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FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES, POLÍTICAS Y DE LA COMUNICACIÓN
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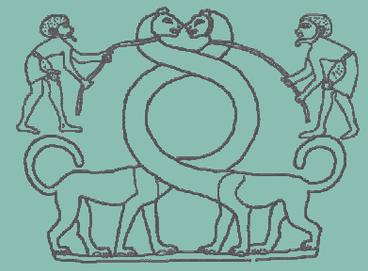

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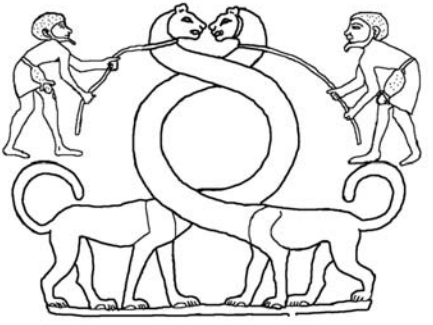

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In Memoriam Gabriel Nápole (1959-2013)

Al cierre de este número recibimos la triste noticia del fallecimiento del R. P. Gabriel Nápole OP, en la noche del 26 de Diciembre de 2013. Sacerdote dominico ordenado en 1986, obtuvo en Teología en, los grados de *élève titulaire* y *diplômé* en la École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem, y el Doctorado en Teología en de Teología "San Vicente Ferrer" de Valencia. Fue Director General del Instituto "Pedro de Córdoba" (Centro de estudios superiores de en América Latina y el Caribe), Secretario de de Teología, y miembro del Consejo de Redacción de de Argentina. A partir de 2004 Gabriel coordinaba el grupo de biblistas argentinos que participan en el proyecto de la École Biblique, *La Bible en ses Traditions*, elaborando la traducción y notas al libro de Josué; y desde el año 2007, participaba en el equipo de traductores de la *Biblia de la Iglesia en América*, confeccionando la traducción y notas a Esdras-Nehemías. Desde el año 2011 se desempeñaba como Vicedecano de de Teología de la UCA[1]. Gabriel fue un enorme amigo del CEHAO y regularmente nos visitaba para asistír a las actividades realizadas en el centro. En el año 2007 disertó en un ciclo de conferencias que ofrecimos, y el producto de su conferencia fue publicado en *Antiguo Oriente*[2]. Siempre lo recordaremos por su nobleza, calor humano, y su envidiable buen humor.

* * *

[1] Una breve lista de su producción académica puede verse en el sitio web de de Teología de : http://www.uca.edu.ar/index.php/site/index/es/uca/facultades/buenos-aires/teologia/docentes/cv/napole/

[2] "Lo que nuestros padres nos contaron" (Sal 78,3): el Antiguo Testamento y de Israel," *Antiguo Oriente* 5 (2007), pp. 167–182.

While closing this issue, we received the sad news of the death of R. P. Gabriel Nápole OP, on the night of December 26th, 2013. Dominican priest ordained in 1986, he received his Licentiate in Theology at UCA, the degrees *élève titulaire* and *diplômé* at the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem, and the Ph.D. in Theology at the Faculty of Theology "San Vicente Ferrer" in Valencia. He was General Director of the "Pedro de Córdoba" Institute (Centre for Advanced Studies of the Dominican Order in Latin America and the Caribbean), Secretary of the Argentinean Society of Theology and a member of the Editorial Board of the Argentinean journal *Revista Bíblica*. Since 2004 Gabriel coordinated the group of Argentine biblical scholars involved in the project at the École Biblique, *La Bible en ses Traditions*, preparing the translation and notes to the book of Joshua; and since 2007, he participated in the team of translators of the *Biblia de la Iglesia en América*, putting together the translation and notes for Ezra-Nehemiah. Since 2011 he served as Dean of the Faculty of Theology at UCA[3]. Gabriel was a great friend of the CEHAO, and he regularly visited us to attend activities in the center. In 2007 he lectured in a cycle of conferences we offered, and his lecture was later published in *Antiguo Oriente*[4]. We will always remember him for his nobility, warmth, and enviable good humor.

[3] A short list of his academic production can be seen in the website of UCA's Faculty of Theology: http://www.uca.edu.ar/index.php/site/index/es/uca/facultades/buenos-aires/teologia/docentes/cv/napole/

[4] "Lo que nuestros padres nos contaron" (Sal 78,3): el Antiguo Testamento y de Israel," *Antiguo Oriente* 5 (2007), pp. 167–182.

Advertising Secrecy, Creating Power in Ancient Mesopotamia: How Scholars Used Secrecy in Scribal Education to Bolster and Perpetuate Their Social Prestige and Power*

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Abstract: Advertising Secrecy, Creating Power in Ancient Mesopotamia: How Scholars Used Secrecy in Scribal Education to Bolster and Perpetuate Their Social Prestige and Power

This study investigates how ancient scholars from mid-first millennium Babylonia and Assyria advertised their possession of secret knowledge to scribal students in order to bolster and perpetuate scholarly social prestige and power in society. After a brief theoretical orientation to issues surrounding the study of secrecy and a sketch of the two-tier scribal educational model developed by Petra Gesche, the study presents evidence for advertising scholarly secrets from the circumstances surrounding the storage and handling of tablets bearing the *Geheimwissen* colophon and from two literary texts copied by first-tier scribes, "In Praise of the Scribal Art" and "The Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic."

Keeywords: Scholars – Scribes – Secrecy – Social Power

Resumen: Publicitando secretos y creando poder en la antigua Mesopotamia: de qué modo los eruditos hicieron uso de los secretos en la educación de los escribas para reforzar y perpetuar su prestigio social y poder

* This material was first presented as part of a larger paper given at the American Schools of Oriental Research in 2010. I wish to thank Seth Richardson and Steven Garfinkle for the invitation to take part in their session, entitled "Communication and Power in Mesopotamian Civilizations." I also wish to thank Jeffrey Cooley of Boston College for his remarks on various drafts of this essay. All mistakes and infelicities are my own responsibility.

* Article received: July 18th 2013; approved: August 29th 2013.

Este estudio investiga de qué modo los antiguos estudiosos de mitad del primer milenio en Babilonia y Asiria publicitaban su posesión de conocimientos secretos a los estudiantes escribas, para reforzar y perpetuar el prestigio social erudito y el poder en la sociedad. Luego de una breve orientación teórica sobre temas relativos al estudio de los secretos, y de un esbozo sobre el modelo de educación en dos niveles desarrollado por Petra Gesche, este estudio presenta evidencia relativa a la promoción de secretos eruditos a partir de las circunstancias que rodean el almacenamiento y la manipulación de tablillas que comparten el colofón *Geheimwissen*, así como de dos textos literarios copiados por escribas del primer nivel, "Elogio del arte de los escribas" y "La épica babilónica estándar de Gilgamesh."

Palabras clave: Eruditos – Escribas – Secreto – Poder social

In a previous study,[1] I argued that elite Mesopotamian scribal-scholars claimed to be the exclusive bearers of secret knowledge from the gods by attaching secrecy to the major scholarly corpora—exorcism, extispicy, lamentation, medicine, and celestial divination—and by guarding these secret texts from outsiders via three major means: restricting the number of people who could access the tablets, communicating admonitions and divine invocations to warn those who did access the tablets, and attaching secrecy labels and *Geheimwissen* colophons to tablets to inform users of the restricted nature of the tablets' contents. The evidence for these ideas came mainly from the secret, scholarly tablets themselves. To further their claims, the ancient scholars also fashioned themselves as the scribal heirs of the antediluvian sages, who were closely allied to Ea, the patron deity of the scholars and the god of secrecy.[2] This professional genealogy provided the scholars with a mythological channel to receive their secret textual corpora from Ea via the sages of antediluvian times through normal scribal channels, i.e., as written copies. Going a step farther, the scholarly claim to secrecy was extended to the entire scribal craft so that Nabu became a god of secrets and anyone who studied scribal products studied secrets *in the company of scholars*.[3] The scholars' claiming to be the exclusive bearers of secret knowledge, the scribal successors of ancient sages, and the gate-keepers of a secret craft would have sup-

[1] See Lenzi 2008: 67–219.

[2] See likewise, e.g., Parpola 1993: XVIII; Rochberg 2004: 210–219; and van der Toorn 2007: 207–211.

[3] See Lenzi 2008: 140–146 for a review of the evidence and an assessment of the ideological importance of and limitations on this claim.

ported and perpetuated their position at court and in society as ritual experts and counselors to the king—a role that is well-known from king lists, letters, and other official texts,[4] especially those in the Neo-Assyrian period.[5] These scribal claims, I argued, are probably best understood as a concomitant development of the editorial work on various series that took place during the second half of the second millennium, since the *Geheimwissen* colophons first appeared at that time.[6] The claims persisted long after the end of indigenous Mesopotamian kingship.[7]

While it is clear therefore that the secret scholarly corpora existed and were indeed guarded against outsiders, it is not clear precisely *how* the scholars transformed this intellectual possession into social prestige and power. The present study begins this exploration in a very circumscribed manner. Focusing on texts and circumstances connected to scribal education,[8] I argue that ancient Babylonian and Assyrian scholars (*ummânū*) advertised their possession of secret knowledge to scribal students as a means—one among others—to bolster and perpetuate scholarly social prestige and power in society.

The Theoretical Orientation and the Limitations of the Scope of and Data for this Study

Before looking into the Mesopotamian textual data, a look at some preliminary considerations are in order. First, I offer a brief theoretical orientation to a few relevant issues surrounding the study of secret knowledge, including what I mean by social prestige and power. And second, I consider the warrants, limitations, and chronological scope of the textual data used in this study for historical reconstruction.

[4] See Lenzi 2008: 70–77.

[5] This is not entirely lacking in Neo-Babylonian sources, though. For a summary of scholars at the Neo-Assyrian court, see Vogelzang 1995: 17–28. For a brief summary of Neo-Babylonian scholar-king relations, see Rochberg 2004: 224–225.

[6] See Lenzi 2008: 120–121, 147–149, 205–206, 214–215.

[7] The persistence of the claims is evidenced by Hellenistic cuneiform tablets bearing the *Geheimwissen* colophon and a king list attesting the *apkallu-ummânu* genealogical connection, though the interpretation of the purpose for such claims changes. As cuneiform became confined to the precincts of temples (e.g., in Uruk and Babylon), the role of cuneiform scribal-scholars in society changed (as did the purpose of their claims to secrecy). See generally Clancier 2011: 752–773. On the *apkallu-ummânu* genealogical connection in the Hellenistic period and the modification to the scholar's exclusive claims (i.e., the role of secrecy in their group identity) in light of their Hellenistic situation, see Lenzi 2008a: 137–169.

[8] For a brief defense of this limited scope, see below.

Theoretical Orientation to Secret Knowledge: For the present purposes, secrecy may be defined broadly as the deliberate practice of withholding information. Scholars who study secrecy have long recognized this practice to be an important tool for creating power within a social formation.[9] The one exercising secrecy, that is, the possessor of a secret, can be nearly any individual in or fraction of a social formation: for example, a government agency, a corporate board, an institution's leader, members of an organization, or a spouse. Whatever the possessor's identity, their intentional withholding of information gives them a situational advantage—a kind of power. As Stanton Tefft writes, secrecy is "one of the social resources available to individuals that they can employ in manipulating or reacting to their environment. For secret knowledge always gives its possessors some degree of power over others."[10]

If secrets, by definition, are restricted to their possessors and are not to be divulged to others, how does one go about studying secrecy within a particular social formation?[11] Recent studies of secret knowledge distinguish between the *content* of secret knowledge, which is often unavailable to the investigator, and the *discursive forms* of secret knowledge, "that is," as Hugh Urban notes, "the *strategies and tactics*…–through which secrets are concealed and revealed, to whom, in what contexts and through what relations of power they are exchanged."[12] It may help to think of this distinction in more familiar terms. We may not know what secrets the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has with regard to a particular issue but we generally know that they maintain these secrets via organizational hierarchy, security clearances, marking documents "classified," lie detector tests, threats of prosecution, or worse.[13]

[9] The seminal work of Simmel (1906: 441–498) is still cited by scholars dealing with secrecy as a social phenomenon.

[10] Tefft 1980: 319–346, here 321. Although Tefft writes about individuals, the same could be said of groups.

[11] The following two paragraphs draw on material presented in an excursus in Lenzi 2008: 19–21.

[12] Urban 1997: 1–38, here 3. See also Bellman 1984; Lindstrom 1990; Johnson 2002, Urban 1998; 2001; and Campany 2006. As Simmel noted in his classic article: "[s]ecrecy is a universal sociological form, which, as such, has nothing to do with the moral valuations of its contents" (1906: 463). For a study that looks at *both* the content and the strategies of secret knowledge in Shi'ite Islam, see Dakake 2006.

[13] The analogy was chosen advisedly. Some scholars have argued that Mesopotamian scholarly secrets were more like trade or guild secrets (e.g., Rochberg 2004: 217). From an outsider's point of view, there is much to be said for this idea. But from an insider's view, that is, from the Mesopotamian scholars' own view as it is implied in their texts, this analogy does not do justice to the cosmological and mythological significance of the scholarly corpora deemed secret (see Rochberg 1999: 419–423 for this insider vs. outsider perspective). Just as the CIA's secrets are

Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "capital" appears frequently in studies of secrecy to explain how secrecy is transformed into power and prestige. I adopt it here as well. Capital, as Bourdieu himself states, refers to "goods, material and symbolic, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation."[14] Capital may be economic, cultural, social, or symbolic. It relates to what you know, whom you know, and the positive perception among peers that these create for their possessor (i.e., prestige and honor but also social power).[15] Moreover, capital is a dynamic force. It is self-replicating and self-reinforcing so that the more one has the more potent it becomes to build power and prestige. For example, a socially well-connected individual is, as Bourdieu notes, "sought after for their social capital and, because they are well known, are worthy of being known."[16] The same applies to the cultural and symbolic capital of secret knowledge. A certain body of knowledge is important and kept secret, and because of its secret status it is viewed as all the more important; a privileged person is entrusted with secret knowledge, and due to their possession of it they are perceived by others as all the more privileged.[17] Filling out the notion of "capital" with regard to secret knowledge, Urban notes the following:

> *[T]wo processes are at work that serve to transform secret knowledge into a kind of capital. First, the strict guarding of information transforms knowledge into a scarce resource, a good that is "rare and worthy of being sought after." . . . Second, once it has been converted into this kind of valuable commodity, secret knowledge can serve as a source of 'symbolic capital' in Bourdieu's sense, as a form of status and power accumulated by social actors and recognized as "legitimate" in a given social field.*[18]

rooted ultimately in a concern for national security and the perpetuation of national interests, so too are the Mesopotamian scholarly secrets rooted ultimately in a concern for cosmological and theological harmony—even if these secrets also serve the scholars' social benefit.

[14] Bourdieu 1977: 178, cited by Urban 1998: 219.

[15] See Bourdieu 1986: 241–258 for a discussion of the various kinds of capital. Urban 1998: 219–221 presents a useful summary.

[16] Bourdieu 1986: 250.

[17] For more on symbolic capital and the related idea of symbolic power, see Bourdieu 1990: 112–121 and 1991: 163–170, respectively.

[18] Urban 1998: 220, 221.

In a more recent study, Urban combines the idea of symbolic capital with Simmel's earlier idea of secrecy as adornment to capture another aspect of secrecy's impact on social relations. He writes,

> *secrecy or the controlled circulation of valued information serves to transform knowledge into something rare, a scarce resource. Like precious jewelry…or expensive clothing…, it is a covering, something which conceals or obscures aspects of the physical person; but it is also an ornament, something which accentuates the person, and so serves as a mark of distinction and prestige.*[19]

Distinction, prestige, and power can only be acquired, however, if the broader society knows something about a group's secret knowledge, if only that the group claims to possess it. In other words, for secret knowledge to become symbolic capital for its possessors it must be advertised: while largely concealing its actual content, the existence of the secret knowledge must be revealed through various discursive means.[20] As Paul Christopher Johnson states, "[a]n uncirculated secret, after all, is merely an individual's idle thought. Unable to attract a following, it fails to register, socially or culturally speaking. A secret's power resides precisely in the delicate dialectic between containment and circulation."[21] Of course, there are some secrets that are never circulated to protect a person from sanctions were the secret learned by others[22] or to create group coherence with no interest in outsiders other than keeping them out.[23] In such cases, extramural social prestige may not be a desired function of secrecy. But where social prestige and power (what Bourdieu calls cultural and symbolic capital) are desired, advertisement is necessary. Johnson calls the discursive advertisement of secret knowledge "secretism," about which he writes

[19] Urban 2001: 5–6. Along the same lines, Johnson states, "[s]ecrets are to religion what lingerie is to the body; they enhance what is imagined to be present" (2002: 4).
[20] For this aspect of secret discourse see Urban 1998: 212 and especially Campany 2006. See also the distinction between relative and absolute secrecy as developed by Johnston in a discussion of mystery religions. As she says, absolute secrecy in the religious sphere is rare (Johnston 2004: 108–109).
[21] Johnson 2002: 132.
[22] e.g., an intelligence agent's betrayal or a spouse's adultery.
[23] This could be the function of a secret hand shake, for example, in some socially-oriented fraternities. For the group coherence view of secrecy in ancient Mesopotamian scribalism, which is not the main focus of this paper, see below.

> *Secretism I define not as merely reputation, but* ***the active milling, polishing, and promotion of the reputation of secrets****. Secretism is freely and generously shared. Secretism does not diminish a sign's prestige by revealing it, but rather increases it through the promiscuous circulation of its reputation; it is the long shadow that hints of a great massif behind. It is through secretism, the circulation of a secret's inaccessibility, the words and actions that throw that absence into relief, that a secret's power grows, quite independently of whether or not it exists.*[24]

It is this issue of secretism, the advertisement of possessing secret knowledge via specific discursive means, that concerns us in the present study. How did the ancient scholars' exclusive possession of secret knowledge become known to first millennium scribal students so as to contribute to the scholars' social prestige and power?

Individuals in Mesopotamian society who were born into certain families, who were unusually attractive, who possessed desirable skills or iconic objects, who had acquired political office, who had access to those in political office, who had amassed a large economic surplus, who had unusually effective military prowess, who had special access to non-obvious beings, or who obtained and curated valued knowledge all enjoyed various levels of social prestige and power, as Bourdieu defines them. Scribal scholars, the social actors in the focus of this study, thus could have enjoyed prestige and power for a variety of reasons. For example, they were often born into influential families;[25] they were literate; they curated important religious texts; and they had access to important political and religious figures, at least until the loss of indigenous kingship in the Persian period. The focus of this study is the Babylonian and Assyrian scholars' exclusive possession of secret knowledge, textualized in their various learned corpora, and *how* or *by what mechanism* possessing this secret knowledge contributed to their social prestige and power. My answer is that at least one of the ways that this happened was through the advertisement of their exclusive intellectual possession to their students, whose livelihood would take them out into society, out beyond the social sphere of the elite scribal-scholars and those they served.

[24] Johnson 2002: 3.

[25] Scribes generally came from the ranks of well-connected families, see Pearce 1995: 2265–2278, here 2265 for the point generally and Beaulieu 2000: 1–16 for a detailed, representative case study from Neo-Babylonian and Hellenistic Uruk.

The Warrants, Limitations, and Chronological Scope of the Textual Data: Ancient intentions are largely inaccessible. We cannot and need not assume that wielders of secret knowledge self-consciously realized the necessity of advertising secret knowledge for their own social advancement to have engaged in such activity or for us to recognize their activity as such. Although we may be able to demonstrate that some ancient scholars were deliberate or even politically shrewd in their tactics of both guarding and advertising their possession of secret knowledge for their advantage, it is likely that many individuals would have never reflected self-consciously about such matters. They would have simply acted the way they were expected to act and reaped the benefits of their intellectual possession and social position—just as many contemporary scholars do. Furthermore, we cannot know how each individual scribal student responded to the scholars' advertisement. No doubt some would have been oblivious to it. Others might have received it more readily. Still others may have been more cynical or incredulous about it. It is useless to speculate about ancient psychological states. We only have texts, the honored product of the scribal craft. The focus in this study therefore will be on what is plausibly warranted from the contextual interpretation of texts available to us.

One can imagine many social situations in which scholars could "advertise" their secret knowledge by performing their craft: the *āšipu* doing a ritual near the river or on a roof or in a sick man's bedroom, the *kalû* beating his drum and chanting in the temple, the *bārû* doing an extispicy, or the *ṭupšar enūma Anu Enlil* gazing at the stars in the middle of the night. These activities may have advertised the craft and even added to the scholar's mystique, but it is unclear to what degree this actually advertised the *secrecy* of their secret knowledge. For the present purposes therefore this discussion will be limited to education-related textual evidence that explicitly mentions secrecy.

The scribes may also have advertised their possession of secret knowledge by word of mouth to their students. And/or, as I suggest below, they may have hoped that their students would advertise it for them by telling others outside the scribal craft. These are reasonable ideas—inferences based on social contexts and human interaction. But they assume and build on something that must first be established with evidence. Thus, we must look to the texts available to us.

One can also imagine many audiences to which the scholars could advertise their exclusive possession (e.g., other scholars, the king, foreigners, etc.). Limiting the present treatment to the educational sphere serves a deliberate methodological purpose. My interest is to understand how scholars could have gained social capital, that is, potentially advanced their prestige and

power, to a broader base of their own society, that is, members of the community beyond their own professional ranks and beyond their employers in the temples and courts where they served. The religious and political position of Assyrian and Babylonian scholars, including the role of secrecy in such, is well-known and treated extensively elsewhere.[26] What can we say about the perception the scholars tried to create about themselves among non-elites? Our inability to identify the audience of many texts with confidence diminishes the usefulness of various genres. This is not at all the case for the material used in an educational context. These texts were clearly directed at students. Thus, if we find material used in the scribal curriculum that also advertises scholarly secret knowledge, then we know the audience, and this audience, as I will mention below, provided a potential means to disseminate the scholarly elites' claims to a broader base of society.

The evidence mustered here comes from several sites in post-Kassite Babylonia and Assyria *prior* to the Hellenistic period, a time when cuneiform was limited to the temples and the need for work-a-day scribes among the general populace was nil.[27] In other words, the data is from various mid-first millennium tablet collections. As is often the case in our field, we do not have as much data as we would like about the topic under discussion. The following brief presentation draws on eclectic evidence that does not allow the nuance that we might wish for. The social reality would no doubt have been more complicated and would have differed somewhat from one place in the mid-first millennium to another. Thus, the purpose of this study is to suggest a plausible social perspective on scribalism that future research can refine as new evidence comes to light.

Advertising Secrecy

To understand how scholars advertised their possession of secret knowledge to their students one needs to understand the scribal educational context. For this, I draw on Petra Gesche's study of the scribal curriculum in first millen-

[26] See, e.g., Lenzi 2008, the references in note 5 above, and Pongratz-Leisten 1999, who treats the issue of scholarly secrecy on pp. 301–320. For a Neo-Assyrian report that reminds the king that celestial divination is not a matter to discuss in public, essentially advertising (i.e., reminding) the king, in my opinion, that the celestial diviners possessed secret knowledge, see Lenzi 2008: 102–103, which treats SAA 8 338: 7–rev. 4 and 342: 7–rev. 2 (for which, see Hunger 1992).

[27] See note 7 above.

nium Babylonia.[28] Although concerned only with first millennium Babylonia, Gesche also summarizes the Assyrian material, mostly from Aššur, and suggests that the system she reconstructs for Babylonia was probably also utilized in Assyria.[29]

According to Gesche, scribal education followed a two-tier system. The first level of the curriculum trained students for institutional administration; the second prepared students for scholarly pursuits, especially *āšipūtu*.[30] The first level of the curriculum started with students copying signs and lexical lists to teach the basics of the cuneiform script. The curriculum then advanced to the copying of selected literary texts, many of which had a strong royal viewpoint to inculcate the proper ideological values in future administrators.[31] This first level of the curriculum also taught practical knowledge such as the proper forms of contracts, mathematics, land surveying, and other skills necessary for administrative activities. For most students, the completion of this first level was the end of their scribal training. Only a small fraction of the students—perhaps as few as 10% according to one estimate[32]—would have continued with their studies to the second level, where they studied classic literary works (such as *Enūma eliš* and *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*) and texts associated with *āšipūtu*.[33] Although there is no explicit connection to secret knowledge, this two-tier system of scribal education would have implicitly advertised to all beginning students the existence of an elite, insider-group within the general scribal ranks. With this background in place, I turn now to a standardized colophon and two compositions that give us a peek into the discursive means scholars used to advertise their possession of secret knowledge to first level students.

Geheimwissen Colophons: One discursive means to advertise the scholars' possession of secret knowledge to first-level students may be found in the *Geheimwissen* colophons and secrecy labels, which in essence warned non-scholars from reading secret texts. A representative example occurs on an explanatory compendium (KAR 307, rev. 26–27).[34]

[28] Gesche 2000.
[29] Gesche 2000: 23–24.
[30] See Gesche 2000: 61–171 and 172–198 for the respective levels. The two levels are summarized graphically on p. 210. Additional training necessary for the scribe's final position (*Fachausbildung*) would take place, essentially, on the job (213–218).
[31] Gesche 2000: 211.
[32] Pearce 1995: 2274–2275.
[33] See Gesche 2000: 172–173 for a summary of the second level curriculum.
[34] See Hunger 1968, #206 (type B) and Livingstone 1989: 102.

26. AD.ḪAL DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ ZU-*u* ZU-*a li-kal-lim* NU ZU-*u a-a* IGI.LAL
27. [NÍG].GIG DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ . . .

SECRET OF THE GREAT GODS. An expert may show an(other) expert. A non-expert may not see (it). A restriction of the great gods . . .

The secrecy label appears in small capital letters in the translation above; the part I am calling a *Geheimwissen* colophon is underlined.[35] The existence of these labels and colophons implies that some literate individuals, whether students or non-scholarly scribes, were assumed to be potential readers of these proscribed texts.[36] The fact that these labels and colophons typically occur with the rubric of the text (generally located at the end of a tablet, though sometimes the labels occur at the beginning) indicates how they were intended to communicate. When someone picked up a tablet containing one of these warnings and checked its colophon or rubric to identify the tablet's content, the secrecy label or *Geheimwissen* colophon would have immediately communicated the fact that the person was holding a restricted text. There is evidence that scholarly (i.e., restricted texts) and mundane (i.e., non-restricted) texts were kept together in a number of private tablet collections.[37] It is therefore plausible to suggest that there would have been circumstances in which a scribal student came across a tablet bearing a *Geheimwissen* colophon or secrecy label. (We cannot document particular instances of this happening, unfortunately. But the scenario is quite plausible from what we know about tablet storage. Moreover, the situation described in SAA 16 65 is suggestive.

[35] For a full discussion and catalog of secrecy labels and *Geheimwissen* colophons, see Lenzi 2008: 160–219. The colophons and labels are first attested in the late second millennium and continue to appear into the Hellenistic and Parthian periods.

[36] See Lenzi 2008: 149–160. Since we do have hints that these proscriptions were actually enforced—that secret knowledge was indeed guarded, the *Geheimwissen* colophons were not simply directed internally to other scribal scholars. There is no doubt that other scribal scholars would have read and regarded these colophons. But my treatment in Lenzi 2008: 154–156 of SAA 16 65, a letter that protests the teaching of extispicy and celestial divination to a man's son by a Babylonian slave, suggests that scholars were not the only intended readers of *Geheimwissen* colophons. This letter uses the very same verbs (*kullumu* and *amāru*) that are used in the *Geheimwissen* colophons to describe the illicit educational activity of this man's son. This suggests "that our anonymous informant has implied in his very word choice the violation of a known prohibition related to restricted knowledge" (Lenzi 2008: 156).

[37] This point is abundantly clear from a perusal of various tablet finds. See, e.g., the generalization by Stolper (1999: 595), quoted by Rochberg 2004: 218. As further examples, scholarly and mundane tablets were found together in several private houses in both Babylon and Ashur (see, e.g., Pedersén 1998: 190–191 [Babylon 19 and 20], 134 [Assur 18], and 136 [Assur 21]).

See note 36.) In such a situation, the colophon would have served as a discursive means both to warn the student against reading the text and to advertise the existence and possession (by the tablet owner) of secret knowledge. Of course, concealing the secret knowledge (inscribed on the tablet) would have depended upon the reader's decision to heed or to disregard the warning.[38] Still, this potential for advertising secret knowledge might have been one of the discursive means by which scholars turned their possession of secret knowledge into social prestige and power.

"In Praise of the Scribal Art": As is well known, scribal education throughout the ages often included the copying of various thematically-appropriate texts that describe both the schoolhouse and the scribal craft itself. One such bilingual example, previously labeled Examenstext D but more appropriately called "In Praise of the Scribal Art,"[39] mentions how scribalism could reveal secrets. One of the exemplars of this text, CBS 2266 + CBS 2301 + CBS 8803 + CBS 8803a + N 921 + CBS 11300 (see CDLI no. P259300 for a photo), is a Neo-Babylonian exercise tablet from Nippur that resembles Gesche's scribal exercise tablet type Ib.[40] The tablet's obverse contains an excerpt of the lexical list ur_5–ra = *ḫubullu* (II 306–376, written nearly twice sequentially);[41] its reverse includes, among other things, the first several lines of the composition under discussion, beginning in its col. iv′. Although this manuscript does not preserve the lines in the composition concerning secrecy (cited below), the tablet's contents and format do suggest that "In Praise of the Scribal Art" was used in the first level of scribal education in the first millennium.[42] Thus, it provides admissible evidence for the purposes of the present study.[43]

[38] Of course, if they disobeyed the colophon's admonition, beginning scribal students would have had a very difficult time reading the tablets due to the pervasive use of logograms in many of the scholarly texts. It is unlikely therefore that a first-level student could have learned much secret knowledge apart from a private tutor who disregarded the two-tiered system (as in SAA 16 65).

[39] See Sjöberg 1972: 126–131 for the most recent edition. The text was known to Sjöberg in four MSS and two others that preserved the catchline (see p. 126). All four MSS witnesses are bilingual. MSS A and B are from Ashurbanipal's library. MS C is from Kish. And our MS D is from Nippur. For an interesting literary reading of this poem, see Hurowitz 2000: 49–56.

[40] For Gesche's type Ib exercise tablet, see Gesche 2000: 45–46.

[41] See Landsberger 1957: 47, 56–80.

[42] The content of the poem confirms this with its listing of administrative tasks and mention of the palace in its concluding lines (15–17). See Sjöberg 1972: 127. The fact that only one school tablet attests this text should not be considered an evidentiary problem. A perusal through Gesche's text index (2000: 806–820) will confirm that relatively few preserved school tablets contain literary excerpts.

[43] The present treatment of this text draws on my earlier work (see Lenzi 2008: 143–144), which used the text for a slightly different purpose.

The text begins in a prospective manner, setting the tone for the entire composition:

> 1. nam-dub-sar-ra ama-gù-dé-ke$_4$-e-ne a-a-um-me-a-ke$_4$-eš
> *ṭup-šar-ru-tu*$_4$ *um-mu la-i-ṭa-at a-bi um-ma-ni*
>
> The scribal art is the mother (*ummu*) of the eloquent, the father of the scholar (*ummâni*).[44]

The final word in Akkadian, *ummâni*, is the same word used for both "school master" and "scholar." From the very beginning of the text, therefore, the student is offered a glimpse of the expertise to which he might aspire, becoming a master, a scholar.[45] This forward looking tendency, that is, the presentation of the level toward which a young student may aspire, is carried through the remainder of the text. This holds true for lines 7–8, where we find an explicit connection between the scribal craft and secrecy. The lines read:

> 7. nam-dub-sar-ra é-a nì-tuku ki-ùri-^{d}am-ma-an-ki-k[e]$_4$
> *ṭup-šar-ru-tu* É *bu-ni ni-ṣir-ti* ^{d}*am-ma-an-ki-*[*ma*]
> 8. [igi]-DU um-ma-ra-ak-en ki-urì na-an-da-ab-lá-e[n]
> *ta-da-al-lip-šim-ma ni-ṣir-ta-šá ú-kal-lam-*[*ka*]
>
> The scribal art is a house of goodness, the *niṣirti* (the treasure/secret)[46] of Ammanki.

[44] Note the phonological homology between *ummu* and *ummâni.* The translation follows Foster 2005: 1023.

[45] If there is any doubt about the prominence of the *ummânu*'s profession in first millennium Babylonian scribal educational subculture, one need only look to ummia = *ummânu*, a Neo- and Late Babylonian non-canonical recension of the lú lexical list discussed by Gesche (2000: 127–135). Unlike other recensions of this list of occupations and officials, this recension's first entry is um-me-a = *ummânu*. The second entry, although attested in only five of the thirty-seven manuscripts used in Gesche's study (twenty-one tablets are broken in line 2), is šámanlá = *šamallû*, which here must mean "scribal student" (see pp. 128, 130–131 for manuscript evidence, and 132; the tablets attesting *šamallû* as the second entry are from Kish and the *Nabû ša ḫarê* temple in Babylon). The following lines of this first section deal with Sumerian terms for Akkadian *amēlu*, "man" (lines 3–14), and *amēlūtu*, "humanity" (15). The foregrounding of *ummânu* and *šamallû* in this first section implies their prominence among men (*amēlū*), if only to the scholars and their students copying the list.

[46] The association of Enki/Ea with *niṣirtu* in line 7 and the use of *kullumu*, "to uncover, reveal," with *niṣirtu* in line 8 (*kullumu* is also used in *Geheimwissen* colophons, treated above) suggest the primary meaning of *niṣirtu* in this context is "secret." Hurowitz (2000: 56, n.27), however, has suggested the word creates a kind of janus-parallelism in line 7: the "treasure" meaning is appropriate with what comes before ("house") and the "secret" meaning with what comes afterward ("Ammanki").

> Should you work ceaselessly with it, it will reveal its secret (*niṣirti*) to you.[47]

The primary purpose of these lines is to underscore the difficulty and reward of becoming a scribe. The text makes clear, however, that part of the scribal craft's reward is the acquisition of something secret. Enki/Ea's appearance, mentioned here under the Emesal Sumerian name Ammanki, is noteworthy in this regard. We know that Nabu is the deity usually associated with scribalism in the first millennium.[48] But the invocation of Ea in this context dealing with scribalism and secrecy makes good literary and social contextual sense. The opening line of the text praises the scribal craft as "the father of scholars"; Ea was the patron of the various scholars and, ultimately, the source of their secret scholarly corpora.[49] Lines 7–8 in context promise the tireless scribal student a very great reward for his indefatigable study: Ea's treasure–secret (*niṣirtu*). By promising the novice (that is, a first-level scribal student) this treasure–secret, the text conveys the message that there are already those who have acquired its possession, namely, the *ummânū*, known servants of Ea, mentioned in line 1. But what is this secret, precisely? On the one hand, the secret is simply the scribal craft as line 7 indicates. This is the most obvious identification. But note that the scribal craft is itself the agent of revealing secrets in line 8, which suggests, on the other hand, that the craft offers more to the advanced student than literacy. Literacy, to build on the house metaphor introduced in line 7, is the door to the riches the scribal craft can reveal.

This reading demonstrates secretism in practice: the student becomes aware of the existence of secrets within the scribal profession and is even promised to gain possession of this valued knowledge if he works hard enough (thus showing how secretism could promote a sense of group coherence for those who possessed it). Yet the young scribal student does not actually learn spe-

[47] The translation is my own. Compare CAD N/2, 276, which translates the lines: "the scribe's craft is a good thing, the secret lore of Enki, if you work ceaselessly with it, it will reveal its secrets to you." Sjöberg (1972: 127), Foster (2005: 1023), and Hurowitz (2000: 56) all translate *tadallipšim-ma*, the initial verb of line 8, as an imperative, "work ceaselessly." Although the poem uses the imperative/prohibitive at times (see, e.g., lines 4–6), the conditional translation of the durative verb in line 8 has the advantage of creating an antithetical parallelism with the statement in line 9: g[ù]-dé nam-mu-un-na-ab-šub-bé-en ság-zu di-[di-e-dè] / *aḫ-ka ta-nam-di-šim-ma ma-sik-ta-ka iq-qab-b*[*i*], "Should you neglect it, you will get a bad reputation" (lit. "your bad reputation will be spoken"). Thus, line 8 shows the positive outcome when the student works hard; line 9 shows the negative outcome when the student neglects his studies.

[48] See also Hurowitz's similar comment (2000: 53–54), though he interprets this fact in terms of the poem's possible subversion of "the regular goddess of scribes, Nisaba (…) or of Nabû (…) replacing them by Enki" (p. 54).

[49] Lenzi 2008: 104–106.

cific secret content. As described in the first section of this study, this is precisely how those with secret knowledge transform their possession into social prestige and power. Secret knowledge is both revealed (its existence) and concealed (its content). Given this, we might say that secret knowledge in this text is symbolic; it stands for the potential prestige and power accessible to those who join the scholars' ranks.

The Standard Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh: As stated above, Gesche argues that the scribal curriculum in first millennium Babylonia included the copying of certain literary texts, many of which exhibit a strong connection to issues of kingship. The SB Epic of Gilgamesh is among such texts and is therefore our second composition that opens a view onto the discursive means scholars used to advertise their possession of secret knowledge.[50]

Before engaging this text, I wish to emphasize that the reading offered below explores one motif, secrecy, in the Epic. It is one perspective on the Epic, which is a complex and sophisticated literary text. My interpretation is not exclusive to other readings. Moreover, as with any text, interpretations must be based on warrants in the text as understood within a cultural context, which for the present reading is scribal education and first millennium Mesopotamian scholarship.

To make the argument easier to follow, I anticipate the main conclusion of my reading here: the secret knowledge presented in the Epic is symbolic, just as it was ultimately in the previous text. The secret knowledge in the Epic reveals the existence of secret knowledge and its possessors but ultimately conceals (while also hinting at) its genuine content.

[50] Gesche 2000: 150, 172. For a discussion of SB Gilgamesh in scribal education, see George 2003: 35–39. Early in the discussion George states that "[o]ral versions of the legends of Gilgameš, Sargon and Narām-Sîn were probably well known to Babylonian children, and their early exposure to written texts about these fabled heroes of remotest antiquity in the first level of schooling sought to take advantage of this familiarity" (36). George's MS y (= VAT 19286) is the only direct evidence so far that SB Gilgamesh was copied by first-level Babylonian scribal students in the first millennium (see p. 399 and Gesche 2000: 790). The late Babylonian tablet contains a syllabary on the obverse (see van Dijk 1987: plate 96 for a copy of the obverse) and SB Gilgamesh III 84–93 on the reverse (see George 2003: 578 and plate 68 for the copy). George's MB MSS Nippur$_{1–4}$, however, provide some earlier curricular evidence for the copying of the Gilgamesh Epic (see pp. 24, 287–294) as do several OB tablets (see pp. 17–18, 22, 216, 241, 260). George speculates that many tablets bearing the Epic were written by advanced scribal students, "sitting their final examinations, as it were" (p. 38), who had "mastered the art of writing and the immense body of learning that went with it" (p. 37). Even if this were the case, it does not negate the evidence cited above for the Epic being copied at the first level of scribal training. As George himself imagines, the Epic would have been "a good story and thus useful, in small quantities, for absolute beginners" (p. 39).

Unlike the OB recension, the SB recension of the Epic of Gilgamesh contains a new prologue, I 1–28.[51] Lines 6–8 of this new prologue proclaim Gilgamesh's comprehensive wisdom and announce that he brought back secret knowledge from before the flood.

> [*nap-ḫ*]*ar né-me-qi ša ka-la-mi* ˹*i*˺-[*ḫu-uz*?]
> [*ni*]-*ṣir-ta i-mur-ma ka-tim-ti ip-*˹*tu*˺
> [*u*]*b-la ṭè-e-ma ša la-am a-bu-b*[*i*]
>
> He learned absolutely everything pertaining to wisdom.
> He saw what was secret, opened what was hidden,
> He brought back a message from before the flood.[52]

George convincingly argues that the secret of line 7 refers to antediluvian knowledge generally (line 8) and not just to the story of the flood. Though the two are related, they are not identical.[53]

Attributing extraordinary wisdom to an ancient Mesopotamian king is commonplace. But this passage goes beyond that. Its reference to what was secret, hidden, and antediluvian refers, as the reader will learn in Tablet XI, to the two occasions when Uta-napishti, the flood hero and, significantly, a protégé of Ea (XI 42), reveals, literally "opens" (*petû*, compare I 7), information to Gilgamesh that presumably only a survivor of the flood would know. Uta-napishti prefaces his revelations there with these formulaic words:

> *lu-up-te-ka* ^{d}GIŠ-*gím-maš a-mat ni-ṣir-ti*
> *ù pi-riš-ti šá* DINGIR.MEŠ *ka-a-šá lu-uq-bi-ka*[54]
>
> Let me open to you,[55] O Gilgamesh, a secret matter,
> Let me speak to you a secret of the gods.

Uta-Napishti's first revelation is the flood story itself, disclosed in XI 11–208. His second, revealed in XI 283–286, concerns the location of a rejuvenating plant, which is eventually lost by Gilgamesh and is therefore of no further use to humans.[56] Having the flood hero introduce the flood story and the rejuve-

[51] See George 2003: 29, 32, inter alia and Tigay 1977: 48, 104–105, and 142–143.
[52] See George 2003: 538 for the text. The translation is my own.
[53] See George 2003: 445–446 and likewise Tigay 1977: 143, n.8.
[54] This is the text of XI 9–10. The text of XI 281–282 varies only slightly. Its restoration is obviously based on the earlier parallel passage. The lines read: *lu-ú-up-te* ^{d}GIŠ-*gím-maš a-mat ni-ṣir-ti* / *u* AD.ḪAL *š*[*á* DINGIR.MEŠ *ka-a-šá lu-u*]*q-bi-*˹*ka*˺. See George 2003: 702, 720.
[55] The pronominal suffix *-ka*, rendered here as "to you," is absent from the verb *lupte* in XI 281. See the previous footnote.
[56] For thoughts about the identification of this plant, see the discussion in George 2003: 524.

nating plant as secrets informs un-initiated individuals (such as first-level scribal students)—if only in a general way—that secret knowledge consists of antediluvian knowledge and medicinal plants.[57] Interestingly, unbeknownst to non-scholarly readers, this information is accurate since antediluvian knowledge and healing properties of plants are in fact connected to the contents of scholarly secret knowledge and to the god Ea, patron of wisdom, secrecy, and scholarship.[58] Yet as Karel van der Toorn has recognized, neither of Uta-napishti's conveyances of information is genuinely part of the secret corpora of the scholars. Thus, Uta-napishti's (pseudo-)revelations to Gilgamesh (and

[57] It is worth noting that the ummia = *ummânu* lexical list (see note 45 above) contains a section dealing with the various Sumerian equivalents for the Akkadian term *āšipu*, "exorcist," the office to which the second level of scribal education prepared students. One of the Sumerian terms for *āšipu* is ^{lú}AD.ḪAL, which is usually a logographic writing for *bārû*, "diviner." AD.ḪAL is, of course, also a common logographic spelling of the word *pirištu*, "secret," as is the case in Gilgamesh XI 282 (see CAD P, 398). Aside from the fact that the exorcist apparently took over the title of the *bārû* in this lexical list (whose work in divinatory matters was considered a secret of the gods [see Lenzi 2008: 55–58] and was becoming more and more the domain of the exorcist [see Geller 2010: 48 and 182, n.52]), we may suggest further that the co-opting of this title also served to associate the exorcist with secrets, and it does so in a text that many aspiring scribes would have copied repeatedly. This lexical equation suggests that young Babylonian scribal students would have been warranted to connect the phrase "secret of the gods" (*pirišti ša ilī*) in XI 10 and 282 with exorcism. See Gesche 2000: 130–131 for the text of the lexical list. The textual evidence for this point, however, is slight and equivocal. Only two manuscripts preserve the equation, one from Sippar and one from Ur. But, many of the witnesses are broken in these lines. Thus, it is likely that others contained the same lexical equivalency. In contrast to this, a few manuscripts from Kish and the *Nabû ša ḫarê* temple in Babylon do not attest *āšipu* here at all; rather, they give the more common equivalent, *barû*. See Gesche 2000: 128. As stated in the introduction to this study, times and places will have varied with regard to how secrecy may have been advertised and the precise textual evidence for such advertisement. We needn't demand uniformity. Besides, this point about the lexical list is not determinative for the "textual secret knowledge" reading of the Epic that I am developing above.

[58] See, e.g., the medical colophon AMT 105/1 (= K.4023), treated in Lenzi (2008: 117 with literature in n.274) and 200, which asserts that the recipes for some salves (*napšalātu*) and attachments (*takṣīrānu*) derive from the antediluvian sages (*apkallū*), known from other contexts to have been sent by Ea. The text of the colophon also includes the *Geheimwissen* refrain (though garbled), indicating that its content was secret. The rendering of *takṣīrānu* here as "attachments" follows *CDA*, 395 and the older practice of the CAD (e.g., L, 112, M/1, 161, and N/1, 317) over against CAD T, 87, which gives "string of amulet stones." *Takṣīrānu* could be made with either stones or plants; for the latter, see, e.g., KAR 44, rev. 3. *Napšalātu* were made by mixing crushed plants or stones with oil. For examples of texts that connect Ea to life-giving plants, see Veenker 1981: 202–203. Both the *asû* and *āšipu* used plants medicinally. But the recording and organizing of this knowledge on tablets fell to the *āšipū*. See Böck 2009: 105–128, here 110.

the Epic's audience) are a kind of advertisement of the existence of secret knowledge, which simultaneously conceal the actual content of genuine secret knowledge. One may learn a few vague (and accurate) ideas about secret knowledge from Uta-napishti's (pseudo-)revelations in Tablet XI but nothing genuinely from the secret corpora. Thus, the Epic's secret knowledge here is a literary decoy (a symbolic substitute) for the real secret knowledge, which was so deeply valued that it could not be revealed in the text. This idea of revelation as concealment, I suggest, holds true for all of the language of secrecy in the Epic. It is, as van der Toorn says, "rhetorical" or shaped both to reveal the existence of secret knowledge and simultaneously to conceal or obfuscate its true content.[59] Again, as described in the first section of this study, this is precisely how those who hold secret knowledge transform their possession of valued knowledge into social prestige and power.

Having Gilgamesh bring back secret antediluvian knowledge connects secret knowledge to kingship but, significantly, *not* to scholarship. This kingship connection in the Epic squares very nicely with an old tradition that ties antediluvian knowledge to important kings in Mesopotamian cultural traditions (e.g., Ziusudra, Enmeduranki, etc.).[60] But where are the scholars? The scholars, if our social scientific perspective with regard to secrecy is to apply, need to have some connection to the Epic's so-called secret knowledge to benefit from its advertisement.

There are two ways to find a place—a subordinate place but one nonetheless—for the scholars in Gilgamesh's achievement of bringing back secret antediluvian knowledge. The first comes from a narrative detail; the second, from claims of the Epic's authorship.

Uta-napishti is the survivor of the flood who passes his secrets along to Gilgamesh, who in turn brings them back to civilization. As we have said, Uta-napishti's (pseudo-)revelations already hint at scholarly lore connected to Ea and thus implicitly advertise the nexus of secrecy and scholarship. But there is another hint in the flood story that would connect the scholars with Uta-napishti's secret knowledge. In the middle of the flood story, we learn that Uta-napishti is not the sole survivor of the flood; along with his family, he is accompanied on the boat by others, which XI 86 describes as follows:

[59] van der Toorn 2007a: 21–29, here 24.
[60] See Beaulieu 2007: 3–19, here 6–7.

> *bu-ul* EDI⌜N⌝ ⌈*ú*⌋-*ma-am* EDIN ⌜DUMU.MEŠ⌝ *um-ma-a-ni ka-li-šú-nu ú-še-li*
>
> I made the animals of the steppe, the creatures of the steppe, and the members (lit. sons) of the *ummânū* board (the boat).[61]

Uta-napishti saved *all* of the *ummânū* from the devastation of the flood. It was in this way, we might surmise, that all of the scholars and their learned crafts were preserved.[62] Although the text credits Gilgamesh with the return of antediluvian knowledge in the prologue (I 7–8)—he is after all the focus of the Epic and the king, XI 86 hints at an etiology of secret knowledge in line with but slightly different from an idea evidenced elsewhere in the first millennium, namely, that contemporary scholars (*ummânū*) were the professional descendants of antediluvian forebears and therefore were connected to antediluvian secret knowledge.[63]

One may suggest that the *ummânū* in the context of the flood story would most obviously refer to the craftsmen who worked on Uta-napishti's boat and that this reading of XI 86 is therefore overly subtle. But it must be remembered that young scribal students were deeply immersed in copying lexical texts. Among the texts copied by first-level students in first millennium Babylonian schools was a non-canonical recension of the lú lexical list that Gesche has called ummia = *ummânu*. As this title suggests, the very first entry of this version of the lexical text, unlike the so-called "canonical" lú list, is um-me-a = *ummânū*. This is sometimes then followed by the word for the junior scribe's own position: šáman-lá = *šamallû*.[64] Given the prominence of these words for the two major positions in the scribal school, i.e., teacher and pupil, and the prominence of this lexical text in first millennium scribal education, it seems plausible to suggest an intertextual connection between the list and SB Gilgamesh XI 86. A student copying SB Gilgamesh XI 86 would have been warranted, given his curriculum, to identify the *ummânū* on Uta-napishti's boat, even if only secondarily, with scribal scholars—the ancestors

[61] See George 2003: 708 for the text. The translation here follows George.

[62] Likewise Noegel 2007: 78, n.97, who cites others.

[63] The evidence that first millennium Babylonian and Assyrian scholars were the professional descendants of the antediluvian *apkallū*, the servants of Ea, is summarized in Lenzi 2008: 106–120. In this tradition, the forbears are not royal, as is Uta-napishti here in the Epic.

[64] Gesche 2000: 130–131 and note 45 above. The evidence for this equation in the first line of the lexical list is unambiguous. Of the thirty-seven manuscripts used by Gesche, all sixteen manuscripts that preserve a first line attest this equation. All other witnesses are broken in the first line.

of the student's teacher—and thus come to recognize the antediluvian genealogy of scholarship and its connection to secrecy by way of association with Uta-napishti, the teacher of secret knowledge to Gilgamesh.

As for the authorship of the SB redaction of the Epic, a well-known catalog of texts and authors dating from the seventh century BCE identifies Sin-leqi-unninni, a *kalû* or cult-singer, as the scholarly author/editor of the SB Epic.[65] Even if one does not think this tradition is historically accurate, the catalog provides invaluable insight into what the ancient scholars themselves believed about the authorship of the Epic. It can be no accident that the person traditionally credited with editing and/or writing the Gilgamesh story, perhaps the very person we are to believe—from the perspective of the Epic's narrative world—to have inscribed the Epic on a tablet for King Gilgamesh (see I 10, 24–28),[66] was himself an *ummânu*. But he was not just any *ummânu*. According to the late Uruk List of Kings and Sages (second century BCE), which likely contains older traditions, Sin-leqi-unninni was Gilgamesh's *ummânū*.[67] Traditions known to first millennium scribes about the Epic's origins therefore preserve the precise relationship between Gilgamesh and Sin-leqi-unninni that we find depicted in other sources between a king and his scholars: secret knowledge is preserved by scholars in writing for the king.[68]

Another layer to the advertisement/concealment of secret knowledge in the Epic of Gilgamesh presents itself in the SB prologue at I 24–28. As these lines form the prologue's conclusion, they are especially significant to understanding the ideological orientation of the SB redaction of the Epic. They read:

[65] See Lambert 1962: 66 (VI, line 10). For a full discussion of Sin-leqi-unninni's authorship of the epic, see George 2003: 28–33. I think this traditional ascription is reasonable and perhaps historically accurate, though I recognize the possibility with Paul-Alain Beaulieu that "he might have been a purely legendary figure that slowly grew in stature to become a divinely inspired sage in the minds of later generations" (2000: 4).

[66] I equate the content of the *narû* mentioned in I 10 with the content of the lapis lazuli tablet (*ṭuppi uqnî*) referred to in I 27. See likewise, e.g., George 2003: 446 and Pongratz-Leisten 1999a: 67–90, here 84.

[67] For a study into the purpose of this king list, see Lenzi 2008a; the text and translation appear on pp. 140–143. We know from other evidence that there was an entire clan of Babylonian scribes that claimed Sin-leqi-unninni as their scribal ancestor. They specialized in *kalûtu* and owned many documents that were labeled a secret. See Beaulieu 2000. Evidence for this family begins in the Neo-Babylonian period.

[68] See likewise Greenstein 1998: 197–204, here 201 and Noegel 2007: 77–79. For scholars in service to the king, see Pongratz-Leisten 1999 inter alia, but especially pp. 286–320. The collection of attestations now available in CAD U/W, 111–115 provides a convenient overview of various texts attesting to the scholars' activities.

[*a-mur*?] ^{giš}*tup-šen-na šá* ^{giš}ERIN
[*pu-uṭ-ṭe*]*r*? *ḫar-gal-li-šu šá* ZABAR
[*pi-te-m*]*a*? KÁ *šá ni-ṣir-ti-šú*
[*i-š*]*i*?*-ma ṭup-pi* ^{na4}ZA.GÌN *ši-tas-si*
[*mim-m*]*u-ú* ^{d}GIŠ-*gím-maš* DU.DU-*ku ka-lu mar-ṣa-a-ti*[69]

Find the tablet-box of cedar,
Release its clasps of bronze.
Open the cover of its secret,
Lift up the lapis lazuli tablet and read aloud,
All of the trials, everything Gilgamesh endured.

These lines allude to the royal practice of depositing inscriptions in the foundations of buildings, here under the walls of Uruk, for future kings to discover, read, and gain wisdom.[70] Thus, the Epic is placed within the conceptual sphere of *narû* literature.[71] Whether the actual audience of the Epic was the king (and his scholars),[72] a first-level scribal student, or someone who may have heard or read the Epic for themselves, the use of this motif in I 24–28 turns the reader/listener into a person worthy of opening the tablet box (literarily speaking). In other words, the reader/listener is in some ways invited to *become* a king like Gilgamesh and through the vicarious reading of the Epic, which is surely the content inscribed on the lapis lazuli tablet, learn—in fact, like Gilgamesh and Uta-Napishti, "open," *petû*, if the restoration is correct—the Epic's revelation of so-called secret knowledge Gilgamesh brought back. It is significant to note that this passage characterizes secret knowledge as *textual* knowledge—a scribal product. This shapes readers' expectations therefore about what Gilgamesh did with the knowledge Uta-Napishti reveals to him in Tablet XI: he wrote it down. Thus, again, the reader learns something accurate about scholarly secret knowledge, namely, its textual character, without learning anything substantive about its content.

But what of these secrets in I 24–28? This apparently magnanimous offer to disclose secret knowledge should not be read too quickly as a genuine offer to open the secrets of ancient Mesopotamian scholarly lore, for already we have seen that a narrative world is being created in which most readers would

[69] See George 2003: 538 for the text. The translation is mine.
[70] Thus, Walker 1981: 194 and George 2003: 446. Compare these lines to the opening lines of the Cuthean Legend, for which see Westenholz 1997: 300, 332.
[71] For an engaging discussion of *narû* literature, see Pongratz-Leisten 1999a.
[72] Pongratz-Leisten (1999a: 67–90, especially 85, 88) has convincingly argued that the primary audience of *narû* literature, which includes the SB Epic of Gilgamesh (see I 10), would have been future kings and their entourage (i.e., the *ummânū*). This, however, does not exclude its educational use.

not actually belong. Moreover, as anyone can see as they read through the rest of the Epic, the wisdom imparted by the Epic—again, the presumed content of the secret tablet in I 26–27—is learned via Gilgamesh's *experience*. Such is in fact very clearly stated earlier in I 10: Gilgamesh established (*šakin*) an inscription (*narû*) of *all that he went through*, not the divination corpus or exorcism corpus.[73] So the invitation to open the tablet box and read the secret is a literary device that adorns, to recall imagery used earlier, the common sense advice the reader learns from Gilgamesh with the garb of secrecy in order to give the advice a greater sense of importance or authority. In the prologue, the text advertises the existence of antediluvian secret knowledge; and now, in this passage, the text adapts the language of secrecy to describe the life-wisdom Gilgamesh learns and offers it to every reader of the epic. This vulgate of secret knowledge is useful and available to all; it is, we might say, a democratized form of secret knowledge. But this so-called secret knowledge is not to be equated with either the antediluvian secrets, which hint at scholarly secret lore but are actually no secrets at all, mentioned earlier in the prologue (and disclosed in Tablet XI) or the actual secret knowledge that we know from other sources was protected by the scholars (i.e., their various learned corpora). This equivocation on the supposed content of secret knowledge, this rhetorical sleight of hand, both advertises and masks yet again that which only the initiated, the king and his royal scholars, actually possessed.

If the ancient reader accepted this idea of the democratization of secret knowledge and believed they themselves had become privy to it in the reading of the Epic, then one might suggest that this literary effect undermines the very reason for the scholars' advertisement of the possession of their own, *true* secret knowledge. But this, in fact, is not the case. Literature is not simple, straight-forward, or flat. Rather, it is evocative, dynamic, and ramified. Different meanings are activated for readers with different backgrounds, contexts, and expectations. Some readers may be prepared to learn about Gilgamesh's exploits and may believe at the conclusion of the prologue that secrets are being opened as the Epic unfolds. This is the intention of the Epic on the surface of it. But by the conclusion of the Epic the story may suggest to some readers, such as first-level scribal students, that something more lies behind the secret knowledge in the Epic than what the tablet box in I 24–28 overtly offers.[74] Tablet XI 196–197 is the first indication of this something

[73] As Peter Machinist, among others, has noted, "the Epic of Gilgamesh becomes a story about itself" (1986: 194).

[74] One might recall the way that line 8 of "In Praise of the Scribal Art" seems to hold out more secret knowledge to the would-be scribe than the mere promise of literacy.

more. Here Ea says:

> *a-na-ku ul ap-ta-a pi-riš-ti* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ
> *at-ra-ḫa-sis šu-na-ta ú-šab-ri-šum-ma pi-riš-ti* DINGIR.MEŠ *iš-me*
>
> *I* did not disclose (literally, "open" from *petû*) the secret of the great gods,
> I showed Atra-ḫasis a dream, and thus he heard the secret of the gods.[75]

Disingenuous denials aside, these lines clearly indicate that Ea, against the will of the gods, showed the flood hero (called Atra-ḫasis in this line) a dream that revealed to him the secret counsel of the gods pertaining to the flood. The other indication of something more occurs in XI 287–293.[76] In these lines we learn that Gilgamesh acquires the secret medicinal plant Uta-Napishti revealed to him from the Apsu, Ea's domain. The significance of both passages is that Ea is the master of secrets, and he reveals secrets to his protégé Uta-Napishti (who bore the *ummânū* safely through the flood) and to Gilgamesh the king who learned everything. A first-level scribal student, who in another text was promised the secrets of Ea, would be warranted to conclude that he too might receive secret knowledge from Ea through his contemporary servants, the scholars. Again, the existence of secret knowledge is revealed but its contents, even though implicitly offered to those who would find favor with Ea, are largely concealed.

According to this interpretation, we may conclude that the advertisement of secret knowledge in the SB Epic of Gilgamesh was another discursive location in which scholars (and the king, in this case) could have parlayed their possession of textual secret knowledge into social prestige and power.

Conclusion

Although the evidence is admittedly sparse, the above discussion presents three examples for how scholars could have advertised scholarly secret knowledge to first-level scribal students in the mid-first millennium. By these discursive means (and no doubt through others) the scholars transformed their unique possession of secret knowledge into social prestige and power. The implications of this discursive practice, however, probably went well beyond persuading first-level scribal students that the scholars possessed secret

[75] See George 2003: 716 for the text. The translation is mine.
[76] See George 2003: 722 for the text.

knowledge and were therefore very special. As mentioned above, the majority of scribal students finished their training with the completion of the first level. After "graduation," these non-scholarly scribes would have gone on to work in the palace, the temples, and among ordinary citizens. As these scribes worked among the general populace, one can imagine that they could have disseminated by word of mouth the idea that scholars possessed secret knowledge. In this way the scholar's social prestige and power might have been bolstered and perpetuated via secretism not only among their students, but also among people more broadly in society. As is true with almost all statements about the general citizenry in ancient Mesopotamia, however, this indirect form of advertising secrecy, although quite reasonable since scribes lived, worked, ate, drank, and slept with people outside the scribal profession, must remain a matter of conjecture.

A secondary result of the advertisement of secret knowledge to scribal students at the first level of their training would have been the creation of in-group cohesion and a sense of privilege among those few students who advanced to the second level of scribal training and on to the full status of scholar. Thus, the discourse of secrecy cut two ways among the scribal students: it informed the non-scholar scribes about the existence of secret knowledge while keeping them out of the esoteric circle that actually possessed the secret knowledge, and it kept the scholar-scribes privy to such secret knowledge in the esoteric circle by virtue of a shared, unique possession.[77] This sociological effect would have been another important contributing factor for preserving and perpetuating the social position, prestige, and power of the select group of scribes we call the *ummânū*.

Addendum

The editor has permitted me to respond to Kathyrn Stevens's recent article "Secrets in the Library: Protected Knowledge and Professional Identity in Late Babylonian Uruk" (*Iraq* 75 [2013], 211–253), which criticizes a few of my ideas in *Secrecy and the Gods*.

Stevens frames scholarly knowledge in terms of "protected" rather than "secret" knowledge. Her ideas are useful for her "broader historiographical project of delineating and explaining protected knowledge and protective mechanisms in the Mesopotamian intellectual domain" (p. 213). But I fail to

[77] For the general sociological issue of keeping outsiders out and insiders in, see Berger and Luckmann 1967: 87–88.

see how they negate the usefulness of a more focused inquiry into secrecy and secret knowledge for understanding the sociology of ancient Mesopotamian scholarship. Secrecy, I suggest, is a specific and distinctive kind of protection. Our views are not ultimately mutually exclusive. Stevens' criticism of my work centers on my treatment of the *Geheimwissen* colophons.

Stevens claims I de-contextualize the *Geheimwissen* colophons because I treat all of the texts bearing this colophon without regard to their specific time and place in the first millennium. I would suggest that I contextualized the texts *differently than she would have liked*. Informed by social scientific studies that use "secrecy" for understanding human organization and mythmaking (pp. 17–21), I looked at texts containing secrecy-related terms to gather relevant data (pp. 22–23). After an examination of all of these texts, I found that some of them describe the corpora of the five scholarly disciplines of *ummânūtu* (lamenters, exorcists, haruspices, celestial diviners, and physicians) as a revelation of Ea and a secret (ch. 2).[78] I then demonstrated that these texts were in fact guarded (see pp. 149–160). All of this provided a broad social context—a framework (Stevens calls it a "top-down" approach, see her p. 212)—for understanding the means scribes used to guard such texts. Among these means were not only secrecy labels and the *Geheimwissen* colophons (pp. 170–204) but also admonitions and divine invocations (pp. 163–170). With only a handful of exceptions, the tablets bearing a *Geheimwissen* colophon belonged to one of the five scholarly disciplines. The reason for the presence or absence of the colophon on any particular tablet, I suggested, was beyond recovery. Stevens is of another opinion, to which I will return below.

Since Stevens has a broader conceptual agenda than my own work, it is not surprising that she also wants to use other colophons beyond the *Geheimwissen* ones for understanding how scholarly knowledge was, as she prefers to see it, protected. Stevens believes tablets bearing a variation of a colophon that admonishes "one who fears" (*pāliḫ*) a deity or deities not to steal the tablet, cause it to be lost, and/or to return it within a specified time ought also to be considered "protected knowledge."[79] I disqualified these

[78] Stevens complains that previous treatments of secret knowledge treated it as an abstract body of material (see, e.g., her p. 212). But in fact that is what our sources mention: there are Akkadian terms for the scholarly crafts and their exclusive textual corpora (e.g., *kalûtu* and *barûtu*). Of course, what actually populated these corpora would have changed over the centuries—something that I did not discuss in my work. Stevens' work usefully emphasizes this fluidity (see, e.g., her p. 232).

[79] She refers to these variations as *tabālu* formulae.

colophons from my consideration because they do not explicitly mention secrecy; they therefore did not unequivocally seem relevant to what I was studying. I suggested they were concerned with the material safety of the tablet rather than guarding its content from unauthorized eyes (p. 204). I then concluded that these and the *Geheimwissen* colophons, "though broadly related, seem to be more complementary than identical in their purposes" (p. 204).[80] Stevens sees the purpose of the two kinds of colophons as more or less the same since both intend to protect, ultimately, the intellectual content of tablets. But she also seems to recognize their different emphases. She writes, "The *Geheimwissen* formulae can certainly be said to reflect a different emphasis from those which prohibit theft or extended borrowing; the former explicitly restrict access to the content to a group of users with specific intellectual qualifications, while the latter are concerned to ensure that the (unspecified) user," thus perhaps another scholar or his copyist, "returns the tablet safely to its rightful place without loss or neglect. However, I would argue that in all the formulae the core concern is to protect knowledge, and hence that, *if we wish to investigate not only Mesopotamian scholarly conceptions of secrecy but also the protection of knowledge by Mesopotamian scholars more generally*, then all tablets marked by protective formulae, not just the *Geheimwissen* type, can be classed as protected or restricted on intellectual grounds" (emphasis added). I agree. But I do not see how this broader perspective requires the dissolution of an analytical category, i.e., secrecy, that both the ancient scholars themselves used to characterize their materials and modern social science has shown to be useful in understanding the dynamics of social formation.

Despite the above disagreements, I believe Stevens' "bottom-up" approach (see her p. 212) represents an advance in understanding the role of the *Geheimwissen* and related colophons on scholarly texts. I suspected in *Secrecy* that various extra-textual circumstances were probably responsible for the attachment of a *Geheimwissen* colophon to some scholarly tablets and not to others (p. 206). Not seeing how to get at evidence that would allow us to retrieve such circumstances, I concluded that looking for a detailed pattern as to why particular texts and not all scholarly tablets were marked with a *Geheimwissen* colophon or other measure was a dead-end (p. 214). Stevens' ideas for finding such a pattern in tablets from Achaemenid and Hellenistic Uruk may be a way out of this presumed dead-end. After a study of the contents and the owners/copyists of tablets bearing specific "protection"

[80] Stevens seems to ignore this statement in her summary of my views.

colophons, Stevens finds that pedagogical tablets were not usually protected—probably because they were considered ephemeral. She also finds that tablets that were protected had some relevance to the owner's or copyist's professional interests whereas the same text owned by another scholar may not have been protected because it was not relevant to their work. Thus, she emphasizes rightly, in my opinion, that what was deemed worthy to mark as secret (or protected, in her broader view) was both circumstantial and fluid. These are very interesting ideas. There is the occasional anomaly that is troublesome to her synthesis. And I have a question about why, if the pedagogical texts were considered ephemeral and therefore not in need of protecting, they ended up in the same tablet cache as other non-pedagogical, protected texts. But her "bottom-up" approach allows us to imagine how various scholars applied their protective measures in diverse circumstances while not bothering to apply them in others. And this is a step forward.

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Los vínculos interregionales de la iconografía Ghassuliense*

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Summary: Interregional links of the Ghassulian iconography
The Ghassulian culture is the most relevant cultural entity in the Chalcolithic of Southern Levant (4500–3700/3600 BCE). The purpose of this paper is to determinate the interregional links of its iconographical assemblage. It analyzed similarities between the Ghassulian iconography and others regions of Near East Asia and Northeast Africa, as well as long distance relationships between those regions. The conclusion is that, although this culture maintained links with Egypt and Eastern Anatolian, this is not enough to explain the features of its iconographical assemblage.

Keywords: Chalcolithic of Southern Levant – Ghassulian culture – iconography – interregional links

Resumen: Los vínculos interregionales de la iconografía Ghassuliense
La cultura Ghassuliense es la entidad cultural más relevante del Calcolítico Sudlevantino (4500–3700/3600 a.C.). El objetivo de este trabajo es determinar los vínculos interregionales de su repertorio iconográfico. Para esto se analizaron las semejan-

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zas entre la iconografía Ghassuliense y las otras regiones del Próximo Oriente asiático y del Noreste africano, así como también las relaciones de larga distancia entre estas regiones. La conclusión es que, si bien esta cultura mantuvo vínculos con Egipto y Anatolia oriental, esto no alcanza para explicar las características de su repertorio iconográfico.

Palabras clave: Calcolítico Sud-levantino – cultura Ghassuliense – iconografía – vínculos interregionales

La Cultura Ghassuliense

El período Calcolítico constituye, en la región del Levante meridional, una suerte de transición entre las formaciones económico-sociales agropastoriles del Neolítico Cerámico y las urbanas del Bronce Antiguo. Entre los aspectos que lo caracterizan se pueden destacar el surgimiento de aldeas con cierto grado de complejidad que combinaban actividades agropastoriles y artesanales, incluyendo el surgimiento de la metalurgia del cobre, el desarrollo de nuevos niveles de especialización en la producción de cerámica y de basalto, la intensificación de la producción agrícola, y el desarrollo de la llamada "revolución de los productos secundarios"[1].

En este trabajo se comparte la propuesta de I. Gilead[2], según la cual el Calcolítico Sud-levantino es equiparado a la cultura Ghassuliense. Esta propuesta tiene coherencia si tenemos en cuenta que, durante este período, ésta fue la única cultura de la región que incluyó artefactos de cobre en su repertorio. Sin embargo, no se comparte la cronología propuesta por este autor, según la cual se debería datar al Calcolítico y a la cultura Ghassuliense entre el 4500 y el 4000/3900 a.C., ya que esta última fecha tiene el problema de no coincidir con los fechados radiocarbónicos más recientes, los cuales indican que el comienzo del Bronce Antiguo I fue en torno al 3800/3700 a.C.[3]. Estos últimos datos coinciden en parte con las fechas corregidas por M. Burton y T.E. Levy[4], quienes datan el final del Calcolítico en 3700/3600 a.C. De todas maneras, es posible pensar en la existencia de una transición de unos 200 años aproximadamente[5].

[1] Levy 2012: 461–463.
[2] Gilead 2011.
[3] Regev *et al.* 2012.
[4] Burton y Levy 2011.
[5] Milevski 2013.

La cultura Ghassuliense ocupaba una gran parte del Levante meridional (**Fig. 1**), que incluía el norte del Néguev, el piedemonte, la planicie costera central y meridional, las tierras altas centrales, la cuenca del Mar Muerto y el valle del Jordán[6]. Coexistía, asimismo, con dos entidades culturales menores: por un lado, con la cultura Golaniense, de los Altos del Golán, con la que guardaba ciertas similitudes con el repertorio artefactual e iconográfico de la misma[7], y, por otro lado, con la cultura Timnita, una cultura básicamente lítica del centro y sur del Néguev[8].

Los indicadores artefactuales de la cultura Ghassuliense, además de los objetos de cobre, son: los bowls en forma de V (*V-shaped)*, las vasijas de soportes aventanados (*fenestrated stand)*, las "cornetas", las mantequeras, las vasijas con agarraderas y/o con bandas pintadas en rojo, las hoces de respaldo angosto (*narrow-backed)*, ciertos microlitos, los osarios de arcilla y ciertos bowls de basalto[9].

Uno de los aspectos más singulares de esta cultura es la amplia variedad de motivos iconográficos, entre los que destacan las imágenes de aves rapaces y de animales salvajes astados, las figurinas zoomorfas con cuencos, "cornetas" o mantequeras en sus lomos, las figurinas antropomorfas naturalistas o abstractas, con ojos y narices prominentes, y con rasgos sexuales destacados, así como también ciertos artefactos, como las cabezas de maza y los "estandartes"[10]. Si bien este repertorio es común a toda la cultura Ghassuliense, hay algunos sitios que se destacan por encima del resto, como los frescos de Teleilat Ghassul[11], el tesoro de Nahal Mishmar[12], el santuario de Gilat[13], la cueva de Nahal Qanah[14] y la cueva de Peqi'in[15].

El Origen de la Cultura Ghassuliense

El objetivo de este trabajo es determinar los vínculos interregionales de la iconografía Ghassuliense. Para esto se analizaron las semejanzas del repertorio

[6] Gilead 2011.
[7] Epstein 1998.
[8] Rosen 2011.
[9] Gilead 2011.
[10] Para una descripción y un análisis de este repertorio iconográfico consultar Espstein 1978; 1982; Milevski 2010.
[11] Seaton 2008.
[12] Bar-Adon 1980.
[13] Alon and Levy 1989.
[14] Gopher and Tsuk 1996a.
[15] Gal, Smithline y Shalem 1997.

iconográfico con las otras regiones del Próximo Oriente asiático y del Noreste africano. Sin embargo, antes de exponer los resultados de este análisis, es necesario hacer una referencia a la cuestión del origen de la cultura Ghassuliense, ya que según algunos arqueólogos[16], se debió a una intrusión septentrional, hipótesis que en parte se basa en la introducción de la metalurgia del cobre arsenicado, así como también en cierta influencia de la cultura Halafiense y de Ubaid Tardía en la decoración de las cerámicas.

Puede afirmarse que esta hipótesis de la intrusión septentrional está inspirada en un enfoque de tipo histórico cultural, paradigma que en algunos aspectos aún es dominante en la arqueología de la región[17]. Desde este enfoque, el análisis de la iconografía tiende a asumir una perspectiva según la cual las fronteras estilísticas serían equivalentes de las fronteras étnico-lingüísticas[18]. Esta equiparación, a su vez, tiende a explicar los cambios en el registro arqueológico, ya sea por mecanismos de difusión de ciertos rasgos culturales, o bien por la migración de determinados pueblos.

Otra hipótesis alternativa sostiene, en cambio, que la cultura Ghassuliense tuvo un origen local a partir de las culturas neolíticas tardías[19], en particular de la cultura de Wadi Rabah[20]. Esta alternativa, que privilegia los procesos de cambio interno, es en parte consecuencia de la introducción de enfoques procesuales, aunque no todos los que la apoyan pueden clasificarse dentro de esta corriente[21]. Ahora bien, esta dinámica de cambio interno no es simple ni directa. Por ejemplo, en la propuesta cronológica de Gilead[22], se ha introducido una fase de transición entre el Neolítico Tardío y el Calcolítico (*ca*. 5000–4500 a.C.), que incluye las culturas de Natzur 4, Tel Tsaf, Besor, y los estratos más antiguos de Teleilat Ghassul, con lo que separa en varios siglos a la cultura Ghassuliense de la de Wadi Rabah. Ahora bien, tanto esta hipótesis como la anterior serán evaluadas, a partir del resultado del análisis realizado, en relación al repertorio iconográfico.

[16] de Vaux 1970; Kenyon 1965; Ussishkin 1971; Bar-Adon 1980; Mazar 1992.
[17] Rowan y Lovell 2011: 6.
[18] Rowan y Lovell 2011: 4.
[19] E.g. Levy 1995; Rowan y Golden 2009.
[20] Gopher y Gophna 2003.
[21] E.g. Gilead 1988.
[22] Gilead 2011.

Consideraciones Teórico-Conceptuales

La hipótesis de la difusión y/o del movimiento de poblaciones permitiría explicar la semejanza entre los repertorios iconográficos de diversas regiones. Para los períodos históricos se conocen varios casos de movimientos de población en el Próximo Oriente en general, por lo que se considera perfectamente posible que esta situación haya estado presente en la Prehistoria tardía del Levante meridional. Sin embargo, se debe tener presente que un movimiento de población no es sinónimo de cambio en el registro arqueológico[23], y que las fronteras étnico-lingüísticas no coinciden, necesariamente, con una cultura arqueológica determinada[24].

Otra alternativa para explicar las semejanzas puede ser la práctica del intercambio de larga distancia. Una teoría que presta especial atención a estos vínculos es la de los sistemas-mundo, según la cual el agente de cambio es la interacción entre poblaciones diferentes[25]. La aplicación de este modelo a escenarios no capitalistas implicó la formulación de modificaciones al modelo original propuesto por I. Wallerstein[26], pero el núcleo conceptual del mismo se ha conservado. Según este modelo, un sistema-mundo se define por la existencia de un centro y de una periferia. La posición de éstos depende de una relación asimétrica de tipo sistémica entre ambos. Esta relación, en tanto sistema, consiste en interacciones de una densidad suficiente como para que los eventos que suceden en un lugar tengan incidencia en toda la estructura.

Según N. Kardulias y T. Hall[27], cada sistema-mundo está compuesto por cuatro redes que definen conjuntos de fronteras. La iconografía formaría parte de la red de información, la más amplia de todas, que incluye la cultura, los valores, el sistema de creencias y la ideología, y que excede a las redes de intercambio y las político-militares. Esta red de información tiene la misma escala que la de bienes de prestigio o de lujo, aunque no suele coincidir de manera exacta con esta última[28].

[23] Para ver un caso de movimiento de población sin cambio en el registro arqueológico (el comercio paleoasirio), y otro con cambio (las colonias Uruk), véase Emberling y Yoffee 1999.
[24] Yoffee 1993: 258.
[25] Hay una extensa bibliografía sobre este tema. Para un buen resumen, con bibliografía, véase Aubet 2007.
[26] Wallerstein 1979 (1974).
[27] Kardulias y Hall 2008.
[28] Kardulias y Hall 2008: 574.

Ahora bien, hay algunos autores que han criticado la supuesta asimetría de estos vínculos, como por ejemplo G. Stein[29], para quien las condiciones materiales de la época impedían el control de regiones tan distantes, relativizando la influencia de una región sobre la otra[30]. Una teoría que enfatiza la simetría del intercambio de larga distancia, en cambio, es la de las esferas de interacción. Según esta teoría, la práctica del intercambio depende de la elaboración de un código común de valores y creencias, que se manifiesta a través de un *corpus* compartido de símbolos[31]. De particular interés resulta la aplicación de N. Yoffee de este modelo a la Prehistoria tardía de Mesopotamia[32]. Este autor distingue entre esferas de interacción regional—Samarra y Hassuna—, e interregional, las cuales divide, a su vez, en económicas—Halaf—y culturales—Ubaid.

Estas dos alternativas teóricas, la de los sistemas-mundo y la de las esferas de interacción, tienen en común que la iconografía forma parte de un sistema simbólico que acompaña el intercambio de productos de larga distancia. Este elemento obliga, entonces, a considerar la presencia de productos foráneos en el Levante meridional, así como también los productos de origen sud-levantino en las otras regiones. El análisis de los resultados ayudará a determinar si las semejanzas se deben a una intrusión externa, a un proceso de desarrollo interno, o bien a la existencia de relaciones de larga distancia.

Los Vínculos Interregionales de la Iconografía Ghassuliense

Para desarrollar este tema se siguió, en parte, el trabajo de P. Beck[33], dedicado al análisis de la iconografía de los artefactos de cobre del tesoro de Nahal Mishmar, ya que la estética de los mismos integra el repertorio iconográfico de la cultura Ghassuliense[34].

Los artefactos de cobre de este tesoro que más se destacan son los "estandartes", los "cetros", las "coronas" y las cabezas de maza piriformes, estas últimas presentes en gran cantidad. Entre los "estandartes", los hay simples y/o con cabezas de maza (**Figs. 2 y 3**). Ambos tipos encuentran paralelos en la región de Irán, específicamente con los artefactos hallados en el sitio de Tepe Hissar

[29] Stein 2002.
[30] Esta opinión también la comparte Rowlands 1987 y Kohl 2011.
[31] Yoffee 1993: 258.
[32] Yoffee 1993.
[33] Beck 1989.
[34] Epstein 1978; 1982.

y de Susa (**Fig. 4**), y en la Mesopotamia, como por ejemplo en los sitios de Uruk y de Tepe Gawra[35]. También se han hallado algunos "estandartes" de cobre en otros sitios de la cultura Ghassuliense, como por ejemplo en Giv'at Ha-Oranim[36], y en Horbat Illit, en la Sefelá[37]. Sin embargo, más comunes de hallar son las cabezas de maza piriformes, como por ejemplo en los sitios de Peqi'in[38], de Abu Matar[39], de Giv'at Ha-Oranim[40] y de Nahal Ze'elim[41]. Este último artefacto está bastante difundido en otras regiones del Próximo Oriente antiguo, como por ejemplo en Uruk y Susa, así como también en Egipto, donde se lo utilizaba como arma y como símbolo de autoridad, particularmente vinculada a la figura del faraón. Ahora bien, un estudio de la morfología, realizado por M. Sebanne[42], ha determinado que la forma de las cabezas de maza sudlevantinas de este período tenía una inspiración de origen nilótico.

Entre los "estandartes" destaca el n° 153 de Nahal Mishmar, el cual posee una cabeza de maza decorada con dos animales salvajes astados contrapuestos, probablemente íbices, con los cuerpos unidos por sus lomos, y con dos armas o herramientas, seguramente una espada y un hacha (**Fig. 5**). Este tipo de composición artística guarda similitudes con las armas ceremoniales mesopotámicas posteriores, como el estandarte "garrote León" (*Lion-Club)*, y con las impresiones de sello halladas en los sitios de Uruk y de Susa. Esta composición también posee semejanzas con el motivo de los bueyes unidos de la paleta del Cazador (*Hunter's Palette)* del Egipto Predinástico (**Fig. 6**), así como con los leones de un sello de la Primera Dinastía en Saqqara[43].

Los íbices presentes en el "estandarte" citado es uno de los animales, junto a las aves rapaces, más representado en la cultura Ghassuliense, comúnmente sólo por su cabeza o, simplemente, por sus cuernos. Estos últimos decoraban varios "estandartes" y "coronas" del tesoro de Nahal Mishmar, así como también vasijas, osarios de cerámica, y pilares de basalto[44]. La amplia presencia de este motivo obliga a detenerse en su análisis, y para eso se citará el caso de la "corona" n° 7 de Nahal Mishmar (**Fig. 7**), la cual ha sido objeto de cierto debate.

[35] Beck 1989: 41.
[36] Namdar *et al.* 2004.
[37] Milevski *et al.* en prensa.
[38] Gal, Shalem y Smithline 2011.
[39] Perrot 1955.
[40] Scheftelowitz y Oren 2004.
[41] Notis *et al.* 1991.
[42] Sebbane 2009.
[43] Beck 1989: 42–43.
[44] Epstein 1978; 1982.

Según P. Bar-Adon[45] y C. Epstein[46], la "corona" n° 7 representaría la fachada de un templo. Esta interpretación se basa en la existencia de representaciones de templos mesopotámicos con cuernos emergiendo de sus paredes, como por ejemplo se ve en la impresión de los sellos cilíndricos en Susa[47]. Sin embargo, un análisis más detenido de esta corona, indica que los cuernos no eran de toro, como los representados en el arte mesopotámico, mediante los cuales se expresaba lo divino en general, sino que eran de íbices o de gacelas. Al parecer, la representación de este último tipo de cuernos tenía una distribución más circunscripta, vinculada no a edificios sagrados, sino a construcciones laicas[48]. Un ejemplo serían los cuernos que emergen de las paredes de una fortaleza en Kishesim, Irán, representada en el palacio del rey asirio Sargón II, en Khorsabad (**Fig. 8**). Basándose en estas evidencias, I. Ziffer[49] propuso que este motivo iconográfico se vincula con edificios de la realeza, siendo la "corona" n° 7 la representación de un palacio o la residencia de un gobernador. Más allá de esta interpretación, que está sujeta a discusión, pues hasta hoy no se han hallado palacios en el Calcolítico Sud-levantino, es interesante notar que el motivo de los cuernos de íbices o de gacelas tendría relación con una probable tradición irania, lo que podría apuntar a la existencia de un vínculo entre el Levante meridional e Irán durante el Calcolítico. No obstante, también es probable que se tratara de un desarrollo local de un motivo común que representaba la fuerza viril[50], ya que las imágenes de gacelas aparecen en el norte de Galilea a partir del VI° milenio a.C.[51].

Otra "corona" de Nahal Mishmar que se puede destacar es la "corona" n° 9, la cual contiene partes del rostro humano, como los ojos y una nariz prominente (**Fig. 9**). Estos motivos estaban bastante extendidos, también, en varios artefactos de la cultura Ghassuliense, como vasijas, figurinas antropomorfas y osarios de cerámica, así como también en los pilares de basalto de la cultura Golaniense[52]. Ahora bien, según D. Shalem[53], estos motivos antropomorfos, en especial los reproducidos sobre los osarios, serían de inspiración mesopotámica y nord-levantina, y guardarían relación con el ciclo mítico de las deidades Inanna y Dumuzi.

[45] Bar-Adon 1980: 132–133.
[46] Epstein 1978: 26.
[47] Beck 1989: 44.
[48] Ziffer 2007: 50–52.
[49] Ziffer 2007.
[50] Milevski 2010: 425.
[51] Getzov 2011.
[52] Epstein 1978; 1982.
[53] Shalem 2008.

Para concluir con los objetos de Nahal Mishmar, se deben señalar tres artefactos, que parecen tener una inspiración directa de Egipto. Se trata de los "cetros" n° 125 y n° 126, y del "estandarte" n° 22 (**Figs. 10, 11 y 12**). El primero tiene la forma de un báculo de pastor, y los siguientes tienen la forma de una planta. Estos motivos tienen serios paralelos en el arte Predinástico y Dinástico temprano, donde el báculo aparece vinculado a la figura del faraón, y donde la planta, según ha señalado M.-H. Gates[54], es probable que se tratase de una de las plantas heráldicas del Alto y Bajo Egipto.

La influencia iconográfica egipcia también se atestiguaría en un conjunto de figurinas antropomorfas naturalistas de marfil y hueso halladas en la región de Beersheba, principalmente en el sitio de Bir es-Safadi (**Fig. 13**). Es probable que las mismas fueran producidas localmente bajo la inspiración de modelos egipcios, en particular los de la cultura Badariense[55]. No obstante, también se han señalado similitudes con figurinas antropomorfas de otras regiones, como las estatuillas de piedra del sitio de Tepe Yahya, en Irán[56].

Con respecto a las figurinas antropomorfas, es menester señalar el caso de las estatuillas de piedra con forma de violín (**Fig. 14**), posible representación abstracta de la mujer, la cual tiene inesperadas similitudes con artefactos de Anatolia occidental, las islas Cícladas y Creta[57]. Sin embargo, en este caso, como en el motivo de los cuernos, se puede señalar un desarrollo local desde finales del Neolítico Cerámico, donde existen estatuillas en forma de violín que podríamos denominar pre-Ghassulienses, como por ejemplo en el sitio de Tel Dover, a orillas del río Yarmuk[58].

Como vemos, varios de los motivos del repertorio iconográfico de la cultura Ghassuliense encuentran paralelos en las otras regiones del Próximo Oriente asiático y del Noreste africano. Se debe señalar que algunas similitudes son más claras que otras, pero, en general, se puede asegurar que el arte Ghassuliense compartió parte de sus motivos con las demás regiones.

Relaciones de Larga Distancia en la Cultura Ghassuliense

Ante todo, hay que señalar que, en la cultura Ghassuliense, la cantidad de productos vinculados al intercambio de larga distancia es muy pequeña, y

[54] Gates 1992: 135.
[55] Véase Ucko 1968.
[56] Mazar 1992: 76–79.
[57] Mazar 1992: 82.
[58] I. Milevski, com. pers.

que los únicos lugares no sud-levantinos en los que aparecen artefactos de la cultura Ghassuliense son los sitios de Tell el Fara'in y de Ma'adi, ambos en el delta del Nilo[59].

Dicho esto, se debe señalar que las relaciones con Egipto parecen estar bien atestiguadas. Por ejemplo, en la cueva de Nahal Qanah se han hallado seis anillos de electro y dos de oro[60]. No se sabe si la producción fue local o foránea, debido a la posible refundición del metal. Sin embargo, se opina que la procedencia más probable del material fue Egipto, o más seguramente Nubia, debido a que allí se encuentran las fuentes de oro más cercanas[61].

Otro elemento que, probablemente, indique la presencia de una relación con Egipto, es un fragmento de una vasija de alabastro hallado en el sitio de Ein Gedi. Se piensa que fue importada desde Egipto, pues se conocen vasijas similares allí y, además, un análisis químico de la muestra señaló la similitud del material con ejemplares egipcios[62]. Sin embargo, existen discusiones en torno a la datación de esta pieza, pues mientras que R. Amiran[63] data este tipo de objetos en Naqada I, A. Kempinski[64] sugiere como fecha muy temprana el reinado de Narmer, debido a la escasez de estos objetos en el Egipto Predinástico.

Acompañando estas evidencias se debe señalar la presencia de artefactos líticos de procedencia egipcia, como las hojas de laminado a presión (*pressure-flaked*)[65] y las puntas de flecha del tipo "Fayum" en el norte del Néguev y la llanura central[66], así como una presencia mínima de vasijas con arcilla del Nilo en el sitio de Gilat[67]. Asimismo, un producto egipcio que se halla en los sitios de la cultura Ghassuliense son las conchas nilóticas, aunque las más comunes son las provenientes del Mar Mediterráneo y del Mar Rojo[68].

En el delta del Nilo, como dijimos antes, atestiguamos la presencia de artefactos Ghassulienses. En el sitio de Tell Fara'in hallamos artefactos cerámicos como los bowls en forma de V, las vasijas de soportes aventanados y algunos fragmentos de mantequeras[69]. Aunque el hecho de que hayan sido elaborados con arcilla local, es un indicio de la presencia de asiáticos sud-levantinos en

[59] Rowan and Golden 2009: 62.
[60] Gopher *et al.* 1990; Gopher y Tsuk 1996b.
[61] Gopher *et al.* 1990; Gopher y Tsuk 1996b.
[62] Ussishkin 1971: 33; 1980: 21.
[63] Amiran 1974: 9.
[64] Kempinski 1972: 12–13.
[65] Perrot 1955.
[66] I. Milevski, com. pers.
[67] Gilead y Goren 1989: 7.
[68] Rowan y Golden 2009: 62.
[69] Rowan y Golden 2009: 64–65.

la región, más que de prácticas de intercambio[70]. No sucede lo mismo en el sitio de Ma'adi, donde se atestiguan artefactos cerámicos de procedencia sudlevantina, a la que debemos sumar la presencia de asfalto originario del área del Mar Muerto[71], así como también objetos y lingotes de cobre, procedentes de Feinan, Jordania[72]. A su vez, este último sitio parece haber participado activamente en una red de vínculos interregionales, como parece indicar la existencia de moldes de lingotes en los sitios de Tall Hujayrat al-Ghuzlan y de Tall al-Magass, en Jordania, cercanos al Golfo de Aqaba, cuyas formas son similares a los lingotes de cobre hallados en Ma'adi[73]. Estos sitios, si bien tienen varias similitudes con el repertorio artefactual de la cultura Ghassuliense, pertenecen a la órbita de la cultura Timnita. Además, en estos sitios, también se ha atestiguado la presencia de instrumentos de pedernal provenientes de Egipto[74]. Sin embargo, hay que notar que la mayor parte de los artefactos hallados en estos sitios, tanto como los de Ma'adi, han sido datados en la parte terminal del Calcolítico y comienzos del Bronce Antiguo I[75]. Además, se ha atestiguado que el cobre que se utilizaba en Tall Hujayrat al-Ghuzlan y Tall al-Magass provenía de los depósitos de Timna, situación diferente a la mayoría de los artefactos de Ma'adi, por lo que la relación entre estos sitios aún permanece en discusión[76].

Para completar los vínculos con el Noreste africano, se debe mencionar la amplia presencia de productos de turquesa en la región nilótica. Es casi seguro que los mismos provenían de un sitio cercano a Serabit el-Khadim, en el Sinaí occidental, de donde provenían también los productos de turquesa hallados en el Levante meridional[77].

Como vemos, es posible inferir la existencia de vínculos entre Egipto y la cultura Ghassuliense (seguramente también con la cultura Timnita). Es probable, que estas relaciones hayan incluido la circulación de los motivos iconográficos comunes a ambas regiones, como el caso de las cabezas de maza piriforme, el báculo del pastor, las plantas heráldicas, el motivo de los animales contrapuestos y unidos por sus lomos, y, quizás, las figurinas antropomorfas naturalistas señaladas en la sección anterior.

[70] Campagno 2010.
[71] Milevski, Marder y Morris 2002.
[72] Campagno 2010: 194.
[73] Klimscha 2011.
[74] Khalil y Schmidt 2009.
[75] I. Milevski, com. pers.
[76] Hauptmann 2007: 302–304.
[77] Beit-Arieh 1980.

Con respecto a los vínculos con las otras regiones del Próximo Oriente asiático, se debe señalar la presencia de obsidiana, roca ígnea volcánica que es común de hallar en los sitios de la cultura Ghassuliense[78]. Según un análisis por activación neutrónica de herramientas de obsidiana halladas en el sitio de Gilat[79], se sabe que el material provenía de tres fuentes de Anatolia centro-oriental. Debemos decir que la presencia de este material en el Levante meridional no era una novedad, sino que se remontaba al Neolítico, por lo que su presencia durante el Calcolítico quizás fuera la continuación de una vieja red que conectaba Anatolia centro-oriental con el Levante meridional.

Con relación a la probable existencia de una red proveniente del norte, se debe volver a mencionar a los objetos de cobre hallados en la cueva de Nahal Mishmar. Estos objetos están elaborados, en su mayoría, con cobre arsenicado. En el Levante meridional, durante el Calcolítico, existieron dos tipos de elaboración del cobre: una más simple, que utilizaba moldes abiertos y cobre puro, y otra más compleja, que utilizaba la técnica de la cera perdida y cobre con importantes porcentajes de arsénico. Esta última variedad de cobre es sumamente rara para este período, aún más si consideramos el alto contenido de antimonio y de níquel que contienen las piezas[80]. Teniendo en cuenta que no existen fuentes de cobre locales con estas características, se ha argumentado que lo más probable es que el material proviniera de Anatolia oriental o de Transcaucasia, donde se conocen fuentes con estas características[81], como por ejemplo el sitio de Ergani Maden, el mayor depósito de cobre arsenicado de Anatolia oriental[82].

Ahora bien, a pesar del origen foráneo del material, es casi seguro que la manufactura de los objetos fue local. En primer lugar, los objetos cerámicos que acompañan al tesoro forman parte del *corpus* de la cultura Ghassuliense[83]. En segundo lugar, el análisis de la iconografía de los objetos de cobre arsenicado, como vimos en la sección anterior, forma parte del repertorio de esta cultura. En tercer lugar, el resultado del análisis petrográfico de los núcleos de arcilla de las cabezas de maza de cobre del tesoro, indica que la misma era de procedencia local[84]. A esto debe sumarse también los resultados de un análisis de los restos de arcilla impregnados a los objetos del tesoro, presumible-

[78] Rowan y Golden 2009: 62.
[79] Yellin, Levy y Rowan 1996.
[80] Muhly 1997: 7.
[81] Key 1980; Mazar 1992: 73; Muhly 1997: 7.
[82] Hauptmann 2007: 296.
[83] Bar-Adon 1980.
[84] Goren 1995.

mente como resultado de la fabricación por la técnica de la cera perdida, los cuales también señalan una elaboración local[85]. En cuarto lugar, si bien no se han hallado centros de producción local de objetos de cobre arsenicado[86], se conoce la existencia de varios centros de producción metalúrgica con productos con moldes, concentrados en la región sur del Levante meridional, principalmente en los sitios de Shiqmim, Abu Matar, Bir es-Safadi y Nevatim[87]. Los objetos hallados en estos sitios, y los demás sitios del Levante meridional, son de cobre puro, y se sabe que la fuente de procedencia eran las minas de Feinan, en Jordania[88]. A pesar de esto, es probable que estos mismos centros de producción fueran los que elaboraron los objetos de cobre arsenicado, como parece indicar el alto contenido de arsénico detectado en algunos restos humanos hallados en el Cementerio V de Shiqmim[89]. En resumen, la evidencia muestra que el producto final era de elaboración local, pero que en el caso de los objetos elaborados con la técnica de la cera perdida se utilizaba un material foráneo, por lo que podemos sugerir que el cobre arsenicado formaba parte, junto a la obsidiana, de la red que conectaba Anatolia centro-oriental con el Levante meridional.

Por último, se debe señalar la presencia de cuentas de pasta de esteatita vidriada, cuya presencia estaba extendida por toda la cultura Ghassuliense, como por ejemplo en los sitios de Shiqmim, Nahal Mishmar y Neve Noy, e inclusive en los denominados *nawamis* del Sinaí[90], así como en los sitios timnitas de Tall Hujayrat al-Ghuzlan y Tall al-Magass[91]. Los estudios realizados sobre estas piezas indican que los minerales para su elaboración no eran de procedencia local, por lo que se ha sugerido un origen foráneo para los mismos[92]. A raíz de los interesantes paralelos en objetos similares hallados en Mesopotamia, pero más específicamente en el valle del Indo, como lo indican estudios realizados en artefactos del sitio de Mehrgarh, en Pakistán, se ha sugerido que el material provenía, probablemente, de Asia Central[93]. La existencia de vínculos entre regiones tan distantes debe tomarse con cautela, pues

[85] Goren 2008.
[86] Levy y Shalev 1989: 365.
[87] Levy y Shalev 1989: 360–361.
[88] Levy y Shalev 1989: 359.
[89] Golden 2009: 293–294.
[90] Bar-Yosef y Porath 2010.
[91] Klimscha 2011.
[92] Bar-Yosef y Porath 2010.
[93] Bar-Yosef y Porath 2010.

no existen estudios dedicados a estos artefactos para el área de Mesopotamia. Sin embargo, es sugerente que entre los objetos del tesoro de Nahal Mishmar se haya hallado un fragmento de lapislázuli, material originario de la actual región de Afganistán[94].

En resumen, es posible determinar la existencia de un vínculo con el norte, más probablemente con Anatolia oriental. Sin embargo, se debe señalar la poca cantidad de productos involucrados en esta relación, pues sólo se trataría de obsidiana y de cobre arsenicado. Respecto de la presencia de cuentas elaboradas con materiales provenientes, quizás, de Irán o más al este, lo que nos permitiría explicar los paralelos con la iconografía de Irán y de Mesopotamia señalados en la sección anterior, aún faltan realizarse estudios, por lo que no podemos sostener que su presencia sea indicador de un vínculo de larga distancia con estas regiones del Próximo Oriente asiático.

Discusión

Es posible afirmar que la región del Levante meridional mantuvo vínculos con Egipto y con Anatolia oriental. En el primer caso, se comprobó la existencia de una mayor cantidad de artefactos compartidos, lo que permitiría explicar la presencia de algunos motivos iconográficos en ambas regiones. En el segundo caso, el vínculo con Anatolia oriental, también se determinó un contacto, aunque restringido sólo a la obsidiana y al cobre arsenicado, lo que lleva a proponer que la intensidad y regularidad del mismo quizás era menor que en relación a Egipto. A esto se debe sumar la ausencia de artefactos y de iconografía Ghassuliense en Anatolia oriental y Transcaucasia[95].

Por otro lado, se vio que algunos de los motivos iconográficos, como los animales salvajes astados y las estatuillas en forma de violín, bien pudieron tener un origen local en las culturas del Neolítico Cerámico Tardío. En relación a esto último, es significativo que ya durante estas culturas haya existido una cierta influencia septentrional. Por ejemplo, se reconoce en el caso de Wadi Rabah la presencia de elementos cerámicos vinculados con la cultura Halafiense[96]. Incluso, Y. Garfinkel[97] ha argumentado que la misma se trató de una variante local de esta última cultura. Esta influencia septentrional en la alfarería también es evidente en la cultura de Tel Tsaf[98], del valle del Jordán,

[94] Bar-Yosef y Porath 2010: 119.
[95] Para las culturas calcolíticos de Transcaucasia y Anatolia oriental, véase Lyonnet 2007.
[96] Levy 2012: 461.
[97] Garfinkel 1999: 152.
[98] Rowan y Golden 2009: 8.

considerada por algunos como una variante tardía de la cultura de Wadi Rabah[99]. Estos elementos septentrionales se desarrollarían luego en la propia cultura Ghassuliense[100]. Por otro lado, en el propio sitio de Tel Tsaf[101] se han hallado fragmentos de cerámica Ubaid, y los grandes silos guardan serios paralelos en su tipología con estructuras similares en Mesopotamia septentrional, como por ejemplo en los sitios de Hassuna, Yarim Tepe y Tell Sabi Abyad. Además, se han hallado una gran cantidad de sellos de arcilla, lo que refleja el desarrollo de una técnica de registro y administración originaria del norte de Siria y de Mesopotamia septentrional[102].

Ahora bien, ¿estos datos son suficientes para proponer un movimiento de población? En el caso de Egipto, parece haber existido un movimiento en dirección norte-sur, del Levante meridional al delta del Nilo, como parece indicar la presencia de artefactos típicos de la cultura Ghassuliense, en el sitio de Tell el Fara'in, elaborados con materiales locales. En el caso de Anatolia oriental tenemos menos datos, pero no se puede descartar un movimiento de población en la misma dirección, no sólo porque hay indicios de influencias previas durante el Neolítico, sino también porque en períodos posteriores se conoce el fenómeno de movimientos de población de origen septentrional, específicamente de Transcaucasia, hacia el Levante meridional[103]. Ahora bien, de haberse producido, estos movimientos parecen no ser suficientes para explicar las semejanzas en el repertorio iconográfico, pues como indicamos con anterioridad, no se halló iconografía semejante en Anatolia oriental, y si bien existen antecedentes, el sistema iconográfico del Ghassuliense no surgió como tal sino hasta comienzos del Calcolítico.

Con respecto al modelo de los sistemas-mundo, la escasez y la ambigüedad de la evidencia no permiten inferir con claridad las direcciones y el grado de los vínculos. De todas maneras, se supone que lo más probable es que los mismos fueron multidireccionales, y que contaron con múltiples nodos de contacto, por lo que no debió existir ningún tipo de predominio de una región sobre la otra. Por lo tanto, no se podría hablar de relaciones asimétricas entre centros y periferias.

La presencia de artefactos elaborados con materiales foráneos puede ser indicador de la existencia de alguna práctica de intercambio de larga distancia, pero en términos simétricos, lo que permitiría aplicar el modelo de las

[99] Gopher 1995
[100] Gilead 2011: 22.
[101] Garfinkel, Ben-Shlomo y Kuperman 2009.
[102] Stein 2010: 28.
[103] Gandulla 2005: 102–108.

esferas de interacción. Sin embargo, la región de Anatolia Oriental, en particular el sitio de Ergani Maden, participaba de la esfera de interacción interregional cultural de Ubaid[104]. Esfera de interacción con que la cultura Ghassuliense no parece haber guardado ningún tipo de relación.

Por lo tanto, la extensión de los vínculos interregionales de la iconografía Ghassuliense no pueden ser explicados de manera suficiente, ni por el posible movimiento de población, ni por la existencia del intercambio de larga distancia. ¿Es posible, entonces, qué las semejanzas se deban a que estas regiones compartían una especie de sustrato cultural común[105]? Una hipótesis semejante ha sido propuesta por Garfinkel[106] y Shalem[107], para quienes el Neolítico Acerámico es considerado como un período formativo de algunas de las características culturales comunes del Próximo Oriente antiguo. Es más, O. Bar-Yosef y A. Belfer-Cohen han aplicado el modelo de las esferas de interacción a este último período, y han podido determinar la existencia de vínculos interregionales tempranos entre las distintas regiones del Próximo Oriente en general, y entre el Levante y Anatolia centro-oriental en particular[108]. Por lo tanto, puede ser que la cultura Ghassuliense haya sido una sub-esfera de interacción de escala regional, lo que permitiría explicar las semejanzas en el repertorio iconográfico con las otras regiones del Próximo Oriente asiático.

En definitiva, si bien existieron vínculos interregionales, las características de la iconografía Ghassuliense no serían consecuencia ni de movimientos de población ni del intercambio de larga distancia, sino de la expresión local de un conjunto de rasgos culturales comunes ya compartidos en toda la región. La singularidad de esta cultura habría residido, no en la originalidad de tales o cuales motivos iconográficos, ya fueran de origen local o foráneo, con mayor o menor antigüedad en la región, sino en la combinación de los mismos, en su estructuración como sistema coherente de imágenes y artefactos. Desde este punto de vista, para poder explicar las particularidades de esta expresión local, no alcanza tampoco con la aplicación del modelo de las esferas de interacción, sino que se debería recurrir a una teoría que tome en cuenta las causas internas de este fenómeno.

[104] Stein 2010: 28, 35–37.

[105] Es menester señalar que desde el punto de vista de este trabajo, la posible existencia de este sustrato no se debió a la existencia previa de una especie de patria original, sino que sería el resultado de la interacción cultural, y por tanto, que se trataría de una unidad en continua construcción, según la dinámica y la variedad de las propias interacciones.

[106] Garfinkel 1994.

[107] Shalem 2008.

[108] Bar-Yosef y Belfer-Cohen 1989.

Conclusión

A la existencia de vínculos con el Noreste africano y Anatolia oriental, que pueden explicar en parte la presencia de semejanzas en el repertorio iconográfico de la cultura Ghassuliense, se suma que todas estas regiones, incluyendo el Próximo Oriente en general, ya formaban parte de una serie de interacciones observables, por lo menos, desde el Neolítico Acerámico, lo que entonces podría explicar la existencia de ciertas semejanzas en regiones distantes como Irán y la Mesopotamia meridional.

La existencia de estos vínculos interregionales, de todas maneras, no alcanza para explicar la originalidad de esta cultura, resultado de una combinación singular de motivos iconográficos, que fue lo que la constituyó en un todo coherente, como parece reflejar el repertorio artefactual e iconográfico de la misma. Esto se pone de relieve con la propia desaparición de la cultura Ghassuliense, porque si bien existieron ciertas continuidades con el período inmediatamente posterior[109], el sistema simbólico de la misma desapareció como tal. El colapso, cuyas razones pudieron ser múltiples, y puede ser que haya sido gradual, es un síntoma inequívoco de que el mismo había perdido capacidad de significación para sus poseedores.

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[109] Como parecen demostrarlo ciertas tradiciones arquitectónicas, cerámicas, la industria lítica y del basalto, la metalurgia del cobre puro y algunas pocas prácticas mortuorias, ver Braun 2011.

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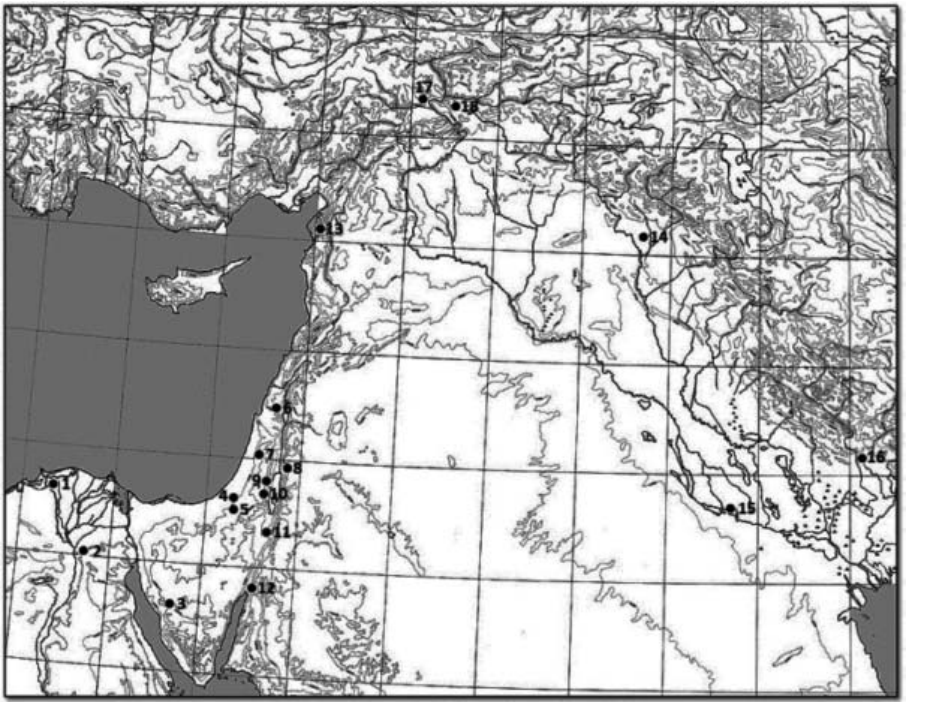


Figura 1.

Mapa con la localización de los principales sitios nombrados en el texto. Cortesía de I. Milevski y del Israel Antiquities Authority. 1. Tell el Fara'in. 2. Ma'adi. 3. Serabit el-Khadim. 4. Gilat. 5. Shiqmim. 6. Peqi'in. 7. Nahal Qanah. 8. Teleilat Ghassul. 9. Ein Gedi. 10. Nahal Mishmar. 11. Feinan. 12. Tall al Magass y Tall Hujayrat al-Ghuzlan. 13. Valle de Amuq. 14. Tepe Gawra. 15. Uruk. 16. Susa. 17. Değirmentepe. 18. Ergani Maden.

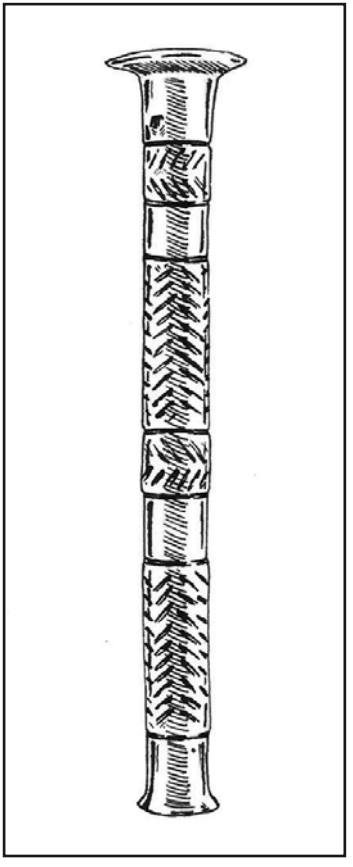


Figura 2.
Nahal Mishmar: "estandarte" nº 41.
Adaptado de Bar-Adon 1980: 61.

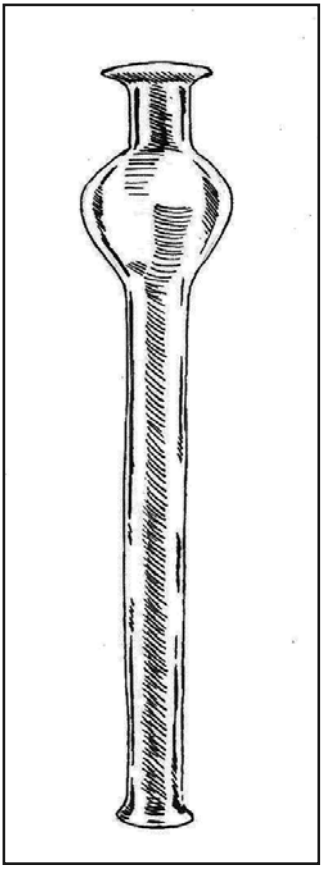


Figura 3.
Nahal Mishmar: "estandarte" nº 50.
Adaptado de Bar-Adon 1980: 65.

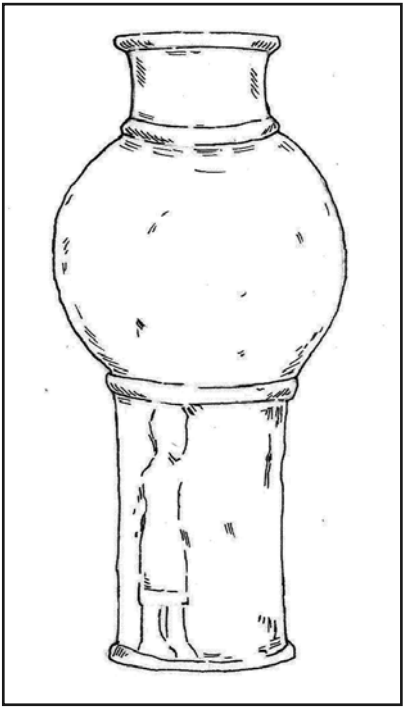
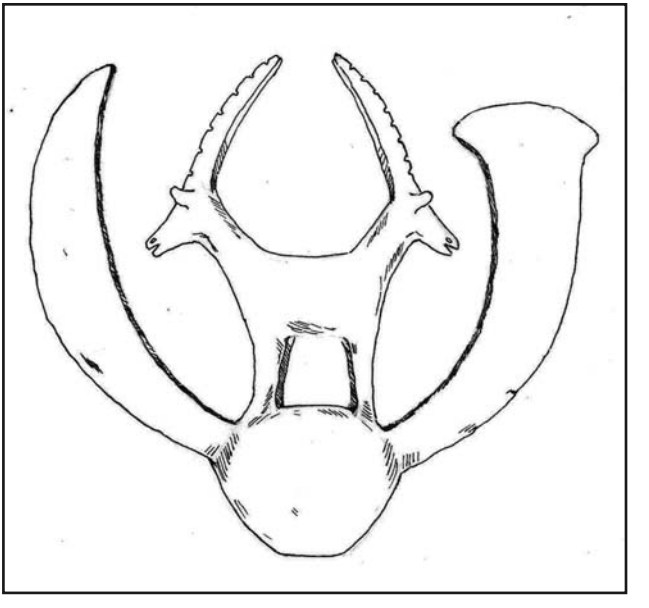


Figura 4.
Susa: "estandarte".
Adaptado de Beck 1989: Fig. 4.b.

Figura 5.
Nahal Mishmar: "estandarte" nº 153.
Adaptado de Bar-Adon 1980: 100.



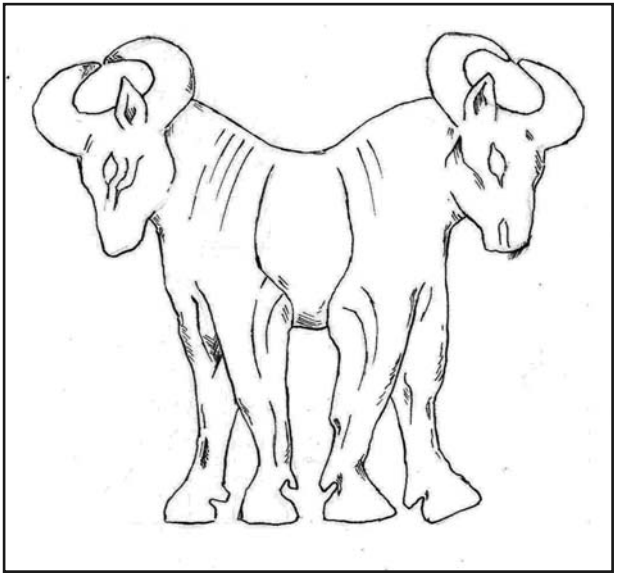


Figura 6.
Abidos: Paleta del Cazador.
Adaptado de Beck 1989: Fig. 7.e.

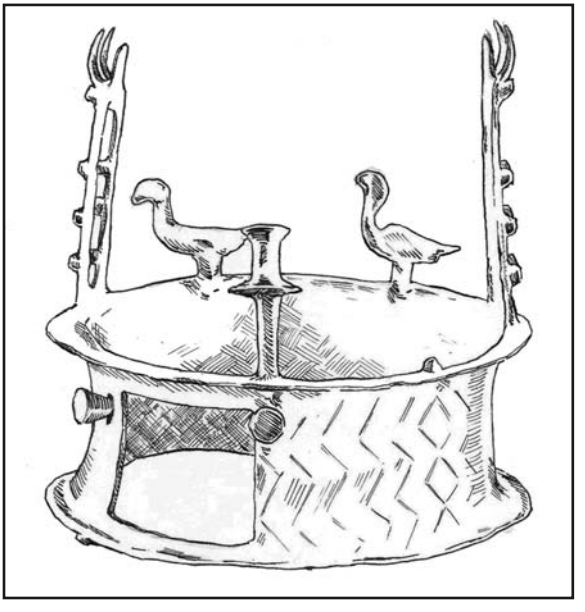


Figura 7.
Nahal Mishmar: "corona" nº 7.
Adaptado de Bar-Adon 1980: 28.

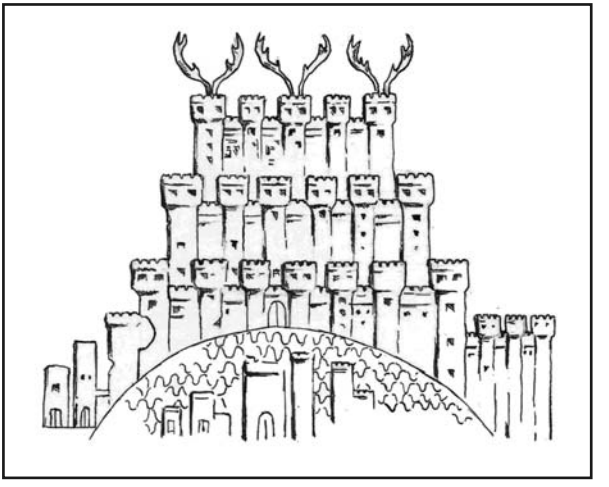
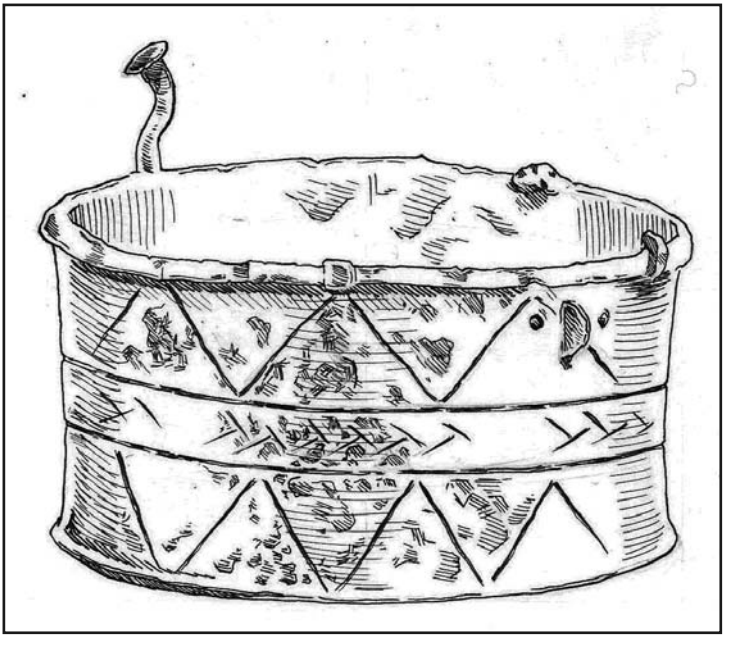


Figura 8.
Khorsabad; sitio de Kishesim.
Adaptado de Ziffer 2007: Fig. 6.

Figura 9.
Nahal Mishmar: "corona" nº 9.
Adaptado de Bar-adon 1980: 31



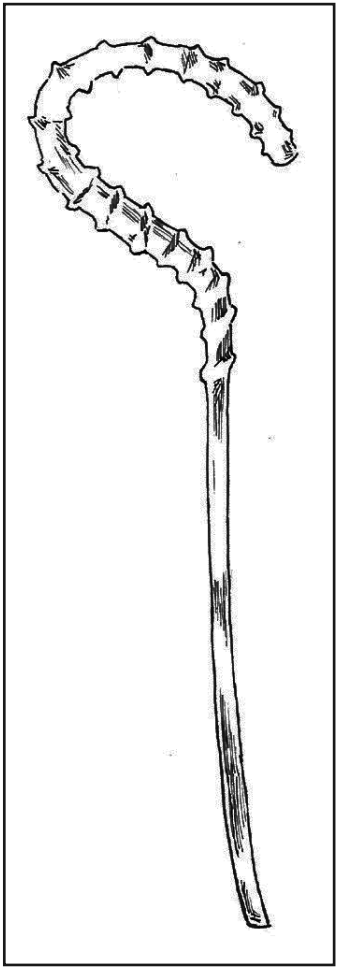


Figura 10.
Nahl Mishmar: "cetro" nº 125.
Adaptado de Bar-Adon 1980: 91.

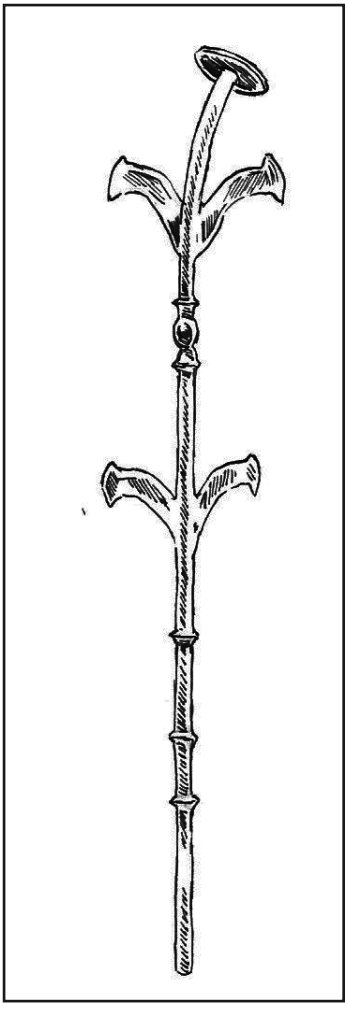


Figura 11.
Nahal Mishmar: "cetro" nº 126.
Adaptado de Bar-Adon 1980: 91.

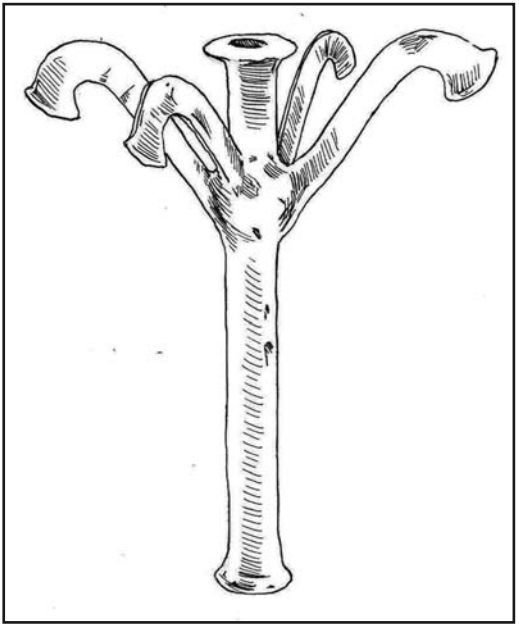


Figura 12.
Nahal Mishmar: “estandarte” nº 22.
Adaptado de Bar-Adon 1980: 51.

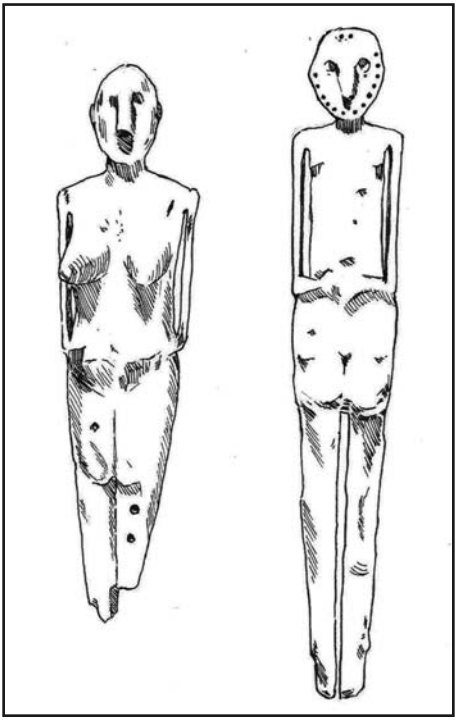


Figura 13.
Bir es-Safadi: figurinas de marfil.
Adaptado de Mazar 1992: Fig. 3.14.

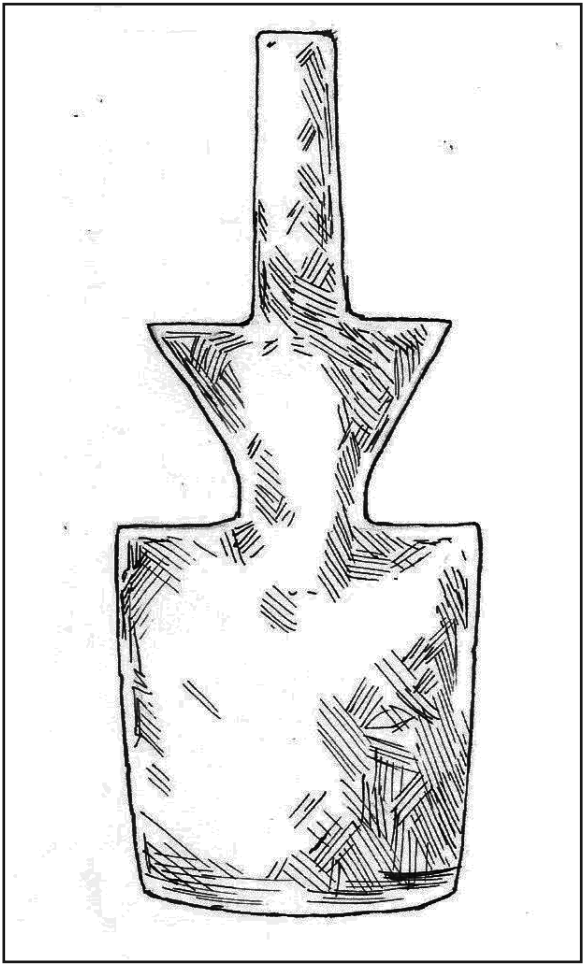


Figura 14.
Gilat: estatuilla de piedra con forma de violín.
Adaptado de Levy 1995: Pl. 4.

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FROM OBADIAH AND PSALM 137 FOR AN EDOMITE TREATY BETRAYAL OF JUDAH IN THE SIXTH CENTURY B.C.E.*

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Summary: Biblical Evidence from Obadiah and Psalm 137 for an Edomite Treaty Betrayal of Judah in the Sixth Century B.C.E.

Focusing on Obadiah and Psalm 137, this article provides biblical evidence for an Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah during the Babylonian crisis ca. 588–586 B.C.E. After setting a context that includes the use of treaties in the ancient Near East to establish expectations for political relationships and the likelihood that Edom could operate as a political entity in the Judahite Negev during the Babylonian assault, this article demonstrates that Obadiah's poetics include a density of inverted form and content (a reversal motif) pointing to treaty betrayal. Obadiah's modifications of Jeremiah 49, a text with close thematic and terminological parallels, evidence an Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah. Moreover, the study shows that Obadiah is replete with treaty allusions. A study of Psalm 137 in comparison with Aramaic treaty texts from Sefire reveals that this difficult psalm also evidences a treaty betrayal by Edom and includes elements appropriate for treaty curses. The article closes with a discussion of piecemeal data from a few other biblical texts, a criticism of the view that Edom was innocent during the Babylonian crisis, and a suggestion that this treaty betrayal may have contributed to the production of some anti-Edom biblical material.

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Keywords: Edom – Judah – Babylon – treaty – Obadiah – Psalm 137

Resumen: Evidencias bíblicas de Abdías y el Salmo 137 para un rompimiento de tratado edomita a Judá en el siglo VI a.C.
Centrándose en Abdías y el Salmo 137, este artículo proporciona evidencia bíblica de un rompimiento de tratado edomita a Judá durante la crisis babilónica de ca. 588–586 a.C. Después de establecer un contexto que incluye el uso de los tratados en el antiguo Cercano Oriente, para establecer las expectativas para las relaciones políticas, y la probabilidad de que Edom puedo operar como una entidad política en el Negev judaíta durante el ataque babilónico, este artículo demuestra que la poética de Abdías incluye una concentración de forma y contenido invertido (un motivo de reversión) que apunta a un rompimiento de tratados. Las modificaciones de Abdías a Jeremías 49, un texto con paralelismos temáticos y terminológicos cercanos, evidencia un rompimiento de tratado edomita a Judá. Por otra parte, el estudio muestra que Abdías está repleto de alusiones a tratados. Un estudio del Salmo 137, en comparación con los textos de tratados arameos de Sefire, revela que este Salmo complejo también evidencia un rom pimiento de tratado por parte de Edom e incluye elementos apropiados para las maldiciones de los tratados. El artículo concluye con una discusión de los datos parciales de algunos otros textos bíblicos, una crítica de la opinión de que Edom era inocente durante la crisis babilónica, y la sugerencia de que este rompimiento de tratado puede haber contribuido a la producción de un material bíblico anti-edomita.

Palabras Clave: Edom – Judá – Babilonia – tratado – Abdías – Salmo 137

This article argues that Obadiah and Psalm 137 evidence an Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah during the Babylonian assault on Judah ca. 588–586 B.C.E. Archaeological and epigraphic evidence for Edomite involvement in the fall of Judah is limited, yet the evidence we do have may be read as congruent with Edomite hostility at the time.[1] The focus here is on biblical evidence, and some summary statements on the historical context of the

[1] Epigraphic evidence has been found for Edomite hostility during the last days of the kingdom of Judah, notably ostraca from Arad, a Judahite fortress in the Beersheba Valley. Arad 24 is suggestive of such an Edomite threat:
This is an order from the king—a life-and-death matter for you. I send (this message) to warn you now: The(se) men (must be) with Elisha lest (the) Edom (ites) (should) enter there.
For this translation, see Pardee 2003: 85. Citing Arad 24, Obadiah, and Psalm 137, Herzog *et al.* (1984: 29) suggest that "it is most likely that Arad Stratum VI was destroyed by the Edomite invasion of the Negev at the time of the Babylonian conquest of Judah…". For my attempt to coordinate epigraphic data with Edomite hostility and to reconstruct specifics of an Edomite campaign into southern Judah, see Dykehouse 2008: 135–208.

Negev, where both Judah and Edom exerted some influence in the early sixth century B.C.E., is necessary given the state of affairs in the study of Edom. First, it appears that during the seventh century Edom and Judah (along with caravaneers and local pastoralists and agriculturalists) were in a mutually-beneficial economic cooperative of trade-route facilitation under Assyrian supervision.[2] It is questionable that Edom had been aggressively encroaching upon the Judahite Negev.[3] Judahite fortifications along the Beersheba Valley might help deter an invasion, but their more regular function may have been to protect, administer, and benefit from international trade route commerce.[4] In this view, whatever Edomite forces were in the Negev prior to the Babylonian assault on Judah were likely ones escorting trade caravans and protecting other local interests.

Second, the geopolitical problem of an Edomite-Judahite border during the Babylonian crisis boils down to a question of Edomite and Judahite geopolitical "domain" (control) and "range" (direct influence) in the Negev.[5] Where did the southern Judahite domain terminate? What was Edom's effective, political range? Was Edom in a geopolitical position to assist Babylon in Judah's destruction? To what extent do "Edomite" artifactual remains found in the Negev and Beersheba Valley evidence an Edomite presence? In the context of a cultural milieu of various tribal subgroups and international trade in and around the Beersheba Valley, it has been argued that the Edomite wares would have functioned at least as status symbols to communicate (and socially protect) the ethnic identity of its users—groups with an Edomite cultural orientation.[6] Given the distribution

[2] It is evident that Assyria attempted to control trade rather indirectly, leaving regional trade administration in the hands of caravaneers and local rulers, with whom Assyria made agreements and received tribute; see, e.g., Eph'al 1982: 93–94; Tebes 2006: 45–62. On the development of Edom's economy and its prosperity due to the *pax Assyriaca*, see also Oded 1970: 177–186; Liverani 1979: 297–317; Bienkowski 1992: 1–12, esp. 4; Knauf 1992: 47–54.

[3] E.g., Finkelstein 1992: 158; cf. Bartlett 1989: 141–142.

[4] Cf. Bartlett 1999: 105.

[5] Political "domain" may be defined as the territory under direct administrative and military control of a particular kingdom or people; political "range" may be defined as the limits of direct social, political, or military influence. In this sense, "range" is typically broader than domain, and a people's range may overlap regions under the administrative control or rule (domain) of another kingdom. Indirect influence could, of course, be felt outside a range. "Domain" and "range" appear to be implicit in the problem of Edomite encroachment into Judah; cf. discussion related to the extent of an Edomite presence in the Beersheba Valley in Lipschits (2005: 141–146); cf. also Dearman 1995: 119–136, esp. 131.

[6] See Thareani 2010: esp. 51–52. For another view, which more severely restricts the amount that so-called Edomite ware in the Negev reflects an "Edomite" ethnicity, see Tebes (2011a: 61–101), who concludes that cooking and serving wares of this type, however, were "explicitly used to draw an ethnic boundary" with Judah (92); note also Tebes 2006: 53–54.

of Edomite wares in contexts of international trade, it is likely that some of these groups had a history of cooperation (if not allegiance) to Edom.[7] I see little reason to doubt that at least some of these groups would self-identify as Edomite. Accordingly, *in a context of the Babylon assault threatening Judah militarily, Edom's direct trade network experience and inter-tribal administrative, logistical, and military capabilities and allegiances could have allowed Edom the opportunity to assume greater operational control of the Beersheba Valley.* It is not unreasonable that parts of the valley could have been be taken by force. Of course, any claim made on such control by Edom subsequent to the fall of Judah in 586 B.C.E. would likely require Babylonian approval, likely as part of a treaty relationship.

A general comment on treaties in the ancient Near East is necessary. For the purposes of this study, a treaty may be defined as "an agreement enacted between the leadership of two or more states in which one or more make promises under oath to perform or refrain from certain actions stipulated in advance."[8] The number of allusions to treaties in historical and literary texts from a great number of places in the ancient Near East suggests that treaties were used in forming international relationships throughout much of the region's history.[9] The distribution of allusions to treaties suggests that states large and small would have engaged in treaty-making.[10] Syro-Palestinian states would be no exception, but we do not know if the conference of envoys of Judah, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon under Zedekiah of Judah ca. 593 B.C.E. (Jer 27:1–15), which may have aimed at forming an anti-Babylonian coalition, resulted in an agreed-upon course of action against Babylonian rule.[11] Was Edom among those revolting from Babylon?

[7] Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001: 21–47, esp. 40–41.

[8] Mendenhall and Heiron 1992: 1179. Covenants manifest the perceived extension of blood ties, forming a basis for concomitant social obligations to ensure mutual wellbeing. Specifically, kinship created a social bond and a primary source of obligation; in terms of political relations, a covenant/treaty is an artificial brotherhood, a fictitious extension of kinship that establishes a quasi-familial relationship; see Kalluveettil 1982: 204–205, following Smith 1894: 318; see also Cross 1998: esp. 11–12. Answering the question of the specific origin and date of the perceived brotherhood of Edom and Judah is outside the bounds of the current study, particularly as definitive evidence is lacking. It is, however, reasonable (if not standard practice in biblical studies) to accept that an Edomite-Judahite kinship relationship predated the sixth century and that Edom would not have wholly denied that relationship. Of course, we have no data from Edom proper to support this view.

[9] See McCarthy (1981: 8–9), which brings to the fore the connection between covenant and the formation of political relationships.

[10] Treaty types of the ancient Near East include the parity treaty, the vassal treaty, and what may be called loyalty oaths; Parpola and Watanabe (1988: XV–XXIV) have discussed no fewer than seven types of treaties.

[11] Cf. Raabe 1996: 53, referencing Malamat 1987: 287–314. Malamat's statements on Judahite and Edomite political relations present Edom as having had some "role in the final destruction of the

In his commentary on Obadiah, Marvin Sweeney has noted treaty connotations in much of Obadiah, and states that Edom and Judah were treaty partners (Jer 27:3) prior to the Babylonian assault and that Edom was eventually betrayed by Babylon.[12] This article will expand on Sweeney's work and takes the opportunity to detail more fully the biblical evidence for an Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah in the sixth-century B.C.E.[13]

INVERSION OF FORM AND OF CONTENT: A REVERSAL MOTIF

Forms of biblical parallelism, chiasmus, and wordplay in various biblical texts have been described as "inverted."[14] Biblical scholarship has also recognized a stylistic devise called the *inverted quotation*, whereby textual elements among intertextual parallels appear in reverse order. In an innovative study of this phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible, P. C. Beentjes has advanced the discussion by identifying five basic types of "inverted quotations".[15] Apart from the attention that the form of the "quotation" gives to an instance of inversion or reversal it is difficult to know how this stylistic device functions (what it "means").[16] Setting aside semantic differences between "inversion" and "reversal", what Beentjes has demonstrated is that several types of reversals are perceivable among parallel quotations: *reversals* of content (e.g., negative theme or message ||

Judean kingdom" after having been in an alliance with Judah in the anti-Babylonian coalition that eventually "came to nothing" despite the revolts carried out by Judah, Ammon, and Tyre (297, 307 n. 40).

[12] See Sweeney 2000: 279–300, esp. 281–282, 285, 293–295.

[13] Three criteria determine the biblical texts serving as bases for discussion. First, the texts must pertain to supposed sixth-century Edomite activity. Similarly, the texts must be datable to that period. Third, the texts must provide a relatively sustained discourse about supposed Edomite activities during the Babylonian crisis. Obadiah's pertinence to supposed Edomite activity during the sixth century is the general consensus. The book meets the criteria. Psalm 137 meets the second criterion, while the other criteria are met through a section devoted to the psalm, below.

[14] See Watson 1984: esp. 127, 135, 246, 356–359. Clear enough is that inversion is a secondary technique and that modification is implicit in inversion; see also Watson 1994: esp. 95.

[15] Beentjes 1996: 31–50, esp. 48; the five types are 1) inverted quotations of an *exact reflection* of another text (e.g., Gen 27:29 || Num 24:9); 2) inverted quotations of a reflection similar to that described above, yet with a *transformed content* (either positive to negative or the reverse; e.g., Hag 1:10 || Zech 8:12); 3) inverted quotations where a number of words from sentence "a" in a multi-sentence parallel changes places with a number of words from sentence "b" (e.g., Rom 10:20–21 || LXX Isaiah 65:1–2); 4) "selective" inverted quotations where a number of words appear in a parallel with a similar theme, yet in different sequence (e.g., Psa 83:14–16 || Isa 17:13–14); and 5) inverted quotations of small changes of merely a few words (e.g., Sir 48:1b || Mal 3:19). Of course, some examples of "quotations" in types three through five might more easily be attributed to established (oral) traditions, which would have less stability as literary traditions. See also Beentjes 1982: 506–523.

[16] Watson 1984: 359 referencing Beentjes 1982: 506–523 and De Roche 1981: 400–409.

positive theme or message; cf., e.g., reversal of fortune); *reversals* of word or phrase order; and, indeed, *reversals* of consonants. Hebrew poets evidently made use of a technique by which an expected or traditional order of textual elements is *reversed*.

Important for the discussion of Obadiah to follow, is Beentjes' fourth type of inverted quotation, the "(selective) inverted quotation." Beentjes discusses a density of inversions in Psa 83:14–16 and Isa 17:13–14. The first four roots of Psalm 83 that Beentjes discusses appear *in exactly reversed order* in the Isaian parallel; a fifth root remains in identical order; and a final parallel term (√ בהל||בלהה), while in identical order in Isaiah, *manifests a transposition (or reversal) of two radicals* (הל || לה). Thus, this last word ("terror"; √ בהל [Psa 83:16] || בלהה [Isa 17:14]) reflects an *internal transposition (inversion) within a context of a larger inverted quotation*.[17] But how do we make sense of this inversion?

A comment might help. Psalm 83 is a petition that God might defend God's people from an alliance of nations that are plotting destruction (vv. 1–6 [Eng. 1–5]). Nations head toward Israel and jeopardize its pastureland (vv. 3 [2], 13 [12]). Notably, the internal transposition in Isa 17:14 *introduces the results* of those activities of God predicted by Isaiah and for which the psalmist petitioned.[18]

At evening time, lo, *terror*!	לעת ערב והנה בלהה
Before morning, they are no more.	בטרם בקר איננו
This is the fate of those who despoil us,	זה חלק שׁוסינו
and the lot of those who plunder us.	וגורל לבזזינו

After a series of terms in reverse order, "terror" appears with *transposed consonants immediately preceding the enemies' reversal of fortune*. Enemies were once victorious (v. 12), yet they vanish in a moment (v. 14). In a context dense with inversion, wordplay with a verbal form of √ בהל in the noun בלהה introduces and reinforces a thematic reversal. *Inversion of form introduces a role reversal*.

This example of the inversion technique indicates that biblical poets had within their artistry a literary device whereby a density of inversions (form)

[17] For discussion see Beentjes 1982: 33–35, 48. Beentjes does not pursue the significance of this density of inversion apart from the extra attention it draws.
[18] Emphasis mine. The translation is that of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

occasionally functions to point to or reinforce an inverted condition (content). For convenience, this special inversion of *both* form and content may be called the "reversal motif". Intertextually, the reversal motif may be found in some occurrences of "inverted quotations" (e.g., Psa 83:14–16 || Isa 17:13–14). Intratextually, the reversal motif can be seen in a particular manifestation of the inversion technique in contexts of reversal of fortune.[19] *Either intertextually or intratextually, the reversal motif is characterized by a certain density of the inversion technique (form) appearing within a context marked by an inverted state of being, condition, or fortune (content).*

EXAMPLES OF INTRATEXTUAL AND INTERTEXTUAL INVERSION IN OBADIAH

Examples of intratextual and intertextual inversion in Obadiah will begin to evidence the book's reversal motif. Obadiah 15b contains a thematic reversal of fortune.[20]

As you have done, it shall be done to you;	כאשר עשׂית יעשׂה לך
your deeds shall return on your own head.	גמלך ישׁוב בראשׁך

In the context of the Edomite hostilities identified in Obad 11–14 (see below), verse 15b predicts a reversal of fortune for Edom, which shall be victimized in the manner of its victim. Obadiah prophesies that Edom will experience an inverted state of being (content), a component of the reversal motif.

Comparing Obadiah with its close parallel in Jeremiah 49 evidences intertextual inversion in several ways. These inverted quotations reveal Obadiah's inversion of *form*.[21] **Table 1** provides obvious terminological

[19] A good example is the artistry around √ בוׁש ("to be ashamed") found in the *chiasmus* of Psa 6:11 (Eng. 10), which describes once-successful enemies (cf. v. 8) who "turn away" (√ שׁוב) in confusion; chiasmus (formal inversion) and wordplay (inversion of ב and שׁ) cooperate to draw attention to the enemies' reversed state of being; see Watson 1984: 26, 245–249; note also the caution in Watson 1994: esp. 210–211, of reading the literary device into a text. The number of instances Obadiah evidences inversion should satisfy the caution.

[20] The translation is that of the NRSV. For a helpful study on intertextual thematic inversion in terms of juxtaposed identities and futures of Edom/Esau and Judah/Jacob through a comparison of Obadiah with select texts from Genesis, see Anderson 2010: 247–255.

[21] The inverted quotation is apparent if we compare the parallels that are primarily *terminological* rather than *thematic* (Jer 49:7aγ–bβ || Obad 8; Jer 49:12 || Obad 16; and Jer 49:22b || Obad 9a; cf. also Jer 49:10aα || Obad 6). This article assumes a Jeremian priority; for discussion, see Dicou 1994: 58–62; cf. Raabe 1996: 22–31.

parallels between Jeremiah 49 and Obadiah organized according to the Jeremian verse order.

Table 1
Parallels between Jeremiah 49 and Obadiah with Strong Terminological Agreement

Jeremiah 49		*Obadiah*	
לאדום	v. 7aα	לאדום	v. 1bβ
כה אמר יהוה צבאות	v. 7aβ	כה־אמר יהוה	v. 1bα
אם־בצרים באו לך לא ישׁאירו עוללות	v. 9a	אם־בצרים באו לך הלוא ישׁאירו עללות:	v. 5b
אם־גנבים בלילה השׁחיתו דים:	v. 9b	אם־גנבים באו־לך אם־שׁודדי לילה איך נדמיתה הלוא יגנבו דים	v. 5a

שמועה שמעתי מאת יהוה וציר בגוים שלוח התקבצו ובאו עליה וקומו למלחנ כי־הנה קטן נתתיך בגוים בזוי באדם: תפלצתך השיא אתך זדון לבך שכני בחגוי הסלע תפשי מרום גבעה כי־תגביה כנשר קנך משם אורידך נאם־יהוה:	vv. 14–16	שמועה שמענו מאת יהוה וציר בגוים שלח קומו ונקומה עליה למלחמה: הנה קטן נתתיך בגוים בזוי אתה מאד: זדון לבך השיאך שכני בחגוי־סלע מרום שבתו אמר בלבו מי יורדני ארץ: אם־תגביה כנשר ואם־בין כוכבים שים קנך משם אורידך נאם־יהוה:	vv. 1c–4

With a remarkably close and extended parallel with Jer 49:14–16, Obadiah 1c–4 (see below) serves as a signal identification of the inversion technique perceivable in much of Obadiah.[22] This *beginning* section parallels a portion *toward the end* of the anti-Edom oracle of Jeremiah 49. While Obadiah 5 has nearly indistinguishable literal correspondence with Jer 49:9, the order of the correspondence is *inverted* (Obad 5a || Jer 49:9*b*; *then* Obad 5b || Jer 49:9*a*). In short, each time an extended terminological parallel appears in Obadiah, it parallels an earlier portion of Jeremiah. As will be shown, some paralleled verses also have components appearing in reverse order. Thus, Obad 1–5 is as an extended inverted quotation of Jeremiah 49. Attention to inversion in Obadiah will evidence treaty betrayal as part of the rhetorical situation of this difficult text.

[22] Syntactic components of the oracles' rather formulaic introductions (Jer 49:7 and Obad 1b) happen to appear in reverse order. The priority of the object of the oracle in Jer 49:7a, however, might be due to the oracle's inclusion in a collection of oracles against the nations introduced as a whole with a messenger formula (46:1). No part of Jeremiah's oracle against Edom subsequent to verse 16 has a strong terminological parallel in Obadiah (see, however, the thematic parallel of Jer 49:22b and Obad 16).

OBADIAH 1–6 AND ITS PARALLELS IN JEREMIAH 49

The title of Obadiah. Two words constitute the title, (חזון עבדיה, "Vision of Obadiah"). We do not know who this "Obadiah" is. Some commentators prefer to understand the work as anonymous and "Obadiah" (√ עבד) as a symbolic or representative title.[23] In this view, the prophet is a "Servant of YH[WH]" (עבדיה). Symbolic or not, the label constituting the second word of the book happens to mirror typical designations of lesser parties in relationships established through ancient Near Eastern vassal treaties.[24] The *first* word might also evidence treaty terminology. The book is identified as Obadiah's "vision" (חזון; usually understood from √ חזה meaning "to see, perceive").[25] Important for the discussion is that within the "Vision of Isaiah" (חזון ישׁעיהו [Isa 1:1]), two of the four occurrences of the root are clearly in a treaty context (28:15a, 18a):[26] "an *agreement* (√ חזה) with Sheol" twice parallels "a *treaty* (ברית) with Death". Additionally, no fewer than three linguistic possibilities show how a "treaty" might be connoted by this root.[27] Accordingly, a reader attuned to the usage and connotations of √ חזה + √ עבד might consider this "Vision of Obadiah" as referencing through allusion "The Agreement of the Servant of YH[WH]."

[23] E.g., Watts 1969; Bič 1953: 11–25.
[24] Kalluveettil 1982: 74, 93–98, 120–124, 129.
[25] See Jepsen, *TDOT* 4:280–290, esp. 281, 284; see also Raabe 1996: 93–96.
[26] The two other occurrences of the root in Isaiah are also noteworthy in light of the present thesis: Isa 29:11 connects "vision" (הזות) with "sealed document" (הספר החתום), and Isa 21:1–2 connects a "vision" with the Negeb and betrayal (√ בגד).
[27] √ חזה is congruent with treaty contexts by 1) prophetic ceremonies (such as augury) known from treaty ratification rituals; 2) by a fixed-*vision* of a determined future; or 3) by metonymy (the stipulations are the *envisioned* agreements of the parties); see Kalluveettil 1982: 31–32; Weinfeld 1973: 190–99, 196 n. 87. It is possible that the Isaian parallels with ברית provided above are derived instead from an entirely different root, perhaps that evidenced by S. Arabian *ḥdyt* ("agreement"; √ *ḥ-d-ʾ*); for this possibility, see Kalluveettil 1982: 31–32. Alternatively, Waston (1994: 213, with bibliography) has advocated repointing the word in 28:15 to *ḥāzē* ("breast"), which would result in a phrase "we will press the breast," which corresponds to the Akkadian *ṣibit tulê* ("touching the breast") an idiom for "making a pact" and describing a treaty ratification gesture.

Obadiah 1 and Jeremiah 49:14. Subsequent to the messenger formula, Obadiah references international politics. **Table 2** presents these verses divided by cola.[28]

Table 2
Obadiah 1 and Its Jeremian Parallel

Jeremiah 49:14		*Obadiah 1*	
שׁמועה שׁמעתי מאת יהוה	v. 14aα	חזון עבדיה	v. 1a
וציר בגוים שׁלוח	v. 14aβ	כה־אמר יהוה לאדום	v. 1b
התקבצו ובאו עליה	v. 14bα	שׁמועה שׁמענו מאת יהוה וציר בגוים שׁלח	v. 1c
וקומו למלחמה	v. 14bβ	קומו ונקומה עליה למלחמה	v. 1c

Jeremiah 49:14aα references some report ("I have heard a report"; שׁמועה שׁמעתי). Obadiah 1cα updates Jeremiah with a first person plural verb ("*We* have heard a report"; שׁמועה שׁמענו). With one difference, the parallel continues: "from YHWH that[29] an envoy unto the nations had been sent." Obadiah's use of "envoy" (ציר) implies international diplomacy.[30] Incidentally, the vowel pointing of Obadiah in the MT also modifies the temporally ambiguous *qal* passive participle (שָׁלוּחַ) in Jeremiah with a Pual perfect (שֻׁלַּח), suggesting that the mission is fully underway. The mention of a report and of an envoy suggest a royal court context for Obad 1b–c, but whether that envoy is human or celestial (i.e., from the divine court) depends in part on how one understands the sender.[31] If the envoy is human

[28] Discussion is facilitated by an analysis of cola as demarcated in the Masoretic text (MT) by heavy disjunctive accents. Detailed presentations of the cola of Obadiah are provided by Renkema (2003: 45–89) and Dick (2005: 1–32).
[29] Reading an explicative *waw*; cf. Rudolph 1971: 302.
[30] See Isa 18:2; 57:9; Jer 49:14; Obad 1; cf. Prov 13:17; 25:13. Isaiah 57:9 demonstrates connotations of "international" diplomacy, albeit to the netherworld (Sheol). As above, Isa 28:15 (cf. v. 18) references a "treaty with Death and an agreement with Sheol" (ברית את־מות ועם־שׁאול עשׂינו חזה). As these verses suggest, ציר is at home in treaty contexts. Isaiah 28:18–19 also mentions "a report" (cf. Obad 1ca) associated with a rejected treaty (cf. Obad 7a with discussion, below).
[31] Rudolph (1971: 302) suggests an angelic envoy, a view that continues to be influential; cf. Raabe 1996: 114: Barton 2001: 135–136.

rather than angelic and if the sender is a head of state, then additional international intrigue is perceivable: some political entity has completed a diplomatic mission among the nations.[32] The text, however, provides too little information to determine both who the "we" of verse 1cα represents and whether anything that follows שמועה שמענו is necessarily part of the report. Either on account of the report or because of some other situation, there is a command to "Rise up! And let us arise against it for battle!" (קומו ונקומה עליה למלחמה). Edom (v. 1b) is typically understood as the referent of the feminine singular prepositional phrase (עליה) connected with √ קום.[33] This root in the imperative occurs seventeen times in military contexts in the HB, including summons to war contexts,[34] yet Obadiah's *double* use of the root is peculiar, perhaps signaling preparations for an imminent and unexpected conflict.[35] Verse 1 is difficult, yet it is rather clear that a theme of divulgence begins the prophecy proper: an envoy makes an international circuit as more persons become privy to some report coupled with a muster for battle. The situation somehow pertains to Edom (לאדום [v. 1b]; perhaps also עליה [v. 1cβ]). What is Edom's role in these affairs?

Obadiah 2 and Jeremiah 49:15. This parallel, demarcated by cola in **Table 3**, evidences the inversion technique and suggests a change of fortune for Edom.

[32] See, e.g., Allen 1976: 144–145; Wolff 1986: 46–47; cf. also Raabe 1996: 117, 157–160.

[33] The sole feminine singular noun in Obad 1 is שמעה ("report"; cf. LXX). The masculine singular referent (i.e., אדום ["Edom"]), however, is sound for no fewer than three reasons: a feminine singular head noun such as "land of…" (ארץ־) might have dropped from אדום; toponyms are usually understood as feminine despite a masculine form (GKC §122h); and, intertextually, Obadiah retained the identical proposition and suffix of the Jeremiah parallel (49:14), the feminine singular referent of which is possibly in the preceding verse ("Bozrah" [בצרה]; cf. Renkema 2003: 121. For "land of Edom," see, e.g., Gen 36:16, 17, 21, 31; Num 20:23; 21:4; 33:37; Judg 11:18; 1 Kgs 9:26; Isa 34:6; 1 Chr 1:43; 2 Chr 8:17. For discussion of the possibilities, see Raabe 1996: 118–119. Also possible is that a diplomatic mission calls to arms Edomite forces against Jerusalem (f. sing.; cf. discussion on Psa 137, below); the emphatic "Rise up! And let us arise against [Jerusalem/Judah]!" fits a context of an envoy calling for Edomite forces to arise against and surprise an erstwhile treaty partner.

[34] Josh 8:1; Judg 4:14; 5:12; 7:9, 15; 9:32; 18:9; 1 Sam 23:4; Isa 21:5; Jer 6:4, 5; 49:14, 28, 31; Obad 1 (2x); Mic 4:13.

[35] The use of two volitives from קום in one verse is found only here; the root is commonly used as the first imperative (followed by a verb of motion) in calls to war (cf. Deut 2:24; Josh 8:1; Judg 7:9; 18:9; 1 Sam 23:4; Jer 6:5; 49:28, 31). Jeremiah reverses the tendency (וקומו follows התקבצו ובאו); Obadiah's peculiar repetition deviates from tradition and might signal Jeremiah's peculiar use of √ קום. Raabe (1996: 117) suggests that a surprise attack might be indicated.

Table 3
Obadiah 2 and Its Jeremian Parallel

Jeremiah 49:15		*Obadiah 2*	
כי־הנה קטן נתתיך בגוים	v. 15a	הנה קטן נתתיך בגוים	v. 2a
בזוי באדם	v. 15b	בזוי אתה מאד	v. 2b

The parallels assert that Edom is to be insignificant among the nations (קטן נתתיך בגוים). Obadiah modifies Jeremiah, however, by proclaiming that Edom (here אתה) shall be "despised utterly" (בזוי . . . מאד), which modifies Jeremiah's "humankind" (אדם) with the inverted position of the ם, which appears last in Jeremiah's באדם, yet occurs first in Obadiah's מאד. This inverted position also reinforces a change in status suggested by the content of the parallel—Edom will be made *exceedingly* despicable (√ בזה + מאד is found nowhere else in the MT). Is the change an intensification of Jeremiah's "despised among humanity" (בזוי באדם), which itself communicates that Edom is the *most* despised in the world?[36] Given the context of hubris (e.g., Obad 3) and the deception attributed to Edom (see below), מאד is a significant modification: *exceptional* (מאד) despicability has now befallen Edom, and YHWH will become involved in tearing Edom down (see discussion on v. 4c, below). What has Edom done to deserve this intensified status?

Obadiah 3–4 and Jeremiah 49:16. This parallel with much literal correspondence describes Edom's hubris.[37]

[36] On the superlative, cf. GKC §132c.
[37] Cf. Jer 21:13 and 49:4–5. Ancient Near Eastern oracles commonly accuse enemies of hubris; see Barton 1990: 51–64.

Table 4

Obadiah 3–4 and Its Jeremian Parallel

Obadiah 3–4		*Jeremiah 49:16*
v. 3aα זדון לבך השׁיאך		v. 16aα תפלצתך השׁיא אתך זדון לבך
v. 3aβ שׁכני בחגוי־סלע מרום שׁבתו		v. 16aβ שׁכני בחגוי הסלע מרום שׁבתו
…		v. 16aγ תפשׂי מרום גבעה
v. 3bα אמר בלבו		…
v. 3bβ מי יורדני ארץ		…
v. 4a אם־תגביה כנשׁר		v. 16bα כי־תגביה כנשׁר קנך
v. 4b ואם־בין כוכבים שׂים קנך		…
v. 4c משׁם אורידך נאם־יהוה		v. 16bβ משׁם אורידך נאם־יהוה

At least four of Obadiah's modifications are important for the thesis. First, in v. 3b, Obadiah adds to Jeremiah by presenting Edom as "one who says in his heart, 'who shall bring me down to earth?'" (אמר בלבו מי יורדני ארץ). The question presupposes that Edom thought its political affairs to be in good order. A second modification suggests one reason for Edom's confidence: a secret element was part of its national security. Although Jer 49:16aα parallels Obad 3aα with the phrase זדון לבך ("the pride of your heart"), Obadiah elaborates with the addition of אמר בלבו ("*the one who says* in his heart"). The elaboration is important for the thesis. Although אמר technically means to vocalize, the phrase is an example of a common idiom (אמר + לב) for internal discourse meaning "thinking, believing, intending" (see, e.g., Psa 14:1; 27:8; 53:1; Isa 49:21; Ezek 28:2; Zech 12:5). The idiom has parallels in treaty texts. A similar idiom (√ יסק + לבב) occurs twice in the treaty text of Sefire III:14–17, which warns that secret plots show an unfaithfulness to the gods of a treaty, violate the treaty relationship, and make one deserving of death[38] (cf. Obad 4c, with discussion on v. 2b,

[38] Cf. also Sefire II B:5; for these texts and discussions, see Fitzmyer 1995: 122–3, 138–9, 154.

above). In both Jeremiah and Obadiah, Edom's hubristic statements reference the defensive qualities of Edom's physical geography (Obad 3aβ || Jer 49:16aβ), but unlike the Jeremian parallel, Obadiah adds an internal (and perhaps secretive) discourse to Edom's national security.

Obadiah's development of a theme of secrecy is further seen in comparing the beginning of the verse (זדון לבך השׂיאך; "deceived you, has the pride of your heart." [v. 3aα]) with its Jeremian parallel (השׂיא אתך זדון לבך; "…the pride of your heart has deceived you." [Jer 49:16aα]). Obadiah's inverted subject/verb order of זדון לבך and √ II. נשׂא ("beguile, deceive") evidences the inversion technique and draws attention to verb. The second occurrence of √ II. נשׂא in Obadiah is in an explicit treaty deception context (השׂיאוך, בריתך[v. 7a–7b]). Obadiah's modification to invert "deception" (Obad 3aα), both accentuates the interiority and secrecy of Edom's words and foreshadows a context of explicit treaty betrayal. Is a secret treaty part of Edom's national security plan? If so, with whom did Edom form a treaty?

The answer may be found in a fourth modification. Obadiah 4b adds a national-security location from which Edom could be torn down (v. 4c), namely, one among the stars: ואם־בין כוכבים שׂים קנך ("Even if among the stars your nest is established…").[39] An astronomical hubris might be at play, but the phrase might also allude to a mundane ally. Babylonian iconography is replete with astral imagery, and worship of the stars in ancient Israel was particularly strong in times of Mesopotamian political influence.[40] The thematic and terminological parallels with Isaiah 14:13—part of an oracle concerning Babylon's fall—are noteworthy in this regard.

You had said in your heart, "I shall ascend the heavens. I shall lift up my throne above the stars of El, and I shall sit on the Mount of Assembly at the far-reaches of Zaphon."	ואתה אמרת בלבבך השׁמים אעלה ממעל לכוכבי־אל ארים כסאי ואשׁב בהר־מועד בירכתי צפון

With the idiom אמר + לב, Babylon's hubristic statement about its elevation includes a secretive quality (cf. Obad v. 3bα, above). Babylon seeks to lift

[39] See Barr 1991: 150–61; whether קן literally means "abode" and is used metaphorically for a nest, or means "nest" and is used metaphorically for Edom's abode might not alter the sense.

[40] For a concise discussion, see Lelli 1999: 809–15. Note also Amos 5:26; 7:43 and discussion in Paul 1991: 194–98. For a detailed presentation, see also Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 283–372.

its throne above the "stars of El" (לכוכבי־אל) only to be cast down (√ ירד [Isa 14:15; cf. Obad 4c]). Similarly, Obadiah has hypothesized that even if Edom is established in such a starry abode (כוכבים [v. 4b]) it would nevertheless be torn down. The divine abode, Zaphon (צפון; "North"), upon which Babylon seeks an administrative position is also suggested by Obad 6b (מצפניו; √ צפן; see below). No other biblical verse provides as many terminological and thematic parallels with Obad 3bα–4 as does Isa 14:13. Obadiah's modification (בין כוכבים) makes sense: Edom's secretive rhetoric of national security (v. 3b) is connected to Babylon intertextually with Isaiah and through the use of astral imagery (v. 4b).

Obadiah 5–6 and Jeremiah 49:9–10. Obadiah's propensity toward the inversion technique is seen in the final cluster of close parallels with Jeremiah 49 (**Table 5**).

Table 5
Obadiah 5–6 and Its Jeremian Parallel

Obadiah 5–6		*Jeremiah 49:9–10*
אם־גנבים בוא לך אם־שודדי לילה	v. 5aα	אם־בצרים בוא לך
איך נדמיתה	v. 5aβ	לא ישׁארו עוללות
הלוא יגנבו דים	v. 5aγ	אם־גנבים בלילה השׁחיתו דים
אם־בצרים בוא לך	v. 5bα	כי־אני חשׂפתי את־עשׂו
הלוא ישׁאירו עללות	v. 5bβ	גליתי את־מסתריו
איך נחפשׂו עשׂו	v. 6a	ונחבה לא יוכל
נבעו מצפניו	v. 6b	שׁדד זרעו ואחיו ושׁכניו
		ואיננו v. 10bβ

Inversion of verse groups, phrases, and consonants are perceivable in the parallel. Several modifications of Jeremiah support the thesis. Obadiah introduces the *first* colon of verse 5 with an element that introduces the *last*

colon of Jer 49:9 (. . . אם־גנבים; "If thieves . . ."). Obadiah modifies Jeremiah by beginning the unit with theivery, accentuating the theme of secrecy suggested by verse 3bα (אמר בלבו). A reference to the night (לילה; connoting mystery and danger) appears in the *introductory colon* of Obad 5, yet its parallel (בלילה) appears in the *last colon* of Jer 49:9. Although Obadiah's introduction to verse 5 is nearly identical to the introductory colon of Jer 49:9 (בוא לך . . . אם־; with Obadiah substituting גנבים for Jeremiah's בצרים), Obadiah has retained that introductory colon exactly and literally, yet has transposed it into the second to last colon of Obad 5 (אם־בצרים בוא לך). Additionally, the second colon of Jeremiah (v. 9ab), has been transposed with some modification to the position of last colon of Obad 5. The modification includes an accentuation of the questioning implied by the syntax of Jer 49:9a by including an interrogative (ה) connected with a negative particle (הלוא). Jeremiah includes only the negative particle (לא). The modification highlights the interrogative. Obadiah also inverts the order of defective[41] spelling in a series of two otherwise identical words: the two in Jer 9aβ read ישׁארו עוללות, whereas the two in Obad 5bβ read ישׁאירו עללות, highlighting the consonants י and ו.[42] Given the hypothesis of a Jeremian priority, Obadiah has surprised a reading audience familiar with the opening colon of Jer 49:9 in two ways. A literal parallel might be expected to begin immediately in verse 5 (אם־ . . . בוא לך || בוא לך . . . אם־ [Jer 49:9aα]), yet that literal parallel occurs later in the verse (5bα). In what is otherwise a parallel of literal agreement, Obadiah has opted to *substitute* Jeremiah's "grape-gatherers" (בצרים; √ בצר "to cut off, enclose") with a root denoting secretive thievery (√ גנב).[43] Why this substitution in a context of so much inversion?

[41] Reading ישׁארו in Jer 49:9 with the MT as a *hip ʿil*.

[42] Nogalski (1993: 63) suggests that these orthographic changes "have little bearing upon either the meaning of the text or the intention of the redactor." For Nogalski, the (other) reversals evidenced in a comparison of Jer 49:9 and Obad 5 may be understood as Obadiah's inversion of the Jeremian order "so that the themes of destruction and remnant appear in the same order as Amos 9:8–10)" (p. 66). Such might be the case (see also Nogalski's explanation of the added interrogative הלוא), but given the frequency of inversion in Obadiah it is not clear that the reversed order of defective spellings are likely due to an "orthographical preference of the redactor" (p. 63) unless that preference had rhetorical significance.

[43] The nominal form may designate a habitual or professional thief; see Hamp, *TDOT* 3: esp. 41.

Through rootplay with √ בצר, it is possible that Obadiah's substitution for thievery produces a pun on the Edomite royal city of Bozrah (בצרה). The inverted order of defectively spelled words between the inverted occurrences of בצרים and גנבים in the Jer 49:9 and Obad 5 parallel has highlighted *defective* spelling and the consonants ו and י (see above). Obadiah's negative particle (הלוא) is spelled fully, unlike Jeremiah's. Obadiah's full spelling also directs our attention to the added interrogative (ה). In a context heavy with inversion that draws attention to spelling, Obadiah's extra ה provides some textual support for a complex rootplay in Obad 5: "grape-gatherers" or more literally "those who shall cut off/enclose" (√ בצר) may be understood as a reference to Bozrah (בצרה = בצר + ה).

The surprise[44] interjection of Obad 5aβ (איך נדמיתה; NRSV "how you have been destroyed!") between the reversed occurrences of בצרים and גנבים is informative. Obadiah 5 is typically understood as suggesting that plundering and destruction are closer and more damaging than Edom might suppose. The occurrence of נדמיתה, however, provides a challenging ambiguity.[45] Should we read the phrase as "How you are similar!" (√ I. דמה), "How you are destroyed/cut off!" (√ II. דמה), or both? Is allusion being made to the root דמם (i.e., "How you are silenced!"; cf., דומה in Isa 21:11; Psa 94:17; 115:177). Reading with √ I. דמה, we see that the complex rootplay likening Edom's principle city with thievery is reinforced: Obadiah exclaims, "How you are *similar* [to a thief, to a destroyer in the night]!" The polysemous נדמיתה also suggests Edom's *destruction* and that Edom's hubristic and interior dialogue connected with Mesopotamian imagery (v. 3) will be *silenced*. Whichever position one takes, verse 5 evidences much inversion of form and a complex pun: Bozrah is likened to a devastating (√ שׁדד) and secretive thief (√ גבר) of the night. Themes of secrecy and international politics (established in vv. 1–4) continue, yet in verse 5 the

[44] Given a text heavy-laden with inversion, it is doubtful that the phrase is accidentally transposed from the end of the verse (contrast BHS).
[45] The consonants are pointed as a *nip ʿal* perfect, second person singular (נִדְמֵיתָה).

sense of danger is heightened and the Edomite political capital might be implied.

Further evidence for the inversion technique and an Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah may be gleaned from Obad 6 in comparison with Jer 49:10aα–β (see Table 5, above). Jeremiah 49:10 declares that YHWH has "stripped Esau, uncovered his enclosures" (שפתי את־עשו גליתי את־מסתריו). The noun מִסְתָּר ("hidden/enclosed place") has the explicit sense of a physical location.[46] In Obadiah, however, Esau is not "stripped" (√ חשׂף), he is "searched out, uncovered" (√ חפשׂ),[47] evidencing an intertextual inversion on the miniscule level through the reversed order of two consonants (שׂף > פשׂ). The *nip ʿal* stem of חפשׂ occurs only here. Translations such as "pillaged" are common,[48] but the etymology of the root suggests not aggression but uncovering something hidden, mysterious, or requiring discernment.[49] This connotation (if not denotation) is evident in the Ugaritic etymological equivalent found in the phrase *bt ḫpṯt* ("The House of Under"),[50] which designates (part of) the netherworld through which Baal's subordinates are to pass toward Mot. Accordingly, Obadiah has modified Jeremiah in order to connote not only a physical search, but also discernment of something hidden or secretive. Translations appear to have been influenced heavily—perhaps too heavily—by the Jeremian parallel (√ חשׂף; "stripped"). Thus, rather than "How Esau is pillaged!" the phrase might better suggest, with English wordplay, "How Esau is *under*stood!"

[46] See also Ps 10:8; 17:12; 64:5; Isa 45:3; 53:3; Jer 13:17; 23:24; Lam 3:10; and Hab 3:14. Contrast סָתָר, which carries connotations both of physical concealment and of intellectual secrecy; see Wagner, *TDOT* 10:362 –372, esp. 369–371.

[47] On the root, see Mass, *TDOT* 5: 112–114.

[48] E.g., RSV/ NRSV: "ransacked"; NIV: "pillaged"; NJB: "looted"; JPS "thoroughly rifled"; contrast KJV: "searched out"; contrast also(?) Vulgate: *quomodo scrutati sunt Esau*; cf. the use of the root in 2 Chr 18:29 (*hitpa ʿel*; lit. "let myself be searched for").

[49] The context of Psa 64:7 [6] includes evil planning (מסוד מרעים; v. 3 [2]) and deep/obscure interior thoughts of heart (וקרב איש ולב עמק; v. 8 [7]); compare the discernment suggested by √ חפשׂ in Prov 20:27; cf. also Amos 9:3 (in *pi ʿel*).

[50] KTU 1.4 VIII:7; cf. 1.5 V:15; the root is used to describe things brought up from below (e.g. drawing water) or the affect of something *from below* (e.g. grain; things dug); cf. Maas, *TDOT* 5:112–14. The accentuating translation, "House of *Under*," may be supported further as the phrase occurs in parallel both with the "thriver(?) of the earth/netherworld" *ʿgśr ʾarṣ* [KTU 1.4 VIII:4]; cf. agricultural "thriving" in a possible etymological relationship between *ǵśr* and Arabic terms as suggested by Gordon [1965: 465]) and "those who go down into the earth/netherworld" *ʿyrdm ʾarṣ* [KTU 1.4 VIII:8–9]). For another view, related bibliography, and a different translation (i.e., "house of the couch") based on a comparison with Heb. בבֵית הַחָפְשִׁית [see 2 Kgs 15:5]), see Wyatt 1998: 113.

What has been discerned? What has "come up" about the brother, Esau? A secrecy theme continues.

Evidence for a secretive Edomite alliance may be observed in Obad 6b, where the prophet modifies Jeremiah's "his hidden places" (מסתריו from √ סתר) into "his hidden places/treasures" (מצפניו from √ צפן), a *hapax legomenon*. Although מצפניו is from a root meaning to hide or treasure up, the root came to be used to signify "north" (צפון), and there are a dozen or so times in the HB where "the *north*" designates a Mesopotamian power.[51] Accordingly, Obadiah has modified a Jeremian term denoting a physical location with one that both denotes *something hidden* and connotes *northernness.* The reversal of expectations (if not reversal of state of being) is surprising: Obadiah communicates that Esau/Edom, a people from the *south* (cf. תימן [v. 9]),[52] may now be understood (cf. √ חפשׂ [v. 6a]) as having cached a secret northernness. Given the sixth-century context, an Edomite relationship with Babylon is most likely what Obadiah implies.

The verb used to divulge this revelation complements this context of Edom's "hidden-northernness." Whereas Jeremiah has "uncovered" (√ גלה), Obadiah provides a *nip ʿal* perfect from בעה. Representative translations of this term in Obad 6 include "searched out" and "ransacked," which provide some distinction from Jeremiah's גליתי, yet appears (again) to be governed as much by the parallels (both נחפשׂו in Obadiah and גליתי in Jeremiah) as by semantics and etymology. The occurrence of √ בעה in Isa 21:12 suggests that the root in the *hip ʿil* connotes the "inquiry" (not "searching") of sentinels. In Isaiah 64:1 [2] the root (in *qal*)—if it is the same root—connotes the boiling effects of fire upon water. In Isa 30:13, the root (in *nip ʿal*) connotes the noticeable swelling out of a stressed and fractured wall. What, then, is bubbling up from biblical Edom? In Aramaic, the root in *pe ʿal* denotes asking, seeking, petitioning, and examining. An Ugaritic occurrence suggests "reveal," which corresponds to the Targum of Obad 6.[53] In the MT of Obad 6, the verb is in the *nip ʿal* stem. Considering the

[51] Cf. uses of the root in Is 14:31; 41:25; Jer 1:14, 15; 4: 6; 6:1, 10:22; 22; 13:20; 15:12; 25: 9, 26; 46:20, 24; 47:2; Ezek 26:7; 38: 6, 15; 39:2; cf. Zeph 2:13.

[52] For a direct connection between "South" (תימן) and Esau/Edom, see Gen 36:9–11; Jer 49:7, 20; Amos 1:12; Obad 1:9.

[53] Raabe (1996: 146–148) considers "revealed" based on the Targum of Obadiah and an Ugaritic occurrence of the root (KTU 1.3 III 28–29): *atmˀ w ank ibgˀyhˀ b tkˀ gˀryˀ spn* ("Come, and I shall

various nuances of the root, secrecy is again a theme: "[Esau's] hidden-northernness has *swelled or bulged out*." Focusing on the connotations of inquiry and petitioning, the *nip ʿal* suggests that Esau's northernness "has become divulged," (or, reciprocally, "divulged itself")—quite different from traditional "has been searched or ransacked." In sum, Obadiah 5–6 charges Edom (a land to the south of Judah) with hiding a secret northernness. It is an ironic reversal: south northerly is.

As is frequently noted, Obad 1–6 displays a literary cohesion around the theme of Edom's doom.[54] The poetic technique of inversion in these verses also provides cohesion, as inversion is evidenced at the verse, colon, phrase, and consonantal level. As stated above, a certain density of inversion of form can point to or reinforce a content-oriented *reversal of fortune* or *reversal of state of being*. Obadiah 6 alone reflects both inverted *form* (√ חשׂף || √ חפשׂ) and inverted *content* (south northerly is), which accentuates the themes of Edom's secrecy and a divulged relationship. Upon leaving Obad 1–6, one might ask to what does Obadiah's rhetorical exercise of the reversal motif point?

Obadiah 7 and the Language of Alliance

Obadiah's extended "inverted quotation" has ended.[55] With verse 7, overt references to a broken international alliance begin.

עד־הגבול שלחוך כל אנשׁי בריתך v. 7a

השׂיאוך יכלו לך אנשׁי שׁלמך v. 7b

לחמך ישׂימו מזור תחתיך v. 7cα

אין תבונה בו v. 7cβ

reveal it in the center of my divine mountain, Zaphon [√ צפן]"; cf. the translation of Wyatt 1998: 78). Coincidently, √ צפן here appears in the same context as √ בעה.

[54] For Obad 1–6 (or 1–7 or 1/2–9) as displaying a unifying theme of "Edom's doom" (or similar terminology), see, e.g., Allen 1976: 146; Stuart 1987: 414; Sweeney 2000: 289.

[55] Thematic parallels do continue (Obad 8 || Jer 49:7b; Obad 9 || Jer 49:22b; and Ob 16 || Jer 49:12). Syntax and translation problems in Obad 7 have generated much discussion, particularly in relation to לחמך and מזור (v. 7ca). In isolation, מָזוֹר is most easily read as "wound" (cf. Jer 30:13; Hos 5:13 [2x]); for discussion, see Nogalski 1998: 67–71.

Three terms likely synonymous with "treaty" are found in Obad 7a–cα: אנשׁי ברית ("men of your covenant") || אנשׁי שׁלמך ("men of your peace") || לחמך ("your bread"). While the first two phrases are readily at home in treaty discourse, the same may be said of לחמך (v. 7cα). Eating in treaty contexts suggest the kinship relations, intimacy, security, and perhaps economic incentive of the established relationship.[56] Additionally, לחמך ("your bread") in Obad 7 might reflect a specific treaty ratification meal.[57] In either case, by synecdoche the term expresses the whole of the treaty. Accordingly, with לחמך and a term referencing the intended result of mutual well-being (שׁלמך), the supposed benefits of Edom's formal treaty relationship is highlighted. In Obad 7, however, Edom's peaceful co-operators shall deceive (√ II. נשׁא) Edom and engage in hostile actions (יכלו לך). Indeed, Edom was already deceived (√ II. נשׁא) in its secret statement of geopolitical security (v. 3). Thus, Obad 7 communicates a terrible reversal of fortune: Edom's own treaty partners act to its detriment. The verse ends with a terse statement of Edom's inability to comprehend or anticipate this reversal (אין תבונה בו; 7d, see below).

Attention to the consonant ך, which occurs nine times in Obad 7a–cα, is helpful. A second person singular pronominal suffix (ך) ends each of the three synonyms for treaty in the verse. In the HB, a pronominal suffix with ברית most often designates *the initiating party*, although not necessarily the superior party, of the treaty/covenant.[58] The verse suggests that Edom *initiated* the treaty relationship. The alliteration (and rhyme)[59] of verse 7 due to the frequency of ך accordingly places a special emphasis on Edom's relations with its allies. Evidently, this treaty was Edom's choice. Given the operative historical context of the current study (see introduction), Obadiah's allusion to an erstwhile hidden collusion between Edom in the

[56] For connotations of political intimacy, see Kalluveettil 1982: esp. 11, 34–35. For bread in Obad 7 as a reference to economy, see Renkema 2003: 145–147.

[57] See, e.g., Gen 26:26–31; see also Kalluveettil 1982: 15–16, 212. An important text in this regard is Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty (6:153–56; cf. also 6.560–562); for texts and discussion, see Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 8–9, 11, 35, 52. See also the ratification ceremony in the treaty between KTK and [Matiʿilu of] Arpad in Sefire IA:40.

[58] See Raabe 1996: 150, noting exceptions of Ezek 16:61 and Zech 9:11.

[59] שׁלחוך כל . . . בריתך השׁיאוך יכלו לך . . . שׁלמך לחמך . . . תחתיך. For end-rhyme, see Watson 1994: 122, 150–151, 172.

south and a divulged (Mesopotamian) "north" (Obad 4–6) provides sufficient information to identify Babylon as the political power with which Edom chose to form a new treaty relationship.

Attention to verbal forms in verse 7 and a consideration of "the border" (הגבול; v. 7a) to which Babylon sends Edom help reveal the story of this treaty relationship between Babylon and Edom. Apart from the context of verse 7b–c, there is no reason to conclude that this *sending* (שׁלח in *pi ʿel*) is hostile. Usage of the root elsewhere demonstrates that the form reflects a *release* of a treaty partner in peace subsequent to the ratification of a new treaty.[60] The definite article (ה־) suggests that Obadiah is referencing a particular border. Obadiah's audience might have understood "*the* border" as the economically important Edomite-Judahite border. A biblical occurrence of הגבול provides textual support for this possibility; Numbers 34:3–5 describes a border virtually identical to the arc of Judahite border fortifications of the early sixth century.[61] With this textual support for a border fitting the context of Edomite-Judahite relations ca. 588–586 B.C.E., Obad 7a might reference Babylon's release of Edom (and its forces) into a strategic position at the Edomite-Judahite border soon after the treaty was formalized. Whatever the case, the treaty relationship toward ensuring mutual wellbeing (√ שׁלם) described in Obad 7a did not last. Edom may have been sent or released (שׁלחוך) to a strategic border (הגבול; Obad 7a), but a trickery comes into play. The wellbeing (שׁלמך) sought by the relationship comes to deceive (השׁיאוך) and overpowers (יכלו לך) Edom (Obad 7b). With the action of the last verb, Babylon impairs (ישׂימו מזור) Edom with the "bread" (לחמך) of their relationship. If an economic incentive for cooperating with Babylon is implied by לחמך, then Obadiah suggests that Edom's new portion in the control of international trade passing through Edom and the Edomite-Judahite border became a primary

[60] On שׁלח in *pi ʿel* see especially 1 Kgs 20:34b (twice with Ahab as speaker: ואני בברית אשׁלחך ויכרת־לו ברית וישׁלחהו). Compare also Gen 26:27–31. Translations of Obad 7a tend to suggest hostility (e.g., NRSV, NIV); cf. LXX ἐξαπέστειλάν; Vulgate *emiserunt*. הגבול appears as the Edomite border with Moab in 2 Kgs 3:20–21.

[61] Num 34:3–5 describes an arc stretching west from the southern end of the Dead Sea to Kadesh-Barnea; "the border" (הגבול) appears in v. 5; cf. also הגבול in Josh 15:1–4).

cause of Babylon's eventual assault on Edom. History evidently supports this factor.[62] Edom's fortune with Babylon has been turned on its head.

Obadiah 1–7 is a good example of how the inversion technique (re: form) can introduce reversal of fortune (re: content). The numerous instances of inverted form in Obad 1–6 and the reversal of fortune suggested by Obad 6–7 (cf. above on 15b) might leave a learned tradent, auditor or (re)reader wondering if a deeper reversal in Obadiah is at work at the point the inverted quotation ends. Why has there been so much inversion preceding the moment Obadiah begins new material? Why does Obadiah predict Edom's fall at the hands of treaty partners? The answer may be found in the density of inversion itself. According to Obad 15b, just as Edom has done, such shall be done to Edom, whose dealings will return upon its own head (כאשר עשית יעשה לך גמלך ישוב בראשך). Verse 7 communicates that a treaty partner (arguably Babylon) "deceived" (√ II. נשׁא) Edom. On the surface, the reversal of fortune in verse 7 is rather straightforward: a relationship has changed for the worse. Inversion, however, is normative in Obadiah 1–6, and the reversal of Edom's fortune anticipated by verse 7 may be much more precise: *Edom had previously deceived its own alliance partner*. As a Judahite composition, Obadiah commends the conclusion that Edom deceived Judah. This precise reversal of fortune is the meaningful result of the reversal motif in this instance. Accordingly, verse 7 announces Edom's eventual political misery (reversal of fortune) based on an application of the so-called *lex talionis* (e.g. v. 15b) pertaining to a betrayed alliance: like Judah, Edom shall suffer treaty betrayal.

OBADIAH 8–14: NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ACTIVITIES CONTRARY TO EXPECTATION

Obadiah 8–10. Kinship language and a cluster of functional synonyms for Edom (e.g., Teman) are apparent in verses 8–10. Although treaty allusions

[62] In ca. 551 B.C.E., King Nabonidus of Babylon evidently critically weakened Edom, probably as part of a campaign aimed at imperial expansion and control of the region's trade routes and the vast wealth of Arabia; see Crowell 2007: 75–88; note also Lindsey 1976: 23–39; for discussion of the motivations (which may have included control of the region's trade routes and the vast wealth of Arabia) and for and historical problems related to Nabonidus' imperial expansion and sojourn to Teima in Arabia, see Beaulieu 1989: esp. 165–166, 178–185.

are unclear,[63] Obadiah's choice of terminology in much of verses 8–10 befits a treaty betrayal context.

הלוא ביום ההוא נאם יהוה	v. 8a
והאבדתי חכמים מאדום	v. 8bα
ותבונה מהר עשׂו	v. 8bβ
וחתו גבוריך תימן	v. 9a
למען יכרת־איש מהר עשׂו מקטל	v. 9b
מחמס אחיך יעקב תכסך בושׁה	v. 10a
ונכרת לעולם	v. 10b

Wisdom and understanding (חכמים . . . ותבונה [v. 8]) link these verses with the end of verse 7 (אין תבונה בו). At the bridge between themes of wisdom and of violence, three toponyms appear: the wise will perish from Edom (v. 8bα); understanding will perish from Mount Esau (v. 8bβ); and broken will be the warriors of Teman (v. 9a). In the Jeremian parallel, Teman, "Southland," is twice directly associated with counsel and planning that cannot survive (49:7, 20a). In Obadiah, the immediately preceding context is similar, but Obadiah places Teman ("Southland") in direct connection with its terrified warriors (וחתו גבוריך תימן [v. 9a]). Given the political overtones of Obadiah 1–7 and the emerging military overtones in vv. 9–14,

[63] Kinship language does not in itself evidence a treaty relationship between Edom and Judah, but it is among the diverse terminology used to designate treaty relationships; see, e.g., 1 Kgs 20:32–33; cf. also *aṯ̱ūtum / aḫ̱ḫ̱ūtum* ("brotherhood") in ANE treaties (Kalluveettil 1982: esp. 17–19, 99, 198–210). √ כרת (v. 9) is at home in contexts of treaty formation (Gen 15:18; Exod 23:32; 24:8; 34:10, 12, 15; Deut 4:23; 5:2, 3; 7:2; 9:9; 28:69; 29:11, 13, 24; Jos 9:15; 24:25; 1 Sam 11:1; 18:3; 2 Sam 3:13; 5:3; 1 Kgs 8:21; 20:34; 2 Kgs 11:4, 17; 17:35; 23:3; 1 Chr 11:3; 2 Chr 6:11; 21:7; 23:3, 16; 34:31; Ezra 10:3; Job 40:28; Jer 31:33; 34:8; Ezek 17:13; Hos 10:4.); the root is also used to describe the consequences of treaty infraction; see G. Hasel (*TDOT* 7:339–352); cf. Kutsch (*TLOT* 2:635–637). The conceptual connection between *cutting* covenants and being *cut off* from a covenant group appears in Gen 17:14. For another double-duty use of the root, see Gen 15:10, 18. If we consider the cutting of animals in Jer 34:18, then the root serves triple-duty; cf. the triple-duty function of an interdialectical semantic equivalent of Heb. √ כרת (Aram. √ גזר; cf. also Heb. גזר) in Sefire IA:7; IA:40; and IB:40–43, whereby the root denotes, respectively, the cutting (i.e., concluding) of a treaty (cf. Gen 15:18), the ceremonial threat placed upon representatives who might violate it (cf. Gen 15:10–17; Jer 34:18), and the inability for treaty partners to cut off other treaty members' households (cf. Gen 17:14). For these texts and related discussion, see Fitzmyer 1995: 42–43, 46–47, 52–53, 69, 97, and 114–115.

what are we to make of Temanite warriors at the cusp of wisdom and violence?

Some biblical evidence has been read as suggestive of a highly developed sapiental tradition in Edom,[64] yet the evidence for a renowned Edomite wisdom is meager and a significant portion of the biblical evidence is comprised of Obad 8–9 and Jer 49:7.[65] In Obadiah, "wisdom" language appears in a context of diplomacy/foreign policy, secrecy, failed treaties, and (with vv. 11–14) an international assault. It is interesting that Isaiah 29:13–15 attributes nearly identical "wisdom" language to Judah in a similar context of international invasion and siege (see vv. 3, 7–8).

The Lord said, "It is because these people draw near with their mouths and lips honoring me—yet their hearts are far from me, and their reverence of me is a commandment of popular instruction—	ויאמר אדני כי נגש העם הזה בפיו ובשפתיו כבדוני ולבו רחק ותהי יראתם אתי מצות ממני אנשים מלמדה
that I shall again amaze this people with shocking awe! I will destroy the wisdom of their wise-ones, while the discernment of their discerners becomes hidden."	לכן הנני יוסף להפליא את־העם־הזה הפלא ופלא ואבדה חכמיו ובינת נבניו תסתתר
Woe to those who go to great depths to hide a plan from YHWH. Their workings are in darkness and they say, "Who shall see us?" and "Who shall know what we are up to?"	הוי המעמיקים מיהוה לסתר עצה והיה במחשך מעשיהם ויאמרו מי ראנו ומי יודענו

Both Isaiah 29:13 and Obad 3 reference an internal or secretive dialogue of the heart (בפיו ובשפתיו כבדוני ולבו רחק ממני [Isa 29:13b] || אמר בלבו [Obad 3bα]). Rhetorical questions of Judahites in Isa 29:15b (ויאמרו מי ראנו ומי יודענו) parallels that of Edomites in Obad 3bβ (מי יורדני ארץ). A triple verbal parallel appears in descriptions of lost wisdom (ואבדה חכמיו ובינת נבניו

[64] Cf. Bar 3:14, 22, 23 (πρόνησις [prudence]; √ σύνασις [understanding]; √ γινώσκω [to know]; σόφια [wisdom]); see also Job 1:1; 2:11.

[65] For a helpful review of the possible meanings of a wisdom tradition in Edom, relevant bibliography, and a cautious conclusion that Edom's metallurgic knowhow was an element of the tradition, see Tebes 2009: 97–117.

תסתתר [Isa 29:14b] ||והאבדתי חכמים מאדום ותבונה מהר עשו [Obad 8b; cf. v. 7cβ]). Because a context of deficient national *political strategies* (not to mention secretive planning) evidently marks both Obadiah and Isaiah 29, it is not clear that Obadiah references an exceptional wisdom tradition in Edom as is sometimes advocated. More likely is that an ironic reversal of fortune is found: Obadiah states that Edom's secretive court diplomacy seeking to guarantee its geopolitical security will ultimately fail.[66]

Obadiah 11-14. These verses constitute the single most detailed biblical description of supposed Edomite hostility against Judah ca. 586 B.C.E.

v. 11aα	ביום עמדך מנגד
v. 11aβ	ביום שׁבות זרים חילו
v. 11bα	ונכרים באו (שׁערו) [שׁעריו]
v. 11bβ	ועל־ירושׁלם ידו גורל
v. 11bγ	גם־אתה כאחד מהם
v. 12aα	ואל־תרא ביום־אחיך ביום נכרו
v. 12aβ	ואל־תשׂמח לבני־יהודה ביום אבדם
v. 12b	ואל־תגדל פיך ביום צרה
v. 13aα	אל־תבוא בשׁער־עמי ביום אידם
v. 13aβ	אל־תרא גם־אתה ברעתו ביום אידו
v. 13b	ואל־תשׁלחנה בחילו ביום אידו
v. 14a	ואל־תעמד על־הפרק להכרית את־פלטיו
v. 14b	ואל־תסגר שׂריתיו ביום צרה

Verse 11aα begins the list of charges against Edom and includes a two-word phrase (עמדך מנגד) unique to Obadiah and often translated into English as "your standing aloof." This understanding of עמדך מנגד (*qal* infinitive construct [√ עמד] with preposition) is often supported through a reference to

[66] Cf. the discussion on Obad 8 with references to court counsel (rather than a general Edomite wisdom tradition) provided by Renkema (2003: 152).

התיצב מנגד, unique to 2 Sam 18:13,[67] but is "stood aloof" an appropriate translation of Obadiah's עמדך מנגד, a phrase utilizing a verb of a different root and in the *infinitive*? An answer may be found in consideration of the apparent specialized use of the *qal* infinitive construct of עמד in biblical Hebrew. Setting Obadiah's use aside, with one possible exception,[68] every time the *qal* infinitive construct is used, an official legal, political, military, or cultic status is evident.[69] This observation suggests that whatever עמדך מנגד implies, it is likely a fulfillment of an official directive of the Edomite leadership.[70] Whether or not the complex preposition מנגד denotes hostility, it does denote an obvious presence. This presence eventually turns hostile (vv. 13–14).

Other elements of Obadiah 11 support this understanding of עמדך מנגד. The verse ends with "even you were like one of them" (גם־אתה כאחד מהם). Obadiah's emphatic use of גם־אתה "*even* you" implies a reversal of expectation. The verse identifies "strangers" (זרים) and "foreigners" (נכרים) as those involved in the assault. The terms likely pertain to Babylonian forces and auxiliaries from tribute nations under Nebuchadnezzar's authority. The description of their activities makes it rather clear that these peoples were hardly neutral, indifferent, or disinterested in their dealings with Judah. Edomites were *like* them; they were not *aloof*. Determined, hostile actions were taken. Opponents took Judah's efficacy (שׁבות זרים חילו; 11aβ), entered its gate[s] ([שׁעריו] (שׁערו) ונכרים באו; v. 11bα), and divvied up Jerusalem (ועל־ירושׁלם ידו גורל; v. 11bβ). Taking together the official connotations of the *qal* infinitive construct of √ עמד and Obadiah's statement of Edom's similitude with foreign peoples engaged in military

[67] See Ringgren *TDOT* 11:178–187.

[68] Ezra 10:13; but, given the context, it would be difficult to designate as "unofficial" this use of עמד; cf. Ezek 1:21, 24, 25; 10:17.

[69] Accepting the categorizations, for legal status, see Exod 18:23; Num 35:12; Josh 20:6, 9; Ezra 9:15; for military positioning, see Judg 2:14; 1 Sam 6:20; Is 10:32; Ezek 13:5; Esth 8:11; 9:16; Dan 8:7; Dan 11:15; for cultic status, see Exod 9:11, 28; Num 16:9; Dtr 10:8; 18:5; 1 Kgs 8:11; 1 Chr 23:30; 2 Chr 5:14; 29:11; 34:31; Jer 18:20; Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65; for political status, see Gen 41:46; Jer 40:10; Ezek 17:14; Dan 1:4; 11:1, 4. For the root connoting official service, see Ringren, *TDOT* 11:178–187; note also official connotations of *infinitival* occurrences of יצב.

[70] Contrast Wolff 1986: 45, and, especially, Barton 2001: 145. The Edomite position at the crossroads (תעמד על־הפרק) would be an effective strategic deployment of troops; on √ פרק in an Edomite context, see Gen 27:40.

operations, a more likely reading of ביום עמדך מנגד . . . גם־אתה כאחד מהם (Obad 11aα, bγ) is not "on the day of your standing *aloof*…*even you* were like one of them," but rather "on the day of your [official] stationing in opposition…*even you* were like one of them." The lack of aloofness is all too clear in the description that follows. In the gates (v. 13) and at the crossroads (v. 14a), Edomites are presented as braggarts (v. 12), relishing the aggressive manifestations of betrayed kinship expectations (vv. 12–14). It is a surprise reversal of sorts;[71] intimate kin and trade partners have officially taken their stand with the foreigners and strangers assaulting Judah and taking its wealth.

Three observations on Obadiah 12–14 support the thesis. First, each of the three verses contains terminology at home in treaty contexts: אחיך (12aα; cf. 1 Kgs 20:32); להכרית from √ כרת (v. 14); and תשלחנה from √ שלח (v. 13).[72] If this last form is related to the idiomatic expression שלח יד ב־, then conspiracy might also be implied.[73] Second, an interesting possibility comes to light with attention to Obadiah 13aβ, which reads אל־תרא גם־אתה ברעתו ("Do not look—even you—into [Judah's] disaster!"). Only here does Obadiah repeat a vetitive (see v. 12aα; note v. 1cβ). Obadiah 13 also repeats the emphatic גם־אתה ("*even* you"; cf. v. 11). Why has Obadiah introduced this doubly repetitive "do not look—*even* you!" within this verse? It is rather interesting that what immediately follows this double repetition is a term with consonantal and phonemic similarity to בְּרִיתוֹ ("his covenant, treaty"), namely בְּרָעָתוֹ ("into his disaster"; v. 13aβ). Could this double repetition around a verb meaning to look coupled with a certain density of terminology at home in treaty contexts unveil ברעתו as Judah's "disastrous-

[71] A chiastic pattern of A-B-C-B'-A' seen in the five cola of Obad 11 supports the thesis. A reference to "foreigners entering his gates" occupies the center (v. 11ba). The verse begins and ends with descriptions of Edom's disposition (v. 11aα, bγ) in connection with the actions of those assaulting Jerusalem (v. 11aβ–bβ). As kin, Edomites may at times enter Judahite gates, but those of verse 11 did so in a manner inconsistent with kinship expectations; by v. 13aα there is an ironic reversal of Edom's status: Edom is implored to stop entering one such gate (אל־תבוא בשער־עמי).

[72] See Kalluveettil 1982: esp. 127–128, 199–201, 207.

[73] According to Tawil (1980: 30–37), the idiom in Aramaic and Hebrew has at least two connotations: a) "to harm/smite"; b) "to plot, conspire, scheme" (less frequently). For possible examples of the expression שלח יד ב־ implying conspiracy, see Est 8:7 and Psa 55:21. יד is absent in Obad 13, prohibiting an easy conclusion of implied conspiracy; see also Kalluveettil 1982: 21, n. 24. On an elliptical hand, see 2 Sam 6:6 and Psa 18:16; see also, e.g., Barton 2001: 147–148. Energic understandings aside, making sense of תשלחנה, which is pointed as a feminine plural in the MT, remains a challenge.

treaty" with Edom?[74] A third observation is the comparison made by Marvin Sweeney between the content of Obad 12–14 and prohibitions known from ANE treaties. According to Sweeney, "This stylistic aspect… emphasizes that Edom grossly violated whatever treaty might have bound the two nations together.[75] Sweeney suggests in particular that the vetitive pertaining to the cutting down of fugitives (v. 14) "plays upon the stipulations of most treaties that call upon an ally to capture and return any enemy fugitives to the king with whom it is allied."[76] These observations collectively suggest that Obadiah accuses Edom of violating treaty expectations.

Obadiah, of course, objects to other Edomite actions. Edom ogled twice, boisterously cheered (v. 12aβ, b), entered the gate of "my people" (v. 13aα), worked against Judah's efficacy/wealth/army (v. 13b),[77] took up a position so as to cut off fugitives (v. 14a) and delivered survivors to captivity (v. 14b).[78] Conceptually similar expectations, both of word and deed, among parity treaty partners are seen in stipulations from "The Treaty of Šamši-Adad V with Marduk-zakir-šumi, King of Babylon," which was formulated in a time of significant political turmoil:

> *Šamši-Adad shall not say (any) evil words about Marduk-rimanni […to] the king, (viz): "Kill, blind, or se[ize him", nor] shall King Marduk-zakir-šumi listen to him (should he say such things). [He shall not …..…] him, [nor …] **to poi[nt]** an eye, toe or finger […..…, nor] … […..… of his …] and his country. He shall not give back the captives […..…]. The king shall indicate to him the fugitives [who] fled [**from Assyria to Babylonia**].*[79]

[74] Similarly, given Aramaic עדן, עדי, עדיא ("oath"; cf. Heb עדות) and Akkadian *adê* ("oath," which was standard for Neo-Assyrian treaties of the first millennium; see Barré 1987: 653–656; Parpola 1987: 161–189, esp. 184–186), perhaps bothאידם ("their calamity") and אידו ("his calamity") in v. 13 are phonemic wordplays, identifying Judah's "calamity-oath" with Edom (אדום).

[75] Sweeney 2000: 293.

[76] Sweeney 2000: 293. On fugitives in ANE treaty stipulations, see also "The Treaty between KTK and Arpad," translated by Franz Rosenthal, *ANET* 659–661, 660 (=Sefire III:4–7); see also McCarthy 1981: 46–47; cf. also the stipulations regarding fugitives in the "Treaty between Mursilis and Duppi-Tessub of Amurru," (*ANET*, 203–205) and the "Treaty between Idrimi and Pilliya," (*ANET*, 532); note also Sefire III:4–7, 19–20 (Fitzmyer 1995: 136–137, 139–141). See also the fugitive clauses in the "Treaty Between Hattusilis and Rameses II" (translated by Albrecht Goetze [*ANET*, 203]).

[77] Treaty loyalty prohibits "raising/sending a hand against" an ally; cf. Sefire I B:23–25 as restored and discussed in Fitzmyer 1995: 49–51, 108 (with bibliography); cf. also Sefire II B:6; and "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty," 66–67 (§ 5) in Parpola 1987: 31.

[78] Cf. Ezek 35:5; Amos 1:6, 9, 11; Joel 4:19 (3:19).

[79] "Treaty of ŠamšiAdad V with Marduk-zakir-šumî King of Babylon," obverse lines 8–14; for presentation of the text and translation, see Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 4.

Military aggression, improper words, agreements regarding captives and fugitives and, perhaps, ogling ("*to poi*[*nt*] an eye" || √ ראה 2x [Obad 12, 13]) are addressed both in the treaty of Šamši-Adad V with Marduk-zakir-šumi and in Obad 12–14. We cannot know whether these verses reference specific language of an Edomite-Judahite treaty, but it seems clear enough that Obad 12–14 has much in common with the content and form of stipulations found in ANE treaties. If these verses do reflect *specific* language of an Edomite-Judiahte treaty, then Edom acted in a manner inconsistent with the treaty.

Obadiah 15–21: The Aftermath of Betrayal

Obadiah 15–16. In the discussion of inversion and the reversal motif in Obadiah, verse 15 has already been noted as an example of *lex talionis* and applicable for the development of the reversal motif. Verse 16 might further allude to an Edomite-Judahite treaty relationship due to the language that it employs, yet it is clear that the verse poses difficulties for interpreters.

v. 15a	כי־קרוב יום־יהוה על־כל־הגוים
v. 15bα	כאשר עשׂית יעשׂה לך
v. 15bβ	גמלך ישׁוב בראשׁך
v. 16aα	כי כאשׁר שׁתיתם על־הר קדשׁי
v. 16aβ	ישׁתו כל־הגוים תמיד
v. 16bα	ושׁתו ולעו
v. 16bβ	והיו כלוא היו

Nearly uniformly, commentators read verse 16 as pertaining to the "cup of wrath" metaphor of YHWH's judgment.[80] But there is a significant problem with the metaphor here. Who is the "you" who has been drinking (כי כאשׁר

[80] Such an understanding appears warranted given the parallel in Jer 49:12. For a detailed excursus, see Raabe 1996: 206–243; on the cup as a metaphor for judgment, see, e.g., Psa 75:8 (contrast 116:13); Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15, 28; 49:12; Ezek 23:31–34; consider also 1 Cor 10:21; 11:27; Rev 14:10. For redaction-critical discussions, see Carroll 1986: 50–55; Nogalski 1993: 69–71.

שתיתם [v. 16aα]) from the cup of wrath(?) on YHWH's(?) holy mountain? Judahites?[81] Edomites?[82] There is no consensus.[83]

A comparison with treaty ceremonies may help. The otherwise commonplace activity of drinking (Heb. √ שתה; Akk. *šatû*), often specified as from a cup (Heb. כוס; Akk. *kāsu*), was evidently a regular feature of treaty ratification ceremonies. Two examples should suffice.[84] Genesis 26:28–31 references eating and drinking (√ שתה) in the context of concluding a treaty agreement (ברית). This element in treaty ratification ceremonies may also be seen among the stipulations of the treaties of Esarhaddon, one of which forbids the treaty partner from concluding treaties with other political entities through "drinking from a cup".[85] If we consider the wealth of treaty references throughout Obadiah, we might suggest a third understanding of v. 16: Edom had once drank upon Mount Zion as part of a treaty ratification ceremony.[86] But Edom is not alone in the drinking (שתיתם [v. 16aα]). As the form is a second person masculine plural (exceptional in Obadiah with Edom as subject), we must ask who *else* drank with Edom upon Mount Zion. Judah? Given the treaty allusions and the international context of Obad 1 and 15ff, perhaps the drinkers are representatives of two or more Palestinian states who met in Jerusalem and formed an anti-Babylonian league.[87] Given the context, the drinkers include representatives

[81] So most recent commentaries; see, e.g Raabe 1996: 203–204.

[82] So most ancient authorities; cf. discussion in Watts 1969: 61; Stuart 1987: 420. The future aspect of Edom's punishment (e.g., Obad 8–10, 18–19, 21) makes it unlikely that Edom has already been a drinker *of the cup of wrath*.

[83] If the drinker is Edom, the locale is odd, unless it refers not to the cup of wrath, but to a celebratory drinking bout in Jerusalem following the fall of Judah (see Renkema 2003: 191). If the drinker is Judah, why is the change of subject not specified? And how are we to understand Obadiah's modification of the Jeremian parallel (לא תנקה כי שתה תשתה [49:12b])? If the drinking subject is Judah, then verse 16 might not reflect an application of the *lex talionis* of verse 15, but an argument from lesser to greater or an intensification of the punishment dished out to the nations compared to that dished out to Judah (e.g., Raabe 1996: 204–205). Effectively, this interpretation of the verse suggests that if Judah drank a cup of punishment, so too all the nations must drink—but unto oblivion. On Jewish and Christian interpretation of this difficult verse through the Reformation, see Elowsky 1992: esp. 114–124.

[84] Sweeney (2000: 295) refers his readers also to such biblical texts as Exod 24:9–11 and Isa 25:6–10; see also LXX Gen 31:54.

[85] "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty" 6:153–156; see Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 35; *ANET* 536.

[86] Cf. Sweeney 2000: 295.

[87] Verse 16 could then be understood as follows. "Just as you [Edom and other league partners] drank [in order to conclude a covenant], so all the nations will drink continuously; they will drink and gulp down and they shall be as if they never were [a different kinship/covenant group]." Obadiah could

of Edom and Judah at least. With the history of interpretation that is available to us for this verse,[88] we know that Obad 16 provides a considerable challenge. Safely and simply, we can state that Obadiah again includes terminology known from treaty contexts.

Obadiah 17–21. These verses describe the anticipated restoration of an exiled Israel to and from specific territories (vv. 17, 19–21). A brief comment will show that these verses thematically parallel territorial regulations (and related commercial clauses) known from ANE treaties. Specific territorial regulations and commercial clauses are seen in 1 Kings 20:34, which pertains to a treaty between Ahab and Ben-hadad. The verse communicates that unnamed and disputed cities under the control of the Syrian king are returned to Israel as a stipulation of the agreement.[89] Quite similar is a territorial stipulation in a treaty between Zidanta I of Hatti and Pilliya of Kizzuwatna, which addresses issues related to previous territorial infractions.

> *The cities which Pilliya took will be given back to the Sun and those of Pilliya which I took will be given back to Pilliya.*[90]

These examples of territorial clauses show that treaties were often concerned with political geography, which presupposes that economies and populations were affected. The treaty of Abba-AN of Yamkhad and Yarimlin of Alalakh reflects the economic value of transferred lands in a territorial clause.

> *The city of Imar along with its fields, the city of….and the city of Parre in exchange for the city of Uwiya; the city of Adrate in exchange for the territory which is….*[91]

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then be seen as asserting that nations become engrafted into Israel's fate through covenant; betrayal of which has kinship-group consequences (cf. בית- + patronymics in Obad 18).

[88] A fourth possibility is that Obadiah may be utilizing two different connotations of drinking (√שתה). Edom (and others) drank from a [treaty] cup on YHWH's holy mountain and on that holy mountain all nations will experience the cup of judgment that pertains to the day of YHWH (v. 15a). Understanding two connotations of √ שתה in this verse is not without precedent; see, e.g., John Calvin, summarized by Elowsky (1992: 121–122).

[89] Cf. Kalluveettil 1982: esp. 202–203, 206–207; see also 1 Kings 9 with Fensham 1969: 71 –87; cf. also Gen 31:44–52.

[90] For this translation, other examples of territorial clauses from treaties of the ANE, and related bibliography, see Kalluveettil 1982: 202–203.

[91] For this translation see McCarthy 1981: 307; cf. also the history of transference of Talʾayim and its villages in Sefire III:23–27.

This treaty specifies that surrounding agricultural areas ("fields") of particular cities would be included in the transfer. In this regard, consider Obad 19–20.[92]

וירשׁו הנגב את־הר עשׂו	[19] Those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau, and those of the Shephelah the land of the Philistines; they shall possess the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria, and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.
והשׁפלה את־פלשׁתים	
וירשׁו את־שׂדה אפרים	
ואת שׂדה שׁמרון	
ובנימן את־הגלעד	
וגלת החל־הזה לבני ישׂראל	[20] The exiles of the Israelites who are in Halah shall possess Phoenicia as far as Zarephath; and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the towns of the Negeb.
אשׁר־כנענים עד־צרפת	
וגלת ירושׁלם אשׁר בספרד	
ירשׁו את ערי הנגב	

Similar to the language of the Abba-AN treaty, Obad 19 makes reference to a transference of "fields" (שׂדה; NRSV "land") associated with specific toponyms. The most frequently specified accusation against Edom in Ezekiel is tied to Edom's desire for or possession of Judahite land.[93] The references to Judahite/Israelite territory as an Edomite objective suggest that economic and territorial gain was a primary motivation for the supposed Edomite hostility against Judah in the sixth century. Obadiah 17–21 specifies a political geography of a restored Israel that is rather inverted from mid-sixth-century geopolitical reality. Given the treaty allusions provided by this study, it is evident that the rhetorical situation of Obadiah 17–21 fits a treaty context. In leaving Obadiah, a summary of this rhetorical situation might prove helpful.

[92] Text-critical and translation problems are numerous in these verses. The translation provided is that of the New Revised Standard Version.

[93] The land of Israel is a regular concern in Ezekiel, and accusations against Edom correspond with this general concern (Ezek 35:10, 12; 36:5b; see Block 1998: 322–34). Evidently, Judahites did not hear Edom's (secretive) declarations (אמרך [35:10]) and "all the abusive speech" (את־כל־נאצותיך [35:12]; cf. a treaty context in two of the three occurrences of √ נאץ in Jeremiah [14:21; 33:24–25]; cf. also the Ugaritic etymological equivalent in a context of political turmoil [KTU 1.17 II: 3, 18]). In sum, Edomite secrecy per Ezekiel pertains to its desire 1) to possess the two lands (perhaps Israel and Judah; cf. Ezek 37:22); 2) to have Israel's mountains for its own devouring (על־הרי ישׂראל . . . נתנו לאכלה [35:12]); and 3) to have its pastureland for booty (מגרשׁה לבז [36:5]).

EVIDENCE FROM OBADIAH FOR EDOMITE TREATY BETRAYAL: A SUMMARY

Obadiah constructs with artistic subtlety and nuance a text with numerous allusions to Edomite treaty betrayal. Themes of diplomacy, secrecy, deception, treaty relationships and betrayal, coupled with the reversal motif suggest that collusion between Edom and Babylon was effected at the expense of Judah. Given the distributions of these allusions, the theme of Edomite treaty betrayal appears to be part of Obadiah's rhetorical situation and essential to its organization.

Both words in the title of Obadiah (חזון עבדיה; v. 1a) reflect treaty terminology. Accordingly, the two-word title may provide a subtle clue that treaty relationships constitute a theme of the book. Verse 1cα relates the dissemination of a report pertaining to an envoy's international diplomatic mission. Although the purpose and content of that mission remain elusive, Obadiah communicates that the mission is fully underway and begins the oracle with a verse manifesting terminology found in treaty contexts as well as themes of international diplomacy and political intrigue in a context of battle. Somehow, Edom is bound up with this intrigue, which provides Edom an exceptional (מאד) despicability (v. 2). A theme of secrecy emerges with verse 3. The inversion technique highlights Edom's connection with deception (√ II. נשׂא), which foreshadows a deception of Edom (by Babylon) in an explicit treaty context (v. 7). With an idiomatic expression suggestive of secrecy (לב+ אמר [v. 3bα), Edom communicates its supposed geopolitical security. This security may be connected to Babylon through the modifications Obadiah makes of the Jeremian parallel (e.g., כוכבים [v. 4b]), particularly as Edom, a kingdom to the south (cf. תימן[v. 9]), has a "hidden northernness" (מצפניו; v. 6b). In the same context and in consideration of Obadiah's modifications within an inverted quotation of Jeremiah, Edom's capital city, Bozrah, is likened a secretive and destructive thief in the night (v. 5aα–β). Through a modification of Jeremiah, Obadiah divulges this once-secret collusion (√ בעה [v. 6]). Obadiah communicates that this revelation was unexpected and dangerous: south northerly is. In short, Obadiah's rhetorical artistry in verses 1–6 subtly contains allusions to a Mesopotamian power, international diplomacy, secrecy, and discernment, and these rhetorical features may be subsumed under the theme of Edomite treaty betrayal, yet *it is only at the point that Obadiah's clear modifications*

of the Jeremian parallel ceases that a theme of treaty betrayal becomes explicit. With a density of treaty terminology (שׁלחוך, בריתך, שׁלמך, לחמך), verse 7 clearly communicates that Edom shall be deceived by its own treaty partner. Given the working inferences of the study, this partner is Babylon. In consideration of the reversal motif, whereby the density of inverted *form* accentuates a reversal of *content*, the reversal of Edom's fortune anticipated by verse 7 may be much more precise: Edom previously deceived its own alliance partner, Judah. Usage of the consonant ך reinforces this precise reversal of fortune and suggests that Edom was the initiating party in its alliance with Babylon. That alliance was ultimately destructive for Edom, and the language of wisdom in verse 7b–8 communicates the reversal of Edom's expectations in regard to its political counsel and plans for national survival.

Verse 11 begins the identification of specific violations of Judah on the part of its brother. Translations of עמדך מנגד(11aα) that present Edom having "stood aloof" might be inaccurate. Rather, Edom appears to have stationed itself in intimate opposition to Judah as a matter of official national policy. Significant similarity between the vetitives and content of verses 12–14 and stipulation sections of ANE treaties suggests a play on the form of treaty stipulations. Verses 17–21 describe a restored territory of Israel, and these verses show some similarity to territorial clauses in ANE treaties. All in all, Obadiah may be read as steeped both with treaty terminology and with allusions to an Edomite treaty betrayal. To be sure, nowhere does Obadiah overtly state that a treaty between Edom and Judah was violated; the theme, however, subtly permeates the work, perhaps as an organizing factor,[94] and commends the following rhetorical situation. Edom initiated a clandestine treaty with Babylon to the detriment of Edom's deceived and treaty-based ally, Judah. What remains is a study of other texts in light of this conclusion.

ALLUSIVE EVIDENCE: PSALM 137 AND OTHER BIBLICAL TEXTS

This section is organized around a discussion of Psalm 137, which is generally considered a composition either of the late exile or a time shortly

[94] According to Gudas (1993: 1281–1282), New Critics "have found the term [i.e., 'theme']…indispensable for pointing to the values and principal unity in a poem. However, they warn that the poem, or at least the good poem, is not a mere rhetorical device for ornamenting a prosaic [theme]…or making it more persuasive. The good poem does not assert [its theme]."

thereafter. Tradition history challenges prohibit inclusion of other texts possibly pertaining to sixth-century Edomite-Judahite relations.[95] For purposes of discussion, the psalm is divided into units according to the disjunctives *ʾaṯnāḥ* and *sillûq*.[96]

By the rivers of Babylon— there we sat down and there we wept	על נהרות בבל שם ישבנו גם־בכינו	v. 1a
when we remembered Zion.	בזכרנו את־ציון	v. 1b
On the willows there	על־ערבים בתוכה	v. 2a
we hung up our harps.	תלינו כנרותינו	v. 2b
For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,	כי שם שאלונו שובינו דברי־שיר ותולליונו שמחה	v. 3a
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"	שירו לנו משיר ציון	v. 3b
How could we sing the LORD's song	איך נשיר את־שיר־יהוה	v. 4a
in a foreign land?	על אדמת נכר	v. 4b
If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!	אם־אשכחך ירושלם תשכח ימיני	v. 5
Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.	תדבק־לשוני לחכי אם־לא אזכרכי אם־לא אעלה את־ירושלם על ראש שמחתי	v. 6
Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem's fall, how they said, "Tear it down! Tear it Down!	זכר יהוה לבני אדום את יום ירושלם האמרים ערו ערו	v. 7a

[95] E.g., the Jacob-Esau narratives of Genesis 25–28 and 32–33; Num 20; Deut 2; 23:17; Isaiah; Amos 1–2; Joel 4:19 (3:19); Mal 1:2–3 (cf. Rom 9:13); Psa 83; Psa 108.
[96] The translation is that of the New Revised Standard Version.

Down to its foundations!"	עד היסוד בה	v. 7b
O daughter Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall they be who pay you back	בת־בבל השׁדודה אשׁרי שׁישׁלם־לך	v. 8a
what you have done to us!	את־גמולך שׁגמלת לנו	v. 8b
Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!	אשׁרי שׁיאחז ונפץ את־ עלליך אל־הסלע	v. 9a

Verse 7 focuses on Edomites, who are presented as reiteratively calling for some unknown entity to tear down (ערו, *piʿel* of √ ערה; lit. "lay bare, make naked, strip") Jerusalem to its foundation (עד היסוד ב ה; lit. "unto the foundations in her"). Apart from this aggressive language, verse 7 does not suggest that Edom was hostile against Jerusalem during the Babylonian campaign. A difficulty is whether verses 8–9 focus on Edom or Babylon. If Edom remains in focus in verses 8–9, then Edomite hostility is evidenced as are treaty allusions.[97] Verse 8aα is the fulcrum: בת־בבל. Does this colon and what follows refer yet to Edom or does the focus return to Babylon?

The limitation of the focus in Psa 137:7–9 to one upon the Edomites is defensible through terminological and thematic parallels. A terminological parallel (סלע[ה]) exists between verse 9 and Obad 3. The psalm ends with a proclamation that blessed-happiness is in store for the one who takes the little ones (of Edomites and/or Babylonians) and shatters them "upon the rock" (אל־הסלע; v.9). The definiteness of this rock suggests a specific location is to be understood, and a few texts mention an Edomite "Rock" ("the Sela"; הסלע).[98] Intertextual evidence may support a connection of the psalm's הסלע with Edomite territory. The context suggests that the target of

[97] A treaty allusion not otherwise addressed in this study is the correspondence between the withering of the right hand (תשׁכח ימיני [v. 5]) and oath-making and punishment (see, e.g., Gen 14:22–23; Exod 6:8; Psa 144:8); on this correspondence, see Bar-Efrat, "Love of Zion," 7–8, esp. note 13.

[98] See 2 Kgs 14:7 (cf. 2 Chr 25:12); Jer 49:16. Two geographically appropriate formations have been suggested for this biblical, Edomite Selaʿ: Umm el-Biyarah, and Khirbet es-Selaʿ. See Hart 1986: 91–95. On Khirbet es-Selaʿ, see Bartlett 1989: 51–52; Fanwar 1992: 1073–4; Crowell 2007: 75–88. The fact that סלע is a common noun simply meaning "rock" prohibits an uncomplicated equation of either of these with the defensible "clefts of rock" where Edomites dwell according to Obad 3 (שׁכני בחגוי־סלע). Obadiah attests "Sela" without the article (סלע). Poetic terseness aside, contrast הסלע (Jer 49:16).

the atrocities of verse 9 are the little ones (עלליך) of an entire population (Babylonian and/or Edomite).[99] What is being envisioned is the seizing and transportation of some thousands to the rock upon which their bodies would be dashed. Such horrific logistics are not without biblical precedent. According to 2 Kgs 14:7, Amaziah's exploits included killing ten thousand Edomites and the taking-by-storm a stronghold named "Sela$^{\varsigma}$" (סלע). Gruesome detail of the same campaign is provided in 2 Chr 25:11–12, a text with semantic as well as thematic parallels with Psalm 137:9 and producing a similar vision of a large population associated with Edom that is apprehended and split upon the rock. The parallels provide an intertextual warrant for reading verses 7–9 with Edom yet in focus.

The psalm also reflects an etymological and thematic relationship to Obad 15b. We can compare אשׁרי שׁישׁלם־לך את־גמולך שׁגמלת לנו ("Happy shall they be who pay you back what you have done to us"; Psa 137:8aβ–b) with כאשׁר עשׂית יעשׂה לך גמלך ישׁוב בראשׁך ("Just as you have done it shall be done to you. Your dealings will return upon your own head!"; Obad 15). Thematically, this parallel closely aligns with the concept of *lex talionis* and anticipates a reversal of fortune. The etymological parallel should be obvious: גמולך ("your dealings" [Psa 137:8a]) parallels גמלך ("your dealings" [Obad 15b]). The root is occasionally employed in economic contexts (e.g. 2 Sam 19:36; 2 Chr 20:11; 32:23–29 [v. 25]; Joel 4:4 [3:4]; cf. English "camel" and its etymology). Its occurrence in an Edomite context is noteworthy given the thesis of treaty betrayal and the economic advantage Edom would gain with control of southern Judah.

A primary obstacle in reading verses 8–9 as pertaining to Edom, however, is not a lack of literary affinity between the psalm and other anti-Edom texts, but whether verse 8aα (בת־בבל; "daughter-of-Babylon") references Babylon or Edom. The colon is often taken as a literary intensification: Babylon as a capital city is personified.[100] No fewer than three possibilities, however, have been proposed for understanding Edom rather than Babylon as the appropriate reference. The first two rely on a redactional assumption[101] or a supposed textual error.[102] Neither is warranted by

[99] Babylonian little ones (ועלליהם) are the targets to be split apart according to Isa 13:16a; similar horrors are found elsewhere; see also Hos 14:1 [Eng. 13:16] and Nah 3:10.

[100] See Fitzgerald 1975: 167–183, esp. 182; cf. Allen 1983: 237. As Fitzgerald acknowledges (e.g., 1975: 173, 174, 179, 180) genitival constructions of בת־ plus toponym/gentilic are ambiguous.

[101] According to Briggs (1902: 2.486), verses 8–9 demand that Edom remains in the context; colon 8aa is a misfortunate redactional gloss.

evidence available from ancient manuscripts. A third possibility is intriguing. In an article arguing that the anti-Edom oracles of Obadiah and Jeremiah 49 were post-exilic prophetic responses to Psalm 137, Graham S. Ogden suggests that the phrase בת־בבל may legitimately be understood as "the ally or confederate of Babylon."[103] Ogden can then understand Edom as the object of the imprecations of the remaining verses; Edom as a child of Babylon (cf. "son" as a vassal's identification) becomes confused for its lord. In short, Edom may remain in focus, providing a warrant to examine elements in the psalm with treaty connotations corresponding to the theme of Edomite treaty betrayal.

Consider again verses 7–8, divided by cola and translated so as to accentuate treaty allusions discussed below.

Remember, YHWH, the Edomites,	זכר יהוה לבני אדום	v. 7aα
the day of Jerusalem, the ones who said, "Strip [her]! Strip [her]	את יום ירושלם האמרים ערו ערו	v. 7aβ
down to the foundations in her!	עד היסוד בה	v. 7b
O daughter of Babylon	בת־בבל	v. 8aα
—destroyed/destroyer—Happy are those who fulfill a covenant of peace with/repay you	השדודה אשרי שישלם־לך	v. 8aβ
your own dealings	את־גמולך	v. 8bα
that you dealt to us!	שגמלת לנו	v. 8bβ

Verse 8 declares that Edom's destruction is justified. In a context of *lex talionis*, √ שלם occurs in the *pi ʿel* ("to complete, reward, make compensation, replace"; v. 8aβ).[104] The root is at home in treaty contexts. We have seen that Obad 7 provides a relevant example, suggesting that Edom's peace-covenant (שלמך) partners will betray Edom (השיאוך) rather

[102] Kellermann (1978: 48) emends to בת־אדום.

[103] Ogden 1982: 89–97, 91. In support of his understanding of בת־בבל as pertaining to alliance, Ogden references his reader to the work of H. Haag, ("bath," *TDOT* 2:336), who understands the figurative uses of בת־ (with a toponym) to include one in which villages and cities of a great city can be considered daughters. This well-attested figurative use suggests that בת־ at times specifically references a weaker or smaller political entity under the aegis or control of the genitive (in our case, בבל־). This use would befit Edom as a vassal of Babylon.

[104] *BDB*, 1022; G. Gerleman, "שׁלח *šlḥ* to send," *TLOT* 3:1330–1348, esp. 1340–1341.

than "fulfill" (cf. √ שָׁלֵם) the treaty.[105] Is the psalm referencing a similar reversal of expectation—a similar payback?

This section will show that Psalm 137 reflects treaty curses and that violence such as described in verses 7–9 would be appropriate by ANE standards should betrayal occur. A treaty written in Aramaic and dating to the mid-eight century is helpful. The curse section of Sefire I A (a vassal treaty between the suzerain Bar-Ga'yah of *KTK* and his vassal, Mati'el of Arpad) has themes and terminology that are strikingly similar to the psalm. Consider lines 29–30, 35, and 40–41.[106]

> *[29]…Nor may the sound of the lyre be heard in Arpad; but among its people (let there rather be) the din of affliction and the noi[se of cry]ing [30]and lamentation! …[35]…Just as wax is burned by fire, so may Arpad be burned and [her g]reat [daughter-cities]! [40]…[and just as] [41]a [har]lot is stripped naked], so may the wives of Mati'el be stripped naked, and the wives of his offspring, and the wives of [his] no[bles]!*

In a context of lamentation, an inter-dialectical etymological and semantic equivalence is apparent in the abandonment of music from the lyre (כנר [Sefire I A:29] || כנרותינו [Psa 137:2b]). In both texts, a lesser polity under the governance of a greater polity may be implied by kinship language, namely the topographical mention of daughter-city/cities: one of Babylon, and those of Mati'el's Arpad (ארפד ו[בנתו [Sefire I A:35][107] || בת־בבל [Psa 137:8a]). Moreover, these daughter cities are found in a parallel context of destruction ("burned"; √ יקד [Sefire I A:35, 37] || "destroy(ed)"; √ שׁדד [Psa 137:8]). Jerusalem is personified and feminine, and about her are the only words in the psalm associated with the sons of Edom (בני־אדום [137:7]), who call for her to be stripped (√ ערה).[108] This sexual assault is paralleled

[105]The phrase "Fulfill the treaty" (תשלם עדיא; Aram. √ שׁלם) appears to be a standard clause of declaring that a treaty is fully observed; see, e.g., Sefire I B:24 (presented and discussed in Fitzmyer 1995: 50, 51, and 108).

[106] The translation is that of Fitzmyer 1995: 44–47.

[107] For the restoration and the possibility that the great daughters of Arpad may pertain to subject cities or regions, see Fitzmyer 1995: 46–47, 91, 93.

[108] For √ ערה ("to strip") with YHWH against Zion, see Isa 3:17, which is set in a context of the systematic stripping of the fineries of the daughters of Zion (בנות־ציון [v. 16]) following the judgment of YHWH (vv. 13–24), perhaps for its own covenant violation leading to exile (cf. 2 Kgs 22:8–23:27).

etymologically and semantically in the Sefire treaty ("and just as a harlot is stripped"; [נ]נ[יה ואיך זי תערר ז] [Sefire I A:40–41][109] || "Strip [her]! Strip [her]!"; ערו ערו [Psa 137:7aβ]). Should Matiʿel betray the treaty, stately ladies suffer indignity (I A:41). Thus, in but a few lines of the curse section of Sefire I A, one finds numerous thematic, etymological, and (in the case of subject cities or regions as "daughters") kinship and syntactical parallels with Psalm 137. One also finds lament and the end of lyre play as (allied) cities are conflagrated and female principals are vandalized. Although we do not have enough treaties from the Iron Age to make a defensible conclusion about the frequency with which these elements appeared together in treaty curse sections, we can say that the language of Psalm 137 is at home in known treaty curses.

Treaty curses and retributive justice might also be in the context of the invective in Psalm 137, where "blessed-happiness" (אשׁרי) is in store for the one who pays Edom back (שׁישׁלם־לך [v. 8aβ]) for its treaty violation of Judah (את־גמולך שׁגמלת לנו [v. 8b]). The mode of payback is horrific: Edomite "little ones" (עלליך) are to be shattered upon the Selaʿ (Psa 137: 9). This horror further evidences the psalm's treaty context; an etymological and thematic parallel is found in a treaty curse identifying a specific legal consequence of treaty infraction. Consider Sefire I A:14, 21–22, which precedes but by a few lines the excerpt cited above.

> *Now if Matiʿel, the son of ʿAttarsamak, the kin[g of Arpad,] should prove unfaithful [to Bar-Gaʾyah…. [then] should seven nurses anoint [their breasts and] nurse a little one, may he not have his fill…*[110]

Should the treaty be violated, nursing will not fend off starvation for the "little one" (עלים [I A:22]; cf. Lam 2:11–12, 19–20; 4:4). A presumably quick(er) death-by-shattering is in store for the "little ones" (עלליך) of Psa 137:9. Oaths among partners during treaty formation made such horrors a mutually-approved, foreseen course of action in the event of treaty betrayal.

[109] For the restoration (Aram. √ ערר rather than עבד), see Fitzmyer 1995: 97–98, citing also Neh 3:5; Jer 13:26–27; Ezek 16:37–38; Hos 2:5.

[110] Emphases mine; the translation is that of Fitzmyer 1995: 45 with three changes. First, "[*then*]" has been added in order to clarify context. Second, "little one" has been substituted for "young boy," accentuating the etymological parallel. Third, a redundant (?) bracket that followed "nurses" has been removed.

A divine witness sanctioned the act (Sefire I A: 7–13; cf. Psa 137:7a[?]), and the treaty would have been communicated publically (cf. Sefire I B:8–10). The Judahite and Edomite leadership would have acknowledged that such retribution was sanctioned and that the one who would carry out such acts would be divinely favored (אשׁרי [Psa 137:8, 9). The "scandalous" statement that blessed-happiness is in store for the one who shatters little ones (Psa 137:8–9) simply reflects this fact.[111] Psalm 137:7–9 is ironic: the sons of Edom are presented as vocalizing a curse wish that could have been applicable to *themselves* in their own broken treaty with Judah.

With the treaty curse language of Psa 137 in mind, consider the only direct reference to Edom in Lamentations (4:21–22).[112]

שׂישׂי ושׂמחי בת־אדום (יושׁבתי)
[יושׁבת] בארץ עוץ גם־עליך תעבר־כוס
תשׁכרי ותתערי

תן־עונך בת־ציון לא יוסיף להגלותך
פקד עונך בת־אדום גלה על־חטאתיך

[21] Rejoice and be glad, O daughter Edom, you that live in the land of Uz; but to you also the cup shall pass; you shall become drunk and strip yourself bare.

[22] The punishment of your iniquity, O daughter Zion, is accomplished, he will keep you in exile no longer; but your iniquity, O daughter Edom, he will punish, he will uncover your sins.

As verse 21 begins to anticipate a future punishment on the daughter of Edom,[113] verse 22 interjects a declaration that the punishment of the daughter of Zion has reached completion (v. 22a). Given covenant infidelity as the overarching biblical (theological) context of Judah's exile and given the current study of Edomite treaty betrayal, this shift of status in Lam 4:21–22 does not appear to be a transferring of Judah's guilt onto the scapegoat, Edom, as some have seen in anti-Edom texts,[114] but rather *a shift in status relative to the timing of a retributive justice deserved by each for covenant (treaty) violation*. The poet of Lamentations states that Judah is completing

[111] On Psalm 137 as the "scandal" psalm, see Peterson 1989: 96. Through the mutually-accepted, divinely-witnessed Edomite-Judahite treaty curses, Edom accepted a threat of destruction. In an ANE worldview, the one who carried out a retributive justice sanctioned by the invectives of the treaty would be carrying out actions "blessed" by those divine witnesses. The psalmist, as a matter of course or of theology, seems either powerless or unwilling to carry out such actions.

[112] The translation is that of the New Revised Standard Version.

[113] Given the syntax בת־ + toponym, Lamentations might be extending the referent to include an unnamed associate of Edom.

[114] See, e.g., Gosse 1989: 511–517; see also discussion in Dicou 1994: 15–16.

its punishment for covenant infidelity to YHWH (v. 22a) whereas Edom can anticipate the consequences of its own covenant infraction (v. 21b, 22b).

Psalm 137 and Lamentations 4:21–22 provide important data for the historical reconstruction. They might reflect a curses section in the Edomite-Judahite treaty, namely, lament, an end of lyre play, the stripping of principals, city destruction, and the wasting of little ones. These texts also evidence that the Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah took place in the sixth century B.C.E., reinforcing the pertinence of Obadiah to that date. Third, unlike Obadiah, the psalmist directly associates Edom *with Babylon*. Thus, Psalm 137 and Lamentations provide considerable historical weight to the argument already made: Edom conspired with Babylon against Judah in the sixth century B.C.E.

SYNTHESIZING PIECEMEAL DATA: EZEKIEL, A NORTH-SOUTH AXIS, AND THE DATE OF BETRAYAL

With Palestine in imperial disarray ca. 588 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar had to decide which kingdom to subdue first. After considering options for dealing with the Palestinian states persisting in rebellion, and for whatever reasons, Babylon undertook a "Judah-first" strategy.[115] With Judah, Tyre, and Ammon in active revolt, why might Nebuchadnezzar first attack the rebel state *at the center*? Was it due to omens and extispacy (see below on Ezek 21:24–27 [Eng. 19–22])? A "divide and conquer" stratagem? This study has shown that sixth-century anti-Edom texts are replete with allusions to a secretive Babylonian-Edomite treaty divulged during the Babylonian assault on Judah. Attacking Judah first would make good sense if a turncoat (Edom) was poised to engage Judah from the south. The resulting north-south axis running from Riblah (2 Kgs 25:2, 6) through Judah to Edom would effectively overwhelm Zedekiah's kingdom and would prohibit efficient communications necessary for joint military operations of Ammonite and Tyrian rebel forces, perhaps inclining them away from attempting to assist Judah (cf. Lam 4:17).

It appears, then, that Judah was caught in a surprise attack, whereby the Judahite front (north) and rear (south) were attacked simultaneously. Verses 5, 10, and 12 of Ezekiel 35 present Edom as engaged in geopolitical hostility. In this context, consider Ezek 36:1–4 (NRSV; emphasis mine),

[115] Portions of Phoenicia may have been subdued early, yet Tyre was left in its rebellion until Jerusalem fell (cf. Ezek 29:17); see also Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.156; *Ant.* 10.228; for an overview, see Katzenstein 1992: 686–690, esp. 690.

which evidences a multi-national campaign against Judah (cf. also Jer 34:1, 7):

> [1]*And you, mortal, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say: O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD.* [2] *Thus says the Lord GOD: Because the enemy said of you, "Aha!" and, "The ancient heights have become our possession,"* [3]*therefore prophesy, and say: Thus says the Lord GOD: Because they made you desolate indeed,* ***and crushed you from all sides****, so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations, and you became an object of gossip and slander among the people;* [4] *therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD: Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains and the hills, the watercourses and the valleys, the desolate wastes and the deserted towns, which have become a source of plunder and an object of derision to the rest of the nations* ***all around****;*

"From all sides" and "all around" (both מסביב; see also Lam 1:17; 2:22; Ezek 23:22) suggest that the Babylonian assault from the north included military actions west (Lachish and Azekah?) and east of Jerusalem (e.g., 2 Kgs 25:4–5; Ezek 21:18–23[?]), and was accompanied by actions in the south. It is significant that "all of Edom" (כל-אדום כלא/אדום כלא [35:15; 36:5]) appears in the verses *immediately prior to and after* Ezek 36:1–4. "Edom" *literarily* brackets (surrounds) the verses about Judah being surrounded. This artistry in the context of a multi-national assault suggests again that military coordination occurred among Babylonian forces from the north and Edomite forces hostile in the Negev to the south.[116]

As mentioned in the introduction to this article, literary evidence suggests that as late as 593 B.C.E. (if not later) Edom was among the Palestinian states contemplating an anti-Babylonian league. It is not uncommon to date the beginning of Zedekiah's rebellion to some five years latter (ca. 589 B.C.E.).[117] Did Edom carry out diplomacy with Babylon early on in the revolt? Two years (ca. 589–Tevet 588/587 B.C.E.)[118] is a rather long time to

[116] For further support of the point, see Ezek 21:1–5 (Eng. 20:45–49), which immediately precedes a prophecy concerning a campaign *against Jerusalem* (21:6–12 [21:1–7]) and which prophesies an imminent campaign against *the Negev* (Ezek 21:2 [20:46]). Twice in the immediate context one finds "from the Negev/South to North" (Ezek 21:3, 9 [Eng 20:47; 21:4]).

[117] The ascension of Pharaoh Hophra (Apries) in 589 B.C.E. and his activities in the eastern Mediterranean may have spurred rebellion. Alternatively, revolt may have occurred earlier, following Psammetichus' parade through Palestine; see Ahlström 1993: 793–794; Lipschits 2005: 70–72.

[118] This article follows the basic chronology for Zedekiah's rule as presented by Hayim Tadmor (1979: 44–60). The general result of this chronology is that Zedekiah's ascension took place

keep true loyalties clandestine. One piece of evidence suggests a more reasonable date. Ezekiel 21:24–27 [Eng. 19–22; NRSV] presents Nebuchadnezzar discerning whether to attack Ammon or Judah first.

> [19] *Mortal, mark out two roads for the sword of the king of Babylon to come; both of them shall issue from the same land. And make a signpost, make it for a fork in the road leading to a city;* [20] *mark out the road for the sword to come to Rabbah of the Ammonites or to Judah and to Jerusalem the fortified.* [21] *For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the fork in the two roads, to use divination; he shakes the arrows, he consults the teraphim, he inspects the liver.* [22] *Into his right hand comes the lot for Jerusalem, to set battering rams, to call out for slaughter, for raising the battle cry, to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up ramps, to build siege towers.*

According to the passage, divination and extispacy rather than objective political and military strategy determines the course of action. For Ezekiel, diplomatic correspondence with representatives of an allied Palestinian state is not part of the decision-making process leading to a Judah-first policy. If this last point accurately corresponds to history, then an argument from Ezekiel's silence is that Edom decided to collaborate with Babylon only subsequent to an intelligence report that Babylon was indeed moving toward Judah first (i.e., some moment after Nebuchadnezzar's forces headed specifically for Judah yet before their arrival). This sudden shift in Edomite diplomacy would not require Edom to keep its formal relationship with Babylon clandestine for any great length of time. Even so, the paucity of evidence does not allow for a definitive date for the formation of Edom's treaty with Babylon against its deceived and treaty-based ally, Judah. This study does not determine whether Edom chose to betray its erstwhile ally after a prolonged deception of Judah or only subsequent to Babylon's advance upon central Palestine in order to suppress rebel states. More work on this point is called for. What does seem clear from the biblical evidence is that by the time of the Babylonian assault on Judah in the tenth month (Tevet) of Zedekiah's ninth year (December 588/January587 B.C.E.), Edom

sometime shortly after 1 Nisan 597, yet his first regnal year would have been reckoned from Nisan 596 through Adar 595 B.C.E. According to 2 Kgs 25:1 (cf. Jer 52:4; Ezek 24:1), the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began on the tenth day of the tenth month (Tevet) of Zedekiah's ninth year (which ran from Nisan 588 to Nisan 587 B.C.E.). In a conversion to the Gregorian calendar, Tevet of Zedekiah's ninth year corresponds to December 588/January 587 B.C.E. On 9 Tammuz of Zedekiah's eleventh year (mid July 586 B.C.E.), after a siege lasting about eighteen months, the walls of Jerusalem were breached and the city fell (2 Kgs 25:3; cf. Jer 52:6).

had initiated and acted upon a clandestine treaty with Babylon to the detriment of Edom's deceived and treaty-based ally, Judah.

CONCLUSION

Through an analysis of biblical evidence, this article has provided a rather specific reconstruction, one that contrasts reconstructions that minimize Edomite hostilities against Judah during the events of 588–586 B.C.E. John R. Bartlett has produced requisite work in the study of Edom and has advocated Edom's innocence during the fall of Jerusalem and Judah.[119] Obadiah 11–14 accuses Edom of specific actions against Judah, yet for Bartlett these accusations are not a "historian's description" but are derived from Obadiah's "imagination."[120] Bartlett holds that Jer 40:11 is "[p]erhaps the most reliable piece of evidence" for Edomite behavior during the Babylonian attack and siege of Jerusalem.[121] Consider Jer 40:11–12 (NRSV), set in a context sometime *after* the fall of Jerusalem and communicating that Judahites were residing in Edom:

> *Likewise, when all the Judeans who were in Moab and among the Ammonites and in Edom and in other lands heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan as governor over them, then all the Judeans returned from all the places to which they had been scattered and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah; and they gathered wine and summer fruits in great abundance.*

Bartlett understands these verses as evidencing the peaceful treatment that Judahites returning from Edom had received there during the attack and siege.[122] In this view, because Edom appeared willing to harbor Judahite refugees, Edom was not the enemy Obadiah envisioned. Setting aside the point that the official political relationships of a nation do not always reflect the behavior of every sub-group of and individual in that nation, I would offer that it is unclear whether Jer 40:11–12 evidences peaceful treatment of Judahites by Edom during the siege of Jerusalem. A comment on the context of Jeremiah 40 is in order. Subsequent to a protracted Babylonian siege, Jerusalem fell and Gedaliah, a pro-Babylonian governor, was appointed by

[119] See, e.g., Bartlett 1982: 23; Bartlett 1989: esp. 151, 156–157; and Bartlett 1995: 20.
[120] Bartlett 1989: 155–156.
[121] Bartlett 1989: 151.
[122] Bartlett 1989: 151, 154, 157. The verse and Bartlett's position have proven influential and cited for reconstructions that minimize Edomite aggression against Judah at the time; see, e.g., Dicou 1994: esp. 184; see also Tebes 2011b: 224 with 232.

Nebuchadnezzar and watched over by a Babylonian garrison (cf. Jer 41:2–32; Kgs 25:22–24). Judahite political prisoners and exiles had evidently already been taken by Babylon, and a rebellious faction and its leaders had been executed (2 Kgs 25:19–21). What is clear is that Jer 40:11–12 speaks of a time when political conditions in Judah had changed.[123] Judah was no longer in revolt. Indeed, "When all the Judeans who were in Moab and among the Ammonites and in Edom *and in all the lands* (בכל־הארצות)…all these Judeans returned from all the places to which *they had been scattered* (נדחו־שם)…" is also suggestive of an imperial allowance or policy toward the *return* of Judahites (captured, hiding, *or* harbored) once hostilities ceased. It does not specify how Judahites *came to be* in Edom. With a pro-Babylon leadership functioning in Judah, and with Edom an ally of Babylon, Edom and Judah would have returned to a rather equal footing—albeit as subjects of Babylon. As has been noted in this article, how allies are to treat captives and fugitives is a regular component of ancient Near Eastern treaties, and Edom and Judah's common loyalty to Babylon could signal the release of any Judahite captives Edom may have taken during the crisis. In short, Jer 40:11–12 speaks of a return of Judahites from several lands sometime after the revolt was quelled and after Babylon appointed Gedaliah as governor of Judah; accordingly, these verses may have little bearing on Edom's political relations with and treatment of Judahites during the Babylonian assault on Jerusalem and Judah ca. 588–586 B.C.E.

This article has argued that Edom kept clandestine from Judah a treaty relationship with Babylon and surprised Judah during the Babylonian assault. A literary-critical question arises. Why would Obadiah present a prophecy of such subtle allusion to betrayal? Why not just say "Edom betrayed Judah"? What makes sense to me is that Obadiah's artistry reflects the hiddenness of Edom's eventually manifested political relationships and aggressive actions during the Babylonian crisis. In this regard, a comment is also in order pertaining to biblical Edom. Foundational ancestral stories had kept Esau/Edom at the closest fringe of Jacob/Israel (Gen 25, 27, 32–33, 35:29). Given the sociological function of treaties to extend kinship, which was a basis for ethical responsibility, not only did the biblical descendants of Esau fail to act as kin of Jacob during the Babylonian crisis, they had rejected that kinship for one with Babylon, which provided them some

[123] It remains uncertain how much time past between the fall of Jerusalem and the return of the fruitful growing season mentioned in v. 12; two months or as many as five years may have past (cf. Jer 52:28–30). For discussion of the political context, for notes on textual issues in Jeremiah 40:11–12, and for relevant bibliographic references, see Keown, Scalise, and Smothers 1995: 232–238.

territorial gain.[124] It appears, then, that after generations of tension (e.g., 1 Sam 14:47; 2 Kings 3; 8:20–22; 14:7; 16:6) Edom chose against Israel/Judah and became through treaty betrayal a people akin to the nations.[125] Perhaps it was this sixth-century violation of a mutually-perceived kinship and treaty relationship binding Edom to Judah that made Edom's political actions dreadfully painful (cf. Lam 1:2, 19; 4:21–22) and contributed to the production of other anti-Edom texts.

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[124] Edomite encroachment into southern Judah could have led to a mid-sixth-century sociological exigency among some Judahites: was Esau—rather than Jacob—the true inheritor of the blessings of Abraham? See Assis 2006: 1–20. Assis, however, minimizes the importance of Edomite involvement in the destruction of Judah for the development of the exceptional attitude toward Edom in biblical sources (2006: 3, 15–17).

[125] Arguably, no other nation apart from Israel receives more biblical attacks than Edom. Stuart (1987: 405–406) provides a convenient table of prophetic oracles against the nations, and states in regard to Edom that "more sheer space" is devoted to oracles against Tyre and Moab. Such is the case if Isaiah 34 is counted as an oracle against the nations in general (as Stuart counts), rather than one principally against Edom. Stuart acknowledges that mention of Edom has a "somewhat wider distribution."

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Covenant and International Relations in the Ancient Near East: A Preliminary Exploration*

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Summary: Covenant and International Relations in the Ancient Near East: A Preliminary Exploration

To a great extent, ancient Near Eastern international relations operated within covenantal frameworks. In light of renewed interest in world history and the Near East in the discipline of International Relations, this article provides a preliminary exploration of the important practice of covenanting as an alternative account of balance-of-power dynamics. The notion, structure and diffusion of the covenant as a common practice have been discussed to great detail in other disciplines, such as, for example, Old Testament Studies. Dialogue with these studies will be pursued, but covenanting is here addressed also in some of its primary sources in light of the English School approach. As it turns out, the practice accounts for a number of peculiarities in alliance formation of the period. The preliminary findings are contrasted with alternative IR accounts of ancient Near Eastern power-balancing.

Keywords: Diplomacy in the ancient Near East – Covenants – English School IR – Balance of power

Resumen: Alianza y relaciones internacionales en el antiguo Cercano Oriente: Una exploración preliminar

En gran medida, las relaciones internacionales del Cercano Oriente antiguo operaban dentro del marco de alianzas. A la luz del renovado interés en la historia mundial y del Cercano Oriente en la disciplina de las relaciones internacionales, este artículo proporciona una exploración preliminar de la práctica importante de las alianzas

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como una explicación alternativa de las dinámicas del equilibrio de poder. La noción, la estructura y la difusión de la alianza como una práctica común, han sido discutidas en gran detalle en otras disciplinas, tales como, por ejemplo, los estudios del Antiguo Testamento. Se continuará con el diálogo con estos estudios, aunque la alianza es aquí abordada también en algunas de sus fuentes primarias a la luz del enfoque de la Escuela Inglesa. Como resultado, la práctica explica una serie de peculiaridades en la formación de las alianzas de la época. Los resultados preliminares se contrastan con las explicaciones alternativas IR del equilibrio de poder del Cercano Oriente antiguo.

Palabras clave: Diplomacia en el antiguo Oriente Próximo – Pactos – Escuela Inglesa (RRII) – Equilibrio de poder

Introduction

International relations in the ancient Near East operated to a great extent within an institutional framework of covenants. Covenants were treaties not only written, but also performed as solemn ceremonial oaths. In this article I provide a preliminary exploration of this theme in light of renewed interest in world history and the ancient Near East in the discipline of International Relations (IR). My suggestion is that balance-of-power explanations could be supplemented by this institutional account in order to make sense of stability in ancient Near Eastern systems of states. Covenants established dyadic arrangements of hierarchy or parity, but they had systemic implications. The institutionalised practice of covenanting relates to a number of peculiarities in the formation of alliances in those systems. It is symptomatic of international societies as defined by the English School of IR theory.

Studying Ancient Near Eastern Diplomacy

Over the last decade or so, the discipline of IR has been increasingly interested in world history and the systems of states in the ancient Near East. Adam Watson's *Evolution of International Society* has operated as a launching pad for several projects on the general relation between world history and IR.[1] Watson's tentative work contains a couple of studies on ancient Near Eastern systems—Sumer and Assyria.[2] His approach is comparative and sensitive to specificities, but one of the most constant elements across ancient systems of

[1] Watson 1992.

[2] Watson's view on Persia goes beyond the chronological scope here.

states, corroborating earlier English School theorising, is their hegemonic disposition legitimised by a shared culture.[3] Watson, of course, was not alone in stressing the hierarchical character of those systems. The literature on historical sociology, state formation, hegemonic stability and imperial overstretch placed similar emphases on the hierarchical character of certain types of stable international orders.[4] The main shortcoming of that literature (hence the added value of Watson's contribution) was the lack of an account of legitimacy and shared understandings as part of the interpretation of stability in cases that (according to mainstream balance-of-power theory) would appear to be counterintuitive at first glance—cases of hierarchical arrangements perceived as mutually advantageous on both sides.

A parallel literature combining IR theory and an in-depth analysis of historical cases has also emerged. Attempts have been made to test mainstream hypotheses on alliance formation and international stability against specific episodes in the context of ancient systems of states.[5] Most of them, however, do not concern the ancient Near East.[6] Stuart Kaufman and William Wohlforth's evaluation of balance-of-power theory in the case of Assyria is a welcome exception, not least because of their conclusion.[7] Facing Assyria's expansionist drive, other great powers most commonly adopted a "balancing" approach, but the "outcome" was "not a balanced system". In fact, balancing was "ineffective" and Assyria rose to prominence. The most rewarded behaviour in that configuration was not balancing, but "submission to Assyrian hegemonic power". There is "no doubt" that Assyria began to rise in an "anarchical system", yet managed to turn it into a "clearly unipolar" structure that remained stable for a long time, "nearly half the system's lifespan".[8] The Assyrian case is merely one example. While it is true that no imperial polity in the ancient Near East achieved the status of a fully unified *empire*, many of them did manage to establish localised hierarchical arrangements with other polities by means of *vassal* covenants—an institutionalisation not of the balance of power, but of a policy of bandwagoning.

Recently, a number of specialist studies on the operation of ancient Near Eastern systems of states have also appeared. Mario Liverani's seminal work based on careful analysis of primary sources looks at five centuries of inter-

[3] See Wight 1977; Bull and Watson 1984.
[4] Mann 2012; Gilpin 1983; Doyle 1986.
[5] Kaufman, Little and Wohlforth 2007.
[6] Wohlforth *et al*. 2007: 155–185.
[7] Kaufman and Wohlforth 2007: 22–46.
[8] Kaufman and Wohlforth 2007: 24, 42–44.

national relations (the Late Bronze age), a period of *balance* pre-dating the concentration of power under Assyria described by Kaufman and Wohlforth.[9] In the Amarna letters on the official dealings of Egypt with other kingdoms, we can find rich documentary evidence for part of the period studied by Liverani.[10] The Amarna system has been studied in depth by a joint team of practitioners, historians and IR scholars and the research findings have been published in a volume edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook. "The most remarkable feature of the Amarna system", they say, "was its survival for more than two hundred years", noting that the structure of that system was "multipolar", while still allowing for a considerable degree of formal hierarchy.[11] Compared to those recent works, Watson's papers on Sumer and Assyria are under-documented, too general and chronologically vague.[12] Another study of the ancient Near East in light of primary evidence and in dialogue with IR is Amanda Podany's *Brotherhood of Kings*.[13] This beautifully written work includes both the Amarna age and the wider period of the Late Bronze age studied by Liverani. Chronologically, it goes beyond, focusing on earlier periods by also addressing more *hierarchical* developments in the Old Babylonian and Early Dynastic periods, including an account of the Akkadian Empire.

Not many students of IR have related the stability of hierarchical arrangements in ancient diplomacy to the institution of covenants, in the form of *suzerain* treaties or *parity* treaties.[14] To be sure, those undertaking interdisciplinary work like Liverani and Podany do highlight the role of suzerainty and parity covenants, and so does the team examining the Amarna letters in detail. Watson barely alludes to the covenant as an institution, and Kaufman and Wohlforth prefer to focus solely on material features of the Assyrian system of states. Historians of political thought David Bederman and Antony Black do more justice to the recurring theme of oaths taken in the form of covenants.[15] Because the covenant as an institution has been so influential in the historical formation of the Hebrew people, and so prominent in the Hebrew Scriptures, several Jewish scholars have stressed its relevance to our

[9] Liverani 2001.
[10] Cohen and Westbrook 2000a. For the primary sources, see Moran 1992.
[11] Cohen and Westbrook 2000b: 234.
[12] But theoretically invaluable. See Buzan and Little 2009: xix–xxx.
[13] Podany 2010.
[14] But see Lafont 2001 on the relevance of diplomatic practices and institutions in general.
[15] Bederman 2001; Black 2009.

understanding of political organisation. Michael Walzer focuses more on the historical and normative influence of the covenant in biblical political thought, whereas Daniel Elazar reinterprets contractualism and identifies a later Western "covenantal tradition" in continuity with the biblical approach.[16]

More relevant to this preliminary article, however, is the literature in Old Testament Studies on the context, literary structure and form criticism of covenants.[17] Many parallels have been identified between the biblical texts describing the relationship Yahweh has with Israel and the covenant diplomatic formulae of the ancient period.[18] Besides, the Old Testament describes covenants made between political leaders along similar lines.[19] This is widely acknowledged by theologians of many persuasions, as well as specialists in ancient languages, archaeologists and historians.[20] In spite of their primary interest in specific biblical passages and their context, these scholars have shed light on relevant aspects of the literary structure and ritual performance of covenant oaths. An accessible popular treatment of the topic has been provided by Delbert Hillers, but George Mendenhall's contribution was the seminal work popularising the topic among the English-speaking audience.[21] Klaus Baltzer, D. J. McCarthy and Ernest Nicholson have also been influential in their introductions to both the topic itself and to the theological and exegetical debate derived from it.[22] Time and again these works posit a relation between the literary structure of covenant formulations and the relations of parity or suzerainty between both parties in a covenant treaty. I shall return to this point later.

A Sketch of the Systemic Features

Contextual details are in order, and I seek to frame and arrange them in a way that makes sense to IR. I employ some of the categories suggested by Barry Buzan and Richard Little in continuity with Watson's work. They combine

[16] Walzer 2012: 1–15; Elazar 1998; 1996.

[17] One of the earliest and most cited works is Korosec 1931.

[18] E.g. Exodus 19:3–6ff. See Muilenburg 1959: 351–357. I am merely pointing out the existence of this parallel, not advancing any theories or criticism about the biblical passages or their chronology.

[19] E.g. Genesis 21:23–24 (between Abraham and Abimelech); Genesis 31:43–54 (between Jacob and Laban). Other examples are 1Kings 5:26 (Solomon and Hiram of Tyre) and 1Kings 15:19 (Asa and Ben-Hadad). See Tucker 1965: 487–503.

[20] Crook 2005: 78–91; Davidson 1989: 323–347; Kline 1997; Weeks 2004.

[21] Hillers 1969; Medenhall 1954: 49–76.

[22] Baltzer 1971; McCarthy 1972; Nicholson 1986.

mechanical and contrived features of international systems and illustrate how their framework of "levels", "sectors" and "sources of behaviour" would apply to longer time-span studies.[23] This seems to be a natural starting point. First, there is the issue of chronological limits. This framework allows me to superficially cover centuries of international relations characterised by the covenantal way of making alliances.[24] Secondly, the theoretical approach allows for degrees of hierarchical arrangements between polities and was particularly designed to counter IR's "anarcophile" tendencies.[25] Thirdly, unlike much of the mainstream literature, the combination of mechanical and contrived aspects highlights the relevance of shared understandings and norms without neglecting other structural features.[26] Watson's theoretical spectrum of authority combined with the role of legitimacy in keeping international societies together is also evoked here in this brief sketch of international relations in the ancient Near East.[27] There is only so much I can do in a sketch, and the intention at this stage is to contextualise the discussion of types and examples of covenant treaties.

The phrase *Near East* describes the Fertile Crescent including the valley of the Nile, Mesopotamia and parts of Anatolia. It is most commonly employed in archaeology and ancient history without the intention of obtaining closure on absolute geographical limits. In terms of chronology, we face all sorts of problems related to multiple theories on how to date events in ancient history. A recent and popular chronology dates the "First Empires and Civilizations" between 3500–800 BC and "The Ancient World" between 800 BC and AD 450.[28] Buzan and Little refer to "The Ancient and Classical World", noting the appearance of Sumerian written records around 3000 BC, preceded by settlements from around 3500 BC.[29] Podany dates the events in her study from 2500 to 1300 BC with the caveat that "all scholars use educated guesses".[30] Liverani's contribution partly overlaps but covers more of a later period, from 1600 to 1100 BC. With Podany and Liverani, Cohen and Westbrook locate the Amarna age between around 1400 and 1300 BC. Watson, as well as Kaufman and Wohlforth, go even further and provide an account of the later period of

[23] Buzan and Little 2000: 68–89.
[24] Buzan and Little 2000: 1–13, 30–32.
[25] Buzan and Little 2000: 21–22.
[26] Buzan and Little 2000: 41–48.
[27] Watson 1990: 99–109.
[28] Marriott 2012: 11–35.
[29] Buzan and Little 2000: 170–173.
[30] Podany 2010: xi.

Assyrian domination, 900–600 BC. Again, it is hard to be more precise in this sketch. I will emphasise the earlier periods between the extreme dates covered in this literature. During this period, the system expanded, interaction became more straightforward, processes and structures changed, but the institution of covenanting remained.

Nevertheless, given the regularity and intensity of interaction, we may speak of a series of systems of city-states encompassing the whole period. While city-states (of both simple and imperial varieties) were the predominant units shaping the ancient Near Eastern systems, we should not discount the potential of nomadic groups to cause aggressive damage or to support those city-states with their trade.[31] City-states were characterised by a central urban area surrounded by irrigated farmland.[32] From 3000 BC onwards a system of loose city-states emerged in Sumeria. Sargon of Akkad, many centuries later, was responsible for the initial success of the "imperial" variety of city-states, absorbing peripheral city-states in stable hierarchical arrangements with the core.[33] This type of political unit would prevail especially after the formation of Hammurabi's empire in Babylonia (around 1700 BC).[34]

Buzan and Little suggest at least four different aspects or *sectors* worth mentioning in connection to the *interaction capacity*, *process* and *structure*. The military sector emphasises offensive and defensive capabilities and perceptions of other actors' intentions. The political sector adds to the military. Both place heavy emphasis on the primary political units and their governments.[35] Buzan and Little lump these two sectors together in their description of durable patterns in the ancient world.[36] "Military forces tended to reflect the type of political economy from which they sprang, with nomadic peoples developing fast-moving light cavalry, and agrarian civilizations cultivating the arts of infantry and fortification".[37] City-states were very centralised, and ruled by a king. In their hierarchical arrangements with peripheral city-states, imperial city-states would still leave local rule to the local king.

In terms of the economic sector, production and trade are the most relevant features when we look at the ancient Near East.[38] Nomadic groups and mer-

[31] See Crawford 1991: 10–11.
[32] Miles 2011: 3–15.
[33] Roux 1992: 145–160.
[34] Watson 1992: 28–32.
[35] Buzan and Little 2000: 73.
[36] Buzan and Little 2000: 216–219.
[37] Buzan and Little 2000: 218.
[38] Buzan and Little 2000: 73–74.

chants played a crucial role bringing luxury goods and raw materials from distant locations. Diplomatic gift exchanges between kings should not be completely framed as a merely political gesture and would also be a channel of trade in disguise.[39] Covenant treaties were extremely useful in military-political and, to a lesser extent, economic terms. They provided a stable and predictable environment for conflict and cooperation among city-states.

The societal sector is also pertinent to the study of covenants, and involves collective identity and transmission of ideas.[40] The notion of an "intertwined or parallel" relation between the "heavenly realm" and everyday life on earth was a shared cultural element.[41] With specific variations, the general perception was that the gods, each with their respective issue of jurisdiction, ruled divine and human affairs in some sort of assembly. Their decision-making was more or less coordinated by a more restricted pantheon of great gods, like Anu, Enlil (Sumer), Marduk (Babylonia), Ashur (Assyria) and El (Ugarit).[42] Human beings (and their city-states) existed to serve the gods in their task of organising the universe.[43] The gods delegated kingship to the heads of each city-state in order to advance political order and justice.[44] The gods were "primarily attached to specific geographic territories", and each city-state would have a main patron god.[45] Reflecting the heavenly realm, the international system was seen primarily as a system of kings coordinated by powerful Great Kings. The decline of a Great King and his city-state would be interpreted as a change in the hierarchical configuration between the deities. This parallel between heaven and earth was reflected also in a familial metaphor in diplomatic language, another important cultural aspect shared across the ancient Near Eastern systems.[46] Kings in a relation of parity would see themselves as *brothers*. Kings in a hierarchical arrangement would relate as *father* and *son*.[47] The status attached to these familial labels was supposed to reflect the power relations between city-states, which, in turn, reflected the rotation

[39] And vice-versa. See Podany 2010: 102; she describes how Shamshi-Adad, king of Upper Mesopotamia during the Old Babylonian period, portrayed a trade exchange as a gift and tribute from a foreign king for purposes of internal propaganda.
[40] Buzan and Little 2000: 73.
[41] Walton 2006: 87.
[42] Walton 2006: 92–97.
[43] See Block 2000: 61, 82.
[44] Walton 2006: 137–138.
[45] Block 2000: 32.
[46] Podany 2010: 28–32.
[47] Beckman 2006: 281.

of arbiter-gods in the pantheon.[48] Great Kings indeed had more formal and *de facto* prerogatives. The language and structure in covenant treaties further reflects and crystallises these relations.

When we study a particular international system, the combination of these different sectors can provide a rich description of the interaction capacity of the political units, the processes in which they engage and the structures within which the system is embedded. *Interaction capacity* comprises the amount of interaction that could potentially take place. Geography and technology (both physical and social) are key considerations here.[49] Desert, mountains and limited technology on land, sea and rivers, made certain types of interaction difficult and cost-ineffective, but not impossible. Messengers, diplomacy (aided by script and a shared official language) and expeditions to demarcate borders were social technologies of that time relevant to the context of covenant treaties.[50]

Process adds to interaction capacity as another source of explanation for international behaviour. It consists of the interactions themselves, whether cooperative or adversarial. War was, of course, a recurring practice, but the highly developed system of diplomatic communications, gift exchanges and royal marriages, together with the practice of covenant oaths, kept warfare in check.[51] The practice of disciplining recalcitrant vassal-kings with military intervention and eventual deportation of the locals was not uncommon, but it was not cost-effective either. Great Kings would rather try to punish them first with a fine, and then with more concrete sanctions.[52] Processes of cooperation were also available with other types of political units. Merchant groups would get permission to settle for some time in a given city-state as a "trading diaspora" and operate as a channel for luxury and necessary goods.[53] There are records of attempts to establish trade and covenant treaties with merchant delegations.

[48] Watson 1992: 27–28.
[49] Buzan and Little 2000: 12.
[50] Buzan and Little 2000: 193–215.
[51] Liverani 2000: 15–27; Westbrook 2000: 28–41; Bederman 2001: Chap. 6.
[52] The episode recorded in the Old Testament book of 2Kings 18 illustrates the point that even at a later stage (when greater 'interaction capacity' was available to lower some of the costs) the initial preference was not for direct violent confrontation. Assyria's Sennacherib challenges his vassal Hezekiah of Judah, who was seeking an alliance with Egypt, forbidden under Assyria's terms. Sennacherib first requires tribute as a fine. Hezekiah persists in disobedience, so Sennacherib surrounds Jerusalem and sends his envoys to denounce Hezekiah in the local language, in an attempt to undermine his local authority, before going to battle. The episode is also recorded in the Assyrian Sennacherib Prism document.
[53] Podany 2010: 103–107.

Process can follow certain well-defined patterns, thus hinting at *structures* shaping and shoving them. "Structure focuses on the principles by which units are arranged into a system, how units are differentiated from each other, and how they stand in relation to each other in terms of relative capabilities".[54] Gary Beckman provides a useful long-term portrait of the structural configuration of international systems in the ancient Near East. During the third millennium BC Sumer was extremely fragmented, despite sharing common norms and culture. It was a "polyadic" system. The second millennium was "bloc-imperial", with a club of Great Powers operating as imperial city-states, "struggling with one another for dominance over minor states". The system was "generally dominated at any one time by three or four large states, which competed among themselves for hegemony over the many smaller political units located in their interstices".[55] One key point here is the hierarchical arrangement of an imperial city-state and its vassals. The central city-state would have direct control over its territory, but a radial relation of authority would develop from the centre to the periphery. *Dominion* could perhaps be the next ring of authority, whereby the imperial city-state would control both the ally's foreign policy and some of its internal politics. *Hegemony*, or control over another city-state's foreign policy while leaving its internal politics intact would constitute the outer ring.[56] Outside those rings of authority (i.e. outside the imperial system) one would find other political units, perhaps similar imperial cities, as rivals. Key imperial city-states of the period were: Egypt and Babylonia (more often), Mittanni, Hatti and Assyria. Finally, the first millennium was in general more centralised, an "oecumenical-imperial" age with the succession of hegemonies exercised by Assyria, Babylonia and the Archamenid Persians.[57] The intermediate period (bloc-imperial) is better documented in terms of covenant treaties.

Covenant Treaties and Oaths

Covenants were not only treaty texts, but also oaths performed in a solemn ceremony. At least two elements are generally present in these treaty texts: the stipulations and the oaths invoking deities as witnesses. Beckman provides a

[54] Buzan and Little 2000: 84.
[55] Beckman 2006: 279–281.
[56] For a theoretical framework, see Buzan and Little 2009: xxv–xxix; Watson 1990. For an application of this framework to ancient systems of states, see Buzan and Little 2000: 176–182.
[57] Beckman 2006: 279–280.

full list of the treaties available for research. There are only three from the third millennium BC (if we include the famous Stele of the Vultures), several from the second millennium (and most of them Hittite, some from Mari) and a good number from the first millennium (mostly involving Assyria).[58] They were written by scribes on clay, but occasionally on stone and metal.[59] Of course, besides these texts, one should not fail to notice a number of passages in the Hebrew Scriptures displaying similar features. Many schemes have been suggested to summarise the most recurring points of covenant treaty texts.[60] The important conclusion is that they are highly stylised and contain clearly discernible sections, which may be omitted in any combination at times—except, of course, for the substance of the treaties (stipulations and oaths).[61] It also matters whether a treaty is *symmetrical* or *hierarchical*—or, rather, a parity covenant or a suzerain-vassal covenant.

The first section is a *preamble* introducing the parties and perhaps additional remarks on the occasion of the treaty. A *parity* formula would carefully stress similar ranks in the description of both parties. Thus the well known Treaty of Kadesh between Hattusili III (Hatti) and Ramses II (Egypt): "The treaty which Ramses, Beloved of Amon, Great King, King of Egypt, Hero, concluded on a tablet of silver with Hattusili, Great King, King of Hatti, his brother, in order to establish great peace and great brotherhood between them forever".[62] A shorter example is the fragment of a parity treaty between Zidanta II (Hatti) and Pilliya of Kizzuwatna: "The Sun, Great King Zidanta, King of Ḥatti, and Pilliya, King of Kizzuwatna have made a (peace) treaty".[63] Symmetry was very important in the recognition of parity. Kings would call each other *brothers* and highlight their status for mutual recognition as peers.

[58] Beckman 2006: Appendix. See also the excellent compilation made by Kitchen and Lawrence 2012.

[59] Charpin 2010: 26–27.

[60] See, for example Mendenhall 1954: 58–61; McCarthy 1972: 12; Beckman 2006: 284–286. In the next few pages I quote a number of primary sources, citing other available English translations. Recent translations are to be preferred where differences are substantial.

[61] Recent readings based on a larger corpus of evidence further confirm the stylized character of covenants. See Kitchen and Lawrence 2012 Vol. 1: xxii–xxv.

[62] Beckman 1996: 91. Beckman warns the reader about some issues with the sources, since the treaty is extant in many versions and more than one language. For another (less accurate) translation of the full passage, see Pritchard 1969: 199–201. For a recent analysis, see Bryce 2006: 1–11.

[63] Adapted from Otten 1951: 129. Beckman could have provided a more accurate translation, but he deliberately omits this treaty from his compilation due to its "relatively poor state of preservation". Beckman 1996: 11.

We read, for instance, in a letter: "Hattusili, Great King, King of Hatti: Say to Kadashman-Enlil, Great King, King of Babylonia, my brother".[64] Compare with the *vassal treaty* between Mursili II (Hatti) and Duppi-Tehshup (Amurru): "Thus says My Majesty, Mursili, Great King of Hatti, Hero, Beloved of the Storm-god; son of Suppiluliuma, Great King, King of Hatti, Hero".[65] Or see the short prologue of another treaty involving Suppiluliuma I himself (Hatti) and Tette (Nuhashshi, near Aleppo): "Thus says My Majesty, Suppiluliuma, Great King, King of Hatti, Hero".[66] The asymmetrical character is stressed by the fact that the "Great King" or "Majesty" ("Sun" in earlier translations) is magnanimously allowing for a treaty covenant to be performed. The vassal-king's name is often omitted in this section. The suzerain-vassal treaty, then, is analogous to a royal grant or domestic decree.[67] It contains the words of the Great King which the vassal thankfully accepts.

A second recurring section is the *historical prologue*, narrating some of the background to that particular treaty. Again from the (parity) Treaty of Kadesh:

> *As far as the relations of the Great King, King of Egypt, and the Great King, King of Hatti, are concerned, from the beginning of time and forever by means of a treaty the god has not allowed the making of war between them. Ramses, Beloved of Amon, Great King, King of Egypt, is doing this in order to bring about the relationship which the Sun-god and the Storm-god established for Egypt with Hatti in accordance with their relationship from the beginning of time, so that for eternity he might not permit the making of war between them.*[68]

Compare with the prologue of the suzerain-vassal treaty between Suppiluliuma I (Hatti) and Niqmaddu II (Ugarit), where the vassal appears more passive and helpless and the suzerain comes to his rescue:

[64] Beckman 1996: 133. For an earlier translation of the full letter, see Luckenbill 1921: 200ff. Notice how the knowledge of the original language has evolved in only a few decades of scholarship.
[65] Beckman 1996: 55. For an earlier translation of the full passage, see Pritchard 1969: 203–205.
[66] Beckman 1996: 50.
[67] Weinfeld 1970; Knoppers 1996. These authors focus on this specific genre of "domestic" policy document.
[68] Beckman 1996: 92; Pritchard 1969: 199–201. The latter suggests a different rendering, perhaps with more weight on a different source.

> *When Itur-Addu, king of the land of Mukish; Addu-nirari, king of the land of Nuhashshi; and Aki-Teshshup, king of Niya were hostile to the authority of His Majesty, the Great King, their lord; assembled their troops; captured cities in the interior of the land of Ugarit; oppressed the land of Ugarit; carried off subjects of Niqmaddu, king of the land of Ugarit, as civilian captives; and devastated the land of Ugarit; Niqmaddu, king of the land of Ugarit, turned to Suppiluliuma, Great King, writing: "May Your Majesty, Great King, my lord, save me from the hand of my enemy! I am the subject of Your Majesty, Great King, my lord. To my lord's enemy I am hostile, and with my lord's friend I am at peace. The kings are oppressing me." The Great King heard these words of Niqmaddu, and Suppiluliuma, Great King, dispatched princes and noblemen with infantry and chariotry to the land of Ugarit. And they chased the enemy troops out of the land of Ugarit.*[69]

Here the Great King reminds his vassal that he is "the lord" and "His Majesty". He is the deliverer of his kingdom and therefore a great debt of gratitude is owed. This contrasts with the parity prologue in which both sides are actively pursuing to cooperate and interact "from the beginning of time", and perhaps they had a history of conflict that is now to be resolved.

The historical prologue, however, can be skipped and the treaty may proceed straightaway to the core sections. Always present, the *stipulations* inform each party of what they were supposed to do. It tells us what substantive agreements are made official by that particular covenant oath. A suzerain-vassal treaty between Suppiluliuma and Shattiwaza (Mittanni) recognises the latter's right to the throne of the satellite state, and includes a royal marriage as part of the stipulations, with a condition:

> *Prince Shattiwaza shall be king in the land of Mittanni, and the daughter of the King of Hatti shall be queen in the land of Mittanni. Concubines will be allowed for you, Shattiwaza, but no other woman shall be greater than my daughter.*[70]

[69] Beckman 1996: 30; Baltzer 1971: 187.

[70] Beckman, 1996: 40; Luckenbill 1921: 166. The earlier rendering is good enough to make the point.

This suggests interference in domestic affairs, characterising a hierarchical relation of dominion according to the theoretical scheme presented before. A common type of clause concerns the suzerain's control over the vassal's foreign policy. Suzerain kings used this to demand active engagement from their subordinates and avoid freeriding. Subordinates, in turn, benefitted from the promise of protection. In parity treaties, stipulations are symmetrical and this is reflected in a mirror-like textual structure, which we can see in this treaty between Idrimi (Alalakh) and Pilliya (Kizzuwatna):

> *When Pilliya and Idrimi took an oath by the gods and made this binding agreement between themselves: they will always return their respective fugitives (...) If Idrimi seizes a fugitive of Pilliya, he will return him to Pilliya, and if Pilliya seizes a fugitive of Idrimi, he will return to Idrimi.*[71]

As far as we can tell, some treaties are unequal and still present a mirrored structure. The treaty between Ebla and Abarsal, regulating a number of things from trade to migration, is one of the most ancient examples:

> *If someone from the border of Abarsal tries to take the place of (a subject of) Ebla; if he himself, from the border of Abarsal, is (a subject of) Abarsal, he shall die. If someone from the border of Ebla tries to take the place of (a subject of) Abarsal; if he himself, from the border of Ebla, is (a subject of) Ebla, he shall die (...). As concerns the merchants of Ebla, Abarsal will let them come back (safely). As concerns the merchants of Abarsal, Ebla will let them come back (safely).*[72]

Most of the other stipulations seem to burden Abarsal much more than Ebla, hence its unequal character. However, promises and stipulations in the ancient Near East would be unilaterally made by each side on separate documents, and then exchanged. Perhaps there are reciprocal promises on Ebla's part that may be missing. Going beyond this and calling it a parity treaty would be to speculate too much. In any case, stipulations are substantive clauses of the treaty. We may say they are the content of the treaty. They tell us what is at stake.

[71] Pritchard 2011: 210.
[72] Milano 1995: 1228; Cooper 2003: 245.

A fourth section is definitely not a universal feature in the ancient Near Eastern treaties, but frequently appears in Hittite texts. It contains *provisions for deposit* of the tablet in temples and perhaps public reading to the court or the wider population:

> *A duplicate of this tablet has been deposited before the Sun-goddess of Arinna, because the Sun-goddess of Arinna regulates kingship and queenship. In the Mittanni land (a duplicate) has been deposited before Tessub [Beckman: the Storm-god], the lord of the kurinnu [shrine] of Kahat. At regular intervals [Beckman: repeatedly, for ever and ever] shall they read it in the presence of the king of the Mittanni land and in the presence of the sons of the Hurri country.*[73]

This passage, taken from the treaty between Suppiluliuma I and Shattiwaza is instructive. Despite the asymmetrical and hierarchical character of the treaty, both parties are still required to remember it. Again, both sides benefitted from the procedure. "Since it was not only the vassal king, but his entire state which was bound by the treaty", says Mendenhall, "periodic public reading served a double purpose: first, to familiarize the entire populace with the obligations to the great king; and second, to increase the respect for the vassal king by describing the close and warm relationship with the mighty and majestic Emperor which he enjoyed".[74]

Also markedly present in all treaties is the *oath*, containing a series of names of deities as witnesses. The deities were above even the Great King—even hierarchical covenant forms make the Great King subject to the gods mentioned in the oath. Some Assyrian treaties may be seen as a partial exception, in that only the gods of Assyria are mentioned. The oaths, calling upon the deities as witnesses in this manner, characterise a crucial distinction between covenants and other contracts of the period. Contracts were not sworn utterances, but oral agreements witnessed in court. Kings are only before the heavenly court. Only the gods could witness covenants, which were solemnly sworn.[75]

[73] Hillers 1969: 35, with some of the spelling changed. This translation is very similar to that provided in Beckman 1996: 42; contrast with Luckenbill 1921: 168–169.
[74] Mendenhall 1954: 60.
[75] Tucker 1965: 500–503.

There are punishments and possibly rewards depending on how the treaty covenant is enforced. The gods often play the role of not only witnesses but also guarantors of the treaty. The striking feature in any case is that the *sanctions* explicitly contained in the treaties are not military or economic—they are religious. They involve curses and blessings from the gods. A short combination of threatened curses and promised blessings can be found in the treaty between Mursili II and Tuppi-Teshshup, already mentioned above:

> *All the words of the treaty and oath which are written on this tablet—if Tuppi-Teshshup does not observe these words of the treaty and of the oath, then these oath gods shall destroy Tuppi-Teshshup, together with his person, his wife, his son, his grandsons, his household, his city, his land, and together with his possessions. But if Tuppi-Teshshup observes these words of the treaty and of the oath which are written on this tablet, then these oath gods shall protect Tuppi-Teshshup, together with his person, his wife, his son, his grandsons, his city, his land, his household, his subjects, and together with his possessions.*[76]

A more elaborate list of curses is contained in a much later treaty between Esarhaddon (Assyria) and Baal (Tyre):

> *May Ninlil, who resides in Nineveh, "tie you to" a swift dagger. May Ishtar, who resides in Arbela, no grant you mercy and forgiveness. May Gula, the great physician, put illness and weariness in your hearts, an unhealing sore in your body, bathe in your own blood as if in water. May the seven gods, the warrior gods, cause your downfall with their fierce weapons. May Bethel and Anath-Bethel deliver you to a man-eating lion. May the great gods of heaven and earth, the gods of Assyria, the gods of Akkad, and the gods of Eber-nari curse you with an indissoluble curse.*[77]

The list of curses and sometimes blessings should not be taken lightly. To the contrary, "the authority of these agreements rested on the oath-gods and their

[76] Beckman 1996: 59; Pritchard 1969: 205.
[77] Pritchard 2011: 534.

threats of retribution in case of violation", and "these oaths were indeed felt to be effective".[78]

A covenant treaty, however, was not ratified in writing. In fact, the covenant itself is not a piece of text. The text represented and reminded the monarchs of the covenant, but it was the actual ceremonial event of the oath that made the treaty binding.[79] The specifics of the ceremony depended on the case, but it could involve animal sacrifice, or some other symbolic dedication of animals to the deities.[80] In the Stele of the Vultures, for example, the oath is performed and two doves are sacrificed to be "eaten for Enlil" as part of the ritual.[81] Sometimes, especially at later periods, cutting up an animal would be symbolic of what could happen to the king who violated the agreement:

> *This ram was not taken from its flock for sacrifice (...) if Mati'ilu (shall violate) the covenant and oath to the gods, then, as this ram, which was taken from its flock and to its flock will not return, and at the head of its flock shall not stand, so Mati'ilu with his sons (ministers), the men of his city, shall be taken from their city, and to his city he shall not return, and at the head of his city he shall not stand (...) if he who is specified by name shall violate this covenant (...) as the head of this ram shall be struck off so shall his head be struck off.*[82]

This passage, describing the oath ceremony of a treaty between Ashur-nerari V (Assyria) and Mati'ilu (Arpad), hints also at the important notion of being in danger if one commits perjury.

For thousands of years the institutionalised practice of covenanting was a primordial element of ancient diplomacy in the Near East. As I have sought to indicate with many examples cutting across the centuries of Antiquity and illustrating a range of geopolitical configurations, it was a very particular pattern of diplomatic relations. The long duration of this institution, its contribution to predictability and stability of expectations in ancient systems of states,

[78] Beckman 1996: 288.
[79] Beckman 1996: 295.
[80] Hillers 1969: 40. However, some think the sacrificial aspect is "highly conjectural"; Weeks 2004: 18.
[81] Weinfeld 1970: 197.
[82] Weinfeld 1970: 198.

as well as its occurrence within a shared cultural framework make covenants a very suitable topic to students of world politics.[83] Yet, covenants have been almost completely ignored from historical accounts in IR. It is time to study them in depth, following the example set by historians and legal scholars. Before concluding, I would like to make a number of points about the relevance of covenants for IR from a theoretical and analytical perspective. In contrast with mainstream balance-of-power or even mainstream "hierarchical" views of world politics, I sketch a brief account of covenants as part of a wider "international society".

An International Society?

Under the assumption of conventional balance-of-power theory, one would expect the opposite of a succession of hegemonies in ancient Near Eastern systems of states, yet we see hegemony more as a rule than an exception. Even the Amarna Age, generally seen as "balanced", follows this alternative pattern. In the well-documented Amarna archives we find "no attempt on anyone's part to use force or the threat of force, as balance of power logic entails (…). Surprisingly, in modern terms, the major powers did not try to balance each other by means of alliances". In their alliance formation, smaller units in those systems opted consistently for bandwagoning strategies, and the Great Kings seemed more concerned with status and prestige "rather than (…) in a complex regulation of the balance of power".[84]

Under different assumptions, however, international relations would indeed be expected to be hierarchical (to a certain extent) for most part of the time and the information on the ancient Near East gathered from primary and secondary sources should come as no surprise. Still, why would the smaller units in the system consistently opt for being under hegemonic influence instead of forming counter-hegemonic alliances pressing for a more independent existence? The question has been answered with reference to *mechanical* and *contrived* categories. Mechanically speaking, we could look at what either side of a hierarchical dyad would gain from the arrangement and come to the conclusion that both would benefit from self-restraint. The hegemon spread the "costs of empire" while the subordinate gained protection and perhaps additional trade-related advantages. This explanation has been pursued more than

[83] Needless to say, this challenges a more "Hobbesian" view of the period. See, for example, the introductory comments in Bryce 2006: 1–2.
[84] Ragionieri 2000: 50–51.

once for other periods in history.[85] Moreover, we could look at the limited "interaction capacity" of the city-states and conclude that the available technology could not handle the constant and rapid flow of information required by a balance-of-power mechanism.[86]

In terms of contrived action, there is no evidence of practitioners being persuaded that the balance-of-power could be a useful tool of statecraft. Rodolfo Ragionieri's full examination of the Amarna correspondence confirms the point.[87] However, as my analysis of the assumptions and practices of covenanting seem to indicate, there is some evidence of shared norms, values and notions of legitimacy lending stability to hierarchical arrangements.[88] We may thus speak of an "international society" in which "a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions".[89] This society operated at a more "reciprocal" level between the Great Kings, but was certainly "hierarchical" within each "imperial city-state" system.[90] The common assumption that earthly kingship had to reflect the hierarchical division in the heavenly realm between greater deities and lesser gods certainly made it easier for subordinates to accept their position.[91] This principle is confirmed, for example, by "transition" cases in which a formerly powerful kingdom has to accept its new role in the "brotherhood of kings" with fewer prerogatives. Sometimes this "transition" would even be reflected in "hybrid" covenant treaty forms.[92]

Watson's studies on Sumer and Assyria explicitly relate kingship and polytheism to the principles of legitimacy in ancient international societies. Black has analysed the political thought of the period and summarised the parallels between "heavenly" politics, "domestic" politics and "international" politics in the following statement: "When someone rose to be king, it was because

[85] For recent attempts, see Escudé 2009; Lake 2009. Hobson 2012 has attempted to show that in fact most international political theories in modernity have drawn on hierarchical assumptions.
[86] Ragionieri 2000: 51.
[87] Ragionieri 2000: 51.
[88] See Watson 1992: 120–132; Weeks 2004: 11–12. Following different methods, both authors allude to fear, sense of duty and political utility as possible sources of international order and enforcement.
[89] Bull 1977: 13.
[90] Liverani 2000.
[91] Bederman 2001: 23–31.
[92] Liverani 2004: 53–81.

he had the favour of the gods. When one city-state conquered others, it was because its god had been singled out at the assembly of gods".[93] A more detailed case has been made for the portrayal of the ancient Near Eastern system of Amarna as a proto-international society. Ragionieri argued against the balance-of-power as an institution, but diplomacy and war were certainly patterned to pursue the "common goals" of an international society.[94] He defined the shared interests of the Great Kings and of the vassal-kings as "maintenance of domestic stability", and the mutual recognition of right to rule and rank as the primary construction of legitimate participation in that society. He claims that states "were thought of as synonymous with the person of the ruler" and, as a conclusion, there was no clear distinction between domestic and international realms and, by implication, no international society in the strictest sense.[95] This view is a relevant attempt to make sense of the evidence in light of contemporary IR theory, but it has to be corrected.

First, Ragionieri misses the very important point that, in the common perception of the period, "the king stood outside society and delivered justice to it." The "language and concepts" employed then to refer to political realities stipulate "that the gods had established not just individual rulers but an *institution*, with specific functions, which would outlast individual rulers".[96] My preliminary findings on the practice of covenanting seem to corroborate the distinction between king and country. It is true that the covenants were personal, but the king is above any other individual—he acts as the covenant-head or *mediator* of the city-state. The performance of a covenant oath and the literary structure of covenant treaties markedly differentiate from private contracts before courts, in that kings, regardless of a parity or hierarchical situation, perceive themselves as being before the gods.

Secondly, Ragionieri suggests that the Amarna system was the first proto-society in history, a statement denied by the fact that the highly institutionalised practice of covenanting was already present many centuries before.[97] In my view, we need to be open to the hypothesis that covenanting had been embedded in pre-existent international societies. Further study would require

[93] Black 2009: 39.

[94] War and diplomacy can, and often do, go together in an international society. Discussing the Sumerian city-states, Paul Kriwaczek describes "a scene of almost incessant strife", but does not deny that "the contenders for Sumerian superiority were all aware, even proud, of sharing a common culture and a common history." The author then proceeds to a brief description of alliance formation during the third millennium BC; Kriwaczek 2010: 77–79.

[95] Ragionieri 2000: 46–52; see also Cohen 1996: 11–28.

[96] Black 2009: 36–38.

[97] Ragionieri 2000: 42–46.

looking at other primary sources (as I have done by quoting Hittite treaties at length in this preliminary exploration) beside the Amarna letters.

Finally, although domestic stability was certainly a shared interest of that society, we also need to add to the list those interests related to the practitioners' perception of their role. "Each city-state was regarded as the estate of a particular deity", says Black. "If the gods were to get the sustenance and reverence they wanted from earth, there had to be order in society and the people must be governed. The human king was the god's estate manager (*ensi*), employed by the god to look after the land and its people, for the god's and the people's well-being".[98] Covenants were not only ways of crystallising "domestic stability" (for they implied mutual acknowledgement of legitimate rule), but also means of keeping the "estate manager" of a locality "in charge", reflecting as far as possible the desire of the gods. And, of course, they would codify and formalise any hierarchy between Great Kings and vassal-kings, further reflecting the situation in the "heavenly realms". Take, as evidence, the language of Sun (Majesty), Great King and the metaphors of brother, father and son contained in the covenant treaties.

The stability and order produced by that international society, therefore, as well as its specific rules of "reciprocity" and "hierarchy" and institutions can add further explanations for the systemic patterns observed in the ancient Near East. Oath ceremonies as part of covenant treaties would reproduce the whole system of rules and norms each time they were performed. The regular reading of covenant tablets, before the king's court or to a wider audience, would further contribute to the social construction of that international society. Were these rules followed? Were agreements kept? It would appear so. Why?

> *Ancient people conceived of three different kinds of sanctions applicable in international relations (...). The first was divine sanction, based on a fear of direct punishment by the god or gods invoked in an international undertaking (...). Secondly, there was a social sanction enforced through the rituals, institutions and political legitimacy of the ancient State, and manifested by a fear that the national god or gods would abandon that State to its enemies (...). The third was an intellectual sanction, developed through legal argumentation and rhetoric, motivated by fear of being deprived of a moral right and freedom of action.*[99]

[98] Black 2009: 36.
[99] Bederman 2001: 50–51.

We have seen much about the first point (divine sanctions) in this study. Further research on the topic should account for the content and meaning of the curse lists in the treaties in order to shed light on the second point, the divine threat to abandon a covenant-breaking land.[100] On the third and last point—moral right—we have the Amarna letters suggesting that the metaphor of brotherhood shared by the practitioners in that system "was not an empty formula but a solemn bond entailing far-reaching political consequences".[101] Official correspondence of the period serves as the best evidence here. Hence, future analysis of this final aspect of enforcement will require research on sources other than treaties.

Final Remarks

In this article I have provided a preliminary exploration of covenanting as an institution of ancient Near Eastern international society. Covenant oaths were embedded in a wider normative, cultural and religious context. The shared belief that the gods would punish treaty violations can be a starting-point to explain *good faith* and the durability of a stable international society over that long period. It would answer why small political units could trust bandwagoning as a strategy of survival in the long run. My suggestion, only tentative at this point, is that balance-of-power explanations could be supplemented by an international society account in order to make sense of stability in those ancient systems of states. Covenants established dyadic arrangements of hierarchy or parity, but they had systemic implications: the Great King's vassals could not fight each other or join another Great King. The notion of brotherhood of kings and the details of oath curses should provide further insight into the long institutional life of covenants in ancient international relations. My suspicion is that even an English School theoretical framework that places social and cultural features at the centre, focusing on rules, norms and shared interests, would have to be adjusted to make room for the fiduciary aspect. *Religion*, in the case presented here, should be distinguished from mere *culture* and *shared values*. It is the realm of *ultimate trust*. Erasing religion from the account, or reducing it to another category, would dilute its dramatic background presence keeping things together in ancient Near Eastern international society.

[100] A similar suggestion may be found in Lafont 2001: 44.
[101] Cohen 1996: 16.

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EL LEÓN Y LAS AVES: ISAÍAS 31:4–5
A LA LUZ DE NUEVAS INSCRIPCIONES NEO-ASIRIAS*

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Resumen: El león y las aves: Isaías 31:4–5 a la luz de nuevas inscripciones neo-asirias

Este artículo estudia los motivos literarios del león y las aves que aparecen en Isaías 31:4–5, que aparecen asociados al accionar de Yahvé durante el sitio de Jerusalén por Senaquerib. Divergiendo de anteriores interpretaciones, se relacionarán estos motivos con la fraseología típica presente en las inscripciones reales neo-asirias.

Palabras Clave: Libro de Isaías – Jerusalén – asirios – león – aves

Summary: The Lion and the Birds: Isaiah 31:4–5 in the light of Neo-Assyrian Inscriptions

This article investigates the literary motives of the lion and birds present in Isaiah 31:4–5, which appear associated with Yahweh's actions during the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib. Contrary to previous interpretations, these motives will be related with the traditional phraseology present in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions.

Keywords: Book of Isaiah – Jerusalem – Assyrians – Lion – Birds

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A mi querido estudiante Mordechai Siev

יְהִי כְבוֹד תַּלְמִידְךָ חָבִיב עָלֶיךָ כִּשֶׁלָּךְ
(*M. ʾAvot* 4:15)

Isaías 31:4–5 dice:

כִּי כֹה אָמַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי כַּאֲשֶׁר יֶהְגֶּה הָאַרְיֵה וְהַכְּפִיר עַל-טַרְפּוֹ
עָלָיו יִקָּרֵא אֲשֶׁר מָלְא רֹעִים ,לֹא מִקּוֹלָם יֵחָת ,לֹא וּמֶהָמוֹנָם יַעֲנֶה ;
כֵּן ,יְהוָה יֵרֵד צְבָאוֹת ,לִצְבֹּא עַל-הַר-צִיּוֹן ,וְעַל-גִּבְעָתָהּ.
כְּצִפֳּרִים עָפוֹת - יָגֵן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת כֵּן ,עַל-יְרוּשָׁלָם ;
גָּוֹנן וְהַצִּיל ,פָּסֹחַ וְהִמְלִיט

La Biblia de Jerusalén traduce:

> 4. Porque así me ha dicho Yahveh: Como ruge el león y el cachorro sobre su presa, y cuando se convoca contra él a todos los pastores, de sus voces no se intimida, ni de su tumulto se apoca: tal será el descenso de Yahveh Sebaot para guerrear sobre el monte Sión y sobre su colina.
> 5. Como pájaros que vuelan, así protegerá Yahveh Sebaot a Jerusalén, protegerá y librará, perdonará y salvará.

En su comentario sobre Isaías, Clements indica que Isaías 31:4–5 ha "ocasionado una dificultad no menor a los comentaristas"[1]. Estas dificultades están íntimamente relacionadas con la supuestamente inusual y desconcertante combinación de los dos símiles animales: uno relacionado con un león (v. 4) y el otro relacionado con aves (v. 5). De modo similar, tal como observó Childs, "se ha argumentado que los vv. 1–3 son 'auténticos' para Isaías y reflejan una tradición isaítica primaria, excepto por alguna expansión menor. Sin embargo, los vv. 4–5 son considerados irremediablemente incoherentes. El verso 4 habla de un intento divino para destruir Sión, mientras que el v. 5 expresa la posición exactamente opuesta al proclamar la protección de Yahvé"[2]. Bien

[1] Clements 1980: 256.
[2] Childs 2001: 231.

resumido por Childs, hay básicamente tres interpretaciones diferentes de los comentaristas con respecto a la unidad de los vv. 4 y 5.

> a. La interpretación tradicional (AV, RSV, NEB) traduce el verbo לְצָבֵּא עַל de forma positiva, "luchar por", y ve la acción de Yahvé en el v. 4 como parte de la misma acción protectora del v. 5.
> b. Otros comentaristas sugieren eliminar porciones del texto para remover la tensión (Duhm, Scott) o bien sostienen que partes de los vv. 4 y 5 se han perdido (Eichrodt). Varios proponen que la secuencia de los versos debería ser reordenada para eliminar el problema (Procksch).
> c. Recientemente una solución redaccional ha sido defendida con seguridad (Vermeylen, Barth, Clements). De acuerdo a esta interpretación, en una fecha tardía un redactor retroproyectó desde los eventos del año 701 la esperanza de un revés a la fortuna de Jerusalén, cambiando de este modo un oráculo originalmente negativo (v. 4) por un augurio positivo (v. 5)[3].

Childs objeta la primera interpretación, señalando: "el verbo hebreo con su preposición es utilizado sistemáticamente en un sentido negativo, 'luchar contra' (cf. Núm. 31:7; Isa. 29:7, Zac. 14:12)". Asimismo, Childs sostiene: "la imagen del león atacando parece fuera de lugar como un símbolo protector"[4]. Con respecto a la segunda interpretación, Childs afirma: "la gran diversidad de estas enmiendas ilustra solamente el alto nivel de subjetividad involucrada"[5]. Con respecto a la tercera interpretación, Childs rechaza el enfoque redaccional, particularmente la solución ofrecida por Clements, quien retiene el v. 4 como genuinamente isaítica, pero asigna los vv. 5 y 8–9 a un redactor josiánico del siglo VII.

Childs, quien toma el v. 4 en un sentido negativo, interpreta el v. 5 como una etapa tardía en el desarrollo de la tradición, que reinterpreta y transforma el v. 4 en una palabra de promesa. En consonancia con su tratamiento previo de este problema[6], Childs continúa manteniendo la posición de que "ante todo, quisiera insistir en que la traducción del verbo en el v. 4 exige una connotación negativa, 'luchar contra' (cf. NJPS)"[7].

[3] Childs 2001: 232–233.
[4] Childs 2001: 233.
[5] Childs 2001: 233.
[6] Childs 1967: 58.
[7] Childs 2001: 233.

Cheryl Exum[8], aunque afirma que "parece que los versos (4–5) están compuestos desde una perspectiva tanto crítica-formal como literaria", apoya a Childs, quien mantiene "persuasivamente" que el v. 5 representa una adición tardía. Sin embargo, con respecto a la cuestión de la amenaza o la promesa que el v. 4 quizás exhiba, Exum sugiere que el verso quizás describe ambas[9]. Siguiendo la interpretación de Exum como "bastante convincente", G. Eidevall afirma que "la expresión en el v. 4 puede ser vista como potencialmente, o incluso intencionalmente, ambigua"[10]. Asimismo, Eidevall mantiene que "tomada aisladamente con respecto al símil del v. 5, se interpreta con mayor naturalidad como una amenaza. Pero la yuxtaposición de los dos símiles nos obliga a interpretar también el primero como una promesa"[11].

Una interpretación alternativa, pero poco sólida desde el punto de vista filológico y metafórico, es la opinión de W. L. Barré de que "hay cierta evidencia para indicar que el pasaje es una unidad y por lo tanto que los dos símiles van de la mano. En su propósito original, ambos son negativos"[12]. En consecuencia, Barré afirma que a la luz de "*yērēd*…*ʿal* en el símil del león, el significado de *yāgēn*…*ʿal* en Isa 31:5 es evidente. Significa '(descender e) iluminar sobre'". A saber, Barré, a partir del arameo y el siríaco, nos ofrece un nuevo significado del hebreo *gnnʿl*: "descender, venir, descansar sobre"[13] y no "proteger". Por consiguiente, de acuerdo con Barré, Dios es representado en el v. 5 como aves (de rapiña) volando que descenderán e iluminarán sobre Jerusalén. Con respecto a las últimas cuatro palabras del v. 5, Barré las considera "una adición editorial"[14]. La interpretación de Barré es completamente inaceptable, ya que no logra mostrar que a) *gnnʿl* significa "descender sobre", b) Dios nunca es comparado o presentado en la Biblia Hebrea con la imagen de "un ave de rapiña", y c) considerar los cuatro últimos verbos del v. 5 (*gānôn whiṣṣil pāsōaḥ whimlîṭ*) como adiciones editoriales se hace claramente para mejorar la dudosa interpretación de Barré.

[8] Exum 1981: 337.
[9] Exum 1981: 338.
[10] Eidevall 1993: 79.
[11] Eidevall 1993: 82.
[12] Barré 1993: 57.
[13] Barré 1993: 58.
[14] Barré 1993: 59.

Con respecto al símil del león (v. 4), corroborado por varios comentaristas modernos, es claramente negativo, a saber, Dios descenderá como un león o león joven se abalanza sobre su presa para luchar contra el Monte Sión y contra su colina. Por otro lado, aquellos académicos que ven la imagen del león como positiva sostienen que aquí la imagen es de un león que protege a su presa de aquellos que pretenden llevársela. "El león no permitirá a nadie robar aquello que le pertenece a él"[15]. Estos académicos comparan este comportamiento con la determinación del Señor de defender la ciudad, que le pertenece a él.

Con respecto al símil de las aves volando (v. 5), más de un comentarista ha observado que "los pájaros que vuelan" es difícilmente una figura transparente de protección. Como observó Exum, "aunque el significado preciso del motivo de las aves revoloteando puede ser cuestionado, la serie de imágenes protectoras que lo acompañan (*gānôn whiṣṣil pāsōaḥ whimlîṭ*) hacen indisputable y enfático su simbolismo defensivo"[16]. El símil de los "pájaros que vuelan" era entendido básicamente en cuatro formas: a) como aves de rapiña defendiendo su presa; b) como aves de rapiña que descenderán y atacarán Jerusalén; c) como aves-madre protegiendo a su cría en el nido; d) como aves asustadas huyendo del peligro.

Completamente ignorados por los comentaristas bíblicos modernos mencionados anteriormente, los exegetas judíos medievales consideran Isa. 31:4–5 como una unidad inseparable, interpretando los símiles del león y de los "pájaros que vuelan" como oráculos positivos, una profecía de salvación isaítica que defiende Jerusalén de la amenaza asiria.

Con respecto a la insistencia de Childs de que צבא על en Isa. 31:4 significa "luchar contra", i.e., el Señor desciende para luchar contra Judá, Tg. J lo entiende como: (טורא דציון ועל רמתה) לְמִשְׁרֵי עַל, "descansar sobre (el Monte Sión y su colina)", hacer la guerra contra los atacantes asirios. De modo similar, Qimḥi observa כי האל ירד עליה לצבא צבא כנגד צבא מחנה אשור, "y el Señor descenderá sobre ella para luchar contra el ejército del campamento asirio". Asimismo, José Kara afirma: על מחנה אשור (el Señor descenderá…para luchar) "contra el campamento asirio". Por el símil de los "pájaros que vuelan", la mayoría de los exegetas judíos medievales, tales como Ibn-Ezra, José Kara, e Isaías de Miteran, son de la opinión de que las aves están volando y protegiendo a su cría en el nido. Por otra

[15] Exum 1981: 338.
[16] Exum 1981: 338.

parte, Qimḥi, citando a su padre, afirma: המשיל מלאך ה׳ אשר הכה מחנהו לאריה בגבורתו ולצפרים עפות במהירותו, (mi padre) "comparó al mensajero del señor que aniquiló el campamento asirio con un león en su poder y con aves volando en su rapidez".

Los estudios bíblicos modernos concuerdan en que el contexto histórico de Isaías 31 debe ubicarse en el mismo período general de 705–701 a.C., previo a la invasión de Senaquerib[17]; sin incluir Isa. 31:5, Isa. 31:4, sin embargo, debería situarse muy probablemente en el mismo momento, aquel de la amenaza a Jerusalén de parte del ejército de Senaquerib. En nuestra opinión, Isa. 31:5 también refleja la amenaza asiria y no debería considerarse una adición tardía como establecen la mayoría de los comentaristas bíblicos modernos.

Por lo tanto, el objetivo del presente artículo es mostrar que Isa. 31:4–5 es una unidad inseparable. Estos dos símiles, que dieron a los estudios bíblicos modernos dificultades como una "inusual y desconcertante combinación de metáforas animales"[18], podrían ser clarificados a la luz de las inscripciones reales asirias, especialmente aquellas de Senaquerib.

En 1969, el semitista H. W. F. Saggs, en su conferencia inaugural "Assyriology and the Study of the Old Testament"[19], pronunciada en el University College Cardiff, observó que:

> *El mismo profeta Isaías, en cuyo tiempo el poder imperial y la influencia cultural asiria estaban en su punto máximo, mostró un agudo interés por los asuntos e incluso por algunos rasgos de la cultura de asiria, que él aclamó como instrumento de Dios, dirigido contra una nación sin dios. Sus intereses parecen haberse extendido de la teología a la filología semítica comparativa, ya que encontramos al profeta haciendo un juego de palabras sobre correspondencias entre el vocabulario hebreo y el acadio. Atribuye al imperio asirio el haber dicho "¿no son mis comandantes todos reyes?" (Isa 10:8). La respuesta literal a esta pregunta retórica era—como Isaías bien sabía—que no lo eran. Isaías estaba mostrando su erudición lingüística, ya que la palabra en acadio para "rey" era, en el dialecto asirio de los tiempos de Isaías, un homófono para la palabra hebrea "comandante"; de*

[17] Childs 1967: 58; 2001: 232–233.
[18] Eidevall 1993: 79.
[19] Saggs 1969.

modo que llamar a un comandante asirio por su título correcto en hebreo era llamarlo rey en su propia lengua.

En 1979, Chaim Cohen en su artículo "Neo-Assyrian Elements in the First Speech of the Biblical Rab-Šāqê"[20], identificó varios elementos que tienen paralelos en los anales neo-asirios. En 1982, Peter Machinist, en un extenso artículo titulado "Assyria and its Image in the First Isaiah"[21], observó seis ejemplos específicos donde la fraseología de las inscripciones reales asirias está reflejada en Isaías, cuando describe al feroz ejército asirio. Asimismo, en 1982 Hayim Tawil, en su artículo "The Historicity of 2 Kings 19:24 (=Isaiah 37:25): The Problem of *Yeʾōrê Māṣôr*"[22], señaló también que Isaías estaba familiarizado con los asuntos domésticos de Senaquerib. En 1999, en su libro "Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah"[23], William Gallagher observó varios paralelos asirios-Isaíticos. Shawn Aster publicó dos artículos[24] demostrando algunos paralelos que indican que Isaías estaba familiarizado tanto con las ideas halladas en las inscripciones reales neo-asirias como con las frases estereotipadas y el lenguaje característico que allí aparece.

A la luz de estos paralelos asirios-isaíticos altamente específicos, podríamos proceder a analizar Isa. 31:4–5. En efecto, estos dos versos demostrarán que Isaías está empleando el motivo de la teología inversa o de reemplazo.

Es bien conocido que en sus anales los reyes asirios se comparaban con un león rugiente, que simboliza poder, gran fuerza y audacia. Asurnasirpal II se jacta de ser *labbāku u zikrāku*, "soy un león y un guerrero"[25]. Asarhadón se describe a sí mismo como *labbu nadru mutīr gimil abī ālidišu*, "un león rugiente, quien venga a su propio padre"[26] (i.e., Senaquerib). Más específicamente, en los anales neo-asirios, en un contexto de guerra, los adverbios *labbiš* y *kīma labbi*, "como un león" son usados para describir a Sargón, quien marcha orgullosamente contra sus enemigos, como un león rugiente cargado de terror: *ina uggat libbiya*

[20] Cohen 1979.
[21] Machinist 1983.
[22] Tawil 1982.
[23] Gallagher 1999.
[24] Aster 2007; 2009.
[25] CAD L 25a 2'.
[26] CAD L 25a 2'.

ummānāt aššur gapšāti adkēma labbiš anadirma ana kašad mātāti šâtima aštakan panīya, "en la ira de mi corazón puse en movimiento a los poderosos ejércitos de Aššur, y, rugiendo como un león, los dispuse para conquistar aquellas tierras"[27]. En su campaña contra Urartu, Sargón presume: *kīma labbi nadri ša puluḫtu ramû etelliš attalakma*, "yo marché (a través de Urartu) orgullosamente, como un león rugiente cargado de terror"[28]. Asimismo, Senaquerib se describe a sí mismo en sus anales como *labbiš annadirma allabie abūbiš*, "llegué a ser desenfrenado como un león, rugiente como una tormenta"[29].

En efecto, Jeremías (Jer. 4:7) describe la amenaza del invasor Nabucodonosor de la siguiente manera:

עָלָה אַרְיֵה מִסֻּבְכוֹ ,וּמַשְׁחִית גּוֹיִם נָסַע יָצָא מִמְּקֹמוֹ לָשׂוּם אַרְצֵךְ לְשַׁמָּה..

"Se ha levantado el león de su cubil, y el devorador de naciones se ha puesto en marcha: salió de su lugar para dejar la tierra desolada...". Más específicamente, al describir la invasión asiria a Judá, Senaquerib es comparado por Isaías con un león cargado de terror de la siguiente manera:

שְׁאָגָה לוֹ כַּלָּבִיא יִשְׁאַג כַּכְּפִירִים וְיִנְהֹם וְיֹאחֵז טֶרֶף וַיַּפְלִיט וְאֵין מַצִּיל

"(Senaquerib) Tiene un rugido como de leona, ruge como los cachorros, brama y agarra la presa, la arrebata, y no hay quien la libre." (Isa. 5:29)[30].

Es bien conocido que, metafóricamente, el señor es representado rugiendo (i.e., bramando) como un león[31]. Sin embargo, en el motivo de la teología inversa o de reemplazo, el Señor, y no el rey asirio, es representado como un león, atacando a los enemigos de Judá. Este motivo es evidente cuando Oseas (11:10) describe al Señor como un león que salva a su nación:

אַחֲרֵי יְהוָה יֵלֵכוּ כְּאַרְיֵה יִשְׁאָג כִּי- הוּא יִשְׁאַג וְיָחֲרְדוּ בָנִים מִיָּם

"En pos de Yahveh marcharán, él rugirá como un león; y cuando ruja él, los hijos vendrán azorados de occidente". En Isa. 31:4, el profeta también describe metafóricamente al Señor como un león que desciende

[27] CAD L 23b a). Cf. también la expresión idiomática *kīma labbi/nēši nayāru*, "rugir como un león".
[28] CAD L 24b b).
[29] CAD L 23b a). Ver también e.g. *labbiš annadirma iṣṣarḫ kabattī*, "Yo (Asarhadón) me enfurecí como un león, mi temperamento se enfureció" (CAD ibid.). Véase Marcus 1977: 87–88; Vargon 1999: 299–301.
[30] Cf. también Joel 1:6; Nah 2:12.
[31] Véase Strawn 2005: 58–63.

sobre el Monte Sión para luchar contra el rey Senaquerib y para liberar a Judá del asedio asirio.

Aunque los estudios bíblicos modernos consideran a Isa. 31:5 como una inserción editorial tardía, no se logra comprender la relación metafórica entre "el león" y los "pájaros que vuelan". Sin embargo, a la luz de la nueva interpretación propuesta siguiente, basada en las inscripciones neo-asirias, especialmente las de Senaquerib, el v. 5 será más claro y la unidad de los vv. 4–5 se hará evidente.

El símil "volando como un ave" ocurre varias veces en las inscripciones reales asirias[32]. En acadio se emplea el verbo *naprušu/naparšudu*, "volar", utilizado varias veces con la expresión idiomática *kīma iṣṣūri/iṣṣūrāti*, "como aves". En efecto, varios reyes asirios informan que sus enemigos, para salvar sus vidas y escapar a la libertad, volaron como aves, i.e. *kī/kīma iṣṣūri/iṣṣūriš naparšudu*, "volando como aves" (para ver la libertad). Tiglatpileser I afirma: *ana šūzub napšātēšum ilānīšuru iššana gisallāt šaqûti kīma iṣṣūri ipparšū*, "para salvarse, ellos (los enemigos) tomaron sus bienes y volaron como aves hacia los picos montañosos más altos"[33]. Asimismo, Sargón se jacta de que sus enemigos *ana qereb birāti šuʾātina kīma iṣṣūri ipparšu*, "volaron como aves hacia aquellas fortalezas"[34]. En efecto, el símil acadio *kī/kīma iṣṣūri/iṣṣūriš naparšudu* es el equivalente semántico en Isaías de כצפורים עפות, "como aves volando".

Más específicamente, el ave también es utilizada dos veces en los anales neo-asirios para invocar la imagen de la encarcelación (i.e., *esēru*), especialmente en referencia a las ciudades sitiadas. Tiglatpileser III narra el asedio de Rezin de Damasco de la siguiente manera: *ālišu akṣurma kīma iṣṣur quppi esiršu*, "…me erigí alrededor de su ciudad, como un ave en una jaula lo encerré"[35]. Este símil también es usado por Senaquerib en el célebre caso donde describe el asedio de Jerusalén durante su campaña contra Ezequías (2 Reyes 18:14–16) en el año 701: *šâšu kī kīma iṣṣūr quppi qereb ursalimma/u āl šarrūtīšu ēsiršu*, "a él mismo, como un ave en una jaula, en su ciudad real, Jerusalén, lo encerré"[36].

[32] Marcus 1977: 97–98.
[33] CAD I/j 211b e).
[34] CAD I/j 212a.
[35] CAD I/j 212a.
[36] CAD I/j 212a.

Como observó Peter Machinist, el autor del primer Isaías estaba familiarizado tanto con las ideas propias de las inscripciones reales neo-asirias como con el lenguaje característico hallado en ellas. Por lo tanto, Machinist supone: "el conocimiento de Isaías sobre Asiria se obtuvo no solamente por la experiencia misma de los asirios en Palestina, sino también por la literatura oficial, especialmente de la corte"[37].

Consecuentemente, el profeta Isaías parece profundamente familiarizado con la afirmación jactanciosa de Senaquerib por la cual confinaba a Ezequías, y por ende a los habitantes de Jerusalén, *kīma iṣṣūr quppi*, "como un ave en una jaula". Isaías empleó una vez más en el v. 5 el motivo de la teología inversa o de reemplazo. A saber, Ezequías no será confinado "como un ave" en una jaula, más bien Ezequías, y por ende los habitantes de Jerusalén, serán libres como aves volando (כצפורים עפות), protegidos por el Señor. Por consiguiente, el uso de cuatro verbos por Isaías (v. 5) גָּנוֹן וְהִצִּיל פָּסֹחַ וְהִמְלִיט, "protegiendo y librando, perdonando y salvando", no es una adición editorial tardía. Más bien, el profeta parece emplear intencionalmente estos cuatro verbos, reflejando las cuatro expresiones de redención del cautiverio egipcio:

וְהוֹצֵאתִי, וְהִצַּלְתִּי,וְגָאַלְתִּי, וְלָקַחְתִּי

"(y yo) liberaré, entregaré, redimiré, sacaré". En efecto, ésta era la interpretación del uso del verbo פָּסֹחַ (v. 5) en la Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael[38]:

> ומה ת״ל וראיתי את הדם אלא בשכר מצוה שאתם עושים אני נגלה וחס עליכם שנאמר ופסחתי עליכם אין פסיחה אלא חייס שנאמר כצפרים עפות כן יגן שנאמר כצפרים עפות כן יגן ה׳ צבאות על ירושלים גנון והציל פסוח והמליט.
>
> *¿Cuál es el propósito de "y cuando veo la sangre"? Es solo éste: como una recompensa por su ejecución del deber, yo tendré que revelarme y protegerte, como está dicho: Pasar sobre significa meramente proteger, como está dicho: "Como aves cerniéndose", así protege el Señor de los Ejércitos a Jerusalén, protegiendo y salvando, perdonando y rescatando.*

[37] Machinist 1983: 719.
[38] Lauterbach 1933: 56.

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Artículo de reseña/Article Review

¿Todo tiempo pasado fue mejor?: Tres estudios sobre comercio y desarrollo y su impacto en la historia económica de la Antigüedad

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AAVV, *Un desafío intelectual lationamericano: Raúl Prebisch en el análisis de sus contemporáneos.* Buenos Aires, Fundación Raúl Prebisch & Fundación Foro del Sur, 2013. 298 pp. ISBN 978–987–29773–0–6. AR$ 100.

Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Comercio y pobreza: Cuándo y cómo comenzó el atraso del Tercer Mundo.* Libros de Historia. Barcelona, Crítica, 2012. 357 pp. ISBN 978–84–9892–009–3. € 26.

Daron Acemoglu y James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty.* London, Profile Books, 2013. Paperback. 529 pp. ISBN 978–1–84668–430–2. USD 17.

En los dos últimos años han salido a la luz tres libros que, pese a la variedad de sus temáticas y las tesis que sostienen—a menudo enfrentadas entre sí—, comparten el interés en dilucidar una de las cuestiones centrales de la historia moderna: qué es lo que hace que determinadas sociedades se desarrollen económica y políticamente, muy frecuentemente a costas de otras, y cuáles son las políticas más adecuadas para el crecimiento de países que vienen "rezagados" en el tren del desarrollo económico. ¿Qué tienen que ver estos tres libros con la historia el antiguo Cercano Oriente? Tienen que ver y mucho, porque muchos de los debates respecto al comercio antiguo, las relaciones centro-periferia, y el desarrollo de los sistemas-mundiales, se originaron en discusio-

nes respecto al desarrollo de las sociedades occidentales modernas. Es por ello que la reseña de estos tres libros es una excelente oportunidad para revisar viejas y nuevas cuestiones respecto de las sociedades antiguas.

El primero de los libros, *Un desafío intelectual lationamericano*, es una compilación de estudios abocados a la vida y obra de Raúl Prebisch, el más importante de los economistas argentinos contemporáneos y conocido mayormente por su aporte a la teoría del desarrollo latinoamericano, cuya fructífera actividad se extendió por Argentina (como primer Director del Banco Central, 1935–1943), Latinoamérica (como Secretario General de la CEPAL, Comisión Económica para América Latina, 1949–1963) y en verdad el mundo entero (como primer director de la UNCTAD, Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre Comercio y Desarrollo, 1964–1969) desde la década de los 1920 hasta su muerte en 1987. De los 20 artículos que comprenden el libro, dos son del mismo Prebisch, mientras que el resto son estudios de especialistas (la mayoría, por supuesto, economistas) que han trabajado con Prebisch y con el que los ha unido la amistad. Salvo dos cortos capítulos introductorios, ninguno de los estudios fue escrito originalmente para este libro, y la mayoría han sido publicados en la revista mexicana *Comercio Exterior* en 1987, en un número especial (número 37/5) dedicado a Prebisch luego de su fallecimiento. Los artículos difieren mucho en perspectiva y extensión; para nuestro propósito, los artículos más importantes son los del mismo Prebisch ("Cinco etapas de mi pensamiento sobre el desarrollo", pp. 21–42), Osvaldo Sunkel ("Las relaciones centro-periferia y la transnacionalización", pp. 85–118), Joseph L. Love ("Raúl Prebisch (1901–1986) Su vida y sus ideas", pp. 129–140), Máximo Lira ("La larga marcha de Prebisch hacia la crítica del capitalismo periférico y su teoría de la transformación de la sociedad", pp. 147–174), y Gert Rosenthal ("La influencia de las ideas de Raúl Prebisch en materia de comercio exterior", pp. 243–254). El libro se complementa con otros artículos de José Miguel Amiune, Enrique Iglesias, Celso Furtado, Aldo Ferrer, Helio Jaguaribe, Víctor L. Urquidi, Benjamín Hopenhayn, Pedro Vuskovic, Hernán Santa Cruz, Adolfo Gurrieri y Octavio Rodríguez, David H. Pollock, Cristóbal Lara Beautell, Javier Villanueva, y Tulio Halperin Donghi.

El aporte teórico de Prebisch al estudio del comercio y el desarollo del capitalismo periférico contemporáneo es enorme, y se extiende a ámbitos de la economía, la sociología y la historia. Sin embargo, aquí nos concentraremos en dos definiciones centrales que han influenciado, y de hecho han ayudado a la formación de, escuelas económicas e historiográficas enteras, con múltiples ramificaciones en la historia del antiguo Cercano Oriente: los con-

ceptos de centro-periferia y del deterioro de los términos del intercambio. Prebisch puso por escrito sus primeras ideas sobre el análisis de centro-periferia durante su trabajo en la CEPAL, aunque "en realidad, este concepto había estado dando vueltas en mi mente durante algún tiempo" (p. 23). Ya desde su trabajo en el Banco Central Prebisch se veía dando cuenta que el funcionamiento de la economía internacional poco tenía que ver con los postulados de la teoría clásica que, tal como fueron descritos por Adam Smith y David Ricardo, afirmaban que el comercio se maneja bajo el principio de las ventajas comparativas, en el que los factores de producción se desplazan libre y fácilmente de una sociedad a otra. Todo lo contrario, para Prebisch las distintas sociedades humanas no son para nada similares, y deben clasificarse en dos grupos principales: países centrales y países periféricos. Los países centrales son aquellos en los cuales la industrialización ha sido más temprana y donde ha alcanzado su más grande expansión, poseyendo una alta productividad, mientras que los países periféricos son aquellos en los que la actividad económica central es la exportación de materias primas y alimentos. La difusión del progreso técnico en las periferias es limitada y desigual, y es en su mayor parte apropiada por el sector exportador. Esencial es el vínculo comercial que une a ambas sociedades, en el que se origina uno de los nudo gordianos centrales del subdesarrollo periférico: el deterioro secular de los términos del intercambio. Prebisch publicó este concepto por primera vez en 1949, siendo acuñado independientemente también por el economista germano-británico Hans W. Singer (de aquí la llamada "tesis Prebisch-Singer"). El análisis de Prebisch y Singer (básicamente sobre los precios del intercambio internacional del período 1870–1939) los llevó a concluir que

> *durante las fases [comerciales] ascendentes los precios de los productos primarios se elevaban más que los correspondientes a los bienes industriales, pero durante las fases de descenso caían de manera más pronunciada* (Love, p. 133)

básicamente porque los países periféricos poseen un gran excedente de mano de obra en el sector agrícola precapitalista, lo que presiona sobre los precios, y consecuentemente los salarios, a la baja. El progreso técnico, en vez de fluir libremente hacia las periferias, se transfiere en su mayor parte al centro.

Los estudios de Prebisch tuvieron un impacto enorme en investigadores que intentaban descifrar las raíces del subdesarrollo latinoamericano y de otras naciones periféricas. Muchos de ellos dieron un paso más allá, apuntando que

los orígenes del subdesarrollo lationamericano provienen de la relación *estructural* de dependencia de larga duración entre los jóvenes países de Latinoamérica y sus metrópolis coloniales (esencialmente España y Brasil, y luego, el Reino Unido y EE.UU.).[1] Prebisch, aunque halagado por su herencia intelectual continuada en la "teoría de la dependencia", tal como se la llamó, nunca se dejó llevar por dichos devaneos intelectuales, a los que acusó de "recomendar una 'desvinculación' radical de los centros" (p. 40). Si hasta ese momento la influencia del concepto de centro-periferia había estado limitada a la economía, fue en el campo de la historia donde, a partir de mediados de la década de 1970, aquél tuvo su mayor desarrollo. Con la publicación del famoso *The Modern World-System* de Immanuel Wallerstein[2] en 1974, las relaciones entre sociedades centrales y periféricas se extendió hasta el nacimiento del capitalismo, en el siglo XV. En poco tiempo, los análisis del "sistema mundial" se expandieron para incluir las sociedades medievales y antiguas, y actualmente la teoría y las herramientas analíticas expresadas inicialmente por Wallerstein son comúnmente utilizadas en los estudios del antiguo Cercano Oriente.[3]

Un desafío intelectual lationamericano es una excelente introducción al pensamiento e historia pública de Prebisch, y es altamente recomendable su utilización como material de cátedra universitaria, al menos en el caso de los artículos más relevantes. La única limitación del libro es la antigüedad de la mayoría de los artículos, la mayoría con más de 20 años. Aunque esto no limita el análisis de la obra de Prebisch, sí existen acontecimientos más recientes que pueden poner en tela de juicio, o al menos recortar la relevancia, de algunos puntos importantes de la obra del economista. Los hechos más relevantes son, primero, la actual fase de crecimiento de los precios de los productos primarios, tales como el petróleo y, para el caso de Argentina especialmente, la soja; y segundo, el "milagro" del desarrollo industrial de los países asiáticos, a los que al ya conocido club de los "tigres asiáticos" (fenómeno ya conocido por Prebisch) ahora se le suma el crecimiento industrial de China. ¿Significa esto que la teoría de Prebisch es inadecuada para la actual coyuntura? Sería muy aventurado inferir esto, en la medida que la continuidad de la fase actual de alza de los precios de las commodities se basa en factores que—como la alta demanda de productos primarios de una China en expansión—son difíciles de cuantificar y predecir.

[1] Véase, por ejemplo, Furtado 1964; Cardoso y Faletto 1976.
[2] Wallerstein 1974.
[3] La bibliografía sobre este tema es, a esta altura, innumerable; para unos pocos ejemplos, véase Frank 1993; Tebes 2008; Hall, Kardulias y Chase-Dunn 2011.

El libro *Comercio y pobreza*, del catedrático de la Harvard University Jeffrey G. Williamson, intenta resolver estas y otras limitaciones del análisis de Prebisch y Singer a partir de un vasto estudio cuantitativo, producto de años de investigación junto a otros académicos. El libro está divido en catorce capítulos, acompañado de una gran cantidad de cuadros cuantitativos y figuras que ayudan a una mejor comprensión del texto. La principal pregunta que busca resolver Williamson es cuándo comenzaron a bifurcarse los desarrollos económicos de los países centrales (Europa Occidental y EE.UU.) de los países periféricos—lo que él denomina la "Gran Divergencia" (término prestado de Kenneth Pomeranz, quien a su vez lo tomó de Samuel Huntigton)—, y cuáles fueron los factores económicos y sociales que determinaron tal estado de cosas. Firmemente anclado en la escuela neoclásica de economía, Williamson ejerce una tenaz defensa de la teoría clásica del comercio, ya que

> *desde los tiempos de Adam Smith no ha habido un solo economista que haya encontrado pruebas o argumentos capaces de negar la hipótesis de la ventaja común que menciona la teoría del comercio: todos los que participan en el mercado se benefician de la actividad comercial* (p. 19)

e incluso que

> *Desde que [David] Ricardo estableciera su teorema de las ventajas comparativas no ha habido un solo crítico de la globalización capaz de desbaratar la lógica de su argumentación* (p. 64).

Desde la vereda de enfrente de Prebisch, Singer y del economista W. Arthur Lewis, que argumentaban que el proceso de globalización del siglo XIX tuvo puros efectos negativos en las periferias, Williamson sostiene que los países periféricos se beneficiaron, en términos absolutos, de los frutos de la Revolución Industrial que comenzó a fines del siglo XVIII, y que dichas sociedades estuvieron mucho mejor que lo que hubieron estado sin la libertad comercial característica del siglo XIX. ¿Cómo se puede arribar a tan diferentes conclusiones? Es aquí donde el estudio de Williamson presenta su mayor novedad y utilidad: el autor presenta un masivo conjunto de datos estadísticos con la evolución de los precios, y de los cambios en los términos de intercambio, de los países centrales y periféricos desde finales del siglo XVIII hasta la

actualidad. Los datos de Williamson demuestran dos grandes tendencias en los precios del siglo XIX:

(a) Mejora de los términos de intercambio para los países periféricos pobres: los precios de los bienes exportados por las periferias subieron, en el largo período 1796–1913 (con un pico entre 1870–1890), comparativamente más que aquellos comerciados por los países centrales. Esta tendencia tiene un efecto inesperado en los países periféricos: el *síndrome holandés.* Al favorecer a los sectores exportadores de materias primas, se drenan recursos hacia el sector primario y se reducen los costos de la moneda extranjera, penalizando a las industrias que compiten con las importaciones y favoreciendo la desindustrialización en la mayoría de los países periféricos;

(b) Excesiva búsqueda de rentabilidad en las periferias o *maldición de los recursos*, en detrimento de empresarios más proclives a generar crecimiento económico: el crecimiento solo beneficia a la pequeña elite que es dueña de las tierras de cultivo, las minas y otros recursos naturales;

(c) Volatibilidad de los precios de las materias primas para el mismo período: Éstos muestran muchas más variaciones que los precios de las manufacturas exportadas por los países centrales, por lo que los países periféricos especializados en la elaboración de uno o dos productos están más expuestos a los vaivenes del comercio internacional.

A la luz de estos datos, Williamson hace grandes esfuerzos en reafirmar que *todos* los países, tanto los centrales como los periféricos, se beneficiaron del comercio. Los *niveles* de ingreso per cápita del Tercer Mundo sí se elevaron gracias a la expansión comercial, pero lo hicieron a *tasas* menores que los países centrales. La razón debe buscarse en los tres grandes factores recién mencionados, que llevaron a la "Gran Divergencia". Los datos presentados por Williamson demuestran que la explosión de los términos del intercambio, y la volatibilidad de los precios, fueron tendencias más marcadas en el período anterior a 1870, por lo que la Gran Divergencia debe fecharse en este período y no en otro. Países con una tradición industrial respetable—como China e India, cuya producción manufacturera combinada representaba en 1750 el 57% de la producción mundial (p. 82)—sufrieron de uno u otro modo los vaivenes del comercio mundial, viendo sus sectores manufactureros derrumbarse o languidecer, mientras que países casi exclusivamente monoproductores, como Argentina y Uruguay, sólo vieron desarrollarse sus industrias en períodos muy tardíos.

Williamson dedica un capítulo entero, el 11, a rebatir la tesis Prebisch-Singer. Según el autor, la limitación de esta tesis no se encuentra en sus aspectos teóricos, sino en la metodología utilizada y en su interpretación. Williamson concede que el "episodio Singer-Prebisch", que corresponde al

período que va desde 1890 a 1939, es una horquilla temporal caracterizada por el desplome de los términos de intercambio, pero ésta no es en ningún modo una tendencia secular, sino una fase más luego del crecimiento secular de los términos del intercambio anterior a 1890. Más aún, no sólo la tendencia a largo plazo no fue tan marcada como la del siglo XIX, sino que fue la *volatibilidad* de los términos de intercambio (que penaliza a los países periféricos pero no a los industrializados), más que su deterioro, lo que constituyó el lastre más significativo para el desarrollo económico periférico.

> *Desde las formulaciones de Prebisch y Singer, los economistas especializados en el estudio del desarrollo vienen pensando que el descenso de los términos de intercambio inhibe dicho desarrollo. Nuestras pruebas sugieren que sus preocupaciones iban descaminadas, puesto que da la impresión de que la muy lamentada correlación entre el lento crecimiento de los ingresos y el deterioro de los términos de intercambio es probablemente espuria—al menos después del año 1870— (...) La volatibilidad de los precios tuvo una gran importancia como elemento coadyuvante en la gran divergencia—hecho que la literatura histórica había venido ignorando hasta hace poco* (pp. 237–238).

No casualmente, es después de 1870 cuando comienzan los primeros experimentos de industrialización en los países periféricos, aunque la mayoría lo hicieron con políticas tarifarias inadecuadas. Y, en el período posterior a 1950, el deterioro en los términos de intercambio desaparece y no hay una tendencia clara en la evolución de los precios, haciendo desaparecer las rémoras a la industrialización en los países periféricos.

El libro de Williamson es una excelente puerta de entrada para todos aquellos interesados en el origen del mundo contemporáneo y de la grieta que separa los países desarrollados de los del "Tercer Mundo". Para los estudiosos de la historia antigua, *Comercio y pobreza* provee de muchas preguntas y elementos de análisis que demasiado a menudo están ausentes en las investigaciones sobre la Antigüedad. En especial, ¿cuál era el rol de las variaciones de precios de los productos intercambiados interregionalmente en épocas precapitalistas? ¿Es posible cuantificar las tendencias en los precios intercambiados entre sociedades precapitalistas, aún de manera muy esquemática? En este punto, Williamson adopta una postura firme: antes de la Revolución Industrial el comercio internacional no representaba sino una minúscula parte de la activi-

dad económica mundial, por una variedad de factores: la poca integración del mercado mundial, la poca convergencia de los precios de las mercaderías comerciadas, el elevado coste del mercadeo, y el hecho de que la enorme mayoría de los bienes comerciados interregionalmente eran de carácter suntuario (metales preciosos, especias, seda, porcelana, etc.). Estos bienes generalmente no competían con las industrias locales, mientras que la mayoría de los productos alimenticios, insumos industriales y combustibles quedaban excluidos del comercio de larga distancia, por lo que sus precios se determinaban por el juego de la oferta y la demanda locales, y no por los mercados mundiales (pp. 24, 27).

En este punto, Williamson comparte la opinión de muchos historiadores[4], que tienden a minimizar la importancia del comercio internacional en períodos precapitalistas y miran con desdén el intercambio de bienes de lujo. Para muchos de ellos, sólo el comercio en productos básicos—especialmente de alimentos—es considerado esencial (Wallerstein diría "sistémico") para el funcionamiento económico. Sin embargo, como señaló hace tiempo Jane Schneider,[5] el comercio en productos de lujo está intrínsecamente ligado a las estructuras sociales y políticas jerárquicas de las sociedades precapitalistas, y es un motor significativo de cambios sociales y económicos en éstas, como está ampliamente demostrado por el caso de manual de la búsqueda de especias y metales preciosos por los comerciantes portugueses y españoles en los siglos XV y XVI, que llevó a la primera expansión europea de gran escala en ultramar y al inicio del sistema mundial moderno.

A pesar de la enorme importancia que tenía el comercio de bienes suntuarios en épocas precapitalistas, es casi imposible cuantificar las variaciones de los precios asociados a éstos. Si los datos fiables de precios aportados por Williamson apenas pueden rastrearse no más atrás que hasta finales del siglo XVIII (¡y solo en las naciones más importantes de Europa Occidental!), ni qué decir tiene intentar rastrear datos seguros para fechas anteriores. Entre los mayores problemas para la recolección de estos datos debe mencionarse: la ausencia de escritura y por ende de evidencias escritas de los precios de los bienes comerciados (el caso del Cercano Oriente antes de ca. 3200 a.C., la América Precolombina y el África Subsahariana); el comercio oficial entre sociedades enmascarado dentro de un sistema de intercambio de regalos (el intercambio del período de Amarna[6]) o dentro de un sistema tributario[7]

[4] Incluyendo el mismo Wallerstein (1974).
[5] Schneider 1977.
[6] Liverani 1990.
[7] Dalton 1975: 105–106.

(¿como por ejemplo el tributo de Edom a Asiria?[8]); la presencia de listas de bienes comerciados, ocasionalmente con sus cantidades y costo de transporte, pero pocas veces sus precios de compra y venta[9]; la virtual inexistencia de una cantidad suficiente de precios distribuidos en períodos temporales largos; y la falta de series de precios sobre un mismo bien (o bienes relacionados) a ambos lados de la relación comercial. Por supuesto, una manera de esquivar estos problemas es utilizar los precios de venta internos de los bienes adquiridos por medio del comercio externo o, en el caso de metales preciosos importados utilizados como medidas de equivalencia, calcular los precios en base a las equivalencias de las transacciones de bienes. Esta metodología, muy utilizada para calcular también las variaciones de los precios internos y del costo de vida, debe utilizarse con mucha precaución, pues los precios de venta locales eran *per se* más altos que el costo de adquisición del exterior y—mucho más importante, dado que el comercio estaba en muchos casos en manos de monopolios estatales y no-estatales (por ejemplo, el palacio o el templo mesopotámico y egipcio antiguos, las corporaciones comerciales del Medioevo, etc.)—sus variaciones no siempre se corresponden con las variaciones de los precios internacionales.

El último libro que reseñaremos aquí, *Why Nations Fail*,[10] es ya un best-seller y ha asegurado a sus autores, Daron Acemoglu (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) y James Robinson (Harvard University), una merecida fama. Dicha fama proviene no tanto de lo novedoso de su propuesta, que no es más que un decálogo del libre mercado y las instituciones políticas inclusivas cuyo modelo más alto son los EE.UU., sino de su prosa atrayente; el libro es de hecho un ensayo ampliado escrito para el gran público, basado en una gran cantidad de artículos académicos publicados anteriormente por los autores. La pregunta que éstos buscan responder es básicamente la misma de los dos libros que hemos reseñado anteriormente: ¿qué es lo que hace que determinados países sean económicamente desarrollados, políticamente estables y con un elevado nivel de ingreso per cápita, mientras que otros (en algunos casos con sólo una frontera de por medio, como México con EE.UU.) adolecen de todas estas características? A lo largo de 15 capítulos Acemoglu y Robinson navegan, con una prosa atrayente, a través de diversos casos tomados de toda la historia humana (aunque los casos contemporáneos son, por supuesto, mayoría) para ilustrar los puntos más importantes de su tesis.

[8] Tebes 2013: 69.
[9] E.g. Jursa 2010: 140–152.
[10] Agradezco a Graciela Gestoso Singer el obsequio de este libro.

Los autores comienzan por descartar teorías basadas en la geografía (Montesquieu, Jared Diamond), la cultura (Max Weber) y la ignorancia, para pasar rápidamente al centro de su análisis: las instituciones políticas y como éstas dan forma al comportamiento de los individuos y los grupos sociales. Para Acemoglu y Robinson,

> *Los países difieren en su éxito económico debido a sus diferentes instituciones, las reglas que influencian cómo trabaja su economía, y los incentivos que motivan a la gente* (p. 73).[11]

Las instituciones políticas no se reducen al hecho de tener una democracia o una constitución escrita, sino que incluyen la capacidad del estado de gobernar y regular la sociedad, y cuán equilibradamente está distribuido el poder en la sociedad.

De esta premisa Acemoglu y Robinson establecen una distinción fundamental entre dos tipos de instituciones: las inclusivas y las extractivas. Las instituciones inclusivas son aquellas que promueven la participación de grandes cantidades de personas en actividades económicas que hacen el mejor uso de sus talentos. Para asegurar esto, dichas instituciones deben poseer ciertos requisitos mínimos: asegurar la propiedad privada, tener un sistema legal imparcial, proveer servicios públicos en los cuales los individuos puedan intercambiar y contratar libremente, permitir la entrada de nuevos emprendimientos, y que las personas puedan elegir sus carreras. De este modo, aquellos con buenas ideas comenzarán sus propias empresas, los trabajadores se emplearán en actividades donde su productividad sea mayor, y las firmas eficientes reemplazarán a las que no lo son ("destrucción creativa"). Mercados inclusivos no significa solo libres mercados: significa también mercado del trabajo totalmente libre, sin métodos coercitivos como la esclavitud y la servidumbre. Ejemplos actuales de instituciones inclusivas incluyen los EE.UU., Europa Occidental, y los "tigres asiáticos". Las instituciones extractivas adolecen de todas estas características, ya que están diseñadas para extraer el producto y la riqueza de una parte de la sociedad para beneficiar a otra. Sociedades con estas características pueden encontrarse en todos los períodos históricos, desde la Latinoamérica colonial, las sociedades esclavistas del Caribe, hasta la Corea del Norte actual.

[11] Las traducciones de este libro son mías.

Acemoglu y Robinson hacen grandes esfuerzos para que su enfoque no sea tomado como totalmente economicista. De hecho, postulan que las instituciones *políticas* inclusivas son el cascarón fundamental para que sea posible desarrollar instituciones *económicas* inclusivas. Las instituciones políticas más proclives a desarrollar inclusivamente a una sociedad son aquellas que son pluralistas, en las cuales el poder social está distribuido equilibradamente entre las distintas partes de una sociedad. Al contrario, las instituciones políticas extractivas se caracterizan por su naturaleza centralizada, en las cuales el poder está en manos de una pequeña elite con pocas fuerzas que se le opongan. Instituciones políticas y económicas inclusivas están intrínsecamente entrelazadas, pues el crecimiento económico es naturalmente distribuido a todo el ejido social, mientras que en sociedades extractivas el producto económico es acaparado por una sola elite. ¿Es posible la existencia de instituciones políticas y económicas de uno y otro tipo? Aparentemente sí, pero dichas combinaciones son por lo general inestables; por ejemplo, aquellas facciones con la suma del poder público intentarán transformar las instituciones económicas extractivas a su favor, o al contrario, el mismo dinamismo económico inclusivo podría desestabilizar irremediablemente el poder político de la elite minoritaria.

La pregunta del millón es por qué, si el crecimiento económico y la prosperidad están asociados a instituciones económicas y políticas inclusivas, éstas no son adoptadas por todas las sociedades. Una parte de la respuesta ya la hemos adelantado: las elites que detentan el poder en instituciones extractivas son poco propensas a incentivar instituciones que ellas no puedan controlar completamente y que, en definitiva, puedan socavar su control del poder. Pero otra parte de la respuesta tiene que ver con el hecho de que en la transición de un sistema económico extractivo a uno inclusivo habrá ganadores y perdedores: entre estos últimos estarán aquellos sectores (como los artesanos al comienzo de la Revolución Industrial) cuyas habilidades e instrumentos se volverán obsoletos en el nuevo orden económico. De aquí la gran resistencia que esta clase de cambios provoca en grandes sectores de la sociedad.

El mayor interés que tiene este libro para nosotros es en su análisis de las instituciones extractivas, que son por supuesto el tipo en el que cae la gran mayoría de las sociedades de la Antigüedad. Aquí los autores no realizan ningún intento de subdividir estas instituciones en diversos tipos (y no lo hacen tampoco en el caso de las instituciones inclusivas), pero sin embargo realizan aportes muy relevantes para las sociedades antiguas respecto a la relación entre elites y actividades económicas. Un punto muy importante es que sí es

posible el crecimiento económico en instituciones extractivas, básicamente en actividades de alta productividad bajo control de las elites, como por ejemplo las plantaciones esclavistas en el Caribe colonial o el "milagro económico" argentino de finales del siglo XIX. Un segundo tipo de crecimiento en instituciones extractivas es aquel en el que se permite el desarrollo de instituciones económicas inclusivas, aunque bajo la órbita de la pequeña elite rectora. Tal es el caso de Corea del Sur durante la dictadura militar anterior a los 1980s o de la China comunista actual. El problema es que, como ya hemos visto, el crecimiento económico bajo aquellas condiciones es frágil y dichas instituciones inclusivas pueden fácilmente colapsar o ser destruidas por las luchas internas innatas a las instituciones extractivas.

Ahora bien, la creación de las condiciones para el crecimiento no es tan fácil como parece a simple vista. Aquí entra a jugar lo que los autores llaman "momentos críticos": "un evento mayor o una confluencia de factores que interrumpen el balance económico o político existente en la sociedad" (p. 101). Por ejemplo, si Inglaterra fue la primera sociedad que logró un crecimiento económico sostenido gracias a la Revolución Industrial, no lo fue por una combinación casual de factores a mediados del siglo XVIII, sino por un proceso que venía de mucho más atrás, que incluía el impacto de la Peste Negra de 1348 y el consiguiente desplome numérico de la fuerza laboral campesina de Europa Occidental, el posterior fin de la servidumbre, el relativamente menor poder del estado absolutista inglés y, finalmente, la Revolución Gloriosa de 1688, que creó las primeras instituciones inclusivas del mundo. Nada de este proceso estaba predeterminado, y el desarrollo de los acontecimientos fue en gran medida aleatorio: una vez que ocurre un momento crítico, las "pequeñas diferencias" son las que llevan a diferentes respuestas institucionales (por ejemplo, el fin de la servidumbre en Europa Occidental y la "segunda servidumbre" en Europa Oriental). "Estas diferencias son a menudo pequeñas al comienzo, pero se acumulan, creando un proceso de desviación institucional" (p. 108). En un proceso de "círculo virtuoso", los distintos grupos sociales encuentran cada vez más difícil y menos atrayente intentar derribar el sistema político para alcanzar sus intereses, porque los grupos rivales tienen cada vez más poder de contrapeso y, como en el caso de Inglaterra, las elites se avinieron a seguir las reglas que ellos mismos se impusieron en 1688. Así, la creación de instituciones inclusivas se da gradualmente, desde abajo, con las clases bajas obteniendo de a poco concesiones políticas, sociales y económicas, de los grupos dirigentes. Sin embargo, no solo el círculo virtuoso hacia sociedades más inclusivas es en gran medida contingente, sino que tam-

bién es reversible: en determinados momentos críticos, sociedades en vías de adoptar instituciones inclusivas pueden de un golpe cerrarse a sí mismas y transformarse en puramente extractivas, como en el caso de la República Romana con la reacción senatorial contra los Gracos y la *serrata* política de la República Veneciana en la baja Edad Media.

Ahora bien, es a todas luces obvio que, en un mundo moderno marcado por los fenómenos del colonialismo y el imperialismo, un análisis puramente institucionalista como este no puede explicar la gran divergencia entre sociedades desarrolladas y no desarrolladas solo en base a diferencias institucionales. Afortunadamente Acemoglu y Robinson no eluden esta cuestión e intentan integrar el período del colonialismo y el imperialismo europeo desde finales del siglo XV dentro del más amplio marco explicativo del libro. Los autores dedican un capítulo entero a explicar que

> *en varios casos las instituciones extractivas que apuntalaron la pobreza de estas naciones fueron impuestas, o al menos mayormente reforzadas, por el mismo proceso que alimentó el crecimiento europeo: la expansión comercial y colonial europea. De hecho, la rentabilidad de los imperios coloniales europeos fue a menudo construida en base a la destrucción de las entidades políticas independientes y las economías indígenas en todo el mundo, o en base a la creación de instituciones extractivas desde cero* (p. 271).

Desafortunadamente los autores enfocan la atención exclusivamente en los casos de dominio colonial o imperial directo, tales como las colonias europeas en África y América, pero no dedican una sola palabra a las consecuencias del intercambio desigual entre los países periféricos y los centrales. Como hemos visto ejemplarmente en el libro de Williamson, las variaciones en los precios fueron un factor fundamental en la "grieta" originada entre Europa y el resto del mundo, y es extraña la falta de discusión de este punto en *Why Nations Fail*, mucho más cuando las variaciones de los precios están muy influenciadas por el marco institucional de una sociedad determinada (por ejemplo, la presión de los trabajadores industriales ingleses manteniendo el precio de las manufacturas exportadas en niveles superiores a los de las exportaciones primarias de los países periféricos, donde los ingresos de los trabajadores normalmente estaban en el nivel de subsistencia). Acemoglu y Robinson no citan, ni siquiera a pie de página, a ningún teórico del desarrollo y del subde-

sarrollo; Prebisch y Singer brillan por su ausencia. La única alusión a la economía del desarrollo es al paradigma de la "economía dual", propuesta en 1954 por W. Arthur Lewis[12] (pp. 258 y siguientes), criticada por su falla en explicar que la economía dual no fue un desarrollo natural de las sociedades de plantación periféricas, sino que fue un sistema económico impuesto por las potencias europeas. Por otro lado, Acemoglu y Robinson hacen hincapié en que no todos los casos de colonialismo afectaron negativamente a las sociedades locales, como en el caso del "milagro africano" de la Botsuana actual (pp. 404–414).

Otro punto débil del análisis de este libro es la poca atención dada a períodos precapitalistas. Es evidente que, desde el punto de vista de *Why Nations Fail*, la gran mayoría de las sociedades precapitalistas fueron instituciones extractivas, en las cuales una pequeña elite (ya sea la nobleza, sacerdotes y/o altos funcionarios) se aprovechaba de la producción extraída a la gran masa de la población. Las ciudades-estado mayas son la única sociedad de este tipo analizada por los autores (pp. 143–149), pero esta es básicamente la misma fotografía que podríamos ver en el Egipto faraónico, la antigua Mesopotamia, y los estados antiguos de India y China. Aunque se mencionan otros casos de la historia antigua, el examen de éstos es muy simplista, y esto sin duda atenta contra la aplicación universal de las hipótesis vertidas por los autores. Esto es muy evidente en el tratamiento que Acemoglu y Robinson hacen de la Revolución Neolítica (pp. 136–143), en la que, para explicar porqué la domesticación de las plantas ocurrió en ciertas áreas y no en otras, predecibleme nte rechazan las hipótesis geográficas. La explicación que los autores dan es que las sociedades de cazadores-recolectores donde tal innovación se dió (como los Natufienses del Levante) estuvieron precedidos por una innovación institucional significativa, a saber, la emergencia de elites políticas que pudieran imponer los derechos de propiedad y mantener el orden: "los comienzos de lo que reconoceríamos como las instituciones extractivas" (p. 140). Explicación atractiva, aunque simplista y con varios flancos débiles, tales como la total ausencia de evidencias de derechos de propiedad (comunal o privada) sobre la tierra en este período, la explícita equiparación entre surgimiento de jerarquías sociales y el mantenimiento del orden social, y la utilización simplista de los datos arqueológicos (diferencias en el ajuar funerario y en el tamaño de los edificios domésticos) para probar la emergencia de elites durantes este período. Puede aducirse que es pedir mucho a un libro de

[12] Lewis 1954.

estas características tal fineza en el nivel del análisis, pero esto no salva al análisis de las sociedades antiguas de muchas de sus flaquezas.

Aunque *Why Nations Fail* es claramente un tributo a la tradición de liberalismo económico que se remonta a Adams Smith, el libro no es una simple oda al libre mercado como único factor del desarrollo económico. Es mucho más que eso: aporta una mirada institucionalista en la cual la lucha entre sectores sociales es un elemento fundamental en el desarrollo de la vida económica de las sociedades. Aunque la libertad de mercado y de trabajo constituyen elementos fundamentales en el análisis de Acemoglu y Robinson, también lo es la lucha por instituciones políticas más inclusivas y plurales.

En conclusión, estos tres libros proveen de muchas herramientas de análisis para las sociedades antiguas. Los investigadores dedicados a éstas, muchas veces atrapados en la ultra-especialización de sus propias disciplinas, se beneficiarán de sobremanera de la lectura de cualquiera de ellos.

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Reseñas bibliográficas / Book Reviews

Amnon Altman, *Tracing the Earliest Recorded Concepts of International Law: The Ancient Near East (2500–330 BCE).* Legal History Library, vol. 8 / Studies in the History of International Law, vol. 4. Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2012. xxvi + 254 pp. ISBN 978–90–04–22252–6. € 54,50.

La presente obra bajo reseña ofrece un panorama general de lo que usualmente se conoce como "ley internacional" (*international law*) en los estudios del Cercano Oriente antiguo, desde el tercer milenio hasta el cuarto siglo a.C. (de aquí en más, todas las fechas referidas son a.C.; la cronología pertenece al autor de la obra bajo revisión). En un principio, consideramos que la referencia explícita a una "ley internacional" debe ser matizada y encuadrada bajo ciertas consideraciones preliminares para evitar posibles anacronismos que una confusión semántica pudiera ocasionar y, asimismo, para advertir sobre lo analítico antes que descriptivo de dicha terminología. En otras palabras, y simplificando el análisis, debe explicitarse que más allá de la existencia de normas que dictaban las reglamentaciones regulares de las relaciones entre reinos y poderes de diverso alcance en la antigüedad oriental, dichas normas han sido recuperadas como práctica a partir de una reconstrucción por parte de los investigadores modernos basada en la documentación textual del período. No existe un "tratado de ley internacional" del antiguo Oriente, equiparable a las normativas que el derecho internacional contemporáneo establece para los Estados actuales.

Hecha esta salvedad—no menor, por cierto—podemos describir los contenidos formales del libro. Luego del orden usual que comprende un Prefacio, agradecimientos, abreviaturas y una breve Introducción (pp. xxi-xxvi), el tratamiento propio de la obra comienza con el Capítulo 1 (pp. 1–22), que comprende el período del Dinástico Temprano en la Baja Mesopotamia (2900–2350). Después de introducir el panorama general en Mesopotamia, conformado por la presencia de súmeros en el extremo sur y por acadios en la región central, Altman define una estructuración sociopolítica básica para ambas poblaciones: si en Sumer encontramos una plétora de ciudades-Estados (constituidas por el asentamiento urbano y su periferia rural inmediata), luchando entre sí por prevalecer en el dominio de una sobre otra o el resto, en la región de Akkad, en cambio, la organización sociopolítica parece haber sido mucho más centralizada desde los inicios del proceso de urbanización. Documentos

hallados en el sitio de Fara (la antigua Shurupak), y que datan aproximadamente de mediados del tercer milenio, constituyen una primera evidencia de una cooperación militar entre ciudades-Estado súmeras para hacer frente a las pretensiones expansivas de Akkad desde la ciudad de Kish. La figura emblemática que aparece por este entonces es la del "rey hegemónico" (*hegemonic king*), un individuo que arbitraba en las disputas entre ciudades-Estado, sostenido por su poder militar. La autoridad que esta figura representaba era disputada por los reyes de las distintas ciudades-Estado bajo su hegemonía: este cargo no estaba institucionalizado sino que obedecía a la interacción entre las ciudades-Estado, lo cual—pensamos—permite reflejar las dificultades para conformar y mantener un poder centralizado en la Baja Mesopotamia en este período. Esta multipolaridad parecía estar anclada en la organización sociopolítica de la zona desde los comienzos mismos del urbanismo, como se puede deducir del hecho de que cada ciudad-Estado pertenece a un dios particular y a su familia divina, como patrimonio exclusivo. Lo que se puede asegurar sin mayores dudas, a partir de la evidencia textual, es que ya en este temprano período existían protocolos de enfrentamiento bélico, así como tratados de alianza entre reyes, que ya expresan la "ideología de la hermandad" que aparece en los subsiguientes períodos históricos.

El Capítulo 2 (pp. 23–48) aborda primeramente el período sargónico (2334–2113), que constituyó, según el autor, *"the first empire in the recorded world history"* (p. 24). El imperio de Akkad, forjado por Sargón y por su nieto, Naram-Sin, logró unificar la mayor parte de la Mesopotamia y trascendió sus fronteras, cimentando con esta unificación la ideología del gobierno del rey como gracia divina. Ya durante el Dinástico Temprano la documentación permite constatar la existencia de una ideología real que sostiene que es el dios Enlil el que gobierna el territorio de la Baja Mesopotamia a través de los reyes de las ciudades-Estado. Ahora bien, puesto que Sargón en su marcha conquistadora trascendió la jurisdicción territorial del dios Enlil, las inscripciones sargónicas sostienen que son los dioses de los territorios conquistados los que confieren el gobierno a Sargón. Esta consideración teológica se transforma, de acuerdo con Altman, en una verdadera disposición "diplomática", la cual sin dudas se ve favorecida por el carácter ordálico que tiene la legitimación de la conquista. Un detalle de relevancia en la administración de los territorios conquistado por Akkad es la aparición de la categoría de tierras del palacio o de la corona, concedidas a dependientes del palacio a cambio de su servicio (una novedad, como indica el autor, que se mantendrá en Medio Oriente hasta el siglo XIX de nuestra era).

Luego en este capítulo, Altman trata el período de la tercera dinastía de Ur (2112–2004), que devuelve el centro de gravedad política regional a la Baja Mesopotamia, aunque continuando con elementos de la propaganda imperial sargónica y, en especial, de la administración del territorio: a la zona central de la Baja Mesopotamia, la continuaba una región periférica hasta la ciudad de Ashshur y una región allende, comprendida por reinos clientes de Ur y de variable sumisión a la ciudad-Estado. Es durante la tercera dinastía de Ur que encontramos la primera evidencia registrada de una alianza matrimonial entre reyes con fines "diplomáticos".

El Capítulo 3 (pp. 49–87) trata la situación "diplomática" general del Cercano Oriente antiguo en el período paleobabilónico (2003–1595), durante el cual el repertorio de fuentes textuales aumenta considerablemente (en particular, los archivos epistolares de Mari), a la vez que un conjunto variado de pueblos o etnias, como los llama Altman (amorritas, hurritas, kasitas, hititas), interactúan a través de un código ahora, al parecer, formalizado de comunicación "inter-estatal". Las características de los períodos anteriores se mantienen y se consolidan: la autorización divina de la guerra, los tratados de paridad y de subordinación (que fijan pautas de extradición y asilo de personas), etc. Asimismo, se manifiesta una norma clara de resolución de conflicto entre dos reyes en disputa: la apelación a un rey mayor, del cual ambos dependen, y que expresa la voluntad divina favoreciendo a una de las partes, con lo cual, a nuestro criterio, se enfatiza así lo arbitrario de la performance de la autoridad real, más allá de todo ensayo de proceso judicial.

El Capítulo 4 (pp. 88–165) describe la situación general durante la Edad del Bronce Tardío (1600–1200), un período de "multiculturalismo", en palabra del autor, cuando el sistema vigente durante el período anterior se extiende hacia el oeste, abarcando a Egipto y a reinos del Mediterráneo oriental (Chipre). Durante este período, signado por la interacción de los grandes poderes de Egipto, Hatti, Mitanni, Asiria y Babilonia, los tratados entre reinos marcan el proceder de la "diplomacia internacional": se pautan alianzas dinásticas, la resolución de conflictos, la extradición de refugiados, etc., a través de mensajeros/embajadores que transitan los amplios territorios de la región. Estos tratados paritarios conviven con otro tipo de vinculación, los tratados de subordinación, entre un gran rey, con un poder territorial expansivo, y un rey local, sujeto a aquel (significativamente, los tratados hititas, lúcidamente caracterizados por Altman y temática de su especialidad). Al igual que en el período anterior, aunque con una mayor visibilidad, los intercambios comerciales siguen la pauta de la diplomacia, de la cual no pueden ser aislados, en términos analíticos.

El Capítulo 5 (pp. 166–219) analiza comparativa y sintéticamente el largo período que va de 1200 a 330. El reino de Asiria reaparece luego de la crisis general del siglo XII y, a partir del siglo X, comienza una progresiva expansión a través del Cercano Oriente, hasta lograr la hegemonía imperial en el siglo VII. Elementos ideológicos-teológicos para expresar un dominio que se pretende absoluto de toda la región, originados en los dos milenios anteriores, siguen estando presentes en las inscripciones imperiales, aunque reformulados: la justificación divina de la guerra es ubicua en las inscripciones celebrativas asirias, aunque ahora esta justificación adquiere el sentido pleno de guerra justa y santa. Con un menor tono de violencia simbólica (nuestros términos), esta ideología se mantendrá en las inscripciones babilónicas y aqueménidas entre los siglos VI y IV. Los modos de dominación imperial de los territorios sometidos por estos poderes parecen ser equiparables aunque existen variaciones: la práctica asiria de la deportación cruzada de poblaciones conquistadas se manifiesta solamente como movimiento en un solo sentido en el caso babilónico; y en el caso persa adquiere el sentido contrario, al tomar en cuenta la liberación de la población israelita por parte de Ciro el Grande a fines del siglo VI. La práctica de tratados de subordinación, especialmente en el caso asirio, revela continuidades con el período anterior pero también diferencias. Una diferencia cuantitativa es el magro número de tratados asirios a nuestra disposición (una media docena, aproximadamente, contando aquellos en estado fragmentario). Con todo, es claro que estos tratados reflejan una condición imperial de mayor alcance, acorde con la ideología triunfalista asiria y sostenida por su potencia militar.

Las consideraciones finales (pp. 210–219) que concluyen el tratamiento presentan un sumario analítico de cada capítulo, sintetizando la coherencia del recorte historiográfico de tres mil años de "relaciones internacionales". Una bibliografía final y los índices analíticos cierran formalmente el libro.

Sin dudas, este libro contribuye al repertorio reciente de estudios sobre las "relaciones internacionales" en el Cercano Oriente antiguo, entre los que podemos nombrar la obra de alcance general editada por R. Westbrook[1], con varios capítulos referidos a la "ley internacional" en cada región, pero también el estudio de A.H. Podany[2], más general y destinado, antes que al especialista en sociedades orientales, a los estudiantes y al público interesado. Tanto el estudio de G. Kestemont[3], como la colección de artículos editada por

[1] Westbrook 2003.
[2] Podany 2010.
[3] Kestemont 1974.

R. Cohen y R. Westbrook[4], se inscriben, con sus matices, analíticamente junto con el Capítulo 4 del libro aquí reseñado, así como el conocido y notable estudio de M. Liverani[5], en virtud, el de mayor rigor analítico entre todas estas obras. Debe señalarse, por otra parte, que ninguno de estos estudios ha problematizado la idea de "relaciones internacionales" del mismo modo en que se ha hecho en los estudios orientales con nociones como "economía", "política" y "religión" y no sin una considerable influencia a partir de los años '70 de la antropología social y cultural, especialmente en sus aspectos económicos y políticos. Dicha problematización merece ser efectuada, a nuestro juicio, para evitar caer en una concepción de la cuestión que la entienda como una variedad en una misma gradación—de relaciones internacionales "primitivas" a relaciones internacionales "modernas" o "contemporáneas"—antes que a partir de una diferencia cultural que se transforma así en ontológica y epistemológica.

En una evaluación general, pero también a partir de diversos tratamientos particulares en el libro, se debe dar la bienvenida a un trabajo de síntesis como el que reseñamos. El tratamiento está claramente expuesto y bien documentado en cada capítulo, lo cual permite una comprensión rápida de la descripción y el análisis histórico. Asimismo, tanto para el período del Bronce Tardío como para el primer milenio, la decisión de Altman de utilizar las comillas al referirse a reinos "vasallos", e incluso su preferencia de reemplazar este término por el de subordinados o clientes, no es solamente una nota terminológica. Por el contrario, debe reconocerse el criterio analítico del autor al considerar problemático e inclusive incorrecto el uso de dicha terminología para denotar o describir la subordinación política en el Cercano Oriente antiguo.

Un detalle menor, y que tal vez provenga de un involuntario error de imprenta, lo constituye la señalación en el título de la obra y en sus primeras páginas del año 2500 como el inicio del tratamiento de las relaciones "internacionales" en el Cercano Oriente cuando, en rigor, el primer capítulo arranca en 2900.

Para concluir, Altman ha logrado producir una síntesis actualizada sobre las "relaciones internacionales" en el Cercano Oriente antiguo preclásico que, si bien terminológicamente puede ser contestada, por otra parte, constituye un planteo claro y preciso de los principales elementos que conforman y caracterizan a dichas relaciones, así como de sus cambios y continuidades, durante tres milenios.

[4] Cohen y Westbrook 2000.
[5] Liverani 2001.

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Hayim Tawil, *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew*: *Etymological-Semantic and Idiomatic Equivalents with Supplement on Biblical Aramaic*. Jersey City, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 2009. Pp. xxiv + 503. ISBN 978–1–60280–114–1. USD 35,55.

El acadio, la lengua semita mejor atestiguada por el descubrimiento de innumerables tablillas, es de conocimiento ineludible para todo estudioso del Cercano Oriente Antiguo. Durante el II y I milenio a. C. ha sido una de las principales lenguas escritas, vehículo de la cultura asirio-babilónica. Por lo tanto para los biblistas que estudian el hebreo bíblico, es una ayuda recurrente a la hora de conocer, no sólo la historia de la lengua hebrea, sino también el significado de ciertos vocablos.

El pan-babilonismo del siglo XIX, que insistía sobre los paralelismos entre la literatura acádica y la hebrea, concebía derivada de Babilonia a toda la cultura medioriental antigua. Pero dejando atrás esa exageración, es cierto que los grandes diccionarios hebreos citan cognados acádicos en sus breves referencias etimológicas y también se da el caso en la dirección opuesta.

En el trabajo que estamos reseñando el Prof. Tawil ofrece algo distinto. En primer lugar cabe señalar que no se trata de un diccionario etimológico. Concebido como un instrumento para biblistas y estudiantes de la Biblia con

someros (o ningún) conocimientos del acadio, este trabajo busca descubrir significados de palabras y raíces hebreas/arameas a través de sus cognados o palabras equivalentes acádicas utilizadas en contextos similares. Pero también iluminar modismos hebreos/arameos a partir de expresiones en acadio. Es decir, contextualizar la confrontación del hebreo/arameo bíblicos con la literatura acádica.

Un ejemplo de contextualización es el tratamiento de la palabra נבא. No sólo proporciona la cita del *CAD* y del diccionario de von Soden *AHw*, como lo hacen algunos diccionarios hebreos, sino que reporta también el texto acádico de la comparación. Lo mismo hace al citar a Pentiuc[1]. Finalmente aporta las citas de artículos de revistas de Fleming[2] y Huehnergard[3]. Si comparamos esta misma palabra en los más prestigiosos diccionarios de Hebreo encontraremos que sólo *HALOT* cita a *AHw* pero no a *CAD*. Por lo tanto hay un enriquecimiento de citas que, además incluyen frases que son útiles para constatar cómo son utilizados determinados vocablos.

Pero si en algo esta trabajo resulta peculiar es en la clarificación de palabras hebreas/arameas a partir de modismos acádicos. Un ejemplo de esto se encuentra en el tratamiento de la raíz רצף que sirve para esclarecer el caso del hapax legomenon en Ct. 3,10. Allí Tawil retoma uno de sus artículos que han sido reunidos en una reciente publicación[4]. En Ct. 3,10 enumerando los detalles de la construcción del אפריון (otro hapax que este *Lexicon* estudia bajo la voz אַפְּדָן) de Salomón se utiliza el sintagma רָצוּף אַהֲבָה en el que se combinan una palabra del campo semántico de la edificación con una palabra del campo semántico de los afectos, la palabra "amor", tan importante en este libro bíblico. Los traductores hesitan entre dos tipos de solución. Algunos se inclinan por un tipo de interpretación figurada como, *tapizada de amor* (Biblia de Jerusalén), *enlosado de amor* (Reina Valera), mientras otros han intentado continuar con el campo semántico de la construcción, pero para eso han debido corregir la palabra "amor" por "ébano", *revestido de ébano* (Biblia del Pueblo de Dios). Estos ejemplos se constatan no sólo en las traducciones al castellano sino también en otras lenguas. Tawil en su *Lexicon* propone una lectura fundamentada en el uso de la raíz רצף con su cognado en acadio *raṣāpu*. Pero no solamente haciendo uso (y abuso) de etimologías a-contextuales, como se verifican en otros diccionarios, sino a través del uso epigráfico, especialmente del período neoasirio y neobabilonio. En esos testimonios

[1] Pentiuc 2001.
[2] Fleming 1993.
[3] Huehnergard 1999.
[4] Berkovitz, Halpern, y Goldstein 2012.

citados en esta entrada lexicográfica, la descripción de las construcciones de los reyes neoasirios Sargón, Senaquerib, Asarhadón y Asurbanipal y los neobabilonios Nabucodonosor y Nabónidas, concluyen con una fórmula similar, referida a la suntuosidad de las mismas. Por eso Tawil propone traducir *decoración suntuosa.*

Algo similar podemos constatar en la entrada ניר. Se trata de una palabra que aparece sólo 8 veces en todo el AT. Sobre tres ocurrencias no hay desacuerdo en su significado, sí, en cambio, en otras cuatro cuyos contextos son muy similares: 1 Re. 11,36; 14,4; 2 Re. 8,19 y 2 Cro. 21,7. Siguiendo la Peshita y la LXX se suele interpretar como "lámpara" y así lo hacen la mayoría de los diccionarios. Tawil, basándose en el uso figurado del término acádico *nīru* ("dominio, gobierno") lo interpreta así en los casos mencionados y también en Prov. 21,4 (la restante ocurrencia pero con la grafía נֵר) y traduce 1 Re. 11,36 *a su hijo, le daré una tribu, de manera que sea un dominio para David, mi servidor para siempre ante mí en Jerusalén*.

Pero también sigue su recorrido vinculando un texto tomado de *CAD* N_2 que reza así: *el gobierno del rey de Acad prosperará y él conquistará a sus enemigos*. A partir de esto sienta un paralelismo entre la evolución semántica del término acádico *nīru* -que sigue este itinerario: "yugo>dominio, gobierno"- con lo que ocurre con el término hebreo עֹל "yugo>dominio", citando una carta de Amarna en la que el término acádico *nīru* es glosado por el término semítico occidental *ḫullu* (=*'ullu*) correspondiente al hebreo עֹל.

A todo esto agrega una comparación de otro significado de ניר "baldío, barbecho, campo cultivable, tierra de labranza" relacionándolo etimológicamente con el término acádico *nīru* "yugo", por analogía con el término *ṣmd* hebreo y acádico. Etimológicamente yugo y campo se derivan de la misma raíz, en acadio *ṣamādu* que significa "uncir, aparejar, atar, sujetar".

Como se ve hay mucho de conjetura en todo esto, pero al menos nos hace accesible el material en el que se basa la misma. En los cuatro casos mencionados esta significación se ajusta al contexto, pero tal vez la prueba de esta evolución en el Hebreo sea un poco floja (existe también en el Lexicón una entrada para עֹל).

El Libro se abre con una introducción que consta de un prefacio, en el que el autor deja en claro de qué se trata la obra y hace un breve repaso práctico de la familia de las lenguas semíticas (págs. IX–XIV), una amplia lista de abreviaturas (págs. XV–XX) y un esquema tipo (con ejemplos claros) de cómo se estructuran las entradas lexicográficas (págs. XXI–XXIV). El cuerpo del libro se compone de una lista de entradas hebreas, siguiendo el alefato (págs. 1–436) y

unas entradas en arameo con el mismo orden (págs. 437–455). Se completa la obra con una lista de nombres propios hebreos y su correspondiente en acadio (págs. 457–464), una breve y bien resumida historia del acadio como lengua, con apuntes de fonología y morfología (págs. 465–471), una concordancia acadio-hebrea/aramea de más de 1200 vocablos (págs. 472–485) y la bibliografía (págs. 486–503).

Como todo manual (aunque el tamaño de sus páginas no lo parezca) el estudioso siempre notará ausencias. No se trata de un lexicon exhaustivo y hay aclaraciones de términos que no están incluidas aquí. Esto no es por desconocimiento del autor—dado que hay muchas de las palabras estudiadas en artículos suyos que no están volcadas en este libro—sino tal vez por un criterio de selección que, evidentemente, nunca satisface a todos. También habrá cierta desilusión al ver que un término está extensamente tratado y otro no tanto, pero eso sí tiene remedio, pues en muchas de las entradas se encuentra al final una referencia bibliográfica de actualidad.

Es un trabajo enorme y, sobre todo, original. No he conocido hasta ahora, algo parecido para poder comparar. Encontrar en un solo volumen una vasta lista de términos hebreos/arameos por orden alefático con las citas del *CAD* y el *AHw* más los textos acádicos con su traducción al inglés, implica mucho trabajo de síntesis. Esto es lo que hace a este libro de mucha utilidad para estudiosos y para los que no lo son tanto y desean acercarse a esta literatura. De hecho, el propio autor en el prefacio indica como último objetivo "*introducir 'indirectamente' a los biblistas y estudiantes que no están familiarizados con el acadio, el vasto material asiro-babilónico compilado en todos los volúmenes*" del *CAD* y el *AHw*.

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Juan Manuel Tebes, *Nómadas en la encrucijada: Sociedad, ideología y poder en los márgenes áridos del Levante meridional durante el primer milenio a.C.* BAR International Series 2574. Oxford, Archaeopress: 2013. Pp. v + 189. ISBN 9781407311975. £34.00.

Este libro nace de rigurosas investigaciones que Juan Manuel Tebes ha venido realizando en los últimos años en el marco de los estudios antiguo orientales. Muchas de ellas fueron parte de numerosos trabajos, incluida su tesis doctoral, que en distintas versiones fueron publicados en revistas académicas especializadas. Siendo su área de investigación las zonas áridas del Levante meridional en la Edad del Hierro, Tebes proporciona al lector evidencias arqueológicas que sostienen sus investigaciones con gran rigurosidad. Esto es muchas veces lo habitual en relación a la escritura de un libro; sin embargo, aquí Tebes se propone ir mucho más allá. Ante la mirada estereotipada de las periferias como un mundo anexo y poco importante, el autor se propone, en base al estudio del fenómeno del tribalismo como término envolvente de los grupos locales que habitaron el Levante meridional en la Edad del Hierro, encontrar la mirada de los propios protagonistas. ¡Un enorme desafío, bucear dentro "de los pueblos sin historia" para encontrar a sus hombres y mujeres!

Tebes se centra en el área que abarca la región del Negev, Edom y Sinaí nororiental, tomando el fenómeno del tribalismo como armazón desde donde se estructuraron las sociedades que interactuaron, interpelando sus formas de vida, sus silencios, los espacios abandonados y recuperados. Desde los modelos teóricos de la antropología social y económica, se logra un corrimiento de las miradas tradicionales que estudiaban a estas sociedades a partir de las

fuentes de las comunidades o estados urbanos vecinos, para aprehender las cuestiones políticas, sociales económicas e ideológicas de los propios protagonistas. De esta manera, no se trata solo de describir la historia de los pueblos o de los grupos nómades y seminómades que interactuaron, sino de lograr explicar, dentro de los procesos históricos, la realidad, la vida desde los propios "hombres de carne y hueso". De allí que el libro invite a realizar una lectura transversal de los mismos, en base a ejes analíticos que comprenden los aspectos económicos, políticos, sociales e ideológicos en los que se disciernen los elementos del tribalismo. El autor utiliza como fuentes de información la producción de cerámica de manufactura local, las actividades económicas—ya sea el intercambio o la extracción del cobre en los diferentes contextos históricos—, el rol preponderante de la organización tribal y su dimensión ideológica—que es analizada desde la estructura articuladora del parentesco y que se expresa en la construcción de las mentalidades. A partir de estos planos, el libro se organiza en diez capítulos, donde se destacan las tablas, mapas y por sobre todo la larga lista de fotografías realizadas por Tebes en sus excavaciones arqueológicas.

El Capítulo 1 Tebes lo dedica al armazón cronológico, con todas las dificultades que implica, debido a la escasez de fuentes, acercarse al área de estudio, y sobre todo por tratarse de una época convulsionada por las contracciones políticas y económicas. Si bien el autor advierte que no es una cuestión cerrada, al mismo tiempo este capítulo pone en cuestionamiento las tradicionales dataciones cronológicas de fuentes epigráficas y arqueológicas. Estas últimas habían creado hitos más o menos estables, a partir de los cuales se tiende a realizar correlaciones con las cronologías de Palestina meridional. Luego de la lectura del capítulo quedan planteados muchos interrogantes y nuevas perspectivas que proponen algunos corrimientos cronológicos para el Negev, Edom, y Sinaí nororiental en la Edad del Hierro.

En el Capítulo 2 se desarrollan las herramientas teóricas para analizar las organizaciones sociales de los pueblos que existieron por afuera de los Estados de la antigüedad. Plantea un interrogante básico y central: ¿Quiénes eran los pueblos que habitaban y se movían a través de las periferias áridas del Levante meridional durante la Edad del Hierro? Para responder esta pregunta, Tebes realiza una ardua tarea utilizando herramientas teóricas de la antropología social y de la etnografía, desde donde se nutre para reconstruir el andamiaje social, ensamblando las evidencias que proporcionan las distintas fuentes. El autor abre un abanico de conceptos analíticos, transitando por los patrones de movilidad y la concepción del fenómeno del tribalismo. Una

conjunción original y novedosa para explicar los cambios sociopolíticos, sobre todo en los niveles locales e interregionales.

Los capítulos del 3 al 7 están dedicados al estudio de las cuestiones económicas y comerciales. El autor se pregunta cómo vivían y se movían con diferentes ritmos las poblaciones locales, al mismo tiempo que se propone penetrar en la argamasa social, penetrando en los entramados del trabajo del cobre, la producción cerámica, la circulación de bienes y la etnicidad. El capítulo 3 está articulado por una pregunta: ¿Cómo respondieron los grupos autóctonos frente a los cambios que se sucedieron en la Edad del Hierro? Para encontrar respuestas a estos interrogantes, Tebes sugiere repensar los modelos teóricos, dejando a un lado los estudios tradicionales que perciben y sostienen el carácter estático de los grupos tribales. Utilizando los instrumentos analíticos que proporciona el modelo de sistemas-mundo, pone en tensión las miradas homogeneizantes. Desde esta óptica hace posible el estudio de los ritmos de formación y disolución de formas de organización políticas, las incidencias de la explotación y transporte del cobre, logrando explicar las interacciones sistémicas, sociopolíticas y económicas. Posteriormente investiga el proceso de formación de entidades políticas estimuladas por la integración de las rutas comerciales camelleras de la Arabia meridional a las nuevas formas del sistema-mundo. Ya en el Capítulo 4 el autor penetra directamente en las cuestiones económicas centrales y la importancia primordial de los grupos sociales orientados al pastoreo. El análisis e interpretación de las evidencias arqueológicas dan cuenta del papel central que tienen las minas de Timna y Feinán en las actividades del trabajo y circulación del cobre durante la Edad del Hierro. Por medio de la extrapolación entre la distribución espacial de la cerámica y los objetos de metal, Tebes se acerca a posibles nuevas respuestas sobre quiénes, cómo y porqué desarrollaron estas actividades, así como el impacto que tuvieron en las organizaciones sociales locales a partir de la retirada de la hegemonía egipcia en el siglo XII a.C. Pero no solo están analizadas las profundas consecuencias de la explotación y circulación del cobre en las vidas de estos pueblos, sino también que se da por tierra con las teorías que relacionan la explotación minera directamente con estructuras estatales, como el estado antiguo de Israel o de Judá. El Capítulo 5 está dedicado a la distribución de la cerámica "midianita", tratando de comprender su significado en el contexto sociohistórico contemporáneo. Tebes realiza un exhaustivo estudio sobre la elaboración y distribución de estas vasijas, a la luz del conocimiento dado por las sociedades etnográficas del Cercano Oriente actual. Si bien Tebes recorre un difícil camino que lo lleva a la búsqueda de explicaciones de las funciones sociales y simbólicas en los

diferentes contextos arqueológicos, deja abiertas las discusiones para construir posibles modelos sobre la naturaleza del intercambio en la Edad de Hierro. El Capítulo 6 es el núcleo duro de la obra, al realizar una original y renovadora propuesta. Aquí el autor se detiene en el estudio de una cerámica particular, conocida tradicionalmente como "edomita". Realizando un riguroso análisis de dicha cerámica, Tebes aborda profundamente este estudio desde diferentes dimensiones, de tipología, datación, sin dejar de observar las esferas de producción y circulación. Aquí el autor rompe con la relación estática entre cerámica y etnia y, desafiando las posturas tradicionales, propone una redefinición de esta cerámica como un conjunto de tipos cerámicos en un área geográfica determinada. Esta nomenclatura implica nuevas miradas, poniendo el foco en diferentes dimensiones sociales, despegándose así de posturas homogeneizantes de los estudios tipológicos. El Capítulo 7 es dedicado al estudio de la cerámica "negevita", buscando quiénes, cómo, dónde y con qué propósitos se manufacturaban estas vasijas. El autor, después de realizar un recorrido del registro arqueológico, la tipología cerámica y su distribución, se inclina hacia una nueva mirada sobre su producción y distribución, haciendo foco en los propios grupos domésticos móviles.

En los últimos capítulos se realiza otro aporte original, al aplicar los modelos de tribalismo y parentesco a las sociedades tribales en el conjunto del Negev, Edom y Sinaí. Tebes se dedica al estudio de las formas organizativas sociales, para luego bucear en los aspectos ideológicos del parentesco que se manifiestan en las mentalidades de estas sociedades. El Capítulo 8 está enmarcado en el fenómeno del tribalismo, acercándose desde las teorías antropológicas a redefinir la condición sociopolítica de Edom. Abre el debate con la pertinencia o no de asignarle la condición de estatalidad al Edom de finales de la Edad del Hierro. El Capítulo 9 penetra directamente en el estudio de los aspectos ideológicos. Desde los instrumentos teóricos que aportan la antropología política y social, Tebes se sumerge en las facetas ideológicas del parentesco para encontrarse con las miradas sobre la heterogeneidad social de Moab, Ammon y Edom, partiendo de algunos textos genealógicos y familiares bíblicos. El autor abre nuevas perspectivas de análisis para comprender cómo el lenguaje del parentesco transmitió las cambiantes y conflictivas relaciones entre los pueblos, así como también sus alianzas. Tebes estudia cómo se explican las profundas interacciones y los acomodamientos poblacionales desde el lenguaje del parentesco y la fluidez que proporcionan las genealogías orales. Asimismo, postula que desde una perspectiva antropológica se pueden dar respuestas no solo a similitudes de creencias religiosas, sino a comprender por qué los auto-

res bíblicos consideran algunos pueblos como enemigos (Ammon y Moab) y otros como hermanos (Edom).

El trabajo de Tebes es superador de los estudios tradicionales sobre las periferias antiguas, logrando una mirada de diversidad en la unidad regional para el período y, a la manera de Eric Wolf, observando a los pueblos sin historia. Al finalizar este profundo, y exhaustivo trabajo, si bien subsisten interrogantes orientados a nuevas vías de indagación, los lectores se encontrarán con los grupos nómades en la encrucijada, con sus entramados sociales, sus lógicas, sus vidas. Es grato mencionar la publicación del libro en español, llegando de esta manera a un inmenso público, ávido de nuevas investigaciones en este campo.

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Política Editorial

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Ejemplos:

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Herzog, Z. and O. Bar-Yosef. 2002. "Different Views on Ethnicity in the Archaeology of the Negev." In: S. Ahituv and E. D. Oren (eds.), *Aharon Kempinski Memorial Volume: Studies in Archaeology and Related Disciplines.* Beersheva: Studies by the Department of Bible and Ancient Near East, Vol. 15. Beersheba, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, pp. 151–181.

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Pratico, G. D. 1985. "Nelson Glueck's 1938-40 Excavations at Tell el Kheleifeh: A Reappraisal." In: *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 259, pp. 1–32.

Libro:

Goddeeris, A. 2002. *Economy and Society in Northern Babylonia in the Early Old Babylonian Period (ca. 2000-1800)*. Leuven, Peeters.

Reseñas Bibliográficas

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