

'They Will Attach Themselves to the House of Jacob':

A Redactional Study of the Oracles Concerning the Nations in the Book of Isaiah 13-23

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Short abstract

The present study argues that a series of programmatic additions were made to the oracles concerning the nations in Isa 13-23 during the late-exilic period by the same circle of writers who were responsible for Isa 40-55. These additions were made to create continuity between the ancient oracles against the nations from the Isaiah tradition and the future fate of the same nations as the late-exilic redactor(s) foresaw.

The additions portray a two-sided vision concerning the nations. One group of passages (14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7) depicts a positive turn for certain nations while the other group of passages (14:26-27; 19:16-17; 23:8-9, 11) continues to pronounce doom against the remaining nations. This double-sided vision is set out first in Isa 14 surrounding the famous taunt against the fallen tyrant. 14:1-2, before the taunt, paints the broad picture of the future return of the exiles and the attachment of the gentiles to

the people of Israel. After the taunt and other sayings of YHWH against his enemies, 14:26-27 extends the sphere of the underlying theme of 14:4b-25a, namely YHWH's judgement against boastful and tyrannical power(s), to all nations and the whole earth. The two sides of this vision are then applied accordingly to the rest of the oracles concerning nations in chs 13-23. To the nations that have experienced similar disasters as the people of Israel, words of hope in line with 14:1-2 were given. To the nations that still possessed some prominence and reasons to be proud, words of doom in line with 14:26-27 were decreed. Only later in the post-exilic period, for whatever reason, be it changed international political climate or further spread of the Jewish diaspora, was the inclusive vision of 14:1-2 extended even to the nations that were not so favourably viewed by our late-exilic redactor (19:18-25; 23:15-18).

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Long abstract

The present study argues that a series of programmatic additions were made to the oracles concerning the nations in Isa 13-23 during the late-exilic period by the same circle of writers who were responsible for Isa 40-55. These additions were made to create continuity between the ancient oracles against the nations in the Isaiah tradition and the future fate of the nations as the late-exilic redactor(s) foresaw.

Many have noticed a pattern in the oracles concerning the nations in Isa 13-23 that there appear to be secondary additions that commonly portray positive attitudes, albeit of varying degrees, toward the nations which are attached to earlier words of doom against them. Because some of these secondary additions reflect some knowledge of the post-exilic period, they are often altogether ascribed to that period. A closer inspection reveals, however, that some betray no awareness of the post-exilic

period and share among them a common vision that may be contrasted to the passages that do allude to the post-exilic period. They are: 14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7. They focus on the restoration of Zion and the people of Israel and on how other similarly afflicted nations may come to Zion to share in that restoration. They are different to the passages such as 19:18-25 and 23:15-18 whose post-exilic date is little in doubt given the mention of a YHWH-temple in Egypt (19:19-21) or the reference to the seventy years of hardship before the restoration (23:15, 17). In these post-exilic passages, the nations turn to YHWH, experience restoration, and serve YHWH, all in their own lands. Another feature that binds 14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7 together is their closeness to Isa 40-55 in style and thought. Not only are these additions to be dated in the late-exilic period, therefore, but they may also be seen as parts of one programmatic redactional layer.

All this, nonetheless, is only one half of the picture. One notices how the inclusive vision found in 14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7 leaves out Babylon, Egypt and Tyre. There can be seen another strand of secondary additions which deals with these nations and is also close to Isa 40-55. They are 14:26-27; 19:16-17; 23:8-9, 11. They reaffirm the earlier words of judgement and stress YHWH's plan behind the fall of the nations. This strand may be viewed as the other half of the same late-exilic layer in Isa 13-23.

Only later in the post-exilic period, for whatever reason, be it changed international political climate or further spread of the Jewish diaspora, was the inclusive vision of 14:1-2 extended even to the nations that were not so favourably viewed by our late-exilic redactor.

The chapter dealing with 14:1-2 (chapter 2) demonstrates that 14:1-4a shows an uncanny resemblance to chs 40-55 both in style and in the pattern of thought. Since there is no compelling reason to date the two lengthy poems (at least their main bodies) for which 14:1-4a currently serves as a bridge-text in the post-exilic period, it seems natural to adopt the view that 14:1-4a was written in the late-exilic period by the same circle of writers who wrote chs 40-55. It is historically plausible to date the main body of ch 13 in the mid-6th Century and the signs of ch 13's dependence on 14:4b-25a suggests that 14:4b-25a was perhaps a collection of sayings against Assyria sometime in the late pre-exilic period. The 'Babylonizing' process of chs 13-14 started already with the writing of ch 13 before the addition of 14:1-4a, therefore, and the main function 14:1-2 was designed to serve in its immediate literary setting was to interpret the imminent fall of Babylon in light of the divine will to restore and establish Zion as a place where the people of Israel return to and where the nations come to join and attach themselves to YHWH's people – one of the core arguments of chs 40-55.

According to the compositional history of 14:28-32 reconstructed in the chapter dealing with this passage (chapter 3), v 28 is identified as the original introduction to a

series of early oracles against the nations in the book (i.e. not just to the oracle against Philistia) and the original poem against Philistia consisted of vv 29, 31-32a plus an ending which is now lost to us. This poem spoke of a future Assyrian attack on the Philistine cities and is to be dated in the pre-exilic period. The remaining parts of the oracle – vv 30, 32b – are later additions to the original poem. V 30b was written against ‘the rod’ sometime during the exilic period. V 32b (the passage of the present study’s focus) was then written in the late-exilic period primarily to assert YHWH’s establishment of Zion as a place of refuge for his people in exile. By setting v 32b as an answer to the Philistine messengers, the invitation to hide in Zion is extended to the Philistines too. It is as though the general vision of 14:1-2 was applied to the specific case of the oracle against Philistia. The use of language in v 32b finds close parallels in chs 40-55 (49:13 in particular) and there is no reason the half-verse must be from the post-exilic period. V 30a, however, does appear to have been written in the post-exilic period but it was a separate expansion on v 32b written first in the margin which was mistakenly copied into the current position.

In the chapter discussing the oracle concerning Cush (chapter 4), 18:1-2, 4-6 is identified as the original poem against Cush inherited by the supposed late-exilic redactor who added v 7 at the end of the poem. It is argued that v 3 was originally a marginal note on 17:12-14 written in the post-exilic period which was mistakenly copied into the verse’s current position. The only intentional secondary addition made to the original oracle against Cush is, therefore, v 7 where one finds some points of contact with chs 40-55. V 7 foretells that the Cushites who were stricken by YHWH in

the past (according to the earlier verses) will one day acknowledge his sovereignty and bring tributary gifts to Zion. The future restoration of a once afflicted people, their journey to Zion, and various connections with chs 40-55 all suggest that 18:7 is a continuation of the same vision first set out in 14:1-2.

In chapter 5 where the oracle concerning Moab is examined, 15:9b; 16:1-5, 13-14 are recognized as passages that are secondary to the original lament/taunt over Moab. It is demonstrated through a comparative study of the two parallel texts Isa 15-16 and Jer 48 that the base-layer of Isa 15-16 is earlier than its counterpart in Jer 48 and that Jer 48 does not have the parallel texts for Isa 16:1-5. However, it is noted that Isa 16:1-2 shows an awareness of Jer 48:28. The results of this comparative study, together with the contrasts in style and subject matter between Isa 16:1-5 and the surrounding poem, suggest that 16:1-5 was not part of the original poem. The sudden 1st person YHWH speech in 15:9b and the clear example of a reapplication of an older oracle in 16:13-14 came from the same redactor who understood the original poem to have been in two parts. The addition of 15:9b and 16:13-14 would have been made sometime during the Neo-Babylonian period before Moab ceased to be a meaningful political force. It is also argued that 16:1-5 may be divided into two parts – 16:1-4a and 16:4b-5 – and that the two passages embrace two distinct concerns. 16:4b-5 is characterized as an expectation for a future priestly Davidic Messiah, a hope which was more common in the post-exilic period, and it is in 16:1-4a that the vision of 14:1-2 is found to have been applied to the oracle against Moab. The same pattern which is observed in 14:32b and 18:7 is also found in 16:1-4a. A formerly displaced people are now told to flee to Zion and ask

for protection with a tributary gift. Although no special words or phrases that could link 16:1-4a with chs 40-55 are found, the fact that 16:1-4a follows the same redactional pattern as 14:1-2; 14:32b; 18:7 supports the claim that 16:1-4a belongs to the late-exilic group of additions as argued by the present study.

Following the examination of all the passages that are inclusive toward the nations, the passages that reflect the opposite side of the late-exilic vision concerning the nations are attended to in the subsequent three chapters.

In chapter 6, not only is 14:26-27 identified as a separate addition to the preceding verses, the passage is recognized as an expansion on the whole of 14:4b-25a and not just 14:24-25a. Just as YHWH punished Assyria in the past on account of its hubris, so will all the proud nations of the whole earth be humbled according to the divine plan. In support of the hypothesis of the present study, striking similarities in language and thought between 14:26-27 and chs 40-49 are observed. YHWH would give Cyrus his chosen vessel victory over the powerful and pompous nations all but for the sake of his people Israel. This was the idea the supposed late-exilic redactor wished to express through 14:26-27 in conjunction with 14:1-4a. Although YHWH's plan is worldwide in scale, the imminent fall of Babylon is especially in the background of 14:26-27 as indicated by the redactional setting in 14:4a. Babylon and other proud nations will soon be brought low according to the plan of YHWH against the nations.

In chapter 7, the paradigm of 14:26-27 is spotted in the middle of the oracle concerning Tyre. The detailed study of the oracle shows that vv 5, 8-9, 11 disturb the general flow of the main poem (23:1-14). According to the reconstruction of the compositional history of 23:1-14, the original poem was about the fall of the Phoenician city-state Sidon and it consisted of vv 1b-4, 6-7, 10, 12-14. Sometime later, v 5 was added to include Tyre in a poem where many other Phoenician cities also appeared. This led to the 'false' identification of the poem by the redactor who gave the poem its heading in v 1a. Subsequently, vv 8-9, 11 were added in the late-exilic period as hypothesized by the present study. The closeness in style and thought of 23:8-9, 11 with 14:26-27 (especially the pairing of the plan and the hostile arm of YHWH) and chs 40-49 supports the late-exilic date of the passage. Finally, sometime during the post-exilic period, 23:15-18 was written to express a hope for Tyre's revival and even conversion (arguably). Whether or not 23:15-18 should be seen as a single or a two-staged expansion, the passage's dependence on Jer 25 with regard to its seventy year reference indicates that all of the final three verses of the oracle concerning Tyre belong to the post-exilic period. As for Isa 23:8-9, 11, the passage claims that the fall of Tyre is part of YHWH's global plan to punish the hubris of the powerful nations of the earth as set out in 14:26-27.

Lastly, in chapter 8, the vision of 14:26-27 is found to have been also applied to the oracle concerning Egypt. It is argued that 19:16-17 was added to the preceding verses latching onto the motif of YHWH's hostile plan against Egypt found in the two

secondary additions made to the earlier poems in vv 3, 11b-12 and combining the said motif with the announcement of Egypt's future trouble through the language of the Exodus tradition. Although no special words or phrases that could help with determining the date of 19:16-17 directly are found, the same pairing of the plan and arm of YHWH present in 14:26-27; 23:8-9, 11 lend support to attributing a late-exilic date to the passage. The fact that the tone of 19:18-25 is expressly different to that of 19:16-17 also serves as a circumstantial evidence for the view that 19:16-17 is not contemporary with 19:18-25, whose post-exilic date is little in doubt. According to 19:16-17, Egypt will soon experience terror because of YHWH's plan to bring Egypt low and exalt his people and their land. Egypt too is a part of the vision of 14:26-27.

The measured/discriminate inclusivism of the late-exilic redactional passages in the oracles concerning the nations in Isa 13-23 may be viewed as a stepping stone for the radically nations-friendly words of the post-exilic passages in 16:14b-5; 19:18-25; 23:15-18. The early materials in Isa 13-23 first began, when the kingdom of Judah was exposed to constant threats and attacks from the foreign powers, as a collection of oracles against the nations which singularly spoke of the nations' doom. Towards the end of the Babylonian exile, these ancient oracles needed to be updated and reapplied to the present day in light of YHWH's dramatic plan to upset the international scene imminently (through Cyrus) for the sake of bringing his people back to their land (chs 40-55). Some of the nations, for whom the words of the oracles of doom evidently came true, were now invited to share in the restoration of Zion. One could argue that the

trajectory started by this late-exilic reapplication of the inherited oracles concerning the nations led to the writing of some of the most profoundly inclusive passages in the HB.

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Abbreviations

BDB	The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
HB	Hebrew Bible
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
1QIsa ^a	1QIsaiah ^a
1QIsa ^b	1QIsaiah ^b
4QIsa ^b	4QIsaiah ^b
ch	chapter
chs	chapters
v	verse
vv	verses
*	section(s) of a verse or a chapter

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Chapter 1: Introduction and survey of scholarship

1-1: Introduction

In Isaiah 13-23, one finds a series of oracles which by and large concern the foreign nations. Although ch 22 appears to be about Jerusalem, the rest of the oracles in Isa 13-23 are mostly about various foreign nations and especially about their calamities at least in what seems to be the oracles' earliest forms. While ch 20 is a prose text describing a prophetic act of the prophet Isaiah in the 3rd person, the majority of Isa 13-23 is poetry albeit with intermittent prose writings that are commonly viewed as secondary additions.

It is widely accepted that many of the oracles concerning the nations in this part of the book contain numerous secondary additions and show that they have had as long and complex a compositional history as elsewhere in Isa 1-39. Not only is there explicit evidence of the later reapplication of an older oracle in 16:13, but one also finds a number of sudden changes in style (such as from poetry to prose) as well as content in the rest of chs 13-23. As an example, while ch 19 begins with a lengthy poem about the fall of Egypt, it ends with a prose text that looks forward to a day when Egypt will be called 'my people' by YHWH on a par with Israel.

Further, in some of these passages which are frequently regarded as secondary additions, many have noticed a recurring pattern. Delitzsch, for example, finds that dramatic turns from words of judgement against the nations to positive messages are found in 14:32; 16:1-5; 18:7; 19:16ff; 23:18.¹ 14:1-2 may be added to this list because even though the passage's inclusive message is not directed at the nation (its immediate literary context is about Babylon), it displays an inclusive attitude toward the nations at large. Imbedded in the harsh words of judgement against the nations, one repeatedly finds messages of hope which show that the doom of the nations is not the last word. Even though not all these passages which are friendly toward the nations envisage the same sort of future when examined closely (as it will be shown later in this study), it makes one wonder if the reappearance of the same theme in a number of oracles that are close together is not by design.

Another similarly recurring theme found across Isa 13-23 is YHWH's punitive plan against the nations. A small number of exegetes have noticed that this theme is repeated in 14:24-27; 19:12; 23:8-9.² To this group, 19:16-17 and 23:11 may be added. In this group of passages, not only is it reiterated each time that it is owing to YHWH's plan towards the whole world that the nations are met/ will meet with disasters, one also finds that the imagery of YHWH's hand is in each instance paired with his plan as

¹ Delitzsch, *Jesaja*, 224-225.

² Erlandsson, *Burden*, 98-99; Werner, *Plan Yahwes*, 34; Landy, 'Tyre' 240; C. Balogh, *Stele*, 135. Werner, however, highlights the difference between 14:24-27 and 19:12; 23:9 (as well as Jer 49:20; 50:45) in that while the latter is concerned primarily with the fate of the individual nations themselves, the former is about the foreign enemies (here typified by Assyria) in the land of Judah. This distinction seems to be exaggerated especially when the unity of Isa 14:24-27 is frequently questioned, but it will all be discussed more fully when we get to examine 14:24-27 later on.

a consistent feature. Again, it raises the question whether this is not another sign of a programmatic redactional activity within Isa 13-23.

While the passages which are positive toward the nations are relatively easy to identify as secondary additions because they all happen to be prose, the verses about the plan and the hand of YHWH are poetry in some places (14:24-27; [23:8-9, 11]) and prose in others (19:16-17). Despite the obvious parallels, it has not been explicitly asked if these additions which remain negative toward the nations belong to the same redactional layer. This is because, in the present form of the book, they happen to be rather more subtly placed among the surrounding texts than the group of passages which are positive toward the nations. 14:26-27, where the plan and the hand of YHWH are in parallel, is more often than not taken as an original unit with 14:24-25. Although it will be discussed more fully later in this study, this seems to be so because 14:26-27 was deliberately written in such a way so as to flow naturally from 14:24-25 by using some of the key words from 14:24-25. 19:16-17 is, likewise, frequently seen as an original unit with 19:18-25. In this instance, 19:18-25 appears to have imitated the style of 19:16-17 by repeating its opening phrase ביום ההוא ('in that day') in 19:18, 19, 21, 23, 24. As a result, the whole of 19:16-25 ended up having something of a family look, leaving 19:16-17 less distinct in appearance. 23:8-9, 11 is also not always seen as an addition because of its poetic style which makes it blend well with the surrounding poem. Because these passages have merged well with their adjacent texts, the parallel elements shared among them, which otherwise might have been more noticeable, have escaped many eyes.

At first glance, the two aforementioned themes may seem to draw two contrasting pictures. One looks forward to a positive turn for the nations and the other reaffirms the older words of doom against them. One may thus be led to assume that the two groups of passages represent the visions of two different editors (or groups of) and that they originate from two separate time periods thus belonging to two distinct compositional layers so to speak. A close examination, however, reveals that the two seemingly separate groups of passages are more closely related to each other than what first meets the eye.

It will be argued later in this study that two of the passages from the list of secondary additions where positive views toward the nations are expressed – 19:18-25; 23:15-18 – do not belong to the same compositional layer as the rest of the passages in this group (14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7). These two passages which allude to a YHWH temple in Egypt as well as to the seventy years of exile are almost always (and quite rightly) dated in the post-exilic period. As will be shown in the detailed treatment of each passage later on, the post-exilic date for 19:18-25; 23:15-18 is often passed on to 14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7, and the whole group is dated in the post-exilic period because they all seem to express a positive attitude toward the nations. When 14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7 are looked at separately, however, there is nothing in them which strongly indicates that they must have been written in the post-exilic period. In fact, both their style and thought match those of Isa 40-55 closely, and this suggests that they belong to a late-exilic editorial layer close to, if not the same as, chs 40-55. When

one examines the second group of passages which re-emphasizes the older invectives against the nations (14:26-27; 19:16-17; 23:8-9, 11), it too shares some uncanny similarities with Isa 40-55 in style and contents. Therefore, both 14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7 and 14:26-27; 19:16-17; 23:8-9, 11 show close connections with Isa 40-55.

The present study puts forward a hypothesis that a series of secondary additions which may be attributed to a late-exilic redactional layer has been added to the oracles concerning the nations across Isa 13-23. It will be argued that the reason these passages portray such similarities in style and thought with Isa 40-55 is because they were written either by the same writer who was responsible for chs 40-55 or by those belonging to the same circle of writers.

In Isa 40-55, one does not find an outlook toward the nations which is uniform with every nation. On the one hand, it is said that the nations will witness YHWH's salvation of his people and the nations are invited to turn to YHWH together with Israel (45:22-23; 52:10 etc.). It is also envisioned that the nations will be the recipients of YHWH's blessings which will flow through the restored servant Israel (42:1, 6; 49:6 etc.). On the other hand, it is foretold that powerful nations will soon be subdued by Cyrus (41:2; 45:1). Babylon is especially going to experience a dramatic fall (ch 47), the coastlands (ים־צִיִּן) are also going to fear Cyrus's military campaign (41:5), and Egypt, Cush, and Seba will be, figuratively speaking, handed over (to Cyrus probably) in exchange for Israel (43:3). Therefore, although the nations are depicted in Isa 40-55 as

beneficiaries of YHWH's salvation, they are only secondarily so through Israel. In addition, some nations are set to be punished by Cyrus (especially Babylon for her cruelty toward YHWH's people), and their destruction is directly related to the deliverance and restoration which Israel (and possibly the nations) is to experience.

A similar attitude toward the nations can be found in the passages which the present study's hypothesis assigns to the late-exilic editorial layer. According to this hypothesis, this late-exilic layer does not view all nations favourably. It tends to be more sympathetic to those nations which either have already suffered great disasters just like Judah has or no longer exercise the same kind of influence in the international arena as in the past (Philistia, Moab, and Cush). In contrast, it expects to witness the judgement of YHWH on those nations which still carry prominence and therefore remain proud (Babylon, Egypt, and Tyre).

The specific passages under consideration are 14:1-2; 14:26-27; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7; 19:16-17; 23:8-9, 11. They are found in oracles concerning Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Cush, Egypt, and Tyre. To posit that they belong to a late-exilic redactional layer, one automatically assumes that by the time these passages were written, the oracles which these passages are added to were already present in the book of Isaiah. The integrity of every one of these passages is at least involved in discussion and in the cases of some their secondary nature is widely accepted. Nonetheless, when it comes to dating individual passages, opinions vary somewhat as was briefly mentioned earlier. This

now leads us to a general survey of the discussion about the compositional history of chs 13-23. This survey is important not least because, according to certain models, many of the oracles, to which the late-exilic secondary passages of the present study's focus have been added, have only been incorporated into the book of Isaiah in the post-exilic period. Obviously, these models *a priori* rule out the possibility that the additions may be attributed to a late-exilic redactional layer because the core oracles themselves have only found their place in the book in the post-exilic period.

1-2: Survey of research on the compositional history of Isaiah 13-23

Before we proceed with the survey of more prevalent views, it would be in order to acknowledge that there are those within critical scholarship who, albeit small in number, maintain that the vast majority (if not all) of Isa 13-23 was written by Isaiah the 8th Century prophet. These scholars do not necessarily deny that these chapters went through one or more editorial processes. It is held, however, that it would have been either the prophet himself or his immediate disciples who edited these chapters and no one later. Edward Young defends the view that all 66 chapters of the book of Isaiah came from the 8th Century prophet. For Young, Babylon in Isa 13-14 is the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the prophet speaks about this future political entity through his prophetic power.³ Seth Erlandsson's treatment of Isa 13-23 is somewhat more

³ Young, *Isaiah Vol. 1*, 409-415. Alec Motyer also holds the same view. Motyer, *Isaiah*, 25-34.

flexible.⁴ Erlandsson allows that certain passages within Isa 13-23 may have been written by the prophet's immediate disciples.⁵ The more significant difference between Erlandsson and Young is that for Erlandsson, Babylon in Isa 13-14 is not the Neo-Babylonian Empire but Babylon of the Neo-Assyrian period.⁶ For Erlandsson, the majority of Isa 13-23 is set against the event of 701, and 13:1-14:27 is also understood to address the situation around that time. A similar view is advocated by John Oswalt, for whom Babylon in Isa 13-14 not only refers to Babylon in the Neo-Assyrian period but is also an icon of high-culture.⁷ Babylon and Tyre (ch 23) together represent proud civilisations at the eastern and western ends of the world. These views obviously preclude the hypothesis of the present study along with other approaches which involve a development of the book over a lengthy period of time altogether. The argument that Babylon received greater significance than Assyria during the Neo-Assyrian period because of its advanced culture does not explain adequately why Isa 13-23 opens with an oracle concerning Babylon and why Assyria receives so little attention (14:24-27). This would be even stranger if the main threat facing all the nations mentioned in this part of the book is an attack from Assyria and not from Babylon. For these reasons, the view held by Erlandsson and Oswalt failed to gain wider support. We shall now move on to more widely adopted views.

1-2-1: Post-exilic מִשְׁנָה collection

⁴ Erlandsson, *Burden*, 64-127, 160-166.

⁵ Erlandsson, *Burden*, 70-74, 76-80, 97-102.

⁶ Erlandsson, *Burden*, 160-166.

⁷ Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 297-301.

Many of the early discussions surrounding the compositional history of Isa 13-23 centred on the question of what the base-layer among these chapters might have looked like. Two factors influenced many scholars' decisions in this search. First, one finds an unusually large number of headings in this part of the book. These titles contain the word *נִשְׁאָא* which has the meaning 'oracle' and they can be found in 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1.⁸ The exact form of these titles as well as their relation to the main bodies of the oracles varies somewhat and each exegete's elucidation of this variation was usually central to reconstructing this base-layer. Second, while most of the oracles in Isa 13-23 deal with the fate of the nations, some parts within it speak about Judah and Jerusalem, as was briefly noted earlier. Again, depending on one's explanation for this phenomenon, contrasting pictures emerged.

As is pointed out by Jacques Vermeylen and Paul Cook, most of the early models share one common feature.⁹ Many believed that a separate collection of oracles against the foreign nations with titles containing the word *נִשְׁאָא* grew independently of the book of Isaiah until it was incorporated into the book. It was either that the base layer of Isa 13-23 before the inclusion of the *נִשְׁאָא* collection consisted of Isaianic materials which originally did not have the *נִשְׁאָא* titles or that bits of Isaianic materials were used to furnish an extra-Isaianic collection of oracles against the nations when the collection was edited into the book. Those holding either one of these views naturally looked for the date when this merger between the *נִשְׁאָא* collection and the base-layer of Isa 13-23 would have taken place. Often decisive for this search was the presumed date

⁸ A heading with the word *נִשְׁאָא* occurs once outside chs 13-23 in the book of Isaiah in 30:6.

⁹ Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 285-286; Cook, *Sign*, 2-23.

of the oracles concerning Babylon in chs 13-14, 21 because time and again they were understood to be the latest among the supposed מִשָּׁח collection.

Duhm believes that a collection of oracles against the nations existed outside the book of Isaiah and that it contained 5 oracles about Philistia, Moab, Aram, and Egypt together with Cush.¹⁰ This supposed collection now makes up the body of Isa 14:28-20:6 excluding 17:12-18:7. A compiler who lived in the second half of the 2nd Century (a date which is now impossible to hold due to the discovery of the Qumran Isaiah scrolls) joined this collection with yet another separate booklet which contained much of chs 21-22 and 30:6-7 and framed the two collections with 13:1-14:23 and ch 23, oracles about Babylon and Tyre. His extremely late date for the inclusion of the various components of chs 13-23 into the book of Isaiah aside, Duhm helpfully demonstrates that the oracles in chs 21-22 and 30:6-7 are different to the other oracles in Isa 13-23 in that they contain the מִשָּׁח headings which do not represent the following oracles quite so exactly as the other מִשָּׁח headings in chs 13-23 do. Oracles in chs 21-22 and 30:6-7 have titles which are made up of catchwords taken from the oracles rather than with clear relevant place-names like the rest of the מִשָּׁח headings in chs 13-23. In Duhm's case, both of his two groups of oracles as well as the framing oracles (concerning Babylon and Tyre) are equally late.

¹⁰ Duhm, *Jesaja*, 12-13.

Marti's reconstruction differs slightly from that of Duhm's in that he supposes that a number of passages can be attributed to Isaiah the 8th Century prophet and that they constituted the base-layer of Isa 13-23 prior to the inclusion of the מִשְׁפָּח collection.¹¹ Most of the passages which Marti believes to go back to the 8th Century (17:1-11+18:5-6; 18:1, 2, 4; [20:1, 3, 4, 6]; 22:1-5, 12-14, 22:15-18) either lack a מִשְׁפָּח heading or have a heading which is made up of catchwords from the following oracle. As for the rest of Isa 13-23 which mostly consists of the nations' oracles with the מִשְׁפָּח headings, they come from widely ranging times and some of them come from the 2nd Century (again, now an impossible date to maintain). Therefore, any passage that seems to have been added secondarily to these late oracles must have been written at an even later date.

G. B. Gray follows a similar principle where he supposes that the oracles with the ten מִשְׁפָּח headings (13:1; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:8, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1; [also 30:6]) came from an independently developed collection of oracles.¹² For Gray, this collection was brought into the book of Isaiah only in the post-exilic period because 13:1-14:4; 21:1-10; (possibly) 15-16; 19; 23 were all written during the exile or later. Again, any passage which was added secondarily to these oracles must have been written after the oracles were included in the book of Isaiah in the post-exilic period. The passages without such headings (14:24-27, 28-32; 17:12-14; 18; 22:15-25) are believed to have formed the base-layer of Isa 13-23 at some point. According to Gray, however, ch 20 was written after the collection of the nations' oracles was brought into the book although the

¹¹ Marti, *Jesaja*, xvi.

¹² Gray, *Isaiah*, li.

chapter may have derived from an early biography (not autobiography) of Isaiah.¹³

This is noteworthy because ch 20 is frequently understood to have been the centre piece of the base-layer of Isa 13-23.

Georg Fohrer similarly assumes that a collection of Isaianic materials against the nations merged at some point with an independent collection of oracles.¹⁴ According to Fohrer's reconstruction, the Isaianic materials (14:24-27, 28-32; 17:1-7 + 28:1-4; 18; 20; 22:1-19) once existed as a separate corpus and it was arranged following a scheme akin to the Egyptian execration texts where the neighbouring nations are arranged in a criss-cross fashion with the home nation at the centre and placed last in the sequence. Thus the oracles are arranged in the sequence of the East (Assyria); the West (Philistia); the North (Damascus and Syria); the South (Egypt); and the centre (Jerusalem). This Isaianic corpus was first broken up and united with the oracles from an independent collection of *נשנ* oracles concerning Babylon (13-14*; 21*), Moab (15-16*), Egypt (19*), and Tyre (23*) before it was brought into the book of Isaiah. According to Fohrer, the oracles from the extra Isaianic *נשנ* collection were placed in their current positions based on a catchword principle – i.e. these oracles were placed next to the Isaianic oracles that contained some shared expressions. In any case, the incorporation of the new edited whole into the book of Isaiah is dated in the post-exilic period by Fohrer.¹⁵

¹³ Gray, *Isaiah*, 344.

¹⁴ Fohrer, 'Isaiah I-XXXIX' 16-18.

¹⁵ Fohrer, 'Isaiah I-XXXIX' 5-6.

While Friedrich Huber is primarily interested in the parts of the book of Isaiah which may be attributed to the 8th Century prophet, he is another scholar who assumes that the various nations' oracles were added to an Isaianic core which involved 14:24-27, 28-32; 17; 18:1-6; 20; 22.¹⁶ The supposed base-layer of Isa 13-23 consisted of oracles that lack straightforward מִשָּׁח headings with the exception of ch 17.

Within the same principle, Wildberger posits that a collection of oracles against the nations which grew outside the book of Isaiah until the post-exilic period was added to the already existing messages of the 8th Century prophet against the nations by a single redactor.¹⁷ Naturally, any addition made to the oracles that were incorporated into the book in the post-exilic period may only be from an even later date. Wildberger, like many others, considers the oracle concerning Philistia in 14:28-32 to be from the 8th Century prophet (albeit with secondary additions). He goes further, however, and wonders if other מִשָּׁח headings in Isa 13-23 were formulated and added secondarily by the same redactor who had brought the extra-Isaianic collection of the nations' oracles into the book in order to create some sort of continuity with the heading found in 14:28.

Hermann Barth, who is famous for introducing the idea of there having been an anti-Assyrian redaction during the reign of King Josiah, argues that after the addition of the anti-Assyrian passages (14:4b-21, 24-27; 17:4-6, 12-14), as well as the

¹⁶ Huber, *Juda und die anderen Völker*, 3.

¹⁷ Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 497-498.

incorporation of chs 18, 20, Isa 13-23 only contained the passages which now do not have the מִשָּׁח headings with the exception of ch 17. As far as the rest of the oracles in Isa 13-23 which are currently introduced with the מִשָּׁח headings are concerned, Barth, like his predecessors, believes that they came from an independent collection and that they were brought into Isa 13-23 early in the post-exilic period.

Otto Kaiser has inverted the order of the conventional supposition that there was first a collection of oracles that currently do not have the מִשָּׁח headings in Isa 13-23 and that an independent collection of oracles with the מִשָּׁח headings were later inserted in between the earlier materials.¹⁸ For Kaiser, there was originally a collection of oracles with the מִשָּׁח headings which may be dated in the late-exilic period. Nevertheless, the passages that lack these מִשָּׁח headings are later writings which were added to the base-layer of the מִשָּׁח oracles. Thus while this model allows the possibility that some secondary passages added to the core collection of oracles came from the exilic period as per the hypothesis of the present study, it negates such a possibility for other passages that are added to the oracles which are traditionally understood to have come from the pre-exilic period such as the core of 14:28-32.¹⁹

The view that is shared among many of the scholars whose views have been introduced thus far is that a certain anonymous collection of oracles concerning the nations was distributed across the base-layer of Isa 13-23 sometime during the post-

¹⁸ Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 1-5.

¹⁹ Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 51-56.

exilic period. According to this supposition, the hypothesis of the present study is negated from the start. There is, however, a different strand of development models which reject the view that a single independent collection of nations' oracles came into the book during the post-exilic period.

1-2-2: Gradual growth of Isaiah 13-23

Quite a number of scholars do not accept that there was one major influx of multiple oracles against the nations from an independent collection. Instead, they opt for a more gradual growth of Isa 13-23. The biggest advantage of this approach is its ability to account for the lack of uniformity in style between various oracles.

John Skinner operates under an oracle-by-oracle policy when deciding the date for different parts of Isa 13-23. He is not bound by the heading of each oracle in this regard. Skinner identifies 14:24-32; 15-16 (reuse of an older oracle); 17:1-14; 18:1-6; 19:1-15; 20; 22:1-23; 23:1-14 as Isaianic and 13:1-14; 23; 18:7; 19:16-25; 21; 22:24-25; 23:15-18 as not written by the 8th Century prophet. Of the passages that do not go back to the 8th Century, Skinner designates only 19:16-25; 23:15-18 as clearly post-exilic products and leaves the date of the rest somewhat open. Skinner in a way identifies the earliest and the latest components in Isa 13-23 but leaves the rest for individual verdict. The hypothesis of the present study does not step too far out from the big picture Skinner draws.

One finds much greater sensitivity toward individual passages' particular features in Edward Kissane's treatment of Isa 13-23. To begin with, he notices the similarity in form between 6:1 and 14:28 and wonders if both openings are structural markers from one of the earliest stages of the formation of the book which was organised chronologically i.e. the days of King Ahaz's reign followed by those of King Hezekiah's.²⁰ Moreover, Kissane insightfully challenges the long-held view that ch 20 formed a part of the base-layer of Isa 13-23. He notes that ch 20, like ch 7, is a 3rd person narrative about the prophet Isaiah instead of being autobiographical as in chs 6, 8-9. Kissane therefore postulates that ch 20 is likely to be of a late-exilic/early-post-exilic origin just like chs 36-39.²¹ Kissane, like some of his predecessors, also points out that some of the מִשְׁפָּח headings describe the oracles that follow 'inaccurately' (e.g. 17:1; 21:1, 13). This leads him to advance the possibility that while some of the headings were written by the authors of the oracles themselves others were editorially added after the oracles have found their way into the book.²²

Not only does he seek to recover the earliest shape of Isa 13-23, Kissane also looks out for any coherence which may be found among the passages he regards as redactional additions to earlier oracles. He identifies 14:3-4; 16:13-14; 18:7; 19:16-25; 21:10; 22:24-25; 23:15-18 as redactional prose additions.²³ Of these additions, Kissane

²⁰ Kissane, *Isaiah*, xxxv.

²¹ Kissane, *Isaiah*, xxxiii, xxxvi.

²² Kissane, *Isaiah*, xxxiv.

²³ Kissane, *Isaiah*, xxxiv-xxxv.

raises the possibility that 16:13-14; 21:10; 22:24-25 were written by the 8th Century prophet himself. As for the others, Kissane argues that they appear to echo the hopes of the Israelites during the exilic period. The reason behind this argument is what he regards as the deliberate replacement of Assyria with Babylon as the archenemy of YHWH's people in 13:19; 14:22; 21:9; 23:13.²⁴ For Kissane, the most likely redactors who would have wished to see Assyria 'updated' to Babylon were those who were in exile in Babylon prior to Cyrus's subjugation of the city. All in all, although Kissane's reconstruction of the compositional history of Isa 13-23 is more complex than those of his predecessors, its complexity is the result of his effort to explain the numerous important observations he makes. Again, the general thrust of Kissane's reconstruction of the development of Isa 13-23 is in important ways in tune with the hypothesis the present study offers.

Vermeylen explicitly rejects the hypothesis that a single collection of the nations' oracles merged with an Isaianic collection of the same to form Isa 13-23.²⁵ For him, it has not been explained adequately why the two collections were mixed together rather than simply juxtaposed. Further, he wonders why some materials which apparently predate the מִשְׁנָה collection have not been given the מִשְׁנָה headings during the supposed merger between the two collections. Instead, Vermeylen envisages a more gradual organic growth of Isa 13-23 where most of the מִשְׁנָה oracles within these chapters had begun with some pre-exilic kernels which subsequently received numerous expansions. Each perceived secondary passage is judged individually and dated accordingly.

²⁴ Kissane, *Isaiah*, xxxvii.

²⁵ Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 285-286.

Vermeulen's conscious attempt not to be tied down to an overly simple model of the chapters' compositional history is a helpful corrective.

Clements, likewise, finds the model of the merger of two collections to be assuming more than the evidence allows.²⁶ Although he follows many others and supposes that the Isaianic core of Isa 13-23 is to be found mainly in 14:28-32; 17:1-6; 18:1-7; 20:1-6; 22 (which are frequently thought not to have come from the hypothetical *אשח* collection), he allows that 13:1-14:23 contains and also grew out of words of Isaiah ben Amoz. Even when it comes to other oracles which may not come from the 8th Century prophet, because Clements does not adopt the view that they all came from one collection, each oracle is dated individually and the date of its inclusion in the book is not subject to a preconceived redactional theory.

Graham Davies is another exegete who highlights the prominence of the Babylonian setting of Isa 13-23.²⁷ Although 14:24-27 may have once been the continuation of the anti-Assyrian passages in ch 10, and ch 20 is 'situated' in the Assyrian period, for Davies, the present arrangement of Isa 13-23 assumes a Babylonian setting and 'looks forward in important ways to chs 40-55, more precisely chs 40-48.'²⁸ Again, what Davies regards as 'explicit dissociation' with Assyria in 23:13 is a significant clue in this regard. Having stressed the Babylonian setting of Isa 13-23

²⁶ Clements, *Isaiah*, 129-131.

²⁷ Davies, 'Destiny' 98-99.

²⁸ Davies, 'Destiny' 98.

which Davies reckons is superimposed on a previous Assyrian setting, he nevertheless attributes all of the positive sayings toward the nations (14:1-2; 18:7; 23:15b-18) to Trito-Isaiah because of their similarity in thought with 60:5ff. 19:18-25 also depends on Trito-Isaiah but it is to be dated later than Trito-Isaiah. Although Davies's dating all of the positive sayings toward the nations in the post-exilic period is not compelling, he helpfully and insightfully draws attention to the fact that not all such sayings express the same level of inclusivity. This last point is significant and is very much in line with the present study's main argument.

Christopher Begg argues forcefully and successfully for the existence of the Babylonian redaction of Isa 13-23 shortly before or after the surrender of Babylon to Cyrus.²⁹ Begg argues that where Babylon appears in Isa 13-23, it is in the 'frame' texts, so to speak. Babylon is mentioned in 13:1, 19-22; 14:4a, 22-23, and these are the passages which he believes frame the main body of oracles found in 13:2-18; 14:4b-21, where Babylon is not mentioned. 23:13 is understood to be parenthetical to the Tyre oracle and it is only in 21:9 that Babylon is mentioned as the original main subject. All this is a clear indication for Begg that there was a redactional 'Babylonizing' of Isa 13-23 at some point. Regarding when this process might have taken place, he points to the portrayal of Babylon in chs 14 and 47 which he believes is at its harshest within the HB. Not only is Babylon depicted as irrevocably doomed in the positive sense, Babylon is also contrasted with other traditional opponents of Israel whose future restorations are foreseen (Cush in 18:7; Egypt & Assyria in 19:18-25; Tyre in 23:17-18). Because such

²⁹ Begg, 'Babylon' 121-125.

severe treatment of Babylon is found elsewhere in the HB only in Isa 47, Begg is confident that the Babylonizing redaction of Isa 13-23 belongs to the same period as Isa 40-55. Begg's theory of a Babylonizing redaction of Isa 13-23 is very much in step with the hypothesis of the present study and is especially helpful in bringing to light the fact that the attitude toward the nations found in the editorial remarks across Isa 13-23 appears to be intentionally discriminate – at least in so far as that Babylon is not given the kind of hope for renewal allowed for other nations.

Allen K. Jenkins offers a somewhat unique picture of the development of Isa 13-23 in a number of ways.³⁰ He does not focus so much on discerning the earliest parts of Isa 13-23 which may go back to Isaiah ben Amoz. Instead his attention is on the three major redactional processes that have shaped Isa 13-23 into what we now have. According to Jenkins, the first redaction took place during the course of events that led to the fall of Jerusalem in 586. This layer contained all the oracles in Isa 13-23 except for those against Babylon (13:1-14:23) and Tyre (ch 23). At this point, the nations' oracles were divided into two halves. The first half ran from 14:28 to 17:14 and concerned Judah's neighbouring countries (Philistia, Moab, Damascus, and Israel). The second half began in 18:1 and ended in 22:25 and dealt with the international superpowers (Cush, Egypt, and Babylon). The primary function of this late-pre-exilic redaction was to warn Judah against the worship of idols and of its dire consequences. This is why each half begins with the words of encouragement about Zion (14:32; 18:7) but ends with those about the attack on Zion (17:12-14; 22:1-14). Although the first assault

³⁰ Jenkins, 'Isaiah 13-23' 237-251.

against Zion in 17:12-14 is thwarted by YHWH, the second in 22:1-14 is brought on by YHWH.

There is, however, another agenda in this redaction. The final phrase in 17:14 'This is the portion of those who loot us, and the lot of those who plunder us!' is directed against not only Damascus and Ephraim but also against Philistia and Moab because it rounds off the first half of the section about the nations and paints a bleak picture for the nations. Nevertheless, the restoration of Cush in 18:7 at the beginning of the second half is applicable also to Egypt and Babylon hinting that there is yet a hope for the nations.

The second major redaction came after the fall of Babylon. Surrounding the late-pre-exilic layer (14:24-22:25), two oracles concerning the proud and powerful nations Babylon (14:1-23) and Tyre (23) were added. The main thrust of this redaction is to look back to the fall of Babylon and Tyre and claim that it was their hubris that had brought YHWH's judgement on them. Finally, at an even later time, ch 13 was added to set the whole of Isa 13-23 'in the context of the Day of YHWH.'³¹

Many of the passages under the present study's focus unusually receive pre-exilic dates in Jenkins's model. Although his identification of the 'Day of YHWH' in the Babylon oracle in ch 13 as being in the style of post-exilic apocalyptic genre has gained

³¹ Jenkins, 'Isaiah 13-23' 250.

some support, his reconstruction of the bi-partite late-pre-exilic redaction has not been adopted by many. This is mostly because 18:1, unlike 14:28, simply does not appear to be the start of a large section. Moreover, it is unlikely that the Babylon text in ch 14 was written shortly after the surrender of Babylon to Cyrus because the kind of slaughter depicted in 14:21-23 did not happen in Cyrus's peaceful conquest of the city.

H.G.M. Williamson continues further in the direction of seeing a late-exilic redaction in Isa 13-23.³² He argues that a major redactional shaping of an earlier Isaianic corpus was carried out by Deutero-Isaiah as he used the corpus as the prelude to his own work (Isa 40-55). In line with Kissane's view, Williamson proposes that the book Deutero-Isaiah inherited contained two structural markers. The first is in 6:1 and the second is in 14:28, and the two openings are remarkably similar.

(The beginning of) Isa 6:1

בְּשָׁנַת־מוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ עֲזַיָּהוּ וַאֲרָאָה אֶת־אֱלֹהִי

(In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw...)

Isa 14:28

בְּשָׁנַת־מוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אָחָז הָיָה הַמִּשְׁאֵל הַזֶּה

(In the year that King Ahaz died came this oracle.)

This indicates that the book was formally arranged into two parts in one of the earliest stages of the book's development and that 6:1 and 14:28 marked the beginnings of

³² Williamson, *Book*, 156ff.

these parts. According to Williamson, there is another pair of resembling structural markers. They are the openings found in 2:1 and 13:1.

Isa 2:1

הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר רָאָה יְשַׁעְיָה בֶן-אָמוֹץ עַל-יְהוּדָה וְיִירוּשָׁלַם.

(The word that Isaiah ben Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.)

Isa 13:1

מִשָּׂא בָבֶל אֲשֶׁר רָאָה יְשַׁעְיָה בֶן-אָמוֹץ

(The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah ben Amoz saw.)

These two passages opened the two halves of the new Isaianic corpus which was redacted by Deutero-Isaiah. A particularly novel idea concerning Isa 13ff is that the second half of the inherited book which Deutero-Isaiah redacted ran all the way from ch 13 to ch 33. Chs 24-27 were not yet written at this point, and with 28:1 lacking any signs of being an opening of a major section, there was no break between the end of ch 23 and the beginning of ch 28.

Williamson focuses his analysis on the bookends of the larger sections of the book, as it were, and therefore neither attempts nor claims to indicate all possible traces of Deutero-Isaiah's redactional activities in Isa 13-33. At both ends of these chapters, this redactor created something of a frame by editing and furnishing 13:1-14:23/27 at the beginning as an introduction and the same with ch 33 as a transitional text to chs 40ff. The present shape of chs 13-14, he argues, expresses a sentiment toward Babylon

akin to that in Deutero-Isaiah. Williamson therefore sees the period shortly before the fall of Babylon as the chapters' most appropriate historical setting. According to Williamson's model, all the main bodies of the oracles concerning the nations in Isa 13-23 were already present when this late-exilic redaction took place. As is apparent, Williamson's model both accommodates and may be further supported by the hypothesis of the present study.

Burkard M. Zapff's detailed treatment of Isa 13-23 follows a similar approach and arrives at not too dissimilar conclusions as the preceding exegetes in the current group.³³ He believes that Isa 13-23 first began with 14:28-29, 31; 17:1-3 (possibly vv 4-6 also); 20*; 22*, and that these passages continued in chs 28ff, as suggested by Williamson. For Zapff, 14:24-25a (and possibly 14:32) was added during the reign of Josiah, in agreement with the proponents of the anti-Assyrian redaction theory. In the late-pre-exilic period shortly before the fall of Jerusalem in 586, more nations' oracles (15-16*; 18-19*) were brought into the Isaianic collection. They were placed in their current position to create a neat geographical pattern as Jenkins argued. Later during the late-exilic period, Babylon oracles and an oracle about Tyre (13:17-22; 21:1-10/15; 23*) were brought into the book. At the same time, the unifying superscript system was introduced in 13:1; 14:28b; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1.

³³ Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 272-301.

In Zapff's view, nevertheless, most of what he identifies as *Fortschreibungen* (16:13-14; 18:7; 19:16-17; 21:16-17; 23:15-17) were written in the post-exilic period. Not much justification is given here by Zapff, however, both for grouping all these passages together and for dating them in the post-exilic period. He also holds that the complex of 14:4b-21* found its way into the book only through the framing verses 14:1-4a and 14:22-23 in the post-exilic period contrary to the widely held view that 14:4b-21 was at some point directed at an Assyrian monarch and that it was present in the book from fairly early on. Further, Zapff argues following Jenkins that 13:1b-16, 22b was also written sometime in the post-exilic period to set the whole of Isa 13-23 in the context of the universal judgement of YHWH in the quasi-apocalyptic milieu using the language of the cosmic Day of YHWH. At an even later date, this concept of the universal judgement of YHWH led to the idea of YHWH's universal salvation and this is found in 19:18-25. Except for his decision on the date of the prose additions across Isa 13-23 as well as his unusual date for the inclusion of 14:4b-21, which only constitute a minor part of his big picture, Zapff's overall reconstruction is not at serious odds with the main thrust of the present study. The present study could in fact serve as fine-tuning of his more general conclusions.

Uwe Becker's interest is primarily in recovering the earliest layer of the book of Isaiah and therefore there is little to engage with in terms of the current discussion. Nevertheless, his view demands attention as he develops Kaiser's view that 14:28-32, which at least in its core is recognised by the overwhelming majority as belonging to

the earliest layer of the book, is in fact a post-exilic product.³⁴ For Becker, 14:28-32 is a *Fortschreibung* on 10:5-11* and 14:24-25a, written no earlier than in the 4th Century because there is some overlap in language between 14:28-32 and the other two passages. Naturally, this negates the late-exilic date of 14:32b but Becker's view is very much a marginal opinion not least because the said overlap in style can be more economically explained as owing to common authorship.

Ulrich Berges more or less builds on Zapff's development model for Isa 13-23.³⁵ Berges accepts that there was a Babylonizing redaction of Isa 13-23 shortly before or after the fall of Babylon. By this time most of the main bodies of the oracles currently found in Isa 13-23 were present. Nevertheless, like Zapff, Berges believes 14:1-23 was not yet written at this time. Echoing Zapff, the taunt against the anonymous tyrant in 14:4b-21 only found its place in the book through its frame texts 14:1-4a and 14:22-23. While Zapff leaves the date of the inclusion of 14:1-23 open in the post-exilic period, Berges argues that it was brought in after the destruction of Babylon by Xerxes in 482. Against the views of Begg and others, Berges believes that the hostility expressed against Babylon in 13:1-14:23 (after these chapters were redacted shortly after 482) is greater than that in ch 47. At the same time, two more sets of passages were added to the book and these include many of the passages which the present study claims to have been written in the late-exilic period. First, a series of passages (13:2; 14:1-2; 16:1, 3-5; 18:7; 23:17-18) were written in order to 'Zionize' Isa 13-23. These passages envisage the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion. In this respect, he sets apart 19:16-25 as a later

³⁴ U. Becker, *Botschaft zum Buch*, 272-274.

³⁵ Berges, *Book*, 125-180.

development because Egypt goes through conversion and restoration without having to come to Zion. 19:16-25 would, nevertheless, still have been written well within the period before the rise of the more exclusive nationalism as found in Ezra-Nehemiah. The details of the passages' date aside, this distinction between 19:16-25 and the other nations-friendly passages is indeed illuminating. Second, the theme of 'the wicked vs the pious' is found in another group of passages (13:2, 9b β , 11; 14:5, 20b-21, 30, 32; 16:13-14; 17:2b β , 14b; 21:2b β , 10, 16-17; 22:25) which were added at this time also. For Berges, a 5th Century Zion community is behind the writing of all these passages that 'Zionize' Isa 13-23 and turn the dynamic of these chapters from the frame of Judah vs the nations into that of the wicked vs the pious. 14:1-23 was added, likewise, by the same community.

The main reason Berges gives a 5th Century date for the passages which are, as it were, nations-friendly seems to be almost entirely due to his dating 14:1-23 after Xerxes's attack of Babylon. There is no other compelling reason for dating these passages so late. Although it will be dealt with in greater detail when 14:1-2 and the surrounding texts are examined, the argument that Babylon is more negatively depicted in chs 13-14 than ch 47 is not convincing.

Joseph Blenkinsopp's treatment of Isa 13-23 more or less stays within the consensus reached so far among the scholars in the present group albeit with a few

exceptions.³⁶ He affirms that, early on in the formation of the book, 14:28 marked the beginning of the second half of the book as 6:1 did the first. Sometime during the exile, Babylon oracles (13:1-14:23; 21:1-10) were added to an older collection of oracles concerning Assyria (14:24-27), Philistia (14:28-31), Moab (15:1-16:11), Damascus (17:1-3), Israel (17:4-6), and Egypt (18:1-6; 19:1-15) which was set in the Assyrian period in order to explain the current Babylonian dominance in light of the prophetic history of Judah. Sometime later, a few additional oracles which concerned the nations of greater current concern (21:11-12, 13-15; 22:1-8; 23:1-16) were added. All these oracles were then subsequently expanded with various additions. Although Blenkinsopp does not specify when the last groups of oracles were included in the book or ask specifically when different additions might have been written, his overall picture of the development of Isa 13-23 encourages a case-by-case approach when dating different secondary expansions found in these chapters.

Marvin Sweeney's search for a Josianic redaction in Isa 13-23 is worth a mention.³⁷ Sweeney acknowledges that there was a Babylonian redaction in chs 13-14 where an older taunt against an Assyrian monarch in 14:4b-21 was 'recontextualized' by the addition of a Babylon oracle in 13:1-22 and the framing verses surrounding the taunt in 14:1-4a, 22-23. Sweeney's focus though is on retrieving the Josianic layer in between the 8th Century materials and the exilic redactional layer. He attributes the following passages in chs 15-23 to the Josaianic redaction: 16:13-14; 19:18-25; 20:1-6; 23:15-18. Quite strikingly, Sweeney believes that the rest of the materials in chs 15-23

³⁶ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 271-273.

³⁷ Sweeney, *King Josaiah*, 244-248.

are from Isaiah ben Amoz. Obviously, none of the passages under examination for the present study can be dated in the late-exilic period according to Sweeney because they were all written either in the 8th or in the 7th Century. Needless to say, Sweeney's conservative dating of chs 15-23 falls somewhat outside of the usual view.

Csaba Balogh is another scholar who strictly follows (perhaps more than anyone) a passage-by-passage policy when dating Isa 13-23 although he is, like Sweeney, often found to prefer more conservative dates.³⁸ For Balogh, the majority of Isa 13-23 (13:2-8; 14:4b-21; 14:24-27; 15:1-16:5; 17:7-8; 19:16-25; 20:1-6; 21:1-10-12; 22: 5b-8a, 19-24; 23:15-18) is from the 7th Century, which is based on the 8th Century passages (14:29, 30b-32; 17: 1-6; 18:1-6; 19:1-5; 22:1-5a, 15-18), though he acknowledges that there are within it passages from the exilic (13:9-16, 17-22; 14:22-23; 16:6-14; 17:9-11; 21:13-17; 22:8b-11, 25) as well as the post-exilic (14:1-4a) periods. His focus is mainly on the supposed late-pre-exilic version of Isa 13-23 and he claims that it resembled the Assyrian inscriptions which celebrated various monarchs' rule over their territories by recording their past military campaigns both in form and function. YHWH's worldwide supremacy is celebrated through the records of his judgement of the nations which used to belong to the territories of the great foreign kings.

Partly because Balogh's primary attention is on the late Assyrian/early Babylonian shape of Isa 13-23, one receives the impression from his reconstruction of

³⁸ Balogh, *Stele*, 75-137.

the growth of these chapters that after the large-scale redaction of Isa 13-23 in the late-pre-exilic period, subsequent additions were all made individually without any clear recognizable scheme. In any case, the majority of the passages under the present study's focus were written in the pre-exilic times according to Balogh.

Finally, Paul Cook's contribution to the understanding of Isa 13-23 is worth a mention. He tackles the old conundrum concerning the minor variations found among the headings of the oracles in these chapters.³⁹ Cook divides the headings into three categories:

- 1) Simple title: מִשָּׁא + geographical name. Example: מִשָּׁא מוֹאָב (15:1).
- 2) Expanded title: מִשָּׁא + geographical name + which ... etc. (13:1).
- 3) Introductory sentence that uses the word מִשָּׁא (14:28).

Cook shows that these types of מִשָּׁא headings are found elsewhere in the HB also. Nah 1:1 and Hab 1:1 would be examples of a 'simple title' and an 'expanded title' respectively. Cook points out that whenever these מִשָּׁא titles are used outside the book of Isaiah in the HB, they introduce textual units longer than a single oracle and, in some cases, even entire books. Based on this knowledge, Cook imagines that at some point, not all oracles in Isa 13-23 had individual titles. He then observes that none of the 'simple titles' in Isa 13-23 were integral parts of the oracles which follow. Cook therefore argues that all 'simple titles' in Isa 13-23 may well be secondary to the oracles. He observes further that some of these 'simple titles' are redundant because the

³⁹ Cook, *Sign*, 36-46.

geographical names of the oracles' addressees appear in the first verse in some cases (15:1; 17:1; 19:1) and that where these 'simple titles' are not immediately followed by the mention of the addressees, the titles are made with a word or an expression from the following oracles (21:1; 22:1; 23:1). Based on these observations, Cook argues that all the oracles with 'simple titles' were without headings at first and that, at an early stage of the development of the book, 14:28 served as an introduction not just for the oracle against Philistia but also for the oracles concerning Moab, Damascus, and Egypt where the current 'simple titles' are redundant. Sometime later, the rest of the oracles with the 'simple titles' (chs 21, 22, 23) were added. He believes that the inclusion of the Babylon oracle in ch13 later in the exilic period could have prompted the adding of the 'simple titles' to create uniformity. Although it will be discussed in detail when we examine ch 23 later on, there appears to be a tricky textual issue in 23:1 and, according to the present study's emendation of the text, the verse does identify the recipient of the disaster as *מַעֲזוֹ הַיָּם* ('the fortress of the sea') which may refer either to Tyre or Sidon. Accordingly, the main body of the oracle in ch 23 may well have been one of the earliest oracles in Isa 13-23 together with the oracles against Philistia, Moab, Damascus, and Egypt. In any case, Cook's reconstruction not only helpfully illuminates the earliest stages of the formation of Isa 13-23, it also does not in any way preclude the present study's hypothesis which deals with a later development of these chapters.

We have observed time and again in this survey that determining the original historical settings behind the composition of many oracles in Isa 13-23 is less than straightforward, resulting in widely varying conclusions. This is often because the

disasters that are either described or foretold in these oracles are consistently so vague and so lack explicit historical references that it is difficult to situate the oracles in any specific period in history. Therefore, when there is much uncertainty over the dates of so many oracles, some sort of clear historical references in the text would always be welcome. The oracle concerning Babylon in ch 13 is an important exception in this respect. With the mention of the Medes attacking the Chaldeans, the oracle serves as a useful peg on which other passages could hang. The hypothesis of the present study wishes to serve future diachronic studies of Isa 13-23 as another such referential point although admittedly it will never be as sure and concrete as the example of ch 13. Further, more specifically with regard to the dramatic shift from the all-out doom of the nations to the genuine hope for their conversion to becoming YHWH's people in Isa 13-23, the present study wishes to demonstrate that the said shift had a traceable intermediary stage within the growth of these chapters.

Having surveyed some of the important works that discuss the growth of Isa 13-23, we may now proceed with a detailed examination of each individual passage that the hypothesis of the present study depends on. Each of the next seven chapters will deal with one of the seven passages under examination in the following order: 14:1-2; 14:32b; 18:7; 16:1-4a; 14:26-27; 23:8-9, 11; 19:16-17. The passages that are positive toward the nations will be attended to first and those that are negative will follow afterwards. First of all, in each chapter, the claim of the present hypothesis that the passage under consideration constitutes a secondary unit will be justified by reconstructing the compositional history of the larger literary unit of which our

passage is a part. While doing so, the question of the date of each textual layer will be tackled focusing especially on the main passage under examination. Moreover, the hypothesis of the present study will in each chapter be tested against the results of the diachronic analysis of each entire oracle to see if the proposed hypothesis successfully explains the shape the oracle is currently in. Lastly, it will be asked in what way our passages interpreted and modified the earlier materials. Needless to mention, various textual difficulties related to the questions above will be dealt with along the way.

Chapter 2: Introducing the theme of the nations joining the people of Israel

(Isaiah 14:1-2)

In the present setting, Isa 14:1-2 is a prose text in the middle of a section – Isa 13:1-14:23 – that is under the heading in 13:1 – מִשַּׁא בָּבֶל ('an oracle concerning Babylon'). This section, dedicated to the fate of Babylon, contains two large poems concerning Babylon – Isa 13:2-22 and 14:4b-21. While the first poem is about the impending fall of Babylon which mentions Babylon by name in 13:19 and their attackers the Medes in 13:17, the second poem is a taunt toward the fall of an oppressive ruler of many nations whose name or further identity is not revealed within the main body of the poem. The immediate literary context of the second poem, 14:3-4a and 14:22-23, however, each relate the poem to Babylon. 14:3-4a directs the poem to the king of Babylon, and 14:22 assumes that the children of the tyrant king in 14:21 are the inhabitants of the city of Babylon as YHWH pronounces the desolation of the city in 14:23.¹ Between these two poems, then, is our passage under examination, 14:1-2. Whereas the whole of 14:1-4a is likely to be from the same hand in the absence of compelling reasons to the contrary, the verses where one finds the theme of the foreigners joining the Israelites (which is

¹ Most commentators assume that Isa 14:3-4a and 14:22-23 belong to the same redactional layer or attribute them to the same hand (Cf. Quell, 'Jesaja 14:1-23' 136-137; Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 294; Kidd, *Alterity*, 72-73. For seeing the relationship between 14:1-3 and 14:21-23, see Alonso Schökel, *Profetas*, 176-177:

v 1 The Lord is gracious	v 21 Ruthless imperative
v 1 Possession of the land	v 21 No possession of the earth
v 1 Incorporation of the foreigners	v 22 Removal of the name and the remnant
vv 1, 3 Rest in the homeland	v 23 Desolation
v 2 Repatriation	v 22 Removal).

Williamson questions the certainty of this view by pointing out that 14:22-23 shows no clear relationship with 14:1-4a. In fact, 14:22-23 speaks of the destruction of the city of Babylon rather than focusing on the fall of the king of Babylon as 14:3-4a makes the following poem to be about. Williamson, *Book*, 168. Also see Jeppesen, 'Massa Babel' 73.

what groups 14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7 together) are 14:1-2. Furthermore, 14:3-4a is somewhat detached from the preceding two verses in that the chief function of 14:3-4a seems to be to introduce the poem that follows. 14:1-2, on the other hand, is more concerned with the rise of Israel than the fall of its archenemy even though the two are inherently connected. For these reasons, 14:1-2 will be treated as a separate unit in this chapter.

Isa 14:1-2 includes in its vision of the restoration of Israel both the picture of the gentiles joining them and that of Israel's rule over those who had oppressed them in the past. The special attention given to Israel's future relationship with the gentiles expressed in these verses stands out especially when one considers that the two poems surrounding 14:1-2 do not deal with this issue at all. As much as the future vision concerning Israel's relationship with the foreigners in 14:1-2 is charged with deep emotions, the exact meaning of the passage is not as obvious as it might seem. Moreover, the passage's unity is not without dispute either. We shall, therefore, first, take the question of unity of Isa 14:1-2 in hand. We will, then, attempt to determine the meaning of the text and, finally, seek to date the composition of the passage.

Isa 14:1-2

כִּי יִרְחֹם יְהוָה אֶת־נַעֲלָב וּבָחַר עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִנִּיחָם עַל־אֲדָמָתָם וְנָלְנָה הָגָר עֲלֵיהֶם וְנִסְפְּחוּ עַל־בֵּית יַעֲקֹב

וְלִקְחוּם עַמִּים וְהִבִּיאוּם אֶל־מְקוֹמָם וְהִתְנַחֲלוּם בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל אֲדָמָתָהּ יְהוָה לַעֲבָדִים וְלִשְׁפָחוֹת וְהָיוּ שָׂבִים לְשִׁבְיָהֶם וְרָדוּ

בְּנִגְשֵׁיהֶם

(For the Lord will have compassion on Jacob, and he will again choose Israel, and he will set them in their land; and the proselytes will join them, and they will attach themselves to the house of Jacob.

And the peoples will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will acquire them as inheritance in the land of the Lord as male and female slaves; and they will take captive those who were their captors, and they will rule over their oppressors.)

2-1: Unity of Isaiah 14:1-2

Isa 14:1-2 is usually thought of as an original unity.² This is, however, often not without a degree of reservation about the clumsy style of writing found in v2a with a series of suffixes that have slightly awkward referents: *וּלְקַחֻם עַמִּים וְהַבִּיאוֹם אֶל מְקוֹמָם* 'And the peoples will take them (Israel) and bring them (Israel) to their (Israel's) place.' However, the awkwardness is only slight, and with the mention of *אֶדְמָתָם* in v 1 referring to the land of Israel and *אֶדְמַת יְהוּדָה* later in v 2, the author has made it more than clear that *מְקוֹמָם* cannot mean 'the place of the *עַמִּים*.'

² Cheyne, *Isaiah*, 87-88; Quell, 'Jesaja 14:1-23' 136; Gosse, 'Isaïe 13:1-14:23' 203; Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 25; Clements, *Isaiah*, 138; Jeppesen, 'Massa Babel' 70-71; Williamson, *Book*, 166-167; Barton, *Isaiah*, 86; Zehnder, 'Jesaja 14:1f.' 16-17.

A number of arguments, nevertheless, have been put forward against the unity of vv 1-2, and they are as follows. First, the most common argument is that, while the foreigners are welcomed into the country in v 1, they are reduced to slavery in v 2.³ The two verses reflect two different attitudes toward the foreigners and this indicates that there are two different authors at work in these verses. Second, v 1 appears to be a closed unit both in terms of thought and form.⁴ Third, the suffixes in v 2a (ולקחום and ויהביאום) refer back to Jacob-Israel in v 1a, leaving v 1b appearing to be an interruption.⁵ Finally, אדמתם and אדמת יהוה seem contradictory.⁶

The first objection to the unity of 14:1-2 raised due to what appears to be a discontinuity of thought between v 1 and v 2 with regard to the attitude toward the gentiles, Williamson points out how the same pattern of thought is found in Isa 49:22-23, a passage that is frequently associated with our present passage.⁷ There, we have the גוים and עמים bringing the sons and daughters of Zion back to her on their shoulders in v 22. This is followed in v 23 with the kings and queens both looking after Zion's children and bowing down to the ground and licking the dust off the feet of Zion. Now, no one questions the unity of 49:22-23 on the ground of discontinuity of thought and there is no reason to do so here in 14:1-2 either. The main stress both in 14:1-2 and 49:22-23 is the elevated status of restored Israel. Just as the vassal nations 'willingly' offer tributes to the nations they are under and assume for themselves the status of

³ Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 296; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 524-525; Kidd, *Alterity*, 72-73.

⁴ Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 524-525.

⁵ Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 296.

⁶ Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 296.

⁷ Williamson, *Book*, 166-167; Jeppesen, 'Massa Babel' 70-71.

servants, so would the foreigners serve the people of Israel of their own accord.

Although the second argument is just as prone to subjectivity as the first, the third argument seems to hold a little more weight. Having spoken about the גר in the second half of v 1, one might expect the writer to have left the object of לקח and הביא unambiguous by specifying that it is Jacob-Israel and not גר, who are also treated in the collective plural (נספחו) at the end of v 1. For this reason, Vermeylen wonders if v 1b is not a later insertion. While one may accept that the beginning of v 2 could have been written less ambiguously, the minor unevenness alone is not enough to introduce a different author. As it stands, the context leaves no doubt that the suffixes of לקחום and הביאום mean the Israelites and not the גר. As for אדמת יהוה and אדמתם, it would suffice to point to Josh 22:19 which demonstrates that the idea of the land of YHWH being at the same time the land of his people is not unparalleled in the HB. Furthermore, it needs to be noted that just as יעקב is coupled with ישראל in v 1a, one sees how בית יעקב at the end of v 1 is coupled with בית ישראל in v 2 at the start of the place where the idea of the servitude of the עמים is expressed, the idea which some have found incompatible with v 1. Therefore, it seems safe to accept the original unity of 14:1-2.

2-2: Meaning of Isaiah 14:1-2

Isa 14:1-2 is commonly understood to have brought closer together the two surrounding poems that were once less subtly joined. Most believe that 14:1-2 was written specifically for the purpose of bridging the two poems. If this is right, one

would naturally expect the two surrounding poems to provide an essential context for 14:1-2, and it begins with the interpretation of the first word כִּי. The traditional view that we have here a causative כִּי, meaning ‘for/because’ seems correct. The fall of Babylon in ch 13 is viewed as being intrinsically related to YHWH’s plan to restore Israel. The fact that YHWH will have compassion on Israel and bring those who are in exile in Babylon back to their land can only mean one thing for Babylon. Its doom is looming. Babylon will soon face its end because YHWH is going to end his people’s exile.

It has been suggested, however, that perhaps 14:1-2 once stood as an independent oracle and was only later brought into the present position to function as a bridge text.⁸ This is because no explicit awareness of ch 13 is found in 14:1-2.⁹ According to this view, כִּי in 14:1 ought to be a temporal כִּי, meaning ‘when.’ The verse would then be read: ‘*When* YHWH has compassion on Jacob... *... then* the proselytes will join them ... etc.’¹⁰ Similarly, one may retain the causal meaning of כִּי but have its causal relation with v 1b and not with ch 13 – i.e. ‘*Because* YHWH will have compassion on Jacob... *... the proselytes will join them... etc.*’ A similar grammatical structure – the use of temporal כִּי with an imperfect verb to be followed by a Waw – found in Deut 14:24-25 is used for support. The problem with seeing a temporal כִּי in 14:1 is that, when a temporal כִּי is used with an imperfect verb, it either points to an

⁸ Zehnder, ‘Jesaja 14:1f.’ 5-6.

⁹ For a different explanation for ‘the absence’ of Babylon in these verses, see Gray, *Isaiah*, 246.

¹⁰ Zehnder, nevertheless, concedes that this interpretation would not have been valid after the passage’s incorporation into the present place. Once 14:1-2 was positioned where it now stands, the causal meaning of כִּי, linking it to ch 13, would have overridden the original meaning.

indefinite future (e.g. Gen 4:12; Deut 4:25; 6:20) or deals with a hypothetical situation, with the meaning 'whenever/if' (e.g. Ex 21:2; Deut 6:25; Isa 37:7). Now, the detailed description of Israel's return from the exile in v 2 gives the impression that YHWH's compassion on Israel is neither uncertain nor to be expected in the distant future. Therefore, the traditional rendering 'for/because' for כִּי in v 1 with its causal relation to ch 13 may be retained as the word's original meaning.

We have two words referring to 'foreigners' in vv 1-2. The first is גֵּר and the second is עַמִּים. Whereas the expression 'עַמִּים' appears frequently in the book of Isaiah to mean 'peoples/nations,' the word גֵּר does not appear again in the book, and therefore its exact meaning is not so clear. Gray outlines the development of the term גֵּר as follows:¹¹ 1) originally, the גֵּרִים were the foreigners who were living within the Israelite tribes in the land of Israel who had some conceded rights and took part in some religious practices (Ex 20:10; 23:12) but were not regarded as fully Israelites until as late as the Deuteronomic code (Deut 14:21); 2) later in the Priestly writings, these גֵּרִים in the land of Israel could become full members of the Israelite community through circumcision (Ex 12:48-49; Num 15:14-15); 3) in later Hebrew (LXX and Mishna), the גֵּרִים seem to have also meant the proselytes regardless of their whereabouts. Somewhere along this line of development are the uses in Ezek 14:7; 47:22-23, where the גֵּרִים appear to have all the same rights and privileges as the Israelites.¹² What may come to our aid is the verb גָּלוּ (Niph. of לוּ). Zehnder points out that although the

¹¹ Gray, *Isaiah*, 245-246.

¹² Cf. Williamson, *Book*, 166. Gosse wonders if it would not be while the Israelites were in exile, when they themselves were the גֵּרִים (Ezr 1:4) that the favourable attitudes toward the גֵּרִים developed. Gosse, 'Isaïe 13:1-14:23' 203-204.

Niph. of לִוּה is used in a variety of contexts such as sexual union (Gen 29:34), joining in the sanctuary works (Num 18:2, 4), and political allegiance (Ps 83:9), it is consistently used in the religious sense in the Prophets (Isa 14:1; 56:3, 6; Jer 50:5; Zech 2:15).¹³ Thus we are nudged in the direction of understanding the גֵּרִים in our passage as those joining the house of Jacob *because of their faith in YHWH* – i.e. potential proselytes. In support of this is the oft-quoted parallel text in Zech 2:15-16.¹⁴

וְנָלְווּ גוֹיִם רַבִּים אֶל־יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְשִׁכְנָתִי בְּתוֹכָם וְיָדַעְתָּ כִּי־יְהוָה צָבָאוֹת שְׁלָחַנִי אֵלֶיךָ וְנָחַל
יְהוָה אֶת־יְהוּדָה חֶלְקוֹ עַל אֲדָמַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבָחַר עוֹד בִּירוּשָׁלָּם

(And many nations will join themselves to YHWH in that day, and they will be my people. And I shall dwell in your midst, and you shall know that YHWH of Hosts has sent me to you. And YHWH will possess Judah as his portion in the holy land, and he will again choose Jerusalem.)

Although, in Zech 2:15, one finds גוֹיִם רַבִּים as opposed to הָגֵר, the Niph. of לִוּה is clearly used in the full religious sense as it results in their becoming YHWH's people. What remains uncertain, however, is whether these גֵּרִים are seen to be joining the Israelites while they are still in exile or only after they have been placed back in their land.

In v 2, the עַמִּים's association with the Israelites begins from the place of exile as they bring the Israelites back to 'their land.'¹⁵ At this point, one naturally comes to ask

¹³ Zehnder, 'Jesaja 14:1f.' 9-10; Kidd, *Alterity*, 74. Also cf. Esth 9:27; Dan 11:34.

¹⁴ As well as the use of the Niph. of לִוּה, also note the occurrence of the verb, נָחַל (possess/ inherit), and the phrase, בָּחַר עוֹד plus ב (to choose again).

¹⁵ Just as a small point of clarification, one should not place any stress on the use of the word לָקַח as one might be tempted to do so given the context of captive-taking in the last line of the verse. The pair לָקַח

if the גרים in v 1 are to be seen as the same entity as the עמים in v 2. If the answer is yes, one may find some difficulty with the notion that the religious converts would be owned as life-long slaves (cf. Lev 25:39ff), as the texts such as Ex 12:48-49 and Num 15:14-15 show that such converts ought to be treated on equal terms as the born-Israelites. To this, one might say that, the phrase עבדים ושפחות does not have to mean life-long slaves, but that it could also mean some form of hired labour (Deut 28:68 possibly). What makes this suggestion highly improbable is the use of the verb התנהל (Hithp. of נהל). Although the Hithp. of נהל occurs only 5 times outside our passage in the HB (Lev 25:46, Num 32:18; 33:54; 34:13; Ezek 47:13), it is evident that the verb has a strong sense of giving or acquiring something as a permanent inheritance.¹⁶ The עמים are going to be owned by the house of Israel as lifelong slaves in our passage. What is more is that the phrase על אדמת יהוה, combined with the Hithp. of נהל, gives the impression that the giver of the עמים as Israel's inheritance is YHWH himself. How is one to reconcile the idea of the גרים becoming the proselytes, with that of YHWH giving the עמים as slaves to the Israelites?

and the Hiph. of בוא is often used together simply to mean 'bring sth/sb.' See particularly, Gen 29:23; 1Sam 9:22; 17:57; 1Kgs 3:1; Jer 3:14; 20:5; Ezek 17:12; 36:24; 37:21.

¹⁶ There is a grammatical peculiarity here. Usually, when the Hithp. of נהל does not have an indirect object, the verb means 'to acquire as inheritance' (Num 32:18; 34:13). However, when the verb has an indirect object following the preposition ל, it acts like the root's Hiph, with the meaning 'to give as inheritance,' the indirect object being the beneficiary of such giving (Lev 25:46; Num 33:54; Ezek 47:13). According to this pattern, our present passage might be translated as 'And the house of Israel will give them (the עמים) to male and female slaves as inheritance.' Because this sense cannot be right, we should, therefore, see the verb in our passage as having no indirect object and the preposition ל of לעבדים to mean 'as' (BDB ל meaning no. 4, 512) i.e. 'And the house of Israel will acquire them as male and female slaves.'

It has been suggested that just as the conversion of the גרים in v 1 is presumably voluntary, the servitude of the עמים might also be a willing act.¹⁷ Such texts as Isa 45:14 might possibly provide the background for such thoughts. In contrast to this, some have wondered if two different entities were envisaged by the two terms הגר in v 1 and עמים in v 2. The former may well be referring to individual foreigners who desire inclusion into the Israelite community while the latter to people groups in the more general sense. Two separate observations may give support to this view. First, a number of critics have placed weight on the final line of v 2, which claims that, the Israelites will be taking their former captors captive and that, they will be ruling over their former oppressors.¹⁸ This has led some to interpret the subservience of the עמים earlier in the same verse in the light of the last line: the reason behind the enslavement of the עמים in v 2 is their former oppression of the Israelites.¹⁹ The second observation is more illuminating. J. Kidd points out that the eschatological future of Israel is often likened to the great events in their tradition of the past and that Isa 14:1-2 is no exception. The idea of choosing and bringing Israel to Palestine is not new (exodus overtones are highlighted by many).²⁰ The foreigners have also joined in previously in that great event (Num 11:4).²¹ On top of these, the differentiation between the *individual* foreigners and the foreign *people groups* too have been made before. Kidd indicates that the laws concerning the individual גרים in Ex 23:9, 12 are contrasted with what follows later in the chapter (vv 20-33) about the Canaanite nations.²² In a similar pattern, Kidd

¹⁷ Cheyne, *Isaiah*, 87-88.

¹⁸ Aage Bentzen sees the resentment of the suppressed people in this passage, the vengeful tone of which reminds him of the book of Esther. Bentzen, *Jesaja*, 111.

¹⁹ Zehnder, 'Jesaja 14:1f.' 16-17.

²⁰ See for example: Erlandsson, *Burden*, 10.

²¹ Kidd, *Alterity*, 75.

²² Kidd, *Alterity*, 76-77.

reckons that, one of the reasons why the גרים in Isa 14:1 are pictured positively is because they cannot be political entities, unlike the עמים in the next verse.²³ Therefore, although one might not go as far as saying the text presents to the foreigners two alternatives, conversion or enslavement as Gray puts it, quite clearly, two rather distinct pictures are displayed it seems.²⁴ Regarding the foreigners at large, 14:1-2 looks forward to the individual gentiles joining the Israelites in their faith in YHWH (i.e. as converts) as Israel's fortunes are restored by YHWH on one hand. On the other hand, the foreign peoples and nations are almost seen as YHWH's gift to the Israelites, as they both provide the Israelites their safe passage back to their homeland and serve them as slaves.

The last ambiguity that remains in our passage is the last line of v 2. The meaning of the line itself offers no difficulty. What is hard to determine is whether we are to see the line as another add-on to the great vision of vv 1-2, or as some sort of a summary to v 2. If the former, vv 1-2 would be simply laying out different parts of Israel's restoration: 1) YHWH's renewed choosing of Israel; 2) Gentile conversion joining in Israel's number; 3) Foreign nations' becoming Israel's servants; 4) reversal of fate between Israel and Israel's oppressors. Should the latter be the case, however, the ו at the start of the line would need to be translated as, 'thus' or 'in this way,' and there would be no change of subject throughout v 2. There do not seem to be sufficient clues in the text to decide either way, unfortunately. Nevertheless, even if the last line of v 2

²³ Cf. E. A. Speiser's study of the difference between גוים and עמים, where he concludes that while the term עמים refers to ethnic groups, גוים refers to nations in the political sense. Speiser, 'People and Nation' 157-163.

²⁴ Gray, *Isaiah*, 246.

is a separate element in a series of visions in vv 1-2, one cannot fail to notice that the theme of reversal is operational throughout vv 1-4a in relation to the two surrounding poems in ch 13 and 14:4bff. Israel's restoration means her enemies' demise and vice versa. We shall now move on to the question of the possible date of our passage's composition.

2-3: Dating Isaiah 14:1-2

Opinions are split when it comes to dating 14:1-2. Some assign the verses to the exilic time and others date them in the post-exilic time.²⁵ The reasons for assuming an exilic date for our passage are ample and apparent. The two verses are full of stylistic features that are found in Isa 40-55 as recognised effectively by all. Williamson lists these in the most detailed manner. They are: 1) the coupling of Jacob and Israel in v 1, which is extremely rare in chs 1-39 and not found in chs 56-66, is exceptionally common in chs 40-49 (particularly important is 46:3 where *בית יעקב* is coupled with *בית ישראל*);²⁶ 2) the idea of YHWH having compassion (*רחם*) on his people is found often in chs 40-55 but appears only once in chs 56-66;²⁷ 3) the use of the verb *בחר* to express the idea of God choosing *his people* is only found in chs 40-55;²⁸ 4) as is already mentioned,

²⁵ Those who suppose an exilic date: Jeppesen, 'Massa Babel' 70-71; Barton, *Isaiah*, 86; Williamson, *Book*, 165-167. Those who suppose a post-exilic date: Gray, *Isaiah*, 246; Duhm, *Jesaja*, 116; Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 296; Davies, 'Destiny' 99; Kidd, *Alterity*, 73-74; Berges, *Book*, 140-141. Those who see either as a possibility: Bentzen, *Jesaja*, 110-111; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 525; Clements, *Isaiah*, 138.

²⁶ He lists them as follows: 40:27; 41:8, 14; 42:24; 43:1, 22, 28; 44:1, 5, 21, 23; 45:4; 46:3; 48:1, 12; 49:5-6.

²⁷ He, again, lists them: 49:10, 13, (15); 54:8, 10; 55:7; 60:10.

²⁸ Likewise: 41:8 (object: Jacob-Israel), 9; 43:10; 44:1 (object: Jacob-Israel), 2; 48:10; 49:7.

the thought pattern of these verses is extremely similar to 49:22-23; and finally, 5) the theme of role-reversal found in the last line of v 2 is particularly prominent in chs 40-55, though not exclusive to those chapters.²⁹

The reasons for some to prefer a post-exilic date are as follows: 1) the use of the verb בחר plus ב is found in several places in chs 56-66 but not in chs 40-55;³⁰ 2) the Niph. of ליה is found again in the book of Isaiah only in 56:3, 6, to designate foreign converts; 3) because either one of the two poems surrounding 14:1-2 (4a) was brought in to the book in the post-exilic period, the bridge-text must be from an even later time.

As for the use of the verb בחר plus ב, it is true that the use does not appear in chs 40-55. However, the use occurs only three times in chs 56-66 (56:4; 66:3, 4) and they are never used with God as the subject and his people as the object as previously mentioned. The observation is far from compelling. The occurrence of the Niph. of ליה in 56:3, 6 is more significant. On the surface, both our passage and 56:6 seem to speak of the religious converts in a positive light. On closer inspection, however, one finds meaningful differences. Zehnder notices that while the focus of 14:1b is on foretelling that there will be gentile converts in the future, 56:6-7 assumes that there already are such converts present, and the main point of the verse is that they will be given full religious rights as the rest of the Israelites. Zehnder seems right to conclude, therefore, that 56:6-7 is speaking in a context where the vision of 14:1b has already happened and

²⁹ He lists the relevant passages in ch 40-55: 41:11-15; 49:7, 23, 25-26; 51:22-23; 52:13-15; 54: 15-17.

³⁰ Duhm, *Jesaja*, 116.

is in the past. Furthermore, should 56:6 be later than 14:1-2, it is almost certain that the former would have been written with the latter in mind. Zehnder's observation is striking then that while the עבדים in 14:2 are the servants of the Israelite people, the עבדים in 56:6 are the servants of YHWH. Therefore, these observations tell us at least that 56:6 is not contemporaneous with 14:1-2. There is one other small observation that might push us further away from associating 14:1-2 with chs 56-66. One finds that in the only two places in chs 56-66 where the word מקום is used, it is used specifically to mean YHWH's sanctuary. The word is never used to refer to YHWH's sanctuary in chs 40-55 (perhaps for the obvious reason), and one tentatively wonders if, for the writer(s) of chs 55-66, מקום had some technical sense when used in association with YHWH. If this is the case (admittedly the assumption stands on shallow grounds), the use of the word מקום in 14:2 to refer to the land of the people of Israel might be an unlikely one if it had been written by the writers of chs 56ff, since the place spoken about in the verse is called only shortly after as אדמת יהוה. Having weighed all the evidence, it seems most likely that our passage was brought about in the late-exilic time. Now, with regard to the dating of the two poems surrounding 14:1-2 (4a), one would need to engage with wider discussion around the compositional history of Isa 13:1-14:27.

2-4: Compositional history of Isaiah 13:1-14:25a³¹

³¹ Both the integrity and the date of 14:26-27 will be dealt with separately later in chapter 5.

Indeed, one of the reasons why some date 14:1-2 in the post-exilic period is because they date ch 13 and/or 14:3-23 in the post-exilic period. If either of the two passages which 14:1-2 serves as a bridge-text is indeed from a period later than the date proposed here for 14:1-2, placing 14:1-2 in the late-exilic period would obviously be impossible to sustain. Since many have voiced their opinions with regard to the dating of both ch 13 and 14:4b-20a, we shall first deal with some of the major views on: 1) the dating of the poem in 14:4b-20a; 2) the issue of the unity and the dating of ch 13; and 3) the relationship between ch 13 and 14:4b-23; before proposing 4) a fresh reconstruction of the compositional history of 13:1-14:25a.

2-4-1: Dating Isaiah 14:4b-20a

The prose text of 14:3-4a identifies the addressee of the taunt song in 14:4b-20a as 'the king of Babylon.' The poem itself, however, leaves the addressee anonymous. It seems almost without doubt that we have here a reuse of an older poem which originally may or may not have been about 'the king of Babylon.'³² This has led many to speculate over the original setting of the poem, and varying proposals have so far been made.

Most commentators see the fall of one of the Assyrian kings as the likeliest original subject of the poem. Because the tyrant is depicted in the poem as once having

³² Gray suggests that the absence of a specific mention of Babylon perhaps means that the poem was written when the oppressors of Israel had been more than the Babylonians. This view, however, fails to offer an explanation for the redactional setting of vv 3-4a which must postdate the taunt and yet directs the taunt to the king of Babylon. Gray, *Isaiah*, 246.

terrorised many kingdoms and exalted himself almost to a divine status, those who had particularly successful military campaigns such as Sargon or Sennacherib often come up as likely candidates.³³ Moreover, for most of those who regard 14:3-4a as an example of a reuse of an earlier poem (as it does indeed appear to be), the Babylonian kings tend to be excluded from consideration. Sargon's death in the battlefield and the loss of his body which prevented a proper burial are frequently mentioned in connection with 14:19-20a by those who prefer Sargon over other Assyrian kings. It has also been pointed out that because the mention of Sennacherib's abrupt death by assassination which would have served the purpose of the taunt well does not feature in the poem, Sennacherib is unlikely to be the figure behind the original poem despite the obvious joy his death must have occasioned among those in Judah.³⁴ Somewhat intriguing then is the following observation made by William Gallagher in favour of seeing Sargon as the original addressee.³⁵ Although צפון is brought up in 14:13 in a mythical setting, Gallagher draws attention to Sargon's association with the mount Zaphon as his source of copper according to the annals of Sargon.³⁶ Gallagher points

³³ Those who prefer to see one of the Assyrian kings as the original addressee of the poem are: Skinner, *Isaiah*, 113; Scholastika Deck, *Die Gerichtsbotschaft Jesajas*, 42; Jonathan Goldstein, *Almighty God*, 90; Percy van Keulen, 'Isaiah 14:4b-21' 117-123; Mary Katherine Hom, *Assyrians in Isaiah*, 60-62. Those who understand the tyrant to specifically mean Sargon are: Ginsberg, 'Reflexes' 49-53; H. Barth, *Josiazeit*, 137-138; Clements, *Isaiah*, 139; Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 232-233; Z. Wiseman, *Satire*, 79-80; W. Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 88-90; Shipp, *Isaiah 14:4b-21*, 160-162; Beuken, *Jesaja*, 57-58; Kőszeghy, *Der Streit*, 31; Christopher Hays, *Death in Isaiah*, 216-221. Finally, see for an attempt to identify the tyrant as Sennacherib: W. H. Cobb, 'The Ode in Isaiah 14' 18-35.

³⁴ Van Keulen, 'Isaiah 14:4b-21' 120.

³⁵ Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 88-89. Gallagher also postulates that Illil may have lost prominence in Assyria somewhat after Sargon, if indeed a case can be made for the connection between הילל in 14:12 and the Mesopotamian deity Illil (which Gallagher sets out in 'On the Identity of Helel Ben Sahar of Is. 14:12-15' *Ugarit-Forschungen* 26, 131-146). Until Sargon, Illil was commonly found in the titles of Assyrian kings. Against this, however, Shipp claims that *hll* with astral connotations is found in the Ugaritic texts more than once, and this makes the Mesopotamian etymology unnecessary. Shipp, *Isaiah 14:4b-21*, 67-79, 130-131, 152.

³⁶ For the identification of mount Zaphon as El's abode in the Ugaritic myth, see N. Wyatt, 'Hollow' 427. Zaphon is also understood as Baal's abode in the Athtar-Baal myth. See M. Heiser, 'Isa 14:12-15' 358.

out that the only other time mount Zaphon appears in the inscriptions of other Mesopotamian monarchs is in those of Tiglath-Pileser III. Sargon's link with the mount Zaphon seems to go a little further as Christopher Hays indicates that the battle in which Sargon met his end was part of his plan to conquer Tabal, the mountainous region which is roughly the area of mount Zaphon.³⁷

The view above is not without challenges though. As has already been briefly mentioned, one of the biggest contributing factors to the 'Sargon theory' is the understanding of the first line of 14:19 which reads, וְאַתָּה הִשְׁלַכְתָּ מִקְבְּרֶךָ. 'But you are cast out from your grave...' would be the line's simplest translation. The line, however, is often interpreted to mean 'But you are cast out *away* from your grave' in connection with the first line of 14:20 לֹא־תִהְיֶה אִתָּם בְּקִבְרָה ('You will not be united with them in burial...'), suggesting that the text is describing someone who has not received a burial. This is then linked to the fact that Sargon's death was not followed by a proper burial due to his body having been lost in the battlefield. This idea is challenged by those who find that what is not the text's most immediate meaning is imposed on the text to make it fit the manner in which Sargon met his end.³⁸ The verb שָׁלַךְ (to throw) with the preposition מִן plus location X more naturally means 'throwing something from location X' (not different in the Hophal). If (and only if) we did not have מִקְבְּרֶךָ (from your grave) and were left only with וְאַתָּה הִשְׁלַכְתָּ, with the idea of being dead provided

C. Hays calls Zaphon here in 14:13 'a fusion of myth and history.' C. Hays, *Death in Isaiah*, 218.

³⁷ C. Hays, *Death in Isaiah*, 218.

³⁸ W. Holladay, 'Isaiah 14' 642; Samuel Olyan, 'Isa 14:19' 423-426; de Jong, *Isaiah among the ANE Prophets*, 141.

by the rest of the verse, one could supply the text with the meaning of being left dead and unburied as in the first two lines of Isa 34:3.

וְחַלְלֵיהֶם יִשְׁלְכוּ וּפְגִרֵיהֶם יַעֲלֶה בְּאֵשׁ

(And their slain ones will be cast out and as for their corpses – their stench will ascend...)

Therefore, in the case of the first line of 14:19, the idea that is expressed is ‘exhuming a corpse from its grave.’ Needless to say, Sargon did not receive a burial and therefore could not have been dug up from his grave either. The kind of situation that is suggested by those who stress the text’s meaning of exhuming the body that was once buried is that of a ritual punishment of the dead. Olyan gives Jer 8:1-2, Ashurbanipal, and the Eshmunazor and Si’gabbar inscriptions as examples of such practices.³⁹ The trouble with it is that no known Mesopotamian monarch of great fame quite fits this description. To overcome this difficulty, a search for a different historical situation is put forward by Percy van Keulen.⁴⁰ Instead of looking for an individual ruler whose grave might have been dug up shortly after his burial, van Keulen claims that the likeliest situation in which a royal tomb may be desecrated is when the royal cities are plundered by the enemies in a violent end of a nation. van Keulen suggests that the fall of the Assyrian Empire in 614-612 (the city of Assur in 614 and Nineveh in 612) could well be the historical background of the poem. The news of the looting of both Assur and Nineveh may have reached Judah and this could have included reports of the desecration of the royal tombs. In this case, the tyrant in the poem could easily be

³⁹ S. Olyan, ‘Isa 14:19’ 425.

⁴⁰ P. van Keulen, ‘Isaiah 14:4b-21’ 117-123.

something of a type for all arrogant kings of the Assyrian Empire (including of course Sargon and Sennacherib) and the desecration of the tomb in the poem would likewise be about not just one royal tomb but many.

Some prefer to see the fall of a Babylonian monarch as the original context of the poem even when they regard 14:3-4a as a redactional setting. After all, 14:3-4a could have only made explicit what was implicit in the poem.⁴¹ Those who see Nebuchadnezzar as the original tyrant behind the poem tend to do so because they take 14:3-4a to be historically accurate. The first name that comes to an Israelite mind when hearing the title 'the king of Babylon' without any further detail would be Nebuchadnezzar. Indeed, the death of which other Babylonian king would motivate a poet more to produce the kind of taunt we have in 14:4b-20a than Nebuchadnezzar? There are, nevertheless, others who see Nabonidus as the more likely character behind the poem because he was the last king of Babylon as an empire. His personal end could be viewed as that of the empire. Any historical discrepancies found in the poem are then often explained away by claiming either that the poem was written shortly before the actual fall of the tyrant or that the exhuming of the tyrant's corpse was a future hope and not a past event.

⁴¹ Those who suspect that the original poem could be about any one Babylonian king: Martin-Achard, 'Esaïe 47' 100; Bellis, 'Changing Face' 66. Those in support of Nebuchadnezzar: Procksch, *Jesaja*, 183-184, 121; de Jong, *Isaiah among the ANE Prophets*, 142. Those in support of Nabonidus: Duhm, *Jesaja*, 112, 117; Hugh Page, *Cosmic Rebellion*, 138; Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 273-275.

At this point, a passing comment is in order. Regardless of who the original addressee of the poem may have been, as far as the writer of 14:3-4a is concerned, the likeliest 'king of Babylon' is Nebuchadnezzar. Vanderhooft highlights that out of some 132 occurrences of the phrase 'the king of Babylon' in the HB, 118 refer to Nebuchadnezzar.⁴² Undeniably, Nebuchadnezzar occupied a significant place in the minds of the Israelites for an obvious reason. The fact that no further detail is given regarding the identity of the king allows us to assume that the most notorious Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar was meant by the writer of 14:3-4a, and that the same was expected to be understood by the readers.⁴³

Returning to the search for the original referent of the poem, the views laid out so far (i.e. that the poem was originally written with one of the Assyrian or Babylonian kings in mind) are not in conflict with the proposed late-exilic date of 14:1-2, except for one view that the poem may have been written about Nabonidus shortly after the fall of Babylon to Cyrus.⁴⁴

Now, it has also been proposed that the poem may have only been composed during the time of one of the Persian kings and that its incorporation into the book of Isaiah through 14:3-4a cannot have happened any earlier. Such a view obviously rules out the late-exilic date of 14:1-2. Moreover, Cheyne and Kaiser cautiously lean toward

⁴² Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire*, 129.

⁴³ Some of those in agreement with this view: Holladay, 'Isaiah 14' 638; Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire*, 129; van Keulen, 'Isaiah 14:4b-21' 117-118; Beuken, *Jesaja*, 59.

⁴⁴ Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 273-275.

the view that the poem looks back to an event in the distant past. The reason why no one specific Babylonian ruler fits all the descriptions in the poem may well be due to the fact that some of the historical details were no longer available to the author.⁴⁵ A rather more forceful argument is put forward by Berges. Berges takes further Gosse's initial idea that when the fairly peaceful conquest of Babylon by Cyrus took place instead of the dramatic downfall of Babylon which was eagerly awaited and hoped for, the dissatisfaction and frustration among the Israelites gave rise to what might be viewed as the start of the apocalyptic genre.⁴⁶ For Berges, it might not be possible to date the original poem but he does not imagine the poem to have found its way into the book of Isaiah without its framing verses (14:1-4a, 22-23).⁴⁷ The disappointment which was caused by not seeing the kind of destruction of Babylon one waited for would not have been consoled sufficiently either by the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus or by the suppression of two Babylonian revolts during the time of Darius to occasion the gleeful text of 14:1-23. The event which Berges sees as the catalyst for the incorporation of 14:1-23 into the book was the destruction of the city of Babylon at the hands of Xerxes in 482. Thus for Berges, the poem in 14:4b-21 played no part in the book of Isaiah before its inclusion into the book after the aforementioned event of 482 and the poem's framing verses (14:1-4a, 22-23) were also not written until after 482. Now, Berges does not deny that the original poem might be early. His reason for dating the final form of 14:1-23 after 482 rests on his views concerning the framing verses. Berges assumes a literary dependence of 14:1-2, 22-23 on the late-exilic texts. He believes that 14:1-2 depends on Deutero-Isaiah and Proto Zechariah, and 14:22-23, on

⁴⁵ Cheyne, 'Recent Study of Isaiah' 133-135; Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 32.

⁴⁶ Gosse, *Isaie 13:1-14:23*, 269.

⁴⁷ Berges, *The Book of Isaiah*, 140-141.

Isa 13:21-22. For Berges, Isa 13:1, 17-22 is contemporary with Isa 40-48 and therefore the framing verses which depend on them ought to be later. Once he has dated 14:1-4a, 22-23 in the post-exilic period, Xerxes' attack against Babylon in 482 would seem to him to be the only plausible historical background of these verses. Although the framing verses will be dealt with separately later, a few brief comments need to be made at this stage. First, what appears to be the signs of 14:1-2's literary dependence on the late-exilic texts does not demand that the passage be dated in the post-exilic period. The stylistic overlap between 14:1-2 and chs 40-55 could just as easily be explained as evidence of common authorship. Second, although one could see 14:1-4a as a *post eventum* writing, in which case we would look for a historical event that could fit what is described in the passage, the passage could just as well be a future vision. In fact, some see the difference between the vision of 14:1-4a and what happened shortly after 538 as a reason to date 14:1-4a before the fall of Babylon, as indicated previously.⁴⁸ After all, the text of 14:1-4a would have the readers see both its vision and the fall of the tyrant in the poem that follows as what would happen in the future.⁴⁹ Since we have dealt with 14:1-2 earlier and will examine 14:22-23 later, it would suffice to say for the moment that as far as the poem in 14:4b-20a is concerned, Berges does not refute its widely held pre-exilic date.

2-4-2: Dating Isaiah 13

⁴⁸ S. Deck, *Die Gerichtsbotschaft Jesajas*, 42.

⁴⁹ Sals, *Hure Babylon*, 263.

Generally speaking, there are fewer disputes over the dating of ch 13. Other than the heading in 13:1, which is almost unanimously recognized as redactional, the historically discernible information is given only in 13:17, 19. It is told in 13:17 that the merciless attackers are the Medes and in 13:19 that the city currently under attack is Babylon ‘the glory of the kingdoms, the splendour of the pride of the Chaldeans’ which is soon to be made ‘like Sodom and Gomorrah.’ There is almost no dispute over the view that though these references clearly refer to the fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, it is highly unlikely for these references to be part of a *post eventum* prophecy because the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 538 was non-violent. Moreover, the fact that the attackers are called the Medes rather than the Persians or Cyrus indicates that the prophecy was made not immediately before the fall of Babylon either. Rather, it seems more probable that the dramatic fall of Babylon was anticipated when its rivals began to grow in strength. Because of the apparent historical plausibility, most commentators go for the mid-6th Century date of the prophecy. All this, however, is only when the original unity of 13:2-22 is presupposed, and some of those who reject the unity of the chapter prefer to date parts of it in the post-exilic period.⁵⁰ The argument which is most frequently repeated is that the cosmic language used in some places of ch 13 (especially

⁵⁰ Clements understands 13:2-22 as a collection of prophecies from different periods. He regards vv 2-3 to be from the 8th Century, vv 4-5 from the 6th Century, and vv 6-8 from shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587. Nevertheless, vv 17-22 are considered with the general consensus to be from shortly before 538. Now, when it comes to vv 9-16, he regards them to be from as late as the 4th Century. Clements, *Isaiah*, 132-138.

Kaiser assumes some parts of 13:2-22 may come from the historical fall of Babylon. However, the universal language found in various parts of the chapter leads him to conclude that the final form of the chapter is proto-apocalyptic and definitely from the post-exilic period. Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 8-13. Similarly, Charis Fischer, *Die Fremdvölkersprüche*, 129-131.

The same universal language makes Vermeylen to likewise date the whole of ch 13 in the post-exilic period. Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 288-292.

v 10) resemble that of the proto-apocalyptic genre which is more commonly associated with the post-exilic period.

Recently, an extensive argument for a bipartite model of ch 13 has been put forward by Burkard Zapff.⁵¹ Zapff divides the chapter into two parts: 1) the late-exilic part – 13:1a, 17-22a; and 2) the post-exilic expansion – 13:1b-16, 22b. The main reason for dating vv 2-16 in the post-exilic period for Zapff is the way these verses appear to make use of the earlier materials in the book to formulate its claims, and below are some of the examples.⁵² First, as is often noticed, the theme of YHWH's calling an army from afar in 13:2-5 is so close to Isa 5:26-29 that a literary dependence is almost certain. Because the army is brought in for the punishment of YHWH's own people in 5:26ff, many agree that this passage is later reapplied in ch 13 to express the idea that the same kind of judgement is pronounced against the enemies of YHWH's people as 'the second stage of the Day of YHWH' following the fall of Jerusalem which might be seen as 'the first stage of the Day of YHWH.' Zapff takes this idea further and draws a contrast with 17:12-14 where the 'many nations' are depicted as a chaotic force against YHWH's people. He notes that the nations are no longer a chaotic force against YHWH but his tool in 13:2-16. Second, Zapff argues that 13:2-16 purposefully refers to various parts of chs 14-23. As examples, he points to a number of rather too common words and phrases such as the imperative 'Wail!' (הילילו) in 13:6 which occurs 3 times in ch 23, or 'man to his neighbour' (איש אל רעהו) in 13:8 which is found in 19:2 (ואיש ברעהו).

⁵¹ Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 16-240.

⁵² Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 213-217.

However, a number of connections with the poem in ch 14 are noteworthy. The tyrant of the taunt in ch 14 is said to have made the earth tremble (Hiph. of רָגַז) and have shaken (Hiph. of רָעַשׁ) the kingdoms in 14:16. The same verb-pair is found in 13:13 where now it is YHWH, and not the arrogant ruler of ch 14, who makes the heavens tremble and the earth shake. Third, Zapff sees connections between 13:2-16 and 2:1-5. The common theme is the gathering of the nations. Nevertheless, in order to argue that 13:2-16 is dependent on 2:1-5, he somewhat unconvincingly claims that 2:1-5 expresses universal salvation, and that 13:2-16 corrects this by stressing YHWH's judgement on the whole world. The contrast between the two passages seems somewhat exaggerated. In both passages, the nations show obedience to YHWH albeit in two different circumstances. Besides, one could equally argue for dependence in the opposite direction – i.e. once the judgement of the world has been brought about (13:2-16), the victorious nations uphold the teachings of YHWH and do away with warfare altogether (2:1-5). Therefore, the claim that there was a development of idea from 2:2-4 to 13:2-16 is not persuasive. Finally, Zapff explains the connections between 13:2-16 and Deutero-Isaiah which are more usually seen as a sign of the former's influence on the latter, in reverse.⁵³ For Zapff, 13:2-16 was written to serve as a bridge-text between chs 2-12 and chs 40ff, and therefore implies that 13:2-16 is later than chs 40ff. In doing so, he draws a contrast (quite questionably) between YHWH's gathering (קָבַץ) his people (after they have received his judgement) in 40:11 and there being no gathering (קָבַץ) of those affected by the 'Day of YHWH' in 13:14. Zapff further claims that the format of 'YHWH's imperative call on the nameless' followed by 'the results of his

⁵³ Williamson's observation: 'raise the voice!' (הֲרִימוּ קוֹל) in 13:2 found in 40:9; 'from a distant land' (מֵאַרְץ) in 13:5 found in 46:11. Williamson, *The Book*, 169. To these Zapff adds: YHWH calling (קִרְאָתִי) his army in 13:3 found in calling Cyrus in 45:3-4. Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 215.

commands' shared by 13:2-16 and ch 40 is an intentional formal alignment made by the author of 13:2-16. In the absence of clear evidence supporting this direction of influence, Zapff's supposition that 13:2-16 is a later bridge-text between Deutero-Isaiah and the earlier materials, as opposed to being a text that influenced chs 40-55, seems unnecessary. When we look at all the texts which Zapff claims 13:2-16 borrowed from (even the ones where the dependence seems to be the reverse), none of them are unambiguously from the post-exilic period or late enough to conclude that the dependence on them must mean that 13:2-16 is a post-exilic text. Therefore, although its post-exilic date is certainly possible, 13:2-16's reliance on other passages in the book of Isaiah does not necessarily make it so.

In order to further justify his division of the chapter, Zapff lays out the following additional points of contrast between the two parts:⁵⁴ First, the army described in vv 2-5 goes beyond an earthly army. That an army comes from 'the heaven's end' (מקצה השמים) gives the impression that a heavenly army is in view. In contrast, YHWH deploys the Medes in v 17. Second, it might seem odd to find that there are two accounts of army-calling (in vv 2-5 and in v 17) and that each is followed by a description of the devastation the said army would bring. Third, while YHWH himself comes with his army to bring the destruction in v 5, he merely stirs up the Medes in v 17, and the Medes alone are found destroying Babylon in the verses that follow. Fourth, unlike in vv 17-22 where the judgement is directed to one location (Babylon), local references are not found in vv 2-16. Instead, the judgement is on the

⁵⁴ Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 237-238.

whole world (כל הארץ in v 5 and תבל in v 11). Fifth, while the moral aspect of the judgement is emphasised in vv 2-16, the guilt of Babylon is only implicit in v 19 through the mention of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sixth, considering the similar descriptions of slaughter in the surrounding verses of v 17, the new beginning in v 17 with הני seems intrusive. Finally, Zapff claims that Isa 34:5-15, which he identifies as the base layer (i.e. the earliest part) of the chapter, depends on ch 13. 34:5-15, however, depends only on 13:17-22 and this implies for Zapff that 13:2-16 was not yet written when 34:5-15 borrowed its materials from 13:17-22.

Some of these arguments are not entirely convincing. For instance, the notion of the coming of YHWH himself and that of him having some other army to do the job for him are not contradictory to each other as Isa 19:1-2 demonstrates. There, YHWH himself comes to Egypt riding on a cloud in v 1, but in the following verse he makes the Egyptians to fight against each other. Additionally, what 34:5-15 has really borrowed from ch 13 is the language of the wild animals occupying the devastated city, which will perpetually stay uninhabited, found only in vv 20-22. This does not seem to add too much weight to Zapff's argument. Despite some of the weaknesses in his arguments, Zapff's suggestion that 13:2-16 might be a later expansion on vv 17-22 is attractive.⁵⁵ Fortunately for our purpose, any decision on this matter does not affect the exilic date of 13:17-22 and therefore the late-exilic date of 14:1-2 is likewise left unaffected. For this reason, the question can be left open for the time being. What may

⁵⁵ For an opposite view that sees vv 2-16 might be an earlier layer which originally concerned Assyria see Jeppesen, 'Isaiah 13-14' 66-69. The universal language and the lack of any indication of an Assyrian background in these verses make one hesitant to agree with its pre-exilic date.

be said of it all is that it seems plausible that 13:2-16 was a universalising expansion on 13:17-22 but that the date of 13:2-16 is uncertain.

2-4-3: Relationship between Isaiah 13 and 14:4b-23

The relationship between ch 13 and 14:4b-23 has been noted by many. We have already touched on the verb-pair רָעַשׁ and רָגַז which occurs both in 13:13 and 14:16.

Another point of contact which is repeatedly commented on is the wilderness theme found both in 13:21-22 and in 14:23. More recently, further similarities have been

pointed out. Both in 13:11 and 14:11, the judgement on the pride (גִּאוּן) is found.⁵⁶ In

14:11, the fall of the tyrant's pride is mocked and in 13:11 YHWH expresses his will to put an end to the pride of the arrogant and to humble the haughtiness of the ruthless.

Another point of contact, which was observed recently, is the appearance of the cosmic language both in 13:10 and 14:13.⁵⁷ Because 13:10 is often involved in the discussions

about the Day of YHWH and 14:13 with that of the underlying myths, the possible connection between the two verses is generally overlooked. With the other connections

already indicated, it seems quite possible that there is an intended link between the fall

of *Helel Ben Shahar* who wanted to ascend to heaven (שָׁמַיִם) above the stars (כּוֹכָבִים) of *El*

in 14:13 and the stars of heaven (כּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם) which will lose their light on the Day of

⁵⁶ Sals, *Hure Babylon*, 264. Sals also adds to this the critical tone toward the wicked (רָשָׁעִים) found in 13:11 and 14:5. Although this is a valuable observation, because 14:5 is almost unanimously understood to be a later insertion, and the dating of it nearly impossible, this will not be included in our consideration regarding the temporal relationship between the two chapters.

⁵⁷ Klaas Spronk, 'Perverse Delight' 152.

YHWH in 13:10. Finally, the theme of there being no hope for the future generations with the death of the children is found both in 13:16, 18 and in 14:21-22.⁵⁸

Now, when it comes to the question of direction of influence between ch 13 and 14:4b-23, the vast majority of scholars assumes that where there is a clear connection ch 13 influenced ch 14.⁵⁹ This is especially so when it comes to the wild animal theme in 13:21-22 and 14:23. The prevalent understanding is that after the poem in 14:4b-20a/21 was given a Babylonian setting by 14:3-4a (or 14:1-4a), 14:22-23 was written in the style of 13:21-22 in order to strengthen the unity of the whole section concerning Babylon.

Having stated various views on the dating of and the temporal relationship between the surrounding passages of 14:1-2, a fresh proposal is offered below.

2-4-4: New approach

Until Jonathan Goldstein argued for the original Assyrian setting of 14:22-23, the Babylonian setting of 14:22-23 had never been questioned.⁶⁰ This is understandable because the MT provides no serious difficulty as it stands and there are no textual variants. The only minor oddity might be found in v 22.

⁵⁸ K. Spronk, 'Perverse Delight' 152.

⁵⁹ To my knowledge, the only two exceptions are Zapff who claims that 13:13 is dependent on 14:16, as we saw earlier, and Charis Fischer who following Zapff believes 13:6, 9-13 knew 14:4b-21. C. Fischer, *Die Fremdvölkerversprüche*, 130.

⁶⁰ Jonathan Goldstein, *Almighty God*, 87-89.

וְקָמְתִי עֲלֵיהֶם נָא יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וְהָכַרְתִּי לְכָכֶל שֵׁם וְשֹׂאֵר וְגִין וְנֶכֶד נָאִם־יְהוָה

(“And I shall rise against them,” declares YHWH of Hosts, “and I shall cut off from Babylon name and remnant, and descendants and posterity,” declares YHWH.)

It may be noted that נָאִם יְהוָה appears twice in v 22 and one receives the impression that the phrase is a little repetitive at the end of the verse. This is especially so when we consider the appearance of נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת at the end of v 23. This alone, however, poses no real problem as the phenomenon occurs elsewhere in the HB a number of times.⁶¹ What is unusual, however, is that in the first half of v 22 as well as at the end of v 23 we have נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת whereas, in between those two, we find the shorter נָאִם יְהוָה at the end of v 22. Elsewhere in the HB, when the phrase נָאִם יְהוָה appears twice or three times close together in either one or two verses, the form of the divine name (either יְהוָה or נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת) almost always stays constant. The only exceptions outside 14:22-23 are found in the book of Haggai (2:4, 23). Therefore, נָאִם יְהוָה at the end of v 22 seems at least somewhat suspicious. Furthermore, coming from a different angle, Goldstein shows a fascinating connection between Isa 14:22 and Zeph 2:14.⁶² Both passages speak of wild animals occupying a devastated city and use the very rare word קָפֹד (hedgehog). קָפֹד appears in the HB only three times and the one remaining occurrence is found in Isa 34:11, where we also find the same wild animal theme. What is interesting when we look at 34:11-15 where all sorts of wild animals feature is that we find a very close connection with 13:21-22 which is also a passage about wild animals occupying a destroyed city. The connections we find between these four passages seem too much of

⁶¹ Isa 52:5; Jer 23:24, 31-32; 29:14; 29:19; Hag 2:4, 23; Zech 1:3.

⁶² J. Goldstein, *Almighty God*, 88-89.

a coincidence.⁶³ Rather, it is possible to notice a relatively straightforward direction of influence from one passage to another. If we disregard the present historical settings of these texts for the moment, the pattern seems to be that more animals are added to the existing list each time the materials are borrowed. In this way, Zeph 2:14 seems to have borrowed from Isa 14:23 and Isa 34:11-15 appears to have borrowed from both Zeph 2:14 and Isa 13:21-22. See the table below for the animals involved:

Isa 14:23 – קֶפֶד (hedgehog)

=>

Zeph 2:14 – קָאֵת (owl?) + קֶפֶד⁶⁴

Zeph 2:14 – קָאֵת + קֶפֶד combined with

Isa 13:21-22 – צִיִּים (wild cats?) + אֲהִים (a hapax. Howling creatures?) + בְּנוֹת יַעֲנָה (ostriches) + שְׁעִירִם (wild goats) + אֲיִים (jackals?) + תְּנִינִים (wild dogs?)

=>

Isa 34:11-15 – קָאֵת + קֶפֶד + יִנְשׁוּף (great owl?) + עֹרֵב (raven) + תְּנִינִים + בְּנוֹת יַעֲנָה + צִיִּים + לִילִית (Lilith) + קֶפֶז (arrow snake?) + דְּיוֹת (hawks?)

According to this picture, Zeph 2:14 ought to be dependent on (and therefore later than) Isa 14:23. The difficulty with this is that the context of Zeph 2:14 is the fall of Assyria and Nineveh rather than that of Babylon. At this point, Goldstein proposes a radical

⁶³ There is of course Jer 50:39 too. Nevertheless, Jer 50:39 seems to have borrowed from only Isa 13:21-22, and is therefore excluded from the present group of texts.

⁶⁴ קָאֵת and קֶפֶד appear together only in Zeph 2:14 and Isa 34:11-15.

conjecture. He wonders if Isa 14:22 originally had בבל for אשור and מנינה (from Nineveh) for נאם יהוה.⁶⁵ Goldstein's reconstruction of the original text of 14:22 would appear as below (vowel points are added for the sake of highlighting the possible effect when read out aloud).

וְקָמְתִי עֲלֵיהֶם נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וְהִכַּרְתִּי לְאֲשׁוּר שֵׁם וְשָׁאָר וְנִין וְנָכַד מְנִינָה

("And I shall rise against them," declares YHWH of Hosts, "and I shall cut off from Assyria name and remnant, and descendants and posterity from Nineveh")

Goldstein points out a double pun which would have been heard when read aloud between לְאֲשׁוּר and וְשָׁאָר, and between וְנִין וְנָכַד and מְנִינָה. At some point מנינה may have changed to נמינה by accident (a מ and a נ switched around). After this, נמינה could have turned into נאם יהוה under the influence of the two surrounding occurrences of נאם יהוה. Once this has taken place, it is not difficult to imagine why some scribe might have wanted to correct אשור into בבל assuming that the taunt against the king of Babylon (משל על מלך בבל) continued to the end of 14:23. Goldstein's proposal is attractive despite the fact that it is entirely conjectural and lacks any textual support whatsoever because: 1) it solves the oddity of נאם יהוה; 2) it is eloquent when read out; and 3) it shows how Zeph 2:13-15 might have been influenced by Isa 14:22-23 and yet has the similar wildlife desolation language in connection with Assyria and not with Babylon.

If it is true that Isa 14:22-23 originally had an Assyrian setting, it would have a significant implication for the following verses concerning Assyria also. 14:24-25a has

⁶⁵ J. Goldstein, *Almighty God*, 87.

long puzzled many commentators. However, if the original Assyrian setting of 14:22-23 is right, there need not be a break between 14:22-23 and 14:24-25a. In fact, bearing in mind that the original setting of 14:4b-20a was likely to have been the fall of an Assyrian ruler, the whole of 14:4b-25a could have had an Assyrian setting at one point.⁶⁶ It is, at this stage of the argument, worth paying attention to Vermeylen's comments on the position of 14:24-27.⁶⁷ Vermeylen asks why these verses about Assyria lack a heading altogether if they were inserted into the foreign nations section after various oracles concerning different nations had been collected. On this basis, Vermeylen supposes that these verses originally came right after 10:14. With the start of the insertion of 10:27b-34, the distance between 10:5-14 (15) and 14:24-27 grew and their relationship weakened as various other later passages increased the gap in between. A similar but modified view can now be developed in the same general direction. It might be that the whole of 14:4b-25a once followed 10:15 before the intervening materials were brought in. This way, the topic of the whole of 10:5-15 and 14:4b-25a could have been about the fall of Assyria. Although dating various parts of 10:16ff is a much discussed and complicated matter, with many parts belonging either to the exilic or post-exilic times, it is generally agreed that 10:5-15 is genuinely about

⁶⁶ Many have observed the sudden introduction of the plural nouns in vv 20b-21 i.e. מְרֵעִים (evildoers) and אֲבוֹתָם (their fathers). This has led to regarding these verses as a later gloss. Determining when the gloss might have been made, however, seems impossible. For the view against separating it from the poem, see Shipp, *Isaiah 14:4b-21*, 134. There is also the issue of the LXX differing from the MT. The LXX directly addresses the singular 'evil seed' (e.g. 'your father [πατὴρ κακῆς σποῆς]' instead of 'their fathers [αὐτοὶ] and so on). Kaiser supposes that the original singulars were changed to plurals to be harmonised with the following verses, while Holladay believes the LXX used singulars to bring the verses closer to the singular tyrant in the previous verses. Fortunately, the issue is not directly relevant for our present purposes and therefore does not need to be decided here. Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 29; Holladay, 'Isaiah 14' 635.

⁶⁷ Vermeylen, *Isaie*, 296-297.

the historical fall of Assyria.⁶⁸ It is notable then that the Assyrian monarch in 10:5-15 is both anonymous and criticised and mocked for his arrogance just like the tyrant in 14:4b-20a. Whoever made the gloss in 14:5, the glossator must have also noticed the similarities we have noted between the two passages.⁶⁹

Now, if we imagine the time when the exilic Babylon oracle in ch 13 was not yet written, when our supposed alteration from אשור into בבל was therefore not made, and perhaps even before the song of salvation in ch 12 was written, it seems very difficult to imagine that whoever wrote ch 13 did not realise that the whole of 14:4b-25a concerned the fall of Assyria. What this means is that, whether or not one half of ch 13 was earlier than the other, the chapter was written using materials from 14:4b-25a. In the minds of the writer(s) of ch 13, Assyria's end was understood as paradigmatically applicable to Babylon. Whatever connections between chs 13 and 14 are found, the direction of influence is therefore from ch 14 to ch 13 and not the other way around. Moreover, because 14:4b-25a was understood by the writer(s) of ch 13 as one continuous unit, there was no reason to provide the last couple of verses (vv 24-25a) a new heading. This was also the case when the taunt song was redirected to 'the king of Babylon' by 14:3-4a because it was not only 14:4b-20a which now addressed the Babylonian monarch but the whole of 14:4b-25a.

⁶⁸ Verses 10-11 are nevertheless identified as a later anti-idol insertion by Williamson. Williamson, 'Isaiah 10:10-11' 17-28.

⁶⁹ The verse is commonly accepted as a gloss because of the sudden introduction of YHWH and its dependence on and the thematic reversal of 10:5.

2-5: Summary and Conclusion

To sum up, the original unity of 14:1-2 does not need to be doubted despite the slight clumsiness in style in the first half of v 2. With regard to the compositional history of 13:1-14:25a, the whole of 14:4b-25a was once a section dealing with the fall of Assyria and continued from 10:14 (15) before the intervening materials were brought in. 14:4b-25a may therefore be dated in the pre-exilic period. During the exilic period, ch 13 (either in part or whole) was written concerning the future fall of Babylon using phrases and motifs from 14:4b-25a by way of using the fall of Assyria as a type to be applied to Babylon. In this respect, 14:3-4a only made explicit what was implicit by redirecting the following taunt song against the king of Babylon. 14:1-4a, the closeness in style and thought with Isa 40-55 which suggests its late-exilic date, was then written to show what would follow the imminent fall of Babylon with regard to YHWH's people in exile. 14:1-2 looks forward to the future influx of individual gentile converts and to the servitude of the nations to YHWH's people. If the main tenor of 13:1-14:25a was that of an impending doom for the enemies of YHWH's people before the writing of 14:1-4a, the addition of these verses shifted the attention of the whole section to the opposite side of the same coin, namely the glorious return of YHWH's people from their exile and the envy and fear of the nations this return will cause. The city of Babylon will be left empty and desolate while Zion is going to be densely populated both by the Israelites who will return from the exile and by the gentile converts who will follow them to Zion. The pride and arrogance of Babylon will be brought to

nothing but the nations will humble themselves before YHWH and serve the people of Zion.

Chapter 3: Philistia may take refuge in Zion (Isaiah 14:32b)

Isa 14:28-32 is an oracle concerning Philistia. According to the hypothesis proposed by the present study, 14:32b belongs to a group of passages in Isa 13-23 which is written by a late-exilic redactor who is closely related (if not identical) to Isa 40-55. As was suggested earlier, 14:32b embodies the same vision that is introduced in 14:1-2. This vision is here applied to the oracle concerning Philistia at the tail end of it. Now, much discussion has gone on over the historical setting of the oracle including the date and the function of the superscript in 14:28. Furthermore, the oracle in its present form (the MT) does not flow quite so naturally and contains a number of difficult textual and exegetical issues. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed by the present study will be tested in this chapter not only by examining the passage which is directly involved in the hypothesis (14:32b) but also by offering a plausible reconstruction of the compositional history of the whole oracle which, as well as accommodating the current proposal, will hopefully be able to explain the various exegetical difficulties the current form of the oracle presents.

Some of the textual difficulties and the historical setting of the original oracle will be dealt with first before an attempt is made at identifying and dating possible later additions.

3-1: Textual difficulties

Verse 30 has a number of oddities.

Isaiah 14:30

וְרָעוּ בְּכוֹרֵי דָלִים וְאַבְיוֹנִים לְבָטָח יִרְבְּצוּ וְהַמָּתִי בָרָעַב שְׁרָשָׁף וְשָׁאֲרִיתָהּ יִהְיֶה

The MT may be translated as: ‘The firstborns of the poor will graze and the needy will lie down in safety; and I will kill your root with famine and your remnant it/he will slay.’ To begin with, v 30a seems to bring in the theme ‘the good news to the poor’ abruptly right in the middle of a warning against Philistia which runs from v 29 to v 31. Although ‘the poor (עניים)’ does occur at the end of v 32, the introduction of the poor (word pair דלים and אביונים) and the livestock imagery in v 30a seem out of place as v 30b clearly engages with v 29 by continuing to speak about ‘the root (שרש)’. The oddity of v 30a’s present position will simply be noted for the moment and it will be dealt with later in greater detail when different compositional layers are discussed.

As one reads v 30a on its own, the phrase ‘the firstborns of the poor (בכורי דלים)’ does not seem natural. Should the phrase be correct, the word בכורים (the firstborns) would have a figurative sense – i.e. ‘the poorest.’¹ However, as is often pointed out, the superlative is unnecessary in the present context and the word בכורים does not serve as

¹ Cf. Job 18:13; Ex 4:22 etc., BDB בְּכוֹר 3.

a very good parallel word with לבטח (in safety/peace).² What is clear from the verbs רעה (graze) and רבץ (lie down) is that a livestock metaphor is in use. Therefore, emendations have been suggested which would fit the current livestock imagery better. The BHS suggests reading בָּכָרִי (in my meadows) instead of בְּכוֹרִי whereas Wildberger recommends reading כְּכָרִים (like lambs) in its place.³ Although both suggestions fit well with the livestock imagery, they are not entirely satisfactory. First of all, neither suggested emendation creates a particularly better parallel with לבטח. As for reading כְּכָרִים (like lambs), the disappearance of the final Mem from כָּרִים to have בְּכוֹרִי is difficult to explain especially when there is no textual support for this reading. בָּכָרִי (in my meadows) is more attractive as it requires a smaller consonantal change. There is, however, one reservation with this reading. Although the verb רעה (graze) can be followed by the preposition בְּ to indicate what is being fed (to the livestock) or where the grazing is taking place, its occurrence is very rare (only 3 times in the HB: Gen 41:2, 8; 1Chr 27:29). Much more frequently, the verb either takes a direct object or the preposition עַל to describe where the animals are grazing. The verb רעה appears with כָּר (meadow) in Isa 30:23c.

Isaiah 30:23c

יִרְעֶה מִקְנֶיךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּר נָחֵב

(Your livestock will graze in that day in a broad pasture)

² Gray, *Isaiah*, 269.

³ Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 573-574.

Therefore, although בָּכָרִי is not grammatically impossible the phrase does not come so naturally and one feels hesitant to replace one awkward reading with another. Despite its oddity, the MT ought to be kept.

It is frequently argued, however, that v 30a (either with or without v 30b) is misplaced and that v 30a originally followed v 32. If and how this misplacement took place will be discussed later but if v 30a indeed came right after v 32, the said superlative may not seem so unnecessary since the עניים (the poor) are mentioned in v 32b i.e. – the poor (עניים) will take refuge in Zion and the poorest (בְּכוֹרֵי דָלִים) will be fed in safety.

The MT for v 30b has a 1st person singular verb וְהָמַתִּי (and I will kill) at the beginning of the line and a 3rd person masculine singular verb יִהָרֵג (he will slay) at the end of the line without a clear indication of the change of the subject of the verbs. As far as the MT is concerned, the subject of וְהָמַתִּי has to be YHWH not only because the killing is to be done with a famine (רָעָב) but also because it is impossible to imagine the prophetic voice vowing to carry out the killing him/herself in the present context.⁴ Somewhat less straightforward is the identification of the subject of the 3rd person verb יִהָרֵג. Since the speaker is YHWH, he can be ruled out. However, the feminine suffixes in this half-verse (שָׁרָה וְשָׂאֲרִיתָהּ) show that the addressee who is at the receiving end of the ordeal remains Philistia from v 29. Now, although it is not immediately obvious

⁴ רָעָב can mean 'hunger' rather than 'famine' but this is so in the HB only when the word is coupled with צָמָא (thirst) to mean 'hunger and thirst.' When the word stands alone, it always means 'famine' in the HB.

what the 'root (שרש) of the snake' in v 29 refers to, given the threatening impression the different kinds of serpents in the verse give, it is quite probable that it refers to the 'rod' that smote Philistia earlier in the same verse. Despite the reappearance of the word שרש (root) from v 29, שרשך in v 30b refers to the root of Philistia and not to the rod that struck Philistia in v 29 (שקט מכה) according to the MT. This thus leaves one of the serpent creatures in v 29 as a better candidate for the subject of the verb יִהָרֵג in v 30b. If we were to try to make sense of the MT, therefore, the line would mean that YHWH is going to kill the root of Philistia with famine and that the serpent which comes from the rod that struck Philistia is going to slay the remnant of Philistia. Needless to say, the MT of v 30b is a little clumsy.

It is perhaps no surprise then that we have a variant reading in 1QIsa^a and a yet different interpretation found in the LXX. The reading from 1QIsa^a has both verbs in v 30b in the 1st person. Instead of יִהָרֵג it reads אֶהָרֵג (I will slay). According to this reading, YHWH is the one killing both the root and the remnant. The LXX on the other hand reads: ἀνελεῖ δὲ λιμῶ τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ τὸ κατάλειμμα σου ἀνελεῖ (but he will kill your seed with famine and your remnant he will kill).⁵ The LXX could have ironed out in its translation v 30b's grammatical awkwardness by aligning it to v 29 by means of changing the first verb from being in the 1st person to the 3rd person. Equally, the LXX's *Vorlage* could have read הָמִית instead of הִמָּית. If indeed the LXX reflects a *Vorlage* that

⁵ There have been attempts to remedy the slightly infelicitous repetition of שרש (in v 29 and v 30b) by changing שרשך into זרעך assuming that this is what the LXX (which reads τὸ σπέρμα σου) had in its *Vorlage*. Donner, *Völkern*, 110. This is unlikely, however, as the LXX seems to translate שרש in v 29 as σπέρματος too. Cf. Jeremy Hughes, *Secrets*, 214. In Olivier Munnich's view, the LXX's translation of v 29 might have been influenced by 'the seed of the serpent' in Gen 3:15. Munnich, *Le Messianisme*, 336-337.

read both verbs of v 30b in the 3rd person, one could postulate with van der Kooij that what we have in the MT is an effort to preserve two separate traditions – what we have in 1QIsa^a and the supposed *Vorlage* of the LXX.⁶ One can say probably enough that the reading of the MT is not the original. Both verbs were either in the 1st or in the 3rd person and the corruption began perhaps when *המתי* was accidentally changed to *המית*, or vice versa.⁷ There is a general tendency among the commentators to prefer keeping the verbs in the 3rd person here. This is because the line then can be allowed to continue after v 29 without having to deal with the isolated 1st person YHWH speech which might seem intrusive within the flow.

There are two difficulties with emending *המתי* to *המית* however. First, there is no Hebrew text that supports this reading. It relies only on the supposed *Vorlage* of the LXX. Second, as was briefly mentioned above, the repetition of the word *שרש* (root) in close proximity with two different referents is stylistically odd and paints a strange picture. The word in v 29 probably refers to the broken rod that smote Philistia. Verse 29 begins with the image of a broken rod. The metaphorical rod which struck Philistia in the past is now broken. Now, the plant image is used in order to express the idea that although Philistia's enemy power had suffered damage in some way it would nevertheless regain its potency and continue to pose a great threat to Philistia. Despite the brokenness, the root (*שרש*) is still intact and from it will come out (*יצא*) a serpent creature (or creatures). In other words, the plant image in v 29 only works in

⁶ van der Kooij, *Textzeugen des Jesajabuches*, 309-310.

⁷ There are nevertheless those who suppose that the MT is correct. Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk*, 148; Charis Fischer, *Die Fremdvölkersprüche*, 146.

conjunction with the image of a broken rod. If the supposed 3rd person verbs in v 30b take the serpent from v 29 as the subject, the one being addressed (i.e. the one that will be killed by the serpent) must be Philistia (as according to the MT). It would then be quite puzzling to see the plant image being applied to Philistia by using the word שרש. That the word here continues to convey the idea of having already suffered loss is confirmed by the parallel word שארית (remnant) at the end of v 30b. Although the phrase שָׁרֵט מִכֶּךָ (the rod of your striking – i.e. the rod that strikes you) implies that Philistia was at least ‘struck’ in some sense, there is no explicit mention of Philistia having already experienced the kind of attack that would lead to the mention of Philistia’s remnant. The real attack from the north (v 31) is yet to come. Further, v 30b is short compared to vv 29 & 31 and this only adds to one’s suspicion. One wonders then if the two verbs in v 30b were originally in the 1st person and that v 30b was a later comment on v 29 that was addressed not to Philistia but to the rod that struck Philistia (with masculine suffixes at the ends of שרשך and שאריתך). If the glossator had identified Philistia’s antagonist in vv 29 & 31 (מצפון עשן בא – ‘smoke comes from the north’) either with Assyria or Babylon, and thought that the revival of the broken rod described in v 29 could not be the last word on the fate of one of these powers, one can imagine how he might have wished to add a divine word of judgement against that power: ‘Though your potency may have grown back from the root that survived “the breaking,” I (YHWH) will kill even that root and your remnant so as to leave you in a state beyond recovery.’ Therefore, we would emend יהרג at the end of v 30 to אהרג following 1QIsa^a.

Moving on to the next verse, the first line of v 31 has a gender disagreement. The line reads: *הִילִילִי שַׁעַר וְעִיר עֵיר* ('Howl, O gate! Cry, O city!'). The word *שַׁעַר* (gate) is treated as a feminine noun by the verb *הִילִילִי* (Howl!) although it is a masculine noun. This seems deliberate rather than accidental because the following parallel line *נִמּוּג פִּלְשֶׁת כָּלָהּ* (Melt away,⁸ O Philistia, all of you!) shows that the words *שַׁעַר* and *עֵיר* are used as metonyms for the whole of Philistia, the region which is consistently treated as a feminine word in the present oracle. Moreover, according to Dobbs-Allsopp, personification of the city/gate as a weeping female figure is a common feature in the city-lament genre in the HB.⁹

The MT of v 32 reads well and no syntactical difficulties are found.

Isaiah 14:32

וּמַה־יַּעֲנֶה מַלְאֲכֵי־גוֹי כִּי יִהְיֶה יֶסֶד צִיּוֹן וְכִהּ יִחָסוּ עַנְיֵי עַמּוֹ

(And what shall one answer the messengers of the nation? That YHWH has founded Zion, and in her the afflicted of his people shall take refuge.)

Although there are no particular grammatical issues in the verse, a couple of new elements seem to have been introduced in this final verse. The subject of the 3rd person singular verb *יַעֲנֶה* cannot be YHWH because YHWH is spoken of in the 3rd person in the following answer and so the verb has to be impersonal. Thus the messengers of 'the nation' as well as the reply from Judah (which has been silent throughout the oracle) to

⁸ *נִמּוּג* is most likely an infinitive absolute functioning as a command. Cf. GK § 113bb.

⁹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep*, 133. Likewise, de Jong, *ANE Prophets*, 145.

what could be imagined as the message which the messengers would have brought (though the contents of which is not told here) are introduced in this verse. For this reason the reading from 1QIsa^a cannot be ignored which reads: ומה יענו מלכי גוי ('And how will the kings of the nation respond?') in v 32a. This reading eliminates the sudden presence of the messengers as well as of Judah giving a reply to them. According to 1QIsa^a, it is the kings of Philistia who are to answer with the words of v 32b after having been told not to rejoice over the recent set back of their enemy nation as it will soon regain its strength and attack again from the north. The LXX supports this reading somewhat and translates v 32a as: καὶ τί ἀποκριθήσονται βασιλεῖς ἐθνῶν ('And what will the kings of the nations answer?').¹⁰ It seems more plausible that at this point the LXX reflects a *Vorlage* which was either close to or the same as what we have in 1QIsa^a rather than to think that the LXX is either translating freely or misreading the Hebrew text. This case might be strengthened when we observe that 1QIsa^a has ובו (and in him) instead of ובה (and in her) in v 32b, the pronoun referring back to YHWH rather than Zion, and that the LXX likewise translates καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ('and through him'), possibly reflecting ובו in its *Vorlage*.¹¹ Of course, it is admitted that the consonantal text of the MT ובה could also be vocalised as ובה, and either way, the meaning of the text is virtually the same.¹²

¹⁰ Donner goes a step further and postulates that the original text had מלכי פלשתים. Donner, *Völkern*, 111.

¹¹ The same phenomenon is explained by Jean Koenig that both 1QIsa^a and the LXX display deliberate changes to the text (reflected in the MT) in order to apply the text to their situation in the Hellenistic period. During this period, for Koenig, the Philistines would have been typologically understood as the Greeks and 'the kings of the nation(s)' in their readings would refer to the successors of Alexander the great. Further, the third person masculine singular pronominal suffix was put in place to increase the religious nuance of the text. J. Koenig, *L'Herméneutique Analogique*, 332-340.

¹² Wildberger prefers ובה following 1QIsa^a. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 575.

Although 1QIsa^a reads well in v 32, one is not inclined to regard it as an earlier reading than what we have in the MT for a number of reasons. To begin with, an accidental change from מלאכי to מלכי is much easier to explain than the change in the opposite direction especially when we bear in mind that the conversation with the Philistine envoys is something of a new element in the flow of the oracle. Further, one can imagine without difficulty how after מלאכי was changed to מלכי the verb יענה could have been 'corrected' to יענו to make the Philistine kings the subject of the verb. If מלכי was original and it was accidentally changed to מלאכי, however, it is quite difficult to conceive why one would change יענו to יענה as יענו could serve just as well when read as an impersonal plural verb with a passive meaning. Moreover, the presence of the Philistine envoys in Jerusalem as depicted in the oracle has some historical justification but this will be dealt with in the following section when we discuss the possible historical setting of the original oracle. Therefore, the reading of the MT is to be kept for v 32 including the feminine pronominal suffix of ובה not because it seems more likely to be the earlier reading than the alternative masculine suffix but because it does not affect the meaning of the text in any significant way.

Therefore, the only consonantal change to be suggested to the MT is יהרג at the end of v 30 which should be changed to אהרג following 1QIsa^a.

3-2: Dating parts of the oracle

As far as v 29 and v 31 are concerned (leaving aside v 30 and v 32 for the moment), there is a relatively strong consensus among exegetes that these verses are to be dated in the pre-exilic period (some even argue for the Isaianic authorship) and that Philistia's enemy described in these verses is Assyria.¹³ The main reason why most date these verses in the pre-exilic period is twofold. Firstly, vv 29 & 31 follow the same pattern of feminine singular commands addressing the whole of Philistia (פְּלִשְׁתִּי כָלָהּ) followed by the reason behind the commands beginning with the word כִּי and this seems to reflect the verses' homogeneity. Secondly, the language used to describe Philistia's enemy power in these verses seems historically genuine. As far as the original composition of these verses is concerned, the descriptions of Philistia's enemy – i.e. the rod that had previously struck Philistia in v 29 or the smoke from the north in v 31 – appear to refer to a real historical political entity as opposed to some typological antagonist. When it comes to identifying this political power, the attack that comes from the north (v 31) points to Assyria (rather than Judah or Egypt) whose vassals many Philistine cities had been for a long time as well as having been oppressed numerous when revolts were attempted.¹⁴ Additionally, it is often repeated that the term rod (שֵׁבַע) is used on more than one occasion in relation to Assyria's aggression in the book of Isaiah (9:3; 10:5, 15, 24; 14:5). Although there is a whole debate about precisely what the broken rod might refer to – i.e. if it refers to the death of an Assyrian

¹³ Gray, *Isaiah*, 265-266; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 575-577; Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 301; Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk*, 147-149; de Jong, *Isaiah among the ANE Prophets*, 144-146; M. Hom, *Assyrians in Isaiah*, 66-67; H. Barth, *Josiazeit*, 14; Beuken, *Must Philistia*, 51-56; Clements, *Zion as Symbol*, 15; S. Deck, *Die Gerichtsbotschaft Jesajas*, 50-53; Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik*, 208-209; Donner, *Völkern*, 110-113; Gosse, *Isaïe 14:28-32*, 97-98; J. Gray, *Reign of God*, 120; H. Hoffmann, *Die Intention*, 64-66; F. Huber, *Juda und die anderen Völker*, 104-106; J. Hughes, *Secrets*, 214-216; Jeppesen, *Cornerstone*, 95-97; J. Koenig, *L'Herméneutique Analogique*, 334-336; Ollenburger, *Zion*, 115-116; J. Roberts, *Isa 14:28-32*, 388-394; G. Stansell, *Micah and Isaiah*, 53; G. Eidevall, *Prophecy and Propaganda*, 57-59; S. Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 375-376; O. Keel, *Geschichte Jerusalems*, 403; Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 286.

¹⁴ Gray, *Isaiah*, 265-266.

king; if so, which Assyrian king etc. – it is generally accepted that the oracle at least in its earliest form arose from a hostile political situation between Philistia and Assyria.¹⁵

Although the majority of exegetes see at least some parts of the oracle as being from the pre-exilic period, only very few would date the entire oracle in its present form in the same period. To begin with, the integrity of the superscript in v 28 is in question. Some believe that the superscript is genuinely ancient and was written to provide an actual temporal setting for the oracle. Others adopt the view that it was secondarily given, and that when it was added, its purpose was not merely to set the oracle within the Judean royal chronology. Rather, it was given as an interpretative tool with which the oracle was to be understood. According to this view, the death of Ahaz in v 28 is to be read into the broken rod in v 29. The rod refers to Ahaz and the breaking of the rod, his death. The serpent that springs from the root must accordingly speak of Hezekiah's succession and he would be all the more oppressive toward Philistia than his father.¹⁶ Even if v 28 is secondary, it is difficult to know just how far it was intended to modify the reading of the following oracle. That the function of v 28 might be restricted to providing a temporal setting for the oracle (whether the verse is secondary or not) is to a small extent supported by Isa 20:1 which reflects an understanding that the Philistines' oppressors were the Assyrians by speaking of

¹⁵ Moreover, particularly intriguing is a Neo-Assyrian prophecy Eidevall refers to which is about a dangerous foreign power: 'I have come from the [m]ace. I have pulled out the snake which was inside it, I have cut it in pieces, and I have broken the mace.' The picture is of a broken rod with a hidden serpent inside. The closeness of the imagery with v 29 is uncanny. Eidevall suggests that perhaps here we have the language that is usually used by the Assyrians against its enemies borrowed to describe Assyria. G. Eidevall, *Prophecy and Propaganda*, 57-59.

¹⁶ de Jong, *Isaiah among the ANE Prophets*, 145-146; Gosse, *Isaïe 14:28-32*, 97-98.

Sargon's conquest of Ashdod. Ch 20, in all its appearance especially with the 3rd person narrative (akin to chs 7, 36-39), is almost certainly later than Isa 14:28 and could have been written in its present position in order to operate as a historical backdrop for various oracles in the Massa corpus (again, in a way similar to chs 36-39).¹⁷

Furthermore, as was cited in the introduction to the present study, Williamson postulates that 6:1 and 14:28 marked the beginnings of two halves of Isaiah's oracles at an early stage of the book's formation – the former functioning as the heading for the oracles uttered during the reign of Ahaz and the latter as the same for those uttered during Hezekiah's reign. If correct, this would mean that 14:28 once introduced not only the oracle concerning Philistia but most of the other early oracles found in chs 14-32.¹⁸ In any case, whenever 14:28 might have been added (if it was indeed added), what is important to us is that the superscript too sets the oracle (at least some of it) in the 8th Century.

Before discussing v 30, which has a number of issues, v 32 needs to be dealt with first. Verse 32a is a question, and v 32b is its answer. There are four aspects of this verse which strike one as being odd. First, when viewed with the rest of the oracle, the length of v 32a seems quite short. Second, the logic of v 32b does not quite follow the earlier parts of the oracle. Third, the expression that YHWH has founded (יסד) Zion in v 32b seems close to the language of chs 40-55. Fourth, in v 32b, the use of the term עניים (the poor) in a religious sense and not in a socio-economic sense appears to be a trait that is found in the exilic period onwards. Each of these points will be unpacked below.

¹⁷ Kissane, *Isaiah*, xxxiii, xxxvi; Cook, *Sign*, 125-135; Williamson, 'Deuteronomy and Isaiah' 251-261.

¹⁸ Williamson, *Book*, 162-164.

For v 32a, we have already established that the reading of the MT is to be preferred to that of 1QIsa^a. According to this reading, an answer needs to be given to the Philistine envoys that are presumably in Judah with a message from their country. To be able to judge whether this setting seems historically plausible, one would need to ask what sort of a message they could have brought. We gather from v 29 that Philistia's enemy nation has suffered some kind of damage which is likely to be the death of a ruler because the imagery of a serpent sprouting from the root strongly suggests continuation of some lineage. We have also agreed with the majority of exegetes that the nation that is hinted at fairly strongly as Philistia's enemy in the present oracle is Assyria. Bearing in mind the number of revolts the Philistine cities had attempted against the Assyrian rule, it is quite conceivable that these Philistine envoys came to Judah to propose a coalition against Assyria when there seemed to be a momentary power vacuum in the empire following the death of its chief ruler. Besides, it might be more than a coincidence that we also have the Cushites sending their envoys to other countries in Isa 18:2. As Bentzen suggests, the Philistine messengers in Isa 14:32a and the Cushite messengers in Isa 18:2 could reflect a similar sort of ambassador sending practice, seeking help and alliance.¹⁹ Therefore, it seems more likely than not that v 32a is an integral part of the original oracle from the 8th Century. As to the question why v 32a is quite so short, a close examination of v 32b could bring us closer to the answer.

¹⁹ Bentzen, Jesaja, 119.

V 32b does not wholly fit the flow of the oracle. Even without going into the meaning of the phrase עָנִי עִמּוֹ, the language of taking refuge (חֹסֶה) and YHWH's founding of Zion suggest that YHWH's people are either already under attack or exposed to some imminent danger when v 32b is seen in the context of vv 29, 31-32a. If the historical background of the original oracle was indeed the Assyrian dominance in the 8th Century as per our supposition, then the most easily conceivable scenario where Zion could be in danger would be if they had rebelled against Assyria. This, however, is unlikely in view of vv 29 & 31. The main focus of vv 29 & 31 is that Assyria is soon going to attack Philistia and that Philistia is not going to withstand the attack. Presumably, then, the answer to be given to the offer of coalition from Philistia would be a 'No.' It is unlikely that the historical background of the original oracle was Hezekiah's rebellion against Sennacherib because in that revolt Judah did form an alliance with the Philistine cities and Egypt. The setting of the original oracle is more likely to be of an earlier date – perhaps in one of the previous Philistine revolts. Should this be the case, Judah would still have been Assyria's vassal state and would not have rebelled against Assyria by joining the Philistines. If Judah did not join the Philistines and remained under Assyria's suzerainty, Judah would not have been in danger of an attack from Assyria. The expected answer, therefore, would not include hints that Judah is in any imminent danger. It is of course also possible that vv 29 & 31 were spoken by Isaiah precisely because Hezekiah was seeking to form an alliance with the Philistine cities during the reign of Sennacherib. Even in this case, 14:32b hardly fits the purpose of the oracle. The goal of the prophetic message would have been to dissuade Hezekiah from forming alliances with the neighbouring countries. Now, the primary motive behind such alliances would have been to break away from Assyria. Therefore,

if Hezekiah were to be successfully discouraged from joining hands with other nations, there would be no revolt against Assyria. However, 14:32b already seems to assume Judah's rebellion against Assyria and Assyria's subsequent retaliation against Judah. It would have been as if the persuasion had failed before it had begun. At the very least, therefore, there seems to be a logical gap between 14:29, 31-32a and 14:32b.

What makes v 32b look even more suspicious is the mention of YHWH's founding (יִסַּד) Zion. The language of YHWH both being the one who has founded (יִסַּד) the earth and the one who now lays the foundation of Jerusalem is often seen in Isa 40-55 (44:28; 48:13; 51:13; 51:16). The only other time in the book of Isaiah outside the chs 40-55 where the root יִסַּד appears in connection with YHWH and Zion is in 28:16.

Isaiah 28:16

לֵכֶן כֹּה אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה הַגִּבִּי יִסַּד בְּצִיּוֹן אֶבֶן אֶבֶן בְּחֵן פֶּנֶת יִקְרַת מוֹסַד מוֹסַד הַמַּאֲמִין לֹא יִהְיֶה

(The MT: Therefore, thus says the Lord YHWH, 'Behold I have founded²⁰ in Zion a stone, a *Bohan* stone, a precious cornerstone of sure foundation. The one who believes will not hasten.')

There is no consensus concerning this much discussed verse with regard to its date.²¹

However, not a few commentators attribute the verse to the prophet Isaiah, and even among those who see it as a later addition to an original oracle by the prophet, many

²⁰ יִסַּד should probably be read as a participle following 1QIsa^a and 1QIsa^b i.e. 'Behold, I am laying in Zion as a foundation a stone etc.'

²¹ As well as the question of its date, the verse has generated a number of discussions and the topics include the nature of the stone (both architecturally and metaphorically), the integrity of the final line, and the redactional intent behind the current position of the verse etc. For a recent discussion on most of these issues, see F. Hartenstein, *Jesaja 28:16-17*, 491-516.

believe it is from the pre-exilic period. If the verse really is from the prophet Isaiah, the closeness of the verse's language with that of Isa 14:32b could be used in favour of seeing 14:32b as part of the original oracle as is often done. Nevertheless, evidence points in the opposite direction as we take a closer look at each occurrence of the verb יסד. Broadly speaking, the things that are founded by YHWH in chs 40-55 are large in scale. In Isa 51:13 & 16, it is the earth itself that is founded by YHWH (in parallel with stretching out heavens). Zion is closely related to this language of YHWH's creation of the world since his comforting Zion is the context of the creation language. The power of YHWH who is calling Zion 'my people' is demonstrated by recalling his creation of the heavens and the earth.²² The smallest of the things being founded by YHWH in chs 40-55 is the temple in 44:28.

Isaiah 44:28

הָאֵמַר לְכוֹרֶשׁ רָעִי וְכָל־חֶפְצֵי יְשָׁלֵם וְלֵאמֹר לִירוּשָׁלַם תִּבְנֶנָּה וְהִכָּל תִּנְסֹד

(The MT: The one who says of Cyrus 'My Shepherd, and all my desire he shall perform.' And saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built,' and the temple, 'You shall be founded'.')

Even here, nevertheless, the temple being founded is in parallel with Jerusalem being built. In 54:11b, one finds YHWH ornamenting the foundations (יסודות) of Zion. The MT reads:

Isaiah 54:11b

²² The discussion whether it is collective Israel or the servant that is addressed in 51:16 does not affect the point being made here.

הִנֵּה אֲנִי מֵרִבֵּץ בַּפֹּדֶד אֲבִנֶיךָ וַיִּסְדָּתִיךָ בַּסְּפִירִים

(Behold, I am the one laying/covering your stones with antimony, and I shall found you [i.e. lay your foundations] with Saphires.)

The vowel pointing of וַיִּסְדָּתִיךָ is however often brought into question because of the reading from 1QIsa^a יסודותיך ('your foundations'). The reading from 1QIsa^a is usually preferred because יסודותיך is a better parallel with אבניך (your stones) and also because decorating the city's foundations with Saphires (lapis lazuli)²³ seems more feasible than using Saphires as the foundations of the city. Having said it all, the Neo-Babylonian kings such as Nebuchadnezzar are often said to have boasted how they built various buildings with lapis lazuli (whether they really did or not is beside the point) according to F. Stummer.²⁴ Further, in the following verse, various building parts are made with, and not just adorned with, different precious stones.²⁵ Therefore, it is not entirely impossible that the MT in 54:11b represents the correct reading. If this were so, 54:11b would be another example where YHWH founds Zion itself. Returning to 28:16, what YHWH founds in this verse is only one specific stone (whatever the stone may be) in Zion and not Zion itself or even the temple within. Thus if one were to ask whether 14:32b seems closer to the language of chs 40-55 or that of 28:16 with regard to its use of the verb יסד, the answer would be chs 40-55.

²³ For seeing less precious lapis lazuli meant by ספירים, see K. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 452.

²⁴ F. Stummer, *Keilschriftliche Parallelen*, 188.

²⁵ the verb שִׁוּם is here followed by an accusative with the sense 'to make' as well as by ל with the meaning 'make sth into x.'

The strongest clue lies with the way the term עניים (the poor) is used in v 32b.

What is clear is that עניים cannot refer to a socio-economic class here. The genitive of עני should be read appositionally i.e. his people who are 'poor.' Otherwise it would be very strange to have only the poor among YHWH's people taking refuge in Zion. The whole of the people of YHWH are called עניים. It is worth noting that when the term עניים appears in places where the words seem to go back to Isaiah ben Amoz (3:14-15; 10:2) it refers to those who are actually poor within the Israelite society. The sense in which עניים is used here seems closer to that found in Zeph 3:12 as Berges helpfully compares.²⁶ There, the word עני is used in an unmistakably ethical sense (i.e. lowly and obedient before God) in contrast to the ones who are lofty (גבה) and rebel against God. One witnesses a similar kind of use in Isa 40-55 (41:17; 49:13, 51:21; 54:11). In all four occurrences in chs 40-55, the term denotes troubled Israel in exile and 49:13 is particularly similar to what we find in 14:32b.

Isaiah 49:13

רְנוּ שָׁמַיִם וְגִילִי אֶרֶץ יִפְצְחוּ הָרִים רְנָה כִּי־נָחַם יְהוָה עַמּוֹ וַעֲנִיּוֹ יִרְחָם

(Shout with joy, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth, breakforth²⁷ with singing, O mountains, because YHWH has comforted his people and he will have compassion on his afflicted.)

In this verse, just as in 14:32b, עני is used synonymously with עמו. The use of the term in chs 56-66 (58:7; 66:2) is yet again slightly different. In 58:7, the term, like in the 8th Century use, denotes specifically the impoverished of the society within the Israelite

²⁶ Berges, *Armen*, 163.

²⁷ 1QIsa^a has יפצחו instead of יפצחו and 1QIsa^a seems preferable.

community. In 66:2b, the term is used to describe those attentive to YHWH's word somewhat like Zeph 3:12.

Zephaniah 3:12

וְאֶל־זֶה אֶבִּיט אֶל־עֲנִי וְנִכְהָרִים וְתָרַד עַל־דְּבָרִי

(... but on this man I will look: on him who is humble and of a smitten spirit and trembling at my word.)

Nonetheless, here in Isa 66:2b, the very fact that the term עֲנִי needed to be further qualified with the phrase, וְנִכְהָרִים וְתָרַד עַל־דְּבָרִי demonstrates that for Trito-Isaiah the term עֲנִי did not immediately connote the YHWH-pious or the beneficiaries of YHWH's salvation.²⁸

Therefore, showing close connections with Isa 40-55, 14:32b appears to be a late-exilic addition to the oracle concerning Philistia. By adding v 32b to the oracle, the theme of YHWH's people taking refuge in Zion is brought into and made the main focus of the whole oracle. The coming threat to Philistia and the mocking of Philistia's premature rejoicing which were once at the centre of the oracle are now moved to the background. Zion being a place of refuge for YHWH's afflicted people in the midst of

²⁸ Therefore, the evidence goes to some extent against those who assume that the 14:32b fits best with the thought-world of Trito-Isaiah. Cf. H. Barth, *Josiazeit*, 14-15; Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 301; Berges, *Armen*, 163. Due to similar assumptions, some reckon that the entire oracle should be dated in the post-exilic period. Duhm, for instance considers 'the rod' to be referring to a Persian ruler and 'the serpent' to Alexander the Great. For Uwe Becker, the imageries in vv 29 & 31 are borrowed from Isa 11:1, 8; 9:2 and therefore these verses are Fortschreibung on the anti-Assyrian texts. Nonetheless, the imageries in vv 29 & 31 do function in an organic way in these verses and in the present case the similarity of language with other earlier writings in the book probably points toward common authorship rather than literary dependence. Cf. Duhm, *Jesaia*, 124; C. Fischer, *Die Fremdvölkerspüche*, 142-149; U. Becker, *Botschaft zum Buch*, 273-274.

the nations' turmoil is the new centre of the message. Moreover, the fact that v 32b is set as a reply to the Philistine messengers, and that the imminent downfall of the Philistines is certain according to vv 29 & 31 (as well as from the exilic community's memory of the recent past), one could argue that the asylum in now divinely established Zion is made open, albeit secondarily, to the Philistines also. They too ought to take refuge in Zion. To repeat the hypothesis of the present study, the theme of the gentile influx in the restoration of Israel and the centrality of Zion in the vision of 14:1-2 is pertinently applied to the oracle concerning Philistia.

If we would briefly return to v 32a, the short question in that line does seem like an odd way to end an oracle now that we have identified v 32b as a later addition. If it really was the original end of the oracle concerning Philistia, it could perhaps have served as a rhetorical question. It seems more likely, though, that a different end followed v 32a.²⁹ Perhaps, the original end of the oracle was lost due to damage to the scroll. The beginning of ch 15 could be a further indication of the scroll having suffered damage at some point. If we consider the heading *משא מואב* (An oracle concerning Moab) as secondary, the oracle concerning Moab begins in 15:1 with causal *כי* and this is rather suspicious. A sentence or a line can begin with causal *כי* both in prose and poetry but a major section never begins with a causal *כי* as far as I am aware. One does find sayings that begin with causal *כי* in prophetic oracles (e.g. Isa 28:15; Hab 2:8) but these

²⁹ Gray similarly supposes that if v 32a is part of the original poem it could be a fragment of a distich. Gray, *Isaiah*, 271.

are never at the beginning of a new major section.³⁰ Therefore, one might postulate that quite early on in the process of transmission a small section in the scroll which contained both the end of the oracle concerning Philistia and the beginning of the oracle concerning Moab was damaged and the words in that section were thus lost. Alternatively, the redactor might simply have deleted what originally followed 14:32a for reasons we cannot now know and replaced it with the present ending.

Having dealt with the rest of the oracle, we can now turn to v 30. We have noted earlier that v 30a seems out of place with its sudden introduction of a new theme and imagery and that it interrupts the flow of the surrounding verses. We have also already identified v 30b as a later comment on v 29 against 'the rod' in an effort to pronounce divine judgement on the enemy, and this might have been motivated by the dissatisfaction caused by hearing about the revival of the said enemy in v 29. In terms of when v 30b might have been added, however, it is difficult to tell as no telling clues are found in the passage. This leaves us with v 30a and we have already noted that its position is obviously suspicious. Because of the oddness of its position many argue that v 30a was misplaced at some point regardless to whether it is secondary to the oracle or not. There are, however, those who understand v 30 to be a later insertion by a single author intended to follow v 29 using the catchword שרש.³¹ There is yet another view that although v 30a is redactional and therefore not homogenous with v 30b, when it was inserted, v 30b was already present and that v 30a was designed to be

³⁰ Perhaps it is because the translators of the LXX also found the beginning of the oracle in Isa 15:1 unusual that the LXX translation does not seem to reflect the first כִּי in Isa 15:1.

³¹ Huber, *Juda und die anderen Völker*, 103; J. Hughes, *Secrets*, 215; Deck, *Die Gerichtsbotschaft Jesajas*, 49.

paralleled by v 30b.³² According to this view, the two halves of v 30 have the following parallels: 1) רעה (to feed) and Hiphil of מות (to kill); 2) בכור (firstborn) and שרש (root); 3) דלים ואביונים (the poor) and שארית (the remnant); 4) רבצ לבטח (to lie down safely) and הרג ברעב (to slay with famine). Nevertheless, these connections appear to be the product of chance and not design and it seems more natural to see the two halves of the verse as unrelated independent additions.

Those who are of the view that v 30a is misplaced usually assume that it originally followed v 32b because of the common use of the terms for 'the poor' in v 30a (דלים ואביונים) and in v 32b (עניים).³³ Although this sounds plausible, one has to provide some kind of an explanation as to how v 30a found its way from the end of v 32 to the present position. One view is that due to the lack of space in the scroll, some of v 32 had to be written in the margin and a subsequent copyist inserted the bit in the margin in the 'wrong' place.³⁴ In this case, it would have been pure chance that only exactly what we have in v 30a ran over into the margin before it was copied into the present position. At this point, one first needs to ask if v 32b and v 30a would have come from the same hand. Although both v 32b and v 30a contain words meaning 'the poor,' v 30a, unlike v 32b, employs a livestock metaphor and it does so in a quite unique way too. Likening God's people to domestic animals grazing and lying down peacefully is not difficult to find elsewhere in the Prophetic books of the HB. Already in Isa 40:11 and 49:9 YHWH's people are seen as being fed by YHWH their shepherd.

³² Beuken, *Must Philistia*, 54.

³³ Donner, *Völkern*, 110; Clements, *Isaiah*, 148.

³⁴ J. Begrich, '14:28-32' in his *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (1964), 124-126, as quoted in Huber, *Juda und die anderen Völker*, 102.

Much similar language is also found in Jer 23:4; Ezek 34:13-15; Zeph 3:13. What seems to be found quite nowhere else in the HB is the merging of the livestock metaphor with the religious use of the terms for 'the poor' which we discussed earlier. Unfortunately, this distinctive feature of v 30a alone does not tell us much about v 30a other than its quirk. However, when considered with its misplacement, its unique use of the livestock metaphor could suggest that v 30a might have been a later marginal embellishment on v 32b.³⁵ Thus this single hypothesis could explain the slight change of mood from v 32b to v 30a as well as the misplacement of v 30a. The words of v 30a (and those only) were first written in the margin and they were later copied into the current place which was near the wrong end of the marginal note.

3-3: Summary and conclusion

To sum up, we have postulated, firstly, that the incomplete original poem included vv 29, 31-32a plus an ending that is now lost to us. Philistia's enemy power alluded to in this poem is Assyria. Regardless of whether the superscript in v 28 was written together with the original poem, v 28 seems to provide the temporal setting of the oracle only (especially since the superscript originally served as an introduction for several oracles and not just the one about Philistia). Sometime later, perhaps in the exilic period, v 30b, which is a word of divine judgement against 'the rod' (and not

³⁵ So too supposes Wildberger. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 579.

Philistia!), was added.³⁶ During the late-exilic period, then, v 32b was written at the end of the oracle either replacing the original ending or filling in an ending which, before the addition of v 32b, seemed somewhat abrupt. Finally, sometime later, v 30a was added as an extension of v 32b in the margin but was erroneously copied into the present place. These processes might be shown as below:³⁷

בשנת מות המלך אחז היה המשא הזה

אל תשמחי פלשת כלך כי נשבר שבט מכך כי משרש נחש יצא צפע ופריו שרף מעופף

והמתי ברעב שרשך ושאריתך [א]הרג

הילילי שער זעקי עיר נמוג פלשת כלך כי מצפון עשן בא ואין בודד במועדיו

ומה יענה מלאכי גוי

כי יהוה יסד ציון ובה יחסו עניי עמו

ורעו בכורי דלים ואביונים לבטח ירבצו

To conclude, Isa 14:32b is a late-exilic addition to an existing oracle concerning Philistia and it has brought to the oracle as its new central message the theme of troubled Israel in exile taking refuge in Zion founded by YHWH. The Philistines are included in the vision of 14:1-2 which continues in 14:32b. What relevance does an old oracle about the imminent fall of the Philistines have for the current late-exilic Israelites when the Philistine cities have long been left in ruin and when the Philistine people barely exist as a distinct ethnic group? 14:32b provides the answer. In view of Israel's

³⁶ Although the sentiment expressed in v 30b suits a wide range of periods in Israel's history, the fact that the gloss is particularly against the idea of the revival of an oppressive power may suggest that the present oppressive power is somehow viewed as the revival of another older power. Perhaps one could imagine some in Israel describing Babylon as the repeat of Assyria. In view of this, sometime during the exilic period might be supposed but it is all too uncertain.

³⁷ Later additions are underlined and the emended consonantal change is a square bracket.

impending return from the exile and the restoration of Zion, if there is any hope left for the Philistines it is to be found in Zion's future. Because 14:32b is an answer given to the Philistine envoys, it at the very least opens up the possibility of the Philistines finding shelter in Zion together with YHWH's people. The Philistines who were once some of the most notorious enemies of YHWH's people in Israel's history are now invited to hide in Zion having been smitten and laid waste by many nations. They too may take refuge in Zion because YHWH has now established the city for his people and for all those who would join and 'attach themselves to the house of Jacob.'

Chapter 4: Cush will come to Zion with a tribute (Isaiah 18:7)

By way of introduction, the general consensus is that 18:7 is a later addition to an earlier oracle found within 18:1-6 which appears to concern the nation Cush. Whereas the original oracle appears to end with a message of doom for Cush, v 7 looks forward to a time when Cush would bring a tribute to mount Zion, 'the place of the name of YHWH of Hosts (מקום שם יהוה צבאות)'. It is in this verse that one finds the kind of redactional tendencies such as providing an earlier existing oracle with a new Zion focus or expressing the idea of nations being subordinate to the people of YHWH that one also finds in 14:1-2, 14:32b and 16:1-4a. It will be argued here in this chapter that 18:7, along with 14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a, belongs to the supposed late-exilic redactional layer as hypothesized by the present study and that the verse was written to apply the vision of 14:1-2 to the oracle concerning Cush. To this end, one would need to know what form ch 18 might have been in before v 7 was added. There are disputes concerning the date and unity of vv 1-6 (as well as textual and translational issues) which need to be dealt with in order to discern the meaning of the original oracle which might be less than self-evident at first glance. Once the original oracle (and its meaning) as the writer of v 7 would have inherited it is traced, one could seek to understand precisely in what ways v 7 modified or commented on the earlier version of the oracle.

4-1: Textual and translational issues

The present oracle contains a number of words or phrases that are difficult to make sense of either because of textual corruption or due to the use of rare words where the meanings are unclear. Dealing first with these would make it somewhat easier for us to tackle the question of the unity and the date of the oracle later.

Isaiah 18:1

הוֹי אֶרֶץ צִלְצֹל כְּנָפַיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַבְרָ לְנַהַר־יַכּוֹשׁ

(Woe to the land of winged beetle, which is beyond the rivers of Cush,)

הוֹי can be translated as ‘woe (to)’ or as a more neutral interjection, ‘ah.’ The decision is usually made therefore based on the nature of the content that follows. In the case of our present verse, since there is a dispute over whether the oracle in ch 18 in its earliest form was an oracle of doom against Cush or not, the conclusion on the said dispute would need to precede the one on the translation of הוֹי.¹ Csaba Balogh, however, argues that the הוֹי usages can be divided into four syntactic categories.² Of these, the present use belongs to a group where ‘הוֹי is directly related to a following noun or participle, which functions as the subject, addressed in the 3rd person, as can be inferred from the use of the suffixes or verbal forms.’³ The context tells one that it is appropriate to translate הוֹי in this group as ‘woe to.’ According to Balogh, the

¹ Sweeney, for instance, does not see any words of threat spoken against Cush in the oracle and thus sees הוֹי as ‘nothing more than an opening interjection of recognition.’ Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 257.

² C. Balogh, *Stele*, 141-142.

³ C. Balogh lists the following passages that belong to this group. 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; 45:9, 10; Jer 22:13; 23:1; Ezek 34:2; Amos 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. C. Balogh, *Stele*, 141-142.

passages that are often referred to when a more neutral translation 'ah' is proposed belong to a different group where הוי is an independent particle, often followed immediately by a direct command or an exclamation.⁴ Balogh's distinction based on syntactic features seems sound and therefore translating הוי as 'woe to' seems preferable. This decision would of course have an implication for one's understanding of the nature of the oracle which will be discussed later.

The word צלצל (as vocalised) is a hapax in the HB but the consonantal צלצל appears a number of times in the HB with a wide range of meanings. In Deut 28:42, the word seems to refer to some kind of an insect. In 2 Sam 6:5 and Ps 150:5, certain musical instruments are meant by the word. In Job 40:31, the word probably means some sort of a fishing tool. With these seemingly unrelated meanings, the best attempt at finding coherence among these different meanings is through the root צלל (to tingle). When duplicated as צלצל, the meaning of 'intense vibration' such as 'to buzz' could conceivably be expressed. This way, the insect in Deut 28:42 could be called thus because of the buzzing of its wings, the fishing tool in Job 40:31 because of the whizzing sound it might make when thrown (in the case of a harpoon), and the musical instruments in 2 Sam 6:5 and Ps 150:5 could be buzzing cymbals of some sort.⁵ Even if this were so, what would ארץ צלצל כנפים (the land of buzzing wings) actually mean? It is hard to tell. At least, this meaning of צלצל works well with כנפים. A different

⁴ The examples Balogh gives are: Isa 1:24; 55:1; Jer 30:7; 47:6; Zech 2:10, 11. C. Balogh, *Stele*, 142.

⁵ Gray, *Isaiah*, 316; J. Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk*, 132; Marta Høyland Lavik, *Tall and Smooth-Skinned*, 51-52.

route is to follow the LXX and the Targum which seem to relate צלצל to a ship.⁶ In favour of this meaning, G. R. Driver points to the Aramaic צלצל (boat).⁷ In this case, כנפים may be understood metaphorically to mean 'sails.' The fact that we have boats of papyrus in the following verse could be in support of this interpretation as some believe it to be.⁸ Conversely, one cannot rule out the possibility that the ancient translators who did not understand the word assumed that it meant 'a boat' under the influence of the boats in v 2. The most satisfying solution so far is offered by Meir Lubetski.⁹ Lubetski argues that צלצל refers to 'the beetle' both in Isa 18:1 and Deut 28:42. He arrives at this in two ways. First, the Targum Onkelos to Deuteronomy translates הצלצל in 28:42 into Aramaic סקה/סקאה meaning 'the sack carrier.' This is significant for Lubetski because by 'the sack carrier' the dung beetle could be meant. Targum Onkelos to Deut 28:38-42 'renders the three pernicious insect genera as the locust, the worm, and the sack carrier (beetle).' Incidentally, even in reality, locusts destroy crops, worms, vineyards, and beetles, trees and fruits.¹⁰ Second, in ספר רפואות (the Book of Medicines) by Asaf Harofeh the physician, צלצל is explained with the Syriac חבשושתא and the Arabic כונפוסא, both meaning 'beetle.'¹¹ Lubetski, therefore, concludes that צלצל was understood as the beetle during the 1st Millennium CE among the Jewish circles although the use was rare and the meaning of the word was sometimes forgotten. He then asserts that by צלצל כנפים in relation to Cush in Isa 18:1, the 8th Century audience would have readily had in mind the picture of the divine winged beetle which was closely associated with

⁶ Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 678-679.

⁷ G. R. Driver, 'Problems' 45.

⁸ P. Cook, *Sign*, 58.

⁹ Meir Lubetski, 'Insect' 103-112.

¹⁰ Meir Lubetski, 'Insect' 107.

¹¹ Meir Lubetski, 'Insect' 109-110.

Egypt as one of its deities.¹² This seems to be the most attractive option because of its relevance to Cush which is the subject of the oracle.¹³

Isaiah 18:2

הַשִּׁלַח בָּיָם וּבְקִלֵי־גִמָּא עַל־פְּנֵי־מַיִם לָכוּ מִלְאָכִים קָלִים אֶל־גּוֹי מְמַשֵּׁף וּמוֹרָט אֶל־עַם נוֹרָא מִן־הוּא וְהִלָּאָה גּוֹי קוֹרָ
קוֹ וּמִבוֹסָה אֲשֶׁר־בָּנָאוּ נְהָרִים אַרְצוֹ

(Which sends envoys on the sea, and on the vessels of papyrus¹⁴ on the face of the water. Go, you swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth,¹⁵ to a people [widely feared], a nation mighty and down-treading, whose land the rivers divide.)

The phrase *הוא והלאה* as it stands is difficult to make sense of. The main difficulty lies with the hapax *מן הוא*. The most popular view is to understand *הוא והלאה* in the same way as *משם והלאה* (from there and onwards e.g. 1 Sam 10:3) i.e. 'a people feared from there and onwards' but the absence of *שם* and the fact that *מן הוא* is a hapax construction make this view difficult to accept. C. Balogh suggests the meaning, 'to the fearful nation *which is* beyond it' for the phrase *הוא והלאה* as an alternative.¹⁶

¹² Meir Lubetski, 'Insect' 111.

¹³ There is yet another option of understanding *צלצל* in relation to *צל* (shadow). Curiously, 1QIsa^a has *צל* (two words) which could mean 'many shadows.' Alternatively, *צלל* (shadow) could be behind the MT's *צלצל*. Any meaning to do with 'shadow,' nevertheless, simply does not make an intelligible sense when combined with *כנפים* as Gray points out. Gray, *Isaiah*, 316.

¹⁴ According to Yoshiyuki Muchiki, *גמא* is an Egyptian loanword from 'gmy.' Y. Muchiki, *Egyptian Proper Names*, 241. See also Job 9:26 where such boats of reed/Papyrus are depicted as fast boats in view of the previous verse. Eva Strömberg Krantz, *Des Schiffes Weg*, 53-55.

¹⁵ *מוֹרָט* is often explained as Pual participle of *מרט* without the preformative *מ* (GK §53s). Incidentally, 1QIsa^a has a variant reading *וממרט*. Because we have just had *מְמַשֵּׁף* before, one wonders if a *מ* had simply dropped out in the MT. Alternatively, Steven E. Fassberg could be right that *מוֹרָט* is an example of the Qal internal passive which was gradually replaced by the Pual. If this were so, 1QIsa^a here would be reflecting the latter stage of the trend. S. Fassberg, 'QAL Internal Passive' 245. Fortunately, none of this affects the meaning of the word.

¹⁶ C. Balogh, *Stele*, 151.

He notes that the phrase *ממך והלאה* which means, 'beyond you' in 1 Sam 20:22, 37 is the predicate of the subject 'arrow' i.e. the arrow *is* beyond you. The thing that is referred to (i.e. the arrow) is made distinct from the referential point which is the personal pronoun 'you.' In the same way, Balogh suggests seeing a distinction between the thing that is referred to (*עם נורא*) and the referential point *הוא* by assuming an implicit *אשר* between *עם נורא* and *הוא והלאה* i.e. 'the fearful nation *which* is beyond it.' He suggests that *הוא* then must refer to the *גוי ממשך ומורט* in the previous line. He justifies this interpretation by saying that *מן הוא* could be an archaic variant form of *ממנו* preserved only in poetry just like *מְנֶהוּ* in Job 4:12. This suggestion has its merits, but if *עם נורא מן הוא והלאה* was intended to refer to a people different to *גוי ממשך ומורט*, one wonders if the poet would not have made it a little clearer perhaps by adding a *ו* to the second *אל* (i.e. *עם*). Some interpreters wonder if *מן הוא* is the result of corrupt dittograph of *הלאה*.¹⁷ If one supposes that a *ו* was added to *הלאה* because of dittography, the original phrase might have been *עם נורא הלאה* (a people widely feared). The objection raised against this solution is that because *הלאה* means 'yonder' it ought to have a specific referential point (i.e. 'from x').¹⁸ That certainly is the norm. There clearly are, however, exceptions as the phrase in Num 17:2 demonstrates: *וְאֶת־הָאֵשׁ זָרָה* ('... and scatter the fire far and wide because they are holy!') Here, the referential point of *הלאה* appears to have been abbreviated and *הלאה* simply reinforces the sense of the verb *זרה* (to scatter) to mean 'away-ward.' Another example can be found in Gen 19:9: *וַיֹּאמְרוּ גַם־הִלָּא* ('... and/but they said, "Stand back!"') *הלאה* here has the sense of 'away as opposed to near.' In a similar way, *נורא הלאה* could have the

¹⁷ Marti, *Jesaja*, 148; Gray, *Isaiah*, 317.

¹⁸ Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 680.

general sense of being 'feared around.' This way, not only is the problematic hapax removed, the line length coheres with the surrounding lines also.¹⁹ Therefore, an emendation from *אל עם נורא הלאה* to *אל עם נורא מן הוא והלאה* seems attractive.

Of course, much of v 2 reappears in v 7 and *אל עם נורא מן הוא והלאה* is found in v 7 also. Verse 7 appears to be an expansion on vv 1-6 (except v 3) and it therefore seems to be the case that the writer of v 7 borrowed words from v 2. Although this will be argued later in this chapter when different compositional layers are identified, the issue which needs to be addressed at present is what to make of the difficult phrase *אל עם נורא* in v 7. It cannot be that the same complex scribal error occurred both in v 2 and in v 7. This means that if the supposed scribal error in v 2 is correct, it must have taken place before v 7 was written. It also implies that the writer of v 7 understood the phrase to mean something and that one therefore must not emend the aforementioned phrase in v 7. In terms of precisely what the writer of v 7 might have understood the phrase to mean is difficult to tell. If, however, the phrase was understood in the way that it is interpreted by the majority of the modern exegetes – i.e. 'a people feared from there and onwards' – then fortunately its overall meaning is hardly different to that of the reconstructed original reading.

Isaiah 18:4

כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁקָטָה וְאֲבִישָׁה בְּמִכּוֹנֵי כְּחָם צָח עַל־אֲזָרוֹר כְּעָב טַל בְּחָם קָצִיר

¹⁹ Marti, *Jesaja*, 148.

(For thus YHWH said to me, 'I will be quiet and look in my abode like the heat of Zach
[on the Nile], like the cloud of dew [on the day] of harvest.')

כַּחַם צַח is usually understood in one of three ways all depending on how the word צַח is understood. Some relate the word with צַחַח (to be dazzling/ to glow), and understand כַּחַם צַח to mean 'like glowing heat.' Others reckon the word comes from צַחַח (to be dry/ thirsty) and render כַּחַם צַח as 'scorching heat.' The third understanding depends on an ostrakon which seems to indicate that צַח is an ancient Hebrew name for a particular month.²⁰ Admittedly, there is a degree of circular reasoning behind which month of the year the word might refer to. Often, it is believed to be one of the summer months because of the word's association with צַחַח (i.e. clear weather) and the mention of קָצִיר (harvest) in the parallel line. Therefore, whether or not צַח is the name of one of the summer months near the harvest, the overall sense of כַּחַם צַח could well be some sort of strong summer heat.

The reading of the MT אור עלי is a little puzzling. Balogh argues that perhaps אור could have the sense of 'morning light' even on its own given the word's frequent association with בֹּקֶר (morning).²¹ He thus translates the line as, 'like scorching heat on daybreak.' Although this interpretation of the line matches the following line well in the sense that both lines speak of the early hours of the morning, the main difficulty lies with the unsuitability of חֶם (heat) with the early morning hours. There have also

²⁰ J. Gibson, *Inscriptions*, 50-51. Some of those who adopt this understanding of צַח: Shemaryahu Talmon, 'Agricultural Metaphora' 272-274; F. Huber, *Völker*, 131; H. Hoffmann, *Intention*, 67; G. Eidevall, *Propaganda*, 79. Some, nevertheless, find the reading of צַח on the ostrakon highly uncertain. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 680; Balogh, *Stele*, 156.

²¹ C. Balogh, *Stele*, 156-157.

been efforts to understand this expression based on the view that אור means either the sun or the sunshine (the word means the sun at least once in the HB – Job 31:26). עלי אור would then mean ‘upon the sun’ or perhaps ‘because of the sun.’ As for the former, Duhm translates the line as, ‘wie strahlende Glut über dem Sonnenlicht.’²² According to this reading, the line is all about the radiance of the sun. When coupled with the following line about the cloud of dew, the two lines paint peaceful and undisturbed morning scenery. As for the latter meaning of ‘because of the sunshine’ suggested by John Day who translates the line as, ‘like glowing heat on account of the sunshine,’ the focus is more on the heat of the sun.²³ This rendering has a somewhat closer relationship with the following line: it is the hot harvest season and the heat of the summer creates the cloud of dew. There is, however, a possible reading that makes an excellent sense with a very slight alteration to the text. The Syriac Peshitta seems to have construed עלי אור as על יאור.²⁴ As well as the obvious attractiveness of the mention of the Nile in the context of an oracle concerning Cush, the Nile would have a particular relevance both to the cloud of dew and to the theme of harvest in the following line. The harvest would naturally have taken place by the riverside in Egypt. Around the harvest season, one would feel the summer heat during the day and the sight of a thick fog over the river early in the morning would be commonplace. The two lines, therefore, seem to mention the two things that are closely related to the harvest season in the first half of each line – i.e. the summer heat and the river mist – and the setting of the scene in the second half – i.e. the river Nile and [the day] of

²² Duhm, *Jesaja*, 138.

²³ J. Day, ‘על אורית’ 266.

²⁴ Kiraz; Bali; Greenberg; Walter, *Peshitta*, 87. This reading is favoured by Eberhard Baumann and Lubetski & Gottlieb but it is rather surprising to see how few are in support of this view. E. Baumann, ‘Zwei Einzelbemerkungen’ 266-267; Lubetski & Gottlieb, ‘Isaiah 18’ 377-378.

harvest. Moreover, it is worth noting that already in v 2, the first line mentions the Nile where it reads, השלח בים צירים (which sends envoys on the sea). ים in the present context would denote the Nile and it is not surprising that an oracle concerning Cush has repeated references to the Nile. Incidentally, it is worth noting that there is על יאור in 19:7 which seems redundant within the verse. 19:7 itself will be analysed in detail when ch 19 is discussed later in this study but it is possible to postulate that a marginal note which was meant to correct עלי אור in 18:4 was mistakenly copied next to a similar looking phrase (על פי יאור) in 19:7 which may have been in the adjacent column.²⁵

בהם קציר (in the heat of harvest) in itself does not have a problem. If it is the correct reading, קציר would need to mean the time of harvest rather than harvest itself. The only thing is that we had כהם צה in the previous line and it seems a little odd that we have the word הם twice in such close proximity for no immediately apparent reason. It is rather intriguing then to find that the Peshitta (again!) seems to construe בהם קציר as ביום קציר.²⁶ One can see that ביום and בהם can seem almost identical and perhaps a scribe misread the former as the latter under the influence of כהם צה in the previous line. Therefore, it seems preferable to read ביום קציר instead of בהם קציר.

Isaiah 18:7

²⁵ Cf. Leslie C. Allen, 'Cuckoos' 143-150; 'More Cuckoos' 69-73.

²⁶ Kiraz; Bali; Greenberg; Walter, *Peshitta*, 87. In support of this view: E. Baumann, 'Zwei Einzelbemerkungen' 267-268; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 678-679; H. Donner, *Geschichte*, 355; Lubetski & Gottlieb, 'Isaiah 18' 378; de Jong, *Isaiah Among the ANE Prophets*, 148.

בַּעַת הַהִיא יִבְלִי־שִׁי לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַם מְמֹשֶׁךְ וּמוֹרֵט וּמַעַם נוֹרָא מִן־הוּא וְהִלָּאָה גּוֹי קוֹרֵקוּ וּמִבּוֹסָה אֲשֶׁר בָּזְאוּ נְהָרִים
אֶרְצוֹ אֶל־מְקוֹם שֵׁם־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַר־צִיּוֹן

(In that time, a tribute will be brought to YHWH [from] a people tall and smooth, from a people feared from there and onwards,²⁷ a nation mighty and down-treading, whose land the rivers divide, to the place of the name of YHWH of Hosts, the mount Zion.)

The first עַם according to the MT is appositional to שִׁי (a tribute). This means עַם מְמֹשֶׁךְ וּמוֹרֵט (a people tall and smooth) are themselves the tribute being brought by the second (and different) עַם. This is hardly likely and it seems almost certain that a מ was accidentally omitted by a scribe. 1QIsa^a supports this conclusion as it has מַעַם instead of עַם.

To repeat the four suggested emendations for convenience, first, the fifth line of v 2 עַם נוֹרָא מִן הוּא וְהִלָּאָה is to be changed to עַם נוֹרָא הִלָּאָה, second, the third line of v 4 כַּחַם צֶחַ is to be changed to כַּחַם צֶחַ עַל יְאוֹר, third, the last line of v 4 כַּעַב טַל בַּחַם קִצִּיר is to be changed to כַּעַב טַל בְּיוֹם קִצִּיר, and finally, עַם in v 7 is to be changed to מַעַם.

4-2: Identifying different compositional layers

Although the question of original unity of 18:1-7 is in important ways related to the date of the oracle/parts of the oracle, the two questions will be kept relatively

²⁷ See the discussion on v 2 above.

separate for practical reasons. To begin with, there is an almost unanimous agreement that v 7 is a later addition to the preceding verses. Discerning the secondary nature of v 7 is not hard. One does not need to go into the sudden change of subject from the harsh images of devastation in vv 5-6 to the scene of tributary procession to mount Zion in v 7. The clear enough indications are as follows. First, the opening words *בעת ההיא* (in that time) which look forward to an indefinite time in the future in a similar way to the more common expression *ביום ההוא* (in that day). Second, the lengthy and industrious imitation of v 2 is unlikely to be the product of the original composition of the poem.²⁸ Finally, despite the reuse of words from v 2, v 7 as a whole – especially its opening words (*בעת ההיא יובל שי ליהודה צבאות*) where there is no parallelism – is prose and not poetry like the rest of the oracle.

There are nevertheless those who suppose that v 7 is an integral part of the original poem.²⁹ Of these, the most noteworthy argument comes from Sweeney whose view is that the whole of ch 17-18 (and not just parts of ch 17) is centred on the impending fall of the Syro-Ephraimite coalition against Assyria in the 8th Century.³⁰ Whereas ch 17 mainly deals with the fall of Damascus, ch 18 is concerned with the imminent destruction of the Northern Kingdom (vv 5-6). The messenger sending scene found in v 2 refers to the king Hoshea of Northern Israel's embassy to the king So of

²⁸ For what it is worth, Beuken also points out the unusual repetition of *יהודה צבאות* in the same verse which is uncharacteristic of the passages that could go back to the 8th Century prophet. Beuken, *Jesaja*, 150.

²⁹ König, *Jesaja*, 200; Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 260-261; Rodney S. Sadler Jr., *Cushite*, 50-51. R. Sadler Jr. considers v 7 to be part of the original poem and not a later addition because the verse's eschatological nuance is also found in v 3, the authenticity of which he does not doubt. Verse 3, nonetheless, is a much doubted verse and this will be discussed below.

³⁰ Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 260-261.

Egypt for military support shortly before Hoshea's revolt against Assyria in 724 which eventually ends with the ruin of the Northern Kingdom. All this, according to Sweeney, reflects the words of the prophet Isaiah directed towards the Judean monarch in Jerusalem within the cultic setting of Zion, the divinely protected city, to discourage Judah from forming a military alliance with Cush. Now, the vision of the Cushites bringing tribute to the temple in Jerusalem in v 7 should therefore be seen alongside 17:12-14. When the nations witness the divine protection of Zion and the destruction not only of its enemies but also of those who rely on other worldly powers, distant nations such as Cush will recognise that YHWH alone is to be trusted and therefore honour his name.³¹ Even if one were to accept Sweeney's general outlook of chs 17-18, it is not so clear why the future vision of the Cushites bringing a tribute to Zion would discourage Judah from forging an alliance with Cush. There seems to be no self-evident reason to think that 18:7 (together with 17:12-14) can only reflect the pre-exilic cultic Zion tradition. To the contrary, the editorial marks left on 18:7, which we have identified earlier, suggest that v 7 is a vision added to an earlier oracle at a different time period as most see it.

Now that we have identified v 7 as a later addition, do vv 1-6 constitute one unified oracle? V 3 is frequently understood to be yet another secondary part of the oracle.³²

³¹ We will engage with Sweeney's historical reconstruction of ch 18 along with that of others later.

³² Marti, *Jesaja*, 148-149; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 681; Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 319; Clements, *Isaiah*, 165; Simon J. de Vries, *Old Revelation*, 68; S. Deck, *Gerichtsbotschaft*, 16; O. Keel, *Geschichte Jerusalems*, 439; P. Cook, *Sign*, 50-51, 70-78.

כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל וְשֹׁכְנֵי אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן־נֹס תִּרְאוּ וְכִתְּלֶנָּה שׁוֹפָר תִּשְׁמָעוּ

(All you inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on earth, when a signal is raised on the mountains, look, and when the trumpet is blown, hear!)

The reasons repeatedly put forward to argue for the secondary nature of v 3 are, first, the occurrence of the word תֵּבֶל (world) which appears in passages that are commonly understood to be secondary, and second, that the verse brings into play the inhabitants of the whole world in the middle of an oracle concerning Cush.³³ The integrity of v 3 is, however, defended by some against such suspicion and the main line of their argument is that it is not surprising that an oracle which concerns such a distant country as Cush (and possibly Assyria for some) should have a universal dimension to it.³⁴ What might be decisive in determining the integrity of v 3 is the way in which the verse alludes to a number of other passages in the book. First, the image of a signal being raised (נִשָּׂא נֹס) for the nations is found in four other places in the book (5:26; 11:12; 13:2; 49:22), and in every one of those four places, both the purpose of the raised signal and the context of many nations for which the signal is raised are spelt out in a clear way. In 18:3, however, it is not explicated why a signal is raised for the nations. This is because the image in 18:3 depends on and alludes to some of the other passages in the book that contain the same image, and the context surrounding the image is thus

³³ P. Cook lists the passages where תֵּבֶל appears in Isaiah. 13:11; 14:17, 21; 24:4; 26:9, 18; 27:6; 34:1; 66:19. P. Cook, *Sign*, 50-51. Of course, the underlying assumption here is that the oracle to which v 3 is added is part of the earliest form of the book of Isaiah.

³⁴ For H. Donner, a clash between Assyria and Egypt concerned the whole world. H. Donner, *Unter den Völkern*, 124-125; de Jong, *Isaiah among the ANE Prophets*, 149; C. Balogh, *Stele*, 171, 179. For Høgenhaven, the messengers in v 2 are to pass the message in vv 4-6 to the whole world. J. Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk*, 132; John B. Geyer, *Mythology*, 106. H. Barth understands v 3 as reflecting YHWH's heavenly court. H. Barth, *Josiazeit*, 12-14.

carried over together with the image itself from these passages. Second, the image of a trumpet being blown (תקע שופר) toward the nations is found elsewhere in the book in 27:13, and there the purpose of the trumpet sound is more obviously described than it is in 18:3.³⁵ The elliptic use of the image in 18:3, again, suggests that it is the writer of 18:3 who borrowed and combined different images from other passages in the book. Finally, the pairing of seeing and hearing which started from 6:9-10 and was subsequently developed and reused throughout the book, is used in conjunction with the motifs of the raised signal and blown trumpet toward the nations only here in 18:3 within the whole book. Therefore, the writer of v 3 seems to have borrowed various images and motifs from different parts of the book (some of which are fairly late in the development of the book) and have joined them together and the verse thus appears to be secondary to the original poem.

Having established the secondary nature of v 3, one still struggles somewhat to see the relevance of v 3 to its immediate literary context. Although it is often commented that v 3 adds a universal dimension to the oracle by including the whole world as briefly mentioned above, what is seldom discussed (if at all) is the function of the raised signal and the trumpet sound that the world is called to see and hear in the verse's literary context. Are the raised signal and the trumpet sound related to the messengers in v 2? Do they have a bearing on the speech of YHWH in v 4? If v 3 was added to the oracle that once consisted of vv 1-2, 4-6, it ought to do something to the oracle, be it commenting on any part of it or modifying the general message of it. As

³⁵ Therefore it is hard to understand why P. Cook would regard Isa 27:13 later than 18:3. P. Cook, *Sign*, 73.

the text stands, it is not easy to see precisely what the writer of v 3 sought to achieve.³⁶

At this point, one might begin to entertain the possibility of v 3 having been misplaced.

It seems all too convenient then that we should have in 17:12-14 a text about many nations (עמים רבים).

Isaiah 17:12-14

הוֹי הַמּוֹן עַמִּים רַבִּים כְּהִמּוֹת יָמִים יְהִיּוֹן וְשִׁאוֹן לְאֻמִּים כְּשִׁאוֹן מַיִם כְּבִירִים יִשְׁאוֹן לְאֻמִּים כְּשִׁאוֹן מַיִם רַבִּים יִשְׁאוֹן וְגִעַר
בוֹ וְנָס מִמֶּרְחֶק וְרָדַף כְּמַיִן הַיָּם לְפָנֵי־רוּחַ וּכְגִלְגָּל לְפָנֵי סוּפָה לַעֲת עָרַב וְהָיָה בְּטָרֶם בֶּקָר אֵינָנו זֶה חֶלֶק שׁוֹסֵינוּ
וְגוֹרֵל לְבִזְיוֹנוֹ

(Woe to the uproar of many nations, like the roar of the seas they roar, and the tumult

of [mighty]³⁷ nations, like the tumult of waters they make tumultuous noise!

[Dittograph omitted]³⁸ But he shall rebuke him, and he shall flee far away, and he shall

be chased away like the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a whirl of

dust before the storm. At evening time, behold, terror! Before the morning, it/he is no

more! This is the portion of those who spoil us, and the lot of those who plunder us.)

Could it be that v 3 was originally a *Fortschreibung* which was meant to follow at the end of 17:14 written in the margin only to be misplaced into the present position by a later copyist? Perhaps 18:3 was added to 17:12-14 primarily under the influence of the passages such as 5:30 where we have 'the roaring of the sea (נהמת ים)' which follows and

³⁶ Gray calls v 3 an eschatological supplement that shows no regard for vv 1-2. Gray, *Isaiah*, 313. For Wildberger, also, v 4 does not follow v 3 very well. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 681.

³⁷ כבירים (mighty) ought to be transposed to after לאמים (peoples) to restore the parallel structure with the first half of the verse.

³⁸ לאמים כשאון מים כבירים is either dittograph or a preserved variant reading of לאמים כשאון מים רבים ישאון at the end of v 12.

is associated with 5:26 where we also have a signal for the nations far away, and even more importantly 13:2 where a signal is raised on a hill to summon an army of nations whose noise is described two verses later using the words קול המון and קול שאון in parallel. Seeing how in other parts of the book the motif of the gathering of the nations by raising a signal is combined with the depiction of foreign armies using the cultic language of the roaring sea, the writer of 18:3 could have wanted to supply the latter in 17:12-14 with the former.

In terms of the overall message of 18:3, the call to see and hear may give us the clue. Throughout the book, the coupling of seeing and hearing is often used in association with obedience to YHWH. Thus one could at the very least guess that, in 18:3, the nations are told to be obedient to YHWH in respect to the message of 17:12-14. They are called to learn from the words of 17:12-14 which speaks of the eventual failure of all those who try to attack 'us.' What might yet remain unclear is the significance of the time when the inhabitants of the world should learn this lesson. The answer could perhaps be found by observing the development of the use of the image of a raised signal within the book of Isaiah. It is used in 5:26 in the context of YHWH's gathering an army to punish his own people. A positive turn in the use of the image is observed in 11:12, however, where a signal is raised to the nations now as a rallying point to which the exiled people of YHWH are gathered. In 13:2, a different kind of positive turn in the use of the image is seen. There, the armies of many nations are gathered by YHWH not to punish his own people but the enemies of his people. The nations that are rallied to YHWH's raised signal are now instrumental in bringing deliverance to

YHWH's people. More significant is 11:10 in the same trajectory where 'the root of Jesse' is a raised signal to which the nations will gather to enquire of (אָל + דָּרשׁ see Job 5:8).³⁹ Passages such as 2:3 may come to one's mind at this point. Within the said trajectory, the raised signal (and the trumpet sound) in 18:3 can be understood as a call for the inhabitants of the world to learn from the lesson of 17:12-14.⁴⁰

As for when 18:3 might have been written in relation to 18:7, two points may be considered. First, the verse appears to allude to passages like 13:2 and 11:10 as noted above which are at the earliest from the exilic period (much more likely to be later). Second, the verse has combined the image of a raised signal and that of a blown trumpet. The latter (תִּקַּע + שׁוּפָר) is found in 27:13 which seems to be an added conclusion to ch 24-27 which is considered to be one of the latest parts of the book. P. Cook believes 27:13 with its great trumpet call was added to 27:12 to form an inclusio with the raised signal in 13:2 marking the beginning and the end of ch 13-27 under the influence of 18:3 where the two images appear together thereby suggesting that 18:3 is earlier than 27:13.⁴¹ Nevertheless, it is far from certain whether this is the case or if it is 18:3 that combined the two separate images together. The pair – the signal and the trumpet – appears in Jer 51:27 also within an anti-Babylonian context much similar to 13:2-5 which complicates the matter further because the pairing of the signal and the trumpet could have happened first in Jer 51:27 under the influence of Jer 4:5-6. In any case, because Isa 18:3 is where the most amount of borrowing takes place, it seems

³⁹ Likening a person to a signal (נֹסֵף) could well have been taken from 30:17.

⁴⁰ The development of the imageries of raised signal as well as the trumpet sound is discussed with a slightly different conclusion to ours in P. Cook, *Sign*, 71-74.

⁴¹ P. Cook, *Sign*, 73.

natural to assume that 18:3 is later than all the passages listed above. If our analysis of 18:3 is correct, therefore, it is likely that when v 7 was added to vv 1-2, 4-6, v 3 was not part of the original oracle concerning Cush. This is supported by v 7's treatment of the earlier poem – in that only one particular people which v 2 refers to rather than all the inhabitants of the world will bring a tribute to Zion. This last point will be treated further when v 7 is analysed.

As for the remaining verses (1-2, 4-6), it is generally believed that they form one unified oracle and that the oracle has an 8th Century date, though there are differences of opinion concerning the exact date and circumstances in which the oracle would have been written. The unity of this supposed original poem has been questioned, however, albeit by a minority of exegetes. The plausibility of these views will need to be weighed before we move on because one's decision on these matters has an important bearing on one's attempt at postulating the goal the writer of v 7 might have wished to achieve through adding the verse.

First, Uwe Becker regards the whole of vv 3-6 (let alone v 7) as a later addition. He does not give much of a reason for this so it is hard to evaluate his claim. However, not even vv 1-2 are of an original unity for him either. Only vv 1-2a (עַל פְּנֵי מַיִם up until) is the original woe oracle against Cush. Verse 2b (לְכֹן onwards) is a later addition intended to turn the original words of woe against Cush into a criticism against

Judah's coalition with Cush.⁴² For Becker, the added v 2b is a sarcastic remark directed toward the Judeans i.e. 'Go to this people for help. It will be of no use to you.' This interpretation seems to have arisen from the understanding that v 2b is addressed to a group of messengers other than the Cushite envoys. This interpretation is based on the argument that *לכו* would not normally carry the sense 'Return!' like *שוב* and if the messengers are told to go rather than return to the Cushites, it is possible that the Judean (and not the Cushite) envoys are being addressed in v 2b. This point will be dealt with shortly when we get to discuss the general meaning of the supposed original oracle. Regardless of whether v 2b is addressed to the messengers of Cush or Judah, the main difficulty with Becker's view would be assigning the whole of vv 3-6, including vv 4-6, as a later addition without a clear reason other than that these verses bring in the idea of 'Völkersturm.'

For a less extreme view, Marti proposes that the original oracle concerning Cush from the prophet Isaiah consisted only of vv 1-2, 4. As for vv 5-6, though also from the prophet, they were originally the last part of the original oracle concerning Syria and Ephraim in 17:1-11 and followed at the end of it. Later, these verses, however, were moved to the present position. Therefore, 18:5-6 originally described the fruitless harvest of Ephraim but it is understood in its new place with the secondary additions of vv 3, 7 as the eschatological removal of Jerusalem's last enemies in YHWH's final

⁴² U. Becker, *Botschaft zum Buch*, 275-277. Somewhat similar is Vermeylen's view that sees vv 5-6 as belonging to the same eschatological redactional layer as v 3. Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 319.

judgement.⁴³ This bold conjecture hangs mainly on the observation that the first person speech of YHWH in v 4 is contrasted with the description of his actions in v 5 in the 3rd person. This can be easily resolved, though, since v 4 could be seen as ‘the speech of YHWH proper’ and vv 5-6 as the explanation of the speech given by the prophetic voice which has been speaking throughout vv 1-2, 4a.⁴⁴ The occurrence of agricultural language in 17:10-11 as well as in 18:5-6 is not significant as the use of the agricultural language in a message of doom is all too common in the HB. After all, as we have discussed in our textual analysis of v 4, familiar harvest-related scenes of the summer season are what we find in v 4. Thus it seems fine to retain the view that vv 1-2, 4-6 belong to the original layer of the oracle concerning Cush.

To sum up, ch 18 seems to contain three compositional layers. First, there was the original oracle concerning Cush in vv 1-2, 4-6. At the end of this oracle, v 7 was later added. Verse 3, which was originally meant to be a comment on 17:12-14, written first in the margin, was introduced into the wrong place by a mistaken scribe and thus interrupted the oracle concerning Cush. Verse 3 appears to be very late in date and v 7 does not reflect v 3 in any way.

It would be worthwhile to try to establish the meaning of the original poem which we have identified as vv 1-2, 4-6 in order to discern what the writer of v 7

⁴³ Marti, *Jesaja*, 147- 152. For a different reason, Sweeney also sees vv 5-6 as describing the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 257.

⁴⁴ Beuken, *Jesaja*, 150.

understood the message of the inherited oracle to be. Even among those who agree on the unity of vv 1-2, 4-6, opinions are divided largely on the following three questions. First, who are being addressed in v 2b? Are they Cushite messengers who are being told to return to their own land?⁴⁵ Or are they the messengers of Judah who are being sent to Cush or some other country?⁴⁶ Second, whose destruction are vv 5-6 referring to? Is it that of Cush?⁴⁷ Or is it that of Assyria?⁴⁸ Or is it that of some other?⁴⁹ Third, mostly depending on one's view on the second question, what precisely is the meaning of the speech of YHWH in v 4?

To answer the first question, because Cush is mentioned by name in v 1, and also because v 2a describes Cush as a country that sends out its envoys on papyrus boats, the swift messengers of v 2b could well be viewed as Cushite envoys who are being sent back. Since it is natural for the Cushite envoys to return to their country of origin, the subsequent descriptions of the people to whom they are being sent may be understood as the people of Cush. Further, it is frequently noted that the description of those who are presumably Cushites in v 2b, in that they are tall and smooth (hairlessness perhaps) as well as mighty and conquering, happen to match Herodotus's description of the Ethiopians in his *Histories* 3:20. They are said to be the tallest and

⁴⁵ Gray, *Isaiah*, 308; Walter Dietrich, *Politik*, 128; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 682, 689; P. Cook, *Sign*, 59.

⁴⁶ Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 92; H. Barth, *Josiazeit*, 13; Clements, *Isaiah*, 164-165; Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 257; U. Becker, *Botschaft zum Buch*, 276; Childs, *Isaiah*, 138; M. Lavik, *Tall and Smooth-Skinned*, 68-70.

⁴⁷ H. Hoffmann, *Intention*, 71; W. Dietrich, *Politik*, 129; F. Huber, *Völker*, 132; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 689-690; Clements, *Isaiah*, 165-166; de Jong, *Isaiah Among ANE Prophets*, 149-150; O. Keel, *Geschichte Jerusalems*, 439; G. Eidevall, *Propaganda*, 82; C. Balogh, *Stele*, 176.

⁴⁸ Duhm, *Jesaja*, 138-139; S. R. Driver, *Isaiah*, 70; Gray, *Isaiah*, 95-96; H. Donner, *Unter den Völkern*, 126; H. Barth, *Josiazeit*, 13; Childs, *Crisis*, 45; D. Janthial, *L'oracle de Nathan*, 168-169.

⁴⁹ The Northern Kingdom: Marti, *Jesaja*, 149-150. Judah: Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 257; Lavik, *Tall and Smooth-Skinned*, 184-185, 208-210. Both Cush and Judah: J. Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk*, 134; P. Cook, *Sign*, 64-65.

best-looking people in the world, and that they have a peculiar way of choosing their king which is that the tallest and the strongest of them is chosen to be their king. Because nothing is said as to why the Cushite envoys are present in Judah prior to a command directed to them in v 2b, the scenario described above is admittedly less than obvious. For this reason, objections to this interpretation have been put forward by many. The first main objection is that לכו would not normatively carry the meaning 'Return!' as briefly mentioned earlier. The second is that if it were the Cushite envoys that are being told to go back to their people in v 2b, the description of the Cushites would be unnecessary i.e. why explain to the Cushites the characteristics of their own people? It has also been suggested that the reason why v 2a uses the word צירים and v 2b מלאכים to describe messengers is to distinguish two different groups of envoys.⁵⁰ For these reasons various alternative interpretations have been proposed and these range from the views that see the command in v 2b being directed toward the Judean envoys who are being sent to Cush or Assyria, to those that see in v 2b heavenly messengers being sent to the whole world. Nevertheless, the objections listed above are far from persuasive. To begin with, some have demonstrated how הלך and שוב can at times be synonymous and are not too infrequently used in parallel.⁵¹ Similarly, ציר and מלאך appear in parallel in Prov 13:17.⁵² As for the unnecessary description of the land from which the Cushite envoys came, many exegetes remind us that the real audience the oracle is aimed at are the Judeans and not the Cushites. Therefore, yes the scenario might not be so immediately clear, but for want of a better interpretation we may

⁵⁰ Lavik, *Tall and Smooth-Skinned*, 70.

⁵¹ C. Balogh lists passages where הלך is used where שוב could easily replace it. Gen 42:19; Num 22:13; 1Sam 8:22. C. Balogh, *Stele*, 167. P. Cook lists passages where the two words are in parallel. Gen 32:1; Exod 4:18-19, 21; Num 24:25; Deut 20:5-8; 1Sam 3:5; 29:7; Isa 37:37; Jer 41:14. P. Cook, *Sign*, 60.

⁵² P. Cook, *Sign*, 59.

conclude that it is the Cushite envoys who are being told to go back to their own people in v 2.

Concerning the second question of whose fall is spoken of in vv 5-6, it seems as though the presence of 17:12-14 which immediately precedes ch 18 is partly the reason why some exegetes understand Assyria to be the recipient of the message of doom in vv 5-6 also. Although the text does not explicitly speak of any one specific event in history and appears to make a general statement about the fate of all the enemies of YHWH's people (at least in its present form), 17:12-14 does make one think of the event described in chs 36-37. Regardless of its function within its present literary context, there is little doubt or disagreement among the scholars that 17:12-14 was at some point redactionally placed in its current position. If it were not for 17:12-14, the poem of our discussion – 18:1-2, 4-6 – neither makes mention of Assyria nor provides even a single suggestive clue that Assyria is in view. Therefore, since Cush is the only nation mentioned by name in the oracle, to assume that the destruction foretold in vv 5-6 was intended to be that of Cush would be the simplest interpretation. The claim that it could be the coalition between Judah and Cush which is to come to disaster makes no practical difference to the view above since the fall of Cush would naturally mean that of the coalition also. Further, it has been pointed out that because the oracle ends with a message of doom for Cush, the description of the Cushites in vv 1-2 as a great people (both aesthetically and militarily) has a rhetorically meaningful place.⁵³ The greater the

⁵³ H. Hoffmann, *Intention*, 71.

elevation, the greater the subsequent fall! For this same reason, the view that the fall of Judah might be the subject of vv 5-6 fails to be persuasive.

Finally, the potentially ambiguous relationship between YHWH's quiet gaze in his abode and the two familiar scenes of the summer harvest season by the Nile in v 4 would benefit from some clarification. Earlier, we have identified vv 5-6 as the prophetic explanation of the speech of YHWH in v 4. What is left unexplained in v 4 is spelt out in vv 5-6. Therefore, whatever we understand the meaning of v 4 to be, it ought to cohere with what follows. It seems as though the point of v 4 is that YHWH may be quiet but not absent in the affairs of Cush. Cush might be unaware of YHWH's involvement in its activities and the destruction he is about to bring on Cush but its fall is imminent regardless. YHWH may be quiet like the summer heat on the Nile and the cloud of dew on the day of harvest. He is, nevertheless, anything but disinterested in Cush and is, rather, watching from his abode closely just as the riverside summer heat by day and the river mist by night are an inseparable part of the harvest scenes. In v 5, we see this theme elaborated and developed further. Like any attentive farmer, YHWH will prune the vine precisely at the right time and the future of Cush is likened to the fate of these cut-off branches.

In terms of the date of the original oracle concerning Cush, the majority of exegetes favour the years leading up to the event of 701 as the likely setting of the oracle. Although a small number of scholars prefer to date the oracle in the period

shortly before 724, there is a general agreement that the earliest form of the oracle does go back to the 8th Century.⁵⁴ Fortunately, we do not here need to decide which of the two 8th Century dates is the more likely setting because our primary aim is to discern the way v 7 treats this earlier oracle, and as far as v 7 is concerned, its focus is on the future and not the past.

Having identified vv 1-2, 4-6 as the original oracle concerning Cush which v 7 would have inherited, and having dealt with its meaning, we may now proceed with our analysis of v 7.

It looks as if v 7 shares at least one aspect of our analysis of the original oracle. The author responsible for v 7 seems to share our understanding of the original poem as being primarily about Cush. This can be known from the way he treats the description of the people in v 2b repeated in v 7. It is this people who will bring to YHWH a tributary gift in the future. It is often highlighted that through the use of the rare word מִנְחָה (a tribute/gift), which only appears three times in the HB (Ps 68:30; 76:12), the present verse is related to Ps 68 & 76. The closeness of the verse with Ps 68 is especially remarkable. In the psalm, kings bring a gift to YHWH in v 30 and Egypt and Cush come to YHWH in submission in v 32. Irrespective of the question of the order of dependence, Ps 68 makes it probable that Cush is in view in Isa 18:7 although it is not

⁵⁴ Those who prefer the period around 724 as the setting of the original oracle: Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 257; A. Schoors, 'Historical Information' 76. For a view that denies the 8th Century setting of the oracle: Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 91-93.

mentioned by name.⁵⁵ As P. Cook argues, if Isa 18:7 is dependent on Ps 68, the former can be understood to have intentionally borrowed from a passage dealing with Cush because it understood the original oracle in Isa 18 to be about Cush. If the dependence goes the opposite direction, then Ps 68 obviously understood Isa 18:7 to be about Cush.⁵⁶

Now that one knows v 7 regarded the earlier oracle as well as itself as being about Cush, in what way can v 7 be said to alter the overall message of ch 18? First, v 7's borrowing of the description of the Cushites from v 2 is significant. As previously mentioned, before the addition of v 7, the earlier oracle announced how this beautiful and mighty people were going to be destroyed by YHWH. The gruesome picture of dead corpses lying around in v 6 is how this oracle ended. By the end of the oracle, they are no longer beautiful or mighty. However, by repeating the description of the Cushites in v 2 in this future vision of v 7, the Cushites are once again seen as a glorious people like in olden days. If, previously, the purpose of their flattering description in v 2 was to make their imminent fall dramatic, thereby emphasising the power of YHWH, their beauty and power in v 7 is now used to adorn YHWH's glory as an example of many powerful nations which come to YHWH in submission. Some have stressed the subordinate nature of the tribute offering in light of Assyria's many tributaries far and wide, and have asked in what way v 7 can be viewed as words of

⁵⁵ For Wildberger, Ps 68:30-32 depends on Isa 18:7 but the reverse is more likely for P. Cook since it is 18:7 that combines the tribute bringing (the rare word *נָסַח*) from Ps 68 and the description of the Cushites from 18:2. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 695; P. Cook, *Sign*, 68.

⁵⁶ P. Cook, *Sign*, 61-62.

salvation for Cush as traditionally understood.⁵⁷ One could answer by saying that bringing a tributary gift to YHWH of Hosts implies that Cush is now under YHWH's lordship and this means at least there is no longer the fear of destruction. On top of this, they have regained their former renown as beautiful and mighty people. Through the addition of v 7, the bleak fate of Cush is now but a thing of the past, and all things considered, Cush enjoys a favourable future in v 7.

This restoration of Cush is, however, not without that of Zion. It is presupposed in v 7 that in the future time the verse anticipates, Mount Zion is again the place that represents the name of YHWH of Hosts. Presumably, Cush is not the only nation that brings a gift to Zion in this vision, but rather one of many. Thus if any restoration is implied for Cush in v 7, all the more so for Zion! Filled with gifts from the nations, Zion is portrayed as the centre of the world with the name of YHWH in its midst. In this way, v 7 shifts the spotlight from the corpse-scattered fields of Cush (v 6) to a gloriously restored Zion. This is not unlike how 14:32b brought to the oracle of doom against Philistia a hope of restoration even for afflicted Philistia because of the newly established Zion. As will be seen in the next chapter of the present study, it is also not too different to how 16:1-4a gives the Moabites, whose destruction the original poem spoke of, a hope of taking refuge in Zion. Not only has the writer of 18:7 moved the focus of the whole oracle to Zion but he has also offered a hope of renewal for once-destroyed Cush.

⁵⁷ Beuken, *Jesaja*, 169-170; Balogh, *Stele*, 180-181, 201.

As for when v 7 might have been written, some critics date it in the exilic period and others do so in the post-exilic period.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, there is not much in the verse by which to date it. The verse's closeness with Ps 68 is not a great help either, because the psalm is fragmentary and dating each section of the psalm is anything but simple.⁵⁹ What could be to our aid is Isa 45:14 in which YHWH says that the Egyptians, the Cushites and the Sabeans would come to Jerusalem in chains and plead with her saying that God is in her and that there is no other god. The ideas promoted in this verse are fairly close to 18:7. In both passages, Cushites come to Zion in submission to YHWH. Admittedly, their portrait of coming in chains in 45:14 seems a little harsher than the picture of beautiful and powerful Cushites coming with a gift in 18:7.⁶⁰ One needs to bear in mind, however, the context of 45:14 which, unlike 18:7, speaks not only of the Cushites but also of the Egyptians and the Sabeans. The three nations – Egypt, Cush, and Seba – appear together as a group earlier in 43:3-4 where YHWH says, because Jacob-Israel is so precious to him, these three nations are given in exchange for his people. Therefore, given the unique literary settings of these passages, the aforementioned dissimilarity between the two passages is only very subtle.

Another point of contact between v 7 and Isa 40-55 might be established based on the mention of 'the name of YHWH of Hosts.' What is found only in chs 40-55 within the book of Isaiah (47:4; 48:2; 51:15; 54:5) is the formulaic phrase יהוה צבאות שמו

⁵⁸ Exilic date: Seitz, *Isaiah*, 147-148; Cook, *Sign*, 69-70. Post-exilic date: Duhm, *Jesaia*, 140; Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 320; Clements, *Isaiah*, 166.

⁵⁹ Cook seems to believe the influence runs from Ps 68 to Isa 18:7 whereas Wildberger assumes the opposite. Cook, *Sign*, 69; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 695.

⁶⁰ For arguments for dissociating the two passages on the basis of this subtle difference, see: Balogh, *Stele*, 186-187; Cook, *Sign*, 69-70.

(YHWH of Hosts is his name).⁶¹ Outside of chs 40-55, 18:7 is the only place in the book of Isaiah where the three words (צבאות + יהוה + שם) appear together in one expression. Of course, one cannot completely rule out the possibility that Isa 18:7 was added by an extra-Isaianic hand, in which case one does not have much of a chance of guessing the date of the verse except that it is probably added either during the exilic or post-exilic period. If, however, we are to attribute the verse to one of the major authors within the book of Isaiah, the verse seems to have most in common with Isa 40-55.

4-3: Summary and conclusion

To sum up, the original oracle in Isa 18 which the supposed late-exilic writer of v 7 inherited included vv 1-2, 4-6. Verse 3 was originally not part of the Cush oracle but a marginal note (a *Fortschreibung*) on 17:12-14 and postdates v 7. The original oracle in vv 1-2, 4-6 was understood by the author of v 7 to concern the fall of the mighty and beautiful people of Cush. Verse 7, which shows some connections with chs 40-55, then applied the hopeful vision of 14:1-2 to the oracle concerning Cush in a way similar to 14:32b; 16:1-4a. The redactor brought Zion to the fore and allowed Cush to share in the city's future glory. Cush will one day acknowledge the lordship of YHWH who formerly caused its destruction. Having been restored to their former splendour, the people of Cush will offer a tributary gift to YHWH in Zion.

⁶¹ It is interesting to note that the title יהוה צבאות, which appears 6 times in Isa 40-55, never occurs in Isa 56-66.

If the reconstruction of the compositional history of the oracle concerning Cush in this chapter is correct, it fits the hypothesis proposed by the present study well. We may now proceed to the next chapter and see how the vision of 14:1-2 is applied to an older oracle concerning Moab in 16:1-4a.

Chapter 5: Zion should receive the outcasts of Moab (Isaiah 16:1-4a)

It will be argued in this chapter that Isa 16:1-4a belongs to the group of late-exilic passages in Isa 13-23 that expresses an inclusive outlook toward the foreign nations as hypothesized in the present study. Isa 16:1-4a is found in the middle of an oracle concerning Moab in Isa 15-16 and there is general scholarly agreement that at least the earliest layer of these chapters is to be dated in the pre-exilic period. Although opinions differ widely as to when in the pre-exilic period this base-layer might have been written, insofar as the hypothesis of the present study is concerned, the imprecise term 'pre-exilic period' suffices. Within this consensus, dating 16:1-4a in the exilic period very much depends on demonstrating that 16:1-4a (as well as 16:4b-5 of course) does not belong to the original layer of the material concerning Moab in chs 15-16. This is especially so because it has been argued more than once that should chs 15-16 be read purely synchronically, 16:1-5 could be read as Moab's failed attempt at securing Zion's protection of its fugitives, with the subsequent verses (16:6-7) understood as a strong rejection of Moab's plea. If this interpretation is correct, one would have to say that 16:1-5 conveys anything but an accepting attitude toward Moab. As noted by many, much of Isa 15-16 reappears in Jer 48, though with variations and a difference in order. Because the comparison between Isa 15-16 and Jer 48 could come to one's aid when trying to discern what the original layer in Isa 15-16 might have been, the relationship between Isa 15-16 and Jer 48 will first be examined in connection with the question of whether Isa 16:1-5 belongs to the original layer of Isa 15-16. The closeness in thought between 16:1-4a and the other exilic passages that seem inclusive toward

the foreign nations in chs 13-23 will be discussed next. Moreover, there are reasons to suspect that Isa 16:4b-5 may reflect a yet further expansion on 16:1-4a. Therefore, this too will be looked at toward the end of this chapter after the reasons why 16:1-4a might have been placed in its position have been considered.

5-1: Relationship between Isaiah 15-16 and Jeremiah 48

One could think of three possible explanations for the many parallel verses between Isa 15-16 and Jer 48. It could be that Jer 48 is dependent on Isa 15-16. Alternatively, Isa 15-16 could have borrowed from Jer 48. Finally, both Isa 15-16 and Jer 48 may independently reflect a common source (or similar sources). The possibility that Isa 15-16 might be dependent on Jer 48 seems improbable for two reasons.¹ First, the parallel verses between Isa 15-16 and Jer 48 are spoken by YHWH in Jer 48 whereas they are spoken by an anonymous poet in Isa 15-16. In Jer 48, YHWH both declares the destruction of Moab and mourns for Moab. In Isa 15-16, in contrast, if we were to ignore the editorial remarks in 16:13-14 and the sudden 1st person speech in 15:9b (for both of which there are no parallels in Jer 48), the identity of the one who weeps and laments for the fall of Moab is not revealed.² According to Burke O. Long, there are only three places in the HB (Isa 16:6ff, Jer 48:29ff, and Ezek 27:1ff) where YHWH utters the words of what Long calls ‘funeral laments.’ In all three of those places, however,

¹ Auvray says this possibility is unthinkable but he does not spell out the reasons. Auvray, *Isaïe*, 168. De Jong believes that Isa 16:6-12 is dependent on Jer 48 on one hand but he postulates on the other that Isa 15-16:5 could be the *Vorlage* of Jer 48. De Jong, *Jeremia*, 127.

² The 1st person speech by YHWH in 15:9b looks as though it is secondary to the lament and this will be discussed later in this chapter.

Long convincingly argues that the original laments may not have had YHWH as the speaker to begin with. Rather, YHWH appears to have been made the speaker of the laments only secondarily.³ Both in Ezek 27 and in Isa 15-16, the actual laments themselves do not show that they are spoken by YHWH. Instead, it is the introductory words in Ezek 27:1-3a and the editorial addition in Isa 16:13-14 which seem to have put the words of each lament in the mouth of YHWH. If we did not have Isa 15-16, Jer 48 would have been an exception in this respect, as the recurring phrase נאם יהוה (declares YHWH) identifies YHWH as the speaker at various points in the lament. Since we do have Isa 15-16 where, unlike Jer 48, the phrase נאם יהוה does not occur within the lament, it is unlikely that Jer 48 served as the *Vorlage* of Isa 15-16. If we were to imagine that Isa 15-16 borrowed its material from Jer 48, this means all the identifications of YHWH as the speaker were removed from the lament deliberately, making the identity of its speaker ambiguous, only to reveal later on in Isa 16:13-14 that it was YHWH who spoke the borrowed poem. If there is a dependence either way, it would be simpler to assume that Jer 48 borrowed from Isa 15-16, and while doing so, the author made YHWH explicit as the speaker of the lament under the influence of Isa 16:13-14.

The second reason is relatively less significant though still worth noting. On a couple of occasions, Isa 15-16 appears to contain harder and more subtle readings than Jer 48.⁴ In Isa 16:7, the people of Moab are told to mourn for the 'raisin cakes of Kir-

³ Long, 'Divine' 85-86.

⁴ The condition of the text of Isa 15-16 is less than excellent. Although the general gist is clear enough, construing the exact meaning of the text proves to be very difficult. Thus in many other cases where Isa 15-16 seems to have more difficult readings in comparison to Jer 48, it may well be down to poor preservation of the text.

Hareseth (לאשישי קיר חרשת) whereas in Jer 48:31 the mourning is for the 'men of Kir-Heres (אל אנשי קיר חרש). The word אשישה is a relatively rare word occurring only 5 times in the HB.⁵ Where it occurs, it is clear from the context that the word refers to some sort of food but its more precise meaning is only found in Hos 3:1 where we find אשישי ענבים (*ashishas* of grapes). The fact that the word is in the masculine only in Isa 16:7 and Hos 3:1 makes it plausible that the same kind of food is meant in both verses.⁶ Although אנשי קיר חרש in Jer 48:31 might appear to be a more predictable reading, the raisin cakes in Isa 16:7 are definitely not out of place especially when viewed in the context of viticulture in the following verses.⁷ Both the LXX and the Targum either had אנשי in their *Vorlagen* for Isa 16:7 or did not know what אשישה (or אשיש) meant. If the word was not so widely known, it is quite possible that Jer 48 (like the LXX and the Targum of Isa 16:7) also did not understand it. In any case, it is unlikely that אנשים would have been turned into the rare word אשישים.

Another similar example is found in Isa 16:9. In the verse, there is much weeping for the vine of Sibmah and Jazer 'because upon your [Sibmah's] summer fruits and your [Sibmah's] harvest a shout will fall (כי על קיצך ועל קצירך הידד נפל)'.⁸ הידד can either be a victory shout or a shout of the harvest field. Considering that the formula על + נפל is normally used to describe some sort of a disaster, one is more inclined to see הידד as a battle shout here. It would also be odd to see the poet weep because of a harvest shout which is characteristically a joyful thing. Nevertheless, the use of the

⁵ 2Sam 6:19; Isa 16:7; Hos 3:1; 1Chr 16:3; Song 2:5.

⁶ The word is in the feminine elsewhere in the HB.

⁷ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 297. Also Cf. Volz, *Jeremia*, 409.

word *הידד* that is also used elsewhere to mean a harvest shout in the context of summer fruits and wheat harvest does give the impression that a certain amount of irony is intended. Instead of the glad shouts of the harvesters, the battle shouts of victory will fall on the harvest fields of Sibmah and Jazer. Some would go even further in this direction and suggest that the attacking enemies might be seen as the ‘harvesters,’ both literally and metaphorically if the attack took place during the harvest.⁸ This nuanced expression is not to be found in the last line of Jer 48:32 which reads: *על קיצר ועל בצירך שדד נפל* (‘on your summer fruits and your grapes [for harvest] the destroyer has fallen.’) By using the word *שדד* (destroyer) instead of *הידד*, the subtle irony of Isa 16:9 is absent in Jer 48:32. Again, because it seems more likely for a subtle expression to be turned into a more direct one for the sake of clarity in the process of transmission than the opposite development to happen, it is improbable that Isa 16:9 is dependent on Jer 48:32. For these reasons, most commentators do not believe that Isa 15-16 is dependent on Jer 48.

Perhaps, then, as has often been suggested, Jer 48 is dependent on Isa 15-16. Many who regard Isa 15-16 as older than Jer 48 tend to conclude thus.⁹ If indeed Jer 48 used Isa 15-16 as its *Vorlage*, however, the mixing-up of the order of the supposedly borrowed verses from Isa 15-16 in Jer 48 would be perplexing. There does not seem to be a clear reason why the order of the verses might have been changed. What is all the more puzzling is that the order of Isa 16:6-12 seems to have been kept more or less the

⁸ Marti, *Jesaja*, 139. See also Brian Jones, *Howling*, 212.

⁹ Cf. Volz, *Jeremia*, 408-409; Alonso Schökel & Sicre Diaz, *Profetas I*, 610; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 600-609; Jones, *Howling*, 99; Schultz, *Quotation*, 307-329; Woods, *Jeremiah 48*, 92-95; Beuken, *Jesaja*, 128.

same while the verses in Isa 15:2-7 appear to have been shuffled and scattered around in Jer 48 (Isa 15:5b is in Jer 48:5!). Some suggest that this might be because Isa 15-16 was used in Jer 48 from memory.¹⁰ While this is a strong possibility, another scenario which cannot be ruled out is that both Isa 15-16 (with the exception of Isa 16:1-5) and Jer 48 made use of a common source.¹¹ If this common source included many short fragmentary sayings concerning Moab, perhaps the authors of both Isa 15-16 and Jer 48 assembled various verses in their desired order and paraphrased where needed for their separate purposes.

Many have found not only the traces of Isa 15-16 in Jer 48 but also of Num 21:28-29 (Jer 48:45-46) and of Num 24:17 (Jer 48:45).¹² Schultz supposes Jer 48 'is drawing on known (and still preserved) sources rather than on unpreserved anonymous sources.'¹³ Nevertheless, when one looks at Num 21:28-29 (popularly known as the 'Song of Heshbon') and Num 24:17 (Balaam's final oracle), a different picture emerges. Firstly, both the 'Song of Heshbon' and the Balaam oracles seem to have been quoted from other sources, and it is likely that those sources developed from foreign traditions. Contrary to those who claim that the 'Song of Heshbon' ultimately has to be an Israelite taunt song against Moab, Milgrom insightfully demonstrates that the chief reason for the incorporation of the song, which may have been of an Amorite

¹⁰ Weiser, *Jeremia*, 32, as quoted in Schultz, *Quotation*, 317; Parke-Taylor, *Jeremiah*, 137.

¹¹ Scholars who suppose there having been a common source include Auvray, *Isaïe*, 168; Albright, *Canaan*, 21; Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 304; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 298; Long, 'Divine' 85.

¹² Isa 24:17-18 is also found in Jer 48:43-44. However, Jer 48:43-44 seems to be older than Isa 24:17-18, though Gray may be right as he reckons the phrase that is also found partly in Lam 3:47 might be 'from popular speech.' Gray, *Isaiah*, 419.

¹³ Schultz, *Quotation*, 310.

origin, in the book of Numbers is not to ridicule Moab (a taunt song though it may have been initially) but to defend Israel's legitimacy in conquering Heshbon.¹⁴ The story of Balaam in Num 22-24 which is commonly called 'The Book of Balaam' is also widely accepted to have been developed from a foreign tradition.¹⁵ Second, if we suppose that Jer 48 quoted from Num 21:28-29 and Num 24:17 (rather than from a non-biblical source), both passages have been quoted with much variation and unnecessary blending of two separate oracles. Rather, it seems more likely that the writers of Numbers and Jer 48 each made a separate use of a common source or two similar sources. Could we not, then, perhaps imagine there having been a collection of oracles concerning Moab of foreign, as well as Israelite, origins?

Whether Jer 48 borrowed from Isa 15-16 or there was a common source which served both Isa 15-16 and Jer 48 as their *Vorlage*, the fact that we seem to lack parallel verses for Isa 16:1-5 in Jer 48 is noteworthy. If Jer 48 borrowed from Isa 15-16, why would Isa 16:1-5 have been left out? Equally, if there was a shared *Vorlage* and this text contained Isa 16:1-5 also, why would these verses not have found their place in Jer 48? Consequently, many would conclude from this that Isa 16:1-5 was not part of the original layer of Isa 15-16. These verses are not found in Jer 48 either because the common source did not have them or because they had not yet been added to Isa 15-16

¹⁴ Gray, *Numbers*, 301-305; Milgrom, *Numbers*, 462-463. Milgrom points to Deut 2:9 which forbids Israel from harassing Moab. The 'Song of Heshbon,' possibly an old Amorite victory song over Moab, is employed in order to clarify that Israel took the former Moabite territory not from the Moabites but from the Amorites who earlier took the same land from the Moabites. Milgrom shows how this same line of argument is repeated by Jephthah in Judg 11:15-27. The same view is found in Wenham, *Numbers*, 55-56.

¹⁵ Wenham, *Numbers*, 57-61.

when Jer 48 quoted these chapters.¹⁶ In support of regarding Isa 16:1-5 as a later addition are its clear differences in style and subject matter when compared with the surrounding lament. While the lament is a description of the fall of Moab in the 1st person, 16:1-5 contains many direct commands.¹⁷ Moreover, Moabite place names are almost absent in Isa 16:1-5.¹⁸ This is in sharp contrast to the surrounding lament which is full of Moabite place names. Instead, the focus moves from Moab to Zion and the future Davidic ruler in 16:1-5.

Despite the reasons stated above, some refuse to believe that 16:1-5 is secondary to the lament in Isa 15-16. The reason why Isa 16:1-5 is not found in Jer 48 would be nothing other than the discriminate use of Isa 15-16 by the writer of Jer 48.¹⁹ After all, not all quotations need to be in full. The most substantial reason why some consider Isa 16:1-5 to be a part of the original layer in Isa 15-16 is that they understand Jer 48:28 to be a paraphrase of Isa 16:1-2.²⁰ For them, this would be evidence against the common view that there are no parallels verses for Isa 16:1-5 in Jer 48. Indeed, one can observe a

¹⁶ The latter view is proposed by Wildberger. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 600-601; Stefan Paas, *Creation*, 410.

¹⁷ There are two instances of brief 1st person YHWH speeches in the lament. They are 15:9b and the last line of 16:10. It will be argued later that 15:9b is an intentional addition which is made at the same time as 16:13-14. The last line of 16:10, however, appears to be a textual corruption that began with dittography. The original line may have been הַיִּיד שָׁבַת (the harvest shout stopped) as Gray supposes. Gray, *Isaiah*, 293. Then there may have been dittography: הַיִּיד דִּשְׁבַּת. Later, הַיִּיד דִּשְׁבַּת gets 'corrected' to הַיִּיד שָׁבַת by a scribe who believed the line to be a divine speech, perhaps under the influence of 15:9b, with the end result which we find in the MT= הַיִּיד שָׁבַת ('I have made the harvest shout to stop'). On the matter of the sudden appearance of direct commands, it is evident that the ancient translators were taken by surprise as they saw the first direct command in 16:1. The Vulgate has 'Emitte agnum, Domine (Send the lamb, O Lord)' which either saw the plural Elohim as the elliptic addressee or did not have the final ך. The LXX and the Syriac have 'I will send' and the Targum has imperfect 3rd plural 'they will send.' The lack of agreement between the versions could be the result of struggles caused by an unexpected imperative. Cf. Rudolph, 'Jesaja 15-16' 135.

¹⁸ Auvray, *Isaïe*, 168. Arnon in 16:2 is debatable because although it formed one of the borders of Moab, the river seems to have been rather well known to the Trans-Jordanian Israelites. Cf. Jdg 11:26; 2Kgs 10:33.

¹⁹ Schultz, *Quotation*, 316-317.

²⁰ Cf. Jones, *Howling*, 99-104.

number of connections between Isa 16:1-2 and Jer 48:28 as noted by a small number of commentators.²¹

Isaiah 16:1-2

שְׁלַח־כֶּרֶם מִשְׁלֵ-אַרְץ מִסְלַע מִדְבָּרָה אֶל־הַר בֵּת־צִיּוֹן

(Send the lamb of the ruler of the land²² from the rocky area towards the wilderness to the mountain of daughter Zion!²³)

וְהָיָה כְּעוֹף־נוֹדָד קֵן מְשַׁלַּח תְּהִיּוֹנָה בְּנוֹת מוֹאָב מִעֲבָרֹת לְאֲרֹנוֹן

(And it shall be that like a wandering bird, a scattered nest, will be the daughters of Moab²⁴ at the fords of Arnon.²⁵)

Jeremiah 48:28

עֲזְבוּ עָרִים וְשִׁכְנוּ בְּסַלְעַי יֹשְׁבֵי מוֹאָב וְהָיוּ כִּיּוֹנָה תִּקְנֶן בְּעֲבָרֵי פִי־פֶחֶת

(Leave the cities and dwell in the rocky area, O inhabitants of Moab! And be like the dove that nests on the sides of the mouth of a pit!)

²¹ Jakob Barth, *Beitraege zur Erklarung des Jesaia* (1885), 20-23, as quoted in, Delitzsch, *Jesaia*, 225; Cheyne, *Isaiah*, 100-101; König, *Jesaja*, 190; Jones, *Howling*, 99-104.

²² Jones sees the first two maqqefs in this verse as a sign of the Masoretes not wanting to read a long chain of genitives i.e. 'a lamb of the ruler of the land.' Jones, *Howling*, 197. That the Masoretes understood מִשְׁלֵ אֶרֶץ either as a vocative or appositionally, nevertheless, is unlikely since the plural imperative does not agree with the singular 'ruler,' and a lamb would not be likened to the ruler of the land. Despite the maqqefs (which after all may not reflect any interpretative traits), the MT could only make sense if the three words מִשְׁלֵ אֶרֶץ כֶּרֶם are read as one genitive construct chain. The solution of adding ל before מִשְׁלֵ in order to clarify the sender and the recipient of the lamb is certainly possible, but it is far from necessary.

²³ On the gender specific nature of בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן, Cf. Dearman, *Daughter Zion*, 144-159.

²⁴ Although it is somewhat strange to see that the women of Moab (בְּנוֹת מוֹאָב) are being singled out as Gray points out, it is not impossible to suppose that setting the women apart may have been deemed more effective to emphasise the helpless state of the fugitives. Gray, *Isaiah*, 288.

²⁵ There is no preposition before מִעֲבָרֹת לְאֲרֹנוֹן (the fords of Arnon) and the fords of Arnon cannot be in the vocative. Therefore, מִעֲבָרֹת לְאֲרֹנוֹן must be an adverbial accusative of place (G-K §118m). It is thus unnecessary to suspect haplography with ב from the previous word מוֹאָב following Procksch and BHS based on Symmachus. Procksch, *Jesaia*, 216.

In both passages, there is the mention of the rocky area (סלע) and the Moabite fugitives are likened to the birds with a reference to their nest (קן and קנין). The close relationship between Isa 16:1-2 and Jer 48:28 is therefore difficult to deny. Nevertheless, the hypothesis that Jer 48:28 is dependent on Isa 16:1-2, and that this demonstrates that Isa 16:1-5 was present when the writer of Jer 48 was making use of Isa 15-16 needs to be questioned.

First, it is hard to understand why Jer 48 would paraphrase Isa 16:1-2 in such a way that it leaves out the theme of Moab seeking refuge in Zion, whereby they are voluntarily assuming a subservient role, and omit Isa 16:3-5 altogether, the very verses that encourage daughter Zion to receive the Moabite fugitives. Would not Moab's willing submission under Zion's lordship have been a welcome idea for the writer of Jer 48? In light of Jer 33, moreover, would not the vision of the restoration of Davidic dynasty (Isa 16:4b-5) have been readily embraced in Jer 48?²⁶

Second, whereas the Moabites are told to leave their cities and flee to the rocky area in Jer 48:28, it is simply assumed in Isa 16:1 that they are already in the rocky area. Without Jer 48:28, it is not entirely clear why the Moabites would be sending a gift to Zion from the rocky area in Isa 16:1. In fact, if it were not for Jer 48:28, it would have been difficult to know whether סלע in Isa 16:1 referred to Sela in Edom or some rocky

²⁶ Woods, *Jeremiah 48*, 91.

area.²⁷ Jer 48:28, on the other hand, does not need any clarification from Isa 16:1-2.

Rather than to assume that Isa 16:1 was simply somewhat ambiguous and that this ambiguity was ironed out or 'explained' in Jer 48:28, it would be simpler to imagine that Isa 16:1-2 was dependent on Jer 48:28. The writer of Isa 16:1-4a was perhaps a learned scribe who was aware of Jer 48, where much of Isa 15-16 reappears, and made use of Jer 48:28 in his writing of Isa 16:1-4a.²⁸ Because the Moabites are told to go to some rocky area away from the cities in Jer 48:28, the writer of Isa 16:1-4a in his imagination may have pictured the Moabites to be in that rocky place after the fall of Moab. There is another minor piece of circumstantial evidence in support of the view that Isa 16:1-4a is dependent on Jer 48:28. It was noted earlier that one of the features which sets Isa 16:1-5 apart from the surrounding lament was that it was dense with direct commands (8 in vv 1-4a). It is possible that Isa 16:1-4a not only borrowed its contents from Jer 48:28 but may have adopted its style also. One finds enough direct commands in Jer 48 in the verses which precede the materials that are in parallel with Isa 15-16 (i.e. vv 1-28) to conclude that it is something of a visible feature of these verses.²⁹ When we look at Jer 48:28 in particular, there are three commands in one verse: 'Leave the cities!' (עזבו ערים); 'Dwell in the rocky area!' (שכנו בסלע); 'Be like the dove!' (היו כיונה).

To sum up the relationship between Isa 15-16 and Jer 48, first, it is relatively clear that the earliest layer of Isa 15-16 is not dependent on Jer 48. Rather, Jer 48 would

²⁷ Gray is, however, right to point out that there are no clear indications in Isa 15 that the Moabites had fled to Edom and that it would be odd to see the Moabites back in Arnon in Isa 16:2. Gray, *Isaiah*, 288.

²⁸ Separating 16:4b-5 from vv1-4a will be justified later in the chapter.

²⁹ In verses 6, 9, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 28.

be dependent on Isa 15-16, if it is not the case that both passages are dependent on a common source. Isa 16:1-4a, a secondary addition to the surrounding lament, however, seems to have made use of Jer 48:28 as its starting point (in vv 1-2). Isa 16:1-4a is, therefore, later than Jer 48 and this would be why Jer 48 does not show any awareness of Isa 16:1-5.

Before we move on to examine Isa 16:1-4a itself, it would be worth attending to some of the other views that are presented by those who do not identify Isa 16:1-5 as a later addition to its surrounding lament. According to some, 16:3-5 contains the words of a failed plea made by the Moabites. They then see v 6 as Zion's rejection of this plea. Everything that is said about the Davidic ruler in vv 4b-5 would in this case be Moab's insincere flattery.³⁰ Even with all the discussions about connections with Jer 48 laid aside, the speaker is unmarked throughout Isa 16:1-5. If the speaker changes from

³⁰ Jones, *Howling*, 259-264. A very similar view is expressed by Smothers, whose work was published in the same year as Jones's. Smothers, 'Isa 15-16' 70-84. See also: D. Janthial, *L'oracle de Nathan*, 167-168; J. B. Couey, 'Isaiah 15-16' 19-20. For Jones, the whole of Isa 15:1b-16:12 is a prophetic/political propaganda against accepting Moab's plea for help. It is not only 16:1-5 that depicts Moab's futile effort, but the rest of Isa 15-16:12 also sarcastically taunts Moab's fall. Although Jones' view on 16:1-5 is rejected here, he might be right to have noticed the taunt-like nature of the base-layer lament of Isa 15-16 (Jones, *Howling*, 113-161). This lament may have originally been a dirge preserved not to express sorrow over the fall of Moab but almost to celebrate it. The critical tone in Isa 16:6 prevents readers from being convinced of the mournful tone of the poem. Isa 16:11 too is noteworthy. על כן מעי למואב ככנור יהמו וקרבי לקיר חרש (Therefore, my bowels will growl for Moab like a lyre, and my inward part, for Kir-Haresh.) Jones seems right to note that the lyre in the HB is usually seen as an instrument of joy and not as that of mourning (Jones, *Howling*, 270; Cf. Finesinger, 'Instruments' 26 & 52). The only other place in the HB where the lyre is associated with mourning is Job 30:31. There, as BDB points out by comparing the verse to Job 21:12 where the pair – the lyre and the pipe – also appears, it could be that the pair of instruments, which were originally (or even naturally) for rejoicing, are now used for mourning. The verse literally means 'my lyre *became* mourning etc.' Cf. BDB היה II e. Alternatively, the pair of instruments could be metonyms for joy in this verse, in which case the lyre and the pipe are contrasted with mourning. The sound the stomach of the poet makes, seemingly in despair over the fall of Moab in Isa 16:11, is like that of the festive instrument lyre. Sweeney also regards vv 3b-5 as a message to be spoken by the Moabites. However, the whole of 16:1-5 is, for him, an independent subunit and therefore 16:6 is not understood as a direct reply to the words of the immediately preceding verses. Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 243.

either YHWH or the poet to the Moabites in v 3, and if noticing this change was meant to be essential for understanding the overall message of vv 3-5, one would have expected to see this change indicated in a more obvious way (see for example, Isa 20:6; 23:4).

Another piece of circumstantial evidence for not seeing Isa 16:1-5 as portraying an inclusive stance toward Moab, used by those who interpret v 6 as Zion's refusal to receive the Moabite fugitives, is the predominantly negative depiction of Moab in the HB.³¹ Although this observation is valid, what we have in Isa 16:1-4a may not be called an outright favourable portrayal of Moab either. We have in these verses advice to Moab to send tribute to, and seek refuge in, Zion. Zion, in turn, is told to receive Moab. Smothers helpfully demonstrates how the language used in these verses portrays a political vassalage.³² The giving of tribute in 16:1, and the word 'shadow (לִצֵּל)' in 16:3, which is also used in Isa 30:2 to mean Egypt's political protection as well as in Judg 9:15 to mean rulership, both point towards Moab's political subservience to Zion.³³ Moreover, although the negative sentiment toward Moab is indeed prevalent in the HB, the stories of foreigners (be it individuals or entire communities) who redirected their allegiance from their god and their people to YHWH and his people are often set in the

³¹ Jones, *Howling*, 137-155. Starting from the birth of Moab's progenitor through incest, Brian Jones lists many hostile portrayals of Moab throughout the HB. Jones, however, admits that the book of Ruth does present a Moabite woman in a positive light. This, for Jones, nevertheless, is also not without hostile nuances. Initially, the disaster befell Elimelech's family when (and perhaps because) they took refuge in Moab and took Moabite women as wives for Elimelech's sons. Further, Ruth's lying down with drunken Boaz brings to memory the lying down of Lot's older daughter with her drunken father.

³² Smothers, 'Isa 15-16' 81-82. See also, W Eichrodt, *Jesaja 13-23 und 28-39*, 45.

³³ Smothers, 'Isa 15-16' 81. Delitzsch supposes 'lamb of the ruler' in Isa 16:1 is a short-hand for a suitable tribute from the land's prince based on 2Kgs 3:4. Delitzsch, *Jesaja*, 225.

positive light in the HB.³⁴ The two are not at odds with each other and therefore the interpretation which the present study supports is no less in tune with the overall tone of the HB than the one that is here refuted.

5-2: Isaiah 16:1-4a

Limiting the late-exilic layer of Isa 15-16 to 16:1-4a and thereby excluding 16:4b-5 requires justification. Therefore, before analysing vv 4b-5 in greater detail later on in the chapter, the more immediate reasons for identifying these verses as an addition to vv 1-4a will be presented here now as we begin to examine the contents of vv 1-4a.

It has been suggested more than once that Isa 16:4b-5 might be an addition to 16:1-4a.³⁵ While the reasons for supposing thus vary somewhat, the most significant evidence is the logical inconsistency of v 4b in view of vv 3-4a. Zion is told to protect the Moabites from their destroyers in vv 3-4a and yet in v 4b the destruction is said to be over and those who trample down have been wiped out of the earth.

Isaiah 16:3

³⁴ What is being praised in Ruth 2:12 is that Ruth, a Moabite woman, came to Bethlehem and took refuge under YHWH's wings. She is praised because she left her people and joined the Israelites, showing her loyalty to her Israelite mother-in-law Naomi by serving her. Somewhat similar is the case of the prostitute Rahab who hid two Israelite spies. She ought to have been destroyed along with the city Jericho but it was by her decision to betray her people and side with Israel that she and her father's house were spared and allowed to live in Israel. There are also the inhabitants of Gibeon who, albeit through deception, made a covenant with Joshua and Israel and became Israel's servants. They were Hivites who ought to have been put to destruction by a divine command (Deut 20:17).

Duhm, *Jesaja*, 129; Gray, *Isaiah*, 289-290; Marti, *Jesaja*, 137; Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 72-73; Vermeylen, *Isaïe*,³⁵ 307.

הביאו עצה עשו פליקה שיתי כליל צלך בתוך צהרים סתרי נדחים נדד אל־תגלי

(Give counsel, provide justice!³⁶ Make your shade as at night in the midst of noon!

Hide the outcasts, do not uncover the fugitive!)

Isaiah 16:4

יגורו בך נדחי מואב הוי־סתר למו מפני שודד כי־אפס המין כלה שד תמו רמס מן־הארץ

V 4 on its own may be translated as: ‘Let the outcasts of Moab³⁷ dwell among you. Be a shelter to them from the destroyer. For the ruthless³⁸ has ceased, the destruction has ended, the trampler has been destroyed³⁹ from the earth.’ If the oppressors of Moab are no longer present why would the Moabites need Zion’s protection from them? For this reason, כִּי at the beginning of v 4b is often understood temporally, marking the

³⁶ The Masoretes have feminine singular imperative הביאי as Qere instead of masculine plural imperative הביאו. Multiple manuscripts have עשי as Qere for עשו also. Wildberger believes the feminine singular verbs are preferable so there would be a gender agreement with the following verbs שיתי and סתרי (as well as אל תגלי at the end of the verse), and the feminine singular possessive suffix at the end of צלך. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 593. What is at stake is the identity of the addressees. To be sure, one would have to decide whether both of the first two verbs of the verse were masculine plural or feminine singular. If the former, the Moabites are still being addressed continuous from Isa 16:1 and if the latter, Daughter Zion is being addressed regardless to who the speaker is. Although פליקה is a hapax legomenon, as Procksch suggests, it is probably closely related to פלילה in Isa 28:7. Procksch, *Jesaja I*, 217. There, the word appears to mean some sort of civil judiciary. Together with giving counsel, Isa 16:3a seem to have a lot more in common with what follows in the rest of the verse than what Moab is told to do in Isa 16:1. Therefore, הביאי and עשי are to be preferred simply because the alternative would not make much sense. For the opposite view that prefers the Ketiv of the MT, see Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 243. In short, Sweeney justifies this by arguing that the masculine plural verbs in v 3 are essentially urging the Moabites to speak the words of what follows these masculine plural verbs through to v 5.

³⁷ Instead of נדחי (i.e. my outcasts, O Moab), two manuscripts have נדחי (i.e. the outcasts of Moab) and the LXX and the Syriac appear to have read this way too. נדחי is problematic for two reasons. First, בך and the feminine imperative הוי immediately after Moab seem to indicate that still the same Daughter Zion is being addressed here. It would be very strange for Moab to be addressed ever so momentarily when all the while Daughter Zion has been the addressee. Second, the נדחים here must be the same נדחים in Isa 16:3c considering the actions to be taken to both are so closely related. Rudolph unconvincingly defends the MT pointing by arguing that מואב could be an explicatory gloss on some rhythmic grounds. Rudolph, ‘Jesaja 15-16’ 136.

³⁸ Instead of the hapax legomenon המין (‘the extortioner’ BDB: from מין ‘squeezing’), 1QIsa^a has חמרץ (BDB: ‘the ruthless’ cf. Isa 1:17). Interestingly, Duhm had previously suggested reading חמרץ. Duhm, *Jesaja*, 129. Somehow both words happen to be very similar in meaning in the present context, making the need to unearth the original reading less urgent.

³⁹ Instead of the plural תמו, the BHS suggests reading the singular תם following 1QIsa^a, the LXX, the Syriac, and the Vulgate and this reading from 1QIsa^a seems preferable.

beginning of a new clause.⁴⁰ This temporal clause would then be understood as setting the scene for v 5: 'When the ruthless has ceased, when the destruction has ended, when the trampler has been destroyed from the earth, then will a throne be established in faithfulness etc.' Whereas vv 4b-5 claim that there will be a just and righteous Davidic judge in some indefinite future where there will be no more destruction, Zion is told in vv 3-4a to grant Moab a gracious ruling here and now. Because the establishment of the Davidic throne in some unknown future does not have a direct causal relationship to Zion's need to protect the Moabite refugees here and now, vv 4b-5 appear to be a later addition made to vv 1-4a with a concern that is related to vv 1-4a only in part. What is more, vv 4b-5 show a high degree of affinity with Isa 9:6 and 11:3-5 both in terms of shared words and thought.⁴¹ Seeing that the allusions to earlier words of Isaiah are concentrated in vv 4b-5, it seems likely that these verses were added to vv 1-4a using the catch word שר (שוֹרֵר from v 4a) as Vermeylen suggests.⁴² Having identified Isa 16:1-4a as a unit, we may now turn our attention to the actual contents of these verses.

Dating 16:1-4a is difficult as there are no obvious clues or historical data in these verses which point to a specific time. According to the hypothesis of the present

⁴⁰ In a similar way, the כִּי at the beginning of 29:20, which is very close to 16:4b in its structure and use of words, perhaps ought to be translated temporally too i.e. 'when the ruthless has ceased etc.' 29:18-19 looks forward to the future and it seems appropriate that 29:20, which seems as though it is an addition made to vv 18-19, should indicate when this future time would be. For a recent discussion on 29:15-24, Cf. C. Balogh, 'Isaiah 29:15-24' 48-69.

⁴¹ Williamson, *Variation*, 56-57. Williamson highlights the following similarities with 9:6: 'The language of establishing a throne, the language of "justice" and "righteousness" ... the reference to David while avoiding explicit use of the title "king," the fact that this will follow liberation from a time of oppression, and the fact that this figure is the recipient of these blessings, rather than their active initiator.' On similarities with 11:3-5, Williamson points to the theme of the future righteous and faithful judge. See also: R. Schultz, 'King in Isaiah' 149-150; Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice*, 59; S. Paas, *Creation*, 410.

⁴² Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 307-308.

study, however, these verses belong to the same programmatic layer as 14:1-2; 14:32b; 18:7, promoting more or less the same set of ideas. Therefore, if it can be demonstrated that 16:1-4a is in fact very close to the aforementioned passages, which have all been dated in the late-exilic period in the previous chapters due to their closeness in style and thought with Isa 40-55, the same late-exilic date may also be attributed to 16:1-4a, albeit with caution.

By the addition of 16:1-4a, Zion has been made the centre of the entire section devoted to Moab. Before our verses were added to the surrounding lament, Isa 15-16 was all about the devastation of Moab and the misery of the Moabite fugitives. Through the addition of 16:1-4a, where the Moabite fugitives are told to come to Zion with a gift and ask for protection, the surrounding lament has been dropped to the background and the strength and the dependability of Zion has been brought to the fore. This is a pattern we have observed in the previous chapters on Isa 14:1-2; 14:32b; 18:7.⁴³ Within this overarching pattern, Moab is now just one of many nations that wish to attach themselves to YHWH's people (14:1-2). Just like the doom of Philistia in 14:28-32, the sorry state of Moab in chs 15-16 is in effect used only to stress the stability of Zion. In the same way YHWH's protection of his people in Zion (the city established by YHWH himself) is extended to the Philistines in 14:32b, the afflicted of Moab are also here invited to hide under the shelter of the city. Further, in the same way the once subdued Cushites will bring a tribute to Zion in 18:7 (in recognition of YHWH's

⁴³ Admittedly, 14:25 already alluded to Jerusalem/Judah before 14:1-4a was added. Nevertheless, this does not nullify the fact that the addition of the vision in 14:1-2 certainly turned the focus of chs 13-14:25 from the fall of the enemies of YHWH's people to the restoration and elevation of the people of Israel and their land.

sovereignty), Moab is here advised to send a gift to Zion as a sign of its subordination under Zion's rule. It is evident that 16:1-4a promotes virtually the same set of ideas as 14:1-2; 14:32b; 18:7 and therefore fits comfortably in the pattern observed in these passages. For want of evidence contrary to this conclusion, it may be assumed that 16:1-4a belongs to the same late-exilic layer as 14:1-2; 14:32b; 18:7.

5-3: Position of Isaiah 16:1-4a

It may at this point be worth dealing with the question of why 16:1-4a might have been written in its present position as opposed to say at the end of the earlier text of Isa 15-16 as was the case with other additions we have looked at so far – Isa 14:32b and 18:7. This question has so far not been answered (or even asked) by those who maintain that 16:1-5 is a later insertion to the surrounding poem. To answer this question, we may turn to Isa 15:9b and 16:13-14. There is little disagreement that the sudden 1st person speech (probably by YHWH) in 15:9b is not part of the original poem about Moab. We can, however, be relatively sure that 15:9b does not come from the same hand as 16:1-4a because the two passages appear to express ideas that are quite opposite to each other. In the former, further disasters are foretold even on the remnants of Moab. In the latter, Daughter Zion is told to hide the fugitives of Moab so they may be protected. It is rather interesting then that Isa 16:13-14, the form and the contents of which betray an appearance of an addition to an earlier text, expresses a

much similar thought as 15:9b. It could well be that both 15:9b and 16:13-14 come from the same writer. If this is true, this writer could have understood the original poem about Moab to have been in two parts – the second part beginning with the ‘we’ language in 16:6 – and decided to make additions at the ends of both halves.

If one is right to date 16:1-4a in the late-exilic period, it is probable that 15:9b and 16:13-14 were added before 16:1-4a was written, perhaps towards the end of the pre-exilic period. 16:13-14, with its specific time frame of three years, gives the impression that Moab as an actual political entity is being spoken of and there are no signs of Moab being treated symbolically (for instance as a symbol for the enemies of YHWH and his people). It is then unlikely for the hostile words of 15:9b and 16:13-14 against Moab to have been written after 16:1-4a was added when the nation was probably either struggling to survive or had already ceased to exist.⁴⁴

Therefore, if the writer of Isa 16:1-4a also saw the bipartite structure of the Moab oracle, which would have been made all the clearer with the additions of 15:9b and 16:13-14 by this time, it does not seem so arbitrary that the addition of 16:1-4a was made between the two halves of the earlier text.⁴⁵ Additionally, because 16:13-14 may have seemed more conclusive than 15:9b, it could have been thought that it was smoother to add the words of 16:1-4a in the present position.

⁴⁴ See the similar language in 21:16-17.

⁴⁵ Of course, 14:1-4a is also written in between the two large poems before and after it although the two poems surrounding 14:1-4a are admittedly rather more distinct from each other than 15:1-9a is from 16:6-12.

5-4: Isaiah 16:4b-5

We have already identified 16:4b-5 as a separate addition to 16:1-4a on the basis of the observation that its vision seems temporally removed from 16:1-4a to a certain extent. In addition to casting the text's perspective to some indeterminate future, the inclusion of vv 4b-5 has also made a slight adjustment to the central focus of 16:1-5. As was discussed earlier, before the addition of Isa 16:4b-5, the chief topic of 16:1-4a was the firmness and the dependability of Zion. At the insertion of vv 4b-5, nevertheless, the emphasis has moved from Zion as a whole to the future Davidic ruler in Zion. The protection to be granted to the Moabites by Zion is now linked to the just character of this Davidic ruler. Zion will be able to exercise what is demanded of it in vv 3-4a when this ruler's throne is established. This much is clear. However, there is a degree of uncertainty regarding the exact nature of this ruler.

Isaiah 16:5

וְהָיָה בְּחֶסֶד כִּסֵּא וְיָשָׁב עָלָיו בְּאַמֶּת בְּאֵהָל דָּוִד שֹׁפֵט וְדָרַשׁ מִשְׁפָּט וּמִהָרָה צֶדֶק

(Then a throne will be established in steadfast love, and on it will sit in faithfulness, in the tent of David, a judge, who both⁴⁶ seeks justice and is skilled⁴⁷ in righteousness.)

⁴⁶ Both Dillmann and Gray point out that וְ...וְ means 'both...and.' Dillmann, *Jesaja*, 156; Gray, *Isaiah*, 291. Gray points to BDB 253a. Therefore, what follows שֹׁפֵט is its description.

⁴⁷ The word מְהִיר probably means 'skilled,' as Delitzsch claims: 'מְהִיר heißt wer eine Sache äußerlich und geistig mit Leichtigkeit bemeistert.' Delitzsch, *Jesaja*, 226. This view finds support from Ullendorff's study of the word in Ethiopic. Ullendorff, *South Semitics*, 195. See also: W. McKane, *Wise Men*, 31-34.

The precise meaning of אהל דוד (the tent of David) is especially unclear. This exact expression only appears here in the HB. What is not so apparent is whether אהל here has an intended overtone of YHWH's sanctuary.⁴⁸ Those who think that it does tend to assume that the tent David pitched for the ark of God in 2Sam 6:17 is alluded to here. A greater significance seems to have been placed on David's tent for the ark, however, when its account is retold in 1Chr 15-16, and it is this account from the Chronicler that seems to display a closer connection with Isa 16:5. The tent's association with David is emphasized by the Chronicler by stating twice in 1Chr 15-16 that it was David who had pitched this tent (1Chr 15:1; 16:1). Moreover, it is told both in 2Sam 6:14 and 1Chr 15:27 that David was wearing an Ephod, a priestly garment, while the ark was being brought to his city. If one is right to see in Isa 16:5 the allusion to the tent which David pitched for the ark of God, it is perhaps possible to claim that the Davidic ruler in this verse sounds a subtle priestly tone. In further support of this priestly context, Williamson argues that some of the description of the Davidic figure in Isa 16:5 may reflect priestly scribal characteristics by comparing מִהָרַם צֶדֶק and דָּרַשׁ מִשְׁפָּט (skilled in righteousness) with לְדַרֵּשׁ אֶת תּוֹרַת יְהוָה (to seek the law of YHWH) in Ezr 7:10, and סֹפֵר מִשְׁפָּט בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה (a scribe skilled in the law of Moses) in Ezr 7:6, as well as סֹפֵר מִהָרַם (a skilled scribe) in Ps 45:2.⁴⁹ Since the priestly context of the Davidic Messiah is commonly associated with the post-exilic period, the priestly nuance of the Davidic ruler of Isa 16:5 would lend an additional support to our hypothesis that vv 4b-5 is a yet later addition made to our late-exilic passage 16:1-4a.

⁴⁸ Those who think it does: M. Weinfeld, *Social Justice*, 58; Williamson, *Variations*, 61; D. Janthial, *L'oracle de Nathan*, 167-168; Greg Goswell, 'David in Amos' 254. Those who do not: Sabine Nägele, *Laubhütte Davids*, 41-42, 200, 211-212; Michael Homan, *Tents*, 19-20. Note especially Williamson's observation that one might have expected in place of אהל דוד a reference to David's house or palace in light of Ps 132:3, where there is a mention of David's 'tent of my house' (בֵּיתִי בָאֵהָל).

⁴⁹ Williamson, *Variation*, 60-61.

It may be somewhat puzzling to see this (almost eschatological) vision about the future Davidic ruler in 16:4b-5 written in the middle of an oracle concerning Moab.⁵⁰ Before we conclude the present chapter, here are some speculations on this matter. First, the Davidic genealogy at the end of the Book of Ruth presents us with a possibility that there existed a known Moabite family tie in David's ancestry. That David sent his parents to the king of Moab for protection in 1 Sam 22:3-4 is often used to support this.⁵¹ Therefore, one may wonder if this tradition served as one of the reasons why Isa 16:4b-5 might have been written following Isa 16:1-4a. Just as Ruth found refuge under YHWH's wings at a time of trouble and became an ancestor of King David, so should the Moabites, at a time of great national calamity, seek refuge in Zion, where there will once again be a David-like king.⁵²

Second, those responsible for Isa 16:4b-5 might have been influenced by 2 Sam 8:2, which says that the Moabites became David's servants and tributaries after he had defeated them. On seeing how Moab is told to send a tribute to Zion (and not Samaria! Cf. 2Kgs 3:4) in Isa 16:1, the learned scribe who wrote of Isa 16:4b-5 could have been

⁵⁰ Williamson calls it 'a "maverick" messianic passage within the book of Isaiah.' Williamson, *Variation*, 62.

⁵¹ Joüon, *Ruth*, 96.

⁵² It is surprising how none of the commentators who mention the book of Ruth when discussing Isa 15-16 mention the genealogies that refer to King David at the end of the book. There are two genealogies, one very brief and the other longer, that lead up to David. The second of the two genealogies is widely regarded a late, appendix-like addition to the book and the first is not without dispute. This uncertainty, perhaps, prevented the commentators from allowing the occurrence of David at the end of Ruth to influence their understanding of Isa 16:4b-5. Concerning Jesse and David at the end of Ruth 4:17, however, Bush notes how the book anticipates, and prepares for David from its start. The book describes the family of Elimelech as 'Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah.' For Bush, it is no accident that 1 Sam 17:12 says, 'Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah named Jesse, who had eight sons etc.' Bush, *Ruth*, 265.

reminded of the time when Moab was David's tributary. Just as they used to offer David tributes, so should they once again offer a tribute to Zion, where the Davidic throne will be re-established in the future.

5-5: Summary and conclusion

The analysis of the parallel verses in Isa 15-16 and Jer 48 suggests that the main poem in Isa 15-16 is older than its counterpart in Jer 48 and therefore if there ever was a direct borrowing of materials from one book to another it must be Jer 48 that is dependent on Isa 15-16. Therefore, the absence of Isa 16:1-5 in Jer 48 is telling with regard to the question of the verses' original unity with the surrounding poem. That Isa 16:1-2 shows an awareness of Jer 48:28 makes it all the more probable that Isa 16:1-5 is a later addition to an earlier oracle. This conclusion coheres with the perceived differences in style and subject matter between Isa 16:1-5 and the poem that surrounds it. Additionally, there are noticeable contrasts between 16:1-4a and 16:4b-5, the latter passage belonging to the post-exilic period in all likelihood. All these observations support the hypothesis that 16:1-4a constitutes a separate compositional unit.

Moreover, the thoughts expressed in 16:1-4a repeat the redactional pattern traced in 14:1-2; 14:32b; 18:7 where earlier texts about the fall of different nations are used to stress the stability and elevated status of (restored) Zion. It is likely therefore

that 16:1-4a belongs to the same layer as 14:1-2; 14:32b; 18:7 – the layer which is dated in the late-exilic period by the present study.

We have now examined all the passages belonging to the hypothetical late-exilic layer in Isa 13-23 that are positive towards the nations. It has so far been observed how the vision laid out in 14:1-2 was found to have been programmatically applied to the oracles concerning Philistia, Moab, and Cush. The following three chapters will deal with the passages in the same late-exilic layer in Isa 13-23 that remain negative towards the nations. These chapters will seek to demonstrate how the woeful outlook of 14:26-27 can be traced in the oracles concerning Egypt and Tyre in 19:16-17; 23:8-9, 11 and how identifying these passages as also belonging to the same late-exilic layer helps to explain the current shape of the oracles.

Chapter 6: Introducing the theme of YHWH's plan against the nations

(Isaiah 14:26-27)

Isa 14:24-27 is a passage that is much discussed among critics for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the passage's mention of Assyria at the end of a long section dedicated to the fate of Babylon (13:1-14:23) in the present form of the book has attracted a large amount of scholarly attention. Another feature of 14:24-27 that has generated much interest in the passage is its close association with various materials in ch 10. Not only is the anti-Assyrian tenor of 14:24-25 generally akin to a number of passages in ch 10, but also what appears to be a gloss in 14:25b specifically echoes 10:27. Lastly, the original unity of 14:24-27 is sometimes called into question and some critics believe that vv 26-27 are a later addition to vv 24-25a.

All these aspects of 14:24-27 are tightly related to the hypothesis of the present study which dates the whole of 14:4b-25a in the pre-exilic period but regards 14:26-27 as belonging to a late-exilic redactional layer. It was postulated earlier in chapter 2 of this study that the whole of 14:4b-25a once formed an anti-Assyrian section together with 10:5-15 (except vv 10-11) sometime in the pre-exilic period before various intervening materials increased the gap and weakened the connection between 10:5-15 and 14:4b-25a. It was also argued that the accidental alteration of 'Assyria' to 'Babylon' in 14:22, which would have taken place after 14:1-4a was added, left the reference to Assyria in 14:25 looking somewhat abrupt and isolated. Because the question of

whether or not 14:26-27 was a separate addition to the preceding verses plays an important part in the overall hypothesis of the present study, the passage demands a careful examination. The results of this examination will help one to judge if the proposed hypothesis adequately explains the current shape of 14:24-27. The arguments in support of identifying 14:26-27 as a separate addition will be presented first before the question of the passage's date is tackled.

6-1: Seeing Isaiah 14:26-27 as a separate addition

Irrespective of whether any of 14:24-27 goes back to Isaiah the 8th Century prophet,¹ it is accepted by many scholars that Assyria in 14:25 refers to the historical empire.² This is why 14:24-27 (except the gloss in v 25b) is often dated in the pre-exilic

¹ It is not in the interest of the present study to discern whether or not Isa 14:24-25a is from Isaiah ben Amoz but some of those who claim the whole of Isa 14:24-27 (except 14:25b) to be from the prophet are: Childs, 'Assyrian' 38-39; Dietrich, *Politik*, 120-121; Dillmann, *Jesaia*, 141 (a part of the prophet's own notes made during the time of Sennacherib on his own writing from the time of Sargon); Donner, *Völkern*, 146; Duham, *Jesaia*, 122-123; Fischer, *Isaias*, 122; Huber, *Jesaja*, 47-48; B. Levine, 'Assyrian Ideology' 420; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 566-567; J. Jensen, 'Yahweh's Plan' 448.

² While this view is popular, there are some critics who see the origin of the text in significantly different ways: For Kaiser, the whole of 14:24-27 (except 14:25b) was originally a post-exilic piece written as a conclusion for 10:1-14. It was later displaced and included in the oracles concerning the nations because the collection lacked an oracle about Assyria. Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 45-48. Wolfgang Werner does not understand Assyria in Isa 14:25 to be the historical empire but rather a typological enemy of God. He dates the whole of Isa 14:24-27 towards the end of the Persian period and he thus sees no historical problem with having Assyria mentioned together with Babylon. Werner, *Plan Jahwes*, 33-35. Gosse, who believes that Isa 13:1-14:23 was written by Trito Isaiah, argues that Trito-Isaiah also wrote Isa 14:24-27. Gosse sees how the Niphal of שבע appears as YHWH's oath in Isa 14:24; 45:23; 54:9; and 62:8. He notes that, in 45:23 and 54:9, the speeches are in the 1st person whereas, in 14:24 and 62:8, they are in the 3rd person. Coupled with the fact that Isa 14:24-27 comes immediately after Isa 13:1-14:23, which he understands to be written by Trito Isaiah, Gosse concludes that Isa 14:24-27 is also written by Trito Isaiah. On formal grounds alone, however, 14:24, with its לא א formula, appears to be closer to Isa 5:9, as Childs demonstrates (Childs, 'Assyrian' 38-39), than Isa 62:8. Gosse, 'Isaie 14:24-27' 17. Following Werner, Charis Fischer dates 14:24-27 in the post-exilic period. For Fischer, however, 14:24, 26-27 once formed one saying and 14:25a was later inserted to create a connection with 10:5-15. Again, Assyria is used as a type for YHWH's enemies. C. Fischer, *Fremdvölkersprüche*, 131-139. P. W. Skehan interestingly

period. There are, however, a small number of exegetes who argue that vv 26-27 are a later expansion on vv 24-25a.³ V 25b, which is almost unanimously regarded as a gloss, will be looked at after investigating whether vv 26-27 can be seen as a separate addition to vv 24-25a.

The details of the solemnly sworn plan of YHWH in v 24 are spelt out in v 25a.

Isaiah 14:25a

לְשֹׁבֵר אַשּׁוּר בְּאַרְצִי וְעַל־הָרֵי אֲבוֹסָנִי

(... to crush the Assyrian in my land and on my mountains I will trample him down...)

YHWH is going to destroy the Assyrians who have presumably encroached on YHWH's land. The reference to YHWH's mountains in parallel with his land points strongly to mount Zion.⁴ The picture is that of YHWH thwarting an Assyrian invasion of Jerusalem.⁵ Thus YHWH's plan in vv 24-25a is specifically about the destruction of the Assyrian invaders attacking Jerusalem. The event of 701 readily comes to mind and

assumes that the difficult text of Isa 8:21-22 may originally have been from between Isa 14:25a and 14:25b. Skehan, 'Problems' 48-49.

³ Clements, 'Isaiah 14:22-27' 255-257; A.K. Jenkins, 'Isaiah 13-23' 240-241; Zapff, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 291. Vincent Eareckson regards only v 27 as a later comment in the wisdom style. Eareckson, 'Isaiah XIV 27' 490-491. Vermeylen believes v 26 and v 27 were added separately to vv 24-25a. Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 261-262.

⁴ The mountain of YHWH would refer to Zion. However, the plural הָרֵי 'my mountains' to refer to mount Zion is unusual but not unprecedented in the HB. One finds the expression הָרֵי צִיּוֹן ('the mountains of Zion') in Ps 133:3, הָרֵי קֹדֶשׁ ('holy mountains') to refer to Zion in Ps 87:1, as well as יְרוּשָׁלַם הָרִים סְבִיב לָהּ ('Jerusalem, mountains are roundabout her') in Ps 125:1.

⁵ M. Hom, *Assyrians in Isaiah*, 62.

it is quite possible that the event is behind the writing of vv 24-25a as many assume.⁶

This plan, nevertheless, finds a new scope in v 26.

Isaiah 14:26

זֹאת הָעֵצָה הַיְעוּצָה עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ וְזֹאת הַיָּד הַנְּטוּיָה עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם

(This is the plan that is planned against the whole earth and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.)

Of course, the phrase *כל הארץ* could also mean 'the whole land of a single country' and need not necessarily mean 'the whole earth' as conventionally understood. The phrase *כל הגוים* ('all the nations'), which is in parallel with *כל הארץ*, nonetheless, clarifies that the whole earth beyond *בארצי* ('in my land') and all the nations beyond Assyria in v 25 are in view.⁷ YHWH's plan now concerns the whole earth and all the nations. Although one is naturally inclined to suppose that the plan (*עצה*) in v 26 is the same plan which YHWH planned (*יעץ*) in vv 24-25a, the latter is clearly against the Assyrian invaders in Jerusalem and not against all the nations of the whole earth. What does it mean then that YHWH's plan to destroy the Assyrian invaders is the plan that is devised against all the nations? This is the exegetical difficulty that arises when one tries to interpret vv 26-27 within the closed frame of vv 24-27. One might argue that the destruction of Assyria in YHWH's land in v 25 is but one phase of YHWH's plan in v 24, and that this

⁶ Because 14:24-25a appears to look back to the event of 701, it is probable that these verses do not go back to Isaiah ben Amoz. Admittedly, it is difficult to date 14:24-25a with great precision. On one hand, our passage betrays some connection in its use of language with Isa 7:5, 7 and 8:10 (8:10 dependent on 7:5, 7), passages which were likely written in the post-exilic period. On the other hand, the direction of influence between 14:24-25a and these other passages is not absolutely clear. Given this uncertainty, it suffices to say for the present purpose that our passage was written sometime after 701 but before 14:26-27 was written in the late-exilic period, a dating which will be defended later in this chapter.

⁷ Those who argue thus: Clements, 'Isa 14:22-27' 255-256; Gonçalves, *Sennachérib*, 309; Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 226.

plan from the start concerned the whole earth. This may be so but the idea that there are multiple phases in YHWH's plan is neither explicit in v 24 nor explained in v 26. Others who assume that the whole of vv 24-27 (except v 25b) was written by the 8th Century prophet might claim that when viewed from the prophet's standpoint the destruction of Assyria could be seen to concern the whole earth.⁸ It is nevertheless unlikely that the image of YHWH's outstretched arm over all the nations in v 26b merely denotes the implications of the failed Assyrian invasion of Jerusalem for the nations. Furthermore, in what ways would the whole earth experience YHWH's hostile plan against them through the defeat of the Assyrian forces in Jerusalem?

This exegetical difficulty can be resolved when one adopts the view that vv 26-27 are a later addition to the previous verses. Perhaps, *זֶה* ('this') at the beginning of v 26 does not refer only to v 25a. Perhaps *זֶה* refers to the whole of 14:4b-25a – i.e. the fall of Assyria and Babylon (through 14:3-4a), the proud enemies of YHWH's people. Not only did the Assyrian invaders fail to capture Jerusalem, the cities of Assur and Nineveh themselves (and their monarch!) faced devastation in the past and the same fate now awaits Babylon.⁹ 'This' – that is, the destruction of the proud powers – is what is planned against all the nations in the whole earth. Therefore vv 26-27 is a reflection on the whole of 14:4b-25a. What YHWH has determined against the Assyrian invaders in the past (vv 24-25a) is a paradigm for all lofty and oppressive foreign powers and this is what is declared in vv 26-27. Just as Assyria met its doom in the past,

⁸ Duhm, *Jesaja*, 122-123.

⁹ See the reconstruction of the compositional history of Isa 13:1-14:25a in chapter 2 of the present study.

so will Babylon and all other similarly arrogant nations in the whole earth face YHWH's hostile hand against them.¹⁰

In partial support of the view that does not see 14:26-27 as belonging to the group of anti-Assyrian texts (of which 14:24-25a is a part) is the way the image of YHWH's outstretched arm is used in these verses. It is probable that this image was borrowed from the recurring refrain *ידו נטויה ופיו לא שב אפיו ועוד ידו נטויה* ('In all this his anger has not turned away but his arm is stretched out still.') found in Isa 5:25; 9:11, 16, 20; 10:4. As noted by some, while YHWH's outstretched arm is directed against his own people in all the said refrain's occurrences in the present form of the book, it is against the nations rather than YHWH's people in 14:26-27.¹¹ The punitive hand of YHWH that was against his own people for their evil has turned away from his people and is now against all the nations for their evil. This movement is somewhat obscured, however, if one regards 14:24-27 as an original unit and dates it in the pre-exilic period. This is because, in its original setting, YHWH's outstretched arm was not against his people. Rather, it was against the tormentors of YHWH's people.

Historically speaking, the main body of materials in which the said refrain is found – i.e. 9:7-20; 5:25-29 – originally concerned the future fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel probably in the context of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis before the

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that Blenkinsopp, for whom the Babylonian poems in ch 13-14 were intentionally juxtaposed with the Assyrian verses in 14:24-27, believes that the point of this juxtaposition was to show that 'the destruction of Babylon represents the fulfilment of the anti-Assyrian prophecies.' Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 289-290.

¹¹ Cf. Gonçalves, *Sennachérib*, 309; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 571.

break up and repositioning of 5:25-29 (10:1-4 does not belong to this body and the refrain in 10:4b is widely recognized as redactional). In this context, 5:25-29 which appears to spell out the ultimate end of the Northern Kingdom would have referred to an Assyrian attack. Therefore, here, as elsewhere in the 8th Century prophet's message (8:4), Assyria is the tool with which YHWH is going to punish the nations that threaten Judah. Now, if the whole of 14:24-27 belongs to the group of anti-Assyrian texts and was written in the pre-exilic period and perhaps even before the repositioning of 5:25-29, it is quite likely that the original historical context of 9:7-20; 5:25-29, the passages from which the image of YHWH's outstretched arm is taken, was still known to the writer of 14:24-27. If so, it may seem a little odd that YHWH's punishment of Assyria and that of all the nations is declared in the same breath. Surely, the decline of Assyria must have meant liberation for many nations that suffered under the empire's lordship.

If, however, 14:26-27 was written in the late-exilic period when the repositioning of 5:25-29 would have already taken place and the refrain in 10:4b was added, the aforementioned movement of YHWH's punitive hand turning away from his own people and being directed against the proud foreign powers would explain the use of the image in 14:26-27 well. At this period, Jacob or Israel would no longer have referred exclusively to the Northern Kingdom as is evident in Isa 40-49. The majority if not all of 9:7-10:4; 5:25-29 would have been read as texts addressing YHWH's people by the supposed late-exilic writer of 14:26-27. Based on YHWH's judgement on Assyria and the impending fall of Babylon, the writer is confident that YHWH's hostile hand which was against his own people in the former days, is now against every proud

nation in the whole earth. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that 14:26-27 is an addition to the preceding verses. We may now attend to the issues surrounding 14:25b.

That 14:25b is a gloss and that it echoes 10:27 is relatively clear and widely recognized.

Isaiah 14:25

לְשֹׁבֵר אֲשׁוּר בְּאַרְצִי וְעַל־הָרֵי אֲבוֹסָנִי וְסָר מֵעֲלֵיהֶם עָלֹו וְסָבְלוּ מֵעַל שְׁכָמוֹ יָסוּר

(... to crush the Assyrian in my land and on my mountains I will trample him down; and his yoke will depart from them and his burden will depart from their¹² shoulder.)

Isaiah 10:27

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יָסוּר סָבְלוֹ מֵעַל שְׁכָמֶךָ וְעָלֹו מֵעַל צִוְאָרְךָ וְחָבַל עַל מִפְגַּי־שָׁמֶן

(And it shall be in that day, his burden will depart from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck; and the yoke will be broken because of fatness.)

While the pronominal suffixes at the end of מעליהם and שכמם in 14:25b do not have an antecedent, the suffixes of שכמך and צווארך in 10:27 do have one as the whole of 10:24-27 speaks directly to YHWH's people in Zion. It is quite possible to postulate then that the author of 10:24-27 also wrote the gloss in 14:25b to stress what the destruction of the Assyrian invaders in Zion would mean to the inhabitants of the city. Now, 10:24-27 is itself a later reflection on 9:3 and the presence of the exodus tradition together with a

¹² Instead of שכמו, LXX, Syriac, Targum, Vulgate seem to have read שכמם, and although it is not all that clear, it appears that 1QIsa^a also has שכמם.

clear reference to the event of 701 points to the exilic period as the earliest possible date for 10:24-27 and 14:25b, but in any case these passages are evidently later than 14:24-25a. Having said all this, the important question for the present discussion is whether or not 14:25b is related to 14:26-27 in any important way.

First, it is relatively clear that 14:25b and 14:26-27 come from two different hands. While 14:25b is still dealing with the fall of Assyria, the following two verses are painting a larger picture which involves all the nations of the earth. Second, it seems somewhat irrelevant whether 14:26-27 was written before or after 14:25b. If v 25b was already present when vv 26-27 were written, the writer of the latter would have simply regarded the former as part of the larger section dedicated to the fate of Assyria (14:4b-25) and the gist of vv 26-27 would not have changed with or without v 25b. If v 25b came after vv 26-27 were written, the fact that the gloss was made at the end of v 25a and not v 27 would indicate that this glossator too viewed vv 26-27 as a passage no longer dealing primarily with Assyria.

6-2: Dating Isaiah 14:26-27

Having argued that 14:26-27 is an expansion on 14:4b-25a, the likeliest date for 14:26-27 will now be proposed. First of all, an explicit mention of YHWH's judgement of the nations all over the world is not found in Isaiah in the materials that are

commonly accepted to be from the pre-exilic period. One might argue that it is possible to find such sayings in 17:12-14; 29:7-8; 30:28. Some of these passages may indeed be dated in the pre-exilic period. Nevertheless, even if these passages are from the pre-exilic period they are either in the context of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis (17:12-14 in its current setting) or in the context of the event of 701 (29:7-8; 30:28; perhaps 17:12-14 in its original setting). The main focus of these passages is not YHWH's worldwide judgement of the nations per se. Rather, the emphasis is on YHWH's protection of Zion and the failure of the foreign attacks against the city. Unlike 14:26, the scene of YHWH's judgement of the nations is therefore Zion and not the nations' homelands. Although 'the nations' (גוֹיִם) feature in these passages, they refer to the specific nations that have attacked Jerusalem in the past and not the nations in the generic sense. Therefore, one finds the explicit references to YHWH's judgement of the whole world in the parts of the book that are from the exilic period or later and it is unlikely that 14:26-27 was written in the pre-exilic period.¹³

The two rhetorical מַי questions in 14:27 may provide us with a further clue with regard to the date of 14:26-27.

Isaiah 14:27

כִּי־יְהִינָה צָבָאוֹת יַעֲזֹז וּמִי יִפֹּר וְיִדּוּ הַנְּטוּיָה וּמִי יִשְׁכְּבָנָה

¹³ Other passages in chs 1-39 where YHWH's worldwide judgement of the nations is mentioned are 24:13; 34:2. These passages are widely regarded as being from the exilic period or later. Some wonder if 33:3 is from the pre-exilic period and predates the formation of ch 33 as a whole. Even if one supposes that 33:3 was originally written in the pre-exilic period, the verse seems to portray YHWH chasing away the foreign invaders (like 17:12-14) rather than YHWH destroying the nations in their lands.

(For the Lord of Hosts has planned; and who will annul [it]? And it is his arm that is stretched out; and who will turn it back?)

Stylistically speaking, if one leaves aside 23:8 (which is also part of the late-exilic redactional layer according to the present study's hypothesis), it is precisely in chs 40-49 alone in the book of Isaiah that one finds numerous examples of rhetorical מי questions that express YHWH's supremacy (40:14, 18, 25, 26; 41:2, 4, 26; 43:9,13; 44:7; 45:21; 46: 5; 48:14). The core message of these questions seems to have sprung from an anti-idol notion that is typified in 46:5.

Isaiah 46:5

למי תדמיני ותשוו ותמשלוני ונדמה

(To whom will you liken me and make equal, and compare me that we may be alike?)

Again, the mention of YHWH's plan in the middle of an anti-idol speech in 45:21, where a rhetorical מי question occurs, is noteworthy.

Isaiah 45:21

הגידו והגישו אף ינעצו יחדו מי השמיע זאת מקדם מאז הגידה הלא אני יהוה ואין עוד אלהים מבלי עדי אלה צדיק ומושיע אין זולתי

(Declare and bring near! Indeed let them plan together. Who has announced this from of old, told it from that time? Is it not I YHWH? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a saviour; there is none besides me.)

43:13 is particularly significant for the present discussion as there is much similarity in language between the verse and 14:27.

גם-מיום אָנִי הוּא וְאֵין מִיָּדִי מַצִּיל אֶפְעֵל וּמִי יִשְׁבְּרֶנָּה

(Even from the day, I am he. And there is none who can deliver from my hand; I will
act and who can turn it back?)

Just like these passages in chs 40-49, 14:27 highlights the fact that YHWH has no rivals.

Since YHWH who is supreme over all the earth has planned to judge the nations, no one can annul his plan. The closeness of thought and language between chs 40-49 and 14:27 is uncanny. It is quite possible then that the writer of 14:26-27 is closely related, if not identical, to the main author(s) of chs 40-55 and that 14:26-27 was written in the late-exilic period.

6-3: Summary and conclusion

It has been noted in this chapter that, unlike 14:24-25a which is about YHWH's protection of Zion from an Assyrian attack, 14:26-27 looks forward to YHWH's judgement of the whole world. In this respect, 14:26-27 is not an expansion only on 14:24-25a but on the whole of 14:4b-25a. Just as Assyria and its king were humbled in the past, so will Babylon and other proud nations. Moreover, 14:26-27's closeness to chs 40-49 in thought and language suggests that 14:26-27 together with 14:1-4a was written in the late-exilic period.

By surrounding 14:4b-25a – a collection of anti-Assyrian sayings – with 14:1-4a and 14:26-27, not only has the late-exilic redactor reapplied older words of judgement against Assyria to Babylon, the current archenemy of YHWH's people, but he has also shifted the focus of the whole section to Israel's return from the exile and the events leading up to it, namely Cyrus's imminent rise to world dominance. Subjugating kings, the Persian ruler will soon be victorious against every nation. The whole world will tremble before him and all this is part of YHWH's plan (41:1-6; 45:1-15). YHWH will punish Babylon and other proud nations through Cyrus the instrument of his plan. His victory against these nations is assured because none other than YHWH is behind him. By executing his judgement on the whole earth, YHWH will free his people and let the nations bring them back to their land and serve them. Therefore, 14:26-27 sets out the prerequisite for the vision of 14:1-2. The proud nations where YHWH's people are held as exiles must first be humbled. Only then will Israel, together with the gentile converts, return to Zion. Now through the addition of 14:1-4a and 14:26-27, the whole of 14:1-27 is all about the imminent return of YHWH's people from their exile following YHWH's judgement of the world powers through Cyrus whose success is all part of YHWH's plan for his people.

Moreover, as was mentioned in the introduction to the present study, the late-exilic redactional activities observed in 13:1-14:27 seem to introduce similar reshaping of the subsequent oracles concerning the nations by way of a paradigm. Just as the vision of 14:1-2 is applied to each of the oracles concerning Philistia, Moab, and Cush, what is set out in 14:26-27 is also found in the contexts of the oracles concerning Egypt

and Tyre. The following two chapters will examine the late-exilic editorial layer of these two oracles.

Chapter 7: Who planned this judgement against Tyre? (Isaiah 23:8-9, 11)

The oracle in Isa 23 is largely divided into two parts. The first is vv 1-14 and the second is vv 15-18. There are visible differences both in style and subject matter between the two. Stylistically speaking, the first is mostly poetry while the second, except the poem in v 16 which appears to be a quotation, is prose. The first is a lamentation over the fall of the general region of Phoenicia (both Sidon and Tyre) and the second speaks of the restoration only of Tyre. There is a widespread agreement that vv 15-18 seem temporally removed from vv 1-14, with the phrase *והיה ביום ההוא* ('And it shall be in that day'), a stereotypical opening of a later reflection in Isa 1-39.

The focus of the present chapter is on 23:8-9, 11, a set of verses that shows a strong relationship to Isa 14:26-27 with the coupling of YHWH's plan and his outstretched arm over the nations.¹ The primary aim of this chapter is to ask if Isa 23:8-9, 11 can be said to belong to the same late-exilic layer as 14:26-27. For this purpose, one must first understand how the whole of vv 1-14 is structured in order to explain the place and function of vv 8-9, 11 within vv 1-14.

The whole of Isa 23 is titled *משא צר* ('An oracle concerning Tyre') in v 1a. As well as the title in v 1a, vv 15-18, an obvious later addition to vv 1-14, also treats vv 1-14 as an oracle concerning Tyre. On closer inspection, however, the fall of Sidon appears to play just as important (if not more important) a role in vv 1-14 as that of Tyre. The

¹ Cf. Landy, 'Tyre' 240; Erlandsson, *Burden*, 98-99; Werner, *Plan Yahwes*, 34.

prominence of Sidon in these verses becomes more easily identifiable when one adopts a few emendations to the MT which will be suggested below where there are difficulties in the text. In fact, the more one observes the details of vv 1b-14, the more one receives the impression that these verses that speak of Tyre may be secondary to the rest of the poem. It appears that the poem was at one point about the fall of the Phoenician city Sidon and that the original poem was later revised to speak of the decline of another great Phoenician city Tyre. It looks as though the verses of our focus – 23:8-9, 11 – were written sometime during this process of the Sidon poem being reapplied to the fate of Tyre.

Therefore, the question about the shape of the original poem in vv 1-14 will be asked first in order to understand the role and function of vv 8-9, 11 within vv 1-14 before discussing the date of both vv 8-9, 11 and vv 15-18.

7-1: Original poem in Isaiah 23:1b-14

7-1-1: Was Isaiah 23:1b-14 originally about Sidon?

Duhm observes that, despite the title מִשַּׁע צֵר (An oracle concerning Tyre) in 23:1a, Tyre appears only twice (vv 5, 8) in vv 1b-14.² Sidon is, however, mentioned three times in this poem (vv 2, 4, 12). For Duhm, because the whole of v 5 is a

² Duhm, *Jesaja*, 166.

secondary addition, Tyre really appears only in v 8. Wondering why Sidon is spoken of more than Tyre if Tyre were the chief subject of the poem, Duhm postulates that the poem in Isa 23:1b-14 might have originally been a poem concerning Sidon. At some later point in time, for whatever reason, the Sidon poem was turned into one about Tyre and the superscription in v 1a was added sometime even later. In order for this hypothesis to work, Duhm wonders if v 8 originally had צידון which was either accidentally or deliberately replaced by צר by a scribe.³ While attempting to resolve the same oddity, Procksch finds the whole of vv 5-11 suspicious and regards them as a later addition.⁴ A similar conclusion is drawn in that, without vv 5-11, the poem would have originally been about Sidon only. Vermeylen, whose view is less extreme, sees the original poem to have been more or less made of vv 1-8, 10, 12, 14, and that it would have been an entirely secular lament over the fall of Sidon (probably suspecting the same change from צידון to צר in v 8 as Duhm and Marti).⁵ The insertion of vv 9, 11, for Vermeylen, shifts the focus of the poem to YHWH's global plan and action.

There are, nonetheless, those critics for whom it is natural to have the two great Phoenician cities mentioned together as their fate often went hand in hand.⁶ This is

³ So Marti, *Jesaja*, 179; and Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 162-167.

⁴ Procksch, *Jesaja*, 296.

⁵ Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 343.

⁶ König, *Jesaja*, 226; Skinner, *Isaiah*, 185; Lindblom, 'Tyros' 62-63; Schoors, *Jesaja*, 138-140; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 860; Erlandsson, *Burden*, 97-98; Katzenstein, *Tyre*, 134-135; Clements, *Isaiah*, 194; Childs, *Isaiah*, 165.

argued further by pointing out that צידון sometimes referred not just to the city but to the whole Phoenician region.⁷

It is worth setting two introductory questions at this point. First, it is true that various other Phoenician groups as well as Sidon are mentioned in this poem. We have בת תרשיש (daughter Tarshish) and יישי א (the inhabitants of the coastland). It might not be, therefore, strange but in fact natural that Sidon is also included here. Tyre, according to this view, is here only representative of the Phoenician region. Why, then, is it that when all the other Phoenician regions mentioned above (Sidon, Tarshish, and the inhabitants of the coastland) are addressed with direct commands in this poem (Sidon: vv 4, 12-[13]; Tarshish: vv 1, 10, 14; the inhabitants of the coastland: vv 2, 6) Tyre is not once spoken to directly?⁸ The suspicion raised by Duhm and others is not explained away satisfactorily by the argument that multiple Phoenician regions, including Sidon, are brought together in this poem. Second, if, on the other hand, one were to suppose that the change did occur from צידון to צר in v 8 in order to turn a poem about Sidon into one about Tyre, why are the other occurrences of צידון in vv 2, 4, 12 left unaltered?

We shall at this point turn to some of the textual issues of the poem which may shed some light on the questions raised so far.

⁷ Rudolph, 'Jesaja 23:1-14' 170; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 860; J. Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk*, 158; Erlandsson, *Burden*, 98; Tsirkin, 'Tartessian' 183-185.

⁸ V 13 has many textual issues but according to the reconstruction of the original form of the verse, which will be proposed later in this chapter, v 13 originally continued to address Sidon from v 12.

7-1-2: Textual emendations

The first issue involves vv 1, 4. The difficulties in each verse will be laid out first and a solution to both verses will be suggested thereafter.

Isaiah 23:1

מִשָּׂא צָר הֵילִילוּ אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ כִּי־שָׁדַד מִבַּיִת מִבּוֹא מֵאֶרֶץ כְּתִים נִגְלָה־לָמוֹ

The MT as it stands may be translated as ‘An oracle concerning Tyre. Howl, O ships of Tarshish, for it is destroyed so that there is no house, so that no one can enter in. From the land of Kittim it is revealed to them.’ The main difficulty is with the phrase *כי שדד מבית מבוא*. It is grammatically awkward. First of all, one would expect the subject to appear after *שָׁדַד* to indicate what it is that is destroyed. Instead, what we have are *בית* and *בוא*, both with *מן* to mean probably ‘without’ (Cf. GK §119y), thus rendering ‘without house, without entering in,’ perhaps explaining the extent of the destruction. Secondly, if one were to say ‘without house and without anyone entering in,’ a Waw in between *מבית* and *מבוא* would be expected (as in Hos 9:11; Zech 7:14; 9:8). If, however, ‘without any house to enter’ is what is meant, *מבית לבוא* would have been more natural. What makes this phrase all the more strange is the repetition of much of Isa 23:1 in v 14. There, *מעזכן* immediately follows *שָׁדַד* as the subject of the verb and this makes the view that *שָׁדַד* in v 1 should be understood as an impersonal verb somewhat unattractive.⁹ This is why some consider seeing *מבית* as a variant of *מבוא* (the LXX does not seem to reflect *מבית*), and others regard both words as a misreading of *מעזכן* (as in v.

⁹ For seeing *שָׁדַד* as an impersonal verb see Dillmann, *Jesaja*, 210. Van der Kooij sees a pattern of postponed clarifications in this poem. As for v 1, the subject of *שָׁדַד* is intentionally made known only in v 14. Van der Kooij, *Tyre*, 35-36. However, such delayed clarifications, in most cases, appear to be the product of textual corruption and later additions as it also seems to be the case here in vv 1, 4.

14).¹⁰ That the LXX does not seem to reflect מבית may simply be due to the freedom with which the LXX translated Isa 23:1-14.¹¹

There are, nevertheless, possibilities of making sense of מבוא with some emendations. Van der Kooij helpfully refers to Isa 24:10 where the MT has נִשְׁבְּרָה קִרְיָתָהּ. ¹² There, in the crushed town, every house is shut up/closed so no one may enter in. We could emend מבית to ביתם (as suggested by the BHS), suspecting a scribal error, and read כי שָׁדַד בֵּיתָם מְבֹא. This emendation would solve the problem of the lack of a subject as well as the unnatural style of מבוא. Although the suggested scribal error is certainly possible, the possibility is admittedly neither strong nor textually supported.¹³ What makes this reading unlikely is that one would be required to read הִלִּילוּ not as an imperative but as Qal perfect, whereas, in v 14 הִלִּילוּ is clearly an imperative.¹⁴ Thus one might be tempted to read בֵּיתָכֶם but it seems a little too distant from מבית. Alternatively, one could imagine some sort of a textual corruption having arisen from a scribal note on 24:10. Perhaps the words בית מְבֹא in 24:10 became faint or smudged, causing a scribe to write the words more clearly in the margin. When the scroll was being copied by a later scribe, these words are mistakenly understood to correct 23:1, the verse which incidentally happened to be in the column on the ‘wrong’ side of the margin. However, it seems simpler to imagine a Waw dropping out accidentally between מבית and מְבֹא.

¹⁰ For reading only מְבֹא: Duhm, *Jesaja*, 166; Bentzen, *Jesaja*, 178. For reading מְעֹזֶכֶן: Gray, *Isaiah*, 389.

¹¹ Cf. Van der Kooij, *Tyre*, 123-125.

¹² Van der Kooij, *Tyre*, 21.

¹³ The BHS refers to the Targum but the Targum seems to have paraphrased מבית.

¹⁴ Cf. Rudolph, ‘Jesaja 23’ 167-168.

The problem of the lack of the subject of שָׁדַד is nevertheless still present and we may now turn to v 4.

Isaiah 23:4

בוֹשִׁי צִידוֹן כִּי־אָמַר יָם מְעוֹז הָיָם לֵאמֹר לֹא־חָלָתִי וְלֹא־יָלַדְתִּי וְלֹא גִדַּלְתִּי בַחֳרִים רוֹמְמָתִי כְּתוּלוֹת

As far as the translation is concerned, this verse seems to offer no trouble. The MT may be translated as, 'Be ashamed, O Sidon, for the sea has spoken, the stronghold of the sea, saying: "I have not writhed or given birth. I have not reared young men or brought up young women."' The only minor peculiarity is that both יָם and מְעוֹז are masculine but the speech in the second half of the verse clearly suits a woman. It is interesting that 1QIsa^a has אָמְרָה instead of אָמַר treating יָם as a feminine noun. Wildberger sensibly regards this discrepancy as permissible in a figurative depiction.¹⁵ With regard to what might have been the original reading, אָמְרָה in 1QIsa^a seems preferable, as one can easily imagine how a scribe might not have appreciated the figurative language of the latter half of the verse and 'corrected' the perceived grammatical 'error.' The opposite process – that, a scribe, who, because he already knew the whole verse before writing it down, had decided to alter the verb ending – might be a little less likely.

¹⁵ Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 856.

The meaning of the verse, however, is less than straightforward. The second half of the verse is a speech of a childless woman. In what metaphorical way a stronghold can be likened to a barren woman is difficult to tell. Even if one were to identify a specific city that is referred to as מעוז הים, one is met with the trickier challenge of making sense of the relationship between its childlessness and Sidon's shame. For this reason, almost all commentators regard מעוז הים לאמר to be a gloss.¹⁶ Without מעוז הים, it appears that the sea is claiming barrenness, which could be a metaphorical way of speaking about the lack of trade between distant countries via the sea. Since Sidon's active business through the sea routes is described in vv 2b-3, one finds a natural relationship between the demise of that business and Sidon's shame. In some indirect way, Sidon's present sorry state with its trading prowess having come to an end is likened to the kind of shame a childless woman might have felt in the ancient world. This reading, then, suggests that v 12a is parallel to the present verse (v 4). In v 4a, Sidon is told to be ashamed, and in v 12a, she is told to exult no more. In v 4b, the sea speaks of never having conceived or having raised young men or young women (בתולות), and in v 12a, Sidon is called בתולת בת צידון (virgin daughter Sidon). It so happens that the speech of the woman in v 4b is something a בתולה might say. In addition, without מעוז הים, it is certainly possible, as some have suggested, that we might have here some traces of an ancient myth that the sea gave birth to the Phoenicians.¹⁷

¹⁶ There are a few who want to see Tyre meant by מעוז הים. Kissane, for example wishes to delete ים as dittograph and keep מעוז הים to mean Tyre. For him, Sidon here means the Phoenician region and this explains why Sidon ought to be ashamed for Tyre's barrenness. Kissane, *Isaiah*, 261. Also Cf. Lindblom, 'Tyros' 65, where Lindblom, who also sees מעוז הים to mean Tyre, explains the reason behind Sidon's shame is its inability to help Tyre. Both attempts, however, appear to have sprung from wanting to find Tyre where it is not mentioned.

¹⁷ Cf. Duhm, *Jesaia*, 167; Gray, *Isaiah*, 388.

We may now remember that in v 1, we lacked the subject of שָׁדָד. We have in v 4 the phrase מֵעוֹז הַיָּם which appears to be a gloss. Could it not be that מֵעוֹז הַיָּם is a misplaced phrase from v 1? We could imagine that at some point a scribe accidentally left out מֵעוֹז הַיָּם in v 1 between שָׁדָד and מִבֵּית (his eyes might have jumped from the מ of מֵעוֹז to מ of מִבֵּית) and writes the left out phrase in the margin. A later scribe, while copying the scroll sees מֵעוֹז הַיָּם in the margin and does not know where it ought to go. He sees the word יָם nearby in v 4, and reckoning מֵעוֹז הַיָּם either to have come from there, or to be a clarifying gloss, writes it after יָם.¹⁸ If we are correct about the misplacement of מֵעוֹז הַיָּם, and place the phrase back in v 1, first, it makes the metaphor in v 4 work, second, the syntax of v 1b is much more natural, and third, מֵעוֹז הַיָּם being very similar to מֵעוֹזָן in v 14, v 14 can now be seen as an abbreviated version of v 1b, functioning as a parallel verse forming some kind of an *inclusio*.

So far, three changes have been proposed: 1) we add מֵעוֹז הַיָּם after שָׁדָד in v 1; 2) we change אָמַר to אָמְרָה in v 4; 3) we remove מֵעוֹז הַיָּם from v 4. We now turn to v 2 for more emendations.

Isaiah 23:2-3

דָּמּוּ יֹשְׁבֵי אֵי סוּר צִידוֹן עֵבֶר יָם מִלְּאוֹן וּבְמִיָּם רַבִּים נָרַע שָׁחַר קָצִיר יְאוֹר תִּבְוֹאֶתָהּ וְתִהְיֶי סוּר גּוֹיִם

¹⁸ Cf. Leslie C. Allen, 'Cuckoos' 143-150; 'More Cuckoos' 69-73.

The MT, as it stands, may be translated thus: 'Wail, O inhabitants of the coastland! The merchant Sidon, crossing the sea, has filled you; and on many/great waters, the seed of Shihor, the harvest of the Nile, was her revenue, and she was the profit of the nations.'¹⁹ Before we discuss the possibility of making two emendations, the phrase סַחַר צִידוֹן, which is usually translated 'merchant of Sidon,' may be dealt with first. The issue at hand is with determining the antecedents of תְּבוּאָתָהּ (her revenue/income) and וְהִיא (and she was) in v 3, which is not straightforward. The MT sees the final ה of תְּבוּאָתָהּ as a feminine suffix. Seeing how the MT reads מְלֹאֲכָהּ, the feminine suffix of which probably refers to אֵי (grammatically awkward as it is), it appears that the MT sees the same antecedent for the final ה of תְּבוּאָתָהּ because v 2 speaks about the gain of אֵי יֹשְׁבֵי אֵי through סַחַר צִידוֹן. For the MT, וְהִיא could, then, either refer to אֵי or תְּבוּאָתָהּ.²⁰ However, סַחַר of צִידוֹן does not have to be in the construct. We could read צִידוֹן appositionally i.e. 'the merchant Sidon.'²¹ In this case, because one is concerned with Sidon that is likened to a merchant and not with a certain merchant of Sidon, it seems possible that the following suffixes that have been mentioned above refer to it in the 3rd feminine singular. Admittedly, the picture would have been simpler if סַחַר were סַחֲרָה but this feminine form is rare in the HB (only appearing in Ezek 27:12, 16, 18).

Moving on to suggesting emendations, the problem with the MT is that סַחַר צִידוֹן (the merchant Sidon) is the subject of both the singular participle of עָבַר and the plural

¹⁹ For translating דָּמָו 'Wail!' when it is usually rendered 'Be silent!' see Dahood, 'Textual' 400-403; BDB II דָּמָו; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 855; Cf. Gray's rejection of this suggestion first proposed by Delitzsch. Gray, *Isaiah*, 389.

²⁰ Cf. Delitzsch, *Jesaja*, 276.

²¹ Cf. Dahood, 'Textual' 403-404.

(Piel) perfect of מלא, leaving us with a number disagreement. For Dillmann, מלא is in the plural because סחר (seeing it to be in the construct) has a collective meaning here.²² This, however, does not explain why עבר is in the singular. Further, the singular suffix of מלאך, whether one follows the MT vocalisation and sees it to be feminine or not, ought to refer to ישבי אי, which is in the plural. Thus many before the discovery of the DSS suspected that perhaps a כ and a ו were switched around and that we should therefore read מלאכיו (whose messengers i.e. messengers of סחר). This means סחר צידון is in the vocative and 'the messengers' become the subject of עברים (ים plus עבר): 'Wail, O inhabitants of the coastland [and] the merchant Sidon, whose messengers travel.' This direction of thought later received support from 1QIsa^a which reads סחר צידון עברו ים מלאכיה (O merchant Sidon, your messengers [i.e. traders] have crossed the sea...)²³ Reed Lessing, however, defending the reading of the MT, points out how the root מלא 'to fill' is used in Ezek 27:25 in a much similar way.²⁴ The MT reads as follows:

Ezekiel 27:25

אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ שָׁרוּתֶיךָ מֵעָרְבֶךָ וּתְמָלְאֵי וּתְכַבְּדֵי מְאֹד בְּלִבְ יָמִים

(The ships of Tarshish travelled for you [with] your merchandise. So you were filled and made abundant in the heart of the seas.)

If we did not have the reading of 1QIsa^a, one would have been tempted to assume a grammatical error (the singular suffix of מלאך instead of a plural suffix) or that the antecedent of מלאך is אי and not ישבי אי (which would be unusual but not

²² Dillmann, *Jesaja*, 211; so also Lessing, 'Tyre' 96.

²³ It is interesting to note that 1QIsa^b has מכאך.

²⁴ Lessing, 'Tyre' 96.

impossible) as Delitzsch tries to explain the MT.²⁵ However, the reading from 1QIsa^a makes good sense and it seems as though at some point מלאכך was miscopied and turned into מלאוך (כ may have been left out first, and י and ו are easily confused), and perhaps later copyists and translators tried to make a number agreement either by removing the Waw from עברו, making it singular (the MT), or saw that a Yod needed to be added to סחר, making it plural (the LXX and the Targum). We see Sidon being told to be ashamed for the barrenness of the sea in v 4, and if indeed vv 2b-3 are concerned with Sidon's merchandising strength on great waters in the past, we have a nice contrast between vv 2b-3 and v 4.

Therefore the two emendations following 1QIsa^a are: 1) change עברו to עבר; and 2) change מלאוך to מלאכך.

Before we move to the textual difficulties in other verses, here is the emended consonantal text of vv 1b-4.

Isaiah 23:1b-4

1 הילילו אניות תרשיש

כי שדד מעוז הים מבית מבוא

מארץ כתים נגלה למו

2 דמו ישבי אי

²⁵ Delitzsch, *Jesaja*, 276. For the examples of the predicate agreeing with the genitive and not the ruling construct noun, Cf. GK § 146a.

סחר צידון עברו ים מלאכיך

3 ובמים רבים זרע שחר קציר יאור תבואתה

ותהי סחר גוים

4 בושי צידון

כי אמרה ים לאמר

לא חלתי ולא ילדתי

ולא גדלתי בחורים רוממתי בתולות

(1. Howl O ships of Tarshish! For the stronghold of the sea is destroyed so that there is no house or anyone entering in. From the land of Kittim it is revealed to them.

2. Wail O inhabitants of the coastland! O merchant Sidon, your messengers/traders have crossed the sea,

3. and on many/great waters, the seed of Shihor, the harvest of the Nile, was her revenue, and she was the profit of the nations.

4. Be ashamed, O Sidon, for the sea has spoken saying, 'I have not writhed or given birth. I have not reared young men or brought up young women.')

The emended text of vv 1b-4 makes clearer the focus of these verses. Verses 2b-4 speak of the humbled state of once prosperous Sidon. If it were not for the superscription in v 1a, there would be no reason to think that Tyre was the city destroyed in v 1b. Although the ships of Tarshish are called to howl and the coastland

inhabitants are told to wail, the shame of Sidon appears to be the dominant topic of these verses.

Another suggestion for emendation is found in v 7a where we have the phrase עליזה הזאת לכם in the MT which may be translated as 'Is this your exultant (one)?' עליזה here seems like an abbreviation for העליונה (cf. Zeph 2:15). Although it does not appear impossible not to have a definite article (cf. GK §126z f.n. 1), it is more plausible that 1QIsa^a, which has העליונה, preserves an earlier reading.²⁶

V 10 is another verse in which the meaning is unclear.

Isaiah 23:10

עברי ארצך כנאָר בת־תרשיש אין מִזַּח עוֹד

The MT may be translated as follows: 'Cross over your land like the Nile O daughter Tarshish! There is no more girdle.' It is hard to understand what it means for Tarshish to cross its land as one would cross the Nile. The first line of this verse could also be understood to mean: 'Overflow your land like the Nile O daughter Tarshish!' This sense is, nevertheless, just as difficult as the former translation. One notices here that the spelling for the Nile (יֵאֵר) is different to that in v 3, יֵאֵר. Furthermore, the *Vorlage* of the LXX of v 10a perhaps read עבדי ארצך כי ארבת תרשיש (Serve your land

²⁶ So Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 856.

because the boats of Tarshish) as Michael Barré suggests.²⁷ Based on this hypothetical reading, Barré then wonders if the original text of v 10a read: עברי ארצך כי אבדת תרשיש (Cross over to your land because Tarshish has perished). According to this reading, the verse would be speaking of the destruction of Tarshish. There is, however, a more attractive solution. First of all, if עברי ארצך means 'cross over back to your land,' we would expect to see אל after עברי. BDB for this reason calls ארצך the accusative of location, i.e. 'cross your land.' Therefore many suggest reading עבדי (i.e. 'Work/till your land!') instead of עברי following the LXX and 1QIsa^a and this suggestion seems correct.

²⁸ Next, the BHS suggests deleting כיאר because it is regarded as dittograph. Indeed, the end of עברי and the beginning of ארצך (i.e. עבר[א]רצך) can make up the word יאר. This would explain why we have יאר in v 10 and יאור in v 3. Moreover, without כיאר, the sense of the verse is much clearer: עבדי ארצך בת תרשיש אין מזה עוד (Till your land O daughter Tarshish! There is no more [city/harbour]). Although the meaning of מזה is still somewhat ambiguous in this hypothetical reading, one may postulate that the dittography (יאר) occurred under the influence of the mention of the Nile in v 3. As for the word מזה, the meaning 'girdle' hardly suits the present context and two popular solutions may be stated here. The majority view is to change מזה to מחו (alternative spelling for מחו city/harbour) and the alternative is to follow Lindblom and Wildberger and understand מזה as an Egyptian loanword for something to do with ship-building (i.e. a ship or a shipyard).²⁹ Fortunately, not much is at stake since both possibilities provide us with similar meanings. Nevertheless, the meaning 'city/harbor' seems to be

²⁷ Barré, 'Isaiah 23,10' 115-119. This reconstruction seems more plausible than the one proposed by Duhm and Wildberger, according to which כי אניות תרשיש turned into כיאר בת תרשיש. Duhm, *Jesaja*, 169; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 857.

²⁸ Cf. Van der Kooij, *Tyre*, 137-138 for the opposite view.

²⁹ Lindblom, 'Tyros' 66-67; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 857.

more appropriate in the present context because the likely referent of the word in question is the whole city (whether it is Tyre or Sidon) whose destruction is lamented throughout the poem. The emended verse is as follows: עבדי ארצך בת תרשיש אין מחז עוד (Till your land O daughter Tarshish! There is no more city/harbour!).

7-1-3: Indirect treatment of Tyre

As was mentioned earlier, one of the main characteristics of this poem in Isa 23:1b-14 is its frequent use of imperatives. The ships of Tarshish are told to howl in vv 1, 14. The inhabitants of the coastland are commanded to wail in v 2. Sidon is to be ashamed in v 4. The inhabitants of the coastland are told to cross over to Tarshish and wail in v 6. Daughter Tarshish is advised to till her land in v 10. The virgin daughter Sion is instructed not to exult any more (though not an imperative but an imperatival infinitive absolute) and to arise and cross over to Kittim in v 12. As this list shows, these commands directed to different Phoenician members are found across the whole poem. It is, then, all the more striking that not one of these commands is made to Tyre. Furthermore, the ships of Tarshish, the inhabitants of the coastland, the merchant Sidon, Sidon, and daughter Tarshish are all addressed in the vocative. Tyre, however, is not once in the vocative. In the two places where Tyre appears (vv 5, 8), Tyre is only spoken of and not spoken to.

Sweeney points out that in this poem, one finds a pattern where a series of commands to lament are (mostly) followed by reasons for lament.³⁰ It will, again, be noted in this light that when Tyre is mentioned clearly by name (in vv 5, 8) the misfortune of Tyre is seen as a somewhat indirect reason for lament. In v 1b, the reason behind the command to howl is said to be the destruction of a certain stronghold of the sea. If it were not for the superscription in v 1a, one would not think of Tyre as the said stronghold. In v 2, the command to wail is linked with the former glory of Sidon. In v 4, Sidon is called to be ashamed because of the sea declaring her barrenness i.e. the lack of business in the sea. Now, the writhing of those in Egypt at the report about Tyre in v 5 is joined to v 4 rather than beginning with another command (perhaps one could imagine the verse opening with a command: 'Writhe, O Egypt, when the report comes...').

In fact, v 5 is almost unanimously understood to be a later addition.

Isaiah 23:5

כְּאֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַע לְמַצָּרִים יִחִילוּ כְּשָׁמַע צָר

(When the report comes to Egypt, they will writhe at the report about Tyre.)

The reasons are as follows. First, the verse lacks parallelism and seems instead to be a brief prose text intended to serve as an added comment in reference to Shihor and the

³⁰ Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 302-305.

Nile in v 3.³¹ It is in fact strange that מצרים, which is only referred to indirectly by the Egyptian rivers Shihor and Nile in v 3, should be mentioned in a poem about the Phoenician region. This oddity is all the clearer when the subject of the verb יחילו (they shall writhe) is most likely to be the people of Egypt. Moreover, the verse is only loosely attached to vv 3-4 through the mention of the Egyptian waters in v 3 and the use of the word חיל in v 4. It was noted earlier how the poem obeys the pattern of direct command(s) being followed by the reasons for the command(s). Verse 5 does not fit in this pattern. It neither serves as another reason for the command for Sidon to be ashamed in v 4 nor begins with a new direct command. Even the connection between vv 4 and 5 through the shared word חיל is not very strong as the use of the word in v 5 is somewhat removed from that in v 4. In v 4, the word is used to mean 'being in labour' (i.e. the pain that accompanies giving birth to a child, the lack of which brings shame on Sidon) whereas the word is used in v 5 to simply mean the displeasure at hearing unwanted news. Therefore, v 5 in which Tyre is mentioned does not appear to be part of the original poem. The question of when the verse might have been written will be dealt with later in this chapter.

We then come to v 6, where one finds another command to howl. The reason seems to be given in v 7 with a rhetorical question that almost sounds like a mockery towards a city whose current state does not reflect its former splendour.³² Verses 8-9, rather than either beginning with a new command or continuing to provide additional

³¹ The Nile is also mentioned in v 10. However, this seems to be due to textual corruption as discussed in p. 180-182.

³² For an attempt to see a tribute offering picture in this verse see Watson, 'Tribute' 371-374.

reasons for lamenting, move to a somewhat different topic of who it is that has done 'this' (presumably some sort of a destruction according to v 11) to Tyre and states that it was YHWH. If it were not for these deviating verses, there would be no reason to think that the exulting city (העליזה) in v 7 was Tyre. To the contrary, in view of v 12, where the oppressed virgin daughter Sidon is told to exult (לעלות) no more, the best candidate for העליזה in v 7 would have been Sidon.

V 10 again follows the pattern of a command followed by the reason for the command. If the reading proposed earlier in the chapter is correct, מחר (city/harbour) could once again refer to Sidon if we did not have vv 8-9.³³ Because Sidon is destroyed, Tarshish can no longer come to Sidon and trade there. It should instead work its own land. Originally, therefore, this verse continued to speak about the fall of Sidon.

One, then, finds in v 11 a similar kind of deviation as the one we have noted in vv 8-9. Verse 11 does not open with a new command or continue from the end of v 10. In fact, v 11 with the 3rd person masculine pronominal suffix of its opening word ידו (his hand) referring back to YHWH in v 9 seems to continue from the end of v 9 as if v 10 did not exist. Carrying on with the subject of YHWH humbling the proud nations, the verse declares that it was the arm of YHWH that had brought the disasters not only upon Tyre but also upon multiple kingdoms (ממלכות). Now, if it were not for the opening word ויאמר at the beginning of v 12 which appears to be a gloss to make v 12

³³ Lindblom, 'Tyros' 66-67; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 857.

flow better from the end of v 11, v 12 would return with a series of direct commands to Sidon and the topic of its destruction. Moving on to v 13, this verse is arguably the hardest verse to make sense of in the whole poem.

Verse 13 is another verse that is often regarded as a later interpolation because of the mention of the Chaldeans. However, discerning the precise meaning of the verse as it stands is demanding and one ought to first work through the textual difficulties of the verse before deciding whether or not the verse belongs to the original poem.

Isaiah 23:13

הֵן אֶרֶץ פְּשָׁדִים זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה אֲשׁוּר יִסְדָּה לְצִיִּים הַקִּימוּ בְּחִינֵי עָרְרוּ אֶרְמוֹנוֹתֶיהָ שָׁמָּה לְמַפְלָה

The MT as it stands might be translated as follows: 'Behold the land of the Chaldeans! This is the people that was not. Assyria established it for wild animals. They raised its siege-towers, they laid bare its palaces, it made it a ruin.' As is evident, the exact meaning of the verse, let alone its relation to the surrounding verses, is difficult to get at. The gender disagreements in the second half of the verse (הַקִּימוּ onwards) can be corrected relatively easily following 1QIsa^a. Instead of בְּחִינֵי, 1QIsa^a has בְּחִינֶיהָ (her siege-towers) and the second half of the verse would thus read: הַקִּימוּ בְּחִינֶיהָ עָרְרוּ אֶרְמוֹנוֹתֶיהָ שָׁמָּה לְמַפְלָה ('they raised her siege-towers, they laid bare her palaces, he made her a ruin'). The number disagreement between the verbs may be set aside for the moment and we may turn to the first half of the verse which is far more problematic. The phrase הֵן אֶרֶץ פְּשָׁדִים is odd and it has been suggested that הֵן אֶרֶץ פְּשָׁדִים אֲשׁוּר could be a

later gloss with the meaning, 'this (the Chaldeans) is the people. It was not Assyria.'³⁴

Based on this theory, it may be postulated that the gloss may have included the immediately following two words as well as the last two words of the verse: **זה העם לא** (this [the Chaldeans] is the people. It was not Assyria. It [the Chaldeans] established her [Assyria] for the wild-animals, it made her a ruin.'). This leaves **הן ארץ כשדים הקימו בחיניה עררו ארמנותיה** which is still somewhat awkward. It has been suggested that **הן ארץ כשדים** might have been corrupted from **הן ארצך שדדה** (Behold, your land is destroyed!).³⁵ If all this is right, the verse would have originally been: **הן ארצך שדדה הקימו בחיניה עררו ארמנותיה** (Behold, your land is destroyed! They [impersonal] raised her siege-towers, they laid bare her palaces.). At some point, **הן ארצך שדדה** was corrupted and changed to **הן ארץ כשדים** (first through the wrong word division). Sometime later, an explanatory gloss (**זה העם לא היה אשור יסדה לציים שמה למפלה**) was made near the word **כשדים** to indicate that it was Babylon alone that was responsible for the fall of Sidon/Tyre and that Assyria was a fellow victim of Babylonian tyranny. Perhaps this gloss ran on to the margin and when the gloss was incorporated into the poem by a later scribe, the last two words were mistakenly severed from the rest of the gloss and were added to the end of the verse. If this conjecture is close to what happened, we may draw two conclusions from it. First, the verse in its original form was an integral part of the original poem. Second, the verse continued to address Sidon from v 12 in its original form and spoke of Sidon's destruction.

³⁴ Condamin, *Isaïe*, 158-160; Cheyne, *Isaiah*, 140; Gray, *Isaiah*, 393-394.

³⁵ Gesenius-Buhl, *Handwörterbuch*, as quoted in Gray, *Isaiah*, 394.

Finally, v 14 practically repeats v 1b but more succinctly. Having analysed vv 1-14, what all this demonstrates is that both vv 5, 8, in which Tyre is mentioned, seem to belong to those verses that are outside of the general pattern of the poem. It seems plausible then that a poem that was originally about the misfortune of the city-state Sidon was later reused (for whatever reason) to speak about the same of Tyre.

7-2: Isaiah 23:8-9, 11

7-2-1: Identifying Isaiah 23:8-9, 11 as a compositional unit

Indeed, vv 8-9, 11 seem to deviate from the rest of the poem by dealing with the separate subject of YHWH being the bringer of the disaster, which the rest of the poem is lamenting over. It is worth considering Vermeylen's observation that vv 9, 11 appear to be the only verses that relate this poem to YHWH and that it is somewhat strange that the cause/fault of the city that has led to its disaster is not mentioned until v 9.³⁶ Moreover, Lindblom rightly points out that the reason for the city's destruction given in v 9 is not specifically aimed at Tyre. Rather, Tyre happens to be part of YHWH's plan which has a global dimension to it (note כל נכבדי ארץ in v 9 and ממלכות in v 11).³⁷ Verses 8-9, 11 have been found to be deviating from the main flow of the poem. Instead of being part of the original poem about Sidon, these verses have the appearance of a reflective comment by someone who was preoccupied with the theme of YHWH humbling all who are proud, the theme found in Isa 2:12ff. This is expressed by using

³⁶ Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 343.

³⁷ Lindblom, 'Tyros' 56.

the coupled language of YHWH's plan and his outstretched arm over the nations found in Isa 14:26-27.

With regard to the relationship between 23:8-9, 11 and 14:26-27, there is another stylistic feature that is shared by both passages. The words preceding 14:26-27 – the words which 14:26-27 expanded – are referred to as *זאת* ('this') by the writer of vv 26-27. It is noteworthy that the writer of 23:8-9, 11 also refers to the disaster the surrounding poem describes as *זאת* ('this'). Therefore, the coupling of 'the plan' and 'the arm' of YHWH (which is also found in 19:16-17 except in v 16, it is a swinging [Hiph. of *נָהַךְ*], rather than stretched out [*נָטַח*], arm), the way the older words to which the additions are made are referred to as *זאת* ('this'), and the aforementioned global dimension, all seem to suggest that 23:8-9, 11 was written by the same hand that wrote 14:26-27 (and 19:16-17).

It was also noted that v 11 seemed to continue from the end of v 9 rather than v 10. It may be postulated that vv 8-9, 11 were originally written as a continuous passage following the end of v 7, the verse with the only rhetorical question in the supposed original poem. The supposed redactor of the present hypothesis may have understood v 7 as the climax of the original poem with its taunt-like character and decided that the end of the verse was a suitable place to write his passage that emphasizes YHWH's plan to humble the proud powers of the world. After our supposed redactor finished writing vv 8-9, 11 and resumed copying from the older scroll, perhaps he left out v 10

and started copying from v 12 assuming that he had already copied v 10, confusing it with v 6 which also mentions Tarshish and opens with a similar looking word. Upon realizing the mistake, our redactor wrote v 10 in the margin next to where it ought to have been written. As this marginal note was written into the main text by a later scribe, the scribe decided to insert v 10 into its present place judging by the note's physical proximity to the main text, failing to appreciate the importance of the pairing of 'the plan' and 'the arm' of YHWH in vv 8-9, 11.

Now as for v 5 which is also identified as a later addition to the original poem, the verse's exact relationship to vv 8-9, 11 is ambiguous. Although v 5 understands the fall of Tyre to be the topic of the poem just like vv 8-9, 11, the theme the latter verses deal with, namely the worldwide plan of YHWH to humble the proud nations, is absent in v 5. For this reason, v 5 does not seem to be from the same hand as vv 8-9, 11 and this leads us to the question: between v 5 and vv 8-9, 11, which came first?

Through whichever addition that was written first, the poem in vv 1-14 began to be understood as an oracle about the fall of Tyre, and this led to the insertion of the heading מִשָּׁא צָר at the beginning of the poem. This is because it is difficult to imagine why the present מִשָּׁא heading would have been given to an oracle that did not mention Tyre once. In this respect, v 5 is more likely to have been written first because 'the report (שִׁמְעוּ)' at the beginning v 5 is *explained* later in the verse as a report about Tyre. That it had to be clarified that the report was specifically about Tyre suggests that the fall of Tyre was not the obvious subject of the poem prior to the addition of v 5.

Contrastingly, v 8 simply assumes that the poem is about the destruction of Tyre. The

focus is solely on the fact that it was YHWH who caused the fall of this influential city and not on the detail that it was Tyre which was humbled.

Therefore, turning a poem about the fall of Sidon into an oracle about Tyre was not the intention of the writer of vv 8-9, 11. Rather, the chief aim of writing vv 8-9, 11 seems to have been to reorient the focus of the poem from simply lamenting (or celebrating in the style of a lament) over the fall of a Phoenician superpower to declaring YHWH's sovereignty over the whole world. This was done by providing the hindsight that YHWH's global plan to humble the glorious and honoured was the real cause of the fall of Tyre, the fate of the city being but one example of the said plan. This plan of YHWH not only covers the whole earth (כל הארץ in 14:26) but his arm of judgement is stretched out over the sea (ידו נטה על הים in 23:11) also.

7-2-2: Clues for dating Isaiah 23:8-9, 11

In terms of the words used in vv 8-9, 11, there is not much that helps us with dating this unit. The only word that might serve as a clue would be the Piel of חלל (to defile/dishonour) in v 9. It is used 5 times in the book of Isaiah (23:9; 43:28; 47:6; 56:2, 6). In Isa 43:28 and 47:6, the word is used in the context of YHWH defiling his people by handing them over to Babylon.³⁸ In Isa 56:2, 6 the word is used in the context of Sabbath observance (i.e. not defiling it). One could say the use of the word in Isa 23:9 is closer to Isa 43:28 and 47:6 than 56:2, 6, but the word is so common in the HB that

³⁸ In the LXX of Isa 43:28, it is the princes that defiled YHWH's sanctuaries.

perhaps it ought not to influence our decision too much. A better clue is found in the use of the rhetorical ׀ question in v 8. We have already noted in our study of Isa 14:26-27 that the use of the rhetorical ׀ questions to express YHWH's supremacy is a common feature in Isa 40-55 (40:14, 18, 25, 26; 41:2, 4, 26; 43:9,13; 44:7; 45:21; 46: 5; 48:14), and that the only two occurrences outside Isa 40-55 are precisely in 14:27 and 23:8. Therefore, I tentatively suggest that vv 8-9, 11 belong to the late-exilic period.

7-3: Isaiah 23:15-18

Isa 23:15-18 is a prose text (except for the quoted poem in v 16) that speaks of the future fate of Tyre. As many have noted, while vv 1-14 speak of the past, vv 15-18 foretells the future. In these verses, no other Phoenician countries are mentioned unlike in the preceding verses where various Phoenician countries are addressed. It is as though the poem to which the expansion is made was chiefly about Tyre in the eyes of the writer of vv15-18. This makes it highly likely that by the time vv 15-18 were added to vv 1-14, vv 5, 8-9, 11 (as well as probably the heading in v 1) had already been incorporated into the poem. Therefore, vv 15-18 would have been written sometime after vv 5, 8-9, 11 were written.

Now, while there is an almost unanimity on the view that vv 15-18 are a secondary expansion on the preceding poem, there is a disagreement over the question

of whether vv 15-18 are a single expansion or a two-staged expansion.³⁹ The phrase *מקץ שבעים שנה* ('at the end of seventy years') appears twice in relation to the fate of Tyre in vv 15 and 17. What happens to Tyre at the end of seventy years in v 15 is, however, different in v 17. While it is said in v 15 that Tyre would be like a forgotten prostitute of the song in v 16 at the end of the 'seventy years,' v 17 foretells YHWH's restoration of Tyre at the end of the same 'seventy years.' This has led some to speculate somewhat hastily that the phrase *מקץ שבעים שנה* in v 15 was accidentally copied from v 17 and was therefore not an original part of v 15.⁴⁰ In fact, v 15 is much shorter in 1QIsa^a than it is in the MT and omits *ונשכחת צר שבעים שנה כימי מלך אחד מקץ שבעים שנה יהיה* ('and Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years like the days of one king; at the end of seventy years it will be...'), a section that happens to include the phrase *מקץ שבעים שנה*. It is, however, hardly likely that v 15 of 1QIsa^a presents an earlier reading than that in the MT.⁴¹ Not only does the LXX seem to reflect the reading of the MT, but it also appears, as Wildberger postulates, as though the aforementioned omission in 1QIsa^a was caused by an eye jump from *צר* to *לצר* in the same verse.⁴² Therefore, there is no compelling reason to question the integrity of *מקץ שבעים שנה* in v 15 other than for the contrasting fate of Tyre at the end of the same 'seventy years' in v 17. As for this contrast in the future of Tyre at the end of 'the seventy years' between vv 15-16 and vv 17-18, it would be explained best by assuming that vv 17-18 were a further expansion on vv 15-16 at a later time.

³⁹ Those who argue for a two-staged expansion of vv 15-18 are: Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 880; Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 170-172; J. Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk*, 157; E. Lipinsky, 'Isaiah 23' 84; S. de Vries, *Old Revelation*, 257.

⁴⁰ Gray, *Isaiah*, 396.

⁴¹ For E. Lipinsky, 1QIsa^a preserves an earlier reading than the MT. Lipinsky, 'Isaiah 23' 84.

⁴² Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 859.

What is important to the present discussion is that, whether vv 15-18 are a one or two-staged expansion, the future of Tyre is described already in v 15 using the seventy year language which, according to the usual view, is likely to be a reference to the Babylonian exile of the people of Israel in Jer 25:11. If Isa 23:15-16 (18) is in fact dependent on and was written after Jer 25:11, the post-exilic period would be the likeliest time of composition for Isa 23:15-16 (18). This conclusion accommodates the late-exilic date of Isa 23:8-9, 11.

It has been suggested, however, that the seventy year period language in Isa 23:15-18 may not depend on the book of Jeremiah. Rather, the seventy years could simply represent the lifespan of an average person as shown in Ps 90:10 and the LXX also seems to make a similar point by the explanatory phrase *ὡς χρόνος ἀνθρώπου* ('like the time of a man'). It has also been proposed that the seventy years language in Isa 23:15-18 could reflect that of Esarhaddon's use in relation to the fall and the rebuilding of Babylon.⁴³ According to this view, Isa 23:15-18 would have been written in the pre-exilic period, predating the book of Jeremiah. Its pre-exilic date then would also make the proposed late-exilic date of vv 8-9, 11 untenable. Although the idea that the seventy years language in Isa 23:15-18 could have been borrowed from Esarhaddon's political propaganda is intriguing, it fails to explain the immediately following phrase *כימי מלך אחד* ('like the days of one king') in v 15. Indeed, many have expressed difficulty with understanding exactly what is meant by the phrase. So much so that it has been suggested that one should emend the text to *בימי מלך אחד* (in the days

⁴³ Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 309; M. Leuchter, 'Isaiah 23:15-18' 413-416.

of another king).⁴⁴ As Wildberger correctly notes, this emendation does not improve the meaning of the phrase since no king is previously mentioned in Isa 23 for there to be 'another king.'⁴⁵

The clue may come from Jer 25:11-12. In Jer 25:11, Judah and its neighbouring countries are told that they are going to serve the 'king of Babylon' for seventy years. If Isa 23:15-18 indeed borrowed some of its ideas from Jer 25, the concept of the days of an oppressive foreign king being seventy years in Isa 23:15 could depend on Jer 25:11-12. There in Jer 25:11-12, it appears as though Judah and its surrounding countries would serve 'the king of Babylon' – i.e. Nebuchadnezzar from v 9 – for seventy years. After the seventy years, in v 12, YHWH would punish the same 'king of Babylon' (Nebuchadnezzar) and the land of the Chaldeans. In the make-believe history of Jer 25, Nebuchadnezzar remains king throughout the seventy years of servitude of the nations. It is perhaps because of this connection between Isa 23:15 and Jer 25 that Ibn Ezra suggests that the king referred to in Isa 23:15 is Nebuchadnezzar.⁴⁶ Tyre would be without business for seventy years because of the oppression of one certain foreign king in Isa 23:15 in the same way that Judah and the whole region around it had to serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon for seventy years in Jer 25.

⁴⁴ Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 169; Procksch had suggested a similar emendation before Kaiser. Procksch, *Jesaja*, 301.

⁴⁵ Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 859.

⁴⁶ Ibn Ezra, *Isaiah*, 107.

The observation that the text of the LXX in Jer 25 is different to the MT in that the LXX does not mention Nebuchadnezzar or the king of Babylon needs to be touched on briefly. It is generally agreed that in Jer 25 the supposed shorter Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX is older than the MT and that the MT's expansions are mostly later explanatory glosses. Of these glosses, in the MT of Jer 25:9, YHWH calls Nebuchadnezzar עבדי ('my servant'). The view that this sort of remark is much more likely to be made after a considerable time has passed since the actual event of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judah, when the emotional hurt of the event is but a thing of a distant literary past, is convincing.⁴⁷ The hypothesis that Isa 23:15-16 borrowed ideas (both the seventy year term and the notion that this duration is in relation to the reign of one king) from Jer 25 assumes that it is the longer text of Jer 25 which we find in the MT which Isa 23 depends on. This would mean that Isa 23:15-18 was written late in the post-exilic period and would suit the theory that vv 8-9, 11 are to be dated in the late-exilic period.

Before we conclude, it is interesting to note two features of Isa 23:15-18 that are similar to Isa 19:18-25, which is another post-exilic text. First, it is the application of the Israelite history of transformation to a foreign nation. In 19:18-25, Egypt is stricken by YHWH only then to turn to him for help and be delivered by a saviour sent by YHWH, and is eventually called 'my people' by YHWH. This pattern is all too familiar in the salvation history of Israel. Egypt will go through the same transformative journey which Israel has gone through in the past. In a much similar way, Tyre in Isa 23:15-18 is

⁴⁷ A. Aejmelaes, 'Jer. xxv 1-14' 471.

to experience their version of the Israelite seventy year exile under the tyranny of a foreign king. After the seventy years, however, just as YHWH had shown mercy to his people after their exile in Babylon, so too will YHWH restore Tyre to its former glory so it could perform the noble task of providing for those in YHWH's household.

Second, it is the audacious breakaway from the status quo. YHWH calling Egypt 'my people' and Assyria 'the work of my hands' in the same league with Israel in Isa 19:24-25 is often regarded as one of the most (if not the most) inclusive and outward-looking expressions in the HB. Similarly, it is often commented how bold it is even in metaphor for a prostitute's hire to be dedicated to YHWH in Isa 23:18.⁴⁸

If the reconstruction of the development of Isa 23:1-14 proposed above is correct, and the supposed late-exilic date for vv 8-9, 11 is right, vv 15-18 would best be dated in the post-exilic period.

7-4: Summary and conclusion

It was argued in this chapter that vv 5, 8-9, 11, which disturb the general flow of the poem in vv 1b-14, seem to be secondary additions to the original poem. Before the addition of these verses (and the heading in v 1a), the original poem was a lament (or

⁴⁸ Peggy L. Day argues that because the prostitution in Isa 23:15-18 is metaphorical there is no contradiction between Isa 23:18 and Deut 23:19. P. Day, 'Metaphor and Social Reality' 66-68. Although this is true, the notion of wealth gained through prostitution being offered to YHWH even in metaphor must have nonetheless raised many eyebrows.

rather a taunt in the style of a lament) over the destruction of the Phoenician city-state Sidon. Because of the lack of historical data in the poem, it is difficult to date the original poem. Whenever the original poem may have been written, v 5 was first added sometime thereafter possibly to include Tyre in a poem that featured many other Phoenician cities. This led to the redactor who was responsible for the addition of the heading in v 1a to identify the poem as chiefly about Tyre. During the late-exilic period, vv 8-9, 11, whose date is determined based on the closeness in style with 14:26-27 and chs 40-49, were added as a single continuous passage following the end of v 7 because the supposed redactor regarded v 7 as the climax of the original poem. By confusing v 10 with v 6, the redactor who wrote vv 8-9, 11 accidentally left out v 10 which originally followed v 7 and later wrote it as a marginal note. This note was mistakenly copied into the present place by a later scribe who failed to understand that vv 8-9, 11 were one continuous passage. This reconstruction of the compositional history of vv 1- 14 coheres with the hypothesis of the present study that vv 8-9, 11 constitute a single late-exilic addition which applied the principle of 14:26-27 to what was then regarded as an oracle concerning Tyre. Furthermore, contrary to the minority view that vv 15-18 were written in the pre-exilic period, the seventy year reference in v 15 is explained best when its dependence on Jer 25 is accepted. Therefore, vv 15-18, which reflect an attitude toward Tyre quite different to that expressed in vv 8-9, 11, are to be dated in the post-exilic period.

Chapter 8: Egypt will be in dread because of YHWH's hand against it (Isaiah 19:16-17)

Isa 19 is an oracle concerning Egypt. In Isa 19:16-17, we find the same pairing of two hostile images against the nations – the plan of YHWH and the hand of YHWH – which we have seen in 14:26-27 and find also in 23:8-9, 11. The aim of the present chapter is to show that the supposition that 19:16-17 (against Egypt) belongs to the same late-exilic redactional layer as 14:26-27 (against the whole world); 23:8-9, 11 (against Tyre) can illuminate both the place and the function of 19:16-17 in the oracle.

With its many parts, Isa 19 is a complex chapter and making sense of the relationships between the different subsections is tricky. Broadly speaking, the chapter is divided into two halves. Verses 1-15 form the first half and these verses are mostly poetry. The second half of the chapter – vv 16-25 – is a series of five prose additions attached to vv 1-15, all beginning with the phrase *ביום ההוא* (in that day). The first half can be divided further into three subsections: vv 1-4; 5-10; 11-15. The relationships between these sections lack a general consensus among exegetes. The five prose sayings in vv 16-25 are also a subject of much debate especially when it comes to the question of their date and unity. The passage of our focus in this chapter – vv 16-17 – is involved in many of these issues. First, because the integrity and the date of vv 1-15 is uncertain, it is hard to know what form the oracle was in when vv 16-17 were added. This concerns the question: what exactly was the writer of vv 16-17 trying to add to the inherited oracle? Second, whether or not vv 16-17 are to be ascribed to the same hand

that wrote any of the verses that follow vv 16-17 is an important question to ask with regard not only to the dating of vv 16-17 but also to the overall message of these verses as intended by their writers. Therefore, we will first discuss the relationship our verses have with the first half of the chapter, and afterwards examine our verses within the context of vv 16-25.

8-1: Isaiah 19:1-15

As was briefly mentioned, Isa 19:1-15 is commonly divided into three parts (vv 1-4; 5-10; 11-15) and there is no general agreement on the relationship between these parts. Some consider vv 1-4 and vv 11-14/15 to be an original unity into which vv 5-10 have been inserted at a later date.¹ Others suggest either that vv 1-15 are of an original unity or that all three parts have separate origins.² Within these varied opinions, our focus will be on vv 3, 12 because the clearest point of contact between vv 16-17 and vv 1-15 is the assertion that the fall of Egypt is what YHWH has planned which is traced in these two verses. It seems curious, however, that both these verses appear to betray some signs of being or containing secondary additions.³ Because vv 3, 12, which have most noticeable connections with vv 16-17, are involved in many issues that have to do

¹ Gray, *Isaiah*, 320-323; Procksch, *Jesaja*, 246; W. Eichrodt, *Herr*, 66; Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 320-323; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 705-707; Clements, *Isaiah*, 168-169; K. Sparks, *Ethnicity*, 205-208; G. Eidevall, *Propaganda*, 86. For some exegetes, the unity is created by vv 11-14/15 being a later development on vv 1-4. Marti, *Jesaja*, 152-155; Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 99; P. Cook, *Sign*, 82-98.

² Those arguing for the original unity of vv 1-15: Skinner, *Isaiah*, 152; Johann Fischer, *Das Buch Isaias*, 139-140; Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk*, 135; W. Werner, *Plan Jahwes*, 40-42; S. Deck, *Gerichtsbotschaft*, 19-20; Alviero Niccacci, 'Isaiah XVIII-XX' 218-221; C. Hays, *Death*, 281-288; C. Balogh, *Stele*, 272-273. Those seeing three separate origins for vv 1-4; 5-10; 11-14/15: F. Lindström, *Origin of Evil*, 92; Oswald Loretz, 'Jes 19:1-25' 105-111; de Jong, *Isaiah Among the ANE Prophets*, 150.

³ Those who have questioned the integrity of v 12: Oswald Loretz, 'Jes 19:1-25' 110; C. Balogh, *Stele*, 273.

with the compositional history of vv 1-15, a close examination of vv 1-15 with a special focus on vv 3, 12 would be in order.

8-1-1: Isaiah 19:5-10

It is commonly understood that Isa 19:5-10 is not an original unity with the surrounding poems – vv 1-4 and vv 11-15. The chief reason for this is the change of subject in vv 5-10. While vv 1-4 appear to speak of Egypt's internal conflicts and nationwide unrest, followed by the rule of a tyrant, vv 5-10 describe a drought and its effect on Egypt's farming and fishing. Verses 11-15, then, centre on yet another topic of the foolishness of Egypt's wisdom.

There are, however, some critics who see it unnecessary to distinguish between vv 1-4 and vv 5-10.⁴ The common argument among those who do not regard vv 5-10 as a separate poem, which would have been artificially joined together with the surrounding verses, is that, form-critically speaking, theophanic genres in the HB as well as in Akkadian and Egyptian literatures (Marduk prophecy, Neferti prophecies etc.) often combine the divine/political activities with natural disasters (not least the drying up of the rivers).⁵ Some linguistic support is also employed. Sweeney points to

⁴ Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 265, 269; H. Marlow, 'Isaiah 19:5-10' 229-242; C. Hays, 'Isaiah 19:1-10' 612-617; Balogh, *Stele*, 240-244.

⁵ H. Marlow, 'Isaiah 19:5-10' 229-242; Cf. 2Kgs 19:24; Isa 37:25; Jer 50:35-38; Ezek 30:10-12 as quoted in Balogh, *Stele*, 240-244.

v 5, the introductory verse to the whole section of vv 5-10, which begins with a Waw perfect verb as though it is a continuation from the preceding verses.⁶

Christopher Hays offers a little more complex (but unconvincing) argument based on a supposed double meaning on the verb סָכַר at the beginning of v 4.

Isaiah 19:4

וְסִכַּרְתִּי אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּיַד אֲדֹנִים קָשָׁה וּמֶלֶךְ עַז יִמְשְׁלֵבָם וְאִם הָאֲדֹנִן יִהְיֶה צָבָאוֹת

(I will [deliver?] Egypt into the hands of a hard lord, and a strong king will rule over them, says the lord YHWH of Hosts.)

The sense of וְסִכַּרְתִּי אֶת מִצְרַיִם בְּיַד אֲדֹנִים קָשָׁה is not straightforward. The most widespread understanding of the word סָכַר is that it is a dialectal variant of סָגַר (to shut/ close off).⁷ Thus by way of picturing Egypt being shut within the hands of a hard lord, some sense of being handed over is drawn. Admittedly, using the word נָתַן would have been a far more common way of expressing the idea. Now, Hays points out that in Ugaritic and in later Jewish Hebrew and Aramaic texts, a general distinction can be found between סָכַר and סָגַר.⁸ Whereas the latter is the more common word to mean ‘close off,’ the former appears to have been used in contexts of shutting up wells and water sources. Hays observes further that the Akkadian cognate *sekēru* has the primary context of damming up waterways, and that it is only by extension that the word is sometimes applied to body parts. Hays thereby argues that in Isa 19:4, סָכַר ought to be understood

⁶ Sweeney, Isaiah, 265.

⁷ E. R. Rowlands, *The Targum and the Peshitta*, 189-190 (as quoted by Hays, ‘Isaiah 19:1-10’ 613).

⁸ Hays, ‘Isaiah 19:1-10’ 613.

in the sense of damming up the waterways of Egypt. בִּיד, in this case, would mean ‘by the hand of.’ He, then, claims that the first line of the verse would have projected two meanings. First, it is the idea of Egypt being handed over to a tyrant. This sense, however, is generated only because of the parallel second line. The second meaning is what Hays would regard as the obvious literal one of the first line if it were left on its own – that is: Egypt’s waterways will be dammed up by a foreign invader. In view of this, Hays understands Isa 19:5-10 as the result of the damming up of Egypt’s waterways and not of drought as commonly supposed. As Hays himself admits, however, the parallel second line of the verse makes it unlikely that סָכַר here could have the meaning ‘to dam up.’ Further, should Hays’ interpretation be correct, one might expect to find at least some reference to a military attack in vv 5-10. Yet, unlike vv 1-4, vv 5-10 seem to describe the despair of a tired people who have suffered from a natural disaster rather than the anxiety or the panic of a besieged country.

While there is no reason to refute that there might be thematic relationships between different parts of Isa 19:1-15 (i.e. natural disasters being understood as the result of YHWH’s coming etc.) the following reasons make it unlikely that the whole of vv 1-15 was composed by the same poet. The perceived thematic relationships across the pericope would be the result of the redactors and the glossators and not due to the original unity of the passage.

First, the unusual place name for Egypt מִצְרַיִם in v 6 (the only time Egypt is mentioned in vv 5-10) is contrasted with the more traditional מִצְרַיִם in vv 1-4. Not only that, vv 5-10 are rich with Egyptian loanwords (these will be mentioned later) and familiar with Egyptian farming and fishing. It is certainly possible to postulate with Beuken that vv 5-10 might have an Egyptian text somewhere beneath it.⁹

Second, the rhythm and metre of vv 5-10 seems fairly consistent but sufficiently different to those of vv 1-4 and vv 11-15. In terms of poetic composition, a concentric structure can be found in vv 1b-4. Verse 1 and v 4 have three lines each and each line consists roughly of 4 beats.

Isaiah 19:1b

הִנֵּה יְהוָה רֹכֵב עַל עֵב קָלִי וּבָא מִצְרַיִם

וְנָעוּ אֱלִילֵי מִצְרַיִם מִפְּנֵיו

וְלִבֵּב מִצְרַיִם יָמַס בְּקֶרְבּוֹ

(וּבָא מִצְרַיִם seems to be an explanatory gloss and this will be explained later)

Isaiah 19:4

וְסִכַּרְתִּי אֶת מִצְרַיִם בְּיַד אֲדֻנִּים קָשָׁה

וּמִלֶּדַע עַד יִמְשָׁל בָּם

נֶאֱמַר הָאֲדֹנָיִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

⁹ Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 704; Beuken, *Jesaja*, 185.

Verse 2 and v 3 have a parallel structure. Both verses have an introductory line, the idea of which is elaborated in the second half of each verse, where a 3rd person plural Waw perfect verb is followed by 4 subjects and/or 4 indirect objects.

Isaiah 19:2

וְסִכְסְכְתִי מִצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם

וְנִלְחַמוּ אִישׁ בְּאֶחָיו וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ עִיר בְּעִיר מִמְלָכָה בְּמִמְלָכָה

Isaiah 19:3

וְנִבְקָה רוּחַ מִצְרַיִם בְּקֶרְבּוֹ וְעֶצְתוֹ אֲבִלַעַ

וְדָרְשׁוּ אֶל הָאֱלִילִים וְאֶל הָאֱטִים וְאֶל הָאֲבוֹת וְאֶל הַיְדֻעִנִים

(וְעֶצְתוֹ אֲבִלַעַ seems to be a gloss and this too will be explained later)

Verses 5-10, however, seem to be more or less made of distichs with three words to each line. If we adopt a few emendations to the text, which have been suggested in the past, it would make this rhythm even clearer.

Isaiah 19:6

וְהֶאֱזָנִיחוּ נְהָרוֹת דָּלְלוּ וְתִרְבּוּ יְאֵרֵי מִצְרַיִם קִנָּה וְסוּף קָמְלוּ

The MT, as it stands, may be translated as, 'And the rivers will stink;¹⁰ the rivers of Egypt have become low and they will be dried up; the reed and the water plant have withered.' First of all the final line קִנָּה וְסוּף קָמְלוּ almost certainly is the first half of a new verse as the BHS indicates because the first line of v 7 makes little sense on its own.

¹⁰ 1QIsa^a has והֶאֱזָנִיחוּ, straight forward Hiphil of זָנַח (to stink), instead of והֶאֱזָנִיחוּ. The strange & might simply be a copying mistake.

עֲרוֹת עַל־יָאוֹר עַל־פִּי יָאוֹר

(Water plants¹¹ will be by the Nile, by the mouth of the Nile.)

The last line of v 6 and the first line of v 7 appear to constitute a separate verse. Moving back to v 6, without קנה וסוף קמלו, the first line seems to end with נהרות, being only 2 words long. 1QIsa^a, however, has ודללו for the next word instead of דללו. Since v 6 begins with a Waw perfect verb, 1QIsa^a is preferable. Further, if ודללו is the correct reading, the verb can either be the end of the first line or the beginning of the second. If it went with the first line, the verse would have a nicely balanced three-three distich:

והאזניחו נהרות ודללו וחרבו יארי מצור (The rivers will stink and become low, and the rivers of Egypt will be dried up).

Then we move on to vv 6c-7a which appear to have been one verse. We have already noted that v 7a makes little sense on its own. Verse 6c, also, stands out with the perfect verb קמלו amid a series of future Waw perfect verbs. For this reason, the fact that 1QIsa^a has וקמלו cannot be overlooked. In 1QIsa^a, וקמלו seems to start a new line. Nevertheless, as this leaves קנה וסוף senseless, most commentators disregard this reading. However, a ו and a י are easily confused, and וקמלו may have been יקמלו (they

¹¹ It is Herz and Thacker's view that ערות came from the Egyptian word 'r, meaning 'rush' or some other water plant. In view of other loan words in the immediate context – קנה (from Akkadian *qanû*) and סוף (from Egyptian *šwf*) to mean some water plants (marsh or reed) – this sounds plausible. Herz, 'Isaiah 19:7' 497-498; Thacker, *Is. 19:7*, 164; Ward, *Root SP*, 339-349. Alternatively, A. Guillaume has suggested that על פי could have been עלפי from an Arabic word *alaf*, meaning 'green or dry fodder for animals.' The literary context makes this suggestion not as attractive as Herz and Thacker's. Guillaume, 'Isaiah XIX. 7' 382. Moreover, for seeing the Egyptian word *štit* behind שתיה, meaning 'weaver' (i.e. 'weaver of flax' in the context of v 9) in v 10, cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 701-702.

will wither). The emended verse would be: קנה וסוף יקמלו ערות על יאור על פי יאור. As is evident, and as most commentators have so suggested, על פי יאור and על יאור cannot both be original. One of them is often regarded as dittograph or a variant reading. There is, however, a more attractive explanation. It seems all too much of a coincidence that we have the difficult expression על יאור in Isa 18:4 which was suggested that it be emended to על יאור in the previous chapter of the present study following the solution offered by the Syriac Peshitta. One could imagine a scribe noticing/suspecting an error in 18:4 (על יאור) and writing down the correction of it (על יאור) in the margin. Years later, a different scribe copies the scroll and fails to recognise what על יאור was meant to correct. He then finds על פי יאור in 19:7, possibly in an adjacent column, and adds על יאור next to it, perhaps believing it to be a variant reading.¹² According to this hypothesis, על פי יאור is the original reading and the LXX, which has πᾶν τὸ κύκλω τοῦ ποταμοῦ (all that is around the river), possibly reflects this reading. Therefore, the original verse for vv 6c-7a may have been as follows.

קנה וסוף יקמלו ערות על פי יאור

(The reed and the water plant will wither, the rushes by the mouth of the Nile)

This way, again, we have a balanced three-three distich. This leaves only the second half of v 8 as clearly not fitting in the general three-three distich rhythm of vv 5-10. Verses 11-15 will be analysed later, but these verses depart from the drought in Egypt to a different topic of foolishness of Egyptian wisdom, and they also abandon the regular rhythm found in vv 5-10 altogether.

¹² For other occurrences of similar scribal errors in the HB, see Leslie C. Allen, 'Cuckoos' 143-150; 'More Cuckoos' 69-73.

Therefore, if it were not for the aforementioned form critical considerations, nothing in vv 5-10 seems to show any explicit link to the contents of either vv 1-4 or vv 11-15. Between vv 1-4 and vv 11-15, however, many have noticed some continuity in the subject matter treated in both passages. In v 3, YHWH claims that he would destroy the plan/counsel of Egypt. In v 12, Pharaoh's wise men are mocked for their inability to fathom YHWH's plan. The original unity of vv 1-4 and vv 11-15 is sometimes argued for because of this connection, despite the final line of v 4 נאם האדון יהוה צבאות (says the Lord YHWH of Hosts) which has the appearance of a closing of some sort, as well as the difference in focus in each section. In fact, vv 1-4 and vv 11-15 differ markedly both in scope and focus. The former is mainly on the internal strife in Egypt, whereas the latter centres on the inadequacy of the leaders and the wise men of Zoan and Noph (although Egypt is mentioned in these verses, it will be argued later that the verses originally concerned Zoan and Noph). We shall next examine v 3 and v 12 in their immediate contexts of vv 1-4 and vv 11-15. However, before we move on, it needs to be said that once we accept that vv 5-10 appear to be a later addition, even if vv 11-15 followed vv 1-4 when vv 5-10 were added, we automatically admit that those who inserted vv 5-10 saw vv 1-4 and vv 11-15 as separate passages.

8-1-2: Isaiah 19:1-4

Isaiah 19:1

מִשָּׂא מִצְרַיִם הִנֵּה יְהוָה רֹכֵב עַל־עֵב קִלְיָא מִצְרַיִם וְנָעוּ אֱלִילֵי מִצְרַיִם מִפְּנֵי וּלְבַב מִצְרַיִם יִמָּס בְּקִרְבּוֹ

This verse may be translated as, 'An oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, YHWH rides on a swift cloud and he will come to Egypt. The idols of Egypt will tremble in his presence and the heart of Egypt will waste away within him.'

Without the superscription *משא מצרים*, the verse has four lines. The length of these lines is, however, somewhat uneven. The first line has 6 words, the second line has 2, and the third and the fourth lines have 4 words each. If one sees *על עב* together as one as the MT does, the first line may seem to be a 5 word line. The first line speaks of seeing YHWH coming on a cloud, and the last two lines seem to describe what the result of YHWH's coming would be. At first sight, the all too short second line (*ובא* (מצרים) does not seem to do much more than repeat the first line. Without the second line, one would have a nicely balanced tristich of 5+4+4. The first line, with a participial verb (the second and the third lines have the Waw perfects, and the fourth, an imperfect) as well as the opening *הנה* in anacrusis, may appropriately be allowed a little extra length as an introductory line (both in style and content) without distorting the rhythm too much. This way, the first line sets out the scene of YHWH's arrival, and the following two lines explain its effect on Egypt. Therefore, the second line appears to be an explanatory gloss that was put in to clarify the direction of YHWH's travel in the first line.

Isaiah 19:2-3

וּסְכַסְכְּתִי מִצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם וְנִלְחָמוּ אִישׁ־בְּאָחִיו וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ עִיר בְּעִיר מִמְלֶכָה בְּמִמְלָכָה

וּבִקְהָה רוּחַ־מִצְרַיִם בְּקִרְבּוֹ וַעֲצָתוֹ אֲבִלַע וְדָרְשׁוּ אֶל־הָאֱלִילִים וְאֶל־הָאֱסִיִּם וְאֶל־הָאֲבוֹת וְאֶל־הַיְדֹעִנִים

The verses as they stand may be translated as, 'And I will stir up Egypt against Egypt, and each man shall wage war against his brother, and each man against his neighbour, town against town, kingdom against kingdom; and the spirit of Egypt will be emptied within him, and his plan will I swallow up (i.e. destroy), and they shall seek after the idols, and after the sorcerers,¹³ and after mediums and after necromancers.'

As noted earlier, v 2 and v 3 are parallel in structure. (And I will stir up Egypt against Egypt) is the overall idea of v 2 – i.e. there will be internal conflicts within Egypt. This is expanded in the following line which begins with an impersonal verb וְלָחֲמוּ (and they will wage war) and lays out four entities that fight against each other moving from small scale domestic conflicts to those between large provinces. Verse 3 more or less has the same structure. The first line, וּבִקְהָה רוּחַ מִצְרַיִם (and the spirit of Egypt will be emptied within him), again, seems to set out the point of the verse however unclear the sense of the line is. The emptying of the spirit of Egypt (whatever it might mean) is demonstrated in the second half of the verse, where another impersonal verb וְדָרְשׁוּ (and they will seek after) is followed by four mediating objects/persons of Egyptian pagan cults. The only difference in structure between v 2 and v 3 is the short two word line וַעֲצָתוֹ אֲבִלַע in v 3 and this raises one's suspicion about the line's place and function in the verse.

¹³ The meaning of the hapax is uncertain.

It needs to be said, to begin with, that it is not immediately obvious in what sense resorting to these pagan practices is related to emptying the spirit of Egypt. Most exegetes readily assume that the emptying of the spirit of Egypt here means the suspension of Egypt's wisdom.¹⁴ This is almost entirely due to the context given by the second line which speaks of YHWH's destroying the plan of Egypt. Therefore, רוח here has to mean 'mind' or some similar seat of intellect. One could think of רוח חכמה in Ex 28:3; Deut 34:9; Isa 11:2 etc. According to this reading, Egypt will be emptied of its wits, and it will run after useless idols and sorcerers for advice, all of which YHWH has gotten rid of. However, if it were not for the second line וַעֲצוּ אֲבָלֵעַ, we would not interpret the first line of v 3 as described above. רוח alone normally does not have the meaning 'mind.' Where it appears to have such a meaning in רוח חכמה, the sense of mind is provided by חכמה and not רוח. Very few examples can be found in the HB where רוח clearly means 'mind' (Isa 29:24; Ps 77:6; possibly Job 20:3 etc.). A far more natural meaning of רוח in v 3 would be either 'strength' or 'courage' (BDB), wherefore the first line of the verse would mean that Egypt's courage would vanish.¹⁵ Not only is this a far more common use of the word רוח, it fits better with the surrounding material except for the suspicious second line. We may return to the parallel structure between v 2 and v 3, where the first line of each verse is elaborated in the latter half of the verse. This interpretation of the first line of v 3 fits much more naturally with the latter half of the verse. Egypt is without courage and therefore everyone flees to idols and sorcerers

¹⁴ Duhm, *Jesaja*, 141; Marti, *Jesaja*, 152; Skinner, *Isaiah*, 155; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 703; Kissane, *Isaiah*, 212; Werner, *Plan*, 47 etc.

¹⁵ BDB points to Josh 5:1 for a similar use of רוח along with Josh 2:11 and Ps 76:13 etc. BDB, 925; those who follow this line of interpretation are A. Niccacci, 'Isaiah XVIII-XX' 218; Beuken, *Jesaja*, 185; K. Hayes, 'Deep Sleep' 46; Balogh, *Stele*, 238.

for help. Seeking advice from idols and sorcerers is not the most immediate sense of the first half of v 3 if it were not for the second line of the verse. Furthermore, we note that the last line of v 1 (ולבב מצרים ימס בקרבו) 'and the heart of Egypt will waste away within him') already expresses essentially the same idea as the interpretation of ונבקה proposed here.

Therefore, it seems probable that ועצתו אכלע (and I will swallow up [i.e. destroy] his [Egypt's] plan/counsel) in v 3 is secondary to the original poem in vv 1-4. Although it could be that ועצתו אכלע in v 3 is simply an explanatory gloss clarifying the meaning of the first line of v 3, there might be more to it than that. It was briefly mentioned earlier that the phrase is commonly seen as a thematic link between vv 1-4 and vv 11-15 by those who regard the two passages as essentially homogenous from their composition. Here in v 3, YHWH destroys Egypt's עצה, and in v 12, Pharaoh's wise men fail to recognise YHWH's עצה. At this point, we may turn to vv 11-15 and see how v 12 fits in these verses.

8-1-3: Isaiah 19:11-15

Isaiah 19:11

אֲדֹנָיִם שְׂרִי צֵעַן חֲכָמֵי יַעֲצִי פְרֹעָה עֲצָה נִבְעָרָה אִיךָ תֵּאֱמָרוּ אֶל־פְּרֹעָה בְּנִי־מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל

The MT, as it stands, may be translated as, ‘Indeed, the princes of Zoan are fools; the wisest of the counsellors of Pharaoh are (?) a stupid counsel. How can you say to Pharaoh, “I am a son of the wise, a son of the kings of old”?’

This verse has two major issues. First, the verse seems a little too long compared to the following verse. Second, *חכמי יעצי פרעה עצה נבערה* is syntactically awkward. Starting with the latter, although *חכמי יעצי פרעה* is not grammatically impossible, and GK §133h sees the first substantival adjective as a superlative (i.e. the wisest of Pharaoh’s counsellors – which the context demands should the MT be correct), the phrase creates a questionable sense when combined with the verb-less predicate *עצה נבערה*: Pharaoh’s wisest advisors ‘are’ a stupid advice. G. R. Driver, for this reason, suggests swapping the word order of *יעצי פרעה* and changing *יעצי* into *יעצו* thus reading *חכמי פרעה יעצו עצה נבערה* (the wise men of Pharaoh counsel brutish counsel).¹⁶ Although Driver justifies the 5 word length of the line by counting *חכמי פרעה* as one beat, Wildberger finds this justification unsatisfactory and suggests reading *חכמי פרעה עצתם נבערה* (the wise men of Pharaoh – their advice is stupid) by regarding the supposed *יעצו* as dittograph.¹⁷ However, one cannot help but think that there are too many scribal errors assumed here. It is worth noting that 1QIsa^a has *חכמיה* (her wise men) instead of *חכמי*. Usually, this reading (*חכמיה יעצי פרעה עצה נבערה*) is not taken seriously by commentators because at first glance it seems harder to make sense of than the reading of the MT.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the following two options make the reading of 1QIsa^a seem earlier than that of the MT. First of all, *יעצי פרעה* could be an explanatory

¹⁶ Driver, ‘Linguistic’ 40; so Kissane, *Isaiah*, 217; and BHS.

¹⁷ Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 702.

¹⁸ Dahood appears to be the only one to take the reading of 1QIsa^a seriously here. Dahood, ‘Isaiah 19, 11’ 420.

gloss. The feminine suffix of חכמיה here must refer to צען and a scribe who failed to make sense of the suffix might have felt the need to clarify the identity of the wise men in view of the latter half of the verse. Thus before the gloss, the line may have read, חכמיה עצה נבערה (her wise men are a stupid counsel). Admittedly, the sense is still awkward. A more likely hypothesis is an accidental intrusion of פרעה from the next line. As to how this might have happened, one could imagine that פרעה in v 11b was for whatever reason slightly illegible (badly written or smudged). The word then gets written down in the margin by a scribe for clarification. However, when the scroll is being copied later by a different scribe, the word in the margin gets wrongly inserted into the present position in v 11a instead of replacing the hard-to-read word in v 11b it was meant to clarify.¹⁹ Before the intrusion of פרעה, the line would have read חכמיה יעצו עצה נבערה (her wise men have planned/counselled a stupid plan). It is easy to imagine how יעצו could have been turned into יעצי when פרעה was brought in. One might be dissatisfied, at this point, with seeing פרעה as an intrusion. In this case, one would keep פרעה and read חכמיה יעצו פרעה עצה נבערה (her wise men counsel Pharaoh a stupid counsel), seeing פרעה and עצה נבערה as double accusatives. The difficulty with this is that when יעץ has a personal object in the HB – i.e. when someone advises a person – this is done most frequently with a pronominal suffix (Ex 18:19; Num 24:14; 1Kgs 1:12; 12:8, 13; Jer 38:15; Ps 16:7; 2Chr 10:8). When it is not done with a pronominal suffix, the personal object is clarified either with the direct object marker את (2 Sam 17:15) or with the preposition ל (Job 26:3). If פרעה is not an accidental intrusion, this would be the only place where יעץ has double accusatives and it would have been much more natural if

¹⁹ This would be another case of Leslie C. Allen's 'Cuckoos.' L. Allen, 'Cuckoos' 143-150; 'More Cuckoos' 69-73. Almost the same kind of process could be behind the famous case of Ps 18:14 where the last three words from the previous verse are repeated at the end of the verse.

the text read *פרעה יעצו לפרעה עצה נבערה*. Since it does not, it appears more likely that *פרעה* in v 11a is an accidental intrusion from v 11b.

In fact, there is another reason why the feminine suffix of *חכמיה* in 1QIsa^a ought not to be readily dismissed and this is closely related to the point made earlier about the extra length of the verse. One notices how Isa 19:11-15 is written in the 3rd person except for the direct addresses in vv 11b-12. If we accept the emended text *חכמיה יעצו עצה נבערה*, for the second line of v 11, the first half of v 11 speaks of the princes and the wise men of Zoan. The second half of v 11, however, is addressed to the wise men of Pharaoh, and v 12 is addressed to Pharaoh about YHWH's plan against the whole of Egypt. In v 13, the princes of Zoan are mentioned again together with the princes of Noph. At this point, we need to deal with the textual issues in v 13.

Isaiah 19:13

נוֹאֲלוּ שָׂרֵי צֶעַן נִשְׂאוּ שָׂרֵי נֹף הִתְעוּ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם פֶּנֶת שְׂבָטֶיהָ

The MT may be translated as, 'The princes of Zoan have become fools; the princes of Noph are deceived; the chief of her tribes have caused Egypt to wander about.'

That 1QIsa^a has *נוֹאֲלוּ* (perhaps from the supposed root *אול* 'to be foolish?' – related to the adj. *אוויל* 'foolish') instead of *נוֹאֲלוּ* (from the root *יאל* 'to be foolish'), and *נִשְׂאוּ* (from the supposed root *שוא* – a related verb to the noun *שֶׁוּא* 'emptiness, vanity')

instead of נשא (from the root נשא 'to deceive') is relatively unimportant as it does not affect the meaning of the verse.

What is more serious is the five-word third line פנת שבטיה התעו את מצרים that is longer than the first two three word lines. That the singular פנת should be the subject of the plural verb התעו is odd. Of course this can be quickly remedied by repointing פנת as פנת and this is suggested by many.²⁰ However, that the direct object את מצרים should come before the subject פנת שבטיה seems awkward even in poetry. The word order might have been more natural if שבטיה did not have the feminine suffix referring either to נר or צען but a masculine suffix referring to Egypt i.e. 'they have caused Egypt to wander, that is, the chiefs of the tribes of Egypt.' Nevertheless, we know that the feminine suffix of שבטיה must refer to either צען or נר because Egypt in vv 14-15 (as also in vv 1, 3) is treated as a masculine noun. Further, it is strange that v 14a יהוה מסך בקרבה (YHWH has mixed in her midst a spirit of distortions [i.e. confusion?]) returns to speak about 'in *her* midst' i.e. Zoan or Noph after the end of v 13 has moved on to the whole of Egypt.²¹ It seems only in v 14b the picture properly moves on to the whole of Egypt. It is, then, certainly intriguing that we have והתעו את מצרים in v 14b. Now, vv 14b-15 appear to be a prose text.

Isaiah 19:14b-15

והתעו את מצרים בכל מעשהו פהתעות שכור בקיאו

²⁰ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 143; Marti, *Jesaja*, 154; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 702; BHS; etc.

²¹ This point was used by Dahood to argue for the superiority of 1QIsa^a in v 11. Dahood, 'Isaiah 19, 11' 420.

וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה לְמִצְרַיִם מַעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב כִּפֶּה וְאַגְמוֹן

(And they will cause Egypt to wander about in all his deed like the staggering of a drunken man in his vomit. And there will be for Egypt no deed which he may do, head or tail, branch or reed.)

The two long sentences in these verses are not divided into lines or contain parallelisms. Rather, they follow the standard prose word order. In addition, whereas vv 11a, 13-14a are set in the past, vv 14b-15 are suddenly set in the future with the Waw perfect וַהֲתַעַו and וְלֹא יִהְיֶה. It is, therefore, quite possible that vv 14b-15, which deal with the whole of Egypt as opposed to specific parts of it like Zoan or Noph in vv 11a, 13-14a, are a later addition. Moreover, this addition (vv 14b-15) contains a number of borrowed phrases from other parts of the book of Isaiah following the repetition of הֲתַעַו from v 13 and seems to be a *Fortschreibung* to the preceding verses.²² The pair תַּעַו (to wander about) + קִיא (vomit) is taken from 28:7-8 and רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב כִּפֶּה וְאַגְמוֹן (head and tail branch and reed) from 9:13. If we are right about vv 14b-15, אֶת מִצְרַיִם in v 13 could be a gloss made by the writer(s) of vv 14b-15. Alternatively, אֶת מִצְרַיִם might have been the result of an eye jump by a copyist from הֲתַעַו in v 13 to וַהֲתַעַו in v 14. Either way, without אֶת מִצְרַיִם, v 13 would be a nicely balanced tristich with three words in each line (נוֹאֲלוּ שְׂרִי). In this case, whether singular or plural, פַּנַּת שְׂבֻטִיהָ need not be the subject of the line but the object of the impersonal verb הֲתַעַו – i.e. ‘they caused the chief(s) of her tribes to wander about.’ Moreover, the feminine suffix of בְּקִרְבָּה in v 14a, which must refer either to Zoan or Noph and not Egypt, no longer appears odd,

²² The phrases borrowed from other parts of the book in these verses have led Vermeylen to question the pre-exilic origin of the whole of vv 1-4, 11-15. Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 320-321.

and certainly does not need to be altered to בקרבם (in *their* midst) following the LXX, which has αὐτοῖς, as do Wildberger and BHS and others.²³

Having cleared the textual issues of v 13, we may return to the discussion about the flow of the materials from v 11ff. We have noted that vv 11b-12 stand out as direct addresses amid 3rd person descriptions. In addition to this, we can now observe that, without vv 11b-12, vv 11a-14a consistently speak about Zoan and Noph and do not explicitly mention מצרים. Only in 14b (which is part of the later prose writing of vv 14b-15) the picture moves on to Egypt at large. Verses 11b-12, on the other hand, speak of Pharaoh's wise men and the plan of YHWH against the whole of Egypt. Therefore, not only do vv 11b-12 stand out as direct addresses, but they also disrupt the scope of the subject matter of the surrounding verses. Further, except for the short quotation at the end of v 11b, vv 11b-12 have the appearance of a prose text lacking parallelisms whereas vv 11a, 13 are clearly poetry. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that vv 11b-12 were inserted between v 11a and v 13, and in light of this, reading חכמיה in v 11a with 1QIsa^a seems all the more appropriate. It is hard to find any similarity either in style or the subject matter between vv 11b-12 and vv 14b-15, and this makes us lean towards the view that the two additions are not from the same hand. It is, also, difficult to know whether vv 11b-12 or vv 14b-15 were added first.

²³ Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 702.

We may, then, ask what purpose adding vv 11b-12 might have served. Those who added vv 11b-12 seem to have wanted to capitalise on the foolishness of the wisdom of Egypt by taking the image of the wisest of Egypt giving foolish עצה and contrasting it with YHWH's עצה, which is beyond the grasp of Egypt's wisest.

Now that we have looked at vv 1-4 and vv 11-15, it seems attractive to entertain the possibility that the writers of vv 11b-12 are the ones who also added the gloss ועצתו in v 3. Perhaps, the gloss in v 3 was intended to work as a linking device, which brings two poems – vv 1-4 and vv 11a, 13-14a – together, that were once somewhat more separate from each other. Below is the emended consonantal text of Isa 19:1-15 (emendations underlined and secondary additions marked with dotted underlines).

Isaiah 19:1-15 (emended)

Verses 1-4

משא מצרים

הנה יהוה רכב על עב קל' ובא מצרים.

ונעו אלילי מצרים מפניו

ולבב מצרים ימס בקרבו

וסכסכתי מצרים במצרים

ונלחמו איש באחיו ואיש ברעהו עיר בעיר ממלכה בממלכה

ונבקה רוח מצרים בקרבו ועצתו אבלע.

וּדְרָשׁוּ אֶל הָאֱלִילִים וְאֶל הָאֲטִים וְאֶל הָאֲבוֹת וְאֶל הַיִּדְעָנִים

וּסְכַרְתִּי אֶת מִצְרִים בְּיַד אֲדָנִים קֶשֶׁה

וּמֶלֶךְ עַז יִמְשַׁל בָּם

נֶאֱמַר הָאֲדוֹן יִהְיֶה צְבָאוֹת

Verses 5-10

וּנְשָׁתוּ מִיָּם מֵהֵימָּה וְנִהְרָ יַחֲרֹב וַיִּבֶשׁ

וְהִזְנִיחוּ נְהָרוֹת וַדְּלִלוּ וַחֲרָבוּ יָאֵרִי מִצּוֹר

קָנָה וְסוֹף יִקְמְלוּ עֲרוֹת עַל פִּי יָאוֹר

וְכָל־מִזְרַע יָאוֹר יִיבֶשׁ נֶדֶף וַאֲיַנְנוּ

וְאֵנֹו הַדִּיגִים וְאֵבְלוּ כָל מִשְׁלִיכֵי בִיאוֹר חֲכָה

וּפְרָשֵׁי מִכְמַרְתָּ עַל פְּנֵי מֵיָם אִמְלִלוּ

²⁴ וְבִשְׁוּ עֲבָדֵי פִשְׁתִּים שְׂרָקוֹת וְאֲרָגִים יַחֲוֹרֶן

נֶפֶשׁ²⁶ מִדְּכָאִים כָּל עֹשֵׂי שֹׁכֵר אֲגָמִי²⁵ וְהָיוּ שְׁתִּיתִיָּה

Verses 11-15

²⁴ This verse has not been discussed. The MT reads עֲבָדֵי פִשְׁתִּים שְׂרָקוֹת וְאֲרָגִים חֲוֹרֶן and may be translated as 'the workers of flax will be ashamed, fine flax (?), and the weavers of white stuff (?).' The sense is difficult. 1QIsa^a and 4Q Isa^b read חֲוֹרֶן (they turned pale) at the end of the verse (1Q Isa^b agrees with the MT) and this seems to be the superior reading and makes some sense. Following Wildberger's suggestion that שְׂרָקוֹת should be read as שְׂרָקוֹת (hapax) to mean 'combers,' the verse now makes reasonably good sense: 'The workers of flax will be ashamed, the combers and the weavers will turn pale.' Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 701.

²⁵ The MT has שְׁתִּיתִיָּה (her foundations). BHS' suggestion to read שְׁתִּיתִיָּה from Coptic *štit* meaning 'weaver' makes sense and suits the context.

²⁶ Wildberger seems right to relate אֲגָמִי not to אֲגָמ (pool), which makes no sense, but to עָגַם (to be grieved). Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 702. Cf. Job 30:25 for עָגַם + נֶפֶשׁ (from BDB 723).

אך אולים שרי צען חכמיה יעצן עצה נבערה

איד תאמרו אל פרעה בו חכמים אני בו מלכי קדם

...אים אפוא חכמיה ויגידו גא לך וידעו מה יעץ יהוה צבאות על מצרים

שרי נף התעו פנת שבטיה²⁷ נואלו שרי צען נשאו

יהוה מסך בקרבה רוח עועים

והתעו את מצרים בכל מעשהו כהתעות שכור בקיאו

ולא יהיה למצרים מעשה אשר יעשה ראש וזנב כפה ואגמון

8-2: Isaiah 19:16-17

8-2-1: Relationship between Isaiah 19:1-15 and 19:16-17

Having examined vv 1-15, we are in a better place to discuss the relationship between vv 16-17 and what precedes them.

Isaiah 19:16-17

ביום ההוא יהיה מצרים כנשים ותרד ופחד מפני תנופת יד־יהוה צבאות אשר־הוא מניף עליו והיתה אדמת יהודה למצרים לחגא כל אשר יזכיר אתה אליו יפחד מפני עצת יהוה צבאות אשר־הוא יועץ עליו

(In that day, Egypt shall be like women, and it will tremble and fear because of the shaking of the hand of YHWH of Hosts which he shakes over it. And the land of Judah shall be a terror to Egypt; everyone who mentions it [the land of Judah] to it [Egypt]

²⁷ 1QIsa^a has נשואו (they have been misled) from נשא rather than נשא (II deceive), but fortunately, the sense is very similar.

will be in dread because of the plan of YHWH of Hosts which he plans against it
[Egypt].)

To answer the question ‘what form might the oracle about Egypt have been in when vv 16-17 were written?’ we may be reasonably sure, according to the present study of vv 1-15, that it included at least vv 1-4, 11-14a. This is because vv 16-17 take the motif of YHWH’s hostile plan against Egypt from what we have identified as additions to the two poems in these verses and develops it further. It is tempting to ask if the same hands that wrote vv 16-17 did not also bring the two earlier poems – vv 1-4 & vv 11-14a – together in the first place by adding vv 11b-12 and the gloss *ועצתו אכלע* in v 3. We do not have to make that decision here, however, and we may leave the question open. What is more important is that vv 16-17 show a positive awareness of vv 1-4, 11-14a. What about vv 5-10 then? Do vv 16-17 reflect vv 5-10 in any way? Certainly not in an obvious way! Nevertheless, if one agrees with those who find the tradition of the Exodus from Egypt alluded to in vv 16-17, vv 5-10 would certainly have helped the writers of vv 16-17 to be reminded of the said tradition.²⁸

We shall at this point move on to discuss how the theory that vv 16-17 belong to the late-exilic layer helps to explain the passage’s hostile attitude towards Egypt and the subtle allusion to the Exodus tradition (if there is one). As well as helping us as an

²⁸ The following are some of the exegetes who find the Exodus tradition reflected in vv 16-17: Dillmann, *Jesaia*, 178; Duhm, *Jesaia*, 144; Skinner, *Isaiah*, 158; Kissane, *Isaiah*, 218; Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 106; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 732; W. Werner, *Plan Jahwes*, 52-53; Franz Sedlmeier, ‘Jes 19:16-25’ 94-95; H. Hagelia, ‘Isa 19:16-25’ 78; S. Lauber, ‘Jes 19:16-25’ 380-382.

aside to judge with greater certainty if the oracle inherited by vv 16-17 indeed included vv 5-10, this will lead us to be able to see better what vv 16-17 were intended to do or add to the existing oracle. Before we do so, though, we shall briefly note that whether or not the oracle received by vv 16-17 already had the *Fortschreibung* in vv 14b-15 is relatively not of great importance to us. This is because vv 14b-15 do not add very much to what might be called the overall message of the oracle in that their function seems more to do with embellishing the oracle with references to other texts within the book and, as far as the general meaning goes, they only seem to re-emphasise the powerlessness of the Egyptians.

8-2-2: Exodus Tradition

As frequently noted by many, YHWH's hand shaking (נִירָה) over Egypt in Isa 19:16 brings to one's mind Isa 11:15 where YHWH shakes (נִירָה) his hand over the river of Egypt. Now we cannot here engage ourselves with all the textual oddities and the problem of dating of 11:15. Even without doing so, nevertheless, it would not be unreasonable to assume some sort of dependence between the two passages whichever the direction of influence is. This is because 'the shaking (נִירָה) of the hand/fist (יָד)' in a hostile manner appears only 5 times in the HB (Job 31:21; Isa 10:32; 11:15; 19:16; Zech 2:13) and the expression is used in relation to Egypt only in Isa 11:15 and 19:16. The fact that 11:15-16 clearly employs the Exodus tradition, then, is important for us. If 19:16-17 is dependent on 11:15, the fact that it echoes a passage with a clear allusion to the Exodus tradition could suggest that the writers of 19:16-17 also had the said tradition in mind. If it is 11:15 which is dependent on 19:16-17 (the more likely possibility), then

it would be quite likely that ch 19 already contained vv 5-10 when this borrowing took place. That 11:15 depended on 19:16-17 (if such is the case) could at least mean that the writers of 11:15-16 found it useful to allude to 19:16-17 when recalling the first Exodus from Egypt.

More intriguing is the motif of Egypt trembling with fear because of YHWH and his people. The passage often referred to in relation to this motif found in vv 16-17 is Ex 15:14 where the news of YHWH's deeds against Egypt makes the Philistines, the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Canaanites tremble as they hear it. However, one might object to this connection by pointing out that although the news is about YHWH's miracles against Egypt, the ones that are in fear are not the Egyptians in Ex 15:14. Within the book of Exodus, 12:33, where the Egyptians send the people of Israel away saying *כָּלֵנוּ מֵתִים* (we are all dead people), would be closer to Isa 19:16-17 but, still, not close enough to convince those who doubt that any connection exists between the two passages. Thus one might at this point be hesitant to agree with the view that Isa 19:16-17 echoes the Exodus tradition. Nevertheless, a much closer parallel to Isa 19:16-17 is found in Ps 105:38.

Psalm 105:38

שָׂמַח מִצְרַיִם בְּצֵאתָם כִּי־נָפַל פַּחַדָּם עָלֵיהֶם

(Egypt rejoiced when they [YHWH's people] departed, for the fear of them fell on them.)

Not only is the word פֶּחַד (fear) shared in both Ps 105:38 and Isa 19:16-17, it is precisely ‘the fear of them (פִּתְחָדִם)’ among the Egyptians (and not some other peoples) that is expressed in both passages. Because this precise notion is not found in the book of Exodus, the fact that it is shared in Ps 105 and Isa 19:16-17 appears to be more than coincidence. Even without going into the direction of influence just yet, it does not seem farfetched to claim a close connection between the two passages. This, together with our verses’ connection with Isa 11:15-16, could give us some assurance that we are not entirely mistaken to sense echoes of the Exodus tradition in Isa 19:16-17.

At this point, the conjecture that our passage 19:16-17, together with Isa 14:26-27 and 23:8-9, 11, is tightly linked to Isa 40-55 somewhat gains support when we realise how close Ps 105 is to Isa 40-55 in its treatment of the Exodus tradition. Svend Holm-Nielsen argues that Ps 105’s treatment of the Exodus tradition is virtually the same as that of Isa 40-55. Both see the exile and the return from it as the second Exodus.²⁹ Holm-Nielsen demonstrates the connection between Ps 105 and Isa 40-55 by showing that when Ps 105 seems to aggrandise the exodus event by using expressions not found in the book of Exodus, these are found in Isa 40-55. For instance, the phrase וַיִּזְבּוּ מַיִם (and the water gushed out) in Ps 105:41, which is used to describe the water flowing out of the rock in the desert, reappears elsewhere in the HB only in Ps 78 (another historical Psalm) and Isa 48:21. Moreover, also in Ps 105:41, a river (presumably referring to the water from the rock) is said to flow in צִיָּה (the dry land). Both the word צִיָּה and an indication that the amount of water was so considerable that it could be

²⁹ Svend Holm-Nielsen, ‘Psalm 105’ 26-27.

called a נהר (stream/ river) are not present in the book of Exodus. In Isa 41:18, though, YHWH promises that he would turn the dry land (צִיָּה) into springs of water. Because the water will be so plentiful, all sorts of trees will grow as a result in the following verse. This promise is given to those in exile, who are thirsty and seek water in the previous verse, and the allusion to YHWH providing water for the thirsty Israelites in the wilderness during the first Exodus is all too clear to miss. Furthermore, Ps 105:43 speaks of the joy (שִׂשׂוֹן) and the singing (רִנָּה) of YHWH's people as he brought them out of Egypt. Although Moses and the Israelites do rejoice as they experience the miracle at the Red Sea in Ex 15, the words שִׂשׂוֹן and רִנָּה do not appear at all in the book of Exodus. Moreover, while in Ps 105 this rejoicing of YHWH's people is immediately followed by their inheriting the Promised Land in the following verse, the book of Exodus makes a sizeable point that the long journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land was definitely not all about שִׂשׂוֹן and רִנָּה. Isa 40-55, however, describes those who would experience 'the second Exodus' as being full of שִׂשׂוֹן and רִנָּה more than once (44:23; 49:13; 51:3, 11; 55:12). Would it then be merely coincidence that both Isa 19:16-17 and Isa 40-55 show close connections with Ps 105 in their use of the Exodus language? Although it is possible that Ps 105 drew some of its Exodus related language separately from Isa 19:16-17 and Isa 40-55, one wonders if the same circle of writers who are behind both Isa 19:16-17 and Isa 40-55 were influenced and inspired by the exaggerated style of Ps 105's treatment of the Exodus tradition.

Therefore, when we ask what the writer(s) of Isa 19:16-17 wished to accomplish by making the addition, we may say first and foremost that they tried to interpret the

earlier oracle through the lens of the Exodus tradition (which the earlier oracle seems free from).³⁰ The 'future' fall of Egypt which the earlier oracle speaks of is fused with the Exodus tradition in the mind of the writer of vv 16-17. For this reason, even if the additions in vv 3, 11b-12 were not made by the same hand that wrote vv 16-17, it is easily understandable why vv 16-17 would have wanted to latch on to the idea that both the confusing of Egypt's counsel (עצה) and its fall are the plan (עצה) of YHWH which is found in the said additions. The mention of the land of Judah (אדמת יהודה) in v 17 which is absent in vv 1-15 can also be similarly explained. Just as the fear of YHWH caused by his wrath on Egypt resulted in the fear of YHWH's people during the first Exodus, it is only natural that the future judgement on Egypt would also bring about the nation's fear of YHWH's people. One might ask about the choice of the word אדמה (land) as opposed to some words denoting YHWH's people. Could it be that because the writer of vv 16-17 viewed the return from the exile as the second Exodus as per chs 40-55, the land of Judah to which the exiles will return now symbolises YHWH's mighty acts? Should further speculation be allowed, one may wonder if on some level vv 16-17 are also interpreting the judgement on Egypt in vv 1-15 symbolically.

There are no particularly special words or phrases in 19:16-17 that could positively point to a specific period in history. Therefore, the supposition that these

³⁰ For W. Werner, the Exodus tradition can be traced already in vv 1-15 and vv 16-17 only summarise the preceding verses. This, however, seems to be mainly due to his view that vv 1-15 are an original unity. The juxtaposition of the political unrest in Egypt and the ruin of the Nile may remind one of some parts of the Exodus story. According to our study of the verses, though, the separate parts of vv 1-15 appear to have been put together by an editor. Although we may agree that the Exodus story can be recalled when one reads vv 1-15 together, and the writers of vv 16-17 could very well have been reminded thus, this does not appear to be by design. Werner, *Plan Jahwes*, 52-53.

verses, together with 14:26-27 and 23:8-9, 11, might belong to a late-exilic layer, inevitably relies on various circumstantial evidence. Somewhat fortunately, though, we find more support in the verses that follow 19:16-17.

8-3: Isaiah 19:18-25

Although the second half of ch 19 (vv 16-25) is formally divided into five sayings, each with the same opening ביום ההוא (in that day), there are largely three views among scholars with regard to their diachronic relationships. There are those who reckon that the whole of vv 16-25 may have been written by the same hand be it on one occasion or throughout a period of time.³¹ There are others who believe that vv 16-25 reflect multiple additions by different authors.³² The third group of interpreters prefer to see a two-staged development of vv 16-25. Verses 16-17 were first written and then at a later stage, vv 18-25 were added to vv 16-17.³³ Although we do not need to differentiate between the second and the third of these views so far as the present hypothesis is concerned, the arguments in support of the third view are of particular interest to us. This is because if there are notable differences between vv 16-17 and vv 18-25, these differences could support the hypothesis that vv 16-17 are to be dated in

³¹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 144; J. Fischer, *Das Buch Isaias*, 143; W. Vogels, 'Is 19:16-25' 497; André Feuillet, 'Summet' 79-87; Alfons Deissler, 'Jes 19:16-25' 9-10; Berges, *Book*, 148; Moshe Greenberg, 'House of Prayer' 36; C. Balogh, *Stele*, 277-302.

³² Skinner, *Isaiah*, 154; Procksch, *Jesaia*, 249; Kaiser, *Isaiah*, 105; F. Sedlmeier, 'Jes 19:16-25' 93; P. Cook, *Sign*, 98-122.

³³ Delitzsch, *Jesaia*, 243; Vermeylen, *Isaïe*, 323-324; Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 270-271; H. Hagelia, 'Isa 19:16-25' 75; J. T. Hibbard, 'Isaiah 19:18' 32.

the late exilic-period and not in the post-exilic period (with vv 18-25) as is the view of the vast majority of scholars.³⁴

First of all, there is an apparent difference of attitude toward Egypt between vv 16-17 and vv 18-25. From the preceding verses, vv 16-17 continue to be hostile toward Egypt unlike vv 18-25 where Egypt enjoys unparalleled inclusivity. Second, it has been pointed out that in vv 16-17, מצרים has singular verbs and singular pronouns whereas it has plural verbs and plural pronouns in vv 18-25.³⁵ Third, vv 16-17 speak about the land of Judah but vv 18-25 mention Israel.³⁶ Fourth, what might be viewed as historical allusions (Israelite cultic language spoken in five Egyptian cities and there being an altar in Egypt for offering sacrifices to YHWH etc.) that led many to date the verses in the post-exilic period are all to be found in vv 18-25. Although exegetes try to link vv 16-17 to a historical event such as the attack of Egypt by Cambyses II, the vision of vv 16-17 is both set in the future and uses vague language to describe the fall. Of course, the visions in vv 18-25 are also set in the future. The vows and the sacrifices to YHWH are made and offered by the Egyptians and not by the Israelites in Egypt in these verses, and therefore these visions are not direct references to historical realia such as

³⁴ There is a small minority of scholars who prefer to date vv 16-25 in the pre-exilic period. J. Fischer, *Das Buch Isaias*, 143; A. Niccacci, 'Isaiah XVIII-XX' 220-221; Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 270; C. Balogh, *Stele*, 277-302. One of the most decisive reasons for placing these verses in the pre-exilic period is the view that the phrase *וַעֲבָדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת-אֲשׁוּר* at the end of v 23 ought to be translated as 'and Egypt will serve Assyria' rather than the more popular translation 'and Egypt will serve with Assyria.' Following this, the Assyrian dominance in Egypt following Esarhaddon's invasion of Egypt is often seen as the historical setting of the verses. Even without going into the radically inclusive ideas expressed in vv 24-25, the interpretation of the aforementioned phrase in v 23 of these exegetes fails to appreciate the force of v 21 which is evidently carried onto v 23. With the sudden introduction of Assyria, the main function of v 23 seems to include Assyria in Egypt's journey to becoming YHWH's people in vv 18-22. Not only Egypt but also Assyria will serve YHWH.

³⁵ Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 270.

³⁶ Sweeney, *Isaiah*, 270.

the temple of YHWH (or rather Yaho/Yahu) in Elephantine. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to imagine how the presence of the Israelite communities and places of worship in Egypt might have led to the visions found in vv 18-25.³⁷ Obviously, it is harder to apply the same logic to vv 16-17 and the lack of any suggestive allusions to any historical events in these verses makes it more likely that they are not an *ex eventu* prophecy. All these observations may serve as circumstantial evidence for the hypothesis of the present study.

8-4: Conclusion

This chapter sought to demonstrate how far the supposition that 19:16-17 belongs to the same late-exilic layer as 14:26-27 and 23:8-9, 11 goes to explain both the way 19:16-17 modifies the preceding verses and the apparent differences between 19:16-17 and the verses that follow. Despite the lack of special words or phrases in 19:16-17 that strongly point to the supposed late-exilic date of the verses, the explicative power of the hypothesis of the present study might be seen to make up for the absence of some such support.

To take a step back for a moment to see the big picture, it is revealing to note how the post-exilic visions in 19:18-25 are markedly different from those found in other passages of 'pro-nations' character in chs 13-23 (14:1-2; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7) which we

³⁷ Cf. J. T. Hibbard, 'Isaiah 19:18' 32-52.

have studied and identified as parts of a late-exilic redactional layer. Zion/land of Judah is no longer the sole centre of the future vision of restoration of YHWH's people. Unlike the late-exilic vision that sees it almost necessary that the nations come to the land of YHWH's people to share in their future glory, what we find in 19:18-25 is a yet further developed picture where nations turn to YHWH, enjoy his favour, and worship him in league with Israel, all in their own lands.³⁸ To some extent, this is also true of 23:17-18, another post-exilic passage. Although Tyre's future wealth will provide for those in YHWH's household in v 18, it is not said in v 17 that Tyre's restoration would begin with the people of Tyre first coming to Zion, the seat of YHWH's name. Rather, it is YHWH who will visit Tyre to revive the city's commerce. In the post-exilic visions of 19:18-25 and 23:17-18, the worship of YHWH and his blessings no longer have geographical boundaries. YHWH will make the nations his own the same way he chose, chastised, and restored Israel, his firstborn.

³⁸ For similar views, see Berges, *Book*, 147; P. Cook, *Sign*, 118-120.

Chapter 9: Summary and conclusion

Having examined all the passages of the present study's focus in relation to the compositional history of the oracles in which our passages are situated, it may be helpful to summarize the results.

The overall hypothesis of the present study was spelt out right from the start in the introductory chapter (chapter 1). It was proposed that the same late-exilic writer (or the same circle of writers) who wrote chs 40-55 made a series of additions to the oracles concerning the nations in chs 13-23 and that these expansions are found in 14:1-2; 14:26-27; 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7; 19:16-17; 23:8-9, 11. It was argued that 14:1-2 and 14:26-27, surrounding what originally was a section dealing with the fall of Assyria (14:4b-25a), were written to introduce the two sides of a future vision vis-à-vis the fate of the nations. The first of the two aspects of this vision was the joining of the nations to the people of Israel as YHWH brings his people back to Zion from their exile (14:1-2). Not only will there be gentile converts who live and worship with the people of Israel in the restored city of Zion, the peoples and nations will facilitate the return of the Israelites to their land and also serve them as slaves. This side of the vision was then applied programmatically to the oracles against the nations which either no longer held their former prominence in the international arena or barely existed as a people by the late-exilic period (Philistia, Moab, and Cush) in 14:32b; 16:1-4a; 18:7. The other side of the vision was the plan of YHWH to humble the proud nations of the world (14:26-

27). Just as Assyria was punished for its pride in the past, so will Babylon and other boastful nations be subdued in a short while. This side of the vision was applied to the oracles against the nations which remained influential and powerful in the late-exilic period (Egypt and Tyre) in 19:16-17; 23:8-9, 11.

It was noted in the chapter dealing with 14:1-2 (chapter 2) that 14:1-4a showed an uncanny resemblance to chs 40-55 both in style and in the pattern of thought. Since there was no compelling reason to date the two lengthy poems (at least their main bodies) which 14:1-4a currently serves as a bridge-text in the post-exilic period it seemed natural to adopt the view that 14:1-4a was written in the late-exilic period by the same circle of writers who wrote chs 40-55. It seemed historically plausible to date the main body of ch 13 in the mid-6th Century and the signs of ch 13's dependence on 14:4b-25a suggested that 14:4b-25a was perhaps a late pre-exilic collection of sayings against Assyria. The 'Babylonizing' process of chs 13-14 started already with ch 13 before the addition of 14:1-4a, therefore, and the main function of 14:1-2 in its immediate literary setting was to interpret the imminent fall of Babylon in light of the divine will to restore and establish Zion as a place where the people of Israel return to and where the nations come to join and attach themselves to YHWH's people – one of the core arguments of chs 40-55.

According to the compositional history of 14:28-32 reconstructed in the chapter dealing with this passage (chapter 3), v 28 was identified as the original introduction to

a series of early oracles against the nations in the book (i.e. not just to the oracle against Philistia) and the original poem against Philistia consisted of vv 29, 31-32a plus an ending which is now lost to us. This poem spoke of a future Assyrian attack on the Philistine cities and is to be dated in the pre-exilic period. Verses 30, 32b are therefore later additions to the original poem. Verse 30b was written against 'the rod' sometime during the exilic period. Verse 32b (the passage of the present study's focus) was then written in the late-exilic period primarily to assert YHWH's establishment of Zion as a place of refuge for his people in exile. By setting v 32b as an answer to the Philistine messengers, the invitation to hide in Zion is extended to the Philistines too. It is as though the general vision of 14:1-2 was applied to the specific case of the oracle against Philistia. The use of language in v 32b finds close parallels in chs 40-55 (49:13 in particular) and there is no reason the half-verse must be from the post-exilic period. Verse 30a, however, does appear to have been written in the post-exilic period but it was a separate expansion on v 32b written first in the margin which was mistakenly copied into the current position.

In the chapter discussing the oracle concerning Cush (chapter 4), 18:1-2, 4-6 was identified as the original poem against Cush inherited by the supposed late-exilic redactor who added v 7 at the end of the poem. It was argued that v 3 was originally a marginal note on 17:12-14 written in the post-exilic period which was mistakenly copied into the verse's current position. The only intentional addition made to the original oracle against Cush is, therefore, v 7 where one finds some points of contact with chs 40-55. Verse 7 foretells that the Cushites who were stricken by YHWH in the

past (according to the earlier verses) will one day acknowledge his sovereignty and bring tributary gifts to Zion. The future restoration of a once afflicted people, their journey to Zion, and various connections with chs 40-55 all suggest that 18:7 is a continuation of the same vision first set out in 14:1-2.

In chapter 5 where the oracle concerning Moab was examined, 15:9b; 16:1-5, 13-14 were recognized as passages that were secondary to the original lament/taunt over Moab. It was demonstrated through a comparative study of the two parallel texts Isa 15-16 and Jer 48 that the base-layer of Isa 15-16 was earlier than its counterpart in Jer 48 and that Jer 48 did not have the parallel texts for Isa 16:1-5. However, it was noted that Isa 16:1-2 showed an awareness of Jer 48:28. The results of this comparative study, together with the contrasts in style and subject matter between Isa 16:1-5 and the surrounding poem, suggested that 16:1-5 was not part of the original poem. It was postulated that the sudden 1st person YHWH speech in 15:9b and the clear example of a reapplication of an older oracle in 16:13-14 came from the same redactor who understood the original poem to have been in two parts. The addition of 15:9b and 16:13-14 would have been made sometime during the Neo-Babylonian period before Moab ceased to be a meaningful political force. It was also argued that 16:1-5 might be divided into two parts – 16:1-4a and 16:4b-5 – and that the two passages embraced two quite different concerns. 16:4b-5 was characterized as an expectation for a future priestly Davidic Messiah, a hope which was more common in the post-exilic period, and it was in 16:1-4a that the vision of 14:1-2 was found to have been applied to the oracle against Moab. The same pattern which was observed in 14:32b and 18:7 was also

found in 16:1-4a. A formerly displaced people are now told to flee to Zion and ask for protection with a tributary gift. Although no special words or phrases that could link 16:1-4a with chs 40-55 were found, the fact that 16:1-4a follows the same redactional pattern as 14:1-2; 14:32b; 18:7 supported the claim that 16:1-4a belongs to the late-exilic group of additions as argued by the present study.

Having examined all the passages that are inclusive toward the nations, the passages that reflect the opposite side of the late-exilic vision concerning the nations were attended to in the following three chapters.

In chapter 6, not only was 14:26-27 identified as a separate addition to the preceding verses, the passage was recognized as an expansion on the whole of 14:4b-25a and not just 14:24-25a. Just as YHWH punished Assyria in the past on account of its hubris, so would all the proud nations of the whole earth be humbled according to the divine plan. In support of the hypothesis of the present study, striking similarities in language and thought between 14:26-27 and chs 40-49 were observed. YHWH would give Cyrus his chosen vessel victory over the powerful and pompous nations all but for the sake of his people Israel. This was the idea the supposed late-exilic redactor wished to express through 14:26-27 in conjunction with 14:1-4a. Although YHWH's plan is worldwide in scale, the imminent fall of Babylon is especially in the background of 14:26-27 as indicated by the redactional setting in 14:4a. Babylon and

other proud nations will soon be brought low according to the plan of YHWH against the nations.

In chapter 7, the paradigm of 14:26-27 was spotted in the middle of the oracle concerning Tyre. The detailed study of the oracle showed that vv 5, 8-9, 11 disturbed the general flow of the main poem (23:1-14). According to the reconstruction of the compositional history of 23:1-14, the original poem was about the fall of the Phoenician city-state Sidon and it consisted of vv 1b-4, 6-7, 10, 12-14. Sometime later, v 5 was added to include Tyre in a poem where many other Phoenician cities also appeared. This led to the 'false' identification of the poem by the redactor who gave the poem its heading in v 1a. Subsequently, vv 8-9, 11 were added in the late-exilic period as hypothesized by the present study. The closeness in style and thought of 23:8-9, 11 with 14:26-27 (especially the pairing of the plan and the hostile arm of YHWH) and chs 40-49 supports the late-exilic date of the passage. Finally, sometime during the post-exilic period, 23:15-18 was written to express a hope for Tyre's revival and even conversion (arguably). Whether or not 23:15-18 should be seen as a single or a two-staged expansion, the passage's dependence on Jer 25 with regard to its seventy year reference indicates that all of the final three verses of the oracle concerning Tyre belong to the post-exilic period. As for Isa 23:8-9, 11, the passage claims that the fall of Tyre is part of YHWH's global plan to punish the hubris of the powerful nations of the earth as set out in 14:26-27.

Lastly, in chapter 8, the vision of 14:26-27 was found to have been also applied to the oracle concerning Egypt. It was argued that 19:16-17 was added to the preceding verses latching onto the motif of YHWH's hostile plan against Egypt found in the two secondary additions made to the earlier poems in vv 3, 11b-12 and combining the said motif with the announcement of Egypt's future trouble through the language of the Exodus tradition. Although no special words or phrases that could help with determining the date of 19:16-17 directly are found, the same pairing of the plan and arm of YHWH present in 14:26-27; 23:8-9, 11 lend support to attributing a late-exilic date to the passage. The fact that the tone of 19:18-25 is expressly different to that of 19:16-17 also serves as a circumstantial evidence for the view that 19:16-17 is not contemporary with 19:18-25, whose post-exilic date is little in doubt. According to 19:16-17, Egypt will soon experience terror because of YHWH's plan to bring Egypt low and exalt his people and their land. Egypt too was a part of the vision of 14:26-27.

As is evident, the fate of Jerusalem played a central role in this vision of the late-exilic period with regard to the nations. The nations would journey to Zion either to experience or to show their gratitude for their deliverance. If the fate of the nations were to take any positive turn, the divine re-establishment of Zion had to come first. It was only when other similarly reduced peoples had bet their future on the restoration of the people of Israel that they could harbour any hope for themselves. Should any nation be opposed to the rise of Zion, there would be dire consequences for that nation (19:17). Contrary to this late-exilic vision, the writers of the post-exilic passages in Isa 13-23 who viewed the nations favourably (19:18-26; 23:17-18) placed no specific

emphasis on the land of Israel. Rather, each nation would experience YHWH's chastisement and deliverance (akin to what Israel had undergone in the past) in their own land becoming part of the worldwide household of YHWH in the end.

To conclude, the measured/discriminate inclusivism of the late-exilic redactional passages in the oracles concerning the nations in Isa 13-23 may be viewed as a stepping stone for the radically nations-friendly words of the post-exilic passages in 16:14b-5; 19:18-25; 23:15-18. The early materials in Isa 13-23 first began, when the kingdom of Judah was exposed to constant threats and attacks from the foreign powers, as a collection of oracles against the nations which singularly spoke of the nations' doom. Towards the end of the Babylonian exile, these ancient oracles needed to be updated and reapplied to the present day in light of YHWH's dramatic plan to upset the international scene imminently (through Cyrus) for the sake of bringing his people back to their land (chs 40-55). Some of the nations (albeit only about a half of all those that feature in Isa 13-23), for whom the words of the oracles of doom evidently came true, were now invited to share in the restoration of Zion. One could argue that the trajectory started by this late-exilic reapplication of the inherited oracles concerning the nations led to the writing of some of the most profoundly inclusive passages in the HB.

Finally, if the present study has succeeded to any degree in demonstrating the plausibility of its main arguments, it may be possible to use the hypothesized late-exilic redaction of Isa 13-23 as something of a temporal peg on which the dating of other

passages could hang in future studies of the formation of Isa 13-23. Moreover, the present study may also contribute to the analyses of the other passages in the prophetic books where the future restoration (of varying magnitudes) of the nations is envisioned – Jer 46:26b (Egypt); 48:47 (Moab); 49:6 (the Ammonites), 39 (Elam); Ezek 29:13-16 (Egypt); Amos 9:11-12 (the nations called by YHWH's name); Zeph 3:9-10 (people from beyond the rivers of Cush); Zech 9:7b (Philistia) – especially with regard to the passages' date and the direction of influence among them (if any!).

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