends of the earth" (*Hist.* iii 25).[64] (3) As a further opinion it is also interesting to mention *Ant.* ii 248–49. Here Josephus maintains that Σαβά was a royal city of Αἰθιοπία, called Meroë by Cambyses, after the name of his sister. The place is described as surrounded by waters (Astapus, Astaboras and the Nile). The background of the legend of Josephus cannot be verified, but it also underlines the close connection be-tween Kush and Seba as seen in Isa 43:3 and 45:14.

To conclude, it seems that some biblical authors—including Isaiah—were familiar with the ethnic diversity of the African nations. In the analysis of the prophecy of Isa 18 it is important to reckon with this biblical tradition.

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[61] Cf. Job 1:15; 6:19; Isa 60:6. It is possible that there were two Sheba in Arabia, one in the south and one in the north. *Sabaʾ* (Sheba) is well-attested in Assyrian texts (cf. I. Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982]).

[62] It is possible to relate אַנְשֵׁי מִדָּה and וּסְחַר to both כּוּשׁ and סְבָאִים. Cf. 4.3.1.4.

[63] Cf. Goldenberg, *Curse,* 18–19. A further reference to Sabaeans may appear in 2 Chr 12:3. The army of Shoshenq I consisted of לוּבִים סֻכִּיִּים וְכוּשִׁים. Unless סֻכִּיִּים is identified with an otherwise unattested Lybian tribe, *Tk(tn)*, from the western desert (Kitchen, *Period,* 295), it may be a scribal error for סבאים. The Τρωγλοδύται that appears in the LXX (cf. Vg.) may support this assumption when compared to Herodotus, *Hist.* iv 183.

[64] τὰ ἔσχατα γῆς. Herodotus maintains that the ἰχτυοφάγοι of Elephantine were able to speak the language of these Aithiopians, which means they were neighbours.

EXCURSUS 2

THE TANG-I VAR INSCRIPTION OF SARGON II AND ITS IMPLICATIONS
FOR THE CHRONOLOGY OF EGYPT'S 25TH DYNASTY

Until not so long ago, four Assyrian texts were known in relation to the rebellion of Ashdod led by Yamani: the Nineveh Prism, the Khorsabad Annals, the Great Display Inscription, and the Small Display Inscription of Room XIV, all belonging to Sargon II. Though each one of the inscriptions makes our picture of those events more complete, on one point they all leave us with an enigma: none of these texts identifies the king who extradited Yamani. Based on an existent chronology, the vague *šar māt Meluḫḫa*, "the king of Meluhha (Nubia)", who delivered Yamani to the Assyrians, was identifyed with Shabaka.

This assumption, however, received a serious blow, when in 1999 an edition of another inscription of Sargon II saw the light: a text found near the Iranian village Tang-i Var in 1968, originally published in Arabian, avoided the attention of scholars prior to its reassessment by Grant Frame.[1] This relief-inscription commemorates the last campaign of Sargon II against the land of Karalla in the East. The relief carved on a rocky mountain wall also refers to the rebellion of Ashdod in 711, mentioning not only the extradition of Yamani, but also the name of the African king. According to line 20 of Frame's edition,[2] the Kushite king who delivered Yamani to the Assyrians was [m]*šá-pa-ta-ku-*[*u*]*šar māt Meluḫḫa, Šá-pa-ta-ku-u* (Shabataka), king of Kush.

The consequences of this new find are significant for the chronology of the Near East. The Tang-i Var inscription can be dated with certainty to 706.[3] This means that Shabataka must have been on the throne at latest in 706, i.e. at least three to four years earlier than it had previously been thought.[4]

1.   SOLUTIONS: COREGENCY VERSUS EARLY CHRONOLOGY

Instead of raising the ascension dates of Piye and Shabaka, in line with an already established chronology, Redford assumed several years of *co-regency* between Shabaka and Shabataka from 706 onward. Shabaka would have been the king of Egypt, who—after assessing the difficulties in administrating a vast geographical area under his control—named Shabataka as chief of Kush.[5]

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[1] G. Frame, "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var", *Or* 68 (1999) 31–57.

[2] Cf. Frame, "Tang-i Var", 40.

[3] Or less likely early 705, shortly before Sargon's death (cf. Frame, "Tang-i Var", 51).

[4] Frame, "Tang-i Var", 54, D. B. Redford, "A Note on the Chronology of Dynasty 25 and the Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var", *Or* 68 (1999) 58.

[5] Redford, "Chronology", 59–60, followed by Morkot, *Black Pharaohs*, 203–4 and J. K. Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role in the Events of 701 BC in Jerusalem", in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* (eds. A.G. Vaughn et al.; SBLSS 18; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 219–34, 227–29. The idea of co-regency for the two kings for a short period of two years had been suggested earlier and independently from the Tang-i Var inscription by L. Borchardt, *Die Mittel zur zeitlichen Festlegung von Punkten der ägyptischen Geschichte und ihre Anwendung* (Cairo, 1935) 74–77; A. Spalinger, "The Year 712 B.C. and Its Implications for Egyptian History", *JARCE* 10 (1973) 98; Kitchen,

In a detailed study on the Tang-i Var inscription and the chronology of the late 8th century Egypt, Kahn argued that the regnal years of both kings, Shabaka and Shabataka needed to be revised. Rejecting the co-regency theory of Redford, he argued for the *successive rulership* of Shabaka and Shabataka. Kahn maintained that in case there was co-regency, it would be impossible to explain how documents originating from the same year, from the same administrative area (Thebes), were dated differently according to the (parallel) regnal years of the two coregent kings.[6] From Kawa Stela V 17 which mentions that Taharka was 20 years old in 701, when he was summoned to Lower Egypt by Shabataka (*FHN* 1.22), and assuming that Taharka was the son of Piye, Kahn concludes that Piye must have been alive untill at least 721 B.C. Since the Tang-i Var inscription mentions the date 706 B.C. as the *terminus ante quem* for the death of Shabaka, and since Shabaka's highest regnal year is 15, 721 was the last year in rule of Piye and the first regnal year of Shabaka, who in his view ruled between 721–707/6. Kahn calculated that Shabataka took over the throne between 24 November 707 and April 706 B.C.[7]

2.   AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

The detailed examination of Kahn would deserve a response much beyond the evaluation presented below. Given the rather restricted character of this study, however, I shall limit myself to two critical points which throw some light on the problem of Kahn's new chronological proposals.

Texts retelling the flight of Yamani all localise the hiding place of Yamani in the far southern region of Egypt. Both the Great Display Inscription and the Display Inscription of Room XIV mention *ana itê māt Muṣri ša pāṭ māt Meluḫḫa*, "to the neighbourhood of Egypt, which is bordered on Meluhha" while the Tang-i Var Inscription has *ana pāṭ māt Meluḫḫa*, "to the border of Meluhha". Assyrian *itû* means 'boundary', 'neighbour'. When used as an adverb (as in this case), it can be translated as 'alongside'.[8] *pāṭu*, a frequently attested expression in connection with descriptions of new territories annexed

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Period, 555–56, 583, 589; F. J. Yurco, "The Shabaka-Shebitku Coregency and the Supposed Second Campaign of Sennacherib against Judah: A Critical Assessment", *JBL* 110 (1991) 34–45; N. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 346.

[6] D. Kahn, "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25", *Or* 70 (2001) 6.

[7] Kahn, "Chronology", 1–18. Cf. K. Jansen-Winkeln, "Alara und Taharka: zur Geschichte des nubischen Königshauses", *Or* 72 (2003) 153 note 23; J. J. M. Roberts, "Egypt, Assyria, and Isaiah, and the Ashdod Affair—A Review Article", in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* (eds. A.G. Vaughn et al.; SBLSS 18; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 272. See further K. Dallibor, "Schebitqo und nicht Schabaqo hat Jamani von Aschdod an die Assyrer ausgeliefert. Der Keilschrifttext von Tang-i Var und seine Bedeutung für die 25. Dynastie", *MittSAG* 11 (2001) 41–50 (unavailable to me).

[8] *CDA* 137. Cf. also *ita*, 'adjacent to' in field descriptions (*CDA* 136).

by the Assyrian kings, means 'edge', 'rim', 'border'.[9] What these inscriptions state is that Yamani fled to that area of the land of Egypt, which was bordered on Meluhha.[10] The texts do not necessarily claim that Yamani fled to Aswan, i.e. right to the southern border, but rather to that part of Egypt, which was adjacent to Meluhha, i.e. Upper Egypt.

In discussions on the Tang-i Var Inscription scholars concentrated on the name of the king Shabataka, but made no attempt to solve the geographical problem posed by this text. What did Yamani do, to whom did he flee in Upper Egypt? The answer may be hidden in the detailed Display Inscription lns. 109–10, which mentions *šar māt Meluḫḫa ša ina qereb* LU[M] (?) x [x] *māt ú-ri-iz/ṣ-ṣ/zu ašar lā aʾāri uruḫ* […], "the king of the land of Meluhha, who was in […] in the land of Urissu, an inaccessible place[11] […]". According to this text, the king of Meluhha was in LU[M] (?) x [x] of the land of Urissu (*Uriṣṣu*). Urissu is undoubtedly the name of Upper Egypt, also called *māt Paturisi* (*Pa-tu-ri-si*) in the later texts of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal.[12] The signs following *ina qereb* are uncertain, but must refer to an area, a place, or the like (though it is not a GN because the determinative is lacking). The sign LUM can also stand for NÚM or NU4,[13] so that word in question may tentatively be reconstructed as *numê*, from *numû*, 'deserted region', 'wasteland'.

The localisation of *šar māt Meluḫḫa* neither in Memphis, nor in Napata, but in Upper Egypt is tantalising. This suggests that the king in Upper Egypt to whom Yamani had fled was a different ruler than the pharaoh seating in Memphis.[14] The tempting conclusion that one can draw from this is that while Sha-

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[9] See e.g. Tiglath-pileser III's Summary Inscription 4:6' (*ITP*, 138–39): *Galʾādi u Abil-*[…] *ša pāṭ Bīt-Ḫumria*, "the cities of Gilead and Abel-…, which are on the border of Israel (*Bīt-Ḫumria*)".

[10] A similar combination of the two expressions appears in the texts of Esarhaddon: *30 bēr qaqqari ultu Apqu ša pāṭi māt Samerina adi Rapiḫi ana itê Naḫal māt Muṣur ašar nāru la īšu* (*IAKA*, 112, lns. 16–17). In a discussion on the Yamani-passage, Na'aman suggested that the meaning of *ana itê* is "across the Egyptian border" ("The Brook of Egypt and Assyrian Policy on the Border of Egypt", *TA* 6 [1979] 73–74). This is unlikely, however, since Sargon's text does not state that Yamani actually crossed the southern border of Egypt, but that he was residing in Upper Egypt (hence Na'aman's proposal to translate the Esarhaddon text by "Raphia beyond the border of the Brook of Egypt", is also not convincing; but this does not affect his overall conclusion concerning the relocation of Nahal Musri).

[11] For a similar wording, cf. Nimrud Prism vii 45–56, Sennacherib's Taylor Prism i 19.

[12] Cf. the Hebrew אֶרֶץ פַּתְרוֹס (Jer 44:1; Ezek 29:14; 30:14), loaned from Egyptian *pꜣ tꜣ rsj*, "the land of the south". Cf. the name of Lower Egypt, *tꜣ mḥw*, "land of the north".

[13] Cf. sign nr. 307 in Wolfram von Soden & Wolfgang Röllig, *Das Akkadische Syllabar* (Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1991), 61, or nr. 900 in Rykle Borger, *Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon* (AOAT 303; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2004), 455.

[14] Contra Roberts, "Egypt", 280. Though Spalinger suggested that Shabaka returned to Kush after resolving the problems in Lower Egypt ("The Foreign Policy of Egypt Preceding the Assyrian Conquest", *CdÉ* 53 [1978] 25), we have no evidence that would support him, except for the questionable data of Herodotus, *Hist.* ii 139–40, 152, who may be referring to Piye.

baka was the pharaoh in Memphis, Shabataka, mentioned in the Tang-i Var inscription, was the "king" of Meluhha in Upper Egypt. Unfortunately the precise name of the location where this "king" was residing has not been preserved. But Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt, would seem a most obvious choice.[15] Thebes was a famous city, the last stronghold of two other kings, Taharka and Tanutamani, against Assyria. Assurbanipal's inscription from the Ishtar temple even calls Thebes "the royal residence of Egypt and Kush" (*ANET*, 297). From a northern perspective, with an ideological background of the Assyrian authors eager to emphasise how far Yamani had fled from the Assyrians and from how far he has been brought to Assyria,[16] Thebes *ina qereb māt Uriṣṣu* was far enough to convince the audience why Sargon did not go himself after the Philistine fugitive.

Another problem with Kahn's chronology is the Karnak Nile level inscription from year 3 of Shabataka (*FHN* 1.17), which suggests that after being crowned in Napata, Shabataka only went to Egypt in his third regnal year.[17] This means, that by the time Shabataka appears as king in Memphis, he has already been ruling for three years. If Shabataka was a sole ruler in Upper Egypt in 706, in order to exclude co-regencies with Kahn, we would need to date his enthronisation as king in Napata to 710/709 B.C.

These considerations lead us back once again to the co-regency theory also proposed in a first reaction to the Tang-i Var text by Redford. It must be admitted that Kahn has made a good case against the co-regency of two actual kings, i.e. pharaohs, if Shabaka's ascension would be dated to 712 (so Redford). But his signalised difficulties can be solved by reckoning Shabaka's rule from 717. The possibility also promoted by Hoffmeier in extension to the preliminary comments of Redford on the Tang-i Var text, should be considered

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[15] The description of the journey of the army of Assurbanipal to Thebes sounds similarly to the restoration proposed above for the text of Sargon. Assurbanipal's army has been following Tanutamani for a month and 10 days on "difficult paths" (*urḫī pašqūti*), "until Thebes" (*adi qereb Neʾ*) (Onasch, *Eroberungen*, 157 note 546). Kahn did not exclude the possibility that Thebes was a government centre ("Chronology", 6). Kawa Stela IV (*FHN* 1.21) lns. 7–10 suggests that when Taharka was called northwards, Shabataka had been ruling in *Thebes*: "up he came sailing northwards to Dominion (Thebes/*Wȝst*) [...] in order that he (Taharka) might be there with him (Shabataka)". Thebes was an important city in the Third Intermediate Period. While in the New Kingdom the viceroys of Kush still administer from Nubia, Panehsi, the king's son of Kush during Ramses XI (1101–1070) transferred his administrative seat from Nubia to Thebes. When Herihor becomes the new high priest of Thebes, he also bears the rank "governor of Nubia", even if by that time his title sounded somewhat unrealistic (cf. L. Kákosy, *Az ókori Egyiptom története és kultúrája* [Budapest: Osiris, 1998], 174).

[16] Note the stereotypical phrase in the Display Inscription lns. 109–11 mentioning the unique occasion of a king so far away from Assyria sending emissaries to Sargon.

[17] Cf. J. von Beckerath, "Über chronologische Berührungspunkte der altägyptischen und der israelitischen Geschichte", in *"Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf". Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient. Festschrift für Oswald Lorenz zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres* (eds. M. Dietrich et al.; AOAT 250; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), 98–99; L. Török, *FHN* 1.129; Schipper, *Israel*, 215.

seriously. Hoffmeier believes that Shabataka was actually appointed as the administrator of Nubia some time after Shabaka ascended the throne in the far northern Memphis. By appointing a new leader for the southern territories, the new pharaoh followed a well-established Egyptian administrative practice of the New Kingdom, with the Egyptian pharaoh ruling from Memphis and the King's Son (viceroy) of Kush as the administrator of the southern "provinces".[18] As we have seen, even Shabaka's choice of the governmental centre of the King's Son of Kush is established in age old Egyptian traditions. The function of the viceroy of Kush could have indeed been regarded as that of a *šarru*, a 'king' of Kush.[19]

Piye also mentions and acknowledges the kings (*nsw*) of Upper and Lower Egypt, even though he considers himself the only real *nsw*.[20] If Egyptian and Assyrian texts designate much smaller rulers of the Delta as 'kings', it is not surprising that this title was also applied to the chief administrator (viceroy) of the vast country of Kush. Piye and his successors have not put an end to the existing administrative system of Lower Egypt and they may have recognised the effectiveness of former Egyptian administration in Upper Egypt as well.

While Kahn rejected the idea of co-regency, it must be admitted that even if the rule of Shabaka is dated with Kahn to 721–707 B.C., the problem of co-regency would remain in some sense. For while Shabaka was the pharaoh of Upper and Lower Egypt, the Assyrian texts of Sargon II call Osorkon IV the king of Egypt (2.3.1.4.). The existence of *šar māt Meluḫḫa* (as referring to Shabataka) during Shabaka is just as (in)significant as is the appearance of *šar māt Muṣri* (as referring to Osorkon) beside Shabaka in the Assyrian texts referring to the year 716, without making any mention of Egypt's actual pharaoh. Though outside Sargon's texts alluding to a "king" somewhere in Upper Egypt we have no support for the viceregnal system of Shabaka and Shabataka, in a period so scantily documented, this is hardly suprising.

As Hoffmeier rightly pointed out, theoretically speaking, taken on itself, the Tang-i Var inscription would support the co-regency (viceregnal-system) theory as much as it would the theory of the successive rulership of the two

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[18] Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role", 229. Cf. also K. A. Kitchen, "Egyptian Interventions in the Levant in Iron Age II", in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors, from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* (eds. W. G. Dever & S. Gitin; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 127.

[19] O'Connor, *Nubia*, 59. Contrary to Hoffmeier, however ("Egypt's Role in the Events of 701 B.C.: A Rejoinder to J. J. M. Roberts", in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* [eds. A.G. Vaughn et al.; SBLSS 18, Atlanta: SBL], 287), the title *šar māt Meluḫḫa* does not in itself preclude that the person referred to as such was the pharaoh of Egypt and Kush. Note that Sennacherib's text refers to the princes of Egypt and the king of Meluhha (Nubia). The latter can hardly be anybody else but Shabataka, the Nubian king on the Egyptian throne. Similarly, Essarhaddon's texts refer to Taharka, the pharaoh of Egypt, as the king of Kush. *Meluḫḫa* sounded more impressive to the Assyrian king and his public. See also Kitchen, "Egyptian Interventions", 127.

[20] Cf. Sennacherib's *šarrāni Muṣuri*, "kings of Egypt" and *šar Meluḫḫi*, "kings of Meluhha". This latter was Shabataka, whose crown prince, Taharka, was leading the battle in 701. See also the kings of Egypt mentioned by Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal.

pharaohs.[21] Sargon's Tang-i Var inscription does not prove that Shabaka ceased to rule after 707. It only states that there was a king of Meluhha in 706. It is rather the list of further arguments and the plausibility of solutions that leads us in the one or the other direction. As argued, the mention of ^{m}*šá-pa-ta-ku-*[*u*]$^{?}$ *šar mât Meluḫḫa* of the Tang-i Var inscription does not necessarily mean that this king of Meluhha was also the pharaoh of Egypt when Yamani was sent to Assyria. If he was only a viceroy (as crown prince) of Kush (and Upper Egypt?), perhaps seating in Thebes, this would have been reason enough for the Assyrian scribes to call him a *šarru*. Even if the importance of the Tang-i Var text can hardly be underestimated, the rather programmatic suggestion of Frame, Kahn, Roberts and others concerning the need to actually rewrite Egypt's history of this period, would still need further convincing support. For the moment an updated traditional chronology (Shabaka 717–703 B.C. and Shabataka 706–703.703–690 B.C.) still provides an acceptable frame for reconstructing these hazardous years of Egypt's much discussed Third Intermediate Period.

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[21] Hoffmeier, "Rejoinder", 286–87.

EXCURSUS 3

מַשָּׂא—A NEW PROPOSAL FOR ITS ETYMOLOGY AND MEANING

מַשָּׂא appears nine times as a superscription in Isa 13–23.[1] Though relatively frequently used in the prophetic literature, it is still puzzling to find a suitable translation for this Hebrew lexeme. Many studies have sought to define the etymology of מַשָּׂא,[2] while others concentrated on the contexts of מַשָּׂא attempting to describe the common characteristics of מַשָּׂא-prophecies in relation to other writings.[3] Below I shall evaluate these views and make a new proposal for the etymology and meaning of מַשָּׂא.

1.   ATTEMPTS TOWARDS AN ETYMOLOGICAL DEFINITION OF מַשָּׂא

While discussions concerned with the meaning of מַשָּׂא differ considerably in their conclusions, almost all of them have one point in common: they consider מַשָּׂא a *maqtal* form of the verb נשא, 'to carry', 'to lift up'. This presupposition is subsequently dealt with in a variety of ways.[4]

1.1.   מַשָּׂא IN THE PROPHETS AND מַשָּׂא AS 'BURDEN'

מַשָּׂא appears in Hebrew several times in the sense of 'burden' that is carried or lifted up.[5] Treating מַשָּׂא in prophetic contexts and superscriptions similarly as

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[1] Isa 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1.11.13; 22:1; 23:1. With a similar sense the term מַשָּׂא appears in 2 Kgs 9:25; Prov 30:1; 31:1; Isa 30:6; Jer 23:33–40; Lam 2:14; Ezek 12:10; Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zech 9:1; 12:1 and Mal 1:1.

[2] H. Gehman, "The 'Burden' of the Prophets", *JQR* 31 (1940–41) 107–21; P. A. H. de Boer, "An Inquiry into the Meaning of the Term משא", in *Oudtestamentische Studiën* (Leiden: Brill, 1948), 5:197–214; J. A. Naudé, "*maśśāʾ* in the Old Testament with special reference to the prophets", in *Biblical Essays: Proceedings of the Twelfth Meeting of Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika* (ed. A. H. van Zyl; Potchefstroom: Pro Rege-Pers, 1971), 91–100; M. Saebø, "Der Begriff מַשָּׂא als Überschrift und Fachwort in den Profetenbüchern", 3. Excurs in *Sacharia 9–14. Untersuchungen von Text und Form* (WMANT 34; Neukirchener: Neukirchen–Vluyn, 1968), 137–40; W. McKane, "משא in Jeremiah 23,33–40" in *Prophecy: Essays Presented to Georg Fohrer on His Sixty-fifth Birthday* (ed. J. A. Emerton; BZAW 150; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980), 35–54; H.-P. Müller, "מַשָּׂא", *TWAT* 5:20–25; B. Jones, *Howling over Moab: Irony and Rhetoric in Isaiah 15–16* (SBLDS 157; Scholars: Atlanta, 1996), 62–88.

[3] R. D Weis, "A Definition of the Genre *maśśāʾ* in the Hebrew Bible", (Ph. D. diss.; Claremont Graduate School, 1986). Cf. Idem, "Oracle", *ABD* 5:28–29; M. H. Floyd, "The מַשָּׂא (*Maśśāʾ*) as a Type of Prophetic Book", *JBL* 121 (2002) 401–22; M. Boda, "Freeing the Burden of Prophecy: *Maśśāʾ* and the Legitimacy of Prophecy in Zech 9–14", *Bib* 87 (2006) 338–57. These authors contrast their rhetorical (Weis, Floyd) or tradition critical (Boda) analysis with earlier etymological studies, but they are in fact concerned with other aspects than the search for a meaning of מַשָּׂא.

[4] Some ancient Jewish exegetes derive מַשָּׂא from a verb different from נשא, 'to lift up', like שא (Menahem ben Jacob), or נשא (Jonah ibn Janah), either way arriving to the conclusion that מַשָּׂא is 'public address, oration' (Arabic *ḫiṭāb*) or 'speech, statement' (Arabic *kalām*) (Jonah ibn Janah). Cf. Weis, The Genre *maśśāʾ*, 21–25.

[5] E.g. Ex 23:5; 2 Kgs 5:17; 8:9; figuratively in 2 Sam 19:36. Note also the meaning

'burden', is an old post-biblical understanding of the term, advocated by some of the ancient versions either in most[6] or in all[7] cases. In modern studies the translation 'burden' was defended by Gehman and De Boer. They assume that מַשָּׂא refers to "burdensome oracles". In a superscription they interpret מַשָּׂא as "the burden imposed on" e.g. Egypt, or "the burden imposed on the prophet".[8]

However, scholars have pointed out that this approach fails to meet both textual and methodological challenges. Some texts clearly do not allow the translation 'burden'. While many of the prophecies appear as judgment oracles, this content may not be characteristic to the whole prophecy ahead of which the inscription appears (see e.g. Isa 19). Furthermore, there is nothing that would allude to judgment in Lam 2:14; Zech 12, or even Isa 21:11–12.[9] Moreover, the use of the verb חזה in connection with מַשָּׂא in Isa 13:1, makes the rendering 'burden' unlikely. Finally, it deserves mentioning that some texts are constructed as a word play on the semantic connotations of מַשָּׂא as 'burden', on the one hand, and מַשָּׂא as some kind of 'prophecy', on the other.[10] Such a word play[11] is more likely with homonyms than when there was only one term

'duty', 'office' appearing among others in Num 4:15.19.24; 1 Chr 15:27.

[6] Cf. the Latin *onus* in the Vulg. for all texts except Prov 30:1; 31:1 (*visio*) and Lam 2:14 (*adsumptiones*). *Tg. Jon.* rendered נבואתא, 'prophecy' once (2 Kgs 9:25), but otherwise מטל, 'burden' (Isa 13:1; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1.11.13; 23:1), מטל נבואתא (Isa 14:28; 22:1; Ezek 12:10; Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zech 9:1), or מטל פתגמא (Zech 12:1; Mal 1:1). In the Syr. we generally find *mšklʾ*, 'burden' (Isa 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1.11.13; 22:1; 23:1; cf. also Ezek 12:10), further *ptgmʾ*, 'sentence', 'verdict' (2 Kgs 9:25; Zech 9:1), *mḥwth* ('burden'? Nah 1:1), *ḥzwʾ* ('vision', Hab 1:1), *ḥzwʾ dptgmwhy* (Zech 12:1; Mal 1:1).

The rendering of the LXX is divergent. In Jer 23, Hab–Mal, 2 Kgs 9:25 (LXX[B]) and Lam 2:14, the Greek translated λῆμμα, a derivate of λαμβάνω, i.e. 'something received', 'income', but sometimes also 'argument', 'theme'. Beside these texts, λῆμμα also translates שְׂאֵת (Job 31:23; Hab 1:7). In Isa 13–23, the Greek term appearing is ὅρασις, ὅραμα 'vision', or ῥῆμα, 'speech'. However, except for Isa 13:1; 14:28; 19:1 and 30:6 the LXX manuscript variously have ῥῆμα and ὅραμα (cf. J. Ziegler's discussion in *Isaias* [Septuaginta 14; 2d. ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967], 96–97).

[7] Aquila renders consistently ἄρμα, and Symmachos and Theodotion λῆμμα.

[8] This view shared by other scholars (Sæbø) and many bible translations (KJV, ASV, etc.). In commenting Gen 15:1, *Gen. Rab.* 44.6 mentions the ten names by which prophecy is called: נבואה, חזון, הטפה, דיבור, אמירה, ציווי, משא, משל, מליצה, חידה. As for the question which one the severest of all was, rabbis pointed to מַשָּׂא with the comment "as its name indicates". The sages treated the term מַשָּׂא as a name for prophecy, like 'vision', etc. On the other side, they also connected it with מַשָּׂא, 'burden'.

[9] Statistically speaking, this evidence is not too meagre if we reckon with the fact that the vast majority of prophecies were judgment oracles. Besides, one may note that מַשָּׂא also appears in Prov 30:1 and 31:1, which are not prophecies. For מַשְׂאוֹת שָׁוְא in Lam 2:14, probably referring to salvation oracles, cf. Ezek 12:24 (חֲזוֹן שָׁוְא) and Jer 23:22–38.

[10] Cf. Jer 23:33–40 and most likely also Isa 30:6. מַשָּׂא בַּהֲמוֹת נֶגֶב is first of all "a מַשָּׂא concerning the beasts of Negev" referring to the burden of the beasts carrying (cf. נשא) treasures to Egypt. But the word choice of Isaiah is clearly ambivalent. מַשָּׂא בַּהֲמוֹת נֶגֶב also alludes at the prophetic מַשָּׂא as an utterance against those driving the beasts.

[11] Weis does not explain Jer 23:33–40 as a word play, but his treatment of this text is

מַשָּׂא meaning 'burden'. The methodological failure of this approach is—as also pointed out by Weis—that the logic of "one word / one meaning" defended by scholars proposing this translation, *a priori* excludes the existence of homonyms.[12] While one can make a case for a contextual definition of a lexeme, judgment speech is very common in prophecy. Unlike Gehman suggested, this context is too broad and too vague to be taken as a sense identifier.

1.2.   מַשָּׂא IN THE PROPHETS AND מַשָּׂא AS 'SENTENCE'

Much of what has been pointed out above also applies to the approach of Naudé, although he deals with the case of homonyms differently. Naudé interprets מַשָּׂא in the light of Num 11:11.17 and Deut 1:12. In these texts Moses is told to bear the מַשָּׂא of the people. Since מַשָּׂא is followed in Deut 1:12 by the noun רִיב, Naudé translated מַשָּׂא by 'sentence' or 'verdict'. He also emphasises the larger context, Num 11, in which after receiving the spirit, the 70 elders begin to prophesy. This prophesying he regarded as important in view of the prophetic usages of מַשָּׂא, althouth he does not make clear in what sense.[13] The activity of Moses he describes as pronouncing judgment based on the Torah.

The concentration of multiple aspects of a larger passage into one lexeme is a prominent difficulty in Naudé's approach. It is unlikely that the expression מַשָּׂא הָעָם (Num 11:11.17) would refer only to the forensic activity of Moses. He provides no explanation how the enumeration of רִיב among the activities of Moses (vss. 12–14) should lead to the identification of רִיב and מַשָּׂא. Note that Deut 1:12 also contains the noun טֹרַח, 'burden' alongside מַשָּׂא and רִיב.[14]

1.3.   מַשָּׂא AND נשׂא קול, "TO LIFT UP THE VOICE"

Being aware of the difficulties of former attempts, a number of scholars argued that מַשָּׂא does not mean 'burden' when used in connection with prophecy, but it must be considered a shortened form of נשׂא קול, "to lift up one's voice". This interpretation has gained wide acceptance since it had first been formulated.[15]

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not convincing (Weis, "The Genre *maśśā*", 81–102). Torczyner recognised the world play, but in some verses he read מַשָּׁא, 'debt' (with שׁ) instead of מַשָּׂא, 'burden' (H. Torczyner, "מַשָּׂא יהוה", MGWJ 76 [1932] 273–84; cf. De Boer, "The Term מַשָּׂא", 211).

[12] Weis, "The Genre *maśśā*", 17 note 39. Note the derivates of נשׂא: מַשָּׂא, 'tribute', 'present' (2 Chr 17:11; Hos 8:10); מַשָּׂא, 'office' (Num 4:15); מַשָּׂא / מַשָּׁא, 'debt', 'loan' (also מַשָּׁאָה). See further מַשְׂאֵה, 'present' (in Ezek 20:40; of sacrifices, cf. רוּם and תְּרוּמָה); מַשָּׂאָה, 'exaltation', 'dignity' (Isa 30:27, cf. Job 31:23, synonym of שְׂאֵת in Gen 49:3) and מַשְׂאֵת, 'signal' (Jer 6:1; cf. מַשְׂאֵת עָשָׁן in Judg 20:38 as smoke signal; see further Akkadian *maššû*, *massû* or *mansû*). The existence of these derivates with a wide range of meanings questions the view that מַשָּׂא derived from נשׂא should automatically be rendered as 'burden(some oracle)'.

[13] Naudé, "*maśśā*", 91–92.

[14] Despite methodological problems in Naudé's study, his conclusion—that מַשָּׂא means 'sentence', or 'verdict'—may still be applied to some texts (though not in those cases he argued for). דָּבָר (as argued below, a synonym of מַשָּׂא) may also mean 'dispute' (Ex 18:16.19), 'verdict' (Deut 17:9; 2 Chr 19:6). Cf. שְׂאֵת in Hab 1:7; Job 31:23 and LXX.

[15] Vitringa was the first to propose this etymology (Weis, "The Genre *maśśā*"). See

The problem with this proposal is, however, that there is no evidence that
נשא קול could be shortened to מַשָּׂא. The verb נשא appears in a dozen of differ-
ent *idiomatic* constructions, of which נשא קול is only one.[16] It seems improbable
that a verb so widely used with different senses, could have been shortened to
a noun with such a definite semantic connotation. The fact that we deal here
with idioms makes the presupposed existence of such an abridged form even
less likely, since the meaning in this case is delimited by a construct chain and
not by one single lexeme.[17] Finally, one should bear in mind that נשא קול
means "to give a sound", and does not refer to speaking in intelligible speech.[18]

2.   A NEW PROPOSAL FOR THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE TERM מַשָּׂא

2.1.   מַשָּׂא—SYNTAGMATIC AND PARADIGMATIC RELATIONSHIPS

A number of texts in the Hebrew Bible demonstrate that verbs related to מַשָּׂא
are also used in connection with דָּבָר. Important is היה and חזה.[19] Furthermore,
the two expressions, מַשָּׂא and דָּבָר, are occasionally used as synonyms. Jeremiah
23:33–40 seemingly suggests that דְּבַר יהוה is a (better) alternative for מַשָּׂא
יהוה. The legitimate question addressed to the prophet would be מַה־דִּבֶּר יהוה or
מֶה־עָנָה יהוה (Jer 23:35), but not מַה־מַשָּׂא יהוה (Jer 23:33). Even if the idea be-
hind this prohibition still remains somewhat obscure,[20] the synonymy is evi-

further Müller, מַשָּׂא, *TWAT* 5:21–22; Wildberger, 505–6; B. Gosse, *Isaïe 13,1–14,23
dans la tradition littéraire du livre d'Isaïe et dans la tradition des oracles contre les nations*
(OBO 78; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1988), 91; Blenkinsopp, 278; etc.
[16] Cf. J. C. Lübbe, "Idioms in the Old Testament", *JS* 11 (2002) 45–63.
[17] Different is מַשָּׂא, 'burden' developed from 'that what is lifted up', or מַשָּׂא as 'office'
or 'task' (Num 4:15.19; 1QSᵃ 1:20; 1QHᵃ 9:12; etc.) from נשא, 'to install in office'.
[18] נשא קול is barely used on its own. A verb is most frequently added following the
pattern נשא קול + ו + verb. E.g. בכה (Gen 21:16; 27:38; Judg 2:4; 21:2; 1 Sam 11:4;
etc.), קרא (Judg 9:7). נשא קול simply means that the action described by the secondary
verb is performed loudly, i.e. "weeping loudly", "speaking (expressed by קרא but not by
נשא) loudly". נשא קול is in this sense a synonym for רום קול (with רום in hiph'il; cf.
Gen 39:15.18; 2 Kgs 19:22; Isa 13:2; 37:23; 40:9; 58:1; etc.) or נתן קול (Gen 45:2; Ps
104:12; Prov 8:1; Jer 22:20). However, one cannot argue that מרום or מתן would mean
'speech', 'pronouncement'. Note other idiomatic constructions with נשא, such as נשא
+ יד + נשא, עין + (also used with an additional verb; he raised up his eyes *and* saw), +
פנים + נשא + לב + נשא + ראש, etc., different parts of the human body. Although נשא is
frequently used in these syntagmatic relationships, none of these constructions has
become simplified to מַשָּׂא. Num 14:1; Job 21:12; Isa 3:7 and 42:2.11 were mentioned
as a proof that נשא can designate the act of speaking on its own. However, in Num
14:1 נשא is not used on its own, but either both נשא and נתן have the same object קול,
or כָּל should be emended to קול. As for Job 21:12; Isa 3:7 and 42:2.11, see below.
[19] חזה. היה with מַשָּׂא appears in Isa 14:28, and היה with דָּבָר in e.g. Gen 15:1; Jer 1:2.
with מַשָּׂא we find in Isa 13:1; Lam 2:14; Hab 1:1, and חזה with דָּבָר in e.g. Isa 2:1.
[20] Cf. the discussions of Torczyner, "מַשָּׂא יהוה", 273–84; McKane, "Jeremiah 23,33–
40"; Boda, "Burden", 352–54. This text is appended to a polemic against prophets,
Jeremiah's adversaries. In this fight of Jeremiah for the acceptance of his words, par-
ticular emphasis falls on other prophets as visionaries (Jer 23:25–32) and as those pro-
claiming salvation (Jer 23:17). However, the reluctance of Jeremiah to accept terming

dent. מַשָּׂא is identified with דְּבַר־יהוה in 2 Kgs 9:25–26. In Prov 31:1 דְּבַר and מַשָּׂא are similarly attested in parallelism.[21]

מַשָּׂא is further elucidated by Sir 9:18, which contains the following phrase: ביטה נורא בעד איש לשון ומשא על פיהו ישונא.[22] The most likely rendering of this sentence is: "The thoughtless speech is feared in the oath of a slanderer, and the מַשָּׂא on his lips is hated".[23] מַשָּׂא definitely denotes here some kind of speech, most likely not an everyday form of speaking, but one opposite to gossip (ביטה) and closer to the solemn character of an oath (עד). This special aspect of a מַשָּׂא-speech also appears in Prov 30:1 and 31:1.

A similar parallelism appears in 1Q27 i 8: נכון הדבר לבוא ואמת המשא, "this word shall surely come to pass, this prophecy (משא) is true".[24]

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his prophetic utterances as מַשָּׂא does not mean that he considered מַשָּׂא a vision rather than a speech, nor that it designated in his view a prophecy of salvation (either implicitly, as a doom against a foreign nation [cf. Saebø, "Der Begriff מַשָּׂא", 138–39], or explicitly). It is more probable that the salvation oracles of false prophets rejected by Jeremiah were generally introduced as מַשָּׂא (cf. Lam 2:14: מַשְׂאוֹת שָׁוְא וּמַדּוּחִים), and this is the reason why Jeremiah deliberately avoided its use for his very diverging message (cf. also Torczyner, "מַשָּׂא יהוה", 279). Similarly, visions and dream as means of revelation are vehemently criticised by Jer 23:16.25–32.

[21] Weis believes that מַשָּׂא in Prov 30:1 and 31:1 is the name of a location in North Arabia, identical with Massa of Gen 25:14 ("The Genre *maśśāʾ*", 369–78). However, this interpretation is questionable. Even Weis seems to be undecided, for on p. 371 he maintains that "the structure of the superscription under this interpretation [namely with *maśśāʾ* as a place name] corresponds well with the structure typical of superscriptions in the prophetic books...". Understanding Prov 30:1 geographically would require a gentilic י, which is, however, absent. מַשָּׂא in Prov 31:1 was understood by the Massoretes as introducing a new verse line and not as forming a construct chain with מֶלֶךְ. There are close resemblances between Prov 30:1 and the *superscription* of the speech of David in 2 Sam 23:1, a text that presents the last words of David in the form of an inspired speech, a prophetic utterance (cf. the use of נְאֻם). It may be interesting to note for Prov 31:1 that the verb יסר is also used alongside מַשָּׂא in the Deir ʿAlla plaster inscription (*ysr spr blʿm … km šʾl*, "the instructions of the book of Bileam … according to the *mšʾ* of El"; cf. E. Lipinski, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II* [OLA 57; Leuven: Peeters, 1994], 118–19; Seow, *PPANE*, 209). Cf. E2.2. below.

[22] Manuscript A (cf. P. C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew* [VTS 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997], 34). The LXX differs from the Hebrew text in reading עֱ[י]ר instead of עד, dismissing ביטה in the translation, and rendering מַשָּׂא as ὁ προπετής, (the one) 'harsh', 'reckless' (in speech). Skehan follows the LXX when translating "Feared in the city is the person of railing speech / and whoever talks harshly is hated." (*The Wisdom of Ben Sira* [AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987], 221).

[23] So also G. Sauer, *Jesus Sirach / Ben Sira* (ATDA 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 102. Cf. Prov 1:22b and 13:5. The Hebrew text is difficult. ישונא can only be the puʿal form of שנא (יְשׁוּנָּא, 'to be hated') or שנא (יְשׁוּנָּא, 'to be altered'). על פיהו may mean either "in his mouth" (Ex 23:13), or idiomatically "at his command" (2 Sam 13:32; Job 39:27), "according to him" (cf. Gen 45:21; Ex 17:1; etc.). The meaning of the translation above is that one hates the מַשָּׂא that the slanderer utters.

[24] In 4Q160 1.4 מַשָּׂא substitutes the Massoretic מַרְאֶה (cf. 1 Sam 3:15). מַרְאֶה like דבר refers to a means of revelation. In 4Q410 1.8–9 משא appears in parallelism with חָזוֹן

These cases demonstrate that in post-biblical Hebrew מַשָּׂא was understood as a speech act.[25] Proverbs 30:1; 31:1; Sir 9:18 suggest that מַשָּׂא is an eloquent form of speaking, one more formal in style. Although מַשָּׂא is not restricted to prophecy, this kind of eloquent speech was, just like prophetic revelation, regarded as more than human, somehow related to God, as the wisdom of Solomon derived from God. Here מַשָּׂא comes close to the otherwise etymologically also debated noun נְאֻם, alongside which it appears in Prov 30:1 and Zech 12:1

2.2.   POSSIBLE COGNATES OF HEBREW מַשָּׂא

Beside examples from post-biblical Hebrew, cognates of מַשָּׂא appear in some other languages as well. Important is the Deir ʿAlla plaster inscription in which *mšʾ / mśʾ* appears in a partially broken context.[26] *mšʾ / mśʾ* is used here in connection with the vision-prophecy of Balaam in a striking combination with the divine name, *mšʾ / mśʾ ʾl*, "the *mšʾ / mśʾ* of El" (cf. מַשָּׂא יהוה in Jer 32:33).

Since the relationship between נשא, 'to lift up' and the prophetic מַשָּׂא was taken as granted, the Akkadian etymological background has barely been noticed. Nevertheless, in Akkadian we find the lexeme *massûtu* (var. *malsûtu*), 'reading-out', 'lecture',[27] which is derived from a well-known verb *šasû* (Old Akkadian *šasāʾu*, Middle and New Assyrian *sasāʾu*[28]), in G meaning 'to shout', 'to call (out)' (a song, lamentation); 'to announce' (of heralds); 'to address', 'to appeal to' (god, king); 'to lay a claim against' (with *eli* or *ina muḫḫi*).[29] *šasû* is the synonym of *nabûm* (cf. נבא), both equalled with the Sumerian g ù . d é in Sumero-Akkadian bilinguals. It is possible that מַשָּׂא is derived from *massûtu*.[30]

[ועל | על יהוד | על יהוד [?] משא [cf. Hab 2:3 and 4Q291 1.2]; ולוא החריש החזון | ולוא יכזב המשא]
החזון [?] בית ישראל) (cf. מַשָּׂאוֹת and חֶזְיוֹן in Lam 2:14 and Ezek 12:24).

[25] Weis assumed that these authors were unaware of the meaning of מַשָּׂא. But his reasoning tends to be circular: "Given the definition of *maśśāʾ* that we will develop in this study, we can see that these usages do not represent a living knowledge of the term…" ("The Genre *maśśāʾ*", 5). It is expected that one examines available material first and not to evaluate this material within the frames of an already existent conclusion.

[26] The phrase was variously reconstructed: *wyḥz . mḥzh . kmšʾ . ʾl*, "and he saw a vision according to the *mšʾ* of El" (J. A. Hackett, *The Balaam Text of Deir ʿAlla* [HSM 31; Chico: Scholars Press, 1980], 33); *wyʾmrn . lh . kmšʾ ʾl*, "and they explained him the very oracle of El" (M. Weippert, "The Balaam Text From Deir ʿAlla and the Study of the Old Testament", in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* [eds. J. Hoftijzer & G. van der Kooij; Leiden: Brill, 1991], 154); *wyštmw . lh . kmšʾ . ʾl*, "and they disclosed to him the very instruction of El" (Lipinski, *Studies*, 115–16). [*wydbrw . l]h . km[š]ʾ ʾl*, "and spoke to him according to the oracle of El" (Seow, *PPANE*, 209–10).

[27] CDA 200; this lexeme appears also at the end of tablets as a subscript: *malsût* PN, 'reading of PN', CAD š 2.171. Cf. also 'Anruf' in *DAW* 312.

[28] For the š > s change cf. Y. Kaufmann, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (Assyriological Studies 19; Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1974), 140–42.

[29] Note also *šassāʾum*, 'wailer', 'shouter'; *šisu* (var. *šīsû, tīsû*); 'cry', 'summons'; *šisītu* (var. *sisītu, tisītu*), 'proclamation' (of herald), 'shout' (of battle), 'roar' (of waterfalls).

[30] The final *t* (fem.) can be explained as a further phonetic development inside the Akkadian. Strikingly, Hebrew מַשְׂאֵת, 'signal' corresponds to *massû* in Akkadian.

There is also another option however. As a further synonym for *šasû*, lexical lists also mention *ragāmu*, 'to cry out', *qabû*, 'to speak', and most importantly a verb *našûm* (cf. *CAD š* 2.149).[31] *našûm* as a synonym of *šasû* appears in the Akkadian texts from Alalah. Text 126:29 contains the following phrase: *aššum nīš Ištar bēlti ul tiššû*, "because you have not taken an oath by the mistress Istar". Taking an oath (*nīš ilāni*) is generally expressed with the verbs *zakāru*, 'to speak', 'say', 'pronounce' and *tâmû*, 'to swear'. In the Alalah text, however, the verb appearing with *nīš* is *našûm*, for which the paradigmatic relationship suggests the meaning 'to speak', 'to utter'.[32] There is thus an Akkadian (or NW Semitic loanword?) *našûm*, "to speak", which could be related to Hebrew נשא.

Akkadian *šasû* (*sasāʾu*) is cognate to the Ethiopic (Geʿez) *śāʾśəʾa* (*śāʿśəʿa* / *sāʿsəʿa*), 'to speak well', 'speak clearly'; 'to answer (promptly)'.[33] *śāʾśəʾa* is most likely related to *wśʾ* or *ʾawśəʾa*, 'to answer', 'to respond', 'to respond in chant', with the loss of *w* and the reduplication of the stem consonants *śʾ*.[34] Brockelmann also mentions here the Arabic cognate *ʾanšaʾa*, 'to speak', 'to answer'.[35]

Etymologically the Akkadian *našûm*, *šasû* (*sasāʾu*), the verbal form of *mšʾ* / *mśʾ* in Deir ʿAlla, the Ethiopic *śāʾśəʾa* (*wśʾ*) and Arabic *ʾanšaʾa* point towards a common Semitic root *śʾ*, from which these may have developed, either with reduplication of stem consonants, or by adding an *n*.[36]

2.3.   POSSIBLE CASES OF נשא EXPRESSING SPEAKING IN THE BIBLE

The existence of a Hebrew verb נשא with a meaning close to Akkadian *našûm* (Semitic *śʾ*) may be deduced from several texts in the Bible.[37] Isaiah 3:7 could

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[31] The names of prophets in Babylonian and Assyrian texts, *raggimu*, *nābû* (in Emar also *munabbiātu*), *qabbātu*, are all derived from verbs meaning 'to speak', 'to call', etc.

[32] The form *tiššû* is influenced by NW Semitic (Akkadian *taššû*), a phenomenon also known from the Amarna Letters (see M. Tsevat, "Alalakhiana", *HUCA* 29 [1958], 130). In Nuzi the oath formula actually appears as *ilāni našûm*. Tsevat also mentioned the possibility of relationship of the Akkadian *našûm* with the Hebrew מַשָּׂא.

[33] See also the derivates *śāʾśāʿ* (also as *sāʾsāʿ* and *śəʾśāʾe*), 'eloquence', 'pleasantness of speech', 'refined manner of speaking' and *śəʾśuʾ*, 'eloquent', 'well-spoken' (*CDG* 524).

[34] Cf. *tawāśəʾa*, *tawaśʾa*, 'discuss', 'dispute', 'argue', 'quarrel', 'speak against', 'defend a case'; *tawāśəʾot*, 'debate', 'speech', 'rely', 'dispute', 'argument'; *mośāʾ* (pl. *mawāśəʾt*; cf. מַשָּׂא) 'antiphonal chant', 'response' (*CDG* 620–21). Based upon Ethiopic, Jacob Barth argued for the existence of a Hebrew verb *ושא*, which he believed to have appeared in Ex 20:7 (לֹא־תִשָּׂא אֶת־שֵׁם). Cf. J. Barth, *Etymologische Studien* (Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1893), 63–64.

[35] The interchange between *n* and *w* in South-Semitic is discussed by C. Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen. Laut- und Formenlehre* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1908), 1:595; T. Nöldeke, *Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* (Strassburg, 1910), 193–4. For he interchange *n* / *w* / *y* in Akkadian, cf. *GAG*, 176, 178, 181.

[36] As seen above in note 29, some derivates of the Akkadian *šasû* (*sasāʾu*) also lack the stem consonant reduplication (cf. *tīsû*, 'cry', 'summons', and *tisītu*, 'proclamation'). For the *n* as "Wurzelaugment", cf. W. von Soden's notes in *GAG*, 175–84.

[37] De Boer has unsuccessfully tried to enclose these texts in his one word / one meaning scheme (De Boer, "The Term מַשָּׂא", 212).

be easily understood in this way, without any textual emendation:[38]

> For should a man seize his brother, in whose father's house there is clothing: "Come, be a chief over us, and let this ruin be under your care!", on that day, the other will cry out (יִשָּׂא בַיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר): "I am no healer, in my house there is neither food nor clothing, do not make me leader of the people."

The same understanding of נשא gives a perfect sense to Isa 42:2:

> He shall not cry out (יִצְעַק) or shout aloud (יִשָּׂא),
> or make his voice heard (יַשְׁמִיעַ...קוֹלוֹ) in the streets.

Note the parallelism with צעק. Similarly, this sense of נשא also suits Isa 42:11, where the verb נשא (without an object) is used along רנן, צוח, and שיר (42:10):

> Let the desert and its towns cry aloud (יִשְׂאוּ),
>   the villages where Kedar dwells.
> Let Sela's inhabitants shout (יָרֹנּוּ),
> call out (יִצְוָחוּ) from the peaks of the mountains.

The translation 'to shout' (of joy) is also suggested for נשא in Job 21:12, paralleled by שמח. These cases suggest that there is a Hebrew verb נשא II, different from נשא I 'to lift up', expressing verbal activity ('to cry [aloud]').[39]

> Above I have noted some idiomatic constructions of נשא used with parts of the human body (cf. note 17). However, a different group of lexemes appear with the verb נשא, denoting some kind of verbal activity: מָשָׁל (Num 23:7.18; 24:3.15.20.21.23; Job 27:1; 29:1; Isa 14:4; Mic 2:4; Hab 2:6), קִינָה (Jer 7:29; Ezek 19:1; 26:17; 27:2.32; 28:12; 32:2; Am 5:1), נְהִי (Jer 9:17), תְּפִלָּה (Isa 37:4; Jer 7:16; 11:14), שֵׁמַע (Ex 23:1), רִנָּה (Jer 7:16, with the prep. בְּ), זִמְרָה (Ps 81:3), אָלָה (1 Kgs 8:31), and most importantly מַשָּׂא. נשא קינה is the same as קין (cf. 2 Sam 1:17; Ezek 32:16), נשא נְהִי the same as נהה נְהִי (Mic 2:4), תְּפִלָּה is the same as פלל, נשא מָשָׁל the same as משל, etc. It is the noun attached to נשא and not this verb that specifies the kind of activity that is taking place. In other words, נשא, when used on its own, cannot substitute any of the verbs. Note at the same time the paradigmatic relationship between lexemes like קִינָה, מָשָׁל, מַשָּׂא etc., which all function similarly from a syntactical point of view, as objects of the verb נשא. However, these formations of the verb נשא with nouns denoting verbal activity should most likely be connected to the well-known נשא, 'to lift up' (in this case meaning 'to issue', etc.).[40] This is supported by other constructions that should most likely be regarded as idiomatic, constructed with נשא, 'to lift up': נשא שֵׁם (Ex 20:7), נשא (ספר חק | Ps 50:16) נשא בְּרִית (Ex 32:1), שֵׁמַע. In Ps 50:16 the verb נשא is

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[38] The emendation was suggested mainly on grounds of haplography (dismissal of קוֹל). The proposal of De Boer that יַד in vs. 6 would be the object of נשא (De Boer, "The Term מַשָּׂא", 212) is also unlikely.

[39] The verb may also be related to the Hebrew noun שָׁאוֹן, 'roar' (of waters; cf. the Akkadian šisītu (var. sisītu and tisītu). שָׁאוֹן also survived mainly in the nominal form. The verbal (denominative?) form שָׁאָה (or שׁוֹא), 'to roar' is found in Isa 17:12. For the interrelation between שׁוֹא / שׁוֹא and נשא or נשא, cf. נשא / נשא / שׁוֹא / שָׁאָה (שׁוֹא in HALOT).

[40] Cf. Akkadian šakānum, 'to issue' used with rigmu, 'sound', qību, 'pronouncement', sipittu, 'lamentation'.

used with the preposition עַל: תִּשָּׂא בְרִיתִי עֲלֵי־פִיךָ. Cf. Ps 16:4, בַּל־אֶשָּׂא
אֶת־שְׁמוֹתָם עַל־שְׂפָתָי. The expression attested here is also known from the Old
Aramaic as *nśʾ ʿl šptym*, "to take upon one's lips". The construction נשא נְהִי
may be considered therefore a shorter form of *נשא נְהִי עַל־שָׂפָה.

Even if one disputed the appearance of the verbal form נשא, 'to cry out', 'to
speak out', the possibility would still remain that מַשָּׂא was loaned into Hebrew
from Akkadian (Assyrian) in a nominal form (viz. *massûtu*).[41]

One last problem needs a further note. In Zech 9:1; 12:1; and Mal 1:1 the
syntax of מַשָּׂא דְבַר־יהוה is strange. Sellin and Saebø argue that if מַשָּׂא was ren-
dered as 'utterance', this expression would sound like an unnatural tautology.[42]
Whether tautology or not, such a construction is not exceptional in Hebrew. It
makes the close semantic relationship between מַשָּׂא and דְבַר־יהוה more evi-
dent. For similar structures, see e.g. דֶּרֶךְ אָרְחֹתֶיךָ מְטַר גֶּשֶׁם (Job 37:6; Zech 10:1),
אֹהֶל בֵּיתִי (Ps 132:3), מְעוֹן בֵּיתֶךָ (Ps 26:8), כַּחֲלוֹם חֶזְיוֹן לַיְלָה (Isa 29:7), [לַיְלָה] (Isa 3:12),
or the even more intriguing הַמַּשָּׂא נְאֻם (Prov 30:1).[43] It is, however, also possi-
ble that מַשָּׂא is a title, independent from דְבַר־יהוה (cf. e.g. NRSV).

Concluding, מַשָּׂא should not be related to the Hebrew נשא, "to lift up". It
is more likely that either מַשָּׂא is a derivate of נשא II, 'to shout', 'to cry', etc.,
which has parallels in other Semitic languages, or מַשָּׂא (like נְאֻם) is an Ak-
kadian (Assyrian) loanword, given its rather restrictive use and similarities
with *massûtu*, 'lecture', 'reading-out', in how it was applied mainly as a super-
scription above prophetic texts.[44]

3.   IS מַשָּׂא A GENRE?

The Hebrew מַשָּׂא should probably be rendered as 'pronouncement', 'cry'. As
for the syntax of מַשָּׂא, in most cases it appears without a preposition. Excep-
tions might be Isa 21:13 (בְּ) and the three interrelated forms in Zech 9:1 (בְּ);
12:1 (עַל) and Mal 1:1 (אֶל). However, the connection between the preposi-
tions and מַשָּׂא is on these places not clear. As it was noted, מַשָּׂא may be an

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[41] The case may be similar with נְאֻם. Some relate נְאֻם to Arabic *naʾama*, 'to howl', 'to
growl', 'to sigh' (H. Eising, נְאֻם, *TWAT* 5:120), but it is more likely a cognate to Ak-
kadian *umma*, to which the Eblaite (and Old Akkadian) *enma* is also related. See C. H.
Gordon, "Vocalised Consonants: The Key to *um-ma* / *en-ma* / נְאֻם", in *The Tablet and
the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (eds. M. E. Cohen et al.;
Bethesda: CDL Press, 1993), 109–10. *umma*, and the earlier *enma* (*CDA* 74), are used
to introduce direct speech (cf. נְאֻם in some cases). נְאֻם is generally used as a designa-
tion of YHWH's speech, with a few exceptions (like 2 Sam 23:1, but see vss. 2–3). The
verbal form of נְאֻם appears only in Jer 23:31 as a denominative.
[42] E. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch* (KAT 12/2; Leipzig: A. Deichertsche, 1930, 547,
Saebø, "Der Begriff מַשָּׂא, 140. Cf. also Gehman, "Burden", 118.
[43] נְאֻם־יהוה is also mentioned with מַשָּׂא דְבַר־יהוה in Zech 12:1. According to McKane,
the intention of דְבַר־יהוה is to define מַשָּׂא more explicitly (McKane, "Jeremiah 23,33–
40", 36). Cf. also the appearance of נְאֻם־יהוה and דְבַר־יהוה with מַשָּׂא in 2 Kgs 9:25–26.
[44] Naudé also mentioned the Mandaic *mansa*, appearing similarly in colophons. How-
ever, *mansa* is derived from *nsa*, 'copying' (E. S. Drower & R. Macuch, *A Mandaic
Dictionary* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1963], 248; cf. Late Hebrew נסח, and its cognates).

independent title in Zech 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1. Even if it is not, the prepositions are probably related to דְּבַר יהוה, and not to מַשָּׂא. In Isa 21:13 the preposition בְּ is most likely also used independently from מַשָּׂא, in the sense that this מַשָּׂא has the title בַּעְרָב, it is the "in the evening" pronouncement (cf. 3.4.1.). מַשָּׂא מִצְרַיִם can be explained as "a pronouncement on Egypt", or simply "the Egypt pronouncement", giving the theme of a prophecy rather than its addressee.

In his dissertation Weis argued that מַשָּׂא represents a certain genre in the prophetic literature.[45] His main contention is that מַשָּׂא is not a YHWH-word as for example the messenger speech was, but it represents a prophetic exposition of a previous revelation, explained according to new historical situations and addressed to a new community.[46] He also notes a change in the function and form of pre-exilic and post-exilic מַשָּׂא-prophecies,[47] but at the same time he argues for a consistency in the form (genre) of these compositions.

Many contentions of Weis' detailed study remain unconvincing. Several shortcomings have already been pointed out by other scholars.[48] Others are implicitly questioned by what has been set forth above.[49] Methodologically important—and at the same time controversial—is his final-form approach to the מַשָּׂא-texts. Weis argued that the final form of the texts is the only stage on which we can rely with certainty. Indeed, this presupposition for him is vital in order to sustain his conclusions regarding the compositional elements of a genre מַשָּׂא. While he may be right at this point, a serious problem in his argumentation emerges from his assertion that this final form and the original form of the prophecies were the same.[50] Although one cannot reconstruct any of the previous stages of a text with certainty, their very existence—that Weis himself did not dispute—questions the conclusions of his final-form analysis. His contentions only apply for this last form of the text.[51] Furthermore, most of

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[45] See Weis, "The Genre *maśśāʾ*"; Idem, "Oracle". See also Floyd, "Prophetic Book", 401–22, and Sweeney repeatedly alluding to Weiss when commenting on Isa 13–23.

[46] "The Genre *maśśāʾ*", 275–76. Weis rendered Isa 15:1 as a "prophetic exposition of YHWH's revealed will concerning Moab". The idea that מַשָּׂא denotes a prophetic word and not a YHWH-word, was suggested earlier by the Jewish scholar Jonah ibn Janah.

[47] The 8th century texts contain the revelation inside the prophetic exposition, while later 6th–5th century oracles only presuppose it. A further change in content and intention is that pre-exilic מַשָּׂא-compositions give an explanation of earlier texts, while after the exile the question addressed is the relation between the present situation and a prophetic revelation. The pre-exilic מַשָּׂא-prophecy was given as an answer to an inquiry, the post-exilic as an explanation for the lack of fulfilment of prophetic oracles in the post-exilic period. There is also a change in function, namely that before the exilie מַשָּׂא gives instructions for the present; after the exile it points to the future.

[48] Cf. Brian, *Howling over Moab*, 62–88 (esp. 65–74); Boda, "Burden", 347–50.

[49] Note the connection of מַשָּׂא and YHWH in Jer 23:33–40 or El in the Deir Alla-text, which disproves his contention that מַשָּׂא is not the word of a divinity. Ezek 12:10–16 is also a YHWH-speech, and not a prophetic exposition (contra Weis', "The Genre *maśśāʾ*", 147–48). Similarly, in 2 Kgs 9:25–26 כִּדְבַר יהוה is the alternative to מַשָּׂא, a YHWH-speech. Note also that מַשָּׂא is not specific for prophecy (Prov 30:1 and 31:1).

[50] Cf. Brian, *Howling over Moab*, 71.

[51] For instance, Weis regarded 2 Kgs 9:25 as an example of a 9th century use of the

what he describes to be characteristic to a מַשָּׂא-oracle also applies to several other prophecies which lack this title. The characteristics he sums up for the מַשָּׂא-texts are so vague that they cannot be of much practical usefulness.[52] The assumption that part of a מַשָּׂא-prophecy would actually contain the reinterpretation of a divine oracle that appears in the same prophecy, is also doubtful.[53]

Weis rejected etymology as an adequate first-step method in defining the meaning of מַשָּׂא. His form-critical analysis leads him to the conclusion that מַשָּׂא was a "prophetic exposition of YHWH's revealed will". However, it is striking that in order to give a translation for מַשָּׂא, at the end of his dissertation he adopts etymology combined with an almost allegorising explanation.[54]

To conclude, efforts to secure a genre-status for the מַשָּׂא-prophecies have not been successful. There are no typical characteristics of a מַשָּׂא-prophecy which would basically distinguish it from other forms of prophetic utterances. As Jer 23:33–35 suggests, like דְּבַר יהוה, מַשָּׂא is a rather general term for prophetic revelation, used without any further intention to specify its form or content.

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term (see Weis, "The Genre *maśśāʾ*", 77–78). However, the book of Kings did certainly not reach its final form before the 6th century, to say the earliest. The inconsistency of Weis is illustrated by his comments on 2 Kgs 9:25–26. In vs. 26 the מַשָּׂא is clearly presented as a YHWH-speech. While Weis recognised this, he argued that this in fact was the work of redactors keen to demonstrate that Jehu had performed the will of YHWH, all according to this prophecy ("The Genre *maśśāʾ*", 77). Weis thus seemingly reckons with a diachronic form of the text. But these admissions are fatal for his conclusions. Further, he repeatedly mentions texts from Isa 13–23 as evidences of an 8th century use of the term, while most scholars would hardly agree that all of this material (and especially in its final form) is Isaianic, or even pre-exilic, blurring his scheme of distinctions between pre-exilic and post-exilic מַשָּׂא-prophecies.

[52] For instance, the lack of the messenger formula (but cf. Isa 18:4; 21:6; Nah 1:12), lack of accusation and announcement of judgment formula (207), texts are never addressed to a community (214), YHWH manifests himself in human affairs (227–28).

[53] The studies of both Weis and Floyd are rather arbitrary at this point (e.g. that Nah 1:11–14 is supposed to be a citation from the 8th–7th century by Floyd, "Prophetic Book", 413), and their method deficient. Weis believes that "if even one text could be shown to have been called a *maśśāʾ* by its creator, then (…) as a result the congruence observed for the other texts points not to coincidence, but to the application of the generic designation to the texts—even if that application is made by others than the original composers." (259). The logic of this sentence is just as difficult to justify, as is his predilection to treat passages contradicting his argumentation as exceptions (229).

[54] Weis combines all aspects of נשא in a perplexing way. מַשָּׂא means 'utterance' (353), but he also leaves the possibility open that מַשָּׂא is something carried, in his opinion, 'the thing brought back', i.e. "to the inquirer from the prophet's encounter with the divinity" (353). He also pointed to a third option, viz. to connect מַשָּׂא to 'smoke-signal', observed in Lachish Letter iv 10 (with *šmrm*, which directs his attention to Isa 21:11b, where the prophet is called a שֹׁמֵר). מַשָּׂא is "the signal of YHWH's intentions received by the prophetic lookout", which he regarded as the most probable explanation of the prophetic מַשָּׂא (354–55). It goes without saying that between מַשָּׂא as 'prophetic exposition' and מַשָּׂא as 'the signal of YHWH's intentions' the gap is so great that one can hardly be surprised that Weis has not even tried to overbridge it.

Excursus 4

עִיר הַהֶרֶס in Isaiah 19:18

The reading עִיר הַהֶרֶס that appears in the majority of Hebrew manuscripts (including the Codex Leningradiensis and the Codex of Aleppo) at Isa 19:18 is different from variants attested in other Hebrew texts and the versions. The two most significant readings that need to be discussed are עִיר הַחֶרֶס, "city of the sun" and πολις ασεδεκ. πολις ασεδεκ, appearing in most LXX manuscripts, is assumed to be a transcription of the Hebrew עִיר הַצֶּדֶק, "city of righteousness".[1] The text critical problems regarding עִיר הַהֶרֶס cannot be discussed apart from its context, especially יֵאָמֵר־לְאֶחָת, for which see note 19:18 m–m.

1. עִיר הַחֶרֶס, "City of the Sun"

The reading עִיר הַחֶרֶס is clearly supported by 1QIsaᵃ, 4QIsaᵇ, sixteen Massoretic manuscripts,[2] Sym. (πόλις ἥλιου) and the Vulg. (civitas solis), to which some would add Josephus' Ant. xiii 3:1. According to Josephus, when building his temple "at Leontopolis in the nome of Heliopolis", the Jewish priest, Onias, motivated his choice of the place with the prophecy of Isa 19. Scholars regard this as an implicit confirmation for reading עִיר הַחֶרֶס, "city of the sun".

Tg. Isa. contains a conflated reading (קרתא בית שמש דעתידא למחרב, "the city of Beth Shemesh, which is destined to be destroyed"). The translators were aware of both חֶרֶם and הֶרֶס, or חֶרֶס and חֶרֶם. The Codex Sinaiticus also translates double: ασεδ ἥλιου. Other writings, such as b. Men 110a, Pesikta De-Rab Kahana 7:5, Pesikta Rabbati 17:4, also offer support for the variant חֶרֶס.[3] In view of this evidence most modern commentators adopt הַחֶרֶס as the more genuine reading.[4] Their opinion seems to be supported by the fact that there

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[1] See further עיר החרם (in six manuscripts), עיר ההרוס, עיר ההרים, בית שמש. Though these are isolated readings, they may support or confute reading ה or ח in הַחֶרֶס / הַהֶרֶס.

[2] Gesenius, 629. A. Baruq, "Léontopolis", DBS 15:368 mentions fifteen manuscripts.

[3] The two Pesikta's mention No (Alexandria!), Nof (Memphis), Tachpanes (Chupianas), עִיר הַחֶרֶס and עִיר שֶׁמֶשׁ. עִיר הַחֶרֶס is explained to be סרקאני and עִיר שֶׁמֶשׁ is said to be Heliopolis. סרקאני is the Hebrew name of Ostracine, a place in the north-eastern Delta. This identification supports the reading חֶרֶס (and not הֶרֶס), which is a literal translation of the name סרקאני (חֶרֶשׂ, 'earthenware', 'potsherd'; cf. Jer 19:2 and the LXX of Judg 1:35). The identification of the city with Ostracine may have been known to Jerome, for when commenting on Isa 19:18, he proposed civitas ostracinen as an alternative translation to civitas solis.

[4] Dillmann, 177; Von Orelli, 78; Penna, 189–90; A. Feuillet, "Un sommet religieux de l'Ancien Testament: L'oracle d'Isaïe xix (vss. 16-25) sur la conversion de l'Egypte", in Études d'exégèse et de théologie biblique. Ancien Testament (Paris: Gabalda, 1975), 266; Fohrer, 1:213; Clements, 171; Kilian, 123; B. Wodecki, "The Heights of Religious Universalism in Is xix:16-25", in "Lasset uns Brücken bauen" (eds. K. D. Schunk et al.; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1998), 173.

Although accepting the reading עִיר הַחֶרֶס, Penna disagreed that the expression would refer to Heliopolis, because the formulation of the phrase would require a symbolic and not a geographical name (see below). He argued that the symbolism here should be seen in relation to Mal 3:20, which mentions the "sun of righteousness"

was a well known Egyptian city, Heliopolis, and by the translation "*one of them* [the cities] will be called" עִיר הַחֶרֶס in Isa 19:18. However, despite the wide support, the reading עִיר הַחֶרֶס leaves us with several important problems.

1.1.   PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT OF ISAIAH 19:18

Heliopolis, a city well known to the writers of the Old Testament, is always called by its Egyptian name, אוֹן (Gen 41:45.50; 46:20; Ezek 30:17).[5] If the author intended to identify one of the five cities with Heliopolis, why would he not have used this usual name? Moreover, the expression עִיר הַחֶרֶס / הַחֶרֶס is a name to be received in the future, after the fulfillment of a series of events. Similar passages (Isa 1:26; 62:12) make it clear that this name to be received by the city is symbolic and not real, not an already existing name. Furthermore, the intention of similar passages is frequently etiological (cf. Judg 1:17; Isa 1:26; Ezek 39:16). In these cases the context provides explanation *why* and *how* such a name has come into being. This is not the case with עִיר הַחֶרֶס in Isa 19, where nothing in the context of vs. 18 explains why the city would be called "the city of the sun".[6] The argument of Van Hoonacker is also worth considering: it would be strange to assume that a city dedicated to YHWH and the cult of the true religion would bear an ancient pagan name.[7] In conclusion, the name "City of the Sun" does not seem to fit the context of Isa 19:18.

1.2.   PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE TEXTUAL WITNESSES

There was a Jewish temple in Leontopolis, in the nome of Heliopolis. According to Josephus, the building of this temple was motivated by its builder, Onias, by the prophecy in Isa 19. While it is often assumed that this description would mean that Josephus' Bible contained the reading עִיר הַחֶרֶס in Isa 19:18, in EXCURSUS 5 I argue that Josephus offers more evidence for עִיר הַהֶרֶס.

What about the other texts reading עִיר הַחֶרֶס? For most scholars, the antiquity of 1QIsaᵃ is substantial evidence when arguing for the priority of this reading in Isa 19:18. But did this Qumran manuscript preserve a more reliable *textual* tradition, or does it merely represent an alternative *theological* tradition?

Some studies establish a close link between the temple community at Leontopolis, in the nome of Heliopolis, and the Jewish community of Qumran.[8]

(Penna, 190; cf. also Fohrer, 1:230). The assumption of Israelit-Groll that עִיר הַחֶרֶס refers to the Amarna cult of the sun-worshipper Achenaten, known to the prophet Isaiah, surpasses the limits of any logical probability and it is incompatible with the present context (S. Israelit-Groll, "The Egyptian Background to Isaiah 19.18", in *Boundaries of the Ancient Near Eastern World: A Tribute to Cyrus H. Gordon* [eds. M. Lubetski et al.; JSOTS 273; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 301–2).

[5] בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ in Jer 43:13 does not designate Heliopolis (cf. 5.2.5).

[6] Cf. Gray, 334; Fischer, 144; Kissane, 219.

[7] A. van Hoonacker, "Deux passages obscurs dans le chap. 19 d'Isaïe (vv. 11.18)", *RBén* 36 (1924) 303.

[8] Cf. S. H. Steckoll, "The Qumran Sect in Relation to the Temple of Leontopolis", *RdQ* 6 (1967) 55–69, esp. 62, 67–68; R. Hayward, "The Jewish Temple at Leontopolis:

Both groups left the main cult centre, Jerusalem, and they both established their own cultic sites. They were both Zadokite in origin. Hayward regarded Qumran and Leontopolis as "two branches of a common Zadokite movement".[9] Steckoll argued that some members of the Qumran community arrived there from Leontopolis. These returnees were in his view responsible for part of the literature in Qumran, such as the LXX, that they brought with themselves from Egypt.[10] Another important connecting point may be the Damascus Document, a significant writing also known from Qumran. The Damascus Document was first found in Cairo, near Heliopolis. Steckoll maintained that "Damascus" was in fact a cryptic name for the community in Egypt.[11]

These ideological connections between Qumran and Egypt should not be underestimated. If this connection really existed, and if Isa 19:18–19 played a role in legitimising the temple of Onias in the nome of Heliopolis for his community, there is a real chance that the reading of 1QIsaᵃ (and 4QIsaᵇ) reflects the same ideology, and it is not less partial or more reliable than the other ancient witness, such as the LXX.[12] The reading עִיר הַחֶרֶס is therefore problematic (cf. also note 19:18 m–m on יֵאָמֵר־לְאֶחָת in section 5.1.).

2.   πολις ασεδεκ / ασεδεχ / ασεδ ηλιου: What the LXX Tells Us

Most LXX manuscripts preserved the reading πολις ασεδεκ on this place. It is generally argued that πολις ασεδεκ is the transliteration of עִיר הַצֶּדֶק.[13] It is often suggested that this translation highlights the view of the LXX on the legality of the Egyptian cult of YHWH as practiced by Jews in Egypt.[14] Going beyond

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A Reconsideration", in *Essays in Honour of Yigael Yadin* (eds. G. Vermes & J. Neusner; Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 1982), 441–42 (=*JJS* 33 [1982]); see also J. E. Taylor, "A Second Temple in Egypt: The Evidence for the Zadokite Temple of Onias", *JSJ* 29 (1998) 311–14. The connection between Qumran and Leontopolis is, however, rejected by M. Delcor, "Le temple d'Onias en Égypte", *RB* 75 (1968) 196–99; R. de Vaux, "*Post-Scriptum* to Matthias Delcor, "Le temple d'Onias en Égypte", *RB* 75 (1968) 188–203", *RB* 75 (1968) 204–5.

[9] Rowley also argued for the identification of the Teacher of Righteousness with Onias III (*The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952], 67), but his theory was questioned because of further convincing support.

[10] Steckoll, "Temple", 67–68.

[11] The Jewish apologete from Egypt, Artapanus, cited by Eusebius, attributed the building of the temple at Leontopolis to "Syrians", who arrived with the family of Jacob in Egypt (Eusebius, *Prep. Ev.* ix 23; cf. Barthélemy, 148). According to CD 12:1–2, the cult site in the mysterious "land of Damascus" was called "the city of the sanctuary". Egyptian Jewish papyri mention "Syrian villages" (e.g. Arsinoe) in Egypt (cf. A. Kasher, *The Jews of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* [TSAJ; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1985], 144–46).

[12] Cf. also my note on Isa 19:20 s (rendering וירד) and 20:6 j–j (נסמד), two readings, which reveal the Egyptian connections and attitude of the author of 1QIsaᵃ.

[13] When referring to the LXX, Jerome transliterates the Greek word by *asedec*, or—according to some manuscripts—*asedech*. He also followed (?) the public opinion that the Greek terms meant *urbis iustitiae*.

[14] E.g. Gesenius, 635; Marti, 157; A. van der Kooij, *Die Alten Textzeugen des Jesajabu-*

this, many argue that עִיר הַצֶּדֶק is in fact the most original reading.[15] However, these studies fail to explain why עִיר הַצֶּדֶק has not survived in Hebrew manuscripts, or in other ancient translations. Being aware of the generally free and often theologically motivated translations in the Old Greek version of Isaiah (especially in Egypt related texts),[16] it would be unwise to base conclusions solely on this ideologically coloured textual witness.

This problem is further complicated by other factors. Why would the LXX have chosen the term πόλις ασεδεκ (assumed to mean עִיר הַצֶּדֶק) in Isa 19:18? According to Driver, this is an allusion to Simon, 'the Just', whose great-great-grandson, Onias had built the temple of Leontopolis. Driver considers עִיר הַצֶּדֶק an allusion to the Zadokite priestly origin of Onias.[17] But as Delcor has pointed out, this would require צַדִּיק in Hebrew, which is not supported by the transcription. The context would not favour Driver's interpretation either.[18]

According to Delcor, πόλις ασεδεκ should rather be understood as a name legitimising the temple of Leontopolis, elevating it to the status of the cult centre in Jerusalem, called a πόλις δικαιοσύνης in Isa 1:26.[19] In the view of Van der Kooij the probable reason for transferring this "city of righteousness" to Egypt was either the desecration of the temple of Jerusalem some time around 167 B.C., or the installation of an illegitimate priest, like Menelaos, in the temple of Jerusalem. Van der Kooij assumes that Onias III's priestly origin accepted by the Greek translators would rather support the second option.[20] However, if that was the case, it is strange that in the same historical situation, Jerusalem is still the πόλις δικαιοσύνης and even μητρόπολις πιστὴ Σιων in Isa 1:26. Moreover, if the authors of the LXX intended to proclaim the legitimacy of the temple at Leontopolis, it is strange that they chose a symbolic name like πόλις ασεδεκ instead of localising the place geographically. That would have certainly been much more to the point than the "city of righteousness", which the reader could connect to any city in Egypt, e.g. Alexandria. It is therefore uncertain that one should regard the LXX as the defence of Onias' cult centre.

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ches. Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testament (OBO 35; Göttingen: Vanden-hoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 55.

[15] Cf. Gray, 335; Van Hoonacker, 111; Idem, "Deux passages", 303–6; Kissane, 219; I. L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of Its Problems* (MVEOL 9; Leiden: Brill, 1948), 68; W. Vogels, "L'Egypte mon peuple – L'universalisme d'Is 19, 16-25", *Bib* 57 (1976) 502–3; Kaiser, 88; Feuillet, "Sommet", 266; J. F. A. Sawyer, "'Blessed Be My People, Egypt (Isaiah 19.25). The Context and Meaning of a Remarkable Passage", in *A Word in Season. Essays in Honour of William McKane* (eds. J. D. Martin & Ph. R. Davies; JSOTS 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986), 62; J. J. Schmitt, "Sun, City of the", *ABD* 6:239; A. Deissler, "Der Volk und Land über-schreitende Gottesbund der Endzeit nach Jes 19,16-25", in *Zion – Ort der Begegnung. Festschrift für Laurentius Klein zur Vollendung des 65. Lebensjahres* (eds. F. Hahn et al.; BBB 90; Bodenheim: Athenäum, 1993), 15.

[16] See on this Van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*. Cf. as an example Isa 19:25.

[17] Driver, *Judaean Scrolls*, 227–28. Cf. also Taylor, "Second Temple", 314.

[18] Delcor, "Temple", 201 note 44. Cf. also Van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 54–55.

[19] Delcor, "Temple", 201.

[20] Van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 55.

The problem of transliteration is also exciting. Why did the authors not translate עִיר הַצֶּדֶק by πόλις δικαιοσύνης as they did with the same expression in Isa 1:26, especially if their intention was to make their claim explicit that Egypt was the new legal cultic centre of YHWH-worshippers? One of the few existent explanations comes from Monsengwo-Pasinya. In his view the translators deliberately avoided giving the city Heliopolis the same name as to Jerusalem in Isa 1:26.[21] However, the very idea of "city of justice" appears in both texts, so that this explanation is unlikely.

According to Van der Kooij, the untranslated word ασεδεκ should be explained in relation to the Canaanite language mentioned in Isa 19:18. The Greek translators thought this was the way the Egyptians would have pronounced the (Canaanite) name of the city.[22] Disregarding the textual variants for the Greek version, the problem is that one would expect here a transliterated עִיר as well, which was also part of the name of the city. The name of the city will not be ασεδεκ, but πόλις-ασεδεκ. This is clear from the formulation of the LXX: πόλις-ασεδεκ κληθήσεται ἡ μία *πόλις*.[23] Elsewhere in the LXX, the Hebrew words which were not translated can all be explained as transcriptions of proper names (personal or geographical). This seems to be the best explanation in isa 19:18 as well. For the authors of the LXX, πόλις ασεδεκ did not mean "city of the righteousness", but "city of Asedek".[24]

The expression πολις ασεδεκ is not uniformly attested in the LXX manuscripts. Ziegler gives the variants ασεδεχ (ms. 301), but more importantly, Codex Sinaiticus has πολις ασεδ ηλιου. The double (conflated) reading is here clearly distinguishable. The secondary reading ηλιου appears alongside the primary form ασεδ (not ασεδεκ or ασεδεχ). Dismissing this evidence on grounds that ηλιου is secondary,[25] would not solve the problem regarding ασεδ.[26]

Wutz collected an enormous amount of data concerning transcriptions and transliterations in the LXX.[27] One of the evident conclusions derived from his

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[21] L. Monsengwo-Pasinya, "Isaïe XIX 16-25 et universalisme dans la LXX", in *Congress Volume: Salamanca 1983* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTS 36; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 201.

[22] A. van der Kooij, "The Old-Greek of Isaiah 19:16-25: Translation and Interpretation", in *VI Congress of the International Organisation for Septuagint and Cognate Studies: Jerusalem 1986* (ed. C. E. Cox; SBLSCS 23; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 137.

[23] Cf. the Greek names Leonto*polis*, Helio*polis*, etc.

[24] Note that σ is not reduplicated, which would be expected when transcribing הַצֶּדֶק (the variant ασσεδεκ appears in ms. 239 according to Ziegler's edition of the Greek Isaiah). Further, in similar cases the Greek recognised the definite article and would have rendered here πόλις τὴν σεδεκ (cf. Gen 2:11; 13:10), unless ה was believed to be not an article, but part of the proper name itself (cf. Gen 10:17; Jer 31:41 [MT 48:41]).

[25] So e.g. Van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 53; Sawyer, "Blessed", 63.

[26] Since ασεδ is also close to the Arabic name for "lion", *asad*, Sawyer argued that this name is a cryptic, but direct reference to Leontopolis (Sawyer, "Blessed", 63). However, the transliteration of an Arabic word into Greek would be quite unnatural at this time, and certainly a feature unique to the LXX versions. We have no evidence that Leontopolis would have been referred to by this date by the Arabic *asad*.

[27] F. Wutz, *Die Transkriptionen von der Septuaginta bis zu Hieronymus* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer), 1933.

study is that in transliterations of unknown Hebrew words, including proper names, multiple misspellings in the Greek are *very* common. Burkitt also notes that "of all the corruptions in the LXX none is commoner than the misreading of transliterations".[28] This evidence should advise more vigilance when reconstructing the Hebrew *Vorlage* of a geographical name attested in the LXX.

Ephrem working with the Syriac text and Eusebius commenting on the Greek of Isa 19:18 arrived to the retroversion ארץ (and not הַצֶּדֶק), which corresponds to αρες in the Greek.[29] Among modern exegetes, Burkitt and Vaccari also questioned the view that πόλις ασεδεκ would go back to a Hebrew עיר הַצֶּדֶק. Burkitt regarded ασεδ to be a misspelling for הַחֶסֶד from "city of kindliness", "city of mercy".[30] In another article, Vaccari tried to prove that ασεδεκ was a corrupted form of הַחֶרֶס.[31] The dissatisfaction of these authors with the usual explanation of ασεδεκ is not without reasons. The term ασεδεκ and its variant, ασεδ, in the Codex Sinaiticus, do raise serious questions.

What could be the Hebrew original of ασεδεκ / ασεδ? σ transliterates ס, שׂ, שׁ and צ. δ might stand for ד, but also for ר, mistakenly read as a ד. The interchange of ר / ד was one of the common errors in reading and copying Hebrew manuscripts.[32] This phenomenon is especially frequent in words unknown to the translator.[33] Unfamiliar geographical names must be reckoned to potential sources of errors. E.g., in Isa 16:7 קיר־חרשׂת was transliterated as δεσεθ.[34] In Jer 31:31.36 (MT 48:31.36) קיר־חרש is transcribed as κιραδας.[35]

Vaccari provides examples in which the Greek κ transcribes the letter ח.[36] In his view, κ derives here from ח, and the LXX transliterates in the reverse order. However, the final εκ in ασεδεκ is also explainable otherwise, namely as a case of dittography of κ, under the influence of the following κληθήσεται.[37]

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[28] F. C. Burkitt, "On Isaiah xix 18.", *JTS* 1 (1900) 569.

[29] Ephrem was also acquainted with ασεδεκ, which he also adopted in his commentary. Gesenius ascribes the form ασεδεκ to Origenes (625).

[30] Burkitt, "Isaiah xix 18", 569. See also T. K. Cheyne, "Heres, the city of", *EB* 2:2018; Fischer, 144; Baruq, "Léontopolis", 15:368–69.

[31] A. Vaccari, "ΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΣΕΔΕΚ. Isa. 19, 18", *Bib* 2 (1921) 353–56; also Wutz, *Transkriptionen*, 43, 177–78. The idea that הַצֶּדֶק might have been a corrupted form of הַחֶרֶס had long ago been noted by Qimchi according to Procksch, 251.

[32] In the book of Isaiah there are almost twenty cases where the two letters were substituted (Vaccari, "ΠΟΛΙΣ", 354–55) and countless examples appear elsewhere in the Bible (Wutz, *Transkritpionen*, 193–96; M. L. Margolis, "Studien im griechischen Alten Testament", *ZAW* 27 [1907] 260–61. For Hebrew copyists, cf. F. Delitzsch, *Die Lese- und Schreibfehler im Alten Testament* [Berlin: De Gruyter, 1920], 105–6).

[33] E. Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (2d ed.; JBS 8; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), 164.

[34] The ח was taken to be a ת, קרית דשׂת.

[35] The Hebrew קיר־חרשׂת appears in 2 Kgs 3:25, which the LXX interpreted not as a geographical name. Instead it translated the expression, as it did with קיר־חרש in Isa 16:11 (but again reading חדש instead of חרש).

[36] "ΠΟΛΙΣ", 355–56. E.g. טָבַח, Ταβεκ (Gen 22:24), מִבְטַח, Μασβακ (2 Sam 8:8), פֶּסַח, φασεκ (2 Chr 30:1 *pass*), פֶּסַח, φασεκ (Jer 38:8; Neh 3:6), אָפִיחַ, Αφεκ (1 Sam 9:1), etc.

[37] Cf. also Cheyne, "Heres", 2:2018; J. Schreiner, "Segen für die Völker in der Vehei-

Burkitt mentions further examples which illustrate this copying error. For example, in Mic 7:20 δώσεις ἀλήθειαν appears in some manuscripts (Codex Alexandrinus and Vaticanus) as δώσει εἰς ἀλήθειαν.[38] This would explain why in the Codex Sinaiticus only ασεδ appears and not ασεδεκ. The form ασεδεκ might have been preferred and adopted exactly because—as Jerome assumed—it seemed to have reflected the Hebrew הַצֶּדֶק. Hence the textual change in the LXX is rather to be explained in mechanical and not theological terms.[39]

The Greek ασεδ may go back to a Hebrew *Vorlage*, in which the consonants ר, ס and ה / ח (transcribed by α) were all present. The hypothetical retroversion of ασεδεκ / ασεδ is probably הסר or חסר.[40] The interchanged order of the letters ר, ס, ה or ח is a frequent error in transcriptions of names. Cf. תִּמְנַת־חֶרֶס (Θαμναθαρες) in Jdg 2:9, which appears as תִּמְנַת־סֶרַח in Josh 19:50 (Θαμνασαραχ, also in the Greek text after MT Josh 21:42) and 24:30 (vs. 31 in LXX Θαμναθασαχαρα).[41]

Concluding, there is no evidence that the reading עִיר הַצֶּדֶק ever existed. Not only Hebrew manuscripts or ancient translations are silent in this respect, but the corrupted Greek ασεδ[εκ] probably also goes back to הרס(ה) or חרס(ה).

3.   עִיר הַהֶרֶס, "CITY OF DESTRUCTION", "CITY OF RUINS"

Above I have mentioned some arguments that question the reading עִיר הַחֶרֶס as the most ancient, but little support has been given to the variant עִיר הַהֶרֶס as yet. As I noted, this reading is adopted in the Codex Leningradiensis and the Codex of Aleppo, and the vast majority of Hebrew manuscripts. This variant is clearly followed by the Syriac version (*hrs*), although the lexeme עיר had not been translated there. The reading of the Syriac bears additional weight in view of the well-known connections elsewhere between the Syr. and the LXX.[42] Aquila and Theodotion have αρες, which can be taken to represent both חרס (as Jerome assumed) and הרס (as assumed by the Syro-Hexapla).[43] Some modern commentaries also follow the reading עִיר הַהֶרֶס.[44]

The verb הרס, 'to break down', 'to destroy' is frequently used with things

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ßung an die Väter", *BZ* 6 (1962) 22 note 75. Fischer, on the other hand, suggested that it was και that caused the problem (Fischer, 144). και appears in the Codex Sinaiticus in the phrase πόλις ασεδ ἥλιου και κληθήσεται.

[38] Burkitt, "Isaiah xix 18", 569.

[39] Contra Feuillet, "Sommet", 266; Van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 53.

[40] In 1 Chr 3:20 יוֹשָׁב־חֶסֶד is transliterated as Ασοβαεσδ, which is most likely a wrong variant for [Ασοβ]ασεδ. Burkitt, Cheyne, and Fisher assume that the LXX of Isa 19:18 also transcribes חֶסֶד. But then the same question would remain: why did he not translate a well-known lexeme? The context speaks against this proposal (cf. the exegesis).

[41] For the interchange of letters in Hebrew verbs or common nouns, see Margolis, "Studien", 264–66; Wutz, *Transkriptionen*, 370–93; Tov, *Septuagint*, 61–62, 142–43.

[42] Cf. Van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 287–88.

[43] F. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum que supersunt sive veterum interpretum graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta*, [1875; repr.; Hildesheim: Olms, 1964], 2:463).

[44] Ibn Ezra, Qimchi (in Slotki, 91); Abulwalid (in Gesenius, 629); Alexander, 358–59; König, 203–4; S. R. Driver, "Ir-Ha-Heres", *DB* 2:481; Fischer, 144; Motyer, 168.

that have been built, altars, idols, houses, cities and city walls.[45] However, as noted, הַהֶרֶס is often assumed to be a deliberate change of the Palestinian scribes intolerant against Egyptian Judaism and more specifically the temple of Leontopolis.[46] Scholars compare this text to Beth-El / Beth-Aven, בֹּשֶׁת / בַּעַל, or אֹון / אָוֶן (Ezek 30:17).[47] That is, exegetes presuppose that copyists were aware of the fact that הַחֶרֶס, which was modified to הַהֶרֶס, referred to Heliopolis.

This is questionable, however. Aq. and Theod. were familiar with the meaning of the Hebrew noun חֶרֶס and the verb הרס. But like the LXX, and the Syr., they do not translate the expression, probably because they assumed that αρες was a geographically defined—although for them unclear—location. None of the ancient texts actually identifies the city with Heliopolis.[48]

Early Jewish texts are fully aware of the significance of the temple of Leontopolis, which they often explain in relation to Isa 19, as Onias did according to Josephus. It is striking that in Qumran, but also in the Talmud and the early Midrashim the reading הַחֶרֶס dominates above הַהֶרֶס. According to *b. Men.* 109b, R. Meir regarded Onias' sacrifices as given to the idols, but he was contradicted by R. Judah, who argued referring to Isa 19:19 (not 19:18!) that Onias offered to the true God, and that his deed was a fulfilment of Isa 19:19. In spite of their reading הַחֶרֶס, these rabbinical sources do not explicitly connect הַחֶרֶס to the temple at Leontopolis in the nome of Heliopolis. This connection seems to appear in Jerome for the first time.[49] In *b. Men.* 109b we even find a different tradition, that Onias has built his altar in Alexandria. Can it be argued then that the copyists changed חֶרֶס into הֶרֶס, when this verse did not play for them the role that exegetes assign to it? If ideological factors did not influence authors untill A.D. 73, when the temple at Leontopolis came to be destroyed, why would later scribes have engaged themselves in outdated apologetics in problems that were nobody's actual concern any more? For otherwise we would have to admit that the reading הֶרֶס is also as old as the temple of Onias itself, i.e. as old as the earliest manuscripts reading חֶרֶס (1QIsaᵃ).

As a matter of fact, Isa 19:18 is not the most remarkable section of the prophecy that should have led to a deliberate change in the Hebrew text. Why would have the scribes left Isa 19:25 unaltered, when it contained more con-

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[45] Cf. altars (Judg 6:25; 1 Kgs 18:30; 19:10.14), idols (Ex 23:24), houses (Prov 14:1), cities (2 Sam 11:25; 2 Kgs 3:25; 1 Chr 20:1; Prov 11:11; Isa 14:17; Ezek 36:35; Mic 5:10), city walls (Jer 50:15; Ezek 26:4.12; 30:4).

[46] Gray, 336; Dillmann, 177–78; Oswald, 378; Barthélemy, 149.

[47] Cheyne, 120; Barthélemy, 150.

[48] It remains a question to what extent this has been done by Sym., since his πόλις ἥλιου (cf. Josh 15:10 LXX) is different from ἥλιου πόλις, the usual way to translate the Egyptian אֹון in the LXX.

[49] His commentary on Daniel 11:14 suggests that he may have known both readings: חֶרֶס (Heliopolis) and הֶרֶס ("they *shall fall to ruin*, for both temple and city shall be afterwards *destroyed*") (cf. S. A. McKinion, *Isaiah 1–39* [The Ancient Christian Commentary on the Scripture–Old Testament 10; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 2004], 144). In his Isaiah commentary, Cyril of Alexandria also mentions Onias' temple, but he locates it at Rhinocolura, near Wadi-el-Arish (Baruq, "Léontopolis", 15:367).

siderable assaults against a particularistic view of the Palestinian form of Judaism, than Isa 19:18.[50] Why did they not modify the text as the versions did?

To conclude, the temple of "Leontopolis" was not unanimously rejected in the circles of Palestinian Judaism,[51] which means that the change הַחֶרֶס > הַהֶרֶס cannot be considered an ideologically motivated textual change in the MT.[52] On the other hand, the reason for "correcting" הַהֶרֶס to הַחֶרֶס might have been to remove a negative reference in a context considered a positive prophecy about Egypt's conversion to YHWH,[53] and to substitute the *hapax legomenon* הֶרֶס with the relatively well-known חֶרֶס.[54] At the same time, it cannot be excluded that the development הַהֶרֶס > הַחֶרֶס was a copyist's error, but one that appeared very early in the history of the Isaianic text.

> In older commentaries, one may also come across other interpretations of עיר הַהֶרֶס. Some argued for a connection between הֶרֶס and the Arabic *hrs*, supposed to have meant "lion", assuming that Isa 19:18 referred to Leontopolis.[55] Gesenius pointed out, however, that *hrs* was a poetic nickname for lion ("the crunching one"), and not a specific term for "lion". Gesenius accepts the reading חֶרֶס arguing at the same time that this corresponds to Arabic *ḥarasa*, 'to protect', 'to save'.[56] The problem with this interpretation is the lack of a Hebrew parallel to this meaning. Procksch's attempt to derive ההרס from Egyptian, regarding it an allusion to Elephantine,[57] is not more convincing either. Baruq proposed the reading עיר הַחֶרֶם, "la ville vouée (à la destruction)", also appearing in some Hebrew manuscripts. He believed that the name *pȝ ḥrm* found in Egyptian texts of the Greco-Roman era, was Semitic in origin, confirming the prediction of 19:18 that an Egyptian city will be called by a Canaanite name. He located this city in the region Wadi Tumilat.[58] But as noted, a geographical name would hardly fit the scope of Isa 19:18.

Concluding, there are no convincing arguments to give up עיר הַהֶרֶס in Isa 19:18 as the most reliable reading. As the exegesis makes this clear (cf. 5.2.5.), "city of ruins / destruction" fits well the context in which it appears.

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[50] Cf. Motyer, 168 note 2.

[51] Contra Sawyer, "Blessed", 62. Cf. *b. Men.* 109b–110a; *b. Meg.* 10a.

[52] Gesenius (634) and Oswald (378) admitted this happened "by chance".

[53] Cf. Motyer, 168 note 2 and see the exegesis.

[54] The unique vocalisation of הֶרֶס is for some authors a major argument in refusing this reading (Barthélemy, 149; De Waard, 88). This argument can easily be reverted, however. Suggestions have been made to revocalise ההרס as הַהֹרֵס (as a reference to the city of "the destroyer", Alexander the Great, Alexandria, the famous cultural centre of Hellenistic Judaism—cf. Procksch, 250), or הֶהָרֵס (qal part. pass.; cf. 1 Kgs 18:30). Yet all the ancient versions (including Aquila and Theodotion) read a ֶ after ר. However it may be, the fact that הֶרֶס is a *hapax legomenon* does not mean that it cannot be the right reading. Indeed, the fact that a *hapax legomenon* has been preserved instead of a competitive reading חֶרֶס, might rather argue in favour of the reliability of this textual tradition (according to the rule of *lectio difficilior*).

[55] Cf. Duhm, 145; Marti, 157.

[56] Gesenius, 634.

[57] Eg. *ḥḥ.t*, 'field', and *rs*, 'south', "city of the plain of the south" (Procksch, 250–51).

[58] Baruq, "Léontopolis", 15:370.

Excursus 5

Isaiah 19:18–19 and the Temple of Onias in Leontopolis

According to Flavius Josephus, the prophecy in Isa 19 was an important evidence for Onias III to build up a Jewish temple at Leontopolis in around 164 B.C.[1] Some regard Isa 19:18–19 as a *vaticinium ex eventu* which, inserted into the biblical text, was supposed to legalise an otherwise unlawful cult-centre established by Onias III. Others argue to have discovered the true meaning of Isa 19:18 reading it through the looking glass of Josephus, presupposing that the localisation of the temple in "Leontopolis in the nome of Heliopolis" would support the reading עִיר־הַחֶרֶס, "city of the sun".[2] Without disclaiming

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[1] *J.W.* vii 432; *Ant.* xiii 64. Opinions differ whether the temple was built by Onias III, son of Simeon II, or Onias IV, son of Onias III. The data in Josephus is at this point uncertain. Cf. Delcor, "Temple", Hayward; "Leontopolis", 430; Taylor, "Second Temple", 300. Taylor ascribes the building of the temple to Onias III (cf. *b. Men.* 109b), maintaining that the name of Onias IV in Josephus can be explained by ideological factors ("Second Temple", 306–7). Tcherikover favours Onias IV above Onias III (*Hellenistic Civilisation and the Jews* [1959; repr.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999], 276–79; cf. also Kasher, *Jews*, 132). Further discussion of this problem has no relevance for the conclusions of this study.

[2] Cf. Hayward, "Leontopolis", 438–40. Scholars localise the Leontopolis of Josephus in the neighbourhood of modern Cairo, at Tell-el-Yahudiyeh (Eg. *Nȝy-tȝ*, Ass. *Naṭḫu*, Gr. Νάθω). Leontopolis of Josephus is different from Leontopolis in the classical authors, located at Tell-el-Moqdam, north-west from Boubaste (Zagazig) (cf. A. Baruq, "Léontopolis", 15:363; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the age of Jesus Christ* [translated, revised and updated by G. Vermes et al.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973–1987], 3:146 note 33; Kasher, *Jews*, 119–22). In connection with Leontopolis, Josephus also mentions ἡ Ὀνίου χωρά, generally translated as "the region of Onias" (*Ant.* xiv 131; cf. *J.W.* i 190; vii 421), as if derived from the name of Onias. However, it is not impossible that Ὀνίου is actually a transliteration of the Egyptian *Iunw* and Hebrew אוֹן, the ancient name of Heliopolis (cf. Baruq, "Léontopolis", 15:365; Taylor, "Second Temple", 315). The geographer Ptolemy mentions Ἡλιοπολίτης νομὸς καὶ μητρόπολις Ὀνίον, "the nome of Heliopolis and the city of Onion" (*Geogr.* iv 5:53). Baruq maintained that the city of Onias came to be identified with On/Heliopolis only in the time of Onias. Heliopolis had been a deserted city before. Josephus localises Leontopolis at 180 stadia from Memphis, while Heliopolis was—according to other sources—at about the same distance. Kasher localised the city of Leontopolis mentioned by Josephus south of Heliopolis, at Demerdash, where remains of a Jewish settlement have also been found (Taylor, "Second Temple", 318). Bohak concluded that the two sites, Leontopolis and Heliopolis were either close to or identical with each other (Taylor, "Second Temple", 318). According to the LXX of Ex 1:11, Heliopolis was the third city (not mentioned in the MT) that the Israelites in Egypt had rebuilt (Ων ἥ ἐστιν Ἡλίου πόλις). In a text of Eusebius citing the Jewish apologete, Artapanus, the Jewish temple is also located at Heliopolis (*Prep. Ev.* ix 23; cf. Delcor, "Temple", 201–2; Barthélemy, 148). According to *Ant.* xiii 66 the temple was built in τῆς ἀγρίας βουβάστεος, "the fields of Bubastis". The prophet Neferti may have originated from this temple. He is called a "wise man of the East, servant of Bastet in her East, and native of the nome of On" (*COS* 1.45). J. van Dijk noted (private communica-

the importance of these texts of Josephus, there remain problems of key impor-
tance, on which I intend to make some brief comments.

Because the account in *Ant.* xiii 56–73 is written more than two centuries
after Onias, one must be critical in using this reference as evidence for the
reconstruction of Isa 19:18.[3] The more so since Josephus seems to have been
uncertain at some points.[4] Moreover, he ascribes some readings of the Isaianic
prophecy to Onias that do not seem to be present in Isa 19:18–19. He gives
the following account in the passages where Isaiah is cited:[5]

> There had, moreover, been an ancient prediction made some six hundred
> years before by one named Isaiah, who had foretold the erection of this tem-
> ple in Egypt *by a man of Jewish birth* (ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς Ἰουδαίου) (*J.W.* vii 432).
> In his desire he [Onias] was encouraged by the words of the prophet Isaiah,
> who had lived more than six hundred years before and had foretold that a
> temple to the Most High God was surely to be built in Egypt *by a Jew* (ὑπ'
> ἀνδρὸς Ἰουδαίου) (*Ant.* xiii 64).

The note concerning the Jewish man is absent from Isa 19:18–19. It might be
an interpretation of Isa 19:20 concerning the saviour sent to Egypt. This addi-
tional data strengthens the interpretive character of the account of Josephus.
This particular interpretation of the Isaianic text in Josephus also means that
one has to be cautious when following the interpretation of Onias / Josephus
concerning the identification of the Egyptian city in Isa 19:18. The account in
Ant. xiii 56–73 might give us the view of Onias, but it can hardly be argued
that this would provide the key to understand Isa 19:18 in its Isaianic context.

But what exactly was the evidence derived by Onias from Isa 19:18? Note
that in the citation above, Onias refers to a temple in Egypt, without naming
the place. His arguments comply with Isa 19:19, speaking of an altar in the
land of Egypt, and not 19:18, which makes no mention of altars.[6] In the letter

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tion) that the old Egyptian full name of Tell-el-Yahudiyeh was actually *Nꜣy-tꜣ-ḥwt-(Rꜥ-
ms-sw)-m-pr-Rꜥ-ḥr-mḥty-Iwnw*, "the place of the temple (of Ramses) in the domain of
Re north of Heliopolis". This means that the place *Nꜣy-tꜣ* was at some early time part
of the administrative domain of the temple of Re in Heliopolis.

[3] Taylor expresses deep concerns for the details of the account of Josephus on the basis
that the description we find in the *Jewish War* is different from the one preserved in
the *Antiquities,* and because "the writing of fraudulent documents and letters was an
easy way to discredit opponents in antiquity" ("Second Temple", 305). Note also that
according to *Ant.* xi 337, another biblical text, the book of Daniel was shown to Alex-
ander the Great. Yet many scholars would be unlikely willing to accept that the book
of Daniel already existed in the year 332 B.C. (cf. Marti, 159; Schoors, 122).

[4] Note the uncertainties around Onias, the temple builder, and Josephus' errors in
identifying other figures of the Maccabaean period (Taylor, "Second Temple", 307).

[5] I follow here the translation of Ralph Marcus and Henry St. J. Thackeray from the
Loeb Classical Library edition with slight modifications when considered necessary.

[6] Cf. also Alexander, 358; Dillmann, 178. From this Koppe concluded that Isa 19:18
was not present in the book of Isaiah, when Onias cited it, but it was added later as a
legitimisation of the cult-centre at Leontopolis. The rhetorical question of Gesenius,
however, points to a different explanation: "ist es nicht natürlicher, dass er sie zwar las,
aber gar nicht auf Leontopolis bezog…?" (Gesenius, 639).

of Onias to the pharaoh "cited" by Josephus he mentions the following:

> "… I came with the Jews to Leontopolis in the nome of Heliopolis, *and to other places* where the nation is settled;[7] and I have found that the most of them had temples contrary to what is proper, and that for this reason they are ill-disposed toward one another, as is also the case with the Egyptians because of the multitude of their temples, and their varying opinions about the forms of worship." (*Ant.* xiii 65–66)

Note that beside Leontopolis, also other places are mentioned as visited by Onias. After this introduction of Onias giving the reasons *why* to build a temple, he further elaborates on his choice of the location *where* to build it:

> "… and I have found *a most suitable place* in the fortress called after Bubastis-of-the-Fields (τῆς ἀγρίας βουβάστεως), which abounds in various kinds of woods,[8] and is full of sacred sculptures,[9] wherefore I beg you to permit me to cleanse this temple, which *belongs to no one*, and *is in ruins*,[10] and to build a temple to the Most High God in the likeness of that at Jerusalem and with the same dimensions, in behalf of you and your wife and children in order that the Jewish inhabitants of Egypt may be able to come together there in mutual harmony and serve your interests. For this indeed is what the prophet Isaiah foretold, 'there shall be an altar *in Egypt* to the Lord God', and many other such things did he prophesy concerning *the place*."[11] (*Ant.* xiii 66-68)

There are some key points in this story. First of all, Onias does not say anything about Heliopolis, nor that he would have chosen this place because Isaiah prophesied that in Heliopolis a temple was to be built. In fact Onias refers to Isa 19:19 and not Isa 19:18, as previously noted.[12] The reference of the sentence "concerning the place" is not so obvious. It may mean the whole land of Egypt, as the "place" previously mentioned, and of which one can say that Isaiah prophesised "many other such things".[13] Of Leontopolis/Heliopolis Isaiah did not prophesy so many things, except that an altar would be built there—if the usual interpretation of עִיר־הַחֶרֶס is followed. Another option is to relate "concerning the place" to that specific place where Onias was going to build his temple,[14] i.e. not necessarily and specifically Leontopolis, but the one Onias was writing about to the king, and which happened to be Leontopolis.

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[7] ἀφικόμενος τοῦ ἔθνους, from the context it must refer to the Jews (cf. Marcus).

[8] Or "*materials* of several sorts", for ὕλη can mean the raw material, 'wood', 'timber'.

[9] It is more appropriate to translate ἱερῶν ζῴων here as "sacred images", instead of "sacred animals" (so Marcus), since this is what Onias is referring to (for this meaning of ζῷον, cf. Liddell-Scott *ad locum*). The ζῷα of the site were the figures, sculptures, paintings of a previous sacred building (temple) now in ruins.

[10] For the meaning and importance of the verb συμπίπτω appearing here, see below.

[11] διὰ τὸν τόπον, lit. "concerning the place".

[12] Cf. also *b. Men.* 109b. Contra e.g. Van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 55; Berges, 166.

[13] Note that in a different description in *J.W.* vii 424 the place Onias was looking for is described in more vague terms as follows: "and he [Onias] asked him [the pharaoh] to give him permission to build a temple *somewhere* in Egypt (που τῆς Αἰγύπτου)".

[14] Note that "the place" appears at the beginning of his letter as well as immediately after it in the account of Josephus as an allusion to the site that Onias has chosen.

Strikingly, *J.W.* vii 432 mentions only that Isaiah prophesised that the temple was going to be built by a Jewish man. It is therefore not so evident that the reference to the Isaianic prophecy is made in order to support the location of the temple. For Onias it might have been more important that a Jewish man had to build a temple in Egypt, perhaps seeing here an allusion to Isa 19:20 as noted above. When Onias mentions why he has chosen Leontopolis as the place of the new temple, he gives the following arguments in the *Antiquities*: the place belonged to no master, it was a no-man's land, it was a place in ruins and there was plenty of building material for a new sanctuary. Moreover, he did not have to begin at the basements, for it was the site of an ancient temple (see *Ant.* xiii 70). From the description it seems that for Onias the choice of the place was more accidental and possibly determined by factors other than exegetical.[15]

But even if indeed exegetical arguments did play a role for him, it is still doubtful that he had used a text containing the expression עִיר־הַחֶרֶס, "city of the sun". Another more convincing explanation can also be given for why that specific place was chosen. Some important characteristics of the place Onias mentions is that it was "deserted", a no-man's land (ἀδέσποτος) and "fallen down", "collapsed" (συμπίπτω; also in *Ant.* xiii 70), which made the place "suitable" (ἐπιτήδειος) for Onias' purposes. These remarks are especially important. In the LXX the verb συμπίπτω translates different Hebrew lexemes, like נפל (Isa 3:8), ירד (Isa 34:7). Most importantly συμπίπτω appears in relation to buildings, as in the account of Josephus. συμπίπτω translates היה לְחָרְבָּה in Isa 64:10: "Our holy temple, our pride, where our fathers praised you, has been consumed by fire. And all that was dear to us is ruined (היה לְחָרְבָּה)". In Ezek 30:4, in a prophecy addressed to Egypt, συμπίπτω stands for the niph'al of הרס ('to be destroyed'), i.e. the same word from which הֶרֶס in Isa 19:18 derives.[16] It is therefore tempting to conclude that if any connection existed between Onias' choice of the place and Isa 19:18, this would suggest that Onias' version of Isa 19:18 contained the reading עִיר־הַהֶרֶס, "the city of ruins / destruction", and not עִיר־הַחֶרֶס, as previously assumed. This may further be underlined by the answer of the Ptolemaic king sent to Onias as recorded by Josephus, which also concentrates on the desolated outlook of the place:

> "… We have read your petition asking that it be permitted you to cleanse the ruined (συμπεπτωκὸς) temple in Leontopolis in the nome of Heliopolis (cf. *J.W.* vii 426), called Bubastis-of-the-Fields. We wonder therefore whether it will be pleasing to God that a temple be built in a place so wild (ἐν ἀσελγεῖ τόπῳ)[17] and full of sacred sculptures. But since you say that the prophet Isaiah foretold this long ago, we grant your request if this is to be in accordance with the Law, so that we may not seem to have sinned against God in any way." And so Onias took over the place and built a temple and an altar to God, similar to that of Jerusalem, but smaller and poorer (*Ant.* xiii 70–72).

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[15] So also Gesenius, 631. Cf. Barthélemy, 148, 150.

[16] See also τὰ πεπτωκότα as the translation of הֲרִיסוֹת in Isa 49:19.

[17] ἀσελγής, 'wanton'. The expression reflects Josephus' attitude towards the temple as built on an unclean place.

If Onias was following Isa 19:18, he did not look for Heliopolis (עִיר־הַחֶרֶס). He looked for a place that had been destroyed. He found such a place at Leontopolis, in the neighbourhood of Heliopolis. Although the Egyptian pharaoh is astonished at his choice, he is ready to concede in view of the Hebrew.

Concluding, despite the general tendency to relate Onias' activities to Isa 19:18–19, many questions remain. First, considering the additions of Josephus (?) to the text of Isaiah (cf. "by a man of Jewish birth"), one needs to investigate the exegetical methods by which Josephus used to explain biblical texts. Second, while the connection between Isa 19:19 and the building of the temple is clear in the account of Josephus, it is uncertain what role if any Isa 19:18 exactly played in Onias' argumentation. Isaiah 19:20 might have been more significant for Onias than Isa 19:18 was. Third, Onias' choice of a specific place in Egypt may have been accidental and determined by practical factors, like those mentioned in "his" letter. To push the conclusions to even further text-critical and text-historical limits we may say this: if Isa 19:18 did count in selecting the place of the new temple, there are good reasons to believe that Onias' text of Isaiah contained the reading עִיר־הַהֶרֶס, since the story in the *Antiquities* particularly emphasises the desolate character of the elected place. Last, it should not be overlooked that the whole story is ideologically coloured by Josephus, who considered this act of Onias "the transgression of the Law".[18] *Whatever* the prophet Isaiah had said, the chosen place was "unclean" according to Josephus, which was much more important to him than the problem of whether or not Onias' acts were compliant with Isa 19:18.

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[18] On this negative attitude of Josephus, cf. Taylor, "Second Temple", 308.

Appendix

Figure 1. The Map of Egypt and Kush[1]
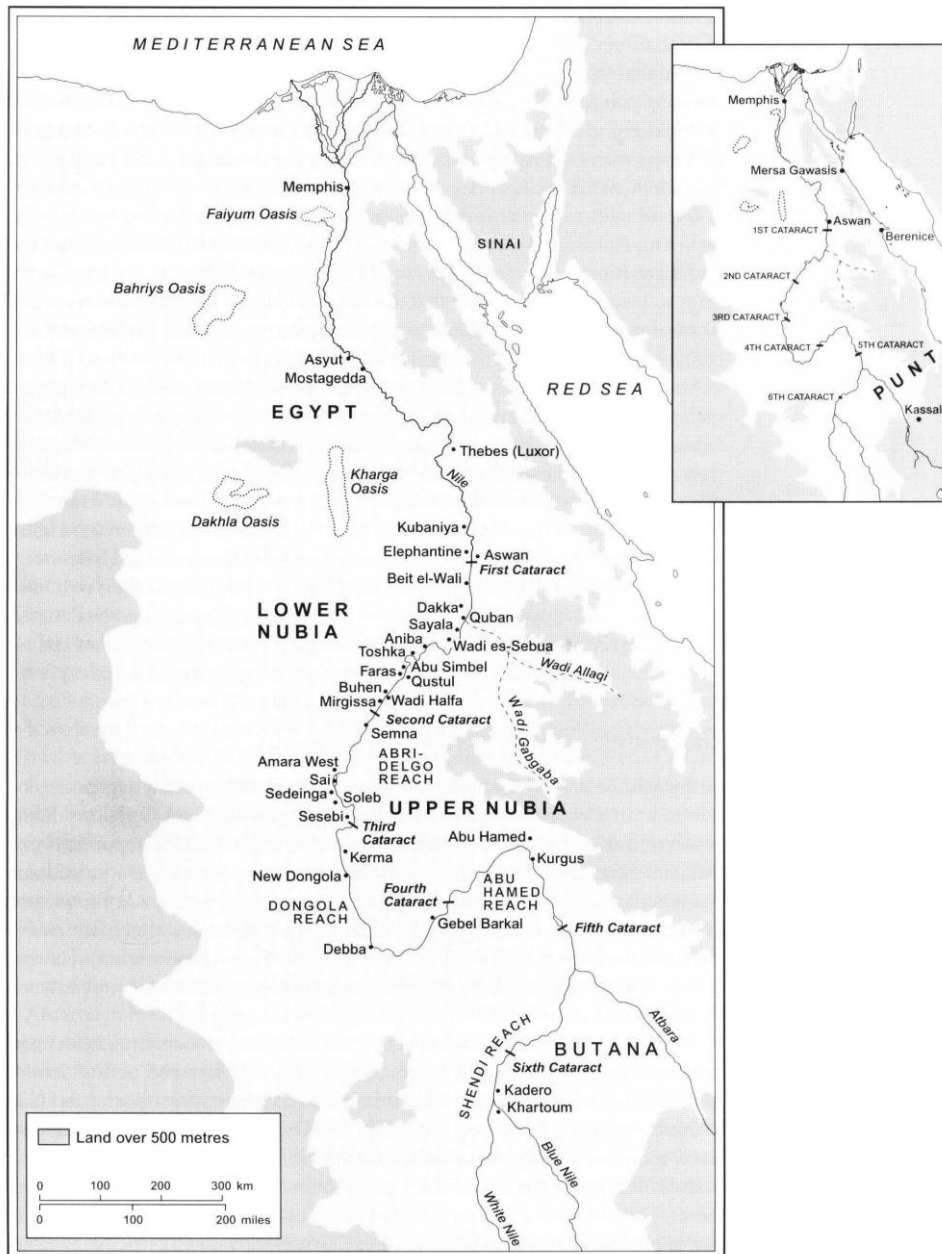
[1] From *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (ed. I. Shaw; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 323.

Figure 2. Chronology of the Egyptian rulers of the Third Intermediate and Late Period[2]

21ST DYNASTY (TANIS)		Osorkon III	
Smendes	1069-1043	Takelot III	
Amenemnisu	1043-1039	Rudamon	
Psusennes I	1039-991	Peftjauawybast	
Amenope	993-984	Iuput II	
Osorkon the Elder	984-978		
Siamun	978-959	24TH DYNASTY	
Psusennes II	959-945	Bakenrenef	720-715
22ND DYNASTY		25TH DYNASTY	
Shoshenq I	945-924	Piye	747-717
Osorkon I	924-889	Shabaka	717-703
Shoshenq II	c. 890	Shabataka	703-690
Takelot I	889-874	Taharka	690-664
Osorkon II	874-850	Tanutamani	664-656
Takelot II	850-825		
Shoshenq III	825-773	26TH DYNASTY	
Pimay	773-767	(Necho I	672-664)
Shoshenq V	767-730	Psametik I	664-610
Osorkon IV	730-715	Necho II	610-595
		Psametik II	595-589
23RD DYNASTY		Apries	589-570
Pedubast I		Amasis	570-526
Iuput I		Psametik III	526-525
Shoshenq IV			

Figure 3. The Scarab Seal Impression of King Hezekiah of Judah

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[2] Adopted from *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (ed. I. Shaw; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 481–82.

Figure 4. The Zendjirli stele of Esarhaddon

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Samenvatting

De stèle van Jhwh in Egypte
De profetieën in Jesaja 18–20 over Egypte en Koesj

Deze studie richt zich op de collectie van volkenprofetieën in het boek Jesaja (13–23), in het bijzonder Jes 18–20, drie hoofdstukken die zich thematisch bezien bezighouden met Afrikaanse volken langs de Nijl. Profetieën over niet-Israëlitische volken komen ook elders voor in het Oude Testament. In het verleden werden deze teksten vaak als een apart genre, een typische vorm van profetie gezien en geanalyseerd, meestal vanuit een godsdienstfenomenologisch perspectief. Hoewel deze eerdere studies aandacht geven aan alle bijbelse volkenprofetieën als brede context voor de interpretatie, maakt het grote aantal van deze profetieën het voor onderzoekers onmogelijk deze teksten exegetisch-theologisch grondig te analyseren. Daarnaast geeft deze vorm van onderzoek niet genoeg aandacht aan de context binnen het eigen bijbelboek waarin de profetieën te vinden zijn, terwijl het boek als context veel kan bijdragen aan hun betekenis.

Om die reden is er tegenwoordig een sterke tendens merkbaar om de volkenprofetieën in hun literaire en boekinterne theologische context te evalueren. In de recente wetenschappelijke literatuur staat de vraag naar het ontstaan van de profetenboeken, vanaf het vroegste stadium tot de huidige vorm, centraal. Daarbij spelen de discussies rondom de vorming en theologische functie van grotere literaire eenheden in de profetische boeken een bijzondere rol. Zo vormen in het boek Jesaja de hoofdstukken 13–23 (of volgens sommigen 13–27) een inter-Jesajaanse literaire eenheid. Maar een blik op deze profetieën maakt duidelijk dat dit geen oorspronkelijke eenheid kan zijn. De profetieën die erin voorkomen zijn geschreven onder verschillende historische omstandigheden (zoals dat expliciet uit de opschriften en impliciet uit de inhoud kan worden geconcludeerd), ze zijn gericht aan verschillende hoorders, willen verschillende boodschappen overbrengen en werden geschreven met verschillende retorisch-theologische doeleinden. De verhouding tussen deze twee aspecten van de collectie, namelijk dat de zelfstandige profetieën in Jes 13–23 in verband staan met variërende historische achtergronden, geadresseerden en boodschappen (diachroon aspect) en dat zij

471

tegelijkertijd als een literaire eenheid worden gepresenteerd (synchroon aspect), vraagt naar verder onderzoek.

Deze studie wil de vraag beantwoorden wat de rol van Jes 18–20 was bij het ontstaan van Jes 13–23. Ofwel: welke conclusies kan men trekken ten aanzien van de literaire vorming, retorisch-theologische functie en historische actualiteit van de volkenprofetieën in Jes 13–23 uit een diepgaande analyse van Jes 18–20 vanaf de vroegste stadia tot de huidige vorm? De hoofdvraag is onderverdeeld in een aantal deelvragen die inhoudelijk als literair, theologisch en historisch kunnen worden gegroepeerd. De literaire vragen hebben betrekking op de problemen rond integriteit, verbinding met de huidige context en auteurschap. Het theologische onderzoek stelt zowel de betekenis of boodschap als de functie van de oorspronkelijke zelfstandige profetieën centraal, alsook de eventuele verschuiving van deze boodschap als gevolg van recontextualisatie. In dit verband komt ook de relatie met andere profetieën over Egypte en Koesj in Jesaja, buiten de collectie Jes 13–23, aan de orde. Wat betreft het historische aspect moet de vraag naar de historische achtergrond van de profetieën en de latere context worden beantwoord, namelijk, in hoeverre deze profetieën tijdgebonden zijn en in hoeverre zij de mogelijkheid bieden voor lezingen in een latere historische context.

Hoofdstuk 1 (Inleiding) schetst de achtergrond voor de onderzoeksvraag. Eerst wordt kort aandacht gegeven aan de huidige stand van het Jesaja-onderzoek, het bredere kader waarin de hoofdvraag van deze studie geplaatst moet worden (§1.1). Daarbij worden ook de verschillende visies gepresenteerd in verband met Jes 13–23 (§1.2). Vaak ziet men de volkenprofetieën hetzij als een samenstelling van verschillende tekstblokken, hetzij als een voortdurende uitbreiding van vroegere profetische teksten. In het algemeen rekent men met een kerntekst van Jesajaans materiaal in Jes 13–23, maar ook met teksten die later om welke reden dan ook aan deze profetieën werden toegevoegd. De bepaling van het Jesajaans materiaal roept echter zowel methodisch als exegetisch veel discussie op. Daarnaast maken de na-Jesajaanse geschiedenis en de invloed van deze teksten duidelijk dat men verder moet kijken dan het materiaal uit de achtste eeuw, als men aan de huidige vorm en functie van Jes 13-23 en het fenomeen profetie als zodanig recht wil doen. Het derde deel van de Inleiding (§1.3) focust op probleempunten die in verband staan met Jes 18–20. Hoewel deze drie hoofdstukken inhoudelijk veel met elkaar gemeen hebben, lijkt Jes 18 vanuit literair oogpunt eerder met Jes 17 verbonden te zijn dan met de profetieën aan Egypte in Jes 19. Inhoudelijk schijnt Jes 19 te bestaan uit twee delen (vv. 1–15 en vv. 16–25) die ook vaak als aparte teksten worden geanalyseerd en in verschillende tijden ondergebracht. Hoewel Jes 20 een verhaal vertelt dat in de tijd van de profeet (achtste eeuw) goed te plaatsen is, lijkt het

alsof de primaire functie en het doel van deze tekst in zijn huidige vorm buiten de tijd van de profeet Jesaja gezocht moet worden. De inleiding sluit af met de beschrijving van het doel en de opbouw van deze studie (§1.4). Hier wordt ook het methodisch-hermeneutisch kader geschetst waarin een antwoord op de onderzoeksvraag wordt gezocht (§1.5).

Hoofdstuk 2 gaat dieper in op de historische periode die naar het zich laat aanzien de achtergrond vormde waartegen Jes 18–20 functie heeft. (Voor zover dat mogelijk is, wordt de concretere achtergrond van deze profetieën later apart besproken.) In dit verband komt vooral de rol van Egypte en Koesj in de geschiedenis van het oude Nabije Oosten aan de orde, voornamelijk in relatie tot Israël en Juda enerzijds en Assyrië en Babylon anderzijds. Dit hoofdstuk streeft ernaar de gegevens van verschillende historische bronnen met elkaar te synchroniseren. Er wordt aandacht besteed aan politieke, economische en sociale gebeurtenissen met betrekking tot Egypte en Koesj, voor zover zij invloed hadden op het alledaagse leven in Israël en Juda.

In Hoofdstuk 3 wordt een literair-theologische analyse gegeven van de volkenprofetieën in Jes 13–17 en 21–23, die de directe context vormen voor Jes 18–20. Allereerst (§3.1.) wordt de term 'volkenprofetie' besproken. Hoewel deze term in de wetenschappelijke literatuur heel algemeen wordt gebruikt, blijkt men er toch behoorlijk veel over van mening te verschillen welke profetieën uiteindelijk tot de volkenteksten gerekend kunnen worden. Deze paragraaf concludeert dat profetieën over Israël of Juda en profetieën over de volken zo nauw met elkaar verbonden zijn, dat het uiteindelijk onmogelijk is om duidelijke grenzen tussen deze twee vormen te trekken. Dat betekent ook dat de volkenprofetieën, in tegenstelling tot wat men vroeger beweerde, binnen de profetische literatuur geen aparte genre vormen.

§3.2. gaat nader in op profetieën waarin vreemde volken het onderwerp van de profetie vormen. Zulke teksten komen ook voor in het oude Nabije Oosten, vooral in verband met oorlog of de bedreiging door vreemde vijanden, en functioneerden als impliciete heilsprofetieën voor de koning van de profeet. Vroeger onderzoek naar de bijbelse volkenteksten brengt deze profetieën ook vaak in verband met oorlogssituaties, waardoor heil aan het eigen volk wordt toegezegd. In andere gevallen verschijnen de vreemde volken als potentiële verdragspartners in politieke opstanden, waarbij door oordeel te verkondigen aan het vreemde volk, de profeet voor de ondergang van zijn eigen volk waarschuwt. Maar er zijn ook wetenschappers die menen dat deze profetieën aan de liturgische context van nationale plechtigheden (verzoeningsdag, klaagbijeenkomsten) moeten worden verbonden, eerder dan of in plaats van aan bepaalde historische omstandigheden. De historische gegevens binnen de profetieën (opschriften en andere inhoudelijke verwijzingen

naar historische gebeurtenissen) enerzijds en het feit dat een profetische tekst nu deel uitmaakt van een literaire compositie anderzijds wekken echter het vermoeden dat de lezer zich zowel van de oorspronkelijke bedoeling en historische context als de latere functie van deze teksten, hetzij liturgisch, hetzij literair, hetzij allebei, bewust moet zijn. Om die reden is het van belang ook aandacht te geven aan de huidige literaire context waarin deze profetieën nu verschijnen.

§3.3. geeft daarom een overzicht van collecties van volkenprofetieën in de bijbelse literatuur, met name Amos, Jeremia, Ezechiël en Sefanja. Uit nader onderzoek blijkt dat deze collecties literaire kunstwerken zijn, goed gepland en rijk aan symbolen, zoals getallen, geografische concepten en symbolische tijdschema's. Er is geen bewijs te vinden in de geanalyseerde teksten dat de opbouw van één van deze boeken een zogenaamd "eschatologisch schema" zou volgen (oordeel over Israël, oordeel over de volkeren, heil aan Israël), zoals vaak wordt aangenomen. Daarentegen is er een nauw verband waarneembaar tussen profetieën over de volkeren en over Israël. De boodschap en functie van de zelfstandige volkenprofetieën kan als deel van een latere collectie een ander accent krijgen. Daarnaast vertonen deze collecties, ondanks enkele over de grenzen van de boeken heen reikende overeenkomsten tussen volkenprofetieën, sterke boekspecifieke trekken, die duidelijk maken dat het boek als context heel belangrijk is voor hun interpretatie.

Het grootste deel van dit hoofdstuk (§3.4.) wordt gewijd aan Jes 13–23. In deze paragraaf wordt in eerste instantie aandacht gegeven aan de typische מַשָּׂא-opschriften, die heel kenmerkend zijn voor Jes 13–23, en die drie verschillende vormen vertonen. Dit verschil wijst uiteindelijk ook naar de groei van deze collectie, bestaande uit profetieën uit verschillende tijden. Het opschrift in Jes 14:28 staat bijvoorbeeld voor één bepaalde profetie en biedt tevens een historisch kader voor de interpretatie van die ene tekst. In 15:1 (vgl. ook 13:1; 17:1; 19:1; 23:1) staat het מַשָּׂא-opschrift daarentegen boven een kleine collectie van Moabteksten (Jes 15–16). De vier מַשָּׂא-opschriften in Jes 21–22 hebben weer een eigen systeem, dat van de andere twee typen afwijkt, waaruit blijkt dat Jes 21–22 een aparte collectie vormen binnen Jes 13–23, die als geheel op een later stadium aan Jes 13–20.23 is toegevoegd. Dit ontstaansproces geeft antwoord op belangrijke vragen van het Jesajaonderzoek, zoals waarom er nu twee profetieën tegen Babylon op twee verschillende plaatsen, in Jes 13 en 21, te vinden zijn, en hoe de profetie tegen Jeruzalem en een hoge Judese beambte in Jes 22 in een collectie over de volken is terechtgekomen. In Jes 13–23 signaleert men twee keer een verschuiving in het vooruitzicht dat de teksten bieden met betrekking tot de volkeren. Teksten die oordeel aan hen verkondigen worden aangevuld met profetieën die met de val van de gemeenschap-

pelijke vijand rekenen en het heil dat daaruit voortvloeit (bijv. Jes 16:1–5; mogelijk ook 17:7–8). Maar aan deze profetieën die heil in het vooruitzicht stellen, worden een enkele keer weer teksten toegevoegd die negatief over de toekomst van hetzelfde volk spreken (bijv. Jes 16:6–12[13–14]). In een eerste stadium lijkt de profetie tegen Assyrië de collectie van volkenteksten te hebben geopend (Jes 10:5vv; 14:4b–21; 14:24–27). Het hoofdmotief is hier de opgeheven hand van Jhwh, eerst over zijn eigen volk (Jes 9:7–20), dan over Assyrië (Jes 10), dan over heel de aarde onder Assyrische overheersing (zie voor dit motief in het begin van de collectie Jes 14:24–27 en aan het eind Jes 23:11). Dit motief onderstreept het nauwe verband tussen de volkenprofetieën en de profetieën over Juda en Israël. Deze editie is kort na de val van het Assyrische wereldrijk te plaatsen. In een tweede stadium keert het oordeel weer terug. Nu wordt het centrale motief de dag van Jhwh en het gevolg daarvan voor alle hoogmoedigen der aarde. Ook Babylon komt aan het begin van de collectie te staan. Het motief van de dag van Jhwh verschijnt op twee belangrijke plaatsen in het boek van Jesaja, namelijk in Jes 2:12 en 13:6.9, en lijkt de collectie van volkenprofetieën op een specifieke manier met de profetieën over Juda en Israël te verbinden.

§3.5. wijst op een belangrijk verschijnsel in de samenstelling van de volkenprofetieën. In de huidige vorm van Jes 13–23 wordt de compositie geopend met een tekst over Babylon (en Assyrië) en gesloten met een tekst over Tyrus. Er zijn belangrijke intertekstuele aanwijzingen in Jes 13:1–14:27 en Jes 23 die een bewuste verbinding tussen deze begin- en slotteksten waarschijnlijk maken. Daarnaast valt het geografisch gezien op dat het begin van de collectie naar Mesopotamië, het land aan de "Beneden Zee" (Perzische Golf), zoals dat in spijkerteksten heet, verwijst. Tyrus en de eilanden die in Jes 23 worden aangesproken zijn verbonden aan de "Boven Zee" (Middellandse Zee). Als de Assyrische koningen de reikwijdte van hun wereldrijk in de inleiding van een stèle wilden omschrijven, gaven zij precies deze coördinaten aan: ik ben de koning van de hele aarde, van de Beneden Zee tot aan de Boven Zee. Het lijkt er verder op dat de opsomming van de verschillende naties die volgens Jes 13–23 onder de macht van Jhwh vernederd of verhoogd worden wil verwijzen naar de opsommende veldtochtbeschrijvingen van de Assyrische koningen, zoals die in de stèleliteratuur voorkomen. Op basis van andere motieven die de lezer uit het taalgebruik van de Assyrische stèles bekend moeten zijn, wordt hier de voorlopige conclusie geponeerd dat Jes 13–23 als een soort "stèle van Jhwh" beschouwd moet worden, waardoor Hij als koning en overheerser zijn claim aan heel de aarde bekendmaakt.

De volgende drie hoofdstukken presenteren een diepgaande analyse van de tekst van Jes 18–20. De tekstkritische, semantische en exegeti-

sche analyses worden gevolgd door de bespreking van de resultaten van-
uit een literair, theologisch en historisch oogpunt. Aan het eind van elk
hoofdstuk worden deze perikopen als deel van "de stèle van Jhwh" en
de יום יהוה-redactie onderzocht.

De tekst van Jes 18 (Hoofdstuk 4) vertoont veel onduidelijkheden,
waardoor de interpretaties beduidende verschillen vertonen. Het woord
הוֹי leidt in deze context een profetie in die aan de geadresseerden een
negatieve boodschap wil overbrengen. De uitdrukking צִלְצַל כְּנָפַיִם, die
als "kever met twee vleugels" vertaald moet worden, slaat op een bekend
Egyptisch symbool (scarabeus sacer). Het in deze profetie beschreven
land strekt zich uit tot over de rivieren van Koesj en moet met het Egyp-
to-Koesjitische rijk worden geïdentificeerd (zie hierover Excurs 1). De
beschrijving van het volk in 18:2 laat daar weinig twijfel over bestaan.
Tegelijk spreekt 18:2 eigenlijk over twee verschillende volkeren, waar-
van het ene verder weg woont dan het andere, zoals dat op grond van de
uitdrukking מִן־הוּא וָהָלְאָה verondersteld mag worden. Mogelijk moet er
onderscheid gemaakt worden tussen de officiële gezanten (צִירִים) die uit
hun land komen en de gezanten die in vs. 2 מַלְאָכִים worden genoemd.
De boodschap die aan deze מַלְאָכִים gegeven wordt, is ook voor de Koesji-
tische gezanten bestemd die bij Juda steun zoeken voor een politiek ver-
drag tegen de vijand. De twee metaforen in vs. 4 werpen licht op de ne-
gatieve houding van Jhwh ten opzichte van het plan tegen Assyrië.
Door het beeld van de vernietiging van de wijnstok in vs. 5 (een motief
dat vaak in Assyrische teksten voorkomt), kort voordat de bessen rijp
beginnen te worden, verwijst de profeet naar de ondergang van de anti-
Assyrische coalitie. Het is dus niet Assyrië dat het oordeel van Jhwh te
wachten staat (zoals vaak wordt aangenomen), maar in eerste instantie
het Koesjitische wereldrijk en met hen allen die hun toekomst met
menselijke hulp en macht veilig willen stellen.

Wat betreft de integriteit van de profetie moet vs. 3, ondanks enke-
le bezwaren, bij de oorspronkelijke tekst worden gerekend. Aan de an-
dere kant schijnt vs. 7, over de erkenning van het koningschap van Jh-
wh op deze aarde (zelfs door de verst wonende Koesjieten), op een later
tijdstip te zijn toegevoegd.

Hoe komt het dat een profetie die Egypte en Koesj als onderwerp
heeft niet bij Jes 19 is gevoegd? Deze vraag, die de exegeten van Jes 13–
23 nog steeds bezighoudt, lijkt beantwoord te kunnen worden door het
feit dat Jes 18 ook als een anti-Israël-profetie opgevat werd, zoals Jes 30
of 31 (vgl. ook Jes 20). Om die reden is Jes 18 in een collectie terecht-
gekomen die de Aram-Israël-coalitie als geadresseerde heeft, net zoals
Jes 17:12–14. Hoewel laatstgenoemde profetie oorspronkelijk op een
andere groep hoorders (mogelijk Assyrië) betrekking zou kunnen heb-
ben, kan deze door de verplaatsing ook wel als een tekst tegen de noor-

delijke vijanden van Juda, namelijk Aram en Israël, worden gelezen. De
verbinding met de context van Jes 17:1–11 wordt – nader beschouwd –
op twee belangrijke punten duidelijk: Jes 17:5 duidt op de graanoogst en
17:6 op de fruitoogst. Deze twee motieven staan ook in de twee aange-
voerde teksten, Jes 17:12–14 en 18:1–7, centraal. Om die reden kunnen
17:12–14 en 18:1–7 als illustratie hebben gediend voor de vervulling
van de profetie in 17:5–6. De coalitie met Aram onder koning Pekach
(Jes 7:1) en de coalitie met Egypte onder koning Hosea (2 Kon 17:4)
waren de belangrijkste misstappen van de Israëlitische koningen geweest
die uiteindelijk tot de ballingschap van het Noordrijk hebben geleid.

De gedetailleerde beschrijving van de Afrikaanse gezanten aan het
hof in Jeruzalem lijkt er op te duiden dat de rol van deze profetie was om
Juda te waarschuwen voor een anti-Assyrische coalitie. In die zin staat
de boodschap van Jes 18 dicht bij Jes 30:1–17 en Jes 31. Maar deze waar-
schuwing is een voorspelling voor de toekomst, en die sluit niet uit dat
een sombere toekomst kan worden vermeden als Juda een ander politiek
standpunt inneemt.

Bij de overwegingen met betrekking tot de historische achtergrond
van Jes 18 moet men twee gegevens serieus nemen. Jes 18:2 blijkt over
Egypto-Koesjitische gezanten in Jeruzalem te spreken. Dat betekent dat
de coalitie onder Egyptische leiding staat. In de opstanden vóór 701 trad
Egypte niet op als leider van de coalitiepartners bij de organisatie van de
opstand, maar bood wel hulp (Israël was de leider in 728–724, Filistea in
720 en 711). Maar het Egyptisch-Koesjitische rijk is nadrukkelijk een
belangrijke speler in 705–701. Daarnaast wordt, zoals reeds genoemd,
het beeld van de heilige scarabee een prominent symbool van koning
Hizkia dat op zijn stempels en de zogenaamde *lmlk*-krukken verschijnt.
Deze laatste worden in de periode kort voor 701 gedateerd. Jes 18 is dus
hoogstwaarschijnlijk in die tijd geboren. De voorspelde val van de Egyp-
tische kever met twee vleugels is een onheilspellend teken voor de toe-
komst van de kever van Juda.

Hoofdstuk 5 neemt Jes 19 onder de loep, een profetie die over de
aankomst van Jhwh in Egypte handelt en over de gevolgen daarvan
voor het leven van de Egyptenaren. Deze profetie is een tekst die als een
מַשָּׂא wordt aangeduid. Excurs 3 concludeert dat het woord מַשָּׂא 'uit-
spraak' betekent en etymologisch niets met מַשָּׂא, 'last', of de uitdrukking
נשׂא קול, "de stem verheffen", te maken heeft. מַשָּׂא kan een leenwoord
zijn uit het Akkadisch of afgeleid van het homoniem נשׂא (II) 'uitspre-
ken', 'uitroepen'. מַשָּׂא geeft geen apart genre aan in de profetische lite-
ratuur. Een tweede, veel bediscussieerde uitdrukking is עִיר הַהֶרֶס, "stad
van verwoesting" of "ruïnestad" in Jes 19:18. Vaak is men van mening
dat de masoretische tekst hier in עִיר הַחֶרֶס, "stad van de zon" of עִיר
הַצֶּדֶק, "stad van gerechtigheid" veranderd moet worden, omdat de nega-

tieve klank van עִיר הַהֶרֶס slecht bij de positieve context van Jes 19:18 zou passen. Maar de lezing van MT is waarschijnlijker, zoals blijkt uit de bespreking in Excurs 4. Een en ander hangt samen met het feit dat de uitdrukking יֵאָמֵר־לְאֶחָת in vs. 18 niet "één van hen zal worden genoemd" betekent, maar: "*ieder* van hen (d.w.z. van die steden) zal worden genoemd". Tevens wordt hier aangetoond dat de zin וְעָבְדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־אַשּׁוּר in vs. 23 moet worden vertaald als "Egypte zal Assyrië dienen", en niet, zoals gebruikelijk, "Egypte en Assyrië zullen samen Jнwн dienen".

Onderzoek van Jes 19 vanuit een literair perspectief wijst uit dat de tekst in zijn huidige vorm geen oorspronkelijke eenheid vormt; de verzen 1–15 en 16–25 zijn ook dikwijls aan verschillende tijden gekoppeld. Maar ondanks stemmen die het tegenovergestelde beweren, blijkt dat 19:16–25 nooit als een zelfstandige eenheid functioneerde. Deze tekst werd geschreven als aanvulling bij 19:1–15 en is daar sterk aan verbonden. Wat betreft de integriteit van 19:1–15 moet men concluderen dat er geen overtuigende reden is om de verzen 5–10 als secundaire invoegingen te beschouwen.

Het עֵצָה-motief van Jes 19:3.11.17 wijst naar een nauw verband met 14:27 en 23:8–9. De profetie over Tyrus in Jes 23 stond voor de invoeging van Jes (20)21–22 dichter bij Jes 19, zoals Tyrus en Egypte ook in Ez 26–28 en 29–32 nauw met elkaar in verbinding staan. In Jes 19:1–15 vindt men geen duidelijke aanwijzingen dat deze profetie tegen een politiek verbond met Egypte wilde waarschuwen (zoals Jes 18), hoewel dit niet uitgesloten kan worden. Jes 19:16–25 wijst vaak naar de geschiedenis van het premonarchische Israël. Om Jнwн's volk te worden, volgt Egypte dezelfde weg van verlossing en erkenning van Jнwн als verlosser die Israël ook heeft gevolgd. Jes 19:16–25 impliceert dat Egypte de God van Israël op een indirecte manier zal dienen: namelijk als vazal van de aardse plaatsvervanger van Jнwн, de Assyrische koning. Daardoor is de boodschap van dit stuk met het universalisme van de koningspsalmen verwant die eveneens over een indirecte vorm van theocratie spreken.

Historisch gezien moet men er rekening mee houden dat Jes 19:1–15 een voorspelling is en dus niet zonder meer aan historische feiten getoetst kan worden. Desondanks bevat de tekst enkele belangrijke aanwijzingen. Jes 19:2 spreekt over Egypte als een land dat in kleine koninkrijken gefragmenteerd is. Jes 19:4 duidt op de komst van een (hoogstwaarschijnlijk) Assyrische heerser die het land zou overnemen. Daarnaast lijkt de rol van de oostelijke stad Tanis – als raadgever van een farao die in Memphis zetelt – er op te wijzen dat de profetie kort voor de veldtocht van Esarhaddon in 671 geschreven is. Jes 19:16–25 spreekt over de dienst van Egypte aan de Assyrische koning, die in de tekst als vertegenwoordiger van Jнwн verschijnt. Zo kan dit gedeelte

van de profetie in de vroege regeringsjaren van Assurbanipal gedateerd worden. In de Assyrische teksten verschijnt hij nadrukkelijk als een bevrijder van de Egyptenaren. Een Judees contingent van koning Manasse heeft ook aan deze veldtocht deelgenomen.

Hoofdstuk 6 geeft een analyse van Jes 20. Afgezien van enkele kleinere tekstuele onduidelijkheden is de boodschap van deze profetie helder in zijn huidige vorm en hoeft men, in tegenstelling tot de mening van enkele exegeten, geen andere, vroegere literaire structuur te veronderstellen. De complexe formulering van Jes 20:1–2 blijkt vergelijkbaar te zijn met Jes 7:1–2 of 36:1–2. Ook moet men aannemen dat יֹשֵׁב הָאִי הַזֶּה niet op de Filistijnen slaat, als oorspronkelijke geadresseerden, maar in eerste instantie op Juda, voor wie de symbolische handeling van de profeet bestemd was. Het is wel vreemd dat een profetie die in 19:25 eindigt met een positief uitzicht op de toekomst van Egypte, weer gevolgd wordt door een sombere tekst over het lot van de Afrikaanse volken. Maar dat is mogelijk het gevolg van een nieuwe redactionele ordening van de profetieën, waarin de voorspoed van de volkeren die samenviel met de val van de Assyrische macht, door de komst van Babylon en de dag van JHWH wordt overschaduwd (vgl. Hoofdstuk 3). Jes 20 is dus op een later tijdstip aan een reeds bestaande voorexilische collectie van volkenprofetieën toegevoegd. Deze tekst vertoon vele overeenkomsten met enkele profetieën uit Jesaja (Jes 10; 18; 30; 31) en ook met narratieve teksten uit dat boek. Bovendien is ook het thema van de vernedering van de 'trots' van Juda een thema dat kenmerkend is voor de יֹום יהוה-redactie van Jesaja.

Historisch gezien is Jes 20 goed op de hoogte van de geschiedenis van 711, de tijd van de verovering van Asdod, die op grond van archeologisch en epigrafisch materiaal redelijk gedetailleerd kan worden gereconstrueerd. Maar de temporele afstand tussen deze tekst en de gebeurtenissen, die onder meer blijkt uit de uitdrukking בְּעֵת הַהִיא, maakt het waarschijnlijker dat Jes 20 zijn boodschap – vertrouw niet op Egypte – op een later tijdstip aan andere hoorders wilde overbrengen (vergelijkbaar met Jes 36–37). De doelgroep van deze profetie moet hoogstwaarschijnlijk onder de pro-Egyptische kringen rond de laatste Judese koningen, Jojakim, Jechonja of Sedekia, gezocht worden, van wie politieke visies het land van Juda in de richting van een nationale ramp dreigden te leiden.

Met de opsomming van de volkeren tussen de Boven Zee en de Beneden Zee zinspeelt Jes 13–23 op de structuur van de Assyrische stèles. Vele motieven in de profetieën van Jes 18–20 maken het mogelijk om deze teksten als deel van een dergelijke stèle, de Israëlitische replica, te interpreteren. Jes 19:19 verwijst letterlijk naar een מַצֵּבָה [...] לַיהוה, "stèle van JHWH", wat duidelijk maakt dat Judeeërs zich van de functie van

zulke monumenten bewust waren. Assyrië, Babylon of Perzië, die vele volken hebben onderworpen, zijn in de visie van de profeten slechts instrumenten in de hand van JHWH, die uiteindelijk de grootste speler van de geschiedenis is. De instrumenten veranderen met de tijd. JHWH zet koningen af en stelt koningen aan (Dan 2:21). Stenen stèlemonumenten zijn opgesteld en vernietigd. Maar voor de lezers van Jes 13–23, de bewoners van Juda – een kleine satraap van wereldrijken die komen en gaan –, proclameert deze stèle van JHWH hoe heel de aarde van zijn majesteit vervuld is (Jes 6:3).

Curriculum Vitae

Csaba Balogh werd geboren op 3 mei 1975 te Marosvásárhely (Targu Mures / Neumarkt), Roemenië, als zoon van Csaba en Ilona Balogh. Vanaf 1993 tot 1998 studeerde hij theologie aan het Protestants Theologisch Instituut te Kolozsvár (Cluj Napoca / Klausenburg), Roemenië. Vanaf 1999 tot 2004 studeerde hij aan de Theologische Universiteit van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (vrijgemaakt) in Kampen (Broederweg 15), waar hij in 2000 zijn doctoraal diploma haalde met als hoofdvak Oude Testament. Tevens volgde hij tussen 2000 en 2002 cursussen Oegaritisch en modern Hebreeuws aan de Protestantse Theologische Universiteit in Kampen. Sinds september 2004 is hij werkzaam als docent oudtestamentische vakken aan het Protestants Theologisch Instituut te Kolozsvár. Hij is getrouwd en heeft twee kinderen.