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Ezekiel 1–19
LESLIE C. ALLEN

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Word Biblical Commentary
Ezekiel 1–19
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* Deceased
To Ken, a brother to look up to

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Editorial Preface

The launching of the *Word Biblical Commentary* brings to fulfillment an enterprise of several years’ planning. The publishers and the members of the editorial board met in 1977 to explore the possibility of a new commentary on the books of the Bible that would incorporate several distinctive features. Prospective readers of these volumes are entitled to know what such features were intended to be; whether the aims of the commentary have been fully achieved time alone will tell.

First, we have tried to cast a wide net to include as contributors a number of scholars from around the world who not only share our aims, but are in the main engaged in the ministry of teaching in university, college, and seminary. They represent a rich diversity of denominational allegiance. The broad stance of our contributors can rightly be called evangelical, and this term is to be understood in its positive, historic sense of a commitment to Scripture as divine revelation, and to the truth and power of the Christian gospel.

Then, the commentaries in our series are all commissioned and written for the purpose of inclusion in the *Word Biblical Commentary*. Unlike several of our distinguished counterparts in the field of commentary writing, there are no translated works, originally written in a non-English language. Also, our commentators were asked to prepare their own rendering of the original biblical text and to use those languages as the basis of their own comments and exegesis. What may be claimed as distinctive with this series is that it is based on the biblical languages, yet it seeks to make the technical and scholarly approach to a theological understanding of Scripture understandable by—and useful to—the fledgling student, the working minister, and colleagues in the guild of professional scholars and teachers as well.

Finally, a word must be said about the format of the series. The layout, in clearly defined sections, has been consciously devised to assist readers at different levels. Those wishing to learn about the textual witnesses on which the translation is offered are invited to consult the section headed *Notes*. If the readers’ concern is with the state of modern scholarship on any given portion of Scripture, they should turn to the sections on *Bibliography* and *Form/Structure/Setting*. For a clear exposition of the passage’s meaning and its relevance to the ongoing biblical revelation, the *Comment* and concluding *Explanation* are designed expressly to meet that need. There is therefore something for everyone who may pick up and use these volumes.

If these aims come anywhere near realization, the intention of the editors will have been met, and the labor of our team of contributors rewarded.

General Editors:  *David A. Hubbard*
Author’s Preface

I am grateful to the editors for the opportunity to write this commentary, which stands alongside my earlier Ezekiel 20–48 and provides a perspective that is consistent with it. The reverse order of writing has given me a strong sense of the wholeness of the book.

I must acknowledge the help of my colleague, James T. Butler, in commenting on a draft of some of my work that impinged on his own, obtaining books from the theological library at Claremont, and being there for me to bounce off my ideas. One of the countless debts I owe my dear wife Elizabeth is her weighing every word I have written and warning of many a trap of careless and infelicitous language. Thanks are due to Fuller Theological Seminary for providing the time and encouragement to study and not least to David Sielaff and his colleagues in the word processing office for their diligent and patient work.

LESLIE C. ALLEN
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October 1993

Main Bibliography

1. COMMENTARIES (IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER; CITED BY NAME HEREAFTER)


* Deceased
Tr. translation, translator(s), translated by, transpose(s)
repr. reprint, reprinted


2. TEXTS, VERSIONS, AND TEXTUAL STUDIES


OTL Old Testament Library (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Westminster) ed. edited, edition(s), editor
Rev. revised, reviser, revision, or reverse
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
CBC Cambridge Bible Commentary
CUP Cambridge University Press
AB Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday)
WBC Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word)
FOTL The Forms of the Old Testament Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)


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3. MAJOR MONOGRAPHS AND ARTICLES

*Bib Biblica*

*HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual*

*CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

*SCS Septuagint and Cognate Studies*

*HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual*

*MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)*

*LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT*

*ETL Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*

*BibOr Biblica et Orientalia (Rome: PBI)*


Gese, H. *Der Verfassungsentwurf des Ezechiel (Kap. 40–48) traditionsgeschichtlich untersucht.*

ed. edited, edition(s), editor
OBO Orbis biblicus et orientalis (Freiburg [Sw]/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck)
SBT Studies in Biblical Theology (London/Naperville, IL: SCM/Allenson)
SCM Student Christian Movement
Tr. translation, translator(s), translated by, transpose(s)
JSOTSup Journal for the Study of the Old Testament [JOST] Supplement Series
UP University Press
Int Interpretation
ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
BZA Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
OBT Overtures to Biblical Theology
Tübingen: Mohr, 1957.


AnBib Analecta biblica (Rome: PBI)
HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
BZA W Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
BWANT Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament (Stuttgart:Kohlhammer)
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
FB Forschung zur Bibel
WMANT Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament (Neukirchen: Neukirchener)
JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Biblical Studies
SC Source chrétiennes
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
OBO Orbis biblicus et orientalis (Freiburg [Sw]/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck)
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
SBS Stuttgarter Bibelstudien (Stuttgart/Würzburg: Echter/KBW)
ErFor Ertäge der Forschung


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Introduction

Bibliography

FB Forschung zur Bibel
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
UP University Press
AnBib Analecta biblica (Rome: PBI)
Tr. translation, translator(s), translated by, transpose(s)
FRLANT Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck)
BBET Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
VT Vetus Testamentum
CTJ Calvin Theological Journal
FS Festschrift, volume written in honor of
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
Tr. translation, translator(s), translated by, transpose(s)
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
Tradition: Prophecy in a Time of Crisis.” In Israel’s Prophetic Heritage. FS P. R. Ackroyd, ed. R. Coggins et al.
J. Lust. 283–94. Fechter, F. *Bewältigung der Katastrophe: Untersuchungen zu ausgewählten Fremvölkersprüche
Prophet’s Word to Prophetic Book: A Study of Walther Zimmerli’s Theory of ‘Nachinterpretation.’” Diss., Yale,

**THE NATURE OF THE COMMENTARY**

This is the second introduction I have written to a commentary on Ezekiel. The first may be found in
the volume *Ezekiel 20–48* (WBC 29, Dallas: Word, 1990), which was written before the present volume.
This introduction is a continuation of the former one and so does not repeat some of its basic content.

The editors’ preface has briefly indicated the format of the series. I have found that it provides
invaluable guidelines for working through the material step by step. The main and sectional
bibliographies attest the academic fellowship in which I have been privileged to share. My reading has
provided a stimulating circle of commentators and researchers. Each member of this scholarly seminar,
so to speak, has made a contribution to the commentary. Those to whom I am especially grateful are
Cooke for his careful grammatical observations, Cornill for his pioneering text-critical research, Ehrlich
for his knack of looking at the text in a different way, Zimmerli for his labors in form and redaction,
and Greenberg for his sense of pervasive literary unity. A host of historical-critical commentaries from Ewald
onwards have been used, with earlier scholarship rather meagerly represented by Jerome and Calvin. A
number of the judgments in more recent commentaries can be traced back to an earlier time, and some

**ed.** edited, edition(s), editor

*HAR* Hebrew Annual Review

*FS* Festschrift, volume written in honor of

*ed.** edited, edition(s), editor

*et al. et alii, and others

*CUP* Cambridge University Press

*ed.** edited, edition(s), editor

*BZAW* Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]

*RB* Revue biblique

*RB* Revue biblique

*Int* Interpretation

*ed.** edited, edition(s), editor

*TBT* The Bible Today

*HSM* Harvard Semitic Museum or Harvard Semitic Monographs

*WBC* Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word)
care has been given to crediting authors with their particular innovations. Behind such attributions there sometimes lies the chagrin of finding that a personal insight had been anticipated long ago, only to be forgotten by subsequent scholarship.

Behind the translation lies a number of drafts and changes of mind. It reflects the end product of study, incorporating the conclusions argued for in later sections of the commentary. Two principles underlie the translation. First, I have indulged in an old game I used to play with passages from Demosthenes and Cicero in student days, imagining that they wrote in English and that I had to translate their Greek or Latin back to this original. Second, this quest for naturalness necessarily has often been limited by a demand for closer accord to the Hebrew made by the structural and exegetical comments. The fivefold variety of rendering displayed by the REB in 18:21–28 ("renounces," "mend his ways," "turn," "give up," and "turn his back") captures the stylistic variation of the English language, but at a certain cost. It would not suit a translation for a detailed commentary on the Hebrew text.

As for the grammatical and text-critical observations in the Notes, the former speak for themselves. As to the latter, written in response to an editorial mandate to interact with the apparatus of BHS, I confess my old-fashioned adherence to the classical tradition. Where the ancient witnesses to the text raise discordant voices, it has been deemed necessary to give priority to the perspective that best accords with the context and with which the origin of secondary readings may be best explained. Qumran has proved unrewarding to the student of the text of Ezekiel, not only because of the paucity of extant fragments but also because they only reflect early forms of the MT. The LXX in its earliest form constitutes the most important witness alongside the MT. In the sophisticated task of assessing differences, the critic must not only explain the contextual superiority of the preferred reading but support it by giving a plausible explanation of the origin of the presumed textual error. One must express personal disappointment at the final report of the Committee of the Hebrew Old Testament Project, sponsored by the United Bible Societies (D. Barthélemy, ed., Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament, vol. 3). Its conclusions read more like the pleas of a defense attorney for the MT than the verdicts of a judge arbitrating among several textual authorities. Tribute must be paid, however, to its comprehensive reviews of scholarly opinion and presentations of the textual evidence.

As for the grammatical and text-critical observations in the Notes, the former speak for themselves. As to the latter, written in response to an editorial mandate to interact with the apparatus of BHS, I confess my old-fashioned adherence to the classical tradition. Where the ancient witnesses to the text raise discordant voices, it has been deemed necessary to give priority to the perspective that best accords with the context and with which the origin of secondary readings may be best explained. Qumran has proved unrewarding to the student of the text of Ezekiel, not only because of the paucity of extant fragments but also because they only reflect early forms of the MT. The LXX in its earliest form constitutes the most important witness alongside the MT. In the sophisticated task of assessing differences, the critic must not only explain the contextual superiority of the preferred reading but support it by giving a plausible explanation of the origin of the presumed textual error. One must express personal disappointment at the final report of the Committee of the Hebrew Old Testament Project, sponsored by the United Bible Societies (D. Barthélemy, ed., Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament, vol. 3). Its conclusions read more like the pleas of a defense attorney for the MT than the verdicts of a judge arbitrating among several textual authorities. Tribute must be paid, however, to its comprehensive reviews of scholarly opinion and presentations of the textual evidence.

These textual annotations represent a second attempt at working on chaps. 1–19. The manuscript of the late W. H. Brownlee’s commentary that underlay Ezekiel I–19 (WBC 28, Waco, TX: Word, 1986), which this volume replaces, lacked specific sets of textual notes until chap. 16, and it fell to me to produce them. While in this volume I have sometimes been able to quote that work, in general the paucity and predictability of the old notes reveal the inadequacy of attempting textual study without the full support of other perspectives of studying the material. Good textual judgments depend on a broad understanding that only other angles can provide.

These other angles are pursued in the section Form/Structure/Setting. Form criticism has proved of inestimable value in clarifying the function and mood of the text. Rhetorical criticism, in the

**REB** Revised English Bible

**BHS** Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

ed. edited, edition(s), editor

**vol. volume**

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**WBC** Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word)
Muilenburgian tradition, has exposed the contours and twists and turns of the material and has also clarified the dimensions of the literary unit. Redaction criticism of a moderate kind has identified the stages of literary development that underlie the present form of the text. This commentary endeavors to stand midway between those of Zimmerli and Greenberg. To speak in generalizations, the former concentrates on the parts and the latter on the whole. Zimmerli can be accused of creating a canon within a canon, with his concern for a primary text and subsequent commentary (cf. Childs, Introduction 369–70; Scalise, “From Prophet’s Word” 185–89). Yet, if the proper focus of a commentary is on the final form of a redacted text, it is also legitimate and necessary to inquire how it reached that form. The following essay on the growth and structure of the literary tradition seeks to supply answers, putting together the jigsaw pieces presented in the course of the two commentaries on Ezekiel.

The Comment section in the commentary is a step-by-step outworking of conclusions reached in the two previous sections. It shows the correlation between the details of the material and makes smaller exegetical decisions along the way. The Explanation section sums up the agenda(s) of the literary unit. Actually it is the best place for the less experienced reader to begin. It often draws concentric circles around the particular unit, the rest of Ezekiel, the OT, and even the biblical revelation as a whole. J. D. Levenson, in the course of a review of Zimmerli’s and Greenberg’s commentaries, asked whether a commentary should include an element of preaching (Int 38 [1984] 212). This commentator would answer that, since these are prophetic texts, his task is to uncover the preaching to their own constituency in which the texts are engaging. To this end the NT references often supplied in the Explanation are an attempt partly to take Christian readers back to an understanding of the OT passage and partly to make them realize its spiritual affinity to areas of their own religious world.

Overall, the attitude taken in this commentary is that of a friend to Ezekiel and his book, an honest friend but an understanding one. This empathetic attitude is perhaps an obvious one for a moderately conservative seminary professor to whom the book is part of the canonical scriptures. It is also one that has been learned from several years’ experience of attempting to teach Judaism from the inside to Christian classes and to speak up for it in response to suspicion and misunderstanding. If the commentator does not speak up on behalf of Ezekiel and the book that bears his name, no one else will bother to do so.

There is an interim quality about every commentary. After a while one can glance through any example of the genre and determine its date without looking at the front. The bibliography stops at a certain point, and the questions posed to the text reflect a certain period. Nonetheless, this has been a good time to write on Ezekiel. Zimmerli and Greenberg have left readers of their respective commentaries wondering, and the time is ripe for a rapprochement between their approaches, rather than, as some might think, setting up entrenched battle lines between literary and historical-critical claims. Moreover, recent years have been productive ones for research into Ezekiel, as the fruit of the 1985 conference at Louvain, Ezekiel and His Book (edited by J. Lust), exemplifies. The time has been opportune to catch up with recent academic contributions and to correlate them with older scholarship.

**THE GROWTH AND STRUCTURE OF THE LITERARY TRADITION**

cf. confer, compare

OT Old Testament

*Int* Interpretation

NT New Testament

OT Old Testament
The dates attached to some of Ezekiel’s messages indicate a prophetic ministry that lasted twenty-two years from 593 to 571 B.C. (1:2; 29:17). The visions, signs, and oracles associated with this ministry seem to fall into two groups. The first corresponds to the period from 593 to about 586 and was initially intended for a constituency of upperclass Judeans who had been deported by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 and settled in a labor camp in the Babylonian heartland. To this threatened group Ezekiel had to bring the even more threatening news that Jerusalem was to finally fall and that Judah’s political existence was to be terminated. A second group of visions, signs, and oracles was evidently delivered to a wider audience, enlarged by Judeans exiled after the fall of the capital. Now Ezekiel had a happier message. As heir of a prophetic tradition of a stark sequence of judgment and salvation in Yahweh’s dealings with the covenant people, he was able to envision return to the land by historicizing the tradition. Darkness was to be followed by the dawn of a new and far better day.

This tradition of judgment and salvation is reflected plainly in the book. Chaps. 1–24 are basically given over to oracles of judgment, while chaps. 33–48 are given over to messages of hope. Ezekiel’s public oracles are preserved in a distinctly literary form that stands at a distance from the communal setting in which they were given. His prophetic ministry is subsumed under the reported voice of God. Even the exiles’ remarks are refracted through a divine oracle.

There are only two voices in Ezekiel’s book, the prophet’s and God’s. Those who consult and oppose Yahweh and Ezekiel never speak. The words of the latter are doubly framed; Ezekiel quotes Yahweh quoting them in refutation. (O’Connor, TBT 18 [1980] 28)

Two of the people’s comments about Ezekiel’s public prophesying speak of him as “he” (אֶזְכַּר, 12:26; 21:5[20:49]), but any impression of him as a person in his own right is largely hidden behind his testimony to the God whose word he brings. Apart from his objection to carrying out part of a symbolic act in 4:14 and his anguished cries of intercession in 9:8 and 11:13, little humanity is allowed to obtrude into the message given by the Lord whose dutiful servant he is.

Ezekiel had plenty of time to compile his prophetic reports, which incorporated his oracles of judgment in the seven years until 586 and his oracles of salvation in the period more than twice as long, from 586 to 571. There is no reason to dismiss the plain import of the message-reception formula that characteristically prefaces the oracles that inaugurate literary units, “I received a message from Yahweh.” Nevertheless, there are indications that Ezekiel’s own work has been amplified by other contributions that are claimed as equally partaking of prophetic authority by continued use of Ezekiel’s messenger formula, “This is the Lord Yahweh’s message,” and divine-saying formula, “so runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.” For this reader, the book contains persistent evidence of literary units that are made up of three layers: a basic oracle, a continuation or updating that stays relatively close to the basic material, and a closing oracle that stands apart from the earlier two pieces. The conclusion to be drawn is that the first two layers are to be ascribed to Ezekiel and the third to heirs of his work who were concerned to preserve it and adapt it to the needs of a succeeding generation (cf. Clements, “The Chronology of Redaction in Ez 1–24” 290, 292).

No long period of time seems to have elapsed in the composition of the book. While Ezekiel ministered in person to the pre-587 prisoners of war and to the first generation of post-587 exiles, the later adaptations that appear in the book seem to have been made among the second generation of exiles. Nothing in the book reflects return to the land as a historical fact. Nor is there any hint that the Persian empire has succeeded the Babylonian. Whereas Second Isaiah placed the fall of Babylon within the
historical setting of the rise of Cyrus in the 540s, the book of Ezekiel is remarkably reticent about any such prospect. Only 21:35–37 (30–32) speaks in guarded tones about its future fall, which was actually to occur in 539 and to lead to Cyrus’s edict of 538 permitting Judeans to return to the land. There are two features in the book that may indicate the timing of the later process of redaction. If the dating of the final vision “in the twenty-fifth year of our exile” (40:1), along with the use of the number twenty-five and its multiples in the ensuing measurements of the new temple, implicitly refers to a year of jubilee, the fiftieth year (cf. 46:17), one may imagine a striking implication. Was the end of the exile understood by the second-generation heirs of Ezekiel’s message to be due to take place in the early 540s (597–547)? A similar extrapolation may be drawn from some other numerical evidence. The exile is put into a forty-year period in the supplementary 4:6, while the same time frame is applied three times to an exile for the Egyptians in the redactional passage 29:11–13. For the Judeans this would spell out the same endpoint (587–547). It is not difficult to infer that these apparent clues to the time of the return would have stimulated keen interest in the book during the 550s, which resulted in the canonical version of the book of Ezekiel.

It is the book, of course, that has canonical authority, and not the prophet himself, although the oral and literary work of the prophet provides its substance. The book shows evidence of much editorial activity, undertaken by Ezekiel and his successors, in terms of both arranging oracles and supplementing them to speak to later concerns of the exiles. The edited book invites its readers to look back at the prophet’s ministry and to apply its challenge and assurance to their own hearts and lives. The intended readers or hearers were living in the closing years of the exile, and by faith we modern heirs of this scripture may stand alongside them and overhear what they heard first. This issue of the setting of the book as a whole is important. Zimmerli, while concerned with the whole book, was inclined to stand beside Ezekiel and then look beyond to the redactional sequel to which the book bears witness. This is a natural procedure, especially since the book urges us to look back at Ezekiel’s prophesying. Yet its real invitation is to engage in a re-reading of the record from a later standpoint, and it is only as we endeavor to respond to that invitation that we honor the book.

CHAPTERS 1–24

This first major section is substantially made up of three collections of messages of judgment. There is a pattern of compilation that runs through much of the book: a vision followed by an account of interpreted sign acts (1:1–3:15/3:22–5:17; 8:1–11:25/12:1–20; 37:1–14/15–28). In each of the first two cases there is a continuation with oracles of judgment. The emphasis on divine judgment indicates its continuing value for the exiles. One purpose it must have had was to give meaning to the recent abyss into which the Judeans had been plunged by loss of land and nationhood. This literary purpose in recounting the interpretation of the tragedy in terms of judgment finds indirect confirmation in the oracles of 22:23–31 and 36:16–23, retrospective post-587 oracles in which we overhear Ezekiel explaining in God’s name the necessity of such punishment for the Judeans. Such a purpose may also be deduced from the injunction to the exiles never to forget their shameful past that led to their judgment (16:54, reinforced in 36:31; 39:26).

Each of the three judgment collections begins with a report of a momentous event that is precisely dated. The date in 1:1, with its enigmatic reference to “the thirtieth year,” has been redactionally brought into line with the chronological system used elsewhere in the book, along with details about Ezekiel necessary for second-generation readers (1:2–3a). The report of Ezekiel’s seeing a vision of Yahweh as a God of judgment and hearing his commission as a prophet of judgment in 1:1–3:15 is

cf. confer, compare
followed by a divine mandate to engage in ominous sign-acts and an interpretation of the final sign, in 3:16a, 22–5:17, and then by a pair of judgment oracles rhetorically addressed to “the mountains of Israel” in chap. 6 and by a series of content-related oracles that announce disaster for Judah and Jerusalem in chap. 7 (cf. Boadt, “Rhetorical Strategies” 188–90). No mention has yet been made of 3:16b–21, which will be discussed later together with similar material.

The second collection begins with a date that verifies the experience of a second vision and also a consultation by the leaders, which marked the community’s recognition of Ezekiel as a prophet. To 8:1–10:22; 11:22–25 has been added a report of a separate temple vision in 11:1–13. It serves to confirm the visionary message of accusation and judgment in a temple setting that appears in chap. 9. The two sign-acts of 12:1–20 duly follow, which forecast the defeat and exile of the people of Jerusalem. At an earlier stage in the history of the book, the sequel was probably a series of judgment oracles against Jerusalem, which pounded nail after nail into its coffin. These are the oracles of 14:12–23 and 15:1–8, which have been combined into a single literary unit, and the single oracle of 16:1–43b.

The third collection has no initial vision but takes its cue from chap. 8 by prefixing a date to a second visit from the leaders, who are given no comforting word but only a message of judgment (20:1–26, 30–31). Two sign-acts are incorporated into a group of oracles that celebrate a “sword” of judgment (21:1–32 [20:45–21:27]). Further oracles follow, two concerning the coming fall of Jerusalem (22:1–16, 17–22), to which a third was added in confirmation (22:23–31), and then the complex of oracles about Jerusalem’s fate in chap. 23, which in its final parts has been augmented from chap. 16. The two oracles of chap. 24 forecast the fall of the now besieged capital. Its initial date is not relevant to the basic structuring of the three collections. Its style does not accord with the dates elsewhere in the book, and it was evidently added at a later stage.

It is obvious from the gaps in the foregoing treatment of chaps. 1–24 that there is other material not yet accounted for. This material breaks the previous pattern and has a pattern of its own, a double agenda of assurance and challenge. It seems to have been editorially inserted, whether by Ezekiel himself or by the redactors of the next generation. The first case is 3:16b–21, which either represents a custom-made digest of 33:1–20 or presses into service an existing variant of it. Post-587 readers are shown that the message of radical judgment sounded in the context still has a certain relevance (cf. Scalise, “From Prophet’s Word” 238–39). Two alternatives now faced the exiles, life or death, and from Ezekiel and his book came every incentive to choose the life and salvation Yahweh intended for them. With that opportunity came a spiritual and moral challenge. The God who had judged his people was to be the judge of the willful unbelievers and apostates among his people.

The second instance occurs in 11:14–21, which functions as a literary response to Ezekiel’s passionate cry deprecating God’s wholesale destruction of his people. One of the prophet’s oracles of salvation is placed here to assure exilic readers of Yahweh’s positive purposes for them in terms of restoration to the homeland and moral and spiritual renewal. It has a sting in its tail, a warning in v 21 that those whose hearts and habits were opposed to God would encounter due retribution.

A further updating in the second collection of Ezekiel’s oracles of judgment occurs in 12:21–14:11. This is a complex of oracles, both pre-587 and post-587, that are concerned with prophecy and the issue of who constituted the people of God. The complex probably arose as backing for Ezekiel’s stand against sinister religious features rife in the post-fall community. It boosted his stock by appealing to the historical validation of his old oracles of judgment despite the doubts of those who first heard them. In the setting of the book, this complex reminds exilic readers of the potential of a right relationship with the covenant God and the promise of return to the land; it also warns that certain aberrations could lead

\[\text{cf. confer, compare}\]
\[\text{cf. confer, compare}\]
to forfeiture and urges repentance. The God who had carried out the radical judgment earlier prophesied by Ezekiel was not to be trifled with. He would carry out any necessary judgment among his people, a relative judgment to be sure, but one to be taken seriously.

The latter part of chap. 16 continues in a similar vein. The oracle in vv 43bb–58 is Ezekiel’s updating of the pre-587 message of judgment. That message had come true, but the post-587 exiles dare not shrug off its recriminations. In a short list of urban centers of vice, Jerusalem trailed miserably behind Sodom and Samaria. The exiles are called to repent of so deplorable a history and, when they returned to the land, to take back with them a spirit of deep regret. The second-generation supplement in vv 59–63 supports Ezekiel’s sardonic challenge with an exhortation written from a straightforward and theological perspective. It gives a reminder of the grace of God that was to be manifested in the coming act of salvation and uses it as an extra lever to stimulate repentance over past sins. A strong sense of divine mercy and of human undeservedness must mark future life in the homeland.

The complex of oracles in 17:1–19:14 strikes the same notes of assurance and challenge, while reinforcing the lesson of national judgment. In chaps. 17 and 19, four oracles of judgment have the downfall of the Davidic dynasty as their theme. At their heart is set a second-generation promise of royal restoration that elevates the language of the negative oracles to a glorious reversal and takes its spiritual cue from Ezekiel’s oracle concerning the reestablishment of a united kingdom under a restored monarchy (37:15–24a). Such good news had moral implications. Chap. 18, a post-587 call to repentance that Ezekiel had issued to the first generation of exiles, is deliberately inserted into the complex, immediately after the oracle of salvation. It shows that the prospect of salvation must exert a moral magnetic force on its would-be heirs, which they resisted at their peril. Eschatological life and renewal were God’s gifts to the repentant.

In the third collection of judgment oracles, one does not have to wait long for the mingled notes of assurance and challenge to be sounded again. The pre-587 oracle of 20:1–26, 30–31 sets before the deportees God’s ancient forecast of national exile (v 23). Its terms “nations” and “countries” are echoed in v 32: by now the exile was a reality. Vv 32–44 give the assurance of a second Exodus to the promised land and a glorious, God-honoring occupation. Yet there was a somber factor to reckon with. The divine judgment against Dathan and Abiram in the wilderness long ago would find a typological parallel in a partial judgment for the exiles. “Rebels” among them would be barred from entering the land (vv 36–38). Moreover, the exiles who did return must never forget how little they deserved the lavish grace of God, in the light of their own former, now forgiven, sins (vv 43–44).

Later in the collection a simple note of assurance is struck. The oracle against the Ammonites in 21:33–34(28–29) reflects not a pre-587 situation but their taunts against the Judeans when Jerusalem fell (cf. 25:3). It assures of vindication and justice. Moreover, the chronologically later element in vv 35–37(30–32) dares to predict doom, in a loud whisper, for Babylon. At the end of chap. 24, there appears a contextually appropriate hint of better times to come. After the imminent downfall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel would no longer function as a sign of divine judgment (v 24) but as a sign of grace (v 27).

CHAPTERS 25–32

The book of Ezekiel falls into line with the other major prophetic books in devoting a substantial section to a series of oracles against foreign nations. The series falls into two nearly equal halves, chaps. 25–28 and 29–32. The first half pays little attention to dating: only one date occurs, in 26:1. The role of this half is to give assurance to the exiles. The hint at the end of chap. 24 that the tide of suffering would turn with the fall of Jerusalem is developed. Chap. 25 basically consists of two pairs of short post-587
oracles directed against Ammon and Moab, Edom and Philistia. The first is amplified by a further anti-Ammon message in vv 6–7. The emphasis on Ammon recalls the message of assurance in 21:33–34 (28–29). In both places Ammon seems to function as a representative symbol of local hostility to Judah. All the oracles in chap. 25 level against their ethnic objects accusations of unjust animosity. The first oracle supplies a sympathetic summary of the tragedy of 587: profanation of the temple, desolation of the land, and exile for the people (25:3). The first consequence functions as an echo of 24:21, where Yahweh declared: “I will profane my sanctuary.” In the new context of salvation, the mockery of the nations over Judah’s judgment was a reprehensible act.

The same note of sympathetic assurance is struck in the first oracle against Tyre, in 26:2. If the date is correctly transmitted and understood, already during the siege of Jerusalem Tyre was hoping to make political capital out of Jerusalem’s downfall (cf. Gosse, *RB* 93 [1986] 554–55). This reason for its judgment is evidently determinative for the collection of oracles against Tyre or its king in 26:1–28:19. In chap. 26 the oracle of vv 4–6 finds an interpretive restatement in vv 7–14. Two later oracles forecasting its eventual fall to Babylon follow in vv 15–18 and 19–21. They must antedate the end of the thirteen-year siege of Tyre in 573. The same can be said of the satirical lament over the ship of Tyre in 27:1–11, 25b–36. It has been skillfully amplified in vv 12–25a with a list of Tyre’s trading products and partners, which was adapted into a cargo list for the doomed ship. The oracles in 28:1–10, 11–19 are directed against the king of Tyre. Ezekiel’s intent in uttering the anti-Tyre oracles, apart from the first, was probably to quash the last vestiges of optimism among his fellow exiles and to show that resistance to Nebuchadnezzar ran counter to Yahweh’s will. Editorially, however, they appear to function as implicit oracles of salvation, taking their cue from 26:2.

The last oracle is addressed to Sidon, in 28:21–23. The supplement in v 24 intends to give the gist of 25:1–28:23 (cf. Fechter, *Bewältigung* 265–69). The description of all Israel’s neighbors as showing contempt (אַל הָעֵד) deliberately recalls the use of the noun in 25:6, 15, as a frame for these chapters. The exiles are promised that Yahweh would put an end to the harassment of their ethnic neighbors. What follows in 28:25–26 is the first of three editorial summaries that appear in the book. The context of the punishment of the nations is related to general positive themes to which Ezekiel’s teaching pointed: the international vindication of Yahweh in restoring Israel to the land promised to Jacob and the prospect of living secure and productive lives. This was the substance of the God-given hope to which the exiles should cling.

The second half of the collection of foreign oracles in 29:1–32:16 has a different message. Boadt’s characterization of chaps. 25–32 as “indirect words of hope” (*HAR* 12 [1990] 5) belongs properly to the first half. The target of all the oracles in this second group is Egypt, to which Judah had appealed for help against the Babylonian attack (cf. 17:15; Jer 37:5, 11). A host of dates are supplied, for each of the basic oracles except 30:1–9. Looking back, one can see the earlier dates in the book marching slowly and inexorably toward the siege of Jerusalem. From this perspective, the redactional date of the beginning of the siege in 24:1 is apposite, and so is the date of 26:1. In the present group of oracles, the dates cluster around the period of the siege, like vultures circling over a dying beast. The last two, in 32:1, 17, fall just beyond the time when news of the fall of the capital reached Ezekiel in exile (cf. 33:21). The date in 29:17 follows the different agenda of its associated oracle.

*cf. confer, compare*
*RB Revue biblique*
*cf. confer, compare*
*HAR Hebrew Annual Review*
*cf. confer, compare*
*cf. confer, compare*
The basic oracles call into question the hope of the exiles that judgment could be averted by Egyptian help. Thus 29:2–6a, associated with the date 7 January 587, foretells defeat for the pharaoh Hophra, the chaos monster of the Nile. Vv 6–9a seem to reflect the situation a little later, when he proved unable to sustain his military attack. The redactional supplement in vv 9b–16 continues a message of Egypt’s fate of desolation but tones it down somewhat to an exile of forty years (cf. 30:23, 26) and restoration to national mediocrity. This fruit of theological reflection appears to set the fate of Egypt within a wider framework of revelation. In 29:17–21 an oracle dated in 571 and associated with the ending of the prolonged siege of Tyre serves as a confirmation that Egypt would eventually fall. The undated 30:1–9 probably belongs to the same time as 29:1–6a; the oracle speaks of the downfall of Egypt in terms of the day of Yahweh. A later oracle appears in 30:10–12, in which Nebuchadnezzar’s conquest of Egypt is promised. Vv 13–19 are about the destruction of Egypt’s cities, a literary continuation that echoes the two previous passages.

30:20–26 reflects news of the Babylonian repulse of the Egyptian attack on the besiegers and promises further misfortune for Egypt at Nebuchadnezzar’s hands, even exile. The oracle in 31:1–18 about the pharaoh in the role of a cosmic tree that is cut to the ground is dated two months later. It attacks the exiles’ continuing obsession that he would resume the attack and drive the Babylonian troops away from the capital. V 18 may function as a literary summary of the chapter. The last two dated oracles are set after the news of the fall of Jerusalem had reached the exiles. They were probably meant to stamp out glowing embers of an optimistic hope that Egypt would not tolerate Babylonian control of Judah. 32:1–16 returns to the motif of the chaos monster, while vv 17–28 compare Egypt with other national has-beens. In a redactional epilogue, vv 29–32, other states are included in Egypt’s fate. The reference to “the commanders of the north” in v 30 appears to encompass the Gog war of chaps. 38–39 (Nobile, “Gog-Perikope” 256–57). We seem to be returning to the note of assurance sounded in the first half of the collection of foreign oracles. Predominantly, however, the original tone of accentuating Judah’s judgment is maintained. It may be summed up in words from 29:16: “Never again will the community of Israel have [in Egypt] an object of trust to which they turn.”

A topic that increasingly confronts the reader of the collection is the grim description of Tyre’s and Egypt’s dooms in terms of Sheol (26:19–21; 28:8; 31:14, 15–18; 32:18–32). It functions as negative backing to the positive message of life for Israel in the succeeding chapters.

CHAPTERS 33–48

The fall of Jerusalem changed the nature of Ezekiel’s prophesying from national judgment to salvation. After the darkness of the old age of radical sin and punishment, a new age was to dawn. The oracles of salvation that celebrate its imminent coming are presented in chaps. 33–48.

First place is given to a combination of assurance and warning, which continues the tone of the series of insertions in chaps. 1–24. In terms of the literary history of the book, these insertions constitute a backward projection that takes its cue from chaps. 33–34. Chap. 33 enshrines at its heart, in vv 21–22, the date when news of Jerusalem’s fall reached the prophet. As 24:27 had predicted, it marks the end of the sinister silence of dumbness imposed on the prophet in 3:26–27. It is followed by an oracle of indirect hope for the exiles in vv 23–29, assuring them that they had not forfeited their inheritance of the land. This assurance is qualified by a message of relative judgment for the jubilant exiles in vv 30–33. The continuity and contrast between the two periods of Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry are well expressed by the echo of 2:5 in 33:33. At the outset of the book, the fulfillment of radical judgment of God’s
people was to prove Ezekiel’s role as a true prophet to the Judeans deported in 597. By this means they would “know that there has been a prophet among them.” Now a new criterion is offered, execution of the relative judgment that would befall irresponsible members of the exiled people. The same qualified assurance occurs in 33:1–20. It is dominated by the motif of life, in vv 10–16. Even as it offers God’s gracious gift of life in vv 10–11, it challenges to moral responsibility in vv 12–20. These messages serve as examples of Ezekiel’s description as a watchman to warn and preserve the people (vv 1–9).

The same combination of assurance and challenge appears in 34:1–22, in the course of a collection of messages that uses the metaphor of sheep. The oracle in 34:1–16 counterposes the phases of national judgment and salvation. The Judean kings had been bad shepherds who had lost God’s sheep. Yahweh was to be the good shepherd who would rescue the exilic strays. Vv 17–22, on the other hand, describe strife among the contemporary flock of exiles and promise divine intervention to effect discriminating judgment on the oppressors and salvation for their victims.

The rest of the chapter consists of successive redactional supplements that develop the sheep imagery. Vv 23–24 theologically round off the earlier messages with a reminiscence of the sign of the scepter in 37:1–24a and its editorial continuation in 37:24b–25. Yahweh would appoint a royal undershepherd for the sheep, who would do good work, unlike the preexilic monarchy. The second supplement in vv 25–30 depicts the land as green pastures, secure and fertile for the returning people. It majors in an eschatological claim of the blessings of Lev 26:1–13. The claim represents a literary reversal. In chaps. 4–6 Ezekiel had appealed to the curses of Lev 26 and claimed that they would be implemented in the coming national judgment. Now there is a corresponding concern to lay claim to the covenant blessings as ingredients of the era of salvation. The final supplement, in v 31, provides a literary conclusion for the unit, rather like 31:18; it defines the covenant relationship in terms of God’s flock.

The gift of the land remains the focus of attention in 35:1–36:15. Reversal of past judgment in future salvation marks the complex of two oracles in 35:1–36:8. Underlying both is Ezekiel’s oracle against the mountains of Israel in chap. 6. Features from that judgment oracle reappear at the beginning of each of these messages (see Allen, *Ezekiel* 20–48 171–72; Gosse, *RB* 96 [1989] 511–17). Judgment was to veer toward Judah’s enemy Edom (35:1–14). This first message is an oracle against a foreign nation that finds a place here as a foil for the restoration of God’s people. It is later in origin than the oracle against Edom in 25:12–14: it reflects Edomite incursion into Judean territory. Yahweh reassuringly claims back the land for his people to enjoy (36:1–8). The echo of the blessings of Lev 26:9 in 36:9–11 aligns the passage with the redactional material of 34:25–30. V 12 serves to introduce vv 13–15, in which the curse pronounced on the land in Num 13:36 is lifted.

36:16–23 counterpoints previous judgment of Israel’s sins with the prospect of salvation, this time in the direct fashion of 34:1–16. Return from exile is given a theological grounding in the restoration of honor to Yahweh’s name, which had been tragically desecrated by his people’s exile. Vv 24–31 are a redactional development, a theological meditation on the implications of vv 16–23 that gathers together a number of Ezekiel’s themes from elsewhere. It was the necessity of Yahweh’s self-vindication that undergirded the promise of restoration—not any merit in Israel. The sins that caused the predicament of exile must arouse a sense of shame and repentance both now and back in the land (cf. 16:52, 58; 20:43–44). Yahweh would give his people a fresh moral start (cf. 37:23). He would create in them a new spirit of obedience (cf. 11:19–20). So the land, earlier defiled by sin according to vv 17–18, would blossom again, and the people, duly cleansed, would be able to live in it again. The land is the renewed

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*RB Revue biblique*

 cf. confer, compare

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focus of the two pieces in vv 33–36 and 37–38, which promise repopulation and fertility for the now ruined land.

The themes of the restored people’s sharing in God’s spirit and their consequent obedience, promised in v 27, prompted further elaboration. Ezekiel’s vision of revived bones and his interpretive oracle of salvation in 37:1–13 are used to elucidate the role of God’s spirit, as the repetition of 36:27a in 37:14 shows. Then the obedience of 36:27b, which reappears in 37:24b, has light shed on it by Ezekiel’s sign and oracle of 37:15–24a. The passage functions as another literary flashback. It is used to show that a means of establishing authority and order would be provided by the restoration of a united kingdom under its messianic king.

The redactor, after using two of Ezekiel’s messages, provides in vv 25–28 a summary of the major themes of the preceding four chapters (cf. Boadt, *HAR* 12 [1990] 15–16). It resumes and advances the positive summary of 28:25–26. It also exhibits a feature we have seen before, echoes of the blessings of Lev 26:4–13. This intertextuality permits a reference to the new temple in vv 26–27, taken from Lev 26:11. The themes of temple, covenant people, king, and land are clearly intended as a heading for chaps. 40–48, which will be used to elaborate them.

Readers have to wait a while, since chaps. 38–39 now intervene. The theme of the account of Gog’s invasion and defeat is secure habitation in the promised land. It functions as an extended echo of that motif in 34:25–28, where it is derived from Lev 26:5; it appears in the account at 38:8, 11, 14 and also in 39:26. There would have been good reason to have inserted it at the end of chap. 34. Presumably a sense of the continuity of the established chaps. 34–37 (cf. Boadt, *HAR* 12 [1990] 15–16) prevented such a placement. Instead, it is put after the series of salvation oracles, a second-best position following mention of peaceful habitation in the land at 37:25–26. The promise of secure habitation is put to the test by envisioning a worst-case scenario. If the new Israel was to be safe from its local neighbors (28:26), how about the possibility of another great foreign invasion? Such worries on the exiles’ minds are allayed. The Gog account checks the security system and finds it more than adequate.

If the Gog account has been redactionally set in its present position, there is little reason to deny Ezekiel’s voice and hand in much of it. It has certainly been reworked. Its three basic parts of 38:1–9; 39:1–5 and 17–20 were first elaborated with a series of parallel treatments at 38:10–16; 39:6–7, 9–10, and 21–22, and further amplified by 38:18–23; 39:11–16. At least the first set of accretions probably goes back to the prophet’s own editing. At three points the text stands at a considerable distance from its context: in 38:17, where Gog’s invasion is claimed as the fulfillment of older, historically based prophecies; in 39:8, where Gog’s defeat is viewed as a similar fulfillment; and in the epilogue of 39:23–29 . The redactional epilogue is reminiscent of 28:25–26. Both passages deliberately turn from a subsidiary issue to summarize mainstream concerns. This one rehearses Yahweh’s past judgment of Israel for its sins, which merited exile and must stay fresh in the people’s memories. It reaffirms the promise of return to the homeland and recapitulates Israel’s prospect of secure habitation. Moreover, it celebrates the coming vindication of Yahweh in the world and his perpetual commitment to his people. If a busy person wanted a reliable digest of the book of Ezekiel, one could not do better than commend the three nutshells of 28:25–26; 37:25–28; and 39:23–29. The only major theme not explicitly mentioned is that of the relative judgment that would discriminate between members of the exilic community. However, the moral responsibility it was meant to instill is included in the conviction that the sins that led to the exile should be taken seriously even after return to the land.

cf. confer, compare
*HAR* Hebrew Annual Review
cf. confer, compare
*HAR* Hebrew Annual Review
The visions that begin in chap. 40 exhibit a feature that occurred in the salvation oracles, the reversal of a particular judgment in a manifestation of salvation. They function as a reversal of the vision of the old temple and its consequent destruction and Yahweh’s abandonment described in chaps. 8–11. As in 8:1, a date is supplied in 40:1, and the fall of Jerusalem is explicitly recalled. Motifs from 8:1–3 are resumed in 40:1–3, and from 8:3–4 in 43:2–5. Chaps. 40–48 fall into three parts. The first, 40:1–42:20, is a visionary tour of the area of the new temple that Yahweh would create for his people (“I will put my sanctuary in their midst,” 37:26). Its description has been amplified at an early stage by 40:38–46a, a supplement about rooms adjacent to some of the gatehouses described in vv 6–37, and by 42:1–14, a further supplement about two sets of rooms in the western area described in the course of 41:5–15a. There is another, misplaced, supplement in 41:15b–26 that carefully describes the woodwork of the temple. One expects it to appear after 40:47–41:4, and its misplacement may reflect its comparative lateness.

The account of the visionary tour continues in 43:1–46:24, now associated with extensive divine commands. The divine glory that left the old temple in chaps. 10–11 returns and fills the new temple. Ezekiel is commanded to transmit to the exiles the transcendent holiness of this temple not made with hands, with which the old one is adversely compared, in order to stimulate among them a shaming sense of the distance that lies between Yahweh and their sinful selves. The prophet is ordered to pass on the ensuing regulations for the organization of the temple. The description of the design of the altar in 43:13–17, which paves the way for regulations for its dedication in vv 18–27, may be editorial. Ezekiel is portrayed as cultic founder in 43:18–22 and also later in 45:18–20a; 46:13–14, a not incongruous role for the prophet of priestly lineage. Two short visionary narratives and related commands feature in 44:1–5; v 5 serves as a heading for 44:6–46:18 (or 24).

The regulations that follow fall into three sections, relating to (1) the two-tiered system of priests and Levites in 44:6–16 and the holy lifestyle of the priests in 44:17–31, (2) the economic maintenance of personnel and sacrifices in 45:1–17, and (3) the cultic procedures of rites and offerings in 45:18–46:15. The prime place is given to the issue of temple personnel, to whom degrees of holiness manifest in the description of the temple are applied. The result is the tiers of Zadokite priests and of Levites. This crucial differentiation brings to a climax a literary process of gradual development. 40:45–46a merely mentioned two types of priests, those with altar duties and those with duties in the temple area. Then in 46:19–20, 24 “priests” are differentiated from “those who serve in the temple area,” while in 42:13–14 there is a one-sided mention of “the priests who have access to Yahweh” or “the priests.” In 45:4–5 the lower group has assigned to it the title “Levites,” in contrast with “the priests who serve in the sanctuary and have access to serve Yahweh.” Finally, in the vehement oracle of 44:6–18, the latter are called Zadokite priests, a development that was duly incorporated into 40:46b; 43:19; and 48:11. A key factor behind the assignation of the high priestly family to this role may have been that priests of such exalted rank could best reflect the holiness of God and his temple. This last stage must antedate the restoration of full worship in the rebuilt postexilic temple in 516, where the priests were simply “the sons of Aaron” (Clements, “The Ezekiel Tradition” 130–31). Did Ezekiel advocate only the first stage of 40:45–46a or himself begin to apply gradations in the holiness of the temple to its personnel? The stage of 42:13–14 and 46:19–20, 24 probably reflects Ezekiel’s later work, since they are set in contexts that otherwise seem to be so characterized. The redactional full-blown system is evident in 44:6–16 and is made the controlling prescription both here and in other passages that it infiltrated. The outworking of holiness in the lives of the priests described in 44:17–27, 31 may have had a wider application at an earlier stage of the text.

A noticeable feature of the subunit 43:1–46:24 is a particular stratum concerning the šâḥôn “head of state” that appears in 44:3; 45:21–25; 46:1–12, to which may have been attracted less specific material in 46:10–18 and 45:16–17 and also in 45:8, 9 (see Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 253). This type of material is
represented among a number of sections that have their own agendas. Ezekiel’s use of ℓ m “king” for Israel’s future ruler in 37:24 and the redactional translation to שׁי נ “head of state” in 37:25b suggests a late origin for it (cf. 34:24). However, it may be significant that the prophet appears to have described preexilic monarchs as both ℓ שׁי ℓ “kings” (43:7–9) and שׁי ינ “heads of state” (e.g., 22:6).

The role of 44:28–30 appears to be to anticipate the next section concerning economic maintenance of the cult; it may have been a continuation of 44:6–16, with which it has some similarity. 45:1–8 has been drawn from 48:8–22, which it summarizes. It defines the land holdings of the two grades of temple personnel and of the head of state. The injunction about correct weights and measures in 45:10–12 governs the contributions of vv 13–17, more specifically those of vv 13–14. The last section, 45:18–46:15, contains regulations about the rites and offerings of the temple. Like the previous section, it begins with Ezekiel’s role as founder of the new cult in 45:18–20a, which the related 46:13–14(15) may have continued at an earlier stage. In 45:21–25; 46:1–12 the cultic role of the head of state comes to the fore. The material about his use of land in 46:16–18 seems to build a bridge to the issue of apportionment of the land described in chaps. 47–48. The visionary journey that closes the subunit in 46:19–24 has close links with 42:1–14 and so may be assigned to a second stage of Ezekiel’s work.

The material devoted to the reoccupation of the land in chaps. 47–48 opens in 47:1–12 with a visionary scene and tour that are more exotic than the previous ones. A careful description of the land’s frontiers in 47:13–23 leads into an account of its allocation in 48:1–29 that depends upon the former passage. The issue of temple personnel reemerges within it. A reflection of the third logical stage in the literary development we noticed earlier has been updated to the fourth within v 11. A later supplement that presupposes 48:1–29 appears in the closing vv 30–35. Developing v 16, it honors the new Jerusalem. It provides both a positive reversal of the old city that Yahweh had justly abandoned to its fate and continuity with the restored capital that featured in 16:53, 55, 61.

This attempt to steer a course through the complex material of the book is necessarily tentative. The prophetic book seems to bear witness to a process of literary arrangement and amplification that the prophet himself initiated. Not all the evidence in the text has been set out in this survey. In chap. 10, for instance, Ezekiel’s reflections about the cherubim appear to give way to later reflections in vv 9b–12, 16–17, and 22a,b. The intent of the completed book was to prepare the exiles to receive God’s gift of new life in the land. The theological summaries of the book in 28:5–6; 37:25–28; and 39:23–29 show an awareness of the complexity of the book and a need to help readers grasp the essential themes. On the verge of the promised land, Ezekiel’s messages were re-read as sources of coherence for Israel’s bewildering history and as humbling insights into the people’s evil potential and into God’s sheer grace in taking them back to fellowship with himself. Nor had Yahweh’s role as judge ended in 587 B.C.. The prospect of a discriminating judgment is repeatedly woven into happier promises and set alongside accomplished threats of past judgment. Beyond such warnings, there is a concern to contrast the national judgment that lay in the past with the prospect of national salvation, as the many cases of deliberate reversal indicate, both within literary units and in the course of the book. The redactors developed the prophet’s salvation oracles. They followed his lead in grounding judgment in the covenant curses of Lev 26 by claiming fulfillment of its blessings in the coming age of salvation. They had an eye for theological reflection on themes broached in Ezekiel’s oracles of salvation. On a religious plane, they felt impelled to take a definitive stand on the issue of the priesthood of the new temple, in application of the principle of divine holiness. Other priestly interests are manifest in the details of the temple woodwork in 41:15b–26 and of the cleansing of the land in 39:11–16.

cf. confer, compare  
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
Ezekiel’s redactors may justly be called disciples. The relatively short time that seems to have elapsed between Ezekiel’s own prophetic ministry with tongue and pen and the completed book indicates that they knew him intimately and empathized with his aims. They too probably came from priestly families, and they claimed the same prophetic authority as their master. With literary skill they updated the book for the next generation, keeping alive the prophet’s ministry to the people of God.

**Ezekiel’s Visionary Call (1:1–3:15)**

**Bibliography**


**Translation**

1. In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth of the month, while I was living among the exiles by the Kebar Canal, a the skies opened, b and I saw a divine vision. c 2. “On the fifth of the

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a 1.a. Hardly “the grand canal” (e.g., Cooke 4; Fohrer 5). It appears in two Akk. texts as naru kabadu/i; the adj is kabadu “great.”

b 1.b. For the Heb. construction, see Cooke 8.
month” refers to the fifth year of King Jehoiachin’s period of deportation. The priest Ezekiel son of Buzi received a communication from Yahweh by the Kebar Canal in Chaldea. I felt Yahweh’s hand on me there, and I saw something to which my attention was drawn. It was a storm wind coming from the north. It consisted of a huge cloud and a blazing fire; radiance surrounded the cloud. Out of it—out of the fire appeared something that gleamed like amber.

1.c. The Heb. pl. of generalization (Joüon 136j), which recurs in 8:3; 40:2, is to be rendered as sg.
2.a. Lit. “it (was)”: for the use of הָיֹ “it” in such explanatory notes, see Cooke 8. The reference to the fifth month functions as a cue phrase harking back to the date in v 1 (Herrmann 1; Lang, Bib 64 [1983] 225) by means of an abbreviated reference to the last element.
3.a. Or possibly “… the priest Buzi.” The office may relate to the first or second name in OT usage. The literary convention of referring to a prophet’s occupation in a superscription (see Form/Structure/Setting) supports the former alternative, which the LXX followed here.
3.b. The inf abs is used idiomatically at the outset of narratives: see Greenberg (41) for examples. V 3 functions along with v 2 as another beginning for the unit (see the Comment).
3.c. For MT על “upon him,” the reading על “upon me,” implied by LXX Syr. and found in thirteen MSS, is generally preferred. The MT suffered assimilation to the third person of v 3a. The first-person echoing of the clause in 3:14b supports the emendation; so does the juxtaposition of divine hand and human vision in 8:1b–2, as here in vv 3b–4.
4.a. The second and third nouns are in apposition to the first. The copula inserted before the second in the LXX and also in the Vg and eight MSS is an easier and so inferior reading: Zimmerli (8) draws attention to this tendency in the LXX. The LXX also presupposes the addition of הָי “in it,” which further clarifies the relation of the cloud to the wind. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:2) interestingly suggested that at an earlier stage it was הָי “came” and was a note added to show the parallelism of the wind and cloud.
4.b. The verb ניָקַל נִמְלָל, which should basically mean “take hold of itself” and is used of lightning in Exod 9:24, seems to have the idiomatic sense of catching on fire and so burning. G. R. Driver (VT 1 [1951] 60 n. 1 and Bib 35 [1954] 145) cited Akk. and Syr. parallels for this semantic development in the case of the synonymous stem ניָקַל נִמְלָל.
4.c. The underlying Heb. text of the LXX evidently had a different order of clauses (see BHS), relating the surrounding radiance more clearly to the cloud (לְגָדַר “to it”: פָּזָר “cloud” is masc.; at the Gr. level, since נֶפֶשָׁה “cloud” is fem, כֵּיק לְעַל אֹתָנוּ “around it” must relate to the neuter פְּנֵי מַעַקְו “wind.” Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:2), related the suffix to ל י “fire” by arguing that it is epicene (cf. Greenberg 43). It is more likely that after the specification of the three nouns (ABC) the latter two are defined further in a B’C’ order, the Vorlage of the LXX had a secondary ABB’CC’ order. The difference in order has sometimes been taken as an indication that the clause about the radiance is a gloss that compares its presence in v 27 (Herrmann 1; Hölscher, Dichter 46; et al.), but it is structurally fitting in both places (see Form/Structure/Setting).
5 Out of it materialized four figures that looked like living beings. Their appearance was as follows: they had human forms, but each one had four faces, and each had four wings, while their legs were straight, with feet like calves’ hooves; they gleamed like burnished copper. However, human arms and hands were beneath their wings on each of their four sides.

4.d. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:2) suggested that ḫmn “from” has a locative sense, as often in compound prepositions, here and in v 5, and in fact LXX so interpreted. But the thought seems to be that from the perspective of the viewer details gradually materialized from the background as the phenomenon approached and could be seen more clearly. The following Ṽa ḥ Ṽv Ṽm “from the midst of the fire” is often taken as an early gloss to make explicit the antecedent of the preceding suffix, but it is universally attested, and a near parallel occurs in v 13, where similar specifying emphasis is laid on the fire, as one reads on.


t 4.e. For the rendering, see the Comment. The LXX adds “and brightness in it,” which may have originated in a comparative gloss ḫn Ṽy ḥ gn “radiance: inside it” which briefly noted the variant ḫn Ṽy Ṽb Ṽs “inside it around” that appears in the MT of v 27a for Ṽb Ṽs ḫn Ṽg “and radiance to it around” here and in v 27b.

6.a. MT ḫl ṽ Ṽj Ṽl “to each to them” is strangely used in the sense “to each one of them” (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:2; Cooke 12, 24). LXX Vg do not represent ḫl “to them,” and 10:21a, as well as v 6a here, supports the shorter text. The extra word may have originated as a variant of ḫn Ṽl “to them (fem)” in v 5.

7.a. After the fem suffixes relating to the living creatures in vv 5–6 (apart from the intrusive ḫl “to them” in v 6), there appears in vv 9–12 and 23–25 a series of masc suffixes. They are often taken as evidence of redaction (see Form/Structure/Setting). They seem to presuppose a humanoid form for the grammatically fem entities and indicate that Ṽy Ṽk “living beings” does not here mean “animals.” A parallel phenomenon is the use of fem suffixes for the wheels in parts of vv 16–18, which may indicate their inanimate nature.

b. 7.b. Lit. “(were) a straight leg” In v 23 appears an evidently misplaced gloss on the sg phrase here, a pl. adj Ṽ Ṽy Ṽ “straight,” which correctly understands the sg as collective or distributive (“were in each case a straight leg” [Hitzig 6]). The LXX* has a pl adj for the MT’s sg phrase, which may imply that the gloss had displaced the text of the MT in its Vorlage, unless it is a loose rendering. In MT the marginal gloss was wrongly related to the next column.

c. 7.c. Heb. ḫl Ṽy Ṽr Ṽ Ṽl “feet,” is used in the extended sense of legs (Vogt, Untersuchungen 82 n. 64).

d. 7.d. The subj of the verb is not the legs, in which case a fem. verb would be expected, but the living creatures, regarded as male throughout the earlier part of the verse (Hitzig 6). Parunak (“Structural Studies” 125) has observed that whenever ḫl “like the gleam” is used in this pericope, it refers to the whole entity under consideration and not just a part of it. Cf. the supernatural figure in 40:3 who looked like copper. Then the application of the phrase to legs in Dan 10:6, in obvious dependence on this passage, does not represent the original intent.

a 8.a. Ṽ Ṽy “hands of” is generally followed; Ṽ Ṽd Ṽy seems to mean “his hands (were [the hands of] a human being)” (Keil 23). The term seems to be used in the wider sense of “arm including hand” (see del Olmo Lete, Vocación 24; cf. HALAT 370a with reference to Jer 38:12).
faces looked like: they each had a human face, and the four of them also had a lion’s face on the right side, and the four had a bull’s face on the left side, and the four had an eagle’s face. Their wings were extended upwards; they each had a pair of wings brushing against their neighbor’s and another pair covering their bodies. Each moved straight ahead: they could move forward...
wherever the spirit wanted to go, without changing direction as they moved.

Out of the living beings appeared what looked like burning, fiery coals. The fire looked like torches moving to and fro between the living beings: the fire had radiance, and from the fire what looked like lightning flashes darted hither and thither.

13.a. For the MT תָּמַדְתֵּו וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו היאֵרְתֵּו-וּמָּצֵּהַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו “and (as for) the likeness of (the living creatures),” the LXX has καὶ ἐν μεγέθεσιν ἐν μέσῳ ‘and in the midst.” 10:2 supports the LXX as to the relative positions of the coals of fire and the living creatures. Both Zimmerli (84) and Greenberg (46) restore תָּמַדְתֵּו והַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו “and between,” following Hitzig (9) and others, but the form of the preposition is characteristic of chap. 10 (contrast ἔκτοτε later in this verse). Better is וּמָּצֵּהַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו “and from the midst of” (Herrmann 3; Fohrer 11; cf. BHS), a form that appears in vv 4–5, where the LXX renders as here. It shares four consonants with the term in the MT. The latter may have originated as a comparative gloss that alluded to the combination תָּמַדְתֵּו … תָּמַדְתֵּו the likeness … of living creatures” in v 5; it was subsequently regarded as a correction of the graphically look-alike preposition. Driver’s attempt to interpret תָּמַדְתֵּו as “midst” (Bib 19 [1938] 61) is unconvincing; neither the NEB nor the REB adopted it.

13.b. The MT הַמִּיצָהִמַּו “their appearance (was like)” suffers from the fact that the fire, rather than the living creatures, is the evident concern of the context. The LXX implies הַמִּיצָהִמַּו “something that appeared (like).” Greenberg (46) prefers to read יְלַדְתַּו הַמִּיצָהִמַּו “like the appearance of coals” on the evidence of the Syr., noting that this is the standard form in the chapter, as later in this very verse, and that the construction in the LXX is unparalleled. However, as often elsewhere, the Syr’s reading looks suspiciously like an easier one that has been assimilated to the context. The MT may have been influenced by v 16b.

13.c. Lit. “it,” with reference to וַיָּעֲשֵּׁה “fire” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:5; Zimmerli 84).

13.d. The MT תָּמַדְתֵּו וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו “the (torches)” has frequently been regarded as a dittograph: the LXX does not represent the article.

13.e. V 13bb and v 14 seem to be doublets (cf. Kraetzschmar 14–15). Since the LXX* omits v 14, scholarship has judged it to be the intruder (but see Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:5, who retained the MT with emendations; Halperin, JBL 101 [1982] 355 n. 22, who judges the LXX’s shorter text to be due to homoeoteleuton; and Lind, JETS 27 [1984] 138). However, the last two words of v 13, צִפְּרָב אֵעֲשָׁה וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו “lightning was coming out,” and the first word of v 14, תָּמַדְתֵּו וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו “and the living creatures,” appear to be separate glosses that have been absorbed into the flow of the text, rather like vv 8b–9. It is significant that the LXX omits תָּמַדְתֵּו וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו in v 15. Greenberg (46) observes that in v 14 its position before the inf abs violates Heb. usage. The term may have originated as a rubric gloss, which noted the subject matter of vv 5–14 (Freedy, VT 20 [1970] 142). Its presence in both vv 14 and 15 seems to represent double incorporation of the same gloss. In v 14 the context refers to flickering flames rather than to the living creatures, which were immobile supports for the throne. As for אֵעֲשָׁה וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו “was coming out,” it seems to be an easier variant of אֵעֲשָׁה וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו in v 14: the Vg “ibant” presupposes it in v 14, while 4Q405 20 ii 21,22:9 אֵעֲשָׁה וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו … וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו presupposes a similar Vorlage (cf. Newsom, Songs 315). Heb. אֵעֲשָׁה וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו appears to be derived from a stem אֵעֲשָׁה יָשָׁה as a byform of אֵעֲשָׁה יָשָׁה “run” (cf. Ewald 224; Dahood, Bib 53 [1972] 395; Q εφεκτέων “ran”). Likewise צִפְּרָב אֵעֲשָׁה וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו “lightning” looks like an explanation of צִפְּרָב אֵעֲשָׁה וְ(ָּעְשֵּׁה הַמֶּגֶשׁ וְ)ָתָּמַדְתֵּו, a hapax legomenon that in the light of later Heb. usage appears to mean “lightning flash” (see A. Cohen, ASJL 40 [1924] 163; Jastrow, Dictionary 154a). As in v 13, the article may be a dittograph. Behind the omission of v 14 in the LXX* lies a recognition of the interrelatedness of vv 13bb and 14, and a wrong decision to follow the easy path of the former and to excise the latter. It thus attests a post-MT stage of the text.
As I looked, my attention was drawn to a wheel on the ground beside the living beings; there was one for each of the four of them. The wheels looked like gleaming gold topaz; they all four had the same shape, and their construction seemed to be that each had another wheel inside it. When the wheels moved forward, they could move in the direction of any of their four sides, without changing direction as they moved. As for their rims, which were awesomely high, their rims were completely covered with eyes in the case of the four of them. When the wheels moved forward, they could move beside them; and when the living beings ascended from the ground, the wheels could ascend too. Wherever the spirit wanted to move forward, they would do so, and the wheels would move forward when they did; and when they stopped, they would stop.

\textsuperscript{a} 15.a. The MT adds תִּ.valueOf "the living creatures," which is not represented in the LXX: see the preceding Note. Nor is it present in the parallel 10:9. The omission allows the style to accord with v 4 (cf. 2:9; 8:2, 7, 10; 10:1, 9; 44:4), where what Ezekiel sees is a new entity. Lind (\textit{JETS} 27 [1984] 137) explained in terms of scribal supplying of an object for the verb.

\textsuperscript{b} 15.b. The MT תִּ.valueOf "in respect of his four faces" does not fit the context. The final waaw is generally attached to the following הָּ.face in v 16, as LXX Syr. Vg and the parallel 10:9 suggest: "and the appearance." Then in an original תִּ.valueOf "in respect of the four of them," attested by the LXX, the final mem was misread as בְּ, a not uncommon error, and sense was achieved by prefixing ה (Zimmerli 85, refining the explanation of Cornill 182).

\textsuperscript{c} 16.a. See the previous Note. The MT adds הָּ.valueOf "and their construction," unrepresented in the LXX* and in the parallel 10:9. It appears to be an anticipation of the term in v 16b (Lind, \textit{JETS} 27 [1984] 137). As Cornill (182) observed, construction is not comparable with a jewel, but appearance is.


\textsuperscript{e} 16.c. Heb. דָּ.valueOf is masc, while the noun is fem.: the same reading appears in the parallel 10:10. Driver (\textit{Bib} 35 [1954] 145–46) assumed the ellipse of דָּ.valueOf "and I saw them," presumably by assimilation to the verb in vv 4, 15, 27, although the form of the verb corresponds to that found in vv 1, 28. The reading is hardly original: one expects a direct object, as in v 27, or further description with הָּ.valueOf וּ.and behold" (\textit{BHS}), as in v 4; 2:9, for which there is no evidence. The MT should probably be retained in v 18a, if only for lack of a convincing alternative. The initial חָּvalueOf is to be taken as a \textit{casus pendens} (Taylor 57; Waldman, \textit{JBL} 103 [1984] 617–18). Elsewhere הָּ.valueOf means "fear" rather than "fearfulness" (Cornill 183), even in Ps 90:11, to which Smend (13) appealed; but analogy with דָּ.valueOf "fear, object of fear" makes such an extension of meaning feasible. For תִּ.valueOf יָvalueOf gw in the sense of "rims," cf. יָvalueOf gw in 1 Kgs 7:33.
too. When they ascended from the ground, they\textsuperscript{a} would ascend alongside them, because the spirit of the living beings\textsuperscript{b} was in the wheels.

\textsuperscript{22}Above the heads of the living beings was something shaped like a platform that gleamed like crystal;\textsuperscript{a} it extended over their heads above them. \textsuperscript{23}Beneath the platform, their wings kept in formation\textsuperscript{a} beside their neighbors’, while their other pair covered their bodies.\textsuperscript{b} \textsuperscript{24}I could hear the

\textsuperscript{a} 20.a. The MT adds ṭ k ḫ j ḥ m ḥ “thither the spirit to go,” originally intended as a correction of the earlier ṭ w h h ḥ ḥ (Herrmann 3). The correction accords with v 12; the corruption was a simple case of haplography. LXX Syr. do not represent the three words.

\textsuperscript{b} 20.b. The traditional text, supported by all ancient witnesses, adds “would ascend alongside them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.” The same material reappears in v 21b. What distinguishes it from the repetitive text of the rest of vv 19–21 is its lack of logical continuity with what precedes in v 20a. One expects a reference to the forward movement of the wheels at this point, as occurs in v 21a: mention of the vertical movement of the wheels is premature (cf. Höhne, “Thronwagenvision” 93). Seemingly a copyist’s eye jumped to ṭ k ḫ j ḥ “would ascend” in v 21b, and he copied out the rest of v 21b, using a text, which, like that of the LXX, still lacked ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ “the wheels” in v 21b. Subsequently, the missing words were reinserted together with the rest of v 21, but without deletion of the now superfluous six words. The cause of the parablepsis may have been the omission of a 34-letter line, or an extra of 17 letters: for this phenomenon, cf. H. M. Orlinsky (JBL 61 [1942] 88–89), who refers to lines in Heb. MSS with about 11–13 or 14, 17, 23, 25, 30, and 35 letters to a line, and to my Greek Chronicles (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 2:133–36. For another case of a corrected and undeleted error, **see 22:20 and Note.** Höhne (“Thronwagenvision” 93) took v 20 as a gloss on v 21b that wanted to make clear that the spirit was the same as in v 12, but this seems an unnecessarily drastic explanation of the overlap. He rightly noted that 10:17 reflects not v 20 but v 21.

\textsuperscript{a} 21.a. The LXX* lacks the MT’s ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ “the wheels”: see the previous Note*. It appears to be another rubric gloss, again occurring at the end of a topical section, like ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ “the living creatures” in vv 14, 15.

\textsuperscript{b} 21.b. Heb. ḥ ḫ j “in vv (20) 21–22 is interpreted as a collective sg “living creatures.” Presumably it was used to “emphasize the unity of the ensemble” (Greenberg 48).

\textsuperscript{a} 22.a. The MT adds ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ “which is awesome,” which is not represented in the LXX*. Probably it was originally intended to relate not to ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ “crystal” (Vogt, Untersuchungen 8; Greenberg, 48, who understand—on what basis?—as “dazzling” [= TEV; cf. NAB “glittering”]) but to ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ “platform.” Kraetzschmar’s suggestion (18) to read ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ “was seen” and to relate it to the platform with reference to 10:1 is worth developing. In the description of the platform at 10:1, ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ “was seen” occurs in the MT but is not rendered in LXX* Syr.. It was probably a gloss referring to the preceding line, where the platform is described as “over the heads of the cherubim”: the gloss remarked that it had been seen earlier by Ezekiel, i.e., in 1:22. Here ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ is its counterpart, corrupted from a comparative gloss ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ and going with what follows: “which was seen extended over their heads” (cf. Dan 1:15 for the construction). The adaptation to ṭ ḫ ḥ ḥ “awesome” was doubtless influenced by its appearance in theophanic descriptions elsewhere (Gen 28:17; Judg 13:6); its strange use to describe the noun of comparison is a clue to its secondary character.
noise made by their wings: it sounded as loud as floodwaters, as loud as the Almighty.\(^a\) When they moved,\(^b\) there was a tumultuous noise like the sound of an army;\(^c\) \(^25\) when they stopped, they would

\(^a\) 23.a. The MT \(\text{t} \text{w} \text{v} \text{y}\) “straight” is awkward in this context: it is forced to explain in terms of a pregnant construction (Kraetzschmar 18; Cooke 19; Greenberg 48). The LXX has a doublet implying \(\text{t} \text{wq} \text{y} \text{m}\) \(\text{t} \text{wd} \text{r} \text{p}\) “stretched out, keeping in line”: the first term occurs in v 11 and the second in 3:13. The similarity of construction (“each other”) and context—the noise made by the wings—in 3:13 suggests that \(\text{t} \text{wq} \text{y} \text{m}\) is the original reading, which 3:13 cites (cf. Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 5:7). As noted above, the MT was intended as a marginal explanatory gloss on v 7a. It was related to the wrong column and taken as a correction of \(\text{t} \text{wq} \text{y} \text{m}\), with which it shares four consonants. For such intercolumnar confusion, see my *Greek Chronicles* 2:90–104, and *VT* 29 (1989) 68–69, with reference to 21:15, 18.

For the meaning of the verb, see Note 3:13.a.

\(^b\) 23.b. The MT, but not the LXX\(^*\), repeats \(\text{h} \text{hn} \text{l} \text{w} \text{k} \text{m} \text{y} \text{y} \text{t} \text{v} \text{v} \text{ya} \text{l} \text{w}\) “and each had two covering for them.” Greenberg (48) takes the repetition as distributive (cf. *GKC* 134q), comparing 10:9, and considers that the omission in the LXX represents the translator’s simplification. However, one would then have expected the repetition of the object, \(\text{w} \text{h} \text{y} \text{t} \text{k} \text{wq}\) “their bodies.” So dittography seems to have been responsible. Cornill (185) and others have also judged the LXX correct in not representing the first \(\text{h} \text{hn} \text{l}\) “for them.” If it relates to the living creatures, it clashes with the two masc references within the clause. However, Greenberg (48) has suggested that it is an ethical dative relating to the wings (cf. BDB 115b, 116a). Then it has an intensifying force, and LXX doubtless dropped it as otiose. \(\text{V} \text{23b}\) has been regarded as a gloss from v 11, since its content seems irrelevant here (e.g., Fohrer 13; Cooke 20). It is possible that it represents a marginal comment on v 11b that supplied a variant reading with an initial \(\text{v} \text{y} \text{a} \text{l}\) “to each”—as a correction of the awkward preceding \(\text{v} \text{ya}\) “each”?—and a final masc suffix. Then the common topic of wings encouraged its attachment to and incorporation in v 23a, in the next column.

\(^a\) 24.a. The LXX\(^*\) does not represent \(\text{yd} \text{v} \text{Al} \text{wq} \text{k}\) “like the voice of Shaddai,” which is often taken as a gloss from 10:5 (Cornill 185; *et al*.). However, \(\text{wr} \text{b} \text{d} \text{b} \text{yd} \text{v} \text{Al} \text{a} \text{l} \text{wq} \text{k}\) “like the voice of El Shaddai when he spoke” looks like an elaboration of the shorter phrase here (Halperin, *JBL* 101 [1982] 355–56 and n. 23). Driver’s repointing \(\text{yd} \text{w}\) as “downpour” (JTS 41 [1940] 168) has been criticized by J. Barr (Comparative Philology and the Text of the OT [Oxford: Clarendon, 1968] 235).

\(^b\) 24.b. The lack of kaph before the following \(\text{wq}\) “sound” indicates that \(\text{wq}\) does not function in a comparison. The continuation in vv 19 and 21, where \(\text{w} \text{k} \text{l} \text{b}\) “when they moved” begins one clause and another identically structured verb begins the next, suggests that the same occurs here with asyndeton, contra the Masoretic accent. Tg. Vg interpreted thus, and thence Vg-based Catholic versions, such as NAB. The implication of v 25b is that the noise ceased (cf. Tg. “their wings became silent”; also 4Q405 20 ii 21,22:13 [cf. Newsom, *Songs* 319]).
**26** Above the platform over their heads was what looked like lapis lazuli in the shape of a throne, and on the throne-shaped object was what looked like a human form, above it.\(^a\)

\(^27\) I saw something that gleamed like amber\(^a\) from the semblance of his waist upwards, while from the semblance of his waist...

\(^{24.c}\) The LXX\(^*\) lacks any representation of  "a tumultuous noise like the noise of an army," and scholars generally judge the MT secondary. However, the term  "noise of some magnitude which can be compared with the hubbub of a military camp or to the thundering feet of an army on the march" (W. McKane, *Jeremiah 1–20* [Edinburgh: Clark, 1986] 250).

Dan 10:6 already seems to presuppose the final comparison with its paraphrase  "like the noise of a multitude." The omission in the LXX\(^*\) may be explained in terms of overlooking a 27-letter line or two lines of 13 and 14 letters (cf. *Note 20.b.* above); its representation of  "when they moved" after "their wings" suggests a partial marginal correction and subsequent insertion into the text at a suitable point. The MT adds vv 24b–25a, "when they stopped they would drop their wings. And there was a noise above the platform that was over their heads"; only C and a few MSS omit. The repetition of v 24b in 25b and the close similarity of v 25a to v 26a raise suspicions. The LXX\(^*\) at the beginning of v 25 implies "and behold a sound" for "and there was a voice/sound" and omits vv 25b–26a. Halperin (*JBL* 101 [1982] 355 n. 22), like Smend (15) before him, has found in the LXX\(^*\) merely loss of vv 25b–26a by homoeoteleuton of  "over their heads.

But the total evidence suggests a more complex phenomenon, namely that three forms of the text may be disentangled: (1)  "and above the platform that was over their heads," the form of v 25a as it appears in the MT; (2)  "and above the platform that was over their heads," the form of v 26a as it appears in the MT; (3)  "and behold a sound above the platform that was over their heads," the form underlying the LXX\(^*\). The MT has a doublet consisting of the first two forms, with v 24b serving as cue words to introduce the variant reading of v 25a. Preference is to be given to the form in v 26a: the initial  "and" at the beginning of a fresh section accords with vv 5 and 22, while an initial  "and behold" (cf. vv 4, 15) or  "and there was" is unparalleled. One may best explain the intrusive sound as a rubric gloss at the end of a section, such as those that appear earlier in the MT in vv 14, 15, and 21: they served to map out the development of the vision account. It is less likely that it was originally intended to anticipate the "voice" of v 28, although that has evidently become its role in the MT. A minor variant in the two MT readings is  "above" in vv 11, 22, and 26b (cf. h l m , v 27). The former was probably influenced by m "from upon" in vv 19, 21. This piece of evidence supports the priority of v 26a.

\(^{26.a}\) Lit. “on it above.” The LXX\(^*\) (and Vg) omitted  as superfluous; subsequently it was wrongly supplied at the end of v 26a.
waist downwards I saw what looked like fire. There was radiance all around him: the surrounding radiance looked like the rainbow that appears in the clouds on a rainy day. That was what the figure who is associated with the glorious presence of Yahweh looked like. At the sight I threw myself down on my face.

Then I heard a voice: it was somebody speaking. \(^{2:1}\) “Human one,” he said to me, “stand on your feet so I can speak with you.” The spirit entered me and made me stand on my feet. Then I heard somebody speaking to me. \(^{3}\) “Human one,” he said to me, “I am sending you to the rebellious community of Israel, who till this day have rebelled against me, both they and their

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\(^{a}\) 27.a. The MT adds \(b\ y w s \ h l \ A t \ y b \ v \ a \ H a r \ m k\) “what looked like fire: it had a covering all round,” which the LXX does not represent. It seems to be an intrusion on two counts. (1) It breaks the ABB’A’ chiasmus of v 27a–b, in which the verbs of seeing and the accompanying similes function as A/A’ and the upper and lower parts of the body as B/B’. Greenberg (50) envisages the MT as a more complex chiastic structure that includes v 27b, so that the A/A’ elements are both longer: each consists of a simile and a circumstantial clause, which in the first instance is “having something with the appearance of fire surrounding it” and in the second case is “and he was surrounded by a radiance.” His structural claim is spoiled by his correct judgment that v 27b refers not to the immediately preceding context of the lower part of the figure but to the entire figure (cf. v 4). This adoption is tantamount to denying that v 27b has any role within the smaller A element. (2) In 8:2, which appears to be a reprise of 1:27, there is general academic support, including Greenberg (166), for the originality of the LXX. As Greenberg himself states, there the LXX “restricts ‘fire’ to the bottom half of the figure, where alone it should be.” Fire is out of place in the description of the upper half. The addition in the MT was probably intended as a comment on v 27b, with \(v \ a \ H a r \ m k\) “what looked like fire” functioning as introductory cue words (Vogt, Untersuchungen 8). The intent of the gloss was to claim that the radiance enveloped the fire (\(h l\) “it”). This ancient interpretation accords with Ehrlich’s claim (Randglossen 5:8) that the masc. suffix in v 27b relates to the fire, as in v 4, rather than to the figure. Heb. \(l \ y b\), lit. “house,” here has the sense of receptacle or covering (cf. BDB 109b); the clipped vocalization is the result of the macqeph (cf. \(w m l \ A t \ M\)), see Ps 58:5(4); GKC 9u; but here GKC 130a n. 3 explains as constr and standing for \(l \ t \ y b \ m\) “within”).

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\(^{a}\) 2:1.a. The preposition \(t \ a\) “with” in Ezekiel, as in 1-2 Kings and Jeremiah, is often vocalized with suffixes as if it were the object sign: Cooke (36) judged it a colloquialism.

\(^{a}\) 2.a. The MT adds \(y l a \ r \ b d \ r \ v a k\) “when/as he spoke to me,” which the LXX omits. It adds little to the narrative and indeed cuts across the future aspect of v 1b. Cornill (186) observed that in Ezekiel \(r \ v a k\) “as” is used in a temporal sense only in 16:50. The MT seems to represent an explanatory marginal comment on the inexplicit messenger formula in 3:11, which echoes the divine language of 3:10: “Thus the Lord Yahweh has said—as he spoke to me.” The comment was related to the wrong column and inserted here, as if it resumed \(r \ b d \ m\) “speaking” in 1:28bb. In place of this clause, the LXX has two verbs added from 3:14 at the Gr. stage of the textual tradition.

\(^{b}\) 2.b. The hithp form means strictly “speaking to himself.” It occurs in contradistinction to the piel ptp in 1:28; 2:8 and recurs in 43:6 with a divine subj. The vocalization appears to be an artificial device motivated by reverence: cf. Greenberg 62.
forebears. It is to the descendants, whose facial expression is more insensitive and whose wills are more stubborn, that I am sending you. You are to tell them, ‘This is the message of the Lord Yahweh,’ whether they listen or fail to do so, rebel community as they are, and they will realize

3.a. In place of the MT lārcyynb “sons of Israel,” the LXX has lārcytyb “house of Israel”: the two phrases are often confused (via an abbreviation b according to Cooke 36), and the opposite textual phenomenon occurs in 3:1. Cornill (187) argued in support of the LXX that the following pl. qualifiers encouraged the change, but Wevers (51) considers that they may make the MT preferable. Zimmerli (89) has urged that the phrase attested in LXX is the customary one in Ezekiel, occurring 83 times over against 11 according to Ezekiel 2 564, and so to be expected in this basic place. He also adds the impressive argument that the expression “house of rebellion” in vv 5, etc. was based on a primary “house of Israel,” and so its presence is expected here—rather than delayed till 3:1. The dominant role of lārcytyb “house of Israel” throughout the divine speech (3:1, 4, 7) must also be taken into account. Accordingly, the reading of the LXX is to be judged as preferable. The MT was probably influenced by yynb “sons” in v 4. The variant attested in the LXX was known in the Heb. tradition: it turns up as lārcytymbAla “to the house of Israel” in 3:5 (see the Note there). The MT adds yynbAla “to nations,” which LXX lacks. It does not fit the context of Ezekiel’s mission to Israel. The Syr. attests a sg “nation,” which the NRSV has adopted, but it is plainly an attempt to match the MT to the context. The addition surely originated in a marginal reading that supplied a variant for yynbAla “to peoples” in 3:6 and strayed into the wrong column: see Note 3:6.b. G. del Olmo Lete’s suggestion that the mem is enclitic (Vocación 296) is unlikely: see Note 26:12.b.

3.b. The LXX lacks the MT’s addition yāblo “revolted against me.” In the MT the consequent collocation of clauses is “who have rebelled against me; both they and their forefathers have revolted against me to this very day.” The combination of the parallel verbs indeed occurs in 20:38, but in the MT yāblo wdrmrvā “who have rebelled against me” is left hanging in the air and otiose after yāblo “rebelling.” The presence of the extra words is less easily explained. The phrase is clearly a doublet; it may have originated as a comparative gloss on yāblo drm “they rebelled against me”: it occurs frequently in the prophetic literature (Isa 1:2; 43:27; Jer 2:8; 33:8; Hos 7:13; 8:1).

4.a. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:9; cf. Brownlee 26) sensitively noted that the adjectives have a comparative sense in this context.

4.b. The LXX lacks v 4a, rightly in the judgment of many commentators. Zimmerli (90) stated that in Ezekiel yynb “sons” is not used absolutely for the people in relation to Yahweh, but Greenberg has justly countered that neither is it here, where it refers to the present generation of Israelites, as distinct from their forefathers. Vv 3–4a exhibit a chiastic structure. It is not fair to call v 4a gloss from 3:7 (Fohrer 15): the variation in phrasing is significant, b lAyqzjw ymnyp yv q “hard-faced and strong-hearted” here as opposed to b lAyqvbyjmAlA “strong-browed and hard-hearted” in 3:7. The changes in 3:7 seem to exhibit the inversion characteristic of recapitulation (cf. Talmon, Qumran 358–61), in which case 3:7 may be understood as presupposing the presence of 2:4a. Its absence from the LXX may be due to the omission of a line of 36 letters or of lines of multiples thereof (see Note 1:20.b.) in the textual history of its Vorlage.

4.c. For the authenticity of yndā “Lord” in the messenger formula, see the appendix in Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556–62, which reverses the policy of deletion he earlier advocated throughout his two volumes. For the LXX evidence, see the discussion of McGregor (Greek Text of Ezekiel 75–93).
that there has been a prophet among them. 6 You, human one, are not to be afraid of them nor intimidated by their facial expression, as well you might when nettles and thorns confront you and you sit on scorpions. Do not be afraid of their words nor intimidated by their facial expression, rebel community as they are, but speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to

5.a. The MT inserts h mhw “and they,” which is lacking in LXX Syr. The function of “and (they will know)” in v 5b in the MT is to introduce the apodosis to the conditional clause (cf. GKC 112ff). However, v 7 (cf. the echo of vv 4b–5a in 3:11) suggests that the conditional clause be taken with v 4b (Cornill 187; Zimmerli 90; et al.). Probably h mhw “and they” arose is a comment on or variant of h mhw “they” in v 3b, clarifying that a fresh clause occurs in the MT.

5.b. Here and in v 7 LXX Syr. (also Syr. in 3:11) render “be frightened” (see BHS), reflecting W ĵ d y by metathesis for W ĵ y (Cornill 187).

5.c. LXX Syr. imply h t a “you” for h yh “there has been,” which Cornill (187) preferred. However, 33:33, which seems to echo v 5b, supports MT here.

6.a. So the LXX, implying t j t Al a ṣ h y p m w for the MT a r y t Al a ṣ h y r b d m w “and of their words do not be afraid” (see BHS). The LXX is generally preferred: Zimmerli (90) notes that it avoids the awkward duplicating of a r y t Al a “do not be afraid” and supplies a parallel structure in v 6a and v 6b. For the translator’s change in the order of words, see Marquis (Textus 13 [1986] 78–80). Did the MT originate in a marginal variant that compared or anticipated the first clause in v 6b, which variant was eventually taken as a correction of t j t Al a ṣ h y p m w “and by their faces do not be intimidated” in view of its identical order of object with prepositional prefix and suffix + negative + verb? Then it is a further case of a “cuckoo” invading the textual nest, for which see in principle my articles in JTS 22 (1971) 143–50; 24 (1973) 69–78.

6.b. Heb. yk, lit. “for,” gives the reason that they might be afraid (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:9; cf. BDB 473b–74a). A. Aejmelaeus (JBL 105 [1986] 205–7), has argued that here and elsewhere a concessive interpretation is wrong; she suggests that here the clause is either causal or an object clause (“that”).

6.c. Heb. ʿū t ʿb is lit. “with you, in your presence” (cf. Note 2.a.∗). The double subj is of uncertain meaning. If—and the supposition is reasonable—w ʿ s i is identified with w ʿ s i “thorn” in 28:24, then br s must have a similar sense. Hitzig (20) and Greenberg (66) have plausibly interpreted as “nettle,” comparing the stem br x “burn”; so does M. Zohary (Plants of the Bible [London: CUP, 1982] 162). Traditionally it has been taken as “brier” (KJV). LXX Syr. Tg. interpreted both nouns in terms of Aram. or late Heb. verbs br s “rebel” and ʿ h s “despise.” Zimmerli (90) retroverted LXX ʿ e p i ʿ s u ʿ t h ʿ o n t a i ʾ p i; s e; k u ʿ w l w “they will combine to attack you around” to an original ʾ y b d ʿ s “surround,” regarding ʿū t ʿb as the object sign. But the order of words hardly suits this reconstruction. It is more likely that the verb ʿ h s underlies the LXX and that ʾ p i; s e; k u ʿ w l w is a loose rendering of ʿū t ʿb (Cooke 36; cf. NRSV). Moreover, it is significant that the first verb in the LXX, para ʿ o ʿ s t h ʿ o u s i “will provoke,” is used to render ʿ r ʿ s “be stubborn” in Hos 4:16: evidently ʿ y b ʿ r ʿ s was translated in terms of its first two consonants. As Greenberg (66) observes, the following term “scorpions” suggests that metaphorical terms are intended in the first clause.

6.d. Heb. lā is used in the sense of l , as often in Ezekiel (Driver, JTS 35 [1934] 54).

6.e. Hitzig (20) suggested that a type of thorn was intended. Garfinkel (JFT 37 [1987] 430–37) has argued for a secondary meaning in terms of a plant from the context and from late Heb. metathesized ʿ ḏ q r “stinging creeper” and also for the causal clause referring to the prophet’s protection, as if by barbed wire.
do so, rebels\(^a\) as they are.

8 “You, human one, are to listen to what I tell\(^a\) you, rather than being a rebel like that rebel community. Open your mouth and eat what I present to\(^b\) you.” 9 I looked, and my attention was drawn to a hand stretched out toward me, holding\(^c\) a book scroll, which he unrolled in front of me. It had writing on the front and back, with the heading\(^a\) “Laments, mourning and woe.” 3:1 Then he said to me, “Human one,\(^a\) eat this scroll and go, speak to the community of Israel.” 2 I opened my mouth, and he fed me with the\(^c\) scroll, saying to me, “Human one, give your stomach

\(^7.a.\) In place of ṭ yrb “rebellious house,” which appears in vv 5, 6, etc., the MT has simply ṭ ṭ “rebellion.” “An abbreviated ṭ may well have fallen out by pseudohaplography after ṭk” (Allen in Brownlee [1986] 21). On the other hand, the longer, well attested (see BHS) reading may simply be a secondary harmonization; strict uniformity is not obligatory. Greenberg’s argument (66) that ṭ ṭ serves to provide a link with v 8, where it is used predicatively of the prophet, deserves consideration.

\(^8.a.\) In place of ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “what I am speaking,” the LXX presupposes ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “the one who is speaking,” clearly by assimilation to v 2b, where the same verb “hear” precedes. The LXX renders differently there (contra Greenberg, VTSup 29 [1978] 139–40) and so the difference seems to have been in its Vorlage.

\(^8.b.\) Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:10) distinguished ṭ ṭ “give toward, hand over” here and in 3:3 from the standard ṭ ṭ “give to.”

\(^9.a.\) LXX Syr. Vg do not represent ṭ ṭ “behold” in the MT ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “and behold in it,” and the repetition of ṭ ṭ is rare (cf. 37:2; Gen 31:51); moreover, a fem suffix ṭ ṭ is expected after ṭ ṭ “hand.” Was a form ṭ ṭ misunderstood as ṭ ṭ = ṭ ṭ ; cf. ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ , 31:18) and wrongly modernized as ṭ ṭ ? It is possible that ṭ ṭ Woriginated as a marginal comment relating to the variant in 1:25 attested by LXX and was subsequently taken with the wrong column, displacing ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ on the other hand, the versions may have dropped the repetitious element.

\(^9.b.\) LXX Tg. render ṭ ṭ “laments” as if sg. The unusual pl—generally ṭ ṭ —favors the MT.

\(^10.a.\) As before, ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ is used in the sense of ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “upon it” or rather here “over it”: the sg ṭ ṭ k “written” suggests that what follows is a title, which Ezekiel could read at a glance, rather than the contents (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:10–11).

\(^10.b.\) LXX Tg. render ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “laments” as if sg. The unusual pl—generally ṭ ṭ —favors the MT.

\(^c\) 10.c. The MT ṭ ṭ is used as an interjection “woe!” in Mishnaic Heb., and LXX Vg so interpret. Here it seems to be used as a noun (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 146, with reference to ṭ ṭ Tg.). An emendation to a noun ṭ ṭ “lament” (Cornill 188, following Olshausen; et al.) is not necessary: cf. Greenberg 67.

\(^a\) 1.a. The MT adds ṭ ṭ ṭ “what you find, eat,” which is not represented in the LXX* and is widely believed to be a gloss. After 2:8b–9, a single command, “eat this scroll,” is expected (cf. 3:2 ). It may be suggested that the words originated as an exegetical and comparative gloss, with a final cue word (“eat: what you find”), on ṭ ṭ “what I present to you” in 2:8. The gloss alluded to Jer 15:16, μ μ b b ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “your words were found and I ate them.” It eased the transition from “hear what I speak to you” in v 8a to “eat what I present to you” in v 8b by hinting, correctly, that Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, was to find words and eat them. The comment suffered displacement from ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “and eat” in v 3:1 and was incorporated into the text here. If so, Greenberg’s linking of the omission in the LXX here with its omission of “what I” in 2:8a as redactional parallels (VTSup 29 [1978] 139) is mistaken.
the opportunity to feed on this scroll I am presenting to you, and let your belly be filled with it.” I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey.

4 “Human one,” he then said to me, “come, go to the community of Israel, and use my very words in speaking to them. 2 For if you were sent to a people whose speech is incomprehensible, whose language is difficult to grasp, or to a host of peoples whose speech is incomprehensible, whose language is difficult to grasp and whose words you could not understand—if they were the

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a 2.a. The MT adds t a zh “this,” unrepresented in the LXX. It is generally regarded as an addition assimilating to vv 1, 3: “this” is correct in the mouth of Yahweh, who holds the scroll, but not on Ezekiel’s lips (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:11).

b 3.a. The MT H l k a W “and I ate” is more naturally pointed H l k a W “and I ate it,” as the ancient versions took it.

c 3.b. Is q w m “sweet” used as a noun, “(in respect of) sweetness” (HALAT 618a), or is the sense “and it turned sweet” (Greenberg 68)? The order of words suggests the former. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:11) suggested pointing as inf const q/T m H l “(so as to) be sweet.”

d 4.a. Heb. y r b d b t r b d w “and speak with my words” appears to have this sense in the context. Zimmerli (92–93) links with the formula h w y r b d b “by the word of Yahweh” used in 1 Kgs 13, but the use of the pl. here does not favor the connection.

ea 5.a. The MT a l “not” is possible, but it must be considered together with a l in v 6a and a l A µ a “if not” in v 6b (see below). The context suggests that it be repointed a l u = W “if” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:12). For confusion between a ã and W, see HALAT 487a.

b 5.b. Lit. “deep” and so inaccessible to the hearer, incomprehensible (cf. Block, JBL 103 [1984] 332 and n. 47): cf. Isa 33:19, which adds [ w m v m “too (deep) to hear.”

c 5.c. Lit. “heavy.” The parallelism suggests that the impact on the hearer is in mind and that it signifies “difficult to grasp.” However, in Exod 4:10 it means “clumsy, not fluent.” The omission of the phrase in LXXB (BHS) is not relevant: it appears to be an inner-Gr. error (cf. Ziegler, LXX 98). The MT reflects the general textual tradition in adding a r c y t y b A l a “to the house of Israel,” which is hardly in apposition to the “people” of v 5a but evidently intended as a contrast, as if “(not … ) but to … ” The construction is awkward, j w v h t a “you are sent” doing double duty (Greenberg 68). The phrase surely originated as an old marginal gloss on a r c y y n b A l a “to the sons of Israel” in 2:3, recording a seemingly correct variant such as the Vorlage of LXX contained. It was wrongly taken with the very similar context of 3:6 in the next column and incorporated into the text.

d 6.a. See Note 5.a.” above. Q w f e l on “would that” presupposes a l U “if.”

e 6.b. For the variant that strayed into 2:3, see Note 2:3.a. * Cf. µ y b r µ y w “many nations” in 26:3; 31:6. The two phrases occur as redactional variants in the parallel texts Isa 2:3 and Mic 4:2.

f 6.c. The omission in the Syr. of the two adjectival phrases that occurred in v 5a is typical of the version, and so is probably not relevant for the Heb. text. The repetition is often taken as accidental, but the first phrase and the final clause seem to be an expanded form of Isa 33:19, [ w m v h p c y q m l “too deep of lip to hear.”
ones I sent you to, they would listen to you. 7 But the community of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are unwilling to listen to me, since the whole community of Israel has stern brows and hard hearts. 8 I now make your face as stern as theirs are and your brow as stern as their brows: 9 as hard as diamond, a which is harder than flint, I am making your brow. You will not be afraid of them nor intimidated by their facial expression, rebel community as they are. 10 Human one,” he told me further, “take to heart all my words that I speak to you, listening with both ears. 11 Then come, go to your fellow nationals in exile and speak to them. Tell them, ‘This is the message of Yahweh,’ whether they listen or fail to do so. 12 Then the spirit lifted me up, and behind me I heard a noise, a loud, pulsating sound, as the manifestation of Yahweh’s glorious presence roseb from where it was situated. 13 The loud, pulsating

6.d. The MT a | Aμα evidently means “surely,” with a following conditional clause that lacks a conditional particle: “surely (if) …” (Hitzig 23; et al., including Greenberg 69; cf. GKC 149b [but 159b, h render this sense unlikely]). This is a most unnatural and confusing construction. Nor is a sense “but” likely, in accord with Aram. a | A (cf. Syr. Tg.), although it is theoretically possible (cf. Gen 24:38; Ps 131:2): the antithesis does not come till v 7 (Zimmerli 93). Many read Aμα “if,” but the intrusion of a | A is then difficult to explain; moreover, ḫ rather than Aμα is typically used in an unreal condition (GKC 159l). It is probable that Aμα originated as an explanation of a | A in the sense Aμα ḫ “if” (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:12; cf. LXX Vg “and if”).

8.a. The pf is performative here and in v 9: see Note 22:13.a.*; Waltke and O’Connor, Syntax 30.5.1d and n. 17; Joüon 112f, g.

9.a. Heb. I ᵜ MVP means “diamond, adamant” rather than “emery, carborundum,” as used to be thought on the basis of a misread Akk. term (see HALAT 1445b–46a). The LXX attests ḫymt ḫ in place of I ᵜ Mvp. Obviously this is a “cuckoo” type of replacement (cf. Note 2:6.a.*). Was ḫymt originally an exegetical comment on 2:3b (cf. Isa 65:3)?

10.a. The tr. conceals the awkward order of clauses, which Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:12) credited to Ezekiel’s inelegant diction.

12.a. Most since Cornill (190–91) have adopted a conjectural emendation made by S. D. Luzzato and independently by Hitzig (24), ḫ Ṣ Ṣ “when … arose” for MT ḫ Ṣ “blessed,” as the context seems to demand. The doxology in the MT is “certainly a somewhat peculiar utterance” (Fairbairn 41). Kraetzschmar (32) called the emendation one of the most brilliant conjectures ever made in OT study. As Greenberg (70) observes, the sequel shows that the noise was caused by the movement of components of the mobile throne, rather than being an articulate sound. There is a similar confusion of ḫ Ṣ as “noise/voice” in the MT at 1:25. The perversiveness of the corruption throughout the textual tradition indicates that it took place at an early stage: in fact it was in the old Heb. script that mem and kaph were easily confused. In chap. 10 ḫ Ṣ “arise” is the equivalent of ḫ Ṣ “be lifted up” in chap. 1: this text appears to be the source for the change. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:12) proposed that an accidental dittograph, ḫ Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ was the midpoint between the MT and the original. However, Kraetzschmar’s suggestion (32) that comparison with Isa 6:3 influenced the corruption is more likely. Doubtless the similarity of Ps 72:19 to Isa 6:3 also contributed. One of the Qumran “Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice,” which were heavily influenced by Ezekiel, may preserve an awareness of textual variation in its reading ḫ Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ “and (the cherubim) bless as they rise” (4Q405 20 ii 21,22:7; 11QShirSabb 3,4:9). The words are probably to be taken together (with Halperin, Faces 52, and against Newsom, Songs 306). Halperin (Faces 44) has described the error as “truly a Freudian slip of the pen,” in view of the deep influence it had on centuries of Jewish mysticism.
sound was the noise made by the wings of the living beings as they kept in formation beside one another, and also the noise made by the wheels alongside them. The spirit, then, lifted me up and took me off. I was passionately moved as I went, being under the firm control of Yahweh’s hand. I came to the exiles in Tel Abib, where they were living. I stayed there among them for a week, in a state of disorientation.

13.a. In v 13b “and noise” appears to be a slight error for “noise” (BHk; cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:12), by mechanical assimilation to twice before. The final nominal phrase repeats the one in v 12 and functions as subj Greenberg (71) takes the waw as explicative. To categorize v 13 as a gloss with a final cue phrase (Herrmann 7) ignores the structural significance of the verse (see Form/Structure/Setting).

b 13.b. This verb qv n is distinct from qv n “kiss.” It is cognate with Arab. nasaqa “string (pearls), join one to another” and Eth. resaq “arranged in order.” In the OT it is used synonymously with “order” (L. Kopf, VT 9 [1959] 265–67; HALAT 690b). Here it has the sense of “keeping in line each in relation to the other” (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 147).

a 14.a. The change of order and construction in relation to v 12a is occasioned by the factor of repetition: cf. 2 Sam 3:22–23; 1 Kgs 20:17, 19 (Joüon 118g).


c 14.c. The MT nm “bitter,” which is not represented in LXX* (cf. Ziegler, LXX 100 Syr., does not fit the context. It is clearly related somehow to q v m “sweet(ness)” in v 3. Was it originally a marginal gloss on 2:8bb (cf: 3:3ag) that expounded the metaphor and explained that what was presented to eat was by nature bitter, but surprisingly turned out to be sweet? A clever interplay with yf m “rebellious” in 2:8 may also have been intended. In due course the comment was related to the wrong column by someone who understood hmj (“vehemence” = LXX oJrmv as “anger.” Within the Gr. textual tradition, metewro “through the air” seems to have nothing to do with ym: it was simply an attempt to make sense of the Gr. term in v 15 (see next Note*) by applying it first to the spirit’s transportation of the prophet.

a 15.a. The MT µv µybvyw h mh (“who lived by the Kebar Canal and who lived there”) is generally held to be conflated (e.g., Zimmerli 95; Greenberg 71). The rest of the textual tradition supports the MT, except that the Syr., along with two Heb. MSS, omits the second clause. Q bvaw “and I sat,” substituted for fva w “and who,” in an attempt to make sense of the conflation, is followed by the Tg.; K and Q are both represented by the Vg “and I sat where (they were sitting),” which the KJV followed. The second clause seems to be the earlier one (Cornill 191; et al.), minus the waw “and,” which was added when the first clause entered the text. Probably rbkAr h nAl a “by the Kebar Canal” was meant as a gloss explaining µv “there” in the light of 1:1, and µybbyh originated as a cue phrase µybgy (= h mh) “they lived” (Lang, Bib 64 [1983] 227–28). The LXX has metewro kaiperil hon “high and I went around” for byba l t “Tel Abib.” The first noun was obviously related to the stem lí t “be high.” For the second noun bsaw was apparently read: is this reading linked with Q bvaw displacing byba in the Vorlage of the LXX?

b 15.b. Heb. ymvm mm appears to be an elative hiph, “distressed”: cf. E. A. Speiser (JCS 6 [1952] 81–92), one of whose categories of elative hiph is forms denoting stillness, sometimes resulting from fear. Since the hiph of µm is transitive apart from Job 21:5 and here, KB 989a took as causative, “causing to be distressed.” Ezra 9:3–4 has a polel ptcp, µm mm, to which Cornill (192) emended.
Notes

1.a. Hardly “the grand canal” (e.g., Cooke 4; Fohrer 5). It appears in two Akk. texts as naru kabaru/i; the adj is kabru “great.”

1.b. For the Heb. construction, see Cooke 8.

1.c. The Heb. pl. of generalization (Joüon 136j), which recurs in 8:3; 40:2, is to be rendered as sg

2.a. Lit. “it (was)”: for the use of איה “it” in such explanatory notes, see Cooke 8. The reference to the fifth month functions as a cue phrase harking back to the date in v 1 (Herrmann 1; Lang, Bib 64 [1983] 225) by means of an abbreviated reference to the last element.

3.a. Or possibly “… the priest Buzi.” The office may relate to the first or second name in OT usage. The literary convention of referring to a prophet’s occupation in a superscription (see Form/Structure/Setting) supports the former alternative, which the LXX followed here.

3.b. The inf abs is used idiomatically at the outset of narratives: see Greenberg (41) for examples. V 3 functions along with v 2 as another beginning for the unit (see the Comment).

3.c. For MT יָעַל “upon him,” the reading יָעַל “upon me,” implied by LXX Syr. and found in thirteen MSS, is generally preferred. The MT suffered assimilation to the third person of v 3a. The first-person echoing of the clause in 3:14b supports the emendation; so does the juxtaposition of divine hand and human vision in 8:1b–2, as here in vv 3b–4.

3.d. Since the LXX* regularly lacks הָעֲרָבָה “there” in similar contexts, at 3:22; 8:1; 40:1, it has been regarded as an addition (see, e.g., Zimmerli 82). But it is arguable that it is relevant at 3:22; 40:1 (see the Notes). Did the LXX* omit here as superfluous (cf. Kraetzschmar 7; Lang, Ezechiel 20; Lind, JETS 27)

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e.g. exempli gratia, for example
adj adjective/adj ectival
Heb. Hebrew
pl. plate or plural
sg singular or under
Lit. literally
Bib Biblica
OT Old Testament
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
inf infinitive
abs absolute (nouns)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
MSS manuscript(s)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

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[1984] 137)? Or was it added to the text in order to bind together more closely the two separate halves of the verse?

4.a. The second and third nouns are in apposition to the first. The copula inserted before the second in the LXX and also in the Vg and eight MSS is an easier and so inferior reading: Zimmerli (8) draws attention to this tendency in the LXX. The LXX also presupposes the addition of hō ḫb “in it,” which further clarifies the relation of the cloud to the wind. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:2) interestingly suggested that at an earlier stage it was ḫb “came” and was a note added to show the parallelism of the wind and cloud.

4.b. The verb ṭjqltm, which should basically mean “take hold of itself” and is used of lightning in Exod 9:24, seems to have the idiomatic sense of catching on fire and so burning. G. R. Driver (VT 1 [1951] 60 n. 1 and Bib 35 [1954] 145) cited Akk. and Syr. parallels for this semantic development in the case of the synonymous stem ḫh.

4.c. The underlying Heb. text of the LXX evidently had a different order of clauses (see BHS), relating the surrounding radiance more clearly to the cloud (w “to it”: ḫl “cloud” is masc.); at the Gr. level, since nef ḫvh “cloud” is fem, kukl w[a]jou “around it” must relate to the neuter pneuma “wind.” Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:2), related the suffix to v ḫ “fire” by arguing that it is epicene (cf. Greenberg 43). It is more likely that after the specification of the three nouns (ABC) the latter two are defined further in a B´C´ order; the Vorlage of the LXX had a secondary ABB´CC´ order. The difference in order has sometimes been taken as an indication that the clause about the radiance is a gloss that compares its presence in v 27 (Herrmann 1; Hölscher, Dichter 46; et al.), but it is structurally fitting in both places (see Form/Structure/Setting).

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
VT Vetus Testamentum
n. note
Bib Biblica
Akk. Akkadian
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
masc. masculine
Gr. Greek
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
4.d. Ehrlich (*Randglossen* 5:2) suggested that 

> הָעַרְבָּךְ (from) has a locative sense, as often in compound prepositions, and in fact LXX so interpreted. But the thought seems to be that from the perspective of the viewer details gradually materialized from the background as the phenomenon approached and could be seen more clearly. The following 

> וַיּוּהְדָּו מ “from the midst of the fire” is often taken as an early gloss to make explicit the antecedent of the preceding suffix, but it is universally attested, and a near parallel occurs in v 13, where similar specifying emphasis is laid on the fire, as one reads on.


4.f. For the rendering, see the *Comment*. The LXX adds “and brightness in it,” which may have originated in a comparative gloss תְּיָבֶּהַל “radiance: inside it” which briefly noted the variant הָלֶה הַיַּם “inside it around” that appears in the MT of v 27a for תְּיָבֶּהַל הָגֶנֶשׁ “and radiance to it around” here and in v 27b.

6.a. MT הָעַרְבָּךְ תֶּהֶם “to each to them” is strangely used in the sense “to each one of them” (cf. Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 5:2; Cooke 12, 24). LXX Vg do not represent הָעַרְבָּךְ “to them,” and 10:21a, as well as v 6a here, supports the shorter text. The extra word may have originated as a variant of הָעַרְבָּךְ הָגֶנֶשׁ “to them (fem)” in v 5.

6.b. Lit. “(were) a straight leg” In v 23 appears an evidently misplaced gloss on the sg phrase here, a pl. adj וַיִּקְנַשָּׁה “straight,” which correctly understands the sg as collective or distributive (“were in each

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
*cf. confer, compare*
SCM Student Christian Movement
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Lit. literally
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
adj adjective/adjectival
sg singular or under
case a straight leg” [Hitzig 6]). The LXX* has a pl adj for the MT’s sg phrase, which may imply that the gloss had displaced the text of the MT in its Vorlage, unless it is a loose rendering. In MT the marginal gloss was wrongly related to the next column.

7.c. Heb. µhylgr ¹k here refers to the extremities of the legs, just as in v 7a µylgr, lit. “feet,” is used in the extended sense of legs (Vogt, Untersuchungen 82 n. 64).

7.d. The subj of the verb is not the legs, in which case a fem. verb would be expected, but the living creatures, regarded as male throughout the earlier part of the verse (Hitzig 6). Parunak (‘Structural Studies” 125) has observed that whenever ¹y[k “like the gleam” is used in this pericope, it refers to the whole entity under consideration and not just a part of it. Cf. the supernatural figure in 40:3 who looked like copper. Then the application of the phrase to legs in Dan 10:6, in obvious dependence on this passage, does not represent the original intent.

8.a. Q “hands of” is generally followed; K wd y seems to mean “his hands (were [the hands of] a human being)” (Keil 23). The term seems to be used in the wider sense of “arm including hand” (see del Olmo Lete, Vocación 24; cf. HALAT 370a with reference to Jer 38:12).

8.b. The MT adds vv 8b–9: “and their faces and their wings belonging to the four of them; their wings were brushing against each other. They did not change direction when they moved: each moved straight ahead.” Hölscher (Dichter 46) and Greenberg (44) have observed that vv 8b–9 and 11–12 are apparently doublets, each supplying some lack in the other.

Lind (JETS 27 [1984] 138) argues in favor of a number of longer readings in the MT on the theoretically reasonable grounds that (1) the reading that best explains the origin of the others is to be preferred and that (2) claims of scribal amplification must be explained in terms of objectively demonstrated causes. He is not able to find any such causes here and so retains the present text. In fact, it can be plausibly argued that vv 8b–9 are secondary, as Hölscher went on to claim. It is significant that counterparts in chap. 10 to v 8a (10:21b) and the beginning of v 10 (10:22a) are juxtaposed. The

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
sg singular or under
Heb. Hebrew
lit. literally
n. note
subj subject/objective
fem. feminine
Cf. confer, compare
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
material in vv 8b–9 seems to have originated in a string of marginal comments that have been taken together and incorporated into the text. For this phenomenon in other parts of the MT of Ezekiel, see my article “Annotation Clusters in Ezekiel,” ZAW 102 (1990) 408–13. The latest elements consist of “and their wings” and “Their wings were brushing against each other,” which are absent from the LXX. Basically htwjaAla hva třbj “were brushing against each other” was a correction of the corrupt vya “each [masc.!]” in v 11b, with třbj functioning as a cue word (Höhne, “Thronwagenvision” 89; cf. Zimmerli 84). The preceding µt [b r a] “to the four of them” in v 8b, already in the LXX, seems to be a variant of the form with a fem suffix, δ [b r a], which occurs twice in v 10 after a form with a masc. suffix. These two glosses were taken together and supplied with a subj µhjypŋk W “and their wings” in v 8b, but after the division into separate sentences it was repeated at the end of v 9a (Zimmerli 84). The initial µhjypŋk W “and their faces” in v 8b is probably a miswriting of µhjypŋk W “and their wings,” under the influence of vv 6, 10 (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:4), which in the MT has been left alongside a corrected text but in the LXX stands uncorrected. V 9b consists of two clauses from v 12a, b in reverse order: the order in v 12 is supported by v 17. The reverse order was intended to suggest that the wings were the subj, by highlighting the fem suffix on δk[b “when they moved”: after the fem references to wings in v 11, the clauses were understood in terms of the movement of the wings rather than of the living creatures. All this scribal activity relating to vv 11–12 has been taken together and inserted into the text at a seemingly appropriate point after the mention of faces and wings for each of the four creatures in vv 6 and 8a.

11.a. The MT prefaces with µhjypŋk W “and their faces,” which is absent from the LXX*: it is probably to be explained as in v 8 (cf. Lind, JETS 27 [1984] 137, who envisages vertical dittography). Greenberg (45) notes that it makes no sense at this point, as the disjunctive accent in the MT virtually admits.

11.b. As we noted above, v 9a has preserved a variant or correction, htwjaAla hva “each to its counterpart,” in place of the MT “each” (masc.). The LXX and Syr. so imply and v 23 supports, while

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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
masc. masculine
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
masc. masculine
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
V Vulgate
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
masc. masculine
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vya as subj does not occur elsewhere. Undoubtedly the earlier occurrence of V yâ “to each” influenced the corruption. The first century B.C. Qumran MS 4QExz\textsuperscript{a,b}, which usually concurs with the MT, attests a text that lacks V yâ (Lust, “Ezekiel MSS in Qumran,” in Ezekiel and His Book, ed. J. Lust, 94–95), presumably after secondary omission of an awkward corrupted element.

11.c. For the rare form of suffix, see GKC 911; Cooke 25.

13.a. For the MT t wmd “and (as for) the likeness of (the living creatures),” the LXX has kai; \varepsilon\eta mes w “and in the midst.” 10:2 supports the LXX as to the relative positions of the coals of fire and the living creatures. Both Zimmerli (84) and Greenberg (46) restore t wnyb w “and between,” following Hitzig (9) and others, but the form of the preposition is characteristic of chap. 10 (contrast \varepsilon\omicron yb later in this verse). Better is t vlx mw “and from the midst of” (Herrmann 3; Fohrer 11; cf. BHS), a form that appears in vv 4–5, where the LXX renders as here. It shares four consonants with the term in the MT. The latter may have originated as a comparative gloss that alluded to the combination t wj … t wmd “the likeness … of living creatures” in v 5; it was subsequently regarded as a correction of the graphically look-alike preposition. Driver’s attempt to interpret t wmd as “midst” (Bib 19 [1938] 61) is unconvincing; neither the NEB nor the REB adopted it.

13.b. The MT µ hā r m “their appearance (was like)” suffers from the fact that the fire, rather than the living creatures, is the evident concern of the context. The LXX implies h hā r m “something that appeared (like).” Greenberg (46) prefers to read yl \j g h hā r m k “like the appearance of coals” on the
evidence of the Syr., noting that this is the standard form in the chapter, as later in this very verse, and that the construction in the LXX is unparalleled. However, as often elsewhere, the Syr.’s reading looks suspiciously like an easier one that has been assimilated to the context. The MT may have been influenced by v 16b.

13.c. Lit. “it,” with reference to ἄ “fire” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:5; Zimmerli 84).

13.d. The MT Ἱ “the (torches)” has frequently been regarded as a dittograph: the LXX does not represent the article.

13.e. V 13bb and v 14 seem to be doublets (cf. Kraetzschmar 14–15). Since the LXX* omits v 14, scholarship has judged it to be the intruder (but see Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:5, who retained the MT with emendations; Halperin, JBL 101 [1982] 355 n. 22, who judges the LXX’s shorter text to be due to homoeoteleuton; and Lind, JETS 27 [1984] 138). However, the last two words of v 13, Λ Ἑ Ἱ Ἡ Ἣ “lightning was coming out,” and the first word of v 14, Τ Ἡ Ἰ Ἡ “and the living creatures,” appear to be separate glosses that have been absorbed into the flow of the text, rather like vv 8b–9. It is significant that the LXX omits Τ Ἡ Ἡ Ἡ in v 15. Greenberg (46) observes that in v 14 its position before the inf abs violates Heb. usage. The term may have originated as a rubric gloss, which noted the subject matter of vv 5–14 (Freedy, VT 20 [1970] 142). Its presence in both vv 14 and 15 seems to represent double incorporation of the same gloss. In v 14 the context refers to flickering flames rather than to the living creatures, which were immobile supports for the throne. As for Ἰ Ἡ “was coming out,” it seems to be an easier variant of Ἰ Ἡ Ἡ in v 14: the Vg “ibant” presupposes it in v 14, while 4Q405 20 ii 21,22:9 Ἰ Ἡ … Ἰ Ἡ Ἐ Ἡ presupposes a similar Vorlage (cf. Newsom, Songs 315). Heb. Ἱ Ἡ appears to be derived from a stem Ἰ Ἡ Ἡ as a byform of Ἰ Ἡ “run” (cf. Ewald 224; Dahood, Bib 53 [1972] 395; Q ef recon “

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Lit. literally
V Vulgate
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
n. note
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
VT Vetus Testamentum
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
4Q 4QSam

cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
Likewise qrb “lightning” looks like an explanation of qzb, a *hapax legomenon* that in the light of later Heb. usage appears to mean “lightning flash” (see A. Cohen, *AJSL* 40 [1924] 163; Jastrow, *Dictionary* 154a). As in v 13, the article may be a ditto. Behind the omission of v 14 in the LXX* *lies a recognition of the interrelatedness of vv 13bb and 14, and a wrong decision to follow the easy path of the former and to excise the latter. It thus attests a post-MT stage of the text.

15.a. The MT adds t wyj h “the living creatures,” which is not represented in the LXX: see the preceding Note. Nor is it present in the parallel 10:9. The omission allows the style to accord with v 4 (cf. 2:9; 8:2, 7, 10; 10:1, 9; 44:4), where what Ezekiel sees is a new entity. Lind (*JETS* 27 [1984] 137) explained in terms of scribal supplying of an object for the verb.

15.b. The MT wynp t [bral “in respect of his four faces” does not fit the context. The final waw is generally attached to the following har m in v 16, as LXX Syr. Vg and the parallel 10:9 suggest: “and the appearance.” Then in an original µt [bral “in respect of the four of them,” attested by the LXX.
the final mem was misread as י, a not uncommon error, and sense was achieved by prefixing ה (Zimmerli 85, refining the explanation of Cornill 182).

16.a. See the previous Note*. The MT adds ה י ח ו מ ה ו מ ו “and their construction,” unrepresented in the LXX* and in the parallel 10:9. It appears to be an anticipation of the term in v 16b (Lind, JETS 27 [1984] 137). As Cornill (182) observed, construction is not comparable with a jewel, but appearance is.


16.c. Heb. ד י א is masc, while the noun is fem.: the same reading appears in the parallel 10:10. Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 145–46) assumed the ellipse of ו ו א : “the likeness of one (wheel).”

16.d. The MT prefixes מ ח ר ו מ ו “and their appearance,” but the LXX* does not represent it, and it is inappropriate here. It is significant that in the parallel 10:10 the previous clause begins with this very word. Accordingly, it represents a comparative gloss relating to v 16ab.

17.a. Lit. “they.”

17.b. The LXX* does not represent מ ת ק ל ב “when they moved,” but since 10:11 reproduces it (with a different word order), the omission may be stylistic.

17.c. Heb. ל , usually “on,” is used in the sense of ל א “to” (cf. vv 9, 12), as often in Ezekiel, doubtless under the influence of Aram. usage (see Rooker, Biblical Hebrew in Transition 128–31).

18.a. The MT מ ה ל ח י ו מ ו מ י ל הו ג ו מ ו “and as for their rims, and they had height and they had fear” is problematic. The LXX και εκείνον αύτοις γινόμενος for the last clause מ ה ל ח ר א ו “and I saw
them,” presumably by assimilation to the verb in vv 4, 15, 27, although the form of the verb corresponds to that found in vv 1, 28. The reading is hardly original: one expects a direct object, as in v 27, or further description with *hnhw* “and behold” (cf. *BHS*), as in v 4; 2:9, for which there is no evidence. The MT should probably be retained in v 18a, if only for lack of a convincing alternative. The initial *hmnw* is to be taken as a *casus pendens* (Taylor 57; Waldman, *JBL* 103 [1984] 617–18). Elsewhere *hαρυ* means “fear” rather than “fearfulness” (Cornill 183), even in Ps 90:11, to which Smend (13) appealed; but analogy with *djay* “fear, object of fear” makes such an extension of meaning feasible. For *μνυθμην* in the sense of “rims,” cf. *μνυθμην* in 1 Kgs 7:33.

20.a. The MT adds *θερατηθαι* “thither the spirit to go,” originally intended as a correction of the earlier *μνυ* “there” with cue words *θερατηθαι* (Herrmann 3). The correction accords with v 12; the corruption was a simple case of haplography. LXX Syr. do not represent the three words.

20.b. The traditional text, supported by all ancient witnesses, adds “would ascend alongside them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.” The same material reappears in v 21b. What distinguishes it from the repetitive text of the rest of vv 19–21 is its lack of logical continuity with what precedes in v 20a. One expects a reference to the forward movement of the wheels at this point, as occurs in v 21a: mention of the vertical movement of the wheels is premature (cf. Höhne, “Thronwagenvision” 93). Seemingly a copyist’s eye jumped to *να ενωθεν* “would ascend” in v 21b, and he copied out the rest of v 21b, using a text, which, like that of the LXX, still lacked *μνωπα* “the wheels” in v 21b. Subsequently, the missing words were reinserted together with the rest of v 21, but without deletion of the now superfluous six words. The cause of the parablepsis may have been the omission of a 34-letter line, if not of two of 17 letters: for this phenomenon, cf. H. M. Orlinsky (*JBL* 61 [1942] 88–89), who refers to lines in Heb. MSS with about 11–13 or 14, 17, 23, 25, 30, and 35 letters to a line, and to my *Greek Chronicles* (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 2:133–36. For another case of a corrected and undeleted error, see 22:20 and Note. Höhne (“Thronwagenvision” 93) took v 20 as a gloss on v 21b that wanted to make clear that the spirit was the same as in v 12, but this seems an unnecessarily drastic explanation of the overlap. He rightly noted that 10:17 reflects not v 20 but v 21.

21.a. The LXX* lacks the MT’s *μνωπα* “the wheels”: see the previous Note*. It appears to be
another rubric gloss, again occurring at the end of a topical section, like יִהוּדָה ‘the living creatures’ in vv 14, 15.

21.b. Heb. יִהוּדָה in vv (20) 21–22 is interpreted as a collective sg “living creatures.” Presumably it was used to “emphasize the unity of the ensemble” (Greenberg 48).

22.a. The MT adds יֵשָׁכֹה “which is awesome,” which is not represented in the LXX*. Probably it was originally intended to relate not to צֹאֵב יִהוּדָה “crystal” (Vogt, Untersuchungen 8; Greenberg, 48, who understand—on what basis?—as “dazzling” [= TEV; cf. NAB “glittering”]) but to יֵשָׁכֹה “platform.” Kraetzschmar’s suggestion (18) to read יֵשָׁכֹה “was seen” and to relate it to the platform with reference to 10:1 is worth developing. In the description of the platform at 10:1, יֵשָׁכֹה “was seen” occurs in the MT but is not rendered in LXX* Syr.. It was probably a gloss referring to the preceding line, where the platform is described as “over the heads of the cherubim”: the gloss remarked that it had been seen earlier by Ezekiel, i.e., in 1:22. Here יֵשָׁכֹה is its counterpart, corrupted from a comparative gloss יֵשָׁכֹה יֵשָׁכֹה and going with what follows: “which was seen extended over their heads” (cf. Dan 1:15 for the construction). The adaptation to יֵשָׁכֹה “awesome” was doubtless influenced by its appearance in theopneustic descriptions elsewhere (Gen 28:17; Judg 13:6); its strange use to describe the

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
* 20.b. The traditional text, supported by all ancient witnesses, adds “would ascend alongside them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.” The same material reappears in v 21b. What distinguishes it from the repetitive text of the rest of vv 19–21 is its lack of logical continuity with what precedes in v 20a. One expects a reference to the forward movement of the wheels at this point, as occurs in v 21a: mention of the vertical movement of the wheels is premature (cf. Höhne, “Thronwagenvision” 93). Seemingly a copyist’s eye jumped to יִהוּדָה יַעֲבֹר “would ascend” in v 21b, and he copied out the rest of v 21b, using a text, which, like that of the LXX, still lacked יֵשָׁכֹה יִהוּדָה “the wheels ” in v 21b. Subsequently, the missing words were reinserted together with the rest of v 21, but without deletion of the now superfluous six words. The cause of the parablepsis may have been the omission of a 34-letter line, if not of two of 17 letters: for this phenomenon, cf. H. M. Orlinsky (JBL 61 [1942] 88–89), who refers to lines in Heb. MSS with about 11–13 or 14, 17, 23, 25, 30, and 35 letters to a line, and to my Greek Chronicles (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 2:133–36. For another case of a corrected and undeleted error, ***see 22:20 and Note. Höhne (“Thronwagenvision” 93) took v 20 as a gloss on v 21b that wanted to make clear that the spirit was the same as in v 12, but this seems an unnecessarily drastic explanation of the overlap. He rightly noted that 10:17 reflects not v 20 but v 21.
Heb. Hebrew
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
TEV Today’s English Version
cf. confer, compare
NAB The New American Bible
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
i.e. id est, that is
cf. confer, compare
noun of comparison is a clue to its secondary character.

23.a. The MT אَا转基因 “straight” is awkward in this context: it is forced to explain in terms of a pregnant construction (Kraetzschmar 18; Cooke 19; Greenberg 48). The LXX has a doublet implying אَا转基因 מَا转基因 פרפ “stretched out, keeping in line”: the first term occurs in v 11 and the second in 3:13. The similarity of construction (“each other”) and context—the noise made by the wings—in 3:13 suggests that אَا转基因 מَا转基因 is the original reading, which 3:13 cites (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:7). As noted above, the MT was intended as a marginal explanatory gloss on v 7a. It was related to the wrong column and taken as a correction of אَا转基因 מَا转基因, with which it shares four consonants. For such intercolumnar confusion, see my Greek Chronicles 2:90–104, and VT 29 (1989) 68–69, with reference to 21:15, 18. For the meaning of the verb, see Note 3:13.a*.

23.b. The MT, but not the LXX*, repeats הَا נן kW מَا יתנ V יאאW “and each had two covering for them.” Greenberg (48) takes the repetition as distributive (cf. GKC 134q), comparing 10:9, and considers that the omission in the LXX represents the translator’s simplification. However, one would then have expected the repetition of the object, מَا יתנ וקר “their bodies.” So dittography seems to have been responsible. Cornill (185) and others have also judged the LXX correct in not representing the first הَا נן “for them.” If it relates to the living creatures, it clashes with the two masc references within the clause. However, Greenberg (48) has suggested that it is an ethical dative relating to the wings (cf. BDB 115b, 116a). Then it has an intensifying force, and LXX doubtless dropped it as otiose. V 23b has been regarded as a gloss from v 11, since its content seems irrelevant here (e.g., Fohrer 13; Cooke 20). It is possible that it represents a marginal comment on v 11b that supplied a variant reading with an initial V יאאW “to each”—as a correction of the awkward preceding V יאא “each”?: and a final masc suffix.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
VT Vetus Testamentum
13.a. In v 13b קרא W“And noise” appears to be a slight error for קרא “noise” (BH; cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:12), by mechanical assimilation to קרא Wtwice before. The final nominal phrase repeats the one in v 12 and functions as subj Greenberg (71) takes the ווא as explicative. To categorize v 13 as a gloss with a final cue phrase (Herrmann 7) ignores the structural significance of the verse (see Form/Structure/Setting).
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
V Vulgate
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
Then the common topic of wings encouraged its attachment to and incorporation in v 23a, in the next column.

24.a. The LXX* does not represent ydv v Al wq k “like the voice of Shaddai,” which is often taken as a gloss from 10:5 (Cornill 185; et al.). However, wr b dd b ydv v Al a I wq k “like the voice of El Shaddai when he spoke” looks like an elaboration of the shorter phrase here (Halperin, JBL 101 [1982] 355–56 and n. 23). Driver’s repointing ydv l as “downpour” (JTS 41 [1940] 168) has been criticized by J. Barr (Comparative Philology and the Text of the OT [Oxford: Clarendon, 1968] 235).

24.b. The lack of kaph before the following l wq “sound” indicates that l wq does not function in a comparison. The continuation in vv 19 and 21, where l k l b “when they moved” begins one clause and another identically structured verb begins the next, suggests that the same occurs here with asyndeton, contra the Masoretic accent. Tg. Vg interpreted thus, and thence Vg-based Catholic versions, such as NAB. The implication of v 25b is that the noise ceased (cf. Tg. “their wings became silent”; also 4Q405 20 ii 21,22:13 [cf. Newsom, Songs 319]).

24.c. The LXX* lacks any representation of h hj m l wq k h mh l wq “a tumultuous noise like the noise of an army,” and scholars generally judge the MT secondary. However, the term h mh is too distinctive to be part of a gloss; it can hardly have been derived from the contextually dissimilar Jer 11:16, the only other place it occurs in the MT. It is cognate with Ug. hmlt “people, multitude” and is “noise of some magnitude which can be compared with the hubbub of a military camp or to the thundering feet of an army on the march” (W. McKane, Jeremiah 1–20 [Edinburgh: Clark, 1986] 250). Dan 10:6 already seems to presuppose the final comparison with its paraphrase wwmh l wq k “like the noise of a multitude.” The omission in the LXX may be explained in terms of overlooking a 27-letter line or two lines of 13 and 14 letters (cf. Note 20.b.* above); its representation of l t k l b “when they

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
n. note
JTS Journal of Theological Studies
OT Old Testament
Tg. Targum
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
NAB The New American Bible
cf. confer, compare
Tg. Targum
4Q 4QSam
 cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Ug. Ugaritic
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
moved” after $\mu$ $\eta$ $\gamma$ $\pi$ $\nu$ “their wings” suggests a partial marginal correction and subsequent insertion into the text at a suitable point. The MT adds vv 24b–25a, “when they stopped they would drop their wings. And there was a noise above the platform that was over their heads”; only C and a few MSS omit. The repetition of v 24b in 25b and the close similarity of v 25a to v 26a raise suspicions. The LXX* at the beginning of v 25 implies $\nu$ $\eta$ $\nu$ $\eta$ $\nu$ “and behold a sound” for $\nu$ $\eta$ $\varsigma$ $\nu$ $\omega$ “and there was a voice/sound” and omits vv 25b–26a. Halperin (JBL 101 [1982] 355 n. 22), like Smend (15) before him, has found in the LXX* merely loss of vv 25b–26a by homoeoteleuton of $\mu$ $\nu$ $\alpha$ $\tau$ $\alpha$ $\iota$ “over their heads.” But the total evidence suggests a more complex phenomenon, namely that three forms of the text may be disentangled: (1) $\mu$ $\nu$ $\alpha$ $\tau$ $\alpha$ $\iota$ $\varsigma$ $\nu$ $\eta$ $\nu$ $\eta$ “and above the platform that was over their heads,” the form of v 25a as it appears in the MT; (2) $\nu$ $\varsigma$ $\nu$ $\omega$ $\nu$ $\nu$ $\nu$ $\nu$ “and and above the platform that was over their heads,” the form of v 26a as it appears in the MT; (3) $\mu$ $\nu$ $\alpha$ $\tau$ $\alpha$ $\iota$ $\varsigma$ $\nu$ $\eta$ $\nu$ $\eta$ $\nu$ $\nu$ “and behold a sound above the platform that was over their heads,” the form underlying the LXX*. The MT has a doublet consisting of the first two forms, with v 24b serving as cue words to introduce the variant reading of v 25a. Preference is to be given to the form in v 26a: the initial $\varsigma$ $\nu$ “and” at the beginning of a fresh section accords with vv 5 and 22, while an initial $\nu$ $\nu$ $\nu$ $\nu$ “and behold” (cf. vv 4, 15) or $\varsigma$ $\nu$ $\nu$ “and there was” is unparalleled. One may best explain the intrusive $\nu$ “sound” as a rubric gloss at the end of a section, such as those that appear

20.b. The traditional text, supported by all ancient witnesses, adds “would ascend alongside them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.” The same material reappears in v 21b. What distinguishes it from the repetitive text of the rest of vv 19–21 is its lack of logical continuity with what precedes in v 20a. One expects a reference to the forward movement of the wheels at this point, as occurs in v 21a: mention of the vertical movement of the wheels is premature (cf. Höhne, “Thronwagenvision” 93). Seemingly a copyist’s eye jumped to $\nu$ $\nu$ $\nu$ $\nu$ $\nu$ “would ascend” in v 21b, and he copied out the rest of v 21b, using a text, which, like that of the LXX, still lacked $\mu$ $\gamma$ $\nu$ $\nu$ $\nu$ “the wheels” in v 21b. Subsequently, the missing words were reinserted together with the rest of v 21, but without deletion of the now superfluous six words. The cause of the parablepsis may have been the omission of a 34-letter line, if not of two of 17 letters: for this phenomenon, cf. H. M. Orlinsky (JBL 61 [1942] 88–89), who refers to lines in Heb. MSS with about 11–13 or 14, 17, 23, 25, 30, and 35 letters to a line, and to my Greek Chronicles (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 2:133–36. For another case of a corrected and undeleted error, ***see 22:20 and Note. Höhne (“Thronwagenvision” 93) took v 20 as a gloss on v 21b that wanted to make clear that the spirit was the same as in v 12, but this seems an unnecessarily drastic explanation of the overlap. He rightly noted that 10:17 reflects not v 20 but v 21.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
C The Cairo Geniza
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
n. note
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
earlier in the MT in vv 14, 15, and 21: they served to map out the development of the vision account. It is less likely that it was originally intended to anticipate the “voice” of v 28, although that has evidently become its role in the MT. A minor variant in the two MT readings is \[ m (v 25a) \text{ and } m m (v 26aa) \], meaning “above.” Neither occurs elsewhere in Ezekiel, but the latter is more common and is close to \[ m “above” \text{ in vv 11, 22, and 26b (cf. } h m m, v 27 \]. The former was probably influenced by \[ m “from upon” \text{ in vv 19, 21. This piece of evidence supports the priority of } v 26aa.

26.a. Lit. “on it above.” The LXX* (and Vg) omitted \[ wyl \text{ as superfluous; subsequently it was wrongly supplied at the end of } v 26a. \]

27.a. The MT adds \[ b y b s h l A t y b v a A h a r m k “what looked like fire: it had a covering all round,” \] which the LXX* does not represent. It seems to be an intrusion on two counts. (1) It breaks the ABB′A′ chiasmus of v 27a–b, in which the verbs of seeing and the accompanying similes function as A/A′ and the upper and lower parts of the body as B/B′. Greenberg (50) envisages the MT as a more complex chiastic structure that includes v 27b, so that the A/A′ elements are both longer: each consists of a simile and a circumstantial clause, which in the first instance is “having something with the appearance of fire surrounding it” and in the second case is “and he was surrounded by a radiance.” His structural claim is spoiled by his correct judgment that v 27b refers not to the immediately preceding context of the lower part of the figure but to the entire figure (cf. v 4). This admission is tantamount to denying that v 27b has any role within the smaller A′ element. (2) In 8:2, which appears to be a reprise of 1:27, there is general academic support, including Greenberg (166), for the originality of the LXX. As Greenberg himself states, there the LXX “restricts ‘fire’ to the bottom half of the figure, where alone it should be.” Fire is out of place in the description of the upper half. The addition in the MT was probably intended as a comment on v 27b, with \[ v a A h a r m k “what looked like fire” \] functioning as introductory cue words (Vogt, Untersuchungen 8). The intent of the gloss was to claim that the radiance enveloped the fire (\[ h l “it” \]). This ancient interpretation accords with Ehrlich’s claim (Randglossen 5:8) that the masc. suffix in v 27b relates to the fire, as in v 4, rather than to the figure. Heb. \[ t y b \text{, lit. “house,” here has the sense of receptacle or covering (cf. BDB 109b); the clipped} \]
vocalization is the result of the maqqeph (cf. wml at M) in Ps 58:5(4); GKC 9u; but here GKC 130a n. 3 explains as constr and standing for [l ] t yb m “within”).

2:1.a. The preposition t d “with” in Ezekiel, as in 1-2 Kings and Jeremiah, is often vocalized with suffixes as if it were the object sign: Cooke (36) judged it a colloquialism.

2.a. The MT adds yl a r bd r v ak “when/as he spoke to me,” which the LXX omits. It adds little to the narrative and indeed cuts across the future aspect of v 1b. Cornill (186) observed that in Ezekiel f v ak “as” is used in a temporal sense only in 16:50. The MT seems to represent an explanatory marginal comment on the inexplicit messenger formula in 3:11, which echoes the divine language of 3:10: “Thus the Lord Yahweh has said—as he spoke to me.” The comment was related to the wrong column and inserted here, as if it resumed f v ak “speaking” in 1:28bb. In place of this clause, the LXX has two verbs added from 3:14 at the Gr. stage of the textual tradition.


3.a. In place of the MT l a r c y nb “sons of Israel,” the LXX has l a r c y t yb “house of Israel”: the two phrases are often confused (via an abbreviation b according to Cooke 36), and the opposite textual phenomenon occurs in 3:1. Cornill (187) argued in support of the LXX that the following pl. qualifiers encouraged the change, but Wevers (51) considers that they may make the MT preferable. Zimmerli (89) has urged that the phrase attested in LXX is the customary one in Ezekiel, occurring 83 times over against 11 according to Ezekiel 2 564, and so to be expected in this basic place. He also

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
n. note
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Gr. Greek
subj subject/subjective
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
pl. plate or plural
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
adduces the impressive argument that the expression “house of rebellion” in vv 5, etc. was based on a primary “house of Israel,” and so its presence is expected here—rather than delayed till 3:1. The dominant role of “house of Israel” throughout the divine speech (3:1, 4, 7) must also be taken into account. Accordingly, the reading of the LXX is to be judged as preferable. The MT was probably influenced by “sons” in v 4. The variant attested in the LXX was known in the Heb. tradition: it turns up as “to the house of Israel” in 3:5 (see the Note there). The MT adds “to nations,” which LXX lacks. It does not fit the context of Ezekiel’s mission to Israel. The Syr. attests a sg “nation,” which the NRSV has adopted, but it is plainly an attempt to match the MT to the context. The addition surely originated in a marginal reading that supplied a variant for “to peoples” in 3:6 and strayed into the wrong column: see Note 3:6. G. del Olmo Lete’s suggestion that the mem is enclitic (Vocación 296) is unlikely: see Note 26:12.b.

3.b. The LXX lacks the MT’s addition “revolted against me.” In the MT the consequent collocation of clauses is “who have rebelled against me; both they and their forebears have revolted against me to this very day.” The combination of the parallel verbs indeed occurs in 20:38, but in the MT “who have rebelled against me” is left hanging in the air and otiose after “rebelling.” The presence of the extra words is less easily explained. The phrase is clearly a doublet; it may have originated as a comparative gloss on “they rebelled against me”: it occurs frequently in the prophetic literature (Isa 1:2; 43:27; Jer 2:8; 33:8; Hos 7:13; 8:1).

4.a. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:9; cf. Brownlee 26) sensitively noted that the adjectives have a comparative sense in this context.

4.b. The LXX lacks v 4a, rightly in the judgment of many commentators. Zimmerli (90) stated that in Ezekiel “sons” is not used absolutely for the people in relation to Yahweh, but Greenberg has justly countered that neither is it here, where it refers to the present generation of Israelites, as distinct from their forebears. Vv 3–4a exhibit a chiastic structure. It is not fair to call v 4a a gloss from 3:7 (Fohrer 15): the variation in phrasing is significant, “hard-faced and strong-hearted” here as opposed to “strong-browed and hard-hearted” in 3:7. The changes in 3:7...
seem to exhibit the inversion characteristic of recapitulation (cf. Talmon, *Qumran* 358–61), in which case 3:7 may be understood as presupposing the presence of 2:4a. Its absence from the LXX* may be due to the omission of a line of 36 letters or of lines of multiples thereof (see *Note 1:20.b.*) in the textual history of its Vorlage.

4.c. For the authenticity of יְהֵנָדָא “Lord” in the messenger formula, see the appendix in Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 556–62, which reverses the policy of deletion he earlier advocated throughout his two volumes. For the LXX evidence, see the discussion of McGregor (*Greek Text of Ezekiel* 75–93).

5.a. The MT inserts וְהִמָּה “and they,” which is lacking in LXX Syr. The function of וְוַֽיְהִי, W“and (they will know)” in v 5b in the MT is to introduce the apodosis to the conditional clause (cf. GKC 112ff). However, v 7 (cf. the echo of vv 4b–5a in 3:11) suggests that the conditional clause be taken with v 4b (Cornill 187; Zimmerli 90; et al.). Probably וְהִמָּה W“and they” arose is a comment on or variant of וְהִמָּה W“They” in v 3b, clarifying that a fresh clause occurs in the MT.

5.b. Here and in v 7 LXX Syr. (also Syr. in 3:11) render “be frightened” (see BHS), reflecting וֹסֵי, Wjdy; Wfjdy; Wdylj. cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

* 20.b. The traditional text, supported by all ancient witnesses, adds “would ascend alongside them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.” The same material reappears in v 21b. What distinguishes it from the repetitive text of the rest of vv 19–21 is its lack of logical continuity with what precedes in v 20a. One expects a reference to the forward movement of the wheels at this point, as occurs in v 21a: mention of the vertical movement of the wheels is premature (cf. Höhne, “Thronwagenvision” 93). Seemingly a copyist’s eye jumped to וֹסֵי, Wjdy; Wfjdy; Wdfjdy, “would ascend” in v 21b, and he copied out the rest of v 21b, using a text, which, like that of the LXX, still lacked יָרְדִכְו וֹסֵי וֹסֵי “the wheels” in v 21b. Subsequently, the missing words were reinserted together with the rest of v 21, but without deletion of the now superfluous six words. The cause of the paralepsis may have been the omission of a 34-letter line, if not of two of 17 letters: for this phenomenon, cf. H. M. Orlinsky (*JBL* 61 [1942] 88–89), who refers to lines in Heb. MSS with about 11–13 or 14, 17, 23, 25, 30, and 35 letters to a line, and to my *Greek Chronicles* (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 2:133–36. For another case of a corrected and undeleted error, ***see 22:20 and Note. Höhne (“Thronwagenvision” 93) took v 20 as a gloss on v 21b that wanted to make clear that the spirit was the same as in v 12, but this seems an unnecessarily drastic explanation of the overlap. He rightly noted that 10:17 reflects not v 20 but v 21.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

et al. *et alii*, and others
by metathesis for \textit{d} j y (Cornill 187).

5.c. **LXX Syr.** imply \textit{h t a} “you” for \textit{h y h} “there has been,” which Cornill (187) preferred. However, 33:33, which seems to echo v 5b, supports MT here.

6.a. So the **LXX**, implying \textit{t j t A l a \mu h y n p m w} for the **MT** \textit{a r y t A l a \mu h y r b d m w} “and of their words do not be afraid” (see **BHS**). The **LXX** is generally preferred: Zimmerli (90) notes that it avoids the awkward duplicating of \textit{a r y t A l a} “do not be afraid” and supplies a parallel structure in v 6a and v 6b. For the translator’s change in the order of words, see Marquis (Textus 13 [1986] 78–80). Did the **MT** originate in a marginal variant that compared or anticipated the first clause in v 6b, which variant was eventually taken as a correction of \textit{t j t A l a \mu h y n p m w} “and by their faces do not be intimidated” in view of its identical order of object with prepositional prefix and suffix + negative + verb? Then it is a further case of a “cuckoo” invading the textual nest, for which see in principle my articles in **JTS** 22 (1971) 143–50; 24 (1973) 69–78.

6.b. **Heb. y k**, lit. “for,” gives the reason that they might be afraid (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:9; cf. **BDB** 473b–74a). A. Aejmelaus (**JBL** 105 [1986] 205–7), has argued that here and elsewhere a concessive interpretation is wrong; she suggests that here the clause is either causal or an object clause (“that”).

6.c. **Heb. \textit{\u t w b}** is lit. “with you, in your presence” (cf. **Note** 2.a.*). The double subj is of uncertain

\begin{itemize}
    \item **Syr.** Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
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    \item **LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
    \item **Syr.** Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
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    \item **LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
    \item **MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in **BHS**)
    \item **JTS** Journal of Theological Studies
    \item **Heb.** Hebrew
    \item **lit.** literally
    \item **cf. confer, compare**
    \item **JBL** Journal of Biblical Literature
    \item **Heb.** Hebrew
    \item **lit.** literally
    \item **cf. confer, compare**
\end{itemize}
meaning. If—and the supposition is reasonable—ר’s is identified with ר “thorn” in 28:24, then ר must have a similar sense. Hitzig (20) and Greenberg (66) have plausibly interpreted as “nettle,” comparing the stem ר “burn”; so does M. Zohary (Plants of the Bible [London: CUP, 1982] 162). Traditionally it has been taken as “brier” (KJV). LXX Syr. Tg. interpreted both nouns in terms of Aram. or late Heb. verbs ר “rebel” and ה ל “despise.” Zimmerli (90) retroverted LXX ἐπιστήθηνται ἐπὶ σέ; κυψέων “they will combine to attack you around” to an original ὑβεί “surround,” regarding ὑτ ἔσω as the object sign. But the order of words hardly suits this reconstruction. It is more likely that the verb ה ל underlies the LXX and that ἐπὶ σέ; κυψέων is a loose rendering of ὑτ ἔσω (Cooke 36; cf. NRSV).

Moreover, it is significant that the first verb in the LXX, παροιστήθησι “will provoke,” is used to render ר ל “be stubborn” in Hos 4:16: evidently ὑβεί was translated in terms of its first two consonants. As Greenberg (66) observes, the following term “scorpions” suggests that metaphorical terms are intended in the first clause.

6.d. Heb. לָא is used in the sense of ל, as often in Ezekiel (Driver, JTS 35 [1934] 54).

6.e. Hitzig (20) suggested that a type of thorn was intended. Garfinkel (VT 37 [1987] 430–37) has argued for a secondary meaning in terms of a plant from the context and from late Heb. metathesized לָא “stinging creeper” and also for the causal clause referring to the prophet’s protection, as if by barbed wire.

7.a. In place of ירי מַת גוב “rebellious house,” which appears in vv 5, 6, etc., the MT has simply ירי מ “rebellion.” “An abbreviated גוב may well have fallen out by pseudohaplography after גוב” (Allen in...
Brownlee [1986] 21). On the other hand, the longer, well attested (see BHS) reading may simply be a secondary harmonization; strict uniformity is not obligatory. Greenberg’s argument (66) that ṭ rm serves to provide a link with v 8, where it is used predicatively of the prophet, deserves consideration.

8.a. In place of ṭ b ḫ m yna Ar v a t a “what I am speaking,” the LXX presupposes ṭ b ḫ m t a “the one who is speaking,” clearly by assimilation to v 2b, where the same verb “hear” precedes. The LXX renders differently there (contra Greenberg, VTSup 29 [1978] 139–40) and so the difference seems to have been in its Vorlage.

8.b. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:10) distinguished ṭ a ṭ ḫ “give toward, hand over” here and in 3:3 from the standard ṭ ḫ “give to.”

9.a. LXX Syr. Vg do not represent ṭ nh “behold” in the MT ṭ b ḫ nh ṭ w “and behold in it,” and the repetition of ṭ nh is rare (cf. 37:2; Gen 31:51); moreover, a fem suffix ṭ b is expected after ṭ y “hand.” Was a form ṭ b misunderstood as ṭ b q ṭ b ṭ w ; cf. ṭ nh ṭ nh 31:18) and wrongly modernized as ṭ ṭ w ? It is possible that ṭ nh Worminated as a marginal comment relating to the variant in 1:25 attested by LXX and was subsequently taken with the wrong column, displacing ṭ b w on the other hand, the versions may have dropped the repetitious element.

10.a. As before, ṭ y ṭ a is used in the sense of ṭ y ṭ ṭ “upon it” or rather here “over it”: the sg ṭ b ṭ k “written” suggests that what follows is a title, which Ezekiel could read at a glance, rather than the contents (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:10–11).

10.b. LXX Tg. render ṭ ṭ yq “laments” as if sg. The unusual pl—generally ṭ ṭ yq —favors the MT.

10.c. The MT ṭ h is used as an interjection “woe!” in Mishnaic Heb., and LXX Vg so interpret. Here

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BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
VTSup Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
sg singular or under
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
it seems to be used as a noun (Driver, *Bib* 35 [1954] 146, with reference to *Tg*.). An emendation to a noun יַהְנָן “lament” (Cornill 188, following Olshausen; *et al.* ) is not necessary: *cf.* Greenberg 67.

1.a. The MT adds לְוָא אֶת מְרָב יָאָתָּא “what you find, eat,” which is not represented in the LXX* and is widely believed to be a gloss. After 2:8b–9, a single command, “eat this scroll,” is expected (cf. 3:2 ). It may be suggested that the words originated as an exegetical and comparative gloss, with a final cue word (“eat: what you find”), on דָּתִּֽים יָאָתָּא “what I present to you” in 2:8. The gloss alluded to Jer 15:16, מִלְכָּא אֶת מְרָב יָבֵֽד וַֽיָּאָת “your words were found and I ate them.” It eased the transition from “hear what I speak to you” in v 8a to “eat what I present to you” in v 8b by hinting, correctly, that Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, was to find words and eat them. The comment suffered displacement from לְוָא אֶת “and eat” in v 8 to לְוָא אֶת “eat” in 3:1 and was incorporated into the text here. If so, Greenberg’s linking of the omission in the LXX here with its omission of “what I” in 2:8a as redactional parallels (*VTSup* 29 [1978] 139) is mistaken.

2.a. The MT adds דַּאָֽז “this,” unrepresented in the LXX*. It is generally regarded as an addition assimilating to vv 1, 3: “this” is correct in the mouth of Yahweh, who holds the scroll, but not on Ezekiel’s lips (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 5:11).

3.a. The MT הָוָא אֶת “and I ate” is more naturally pointed wav אֶת “and I ate it,” as the ancient versions took it.

3.b. Is קָֽתָּא “sweet” used as a noun, “(in respect of) sweetness” (*HALAT* 618a), or is the sense “and it turned sweet” (Greenberg 68)? The order of words suggests the former. Ehrlich (*Randglossen* 5:11) suggested pointing as inf constr קָוָא תְּלכִּי “(so as to) be sweet.”

4.a. Heb. יִרְבָּֽד יִרְבָּֽדָּא “and speak with my words” appears to have this sense in the context. Zimmerli (92–93) links with the formula הָוָא יִרְבָּֽדָּא “by the word of Yahweh” used in 1 Kgs 13, but the use of the pl. here does not favor the connection.

5.a. The MT אַל “not” is possible, but it must be considered together with אִל in v 6a and אִל אִל “

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*Bib* *Biblica*
*Tg.* Targum
*et al.* *et alii,* and others
cf. *confer*, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. *confer*, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*VTSup* Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
pl. plate or plural
if not” in v 6b (see below). The context suggests that it be repointed $\text{â}$ $\text{u} (= \text{W})$ “if” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:12). For confusion between $\text{â}$ $\text{u}$ and $\text{W}$, see HALAT 487a.

5.b. Lit. “deep” and so inaccessible to the hearer, incomprehensible (cf. Block, JBL 103 [1984] 332 and n. 47): cf. Isa 33:19, which adds $\text{\textquoteleft} \text{\textquoteright}$too (deep) to hear.$\text{\textquoteright}$

5.c. Lit. “heavy.” The parallelism suggests that the impact on the hearer is in mind and that it signifies “difficult to grasp.” However, in Exod 4:10 it means “clumsy, not fluent.” The omission of the phrase in LXXB (BHS) is not relevant: it appears to be an inner-Gr. error (cf. Ziegler, LXX 98). The MT reflects the general textual tradition in adding $\text{\textquoteleft}$\text{\textquoteright}$you are sent” doing double duty (Greenberg 68). The phrase surely originated as an old marginal gloss on $\text{\textquoteleft}$\text{\textquoteright}$to the sons of Israel” in 2:3, recording a seemingly correct variant such as the Vorlage of LXX contained. It was wrongly taken with the very similar context of 3:6 in the next column and incorporated into the text.

6.a. See Note 5.a. above. $\text{Q}$ $\text{\textquoteright}$would that” presupposes $\text{â}$ $\text{u} \text{\textquoteright}$if.$\text{\textquoteright}$

6.b. For the variant that strayed into 2:3, see Note 2:3.a. Cf. $\text{\textquoteleft} \text{\textquoteright}$many nations” in 26:3; 31:6

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Lit. literally
cf. confer, compare
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
n. note
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
Gr. Greek
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
* 5.a. The MT $\text{â}$ $\text{u}$ “not” is possible, but it must be considered together with $\text{â}$ $\text{u}$ in v 6a and $\text{â} \text{Aµa}$ “if not” in v 6b (see below). The context suggests that it be repointed $\text{â}$ $\text{u} (= \text{W})$ “if” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:12). For confusion between $\text{â}$ $\text{u}$ and $\text{W}$, see HALAT 487a.
The two phrases occur as redactional variants in the parallel texts Isa 2:3 and Mic 4:2.

6.c. The omission in the Syr. of the two adjectival phrases that occurred in v 5a is typical of the version, and so is probably not relevant for the Heb. text. The repetition is often taken as accidental, but the first phrase and the final clause seem to be an expanded form of Isa 33:19, “too deep of lip to hear.”

6.d. The MT alamu evidently means “surely,” with a following conditional clause that lacks a conditional particle: “surely (if) …” (Hitzig 23; et al., including Greenberg 69; cf. GKC 149b [but 159b, h render this sense unlikely]). This is a most unnatural and confusing construction. Nor is a sense “but” likely, in accord with Aram. ala (cf. Syr. Tg.), although it is theoretically possible (cf. Gen 24:38; Ps 131:2): the antithesis does not come until v 7 (Zimmerli 93). Many read ala “if,” but the intrusion of ala is then difficult to explain; moreover, ṭi rather than muq is typically used in an unreal condition (GKC 159l). It is probable that μo originated as an explanation of ala in the sense “if” (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 23.a. In place of the MT lac ynb “sons of Israel,” the LXX has lac yb “house of Israel”: the two phrases are often confused (via an abbreviation ḫ according to Cooke 36), and the opposite textual phenomenon occurs in 3:1. Cornill (187) argued in support of the LXX that the following pl. qualifiers encouraged the change, but Wevers (51) considers that they may make the MT preferable. Zimmerli (89) has urged that the phrase attested in LXX is the customary one in Ezekiel, occurring 83 times over against 11 according to Ezekiel 2564, and so to be expected in this basic place. He also adduces the impressive argument that the expression “house of rebellion” in vv 5, etc. was based on a primary “house of Israel,” and so its presence is expected here—rather than delayed till 3:1. The dominant role of lac yb “house of Israel” throughout the divine speech (3:1, 4, 7) must also be taken into account. Accordingly, the reading of the LXX is to be judged as preferable. The MT was probably influenced by μo ynb “sons” in v 4. The variant attested in the LXX was known in the Heb. tradition: it turns up as lac ybAla “to the house of Israel” in 3:5 (see the Note there). The MT adds μo ymbAla “to nations,” which LXX lacks. It does not fit the context of Ezekiel’s mission to Israel. The Syr. attests a sg “nation,” which the NRSV has adopted, but it is plainly an attempt to match the MT to the context. The addition surely originated in a marginal reading that supplied a variant for μo ymbAla “to peoples” in 3:6 and strayed into the wrong column: see Note 3:6.b.* G. del Olmo Lete’s suggestion that the mem is enclitic (Vocación 296) is unlikely: see Note 26:12.b.* Cf. confer, compare

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Heb. Hebrew
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
et al., et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
5:12; cf. LXX Vg “and if”).

8.a. The pf is performative here and in v 9: see Note 22:13.a.*; Waltke and O’Connor, Syntax 30.5.1d and n. 17; Joüon 112f, g.

9.a. Heb. ŋym means “diamond, adamant” rather than “emery, carborundum,” as used to be thought on the basis of a misread Akk. term (see HALAT 1445b–46a). The LXX attests ðymt w“and continually” in place of ŋymw. Obviously this is a “cuckoo” type of replacement (cf. Note 2:6.a.*). Was ðymt originally an exegetical comment on 2:3b (cf. Isa 65:3)?

10.a. The tr. conceals the awkward order of clauses, which Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:12) credited to Ezekiel’s inelegant diction.

12.a. Most since Cornill (190–91) have adopted a conjectural emendation made by S. D. Luzzato and independently by Hitzig (24), ùwr b “when … arose” for MT ùwr b “blessed,” as the context seems to demand. The doxology in the MT is “certainly a somewhat peculiar utterance” (Fairbairn 41). Kraetzschmar (32) called the emendation one of the most brilliant conjectures ever made in OT study. As Greenberg (70) observes, the sequel shows that the noise was caused by the movement of components of the mobile throne, rather than being an articulate sound. There is a similar confusion of

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cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
pf perfect
n. note
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
*6.a. So the LXX, implying tj A μ h yo pm mw for the MT a r y t A μ h y r b d mw “and of their words do not be afraid” (see BHS). The LXX is generally preferred: Zimmerli (90) notes that it avoids the awkward duplicating of a r y t A “do not be afraid” and supplies a parallel structure in v 6a and v 6b. For the translator’s change in the order of words, see Marquis (Textus 13 [1986] 78–80). Did the MT originate in a marginal variant that compared or anticipated the first clause in v 6b, which variant was eventually taken as a correction of tj A μ h yo pm mw “and by their faces do not be intimidated” in view of its identical order of object with prepositional prefix and suffix + negative + verb? Then it is a further case of a “cuckoo” invading the textual nest, for which see in principle my articles in JTS 22 (1971) 143–50; 24 (1973) 69–78.
cf. confer, compare
tr. translation, translator(s), translated by, transpose(s)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
OT Old Testament
as “noise/voice” in the MT at 1:25. The pervasiveness of the corruption throughout the textual tradition indicates that it took place at an early stage: in fact it was in the old Heb. script that mem and kaph were easily confused. In chap. 10 Ṣ W “arise” is the equivalent of Ṣ Ṣ “be lifted up” in chap. 1: this text appears to be the source for the change. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:12) proposed that an accidental dittograph, Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ (MT Ṣ Ṣ), was the midpoint between the MT and the original. However, Kraetzschmar’s suggestion (32) that comparison with Isa 6:3 influenced the corruption is more likely. Doubtless the similarity of Ps 72:19 to Isa 6:3 also contributed. One of the Qumran “Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice,” which were heavily influenced by Ezekiel, may preserve an awareness of textual variation in its reading Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ (MT Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ “and (the cherubim) bless as they rise” (4Q405 20 ii 21,22:7; 11QShirSabb 3,4:9). The words are probably to be taken together (with Halperin, Faces 52, and against Newsom, Songs 306). Halperin (Faces 44) has described the error as “truly a Freudian slip of the pen,” in view of the deep influence it had on centuries of Jewish mysticism.

13.a. In v 13b Ṣ W “and noise” appears to be a slight error for Ṣ “noise” (BHK; cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:12), by mechanical assimilation to Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ twice before. The final nominal phrase repeats the one in v 12 and functions as subj Greenberg (71) takes the Ṣ as explicative. To categorize v 13 as a gloss with a final cue phrase (Herrmann 7) ignores the structural significance of the verse (see Form/Structure/Setting).

13.b. This verb Ṣ Ṣ is distinct from Ṣ “kiss.” It is cognate with Arab. nasaqqa “string (pearls), join one to another” and Eth. nesanq “arranged in order.” In the OT it is used synonymously with Ṣ Ṣ “order” (L. Kopf, VT 9 [1959] 265–67; HALAT 690b). Here it has the sense of “keeping in line each in relation to the other” (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 147).

14.a. The change of order and construction in relation to v 12a Ṣ is occasioned by the factor of repetition: cf. 2 Sam 3:22–23; 1 Kgs 20:17, 19 (Joüon 118g).


14.c. The MT Ṣ Ṣ “bitter,” which is not represented in LXX* (cf. Ziegler, LXX 100) Syr., does not
fit the context. It is clearly related somehow to qwtm “sweet(ness)” in v 3. Was it originally a marginal gloss on 2:8b (cf. 3:3aa) that expounded the metaphor and explained that what was presented to eat was by nature bitter, but surprisingly turned out to be sweet? A clever interplay with yr “rebellious” in 2:8 may also have been intended. In due course the comment was related to the wrong column by someone who understood hm (“vehemence” = LXX of mh λόγος “anger.” Within the Gr. textual tradition, metewro “through the air” seems to have nothing to do with yr: it was simply an attempt to make sense of the Gr. term in v 15 (see next Note*) by applying it first to the spirit’s transportation of the prophet.

15.a. The MT µv µyb v vrw ð ñh a µyb v v ð “who lived by the Kebar Canal and who lived there” is generally held to be conflated (e.g., Zimmerli 95; Greenberg 71). The rest of the textual tradition supports the MT, except that the Syr., along with two Heb. MSS, omits the second clause. Q ðv ð “and I sat,” substituted for ðv ð “and who,” in an attempt to make sense of the conflation, is followed by the Tg.; K and Q are both represented by the Vg “and I sat where (they were sitting),” which the KJV followed. The second clause seems to be the earlier one (Cornill 191; et al.), minus the aw “and,” which was added when the first clause entered the text. Probably ðb Ar ð “by the Kebar Canal” was meant as a gloss explaining µv “there” in the light of 1:1, and µyb v v ð originated as a cue phrase µyb v v (“they lived”) (Lang, Bib 64 [1983] 227–28). The LXX has metewro kai; perihelqon “high and I went around” for byba ð “Tel Abib.” The first noun was obviously related to the stem µvb “be high.” For the second noun byba in the Vorlage of the LXX?

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare
Gr. Greek

15.a. The MT µv µyb v vrw ð ñh a µyb v v ð “who lived by the Kebar Canal and who lived there” is generally held to be conflated (e.g., Zimmerli 95; Greenberg 71). The rest of the textual tradition supports the MT, except that the Syr., along with two Heb. MSS, omits the second clause. Q ðv ð “and I sat,” substituted for ðv ð “and who,” in an attempt to make sense of the conflation, is followed by the Tg.; K and Q are both represented by the Vg “and I sat where (they were sitting),” which the KJV followed. The second clause seems to be the earlier one (Cornill 191; et al.), minus the aw “and,” which was added when the first clause entered the text. Probably ðb Ar ð “by the Kebar Canal” was meant as a gloss explaining µv “there” in the light of 1:1, and µyb v v ð originated as a cue phrase µyb v v (“they lived”) (Lang, Bib 64 [1983] 227–28). The LXX has metewro kai; perihelqon “high and I went around” for byba ð “Tel Abib.” The first noun was obviously related to the stem µvb “be high.” For the second noun byba in the Vorlage of the LXX?

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Heb. Hebrew
MSS manuscript(s)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
sitting),” which the KJV followed. The second clause seems to be the earlier one (Cornill 191; et al.), minus the waw “and,” which was added when the first clause entered the text. Probably rbkAr h nAl a “by the Kebar Canal” was meant as a gloss explaining µV “there” in the light of 1:1, and µyβv yh originated as a cue phrase µyβv y ( = ḫ mh ) “they lived” (Lang, Bib 64 [1983] 227–28). The LXX has metewro” kai; perihlqon “high and I went around” for byb α l t “Tel Abib.” The first noun was obviously related to the stem l l t “be high.” For the second noun bs a w was apparently read: is this reading linked with Q bvaw, displacing byb α in the Vorlage of the LXX?

15.b. Heb. µymv m appears to be an elative hiph, “distressed”: cf. E. A. Speiser (JCS 6 [1952] 81–92), one of whose categories of elative hiph is forms denoting stillness, sometimes resulting from fear. Since the hiph of µmv is transitive apart from Job 21:5 and here, KB 989a took as causative, “causing to be distressed.” Ezra 9:3–4 has a polel ptcp, µmwv m, to which Cornill (192) emended.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

The literary unit runs from 1:1 to 3:15. The formula of rising up and going to a different place is one convention for marking the end of a narrative segment, as in principle R. Alter (The Art of Biblical Narrative [New York: Basic Books, 1981] 65) has observed; 3:12, 14–15 clearly reflects this convention. The unit as a whole consists of a report of a vision, which contains an account of a theophany and communication of a divine commission of a prophetic vocation. B. O. Long (JBL 95 [1976] 359–63) has characterized it as belonging to the type of vision report that is a dramatic word-vision. In this type the report depicts a heavenly scene or dramatic action, a supramundane situation that presages a future event in the mundane realm. The ominous import is conveyed by the divine word. An important use of this kind of vision report is to legitimate prophetic claims, such as Isaiah’s message of judgment in Isa 6 and Zechariah’s message of salvation in Zech 1:8–17. The divine word has the function of commissioning the prophet. Ezek 1:1–3:15 falls into this category. Long has observed that the dramatic word-visions in Ezekiel tend to lay heavy stress upon the divine word and

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Tg. Targum
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
KJV King James Version (1611) = AV
et al. et alii, and others
Bib Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
JCS Journal of Cuneiform Studies
ptcp participle
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
treat vision as mere preparation for word. Moreover, there is often a twofold pattern of the appearance of Yahweh’s glory and divine address (40:1–4; 43:1–12; 44:4–31; cf. 8:1–6). He has plausibly suggested that a priestly convention for schematizing divine vision and instruction underlies this bipartite type of account (cf. Num 20:6–8; cf. M. Weinfeld, THAT 4:35–36). It might be added that Yahweh’s appearing in glory is often associated with judgment in P (Exod 16:10; Num 14:10; 16:19–21; 17:7–10[16:42–45]). The same pattern of vision and instruction appears in the visionary call narrative here, the report of a theophany and, in a separate phase, a commissioning message (cf. Dan 8:15–18).

Prophetic call narratives by Ezekiel’s time represented an established tradition, behind which lay older accounts of the call of national leaders such as Moses in Exod 3–4 and Gideon in Judg 6. Zimmerli (97–100) has distinguished between two types of prophetic call account, one of which majors in a throne vision, seen in Isa 6, and the other in the divine word, such as Jer 1:4–10. He has found a combination of both, in chaps. 1 and 2–3, respectively. However, Long (ZAW 84 [1972] 494–500) has disputed Zimmerli’s bifurcation. He envisions a single type, discovering a common source for the features of divine vision and word in older, ancient Near Eastern and Israelite theophany vision or dream reports, in which theophany was a legitimating device (e.g., 1 Kgs 3:5–15). He prefers to regard this tradition as exhibiting not a form but a schema that was used in texts of various genres. There does appear to be a recurring set of traditional elements that make up the call reports. These have been variously identified, often with more difference in nomenclature than in substance (cf. the table in G. del Olmo Lete, Vocación 372–73). For example, N. Habel (ZAW 77 [1965] 313) found in Ezekiel’s case six elements: divine confrontation (1:1–28), introductory word (1:29–2:2), commission (2:3–5), implied objection (2:6, 8), reassurance (2:6–7), and sign (2:8–3:11). The presence of an objection, however, is doubtful.

Identification of generic elements is not necessarily the same as exposing the literary structure within which they are used as building blocks. The theophany account, with its emphasis on seeing, is exceedingly elaborate: it extends from 1:1 to 1:28ba. G. del Olmo Lete (Vocación 299–300, 307–8) has observed that the long form ֶהִנְּךָ-ray “and I saw” in vv 1 and 28ba—as distinct from the shorter equivalent ֶהִנְּךָ-ray Win vv 4, 15, and 27—provides a frame for the theophany account. V 1 has an introductory role; consideration of vv 2–3a may be deferred to a later point. Thereafter it is possible to divide up the narrative on the basis of subject matter, but commentators have shown no consistency in using this method. Rhetorical criticism is a safer, more objective guide in delineating the limits of the parts that make up this literary whole. H. V. D. Parunak has observed that a chiastic framework is provided in vv 4 and 26–28 (“Structural Studies” 123–24; JBL 99 [1980] 63):

A. Storm phenomena

הָרַע , הָרַע אֲרֻם ְבּוֹרָשּׁלַם

“storm wind, cloud”

C’. ֶלַּל וֹיֶהָה

“like gleaming amber,” v 27a
B. bybs w h gnw
   “and radiance surrounded it”
B’. bybs w h gnw
   “and radiance surrounded him,” v 27b
A’. storm phenomena
   μ v gh, σ
   “cloud, rain,” v 28a
C. lmvjh ÷y[k µvgh
   “like gleaming amber”
   ÷n[...

Within this outer framework, he suggested that the body of the text consisted of three sections, vv 5–14, 15–21, and 22–25, each of which contains the same key word as occurs in the framework units, ÷y[k “like the gleam of” (vv 7, 16, 22).

It is possible to refine this structural analysis. First, the description of the vision proper begins with v 3b (see the Comment) and ends at v 28a, after which v 28b harks back to v 1 and rounds off the narrative, as noted above. V 28b aligns with chap. 2. Second, and more important, Smend (10), followed by Bertholet ([1897] 6) and Kraetzschmar (7), on grounds of subject matter isolated vv 13–14 as a section in its own right. Four stylistic factors support this refinement and even suggest that the section closely aligns with vv 3b–4 and 26–28a. (1) v ã “fire” occurs in vv 4, 13 (three times), and 27, independently of the chiastic structure of vv 4 and 26–28a. (2) The weather phenomena of vv 4 and 28a are matched by q zb “lightning flash” in v 14. (3) There is a partial echo of the B/B’ element of vv 4 and 27b in ã h gnw “and the fire had radiance” in v 13 (cf. the resumptive bybs h gnw “the surrounding radiance” in v 28a). (4) h h mk “like the appearance of” occurs only in vv 13–14 (two times), apart from its fourfold occurrence in vv 26–28a. It is true that Parunak’s sectional key word ÷y[k “like the gleam of” does not occur in vv 13–14, but neither does h h mk “like the appearance of” occur in v 4. There seems to be a certain selectivity, rather than uniform repetition of every feature.

When content is aligned with this stylistic evidence, there emerges an impression of an alternating sequence that finally coalesces. A storm theophany in v 4 gives way to a throne theophany in vv 5–12; it reappears in vv 13–14 and then yields to development of the throne theophany in vv 15–21 and 22–24a, 25b before the storm and throne theophanies are finally combined in the climactic vv 26–28a:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>storm</th>
<th>13–14</th>
<th>26–28a</th>
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<tr>
<td>throne</td>
<td>3b–4</td>
<td>15–21</td>
<td>22–25</td>
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With respect to the throne theophany sections of vv 5–12, 15–21, and 22–25, Hals (14) observed a consistent feature, a concluding motif of mobility. This insight enables the reader to see that each of these sections falls into at least two parts, the latter of which is concerned with mobility. In vv 5–12 the description of the living creatures, whose role is later shown to be supporters of the throne, culminates at v 12 in their movement under the control of the jwr “spirit.” The preceding vv 5–11 consist of two roughly parallel parts. Vv 5–7 mention their human form (v 5a), their four faces (v 6a) and four wings (v 6b), and also their legs (v 7a), while vv 8–11 (actually vv 8a, 10–11: see the Notes) develop these aspects by referring to human arms and hands (v 8a) and by describing the faces (v 10) and wings (v 11). Vv 15–21, which describe the wheels of the throne, fall into two parts, vv 15–18 and 19–21: Årab l[m “from the ground” in vv 19 and 21 function as an inclusion, echoing the initial Årab “on the ground” in v 15. Vv 19–21 develop v 12, explaining the movement of the wheels in relation to the creatures.
under the joint control of the firmament-platform” above the living creatures in v 22. Thereafter the motif of mobility comes to the fore again. To this end v 23 has a transitional function; vv 24a and 25b describe the noise of the creatures’ moving wings.

The second part of the visionary call narrative consists of 1:28bb–3:11. It majors in Yahweh’s verbal revelation to Ezekiel: just as the verb see” echoes through the first part, so the formula that introduces divine speech, “and he said to me,” reverberates through this one (2:1, 3; 3:1, 3, 4, 10). It is reinforced by the related verb speak” in the early stages of the account (1:28bb; 2:1, 2). There has been a tendency to define the structure of this second part in terms of the occurrence of the vocative “human one,” which mostly follows the introductory formula “and he said to me” and also stands after “and you” within divine speech (2:6, 8). Thus Lamparter (38), Zimmerli (106–7), and Greenberg (72–73) envision six sections that also express form-critical features: an introduction in 1:28bb (or 2:1)–2:2, commission in vv 3–5, reassurance in vv 6–7, ordination in v 8–3:3, recapitulation of the commission in 3:4–9, and a summary in vv 10–11. The cases of “human one” in 3:1, 3 are taken as introducing stages within a larger section. We noted previously Habel’s analysis of the passage (ZAW 77 [1965] 313) solely in terms of form, concluding with a section 2:8–3:11. The heterogeneity of the material in this section makes it unlikely.

Scholars commonly postulate a section 2:8–3:3, which contains three instances of “human one.” The abundance of the address casts doubt on the usefulness of the term as a criterion for structural division. Moreover, the identification of form-critical elements is not necessarily a guide to the literary structuring of a particular unit. Does this long text contain rhetorical clues to its structure? The series of imperatives addressed to Ezekiel, “stand” in 2:1, “hear” in 2:8, and “come, go” in 3:4, seems to initiate major stages of development. This criterion by itself suffers from the same defect as the vocative address, since imperatives also occur in 3:1, 3, 10, and 11, and prohibitions feature in 2:6. But an analysis in terms of three sections consisting of 1:28bb–2:7, 2:8–3:3, and 3:4–11 is supported by evidence of inclusion observed by del Olmo Lete (Vocación 316–17). In 2:8 and 3:3, “what/which I am presenting to you” forms a framework. Likewise, in 3:4 and 11a the divine assignment to Ezekiel is stated twice, in similar terms.

The stylistic structure of 1:28bb–2:7 is more difficult to discern. Del Olmo Lete has found an inclusion in the repetition of 2:4b–5a in v 7. Certainly 1:28bb–2:2a functions as an introduction, whose beginning, “and I heard the voice of someone speaking,” is repeated at the start of the main part, in 2:2b. The doubled motif of sending in vv 3a and 4a is matched by the twin reassurance not to fear in v 6. The content of vv 4b–5a is repeated in v 7. It seems then that after the introduction there are two coordinated subsections, vv 2b–5 and 6–7, each of which falls into two parts.

In terms of content, the three sections are concerned with the elements of commission, ordination, and confirmation, as del Olmo Lete (Vocación 316–17) has observed. The first section includes the element of reassurance in 2:6–7. Del Olmo Lete has noted that the final item in call narratives often consists of resumption of one or more earlier elements, and that confirmation closes the extended call narrative in Jer 1, at vv 17–19.

The unit is concluded by the narrative of 3:12–15, with a change of scene whereby Ezekiel is translated from the site of the vision to the exilic settlement. Parunak has seen a complete chiasm covering 1:1–3:15, in the course of which 3:12 corresponds to 2:1–2, 3:13 to 1:4–28, and 3:14–15 to
1:1–3 ("Structural Studies" 122–37; JBL 99 [1980] 62–66; cf. Fuhs 19). His comparison of 3:12 and 2:1–2 includes repetition of divinely related speech, but this parallel precariously depends on the Masoretic doxology in 3:12. Del Olmo Lete (Vocación 317) has more reasonably found a further case of inclusion. 3:12–14a aligns with 1:4–28, deliberately echoing the earlier description of theophany, while 3:14b–15 resumes 1:1–3 (more strictly 1:1, 3b) in its references to the exiles (יהויה “the exiles” and ועבות “among them” in v 15) and the pressure of Yahweh’s hand (v 14b). One may also partially reinstate Parunak’s scheme and see in the spirit’s translation of the prophet in vv 12a and 14a a counterpart to the spirit’s enabling in 2:2. Then 1:4–2:2 is the initial span of material that is paralleled in 3:12–14a.

While 1:1–3:15 gives the impression of being a literary unit in the light of its form-critical and stylistic coherence, we must ask whether and to what extent redactional activity underlies it. In this regard, one must consider that the account appears to envision only Ezekiel’s ministry of judgment and never to transcend it with any hope of a brighter future (cf. Hals 10). However, the intrusive 1:2–3a can hardly be excluded from the category of redaction (see below). As for the vision account, while it is impressionistic, it shows clear evidence of reflection. Accordingly, doubt is cast on Block’s explanation of the traditional state of the text as the result of an emotional blurring out of the prophet’s immediate observations (CBQ 50 [1988] 427–39). As Greenberg (52) has observed, the depiction of the various motions and situations of the apparition … seems to be based on a combination of observations more complex and varied than the mere approach of the apparition involved in this vision.

Yet this reflective character could well have been inherent in the written account from the beginning. Zimmerli, after reviewing and criticizing earlier redaction-critical efforts (95–97), went on to set out his own presentation (100–106). Most significantly, he saw an indication of redaction in the variation in gender of suffixes relating to the living creatures and associated grammatical phenomena, whereby masculine forms appear alongside expected feminine ones. It permitted him to isolate a minimal amount of original material, which uses feminine suffixes. However, Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 215 n. 203) has observed that Zimmerli retained v 12 (apart from v 12a) despite its masculine references.

A related issue is the use of feminine suffixes for the (masculine) wheels in vv 16–18. Höhne (“Thronwagenvision” 80–84), following Eichrodt (55–56), attributed both sets of aberrant suffixes to copyists who altered to masculine suffixes in the case of the creatures under the influence of the (male) cherubim in chap. 10 and erroneously altered to feminine suffixes in the case of the wheels in mechanical assimilation to the feminine suffixes in 1:5–12. The relatively random inconsistency of these grammatical deviations is probably to be laid at the door of text criticism, rather than redaction criticism, although they may be retained as a textual curiosity that has no bearing on exegesis.

Zimmerli (104–5, 127), developing the observations of Sprank (Studien 52–54), also regarded the whole section concerning the wheels, vv 15–21, as secondary, though already presupposed by chap. 10. His main argument depends on his redactional view of the material with wrong suffixes in vv 5–12. He also found marked deviation in content from the rest of the vision: a breaking of the ascending order of description by reverting to a low element, a switch from an airborne perspective to the ground, and a concern with technical detail. Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 181 n. 125) prefers to think rather of a concern for
minute details, but otherwise he tends to support Zimmerli. He argues that the wheeled divine chariot in vv 15–21 represents a totally different concept from that of the throne-bearing creatures that dominates the rest of the vision (Jahwe-Visionen 180–88). If the structural analysis offered above is correct, one could also adduce a structural argument: that if vv 15–21 were omitted, the resultant pattern would be simply A/B/A/B/AB. Moreover, Houk (ZAW 93 [1981] 76–85) has applied to the unit two statistical methods of determining authorship and deduced that vv 15–21 are secondary. In fact, he cuts out considerably more than Zimmerli’s reconstructed text and envisions a brief primary unit of vv 4–5a, 22, 26–28.

These arguments are much more impressive in terms of their cumulative impact than when considered one by one. In my limited experience, statistical analysis has sometimes supported and sometimes been at tantalizing variance with other perspectives. Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 143) significantly also regarded the whole of vv 13–14 as secondary. He worked with a unitary conception of Ezek 1 as closely linked with ancient Near Eastern iconography. But what if the vision narrative deliberately employs two basically different cultural conceptions, as the structure suggests, and vv 15–21 represent the influence of the storm theophany of vv 13–14? Indeed, Mettinger (Dethronement 105) has urged the originality of vv 15–21 because of the link between cloud and chariot in literary descriptions of the storm theophany in the OT. He cited Pss 104:3; 77:19 (18; § § “wheeled vehicle”); Zech 6:1–8; 2 Kgs 2:11. Although vv 15–21 embody reflection, like other parts of the vision, their redactional nature is not assured.

Zimmerli (126) linked v 7 with the addition of vv 15–21 as implying a single metal post as part of a metal chariot, instead of a foot or feet. However, Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 178 n. 115, 215) has observed on iconographical grounds that a reference to two literal feet is quite possible and indeed more likely. Overall, while one must leave open the possibility of redaction in this complex vision account, it does possess a degree of coherence that is compatible with a writing down (or dictating) of afterthoughts regarding an overwhelming experience.

As for the rest of the call narrative, 1:28b–3:15, it is significant that Zimmerli (106–7) has judged it to be of a primary nature. He has defended the text, repetitious as it often is, against earlier charges of redaction. He has found only 3:13 secondary, largely because of its masculine suffix relating to the living creatures. However, as we saw earlier, the verse has a valuable structural role to play in the overall narrative. To attribute this particular stylistic phenomenon to redactional activity is to create a jigsaw with one missing piece.

The call narrative as a whole clearly functions as a literary introduction to the judgment oracles of Ezekiel. The parallel of Isa 6, which evidently served as a preface to a written collection of Isaiah’s oracles delivered during the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis (7:1–8:18 or 9:6[7]; cf. R. E. Clements, Isaiah 1–39 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980] 70–71), suggests that it was combined with a shorter or longer collection of Ezekiel’s oracles of judgment, possibly culminating in chap. 7. The call narrative provided supernatural warrant for them (cf. Long, “Prophetic Authority” 12–13, although his attributions of both the Isaiah and the Ezekiel complexes to later tradents is less likely).

The redactional note(s) in 1:2–3a seem(s) to consciously integrate this material into a subsequent larger whole. The style of opening an oracle or collection of oracles with a combination of a

n. note
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
OT Old Testament
n. note
cf. confer, compare
n. note
cf. confer, compare

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message-reception formula and general information about the prophet accords with Hag 1:1; Zech 1:1. However, it would be rash to conclude with Zimmerli (110) that the redactional addition was made in the early postexilic period. It is noteworthy that there is a difference in the style of dating by years in Ezekiel on the one hand and in Haggai and Zechariah on the other. The style of Ezek 1:1, 2 accords with that of the rest of the book in supplying (1) first a cardinal number and then the year in cases of numerals from eleven upwards, and (2) first the year and then an ordinal number in cases of numerals from one to ten, while the examples in Haggai and Zechariah follow an evidently postexilic style of placing the year before a cardinal number (cf. C. Hardmeier, Prophetie im Streit vor dem Untergang Judas, BZAW 187 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990] 102–4 and n. 36). Moreover, the similarity of Ezek 1:2 to Hag 1:1; Zech 1:1 seems to be fortuitous. In this case, the opening of the unit had evidently been established already and was regarded as sacrosanct. The only way to amplify the text was to clarify the date, by means of an addition that referred to the ground-breaking nature of the eventual oracle with the infinitive absolute (see the Notes), and to give some basic personal and topographical details about Ezekiel. The secondary impression of the text upon the reader, including its switch to the third person, suggests that Ezekiel himself was not responsible for vv 2–3a and that the writer belonged to the second generation of exiles for whom such details about the prophet were considered necessary, perhaps under the influence of a literary tradition of superscriptions in which parentage, occupation, and setting were already important (cf. Tucker, “Prophetic Superscriptions” 61, 69).

Here is an outline of the literary unit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1:1–28ba</th>
<th>Ezekiel’s vision of God</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:2–3a</td>
<td>Chronological clarification and general introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:3b–4</td>
<td>A theophany of storm, fire, and radiant aura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5–12</td>
<td>The winged beings who fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:13–14</td>
<td>The fire and aura of the storm theophany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15–21</td>
<td>The wheels that could move on the ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:22–25</td>
<td>The firmament-platform and the noise made by the flying wings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:26–28a</td>
<td>The throne and the enthroned deity; the fire and the aura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:28ba</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:28bb–3:11</td>
<td>Ezekiel’s message from God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:28bb–2:7</td>
<td>Commissioning to be a prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:8–3:3</td>
<td>Ordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:4–11</td>
<td>Confirmation</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:12–15</td>
<td>Ezekiel’s translation</td>
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**Comment**

The prophetic call narrative of 1:1–3:15 is a carefully constructed composition that falls into two parts, an account of Ezekiel’s visual encounter with Yahweh (1:1–28ba) and a description of his auditory receipt of a prophetic commission (1:28bb–3:11).

cf. confer, compare
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
n. note
cf. confer, compare
The visual encounter is to be described in vv 3b–28a. Here it is supplied with a brief introduction in which the announcement of the vision in v 4 (םג וֹאָרָא “and I saw”) is expanded into a longer preliminary statement. It fittingly includes the term מֹאָרָא “and I saw,” which will be resumed in the even briefer closing description of Ezekiel’s reaction to the vision in v 28ב. There is a reference to the time of the vision and, in general terms, Ezekiel’s circumstances when he experienced it.

The reference to “the thirtieth year” is problematic. H. H. Rowley’s honest admission “I know of no wholly satisfactory solution” (BJRL 36 [1953] 182), which echoes that of Keil (19), originally written in 1868, still holds true. The dating does not conform to the use of Jehoiachin’s deportation in 597 B.C. as an initial point, which is found in the rest of the book, including v 2. This fact seems to suggest that it antedates that chronological reference system, which begins in 8:1 and runs at intervals throughout the rest of the book (20:1; 24:1, etc.; cf. the more explicit 33:21; 40:1). Its uniqueness is consistent with the supposition that 1:1–3:15 originally prefaced an independent, short collection of oracles of judgment that appears in chaps. 4–7. York (VT 27 [1977] 83–91) has given an overview and critique of the various solutions that have been offered. So has Kutsch, more briefly, in Daten 45–46, while Low (“Interpretive Problems” 78–124) has devoted a chapter to it. Only the more significant proposals need be reviewed here. It is possible to relate “the thirtieth year” to Jehoiachin’s deportation by text-critical means. Thus W. F. Albright (JBL 51 [1932] 96–97) developed a suggestion made earlier by A. Merx, that it refers to the publication of the book in 568 B.C. In order to reach this explanation, he had to make the assumptions that v 3a originally followed v 1a and that in v 2 הָנָו הָא יָן “that is, the year” was a corruption of הָנָו הָא “in the year.” By these means he was able to reconstruct an initial “In the thirtieth year … Ezekiel … received a communication from Yahweh …” After this editorial introduction, the first-person vision account opens with “In the fifth year … , while I was living among the exiles …” This reconstruction restores coherence to the text but strangely equates publication of a book with receipt of an oracle (York, VT 27 [1977] 89). Moreover, it fails to satisfy the reader with what is a paramount necessity in text-critical work, a convincing explanation as to how so clear a text fell into such disorder. If such a text were extant, it would be branded as a secondary attempt to smooth away difficulties. Kutsch (Daten 49–54) also has conjectured that the two dates relate to Jehoiachin’s exile: they represent originally independent superscriptions, vv 1, 3b and vv 2–3a. The first introduced the theophany narrative in v 4–28a and belonged to the end of Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry, while the second prefaced the call narrative of 1:28b–3:11 that reports the inauguration of his ministry. However, this separation puts asunder what in form-critical terms belongs together.

If one equates the thirtieth year with the royal date in v 2, as the present text obviously intends us to do, it refers to 593 B.C. Working back, one arrives at the year 623. Jewish tradition, represented by the Targum and Jerome, accordingly interpreted in terms of Josiah’s reform and the finding of the book of the Torah in the temple in 621 (so Herrmann 10). Nobile (Anton 59 [1984] 396–99) has traced links between 2 Kgs 22–23 and the book of Ezekiel. But why this fact should have been so crucial for dating Ezekiel’s vision or call remains unexplained. So does the supposition that it could have been regarded as self-evident, with no need of explicit clarification.

Another hypothesis links the thirtieth year with the apparent reference to jubilee year chronology in 40:1. The deportation under Jehoiachin is identified as the halfway point in a fifty-year cycle, five years

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BJRL Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester

cf. confer, compare

VT Vetus Testamentum

JBL Journal of Biblical Literature

VT Vetus Testamentum
after which Ezekiel received his call (25 + 5 = 30; Nobile, Anton 59 [1984] 399–402).

The most plausible solution, one that requires the fewest assumptions or the least reading into the text, is to relate the tantalizing chronological reference to Ezekiel’s age at the time of this experience, an explanation that goes back to Origen. Strictly one requires a fuller text, either the prefixing of בֵּן “son of,” the standard idiom for age, which Kraetzschmar (4) proposed to insert, or the addition of יָמִי “of my life,” in line with Gen 7:11, as K. Budde (ExpTim 12 [1900] 39–40) urged. In JBL 50 (1931) 29–30 he tentatively suggested emending יָמָיו “year” to יָמִי “of my years” (cf. BHK). However, S. G. Taylor (TynBut 17 [1966] 119–20) has drawn attention to the briefer text of Gen 8:13, which in dependence on the more explicit Gen 7:6, 11, merely refers to the year, month, and day, with obvious reference to Noah’s age. Here there are no preceding standard references, and it must remain a moot point whether in their absence one may find an unambiguous allusion to the prophet’s age. Yet if one works with the assumption that the text has been correctly transmitted and that it is meaningful as it stands, it can least unreasonably be understood as a poor way of expressing age. Our knowledge of the Jerusalem priesthood does not permit us to judge whether the age of thirty was professionally significant (cf. the age of ordination in Num 4; 1 Chr 23:3).

The general location of the vision is indicated by the reference to Ezekiel’s belonging to the group of deportees residing near the Kebar Canal. Other texts, 3:23 and 43:3, along with the editorial 1:3a, clarify that the vision occurred at the bank of the canal, which was some distance away from the actual settlement according to 3:15. In the light of Ps 137:1–2; Acts 16:13, it is possible that the place was used for worship, the cleansing presence of water serving to mitigate the uncleanness of a foreign land (cf. Amos 7:17). At any rate the parallel of Daniel’s angelophany at the bank of the Tigris (Dan 10:4) suggests that such a location was judged worthy of a visual revelation.

The Kebar Canal is mentioned in two fifth-century B.C. texts relating to the banking firm of Murashu, one of which indicates that it ran in the vicinity of the city of Nippur. Accordingly it can no longer be identified with the major artery ᵀᵉʳᵉⁿ⁻ᴺⁱˡ, which flowed through Nippur (so, e.g., Cooke 4–5; Zimmerli 112). It was part of a complex network of canals that came into being in the Mesopotamian heartland to provide artificial irrigation from the Euphrates and, to a lesser extent, the Tigris for the grain crops and date orchards, and also, in the case of larger watercourses, transportation of these and other goods. In the fifth century the large estate of a royal prince, Prince Manusunu was situated in the area between Nippur and the Kebar Canal (cf. Vogt, Bib 39 [1958] 211–16 = Untersuchungen 26–31; R. Zadok, Israel Oriental Studies 8 [1978] 266–332; R. M. Adams, Heartlands 176–78, 186–88). Various groups of national exiles were eventually settled in the Nippur area, in a neo-Babylonian program to rehabilitate the region after its depopulation from the wars with Assyria in the seventh century (cf. Zadok, Israel Oriental Studies 8 [1978] 326; Ephal, Or 47 [1978] 80–82).

ExpTim The Expository Times
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
cf. confer, compare
TynBut Tyndale Bulletin
cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare
Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
The opening of the heavens is an expression that occurs here first and has influenced a number of later visionary and apocalyptic texts, in the sense of glimpsing of a heavenly scene or witnessing the descent of a heavenly being (e.g., 3 Macc 6:18; 2 Bar 22:1; T. Lev. 5:1; Matt 3:16; Acts 7:56; Rev 19:11). It here refers to the preliminaries of a theophany. It is tantamount to the tearing (קָרַף) of the heavens in Isa 63:19(64:1) and to the spreading open (הַחֲנָן, חָנָן) of the heavens like the curtains of a tent in 2 Sam 22:10 = Ps 18:10(9); Ps 144:5 for the same purpose (cf. F. M. Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic [Cambridge, MA: Howard University, 1973] 159 n. 59). It thus prepares fittingly for the theophany Ezekiel is about to experience. However, the choice of verb seems to add a particular nuance. In the OT the “windows” or floodgates of heaven were opened to permit the sending down of either blessing (2 Kgs 7:2; Mal 3:10) or judgment (Gen 7:11; Isa 24:18) (see F. Lentzen-Deis, Bib 50 [1969] 303). The subsequent content of the vision will make clear that here a revelation of judgment is in view.

The Heb. מִי לָהָיו מַעֲרָמִים might here be interpreted “vision(s) of God,” that is, a vision in which God was seen. However, it is a fixed phrase in Ezekiel, occurring also in 8:3; 40:2, in contexts where divinely given visions are in view. This latter meaning is to be adopted here for the sake of consistency. It was a vision “no mortal eye could see without divine help” (Greenberg 41).

2–3a This material has an intrusive ring, as its third-person reference to Ezekiel indicates. One might regard v 2 as a text-critical gloss, as Herrmann (1) and Lang (Bib 64 [1983] 225), among others, have done. Its initial cue phrase certainly conforms to a pattern of glosses that appears in the book (cf., e.g., 23:4b). However, the random element that marks such glosses is conspicuously lacking. The content aligns with the system of dating that occurs throughout the book from 8:1 onwards. Thus v 2 is redactional in nature. The use of אָּלֶה “that is” is the same as in 2 Kgs 25:8: the redactional intent is to provide a consistent synchronism for the dating of v 1, and there is no reason to doubt the chronological equation. According to Parker and Dubberstein’s calendrical reconstruction of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (Babylonian Chronology 28), it represents 31 July 593. The dating by the deportation of “the king” appears to reflect the political reality that Jehoiachin was still the legitimate monarch and that Zedekiah ruled in Judah only as regent (cf. Zimmerli 114–15). Understandably, it also expresses a conviction among the exiles that the future lay with them rather than with those in the homeland, a conviction that Ezekiel shared and endorsed in his prophetic ministry.

V 3a seems to continue the redactional amplification. It provides a superscription, not for the book, since only one oracle (וּבְדִּי “word”) is in view, but strictly for the unit 1:1–3:15. It reveals an awareness that the ensuing vision is a preparatory part of a larger whole in which the divine word is the significant element. To this end it takes over the message-reception formula that characteristically introduces oracles in the book (see 3:16b and Comment). However, it seems also to reflect a placing of this material at the head of a series of oracles (see Form/Structure/Setting).
The name **yeḥezqēl**, which recurs in 24:24 and is shared by another priest in 1 Chr 24:16, means “May God strengthen.” It expresses the prayerful wish of his parents that God would care for the newborn child by endowing him with strength, so that he could face life’s vicissitudes with confidence (see J. D. Fowler, *The Theophoric Divine Names in Hebrew*, *JSOTSup* 49 [Sheffield: *JSOT*, 1988] 98, 100). A yahwistic form of the name, **yeḥezqiyyahu** (Hezekiah) “May Yahweh strengthen,” was the name of an earlier Judean king, among others (see *BDB* 306a). In 3:8–9 there is probably a play on Ezekiel’s name: he would be given grace to live up to it, as an unpopular prophet.

The location of the prophet when he receives the vision is beside the Kebar Canal, which is further defined as in southern Babylonia (“Chaldea”). The definition of place marks both a narrowing and a widening clarification of the information given in v 1. There the reference to the canal identified it with the settlement to which Ezekiel belonged; here it is the setting of the encounter with Yahweh (see *Comment* on v 1). The designation “Chaldea, land of the Chaldeans” is more specific than “Babylon(ia),” which from the perspective of far-off Judah is generally the location of the deportees (2 Kgs 24:16; Ezra 1:11, etc.; Jer 24:1; 28:4; 29:1, 4), although the present description occurs in Jer 24:5.

3b–4 The experience of Yahweh’s “hand” is regularly associated with the personal receipt of a vision in the book of Ezekiel (3:22; 8:1; 37:1; 40:1); in 33:22 it triggers an extraordinary divine action. It has antecedents in earlier descriptions of prophetic experiences. The closest to the examples in Ezekiel is in 2 Kgs 3:15, where Yahweh’s hand causes a trance in which an oracle is communicated. The case in 33:22 is comparable with that in 1 Kgs 8:46, where it relates to a physical empowering to run with exceptional speed. In Isa 8:11 it refers to the divine constraint associated with delivery of an oracle (cf. in principle Jer 20:7, 9). In Jer 15:17 it is used more generally in association with the vehement, anti-social consequences of being a prophet; similarly in Ezek 3:14 it is associated with prophetic passion. Roberts (*VT* 21 [1971] 244–51) has related the expression to the usage in ancient Near Eastern and Israelite literature concerning a negative manifestation of supernatural power, especially in sickness or plague (cf., e.g., Exod 9:15). He has traced the prophetic development to a similarity between physical or psycho-physical symptoms and the prophetic phenomena. However, Wilson (*JBL* 98 [1979] 325) has observed that the expression belongs to the same set of prophetic terminology as the message-reception formula. So it refers not to external behavior, such as ecstasy or trance, but to divine possession as the means of divine-human communication. Yet it may be noted that divine possession here results in specific manifestation of a vision, which may or may not be regarded as an ecstatic experience, according to one’s definition of the word (cf. Wilson, *JBL* 98 [1979] 324 and n. 10). In this case the physical pressure of the divine hand is the harbinger of an experience of a supernatural vision. Chronologically it does not follow the seeing of v 1 but introduces the flashback describing the vision in detail and prepares for the seeing of v 4 (cf. 8:1b–2; cf. Mosis 253 n. 17).

*JSOTSup* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament [JOST] Supplement Series
*JSOT* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Biblical Studies
cf. confer, compare
*VT* *Vetus Testamentum*
cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
*JBL* *Journal of Biblical Literature*
cf. confer, compare
*n. note*
The visionary convention of first announcing the vision with a verb of seeing and then using the transitional "and behold" before presenting the vision segment is followed here (Long, *JBL* 95 [1976] 357). D. J. McCarthy (*Bib* 61 [1980] 332) has described this transitional element in terms of excited perception that conveys a strong emotional tone.

The phenomenon observed by Ezekiel is described in general terms in v 4 as something seen in the distance. Then in the succeeding account, specific details reflect its approach. Storm, cloud, and fire are in the OT regular elements of a storm theophany, a literary tradition that was basically derived from mythological descriptions of the storm or war god in ancient Near Eastern religious contexts and already had a long history of literary usage in Israel. It is from this latter source that Ezekiel evidently took it. The storm god was at home in upper Mesopotamia and east of the Tigris, where rain-based agriculture was practiced, but not on the lower courses of the Tigris and Euphrates, where irrigation agriculture prevailed (Oppenheim, “Assyrian-Babylonian Religion” 67). The storm theophany was employed in Israel to describe the help given by Yahweh to his servant or people against enemies. The full form consists of two elements, a description of Yahweh’s coming and then a description of the reaction of the earth to his appearing (cf. Nah 1:3b–6), but often only one element is used, as here. Parallels to the present description are:

1. His way is in whirlwind and storm,
   and a cloud is the dust of his feet. (*Nah* 1:3b)

2. Out of the radiance before him
   there passed through his clouds
   hailstones and coals of fire. (*Ps* 18:13[12]; cf. *2 Sam* 22:13)

The storm wind features similarly in *2 Sam* 22:11 (= *Ps* 18:11[10]); *Zech* 9:14; *Job* 38:1; 40:6; *Ps* 77:19(18). So do clouds in *Isa* 19:1; *Pss* 77:18(17); 97:2. The radiance of fire or lightning is also an element of the storm theophany in *Hab* 3:4, 11 (cf. *Isa* 4:5).

The theological program of the prophets included a strong tendency to engage in ideological reversal, whereby comforting traditions were re-used in a challenging way. One instance of this prophetic reversal was to portray the coming of Yahweh in a storm theophany to Israel as his victim. Thus Micah used the storm-theophany tradition to express divine judgment on the capital of the Northern Kingdom (*Mic* 1:3–6). Earlier, punishment had been the lot of Israel’s enemies, and this old perspective is preserved in *Nah* 1:3b–8; *Hab* 3:3–15. It also appears in *Ps* 97:3–5, where Yahweh’s “judgments,” to Israel’s relief (v 8), are carried out by means of his appearing in the trappings of a thunderstorm:

3. Fire goes before him
   and lights up his foes around.
   His lightning flashes light up the world. (vv 3–4a)
One may contrast Ps 50:3–4, which shares the prophetic nuancing:

Our God comes, unable to keep silent.
A fire in front of him consumes,
and around him a storm rages.
He calls to the heavens above
and to the earth, in order to try his people.

Ezekiel too, in the light of the context, appears to be drawing on this use of the storm theophany to convey a threat that Yahweh poses to his covenant people.

The “north” is an unexpected item in the description: after the opening of the skies in v 1, one expects the apparition to come straight down. In 2 Sam 22:10 (= Ps 18:10[11]), Yahweh “spread open the skies and came down.” However, a meaning “cloudy sky,” derived from הַזָּהָב “hide” (E. Vogt, Bib 34 [1953] 426; J. de Savignac, VT 3 [1953] 95–96; cf. N. Habel, Job [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985] 371), does not commend itself, if some suitable significance in terms of the standard sense “north” can be perceived. C. Grave (UF 12 [1980] 226–27) has argued for an early meaning “clear sky” for Ugar. סֶפֶן, which was then associated with the north wind that clears the sky. If so, such a meaning would be possible here, although again one would prefer a more established meaning. An oft-suggested reference to Mount Casius, earlier Zaphon (= north), as the mountain home of the gods (so, e.g., Jeremias, Theophanie 116–17; cf. Ps 48:3[2]) seems hardly to fit the celestial demand of the context. Nor does the proposal that Yahweh is traveling from Jerusalem to Babylonia along the Fertile Crescent (e.g., Bertholet [1936] 5; Fohrer 12), for the same reason. Intriguingly, in Job 26:7 סֶפֶן “north” seems to be used where one might expect a reference to the heavens, but in fact it may indicate the sacred mountain, in synonymous parallelism with אֲיָר “earth,” as Roberts (Bib 56 [1975] 554–57) has argued. It appears to bear this meaning in Job 37:22 (Habel, Job 515).

The celestial source of the theophany in v 1 suggests as a consequence that the northern sector of the sky is in view here, but why should this be specified? Scholars commonly find links between 2:1–3:1 and the call of Jeremiah in Jer 1, and indeed between various passages in the respective books. Thus in a primary part of the Gog-Magog unit, Ezek 38–39, the invader is described as coming from the north (39:2; cf. 38:6, 15), in echo of the “foe from the north” motif that appears in the early oracles of Jeremiah (cf. Keil 20). In the course of the extended call narrative in Jer 1, Yahweh declares that “from the north will be opened up evil” (הַזָּהָב תָּמִית). When one recalls that the same passive verb is used of the opening of the heavens in v 1, seemingly in a sinister sense, and that a theophany of judgment is in overall view, the exegetical possibility presents itself that “north” carries overtones of the proclamation of evil that Yahweh brings with him (cf. 2:10; cf. Keil 20–21; Ziegler 12). He comes

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**Bib Biblica**

**VT Vetus Testamentum**

cf. confer, compare

**UF UF Ugaritische Forschungen**

Ugar. Ugaritic
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example

**Bib Biblica**
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
from a sinister quarter of the sky.

The recurrence of the material of v 4ab in v 27 has prompted the widespread suggestion that it is a textual gloss or redactional addition from the later description (cf., e.g., Fohrer 7; Zimmerli 82, 101, 125). However, the discipline of rhetorical criticism has encouraged a more positive attitude toward repetition. Here it seems to have important structural significance (see Form/Structure/Setting). The radiant aura surrounding the cloud accords with 2 Sam 22:13 (= Ps 18:13[12]), where such an aura precedes Yahweh’s appearance in a theophany.

A dominant feature of the vision account is broached in v 4b, an appeal to analogy, whether by means of the preposition “like” or the use of the nouns הֹאֵרָם “appearance” and וְעַיִן “likeness.” The presupposition of this feature is that the apparition crosses the bounds of the usual and natural. Human experience cannot find plain words to match the phenomena; it can only provide approximations to what is essentially uncanny and mysterious.

The term לִמְנִי , which also occurs in v 27 and 8:2, raises problems for the lexicographer and exegete. There are a number of indications that support the sense “amber,” as in the KJV and NRSV. The equivalents ἱκτὶ οὖν in the LXX and electrum in the Vulgate point in two separate directions, amber stone and white gold. The latter is an alloy that in Pliny’s period was made up of 80 percent gold and 20 percent silver (Historia Naturalis 33.23). The search for the right meaning has concentrated on identifying an Akkadian cognate. G. R. Driver (VT 1 [1951] 60–62) equated the word with Akkadian elmesû, which he understood as “brass” (so the REB), in reliance on R. C. Thompson’s Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936) 76–79. However, serious doubts have been raised as to whether elmesû can bear this meaning (see D. Bodi, Poem of Erra 90 and n. 41). CAD 4.107–8 is inclined to identify לִמְנִי with this Akkadian term, which it leaves untranslated but interprets in the light of its contexts, where it is used as “a quasi-mythical precious stone of great brilliancy and color which one tried to imitate with dyes.” CAD 4.366–67 does not favor any connection with esûmaru, which means silver or a silver alloy. In the neo-Babylonian Poem of Erra, elmesû is apparently derived from a tree, in which case its interpretation as amber is assured (Landsberger, VTSup 16 [1967] 196; Bodi, Poem of Erra 93; for the linguistic relation between the Akkadian and Hebrew terms see Landsberger, VTSup 16 [1965] 195 and n. 1).

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
KJV King James Version (1611) = AV
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
VT Vetus Testamentum
REB Revised English Bible
n. note
VTSup Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)
VTSup Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)
n. note
5–12 The blurred mass of wind-driven cloud and differing degrees of brightness gradually resolves itself into a series of distinct elements. The first to materialize and be noticed as the apparition approaches is the group of four living creatures. At this point the storm theophany becomes a throne theophany, as the vision report will eventually clarify (v 26). Separate motifs have here been combined (Jeremias, *Theophanie* 63; Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen* 190). The throne vision had already featured in the account of Isaiah’s prophetic call in Isa 6. Isaiah saw Yahweh present in judgment, sitting in council, with the verdict of judgment passed and awaiting execution (R. Knierim, *VT* 18 [1968] 54–57; O. H. Stek, *BZ* 16 [1972] 195–97; Long, *JBL* 95 [1976] 361). At an earlier period Micaiah ben Imlah had seen a vision of the enthroned Yahweh in session with his council of judgment, discussing how the death sentence might be carried out (1 Kgs 22:19–22). In line with this tradition, the throne vision that Ezekiel gradually describes functions as a theophany of judgment. Indeed, this passage became part of a continuing tradition. In second-century B.C. Judah, two more visions were described that spoke in terms of a throne with wheels, in echo of Ezek 1:15–21. In the Book of the Watchers the intent of the vision is to reprove the supernatural Watchers for their sins (*1 Enoch* 14:3; 15:1–16:3; for the wheels of the throne, see 14:18). Likewise, in Dan 7:9 the wheeled throne has a setting of a divine court of judgment. There seems to be a conscious reminiscence of Ezek 1 in its description of a theophany of judgment upon the kingdoms of the earth.

![Figure 1. An enthroned deity supported by lions](image)

While it is not a good exegetical procedure to anticipate later material, in this case the reader will be better served by a brief presentation of the general picture that emerges in the description only step by step. Keel (*Jahwe-Visionen* 125–273), building upon earlier work done by L. Dürr and others, has produced a lavishly illustrated study of ancient Near Eastern and Anatolian royal and religious

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*VT* Vetus Testamentum  
*BZ* Biblische Zeitschrift  
*JBL* Journal of Biblical Literature  
*1 Enoch* Ethiopic, Slavonic, Hebrew Enoch
iconography that sheds light on the particular throne imagery reflected here. Four-winged humanoid figures support on their heads a platform that represents the sky, above which sits the enthroned figure of Yahweh. This conception appears to be a fusion of at least two separate, well-attested traditions of religious iconography. In the first tradition two lions, bulls, or cherubs (two-winged animals with human heads) supported a platform above which stood a throne on which the deity sat. The example illustrated here (fig. 1) is an eight-foot-high basalt sculpture from Carchemish in North Syria that dates from the first half of the first millennium B.C. A throne occupied by a bearded god stands on a platform that is supported by two lions held by a bird-headed genius or lesser deity. The second tradition relates to two- or four-winged genii who support with their upper pair of wings and/or hands the wings of the sun or sky. Figure 2 shows a seal of the Persian period that reflects this tradition. The upper part of the skybearers’ bodies has a human form, while the lower part takes the form of a bull: this feature of bullmen was taken over from the neo-Assyrian and neo-Babylonian depiction of skybearers.

Figure 2. Winged bullmen as skybearers

In Ezekiel’s representation, the sky-bear ing genii, as if deposed from their divine role (cf. Ps 82), have strikingly taken the place of the thronebearing animal or cherub attendants; they minister to Yahweh as King of kings and Lord of lords. Vv 5–12 focus upon the skybearers and describe their appearance and role.

5–7 As we noted in Form/Structure/Setting, vv 5–7 give a basic overall description of the figures. They have a human form (v 5a), four faces (v 6a), four wings (v 6b), and—evidently—two legs (v 7a). They are described as animate beings ( метро “living creatures”). They are “four” in number, a feature that reappears in their faces and wings and later with respect to the wheels. In ancient Near Eastern art thronebearers were only two in number, whereas representations of skybearers, when freed from the constraints of two-dimensional art, could be four (Keel, Jahwe-Visionen 248). The four figures, which are usually under the four corners of the platform, reflect the universal power of God. This significance is

cf. confer, compare
derived from the four cardinal directions, “the four quarters of the earth” (Isa 11:12). The Assyrian king was grandiloquently entitled sar kibrâṭêrtêti “the king of the four quarters.” Ideally, the figures stand on the edge of the whole earth, supporting the sky above; here they have been scaled down in size, but not in value, as bearers of the divine throne. Their predominantly human shape, which distinguishes them from cherubim (cf. chap. 10) that were essentially animal in form, is qualified by the ensuing list of deviations, in respect of their four faces, four wings, and calves’ feet. Their four faces find a partial parallel in the four human or animal—representing the same animal—faces of gods and genii in ancient Near Eastern iconography. Figure 3 shows an eighteenth-century B.C. Assyrian representation of a god with four human faces. Moreover, skybearers could be depicted with two faces, as in figure 4, which shows the top row of skybearers with two lions’ heads on a fourteenth-century B.C. ivory piece found at Megiddo. The multiplicity of faces seems to signify the omnipresence of the god and, in the case of skybearers, their vigilance in scanning the earth to protect heaven from violation (Keel, Jahwe-Visionen 230, 233).

The four wings, whose function will be described in v 11, can be paralleled in many ancient representations of skybearers, as in figure 2. The reference to the legs as straight in v 7a is not clear. It may simply mean that they were stationary rather than used for locomotion (Barrick, CBQ 44 [1982].

cf. confer, compare

CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly
Then the description does not conflict with the skybearers of ancient iconography, who generally had knee joints, backward pointing in the case of bullmen. In fact, Ezekiel’s creatures seem to be bullmen with respect to their feet. Again, figure 2 is relevant, in which the upper parts of the skybearers’ bodies look human, and the lower parts, culminating in hooves, are bovine. It was a feature of neo-Assyrian and neo-Babylonian art to represent skybearers as bullmen, with two legs, and such seems to be the case here (cf. Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen* 215). In that case the older view that the legs were single metal pedestals (so Zimmerli 126) is a misunderstanding.

The comparison of the creatures with “burnished copper” is reminiscent of the appearance of the supernatural guide much later in the book, at 40:3. In both cases it signifies their shining appearance, as befits supernatural beings (cf. יָרָה לְהַלְמָן “like the gleam”), like the “two men in dazzling clothing” at the tomb of Jesus (Luke 24:4).

**Figure 4. Two-headed skybearers**

8a, 10–11 The next section is roughly parallel with vv 5–7; it covers similar ground in greater detail, with an ABCD/ABC scheme. First, the human appearance of the creatures is illustrated by reference to their arms and hands (v 8a), and then their faces (v 10) and wings (v 11) are described further. Their hands and arms would look as in figure 2, except that there they are raised to support the sky, whereas according to vv 22, 26 the creatures’ heads have that function. In this case too we are probably to envision one pair per creature, as the four of them stood in a square (Cooke 13).
Their faces are of four different types. As we noted above, such diversity is unparalleled. Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 231, 237) has given examples of humanoid, winged skybearers with two heads, whether of an eagle, lion, bull, or a human being. Here, however, the four types are strikingly combined in each being. As Greenberg (45) has observed, the uneven formulation reflects the order of observation. In each case Ezekiel saw a human face on the front, which reinforced the generally human appearance, then the two animal faces on the left and right sides, and finally, by comparing the other beings, the eagle’s face at the back. As the Midrash Rabbah on Exod 15 commented: “The most exalted of all living creatures is the human being; of birds, the eagle; of cattle, the ox; and of wild beasts, the lion. All of these received royalty and had greatness bestowed upon them, and they are set under the chariot of God” (Shemoth 23:13). But more must be said. In their oriental setting these faces are an expression of divine power, reflecting that of the lion and other great earthly beings. Here the creatures are represented as supernatural, in view of v 7b. As supernatural beings, they are mediators of Yahweh’s powerful being. Yet, as his supernatural servants, they also represent the concerted best that each of his orders of animate creation can separately contribute to his glory (cf. Pss 103:20–22; 148).

The upward sweep of the upper of the two pairs of wings does not serve to support the sky as in the case of the Near Eastern winged skybearers. The purpose of v 12a appears to be to explain their function in terms of motion, just as the echo of v 12 in vv 19–21 explains the motion of the wheels. The noise of their wings mentioned in v 24a (and 3:13) also suggests that the outspread wings are not static and ornamental, like those of the cherubim above the ark (Exod 25:20; 1 Kgs 6:27), but dynamic and functional. The other pair of wings, as in the case of four-winged skybearers and other divine beings in Eastern art, point downwards and cover the body (see fig. 2), as in the case of the seraphim of Isa 6:2, of which there may well be a complementary echo here.

12 This expression of mobility is the first instance of an increasingly dominant concluding motif in each of the three throne-theophany sections. In the light of v 11a, the movement of the beings seems to have been accompanied by their flapping wings. It has alternatively been explained in terms of the approach of the whole apparition, within which the beings stand completely rigid and immobile (so, e.g., Zimmerli 121). The amount of redactional layering one espies in this vision account determines which explanation should be followed: certainly the presence of vv 15–21 in it dictates at least the propriety of the former for the full form of the text.

The potential direction of movement is governed by the compass points faced by each of the four beings. The actual direction is controlled by the “spirit” that animates them (cf. v 21). The “spirit” of God is sometimes referred to as the manifestation of God in his omnipresence (Ps 139:7), roaming to all points of the compass (Ezek 37:9), and that conception seems to be implied here. The divine spirit is here the organizing force that directs the apparition hither and thither, wherever it wants to go, as the expression of the divine will.

The very notion of movement, whether of the whole apparition or of the beings, strikes a discordant note against their background as either skybearers or bearers of the throne. By their very nature these are essentially static conceptions. In Ezekiel’s vision the basic notion has been transformed. The storm theophany of v 4 has been allowed to determine the essential character of the throne vision. In contemporary art the bearers of the sun or sky and the bearers of a god’s throne were models of cosmic or supernatural reality, which brought to the believing observer a sense of the sublime. Likewise, the visionary prophet sees a representation of his universal God manifesting himself in cosmic splendor. In Isa 6 a heavenly scene is superimposed upon the earthly temple; here it is superimposed on the

cf. confer, compare

e.g. exempli gratia, for example

cf. confer, compare
theophanic cloud. In apocalyptic vision accounts, the seer is taken to heaven (cf., e.g., 1 Enoch 14:8–25; 2 Cor 12:2–4); here the heavenly comes down to the seer via the literary tradition of the storm theophany. The two traditions, one literary and the other partly visual, have not simply been juxtaposed but combined in such a way that the first has radically influenced the second. The implicit link that encouraged the combination of the traditions may have been the common motif of wings. In the storm theophany Yahweh travels on the “wings of the wind” according to 2 Sam 22:11 (= Ps 18:11[10]; Ps 104:3. If this association of motifs common to both traditions does underlie the combination, then the representation of the throne theophany in this vision account presumably included the motion of the beings’ wings as the means of transporting the throne from the beginning and not merely at a later stage. Moreover, the mention of] W “wind” in v 4 as a constituent element of the storm theophany may have been an influential factor in its reappearance in the sense of “spirit” in the description of the throne theophany at v 12.

13–14 This section reverts to the storm theophany of v 4, although the mention of the living beings or thronebearers echoes the throne theophany of vv 5–12 by way of coordination. The mention of “fiery coals” aligns with the description of the storm theophany of the warrior God in 2 Sam 22:9, 13 (= Ps 18:9[8]; cf. v 13[12]). The “lightning flashes” are reminiscent of the regular element of lightning (Q r b), which appears in 2 Sam 22:13 (= Ps 18:13[12]); Pss 77:18–19(17–18); 97:4, as indeed the textual annotation in v 13 may have been observing (see Note 13.e.).

Evidently the closer proximity of the apparition enables the fiery mass glimpsed in v 4 to be particularized into a pulsating core, which is compared with moving “torches” (cf. the theophanic description in Gen 15:17); it breaks through the enveloping aura of v 4 with intermittent flashes that
resemble lightning. The emphasis on manifestations of fire has a negative connotation. As in Ps 97:3–4 fire serves to burn up Yahweh’s adversaries and lightning to inspire dread in the observing earth, so here his coming with such accouterments poses a terrible threat. The nature of that threat will be spelled out when the divine vision is succeeded by the divine word.

15–21 If vv 13–14 majored in storm theophany while relating it to throne theophany by way of the bearers, vv 15–21 primarily continue the throne theophany theme but tie it into storm theophany by describing the throne in terms of a wheeled chariot. Mettinger, as we noted above (see Form/Structure/Setting; cf. also Isa 66:15; Hab 3:8), has observed that the divine chariot is an element of the storm theophany. If the throne theophany of Ezek 1, while resting on OT literary foundations, is closely associated with ancient Near Eastern visual art, here it is strongly influenced by the literary presentations of the storm theophany. There is no compelling objection to crediting Ezekiel with this composite picture. From the beginning, the vision account combines the two motifs from different sources, Yahweh’s coming in the storm and his enthronement in majesty (Keel, Jahwe-Visionen 190, 253). Accordingly, there can be no cavil in principle at the overlap of the two traditions in this section.

The purpose of the wheels emerges from the structural emphasis on “the ground” in vv 15, 19, and 21 (see Form/Structure/Setting). The throne on its platform functions as an amphibious vehicle: it not only flies through the sky by means of the wings of its bearers but drives along the ground by means of its wheels. It is a mark of the two distinct sources of the overall imagery that the structural relation between the wheels and the rest of the structure is left unclarified. The apparition lands on the ground, where indeed 3:12 seems to represent it. There is no need for the artificial conception of a supernatural plane on which the apparition rested in the vision (Tg.; Kraetzschmar 15; Bertholet [1936] 4; Cooke 16). Indeed, the emphasis on earthly mobility gives to the traveling throne of judgment a sinister potential. We are reminded of the grim message of relentless judgment delivered by Amos, that wherever God’s people fled, whether to Sheol or heaven or to the top of Carmel or the bottom of the sea, they would not be able to escape his clutches (Amos 9:1–4; cf. Ezek 5:12).

15–18 This first half of the account of the wheels concentrates on description. The prophet’s attention is drawn first to a single wheel of the now close and stationary apparition and then to the three others. Their relation to the thronebearers is loosely described by the preposition “beside.” They share in the brightness and magnificence of the whole (vv 4, 27) and of the other parts (vv 22, 26; cf. v 7) by being compared to precious stones.

Their construction in terms of a wheel within a wheel has taxed commentators and indeed has become an idiomatic expression for an involved set of circumstances. It is tempting to explain in terms of an ancient wheel structure, a disc wheel, solid from hub to rim, with a large concentric hub around the axle, so that the wheel seemed to have a smaller one inside it (see figs. 122–26 in Keel, Jahwe-Visionen 184–85). However, the intention of v 17, which deliberately anticipates the wheels’ four-directional mobility (backwards, forwards, left, and right) in vv 19–21, appears intended to explain v 16b (e.g., O. Procksch, “Die Berufungsvision” 146). Accordingly, it is preferable to revert to the older explanation of a globe-like structure in which two wheels stand at right angles. Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 264–65 and fig. 190) has cited an apposite Hellenistic representation of Mithras from eastern Asia Minor or northern Syria, in which the winged god with a lion’s face stands on a globe that has two crisscrossing wheels.

cf. confer, compare
OT Old Testament
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
The supposition of an optical illusion whereby Ezekiel looked through one wheel to another behind it (Smend 12; Procksch, “Die Berufungsvision” 146–47; Cooke 17) has little to commend it. It would be more likely if the prophet were at a distance from the apparition, but his closeness to it seems to be required by v 15.

The first part of v 18 is uncertain. Waldman (JBL 103 [1984] 614–18), unwittingly anticipated by Smend (13) and Weinfeld (TWAT 4:32), has taken הָגַה “height” as “majesty,” which would provide a good parallel with הָגַף יַע “awesomeness” and is a possible rendering in the light of Job 40:10. However, the material context and the comparable use of הָמַה “height” in 1 Kgs 7:32, in the course of a description of wheels, suggest that הָגַה is used here in this primary sense, with reference to the top edge of the rims. The “eyes” that cover the rims correspond to nail studs fixed all round the rims of wooden wheels, which served as metal tires, like hobnailed boots, so that the wheels did not wear down (see figs. 123, 191, 192 in Keel, Jahwe-Visionen 184, 266). Keel has noted that their metamorphosis into eyes has an analogy in Egyptian figurines of the genius Bes, which were studded all over with copper nails in the New Kingdom period but later with eyes (Jahwe-Visionen 269 and figs. 193, 194). These eyes reinforce the four faces of the living beings as an expression of divine omnipresence, like “the eyes of Yahweh that range throughout the earth” in Zech 4:10 (cf. Rev 5:6).

19–21. The second half of the section typically concentrates on mobility, in a development of v 12. The description now departs from the order of Ezekiel’s perception—we are not to imagine that the apparition, having landed, took off again before the moment of 3:12—and indulges in generalized observation (cf. Greenberg 52). The impression is given that there was no direct contact between the wheels and the beings but that the movement of the wheels automatically aligned with the direction taken by the beings. V 17 has already implied that, while the structure was on the ground, whichever being was in the lead, the wheels that were aligned in that orientation moved and then stopped at that being’s direction. In vertical, wing-powered movement, the wheels did not fall off but rose with the flying beings. Vv 20–21 amplify v 19 by relating this double movement to the controlling “spirit” of v 12. It controlled the forward movement on the ground (vv 20 [abbreviated]–21a), and also the taking off into the air (v 21b). The change of syntactical construction with reference to the spirit in vv 20–21 serves to highlight its role in an inclusion and climax. The divine spirit that controlled the beings’ wings in flight also controlled the wheels on the ground and kept them attached when the apparatus was airborne. The whole was an extension of the omnipresent spirit.

22–25 The renewed emphasis on the living beings in vv 20–21 facilitates a shift to the יַע that they supported with their heads. The term is a double entendre: it represents both the “platform” or firm surface on which the divine throne rests (v 26) and the firmament of the sky (cf. Gen 1:6–8; Ps 19:2[1]). Here the role of the living beings as skybearers comes to the fore. The gleaming יַע which it is compared could be either “crystal” (evidently LXX Syr. Vg; cf. Rev 4:6) or “ice” (Tg.; Job 6:16; 37:10).

JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
V Vulgate
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Scholars are divided: for example, Zimmerli (122) opts for the former, and Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 254–55) for the latter. The use of ֳּ like the gleam of” with “amber” in vv 4 and 27, “copper” in v 7, and “gold topaz” in v 16, suggests that a precious stone is to be preferred here.

The overall structure is evidently determined by a compulsion to revert to the motif of mobility that closed the sections vv 5–12 (in v 12) and vv 15–21 (in vv 19–21). Accordingly, the natural continuation with what lay above the firmament-platform has to be deferred, to make room for mention of the flapping wings of the mobile, airborne skybearers beneath it. Again the observation is generalized and reflective: v 25b catches up with the actually stationary position of the apparition. It reverts explicitly to the stage of vv 11–12, adding the factor of the tight formation of the flyers and stressing that only the upper pair of wings was used for flight.

Sight briefly gives way to sound. The new element of hearing in v 24 anticipates the subsequent auditory stage of the encounter that will begin in v 28b and serves to prepare the reader for it. Here, however, what is heard is moving wings. The noise is illustrated by a double set of comparisons. The first, which is echoed in 43:2, here lacks the connotation of the chaotic sea over whose threat God triumphs (Ps 29:3; Isa 17:12–13) and simply represents overwhelming loudness of a threatening nature, like the comparison with an army in the next clause, but here in terms of the roar of rushing water. In the second comparison, “like the voice of the Almighty,” the roaring of the God of the storm in claps of thunder seems to have been borrowed from the storm theophany (cf. Ps 29:3–9; Job 37:2–4, although ֶ the Almighty” is not used in either case). The archaizing divine term seems to point to the echoing of an old conception. Once again the mingling of storm theophany and throne theophany is exemplified.

The final, climactic section reverts in its resumption and development of key vocabulary to the theme of the storm theophany, used earlier in vv 4 and 13–14, and combines it with that of the throne theophany. The living beings’ joint role as skybearers and thronebearers is now revealed, for not only does the platform supported by their heads represent the sky, but it in turn supports the divine throne. The throne is compared to “lapis lazuli,” a brilliant violet blue stone (cf. Keel, Jahwe-Visionen 256 and n. 333) that in the vision of Exod 24:10 is used of the platform on which God stood.

When Yahweh appears in a recognizable form in the OT, the human form is regarded as the natural and characteristic one for him to assume (cf. Barr, “Theopany and Anthropomorphism” 32–33). What is elsewhere implicit in references to Yahweh sitting, standing, or the like (Amos 7:7; 9:1; Isa 6:1) is here explicitly stated. In this vision there is hardly any distinction between the way in which the living beings and Yahweh are described as human (וֹדָא תַּמִּד “human likeness” in v 5 and וֹדָא הַמֶּרֶם תַּמִּד “what looked like a human form” here). Both they and he, as supernatural figures, only approximate to a human form; in the latter case the element of approximation is somewhat heightened. Yahweh manifests himself to human beings as a person in the highest form of life generally perceptible to them.

That this revelation is the heart of the theophany vision is shown by the climactic resumption of terms

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
cf. confer, compare
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
n. note
OT Old Testament
cf. confer, compare
from v 4 and in part from v 13. What had been glimpsed from afar in terms of a homogeneous mass of energy is now seen close up as the nucleus of the power that had permeated the whole. Moreover, what in vv 13–14 had been located inside the group of living beings is now seen on closer examination to be associated with the throne of God. “Fire,” “amber,” and “radiance” directly reappear, and reference is also made to “cloud.”

The phenomena have the effect of veiling God. Ezekiel sees as if in a mirror dimly (Fretheim, The Suffering of God 90, 95). The divine figure’s lower portion is enveloped in fire, as if by a train, while the upper portion is more clearly delineated and suffused with a rich amber color. The whole figure is enveloped in an aura, so that what is seen is a silhouette surrounded by light (Auvray, RB 67 [1960] 484). The (semicircular?) aura, kaleidoscopic in its coloring, is likened to a rainbow amidst dark storm clouds. It is customary to compare a ninth-century colored ceramic depicting the winged god Asshur set in the flaming yellow disc of the sun, drawing his bow and floating among rain clouds (see fig. 5; a colored reproduction appears in Parrot, Nineveh and Babylon 227). His head and the upper part of his body are shown in a human shape, while the lower part is clothed with a flared skirt. A remarkably similar conception is described here, although the rainbow is the aura rather than being held in Yahweh’s hands. The basic observation made above on v 4 renders it unlikely that Ezekiel would have seen such a representation. There can be no doubt, however, that the intent is the same. The storm theophany and the throne theophany have here been fused, and the rainbow threateningly alludes to the bow of the warrior God (Hab 3:9; cf. Job 20:24), from which the lightning arrows are shot (cf. v 14; 2 Sam 22:15 = Ps 18:15[14]). Can the rainbow be associated with the gracious symbolism of Gen 9:12–17, as a few scholars have claimed? John Calvin’s exegetical acumen prevented him from so doing. He peremptorily commented: “What interpreters bring forward about a symbol of reconciliation is altogether out of place” (105; cf. Höhne, “Thronwagenvision” 74, and contrast Eichrodt 58; Vogt, Untersuchungen 11; Low, “Problems” 242–43).

In v 28a–b Ezekiel reflectively sums up his description of the divine figure of vv 26b–28a by associating with it the d wbk (“glory,” “glorious presence”) of Yahweh. By this specification he consciously relates his theophanic vision to an earlier tradition of Yahwistic revelation. In fact, d wbk h w by “the glory of Yahweh” is a set phrase in the Priestly source, and it seems to be to this tradition that Ezekiel alludes, where glory is conceived as a blazing fire enveloped in a cloud (e.g., Exod 24:16–17; cf. Weinfeld, TWAT 4:28, 32; Westermann, THAT 1:808). In particular, some Priestly wilderness narratives mention Yahweh’s appearance in glory in order to pronounce judgment (Exod 16:10–12; Num 14:10–12; 16:19–21; 17:7–10). This tradition of a veiled appearance is only one of the traditions on which the vision has drawn, but the priest-prophet Ezekiel cites it as the one most important to him. Here the divine figure seems to be identified with the glory; not unnaturally in other places the term is

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**Notes**

- **RB Revue biblique**
- cf. confer, compare
- cf. confer, compare
- cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare


widened to cover the whole apparition (e.g., 3:12, 23; 43:2).

The vision account closes in v 28b with a recapitulation of the initial verb “and I saw” (v 1) and with Ezekiel’s response. Overwhelmed, he adopts the body language of shocked submission. His reflex is an acknowledgment of Yahweh’s revelation of his glorious self. In so reacting to the manifestation of divine glory, the prophet stays within the Priestly tradition (cf. Lev 9:24; Num 16:22; 17:10 [16:45]).

Figure 5. Asshur as a storm god drawing his bow

1:28b–3:11 In the second phase of Ezekiel’s visionary experience, God reveals himself not so much to his eyes but to his ears. The distinction is not absolute: as the element of hearing was present in 1:24, so the element of seeing resurfaces in 2:9. “There is a kind of sacramentalism evident in the combination of the word and the visible vehicles in and through which the word is … ‘enfleshed’ and conveyed” (Fretheim, The Suffering of God 84). The tone of the composition changes from the transcendent to the immanent, from the universal to the particular. The change is necessitated by the increased involvement of Ezekiel, the Judean exile, as he ceases to be an external observer and becomes a participant in the divine purpose. The essential coherence between the vision and the ensuing commission is that the God who has revealed himself in a theophany of judgment turns Ezekiel into a prophet of judgment. Ezekiel’s commissioning to the task of prophecy is set out in 1:28b–2:7. It is reinforced by the symbolic rite of ordination described in 2:8–3:3 and by the recapitulating confirmation of his task in 3:4–11.
1:28bb–2:2a This introductory subsection prepares Ezekiel for the prophetic commission. Now Ezekiel hears not the noise of flapping wings but an unidentified articulate voice that addresses him. The vocative “member of humanity,” “human one” relates him to the supernatural beings, Master and servants, whose forms were humanlike (1:5, 26) but who by their very likeness were distinct from humanity. A chasm of essence separates Ezekiel from them and especially from the God whom the spoken words eventually reveal the speaker to be (see 2:4). Ezekiel is “a human being and no God” (28:2; cf. Isa 31:3), out of his league in the transcendent scene, as his physical reflex had demonstrated. Even as the voice underlines the difference, it hints that this human being may have a role in the divine plan. The vocative “human one” persistently prefaces the divine messages in this passage of commission and in fact throughout the book of oracles. It serves to characterize Ezekiel as the prophet of divine transcendence, marked by humble awareness of who God is and by a concern that his fellow exiles should share his awareness.

Accordingly, his natural response to the divine vision must not be allowed to prevent his hearing the divine word of commission. The call to stand up (cf. Dan 10:11; Acts 26:16) is an invitation to conscious participation in God’s concerns, to be poised for action on his behalf. Ezekiel’s weakness is countered by the enabling power of God, “the spirit-power which proceeds from God” (Keil 48). That this term does not refer simply to a subjective vigor or courage that he felt (Greenberg 62; cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 568) is suggested by the next verb, “and you made me stand,” which seems to refer to an objective force that stands on the divine side of reality (cf. 37:10). It is difficult not to relate this force to the empowering of the living beings and wheels in 1:12, 20–21. The lack of an article accords with the stereotyped style of spirit-control in 3:12, 14, 24; 8:3; 11:1, 24a; 43:5, which is presumably the reason for its absence here.

2b–5 Unwittingly Ezekiel is poised and ready to carry out the errand the mysterious voice now assigns to him. The introductory speaking can now give way to the main communication to which v 1bb referred.

2b–4a Two topics are in view: the new role Ezekiel is to play and the moral nature of the people of God. First, the verb “send” is emphasized by its double occurrence in vv 2b and 4a. It is a basic and characteristic term in prophetic call narratives (cf. Isa 6:8; Jer 1:7), which identified the human object as the authorized agent of God (cf. Jer 14:14–15). Significantly, Jeremiah’s letter to the hostages in Babylon denounced prophets whom Yahweh had not sent (Jer 29:9, 31). Second, there is a concern for the ultimate recipients of the divine message. They are defined not yet as Judean exiles (3:10) but in wider terms as representatives of “the community of Israel” (lārçi tyb), which is a standard designation in the book of Ezekiel for the covenant people, used eighty-three times according to Zimmerli (Ezekiel 2 564). The scope of the designation extends not only horizontally from the exiles back to the people in the homeland but also vertically in a series of generations (cf. Jer 3:25). Ezekiel’s message in 20:1–32 is a virtual commentary on their sinful past and present. Their sin is characterized as rebellion, both as an attitude and as a succession of acts that exemplified it. The Hebrew term for rebelling (dārāmil) is a theological metaphor derived from a political act, the refusal of subjects to give
loyalty to their king (cf. 2 Kgs 18:7; Ezek 17:15). The present generation is defined as worse than their predecessors, both in external behavior and in internal attitude. Externally, they are marked by brazenness. Literally, they are hard-faced (מַפְתַּלְתְּ שֵׁל תַּלְתְּ, a variation of the usual “stiff-necked” (וֹ הָנְא שֵׁל תְלְטְלְכְ, e.g., Exod 32:9), intended to pave the way for the reaction they will present to the prophet according to v 6 (מַפְתַּלְתְּ שֵׁל תַּלְתְּ “faces” twice; cf. 3:8a). Internally, they are strong-willed in their opposition to God.

4b–5 Alliteration links prophetic spokesperson, divine speaker, the alternative reactions of the audience, and their basic nature: מַפְתַּלְתְּ שֵׁל תַּלְתְּ “say” (twice), מַפְתַּלְתְּ שֵׁל תַּלְתְּ “if” (twice), and מַפְתַּלְתְּ שֵׁל תַּלְתְּ “rebellious.” Ezekiel’s task is to deliver the prophetic word, which is cited in terms not of its content but of its divine authority, by using the messenger formula that customarily introduces an oracle of judgment. The response of the recipients to the message of their sovereign (מַפְתַּלְתְּ שֵׁל תַּלְתְּ “Lord”) is strikingly described as immaterial, whether acceptance of the message or—more likely in view of their sinful nature—rejection. The people are described as a “rebel community” (מַפְתַּלְתְּ שֵׁל תַּלְתְּ), a term that in Ezekiel’s oracles is a bitter nickname for the community of Israel. The implicit reason Yahweh sets no store by their response is that the prophetic message would be one of inexorable judgment, in reaction to the people’s sin (vv 3–4a). The learning of its truth would require no spiritual intuition. The stark fulfillment of the judgment in their experience would be its endorsement, proving the prophetic authority of Ezekiel (cf. 33:33). A version of the recognition formula is used. The formula is especially characteristic of Ezekiel’s oracles, occurring ninety-two times according to Zimmerli (Ezekiel 2 564). Apart from 33:33 and here, the reality of Yahweh himself is what is to be taken to heart (see, e.g., 6:7). Here, however, the context warrants a focus on Ezekiel as his genuine spokesperson. One may compare Num 16:28 for this human perspective: “By this means you will know that Yahweh has sent me to do all this and that it was not my own idea” (cf. Zimmerli, I Am Yahweh 49–50).

6–7 Ezekiel is fully briefed on the negative reactions of his audience, so that their antagonism would be no shock that reduced him to panic and consequently to abandonment of his prophetic task. He is strongly urged—even ordered—not to succumb to the fear that would be a natural reaction to so daunting an audience as their characterizations in vv 4a and 5a had indicated they would be. Unlike Jeremiah at his prophetic call (Jer 1:8, 18), he is not comforted with the promise of Yahweh’s presence or enabling: the latter assurance will, however, be given in 3:8–9. At this point, to be forewarned is to be psychologically forearmed. Thorns are a standard metaphor of hostility (cf. 28:24; Mic 7:4), while sitting on scorpions vividly conveys a sense of shock. Their opposition in demeanor and verbal retort was grounded in their basic antagonism to Yahweh, as a “rebel community” (cf. 3:7). It was no reason for Ezekiel to fail to discharge the mandate of vv 4b–5. He must present God’s message in a forthright, take-it-or-leave-it fashion.

2:8–3:3 Ezekiel now undergoes a symbolic rite of ordination. Divine word and prophetic narrative of a visionary, symbolic event alternate in a triple sequence of explanation and deed (2:8 + 9–10; 3:1 + 2; 3:3a + 3b; cf. Hos 1:2–3).

cf. confer, compare

e.g. exempli gratia, for example

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

e.g. exempli gratia, for example

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
8–10 Ezekiel not only had to “stand” (2:1), poised to be sent to speak Yahweh’s message of inevitable judgment, he must also “listen” to that message. In this response of compliance, he is categorically singled out from the rest of the people, just as Isaiah in his prophetic call was isolated from his sinful fellow worshipers by a physical sign of cleansing (Isa 6:5–7). Like Isaiah, Ezekiel is set apart by a symbolic act. It is announced by God’s strange call to eat what he is about to receive from God. On second thought, the invitation becomes less strange, for it clearly connects with Jeremiah’s inaugural experience, whose mouth Yahweh touched with his hand, assuring him that he had just put his words into it (Jer 1:9). Later Jeremiah said:

“They words were found
and I ate them,
and your words became a joy to me,
and my heart’s delight.” (Jer 15:16)

These texts were evidently mulled over by Ezekiel, and they grew into sensory elements of his own call. Ezekiel does not yet eat, for the ensuing narrative of vv 9–10 concentrates first on what Yahweh offers to him. The narrative reverts to the visionary mode of chap. 1 (cf. 1:4, 15). Under the influence of the sublimity of that vision, as in the case of the voice in 1:28, the mysterious hand he sees is not directly identified as Yahweh’s, although it may be inferred from v 10 (“he unrolled”) and 3:1 (“he said”) that it was. The book scroll, probably made of leather (cf. Wiseman, “Books” 1:32), was unusually inscribed on the back as well as the front and so was totally filled. Ezekiel could observe the sinister title “laments, mourning, and woe” at the top of the scroll as its first length was unrolled. The scroll symbolizes the prophetic oracles Ezekiel was to deliver and presupposes a custom of preserving a prophet’s messages in written form (cf. Jer 36:4, 32; 45:1; cf. E. F. Davis, Swallowing the Scroll 50–51). The title refers not to the content of the prophetic revelation but obliquely to its effect. Although laments in the literary sense feature in Ezekiel’s prophesying (see 19:1, 14; 26:17; 27:2, 32; 28:12; 32:12–16), they are not in view here. Apart from 19:1, 14 they occur in oracles to other nations, whereas his own people are envisioned here. The terms, piled up in an overwhelming manner, feature as a reaction to extreme suffering (cf. 21:11–12, 17[6–7, 12]). They allude to oracles of judgment, such as Ezekiel delivered during the first seven years of his prophetic service, till the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.:

3:1–2 Having clarified what Ezekiel was to eat, Yahweh can reissue his initial command and in the same breath interpret the symbolic act as a preparation for a prophetic ministry to God’s people. The mention of the target traces an arc back to the initial announcement of 2:3 and serves to establish that the “laments, mourning, and woe,” with which the scroll is crammed full, connote the message of intense punishment deserved by his chronically rebellious people (cf. Isa 1:4–6). Ezekiel proceeds to comply with the first order by opening his mouth, and Yahweh feeds him.

3 Here the symbolic drama of word and deed might have ended. But it continues, with a command that the scroll given by God be swallowed down and digested. In the words of the Episcopal Prayer Book collect, he is to “mark, learn and inwardly digest” the divine oracles and make them his own. In the final snatch of narrative, there is nothing left for Yahweh to do. It remains for Ezekiel to comply. He evidently swallows what is still in his mouth and so is able to take another mouthful. In this complying he

*cf. confer, compare*
*cf. confer, compare*
*cf. confer, compare*
*cf. confer, compare*
*cf. confer, compare*
*cf. confer, compare*
observes its ironic sweetness. What in terms of content would have been unpalatable as the bread of adversity (cf. Note 3:14.c.*), in terms of his willingness to receive it as God’s word was sweet, like the “heart’s delight” of Jeremiah (Jer 15:16; cf. Ps 119:103). He has opened his life to the divine will and undertaken to submit his own will to his Lord’s (cf. 24:16–17, 24; cf. John 4:34). He has committed himself to a prophetic ministry that will invoke hostility and rejection, but the privilege far outweighs such hardship (cf. Phil 1:29).

4–11 Yahweh’s visionary communication closes on a note of confirmation that echoes much of the foregoing, often in a heightened form (cf. Greenberg 73). Ezekiel’s prophetic role to Israel (vv 4b, 11a) and his obligation to Yahweh (vv 4b, 11b) are reaffirmed in a literary framework. The bulk of the confirmation is devoted to preparing him for Israel’s negative reception (vv 5–9), while his own obligation to Yahweh is restated (v 10).

4 The basic message “I am sending you to the community of Israel” (2:3) is reaffirmed in terms of its restatement in 3:1, “go and speak to the community of Israel.” The restatement shifts the emphasis from Yahweh’s appointment to Ezekiel’s responsibility, in this new triangular relationship between God, prophet, and people. A key part of this responsibility is to transmit the divine messages accurately: here the injunction of 2:7a recurs.

5–9 The continuation of the basic message in 2:3–4a was concerned with Israel’s fundamental rejection of Yahweh, while the context of 2:7a had to do with Ezekiel’s hostile reception in the constituency to which he was being sent and with the need for an unflinching commitment to his task (2:6). These two themes are now developed together. The three parties of Yahweh, Ezekiel, and Israel would be split adversarially: Israel vs. Yahweh and Ezekiel.

5–7 Whereas the sinfulness of the community of Israel had been defined vertically in 2:3b–4a, with the effect of intensifying that of the present generation, now in vv 5–7a there is a horizontal contrast, between the community of Israel and other nations. The initial “for” is used subtly, as often in Hebrew (cf. BDB 473b, 474a). Greenberg (68) has seen a simple causal link: the message may be spoken to Israel verbatim because a common language is shared. But if the text of vv 5–6 is understood as in the translation, it introduces an obstacle to the prophet’s mission presented in v 7. Then vv 5–7 give an...
underlying reason why the exhortation that the prophet be faithful to his task is needed. The sense is virtually “despite the fact that.”

The nation of v 5 is presumably Babylonia: the first phrase, rendered “whose speech is incomprehensible,” occurs in Isa 33:19, where it refers to the dominant nation of Assyria. Correspondingly the “many peoples” of v 6 seem to refer to ethnic groups of exiles who had been concentrated in the Nippur region (cf. Zimmerli 137). By comparison with God’s people, all such would have made the effort to overcome the language barrier and understand what the prophet was saying. Jesus made a similar point concerning the rejection of his miracles in local towns: Tyre and Sidon would have repented, whereas Chorazin and Bethsaida had not. Even Sodom would have survived, had it seen the miracles that Capernaum despised (Matt 11:2, 23)! Within the OT, in the book of Jonah the people of Nineveh are portrayed as responsive to God’s word, while the prophet had been recalcitrant.

There is none so deaf as the person who does not want to hear. Israel’s unnatural unresponsiveness would not result from a lack of understanding but from a spiritual barrier, a deliberate refusal. Ezekiel’s experience would conform to a prophetic tradition represented especially by Isaiah (see Isa 1:19–20; 28:12; 30:9, 15). It would not be the fault of Ezekiel; it would reflect Israel’s attitude toward Yahweh himself. In a recapitulating echo of v 2a, which referred to the present generation of Israel, but now with a comprehensive “whole” that seems to gather Israel past and present into its sweep, their confrontational nature (cf. Jer 3:3; 5:3; Isa 48:4) and stubbornness of will are deplored.

8–9a How then could Ezekiel cope? It was a question that the commissioning of 2:4–7 had not tackled, while the ordination of 2:8–3:3 had dealt only with the equipping of Ezekiel with the divine word. Now the lack is supplied. If Yahweh and Ezekiel are to be united in suffering rejection (v 7a), there would also be a positive side to this solidarity. As Jeremiah in the sequel to the prophetic call was invested with the strength of a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls (Jer 1:18–19a), so Ezekiel is now steeled to confront his opponents without flinching. By divine enabling he would live up to the prayerful wish embodied in his name (µẏ qzj “stern, hard, strong”; laqzjy “May God strengthen”). Hardened in sin as the people were, they would meet their match in his resolute hardness in standing firm for God. Like diamond, the hardest substance known, he would resist their browbeating.

9b Thus there would be no room for fear. The first pair of negative commands in 2:6 can now be restated in terms of promises. The closing reference to Israel’s nickname, “rebellious community,” taken from the end of 2:6, makes a fitting climax to a section that has emphasized their negative response.

10 Ezekiel also had a part to play in this partnership with Yahweh. His prophetic ministry must be in tune with his rite of ordination. Two lessons are drawn. First, the once-for-all command to digest the scroll in 3:3a was to find a constant counterpart in his inner acceptance of God’s messages. Second, the command to “hear” in that sacramental rite, which was symbolically interpreted as eating with one’s mouth (2:8), must be a watchword for his future ministry.

11 The conclusion functions basically as a parallel to v 4b, in a framework for the divine speech of confirmation. Ezekiel is sent back into the exilic community to which he belonged (cf. 1:1a). The phrase “community of Israel” of v 4b and elsewhere is now grounded in its local Judean representatives among whom he is to exercise his prophetic ministry. (No mention, be it noted, is made of any ministry in Palestine.) The command to echo Yahweh’s own words in v 4b is varied by use of the synonymous messenger formula, borrowed from 2:4b–5a. It makes for a more forceful ending, for it brings with it the shoulder-shrugging alternatives that provide a devastating throwaway line. The messages entrusted

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cf. confer, compare
OT Old Testament
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
to the prophet were to be bad news of inexorable judgment. The verdict had already been passed by the
divine judge. It was Ezekiel’s task to notify those who had been found guilty.

12–15 Ezekiel’s visual and auditory encounter with Yahweh is drawn to a close with a final narrative
that by its echoes of earlier parts of the story provides a literary winding down (see
Form/Structure/Setting).

12–13 The translocation of Ezekiel by the spirit is the first of a number of such experiences (see 8:3;
11:1, 24; 43:5; cf. 37:1). V 14 will continue the topic, but first the departure of the apparition is
recorded, in terms of sounds heard. It is implied that it had stood stationary on the ground since the point
of 1:15. The term הַנִּלְאָה יְדֵי יָהֹוהָ “the glory of Yahweh,” which had been used in 1:28 to describe
the enthroned divine figure, is evidently employed here as a literary shorthand to refer to the whole
apparition. Its “standing place” (וֹקֶם) corresponds to the similar verb דָּמְרוּ “stand” in v 23 and to its
use with reference to the stationary apparition in 1:21, 25. The noise is explained in v 13. The noise of
the flapping wings corresponds to that heard in 1:24. Only here is there mention of the (squeaking,
rumbling) noise of the wheels. Does it refer to a taxiing, as if along a runway, before takeoff? Strictly
one expects the wheels to have been heard before the wings. Perhaps the louder noise is explained first,
unless the wings flapped even when the apparition was moving on the ground. The stem וָיָפָה, here
rendered “pulsating sound,” is used of the noise of war chariots in Jer 47:3 and of their wheels in Nah 3:2.

14–15 The description of Ezekiel’s translation is now resumed. Significantly, the verb וָקִים “lift up”
is used in 1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:16 (cf. Acts 8:39), with reference to a belief that Elijah could be
physically removed by the “spirit of Yahweh,” while the second verb וָקִים “take away” occurs in 2 Kgs
2:3 in the same sense, with Yahweh as subject. The language used evokes preclassical prophetic
experiences and characterizes Ezekiel with authoritative credentials as an old-world prophet of the
stature of Elijah. Since these older passages seem to be in view, the spirit should be understood as
Yahweh’s, as explicitly in 37:1.

The action of the spirit is associated with a fresh experience of the “hand of Yahweh.” In literary
terms it echoes the visionary associations of 1:3b, but in meaning the usage recalls supernatural aid
involved in the movement of Elijah from Carmel to Jezreel (1 Kgs 18:46). By such language Ezekiel
further claims that the dynamic intervention of Yahweh in Elijah’s experience had been re-created in his
own (cf. Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets 13–16, 28–37). The supernatural phenomenon had an
effect on his mind as well as his body, an emotional excitement that gripped him as the subjective effect
of Yahweh’s strong hand upon him.

The supernatural journey ends at his exilic settlement, which was evidently some distance away from
the scene of the vision. It is identified as Tel Abib, which in Akkadian refers to a very ancient mound, a
site believed to have been destroyed by the primeval flood (אָבִיב; cf. CAD 1:78a). It is psychologically
ture to life that the excitement of v 14 gives way to the exhaustion of v 15. The overwhelming
experience of vision (cf. 1:28b) and call that he had undergone left him “disoriented” for a whole week.

In a rhetorical sense the account has been neatly rounded off. Yet the conclusion also ironically

*cf. confer, compare

*cf. confer, compare

*cf. confer, compare

*cf. confer, compare

*CAD The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (21 vols.;
Chicago/Glückstadt: Oriental Institute/Augustin, 1964–)

*cf. confer, compare
leaves the reader with a sense of incompleteness and suspense. The commissioned prophet is left stunned and withdrawn! He comes to the exiles, the specific targets of Ezekiel’s commission in v 11, and yet he is speechless. He has arrived back “among them,” where he was to be a prophet (2:5), and he communicates nothing. The time limitation resolves the non sequitur. It conveys a sense of an intermission. The narrative halts in its tracks, waiting for a fresh momentum that will surely come.

**Explanation**

The vision report in chap. 1 has had a profound effect on its readers down the ages. By the time the book of Sirach was written, about 180 B.C., Ezekiel was remembered as the prophet who “saw a vision and described the different parts of the chariot” (Sir 49:8). For centuries the mystical side of Judaism was fired by the vision (cf. Scholem, *Jewish Mysticism* 40–79; Gruenwald, *Merkabah Mysticism* 29–97). The task of exegesis is to put divine revelation in its ancient setting by explaining its cultural context. If modern readers think of a spaceship when they read the vision, and an earlier generation thought of an airship (cf. Gaebelien 22), it is reasonable to ask what Judean exiles in sixth-century Babylonia would have thought of it. Biblical revelation is essentially clothed in cultural dress; its cultural elements, which were intended to convey what is new by what is known, deserve respect. Yet Ezekiel distanced himself from actually identifying what he saw with his own culturally conditioned descriptions, as his constant recourse to analogy indicates (cf. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll* 84–85).

Modern study has somewhat robbed the vision of its uniqueness and strangeness. For instance, it has focused on the unity between the divine vision of chap. 1 and the divine word of 2:1–3:11, as a double witness to the prophetic role of Ezekiel. By Ezekiel’s time the vocation to be a prophet had been graced by a special experience of theophany, a combination of divine vision and audition through which the prophetic commission was issued. The experience to which Ezekiel bears personal testimony in this account was like that of Isaiah in that it was a vision of Yahweh’s heavenly throne of judgment (Isa 6:1–5). But whereas in Isaiah’s vision the heavenly scene was superimposed upon the temple, here it is projected on a storm theophany. The literary motif of the storm theophany was a separate tradition that connoted the coming of the warrior God to help his people—or, in a prophetic reversal of meaning, to judge them. It is in this latter sense that the storm-theophany motif is used here: the vision combines the two literary motifs of storm theophany and throne theophany, with their common theme of judgment. The throne scene is depicted in a highly developed form strongly influenced by visual art. The nature of Israel’s God has been presented via ancient Near Eastern religious iconography. The artistic conceptions of the sky god supported by his divine four-winged, humanoid bearers and of the enthroned god, the platform of whose throne rests upon two animal bearers, are borrowed and blended, in an effort to express the universal dominion and majesty of Yahweh himself. It is this heavenly king who uses the storm theophany to come to earth on a representation of his celestial throne, to appear to the Judean exile Ezekiel.

There is a sustained and increasing emphasis on the mobility of the apparition. The caryatidlike skybearers and thronebearers are no longer static but fly their divine charge from heaven to earth. The wheels, with their orbits of eyes that reflect omnipresence, are the means whereby Yahweh may travel the earth. It is this universal God from whose judgment none can escape that appears to Ezekiel and summons him to deliver his message of judgment.

The vision report adds special weight to the call account (cf. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God* 84–86).

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
It reveals relevant aspects of the God who calls and so of the word that Ezekiel is to deliver. In a metaphorical rite of ordination, he becomes the host of the imbedded word, the inspired bearer of divine revelation. If later in his ministry he functions explicitly as a “sign” of Israel as recipient of judgment (12:6, 11; 24:24), here he is a sign of the judging God, a messenger of inexorable judgment for a sinful people. As such, he is to bear the brunt of their rejection of God. The literary function of this warning is evidently the same as that of Isa 6, before the rejection of Isaiah’s ministry is narrated in the ensuing chapters: to affirm that despite his rejection—and even because of it—he is the authentic emissary of God in his role as prophet of judgment. We have little direct evidence of the exiles’ rejection of Ezekiel in this role, and this facet of his call is valuable as an indirect witness to it. The exiles’ refusal to listen to the prophet also serves to illustrate the sinfulness of the people of God as a “rebel community” and so their ripeness for judgment. In their rejection of Ezekiel we catch an echo of their rejection of Yahweh (3:7; cf. 1 John 3:1).

From the human angle there is a starkness about Ezekiel’s call. He is constantly addressed as “human one,” but there is something almost inhuman about his response, or lack of it. He is no Isaiah who pleads for a limit to be set on judgment (Isa 6:11). He is no Jeremiah who protests at the prophetic role that is thrust upon him against his will (Jer 1:6). His “not to reason why,” his “but to do and die”! He faints in awe of the theophany; he finds sweet satisfaction in pure obedience. This is evidence of a phenomenon that the whole book attests, an affirmation of radical theocentricity. Did priestly rank in ancient Israel tend to inculcate an attitude toward God such as professional military training does toward superior officers (cf. 1 Sam 2:35)? Be that as it may, there is evidence that the absolute “yes” of Ezekiel’s response to God took a psychological toll, in the disorientation of 3:15. Theologically, however, Ezekiel’s passive subjection conveys an assurance that his oracles are the true, unalloyed word of God.

**Prophetic Signs and Their Interpretation (3:16–5:17)**

**Bibliography**


Translation

Diss. Dissertation
JANESCO Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University
BN Biblische Notizen
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
BETL Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium (Leuven/Gembloux: Leuven UP/Peeters)
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
UF UF Ugaritische Forschungen
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
VTSup Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
CTM Concordia Theological Monthly
TZ Theologische Zeitschrift (ThZ)
ZDPV Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins
ExpTim The Expository Times
JNSL Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages
AJBA Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
FS Festschrift, volume written in honor of
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
VT Vetus Testamentum
Int Interpretation
IBS Irish Biblical Studies
16 A week later—I received the following communication: 17 “Human one, I appoint you a lookout for the community of Israel. Whenever you hear a message from my lips, you are to caution them against me. 18 When I tell someone who is wicked, ‘You are doomed to die,’ and you have not cautioned him, giving the wicked person an explicit caution against his wicked behavior in order that he may live, the wrongdoing of that wicked person will cause his death, but I will hold you responsible for his demise. 19 If, on the other hand, you have cautioned the wicked person, but he has failed to give up his wickedness or any of his wicked behavior, his wrongdoing will cause his death, but you will have saved your life. Moreover, when someone who is virtuous gives up his virtue and does wrong, I will put in his path an obstacle that causes his downfall. If

a 17.a. As in v 9, the pf has a performative sense.
b 17.b. The Heb. juxtaposition of pf consec verbs has a hypothetical sense: cf. GKC 112kk.
c 17.c. After ydm “from my mouth” in the previous clause, ymm could mean “(pass on a warning) from me” (BDB 264a; KB 252b). However, the use of mm with the same verb in v 8 with the sense “warn off, against the consequences of” suggests that divine punishment is in view (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:17; HALAT 255a). The English translation “before me” in Zimmerli 142 is inadequate for “vor mir” (Ezechiel 1 86), which means rather “(caution) against me.”
d 17.d. Since Heb w[y] “to keep him alive” does not occur in the parallel version, there has been a scholarly tendency to delete it as secondary here (BHS). See the previous note*.
f 17.f. The NRSV achieves inclusive language by treating the Heb. sg forms as collective. In this historically oriented commentary, it seems preferable to retain the references to individual cases, to provide a basis for exegesis.

a 18.a. Scholars tend to prune the double phrase by excising w[w] “from his wickedness and” in line with 33:9 (BHS). Significantly, if somewhat inconsistently, Zimmerli (142) tacitly retained the text. There seems to be a hinging intent in the sequence w[w] “and he did not turn from his wickedness” and wqdxm bwvbw “and when … turns from his righteousness” in v 20. The LXX reflects awh [v r h “that wicked person” (Fohrer 23), with different word division, contra Zimmerli (143) and BHS.
b 18.b. The MT reflects the general textual tradition in this double mention of warning. Since the second recurs in the parallel 33:8, the first clause is often regarded as secondary. However, Fohrer (23) argued the other way, that the second clause was a comparative gloss from 33:8. If the first clause has been added, the original intention may have been to note the corresponding clause in 3:20. The force of the pf verbs is conditional, with the same function as yk “if” in vv 19, 20b, 20a: see Greenberg (84), who gives examples from priestly legal prescriptions. So the focus of the sentence is on the impf. verbs of v 18b as main verbs, as in vv 19–21b.
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f 19.f. The NRSV achieves inclusive language by treating the Heb. sg forms as collective. In this historically oriented commentary, it seems preferable to retain the references to individual cases, to provide a basis for exegesis.

a 20.a. Scholars prefer to read a fem. form, as in 18:24; 33:18 (see BHS). However, Greenberg (86) has observed a recensional preference for the masc segholate forms, [v f “wickedness” and qdX “righteousness,” in contrast to the fem forms used in chaps. 18 and 33, which he notes were dictated by the standard phrase hqdX wfw “justice and righteousness” used in 18:5 (Greenberg 89). His consequent uneasiness about wqdx “his righteous acts” may be alleviated by the fact that the fem. pl. relates specifically to concrete acts rather than a state (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:17).
you have not cautioned him, his sin will cause his death and no cognizance will be taken of his virtuous deeds\(^c\) that he has done,\(^d\) but I will hold you responsible for his demise.\(^{21}\) If, on the other hand, you have cau-
tioned the virtuous person\(^b\) that as a virtuous person\(^b\) he should not sin, and he stops sinning,\(^c\) he will certainly live, because he heeded the caution,\(^d\) while you will have saved your life.” — 22 I felt Yahweh’s hand on me there.\(^a\) “Get up,” he told me, “and go out to the plain so I can speak with you there.”\(^{23}\) Getting up, I went out to the plain, where I found the glorious manifestation of Yahweh’s presence resting, just as\(^a\) I had seen it by the Kebar Canal. I threw

\(^{b}\) 20.b. That is, a fatal “accident” that leads to his premature death. The term \(W k m\) “stumbling block” was seemingly borrowed from Jer 6:21: cf. the use of the watchman metaphor of Jer 6:17 in v 17. cf. in principle 1 Kgs 22:20, 34. Calvin (160–61) rightly saw that it refers to the execution of punishment.

\(^{c}\) 20.c. For the defective writing in K, see Note 33:13.\(b^*\).

\(^{d}\) 20.d. The non-representation of \(h C\) “that he has done” in LXX\(^B\) is judged an inner-Greek aberration by Ziegler, LXX 101; cf. 18:24.

\(^{a}\) 21.a. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:17) suggested that in the MT \(q y d x\) “righteous one” stands in apposition to the subj: “you as a righteous person (have warned him)” (cf. Brownlee [1986] 47). This eases the construction but is confusing in the context, in which the term, like \(V f q\) “wicked one” elsewhere, refers to the hypothetical character who is the object of warning. More obviously, the noun is in apposition to the acc suffix: see GKC 131m. LXX Syr. imply \(q y d x t r h z h\) “you have warned the righteous person.” Greenberg (86) suggests that the MT reflects a conflated text: \(q y d x\) is a gloss representing the reading underlying LXX Syr. as an alternative to \(W f r h z h\) “you have warned him.” However, \(W f r h z h\) may simply be a case of mechanical assimilation to the verbal form in v 20. The removal of the suffix yields an expected parallelism with v 19. The LXX does betray a belated awareness of the MT: in v 21b it renders \(r h z n\) “he was warned” as if it were \(W f r h z h\). Evidently in the history of its Vorlage a marginal reading \(W f r h z h\) was taken to relate not to the first instance of the verb but to the second, because of the double occurrence of a preceding \(y k\) “if, because,” and took its place.

\(^{b}\) 21.b. The second instance of \(q y d x\) “righteous” in the MT seems superfluous. LXX Syr. appear to have found it before the main verb (“the righteous person will certainly live”). It can be argued that the diversity of the textual tradition indicates that it is a gloss of some kind (BHS), Greenberg (84) adventurously takes \(a f j A a l\) \(a W q y d x\) as an explanatory gloss on \(a f j y t b l\) , which originally meant “so that he does not sin” (cf. 13:22), with \(q y d x\) functioning as a cue word: “righteous one: and he did not sin.” However, \(a f j A a l\) \(a W W\) “and he did not sin” seems to function as a structural counterpart to … \(b V A a l\) \(W\) “and he did not turn …” in v 19. The positioning in LXX Syr. is not likely: \(V f q\) “wicked one” in v 18b hardly suggests it, since it does not reappear in v 19 and is not matched in v 20. Freedy (VT 20 [1970] 143) proposed that the superfluous term originated as a rubric gloss to indicate the theme of v 21. This would be more plausible if a parallel example he found in v 18 (VT 20 [1970] 147) were more convincing. I cannot delete \(q y d x\) with a good conscience because I have no assurance as to how it entered the text.

\(^{c}\) 21.c. The pf is constative, here referring to extended duration (cf. Waltke and O’Connor, Syntax 30.1d; Joüon 112e): “did not continue to sin” (cf. Kraetzschmar 33).

\(^{d}\) 21.d. For the extended meaning of \(h z n\) “take warning,” see 33:4 and Note 33:4.a.\(^*\)

\(^{a}\) 22.a. LXX* Vg omit \(f\) \(V\) “there”: see Note 1:3.d. It presumably alludes to v 15 and antedates the insertion of vv 16b–21 (Kraetzschmar 39; Hölscher, Dichter 54). Probably it was omitted deliberately because it now lacks an adjacent antecedent.
myself down on my face, whereupon the spirit entered me and made me stand on my feet. Yahweh spoke with me: “Go home,” he told me, “and shut yourself indoors—they will actually put ropes round you, human one, and tie you up, so that you will not be able to mix with them outdoors—and I will make your tongue stick to your palate, and you will be dumb and so unable to relate to them as an agent of punishment, rebel community though they are. But whenever I speak with you, I will open your mouth and you will tell them ‘This is the message of the Lord Yahweh.’ Anyone ready to listen may listen and anyone who refuses to do so may refuse, rebel community as they are.

4:1 “You, human one, are to take a brick and, setting it in front of you, draw a city on it. Then set against it siege appliances: erect a siege tower against it, pile up a ramp against it, station against it army encampments, and set battering rams all around. Also, you are to take an iron baking plate and use it as an iron wall separating you from the city. Stare fixedly at it and regard it as in a state of siege, and besiege it. It is to be a sign for the community of Israel.

4:2 “You are also to lie down on your left side and let it feel the guilt of the community of Israel.

a 23.a. In front of d wb k k “like the glory,” the LXX has “like the appearance and” (see BHS), which evidently represents a comparative gloss from 43:3.
a 24.a. Lit. “he,” with implicit reference to Yahweh; W “spirit” is fem.. Cf. 1:28bb–2:3. Here the divine speaking of v 22bb is fulfilled.
a 25.a. LXX Vg render as passive, presumably taking as niph. But the following active verb and especially μ k w b “among them” suggest an active form, as Hitzig (28) and others have observed; moreover, μ h l “to them” in v 26 lends further support (Herrmann 26). Comparison with 4:8 is a red herring: the proposal to read yt t n “I have put” and yk s a W“and I will tie” with Eth (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:14) is to be resisted. Zimmerli (147) has observed that BHK’s appeal to the Tg. is unwarranted. The pf verb evidently refers to the future: cf. 4:8, 15 and GKC 106n. It seems to be basically performative with a future application: cf. 4:5 and Note 4:5.a.
a 26.a. For the indirectly causal role of yk “for” here and in v 27, see Note 2:6.b.
a 27.a. For the use of ynd a “Lord” in the messenger formula here and in 5:5, 7, 8, see Note 2:4.c. It should not be deleted with BHS.
a 1.a. The general textual tradition adds μ I v W y a a “Jerusalem,” but the specification is unnatural, and it seems to be an early, correct gloss anticipating vv 7, 16 (Hölscher, Dichter 61 n. 1; et al.). The particle t a cannot introduce a gloss, as in Isa 7:17, 20 (cf. Driver, “Glosses” 127).
a 2.a. The MT adds a fifth h y l “against it,” unrepresented in LXX* Vg; it may have entered the text by assimilation to the preceding clauses. Zimmerli (148) observes that it breaks the pattern of three-beat clauses. It is possible, however, that a copyist or translator wearied of reproducing yet another h y l . The preceding verbal form μ y c W “and set” deviates from the earlier consec pf forms, but even if LXX Vg attest t m c W (BHS), the MT may be retained as a harder reading. Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 508 n. 37) correctly observes that Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 147–48) misunderstood the various military terms of this verse as parts of a single siege machine.
You are to bear their guilt for as many days as you lie on it. I assign you 390 days corresponding to their years of guilt, during which time you are to bear the guilt of the community of Israel.—

When you have completed that period, you are to lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the punishment of the community of Judah; forty days I assign you, a day for each year.—

Stare fixedly, then, at Jerusalem under siege, with your arm bared, and prophesy against it. In fact, I will put ropes round you, to stop you turning from one side to the other until you have completed your period for the siege.

“You are also to take some wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and emmer, and, putting them in a pot, make them into bread for yourself. You are to eat it as many days as you lie on your side, 390 days. The food you eat is to be rationed to twenty shekels per day: you are to eat it at the same time each day. As for water, you are to drink a controlled amount, a sixth of a hin, drinking it at the same time each day. The form in which you are to eat it is to be that of a barley cake, and you are to bake it in stools of human excrement, in public view.”

4.a. Lit. “put on it”: cf. the sense of “attribute, impute (error, shameful conduct) to” (BDB 963a). cf. REB “putting the weight of … on it.” Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 123) interestingly relates the suffix of “on it” to the community of Israel, but the clear sense “on your side” for “on it” in v 4b requires the same meaning here. Wellhausen’s conjectural emendation “and I will place … on you” (in Smend 29) anticipates the explicit divine action of v 5 (Zimmerli 148). The emendation used to be popular; it was adopted by RSV and NEB, but significantly NRSV and REB have reverted to the MT. The conjecture “and bear,” with deletion of “on it” (Cornill 194; Zimmerli 148; et al.), arbitrarily rewrites the text in line with vv 5b, 6a (cf. v 4b).

5.a. For the performative pf here and in v 6b, see Note 3:8.a.*

5.b. For the number “190” in the LXX, see the Comment. The reading is an easier, and so secondary, one.

6.a. Heb. “again” is slightly awkward, which may have been why LXX* Syr. omit. Greenberg (105) cites Josh 5:2 for its use in non-identical repetition.

6.b. In L (= BHS) K, seems to be an idiosyncratic slip for “right”; for Q, see HALAT 397b.

6.c. Heb. seems to mean “guilt” in v 5 but “punishment” here. See the Comment.

8.a. For the pointing ” your confinement,” with reference to the restrictions imposed on the prophet, but cf. 5:2ab.

9.a. For the Aramaizing ending, see GKC 87e. The pl. forms in this list are plurals of result, referring to threshed wheat, podded lentils, etc. (Cooke 64, with reference to GKC 124m).

9.b. This is another, tetraploid species of wheat, regarded as inferior, since the hulled grains could not be freely threshed; the rendering “spelt” (NRSV) is erroneous, since it is a hexaploid variety of wheat that does not grow in Palestine (cf. Isa 28:25; M. Zohary, Plants of the Bible [Cambridge: CUP, 1982] 74–75).

10.a. Lit. “by weight.” Heb. is a variant of the standard q m, used in v 16; 5:1.

10.b. Strictly, from one hour of the day to the same hour on the next day. In Mishnaic Heb. the phrase (50) observed.

11.a. The meaning “measure” for m “from time to time” is used in the same sense, as Kraetzschmar (50) observed.
explained Yahweh, a “represents the unclean way in which members of Israel will eat b among the nations.” c—14 “No, Lord a Yahweh,” I said. “My throat b has never been defiled. From my childhood till now I have never eaten a carcass or ravaged animal, nor has expired sacrificial meat entered my mouth.” 15 “Look,” he told me, “I allow a you cattle dung in place of human stools, and you may prepare your bread on that.” 16 He also told me, “Human one, I am going to break the bread sticks a in Jerusalem. They will eat rationed amounts of bread b and also drink controlled amounts of water. b

a 12.a. The LXX ἐγκρεμον “bread baked in ashes” for τὸ ἁλί “round cake” is a contextually sensitive rendering. It is consonant with the use of the preposition ἐν “in.” The noun phrase is appositional: Cooke (64) calls it an acc of specification, comparing Lev 6:9(16)b; cf. the construction in 5:1a. Then the fem suffix on the verb, whose antecedent is the masc ἄρτος “food” in v 10, and also the succeeding pronouns agree with the nearer fem noun (Ehrlich, Randglossen 16). Greenberg (107), in the interests of claiming a separate oracle consisting of vv 6, 12–15, finds a new topic here, on the analogy of vv 10–11: the barley cake is the logical object, functioning as a casus pendens (cf. 32:7b). More probably the verb resumes the instances in v 10, with further clarification, in view of (1) the application in vv 16–17 solely in terms of vv 10–11 and (2) the description of the food of v 12 as ὁ γύρῳ “bread” in v 15, which resumes the very noun used in v 9, to which v 10 refers.

b 12.b. Heb. יַהֲנָךְ “it” is a casus pendens: other examples of a pronoun so construed occur in 9:10a; 30:18b; 33:17b. LXX Syr. Vg do not represent: it is an element naturally omitted in translation.

c 12.c. The omission of יָמַךְ “excrement” in the Syr. and in v 15 does not warrant its deletion as a gloss, as Fohrer (31) and Freedy (VT 20 [1970] 136) have urged. The Syr. notoriously abbreviates, and the briefer later reference is quite natural.

a 13.a. In place of הַנַּחַל יִרְצֶה יִרְצֶה “and Yahweh said,” the LXX has “and you will say ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel’ ” (see BHS). This reading obviously repeats 3:27a, apart from יִרְצֶה יִרְצֶה “(say) to them”; the divine title, which recurs in the LXX at v 14; 43:18 (and in LXX at 20:47[21:3]) is seemingly a misunderstanding of the Heb. via an abbreviation of the tetragrammaton (see Cooke 65). The omission of “to them” suggests that the material was meant to relate to a context where it no longer applied. V 7b is significant, where Ezekiel is told to prophesy against Jerusalem. Was the material in the LXX originally added as an explanatory gloss relating v 7b to 3:27, observing that this was a case where Ezekiel was released from his dumbness? If so, it is not clear why it slipped down to v 13, where it obviously displaced the introductory clause after being understood as a correction of it.

b 13.b. The MT adds “their bread,” which is not represented in the LXX*. It is best understood as a slight amplification influenced by vv 15–16.

c 13.c. The MT adds “where I will drive them,” which again the LXX* does not yet represent. The verb of divinely enforced exile does not recur in the book; it is characteristic of Jeremiah (see Zimmerli 150). Cooke (56) may be correct in regarding Jer 24:9 as the source.

a 14.a. For the formulaic use of יָדָךְ “Lord” in this exclamation of protest, see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556, 561–62.


a 15.a. See Note 3:25.a.*

a 16.a. See the Comment.
17. My intent is\(^a\) that they should be short of bread and water and that they should one and all\(^b\) be filled with despair, mortified by their guilt.

5:1. “Next, human one, you are to take a sharp sword and use it as a barber’s razor,\(^a\) applying it all over the hair of your head\(^b\) and beard. Then take scales to weigh it, and divide it up. 2. A third part\(^a\) you are to burn in flames inside the city, when the period of representing the siege is over;\(^b\) another third you are to cut up\(^c\) with your sword all round the city; and the remaining third you are to disperse to the wind. I will chase after them with drawn sword. 3. Then take a small amount of it\(^a\) and wrap it in your skirt,\(^b\) but some of this you are to take again and throw into the fire and burn it up. Out of it\(^a\) fire will come to the whole community of Israel.\(^b\)

\(^a\) 16.b. The MT adds \(\text{\`awm\`aw}\) b w . . h ga d b w “and with anxiety … and with dismay” to the nouns of limitation, although in sense they do not function as coordinated pairs. The omission of the first added term and the transposition of the second in the Syr. support their secondary nature. They evidently originated as comparative glosses from the parallel 12:19.

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\(^a\) 17.a. The Heb. final clause depends on the divine punishment of v 16a, as a statement of divine purpose (cf. Zimmerli 170). However, Greenberg (108) takes it as a clause of result, claiming this sense in conclusions at 6:6; 12:19; 14:5; 16:63.

\(^b\) 17.b. Lit. “each one and his brother.”

\(^a\) 1.a. For the Heb. order of words and construction, see Cooke 65.

\(^b\) 1.b. Coordination with “beard” indicates that v \(\Delta\) f “head” here refers to the hair of the head (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:17, with reference to Num 6:9; 2 Sam 14:26). Thus in v 1b the pl. suffix refers to the two clumps of hair.

\(^a\) 2.a. The LXX artificially speaks of fourths rather than thirds here and in v 12: in the application of v 12 it counts plague and famine as two separate punishments. This is a harmonizing process that takes its cue from the “four” judgments of 14:21, in which plague and famine are counted separately.

\(^b\) 2.b. Fishbane (“Qumran Pesher” 109 and n. 60) understands as “representing the fullness of time of the siege.” Then the clause is an interpretation with reference to the whole period of the siege and anticipates the interpretation later in the verse. He rightly observes that a reference to the end of the siege itself does not fit; rather, the phrase appears to develop the temporal references to Ezekiel’s enactment of the symbolic acts in 4:3, 8, 9 (cf. 4:6), as Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 495–96 and n. 14) has observed.

\(^c\) 2.c. The MT “and you are to take the third—you are to cut.” The second verb, marked by asyndeton and lack of an object, functions as a rather awkward circumstantial clause denoting concomitance (Cooke, 65). It is widely held that the text originally read “and the third you are to cut,” \(\text{t} \text{j} \text{q} \text{l} \text{`aw}\) “(and) you are to take” being an insertion (Cornill 202 et al.) and also the object sign, which the next clause (and v 12ab–b) lacks (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:17; et al.). Greenberg (109) suspects a conflated text. The verb could have entered the text as an erroneous resumption of the form in v 1b or anticipation of that in v 3a.

\(^a\) 3.a. For \(\text{lf \`aw}\) “from there,” see BDB 1027b.

\(^b\) 3.b. A sg form is expected (cf. 16:8); the MT may easily be an aural error, with a false plene writing. Greenberg (110) finds a deliberate echo of the wind wrapping in its wings at Hos 4:19; certainly an allusion to it may underlie the MT.
5 “The Lord Yahweh’s message is as follows: This refers to Jerusalem, which I have put at the center of the other nations, with other countries surrounding it. 6 But it has wickedly rebelled against my standards more than the other nations, and against my rulings more than the countries around it, in that they have rejected my standards and failed to follow my rules. Therefore this is the message of the Lord Yahweh: Inasmuch as you have been more insolent than the nations around you, failing to follow my rules or put my standards into practice or even to meet the...
standards of the nations around you, therefore the Lord Yahweh’s message is as follows: I for my part am your adversary; I will carry out acts of judgment inside you in full view of the nations. I will do in you what I have never done before and will not do again, because of all your shocking practices:

so parents will eat children inside you, and children will eat their parents. I will carry out acts of judgment in you and disperse all those of you who are left to every wind. Therefore I swear on my life, runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle: because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable objects of worship and with all your other shocking practices, I for my part will resort to shearing, with no pitying glance or personal compassion. A third of you will die of plague or perish of famine inside you, another third will fall to the sword around you, while the remaining third I will disperse to every wind and chase after them with drawn sword. My anger
will be exhausted; I will sate\textsuperscript{a} my fury against them,\textsuperscript{b} and they\textsuperscript{c} will realize that I, Yahweh, have spoken in my passion, when I exhaust my fury against them.\textsuperscript{14}I will make\textsuperscript{a} you an object of destruction\textsuperscript{b} for every passerby to see.\textsuperscript{15}Then you will become\textsuperscript{a} an object of scorn and abuse\textsuperscript{b} to the

\textsuperscript{a}13.a. The LXX does not represent this second verb, but Zimmerli (152) has argued well for its authenticity. Probably the translator combined two verbs into one, as in 6:4.

\textsuperscript{b}13.b. The MT adds ית מני וわたし “and I will get relief,” which is not represented by the LXX\textsuperscript{*}. In favor of the piling up of verbs, Greenberg (111) has appealed to the four clauses for spending fury in 16:42. However, the absence from the LXX\textsuperscript{*} suggests that it is not original. Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 70 n. 35), impressed by the Heb. wordplay, has claimed that inability to convey it was the deliberate reason for omission in the LXX\textsuperscript{*}. But more probably it is a variant reading that has entered the text, which originated in a telescoping of ית מני וわたし by parablepsis from יא to יב (Herrmann 30). Significantly, the Qumran fragment 11Qez 5:11–17 does not have room for the whole of v 13 as it appears in the MT (Brownlee, RevQ 4 [1963] 15; Lust, “Ezekiel Manuscripts” 91).

\textsuperscript{c}13.c. For the pl. reference, cf. vv 6b, 12. With its second sg verb, the LXX not only reverts to the initial suffix in v 12 but paves the way for the second sg references in vv 14–17.

\textsuperscript{a}14.a. The differentiation between pf consec forms in vv 13 and 15 and the simple impf here suggested to Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:19) that v 14 should be regarded as a continuation of v 13b. However, the resumptive content of v 13b is not continued in v 14; moreover, the rather abrupt switch in person suggests that v 14 be taken separately. Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 70) construes it as a final clause, but structurally v 14 seems to belong with what follows (see the Comment).

\textsuperscript{b}14.b. The MT’s similar-looking terms הָרָֽגְל הָבָֽרָֽל “an object of destruction and an object of scorn” appear to reflect a conflated text. The second term, which anticipates v 15, is significantly not rendered in the LXX\textsuperscript{*}, although again Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 74 n. 50) argues that untranslatable wordplay explains the omission. It may be not simply a dittograph (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:19) but originally a variant הָרָֽגְל for הָרָֽל “object of scorn” after the verb “become” in v 15; moreover, the rather abrupt switch in person suggests that v 14 be taken separately. Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 70) construes it as a final clause, but structurally v 14 seems to belong with what follows (see the Comment).

\textsuperscript{a}15.a. The MT הָיִה וָסָע “and it (= Jerusalem) will become” is an error for the similar-looking יָהִֽו וָסָע “and you will become,” implied by the ancient versions and demanded by the context of second fem sg references. The discovery of fragments of 11Qez has brought apparent confirmation by its reading יָהִֽו וָסָע (Brownlee, RevQ 4 [1963] 14–15). Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:19) explained the error in terms of pseudodittography (יהו ).
nations around you, when I carry out in you acts of judgment in furious punishment—I, Yahweh, have spoken.¹⁶ When I let loose against them my baneful arrows, which will wreak destruction, I will break your bread sticks.¹⁷ I will let loose against you famine and vicious animals, and they will

¹⁵.b. For the form ḫpvwdg “object of abuse,” see Greenberg 116. The MT has another pair of nouns, ḫmv ḫwm /terms, which, contra Jerome, Zimmerli (153), and BHS, are not the first but the second pair. My explanation in Brownlee [(1986) 88] may stand, with slight amplification. As for stēnakt(h)v “giving cause for mourning,” Cornill (206) observed that ḫmv is rendered by stēnaein “groan” in 26:16, although Ziegler (LXX 212), on apparently good grounds, there prefers a form of stugnaein “be gloomy,” read by MS 967. So, whether or not we emend stēnakt(h)mo stugna(h)t(y) it seems to render ḫmv “an object of horror.” Jerome commented that he did not know what the other term, dhlaisth (LXXB etc.), meant; nor do we. The variant deilias t(h)v “giving cause for fright” in MS 26 undoubtedly preserves or restores the translator’s intent: cf. deilaiein “make afraid” in Deut 20:8 LXX and deiliah “be afraid” in Isa 13:7 LXX, both for the niph of ḥwm “melt with fear.” Heb. ḫwm seems to have been rendered in terms of its presumed first two root letters. Strangely, the Heb. pair of nouns was translated in reverse order. The MT evidently reflects a conflated text, with only the second pair of terms attested by the LXX*. The first pair looks authentic: cf. the pairing in Isa 51:7; Zeph 2:8. How then did the second pair enter the text? It may be suggested that it has something to do with ḫhmnv bwh ḥr “by measure and with dismay” in 4:16. The first term is rare (see Note 4:11.a.); it was seemingly supplied with an explanatory gloss that understood it as a variant of ḥwm “chastisement.” The second term, which occurs seldom in Ezekiel, was glossed with the standard ḫwm. These two glosses once stood in the margin of 4:16, but were at some point inserted as a pair in the wrong side of the column, at 5:15. A shift to the new context was encouraged not only by the pairing of nouns in 5:15 but also by the presence of ḥb ṣ r “destruction,” a synonym of ḫwm, and of ḥ ṣ ṭ “punishment,” a synonym of ḫwm, in 5:14 and 15b respectively. In the Vorlage of the LXX, the new pair displaced the first pair of nouns, but in the MT, both pairs have survived.

¹⁵.c. The MT adds ḫhmj b ḫwh “with anger and fury and,” which is not represented in the LXX* and is probably a later addition in view of the “clumsy repetition” of ḫhmj (Zimmerli 153). The extra material could be a comparative annotation from Jer 21:5, whose context resembles this passage.

¹⁵.d. The LXX has “my fury” for ḫmj “fury,” under the influence of v 13.

¹⁶.a. The MT ḫhb “against them,” already attested by the LXX, is awkward, as its omission in the Tg. shows: v 16 and the early part of v 17 are dominated by second pl. references. See Note 16.c.* and the Comment.

¹⁶.b. The MT ḫhr ḫhr “of famine, harmful” appears to be a doublet, of which the LXX* represents only ḫhr. However, this awkwardly anticipates one of the acts of judgment detailed in v 17 and is probably a scribal error by mechanical assimilation to the term there. Then the LXX is right in presupposing a pointing ḫhr “my arrows” in place of the MT ḫhr “arrows of” (Hitzig 39; et al.).

¹⁶.c. The MT adds ḫḥ ḫ ḫ “which I will send to destroy you, and famine I will increase upon you,” which the LXX* leaves unrepresented. The addition is probably made up of two explanatory glosses (Hitzig 39). The first by the use of an impf. verb clarifies the pf ḫhr in the previous relative clause, “which are for your destruction,” as a fut reference. The second explains “arrows of famine” of the MT as a series of famines and also interprets the awkward ḫhb “against them” in second person terms. For the form of ḫ ḫ ḫ “I will add,” see Joüon 114g.
leave your childless. Moreover, plague and bloodshed will sweep through you, and I will order the sword to invade you. I, Yahweh, have spoken.”

Notes

17.a. As in v 9, the pf has a performative sense.

17.b. The Heb. juxtaposition of pf consec verbs has a hypothetical sense: cf. GKC 112kk.

17.c. After יפ מ “from my mouth” in the previous clause, יכנמ could mean “(pass on a warning) from me” (BDB 264a; KB 252b). However, the use of ה with the same verb in v 8 with the sense “warn off, against the consequences of” suggests that divine punishment is in view (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:17; HALAT 255a). The English translation “before me” in Zimmerli 142 is inadequate for “vor mir” (Ezechiel 1 86), which means rather “(caution) against me.”

18.a. The noun, serving as a type, is pointed with the article, but hereafter lacks it: see Greenberg 84.

18.b. The MT reflects the general textual tradition in this double mention of warning. Since the second recurs in the parallel 33:8, the first clause is often regarded as secondary. However, Fohrer (23) argued the other way, that the second clause was a comparative gloss from 33:8. If the first clause has been added, the original intention may have been to note the corresponding clause in 3:20. The force of the pf verbs is conditional, with the same function as יכ “if” in vv 19, 20b, 20a: see Greenberg (84), who gives examples from priestly legal prescriptions. So the focus of the sentence is on the impf. verbs of v 18b as main verbs, as in vv 19–21b.

18.c. The adj does not occur in 33:8 or in LXX Syr. here, but the LXX at the comparable point in v.
19 reflects a Vorlage that is a development of it. Zimmerli (142–43) regards \( V \) as always substantival, “wicked one,” and only here in the OT used adjectivally, but see HALAT 1208b. In general 3:18–21 reflects a fuller, more heavy-handed text than its counterpart in chap. 33, but this style is probably to be understood in recensional rather than text-critical terms, in the light of the LXX’s tendency to reflect a text similar to the MT in this section.

18.d. Since Heb \( wtyjl \) “to keep him alive” does not occur in the parallel version, there has been a scholarly tendency to delete it as secondary here (BHS). See the previous note*

18.e. Heb. \( V \) a \( vr \) may be an Aramaism, “that wicked person”: cf. Dan 2:23 and Greenberg 85. But \( V \) could be appositional: cf. the apparently appositional usage of \( qydx \) “righteous” in v 21.

18.f. The NRSV achieves inclusive language by treating the Heb. sg forms as collective. In this historically oriented commentary, it seems preferable to retain the references to individual cases, to provide a basis for exegesis.

19.a. Scholars tend to prune the double phrase by excising \( w w[vr \] “from his wickedness and” in line with 33:9 (BHS). Significantly, if somewhat inconsistently, Zimmerli (142) tacitly retained the text. There seems to be a hinging intent in the sequence \( w \) \( V \) \( m \) \( b \) \( V \) \( Aa \) \( w \) “and he did not turn from his wickedness” and \( wqdxm \) \( bwvbw \) “and when … turns from his righteousness” in v 20. The LXX reflects

\* 18.c. The adj does not occur in 33:8 or in LXX Syr. here, but the LXX at the comparable point in v 19 reflects a Vorlage that is a development of it. Zimmerli (142–43) regards \( V \) as always substantival, “wicked one,” and only here in the OT used adjectivally, but see HALAT 1208b. In general 3:18–21 reflects a fuller, more heavy-handed text than its counterpart in chap. 33, but this style is probably to be understood in recensional rather than text-critical terms, in the light of the LXX’s tendency to reflect a text similar to the MT in this section.

Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
gs singular or under
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
“that wicked person” (Fohrer 23), with different word division, contra Zimmerli (143) and BHS.

20.a. Scholars prefer to read a fem. form, as in 18:24; 33:18 (see BHS). However, Greenberg (86) has observed a recensional preference for the masc segholote forms, ור פ מ “wickedness” and דא “righteousness,” in contrast to the fem forms used in chaps. 18 and 33, which he notes were dictated by the standard phrase ה ד ו מ “justice and righteousness” used in 18:5 (Greenberg 89). His consequent uneasiness about דא “his righteous acts” may be alleviated by the fact that the fem. pl. relates specifically to concrete acts rather than a state (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:17).

20.b. That is, a fatal “accident” that leads to his premature death. The term ל ו מ “stumbling block” was seemingly borrowed from Jer 6:21: cf. the use of the watchman metaphor of Jer 6:17 in v 17. cf. in principle 1 Kgs 22:20, 34. Calvin (160–61) rightly saw that it refers to the execution of punishment.

20.c. For the defective writing in K, see Note 33:13.b*.

20.d. The non-representation of ה כ ו מ “that he has done” in LXX is judged an inner-Greek aberration by Ziegler, LXX 101; cf. 18:24.

21.a. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:17) suggested that in the MT דא “righteous one” stands in apposition to the subj: “you as a righteous person (have warned him)” (cf. Brownlee [1986] 47). This eases the construction but is confusing in the context, in which the term, like ו מ “wicked one” elsewhere, refers to the hypothetical character who is the object of warning. More obviously, the noun is in apposition to the acc suffix: see GKC 131m. LXX Syr. imply דא מ “you have warned the righteous person.” Greenberg (86) suggests that the MT reflects a conflated text: דא is a gloss

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BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

fem. feminine

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

fem. feminine

pl. plate or plural

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

cf. confer, compare

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

subj subject/subjective

cf. confer, compare


LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
representing the reading underlying LXX Syr. as an alternative to ῥ γ ᾶν “you have warned him.” However, ῥ γ ᾶν may simply be a case of mechanical assimilation to the verbal form in v 20. The removal of the suffix yields an expected parallelism with v 19. The LXX does betray a belated awareness of the MT: in v 21b it renders γ ᾶν “he was warned” as if it were ῥ γ ᾶν. Evidently in the history of its Vorlage a marginal reading ῥ γ ᾶν was taken to relate not to the first instance of the verb but to the second, because of the double occurrence of a preceding γκ “if, because,” and took its place.

21.b. The second instance of ὁ ὁδὸς “righteous” in the MT seems superfluous. LXX Syr. appear to have found it before the main verb (“the righteous person will certainly live”). It can be argued that the diversity of the textual tradition indicates that it is a gloss of some kind (BHS). Greenberg (84) adventurously takes α ᾱαι ὁ ὁδὸς as an explanatory gloss on α ᾱαι ὁμώμολος, which originally meant “so that he does not sin” (cf. 13:22), with ὁ ὁδὸς functioning as a cue word: “righteous one: and he did not sin.” However, α ᾱαι ὁμώμολος “and he did not sin” seems to function as a structural counterpart to … ἀ ϖ ὀ ᾵τ “and he did not turn …” in v 19. The positioning in LXX Syr. is not likely: ἐ ᾱω “wicked one” in v 18b hardly suggests it, since it does not reappear in v 19 and is not matched in v 20. Freedy (VT 20 [1970] 143) proposed that the superfluous term originated as a rubric gloss to indicate the theme of v 21. This would be more plausible if a parallel example he found in v 18 (VT 20 [1970] 147) were more convincing. I cannot delete ὁ ὁδὸς with a good conscience because I have no assurance as to how it entered the text.

21.c. The pf is constative, here referring to extended duration (cf. Waltke and O’Connor, Syntax 30.1d; Joüon 112e): “did not continue to sin” (cf. Kraetzschmar 33).

21.d. For the extended meaning of γ ᾶν “take warning,” see 33:4 and Note 33:4.a.*
22.a. **LXX* Vg omit */v/ “there”: see *Note 1:3.d*. It presumably alludes to v 15 and antedates the insertion of vv 16b–21 (Kraetzschmar 39; Hölscher, *Dichter* 54). Probably it was omitted deliberately because it now lacks an adjacent antecedent.

23.a. In front of */wb* k b “like the glory,” the **LXX** has “like the appearance and” (see *BHS*), which evidently represents a comparative gloss from 43:3.

24.a. Lit. “he,” with implicit reference to Yahweh; */w/ “spirit” is fem. Cf. 1:28bb–2:3. Here the divine speaking of v 22bb is fulfilled.

25.a. **LXX Vg** render as passive, presumably taking as niph. But the following active verb and especially */k* b b “among them” suggest an active form, as Hitzig (28) and others have observed; moreover, */h* l “to them” in v 26 lends further support (Herrmann 26). Comparison with 4:8 is a red herring: the proposal to read */tt* b n “I have put” and */t* s b w “I will tie” with Eth (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 5:14) is to be resisted. Zimmerli (147) has observed that *BHK*’s appeal to the Tg. is unwarranted. The pf verb evidently refers to the future: cf. 4:8, 15 and *GKC* 106n. It seems to be basically performative with a future application: cf. 4:5 and *Note 4:5.a.*

26.a. For the indirectly causal role of */tk/ “for” here and in v 27, see *Note 2:6.b.*
27.a. For the use of יְהוָה “Lord” in the messenger formula here and in 5:5, 7, 8, see Note 2:4.c.* It should not be deleted with *BHS*.

1.a. The general textual tradition adds מַלְטֶלָא וֵאֱמַלָא “Jerusalem,” but the specification is unnatural, and it seems to be an early, correct gloss anticipating vv 7, 16 (Hölscher, *Dichter* 61 n. 1; et al.). The particle † אלה can introduce a gloss, as in Isa 7:17, 20 (cf. Driver, “Glosses” 127).

2.a. The MT adds a fifth ḫיָל[ ] “against it,” unrepresented in *LXX* *Vg*; it may have entered the text by assimilation to the preceding clauses. Zimmerli (148) observes that it breaks the pattern of three-beat clauses. It is possible, however, that a copyist or translator wearied of reproducing yet another ḫיָל[ ] . The preceding verbal form מָכָּת “and set” deviates from the earlier consec pf forms, but even if *LXX* *Vg* attest מָכָּת (*BHS*), the MT may be retained as a harder reading. Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 508 n. 37) correctly observes that Driver (*Bib* 35 [1954] 147–48) misunderstood the various military terms of this verse as parts of a single siege machine.

4.a. Lit. “put on it”; cf. the sense of מְכָּת מְכָּת “attribute, impute (error, shameful conduct) to” (BDB 963a). cf. *REB* “putting the weight of … on it.” Krüger (*Geschichtskonzepte* 123) interestingly relates the suffix of מָכָּת[ ] “on it” to the community of Israel, but the clear sense “on your side” for מָכָּת[ ] in v 4b requires the same meaning here. Wellhausen’s conjectural emendation מְכָּת[ ] מָכָּת[ ] “and I will place … on you” (in Smend 29) anticipates the explicit divine action of v 5 (Zimmerli 148). The emendation used to be popular; it was adopted by *RSV* and *NEB*, but significantly *NRSV* and *REB* have

*4.c. For the authenticity of יְהוָה “Lord” in the messenger formula, see the appendix in Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 556–62, which reverses the policy of deletion he earlier advocated throughout his two volumes. For the *LXX* evidence, see the discussion of McGregor (*Greek Text of Ezekiel* 75–93). *BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
*LXX* The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*Vg* Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
pf perfect
*LXX* The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*Vg* Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
n. note
*Bib Biblica*
Lit. literally
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
*REB* Revised English Bible
reverted to the MT. The conjecture לָא כֵּן “and bear,” with deletion of וְלָא “on it” (Cornill 194; Zimmerli 148; et al.), arbitrarily rewrites the text in line with vv 5b, 6ab (cf. v 4b).

5.a. For the performative pf here and in v 6b, see Note 3:8.a.*

5.b. For the number “190” in the LXX, see the Comment. The reading is an easier, and so secondary, one.

6.a. Heb. לָא נַע “again” is slightly awkward, which may have been why LXX* Syr. omit. Greenberg (105) cites Josh 5:2 for its use in non-identical repetition.

6.b. In L (= BHS) K, יָנָמַע looks to be an idiosyncratic slip for יָנָאת “right”; for Q, see HALAT 397b.

6.c. Heb. יָנַע seems to mean “guilt” in v 5 but “punishment” here. See the Comment.

8.a. For the pointing עָבַר וַיֶּקֶם, see GKC 851. Ehrlich (Randglossen 16; cf. BHK) suggested a vocalization עָבִרְךָ “your confinement,” with reference to the restrictions imposed on the prophet, but cf. 5:2a.
9.a. For the Aramaizing ending, see GKC 87e. The pl. forms in this list are plurals of result, referring to threshed wheat, podded lentils, etc. (Cooke 64, with reference to GKC 124m).

9.b. This is another, tetraploid species of wheat, regarded as inferior, since the hulled grains could not be freely threshed; the rendering “spelt” (NRSV) is erroneous, since it is a hexaploid variety of wheat that does not grow in Palestine (cf. Isa 28:25; M. Zohary, Plants of the Bible [Cambridge: CUP, 1982] 74–75).

10.a. Lit. “by weight.” Heb. lwq v m is a variant of the standard lq v m, used in v 16; 5:1.

10.b. Strictly, from one hour of the day to the same hour on the next day. In Mishnaic Heb. the phrase t l t m “from time to time” is used in the same sense, as Kraetzschmar (50) observed.

11.a. The meaning “measure” for h m is clear from the contexts in which it is used (also v 16; Lev 19:35; 1 Chr 23:29), but its derivation is uncertain.

12.a. The LXX ejgrfu ian “bread baked in ashes” for t g “round cake” is a contextually sensitive rendering. It is consonant with the use of the preposition b “in.” The noun phrase is appositional: Cooke (64) calls it an acc of specification, comparing Lev 6:9(16)b; cf. the construction in 5:1a b. Then the fem suffix on the verb, whose antecedent is the masc l k a m “food” in v 10, and also the succeeding pronouns agree with the nearer fem noun (Ehrlich, Randglossen 16). Greenberg (107), in the interests of claiming a separate oracle consisting of vv 6, 12–15, finds a new topic here, on the analogy of vv 10–11: the barley cake is the logical object, functioning as a casus pendens (cf. 32:7b). More probably the verb resumes the instances in v 10, with further clarification, in view of (1) the application in vv 16–17 solely in terms of vv 10–11 and (2) the description of the food of v 12 as ml “bread” in v 15, which resumes the very noun used in v 9, to which v 10 refers.

12.b. Heb. a yh “it” is a casus pendens: other examples of a pronoun so construed occur in 9:10a; 30:18b; 33:17b. LXX Syr. Vg do not represent: it is an element naturally omitted in translation.
12.c. The omission of "excrement" in the **Syr.** and in v 15 does not warrant its deletion as a gloss, as Fohrer (31) and Freedy (**VT** 20 [1970] 136) have urged. The **Syr.** notoriously abbreviates, and the briefer later reference is quite natural.

13.a. In place of "and Yahweh said," the **LXX** has "and you will say ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel’ " (see **BHS**). This reading obviously repeats 3:27ab, apart from "(say) to them"; the divine title, which recurs in the **LXX** at v 14; 43:18 (and in **LXX**A at 20:47[21:3]) is seemingly a misunderstanding of the **Heb.** via an abbreviation of the tetragrammaton (see Cooke 65). The omission of "to them" suggests that the material was meant to relate to a context where it no longer applied. **V 7b** is significant, where Ezekiel is told to prophesy against Jerusalem. Was the material in the **LXX** originally added as an explanatory gloss relating v 7b to 3:27, observing that this was a case where Ezekiel was released from his dumbness? If so, it is not clear why it slipped down to v 13, where it obviously displaced the introductory clause after being understood as a correction of it.

13.b. The **MT** adds “their bread,” which is not represented in the **LXX**. It is best understood as a slight amplification influenced by vv 15–16.

13.c. The **MT** adds “where I will drive them,” which again the **LXX** does not yet represent. The verb of divinely enforced exile does not recur in the book; it is characteristic of Jeremiah (see Zimmerli 150). Cooke (56) may be correct in regarding **Jer 24:9** as the source.


15.a. See **Note** 3:25.a.*
16.a. See the Comment.

16.b. The MT adds ÷wmmv b w… h gã d b w“and with anxiety … and with dismay” to the nouns of limitation, although in sense they do not function as coordinated pairs. The omission of the first added term and the transposition of the second in the Syr. support their secondary nature. They evidently originated as comparative glosses from the parallel 12:19.

17.a. The Heb. final clause depends on the divine punishment of v 16a, as a statement of divine purpose (cf. Zimmerli 170). However, Greenberg (108) takes it as a clause of result, claiming this sense in conclusions at 6:6; 12:19; 14:5; 16:63.

17.b. Lit. “each one and his brother.”

1.a. For the Heb. order of words and construction, see Cooke 65.

1.b. Coordination with “beard” indicates that V ã † “head” here refers to the hair of the head (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:17, with reference to Num 6:9; 2 Sam 14:26). Thus in v 1b the pl. suffix refers to the two clumps of hair.

2.a. The LXX artificially speaks of fourths rather than thirds here and in v 12: in the application of v 12 it counts plague and famine as two separate punishments. This is a harmonizing process that takes its cue from the “four” judgments of 14:21, in which plague and famine are counted separately.

2.b. Fishbane (“Qumran Pesher” 109 and n. 60) understands as “representing the fullness of time of the siege.” Then the clause is an interpretation with reference to the whole period of the siege and anticipates the interpretation later in the verse. He rightly observes that a reference to the end of the siege itself does not fit; rather, the phrase appears to develop the temporal references to Ezekiel’s enactment of the symbolic acts in 4:3, 8, 9 (cf. 4:6), as Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 495–96 and n. 14) has observed.

*25.a. LXX Vg render as passive, presumably taking as niph. But the following active verb and especially µ k v b “among them” suggest an active form, as Hitzig (28) and others have observed; moreover, µ h “to them” in v 26 lends further support (Herrmann 26). Comparison with 4:8 is a red herring: the proposal to read yt t ſ “I have put” and yt s w “and I will tie” with Eth (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:14) is to be resisted. Zimmerli (147) has observed that BHK’s appeal to the Tg. is unwarranted. The pf verb evidently refers to the future: cf. 4:8, 15 and GKC 106n. It seems to be basically performative with a future application: cf. 4:5 and Note 4:5.a.*
2.c. The MT “and you are to take the third—you are to cut.” The second verb, marked by asyndeton and lack of an object, functions as a rather awkward circumstantial clause denoting concomitance (Cooke, 65). It is widely held that the text originally read “and the third you are to cut,” ֹיָּשָׁן שָׁנָה “and you are to take” being an insertion (Cornill 202 et al.) and also the object sign, which the next clause (and v 12ab–bא) lacks (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:17; et al.). Greenberg (109) suspects a conflated text. The verb could have entered the text as an erroneous resumption of the form in v 1b or anticipation of that in v 3a.

3.a. For ⚭יָּשָׁנ “from there,” see BDB 1027b.

3.b. A sg form is expected (cf. 16:8); the MT may easily be an aural error, with a false plene writing. Greenberg (110) finds a deliberate echo of the wind wrapping in its wings at Hos 4:19; certainly an allusion to it may underlie the MT.

4.a. The antecedent of the masc suffix is not clear. Cooke (58) and Greenberg (110) take it in a neuter sense, referring to the last act of judgment (cf. the LXX, which evidently relates it to the city), but it is more likely that the antecedent is וַאֲרֵבָה “fire” (Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 583 n. 207). To regard the clause as a gloss from 19:14 (Cooke 58; et al.) is dubious: the reference and context are completely different. Zimmerli (151), BHS, Liwak (“Probleme” 262 n. 7), and Uehlinger (Jerusalem 116, 119) are mistaken in stating that the LXX* does not attest the clause. I echoed this mistake in Brownlee (1986) 79–80.

4.b. The LXX represents a secondary tradition of different sentence division, whereby “to the whole community of Israel” has been taken with v 5. It introduces v 5 with καὶ εἴρει “and you will say.” Doubtless the reading originated as a misplaced variant of וַתִּזְבַּדְתָּ “and you rebelled,” which itself was subsequently interpreted as וַתִּזְבַּדְתָּ וָּיֶרֶעֶב “and you will say” in the LXX at v 6. This reading has sometimes been preferred (Cornill 202–3; et al., including Zimmerli, 151).

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
et al. et alii, and others
et al. et alii, and others
sg singular or under
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
n. note
et al. et alii, and others
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
n. note
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
5.a. Although מִהְיֶה־זִּבַּת “this” often points forward, in this context it points back: cf. the cases listed in BDB 261a. For its use in interpretation, cf. Zech 5:3, 6–8.

5.b. The LXX implies τὰ τῶν χωρῶν “the (countries),” which reads better and could easily have dropped out by haplography (cf. v 6; Zimmerli, 151). For the pl. τὰ τῶν χωρῶν, characteristic of later Heb., see Rooker, Biblical Hebrew in Transition 75–77.

6.a. It is possible to take מִיְהִישָׁה as a fem. inf constr, “(so as to) be wicked,” and to link it comparatively with what follows: “more wicked than the nations and … than the countries” (Hitzig 37; et al., including Zimmerli 151 and Greenberg 111). Significantly, HALAT (1207b) is uncertain. More naturally, the two objects indicate that the initial verb is the focus of the comparison (cf. v 7). Then מִיְהִישָׁה means “in respect of wickedness” and so “wickedly” (RSV).

7.a. The suffix is pl.

7.b. The MT מִקְנָה is already presupposed by the LXX (cf. Cooke 66) and seems to be intended as a denominative verb from מְנָה, “be turbulent,” perhaps under the influence of מְנָה “multitude, tumult ” in 7:11–14. Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 504), rendering “your turmoil ([which is] more than the nations”), evidently regards it as a noun, but the syntactical construction is then problematic. Cornill (203), implicitly following Böttcher, and others have conjecturally emended to מִקְנָה הדֹּלַח “(because of) your rebelling,” which nicely resumes v 6; but difficulty in explaining how the corruption might have occurred stands in the way of adopting this otherwise attractive emendation. As I suggested in Brownlee ([1986] 88), Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 61) was surely correct in comparing מְנָה “insolent” in Prov 29:21; Sir 47:23 (cf. HALAT 568a) and seeing here an internal hiph form of מְנָה that must be pointed מִקְנָה הדֹּלַח “(because of) your rebelling.”

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
pl. plate or plural
Heb. Hebrew
fem. feminine
inf infinitive
constr construct
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
pl. plate or plural
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
Bib Biblica
you are (more) disdainful”: cf. the REB “since you have been more insubordinate.” Then a stylistic variant of the verb for rebelliousness in v 6 is employed here.

7.c. Some Heb. manuscripts and editions and Syr. Arm and two Gr. manuscripts omit the negative; the NRSV has adopted this shorter text, which accords with 11:12: Israel descended to the low level of the nations. The MT, which has the support of the LXX, fits the context (see the Comment). The omission was an attempt to avoid apparent contradiction of 11:12 (Keil 89). The double negativity of divine imminent action in vv 8b–9 functions as a stylistic counterpart to the double human failure to act here.

8.a. LXX* Syr. do not represent yra ἀμ g “even I,” but it is contextually fitting: cf. v 11b.

8.b. The suffix is fem. sg.

8.c. In the context the MT ἀνθρώπος is used in the sense ἀνθρώπος “acts of judgment” (vv 10, 15; cf. other passages listed in BHS). It is not possible to determine which word is represented in the LXX. Kraetzschmar (59) and Greenberg (111) justify the MT in terms of wordplay between crime and punishment, but more probably the latter form is to be read (Cornill 204 et al.): the MT is a case of mechanical assimilation to the term in v 7, induced by the general overlap of vocabulary.

10.a. The ancient versions harmonize the two clauses: Syr. Tg. have “their children” and the LXX*
has simply “parents.”

11.a. For the formulaic use of יְהֹוָה “Lord” in a divine-saying formula, see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2 556, 562.*

11.b. The LXX* does not represent the former of the two phrases. Zimmerli (*Ezekiel 2 556, 562*) considers it possibly an addition, comparing 7:20. The pair occurs indubitably at 11:18, 21. cf. 37:23 and Note 37:23.a.*

11.c. Heb. [ז] here seems to be used absolutely with the sense “I will shear, shave” (Herrmann 30; Zimmerli 152; *HALAT* 195b), repeating the imagery but not the vocabulary of v 1. One may compare the rephrasing of v 2 in v 12 and, more appositely, the stylistic variation employed in vv 6–7. The meaning “sheave” is common in Aram.: Greenberg (115) notes that it is used for [ז] “sheave” in the Tg. at *Judg* 16:19; 2 *Sam* 10:4. This sense does occur in Heb. at *Isa* 15:2; *Jer* 48:37, but its primary meaning is “diminish, restrain.” The ancient versions found difficulty: S Vg Tg. (cf. Sperber, *Bible in Aramaic* 4B:335) render as if [ז] “I will cut down,” which occurs as a minority reading in the Masoretic tradition (see *BHK*) and which the *NRSV* prefers; LXX Syr. have “I will reject you” (= *NJB*), which may represent [ז] “I will abhor,” since the same equivalents occur in both versions at 16:45. The *REB* “destroy” (cf. *NEB* “consume”) perpetuates Driver’s view that the verb in the MT is cognate with Arab. *Jarāa* “swallow down” and used in the sense “utterly destroy” (*Bib* 35 [1954] 148).

11.d. For the meaningless juss of the Heb. verb, if such it is, see *GKC* 72r; Joüon 80k and n. 2;

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Tg. Targum
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
Tg. Targum
Heb. Hebrew
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
*NJB* New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
*REB* Revised English Bible
cf. confer, compare
*NEB* The New English Bible
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
*Bib* *Biblica*
Heb. Hebrew
Waltke and O’Connor Syntax 34.2.1c.

12.a. The form \( \dddot{\textit{ytvlv}} \) in L and most manuscripts is a slip for \( \dddot{\textit{ytvlv}} \) (BHK cf. BHS). For the LXX “fourth,” see Note 2.a.* above.

12.b. The transposition of clauses in the LXX noted by BHS is secondary: it artificially separates what was to happen inside and around the city, in order to juxtapose the two actions with the sword (Cornill 205).

13.a. The LXX does not represent this second verb, but Zimmerli (152) has argued well for its authenticity. Probably the translator combined two verbs into one, as in 6:4.

13.b. The MT adds \( \dddot{\textit{ymjnhw}} \) “and I will get relief,” which is not represented by the LXX*. In favor of the piling up of verbs, Greenberg (111) has appealed to the four clauses for spending fury in 16:42. However, the absence from the LXX* suggests that it is not original. Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 70 n. 35), impressed by the Heb. wordplay, has claimed that inability to convey it was the deliberate reason for omission in the LXX*. But more probably it is a variant reading that has entered the text, which originated in a telescoping of \( \dddot{\textit{ymj nh w}} \) by parablepsis from \( \dddot{j} \) to \( \dddot{h} \) (Herrmann 30). Significantly, the Qumran fragment 11Qez 5:11–17 does not have room for the whole of v 13 as it appears in the MT (Brownlee, RevQ 4 [1963] 15; Lust, “Ezekiel Manuscripts” 91).

n. note
L Leningrad Codes of MT (as published in BHS) or Codex Leningradensis, B19a
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensis, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*2.a. The LXX artificially speaks of fourths rather than thirds here and in v 12: in the application of v 12 it counts plague and famine as two separate punishments. This is a harmonizing process that takes its cue from the “four” judgments of 14:21, in which plague and famine are counted separately.
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
n. note
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
11Qez MS of Ezekiel from Qumran Cave 11
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
RevQ Revue de Qumràn
13.c. For the pl. reference, cf. vv 6b, 12. With its second sg verb, the LXX not only reverts to the initial suffix in v 12 but paves the way for the second sg references in vv 14–17.

14.a. The differentiation between pf consec forms in vv 13 and 15 and the simple impf here suggested to Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:19) that v 14 should be regarded as a continuation of v 13bb. However, the resumptive content of v 13bb is not continued in v 14; moreover, the rather abrupt switch in person suggests that v 14 be taken separately. Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 70) construes it as a final clause, but structurally v 14 seems to belong with what follows (see the Comment).

14.b. The MT’s similar-looking terms הָרִידְלִי וַחְרָדְלִי “an object of destruction and an object of scorn” appear to reflect a conflated text. The second term, which anticipates v 15, is significantly not rendered in the LXX*, although again Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 74 n. 50) argues that untranslatable wordplay explains the omission. It may be not simply a ditto graph (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:19) but originally a variant הָרִידְלִי for הָרִידֵי “object of scorn” after the verb “become” in v 15 (cf. the respective lists with and without lamed in BDB 358a), which suffered the fate of incorporation into v 14 with the copula. The next phrase, יוֹהֵב יְבָרֹס רְבֵּא מְיוֹגָם “among the nations who are around you,” is suspiciously similar to v 15a, יְבָרֹס רְבֵּא מְיוֹגָם “to the nations who are around you.” It is significant that for מְיוֹגָם there is a variant מְיוֹגַם “among the nations” represented in many manuscripts and reflected in LXX Vg. Accordingly, the present phrase, which is a firm part of the textual tradition, looks like an early variant anchored with cue words, which has strayed from the margin into a point in v 14 that roughly matches the position of the original in v 15. For מְיוֹגַם, the LXX strangely has “and your daughters,” which reflects יְבָרֹס. As I explained in Brownlee ([1986] 88), this reading appears to be the result of a mechanical telescoping of יְבָרֹס יְבָרֹס רְבֵּא מְיוֹגוּם into יְבָרֹס מְיוֹגוּם (by parablepsis from יְבָרֹס) into יְבָרֹס מְיוֹגוּם. Then the following כֻּנֵל וָסַו “around you” in the LXX represents a (pre-hexaplaric?) partial approximation to the MT.

15.a. The MT הַתְּיָהְו “and it (= Jerusalem) will become” is an error for the similar-looking תְּיָהְו וָבַיְהֵר תְּיָהְו וָבַיְהֵר “and you will become,” implied by the ancient versions and demanded by the context of second fem sg references. The discovery of fragments of 11QEZ has brought apparent confirmation by its reading תְּיָהְו וָבַיְהֵר.

15.b. For the form \(\text{ḥpwdg}\) “object of abuse,” see Greenberg 116. The MT has another pair of nouns, \(\text{ḥmvwm}\) \(\text{rswm}\) “a warning and an object of horror.” The LXX\(^*\) represents only one pair of nouns, which, contra Jerome, Zimmerli (153), and BHS, are not the first but the second pair. My explanation in Brownlee ([1986] 88) may stand, with slight amplification. As for \(\text{stnakt hν}\), giving cause for mourning,” Cornill (206) observed that \(\text{μmv}\) is rendered by \(\text{stnαvεin}\) “groan” in 26:16, although Ziegler (LXX 212), on apparently good grounds, there prefers a form of \(\text{stugnavεin}\) “be gloomy,” read by MS 967. So, whether or not we emend \(\text{stnαkt hν}\) \(\text{stugnaκτ hν}\) it seems to render \(\text{ḥmv m}\) “an object of horror.” Jerome commented that he did not know what the other term, \(\text{dhlaist hν}(\text{LXX}\text{B etc.})\), meant; nor do we. The variant \(\text{deiliαst hν}\) “giving cause for fright” in MS 26 undoubtedly preserves or restores the translator’s intent: cf. \(\text{deiliαvεin}\) “make afraid” in Deut 20:8 LXX and \(\text{deiliα h}\) “be afraid” in Isa 13:7 LXX, both for the niph of \(\text{ssm}\) “melt with fear.” Heb. \(\text{rswm}\) seems to have been rendered in terms of its presumed first two root letters. Strangely, the Heb. pair of nouns was translated in reverse order. The MT evidently reflects a conflated text, with only the second pair of terms attested by the LXX\(*\). The first pair looks authentic: cf. the pairing in Isa 51:7; Zeph 2:8. How then did the second pair enter the text? It may be suggested that it has something to do with \(\text{ḥmvwm}\) \(\text{hrwcmb}\) “by measure and with dismay” in 4:16. The first term is rare (see Note 4:11.a.\*); it was seemingly supplied with an explanatory gloss that understood it as a variant of \(\text{rswm}\) “chastisement.” The second term, which occurs seldom in Ezekiel, was glossed with the standard \(\text{ḥmv m}\). These two glosses once stood in the margin of 4:16, but were at some point inserted as a pair in the wrong side of the column, at 5:15. A shift to the new context was encouraged not only by the pairing of nouns in 5:15 but also by the presence

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11QEz MS of Ezekiel from Qumran Cave 11

*RevQ* *Revue de Qumrân*

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

*BHS* *Biblia hebraica stuttgартensis*, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

MS Monograph Series or Manuscript

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

cf. *confer*, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

niph Niphal

Heb. Hebrew

Heb. Hebrew

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

cf. *confer*, compare

* 11.a. The meaning “measure” for \(\text{ḥw č m}\) is clear from the contexts in which it is used (also v 16; Lev 19:35; 1 Chr 23:29), but its derivation is uncertain.
“destruction,” a synonym of הָיוֹ מִרְיוֹת, and of בָּשָׁם, “punishment,” a synonym of שֵׁם, in 5:14 and 15b respectively. In the Vorlage of the LXX, the new pair displaced the first pair of nouns, but in the MT, both pairs have survived.

15.c. The MT adds וַהָיוֹ מִרְיוֹת יִבְשָׂם a b “with anger and fury and,” which is not represented in the LXX* and is probably a later addition in view of the “clumsy repetition” of וַהָיוֹ מִרְיוֹת (Zimmerli 153). The extra material could be a comparative annotation from Jer 21:5, whose context resembles this passage.

15.d. The LXX has “my fury” for וַהָיוֹ מִרְיוֹת “fury,” under the influence of v 13.

16.a. The MT מְהֹ בּ “against them,” already attested by the LXX, is awkward, as its omission in the Tg. shows: v 16 and the early part of v 17 are dominated by second pl. references. See Note 16.c* and the Comment.

16.b. The MT מְיָרֹ בּ “of famine, harmful” appears to be a doublet, of which the LXX* represents only בּ מְיָרֹ. However, this awkwardly anticipates one of the acts of judgment detailed in v 17 and is probably a scribal error by mechanical assimilation to the term there. Then the LXX is right in presupposing a pointing מָיָרֹ “my arrows” in place of the MT יָרֹ כּ “arrows of” (Hitzig 39; et al.).

16.c. The MT adds מִקְלָא יֵלְלוּ וִי וּבָשָׁם “which I will send to destroy you, and famine I will increase upon you,” which the LXX* leaves unrepresented. The addition is probably made up of two explanatory glosses (Hitzig 39). The first by the use of an impf. verb clarifies the pf מֶהֹ בּ in the previous relative clause, “which are for your destruction,” as a fut reference. The second explains “arrows of famine” of the MT as a series of famines and also interprets the awkward מְהֹ בּ “against them” in second person terms. For the form of מֵאִי וּבָשָׁם “I will add,” see Joüon 114g.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
clause, “which are for your destruction,” as a fut reference. The second explains “arrows of famine”
of the MT as a series of famines and also interprets the awkward µhb “against them” in second person
terms. For the form of 1 § ā “I will add,” see Joüon 114g.

17.a. The suffixes from here on are second sg. In the LXX all the second person suffixes are sg, in
line with v 15.

17.b. The LXX translates “I will take vengeance on you,” a rendering also found in 14:15; the
change of person may reflect the influence of the verbal form found there.

17.c. LXX Syr. add the equivalents of ḏ yb 5 m “around,” perhaps in reminiscence of the
contextually similar 28:23 (Hitzig 40).

**Form/Structure/Setting**

This next literary unit consists of 3:16–5:17. The messenger-reception formula in 6:1 will signal the
beginning of a further unit. This unit follows the pattern of the previous one in 1:1–3:15: an introductory
divine vision (3:22–24a) is followed by a divine speech (3:24b–5:17). In more general terms, the unit
exhibits a scheme that is common in the book, in that an initial narrative written in the first person is
followed by a divine speech addressed to the prophet (cf. chaps. 14, 20; cf. Zimmerli 154). However, in
this case the narrative is prefaced by a divine announcement of Ezekiel’s appointment as prophetic
watchman and an elaboration of his consequent responsibilities. This structurally unexpected section, 3:16
(or 16b)–21, which is introduced with a message-reception formula in v 16b, warrants separate
comment later.

The divine speech of 3:24b–5:17 basically consists of a series of divine commands for Ezekiel to
carry out five sign-acts, with interpretation of those acts included or appended in each case (cf. Fohrer,
*Symbolischen Handlungen* 47–53). Both the acts and their interpretation are incorporated into the divine
command, a late phenomenon characteristic of Ezekiel (see Zimmerli 156). There are a host of what
might be understood as structural markers in the text: µd a A b h t a w“And you, human one” at 3:25; 4:1;
5:1, h t a w“And you” at 4:3, 4, 9, and yl a r ma y w µ d a A b “and he told me, ‘Human one’” at 4:16. We
must bear in mind the randomness (in sectional terms) of such features in the divine speech of 2:1–3:11.
In this speech those at 3:25; 4:3, 16 do not carry the weight of introducing major sections.

The first section, 3:24b–27, involves a command to undergo a symbolic act of seclusion. That a
sign-act is in view here is suggested by (1) the presence of interpretation of the command at v 26a b and
v 27a b, (2) the reinforcement of the command with divine action in the course of vv 26–27, just as
divine constraint reinforces a sign-act at 4:8, and also (3) the specific description of Ezekiel’s release
from dumbness in 24:27 as a “sign” ( tp W). The second section, 4:1–3, consists of a double command to

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**Abbreviations**

*pf* perfect

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)

*cf.* confer, compare
depict the siege of Jerusalem in vv 1–3a and an interpretation in v 3b. The third section, 4:4–8, is primarily a command to depict Israel’s guilt, which includes within it interpretation; v 8 features a divine constraint, to ensure the correct fulfillment of the command. In the present form of the text, a second command appears at v 6, whose function must be considered later. The fourth section, 4:9–15, consists of a command to depict the harsh conditions of the coming siege of Jerusalem, which is interpreted in vv 16–17. The command is uniquely modified in vv 14–15, after the prophet’s protest. The role of v 13 will be discussed later.

The fifth section, 5:1–17, is the last and longest. A command to depict the fate of the besieged citizens in vv 1–4a has its own interpretation included, in v 2b, but most of the section consists of lengthy interpretive comments, in vv 4b–17. The basic interpretation in vv 5–6, which is introduced with a messenger formula, develops, via its accusatory material in v 6, into an oracle of judgment in vv 7–10. There follows in vv 11–13 an elaborated triple proof saying made up of accusation, sentence, and expanded recognition formula, with a closing formula of divine asseveration in v 13b (cf. Zimmerli 38–40). Two supplementary messages of judgment follow in vv 14–5 and 16–17, each of which closes with the asseveration formula. From v 7 onwards, this interpretive material is addressed rhetorically to Jerusalem or to its citizens. In the light of 4:1–3, 7, there can be no question of the prophet’s literal presence in Jerusalem.

It is sometimes advocated that the whole unit falls into two parts, the first consisting of the series of commands to carry out sign-acts, which closes at 5:4, and the second made up of oracular material in 5:5–17 (Zimmerli 174; Krüger, Geschichtskonzepte 115; earlier Cooke 58 and Eichrodt 80). Zimmerli bases this bipartite division on his adoption of the introductory “and you will say to all the community of Israel,” found in the LXX at 5:4b (see Note 5:4.b.), and thus differentiates between the earlier personal commands of Yahweh to Ezekiel and the delivery of a public oracle (cf. BHS). Greenberg (110, 117–19), however, bases it on the claim that in 5:5–17 all the foregoing acts find a loose interpretation (cf. Smend 33; Kraetzschmar 42, 56; Keil 88; Eichrodt 87–89; Klein 45–46; Freibel, “Sign-Acts” 498–99). Slightly inconsistently, he also considers this section the “script” of the prophesying that Ezekiel was ordered to undertake in 4:7 (120, 123). Earlier, Cooke (58) regarded these verses as a twofold commentary, on the symbolic act described in 4:1–3(5:5–10) and on the act in 5:1–4(5:11–15). In fact, where there is an echo of previous symbolism, it is that of the last command. In particular, vv 10b and 12 show that the main aim of vv 5–15 is to provide an interpretive commentary on the final sign. If v 5 relates to the model of the city, it does so because it has also featured in the last command, at v 2; in vv 8 , 10 ûkwtb “inside you” clearly alludes to r y h ûkwtb “inside the city” in v 2. Thus it seems correct to take 5:1–4 closely with vv 5–15 (Fohrer, Symbolischen Handlungen 52–53; Reventlow, Wächter 24; Hals 28–30).
It is clear to most scholars that the unit is not homogeneous. The question it poses to careful readers is not whether redaction has taken place but how much. Greenberg (86, 93, 119, 125) has a minimal assessment, regarding 3:20bb as an interpolation from 18:24 or 33:13 and 4:6, 12–15 as an originally separate little unit about the exile that has been worked into siege material secondarily. The first section of the literary unit, 3:16b–21, is commonly taken as a redactional anticipation of chap. 33 (see my review of scholarly opinion in Ezekiel 20–48 143–44). It applies to the first period (or both periods) of Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry what strictly belonged to the second period. It is sometimes urged that the Masoretic space within v 16 (traditionally called $ \text{Q wS p}$ “a space within the verse”) shows an awareness that the text was interrupted with an interpolation (Kraetzschmar 36; Cooke 44; Reventlow, Wächter 130). However, Greenberg (83) has appealed to Talmon’s well-argued proposal in Textus 5 (1966) 11–21 that in other texts such spacing indicates that supplementary information was available elsewhere in the Bible or in extrabiblical material. He suggests that in this case it was a reference to 33:1–9.

The difficulty with 3:16b–21 goes beyond structural considerations (see above): its orientation toward repentance and life hardly accords with the message of inescapable judgment that Ezekiel delivered till Jerusalem fell, to which the first unit of 1:1–3:15 unambiguously referred. M. A. Schmidt (TZ 6 [1950] 92) claimed that different settings lie behind 33:1–6 and 33:7–9: first the people and then the prophet are addressed. Accordingly, he argued, while the parable of 33:1–6 belongs to the second, post-587, phase of Ezekiel’s work, the application in 33:7–9 has been borrowed from the chronologically earlier 3:16–21. Greenberg (91–97) has followed Schmidt: 3:16–21 were only for Ezekiel’s ears and conveyed the message that, whether his audience listened or not (3:10–11), his responsibility lay only in proclaiming God’s message of judgment, whereas in chap. 33 a positive, public call to repentance comes to the fore. Irrespective of whether positive notes can be removed from or toned down in 3:16–21, the basic premise of a private oracle that originally had a different setting from a public oracle is problematic in this instance. One may compare the continuation of 33:1–9 in vv 10–20, where divine address to the people (vv 10ab, 11b, 20) is mingled with address to the prophet (vv 10aa, 11a, 17). Moreover, the “private” 3:20–21 seems to have been inspired by 33:13, 18, part of the continuing public oracle.

The next section, 3:22–27, is also frequently regarded as a secondary insertion because of its affinity with material in 24:25–27 and 33:21–22 concerning a divine promise to remove Ezekiel’s dumbness and its fulfillment. It is often taken as belonging chronologically to a time just before Jerusalem fell (e.g., Cooke 44, 46; Eichrodt 348–50; Krüger, Geschichtskonzepte 351–52; cf. Zimmerli 159–61, who regards vv 25–27 as secondary and having no historical basis). However, if the section can reasonably be explained in its present context, our duty is to take it as it stands.

For the sections involving symbolic actions in 4:1–5:4, the question of the interpretive setting is crucial. Since Cornill (198), the test to detect secondary material has been to ask whether the siege of Jerusalem or the exile that followed it is in view. Hölscher (Dichter 61–62) added the criterion that each of the commands to engage in sign-acts that related to the siege begins with the instruction $\text{Ul} \mid \text{q} “$ take for yourself.” He thus established a primary group of three poetic sections, 4:1–2 and 9a, 10–11, and 5:1–2. Among others, Zimmerli (155–56) has followed Hölscher’s lead, though playing down somewhat his poetic emphasis. Certainly threefold compositions are not unknown in the prophet’s ministry: a good case can be made in the Gog-Magog unit of chaps. 38–39 for such a primary series of passages that subsequently received literary amplification (see Ezekiel 20–48 204–9). In this case the result is a neat, symmetrical composition, but whether it is necessary is doubtful. However, Cornill’s test

TZ Theologische Zeitschrift (ThZ)
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
 cf. confer, compare
remains a fair one. Its application sets question marks at least against 4:6 and 13 and suggests that these verses are reinterpretable material that seeks to update primary siege-related messages.

The problem with 5:5–17 is the complexity of its form-critical structure. Two alternative conclusions may be drawn. First, it is possible to explain the complexity in redaction-critical terms and to reduce the primary material to, for example, an interpretive oracle of judgment in vv 5–6a, 8–9, 14–15 (cf. Zimmerli 154; Fuhs 36–38). Or else one may envision development of the form-critical tradition of the judgment oracle to a point of “dissolution” in “this baroque extravagance” marked by “repetition and cumulation” (C. Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech [Louisville: Westminster/Knox, 1991] 208). Vv 5–17 do give a distinctly literary impression. The more specific interpretive oracle in vv 11–13 may have been interwoven with the more allusive material. But no hiatus in overall setting is discernible, and so no long period of development is required for the present shape of vv 5–17.

The unit may be outlined as follows:

3:16a, 22–24a Ezekiel’s renewed vision
3:16b–21 His later role as prophetic watchman
3:24b–27 God’s commands: (1) Seclusion and dumbness alternating with prophesying of judgment
4:1–3 (2) The sign of the siege game
4:4–5, 7–8 (3) The sign of Israel’s guilt
4:6 Application to the exile
4:9–12, 14–17 (4) The sign of siege conditions
4:13 Application to the exile
5:1–17 (5) The sign of the fate of the besieged, with extensive commentary

Comment

3:16b–21 On the grounds of the content of this passage, the indication of time in v 16a should be taken with v 22 (Kraetzschmar 37; Bertholet [1936] 13; Hölscher, Dichter 54; Zimmerli 142; Lamparter 46). The intent of the deliberate interruption was evidently to bond it closely with vv 22–27 and what follows in the unit, and the reason will need to be carefully sought from the text as it is encountered. We might have expected the passage, as a further divine definition of Ezekiel’s prophetic role, to relate to the earlier call narrative, and in general terms it still does. But its particular placing must be taken seriously, as a comment on or qualification of what follows. A unit consisting of 1:1–3:21 is not to be envisioned, with Smend (1) and Davidson (11), nor is it to be isolated as a separate unit, with Greenberg (82).

16b–19 This passage is borrowed substantially from 33:7–9 and prefaced with a message-reception formula, which characteristically opens a new section of prophetic revelation. The reader is directed to Ezekiel 20–48 144–48 for basic exegesis: here the focus will be on relating the passage to its new context. It stands in purposeful tension with its present literary environment. At times it initially aligns with what seems alike but provocatively takes a different tangent. The very metaphor of a watchman for Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry is a development of Jer 6:17 and echoes its tones of divine concern that his people should not come to harm. The foe who attacks is strangely also the friend who wants those who on moral grounds are necessarily his enemies to escape. The judge who passes the death sentence that

cf. confer, compare
Or Orientalia (Rome)
Ezekiel has to transmit for flouting the divine will (cf. 2 Kgs 1:4, 6, 16; cf. K. Illman, OT Formulas 104–5) is loath to order the execution. Such was the message the prophet was eventually to receive from Yahweh. Yet in v 27 he is told that he would hear a different message. It consisted of the messenger formula “Thus says the Lord Yahweh,” which in the light of its earlier usage in 2:4; 3:11 connotes inescapable judgment. Moreover, in v 27 a take-it-or-leave-it attitude, whereby God shrugs his shoulders over Israel’s response as immaterial, is conveyed by the mention of their hearing or not hearing (cf. the even more categorical 3:7). Yet in vv 16b–21 the people’s response to the prophetic warning, positive or negative, is all important. Here the victims are not abandoned to the same collective doom but segregated into two groups, those who die and those who survive. Indeed, all could escape, for Yahweh’s intent, even in the case of the wicked person who pays no heed to the warning, was “to preserve his life.” This statement of purpose is of crucial importance, inasmuch as it has been added to the basic text of 33:8, in order to bring to the surface the underlying truth of Yahweh’s redemptive will (cf. 33:10–11). Calvin (155) noticed the clash between this life-giving message and the preceding context, observing that “this may seem absurd, because all hope of repentance was taken away beforehand.”

At one point the material does not pass through similar terrain to a different goal but indulges in outright contrast. In v 27 the prophet is coerced into delivering his message of doom by Yahweh’s opening the sluicegates of communication. Yet here he has the option of warning or not warning the victims of merited doom. He needs the threat of Yahweh’s role as avenging next of kin for the unwarned deceased (cf. Num 35:12–21) as incentive to pass on the warning.

Notes of continuity with material elsewhere in this unit are struck. As in v 17, the prophet has a social responsibility to the “community of Israel,” which is mentioned in 4:3, 5; 5:4 (cf. 2:3; 3:1, 4), in terms of bearing witness to the doom of Jerusalem. The iniquity (̱") that causes death echoes the “guilt of the community of Israel” in 5:4. Vv 18–19 echo the “guilt” (̱", here rendered “wrongdoing”) experienced by the besieged citizens of Jerusalem in 4:17; but there is a change of perspective, in that collective sinfulness here gives way to the wrongdoing of a sector of the community, just as the communal “wickedness” of 5:6 is here replaced by that in 3:18, 19. Likewise, the punitive death of 3:18, 19 recalls that of the besieged victims of plague in 5:12, who suffer amid the collective punishment of their peers. Here, however, not only is there a way to escape it, but its victim stands for a group whose sufferings are not necessarily shared by the whole community.

These blatant notes of continuity and discontinuity serve to compare and contrast the later, largely positive ministry of Ezekiel among the exiles, after Jerusalem had fallen in 587 B.C., with his pre-fall, negative task. After human hopes had proved false, salvation or life pressed to the fore as God’s future intent for the exiles. Yet they had to identify themselves positively with his saving will in order to achieve it. Like Christian in Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, Ezekiel was made to see that “there was a way to hell even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction”—from the exilic antechamber to the promised land, as well as from Jerusalem.

20–21 These two verses are not present in the prophetic exposition of the parable of the watchman in 33:7–9. Rather, they are inspired by 33:13, 18 (cf. 18:24, 26; in respect of ̱" ̣ †") “his sin” in v 20b,
18:24 is closer). After the examples of the radically wicked person who either was not warned or, if warned, persisted in his wickedness, now a backsliding believer provides quasi-parallel illustrations either of failure to warn or of repentance after warning. The microstructure of v 18a is not matched in its evident counterpart, v 20a: the reason is simply the different source material that is being drawn upon, in 33:13, which also explains the extra element of unremembered virtues in v 20b. The latter is a realistic observation concerning the need to keep virtue current. “Righteousness is not something to be saved up. Righteousness implies a relationship with others, and such a relationship is either present or not” (Andrew 26).

These two verses are more upbeat in tone than the former pair. The initial divine sentence of death (v 18a), which was carried out twice (vv 18b, 19b) against the will of the judge, is passed again (v 20a) but executed only once (v 20b). In the second scenario it is replaced by a pledge of life (v 21b). The responsibility of the prophet is still the main concern, but, as before, the responsibility is shared with his audience in a network of possibilities. The gospel-like bad news that had the potential of becoming good news at last joyfully reaches that goal in the climactic mandate of life. The prophet’s efforts come to happy fruition, and so does the positive will of God mentioned earlier. In stylistic terms the initial sentence ֹתתת “you are doomed to die” in v 18a is countered by the final affirmation ִיִּי “he will certainly live” in v 21b, in an inclusion. God’s goodwill and Ezekiel’s labors win through in at least one instance in the outworking of the divine-prophetic program, and so the prophet is both encouraged and validated in his difficult task (cf. 33:30-33).

It is significant that 33:13 features not in a context that emphasizes God’s offer of life (33:1-11) but in an ardent discussion of the need for Ezekiel’s exilic congregation to choose life and pursue a God-honoring ethical path (33:12-20). Its incorporation into the development of the watchman metaphor serves to reinforce the prophet’s duty in his post-fall ministry, not simply to broadcast the grace of God for all the people of God but to challenge them to reflect that grace in their lives. Any who failed to do so would “not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:21), in the form of eschatological return to the land (Ezek 20:33-38). The role of vv 16b-21 in its present context will be considered further in the Explanation below.

3:16a, 22-24a Ezekiel is allowed a week to recover from and think through his overwhelming encounter with the God who revealed himself in majestic theophany. Then he is summoned afresh and undergoes the same awesome experience as before in a further confirmation of his call to be a prophet of judgment to his fellow exiles.

As in 1:3b, the pressure of the divine hand prepares for the double experience of a vision and the message that will accompany it. However, the vision does not immediately follow; somewhat as in 37:1, it awaits a journey to the scene where it will take place. Whereas in 37:1 Ezekiel is transported by the spirit, here he is commanded to make his own way there; a structural counterpart to this command will be provided in v 24b by the command to return home. His destination is the place that will be the venue of a further vision in 37:1-12, where, however, it will be the setting of a message of new life for the spiritually dead rather than of grim judgment. The plain or broad valley refers to part of the wide alluvial plain of Babylonia interspersed with tells and canals. Here it is in the region around Tel Abib, but in a different area from the scene of the initial call. The narrative carefully plots the two visionary occurrences, just as it will draw a line of reference between the next vision and this one in 8:4, between that and the first one in 10:15, 20, 22, and a double line between the vision of 43:3 and those of chaps. 1 and 8. The vision is introduced simply by ֶה ֶנ “behold” (rendered “I found” in the translation). The whole apparition described at length in 1:4-28a is summed up as “the glory of Yahweh,” as in v 12. In

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

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this case the prophet does not see it coming from afar and then landing but finds it already at rest. The “resting" (דָּמָל, lit. “standing”) corresponds to the term “place” (מִפְּל) in v 12b.

Ezekiel’s reaction naturally is a repetition of 1:28b, one of shocked submission to the claims of the one who appeared in majestic theophany. As in 2:2a, he is empowered by the spirit to stand and so assume the prophetic position of a servant standing in the presence of his divine master, like Elijah and other prophets (1 Kgs 17:1; 18:15; 2 Kgs 3:14; 5:16; Jer 15:19).

24b–27 The verbal communication to which the vision has been the solemn prelude begins here. This next phase, like the first at v 22b, is prefaced by a blunt command, now to return home and stay there. Presumably, the delay of the vocative מַדָּנ (“human one”) till v 25, with which the immediate usage in 2:3 contrasts, occurs in order to allow the parallelism of the two initial commands to stand out more clearly. The prophet’s seclusion, like the symbolic iron plate interposed between the model city and Ezekiel in 4:3, signifies the alienation of Yahweh from his people: fellowship and blessing are no longer dispensed to his covenant partner. Seclusion from the public is in view: Eichrodt (77) has rightly objected to Zimmerli’s judgment (159) that, since elsewhere Ezekiel’s house is the place of prophesying (8:1; 14:1; 20:1), he is not here prevented from engaging in prophecy.

25 Ezekiel’s seclusion is to be sustained from another quarter. He is informed that his fellow exiles will constrain him, giving physical expression to their opposition to the prophet and so to the God he represents. The vocative “human one” seems to interject a note of sympathy, as mention of an addressee’s name would in human speech. Ezekiel’s house arrest, enforced by tying him with ropes, aligns with the written counsel of an exilic prophet of a different persuasion, that Jeremiah should be put in the stocks for sending the exiles a letter that predicted a long stay (Jer 29:26–28). The note of popular opposition to Ezekiel for his judgment oracles has been sounded in the call narrative, at 2:6; 3:7. Its present significance is to accentuate the estrangement between God and his people, who in rejecting his prophet reject Yahweh, as in 3:7.

26a After the parenthesis of v 25 that describes attendant circumstances, the command of v 24b is reinforced by a divine constraint; similarly, the command of 4:4 will be reinforced by the constraint imposed by God in 4:8. Enforced silence would accompany the enforced seclusion of the prophet. Normal relations between him and his contemporaries were to be broken off. His silence would represent the silence of God in response to their pleas for his intervention on their behalf against the victorious Babylonians. In a psalm of lament, divine silence is associated with distance from the one who prays (Ps 35:22; cf. 22:2–3[1–2]). The prophet is to act out this lack of communication, which is tantamount to a refusal to come to the people’s aid: they have forfeited all claim to that. Yahweh has broken off friendly relations with his people.

26b–27 The affliction of the prophet with dumbness would also—unless or until it were suspended—prevent his carrying out his assigned function of prophesying judgment to the “rebellious community.” The epithet deliberately recalls the earlier commissioning speech, where it occurred in contexts of Ezekiel’s prophetic activity (2:5–8; 3:9). The careful reader is prepared, therefore, for a modifying statement about his prophesying, such as occurs in v 27.

Controversy has been rife over the precise meaning of יַקְּרָ֥מ וֹא יָֽהָּא in v 26a. The presence of יָֽהָּא “man” points to a role Ezekiel has within the community: one is reminded of אֱ֥לֹהִים יָֽהָּא “a prophet man” in Judg 6:8. The clue to the meaning of יַקְּרָ֥מ appears in the immediate context, in the next verse. If v 26 were damaged and illegible, one would have little difficulty in reconstructing its sense with the aid of v 27: the two verses both pose a contrast and indulge in repetition. To be struck dumb and so unable to

lit. literally

cf. confer, compare
function as an \( j\ yk\ w\ m\ \) is the opposite of being freed from the affliction and so able to function as a prophet of inexorable judgment. The latter ability is what is signified in v 27ab\^g, in the light of the use of the messenger formula and the qualification of the irrelevance of the people’s response in 2:4–5a; 3:11. This structural parallelism within vv 26 and 27, in part antithetic and in part synonymous, maneuvers the reader into a narrow and unambiguous meaning for \( j\ yk\ w\ m\). It can signify nothing other than (in German) Strafprediger (Kraetzschmar 40; Fohrer 25; Vogt, Untersuchungen 34; HALAT 392a), “proclaimer of punishment.” This meaning is congruent with the sense “(divine) punishments” for the cognate noun \( t\ y\ k\ w\ t\) within the same unit at 5:15 and also in 25:17. The verb \( jyk\ wh\) “reprove” is used in a variety of contexts in the OT, but pertinent texts are Hab 1:12, which speaks of Yahweh using the Chaldeans to punish the wicked, and Isa 37:4, in which Yahweh is asked to rebuke the words of Sennacherib. Here the prophet functions as spokesperson for the punishing God.

Hölscher (Dichter 57) wanted to understand the prophetic term as “one who warns and admonishes his hearers to repent”; he equated it with the role of watchman in 3:16b–21. He had in mind the use of the verb in wisdom contexts, such as Prov 24:25, and specifically of the participial noun in Prov 25:12. Similarly, Tromp (“Paradox” 210) defined the term as “somebody who reproves and in that way attempts to bring about the conversion of his audience…. No prophet any more … might talk them out of their disastrous ways.” Rather, the people would be “left to their own fate.” Greenberg (102) has likewise interpreted the role as “a reprover, one who reproaches wrongdoers with their wickedness and calls on them to mend their ways.” Wilson (VT 22 [1972] 98–100) has assigned to the term the sense “arbitrator” and understood it of prophetic intervention with God that is here denied. Even if such a meaning is not attested elsewhere (Greenberg 102), it might be regarded as a feasible development from the forensic sense “arbitrating judge” that the participial noun has in Isa 29:21; Amos 5:10. In VT 22 (1972) 93–94, 104, Wilson regarded the present passage as an editorial insertion, but in JBL 38 (1984) 129 he related it to the beginning of Ezekiel’s ministry. Wilson’s suggested meaning is attractive, and I expressed a preference for it in Ezekiel 20–48 62. It interprets the dumbness as a ban on intercession with God, a ban that is easily understood as operating for seven years, until the dumbness is removed (24:25–27; 33:21–22), and allows it to be concurrent with the prophesying of v 27. However, his suggestion imports an alien notion into the context, which itself sets clear guidelines for the interpretation. Wilson (VT 22 [1972] 93) rightly said, though he had his own ax to grind in so saying, that “the author of iii 22–27, xxiv 25–27, and xxiii 21–22 clearly wants the reader to understand that the dumbness continued from the prophet’s call to the fall of the city.”

The modification of the silencing of the prophet in v 27 enables him to impart more than what is connoted by the silence. The sign of the withdrawal of divine favor from Israel is punctuated by announcements of Yahweh’s active hostility. In a different way this same double message will be communicated in 4:3. There the erection of the iron plate between Ezekiel, as God’s representative, and the model of the city connotes God’s hiding of his face from Jerusalem; at the same time, however, the prophet is to “set his face” against it, in token of Yahweh’s adversarial attitude. Both messages are necessary, and so v 27 adds an essential qualification of the first message. Intermittently the prophet’s

OT Old Testament
VT Vetus Testamentum
VT Vetus Testamentum
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
VT Vetus Testamentum
dumbness would be suspended, to the limited extent that he would be able to deliver oracles of judgment, which would come to pass whatever the hearers’ response to them. In fact, the very limiting of Ezekiel’s speech to judgment messages underlines the inevitability of judgment (Lamparter 47).

Many commentators have objected to this plain understanding of the text, inasmuch as it involves seven years of relative silence for the prophet. A significant number deny that the present passage belongs to the beginning of Ezekiel’s ministry, preferring to telescope the accounts of dumbness in chaps. 3, 24, and 33 and to view them as covering a short period of enforced silence around the time of the fall of Jerusalem. Zimmerli (160) has objected to the present positioning of the passage on the ground that v 27 cannot refer to intermittent speaking because chaps. 24 and 33 imply uninterrupted dumbness up to the point when it was removed. This objection assumes that the two other passages make a comprehensive statement that may be used as evidence to clarify this passage. However, the assumption expects too much from them. It overlooks a basic element of discord between this passage and the other two. If this one is taken at face value, when the prophet speaks, the content of his speaking is to be nothing other than oracles of radical judgment. Yet in chap. 33 the time for such has passed (Greenberg 103). The discrepancy makes room for the present passage to make its own statement with respect to intermittent prophesying. The commentator must tolerate loose ends in comparing the three related passages and not jump to harmonizing conclusions. 3:26–27 as yet knows nothing about a turning point in God’s relations with Israel and any possibility of oracles of salvation. It is firmly locked into a perspective of utter judgment.

A “new twist” (Greenberg 102) is given to the divine insistence in 2:3; 3:4, 10–11 that Ezekiel should speak only what he had first heard from Yahweh. “The theme of dumbness is used to underline the point that the word which the prophet speaks is God’s, not his own” (Carley 29). “Ezekiel was to be known as nothing but the mouthpiece of Yahweh. When he spoke, it was because God had something to say; when he was silent, it was because God was silent” (Taylor 74).

His speech is to be intermittent and limited to judgment oracles. Greenberg (102–3, 121) has revived this understanding of the text, which was widely held at an earlier period (Smed 27; Keil 66–67; Kraetzschmar 38, 40; Skinner 53); he has won significant support (Lemke, Int 38 [1984] 166 n. 2; Tromp, “Paradox” 209–11; Klein, Ezekiel 39; Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 454–57; cf. Sherlock, ExpTim 94 [1982/83] 296–98). One may note also the view that v 27 relates to intermittent speech but is a redactional addition (Hölscher, Dichter 59; Carley 29). The speechlessness Ezekiel is to undergo is to be understood literally rather than in any metaphorical sense (cf. Friebel’s discussion in “Sign-Acts” 439–41). The description of its removal as a “sign” (тямя) in 24:27 indicates a verifiable, objective experience. Does it refer to a physiological condition? Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 444–48) has observed that elsewhere the niphal or passive conjugation of יא “be dumb” that appears in 3:26; 24:27 refers not to physical incapacity but to self-imposed speechlessness due to circumstances (e.g., Isa 53:7; Ps 39:3[2]; cf. Dan 10:15). He interprets the divine imposition of speechlessness in v 26א as possibly “a stylistic way of stating that the divine ability was given to Ezekiel to fulfill this difficult nonverbal behavior over the required extended period of time” (“Sign-Acts” 448). However, this interpretation may place too much

Int Interpretation
n. note
cf. confer, compare
ExpTim The Expository Times
cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare
weight on what could be an accidental phenomenon, that in other extant cases the niphal of \( \mu \lambda \) does not refer to physical incapacity. After all, the adjective \( \mu \lambda \) refers to a physiological condition. The prior focus on Yahweh’s making Ezekiel’s tongue stick to his palate deserves to be considered the determinative statement, which prompts an understanding in terms of a physical constraint, rather than merely an enabling of Ezekiel’s voluntary abstinence from speech. This judgment is reinforced by the reference in 33:22a to Yahweh’s opening the prophet’s mouth, in the light of which the passive variants of the phrase in 24:27a; 33:22a imply divine agency. Tromp (“Paradox” 209) rightly speaks of three agents in the passage who concur in realizing similar programs: (1) the prophet is told to confine himself to his house; (2) he will be bound by others so that he will be unable to go out; and (3) God will bind the prophet’s tongue.

A psychological interpretation in terms of the prophet’s depression (cf. 3:15b) that is accompanied by God’s command to become secluded and silent (Greenberg 121) appears insufficient. There seem to be no compelling objections to construing the passage in terms of the prophet’s intermittent delivery of judgment oracles till the city fell seven years later. If the enforced silence appears to be excessively long, it aligns with other phenomena in the book that exhibit lengthy elaboration and inordinate extravagance.

The unambiguous references to the call narrative within the passage tie it firmly to its present setting.

4:1–3 Yahweh’s address to the prophet continues in 4:1–5:4 with a series of commands to the prophet to carry out symbolic acts. This set of instructions begins with the order to scratch a recognizable representation of Jerusalem. There are a number of Babylonian examples extant of plans engraved on clay tablets, such as of the city of Nippur (ANEP 260) or of a house (Meissner, Babylonienvand Assyrien, vol. 2, fig. 154). It is not specified whether such a ground plan or a sketch on a vertical plane with walls and buildings is in view. However, the consequent elaboration of the sign-act with siege representations may indicate a sketch such as often appeared in Mesopotamian victory reliefs (Uehlinger, “‘Zeichne eine Stadt’” 141–49; cf. ANEP 366). Next, Ezekiel is somehow to represent a siege being conducted against the city. Did he draw the siege paraphernalia on the brick (Keil 70; Herrmann 32) or depict the objects on other bricks or use primitive models? The first option is unlikely: the flow of the text in vv 1–2 suggests that the pronominal suffixes referring to the brick continue, so that the brick that now, by means of the drawing, represents the city is confronted with other objects tactically placed to represent a siege attack. Moreover, the repetition of the verb “place” (\( \div \abla \)) used of the brick, to refer to some of the siege paraphernalia, points to the same conclusion. Wevers (60) has observed that there would hardly be room on the brick for the total depiction. Ancient Near Eastern bricks varied in size from 10 to 24 inches long and from 6 to 13 1/2 inches wide (K. Galling, BRL 364). The fact that the verb \( \mathcal{Q} \mathcal{Q} \mathcal{Q} \) “draw,” used in v 1, is not repeated in v 2 suggests that models were used (Uehlinger, “‘Zeichne eine Stadt’” 150–52).

The specification of siege equipment that follows reflects the development of siege warfare under the Assyrians, which the neo-Babylonian army took over. A battering ram moved on wheels and was a

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cf. confer, compare


vol. volume

fig. figure

cf. confer, compare


wooden structure covered with wicker shields. It had a turret with openings, by means of which the operation of the ram could be controlled and also arrows could be fired at the defenders. The destructive feature was its metal ramming rod, the end of which was shaped like a spear head or an ax blade. It was rammed between the stones of the city wall and then would be levered from side to side so that a section of the wall would collapse (see Yadin, *Art of Warfare* 314–17, 391, for description and illustrations). The siege tower was a mobile assault tower from which archers gave covering fire to the troops operating the ram (Yadin, *Art of Warfare* 314, 391). The ramp was built up of earth and covered on its top and sides with stones and bricks or planks, as a surface along which the battering ram was wheeled up to the wall or gates (21:27[22]; Yadin, *Art of Warfare* 315). The identity of the besieging army is not specified, but in the historical context there was only one real possibility, the Babylonians.

3 After this representational assembly of a grim war game, Ezekiel was to use a utensil that was part of home cooking equipment and place it upright between the city and himself. It was a convex iron plate or griddle that was normally placed over the fire, with the edges resting on bricks surrounding the fire; cakes and bread were baked on it (see M. Kellermann, *BRL* 30, for description and illustration). The plate was to act as an iron wall and to be a figurative expression of the severance of normal relations between Jerusalem and the God whom the prophet represented. In the siege that it was to undergo, its fate was sealed: no help would be forthcoming from God. He had withdrawn his favor and hidden his face (cf. 7:22). An iron curtain of alienation divided him from the city. A number of commentators have usefully compared Lam 3:44:

> You have covered yourself with a cloud,
> so that prayer cannot pass through.

Yet if God’s answer to pleas for help was an inactive silence (cf. 3:25–26), his attitude was also one of active hostility (cf. 3:27). He had not only withdrawn his help but also would himself prosecute the siege with determination, using the Babylonian army and its expertise as his instruments. Such was the significance of Ezekiel’s staring hard at the city and (presumably) moving the models of the besieging forces to represent the siege in action. The fixed staring is similar to Ezekiel’s frequent symbolic gesture of turning to look in the direction of the target of an oracle of judgment (cf. 6:2; 21:7[2], where Jerusalem is the target; cf. Jer 21:10).

The scene to be enacted by the prophet is called a “sign to the community of Israel,” that is, to those representatives of it who shared Ezekiel’s exile, as comparison of 2:3; 3:1, 4, 7 with 3:11 shows. Only here in this series of five sign-acts does the term “sign” appear. The prophets typically engaged in symbolic acts, and they were particularly characteristic of Ezekiel’s ministry (cf. Zimmerli 28–29). Their role was to reinforce the prophetic word of interpretation that accompanied them (see *Form/Structure/Setting*). Their precise intention is disputed. Did they actually create the future by prefiguring it (G. von Rad, *OT Theology* [New York: Harper, 1965] 2:96–97)? Or did they function as “street theater,” as a teaching aid that dramatically visualized the oral message of the prophet (Lang, “Street Theater” 305)? Krüger (*Geschichtskonzepte* 118–19) has observed that these explanations need...
not be alternatives but may both be correct: the first relates the sign-act to the spectators before whom it is performed (cf. v 12), while the second relates it to the event symbolized. However, the view that the sign-act is to be distinguished from the oracle, inasmuch as it had special power bestowed upon it to shape the future, is based on its supposed development from acts of magic (cf. Fohrer, Symbolischen Handlungen 10, 47–55, 121–24). Such a developmental view is no longer in vogue among anthropologists (cf. Lang, “Street Theater” 302–5; J. W. Rogerson, Anthropology and the OT [Atlanta: Knox, 1979] 22–53; Uehlinger, “‘Zeichne eine Stadt’” 122–35). Sign and interpretation worked in mutual confirmation. If actions speak louder than words, here they were a megaphone for the prophetic words.

4–5, 7–8 The first two sets of instructions in 4:1–3, 4–8 are interlocked as a pair by their common references to the siege depicted in the first (4:2, 3, 7, 8). This next sign-act is a demonstration of Israel’s guilt. Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 129 n. 324) has usefully referred to Isa 59:2 in illustration of the implicit link between this sign and the previous one:

But your guilty deeds have caused separation
between you and your God,
and your sins have hidden his face
away from you, preventing his hearing.

Again “the community of Israel” is the target of the sign, but now their vertical links of solidarity with past generations come to the fore, as in 2:3. Ezekiel shared the outlook of Jeremiah and the Deuteronomist, that a backlog of sins lay behind the final destruction of the covenant nation. They are indeed a “rebel community” (3:26–27). The outworking of divine judgment was the focus of the first of these twin signs, in vv 1–3; now underlying accusation is made explicit in the second. Together the two signs function like a two-part oracle of judgment that is made up of both accusation and announcement of punishment. Accordingly, this sign relates not to the future but to the meaning of the past.

While in vv 1–3 Ezekiel represented the divine subject of the section that announced punishment in the judgment oracle, here he correspondingly represents the standard subject of the section of accusation. The necessity of Ezekiel’s lying on his left side will become clear in v 7, where his right arm is to feature in a further aspect of the complex sign (cf. Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 538 n. 108). Putting his full weight on one side represents the guilt or culpability of the covenant people, which he is to “bear.” This bearing is not substitutionary, as if the prophet were atoning for their guilt, but representative. The phrase “bear guilt” has been borrowed from priestly circles, where it has a range of meanings; in this case the sense is closest to the usage in Exod 28:38.

The period of time allotted to this lying is 390 days, with each day encapsulating a year of guilt. A tradition close to that of the Deuteronomistic History is evidently being followed, according to which the period of the monarchy till the end of Zedekiah’s regency was just over 433 years, while Solomon’s temple stood for some 422 years (cf. J. A. Montgomery and H. S. Gehman, Kings [Edinburgh: Clark, 1951] 48–52). In the light of the specific accusation of defiling Yahweh’s sanctuary in 5:11 (cf. chap. 8;
43:7–9; 44:6–8), the number is best understood as a general reference to the existence of the first temple. Alternatively, it may relate to the period of disunity of the covenant nation: the Deuteronomist reckoned 393 1/2 years, or 390 in round numbers, for the period from the division of the kingdom till the fall of Jerusalem. Then one may compare the promise of renewed unity in 37:5–24, specifically in 37:22. This alternative provides a better solution for the actual number, but at the cost of losing a reference to a primary concern in the book.

7 The present sign-act is closely associated with the previous one. Evidently Ezekiel was to lie facing the model of the besieged city, which is now interpreted as Jerusalem; his staring, resumed from v 3b, was to occur during the execution of the second stage. Accordingly, vv 1–3a form a preparation for engaging in a coordinated pair of sign-acts. The amplification of the threatening stare with actual interpretive prophesying suggests that it was indeed a variant, expressed in stronger terms, of the gesture Ezekiel commonly adopted in delivering an oracle of judgment (cf. 6:2; Layton, *UF* 17 [1986] 173). In this role Ezekiel performs as a representative of Yahweh, so that in the doubled symbolic activity he represents both the accusing agent of punishment and the accused. The bared arm, with sleeve pulled back, signifies the readiness of Yahweh to act against his people. In Isa 52:10 it relates to Yahweh’s fighting for them, but in this negative context it spells danger and threat (cf. Jer 21:5; Ezek 20:33).

8 Just as in 3:26 a divine constraint reinforced Ezekiel’s performance of his first sign-act, so another divinely imposed restraint aids the prophet’s own activity, or rather lack of it. He would find himself harpered as if by ropes (cf. Pss 2:3; 129:4) and unable to move until he had discharged the dual task of lying opposite the siege model and prophesying. The metaphor echoes 3:25, but here it has a different application. The concurrence of the two sign-acts meant that the prophet’s representation of the siege lasted as long as the days of guilt. The immobility reflects the radical and long-term nature of Israel’s sin, which will later be portrayed, in different terms, in 20:3–31. The feasibility of so long a performance has been queried. However, it may be that we are to regard the immobility not as totally continuous over a period of 390 days but as a series of continual daily acts of public witness, which were permanent as long as each one lasted, somewhat like the constraint of 3:26 that was punctuated by the prophesying of 3:27.

Since the actions were intended to communicate a message to the people, all that is required is that they were performed as part of Ezekiel’s public ministry, and not necessarily as part of his private, non-prophetic life. (Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 546; cf. Streane in Davidson 33)

The next dating for Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry, in 8:1, allows for fourteen months to elapse after that of 1:1–2. Accordingly, there is time for this period of 390 days—and (after the symbolic act of 5:1–4) also a month’s vacation before the prophet had to function again! This reckoning assumes that the daily performance of the double symbolic activity did not overlap into chaps. 8–11. The oracles in chaps. 6–7 may reflect a literary placement rather than a chronological one (cf. Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 545 n. 123). Certainly this and the other symbolic actions are most naturally to be understood as actually carried out: “the accomplishment is essential to a true sign-action” (Zimmerli 156). The mention of public spectators in 4:12 so suggests, while Ezekiel’s objection in 4:14 presupposes that he was expected to enact
Yahweh’s instructions (Herrmann 38).

6 The text jumps from guilt to punishment, from accusation that warranted the siege to representation of exile. This phenomenon will be repeated in v 13; it is part of a process of updating Ezekiel’s message to fit changing circumstances. It is significant that v 9b has not yet any awareness of v 6. The shift from the context is facilitated by the double meaning of ðıw, “guilt” and “punishment,” and so the double significance of ðıw acn as “bear guilt” and “bear punishment.”

The Priestly Num 14:34 has acted as a literary bridge between the day-years of vv 4–5 and those of v 6, inasmuch as there forty years of staying in the wilderness correspond to the forty days of spying out the land and are to be the period in which the people of Israel bear their iniquities (twnw acn) in punishment. However, there the forty days related to sin, and the forty years to punishment; a different relationship between the days and years pertains here in v 6. The new development moves from accumulation of longstanding sin in vv 4–5 to actual punishment over a period of time here. The mention of forty years, a round figure for a generation (cf. Num 14:28–31; Amos 2:10; 5:25), accords with the period of exile attributed redactionally to Egypt in 29:11–12. The victims of exile are identified as the “community of Judah,” which is evidently a reference to the people of the Southern Kingdom who experienced the exile, who are now singled out from the total covenant community of v 5, somewhat as in 37:16. One may consider the political description “elders of Judah” in 8:1 as applying to the same group elsewhere referred to in more theological terms as “elders of Israel” (14:1; 20:1; Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 530–31). The naturalness of the historical reference to the political community may be illustrated from 25:3, which refers to the exile of the “community of Judah” after referring theologically to the “land of Israel.”

The Septuagint, working backwards, made v 8, with its mention of siege, the starting point for a consistent exegesis of vv 4–8, whereby vv 4–5 were understood in terms of bearing punishment. Then the Israelite experience that preceded the Judean exile had to be the exile of the Northern Kingdom, which took place roughly 150 years before that of Judah (LXX, v 4: cf. BHS. The actual number is about twenty years less, but a figure that related to 350 [= 390–40] years was obviously desired.) In that case the total years of punishment were 190 (LXX in v 5, 9). This rationalizing reconstruction, whether it derives from the LXX translator or from a preexisting tradition, is akin to the mention of four parts of hair in 5:2 LXX, as opposed to the three in the MT (see Note 5:2.a.*). As Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 535) has observed,

Although the meaning of “Israel” as the Northern Kingdom and “Judah” as the Southern Kingdom is semantically possible, the specific usage in the rest of the book opposes such a singular meaning in 4:4–6.

cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
* 2.a. The LXX artificially speaks of fourths rather than thirds here and in v 12: in the application of v 12 it counts plague and famine as two separate punishments. This is a harmonizing process that takes its cue from the “four” judgments of 14:21, in which plague and famine are counted separately.
The LXX may have been misled into taking “right” and “left” as references to south and north, instead of simply opposing sides. A number of scholars, mainly of an earlier vintage, for instance Kraetzschmar (42, 47), Fohrer (29–32), and Eichrodt (78, 83–86; cf. BHK and BHS at v 5; NEB), have followed the LXX down its false trail of harmonization, encouraged by the doctrinaire assumption that symbolic acts must always depict future events (Fohrer, Symbolischen Handlungen 110). Interestingly, the Qumran community used the 390 years to describe Israel’s extended “exile” from the time of God’s giving them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar until the emergence of the Hasidim (CD 1:5–11; cf. Thiering, AJBA 1 [1969] 30–34).

It is one thing to define the literary relationship of v 6 to its context and quite another to understand what, if anything, it means in historical terms. Is the command to be put in a post-587 setting, after the siege had culminated in destruction and exile? Or in an earlier period, after the city had fallen and before the exiles had arrived in Babylonia? It may be that we are to think in terms of a further period of forty days during which Ezekiel later lay on his side, in a reinterpreting resumption of his earlier symbolic action (cf. Cooke 53). Certainly the specification of exile as forty years long indicates a setting not beyond the exilic period (Lamparter 52 n. 20).

9–12, 14–17 The next symbolic action in the series of siege-related representations dramatizes the scarcity of food to be experienced by those beleaguered inside Jerusalem. V 9a has a preparatory but obviously public (cf. v 12) function, like vv 1–3a in relation to vv 3b–7. The use of different cereals and legumes implies that only scraps of each would be available to bake into a concoction of bread. There seems to be no thought of uncleanness in mixing different cereals (Hölscher, Dichter 61 n. 2; Fohrer 32; Zimmerli 169; contra Smend 31; Bertholet [1897] 21; Eichrodt 86, with reference to Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9–11). As in vv 4–5, Ezekiel is to represent the victims of divine judgment.

9b The interconnectedness of the siege-related signs is further reflected in that the food Ezekiel is to eat during his period of lying down facing the siege model is now described. Presumably the food was to be kept in storage jars and the preparation was to be repeated as necessary in Ezekiel’s “off-duty” hours (Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 551 n. 141).

10–11 Ezekiel is to be rationed to one meal a day, consisting of just over eight ounces of bread, hardly sufficient to maintain life. As for water, he is allocated about two-thirds of a quart, to be drunk at one time (cf. IDB 4:833–35). The historical actualities of the eventual siege may be illustrated from Jer...
37:21, according to which Jeremiah was allowed a loaf of bread per day till the supply ran out, and from 
Jer 38:6, where one cistern at least had only muddy ooze at the bottom into which Jeremiah sank.

12 The prophet is given instructions as to how the siege food of vv 9–10 is to be baked. He is told 
that the baking process is to be carried out “in public view.” Evidently, it was customary to bake a 
barley cake, as distinct from one made from more expensive wheat, not in an oven or on a griddle but 
directly on hot stones (cf. 1 Kgs 19:6) or in the hot embers of a fire (cf. the parallel cited by Greenberg 
107). Dried animal dung could provide fuel for the fire, but here, to depict the rigors of the siege, 
evidently after the animals had been eaten for food, there is to be the revolting substitution of human 
excrement, which would be in direct contact with the food. Its uncleanness may be illustrated from the 
instructions for its disposal outside the camp and the divine warrant for them in Deut 23:13–15(12–14). 
Even worse siege conditions are envisioned in 2 Kgs 18:27 (= Isa 36:12), eating one’s own excrement.

14–15 The prophet vehemently protests at the command to bake the food by such a grossly unclean 
method. It is out of character with the dietary lifestyle to which he has been committed. His natural 
objection is intensified by his upbringing in a priestly family who scrupulously ate only kosher food. The 
Christian reader will be reminded of Peter’s protest in Acts 10:14 and may use it as a standard against 
which to judge the even greater degree of a priest’s abhorrence. Animals that had died from natural 
causes or from attack by wild animals or birds of prey were barred from the diet of priests (Lev 22:8; cf. 
Ezek 44:31), as well as that of lay Israelites (Exod 22:30[31]; Deut 14:21; cf. Lev 17:15), presumably 
because the blood could not be drained from the carcass (cf. Lev 17:10–13). Priestly families had access 
to the meat of certain sacrificial animals, but it had to be eaten within two days; to eat it later was a ritual 
offense (Lev 7:18; 19:7).

Ezekiel is granted a concession. He is permitted to substitute dried cattle dung as fuel in his public 
performance of this sign. It thereby loses some of its representational value; presumably the prophet was 
able to announce the fact of the milder substitution. Evidently the food was thereby prevented from 
having the effect of making him unclean (Cooke 57; Zimmerli 171).

16–17 This material logically follows on from the instructions for the symbolic action given in vv 
9–12, after the interruption of the exchange in vv 14–15. The discontinuity of the exchange is marked by 
the insertion of an introductory-speech formula. The sign is interpreted in terms of shortage of food and 
also of water. The interpretation is thus not comprehensive; it focuses on the particular part of the action 
commanded in vv 10–11 and also by implication on the scanty supply of basic ingredients suggested in v 
9. The mention of “guilt” also alludes to the accusation of the community of Israel in the previous 
symbolic action (vv 4–5). This overlap is consistent with the explicit links forged between the various 
symbolic actions that have already been observed.

However, a key purpose of the interpretation is evidently to build a literary bridge between the 
forthcoming siege of Jerusalem and the series of covenant curses in Lev 26 (cf. Reventlow, Wächter 
25–26; Greenberg 108). The opportunity to do so seems to have dictated which part or parts of the 
symbolic activity should be singled out for interpretive comment. Yahweh’s announcement that he would 
“break the bread sticks in Jerusalem” appropriately harks back to the phase of the curses that 
envisioned the Israelites as gathered within their cities, sheltering from the enemy (Lev 26:25). Yahweh

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
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cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
was to “break their bread sticks” (Lev 26:26), so that their bread would be issued “in rationed amounts” (לֶשֶׁת מִבְּשָׂר “by weight,” exactly as here; cf. לֶשֶׁת מִבְּשָׂר in Ezek 4:10). Moreover, it is possible that the reference to being “mortified by their guilt” has been borrowed from a later phase of the curses, which relates to exile (עֶבֶד תִּמְרֶנֶת מְשֻׁרֶת in Lev 26:39; cf. עֶבֶד תִּמְרֶנֶת מְשֻׁרֶת elsewhere), because of the contextual appropriateness of the reference to guilt. At any rate, the echo of Lev 26:26 makes it clear that the siege is to be Yahweh’s punishment of Israel for breaking their covenant with him by failing to honor its terms (Lev 26:14–15; cf. Ezek 5:6).

The breaking of bread sticks is a metaphorical reference to the practice of carrying and storing ring-shaped loaves on a long stick or on cords slung over such a stick (cf. Schult, ZDPV 87 [1971] 206–8, developing L. Köhler’s earlier work; HALAT 543a). To break these sticks implies cessation of the bread supply.

13 This divine statement explicitly interprets the sign-act in terms of the conditions of exile. As Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 124 n. 304) has observed, “members [יִשְׂרָאֵל נְתִים lit. ‘sons’] of Israel” here signifies part of the collective “community [עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל ‘house’] of Israel.” The reinterpretation disturbs the flow from v 12 to v 14 (Herrmann 37; Cooke 55; Zimmerli 149). It is closely related to that which appeared in v 6 earlier. Like v 6, it deliberately and radically reapplies the symbolic action that explicitly relates to siege conditions (Cooke 50; Eichrodt 79) and wants not to contradict the primary application but to suggest that its significance is not thereby exhausted. There is no need to relate vv 12–15 as a whole to the exile, as a separate sign from that of vv 9–11 (Wevers 60; Carley 34; Garscha, Studien 90–91; Greenberg 119): the separate introduction that opens v 13 points to the supplementary nature of the verse. The uncleanness of any food eaten in exile is paralleled in Hos 9:3–4, which this verse may echo; it is a consequence of living in an “unclean land” (Amos 7:17).

5:1–4 The last in the series of sign-acts concentrates on the grim fate of the people confined to Jerusalem, which they would undergo during and after the siege. The shift from the city, which featured in 4:1–3, to its inhabitants has been facilitated by the symbolism of siege food in 4:9–12, 14–17 and by the explicit plural references in 4:16–17. The symbolic action of shaving is a development of the metaphor of divine punishment in Isa 7:20, whereby Yahweh was to use Assyria as a razor that would shave off all bodily hair. The metaphor seems to mean that Ahaz would suffer the deep humiliation of being left with nothing (R. E. Clements, Isaiah 1–39 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980] 90; cf. 2 Sam 10:4–5). For a priest to cut his hair was out of character (cf. 44:20), but the text does not take up this perspective.

1–2 As Ezekiel represented the divine punisher in 4:1–3, so he does here, by doing the shaving (cf. 5:11). But by being the one shaved, he assumes the role of the people in the city, as he represented them
in 4:9–12, 14–17 (cf. Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 573). The preliminary instructions to the prophet to shave off all the hair on his head and face and to divide it into three parts precede the symbolic action proper. Its description begins in v 2; it has to be done after Ezekiel has completed the earlier siege-related actions. As in the case of each act concerning Jerusalem (cf. 4:7–8, 9), this final one is carefully interlocked with what precedes. The model city under siege of 4:1–2 features again in this symbolic action, as it did in 4:7.

The fate of the citizens was predetermined: there was no future for them in the city. One of the three piles of hair he was to ceremonially set alight on the brick that bears a picture of the city, in a fire of divine judgment. The second pile he was to spread on the ground and the brick and slash with the sword (Friebel, Sign-Acts 575). Ominously, it was to occur on the very area where the besieging army took up its position (יָרֵץ וֹב יֹדֶס “around it,” v 2; ד יֹדֶס “around,” 4:2). Then the God who commands interrupts his instructions with an interpretation couched in terms of his own destructive work, which obviously cites Lev 26:33ab. While the citation is not exact, it is semantically equivalent: the Lev 26 text has בָּרְגַנְתָּה וַיַּקַּר אִית אִית יָרֵץ וֹבָא וָהֹר “and I will draw after you a sword,” while here we read וַיַּקַּר אִית אִית יָרֵץ וֹבְרָגֶנֶת “and a sword I will draw after them.” The abrupt change of person results from a contextually unadjusted quotation: older material has been lifted from its source without harmonizing it with its new context (Rooker, Transition 62; cf. Greenberg 109). Or, rather, adjustment has been minimally confined to changing a second plural suffix to a third. In the light of this clear parallel, the preceding clause, “you are to scatter to the wind” (וְרַחֲלָת בָּדוֹת), is dependent on Yahweh’s scattering “among the nations” (וַיַּשְׁלַח נַעַר הָאָרֶץ) in Lev 26:33a. The underlying note of reprisal for covenant breaking, struck just before in 4:16–17, is here repeated and developed. Those who escaped urban destruction in the land could not find respite from Yahweh’s destructive power outside it (cf. Lev 26:31–33). The message is corroborated by harnessing it to an evidently recognized tradition.

3–4 A few hairs that belong to the last third are to be retrieved from the ground where they have fallen and carried safely in the loose end of Ezekiel’s robe, which could be turned up and used as a bag (cf. Hag 2:12 and in general 1 Sam 25:29). But how safe are these individual hairs? Not very, for some of them are to be taken out and consigned to the fire of judgment that still burned on the brick. There is an ironic toying with the notion of hope of survival for a remnant. “It is … aimed at the destruction of all hope of surviving the judgment with a whole skin” (Eichrodt 87; cf. Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 590–91; Krüger, Geschichtskonzepte 125). Thus v 3 functions as a background to v 4, which rephrases the pursuing sword of v 2bd (Greenberg 110). “Although they escape from the fire, the fire will consume them,” as Ezekiel said elsewhere (15:7). The last clause of the verse draws a more general conclusion. The fate of Jerusalem and those Judeans who were besieged within its walls had a representative value: it would be decisive for the covenant people as a whole. The initial fire would lead to a conflagration of judgment that was to engulf the whole community of Israel. For the already exiled members of the community to whom Ezekiel ministered, the fate of the citizens of Jerusalem would entail the extinction of hope.

5–17 A long interpretive oracle now follows, formally introduced with the messenger formula, which in 2:4; 3:11 had been the shorthand designation of messages of judgment.

5 The reference to Jerusalem is not merely a specification of the city as a place, which had just
featured in the burning episode of v 2. It also connotes the members of the administration and other notable citizens who played a leading, representative role in the ongoing life of Judah, as the mention of “its” rebellion in v 6 shows. Accordingly, there is a focus on those who lived in Jerusalem, which fits well the sign-act of 5:1–4 (cf. Fohrer 35). While the symbolic action of 4:4–5 had accused the covenant community as a whole of a long history of guilt, here there is a concentration on the sinful role of the capital. The accusation is accentuated by setting it against a background of privilege. Jerusalem’s wrongdoing is represented as failure to live up to responsibilities that went with such a privileged position. Such accentuation in terms of a quite unexpected negative response to God’s earlier gracious treatment is characteristic of earlier prophets: it occurs notably in Hos 11:1–2; Amos 2:6–12; Isa 5:1–4. Here the concentration on Jerusalem is reminiscent of Isaiah’s depiction of the capital as having degenerated from its original state as a “faithful city” that was “full of justice” and the home of “righteousness” to a den of corruption and vice (Isa 1:21–23). Yahweh’s setting Jerusalem in the middle (ûwtb) of the other nations hardly means that it stood on an equal footing with them (Greenberg 110). The qualifying reference to its being surrounded by them gives expression to its centrality (cf. 32:22–26). One may compare the superlative role of ûwtb in 29:12; 30:7, with the sense of standing out among others. “Yahweh has chosen Zion” (Ps 132:13). Later in the book, the position of the postexilic community at the “navel” of the earth (38:12; see my Ezekiel 20–48 206–7) represents a transference of a Jerusalem motif to the land (cf. Bodi, Poem of Erra 219–30). There is an echo of Jerusalem’s preeminent role in Zion theology (cf. Krüger, Geschichtskonzepte 77). Zion was nothing less than “the joy of all the earth” and “the perfection of beauty” Pss 48:3[2]; 50:2; Lam 2:15; cf. H.-J. Kraus, Theology of the Psalms [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986] 78–84). The usage of ûwtb “in the middle” and bybs “around” is different from that in v 2 (cf. v 12): the terms have been ironically applied to another sphere of thought, enhancing the contrast between God’s initial positive purpose and his ultimate negative purpose.

The reference to Jerusalem’s rebellion (ûmî nî) recalls the characterization of the covenant people as a rebel community (ûmî nî ûyû d’), which occurred most recently in 3:27. The capital’s privileged role carried with it the priestly duty of custodianship of the Torah (cf. Isa 2:3; Eichrodt 88; Krüger, Geschichtskonzepte 78, 80) and also the social duty of administering and living up to its divinely set standards (Isa 1:21). Yet morally Jerusalem had turned into a veritable Sodom of wickedness, as Isaiah provocatively charged (Isa 1:10). The contrast with other nations recalls the disdainful distinction made in 3:5–7, that they would gladly embrace the prophet’s message, unlike the community of Israel. Here there is an implication of a kind of natural law possessed by the other nations, such as is implied in the Noachian covenant of Gen 9 and underlies Amos 1:3–2:3 (cf. J. Barton, Amos’s Oracles against the Nations [London: CUP, 1980] 40–50).

The mention of Yahweh’s “standards” (û lî ρ yî m) and “rules” (û nq j) corresponds to the regular phraseology in the Priestly source of the Pentateuch, as the list of OT comparative usage in M.
Weinfeld’s *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 337 shows. More specifically, the clause “they have rejected my standards” seems to be an allusion to Lev 26:3, 15, which speak of the Israelites, in the second plural, as rejecting, rather than walking in, God’s rules. The abrupt change to a plural verb reflects lack of adjustment of the literary reference (cf. Reventlow, *Wächter* 7–9; Greenberg 111; Rooker, *Transition* 62; see the Excursus following 6:1–14). The implicit understanding of Jerusalem in terms of its citizens underlies the survival of the plural form. Readers who would like to know what specific sins are in view may turn to a virtual commentary on these generalizations that appears in 22:3–12, 25–30.

7–10 The accusatory interpretation develops into a regular judgment oracle that moves from recapitulated accusation (v 7) to announcement of punishment (vv 8–10). Both elements are lavishly introduced by the messenger formula. Strictly, the first is resumed by the second, as, for instance, in Jer 35:18–19 (Liwak, “Probleme” 73). The oracle is rhetorically addressed to Jerusalem and its inhabitants: one is reminded of Yahweh’s charge to Ezekiel in 4:7 to stare fixedly at Jerusalem and prophesy against it. The oracle begins with second plural references in v 7, which slightly adapt the third plurals of v 6b; then it continues in vv 8–10 with second feminine singular references to Jerusalem. The stylistic poles of the oracle appear in Jerusalem’s failure to “do” (הָעֵצָה) Yahweh’s “standards” (מַעַט) in v 7a and Yahweh’s resolve to “do acts of judgment” (מַעַט הָעַצַּה) in vv 8b, 10a. The implicit understanding of Jerusalem in terms of its citizens underlies the survival of the plural form. Readers who would like to know what specific sins are in view may turn to a virtual commentary on these generalizations that appears in 22:3–12, 25–30.

The oracle contains three interpretive elements. First, יִרְאֶה הָעֵצָה בֶּן אֱלֹהִים “inside you” in vv 8b, 10a reflects יִרְאֶה הָעֵצָה בֶּן אֱלֹהִים “inside the city” in v 2a; in this case, unlike v 5, there is a direct connection with the enacted symbolism, although יִרְאֶה הָעֵצָה בֶּן אֱלֹהִים “around you” (v 7ab, b) stays within the different orbit of vv 5–6, in keeping with the recapitulative role of v 7. Second, the scattering to every wind of the rest of Jerusalem’s inhabitants—the second singular suffix so connotes (Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte* 79)—in v 10b repeats the divine action of v 2b with the climactic addition of יִרְאֶה הָעֵצָה בֶּן אֱלֹהִים “every.” Third, the adversarial intervention of Yahweh (v 8ab) and his initiation of punishment interpret Ezekiel’s representative role in the symbolic action.

7 In the recapitulated accusation, the reference to insolence is a stylistic variation of the rebelliousness mentioned in the basic charge. The earlier contrast with the nations is here expressed in a separate clause concerning the failure of Jerusalem’s citizens to comply even with standards divinely assigned to other nations and customarily kept by them (cf. 16:27).

8 A hinge between cause and effect, “therefore,” regularly links accusation and announcement of punishment in prophecic oracles of judgment, and the messenger formula also characteristically introduces the announcement of divine reprisal. A formula of encounter, יִרְאֶה הָעֵצָה בֶּן אֱלֹהִים “behold I am against you,” occurs here for the first time in the book (cf. Zimmerli 26 and n. 151, which partially updates p. 175). The reactive phrase יִרְאֶה אִם גַּר “I for my part,” which will recur in v 11, is also characteristic of announcements of punishment (cf. BDB 169b); it traces correspondence between the

OT Old Testament

cf. confer, compare

retributive intervention of Yahweh and the prior activity of the accused. The phrase μυρπνν νο “carry out acts of judgment,” which is common in the book, was borrowed from Priestly literature (Exod 12:12; Num 33:4; cf. Exod 6:6; 7:4). Ezekiel was able to draw on a rich heritage of prophetic and priestly traditions. Here the phrase, which outside this book is employed with Israel’s enemies as victims, strikingly has Jerusalem as its object. Yahweh, Jerusalem, and the nations appeared in different roles in vv 6–7. Mention of the nations as eyewitnesses of the judgment marks a rearrangement of these three entities, in the fateful twist of the kaleidoscope that v 8 represents.

9–10a The grim threat of unique measures may be a reminiscence of the similar Isa 7:17, in the light of the echoing of Isa 7:20 in v 1. Contextually, it reacts to Jerusalem’s glaring excess in so failing to live up to its position of privilege above the other nations as to plunge far beneath them (vv 5–7). The retaliatory nature of these measures is reinforced by recalling the accusations leveled against Jerusalem. The failure to meet Yahweh’s standards mentioned in vv 6–7 is now summed up as “all your shocking practices.” The term ἡμβολή “abomination, shocking practice” employed here is characteristic of Ezekiel. Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 83 n. 97) has observed that 36 percent of all the instances in the OT occur in the book of Ezekiel, which represents only 6 percent of the whole. Here, unlike the usage in v 11, the term functions as an equivalent of general sins or iniquities, as in 18:13, 24; 20:4; 22:2 (cf. Jer 7:10). It expresses that which is emotionally hateful to Yahweh and incompatible with the covenant relationship. The repeated term therefore “therefore, so” permits a gliding from accusation at the end of v 9 to punishment in v 10a. The statement of cannibalism within the family also functions as an experience of the unique punishment of v 9a, which is here presented in terms of human consequences. It appears to be a loose citation of Lev 26:29, which illustrates the rigors of a siege by means of filial cannibalism. Here that threat is stylistically capped with a climactic statement of its paternal counterpart (Liwak, “Probleme” 76).

10b This pair of statements looks back and forward. Its first statement functions in an inclusion, recalling the initial phrase in v 8b. It is also a summary that sweeps together all the actions to be carried out by Yahweh in Jerusalem according to vv 8b–9. However, such actions within the city interpretively cover only the first part of the symbolic action, in v 2a. Hasty reference is made to the rest by extracting the striking phrase “scatter to the wind” from v 2b, with the addition of “every” to the noun by way of climax, and with appropriate change to a first-person verb. The latter adaptation brings the clause closer to the basic statement of divine scattering among the nations in Lev 26:33a. The reference to the “rest” (τῆς ἐκ τῶν) of Jerusalem’s citizens may be an indirect resumption of the ironic actions of vv 3–4, since the term can mean “remnant” (cf. 11:13). This half verse also functions as a heading, giving an overview of the next section, vv 11–13, which will feature the main interpretation of the sign of the hair, detail by detail.

11 Logically, the conjunction “therefore” must refer back to the accusation of “all your shocking practices” at the end of v 9, which the new accusation resumes (and defines). In a similar way the accusation of v 6 was resumed in the charge of v 7ab-d, with an intervening “therefore” and a messenger formula. Here the messenger formula is replaced by an oath formula and an accompanying divine-saying formula, which lend certainty to the fulfillment of this new oracle of judgment. The definition of Jerusalem’s “shocking practices” or “abominations” (ἡμβολή ἡμβολή) reflects the term’s traditional
links with impurity (see, e.g., Lev 18:24–30; Deut 14:3). In priestly thought the sins of the people had the effect of polluting the sanctuary with a miasma of uncleanness, which required removal by sacrifice to save the people from perishing (Lev 15:31; 16:19; Num 19:20). Milgrom (RB 33 [1976] 398) has compared this principle to that in Oscar Wilde’s novel about the picture of Dorian Gray, which lost its youth as Dorian degenerated and returned to its former beauty at his death. If the Hebrew text is original at this point (see Note 11.b.), the presence of pagan objects of worship in the temple (cf. 8:5–6, 9–10) is cited as a blatant example of the defiling abominations committed by the people of Jerusalem.

In reprisal for this attack on his sanctuary and so on himself, Yahweh had to adopt a radical policy of curtailment: the verb now used means both to shave and to curtail. Nor would he have any compunction in so doing. The double clause that qualifies this punishment is a divine formula that will recur five times in chaps. 7–9. It is an adaptation of an expression whose original setting was in the court of law, according to the usage in Deuteronomy (Deut 13:9 [8]), where it refers to the necessity of extreme punishment due to the serious nature of a crime (see, however, Raitt, Theology of Exile 50–53). Here Yahweh judges the offenses to be so grave that no lesser plight could befall the citizens of Jerusalem than the inexorable fate depicted in the symbolic action.

12 The burning of one third of the cut hair “inside the city” (v 2) is interpreted as a metaphor for the rigors of a siege, specifically the fatal outbreak of plague and onset of famine (cf. 2 Kgs 25:3). The slashing of the next third of the pile of hair with the sword “around” the model of the city is sufficiently clear as to need little explanation. It found fulfillment in a royal attempt to escape the besieged city (2 Kgs 25:4–7). The fate of the last pile of hair is simply repeated in v 12b from the end of v 2, with the necessary change of the first of the two verbs to the divine first person, to match the second verb. The change of person brings v 12b even closer to its prototype in Lev 26:33a. The divine curse for the people’s radical breach of Yahweh’s covenant with them was to come tragically true. The triple formula of fatalities caused by plague, famine, and sword in warfare was also used by Jeremiah (e.g., Jer 21:19; 27:13). It recurs in Ezek 6:11, 12; 7:15. The formula, which may have been borrowed from Jeremiah by Ezekiel, is used rather more freely by the latter (see Illman, OT Formulas 94–97).

13 The qualification in the treatment of the final portion of hair in vv 3–4 does not find precise interpretation. Instead, there is a more allusive style of interpretation. The multiple references to divine anger surely correspond to the fresh fires of judgment that blazed in v 4. Moreover, the double use of הַלְּכֵּה “be exhausted” not only fittingly characterizes the finality of the fate described there but also echoes the sound of הַלְּכֵּה “all” in v 4b. The fires of judgment would take the form of divine anger, for which fire is a standard metaphor in this book and elsewhere (e.g., 22:20–22, 31; 24:11–13; Jer 7:20;
Lam 4:11).

The addition of a recognition formula to the judgment oracle turns it into a proof saying. The purpose of the judgment was to be the recognition and vindication of Yahweh. He is not one to stand idly by while his people engage in gross sin that pollutes his sanctuary. He will deal radically with the moral chaos that has disturbed Jerusalem’s special relationship with Yahweh. The recognition formula is expanded with a formula of asseveration, which refers to Yahweh’s verdict of judgment, as in 17:21; here the asseveration formula is qualified with the intensive phrase “in my passion.” The recognition formula has been further extended with a clause that refers to the execution of judgment as an accomplished fact, as, for instance, in 6:13; 12:15. The fulfillment of Yahweh’s word would reveal him as the God who triumphs over wrong and over the perpetrators of wrongdoing.

14–17 There follow two supplementary statements, in vv 14–15 and 16–17, each of which closes with a further formula of divine asseveration. Vv 14–15 resume and develop the announcement of judgment made in vv 8–10, while vv 16–17 resume and develop that of v 12a. Thus vv 14–17 make up a third block of interpretive material, after those of vv 5–10 and 11–13, and seek to coordinate the two earlier ones. Another major function of this block is to amplify the allusions to Lev 26 that have occurred in vv 5–13.

14–15 The reference to the surrounding nations takes the reader back to v 8 and even further back to vv 5 and 7, while “before the eyes of (every passerby)” is a sinister echo of “in the nations’ view” in v 8. The recapitulating “when I carry out acts of judgment” harks back to the language of divine intervention in vv 8 and 10. There were to be two more phases of such judgment for Jerusalem to undergo. First, the covenant curse list of Lev 26 envisioned not only siege for Israel’s cities but also destruction. The threat that Yahweh would make them objects of destruction (hbrj … ytnw, Lev 26:31) is here echoed in the language of v 14a, “and I will make you an object of destruction” (hbrj ûntaw). Like the earlier acts of judgment in v 8, destruction would be subject to the humiliating observation of others. Such humiliation is brought to the surface in v 15. The motif is borrowed from the tradition of the communal lament (Pss 44:14–15[13–14]; 79:4; cf. 89:51–52[50–51]). It does feature in a curse list in Deut 28:37, but only with reference to exiles. In this final reference to the nations, Jerusalem ironically retains its central role of v 5, but all else has changed. It has exchanged the high place of privilege for the low place of contempt. The “furious punishment” is a measure of the intensity of sinfulness that warrants these acts judgment. Yahweh has given his verdict and pledges that it will be carried out.

16–17 A whole series of afflictions is promised to Jerusalem and its citizens in this vehement recapitulation of v 12a. At first the citizens are mentioned obliquely, as in vv 6b and 13; then they are addressed in vv 16b–17a1, as in v 7. There is finally a renewed turning to Jerusalem, which is addressed in v 17a2-b, as in the concluding vv 8–10 and also in vv 14–15. A pattern emerges from these twists and turns.

The description of Yahweh’s acts of judgment as his arrows may have been suggested by Deut 32:23, the context of which is not dissimilar. But the main intent of these closing verses is to capture the bitter flavor of Lev 26. Thus the breaking of bread sticks, a citation of Lev 26:26, is repeated from the earlier sign interpretation in 4:16; now it is closer to the original with respect to “you.” The citation is woven into the present context by the mention of famine repeated from v 12. The letting loose of “vicious animals” that “leave you childless” is obviously borrowed from Lev 26:22, except that for the hiphil form of the initial verb a piel is used here. The second singular pronoun reaches beyond the city of

e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare
Jerusalem to its inhabitants, as it did in v 10 (ûtyrav “those of you who are left”). The mention of plague and sword reaffirms v 12, but they are also meant to evoke the rigors of Lev 26:25, as the use of the same phrase, “cause to come upon” (l[ ayba), in the second case strongly suggests. The reference to bloodshed presumably paraphrases the dying of v 12a. The alliterative µdw rbd “plague and bloodshed” seems to be virtually a hendiadys, “a fatal plague.” After this volley of nightmarish woes, which in formal terms mingle divine punishment and its human consequences, the divine fiat resounds once more, in confirmation: “I, Yahweh, have spoken.”

Explanation

The book continues almost as dramatically as it began, with a renewed vision and divine commands for Ezekiel to carry out a series of symbolic actions concerning the coming siege of Jerusalem. Interpretive comments are included with the actions, mostly of a brief nature; the last sign of the frighteningly methodical disposal of the people in the capital receives an elaborate interpretation that grounds divine judgment in accusations of dire human sinfulness. “Emphatic expression is … given to the unfathomable guilt of the people and the relentless fury it has evoked in God” (Greenberg 128). The function of this message of judgment is theodicy. It focuses on coming catastrophe and asks what has been done to deserve such a fate. Typically an oracle of judgment that serves as an expression of theodicy “will refer to the catastrophe under some harsh image and then fill the accusation with the most extreme charges of sin imaginable” (Raitt, Theology of Exile 90–94, esp. 92). The extreme generalizations that mark most of the accusations, in 5:6–7, 11, as well as 4:4–5, and the radical nature of the judgment indicate that the purpose of the present message of judgment is to explain that God’s coming action is justified. Thus this second unit of the book appropriately follows the first, in which Ezekiel’s call by the divine judge was narrated and announced.

This purpose serves to shed light on a NT passage. In Romans 1:18–3:26 Paul explains justification by faith by arguing that “the wrath of God” (Rom 1:18) must fall upon humanity, both Gentiles and Jews, because “all have sinned” (3:23). The latter statement is not meant as a truism: human sinning partakes of an outrageous quality, as the apostle’s previous impassioned and extreme definitions make clear. For Paul, as for Ezekiel, there was need for theodicy, as warrant for the radical work of God.

In the present unit, corroborative weight is lent to the harshness of the divine intervention by appeal to what was evidently an existing tradition, the series of covenant curses in Lev 26. It is difficult to resist Greenberg’s conclusion: “All indications are of Ezekiel’s dependence upon Lev 26” (127). The relative closeness of the parallels with Lev 26 and the sustained frequency of their presence seem to point to a literary source that was acknowledged as authoritative by the exiles, to which the prophet appealed to support the vehemence of his message (see the **Excursus that follows chap. 6). The accusation of rejecting God’s standards and rules (5:6) leans on the premise of the curses in Lev 26:15. Then the punishments of Lev 26:22, 25, 26, 29, 31, and 33 are echoed in the interpretive material of 4:10, 16, 17; 5:2, 10, 12, 16, 17. This pattern of quotation or allusion that runs through chaps. 4–5 was evidently intended as a powerful argument that God’s new and shocking prophetic word was congruent with an older, priestly word concerning the failure of the covenant people and the inevitable reprisals of their Lord. There is a deliberate historicizing of the phases of deterrent curses in terms of an imminent catastrophe.

Another tradition comes to the fore in these chapters, this time as the target of sinister reinterpretation. Zion theology, which finds poetic and cultic expression in the Songs of Zion, Pss 46, 48,
76, 87, was a strong impediment to threats of Jerusalem’s downfall. The aura of impregnability afforded by Yahweh’s presence in the temple was a sacred canopy under which his people could shelter from all such threats, whether posed by foreign pressure or by prophets of doom. Indeed, as Lam 4:12 later expressed it:

The kings of the earth did not believe
nor any of the inhabitants of the world
that enemy or foe could enter
through the gates of Jerusalem.

Yet Ezekiel affirmed that the battle whose outcome Zion’s lore proudly celebrated, for instance in Ps 48:5–7 (4–6), would be virtually reenacted, and that this time God’s favor would not save Jerusalem (4:1–3; cf. Krüger, Geschichtskonzepte 127). The theological basis for the tradition of Jerusalem’s security, its unique character, is brought into the open in 5:5—and made the reason for its fall. The central position of divine privilege that Jerusalem held in the world accentuates the egregious nature of the capital’s rejection of divine standards. Much is expected of the one to whom much is given (Luke 12:48). The very argument that Amos had used against the Northern Kingdom reappears here, with reference to Jerusalem:

You only have I known
of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you
for all your iniquities. (Amos 3:2)

Ezekiel’s engaging in striking symbolic acts continues the strange tradition represented by Isaiah, who walked barefoot and scantily clad for three years as a “sign” against Egypt (Isa 20:3–4), and by Jeremiah, who carried a wooden yoke around Jerusalem, as a token that the residents should surrender to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 27:2, 12; 28:10). It is not difficult to see the political relevance of Ezekiel’s own symbolic actions, concerning the siege and fall of Jerusalem and the fate of those who lived in or had taken refuge in the city. At about the same time that Ezekiel received instructions to perform these signs and give an accompanying commentary, an anti-Babylonian conference of western states was being held in Jerusalem (Jer 27:3), evidently to plot rebellion against an empire that had recently been beset by domestic and provincial difficulties (see Malamat, “Twilight of Judah” 135–37). The conference gave expression to a widespread hope, at home (cf. Jer 28:1–4) and among the exiles (cf. Jer 29:8–9), of a glorious reversal of Judean fortunes, which would include the release of the 597 B.C. prisoners of war. Ezekiel had to spell out to the exiles the emptiness of all such hopes. Rather, Jerusalem’s fate under God was to be a military siege that would culminate in destruction and widespread loss of life. Any expectation that was not realistically grounded in moral and religious commitment to Yahweh was doomed to disappointment. The prophet was preparing the exiles for the tragic fall of Jerusalem that occurred a few years later.

There is evidence of redactional amplification of the basic message. The sudden references to exile in 4:6, 13 arouse suspicion in their siege-related contexts. They lack the appropriateness of the references in 5:2b, 12b that follow a natural sequence of siege, destruction, and exile. Surely 4:6, 13 are to be interpreted in terms of an intention to find a new relevance in the adjacent material. Fulfillment in the
siege conditions in 587 B.C. did not exhaust its applicability to God’s people as victims of his judgment. Those who eventually languished in the ensuing exile were invited to realize that his sentence of punishment was still being served by their generation and that the divinely imposed curse of eating unclean food was as much a mark of exile as it was of the siege. The updating is comparable with the redactional extension of the sin and punishment of the Northern Kingdom to Judah in the book of Hosea (Hos 8:14; 10:11; 12:1[11:12, see REB], 3[2]). Here the hermeneutical widening of the original scope constitutes a warning that divine judgment could not be relegated to the past but that present experience revealed the same somber side of God in his relationship with the Judean exiles. There is no difficulty in seeing Ezekiel’s hand at work in these reinterpretations, since his prophetic ministry continued long after 587 and extended into the main period of exile. It is less likely that the hostages of 597 are in view.

A redactional item of a different type is to be found in 3:16b–21. The rest of the material in this literary unit is marked by conformity with the former unit. The message of inescapable judgment to a rebel community, with which Ezekiel was entrusted at his call, is reaffirmed in 3:27. The note of hostile response to Ezekiel’s message, which is struck in 2:6; 3:7, is sounded again in 3:25. On a par with such sentiments is the withdrawal of divine favor that Ezekiel represents both in the seclusion and silence of 3:24, 26 and in the iron plate that separates the prophet from the model of the city in 4:3. The sign-acts and their interpretation describe the form that God’s judgment is to take and give justifications. The messenger formula that is used as a cipher of judgment in 2:4; 3:11 continues in that function in 3:27; its regular employment in an oracle of judgment at 5:5, 7, 8 serves to echo the earlier usage. The formula of divine asseveration, “I have spoken” (ytrbd) in 5:13, 15, 17 reminds the careful reader of the triple mandate to Ezekiel to repeat “my words” (yrbd) in 2:7; 3:4 and “my words that I will speak” (yrbdrvā) in 3:10. The commission to prophesy to “the community of Israel” (2:3; 3:1, 4, 7) is resumed in the sign for such a constituency at 4:3, in the statement of its guilt at 4:4, and in implications for “all the community of Israel” at 5:4 (cf. 3:7).

This flow of continuity is interrupted by 3:16b–21. There is no need, however, to cut the knot of the presence of this section by resorting to “a purely text-critical cause, such as a displaced page” (Reventlow, Wächter 130). As was noted in the Comment, the section is superficially integrated into its context by the reference to “the community of Israel” in 3:17 and by the mention of “iniquity” (áveis) in 3:18, 19 (cf. 5:4). However, its discontinuity outweighs the continuity, a phenomenon that suggests that redactional splicing has taken place. It is sometimes suggested that the school of Ezekiel wished to emphasize that divine concern for repentance was a feature of Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry from the outset. This conclusion has been drawn, for example, by Fohrer (23), Fishbane (Int Interpretation 38 [1984] 134), Hals (24), and Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 353). However, Greenberg’s sensitivity to the falsehood of thus imbedding a statement of Ezekiel’s later role in a pre-fall context (“falsely,” 93) deserves to be taken seriously. Rather, the insertion bears witness to a re-reading of these early chapters from a vantage point of changed conditions. One may compare the way that, in the book of Isaiah, 4:2–6 and chap. 12 reflect a redactional reading of the preceding chapters in a later period, which seeks to apply them to a different setting. In both the ministry and the book of Ezekiel, a turning point comes with the fall of Jerusalem, and a new message of salvation is made possible. However, the old message of judgment continues to have a certain relevance. Ezek 20:33–38; 33:30–33; 34:20–22 are passages that realistically carry a message of partial judgment, in order to affirm the moral challenge that confronts those who are...
to be saved. The old message of radical judgment had been fulfilled, but its usefulness lived on in the reminder that “God is not mocked” (Gal 6:7). It is in this sense that 3:16b–21 has been abstracted from 33:1–13 and placed at this point. We are meant to notice not how ill-fitting this passage is in a context of absolute judgment but rather how that context needs to be reinterpreted.

We are invited to look back from a later perspective and to re-read the message of inevitable judgment through eyes that have already read the later modifications to the first message. God does not cease to be the judge of the apostate and of the backsliding believer. Ezekiel’s later role as watchman certainly involved a call to repentance and so a desire to save the lost among the people of God. But God’s will to save in no way cancels out his moral necessity to judge, wherever evil exists among “the community of Israel.” “Iniquity” is still abhorrent to him. The vision of the divine judge must still grip those who hear it read, and Ezekiel’s call to announce punishment for rebels against the will of God still stands. God’s “severity” survives as a real deterrent, even when his “kindness” has come to prevail—“kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off” (Rom 11:22).

The categorical imperative that rested on Ezekiel to carry out this task of watchman is reminiscent of that of Paul to “warn everyone and teach everyone” (Col 1:24–29, esp. v 28). This imperative, both prophetic and apostolic, underscores the need for God’s people to covet a strong sense of his will in matters of their own hearts and habits.

Yahweh’s Campaign against the Mountains of Israel (6:1–14)

Bibliography

Translation

1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2 “Human one, look in the direction of the mountains of Israel and issue a prophecy against them. 3 Mountains of Israel, you are to say, listen to the declaration of Yahweh. Here is a message from the Lord Yahweh to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys. 4 I am going to order a sword to invade you, and I will destroy your local shrines. 5 Your altars will be reduced to ruins, and your incense burners smashed. 6 Wherever you live, towns will be devastated and local shrines reduced to ruins, with the result that your

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**VTSup** Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)

ETS Erfurter Theologische Studien

BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]

FB Forschung zur Bibel

SOTSMS Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series

CUP Cambridge University Press

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2.a. For the interchange in sense between ל “to” and ל “against,” cf. Note 1:17.c.

3.a. The MT adds ינדא “Lord,” in contravention of the formulaic range of usage in Ezekiel (see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556). Mechanical assimilation to the next clause has doubtless occurred.

3.b. For the use of ינדא “Lord” in the messenger formula here and in v 11, see Note 2:4.c.

3.c. For the K/Q forms, see Zimmerli 179.

3.d. The LXX implies וּבַּאֲמָרָם “and (they) will be destroyed,” probably by assimilation to the pl. verbs of v 4a (cf. v 6).

4.a. See HALAT 315b–16a.

4.b. The LXX∗ does not render this verb separately, making both nouns depend on the earlier verb.

4.c. The etymology of Heb. לְנִי “idol” is uncertain; probably, it literally means a stone block (Cooke 73; Greenberg 132; cf. HALAT 185a). It is vocalized by analogy with לְנַדְּרֶשׁ “abhorrent object of worship.” MT adds v 5a, “and I will put the corpses of members of Israel in front of their idols,” which violates the direct address of the context and is not represented in the LXX∗. It appears to be a gloss that cites Lev 26:30 and interprets “your (slain)” in v 4b, which itself echoes Lev 26:30, in human terms instead of relating to the mountains. In Lev 26:30 and context, the suffixes have the former sense. The secondary nature of v 5a is further indicated by closeness of reference to Lev 26:30, over against the loose treatment in v 4b, as in the overall context (Reventlow, Wächter 29).

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6.a. The rendering “blood-spattered altars” in NEB and REB for לְנִי פָּרֵק “cities” depends on an alternative etymologizing (cf. Driver, JTS 41 [1940] 169, following T. H. Gaster) that was criticized by E. W. Nicholson (VT 27 [1977] 113–16). Driver judged that the meaning “cities” did not fit a succession of cultic terms, but it echoes the underlying Lev 26:31, 33 and in turn is clearly echoed in 35:4; 36:4, 10.
altars will be devastated and ruined⁶ and your idols smashed and demolished, while your incense burners will be knocked down and your artifacts obliterated;⁷ and people will lie fallen,⁸ slain among you. Then you will realize that I am Yahweh, when⁹ your survivors of the sword are present among the nations, when you are dispersed among other countries. Then your survivors will remember me among the nations where they are held captive, how I was stricken by their wanton hearts that had lost faith⁹ in me and by their wanton eyes that had followed their idols. They will
regard themselves with disgust\textsuperscript{d} for all their shocking rites. \textsuperscript{10}Then they will realize that I am Yahweh; I did not threaten without due cause\textsuperscript{a} to inflict on them such a disaster.\textsuperscript{b}

\textsuperscript{11}“Here is a message from the Lord Yahweh. Clap your hands and stamp your foot, and bemoan all their shocking rites\textsuperscript{b} of the community of Israel,\textsuperscript{c} who\textsuperscript{d} are to fall victim to sword, famine, and pestilence. \textsuperscript{12}Those far away will die of pestilence, those nearby will fall to the sword, while those who escape the one\textsuperscript{a} or survive the other will die\textsuperscript{b} of famine, and then I will have exhausted my fury

\textsuperscript{c} 9.c. The MT \textit{r} \textit{s} V \textit{r} \textit{a} “which turned away,” unrepresented in the LXX\textsuperscript{*}, is generally taken as a gloss clarifying the pregnant use of \textit{l l m h nz} “fornicate away from”; cf. the parallel \textit{y r} a \textit{t w r} \textit{z h} “that fornicated after” in the next clause. For \textit{l m h nz}, cf. Hos 9:1.

\textsuperscript{d} 9.d. For the vocalization, see Joüon 800. The MT adds \textit{w c} [ r v a t w r h a] a “for [= l l ; cf. 36:31] the evils that they did,” which the LXX\textsuperscript{*} does not represent. It seems to be a comparative gloss alluding to 20:43 (Cornill 210; et al.).

\textsuperscript{e} 9.e. The preposition is usually \textit{b} in this construction; in 36:31 it is \textit{l l}. For \textit{l l}, cf. its usage with reference to the cause of an emotion (BDB 514b–515a). The attestation of \textit{b} by LXX Syr. Vg appears to reflect an easier reading.

\textsuperscript{a} 10.a-b. Heb. \textit{m n j Al a} a a l “not in vain” (a unique phrase; cf. GKC 119ii) and \textit{h r h m h l t w c} [ l t a z h “to do this evil to them” are not represented in the LXX\textsuperscript{*}. Zimmerli (180) took them as secondary, deriving from 14:23, but the wording there is by no means close. The MT deserves the benefit of the doubt. Cooke (71) argued that the striking language supports the MT, while Wevers (70) urged that the first phrase is germane to the passage (cf. also Greenberg 135): “the effectiveness of Yahweh’s speech is demonstrated by the exiles’ confession and self-loathing.” Wevers understood the first clause in terms of effective expression, rather than adequate causality.

\textsuperscript{b} 10.a-b. Heb. \textit{m n j Al a} a a l “not in vain” (a unique phrase; cf. GKC 119ii) and \textit{h r h m h l t w c} [ l t a z h “to do this evil to them” are not represented in the LXX\textsuperscript{*}. Zimmerli (180) took them as secondary, deriving from 14:23, but the wording there is by no means close. The MT deserves the benefit of the doubt. Cooke (71) argued that the striking language supports the MT, while Wevers (70) urged that the first phrase is germane to the passage (cf. also Greenberg 135): “the effectiveness of Yahweh’s speech is demonstrated by the exiles’ confession and self-loathing.” Wevers understood the first clause in terms of effective expression, rather than adequate causality.


\textsuperscript{b} 11.b. The MT adds t w f “evil(s),” which the LXX\textsuperscript{*} does not represent and is awkward, whether it is an adj or a noun. The reading is best explained by supposing a marginal phrase t w f t w b [ w t that originally referred to v 9 and sought to compare 20:43: In the gloss, t w b [ w t functions as a cue word: “For ‘abominations’ (20:43) has ‘evils.’” The comparative gloss was taken as a correction of t w b [ w t “abominations” here in v 11 and displaced it. Then the MT bears witness to two separate attempts at similar annotation of v 9, one of which entered v 9 and the other v 11.

\textsuperscript{c} 11.c. The REB takes a f c y t y b “community of Israel” as vocative, but (1) it is rather distant from the supposed addressee, and (2) an article is then expected with the preceding phrase or noun.

\textsuperscript{d} 11.d. The LXX\textsuperscript{*} does not represent f V a “who.” With or without it, the continuation is somewhat strange.
against them and you will realize that I am Yahweh, when their slain lie among their idols round their altars on every high hill, on all the tops of the mountains, and under every luxuriant tree and under every leafy terebinth, wherever they presented fragrant offerings to appease all their idols. I will deal them a blow and reduce the country to wrack and ruin wherever they live, from the wilderness to Riblah.

Then they will realize that I am Yahweh.”

Notes

2.a. For the interchange in sense between † “to” and ‡ “against,” cf. Note 1:17.c*. 

a 12.a. Heb. † קָאִית “and the one who is left” is not represented in the LXX*, but the translator may well have regarded it as an otiose synonym of the following term. Hitzig (43) and others have defined it as a gloss that explained the following ‡ הַמַּת as “one who survives,” in comparison with the interpretation “one who is besieged” (LXX). Freedy (VT 20 [1970] 136–37) added that without it the three cola are perfectly matched. However, Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 61; cf. Keil 97; von Orelli 29) adequately explained the pair of words in climactic terms as “he who is left over (from the pestilence)” and “he who is preserved (from the sword).”

b 12.b. The LXX συντελέσηται “will be destroyed” reflects, in place of † ἢμα “will die,” not ‡ ἢμα “will come to an end” (BHK; Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 61) but ‡ ἡλκὺ “will perish” (see Zimmerli 181). The reading is secondary and represents assimilation to 5:12.

a 13.a-b. The LXX* does not represent the second and fourth of the four phrases, but Cornill (210–11) retained them for their distinctive phraseology, although he jettisoned the first and third phrases. Greenberg (135) has sensitively traced the innovative adaptation of familiar elements throughout the two pairs of phrases (cf. Simian, Nachgeschichte 267).

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c 13.c. For the construction, see Joüon 129q.

a 14.a. The translation endeavors to capture the alliteration of ‡ מְדִים מֵמִים מְדִים מְדִים, two nouns meaning “ruin.”

b 14.b. No such place as Diblah or Diblathah is known. Since J. D. Michaelis, the place name is generally taken, via an early † כ error that Jerome noted long ago, as originally a reference to Riblah, to which a few late Masoretic manuscripts correct (see BHK). Greenberg (137) has aptly compared the error in the LXX of 2 Kgs 25; Jer 52. Then there are two interpretive options: (1) with the MT to take the phrase as comparative, “more (desolate) than the wilderness of Riblah” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:22; BHS; REB), or (2) as is more commonly done, to point the first noun as abs, ‡ בּדִים מְדִים, and to render “from (the) wilderness to Riblah.” In the former case the ‡ הending is not easily explicable, while in the latter it is a straightforward indication of direction. However, in the second option one would expect ‡ בּדִים מְדִים “from the wilderness” (see BHS), although Greenberg (137) has justified the anarthrous noun as a case of poetic style; in prose Smend (40) compared 21:3; 23:42. The contextual emphasis on comprehensiveness (see the Comment) favors the second option.

c 14.c. The second person in the LXX* “assimilates … to the formulation of v 13a” (Zimmerli 182). cf. confer, compare

* 17.c. Heb. † רָאִי, usually “on,” is used in the sense of † רָאִי “to” (cf. vv 9, 12), as often in Ezekiel, doubtless under the influence of Aram. usage (see Rooker, Biblical Hebrew in Transition 128–31).
3.a. The MT adds יְהֹוָה “Lord,” in contravention of the formulaic range of usage in Ezekiel (see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2* 556). Mechanical assimilation to the next clause has doubtless occurred.

3.b. For the use of יְהֹוָה “Lord” in the messenger formula here and in v 11, see *Note 2:4.c*.

3.c. For the K/Q forms, see Zimmerli 179.

3.d. The LXX implies וֶדֶּבַעַת “and (they) will be destroyed,” probably by assimilation to the pl. verbs of v 4a (cf. v 6).

4.a. See *HALAT* 315b–16a.

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E. W. Nicholson (VT 27 [1977] 113–16). Driver judged that the meaning “cities” did not fit a succession of cultic terms, but it echoes the underlying Lev 26:31, 33 and in turn is clearly echoed in 35:4; 36:4, 10.

6.b. For the vocalization, which derives from a rare stem 𐤄𐤃𐤉, see Cooke 74. A variant pointing (see BHS) associates with the standard stem 𐤄𐤃𐤉.

6.c. Heb. ṭmtv a ṭm employs a byform of ṭmtv “be desolate,” as the renderings in Syr. Syh Tg. appear to confirm (Driver, “Confused Hebrew Roots” 75–77). The LXX attests a shorter text in v 6, omitting the verbs ṭmtv a ṭm “and be ruined” and ṭt ṭm “and be demolished,” and also the final clause ṭm ṭmtv 𐤄𐤃𐤉 m “and your artifacts will be obliterated.” The first two omissions may reflect simply the translator’s unwillingness to render each verb of destruction separately, as evidently in v 4. The last clause could easily have been overlooked by homoeoarcton of ṭm and homoeoteleuton of 𐤄𐤃𐤉. Kraetzschmar (67) and Cooke (74) rightly warned against uncritically following the LXX. In Brownlee (1986) 95, I drew attention to an impressive stylistic pattern that dominates the sentence as it stands in MT: verb + subj/verb + subj/two verbs + subj/two verbs + subj/subj + verb/subj + verb.

7.a. For this sense of the verb, see Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:20; Joüon 112a n. 5.

8.a. The MT prefaces with ṭt ṭt ṭm ṭm “and I will leave,” which is generally taken as reflecting a conflated text (e.g., Greenberg 134). The LXX* does not represent it, and it appears to have originated in a comparative gloss derived from the similar 12:16 (Cornill 209; et al.). The deletion is supported by a form-critical factor: see Form/Setting/Structure. Simian’s failure to recognize the intrusion led him to characterize vv 8–9 falsely as a promise of salvation (Nachgeschichte 121; contrast Hölscher, Dichter...
66). Zimmerli (179) and Liwak (“Probleme” 276 n. 64) have rightly criticized Driver’s understanding of ῥ with ῲ as “when they fall” (Bib 19 [1938] 61; so NEB but not REB).

8.b. The MT µk yt ῳ zh ῲ “when you are dispersed” would normally be µkt ῳ zh ῲ: the suffix has been treated as if it were a fem. pl. ending (cf. 16:31 and GKC 911). It may simply be a case of mechanical assimilation to the µk yt ῳ endings in vv 3–6.

9.a. Heb. ῳ vā seems to function as a second object after w k zw “and they will remember,” with the sense “the fact that, how”: cf. ῳ vā ῲ “how” after ῳ k z in 2 Kgs 20:3 (= Isa 38:3).

9.b. Driver (JSS 7 [1962] 96), followed by Greenberg (134; cf. Keil 96), NEB and NRSV, took t ῲ vā t ῲ “I was brokenhearted, grieved at,” comparing Syr. ittbr and Akk. itti “with” after verbs expressing anger. The repetition of vā ῳ vā is suspicious, but the LXX indirectly supports the MT by representing ῳ ῲ vā ῳ vā “I swore.” One may not emend to ῳ ῲ vā ῳ vā (“how) I broke,” on the basis of ῳ S Q Tg. Vg (BHK; Brownlee 98, 100): not only “hearts” but “eyes” must be the awkward object. The conjectural emendation ῳ ῲ ῳ vā “and I will break” (Wellhausen in Smend 39 et al.) has the same defect. Bewer’s proposal in ZAW 63 (1951) 193, with comparison of 20:43; 36:31, to delete ῳ vā “me” and also ῳ ῲ vā ῳ vā as a variant of ῳ ῲ vā ῳ vā “whom I will have taken captive” in a conflated text, with the consequent syntax “I will remember … their wanton hearts,” is attractive: ῳ ῲ vā ῳ vā “and they will be broken” in vv 4, 6 may have influenced the MT.
9.c. The MT יָאָרָתָּא “which turned away,” unrepresented in the LXX*, is generally taken as a gloss clarifying the pregnant use of יָאָרָתָא תָּאָרָתָא “fornicate away from”: cf. the parallel יָאָרָתָא תָּאָרָתָא “that fornicated after” in the next clause. For יָאָרָתָא תָּאָרָתָא, cf. Hos 9:1.

9.d. For the vocalization, see Joüon 80o. The MT adds וּכְנָּא תָּאָרָתָא “for [= ] ; cf. 36:31] the evils that they did,” which the LXX* does not represent. It seems to be a comparative gloss alluding to 20:43 (Cornill 210; et al.).

9.e. The preposition is usually ב in this construction; in 36:31 it is מ. For מ, cf. its usage with reference to the cause of an emotion (BDB 514b–515a). The attestation of ב by LXX Syr. Vg appears to reflect an easier reading.

10.a-b. Heb. יָאָרָתָא אֲלָא “not in vain” (a unique phrase; cf. GKC 119ii) and יָאָרָתָא בְּּאַרְּא “to do this evil to them” are not represented in the LXX*. Zimmerli (180) took them as secondary, deriving from 14:23, but the wording there is by no means close. The MT deserves the benefit of the doubt. Cooke (71) argued that the striking language supports the MT, while Wevers (70) urged that the first phrase is germane to the passage (cf. also Greenberg 135): “the effectiveness of Yahweh’s speech is demonstrated by the exiles’ confession and self-loathing.” Wevers understood the first clause in terms of effective expression, rather than adequate causality.


MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
Lit. literally

11.b. The MT adds ḫ t ṯw]<ř “evil(s),” which the LXX* does not represent and is awkward, whether it is an adj or a noun. The reading is best explained by supposing a marginal phrase ḫ t ṯw]<ř ḫ t ṯw]<ř that originally referred to v 9 and sought to compare 20:43. In the gloss, ḫ t ṯw]<ř functions as a cue word: “For ‘abominations’ (20:43 has) ‘evils.’” The comparative gloss was taken as a correction of ḫ t ṯw]<ř “abominations” here in v 11 and displaced it. Then the MT bears witness to two separate attempts at similar annotation of v 9, one of which entered v 9 and the other v 11.

11.c. The REB takes ḫ t ṯw]<ř “community of Israel” as vocative, but (1) it is rather distant from the supposed addressee, and (2) an article is then expected with the preceding phrase or noun.

11.d. The LXX* does not represent ḫ ṭ “who.” With or without it, the continuation is somewhat strange.

12.a. Heb. ḫ ṭ “and the one who is left” is not represented in the LXX*, but the translator may well have regarded it as an otiose synonym of the following term. Hitzig (43) and others have defined it as a gloss that explained the following ḫ ṭ ᵗn as “one who survives,” in comparison with the interpretation “one who is besieged” (LXX). Freedy (VT 20 [1970] 136–37) added that without it the three cola are perfectly matched. However, Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 61; cf. Keil 97; von Orelli 29) adequately explained the pair of words in climactic terms as “he who is left over (from the pestilence)” and “he who is preserved (from the sword).”

12.b. The LXX sunt ᵗλ ᵗε ᵗς ᵗή ᵗα “will be destroyed” reflects, in place of ḫ ṭ ṭmy “will die,” not ṭ ṭξ ᵗ� “will come to an end” (BHK; Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 61) but ṭ ṭ ṭ ᵗγ “will perish” (see Zimmerli 181). The reading is secondary and represents assimilation to 5:12.

13.a-b. The LXX* does not represent the second and fourth of the four phrases, but Cornill (210–11)}
retained them for their distinctive phraseology, although he jettisoned the first and third phrases.

Greenberg (135) has sensitively traced the innovative adaptation of familiar elements throughout the two pairs of phrases (cf. Simian, Nachgeschichte 267).

13.c. For the construction, see Joüon 129q.

14.a. The translation endeavors to capture the alliteration of ḫ ṁyw mw ḫ mnmw, two nouns meaning “ruin.”

14.b. No such place as Diblah or Diblathah is known. Since J. D. Michaelis, the place name is generally taken, via an early r/d error that Jerome noted long ago, as originally a reference to Riblah, to which a few late Masoretic manuscripts correct (see BHK). Greenberg (137) has aptly compared the error in the LXX of 2 Kgs 25; Jer 52. Then there are two interpretive options: (1) with the MT to take the phrase as comparative, “more (desolate) than the wilderness of Riblah” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:22; BHS; REB), or (2) as is more commonly done, to point the first noun as abs, r b d mm, and to render “from (the) wilderness to Riblah.” In the former case the ḫ ;ending is not easily explicable, while in the latter it is a straightforward indication of direction. However, in the second option one would expect r b d mh m “from the wilderness” (see BHS), although Greenberg (137) has justified the anarthrous noun as a case of poetic style; in prose Smend (40) compared 21:3; 23:42. The contextual emphasis on comprehensiveness (see the Comment) favors the second option.

14.c. The second person in the LXX* “assimilates … to the formulation of v 13a” (Zimmerli 182).

Form/Structure/Setting

Chap. 6 comprises a separate literary unit, as the message-reception formulas in 6:1 and 7:1 indicate. The unit breaks down into two oracles in vv 2–10 and 11–14, both of which have messenger formulas at their head (vv 3, 11) and begin with commands to engage in expressive gestures (vv 2, 11). The oracles are marked by double recognition formulas, in vv 7 and 10 on the one hand and vv 13 and 14 on the other. Accordingly, these oracles are proof sayings: they are of the bipartite type, with an announcement of judgment and a closing recognition formula that has a temporal clause appended. Both oracles are extended with further statements of judgment, which in turn end with their own recognition formulas. The temporal clauses, consisting of beth with infinitive construct, in vv 8 and 13, are instances of a resumptive clause closely linked with its preceding recognition formula (“you/they will know … when. …”), which may then be capped with a further recognition formula. This construction is not unparalleled in the book of Ezekiel. We have already observed a resumptive temporal clause in 5:13; the fuller style

cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
REB Revised English Bible
abs absolute (nouns)
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
with a further recognition formula occurs in 30:25–26. The MT has understood the nature of the
temporal clause in v 13 as an appendage, but the textual intrusion at the beginning of v 8 prevented
recognition of the one there.

In the present two oracles, the temporal clauses do not precisely resume material earlier in their
respective oracle, but such must be their form-critical role (see the Comment). In each case the following
new statement or series of statements, which leads on to a further recognition formula, represents an
extension of the message, somewhat as in 36:12, but here much more developed, so that one has two
pairs of linked proof sayings. Greenberg (137–38) has called the second sections “afterwaves” and
aptly compared 12:15–16; 20:42–44.

The two oracles match not only in their overall form but in their initial expressive gestures (vv 2, 11).
Parunak (“Structural Studies” 187) has drawn attention to the stylistic patterning that unites the oracles,
an ABB’A’ chiastic arrangement in which A/A’ stand for cultic references within vv 1–7 and 13–14, and
B/B’ represent references to human suffering in vv 8–10 and 11–12. One may also observe the use of ąPOSITION
“all the abominations” in vv 9 and 11 as a hinge that connects the two oracles.

The announcement of judgment in the first oracle has its own rhetorical artistry in that it begins with
ąPOSITION “sword” (v 3) and ends with “slain” (v 7), clearly breaking up the common phrase, which
appears frequently in chaps. 31–32. ąPOSITION “slain by the sword.” In v 4b ąPOSITION “your slain”
also occurs, while ąPOSITION “will be devastated” in v 6a may be a word play on ąPOSITION in v 3. This pattern
indicates two sections, vv 3–5 and 6–7a, which the content supports. This stylistic feature suggests the
originality of vv 6–7a, which have been regarded with suspicion simply because in content they elaborate
vv 4–5 (Bertholet [1936] 24–25; Zimmerli 183; Bettenzoli, Geist der Heiligkeit 185–86). The second
oracle echoes the terms “sword” and “slain,” in vv 11–13a, and also the falling of vv 4b and 7a in vv
11b–12ab.

The second oracle is characterized by an intensification indicated by the term “all.” In the first
oracle it occurs only twice, qualifying “your dwelling places” in v 6 and “their abominations” in v 9. However, it reverberates through vv 11–14: it qualifies not only the same recurring nouns (in reverse) in vv 11 and 14 but also the series of four nouns relating to pagan cultic places in v 13. Moreover, it seems to be echoed by the exhausting (ąPOSITION of Yahweh’s anger in v 12. Thus sin and
punishment are vehemently highlighted by this device.

The parallels between the two oracles must not cause us to overlook their difference in perspective.
The first oracle is rhetorically addressed to the “mountains of Israel,” although there is a switch to the
people who live in the homeland, which occurs at least by v 5b (for this phenomenon, see the Comment).
By contrast, the second oracle is evidently addressed to Ezekiel’s fellow exiles, as the second plural
reference in v 13a indicates, and the unexiled Judeans are consistently referred to in the third person,
initially as “the community of Israel” in v 11. This difference in perspective between the two
oracles shows that they originated separately; so does their different representation of Judah’s fate, one
of which envisions exile and the other not. Reventlow (Wächter 33 n. 167) was doubtless correct in
considering that the similarity of the material in the former half of the first oracle and the latter half of the
second was the prime reason for combining the two in a literary unit. One may add that the similarity
indicates that the second oracle may betray awareness and reflection of the first. Vv 13ab–14 have been
regarded as a redactional expansion to tie the chapter together (e.g., Wevers 67; Zimmerli 191),

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**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**n. note**

e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example
that conclusion is by no means compelling (see the Comment). Bettenzoli (Geist der Heiligkeit 186 n. 2) has defended the passage on structural grounds. The use of deuteronomistic language in v 13 is not incompatible with Ezekiel’s authorship (see Joyce, Divine Initiative 25–26, and in principle Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 xv).

The setting for both oracles is Ezekiel’s period of Babylonian exile before the fall of Jerusalem. In the first oracle, turning in the direction of the mountains of Israel and direct address by no means require the prophet’s presence in Palestine (cf. Brownlee [1986] 96) but are vivid rhetorical features, as in the oracles against foreign nations (25:2–3; 29:2–3). The real addressees of the first oracle, as of the second, are Ezekiel’s companions in exile. The ascription of vv 8–10 to a period after the fall of Jerusalem, so that a later oracle of Ezekiel’s was subsequently inserted (e.g., Herrmann 43; Eichrodt 96; Zimmerli 190), is not necessary (cf. Greenberg 140–41, and see the Comment).

The unit may be outlined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse Range</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:1–10</td>
<td>Oracle against the mountains of Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:2–7</td>
<td>Destruction of the local shrines and their worshipers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:8–10</td>
<td>Remorse of the deported survivors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:11–14</td>
<td>Oracle against those in the homeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:11–13aa</td>
<td>God’s fury spent in fatalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:13ab–14</td>
<td>Death and destruction in reprisal for illicit worship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

1 The narrative message-reception formula strictly introduces the first oracle in vv 2–10, but it covers also the second in vv 11–14, and so serves as an introduction to a literary unit, as often in the book.

2 The first oracle opens with a divine command to the prophet, typically addressed as “human one” (see 2:1 and the Comment), to engage in a symbolic gesture of staring in the direction of the addressees of the oracle. This pose of attentiveness is frequently commanded throughout the book (see the Comment on 21:2 in Ezekiel 20–48 24–25). It recalls an ancient prophetic practice associated with Balaam (Num 24:1) and Elisha (2 Kgs 8:11), but in such a context as this one it no longer refers to visual contact but simply to looking in the general direction of the target of the oracle. The westward look facilitates the eventual use of second-person references to the far-off recipients in apostrophic fashion: they are already the focus of the prophet’s gaze. It vividly creates a sense of their role as the object of Yahweh’s attention and will, via his prophetic representative. Indeed, it may well function as an extension of the setting of the divine face against objects of his judgment (cf. 14:8; 15:7), an idiom that is associated with both priestly (e.g., Lev 17:10; 20:3) and prophetic (Jer 21:10; 44:11) settings (cf. Reindl, Das Angesicht Gottes 110–19; Layton, UF 17 [1986] 177–78). In this connection, it may be significant to observe that the divine phrase occurs in Lev 26:17 (cf. Reventlow, Wächter 27–28), since this chapter contains many
allusions to Lev 26. It is no obstacle that the verb for “set” is הָקָי there and מַעְלָה here, since the verbs are synonymous in this phrase, and chap. 6 characteristically does not echo Lev 26 in a slavish fashion. There may already be a presentation of the prophet as herald of judgment on Israel for breaking the covenant, as earlier in chaps. 4–5.

The target of the oracle is “the mountains of Israel,” a phrase that appears frequently in the book of Ezekiel and nowhere else. The term alludes to the land of Israel, partly as characteristically mountainous terrain and partly in differentiation from the monotonous Babylonian plain in which Ezekiel and his fellow exiles now lived. It expresses such nostalgia as a native of Switzerland feels who has to reside in Holland, or a Welshman who must live in East Anglia. It also expresses the loss of a grandeur that was the gift of God to his people (cf. Vawter 51). Yet the notion of majestic privilege is here blatantly overridden by a message of judgment. For all its magnificence, the land must suffer as a result of Israel’s sinning.

The message proper is impressively delayed by a verbal fanfare of further introduction. It consists of a call for attention to the divine word, which highlights the confrontation between Yahweh and his audience, and a messenger formula. The latter element permits further specification of the target in the spectacular variety of its rugged and gentle contours (cf. Deut 8:7), which were soon to be overtaken by tragedy.

Whether or not there was an allusion to Lev 26 in the symbolic stare of v 2a, it can hardly be missed in the first words of the actual oracle. The announcement of Yahweh’s imminent intervention by summoning a “sword” of destruction to Israel’s mountains is a deliberate reminiscence of the beginning of Lev 26:25, “and I will bring a sword against you,” like that in 5:17. It alludes to the prospect of Israelites’ being given over into the hand of an enemy, as that verse concludes. It announces a confrontation (“I … you”) that will be spelled out in two respects in vv 3b, 4–5b, in v 3b, which is further broken down in v 4a, and in vv 4b, 5b (cf. Simian, Nachgeschichte 191).

In the first clause of Lev 26:30, a further punitive act of God was to be the destruction of “your local shrines”; here that act is claimed as dreadfully relevant (cf. Holscher, Dichter 66; Reventlow, Wächter 29). The מַעְלָה, traditionally rendered “high places,” were cultic platforms built of stones on which altars were built, and then by extension the sanctuaries within which the platforms stood (see Vaughan, The Meaning of ‘בָּאָרֶךʿ esp. 29–55). They were commonly situated on high ground but could be built in valleys and even inside cities (see 2 Kgs 17:9). Josiah had undertaken the destruction of the local shrines as part of his religious reforms (2 Kgs 23:8, 15, 19), but evidently they were reactivated after his death in 609 B.C. Behind this condemnation of the local shrines may be espied the standpoint of a Zadokite prophet whose family had served for generations in the Jerusalem temple, a standpoint reinforced by the deuteronomic perspective of the temple as the sole legitimate sanctuary (Deut 12). This standpoint wins support from the ensuing references to the pagan nature of the worship carried on at the local shrines all over Israel’s territory.

V 4a spells out the results of Yahweh’s intervention in destroying the shrines, by specifying the destruction of their standard contents, altars and incense burners. The second item is significantly specified as the object of destruction in the second clause of Lev 26:30, so that the oracle is still closely following its source, though not slavishly, since the verbs of destruction vary and “altars” are a new,
though natural, item. Garscha (Studien 94) wrote of the “astonishing closeness of vv 4–7 to Lev 26:23ff.” and found (post-Ezekielian) dependence. The term אִשְׁמַע (Im) has been clarified by archeological research as an incense burner of some kind. It may have been a small, portable stone stand in which incense was burned or a vessel placed on top of altars (see IDB 2:699–700; Nielsen, Incense 45). They are consistently regarded as innovative and pagan in the relatively late passages of the OT in which they are mentioned (Isa 17:8; 27:9; 2 Chr 14:4[5]; 34:7), although in certain forms the use of incense was an established part of Israelite ritual from ancient times (see Haran, VT 10 [1960] 113–29). They may have been associated with a particular pagan cult (see Beyse, TDOT 4:475–77).

Still shadowing the basic text of Lev 26, the oracle of judgment moves from places and paraphernalia of illegitimate worship to include the people who engage in such worship. V 4b, which together with v 5b is expressed in terms of divine intention, clearly alludes to the next clause of Lev 26:30, “I will place your [= the Israelites’] corpses on the corpses of your idols.” “Idols” (יִלְלָג µylwlg), probably basically “stone blocks” (see Note 4.c.), are a frequent object of attack in the book of Ezekiel as a deviant focus of worship (cf. Exod 20:4–5). The second plural references that earlier in the oracle referred to the mountains must now have a human sense, as indeed is the case in the rest of the oracle. Zimmerli (183) has argued well for the originality of this shift in address, which for some scholars has been a signal of redaction (see, e.g., Simian, Nachgeschichte 118–19). In fact, the shift was caused by the magnetic pull of the basic text of Lev 26, in which the second plural suffixes consistently refer to Israelites (cf. Reventlow, Wächter 29 n. 143). The oracle could not resist its attraction for long. Part of the import of v 4b is that the shrines are defiled by the death of the worshipers. This sentiment is continued and stated more blatantly in v 5b (cf. 2 Kgs 23:14, 16, 20).

6–7a There follows an elaboration of the previous message of destruction, which emphatically underlines it. Amplification occurs at the beginning and near the end. First, there is a reference to the devastation of cities, which looks at first sight to be an intruding element: presumably, the cities feature as the centers where local shrines are found. Once more Ezekiel is staying close to the script of Lev 26.

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OT Old Testament

VT Vetus Testamentum


V Vulgate

4.c. The etymology of Heb. יִלְלָג (ylwlg) “idol” is uncertain; probably, it literally means a stone block (Cooke 73; Greenberg 132; cf. HALAT 185a). It is vocalized by analogy with אִשְׁמַע (Im) “aborrent object of worship.” MT adds v 5a, “and I will put the corpses of members of Israel in front of their idols,” which violates the direct address of the context and is not represented in the LXX*. It appears to be a gloss that cites Lev 26:30 and interprets “your (slain)” in v 4b, which itself echoes Lev 26:30, in human terms instead of relating to the mountains. In Lev 26:30 and context, the suffixes have the former sense. The secondary nature of v 5a is further indicated by closeness of reference to Lev 26:30, over against the loose treatment in v 4b, as in the overall context (Reventlow, Wächter 29).

cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare
n. note
cf. confer, compare
Twice it refers to the devastation of “your cities” (vv 31a, 33b; cf. Reventlow, Wächter 30; cf. Fohrer 37, who removed vv 5b–7 as a gloss dependent on Lev 26:30–31). In the former instance, “your cities” occurs in parallelism with “your sanctuaries.” Cognate terms are used for devastation, a verb ֱֶֽהֶֽבְּרַ֣ת here and a noun ֶֽהֶֽבְּרַ֥ה in Lev 26:31, 33. The initial phrase µִכְּקָֽדֶּמֶּשׁ v 6 “in all your dwelling places” is a standard expression in priestly legislation (e.g., Num 35:29; see Reventlow, Wächter 30 n. 144; Greenberg 132). There is further amplification in the detail of the destruction of religious artifacts at the end of v 6. Here the reference seems to be to images (cf. Isa 41:29).

The elaboration is couched in terms of consequences of Yahweh’s intervention. The ruination of the local shrines is again spelled out with reference to altars, idols, and incense burners, in a slightly different order than before. The detailing is made syntactically clearer by being introduced with צְכִּים “with the result that.” V 7a repeats the human element from v 4b, in terms that are not specifically cultic. The change seems to be deliberate. There appears to be an inclusion at vv 6a and 7a, so that the loss of human life is widened from shrines to cities: in Lev 26:25 µִכְּקָֽדֶּמֶּשׁ “among you,” which recurs in v 7a here, follows a reference to cities.

Vv 4–7a represent the first part of a bipartite proof saying that moves from announcement of punishment to a recognition formula. More often proof sayings are tripartite, beginning with accusation. In this case the accusation is implicitly included in the statement of judgment: cultic deviation is the offense that causes divine retribution.

7b–8 The recognition formula in v 7b draws to a close the proof saying in its basic form. The object of Yahweh’s acts of judgment against the local shrines and those who worship in them is to reestablish a true awareness of the nature of Yahweh, an awareness that had been dimmed by syncretistic rites. Only such drastic treatment would bring about a recovery of the distinctiveness of Israel’s traditional God. Israel would find him, but too late (cf. Amos 4:12).

The use of what is customarily a recapitulating element in v 8 at first sight creates a problem. Instead of repeating earlier material, the text proceeds to introduce a new experience (cf. Brownlee [1986] 98). The solution is simply that for prophet and hearers, and indeed for early readers, there is already a knowledge of phases of invasion, destruction, death, and exile, so that the text can flow from phase to phase in the development of a familiar theme of judgment. The motif of exile has already occurred in the sign-act and interpretation of 5:1–17, specifically at 5:3b, 10b, and 12b. The present oracle presupposes a series of acts of selective judgments that for some would culminate in exile. Moreover, the master text of Lev 26 itself makes use of such a series, culminating in the threat “I will scatter you among the nations, and I will chase you with unsheathed sword,” a threat that chap. 5 puts to striking use. Both Ezekiel’s earlier proclamation and the literary source to which he expressly refers make the reference to exile no surprise. The exile marks no reprieve but is itself “a kind of death” (Calvin 227). Far from presenting a positive hope, vv 8–10 “serve to pile doom upon doom and to emphasize the inevitability of the judgment that God has pronounced upon Israel” (Vawter 54).

9–10 The ensuing punishment not only consists of imprisonment on foreign soil but takes on a
specifically mental character, the self-torturing of the Judean prisoners with memories of their irredeemable past. Three verbs give expression to this mental punishment: remembering, regarding with disgust, and realizing. Too late, they would recall with revulsion their cultic deviations and so be brought back to a true sense of Yahweh’s being. Such remorse would be their reaction to their former alienation from him. The term “heart” refers to the will; similarly, “eyes” refers to allegiance (cf. Ps 123:2; Ezek 18:6). Yet they had adopted a false allegiance, straying from their original faithfulness to Yahweh (cf. Hos 9:1). They had willingly devoted themselves to that which did not represent the true God and readily responded to the temptation of rival claims. The concept of religious unfaithfulness will be developed in chap. 16. If the text is correct (see Note 9.b.^[9.b. Driver (JSS 7 [1962] 96), followed by Greenberg (134; cf. Keil 96), NEB and NRSV, took יָתְרַבְּנָּה as “I was brokenhearted, grieved at,” comparing Syr... ittbr and Akk. itti “with” after verbs expressing anger. The repetition of וְנַּרְו אָּ is suspicious, but the LXX indirectly supports the MT by representing יָתְרַבְּנָּה as יִתְּרַבְּנָּה “I swore.” One may not emend to יָתְרַבְּנָה (רַבְּנָּה) “(how) I broke,” on the basis of אָּ ס Q Tg. Vg (BHK; Brownlee 98, 100): not only “hearts” but “eyes” must be the awkward object. The conjectural emendation יָתְרַבְּנָּה וְנַּּרְו אָּ “and I will break” (Wellhausen in Smend 39 et al.) has the same defect. Bewer’s proposal in ZAW 63 (1951) 193, with comparison of 20:43; 36:31, to delete יָתְרַבְּנָּה “me” and also יָתְרַבְּנָּה וְנַּּרְו אָּ as a variant of יָתְרַבְּנָּה נַּרְו אָּ “whom I will have taken captive” in a conflated text, with the consequent syntax “I will remember ... their wanton hearts,” is attractive: נַּרְו אָּיִ בְּ וְנַּּרְו אָּ “and they will be broken” in vv 4, 6 may have influenced the MT.

11 The messenger formula paves the way for a fresh oracle. Again the message is accentuated by the initial expressive activity in which the prophet is ordered to engage. Comparison with Jer 19:1–3 suggests that a message to the prophet has here been merged with a public message (cf. plural “you” in v 13), so that the former slides into the latter. The phenomenon was encouraged by the characteristic presentation of prophetic oracles in the book as communications to Ezekiel rather than as explicitly relayed through him to an audience.

In this contextual setting, the excited gestures seem to express “indignation tempered by grief and sadness” (Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 610; cf. Eichrodt 96–97; Carley 42). Clapping has a number of associations in the OT. Here, as in 21:22(16); Num 24:10, it seems to signify anger, in reflection of the divine fury of v 12b. The stamping of feet occurs only in 25:6, where it is an expression of malicious joy, but here it must reinforce the emotion displayed in the clapping of hands. The crying of “Ah!” or “Alas!” appears to denote lamentation, in the light of its cause, the accusation and coming punishment of

cf. confer, compare

* 9.b. Driver (JSS 7 [1962] 96), followed by Greenberg (134; cf. Keil 96), NEB and NRSV, took יָתְרַבְּנָּה as “I was brokenhearted, grieved at,” comparing Syr... ittbr and Akk. itti “with” after verbs expressing anger. The repetition of וְנַּּרְו אָּ is suspicious, but the LXX indirectly supports the MT by representing יָתְרַבְּנָּה as יִתְּרַבְּנָּה “I swore.” One may not emend to יָתְרַבְּנָּה (רַבְּנָּה) “(how) I broke,” on the basis of אָּ ס Q Tg. Vg (BHK; Brownlee 98, 100): not only “hearts” but “eyes” must be the awkward object. The conjectural emendation יָתְרַבְּנָּה וְנַּּרְו אָּ “and I will break” (Wellhausen in Smend 39 et al.) has the same defect. Bewer’s proposal in ZAW 63 (1951) 193, with comparison of 20:43; 36:31, to delete יָתְרַבְּנָּה “me” and also יָתְרַבְּנָּה וְנַּּרְו אָּ as a variant of יָתְרַבְּנָּה נַּּרְו אָּ “whom I will have taken captive” in a conflated text, with the consequent syntax “I will remember ... their wanton hearts,” is attractive: נַּּרְו אָּיִ בְּ וְנַּּרְו אָּ “and they will be broken” in vv 4, 6 may have influenced the MT.

cf. confer, compare

OT Old Testament
“the community of Israel.” The latter term has in view those who were residing in the homeland. Their “abominations” or “shocking rites” will be amplified in v 13ab–b, although for the reader, via the same term at the end of v 9, they already convey the parallel gamut of illegitimate worship mentioned in vv 4–6. The reader also equates the punishment of falling here with that in vv 4b and 7a. In the present oracle, the means of their falling is defined, by means of the triad “sword,” “famine,” and “pestilence.” While in the first oracle the “sword” is the general term for destructive power that was to overwhelm the inhabitants of the land, in the second message it is but one means at God’s disposal. The sinister triad has already occurred at 5:12 in the context of the siege and fall of Jerusalem (see the Comment there). Here its range is extended to the land, in the light of the latter half of the oracle. The triad represents methodical disposal, rather like the symbolic act of 5:1–3, although here, unlike there (and 6:2–10), exile is not in view. Echoes of Lev 26 in vv 13–14 suggest that Lev 26:25–26 is in mind, where sword and pestilence are mentioned specifically and famine is described.

12–13a The series of fatalities is elaborated in v 12a. The terms “far” and “near” idiomatically represent a merism that expresses comprehensiveness; it is one of many ways in which comprehensiveness features in this oracle. The terms are a catch-all pair of categories (cf. 22:5; Jer 25:26; cf. Krasovec, Merismus 142). Here the triadic scheme requires an extra category, so that the last vestiges of life may be gleaned after the double grim harvest. All these destructive events in human experience would be Yahweh’s way of giving full vent to his anger. As in 5:13a, this statement prefaces the recognition formula. His passionate intervention in comprehensive judgment was the only means by which his people could be taught the demands of his being and so of his covenant requirements. The radical representation of their doom requires that “you,” Ezekiel’s fellow prisoners of war, should be the recipients of the lesson. The logic nicely coincides with the prophetic actuality: all of Ezekiel’s oracles were meant to be heard and appreciated by his immediate audience.

13ab–14 The statement of recapitulation serves as a joint definition of the “shocking rites” of v 11 and of examples of the destruction that they would engender. The dominant mention of “idols,” at beginning and end, and of “fragrant offerings of appeasement,” at the conclusion, suggest that Lev 26:30–31 is being echoed. If so, the recapitulation fulfills its function in an oblique sense: it is a reminiscence of the scheme of disobedience and destruction set out in Lev 26. The comprehensive nature of the punishment expressed in vv 11b–12 is echoed in the intermediate material of the recapitulating statement, a series of four expressions of illicit worship that include the qualifier “all” (see also Form/Structure/Setting). To achieve this end, the prophet presses into service a pair of phrases current in the late preexilic period, especially in deuteronomistic literature, “under every luxuriant tree” and “on every high hill” (1 Kgs 14:23; 2 Kgs 17:10; Jer 2:20; cf. Holladay, VT 11 [1961] 170–76, who, however, suggests dependence on Deut 12:2). The second phrase is varied with a different adjective for “high” (הַרֹּאשׁ for הַרֹּאשׁוֹ as in 20:28; 34:6). With these phrases are intertwined two others, which seem to be adapted from Hos 4:13.

14 The devastation of the land harks back to Lev 26:32a, 33b (cf. Reventlow, Wächter 34). The motif is worked into the oracle by means of three embellishments that indicate comprehensiveness: the rhyming “wrack and ruin,” the phrase of geographical totality, and the priestly qualifier “wherever they live.” The extent of the land is comparable with its description in the priestly terms of the old political land of Canaan in 47:15–20, in dependence on Num 34:2–12 (see Ezekiel 20–48 280–81). Then “the
“wilderness” is “the wilderness of Zin” (Num 34:3). However, the northern boundary extends further north, to Riblah in the administrative area of Hamath (“Riblah” in Num 34:11 is a different place). The extension is “perhaps for the sake of its painful associations” (Cooke 73), as the site of Jehoahaz’s imprisonment in 609 B.C. (2 Kgs 23:33), which marked the end of Judah’s earlier bid for independence.

The focus of the comprehensiveness expressed in vv 13a–b has been the areas of illicit worship up and down the land, and only secondarily the defiling presence of the “slain” in each area. V 14 appropriately develops this focus. Yahweh’s punitive blow against his people results in devastation for the land. Accordingly, representatives of the people may be envisioned in the final recognition formula as still alive to witness this destruction and alert at last to divine reality before the death that has overtaken their fellows reaches them in turn.

**Explanation**

Cassuto (“Arrangement” 230) rightly observed that the bringing of the sword upon the citizens of Jerusalem in 5:17 serves as a literary hinge for chap. 6, which opens with the same fate for the mountains of Israel (v 3). Greenberg (139) has traced three other links with the preceding unit. The stem מ المو “be devastated” overflows from 4:17; 5:15 into chap. 6, at vv 4, 6, and 14. After 5:13, the exhausting of Yahweh’s anger persists in 6:12. The sinister triad of sword, famine, and pestilence in 6:11–12 echoes 5:12 (cf. 17). The theme of divine retribution is continued in no uncertain terms. It may be added that the exile, which brought further loss of life in 5:3–4, 12, features again in a punitive sense in 6:9–10, now as the scene of bitter remorse for former sins.

Boadt (“Rhetorical Strategies” 188–89) has drawn attention to the thematic development in at least three respects. First, the geographical target widens, and with it the scope of the punishment to include the people at large. Not only Jerusalem is to be the target of God’s attack (chaps. 4–5), but the mountains of Israel (6:2–10), in fact the land in all its traditional amplitude (6:14). Second, the accusation receives clearer focus. The “iniquity” of 4:5(–6), 17, which was defined in terms of improper worship at the Jerusalem temple (5:11) is now expanded to cover the pagan rites carried on at the semi-pagan local shrines throughout the land. Third, the recognition formula that appeared in 5:13 now bombards the reader at 6:7, 10, 13, and 14. Yahweh’s aim was that his people should rediscover their lost perspective as to the true nature of his being and of his expectations; only such drastic means could achieve this aim. Israel, whether alive or dead, must honor Yahweh’s demand that he be acknowledged in all the uniqueness of his being.

At the root of Israel’s problems was a breaking of the covenant relationship. In reprisal Yahweh’s preordained curses had to come into operation. The growing dependence on Lev 26 as a basic text continues in chap. 6. A cluster of its threats now appear, from Lev 26:25, 30–33. This literary agenda provides an ongoing rationale for Ezekiel’s interpretation of the catastrophe that was to sweep over the land in a few years’ time. Priestly text and prophetic voice unite in a powerful blend of covenant theology and imminent experience.

The book of Ezekiel testifies that Yahweh’s last word had not been spoken. Certainly the exiles’ human expectations of a quick return to the land and to the status quo had to be dashed. But the dashing of these hopes and the radical dismantling of a perverse religious institution that pervaded the land eventually provided the opportunity for a new, God-given and God-honoring hope. In due course 35:1–36:15 will expressly give a positive counterpart to chap. 6. Catastrophic judgment had to come, but it would be followed by salvation (see Ezekiel 20–48 171–74). If the judgment of 3:22–5:17 subsequently needed to be reaffirmed in partial terms for the heirs of that salvation in 3:16b–21, with

*cf. confer, compare*
equal certainty the glorious reversal which that salvation represented had eventually to be celebrated. The double program is not unknown to readers of the NT. In Rom 11 Paul both celebrated the salvation that had reached the Gentiles and would, he argued, ultimately be embraced by the people of Israel (vv 11–16, 23–32) and sounded a warning of divine rejection against those Christians who did not stay within the scope of God’s grace (vv 17–22).

**Excursus: The Relation between Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 4–6**

**Bibliography**


In the course of the second volume of the commentary, *Ezekiel 20–48*, which was written before this one, attention was drawn to passages that bear a close relationship to material in *Lev 26*, which contains a set of blessings and curses according to Israel’s response to the covenant terms. These passages fall into two distinct groups. First, there is 33:27–29, which Ezekiel himself must have delivered after 587 B.C. The other passages appear to be redactional and in fact constitute some of the latest parts of the book: they are 34:25–30; 36:9–11; and 37:26–27, all of which give the impression of together endeavoring to supply comprehensive parallels to the blessings in *Lev 26*, and also 28:25–26.

*Lev 26* concludes the Holiness Code, *Lev 17–26*. In general terms its core seems to consist of the blessings of vv 3–13 and the curses of vv 14–33; but the homogeneity and age of this material are disputed. Consequently it is difficult to determine its relationship to seeming parallels in the book of Ezekiel. Does one piece of literature depend on the other, and if so, in which direction? Do both depend upon a common source, as Fohrer (*Hauptprobleme* 147–48) considered (cf. Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte* 100)? Kilian (*Untersuchung* 161–62) judged that the primary layer in *Lev 26* was composed by a member of the school of Ezekiel, whose diction was influenced by Ezekielian phraseology (cf. Levine, “Epilogue to the Holiness Code” 19–30; *Leviticus* 275–81). On the other hand, Reventlow (*Heiligkeitsgesetz* 30) took the Holiness Code as a whole, including *Lev 26*, as preexilic and pertaining to the blessing-curse ritual of covenant renewal at the autumn festival (see R. de Vaux’s critique in *RB* 69 [1962] 297–99). Further, he regarded the prophet Ezekiel as an official covenant mediator, who made
literary use of the cultic text (*Wächter* 42–44).

Ideally, the Ezekiel commentator needs to expend as much labor on the Holiness Code and its relation to the Priestly literature as on the prophetic text, before venturing to address with confidence the relation between Leviticus and this prophetic book. In the absence of such detailed study, certain assumptions have to be made, and certain convictions that come from immersion in the book of Ezekiel must make a contribution.

As a working hypothesis, one may start with the reasonable proposal of Elliger (*Leviticus* 365–66, 371), that behind Lev 26 stands a preexilic cultic text that was used in the autumn festival, as the mention of “rain” in Lev 26:4 suggests. Elliger endeavored to reconstruct this basic text by taking note of the poetic character of much of the material. He accepted as original as much of the text of vv 3–13 as exhibits parallelism and a 3 + 3 meter, or slight variations thereof, and lack of the prosaic object sign ה .

In vv 14–39 he added the factor of thematic correspondence with the earlier blessings. He excluded material that seemed to reflect historical reminiscence of the fall of Jerusalem. His primary layer was Lev 26:4, 5b, 6a, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16a (as far as ה ה “terror”), 17, 19, 20, 25aab, 30b, 31, 32ab, 33a, 37b, 38. He attributed the rest of the material to an exilic (i.e., post-587) redactor.

With such conclusions it is possible to regard all the passages in Ezekiel related to Lev 26, which were mentioned in the first paragraph, as dependent on a redacted text that included at least material from Lev 26:4–38. It is an interesting exercise to apply Elliger’s arguments to Ezek 33:27–29, which is set in a post-587 oracle of Ezekiel’s and so reflects a fixed historical period. The evidence is set out in Table 1. Ezek 33:27 seems to echo Lev 26:22a (redactional), 25aab (primary), and bā (redactional), while 33:28(–29) reflects 26:19a (primary) and 26:33bā (redactional). A number of these redactional labels are open to question. Kilian, who attributed Lev 26 to a tradent of Ezekiel, also distinguished between primary and secondary layers; in fact he judged all these particular parts primary. He justified Lev 26:22a as expressing the reverse of (an original) v 6b (cf. Reventlow, *Heiligkeitsgesetz* 151). He accepted the whole of v 25, while Reventlow (*Heiligkeitsgesetz* 153) took v 25aab (as far as ל כ “sword”) and bā as a 3 + 3 bicolon. In v 33 he excluded only bā, while Reventlow (*Heiligkeitsgesetz* 155) regarded v 33b as an original 3 + 3 bicolon. Kilian worked with looser criteria, which did not include poetic factors. V 33bā (and b) does pass Elliger’s poetic tests but failed to gain entry into his basic text because of its repetition of v 32 or v 31aab, which he claimed not to be a feature of the original. The rhetorical critic will not share his confidence in this particular criterion; Kilian himself (*Untersuchung* 152) considered repetition at this juncture quite feasible. V 25aab (with b) also passes the metrical text, but Elliger (*Leviticus*) judged its language to be prophetic, comparing Amos 4:10; Ezek 28:23. Whether this is sufficient ground for excluding it from a preexilic text, at least in its later preexilic form, is questionable. We are left with v 22a, which is firmly prosaic. If Elliger’s basic thesis of a preexilic cultic poem is correct and if Ezekiel did echo v 22aab, in line with his other allusions in this passage, it had already become part of an amplified text.

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<th>Table 1. Parallels between Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 33</th>
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The relation of Ezek 4–6 to Lev 26 may now be considered. Chap. 6 is a good place to begin, because of its evident cluster of echoes over a relatively short span. These echoes, which are not of a

*cf. confer, compare*
slavish nature, are five or six in number; a further one appears in the MT at 6:5a, but it is a much later intrusion (see Note 6:4.c.*). The first, the prophet’s setting his face in 6:2ab, may or may not be an allusion to the divine pose of Lev 26:17a (primary, according to Elliger): see the Comment. In 6:3b br j µ k y l [ a y b m y n a “I am about to bring upon you a sword” reflects Lev 26:25a (primary), br j µ k y l [ y t a b h w “and I will bring upon you a sword,” while the “high places” (t w m b ) of 6:3bg and “incense burners” (µ y n m j ) of 6:4ab correspond to the references in Lev 26:30a (secondary). In 6:6ab h n b r j t µ y r [ h “the cities will be devastated” reflects either Lev 26:31a (primary), y t t n w h b r j µ k y r [ A t a “and I will make your cities a devastation,” or v 33b (secondary), w h n y µ k y r [ w h b r j “and your cities will become a devastation.” In 6:8 µ k y t w z h b µ y n g b “among the nations, when you are scattered” recalls Lev 26:33a (primary), µ y n g b h r z a µ k t a w “and you I will scatter among the nations.” These are the references in the first oracle of 6:2–10.

Table 2. Parallels between Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 4–6

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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
* 4.c. The etymology of Heb. l W g “idol” is uncertain; probably, it literally means a stone block (Cooke 73; Greenberg 132; cf. HALAT 185a). It is vocalized by analogy with Å w q v “abhorrent object of worship.” MT adds v 5a, “and I will put the corpses of members of Israel in front of their idols,” which violates the direct address of the context and is not represented in the LXX*. It appears to be a gloss that cites Lev 26:30 and interprets “your (slain)” in v 4b, which itself echoes Lev 26:30, in human terms instead of relating to the mountains. In Lev 26:30 and context, the suffixes have the former sense. The secondary nature of v 5a is further indicated by closeness of reference to Lev 26:30, over against the loose treatment in v 4b, as in the overall context (Reventlow, Wächter 29).
År a h At a “and I myself will desolate the land,” or v 33b (secondary), h m m n v \(\mu k x r a\) h t y h w “and your land will become a desolation.”

Two striking phenomena of these links between chap. 6 and Lev 26 are that not only do all of them, apart from the uncertain case in v 2, represent a fairly compact group of material within Lev 26, but also, within the two oracles, they move consecutively through the catalogue of curses. Indeed, Garscha (Studien 94–96), because of the “astonishing” closeness to Lev 26, considered 5:16–17 and 6:4–7 a later redactional unit. My own study has not found decisive evidence of subsequent redaction in chap. 6.

As for Elliger’s secondary material, Lev 26:33b has been discussed above. V 30a seems to feature no less than three times in Ezek 6. Items from it are interwoven in vv 3–4 into a group of primary references. Elliger (Leviticus 368) drew attention to its non-poetic character and attributed it to a “prophetic,” accusatory layer that does not fit in a pre-deuteronomistic liturgical piece. Reventlow (Heiligkeitsgesetz 154) judged that a poetic original lay behind the present poetic form of v 30a: he suggested two bicola (3 + 3, 3 + 2), with passive verbs in the first bicolon. Kilian (Untersuchung 151, 155–56), from his later standpoint, raised no objection to v 30a. He was not impressed with Reventlow’s rewriting, perhaps not unaturally in view of their different approaches to Lev 26. On balance, it does appear that, as in Ezek 33, if the prophet was recalling an existing text, it had already received some amplification, here at the point of v 30a. It is preferable to think in terms of an insertion: it is difficult to see why Reventlow’s proposed change should have been made.

The apparent references in chaps. 4–5 fall into at least three groups, 4:16; 5:2; and 5:6–17. In 4:16a \(\mu j l A h f m r b v\) y n h “behold I am about to break the bread stick” and \(l q v m b\) \(\mu j l\) “rationed bread” are reminiscent of Lev 26:26a (secondary). Elliger, (Leviticus 368) was inclined to align vv 25a–29 with the “prophetic” layer he also found in v 30a. He considered that its details were borrowed from the experience of the fall of Jerusalem and so postdated it. Kilian (Untersuchung 151) drew attention to the contextually unparalleled temporal construction (… \(y r b v b\) “when I break …”) in v 26a as possible evidence of its secondary nature. Reventlow (Heiligkeitsgesetz 154) posited a grammatical rewriting and reordering of v 26 and thought that he could find two \(3 + 3\) bicola. He argued that the curse corresponds to the blessing of v 5b (primary), but Kilian more correctly related it only to v 26b. As to reflection of post-587 B.C. experiences, Reventlow (Heiligkeitsgesetz 149) preferred to explain the vivid description in terms of increase in the intensity of curses. It seems that once more an amplification of the basic text is involved. However, it need not be dated after 587: rationing and famine are commonplaces in a siege (cf. 2 Kgs 6:25). The guilt-ridden mortification (\(\mu n w b\) \(b q m n w\)) of 4:17bb may possibly be linked with Lev 26:39, but for present purposes it is better to stay within the confines of Lev 26:4–33 and discount it. The phrase recurs in Ezek 24:23; 33:10 in contexts devoid of allusions to Lev 26.

At 5:2b the text jumps from instructions to the prophet for the final sign-act to a first-person interpretation, \(\mu h y r j a\ q y r a\ b r j w\) “and a sword I will draw after them.” This will recur in 5:12 and surely harks back to Lev 26:33a, \(b r j \mu k y r j a\ y t q y r h w\) “and I will draw after you a sword,” one of Elliger’s primary portions. This parallel in turn suggests that the preceding scattering to the wind (\(h r z t\) \(| w r l |\) ) in 5:2bb echoes the divine scattering among the nations (\(l y n b h r z n\)) in Lev 26:33aa (primary): the new feature of the wind was dictated by the symbolism of the context.

There is a literary feel about the interpretive section 5:6–17, but there appears to be no reason either to deny Ezekiel’s hand in any part of it or to detach it from his pre-587 ministry of judgment. In 5:6b the sudden switch from second singular mention of Jerusalem to third plural references to its citizens is best explained as due to the constraint of allusion to Lev 26. Indeed, Reventlow (Wächter 7) interpreted the

<cf. confer, compare>
preceding יֵקָלָה not as “because” but as introducing a quotation: he referred to GKC 157b and compared the later יֵמָא נֵצֶר “as it is said.” One might relate וֹסָא הַמִּתְיָר נַעַבְיוֹ m. יְפַּר וָן ב “my standards they rejected” in v 6bא to that very clause in Lev 26:43bb, with Reventlow (Wächter 8) and Greenberg (111). However, it is set in a passage that may well reflect a later, redactional interest in giving a theological explanation of the exile (cf. Thiel, ZAW 81 [1969] 66–67). It is better, then, to refer to another verse that Reventlow went on to cite, Lev 26:3א, וֹקְלַת יִתְיָר ב אִמָּא “if in my rules you walk,” as a basis for 5:6ב, μַּה ב וֹקְלַת ה א ל יִתְיָר וָּאֲוָי יְפָר “and my rules—you have not walked in them,” and also to Lev 26:15א, וֹסָא ה מ יְפַּר מ “and my standards” occurs in v 15אא, as underlying 5:6בא. We have already seen an example of a change from second person to third in the echoing of Lev 26:33א at Ezek 5:2ב (= 12ב). Elliger (Leviticus 367), after some discussion, accepted Lev 26:15 as primary and possessing a 3 + 4, 4 + 3 meter. However, perhaps surprisingly, he regarded 26:3 as prosaically prolix and so secondary (Leviticus 365). This latter conclusion creates a certain difficulty: vv 3 and 15 surely correspond, and each one needs the other. Moreover, יֵתְיָר וּנְמָ “(and) I will give” at the beginning of v 3 requires such an introduction as v 3 provides. Reventlow (Heiligkeitsgesetz 146) accepted v 3, but unfortunately without comment. It may be that we should take a leaf out of Reventlow’s book elsewhere and posit a poetic original. Perhaps the issue is not relevant to the present concern: v 15, at the outset of the curses section, need be the only source. However, in both verses we must reckon with deuteronomistic or deuteronomistic elements, the phrase הֵו וּנְמָ “keep and do” in v 3 and וֹקְלַת מ “commands” in vv 3 and 15. We recall that Elliger regarded Lev 26:30 as deuteronomistic in tone. Yet such passages may not on that ground be denied to Ezekiel. An increasing number of scholars are prepared to find deuteronomistic features in his own oracles (cf., e.g., Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 xv; Joyce, Divine Initiative 122–24).

The next point of contact occurs at 5:10א, where fathers’ eating sons (וֹקְלַת יִתְיָר ב א עָגְאָו) thematically aligns with Lev 26:29א, μַּה ב וֹקְלַת מ “and you will eat the flesh of your sons,” a secondary passage that, according to Elliger (Leviticus 369), reflects the 587 B.C. experience. However, Reventlow’s principle of increasingly dire threats may be sufficient explanation in this case. Besides, child cannibalism in a siege context appears in 2 Kgs 6:24–30 and so can hardly be restricted to the siege of Jerusalem. Nor must the 3 + 3 meter be overlooked. The link between 5:10ב and Lev 33אא concerns scattering, which has already been discussed in the case of 5:2. So have the two references in 5:12ב, which repeat elements found in 5:2.

In 5:14אא הָבְרָא יִרְמַט א וּנְמָ “and I will make you [= Jerusalem] a devastation” seems to be an application of Lev 26:31אא, הָבְרָא יִרְמַט א וּנְמָ “and I will make your cities a devastation,” which Elliger (Leviticus 368) regarded as primary, presumably before the object sign was inserted. A cluster of parallels occurs in 5:16–17. The breaking of bread sticks reappears in 5:16ב: the reflection of Lev 26:26אא has already been discussed in connection with 4:16. At 5:17אא וֹל כָּל קוֹו וּל ה ר י בָּפְאָו “and I will let loose upon you [pl.] … vicious beasts and they will leave you [sg] childless” can hardly be dissociated from Lev 26:22אא, וֹל כָּל חֶל כָּל ד ה ט י בָּפְאָו “and I will let loose on you [pl.] wild beasts and they will leave you [pl.] childless.” Elliger considered

cf. confer, compare
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
cf. confer, compare
pl. plate or plural
sg singular or under
this curse secondary, partly because it corresponds to 26:6b, which he regarded as secondary because the 4 + 4 meter of v 6b diverges from the 3 + 3 pattern found in the context. Reventlow (Heiligkeitsgesetz 147, 151), who slightly rewrote v 6b to accommodate it to the regular metrical form, argued that the correspondence between vv 6 and 22 was a factor that favored the primary nature of the latter verse, but he was unable to restore a feasible original. It seems only fair to align this case with secondary prose cases already noted. In 5:17b Yahweh’s bringing the sword, which recalls Lev 26:25a, repeats an element already found in 6:3bb.

What may be concluded from this detailed examination of numerous points of contact between Lev 26 and Ezek 4–6? Most of them may be credited to a preexilic cultic text constituted on Elliger’s lines, but slightly longer than he allowed. However, there are a few cases that bear witness to subsequent literary expansion of the basic text. These are Lev 26:15a (Ezek 5:6b), 22a (Ezek 5:17a), 26a (Ezek 4:16a; 5:16b), and 30a b (Ezek 6:3b, 4ab, 13ab). There are no good grounds for denying that by the last years before 587 B.C. Ezekiel and his fellow prisoners of war were familiar with a text that had already reached the stage of incorporating these elements, in its development toward the canonical form.

Judah’s Day of the Lord (7:1–27)

Bibliography

Translation

1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: “Furthermore, you human one—here is a message from the Lord Yahweh to the country of Israel.

An end is coming, the end is coming upon the four corners of the earth.

Now the end looms over you and I will unleash my anger upon you,

BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
ETL Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses

a 2.a. LXX* Syr. add “say” as a link between the vocative and the messenger formula: μα “say” could have fallen out after μ daemon “human.” An introduction consisting of the impv “say (to them)” and the messenger formula occurs, for instance, in 12:10, 23, 28, but the messenger formula can stand by itself, as in 26:3. The question is whether the initial vocative demands an impv. In 39:17 the sequence of vocative, messenger formula, and impv appears. Closest to the MT here is 22:18–19, where the vocative and messenger formula occur with an intervening explanatory clause, and 26:2–3, where the vocative is separated from a messenger formula by a causal clause. It is a short step from those instances to this one, and so the MT can be justified as a harder reading.

b 2.b. For the presence of γ ι θ ι “Lord” in a messenger formula here and in v 5, see Note 2:4.c.*

c 2.c. Comparison with v 6 suggests that ḫ “is coming” should be inserted. The text is hardly coherent without it: in the MT ḥq is seemingly an interjection, “The end!” Its omission in the MT was a simple case of haplography; the ancient versions seem to attest it. The evidence of the LXX is especially significant in view of its tendency to attest a shorter text. For the change of word order in the LXX, see in principle G. Marquis, Textus 13 (1986) 59–84.

d 2.d. Q’s masc. form of numeral is expected with the fem. noun (cf. HALAT 463a).

e 2.e. Or “land,” but the use of the phrase in Isa 11:12 (cf. Job 37:3; 38:13) suggests “earth” (Herrmann 49; Hölscher, Dichter 67; et al.; REB). In v 21 ḥ h means “the earth,” but in v 23 “the land.” The LXX* puts vv 6a–9 before vv 3–6a; in fact, the prefaced material reflects a different translation than that of chaps. 1–25 (cf. McGregor, Greek Text of Ezekiel 95) and was obviously added to fill a perceived gap. It was inserted in the wrong place, presumably because of the recurring ḫ h “the end has come” in vv 2 (= v 6a) and 10. In v 6 (= v 9 in the MT) ḫ ṣ ṣ m “I am” for ḫ “I” is characteristic of the translator of chaps. 26–39, as opposed to ḫ ṣ ṣ m “I am” in v 9 (= v 5), which reflects the usual rendering in chaps. 1–25. Bogaert (“Les deux rédactions” 30) wonders whether the presence of ḫ m was encouraged by the ptep, but comparison with 20:12 suggests not. Moreover, ḫ ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ “and I will judge you” is rendered with the verb kr in v 5 (= v 8), but with ḫ ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ in v 7 (= v 3); both renderings are used in chaps. 1–25 and 26–39. In addition, Bogaert has observed that the rendering ḫ ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ “the striker” for ḫ ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ is unparalleled in LXX Ezekiel, although it is common in the LXX elsewhere. Zimmerli (201) correctly notes that the displaced material in the LXX relates to vv 6a–9. BHS wrongly seems to envision blocks of vv 3–5a and 6–9. See Form/Structure/Setting.

3.a. The LXX* reflects ḫ “I” for ḫ ḫ “my anger” (Hitzig 45).
passing judgment on you as your ways warrant
and repaying you for all your shocking deeds.

4 No pitying glance will I give
nor any show of compassion,
but I will repay you for your ways,
and your shocking deeds will haunt you,
and then you will all realize that I am Yahweh.

5 “Here is a message from the Lord Yahweh.

Calamity after$^a$ calamity,
here it comes.

6 An end is coming;
the end$^b$ is coming upon you.

Here$^b$ comes, $^7$ comes$^a$ doom($^b$)

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$^a$ 4.a. For the form of the verb, see Note 5:11.d. The MT adds ðyl [“(upon) you,” which the LXX and v 9 lack, as do the instances of the formula elsewhere, e.g., in 5:11; 8:18. It probably entered the text by mechanical assimilation to the clauses in vv 3b and 4b.

$^b$ 5.a. The MT “evil, one evil” is strange; Rashi’s interpretation of t j ã “one” as “unique” reads into the text. A minority Masoretic reading (see BHS) that is reflected in the Tg. is f j ã “after,” with the sense “disaster after disaster” (cf. v 26). The Syr. implies t j t “in place of, in exchange for,” with the meaning “physical evil for moral evil” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:22). It is tempting to conjecture with Greenberg (148) that the MT t j ã is the result of conflation between two variants, f j ã and t j t. The LXX does not represent v 5b, or at least represents only h nh “behold.” Consequently, v 5b has been regarded as an explanatory gloss on v 6 (Fohrer 43). But so distinctive a text hardly suggests a gloss, and what its intention might have been is not clear. The fuller text in the MT deserves the benefit of the doubt. For the meaning “disaster” for h[ f , cf. 6:10; 14:22. Ehrlich’s interpretation, cited above, anticipates the moral retribution later in the oracle, but it does not fit the immediate context so well.

$^a$ 6.a. The secondary material in the LXX offers an abbreviated text that omits six words from Áyq h “it is awakened (?)” in v 6ab to h r y p x h “the doom (?)” in v 7a. The omission may simply represent parablepsis by homoeoteleuton (u y l a … ) u y l a “to you (… to you),” if Áyq h was not present in the Vorlage (Hitzig 47). The latter term probably originated as an orthographical variant of Áq h “the end” (Hitzig 47; et al.). It has been variously explained as (1) “it is awakened” (Q Vg), (2) “it has brought the end,” a denominative verb from Áq “end” (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 148, who did not, however, consider the verb authentic), and (3) “it is ripe,” denominative from Áyq “ripe summer fruit” (Greenberg 148, implicitly following Bewer).

$^b$ 6.b. The fem. verb has as its subj the fem. noun in v 7.

$^a$ 7.a. The MT h ã b “is coming” may be a dittograph (Wevers 73), but the presence of the two verbs with the same subj in v 10 is an argument in its favor.

$^b$ 7.b. The MT h r y p x here and in v 10 is hardly the same term that means “garland, crown” in Isa 28:5, though Q and the Tg. identified the nouns. “Doom” ([N]RSV, REB) “is as good a guess as any” (Wevers 73 and at least “an educated guess” (Blenkinsopp 47). See the discussions in Zimmerli (201) and Greenberg (148) and most recently in Masson, VT 37 (1987) 301–11, who suggests a meaning “net,” as a symbol of exile.
upon you, residents of the land.
The time is coming, the day is near—
tumult, not harvest, shouts in the mountains.  
8 Soon now I will drench you with my wrath and exhaust my anger upon you, passing judgment on you as your ways warrant and repaying you for all your shocking deeds.  
9 No pitying glance will I give nor any show of compassion, but I will repay you for your ways, and your shocking deeds will haunt you, and you will all realize that I am Yahweh, the one who struck the blow.

10 “Here is the day, here it has come—doom(?) has appeared. Injustice has burst into blossom,
12 The time has come,
the day has arrived.\textsuperscript{a}

Let the buyer not be glad
nor the seller be sorry.\textsuperscript{b}

13 For the buyer will not come back
to what has been sold,\textsuperscript{a}

\textsuperscript{a} 12.a. The LXX \textit{ijdouv} “behold” seems to reflect a misreading of \textit{gh} “has arrived” as \textit{h nh}.

\textsuperscript{b} 12.b. The LXX* does not represent \textit{v 12b}, “since burning anger rests on all its wealth,” and it is often taken as an addition, partly because it interrupts the sequence of \textit{v 12a} and \textit{v 13a}. In content it matches the references to Yahweh’s anger in vv 3, 8. The LXX* in fact lacks the three similar refrainlike statements here and in vv \textit{13b} and 14. The fem. sg suffix lacks an obvious antecedent: the land in the heading of \textit{v 2a} has been addressed directly in vv 2b–9. See the next \textit{Note} for further discussion.

\textsuperscript{a} 13.a. The MT has “for the seller to what has been sold will not return,” while the LXX has “for the buyer to the seller will not return.” The MT is credible only if it refers to the institution of jubilee, in which land was restored to its original owners (Lev 25), as Jerome suggested (but see Dijkstra, \textit{JSOT} 43 [1989] 110–11). Unfortunately, this interpretation does not follow on naturally from the basic injunction in \textit{v 12a}: the seller’s desisting from mourning can hardly be grounded in his future inability to regain the property. If this is what \textit{v 13a} means, its lack of direct connection suggests that it is a gloss (cf. Zimmerli 206, 208). The presence of the clause in the LXX is an encouragement to regard it as a primary part of the text. Yet the form it takes in either tradition yields little sense in the context. Accordingly, one must search for an intermediate reading, which underlies both the MT and the LXX. If the latter’s “the buyer” (= \textit{h nwq h}) is right, then it is plausible to suppose that \textit{rk wnh} “the seller” originated as a corrupt variant of \textit{rk mmh} “what is sold,” under the influence of \textit{rk wmh} “the seller” in \textit{v 12}. Then the variant displaced \textit{h nwq h} “the buyer” in the MT and \textit{rk mmh} “what is sold” in the text underlying the LXX. In \textit{v 13ab–b} the MT has three additions, (1) “and still in life,” (2) “their life,” and (3) “for (the) vision concerning all its army will not be revoked.” The first two will be considered in the following \textit{Note}. The third links with \textit{v 12b} (see \textit{Note} 12.b* above) and also with \textit{v 14b}, and significantly all of these three similar cases are absent from the LXX*.
and both, because of the iniquity each has done,
will fail to hold on to their lives.

They have blown on the bugle and made everything ready;
but nobody goes into battle.

Generally ðwzj “vision” has been taken as an error for ðwrj “burning anger” since Ewald (240), but the opposite may be true. This middle case seems to constitute the original comment, which relates to the “vision” (ðwzj) that is sought in v 26. No such optimistic revelatory oracle would be forthcoming, because Yahweh’s will has been declared through a pessimistic oracle that would not be revoked. This oracle is identified by its subject matter, “concerning all its army (h npmh Al k),” with reference to Egypt in 32:12, 16. Alternatively, there may be a reference to h npmh Al k “all his army,” referring to Pharaoh in 31:18; 32:31, 32, or indeed to both. The annotator had in mind the Egyptian failure to come successfully to Judah’s aid against Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 17:15, 17; 30:21–26). He attributed it to Yahweh’s declared and irrevocable will in the matter, which no urgent entreaty could avert. The marginal comment became attached to the previous column because of overlap of vocabulary that caused confusion: | b at v “let/will mourn” occurs in vv 12 and 26, and b wv al “will not return, be revoked” occurs in the text at v 13. It may be that the initial placing in the text was in v 12b and that after corruption a correct variant was attached after v 13a. Anyway, the form at present in v 12b is an abbreviated version in which ðwzj “burning anger” has taken the place of ðwzj “vision,” presumably to give a better contextual link with the anger of vv 3, 8 (cf. Jer 18:20; for the verb b w with the sense “be averted,” see Ps 106:23). There may also have been a reminiscence of Jer 4:8: certainly Jer 4:9 is similar to vv 26–27aa b. After this corruption, h npmh Al k must have been understood as “its wealth” in the context of buying and selling, and the suffix was related to the land of Israel in v 2. A third variant, which came to rest in v 14b, made the anger more explicit as Yahweh’s (ynwrj “my burning anger”), in line with the first person suffixes in vv 3, 8. The term ðwzj does not occur elsewhere in Ezekiel.

b 13.b. In place of the MT wqzjty “will strengthen themselves,” the LXX (supported by the Syr.) kratei`n seems to presuppose a sg hiph form Q Zj “will retain (his life).” In the LXX OT, kratei`n generally stands for the hiph of Q Zj, though in 2 Kgdms 3:6 it represents the hitp. For the direct object, cf. Mic 7:18. The two glosses in v 13ab, which the LXX lacks, µ t y µ y y b d w “(and) still in life, their life,” seem to be attempts to accommodate MT’s verbal form. The second, “their life,” corrected “his life,” while the first dealt with the lack of grammatical connection between verb and noun, by suggesting an adverbial relationship. The reading ðy “[in eye]” implied by the LXX for the MT ðwnw “because of his iniquity” is interesting. Jerome (79) commented on the waw/yod interchange. The reading seems to go back to a form intermediate between the LXX and the MT, ðw “(each) because of the iniquity (of his life),” which may have encouraged the corruption to an intransitive verb in the MT. The MT’s present text, ðwnw b v ya “each because of his iniquity,” is confirmed by v 16 (cf. 4:17).

c 14.c. Heb. ykh functions as an inf abs continuing the finite verb (GKC 72z; Joüon 80n). The LXX renders, strangely, krate he “judge.” A reading or misreading as ykh “(Hitzig 50) is its most plausible basis, though the verb is not so rendered in the LXX OT.
15 Outside lurks the sword; 
inside, plague and famine. 
Whoever is in the country 
will die by the sword, 
and whoever is in the capital 
will be devoured\(^a\) by famine and plague. 
16 If any escape\(^a\) 
and stay in the mountains, 
they will all be put to death\(^b\) 
because of the iniquity each has done. 
17 Every hand will hang limp, 
and every knee will be wet with urine.\(^a\) 
18 They will tie sackcloth round their waists 
and will be seized by shuddering, 
while every face will be covered with shame 
and every head shaved bare. 
19 “Their silver they will throw out into the streets, 
and their gold will be treated as something unclean.\(^a\)
They will not use it to satisfy their appetites
and to fill their stomachs,
because it has caused them to fall into iniquity.

They turned its beautiful ornaments into objects of pride
and made their shocking images out of it:
that is why I will turn it into something unclean for them.

I will hand it over to foreigners as loot,
as booty to the wickedest people on earth, who will desecrate it.

I will avert my gaze from them,
while they desecrate my treasury:
vandals will enter it
and desecrate it.

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19.a. The LXX* leaves unrepresented v 19a, “their silver and their gold will not have power to rescue them on the day of Yahweh’s anger.” In this divine speech the third person reference strikes an alien note, while the closeness to Zeph 1:18a suggests that it is a comparative gloss (Hitzig 52; et al.), with the wording slightly changed to comply with µbhzw µpsk “their silver … and their gold” in v 18a b. The gloss shows a sensitivity to the common context of the “day of Yahweh” motif.

19.b. “It” refers to the silver and gold in vv 19b–21 as a single entity. The suffix relates to the entire phrase: “their stumbling block of [= leading to] iniquity” (Greenberg 153).

20.a-b. For the MT whm;c “one made it” (cf. S “each …”), LXX Syr. Vg imply a pointing wh ma “they made it,” which suits the pl. verb in v 20ab. The suffix is resumptive: “as for its ornamentation, they made it …” The MT is seemingly a consequence of understanding ṃyd [ “its (ornamentation)” as a collective sg suffix relating to the people. In fact, it refers to the silver and gold (cf. Zimmerli 199; in his translation “his” should have been rendered “its” in English).

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20.c. The LXX* does not represent the MT’s addition of µh yx vq v “their detested things.” The asyndeton supports its secondary nature (contrast 11:18 in the MT and the LXX). The gloss may have sought to explain the unusual phrase that precedes (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:24). The inserted copula, for which there is some textual evidence, is not to taken as original (BHK) but as a subsequent attempt to integrate the gloss.

21.a. For the superlative force here and in v 24, see Cooke 87, and in v 24, also Joüon 141d.

22.a. Lit. “my hidden, treasured thing, treasure.” Comparison with ꧐ ꧐ ṃ “store, storehouse” alongside ꧐ ꧐ ṃ “storehouse” suggests that here it may have the extended sense of “treasury” (see the Comment).

22.b. The fem. suffixes (cf. K in v 21b) seem to identify God’s treasure or treasury as Jerusalem. If expected masc. forms are read, ṃ ṃ and ṁ ṁ ṅ ṃ “and” at the beginning of v 23, which was lost by haplography (see the next Note).

22.b. The fem. suffixes (cf. K in v 21b) seem to identify God’s treasure or treasury as Jerusalem. If expected masc. forms are read, ṃ ṃ and ṃ ṃ ṅ ṃ “and” at the beginning of v 23, which was lost by haplography (see the next Note).
For the land is full of bloodshed, b
and the capital is full of violence.
24 I will send in the worst of the nations,
who will occupy their houses.a
I will put an end to their source of pride and power, b
and their sanctuaries c will be desecrated.
25 Anguish is coming, a
and they will try to find safety, to no avail.
26 Disaster will come on the heels of disaster;
bad news will echo bad news.
They will try to get a revelation from the prophet,
while a ruling will elude the priest,
and counsel the elders.
27 The head of state will wear the garb of consternation, a

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a 23.a. The MT “make [impv] the chain(?)” poses syntactical and semantic difficulties. The LXX took it with v 22, rendering “and they will cause confusion,” i.e., … ὧν ῥῆμα (see the previous Note), which completes the poetic line and at least makes sense. The emendation q vt b –h, “slaughter” (cf. 16:40), proposed by Kraetzschmar (82; cf. Bertholet [1936] 28; HALAT 160a), imports a reference to loss of life that does not fit the emphasis on material destruction in the context. See BDB 958b and the discussion in Zimmerli 199–200. Did the clause originate as an early gloss qualifying v 20a and referring to chains being made for the idols with the silver and gold (cf. 1 Kgs 6:21; Isa 40:9)?
b 23.b. The MT, which prefaces with ἡ ἐδοκίμασεν ἅρια “judgment” implies “verdicts of murder” and so judicial murder (Greenberg 154). The LXX* does not represent ἡ ἐδοκίμασεν; the parallelism and comparison with 9:9 oppose its inclusion. Cornill (220) suggested that it originated as a gloss on the preceding unknown ἦν ἐδοκίμασεν. Was it rather an ironical comparative gloss on v 23bb, with the city “once full of justice [ἡ ἐδοκίμασεν]” (Isa 1:21) in mind (cf. Messel, Ezechielfragen [Oslo: Dybwad, 1945] 53)?
a 24.a. The LXX* does not render ἔρχεται, perhaps by oversight, since v 24a and v 24b begin with verbs of similar form (Cooke 83). In favor of the MT, Greenberg (154) has drawn attention to the external parallelism of forms and sounds that marks the two lines.
b 24.b. For the MT ἔρχεται “(the pride of) the strong” the LXX presuppuses ἔρχεται ὑπὸ “their (proud) might,” which accords with usage elsewhere in Ezekiel (24:21; 30:6, 18; 33:28).
c 24.c. The MT ἔρχεται “(the pride of) the strong” the LXX presuppuses ἔρχεται ὑπὸ “their (proud) might,” which accords with usage elsewhere in Ezekiel (24:21; 30:6, 18; 33:28).
a 25.a. It is generally urged that a fem. form be read, ἄρα ὀ “is coming” or ὄ ὀ “will come,” agreeing with the fem. subj (see BDB 891b, with reference to GKC 29e). However, Greenberg (155) has plausibly argued that the hapax legomenon is masc with an archaic unstressed –ā; ending (cf. GKC 90f).
while the people in the land will be shocked into inactivity.
I will make their way of life the basis of my dealing with them
and judge them by their own judgment of others.
Then they will realize that I am Yahweh.”

Notes

2.a. LXX* Syr. add “say” as a link between the vocative and the messenger formula: ἀρθεί “say” could have fallen out after μαν “human.” An introduction consisting of the impv “say (to them)” and the messenger formula occurs, for instance, in 12:10, 23, 28, but the messenger formula can stand by itself, as in 26:3. The question is whether the initial vocative demands an impv. In 39:17 the sequence of vocative, messenger formula, and impv appears. Closest to the MT here is 22:18–19, where the vocative and messenger formula occur with an intervening explanatory clause, and 26:2–3, where the vocative is separated from a messenger formula by a causal clause. It is a short step from those instances to this one, and so the MT can be justified as a harder reading.

2.b. For the presence of ynd a “Lord” in a messenger formula here and in v 5, see Note 2:4.c.*

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27.a. The LXX* leaves unrepresented the initial ἔαυ θαλμ “the king will mourn and.” The following ἀτρип “the people of the land” is difficult in view of the sg number, which vitiates my view expressed in Brownlee (114) that the MT be retained, following Cooke (84). Probably the noun and verb in the MT function as a gloss explaining the next clause, which was later incorporated into the text with the copula. The poetically anarthrous (so the LXX*) “head of state” was explained as “the king,” and the unique metaphorical phrase “wear consternation” was explained in terms of the verb in v 12 (Hitzig 56). Hebr. וּמְמָשֵׁה, usually “devastation,” is seemingly used in the sense of מְמָשֵׁה “horror” (4:16; 12:19). The glossator may also have had in mind 2 Sam 14:2, where “wear [v]” the clothes of mourning” is preceded by the hithp ofובא.

27.b. LXX Syr. Vg render as if מְמָשֵׁה “according to their way,” to which Cornill (221) and others have emended the MT. Heb. מְמָשֵׁה seems to mean “on account of” or perhaps (Greenberg 157, with reference to BDB 579a) “out of the repertoire of” and may be kept as the harder reading. In fact, Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 27) warned that the versions may have rendered freely.

27.c. The preposition ב is attested by the LXX את “in,” as opposed to the easier ל “according to” found in a score of MSS and implied by the Vg. Cooke (85) fittingly compared 23:24; 44:24(Q). The preposition is used with reference to a standard of measurement or computation (cf. BDB 90b).

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
impv imperative(s)
impv imperative(s)
impv imperative(s)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
2.c. Comparison with v 6 suggests that ἀ δ “is coming” should be inserted. The text is hardly coherent without it: in the MT Ἄ ᾄ is seemingly an interjection, “The end!” Its omission in the MT was a simple case of haplography: the ancient versions seem to attest it. The evidence of the LXX is especially significant in view of its tendency to attest a shorter text. For the change of word order in the LXX, see in principle G. Marquis, Textus 13 (1986) 59–84.

2.d. Q’s masc. form of numeral is expected with the fem. noun (cf. HALAT 463a).

2.e. Or “land,” but the use of the phrase in Isa 11:12 (cf. Job 37:3; 38:13) suggests “earth” (Herrmann 49; Hölscher, Dichter 67; et al.; REB). In v 21 Ἄ ᾄ ἀ Ἴ means “the earth,” but in v 23 “the land.” The LXX* puts vv 6ab–9 before vv 3–6aa; in fact, the prefaced material reflects a different translation than that of chaps. 1–25 (cf. McGregor, Greek Text of Ezekiel 95) and was obviously added to fill a perceived gap. It was inserted in the wrong place, presumably because of the recurring τ ο ᾃ π ἐ ἔ ν a " the end has come" in vv 2 (= v 6a) and 10. In v 6 (= v 9 in the MT) ἐ γ ἀ μ ἐ ἐ ν ἴ ἴ my ν ἴ I am” for ί ν a “I ” is characteristic of the translator of chaps. 26–39, as opposed to ἐ γ ἧ ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν ν
3.a. The LXX* reflects ינא “I” for יפ על “my anger” (Hitzig 45).

4.a. For the form of the verb, see Note 5:11.d. The MT adds ישלח [“(upon) you,” which the LXX* and v 9 lack, as do the instances of the formula elsewhere, e.g., in 5:11; 8:18. It probably entered the text by mechanical assimilation to the clauses in vv 3b and 4b.

4.b. “All” in the translation attempts to represent a change to pl. The sg form in LXX Syr. here and in v 9 seems to reflect assimilation to the context (cf. 5:13).

5.a. The MT “evil, one evil” is strange; Rashi’s interpretation of יא “one” as “unique” reads into the text. A minority Masoretic reading (see BHS) that is reflected in the Tg. is יא “after,” with the sense “disaster after disaster” (cf. v 26). The Syr. implies יא יא “in place of, in exchange for,” with the meaning “physical evil for moral evil” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:22). It is tempting to conjecture with Greenberg (148) that the MT יא יא is the result of conflation between two variants, יא יא and יא יא. The LXX* does not represent v 5b, or at least represents only יהה “behold.” Consequently, v 5b has been regarded as an explanatory gloss on v 6 (Fohrer 43). But so distinctive a text hardly suggests a gloss, and what its intention might have been is not clear. The fuller text in the MT deserves the benefit of the doubt. For the meaning “disaster” for יה , cf. 6:10; 14:22. Ehrlich’s interpretation, cited above, anticipates the moral retribution later in the oracle, but it does not fit the immediate context so well.

6.a. The secondary material in the LXX* offers an abbreviated text that omits six words from יא יא “it is awakened (?)” in v 6ab to יהה יא יא “the doom (?)” in v 7a. The omission may simply represent
parablepsis by homoeoteleuton (ûyla … ) ûyla “to you (… to you),” if Åq h was not present in the Vorlage (Hitzig 47). The latter term probably originated as an orthographical variant of Åq “the end” (Hitzig 47; et al.). It has been variously explained as (1) “it is awakened” (Q Vg), (2) “it has brought the end,” a denominative verb from Åq “end” (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 148, who did not, however, consider the verb authentic), and (3) “it is ripe,” denominative from Åyq “ripe summer fruit” (Greenberg 148, implicitly following Bewer).

6.b. The fem. verb has as its subj the fem. noun in v 7.

7.a. The MT h a b “is coming” may be a dittograph (Wevers 73), but the presence of the two verbs with the same subj in v 10 is an argument in its favor.

7.b. The MT h r y p x here and in v 10 is hardly the same term that means “garland, crown” in Isa 28:5, though Q and the Tg. identified the nouns. “Doom!” ([N]RSV, REB) “is as good a guess as any” (Wevers 73) and at least “an educated guess” (Blenkinsopp 47). See the discussions in Zimmerli (201) and Greenberg (148) and most recently in Masson, VT 37 (1987) 301–11, who suggests a meaning “net,” as a symbol of exile.

7.c. V 7bb appears to bear some relation to v 11b. The secondary text in the LXX* is somewhat closer to v 11b in terms of its repeated oujdev “neither … nor.” Indeed, met a q or ubw seems to reflect μ α “from tumults” (cf. v 11b; cf. qorubw* for α in Dan 10:6 LXX). But wj divnwn “labor cries” may have something to do with h h “pregnant woman” (Cornill 213) or ḫw “pregnancy” (Goettsberger, BZ 22 [1934] 206). The MT seems to be intended to mean as the translation renders, dh being regarded as a variant form of d dh “shout” at harvest time. To relate dh to d ḫ “glory” (ÆA Q Vg ) is no help. In the absence of a better explanation, we can only stay with the MT. It is sometimes
suggested that ‘a day of’ has dropped out after ‘the day’ (Cornill 213; Cooke 78; Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 61–62; cf. 30:3; Joel 2:2), which would ease the construction.

9.a. The secondary text in the LXX* as well as the Vg implies ‘because your ways’ in place of the MT ‘according to your ways,” in line with v 4. The syntax favors the slight change (cf. Zimmerli 196). The MT seems to have suffered mechanical assimilation to ‘the day’ in v 8a.

9.b. See Note 4.b.* above.

9.c. Heb. hkm “who struck, striker” is rather abrupt. Greenberg (149) has observed the rare use of a predicative ptcp in a recognition formula besides in 20:12; 37:28, in both cases with an object expressed. However, Zimmerli (196) has noted that the verb occurs without an object in 9:5, 7–8. Cornill (213) and others have emended slightly to hkmh “the striker,” assuming haplography of h and appealing to LXX Syr.. A fragment of 11QEv has the same reading as the MT, hkm (see Lust, “Textual Witnesses” 91), but this is hardly surprising, since the Qumran MSS of Ezekiel all reflect a Masoretic type of text.

10.a. The LXX* omits hr ypxh … hnb “comes … the doom(?)” hr nh “behold” is seemingly rendered eij kaiiv “even though” (cf. Cornill 214). Perhaps the omission was prompted by inability to render hr ypx, on which see Note 6.a.* above.

_Bib Biblica_

* cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
* cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
4.b. “All” in the translation attempts to represent a change to pl. The sg form in LXX Syr. here and in v 9 seems to reflect assimilation to the context (cf. 5:13).

Heb. Hebrew
ptcp participle
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
11QEv MS of Ezekiel from Qumran Cave 11
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
* cf. confer, compare
10.b. The verb is probably to be accented as pf, \(\text{hab}\); see the Comment.

10.c. The MT and LXX take as “rod,” but \(\text{hfm}\) “perversion, injustice” (9:9) makes a more obvious and widely adopted parallel (Bewer, *JBL* 45 [1926] 227–28; et al.). An interpretation of “rod” in terms of Nebuchadnezzar has little to commend it.

10.d. The MT, in common with the general textual tradition, adds v 11. V 11a, “the violence has grown into a rod of wickedness,” appears to be an early series of glosses: \(\text{smjh}\) “the violence” was borrowed from v 23 via 9:9, to explain \(\text{hfm}\) in terms of injustice (Bewer, *JBL* 45 [1926] 227–28; cf. the previous Note), while on the other hand \(\text{vrhfh}\) “rod of wickedness” (cf. \(\text{vrhfbv}\) “the staff of wickedness,” Ps 125:3) seeks to justify the interpretation adopted in the pointed text. The intervening \(\text{µq}\) “has grown into” (cf. Greenberg 148) may be an attempt to combine the diverse explanations into a clause that seeks the best of both exegetical worlds, paraphrasing v 10b, “the rod/injustice has blossomed,” though it better reflects \(\text{rj}\) “has budded, sprouted” in v 10b. The LXX, “and he will break the support of the wicked [= \(\text{vrh}\)]” (see *BHS*), obtained what was considered an intelligible meaning by taking \(\text{µq}\) as introducing an object. The preceding five letters of its Vorlage may have been damaged, and indeed it may have lacked \(\text{smjh}\) “the violence.” The translator seems to have associated “rod” with Yahweh’s breaking of it, in reminiscence of 4:16; 5:16 (\(\text{suntrivein sthviga}\) “break (the) support”; cf. Bogaert, “Les deux rédactions” 30) and so used the verb “break.” V 11b, “and not from them and not from their multitude and not from their moaning(?) and (there is) no eminence(?) in them,” seems to be a variant of v 7bb but defies coherent explanation. Greenberg (148) calls it “obscure, with

* 6.a. The secondary material in the LXX* offers an abbreviated text that omits six words from \(\text{AYQ}\) “it is awakened(?)” in v 6ab to \(\text{rj}\) “the doom(?)” in v 7a. The omission may simply represent parablepsis by homoeoteleuton (\(\text{uyf}\) a ... \(\text{uyf}\) a “to you (... to you),” if \(\text{AYQ}\) was not present in the Vorlage (Hitzig 47). The latter term probably originated as an orthographical variant of \(\text{AQ}\) “the end” (Hitzig 47; et al.). It has been variously explained as (1) “it is awakened” (Q Vg), (2) “it has brought the end,” a denominative verb from \(\text{AQ}\) “end” (Driver, *Bib* 35 [1954] 148, who did not, however, consider the verb authentic), and (3) “it is ripe,” denominative from \(\text{AYQ}\) “ripe summer fruit” (Greenberg 148, implicitly following Bewer).

pf perfect
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*JBL* Journal of Biblical Literature
et al. et alii, and others
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
*JBL* Journal of Biblical Literature
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*BHS* Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
cf. confer, compare
its crazy variations on h and m/n sounds.” The LXX∗, “and not with tumult nor with haste” (see BHS), is shorter and somewhat closer to v 7. Zimmerli (197) has deduced from the LXX∗ that the MT consists of two basic expressions and two additions (cf. Cooke 86). Comparison with v 7 suggests that the two basic nouns were ḫminimal “tumult” and ḫminimal “confusion.” The last phrase seems to be a variant of the former term via a µ/b confusion. The series of third pl. suffixes lacks an antecedent, while vv 13–27 are full of third pl. references. This phenomenon suggests that v 11b somehow originated as a comment on part of that material; certainly the second term may have something to do with ḫminimal “its wealth/army” in vv 12 and 14.

12.a. The LXX ἴδουν “behold” seems to reflect a misreading of ḫ “has arrived” as ḫminimal .

12.b. The LXX∗ does not represent v 12b, “since burning anger rests on all its wealth,” and it is often taken as an addition, partly because it interrupts the sequence of v 12a and v 13a . In content it matches the references to Yahweh’s anger in vv 3, 8. The LXX∗ in fact lacks the three similar refrainlike statements here and in vv 13b and 14b. The fem. sg suffix lacks an obvious antecedent: the land in the heading of v 2a has been addressed directly in vv 2b–9. See the next Note for further discussion.

13.a. The MT has “for the seller to what has been sold will not return,” while the LXX has “for the buyer to the seller will not return.” The MT is credible only if it refers to the institution of jubilee, in which land was restored to its original owners (Lev 25), as Jerome suggested (but see Dijkstra, JSOT 43 [1989] 110–11). Unfortunately, this interpretation does not follow on naturally from the basic injunction in v 12a : the seller’s desisting from mourning can hardly be grounded in his future inability to regain the property. If this is what v 13a means, its lack of direct connection suggests that it is a gloss (cf. Zimmerli 206, 208). The presence of the clause in the LXX is an encouragement to regard it as a primary part of the text. Yet the form it takes in either tradition yields little sense in the context. Accordingly, one must search for an intermediate reading, which underlies both the MT and the LXX. If the latter’s “the
buyer” (= הָנְווָה הַ) is right, then it is plausible to suppose that רַק-וָמָה “the seller” originated as a corrupt variant of רַק-וָמָה “what is sold,” under the influence of רַק-וָמָה “the seller” in v 12. Then the variant displaced הָנְווָה הַ “the buyer” in the MT and רַק-וָמָה “what is sold” in the text underlying the LXX. In v 13ab–b the MT has three additions, (1)“and still in life,” (2) “their life,” and (3) “for (the) vision concerning all its army will not be revoked.” The first two will be considered in the following Note. The third links with v 12b (see Note 12.b. above) and also with v 14b, and significantly all of these three similar cases are absent from the LXX*

Generally רָפָא “vision” has been taken as an error for רָפָא יְאָרָה “burning anger” since Ewald (240), but the opposite may be true. This middle case seems to constitute the original comment, which relates to the “vision” ( רָפָאי) that is sought in v 26. No such optimistic revelatory oracle would be forthcoming, because Yahweh’s will had been declared through a pessimistic oracle that would not be revoked. This oracle is identified by its subject matter, “concerning all its army [הָנְוָה אֶל-קָה],” with reference to Egypt in 32:12, 16. Alternatively, there may be a reference to הָנְוָה אֶל-קָה “all his army,” referring to Pharaoh in 31:18; 32:31, 32, or indeed to both. The annotator had in mind the Egyptian failure to come successfully to Judah’s aid against Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 17:15, 17; 30:21–26). He attributed it to Yahweh’s declared and irrevocable will in the matter, which no urgent entreaty could avert. The marginal comment became attached to the previous column because of overlap of vocabulary that caused confusion: לָבַי יְאָרָה “let/will mourn” occurs in vv 12 and 26, and הב יְאָרָה “will not return, be revoked” occurs in the text at v 13. It may be that the initial placing in the text was in v 12b and that after corruption a correct variant was attached after v 13a. Anyway, the form at present in v 12b is an abbreviated version in which רָפָא יְאָרָה “burning anger” has taken the place of רָפָא “vision,” presumably to give a better contextual link with the anger of vv 3, 8 (cf. Jer 18:20; for the verb הב יְאָרָה with the sense “be averted,” see Ps 106:23). There may also have been a reminiscence of Jer 4:8: certainly Jer 4:9 is similar to vv 26–27ab. After this corruption, הָנְוָה אֶל-קָה must have been understood as “its wealth” in the context of buying and selling, and the suffix was related to the land of Israel in v 2. A third variant, which came to rest in v 14b, made the anger more explicit as Yahweh’s (יְאָרָה יְבָי “my burning anger”), in line with the first person suffixes in vv 3, 8. The term רָפָא יְאָרָה does not occur elsewhere in Ezekiel.

13.b. In place of the MT וָצִי † יְאָרָה “will strengthen themselves,” the LXX* (supported by the Syr.)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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* 12.b. The LXX* does not represent v 12b, “since burning anger rests on all its wealth,” and it is often taken as an addition, partly because it interrupts the sequence of v 12a and v 13a. In content it matches the references to Yahweh’s anger in vv 3, 8. The LXX* in fact lacks the three similar refrainlike statements here and in vv 13b and 14b. The fem. sg suffix lacks an obvious antecedent: the land in the heading of v 2a has been addressed directly in vv 2b–9. See the next Note for further discussion.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

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krathvsei seems to presuppose a sg hiph form qžh ‘will retain (his life).’ In the LXX OT, krateiν generally stands for the hiph of qžh, though in 2 Kgdms 3:6 it represents the hithp. For the direct object, cf. Mic 7:18. The two glosses in v 13ab, which the LXX lacks, µt ѱyβ yyyβ b d νl ν ‘(and) still in life, their life,’” seem to be attempts to accommodate MT’s verbal form. The second, “their life,” corrected “his life,” while the first dealt with the lack of grammatical connection between verb and noun, by suggesting an adverbial relationship. The reading ѱβν “in eye” implied by the LXX for the MT νlν b “because of his iniquity” is interesting. Jerome (79) commented on the waw/yod interchange. The reading seems to go back to a form intermediate between the LXX and the MT, νlν b “(each) because of the iniquity (of his life),” which may have encouraged the corruption to an intransitive verb in the MT. The MT’s present text, νlν b νγά “each because of his iniquity,” is confirmed by v 16 (cf. 4:17).

14.a. There is impressive ancient support for pointing as an impv (see BHS), but v 14ab suggests a past tense (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:23).

14.b. For the uncertain noun, see Zimmerli 198. The LXX renders as above.

14.c. Heb. ѱh functions as an inf abs continuing the finite verb (GKC 72z; Joüon 80n). The LXX renders, strangely, krivatε “judge.” A reading or misreading as ѱh -νh (Hitzig 50) is its most plausible basis, though the verb is not so rendered in the LXX OT.

sg singular or under
hiph Hiphil
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
OT Old Testament
hiph Hiphil
hithp hithpael
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
impv imperative(s)
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
inf infinitive
abs absolute (nouns)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
14.d. The lack of representation of ḫlô lh ʧə wî l k h ʷ, “(everything) but nobody goes into” in the
LXX* is probably to be explained in terms of parablepsis by homoeoteleuton, as I suggested in
Brownlee 112.

14.e. For v 14b in the MT, see Notes 12.b.* and 13.a.* above.

OT Old Testament
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
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taken as an addition, partly because it interrupts the sequence of v 12a and v 13a ʷ. In content it matches
the references to Yahweh’s anger in vv 3, 8. The LXX* in fact lacks the three similar refrainlike
statements here and in vv 13b ʷ and 14b. The fem. sg suffix lacks an obvious antecedent: the land in the
heading of v 2a has been addressed directly in vv 2b–9. See the next Note for further discussion.
* 13.a. The MT has “for the seller to what has been sold will not return,” while the LXX has “for the
buyer to the seller will not return.” The MT is credible only if it refers to the institution of jubilee, in
which land was restored to its original owners (Lev 25), as Jerome suggested (but see Dijkstra, JSOT 43
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in v 12a ʷ: the seller’s desisting from mourning can hardly be grounded in his future inability to regain the
property. If this is what v 13a ʷ means, its lack of direct connection suggests that it is a gloss (cf.
Zimmerli 206, 208). The presence of the clause in the LXX is an encouragement to regard it as a primary
part of the text. Yet the form it takes in either tradition yields little sense in the context. Accordingly, one
must search for an intermediate reading, which underlies both the MT and the LXX. If the latter’s “the
buyer” (= h wkg h ʷ) is right, then it is plausible to suppose that ḫk ṭ-wmhm “the seller” originated as a
corrupt variant of ḫk ṭmmh “what is sold,” under the influence of ḫk ṭwmh “the seller” in v 12. Then the
variant displaced h wkg h “the buyer” in the MT and ḫk ṭmmh “what is sold” in the text underlying the LXX
. In v 13ab–b a the MT has three additions, (1)“and still in life,” (2) “their life,” and (3) “for (the)
vision concerning all its army will not be revoked.” The first two will be considered in the following Note
. The third links with v 12b (see Note 12.b.* above) and also with v 14b, and significantly all of these
three similar cases are absent from the LXX*.
15.a. LXX Tg. imply \( \text{wnlk} \) \( k \) \( y \) “will destroy him” for the MT \( \text{wnl} \) \( k \) \( a \) \( y \) “will devour him”: cf. 5:12; 6:12. In the latter case, the variant is secondary.

16.a. For the construction, cf. *GKC* 144e.

16.b. The MT \( \text{twmh} \) \( \mu l k \) \( t \) \( \text{wyagh} \) \( \text{ynwyk} \) “like the doves of the valleys, all of them cooing” implies that v 16a is the apodosis and that v 16b qualifies v 16a: “they will stay in the mountains …, each one for his iniquity.” The use of the phrase “each for his iniquity” in v 13 (cf. too 3:18, 19; 18:18; 33:18, 19) and the dire language of v 15 point to a harsher fate, to the punishment of death. In fact, the LXX “I will put to death” appropriately implies \( \text{tmeh} \); a hiph inf abs, for \( \text{twmh} \) “cooing” (Brockington, *Hebrew Text* 221). However, in the context it should probably be taken as having an indefinite subj and so being

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Generally \( \text{\textasciitilde{wzj}} \) “vision” has been taken as an error for \( \text{\textasciitilde{wrj}} \) “burning anger” since Ewald (240), but the opposite may be true. This middle case seems to constitute the original comment, which relates to the “vision” (\( \text{\textasciitilde{wzj}} \)) that is sought in v 26. No such optimistic revelatory oracle would be forthcoming, because Yahweh’s will had been declared through a pessimistic oracle that would not be revoked. This oracle is identified by its subject matter, “concerning all its army \[\text{Hnw\textasciitilde{m}\textasciitilde{h} Alk}\],” with reference to Egypt in 32:12, 16. Alternatively, there may be a reference to \( \text{hnœwmh Alk} \) “all his army,” referring to Pharaoh in 31:18; 32:31, 32, or indeed to both. The annotator had in mind the Egyptian failure to come successfully to Judah’s aid against Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 17:15, 17; 30:21–26). He attributed it to Yahweh’s declared and irrevocable will in the matter, which no urgent entreaty could avert. The marginal comment became attached to the previous column because of overlap of vocabulary that caused confusion: \( \text{bwv} \ y \) \( \text{â\textasciitilde{i}} \) “let/will mourn” occurs in vv 12 and 26, and \( \text{bwv} \ y \) \( \text{â\textasciitilde{i}} \) “will not return, be revoked” occurs in the text at v 13. It may be that the initial placing in the text was in v 12b and that after corruption a correct variant was attached after v 13a. Anyway, the form at present in v 12b is an abbreviated version in which \( \text{\textasciitilde{wrj}} \) “burning anger” has taken the place of \( \text{\textasciitilde{wzj}} \) “vision,” presumably to give a better contextual link with the anger of vv 3, 8 (cf. Jer 18:20; for the verb \( \text{bwv} \) with the sense “be averted,” see Ps 106:23). There may also have been a reminiscence of Jer 4:8: certainly Jer 4:9 is similar to vv 26–27a\( \text{â\textasciitilde{i}} \). After this corruption, \( \text{h nw\textasciitilde{m}h Alk} \) must have been understood as “its wealth” in the context of buying and selling, and the suffix was related to the land of Israel in v 2. A third variant, which came to rest in v 14b, made the anger more explicit as Yahweh’s (\( \text{ynwrj} \) “my burning anger”), in line with the first person suffixes in vv 3, 8. The term \( \text{\textasciitilde{wrj}} \) does not occur elsewhere in Ezekiel.

**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

**Tg.** Targum

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

cf. *confer*, compare

cf. *confer*, compare


**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

cf. *confer*, compare

**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

hiph Hiphil

inf infinitive

abs absolute (nouns)
a virtual pass, “will be put to death.” The LXX* has no equivalent for ὁ ὅμως ἵππος ἵππος “like the doves of
the valleys,” which looks like an explanatory gloss on the following verbal form, explaining both its
meaning and its odd fem. gender. Q (= LXX*) renders a Heb. reading τῷ ὅμως ἵππος ἵππος “like murmuring
doves” (cf. Isa 59:11), which was probably the earlier form of the MT (Cornill 216). MT “valleys” was
presumably a miswriting under the influence of “mountains” just before.

17.a. See Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 5:23–24; Driver, *ZAW* 65 (1953) 260; and *Note 21:12(7).a.* in
Ezekiel 20–48 19. The LXX interpreted thus, in terms of involuntary micturition. Heb. µ refinement “water”
functions as an acc of fullness: cf. *GKC* 117z. The Tg. rendered euphemistically, constrained by a public
reading of the text, “will be poured out like water.”

19.a. The LXX* leaves unrepresented ν 19a, “their silver and their gold will not have power to
rescue them on the day of Yahweh’s anger.” In this divine speech the third person reference strikes an
alien note, while the closeness to Zeph 1:18a suggests that it is a comparative gloss (Hitzig 52; et al.),
with the wording slightly changed to comply with µ β θ φ ι λ τ ν “their silver … and their gold” in ν
18a b. The gloss shows a sensitivity to the common context of the “day of Yahweh” motif.

19.b. “It” refers to the silver and gold in vv 19b–21 as a single entity. The suffix relates to the entire
phrase: “their stumbling block of [= leading to] iniquity” (Greenberg 153).

20.a-b. For the MT ὃν μὲν ἐκτός “one made it” (cf. § “each …”), LXX Syr. Vg imply a pointing ὃν μὲν
they made it,” which suits the pl. verb in v 20ab. The suffix is resumptive: “as for its ornamentation,

subj subject/objective
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
fem. feminine
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
acc according (to) or accusative
cf. confer, compare
1910; repr. 1966)
Tg. Targum
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
pl. plate or plural
they made it …” The MT is seemingly a consequence of understanding וְיָדַיִם “its (ornamentation)” as a collective sg suffix relating to the people. In fact, it refers to the silver and gold (cf. Zimmerli 199; in his translation “his” should have been rendered “its” in English).

20.c. The LXX* does not represent the MT’s addition of הֵלֶּחֶק וְלֵיהָ “their detested things.” The asyndeton supports its secondary nature (contrast 11:18 in the MT and the LXX). The gloss may have sought to explain the unusual phrase that precedes (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:24). The inserted copula, for which there is some textual evidence, is not to taken as original (BHK) but as a subsequent attempt to integrate the gloss.

21.a. For the superlative force here and in v 24, see Cooke 87, and in v 24, also Joüon 141d.

22.a. Lit. “my hidden, treasured thing, treasure.” Comparison with וַיַּתִּית “store, storehouse” alongside וַיַּתִּית יַבִּיהי “storehouse” suggests that here it may have the extended sense of “treasury” (see the Comment).

22.b. The fem. suffixes (cf. K in v 21b) seem to identify God’s treasure or treasury as Jerusalem. If expected masc. forms are read, הָבָה וַלְיָה הָיְתֶה “storehouse” (see the Comment).

23.a. The MT “make [impv] the chain(?)” poses syntactical and semantic difficulties. The LXX took it with v 22, rendering “and they will cause confusion,” i.e., … וְלֹ֥א הָיְתֶ�ָת “slaughter” (cf. 16:40), proposed by Kraetzschmar (82; cf. Bertholet [1936] 28; HALAT 160a), imports a reference to loss of life
that does not fit the emphasis on material destruction in the context. See BDB 958b and the discussion in Zimmerli 199–200. Did the clause originate as an early gloss qualifying v 20a and referring to chains being made for the idols with the silver and gold (cf. 1 Kgs 6:21; Isa 40:9)?

23.b. The MT, which prefaces with \( f p v m \) “judgment” implies “verdicts of murder” and so judicial murder (Greenberg 154). The LXX* does not represent \( f p v m \); the parallelism and comparison with 9:9 oppose its inclusion. Cornill (220) suggested that it originated as a gloss on the preceding unknown \( q v t \). Was it rather an ironical comparative gloss on v 23bb, with the city “once full of justice [\( f p v m \)]” (Isa 1:21) in mind (cf. Messel, Ezechielfragen [Oslo: Dybwad, 1945] 53)?

24.a. The LXX* does not render v 24a, perhaps by oversight, since v 24a and v 24b begin with verbs of similar form (Cooke 83). In favor of the MT, Greenberg (154) has drawn attention to the external parallelism of forms and sounds that marks the two lines.

24.b. For the MT \( m y l \) “(the pride of) the strong” the LXX presupposes \( m É \) “their (proud) might,” which accords with usage elsewhere in Ezekiel (24:21; 30:6, 18; 33:28).

24.c. The MT \( m h w d q m \) is oddly vocalized as piel ptc, with pejorative intent: “the places that they [rather than God] sanctify” (Greenberg 155). The expected \( m h w \) \( q mi \) “their sanctuaries” is presupposed by LXX Vg Tg. (cf. Syr. “their sanctuary”).

25.a. It is generally urged that a fem. form be read, \( h a b \) “is coming” or \( a b t \) “will come,” agreeing with the fem. subj (see BDB 891b, with reference to GKC 29e). However, Greenberg (155)

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS) LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT cf. confer, compare
has plausibly argued that the *hapax legomenon* is masc with an archaic unstressed –ā; ending (cf. *GKC* 90f).

27.a. The LXX* leaves unrepresented the initial w l b a t y ū l m h “the king will mourn and.” The following a y č n most naturally means “leader, head of state,” with reference to the king, in association with “the people of the land”: cf. 45:16, 22; 46:2–3, 8–9. In 12:12; 21:30(25) the term refers to Zedekiah, who is in view here. A reference to government officials (cf. Greenberg 156, appealing to 32:29; cf. too 21:17[12]) is difficult in view of the sg number, which vitiates my view expressed in Brownlee (114) that the MT be retained, following Cooke (84). Probably the noun and verb in the MT function as a gloss explaining the next clause, which was later incorporated into the text with the copula. The poetically anarthrous (so the LXX*) “head of state” was explained as “the king,” and the unique metaphorical phrase “wear consternation” was explained in terms of the verb in v 12 (Hitzig 56). Heb. h mmv, usually “devastation,” is seemingly used in the sense of ḫm mmv “horror” (4:16; 12:19). The glossator may also have had in mind 2 Sam 14:2, where “wear [v b l] the clothes of mourning” is preceded by the hithp of l b ā.

27.b. LXX Syr. Vg render as ifū k r ḫ k “according to their way,” to which Cornill (221) and others have emended the MT. Heb.ū k r ḫ m seems to mean “on account of” or perhaps (Greenberg 157, with reference to BDB 579a) “out of the repertoire of” and may be kept as the harder reading. In fact, Driver (*Bib* 19 [1938] 27) warned that the versions may have rendered freely.

27.c. The preposition b is attested by the LXX ejn “in,” as opposed to the easier k “according to” found in a score of MSS and implied by the Vg. Cooke (85) fittingly compared 23:24; 44:24(Q). The

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cf. *confer, compare*

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. *confer, compare*
cf. *confer, compare*
cf. *confer, compare*
sg singular or under
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
*Bib* Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
preposition is used with reference to a standard of measurement or computation (cf. BDB 90b).

**Form/Structure/Setting**

Chap. 7 is a distinct literary unit, as its initial message-reception formula and the fresh beginning in 8:1 indicate. The unit falls into three two-part proof sayings, in vv 2–4, 5–9, and 10–27, each of which moves from a forecast of divinely instigated disaster to a closing recognition formula. Moreover, in each case, announcements of divine “judicial” recompense occur near the end (vv 3a₂, 4b, 8a₂, 9b, 27b_2₃). The first two oracles are introduced by a messenger formula, in vv 2 and 5. They are also parallel in moving from an impersonal fate to a personal intervention on Yahweh’s part. This pattern is repeated to some extent in the third oracle. There the emphasis on the people’s fate eventually gives way to an expression of divine intervention in vv 20b–24 and 27b₂. Other parallels will be drawn in the **Comment** section.

The third oracle is lengthy and diverse. Hals (43) has observed that “it seems to ramble puzzlingly with no detectable continuity.” However, Greenberg (158) has usefully isolated recurring elements in this oracle. He has observed three cases of parallelism: (1) the futility of commerce in vv 12–13 and the futility of wealth in v 19; (2) war and death in vv 14–16 and invasion and destruction in vv 21–24; and (3) general demoralization and mourning in vv 17–18 and general consternation in vv 26b–27. These parallels point to a bipartite structure for the third oracle, vv 10–18 and 19–27.

This analysis finds support from stylistic factors. In the first half, after v 10 introduces the whole oracle, the two sections of vv 12–13 and 14–16 both end with the phrase נְבֵן עֵר “each for his iniquity,” while the third section, vv 17–18, begins and ends with a repeated ק “all.” In the second half, the first section, vv 19–20, starts and finishes with מֵדָא “unclean thing,” while the second section, vv 21–24, is shot through with references to desecrating (לִכְנָה, four times). The third section, vv 25–27a, is followed by a conclusion to the oracle in v 27b.

This division of the third oracle agrees somewhat with the proposal of Ewald (238–41) and Smend (41) that the whole unit be divided into three sections, vv 2–9, 10–18, and 19–27. However, one should rather think in terms of two literary sections, vv 2–9 and 10–27, each of which falls into two parallel statements, vv 2–4 and 5–9, and vv 10–18 and 19–27.

The structural symmetry that has been uncovered constitutes an objective clue toward resolving a baffling problem that besets vv 2–9. The earliest extant form of the LXX lacks vv 6ab–9 in their proper place. They appear in the wrong place, before v 3, as a subsequent insertion (see Note 2.c.*). Moreover,
the oracles in vv 2b–4 and 5b–9 are very similar in content. This pair of phenomena could suggest a conflated text, in which the Greek textual tradition preserved the secondary material in one place and the Hebrew tradition in another (Tov, *ETL* 62 [1986] 90). However, the LXX evidence is more complex: it does not fall into neat divisions of vv 2b–4 and 5–9; it preserves v 2b separately from vv 3–4, in front of part of v 6. Zimmerli (193, 201; cf. Cornill 213) has correlated the Greek and Hebrew evidence by deducing that not only do vv 6ab–9 constitute a variant of vv 2b[including Åq “end”]–4, but vv 5a, 6a originally functioned as an introduction to the oracle of vv 10–27, which now lacks an introduction because of the intrusion of the variant to the first oracle.

Not all critical scholars have seen recensional variation or secondary accretion in vv 2–9. For instance, Fohrer (42) considered rather that the second oracle represents Ezekiel’s expansion and adaptation of the first oracle. Cooke (75) was inclined to suppose that Ezekiel uttered more than one oracle on the same theme and that both have been grouped together as a prelude to the longer oracle of vv 14–27, along with vv 10–11 and 12–13, which he regarded as separate oracles. Likewise, Brownlee (105) thought not in terms of “variant recensions of the same material, despite close verbal parallels, but of variations of the original prophecy on different occasions” (cf. too Zimmerli’s indecision [206]). In terms of content it is not easy to assign priority: while most scholars have regarded the second oracle as later, Hölscher (*Dichter* 67) viewed vv 2b–4 as a secondary addition rather than as a recensional parallel to vv 5–9 or as the primary oracle that was later supplemented with vv 5–9.

One must take into account not only the closeness of the two oracles but also their differences. V 2b strikes a universal note that is lacking in the second oracle. As for the second oracle, there is extra material in v 7, the first part of which implies that this message is addressed not like the first to τ mda ḫ l ā r ḫ ȝ “the country of Israel” but to the (collective) ḫ r a ḫ b v ṭ w “inhabitant(s) of the land.” Indeed, the feminine suffixes of the second oracle, from which the masculine form in v 7a stands out, may well represent a mistaken assimilation to the feminine suffixes in vv 3–4 (Davidson 47). Zimmerli (201) has drawn attention to this possibility; in fact, the phenomenon points to the original independence of the second oracle, close as it is to the first.

If one resists the temptation to extrapolate from the Greek evidence conflation of a shorter text that...
lies behind the MT, the question arises how it came about that vv 6a–9 are missing from the earliest extant form of the LXX. Parunak’s explanation (“Structural Studies” 197–98) in terms of omission by homooteleuton, from År åh “the earth” in v 2 to År åh “the land” in v 7, loses too much. Rather, the answer lies in omission of a slightly different amount of material by homoeoarcton. A copyist within the tradition of the Hebrew Vorlage used by the Greek translator overlooked vv 6a–9 because of the similarity of the initial material in v 6ab and v 10ab, respectively, which was perhaps set out as separate lines (see Note 1:20.b.):

\[
\text{h} \text{r} \text{p} \text{x} \text{h} \text{ a} \text{b} \text{ h} \text{n} \text{h} \text{ û} \text{y} \text{l} \text{a} \text{ Åq} \text{h} \text{ a} \text{b} \\
\text{Coming is the end to you; behold, coming, coming is the doom(?).} \\
\text{h} \text{r} \text{p} \text{x} \text{h} \text{ h} \text{a} \text{x} \text{y} \text{ h} \text{a} \text{b} \text{ h} \text{n} \text{h} \text{ µ} \text{w} \text{h} \text{ h} \text{n} \text{h} \\
\text{“Behold, the day; behold, coming, coming forth is the doom(?).”}
\]

One might lay this oversight at the door of the translator, were it not for the fact that room has to be left for the later omission of the last four words in the latter case (see Note 6.a.* above). Subsequently, comparison with another Hebrew manuscript led to the loss being made good, perhaps by the translator of chaps. 26–39; however, the extra material was inserted in the wrong place.

Neither here nor in chap. 36, where the LXX papyrus 967 lacks vv 23bb–38, should one jump to conclusions concerning the original state of the Hebrew text. Both of the first two oracles in chap. 7

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**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

20.b. The traditional text, supported by all ancient witnesses, adds “would ascend alongside them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.” The same material reappears in v 21b. What distinguishes it from the repetitive text of the rest of vv 19–21 is its lack of logical continuity with what precedes in v 20a. One expects a reference to the forward movement of the wheels at this point, as occurs in v 21a: mention of the vertical movement of the wheels is premature (cf. Höhne, “Thronwagenvision” 93). Seemingly a copyist’s eye jumped to ṣv ~ ṭy “would ascend” in v 21b, and he copied out the rest of v 21b, using a text, which, like that of the LXX, still lacked μ yνp ṣv “the wheels” in v 21b. Subsequently, the missing words were reinserted together with the rest of v 21, but without deletion of the now superfluous six words. The cause of the parablepsis may have been the omission of a 34-letter line, if not of two of 17 letters: for this phenomenon, cf. H. M. Orlinsky (*JBL* 61 [1942] 88–89), who refers to lines in Heb. MSS with about 11–13 or 14, 17, 23, 25, 30, and 35 letters to a line, and to my *Greek Chronicles* (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 2:133–36. For another case of a corrected and undeleted error, ***see 22:20 and Note.*** Höhne (“Thronwagenvision” 93) took v 20 as a gloss on v 21b that wanted to make clear that the spirit was the same as in v 12, but this seems an unnecessarily drastic explanation of the overlap. He rightly noted that 10:17 reflects not v 20 but v 21.

* 6.a. The secondary material in the LXX* offers an abbreviated text that omits six words from Åyq h “it is awakened (?)” in v 6ab to ṣv ṭy x h “the doom (?)” in v 7a. The omission may simply represent parablepsis by homoeoteleuton (ṭy ā … ) ṭy ā “to you (… to you),” if Åyq h was not present in the Vorlage (Hitzig 47). The latter term probably originated as an orthographical variant of Åq h “the end” (Hitzig 47; et al.). It has been variously explained as (1) “it is awakened” (Q Vg), (2) “it has brought the end,” a denominative verb from Åq “end” (Driver, *Bib* 35 [1954] 148, who did not, however, consider the verb authentic), and (3) “it is ripe,” denominative from Åyq “ripe summer fruit” (Greenberg 148, implicitly following Bewer).

**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
seem to go back to the earliest stage of the written text. Their identical core should not blind the reader to their differences, especially the change in address from the land to its inhabitants. Yet their literary combination makes positive use of their similarity, as an opportunity to emphasize their common themes by dint of repetition, a phenomenon that is also evident within the third oracle. The structural parallelism of the chapter appears to be an integral, primary phenomenon, which is sabotaged by the assumption that the second oracle represents an alternative recension or is secondary. The overall structure of the group of oracles may be defined as A/A′/B B′. However, there are also signs of an A/B/B′ A′ pattern, in which the human dimensions of the second oracle match those in the first half of the third oracle, and the emphasis on place in the first oracle is resumed in the second half of the third.

As in chap. 6, the geographical setting of these oracles is Ezekiel’s place of exile: the direct μτ[δyw “and you will know” in vv 4 and 9 seems to represent the real address of the prophet’s fellow exiles, as in 6:13. The oracles clearly belong in the pre-587 period. The oracles of 12:21–25, 26–28 imply that Ezekiel was prophesying on these lines long before 587 B.C. The general nature of their content does not permit further historical precision. They reflect a presentiment of disaster, which is spelled out in the third oracle in terms of the collapse of Judah’s social life, which Ezekiel had known so well.

This unit stands out as the first one to consist of a collection of poetic oracles (see the layout in BHS). All the previous oracles have been in prose, even if in a heightened, poetrylike style in places. The poetry is sometimes prosaic, but poetry it seems to be. The lines are mainly bicola; tricola appear in vv 4b, 7b, 9b, 10ab,a, 19ad–b, 20, 26b, and 27b.

In outline, the unit falls into the following divisions:

7:1 Introductory message-reception formula
7:2–4 The coup de grâce for the country of Israel
7:5–9 The final doom for the inhabitants of the land
7:10–27 The breakdown of Judah’s social structures in death (vv 10–18) and in material destruction (vv 19–27).

Comment

2 The oracle of vv 2b–4 is addressed rhetorically to “the country of Israel.” The phrase is characteristic of Ezekiel; it occurs only in this book, in nearly a score of instances (see Zimmerli 203). If the term “mountains of Israel” in chap. 6 was emotionally evocative, so too is this phrase. “The term <admat ‘soil of’ evokes the earth of the alienated homeland lived on by Israel; it is particularly poignant in the mouth of an exile” (Greenberg 145). The land of ancient promise tragically becomes the object of threat and punishment, the victim of crimes committed within its boundaries. Yet this judgment is set in a larger context, “the four corners of the earth.” There can be little doubt that the universality of the day of Yahweh is in view. The literary setting of this oracle alongside others that explicitly mention “the day” (vv 7, 10, 12) reveals an awareness that it too contributes to this general theme. Ezekiel is echoing a prophetic convention of judgment that, with Israel as target, went back to Amos (Amos 5:18–20) but that gradually took on overtones of judgment for neighboring nations (see Isa 2:6–21) and for the world at large (see Zeph 1:2–18). Other nations may already have been the sphere of reference for Amos’s audience (cf. Amos 1:3–2:16). The universal nature of the day of Yahweh will again be Ezekiel’s
concern in one of his oracles against Egypt, in 30:2–9 (see esp. v 3). Yet the chosen corner of Israel would not be exempt from Yahweh’s general destruction of a wicked world in the coming cataclysm. As in the remaining oracles of this chapter, the theme of the day of Yahweh is only broached at the beginning of the oracle and not pursued.

In the grim announcement of the coming end, which does not intrinsically belong to the day-of-Yahweh theme, there seems to have been an intention to evoke both the message of Amos to the Northern Kingdom, “The end has come upon my people Israel” (Amos 8:2), and the wording in the priestly tradition of the flood, “The end of all flesh has come before me” (Gen 6:13; cf. Frymer-Kensky, “Pollution, Purification” 409–11). This implicit double basis helps to explain the transition from a universal reference to a narrower scope.

3 “Now” it was to be Israel’s turn (cf. Hab 2:16). The “end” was to be no impersonal disaster but the outworking of Yahweh’s vehement reaction to an immoral lifestyle. A manifestation of his “anger” would be sent, like his arrows of destruction in 5:16, to ravage the land. It was a just anger, triggered by the behavior of those who lived there, that would thus be exposed for the abhorrent thing it was. The verb rendered “repay for” is literally “lay upon,” implying Yahweh’s effecting of a natural progression from sin to punishment: “sins boomerang, bringing doom upon the perpetrators” (Brownlee 106). “Chastisement is but sin assuming another form, a form which it inevitably takes” (Davidson 45). As in 5:9, “abominations, shocking practices” is used as a general term for wrongdoing committed in the homeland and characterizes it as abhorrent to Yahweh and out of keeping with the covenant relationship.

4 The oracle continues along a mental track parallel with chap. 5, forestalling any appeal to the clemency of Yahweh and pronouncing the wrongdoing so heinous as to be beyond its reach (cf. 5:11 and Comment). The announcement of v 3b must stand. In v 4b, literally, their “abominable deeds will be among you,” surviving and, as it were, haunting the land in the form of their disastrous effects. Greenberg (147) has rendered the verb “fester” and compared the way that blood is described in 24:7: “The guilty evidence … ever-present, will call down retribution on the culprits.” The two clauses of v 4b combine these self-generating consequences with Yahweh’s own intervention, working alongside the natural process and determining its character and timing.

The oracle of judgment culminates in a recognition formula. After the sustained rhetorical address of the homeland, there is now a turning to speak directly to Ezekiel’s fellow exiles. The catastrophe that was to befall their beloved country would be evidence of the reality and nature of Yahweh. When disaster struck, this oracle would enable them to recognize it for what it was, the intervention of the true God and the revelation of his moral authority.

5–7 A renewed messenger formula introduces an oracle similar to the previous one, but the similarities must not be allowed to blind the reader to its distinctive nuances. This version goes its own way in important places, despite its overlap with the first oracle. The announcement of a series of disasters will be repeated in the next oracle, at v 26a. As in v 2, the repeated imminence of “the end” is declared, but now it is reinforced with mention of “doom(?)”, and its target is not first the world and then the homeland but, with speech that is more direct and more plain, “the inhabitants of the land.” The day-of-Yahweh theme emerges more distinctly. “The day” is shorthand for the day of Yahweh: one may compare the short and long references in 30:3 and also the longer rendering of the LXX below in v 10. The nearness of the day is a traditional element in “day of Yahweh” passages (cf. 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
; Zeph 1:7, 14). Also in 30:3 there is a parallel reference to “the time of the nations.” Both there and here the “time” is evidently a fateful time or a set time, the meaning of which is colored by the context as the moment when Yahweh intervenes in climactic judgment. But, unlike the case in v 3, there is not an immediate turning to Yahweh’s direct role. Instead, there is a dwelling on the chaos that would be engendered. If the standard interpretation is correct, there is a contrast between shouts of war and happy shouting at harvest celebrations. Then the overthrow of normal social life, upon which the third oracle will focus, finds an anticipation here. The association of “the day” with “tumult” (םֵּלָעָה) invites comparison with Isa 22:5, where there is mention of Yahweh’s “day of tumult,” with military overtones.

8 The nearness (וְנָא) of the day is now echoed by the imminence (וְאָדַר) of the outpouring of divine wrath. Unlike v 3, “now” simply reinforces the note of imminence. V 8 consists of two lines in regular poetic parallelism, unlike the more rugged first line in v 3, and is made up of phrases that are common in the book. The effect of the two lines, especially of their counterpointed nouns (“my wrath/anger,” “your ways/shocking deeds”), is to draw a logical parallel between gross human wrongdoing and vehement divine reprisal. Stylistically, the parallel is reinforced by wordplay, וּנְה יִזְעַק יִזְעַק “and I will exhaust” and וּנְה “all (your shocking deeds),” a play that we observed earlier at 6:11–12. With their every move, the people of the land were heading for inevitable checkmate in their challenge of God.

9 The echoing of v 3ab in v 8ab begins a three-line duplication of the rest of the first oracle. The denial of clemency and the juxtaposition of divine retribution and natural consequences are repeated, along with the closing recognition formula, which again is seemingly directed to Ezekiel’s immediate audience. Now, however, there is a capping with the blow that Yahweh is to inflict, which, in the present literary context, points forward to Yahweh’s destructive and remorseless blow against Jerusalem in 9:5. It will find a near parallel in 32:15ab, “when I strike all who inhabit it [= Egypt], then they will know that I am Yahweh.” Only by such a harsh blow (cf. 6:14) could the truth about Yahweh be revealed and lesser claims to know his will be discredited.

10, 12a The recognition formula in v 9 indicates that a new oracle begins in v 10, as does the parallel between v 10ab and vv 6–7a. However, the oracle is not formally introduced, unlike the first two oracles. The abruptness shows its literary role as a continuation and elaboration of the earlier oracles concerned with the day of Yahweh. This oracle differs from the previous ones in that there is no rhetorical address of the land or its inhabitants. Instead, there is a descriptive account that speaks with less artifice of the disruption and disaster that “they,” clearly the Judeans, would undergo. As in the previous messages, the day of Yahweh theme is an initial device that has the function of arresting hearers’ attention and is not maintained. The beginning in vv 10 and 12a is similar to the start of the second oracle, while it may be significant that v 11b has elements in common with the end of v 7. A novel feature is that perfect verbs appear in vv 10 and 12a, as opposed to the imminent future aspect of the participial or adjectival forms that have been associated with the day-of-Yahweh clauses earlier. This phenomenon, with which v 14 (and v 20b) should probably be linked, represents a vivid intensification that coexists with the plainer future references in vv 13 and 15–17 (cf. GKC 106n). The last line of v 10 represents new material that is woven into the introduction. The flowering of injustice and budding of insolence are metaphors for the inevitable maturing of deeds into consequences. The notion corresponds to the haunting presence of shocking deeds in vv 4 and 8. These social vices were ripe for reaping in a

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**cf. confer, compare**

**cf. confer, compare**

**cf. confer, compare**

harvest of destruction. The accusation of injustice will be repeated in 9:9, with Jerusalem as its target. The charge of “insolence” is not brought elsewhere in the book. It might be linked with ḫw ḫ “pride” in vv 20, 24 and interpreted as self-assured arrogance that pits itself against God (cf. Deut 1:43; cf. Brownlee 115). However, the poetic parallelism and comparison with 9:9 and also 7:23 leave us in little doubt that it refers to willful infringement of human rights. One may compare the use of the cognate verb in Exod 21:14 for “a premeditated disregard of the law, a presumptuous offense against law and morality” (J. Scharbert, TDOT 4:48).

12ab–13 Normal life would be brought to a halt by the disruptive advent of the day of Yahweh. The example of a commercial transaction is explored (cf. Isa 24:2). Buying and selling, along with the contrary emotions of the excitement of getting something new and of the reluctance to part with familiar property, would prove pointless. The sentiment is a variation of the prophetic futility curse, such as building houses and not living in them (Amos 4:11) or sowing but not reaping (Mic 6:15). Here the initial action is represented obliquely, but dramatically, as an exhortation. The consequent frustration, in terms of an inability to capitalize on the initiated action, is capped with an explanation that death would overwhelm both buyer and seller! This fate is justified with the general charge of “iniquity.”

14–16 The topic of coming death, broached in v 13bb, is expounded in this next section. Again there is vivid use of the past tense initially, to underline the certainty of the event, and the style of the futility curse is ominously continued in a new context of military conflict (cf. Amos 5:3 and S. M. Paul, Amos [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991] 161). The trilogy of doom—sword, plague, and famine—used before in 5:12; 6:11–12, reappears in a format of siege warfare, as in 5:12. Yahweh’s military agents who were to wield the sword would be backed by fifth columnists, famine and plague, which would ravage Jerusalem from within. Then, somewhat as in 6:12, the chance of escape is countered by a further onslaught of death. As in Amos 5:18, vain hopes are quashed by the illustration of escaping from a lion or bear only to be bitten by a snake, so here a frying-pan-to-fire experience expresses the theme of wholesale and inescapable death. Once more, as in v 13, its justice is grounded in the general charge of “iniquity,” for which it was to be a fair reprisal.

17–18 The closing section of the first half of the oracle reverts to an earlier stage, before death has wiped out the community, but maintains the same emphasis on comprehensiveness. The convention of a reaction to bad news is employed here by means of a series of formulaic terms (cf. 21:12[7]; Isa 13:7–8; Jer 6:24; cf. Hillers, ZAW 77 [1965] 86–90). It reflects as in a mirror the severity of the coming disaster. General demoralization and loss of physical control would occur, in reaction to the social breakdown caused by invasion. Moreover, mourning rites of sackcloth and shaved heads would give expression to the people’s sense of humiliation and dread (cf. 27:31): v 18 artistically weaves external rites and negative emotions in a chiastic order.

19–20 This initial section of the second half of the oracle matches vv 12–13 in the first. Now,
however, the upheaval in Judean society is illustrated in terms of a drastic rejection of silver and gold. The sentiment seems to be an echo of material from two “day of Yahweh” passages, Zeph 1:18, “Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of Yahweh’s wrath,” and Isa 2:20, “they will throw away their silver idols and their gold idols.” Indeed, the reference of an alert glossator to the first reminiscence has been preserved in the MT at v 19a. A dire situation from which even money cannot buy escape and the spiritual declension marked by the illegitimate use of divine images are dramatically combined as consequence and cause. The second element corresponds to the phrase “each for his iniquity” in v 13. In fact, the term “iniquity” recurs here in v 19, in the phrase “stumbling block of iniquity,” which is characteristically employed in the book of Ezekiel to refer to the cultic use of images (see 14:3–4, 7; 44:12; cf. 18:30). Here it is used as an anticipatory summary of the sin of v 20.

The priestly term “menstruation, unclean thing” is a strong expression, such as especially a priest would use, for that which is extremely impure. Menstrual blood was regarded as a major ritual contaminant, though it had no immoral connotations (cf. Frymer-Kensky, “Pollution, Purification” 401–4). Here it functions as a metaphor for that which is abhorrent and so undesired. It expresses a sense of despair and a situation of crisis. There seems to be an underlying thought that food was no longer available, so that money was no longer of use. This scenario is viewed as an indirect result of human wrongdoing in the cultic area. A perversion of that which is precious would eventually make it precious no longer. Yahweh’s intervention would radically change the Judeans’ view of their misused wealth. The divine ratification of the human assessment is a parallel of sorts to the combination of an automatic process of doom and its expediting at Yahweh’s hands, in the first two oracles. God was to be secretly at work in the human situation, using history for his own moral ends.

21–24 A plain statement of this retributive providence in operation is made in this next section, which alternates divine causation and human aggression. As in Hos 2:10–11(8–9), misuse of Yahweh’s gifts would result in forfeiture of them. There is an oscillation of referents for the third plural pronouns and verbs, “they/them/their.” Mainly, they relate to the human invaders, clearly the neo-Babylonian army, which had invaded Judah earlier, in 597 B.C. but they also refer to the “they” of the earlier parts of the oracle, the Judeans. Yahweh is revealed as on the side of the new human factor and so as the enemy of his people. The grim threat that he would avert his face from them runs counter to his usual benevolent grace, when he lifted up his face upon them with a smile of blessing (Num 6:26; cf. Ezek 4:3a and the Comment). The withdrawal of covenant favor corresponds to the lack of clemency avowed in the two earlier oracles, at vv 4 and 9.

The divine commission to aliens and comparative barbarians who would be no respecters of Judean culture or religion finds mention also in the oracles against Tyre (28:7) and Egypt (30:11; 31:11–12), with reference, explicit or implicit, to the neo-Babylonians. In view of the mention of desecration, it is silver and gold objects of worship that are to be abandoned to the enemy. In line with the accusation in v 23b, but in inverse order, first the invasion of the capital is envisioned, in vv 21–23a, and then that of the land in general, in v 24, as the plural term “sanctuaries” suggests. More precisely, Yahweh’s “treasury” appears to be the temple in Jerusalem, in which images were to be found (cf. 8:10), as well as in the local shrines where Yahweh was worshiped (cf. 6:6, 13). It features as the repository of precious
objects, here specifically of the silver and gold images of v 20.

The intervening accusation of v 23b, which acts as a pivot in this section, corresponds to the accusation of “iniquity” in v 16, at the end of the parallel section of the first half of the oracle. The charges of murder and social oppression that found no resolution in the lawcourts (cf. 9:9) represent the second main sin of Judah in Ezekiel’s eyes (cf. 8:16–17). The final term, מלח “violence,” “is cold-blooded and unscrupulous infringement of the personal rights of others, motivated by greed and hate and often making use of physical violence and brutality” (H. Haag, *TDOT* 4:482). The sudden shift from one charge to the other shows how closely connected they were as violations of Israel’s joint obligations to Yahweh, in the realms of cult and society. It is made clear that not only cultic aberrations defiled the temple: severe threats to human life also had a polluting effect on the sanctuary at the center of Israel (cf. 5:11 and the *Comment*). The sacrilege that was to be committed by the invaders at Yahweh’s command only rationalized a state of affairs already present. It would expose the breach that the Judeans themselves had caused in the sanctity of the temple. The permitted desecration of not only the images but also the temple would ratify its contamination at Judah’s hands.

As we observed above, v 24 seems to refer to the invasion of the land as a whole, which would include the taking over of homes in Judean towns and villages. In 24:21 מעלוגת “their source of pride and power” (see Note 24.b.); cf. Lev 26:32, though no intertextuality is evident here) is applied to the temple, as the proud symbol of Yahweh’s positive relation to Judah and an inviolable bastion that gave protection to Jerusalem (see Ezekiel 20–48 61). Here too the parallelism indicates a cultic application, but now with reference to the many local shrines that came under attack in chap. 6. The juxtaposition of that which is sacred (到底是 “sanctuary”) and divinely caused desecration (דעם), polar opposites, calls into question the religious faith of Judah as a source of hope.

25–27a This section corresponds to the third section of the first half of the oracle (vv 17–18). It too features the convention of the community’s reaction to bad news, although in less rigid a format than was used there. Again it seems to reflect the intensity of the disaster that was to come. Within the literary unit, the coming of anguish and disaster is an echo of the coming of “the end” in v 2 and of “the end” and “doom(?)” in v 6. More obviously there is a resumption of the initial coming of “doom(?)” and “the time” in vv 10–11, at the outset of this oracle. If מעלוגת is the outcome of Yahweh’s smiling face (Num 6:25–26), the result of the averting of his gaze (v 22) is a lack of such peace. Zimmerli (209) has observed that the succession of bad news finds graphic illustration in Job 1–2. Recourse to religious authorities would fail, whether to prophets for an oracle of salvation or to priests for a ruling as to religious standing or possible reinstatement (cf. Jer 18:18; Lam 2:9; Amos 8:11–12). Behind their silence lies the silence of God himself (Lamparter 66 n. 26). Civil authorities, represented by the elders, would have no policy for success (cf. Lam 2:10). The latter theme is continued in v 27ab: the

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare


cf. confer, compare

*24.b. For the MT ממע ולוגת “(the pride of) the strong” the LXX presupposes ממע ולוגת “their (proud) might,” which accords with usage elsewhere in Ezekiel (24:21; 30:6, 18; 33:28).


cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
king, here called “head of state” (cf. Ezekiel 20–48 194; Seitz, Theology in Conflict 121–31), would have no magic answers (cf. 2 Kgs 19:1). No wonder then that his subjects, “the people of the land” (cf. Ezekiel 20–48 253), were to be demoralized and irresolute.

No answers would be forthcoming, because sufficient answer could be found in their experience of disaster. It would be their only clue to Yahweh’s revelation, a revelation by which he showed himself not their patron but their judge and prosecutor. It was not the answer they wanted, but lack of any other would testify to its truth. In fact, Judah’s abhorrent lifestyle, including radical injustice that created its own standards (contrast 44:24), ruled out any other answer. The grim message at the close of the two preceding oracles (vv 3–4, 8–9) is reiterated with unremitting force.

**Explanation**

This is a frightening chapter. It consists of a group of poetic oracles intended to convince Ezekiel’s fellow hostages in the Babylonian heartland that their hopes of returning soon to their homes and families in far-off Judah would not materialize. Their own perception of Yahweh was positive and reassuring. They badly needed to learn that his purposes, grounded in his moral character, were necessarily hostile and ominous (vv 4, 9). The message is driven home in this literary setting by repetition, by using two versions of a basic oracle and capping it with another that reinforced its sentiments at greater length. Each oracle opens with an echo of the tradition of the day of Yahweh. This nightmarish tradition was employed by the prophets to evoke fear in the hearts of heedless or optimistic hearers. It spoke of the sinister intervention of God in disaster. In the first pair of oracles, this tradition is reinforced with forecasts of “the end,” with ominous reminiscence of the message of Amos about the fall of the Northern Kingdom and of the primeval flood that blotted out the world. “This is no cautionary warning but a promise of sure extinction. If there is to be a future for Israel, it must come as a new revelation. Here there is none” (Vawter 56). The end of all things was at hand, and it was time for judgment to begin with the people of God (cf. 1 Pet 4:7, 17). Half a century later, Second Isaiah could cancel out the potential threat of the flood (Isa 54:9–10). Not so Ezekiel, in the first half of his ministry. Jerusalem had to fall. The national existence of Judah was to be terminated in a cataclysm of judgment.

The cause of such judgment lay not in the mysterious counsels of God but in the behavior of the people of Judah. It was their chickens that were to come home to roost. It was their covenant-violating “ways” and “shocking deeds” (vv 3–4, 8–9) that would generate an automatic doom. Their “injustice” and “violence” were to ripen into a baneful crop (v 10). From this perspective, Yahweh’s role was to oil the machinery of cause and effect and to ensure that it worked efficiently. His judicial punishment was the natural and logical outcome of the covenant people’s crimes committed against God and against each other. “Do not be deceived,” Ezekiel has to proclaim, like Paul; “God is not mocked, for whatever individuals sow they will also reap” (Gal 6:7). This was not to deny the personal, passionate involvement of God in the retributive process. His “wrath” and “anger” (vv 3, 8) were triggered by abhorrence of their faithlessness, which shut the door on his clemency and favor (vv 4, 9, 22).

The third oracle vividly explores the coming disaster in a double presentation of three scenarios: the breakdown of the norms of Judean society, widespread death that overtook even refugees or material destruction that reached as far as the temple, and the general consternation of the Judeans in the
homeland, bereft of help from both religious and secular leaders. A society that did nothing about serious violations of the human rights of its members was doomed. A religious institution in which dishonor was done to the basic revelation of the God whose worship was professed was not worth preserving. As K. Koch (The Prophets [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984] 2:92) has commented,

Wherever a group of people continually engages in evil behaviour, deadly mechanisms begin to interlock. At the bottom of the pyramid come the spheres of act and corresponding destiny, which are now consummated. Above them are the active powers such as pestilence, famine and sword. Higher up still are the entities of wrath and white heat. And finally comes the burning-glass itself—the personal focus in Yahweh who, in his desire to be known, intervenes in history with ardent zeal and without compassion.

This chapter forms the climax of a series of oracles initiated in chap. 5. It closes the first section of the book, a section that began with the revelation in theophany of the divine judge and the commissioning of his prophet of judgment and then proceeded from sign-acts of the coming fall of Jerusalem to an interpretative oracle of judgment and then to messages of doom for the whole land. Cassuto (“Arrangement” 230–31) has observed that the hinge between chaps. 6 and 7 is the divine anger of 6:12 and 7:3, 8. There are further links with chaps. 5–6, though allusions to Lev 26 are not maintained. As in 6:11–14, there is no reference to exile as a further punishment, unlike chaps. 4 and 5 and 6:1–10. Boadt (“Rhetorical Strategies” 188–89) has traced the links with chaps. 5 and 6: the trilogy of disaster—sword, plague, and famine—that runs through the series of oracles (5:12; 6:11; 7:15), along with the denial of clemency (5:11; 7:4, 9) and the recognition formula (5:13; 6:7, 10, 13, 14; 7:4, 9, 27). The prevalence of the last recurring element reflects the necessity of quashing the hopes of Ezekiel’s fellow hostages for a speedy return to their homeland. Behind such hopes lay a conviction that God was on their side and ready to answer their prayers. Ezekiel’s message of the coming defeat of capital and country revealed the stark truth regarding God’s stance. Judah had put itself outside his mercy and within his punitive reach. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:31). Each community of faith in every age must add its sober amen and, forewarned, stay out of the trap into which Judah fell.

The Temple Vision (8:1–11:25)

Bibliography


Bib Biblica
CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
SBLMS Society of Biblical Literature [SBL] Monograph Series
FS Festschrift, volume written in honor of
BZ Biblische Zeitschrift
JTS Journal of Theological Studies
AnBib Analecta biblica (Rome: PBI)
FS Festschrift, volume written in honor of
JANESCU Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University
JSS Journal of Semitic Studies
VT Vetus Testamentum
IEJ Israel Exploration Journal
VT Vetus Testamentum
VT Vetus Testamentum
TQ Theologische Quartalschrift
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
HR History of Religions
SBS Stuttgarter Bibelstudien (Stuttgart/Wurzburg: Echter/KBW)

Translation

1 In the sixth year, on the fifth of the sixth month, I was sitting at home with the Judean elders
sitting down in front of me, when Yahweh's hand descended on me there. I had a visionary sighting of a figure that looked human. From his waist down there was fire, while from the waist up there was a sort of shining glow, like gleaming amber. He stretched out what looked like a hand and grasped my hair by the forelock. Then the spirit lifted me up into the air and brought me in a divine vision to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north-facing gateway, where there was

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1.a. The LXX has “fifth,” probably by mechanical assimilation to the fifth day (Cooke 89, following Toy). Smend (49) initiated a preference for the reading of the LXX on the ground that the MT has postponed the date to make room for the periods of 3:16; 4:4–6, but see Zimmerli’s discussion (216).

1.b. The MT adds ymda “Lord,” in contradiction of the regular formulaic usage: cf., e.g., 1:3. See Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556, who has found here a possible secondary intrusion.

1.c. There is a variation of the common verb in this formulation, yht w“and … came,” as in 1:3, in line with which the LXX and MSKen 150 standardized here (Hölscher, Dichter 69 n. 1). “Ken” in Zimmerli 216 is an error in the English edition.

1.d. The LXX regularly omits “there” in this formulation: see Note 1:3.d.°

2.a. The LXX’s underlying vya “man” for va “fire” is generally preferred, as corresponding to µda “human being” in 1:26: the description in v 2 clearly echoes 1:26–27. The MT probably suffered assimilation to va later. Greenberg (166) has noted in favor of the change that it provides an antecedent for the following personal suffixes. The LXX also lacks representation of the preceding h r mk “like the appearance of.” At first sight the MT might accord with µda h r mk t wmd “a figure like the appearance of a human being” in 1:26 or represent assimilation to the longer phrase (Zimmerli, 216); but it is more likely that the MT attests an addition made after the corruption to va “fire,” relating to the secondary v a h r mk “like the appearance of fire” in 1:27ab (Herrmann 51), where the whole figure is envisioned as enveloped in fire, rather than only the lower half.

2.b. The MT wynt m h a r mm “from the appearance of his loins” here (but significantly not in v 2b) seems to have suffered assimilation to 1:27. Probably the phrase was a comparative comment, meant to indicate that 1:27 so read in both cases. The comment displaced wynt mm “from his loins,” attested by the LXX and also found in MSKen 96.

2.c. The LXX° exhibits a shorter text, lacking representation of ÿf k r h z “a shining glow like the gleam of,” but it seems to be the result of an arbitrary abbreviation (cf. Zimmerli 217): the distinctive r h z seems inconceivable as a gloss (Cornill 221; cf. M. Görg, TDOT 4:46).

2.d. For the rendering, see the Comment on 1:4. The longer form h m v j h may be due to its climactic placing in a grandiose description (Joüon 93i).

3.a. Heb. t ymbt “structure” is unusual in this context: it appears to have developed the sense of form or shape, akin to its use to refer to images (cf. BDB 125b).

3.b. Lit. “between earth and sky.”

3.c. For the pl, which is characteristic of Ezekiel, see Note 1:1.c.°, and for the phrase, see the Comment on 1:1.
situated the outrageous image, which invokes divine outrage. There too was to be found the manifestation of the presence of the God of Israel, just as it had been revealed to me in the plain.

"Human one," he told me, "look north." When I did so, I noticed on the north side of the gate the altar of that outrageous image, at the point of entry. "Human one," he told me, "just look at..."
what people are doing! They are engaging here in extremely shocking rites. by functioning as they are away from my sanctuary. But you will go on to observe rites even more shocking."

Then he brought me to the entrance to the court, where I saw a hole in the wall. "Human one," he told me, "break through the wall." When I had done so, there was a means of entry.

6.a. Joüon 161b has observed that all the instances of יָרָא "Have you seen?" in the OT have an exclamatory nuance and that Jerome rendered with emphatic statements. This observation, which relates to vv 12, 15, and 17, surely also applies to this case, where a ptcp is employed.

6.b. The MT adds "(in) which the community of Israel (are engaging here)," unrepresented in the LXX*. Superficially the addition accords with the phrasing in vv 9, 12, 17 (cf. v 13), but one then expects an article with עָרָבֹת עָרָבֹת [עָרָבֹת "great abominations," such as appears in vv 9 and 17 (Cooke 101). The English versions surreptitiously render as if the article were there. The addition sought to provide a parallel to the other verses and was inspired by references to the community of Israel in vv 10–12.

6.c. Is the implicit subj “they” or “Yahweh”? The latter is preferred by modern versions; and it is found in the Vg and followed by some scholars (Ewald 244; et al.). It looks ahead to Yahweh’s subsequent abandonment of the sanctuary. However, Cooke (101), like Kraetzschmar (89) before him, admitted that the lack of an explicit subj to this end is “particularly harsh.” It is more natural to continue the human subj with LXX Syr. Tg. אֲדֹ� אֲדֹ (Bertholet [1897] 46; et al.; see especially Zimmerli 218, 238). Greenberg (169) has observed that elsewhere מִמְּשָׁה מַשָּׁה "be far from” has a human subj in relation to God. See the Comment.

6.d. The adj has a comparative force in this context, as the parallel v 15b makes clear (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:26). The LXX stylistically renders דְּהֵל דְּהֵל "you will yet again" by הֵל "further" here and in vv 13 and 15.

7.a. Heb. אֵל אֵל "one" has virtually the force of an indefinite article.

7.b. The LXX* does not represent v 7b. Greenberg (169) has suggested that it originated as a variant of v 8bb, with אֵל אֵל "hole" having the meaning “hiding place,” and referred to a secret meeting place. The omission has been made part of a larger hypothesis concerning the original text, that the passage about the second sin moved from Ezekiel’s being brought to the entrance of the court (v 7a) directly to the divine order to enter (v 9), with which the prophet complied and saw the walls of the open court covered with pictures of idols (Zimmerli 218–19, 240; cf. Cornill 223–24; Fohrer 49; Wevers 81). This simple narrative was complicated into a secret rite by the insertion of v 8, presumably at the pre-LXX stage of the tradition, under the influence of the digging through the wall in 12:5, 7, and by the addition of v 7b at a post-LXX stage. A major plank in this theory is the supposed omission of יָרָא יָרָא יָרָא "in darkness" from the LXX in v 12, for which see below. The presumed shorter text has the advantage of conforming more closely to the structure of the other scenarios of sin. The first scenario progresses from specification of the place to which Ezekiel is brought (v 3 // v 7) to a divine order to observe (v 5a // v 9 ). In the third and fourth scenarios there is a direct movement from a specification of place (vv 14a, 16a) to a description of the sin (vv 14b, 16a–b // vv 5b, 10–11). There is a relative uniformity that offers no counterpart to v 8; but its very relativity should make the reader cautious about regarding this extra element as secondary. The emphasis on secrecy appears to echo an OT motif associated with venturing outside the norms of Yahwistic worship (see the Comment). Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 149–50) interpreted vv 7b–8 in a feasible way, which in fact coincides with Jerome’s exegesis (95–96): the prophet is told to enlarge the existing hole until it becomes an opening big enough to squeeze through. He explained the omission of v 7b in the LXX* in terms of the translator’s missing the distinction between אֵל אֵל אֵל “hole” and אֵל אֵל אֵל “opening” and regarding them as synonyms.
through,” he told me, “and observe the shocking rites a in which people are engaging here.” 10 I went through, and there before my eyes was every a kind of horrible object of worship b and all the idols of the community of Israel, engraved c all over the wall. 11 Seventy of the elders of the community of Israel were standing in front of the engravings among them was standing Jaazaniah son of Shaphan a—each holding a censer in his hand, and incense fumes b were wafting up. 12 Then

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a 8.a. The LXX* does not represent either instance of Ψαγβ “through the wall,” but in v 10 renders Ψαγ θιλ “on the wall” as ετ έτ ου “on it.” Zimmerli (219) supposed that the translator did not understand Ψαγ, but it is certainly translated in 12:5, 7; 13:12, 14, 15. The most natural explanation of the evidence is that the pronoun in v 10 presupposes a rendering in v 8 and that we are to envision in v 8a an inner-Greek omission by homoeoteleuton of ετ έτ ου (after ηυξυν “dig”), the rendering in 12:5. In v 8b the phrase was deliberately left untranslated as otiose in Greek. Balla (Festschrift 8), followed by Fohrer (ZAW 63 [1951] 38) and others, took over Herntrich’s notion that Ψαγ “through the wall” was introduced from 12:5, 7. Since in Ezek 12:5, 7, 12, the LXX renders Ψάγ θιλ “dig” by διορυτήω, while in the LXX of the Pentateuch ου ουτιοω stands for ι ι “dig,” Balla supposed that here LXX ηυξυν “dig” and Υφιξα “I dug” imply an underlying Ψαγ (rather than Ψάγ), which should properly be related to another stem, ΙΨ α, meaning “search for, look around for.” (HALAT 327a considers the meaning “search for” to be a metaphorical extension of “dig” within the semantic range of the one verb Ψαγ.) Balla’s linguistic differentiation can hardly bear the weight he attaches to it. One may compare the way in which ΙΨ έδα “border” is rendered by the verb διορίζω “borders” in 47:18, while in 47:20 it is translated οίζω. This variation, which Ziegler (LXX 324) unnecessarily obliterates, is especially pertinent in the light of McGregor’s contention (Greek Text 157–81) that the same translator was responsible for chaps. 1–25 and 40–48.

b 10.b. The MT has a longer text, “every representation of reptile and animal [h mh b w c mr t ynb t], detestable thing.” The intervening phrase is not present in the LXX*; its awkward position seems to demonstrate its secondary character. It probably originated in an exegetically correct annotation that cited Deut 4:17–18 in a list of prohibited images. Perhaps the annotator also had in mind Lev 11 and envisioned the artistic representations as consisting of ritually unclean creatures (אכז). Ackerman (Under Every Green Tree 43 n. 224) has proposed that here unclean food is in view, eaten at a marzeµα, a West Semitic religious feast. The switch from sg אכז “that which is detestable” to pl יול “idols” could support this proposal.

c 10.c. Heb. Ψαγ is better taken not as a pual ptep but as a noun, “engraved work,” here used predicatively (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:26; Zimmerli 219, with reference to 23:14; 1 Kgs 6:35).

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a 9.a. The MT adds ιρ “the evil(s),” which is not represented in the LXX*. As in 6:11, it seems to be a comparative gloss, in this case probably harking back to 6:11.

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he told me, “Just look, human one, at what the elders of the community of Israel are doing in the dark, each at the recess of his image! They justify with the sentiments that Yahweh cannot see, Yahweh has left the country.” He also told me, “You have yet to observe rites even more shocking, in which people are engaging.”

Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gateway leading to Yahweh’s temple, where I found women sitting, bewailing Tammuz. “Just look at that!” he told me. “But you have yet to observe rites even more shocking than seen hitherto.”

He brought me into the inner court of Yahweh’s temple, and by the entrance to the nave, between the porch and the altar, I found about twenty-five men with their backs to Yahweh’s nave and their faces turned to the east, kowtowing in worship to the sun. “Just look at that, human one!” he told me. “It was evidently not enough for the Judean community, after engaging

b 11.b. It is possible that “cloud” is a gloss on the hapax legomenon “perfumed smoke” (Bertholet [1897] 48; et al.): cf. its use relating to incense in Lev 16:13. The LXX* renders with only one term; however, the pair may deliberately have been translated thus.

a 12.a. The LXX* (cf. Syr. Vg) seems to have rendered “in the dark, each one in the rooms of his image” as “each one of them in their secret bedroom.” “Bedroom” implies which the Tg also reflects. So the ancient versions attest an exegetical tradition, which may have arisen from relating “in the dark” to “bed covering” (Isa 28:20). Scholars have endlessly copied each other in stating that the LXX* lacks an equivalent for “in the dark.” However, reflects “darkness”: cf. “hide” for the verb “make dark” in Job 38:2 LXX and the sense of secrecy for “dark place” in Isa 29:15. For the change in word order, see in principle G. Marquis, Textus 13 (1986) 59–84. The pl in place of sg, is due to the ambiguity of “each, every”: see Greenberg 170. The term seems to have the sense of a small chapel or recess. The notion that the cult “took place also in individual homes” (Zimmerli 242) is not a natural interpretation of the text (cf. Hitzig 61).

b 12.b. Lit. “because.”

c 12.c. The MT adds “us,” which is lacking in the parallel 9:9, where the present claims are expressly quoted (cf. Ps 94:7), and is not represented in the LXX*.

a 14.a. For “the women” it is sometimes urged that be read, but idiomatically the article can be used thus (GKC 126q; Joüon 137n).

a 16.a. For the acc of place, see Cooke 103; Joüon 126h. Contrast 11:1.

b 16.b. The LXX* has “twenty,” which may better suit “about,” as a round number. However, Greenberg (172) has observed that twenty-five is a favorite number of Ezekiel’s.

c 16.c. An incomprehensible oddly appears in place of the expected “worshiping,” which sixteen MSS read (Cornill 226). “A marginal note ‘and you worship’ may have been written as a catchword for worship of other gods, alluding to such texts as Deut 11:16; Josh 23:16” (Allen in Brownlee 127). Then it was combined with the standard text. Or was the contaminating factor a comment “about to be destroyed,” inspired by their fate in 9:6 and by the term “destroying” that runs through chap. 9? The MT adds “to the east,” which the LXX* does not reflect. It seems unnecessarily repetitious and may have been a vertical dittograph, assuming a fifteen-letter line.
shocking rites as they have already engaged in here, to fill the country with violence. Now they have gone further in provoking me to anger:*b here they are putting branches to their noses:*c 18My reaction will be one of wrath. I will give no look of pity and show no compassion. However loudly they cry out for me to hear, I will not listen to them.”:*a

9:1 Then he cried loudly in my hearing, “Come here,*a you who are to be responsible for the city’s fate,*b with your weapons of destruction in your*c hands.” *d 2 There appeared six men, coming from the

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* a 17.a. Usually the Heb. construction with ימ is regarded as logically redundant (see GKC 67t; Cooke 103; Joüon 141i). However, both here and in Isa 49:6 it may be explained in terms of time, with the sense “after.” That which is ironically regarded as trifling is not the previous three cultic offenses but the community’s separate social ills. These ills are introduced by כי “that,” and mention of them reverts to 7:23 (and also anticipates 9:9). The present, fourth cultic sin is regarded as worse than the three earlier ones and the social sin. The deletion of כי ימ יכ “that they have filled the country with violence,” proposed by Gunkel (Schöpfung 142 n.), has won some scholarly support, but there is no textual support for it.

b 17.b. The LXX* has no counterpart for this clause, but it fits well in leading up to the sin of sins (Cooke 100). The first verb ב והו “and they have gone further” echoes ב והו “you will go further” in v 15b. The following verb has a structural role in the context (see the Comment).

c 17.c. In the Masoretic tradition, מ פ א “their nose(s)” (see Note 9:1.d.*) is regarded as one of the tiqqune sopherim, deliberate scribal corrections intended to remove objectionable expressions referring to God, as a replacement for מ פ א “my nose.” McKane (“Observations” 71–75) has accepted this tradition. However, the ancient versions know nothing of this interpretation. The LXX “like those turning up noses, sneering” implies the MT, as does the Tg “bringing shame in front of them.” Accordingly, the tradition appears to have originated remarkably late. It seems to have developed from particular interpretations of הרמא (pruned) branch.” See McCarthy’s discussion (Tiqqune Sopherim 91–97) and the Comment.

a 18.a. The LXX* leaves v 18b unrepresented, and it is often taken as having originated in a repetition of 9:1. On the other hand, it could easily have been lost by homoeoarcton (Greenberg 175). It functions as a literary hinge between sections: cf. Ezra 3:13 (cf. D. J. Clines, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984] 71).

b 18.b. Heb. מができ is capable of three interpretations. In the context, it is best taken as qal impv, “come here” (= “come,” NAB; “draw near,” NRSV), with an unusual vocalization (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:27; et al., with reference to Ps 69:19): cf. GKC 46d; Joüon 44c. It is no objection to this understanding that a third person reference occurs in v 1b: it is idiomatic with מ יכ “each one” in second person contexts, whether future (Amos 4:3) or imperative (1 Sam 25:13; Zech 7:10; 8:17; cf. Joüon 147d). The form could alternatively be piel impv, “bring here” (NIV), with an indefinite subj referring to unseen attendants, which Greenberg (175), among others, prefers. A third possibility is to take as qal pf, “(they) have come” (= “Here they come,” REB), for which Cornill (226) and others have opted: this has in its favor the support of LXX Vg but little else. The ancient versions probably missed the idiomatic nature of מ in.

c 18.c. Heb. מ镦 in the pl elsewhere has the concrete sense of “overseers, persons in charge.” Such a personal sense is presupposed by v 1b (Hitzig 65). The LXX rendered “punishment,” and there may indeed be ambiguity in the term: cf. the rendering “executioners” offered by Cooke (103) and Greenberg (174). In the translation above, “fate” is an endeavor to exploit this feature. To take the term as an intensive pl (“punishment,” Fohrer ZAW 63 [1951] 38) or as hinting at the plurality of the executioners (Zimmerli 223, who renders “the woes of punishment”) would each be a less likely option.
direction of the upper, north-facing\(^a\) gateway,\(^b\) all holding cudgels. With them was another man, clothed\(^c\) in linen, who had a writing kit\(^d\) at his waist. They came and stood beside the bronze altar. \(^3\) Now the manifestation of the presence of the God of Israel had ascended from the cherubim-structure\(^e\) it rested on and moved to\(^f\) the threshold\(^g\) of the temple.

He cried to the man who was clothed in linen and had the writing kit at his waist; \(^4\) Yahweh\(^a\) told him, \(^b\) “Pass through the city of Jerusalem\(^c\) and put a cross on the foreheads of the men who have been moaning and groaning\(^d\) over the shocking rites perpetrated within it.” \(^5\) To the others he said, in my hearing, “Pass through the city behind him and start killing, with no\(^a\) look\(^b\) of pity nor show

\(^1.c.\) Lit. “his”: see Note 1.a\(^a\), above.
\(^1.d.\) The idiomatic sg is to be rendered pl. “Such words as hand, head …, where the organ or thing is common to a number of persons, are generally used in the singular” (A. B. Davidson, Hebrew Syntax [Edinburgh: Clark, 1896] 17 remark 4). V lb is often taken as secondary, a variant of the clause at the end of v 2\(^a\) (Cornill 226–27; et al.), but it has a firm place both in the textual tradition and in the structure of chap. 9, in which \(^t\) V lb “destruction, destroying” plays a major role.

\(^2.a.\) Heb. \(\text{הָנַפּ מִן} \text{ ו} \text{ א}\) “which is oriented” is a strange construction. Usually in Ezekiel either \(\text{ל} \text{ ו} \text{ א} \text{ ו} \text{ נַפּ} \text{ ה} \text{ שַׁעַר}\) “whose face” or \(\text{הָנַפּ} \text{ ה} \text{ הָנַפּ} \text{ ה}\) “which faces” (cf. 8:3) is found.

\(^2.b.\) For the idiomatic lack of article, cf. 2 Chr 23:20 and see GKC 126w.

\(^2.c.\) The pass ptcp is here and in v 3 continued with an acc as a retention of a second acc, but in v 11 with a genitive: see GKC 116k, 121d.

\(^2.d.\) Heb. \(\text{ל} \text{ ס} \text{ ק}\) is a loanword from Egy. \(\text{גֶּפֶט} “scribe’s palette”\): see T. O. Lambdin, JAOS 73 (1953) 154. LXX \(\text{זָוֲבָה}\) “belt” is a rendering that has hitherto baffled scholars: it is evidently the result of confusion with \(\text{גֶּפֶט}\) “band” (cf. 13:18, 20).

\(^3.a.\) The sg \(\text{בָּרֶק}\) \(\text{ל}\) “cherub” here appears to refer to a single, comprehensive entity, like the sg \(\text{הַנַּפּ} \text{ שַׁעַר}\) “wheel structure” in 10:2, etc. The usage seems to reflect differentiation in meaning from the pl forms elsewhere in the account: see the Comment.

\(^3.b.\) The preposition is used in a pregnant sense; see GKC 119ee.

\(^3.c.\) See HALAT 588b. Zimmerli (224, 226, 251) followed KB 553a in rendering “podium” but later abandoned this meaning, in Ezekiel 2 490. Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 129 n. 4) observed that it would be difficult to jump over a podium (Zeph 1:9; cf. 1 Sam 5:4–5).

\(^3.a.\) The LXX\(^*\) omitted the divine name, doubtless regarding it as otiose in the context. Greenberg (176) has found an interesting parallel in Lev 1:1: after a reference to the glory of Yahweh (in Exod 40:35, interrupted by vv 36–38), the divine subj is specified not with the next verb but with the one following. This gradual identification prevented an understanding of the two figures in terms of contrast. R. Rendtorff (Leviticus [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985] 22) has drawn attention to a further example of this phenomenon in Exod 24:16 + 25:1. Ohnesorge (Jahwe gestaltet 284 n. 4) has correctly noted the general rule that Yahweh is not specified as subj in the vision narratives, but this instance should be retained as a special case.

\(^4.b.\) For the defective writing in K, see Notes 33:13.b\(^*\), 40:6.b\(^*\).

\(^4.c.\) Lit. “through the city, through Jerusalem.” The LXX\(^*\) lacks the first phrase, but \(\text{ל} \text{ מ} \text{ א}\) “the city” is a key term in the account. The phrase may have been lost by parablepsis (Wevers 85). The second phrase is often regarded as an explanatory gloss (Cornill 227; et al.), in which case the gloss displaced the original phrase in the LXX, while the MT exhibits a conflated text.

\(^4.d.\) The pair of verbs is alliterative, \(\text{ל} \text{ נָא} \text{ ו} \text{ נַא}\) (cf. 6:14 and Note 6:14.a\(^*\)).

\(^5.a.\) K \(\text{ל} \text{ א}\) “upon” is a slip for Q \(\text{ל} \text{ א}\) “not,” a mechanical copy of the two cases in v 4b.
of compassion.  

You are to assassinate and destroy the old together with young people of both sexes, and women together with children. But do not go near anyone marked with a cross. Begin at my sanctuary.” They began with the men in front of the temple. “Desecrate the temple,” he told them, “filling the courts with the dead. Go out and start killing in the city.”

During the latter killing, while I was left alone, I threw myself down on my face and shouted out, “Oh no, Lord Yahweh! Do you mean to destroy all Israel who are left, while you drench Jerusalem with your fury?” He answered me, “The guilt of the community of Israel is quite
They have excused such behavior with the sentiments that Yahweh has left the country and so cannot see. My reaction will be that I shall lack any look of pity and show no compassion. I rule them accountable for their conduct. Then I noticed the man who was clothed in linen and had the writing kit at his waist, reporting back. “I have acted in accord with your command,” he said. I had a visionary sighting of what looked like lapis lazuli above the platform that was over the heads of the cherubim: it was in the form of a throne above them. He told the man clothed in linen the following: “Go in between the rotary system, under the cherubim, and fill your cupped

9.b. The LXX adds “and uncleanness,” which represents an incorporated variant χάμον (cf. Cornill 229) for חק “injustice,” via a metathesized חמח (Hitzig 68). The variant reflects Jerusalem’s “uncleanness” in 22:15; 24:13. Within the Masoretic tradition, there is a variant סמ גז “violence” (see BHK), inspired by 7:23 (cf. 8:17). Cornill insisted that the first term in the LXX, אֲבֵדיאֶבֶן “injustice,” represented סמ גז, but the latter is rendered אֲבֵדיאֶבֶן in 7:23; 8:17 and אֲבֵדיאֶבֶן only in 45:9, perhaps by the same translator.

10.a. The pf is performative: see Note 3:8.a.

11.a. In place of קוראֲב “as,” which the ancient versions attest, קוֹרַא קבע “according to all that” intends to make the expression more comprehensive and represents an assimilation to the longer version of this formulation: cf. especially Deut 26:14. “K … aligns with 12:7; 24:18; 37:7, 10. Q … does not occur in the book” (Allen in Brownlee 141).

1.a. For the use of לַא in the sense of ל, here with the sense “above” (cf. 1:26), see Note 2:6.d.

1.b. The MT prefaces with חאֲרָמְק “like the appearance of,” which has no counterpart in the LXX*. It doubtless originated as a comparative gloss on וּבַאֲרָמְק “like (stone),” noting that the basic 1:26 had וּבַאֲרָמְק “like the appearance of stone” instead of וּבַאֲרָמְק. The gloss, after the sense of its purpose was lost, was incorporated into the text at a syntactically feasible point.

1.c. The MT adds חאֲרָנ “appeared, was seen,” which has no counterpart in LXX* Syr.. It seems to have been a reader’s comment on the platform’s being over the heads of the cherubim, to the effect that such had been seen by Ezekiel earlier, viz. in 1:22. The reading turns up in 1:22, in the corrupted form וּבַאֲרָמְק “terrible” (see Note 1:22.a.); its parallel placing gives a clue to its original meaning, or at least perceived meaning. One might more naturally have related the gloss to the throne of 1:26a, as a case of déjà vu. If the MT in 1:22 reflects the original meaning of the gloss, it properly belonged before וּבַאֲרָמְק [“which was seen (over the heads),”] but was inserted instead before וּבַאֲרָמְק “above them.” If the evidence of 1:22 reflects a mistaken perception, that perception was the mistaking of וּבַאֲרָנְק “it was seen above them” as a reference to the platform rather than to the throne, and the mistake was caused by equating וּבַאֲרָמְק “above (them)” and וּבַאֲרָמְק “over the heads.” In the MT the accentuation suggests that Yahweh was understood to be the subj (so Keil 133, 135; cf. Becker, “Ez 8–11” 146 n. 42).

2.a. The LXX* does not represent קמָיְרָו “and he said.” It is easier to explain this as omission of a redundant item than to account for its insertion. Zimmerli (226) attributes it to the secondary editing of chap. 10, which one would take to mean that the divine command is redactional. However, in both his sections on form and on exegesis (234, 250), he regards the command as substantially original but with reference to the ark in the temple rather than to the celestial conveyance: in v 2 only the phrase וּבַאֲרָמְק וּבַאֲרָנְק “from between the cherubim” is secondary (254). Greenberg (180) plausibly accounts for קמָיְרָו as a means of slowing the narrative and thus lending it solemnity; he gives other examples of this phenomenon.
hands with fiery coals from the space between the cherubim and scatter them over the city." As I watched, he went in. Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in. Moreover, a cloud was filling the inner court: the manifestation of Yahweh's presence rose from the cherubim-structure and moved to the threshold of the temple, and so the temple area was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the radiance of the manifestation of Yahweh's presence. The sound of the cherubim's wings could be heard as far away as the outer court: it was as loud as the voice of the Almighty God, while he was speaking. When he had commanded the man clothed in linen to take fire from the space between the rotary system, between the cherubim, and he had gone in, he stood beside a particular wheel, and one of the group of cherubim

2.b. The sg | gl g here refers collectively to the wheel structure or set of wheels; one may compare the collective usage in 23:24; 26:10, with reference to war chariots. Cf. b w k “cherubim-structure” in 9:3; 10:4.

2.c. The MT is at first sight a further instance of the phenomenon just mentioned. However, in chaps. 8–11 the text seems to distinguish quite strictly in semantic terms between the collective sg form and the pl form (see the Comment). Accordingly, there is much to be said for reading a pl μ y b w k , as later in the verse, by assumption of pseudohaplography of μ y before μ w, as many scholars since Hitzig (69), including Greenberg (181), have done. The pl forms later in the verse and those in the narrative fulfillment of the command at v 7 provide internal support for this change. An appeal to the LXX (BHS) is of little value, since it has harmonistic pl forms in 9:3; 10:4, where the MT has sg forms.

3.a. The MT V y h w b b is a case of a pronoun with a noun in apposition: “when he—the man—went in.” This is a construction not uncommon in later Heb. and in Aram. (Joüon 146e; Rooker, Biblical Hebrew 91–92). However, Zimmerli (226) has noted a pattern of metathesis of w and a with this verb, and this instance is doubtless to be so explained. Alternatively, V y h “the man” was a gloss intended to clarify the suffix (Herrmann 54; Dijkstra, “Glosses” 67–68).

4.a. In the light of 9:3, V [ ] is used in the sense of l a “to”: see Note 1:17.c.* As in 9:3, the preposition is used in a pregnant sense, “and (moved) to” (Cooke 119).

6.a. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:31) noted that the inf is continued with finite verbs and the main clause is in v 7. Rather, it begins with the second verb in v 6b.

7.a. Heb. V [ ] V w h has an indefinite subj: “and one extended.” The following t w n y b m here seems to include a partitive sense “(one) from among,” “(one) of a group”: cf. the partitive use of m “from” (cf. BDB 580b, which with reference to the subj cites Lev 25:33; Dan 11:5) and the sense “among” for w m and “from among” for w m with reference to a group of persons (BDB 1063b) and likewise for b r q m (BDB 899a). It can hardly bear a sense of direction toward the cherubim, for which one would expect t w n y b Al a , as in v 2. The MT b w k h “the cherub,” idiomatically used for “a cherub” (Becker, “Ez 8–11” 147 n. 44, with reference to GKC 126q–s; Joüon 137m–n), has no counterpart in the LXX*. It appears to be a clarifying, exegetically correct gloss: the rest of the verse shows that the man is not the subj, and the content of v 8 indicates an understanding in terms of a cherub’s hand. The LXX* does not represent μ y b w k t w n y b m “from among the cherubim.” Zimmerli (226–27) observed that the omission of “the cherub” makes the LXX “unintelligible”: it reads first as if the man were the subj and then treats him as object of the activity. While one does not need “the cherub,” the accompanying prepositional phrase is required. Did an original ej m e v o t w n h c e r o u b i n “from the midst of the cherubim” (vv 2, 6) fall out by homoeoarcton before ej m e v o (ek/eic)? Then the scholarly deduction from the LXX* text concerning the secondary nature of v 7ab q (Hitzig 70–71; et al.; cf. BHS) loses its basis.
extended his hand to the fire that was between the cherubim and picked up some of the fire. Then he put it in the cupped hands of the one clothed in linen, who took it and went out. The cherubim were seen to have what appeared to be human arms and hands under their wings. I had a visionary sighting of four wheels beside the cherubim, each wheel with a cherub beside it. In appearance the wheels looked like a gold topaz stone, and in appearance they all four had the same form. It was as though one wheel was inside another. When they moved forward, they could move in their four directions without changing direction as they moved, because in whichever direction one of the heads faced, the other ones followed it without changing direction as they

7.b. Zimmerli (226), following Herrmann (54), urged that the minority reading µywrk be read for µywrkh “the cherubim.” However, Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:31) correctly observed that the lamed only appears with compound prepositions such as twnybm “from between” and not with simple ones such as twnyb “between” here.

c 7.c. In differentiation from the cherub’s “hand” (ド) in vv 7aa, 8, here ḫ “hollow of the hand” is used.

8.a. LXX Syr. render “and I saw,” reflecting assimilation to the verb at the beginning of v 9.

b 8.b. Heb. ḫ “hand” seems to be used collectively. The LXX renders pl, probably reflecting ḫ “hands” (= v 21) in its Vorlage. In 1:8 a sg appears in the LXX and a pl in the MT. For the rendering “arms and hands,” see Note 1:8.a.*

9.a. The Heb. repetition has a distributive force: see GKC 134l, q. The single rendering in LXX* Syr. is the result of haplography (Wevers 89).

10.a. Heb. µhãr µW is a casus pendens, “and as for their appearance” (Cooke 120).

b 10.b. For the masc ḫ “one,” as in 1:16, see Note 1:16.c.*
moved, and so did their whole bodies, their backs, arms, and wings. The wheels were full of eyes all over, in the case of the four of them. Now these wheels were what I had heard called a rotary system. When the cherubim moved forward, the wheels would move beside them; and when the

a 11.a. In v 11a, although in the LXX the cherubim (αυτας τας “they”) are twice the subj, the wheels must be in view. Both the preceding context and the evidently parallel 1:17 so indicate. The fact that v 11b does not depend on the wheel description in chap. 1 makes a different subj possible. V 12, especially the differentiating “and the wheels,” implies that the cherubim are now in view. Then V αρμ in must mean not the front wheel (Keil 139; Eichrodt 109; HALAT 1088a) but either the head of the (leading) cherub (אה; Jahn 62; Zimmerli 127 [on p. 227 “front wheel” seems to be a mistranslation of das vordeste]; Greenberg 181) or actually the leading cherub (ס; Kraetzschmar 110; Fohrer 57). Of the latter alternatives, which yield a similar overall meaning, the first seems to be the better in the light of the sequel. The directional locking of the wheels (v 11a) is grounded in a parallel locking of the cherubim. The reference in v 12a to the physical parts of the cherubim seems to be connected with the prior mention of V αρ in in the sense of “head.” Then the subj of the main verbs in v 11b is the other heads, which as they moved still looked respectively to the right or left or the reverse of the direction of travel. This static posture is then applied to the rest of their bodies. Vogt (Untersuchungen 70) has followed GB 645b in taking וירג יא “after it” with the relative clause, rather than with the following verb: it then supplies a resumptive pronoun for the antecedent ואר “the place,” with reference to the directional aim. Perhaps it should be pointed as an explicit subj וירג יא “the others [= heads] in relation to it.” The reading דיאר “the first head,” implied by the LXX (see BHIS), clearly needs more explanation than a /d error. It surely arose as an explanatory comment on דיאר “(the face of) the first” in v 14. The comment observed, in line with the corrupted MT, that the faces were not features of an individual cherub’s single head but belonged to separate heads. The marginal comment was understandably taken as a correction for the very similar-looking וירג יא ואר “a little higher up and displaced it. For this type of textual development, see Note 2:6.a.* This explanation raises a problem: v 14 is not extant in the LXX*, but a comment on it is. This phenomenon is to be explained by the fact that the LXX of Ezekiel at times attests a post-Masoretic texttype: in the history of its Vorlage, v 14 once stood but was subsequently deleted, perhaps after comparison with another, more highly regarded exemplar, but conceivably simply because in its corrupted form it contradicted 1:10.

a 12.a. The MT וירג כב “and all their bodies” is not represented in the LXX*, which may indicate that it originated in a (correct) exegetical gloss. The final four words of v 11 are to be understood in v 12a. In v 12b the switch from suffixes to article is a clue to a syntactical change.

b 12.b. The MT adds an unconnected ואר “their wheels,” which Kraetzschmar (111), followed by Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:32) and Greenberg (179), plausibly traced to a variant of יאר “the wheels” at the head of v 12b, which has been incorporated into the text. The LXX* seems to attest the term, so that it must have been an early gloss. The suffixed form was presumably the result of assimilation to the three preceding nouns in v 12a. It may well reflect an understanding of the cherubim’s bodies as covered with eyes, as well as the wheels, in line with the verse division in the MT. However, comparison with 1:18 suggests that only the wheels had eyes (Torrey, JBL 58 [1939] 71–73).
cherubim lifted their wings to rise from the ground, the wheels would not change direction

13.a. The REB has misunderstood v 13. The MT adds v 14, “‘Each had four faces’: the face of the first was a cherub’s face, and the face of the second a human face, and the third a lion’s face and the fourth an eagle’s face.” This material is on the borderline between the concerns of text criticism and of redaction criticism. It seems to make use of cue words, “each had four faces,” a sign of a textual gloss, yet a redactional feature in 1:2. The cue words could be a citation of 1:6a and belong with the echoes of chap. 1 already encountered in chap. 10; or they could be a citation of 10:21aa and so a gloss incorporated into the text at a different place, before the interpretive comment of v 15b, rather than after its occurrence in v 20a. The presence of v 14 is to be regarded as a textual issue. There is at this point a break in the parallel treatment of chap. 1: vv 9–12 refer back consecutively to 1:15–18, while vv 16–17 deal equally consecutively with 1:19–21. Yet v 14 harks back to 1:6a and also to 1:10. While this inconsistency could be interpreted in terms of a further redactional layer, its association with the glosses represented in v 15 suggests that it originated in a late gloss. One might also adduce the omission of v 14 in the LXX, but at an earlier stage in its Vorlage, v 14 does seem to have been present, before it was discarded (see Note 11.a.). The content of v 14 appears confused: v 14bb, like 1:10, envisions four faces for each cherub, in line with the cue words, yet v 14ba strangely speaks in terms of each of the four cherubim having one, unique face. If v 14 is a textual gloss, one expects greater conformity with 1:10 and must conclude that subsequent corruption is to blame (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:32). Harmony with both 1:10 and v 14a dictates for v 14ba an original µda ynp ynv hw rw ynp dj a h “the first the face of an ox and the second the face of a man.” It is feasible to take the first ynp “the face of” in the MT as the uncorrected result of a copyist’s eye jumping from djal “to each” to dj a h “the first.” Then ynp w “and the face of” in the second clause came in as a false harmonization with the corrupted start of the first clause. As for bwrk ynp “the face of the cherub,” the unique presence of the article with a genitive noun of an animate type betrays its alien nature. It may well have originated in a subsequent gloss on dj a h ynp “the face of the first” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:32), which later still displaced the basic r w ynp “the face of an ox.” Whereas 1:10 lists the faces directionally, this annotation takes its cue from the “four” of 10:21 (and 1:6) and lists them numerically. In contrast to the southern orientation of 1:10, the numbering of the faces seems to represent a westerly orientation. The Syr interestingly lacks the first ynp “the face of” and ynp w “and the face of,” but its clause “one (face) was the face of a cherub” discloses that its text is not pre-Masoretic but post-Masoretic, the result of a later partial attempt to harmonize with 1:10. It is just possible that the MT was intended to signify “the first face … the second face,” as the Vg interpreted (cf. Becker, “Ez 8–11” 148 and n. 46, with reference to GKC 134o–p; Joüon 138b, 142o).
independently of them.\(^b\) 17 When the former stopped, the latter stopped too, and when they rose, rose\(^a\)

\(^b\) 13.b. The MT also adds v 15 “and the cherubim rose; they were the living creatures I had seen at the Kebar Canal.” It is present in the LXX\(^*\), but Greenberg (183) speaks for most scholars in describing it as an “awkward anticipation of vss. 19a, 20a below; apparently fragments copied in at the wrong place.” Kraetzschmar (112) observed that the past consecutive verb in v 15a does not fit the descriptive nature of the context. This amalgamation of separate glosses into a continuous format within the text is no stranger to the MT of Ezekiel: see my note in ZAW 102 (1990) 408–13. Vv 14–15 appear to be a cluster of annotations that relate to vv 19a, 20a, 21a. V 14, an elaboration of v 21a, was wrongly attached to the echoing of v 20a in v 15a, as I suggested above. V 15b had earlier become attached to µybwr k “the cherubim” in v 15a, having floated from its marginal mooring near µybwr “cherubim” in v 20. So the gloss of v 15a joined the text first, presumably from the margin, where it functioned as a comment on Årah l[m µwrl “[to rise from the ground]” in v 16; the comment compared v 19a, where their capability was put into practice. As to the origin of the second gloss, it is best understood as a variant reading. It seems to scrupulously delete the bare phrase larcyAyhla tjt “under the God of Israel.” It is significant that in v 22 after ytj̄ “I saw” the LXX\(^*\) adds “under the glory of the God of Israel,” which doubtless originated as a more seemly variant of the phrase in v 20: the Tg renders in this very way in v 20. Thus there is evidence of two expedients to render the text in a more seemly way, to expand (LXX\(^*\), Tg.); or to delete (MT, in v 15b) the divine reference.

\(^a\) 16.a. Heb. µbsy has been used earlier in the sense of changing direction, in v 11a (= 1:17) with reference to the restricted mobility of the wheels while moving on the ground (cf. 1:15, 19). In 10:11b, however, independently of chap. 1, it seems to refer to the similarly limited directional range of the cherubim in flight. Here it relates differently to the wheels, while the celestial conveyance was in flight. In chap. 1 the two means of mobility, the wheels and the living creatures (via their wings), are not mechanically linked, and theoretically the wheels might have fallen off or pursued an independent course. But no, affirms the present passage, they were locked into the same flight path by the controlling “spirit” of v 17. It seems to be implied here that the wheels rotated even in the air, which may have been deduced from 3:13. One may compare the representation of flying horses, reindeer, bicycles, and vehicles in films: legs and wheels move as if on the ground.
18 The manifestation of Yahweh’s presence left the temple and took up a position on the cherubim. 19 Then the cherubim lifted their wings and rose from the ground before my eyes, leaving with the wheels alongside them and with the manifestation of the presence of the God of Israel above them. But it stopped at the entrance of the east gateway to Yahweh’s temple. 20 They were the very group of living beings I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Kebar Canal: now I recognized them to be cherubim. 21 Each had four faces and four wings, and what seemed to be

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human arms and hands under their wings. 22 The semblance of their four faces was that of the faces which I had seen by the Kebar Canal—both their appearance and the cherubim themselves, each moving according to his facial orientation.

11:1 The spirit lifted me and brought me to the east gateway leading to Yahweh’s temple, the one that faces east. 2 At the entrance to the gateway I noticed twenty-five men, among whom I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, who were public officials. 3 “Human one,” he told me, “these are the men who are making iniquitous plans and hatching evil schemes in this city, who say, ‘No need to build any houses in the near future. This is the caldron, and we are the meat.’ 4 So issue a prophecy against them, issue a prophecy, human one.” Then Yahweh’s spirit descended upon me, and he told me to say, “The message of Yahweh is as follows: That is the way you have been talking, community of Israel; I know the thoughts you are entertaining in your minds. You have caused the death of many people in this city, filling its streets with the dead.

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21.a. The MT repeats לְבָנָה “four,” as if distributive, but a longer formulation would then be required (cf. v 9 and Cooke 120–21); besides, one expects then a comparable idiom in the next clause (Zimmerli 228). The proto-Masoretic 4QEzek seems to have contained the repetition (Lust, “Ezekiel MSS in Qumran” 97; Sinclair, RevQ 14 [1989] 104). But the cue phrase in v 14a and the text of LXX* Vg here lack the repetition, which is simply a dittograph. However, the LXX* betrays an awareness of the longer text in the history of its Vorlage: in the next clause it has “eight” in place of “four.” Evidently, a marginal לְבָנָה לְבָנָה “four four,” a Masoretic type of variant, was taken as a correction of the wrong numeral (cf. Kraetzschmar 114); the Gr. translator added up the numerical pair.

22.a. The LXX* does not represent מִרְבָּעָם “their semblance,” but the text can hardly exist without it (see the next Note). The translator may have left it untranslated as a cognate acc. My earlier explanation of it as a gloss from 1:13 (in Brownlee 148) founders on its topical dissimilarity.

22.b. Lit. “and themselves,” best regarded as a second object of the previous verb (Cooke 121; Blau, VT 4 [1954] 12). This is simply a case of poorly written Hebrew. It is methodologically wrong to reconstruct the LXX καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν “and them” (with reference to the cherubim) as מִרְבָּעָם ו (Cornill 234; et al.). The LXX clearly reflects the same text as the MT, and there is no graphical relationship between it and the presumed original (cf. Bertholet [1987] 60; Barthélemy, Critique 3:62). Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 150; cf. Rooker, Biblical Hebrew 88–90) regarded מִרְבָּעָם מִרְבָּעָם as the subj of the following verb, appealing to Mishnaic usage, but he seems to have abandoned this notion later: it is not reflected in the NEB. Whether or not מִרְבָּעָם can at times express an emphatic nominative, it does not seem to do so here, contrary to my earlier opinion in Brownlee (148)

1.a. The repetition is firmly established in the textual tradition. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:34) and others have deleted as a gloss, and Talmon (Textus 1 [1960] 172) found conflation here, but “Hebrew writers do repeat themselves” (Wevers 93).

1.b. The LXX “about twenty-five” may reflect an exegetical identification with the group in 8:16. If so, this equation reflects a different layer of tradition than the LXX* text in 8:16, which has instead “about twenty.”

3.a. See the Comment.

5.a. Usually the messenger formula includes the title מְלֹאכָה “Lord,” as in v 7 (see Note 2:4.c.*). There is a parallel in 21:8(3).

5.b. The MT מְלֹאכָה מְלֹאכָה “(I know) it” is a sg suffix resuming the pl antecedent, a permissible Heb. construction (see GKC 135p; Joüon 149a). However, dittography of מְלֹאכָה may have occurred (Cornill 236, noting, perhaps unfairly, the non-representation in LXX Vg).
the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: Your dead whom you have put in it are the ones who are the meat, if this is a caldron. But as for you, I will take you out of it. The sword you fear is the sword I will send in to attack you, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh. I will take you out of it and hand you over to aliens, performing acts of judgment against you: you will fall as victims of the sword. On Israelite territory I will execute your judgment, and then you will realize that I am Yahweh. This city will not serve as your caldron, nor will you be like meat inside it. On Israelite territory I will execute your judgment, and then you will recognize that I am Yahweh. As I prophesied, Pelatiah son of Benaiah dropped dead. I threw myself down on my face and called out loudly: “Oh no, Lord Yahweh,” I protested, “you are after all going to make a complete end of Israel’s survivors.”

I received a communication from Yahweh: “Human one, your own brothers, the kinsfolk for whom you are responsible, and the whole community of Israel in its entirety have been described

6.a. The pf with weak waw is used when “the second verb merely repeats the idea of the first, being synonymous or in some way parallel with it” (Davidson, Hebrew Syntax 58[a]).

7.a. The MT  is generally taken as an error for the widely attested (see BHS) “I will take out.” A copyist’s eye may have slipped to -Ψ, “and I will” take out) in v 9, which is set in a similar context, and made an inadvertent error. Keil (147) accepted the MT as a pf with an indefinite subj (cf. Greenberg 185).

8.a. For the formulaic use of Lord in a divine-saying formula, see Note 5:11.a.


12.a. The omission of vv 11–12a in LXX seems to be merely due to homoeoteleuton (Ziegler, LXX 129; Wevers 95): cf. the comparable loss of 33:25ab–27a.

12.b. The MT adds “by whose rules you have not walked and whose standards you have not met, but you have acted in accord with the standards of the nations around you,” which has no counterpart in the LXX. It seems to be a later comment borrowed from 5:7, except that there a negative statement appears in the last clause. Greenberg (188) has made the form-critical observation that only here is a recognition formula supplemented with material relating to Israel’s sin, rather than to divine activity. The relevance of the comment at this point is not immediately clear. It functions as a general accusation and as justification for the judgment. It must have been triggered by the recurrence of the phrase “perform acts of judgment” (v 9b) in 5:8 (see Note 5:8.c.): the addition attests a pre-corrupted text there. It also serves as a counterpart to v 20a, which must have encouraged the retention of the comparative note.

13.a. Cf. 8: and see the Note on 4:14.a.

13.b. The ancient versions understood as a question, by comparison with 9:8. Possibly the MT has suffered loss of an interrogative he by haplography (Kraetzschmar 119; et al.). On the other hand, the affirmation may serve as an intensification of 9:8 (cf. Eichrodt 140–41).


15.a. Lit. “as for …, of whom …” The extended casus pendens is not resolved until the object pronouns of v 16, a phenomenon that bonds the two parts of the oracle with remarkable compactness. Ohnesorge (Jahwe gestaltet 59–60) has suggested that  “whom” means “because,” with reference to Eccl 8:11 (cf. 1 Sam 25:26).
by the residents of Jerusalem as follows: ‘They are far away\textsuperscript{a} from Yahweh; we have been given the right to take over the country.’ \textsuperscript{16}Say then that the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: Yes,\textsuperscript{b} I did send them far away among the nations; yes, I did scatter them in other countries, but I have partially\textsuperscript{c} taken the place of their sanctuary in the countries they have come to. \textsuperscript{17}Say then that the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: I will go on\textsuperscript{d} to gather you\textsuperscript{e} from the peoples, collecting you from the countries you have been scattered in, and I will give you the land of Israel. \textsuperscript{18}When they come there, they will remove from it all its loathsome religious practices and shocking rites. \textsuperscript{19}I will give them different\textsuperscript{f} hearts,\textsuperscript{g} removing stony hearts from their bodies and giving them hearts b 15.b. Heb. ûtwlg yvna “your men of redemption” seemingly has a subjective suffix (Horst, VT 3 [1953] 337–38; cf. Brownlee 164). LXX Syr. imply ûtw lg yw na “your men of exile, fellow exiles (= NRSV),” which has been preferred by some scholars since Ewald (252) and Cornill (237). However, Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:34) observed that for this sense ymb “sons” would have been used: cf. h | wg ymb “exiles” in Ezra 4:1, etc. The ensuing context develops the motif of possession of land, to which the term in the MT alludes: see the Comment. c 15.c. For this phrase, cf. 20:40 and the redactional 36:10. d 15.d. The ancient versions agree with the MT’s pointing as an impv, which thus reflects a common exegetical tradition. However, Hitzig (78) revived the proposal of medieval Jewish commentators to repoint as pf, in line with the parallel clause, and most commentators have followed suit. The evidently resumptive causative pf µytqjrh “I sent them far away” on Yahweh’s lips in v 16 affords a further internal argument for so doing. e 15.e. Heb. â yh is used as an anticipatory pronoun: “it, namely the land” (cf. Joüon 146e). Its absence from the similar 33:24b and non-representation in the LXX* have led Bertholet ([1897] 62) and a few others to query its authenticity. On the other hand, Cornill (237) and others have regarded År a h “the land” as the intruder: it could be a comparative gloss from 33:24. Perhaps the MT has a conflated text, and the LXX* preserves one of the two variants. It is hardly true that â yh by itself has no antecedent (Zimmerli 229–30): originally it could have referred to Jerusalem (Herrmann 57; Eichrodt 111; Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet 7), as a parallel to the quotation in v 3. However, the phrase more naturally refers to the land (cf. 36:5; Exod. 6:8), and certainly by the textual stage of v 17b, a reference to the land is presupposed. Brownlee (154), disregarding the Masoretic accentuation, made a separate clause: “This is ours.” a 16.a. Heb. yk is evidently used with an asseverative sense (Hitzig 78; et al., including Zimmerli 230): cf. Joüon 164b. Joüon 172b here takes as concessive, “although,” but “yk alone is not capable of introducing concessions of the real [as distinct from hypothetical] type” (A. Aejmelaeus, JBL 105 [1986] 199 n. 18). She has found a causal meaning here, presumably by taking v 16b as a further part of the causal clause in a negative sense, as Ewald (251) and Smend (65) did. It is more likely that v 16b has a positive meaning, and so yk cannot be causal. b 16.b. Heb. f f m functions as appositional to v d q m, “a little sanctuary”: for the combination, cf. f f m “a little help” in Dan 11:34 (Greenberg 190). BDB 590a and HALAT 578a take as adverbial, with a similar qualitative sense. a 17.a. The initial waw “and” after a messenger formula evidently expresses continuity. It is not infrequent in Ezekiel: cf. 17:22; 25:13; 30:10, 13; 32:3. b 17.b. The LXX has third pl pronouns throughout v 17, harmonizing with v 16. In the case of µ f wp n “you were scattered,” this necessitated construing as µ f k p h “I scattered them,” from Å p n instead of Å wp. That stem does not occur elsewhere in Ezekiel.
soft as flesh,\(^{20}\) so that they can follow my rules and actively meet my standards. So they will become\(^{a}\) my people, while I will become their God.\(^{21}\) But those others whose hearts are devoted\(^{b}\) to loathsome and shocking rites, I pronounce\(^{b}\) accountable for their conduct, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh."

\(^{22}\) Then the cherubim raised their wings, with the wheels alongside them and the manifestation of the presence of Israel’s God above them.\(^{23}\) The manifestation of Yahweh’s presence rose from its location inside\(^{a}\) the city and took up a position on the mountain that lies east of the city.\(^{24}\) Thereupon the spirit lifted me and brought me to the exiles in Chaldea,\(^{a}\) in the visionary experience\(^{b}\)

\(^{a}\) 19.a. The MT \(d\) \(\dot{a}\) “one, a single” has no clear rapport with the context. The LXX implies \(\gamma\) \(\dot{a}\) “another,” which most scholars since Hitzig (79), including Barthélemy (Critique 3:67–69), have adopted (cf. 1 Sam 10:9), via a \(\gamma / d\) error. It aligns with the change of heart in v 19b. The supposition of an original \(\gamma d\) “new” (attested by Syr. Tg.; cf. v 19a), distorted into \(d\) \(\dot{a}\) via an intermediate \(d\) (Cornill 238; Zimmerli 230), is too speculative, as Liwak (“Probleme” 130) observed. The MT may have been influenced by Jer 32:39. Barthélemy (“’Un seul’” 329–38) supposes that the original reading was deliberately changed because of the perception of a pejorative connotation.

\(^{b}\) 19.b. The MT, in principle reflecting the general textual tradition, adds “and a new spirit I will put within you.” The widely attested reading \(\mu\) \(b\) \(r\) \(q\) \(b\) “within them” (cf. BHS), although adopted by many scholars, smacks of secondary harmonization. If the criterion is to reconstruct the most likely textual development, the MT is to be explained in terms of a comparative gloss from 36:26 (Levin, Verheissung 207 and n. 36; Ohnesorge, Jahre gestaltet 11).

\(^{a}\) 20.a. For the ingressive-factitive sense of the verb, see N. Lohfink, “Beobachtungen” 297 n. 79.

\(^{b}\) 21.a. The MT \(\dot{b}\) \(\dot{a}\) \(\lambda\) \(\dot{w}\) “but to the heart of,” though supported by the LXX*, cannot be original: \(\dot{b}\) “heart” unnecessarily anticipates \(\dot{b}\) \(\dot{l}\) “their heart,” and some indication of a differentiated group of people is required. Hitzig (79) and others have derived from the Tg. a reading \(\gamma\) \(\dot{b}\) \(\dot{a}\) \(\dot{w}\) “but after” (cf. 20:16; 33:31; cf. the Vg “and after the heart of”). Sperber (Bible in Aramaic 4B:336) has cautioned that, although \(\dot{b}\) is not represented in the Tg., the Tg. renders \(\dot{b}\) \(\dot{a}\) “to” as \(\gamma\) \(\dot{t}\) \(\dot{b}\) “after” in 16:26, 28, while Cornill (288–89) observed that the textual development from this supposed original is difficult to explain. Cornill himself reconstructed the text as \(\gamma\) \(\dot{r}\) \(\dot{a}\) \(\dot{w}\) “but as for these (who) after,” arguing that \(\dot{b}\) was put into the text too soon and subsequently \(\gamma\) \(\dot{a}\) fell out. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:38–39) found this reconstruction too radical. He read \(\dot{b}\) \(\dot{b}\) \(\dot{a}\) \(\dot{w}\) with a wordplay on two senses of \(\dot{b}\): “but as for (those whose) heart adheres to the ‘heart’ or essential meaning (i.e. immoral consequences).” More plausibly Greenberg (191) has emended to \(\mu\) \(\dot{h}\) \(\dot{x}\) \(\dot{w}\) \(q\) \(v\), \(\dot{b}\) \(\dot{h}\) \(\dot{a}\) \(\dot{w}\) “but as for those (whose) … (walk) in (their loathsome rites),” comparing \(\dot{b}\) \(\dot{u}\) \(\dot{h}\) “walk in” (vv 12, 20) and \(\dot{b}\) “heart” (v 19) as the contextual components that have been reused here. He was implicitly following Kraetzschmar (122; cf. BHK). Perhaps after \(\dot{h}\) \(\dot{a}\) \(\dot{w}\) was abbreviated to \(\dot{h}\) \(\dot{a}\) \(\dot{w}\) (cf. BDB 41a), haplography of \(\lambda\) \(\dot{m}\) was assumed, in order to avoid the impossible apparent phenomenon of two adjacent prepositions. For the asyndetic relative clause, cf. Joüon 158a–db.

\(^{b}\) 21.b. For the performative pf see, Note 3:8.a.*

\(^{c}\) 21.c. For the use of \(\gamma\) \(\dot{a}\) “Lord” in the divine-saying formula, see Note 5:11.a.*

\(^{a}\) 23.a. Hardly “from the middle of” (NRSV). The temple was adjacent to the eastern wall of the city. Cf. the use of \(\dot{u}\) \(\dot{w}\) \(b\) to mean “inside” as an emphatic variant of \(\dot{b}\) “in,” e.g., in Gen 18:24, 26 (cf. Bertholet [1897] 64). One expects \(\dot{u}\) \(\dot{w}\) \(m\) “from inside”: the expression \(\dot{u}\) \(\dot{w}\) \(\dot{m}\) \(\dot{m}\) is unique. There is a contrast with the mountain outside the city (Toy 117).
given by the spirit of God. Then I ceased to experience the vision I had seen, and I declared to the exiles all the messages Yahweh had revealed to me.

Notes

1.a. The LXX has “fifth,” probably by mechanical assimilation to the fifth day (Cooke 89, following Toy). Smend (49) initiated a preference for the reading of the LXX on the ground that the MT has postponed the date to make room for the periods of 3:16; 4:4–6, but see Zimmerli’s discussion (216).

1.b. The MT adds ynd a “Lord,” in contradiction of the regular formulaic usage: cf., e.g., 1:3. See Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556, who has found here a possible secondary intrusion.

1.c. There is a variation of the common verb in this formulation, yh tw “and … came,” as in 1:3, in line with which the LXX and MSKen 150 standardized here (Hölscher, Dichter 69 n. 1). “Ken” in Zimmerli 216 is an error in the English edition.

1.d. The LXX regularly omits “there” in this formulation: see Note 1:3.d.

2.a. The LXX’s underlying v yd “man” for v a “fire” is generally preferred, as corresponding to d a “human being” in 1:26: the description in v 2 clearly echoes 1:26–27. The MT probably suffered assimilation to v a later. Greenberg (166) has noted in favor of the change that it provides an antecedent for the following personal suffixes. The LXX also lacks representation of the preceding h fr “like

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*a 24.a. Lit. “to the Chaldeans”: see Joüon 93d. Idiomatically, it means “to Chaldea”: see BDB 505a and cf. 16:29; 23:16.

*b 24.b. The form h fr “vision” is used here (twice) and in 43:3, instead of the standard fem form.

*c 24.c. Heb. yh a j w b “by means of the spirit of God” can hardly qualify the verb of which j w “spirit” is subj. It seems rather to qualify the “vision,” which virtually has a verbal force, “that which was seen (by means of).” In v 5 h w j w “the spirit of Yahweh” occurs; the present phrase may have been influenced by the standard j w r m “divine visions” (1:1; 8:3; 40:2).

*d 24.d. Lit. “(the vision) went up from upon me.” See the Comment.
the appearance of.” At first sight the MT might accord with μδα ḫар ṭwmđ “a figure like the appearance of a human being” in 1:26 or represent assimilation to the longer phrase (Zimmerli, 216); but it is more likely that the MT attests an addition made after the corruption to Ṽא “fire,” relating to the secondary Ṽא ḫar ṭwmđ “like the appearance of fire” in 1:27ab (Herrmann 51), where the whole figure is envisioned as enveloped in fire, rather than only the lower half.

2.b. The MT ṭynbt ḫm ḫm “from the appearance of his loins” here (but significantly not in v 2b) seems to have suffered assimilation to 1:27. Probably the phrase was a comparative comment, meant to indicate that 1:27 so read in both cases. The comment displaced ṭynbt ṭmđ “from his loins,” attested by the LXX and also found in MSKen 96.

2.c. The LXX * exhibits a shorter text, lacking representation of Ḯkh ṭh ḳ “a shining glow like the gleam of;” but it seems to be the result of an arbitrary abbreviation (cf. Zimmerli 217): the distinctive ṭh ḳ seems inconceivable as a gloss (Cornill 221; cf. M. Görg, TDOT 4:46).

2.d. For the rendering, see the Comment on 1:4. The longer form ṭนม ḫmj ṭ may be due to its climactic placing in a grandiose description (Joüon 93i).

3.a. Heb. ṭynbt “structure” is unusual in this context: it appears to have developed the sense of form or shape, akin to its use to refer to images (cf. BDB 125b).

3.b. Lit. “between earth and sky.”

3.c. For the pl, which is characteristic of Ezekiel, see Note 1:1.c.*, and for the phrase, see the Comment on 1:1.

3.d. The LXX * lacks a counterpart to the fem form ṭ ymynp ṭ “inner” in the MT, in which an ellipse of ṭ ḳ -Ḥ “the court” is presupposed. The inner court of the temple is mentioned in v 16; 10:3, but the present context suggests that a gate farther from the temple is in view (see the Comment). The confusion

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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
* L.c. The Heb. pl. of generalization (Joüon 136j), which recurs in 8:3; 40:2, is to be rendered as sg
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
underlying the LXX between Ἰπ. Ἰ “facing” and ἤμυρ. Ἰ “inner” at 40:19, 32 suggests that the MT has a conflated text. The second element is the original one. Did a copyist write Ἰπ. Ἰ in place of Ἰ第八 Ἰp. Ἰ and leave the torso uncorrected? Then the MT reflects a later attempt to make sense of the abandoned error by recourse to ἤτ. ἤμυρ. Ἰ “inner” across the scroll in the next column (v 16) and/or by equating the position of the “glory” in v 4 with the description in 10:3–4. Cf. the comparable case in 22:20 (Allen, JSS 31 [1986] 131–33; id., Ezekiel 20–48 32). The Syr represents Ἰπ. Ἰ “the Corner (Gate),” which may be another attempt to interpret the torso, via haplography; it is a topographical improvement on the MT, insofar as it refers to a city gate at the west end of the north wall (cf. IDB 2:853a). There is no need to prefix an article to ἶ (“the”) gate” (cf., e.g., BHS, but contrast BHK; cf. 9:2; 40:28 and GKC 126w; Joüon 138b, c.

3.e. Heb. ד ו מ, which in 2 Kgs 2:19 refers to the “situation” of a city, here reasonably denotes the location of the image (BDB 444a). Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:25) envisioned a seated image; also Ackerman (Under Every Green Tree 39–40) argues for a rendering “throne.” The LXX’s nonrepresentation does not appear to be textually significant: cf. Zimmerli 217.

3.f. For the verbal form, see GKC 75qq. The LXX (and Syr.) ran together the two final terms with one rendering, in line with its penchant for abbreviation in this context. It is striking, however, that the literalizing Α S Q and LXXOL rendered with a single form: one must leave open the possibility that the second term, which is not present in v 5, is a gloss (Cornill 222) on, or a dittograph (Ehrlich Randglossen 5:25) of, the first.
5.a. The MT has “on the north side of the gate of the altar that outrageous image,” so that Ezekiel’s attention is here drawn to the image as if to a novel feature, whereas he had already referred to it in the narrative of v 3b. One way to resolve the problem is to regard the relative clause at the end of v 3 as an anticipatory gloss (Cornill 233; et al.). Another, less drastic, expedient is to dissociate v 5 from v 3 by reading with a slight change: ] b zm hr [ V l “(north) of the gate, the altar of …” (H. Gunkel, Schöpfung und Chaos 141 n. 1; Bertholet [1897] 46; et al.). The same end may be achieved with even less alteration by redividing the consonantal text as ] b zm hr [ V l , with a redundant h; after ] (Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 62; he pointed hr [ V l “to the gate of,” but hr [ V l “to the gate” is necessary [see my note in Brownlee 126]). Driver compared hr [ V l “to Sheol” in Ps 9:18(17); one might also cite as a near parallel hr nw x Al a “to the north” in v 14 below. An “altar gate” is not otherwise known, though it might conceivably refer to a gate near the bronze altar that Ahaz moved to the north side of the temple court (2 Kgs 16:14; cf. Ezek 9:2; Hitzig 59). However, this explanation is only viable if a gate to the temple (= “inner” in the MT of v 3) court is in view: see the Comment. The LXX has “east gate,” misreading ] r zm h for ] b zm h, which conflicts with the north-facing gate of v 3. But, indirectly, the LXX supports the MT and shows that the latter’s error was perpetrated at an early stage.

5.b. The LXX* does not represent the final location, but it can hardly be dispensed with, as Zimmerli (218) and Wevers (80) have correctly observed. For the hapax legomenon h a y d, cf. Akk. bıq “(drainage) opening (in a wall)” (CAD 2:297a).

6.a. Joüon 161b has observed that all the instances of t yr h “Have you seen?” in the OT have an exclamatory nuance and that Jerome rendered with emphatic statements. This observation, which relates to vv 12, 15, and 17, surely also applies to this case, where a ptcp is employed.

6.b. The MT adds “(in) which the community of Israel (are engaging here),” unrepresented in the LXX*. Superficially the addition accords with the phrasing in vv 9, 12, 17 (cf. v 13), but one then expects an article with t wd g t wb [ vt “great abominations,” such as appears in vv 9 and 17 (Cooke 101 ). The English versions surreptitiously render as if the article were there. The addition sought to provide a parallel to the other verses and was inspired by references to the community of Israel in vv 10–12.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
n. note
Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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6.c. Is the implicit subj “they” or “Yahweh”? The latter is preferred by modern versions; and it is found in the Vg and followed by some scholars (Ewald 244; et al.). It looks ahead to Yahweh’s subsequent abandonment of the sanctuary. However, Cooke (101), like Kraetzschmar (89) before him, admitted that the lack of an explicit subj to this end is “particularly harsh.” It is more natural to continue the human subj with LXX Syr. Tg. A Q (Bertholet [1897] 46; et al.; see especially Zimmerli 218, 238). Greenberg (169) has observed that elsewhere ל[מ]נ פ “be far from” has a human subj in relation to God. See the Comment.

6.d. The adj has a comparative force in this context, as the parallel v 15b makes clear (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:26). The LXX stylistically renders ב ו ת ו “you will yet again” by וְיַאְדֵה “further” here and in vv 13 and 15.

7.a. Heb. דא “one” has virtually the force of an indefinite article.

7.b. The LXX* does not represent v 7b. Greenberg (169) has suggested that it originated as a variant of v 8bb, with ל[מ]נ פ “hole” having the meaning “hiding place,” and referred to a secret meeting place. The omission has been made part of a larger hypothesis concerning the original text, that the passage about the second sin moved from Ezekiel’s being brought to the entrance of the court (v 7a) directly to the divine order to enter (v 9), with which the prophet complied and saw the walls of the open court covered with pictures of idols (Zimmerli 218–19, 240; cf. Cornill 223–24; Fohrer 49; Wevers 81). This simple narrative was complicated into a secret rite by the insertion of v 8, presumably at the pre-LXX stage of the tradition, under the influence of the digging through the wall in 12:5, 7, and by the addition of v 7b at a post-LXX stage. A major plank in this theory is the supposed omission of ל[מ]נ פ “in darkness” from the LXX* in v 12, for which see below. The presumed shorter text has the advantage of conforming more closely to the structure of the other scenarios of sin. The first scenario progresses from specification of the place to which Ezekiel is brought (v 3 // v 7) to a divine order to observe (v 5a // v 9). In the third and fourth scenarios there is a direct movement from a specification of place (vv 14a, 16a) to a description of the sin (vv 14b, 16ab–b // vv 5b, 10–11). There is a relative uniformity that offers no counterpart to v 8; but its very relativity should make the reader cautious about regarding this extra element as secondary. The emphasis on secrecy appears to echo an OT motif associated with venturing outside the norms of Yahwistic worship (see the Comment). Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 149–50) interpreted vv 7b–8 in a feasible way, which in fact coincides with Jerome’s exegesis (95–96): the prophet is told to enlarge the existing hole until it becomes an opening big enough to squeeze through. He explained the omission of v 7b in the LXX* in terms of the translator’s missing the distinction.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Tg. Targum
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
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Bib Biblica

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between "hole" and "opening" and regarding them as synonyms.

8.a. The LXX does not represent either instance of ryqb “through the wall,” but in v 10 renders ryqhAl “on the wall” as ejpÆ aujtou “on it.” Zimmerli (219) supposed that the translator did not understand ryq, but it is certainly translated in 12:5, 7; 13:12, 14, 15. The most natural explanation of the evidence is that the pronoun in v 10 presupposes a rendering in v 8 and that we are to envision in v 8a an inner-Greek omission by homoeoteleuton of ej Ñ ton toi`con (after ofuxon “dig”), the rendering in 12:5. In v 8ba the phrase was deliberately left untranslated as otiose in Greek. Balla (Festschrift 8), followed by Fohrer (ZAW 63 [1951] 38) and others, took over Hernrich’s notion that ryqb “through the wall” was introduced from 12:5, 7. Since in Ezek 12:5, 7, 12, the LXX renders f t] “dig” by dioruvttw, while in the LXX of the Pentateuch ofuvttw stands for rpj “dig,” Balla supposed that here LXX ofuxon “dig” and w[uxa “I dug” imply an underlying f rpj (rather than f t ] ), which should properly be related to another stem, f rpj, meaning “search for, look around for.” (HALAT 327a considers the meaning “search for” to be a metaphorical extension of “dig” within the semantic range of the one verb f rpj.) Balla’s linguistic differentiation can hardly bear the weight he attaches to it. One may compare the way in which lwbg “border” is rendered by the verb diorivzei “borders” in 47:18, while in 47:20 it is translated ofirvei. This variation, which Ziegler (LXX 324) unnecessarily obliterates, is especially pertinent in the light of McGregor’s contention (Greek Text 157–81) that the same translator was responsible for chaps. 1–25 and 40–48.

9.a. The MT adds tv rh “the evil(s),” which is not represented in the LXX. As in 6:11, it seems to be a comparative gloss, in this case probably harking back to 6:11.

10.a. In place of l k “every,” the LXX has mavtaia “vain things,” which Cornill (224) speculated was an error for pauta tav’ll the.” However, it is significant that l bh “vanity,” in the sense of idols, is so rendered in Jer 2:5; 8:19. In place of l k hnhw “and behold every,” the translator may have read or misread l bh hnhw “and behold vanity” via dittography and a k/b confusion. It is possible that l bh originated as a comparative gloss on l ms “image” in v 5: in Jer 2:5 l bh follows yl [ m wzr r “they have departed from me.” If so, the note slipped down because of the similarity of vv 6 and 9 and was taken as a correction of the similar-looking l k-h .

10.b. The MT has a longer text, “every representation of reptile and animal [h mh b w c mr t ynb t ],
detestable thing.” The intervening phrase is not present in the LXX*; its awkward position seems to demonstrate its secondary character. It probably originated in an exegetically correct annotation that cited Deut 4:17–18 in a list of prohibited images. Perhaps the annotator also had in mind Lev 11 and envisioned the artistic representations as consisting of ritually unclean creatures (AQV). Ackerman (Under Every Green Tree 43 n. 224) has proposed that here unclean food is in view, eaten at a marzeµah, a West Semitic religious feast. The switch from sg AQV “that which is detestable” to pl YLQGQ “idols” could support this proposal.

10.c. Heb. hqjm is better taken not as a pual ptcp but as a noun, “engraved work,” here used predicatively (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:26; Zimmerli 219, with reference to 23:14; 1 Kgs 6:35).

11.a. The syntactical awkwardness of the Heb. expression, which the LXX* tidied (cf. Zimmerli 220) is doubtless original: “the sentence may just be poorly written” (Allen in Brownlee 127).

11.b. It is possible that ṛy “cloud” is a gloss on the hapax legomenon ṭ y “perfumed smoke” (Bertholet [1897] 48; et al.): cf. its use relating to incense in Lev 16:13. The LXX* renders with only one term; however, the pair may deliberately have been translated thus.

12.a. The LXX* (cf. Syr. Vg) seems to have rendered ṭ ykm yr dj b v ya Ṽvj b “in the dark, each one in the rooms of his image” as “each one of them in their secret bedroom.” “Bedroom” implies bk cm rdj, which the Tg also reflects. So the ancient versions attest an exegetical tradition, which may have arisen from relating ṭ ykm to ḥks m “bed covering” (Isa 28:20). Scholars have endlessly copied each other in stating that the LXX* lacks an equivalent for Ṽvj b “in the dark.” However, kruptw/ reflects Ṽvj “darkness”: cf. kruptein “hide” for the verb Ṽjvm “make dark” in Job 38:2 LXX and the sense of secrecy for Ṽvj m “dark place” in Isa 29:15. For the change in word order, see in principle G. Marquis, Textus 13 (1986) 59–84. The pl YLQGQ “rooms,” in place of sg, is due to the ambiguity of Ṽya “each, every”: see Greenberg 170. The term seems to have the sense of a small chapel or recess. The notion that the cult “took place also in individual homes” (Zimmerli 242) is not a natural interpretation of the text (cf. Hitzig 61).
12.b. Lit. “because.”

12.c. The MT adds וּתָא “us,” which is lacking in the parallel 9:9, where the present claims are expressly quoted (cf. Ps 94:7), and is not represented in the LXX*.

14.a. For מִי נִמ “the women” it is sometimes urged that מִי נִ be read, but idiomatically the article can be used thus (GKC 126q; Joüon 137n).

16.a. For the acc of place, see Cooke 103; Joüon 126h. Contrast 11:1.

16.b. The LXX* has “twenty,” which may better suit ק “about,” as a round number. However, Greenberg (172) has observed that twenty-five is a favorite number of Ezekiel’s.

16.c. An incomprehensible מִּי נַנְתָּא מִּי נְכָנָא oddly appears in place of the expected מִי נַנְתָּא מִּי נְכָנָא “worshiping,” which sixteen MSS read (Cornill 226). “A marginal note מִי נַנְתָּא מִּי נְכָנָא ‘and you worship’ may have been written as a catchword for worship of other gods, alluding to such texts as Deut 11:16; Josh 23:16” (Allen in Brownlee 127). Then it was combined with the standard text. Or was the contaminating factor a comment מִי נַנְתָּא מִּי נְכָנָא “about to be destroyed,” inspired by their fate in 9:6 and by the term מִּי נַנְתָּא מִּי נְכָנָא “destroying” that runs through chap. 9? The MT adds ק מָדָא ק “to the east,” which the LXX* does not reflect. It seems unnecessarily repetitious and may have been a vertical dittograph, assuming a fifteen-letter line.

17.a. Usually the Heb. construction with מ is regarded as logically redundant (see GKC 67t; Cooke 103; Joüon 141i). However, both here and in Isa 49:6 it may be explained in terms of time, with the sense “after.” That which is ironically regarded as trifling is not the previous three cultic offenses but the community’s separate social ills. These ills are introduced by ק “that,” and mention of them reverts to 7:23 (and also anticipates 9:9). The present, fourth cultic sin is regarded as worse than the three earlier ones and the social sin. The deletion of מ יִגְדְּקָא מ יִגְדְּקָא “that they have filled the country with violence,” proposed by Gunkel (Schöpfung 142 n.), has won some scholarly support, but there is no textual support for it.

17.b. The LXX* has no counterpart for this clause, but it fits well in leading up to the sin of sins (Cooke 100). The first verb וּכ וּשָׁמַת “and they have gone further” echoes וּכ וּשָׁמַת “you will go further” in v
15b. The following verb has a structural role in the context (see the Comment).

17.c. In the Masoretic tradition, ḫ µ pa “their nose(s)” (see Note 9:1.d.*) is regarded as one of the *tiqqune sopherim*, deliberate scribal corrections intended to remove objectionable expressions referring to God, as a replacement for y ḫ µ pa “my nose.” McKane (“Observations” 71–75) has accepted this tradition. However, the ancient versions know nothing of this interpretation. The LXX “like those turning up noses, sneering” implies the MT, as does the Tg “bringing shame in front of them.” Accordingly, the tradition appears to have originated remarkably late. It seems to have developed from particular interpretations of ꔹ ḫ Ṁ Ṗ “(pruned) branch.” See McCarthy’s discussion (*Tiqqune Sopherim* 91–97) and the Comment.

18.a. The LXX* leaves v 18b unrepresented, and it is often taken as having originated in a repetition of 9:1. On the other hand, it could easily have been lost by homoeoarcton (Greenberg 175). It functions as a literary hinge between sections: cf. Ezra 3:13 (cf. D. J. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984] 71).

9:1.a. Heb. ṭ Ṯ Ṭ Q Q is capable of three interpretations. In the context, it is best taken as qal impv, “come here” (= “come,” NAB; “draw near,” NRSV), with an unusual vocalization (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 5:27; et al., with reference to Ps 69:19): cf. GKC 46d; Joüon 44c. It is no objection to this understanding that a third person reference occurs in v 1b: it is idiomatic with ṭ Ṯ Ṭ “each one” in second person contexts, whether future (Amos 4:3) or imperatival (1 Sam 25:13; Zech 7:10; 8:17; cf. Joüon 147d). The form could alternatively be piel impv, “bring here” (NIV), with an indefinite subj referring to unseen attendants, which Greenberg (175), among others, prefers. A third possibility is to take as qal pf, “(they) have come” (= “Here they come,” REB), for which Cornill (226) and others have opted: this has in its favor the support of LXX Ṯ Ṯ but little else. The ancient versions probably missed

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* I.d. The idiomatic sg is to be rendered pl. “Such words as hand, head …, where the organ or thing is common to a number of persons, are generally used in the singular” (A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax* [Edinburgh: Clark, 1896] 17 remark 4). V lb is often taken as secondary, a variant of the clause at the end of v 2aa (Cornill 226–27; et al.), but it has a firm place both in the textual tradition and in the structure of chap. 9, in which ṭ -y Ṭ Ṭ “destruction, destroying” plays a major role.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
NAB The New American Bible
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
NIV The New International Version (1978)
REB Revised English Bible
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
the idiomatic nature of v lb.

1.b. Heb. ַדְּפַס in the pl elsewhere has the concrete sense of “overseers, persons in charge.” Such a personal sense is presupposed by v 1b (Hitzig 65). The LXX rendered “punishment,” and there may indeed be ambiguity in the term: cf. the rendering “executioners” offered by Cooke (103) and Greenberg (174). In the translation above, “fate” is an endeavor to exploit this feature. To take the term as an intensive pl (“punishment,” Fohrer ZAW 63 [1951] 38) or as hinting at the plurality of the executioners (Zimmerli 223, who renders “the woes of punishment”) would each be a less likely option.

1.c. Lit. “his”: see Note 1.a*. above.

1.d. The idiomatic sg is to be rendered pl. “Such words as hand, head …, where the organ or thing is common to a number of persons, are generally used in the singular” (A. B. Davidson, Hebrew Syntax [Edinburgh: Clark, 1896] 17 remark 4). V lb is often taken as secondary, a variant of the clause at the end of v 2a (Cornill 226–27; et al.), but it has a firm place both in the textual tradition and in the structure of chap. 9, in which ַדְּפַס ַג “destruction, destroying” plays a major role.

2.a. Heb. ַדְּפַס ַג “which is oriented” is a strange construction. Usually in Ezekiel either ַדְּפַס ַג “whose face” or ַדְּפַס ַג “which faces” (cf. 8:3) is found.

2.b. For the idiomatic lack of article, cf. 2 Chr 23:20 and see GKC 126w.

2.c. The pass ptc is here and in v 3 continued with an acc as a retention of a second acc, but in v 11 with a genitive: see GKC 116k, 121d.

2.d. Heb. ַדְּפַס ַג is a loanword from Egy. ַגְּסִי “scribe’s palette”: see T. O. Lambdin, JAOS 73 (1953) 154. LXX ַגְּסִי “belt” is a rendering that has hitherto baffled scholars: it is evidently the result of confusion with ַדְּפַס ַג “band” (cf. 13:18, 20).

3.a. The sg ַגְּסִי ַג “cherub” here appears to refer to a single, comprehensive entity, like the sg ַגְּסִי ַג “wheel structure” in 10:2, etc. The usage seems to reflect differentiation in meaning from the pl forms elsewhere in the account: see the Comment.
3.b. The preposition is used in a pregnant sense; see *GKC* 119ee.

3.c. See *HALAT* 588b. Zimmerli (224, 226, 251) followed *KB* 553a in rendering “podium” but later abandoned this meaning, in *Ezekiel* 2 490. Keel (*Jahwe-Visionen* 129 n. 4) observed that it would be difficult to jump over a podium (*Zeph* 1:9; cf. 1 Sam 5:4–5).

4.a. The *LXX* omitted the divine name, doubtless regarding it as otiose in the context. Greenberg (176) has found an interesting parallel in *Lev* 1:1: after a reference to the glory of Yahweh (in *Exod* 40:35, interrupted by vv 36–38), the divine subj is specified not with the next verb but with the one following. This gradual identification prevented an understanding of the two figures in terms of contrast. R. Rendtorff (*Leviticus* [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985] 22) has drawn attention to a further example of this phenomenon in *Exod* 24:16 + 25:1. Ohnesorge (*Jahwe gestaltet* 284 n. 4) has correctly noted the general rule that Yahweh is not specified as subj in the vision narratives, but this instance should be retained as a special case.

4.b. For the defective writing in K, see *Notes* 33:13.b.*; 40:6.b.∗

4.c. Lit. “through the city, through Jerusalem.” The *LXX* lacks the first phrase, but K יַחְדָּה “the city” is a key term in the account. The phrase may have been lost by parablepsis (Wevers 85). The second phrase is often regarded as an explanatory gloss (Cornill 227; et al.), in which case the gloss displaced the original phrase in the *LXX*, while the *MT* exhibits a conflated text.

4.d. The pair of verbs is alliterative, יִנָּה and יָנָה (cf. 6:14 and *Note* 6:14.a.*)

5.a. K יָנָה “upon” is a slip for Q יָנָה “not,” a mechanical copy of the two cases in v 4b.

5.b. Q “your eye” observes the ruling mentioned in *Note* 1.d.∗ above.

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n. note

*cf. confer, compare*

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n. note

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*MT* The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

*cf. confer, compare*

*14.a. The translation endeavors to capture the alliteration of ه יָנָה יִנָּה, two nouns meaning “ruin.”

Q “Qumran”, “Qere” *Qere* (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
6.a. The MT \( \text{יְהָנָה} b \) “young men” requires before it the copula, which may have fallen out by pseudohaplography (cf. Zimmerli 225).

6.b. The MT adds in apposition \( \text{יְהֵן} \) “the elders,” wrongly identifying with the group in 8:11–12 instead of that in 8:16. The LXX\(^a\), here represented by LXX\(^{106}\), lacks it; LXX\(^B\) betrays hexaplaric influence (Ziegler, LXX 19, 40–41). This explanatory gloss was evidently triggered by \( \text{זֶה} \) “the old” in v 6a. At the end of the verse, the LXX has “inside in the house,” in place of “in front of the house.” Evidently its Vorlage had not \( \text{יְבָה} \) but \( \text{יְבָל} \) “in my temple” (Hitzig 67). Underlying this strange reading, which corresponds to nothing in chap. 8, was probably something like \( \text{יְבָה} \) “in the inner (court) of the temple area,” which harks back to 8:16. This may well have been a (correct) explanatory gloss that displaced the reading that now appears in the MT.

7.a. The LXX “the streets” (= \( \text{תַּחְתָּה} \)) for \( \text{תַּחְתָּה} \) “the courts” is an error inspired by 11:6 (Cooke 110). Perhaps what was intended as a comparative gloss displaced the correct text.

7.b. The MT \( \text{וֹק} \text{ח} \text{וֹק} \) “Go out, and they will go out and kill” (or, with weak \( \text{וֹלָח} \) “and they went out and killed”) cannot be right. The LXX (cf. the Syr.) implies \( \text{וֹק} \text{ח} \text{וֹק} \) “go out and kill,” which is required. Since Wellhausen (in Smend 57), \( \text{וֹק} \text{ח} \text{וֹק} \) has been explained as originating in a dittograph of \( \text{וֹק} \text{ח} \text{וֹק} \). “MT follows the pattern of v 6b in adding narrative fulfillment to a command, but (a) the normal \( \text{וֹלָח} \) consec construction is not employed and (b) \( \text{וֹק} \text{ח} \text{וֹק} \) has no corresponding element in the command” (Allen in Brownlee 141). Greenberg (178) has observed that the MT violates the unity of place maintained in the vision.

8.a. The MT exhibits a mixed form \( \text{רָאוֹנָה} \text{נָה} \text{כָּנָה} \) and many MSS attest \( \text{רָאוֹנָה} \text{נָה} \text{כָּנָה} \) “and left,” a niph

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\(^a\) l.d. The idiomatic sg is to be rendered pl. “Such words as hand, head …, where the organ or thing is common to a number of persons, are generally used in the singular” (A. B. Davidson, Hebrew Syntax [Edinburgh: Clark, 1896] 17 remark 4). V lb is often taken as secondary, a variant of the clause at the end of v 2a (Cornill 226–27; et al.), but it has a firm place both in the textual tradition and in the structure of chap. 9, in which \( \text{יְבָה} \) \( \text{יְבָה} \) “destruction, destroying” plays a major role.

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**cf. confer, compare**

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ptcp, which fits the following ἔγνω “I” in a circumstantial clause (Hitzig 68). This was combined with another, inferior, reading: τὰ θέλημα ἐμαυτοῦ “and I was left.” The main clause begins in v 8b, while v 8a sets the scene for it. The alternative text made the main clause begin with v 8ab, probably under the influence of the string of first person consec verbs in v 8b. The LXX* omits v 8ab: perhaps its Vorlage or a predecessor of it already had the reading τὰ θέλημα ἐμαυτοῦ and the clause was overlooked by homoeoarcton.

8.b. For the standard presence of ὑνὴ ἀ “Lord” in this exclamatory protest, see Note 4:14.a.*

8.c. The LXX* does not represent ἀλλὰ “all.” “However, the exaggeration belongs to the fervour of the plea” (Cooke 108; cf. Kraetzschmar 103). It seems to correspond to ἀλλ’ “complete end” in the parallel 11:13.

9.a. The supplementing of ἃ ἄρκτος γέτῃ ὑπὸ “the community of Israel” with ἀλλὰ ἄρκτος ὑπὸ “and Judah” makes an ill match. The former is a comprehensive term for God’s people, used in 8:6, 10–12, and must have the same significance as “Israel” in 9:8. In 8:17 the political term “community of Judah” has been used. The addition seems to reflect an early desire to draw attention to this reference (Zimmerli, VT 8 [1958] 82; cf. Kraetzschmar 103; Herrmann 54), encouraged by the resumption of 8:17ab in 9:9ab. It is already attested in the LXX.

9.b. The LXX adds “and uncleanness,” which represents an incorporated variant ἁμήν (cf. Cornill 229) for ἁμὴν “injustice,” via a metathesized ἁμήν (Hitzig 68). The variant reflects Jerusalem’s “uncleanness” in 22:15; 24:13. Within the Masoretic tradition, there is a variant ἁμὴν “violence” (see BHK), inspired by 7:23 (cf. 8:17). Cornill insisted that the first term in the LXX, ἁμήν ἀ “injustice,” represented ἁμήν, but the latter is rendered ἁμήν ἀ in 7:23; 8:17 and ἁμήν ἀ only in 45:9, perhaps by the same translator.

10.a. The pf is performative: see Note 3:8.a.*
11.a. In place of \( \text{Krk} \) “as,” which the ancient versions attest, \( \text{Qrk} \) “according to all that” intends to make the expression more comprehensive and represents an assimilation to the longer version of this formulation: cf. especially Deut 26:14. “K … aligns with 12:7; 24:18; 37:7, 10. Q … does not occur in the book” (Allen in Brownlee 141).

1.a. For the use of \( \text{l} \) in the sense of \( \text{l} \), here with the sense “above” (cf. 1:26), see Note 2:6.d.*

1.b. The \( \text{MT} \) prefaces with \( \text{hark} \) “like the appearance of,” which has no counterpart in the \( \text{LXX} \). It doubtless originated as a comparative gloss on \( \text{bək} \) “like (stone),” noting that the basic 1:26 had \( \text{bək} \) “like the appearance of stone” instead of \( \text{bək} \). The gloss, after the sense of its purpose was lost, was incorporated into the text at a syntactically feasible point.

1.c. The \( \text{MT} \) adds \( \text{harn} \) “appeared, was seen,” which has no counterpart in \( \text{LXX} \) \( \text{Syr} \). It seems to have been a reader’s comment on the platform’s being over the heads of the cherubim, to the effect that such had been seen by Ezekiel earlier, viz. in 1:22. The reading turns up in 1:22, in the corrupted form \( \text{arwn} \) “terrible” (see Note 1:22.a.); its parallel placing gives a clue to its original meaning, or at least

* 8.a. The \( \text{pf} \) is performative here and in v 9: see Note 22:13.a.*; Waltke and O’Connor, Syntax 30.5.1d and n. 17; Jouion 112f, g.

K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” \( \text{Qere} \) (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
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* 6.d. Heb. \( \text{l} \) is used in the sense of \( \text{l} \), as often in Ezekiel (Driver, JTS 35 [1934] 54).

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* 22.a. The \( \text{MT} \) adds \( \text{arwn} \) “which is awesome,” which is not represented in the \( \text{LXX} \). Probably it was originally intended to relate not to \( \text{jrqh} \) “crystal” (Vogt, Untersuchungen 8; Greenberg, 48, who understand—on what basis?—as “dazzling” [= TEV; cf. NAB “glittering”]) but to \( \text{yqr} \) “platform.” Kraetzschmar’s suggestion (18) to read \( \text{harn} \) “was seen” and to relate it to the platform with reference to 10:1 is worth developing. In the description of the platform at 10:1, \( \text{harn} \) “was seen” occurs in the \( \text{MT} \) but is not rendered in \( \text{LXX} \) \( \text{Syr} \). It was probably a gloss referring to the preceding line, where the platform is described as “over the heads of the cherubim”: the gloss remarked that it had been seen earlier by Ezekiel, i.e., in 1:22. Here \( \text{arwn} \) is its counterpart, corrupted from a comparative gloss \( \text{harn} \) and going with what follows: “which was seen extended over their heads” (cf. Dan 1:15 for the construction). The adaptation to \( \text{arwn} \) “awesome” was doubtless influenced by its appearance in theophanic descriptions elsewhere (Gen 28:17; Judg 13:6); its strange use to describe the noun of comparison is a clue to its secondary character.
perceived meaning. One might more naturally have related the gloss to the throne of 1:26a, as a case of déjá vu. If the MT in 1:22 reflects the original meaning of the gloss, it properly belonged before v ā r Al [“(which) was seen (over the heads),” but was inserted instead before µh y[l] “above them.” If the evidence of 1:22 reflects a mistaken perception, that perception was the mistaking of µh y[l] “it was seen above them” as a reference to the platform rather than to the throne, and the mistake was caused by equating l[l] “above (them)” and v ā r Al [“over the heads.” In the MT the accentuation suggests that Yahweh was understood to be the subj (so Keil 133, 135; cf. Becker, “Ez 8–11” 146 n. 42).

2.a. The LXX* does not represent f ma yw “and he said.” It is easier to explain this as omission of a redundant item than to account for its insertion. Zimmerli (226) attributes it to the secondary editing of chap. 10, which one would take to mean that the divine command is redactional. However, in both his sections on form and on exegesis (234, 250), he regards the command as substantially original but with reference to the ark in the temple rather than to the celestial conveyance: in v 2 only the phrase f ̃ w̃ ỹ b̃ m µ̃ ỹ b̃ w̃ r̃ k̃ “from between the cherubim” is secondary (254). Greenberg (180) plausibly accounts for f ma yw as a means of slowing the narrative and thus lending it solemnity; he gives other examples of this phenomenon.

2.b. The sg l[l] g here refers collectively to the wheel structure or set of wheels; one may compare the collective usage in 23:24; 26:10, with reference to war chariots. Cf. b W k “cherubim-structure” in 9:3; 10:4.

2.c. The MT is at first sight a further instance of the phenomenon just mentioned. However, in chaps. 8–11 the text seems to distinguish quite strictly in semantic terms between the collective sg form and the pl form (see the Comment). Accordingly, there is much to be said for reading a pl µ y b w k, as later in the verse, by assumption of pseudohaplography of y y before w as many scholars since Hitzig (69), including Greenberg (181), have done. The pl forms later in the verse and those in the narrative fulfillment of the command at v 7 provide internal support for this change. An appeal to the LXX (BHS) is of little value, since it has harmonistic pl forms in 9:3; 10:4, where the MT has sg forms.

3.a. The MT v yha w b b b is a case of a pronoun with a noun in apposition: “when he—the man—went in.” This is a construction not uncommon in later Heb. and in Aram. (Joüon 146e; Rooker, Biblical Hebrew 91–92). However, Zimmerli (226) has noted a pattern of metathesis of w and dh with this

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Cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
verb, and this instance is doubtless to be so explained. Alternatively, וַיָּחַד “the man” was a gloss intended to clarify the suffix (Herrmann 54; Dijkstra, “Glosses” 67–68).

4.a. In the light of 9:3, | | is used in the sense of | | “to”: see Note 1:17.c.* As in 9:3, the preposition is used in a pregnant sense, “and (moved) to” (Cooke 119).

6.a. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:31) noted that the inf is continued with finite verbs and the main clause is in v 7. Rather, it begins with the second verb in v 6b.

7.a. Heb. | | וַיָּחַד has an indefinite subj: “and one extended.” The followingṯ וְנַחַד here seems to include a partitive sense “(one) from among,” “(one) of a group”: cf. the partitive use of ויָּחַד “from” (cf. BDB 580b, which with reference to the subj cites Lev 25:33; Dan 11:5) and the sense “among” for וְנַחַד and “from among” for וְנַחַד with reference to a group of persons (BDB 1063b) and likewise for בְּרִֽיָּם and בְּרִיָּם (BDB 899a). It can hardly bear a sense of direction toward the cherubim, for which one would expectṯ וְנַחַד, as in v 2. The MT בְּרִֽיָּם “the cherub,” idiomatically used for “a cherub” (Becker, “Ez 8–11” 147 n. 44, with reference to GKC 126q–s; Joüon 137m–n), has no counterpart in the LXX*. It appears to be a clarifying, exegetically correct gloss: the rest of the verse shows that the man is not the subj, and the content of v 8 indicates an understanding in terms of a cherub’s hand. The LXX* does not represent וַיָּחַד בְּרִֽיָּם “from among the cherubim.” Zimmerli (226–27) observed that the omission of “the cherub” makes the LXX* “unintelligible”: it reads first as if the man were the subj and then treats him as object of the activity. While one does not need “the cherub,” the accompanying prepositional phrase is required. Did an originalἐκ μεσοутה מֶרְכָּבֵה נְסֵכָי “from the midst of the cherubim” (vv 2, 6) fall out by homoeoarcton before ἀπό μεσού (ἐκ/ἐκτ)? Then the scholarly deduction from the LXX* text concerning the secondary nature of v 7abg (Hitzig 70–71; et al.; cf. BHS) loses its

* 17.c. Heb. | | , usually “on,” is used in the sense of | | “to” (cf. vv 9, 12), as often in Ezekiel, doubtless under the influence of Aram. usage (see Rooker, Biblical Hebrew in Transition 128–31).
basis.

7.b. Zimmerli (226), following Herrmann (54), urged that the minority reading ṭwāyōb ẓāl be read for ṭwāyōb ẓāḥ “the cherubim.” However, Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:31) correctly observed that the lamed only appears with compound prepositions such as ṭwāyōb “from between” and not with simple ones such as ṭwāyōb “between” here.

7.c. In differentiation from the cherub’s “hand” (ḏy) in vv 7a, 8, here ḫy “hollow of the hand” is used.

8.a. LXX Syr. render “and I saw,” reflecting assimilation to the verb at the beginning of v 9.

8.b. Heb. ḫy “hand” seems to be used collectively. The LXX renders pl, probably reflecting ḫyd “hands” (= v 21) in its Vorlage. In 1:8 a sg appears in the LXX and a pl in the MT. For the rendering “arms and hands,” see Note 1:8.a.*

9.a. The Heb. repetition has a distributive force: see GKC 134l, q. The single rendering in LXX* Syr. is the result of haplography (Wevers 89).

10.a. Heb. ṭhām w is a casus pendens, “and as for their appearance” (Cooke 120).

10.b. For the masc ḫa “one,” as in 1:16, see Note 1:16.c.*

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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
* 18.a. The MT ṭh hāy w ṭh ṭh bg ṭh ybg ṭh bg “and as for their rims, and they had height and they had fear” is problematic. The LXX kai; eidoν auta; vaimples for the last clause ṭh hāy w “and I saw them,” presumably by assimilation to the verb in vv 4, 15, 27, although the form of the verb corresponds to that found in vv 1, 28. The reading is hardly original: one expects a direct object, as in v 27, or further description with ṭh mn ṭh “and behold” (cf. BHS), as in v 4; 2:9, for which there is no evidence. The MT should probably be retained in v 18a, if only for lack of a convincing alternative. The initial ṭh ybg ṭh bg is to be taken as a casus pendens (Taylor 57; Waldman, JBL 103 [1984] 617–18). Elsewhere ṭh ybg means “fear” rather than “fearfulness” (Cornill 183), even in Ps 90:11, to which Smend (13) appealed; but analogy with ḫ ḫ ḫ “fear, object of fear” makes such an extension of meaning feasible. For ṭwāyōb ṭh bg ṭh bg ṭh bg in the sense of “rims,” cf. ṭwāyōb ṭh bg in 1 Kgs 7:33.
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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Heb. Hebrew
11.a. In v 11a, although in the LXX the cherubim (ἀυτοί ἄντι οἱ θείς) are twice the subj, the wheels must be in view. Both the preceding context and the evidently parallel 1:17 so indicate. The fact that v 11b does not depend on the wheel description in chap. 1 makes a different subj possible. V 12, especially the differentiating “and the wheels,” implies that the cherubim are now in view. Then ἀνόηθα must mean not the front wheel (Keil 139; Eichrodt 109; HALAT 1088a) but either the head of the (leading) cherub (phia; Jahn 62; Zimmerli 127 [on p. 227 “front wheel” seems to be a mistranslation of das vordeste]; Greenberg 181) or actually the leading cherub (δ; Kraetzschmar 110; Fohrer 57). Of the latter alternatives, which yield a similar overall meaning, the first seems to be the better in the light of the sequel. The directional locking of the wheels (v 11a) is grounded in a parallel locking of the cherubim. The reference in v 12a to the physical parts of the cherubim seems to be connected with the prior mention of ἀνόηθα in the sense of “head.” Then the subj of the main verbs in v 11b is the other heads, which as they moved still looked respectively to the right or left or the reverse of the direction of travel. This static posture is then applied to the rest of their bodies. Vogt (Untersuchungen 70) has followed GB 645b in taking ἔρχεται “after it” with the relative clause, rather than with the following verb: it then supplies a resumptive pronoun for the antecedent Ἐπιδομένον τῷ ἠγαθόν, “the place,” with reference to the directional aim. Perhaps it should be pointed as an explicit subj ἔρχεται “the others [= heads] in relation to it.” The reading Ἓν τῷ ἄνοηθα “the first head,” implied by the LXX (see BHS), clearly needs more explanation than a λάθος error. It surely arose as an explanatory comment on ἄνοηθα ἀνόηθα “(the face of) the first” in v 14. The comment observed, in line with the corrupted MT, that the faces were not features of an individual cherub’s single head but belonged to separate heads. The marginal comment was understandably taken as a correction for the very similar-looking ἔρχεται ἤ “the others” a little higher up and displaced it. For this type of textual development, see Note 2:6.a.* This explanation raises a problem: v 14 is not extant in the LXX, but a comment on it is. This phenomenon is to be explained by the fact that

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* 6.a. So the LXX, implying τῷ Τίτῳ, a μὴ ὑπνοῦσα, the MT ἄργυντα, a μὴ ὑπερβολή “and of their words do not be afraid” (see BHS). The LXX is generally preferred: Zimmerli (90) notes that it avoids the awkward duplicating of ἄργυντα, a “do not be afraid” and supplies a parallel structure in v 6a and v 6b. For the translator’s change in the order of words, see Marquis (Textus 13 [1986] 78–80). Did the MT originate in a marginal variant that compared or anticipated the first clause in v 6b, which variant was eventually taken as a correction of τῷ Τίτῳ, a μὴ ὑπνοῦσα “and by their faces do not be intimidated” in view of its identical order of object with prepositional prefix and suffix + negative + verb? Then it is a further case of a “cuckoo” invading the textual nest, for which see in principle my articles in JTS 22 (1971) 143–50; 24 (1973) 69–78.
the LXX of Ezekiel at times attests a post-Masoretic texttype: in the history of its Vorlage, v 14 once stood but was subsequently deleted, perhaps after comparison with another, more highly regarded examplar, but conceivably simply because in its corrupted form it contradicted 1:10.

12.a. The MT \( \mu \tau \rho \varsigma \beta \ \lambda \kappa \pi \omega \ \kappa \pi \) “and all their bodies” is not represented in the LXX*, which may indicate that it originated in a (correct) exegetical gloss. The final four words of v 11 are to be understood in v 12a. In v 12b the switch from suffixes to article is a clue to a syntactical change.

12.b. The MT adds an unconnected \( \mu \pi \nu \rho \pi \nu \omega \alpha \) “their wheels,” which Kraetzschmar (111), followed by Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:3) and Greenberg (179), plausibly traced to a variant of \( \mu \nu \pi \pi \nu \omega \ \alpha \) “the wheels” at the head of v 12b, which has been incorporated into the text. The LXX* seems to attest the term, so that it must have been an early gloss. The suffixed form was presumably the result of assimilation to the three preceding nouns in v 12a. It may well reflect an understanding of the cherubim’s bodies as covered with eyes, as well as the wheels, in line with the verse division in the MT. However, comparison with 1:18 suggests that only the wheels had eyes (Torrey, JBL 58 [1939] 71–73).

13.a. The REB has misunderstood v 13. The MT adds v 14, “‘Each had four faces’: the face of the first was a cherub’s face, and the face of the second a human face, and the third a lion’s face and the fourth an eagle’s face.” This material is on the borderline between the concerns of text criticism and of redaction criticism. It seems to make use of cue words, “each had four faces,” a sign of a textual gloss, yet a redactional feature in 1:2. The cue words could be a citation of 1:6a and belong with the echoes of chap. 1 already encountered in chap. 10; or they could be a citation of 10:21a and so a gloss incorporated into the text at a different place, before the interpretive comment of v 15b, rather than after its occurrence in v 20a. The presence of v 14 is to be regarded as a textual issue. There is at this point a break in the parallel treatment of chap. 1: vv 9–12 refer back consecutively to 1:15–18, while vv 16–17 deal equally consecutively with 1:19–21. Yet v 14 harks back to 1:6a and also to 1:10. While this inconsistency could be interpreted in terms of a further redactional layer, its association with the glosses represented in v 15 suggests that it originated in a late gloss. One might also adduce the omission of v 14 in the LXX*, but at an earlier stage in its Vorlage, v 14 does seem to have been present, before it was discarded (see Note 11.a.*). The content of v 14 appears confused: v 14bg, like 1:10, envisions four...
faces for each cherub, in line with the cue words, yet v 14b strangely speaks in terms of each of the four cherubim having one, unique face. If v 14 is a textual gloss, one expects greater conformity with 1:10 and must conclude that subsequent corruption is to blame (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 5:32). Harmony with both 1:10 and v 14a dictates for v 14b an original µd α  γνπ  γνυν  γνω  γνπ  δ  γνπ  “the first the face of an ox and the second the face of a man.” It is feasible to take the first γνπ “the face of” in the MT as the uncorrected result of a copyist’s eye jumping from δ  γνπ  “to each” to δ  γνπ  “the first.” Then γνπ  W “and the face of” in the second clause came in as a false harmonization with the corrupted start of the first clause. As for δ  γνπ  “the face of the cherub,” the unique presence of the article with a genitive noun of an animate type betrays its alien nature. It may well have originated in a subsequent gloss on δ  γνπ  “the face of the first” (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 5:32), which later still displaced the basic γνπ  “the face of an ox.” Whereas 1:10 lists the faces directionally, this annotation takes its cue from the “four” of 10:21 (and 1:6) and lists them numerically. In contrast to the southern orientation of 1:10, the numbering of the faces seems to represent a westerly orientation. The Syr interestingly lacks the first γνπ “the face of” and γνπ  W “and the face of,” but its clause “one (face) was the face of a cherub” discloses that its text is not pre-Masoretic but post-Masoretic, the result of a later partial attempt to harmonize with 1:10. It is just possible that the MT was intended to signify “the first face …

* 11.a. In v 11a, although in the LXX the cherubim (αυτα  ντις “they”) are twice the subj, the wheels must be in view. Both the preceding context and the evidently parallel 1:17 so indicate. The fact that v 11b does not depend on the wheel description in chap. 1 makes a different subj possible. V 12, especially the differentiating “and the wheels,” implies that the cherubim are now in view. Then V α  γνπ  “must mean not the front wheel (Keil 139; Eichrodt 109; *HALAT* 1088a) but either the head of the (leading) cherub (Æ  Jahn 62; Zimmerli 127 [on p. 227 “front wheel” seems to be a mistranslation of *das vordeste* ]; Greenberg 181) or actually the leading cherub (S; Kraetzschmar 110; Fohrer 57). Of the latter alternatives, which yield a similar overall meaning, the first seems to be the better in the light of the sequel. The directional locking of the wheels (v 11a) is grounded in a parallel locking of the cherubim. The reference in v 12a to the physical parts of the cherubim seems to be connected with the prior mention of V α  γνπ  in the sense of “head.” Then the subj of the main verbs in v 11b is the other heads, which as they moved still looked respectively to the right or left or the reverse of the direction of travel. This static posture is then applied to the rest of their bodies. Vogt (*Untersuchungen* 70) has followed G 645b in taking γντρ  “after it” with the relative clause, rather than with the following verb: it then supplies a resumptive pronoun for the antecedent μ ντρ  μη “the place,” with reference to the directional aim. Perhaps it should be pointed as an explicit subj γντρ  “the others [= heads] in relation to it.” The reading δ  γνπ  v a r  “the first head,” implied by the LXX (see *BHS*), clearly needs more explanation than a γνπ  “error. It surely arose as an explanatory comment on δ  γνπ  (γνπ  “(the face of) the first” in v 14. The comment observed, in line with the corrupted MT, that the faces were not features of an individual cherub’s single head but belonged to separate heads. The marginal comment was understandably taken as a correction for the very similar-looking γντρ  “a little higher up and displaced it. For this type of textual development, see Note 2:6.a.* This explanation raises a problem: v 14 is not extant in the LXX*, but a comment on it is. This phenomenon is to be explained by the fact that the LXX of Ezekiel at times attests a post-Masoretic texttype: in the history of its Vorlage, v 14 once stood but was subsequently deleted, perhaps after comparison with another, more highly regarded exemplar, but conceivably simply because in its corrupted form it contradicted 1:10.

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the second face,” as the Vg interpreted (cf. Becker, “Ez 8–11” 148 and n. 46, with reference to GKC 134o–p; Joüon 138b, 142o).

13.b. The MT also adds v 15 “and the cherubim rose; they were the living creatures I had seen at the Kebar Canal.” It is present in the LXX*, but Greenberg (183) speaks for most scholars in describing it as an “awkward anticipation of vss. 19a, 20a below; apparently fragments copied in at the wrong place.” Kraetzschmar (112) observed that the past consecutive verb in v 15a does not fit the descriptive nature of the context. This amalgamation of separate glosses into a continuous format within the text is no stranger to the MT of Ezekiel: see my note in ZAW 102 (1990) 408–13. Vv 14–15 appear to be a cluster of annotations that relate to vv 19a, 20a, 21a. V 14, an elaboration of v 21a, was wrongly attached to the echoing of v 20a in v 15a, as I suggested above. V 15b had earlier become attached to µybwrkh “the cherubim” in v 15a, having floated from its marginal mooring near µybwr “cherubim” in v 20. So the gloss of v 15a joined the text first, presumably from the margin, where it functioned as a comment on Åarah l[m µwr “to rise from the ground” in v 16; the comment compared v 19a, where their capability was put into practice. As to the origin of the second gloss, it is best understood as a variant reading. It seems to scrupulously delete the bare phrase [Arc yAh]a tít “under the God of Israel.” It is significant that in v 22 after yřf yřf “I saw” the LXX* adds “under the glory of the God of Israel,” which doubtless originated as a more seemly variant of the phrase in v 20: the Tg renders in this very way in v 20. Thus there is evidence of two expedients to render the text in a more seemly way, to expand (LXX*, Tg.); or to delete (MT, in v 15b) the divine reference.

16.a. Heb. wbsy has been used earlier in the sense of changing direction, in v 11a (= 1:17) with reference to the restricted mobility of the wheels while moving on the ground (cf. 1:15, 19). In 10:11b, however, independently of chap. 1, it seems to refer to the similarly limited directional range of the cherubim in flight. Here it relates differently to the wheels, while the celestial conveyance was in flight. In chap. 1 the two means of mobility, the wheels and the living creatures (via their wings), are not mechanically linked, and theoretically the wheels might have fallen off or pursued an independent course. But no, affirms the present passage, they were locked into the same flight path by the controlling “spirit ” of v 17. It seems to be implied here that the wheels rotated even in the air, which may have been deduced from 3:13. One may compare the representation of flying horses, reindeer, bicycles, and vehicles in films: legs and wheels move as if on the ground.

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cf. confer, compare
n. note
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
16.b. Lit. “from beside them.” The verb ὁδὸς ἱαμ “change direction” is used in a different context than that of v 11, as we observed above. The Vg residebant “did (not) remain behind” may imply ὁδὸς ἵαμ “did (not) stay (behind),” which was adopted by Cornill (229). However, like ὁδὸς ἵαμ, οὐκ ἄπειλόντο “were not left behind,” it seems to be a rough paraphrase of the MT. Cf. the NJPS “did not roll away from their side.” The LXX* does not represent ὁδὸς ἵαμ ἴαμ ἴαμ ἴαμ ἴαμ “even they from their side,” possibly because the translator could not perceive the novel relationship between the prepositional phrase and the verb. However, in v 16a the LXX* has ὁδὸς ἵαμ ἴαμ ἴαμ ἴαμ “they too beside them,” which clearly stands for (ὁδὸς ἵαμ ἴαμ ἴαμ ἴαμ) ἵαμ ἴαμ ἴαμ ἴαμ and fits well there. Cooke (117) considered the phrase here in v 16b an accidental repetition of the one in v 16a, which has been shortened in the MT. Then ὁδὸς ἵαμ has a locative sense, as in 40:7. While this proposal fits v 16a, it leaves v 16b too skimpy. If the mention of the wheels’ changing direction is correct, it does require its present qualification in this new setting. For the expression in v 16b, cf. ὁδὸς ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ “and he turned away from him” in 1 Sam 17:30. There is a possible clue that the LXX* once contained the material now missing from v 16b. For “the wheels” it unnecessarily has “their wheels,” which raises the suspicion that ἴαμ ἵαμ “them” is a relic of a rendering for ὁδὸς ἵαμ ἵαμ “from beside them,” lost within the Gr. tradition. In that case the Vorlage read ὁδὸς ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ “the wheels.”

17.a. While the stem ὁδὸς ἵαμ “be high” is used for most conjugations, it is replaced by ὁδὸς ἵαμ ἵαμ in the niph.

17.b. See 1:21–22 and Note 1:21.b.*

18.a. The MT has a longer text, τὸ ἡμιῆμ ἴαμ ἴαμ ἵαμ ἵαμ “from upon the threshold of the temple,” while the LXX* implies simply τὸ ἡμιῆμ ἵαμ ἵαμ “from the temple,” which scholars prefer. Greenberg (183), following Cornill (234), has observed that the verb ἱαμ ἵαμ “go out” leads one to expect ὁδὸς ἵαμ “from,” while ὁδὸς ἵαμ “from upon” would be more natural with ὁδὸς ἵαμ “rise,” as in v 4. The MT reflects an exegetical gloss based on v 4 or a comparative note.

19.a. The MT, reflecting the general textual tradition, places this last phrase at the end of the verse. Comparison with 11:22 suggests that it belongs here. In its position in the MT, it reads very strangely:

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Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Cf. confer, compare
NJPS New Jewish Publication Society Version
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

*21.b. Heb. הַיָּעָר in vv (20) 21–22 is interpreted as a collective sg “living creatures.” Presumably it was used to “emphasize the unity of the ensemble” (Greenberg 48).

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one cannot credit even a redactor with putting it there. Evidently, at an early stage a line of twenty-five letters was accidentally dropped (see Note 1:20.b.*), and it was replaced in an incorrect position. V 20 harks back to the first sentence of v 19, just as v 8 comments on v 7a: the narrative is allowed to reach a natural resting place before commentary is added. But this delay caused the error to go undetected: v 20 flows naturally from the misplaced v 19b.

19.b. LXX Syr. have a pl verb, as a logical consequence of the error discussed in the previous Note, which removed the antecedent of the sg verb. The parallelism of v 18b and 11:23b supports the MT.

20.a. Here and in v 22 the demonstrative pronoun is attracted into the number of the predicate (Cooke 120–21).

21.a. The MT repeats הָרָא “four,” as if distributive, but a longer formulation would then be required (cf. v 9 and Cooke 120–21); besides, one expects then a comparable idiom in the next clause (Zimmerli 228). The proto-Masoretic 4QEzek² seems to have contained the repetition (Lust, “Ezekiel MSS in Qumran” 97; Sinclair, RevQ 14 [1989] 104). But the cue phrase in v 14a and the text of LXX* Vg here lack the repetition, which is simply a dittograph. However, the LXX* betrays an awareness of the longer text in the history of its Vorlage: in the next clause it has “eight” in place of “four.” Evidently, a marginal הָרָא הָרָא “four four,” a Masoretic type of variant, was taken as a correction of the wrong numeral (cf. Kraetzschmar 114); the Gr. translator added up the numerical pair.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
* 20.b. The traditional text, supported by all ancient witnesses, adds “would ascend alongside them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.” The same material reappears in v 21b. What distinguishes it from the repetitive text of the rest of vv 19–21 is its lack of logical continuity with what precedes in v 20a. One expects a reference to the forward movement of the wheels at this point, as occurs in v 21a: mention of the vertical movement of the wheels is premature (cf. Höhne, “Thronwagenvision” 93). Seemingly a copyist’s eye jumped to וּבְנָף would ascend” in v 21b, and he copied out the rest of v 21b, using a text, which, like that of the LXX, still lacked וּבְנָף וּבְנָף “the wheels” in v 21b. Subsequently, the missing words were reinserted together with the rest of v 21, but without deletion of the now superfluous six words. The cause of the parablepsis may have been the omission of a 34-letter line, if not of two of 17 letters: for this phenomenon, cf. H. M. Orlinsky (JBL 61 [1942] 88–89), who refers to lines in Heb. MSS with about 11–13 or 14, 17, 23, 25, 30, and 35 letters to a line, and to my Greek Chronicles (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 2:133–36. For another case of a corrected and undeleted error, ***see 22:20 and Note. Höhne (“Thronwagenvision” 93) took v 20 as a gloss on v 21b that wanted to make clear that the spirit was the same as in v 12, but this seems an unnecessarily drastic explanation of the overlap. He rightly noted that 10:17 reflects not v 20 but v 21.

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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
MSS manuscript(s)
RevQ Revue de Qumrân
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
22.a. The LXX* does not represent מִגְרָשָׁם “their semblance,” but the text can hardly exist without it (see the next Note). The translator may have left it untranslated as a cognate acc. My earlier explanation of it as a gloss from 1:13 (in Brownlee 148) founders on its topical dissimilarity.

22.b. Lit. “and themselves,” best regarded as a second object of the previous verb (Cooke 121; Blau, VT 4 [1954] 12). This is simply a case of poorly written Hebrew. It is methodologically wrong to reconstruct the LXX καὶ ἀπὸ αὐτῶν “and them” (with reference to the cherubim) as ἦν ὁ κ. in (Cornill 234; et al.). The LXX clearly reflects the same text as the MT, and there is no graphical relationship between it and the presumed original (cf. Bertholet [1987] 60; Barthélémy, Critique 3:62). Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 150; cf. Rooker, Biblical Hebrew 88–90) regarded מִגְרָשָׁם as the subj of the following verb, appealing to Mishnaic usage, but he seems to have abandoned this notion later: it is not reflected in the NEB. Whether or not מִגְרָשָׁם can at times express an emphatic nominative, it does not seem to do so here, contrary to my earlier opinion in Brownlee (148)

1.a. The repetition is firmly established in the textual tradition. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:34) and others have deleted as a gloss, and Talmon (Textus 1 [1960] 172) found conflation here, but “Hebrew writers do repeat themselves” (Wevers 93).

1.b. The LXX “about twenty-five” may reflect an exegetical identification with the group in 8:16. If so, this equation reflects a different layer of tradition than the LXX* text in 8:16, which has instead “about twenty.”

3.a. See the Comment.

5.a. Usually the messenger formula includes the title יָהָדָה “Lord,” as in v 7 (see Note 2:4.c.*). There is a parallel in 21:8(3).

5.b. The MT יִדְּוִל “I know” it is a sg suffix resuming the pl antecedent, a permissible Heb construction (see GKC 135p; Joüon 149a). However, dittography of he may have occurred (Cornill

cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
VT Vetus Testamentum
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
NEB The New English Bible
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*4.c. For the authenticity of יָהָדָה “Lord” in the messenger formula, see the appendix in Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556–62, which reverses the policy of deletion he earlier advocated throughout his two volumes. For the LXX evidence, see the discussion of McGregor (Greek Text of Ezekiel 75–93).
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
236, noting, perhaps unfairly, the non-representation in LXX Vg).

6.a. The pf with weak waw is used when “the second verb merely repeats the idea of the first, being synonymous or in some way parallel with it” (Davidson, Hebrew Syntax 58[a]).

7.a. The MT ayxwh is generally taken as an error for the widely attested (see BHS) ayxwa “I will take out.” A copyist’s eye may have slipped to -y[h] X W -W “(and I will) take out” in v 9, which is set in a similar context, and made an inadvertent error. Keil (147) accepted the MT as a pf with an indefinite subj (cf. Greenberg 185).

8.a. For the formulaic use of yndâ “Lord” in a divine-saying formula, see Note 5:11.a.*


12.a. The omission of vv 11–12a in LXX seems to be merely due to homoeoteleuton (Ziegler, LXX 129; Wevers 95): cf. the comparable loss of 33:25ab–27a.

12.b. The MT adds “by whose rules you have not walked and whose standards you have not met, but you have acted in accord with the standards of the nations around you,” which has no counterpart in the LXX*. It seems to be a later comment borrowed from 5:7, except that there a negative statement appears in the last clause. Greenberg (188) has made the form-critical observation that only here is a recognition formula supplemented with material relating to Israel’s sin, rather than to divine activity. The relevance of the comment at this point is not immediately clear. It functions as a general accusation and as justification for the judgment. It must have been triggered by the recurrence of the phrase µyfpv hc [“perform acts of judgment” (v 9b) in 5:8 (see Note 5:8.c.): the addition attests a pre-corrupted text.

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
* 11.a. For the formulaic use of yndâ “Lord” in a divine-saying formula, see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556, 562.
Heb. Hebrew
Cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
there). It also serves as a counterpart to v 20a, which must have encouraged the retention of the comparative note.

13.a. Cf. 9:8 and see the Note on 4:14.a.*

13.b. The ancient versions understood as a question, by comparison with 9:8. Possibly the MT has suffered loss of an interrogative he by haplography (Kraetzschmar 119; et al.). On the other hand, the affirmation may serve as an intensification of 9:8 (cf. Eichrodt 140–41).


15.a. Lit. “as for …, of whom …” The extended *casus pendens* is not resolved until the object pronouns of v 16, a phenomenon that bonds the two parts of the oracle with remarkable compactness. Ohnesorge (*Jahwe gestaltet* 59–60) has suggested that для а “whom” means “because,” with reference to Eccl 8:11 (cf. 1 Sam 25:26).

15.b. Heb. у т в г н а “your men of redemption” seemingly has a subjective suffix (Horst, *VT* 3 [1953] 337–38; cf. Brownlee 164). LXX Syr. imply у т в г н а “your men of exile, fellow exiles (= NRSV),” which has been preferred by some scholars since Ewald (252) and Cornill (237). However, Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:34) observed that for this sense я б “sons” would have been used: cf. на в г я б “exiles” in Ezra 4:1, etc. The ensuing context develops the motif of possession of land, to which the term in the MT alludes: see the Comment.

15.c. For this phrase, cf. 20:40 and the redactional 36:10.

* 8.c. In the context the MT утв п м means ethical “standards” (vv 6, 7); it is here used in the sense утв п “acts of judgment” (vv 10, 15; cf. other passages listed in *BHS*). It is not possible to determine which word is represented in the LXX. Kraetzschmar (59) and Greenberg (111) justify the MT in terms of wordplay between crime and punishment, but more probably the latter form is to be read (Cornill 204 et al.): the MT is a case of mechanical assimilation to the term in v 7, induced by the general overlap of vocabulary.

Cf. confer, compare


**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare


cf. confer, compare

**VT** *Vetus Testamentum*

cf. confer, compare

**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

**Syr.** Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

**NRSV** New Revised Standard Version (1989)

cf. confer, compare

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
15.d. The ancient versions agree with the MT’s pointing as an impv, which thus reflects a common exegetical tradition. However, Hitzig (78) revived the proposal of medieval Jewish commentators to repoint as pf, in line with the parallel clause, and most commentators have followed suit. The evidently resumptive causative pf $\mu y t q_j f$ h “I sent them far away” on Yahweh’s lips in v 16 affords a further internal argument for so doing.

15.e. Heb. $\ddot{y} h$ is used as an anticipatory pronoun: “it, namely the land” (cf. Joüon 146e). Its absence from the similar 33:24b and non-representation in the LXX have led Bertholet ([1897] 62) and a few others to query its authenticity. On the other hand, Cornill (237) and others have regarded $\ddot{a} r a h$ “the land” as the intruder: it could be a comparative gloss from 33:24. Perhaps the MT has a conflated text, and the LXX preserves one of the two variants. It is hardly true that $\ddot{a} y h$ by itself has no antecedent (Zimmerli 229–30): originally it could have referred to Jerusalem (Herrmann 57; Eichrodt 111; Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet 7), as a parallel to the quotation in v 3. However, the phrase more naturally refers to the land (cf. 36:5; Exod. 6:8), and certainly by the textual stage of v 17b, a reference to the land is presupposed. Brownlee (154), disregarding the Masoretic accentuation, made a separate clause: “This is ours.”

16.a. Heb. $\ddot{i} k$ is evidently used with an asseverative sense (Hitzig 78; et al., including Zimmerli 230): cf. Joüon 164b. Joüon 172b here takes as concessive, “although,” but “$\ddot{i} k$” alone is not capable of introducing concessions of the real [as distinct from hypothetical] type” (A. Aejmelaeus, JBL 105 [1986] 199 n. 18). She has found a causal meaning here, presumably by taking v 16b as a further part of the causal clause in a negative sense, as Ewald (251) and Smend (65) did. It is more likely that v 16b has a positive meaning, and so $\ddot{i} k$ cannot be causal.

16.b. Heb. $f [\ddot{m}$ functions as appositional to $v d q m$, “a little sanctuary”: for the combination, cf. $f z [\ddot{m}$ “a little help” in Dan 11:34 (Greenberg 190). BDB 590a and HALAT 578a take as adverbial, with a similar qualitative sense.

17.b. The LXX has third pl pronouns throughout v 17, harmonizing with v 16. In the case of μτωρπν “you were scattered,” this necessitated construing as μτκρπν “I scattered them,” from Αρπν instead of Αρω. That stem does not occur elsewhere in Ezekiel.

19.a. The MT ḫ נ “one, a single” has no clear rapport with the context. The LXX implies נ א “another,” which most scholars since Hitzig (79), including Barthélemy (Critique 3:67–69), have adopted (cf. 1 Sam 10:9), via a ḫ /ד error. It aligns with the change of heart in v 19b. The supposition of an original ḫ נ “new” (attested by Syr. Tg.; cf. v 19a), distorted into ḫ נ via an intermediate ḫ נ (Cornill 238; Zimmerli 230), is too speculative, as Liwak (“Probleme” 130) observed. The MT may have been influenced by Jer 32:39. Barthélemy (“‘Un seul’ ” 329–38) supposes that the original reading was deliberately changed because of the perception of a pejorative connotation.

19.b. The MT, in principle reflecting the general textual tradition, adds “and a new spirit I will put within you.” The widely attested reading μβרק נ “within them” (cf. BHS), although adopted by many scholars, smacks of secondary harmonization. If the criterion is to reconstruct the most likely textual development, the MT is to be explained in terms of a comparative gloss from 36:26 (Levin, Verheissung 207 and n. 36; Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet 11).

20.a. For the ingressive-factitive sense of the verb, see N. Lohfink, “Beobachtungen” 297 n. 79.

21.a. The MT ב ל “but to the heart of,” though supported by the LXX*, cannot be original: ב ל “heart” unnecessarily anticipates ב ל “their heart,” and some indication of a differentiated group of people is required. Hitzig (79) and others have derived from the Tg. a reading נ ל W“but after” (cf.

cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgardensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
n. note
n. note
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
20:16; 33:31; cf. the Vg “and after the heart of”). Sperber (Bible in Aramaic 4B:336) has cautioned that, although b/l is not represented in the Tg., the Tg. renders l a “to” as r t b “after” in 16:26, 28, while Cornill (288–89) observed that the textual development from this supposed original is difficult to explain. Cornill himself reconstructed the text as y r j a h l a W “but as for these (who) after,” arguing that b/l was put into the text too soon and subsequently y r j a fell out. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:38–39) found this reconstruction too radical. He read b/l A l a h l a W with a wordplay on two senses of b/l: “but as for those (whose) heart adheres to the ‘heart’ or essential meaning (i.e. immoral consequences).” More plausibly Greenberg (191) has emended to -m h x v b h l a W “but as for those (whose) … (walk) in (their loathsome rites),” comparing b ûh l “walk in” (vv 12, 20) and b l “heart” (v 19) as the contextual components that have been reused here. He was implicitly following Kraetzschmar (122; cf. BHK).

Perhaps after h l a W was abbreviated to l a W (cf. BDB 41a), haplography of lamed was assumed, in order to avoid the impossible apparent phenomenon of two adjacent prepositions. For the asyndetic relative clause, cf. Joüon 158a–db.

21.b. For the performative pf see, Note 3:8.a.*

21.c. For the use of y nd a “Lord” in the divine-saying formula, see Note 5:11.a.*

23.a. Hardly “from the middle of” (NRSV). The temple was adjacent to the eastern wall of the city. Cf. the use of û b l b to mean “inside” as an emphatic variant of b “in,” e.g., in Gen 18:24, 26 (cf. Bertholet [1897] 64). One expects û b l û “from inside”: the expression û b l û is unique. There is a contrast with the mountain outside the city (Toy 117).

24.a. Lit. “to the Chaldeans”: see Joüon 93d. Idiomatically, it means “to Chaldea”: see BDB 505a and cf. 16:29; 23:16.

24.b. The form h a f û “vision” is used here (twice) and in 43:3, instead of the standard fem form.

cf. confer, compare
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Tg. Targum
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
* 8.a. The pf is performative here and in v 9: see Note 22:13.a.*; Waltke and O’Connor, Syntax 30.5.1d and n. 17; Joüon 112f, g.
* 11.a. For the formulaic use of y nd a “Lord” in a divine-saying formula, see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556, 562.
Cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
24.c. Heb. µyhla jwrb “by means of the spirit of God” can hardly qualify the verb of which jw “spirit” is subj. It seems rather to qualify the “vision,” which virtually has a verbal force, “that which was seen (by means of).” In v 5 hwhy jw “the spirit of Yahweh” occurs; the present phrase may have been influenced by the standard µyhla twrm “divine visions” (1:1; 8:3; 40:2).

24.d. Lit. “(the vision) went up from upon me.” See the Comment.

Form/Structure/Setting

The next literary unit, an extended vision account, comprises chaps. 8–11. The framework of the vision is firmly set within Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry to the Judean prisoners of war in Babylonia, and there is no good reason to doubt this setting. This framework is chiastic, in 8:1–3 and 11:24–25 (Hossfeld, “Die Tempelvision” 156–57). Hossfeld’s scheme is preferable to that of Parunak (“Structural Studies” 209) and that of Greenberg (150). Ezekiel’s this-worldly context is described in 8:1a and 11:25 (A, A’). The onset of the vision is marked by the descent of Yahweh’s hand in 8:1b, while the “lifting” of the vision is stated in 11:24b (B, B’). The prophet is translated by the spirit, away in 8:3b and back in 11:24a (C, C’). The vision proper is contained within 8:4/5–11:23. The initial divine summons to look at a visionary object in 8:5 accords with the opening of vision accounts in Gen 13:14; Zech 5:5. The vision account is made up of three consecutive dramatic word-visions. These depict dramatic actions taken as portents presaging future events in human experience and contain Yahweh’s spoken word as an integral element (Long, JBL 95 [1976] 359–60, 362). The visions progress verbally and visually from accusation of Jerusalem’s cultic sins in chap. 8 to its punishment in chaps. 9–10, so that they are a visionary version of a two-part oracle of judgment (Zimmerli 235). Parunak’s structuring in terms of a rîb or lawsuit (“Structural Studies” 208–10) is forced. One may compare a similar phenomenon in the sign-acts earlier in the book: of the two sign-acts described in 4:1–8, one reveals divine punishment for the capital and the other grounds the punishment in accusation of the people of God. The vision account, reported eventually to the elders (11:24), is another visual means of communicating the same overall message.

The account in chap. 8 consists of four scenes of aberrant worship observed in the area of the temple (vv 3–6, 7–13, 14–15, 16–18). The scenes vary in length, occupying in BHS six, ten, three, and seven lines, respectively. They are structured on similar lines, with four or five stages (cf. Horst, VT 3 [1953] 342–44; Rose, Ausschliesslichkeitsanspruch 196–97). (1) The spirit or Yahweh brings Ezekiel to a location (vv 3, 7, 14a, 16a). (2) In the first two vignettes, the prophet is ordered to observe (vv 5a, 9). (3) There is a description of a particular cultic sin, introduced by hnh “behold” (vv 5b, 10–11, 14b, 16a–b) and, apart from the first scene, specifying the participants (vv 11, 14b, 16ab). (4) A divine rhetorical question about the observation, addressing the prophet as µdâ Â “human one,” follows (vv 6b, 12, 15a, 17a): it functions formally as an accusation (Zimmerli 235, with reference to 1 Kgs 20:13, 28). (5) An announcement of worse sights to come is made (vv 6b, 13, 15b); in the last scene this is replaced by a declaration of climactic sin (v 17ab–b). The final stage serves to link the scenes into a consecutive

Heb. Hebrew
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
cf. confer, compare
VT Vetus Testamentum
The accusatory scenes of chap. 8 are linked with the judgment scenes that follow by Yahweh’s declaration of punishment in 8:18. This link is reinforced by five others: (1) the rhetorical echo of 8:18b in 9:1a; (2) the harking back to the “abominations” of chap. 8 in 9:4; (3) the reference to the worshipers of 8:16–17 in 9:6a; (4) the deliberate repetition of the claim of religious independence (8:12) in 9:9; and (5) in 9:10 the repetition of the final note of merciless judgment in 8:18, so that chaps. 8 and 9 have parallel endings.

Chap. 9 is made up of three parts with alternating halves: (1) vv 1–2a (A) and v 2b (B), (2) vv 3b–4 (B) and vv 5–7 (A), and (3) vv 8–10 (A) and v 11 (B). Each of the three parts begins with a cry or a shout, a divine cry (אָרְקָא) in vv 1, 3b and a prophetic shout (קְצָפָא) in v 8. The A sections of the three parts deal with destruction: (יָכָא, “destruction, destroying” (vv 1, 5, 7, 9) is the key word that stylistically unites them. The B sections deal with the sparing of lives and are significantly briefer (1 1/2, 3, and 1 1/2 lines, as opposed to 2 1/2, 5, and 5 1/2 lines for the A sections). The key word יָכָא “city,” which occurs in all the A sections (vv 1, 5, 7, 9), emphasizes that the destruction of the residents of Jerusalem is in view; it also appears in one of the B sections, at v 4.

The theme of the judgment of Jerusalem is brought to a close in the course of 10:1–7; again the key term יָכָא “city” occurs, in v 2. Now another, related topic is interwoven in 10:3 (cf. 9:3) and developed in 10:1, 18a, 19b; 11:23: the gradual departure of Yahweh’s presence from the temple and eventually from the city (יָכָא, twice in 11:23). The momentum of the narrative is remarkably slowed in chap. 10 by increasingly discursive description. This change of pace will require examination under the rubric of redaction.

A further visionary temple scene appears in 11:1–13, with a fresh introductory note of Ezekiel’s translation by the spirit (11:1), paralleling that of 8:3b. The passage is framed by an inclusion with reference to Pelatiah (vv 1, 13). Its main part is a personal oracle to Ezekiel (vv 2–12), which in form is both a disputation and a proof saying. A similar combination of forms occurs in the vision of 37:1–14 (see Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 184). Graffy (A Prophet Confronts 42–46) has defined the disputation in terms of a quotation (v 3ab), preparatory remarks (vv 4–6), a first refutation (vv 7–10), and another refutation (vv 11–12). It is better to analyze in line with Murray’s tripartite structure for a disputation: v 15 constitutes the thesis, v 16 the dispute, and vv 17–20 the counterthesis. These three elements are obliquely matched with the three elements of a (tripartite) proof saying. The quotation stands outside the latter scheme; the dispute aligns with its accusatory element, and the counterthesis with its element of passing judgment. The recognition formula of v 10b, which is repeated in v 12a, falls outside the structure of the disputation.

11:14–21 is clearly intended as a literary response to Ezekiel’s prayer in v 13. It opens with its own message-reception formula, which normally begins a new unit, and it is not a vision account. Form-critically the piece is both a disputation and a proclamation of salvation. The analysis of Graffy (A Prophet Confronts 47–52) is as follows: a quotation (v 15), the first refutation (v 16), and the second refutation (v 17). Again we should take our bearings from Murray’s refinement of the shape of the disputation genre: v 15 constitutes the thesis, v 16 the dispute, and vv 17–20 the counterthesis. Vv 17–20 do double form-critical duty as a proclamation of salvation. V 21 appears to be the final part of an inclusion (Cornill 239), an echoing reference to the people cited in v 15b. The basic vision account of chaps. 8–11 is finally resumed in 11:22.

The foregoing analysis of form and structure of the literary unit has revealed a certain lack of

cf. confer, compare

*JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* Biblical Studies
straightforwardness. 11:1–21 represents a notable detour from the basic narrative, while within chap. 10 there is a reflective agenda that contrasts with the brisk pace of chaps. 8 and 9. This evidence raises the issue of redaction in the unit. There are points of tension between 11:1–21 and the main vision account. It is unaware of preceding events, the remarkable death of the sinning population of Jerusalem (9:6–8), the burning of the city (10:2, 7), and the arrival of the glory of Yahweh at the east gateway where 11:1–13 is set (10:18–19). The social sins of 11:2–3, 6 are a different cause for complaint than that in 8:6–17, where the sins were of a cultic nature (but cf. 8:17b; 9:9). The assumption in 11:15 that Yahweh still dwells in the land stands in tension with earlier claims of the residents of Jerusalem that Yahweh has left the land (8:12; 9:9).

Within 11:1–21, vv 1–13 and vv 14–21 appear to have been mutually independent in origin. The message-reception formula used in 11:14 generally introduces a new literary unit but not always: in 12:8; 21:6(1) it introduces a fresh oracular phase within a unit. Here it is comparable to the formula in 3:16b, introducing a redactional item that deliberately breaks into the context. Moreover, the positive message of vv 17–21 creates tension with the message of judgment of the context, and indeed with the tenor of Ezekiel’s pre-587 B.C. prophetic ministry. Greenberg (204) has granted that vv 14–21 “appear … to have been an originally independent oracle … integrated into the vision.” The inner coherence of vv 14–21 has been much doubted: the oracle refers to the exiles first in the third person (vv 15–16), then in the second (v 17), and finally in the third person again (vv 18–20), a phenomenon that is easily explained in terms of redactional amplification. Zimmerli (263) and Wevers (95–97) considered v 17 an addition and vv 18 and 21a subsequent, separate additions. Ohnesorge (Jahwe gestaltet 14–59; cf. Hals 69–71) has proposed a more intricate series of developments applied to a basic oracle of Ezekiel’s that stopped at the end of v 16, with v 21 functioning as a final redactional link between vv 1–20 and the new context of chaps. 8–11. Similarly, in 1960 Greenberg (“Vision of Jerusalem” 163) opined that “whether all of 11:17–20 originally belonged here … may well be doubted”; however, by 1983 he was speaking in terms of a single, probably pre-fall oracle (204).

Attention should be paid to the contribution of form criticism to the question of redaction. The shape of the disputation seems to establish the coherence of the oracle at least as far as v 17. The strange switch to direct address of the exiles in v 17 has been reasonably explained by Liwak (“Probleme” 113 and n. 19), who considered only v 21 an addition. The oracle is addressed to Ezekiel in vv 18–20(21), as in v 15, while in v 16 it is addressed rhetorically to the residents of Jerusalem, and in v 17 it is addressed to the exiles, the real audience of the oracle. The separate introductions in vv 16a and 17a keep Ezekiel in view as the addressee of Yahweh, and so bridge the main sections of vv 15 and 18–21. These separate introductions also serve to isolate vv 16ab and 17ab with virtual quotation marks, as directed to different addressees. Graffy (A Prophet Confronts 48), who, however, accepted as primary only vv 14–17, has drawn attention to 33:24–29 for the switch in persons. The latter oracle, which focuses on the nonexiled Judeans, mentions them first in the third person (v 24), then in the second (vv 25–26), and finally in the third again (vv 27, 29). Similarly, the present oracle, which focuses on the exiles, speaks of them in the third person (vv 15–16), second person (v 17), and third person (vv 18–20). The references to “nations” in v 16 but to “peoples” in v 17 may simply be due to stylistic variation, while the mention of “the country” (Åf å) in v 15 but of “the land [t md å] of Israel” in v 17 is not redactionally significant (cf. 33:24aa over against 33:24ab–26).

As for the historical and geographical setting, the basic oracle is generally credited to Ezekiel’s
Babylonian ministry before the fall of Jerusalem, because of the reference to “the residents of Jerusalem” in v 15 (cf. 12:19): the post-fall oracle of 33:24–29 mentions “those who reside in these ruins” (33:24; cf. 36:35). However, Eichrodt (143), following Kraetzschmar (119–20; cf. Bertholet [1936] 41; Brownlee, JBL 89 [1970] 395), has argued that

the whole passage in general, and in particular the form in which residents in Jerusalem stake their contested claim, displays such striking resemblances to 33:24ff. that it makes all contrary arguments quite unconvincing. The fact that Jeremiah shows no knowledge of any such hasty repudiations by the Jews remaining in the land of their departed fellow-countrymen must tell against putting it at a date previous to 587. Some still lived on in Jerusalem, even subsequently to the conquest of that city.

The content of other parts of the oracle point to the same conclusion, that it must be assigned to the post-fall period. The formulaic expression used in v 16a, which is universally regarded as part of the basic oracle, is elsewhere in the book used only of the exile that followed the fall of Jerusalem. It occurs in historical retrospect, as here, in 30:19, and in predictions in 12:15 (cf. 6:8); 20:23; 22:15. V 18 implies that the returnees would still find the accoutrements of idolatry in the land, and no account need be taken of the disruptive crisis of 587. Moreover, the references to cultic abominations seem to presuppose the oracle in 33:24–29 (especially v 26). The two oracles are complementary in that the one in chap. 33 focuses on those in the homeland, and this one on the exiled Judeans. In here espousing a post-587 date, I must admit my uninformed error in earlier ascribing it to the pre-587 era in Ezekiel 20–48 153.

11:1–13 strikes notes of serious discord with the foregoing vision narrative, as we observed earlier. Rothstein (888, 890, 892) supposed that it originally belonged after 8:15, while Bertholet ([1936] 29), implicitly followed by May (118), placed it after 8:18. However, the deliberate grouping of four scenes depicting sins that are cultic in nature does not favor these proposals. Schmidt’s suggestion (TZ 6 [1950] 88–89) that 11:1–21 originally belonged before 11:24, as a parallel vision to that of 8:1–10:18; 11:22–23, is too speculative. 11:1–13 is best taken as a separate temple vision (Fohrer 58; Eichrodt 119, 134–35; Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet 55; cf. Greenberg 199). The notice of translation by the spirit in v 1 accords with 8:3b rather than with any subsequent relocation of the prophet within chaps. 8–10, and this factor supports its independent nature. It is true that Ezekiel is so conveyed in 43:5, within the vision of the new temple, but that is expressly to avoid the prophet’s walking over an especially sacred area. There are no good grounds for denying the attribution of the vision account to Ezekiel, as Hölscher (Dichter 75) and Hossfeld (“Die Tempelvision” 154) have done. Zimmerli (257) considered that the prophet himself inserted this short narrative. Its redactional relevance lies especially with chap. 9: it echoes its temple-set message of accusation-laden judgment. The mention of “the city” of Jerusalem in 11:2, 6 reinforces a motif of the judgment account in chap. 9, while the accusation of 11:6 echoes that of 9:9. The prophet’s outcry against the severity of Yahweh’s judgment in 9:8b is repeated in 11:13b.

It is to this cry that vv 14–21 function as a redactionally placed reply, a reply that transcends the fate of Jerusalem to be sealed in 587 B.C. and leaps ahead to reassure the exilic victims of that catastrophe.

Such an editorial activity reveals a change in setting, from a concern for simply enabling the message to be heard by an unwilling audience to a concern for enabling a willing audience to integrate the apparently

cf. confer, compare
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
cf. confer, compare
TZ Theologische Zeitschrift (ThZ)
cf. confer, compare
disparate aspects of an overall message. (Hals 233)

We must now engage with the rather different issues presented by chap. 10. At this stage of the vision account, the flow of the narrative is increasingly interrupted with commentary of various kinds. Redaction critics have not unnaturally endeavored to penetrate behind such elaborations and find the basic core. Thus Zimmerli (231–34) discovered it in vv 2 (without “between the cherubim”), 4, 7 (without both plural references to the cherubim), 18a, 19a (and then 11:23). Other scholars have come to similar conclusions. In establishing criteria for amplification of the presumed earliest form of the text, it is important to distinguish material marked by certain patterns. The most obvious pattern is an introductory ℨ ℬ ℨ ℤ ℨ ℽ ℬ Ⅎ ℬ ℩ ℳ ℳ ℳ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℬ ℥
detecting a fourth type of material, which overlaps with the second and third types in v 20 and with the third type in 8:4. One may fruitfully compare the mixture of types in 43:2–3, where “the glory of the God of Israel” occurs together with a comparison of 1:24 and also with the third type, and categorize it as reflective comment on the basic statement of 43:4a (cf. also 44:2). There is a further example of the fourth type of material in 9:3, which deliberately anticipates 10:4a, but with a change from “the glory of Yahweh” to “the glory of the God of Israel.” The change of verb for rising appears to be purely stylistic (cf. 11:23a). Other cases are in 10:19bb and 11:22b, which are amplifying references to “the glory of the God of Israel” as positioned above the cherubim.

It will have been noted that the first three types of amplification tend to refer back to aspects of the vision reported in chap. 1. This same feature reappears in a different way in a fifth and final type, which indulges in systematic and detailed citation of chap. 1. It has two concerns, form and function. There are three instances. The first, in 10:9b–12a, has an interest in the form of the wheels ([µ] h a r m “[their] appearance”) in vv 9b–10 and also in their operation (vv 11–12a) and to this end cites 1:16–18a. A second case may be seen in 10:12b, 16–17, which cites 1:18b–19 in continuation of the earlier case. It too is concerned with form, in v 12b, although the precise term h a r m “appearance” does not appear, and with function, in vv 16–17. The last example, in v 22a b, is much briefer: it refers to the form (µ h a r m “their appearance,” v 22a) and function (v 22b) of the cherubim, and in the second part quotes from 1:12a.

These five types of considerable editorial supplementation, which have left telltale signs in the text, are all that may reasonably be claimed. One may not, for instance, include 10:3a, which is an innocent circumstantial clause that has every right to stand in the basic narrative. Nor, above all, may one differentiate the plural µ y b w k “cherubim” from the singular, collective b w k “cherub-structure” as a redactional criterion. Rather, the different usage was a feature of the text from the beginning, denial of which causes unnecessary difficulties (see the Comment).

How may this manifold activity be explained in terms of the literary history of the text? My work in the latter half of the book disclosed time and time again a threefold pattern running through the material in its present shape of literary units. First, there is a basic text; second, there is an updating or continuation or other literary expansion that stays close to the basic material; and, third, there is a stratum that stands at some distance from the previous stages in its perspective (see, e.g., Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 229). The perspective of this third stratum can be of various kinds. The enumeration of cargo in 27:12–25a and the detailing of the interior design and decoration of the new temple in 41:15b–26 seem to come closest to the quotation of consecutive blocks of material from chap. 1 in the fifth type of editorial activity. If one applies this model of a threefold pattern of literary development, the more moderate first four types of reflective reworking may be credited to the prophet himself, along with the basic narrative at an earlier stage. In favor of this proposal is the occasional overlap of types in the same material: the third and fourth in 8:4 and the second, third, and fourth in 10:20–22a b (cf. 43:2–3). One may also observe the natural way the fourth type at 9:3 is woven into the text by the presence of the divine name in 9:4 (see Note 9:4.a.*). That Ezekiel himself was not responsible for 10:12a, and so for the

\[ \text{cf. confer, compare} \]
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material of the fifth type associated with it, is indicated by its misunderstanding of the difficult 1:18a (see the Comment).

The literary revision evident in chap. 10 and also sporadically in chaps. 8, 9, and 11 may be summed up as follows, with indication of the different types found: 8:2 (I), 4 (III, IV); 9:3 (IV); 10:1 (I), 5 (II), 8 (II), 9a (I), 10a, b–12a (V), 12b, 16–17 (V), 13 (II), 19b (IV), 20–22aa b (II, III, IV), 22ag b (V); 11:22b (IV). In the earlier discussion there has been no mention of 10:21, which cites 1:6, 8aa. The flow of the material, especially between v 21a and v 22aa b, seems to indicate that there is a single, continuous section here. However, evidence of the fifth type of revision in 10:22ag b, which cites 1:12a, could suggest that 10:21 is part of a larger block continued in v 22ag b. This view wins favor from the fact that in 10:8, if it has been interpreted aright, the prophet has already explained the hand of the cherub mentioned in v 7. Nevertheless, the reference to the cherubim’s faces in v 22aa does seem to require the earlier reference in v 21aa. Certainly citation of chap. 1 has been present in earlier types of reworking of the basic text.

Discussion of stages of redaction centering on chap. 10 raises questions concerning the insertion of 11:1–21. The positive continuation of the negative oracle in 11:1–13 with a positive one in vv 14–21 has a parallel in chap. 20, although in that case there is much closer similarity in the terminology of the two oracles. But the principle is the same, and if 20:32–44 may be credited to Ezekiel’s own post-587 updating (see my treatment in Ezekiel 20–48 8, 15–16 and also in CBQ 54 [1992] 448–62), there is no obstacle to seeing in 11:14–20 or 21 the prophet’s relocation of later material, which at an earlier stage may have been positioned in the vicinity of the oracle in 33:23–29. The apparent desire to warn the exiles that is present in 11:21 (see Comment) is congruent with Ezekiel’s special message of judgment-tinged salvation that is also present in the latter half of chap. 20. Overall, the post-587 impression that 11:14–21 leaves on the reader is reminiscent of 3:16b–21, which was also inserted into a pre-587 context. 11:1–21 still tantalizes the careful reader with unanswered questions, but in its present form this pair of passages shows evidence of careful integration into its context. It is a new patch on old cloth, yet has been purposefully sewn in by an expert literary tailor.

An analysis of the literary unit, which leaves out of account its briefer redactional intricacies, is here presented.

| 8:1–3ba | Introduction to the temple vision |
| 8:3bb–18 | Four scenarios of cultic sin and Yahweh’s vocal reaction |
| 8:3bb–6 | The pagan altar |
| 8:7–13 | The idolators in the secret room |
| 8:14–15 | The women who worshiped Tammuz |
| 8:16–17 | The sun worshipers |
| 8:18 | Yahweh’s pronouncement of punishment |
| 9:1–11 | Judgment and exemption |

* 4.a. The LXX* omitted the divine name, doubtless regarding it as otiose in the context. Greenberg (176) has found an interesting parallel in Lev 1:1: after a reference to the glory of Yahweh (in Exod 40:35, interrupted by vv 36–38), the divine subj is specified not with the next verb but with the one following. This gradual identification prevented an understanding of the two figures in terms of contrast. R. Rendtorff (Leviticus [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985] 22) has drawn attention to a further example of this phenomenon in Exod 24:16 + 25:1. Ohnesorge (Jahwe gestaltet 284 n. 4) has correctly noted the general rule that Yahweh is not specified as subj in the vision narratives, but this instance should be retained as a special case. 

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9:1–2  Summons of the supernatural agents
9:3–7  The two commissions of the agents
9:8–11  Ezekiel’s protest and Yahweh’s negative reply; the return of the agent of exemption
10:1–22  The burning of Jerusalem commanded; the gradual departure of the glory of Yahweh
  10:1–3  The commission of the incendiary
  10:4–5  The first stage of the departure of the glory of Yahweh
  10:6–7  The equipping of the incendiary
  10:8–17  Description of the cherubim and wheels
  10:18–19  The second and third stages of the departure of the glory of Yahweh
  10:20–22  Further description of the cherubim
11:1–21  Sin and salvation
  11:1–13  A further vision of sin and judgment
  11:14–21  Positive prospects for the exiles
  11:22–23  The final stage of the departure of the glory of Yahweh
  11:24–25  Conclusion of the temple vision

**Comment**

The purpose of the precise dating, which was a mark of the introduction to the first vision (1:1, 2), seems to have been to provide careful documentation as to the genuineness of the prophetic experience and so to eventually vindicate Ezekiel when his forecast came true. In 24:2 the prophet records a divine instruction to write down the date, for later verification that he was a true prophet (cf. Isa 8:1–4; 30:8). According to the tables in Parker and Dubberstein’s *Babylonian Chronology* (28), this date represents 17 September 592 B.C., which was nearly fourteen months after the initial vision. The visit of “elders” to Ezekiel’s home will recur in 14:1; 20:1 (cf. 33:31). As explicitly in 20:1 (cf. 14:3), they evidently came with the expectation of receiving a favorable oracle. In each case the prophet could proclaim naught for their comfort. In this instance his response was to be the recounting of the vision as testimony to Yahweh’s just judgment (11:25). The recurrence of the “Judean elders” (in 14:1; 20:1, 3, “Israel’s elders”) to Ezekiel reflects his religious authority as a prophet (cf. 2 Kgs 19:2). The office of “elder” refers to the system of self-government established among the exiles, in continuation of the representative institution of leadership traditionally carried on in the homeland. It is also attested in Jer 29:1, with the term “exilic elders.” The system continued into the main period of exile and thence into the early postexilic period (cf. Ezra 5:5, 9; 6:7, 8, 14). The Egyptian community in Babylonia in 529 likewise had an assembly of elders recognized by the Persian authorities (I. Ephal, *Or* 47 [1978] 74–80).

The ecstatic experience of the vision is inaugurated by the pressure of Yahweh’s hand, as in 1:3. The falling of the hand, as distinct from its coming in 1:3 and in most other cases in the book, gives

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
*Or Orientalia* (Rome)
expression to the suddenness of the event, rather as the verb "be strong" in 3:14 and Isa 8:11 refers to its overwhelming nature. The reference in the narrative epilogue at 11:25 to Ezekiel’s reporting the vision to “the exiles,” presumably the (still) assembled elders, implies that the ecstatic experience had been trancelike and so an out-of-the-body experience, in terms of 2 Cor 12:2, as Jerome (94, 125–26) perceived. The analogy of dreaming suggests that it may have taken place in a short space of time (Skinner 80). In this respect it seems to correspond with the vision of 37:1–14. In the first vision, on the other hand, the experience of translation (3:14–15), though described as here in v 3, appears to have been a physical one, as in the old texts relating to Elijah (1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:16; cf. Acts 8:39). Here a parapsychological phenomenon is used as a vehicle of divine communication that the prophet may recount in turn to his constituency.

2 The significance of this statement will not be immediately obvious to the reader. It belongs to a network of parenthetical observations scattered through chaps. 8–10. In this particular form it is matched by material in 10:1, 9a (see Form/Structure/Setting). There is no reason to deny them to the pen or dictating voice of the prophet, but they stand apart from the basic narrative, at a different literary level. V 2 gives the impression of being an independent little vision report inserted as an important afterthought. A mark of these observations is their reference to elements in the first vision in chap. 1. Inquiry into the reason for the comparison must await comment on chap. 10. Here it may be said that the “glory of Yahweh” at that point becomes a crucial theme of the vision account. In anticipation of that later emphasis, the narrative hastens “to focus attention on its presence” (Greenberg 197) and so to give it pride of place in the overall account. From the very beginning, the divine figure of judgment revealed in chap. 1 brooded over the visionary experience and made his presence felt.

It is sometimes suggested that the supernatural figure in this verse functions as an angelic messenger, like that of 40:3 (Zimmerli 236; Wevers 79). However, the vision in chaps. 8–11 has no room for an angelic interpreter, such as features in chaps. 40–48. It is Yahweh who speaks directly to Ezekiel (see, e.g., 8:6, 18). Moreover, the consistent pattern of references to the first vision in the course of chaps. 8–10 makes it clear that the intent is to represent Yahweh, with radiant contours that evoke 1:27a, b, while t wmt “figure” recalls “the figure associated with the glory of Yahweh” at 1:28a. The resumption of that climactic description at the outset of the narrative, before the vision proper has begun, provides a sublime and disturbing frontispiece.

3ab The processes of lifting and conveying that in 3:14 were both assigned to the spirit are here allocated separately. The standard expression of forcible possession in terms of Yahweh’s hand, which was used in v 1, is here extended into an agency of the initial stage of levitation. Zimmerli (236) interestingly conjectures that the mode of lifting corresponded to the pain and giddiness felt by the prophet. Presumably, Ezekiel’s hair had grown sufficiently since 5:1. In an Akkadian text, Nergal, the god of the underworld, similarly seizes an Assyrian prince by his hair before carrying him to his domain (ANET 110a). Here, however, the spirit takes over its customary role of transportation.

3bb–17 Four scenarios of cultic sins committed in the area of the temple now follow. These scenarios are composed in a similar pattern, already observed in Form/Structure/Setting. A major problem that demands resolution is the course along which the prophet is conducted. The immediate impression given by the consistent verbal statements, first ūt a b t w “and (the spirit) brought me” here and then ūt a b w “and he brought me” in vv 7, 14, and 16, is that Ezekiel is taken on a direct and inward route into the temple court. This impression is supported by the evidence of the vision of the new

cf. confer, compare

temple in chaps. 40–48. There the same verb marks the prophet’s arrival at the temple site and his progression from outside the complex of temple buildings to its center (40:1–3, 17, 28, 32, 48; 41:1; 43:5; 44:4). In 46:19 the verb is used of access from the outer court to a path built up to the level of the inner court and regarded as an extension of it. Similarly, this verb characterizes the direction of that path in 42:9. It refers to the access of priests in 42:14 and of worshipers in 44:5; 46:2, 8, 9. On the other hand, the prophet’s laterally directed movements are marked by the verbs לְמַּסְדָּב “conduct” (40:24; 43:1) and יְמַסְדָּב “take over” (46:21; cf. בּוֹס “changed direction,” in 42:16, 17, 19). The only exceptions to this careful use of terminology are in 40:35; 42:1, where יְמַסְדָּב “bring” is used of entry into buildings and not of movement toward the middle of the temple complex (cf. בּוֹס “enter” in 8:9, 10). The bottom line of this comparison with chaps. 40–48 is that one expects the verb to signal a similar inward progression here in a relatively short sequence.

This expectation created by the verb is not immediately matched by the places specified as its directional objects. In particular, there do not seem to be enough gates to fit into the route. The issue is complicated by the references in the MT to “the inner (court?)” in v 3 and to the “altar gateway” in v 5, which must refer to a gateway into the inner court of the temple. There are other grounds for adjusting the Hebrew text so that on the first lap of the journey the prophet has not progressed so far (see Notes 3.d.* and 5.a.*). Greenberg (168–69, 171), who retains the traditional text, relates v 16, of course, to the

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

* 3.d. The LXX* lacks a counterpart to the fem form יְמַסְדָּב “inner” in the MT, in which an ellipse of יְמַסְדָּב “the court” is presupposed. The inner court of the temple is mentioned in v 16; 10:3, but the present context suggests that a gate farther from the temple is in view (see the Comment). The confusion underlying the LXX between יְמַסְדָּב “facing” and יְמַסְדָּב “inner” at 40:19, 32 suggests that the MT has a conflated text. The second element is the original one. Did a copyist write יְמַסְדָּב in place of יְמַסְדָּב and leave the torso uncorrected? Then the MT reflects a later attempt to make sense of the abandoned error by recourse to יְמַסְדָּב “inner” across the scroll in the next column (v 16) and/or by equating the position of the “glory” in v 4 with the description in 10:3–4. Cf. the comparable case in 22:20 (Allen, JSS 31 [1986] 131–33; id., Ezekiel 20–48 32). The Syr represents יְמַסְדָּב “the Corner (Gate),” which may be another attempt to interpret the torso, via haplography; it is a topographical improvement on the MT, insofar as it refers to a city gate at the west end of the north wall (cf. IDB 2:853a). There is no need to prefix an article to יְמַסְדָּב “(the) gate” (cf., e.g., BHS, but contrast BHK): cf. 9:2; 40:28 and GKC 126w; Joüon 138b, c.
inner court, vv 3 and 5 to the outer entrance of the gateway in the wall around the inner court, and v 7 perhaps to the south entrance of the same gateway. He finds himself unable to identify the location of v 14, though he mentions a suggestion that it relates to a door to the side structure of the temple.

At this point it will be useful to look at Busink’s reconstruction of the palace complex built by Solomon (fig. 6), which at the northern end was occupied by the temple set within its own court. The illustration, reproduced from Der Tempel van Jerusalem 1:160, leaves unrepresented gates in the northern wall of the temple and in the corresponding wall of the perimeter of the complex. Sprank, who devoted a long section to the topography of vv 3–17 (Ezechielstudien 4–25), conceived of a straight course from the peripheral wall to the center of the temple area. He reckoned that vv 3 and 5 refer to the inner entrance of the north gateway leading into the court of the palace complex, and v 7 to the entrance to the temple court. He dismissed v 14 from consideration, judging vv 14–15 to be secondary, on rather slender grounds.

Sprank was countering earlier proposed routes that involved what he called a zigzag course. Thus Kraetzschmar (87–95) and Rothstein (887–88) judged Ezekiel’s location in vv 3 and 5 to be at the inner entrance of the gateway to the temple court, in v 7 at the outer entrance of the same gateway, in v 14 at the inner entrance of the gateway in the perimeter wall of the royal complex, and then in v 16 in the temple court. Sprank’s instinct in rejecting this movement out and back was surely correct. As we have seen, the general usage of the verb referring to Ezekiel’s directed movements in chaps. 40–48 speaks in its favor. In fact, when the prophet is made to retrace his steps in the new temple vision, the verb בָּיִד וּחֲנָה “bring back” is carefully used (44:1; 47:1; cf. 44:5; 46:9), while for outward movement אָיָה וּחֲנָה “bring out” appears (42:1, 15; 46:21; 47:2; cf. 44:5; 46:12). This principle renders unlikely not only Kraetzschmar’s and Rothstein’s reconstruction but also Cooke’s (91–98). He envisioned in vv 3 and 5 a position in the temple court near the north gateway, in v 7 a movement to the interior of the gateway, in v 14 to the outer entrance of the gateway, where he sees the women in the outer court, then back in v 16 to the temple court. A variation on the same theme was offered by Schmidt (TZ 6 [1950] 85–87), who placed the prophet at the outer entrance to the gateway to the temple court in vv 3, 5, and 14 and at the inner entrance to the gateway in the perimeter wall in v 7.

* 5.a. The MT has “on the north side of the gate of the altar that outrageous image,” so that Ezekiel’s attention is here drawn to the image as if to a novel feature, whereas he had already referred to it in the narrative of v 3b. One way to resolve the problem is to regard the relative clause at the end of v 3 as an anticipatory gloss (Cornill 233; et al.). Another, less drastic, expedient is to dissociate v 5 from v 3 by reading with a slight change: בָּיִד בֶּזֶן הִרְפָּא וַחֲנָה “(north) of the gate, the altar of …” (H. Gunkel, Schöpfung und Chaos 141 n. 1; Bertholet [1897] 46; et al.). The same end may be achieved with even less alteration by redividing the consonantal text as בֶּזֶן הִרְפָּא וַחֲנָה with a redundant הִ, after הִ (Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 62; he pointed הִרְפָּא וַחֲנָה “to the gate of,” but הִרְפָּא וַחֲנָה “to the gate” is necessary [see my note in Brownlee 126]). Driver compared הִרָפָא וַחֲנָה “to Sheol” in Ps 9:18(17); one might also cite as a near parallel הִרָפָא וַחֲנָה “to the north” in v 14 below. An “altar gate” is not otherwise known, though it might conceivably refer to a gate near the bronze altar that Ahaz moved to the north side of the temple court (2 Kgs 16:14; cf. Ezek 9:2; Hitzig 59). However, this explanation is only viable if a gate to the temple (= “inner” in the MT of v 3) is in view: see the Comment. The LXX has “east gate,” misreading הִרְפָּא וַחֲנָה for בֶּזֶן הִרְפָּא וַחֲנָה, which conflicts with the north-facing gate of v 3. But, indirectly, the LXX supports the MT and shows that the latter’s error was perpetrated at an early stage.

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
TZ Theologische Zeitschrift (ThZ)
The solution to this topographical puzzle, which Sprank did not quite attain, lies in reconstructing the journey backwards. In v 16 Ezekiel is explicitly located in the temple court. In v 14 he must be at the outer entrance of the gateway leading directly to the temple, as the text seems to say, and so the gateway set in the wall around the temple court. Then in v 7 “the entrance to the court” must be at the gateway in the perimeter wall of the royal complex. In turn the gateway in vv 3 and 5 must have been a north gateway in the city wall. This is the solution espoused by Zimmerli (236–37, 240), who has been followed by Wevers (79), Vogt (Untersuchungen 42–45 and n. 14), and Carley (52–54) and most recently by Ackerman (Under Every Green Tree 54–55). Its two advantages are that it posits an ongoing inward movement and it accords with indications in the text itself. Thus v 3 mentions simply Jerusalem as the point of arrival, so that a gateway in the city wall is a natural location for vv 3 and 5. V 7, which refers to “the court” rather than the “inner court” of v 16, then refers to the northern end of the court of the palace complex. V 14 brings Ezekiel and the reader to the gateway in the wall surrounding the temple court, as the text appears to say. This reconstruction supports the adjustments to the MT made in

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conjunction with other factors in vv 3 and 5: at that stage the prophet must be two gates away from the
one giving access to the temple court.

Another issue at stake in 8:3–17 is the nature of the visionary scenes Ezekiel witnessed. Were they
meant to constitute a veridical vision, so that a time traveler in the vicinity of the temple on 17
September 592 B.C. could have filmed the events happening as Ezekiel described them by second sight?
Probably not: the worship of Tammuz featured in the third scene is a counter indication. Such ritual
mourning took place in the fourth month (June–July) rather than the sixth. The god lent his name to the
Babylonian term for the fourth month, which the Judeans took over in postexilic times. Although one
could explain the discrepancy in terms of a local variation (J. Gray, *IDB* 4:516), there seems to be no
need to do so, as Smend (53) observed. As Cassuto (“Arrangement” 231 n. 3) pointed out, the
continuation of the vision account in chap. 9 is not meant to refer to the present but is a representation of
the destruction that was to occur some five years later. Ezekiel views a series of religious sins that are
rhetorically grouped together in the vision but were simply typical of worship carried on at different
times in Jerusalem at that period, which he himself may well have seen while he lived there.

Yet can one maintain even this general interpretation? Greenberg, in his “Prolegomenon” to Torrey’s
Pseudo-Ezekiel (xxviii–xxvii, xxxiii), has followed Y. Kaufmann and others since Hitzig (65) in arguing
that such sins were characteristic of the period of Manasseh in the seventh century but were abolished in
the reforms of Josiah toward the end of the century and not revived. Thenceforth, as the evidence of
Kings, Jeremiah, and Lamentations shows, unorthodox religious practices were no longer carried on in
public, officially sponsored cults, though they did survive in private, clandestine ones. Ezekiel was
speaking of Judah’s apostasy in terms of Manasseh’s; the Chronicler took his cue from Ezek 8 in
attributing such apostasy and defilement of the temple to priests and people in Zedekiah’s reign (2 Chr
36:14). Only Ezek 8:10–12 may be regarded as a depiction of contemporary paganism. Morton Smith
(*ZAW* 87 [1975] 11–16) has challenged Greenberg’s thesis on two grounds. First, Kings appears to
attribute the final fall of Jerusalem to Zedekiah’s wickedness, rather than to Manasseh’s sins (2 Kgs
24:19–20). Second, in the account of Jeremiah’s clash with the Judean worshipers of the queen of
heaven in Jer 44, the suspension of the cult mentioned in v 18 may well refer to the final siege of
Jerusalem, rather than to Josiah’s reform. If so, in both official and private forms (v 17) the cult persisted
down till then, and Ezekiel’s reference to cultic sins need not be anachronistic. Smith’s case is hardly
overwhelming, and anyway the issue is not crucial for our present concern. On balance, however, it
seems better to adhere to the commonly held view that Manasseh’s cultic aberrations were revived in the
reign of Jehoiakim (cf. Zimmerli 245). This view receives support from the religious assessments in 2
Kgs 23:32, 37; 24:9, 19 that Josiah’s successors “did evil in the eyes of Yahweh.”

3bb–6 Ezekiel evidently finds himself just inside the city wall of Jerusalem. At least by the seventh
century, if not earlier, there was a space between this wall and the north wall of the palace complex
(Zimmerli 237; “Jerusalem” 418–20). Perhaps the north gateway is to be identified with the “sheep gate”
of Neh 3:1 (Vogt, *Untersuchungen* 42). We are to envision a structure of some size, “like a college
lodge,” as the Oxford don Cooke (91) commented. At either end of a wide corridor there would have
been an “entrance”; in the light of v 5, Ezekiel stood by the south entrance. The “image” (לְמָשָׁח) he sees
at this place is an anthropomorphic idol, to judge by the usage of the term in Phoenician inscriptions.
Significantly, the same term occurs in 2 Chr 33:7, 15, seemingly with reference to the Phoenician

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*MT* The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)


n. note

*ZAW* Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

cf. confer, compare
goddess Asherah, in connection with an image set up in the temple precincts (2 Kgs 21:7). If this cult, abolished by Josiah, was revived after his death, the cult image may have been placed elsewhere (McKay, Religion 22–23, 93 n. 27). Here it has pride of place as a guardian figure. The focus of the narrative lies in the religious significance of the image, as an outrage to Yahweh, more literally a provocation to jealousy (ד נְא). The sentiment is that which appears in Deut 32:16, 21a (Rose, Ausschliesslichkeitsanspruch 210 n. 3):

They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominable rites they provoked him to anger. They have stirred me to jealousy with a non-god, provoked me to anger with their nonentities.

Indeed, chap. 8 seems to be citing Deut 32, using these references as a frame at beginning and end: in v 17 the verb וַיַּזְקֵפֵהוּ “provoke to anger” occurs, corresponding to the hiphil form in Deut 32:16 (piel in 32:21). Yahweh’s exclusive claims on his people were being fundamentally denied by this evidence of pagan worship in the city of God.

The primary narrative is interrupted by the afterthought of v 4a. It might perhaps better have appeared as a counterpart to the visionary observation of v 5bb, which is also introduced by והַנְּחָת “behold.” However, the intent seems to have been deliberate, as Zimmerli (238) suggests, to counterpoint intruder and rightful claimant, the false and the real. Yahweh makes his presence felt by his theophanic presence, as the double “there” indicates. The second “there” is meant in quite general terms. The statement itself is a general one and looks forward, together with 9:3, to the revelation of chap. 10. The opportunity is taken to compare the manifestation with the earlier occurrence in 3:23. Whether ד וֹב כ “glory” refers here simply to the divine figure or, as in 3:23, embraces the throne conveyance is not stated: the comparison with 3:23 and the parallel of 43:2–3 suggest the latter sense.

Throughout the tour described in chap. 8, Yahweh provides a commentary for what Ezekiel sees in his vision. Two of Amos’s visions feature a visionary sight, a divine question (“What do you see?”), a pause for an answer, and then a commentary (Amos 7:7–9; 8:1–3). In Jer 1:11–16 there are two similar instances, with the first element lacking. In this vignette and also in the second (v 9), a command to see is followed by a description of the scene and then a shocked question concerning what is seen that leads into commentary. Ezekiel’s attention is expressly drawn to what lies on the other side of the gateway and so just outside the wall. He sees an altar associated with the cult of the image erected on the inner side of the gateway. In principle the phenomenon corresponds to Jeremiah’s reference to altars “as many as the streets of Jerusalem” (Jer 11:13). The divine reaction refers obliquely to the rites represented by the altar and raises as an objection not simply that they are pagan in nature but that they are being practiced outside the sanctuary. The implication appears to be that, in the eyes of the adherents of this cult, it came under the umbrella of Yahwism and in no way constituted a denial of their basic faith in Yahweh. However, the God of Ezekiel cannot be associated with so liberal a notion. The reference to the temple as the rightful site of worship is an argument against accepting this cultic phenomenon as any true part of Yahwism.

7–10 The reference to “even more shocking rites” in v 6bb acts as a literary bridge to the next scenario, preparing the reader for an intensification in the scale of religious aberrations. The prophet is brought to a gate in the wall of the palace complex, inside which lay the northern part of the great court of 1 Kgs 7:9, 12. It is probable that this access to the temple was the most frequented: the royal buildings lay to the south and east, while the west was closed by the temple itself (Davidson 55). The regular pattern of the scenarios is interrupted by an incident that draws attention to the secrecy of the particular
rite, which will be the concern of the divine commentary in v 12. There seems to be a reference to a large
room beside the gateway, evidently built into the wall, but with no obvious door to enter. One may
compare the large chamber in Neh 13:5, the hall in 1 Sam 9:22, and the rooms alongside the walls of the
outer court in Ezekiel’s new temple at 40:17 (see the discussion in Ackerman, Under Every Green Tree
67–69). The prophet’s attention is drawn to a hole, which he is commanded to enlarge in order to use as
a means of entry. By this means he is able to observe the second vignette: evidently the hole would have
provided an insufficient view. In this secret room he sees engravings all over the main wall. An annotator
has identified the subjects of the engravings with the prohibited images of Deut 4:17–18 and may also
have had in mind the ritually unclean creatures of Lev 11. The note is a valuable ancient interpretation,
filling out what is left tantalizingly unexplained in the basic text. The figures contrast with the orthodox
temple engravings of 1 Kgs 6:29, 32, 35.

11 In the first scenario there was only an indirect reference to worshipers. Now there is a full
description. They were none other than the national council of Judah. The number “seventy” is meant
to evoke for the reader the traditional institution of Exod 24:1–9; Num 11:16, 24–25. These
representatives of the community of faith appear not in a setting of privilege and empowering at
Yahweh’s hands but in a provocative context of pagan worship. The expression “stand in front of” has
the connotation of worship (Herrmann 60). Mention of “Jaazaniah son of Shaphan” may have been
intended to indicate a contrast with his father, the devout secretary of state to Josiah (2 Kgs 22:3–14).
Three of Shaphan’s sons are mentioned in Jer 26:24; 29:3; 36:10–12. He may well have had a fourth,
Jaazaniah, “the black sheep of a very worthy family” (Taylor 99). Perhaps too there is an intention to
play on the meaning of his name, “Yahweh pays heed” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:26), and so to suggest
how his present behavior belied his name. The group’s burning of incense is obviously meant to convey
tacit dissonance with the orthodox requirement that only those of priestly rank could offer incense
legitimately (Num 16:40; cf. 2 Chr 26:16–19). The burning here comprises a separate offering,

12–13 The divine explanation draws attention to the secret nature of the rite. This is a motif of
aberrant worship that is especially evident in Deuteronomy as an insidious feature (Deut 13:7; 27:15); it
also appears in Job 31:27 as one of Job’s denials in his oath of piety. Its combination with defiant
justification is reminiscent of Isa 29:15:

Alas for those who deeply from Yahweh
hide their plans,
whose deeds are done in the dark,
and who say, “Who sees us? Who knows us?”

There it was evidently the foreign policy of Judean statesmen that was under condemnation (cf. Isa 30:1
), and there is a hint of shame behind their provocative words. Here a later generation of those statesmen
is indulging in pagan rites and making the same brazen claim to self-determination and yet paradoxically
expressing their shamefacedness. They ground their convictions in the ancient doctrine that linked
Yahweh with the land, a doctrine that now had seemingly lapsed with the defeat of 597 B.C. The sequel
to these accusatory scenarios in chaps. 10–11 will ironically show the grain of truth that lay in such a
perverted claim: Yahweh was indeed about to leave his temple and land, in an act of judgment upon the
lack of faith he found there (Greenberg 200). Their claim that Yahweh had left the country was a boast

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cf. confer, compare
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of impunity, but the coming reality behind the claim would be attended by death and destruction.

14–15. Worse was to come in this tour of impiety. This brief vignette balances the last, long one and paves the way for the climactic one of vv 16–17. It took place on the verge of the temple court, at the entrance to the north gate. Perhaps that was what lent the scenario its heinous quality: approaching holy ground, one found not a return to piety but still more paganism. And in this case the paganism was no longer hidden but overt. A chilling factor from the perspective of Judean exiles in Babylonia was that a Babylonian god was being worshiped on Judean soil. The cult of Tammuz (Dumuṣi), which was one of the most popular in Mesopotamia, probably entered Judah under Babylonian influence (McKay, Religion 68–69). Scholars used to consider him a dying and rising fertility god, but on inadequate grounds (see Gurney, JSS 7 [1962] 153–60; Yamauchi, JBL 84 [1965] 283–90). Dumuṣi was the husband of the goddess Inanna, who banished him to the underworld. His fate was bewailed in lamentation rites in the month of June–July. Sitting is the posture of mourners (cf. 26:16; Job 2:8; Jonah 3:6). It is likely that the cult appealed especially to women (see Jacobsen, HR 1 [1962] 204).

16 Ezekiel is finally brought into the “inner court” of the temple (cf. 1 Kgs 6:36). The place of the last aberration is the open space in the court between the temple porch and the altar of burnt offering, with which Ahaz replaced the old, smaller bronze altar (2 Kgs 16:10–16). It is invested with special sanctity in Jewish tradition (see Greenberg 171). Within the OT it is singled out as the site of the priests’ lamentation at a public ceremony of repentance (Joel 2:17). In Matt 23:35 the murder of the priest-prophet Zechariah is regarded as especially abhorrent because it was committed on this spot. Josiah had endeavored to remove the worship of the sun god from the temple court (2 Kgs 23:11–12). The cult was particularly common in Syria and probably spread to Judah from there (see Cogan, Imperialism 84–86; McKay, Religion 51–53). Turning one’s back on Yahweh was a not uncommon metaphor for apostasy (Jer 2:27; 32:33; cf. 2 Chr 29:6). Here it is used literally, yet retains the sense of the metaphor. The worship of the rising sun entailed turning one’s back on the temple structure, which itself faced east and which was regarded as Yahweh’s home. Thus a situation of intolerable tension between the sun cult and Yahwism is described. The participants may have intended their sun worship as a legitimate extension of their traditional faith (cf. Zimmerli 243–44; McKay, Religion 34–35). However, the text engages in deliberate polemic and maintains the incompatibility of the two forms of faith.

17 In a generalizing statement, the divine commentary sums up the earlier religious aberrations and couples them with sin of a social kind. To interpret סמ”מ “violence” as wrong done to God and take it as a definition of the final outrage (Cooke 100) is forcing the text. Appeal to its usage in Job 21:27 and the appearance of the cognate verb with the Torah as object in Zech 3:4; Ezek 22:26 are insufficient arguments. In the book of Ezekiel, both cultic and social sins constitute the basis of divine judgment. In summaries of Judah’s wrongdoing, the two types of sin stand side by side (22:4; 33:25–26). Within the short compass of the adjacent chap. 9, both types coexist, the cultic in v 4 and the social, characterized as “very, very great guilt,” in v 9. Here the three examples of cultic sin glimpsed earlier in chap. 8 and the implicitly worse social sins of the nation pale beside this last cultic insult to Yahweh. The provoking of Yahweh to anger provides the final scaffolding for a literary framework borrowed from Deut 32:16(21 ) and first represented in v 3.
The last clause, v 17bb, has defied extensive exegetical attempts to supply a precise interpretation. Medieval Jewish exposition of הַרְמֶז in terms of breaking wind has won some scholarly support (Toy 112; Kraetzschmar 97; van den Born 65; Eichrodt 128; Vawter 69; cf. Zimmerli 244). It has little in its favor beyond providing a suitably insulting meaning. The same may be said of the other rabbinc interpretation, “penis,” which McKane (“Observations” 71–75) has accepted, in terms of an idiomatic expression of affront. The former interpretation is closely associated with a reading “my nose,” but the very reading seems to have arisen from that homiletical interpretation of הַרְמֶז (see Note 8:17.c.*). Structurally, v 17 corresponds to Yahweh’s shocked drawing of Ezekiel’s attention to the particular stage of abominations reached and his promise of worse to come, in vv 6, 12–13, 15. The climactic point here reached requires a slightly different order: a brief alerting of Ezekiel is accompanied by a review of previous and other sins and by a statement regarding the present, worst instance. The ABC pattern is varied to ACB. That this is so is shown by the participle יָדִּיתְו, “putting,” which matches the participle יָדוּ, “doing” in vv 6 and 12; it is missing in the generally brief section of vv 15–16. So the clause is not to be related to the social wrongdoing of v 17b (contra Gordis, JTS 37 [1936] 288; Sarna, HTR 57 [1964] 348–49; Greenberg 172–73). Rather, it appears to be a gesture associated with the last pagan rite, a gesture to which all the ire provoked by the rite gets attached. Gestures are symbols of commitment, as the German generals knew well in 1944, when they reluctantly obeyed Hitler’s order to adopt the Nazi salute. This particular religious gesture is comparable to the hand-kissing of the mouth in worship of the sun or moon at Job 31:27. The holding of an object to the nose appears in a Syrian representation of a king holding a flower on a stalk in front of his beard, while his right hand is clenched in front of his mouth, as he engages in astral worship (ANEQ 281; see Sags, JTS 11 [1960] 322, 328). The Akkadian expression appa labana denotes a gesture of worship involving both hand and nose. Sometimes the hand holds an object to the nose, as in the Bavarian sculpture of Sennacherib worshiping the Assyrian gods, in which the object held by the king is perhaps a branch (see Gruber, JANESCU 7 [1975] 78–79).

18 Yahweh’s reaction to the blatant behavior of the “Judean community” in v 17 now follows. His coming punishment, which looks forward to chaps. 9–10, is expressed in emotional terms, wrath and mercilessness. The tones of exasperation fittingly follow those expressed earlier, the framing terms “jealousy” or “outrage” and “anger” (vv 3, 5, 17), the piling up of the term “abominations” or “shocking rites” (vv 6, 9, 13, 15, 17), and the associated exclamatory questions (vv 6, 12, 15, 17). The

cf. confer, compare

"17.c. In the Masoretic tradition, יָדוּ “their nose(s)” (see Note 9:1.d.*) is regarded as one of the tiqqune sopherim, deliberate scribal corrections intended to remove objectionable expressions referring to God, as a replacement for יָדוּ “my nose.” McKane (“Observations” 71–75) has accepted this tradition. However, the ancient versions know nothing of this interpretation. The LXX “like those turning up noses, sneering” implies the MT, as does the Tg “bringing shame in front of them.” Accordingly, the tradition appears to have originated remarkably late. It seems to have developed from particular interpretations of הַרְמֶז “(pruned) branch.” See McCarthy’s discussion (Tiqqune Sopherim 91–97) and the Comment.

JTS Journal of Theological Studies
HTR Harvard Theological Review
JTS Journal of Theological Studies
JANESCU Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University
lack of mercy is illustrated in dread terms of Yahweh’s refusal to hear entreaties, a not uncommon prophetic motif (cf. Jer 11:11; Mic 3:4; Zech 7:13). There may be a resumptive allusion to the name “Jaazaniah” in v 11: the promise implicit in the name had been forfeited by the conduct of the bearer and his associates.

9:1–11 This next section of the vision account inaugurates the judgment of the “Judean community” (8:17) but focuses its implementation in the “city” of Jerusalem, which is a key word in the section. There is a parallel with Ezekiel’s bearing the iniquity of the community of Israel in 4:4–5, in conjunction with his depiction of the coming siege of Jerusalem (4:7–8). The three bipartite subsections noticed in Form/Setting/Structure, vv 1–2, 3b–7, 8–11, highlight an unexpected tension in the chapter, between punishment and sparing.

1–2 The loud divine cry ordering punishment drowns out the sinners’ potential loud cries for mercy in 8:18b and forms “an ironic contrast” to them (Blenkinsopp 57). The command is issued to a squad of supernatural destroyers. They constitute an example of prophetic reversal of an otherwise positive motif for Israel, the destroying angel of Exod 12:23; 2 Kgs 19:35 (cf. Zech 1:20–21). God’s people were no longer on the side of the angels!

The executioners find a cultural parallel in Babylonian literature, the seven gods who feature as agents of the judgment of Erra in the Poem of Erra (Bodi, Poem 95–110). The six angels appear from the same direction as the prophet, from the north. Here there seems to be the same echo of Jeremiah’s motif of the foe from the north as appeared in 1:4 (cf. Bertholet [1897] 51; et al.). They came through the same gateway as Ezekiel did in 8:16. It is described as “upper”: the inner court evidently stood on a higher level than the rest of the precincts, like the new temple court (cf. 40:31). The gateway is commonly identified with the upper Benjamin gate of Jer 20:2, leading to the inner court, though Greenberg (176) considers it a gate in the wall of the outer court. It clearly stood in line with the Benjamin Gate in the city wall (Jer 37:13), which may be the same as the Sheep Gate in Nehemiah. Jotham is said to have built “the upper gate of the house of Yahweh” (2 Kgs 15:35), though whether this one is in view is uncertain, since there was also an upper gate on the south side of the court, to which 2 Chr 23:20 must refer (Zimmerli, “Jerusalem” 420).

Beside the six executioners appears a seventh angel whose only implement is a writing kit. Readers have to wait until v 4 for his role to be disclosed. His linen garment, which serves to distinguish him from his colleagues, can be a mark of priestly rank (cf. Exod 28:42; Lev 6:3[10]; 16:4); accordingly, in 10:6, 7 the Septuagint renders “holy robe,” in reminiscence of Lev 16:4. Here, however, as in Dan 10:5; 12:6–7, it seems to demarcate its wearer as an angelic figure (cf. Mark 16:5; Rev 15:6). Linen was generally bleached and so white. The writing kit, which here reflects Egyptian practice, consisted of a wooden palette with hollowed places for cakes of black and red ink and a slot in which pens were kept (IDB 4:919; cf. D. J. Wiseman, CHB 1:31). It was evidently tucked into the waistline of the linen robe. The angelic group awaits its orders, standing by the “bronze altar,” the old Solomonic altar of burnt

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cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
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cf. confer, compare
CHB P. R. Ackroyd et al. (eds.), The Cambridge History of Judaism [the Bible], vol. 1 (Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1963-70)
offering that Ahaz had moved to the north side of the temple court (2 Kgs 16:14).

3a This observation is a deliberate anticipation of 10:4a and wants to insist that the incident of which it speaks had already occurred before that stage in the narrative—and before the present stage. It is not concerned to specify when it occurred but merely links its accomplishment with this context (cf. Becker, “Ez 8–11” 143–44). The God who issues his commands in vv 3b–7 is identified with the glorious figure who was already engaged in the first stage of leaving the temple. The mention of the “shocking rites” of chap. 8 in v 4 and of the arch-sinners of 8:16–17 in v 6 implies that Yahweh’s commands are a reaction to the sins revealed in that chapter. Accordingly, the placing of 10:4a at the earlier point of 9:3 makes it clearer that Yahweh’s abandonment of his temple is a direct consequence of his people’s sins and a parallel punishment to the judgments of chaps. 9–10.

An alternative way of understanding the text involves taking it with what follows, rather than with what precedes (cf. Blenkinsopp 58). Then the verb is not pluperfect but perfect, simply attesting an event prior to the divine cry. In that case, perhaps Yahweh’s rising from his throne is the act of the judge in passing sentence (Schmidt, TZ 6 [1950] 89 n. 21, with reference to Isa 2:19, 21; Mettinger, Dethronement 101). It is more likely, however, that there is here a reminiscence of the Priestly conception of the permanent presence of the glory of Yahweh in the tabernacle, with occasional “emanations” outside it to deliver pronouncements of punishment (Exod. 16:7, 10; Num 14:10; 16:19; 17:7; cf. Mettinger, Dethronement 89). Certainly the style of vv 3b–4 (see the Notes) evokes a communication of the God who has just revealed himself in glory. Whichever meaning is correct, the relation between 9:3 and 10:4a is left unresolved. Kraetzschmar (100) rightly rejected the harmonistic notion that in between the events of these two verses Yahweh resumed his position on the ark; however, one may not dispose of 10:4a, as he did.

The translation “cherub-structure” renders the singular bwrk “cherub.” The singular form appears to be a way of differentiating from the plural µybwrk “cherubim,” who in the narrative of chaps. 10–11 represent the supernatural “living creatures” of chap. 1 who convey the throne of Yahweh. The use of the singular to differentiate their artistic counterparts from the celestial entities may be because the temple cherubim were a pair, whereas the others were four in number (Greenberg 198–99). It may, however, be because the temple cherubim formed a single structure, with one wing on each side extending horizontally and forming a seat for an invisible throne (cf. Keel, Jahwe-Visionen 24–26 and fig. 10, with reference to Haran, IEJ 9 [1959] 35–36). The interpretation of this singular form in terms of the cherubim in the holy of holies accords with rabbinic exegesis; it was revived by Müller (Ezechiel-Studien 26–29) and followed by Kraetzschmar (100). In 10:2, 4, Zimmerli (250) has interpreted the singular form as a true singular: only one cherub was visible to a person entering the holy of holies. However, Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 152) has observed that this representation does not accord with the layout in 1 Kgs 6:23–28, where the two cherubim stand parallel, facing the nave. Further, Zimmerli (232, 254) regards the difference in number as a redactional criterion. The plural redactionally refers to the mobile throne of chap. 1, while the singular in 10:2, 4 relates to a cherub statue in the basic text. In the secondary 9:3a, however, he finds a reference to the mobile throne. Other scholars simply read a plural in 9:3a (see BHK; Houk, JBL 90 [1971] 51). Greenberg (197) has correctly pointed out that the
only meaningful direction of motion to the threshold is from inside outward, and so the singular naturally
refers to the wooden figures in the inner sanctuary, and in turn ḏ wd k “glory” relates to his permanent
presence within it. The threshold of the temple was located between the porch and the nave of 8:16, at
the doors of the nave.

3b–4 The second part of the main narrative begins, like the first, with a divine cry, now addressed to
the seventh, linen-clad angel. The initial role of this angel and the function of his writing kit are revealed.
He is to use his pen and ink to mark with a cross those who are to be exempted from the general
destruction of the population of Jerusalem. The mark, like the sign put on Cain in Gen 4:15, has a
protective significance. It is literally the letter taw or “t,” which in the old Hebrew script was written in
the form of a cross or plus sign. The Church Fathers unfairly traded on the reference to a cross,
anachronistically understanding it in Christian terms and regarding it as a prooftext for the custom of
making the sign of a cross.

The notion of sparing any comes as a surprise after the categorical divine statement of 8:18. The
earlier part of the book has already displayed variety in the negative prospects of the Judeans, sometimes
implying complete destruction within the land, sometimes permitting for some a short lease on life before
death strikes (5:2, 12), and sometimes envisioning exile as a limbo where surviving sinners mourn over
their sins (6:9). The sparing of 5:3 has an ironic ring in its context. In the next chapter, 12:16 accords
with 6:9, while 14:22 is similar; in 21:8–9(3–4) both innocent and guilty are to be killed. The present
passage is striking in that it straightforwardly implies the presence of innocent people in the capital, who
were to be spared; perhaps 14:12–20 aligns with it. Different pastoral needs among Ezekiel’s fellow
prisoners of war presumably shaped these different prophetic responses. The small number of the
survivors may be gauged from the proportion of one angel devoted to exemption and six to destruction.
His unsummoned appearance in v 2, after the summons to the executioners in v 1, suggests his relatively
minor role, at least in his task as a scribe. The survivors serve to enhance the sinful status of their fellow
citizens and so the fairness of divine punishment, inasmuch as they voice God’s own dismay at the cultic
aberrations.

5–7 The narrative now moves into the latter half of the first section. The ruthlessness of 8:18 is to be
applied to those who lack the mark of immunity. The executioners are to be unsparing, killing all three
categories of the population, the old, the young, and mothers with their children. The sanctuary was no
longer to serve as an asylum (cf. 1 Kgs 1:50–53; 2:28–34; 11:15). The slaughter began at God’s
sanctuary, “for there his holiness had been most profaned and his Torah most defied” (Muilenburg 574).
Those who had committed the ultimate sin of 8:16–17 were to be the first to die. V 7 is strictly out of
sequence, since the desecrating slaughter had already begun. It functions “as an explicit divine license to
commit an unthinkable desecration” (Greenberg 178, following Hölscher, Dichter 70 n. 1). The
desecration endorses that already committed by the cultic deviants of chap. 8. The killing of the men in
front of the temple would formally desecrate the temple itself (cf. 2 Kgs 23:15–16, 20). The command to
fill the courts with corpses overlaps with the initial tactical command in v 6a:b to begin at the sanctuary.
This second stage covers not only the cultic sinners of 8:16–17 but those of 8:7–14: those in the “inner
court” (8:16; cf. 8:14) and at “the entrance to the (outer) court” (8:7) would be included. The final
command presumably sweeps within its scope any citizens worshiping illicitly at the city gate (8:3–6).

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cf. confer, compare
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cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

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The commands fan out and encompass in reverse the four groups who had engaged in shocking rites in chap. 8.

This third verbal communication of the chapter is not a divine command, like the earlier two, but a prophetic plea to God. Ezekiel can remain an onlooker no longer. He passionately projects himself into the visionary situation, as he is left alone (as the only person alive?) in the inner court to imagine the slaughter being perpetrated outside the temple area. This first half of the third part of the narrative picks up the key term תָּשַׁךְ "destruction" from vv 1 and 6 and incorporates it into his prayer of intercession. Intercession was a regular part of prophetic ministry: it occurs in a vision account at Amos 7:2, 5. It features in Ezekiel’s ministry only here and in 11:13. Its relative absence aligns with the unconditional nature of the doom that is generally reflected in his oracles of judgment (cf. Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:7; Greenberg 203). Here Ezekiel protests against the destruction that has been so vividly portrayed as divinely instigated. The pleas of sinners may go unheard (8:18), but there is a chance that a prophet’s plea may prevail.

The destruction of the city’s population ordered by Yahweh is interpreted in terms of his reaction of anger forecast in 8:18: it is nothing less than the outpouring of his fury (cf. 36:18). Those of Israel who are left are presumably the survivors of the destruction at the hands of the Babylonians in 597 (cf. 2 Kgs 24:14). The population of Jerusalem was a natural concern for the prisoners of war taken to Babylonia, including Ezekiel, since their relatives and even children remained there (cf. 24:21, 25). It is implied that Jerusalem’s fate spells the fate of Judeans in the rest of the homeland. The mention of the sinful status of both Judah and Jerusalem in v 9 shows that the capital had a representative role. Whether in his anguish Ezekiel overlooks those to be spared in v 4 (Kraetzschmar 103) or whether he seeks mercy for the sinners is not made clear. The fact that Yahweh’s answer in vv 9–10 deals only with sin and sinners suggests the latter explanation.

The prophet’s protest provides an opportunity for a powerful justification of the destruction at the close of the chapter. “Ezekiel prays, but the answer is in effect: Too late! Sin has reached its full measure” (Blenkinsopp 59). The mercilessness of v 5 is grounded in a fresh statement of the human guilt that must meet with retribution. The guilt is not expressed in terms of the religious sins of chap. 8 that were summarized in 9:4, though they are obviously included in its characterization as “quite considerable.” Here the point is being made that the guilt relates not only to Israel’s worship but also to their way of life. This other side of their guilt, which was briefly mentioned in 8:17, is now amplified. Jerusalem, as representative of the nation, must suffer for the social sins to be found both in the country at large and in the capital. The charges align with Jeremiah’s denunciation of Jehoiakim (Jer 22:13–19; cf. Lam 4:13) and also with Ezekiel’s post-587 comprehensive description of the final kings who abused human rights in Jerusalem and of royal officials who did the same both in Jerusalem and in Judah (22:25, 27, 29; see Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 31–33, 38–39). The description of objective guilt is reinforced by one of a subjective attitude that repudiated Yahweh’s claim on their lives as no longer valid. The double description of the wicked in Ps 94:5–7 is remarkably similar, though it lacks the pointed reference to the defeat of 597:

Your people, Yahweh, they crush,
and your inheritance they afflict.

cf. confer, compare

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Widow and resident alien they kill,  
and orphans they murder.  
They say, “Yah does not see,  
the God of Jacob does not realize.”

The charges of 8:12 are here quoted. The reversal in order is a feature of literary quotation, while the use of the past tense ἔμεν “they (have) said” harks back to 8:12 (Beentjes, Bib 63 [1982] 508–9). We must take seriously the fact that in 8:12 these sentiments were attributed to the Judean elders. As political leaders they were responsible for the civil wrongs perpetrated in the capital and country, and in their destruction they were to drag down their fellow Judeans.

10 Yahweh continues in the vein of 8:18, γὰρ ἀλλὰ “I for my part,” and repeats the note of mercilessness he had sounded there and which in 9:5 he had urged on the executioners who represented him. The divine reaction, it is claimed, was commensurate with the guilt. It was too excessive for a reprieve, such as Amos had obtained in his first two phases of intercession, but significantly not in his third (Amos 7:1–9). In this new context the hard glint in Yahweh’s “eye” is an ironic answer to the assertion of v 9 that he cannot see (Greenberg 178). The justice of the punishment is reinforced in the final sentence: the liability they disdained in v 9b Yahweh was simply laying at their door, where it belonged. He was the catalyst whereby deeds matured into their natural consequences.

11 The narrative comes to an interim close and also prepares to advance to its next stage, by the report of the return of the linen-clad angel, who is to feature again in chap. 10. Mention of his writing kit lays emphasis on his earlier role as agent of exemption from destruction. Ezekiel and the reader are implicitly reminded that, if unrepentant sinners could not secure mercy, there were those who stood on the side of God and the prophet whose lives were spared from the solidarity of a comprehensive punishment.

10:1 V 2 will continue the narrative with the new, punitive task of the linen-clad angel to take fire from the divine conveyance borne by the cherubim. This verse, introduced in the style of 8:2; 10:9, pauses to explain that the object mentioned in v 2 is the conveyance of chap. 1; 1:26a is cited, with “cherubim” taking the place of the living beings (יִּפְרֵץ). The comment also appears to have a bearing on v 4, where the motif of Yahweh’s abandoning the temple is introduced in the primary text (cf. 9:3). Eventually, Yahweh was to move to his conveyance and depart in it (vv 18–19). To this latter end, only 1:26a is cited, and the seated figure of Yahweh in 1:26b is left unmentioned. The mobile throne stands empty, ready for use by the divine king. There seems to be a third intent, perhaps the prime one, in the deliberate reference to chap. 1. There the vision of Yahweh’s conveyance signified his character as judge and underscored Ezekiel’s call to be a prophet of judgment. Here in v 2 the conveyance provides the fiery coals of judgment that will destroy Jerusalem. So v 1 draws attention to the close connection between the material source of judgment and the vision of chap. 1 and is at pains to observe that the same judgment-laden phenomenon has reappeared in the second vision. The chapter in its final form reflects a dominant need to amplify this observation in a variety of ways.

2 No longer is the angel described as equipped with his writing kit. His role changes from scribe to incendiary. Like Sodom of old, Jerusalem was to be destroyed by fire. The divine command corresponds to the order to kill the population, given to the other six angels in 9:5–7, but now the city itself is to be the object of destruction. Where is the fire to come from? V 1 has already implied that it is to be linked with the divine conveyance of chap. 1. Indeed, “fiery coals” feature there “between [יִפְרֵץ, emended text] the living creatures” (1:13). It is feasible to suppose that the coals mentioned here, which are to be taken

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cf. confer, compare
“from between the cherubim” (µywkrk twnyb m), are the very same. However, those scholars who consider that the references to chap. 1 and to cherubim generally in chap. 10 (and also 8:2) emanate from a wrong-headed redactor have been at pains to explain otherwise. The Masoretic reading bwrkh “cherub” in the first occurrence in v 2a may be cited in their favor, for the entities who man the conveyance in chaps. 10–11 are elsewhere referred to in the plural, while the singular is reserved for the cherubim-structure associated with the ark in the temple (9:3; 10:4; see Note 10:7.a.*). However, late in v 2a a plural form appears. Moreover, in the recapitulation of v 2 at v 6 and in the narrative fulfillment at v 7, the plural is found at the corresponding places. Accordingly, the singular form in v 2 is to be emended to a plural (see Note 2.b.*).

If the fire is given a cultic location in or near the temple, its source is problematic, especially as it is linked with a wheeled object. Zimmerli (250–51), who located the singular cherub in the sanctuary and considered all the plural references secondary, gave vent to his bewilderment in a barrage of questions, among which he speculated that a mobile brazier for the offering of incense was set before the ark in the holy of holies. Eichrodt (134; cf. Vogt, Untersuchungen 51), removing reference to the wheels as an accretion, judged the altar of incense in the nave, just outside the holy of holies, to be the source of the fire. Houk (JBL 90 [1971] 51), followed by Fuhs (57), harmonized all the singular and plural references to cherubim to plural forms. He thought in terms of wheeled laver stands that had side panels decorated with cherubim (1 Kgs 7:27–37) positioned on the south side of the temple (Ezek 10:4)—and also, he hypothesized, on the north side—and having between them the altar of burnt offering from which the fire came. Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 153, 160–61) has rightly rejected these labored explanations. He relates all the references to a single cherub, including the first occurrence in v 2a, not to the ark but to a theophanic phenomenon: Yahweh rides on a cherub (Ps 18:11[10] = 2 Sam 22:11). In this connection he offers a novel meaning for bwrkh, which in chap. 10 is usually interpreted “wheelwork” or the like and which in

* 7.a. Heb. | v ywh has an indefinite subj: “and one extended.” The following t wynb m here seems to include a partitive sense “(one) from among,” “(one) of a group”: cf. the partitive use of ḫm “from” (cf. BDB 580b, which with reference to the subj cites Lev 25:33; Dan 11:5) and the sense “among” for ḫw b and “from among” for ḫt m with reference to a group of persons (BDB 1063b) and likewise for b ḥqa and ḥ ḫqa (BDB 899a). It can hardly bear a sense of direction toward the cherubim, for which one would expect t wynb A | a, as in v 2. The MT bwr kḥ “the cherub,” idiomatically used for “a cherub” (Becker, “Ez 8–11” 147 n. 44, with reference to GKC 126q–s; Joüon 137m–n), has no counterpart in the LXX*. It appears to be a clarifying, exegetically correct gloss: the rest of the verse shows that the man is not the subj, and the content of v 8 indicates an understanding in terms of a cherub’s hand. The LXX* does not represent µyw krk t wynb m “from among the cherubim.” Zimmerli (226–27) observed that the omission of “the cherub” makes the LXX “unintelligible”: it reads first as if the man were the subj and then treats him as object of the activity. While one does not need “the cherub,” the accompanying prepositional phrase is required. Did an original ejk meq twnceroubin “from the midst of the cherubim” (vv 2, 6) fall out by homoeoarcton before ejk meq twnceroubin? Then the scholarly deduction from the LXX* text concerning the secondary nature of v 7abq (Hitzig 70–71; et al.; cf. BHS) loses its basis.

* 2.b. The sg | q here refers collectively to the wheel structure or set of wheels; one may compare the collective usage in 23:24; 26:10, with reference to war chariots. Cf. bwr k “cherubim-structure” in 9:3; 10:4.

cf. confer, compare
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my translation I have rendered “rotary system,” to distinguish from "µ ν  "wheels.” He takes it as a “mass rolled together” or conglomeration, consisting of dark cloud, coals, and lightning accompanying Yahweh’s appearing (cf. Ps 18:9–10[8–9], 13–14[12–13]), both in chap. 10 and also in Ps 77:19(18) (NRSV “whirlwind”). Then the redactor(s) adapted or explained these references in terms of the similar vision account in chap. 1. Mettinger (Dethronement 100–102) has substantially followed Keel but favors less critical surgery than Keel or Zimmerli: he finds a basic reference to the mobile conveyance of chap. 1 in the singular “cherub” of 9:3; 10:2, 4.

Basic issues in this debate are, first, how far the text can be interpreted in a consistent way and, second, what form that interpretation should take. Where tension occurs, redaction criticism wishes to have its say, but textual criticism may also have a contribution to make. The MT in 10:2 creates havoc by its singular “cherub,” and that at least should be adjusted by standard text-critical procedures. Apart from that, the text confronts us with two seemingly separate entities, one associated with a singular “cherub” and the other with the plural “cherubim.” Houk would think of an original text with all plural forms, while Zimmerli would conceive of a primary text with a singular and a redacted text with plural forms. So does Keel, but with a radically different interpretation. Of the three interpretations of the source of the fire, Keel’s is the most convincing. But it is strange at first sight that he did not find a direct reference to 1:13. After all, 1:13–14, along with 1:4, as I have explained it, uses the motif of theophany, as distinct from the heavenly throne tradition employed in most of the rest of chap. 1. Keel himself (Jahwe-Visionen 143) spoke of vv 13–14 as theophanic but considered them an intrusion because they did not align with the dominant motif of the chapter. This view, which ignores the structural dimensions of chap. 1 (cf. my structural analysis in VT 43 [1993] 145–51) and confuses redaction criticism with form criticism, predisposed Keel to find no significant reference to 1:13 in 10:2. Moreover, he was doubtless influenced by the fact that elsewhere in chap. 10 “cherubim” appear in undoubtedly redacted contexts.

One may sympathize with the reluctance of Zimmerli, Keel, and other scholars to find references to cherubim a primary feature, for a fundamental objection stands in the way of identifying the mobile cherubim of chap. 10 with the living beings of chap. 1. Both were hybrid beings, but the latter were winged, four-headed humanoids with the feet of calves (and so bullmen). On the other hand, winged cherubim, which represent supernatural protectors, especially of the tree of life, and at times functioned as bearers of a royal or divine throne, had animal bodies and human heads in ancient Near Eastern iconography. Typical examples of cherubim are the Egyptian sphinx, with the body of a lion, and the Mesopotamian entrance guardian, with the body of a bull. Both forms are radically different from the living beings described in chap. 1. It would be extremely difficult to confuse one group with the other. Mettinger (Dethronement 99–100) is untroubled by the metamorphosis. He compares August Strindberg’s A Dream Play, in which a tree in one act appears as a coat hanger in the next. However, Ezekiel’s visions do not display such surrealistic confusion elsewhere, and so one does not expect to find it there.

In fact, cherubim have been more broadly defined in the history of scholarship. Vincent (Jérusalem 2–3:401) considered that the temple cherubim had human bodies. Unfortunately, his reasoning was based on modern aesthetic standards. He found the notion of human forms in the holy of holies, rather than animal ones, “more worthy and in better harmony with their transcendent role.” Busink (Tempel 1:269, 285–86) took over Vincent’s description but based it on the winged, humanoid genii in ancient Near
Eastern iconography. However, Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 16–18, 21, 152 n. 46) has observed that such protecting genii flanking a holy object typically faced each other. The ark cherubim had neither this function nor this orientation. They functioned as bearers of the deity, and these always had an animal form and looked forward. In the temple description in 1 Kgs 6:23–28, the gold-covered, olivewood statues of two-winged cherubim stand parallel, looking into the nave. The Chronicles account supports this positioning with an even clearer statement, in 2 Chr 3:13. Therefore, the cherubim in the temple must have had animal forms.

Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 16–17) comes to a different conclusion with respect to the cherubim in the wilderness tabernacle. In the Priestly account at Exod 25:20; 37:9, the two-winged cherubim face each other and do not function as bearers of the deity. A different type of cherub is represented there, with a human form. Such cherubim accord with humanoid figures that face an object, such as the tree of life or a divine image, and protect it. Forward-facing figures typically had animal bodies and sideways-facing ones had human bodies. A clear example of a sideways-looking guardian figure with a human body has been found on a bone mirror handle at Hazor. A four-winged cherub, in this eighth-century representation, faces and grasps the tree of life (ANEP 854; Y. Yadin, Hazor [London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975] 156–57).

Keel suggested that this Priestly representation may have been dependent on Ezek 10:20, where the cherubim are equated with the living beings of Ezek 1. But what if the Priestly account of the ark in the tabernacle was extant by the period of Ezekiel? The material in P seems to have emanated from different periods: Haran (Temples 189–204) has argued that the Priestly account of the tabernacle in the wilderness antedates the reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh. If the account is earlier than Ezekiel, there is sufficient explanation for the equation of the living beings in chap. 1 with the cherubim in chap. 10, and already in the basic text of v 2 this equation may be seen as implicit. What the various amplifications seek to do is simply to make this presupposition explicit. The divine command of v 2 already envisions such a conveyance as chap. 1 described, with humanoid attendants and wheels of a certain kind.

The naming of the attendants as cherubim occasioned a flurry of explanatory activity; one must ask why the change of term was necessary. The literary means of the change is now apparent: it is plausible to posit dependence on the Priestly account of the tabernacle. It may well be that Ezekiel, versed in this scholastic tradition, considered that the temple cherubim also were of the humanoid type. Anyway, a clear parallel is drawn between the temple cherubim and the “cherubim” of the mobile throne. The intent was seemingly to detract from the significance of the temple cherubim and the associated concept of the protective presence of God grounded among his people. The earthly representation was a temporal shadow of a celestial reality. Two truths had to be proclaimed about this reality. First, it could be manifested differently, in terms of the omnipresent God of judgment, as Ezekiel had earlier experienced in the inaugural vision. Second, this manifestation was not to be tied permanently to time or place. In v 2 the former truth comes to the fore. The theophanic fire of 1:13 is now menacingly present in the inner court of the temple. The mobile cherubim that guard the fire of divine judgment by their presence implicitly overshadow the static models placed inside the temple beside the cultic presence of Yahweh, a notion that v 4 will develop.

Greenberg (180–81) has correctly observed that the wheels extended lower than the attendants, so that there was a space between and under the latter. The angel had to go into the towering structure and fill his “cupped hands” with some of the coals of fire that were to set the city ablaze (cf. Exod 9:8). Houk

n. note
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(JBL 90 [1971] 53–54), followed by Fuhs (57), interpreted the fire as purificatory, with reference to Isa 6:6–7, and the means of marking the innocent citizens in chap. 9. He was implicitly developing a suggestion made and rejected by Herrmann (66). His interpretation depends on reordering the present text, so that 10:2–7 (minus vv 4a, 5) originally came between 9:1–2 and 9:3–4. This hypothesis deprives the angel’s writing kit of any significance.

3a Ezekiel, who witnessed the angel’s entry into the nether parts of the divine conveyance, was presumably standing somewhere in the temple court, to which he had been brought in 8:16. Now the location of the conveyance is established as in the same court, the “inner” court of 8:16, which in v 4b is naturally called simply “the court.” More precisely, the cherubim are situated on the south side, which can hardly connote “beneficial” here (Zimmerli 254, in differentiation from the approach of the executioners from the north in 9:2). The cherubim stand well away from the chain of abominations that had occurred at various points to the north of the temple and finally parallel with it (Greenberg 181, who, however, has bunched all the abominations into the temple court, in dependence on the MT).

3b–4 The phenomenon of the cloud filling the court in v 3b is explained and amplified in v 4. The cloud has links both with 1 Kgs 8:10–11 and with Exod 40:34–35. The former passage is often taken as a Priestly accretion from Exodus (see, e.g., Noth, Könige, BKAT 9 [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1983] 180–81), though Weinfeld (Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School [Oxford: Clarendon, 1972] 204) and Mettinger (Dethronement 88) regard Exod 40:34–35 as a retrojection of the Kings passage. In fact, our passage is slightly closer to Kings, in that the verbs of filling apply both to the cloud and to the glory. There are two important points to be noted. First, there is here a link with a Priestly tradition, which matches the earlier representation of the cherubim. The chapter moves steadily on Priestly lines. Second, there is an echo of Yahweh’s taking possession of his completed sanctuary. It is an ironic echo, for here the glory is departing. Yet we cannot miss the significance of juxtaposing v 3a and v 3b. Two traditions are combined here, the Priestly one of the cultic manifestation of Yahweh and the application of the phrase “glory of Yahweh” to the theophanic manifestation of the heavenly throne in Ezek 1:28. The presence of the latter conception is clear from the use of portfolio “radiance, bright aura,” a key element in chap. 1, at vv 4, 13, 27, and 28, a term that had been borrowed from accounts of storm theophany (e.g., Ps 18:13[12] = 2 Sam 22:13; Hab 3:11). Zimmerli (251), whose concern it was to prune out references to chap. 1 as extraneous, left untouched v 4 with its small but unmistakable testimony to it. There is a sense of transition here, signaled both by the presence of the mobile cherubim in the court and by the movement of the glory of Yahweh from the ark to the threshold of the temple, on its way to joining the cherubim.

Underlying the passage is a complex theological concept of the presence of God, as Greenberg (196) has observed. Hossfeld’s criticism of him for so doing (“Die Tempelvision” 160 n. 30) was motivated by his excessive redaction-critical stance. What Fretheim (Suffering of God 63) has called the “tabernacling presence” of God could coexist with his self-manifestation in theophany, as 8:4 bears implicit witness. Here the former is strikingly subordinated to, and gives way to, the latter. This may be why arranty “rotary system” is used in the basic v 2: it has a literary association with the theophanic chariot. In Ps 77:19(18) it means or may be taken to mean “‘wheel,’ to be understood pars pro toto for

**Note**: The term **pars pro toto** is used to signify that the wheel is a general representation of the chariot as a whole.
the chariot” (Mettinger, *Dethronement* 105, following Jeremias, *Theophanie*, 2nd ed., 26 n. 3).

V 4a has already occurred in 9:3a, but this is its primary place. The intensification of divine presence represented by “glory” is here, as in 9:3, a cultic phenomenon. The movement of Yahweh out of and away from the temple is begun. Block (*Gods of the Nations* 129–61) and Bodi (*Poem of Erra* 191–218) have compared the motif of divine abandonment in Ezek 8–11 with the forms it takes in ancient Near Eastern texts. Our text has special links with three roughly contemporary Mesopotamian texts. First, in the story of Esarhaddon’s rebuilding of Babylon, the patron deity Marduk’s anger at the city for moral and cultic sins is narrated, and then follow his destruction of the city and temples, including his own, and his eventual return to his temple. The departure of other gods from Babylon is mentioned, and his own departure is implied by the subsequent description of his return. Second, the sixth-century Prayer of Adad-guppi briefly relates: “in the sixteenth year of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, Sin, king of the gods, became angry with his city and with his temple and went up to heaven; the city and the people in it became desolate” (1:6–9). Third, the Cyrus Cylinder, celebrating the Persian conquest of Babylon in 538, mentions Marduk’s great anger at the king’s cultic aberrations and oppression of his people by forced labor, his departure with the other gods, and the consequent destruction of the temples and city and the annihilation of the population. These cultural examples of the motif provide striking parallels to its use in the context of chap. 8–11. They lend support to Zimmerli’s refusal to countenance (“Das Phänomenon” 181–82) or even mention in his commentary the deletion of basic material relating to divine abandonment in 10:4, 18, 19; 11:23, advocated by scholars of the previous generation (Hölscher, *Dichter* 78; Bertholet [1936] 39; Balla, “Ezechiel” 1; cf. Houk, *JBL* 90 [1971] 49, 52).

5 In an afterthought, a comparison is drawn between the cherubim of vv 2–3 and the living beings of the inaugural vision. Like them, they had wings, and their flapping is related to one of the comparisons in 1:24. The simile “as loud as the Almighty” is amplified not only by the addition of “God” but by reference to the divine command of v 2. V 2 is the mainspring of the afterthoughts and redactional comments in chap. 10; it is a revelation on which light was continually sought. In this case v 2 provided an example of the divine voice, which is regarded as loud, as it is explicitly described in 9:1. The flapping of the wings alludes to their motion, warming the motors up (Mettinger, *Dethronement* 101), as they prepare to leave. The reference to noise heard in the outer court is at first sight strange, since Ezekiel is standing in the temple court. The outer court is distinguished from the inner court of v 3 and must refer to the court of 8:7, inside the perimeter wall of the palace complex. Brownlee (150) has plausibly related the place and the noise to an echo “reverberating from the high walls of the outer court.” Indeed, the palace buildings to the south may have caused the resonance.

6–7 V 2 is now resumed in a brief paraphrase, primarily after the digression in vv 3–4, in order to prepare for its fulfillment in v 7. The narrative in passing interprets the “rotary system” in terms of the wheels of chap. 1: a more formal identification will appear in v 13. The last clause in v 6, “(and) he stood beside a wheel,” begins the next phase of the narrative, which continues in v 7. The execution of the command proves more complex than the command itself: one of the cherubim hands the fire to the angel. His going out is not merely from the undercarriage of the celestial conveyance but from the temple court, out into the city, as in 9:7 (Sprank, *Ezechielstudien* 59 n. 1; Zimmerli, “Das Phänomenon” 181). A veil is drawn over the sequel, as in 9:7, where only the slaughter of the men in the temple court could be recorded. The reason for this double reticence is the literary principle of unity of place (Greenberg 193...
The narrative takes its cue from Ezekiel’s own location and reports what he was able to observe.

8 Another afterthought is recorded, of the same type as that in v 5 (see Form/Structure/Setting), now concerning the hands of the cherubim. It provides an explanation of the mention of the cherub’s hand at the beginning of v 7 and takes the opportunity to identify the cherubim in yet another aspect with the living beings in chap. 1, here with reference to 1:8.

9a This is a different type of afterthought, paralleled in v 1 and also in 8:2 and typically consisting of one sentence. As an independent visionary statement, it seems logically to postdate the kind of comment found in v 8, which is more smoothly integrated into the flow of the narrative. It is an interruption, however, that is most naturally to be attributed to Ezekiel himself. It develops the casual identification of the “rotary system” of v 2 with the wheels of chap. 1. The close relationship between cherubim and wheels evident from v 2 is explained in a paraphrase of 1:15.

9b–12a An opportunity is taken to develop the comparison with chap. 1 in a sustained and more detailed manner. It is difficult to avoid the impression that a later redactor is at work here. The form of the wheels (vv 9b–10) and how they function (vv 11–12a) are the objects of intense concern. The purpose of this study is not only to explain the reference to the wheel at the end of v 6 but evidently to shed light on a later point in the narrative, v 19a, where the wheels are involved in the departure of the cherubim. What did these wheels look like? 1:16 supplies information, both as to their jewel-like gleam and as to their spherical shape; this information is cited in v 9b–10. How did they work? 1:17–18a is quarrled for the answer. They were constructed to move forward in any of four directions, in dependence on the cherubim. In turn the cherubim were locked into their forward movement, following the head of the particular cherub that faced in the forward direction. V 1, where the heads of the cherubim are encountered, with a collective singular, as in the basic 1:26a, provides the cue for mention of the head here. It had for the redactor the merit of providing clarification of 1:18a and justification for the explanation given in 10:12a: reference is found to the physical parts of the cherubim, matching the head. The redactor obviously found difficulty with this half verse. The initial הַֽﬠַרְעַֽפְשְׁנִי (with feminine suffix) in 1:18a was construed not as “and their rims,” with reference to the wheels, but “and their backs,” with reference to the (feminine) living beings, which are now understood as cherubim. The probable reason for this interpretation was a careful differentiation of הַֽﬠַרְעַֽפְשְׁנִי from מַﬠַרְעַֽפְשְׁנִי “their rims” (with a masculine suffix) in 1:18b, which was rightly recognized as the rims of the (masculine) wheels and interpreted as “the wheels” in 10:12b. V 12 provides interesting evidence of the antiquity of the variation in suffixes in chap. 1.

In line with the exegetical decision to relate 1:18a to the cherubim, הַֽﬠַרְעַֽפְשְׁנִי “fear” was misread or guessed as if it had to do with (arms and) hands. Was it taken as an Aramaic form אוּדוּפְשִין “hands”? Then for completeness, there was a rounding out at beginning and end with “bodies” and “wings.” Thus all the other parts of the cherubim moved in unison with their individual heads: in particular there is a focus on the three cherubim that were not taking the lead. One fact emerges from this overall interpretation in v 12a, which Herrmann (68) called “fantastic”: for all its grammatical care and exegetical ingenuity, it stands at a distance from the basic 1:18a.

13 The text returns to one of Ezekiel’s reflective afterthoughts, which at an earlier stage stood next to v 9a. It explains that what the prophet had there been calling “wheels,” in line with chap. 1, were properly “a rotary system” in the language of the divine command he had heard and recorded in vv 2 and 6. Kraetzschmar’s observation (111) that it should have come after v 6 is hardly fair. V 7 needed logically to come after v 6, but it raised the question of the cherub’s hand, which had to be resolved in v 8. Then there could be a return to the issue of the “wheel” mentioned at the end of v 6, first in v 9a and then in the previously adjacent v 13. V 13 sorts out the apparent discrepancy between the reference to both the rotary system and the wheel in v 6.
Consecutive use of chap. 1 continues to be made, now from 1:18b–21. Again, the form of the wheels is considered first (v 12b) and then how they functioned (vv 16–17). V 12b is parallel with v 9b and describes their gleaming appearance in terms of the bright eyes that cover the rims, by citing 1:18b. This second block of redactional material has been split into two: v 12b was put with the first block in vv 9b–12a, before v 13, while vv 16–17 were set after it—and eventually at a greater distance by the subsequent intrusion of both v 14 and v 15. Why was the material severed in this way? There was good reason to place v 9b next to v 9a: it follows it in its master text, since v 9a reflects 1:15 and v 9b reflects 1:16a. The redacted text flows on, parallel with that of chap. 1. But the existing v 13 had to be eased into the redactional material at a suitable point. That point was judged to be after the reference in v 12b to “the wheels,” which could provide an occasion for mention of their remaining in v 13.

Halperin (VT 26 [1976] 131), followed by Keel (Jahwe-Visionen 150 n. 40, 269), has suggested that the purpose of 10:9–17 was “to contribute not to the adjacent temple vision, but to the understanding of its own Vorlage—the description of the wheels in i 15–21” and to interpret the wheels in terms of angels. His premise that vv 9–17 have no contribution to make to the vision is rather hasty. His interpretation has sought to align the material with the understanding of the wheels as a group of angels in late Jewish angelological material. The earliest evidence of this characterization appears in the Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 61:10), which belongs either to the first century B.C. or to the first century A.D. Earlier still, in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice found at Qumran, the wheels are animate beings but are not yet regarded as a class of angels (Newsom, Songs 309, with reference to 4Q 405 20 ii 21 22:3 and 4Q403 lli 15). We have argued above that exegetically v 12a aligns with v 11 and relates to the cherubim. V 12b begins a new stage in the redactor’s work, and the eyes are a feature of the wheels alone, as in chap. 1. The present verse division in the MT may well reflect a later understanding of the wheels in animate terms, encouraged by the corruption in 3:12. Interestingly, in Rev 4:6, 8 the “four living beings” are described as full of eyes, which at least implies the relating of v 12a to the cherubim, rather than to animate wheels, as Halperin understands the half verse. In order to maintain his interpretation, he takes υμνων ωνων“and the wheels” at the beginning of v 12b as a marginal gloss (VT 26 [1976] 137).

The continuation of the redactional material in vv 16–17 uses 1:19–21 to show the automatic reflex of the wheels to the various movements of the cherubim and to find it not in any mechanical connection but in the invisible control wielded by the cherubim by means of their “spirit.” This, explains the redactor, was how the wheels could move alongside the cherubim in v 19. V 16b is his own reaffirmation that the wheels were incapable of independent movement. It corresponds to 1:20aa, which mentions the alignment of wheels and spirit (for the rest of 1:20, see the pertinent Notes). That detail is not directly relevant for the redactor, whose concern is the subordination of the wheels to the cherubim themselves. His replacement clause is a rough equivalent from his own perspective: according to 1:21bb, the spirit was in fact that of the living beings. If proof were needed, the reference to “living beings” demonstrates that chap. 1 is being used (Cooke 117).

18–19 The basic narrative is now resumed from v 7. It records a second stage in the departure of the glory of Yahweh, after the first in v 4a. The empty throne to which Ezekiel drew attention in v 1 is empty no longer. God’s “tabernacling presence” is over. It is replaced by his presence in a theophany

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VT Vetus Testamentum
n. note
4Q 4QSam1
4Q 4QSam1
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
VT Vetus Testamentum
of judgment. The cherubim function no longer simply as guardians of the fire beneath the throne but as bearers of the throne of v 1. The “glory of Yahweh” is here a reference to the resplendent divine figure of 1:28, as it clearly was in v 4 and also in 9:3. However, 8:4 seems to use it more generally of the total revelation of Yahweh on his mobile throne borne by living beings or cherubim, as in the earlier 3:12, to which reference is made in 8:4.

The cherubim ascend into the air for the short journey of about fifty yards across the court to the east gate of the court, going away from the direction of the temple. The journey could presumably have been accomplished by the wheels on the ground, but a formal flight served better the motif of divine departure, which Ezekiel underlines with his subsequent reference to “the glory of the God of Israel.” The division of the departure into separate stages, of which the second and the third occur in vv 18–19 (cf. v 4), also served to draw attention to the departure. It is like the slowing down of the normal speed in a movie, so that each movement in a particular scene can be savored. The use of the verb עָרְז and its passive surrogate עָרְזוּ “be (raised) high” in vv 17, 19 is interesting. In the account of the inaugural vision, דְּרָז “be lifted up” is used, in a reflective portion, at 1:19, 21. The employment of עָרְז accords with 3:12 (in the original text), where it appears in a narrative of departure, as here. The redactor, unaware of such a stylistic nicety, borrowed עָרְז to use in his reflective material in vv 16–17.

20–22a In an afterthought, the prophet makes an explicit identification of the cherubim in vv 18–19 with the living beings of the vision associated with his call. He has come to realize that the living beings were what in the present narrative are called cherubim. Matching features, which corroborate the identification, are supplied in v 21, the four faces and wings and the arms, with allusion to 1:6, 8a. Despite the somewhat confusing reference to cherubim in the divine command of vv 2, 6, they were indeed the living beings described in chap. 1. What clinched the identification was the déjà vu distinctiveness of the faces. It is significant that the cherubim that decorate the temple walls in the eschatological vision at 41:18–19, in a section deriving from later redaction, face one another and so are presumably humanoid. They are described as having two faces, which Wevers (307) and Haran (Temples and Temple-service in Ancient Israel [Oxford: Clarendon, 1978] 258 n. 17) have rightly interpreted as a two-dimensional representation of four-faced creatures (cf. Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 233, where I followed Galling [in Fohrer 234] and Zimmerli [388] in wrongly speaking of two heads). This description has taken 10:20–21 seriously, with its information about the four faces of the cherubim and their identification with the (humanoid) living beings of chap. 1.

22g b The redactor responsible for the two conjoined blocks of material concerning the form and operation of the wheels in vv 9b–12a and 12b, 16–17 makes a last, brief reference to form and mode of functioning here. Now not the wheels but the cherubim are in view. Their “appearance” has just been sketched in vv 21–22ab. How they functioned can be cited from 1:12a. The quotation neatly serves to coordinate appearance and operation, for it traces the importance of the faces in determining direction of movement. The redactor’s concern is to investigate why the throne bearers needed to have as many as four faces (v 21). The answer lies in the mobility of the divine conveyance.

11:1–21 The narrative about the departing glory is interrupted by an independent visionary experience in vv 1–13, which in turn is supplemented with a positive message in vv 14–21.

1–13 Mention of the entrance to the east gateway to the temple court in 10:19 prompted a reference to another vision Ezekiel had seen concerning that very place. This vision account is relevant to the basic narrative inasmuch as it overlaps with chap. 9 in its concern for the sin and judgment of Jerusalem (see

cf. confer, compare
n. note

cf. confer, compare
**Form/Structure/Setting**. The passage is structured in a threefold pattern of narrative and speech. The first two sections contain narrative and divine speech, in vv 1–4 and 5–12, while the third comprises further narrative and the prophet’s speech, in v 13. The divine speech consists first of a private communication to Ezekiel (vv 2–4) and then of a public oracle for him to deliver (vv 5ab2–12).

1. The beginning of the vision account is parallel with 8:3, 5 in referring both to transportation by the spirit to a gateway in Jerusalem and to Yahweh’s addressing the prophet. At the entrance to the east gateway to the temple, Ezekiel witnesses a meeting being held that is far from religious in nature. He recognizes from his previous residence in Jerusalem two men, Jaazaniah, who by reason of his patronymic is a different person from that in 8:11, and Pelatiah. He calls them מ[ה י]ר[ך] “officials of the people,” a term that otherwise occurs only in postexilic texts, Neh 11:1; 1 Chr 21:2; 2 Chr 24:23. In Jer 29:2; 52:1 “officials of Judah” are differentiated from “officials of Jerusalem,” with reference to royal officials who had responsibility for the two administrative areas. Here there is a general appellation, which may reflect the prophet’s exilic remoteness (Zimmerli 257).

2–3 It must be Yahweh who speaks, in view of the divine commission to prophesy in v 4. A general characterization of the men is given, citing their involvement in morally evil projects. The first phrase, “making iniquitous plans,” and the subsequent mention of “evil” seem to be deliberate echoes of Mic 2:1. Their policy is explained by a resolution in v 3a, which is supported by a metaphorical saying in v 3b. The resolution has been variously interpreted (see Zimmerli 258). The initial echo of the accusation in Mic 2:1–2 provides the clue: there the evil schemes of the powerful were to seize the houses of others, which they coveted (Ohnesorge, *Jahwe gestaltet* 69; cf. Fuhs 60; Fohrer 60; Greenberg 187). These city planners had no scruples in attaining their selfish ends, as the more specific accusation in v 6 will reveal. Their illegal seizure of the property of other citizens made it unnecessary to engage in further building. The epigram in v 3b is harder to interpret. The immediate context and the denial of the validity of the saying in v 11 (cf. v 7) make it clear that a positive, smugly reassuring comment is being made. One can imagine it being said with a knowing grin. The imagery is used differently in 24:3–11, as a metaphor of judgment relating to the siege of Jerusalem: Yahweh would make it hot for the citizens of Jerusalem! Here the thought may be that the caldron protects its contents from the fire (Keil 145; Bertholet [1897] 61). It is more likely, in the light of v 7, that there is an implicit contrast between meat, which corresponds to the best cuts of meat and choicest bones in 24:1 that are put into the caldron, and offal that has no right in the pot (Greenberg 187). The plotters are contrasting themselves with their victims, whose rights to live in the city they have denied.

4 The citation of the proud claims of the powerful elite has launched a disputation to which Yahweh will give a vigorous and reasoned response. The quotation also constitutes an accusation that triggers an oracle of judgment. Ezekiel is commissioned to transmit the oracle. The repetition of the command conveys the deep emotion provoked by the oppression. It is striking that an oracle is issued within a vision: the visionary prophet is characteristically an observer. A parallel occurs in 37:1–14, where Ezekiel becomes a participant in the unfolding of the drama of the dry bones that come to life. Here, however, he remains an observer. His vocal role (v 13) really impinges on the exiles who are listening to the vision account (cf. 11:25). They need to hear reasons why Jerusalem must fall and cannot be spared. The vision is a dramatic means of communicating this unpalatable truth.

5 A fresh segment of narrative appears. Mention of the spirit’s falling on the prophet is unique, and it is sometimes suggested that it is a redactional addition (Zimmerli 258; Wevers 93; Ohnesorge, *Jahwe gestaltet* 51). A narrative prelude to the statement that follows is structurally fitting. Elsewhere in the...
book the spirit relates to the prophet as a means of empowerment (2:2; 3:24) or of the parapsychological feat of translocation (3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 37:1; 43:5). Closely associated with it is the hand of Yahweh as the initiating force in ecstatic experiences (1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 37:1; 40:1). In 33:22 the divine hand is the instrument that releases Ezekiel from dumbness and so enables him to prophesy (cf. Isa 8:11; Jer 15:17). Similarly, the spirit functions here as the stimulus to prophecy, like the “burning fire” that constrained Jeremiah to proclaim the grim word (Jer 20:9). The range of usage of the onrush (jlx) of the spirit in early narratives is worth comparing. The present use corresponds to the onrush of the prophetic spirit (1 Sam 10:6, 10; cf. 1 Kgs 22:24), as opposed to that of the empowering spirit in Judg 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam 11:6; 16:13. A reason for mentioning the prophetic spirit will emerge later in the verse.

The mention of Yahweh’s knowledge of the officials’ schemes and feelings of security serves to express their responsibility to a higher, moral power.

Sheol and Abaddon are visible to Yahweh:

Sheol and Abaddon are visible to Yahweh:

Sheol and Abaddon are visible to Yahweh:

Sheol and Abaddon are visible to Yahweh:

Sheol and Abaddon are visible to Yahweh:

how much more human minds! (Prov 15:11)

Here the term for “minds” is jwr, the very word used earlier in the verse for the prophetic spirit. There seems to be a conscious polarization between the two mainsprings of speech, the human spirit that expresses itself in self-assured statements of abuse of power and the divine spirit that finds expression in criticizing and countermanding the schemes of its human counterpart. The officials are strikingly addressed as “community of Israel”: as officials of the people, they act as representatives. The vocative has an ironic ring. They were certainly not living up to their responsibilities as members of God’s covenant people.

6 The role of v 6 is to dispute the thesis propounded by the city leaders. It cannot be valid, because the activity that underlies the thesis is morally wrong. Lives as well as houses were involved in the real estate deals implied in v 3a, just as the disposal of Naboth’s vineyard was facilitated by his assassination in the name of legality (1 Kgs 21:1–16). In this case, however, not an individual but large numbers had suffered. Eissfeldt (Studies 77–81) showed that “slain” relates not only to the war dead but also to civilians who wrongly lost their lives by murder or political execution (cf. Deut 21:1–6; Jer 41:9).

Accordingly, Zimmerli’s strained exegesis, following Horst (VT 3 [1953] 341), cannot stand, as Eichrodt (136 and n. 1) observed: he related v 6 to a future divine judgment, caused by the leaders’ sin, of filling Jerusalem with corpses slain in war. In terms of an oracle of judgment, v 6 functions as accusation, while in terms of the disputation, it gives reasons for denying the validity of the initial thesis.

7–12a The accusation gives way to a pronouncement of punishment, formally introduced by the linking “therefore” and the messenger formula. Within the disputation it has the role of a counterthesis, as in 33:27–28.

7a The contrary proposition is a restatement of the thesis, which typically inverts the order of clauses (cf. 9:9 and the Comment). Those who have a legal and theological right to stay in the city are the people killed for their houses. By a gruesome extension of the metaphor, the meat in the caldron is identified as the corpses of the officials’ victims. “The only good Jerusalemite is the dead Jerusalemite” (Taylor 110).
7b–8 But what of the oppressors? They have no right to the city properties they have taken over. So their fate will be to lose their comfortable niche in Jerusalem and to be slain in turn. The rhetorical logic of vv 7–10 depends on a break-up of the stereotyped phrase "slain by the sword" (Num 19:16; Isa 22:2; Jer 14:18; Ezek 31:17, etc.). In a sinister word game, one word in the phrase suggests the other. "All who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matt 26:52). Or in Ezekiel's own striking words in a later oracle, concerning the post-587 occupants of the land, those who "stand by the sword ... will fall by the sword" (33:26–27). The sword refers to the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians, as v 9 will clarify. The officials were living in a fools' paradise, trying not to think of the fear that had haunted them since the earlier invasion in 597 B.C.. That nightmare would come true. The sword would be sent in on Yahweh's orders, commissioned to work out his moral retribution. The divine-saying formula at the end of v 8 serves to mark a minor break in the sequence of thought.

9–10 An amplification of the double punishment of vv 7b–8 now follows. Divine expulsion from the capital would put them in the ruthless power of aliens (cf. 7:21). Thus would the judicial verdict of "guilty" passed against them by the divine judge be carried out (cf. 5:8, 10, 15). This death penalty would be exacted "on Israelite territory." The phrase "is a shortened variant of the fixed expression "in all the territory of Israel." Apart from 2 Kgs 14:25, " does not refer to the border of Israel (M. Ottoson, TDOT 2:365). Vv 9–10 have mistakenly been taken as an addition that reads back into the text the execution of leading Judeans at Riblah in Syria in 587 (2 Kgs 25:20–21); then the divine-saying formula in v 8 ended the original oracle, and the repetition of v 7 in v 9 was a mark of redaction (Zimmerli 259; Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet 51–52). The oppressors’ membership in the community of Israel (v 5) would not save them from a judicial death in Israel. They would suffer the punishment meted out by the God of the land (cf. 6:7, 11–14). The recognition formula in v 10b turns the oracle of judgment into a divine-proof saying. The punishment would be a means to a particular end, the proof of the moral authority of Yahweh, willfully overlooked before his forceful intervention into Judean affairs.

11–12a The oracle is extended in these closing affirmations. This material too has been regarded as secondary, but it should not be impeached on textual grounds (see Note 11.a.); v 12b, on the other hand, cannot stay). The form critic does not like continuation after the usually final element of the recognition formula, while the redaction critic is suspicious of repetition (cf. Hitzig 77; et al., including Zimmerli 259; Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet 52). For the rhetorical critic, repetition is welcome as an emphatic device characteristic of Hebrew literature. The second role that the oracle has, as a disputation, has determined the presence and content of this further material. In a final twist, the counterthesis of v 7a is rephrased as an outright denial of the thesis in v 3 and related to the future of which vv 7b–10 had spoken. The privilege to reside in Jerusalem was not theirs. Israel’s location for the due process of law for deviant members of Israel’s community is reaffirmed. There was no lesser means whereby Yahweh...
could reestablish his authority over them.

13 The segment of narrative introduces the last speech, this time a vocal reaction from Ezekiel. The references to his prophesying and to Pelatiah glance backwards over the unit, citing the verb of v 4 that embraces vv 5–12 and also one of the names of v 1. Evidently Ezekiel carried out the command to prophesy and duly repeated the disputation and proof saying of vv 5–12. The prophet is horrified by the instant demise of Pelatiah (cf. Acts 5:5). It was not a result of his prophesying, which envisions a later fulfillment in terms of invasion and conquest. It was thus not an event like the death of Jeremiah’s rival Hananiah, who died after a personal oracle to that effect (Jer 28:15–17; cf. Acts 5:9–10). In fact, Pelatiah, by his quick and premature death, evaded the particular fate decreed by the oracle. This surprise ending raises questions about the nature of the vision account. Unlike the main temple vision, was it intended as a veridical account? Then the prophet was exercising the God-given gift of second sight, somewhat like Elisha in 2 Kgs 5:26; 6:31–33 (Cooke 123; Eichrodt 139–40). However, presumably the veridical nature of the vision did not extend to the prophesying, which seems to be a voice-over device to express divine judgment, addressed to the exilic hearers, rather than an integral element of involvement, such as it is in chap. 37.

For Ezekiel the sudden death must have functioned as an omen, as “God’s veto” on the future of Jerusalem and its citizens (Horst, VT 3 [1953] 342). It is probable that the very name “Pelatiah,” which means “Yahweh provides escape,” contributed to the ominous nature of the incident (Goetsberger, BZ 19 [1931] 14; cf. Greenberg 189; so earlier Calvin 362). The event tragically belied his name. But it raised a larger question concerning the Judah-domiciled “Israel” of v 5, who had escaped the rigors of 597. To this question Ezekiel gives anguished expression in v 13b. It is framed as a statement and so takes a stronger form than the parallel 9:9, but clearly it has the force of an intercessory prayer or a prophetic lament.

14–21 The anguished prayer of v 13 echoes down the years. This next oracle is meant to serve as a virtual reply. It has an independent, non-visionary agenda, as its separate message-reception formula in v 14 attests, but it functions here as a literary answer that honors the spirit of Ezekiel’s petition. The oracle is best interpreted as a post-587 prophecy (see Form/Structure/Setting). It is a disputation, like vv 1–13, but this one blends the counterthesis with a proclamation of salvation. The thesis, dispute, and counterthesis are distinguished by the separate verbs of saying (מָלֵא) in vv 15, 16, and 17, as they were in the previous disputation (vv 3, 5, 7).

15 As in 33:24, the non-exiled Judeans console themselves with a theological claim to the land. In a spirit of one-upmanship, they explicitly contrast themselves with the exiles and raise their own self-esteem at the others’ expense. Yahweh is categorized as God of the land (cf. 1 Sam 26:19; Hos 9:3). A providential conclusion can be drawn, that the exiles have been banished from his presence, while those left behind still bask in it, enjoying the land as a “sacramental assurance of the favor of Yahweh” (Zimmerli 261). This double assessment in terms of the possession and denial of territorial rights is made even more of a put-down for the exiles by the introductory v 15a. It is Ezekiel’s own family and community who are presented as the target of this exclusive way of thinking. Three concentric circles of kinship are drawn, the first of which is his very own brothers, members of the nuclear family. The second is a wider circle, the extended family, which significantly relates to the right of a family member to
redeem the land of a relative who had the misfortune to lose it (see Lev 25:25–26, 29–32; cf. Lev 25:48–49). There was room in the laws of redemption even for a priestly family like Ezekiel’s (Lev 25:32–34). The non-exiled Judeans had failed to reckon with the right of redemption. This reference casts a beam of hope over the demeaning thesis and its evaluation. So does the definition of the third and widest circle, “the whole community of Israel in its entirety.” In this context, as in 20:40 (cf. 37:15–23), it seems to refer to the Judean exiles languishing in their Babylonian settlements, characterizing them exclusively as the people of God. The battle lines are drawn up right from the beginning. It is unambiguously affirmed that the Judeans, who have gone through the judgment of exile and stand before God as those who have received the due reward for their deeds, are the ones who have a future with God as his family (cf. Luke 18:14).

16 The initial formal reaction of Yahweh to the land claim of the non-exiles rhetorically addresses them, in the spirit of v 15, which spoke of the exiles as the distant “they.” This verbal reaction disputes the thesis. It grants the premise on which the thesis was based, the fact of exile, and even interprets it theologically in terms of an event initiated by Yahweh. For the exiles the old country had been replaced by other countries as their home. However, the dispute adduces a damaging modification of the thesis by claiming that Yahweh is still present with the exiles, though in a reduced form. So they were not “far from Yahweh,” as the thesis claimed. This reduced presence is strikingly described in terms of “a partial sanctuary.” Reference is often made to Isa 8:14 for elucidation, but the text there seems to require emendation. The formulation may imply that the basis of the exiles’ self-confidence was the ability to worship at the ruined temple site in Jerusalem (cf. Jer 41:5). In that case the unexiled Judeans were laying claim to a territorial belief that to worship in the temple carried with it the benefit of continuing as a member of God’s people in God’s land (see Exod 15:17; Isa 57:13; cf. R. E. Clements, God and Temple [Oxford: Blackwell, 1965] 73). The Targum interpreted the present phrase in terms of synagogues, but this is a homiletical rendering: there is no sure knowledge of synagogues until the Hellenistic period in Egypt. We are not told in what ways the limited presence of God among the exiles was apprehended. It may fairly be explained in terms of Jer 29:12–14, in the shorter form of the LXX:

“You will pray to me and I will hear you, and you will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart, and I will reveal myself to you.”

The spiritual presence of God before the exile (and after: cf. chaps. 40–48) required the religious props of temple festivals and sacrifices. But it was available for the exiles apart from the institution of the temple (cf. Dan 6:10).

17 The counterthesis begins in v 17 and continues till v 20. It takes the glorious form of a proclamation of salvation. V 17 has a change of perspective: the exiles, who are the real recipients of the oracle as a whole, are now addressed. Yahweh’s personal intention was to return them to their homeland. In so doing, it is implied, he would act as their confidence or redeemer, and claim back the land for his people (Liwak, “Probleme” 118–19). What Ezekiel could not do for his family (v 15a), Yahweh...
himself would undertake for his people. The beginning of the message, v 15a, had raised hopes for the exiles that redemption was part of God’s continuing purposes for Israel, which he would accomplish as the spiritual patron of the exiles. There seems at this point to be the beginning of a drawing on the Priestly passage Exod 6:6–8. M. Fishbane (Text and Texture [New York: Schocken, 1979] 132) has observed the sustained usage of this passage in Ezek 20:33–42, with reference to a second exodus. In Exod 6:6 the exodus is represented as Yahweh’s redeeming activity, as the exercising of his claim on his people rather than the Egyptians. Here by implication there is to be a new exodus, which would lead to Yahweh’s claiming back the land for his exiled people. As in Ezek 20:42, the traditional term År a “country” in the basic Exod 6:8 is replaced by larcy tmd “the soil/land of Israel,” which is characteristic of Ezekiel’s oracles and speaks in warm terms of the distant homeland (cf. Zimmerli 203). Usually in Ezekiel there is reference to bringing into the land (20:42; 34:13; 36:24; 37:12, 21; cf. Exod 6:8a). Here it is replaced by the giving of the land, in reflection not only of v 15 above but also of the underlying Exod 6:8b. Ezekiel’s hearers would not be unaware that Exod 6:8 promises the land as a hvrwm, that which is taken over with full right—the very term that the native Judeans had arrogated for themselves in v 15 with the same verbal construction. The old scripture comes to new life in the setting of exile.

18 The rest of the counterthesis is addressed to Ezekiel, reverting to the perspective of the opening of the oracle, v 15a. V 17 dealt with the second part of the thesis, the issue of the land and its rightful owners. In vv 18–20 the prior part is contested, concerning separation from Yahweh. Fellowship between Yahweh and his repatriated people is promised, under three aspects. The first relates to proper worship. In 20:40–41 there is a reference to the new, acceptable worship to be instituted on God’s holy mountain, by contrast with idolatrous worship entertained by some of the exiles (20:32, 39). Here the implicit contrast is with the illicit practices of the Judeans at home, to which the parallel oracle of 33:23–29 plainly refers, in 33:25–26, 29. The noninstitutional spirituality enjoyed by the exiles in v 16b would be translated into a reformation of the religious evidence they would find on their return (cf. 2 Chr 14:2–3[3–4]).

19–20a The second aspect of fellowship that Yahweh and his people would enjoy was to be in terms of general obedience to his will. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel were aware that the radical deviation of late preexilic Israel from Yahweh’s revealed will required an equally radical solution. Ultimately what needed to be removed lay not outside them, as in v 18, but inside, and only God could do that. The heart stands for the will: Israel’s hearts had been hard and wanton (2:4; 3:7; 6:9). “Stone hearts” refer to that which is unconscious, immobile, and so unresponsive to God (cf. Exod 15:16; 1 Sam 25:37). By contrast, “hearts of flesh” relate to that which is tender, yielding, and responsive. What was needed was a transformation wrought by God, replacing unresponsiveness with a new compliance to the will of God. This compliance meant obedience to the Torah, the revelation of Yahweh’s will for Israel. God had to break in, to do “what the law could not do . . ., in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled” (Rom 8:3–4). The old divine standards were to continue (cf. 20:11, 19), and the human condition was to be eschatologically changed to rise to their sublime level. “The same law by which the people were judged becomes the law to which they were saved” (Raitt, Theology of Exile 182). If v 19 represents a removal of Israel’s former unresponsive hearts, v 20a corrects the disobedience deplored in
The third aspect of fellowship with God is the resumption and fulfillment of the former relationship. Whereas Exod 6:6, 8 were echoed earlier, now it is the turn of Exod 6:7. As in that text (cf. Lohfink, “Beobachtungen” 304 n. 100), this covenant between patron God and client people is not logically subsequent to the earlier stages but concurrent with them. The old covenant formulation of Yahweh’s commitment to his people in Exod 6:6–8 is here revived and made the object of hope. The motif of God’s claim on his people has been incorporated into this re-presentation of his initial pledge of divine patronage. The intrusion does not jar, for the divine claim was to be facilitated by divine enabling.

This last verse is difficult to get into precise focus with its context, perhaps because different facets of interpretation are intended, according to the particular context with which one aligns it. Most obviously it forms the latter part of a framework shared by v 15. From this perspective it relates to the impious Judeans left in the land (cf. v 18), whose arrogant claims had sparked the disputation (Cornill 239; et al.). For those who so blatantly rejected God’s claims, there could be only judgment, while salvation awaited his true people in exile. The use of the formulaic “put their way upon their heads” in v 21b supports this basic interpretation: it is employed in 9:10 and 22:31 of the pre-587 residents of Jerusalem and in 17:19 of Zedekiah. Yet Hossfeld (TQ 167 [1987] 275) has rightly observed that the evidence of pagan worship being entertained by the exiles in 14:1–11 (cf. 20:32) shows that a reference to the exiles is included. Just as in 33:23–29 the denial of the nondeported Judeans’ claim on the land because of their immorality posed an implicit challenge for the exiles in 33:30–33, so the present statement functions as a double-entendre that reached beyond sinners in the homeland to embrace sinners in exile.

The narrative interrupted by 11:1–21 and before that by the afterthoughts and redactional observations in 10:20–22 is now resumed. V 22 functions as more than a recapitulation of 10:19. It has its own role to play in the description of the last stage in the gradual departure of Yahweh’s glory. The repetition of v 19 in v 22 serves as a ceremonial backdrop, with the cherubim acting as a guard of honor accompanying the divine king on the fateful journey. It is like a symbolic ceremony marking a colony’s independence. It is made plain that a climactic point has been reached in the relationship between Yahweh and his people. The king and his entourage leave the capital. The final stop at the Mount of Olives (cf. Zech 14:4), after flying over the Kidron Valley, accentuates Yahweh’s leaving the temple and the holy city. In the ancient Near Eastern motif of a deity’s abandoning his temple, the god typically returns to heaven, as indeed Hos 5:15 implies. Here enough has been said in the report of Yahweh’s pausing outside Jerusalem: “Behold, your house is forsaken” (Luke 13:35). Anyway, for the watching prophet, the Mount of Olives marked the eastern horizon of the city (von Orelli 44). The literary principle of unity of place, which was observed at work earlier, is evident again. The glory of Yahweh “could be seen by Ezekiel clearly outside the city limits” (Stuart 105).

As in 3:14–15, the close of the vision is marked by the spirit’s transportation of Ezekiel back to the settlement where he lived with his fellow exiles. Here, however, v 24b serves to confirm that his visionary experience had occurred in a trancelike state, unlike the vision of chaps. 1–3. Taylor (113) and Greenberg (191) have compared the “rising” of the vision with the ascent of the divine figure at the
close of a theophany (Gen 17:22; 35:13). The elders have been waiting for an oracle (8:1). They now receive it in their capacity as “exiles,” as representatives of the exilic community. The prophet returns to consciousness of his natural surroundings and of his mission. The elders heard in the telling of the vision the chilling message of Yahweh’s indictment and final judgment of the city to which they had been hoping to return and resume their normal lives.

Explanation

This vivid portrayal of sin and judgment conveys the enormity of both the sins committed in Jerusalem and the divine reprisals that must therefore befall it. “Eye-witnessing … here serves theodicy: the prophet sees with his own eyes the depravity of the people and hears judgment pronounced with the culprits in his presence” (Greenberg 200). Or, in Calvin’s words (283), “the Almighty must of necessity appear as the avenger of his glory and worship.” The portrayal begins and ends with a framework of comings and goings. There are four stages of the prophet’s advance into the temple area. As he advances, four separate film clips, as it were, present ever greater sinfulness. Ezekiel “moves from secular space to locations that are progressively more sacred space, … from what he considers less reprehensible to more abominable cultic activities” (Ackerman, Under Every Green Tree 55). The image and altar at the city gate (8:3b–6), the secret cult at the gate to the palace complex (8:7–13), the open worship of Tammuz at the entrance to the temple court (8:14–15), and the blatant worship of the sun god in front of the temple (8:16–17) are the four scenes to which the prophet is brought in his vision. Some of this religious activity, at least the first act and perhaps the last, would have been justified by its devotees in terms of “poly-Yahwism,” to use Rose’s striking term (Ausschliesslichkeitsanspruch 208), but from the prophet’s perspective they were all aberrations and alien to Yahweh’s primitive revelation.

Such human comings are matched by divine goings (cf. the slightly different view of Vogt, Untersuchungen 53 and n. 26, implicitly followed by Hossfeld, TQ 167 [1987] 275; id., “Die Tempelvision” 153). In chaps. 10–11 four stages of Yahweh’s departure are depicted, from the holy of holies, where he was enthroned above the ark, to the threshold of the temple (10:4; cf. 9:3), to the mobile conveyance of the cherubim (10:18), then over to the east gateway of the temple court (10:19), and finally beyond the city to the Mount of Olives (11:23). Within this framework it is made clear that Yahweh’s departure is accompanied by destruction, presented in two scenes in chaps. 9–10. His celestial agents are ordered to carry out a bloodbath in Jerusalem and to make it a blazing inferno. The description of the sword and fire that the Babylonians would bring to the capital in 587 in terms of the angelic fulfilling of divine commands is reminiscent of the later apocalyptic representation in the book of Daniel of heavenly conflicts that match their earthly counterparts (see Dan 10:13–14, 20–11:1). The prophet’s comings in chap. 8 receive a preliminary antithesis in the departure of the angelic execution squad, whose killing begins with the sun-worshippers of 8:16 and continues back through the courts and out into the city, in a reversal of Ezekiel’s incoming journey through scenes of cultic sin (9:6–7). There is an echo of this initial angelic departure in that of the celestial incendiary, who receives the fire of judgment from beneath the mobile conveyance that had featured in the theophany of judgment in chap. 1 (see 1:13) and leaves the inner court to do his destructive work in the city (10:2, 7). The exits of 9:7 and 10:7 are matched and transcended by the divine exodus in 10:18–19. Another factor that binds the vision

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Or Orientalia (Rome)
cf. confer, compare
n. note
TQ Theologische Quartalschrift
cf. confer, compare
together is the double notation in 8:12; 9:9: “Yahweh cannot see; Yahweh has left the country” (cf. Greenberg 200). God has seen, and his showing the prophet in chap. 8 is the proof. Moreover, the excuse that he has left turns into an unconscious prophecy: God does leave, but at his own chosen time.

The conveyance introduced into the vision account in 10:2 provides a coordinating factor: it ties together the destruction of Jerusalem by fire and the eventual departure of Yahweh. Preparation for this double role has been made by the judgment theophany in chap. 1, which is echoed in 10:2. There is a change of terminology from [?] “living beings” to cherubim, which facilitates the theme of the permanent presence of Yahweh above the cherubim in the holy of holies giving way to a merely temporary theophanic presence. This momentous theme was subsequently underscored with a variety of explanatory comments harking back to the vision of chap. 1 and spelling out the identity of the conveyance in this vision with the one that featured there.

The supplementing of the vision with a parallel vision in 11:1–13 provides an opportunity to emphasize the social side of the wrongdoing committed in Jerusalem alongside the cultic sins (cf. 8:17; 9:9) and also to tie the angelic judgment of chaps. 9–10 to earthly actualities. The reiteration of the prophet’s reaction of despair (11:12; cf. 9:8) triggers the incorporation of a nonvisionary oracle of hope, a different hope that replaces the lost hope of the sparing of Jerusalem. We are reminded of the deliberate supplementing of oracles of judgment with oracles of salvation later in the book, notably in chap. 20. The intended readers of the book are deported Judeans living in the post-587 period of exile, who looked back to a past judgment. For such, the saga of Yahweh’s dealings with his people could be brought up to date. They had a God-given “future and a hope” (Jer 29:11)—and even a present experience of his limited presence. Ahead lay a prospect of much greater fellowship with him and an eschatological enjoyment of the promises of Exod 6:6–8. Lest the recipients of such promises—involving a second exodus, return to the promised land, and inner renewal—act irresponsibly, they are reminded, rather as in 3:16b–21, that if judgment is past, it is not a thing of the past. In a relative sense judgment looms over the heirs of promise, so that hope ever contains a purifying factor (cf. 1 John 3:3). The echoing of 9:6 in 1 Pet 4:17, “For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God,” widens the issue to the suffering of believers in the eschatological tribulation, but in its own way it wants to affirm their obligation to “do good” (1 Pet 4:19).

The temple vision serves to develop themes broached earlier in the book. The crucial link with the judgment vision of chap. 1 has already been mentioned. Cassuto (“Arrangement” 231) has observed two links with chap. 7: the divine aloofness of 7:22, whereby invaders might raid the temple with impunity, grows into Yahweh’s active withdrawal, and the abominations and detestable objects of 7:20 (cf. 5:11) are carefully categorized in chap. 8. Boadt (“Rhetorical Strategies” 188 n. 21) has noticed that the double formula of divine mercilessness in 8:18; 9:5, 10 continues the expressions found in 5:11; 7:4, 9. There are three other links. The outpouring of wrath proposed in 7:8 is portrayed in 9:8 (cf. 8:18), while the social sin of injustice in 7:10 resurfaces in 9:9 and the “aliens” of 7:21 reappear in 11:9. The twin themes of sin and punishment thus receive strong reinforcement in this vision account.

The happy ending to the unit implicitly contrasts the condemned sanctuary of 9:6 with the metaphorical “partial sanctuary” that the exiles found Yahweh to be (11:16). The oracle of salvation

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
n. note
cf. confer, compare
does not specifically go on to mention a renewed sanctuary. Apart from 20:40, it is left till 37:26–28 to make that promise. Its own motifs of return to the land and a renewed relationship with Yahweh are deemed worthy of repetition in 36:24–28. The promise at the end of chap. 37 is embodied in a separate vision, the vision of the new temple in chaps. 40–48. In the course of that vision, Yahweh’s re-entry through the east gate and the filling of the temple with his glory (43:1–5; cf. v 7) represent a wonderful reversal. Where sin abounded and judgment rightly fell, grace was to superabound in the holy fellowship of God and his people.

Further Signs and Meanings (12:1–20)

Bibliography


Translation

cf. confer, compare
ATANT Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
Diss. Dissertation
Tr. translation, translator(s), translated by, transpose(s)
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
ConBOT ConB Old Testament Series
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
FS Festschrift, volume written in honor of
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
et al. et alii, and others
Heb. Hebrew
I received the following communication from Yahweh: “Human one, you are living among that rebellious community, who have eyes to see with, but see nothing, who have ears to hear with, but hear nothing, because they are a rebellious community. So, human one, you are to make up a pack for exile and then set out for exile in the daytime, with them as spectators. When they watch you going into exile, leaving your present home and going elsewhere, perhaps they will see the truth, though they are a rebellious community. While they watch, carry out your pack, made up of such things as you would take into exile. Do it in the daytime. Then in the evening go out yourself, still under their observation, acting as any deportee would. While they watch, break through the wall and go out through it. Under their continued gaze shoulder your pack, going out at dusk.

2.a. Strangely, the LXX has the equivalent of µην του βλέπον μετατρέπεται "among their abominations," which is hardly original, not least because the suffix lacks an antecedent. Presumably the suffixed noun once stood in the margin and was foolishly taken as a correction of γῆνη τοιγενομένος "the rebellious community," with which it has some letters in common. Doubtless the intention of the gloss was exegetical, to supply an object for the seeing and hearing.

2.b. A copula is implied by LXX Syr. Tg. MSS Vg and read by some MSS. It could have fallen out by haplography. However, Kraetzschmar (124) observed that Jer 5:21, which probably underlies this clause, lacks it.

3.a. Heb. הַלְגָּו "and go into exile" is not represented in the LXX* and since Hitzig (81) has usually been judged a dittograph, on the ground that it anticipates יָלִג וַגְּו "and go into exile" in v 3b. However, Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 150) defended it by taking the following verb as conditional (cf. REB). Greenberg (209), anticipated by Jahn (73), has also counseled the deletion of מים "in the daytime" as a mechanical intrusion from v 4a. In Brownlee 170, I commented that “the general nature of הַלְגָּו ['go into exile'] is significant: it is subdivided into the two stages of bringing out and going out in v 4. The process is initiated during the day: the timing is mentioned because its continuation into the evening (vv 4–6) is in mind.”

3.b. Not see that they are … ” (cf. NBJ, REB). Smend (69) observed that צ, strictly causal “because,” does not function here as the object of “will see” but serves as an echo of 2:5–7; 3:27. For the indirect causal sense, see Note 2:6.b.; here the clause clarifies the doubt expressed in “perhaps.”

4.a. The omission of מים "before their eyes" in LXX* Syr. appears to be stylistic: see Zimmerli 265.

4.b. The construction of צ "like" and abstract noun seems to have been a favorite of Ezekiel’s: see the parallel in 26:10 and cf. 33:31. So a repointing to יָלִג וַגְּו "like those brought out” (Fohrer 63; BHK; Brockington, Hebrew Text 223; HALAT 407b [misprinted in 530a]) is unnecessary.
Keep your face covered so that you cannot see the ground. The reason for doing all this is that I am making you an omen for the community of Israel.” 7 I did just as I had been instructed. During the day I carried out my pack suitable for exile. In the evening I broke through the wall with my hands. I went out at dusk, shouldering my pack as they watched.

5.a. The MT  a X W W “and bring out” recurs in principle at vv 6a and 7b, at the same stage of the sign-act and its execution. An ellipse of “your pack” has to be assumed; this is not difficult, since the same occurs with a C O a C y “place (on your shoulders)” in vv 6a and 12a. The difficulty lies in the fact that there are two stages in the sign-act, the first consisting of the bringing out of the pack, out of the house, in vv 4a and 7a, and the second including going out through the hole, as vv 4b and 12a explain (cf. Cornill 242). The cases in vv 5b, 6a, 7b must belong to the second stage; a Y X W L in v 12ab is in a different category, signifying “to bring (him) out.” Accordingly, the qal readings attested by the ancient versions (see BHS) are to be adopted in each case, as very many scholars since Hitzig (82) have advised. The latter observed that the misinterpretation depended on a false explanation of a Y X W L in v 12, as if it meant “to bring it out.” Driver ([Bib] 35 [1954] 150) retained the MT in each case, assuming the ellipse of Y [J] N “yourself,” but this makes for a most confusing sequence, especially in v 6a, where two different ellipses have to be assumed. Ehrlich’s interpretation of the MT as “defecate” (Randglossen 5:40) has no merit. Zimmerli (265) also left the MT unchanged, but at the price of regarding their contexts as redactional. Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 624–25, 628) has not only maintained the MT in these places but emended to a hiph form in v 12a, reading a Y X W L “will bring out” for the MT a X W L “and will go out.” He has speculated that after making the hole Ezekiel “proceeded back into the house [and] reappeared… with the exile bag,” which at an earlier point he had taken back into the house (“Sign-Acts” 634 and n. 27). Before him, Smend (70), Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:41), and Zimmerli (266) read a hiph in v 12a. It is doubtful whether vv 6 and 12 support Friebel’s assumption. V 7, by its narrative order of clauses, implies a hysteron proteron in vv 6 and 12; vv 6 and 7 specify the visibility of the shouldering of the pack, which was evidently lying outside the wall.

6.a. LXX ‘A V g render as a pass verb, “I was carried.” So do LXX V g in vv 7 and 12. This interpretive change may reflect an effort to see wordplay with a Y C N “head of state” in vv 10 and 12, taken as a pass form of noun, “one who is carried.” See the Comment on v 11.

6.b. See Note 5.a.*

6.c. Heb. h f l , for whose etymology see HALAT 787a, occurs only once outside this section (also in vv 7, 12), in Gen 15:17, where it means the period after sunset. “It must here mean dusk, since people could still see what one was doing” (Wevers 100). The LXX in both passages failed to comprehend the term, in Genesis guessing “flame” and here “hidden.”

6.d. The pf seems to be performative: see Note 3:8.a.*

7.a. Cornill (242) and Zimmerli (266) have assumed that the LXX has no rendering for Y f k “my pack.” In fact Y f k was read as W 0 K G “all and,” with a Y 0 W confusion and wrong word division (p a v t a … k a y “everything … and”).

7.b. Heb. d Y b “by hand” may be a partial dittograph of f Y b “in the wall”: LXX* Syr. do not render. Ewald (255) took as “by force,” comparing Isa 28:2, but Cooke (131) doubted such a meaning in prose. Ehrlich’s emendation to d t Y b “with a tent peg” (Randglossen 5:41; cf. BHK), comparing Deut 23:14, was linked with his notion of defecation. The MT may be given the benefit of the doubt. The addition of this little detail in reporting Ezekiel’s compliance is true to life.

7.c. See Note 5.a.*

7.d. See Note 6.a.*
Next morning I received a communication from Yahweh: “Human one, the community of Israel, that rebellious community, asked you what you were doing, didn’t they? Say to them, I represent an omen for you. They will experience what I have acted out: they will go into exile as the head of state, this burden/oracle, in Jerusalem and all the community of Israel who are among them. Say.” Generally מקבת “among them” is conjecturally emended to היהבת “inside it,” as the context seems to demand. Evidently assimilation to the form in v 12 occurred (see Note 11.a. below). According to Smend (69), the emendation was first suggested by J. D. Michaelis. Herrmann (75) bluntly categorized the words rendered “the head of state this burden/oracle” as “incomprehensible.” The LXX, which takes כַּנ “burden, oracle” as a synonym of כַּנ כ “head of state,” provides no overall coherence. וגו Tg. represent a Jewish exegetical tradition that prefixes ≈ “Concerning the head of state is this oracle (and [concerning]…),” and modern versions have adopted this expedient. But nowhere else in Ezekiel does כ מ “burden, oracle” mean “oracle.” Henrich (Ezechielprobleme 123) saw a reminiscence of Jer 23:33 כ כ µ ת a (emended, as is customary, with LXX Vg) “you are the burden” and construed “The head of state is this burden,” with wordplay between כ כ and כ מ. Greenberg (211–12) has adopted this interpretation with reference to the pack carried (כ מ, linked with כ מ) by Ezekiel. He has seen in it not only a role in a predictive representation of exile but a symbolic sense whereby it stands for the king and people of Jerusalem. His interpretation is closely linked with his view that the pack is “the main prop of the dumb show” (210), which depends on his retention of the hiph forms in vv 5b, 6a, and 7b. Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 625–26 and n. 9) has rendered “This (act of) carrying (refers to) the ruler in Jerusalem and (to) all ….” again justifying it by reference to the hiph verbs. The Masoretes obviously intended some such reading, though the word order in v 10ב is strange. Freedy (VT 20 [1970] 133, 144) has understood v 10ב as two separate glosses that have become fused: כ כ “the head of state” originated as a marginal annotation on vv 12–14, while the rest of v 10ב was a marginal introduction to vv 3–6, to the effect that the exilic burden carried by Ezekiel referred to an act that would take place in Jerusalem. After the fusion, v 10ב was added to make sense, and finally מ כ “say” at the beginning of v 11 resumed the beginning of v 10. Independently, Lang (Kein Aufstand 19) has come to a similar but more plausible explanation of v 10ב. First, “this burden” was intended as an exegetical elaboration of v 12א, supplying an object for כ כ “will carry.” Second, the rest of v 10ב, “the head of state in Jerusalem and all the community of Israel who are among them,” was a separate annotation, into which the first one was later interpolated. This latter annotation related to the earlier part of v 12א and made clear that the residents of Jerusalem were also threatened with deportation. A little difficulty surely remains with the presence of כ כ “they” in the relative clause, which can hardly stand alongside מ כ “among them,” even in a gloss. The latter term should probably be regarded as a later corruption of יהלב “within it”; the gloss functions as an explanation of the subj of the verb יהלב “they will go (into exile)” in v 11ב. Lang explains the initial מ כ “say” in v 11 in the same way as Freedy. Neither has dealt with the messenger formula in v 10ב. Was its marginal role to explain that, after the prophetic “I” of v 11, a divine “I” is speaking in v 13 or even implicitly from v 12? Garscha (Studien 107) and Pohlmann (Ezechielstudien 38 n. 136) have objected that v 10 is required to provide an antecedent for the third pl pronouns of v 11 (cf. Zimmerli 268), but in both the historical and literary contexts their identification is obvious.

10.a. The MT, followed by the ancient versions, adds incoherently “Thus has the Lord Yahweh said: The head of state, this burden/oracle, in Jerusalem and all the community of Israel who are among them. Say.” Generally מקבת “among them” is conjecturally emended to יהבת “inside it,” as the context seems to demand. Evidently assimilation to the form in v 12 occurred (see Note 11.a. below). According to Smend (69), the emendation was first suggested by J. D. Michaelis. Herrmann (75) bluntly categorized the words rendered “the head of state this burden/oracle” as “incomprehensible.” The LXX, which takes כ כ “burden, oracle” as a synonym of כ כ כ “head of state,” provides no overall coherence. וגו Tg. represent a Jewish exegetical tradition that prefixes ≈ “Concerning the head of state is this oracle (and [concerning]…),” and modern versions have adopted this expedient. But nowhere else in Ezekiel does כ מ “burden, oracle” mean “oracle.” Henrich (Ezechielprobleme 123) saw a reminiscence of Jer 23:33 כ כ µ ת a (emended, as is customary, with LXX Vg) “you are the burden” and construed “The head of state is this burden,” with wordplay between כ כ and כ מ. Greenberg (211–12) has adopted this interpretation with reference to the pack carried (כ מ, linked with כ מ) by Ezekiel. He has seen in it not only a role in a predictive representation of exile but a symbolic sense whereby it stands for the king and people of Jerusalem. His interpretation is closely linked with his view that the pack is “the main prop of the dumb show” (210), which depends on his retention of the hiph forms in vv 5b, 6a, and 7b. Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 625–26 and n. 9) has rendered “This (act of) carrying (refers to) the ruler in Jerusalem and (to) all ….” again justifying it by reference to the hiph verbs. The Masoretes obviously intended some such reading, though the word order in v 10ב is strange. Freedy (VT 20 [1970] 133, 144) has understood v 10ב as two separate glosses that have become fused: כ כ “the head of state” originated as a marginal annotation on vv 12–14, while the rest of v 10ב was a marginal introduction to vv 3–6, to the effect that the exilic burden carried by Ezekiel referred to an act that would take place in Jerusalem. After the fusion, v 10ב was added to make sense, and finally מ כ “say” at the beginning of v 11 resumed the beginning of v 10. Independently, Lang (Kein Aufstand 19) has come to a similar but more plausible explanation of v 10ב. First, “this burden” was intended as an exegetical elaboration of v 12א, supplying an object for כ כ “will carry.” Second, the rest of v 10ב, “the head of state in Jerusalem and all the community of Israel who are among them,” was a separate annotation, into which the first one was later interpolated. This latter annotation related to the earlier part of v 12א and made clear that the residents of Jerusalem were also threatened with deportation. A little difficulty surely remains with the presence of כ כ “they” in the relative clause, which can hardly stand alongside מ כ “among them,” even in a gloss. The latter term should probably be regarded as a later corruption of יהלב “within it”; the gloss functions as an explanation of the subj of the verb יהלב “they will go (into exile)” in v 11ב. Lang explains the initial מ כ “say” in v 11 in the same way as Freedy. Neither has dealt with the messenger formula in v 10ב. Was its marginal role to explain that, after the prophetic “I” of v 11, a divine “I” is speaking in v 13 or even implicitly from v 12? Garscha (Studien 107) and Pohlmann (Ezechielstudien 38 n. 136) have objected that v 10 is required to provide an antecedent for the third pl pronouns of v 11 (cf. Zimmerli 268), but in both the historical and literary contexts their identification is obvious.

11.a. The LXX adds “in its midst,” which from the flow of the Gr. context evidently goes back to יהלב in its Vorlage. It is plausible to regard it as originating in a marginal correction of, or replacement for, מ כ “in their midst” in v 10 (cf. Cornill 243).
prisoners. Even the head of state, who is there with them, will shoulder his pack, going out at dusk. He will have had a breach made in the wall through which he may be brought out. He will keep his face covered, because then he will not see anything. So I will spread out my net for you.

b. Lit. “it will be done to them.” Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 628 and n. 13) renders µhl “by them,” an expedient that Hitzig (83) considered and rejected. The role of victims fits µlv “captivity,” which, in line with the underlying verb hbb “take captive,” envisions the people of Jerusalem as objects of aggression.

c. Heb. µb Lv “in captivity” has been considered a variant of hlb “into exile” (Ehrlich Randglossen 5:41; et al.), but it is generally attested, except for the Syr., which characteristically abbreviates and was encouraged to do so here by the fact that it has consistently used sêbâ as the rendering for hlb. The terms do not function as syntactical synonyms.

d. Lit. “they will make a hole.” If the reference is to the damage done by the besieging Babylonians (Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 645–46; cf. Garscha, Studien 111; cf. the Comment), strictly the timing, while future for the prophet, was prior to the earlier actions. The Heb. impf. may bear this sense (cf. Joüon 113b). The sg verb in LXX Syr. is an easier and so inferior reading; NIPS and NRSV have adopted it, following Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:41; et al.

e. The implicit object of ayxhl “to bring out” is “him,” the head of state (Tg.; Hitzig 83). The noncausative “to go out” found in LXX Syr. has been adopted by many since Cornill (243): it represents a well-meant but unnecessary harmonization with the earlier qal examples of this verb that rightly distinguished between the bringing out of the pack in the first stage of the sign-act and its interpretation and the going out in the second stage. By this criterion, the pack certainly cannot be the object.

f. LXX Syr. rendered blv ÷[y “because” as if it were blv ÷[ml “in order that”: Greenberg (213) has fairly argued, by reference to Abarbanel’s exegesis, that paraphrase of the MT is involved. So the widespread emendation advocated since Cornill (244) is unnecessary. The fact that elsewhere the conjunction is construed with a pf or frequentative impf verb is not decisive.

g. Heb. ÷[l uses the lamed of norm, “according to the eye, visibly”: cf. 1 Sam 16:7 µyny[ “(see) according to the eyes” (Cooke 135, with reference to S. R. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel [Oxford: Clarendon, 1913] 133). The LXX construes the verb as pass, which again since Cornill (243) has encouraged most to repoint as hâr;yE with reference to the king’s disguising himself in his escape from Jerusalem. However, comparison with v 6 suggests that the MT is correct. The MT adds Ar a hAt a a wâ “he (will not see) the ground,” a blatant addition, as most since Hitzig (83), including Greenberg (215), have recognized. Now the nonrepresentation in LXX967 (= LXX*) supports its secondary nature (Fohrer 65; Zimmerli 267; contra Ziegler, LXX 133). The intent of the gloss was evidently to safeguard the active sense of the unpointed verb: it seems to betray an awareness that it might be construed as pass, as indeed LXX did. LXXB reflects this addition, in the form “and he the land will not see,” with necessary indication of the verb in translation and after the earlier pass rendering.
him; he will be caught in my hunting equipment. I will bring him to Babylon in Chaldea—though he will not see it!—and then he will die. 14 As for all his entourage, who assist him, and all his troops, I will scatter them to every wind, chasing after them with drawn sword: then they will realize that I am Yahweh. When I have dispersed them among the nations, scattering them in foreign countries, I will leave a few of them unscathed by sword, famine, and pestilence, with the intent that they should declare all their shocking practices among the nations they have reached; so they will realize that I am Yahweh.”

17 I received the following communication from Yahweh: 18 “Human one, you are to quake as you eat your bread, and shudder as you drink your water. 19 Tell the people of the land this message from the Lord: Yahweh concerning the residents of Jerusalem still on Israelite soil: They will eat their bread anxiously and drink their water with trepidation, anticipating its territory

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a 14.a. The MT “(source of) his help” may be retained rather than the common emendation since Cornill (244) to מַעַלּוֹ כֹּלָּהוּ, “his helpers,” with reference to LXX Syr. Tg. and also to 30:8; 32:21. An etymological link with Ugar gër “warrior” has been postulated (cf. HALAT 767a, b; M. Dahood, Bib 43 [1962] 226).

b 14.b. As Smend (71) commented long ago, ¹גא has been variously aligned with Akk. agappu and Aram. ¹גא “wing,” in a military sense, like Latin ala, or with Arab. guff, gaff “group,” with a prosthetic aleph. HALAT 11a opts for the latter derivation.

a 15.a. For the syntax, see Form/Structure/Setting.

a 16.a. The subj seems to be the new exiles, in line with the previous two verbs (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:42; Cooke 133; Joyce, Divine Initiative 153 n. 5), rather than the nations (Bertholet [1897] 67; et al., including Zimmerli 274) or both (J. Hausmann, Israels Rest [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987] 86).

a 18.a. Elsewhere the noun כָּלָה generally refers to earthquake or to a loud noise, while -ה כָּלָה can refer more widely to agitation, including that of the emotions. The pair, in the form of noun or verb, often occurs in parallelism; significantly in Job 39:23 both are used of a warhorse quivering with excitement to be off (BDB 1126b).

b 18.b. The MT, along with the general textual tradition, adds כָּלָה כָּלָה “and with anxiety.” As I stated in Brownlee (177), the expression “has been viewed with suspicion [since Herrmann 75] because the parallel clause has only one such qualifying term and this noun recurs with reference to eating, not drinking, in v 19a. Was it a marginal gloss on כָּלָה כָּלָה ‘quaking,’ generally used of earthquake, in v 18a?

Then the two terms of כָּלָה refer to physical trembling, while those in כָּלָה have an emotional force.

a 19.a. For the use of מִלָּה, “Lord” in the messenger formula, see Note 2:4.c.*


c 19.c. Heb. מִלָּה usually introduces a clause of purpose or even of result. Here, however, its use seems to crystallize the fear of those who eat and drink. Hitzig (84) and Keil (162) (cf. Hölscher, Dichter 82) showed a respect for the context in their claim of a causal sense; in fact, the Syr rendered “because.” Probably the conjunction is to be aligned with the sense “in view of, on account of” that the preposition has.
being desolated and stripped of what now fills it, as a result of the violence perpetrated by all who reside there. 20 The other cities, now inhabited, will also be laid waste, and the country will become desolate. Then you will realize that I am Yahweh.”

Notes

2.a. Strangely, the LXX has the equivalent of µητωρ wb [wt =wb “among their abominations,” which is hardly original, not least because the suffix lacks an antecedent. Presumably the suffixed noun once stood in the margin and was foolishly taken as a correction of yr mh t yb “the rebellious community,” with which it has some letters in common. Doubtless the intention of the gloss was exegetical, to supply an object for the seeing and hearing.

2.b. A copula is implied by LXX Syr. Tg. MSS Vg and read by some MSS. It could have fallen out by haplography. However, Kraetzschmar (124) observed that Jer 5:21, which probably underlies this clause, lacks it.

3.a. Heb. חֵלְגָּה “and go into exile” is not represented in the LXX and since Hitzig (81) has usually been judged a dittograph, on the ground that it anticipates חֵלְגָּה “and go into exile” in v 3b. However, Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 150) defended it by taking the following verb as conditional (cf. REB). Greenberg (209), anticipated by Jahn (73), has also counseled the deletion of µמַי “in the daytime” as a mechanical intrusion from v 4a. In Brownlee 170, I commented that “the general nature of חֵלְגָּה [‘go into exile’] is significant: it is subdivided into the two stages of bringing out and going out in v 4. The process is initiated during the day: the timing is mentioned because its continuation into the evening (vv 4–6) is in mind.”

d 19.d. Heb. חֵלְגָּה “its land” refers to the district or region of Jerusalem: cf. the examples in BDB 76a (2.b, c) and the pl. in 1 Chr 13:2; 2 Chr 11:23. The reference to “those who reside in it” appears to hark back to “the residents of Jerusalem” in v 19a. The ancient versions seem to imply חֵלְגָּה “the land,” adopted by Smend (71) and by Cornill (244, with significant reference to 19:7; 30:12; 32:15) and others. Assimilation to those passages may well have occurred. The reading חֵלְגָּה “their land,” found in a few MSS and adopted by Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:42) and others, is an easier and so secondary reading.

c 19.e. The recurrence of the rendering of the LXX at 32:15 supports the MT חֵלְגָּה “deprived of its fullness” (Cornill, 244; Zimmerli 276; contra BHS). The preposition is used in a privative and pregnant sense: cf.. 32:15; Lev 26:43.

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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Tg. Targum
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MSS manuscript(s)
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
REB Revised English Bible
3.b. Not “see that they are …” (cf. NBJ, REB). Smend (69) observed that יֵקֶן, strictly causal “because,” does not function here as the object of “will see” but serves as an echo of 2:5–7; 3:27. For the indirect causal sense, see Note 2:6.b.; here the clause clarifies the doubt expressed in “perhaps.”

4.a. The omission of μή ὑπάρξῃ “before their eyes” in LXX* Syr. appears to be stylistic: see Zimmerli 265.

4.b. The construction of כֹּחַ “like” and abstract noun seems to have been a favorite of Ezekiel’s: see the parallel in 26:10 and cf. 33:31. So a repointing to יָאִשׁ וְחָלֹק “like those brought out” (Fohrer 63; BHK; Brockington, Hebrew Text 223; HALAT 407b [misprinted in 530a]) is unnecessary.

5.a. The MT נָשָׁהוּ “and bring out” recurs in principle at vv 6a and 7b, at the same stage of the sign-act and its execution. An ellipse of “your pack” has to be assumed; this is not difficult, since the same occurs with אֲכַל תֵּאֹל אֶל יַעַבֵּר “place (on your shoulders)” in vv 6a and 12a. The difficulty lies in the fact that there are two stages in the sign-act, the first consisting of the bringing out of the pack, out of the house, in vv 4a and 7a, and the second including going out through the hole, as vv 4b and 12ab explain (cf. Cornill 242). The cases in vv 5b, 6a, 7b must belong to the second stage; אֲיַחַשׁ וְחָלֹק in v 12ab is in a different category, signifying “to bring (him) out.” Accordingly, the qal readings attested by the ancient versions (see BHS) are to be adopted in each case, as very many scholars since Hitzig (82) have advised. The latter observed that the misinterpretation depended on a false explanation of אֲיַחַשׁ וְחָלֹק in v 12 , as if it meant “to bring it out.” Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 150) retained the MT in each case, assuming the ellipse of אַלִּכּוּנָה “yourself,” but this makes for a most confusing sequence, especially in v 6a, where two different ellipses have to be assumed. Ehrlich’s interpretation of the MT as “defecate” (Randglossen 5:40) has no merit. Zimmerli (265) also left the MT unchanged, but at the price of regarding their contexts as redactional. Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 624–25, 628) has not only maintained the MT in these

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cf. confer, compare
REB Revised English Bible
6.b. Heb. יֵקֶן, lit. “for,” gives the reason that they might be afraid (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:9; cf. BDB 473b–74a). A. Aejmelaeus (JBL 105 [1986])205–7), has argued that here and elsewhere a concessive interpretation is wrong; she suggests that here the clause is either causal or an object clause (“that”).
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
Bib Biblica
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
places but emended to a hiph form in v 12aa, reading $\text{ay}_X XW$ “will bring out” for the MT $\text{ay}_X XW$ “and will go out.” He has speculated that after making the hole Ezekiel “proceeded back into the house [and] reappeared… with the exile bag,” which at an earlier point he had taken back into the house (“Sign-Acts” 634 and n. 27). Before him, Smend (70), Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:41), and Zimmerli (266) read a hiph in v 12aa. It is doubtful whether vv 6 and 12 support Friebel’s assumption. V 7, by its narrative order of clauses, implies a hysteron proteron in vv 6 and 12; vv 6 and 7 specify the visibility of the shouldering of the pack, which was evidently lying outside the wall.

6.a. LXX ‘$\text{av}$ Vg render as a pass verb, “I was carried.” So do LXX Vg in vv 7 and 12. This interpretive change may reflect an effort to see wordplay with $\text{ay}_X C \text{n}$ “head of state” in vv 10 and 12, taken as a pass form of noun, “one who is carried.” See the Comment on v 11.

6.b. See Note 5.a.

6.c. Heb. $h\text{f} | [ $, for whose etymology see HALAT 787a, occurs only once outside this section (also

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n. note
hiph Hiphil
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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* 5.a. The MT $\text{t}$ $\text{av}_X WH W$ “and bring out” recurs in principle at vv 6a and 7b, at the same stage of the sign-act and its execution. An ellipse of “your pack” has to be assumed; this is not difficult, since the same occurs with $\text{a}_C T \text{t} \text{av}_C Y$ “place (on your shoulders)” in vv 6a and 12a. The difficulty lies in the fact that there are two stages in the sign-act, the first consisting of the bringing out of the pack, out of the house, in vv 4a and 7a, and the second including going out through the hole, as vv 4b and 12a explain (cf. Cornill 242). The cases in vv 5b, 6a, 7b must belong to the second stage; $\text{ay}_X W H |$ in v 12ab is in a different category, signifying “to bring (him) out.” Accordingly, the qal readings attested by the ancient versions (see BHS) are to be adopted in each case, as very many scholars since Hitzig (82) have advised. The latter observed that the misinterpretation depended on a false explanation of $\text{ay}_X X H |$ in v 12, as if it meant “to bring it out.” Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 150) retained the MT in each case, assuming the ellipse of $W \text{p} \text{n}$ “yourself,” but this makes for a most confusing sequence, especially in v 6a, where two different ellipses have to be assumed. Ehrlich’s interpretation of the MT as “defecate” (Randglossen 5:40) has no merit. Zimmerli (265) also left the MT unchanged, but at the price of regarding their contexts as redactional. Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 624–25, 628) has not only maintained the MT in these places but emended to a hiph form in v 12aa, reading $\text{ay}_X X W$ “will bring out” for the MT $\text{ay}_X X W$ “and will go out.” He has speculated that after making the hole Ezekiel “proceeded back into the house [and] reappeared… with the exile bag,” which at an earlier point he had taken back into the house (“Sign-Acts” 634 and n. 27). Before him, Smend (70), Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:41), and Zimmerli (266) read a hiph in v 12aa. It is doubtful whether vv 6 and 12 support Friebel’s assumption. V 7, by its narrative order of clauses, implies a hysteron proteron in vv 6 and 12; vv 6 and 7 specify the visibility of the shouldering of the pack, which was evidently lying outside the wall.

Heb. Hebrew

in vv 7, 12), in Gen 15:17, where it means the period after sunset. “It must here mean dusk, since people could still see what one was doing” (Wevers 100). The LXX in both passages failed to comprehend the term, in Genesis guessing “flame” and here “hidden.”

6.d. The pf seems to be performative: see Note 3:8.a.*

7.a. Cornill (242) and Zimmerli (266) have assumed that the LXX* has no rendering for yl k “my pack.” In fact yl k was read as WÖl K o‘all and,” with a yÖw confusion and wrong word division (p a u t a ... k a Í y “everything ... and”).

7.b. Heb. d yb “by hand” may be a partial dittograph of f yq b “in the wall”: LXX* Syr. do not render. Ewald (255) took as “by force,” comparing Isa 28:2, but Cooke (131) doubted such a meaning in prose. Ehrlich’s emendation to d f yb “with a tent peg” (Randglossen 5:41; cf. BHK), comparing Deut 23:14, was linked with his notion of defecation. The MT may be given the benefit of the doubt. The addition of this little detail in reporting Ezekiel’s compliance is true to life.

7.c. See Note 5.a.*

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
pf perfect
8.a. The pf is performative here and in v 9: see Note 22:13.a.*; Waltke and O’Connor, Syntax 30.5.1d and n. 17; Joüon 112f, g.
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
7.d. See Note 6.a. *

10.a. The MT, followed by the ancient versions, adds incoherently “Thus has the Lord Yahweh said: The head of state, this burden/oracle, in Jerusalem and all the community of Israel who are among them. **Say.**” Generally מָצָא כְּмָעִיר אָנָן “among them” is conjecturally emended to מָצָא כְּמַעַר “inside it,” as the context seems to demand. Evidently assimilation to the form in v 12 occurred (see Note 11.a. * below). According to Smend (69), the emendation was first suggested by J. D. Michaelis. Herrmann (75) bluntly categorized the words rendered “the head of state this burden/oracle” as “incomprehensible.” The LXX, which takes אַל כִּמ “burden, oracle” as a synonym of אַל כִּמ “head of state,” provides no overall coherence. ס וג יר. represent a Jewish exegetical tradition that prefixes ל ו כ: “Concerning the head of state is this oracle (and [concerning]… ),” and modern versions have adopted this expedient. But nowhere else in Ezekiel does אַל כִּמ “burden” mean “oracle.” Herrntrich (Ezechielprobleme 123) saw a reminiscence of Jer

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* 6a. LXX ‘ח וג render as a pass verb, “I was carried.” So do LXX וג in vv 7 and 12. This interpretive change may reflect an effort to see wordplay with בתא ו ה “head of state” in vv 10 and 12, taken as a pass form of noun, “one who is carried.” See the Comment on v 11.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

* 11.a. The LXX adds “in its midst,” which from the flow of the Gr. context evidently goes back to את ו ה in its Vorlage. It is plausible to regard it as originating in a marginal correction of, or replacement for, בתא ו ה “in their midst” in v 10 (cf. Cornill 243).

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

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Tg. Targum
23:33 ac mh µt a (emended, as is customary, with LXX Vg) “you are the burden” and construed “The head of state is this burden,” with wordplay between ac yh n and ac m. Greenberg (211–12) has adopted this interpretation with reference to the pack carried (ac n, linked with ac m) by Ezekiel. He has seen in it not only a role in a predictive representation of exile but a symbolic sense whereby it stands for the king and people of Jerusalem. His interpretation is closely linked with his view that the pack is “the main prop of the dumb show” (210), which depends on his retention of the hiph forms in vv 5b, 6a, and 7b. Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 625–26 and n. 9) has rendered “This (act of) carrying (refers to) the ruler in Jerusalem and (to) all …,” again justifying it by reference to the hiph verbs. The Masoretes obviously intended some such reading, though the word order in v 10b is strange. Freedy (VT 20 [1970] 133, 144) has understood v 10b as two separate glosses that have become fused: ac yh mh “the head of state” originated as a marginal annotation on vv 12–14, while the rest of v 10b was a marginal introduction to vv 3–6, to the effect that the exilic burden carried by Ezekiel referred to an act that would take place in Jerusalem. After the fusion, v 10bb was added to make sense, and finally r ma “say” at the beginning of v 11 resumed the beginning of v 10. Independently, Lang (Kein Aufstand 19) has come to a similar but more plausible explanation of v 10b. First, “this burden” was intended as an exegetical elaboration of v 12aα, supplying an object for ac y “will carry.” Second, the rest of v 10b, “the head of state in Jerusalem and all the community of Israel who are among them,” was a separate annotation, into which the first one was later interpolated. This latter annotation related to the earlier part of v 12aα and made clear that the residents of Jerusalem were also threatened with deportation. A little difficulty surely remains with the presence of mh mh “they” in the relative clause, which can hardly stand alongside mh mh “among them,” even in a gloss. The latter term should probably be regarded as a later corruption of mh mh “within it”; the gloss functions as an explanation of the subj of the verb wk y “they will go (into exile)” in v 11bβ. Lang explains the initial r ma “say” in v 11 in the same way as Freedy. Neither has dealt with the messenger formula in v 10ab. Was its marginal role to explain that, after the prophetic “I” of v 11, a divine “I” is speaking in v 13 or even implicitly from v 12? Garscha (Studien 107) and Pohlmann (Ezechielstudien 38 n. 136) have objected that v 10 is required to provide an antecedent for the third pl pronouns of v 11 (cf. Zimmerli 268), but in both the historical and literary contexts their identification is obvious.

11.a. The LXX adds “in its midst,” which from the flow of the Gr. context evidently goes back to mh mh in its Vorlage. It is plausible to regard it as originating in a marginal correction of, or replacement for, mh mh “in their midst” in v 10 (cf. Cornill 243).

11.b. Lit. “it will be done to them.” Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 628 and n. 13) renders µh “by them,”
an expedient that Hitzig (83) considered and rejected. The role of victims fits יָבִブ "captivity," which, in line with the underlying verb הָבִיב "take captive," envisions the people of Jerusalem as objects of aggression.

11.c. Heb. יָבִיב "in captivity" has been considered a variant of הָבִיב "into exile" (Ehrlich Randglossen 5:41; et al.), but it is generally attested, except for the Syr., which characteristically abbreviates and was encouraged to do so here by the fact that it has consistently used שֶׁפֶרָאָה as the rendering for הָבִיב. The terms do not function as syntactical synonyms.

12.a. The placing of subj before verb implies emphasis.


12.c. The MT -ד כ יָב ו "and (he will go out)” can be justified grammatically as a וַאֲנָשִׁב introducing the apodosis, “in the dusk, then he will go out”: see Davidson, Hebrew Syntax 56. But it is more likely that the text takes הָלִי ל י ב "at dusk" with what precedes, whereas v 7, duly emended, suggests otherwise. There is strong textual evidence for reading ד כ י "he will go out" (Cornill 243; et al.; see BHS). See also Heb. Hebrew et al. et alii, and others
Sy. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
* 5.a. The MT ד כ י ו מ ו "and bring out” recurs in principle at vv 6a and 7b, at the same stage of the sign-act and its execution. An ellipse of “your pack” has to be assumed; this is not difficult, since the same occurs with ד כ י ו מ נ "place (on your shoulders)” in vv 6a and 12a. The difficulty lies in the fact that there are two stages in the sign-act, the first consisting of the bringing out of the pack, out of the house, in vv 4a and 7a, and the second including going out through the hole, as vv 4b and 12a. The cases in vv 5b, 6a, 7b must belong to the second stage; ד כ י ו מ ה in v 12b is in a different category, signifying “to bring (him) out.” Accordingly, the qal readings attested by the ancient versions (see BHS) are to be adopted in each case, as very many scholars since Hitzig (82) have advised. The latter observed that the misinterpretation depended on a false explanation of ד כ י ו מ ה in v 12, as if it meant “to bring it out.” Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 150) retained the MT in each case, assuming the ellipse of ד כ י ו מ נ “yourself;” but this makes for a most confusing sequence, especially in v 6a, where two different ellipses have to be assumed. Ehrlich’s interpretation of the MT as “defecate” (Randglossen 5:40) has no merit. Zimmerli (265) also left the MT unchanged, but at the price of regarding their contexts as redactional. Friebl (“Sign-Acts” 624–25, 628) has not only maintained the MT in these places but emended to a hiph form in v 12אא , reading ד כ י ו מ נ “will bring out” for the MT ד כ י ו מ נ “and will go out.” He has speculated that after making the hole Ezekiel “proceeded back into the house [and] reappeared… with the exile bag,” which at an earlier point he had taken back into the house (“Sign-Acts” 634 and n. 27). Before him, Smend (70), Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:41), and Zimmerli (266) read a hiph in v 12אא . It is doubtful whether vv 6 and 12 support Friebl’s assumption. V 7, by its narrative order of clauses, implies a hysteron proteron in vv 6 and 12; vv 6 and 7 specify the visibility of the Shouldering of the pack, which was evidently lying outside the wall.
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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Note 5.a. above.

12.d. Lit. “they will make a hole.” If the reference is to the damage done by the besieging Babylonians (Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 645–46; cf. Garscha, Studien 111; cf. the Comment), strictly the timing, while future for the prophet, was prior to the earlier actions. The Heb. impf. may bear this sense (cf. Joüon 113b). The sg verb in LXX Syr. is an easier and so inferior reading; NIPS and NRSV have adopted it, following Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:41; et al.

12.e. The implicit object of \( \text{ayxwhl} \) “to bring out” is “him,” the head of state (Tg.; Hitzig 83). The noncausative “to go out” found in LXX Syr. has been adopted by many since Cornill (243): it represents...
a well-meant but unnecessary harmonization with the earlier qal examples of this verb that rightly
distinguished between the bringing out of the pack in the first stage of the sign-act and its interpretation
and the going out in the second stage. By this criterion, the pack certainly cannot be the object.

12.f. LXX Syr. rendered מֹסֵר "because" as if it were מָשָׁר מֹסֵר "in order that": Greenberg
(213) has fairly argued, by reference to Abarbanel’s exegesis, that paraphrase of the MT is involved. So
the widespread emendation advocated since Cornill (244) is unnecessary. The fact that elsewhere the
conjunction is construed with a pf or frequentative impf verb is not decisive.

12.g. Heb. מֹסֵר uses the lamed of norm, “according to the eye, visibly”: cf. 1 Sam 16:7 מֹסֵר מֹסֵר “(see)
according to the eyes” (Cooke 135, with reference to S. R. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and
as pass, which again since Cornill (243) has encouraged most to repoint as מֹסֵר מֹסֵר with reference to the
king’s disguising himself in his escape from Jerusalem. However, comparison with v 6 suggests that the
MT is correct. The MT adds מֹסֵר מֹסֵר “he (will not see) the ground,” a blatant addition, as most
since Hitzig (83), including Greenberg (215), have recognized. Now the nonrepresentation in LXX967 (=
LXX*) supports its secondary nature (Fohrer 65; Zimmerli 267; contra Ziegler, LXX 133). The intent of
the gloss was evidently to safeguard the active sense of the unpointed verb: it seems to betray an
awareness that it might be construed as pass, as indeed LXX did. LXXB reflects this addition, in the form
“and he the land will not see,” with necessary indication of the verb in translation and after the earlier
pass rendering.

13.a. Rather than “over”: cf. Prov 29:5 (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:41; Greenberg 214; NIV). See the
Comment.

14.a. The MT “(source of) his help” may be retained rather than the common emendation since
Cornill (244) to בּוֹזָר מַעְרָע מַעְרָע “his helpers,” with reference to LXX Syr. Tg. and also to 30:8; 32:21.
etymological link with Ugar ḡɔzr “warrior” has been postulated (cf. HALAT 767a, b; M. Dahood, Bib 43 [1962] 226).

14.b. As Smend (71) commented long ago, ḡa has been variously aligned with Akk. agappu and Aram. ḡa “wing,” in a military sense, like Latin ala, or with Arab. guff, gaff “group,” with a prosthetic aleph. HALAT 11a opts for the latter derivation.

15.a. For the syntax, see Form/Structure/Setting.

16.a. The subj seems to be the new exiles, in line with the previous two verbs (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:42; Cooke 133; Joyce, Divine Initiative 153 n. 5), rather than the nations (Bertholet [1897] 67; et al., including Zimmerli 274) or both (J. Hausmann, Israels Rest [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987] 86).

18.a. Elsewhere the noun ṣkt generally refers to earthquake or to a loud noise, while ẖ ṣgr can refer more widely to agitation, including that of the emotions. The pair, in the form of noun or verb, often occurs in parallelism; significantly in Job 39:23 both are used of a warhorse quivering with excitement to be off (BDB 1126b).

18.b. The MT, along with the general textual tradition, adds ṣkt ḡa ḏ b Ṽw “and with anxiety.” As I stated in Brownlee (177), the expression “has been viewed with suspicion [since Herrmann 75] because the parallel clause has only one such qualifying term and this noun recurs with reference to eating, not drinking, in v 19a. Was it a marginal gl[oss] on ṣkt Ṽ “quaking,” generally used of earthquake, in v 18a? Then the two terms of v 18 refer to physical trembling, while those in v 19a have an emotional force.

19.a. For the use of ṣmd ḡa “Lord” in the messenger formula, see Note 2:4.c.*


19.c. Heb. ʿălm usually introduces a clause of purpose or even of result. Here, however, its use
seems to crystallize the fear of those who eat and drink. Hitzig (84) and Keil (162) (cf. Hölscher, Dichter 82) showed a respect for the context in their claim of a causal sense; in fact, the Syr rendered “because. ” Probably the conjunction is to be aligned with the sense “in view of, on account of” that the preposition has.

19.d. Heb. הָֽלְמָמִ֥ים “its land” refers to the district or region of Jerusalem: cf. the examples in BDB 76a (2.b, c) and the pl. in 1 Chr 13:2; 2 Chr 11:23. The reference to “those who reside in it” appears to hark back to “the residents of Jerusalem” in v 19a. The ancient versions seem to imply הָֽלְמָמִ֥ים “the land,” adopted by Smend (71) and by Cornill (244, with significant reference to 19:7; 30:12; 32:15) and others. Assimilation to those passages may well have occurred. The reading הָֽלְמָמִ֥ים “their land,” found in a few MSS and adopted by Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:42) and others, is an easier and so secondary reading.

19.e. The recurrence of the rendering of the LXX at 32:15 supports the MT הָֽלְמָמִ֥ים “deprived of its fullness” (Cornill, 244; Zimmerli 276; contra BHS). The preposition is used in a privative and pregnant sense: cf.. 32:15; Lev 26:43.

Form/Structure/Setting

12:1–20 constitutes a literary unit consisting of two divine commands to engage in sign-acts, together with statements of their interpretation. Each has its own introductory formula of the prophet’s reception of a divine message, in vv 1 and 17. Indeed, the two elements of command and interpretation in the first case are demarcated as separate, but consecutive events by a message-reception formula in v 8, rather like that in 24:20, after 24:15. The literary form of prophetic signs and their meaning enveloped within a divine speech was encountered earlier in 3:24b–5:17 (cf. Zimmerli 156–57). Within this unit the second case, in vv 17–20, follows the pattern that appears there. The first case, in vv 1–16, diverges from that pattern in two ways. First, the sequence of divine command and interpretation is interrupted in v 7 by a narrative report of Ezekiel’s performance of the command, as in 24:18. Second, use is made in vv 9–11 of a question-and-answer format to link the command and the interpretation. This format occurs elsewhere in the book with this function, in 21:12; 24:19–21; 37:18–19. Long (JBL 90 [1971] 129–39) has analyzed this schema both in Ezekiel and elsewhere in the OT and shown that in this book the

Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
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cf. confer, compare
pl. plate or plural
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
OT Old Testament

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originally independent schema has been woven into reports of sign-acts. Here, as in chap. 24, it follows a
description of the performance of the sign-act. Within vv 1–16, the command to the prophet to engage in
the symbolic act in vv 2–6 falls into three parts. Greenberg (217) has observed that the introductory vv
2–3 make up a subunit marked by the device of inclusion, concerning the seeing of the rebellious
community. A full statement of the sign follows in vv 4–6a. The two stages of the sign are given in v 4,
while in vv 5–6a the three elements of the second stage are supplied. In v 6b the general significance is
briefly given. Ezekiel’s role as a “omen” recalls the need for the community to “see” expressed
in vv 2–3, while the fivefold “before their eyes” throughout vv 3–6a has echoed “eyes” in v 2. The report of the performance follows in v 7, echoing the two stages and reiterating two of the
two elements in the second stage. The divine interpretation is introduced in vv 9–11b by a brief
recapitulation of the previous key elements: the characterization of “the community of Israel” resident
in Babylonia as “a rebellious community” (vv 2, 3), the prophet’s role as an “omen” (v 6b), and his
performance of the sign-act (v 7a). A straightforward application of Ezekiel’s pantomime of exile,
evidently to the people of Jerusalem, is presented in v 11b. V 12 applies the details of the second stage
of the sign to “the head of state,” while vv 13–14 go beyond the sign in describing his subsequent fate
and the defeat of his army. V 15a rounds off the purpose of this interpretation that plainly is also an
oracle of judgment, with a recognition formula. Thus vv 11–15 function as a two-part proof saying, with
the elements of a pronouncement of punishment and a formula of recognition. V 9 might loosely be
regarded as contributing the first part of a three-part proof saying, by its accusatory mention of “a
rebellious community.” Vv 15b–16 are best taken as a supplementary proof saying (Lang, Kein Aufstand
18, with special reference to 5:16–17). It supplies the subsequent fate of the exiled people of Jerusalem
at Yahweh’s hands and the means whereby Yahweh would bring about their recognition of his
perspective. This latter proof saying is essentially bipartisan, but it contains an accusing reference to the “abominations” of his victims.

The accompanying report, of Yahweh’s commission to carry out a sign-act (v 18) and his
interpretation, is shorter and much simpler. The symbolism is applied specifically to the residents of
Jerusalem (v 19a). Again the interpretation also functions as a bipartisan proof saying, as the closing
recognition formula (v 20b), now addressed to Ezekiel’s hearers, discloses. Mention of “violence” in v
19b constitutes an accusatory motif. In v 20a the pronouncement of punishment goes beyond the
precise dimensions of the sign and its interpretation.

The question of redaction has loomed large in the scholarly study of vv 1–16. The basic issues are
whether and to what extent the text steps beyond the expected bounds of the deportation of the people
of Jerusalem into the different topic of the flight, capture, and blinding of Zedekiah and applies to the
latter topic the elements of the sign-act relating to exile. Thus Herrmann (77) took vv 12–14 as
supplementation added by Ezekiel, along with v 6a “and you will not see the land” as an anticipatory
reference to the blinding of Zedekiah. He noted that vv 12–14 broke the context of vv 11 and 15 that
relate to the residents of Jerusalem. Herrmann was developing the view of Giesebruch (Berufsbegabung
167–71; cf. Kraetzschmar 126), who regarded the whole passage as first written down after 587 B.C. by
Ezekiel, who incorporated Zedekiah’s historical experience into the account. Hölscher (Dichter 80–81)
found vv 12–14 (and v 10) to be the work of an interpolator, inserted after the fateful royal experience in
587. He included in this redaction the references to evening, darkness (h\f \ ), and covering of the face
within vv 4–7 as preparatory references to Zedekiah’s blindness; in fact, he regarded vv 4–6a, 7ab as
secondary. Fohrer (63–64) reverted to Herrmann’s view, taking vv 12–15 as a second interpretation of the
sign-act added later by Ezekiel and v 10 as a gloss reinterpreting vv 1–11. Zimmerli’s treatment

cf. confer, compare
(267–69) is closer to Hölscher’s. The references to digging through the wall and bringing out the pack in darkness (v 5 and within vv 6–7) retrospectively allude to the breaches made in the wall in 587 and to Zedekiah’s escape at night (2 Kgs 25:4; Jer 39:2, 4; 52:7). Vv 10ab–b, 12–15 are likewise secondary, except the references to shouldering the pack and covering the face within v 12, which were expressed in the plural at the primary stage. In Zimmerli’s wake, Amsler (Actes 57) has characterized vv 5, 10, 12–15 as a “re-lecture” or redactional reinterpretation (cf. too Wevers 99). Laato (Josiah 152–53) regards vv 12–14 as secondary.

Lang (Kein Aufstand 21–23; Ezechiel 25–27) has also found redactional input, but he has limited it drastically to two short expressions, År a hAt a a wāh “he the land” at the end of v 12b and ḫw t wē w hā r yāāh “but it he will not see” within v 13bb. I must interject at this point that before reading Lang I came to the same conclusion concerning the second expression, while regarding the first as a textual addition (see Note 12.g.*). Lang considers both king and people to lie within the purview of the sign-act, comparing the associated threat to Jerusalem and the king in chap. 21 and the double deportation of Jehoiachin and representatives of the people in 597. He takes the two short additions as evidence of a post-587 reinterpretation of the references to the king, in terms of flight, disguise (covering the head), and blindness. Greenberg (215, 220) has come to practically the same conclusion as Lang did regarding after-the-event additions to the text. However, he goes further in that he includes År a hAt a “the land” in v 6aa and regards the verb of seeing as originally passive in both vv 6 and 13 (with LXX, in the second case), in a prediction of Zedekiah’s disguising himself in his attempt to escape. Greenberg allows for the possibility that Ezekiel was responsible for reinterpretive touches alluding to the king’s blindness in the light of events. Similarly Klein (Ezekiel 48, 51) finds only the specific references to the king’s blindness, in vv 5, 12, and 13, to be secondary. Uehlinger (“Bild und Wort” 137 n. 125) has characterized only the references to covering the face at night in vv 6 and 12 to be secondary expansions that refer exclusively to Zedekiah.

It is clear that the once-dominant view of extensive redaction has been in recent study not quite demolished but considerably diluted. Since Zedekiah was blinded not at Jerusalem but at Riblah later (2 Kgs 25:7; Jer 39:7; 52:11), to see references to his blindness before v 13 is premature and so unlikely. In his attempted escape, the king left Jerusalem through a city gate, not through a breach in the wall (2 Kgs 25:4; Jer 39:4; 52:7). Surely this was not the “trifling inconsistency” that Cooke (131) called it, on the assumption of a statement after the event. Certainly the older critical view must be considered correct in

cf. confer, compare

* 12.g. Heb. yi on uses the lamed of norm, “according to the eye, visibly”: cf. 1 Sam 16:7 y n (“see) according to the eyes” (Cooke 135, with reference to S. R. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel [Oxford: Clarendon, 1913] 133). The LXX construes the verb as pass, which again since Cornill (243) has encouraged most to repoint as hā r yE with reference to the king’s disguising himself in his escape from Jerusalem. However, comparison with v 6 suggests that the MT is correct. The MT adds År a hAt a a wāh “he (will not see) the ground,” a blatant addition, as most since Hitzig (83), including Greenberg (215), have recognized. Now the nonrepresentation in LXX967 (= LXX*) supports its secondary nature (Fohrer 65; Zimmerli 267; contra Ziegler, LXX 133). The intent of the gloss was evidently to safeguard the active sense of the unpointed verb: it seems to betray an awareness that it might be construed as pass, as indeed LXX did. LXXB reflects this addition, in the form “and he the land will not see,” with necessary indication of the verb in translation and after the earlier pass rendering.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT n. note
the criterion that originally the sign and its interpretation straightforwardly envisioned deportation and
that there seems to be no room for the separate topic of Zedekiah’s series of misdemeanors independent
of the people’s experience. References to his escape from the city and disguise, about which the
historical sources say nothing, and punishment of blindness have no place here. Not escape but
deporation and becoming prisoners of war are the explicit meaning of the sign (v 11). The topic of the
king’s attempted escape is an exegetical red herring that, though as old as the LXX, has done a
disservice to the text. As hinted above, the undoubted reference to Zedekiah’s blindness in v 13 should
be credited to the redactor. Friebel’s exegesis in terms of seeing the land of Judah (“Sign-Acts” 643) is
forced: Chaldea is more naturally in view. The reference represents a skewing of the basic feature of not
seeing the land or ground in vv 6 and 12 (Greenberg 214). The novelty of the interpretation indicates a
distance from the basic text so great that it can hardly be credited to Ezekiel’s own reworking of it.

But what of the rest of v 13, and v 14, which certainly depart from the sign-act? Here attention
should be paid to the setting of the sign and accompanying oracle. V 11 firmly anchors the prophetic
revelation among the hostages in Babylonia, in its discrimination between “you,” who saw the sign, and
“they” in Jerusalem, who were to experience its reality. Moreover, the evident ease in breaking through
the wall in vv 6–7 indicates a Babylonian wall of clay brick, rather than a Palestinian house wall that
would typically have been built of stone. As to its dating, Lang (Ezechiel 56) briefly suggested that chap.
17 is earlier than the sign-acts in chaps. 4–5, 12. In turn Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 404–6) has
observed the closeness between 17:16, 20, 21 and 12:13–14 and has argued that the primary interest of
the sign-act and its interpretation was not to predict future events but to permit the “seeing” (vv 2–3) of
the consequences of the anti-Babylonian policies of Zedekiah, already criticized by the prophet in chaps.
17 and 19. The hostages’ failure to take seriously Ezekiel’s critique and as yet unfulfilled prophecies of
doom prompted a reaffirmation of the fate of the king, within the wider context of the fall of Jerusalem
and the deportation of its citizens.

The following sign-act and interpretation in 12:17–20 clearly align with 4:16–17 in content and so
presumably with the sign-act of 4:9–12 that depicted for the hostages the rigors of the coming siege.
However, Hölscher (Dichter 82), implicitly followed by Fohrer (65) and Fuhs (67–68), envisioned a
post-587 setting, relating not to the besieged residents of Jerusalem but to those left in the city after the
deporation (cf. 33:23–29). This reconstruction depends too heavily on an assumption of historical
continuity between the two sign-acts in 12:1–20. As to the geographical setting, the expression “the
people of the land,” if it is used in v 19 to describe the addressees (rather than those “concerning”
whom the oracle is spoken), might be taken as residents of Judah and Jerusalem (cf. 7:27; so Hölscher,
Dichter 82; Brownlee, 178–79). The issue is clearly germane to the hypothesis of Ezekiel’s Judean
ministry. Were the evidence stronger elsewhere, the passage could well be used in its support. An exilic
provenance is more probable.

The unit may be outlined as follows:

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
Comment

1–16 This report of a pair of divine messages received by the prophet covers a period of two days. The former was given on the first day and relates to activities to be carried out both during its daylight hours and in the evening and ensuing dusk. The latter message was given the next morning. A similar time span is specified elsewhere in the book, at 24:18; 33:22. The first message is a command to perform a sign-act relating to the coming exile of the people in Jerusalem. The second is an interpretation of the sign-act. The messages are punctuated by the performance of the sign.

2–3 This introductory part of the first oracle not only gives a brief description of the symbolic act Ezekiel is to carry out but frames it within statements of the lack of understanding of Ezekiel’s community of hostages and of the aim to attempt to remove it by means of this enactment. Twice the Judeans already deported are described as “a rebellious house,” a designation that recurs in the recapitulation of v 9. The reader of the book is reminded not only of its occurrences in the prophetic commissioning of Ezekiel (2:5–8; 3:9) but also of its dominant role in the first of a block of sign-acts in 3:22–5:4 (3:26–27). The evidence of rebelliousness is a refusal to listen to Ezekiel’s presentation of the divine will, just as in the earlier passages doubt had been cast on whether they would be responsive. The implication here is that the prophet had already been endeavoring to communicate his message of judgment, but with scant success. The description of his constituency as blind and deaf seems to be a deliberate reapplication of Jer 5:21. As often, Ezekiel is portrayed as an exilic Jeremiah, just as Jeremiah in turn is portrayed as a southern Hosea by echoes of the earlier prophet. There is probably also a conscious echo of Isa 6:9–10, where Isaiah’s prophetic ministry is described in terms of a communication failure that in itself confirms and justifies the message of judgment. As a rejected prophet, Ezekiel was standing in a noble tradition of testimony to God’s just punishment of his people. There is an implicit message of assurance for Ezekiel here (cf. 1 Cor 4:2, 4).

The refusal of Ezekiel’s neighbors to recognize or listen to God’s purposes in contemporary history is challenged with a fresh portrayal (vv 3–7) and proclamation (vv 9–16) of Jerusalem’s fate. The hope is expressed in v 3b that the portrayal especially would penetrate the barriers they had created and give them insight. Seeing is used in the cognitive sense of knowing (cf. 21:4, 10[20:48; 21:5]; Zimmerli, I Am Yahweh 31; D. Vetter, THAT 2:697). In prophetic speech the term יִדְרָע “perhaps” is associated with a call to repentance to which the sovereign God might respond favorably and repeal his decree of judgment for the penitent (Jer 26:3; 36:3; Amos 5:15; Zeph 2:3; cf. Joel 2:14; Jonah 3:9; 2 Tim 2:25). Here, however, those addressed are primarily observers, rather than victims, of the coming judgment, although it would dash their hopes of a speedy return. The conditionality is not related to God’s sparing them, as a spur to repentance, but to their enlightenment. “Perhaps” is God’s sigh, rather than a threat. Whether they chose to see the light or not, the judgment of the covenant nation was inevitable: in the commissioning of Ezekiel the same sentiment was expressed in terms of whether they listened or not (2:7; 3:11; cf. Uffenheimer, “Son of Man” 50–51). Greenberg (220) has rightly dissented from Lang’s interpretation in terms of political activism (Kein Austand 24–25; cf. Uehlinger, “Bild und Wort” 140),

cf. confer, compare
whereby Ezekiel was urging the hostages to take last-minute measures to get in touch with the Jerusalem authorities and so avert the city’s fate. That fate was beyond hope; its interpretation as divine retribution was still feasible.

An initial description of the sign-act is supplied in v 3a(ba). As in some of the earlier symbolic actions, the first task, here the making up of a pack to take into exile (cf. Jer 46:19), functions as a preparatory feature, rather than being a part of the public demonstration. Ezekiel is to represent the residents of Jerusalem evacuating the capital as deportees. The following verses will break up the process into a series of stages and details, but here two main features are stressed: the beginning of the process is set in the daytime, and Ezekiel is to seize the limelight. He is not told what the pack is to consist of. He knows only too well from personal experience, his own deportation in 597. Deportation of groups and communities was practiced in both the Assyrian and the Babylonian empires. Assyrian victory reliefs depict the process frequently (see ANEP 10, 366, 373), and the deportees carry pathetic bundles, survival kits to which their homes had been reduced. In Midrash Rabbah (Lam 1:22) Rabbi Hitiyya bar Abba, one of the Tannaim, described the bundle of Ezek 12:3 as consisting of three dual-purpose articles, a skin to hold flour (or water, according to another reading) or serve as a pillow, a mat to sit or sleep on, and a bowl to eat or drink from. Ezekiel is to mimic exile by carrying this pack (v 4) on a short journey from his home, “far enough to show what the action meant” (Cooke 130).

Further unfolding of the symbolic procedure now appears. It is to fall into two stages, and it is reaffirmed that in both stages Ezekiel is to make himself a public spectacle. As the first stage, he is ostentatiously to carry out his pack during the day. The second stage is the enacting of the start of the actual trek into exile, in the evening, no less conspicuously. Perhaps these two stages evoked the hostages’ own last hours in Jerusalem, fearfully responding to unfeeling military orders marked by a “hurry and wait” syndrome. Coolness is the explanation commentators usually give for the timing of the deportation in the evening. Greenberg (210), anticipated by Rothstein (896) and followed by Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 649–50), eschewing historical actuality, has suggested that it evokes calamity and closure, comparing Isa 24:11; Jer 13:16.

5–6a The second stage of the sign-act is elaborated, with three extra details or pairs of details. First, Ezekiel is to break through the wall of his home and step through the hole he has made. Second, he is to go out at dusk and put his pack on his shoulder. Third, he is to keep his face covered and catch no glimpse of the ground. As for the first instruction, in v 5, the damage to the wall is expressed with a plural verb in its interpretive counterpart in v 12. If, as seems reasonable, we are to interpret the sign-act strictly in terms of deportation, the reference must be to the Babylonians breaking through the wall of the besieged Jerusalem, as the prelude to making its residents prisoners (Friebel, “Sign-Acts” 645–46; Uehlinger, “Bilt und Wort” 138; cf. Garscha, Studien 111). In terms of history, this climactic event is recounted in 2 Kgs 25:4; Jer 39:2; 52:7. Then, as Friebel has observed, Ezekiel represents at this point not the people of Jerusalem but their enemies. This double role for the prophetic actor has been encountered in the earlier sign-acts in the book, notably in 5:1–2, where he represented both the divine punisher, by shaving, and the people in the city, by being the one shaved. Ezekiel breaks through the wall of his home: ℓ̂n customarily has this meaning, and we are to envisage a Babylonian adobe wall made of clay bricks, which could easily be penetrated. Thus is represented the prior capture of the city whose citizens were to be deported, just as in Amos 4:3 the wealthy women of Samaria were to “go out through the breaches” in the walls (Giesebrecht, Berufsbegabung 168; Uffenheimer, “‘Son of Man’
In v 6a the third detail is expressed with an added consequence. An interpretation in terms of Zedekiah’s dramatic escape from the city with reference to a disguise is to be resisted. It requires a passive verb of seeing in the sense of not being recognized, which is possible only in v 12, where the LXX so rendered, though it virtually imported such a meaning into v 6 by rendering φυλάσσοντας τὴν χώραν “at dusk” as “hidden.” To achieve this end by deleting “the land/ground” as a redactional addition (Greenberg 215) is a counsel of despair. Nor is a reference to Zedekiah’s blindness relevant: he was only blinded at a later date, after he was captured and taken to Riblah. Uffenheimer (“‘Son of Man’” 53) and initially Greenberg (211) interpreted the seeing as a recognition that the land would never be seen again (cf. Jer 22:12). Friebel (“Sign-Acts” 653) has developed this interpretation: the covering of the face figuratively portrays as permanent the exile of the people of Jerusalem. From that point on, the land would no longer be seen. This interpretation has the merit of according with v 12, where, if the MT’s conjunction and pointing are maintained, not seeing functions as the explanation of covering the face. Sometimes in the OT covering the face has the connotation of grief (2 Sam 15:30; Esth 6:12) or shame (2 Sam 19:5; Esth 7:8; Jer 14:3–4). A different verb appears here, though that is not an essential factor in the interpretation. Overall, comparison of vv 6 and 12 suggests a symbol of radical loss: the gesture “plaintively hides the lost homeland from the view of the exiles” (Zimmerli 271).

6b Ezekiel’s acting out of Jerusalem’s downfall and deportation is characterized as a sign to the 597 B.C. exiles, who represented the whole people of God. The term עֵד used here and in v 11, recurs in 24:24, 27, again with reference to the prophet. It is a synonym of the term עִד used for the sign-act in 4:3 but brings to the fore the nature of his role as a warning (see S. Wagner, TWAT 4:755–56). The word brings to a close the accumulative accent on seeing in vv 2–6: those who have no insight into Yahweh’s purposes for his people (v 2) are shown in plain sight (vv 3–5) the separate stages of a warning sign (v 6), to sharpen their perception (v 3). A similar range of vocabulary occurs in Deut 29:1–3 (2–4).

7 The prophet narrates that he duly carried out Yahweh’s instructions concerning this sign. The two stages of the symbolic action are recorded. Only two phases of the second stage are described, with a telescoping of the literary, over-elaborate AB’C’B’’ structure of vv 5–6a into a practical AB’C order. The third phase of v 6ab is not represented, perhaps because of its figurative rather than representative role. One should not reason from the true-to-life incomplete repetition that v 6 has been expanded nor, with Rothstein (896), that a clause has been lost.

8–11 A fresh divine communication is imparted to the prophet early on the morrow. The reader learns that Ezekiel had silently mimed his way through the sign-act and that his intrigued spectators had unavailingy questioned him about its meaning. The prophet is given a basic interpretation in v 11. It passes on to the hostages Ezekiel’s dramatic role as an “omen,” revealed to him in v 6. If the sign-act was intended to give insight to those with blind eyes, the interpretation was a further attempt to shout its
meaning to their deaf ears (v 3). Discrimination is made between “you,” the object of the sign, and “they,” its subject, clearly the people of Jerusalem who were to share the fate of the already deported hostages, just as Ezekiel had proclaimed earlier in chaps. 5 and 6. They were to lose control of their lives and suffer the fate of exile. In turn the king was to “be brought out” in v 12. The LXX, Aquila, and the Vulgate, by their passive rendering of the verb for “take up, carry” in vv 6, 7, and 12, were sensitively, if wrongly, extending this sentiment of victimization.

12 A detailed interpretation now follows. The careful reader receives two surprises: first, the earlier of the two stages is passed over, presumably as needing no verbal elaboration, and second, not the people but the king features in the application. Zedekiah is referred to as אֲיַנוֹן “head of state,” as in 7:27. He functions as a representative figure, standing for the people he typifies before God. There is also a sense that not even the king would escape the fate of the community at large. Just as in 21:24–32(19–27) both Jerusalem and the king are threatened in the same oracle, so here their highest ranking citizen takes his place beside the citizens indicated in v 11 (Lang, Kein Aufstand 21). Nor must we overlook a further factor. The sign-act and accompanying public oracle were intended as a confirmation of the message in chap. 17 concerning the fate of Zedekiah as a disobedient vassal of Nebuchadnezzar (see Form/Structure/Setting). This factor is the main reason for singling him out here.

So there were good reasons for applying the second stage of the sign-act, with its three pairs of details, to Zedekiah. In relation to vv 5–6a, the first two pairs are reversed, but the third is only slightly varied. The reversal was perhaps meant to achieve wordplay between אֲיַנּוֹן “head of state” and אֲיַנָּה “will take up, carry.” Who better than he to feature in this action, ominously suited as he was by his description! As we observed in relation to v 5, the switch to a plural in the breaking through the wall now differentiates between Ezekiel’s earlier double role, representing both the people of Jerusalem and their enemies. While רָצֹק “wall” usually refers to a house wall, here it is retained with reference to a city wall, usually הָיוֹת; indeed, רָצֹק has this meaning in Num 35:4; Josh 2:15.

13–15a The public message that had been put into Ezekiel’s mouth about his own role (v 11) has by v 13 shifted into a divine oracle. This phenomenon of alternate voices will recur in the interpretation of another sign-act, at 24:21–24. There is now an echo of Zedekiah’s capture and deportation to Babylon, there to die, and of the dispersal and defeat of his army, originally proclaimed in 17:16b, 20–21. Evidently Ezekiel’s constituency had been loath to accept his predictions, and the time that had elapsed with no fulfillment of the predictions had confirmed them in their optimistic stand. Now the earlier message is reaffirmed. It is reinforced with a proclamation by sight and sound of the siege of the royal capital and the deportation of its residents, in vv 2–12. There are no references to Zedekiah’s attempted escape either here or in chap. 17.

The king would be captured not merely by Nebuchadnezzar’s troops but by the divine adversary who masteredminded the Babylonian campaign and made it the means of his retribution. Yahweh was the hunter who would trap his prey and give it to his servants to take proudly home. The net is not a sort of giant butterfly net but, as the context of 19:8 makes clear, part of an ambush toward which the frightened victim would be driven to be entangled by netting spread on the ground or to fall into a pit dug under it (cf. Keel-Leu, Symbolism 93–94; Greenberg 214). Jerusalem was ironically to be Yahweh’s trap. A redactor could not resist inserting a factual reference to Zedekiah’s blindness (2 Kgs 25:7; Jer 39:7; 52:11), glimpsing a terrible twist of fate in a different and later “fulfillment” of his unwillingness to see in v 12. Chap. 17 is as silent about his loss of sight as about his attempted escape from Jerusalem. The king’s bodyguard and army would be no match for Yahweh’s punitive onslaught. A saying that amplifies the

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

cf. confer, compare
echo in 17:21a of 5:2, 12, where the fate of Jerusalem’s citizens is in view, here applies narrowly to the soldiery. Dispersed and chased to their deaths, they would be unable to protect their sovereign from divine judgment. By this fate they would recognize at last the work of the divine judge (cf. 17:21b), undoing all their misplaced patriotism and loyalty.

15b–16 The oracle is rounded off by reversion to the theme of general exile announced by the sign-act and by the straight interpretation in v 11. The third-person references naturally relate to the people of Jerusalem, as v 11 used them. Deportation from the capital would result in a fragmentation of their community in exile (cf. 11:16). Nor would that be the sum of their woes. The three furies of sword, famine, and pestilence, with which 5:12; 6:11–12; and 7:15 had threatened Jerusalem, would ravage them further, leaving a mere “remnant” of the community. The motif is not used in any positive or reassuring sense, as if a ship, harried by every wind, at last reaches a safe haven. Rather, with sinister irony, it perpetuates the negativism and suffering, as in 6:9. Their location “among the nations” (v 15b) would be where they come to their spiritual senses and at last feel the burden of “all their abominations” that hitherto had burdened only Yahweh. As Ezekiel in his exile had in God’s name accusingly declared the sins or abominations committed in the homeland and the liability to judgment (e.g., 5:9 [see the Comment there]; 7:3–4), so they, the accused, in their coming exile would take up his cry in confession. By this grim means Yahweh’s way with them would be acknowledged as justified, and he would be vindicated.

17–18 The second of a pair of sign-acts is now commanded, introduced by its own message-reception formula. The symbolic action is related to the one described and interpreted in 4:10–16, forecasting the intense shortage of food and water during the coming siege of Jerusalem. The glosses in the MT at 4:16 (see Note 4:16.b.) draw an early and well-motivated parallel between that verse and v 19 here. Here the connection with the siege is indicated by the foreboding threat, as v 19 implies, that was to seize the people of Jerusalem as they ate and drank. Ezekiel is commanded to represent them by acting out that foreboding in an exaggerated physical counterpart, a pitiable trembling that presumably showed itself in spilling his drink and missing his mouth with his food.

Zimmerli (278), followed by Eichrodt (153–54), has diagnosed Ezekiel’s condition as a physiological consequence of the strain he felt from his ecstatic prophetic experiences. Greenberg (225) has rightly objected that nothing in the text suggests this origin for the trembling and that comparison with the earlier sign-acts indicates rather that Ezekiel was exercising further dramatic skill. The selection of a meal as the setting for such emotion represents its role as a paradigm of ordinary daily living (cf. Eccl 9:7; Amos 7:12).

19 The interpretation is addressed to “the people of the land.” This group, which in the OT usually relates to residents of Judah or Jerusalem, in 7:27; 45:12 is distinguished from the king as the common people (cf. E. LipinEski, TWAT 6:190). Here the phrase appears to refer ironically to the prophet’s
exilic constituency, as former residents of their homeland and now landless (Eichrodt 154–55). It implies that their loss was soon to be shared by the Judean populace at large. The phrase paves the way for subsequent references in the interpretive oracle, first to the “land” (אֵרָה) or region of Jerusalem and then to the land (אֵרְאָה again) as a whole. The attempt to understand the land in v 19 as Babylonia (Calvin 407; Vawter 80) is misguided. The physical trembling of v 18 is explained in terms of strong emotion. The foregone conclusion to be drawn from the siege was to dominate the lives of the besieged, casting a terrible shadow of premonition over them. From the vivid perspective of the alleged emotions of the besieged, the fall of Jerusalem is announced afresh. The city and its outlying area (cf. Josh 15:21–61) were to lose their assets in the coming destruction. The interpretation does not miss the opportunity to point a finger at the victims as responsible for their own fate. “Violence,” described as an urban sin in 7:23, was to wreak its nemesis.

20 Ezekiel “had threatened destruction to Jerusalem and its citizens: he now adds the other cities which were still inhabited. Lastly, he speaks of the whole land, as if he said that no single corner should suppose itself free from slaughter” (Calvin 408). The devastation of the rest of Judah, especially of its other urban centers, is declared as a future fact. The eventual fulfillment of such catastrophe for Jerusalem and Judah would force upon the attention of the Judean hostages God’s role as judge of his people. If the sign and its interpretation failed to do so, the coming of the terrible event to which they pointed would leave no doubt. This future, enforced dawning of truth draws an arc back to the beginning of the unit, vv 2–3. Ezekiel’s role as actor and teacher was to attempt to remove present blindness to the purposes of God. To this end the threat that, whether they now wanted to or not, they would soon have no option provides a powerful supporting argument.

**Explanation**

It is characteristic of the book to follow a vision report, in this case chaps. 8–11, with an account of sign-acts and their interpretation within an oracular setting. Thus the inaugural vision of 1–3:15 was followed by the interpreted signs in 3:22–5:17, and the dry bones of 37:1–14 will be succeeded by the joined sticks of 37:15–28. There are indications that this unit is meant to function as a literary echo and confirmation of 3:22–5:17, just as the preceding vision, by means of its theophany of judgment associated with the cherubim, echoed that of the inaugural vision with its living creatures. Parunak (“Structural Studies” 216) has drawn attention to connecting links. The epithet “rebellious community” in 12:2–3, 9 repeats that of 3:26–27. The motif of dispersion and death in 12:14–16 recalls 5:2, 12. The anxious eating in 12:9 is reminiscent of the shortage of food and the despair in 4:16–17. One might add the use of “abominations” as a general term for sin in 12:16, which evokes 5:9. There are also echoes of elements found in the oracles of chaps. 6 and 7: the lawless violence perpetrated in the capital (7:23) reappears in 12:19, and the destruction of the homeland (6:14) in 12:20. The trilogy “sword, famine, and pestilence” occurs not only in 5:12 but also in 6:11–12 and 7:15. The prophetic wheel of sin and judgment is rotated a second time for readers of the book, to reinforce the message.

Historically the first sign-interpretation had another role, as its closing links with chap. 17 reveal. The message of divine retribution for Zedekiah, involving his capture and permanent deportation, had fallen on deaf ears. The Judean hostages in Babylonia believed fervently in Jerusalem’s security. Not to do so would have ruled out their own quick return to their homeland, an intolerable inference. If they had been


*cf. confer, compare*
blind to Ezekiel’s earlier oracle, it was because there are none so blind as those who do not want to see. The message is given again, in the wider context of the fall of besieged Jerusalem and the exile of its populace. The vivid portrayal of the sign-act is an endeavor to break through the barriers of self-deception Ezekiel’s audience had built to block out the truth (v 3; cf. Mark 8:14–21; Luke 12:54–56). No explicit reference is made to the hostages’ own deportation a few years before: in his ominous role Ezekiel may well have mimicked the very procedures they had undergone in their forced evacuation from the capital. If so, a deep sense of déjà vu added emotional weight to the drama. God does not take no for an answer but hammers at the doors of their perception, asking to be let in, so that his will may not only be done but understood and bravely accepted.

The second sign-act intriguingly looks at the home situation through the reactions of those besieged in Jerusalem. The portrayal of strong emotions is meant as a frontal attack on the hostages’ attitude. It suggestively countered their willful optimism with grim presentiment. It was a further lesson that endeavored to teach the truth about God in this phase of his purposes for his people.

The Validity of Ezekiel’s Prophetic Ministry (12:21–14:11)

Bibliography

Translation

21 I received the following communication from Yahweh:

22 “Human one, what do you all mean by this slogan you are using about the land of Israel, ‘After a long time elapses, every revelation is a dead letter’? 23 Well, tell them this as a message from the Lord Yahweh: I will put a stop to this slogan, and it will be used in Israel no longer. Say to them rather: The time is near, and so is...
the content of every revelation. 24 For no longer will any revelation be spoken in vain nor any divination be devoid of reality in the community of Israel. 25 For it is I, Yahweh, who is speaking: whatever word I speak is fulfilled. There will be no further delay. In your lifetime, you rebellious community, I mean to both speak the word and fulfill it. So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.”

26 I received a further communication from Yahweh: 27 “Human one, I draw your attention to what the community of Israel is saying, ‘The revelation he is giving relates to a long time ahead. It...
is about the distant future he is prophesying. 28 Well, tell them this as a message from the Lord Yahweh: There will be no further delay over any words of mine. Whatever word I speak is fulfilled. So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.

13:1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: Human one, prophesy against Israel’s prophets, prophesy and tell them. Hear Yahweh’s pronouncement, this message from the Lord Yahweh. Trouble awaits those whose imagination was the inspiration behind their prophesying, without receipt of a revelation. (Your prophets, Israel, have become like jackals that haunt

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*a. The LXX adds the equivalent of יר מִה ה “rebellious.” Probably this is a case of inner-Greek assimilation to v 25. An addition at the Heb. level would have incorporated יְוָיְו וֹיְוֹק “house.”

*b. The proposal to move the אתנָךְ, so that יְר בּד אֲלֵי ק “all my words” goes with what follows (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:43; BHS; Greenberg 229), leaves the preceding neuter verb standing by itself, as in v 25, but at the expense of complicating the following clause in relation to that verse. It is significant that the LXX reflects the MT’s punctuation, rendering with a pl. verb. The extra material may be explained in terms of the Heb. idiom of construing a pl subj, whether masc or fem, with a fem sg verb (GKC 145k; Cooke 136–37, with reference to 41:25; Zimmerli 283).

*b. See Note 25.a.*

*c. The omission of vv 26–28 in LXX* does not appear to be significant for the Heb. text. Most probably it occurred by parablepsis within the Gr. tradition (Filson, *JBL* 62 [1943] 27–32; Lust, “Textual Witnesses” 14–15).

*a. The MT יְר אֲלֵי מ “who prophesy” adds nothing to the sense, whereas a repeated יְר בּד ה ל“prophesy” accords with Ezekiel’s style: cf. 11:4; 34:2; 37:9 (Cornill 246; et al.). The emendation has some support from the LXX, which presupposes יְר בּד ה ו“And prophesy,” by assimilation to v 17. Moreover, the combination “prophesy and say” recurs in 21:14, 33(9, 28); 30:2; 36:3. For the origin of the MT, see Note 3.a.* below.

*b. The MT יְר בּד מ יְר אֲלֵי מ “to prophets from their (own) hearts” is an unexpected second definition of the addressees: one expects simply יְר בּד ה ל “to them” (cf. v 17b), which the LXX* represents. For the origin of the MT, see the following Note.*
You did not climb up to the holes in the wall and rebuild it for the community of Israel so they could resist during the fighting on the day of Yahweh. You who made worthless revelations and offered false divinations, who claimed, ‘So runs Yahweh’s oracle,’ without a commission.
from Yahweh, and expected the message to be substantiated. 7 you did make worthless revelations and speak false divinations, didn’t you? 8 So the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: Because you uttered worthless pronouncements and made false revelations, for that reason I am your opponent, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh. 9 I will deal a blow a to the prophets who made worthless revelations and offered false divinations: They will not be included in the assembly of my people nor documented in the register of the community of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel. Then you will realize that I am b Yahweh.

10 “Because a they have led my people astray b by promising peace when there has been no peace, and when my people c built a wall of loose stones, d they just e gave it a plaster f rendering, 11 tell those

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a 6.a. The MT b zk µ s q w a w wsz “they have seen what is worthless and false divination” mixes a verb and a noun. One expects either a pair of verbs or a pair of nouns (cf. vv 7–9). The first expedient was achieved by Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 150), who construed wsz as a noun, “vision” (cf. Note 3.b.* above), in an exclamatory phrase “Oh! Vain vision and false divination!” and the rest of v 6 likewise (cf. the NEB, “Oh, those prophets who say …”). Talmon and Fishbane (ASTI 10 [1975/76] 150 n. 24) emend to 4 wsz “vision,” without intimating how they integrate v 6a a into the rest of the verse. The second expedient, to find two verbs here, is more commonly pursued. Cornill (247) revocalized as two inf abs forms, µ–/s q w… /zj ; The Vg implies wms qw… wsz “they have seen … and divined,” while the LXX and Tg. presuppose ptcp forms, yme ò ù ò… yzì jì 0 with a òώ w variant in the first case. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:44) plausibly integrated v 6 with the direct address in vv 5, 7–8 by adopting the latter verbal forms and regarding as vocatives; he noted that the third person references in v 6a b are idiomatic (cf. GKC 144p and Note 22:3.c.*).

7.a. The LXX* has no counterpart for v 7b in the MT, “and say ‘So runs Yahweh’s oracle,’ when I have not spoken.” Probably the addition represents a comparative gloss on v 6a, for which the first three Heb. words (minus the copula) function as cue words. Comparison was made with Jer 23:21, where in a first person divine context Yahweh’s nonsending of false prophets is matched with his nonspeaking. The gloss was subsequently eased into the text at a feasible point, with the addition of waw.

9.a. The MT h t y ṣ w “(and my hand) will come (upon)” is elsewhere a technical expression relating to an esoteric prophetic experience (e.g., 1:3), which is out of place in this declaration of divine punishment. It is doubtful whether the explanation of the strange usage in terms of sarcasm, given by Kraetzschmar (132) and others is adequate. The LXX implies y ṣ w “and I will stretch out,” which is formally expected (cf. 6:14; 14:9, 13) and has generally been adopted since Hitzig (88). Yet how the MT arose is most uncertain. It may have been a comment or correction relating to an adjacent part of the text, which subsequently displaced the right reading here. Was it earlier a masc form ṣ w belonging to v 11 (see Note 11.a.*), which was wrongly related to v 9 and adapted in gender?

9.b. The MT adds ymd a “Lord,” which does not reflect the formulaic practice in Ezekiel: see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556–62. It was probably added by assimilation to v 8.

10.a. For the emphatic ì ṣ w ì ì “because and because” in grounds for divine punishment, cf. 36:3; Lev 26:43. Talmon and Fishbane (ASTI 10 [1975/76] 133 and n. 21), followed by Greenberg (241), take the causal clause in v 10a as the conclusion of v 9, as in Lev 26:43. But in Ezek 36:3 it is clearly an initial clause.

10.b. Elsewhere the stem is h ] t, e.g., in 14:11; here the Aram. form h ] f is used.

10.c. Lit. a sg pronoun, with reference to “my people” (Smend 75; et al.).

10.d. See the Comment.
plasterers: ‘If drenching rain comes, a if hailstones b fall and a storm wind whips up, c and you are faced with a collapsed wall, d you will be asked where your rendering is, won’t you?’

So here is the Lord Yahweh’s message: In my fury I am going to whip up a storm wind, and drenching rain will come because of my anger, and hailstones in destructive fury. b I will demolish the wall you rendered with plaster and level it to the ground, leaving its foundation exposed. a Then you will

e 10.e LXX Syr. Vg may preserve a variant h nh w “and they,” in contrast to the earlier pronoun (cf. BHS), but the MT µ nh W “and behold they” fittingly expresses surprise (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:45).

f 10.f. Heb. l pt is a byform of the stem l pf “coat (with clay).” See the Comment.

a 11.a. For the MT h yj l p yw “and (it) will fall, it was” one expects simply h yh W “it will come,” relating to the rain (cf. v 13b), with waw introducing the message, as in v 13ab. The LXX represents this shorter text. Probably, as I suggested in Brownlee (186), l p y originated as an explanation of the pf l p n in v 12, which refers to the future (“[the wall] will fall”). It was taken as a correction of h yh Win v 11 and was inserted here, producing a conflated text. In an English translation the juxtaposition of clauses is more naturally replaced by subordination (cf. GKC 159g; Joüon 167b).

b 11.b. The MT “and you, O hailstones” strangely switches to direct address (cf. v 13b). LXX Vg (cf. Syr.) represent a repointing of h n t a h o and you” (cf. v 20a) as h n t a w o and I will give,” but a verb is otiose here. D. N. Freedman (in Propp, ZAW 102 [1990] 404 n. 3) has interestingly adopted the interpretation as a verb and coupled it with the next verb: “and I will cause … to fall.” However, a first person divine reference is out of place here and anticipates v 13. One expects simply a waw before yn b a “stones.” Did h n t a originate as a correcting or explanatory gloss on the masc form µ t a “you” in v 20b? If so, it is difficult to see why the annotation wandered so far. “Hail” is usually d r b: the term v yb g l a, which appears here and in v 13 and also in 38:22, is related to Ugar. lgbt, an unknown commodity, and Akk. algarisù, a type of jewel (HALAT 49b). Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 151) judged the sense to be “(hail)stones hard as rock.” The LXX has a second rendering ei j t ou, ej d w mou a j w h “to their bundles,” which Hitzig (89) rightly explained as a doublet: he compared the rendering of Q for s y p k in Hab 2:11.

c 11.c. The MT l q b t, pointed as a piel, is more naturally taken as a niph l b B t “break out” (cf. Isa 58:8; 59:5), in line with the pass rendering in the LXX: cf. v 13. Greenberg (238) justifies the MT in terms of the intransitive use of this piel form in midrashic Heb. This is certainly how the present pointing is to be understood, rather than implying the wall as object, as BDB 132a explained, which clashes with the usage in v 13.

a 12.a. Lit. “and behold the wall will have fallen.”


b 13.b. The lack of a verb is supplied by an added e p a w w “I will bring” in the LXX Cornill (249) has been followed by many in emending h l k “destructively” to h n p t “will fall,” in line with v 11, but the MT can stand.
recognize that I am Yahweh. 15 I will vent my fury on that wall and on those who gave it a plaster rendering, and then I will say concerning you, ‘The wall is gone and its plasterers are gone,’ 16 that is, Israel’s prophets who prophesied about Jerusalem and made revelations of peace for it when there was no peace. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.

17 “Now, human one, you are to look in the direction of those women among your people whose imagination is the inspiration behind their prophesying. Issue a prophecy against them and tell them this as a message from the Lord Yahweh: Trouble awaits those women who get individuals into their power by sewing bands to put on everybody’s wrist and by making shawls to put on

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a 14.a. The MT and the general textual tradition add ḥ k ḫ b ṭ y l k w h l p nw “and it [fem.] will fall and you will be destroyed in its [fem.] midst.” Should one change to a masc verb with reference to the wall and understand the suffix in a neuter sense with reference to the fragments of the broken wall (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:46), in the latter case either repointing as masc (Ḥ k ẖ b, Bertholet [1936] 46) or writing ḫ ḫ b (Rothstein 900)? These are methodologically inadequate measures that leave the present text unexplained. It seems to have arisen as a comment on Jerusalem in v 16, interpreting the metaphor of the fallen wall in vv 12, 14a in plain terms. The second word was meant as a comment on ḥ l ḥ l “destructively” in v 13, explaining it as referring to the destruction of the prophets, with help from v 15. The third word either goes with it, meaning “in the midst of the storm wind,” or is a corruption of ṭ j k ḫ b “in punishments,” attested by the LXX (cf. Hitzig 89), a comparative gloss on v 13 that alluded to the parallelism found in 5:15. In BHS the extent of the addition is indicated wrongly.

15.a. The MT ʿ m ṭ w “and I will say” is already attested by the LXX “and I said.” Hitzig (89) and others have suggested that it be pointed ʿ m ṭ w ṭ ṭ with an indefinite subj, “and one will say,” a variation of the pass form in v 12. Syr. Tg. attest a pass form, clearly by assimilation to v 12.

15.b. Hardly “to you,” since the demise of the prophets is envisioned.

15.c. Cornill (249) called the MT ḳ ḳ w… ḳ ḳ “there is no … and no” a flat expression. He has been followed by many in adopting the reading attested by the Syr., ḥ y ṭ w… ḥ y ṭ “where … and where?” in line with v 12. However, it seems to be a further case of assimilation. Preference for it generally accompanies a redactional view of v 15.

16.a. Not “to” (NIV, REB), since prophets both in exile and in the homeland seem to be in view. Heb. ʿ is used in the sense of ʿ (here with the sense “concerning”), as in vv 2, 8, 9, 17, 19, 20 (BHS).

17.a. The hithp seems to mean “behave as a prophet” (J. Jeremias, THAT 2:17). Wilson (JBL 98 [1979] 329–36), who also interprets as to act like a prophet, either in word in deed, has observed here and in 37:10 a focus on the prophetic word as the basis of evaluation, so that the hithp form has become synonymous with the niph. Rendtorff (TDNT 6:799) has noted that in 37:10, in differentiation from the niph form in v 7 (and vv 4, 9), it relates to a quasi-magical summons rather than an announcement, which suits the power of life and death exercised by the women prophets in this passage.

18.a. Lit. “hunt down.”

b 18.b. Heb. ṭ ṭ ṭ k, which is found only here and in v 20, is generally related to Akk. kasītu, kisītu “fetter.” In later Heb. the noun means “cushion”; Greenberg (239) so interprets, but it is difficult to fit this meaning into the context. The LXX so renders here, but its translation “belt” for ṭ ṭ q, seemingly taken as ṭ k, in 9:2 reflects a different interpretation.

c 18.c. Lit. “joints of hands.” For the MT ṭ ṭ y ṭ “my hands,” it is necessary to read ṭ y ṭ y “hands,” implied by Syr. Tg. and read by a few MSS. The error presumably came about via scribal abbreviation, ṭ y ṭ y (Cooke 149; Driver, Textus 1 [1960] 115). A further shortening to ṭ y “hand” is attested in LXX Vg.
everybody's head, of varying sizes. You mean to captivate individuals belonging to my people and to sustain your own selves! You have desecrated me among my people for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread, using your falsehoods uttered to my people, who like to listen to falsehood, to put to death individuals who should not die and to restore to life individuals who should not live. So the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: I intend to counteract your bands, the point at which you get individuals into your power. I will tear them off your arms, and let the individuals you are captivating go free and fly away. I will also tear off your shawls and rescue my people from your

\[d\] 18.d. Heb. \(\text{t} \text{w} \text{p} \text{s} \text{m}\) occurs only here and in v 21. The LXX renders in general terms as “coverings.” Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 63–64) argued by comparative etymologizing that loose flowing or spreading or all-enveloping veils or shawls were in view. In later Heb. the term evidently means “rags” (Greenberg 239).

\[c\] 18.e. Lit. “stature.”

\[f\] 18.f. The interrogative \textit{he} is normally pointed without the daghesh, but see GKC 100l; Joüon 102l–m; there is no need to repoint with Cornill (250) and others. The question has the force of a surprised exclamation (Smend 78).

\[g\] 18.g. Heb. \(\text{y} \text{m} \text{r} \text{h} \text{n} \text{k} \text{l}\) seem to be used in periphrasis for genitives, “of my people, of yourselves” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:47). The LXX does not represent \(\text{h} \text{n} \text{k} \text{l}\), probably because it took the adjacent verbs as third pl., rather than second, and so had no room for it.

\[a\] 19.a. Or conceivably “with.” Kraetzschmar (136) observed that the \textit{beth} of price is normally seen here but reported that W. Robertson Smith (Journal of Philology 13 [1885] 273–87) interpreted of offerings brought to obtain an oracular response.

\[b\] 19.b. For the modal use of the \textit{impf.}, see Joüon 113m.

\[a\] 20.a. Syr. Vg Tg. render \(\text{m} \text{v} \ldots \text{f} \text{v} \text{d}\), lit. “as by which.” Hitzig (91) and others have retroverted as \(\text{m} \text{v} \text{d}\). Zimmerli (289) has defended the spatial reference of the MT, which is supported by the LXX: the victims are caught as in nets.

\[b\] 20.b. The MT adds \(\text{t} \text{w} \text{f} \text{p} \text{t} \text{l}\) : see Note 20.e.

\[c\] 20.c. The MT along with the general textual tradition attests \(\text{m} \text{k} \text{y} \text{t} \text{v} \text{w} \text{z} “your arms,” but it creates a difficulty inasmuch as v 18 seems to imply that the clients of the women prophets wore the wristbands. Cornill (250) noted that there was no corresponding phrase “off your heads” in v 21a and conjectured that the phrase “off your arms” was a false addition that took the suffix in v 21 to mean “worn by you,” instead of “made by you.” Rothstein in BHK suggested that \(\text{m} \text{h} \text{y} \text{t} \text{v} \text{z} “their arms” be read, and BHS has firmly adopted his suggestion. False assimilation to \(\text{m} \text{k} \text{y} \text{t} \text{w} \text{p} \text{s} \text{m} “your shawls” in v 21 is indeed plausible. There is a bewildering mixture of masc and fem. second pl. suffixes in vv 19–21. See the Comment.

\[d\] 20.d. The MT \(\text{m} \text{w} \text{v} \text{p} \text{n} \text{h} \text{t} \text{a}\) “persons” can hardly be right: such a pl. form is not found elsewhere, an article is expected, and the earlier \(\text{t} \text{w} \text{p} \text{n} \text{h} \text{t} \text{a}\) “the persons” needs no repetition. LXX Tg. “their souls” implies \(\text{m} \text{v} \text{p} \text{n} \text{h} \text{t} \text{a}\), which deals with the first two difficulties but not with the third. Cornill’s brilliant conjectural emendation \(\text{m} \text{y} \text{w} \text{p} \text{j} \text{t} \text{a}\) “them free” (251) has won general acceptance. He cited the well-attested phrase \(\text{y} \text{w} \text{p} \text{j} \text{l} \text{v} “let (slaves) go free” (see BDB 344b, 1019a); the masc is the standard form. The error was due to the two preceding cases of \(\text{t} \text{w} \text{p} \text{n} \text{h} \text{t} \text{a}\), which caused wrong word division and the dropping of \(\text{m} \text{n} \text{h} \text{t} \text{a}\).
clutches, so that they are no longer within your preying grasp. Then you will realize that I am Yahweh.

22 “Because you have demoralized\(^a\) the innocent,\(^b\) whom I had no intention of harming, and encouraged\(^c\) the guilty rather than getting them to abandon their lifestyle, with their survival in view \(^d\)— 23 that is the reason you will never again make worthless revelations or practice such divination:\(^a\)

I will rescue my people from your clutches, and then you will realize that I am Yahweh.”

14:1 Some of Israel’s elders visited\(^a\) me and sat down in front of me. \(^3\) I received the following communication from Yahweh: \(^3\) “Human one, the minds of these men have turned\(^b\) to their idols, and

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\(^{20.e.}\) Heb. \(\text{lamed} \text{ ptcp} \) seems to qualify the setting free of the captivated clients. In v 20a it reappears in the MT in the different context of their being hunted down. It can hardly belong in both places. The lack of a counterpart there in the LXX* and the similarity of the preceding phraseology in vv 20a, b suggest that the term was added there by false assimilation after v 20b was corrupted (cf. Hitzig 92). The stem appears to be Aram., with the sense “fly” (\(\text{b} \text{ S Vg}\)), which the LXX “to scattering” and the Tg. “to destruction” also reflect. Then it appears to allude to a bird escaping from a snare (Ps 124:7; Hitzig 92). The use of the \(\text{lamed} \text{ with a ptcp}\) (or a noun “birds”) remains difficult (cf. Greenberg 240). Perhaps the composite term means “(let go free) into the state of persons who fly away” (cf. Exod 21:26, 27).

Cornill’s suggestion that it was a gloss to replace the corrupted \(\text{yvpj} \text{ p}\) “free” (251–52) deserves consideration.

\(^{22.a.}\) Since Hitzig (25–52), there has been a tendency to emend to \(\text{b yākḥ}\) “harm” in line with v 22ab, especially because the hiph of \(\text{hākḥ}\) does not occur elsewhere. Indeed, HALAT (434a) (cf. Ehrlich Randglossen 5:46) gets rid of the other (niph) cases of the stem \(\text{hākḥ}\) (Ps 109:16; Dan 11:30), regarding them as derived from \(\text{hākūn}\). However, there appears to be a play on two similar stems (Wevers 110). Greenberg (241) has noted how in Heb. verbs hiph and niph regularly correspond, with act and pass meanings respectively.

\(^{22.b.}\) The MT adds \(\text{rqv}\) “falsehood, falsely,” for which the LXX* has no counterpart. See Note 23.a.

\(^{22.c.}\) The \(\text{lamed} \text{ with inf constr}\) functions as a continuation of the preceding inf in the causal clause: cf. Cooke 150; Joüon 124p. Elsewhere other parts of the verb, rather than an inf, occur in the relevant preceding clause.

\(^{22.d.}\) The implicit subj of \(\text{yîy h l}\) “to keep him alive” is the female prophets who are addressed: this subj is carried over from the verb in v 22ba , leapingfrog the change of subj in the case of \(\text{b w̄}\) “return.”

\(^{23.a.}\) Many scholars since Cornill (252) have recommended the conjectural emendation of \(\text{µsq}\) “divination” to \(\text{b zık}\) “falsehood,” in the light of the parallelism in vv 6, 7, 9, 19. The MT \(\text{rqv}\) , another term for “falsehood,” in v 22 is comparable. It doubtless originated as an exegetical gloss on \(\text{µsq}\) here, as I observed in Brownlee (194); it occurs only here in Ezekiel, and in this chapter is its equivalent, but it is common in Jeremiah (see especially Jer 14:14; Zech 10:2). Here the MT can stand: after the first clause, \(\text{µsq}\) has a pejorative sense.

\(^{1.a.}\) The MT \(\text{awbyw}\) “and one came” is probably a further example of metathesis, to which this verb is particularly prone in Ezekiel (see Zimmerli 300). It was corrupted from the expected \(\text{vb b ȳ}\) “and they came,” as in 9:2. It is true that the MT is a possible construction (Joüon 150j); that very possibility served to perpetuate the error.
they have focused\textsuperscript{b} on that which has made them fall into iniquity. Why\textsuperscript{c} should I let myself be consulted\textsuperscript{d} by them? \textsuperscript{4}So speak with them and tell them this as a message from the Lord Yahweh: When any single member of the community of Israel whose mind turns to his idols and who focuses on what makes him fall into iniquity comes to a\textsuperscript{a} prophet, I, Yahweh, will bring myself to give him an authoritative\textsuperscript{b} answer;\textsuperscript{c} in keeping with\textsuperscript{d} his host of idols. \textsuperscript{5}My purpose will be to hold the community of Israel responsible\textsuperscript{b} for their thinking, inasmuch as they have alienated themselves\textsuperscript{b} from allegiance to me, with all\textsuperscript{c} their idols. \textsuperscript{6}Therefore tell this to the community of Israel, as a

\textsuperscript{a} 3.a. Lit. “These men have set on their hearts.” Schoneveld (OTS 15 [1969] 193–98), following M. du Buisson, envisioned an amulet worn over the heart or a tattoo on the breast, but elsewhere the phrase \textsuperscript{b} \| \textsuperscript{h} \leftarrow \textsuperscript{h} \textsuperscript{c} relates to thinking (see BDB 749a; cf. 20:32). See Mosis’s critique of this thesis in BZ 19 (1975) 193 n. 99.

\textsuperscript{b} 3.b. Lit. “they have set before their faces.” The verb \textsuperscript{d} \textsuperscript{h} \textsuperscript{n} “set” is varied with the synonym \textsuperscript{d} \textsuperscript{h} \textsuperscript{y} \textsuperscript{c} in vv 4, 7 (cf. Talmon, Qumran 342–43).

\textsuperscript{c} 3.c. Lit. “Should…?” NAB and NJB idiomatically preface with “Why?” to express the rhetorical nature of the question.

\textsuperscript{d} 3.d. The niph has a tolerative force (GKC 51c), as with this verb in 20:3, 31; 36:37. The MT “should I be consulted, consulted” is strange. One expects the first verbal form to be that of an inf absol, \textsuperscript{d} \textsuperscript{v} \textsuperscript{r} \textsuperscript{d} \textsuperscript{h} \leftarrow \textsuperscript{h} \textsuperscript{c} , strengthening an indignant question (GKC 113q). Probably this is a case of mechanical assimilation to the next word (but cf. Greenberg 248).

\textsuperscript{a} 4.a. Heb. “the prophet”: see Cooke (155) for the idiomatic usage.

\textsuperscript{b} 4.b. K \textsuperscript{h} \textsuperscript{b} “with it” is probably intended to anticipate the following “with the multitude of idols”: cf. the Syr. “with them.” Q \textsuperscript{d} \textsuperscript{a} \textsuperscript{b} “when he comes (with),” followed by NJPS and NRSV, makes a minimal improvement by finding a resumption of the previous verb. Since Hitzig (94), \textsuperscript{y} \textsuperscript{b} \textsuperscript{d} \textsuperscript{h} \textsuperscript{c} , which appears in the parallel v 7, has been generally adopted as an emendation, with the presumed support of the Tg., with which Sperber (Bible in Aramaic 4B:337) agrees. However, Greenberg’s contention that this is not so (247) has merit, especially as the Tg. has a rendering for \textsuperscript{y} \textsuperscript{a} \textsuperscript{b} \textsuperscript{d} “for he comes.” Nor is it easy to explain a corruption from \textsuperscript{y} \textsuperscript{d} to \textsuperscript{h} \textsuperscript{b} : it could have arisen via an intermediate reading \textsuperscript{y} \textsuperscript{b} , which the LXX may presuppose in v 7, unless it represents \textsuperscript{h} \textsuperscript{b} , by assimilation to the K form here. Yet, in the light of v 7 , it is the expected reading, and \textsuperscript{h} \textsuperscript{b} (or \textsuperscript{a} \textsuperscript{b} ) can hardly be original. Overall, an emendation to \textsuperscript{y} \textsuperscript{b} is the least objectionable solution. The sense of the preposition is determined by such expressions as speaking in Yahweh’s name or swearing by Yahweh (see BDB 90a): “by myself;” “on my own authority.” It virtually reinforces the reflexive element in the verb (Cooke 155).

\textsuperscript{c} 4.c. The niph form appears to be of the same type as the verb in v 3, perhaps developed by analogy with it: “allow myself to give an answer.” Hossfeld and Meyer (Prophet 119) have taken the pf in the sense “I have (already) given an answer,” but the clearly parallel expression in v 7, which uses a ptcp, suggests that a fut sense is intended.

\textsuperscript{d} 4.d. The preposition may connote a standard of measurement (Cooke 155): cf. BDB 90b.

\textsuperscript{a} 5.a. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:48) has usefully compared the Mishnaic sense of the niph, “be held responsible” (cf. NJPS “hold to account”).

\textsuperscript{b} 5.b. For the niph usage of this verb, cf. Isa 1:4.

\textsuperscript{c} 5.c. Heb. \textsuperscript{d} \textsuperscript{h} \textsuperscript{l} \textsuperscript{k} “all of them” may qualify the subj of the verb, as most modern versions interpret. More probably it reinforces the previous noun, a construction common in Ezekiel (BDB 481b; thus NAB): the phrase appears to be an intensifying counterpart to “with the host of their idols” in v 4 (Smend 81).
message from the Lord Yahweh: Turn, turn away from allegiance to your idols and turn your attention from all your shocking rites. For to every single member of the community of Israel or any resident alien within Israel who ceases to follow me and adopts another faith, mentally turning to his idols and focusing on what makes him fall into iniquity, and then comes to a prophet to consult me through him, I, Yahweh, will bring myself to give an authoritative answer. I will make that person the focus of my hostility: turning him into an omen and a byword, I will exclude him from belonging to my people, and then you will realize that I am Yahweh. If the prophet is so misled as to deliver an oracle, I, Yahweh, will show him to have been misled. I will deal him a blow and fatally remove him from inclusion in my people Israel. They will both suffer punishment for their iniquity, inquirer and prophet alike. My purpose will be to stop the community of Israel straying from my leadership and sullying themselves with all their rebellious ways, so that they

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a 6.a. In the light of 18:30, the hiph has an intransitive force, perhaps by way of ellipse of the natural object “yourselves.”
b 7.a. The partitive preposition is here used with a collective sg.
c 7.b. For the syntactical construction, see Cooke 155.
d 7.c. Lit. “consecrates himself from after me”: cf: the use of the verb to refer to devoting oneself to a pagan god in Hos 9:10. In Lev 22:2 it means “keep oneself religiously separate from [ב"ד].”
e 7.d. It is more natural to take the client as the subj of the inf: ור ו with ב means “inquire of (God).” Then ג means “(coming) to (the prophet)” as agent or medium of the consultation. Greenberg (250) compares מירא על א ור ו “one who consults the dead” in Deut 18:11.
f 7.e. See Note 4.b. above.

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a 8.a. The hiph form is anomalous: the case in 21:21 is a textual error (see Note 21:21.b*). A qal form ויתך מך ו is generally predicated. Did a comparative gloss from ו 9, ויתך מך ו “and I will destroy him, ” stand in the margin with reference to its counterpart ויתך מך ו “and I will cut him off” and encourage a miswriting of the previous verb? The reading with a ס in found in some MSS, meaning “and I will destroy him,” is an attempt to make sense out of the MT.
b 8.b. Elsewhere a.sg ו.Me occurs with the sense “byword.” To read a sg form on the alleged evidence of Syr. Vg (BHK, BHS) is methodologically dubious, especially without an explanation as to how the MT arose. The strange reading “(make you) into a desert and into destruction” in the LXX attests in its Vorlage מבה ו מה ו “as an object of horror and a byword,” derived from Deut 28:37. A sg ו.Me is expected here too. In support of the MT, Greenberg (250) has adduced cases of pairs of nouns in which the first is sg and the second pl., at Isa 43:28; 50:6.

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a 9.a. Mosis (BZ 19 [1975] 166–69; TWAT 4:829–31) has compared the “prophetic” pf forms in vv 4b and 7b to statements of future divine reaction that begin with ויהי ירה “I, Yahweh.” He argued that the same construction is to be found here. Then, as in vv 7b–8a, the pf is followed by consecutive pf forms. Following H. E. Smieter, he has attributed to the piel here a factitive force (cf. Joujon 52d; GKC 52g), “show to be misled.” Mosis has also plausibly claimed for the piel of מ in Jer 20:7 the sense “make to be a fool,” and for the pual in Jer 20:10 the meaning “let himself be made a fool,” by an inadvertent statement or action. Mosis’s interpretation has been followed by Fuhs (75) and Klein (Ezekiel 111 n. 10).
b 10.a. Lit. “the like of the inquirer’s punishment the like of the prophet’s punishment.” Cooke (156) observed that in this idiom the present order, whereby the second entity is like the first, is less common.
function as my people and I may function as their God. So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.”

Notes

22.a. “All” is added to indicate that the Heb. for “you” is pl.


22.c. The LXX* does not represent ἡκ “every,” but its parallel presence in v 23 supports it.

23.a. For the formulaic use of יהוה “Lord” in the messenger formula here and in v 28; 13:3, 8, 13, 18, 20; 14:4, 6, see Note 2:4.c.*

23.b. The pf in the MT is “prophetic”: cf. GKC 106n. However, LXX* LXXOL and a few MSS imply יתב וה with a prefixed ו, which accords with Ezekiel’s style elsewhere (see 11:17 and Note 11:17.a. *). It could easily have fallen out by partial haplography in a וה sequence. The LXX construed the verb as a hiph of ו, meaning “reverse,” a possible but less likely parsing than the pointed MT.


23.d. Heb. יתב “word, declaration, that which is declared” has as its counterpart in the Syr. a verb: “(the revelation) will happen.” Zimmerli (279) has listed the comparable modern scholarly attempts to supply a match for the verb in v 22b, but rightly counseled keeping the MT.

Heb. Hebrew
pl. plate or plural
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
* 4.c. For the authenticity of יהוה “Lord” in the messenger formula, see the appendix in Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556–62, which reverses the policy of deletion he earlier advocated throughout his two volumes. For the LXX evidence, see the discussion of McGregor (Greek Text of Ezekiel 75–93).
pf perfect
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
24.a. The MT has constr forms in the case of לְוָאֵ֖י “revelation” and לִשְׁפָּתֶ֖ים “divination,” a possible construction that regards the following adj as a noun in each case (see GKC 128w). However, the exegetical intent of this pointing seems to have been to equate these expressions with those relating to false prophets in 13:7. See the Comment. Probably the minority pointing as abs (see BHS) should be followed, and the qualifying nouns should be taken as predicative (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:42–43).

24.b. Heb. נַמָּא appears to mean here not “false” but “worthless” (Ehrlich Randglossen 5:42–43) and so “in vain”: see the range of meanings in BDB 996a. A rendered אֵיַח “in vain” and S Q מַבָּאֲא “vain, empty.”

24.c. Heb. קֶלִּגָּא, lit. “smooth,” seems to have the developed meaning “empty” that it has in Mishnaic Heb. (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:42–43; Greenberg 228; see Jastrow, Dictionary 473b–74a). The LXX τὰ πρὸ τὰ καρά “(prophesying) favorably” renders the same stem in Prov 7:5. Cornill’s assumption (245) of an underlying קֶלִגָּא “in vain, freely” here is unwarranted.

24.d. The variant “sons,” which is widely attested (see BHS), is evidence of a common confusion between the two phrases “house of Israel” and “sons of Israel”: see Note 2:3.a.*
25.a. The syntax of v 25a is uncertain. The accentuation in the MT implies “For I am Yahweh; I (will) speak what I speak, a word and it will be done.” Then the second clause exhibits a deliberately inexplicit idem per idem construction (Cooke 136–37; Greenberg 228–29). Cooke, following Hitzig (86) and others, actually regarded rbd “word” as a noun qualifying the preceding relative clause: “what word I will speak.” Greenberg invests the final word with the force of a relative clause: “(as) a word that will be done.” On the other hand, Zimmerli (279–80; cf. von Orelli 51) construes as “For it is I, Yahweh, who speak. The word that I speak is fulfilled.” He makes the good observation that the last five words should be understood in terms of v 28ba, which appears to be a parallel statement. With respect to rbd “word,” he follows Cooke, but he takes -h c [ y, w not as “and (it is will be done)” but as introducing an apodosis. Then the initial words are to be regarded as a variation of the concluding statement yt rbd hwh y na “I, Yahweh, have spoken” found in 5:17; 21:22; 30:12; 34:24, which is introduced by ṧk “for” in 21:37; 26:14. Indeed, the whole sentence is to be regarded as a variation of the larger concluding statement yt y [ w yt rbd hwh y na “I, Yahweh, have spoken and will do (it)” in 17:10; 22:14; 36:36; 37:14 (cf. 24:14) (Zimmerli 281). This variation seems to refer to Yahweh’s general, rather than future and specific, activities. The latter are clearly in view in v 25b, which is formulated slightly differently.

25.b. The fem verb has a neuter sense: cf. GKC 122q; Joüon 152c, d. LXX Syr. render loosely “I do not delay.” The parallelism of v 28 supports the MT, contra Cornill (246), who postulated original

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* 3.a. In place of the MT larcy ynb “sons of Israel,” the LXX has larcy tyb “house of Israel”: the two phrases are often confused (via an abbreviation ḫ according to Cooke 36), and the opposite textual phenomenon occurs in 3:1. Cornill (187) argued in support of the LXX that the following pl. qualifiers encouraged the change, but Wevers (51) considers that they may make the MT preferable. Zimmerli (89) has urged that the phrase attested in LXX is the customary one in Ezekiel, occurring 83 times over against 11 according to Ezekiel 2 564, and so to be expected in this basic place. He also adduces the impressive argument that the expression “house of rebellion” in vv 5, etc. was based on a primary “house of Israel,” and so its presence is expected here—rather than delayed till 3:1. The dominant role of larcy tyb “house of Israel” throughout the divine speech (3:1, 4, 7) must also be taken into account. Accordingly, the reading of the LXX is to be judged as preferable. The MT was probably influenced by r c y ynb “sons” in v 4. The variant attested in the LXX was known in the Heb. tradition: it turns up as larcy tyb Al a “to the house of Israel” in 3:5 (see the Note there). The MT adds r ynb Al a “to nations,” which LXX lacks. It does not fit the context of Ezekiel’s mission to Israel. The Syr. attests a sg “nation,” which the NRSV has adopted, but it is plainly an attempt to match the MT to the context. The addition surely originated in a marginal reading that supplied a variant for r ynb Al a “to peoples” in 3:6 and strayed into the wrong column: see Note 3:6.b. G. del Olmo Lete’s suggestion that the mem is enclitic (Vocación 296) is unlikely: see Note 26:12.b.^

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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divergence between vv 25 and 28 and subsequent assimilation.

25.c. For the formulaic use of ינדא “Lord” in the divine-saying formula here and in v 28; 13:6, 8, 16; 14:11, see Note 5:11.a.*

27.a. The LXX adds the equivalent of γρ ἁρ “rebellious.” Probably this is a case of inner-Greek assimilation to v 25. An addition at the Heb. level would have incorporated τ ἕσπερ “house.”

28.a. The proposal to move the ἄθναις, so that ἀλḥο “all my words” goes with what follows (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:43; BHS; Greenberg 229), leaves the preceding neuter verb standing by itself, as in v 25, but at the expense of complicating the following clause in relation to that verse. It is significant that the LXX reflects the MT’s punctuation, rendering with a pl. verb. The extra material may be explained in terms of the Heb. idiom of construing a pl subj, whether masc or fem, with a fem sg verb (GKC 145k; Cooke 136–37, with reference to 41:25; Zimmerli 283).

28.b. See Note 25.a.*

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Heb. Hebrew

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

pl. plate or plural

Heb. Hebrew

subj subject/objective

sg singular or under


*25.a. The syntax of v 25aא is incertain. The accentuation in the MT implies “For I am Yahweh; I (will) speak what I speak, a word and it will be done.” Then the second clause exhibits a deliberately inexplicit idem per idem construction (Cooke 136–37; Greenberg 228–29). Cooke, following Hitzig (86) and others, actually regarded ר שד “word” as a noun qualifying the preceding relative clause: “what word I will speak.” Greenberg invests the final word with the force of a relative clause: “(as) a word that will be done.” On the other hand, Zimmerli (279–80; cf. von Orelli 51) construes as “For it is I, Yahweh, who speak. The word that I speak is fulfilled.” He makes the good observation that the last five words should be understood in terms of v 28bא, which appears to be a parallel statement. With respect to ר שד “word,” he follows Cooke, but he takes -ח יא [ יא, W not as “and (it is/will be done)” but as introducing an apodosis. Then the initial words are to be regarded as a variation of the concluding statement יא ר שד ה ונח יא “I, Yahweh, have spoken” found in 5:17; 21:22; 30:12; 34:24, which is introduced by יא “for” in 21:37; 26:14. Indeed, the whole sentence is to be regarded as a variation of the larger concluding statement יא יא יא שד ה ונח יא “I, Yahweh, have spoken and will do (it)” in 17:10; 22:14; 36:36; 37:14 (cf. 24:14) (Zimmerli 281). This variation seems to refer to Yahweh’s general, rather than future and specific, activities. The latter are clearly in view in v 25b, which is formulated slightly differently.
28.c. The omission of vv 26–28 in LXX\(^\text{967}\) does not appear to be significant for the Heb. text. Most probably it occurred by parablepsis within the Gr. tradition (Filson, *JBL* 62 [1943] 27–32; Lust, "Textual Witnesses" 14–15).

2.a. The MT µa yb nh “who prophesy” adds nothing to the sense, whereas a repeated ab nh i“prophesy” accords with Ezekiel’s style: cf. 11:4; 34:2; 37:9 (Cornill 246; *et al.*). The emendation has some support from the LXX, which presupposes ab nh w“and prophesy,” by assimilation to v 17. Moreover, the combination “prophesy and say” recurs in 21:14, 33(9, 28); 30:2; 36:3. For the origin of the MT, see Note 3.a.\(^*\) below.

2.b. The MT µblm yb nh “to prophets from (their) (own) hearts” is an unexpected second definition of the addressees: one expects simply µh yla “to them” (cf. v 17b), which the LXX\(^*\) represents. For the origin of the MT, see the following Note.\(^*\)

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**Notes**

1. The MT µaiB;NIh’ “who prophesy” presumably originated as a marginal gloss intended to correct µaiybiNÒh’ “the prophets” in v 3; for the expected ptcp, cf. v 17a. It was wrongly taken as a correction of the original second ab nh “prophesy” in v 2a, doubtless encouraged by the wording in v 17a. In v 2b µblm yb nh “to the prophets from their hearts” was earlier µblm yb nh “to those who prophesy from their hearts,” before the first term was mechanically assimilated to the noun in v 3a. It attests the alternative reading in v 3a and probably aligns with the *Vorlage* of the LXX\(^*\); this marginal reading displaced µh yla “to them” in v 2b. In v 3a µybh nh “foolish” may simply represent a misreading of µblm yb nh “from their hearts” in wrong but understandable expectation of an adj after the noun (cf. Cooke 139). Finally, the relative clause is an exegetical gloss, rephrasing the basic text that once stood at the end of v 3a and implicitly contrasting the “spirit” of these prophets with the spirit of true prophecy (cf. Isa 30:1).

2. The MT µa yb nh “who prophesy” adds nothing to the sense, whereas a repeated ab nh i“prophesy” accords with Ezekiel’s style: cf. 11:4; 34:2; 37:9 (Cornill 246; *et al.*). The emendation has some support from the LXX, which presupposes ab nh w“and prophesy,” by assimilation to v 17. Moreover, the combination “prophesy and say” recurs in 21:14, 33(9, 28); 30:2; 36:3. For the origin of the MT, see Note 3.a.\(^*\) below.

3. The MT µjwr yaiB;NIh’ “the foolish prophets who follow their (own) spirits” has a shorter counterpart in the LXX\(^*\), “those who prophesy from their hearts.” The standard rule of preference for the shorter text seems to apply here. Two alternative, synonymous readings relating to v 3 appear to lie behind the jumble of readings in vv 2–3: (1) µblm µya BNh Al [ ywh and (2) µblm µya BNh ]ywh, both meaning “woe to those who prophesy from their hearts.” There are two differences. For the difference of preposition, one may compare l in v 18 and l [ in Jer 50:27: the usage in v 18 may point to l as original, but one must allow for the possibility of stylistic variation and later harmonization. The second difference concerns an abs or constr ptcp: for the latter, see Joüon 129n. In v 2a the MT µya BNh “who prophesy” presumably originated as a marginal gloss intended to correct µya yb NH “the prophets” in v 3; for the expected ptcp, cf. v 17a. It was wrongly taken as a correction of the original second ab nh “prophesy” in v 2a, doubtless encouraged by the wording in v 17a. In v 2b µblm yb nh “to the prophets from their hearts” was earlier µblm yb nh “to those who prophesy from their hearts,” before the first term was mechanically assimilated to the noun in v 3a. It attests the alternative reading in v 3a and probably aligns with the *Vorlage* of the LXX\(^*\); this marginal reading displaced µh yla “to them” in v 2b. In v 3a µybh nh “foolish” may simply represent a misreading of µblm yb nh “from their hearts” in wrong but understandable expectation of an adj after the noun (cf. Cooke 139). Finally, the relative clause is an exegetical gloss, rephrasing the basic text that once stood at the end of v 3a and implicitly contrasting the “spirit” of these prophets with the spirit of true prophecy (cf. Isa 30:1).
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clause is an exegetical gloss, rephrasing the basic text that once stood at the end of v 3a and implicitly contrasting the “spirit” of these prophets with the spirit of true prophecy (cf. Isa 30:1).

3.b. While the context makes the sense clear, the syntax of \(\text{y} \text{t} \text{b} \text{w}\) is difficult. Heb. \(\text{y} \text{t} \text{b} \text{w}\) normally makes an inf negative, “so as not to (see)”; here perhaps it means “without (seeing)” (Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 63, who compared \(\text{y} \text{t} \text{b} \text{w}\) “without”). Then one expects an inf rather than the pf in the MT (cf. BDB 116b–117a). KB (132a) advocated repointing as inf abs, \(\text{y} \text{t} \text{b} \text{w}\); Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 63; Bib 35 [1954] 150) construed the form in the MT as a verbal noun, “seeing,” with the accent on the first syllable: cf. \(\text{y} \text{t} \text{b} \text{w}\) “swimming” in 47:5 (GKC 93x). The initial \(\text{waw}\) is explicative, “and that”: cf. BDB 252b. The interpretation of the clause in GKC 152x is unlikely, as GKC 155n acknowledges.

4.a. Heb. \(\text{w} \text{h} \text{n}\) “have been” has no counterpart in the LXX* (and is absent from MS Ken 62). For its position and sense, Greenberg (236) has compared 22:18.

5.a. For the switch from third person in v 3 to second, cf. 34:2–3 (Hossfeld and Meyer, Prophet 135).

5.b. Since Cornill (247), \(\text{w} \text{r} \text{p} \text{b}\) “into the breaches” has often been emended to sg \(\text{r} \text{p} \text{b}\) “into the breach,” by comparison with the formulation in 22:30; Ps 106:23. Then ditto of \(\text{w} \text{r} \text{p}\) was to blame.

cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
Bib Biblica
pf perfect
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cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
cf. confer, compare
sg singular or under
(Kraetzschmar 131–32). The ancient versions so attest (cf. BHS), but their evidence may reflect a widespread exegetical tradition that assimilated to the common formulation. Elsewhere the pl. is \( \mu \overline{y}x \overline{r} \rho \), but in post-biblical Heb. a fem form \( \overline{h} \times \rho \) is standard (Jastrow, Dictionary 1237b–38a). Assimilation is more certainly to blame for the verb “stand” found in LXX Tg., which clashes with \( \delta m[m] \) “stand, resist” later. Cornill’s argument that the text was changed to avoid such a clash is less likely.

6.a. The MT \( bzk \overline{m}s q w a w \overline{w} \) “they have seen what is worthless and false divination” mixes a verb and a noun. One expects either a pair of verbs or a pair of nouns (cf. vv 7–9). The first expedient was achieved by Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 150), who construed \( \overline{w} \) as a noun, “vision” (cf. Note 3.b.* above), in an exclamatory phrase “Oh! Vain vision and false divination!” and the rest of v 6 likewise (cf. the NEB, “Oh, those prophets who say …”). Talmon and Fishbane (ASTI 10 [1975/76] 150 n. 24) emend to \( \overline{w} \) “vision,” without intimating how they integrate v 6a into the rest of the verse. The second expedient, to find two verbs here, is more commonly pursued. Cornill (247) revocalized as two inf abs forms, \( \mu \overline{y} /s q \overline{w} \ldots /zj \) ; The Vg implies \( \overline{w} \) “they have seen … and divined,” while the LXX and Tg. presuppose ptcp forms, \( \overline{y}m\overline{e}q \overline{z} \ldots \overline{y}z\overline{j} \) with a \( \overline{y}l\overline{ow} \) variant in the first case. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:44) plausibly integrated v 6 with the direct address in vv 5, 7–8 by adopting the latter verbal forms and

cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
pl. plate or plural
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
* 3.b. While the context makes the sense clear, the syntax of \( wfr \overline{y}l \overline{b} \) is difficult. Heb. \( \overline{y}l \overline{b} \) normally makes an inf negative, “so as not to (see)”; here perhaps it means “without (seeing)” (Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 63, who compared \( \overline{y}l \overline{b} \) “without”). Then one expects an inf rather than the pf in the MT (cf. BDB 116b–117a). KB (132a) advocated repointing as inf abs, \( \overline{d} \gamma \) ; Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 63; Bib 35 [1954] 150) construed the form in the MT as a verbal noun, “seeing,” with the accent on the first syllable: cf. \( \overline{w} \) “swimming” in 47:5 (GKC 93x). The initial \( wfr \) is explicative, “and that”: cf. BDB 252b. The interpretation of the clause in GKC 152x is unlikely, as GKC 155n acknowledges.

cf. confer, compare
NEB The New English Bible
ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
n. note
inf infinitive
abs absolute (nouns)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
ptcp participle
regarding as vocatives; he noted that the third person references in v 6a–b are idiomatic (cf. GKC 144p and Note 22:3.c.†).

7.a. The LXX has no counterpart for v 7b in the MT, “and say ‘So runs Yahweh’s oracle,’ when I have not spoken.” Probably the addition represents a comparative gloss on v 6a, for which the first three Heb. words (minus the copula) function as cue words. Comparison was made with Jer 23:21, where in a first person divine context Yahweh’s nonsending of false prophets is matched with his nonspeaking. The gloss was subsequently eased into the text at a feasible point, with the addition of waw .

9.a. The MT hát yh w “and (my hand) will come (upon)” is elsewhere a technical expression relating to an esoteric prophetic experience (e.g., 1:3), which is out of place in this declaration of divine punishment. It is doubtful whether the explanation of the strange usage in terms of sarcasm, given by Kraetzschmar (132) and others is adequate. The LXX implies yêt yf nW “and I will stretch out,” which is formally expected (cf. 6:14; 14:9, 13) and has generally been adopted since Hitzig (88). Yet how the MT arose is most uncertain. It may have been a comment or correction relating to an adjacent part of the text, which subsequently displaced the right reading here. Was it earlier a masc form hát yh w belonging to v 11 (see Note 11.a.), which was wrongly related to v 9 and adapted in gender?

9.b. The MT adds ynd a “Lord,” which does not reflect the formulaic practice in Ezekiel: see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556–62. It was probably added by assimilation to v 8.

10.a. For the emphatic ÷[ybw ÷[y “because and because” in grounds for divine punishment, cf. 36:3; Lev 26:43. Talmon and Fishbane (ASTI 10 [1975/76] 133 and n. 21), followed by Greenberg (241), take the causal clause in v 10a as the conclusion of v 9, as in Lev 26:43. But in Ezek 36:3 it is clearly an
initial clause.

10.b. Elsewhere the stem is הִנֶּה הִנֶּה, e.g., in 14:11; here the Aram. form הִנֶּה is used.

10.c. Lit. a sg pronoun, with reference to “my people” (Smend 75; et al.).

10.d. See the Comment.

10.e. LXX Syr. Vg may preserve a variant מִיַּחַל מִיַּחַל “and they,” in contrast to the earlier pronoun (cf. BHS), but the MT מִיַּחַל מִיַּחַל “and behold they” fittingly expresses surprise (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:45).

10.f. Heb. בְּשָׁתָה is a byform of the stem בְּשָׁתָה “coat (with clay).” See the Comment.

11.a. For the MT יָרַע יָרַע “and (it) will fall, it was” one expects simply יָרַע יָרַע “(it) will come,” relating to the rain (cf. v 13b), with וָאָמַר introducing the message, as in v 13ab. The LXX represents this shorter text. Probably, as I suggested in Brownlee (186), בְּשָׁתָה originated as an explanation of the pf בְּשָׁתָה in v 12, which refers to the future (“[the wall] will fall”). It was taken as a correction of יָרַע יָרַע in v 11 and was inserted here, producing a conflated text. In an English translation the juxtaposition of clauses is more naturally replaced by subordination (cf. GKC 159g; Joüon 167b).

11.b. The MT “and you, O hailstones” strangely switches to direct address (cf. v 13b). LXX Vg (cf. Syr.) represent a repointing of מִיַּחַל מִיַּחַל “and you” (cf. v 20a) as מִיַּחַל מִיַּחַל “and I will give,” but a verb is
otiose here. D. N. Freedman (in Propp, ZAW 102 [1990] 404 n. 3) has interestingly adopted the interpretation as a verb and coupled it with the next verb: “and I will cause … to fall.” However, a first person divine reference is out of place here and anticipates v 13. One expects simply a waw before ynb ą “stones.” Did h̄nt ą originate as a correcting or explanatory gloss on the masc form µ̄t ą “you” in v 20b? If so, it is difficult to see why the annotation wandered so far. “Hail” is usually ḫr b : the term v yb ą ą, which appears here and in v 13 and also in 38:22, is related to Ugar. ṭgbl ą an unknown commodity, and Akk. algarisû, a type of jewel (HALAT 49b). Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 151) judged the sense to be “(hail)stones hard as rock.” The LXX has a second rendering ejf' tou', ejndevsmou' auw`n “to their bundles,” which Hitzig (89) rightly explained as a doublet: he compared the rendering of Q for ṣ yd k in Hab 2:11.

11.c. The MT qbt, pointed as a piel, is more naturally taken as a niph q̄'t̄ “break out” (cf. Isa 58:8; 59:5), in line with the pass rendering in the LXX: cf. v 13. Greenberg (238) justifies the MT in terms of the intransitive use of this piel form in midrashic Heb. This is certainly how the present pointing is to be understood, rather than implying the wall as object, as BDB 132a explained, which clashes with the usage in v 13.

12.a. Lit. “and behold the wall will have fallen.”


13.b. The lack of a verb is supplied by an added ḥ̄p̄ ąw “I will bring” in the LXX Cornill (249) has been followed by many in emending h̄ l̄ k̄ “destructively” to h̄nl̄ p̄ t̄ “will fall,” in line with v 11, but the MT can stand.

cf. confer, compare

ZW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
n. note
Ugar. Ugaritic
Akk. Akkadian
Bib Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
Lit. literally
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
14.a. The MT and the general textual tradition add hkwb µtylkhp "and it [fem.] will fall and you will be destroyed in its [fem.] midst." Should one change to a masc verb with reference to the wall and understand the suffix in a neuter sense with reference to the fragments of the broken wall (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:46), in the latter case either repointing as masc (hkəwb, Bertholet [1936] 46) or writing wkwb (Rothstein 900)? These are methodologically inadequate measures that leave the present text unexplained. It seems to have arisen as a comment on Jerusalem in v 16, interpreting the metaphor of the fallen wall in vv 12, 14a in plain terms. The second word was meant as a comment on hlk "destructively" in v 13, explaining it as referring to the destruction of the prophets, with help from v 15. The third word either goes with it, meaning "in the midst of the storm wind," or is a corruption of tkwb "in punishments," attested by the LXX (cf. Hitzig 89), a comparative gloss on v 13 that alluded to the parallelism found in 5:15. In BHS the extent of the addition is indicated wrongly.

15.a. The MT ṫ maw "and I will say" is already attested by the LXX "and I said." Hitzig (89) and others have suggested that it be pointed ṫ məw with an indefinite subj, "and one will say," a variation of the pass form in v 12. Syr. Tg. attest a pass form, clearly by assimilation to v 12.

15.b. Hardly "to you," since the demise of the prophets is envisioned.

15.c. Cornill (249) called the MT ḡya w... ḡya “there is no ... and no” a flat expression. He has been followed by many in adopting the reading attested by the Syr., ḡ yə w... ḡ yə “where ... and where?” in line with v 12. However, it seems to be a further case of assimilation. Preference for it generally accompanies a redactional view of v 15.

16.a. Not “to” (NIV, REB), since prophets both in exile and in the homeland seem to be in view. Heb. ḥa is used in the sense of ḥ (here with the sense “concerning”), as in vv 2, 8, 9, 17, 19, 20 (BHS).

17.a. The hithp seems to mean “behave as a prophet” (J. Jeremias, THAT 2:17). Wilson (JBL 98
[1979] 329–36), who also interprets as to act like a prophet, either in word in deed, has observed here and in 37:10 a focus on the prophetic word as the basis of evaluation, so that the hithp form has become synonymous with the niph. Rendtorff (TDNT 6:799) has noted that in 37:10, in differentiation from the niph form in v 7 (and vv 4, 9), it relates to a quasi-magical summons rather than an announcement, which suits the power of life and death exercised by the women prophets in this passage.

18.a. Lit. “hunt down.”

18.b. Heb. סקנ, which is found only here and in v 20, is generally related to Akk. kasītu, kisittu “fetter.” In later Heb. the noun means “cushion”; Greenberg (239) so interprets, but it is difficult to fit this meaning into the context. The LXX so renders here, but its translation “belt” for סקנ, seemingly taken as סק, in 9:2 reflects a different interpretation.

18.c. Lit. “joints of hands.” For the MT יד י “my hands,” it is necessary to read יד י “hands,” implied by Syr. Tg. and read by a few MSS. The error presumably came about via scribal abbreviation, יד י (Cooke 149; Driver, Textus 1 [1960] 115). A further shortening to י י “hand” is attested in LXX Vg.

18.d. Heb. סקנ occurs only here and in v 21. The LXX renders in general terms as “coverings.” Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 63–64) argued by comparative etymologizing that loose flowing or spreading or all-enveloping veils or shawls were in view. In later Heb. the term evidently means “rags” (Greenberg 239).

18.e. Lit. “stature.”

18.f. The interrogative he is normally pointed without the daghesh, but see GKC 100l; Joüon
1021–m; there is no need to repoint with Cornill (250) and others. The question has the force of a surprised exclamation (Smend 78).

18.g. Heb. ym[ | and h nk | seem to be used in periphrasis for genitives, “of my people, of yourselves” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:47). The LXX does not represent h nk | , probably because it took the adjacent verbs as third pl., rather than second, and so had no room for it.

19.a. Or conceivably “with.” Kraetzschmar (136) observed that the beth of price is normally seen here but reported that W. Robertson Smith (Journal of Philology 13 [1885] 273–87) interpreted of offerings brought to obtain an oracular response.

19.b. For the modal use of the impf., see Joüon 113m.

20.a. Syr. Vg Tg. render µv ... f v å, lit. “where,” as “by which.” Hitzig (91) and others have retroverted as µ b. Zimmerli (289) has defended the spatial reference of the MT, which is supported by the LXX: the victims are caught as in nets.

20.b. The MT adds t ù r : see Note 20.e.

20.c. The MT along with the general textual tradition attests µ k ž t | W Z “your arms,” but it creates a difficulty inasmuch as v 18 seems to imply that the clients of the women prophets wore the wristbands. Cornill (250) noted that there was no corresponding phrase “off your heads” in v 21a and conjectured that the phrase “off your arms” was a false addition that took the suffix in v 21 to mean “worn by you,” instead of “made by you.” Rothstein in BHK suggested that µ h ž t | f Z “their arms” be read, and BHS has
firmly adopted his suggestion. False assimilation to μκυτ ψς μ “your shawls” in v 21 is indeed plausible. There is a bewildering mixture of masc and fem. second pl. suffixes in vv 19–21. See the Comment.

20.d. The MT μυπνάτα “persons” can hardly be right: such a pl. form is not found elsewhere, an article is expected, and the earlier τ μπνάτα “the persons” needs no repetition. LXX Tg. “their souls” implies μυνάτα, which deals with the first two difficulties but not with the third. Cornill’s brilliant conjectural emendation μυψάτα “them free” (251) has won general acceptance. He cited the well-attested phrase μυψάτα “let (slaves) go free” (see BDB 344b, 1019a); the masc is the standard form. The error was due to the two preceding cases of τ μπνάτα, which caused wrong word division and the dropping of ηθ.

20.e. Heb. תְרָפְל seems to qualify the setting free of the captivated clients. In v 20a it reappears in the MT in the different context of their being hunted down. It can hardly belong in both places. The lack of a counterpart there in the LXX and the similarity of the preceding phraseology in vv 20a, b suggest that the term was added there by false assimilation after v 20b was corrupted (cf. Hitzig 92). The stem appears to be Aram., with the sense “fly” (א נ Vg), which the LXX “to scattering” and the Tg. “to destruction” also reflect. Then it appears to allude to a bird escaping from a snare (Ps 124:7; Hitzig 92). The use of the lamed with a ptcp (or a noun “birds”) remains difficult (cf. Greenberg 240). Perhaps the composite term means “(let go free) into the state of persons who fly away” (cf. Exod 21:26, 27). Cornill’s suggestion that it was a gloss to replace the corrupted μψάτα “free” (251–52) deserves consideration.

22.a. Since Hitzig (25–52), there has been a tendency to emend to ב יאכ “harm” in line with v 22ab, especially because the hiph of הָא כ does not occur elsewhere. Indeed, HALAT (434a) (cf. Ehrlich


fem. feminine
pl. plate or plural
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
pl. plate or plural
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
Heb. Hebrew
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
ptcp participle
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
Randglossen 5:46) gets rid of the other (niph) cases of the stem ḥāk (Ps 109:16; Dan 11:30), regarding them as derived from ḥāk. However, there appears to be a play on two similar stems (Wevers 110). Greenberg (241) has noted how in Heb. verbs hiph and niph regularly correspond, with act and pass meanings respectively.

22.b. The MT adds ק ו־ “falsehood, falsely,” for which the LXX* has no counterpart. See Note 23.a.

22.c. The lamed with inf constr functions as a continuation of the preceding inf in the causal clause: cf. Cooke 150; Joüon 124p. Elsewhere other parts of the verb, rather than an inf, occur in the relevant preceding clause.

22.d. The implicit subj of יִשהֲנָה “to keep him alive” is the female prophets who are addressed: this subj is carried over from the verb in v 22b, leapfrogging the change of subj in the case of הבו “return.”

23.a. Many scholars since Cornill (252) have recommended the conjectural emendation of מִשְׁפָּט “divination” to בּזֵק “falsehood,” in the light of the parallelism in vv 6, 7, 9, 19. The MT ק ו־, another term for “falsehood,” in v 22 is comparable. It doubtless originated as an exegetical gloss on מִשְׁפָּט here, as I observed in Brownlee (194); it occurs only here in Ezekiel, and in this chapter is its equivalent, but it is common in Jeremiah (see especially Jer 14:14; Zech 10:2). Here the MT can stand: after the first clause, מִשְׁפָּט has a pejorative sense.

1.a. The MT וַיְכוֹלַּה “and one came” is probably a further example of metathesis, to which this verb is particularly prone in Ezekiel (see Zimmerli 300). It was corrupted from the expected וַיְכוֹלַּה“and they came,” as in 9:2. It is true that the MT is a possible construction (Joüon 150j); that very possibility served to perpetuate the error.

du Buisson, envisioned an amulet worn over the heart or a tattoo on the breast, but elsewhere the phrase ḥalabal relates to thinking (see BDB 749a; cf. 20:32). See Mosis’s critique of this thesis in BZ 19 (1975) 193 n. 99.

3.b. Lit. “they have set before their faces.” The verb ḥalabal “set” is varied with the synonym ḥalabal in vv 4, 7 (cf. Talmon, Qumran 342–43).

3.c. Lit. “Should…?” NAB and NJB idiomatically preface with “Why?” to express the rhetorical nature of the question.

3.d. The niph has a tolerative force (GKC 51c), as with this verb in 20:3, 31; 36:37. The MT “should I be consulted, consulted” is strange. One expects the first verbal form to be that of an inf absol, ṣǒ ḥalabal, strengthening an indignant question (GKC 113q). Probably this is a case of mechanical assimilation to the next word (but cf. Greenberg 248).

4.a. Heb. “the prophet”: see Cooke (155) for the idiomatic usage.

4.b. K ḥilbal “with it” is probably intended to anticipate the following “with the multitude of idols”: cf. the Syr. “with them.” Q ḥilbal “when he comes (with),” followed by NJPS and NRSV, makes a minimal improvement by finding a resumption of the previous verb. Since Hitzig (94), ḥilbal, which appears in the parallel v 7, has been generally adopted as an emendation, with the presumed support of the Tg., with

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cf. confer, compare

BZ Biblische Zeitschrift

n. note

Lit. literally

cf. confer, compare

Lit. literally

NAB The New American Bible

NJB New Jerusalem Bible (1985)

niph Niphal


MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)


cf. confer, compare

Heb. Hebrew

K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)

cf. confer, compare

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)

NJPS New Jewish Publication Society Version


Tg. Targum
which Sperber (*Bible in Aramaic* 4B:337) agrees. However, Greenberg’s contention that this is not so (247) has merit, especially as the Tg. has a rendering for ab, yf ad “for he comes.” Nor is it easy to explain a corruption from yb to hb: it could have arisen via an intermediate reading wb, which the LXX may presuppose in v 7, unless it represents hb, by assimilation to the K form here. Yet, in the light of v 7, it is the expected reading, and hb (or ab) can hardly be original. Overall, an emendation to yb is the least objectionable solution. The sense of the preposition is determined by such expressions as speaking in Yahweh’s name or swearing by Yahweh (see BDB 90a): “by myself,” “on my own authority.” It virtually reinforces the reflexive element in the verb (Cooke 155).

4.c. The niph form appears to be of the same type as the verb in v 3, perhaps developed by analogy with it: “allow myself to give an answer.” Hossfeld and Meyer (*Prophet* 119) have taken the pf in the sense “I have (already) given an answer,” but the clearly parallel expression in v 7, which uses a ptcp, suggests that a fut sense is intended.

4.d. The preposition may connote a standard of measurement (Cooke 155): cf. BDB 90b.

5.a. Ehrlich (*Randglossen* 5:48) has usefully compared the Mishnaic sense of the niph, “be held responsible” (cf. NJPS “hold to account”).

5.b. For the niph usage of this verb, cf. Isa 1:4.

5.c. Heb. µlk “all of them” may qualify the subj of the verb, as most modern versions interpret. More probably it reinforces the previous noun, a construction common in Ezekiel (BDB 481b; thus NAB): the phrase appears to be an intensifying counterpart to “with the host of their idols” in v 4 (Smend 81).

6.a. In the light of 18:30, the hiph has an intransitive force, perhaps by way of ellipse of the natural object “yourselves.”
7.a. The partitive preposition is here used with a collective sg.

7.b. For the syntactical construction, see Cooke 155.

7.c. Lit. “consecrates himself from after me”: cf. the use of the verb to refer to devoting oneself to a pagan god in Hos 9:10. In Lev 22:2 it means “keep oneself religiously separate from [ ErrorMessage ].”

7.d. It is more natural to take the client as the subj of the inf: "v rd with b" means “inquire of (God).” Then "w" means “(coming) to (the prophet)” as agent or medium of the consultation. Greenberg (250) compares "byt mh Al a v rd “one who consults the dead” in Deut 18:11.

7.e. See Note 4.b. above.

8.a. The hiph form is anomalous: the case in 21:21 is a textual error (see Note 21:21.b*). A qal form "whytcw" is generally predicated. Did a comparative gloss from v 9, "wytc d mc h w “and I will destroy him,” stand in the margin with reference to its counterpart "wytc r k h w “and I will cut him off” and encourage a miswriting of the previous verb? The reading with a "fn found in some MSS, meaning “and I will destroy him,” is an attempt to make sense out of the MT.

8.b. Elsewhere a sg lvm occurs with the sense “byword.” To read a sg form on the alleged evidence of Syr. Vg (BHK, BHS) is methodologically dubious, especially without an explanation as to how the MT

sg singular or under
Lit. literally
cf. confer, compare
subj subject/subjective
* 4.b. K h b “with it” is probably intended to anticipate the following “with the multitude of idols”: cf. the Syr. “with them.” Q a b “when he comes (with),” followed by NJPS and NRSV, makes a minimal improvement by finding a resumption of the previous verb. Since Hitzig (94), yb, which appears in the parallel v 7, has been generally adopted as an emendation, with the presumed support of the Tg., with which Sperber (Bible in Aramaic 4B:337) agrees. However, Greenberg’s contention that this is not so (247) has merit, especially as the Tg. has a rendering for a b , yt a d “for he comes.” Nor is it easy to explain a corruption from yb to h b : it could have arisen via an intermediate reading wb, which the LXX may presuppose in v 7, unless it represents h b , by assimilation to the K form here. Yet, in the light of v 7, it is the expected reading, and h b (or a b ) can hardly be original. Overall, an emendation to yb is the least objectionable solution. The sense of the preposition is determined by such expressions as speaking in Yahweh’s name or swearing by Yahweh (see BDB 90a): “by myself,” “on my own authority.” It virtually reinforces the reflexive element in the verb (Cooke 155).

hiph Hiphil
qal the basic stem of Heb. verbs
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MSS manuscript(s)
sg singular or under
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
arose. The strange reading “(make you) into a desert and into destruction” in the LXX attests in its Vorlage $\text{V} \text{m} \parallel \text{W} \text{h} \text{m} \text{v} \text{l}$. Perhaps this was a copyist’s recasting into typical Ezekielian language (cf., e.g., 6:14) of a comparative gloss $\text{V} \text{m} \parallel \text{W} \text{h} \text{m} \text{v} \text{l}$ “as an object of horror and a byword,” derived from Deut 28:37. A sg $\text{v} \text{m}$ is expected here too. In support of the MT, Greenberg (250) has adduced cases of pairs of nouns in which the first is sg and the second pl., at Isa 43:28; 50:6.

9.a. Mosis ([BZ 19 [1975] 166–69; TWAT 4:829–31]) has compared the “prophetic” pf forms in vv 4b and 7b$b$ in statements of future divine reaction that begin with $\text{h} \text{v} \text{w} \text{m} \text{j} \text{a}$ “I, Yahweh.” He argued that the same construction is to be found here. Then, as in vv 7b$b$–8a, the pf is followed by consecutive pf forms. Following H. E. Smieter, he has attributed to the piel here a factitive force (cf. Joüon 52d; GKC 52g), “show to be misled.” Mosis has also plausibly claimed for the piel of $\text{h} \text{t} \text{p}$ in Jer 20:7 the sense “make to be a fool,” and for the pual in Jer 20:10 the meaning “let himself be made a fool,” by an inadvertent statement or action. Mosis’s interpretation has been followed by Fuhs (75) and Klein (Ezekiel 111 n. 10).

10.a. Lit. “the like of the inquirer’s punishment the like of the prophet’s punishment.” Cooke (156) observed that in this idiom the present order, whereby the second entity is like the first, is less common.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

Ewald (254, 257) recognized in 12:21–14:11 a collection of oracular pieces dealing with various aspects of prophecy. He was followed by Smend (67), von Orelli (51), Kraetzschmar (128), Herrmann (76), and Cooke (135), among older scholars, as well as by several more recent
commentators, such as Muilenburg (576). Talmon and Fishbane (ASTI 10 [1975/76] 131–38) have used structural analysis to establish the validity of this grouping. They compared the collection in Jer 23:9–40, which actually bears the heading “Concerning the prophets.” They found the core of the present collection to be a pair of composite oracles, against rival prophets in 13:1–16 and against female prophets in 13:17–23. It is flanked by a pair of oracles in 12:21–25 and 26–28, concerning Ezekiel’s prophetic revelation and the people’s refusal to accept it, and by a further pair in 14:1–8, 9–11, concerning the seeking and granting of prophetic oracles. One may quibble about the definition of 14:1–11 as a pair of oracles, but vv 1–8 and 9–11 do deal with a pair of topics, respectively, the inquirer and the prophet to whom inquiry is made. In strict terms one could map out the overall symmetry as A + B/A(= a + b)+ B(= a + b)/a + b, but the principle of pairing is beyond dispute. Apart from the prophetic theme that runs through the collection, there are vocabulary links between the double core and the initial pair of oracles. The four expressions that dominate 13:1–16 (or at least vv 1–19, 16), הָזִי “have a vision” and מִצְוָת “prophetic revelation,” מִצְוָת “divine, divination,” אָרְצָה “worthless,” and בּוֹלֵק “false,” not only recur in vv 19 and 23 but are also anticipated in 12:22–24, 27 in three cases out of the four. A further integrating factor is the common punishment of prophets in 13:9 and 14:9, namely, the blow from the divine hand and exclusion from the people of God.

The first pair of oracles, in 12:21–25, 26–28, are disputations concerning the nonfulfillment of prophecy. Graffy (A Prophet Confronts 52–58), in the course of a careful exegetical study, has analyzed their form in terms of quotation (vv 22b, 27ab) and refutation (vv 23–25, 28). D. F. Murray’s threefold structuring of the disputation genre in JSOT 38 (1987) 95–121, in terms of thesis, dispute, and counterthesis, suggests a reexamination. In the second and shorter case, the thesis in v 27ab is followed by a counterthesis in v 28ab and by a dispute in v 28ba. In the prior and more complex case, the thesis in v 22b gives way first to a parallel counterthesis in v 23b and then to a dispute in vv 24–25aa, which in two יְבַק (“for”) clauses gives the grounds for the counterthesis, and finally to a paraphrase of the counterthesis in v 25abba. Beyond the common elements of the genre, the disputations match in several respects: their initial message-reception formulas, the address of Ezekiel as מַעַל “human one,” and the use of the messenger formula to introduce the divine responses and of the divine-saying formula to conclude them. Moreover, a shorter version of the restatement of the counterthesis in v 25abba reappears in the counterthesis of v 28aa.

Talmon (Qumran 397 n. 204) has found a stylistic phenomenon of inverted recapitulation that binds the two oracles together as a pair in the two matching pairs of statements within vv 25 and 28, namely, ṿυμַת מַל מַכְר [ywrbd] rbda rva ta dw “whatever word I speak is fulfilled. There will be no further delay” and ṿυמַת מַל מַכְר [ywrbd] rbda rva yrbdal dw “There will be no further delay over any words of mine. Whatever word I speak is fulfilled.” The respective order of the clauses indicates inverted parallelism, so that one mirrors the other.

After the new message-reception formula in 13:1, vv 2–23 divide into two bipartite literary oracles. The first, in vv 2–16, is directed at male prophets and begins and ends with oracular formulas, in vv 2–3a a and 16b. The first half is a woe oracle in vv 3ab–9; it is also a tripartite proof saying. In Ezekiel the woe announcement is used as the first part of a two-part oracle of judgment (cf. ABD 6:945–46). The proof saying proceeds from a doom-laden accusation (“Woe…,” vv 3ab–7) to a forecast of punishment.

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ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Biblical Studies
n. note
cf. confer, compare
ABD D. N. Freedman (ed.), Anchor Bible Dictionary

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that opens with a summary of the accusation (vv 8–9a) and closes with the recognition formula (v 9b). The second half lacks an introduction of its own and functions as a literary continuation of the earlier passage. It is a tripartite proof saying that moves from a reasoning accusation (“Because … ,” v 10) to a forecast of judgment (vv 13–14a) and the recognition formula (v 14b). The judgment is anticipated in vv 11–12 and supplemented with a climactic statement in v 15, while a conclusion to the whole double oracle in v 16 includes elements drawn from both halves. The second literary oracle, in vv 17–23, is directed at female prophets who practice sorcery. The oracular introduction in vv 17–18a opens with a command of a prophetic gesture. Its first half in vv 18ab–21 is again a woe oracle that is also a tripartite proof saying, though this time the recapitulating accusation is lacking. It develops from accusation (vv 18ab–19) to a forecast of punishment (vv 20–21a) and finally to the recognition formula (v 21b). While in the first oracle the two halves were of similar length (9/10 lines in BHS), in this case they fall into disproportionate parts (11/3 lines). The second portion, like its counterpart in the first oracle, functions as a literary continuation of the foregoing. Again, like its parallel, it is a tripartite proof saying, whose elements appear respectively in vv 22, 23ab, and 23b.

As for stylistic factors, beyond those represented by form-critical formulas and elements, listed by Hossfeld and Meyer (Prophet 129–30), Talmon and Fishbane (ASTI 10 [1975/76] 134) have noted how vv 6–9 are dominated by a common vocabulary, variations on א ו ה ז “have worthless revelations” and ב ז כ מ ש ע “offer false divinations.” The four terms operate as an integrating factor for the two composite oracles: they reappear in vv 19 and 23, the final term in v 19 and the other three in v 23. One suspects that only three of the terms are employed in v 23 because the fourth has been used up, as it were, in v 19. V 23, by means of its stylistic echoes, serves as the conclusion for the pair of literary oracles in chap. 13. Parunak (“Structural Studies” 224) has observed the parallelism between the interrogative elements of the accusations in the first halves, at vv 7a and 18b. Another unifying element is the sixfold י מ “my people,” distributed at vv 9 and 10, then at vv 18, 19, 21, and 23. Parunak (“Structural Studies” 229–30) has noted that in the second composite oracle, while the sevenfold ת ו ה נ “persons” is a key word only for vv 18–21 (cf. too the fourfold ד ד X, ד ו (“hunt”) stems in vv 18, 20, 21), the two halves are united by the repetition of “and I will rescue my people from your clutches” (v 21) in v 23 and by the thematic counterpointing of hunting down or putting to death (vv 18, 19, 20) or demoralizing (v 22) and of keeping alive (v 19, 22).

14:1–11, after the introductory vv 1–2, consists of a private, explanatory oracle to the prophet in v 3 and commissioning in v 4a to deliver the public oracle of vv 4ab–11. There are similar instances of preparatory private oracles followed by public ones in 22:18 + 19–22; 23:2–21 + 22–27, and 36:17–21 + 22–23 (or 32). The public oracle first repeats the private one with an added threat of specific judgment (vv 4ab–5); then in a development, it envelopes that threat in a framework of general appeal and deterrent (vv 6–11) at vv 6 and 11 (cf. Parunak, “Structural Studies” 23–34). Vv 6–11 constitute a call to repentance; they have the formal elements of an admonition (v 6), an accusation (v 7), a threat (vv 8–10), and a promise (v 11) (Raitt, ZAW 83 [1971] 35). The overall oracle is also a variant of a judgment oracle. The accusation is sounded three times in similar terms: in the private oracle at v 3, in the

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BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute

V Vulgate

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
threatening first phase of the public oracle at v 4, and in the deterrent, second phase at v 7. For the use of an oracle of judgment to make an eventual appeal, one may compare Isa 28:14–22.

A dominant feature of the whole piece is a host of formulations taken from the realm of cultic law and used to characterize the offender and the fact and form of his punishment (Zimmerli 302–6; earlier in ZAW 66 [1954] 8–19). This feature invests the prophetic piece with the solemn air of a priestly ruling uttered with divine authority. The complexity of the piece, as a law-saturated summons to repentance, in which declarations of a positive intent are wrapped round dire announcements of punishment, helps to explain its peculiarities. Thus, its dominant third-person orientation in referring to the human targets of punishment accords with its legal perspective (Zimmerli, ZAW 66 [1954] 7). Vv 7–8 constitute a self-contained statement of judgment that is also a two-part proof saying, concluding with the recognition formula. Normally the proof saying is a genre that marks the whole oracle; here it has been subsumed within an individual instance of case law. In fact, here the recognition formula may be regarded as a translation into prophetic terms of the formula of self-designation, “I am Yahweh,” that often stands at the end of individual cultic laws in the Priestly legislation and especially in the Holiness Code (see, e.g., Lev 19:11–18, 30, 32, 37). Then in vv 9–10 “in typical case-law style a further subcase appears and requires additional legal elaboration” (Hals 92; cf. Zimmerli 40). Hölscher (Dichter 86) and Zimmerli (305) have rightly taken vv 1–11 as an integral piece. There is no need to postulate a redactional addition with Herrmann (87) and Fohrer (76) or a literary supplement made by Ezekiel (Wevers 111).

Stylistically the formulation relating to an inquirer entertaining idolatry and the issuing of a divine response, in vv 3, 4, and 7, bind much of the piece together. So do the solemn ingredients hwh y yna “I am Yahweh” in vv 4 and 7, which are echoed in the recognition formula of v 8. Talmon and Fishbane (ASTI 10 [1975/76] 137–38) have drawn attention to the rhetorical relation between offense and penalty in an individual’s setting of idols before the face (µyc … wnp) in vv 3, 4, 7 and Yahweh’s setting his face against him and making him an omen (µyc … ynp ÷tn) in v 8. A sustained wordplay runs through the piece and gives added coherence to it: ÷w “iniquity” (vv 3, 4, 7, 10 [three times]), the verb h n “allow oneself to answer” (vv 4, 7), and ÷ ml “in order that” (vv 5, 11). Human sin leads initially to a dire response of judgment but ultimately encounters positive divine purposes.

As for the settings of the various pieces, 12:21–25 is best understood as relating to Ezekiel’s own oracles of Judah’s doom and being addressed to his fellow prisoners of war in vv 22 and 25 (Herrmann 78, 83; cf. Fohrer 66; Eichrodt 155; Wevers 103). The evident inclusion of Ezekiel in the collective address in v 22 points to these conclusions. The phrase | d f c y t m d a Al | has often been rendered “on the soil of Israel” or the like, with the implication that the saying was current in Judah concerning such prophets of judgment as Jeremiah and that it had reached the exiles (Zimmerli 281–82; Greenberg 230), or else it surveys a whole history of Israel’s response to prophecy (Zimmerli 282, following Janssen). 12:26–28 explicitly relates to Ezekiel’s oracles to the exiles but deals with a different type of objection to his prophesying. Again, a pre-587 setting is in order.

The oracles of chap. 13 bear evidence of literary composition and do not necessarily reflect the same setting. The reference to return to the land in v 9 invests the proof saying of 13:2–9 with an exilic
provenance, so that Ezekiel’s prophetic rivals in exile are in view. The application of the imagery of v 5 to prophets in the homeland at 22:30 (cf. Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 33, 39) is no hindrance. It is probable that Ezekiel regarded the exilic prophets as part of a larger group that included counterparts in Judah. But into what period of Ezekiel’s ministry does the oracle fit? It is natural to relate the opposing prophetic message to denials that Jerusalem would fall, as in the oracles of Jer 23:16–40. But mention of return to the land aligns with his positive oracles: it is too integrated into its context to take it as introduced by the prophet at a later time or as a redactional insertion, with Eichrodt (167) and Wevers (107). Kraetzschmar (130) helpfully pointed to the preponderance of perfect verbs. Correspondingly, Greenberg (145–46) has contrasted the participles and imperfect forms found in Jer 23 and suggested that the oracle may look back from a post-fall perspective, as in Lam 2:14, which uses verbs in the perfect. There are significant links between vv 3–9 and the oracle in 34:2–16. Both messages are woe oracles containing a rhetorical question, depend on Jer 23, and refer to the day of Yahweh as a past phenomenon, in a backward look at the catastrophe of 587 (Janzen, Mourning Cry 76–77). No credence can be given to the older view that differentiated between second and third person references to the prophets, ascribing vv 2, 7, 8 (assumed to be originally second person!) to a pre-587 Babylonian oracle and vv 3, 5, 6, 9 to a post-587 oracle uttered in Jerusalem (Rothstein 898, followed by Cooke 137–38; cf. Fohrer 66). Zimmerli (Ezechiel 1 292 [mistranslated in Ezechiel 1 294]), followed by Greenberg (243), has observed that, in the light of Ezekiel’s practice elsewhere, the formula of confrontation in v 8 requires continuation with a sentence of punishment such as v 9 provides.

The oracle in vv 10–15 or 16 is a literary continuation of vv 2–9 but does not reflect the same temporal setting. The reference to false optimism points to pre-fall forecasts, while behind the metaphorical language of vv 13–14 there seems to lie an allusion to the fall of Jerusalem as a future event. V 16 is best understood as a post-fall comment that integrates the pre-587 oracle of vv 10–15 into a larger literary whole, consisting of vv 2–16. Its echoes of vv 2 and 10 so suggest: stylistically v 16 provides an inclusion both for vv 10–16 and for vv 2–16.

The oracle against female prophetic sorcerers in vv 17–21 has a focus on their individual clients, which hinders the recovery of a precise setting. The inference of Kraetzschmar (135) and Eichrodt (173–74) that it reflects the complete despair of the post-587 period is not compelling. Zimmerli (298) has more plausibly claimed that the magical practices filled up a vacuum left by loss of the cult in the exilic period. The supplementary passage in vv 22–23 gives the impression of an intention to provide literary symmetry for 13:1–23 (Fuhs 73), not least in the echo of the key vocabulary of vv 2–9 in v 23a. Both that impression and the implicit contrast in v 22 with the post-587 watchman role of Ezekiel according to 3:18; 33:8 point to a post-fall setting, which seems also to be reflected in vv 17–21. Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 459–60) has observed the similarity between the promise to rescue his people from the sorcerers’ clutches (vv 21, 23) and 34:10b. Chap. 13 is a literary composition in which earlier oracles have been woven together. It may fairly be attributed to the prophet Ezekiel. An exception should probably be seen in v 4, which with its address to Israel and epigrammatic generalization stands at a distance from its context, and so is to be credited to later redaction. A clue to the chronological setting of 14:1–11 emerges from the similarity between v 11 and 37:23. On this score Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 460) has plausibly allocated it to the second, positive period of Ezekiel’s work; he also compared the use of הָּלַע “go astray” in 44:10, 15; 48:11. The deterrent purpose of v 11 hardly matches the theme of radical and inexorable judgment that runs through his pre-587 oracles (Kraetzschmar 139). Zimmerli (ZAW 84 [1972] 512–13) found in the oracle a post-fall

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cf. confer, compare

V Vulgate
situation: he noted the positive ring of the call to repentance in v 6. It is matched in the probably post-587 chap. 18 (vv 30–32). Both v 6 and v 11 have links with the new, saving task of Ezekiel in 33:1–9, 14–15 and their literary anticipation in 3:20–21.

The literary unit may be outlined as follows.

| 12:21–28 | Two disputations about the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s oracles |
| 12:21–25 | Their certain fulfillment |
| 12:26–28 | Their imminent fulfillment |
| 13:1–23 | Two two-part oracles attacking false prophecy |
| 13:1–16 | Male prophets condemned |
| 13:2–9 | Their exclusion from the community |
| 13:10–16 | Their exposure as charlatans |
| 13:17–23 | Female prophets condemned |
| 13:17–21 | The countering of their magic |
| 13:22–23 | The termination of their immoral ministry |
| 14:1–11 | A two-part oracle condemning lay syncretism and its promotion by prophets |

Comment

21–28 Two similar oracles about the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophesying have been set together. They are both in the form of disputations and reflect reluctance among the prophet’s fellow exiles to accept his oracles as a valid representation of the future.

21–22 After the introductory message-reception formula and the address to the prophet, the community of which Ezekiel forms a part comes under divine attack for its attitude to prophecy directed against the homeland. The preceding literary context, though belonging to a separate unit, gives a clear, editorially intended clue to the type of prophecy meant: in 12:19 יָעָכִי "the land of Israel" has been mentioned in connection with the coming siege of Jerusalem and the devastation of Judah and its other cities, obviously at the hands of Babylonian invaders. It was such pre-587 oracles that met with resentment from the targeted constituency. The indignant question that will not tolerate such antipathy has a parallel in opening a dissertation at 18:2. The exiles’ frame of mind is summed up in ל ו מ or popular epigram. Jer 5:12 expresses a similar rejoinder to prophecies of judgment, uttered by Judeans in the homeland:

[Yahweh] is insignificant.
No disaster will come upon us,
nor will we see sword or famine.

Such an attitude has here been crystallized into a theological slogan. From the perspective of the people who spoke it, “it sums up the truth about these maniacal doom-and-gloom prophets: ‘Here is the way it is with you fellows: you talk tough, but nothing ever happens’” (Polk, CBQ 45 [1983] 574). As in 7:26, בֵּין, primarily “vision,” stands generically for a revealed oracle, with emphasis on the spoken word. The intent is to dismiss Ezekiel’s oracles and to characterize him as a false prophet who need not be taken seriously. The statement מִי יָמִיָּהוּ וּקְרֵא כָּהַיָּהוּ הָא יֵלְכוֹלָה “the days grow long” has an imperfect rather than a
perfect verb. So it does not claim that Ezekiel had been prophesying for a long period but, along with the next clause, represents a generalization that oracles never come true. Nevertheless, the time lag between Ezekiel’s call to be a prophet of judgment in 593 and Nebuchadnezzar’s eventual besieging of Jerusalem in 588 may well underlie the gibe.

23 In terms of the disputation style, the slogan has represented a preliminary thesis. Yahweh supplies his servant with an authoritative answer. The course of coming events would be his providential way of silencing these exilic representatives of “Israel.” This intervention could be summed up in terms of a counterthesis. “The days grow long” is adapted into a reversal, “The days have grown near.” In place of the indefinite imperfect verb stands a precise perfect. The God who prophesied judgment through Ezekiel now stands at the door, judgment in hand. The claim is paralleled in an oracle rhetorically addressed to Jerusalem, which grounds its coming destruction in its own sin: “You have brought near your days [of judgment]” (22:4). The second clause of the counterthesis only partially matches that of the thesis, though the whole corresponds as two cola of two beats. It insists that every judgment oracle will find its target, its wording destined to become fact.

24–25 The dispute that follows the counterthesis underscores it with two good reasons. The first reason picks up the peremptory “no longer” in the introduction to the counterthesis. V 24 has commonly been interpreted in terms of false prophecy and thus often regarded as an irrelevant insertion (see, e.g., Cooke 136; Hossfeld and Meyer, Prophet 122). Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:42–43; see Note 24.a.), implicitly followed by Greenberg (228) and Blenkinsopp (68), suggested that it be understood in relation to the as-yet-unfulfilled oracles of judgment uttered by Ezekiel. Those spoken oracles that still hovered in the air would swoop into human experience and find their promised prey. In terms of Isa 55:11, though oracles of salvation are there in view, God’s word would not return to him empty but would accomplish his will. Yahweh would honor his messages of judgment delivered to the exiled representatives of the community of Israel. Here “divination” is used as a neutral term, a synonym of the revealed oracle (cf. 13:6 and the Comment). Within the literary unit, this sentiment in v 24 serves as a striking foil to the worthless revelation and false divination of chap. 13. It overlaps in wording but is starkly different in meaning.

A second reason is provided for the counterthesis in v 25a, which is a general theological statement that Yahweh always honors his authentic messages. “God who speaks is not divided against himself. Whenever he opens his mouth, he stretches out his hand to fulfill his words” (Calvin 412). It would not do for the exiles to dismiss the true prophet, for behind him stood one who categorically was both willing and able to make his messages come true. Finally, in the rest of the oracle before the closing divine-saying formula, the counterthesis in v 23 is repeated in a paraphrase that clinches the matter. The reality behind Ezekiel’s predictions of judgment would stare the hearers in the face. This generation would be living witnesses to both the spoken word and the grim actuality to which it pointed (cf. Mark 13:30). The “no longer” that featured at the start and midpoint of Yahweh’s reply occurs again in this conclusion, as a renewed signal of life-shattering change. The addressing of the exiles as “a rebellious

V Vulgate
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
*24.a. The MT has constr forms in the case of מִרְאָה “revelation” and מִרְאָה “divination,” a possible construction that regards the following adj as a noun in each case (see GKC 128w). However, the exegetical intent of this pointing seems to have been to equate these expressions with those relating to false prophets in 13:7. See the Comment. Probably the minority pointing as abs (see BHS) should be followed, and the qualifying nouns should be taken as predicative (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:42–43).
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
community” accords with usage at 2:5, 7; 3:27 in a description of the prophet’s constituency as people who would be unlikely to listen.

26–27 A parallel oracle concerning the nonfulfillment of prophecy is introduced by the message-reception formula and by Yahweh’s address. The divine preface to the thesis that this disputation will oppose is less vehement than in the former case, in keeping with the less skeptical tone of the thesis. The more moderate preface includes a differentiation between Ezekiel and his constituency, the exilic representatives of the people of God, who are now referred to in the third person. In contrast to the thesis of v 22, this one represents another group and another time. The thesis pointedly concentrates on the prophet (“he”) and so subtly reflects the speakers’ shielding themselves somewhat from the divine authority of his oracles. They also distance themselves from his prophesies of judgment by relegating them to a later fulfillment. The chiastic order in the two clauses focuses on this feature. There is not so much complacency here as a sense of relief, such as Hezekiah expressed in Isa 39:8, while voicing his acceptance of Isaiah’s oracle, “There will be peace and security in my lifetime.” This group did not share the radical indifference of the elite in Samaria whom Amos characterized as “those who put the evil day far off” (Amos 6:3). The impact of Ezekiel’s oracles is diluted by deferring them to a distant date, though unlike Hezekiah the recipients have been given no prophetic warrant for so doing. Presumably, a gap that existed between oracle and fulfillment was construed as ground for a further respite. The proponents of the thesis reacted like Californians who accept that their region is liable to earthquakes but fail to get their houses bolted to the foundations or to take other appropriate precautions. Here a belief in a breathing space constituted a failure to take fully into account the significance of the predictions of disaster and to make mental and spiritual adjustments.

28 The counterthesis and dispute follow the same lines as those in vv 23–25, but in a briefer compass. They do give vent, however, to a deliberate emphasis on the divine origin of Ezekiel’s oracles. The doubled human “he” of the thesis is challenged by mention of “my words (or oracles),” while the reference to Yahweh’s speaking and even the opening messenger formula and the closing divine-saying formula here have a corresponding nuance they lacked in the previous disputation. The denial of further delay in the counterthesis is now a direct contradiction of the thesis. The fall of Jerusalem was much closer than the exiles thought: “The time has come, the day is near” (7:7). The argument used to support the counterthesis is again a general appeal to the firm control exercised by the divine word over human history. The more immediate applicability of this divine retort to the underlying situation suggests that it was reused and expanded to fit the different situation of v 22, and this is how the overlap between the two disputation is to be explained.

13:1–3 The message-reception formula of v 1 introduces a pair of composite oracles, the former of which extends to v 16, as the divine-saying formula signals. Within this literary product, one may distinguish vv 2–9 as a woe oracle and a proof saying. The commissioning of Ezekiel to deliver this message singles out “Israel’s prophets” as its target. The traditional rivalry between establishment prophets and antiestablishment prophets that is stated in the narrative of 1 Kgs 22 and echoed in Isa 28:7–10; Hos 4:5; Mic 3:5–8 came to a head in Judah’s final period of crisis. Jer 23 and 27–29 bear tragic witness to the equally sincere but radically different voices that appealed to the people in God’s name. Nor was the pre-587 community of Judean prisoners in Babylonia free of such distressing polarization. Jeremiah’s letter to them makes critical mention of deceptive “prophets and diviners,” naming two of them and accusing them of sexual immorality that detracted from the credibility of their optimistic oracles (Jer 29:8–9, 15, 21–23). In this oracle Ezekiel speaks from a later, post-587 standpoint (see Form/Structure/Setting). He seems to consciously echo Jer 23 and to apply its accepted prophetic authority to the exilic context. He addresses a local group of rival prophets who had been active in the critical pre-fall years, but he regards them as part of a larger group, “Israel’s prophets,” who included spiritual cousins back in Jerusalem in recent history. The interjection “woe” in v 3 permits the targets of

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the oracle to be characterized and hints at the future disastrous consequences of their activity, which will be spelled out in vv 8–9a. The characterization draws a lesson from history. Events had shown that those prophets who delivered messages of hope and reassurance were not inspired by God. Ezekiel echoes Jeremiah’s wording, “visions of their own minds, not from Yahweh’s mouth” (Jer 23:16; cf. 14:14; cf. J. W. Miller, *Verhältnis* 93 n. 1).

4 This interruption of the continuation of the accusation in v 5 taxes the exegete. It seems to be a jubilant redactional comment, distanced from the context by its rhetorical address of the community. The same Hebrew term refers to both foxes and jackals (cf. *HALAT* 1341b). Since the former hunt singly and the latter congregate in groups and frequent ruins (cf. Lam 5:18), the choice of rendering is obvious. The ironic point appears to be that the discredited prophets, who envisioned a wonderful future for Israel, have been reduced to mulling over their disappointment, skulking in their ruined hopes. The notion of ruins was derived from the imagery of siege warfare used in v 5.

5 The clear echo of this charge in 22:30, with reference to false prophets in Jerusalem (22:28, which originally stood after v 29), establishes that it is a metaphorical statement referring to the prophetic responsibility of intercession, as the Targum interpreted. Ezekiel had vainly engaged in this task (9:8; 11:13), while Jeremiah had been divinely dissuaded from attempting it (Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:11–12). In both cases judgment was inexorably fixed. Nonetheless, it was a good instinct for any prophet of judgment to follow and revealed how seriously it weighed on his soul (cf. Amos 7:2, 5, where a synonym of the verb “stand” is used). The optimistic prophets, on the other hand, had no inkling of the coming catastrophe that materialized in 587. So they had lent no such helping hand, in empathy for Israel’s distress and in understanding of its cause. Rather, as v 10 will explain, they tried to plaster over the cracks in the wall, blithely unaware that the crisis was of horrendous proportions, a veritable “day of Yahweh,” as chap. 7 had interpreted it (cf. 34:12; A. J. Everson, *JBL* 93 [1974] 332–33). The imagery is of siege warfare, specifically of the danger caused by the battering rams that were a feature of Assyrian and Babylonian warfare. They were pushed up ramps constructed against the city wall, to break through the higher, less stoutly built layers of stone (see Yadin, *Art of Warfare* 2:315, 413, 422–25, 434–35; Greenberg 236).

6–7 Yahweh’s disowning of the prophets of hope is categorically expressed in Jer 14:14 (cf. 23:21): “I did not send them or command them or speak to them. Lying revelations, vain divinations, and the deceit of their own minds is what they are prophesying to you.” Ezekiel adapts such sentiments, with his own negative vocabulary for the nature of their oracles (cf. Miller, *Verhältnis* 105). Divination is strictly the telling of the future by means of devices of various kinds (cf. 21:26 [21]). It is staunchly prohibited in Deut 18:10, 14. However, the addition of the epithet “false” may indicate that Ezekiel

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
n. note
cf. confer, compare
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cf. confer, compare
JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
judged it by its results rather than by its nature (cf. Vanderkam, “Apocalyptic Thought” 173; cf. the positive usage in Prov 16:10). The same seems to have been true of Micah, who was prepared to credit diviners with divine gifts that they had abused by self-seeking and so were doomed to lose (Mic 3:6–7). In this case the oracles had turned out to be untrue, and so it is reasoned that those who had uttered them were not authentic, commissioned prophets after all. Their sincerity and confidence had been belied by events. The derisive question in v 7 challenges them to admit their error. It rubs their noses in the mess that recent history had left them with. A rhetorical question is a common element in the woe oracle (cf. v 18; 34:2; Janzen, Mourning Cry 47 n. 18, 76–77).

8–9 The renewed messenger formula, along with the supporting divine-saying formula, solemnly introduces the divine verdict, while the double “therefore” and the summarizing causal clause attest its reasonableness and justice. Here the divine-saying formula takes on a special quality, in the light of its misuse in v 6: now a true prophet speaks. The confrontation formula makes a basic declaration of hostility (cf. Jer 23:30–32). It is elaborated in v 9, first in general terms of divine retaliation against these discredited prophets and then in spelling out a triple judgment. The judgment is formally expressed in the third person (cf. Eichrodt 166). It drives a wedge between the words of the phrase used to describe the targets of the oracle in v 2, “Israel’s prophets.” It would demonstrate that this status was based on spurious claims. Ludwig Köhler (Hebrew Man [London: SCM, 1956] 102–3) sought to imaginatively recapture the cultural significance of dws, here rendered “assembly,” by envisioning a campfire circle, where men met together after work to share their news and dreams. Certainly it has a ring of intimacy. Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 459) has plausibly suggested that Ezekiel is transposing Jeremiah’s denials that the optimistic prophets ever had a place in Yahweh’s dws or inner council (Jer 23:18, 21). Well then, those who had wrongly claimed this prophetic credential would lose their membership of the dws at the lower level of the community of faith. The second punishment is exclusion from the roll of Israel’s citizens (cf. Ezra 2:2–62; Neh 7:5–64). It was Yahweh’s prerogative to maintain this list and to delete the names of those whose lives were diametrically opposed to his covenant (cf. Ps 109:13; “written in the dust,” Jer 17:13). Excommunication from the community will be mentioned further in 14:8–9. The third punishment implicitly contrasts the false hopes engendered by the optimistic prophets, for whom Jerusalem could never fall, and the true hope of an eventual return to the land after the full rigors of judgment and exile. True hope as it was, it was conditional, and 20:38 will soberly speak again of its possible forfeiture, in terms of an event of divine demarcation. The eschatological note struck by the third punishment also covers the other two, in the light of the common future verbs. It would be only the true people of God who returned, and God would determine their membership. These three punishments were to vindicate Ezekiel’s God as the source of legitimate prophecy and so repudiate any connection with discredited practitioners of the religious art.

10–15 This oracle again deals with the optimistic prophets, but it basically belongs to the pre-587 period. It has been attached to vv 2–9 as a literary continuation, without specification of its targets, in order to explicate the wall metaphor of v 5. Like the previous oracle, it takes over terms used earlier by...
Jeremiah and so claims continuity with his radical prophetic stand.

10 The rival prophets are accused of leading astray God’s people. It is a traditional charge, reflected not only in Jer 23:13, 23 but also earlier in Mic 3:5. As often in the prophetic literature, “my people” has a ring of outrage: as their patron, Yahweh reacts to the victimization of his people. The leading astray is explained in terms of false promises of µWV “peace, security.” Again, it was a charge that Jeremiah had made earlier (Jer 6:14 = 8:11; cf. Mic 3:5; cf. Miller, Verhältnis 3 and n. 2, 108). For Jeremiah, µWV had a medical metaphorical meaning, “health”: he associated it with a superficial cure of the people’s wounds at the hands of the optimistic prophets. A reference to superficiality survives in Ezekiel’s own recourse to metaphor. He imagines a A], a term that occurs only here in the OT and which in the Mishnah (m Sōb 3:8) is a rough stone wall, a terrace wall of loose, un-mortared stones. What the prophets had done was tantamount to plastering over such a dry wall, giving the impression of a solid, substantial structure. In ancient Mesopotamia, external and internal walls were plastered with a more liquid form of the mixture of clay, water, and chopped straw or dung used for mortar (Lloyd, “Building” 1:461). The people’s wall is here envisaged as an external wall in view of its exposure to wind and rain in vv 11 and 13. It represented their own one-sided belief that Yahweh would protect his temple and Jerusalem, out of loyalty to his covenant with them. The optimistic prophets had bolstered such a belief, thereby plastering over the rickety wall. Ezekiel echoed this metaphor in a later oracle, at 22:28. There may be a wordplay between lpt (properly lpf) “plaster” and lpt “that which is senseless” (cf. Propp, ZAW 102 [1990] 404–8). This possibility is supported by the fact that Jer 23:13, which probably underlies the present passage, refers to h lpt “senselessness” manifested by false prophets (cf. W. McKane, Jeremiah [Edinburgh: Clark, 1986] 573–74; cf. Lam 2:14).

11–12 One expects an immediate continuation of the formal statement of divine punishment that begins in v 13. Jahn (82) and Zimmerli (290), followed by Wevers (107–8), Carley (83), and Hals (86), have secured form-critical neatness by regarding vv 11–12 as a later addition. Eichrodt (160–61), on the other hand, deleted vv 13–14aba as a subsequent, prosaic addition and kept vv 11–12. The two verses do provide a desired transition from the third-person statements of v 10 to the second-person references of vv (13–)14 via the divine command to the prophet relating to the optimistic prophets in v 11–12. These verses indeed anticipate vv 13–14a, but they leave out from the catastrophe the element of divine causation, so that the ensuing verses are not simply repetitious. As the text stands, there is an impressive movement from the confident speech of the prophets (f ma “saying,” v 10) to the mocking counter-speech of Ezekiel (f ma “tell,” v 11), then to the shocked, reactive speech of others (f ma y “it will be said,” v 12), and finally to the twofold speech of Yahweh (f ma “says,” v 13; f ma W “and I will say,” v 15) in the divine sentencing. This pair of verses poses a sardonic question as to the possibility of the wall’s collapse. The question closes the accusation, rather like the parallel mocking question in v 7. Here, however, the accusation of shoddy workmanship is viewed from a future perspective. The closest
counterparts in the book, in 17:9–10; 26:15, are exclusively oriented toward judgment, rather than accusation.

13–14 The preceding question is capped by a definite forecast of divine punishment along those very lines. There is a new factor of divine agency, which is augmented by references to Yahweh’s anger. Popular hope, so assiduously nurtured by the prophets, would be exposed for the sham it was. There seems to be a deliberate echo of Jer 23:19–20: “See, Yahweh’s storm, fury, will go forth, and a whirling storm …; Yahweh’s anger will not turn back.” Only by such drastic means could divine truth be revealed.

15–16 The form-critically supplementary sentence in v 15 returns to the question of vv 11–12 and extends its threat into a forecast of doom for the prophetic plasterers, as well as for their wall. The mocking question posed by other people (v 12) is given an authoritative counterpart, the divine comment on the disappearance of the makeshift structure, prophets and all. The statement strikes a fitting final note, as comparison with Job 8:22; 24:24; Isa 17:14 shows. The literary ending of v 16 returns to the post-fall perspective of vv 2–9. It blends the two separate oracles into a single composition by combining “Israel’s prophets” from v 2 with the spurious assurance of peace mentioned in v 10. The piece is given a historical aspect by reference to Jerusalem. It was the capital’s survival or fate that was the burning prophetic issue. By the time of v 16, as of vv 2–9, it had been resolved in Ezekiel’s favor.

17–19 Among the Judean exiles there were female counterparts to the male prophets of vv 2–16. They had a private rather than a public ministry: their concern was not to interpret political issues but to resolve the personal problems of their clients, like the prophets of Mic 3:5. Moreover, they performed magical spells as a means of prognostication. Ezekiel is directed to engage in a symbolic gesture, as in 6:2 (see the Comment there). Here it announces a virtual counterspell that puts the evil eye on these sorcerers. The specification of the object of the gesture permits an initial characterization in terms of a lack of divine inspiration, the same accusation that had been leveled against the male prophets in v 3. The verb for prophesying may allude to the magical activity they indulged in (see Note 13:17.a.†). The accusation proper after the messenger formula in vv 18–19 begins with the sinister “woe.” This inauspicious introduction allows a further characterization of the female prophets, with respect to their magical devices that evidently accompanied the spells. The wristbands and shawls that are mentioned in terms of disparagement here seem to have been worn by the clients, though v 20 suggests otherwise. The prevalence of magical practices in Mesopotamia (see IDB 1:283; ABD 4:465) doubtless encouraged their use among the exiles, although such a tradition was also known in their homeland (cf. Exod 22:18[17]; Deut 18:10). The female sorcerers’ magical powers were evidently widely credited among the exiles. The accusation itself has no doubt about their effectiveness. These women evidently operated under the umbrella of Yahwism and doubtless incorporated his name into their spells, like later Jewish magicians. The nub of the accusation is that they have been driven solely by material considerations (cf. Mic 3:5) and that they have shown no moral discrimination in dispensing their powers of restoration and death. So

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† 17.a. The hithp seems to mean “behave as a prophet” (J. Jeremias, THAT 2:17). Wilson (JBL 98 [1979] 329–36), who also interprets as to act like a prophet, either in word in deed, has observed here and in 37:10 a focus on the prophetic word as the basis of evaluation, so that the hithp form has become synonymous with the niph. Rendtorff (TDNT 6:799) has noted that in 37:10, in differentiation from the niph form in v 7 (and vv 4, 9), it relates to a quasi-magical summons rather than an announcement, which suits the power of life and death exercised by the women prophets in this passage.


ABD D. N. Freedman (ed.), Anchor Bible Dictionary
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
their operations can be described in negative terms, both as defaming Yahweh’s name and as abuse of his people, whom they hunt down or captivate (יָדֹן וָאֶרֶץ). Yahweh’s role of protective patron, which appeared earlier in v 10, resounds through the second half of the chapter, in vv 18, 19, 21, and 23. The references to תָּו אַחֲרִים are to living persons, not to “souls” or to the Mesopotamian concept of “external souls,” spirit counterparts that personify the inner soul (Saggs, JSS 19 [1974] 7–12). It is less speculative to refer v 19 to forms of payment than to offerings that accompanied the spells, as Cooke 147, following W. Robertson Smith, van den Born (87), and Greenberg (244) have interpreted. Contextually, the barley and bread serve to elucidate the reference to sustaining their own lives in v 18bō.

20–21 The announcement of divine punishment now follows. Yahweh would neutralize the magical power of the wristbands and shawls, and so set free the victimized members of his people. The reference to “your arms” suggests that the bands were worn by the sorcerers, as opposed to the contrary impression of v 18. Perhaps at some stage in the ritual the objects were transferred from the client to the sorcerer, or vice versa. The metaphor of hunting is imaginatively countered by the notion of the victim’s flying away, like a bird freed from a snare (cf. Ps. 124:7). Such liberation would attest the superior power of Yahweh and his concern to vindicate his dishonored name.

22–23 The literary continuation, consciously matching v 10, repeats the earlier accusation of immorality (v 19) in sharper focus. There had been a human willfulness about the sorcerers’ diverse treatment of their clients, which ran counter to Yahweh’s own moral and redemptive will. Unlike Ezekiel in the second period of his ministry, they had no interest in promoting moral standards in the community, in ensuring that the wicked reform and so inherit the life associated with restoration to the homeland (cf. v 9). There is a clear echo of Jer 23:14, but in this exilic context it stands in contrast to Ezekiel’s own perspective (Zimmerli 298). By way of conclusion to the chapter, the divine judgment and recognition formula of v 21 are repeated, along with “never again.” The repetition is intertwined with a characterization of the sorcerers in terms of the vocabulary of vv 2–9. Thus public prophets and private practitioners of magic are loosely grouped together under the same fateful condemnation as inadmissible exponents of Yahwism.

14:1–3 The public recognition of Ezekiel as a prophet to the exilic community is indicated by the visit of members of its governing body and their respectful squatting before him (cf. 2 Kgs 4:38; 6:32). Whereas in 8:1; 20:1 they represent the pre-587 group of hostages, here they head up the larger, post-587 Judean community in exile. Ezekiel had by now received accreditation through the fulfillment of his earlier oracles, and it was with not unreasonable expectation of a positive word for the future that the elders came. However, they were to be disappointed. There was no automatic word of salvation for them. The era of promise was not to dawn as an inalienable right of all members of God’s people. The private message that Ezekiel receives in v 3 has this implication. It singles out the “men” (יהוה נָעֲבָנֶה, as in v 1) who had come to Ezekiel as inquirers. These individuals had forfeited any claim they had to a favorable response from Yahweh. They are judged to be halfhearted in their loyalty to him. God could read minds (Ps 7:10[9]; Jer 11:20), and he found inconsistency between their outward recourse to a Yahwistic prophet and their inner disposition. Does the thinking about idolatry that comes into their minds relate to a wistful hankering after preexilic practices in Judah, such as chap. 8 had illustrated (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:47; cf. Eichrodt 179–80)? Similar language is used in 20:32, in another post-587 oracle,
and there it refers to an opening of the exiles’ minds to the reality and power of the Babylonian gods, now that the catastrophe of Judah’s downfall had seemed to expose the weakness of Yahweh. That way madness lay, in the forms of temptation to apostasy and total rejection of Yahweh’s claim on their lives. Such doublemindedness lost them their opportunity for a divine oracle in this case, declares Yahweh in an exasperated question. In a comparable vein the psalmist testified after a successful inquiry: “If I had regarded wrong in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me” (Ps 66:18). This private message to Ezekiel, which supplies essential information about his clients, reminds the reader of 1 Sam 16:7, where Yahweh whispers advice to Samuel about Jesse’s sons (cf. 1 Sam 9:17).

4–5 Ezekiel is commissioned to explain Yahweh’s refusal. The style of the message is heavily influenced by legal terminology. First, the introductory “any single man [V]ya V yah] of the community of Israel who … ” is characteristic of apodictic law (cf. Liedke, Gestalt 106–43). It especially occurs five times in the Holiness Code (Lev 17:3, 8, 10; 20:2; 22:18; cf. 17:13); here the shorter formulation of Lev 17:3 is used. In the first four cases, such language introduces a dire offense, and so it does here. In this instance, the offense is to request a prophetic oracle while in the spiritual state of v 3. In the context there is probably also an implicit factor, that the exilic leaders are condemned for the bad example they gave to the people. In v 4b the first phrase הוהי יוהי “I, Yahweh” is a formula of self-designation that echoes not so much any legal precedent as the usage at the head of an oracular answer (Isa 41:17; 48:17; see Zimmerli, I Am Yahweh 15–19). The ensuing promise of an oracle is difficult to square with the outright refusal in v 3, with which v 7 accords. Several expedients have been offered. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:47–48) related the verb הוהי פותי not to the stem הוהי “answer” but to a homonym meaning “humble oneself.” He observed that in Mishnaic Hebrew the term can mean “excuse oneself.” Here, he suggested, there is a special nuance of this usage, a polite refusal. This explanation would fit, but semantically it is speculative. Bertholet ([1936] 50–51) took v 4b as a question implying denial, assuming loss of the interrogative particle ה by haplography. This construing would also be grammatically feasible as the text stands. Yet it does not accord with the response given in v 6 or with that in v 8. A common expedient since Hitzig (94) is to take the (emended) פותי “by myself” as “directly,” that is, not through a prophet as an agent. Yahweh would respond not in words but in an act of judgment. It is questionable, however, whether this sense is warranted (see Note 14:4.c.*). One may profitably compare 20:1–31, where the refusal to give a favorable oracle turns into an oracle of judgment that fundamentally justifies hearers’ fate of exile and grounds it in their sin (20:4, 23–24, 30–31). In this case the eventual answer is a double one, first an appeal for repentance (v 6) and then a threat of punishment (v 8). Yahweh ironically promised an oracle: the verbal form underscores his “unilateral control of the revelatory process” (Davis, Swallowing the Scroll 151 n. 30). The oracle would be one that was consistent with the propensity of the inquirers to idolatry. The divine aim was to hold the community accountable. The elders came not only as individuals (“these men,” v 3) but as representatives of the larger group in which others were infected with the same tendency to take seriously the rival religion around them, hedging their spiritual bets. Yahweh in turn had to take that tendency seriously. The chiastic reversal of idols and

* n. note

** cf. confer, compare

* cf. confer, compare

* cf. confer, compare

* 4.c. The niph form appears to be of the same type as the verb in v 3, perhaps developed by analogy with it: “allow myself to give an answer.” Hossfeld and Meyer (Prophet 119) have taken the pf in the sense “I have (already) given an answer,” but the clearly parallel expression in v 7, which uses a ptcp, suggests that a fut sense is intended.

n. note
thinking (םָלָה), which Parunak (“Structural Studies,” 231) has noted, neatly concludes vv 4–5.

6 The linking “therefore” and accompanying oracular formulas preface not an announcement of punishment, as so often in the book, but an impassioned call for a change of heart addressed to the community at large. In this case the logical consequence was to begin again the spiritual journey in renewed, wholehearted faith. The call fits well into the second, positive phase of Ezekiel’s ministry that prepared the exilic community for return to the land (cf. 18:30; 33:11). The verb וָלָקָה “seek” in v 3 may have paved the way for this call. There it was used with reference to seeking an oracle (“let myself be consulted”). In prophetic contexts of repentance, it is widely employed in the sense of seeking Yahweh in true faith (Isa 55:6; Hos 10:12; cf. the related וַלִּקַּה “seek” in Jer 29:13; Hos 3:5; Zeph 2:3). V 6, then, explains the right way to seek God, as compared to an improper way. As typically in the book of Ezekiel, the call to turn specifies that from which one must turn, here in direct continuity with the negative description of the community in v 5.

7–8 The appeal of v 6 is grounded in the reason of vv 7–8. The specific announcement of punishment elaborated in these verses was meant to serve as a deterrent upon the people at large and to make them think twice about their leaning toward pagan religion. The generic definition of the legal offender in v 7 follows the practice in the Holiness Code exactly, in that resident aliens are included in the community. Of the six references from the Code cited with reference to v 4, all but the first take this longer form. It presumably reflects the stereotyped usage of the preexilic period (Smend 81; et al.; Mosis, BZ 19 [1975] 176), unless it refers to resident aliens taken prisoner in 597 (Fohrer, Hauptprobleme 245; cf. Kraetzschmar 137). The accusation of an openness to idolatry is also given a wider definition, by spelling out the corresponding loss of spiritual loyalty to Yahweh. The verb לֶאָזָה is similarly used of devoting oneself to Baal in Hos 9:10. The rest of the accusation and the divine response of a negative oracle largely accord with v 4. V 8 is virtually a statement of that oracle, though the Hebrew presents it as a consequence of its delivery. The announcement of the punishment continues along legal lines. The initial element of divine hostility and the third one of excommunication occur together in texts of the Holiness Code, Lev 17:10; 20:3, 5, 6. What is a legal pronouncement of case law there is in this prophetic context a verdict delivered to specific individuals, the inquiring elders. The hostile stare is an ironic measure-for-measure response to the idolatrous fixation of the accused, mentioned in vv 3, 4, and 7. The sentence of excommunication is expressed in terms of divine activity. In the legal texts it tends to have a passive formulation, with an implication of divine agency, so that the meaning is the same (Mosis, BZ 19 [1975] 173). The ultimate curse of excommunication that is invoked is laid down for a variety of offenses in the Priestly literature. It implies a premature death and extinction of the victim’s lineage, whether by means of childlessness or by the death of his children, as Wold has argued (“The kareth Penalty” 1–25; cf. M. Tsevat, HUCA 32 [1961] 192–99). In Lev 20:2–6 this curse is imposed for such types of apostasy as worship of Molech and necromancy, and the present offense of idolatry is clearly related to those two. The resemblance is all the closer in that, apart from Lev 17:10, only the cases in

cf. confer, compare
V Vulgate
et al. et alii, and others
BZ Biblische Zeitschrift
cf. confer, compare
BZ Biblische Zeitschrift
cf. confer, compare
HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
Lev 20:3, 5, 6 share with this case an active verb for the excommunication. Moreover, those three cases also use the singular µ[ peoples,” rather than the more common plural form (cf. Zimmerli, ZAW 66 [1954] 17). These parallels suggest that in this oracle Ezekiel is not merely clothing a religious offense in legal dress but consciously claiming warrant for it in sacral law, with the forementioned parallels in mind. The turning of the offenders into an omen affords a recognition of the work of God in their fate (see TDOT 1:171) and so a means of attaining the intent of the recognition formula. By linking “omen” and “byword” there also emerges a sense of warning (cf. Num 17:25; Jer 29:22), which points forward to Yahweh’s deterrent purpose in v 11. For the use of ð t m “from the midst of,” Num 19:20 may be compared. It is Ezekiel’s “translation” of the synonym ð t m in Lev 20:5–6: the former term is very common in the book, whereas the latter never occurs.

9–10 A related case needed to be included in the ruling. What if a prophet gave a favorable response to such an offender? Human nature being what it is, a prophet might be misled into so doing, as one who “lets himself be induced by the wish to please, or by a calculated compromise … treating his client’s deadly crime as if it were a venial weakness” (Eichrodt 183). In the protasis, the order yk a yb nh w “and the prophet it” accords with cultic case law (cf., e.g., Lev 1:2; Liedke, Gestalt 24, 142). In the apodosis, a reference to divine deception is traditionally seen. However, Mosis’s research has shed new light on the text, especially his comparison of the syntactical construction of vv 4 and 7, with which one expects to find a close parallel here (see Note 14:9.a.). Yahweh would bring into the open the mistake made by the prophet by holding him responsible for it and imposing on him, too, the sentence of excommunication. Here the nature of such an act as a divine sentence of death is clearly indicated (cf. Deut 4:3). In summary, the joint liability of both offender and prophetic accomplice is firmly stated: the latter’s mistake did not mitigate the former’s error. The phrase ð w in the sense “bear the consequences of iniquity” is yet another element borrowed from cultic law. Significantly, in Lev 20:17 it occurs just after the excommunication formula. Apart from its general usage in terms of liability to divine punishment, it is used specifically of dual responsibility nine times in the cases of adultery and incest in Lev 20:10–20 (contrast Num 5:31). It is probable that these texts have influenced the present passage, so that it constitutes a deliberate reminiscence that borrows from the context of the religious cases in Lev 20:2–6.

11 This selective punishment that exposed blatant compromise and its prophetic fostering was to serve as a deterrent for the rest of the exiles (Hitzig 96; Hölscher, Dichter 86). The mingled notes of dire punishment and passionate appeal earlier in the piece here find resolution in the statements of God’s ultimate purpose. The worst sinners would be made a public example. Others in the exilic community who harbored a leaning toward paganism but did not draw attention to their inner lie by recourse to a Yahwistic prophet were to be given the opportunity of learning a lesson from the selective punishment and recognizing Yahweh’s exclusive claims on their hearts and lives (Kraetzschmar 137). By this means

cf. confer, compare
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
9.a. The Heb. ã g y s is cognate with Akk. šugaru “wooden collar”: cf. the Tg. Ñ t w “collar” and Vogt, Bib 37 (1956) 388–89; Held, JANESCU 5 (1973) 184–85.
cf. confer, compare

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the interim purpose of v 5, to bring home to them the inappropriateness of their divided hearts, would be both accomplished and transcended. A new spiritual decision would halt their proneness to paganism, and they would be spared the fate of excommunication. The closeness of v 11ab to 37:23 is striking. There the cleansing of the people’s defilement with rebellious ways and the realization of the covenant relationship are presented as eschatological ideals that include restoration to the land (cf. 11:20). Here it is implied that the exilic community is called to anticipate that blessed state. They were so to commit themselves to its hope as to purify themselves even now by renewed commitment to Yahweh’s leadership (cf. 1 John 3:3). Beside the specter of fatal excommunication from God’s people stands a prospect of living up to the covenant relationship.

**Explanation**

The oracles in this group are interconnected by their common theme of prophecy. Taken as a block, they reflect a post-587 dating. Thereby the popular criticism in 12:22–28 that Ezekiel’s prophecies of judgment would not materialize or could safely be relegated to a period beyond the lifetime of the prisoners of war taken in 597 receives a sharp rebuttal. By the same token the counterclaim in this first pair of oracles that the message of doom would come true without delay finds its confirmation in the later standpoint of most of the remaining oracles. The same positive effect is accomplished by weaving the preexilic 13:10–15 into the exilic 13:1–9, 16. By hindsight the simple criterion of the historical fulfillment of prophecy (cf. Deut 18:22; Jer 28:9) could be used as a weapon to prove Ezekiel right. The responses of skepticism (cf. 2 Pet 3:4) and of a more pious but still dangerous deferral (cf. Matt 25:5) were shown to be wrong. So too were the pretensions of prophets of a different ilk, who had opposed oracles of doom that Ezekiel and other prophets in a similar tradition had delivered. The wall of hope built by the people and plastered over by those prophets had by now fallen, and great was the fall of it.

The fall of Jerusalem and the influx of exiles to join the hostages in Babylonia ended neither Ezekiel’s prophetic activity nor the need to fight against misrepresentations of Yahweh. Magical practices and fortune telling performed in Yahweh’s name, for all their popularity, represented deviation from orthodox Yahwism. Such aberrations could not be countenanced, especially as they were motivated by materialism. Moreover, the temptation, widespread among the exiles, to dilute commitment to Yahweh by taking the claims of Babylonian religion seriously had to be nipped in the bud.

It is clear that the overall concern of this literary unit is not simply prophecy but the relationship between the people and prophecy. It is a feature of the unit to define who belonged to the people of God. Those prophets who had opposed the truth of divine judgment would forfeit the right to communal salvation after the judgment, and indeed to membership of the community of promise (13:9). So too would the exilic leaders who compromised with paganism and yet sought Yahweh’s prophetic will, along with any prophet who toadied to them (14:1–11). By contrast Yahweh is presented as the patron of the true people of God, whether misled by false representations or potentially sensitive to overtures to fresh commitment (13:10, 18, 19, 21, 23; 14:11). A further element that binds the different pieces together is the emphatic ־דע “never again” that marks Yahweh’s intervention in the Judeans’ experience correcting misapprehensions of various kinds. The structural distribution of this phrase, in 12:24, 28; 13:21, 23; 14:11 (two times) is striking. There seems to be an intention to proclaim that, just as surely as

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cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
Yahweh had intervened by means of the fall of Jerusalem (12:24, 28), so his intent in the exilic situation was both to intervene against the female prophets (13:21, 23) and to restore and purify the community (14:11). Another, minor theme is the drawing of a contrast between Ezekiel’s exilic role as preacher of repentance (14:6) and the moral irresponsibility of his religious rivals (13:22).

The intent of the literary unit was to promote Ezekiel’s stock, by referring to his successful record in predicting the fall of Jerusalem, in the face of opposition from the people and his prophetic rivals. This legitimation provided support for his crusade against two current and related threats to the faith, sorcery and pagan religion. Such legitimation served to counter the popularity of sorcery and an openness to paganism on the part of exilic leaders, with prophetic backing in the latter case. Against these strong odds Ezekiel was able to make even stronger claims to stand for the truth. The threats of exclusion from the eschatological community align with his stern warnings of selective judgment in the post-fall passage 20:32–38. God could and would cut off sinners from the community of promise—so beware (cf. Rom 11:20–22)! God was cognizant of and sympathetic to the people’s secret temptation to pagan religion, and so was providing the way of escape. If, however, they ignored it, the only prospect was to fall (cf. 1 Cor 10:12–13). No one can serve two masters.

The prophet’s case was reinforced by reference to two earlier types of religious authority. First, Ezekiel echoed Jeremiah’s attacks on false prophets and so claimed to stand in the same, now vindicated, tradition. Jeremiah himself, at an earlier stage of history, had professed to stand in an established tradition of antiestablishment prophets (Jer 28:7–9). Second, Ezekiel found firm warrant for his opposition to religious compromise in the case laws of Lev 20. A similar double recourse to the Torah and to prophetic revelation appears in another unit later in the book, chap. 22 (see Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 35–40). In the first oracle, 22:2–16, the future fall of Jerusalem is grounded in the ignoring of Israel’s legal traditions, while in the last piece, 22:23–31, its fall, now a fact, is explained as the fulfillment of both Zephaniah’s and Ezekiel’s prophecies. Here too there is a claim to continuity with the noble traditions of the Torah and the Prophets (cf. Matt 5:17).

As for the relationship of this unit to the prefall visions and messages of judgment in 8:1–12:20, it has a parallel of sorts in the relation of 3:16b–21 to the surrounding 1:1–3:16a, 22–27. Both passages look back from a later vantage point and pertain to the post-fall ministry of Ezekiel. They are a reminder that we, the readers of the book, are looking over the shoulders of the large community of post-587 deportees, rather than the smaller group of post-597 hostages. Heirs of salvation as we also are by grace, like them we must listen afresh to the messages of judgment, lest we fall away from the faith (cf. Heb 3:7–4:13).

**Jerusalem’s Inevitable Fate (14:12–15:8)**

*Bibliography*

*cf. confer, compare*
*cf. confer, compare*
*cf. confer, compare*
*cf. confer, compare*

Translation

12I received the following communication from Yahweh: 13“Human one, suppose a country sins against me by infringing my rights and I deal it a blow, breaking its bread sticks and sending b famine into it and so depriving it of human and animal life. 14Even if it had living in it these three men, Noah, Daniel, a and Job, they are the ones who would be saved, b because of their virtue, runs

TLZ Theologische Literaturzeitung
VT Vetus Testamentum
VT Vetus Testamentum
VT Vetus Testamentum
JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society
VT Vetus Testamentum
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
Heb. Hebrew
BMik Beth Mikra
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
VT Vetus Testamentum
a 13.a. The Heb. syntax is complex. The initial protasis of v 13 is extended in v 14a; the apodosis occurs in v 14b. Cf. Cooke 156.

b 13.b. Whereas vv 19 and 21 exhibit a piel of | | v “send,” here the hiph is used, as often with reference to the sending of plagues (cf. Zimmerli 310). In Amos 8:11 it is associated with famine, as here. An emendation to a piel (Herrmann 87; cf. BHS) is unnecessary.

the oracle of the Lord Yahweh. 15 Or suppose I get wild beasts to prowl the country and they take its children and it becomes desolate and untraveled because of the beasts. 16 Even if it had those three men in it, then I swear by my life, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh, they would not be able to save either sons or daughters. They would be the only ones saved, while the country would become desolate. 17 Or suppose I get the sword to invade that country and I command the sword to range the country and I deprive it of human and animal life. 18 Even if it had those three men in it, then I swear by my life, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh, they would be unable to save either sons or daughters; they are the only ones who would be saved. 19 Or suppose I let loose pestilence against that country, drenching it with my fury in bloodshed and depriving it of human and animal life. 20 Even if it had Noah, Daniel, and Job living in it, then I swear by my life, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh, they would not save a single son or daughter; they would just save themselves, because of their virtue.

21 “This is the explanatory message of the Lord Yahweh: All the more so should this be the

14.b. The MT ΜΨΠΝ ΨΧΠΨ “would save themselves” is a little strange in its use of the piel, which elsewhere means to strip off or spoil (cf. BDB 664b): in v 20 a standard hiph occurs. Greenberg’s recourse to the piel-hiph variation of the stem ךל פ “send” in vv 13, 19, 21 (258) assumes that the piel had a wider use than its remaining attestations in the Heb. Bible (cf. Keil 187; Bertholet [1897] 76). The LXX implies a shorter text, ƤΧΠΨ “would be saved.” It is feasible to explain the different readings by supposing that ΜΨΠΝ “themselves” originated in a brief marginal note that served to compare the different phraseology in v 20 and that its wrongful incorporation into the text necessitated a repointing as piel (Hitzig 97; et al.). Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:49) duly repointed but retained ΜΨΠΝ as appositional to the subj, “they themselves,” comparing a not quite parallel case in Isa 46:2. A conjectural emendation to a hiph form in line with v 20 (Bertholet [1936] 50; Cooke 156; Fohrer 77) is not warranted.

c 14.c. For the standard usage of ינפא “Lord” in a divine-saying formula here and in vv 16, 18, 20, 23; 15:8, see Note 5:11.a.

Or Orientalia (Rome)

15.a. The MT Ƥ “if” is generally used of conditions that were unfulfilled or unlikely to be fulfilled (GKC 159l, x, y; cf. the original א ואת 3:5, 6). Whether an exception occurs in Gen 50:15 (Greenberg 258) is a moot point. An emendation to Ƥ “or,” first proposed by Cornill (254), in line with vv 17 and 19 is attractive. The question must be asked how the reading in the MT arose. Was it a marginal explanatory note on the unreal condition of v 14a, which was wrongly taken as a correction of the similar-looking opening of v 15?

16.a. There is ancient support for the prefixing of the copula (see BHS), in line with v 18 (cf. vv 14, 20 ). Perhaps the MT should stand, as the harder reading and in the light of other variations between the cases (cf. Greenberg 258).

Or Orientalia (Rome)

19.a. As often, ךל is used in the sense of ךל here with the sense “against.”

20.a. The LXX has a pass form “will be left,” with “son or daughter” as subj. The translator evidently had his eye on v 22 in using this particular verb. Did he have ƤΧΠΨ “be saved” in his Vorlage? The reading may have originated as a marginal comment on the verbal phrase in the next clause, which contrasted the usage in v 14. Then it was taken as a correction of the preceding verb. If so, both the MT and the LXX exhibit relics of comparative comments, in vv 14 and 20, respectively.
case now that I have let loose against Jerusalem all four of my baneful instruments of judgment, sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence, depriving it of human and animal life! 22 Surprisingly, some survivors will be left in it, sons and daughters who will be brought out alive. In fact they will come out to you; you will see how they have behaved and conducted themselves, and you will not feel so bad about the disaster I have brought on Jerusalem, the totality of what I will have brought upon it. 23 They will make you feel not quite so bad, when you see how they have behaved and conducted themselves. You will realize the reasonableness of my doing in it all I did, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh."

15:1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2 “Human one, out of all the various

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a 21.a. Heb. יֵקָ Scriptures for this word, it is lit. "for." The LXX omits it, probably by parablepsis before ה beforeEachly, but. cf. its use at the head of the interpretive 32:11–14.
b 21.b. For the stereotyped יֵךְ א “Lord” in the messenger formula, see Note 2:4.c.
c 21.c. Here and in 15:5, as in 2 Sam 4:11, א and יֵךְ retain a separate force, “how much more, when.”
d 22.a. In ה ה "behold” “there is a note of surprise” (Zimmerli 310). The Heb. syntax is not clear. Does the main clause begin with v 22a (Smend 85) or with v 22b (Hitzig 98) or at an intermediate point, with מ ה “behold they” (Cooke 156; Zimmerli 310)? The structure of the four cases in vv 13–20 suggests the first option: the survival and deportation of some residents of Jerusalem function as an unexpected counterpart to the deliverance and/or nondeliverance in the earlier cases.
e 22.b. In place of the MT’s hop form, LXX 5 Syr. Vg presuppose a hiph ptcp, which has been frequently adopted since Cornill (256). Zimmerli (310), followed by BHS, has also dispensed with the article as a ditto. For the article, see GKC 126w. Greenberg (259) has plausibly defended the pass ptcp in the MT on the ground that the sons and daughters in the illustrative four cases stand for the undeserving. They it is who will now turn out to be the ones who are (not saved but) spared. Then one group is in view in v 22a, the surviving “sons and daughter.” See further in the Comment, and cf. Jer 38:22.

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22.c. Heb. יֵךְ ה מ “behold they” resumes ה ה “behold” earlier.
d 22.d. Lit. “be consoled.” LXX B text 538 106 omit vv 22–23a, seemingly by homoeoteleuton (Ziegler, LXX 145). Unfortunately, pap. 967 is not extant at this point. The error appears to have been an inner-Greek one and probably occurred independently in the three MSS. All three belong to different textual families: MS 538 is Lucianic and MS 106 Alexandrian. In Zimmerli (310), as also in his German edition, “108” is an error for “106.” Zimmerli, with the redaction critic’s suspicion of the repetitious nature of vv 22b–23a, regards the omission as significant for the Heb. text.

e 22.e. In place of the object sign, ה ה " I have brought on Jerusalem.” The object sign reflects attraction to the function of ה ה "the disaster” within the relative clause as the object of the verb יֵךְ ה מ "I have brought” (GKC 1171; Blau, VT 4 [1954] 11; T. Muraoka, Emphasis in Biblical Hebrew [Jerusalem: University of Jerusalem, 1969] 124). The LXX’s longer “all the evil things” for ה ה “all” is epehexetical, and the shorter MT is to be preferred.

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a 15:2.a. The LXX (and LXX) prefaces with “and you,” after the message-reception formula, as in the MT at 7:2; 21:24; 22:2; 27:2; 37:16. Cornill (256) and a few others have adopted this reading. Interestingly, it reflects in its own way continuity with the preceding pericope.
b 2.b. Heb. יֵךְ המ expresses separation (Simian-Yofre, “Le métophore” 237). It has the sense of being singled out from a generic group: see Gen 3:14 (cf. GKC 119w). See further Note 2.d. below.
kinds of woody plants, what becomes of the wood of the grapevine, the vine that is included in the range of woody plants? Is lumber for any constructive use got from it? Can one get from it a peg to hang any object on? In fact, if is consigned to the fire as fuel. When its two ends are

c. The sg noun has a collective force here and in v 6; cf. the synonymous pl. in v 2b.
d. Lit. “the plant of the grapevine becomes what?” The interrogative functions as a predicative noun (cf. BDB 226a): cf. LXX Syr. Vg; von Orelli 57; Greenberg 264; Simian-Yofre, “Le métaphore” 237. In the light of the ensuing context, especially v 6, its sole function as firewood is implicitly in view. An interpretation “How is … different from” (Tg.; Zimmerli 317) does not suit the context. Nor does the similar and widely held interpretation “How is … better than,” which takes כ as comparative (Ewald 265; et al.).
e. The MT, together with Syr. Tg., has understood the two halves of the question as synonymously parallel. This seems to be preferable, in that it aligns with the briefer, summarizing v 6ab. An objection to it is that one expects a fem. verb, rather than the masc. יָ֖֔נִ֖ “is (among)” after the antecedent יָ֖֔נִ֖ “the vine.” However, this phenomenon is found elsewhere: cf. Joüon 150b, k. The deletion of יָ֖֔נִ֖ “the vine that is among the woody plants” (Herrmann 90; et al.) takes its cue from the shorter v 6, but it is unnecessary. LXXB text has no equivalent for יָ֖֔נִ֖ “the vine,” but this is simply due to inner-Greek homoeoteleuton (Ziegler, LXX 145): pap. 967 attests it. So there is no warrant to delete it, as Jahn (95) did (cf. BHS). LXX Vg took יָ֖֔נִ֖ יָ֖֔נִ֖ “the vines of the forest” as the class of woody plants.
a. LXX Tg. presuppose an active verb, by assimilation to v 3b. Greenberg (265) has noted that the MT falls into a pattern of active/pass variation for the verbs מְּנֵֽה in vv 3 and 5 and מְּנֵֽה “give” in vv 4 and 6. There is thus no need to change with Cornill (256) and a few others.
b. Heb. יָ֖֔נִ֖ “behold” has been understood as introducing a conditional clause (e.g., Fohrer 81; so NAB, NJPS, and REB), but in the light of v 6, v 4a presents a general rule (Hitzig 100; Greenberg 265).

d. 3. a. The sg noun has a collective force here and in v 6; cf. the synonymous pl. in v 2b.
d. Lit. “the plant of the grapevine becomes what?” The interrogative functions as a predicative noun (cf. BDB 226a): cf. LXX Syr. Vg; von Orelli 57; Greenberg 264; Simian-Yofre, “Le métaphore” 237. In the light of the ensuing context, especially v 6, its sole function as firewood is implicitly in view. An interpretation “How is … different from” (Tg.; Zimmerli 317) does not suit the context. Nor does the similar and widely held interpretation “How is … better than,” which takes כ as comparative (Ewald 265; et al.).
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consumed by the fire and its middle part is charred, is it good for any practical purpose? Even when it is whole, it has no constructive use. How much less does it have any constructive use when the fire has consumed it and it is charred?

“So this is the message of the Lord Yahweh: As the grapevine functions among the range of woody plants, in that I have designated it to be fuel for the fire, such is the role I have assigned the residents of Jerusalem. I will set my face against them: they have escaped one fire only to be consumed by another fire. You will realize that I am Yahweh when I set my face against them and make the country desolate because they have infringed my rights, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.”

Notes

13.a. The Heb. syntax is complex. The initial protasis of v 13 is extended in v 14a; the apodosis occurs in v 14b. Cf. Cooke 156.

13.b. Whereas vv 19 and 21 exhibit a piel of ‘send,” here the hiph is used, as often with reference to the sending of plagues (cf. Zimmerli 310). In Amos 8:11 it is associated with famine, as here. An emendation to a piel (Herrmann 87; cf. BHS) is unnecessary.


14.b. The MT “would save themselves” is a little strange in its use of the piel, which elsewhere means to strip off or spoil (cf. BDB 664b): in v 20 a standard hiph occurs. Greenberg’s

c 4.c. The LXX by an interesting mistake found a reference to annual pruning, taking wyq “its ends” as cuttings (Cornill 257, following Schlesner) and ynv “two” as years (Cooke 158, who noted the converse in 4:5).

5.a. See Note 14:21.c.

5.b. For the implicit interrogative sense, see Cooke (158) and GKC 150a.

6.a. There is no need to assume here “strained … syntax” (Greenberg 266). In the light of v 2, the verb “to be” should be understood. Then the relative conjunction has a causal sense, as often.

6.b. For the collective sense, cf. v 2a and Note 2.c.

7.a. The LXX has a third pl. verb, wrongly assimilating to the context.

Heb. Hebrew

hiph Hiphil

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)

K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)

VT Vetus Testamentum

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

recourse to the piel-hiph variation of the stem יָדְעוּ תִּשְׁלַח "send" in vv 13, 19, 21 (258) assumes that the piel had a wider use than its remaining attestations in the Heb. Bible (cf. Keil 187; Bertholet [1897] 76). The LXX implies a shorter text, Διὰ τῶν ἰδιῶν "would be saved." It is feasible to explain the different readings by supposing that יָדְעוּ תִּשְׁלַח “themselves” originated in a brief marginal note that served to compare the different phraseology in v 20 and that its wrongful incorporation into the text necessitated a repointing as piel (Hitzig 97; et al.). Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:49) duly repointed but retained יָדְעוּ תִּשְׁלַח as appositional to the subj, “they themselves,” comparing a not quite parallel case in Isa 46:2. A conjectural emendation to a hiph form in line with v 20 (Bertholet [1936] 50; Cooke 156; Fohrer 77) is not warranted.

14.c. For the standard usage of יָדְעוּ תִּשְׁלַח “Lord” in a divine-saying formula here and in vv 16, 18, 20, 23; 15:8, see Note 5:11.a.

15.a. The MT וַיֹּאמֶר “if” is generally used of conditions that were unfulfilled or unlikely to be fulfilled (GKC 159l, x, y; cf. the original לא | (in 3:5, 6). Whether an exception occurs in Gen 50:15 (Greenberg 258) is a moot point. An emendation to וַיֹּאמֶר “or,” first proposed by Cornill (254), in line with vv 17 and 19 is attractive. The question must be asked how the reading in the MT arose. Was it a marginal explanatory note on the unreal condition of v 14a, which was wrongly taken as a correction of the similar-looking opening of v 15?

16.a. There is ancient support for the prefixing of the copula (see BHS), in line with v 18 (cf. vv 14, 20). Perhaps the MT should stand, as the harder reading and in the light of other variations between the cases (cf. Greenberg 258).

19.a. As often, לא is used in the sense of לא, here with the sense “against.”

20.a. The LXX has a pass form “will be left,” with “son or daughter” as subj. The translator evidently had his eye on v 22 in using this particular verb. Did he have Διὰ τῶν ἰδιῶν “be saved” in his Vorlage? The reading may have originated as a marginal comment on the verbal phrase in the next clause, which contrasted the usage in v 14. Then it was taken as a correction of the preceding verb. If so, both the MT

hiph Hiphil
hiph Hiphil
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
subj subject/subjective
hiph Hiphil
* 11.a. For the formulaic use ofיָדְעוּ תִּשְׁלַח “Lord” in a divine-saying formula, see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556, 562.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
pass passive
subj subject/subjective
and the LXX exhibit relics of comparative comments, in vv 14 and 20, respectively.

21.a. Heb. ṣ/k is lit. “for.” The LXX omits it, probably by parablepsis before ḫ/k “thus” (Wevers 116). Hitzig (98) and others have taken ṣ/k as emphatic, but cf. its use at the head of the interpretive 32:11–14.

21.b. For the stereotyped ᾱνδ Ᾰ “Lord” in the messenger formula, see Note 2:4.c.*

21.c. Here and in 15:5, as in 2 Sam 4:11, ḏ and ṣ/k retain a separate force, “how much more, when.”

22.a. In ḫ Ṣ “behold” “there is a note of surprise” (Zimmerli 310). The Heb. syntax is not clear. Does the main clause begin with v 22a (Smend 85) or with v 22b (Hitzig 98) or at an intermediate point, with Ṣ Ṣ “behold they” (Cooke 156; Zimmerli 310)? The structure of the four cases in vv 13–20 suggests the first option: the survival and deportation of some residents of Jerusalem function as an unexpected counterpart to the deliverance and/or nondeliverance in the earlier cases.

22.b. In place of the MT’s hoph form, LXX 5 ἔσεται ἀνάμεσα ἐν τοῖς προσώποις τῆς οἰκουμενῆς ἑτέρων ἔτην. The LXX evidence, see the discussion of McGregor (Greek Text of Ezekiel 75–93).

22.c. Heb. ḫ Ṣ Ṣ “and behold they” resumes ḫ Ṣ “behold” earlier.
22.d. Lit. “be consoled.” LXX\textsuperscript{B} text 538\textsuperscript{106} omit vv 22–23\textsuperscript{a}, seemingly by homoeoteleuton (Ziegler, \textit{LXX} 145). Unfortunately, pap. 967 is not extant at this point. The error appears to have been an inner-Greek one and probably occurred independently in the three MSS. All three belong to different textual families: MS 538 is Lucianic and MS 106 Alexandrian. In Zimmerli (310), as also in his German edition, “108” is an error for “106.” Zimmerli, with the redaction critic’s suspicion of the repetitious nature of vv 22b–23a, regards the omission as significant for the Heb. text.

22.e. In place of the object sign, \( \left\vert \begin{array}{l} \text{“for” or “at” in the sense of “}} \end{array} \right\end{array} \) (Rothstein 904; Bertholet [1936] 52) has been proposed. Either would be confusing after \( \mu/l \) \( \chi \nu \rho \omega \mu \alpha i \) “I have brought on Jerusalem.” The object sign reflects attraction to the function of \( \gamma \tau \rho \eta \) “the disaster” within the relative clause as the object of the verb \( \psi \alpha b h \) “I have brought” (\textit{GKC} 1171; Blau, \textit{VT} 4 [1954] 11; T. Muraoka, \textit{Emphasis in Biblical Hebrew} [Jerusalem: University of Jerusalem, 1969] 124). The LXX’s longer “all the evil things” for \( \left\vert \begin{array}{l} \kappa \end{array} \right\end{array} \) “all” is epexegetical, and the shorter MT is to be preferred.

15:2.a. The LXX\textsuperscript{*} (and LXX\textsuperscript{L}) prefaces with “and you,” after the message-reception formula, as in the MT at 7:2; 21:24; 22:2; 27:2; 37:16. Cornill (256) and a few others have adopted this reading. Interestingly, it reflects in its own way continuity with the preceding pericope.

2.b. Heb. \( \left\vert \begin{array}{l} \kappa \end{array} \right\end{array} \) “m” expresses separation (Simian-Yofre, “Le métaphore” 237). It has the sense of being singled out from a generic group: see Gen 3:14 (cf. \textit{GKC} 119w). See further Note 2.d.* below.

2.c. The sg noun has a collective force here and in v 6; cf. the synonymous pl. in v 2b.

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MSS manuscript(s)
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
Heb. Hebrew
\textit{VT} Vetus Testamentum
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
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Heb. Hebrew
*2.d. Lit. “the plant of the grapevine becomes what?” The interrogative functions as a predicative noun (cf. \textit{BDB} 226a): cf. LXX Syr. Vg; von Orelli 57; Greenberg 264; Simian-Yofre, “Le métaphore” 237. In the light of the ensuing context, especially v 6, its sole function as firewood is implicitly in view. An interpretation “How is … different from” (Tg.; Zimmerli 317) does not suit the context. Nor does the similar and widely held interpretation “How is … better than,” which takes \( \pi \) as comparative (Ewald 265; \textit{et al.}).
sg singular or under
\textit{cf.} confer, compare
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2.e. The MT, together with Syr. Tg., has understood the two halves of the question as synonymously parallel. This seems to be preferable, in that it aligns with the briefer, summarizing v 6ab. An objection to it is that one expects a fem. verb, rather than the masc. יִֽהְוָ֖ז “is (among)” after the antecedent יִֽהְוָ֖ז “the vine.” However, this phenomenon is found elsewhere: cf. Joüon 150b, k. The deletion of יִֽהְוָ֖ז יִֽהְוָ֖ז “the vine that is among the woody plants” (Herrmann 90; et al.) takes its cue from the shorter v 6, but it is unnecessary. LXXB text has no equivalent for יִֽהְוָ֖ז “the vine,” but this is simply due to inner-Greek homoeoteleuton (Ziegler, LXX 145): pap. 967 attests it. So there is no warrant to delete it, as Jahn (95) did (cf. BHS). LXX Vg took יִֽהְוָ֖ז יִֽהְוָ֖ז יִֽהְוָ֖ז “the wood of the branches (which …)” together, “out of all the wood of the branches (which …)”: then “wood” functions as the regular antecedent. Ewald (265–66), Cornill (257), and others have construed thus, finding reference to brushwood, but Hitzig (99) rightly disputed such a meaning for יִֽהְוָ֖ז. On similar lines, Zimmerli has interpreted “than the wood of climbing plants, creepers” (Ezechiel 1 325; the English edition [317] mistranslates). Developing such an interpretation, Baumann (TLZ 80 [1955] 119–20) explained that Judah, the cultivated vine, had turned into a wild vine in the forest, entering the arena of the nations by its alliance with Egypt. Zimmerli himself (319 n. 6)
pronounced Baumann’s view an imposition on the text. V 6ab points to a more general comparison, with all other types of wood. Greenberg (265) takes ḣf wʾnz as a cut off branch, invoking the verb ḥ rmz “prune.” This rendering would suit the context, but elsewhere it seems to mean a growing vine branch (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 151); a derivation from ḥ rmz “prune” is not certain (cf. Driver; HALAT 261b). Driver found reference to two different types of grapevine, the cultivated kind in v 2a and the wild one in v 2b. Hitzig (99) related throughout to the wild vine. See the following Note.

2.f. Heb. ḥ ṣn has the sense “belong among” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:50; Greenberg 265). Smend (86), followed by Greenberg (265), rightly understood ḥ ṣn ṣx “the trees of the forest” as the class of woody plants.

3.a. LXX Tg. presuppose an active verb, by assimilation to v 3b. Greenberg (265) has noted that the MT falls into a pattern of active/pass variation for the verbs ḥ ṣ “make” in vv 3 and 5 and ḥ ṣ “give” in vv 4 and 6. There is thus no need to change with Cornill (256) and a few others.

4.a. Heb. ḥ ṣn “behold” has been understood as introducing a conditional clause (e.g., Fohrer 81; so NAB, NJPS, and REB), but in the light of v 6, v 4a presents a general rule (Hitzig 100; Greenberg 265).

4.b. Simian-Yofre (“Le métaphore” 238–39) has taken as subj ḥ ṣ in the sense of forest and then as subj in v 6a both the forest and the grapevine. Irrespective of whether ḥ ṣ bears the sense of forest, neither suggestion appears obvious.

4.c. The LXX by an interesting mistake found a reference to annual pruning, taking ṣwx ṣ “its ends” as cuttings (Cornill 257, following Schleusner) and ṣwy “two” as years (Cooke 158, who noted the converse in 4:5).

5.a. See Note 14:21.c*.

5.b. For the implicit interrogative sense, see Cooke (158) and GKC 150a.

V Vulgate
Bib Biblica
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
NAB The New American Bible
NJPS New Jewish Publication Society Version
REB Revised English Bible
subj subject/subjective
subj subject/subjective
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
* 21.c. Here and in 15:5, as in 2 Sam 4:11, ḥ and ṣ retain a separate force, “how much more, when.”
6.a. There is no need to assume here “strained … syntax” (Greenberg 266). In the light of v 2, the verb “to be” should be understood. Then the relative conjunction has a causal sense, as often.

6.b. For the collective sense, cf. v 2a and Note 2.c*.

7.a. The LXX has a third pl. verb, wrongly assimilating to the context.

Form/Structure/Setting

The two oracles of 14:12–23 and 15:1–8, each introduced by its own messenger-reception formula, belong together as a literary unit. Mosis (263 n. 155), Fuhs (79), and Brownlee (214) have drawn attention to their common terminological framework, set in a chiastic order: the infringing of Yahweh’s rights (l [m l [m) at 14:13; 15:8b and the desolation of the land at 14:15–16; 15:8a. This deliberate inclusion brackets together two messages that at their conclusions are both concerned with the fate of the residents of Jerusalem (14:21–23; 15:6–8). That the oracles originated separately and were subsequently joined at a literary stage is indicated by the different focus, on survival in the first and on extermination in the second, as in the two oracles of chap. 6.

In genre the paired pieces are proof sayings addressed to Ezekiel’s companions in exile. They also have in common a comparative style of arguing that moves from a theoretical situation to a current concern relating to Jerusalem, and from a lesser situation to a more serious one (yk ¹a “how much more/less when …,” 14:21; 15:5). The recognition formula in v 23 shows that 14:12–23 is a proof saying. From v 21 onwards it is a two-part proof saying, with vv 21–23a announcing the coming judgment. More strictly, v 21 announces the divine punishment, and vv 22–23a the human consequences of punishment, which include accusatory references to the behavior of those punished. The messenger formula of v 21 begins the second half of the oracle. The first half is devoted to a hypothetical case of divine judgment, subdivided into alternative scenarios. The language of cultic case law appears in the initial yk Äf å “a country if” (cf. 14:9) and in the repeated Ä “or” (vv 15 [emended], 17, 19; cf. BDB 15a). Unlike case law, however, different divine punishments, rather than human crimes, are here in view. The scenarios of judgment pave the way for the specific judgment of the second half of the oracle. The initial premise of sin within v 13a provides the first element of a three-part proof saying in the overall oracle. Fohrer (78) categorized vv 12–23 as a disputation, but Zimmerli (313) has rightly disagreed: the formal structure of a disputation, especially an initial quotation, is lacking. Yet it is clear that contemporary arguments are being challenged in this oracle.

The oracle has a chiastic thematic structure, as Parunak (“Structural Studies” 242) has observed: sin (A, v 13aa), judgment (B, vv 13ab–20), judgment (B’, vv 21–22a1), and sin (A’, vv 22aa2–23a). The four scenarios in vv 13ab–20 follow the same pattern of repeated elements, but with variations, which Parunak has set out in a table. Hitzig (97–98), followed by Greenberg (260), noticed that the first and

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* 2.c. The sg noun has a collective force here and in v 6; cf. the synonymous pl. in v 2b.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

pl. plate or plural

n. note

fourth scenarios provide a solid framework for the intervening two: only they name Noah, Daniel, and Job and specify their righteousness. The application of judgment to Jerusalem in section B’ echoes the scenarios in combining all the four individual forms of judgment and in repeating the cutting off of life and the mention of sons and daughters. It is closest in its terminology to the initial hypothesis of the last of the four scenarios (v 19), as one might expect from the continuity: the formulation "I have let loose on" echoes "I let loose on," while "depriving" matches the term there. Parunak (“Structural Studies” 247–48) has drawn attention to the chiastic ordering of section A’: behavior and deeds, the motif of comfort, and Yahweh’s bringing retribution on Jerusalem form parallel topics from the edges of the section to the double center.

15:1–8 is another proof saying, unquestionably bipartite, made up of an announcement of judgment (vv 6–7a) and an extended recognition formula (vv 7b–8), which includes a final reason of human sin (v 8b; see below). It is composed in elevated prose rather than poetry (Zimmerli 318). It resembles the former oracle in devoting its first half to a less threatening generalization, which is then applied concretely in the second half. This parallel must have been a further reason for their being juxtaposed in a literary unit. Again a messenger formula introduces the application. The first half is often described as a parable. However, Hals (99) calls it an analogy, noting that the formulaic characteristics of introducing and concluding a parable are absent. For Simian-Yofre (“Le métaphore” 342–47) it is a metaphor, since it is not a narrative but the description of a situation. The analogy or metaphor is recapitulated as a simile in v 6abγ. Hals has characterized the function of the oracle as a disputation; however, as before, the precise elements of such a genre are lacking.

As for structure, the skeleton emerges as v 4a, ḥlkal ∼tn val “to the fire it is given for consuming,” v 6ab ḥlkal val ṣtt n “I have given it to the fire for consuming,” and, in a drawn out application, v 6ba ṣtt n “I have given” and v 7aγ µlkat vahw “and the fire will consume them.” It is clear then that this negative purpose for the wood of the grapevine is the intended focus of the analogy. These structural bare bones are represented in the analogy at v 4 as a firm fact, which answers the initial question in v 2 as to the purpose of the grapevine wood. This fact is surrounded and reinforced by a barrage of questions that deny a constructive use for the wood: ḥlkal ml “for work” in vv 3 and 4b constitutes wordplay with ḥlkal “for consuming” (Rivlin, BMik 63 [1975] 564). This alliterative term occurs again two times in v 5, once in a negative fact (v 5a) that balances the positive fact of v 4a and again in a supporting exclamatory question (v 5b). The key statement of v 4a is supported by partial echoes, vaḥ ḥlkā “the fire has consumed” within v 4b and ṣtt lkā va “fire has consumed it” in v 5b a.

The settings of the two oracles are very similar. Chronologically both look forward to the fall of Jerusalem, and so are pre-587. Both are addressed to Ezekiel’s companions in exile in their recognition formulas. Zimmerli (318) has gauged from the perfect tense ṣtt in v 21 a precise dating for the first oracle between the capture of Jerusalem and the arrival of the new exiles in Babylonia. Keil’s interpretation in terms of divine resolve (188) is not convincing. Possibly the verb has a future perfect sense, “when I will have let loose,” as often in temporal clauses, especially of time (cf. Joüon 112i), but the differentiation from the imperfect ḥlkā va “I send” in v 19 (cf. vv 15, 17, and also v 13) looks deliberate. A knowledge of the later stages of the siege seems to be presupposed.

Pohlmann (Ezechielstudien 6–11, 161; cf. Garscha, Studien 270) has suggested for the two parts of chap. 15 a complex history of development. The grapevine illustration arose in the post-587 period as a commentary on the status of the exiled king Jehoiachin (cf. chap. 19), whereas the role of vv 4b–8 and

BMik Beth Mikra
14:21–23, which also derived from the post-587 period, was to affirm the earlier group of hostages and to disparage the new exiles. Such literary archeologizing differs in its presuppositions from the treatment provided in this commentary.

It has sometimes been doubted whether vv 21–23 are an authentic continuation of vv 13–20, on the grounds of apparent inconsistency between the two parts (cf. S. Herrmann, *Heilserwartungen* 248–52): see the discussion in Zimmerli (313). Likewise, in the second oracle, Hölscher (*Dichter* 92) found a lack of complete correspondence between the analogy and the interpretation. Again, Zimmerli (318) has defended the primary nature of vv 6–7ba. However, it appears to be a different matter with vv 7bb–8. As noted above, v 8 provides the concluding part of a chiastic framework that secondarily combines the two separate oracles in the literary unit. The intent of vv 7bb–8 is to provide two stylistic echoes: first, of the second oracle in v 7bb μحة b yonp At a ymwc b “when I set my face against them,” varying v 7aa yt t nw μحة b yonp At a “when I put my face against them,” and, second, of the first oracle in v 8 (cf. Hölscher *Dichter* 92; Zimmerli 319–20; Wevers 117). There is no reason, however, to deny Ezekiel’s hand in this editorial activity.

Here is an outline of the unit:

14:12–23 The doom of Jerusalem under Yahweh’s bombardments
14:13–20 The hypothesis of divine punishment of a sinful country
14:13–14 Fatal punishment by famine
14:15–16 Fatal punishment by wild beasts
14:17–18 Fatal punishment by invasion
14:19–20 Fatal punishment by pestilence
14:21–23 Jerusalem’s total bombardment and its justification to the exiles
15:1–8 The doom of Jerusalem in terms of destruction by fire
15:2–5 The analogy of grapevine wood fit only for fuel
15:6–8 Application to the people of Jerusalem

**Comment**

12–13. The message-reception formula introduces a fresh oracle that in its first half, vv 13–20, presents a theological argument. In the light of the contemporary references in the second half of the oracle, vv 21–23, the intention is to dismiss an expectation that the people of Jerusalem would survive the crisis that threatened them. The argument is presented four times in parallel, slightly different terms, like four heavy hammer blows that crash down on a precious object and smash it to smithereens. This argument is not directed specifically at the historical situation; it stands detached and relates to a hypothetical case that is transparent enough to let the exiles to whom the message is addressed (vv 22–23) realize its import. Each of the four presentations of the case has three sections: a basic hypothesis of (human sin and) divine judgment, development of the hypothesis, and a categorical conclusion that in three out of the four instances is emphasized by a divine oath (Schulz, *Todesrecht* 180). V 13 presents the initial and fullest form of the hypothesis. It postulates a nation that has sinned against Yahweh. Israel is not primarily in view: the case reflects a concept of the universal, providential rule of Yahweh. This concept is part of the prophetic heritage that Ezekiel received from earlier prophets: Amos 1:3–2:3 and Jer 18:6–11 are prime examples.

Yet, like Amos and Jeremiah before him, our prophet was using the concept as a window through which to glimpse obliquely Yahweh’s dealings with his own people. There are two indications that the hypothetical nation is really a facade for Israel. First, the term מ madeb “commit an act of unfaithfulness,”
which is used as a definition of sinning, elsewhere applies only to Israel, whether only the verb or the noun is used or, as here, the verb with a cognate accusative. The term refers to an infringement of Yahweh’s rights, by encroaching on holy ground (2 Chr 26:16–18), meddling with temple customs (2 Chr 29:19; 36:14), taking what belonged to Yahweh (Josh 7:1), or violating an oath taken in Yahweh’s name (Ezek 17:18) and especially a promise to uphold the covenant (Lev 26:40, cf. v 15), notably by resorting to idolatry (e.g., Num 31:16) (see Milgrom, *JAOS* 96 [1976] 236–39; cf. Ringgren, *TWAT* 4:1039–41). The second indication that hearers or readers are encouraged to think of Israelites as ultimately in view is the use of terminology expressly associated with covenant curses directed against Israel. As in 4:16; 5:16, the breaking of bread sticks deliberately echoes Lev 26:26. Likewise, in v 15 the prevalence of wild beasts and consequent death of children and the desolation of the land (cf. 6:6, 14) are meant to recall Lev 26:22, 33. In v 17 the introduction of the sword into the land harks back to Lev 26:25, while in v 19 the letting loose of pestilence evokes another part of Lev 26:25. For all these references the *Excursus* on the use of Lev 26 in chaps. 4–6 sought to establish that Ezekiel was appealing to an existing cultic text. Here, then, such Israel-based echoes imply that the apparently hypothetical case contains throughout an exhortation “if the shoe fits—and it does—then wear it.” A further indication to the same effect is that Ezekiel’s oracles generally apply the triad of sword, famine, and pestilence to Jerusalem’s fate (see 5:12 and *Comment*); here the triad is enlarged by a fourth item, the wild beasts, as in 5:17.

14 Though the text shows clear signs of speaking about Israel, the facade of universalism is maintained by mentioning three non-Israelite saints, Noah, Daniel, and Job, in the development of the basic hypothesis. Comparison is often made between vv 13–20 and Jer 15:1–3. There Jeremiah’s intercession on the people’s behalf is rejected: not even a Moses or a Samuel could avert by his prayers Judah’s merited punishment. It is probable that Ezekiel is consciously adapting that oracle, which goes on to specify four different kinds of punishment (pestilence, sword, famine, and captivity) and four types of destruction (sword, dogs, birds, and wild beasts) (Miller, *Verhältnis* 93; Zimmerli 313). However, we should leave open the possibility that the two passages give vent to “parallel insights” (Vawter 88). If there was a link, the switch from Israelite intercessors to non-Israelite saints was necessitated by the universal framework of the case under discussion. Noah is the hero of the flood narrative (Gen 6–9; cf. Isa 54:9), whereas Job is the saint of the ancient story that underlies the book named for him. The foreign and ancient factors of the context indicate that Daniel is not the Judean contemporary with Ezekiel who features in the narratives of Dan 1–6 but the figure in Ugaritic texts, to whom Ezek 28:3 will refer as a model of wisdom in a Phoenician context. Wahl (*VT* 42 [1992] 551–52), following Dressler (*VT* 29 [1979] 157–61), has identified Daniel with the canonical character but at the price of regarding 14:12–20 as a postexilic composition.

Whether the mention of sons and daughters in vv 16, 18, and 20 is a traditional element relating to all

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cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
*JAOS* Journal of the American Oriental Society
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
*VT* Vetus Testamentum
*VT* Vetus Testamentum
three of these characters is a moot point. Since it has been argued that all three both lost their children and saved their children, it is safer to conclude with Greenberg (258) that it does not represent a traditional motif associated with the three figures. Rather, these ancient heroes function as eminently good people, known for their “righteousness” or “virtue,” as the text significantly states at the beginning and end of the discussion, here and in v 20. Noah was “a righteous man, blameless in comparison with his contemporaries” (Gen 6:9 [P]; cf. 7:1 [J]). Job was “blameless and upright, fearing God and shunning evil” (Job 1:1; cf. 12:4), and uniquely so (Job 1:8; 2:3). Daniel in the Aqhat epic was a good judge, “judging widows and trying the cases of orphans” (CTA 17.5.7–8 and the mutilated 19.1.23–25; ANET 151, 153), unlike Jerusalem’s judges in Isaiah’s time (Isa 1:23). Whether Ezekiel and his fellow exiles had first learned of this figure from Phoenician exiles or Israelite tradition already knew of him we cannot establish. Certainly in later Jewish tradition he features as the uncle and father-in-law of the antediluvian Enoch (Jub 4:20).

The insistence that such moral heroes could save no one but themselves seems to be attacking a counterclaim made by the exiles, appealing to a solidarity of virtue that could outweigh the liability of sinners to punishment. Abraham’s plea that Sodom be spared if fifty or even ten good persons could be found there (Gen 18:22–33) presupposes such a beneficial solidarity, and the Decalogue (Exod 20:5; cf. 34:7; Deut 5:10) reinforces it. Here the oracle simply rules such a possibility out of court, as inappropriate at this juncture of Israel’s history. The ensuing verses repeat the basic “no” again and again. Ezekiel’s message is that “there are no party tickets to deliverance” (Taylor 128). In God’s name the prophet sized up the situation and categorically denied such a soft option; in the three remaining cases the denial is reinforced by a divine oath. A straight and inevitable line led from sin to punishment, and no reprieve was possible for Jerusalem and Judah. The political inevitability of the fall of Jerusalem was matched by a theological inevitability. Discussion of other possibilities was a monstrous irrelevance, like that of the theological society in hell to which the bishop belonged in C. S. Lewis’s The Great Divorce.

15–16 The second hypothetical disaster continues in a sinister evocation of Lev 26, now with a double reference. This time a divine oath reinforces the flat denial, as in the two remaining cases. Another regular pattern is established by the citing of sons and daughters as those beyond rescue (cf. vv 18, 20). Spiegel (“Noah, Daniel and Job” 320–21), followed by Greenberg (261), was surely correct in seeing the reflection of a current pressing concern of the exiles here and in vv 18, 20, 22. According to 24:21, the children of the hostages deported in 597 had been left behind, and here Ezekiel prophesies their death rather than the fond reunion of separated family members. Behind the paternal paradigms of “these men” stood real fathers worried about the fate of their dear children. Surely God would hear their prayers and spare these loved ones. No, comes the answer, they themselves were spared by their prior deportation, though they were no Noahs, Daniels, or Jobs, but they could make no claim on God for the sparing of their children.

17–20 The options in God’s arsenal continue, first military invasion and then the outbreak of

P Pesher (commentary)
cf. confer, compare
J Yahwist/Jahwist (supposed biblical literary source)
cf. confer, compare
CTA A. Herdner, Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
pestilence. Whatever the weapon, its death-dealing force is irresistible. In the latter case, pestilence is linked with bloodshed, as elsewhere in the book (5:17; 28:23; 38:22). No guarantee could be given that a single child would be saved.

21–23a The oracle leaves the sphere of argument and hypothesizing what could or could not happen. It moves over to the real world of Judean cities and countryside laid waste, of Babylonian troops besieging Jerusalem and of the horrors of a sick and starving populace. The change of order whereby the sword is given first place points to military attack as the force that triggered the rest in the historical actuality. Not one of the hypothetical plagues but all four held the capital in their deadly grip, as instruments of divine judgment. How could one entertain theological rationalizations of deliverance in a situation that pointed so clearly to God’s punitive hand at work?

The oracle that till now had shouted a vehement “no” at optimistic theologizing now seems to contradict itself. It is prepared to give an assent qualified with reservations to the instinctive question posed by anxious parents in exile. Yet, from another perspective, it brings a logical and necessary conclusion to the earlier discussion. Any debater can see a flaw in vv 14–20. The text argues, evidently seeking to counter religious arguments current among the exiles. Yet it only engages in denial and in reiteration of denial, as to the tenability of the exiles’ arguments. Now a proof is provided, a proof that indeed lies in the future and not in the present, but offered for future verification. These very children would arrive in the Babylonian heartland, a living proof of true theology at work. The consequent exposure of Jerusalem’s lifestyle over the past few years would show that Yahweh had no option but to destroy that veritable Sodom of a city (cf. 6:9–10; 12:16; 16:48–52). “Ye shall see that it could not be otherwise” (Calvin 82). The exiles would realize that their hopes that the capital’s doom would be averted had been misplaced. Such hopes had been fused with family love and buttressed by plausible arguments. Instead, the exiles would be driven to say “yes” to the fall of Jerusalem, at last seeing in it the reasonableness of Yahweh’s inevitable reaction. Ironically, the very children who had been the focal point of theological hope for their worried parents would turn out to be agents of a different truth, witnesses to a divine necessity. The home truths of vv 22a–23a, which relate to Jerusalem’s fate and the exiles’ muted reactions as they witnessed their children’s sinfulness, are expressed forcibly by chiastic repetition, which replaces the consecutive repetition of the earlier part of the oracle. Moreover, Greenberg (261) has noted the careful wordplay between מִנָּה (not) without due cause” and מִנָּה “be consoled.” The survival of beloved children would minimize the sense of shock at the downfall of Jerusalem. However, it would not be a case of human love bringing a measure of consolation. Rather, the factor of consolation is raised to a divine plane, the exiles’ coming to understand the will of God and the constraint that triggered his radical action. The children would march as God’s subdued prisoners in his victory procession. Their exiled parents would see them as such, not as saved trophies of love and grace given to them in response to their pious prayers. The switch from the positive verb יָדוּחַ “deliver” that ran through vv 13–20 to מַלְאוֹן “be brought out, come out” in v 22 is highly significant, as Zimmerli (316) has observed, suggesting an echo of Jer 15:1–2.

15:1–2 This next oracle is parallel to the first in a number of respects. Like that one, it begins at a distance from the point it eventually wants to make. After the message-reception formula, there is a musing on a phenomenon of viticulture. Perhaps it was inspired by the exiles’ witnessing (or laboring at) the pruning of the grapevines in a nearby vineyard and the collection of the prunings into bundles for firewood. Greenberg (267) aptly refers to the Mishnah (m. Sanh. 7:2) and to the Babylonian Talmud, (t.

cf. confer, compare
m. Sanh. Mishna tractate Sanhedrin
t. Tosepta
Abod. Zar. 18a), which mention bundles of vine stems used for fuel. As for those bundles, Ezekiel queries that there was nothing else one could do with the prunings, was there? The question as to what should be done with them is posed in v 2. There were many trees and shrubs whose wood could be used for constructive ends, but not the grapevine.

3–5 The questions continue, intending to deny any constructive use for grapevine wood. It could not even provide a wall peg. No, the fact was that its only use was one that resulted in its destruction—as firewood. How about, v 4b goes on to posit, when the loose ends of a bundle of grapevine prunings had been burned away and the tighter middle part, to which the air and flames could not get so readily, was left charred by the fire? It was even more obvious then that it had no positive use. It was fit, it is implied, only for burning.

6 The prophetic musing turns out to have been an analogy. It is now telescoped into a simile, to illustrate the fate of the citizens of Jerusalem. The contraction into the confines of a simile helps to show the development of the analogy. There is no mention of the uselessness of the grapevine wood: that topic was only incidental to the analogy. Instead, the focus is on its particular use, as articulated in v 4a. Commentators have tended to see in the wood’s uselessness an implicit accusation of the sinfulness of the people of Jerusalem. For example, “What is said about the uselessness of the wood is thereby set before every hearer as the inescapable basis of this judgment” (Zimmerli 318). The real emphasis of the analogy is that it is a fact of life that grapevine wood is useful only as firewood. This is part of the economy of nature in the service of humanity. After pushing uselessness to the fore, commentators have then complained that the application of the analogy makes no mention of the uselessness of the wood. It has no need to do so. As Wevers (117) has stated, though he still wrongly calls the vine’s uselessness the point of the analogy and the burning an incidental element (118), “The real comparison is: as the wood of the vine is good for nothing but fuel, so Jerusalem is fit only for the fire.” It is debatable what links the prophet’s analogy has with the regular covenant metaphor of Israel as the grapevine, which earlier prophets used negatively, in criticism of the nation’s purely economic success (Hos 10:1) or of its poor vintage in terms of social ethics (Isa 5:1–7) or of its religious degeneration (Jer 2:21). Here nothing is said about fruit or lack of it. Instead, the focus is on a stage after the grapes have been harvested, when the branches that have fruited are pruned away. The most one can say is that the present analogy is ironic, in its concentration on a negative element of viticulture that did not otherwise feature in theological metaphors. The precise focus is on Yahweh’s purpose for the residents of Jerusalem, who stand as representatives of the people of God. A parallel is drawn between the grapevine prunings and the role destined for the capital.

7 God’s “giving” (v 6, יִתְנֶנָּה; cf. יִתְנֶנָּה “it is given,” v 4) or assigning of such a role shifts into a personal, sinister orientation. It was to mean his “giving” (נִתְנֶנָּה נוּנָא) or setting his face against the citizens in a pose of hostility. The rest of the formulation of vv 4a and 6a inexorably follows, in mention of future consumption by fire. The reference to a previous burning must refer to the capture and spoiling of Jerusalem in 597, which left its citizens intact, apart from those deported with Ezekiel. This time their fate was sealed. The backward and forward perspectives in v 7ab seem to echo the closing part of the analogy, in vv 4–5, on which the text appears to linger intentionally. The half-burnt bundle of prunings, fit only to feed the flames, stands for post-597 Jerusalem waiting for the coup de grâce. The city was by no means “a brand plucked from the burning” (Zech 3:2). No, the fire of 597 was an omen of worse misfortune to come, the beginning of the end. God’s task had been done only in part, and he would return to complete his inevitable work of destruction and to consume the city, citizens and all.

Abod. Zar. Aboda Zara

cf. confer, compare
The oracle is presented to the 597 deportees as a negative reading of the future of Jerusalem, which would shed light on Yahweh’s purpose to judge his people. The literary conclusion in vv 7b–8 seems to result from Ezekiel’s editorial labors. It ties together the two separate oracles of 14:12–23 and 15:1–7b, inversely echoing Yahweh’s hostile orientation in v 7a and Yahweh’s devastation of the land in the earlier case study (14:15, 16) with its basic accusation (14:13). The intent is not only to provide a literary framework for the pair of related oracles but to supply the ingredient of accusation evidently lacking in the presentation of the second oracle. Jerusalem’s fate is grounded in its spiritual perfidy. The fall of the capital is carefully explained, not in terms of fatalism but as due to human culpability.

Explanation

Ezekiel waged a constant crusade to convince his fellow exiles of the coming downfall of Jerusalem. Two related attempts are preserved here. The first is evidently a reply to expressions of a contrary hope that were based on a theological argument. It is always tempting to use theology in the service of human desires and emotional attachments. The exiles, with sons and daughters back in the capital, could hardly entertain the thought of the fall of the city and their consequent death. It would mean the rejection of all their prayers, undeserving of rescue though their children might be. The whole issue had to be lifted to a different, unemotional plane, in order that its seriousness might be appreciated. Yahweh’s providential working in society, in any society, for moral ends is presented as the crux of the matter. Divine retribution had to be commensurate with widespread evil. This was no time to appeal to a positive solidarity that might conceivably have prevailed against it. All would be swept away by an avalanche of destruction, which for Israel represented the outworking of covenant curses. So any survivors would feature in the realization of Yahweh’s moral will as witnesses to his justice. Certainly human righteousness (14:14, 20) could not be used as a shield to protect the ungodly against the establishment of divine righteousness.

The second oracle appeals to metaphor. As Isaiah used agriculture to explain the ways of God (Isa 28:23–29), here Ezekiel applies an aspect of viticulture. The present time allowed no comforting recourse to the covenant picture of the vine lovingly tended and protected by Yahweh (cf. Ps 80:9–20[8–19]). Instead, the divine vinedresser must resort to radical pruning and burning. This message links with Ezekiel’s focus on finality in chap. 7: the end was in sight. What our prophet predicated of a doomed Jerusalem, Jesus was to apply threateningly to disaffected followers (John 15:6), while similarly Paul wrote of both Israel and the Gentile-dominated church being broken off from the ideal olive tree of the people of God (Rom 11:17–22; cf. Jer 11:16). Here, Jerusalem had to fall. To the comprehensive instruments of destruction in the first oracle is added a fifth in the second oracle, fire. For the moment, a long and bitter moment for the exiles, the signs of the times could be read in no other way.

Jerusalem, Cinderella and Ugly Sister (16:1–63)

Bibliography

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare


Translation

1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2 “Human one, inform Jerusalem of its shocking practices 3 and tell Jerusalem this message from the Lord Yahweh: Your native country and place of birth was the territory of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite b and your mother a Hittite. 4 As for the circumstances of your birth, on the day you were born a your umbilical cord was not cut, b you were not washed with a view to oiling (?) you, c you were not rubbed with salt nor
were you wrapped in swathing cloths. No kindly eye ensured any of these things was done out of compassion for you. In fact, you were exposed in the countryside, in contempt for your life, on the day you were born. I came along, and, noticing you kicking about in your blood, I told you in your bloody state to live and to grow as prolifically as a wild plant. You did grow: you became tall
and started your periods. Your breasts became firm and your hair became prolific. But you were stark naked. I came along again, and, noticing that your time had come, the time for love, I spread over you the edge of my garment and covered your naked body. I pledged myself to you and entered into a marriage covenant with you, runs the oracle of the Lord, and you became my wife.

9 I washed you with water, rinsing off your blood, and rubbed oil on you. I clothed you in a robe of many colors and put leather sandals on you. I wrapped your head in fine linen and covered you with rich fabric. I gave you jewelry, putting bracelets on your wrists, a necklace at

b 7.b. The MT ûyt t n “I made you” is represented in the LXX but not in the Syr. Jahn (101), followed by Fohrer (85), Eichrodt (199), and Zimmerli (324), explained it as a consequence of the corruption of the earlier impv to a noun, but its presence in the LXX, which reflects no such corruption, suggests otherwise. Probably a marginal note ûyt t n h d c h j mx k “I made you like a wild plant” was intended as an exegetical comment. It linked the earlier, negative exposure in the countryside (h d c j , v 5b) with positive growth like a plant of the countryside (h d c h ) and observed that the latter was a divine reversal. This longer comment displaced the comparison; the LXX still attests this stage. Next, the initial impv was adapted to a noun to accommodate the new verb. This stage is reflected in the MT, “I made you a grown object.”

c 7.c. The MT µyyd[b “(and you came) into/with adornment of [or: most beautiful] jewels” seems to be meant as an exotic metaphor for the physical development of v 7a . Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:53) and Greenberg (276) have retained MT, but most scholars have followed J. D. Michaelis and found here a reference to the onset of menstruation (µyDi[i Isa 64:5[6]). Zimmerli (324), with Cooke (166), reconstructed as µyyd[b “(you reached the stage of [cf. BDB 98a]) menstruation,” assuming dittography. This is slightly preferable to Bertholet’s suggestion ([1897] 80): µyyd[t b “the time of menstruation.” The MT was influenced by the clause µyyd[t a w “and I adorned you with jewelry” in v 11. A pl. form of the collective µyyd[ “jewelry” does not occur elsewhere. The error is an old one: LXX Syr. indirectly reflect it in their rendering “to cities of cities.” It represents not merely a d/f error but assimilation to h yr[w µ r[ “nakedness and bareness” in v 7b (cf. Zipor, ZAW 103 [1991] 100).

d 7.d. Heb. µyyd v “breasts” need not be corrected to ûyyd v “your breasts” (Cornill 260; cf. Note 4.b. above). It seems to be a high-flown, poetic equivalent of a suffixed noun. Greenberg (277, with a regrettable printing error) has usefully referred to Lam 2:15; 3:41, where a dual suffixless body part occurs alongside a sg suffixed one.

e 7.e. Predicative nouns are used adjectivally (cf. GKC 141c, d; Joüon 154a).

a 8.a. For the formulaic use of µyyd a “Lord” in the divine-saying formula here and in vv 14, 19, 23, 30, 43, 48, and 63, see Note 5:11.a. It is omitted in v 58: cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556.

a 10.a. Heb. t is also used of the cover of the tabernacle in Exod 25:5, etc. It has not been identified with any certainty. It may refer to the hide of the dugong, a herbivorous aquatic mammal, which was used by the Bedouin for sandals (F. S. Bodenheimer, IDB 2:252a). Alternatively, it is cognate with Akk. dusû, (Sumerian *tu[h]sâ), the leather of goats or sheep dyed and tanned the color of a precious stone dusû, which was used for luxury sandals and for decorating harnesses (CAD 3:201–2; Greenberg 278, following H. Tadmor).

b 10.b. Heb. t “wrap,” when used of clothing, refers to headgear (BDB 289b).

c 10.c. Heb. m is some kind of an exotic cloth, for which Egy. and Hittite possible cognates have been found (HALAT 609b). Rabbinic tradition identified it anachronistically with silk.
your throat, a ring in your nose and earrings on your ears, and a magnificent diadem on your head. So you were adorned with gold and silver, while fine linen, rich fabric, and multicolored cloth were what you wore. Your food was fine flour, honey, and olive oil. You became exquisitely beautiful, fit to be a queen. You won international renown for your beauty, because it was perfect as a result of the splendor with which I had endowed you, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.

"But you put your faith in your beauty and used your renown to become sexually promiscuous. You lavished your promiscuous favors on anybody who came along. To him you came so that they might be his. You took some of your clothes, and, making for yourself brightly colored shrines, you were promiscuous as you lay on them. You also took your magnificent jewelry, made of my gold and silver I had given you; you used it to make yourself male images, and

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a 13.a. Q V V “fine linen” repeats the term used in v 10b. K V V has suffered assimilation to the following ָיָּמָּנו. (Cornill 260; et al.).

b 13.b. K יְלָּּכָּא represents the older writing of the second fem. pf, while Q gives the later form †לָּכָא. This phenomenon recurs in vv 22a, 31 (2x), 43 (2x), 47, and 51. In vv 22b, 28, and 29, the text exhibits the later form.

c 13.c. This last clause is not represented in the LXX*. Cornill (261) and others have viewed it as an interpolation. Cornill thought that it destroyed the parallelism of clauses. On the other hand, Cooke (165) regarded it as necessary to bring the story to its climax. Wevers (122) considers its omission in the LXX* an error. Was a twelve-letter line overlooked?

15.a. The MT †לָּכָא “your (acts of) harlotry” adds to a sg noun the type of suffix usually attached to a pl. noun, here and in vv 22, 33, 34, and 36. However, in vv 20 and 25 this mixed formation occurs only in Q, while K has a sg type of suffix; and in vv 26 and 29 the MT has a sg form of suffix. A similar range of phenomena recurs in chap. 23. See GKC 91l; Joüon 94j.

b 15.b. The MT has here †לָּכָא “so that they might be his” and in v 16b †לָּכָא “not coming things and it/he will not be.” These readings appear to be alternatives (cf. Cornill 261–62). The latter was evidently a marginal variant that was subsequently inserted into the text at a point that was judged feasible. The LXX*, which lacks the first case, is a development of this stage. The first and shorter text has been explained by Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 151) as a purpose clause that uses a juss without the copula, as in Job 9:33 (cf. GKC 109j; Joüon 116j): “so that it might become his.” Like Keil (204), he took †לָּכָא “your beauty” as the antecedent, which is rather distant (cf. Hitzig 105).

Greenberg (280), though he interpreted as an exclamation (“it was his!”), is to be preferred in regarding †לָּכָא “your harlotry” as the subj, in line with most medieval Jewish exegetes (cf. Barthélémy, Critique 398). Greenberg has noted that the phrase †לָּכָא “become” frequently has a masc. verb despite a fem. subj (Joüon 150k, 1). As for the counterpart in v 16b, which Greenberg (280) has called “hardly coherent,” Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 151–52, 312), adapting an earlier proposed emendation made by Cornill, proposed †לָּכָא “to him you came so that it might become his.” The LXX “you will (not) come” lends some support to his interpretation of the first verbal form, in which an expression normally used of a man is strikingly applied to a woman. Again he took “beauty” as the subj of the second verb, an unlikely expedient. If he was right in his slight reconstruction †לָּכָא “to him you came,” v 16b does not fit in its present place, but admirably completes v 15. Then the end of v 15 in the MT represents a truncated text that has suffered from parablepsis, whereas the reading found in v 16b constitutes a corrupted form of the longer, original text. In v 15b the Tg. represents †לָּכָא “so that it will not be,” in reversal of the †לָּכָא error that underlies the MT.

d 16.a. See Note 15.b. above.
you were promiscuous with them. 18 You took your garments of many colors and used them to cover the images. 19 Moreover, my food that I had given you, with which I had fed you in the form of fine flour, oil, and honey, you wanted to place before them as fragrant offerings, and this is what happened, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh. 20 You even took your sons and daughters, the ones you had borne me, and sacrificed them to them for food. Were your promiscuous ways not enough, 21 that you also slaughtered my sons and gave them up, devoting them to the images? 22 As well as indulging in all your shocking and promiscuous ways, you failed to remember your young days—when you were stark naked, you used to kick about in your own blood.  23 “After all such wickedness of yours—woe betide you, warns the oracle of the Lord Yahweh— 24 you built yourself an enclosure, making yourself a stall in every square. 25 At the corner of every

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\[a\] 18.a. Lit. “them.”  
\[a\] 19.a. The Heb. construction is complicated, if not tortuous: a *casus pendens* that includes an appositional relative clause without \(\textit{wh} \; \textit{v} \; \textit{a}\) “which” (Greenberg 280) and, since \(\textit{ym} \; \textit{t} \; \textit{nw}\) “you gave it,” an appositional role for the three specific nouns, “(with which)—namely fine flour, oil, and honey—I fed you.” Cornill (262) and others have seen an interpolation here: see Zimmerli 326.  
\[b\] 19.b. The Syr. does not represent \(\textit{yhw}\) “and it happened”; one wonders whether it is a fresh variation on the end of v 15. A claim of dittography (Cooke 168; Zimmerli 326; *BHS*) is not likely. Does the preceding consec pf have the modal sense the impf. can bear, “want to” (cf. Joüon 113n)? Then this final statement indicates achievement.  
\[a\] 20.a. The question is to be taken with v 21: cf. Josh 22:17–18 (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 5:55; Cooke 172; earlier Ewald 268). Cooke was probably right in taking \(\textit{m}\) as partitive. *BDB* 590a took it as causal: “because of thy whoredom.” The *REB* construes it as comparative: “Was this slaughtering any less a sin than your fornication?”  
\[a\] 21.a. Heb. \(\textit{gh} \; \textit{by} \; \textit{h}\) means to “pass over, offer up,” to which 20:31 adds \(\textit{wa} \; \textit{b}\) “in the fire”: see Day, *Molech* 20, and the *Comment*.  
\[b\] 21.b. Lit. “to them.”  
\[a\] 22.a. Heb. \(\textit{t} \; \textit{a}\) here means “besides” (Driver, *Bib* 19 [1938] 22). The LXX implies \(\textit{t} \; \textit{a} \; \textit{z}\) “this,” which Cornill (263) and others have adopted; for the confusion, cf. 47:17–19.  
\[b\] 22.b. The LXX* does not represent \(\textit{ut} \; \textit{vt}\) “your abominations”; it could easily have fallen out because of its graphical similarity to the next word. Herrmann (93), followed by Zimmerli (326) and *BHS*, deleted.  
\[c\] 22.c. Heb. \(\textit{t} \; \textit{y} \; \textit{h}\) “you were,” unrepresented in Syr. Vg, is indirectly attested by the LXX in the form \(\textit{t} \; \textit{y} \) “you lived,” an echo of v 6b. For the final position of the verb, Greenberg (281) compares 22:18. Syntactically, v 22b can only be taken as in the translation.  
\[a\] 23.a. The LXX* does not render this exclamation, lit. “woe, woe to you!” Since Cornill (263), it has often been regarded as a gloss, “a passionate interjection of a reader” (Zimmerli 327). Kraetzscha pointedly urged its retention. It does accord with the passion of v 30a. In fact, the following divine-saying formula, which the LXX* attests, serves to reinforce the exclamation and so presupposes it.
street you built your stall and put your beauty to shocking use, opening your legs for anybody who came along and thus adding to your promiscuous ways.  

26 You made promiscuous overtures to the Egyptians, your neighbors with the big penises; adding to your promiscuous ways in order to provoke me to anger.

27 So I reacted by dealing you a blow: I curtailed your quota of land, letting your enemies have their will with you, namely the daughters of the Philistines, who were embarrassed by your lascivious behavior.  

Then you made promiscuous overtures to the Assyrians, because you were unsatisfied, and you were promiscuous with them, but still you were

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a 24.a-b. For the strange pausal form b₂ in L, cf. d₁ in the formula d₁ w w₁ w “for ever and ever.” The two terms b₂ and hmr are significantly differentiated in the text from the t wmb “shrines” of v 16, though many commentators have identified them, such as Zimmerli (343), in his case as part of his redactional theorizing. The context suggests that secular structures are in view, while the linking of the two terms with prostitution in vv 30–31 must be taken seriously. Heb. b₂, as something convex, may here mean a domed tent, like h b q used perhaps for prostitution in Num 25:8. LXX Syr. Vg interpreted as “brothel,” which Herrmann (93), Hölscher (Dichter 95), and Greenberg (281) have accepted. B. Lang (Frau Weisheit [Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1975] 137) has taken hmr not as an elevated place or the like but as “house, dwelling place,” comparing Akk. ramû; “put up a dwelling” and Ugar. rwm “erect a building.” Here he envisions a tent-structure. The Vg again interpreted in terms of a brothel.

b 24.a-b. For the strange pausal form b₂ in L, cf. d₁ in the formula d₁ w w₁ w “for ever and ever.” The two terms b₂ and hmr are significantly differentiated in the text from the t wmb “shrines” of v 16, though many commentators have identified them, such as Zimmerli (343), in his case as part of his redactional theorizing. The context suggests that secular structures are in view, while the linking of the two terms with prostitution in vv 30–31 must be taken seriously. Heb. b₂, as something convex, may here mean a domed tent, like h b q used perhaps for prostitution in Num 25:8. LXX Syr. Vg interpreted as “brothel,” which Herrmann (93), Hölscher (Dichter 95), and Greenberg (281) have accepted. B. Lang (Frau Weisheit [Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1975] 137) has taken hmr not as an elevated place or the like but as “house, dwelling place,” comparing Akk. ramû; “put up a dwelling” and Ugar. rwm “erect a building.” Here he envisions a tent-structure. The Vg again interpreted in terms of a brothel.

25.a. Herrmann (94) and Greenberg (271) have taken v 25b with v 26, in which case v 26b is resumptive.

26.a. As in 23:20, f c b “flesh” is a euphemism.

27.a. For this sense of q j “decree, limit,” see Liedke, Gestalt 164–65.


c 27.c. The LXX t aₐ, e k l i n ou`a s e “who were turning you aside (from your way)” (cf. Syr. “who were restraining you”) may have been motivated by a desire to echo the sound of the Heb. t wml k mh (Cornill 264). It seems rather to represent a Vorlage t wml k mh , which the translator took as a hiph, “who make (you) ashamed.” It was doubtless meant to be a hoph, a less common variant of the niph.

27.d. For the construction, see GKC 131r and cf. 24:13. Greenberg (283) understands h mz as “depravity” here and also in vv 43, 58; 23:27, 29, 35. While it bears that sense in 24:13, its context is sexually oriented in these cases and also in 22:9, 11; 23:44, 48–49.

28.a. The verb h nz “commit fornication” takes a direct object in Jer 3:1 and possibly in Isa 23:17. The construction with “to” in vv 26, 28a and the nonrepresentation of an object in LXX Vg have induced Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:56) and others to dispense with the suffix.
not satisfied. 29 You extended your promiscuous ways to the trading[a] country of Chaldea, but even so you were not satisfied. 30 How angry I became with you,[a] runs the Lord Yahweh runs the Lord Yahweh's oracle, when you did all this, just what a headstrong[b] prostitute does, 31 when you built[a] your enclosure at the corner of every street and your stall in every square! Yet you have not been like a regular prostitute, in that you have disdained[b] any payment,[b] you adulterous wife[a] who have

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[a] 29.a. Heb. ד נק is here not a proper noun “Canaan” but means “trade,” as in 17:4. The LXX*, represented by pap. 967, does render it, contra BHS. The omission in LXXB was caused by homoeoarcton.


[a] 30.a. The LXX “How can I make a covenant with your daughter?” has in view † ב “daughter” and י מ “circumcise,” interpreted as a sign of the covenant, and reflects the MT; so does ס, followed by LXXL and Vg, “With what will I purify your heart?” which understood the verb in terms of purification (Stummer, VT 4 [1954] 36). The Tg. “How strong was the wickedness of your heart!” took the noun as a feminine variant of ב י “heart,” like ס, and derived the verb from ז מ “be full,” supplying “of wickedness” from vv 23 and 57. The MT הן מ is pointed as a pass ptep from מ מ “be weak” (BDB 51a); accordingly, the NJB translates “How simple-minded you are” and the NIV “How weak-willed you are.” Stummer (VT 4 [1954] 37–39) rendered “How feverish is your heart,” which Zimmerli (328) has tentatively adopted. Stummer took his cue from ס and the Tg for the noun; following Zorell (Lexicon 62), he related the verb to Arab. malla “be seized by a feverish excitement” and postulated a byform מ מ from a cognate Heb. מ מ. He appealed to the interpretation in a Jewish medieval poem on these lines. The NJPS and the NRSV “How sick was/is your heart” have translated in this vein, and so does Greenberg (283), “How hot your ardor is.” The interpretation that has the strongest linguistic support is “How I was filled with anger against you,” which the alternative renderings in the NJPS and NJB reflect. This interpretation is based on a comparison with Akk. libbati malu “be full of anger against,” which takes an objective suffix. The same idiom reappears in Aram. † ב מ “be full of wrath,” with an objective genitive (see Driver, JTS 32 [1930/31] 366; Cooke 173; Fitzmyer, CBQ 23 [1961] 460–62). This option requires a repointing of the verb as מ מ, or מ מ מ “I was filled”: for the final letter, see Joüon 78g. Certainly all the ancient versions except the Tg. interpret as a first sg impf.. Zimmerli (328) has objected that a note of anger in v 30 occurs too soon. But it accords with the provocation of Yahweh and his partial reaction in vv 26–27 and paves the way for his full reaction initiated in vv 36–37, the performance of which was to sate his anger (v 42).

[b] 30.b. Cf. BDB 1020b; Driver, Bib 35 (1954) 152. ס rendered “independent.”

[a] 31.a. For the vocalization, cf. 6:8 and Note 6:8.b.* The expected pointing occurs in ג ה י ב “when you did” in v 30. The resumptive nature of the content of v 31a indicates that it is coordinate with v 30b, in fact parallel with v 30a (RSV, NRSV).

[b] 31.b. LXX ס Syr. Vg render on the lines of “in gathering (payments),” taking the compared prostitute as subj rather than the “you” of the main verb. Insofar as the LXX recognized the verb ס ל in the hithp at 22:5, the rendering may indicate a Vorlage ב ע ל “in gathering” (Cornill 266, who observed that the same Gr. verb is used in Gen 47:14). The MT makes good sense.

[c] 31.c. Heb. ל א is a prostitute’s fee (BDB 1072b).
welcomed strangers\(^b\) instead of\(^c\) your husband. 33 Every prostitute is given presents,\(^a\) but you have given your own presents to all your lovers, and you have bribed them with all your promiscuous ways to come to you from everywhere around. 34 Your promiscuous attitude is contrary to that of those women: you are not solicited, and whereas you give payment, no payment is given to you—you are so contrary.

35 “So listen to Yahweh’s oracle, you prostitute. 36 This is the Lord Yahweh’s message: Because your sexual profligacy\(^a\) has been so lavishly demonstrated\(^b\) and your private parts have been exposed in your promiscuity with\(^c\) your lovers, and because of\(^d\) all your shocking idols, and in correlation with\(^e\) the bloodguilt involved in giving them your sons, the bloodguilt involved in giving

\(^{a}\) 32.a. The syntactical alignment of v 32 with the second-person context is not immediately clear. The LXX took as a separate sentence by adding “is like you” (cf. §). It is possible to understand the noun as a vocative. In that case the following clause is to be construed as a relative clause without \(\text{f} \text{v} \text{a} \) “who”; for the idiomatic third-person references, see 22:3 and Note 22:3.c*. A number of scholars since Hitzig (109), including Zimmerli (346), have taken v 32 as a redactional comment. Greenberg (285) regards it as a textual alternative to v 33a in a conflated text.

\(^{b}\) 32.b. For the use of the object sign with an indeterminate noun, cf. Joüon 125h. The LXX seems to imply \(\text{m} \text{y} \text{n} \text{nt} \text{a} \) “payments” for \(\text{m} \text{yr} \text{z}\text{At} \text{a} \) “strangers,” doubtless by assimilation to the theme of the context. If v 32 is to be integrated by means of a vocative address, receiving payments does not suit: this is what the addressee does not do (vv 31b; 33b; Wevers 127). Nor is it naturally characteristic of an adulterous relationship. The former objection also applies to the reading \(\text{m} \text{yr} \text{z}\text{At} \text{a} \text{m} \) “from strangers” represented in the Syr..

\(^{c}\) 32.c. Or “while under the authority of”: cf. 23:5.

\(^{a}\) 33.a. Here and in v 33b \(\text{h} \text{d} \text{n} \) and \(\text{HD} \text{n} \) “gift” are used: see Zimmerli (329) and Greenberg (285).

\(^{a}\) 36.a. Heb. \(\text{h} \text{t} \text{v} \text{j} \text{n} \) could conceivably mean “your copper” in the sense of “your money,” as the NJB (cf. the LXX) takes it, but the term is not used thus elsewhere and it hardly fits the evidently synonymous parallelism. The Mishnaic use for the bottom of an oven, from which Cornill (266), following A. Geiger and medieval Jewish exegesis, extrapolated a physiological meaning “bottom,” is a speculative recourse. Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 65) usefully related to Akk. nuhsât “superfluity, luxury,” here in the sense of sexual extravagance; he noted that the term often had the connotation of a liquid and so suited the verb. He was anticipated by F. Delitzsch (Cooke 174). Greenberg (285–86; “Nhšt” 85–86) interprets more directly in terms of juices that are sexually aroused, comparing Akk. nuhsâtu. This would suit the accompanying verb even better. The Akk. term refers to hemorrhage, according to CAD 11, 1:141–42; Greenberg claims that it refers more widely to a(n abnormal) genital discharge, usually but not necessarily bloody.

\(^{b}\) 36.b. Lit. “poured out.” For \(\text{h} \text{p} \text{v} \text{h} \) the Tg. implies \(\text{h} \text{p} \text{c} \text{j} \) “you uncovered” (Sperber, Bible in Aramaic 4B:337). This verb occurs in parallelism with the piel of \(\text{h} \text{l} \text{g} \) “expose” at Isa 47:2; cf. the usage in Jer 13:26. Following Geiger, Cornill (266) and others have adopted it, together with a piel form \(\text{h} \text{l} \text{g} \text{x} \text{h} \) “and you exposed,” as the Syr. rendered. The changes stand or fall according to the understanding of the accompanying noun.

\(^{c}\) 36.c. For this usage, in the sense of \(\text{h} \text{a} \) (BHS), cf. vv 26, 28, and 29.

\(^{d}\) 36.d. It is possible to take this preposition as a continuation of the preceding one (“with”; Smend 99; et al., including BHK and BHS), but the Masoretic accentuation is probably correct in differentiating the phrases, so that three separate accusations are brought.
them your sons, \(^{37}\) in reprisal I for my part\(^{a}\) am going to gather together all your lovers to whom you gave such pleasure.\(^{b}\) All those you loved, together with all you came to hate, I will gather from everywhere around to confront you and I will expose your private parts to them, and they will see all your private parts.\(^{38}\) I will pass sentences\(^{a}\) fit for female adulterers and murderers\(^{b}\) and give you over to a death\(^{c}\) perpetrated in jealous fury.\(^{39}\) I will hand you over to them, and they will overthrow your enclosure, while your stall\(^{b}\) will be demolished. They will strip you of your clothes and take away your magnificent jewelry, leaving you stark naked.\(^{40}\) They will order a crowd to attack you, who will stone you, hack you to pieces\(^{a}\) with their swords, with their swords,\(^{41}\) and burn down your houses, inflicting such punishments on you in the presence of many other women. I will stop you being a prostitute, and you will never again make payments.\(^{42}\) Only then will I have sated my fury against you, and my jealous fury will leave you alone; I will then be calm, angry no more.\(^{43}\) Because you have not remembered your young days but have upset me\(^{a}\) with all this behavior, I for my part now\(^{b}\) hold\(^{c}\) you responsible for your behavior, runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.

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\(^{36}.e\). Since Ewald (271), the MT \(\text{ymd} \text{k w}\) “and in accordance with the bloodguilt” has generally been rejected in favor of the minority Heb. reading \(\text{ymdb w}\) “and because of the bloodguilt,” with the support of LXX Vg Tg.. The latter continues the causality in a straightforward way, but Greenberg (286), implicitly following Smend (99) and Bertholet ([1897] 85), has justly retained the MT as a harder reading, noting Ezekiel’s preference for \(k\) “like” in relating offense to punishment.

\(^{37}.a\). The LXX, including the LXX* in the light of the lacuna in pap. 967 and the presence of \(\text{epiv}\) “against” in B., adds “against you,” which in view of the following \(\text{ptcp}\) cannot here represent the confrontation formula (cf. 13:8) but anticipates v 37b, probably by way of exegetical clarification.

\(^{37}.b\). Heb. \(\text{br}\) “be pleasing” is not used elsewhere in a sexual sense. Following H. Graetz, Bertholet ([1897] 85) and others have advocated conjectural emendation to \(\text{tb}\) “you lusted,” in line with 23:5, 7, 9. Driver (\(\text{Bib}\) 19 [1938] 65) related \(\text{br}\) to Akk. \(\text{erepu}\) “enter in,” used of a woman who enters the house of a man not her husband. Neither expedient is compelling.

\(^{38}.a\). For \(\text{yf} \text{p v m}\) “sentences” the LXX* has a sg form. Kraetzschmar (152) justified the MT in that two sets of criminals are specified. In 23:45 a sg noun appears before each group of criminals. Probably partial assimilation to that passage underlies the LXX*.

\(^{38}.b\). The omission of the second noun in the LXX* was doubtless only an inner-Greek accident, which LXXc managed to escape.

\(^{38}.c\). Ehrlich (\(\text{Randglossen}\) 5:58), followed by Greenberg (286), justified the MT in the sense “I will make you the object of my bloody anger and jealousy.” He compared 35:6, but there the text is probably corrupt (see my note in \(\text{ZAW}\) 102 [1990] 412; \(\text{Ezekiel}\) 20–48 167). LXX Vg imply a \(\text{Vorlage}\) \(\text{uity t nw \mu d b}\) “and I will make you in blood,” which seems to have suffered metathesis from \(\text{u b y t nw \mu d}\) “and I will bring upon you blood” (Halévy, \(\text{RÉJ}\) 24 [1892] 36; et al.; \(\text{NRSV}\), \(\text{REB}\)). The proposal to read on these lines but to delete \(\mu d\) “blood” (Rothstein 908; et al., including \(\text{BHK}\); cf. \(\text{BHS}\)), by comparison with 23:25, is unnecessary.

\(^{39}.a\). In light of v 25, a sg form, as represented in LXX Vg, is expected in place of the pl. of the MT.

\(^{40}.a\). The \(\text{hapax legomenon}\) \(q t b\) is well attested in cognate languages: see \(\text{HALAT}\) 160a.

\(^{43}.a\). Greenberg (288) has retained the MT’s qal form \(\text{yzgr t wby}\) continuing the force of the negative and understanding in terms of being agitated by fear: “and were not in dread of me.” The ancient versions imply a hiph “and you agitated me,” which is generally adopted, ever since Hitzig (111), who compared Jer 50:34. The stem appears in a noun form \(\text{hzgr}\) “agitation” at 12:18. The previous mention of \(\text{h t a Al k}\) “all these things” in an evident context of anger at v 30 supports the repointing.
“You behaved lasciviously, didn’t you, in addition to your other shocking practices? Anyone who likes to quote proverbs would choose for you ‘Like mother, like daughter.’ You take after your mother, who rejected her husband and sons. You also take after your sisters, who rejected their husbands and sons. The mother of you all was a Hittite, and your father was an Amorite. The bigger of your sisters was Samaria, along with her daughters, who used to live to the north of you. The smaller of your sisters, who lived to the south of you, was Sodom, along with your daughters. You have walked in their tracks and copied their shocking practices, haven’t you? It did not take very long for your general behavior to become worse than theirs. I swear by my life, runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle, your sister Sodom, along with her daughters, did not behave so badly as you and your daughters. The trouble with your sister Sodom was the pride she and her daughters took in overeating and in complacent ease, while they gave no support to the poor and needy. They were arrogant and behaved shockingly toward me. So I removed them, when I saw it. In turn, Samaria did not commit half the sins you have committed. You have engaged in practices more shocking than theirs. In fact, you have made your sisters look guiltless by all the shocking things you have done. You for your part must bear your humiliation, since you have been an argument in your sisters’ defense. They look guiltless in comparison with you, because of the more shocking nature of the sins in which you have indulged. So you are the one who must be ashamed and bear your humiliation, because you have made your sisters look guiltless. I will rehabilitate...”

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b 43.b. Heb. aḥ occurs in Gen 47:23 as an interjection “behold”; it is an evident Aramaism (cf. Dan 2:43). It is supported by LXX Syr., but its position in the sentence is strange (cf. Zimmerli 331). Wevers (129) has observed that, as an equivalent of the normal ḥnḥ “behold,” it is form-critically fitting.

c 43.c. The pf seems to be performative: see Note 3:8.a. In place of ṭāḇ b “(I put) on head” one expects ūvār b “on your head,” as LXX Syr. Vg imply: cf. 9:10; 11:21; 22:31. Scribal abbreviation of an obvious element may well have occurred and later been ignored.

d 43.d. Here and in vv 47 and 56, ḥ ṭ “and not” introduces a question (Hitzig 111): cf. GKC 150a.

a 44.a. In ḥ mā k “like her mother” the mappiq is not written before beth: see Joüon 94h.

a 45. a. The MT clearly recognizes two pl. forms of t ṣ a “sister,” t ṣ a in vv 51 (Q), 55 and t ṣ a in v 52b. Was the former intended as a dual, ṣ t ṣ a ? In place of the expected suffixed forms ūv ṣ ṣ a or ūv ṣ ṣ a, one finds a defectively written ūt preceding here and in vv 51 (K) and 52a, b.

b 45.b. “All” is added in the translation to indicate that the suffix is pl.

a 47.a. See Note 43.d. above.

b 47.b. Heb. ㎜ k is used of time, “soon,” as in Ps 81:15(14), etc. The intensifying ṭ Q is a hapax legomenon: HALAT 1020a compares Eth. ḥ ṭ “small.” It is not represented in LXX Syr.. For the following ṭ ṭ, see Cooke 179. In the text of BHS, the annotation “a” should be deleted and “b” changed to “a.” Perhaps the editor at some stage intended “a” to accord with note “a” in BHK. Also in BHS ㎞ ṭ ṭ b is a printing error for ㎞ ṭ it is not listed in R. Wonneberger, Understanding BHS (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1984) 74.

a 49.a. Heb. ṭ ṭ “pride” is explained by the following nouns, whether one repoints it as constr (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:59) or regards them as appositional (Greenberg 289).

a 50.a. The Masoretic reading ḥ ṭ ṭ b ṭ is assimilated to ḥ ṭ ṭ “and they behaved” (Cooke 179).

b 50.b. Or possibly “as you have seen.” Grammatically the verb may be either second person (A ṭ Q Vg; see Note 13.b. above) or first (LXX Syr. ṭ). See the Comment.

a 51.a. A pl. “your sisters” ūv ṭ ṭ a (cf. Q ūv ṭ ṭ a ) is required. See Note 45.a. above.
them, both Sodom and her daughters and Samaria and hers, and I will rehabilitate
you together with them, in order that you may bear your humiliation and feel
duly ashamed of all you have done, at the same time bringing consolation to them.
As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters will be restored to their original state
and so will Samaria and her daughters, while you will similarly be reinstated.
Your sister Sodom was the topic of your talk, wasn’t she when you were so proud,
before your own wickedness was exposed, as it is now—the butt of the daughters
of Edom and all her neighbors, such as the daughters of Philistia, who treat you with contempt.

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52.a. Here, in v 54, and also in 39:26, the phrase יִנְשָׁא הַאֲשֶׁר “bear humiliation” refers to remorse for former sins; elsewhere in the book it relates to punishment (32:24–25, 30; 34:29; 36:6–7; 44:13).
53.a. See Bracke’s evaluation of the phrase תָּבִא וְגַו in ZAW 97 (1985) 233–44. He understands it in terms of Yahweh’s reversal of his previous judgment. The noun appears to function as a cognate, internal object of the intransitive verb (cf. Joüon 125q, r), with a genitive noun or suffix relating to the object of the reorientation: “change a changing with regard to.” The initial form תָּבַי in the MT and the K forms in the rest of the verse evidently derive from תָּבַי “take captive,” with the sense “captivity,” which in this context would not suit the case of Sodom. The forms of תָּבַי in Q are the expected ones: cf. תָּבַי “perversion” from צוּל. For the K/Q variants, cf. R. Borger, ZAW 66 (1954) 315–16.
53.b. In place of כָּל תָּבַי Wand Q תָּבַי וְב, one expects a verb יִתְבַיְיָי וְו “and I will restore,” which the ancient versions represent, and this has been generally read since Ewald (273). The error presumably arose by metathesis that occurred within the K form. In place of the anomalously pl. noun יִתְבַי יִתְבַי one expects יִתְבַי וְב. The MT seems to have confused יִתְבַי Wand יִתְבַי Wendings frequently in this passage.
55.a. In place of the MT יֵתָּב יַנְי, a sg יֵתָּב יַנְי “and your sisters,” supported by LXX Syr. Vg, would fit “Sodom,” but it may stand as a casus pendens.
55.b. The form יֵתָּב יַנְי, used two times for the third person to artificially distinguish from the regular form יֵתָּב יַנְי used for the second person in v 55b (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:60).
56.a. Heb. יֵתָּב יִנְשָׁא that usually means “report,” here presumably means “mention” (BDB 1035a), if not “byword” (Greenberg 290).
56.b. See Note 43.d. above.
56.c. A sg יֵתָּב יִנְשָׁא “your pride” is expected, rather than the pl. יֵתָּב יִנְשָׁא in the MT, which never occurs elsewhere in the OT.
57.a. The MT יֵתָּב יִנְשָׁא “as at the time of” (= S Q T) is strange, but there is no clear alternative. Greenberg (290) assumes that the MT is the equivalent of יֵתָּב יִנְשָׁא יִנְשָׁא and takes הַרְעָה הַרְעָה “reproach” as in apposition to יֵתָּב יִנְשָׁא יִנְשָׁא “your wickedness.” Smend (104) observed that one expects Jerusalem rather than her wickedness to be the object of reproach. The translation follows LXX ἀνὰ τὴν τοῦ Ἰερουσαλήμ: “as now,” i.e., יֵתָּב יִנְשָׁא , which Hitzeig (114) and Cornill (272) adopted. In fact, the LXX interpreted “you are the reproach,” which makes good sense, but can hardly be obtained from the MT; as Herrmann (97) commented, the LXX seems to have had the same Heb. consonants in its Vorlage. To achieve such a sense, various emendations have been suggested: see the list in Zimmerli (333). If indeed emendation is necessary, the most plausible is יֵתָּב יִנְשָׁא יִנְשָׁא “you like her” (Ehrlich Randglossen 5:60).
You will bear the consequences of your lasciviousness and shocking practices, runs Yahweh’s oracle.

“Certainly the Lord Yahweh’s message is as follows: Will I deal with you in a way that corresponds with what you have done, you who have despised the oath and so broken the covenant? No, I for my part will remember my covenant with you, the one made in your young days, and I will establish with you an everlasting covenant. You in turn will remember your former behavior and feel humiliated, when you receive your big sisters and also your little ones and I give them to you as daughters, even though I am not obliged by my covenant with you. For my part will establish my covenant with you and you will realize I am Yahweh, in order that you may remember

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b 57.b. The MT ḫḏā “Aram, Syria” does not fit as an enemy in this historical period: “the time of Aram’s hostility was much too ancient to be mentioned” (Cooke 178). The Syr. implies ḫḏā “Edom,” which also occurs as a minority Masoretic reading, and this has generally been read since Cornill (272). Cf. 25:12; 36:2–15. For the confusion, cf. 27:16.

c 57.c. Zimmerli (333) regards the reference to the daughters of the Philistines as a gloss inspired by v 27. Its syntactical abruptness, the distance between Edom and Philistia, and the awkwardness of ḥḏē “on every side,” seemingly connected with a single nation, certainly raise questions. Edom and Philistia are treated in adjacent oracles in chap. 25.

d 57.d. For the orthography, see GKC 72p. Joüon 80k derives from a different verb, ḫ ḫ “attack,” but see D. Bodí’s study of the stem in Poem of Erra 69–81, esp. pp. 71–72.

58.a. The pf appears to be prophetic, a “pf of future certainty” (Cooke 178). Ṣ rendered as fut.

59.a. Heb. ḫk is not rendered in the LXX*; cf. 14:21 and Note 14:21.a.* A first-person verb is required, as Q and the ancient versions attest, in place of the inappropriate second person form in K, which may simply be a mechanical error, but cf. GKC 44i. Cf. the ambivalent ḫ Ṣ “I/you saw” in v 50. In the context ḫ ḫ “Wis best taken as a question “will I do?” (cf. GKC 150a; Joüon 161a). Calvin (172) was aware of the possibility: “some translate … as if it had been said, ‘Shall I do with thee as thou hast done?’” It functions as a deliberate counterpart to the negative ḫ ḫ “did you not do?” in v 43b (see Form/Structure/Setting). Taken as a statement, the text refers to Jerusalem’s judgment as future, which strains the context. Cf. the flow of Lev 26:44–45.

59.c. C and the LXX (not only “LXXL 967* [BHS]) read “my covenant,” but the parallelism supports the MT. Assimilation to v 60 caused the variant.


61.a. LXX967 L Syr. represent ḫ Ṣ ḫ “when I take.” Ziegler (LXX 157) has equated LXXB, which follows MT, with the LXX*, but Katz (Bib 35 [1954] 34) considered the reading of pap. 967 original. Since Hitzig (115), the variant has been preferred. The MT, which gives a suitable sense (Cooke 181), is to be retained as a slightly harder reading. The use of ḫ Ṣ “take” in the variant accords with the usage in vv 16–18, 20, where it is a preliminary to further action (Greenberg 292). Doubtless that usage encouraged the variant. Here ḫ Ṣ means “receive (as a gift).” Greenberg has compared the sequence in Josh 13:8; 18:7.

61.b. Heb. ḫ, in the sense of ḫ, here means “in addition to.”

61.c. See the Comment.
and be ashamed, feeling so humiliated that you will keep your mouth shut in future, when I have
absolved you for everything you have done. So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.”

Notes

3.a. For the formulaic use of ינד א “Lord” in the messenger formula here and in vv 36 and 39, see
Note 2:4.c."

3.b. The definite article is not expected with this clearly predicative adj, as the parallel clause and the
counterpart of both clauses in v 45 show. It probably came into the text under the influence of the
preceding ינד ה נק "the Canaanite” (Greenberg 274).

4.a. The casus pendens is resumed by the verbal continuation (Cooke 166); Bertholet ([1936] 54)
took the expression as a variant of the defectively written form in v 3. For the acc retained with a pass

4.b. This verb and the next main verb and the last one are probably not pual (HALAT, ad loc.) but
pass qal (Greenberg 275), since none has a corresponding piel form extant. The LXX “they bound your
breasts” reflects not merely a ר/וד error in the case of the noun, but probably also replacement by a
slipped marginal note that originally explained ידב ו "breasts” in v 7 as “your breasts” (cf. Note 7.d.*
below). The verb “they bound” may reflect awareness of a Heb. verb ר יד כ “tie” cognate with Arab. karra
“wind,” here in the form of a pass qal and with an archaic fem. sg ending (Driver, “Ancient Lore” 278;
cf. ExpTim 57 [1945/46] 193). Driver, who considered a reference to the tying of the cord original,
suggested as an alternative the reading of MS K 102, יד כ, which he rendered “has been tied,” a pass qal

* 4.c. For the authenticity of ינד א “Lord” in the messenger formula, see the appendix in Zimmerli,
Ezekiel 2 556–62, which reverses the policy of deletion he earlier advocated throughout his two
volumes. For the LXX evidence, see the discussion of McGregor (Greek Text of Ezekiel 75–93).
adj adjective/adjectival
cf. confer, compare
HALAT W. Baumgartner et al., Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament, rev. 3rd
ed. of KB (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967-83)
pass passive
qal the basic stem of Heb. verbs
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
* 7.d. Heb. יד ו "breasts” need not be corrected to יד ו "your breasts” (Cornill 260; cf. Note 4.b.*
above). It seems to be a high-flown, poetic equivalent of a suffixed noun. Greenberg (277, with a
regrettable printing error) has usefully referred to Lam 2:15; 3:41, where a dual suffixless body part
occurs alongside a sg suffixed one.
Heb. Hebrew
pass passive
qal the basic stem of Heb. verbs
fem. feminine
sg singular or under
cf. confer, compare
ExpTim The Expository Times
He aligned it with Mishnaic Heb. ūrk and Akk. karaku, both meaning “wind.” His second suggestion had earlier been proposed by Halévy (RÉJ 24 [1892] 30–31). This latter reading was adopted in the NEB (Brockington, Hebrew Text 223) and evidently retained in the REB. Barthélemy (Critique 3:92) has objected that ūrk means to tie with a bandage, not with a knot.

4.c. The Tg. rendered this most uncertain term “to be cleansed.” Driver (“Difficult Words” 63–64) interpreted as rubbing with oil, taking y\[m as an Aram. inf form of a verb h\[n cognate with h\[n “smear.” V 9 lends support to this interpretation. Q Vg “for salvation” linked with y\[j “save,” and S “for care” with the postbiblical sense of h\[n “look, care.” LXX Syr. did not render, presumably out of ignorance.

4.d. The hoph inf abs establishes assonance with the preceding j | mh (“salted”) (Greenberg 275).

5.a. For this sense of the verb, see Cogan (JNES 27 [1968] 133–35), following Ehrlich; Malul (JSOT 46 [1990] 100–106).

6.a. The pl. accords with the usage in cultic laws with reference to discharge of blood (Lev 12:4–5; 15:19; 20:18; Greenberg 276); a sg occurs in v 22.

6.b. Unlike LXX Syr., the MT repeats the clause, perhaps by repetition of a fourteen-letter line (Allen in Brownlee 218). The Vg rationalized the repetition by taking j ymd b “in your blood” with the verb of saying in the first case and with the impv in the second (cf. Jerome 166; cf. Hitzig 102; Smend 90). The LXX took the phrase with the impv, as its translation in v 22 confirms. Ewald (267, “in spite

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MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
qal the basic stem of Heb. verbs
Heb. Hebrew
Akk. Akkadian
RÉJ Revue des Études Juives
NEB The New English Bible
Tg. Targum
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
hoph hophal
inf infinitive
abs absolute (nouns)
JNES Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Biblical Studies
pl. plate or plural
sg singular or under
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
of your blood”) and Cornill (259) followed suit. Of the modern versions, the REB does the same, but the
NIV, NJB and NRSV may be more correct in relating it to the main verb (likewise Zimmerli 323). See the
Comment.

7.a. The MT הָבִר, usually “abundance, myriad,” here seems to mean “growth, a grown object”
(Greenberg 276). However, the Syr attests וַיַּפְרָדוּ “and grow,” and so does the LXX, but without
the copula, except for LXXA. The subsequent וַתָּבִרְתָּ וַתָּבִיב and you grew” appears to echo such a reading (Cornill 259; et al.). See further in the next Note.

7.b. The MT וַיִּתְנָה “I made you” is represented in the LXX but not in the Syr. Jahn (101),
followed by Fohrer (85), Eichrodt (199), and Zimmerli (324), explained it as a consequence of the
corruption of the earlier impv to a noun, but its presence in the LXX, which reflects no such corruption,
suggests otherwise. Probably a marginal note וַיִּתְנָה הָבִר “I made you like a wild plant” was
intended as an exegetical comment. It linked the earlier, negative exposure in the countryside (הָבִיר, v
5b) with positive growth like a plant of the countryside (הָבִיר) and observed that the latter was a divine
reversal. This longer comment displaced the comparison; the LXX still attests this stage. Next, the initial
impv was adapted to a noun to accommodate the new verb. This stage is reflected in the MT, “I made
you a grown object.”

7.c. The MT וַיַּדְּבִר וַיַּדְּבִּר “(and you came) into/with adornment of [or: most beautiful] jewels”
seems to be meant as an exotic metaphor for the physical development of v 7aa. Ehrlich (Randglossen
5:53) and Greenberg (276) have retained MT, but most scholars have followed J. D. Michaels and found
here a reference to the onset of menstruation (יָדְּבָרנָה Isa 64:5[6]). Zimmerli (324), with Cooke (166),
reconstructed as וַיַּדְּבָר וַיַּדְּבִּר “(you reached the stage of [cf. BDB 98a]) menstruation,” assuming
dittography. This is slightly preferable to Bertholet’s suggestion ([1897] 80): וַיַּדְּבָר וַיַּדְּבִּר “the time of
menstruation.” The MT was influenced by the clause יָדְּבִּר וַיַּדְּבִּר “and I adorned you with jewelry” in v
11. A pl. form of the collective יד[ “jewelry” does not occur elsewhere. The error is an old one: LXX Syr. indirectly reflect it in their rendering “to cities of cities.” It represents not merely a ידר error but assimilation to ידר [ “[nakedness and bareness]” in v 7b (cf. Zipor, ZAW 103 [1991] 100).

7.d. Heb. ידר ו “breasts” need not be corrected to ידר ו “your breasts” (Cornill 260; cf. Note 4.b.* above). It seems to be a high-flown, poetic equivalent of a suffixed noun. Greenberg (277, with a regrettable printing error) has usefully referred to Lam 2:15; 3:41, where a dual suffixless body part occurs alongside a sg suffixed one.

7.e. Predicative nouns are used adjectivally (cf. GKC 141c, d; Joüon 154a).

8.a. For the formulaic use of יד א “Lord” in the divine-saying formula here and in vv 14, 19, 23, 30, 43, 48, and 63, see Note 5:11.a.” It is omitted in v 58: cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556.

10.a. Heb. יד and יד is also used of the cover of the tabernacle in Exod 25:5, etc. It has not been identified with any certainty. It may refer to the hide of the dugong, a herbivorous aquatic mammal, which was used by the Bedouin for sandals (F. S. Bodenheimer, IDB 2:252a). Alternatively, it is cognate with Akk. dusu, (Sumerian *tu[h]sia), the leather of goats or sheep dyed and tanned the color of a

A Codex Alexandrinus
pl. plate or plural
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
* 4.b. This verb and the next main verb and the last one are probably not pual (HALAT, ad loc.) but pass qal (Greenberg 275), since none has a corresponding piel form extant. The LXX “they bound your breasts” reflects not merely a ידר error in the case of the noun, but probably also replacement by a slipped marginal note that originally explained ידר ו “breasts” in v 7 as “your breasts” (cf. Note 7.d.* below). The verb “they bound” may reflect awareness of a Heb. verb ידר ו כ “tie” cognate with Arab. karra “wind,” here in the form of a pass qal and with an archaic fem. sg ending (Driver, “Ancient Lore” 278; cf. ExpTim 57 [1945/46] 193). Driver, who considered a reference to the tying of the cord original, suggested as an alternative the reading of MSK ידר ו , ידר ו , which he rendered “has been tied,” a pass qal ידר ו. He aligned it with Mishnaic Heb. ידר ו and Akk. karaju, both meaning “wind.” His second suggestion had earlier been proposed by Halévy (RÉJ 24 [1892] 30–31). This latter reading was adopted in the NEB (Brockington, Hebrew Text 223) and evidently retained in the REB. Barthélemy (Critique 3:92) has objected that ידר ו means to tie with a bandage, not with a knot.
cf. confer, compare
* 11.a. For the formulaic use of יד א “Lord” in a divine-saying formula, see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556, 562.
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
precious stone ḏusûu, which was used for luxury sandals and for decorating harnesses (CAD 3:201–2; Greenberg 278, following H. Tadmor).

10.b. Heb. ṣb l ṣ “wrap,” when used of clothing, refers to headgear (BDB 289b).

10.c. Heb. ṣk  ṣm is some kind of an exotic cloth, for which Egy. and Hittite possible cognates have been found (HALAT 609b). Rabbinic tradition identified it anachronistically with silk.

13.a. Q ṣ ṣ “fine linen” repeats the term used in v 10b. K ṣ ṣ has suffered assimilation to the following ṣ ṣ (Cornill 260; et al.).

13.b. K ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ represents the older writing of the second fem. pf, while Q gives the later form ṣ ṣ ṣ ṣ . This phenomenon recurs in vv 22a, 31 (2x), 43 (2x), 47, and 51. In vv 22b, 28, and 29, the text exhibits the later form.

13.c. This last clause is not represented in the LXX*. Cornill (261) and others have viewed it as an interpolation. Cornill thought that it destroyed the parallelism of clauses. On the other hand, Cooke (165) regarded it as necessary to bring the story to its climax. Wevers (122) considers its omission in the LXX* an error. Was a twelve-letter line overlooked?

15.a. The MT ṣ ṣ ṣ “your (acts of) harlotry” adds to a sg noun the type of suffix usually attached to a pl. noun, here and in vv 22, 33, 34, and 36. However, in vv 20 and 25 this mixed formation occurs only in Q, while K has a sg type of suffix; and in vv 26 and 29 the MT has a sg form of suffix. A

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**Akk.** Akkadian


**Heb.** Hebrew


**Heb.** Hebrew


**Q** “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.”) Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT, or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)

**et al. et alii**, and others

**K** Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)

**fem.** feminine

**pf** perfect

**Q** “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.”) Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT, or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)

**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**pl.** plate or plural

**Q** “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.”) Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT, or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)

**K** Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
similar range of phenomena recurs in chap. 23. See GKC 911; Joüon 94j.

15.b. The MT has here yhyAW “so that they might be his” and in v 16b h yhy y al w t ve b al “not coming things and it/he will not be.” These readings appear to be alternatives (cf. Cornill 261–62). The latter was evidently a marginal variant that was subsequently inserted into the text at a point that was judged feasible. The LXX*, which lacks the first case, is a development of this stage. The first and shorter text has been explained by Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 151) as a purpose clause that uses a juss without the copula, as in Job 9:33 (cf. GKC 109j; Joüon 116i): “so that it might become his.” Like Keil (204), he took ū ḥp ḥ “your beauty” as the antecedent, which is rather distant (cf. Hitzig 105).

Greenberg (280), though he interpreted as an exclamation (“it was his!”), is to be preferred in regarding ū ḥp ḥ “your harlotry” as the subj, in line with most medieval Jewish exegeses (cf. Barthélemy, Critique 3:98). Greenberg has noted that the phrase l̄ h yh “become” frequently has a masc. verb despite a fem. subj (Joüon 150k, 1). As for the counterpart in v 16b, which Greenberg (280) has called “hardly coherent,” Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 151–52, 312), adapting an earlier proposed emendation made by Cornill, proposed h yhy w l w t a b; w “to him you came so that it might become his.” The LXX “you will (not) come” lends some support to his interpretation of the first verbal form, in which an expression normally used of a man is strikingly applied to a woman. Again he took “beauty” as the subj of the second verb, an unlikely expedient. If he was right in his slight reconstruction t a b w “to him you came,” v 16b does not fit in its present place, but admirably completes v 15. Then the end of v 15 in the MT represents a truncated text that has suffered from parablepsis, whereas the reading found in v 16b constitutes a corrupted form of the longer, original text. In v 15b the Tg. represents yh yAal “so that it will not be,” in reversal of the w /a\ error that underlies the MT.

sg singular or under
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
subj subject/subjective
cf. confer, compare
masc. masculine
fem. feminine
subj subject/subjective
Bib Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
subj subject/subjective
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Tg. Targum
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
16.a. See Note 15.b.* above.

18.a. Lit. “them.”

19.a. The Heb. construction is complicated, if not tortuous: a *casus pendens* that includes an appositional relative clause without *f v a* “which” (Greenberg 280) and, since *ym j* “my food” is still in view in the resumptive *wh yt t nw* “you gave it,” an appositional role for the three specific nouns, “(with which)—namely fine flour, oil, and honey—I fed you.” Cornill (262) and others have seen an interpolation here: see Zimmerli 326.

19.b. The Syr. does not represent *yhyW* “and it happened”; one wonders whether it is a fresh variation on the end of v 15. A claim of dittography (Cooke 168; Zimmerli 326; *BHS*) is not likely. Does the preceding *consec pf* have the modal sense the *impf.* can bear, “want to” (cf. Joüon 113n)? Then this final statement indicates achievement.


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* 15.b. The MT has here *yhyW* “so that they might be his” and in v 16b *h yhy y al w t w ab al* “not coming things and it/he will not be.” These readings appear to be alternatives (cf. Cornill 261–62). The latter was evidently a marginal variant that was subsequently inserted into the text at a point that was judged feasible. The *LXX,* which lacks the first case, is a development of this stage. The first and shorter text has been explained by Driver (*Bib* 35 [1954] 151) as a purpose clause that uses a juss without the copula, as in Job 9:33 (cf. *GKC* 109i; Joüon 116i): “so that it might become his.” Like Keil (204), he took *û yp y* “your beauty” as the antecedent, which is rather distant (cf. Hitzig 105). Greenberg (280), though he interpreted as an exclamation (“it was his!”), is to be preferred in regarding *û yp wz* “your harlotry” as the *subj,* in line with most medieval Jewish exegetes (cf. Barthélémy, *Critique* 3:98). Greenberg has noted that the phrase *l yhy* “become” frequently has a *masc.* verb despite a *fem.* *subj* (Joüon 150k, 1). As for the counterpart in v 16b, which Greenberg (280) has called “hardly coherent,” Driver (*Bib* 35 [1954] 151–52, 312), adapting an earlier proposed emendation made by Cornill, proposed *h yhy W w t a b; W* “to him you came so that it might become his.” The LXX “you will (not) come” lends some support to his interpretation of the first verbal form, in which an expression normally used of a man is strikingly applied to a woman. Again he took “beauty” as the *subj* of the second verb, an unlikely expedient. If he was right in his slight reconstruction *t a b W* “to him you came,” v 16b does not fit in its present place, but admirably completes v 15. Then the end of v 15 in the MT represents a truncated text that has suffered from parablepsis, whereas the reading found in v 16b constitutes a corrupted form of the longer, original text. In v 15b the Tg. represents *yhyAAl* “so that it will not be,” in reversal of the *W /a*l error that underlies the MT.

Heb. Hebrew
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
*BHS* *Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia,* ed. K. Eллер and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
*consec* consecutive
*pf* perfect
*impf.* imperfect
*cf.* confer, compare
*cf. confer, compare*
172; earlier Ewald 268). Cooke was probably right in taking ﬂ as partitive. BDB 590a took it as causal: “because of thy whoredom.” The REB construes it as comparative: “Was this slaughtering any less a sin than your fornication?”

21.a. Heb. † yb [ h means to “pass over, offer up,” to which 20:31 adds ℓ b “in the fire”: see Day, Molech 20, and the Comment.

21.b. Lit. “to them.”

22.a. Heb. † a here means “besides” (Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 22). The LXX implies † α Ζ “this,” which Cornill (263) and others have adopted; for the confusion, cf. 47:17–19.

22.b. The LXX* does not represent † yb [ v “your abominations”; it could easily have fallen out because of its graphical similarity to the next word. Herrmann (93), followed by Zimmerli (326) and BHS, deleted.

22.c. Heb. † yh “you were,” unrepresented in Syr. Vg, is indirectly attested by the LXX in the form † yh “you lived,” an echo of v 6b. For the final position of the verb, Greenberg (281) compares 22:18. Syntactically, v 22b can only be taken as in the translation.

23.a. The LXX* does not render this exclamation, lit. “woe, woe to you!” Since Cornill (263), it has often been regarded as a gloss, “a passionate interjection of a reader” (Zimmerli 327). Kraetzschmar (150) urged its retention. It does accord with the passion of v 30α. In fact, the following divine-saying formula, which the LXX* attests, serves to reinforce the exclamation and so presupposes it.

24.a-b. For the strange pausal form bg² in L, cf. d², in the formula d [ w µ lv “for ever and ever.” The two terms bg and h mr are significantly differentiated in the text from the ℓ wmb “shrines” of v 16, though many commentators have identified them, such as Zimmerli (343), in his case as part of his


REB Revised English Bible

Heb. Hebrew

Biblica

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

Heb. Hebrew

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)

Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

L. Leningrad Codes of MT (as published in BHS) or Codex Leningradensis, B19a

cf. confer, compare
redactional theorizing. The context suggests that secular structures are in view, while the linking of the two terms with prostitution in vv 30–31 must be taken seriously. Heb. ḫ q, as something convex, may here mean a domed tent, like ḫ ḫ q used perhaps for prostitution in Num 25:8. LXX Syr. Vg interpreted as “brothel,” which Herrmann (93), Hölscher (Dichter 95), and Greenberg (281) have accepted. B. Lang (Frau Weisheit [Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1975] 137) has taken ḫ ḫ as not as an elevated place or the like but as “house, dwelling place,” comparing Akk. ṭaunu; “put up a dwelling” and Ugar. ṭaunu “erect a building.” Here he envisions a tent-structure. The Vg again interpreted in terms of a brothel.

25.a. Herrmann (94) and Greenberg (271) have taken v 25b with v 26, in which case v 26b is resumptive.

26.a. As in 23:20, ḫ ḫ “flesh” is a euphemism.

27.a. For this sense of ḫ ḫ “decree, limit,” see Liedke, Gestalt 164–65.

27.b. For ḫ ḫ “throat” as the physical seat of desire, see H. W. Wolff, Anthropology of the OT, tr. M. Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) 15–17.

27.c. The LXX ταύτα εἰργάζεται σε “who were turning you aside (from your way)” (cf. Syr. “who were restraining you”) may have been motivated by a desire to echo the sound of the Heb. twmlknh (Cornill 264). It seems rather to represent a Vorlage ταύτα ṭawmlknh, which the translator took as a hiph, “who make (you) ashamed.” It was doubtless meant to be a hoph, a less common variant of the niph.

27.d. For the construction, see GKC 131r and cf. 24:13. Greenberg (283) understands ḥ msz as “depravity” here and also in vv 43, 58; 23:27, 29, 35. While it bears that sense in 24:13, its context is sexually oriented in these cases and also in 22:9, 11; 23:44, 48–49.

28.a. The verb ḥ msz “commit fornication” takes a direct object in Jer 3:1 and possibly in Isa 23:17. The construction with “to” in vv 26, 28a and the nonrepresentation of an object in LXX Vg have

Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Akk. Akkadian
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
OT Old Testament
tr. translation, translator(s), translated by, transpose(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Heb. Hebrew
hiph Hiphil
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
induced Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:56) and others to dispense with the suffix.

29.a. Heb. יִנְפָּר is here not a proper noun “Canaan” but means “trade,” as in 17:4. The LXX*, represented by pap. 967, does render it, contra BHS. The omission in LXXB was caused by homoeoarcton.


30.a. The LXX “How can I make a covenant with your daughter?” has in view יֵפֵר “daughter” and יִמָּנֵר “circumcise,” interpreted as a sign of the covenant, and reflects the MT; so does S, followed by LXX L and Vg, “With what will I purify your heart?” which understood the verb in terms of purification (Stummer, VT 4 [1954] 36). The Tg. “How strong was the wickedness of your heart!” took the noun as a feminine variant of בֵּר “heart,” like S, and derived the verb from מָנֵר “be full,” supplying “of wickedness” from vv 23 and 57. The MT חֶּּלֶּכֶּה is pointed as a pass ptp from מָנֵר “be weak” (BDB 51a); accordingly, the NJB translates “How simple-minded you are” and the NIV “How weak-willed you

Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
contra in contrast to
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
∗24.a-b. For the strange pausal form בֵּר in L, cf. מִמְּץ, in the formula מִמְּץ וּמִשְׁעַר וּתְרַנְּס “for ever and ever.” The two terms בֵּר and מִשְׁעַר are significantly differentiated in the text from the מִסְדָּרב “shrines” of v 16, though many commentators have identified them, such as Zimmerli (343), in his case as part of his redactional theorizing. The context suggests that secular structures are in view, while the linking of the two terms with prostitution in vv 30–31 must be taken seriously. Heb. בֵּר, as something convex, may here mean a domed tent, like מִשְׁעַר used perhaps for prostitution in Num 25:8. LXX Syr. Vg interpreted as “brothel,” which Herrmann (93), Hölscher (Dichter 95), and Greenberg (281) have accepted. B. Lang (Frau Weisheit [Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1975] 137) has taken מִשְׁעַר not as an elevated place or the like but as “house, dwelling place,” comparing Akk. (run)u; “put up a dwelling” and Ugar. rwm “erect a building.” Here he envisions a tent-structure. The Vg again interpreted in terms of a brothel.
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
VT Vetus Testamentum
Tg. Targum
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
pass passive
ptcp participle
NJB New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
are.” Stummer (VT 4 [1954] 37–39) rendered “How feverish is your heart,” which Zimmerli (328) has tentatively adopted. Stummer took his cue from S and the Tg for the noun; following Zorell (Lexicon 62), he related the verb to Arab. malla “be seized by a feverish excitement” and postulated a byform l ma from a cognate Heb. l l m. He appealed to the interpretation in a Jewish medieval poem on these lines. The NJPS and the NRSV “How sick was/is your heart” have translated in this vein, and so does Greenberg (283), “How hot your ardor is.” The interpretation that has the strongest linguistic support is “How I was filled with anger against you,” which the alternative renderings in the NJPS and NJB reflect. This interpretation is based on a comparison with Akk. libbati malu “be full of anger against,” which takes an objective suffix. The same idiom reappears in Aram. t b l m “be full of wrath,” with an objective genitive (see Driver, JTS 32 [1930/31] 366; Cooke 173; Fitzmyer, CBQ 23 [1961] 460–62). This option requires a repointing of the verb as h l m a, or h l M a “I was filled”: for the final letter, see Joüon 78g. Certainly all the ancient versions except the Tg. interpret as a first sg impf.. Zimmerli (328) has objected that a note of anger in v 30 occurs too soon. But it accords with the provocation of Yahweh and his partial reaction in vv 26–27 and paves the way for his full reaction initiated in vv 36–37, the performance of which was to sate his anger (v 42).

30.b. Cf. BDB 1020b; Driver, Bib 35 (1954) 152. S rendered “independent.”

31.a. For the vocalization, cf. 6:8 and Note 6:8.b. The expected pointing occurs in û t w c b “when you did” in v 30. The resumptive nature of the content of v 31a indicates that it is coordinate with v 30b, in fact parallel with v 30a (RSV, NRSV).

31.b. LXX S Syr. Vg render on the lines of “in gathering (payments),” taking the compared

NIV The New International Version (1978)
VT Vetus Testamentum
Heb. Hebrew
NJPS New Jewish Publication Society Version
NJPS New Jewish Publication Society Version
NJB New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
Akk. Akkadian
JTS Journal of Theological Studies
CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly
Tg. Targum
sg singular or under
imperf. imperfect
Cf. confer, compare
Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
*8.b. The MT µ k y t w z h b “when you are dispersed” would normally be µ k t w z h b: the suffix has been treated as if t w were a fem. pl. ending (cf. 16:31 and GKC 911). It may simply be a case of mechanical assimilation to the µ k y t w endings in vv 3–6.
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)

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prostitute as subj rather than the “you” of the main verb. Insofar as the LXX recognized the verb $q \mid q$ in the hithp at 22:5, the rendering may indicate a Vorlage $q \mid q$ “in gathering” (Cornill 266, who observed that the same Gr. verb is used in Gen 47:14). The MT makes good sense.

31.c. Heb. אֱלַעַם is a prostitute’s fee (BDB 1072b).

32.a. The syntactical alignment of v 32 with the second-person context is not immediately clear. The LXX took as a separate sentence by adding “is like you” (cf. §). It is possible to understand the noun as a vocative. In that case the following clause is to be construed as a relative clause without ו “who”; for the idiomatic third-person references, see 22:3 and Note 22:3.c*. A number of scholars since Hitzig (109), including Zimmerli (346), have taken v 32 as a redactional comment. Greenberg (285) regards it as a textual alternative to v 33a in a conflated text.

32.b. For the use of the object sign with an indeterminate noun, cf. Joüon 125b. The LXX seems to imply לִפְנֵיהֶם “payments” for מִי זַעְמָא “strangers,” doubtless by assimilation to the theme of the context. If v 32 is to be integrated by means of a vocative address, receiving payments does not suit: this is what the addressee does not do (vv 31b; 33b; Wevers 127). Nor is it naturally characteristic of an adulterous relationship. The former objection also applies to the reading מִי זַעְמָא מ “from strangers” represented in the Syr..

32.c. Or “while under the authority of”: cf. 23:5.

33.a. Here and in v 33b מִדָּנ and מ “gift” are used: see Zimmerli (329) and Greenberg (285).

36.a. Heb. יִסְתַבְּלֶה could conceivably mean “your copper” in the sense of “your money,” as the NJB (cf. the LXX) takes it, but the term is not used thus elsewhere and it hardly fits the evidently synonymous

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
subj subject/subjective
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
hithp hithpael
Gr. Greek
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
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cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
parallelism. The Mishnaic use for the bottom of an oven, from which Cornill (266), following A. Geiger and medieval Jewish exegesis, extrapolated a physiological meaning “bottom,” is a speculative recourse. Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 65) usefully related to Akk. nuḫšū “superfluity, luxury,” here in the sense of sexual extravagance; he noted that the term often had the connotation of a liquid and so suited the verb. He was anticipated by F. Delitzsch (Cooke 174). Greenberg (285–86; “Nḫšā’ 85–86) interprets more directly in terms of juices that are sexually aroused, comparing Akk. nuḫšatu. This would suit the accompanying verb even better. The Akk. term refers to hemorrhage, according to CAD 11, 1:141–42; Greenberg claims that it refers more widely to a(n abnormal) genital discharge, usually but not necessarily bloody.

36.b. Lit. “poured out.” For ûpvh the Tg. implies ûpcj “you uncovered” (Sperber, Bible in Aramaic 4B:337). This verb occurs in parallelism with the piel of hlg “expose” at Isa 47:2; cf. the usage in Jer 13:26. Following Geiger, Cornill (266) and others have adopted it, together with a piel form yLig¾T “and you exposed,” as the Syr. rendered. The changes stand or fall according to the understanding of the accompanying noun.

36.c. For this usage, in the sense of 1 å (BHS), cf. vv 26, 28, and 29.

36.d. It is possible to take this preposition as a continuation of the preceding one (“with”; Smend 99; et al., including BHK and BHS), but the Masoretic accentuation is probably correct in differentiating the phrases, so that three separate accusations are brought.

36.e. Since Ewald (271), the MT ymdk w “and in accordance with the bloodguilt” has generally been rejected in favor of the minority Heb. reading ymd b w “and because of the bloodguilt,” with the support of LXX Vg Tg.. The latter continues the causality in a straightforward way, but Greenberg (286),

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Biblica
Akk. Akkadian
Akk. Akkadian
Akk. Akkadian


Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartsensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
cf. confer, compare
et al. et alii, and others


BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartsensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

Heb. Hebrew

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)

Tg. Targum
implicitly following Smend (99) and Bertholet ([1897] 85), has justly retained the MT as a harder reading, noting Ezekiel’s preference for \( k \) “like” in relating offense to punishment.

37.a. The LXX, including the LXX* in the light of the lacuna in pap. 967 and the presence of \( \epsilon \pi \iota\nu \) “against” in \( B \), adds “against you,” which in view of the following ptp cannot here represent the confrontation formula (cf. 13:8) but anticipates v 37b, probably by way of exegetical clarification.

37.b. Heb. \( \text{b.r} \) “be pleasing” is not used elsewhere in a sexual sense. Following H. Graetz, Bertholet ([1897] 85) and others have advocated conjectural emendation to \( \text{t.b.g} \) “you lusted,” in line with 23:5, 7, 9. Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 65) related \( \text{b.r} \) to Akk. \( \text{erpu} \) “enter in,” used of a woman who enters the house of a man not her husband. Neither expedient is compelling.

38.a. For \( \dot{y} \overline{p} \overline{v} \overline{m} \) “sentences” the LXX* has a sg form. Kraetzschmar (152) justified the MT in that two sets of criminals are specified. In 23:45 a sg noun appears before each group of criminals. Probably partial assimilation to that passage underlies the LXX*.

38.b. The omission of the second noun in the LXX* was doubtless only an inner-Greek accident, which LXXc managed to escape.

38.c. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:58), followed by Greenberg (286), justified the MT in the sense “I will make you the object of my bloody anger and jealousy.” He compared 35:6, but there the text is probably corrupt (see my note in ZAW 102 [1990] 412; Ezekiel 20–48 167). LXX Vg imply a Vorlage \( \mu \delta \beta \nu \gamma \eta \tau \tau \eta \mu \omega \) “and I will make you in blood,” which seems to have suffered metathesis from \( \gamma \tau \tau \eta \mu \omega \mu \delta \beta \nu \) “and I will bring upon you blood” (Halévy, RÉJ 24 [1892] 36; et al.; NRSV, REB). The proposal to

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**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

**B. breve** (metrically short poetic line), or before a tractate indicates Babylonian Talmud.

**ptcp** participle

cf. *confer, compare*

**Heb. Hebrew**

**Bib Biblica**

**Akk. Akkadian**

**LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT**

**sg** singular or under

**MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)**

**sg** singular or under

**LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT**

**LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT**

**LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT**

**MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)**

**ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft**

**LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT**

**Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)**

**RÉJ Revue des Études Juives**

**et al. et alii, and others**

**NRSV New Revised Standard Version (1989)**
read on these lines but to delete µ đ “blood” (Rothstein 908; et al., including BHK; cf. BHS), by comparison with 23:25, is unnecessary.

39.a. In light of v 25, a sg form, as represented in LXX Vg, is expected in place of the pl. of the MT.

40.a. The hapax legomenon q t ñ is well attested in cognate languages: see HALAT 160a.

43.a. Greenberg (288) has retained the MT’s qal form yzgr ñ wby continuing the force of the negative and understanding in terms of being agitated by fear: “and were not in dread of me.” The ancient versions imply a hiph “and you agitated me,” which is generally adopted, ever since Hitzig (111), who compared Jer 50:34. The stem appears in a noun form h zgr “agitation” at 12:18. The previous mention of h l a Al k “all these things” in an evident context of anger at v 30 supports the repointing.

43.b. Heb. ñ h occurs in Gen 47:23 as an interjection “behold”; it is an evident Aramaism (cf. Dan 2:43). It is supported by LXX Syr., but its position in the sentence is strange (cf. Zimmerli 331). Wevers (129) has observed that, as an equivalent of the normal ñ nh “behold,” it is form-critically fitting.

43.c. The pf seems to be performative: see Note 3:8.a.* In place of ñ f b “(I put) on head” one expects ñ v ñ f b “on your head,” as LXX Syr. Vg imply: cf. 9:10; 11:21; 22:31. Scribal abbreviation of an obvious element may well have occurred and later been ignored.

43.d. Here and in vv 47 and 56, ñ l W “and not” introduces a question (Hitzig 111): cf. GKC 150a.

*8.a. The pf is performative here and in v 9: see Note 22:13.a.: Waltke and O’Connor, Syntax 30.5.1.d and n. 17; Joüon 112f, g.

et al. et alii, and others

cf. confer, compare

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)

pl. plate or plural

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)


MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare

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44.a. In ḫ māḵ “like her mother” the mappiq is not written before beth: see Joüon 94h.

45. a. The MT clearly recognizes two pl. forms of t wj a “sister,” t wj a in vv 51 (Q), 55 and t wj j a in v 52b. Was the former intended as a dual, ụ yṭ wj a? In place of the expected suffixed forms ụ yṭ wj a or ụ yṭ wj j a, one finds a defectively written ụ t ending here and in vv 51 (K) and 52a, b.

45.b. “All” is added in the translation to indicate that the suffix is pl.

47.a. See Note 43.d.* above.

47.b. Heb. ṣ m ṫ is used of time, “soon,” as in Ps 81:15(14), etc. The intensifying ḥ ʿq is a hapax legomenon: HALAT 1020a compares Eth. ḥ ṭ “small.” It is not represented in LXX* Syr.. For the following waw, see Cooke 179. In the text of BHS, the annotation “a” should be deleted and “b” changed to “a.” Perhaps the editor at some stage intended “a” to accord with note “a” in BHK. Also in BHS ṣḥ yṭ wb ṣ ṭ b is a printing error for ṣ k ṭ; it is not listed in R. Wonneberger, Understanding BHS (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1984) 74.

49.a. Heb. ḥ ṭ ṣ “pride” is explained by the following nouns, whether one reploints it as constr (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:59) or regards them as appositional (Greenberg 289).
50.a. The Masoretic reading הָנְיָהַבְגִ֑יַּו Whas been assimilated to הָנְיָכְלָיַּו “and they behaved” (Cooke 179).

50.b. Or possibly “as you have seen.” Grammatically the verb may be either second person (א ש צ Q Vg; see Note 13.b. above) or first (LXX Syr. Tg.). See the Comment.

51.a. A pl. “your sisters” וְיָתָוּ֥יַּו (cf. Q וְיָתָוּ֥יַּו a) is required. See Note 45.a.* above.

52.a. Here, in v 54, and also in 39:26, the phrase הָמְלָיַּוֶּנֶּכְיַּו “bear humiliation” refers to remorse for former sins; elsewhere in the book it relates to punishment (32:24–25, 30; 34:29; 36:6–7; 44:13).

53.a. See Bracke’s evaluation of the phrase תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו в b w in ZAW 97 (1985) 233–44. He understands it in terms of Yahweh’s reversal of his previous judgment. The noun appears to function as a cognate, internal object of the intransitive verb (cf. Joüon 125q, r), with a genitive noun or suffix relating to the object of the reorientation: “change a changing with regard to.” The initial form תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו in the MT and the K forms in the rest of the verse evidently derive from הַבְיִּדְיִּיַּו “take captive,” with the sense “captivity,” which in this context would not suit the case of Sodom. The forms of תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו in Q are the expected ones: cf. תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו “perversity” from זַיִּדְיִּיַּו. For the K/Q variants, cf. R. Borger, ZAW 66 (1954) 315–16.

53.b. In place of K תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו в W and Q תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו в W, one expects a verb יָתָוּ֥יַּו b v w “and I will restore,” which the

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Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
* 13.b. K יֶת ִּיַּו k a represents the older writing of the second fem. pf, while Q gives the later form ת ִּיַּו k a.
This phenomenon recurs in vv 22a, 31 (2x), 43 (2x), 47, and 51. In vv 22b, 28, and 29, the text exhibits the later form.
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Tg. Targum
pl. plate or plural
cf. confer, compare
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
* 45. a. The MT clearly recognizes two pl. forms of תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו a “sister,” תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו a in vv 51 (Q), 55 and תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו a in v 52b. Was the former intended as a dual, תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו a? In place of the expected suffixed forms תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו a or תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו a, one finds a defectively written תַּבְיִּדְיִּיַּו ending here and in vv 51 (K) and 52a, b.

ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
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cf. confer, compare
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ancient versions represent, and this has been generally read since Ewald (273). The error presumably arose by metathesis that occurred within the K form. In place of the anomalously pl. noun ûyt ywb v one expects û t wb v. The MT seems to have confused û t Wand ûyt Wendings frequently in this passage.


55.a. In place of the MT ûyt wj a “and your sisters,” a sg û t wj a w “and your sister,” supported by LXX Syr. Vg, would fit “Sodom,” but it may stand as a casus pendens.

55.b. The form ÷bvt is used two times for the third person to artificially distinguish from the regular form h nyb wb t used for the second person in v 55b (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:60).

56.a. Heb. h [ wmv, which usually means “report,” here presumably means “mention” (BDB 1035a), if not “byword” (Greenberg 290).

56.b. See Note 43.d.* above.

56.c. A sg û nwag “your pride” is expected, rather than the pl. ûynwag in the MT, which never occurs elsewhere in the OT.

57.a. The MT t [ wmk “as at the time of” (= S Q Tg.) is strange, but there is no clear alternative.

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K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
pl. plate or plural
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
ptcp participle
Bib Biblica
Bib Biblica
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Heb. Hebrew
* 43.d. Here and in vv 47 and 56, d ú “and not” introduces a question (Hitzig 111): cf. GKC 150a.
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
OT Old Testament
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Tg. Targum
Greenberg (290) assumes that the MT is the equivalent of הָבִ֖֯לֶקֶת “now” and takes הָבִ֯רֹת “reproach” as in apposition to וַתִּ֯֫בְֻלֶֽקֶת “your wickedness.” Smend (104) observed that one expects Jerusalem rather than her wickedness to be the object of reproach. The translation follows LXX ‘א Vg: “as now,” i.e., תְּֽוָֽמִיק, which Hitzig (114) and Cornill (272) adopted. In fact, the LXX interpreted “you are the reproach,” which makes good sense, but can hardly be obtained from the MT; as Herrmann (97) commented, the LXX seems to have had the same Heb. consonants in its Vorlage. To achieve such a sense, various emendations have been suggested: see the list in Zimmerli (333). If indeed emendation is necessary, the most plausible is תְּֽוָֽמִיָּ֖ה הָמִיק “you like her” (Ehrlich Randglossen 5:60).

57.b. The MT מַרְדֹּ֔ךְ “Aram, Syria” does not fit as an enemy in this historical period: “the time of Aram’s hostility was much too ancient to be mentioned” (Cooke 178). The Syr. implies מַדְּחָ֑א “Edom,” which also occurs as a minority Masoretic reading, and this has generally been read since Cornill (272). Cf. 25:12; 36:2–15. For the confusion, cf. 27:16.

57.c. Zimmerli (333) regards the reference to the daughters of the Philistines as a gloss inspired by v 27. Its syntactical abruptness, the distance between Edom and Philistia, and the awkwardness of בְּֽיָ֖בָֽסִים “on every side,” seemingly connected with a single nation, certainly raise questions. Edom and Philistia are treated in adjacent oracles in chap. 25.

57.d. For the orthography, see GKC 72p. Joüon 80k derives from a different verb, מַדְּחַ֑א “attack,” but see D. Bodi’s study of the stem in Poem of Erra 69–81, esp. pp. 71–72.

58.a. The pf appears to be prophetic, a “pf of future certainty” (Cooke 178). מַתְּֽוָֽמִיק rendered as fut.

59.b. For the consec pf, see Note 11:17.a.* A first-person verb is required, as Q and the ancient versions attest, in place of the inappropriate second person form in K, which may simply be a mechanical error, but cf. GKC 44i. Cf. the ambivalent יָדַעְתִּי יָדַעְתִּי “I/you saw” in v 50. In the context יָדַעְתִּי יָדַעְתִּי Wis best taken as a question “will I do?” (cf. GKC 150a; Joüon 161a). Calvin (172) was aware of the possibility: “some translate … as if it had been said, ‘Shall I do with thee as thou hast done?’” It functions as a deliberate counterpart to the negative יָדַעְתִּי יָדַעְתִּי “did you not do?” in v 43b (see Form/Structure/Setting). Taken as a statement, the text refers to Jerusalem’s judgment as future, which strains the context. Cf. the flow of Lev 26:44–45.

59.c. C and the LXX (not only “LXX L 967” [BHS]) read “my covenant,” but the parallelism supports the MT. Assimilation to v 60 caused the variant.


21.a. Heb. יָקָל is lit. “for.” The LXX omits it, probably by parablepsis before יָדַע “thus” (Wevers 116). Hitzig (98) and others have taken יָקָל as emphatic, but. cf. its use at the head of the interpretive 32:11–14.

consec consecutive
pf perfect

* 17.a. The initial וָאָב “and” after a messenger formula evidently expresses continuity. It is not infrequent in Ezekiel: cf. 17:22; 25:13; 30:10, 13; 32:3.

Q “Oumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)

K Kethib (the written consonant Hebrew text of OT)

cf. confer, compare


Cf. confer, compare


Cf. confer, compare

C The Cairo Geniza

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

Cf. confer, compare


Cf. confer, compare
61.a. **LXX**967 L **Syr.** represent ὅτι ἐπὶ ἂν ὕπανσιν “when I take.” Ziegler (LXX 157) has equated LXXB, which follows MT, with the LXX*; but Katz (Bib 35 [1954] 34) considered the reading of pap. 967 original. Since Hitzig (115), the variant has been preferred. The MT, which gives a suitable sense (Cooke 181), is to be retained as a slightly harder reading. The use of ἔπαινος “take” in the variant accords with the usage in vv 16–18, 20, where it is a preliminary to further action (Greenberg 292). Doubtless that usage encouraged the variant. Here ἔπαινος means “receive (as a gift).” Greenberg has compared the sequence in Josh 13:8; 18:7.

61.b. **Heb.** לָא, in the sense of לָא, here means “in addition to.”

61.c. See the Comment.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

Chap. 16 is a literary unit, as the initial and unrepeated message-reception formula of 16:1 shows. We have to wait until 17:1 for the next. The unit divides into three sections. The basic one runs from v 2 to v 43b. It continues with—almost drifts into—a second section, vv 43bb–58. The final section consists of vv 59–63. The basic section is a variation of an oracle of judgment. Thus, a sentence of divine punishment commences in v 35, introduced by a standard link with a preceding accusation, ἦλθεν “therefore,” and by a summarizing restatement of the accusations and then a resumptive ἦλθεν “therefore.” Correspondingly, the accusation occurs in vv 15–34. It is announced in v 2, “Inform Jerusalem of its shocking practices.” What intervenes is a contrasting motif that is a not infrequent expansion of the accusation in prophetic oracles, a description of the earlier saving acts of God that serves as an incriminating background to the accusation (see Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech, tr. H. C. White [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967] 182–83).

The whole oracle of judgment is shaped as a sort of allegory. It is dominated by the metaphor of Jerusalem as a girl who, rescued from death and richly blessed by her benefactor-husband, repays him with infidelity and must lose her life. Allegory is a loose description, for at times the details of the story, parablelike, bear no exact relation to reality, while at other times reality breaks through, leaving the metaphor behind (Zimmerli 335; Hals 109). A better designation would be extended metaphor (Wilson 673; Galambush, Jerusalem 11). Gunkel (Folktale 128–31) suggested that the allegory goes back to an Israelite folktale. His suggestion needs to be reassessed in the light of Greenberg’s criticisms (300–301; cf. Hals 109).

This first oracle fits comfortably into Ezekiel’s pre-587 ministry of preparing his fellow exiles for the coming fall of Jerusalem, with its rhetorical address of the personified capital. The same cannot be said of the second oracle, which presupposes the first one and consciously supplements it. Now Jerusalem
stands on an equal footing of political desolation with its two sister cities Sodom and Samaria, and only God’s future act of restoration can remedy its hapless state (Greenberg 304). This post-587 piece is essentially a call to the exilic community to repent (v 52) in retrospect for preexilic sins worse than the sins of Sodom and Samaria (vv 44–51). It weaves into this theme the coming return from exile (vv 54, 58).

The last section, vv 59–63, is a two-part proof saying announcing God’s coming salvation and virtually closing with a recognition formula (v 62b). The actual ending emphasizes a sober concern for Israel’s continued repentance (v 63; cf. v 61a). This final piece stands at some distance from the earlier ones. While the earlier two are like chap. 20 in consisting of a pre-fall oracle of judgment and a literary sequel that thematically builds upon it an oracle of salvation with a post-fall background, the last section of chap. 16 is more reminiscent of the generalizing supplements of 34:23–38; 36:24–32; 37:24b–30, which are to be credited to the redactor(s) at work in the second generation of exiles (see Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 160, 177–78, 192). Interestingly, in that material the same proof-saying type of oracle of salvation reappears, in 34:25–30; 36:33–36, 37–38; 37:24b–30. Zimmerli, who likewise attributes vv 59–63 to Ezekiel’s disciples (353), has commented on the nature of the whole chapter as a kernel element successively supplemented as ideas are developed and expanded (334).

The form-critical structure of each piece has been overlaid with a rhetorical structuring. The form of the basic oracle has already been defined in terms of an expanded accusation (vv 3–34) and an announcement of punishment (vv 35–43b). Each of the two parts has its own introduction, a command from Yahweh to Ezekiel to inform Jerusalem of the accusation in v 2 and then one from Ezekiel to Jerusalem to hear Yahweh’s word of judgment in v 35. These two parts are broken into smaller elements by stylistic features. Greenberg (292) has observed the strategic role of the divine-saying formula in demarcating subsections of the first oracle. Thus vv 3–8, 9–14, 15–19, 35–43(ba) close with the formula, and vv 23–29 and 30–34 open with it. By implication vv 20–22, which lack the formula, are isolated as a subsection after the one in v 19 and before that in v 23. Krasovec (Antithetic Structure 96–98) has drawn attention to the antitheses that mark the major sections of this first oracle. The foundling’s abandonment to death (vv 3–5) is reversed by Yahweh’s gift of life (vv 6–14). His love (vv 6–14) is repaid by ungratefulness and unfaithfulness (vv 15–34). She takes off her clothing for her lovers (vv 15–34), while in reprisal they strip it off by force (vv 35–43). Galambush (Jerusalem 100–101) has noticed the contrast between Yahweh’s doubly passing by (rb[w] a w) in vv 6 and 8 and the repeated “every passer by” (rb[w] Al k), first Canaanite gods and then foreign nations, in vv 15 and 25; there is also a parallel between Jerusalem’s initial exposure to death in v 4 (cf. ûymd “your blood” in v 6) and her final abandonment to death in v 40 (cf. ûd “blood” in v 38).

Parunak (“Structural Studies” 261, 268) and Greenberg (294) have both characterized vv 43bb and 58 as parallel endings to adjacent pieces, with their double mention of h mz “lasciviousness” and vb w “shocking practices.” They are better taken as an inclusion or framework, so that v 43bbg has an introductory role (Hitzig 111), as in most modern versions. Its verb vb [ “you have done” is a keynote of the piece, recurring in vv 47, 48, 51, and 54. One may speak of parallel beginnings in the case of vv 43bb and 59ab, where the negative question as to Israel’s behavior, vb [ “and have you not done?” and the positive question as to Yahweh’s future behavior, vb [ W“and will I do?” are counterpointed. The resumptive reference to Israel’s behavior in v 59ab, vb [ “as you have done,” confirms this intention. This counterpointing note runs through the final piece, vv 59–63: Jerusalem broke the covenant, while Yahweh would establish the covenant, and Yahweh would remember his past grace and Jerusalem its past sin. As for the overall structuring of the chapter, Swanepoel (“Ezekiel 16” 93–94) has found a fivefold pattern. God’s mercy frames the whole (vv 3–14, 59–63). Jerusalem’s sin provides an inner frame (vv 15–34, 44–58). At the center stands the judgment of
God (vv 35–43). The double effect is to emphasize the consequences of Jerusalem’s sin and the incomparable mercy of God.

The relationship of chap. 16 to chap. 23 deserves some consideration. The latter chapter personifies Judah/Jerusalem as the unfaithful wife of Yahweh. It has a narrower focus in concentrating on Jerusalem’s political alliance with Egypt, while secondarily and redactionally it embraces religious sins. The kernel oracle of chap. 16 is concerned solely with Jerusalem, but chap. 23 envisions two sisters, first Judah and Israel (vv 2–27) and then Jerusalem and Samaria (vv 32–34). This broader concern was clearly the inspiration behind the notion of the three sisters, Jerusalem, Samaria, and Sodom, who feature in the supplementary, post-587 messages of chap. 16. The similarities between the two chapters must be correlated with the various literary stages represented in their material (for the development within chap. 23, see Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48* 45–48). At first sight there seems to be a natural overlap between 16:26–29, 37–41 and 23:12, 16, 19, 22–27, verses that belong to the basic oracle of 23:2–27. The prophet was dealing with the same subject matter in both oracles. In fact, it is probable that 23:2–27 is a specific adaptation of 16:2–43b, prompted by Zedekiah’s flirtation with Egypt. In 16:26 the affair with Egypt is confined to Hezekiah’s reign, which suggests that Zedekiah had not yet made overtures to the Egyptians. So there are echoes of the earlier oracle in the later one, though one must leave open the possibility of a little later editing from chap. 23. A fortiori, the links between 16:20–21 and 23:36, 39 are to be understood as the latter’s echoes of the former passage: 23:36–49 is comparatively later than 23:2–27. The same applies to the connections between 16:18 and 23:41, 16:38 and 23:45, and 16:40–41 and 23:46–49. The similarity between 16:36–39 and 23:28–30 falls into this category: 23:28–31 and 35 are an editorial framework for the song of the cup in 23:32–34. It is not easy to decide which way the current runs in respect of the closeness of 16:58 and 23:35. Since 23:35 seems to envision the judgment upon Jerusalem as a future event and 16:58 is set in a post-587 literary context, 23:35 probably inspired 16:58.

A related issue is the question of redaction within the kernel oracle. Zimmerli (334–35, 347–48), in the wake of Hölscher (*Dichter* 92–95), has judged that it originally lacked a political orientation and dealt solely with syncretism with the religions of Canaan and the great nations. I was influenced by his viewpoint in *Ezekiel 20–48* 48. However, Krüger (*Geschichtskonzepte* 147–51) has submitted Zimmerli’s complex set of redactional supplementation to an intensive critique (cf. Hals 107, 110). In particular he has contended that Zimmerli’s interpretation of the “lovers” in vv 37, 39–40 not as foreign nations, as the present context does, but as foreign gods (345, 346) introduces a novel and astounding notion to the book of Ezekiel. Nowhere else is the invasion of Jerusalem credited to the gods of the world powers. If foreign nations are meant, then the announcement of punishment flows on naturally from the political charge of vv 26–29, to which Zimmerli took exception. Ezekiel inherited a developed prophetic tradition in which sexual infidelity was used as a metaphor both for Israel’s adoption of Canaanite religion (*Hos* 1:2; 2:7–15[5–13]; 3:1; *Jer* 2:20) and for political alliances with foreign powers (*Hos* 8:9; *Jer* 2:33, 36). His blending of both themes is an instance of his frequent dependence on earlier prophecy. The very length of the basic oracle may reflect a degree of literary expansion, as Ezekiel transposed the oral message to written form, but its essential shape seems to have been preserved.

The detailed development of chap. 16 may be presented as follows.

| 16:2–43b | Jerusalem’s resistance to Yahweh’s grace and coming retribution |
| 16:2     | Ezekiel’s accusatory commission |
| 16:3–34  | Grace and ingratitude |

*cf. confer, compare*
Comment

2–43bα This initial oracle lays a foundation for the whole chapter. It is rhetorically addressed to Jerusalem and describes it by the metaphor of an unfaithful wife who must receive the legal punishment for her crime. Whereas earlier prophets had used the metaphor for both the religious and political entanglements of Israel in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., Ezekiel not only combines the two types of aberration but extends the metaphor back in time. So he “provides” Yahweh’s covenant partner “with a biography” (Greenberg 299). This biography is presented as an accusation in vv 3–34, and its imminent sequel as a forecast of judgment in vv 36–43bα. Not the covenant nation but its capital is the focus of the oracle. Ezekiel must have been influenced by the description of Jerusalem as a prostitute in Isa 1:21, where, however, infidelity to the moral and social standards of the covenant were in view, rather than religion or international politics.

2–3aα A rhetorical address of Jerusalem in terms of indictment and sentence occurs again in 22:2–16 and begins in a similar formal way in 22:2. There an analysis of contemporary sins is given, whereas here a historical perspective is taken. In this respect the oracle is similar to that of 20:3–31, where a review of Israel’s past history is made the basis of a contemporary indictment (20:4, 30). To “inform” or “cause to know” (יָדֵה) is the duty of the priest in communicating Israel’s cultic traditions in 22:26; 44:23 (cf. Hos 4:6). When it is used in Ezekiel’s oracles of judgment, as here, it takes on a forensic tone (also 22:2; cf. Job 10:2; 13:23), as if in reminiscence of a religious court where priests were the judges (cf. 44:24; Deut 17:9; 19:17). This priest-turned-prophet maintained a priestly role even as he delivered prophetic oracles of judgment in God’s name.

3ab–8 The content of the accusation breaks down into six sections, most of them installments in a continuing story, and this is the first. The first two sections, vv 3ab–14, major in the preliminary gracious intervention of God, turning an unwanted baby girl into a queen of world renown. To this end a negative word picture of the family background and post-birth experiences of the personified Jerusalem is painted in vv 3ab–5.

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
“Listen, Jerusalem, if you want to know your nature, to see what your behavior is like and to what end you are rushing, inspect your family tree” (Polk, *CBQ* 45 [1983] 575). Jerusalem’s background had been completely pagan, a bad omen for its future history. Jerusalem had paganism in its blood. The first part of the eventual accusation, vv 15–22, will implicitly develop the influence of Jerusalem’s heredity by describing its adoption of Canaanite religious practices. Ezekiel is exploiting the historical tradition of the Jebusite city-state of Jerusalem, which was not vanquished till the time of David (Josh 15:63; Judg 1:21; 2 Sam 5:6–8). In place of the standard phrase “land of Canaan,” mention is made of “the land of the Canaanite” in order to emphasize Jerusalem’s pagan origins (Greenberg 274). The Canaanites, Amorites, and Hittites have a firm place in the pentateuchal lists of pre-Israelite ethnic groups, who had to be driven out to avoid Israel’s compromising its faith in Yahweh (cf. Gen 15:20–21; Exod 3:8; 23:23–24; Deut 7:1–5). In Num 13:29 (probably J) the Hittites and Amorites are located along with the Jebusites in the hill country. Jerusalem is regarded as Amorite in Josh 10:5, while “Uriah the Hittite” lived in Jerusalem in David’s time (2 Sam 11–12; for the extrabiblical background of the two groups, see *ABD* 1:199–202; 3:219–33).

The oracle moves from place of birth to circumstances of birth, which are equally inauspicious. The passage is framed by an inclusion, “on the day you were born.” This is how E. W. G. Masterman (*PEFQS* 1918, 118–19) described the treatment of a newborn baby among the contemporary fellahin:

> As soon as the navel is cut, the midwife rubs the child all over with salt, water and oil, and tightly swathes it in clothes for seven days; at the end of that time she removes the dirty clothes, washes the child and anoints it, and then wraps it up again for seven days—and so on till the fortieth day.

A litany of negative clauses replaces such norms. These omissions are interpreted as a lack of kindly compassion, which by implication had to await Yahweh’s intervention to materialize. Exposure of unwanted babies, especially girls, was common in the ancient world (cf. Greenberg 275). This one was abandoned, still attached to the placenta, and left to die. In the ancient Near East, washing, cleaning, and clothing the newborn child had the force of legitimation on the parents’ part. By failing to do so they had relinquished all rights to the child (Malul, *JSOT* 40 [1990] 106–10). This part of the story has no historical counterpart, except as a commentary on the Canaanite lifestyle. It serves as a negative foil to Yahweh’s positive intervention. To find an allusion to the emigration of Jacob’s family from Canaan (Gen 45:6–7; Greenberg 301) is eisegesis.

Yahweh intervenes for good, rescuing this “little savage” (Eichrodt 205) from certain death and ordaining for her abundant life. God’s seeing, here and also in v 8, reverses the lack of a kindly “eye” in v 5. Now at last the baby finds kindness and help. The gory mess in which the newborn was left to wallow has the connotation of ritual uncleanness, like that of menstrual blood (Lev 12:2–8; cf. Luke 2:22–24). The divine decree of empowerment to live and grow, despite such an encumbrance, is reminiscent of the command to be fruitful and multiply in the priestly account of creation (Gen 1:22, 28; יִלָּדְוּ וּלֹא לוֹדְוּ “and multiply” corresponding to יִלָּדְוּ וּלֹא לוֹדְוּ “and grow” here), which in turn is invoked upon Jacob (Gen 28:3; 35:11; cf. 17:2, 6). Malul (*JSOT* 46 [1990] 111–13) has observed that the Akkadian equivalent of the

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*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
cf. confer, compare

*Anchor Bible Dictionary*

*Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*
cf. confer, compare

*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
cf. confer, compare

Biblical Studies
causative form of the verb יָּתֵר “live,” bullutum “keep alive,” has the connotation of adoption; it is sometimes accompanied by rubbum “raise,” which accords with the intransitive verb בּוּר “grow” used two times here. Moreover, to adopt a newborn child while still ina meṣû u daµmeµsû “in its amniotic fluid” or ina meṣû “in its amniotic fluid and birth blood” meant that the baby could not be reclaimed by its natural parents (Malul, JSOT 46 [1990] 108–9, 111, 123 n. 86). The comparison with “a plant of the countryside” (טַמרֵן ) ironically echoes the baby’s abandonment in the countryside (טַמרֵן ) in v 5: where death lurked for the human outcast, paradoxically an opportunity for life was wrested. Yahweh’s passing by hardly alludes to the tradition of God’s finding Israel in the wilderness (Hos 9:10; Deut 32:10; cf. Jer 31:2; Krüger, Geschichtskonzepte 184). The divine intervention, preparing and preserving it for its destiny, refers to Yahweh’s providential watching over the pagan city-state.

The creative command turned into fact, and the baby grew into adolescence and sexual maturity, marked by breasts and pubic hair (cf. Isa 7:20). The onset of menstruation strikes a somewhat negative note that will not be resolved until the washing of v 9, while the nakedness will receive a symbolic resolution in v 8 and an actual one in v 10. What was not done at birth or in the years that followed would eventually be made good when Yahweh had direct dealings with Jerusalem.

8 The woman is the city, preserved and now come of age and reveling in its cityhood. Its privileges are due to Yahweh’s prior decree, who had his own plans for its future. The story now joins up with history: in David’s reign Jerusalem was incorporated into Israel, becoming its capital city. “You became mine”—the veritable “city of God,” as a song of Zion acclaims it (Ps 46:5[4]; cf. Ps 48:2, 9[1, 8]). The union is celebrated as a marriage rite. For a man to spread the hem of his garment over a woman was a symbolic gesture that constituted a proposal of marriage. He thus extended over her both his authority and his willingness to support her (cf. Ruth 3:9; Kruger, JNSL 12 [1984] 84–85). Behind the marriage pact lies the divine covenant made with Israel, which received reaffirmation through Jerusalem’s becoming Israel’s capital (cf. 2 Sam 5:12). Here לִּפְרָדְתָּה, the standard word for “covenant,” primarily means “marriage pact.” Although such a meaning can no longer be found in Mal 2:14, the usage in Prov 2:17 supports such a meaning here (see Weinfeld, TDOT 2:255–56; Glazier-McDonald, Malachi 100–102). The only parallel for the swearing of an oath in a marriage context occurs in Gen 31:53b, concerning an agreement pertaining to marriage relationships between husband and father-in-law in Gen 31:43–50, 53b–54 (see ABD 1:1194–95). The final clause, “and she became mine,” evokes the solemn wording of the marriage pact, “She is my wife and I am her husband,” which is attested in the Jewish marriage contracts from Elephantine (see Yaron, JSS 3 [1958] 2–4; contrast Hos 2:4[2]).
The second installment largely shows how Yahweh discharged his legal commitment to be responsible for his new wife. This, rather than a wedding ceremony, is now in view. She is cleansed of her ritual and natural impurity with water and oil, to make up for the deprivation that marked her newborn state (v 4). The one who lacked swathing bands and grew up naked (vv 4, 7) is now dressed in the best of clothes, headgear, and footwear. Her royal rank is indicated by the multicolored robe, worn by the royal bride in Ps 45:15(14) (cf. Judg 5:30); to trace parallels with the vocabulary of the tabernacle furnishings is not particularly helpful. A complete set of jewelry is lavished upon her, culminating in a royal diadem. V 13a pauses to savor these gifts of jewelry and clothing, summarizing them in reverse order. Then the provision of food is mentioned. Fine flour or semolina was included in the food supply of Solomon’s household in 1 Kgs 5:2(4:22). Finally, Jerusalem’s beauty is celebrated and lingered over in a series of clauses. Under Yahweh’s extravagant care, she blossomed into a peerless beauty. Just as handsomeness in Israelite culture was one qualification for kingship (1 Sam 16:12; 2 Sam 14:25), so was beauty for queenly rank. Here Jerusalem’s role as a royal capital comes to the fore (Brownlee 228; Krüger, Geschichtskonzepte 183). Moreover, the perfect beauty that won international fame evokes the acclaim of Jerusalem in expressions of the theology of Zion, as “the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth” (Lam 2:15; Pss 48:3[2]; 50:2). The motif of perfect beauty is reapplied to the great city of Tyre in 27:3, 4, 11. Of course, this affirmation of Zion theology is seriously qualified by the rest of the oracle and by Ezekiel’s overall intent to look behind it to a murky past that was more determinative for Jerusalem’s grim future. The closing note of this section is the debt that the foundling-wife owed to her patron-husband. All was of grace. As Paul wryly reminded the Corinthian Christians, “What do you have that you did not receive? … You are filled, … you are rich, … you have become kings” (1 Cor 4:7–8; cf. Ezek 31:7–9).

The narrative takes a scandalous turn in this third installment of the story, as the oracle moves from redemptive grace to accusation and from positive divine acts to Jerusalem’s negative reactions. The linchpin of the development is her renown and beauty, which featured in v 14 and now in reverse in v 15. There is a new independence, a wrongful self-confidence that leads to the transfer of her sexual vigor (vv 7–8) to the street. The false trust in her beauty means that the “gift replaces the giver” (Zimmerli 342; cf. 33:13).

This section is dominated by the stem הִנָּה relating to sexual intercourse outside marriage and to prostitution: it occurs four times in vv 15–19 and six times in vv 15–22. In 6:9; 20:30 Ezekiel applies the imagery to the worship of gods other than Yahweh, and it is so used here. The mention of וָמָה “high places” is an early indication (cf. 6:3, 6 and the Comment; 20:29). The syncretistic incorporation of Canaanite elements into local worship is in view. The “images” of v 17 (cf. 7:20) and the “fragrant offerings” of v 19 (cf. 6:13) develop the theme. The description of the images as “male” is best understood as a reflex of the sexual metaphor, rather than indicating the exclusion of goddesses. An interpretation as phallic symbols (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:55; et al.) does not suit the reference to clothing them in v 18 (Schottroff, ‘Gedenken’ 320). Another dominant motif is the threefold taking of vv
16–18. What Yahweh had given in vv 10–13a, his consort now grabbed and perverted. The clothes became curtains (cf. Exod 36:8, 35) and also costumes for the images (cf. Jer 10:9). The metal jewelry was melted down into images, whether cast of solid metal or plated. Two other links with earlier endowments are made. First, the rubbing oil of v 9 was diverted to pagan religious use. A new element is added, perfume that involved burning spices as a fumigant (cf. Prov 27:9; Exod 30:37–38; Nielsen, Incense 89–94). Doubtless, perfume was added as the second of a standard word pair (cf. 23:41; Prov 27:9). Since food is specified in the next verse, the reference here to the religious use of incense can hardly refer to meal offerings (cf. Lev 21:1–2). It presumably relates to a concoction used for burning in the incense burners associated with the high places (see 6:4, 6 and the Comment). In Isa 57:9 oil and perfumes are associated with the cult of Molech, which is the topic of the next section. Second, the food of v 13a was turned into meal offerings, properly made of oil, spice, and fine flour and burned on the altar to produce fragrant fumes (cf. Lev 2:1–2). The inclusion of honey, prohibited in the priestly legislation (Lev 2:11), may be a reference to their heterodox nature. The use of meal offerings at Judean high places and in various pagan rites seems to be implied in 2 Kgs 16:4; 18:4; 22:17; 23:5; Jer 1:16, etc. (see M. Haran, VT 10 [1960] 117–18).

20–22 The next installment is devoted to a fresh development that is regarded as the ultimate outrage. Reference is made to the cult of Molech that was practiced in the Valley of Hinnom to the immediate south of Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 7:31, 32). It involved the sacrifice of children of both sexes. V 21 suggests that this sacrificing occurred in two stages, ritual slaughter and then burning (Cooke 169; Heider, Cult 366 n. 722, 374). “Devoting” (הָרָב [h]; cf. 20:26) is a technical term, short for “devoting in the fire” (20:31 and elsewhere). This new “taking” does not correspond precisely to a gift bestowed by Yahweh, though mention of sons and daughters smoothly follows the marriage of v 8. Ezekiel may have been influenced to set the topic here by the fact that already in Jer 2:23–25; Lev 20:5 (H) the Molech cult is described in sexual imagery. So its mention in this context is natural for himself and his audience.

Emotional outrage is expressed in referring to children whom “you had borne me” and “my sons” and also in the vehement question of vv 20b–21 and in the term “abominations” in v 22. It surfaces too in the closing recapitulation of Jerusalem’s “young days” (vv 6–7), before Yahweh’s grace had transformed her life. This recapitulation nicely illustrates the purpose of the early stages of the story, to accentuate the accusation as a surprising disappointment (Hals 106). “How could you!” is the implicit message. If Jerusalem had remembered what she was apart from God’s grace, she would not have behaved like this. While the accusation of v 22a sums up vv 15–21, the recapitulation may intend to pinpoint the sins of this particular section, vv 20–21. She who had been at death’s door by her parents’ whim should have known better than to deliver to death her patron’s and her own children.

23–29 An emotional residue lingers in v 23, with its loaded accusing vocabulary and threat of divine reprisal. It seems to echo the divine cry מִלְתֵּךְ וְעִבְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלָיִם “Woe to you, Jerusalem,” in a context of
marital infidelity similar to Jer 13:27. Eventually the account settles to its new topic, to which this fifth installment turns. It explores another aspect of the open marriage, one already described by earlier prophets in sexual terms, alliance with foreign powers (cf. Hos 8:9; Jer 22:20; 30:14; and probably 2:33). Alliance meant dalliance. Jerusalem, as the center of royal administration and so of foreign policy, could reasonably be held responsible. That this dalliance runs parallel to the former one of vv 15–22 is indicated by the repetition of “your beauty” and “any passer by” from v 15. Exactly as in vv 15–22, the stem הָּלָּכַּה “be sexually promiscuous” occurs six times. “After” in v 23 has a literary sense rather than a chronological one. It connotes degree: Jerusalem goes from bad to worse. There is an impression of nymphomania, as Jerusalem grows increasingly promiscuous (נָּבָּרָה “add,” vv 25, 26, 29: a parody of the growing of v 7?) but fails to find satisfaction (vv 28, 29). The embarrassment of the Philistine cities at Jerusalem’s outrageous behavior in v 27 is a motif that will be exploited later in the chapter. It corresponds to Ezekiel’s claim in 5:6–7 that Jerusalem’s sin was greater than that of other nations (cf. Amos 3:9–10). The obscenities “open her legs” (v 25) and “big penises” (v 26), the extreme term הָּלָּכַּה “lasciviousness” (v 27), and even כ “all” (three times in vv 24–25) contribute to the tone of excess in which Jerusalem’s three instances of political affairs are described (vv 26, 28–29). The reference to Chaldea provides an updating of Hosea’s and Jeremiah’s condemnation of Israel’s and Judah’s seesawing between Egypt and Assyria (Hos 7:11; Jer 2:18).

After the first of these affairs, Yahweh is driven by exasperation to intervene with an interim punishment, with which Amos 4:6–11 may be compared in principle. That Jerusalem does not learn her lesson but continues in further affairs gives the reader a sense of foreboding as to her fate. There is a historical progression in the political overtures, though links with Assyria predated those with Egypt. Presumably the former’s longer control of Judah dictated the order, while Zedekiah’s flirtation with Egypt that lies at the base of chap. 23 had not yet occurred. Moreover, in v 28 Judah’s subordination to Assyria during Manasseh’s long reign is doubtless in view. V 27 shows that Hezekiah’s reign is in mind in v 26, specifically his attempt to get Egyptian help for his rebellion against Assyria, which Isaiah condemned in Yahweh’s name (Isa 30:1–7; 31:1–3). Sennacherib’s annals shed light on v 27:

His [Hezekiah’s] towns which I had plundered I took away from his country and gave them (over) to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Sillibel, king of Gaza. Thus I reduced his country…. (ANET 288a; Eissfeldt, PJ 27 [1931] 58–64)

Here the Assyrian punitive reprisal in 701 B.C. for rebellion and a pro-Egyptian policy is credited to Yahweh’s providential control. The “daughters of the Philistines” are the independent cities of Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza (Fitzgerald, CBQ 37 [1975] 171). With v 29 we reach Jehoiakim’s three-year submission to Nebuchadnezzar (c. 603–601) and Zedekiah’s submission from 597 till the date of this oracle, perhaps with echoes of earlier contacts with Babylon (cf. Greenberg 282). As with earlier prophets, secular options for Judah, a tiny state tossed in the wash of world powers, are left out of

cf. confer, compare

V Vulgate


PJ Palästina-Jahrbuch

CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly

c. circa (about, approximately)

cf. confer, compare
consideration. All is subsumed under the prophetic single-minded concept of Yahweh’s theological authority, which Judah resists at the cost of its ruin.

30–34 The provocation Yahweh felt at Jerusalem’s political affairs was expressed in vv 23–29, not only by the strong language used to describe its policies but also by the reference to angering him in v 26. It is renewed in the emotional outburst of this next section, which corresponds in its tone to the general comment of v 22. Now it is appropriately expanded to a full section, in line with increased provocation. The solid structures of vv 24–25 are recalled and linked with professional prostitution. Hosea had characterized Israel’s political switching as the behavior of a “silly and senseless dove” (Hos 7:11) and also their religious promiscuity as “without sense” (Hos 4:11–14), while Jeremiah protested the unnaturalness of Judah’s religious deviations (Jer 18:13–15). Here Jerusalem’s politics is in view, and scorn is poured on its failure to play out the metaphorical role consistently. The verb djlv “bribe” in v 33 links the political reality of the tribute (djv) Judah had to pay as vassal to its imperial overlords (2 Kgs 16:8; cf. hjm “tribute” in the case of the Northern Kingdom at 2 Kgs 17:3–4; Hos 10:6). Such financial loss hardly fitted the figure of the professional prostitute who trades her favors for fees (÷nta; cf. Hos 9:1; Mic 1:7). The point being made is not that the illustration breaks down. Rather, Jerusalem, Yahweh’s royal consort, gained nothing from her infidelity. She who had been showered with royal wealth squandered it on lovers and had little left. There is an implicit reference to the gold and silver of v 13 (cf. v 17). 2 Kgs 16:8 specifies silver and gold as tribute to Assyria, and 2 Kgs 23:33, 35 as an indemnity (v ḫnt) to Egypt, while in 597 B.C., according to 2 Kgs 24:13, gold temple vessels were confiscated by the victorious Babylonians. Such impoverishment was proof positive of the folly of playing at international politics. The “adulterous wife” (v 32) who rushed into affairs (v 34, “not solicited”) had taken on a role she could not handle properly, to her own advantage. Fierce scorn is expressed finally in the double ûph “contrary” that frames v 34. It is a term that Isaiah had used of Hezekiah’s overtures to Egypt (µkkph “How perverse you are!” [NJB], Isa 29:16), overtures that drained “riches” and “treasures” from Judah but proved a fruitless venture (Isa 30:6–7).

35–43 The judicial sentence that follows falls into an extended passage of cause and effect (vv 36a + 37–42) and a general summary (v 43a + b1). The sentence is formally introduced by a messenger formula (v 36a1) and closed by a divine-saying formula (v 43b2). By way of transition, v 35 itself, before its summons to hear the sentence, moves from cause to effect by its “therefore” and sums up the overall accusation with the vocative “prostitute.”

36 The previous accusations of vv 15–22 + 23–34 are summed up in a triple recapitulation. The second accusation of political affairs comes first, as still fresh in the mind; it picks up the term “lovers” from v 33. Then the first accusation of religious infidelity is mentioned in its two parts, idol worship, which hints at the “images” of v 17 but translates them into Ezekiel’s regular term “idols,” and then the particularly heinous deviation of v(v 20–)21, child sacrifice. The ensuing portrayal of punishment is mainly angled as reprisal for foreign politics. This perspective serves to counterbalance the representation of the former accusation of indigenous paganism as a development of the introductory vv 3–14, in terms of perversion of Jerusalem’s divine rescue and endowment and of reversion to its Canaanite origin.

37–38 The first stage of Jerusalem’s punishment fits the crime by involving her international lovers, who are brought from all around, as they had been invited earlier (v 34). The lovers are divided into

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
NJB New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
present lovers, the Chaldeans, and ex-lovers, now rejected (cf. 23:22). The public exposure of the naked body was a symbolic act of legal punishment for adulterers (see Kruger, *JNSL* 12 [1984] 82): it reversed the husband’s provision of clothing (v 10) and took away the wife’s married identity. In terms of Hos 2:12(10), “I will uncover her immorality in the sight of her lovers” (cf. Jer 13:26; Nah 3:5). Adultery was a capital crime for both men and women (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22), and so was murder, in this case of Jerusalem’s children (v 36). Yahweh, as both cuckolded husband and sovereign judge, would pass the double sentence, with the jealous fury of a husband scorned (cf. Prov 6:34).

39–41a In the prophetic representation of judgment there is usually “a kind of synergism in which divine and human actions are forged into a single whole or the divine intent of judgment is wrought out through human agency” (Miller, *Sin and Judgment* 138). So here the reprisals of vv 37b–2–38 were to be carried out by the assembled lovers. The punishment is presented both on the human plane, as a reaping of the baneful crop Jerusalem had sown by playing off one nation against another, and as a providential fate, masterminded by the divine victim of Jerusalem’s sins. The final downfall of the city by military means is portrayed as a fitting retribution: the brothels of vv 24–25, 31 are destroyed, and marital assets bestowed in vv 10–13 are lost. The clock was to be put back. Jerusalem would forfeit all the perquisites of royal rank given by the God of Israel. The “crowd” of v 40 is both a legally constituted assembly and an army. In the former role they stone the offender to death, as in Deut 22:21, 24. In the latter role they resort to sword and fire (cf. 2 Kgs 25:9). The hacking of the corpse is unparalleled as a judicial feature. Greenberg (287) compared the quartering of a hanged traitor in old British law. There may simply be a literary mingling of metaphor and reality, a fusion of socio-legal and military roles (cf. 23:47). The witness of other, uninvolved nations (“women”) recalls 5:8, 14. In this context it signifies reversal of the international renown of v 14 (cf. v 27; Lam 4:12).

41b–42 Such radical measures as the international humiliation and “killing” of Jerusalem were the only way Yahweh could end the capital’s commitment to foreign involvement. *V* 42 is not an assurance of salvation, as von Oreli (909) and Zimmerli (347) claimed, but “a notice that God will not rest until he has afflicted the extreme penalty” (Greenberg 288). Krüger (*Geschichtskonzepte* 194) has observed in confirmation that the death of Jerusalem has already been announced in vv 40–41. The verse aligns with 5:13 and 24:13 as a grounding of reprisal. There had to be a spending of the jealous fury of v 38, a final resolution of the problem that provoked Yahweh to pain-filled anger in v 26. This glancing back over the earlier material shows that theodicy is the issue at stake in this oracle. Only the final destruction of Jerusalem could wipe clean the slate of accumulated debt owed to its divine patron.

43ab The concluding recapitulation of cause and effect goes back further to v 22. It observes the aggravation of the offense caused by ignoring the benevolence of the divine victim (cf. Judg 8:34). Jerusalem owed everything to God, and to treat him as she had was unconscionable. He could only let justice take its terminal course. As David solemnly stated at the judicial slaying of the Amalekite, “Your blood be on your own head” (2 Sam 1:16).

43bb–58 This next piece has been composed in conscious dependence on the former oracle. It
speaks from a later point in history. There was no longer any need to belabor the punishment of Jerusalem or to project it into the future. The capital’s fall from grace was now known to all of Ezekiel’s constituency.

43b–45 This message starts from the same premise as the first: the pre-Israelite alien family background of the capital. The former oracle had utilized it with a hint of Jerusalem’s reversion to type in adopting a Canaanized form of worship, complete with child sacrifice, and in failing to stay within traditional Israelite parameters of loyalty to Yahweh. There was a lot more mileage to be gotten out of the concept, and so the prophet eventually returns to it. In relation to v 3 the reminder “Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite” exhibits the inversion typical of Hebrew recapitulation (cf. Talmon, *Qumran* 358–78, esp. 360). It also serves to put the focus on the mother, emphasizing the female spouse. This permits a pattern to be demonstrated in the way wives treated their husbands and children in this dysfunctional family to which Jerusalem belonged. The personified capital’s own behavior is summed up from the first oracle in the strong terms † vb [ vō “abominations, shocking practices” (vv 2, 22, 36) and hî mask “lasciviousness” (v 27). This outrageous behavior was no surprise. It was reminiscent of the sexual and religious lifestyle with which Israel tarred the indigenous population of Canaan (Lev 18:25–28; Deut 12:31; 18:9, 12; 20:18).

The proverb defines a person in terms of heredity and upbringing, and so focuses on the next generation (W. McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach*, OTL [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970] 29). A fleeting vignette is given of the old mother’s lifestyle. In sexual terms she is typified as leaving her husband (not Yahweh, in this case) and in religious terms as sacrificing her sons. This malignant matriarchy continued into the next generation of Jerusalem’s “sisters.” It is clear that this message, though it starts from the same premise as the first, will develop along a different path. Jerusalem is no longer a foundling abandoned by parents. Nor has it suffered capital punishment. It lives on in the exiles who survived the city’s fate. It is a member of a family of three matriarchal women who all bear their mother’s ugly likeness. The notion is a development of the two sisters, Judah and Israel or Jerusalem and Samaria, in the preexilic oracles of 23:2–27, 32–34.

46–47 Structurally, this pair of verses expresses in brief what vv 48–51b will expand into a fuller form (cf. Parunak, “Structural Studies” 262, who excludes v 51b). Both the abstract and the expansion claim that Jerusalem’s sin was worse than that of Samaria or Sodom. These two fallen cities were notorious for their sins that led to their destruction—but fallen Jerusalem was no better! The abstract moves in three stages, first introducing Jerusalem’s two ugly sisters and their female brood, next identifying her as a third ugly sister, and finally branding her as the worst of the litter. Samaria, the witch of the north, is called the bigger of the two sisters, not in terms of age but as capital of a nation. Sodom, the witch of the south, historically the older, was a smaller entity, a city-state. Both had satellite cities associated with them, which are called “daughters” (cf. Num 21:25; Ps 48:12[11]; see Fitzgerald, *CBQ* 37 [1975] 172). Both cities were bywords for wickedness. Jerusalem had been compared to them by earlier prophets. In *Isa* 1:10 Jerusalem is called Sodom, while in *Mic* 6:16 it is accused of adopting the practices of Omri and Ahab, who both ruled from Samaria (1 Kgs 16:24). Jeremiah had compared the prophets of Samaria and Jerusalem and characterized them as Sodom-like (Jer 3:13–14). In a prose version of the same theme Jerusalem is stigmatized as more guilty than her sister Samaria (Jer 3:11). Ezekiel gathers up such prophetic traditions (cf. too *Deut* 32:32), especially from Jeremiah, and utilizes

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cf. confer, compare
OTL Old Testament Library (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Westminster)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
*CBQ* Catholic Biblical Quarterly
them here, in claiming Jerusalem’s parity in wickedness and passing to its predominance. The older message needed to be sounded afresh, for a purpose he will disclose later.

48–51b The theme is forcibly reiterated at greater length and introduced by a divine oath. Jerusalem is furnished with “daughters,” or dependent cities, so that the nation of Judah is in view. Now the order “Samaria-Sodom” is stylistically inverted. Yes, Sodom was not so bad as Jerusalem (v 48). Yes, Samaria was not so bad as Jerusalem (v 51a). Yes, Jerusalem was worse than both (v 51b). The inversion that put Sodom first gives an opportunity to expatiate on Sodom’s fatal sins, which is done in a relatively minimizing fashion (vv 49–50). The sketch of Sodom’s (and Samaria’s) sins in v 45b leads the reader to expect a denunciation on sexual lines, as in Gen 19:1–11. Certainly Yahweh’s getting rid of Sodom “when he saw” their behavior (v 50) appears to echo Gen 18:21. Moreover, Sodom’s shocking or abominable conduct in v 50 may well be a reflection of homosexuality (cf. Lev 18:22; 20:13; Greenberg 289). But the specification of Sodom’s sins highlights the city’s arrogance or pride in materialistic comfort and excess, coupled with a lack of concern for the poor. This picture of the urban wealthy who have no concern for the underclass at their door (cf. Luke 16:19–21) may reflect a variant tradition, but it is more likely a projection of the social sins of Jerusalem (cf. Isa 1:17, 23; 3:16; 32:9–14; Jer 22:13–18). “Pride” (םג) significantly recurs in v 56 with reference to Jerusalem. (In dependence on Ezekiel, Sir 16:8 characterizes Sodom’s sin as pride.) In Jerusalem’s case such sins were compounded by the religious and political sins of vv 15–34.

51b–52 The point of this tirade against Jerusalem as the ugliest of three ugly sisters now emerges. This section is a double presentation of a call to repentance framed by accusation. It has an ABA′/ABA structure. The A element reaffirms Jerusalem’s peerlessness. It cites the verb used in Jer 3:11 with reference to the Northern Kingdom’s showing itself less guilty (ד) than Judah. In keeping with a call to Jerusalem and a comparison of cities, now the verb is used with Jerusalem as subject. The A′ variation uses a forensic synonym “arbitrate on someone’s behalf,” here with the sense of providing extenuating circumstances. The B element is a summons to repentance. So the structure runs as follows: (A) Jerusalem made them look guiltless (vv 51b, 52a); (B) so she must bear her humiliation (vv 52a1, 52b); (A′) because she exculpated them (v 52a2) or (A) because she made them look guiltless (v 52b).

The first oracle had mentioned the daughters of the Philistines being ashamed of Jerusalem’s lascivious behavior (v 27). This notion of shame is now reused and applied to the Jerusalem that survived in the form of the 587 B.C. exiles. Jerusalem too must come to the point of shamefulness. There appears to be a reminiscence of Jeremiah’s complaint that Judah before its downfall had “a harlot’s brow, refusing to be ashamed” (Jer 3:3; cf. 6:15; 8:12). In Ezekiel’s prophesying, the appeal aligns with his preexilic forecast that Judah’s exiled survivors would come to regard their past with revulsion (6:9). The scales would fall from their eyes, and they would at last see themselves as God saw them. This deflated self-awareness for which Ezekiel now pleads was the only spiritually sane course for them to take. It was a call that Ezekiel’s editors would reinforce for the exiles in 36:32.

53–54 The final part of the message also consists of twin statements, a brief one in vv 53–54 and an expanded one in vv 55–58. It turns to a positive future, for Sodom, for Samaria (cf. 37:15–22), and,

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*cf. confer, compare*
almost as an afterthought, for Jerusalem. There is an ironic handling of the promise of a return from exile. By now Ezekiel’s hearers were presumably accustomed to such good news, so that this sardonic variation could have full effect. If Jerusalem was to be restored after plunging to such sinful depths, it was only fair that lesser offenders should participate in restoration and even take precedence. Here Jer 3:11–12 may have been influential, where Israel, less guilty that Judah, is invited to return. The presence of Jerusalem’s similarly blessed neighbors would prod her into constant awareness of her sin of deepest dye, as well as gratify them.

Ezekiel affirmed this message in a more straightforward context at 20:43. The restored exiles should never forget their shameful past. In Pauline terms, they should continually thank God that, once slaves to sin, they had been redeemed (Rom 6:17–18). Ezekiel’s disciples underlined this truth in 36:31 and 39:26, in the latter case echoing the phraseology of 16:34.

55–58 The elaboration covers similar ground for emphatic reiteration. Vv 56–57 go their own way in glancing at Jerusalem’s past and present. Jerusalem, living in her glasshouse, should not have been so ready to throw stones at Sodom. Her complacent gloating was a thing of the past, now that she had suffered Sodom’s fate. The verbal ridicule and contempt shown to Jerusalem by her neighbors, the cities of Edom and Philistia, are not the subject of a message of consolation to the Judeans, as in 25:12–17 (cf. 35:1–14; 36:5), but simply just desserts. The exiles dare not complain. Like an ex-boxer whose broken nose and cauliflower ears remain to give away his former profession, they would take back to the land as scars regret and contrition for the radical sinfulness that marked their past. The necessity of repentance in the context of an oracle of salvation, so that salvation is made a presupposition of, or motivation for, repentance—instead of repentance being a condition for repentance—is striking. It has a later parallel in Isa 44:21–22 and a precedent in Jer 3:12, 14, on which the present passage may well depend.

59–63 This final, editorial piece stands at some distance from the earlier two, though in clear continuity with them. It speaks with prophetic authority, as the initial messenger formula and the final divine-saying formula indicate. It provides a generalizing, theologically reflective conclusion, tying up loose ends of the former pieces and repeating some of their key lessons.

59–61 First, the ironical tone of vv 53–58 could not be permitted to veil the real graciousness of God involved in the coming time of salvation, when his people were brought back to the land. His future deeds would provide a wonderful contrast with what Jerusalem had “done” according to vv 43bb, 47, 51, and 54. In between his initial grace and his eschatological grace yawned the chasm of a broken covenant. The pledge and marriage pact of v 8 are here recalled and interpreted as a figure for the covenant relationship God had made with Israel, for which Jerusalem is an evident symbol. Jerusalem had been like the last king Zedekiah, who had despised the divine oath and broken the divine covenant in his perfidy toward Nebuchadnezzar (17:18–19). In so doing Jerusalem had failed to remember the desperate situation of her young days (vv 22, 43) and the rescue to life and love that followed. Not so her faithful consort. He would establish an “everlasting covenant” with her as the center of a new community, a covenant that would permanently replace the one that was broken (cf. 37:26). Jerusalem too would have some remembering to do. God’s surprising faithfulness would provoke her to think back guiltily to her sinful past and so be all the more appreciative of his grace, on the lines of vv 54 and 58. Such grace would include the gift of the whole land. Sodom and Samaria and their dependencies, restored as promised in vv 53 and 55, would be subordinated to Jerusalem as capital of a promised land that included their territory (cf. 47:15–20). The final phrase, ûtyrbm, literally “not from your covenant,” has a number of possible meanings, reviewed in Brownlee (251–52). The context suggests
that it is another manifestation of divine grace, here transcending the previous relationship. His former
covenant with Jerusalem did not obligate him to give her control of Sodom or Samaria, but he would
magnanimously do so: “this act of grace will not flow automatically, by way of a mechanical deduction,

62–63 The piece closes by lingering over the vital truths of vv 60–61 (cf. Renaud, “L’alliance
eternelle” 336). Jerusalem would be reintroduced to Yahweh and encounter him as the God who
graciously renewed the covenant of v 8. His intent was that her sins should be forgiven but never
forgotten. Only a sober memory of the fate from which she was rescued could keep her from ever
bragging again, as in v 56, that she was not like that sinner Sodom (cf. Luke 18:9–14; Rom 3:19, 27).
Instead, it would provide motivation for bearing the fruit of repentance (Matt. 3:8).

**Explanation**

Ezek 16, or at least vv 1–58, deliberately wears a badge of political incorrectness. It is not surprising
that the Targum completely rewrote it, removing any slur against Jerusalem and turning it into a
wholesome presentation of Jewish orthodoxy. Down through the ages its distasteful message has blunted
its original intent, though it is pornography only in an etymological sense and has no intent of sexual
arousal. In the present climate of thought, its disparaging depiction of the female as victim of social
violence is particularly upsetting (cf. Darr, *JSOT* 55 [1992] 114–16). To appreciate the prophetic
agenda, we must distinguish between ancient cultural norms of handling marital infidelity and the
shocking use to which Ezekiel put them. It was a vehement ploy to communicate the necessity of the fall
of Jerusalem, dragging Judah down with it.

The prophet’s repeated pre-587 insistence that Jerusalem must be destroyed ran into an immovable
object in the form of Zion theology. Doubtless, his fellow hostages insisted more loudly that Jerusalem
was sacrosanct, the invincible city of God that “will not be moved” (Ps 46:6). Ezekiel opposed this
religious ideology, implicitly in 4:1–3 and explicitly in 5:5–17 (see especially v 5). Now the risqué tour
de force in 16:2–43b, which lies at the basis of this composite chapter, represents an irresistible force
with which Ezekiel attempted to dislodge the immovable object (cf. Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte* 174,
197). Isaiah had demanded faith as a necessary catalyst to let Zion theology work (Isa 28:16). Ezekiel
too adduces caveats. As in 5:5, he affirms Jerusalem’s special status in God’s heart (vv 8–14), freely
echoing language of the songs of Zion in v 14. However, he sets this truth in the middle of a longer
story. It had a sinister beginning and ending, relating to Jerusalem’s pagan antecedents and to its failure
to measure up to its destiny.

Jerusalem came late into Israel’s control. Bad blood lay in its past, the prophet suggests—a hint of
the wickedness that led to the pre-Israelite nations being driven out (Deut 9:4–6). Later in the oracle it
would be intimated that Jerusalem had reverted to type, by behavior that proved what Christians would
call its original sin. The role that was thrust upon Jerusalem, to be the religious and political capital of
God’s people, is conveyed in the powerful allegory of a foundling, whom Yahweh rescued, married, and

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*CTJ* Calvin Theological Journal  
*Int* Interpretation  
*JSOT* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament  
Biblical Studies

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*cf. confer, compare*
marvelously provided for. In the overall message, which is a variation of a standard oracle of judgment consisting of accusation and punishment, the story of divine favor acts as a foil for the following accusation. It was a standard prophetic technique, such as Amos used in Amos 2:9–11, Hosea in Hos 9:10; 11:1; 13:4–5, Isaiah in Isa 5:1–2, and Jeremiah in Jer 2:1–3. The accusation is thereby shown as all the darker, by holding it up to the light of God’s grace.

The accusation falls into two parts. Hosea put it more succinctly, in the form of a confession: “Assyria will not save us, and we will no longer call ‘our God’ what our hands have made” (Hos 14:4[3]). But Ezekiel said it more powerfully, borrowing from Hosea himself and from Jeremiah the metaphor of illicit sex applied both to Canaanized religion and to foreign politics. The language is deliberately repulsive and coarse, to counter mythology with compelling metaphor and to convey the depths of ungrateful infidelity to which Jerusalem had sunk. The metaphor carries the reader on to an inevitable future, the degradation and death that were the legal punishment for adultery. Jerusalem must fall. By such means Ezekiel countered the contemporary value of an ancient theological tradition with the newer, subversive prophetic tradition.

The second piece in vv 43b–58 builds on the first and applies it to a post-587 situation. The exiles who had experienced the downfall of Jerusalem in person or by report must factor it into their spiritual reckoning, urges the prophet. He challenges them, as the living embodiment of Jerusalem, to recognize that its and their sin was “exceeding sinful” (Rom 7:13, KJV), beside which the sins of Sodom and Samaria paled. Whereas the first message defined Jerusalem’s sin vertically in relation to God, this one does so horizontally, with respect to two infamous cities. Such a nadir of sinfulness must call forth a response of contrite repentance. Such healthy shame must haunt their coming return to the land, in the form of a deep regret at wounding God so deeply.

The second message dwelt on what had been done by “Jerusalem,” now as in Second Isaiah a cipher for the Judean exiles, whereas the first oracle had presented a measure-for-measure punishment for its sins. By contrast, the closing message, which in vv 59–63 editorially develops the first two, celebrates the ending of such correlation in what God was to do in the coming era of salvation. Where sin abounded, grace was to superabound. A God who still loved his people would replace a broken covenant with an unbreakable covenant. Yet, when the dark past was succeeded by so glorious a future, it must ever find a Lenten memorial in the hearts of God’s people. There is a glancing forward to 17:19 and the sin of Zedekiah, who despised Yahweh’s oath and broke his covenant. The language is reapplied to the exiled “Jerusalem” and used to reinforce a sense of the sinfulness that stained their past. Forgiveness must not mean forgetfulness, which had tragically marked Jerusalem’s dark ages (vv 22, 43). The saved know themselves to have been the foremost of sinners (1 Tim 1:15). In that knowledge of unworthiness, they know God’s love (vv 2, 62) and are constrained to mirror it in obedience.

The Death and Resurrection of the Judean Monarchy (17:1–24)

Bibliography

KJV King James Version (1611) = AV

Translation

1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2 “Human one, tell the community of Israel a cryptic allegory in a message from the Lord: Yahweh:

A great eagle
with large wings
and long pinions,
covered with plumage,

Sem. Semitica or Semitic
OTS Oudtestamentische Studiën
JCS Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
B Walton Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament (Stuttgart:Kohlhammer)
FB Forschung zur Bibel
ConBOT ConB Old Testament Series
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly
WZ Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift
Bib Biblica
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
JSOTSup Journal for the Study of the Old Testament [JOST] Supplement Series
JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Biblical Studies
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
a 3.a. For the formulaic use of יְהֹוָה “Lord” in the messenger formula here and in vv 9, 19, and 22, see Note 2.4.c.
b 3.b. Heb. אַל|ב; “filled with” functions as a verbal form, with the noun as object. Fohrer (93) proposed a repointing as constr אַל|ב.
with colored feathers, came to Lebanon.
It took the crown of a cedar,
and carried it away to a trading country, setting it in merchantville.
Then it took a native seed
and put it in a seed plot.
Now a shoot, beside abundant water
he set it out, like a willow;
intending it to grow and become a grapevine,
one trailing and low,
with its branches turned toward it
and its roots staying beneath it.
It did become a grapevine;
it grew branches and sent out boughs.
But there was another great eagle
with large wings
and luxuriant plumage.
At once this grapevine
bent its roots in its direction

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4.a. Heb. הֲנָעַן "shoot" occurs only here (cf. Joüon 88Eb for the form); הֲנָעַן in v 22 is the standard form.  
4.b. See Note 16:29.a.  
5.a. Lit. "one of the seeds of the land": [ט] זה is collective.  
5.b. Ewald (275) reasonably equated the hapax legomenon [ט] חַמָּן stem, shoot." Akk. quΔ to which Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 312) also appealed, and thence Lang, Kein Aufstand 29; Greenberg (310) has no basis: see Barthélemy, Critique 3:118. Barthélemy (Critique 3:116–17) has rightly queried whether LXX* Syr. lack the term, as is generally claimed. The LXX* תִּפְתַּע may well mean "plant," rather than "planted," in which case [ט] "seed" has been left unrepresented as otiose. This is certainly the case with Syr. נִשְׁבָּט<plant."  
5.c. Heb. חַמָּן is a hapax legomenon; it denotes a species of willow in Mishnaic Heb. and Arab.. For the syntax, see Greenberg 311. Zimmerli (355), implicitly following Hitzig (117), suggested a more general meaning, "waterside plant," which would ease the construction.  
6.a. The MT points as main verbs, "and it grew and became." Ewald (275) proposed repointing with weak וָאוֹ (NEB), and many scholars have concurred, including Greenberg (311). This expedient avoids repetition in v 6b and accords with the evidently continuing statements of purpose in the second line. It also aligns with the clearly parallel intention of the overlord in the interpretation at v 14.  
6.b. For the syntax, see Cooke 186.  
6.c. I.e., the eagle, as the contrast in v 7 and the subservience of v 14 suggest (Keil 239).  
7.a. Lit. "one," in the sense of "another," if the idiomatic repetition in 19:3, 5; 37:16 may be compared (Keil 237; von Orelli 67–68; Zimmerli 355). Many, including Barthélemy (Critique 3:68), emend אֲלֵךְ "one" to אֲלֵכָה "another," claiming LXX Syr. Vg in support.
and sent out its branches toward it
to be supplied with water
d—
away from the bed where it had been planted.
8 On a good plot,
beside abundant water,
it had been planted,
but it wanted to grow branches
and produce fruit
and so become a magnificent grapevine.
9 Tell them this message from the Lord Yahweh: Will it flourish?
Won’t the first eagle tear it out by its roots
and strip off its fruit so that it shrivels,
all the new leaves it has grown shrivel?

b 7.b. The context indicates some such meaning, which LXX Tg. support. Whether this is the same stem as ḫk “be hungry,” as Driver (ETL 26 [1950] 343–44) argued, is uncertain. BDB 495b compared Arab. kafana “spin, wrap (in shrouds).” In later Heb. and Jewish Aram., ḫk also means “bend” (Jastrow, Dictionary 660b), as evidently here.
c 7.c. One expects a fem. suffix ṭ. The masc. form seems to be a scribal slip after ω[ “to him.”
d 7.d. Lit. “so that it (the second eagle) might give water.”
e 7.e. The preposition goes with ḫ “sent out” (Keil 239; Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:62). For this suspended order, Greenberg (311) has usefully referred to A. Sperber’s list of such cases in JBL 64 (1945) 117–18. The attempt to take as comparative, “drink more water than the bed …” (Cornill 274; et al.; = NAB, NJPS) is unnecessary and unlikely: see Greenberg 312.
f 7.f. The pl. here and in v 10 is strange and sometimes emended, e.g., by Zimmerli (356), who here blamed metathesis of waw and gimel. Barthélemy (Critique 3:118–20) has explained it in terms of ridges that separate the furrows: cf. the meaning “ascend” for the Arab. and Eth cognates.
a 8.a. The relation of v 8a and 8b to each other and to v 7 is not immediately clear. To relate the whole of v 8 to the grapevine’s present opportunities can hardly be right, in view of its restriction in v 6. Accordingly, v 8a seems to point back and v 8b forward. Greenberg (311) has rightly observed that ṭ ṭ means “plant” rather than “transplant”: see HALAT 1540a.
b 8.b. HALAT 13b, 17a list as both a noun and an adj V 23 suggests that it is the latter: for the form, cf. Joüon 89g.
a 9.a. The verb can have an interrogative force (Keil 240; Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:63; Greenberg 313): cf. GKC 150a. But he could easily have fallen out by haplography (Hitzig 118), yielding a rhetorical parallel with vv 10 and 15.
b 9.b. Lit. “he, it.”
c 9.c. The hapax legomenon ᵇ ᵇ ᵇ has the sense of (wine) turning sour in Mishnaic Heb.; similarly, the LXX renders “rot,” which Greenberg (313) favors. Traditionally the verb has been aligned with ḥ “cut off.”
d 9.d. Bertholet’s proposal ([1936] 60) to read ḫ ṭ ṭ ṭ “its branches” for ḫ ṭ “its fruit,” in line with v 6, is not necessary. “Fruit” echoes the nearer v 8.
e 9.e. The nonrepresentation of ṭ ṭ ṭ “it will shrivel” in the LXX is due to its syntactical reconstruing: see Barthélemy (Critique 3:121), who compares the repetition of the verb in v 10. For the syntax of the verb and nouns, see Greenberg (313).
No need of great force or a large army

to pull it up, its roots and all."!

It is planted now, but will it flourish?
Won’t it shrivel away
when it is struck
by the east wind?

On the bed where it is growing it will shrivel.”

11 I received the following communication from Yahweh: 12 “Tell that rebellious community,
You don’t know what all this means, do you? Tell them: Look, the king of Babylon went to
Jerusalem and took its king and officials, bringing them back to Babylon. 13 Then, taking a
member of the royal family, he made a treaty with him and required him to enter into an oath; he
included in the treaty the leading people in the country. 14 He wanted the realm to be a lowly one
that would not engage in uprising but keep his treaty permanently. 15 But the ruler rebelled against
him, sending his envoys to Egypt to obtain horses and a large army. Is he likely to succeed? Will
anyone who is guilty of such conduct get away with it? Can he break a treaty and get away with it?
If I swear by my very life, warns the Lord Yahweh: The capital of the king who gave him royal
power, but whose oath he disregarded and whose treaty he broke—Babylon is the place where he will die. 17 Not with great military strength and a large army will he deal with him when

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11.f. Lit. “(and that too) without …”
12.g. The strange form is evidently an Aramaizing inf of a C inf “take away” with an ending borrowed from the lamed he type of verb.
12.h. Hardly “from its roots,” in view of v 9b; rather, “beginning from its roots.”
13.a. Lit. “one of the royal seed,” interpreting “seed” in v 5.
13.b. Heb. | Q | “took” is usually understood in terms of deportation, but then the order of clauses is strange. Kutsch (THAT 1:345), followed by Hossfeld (Untersuchungen 78) and Lang (Kein Aufstand 55–56), has suggested a sense of taking into a covenant, as in 2 Chr 23:1.
14.a. Lit. “so that it (the treaty) would endure.” To take the kingdom as the subj upsets the flow of v 14b. LXX S, with its transitive verbs, rightly had the treaty in view. Cf. the hiph in Ps 105:10 in the sense of establishing a covenant. C wd b 1 “so that it would serve him” (= Tg.) is a clarifying replacement.
15.a. Lit. “he.”
15.b. For the common interrogative sense of a verb after the conjunction, see GKC 150a and 16:59.
15.c. Lit. “escape.”
16.a. For the formulaic use of ymd a “Lord” in the divine-saying formula, see Note 5:11.a.
16.b. For the “place” in the sense of “city,” see BDB 880a.
16.d. The MT takes W d “with him” with v 16b, but the Vg “which he had with him” rightly takes with “treaty”; cf. Lev 26:44. Cooke’s objection (193) that a resumptive pronoun is required has no weight: b b b Au wd b “in Babylon” is the resumptive element.
war breaks out, when earthworks are piled up and siege structures are built, portending much loss of human life. He has repudiated an oath, thereby breaking a treaty. He actually gave his hand in pledge and yet was guilty of such conduct. So he is not likely to get away with it. This then is the Lord Yahweh’s message: I swear by my very life, the repudiated oath to me are matters for which I will hold him responsible. I will spread out my net for infringing my rights. All the elite troops in his army will fall to the sword.
while the survivors will be scattered in every direction. Then you will realize that I, Yahweh, gave
my word.

22 ‘This is the message of the Lord Yahweh: I too will take\(^c\) from the tall\(^b\) crown of the cedar a
tender shoot,\(^c\) plucking it from its topmost\(^d\) shoots. Then I myself will plant it on a high and lofty
mountain: 23 Israel’s high mountain is where I will plant it. It will grow branches and produce fruit
and will become a magnificent cedar. Every beast\(^d\) will live beneath it, while every bird will perch in

\(^{20}\)c. The LXX\(^*\) lacks v 20b and also the first phrase of v 21. The error probably occurred within the Gr.
tradition, by parablepsis (\(\alpha \upsilon \zeta \omicron \upsilon \alpha \upsilon \zeta \omicron \upsilon \omicron \) “his”). Removing this material (Cornill 278; et al.) leaves \(\text{W}_{\text{p}} \text{y}^{\text{y}}\) “(they) will fall” without a pl. subj Fohrer (95), Cooke (190), and Zimmerli (358) accordingly read \(\text{I} \text{K} \text{W}^{\text{y}}\) “and all” in place of \(\text{I} \text{K} \text{B}^{\text{y}}\) “in all,” as in the second phrase in 12:14. Cornill observed that this material
does not correspond to anything in the allegory, but Bertholet ([1897] 94) retorted that vv 19–21 go
beyond the allegory with a further statement, including Yahweh’s spreading his net.

\(^{21}\)a. Blau (\(\text{VT} \text{4} [1954] 9\)) regarded \(\text{T} \text{a}\) as an object sign, with the subj perceived as a sort of object,
after the niph verb in v 20. It is more likely that it introduces the subj, as in 43:3. Cf. Rooker, Biblical
Hebrew 88–90. \(\text{K} \text{W}^{\text{r}} \text{B} \text{M}^{\text{r}}\) (sg) and \(\text{Q} \text{W}^{\text{r}} \text{J} \text{B} \text{M}^{\text{r}}\) (pl.) represent a hapax legomenon meaning “fugitives,”
which S Q Vg support. \(\text{A} \) and many MSS imply \(\text{W}^{\text{r}} \text{J} \text{B} \text{M}^{\text{r}}\) “his choice troops,” with a pl. form as in Dan
11:15; the sg occurs in Ezek 23:7; 24:4–5; 31:16. The Syr. “his nobles” and the Tg. “his valiant men”
also point in the latter direction. Barthélemy (Critique 3:122) considers the MT to be the primary
reading, before assimilation to a more common term occurred. However, the context requires a word for
regular soldiers in v 21a\(^a\) and then a reference to fugitives in v 21ab (Zimmerli 358).

\(^{21}\)b. See Note 12:14.b*.

\(^{22}\)a. For the initial \(\text{W} \text{W}^{\text{W}}\) “and” after the messenger formula, see Note 11:17.a*.

\(^{22}\)b. The LXX\(^*\) lacks an equivalent for \(\text{H} \text{M} \text{R}^{\text{R}}\) “high.” The argument that no adj occurs in v 3 (Cornill
278) is not compelling; poetry is typically more succinct than prose. More significantly, LXX\(^*\) Syr. do
not represent the MT \(\text{Y} \text{T} \text{T} \text{W}^{\text{N}}\) “and I will give,” which is “unwanted” (Greenberg 316; cf. 319): see Note
19.b. * above. It anticipates “and I will plant” in the sequel. It spoils the chiastic order, which seems to
deliberately imitate the line in vv 3bb–4a (cf. Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 72).

\(^{22}\)c. LXX\(^*\) Syr. overlook \(\text{U} \text{F}^{\text{F}}\) “tender,” with which Q NW “shoot” is to be understood from the
preceding noun (Hitzig 120). Cornill (278) conjectured that \(\text{A} \text{P} \text{A} \text{L} \text{O} \text{U}^{\text{S}} \text{Q} \text{Q}\) “tender” fell out of the Gr.
text after \(\text{A} \text{U} \text{L} \text{W}^{\text{W}}\) and before \(\text{A} \text{P} \text{K} \text{N} \text{W}^{\text{W}}\).

\(^{22}\)d. The LXX\(^*\) adds \(\text{K} \text{A} \text{R} \text{D} \text{I} \text{A} \text{Y} \text{V} \text{N} \text{O} \text{N}^{\text{V}}\) “heartwood,” a misplaced gloss on \(\text{T} \text{I} \text{M} \text{X}^{\text{X}}\) “crown”. S, whose work is
not extant here, so rendered in 31:14 and used the synonymous \(\text{E} \text{G} \text{K} \text{A} \text{R} \text{D} \text{I} \text{O} \text{N}^{\text{V}}\) in v 3 and 31:10. The
addition is clearly the product of prehexaplaric revision.
its shady branches.\(^b\) \(^{24}\) Then all the trees in the countryside will realize that I, Yahweh, am the one who has reduced the tall tree and raised the low tree, who has shriveled the green tree and given\(^a\) the shriveled tree new growth. I, Yahweh, have given my word and will act on it.”

Notes

3.a. For the formulaic use of `ynda “Lord” in the messenger formula here and in vv 9, 19, and 22, see Note 2:4.c\(^*\).

3.b. Heb. `al| \(\mathfrak{eb}\), “filled with” functions as a verbal form, with the noun as object. Fohrer (93) proposed a repointing as constr `al| \(\mathfrak{eb}\).

4.a. Heb. h q `ny “shoot” occurs only here (cf. Joüon 88Eb for the form); t q `nwj in v 22 is the standard form.

4.b. See Note 16:29.a\(^*\).

5.a. Lit. “one of the seeds of the land”: \(\mathfrak{rz} \mathfrak{z} \mathfrak{z}\) is collective.

\(^a\) 23.a. The MT `nk \(\mathfrak{A} \mathfrak{k} \mathfrak{w} \mathfrak{x} \mathfrak{k}\) “all birds of every kind [lit. ‘wing’]” occurs in Gen 7:14 and, without the initial \(\mathfrak{k}\) “all,” in Ezek 39:4, 17. LXX\(^A\)\(^C\) implies `nk \(\mathfrak{k} \mathfrak{w} \mathfrak{h} \mathfrak{j}\) \(\mathfrak{k}\) “every beast, and every bird [lit. ‘wing’],” whereas the LXX\(^*\), represented by B. 967, and LXX\(^O\)\(^L\) reflect the MT, in line with \(\mathfrak{A} \mathfrak{S} \mathfrak{Q}\). Again the LXX\(^*\) has been subject to prehexaplaric revision. Cornill (278) and others, including the RSV, have adopted the variant, observing that birds do not live under trees. Barthélemy (Critique 125–26), alert to this objection, has proposed making a break after `wt \(\mathfrak{t}\) “beneath it” and taking the preceding verb as indefinite, so that the birds are excluded. He regards the early LXX reading as a case of assimilation to the frequent pair “beast-bird.” His expedient is artificial and creates an unbalanced pair of clauses, while the variant yields a fine chiastic arrangement (ABC/CBA). Chiasm is a feature of this oracle: two instances have occurred in vv 22ab–23aa. Probably `nk `\(\mathfrak{A} \mathfrak{k} \mathfrak{w} \mathfrak{x}\) “bird of every kind” originated as a comparative gloss that was wrongly taken as a correction of `nk \(\mathfrak{k} \mathfrak{w} \mathfrak{h} \mathfrak{j}\) “beast and every bird.”

\(^b\) 23.b. The LXX\(^*\) has extra material that originated in a Heb. comparative gloss `\(\mathfrak{w} \mathfrak{v} \mathfrak{y} \mathfrak{w} \mathfrak{x}\) “in its shade they will dwell,” derived from 31:6. The verb was rendered “be restored,” as if from \(\mathfrak{b} \mathfrak{w} \mathfrak{w}\), under the influence of 16:55.


\(^*\) 4.c. For the authenticity of `ynda “Lord” in the messenger formula, see the appendix in Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556–62, which reverses the policy of deletion he earlier advocated throughout his two volumes. For the LXX evidence, see the discussion of McGregor (Greek Text of Ezekiel 75–93).

Heb. Hebrew constr construct
Heb. Hebrew cf. confer, compare

29.a. Heb. `\(\mathfrak{n} \mathfrak{k}\) is here not a proper noun “Canaan” but means “trade,” as in 17:4. The LXX\(^*\), represented by pap. 967, does render it, contra BHS. The omission in LXX\(^B\) was caused by homoeoarcton.

Lit. literally
5.b. Ewald (275) reasonably equated the *hapax legomenon* ḫ with Syr. quēstem, shoot.” Akk. quē, to which Driver (*Bib* 35 [1954] 312) also appealed, and thence Lang, *Kein Aufstand* 29; Greenberg (310) has no basis: see Barthélemy, *Critique* 3:118. Barthélemy (*Critique* 3:116–17) has rightly queried whether LXX’ Syr. lack the term, as is generally claimed. The LXX’ ḫ ʿē may well mean “plant,” rather than “planted,” in which case ḫ ʿē “seed” has been left unrepresented as otiose. This is certainly the case with Syr. nsbh<plant.”

5.c. Heb. ḫpx is a *hapax legomenon*; it denotes a species of willow in Mishnaic Heb. and Arab.. For the syntax, see Greenberg 311. Zimmerli (355), implicitly following Hitzig (117), suggested a more general meaning, “waterside plant,” which would ease the construction.

6.a. The MT points as main verbs, “and it grew and became.” Ewald (275) proposed repointing with weak *waw* (= NEB), and many scholars have concurred, including Greenberg (311). This expedient avoids repetition in v 6b and accords with the evidently continuing statements of purpose in the second line. It also aligns with the clearly parallel intention of the overlord in the interpretation at v 14.

6.b. For the syntax, see Cooke 186.

6.c. I.e., the eagle, as the contrast in v 7 and the subservience of v 14 suggest (Keil 239).

7.a. Lit. “one,” in the sense of “another,” if the idiomatic repetition in 19:3, 5; 37:16 may be compared (Keil 237; von Orelli 67–68; Zimmerli 355). Many, including Barthélemy (*Critique* 3:68), emend ḫ ʿā “one” to ḫ ʿā “another,” claiming LXX Syr. Vg in support.

7.b. The context indicates some such meaning, which LXX Tg. support. Whether this is the same stem as ḫk “be hungry,” as Driver (*ETL* 26 [1950] 343–44) argued, is uncertain. BDB 495b compared...
Arab. kafana “spin, wrap (in shrouds).” In later Heb. and Jewish Aram., 𐤙𐤃𐤌 also means “bend” (Jastrow, Dictionary 660b), as evidently here.

7.c. One expects a fem. suffix ḫ. The masc. form seems to be a scribal slip after ḫ “[to him].”

7.d. Lit. “so that it (the second eagle) might give water.”

7.e. The preposition goes with ḫ | ׀ ⓪ “sent out” (Keil 239; Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:62). For this suspended order, Greenberg (311) has usefully referred to A. Sperber’s list of such cases in JBL 64 (1945) 117–18. The attempt to take as comparative, “drink more water than the bed …” (Cornill 274; et al.; = NAB, NJPS) is unnecessary and unlikely: see Greenberg 312.

7.f. The pl. here and in v 10 is strange and sometimes emended, e.g., by Zimmerli (356), who here blamed metathesis of waw and gimel. Barthélemy (Critique 3:118–20) has explained it in terms of ridges that separate the furrows: cf. the meaning “ascend” for the Arab. and Eth cognates.

8.a. The relation of v 8a and 8b to each other and to v 7 is not immediately clear. To relate the whole of v 8 to the grapevine’s present opportunities can hardly be right, in view of its restriction in v 6. Accordingly, v 8a seems to point back and v 8b forward. Greenberg (311) has rightly observed that ׀ ⓪ means “plant” rather than “transplant”: see HALAT 1540a.

8.b. HALAT 13b, 17a list as both a noun and an adj V 23 suggests that it is the latter: for the form, cf. 


Arab. Arabic
Heb. Hebrew
Aram. Aramaic
fem. feminine
masc. masculine
Lit. literally
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
et et alii, and others
al. et alii, and others
NAB The New American Bible
NJPS New Jewish Publication Society Version
pl. plate or plural
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare
Arab. Arabic
Eth Ethiopic version or language
adj adjective/adjectival
V Vulgate
cf. confer, compare
Joüon 89g.

9.a. The verb can have an interrogative force (Keil 240; Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:63; Greenberg 313): cf. \textit{GKC} 150a. But \textit{he} could easily have fallen out by haplography (Hitzig 118), yielding a rhetorical parallel with vv 10 and 15.

9.b. Lit. “he, it.”

9.c. The \textit{hapax legomenon} \textit{ss} \textit{q} has the sense of (wine) turning sour in Mishnaic \textit{Heb.}; similarly, the LXX renders “rot,” which Greenberg (313) favors. Traditionally the verb has been aligned with \textit{Âxq} “cut off.”

9.d. Bertholet’s proposal ([1936] 60) to read \textit{h y} \textit{w} \textit{r} \textit{a p} “its branches” for \textit{h y} \textit{r} \textit{p} “its fruit,” in line with v 6, is not necessary. “Fruit” echoes the nearer v 8.

9.e. The nonrepresentation of \textit{v b y} \textit{t} “it will shrivel” in the LXX* is due to its syntactical reconstruing: see Barthélemy (\textit{Critique} 3:121), who compares the repetition of the verb in v 10. For the syntax of the verb and nouns, see Greenberg (313).

9.f. Lit. “and (that too) without …”

9.g. The strange form \textit{t w} \textit{a c} \textit{m} is evidently an Aramaizing \textit{inf} of \textit{a c n} “take away” with an ending borrowed from the \textit{lamed he} type of verb.

9.h. Hardly “from its roots,” in view of v 9b; rather, “beginning from its roots.”

13.a. Lit. “one of the royal seed,” interpreting “seed” in v 5.

13.b. \textit{Heb. j} \textit{q l} “took” is usually understood in terms of deportation, but then the order of clauses is strange. Kutsch (\textit{THAT} 1:345), followed by Hossfeld (\textit{Untersuchungen} 78) and Lang (\textit{Kein Aufstand} 55–56), has suggested a sense of taking into a covenant, as in 2 Chr 23:1.

14.a. Lit. “so that it (the treaty) would endure.” To take the kingdom as the \textit{subj} upsets the flow of v 14b. LXX \textit{s}, with their transitive verbs, rightly had the treaty in view. Cf. the hiph in Ps 105:10 in the

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\textit{inf} infinitive
\textit{Lit.} literally
\textit{Heb.} Hebrew
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\textit{subj} subject/subjective
sense of establishing a covenant. C wd b l “so that it would serve him” (= Tg.) is a clarifying replacement.

15.a. Lit. “he.”

15.b. For the common interrogative sense of a verb after the conjunction, see GKC 150a and 16:59.

15.c. Lit. “escape.”

16.a. For the formulaic use of ynd a “Lord” in the divine-saying formula, see Note 5:11.a.

16.b. For µq m “place” in the sense of “city,” see BDB 880a.


16.d. The MT takes wt a “with him” with v 16b, but the Vg “which he had with him” rightly takes with “treaty”; cf. Lev 26:44. Cooke’s objection (193) that a resumptive pronoun is required has no weight: l b b Àu wt b “in Babylon” is the resumptive element.

17.a. Comparison with v 9bg, where the army is implicitly Nebuchadnezzar’s, has provoked several textual, syntactical, and semantic considerations. Ewald (275–76) treated ḫ Ḫ “Pharaoh” as appositional to ᵇ ᵇ “him” and made Nebuchadnezzar subj, “he will deal with him—Pharaoh—in war.” Kraetzschar (159–60) deleted the name as a false gloss wrongly relating to v 15a; he noted that elsewhere in Ezekiel ḥ ḭ “army” refers to the Babylonians. Herrmann (104) followed him and claimed that in Ezekiel the verb ḥ ḧ “deal” with ᵇ ᵇ “with” is always hostile; he actually considered v 17 secondary, interrupting the flow of vv 16 and 18 (106). He interpreted that Nebuchadnezzar would not need a large army to punish Zedekiah. Similarly, Greenberg (JBL 76 [1957] 307–9; cf. his Ezekiel 1–20 315) has interpreted both vv 9 and 17 as a(n unfulfilled) forecast that Nebuchadnezzar would need only a
small army to defeat Zedekiah: (1) ḫṝ ṭ ṭ “Pharaoh” is secondary, introduced to overcome the difficulty that a large Babylonian army and a drawn-out siege proved necessary, and referring after the event to Hophra’s weak and futile campaign against Nebuchadnezzar; (2) ḫṝ ṭ ṭ always means “deal hostily with” in Ezekiel (7:27; 16:59; 22:14; 39:24; and esp. 23:25, 29), whereas ḫṝ ṭ ṭ is used for a friendly sense, in 20:44; and (3) as in v 9, ḫ נוספת ṭ “and not” must negate the following adverbial phrases, and not the verb, as it is generally understood. This last point is a good one. The second point has the value of a supporting argument: in Jer 21:2 ḫ帰り ṭ ṭ has a friendly meaning. Unconvincing attempts have been made to create an unambiguously positive verb. Rothstein (913), following H. Graetz, emended to ḫ谕 ṭ “will save,” while Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 153), followed by the REB, found a supposed Arab. cognate for a stem ḫ帰り ṭ meaning “protect.” As to the source of the evidently intrusive ḫ帰り “Pharaoh,” it is perhaps best explained as a comparative gloss supplying a subj for the verb. The annotator confused the ḫ帰り ṭ “large army” of v 9 with that desired from Egypt in v 15, misled by the ambiguity of the verbal phrase (cf. Kraetzschmar 160). See the Comment.

18.a. McCarthy (Bib 61 [1980] 337) observes that ḫ⤴ “behold” has a concessive sense.

19.a. The suffixes have a loosely objective force, “the oath sworn to me” and “the treaty in which I was invoked as witness” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:94).

19.b. For the form of the verb, see GKC 67v.

19.c. Heb. ṭ่วย ṭɪ “and I will put it (on his head)” loosely employs a masc suffix after two fem. antecedents (Smend 112; Greenberg 316). The suffixless emendation ṭ่วย ṭɪ “and I will put” (Wevers 138) seems to have been anticipated in ancient times: the marginal variant was eased into the text at a suitable point, in v 22, as a quasi-counterpart to the verb in v 5.


20.b. For the acc, see Cooke 193; Greenberg 316. The seeming parallel in 1 Sam 12:7 is textually uncertain. Did ṭ ṭ “for” fall out by partial haplography (cf. BHS)?

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Bib Biblica
REB Revised English Bible
Arab. Arabic
subj subject/subjective
cf. confer, compare
Bib Biblica
Heb. Hebrew
fem. feminine
NIV The New International Version (1978)
acc according (to) or accusative
cf. confer, compare
20.c. The LXX* lacks v 20b and also the first phrase of v 21. The error probably occurred within the Gr. tradition, by parablepsis (α άτομος αυτού “his”). Removing this material (Cornill 278; et al.) leaves "they will fall" without a pl. subj. Fohrer (95), Cooke (190), and Zimmerli (358) accordingly read "and all" in place of "in all,” as in the second phrase in 12:14. Cornill observed that this material does not correspond to anything in the allegory, but Bertholet ([1897] 94) retorted that vv 19–21 go beyond the allegory with a further statement, including Yahweh’s spreading his net.

21.a. Blau (VT 4 [1954] 9) regarded קָדָם as an object sign, with the subj perceived as a sort of object, after the niph verb in v 20. It is more likely that it introduces the subj, as in 43:3. Cf. Rooker, Biblical Hebrew 88–90. K וְיִרְבְּם (sg) and Q וַיִּרְבְּמוּ (pl.) represent a hapax legomenon meaning “fugitives,” which S Q Vg support. And many MSS imply וַיִּרְבְּמוּ “his choice troops,” with a pl. form as in Dan 11:15; the sg occurs in Ezek 23:7; 24:4–5; 31:16. The Syr. “his nobles” and the Tg. “his valiant men” also point in the latter direction. Barthélemy (Critique 3:122) considers the MT to be the primary reading, before assimilation to a more common term occurred. However, the context requires a word for regular soldiers in v 21a and then a reference to fugitives in v 21b (Zimmerli 358).

21.b. See Note 12:14.b*.

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*BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)  
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT  
Gr. Greek  
et al. et alii, and others  
pl. plate or plural  
subj subject/subjective  
VT Vetus Testamentum  
subj subject/subjective  
niph Niphal  
subj subject/subjective  
Cf. confer, compare  
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)  
sg singular or under  
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)  
pl. plate or plural  
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)  
MSS manuscript(s)  
pl. plate or plural  
sg singular or under  
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)  
Tg. Targum  
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)  
¹4.b. As Smend (71) commented long ago, קָדָם has been variously aligned with Akk. agappu and Aram. קָדָם “wing,” in a military sense, like Latin ala, or with Arab. gaff, gaff “group,” with a prosthetic aleph. HALAT 11a opts for the latter derivation.
22.a. For the initial waw “and” after the messenger formula, see Note 11:17.a.

22.b. The LXX* lacks an equivalent for hmr “high.” The argument that no adj occurs in v 3 (Cornill 278) is not compelling: poetry is typically more succinct than prose. More significantly, LXX* Syr. do not represent the MT yel t nmw “and I will give,” which is “unwanted” (Greenberg 316; cf. 319): see Note 19.b.* above. It anticipates “and I will plant” in the sequel. It spoils the chiastic order, which seems to deliberately imitate the line in vv 3bb–4a (cf. Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 72).

22.c. LXX* Syr. overlook ûr “tender,” with which qnw “shoot” is to be understood from the preceding noun (Hitzig 120). Cornill (278) conjectured that ãJJplovn (= AES Q) “tender” fell out of the Gr. text after aujt and before ajpnw.

22.d. The LXX* adds kardiav “heartwood,” a misplaced gloss on t ñx “crown”. S, whose work is not extant here, so rendered in 31:14 and used the synonymous ãgkavrdion in v 3 and 31:10. The addition is clearly the product of prehexaplaric revision.

23.a. The MT ¹nkAlk rwpx lk “all birds of every kind [lit. ‘wing’]” occurs in Gen 7:14 and, without the initial lk “all,” in Ezek 39:4, 17. LXXAC implies ¹ nk lkw hyj lk “every beast, and every bird [lit. ‘wing’],” whereas the LXX*, represented by B. 967, and LXXOL reflect the MT, in line with AES Q. Again the LXX* has been subject to prehexaplaric revision. Cornill (278) and others, including the RSV, have adopted the variant, observing that birds do not live under trees. Barthélemy (Critique 125–26), alert to this objection, has proposed making a break after wytjt “beneath it” and taking the preceding verb as indefinite, so that the birds are excluded. He regards the early LXX reading


LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare

19.b. For the form of the verb, see GKC 67v.
cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
Gr. Greek
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
lit. literally
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
lit. literally
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
B. breve (metrically short poetic line), or before a tractate indicates Babylonian Talmud.
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
as a case of assimilation to the frequent pair “beast-bird.” His expedient is artificial and creates an unbalanced pair of clauses, while the variant yields a fine chiastic arrangement (ABC/CBA). Chiasm is a feature of this oracle: two instances have occurred in vv 22ab–23aa. Probably הָיָה הַיָּדוֹת הַיָּדוֹת לְקָרְאָה לְקָרְאָה וּדַרְבּ אֶת הַיָּדוֹת “bird of every kind” originated as a comparative gloss that was wrongly taken as a correction of הָיָה הַיָּדוֹת לְקָרְאָה לְקָרְאָה וּדַרְבּ אֶת הַיָּדוֹת “beast and every bird.”

23.b. The LXX has extra material that originated in a Heb. comparative gloss הָוָה הָוָה וּלְבָנָה אֵת הַיָּדוֹת “in its shade they will dwell,” derived from 31:6. The verb was rendered “be restored,” as if from הָוָה הָוָה , under the influence of 16:55.


**Form/Structure/Setting**

Chap. 17 begins with a message-reception formula that launches a new literary unit. The contents of the chapter are marked by thematic continuity and development, so that the new formula that occurs in 18:1 signals that the former unit consists of chap. 17. In fact, an intervening formula occurs in 17:11, but this has a secondary role of separating interpretation from a previous allegory, as in 21:6(1) after 21:1–5(20:45–49). One may compare its occurrence with interpretation of a sign-act, in 12:8 after 12:1–7 and in 24:20 after 24:15–19. Although there are good reasons for regarding chap. 17 as a literary unit, there are even better ones, which will eventually emerge, for envisioning an overarching unit of chaps. 17–19.

The first of the three pieces in this unit (vv 2–10) is an allegory about two eagles, a cedar, and a grapevine. It is thus a fable, a story in which animals and plants are invested with human characteristics and behavior. The genre was traditionally used as a political cartoon in order to either challenge leadership or affirm it (Judg 9:8–15; 2 Kgs 14:9; Solomon, “Fable” 121). In the overall two-part message of vv 2–10 + 11–21, it is used as an allegory, which is what מַכְלָה in v 2 means in the light of the detailed interpretation that follows. The metaphorical communication is also called a הָדְיִי or “riddle,” not in a technical sense (see Judg 14:10–18) but loosely, as often in the OT, in the sense of a statement that requires elucidation, “whose essence was opaqueness, mystification, enigma” (McKane, Proverbs 267). Von Rabenau (WZ [1957/58] 1056–57) has found elements of a riddle in the question-and-answer format of vv 9–10 and in the paradox whereby the grapevine abandons its patron.

An initial messenger formula in v 3 has a counterpart in v 9, which also serves to push to the fore the addressees mentioned in v 2. The phenomenon of a doubled messenger formula reminds the reader of a bipartite oracle of judgment, in which accusation and punishment are so demarcated. This impression is supported by a switch from past narrative in vv 3–8 to future consequences, presented largely in the form of questions, in vv 9–10.

The first piece is most probably to be regarded as poetry, as it is laid out in BHS. It begins after the messenger formula in v 3; the corresponding introductory material in v 9a, rather strangely including the

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**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
**Heb.** Hebrew
**cf. confer, compare**
**OT Old Testament**
**WZ Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift**
**BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgarten**edia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
brief initial question, lies outside the rhythmical scheme. Greenberg’s metrical analysis (318) may largely stand, except that the first line in v 6 seems to have a 3 + 3 meter, while the third line in v 7 is 2 + 2 + 2, and v 9b may be defined as 3 + 3, 4 + 4 + 3. Hals (115) prefers to call this material elevated prose, and certainly the difficulty of analyzing vv 9–10 makes one sympathize with this viewpoint. The poem mostly uses 3 + 3 bicola and 2 + 2 + 2 tricola.

The second piece, in vv 11–21, reverts to prose. It has the genre of a tripartite proof saying. The expanded recognition formula in v 21b is preceded by a forecast of divine punishment in vv 19–20, with accompanying human consequences in v 21a. The forecast duly opens with a telltale “therefore,” which is followed by a divine oath. One expects to find a corresponding accusation in the initial block of material, vv 12–18. In fact, vv 15b–18 already deal with future human consequences, which are reinforced with an oath and a divine-saying formula in v 16. Past narrative, obviously accusation, occurs in vv 12–15a, after instructions to the prophet to direct a question to the exiles about the meaning of the fable. Is the deviation from a straightforward oracle of judgment due to the other role of the piece as interpretation of the allegory? Yes, there is a close relationship between the two pieces, and the second is tightly controlled by the first. There is consecutive parallelism between the pieces, with correspondence as follows: vv 3a2–4/12b, 5/13, 6/14, 7–8/15a, 9/15b–17, and 10/18–21a. The interpretation does not finish at v 15, as many commentators have considered. Details will emerge in the Comment. For now it may be observed that, while the form-critical division of vv 12–21 occurs between v 18 and v 19, from a rhetorical perspective the interpretive piece divides after v 17.

The third message, in vv 22–24, is an oracle of salvation that reuses the imagery of the initial poem in a positive sense. Introduced merely by a messenger formula, it is appended to the previous material and presupposes it. It has the form of a positive proof saying, as its extended recognition formula in v 24a indicates. It closes with a formula of affirmation. The echoes of vv 3–10 in this final oracle round off the chapter and provide it with an inclusion (cf. Parunak, “Structural Studies” 270–71; id., Bib 62 [1981] 167, who, however, goes further and analyzes the chapter as a chiasm; Parunak also found structural significance in the emphasis on Yahweh in vv 19–21 and 22–24 [“Structural Studies” 274], which Greenberg [320] developed).

The original settings of the three pieces are diverse. The first two oracles are clearly contemporary with each other. If the metaphorical and interpretive oracles of 21:1–10(20:45–21:5) are contemporaneous (Zimmerli 422), surely this pair of oracles is. The “cryptic” allegory could hardly have stood by itself, especially with its false clue of an ostensible reference to Canaan in v 4; Simian-Yofre (Bib 65 [1984] 33–40) has detailed the ambiguities of the fable. Evidently Zedekiah was already set on rebelling against Babylon and had appealed to Egypt for military help. Babylonian reprisal, including the siege that began in January 588, lay in a predicted future. Vv 16, 20, and 21 are echoed in the slightly later, but still pre-fall, oracle of 12:2–16; there seems to be no compelling reason to regard these verses as composed after the event. Nor does the proposal to regard vv 16–18 as a “prose” addition (Rothstein 913 and many) commend itself: the context does not appear to be poetry. The material is substantially interlocked into the symmetrical structuring. To delete it would leave a gaping hole (cf. Lang, Kein Aufstand 54; Laato, Josiah 158). Zimmerli (361) has observed that the description of Babylon in commercial terms reflects the experience of the Judean deportees of 597. The addressees are “the rebellious community” (v 12), the exilic representatives of “the community of Israel” (v 2) among whom Ezekiel exercised his ministry of judgment (cf. 2:5; 12:9).

cf. confer, compare
Bib Biblica
Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
The third oracle is a literary continuation of the first pair. It reflects a post-587 switch to a positive message for the exiles, now that divine judgment had done its worst. In principle it could be credited either to Ezekiel or to his exilic redactors. The royal eschatological content aligns with 34:23–24; 37:24–25, which (except for 37:24a) are to be assigned to Ezekiel’s school (see Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 160, 163–64, 191–95). Accordingly, this piece too seems to be a late redaction that crowns the earlier messages of judgment for Judah’s last monarch with the good news of God’s future grace to the house of David.

The unit falls into the following divisions:

17:1–10 A fable about two eagles, a cedar, and a grapevine
17:3–4 The eagle’s removal of a cedar shoot
17:5–8 The grapevine’s attraction to a rival eagle
17:9–10 The eagle’s likely response
17:11–21 The interpretation in terms of Zedekiah’s infidelity
17:12 The deportation of Jehoiachin
17:13–15a The installation of Zedekiah as vassal and his rebellion
17:15b–21 Zedekiah’s fate at Nebuchadnezzar’s and Yahweh’s hands
17:22–24 A promise of God’s restored cedar in Jerusalem

Comment

2–3aa 1/12a Ezekiel is instructed to transmit to the deported representatives of Israel a “riddle” and an “allegory.” Riddles excite the curiosity and leave the baffled listeners keen for an answer. What follows is not a true riddle but a fable or theological cartoon that is equally intended to whet the hearers’ appetites for the plain oracle that follows. At the head of that oracle the exiles are called, as often, “a rebellious community.” The nuance is that spelled out in 12:2, their lack of understanding of Ezekiel’s message: “they have ears to hear with but hear nothing.” The allegory and the accompanying interpretation are an attempt to penetrate their willful deafness to the prophetic word. The taunting question is like the question-and-answer format that links commands to carry out sign-acts and their interpretations elsewhere in the book (12:9–11; 21:12; 24:19–21; 37:18–19). The repeated instruction to “tell” allows an interval for the audience to reflect on what the fable might mean (Greenberg 314).

3aa 2–4/12b The term ß ß ß ß may refer to either the vulture or the eagle. The abundance of feathers rules out the former, which has a bare neck and head. The coloring points to the golden eagle, which has yellow neck feathers (Greenberg 310). Herrmann (106) suggested that reminiscence of a Mesopotamian colored relief or sculpture underlies the description. The golden eagle, with a wing span up to six or seven feet wide in flight (Brownlee 262), is indeed a “great” bird. This veritable king of birds comes to Lebanon, to engage with a majestic cedar. It seizes a shoot and carries it off to a place known for its commerce. The interpretation of this puzzle, echoing the coming, taking, and bringing of the allegory, calls to mind Nebuchadnezzar’s campaign against Jerusalem in 597 and his deportation of the eighteen-year-old king Jehoiachin and also his court to Babylon (see 2 Kgs 24:10–12). Evidently the cedar stands for the Davidic line and Lebanon for its mountain capital.

5/13 The eagle provides a local replacement, which it nurtures from seed to plant (cf. Deut 22:9; Jer 2:21), from seedbed to a well-watered permanent site. The interpretation picks up the detail of taking
The treaty is clearly viewed as beneficial for Judah, a vehicle of stability and opportunity. The mention of an oath alongside the treaty initiates an emphasis that will also appear in vv 16, 18, and 19. It refers to a religious oath of fidelity that a vassal took to his overlord, exposing himself to curses if he reneged. Both terms have Akkadian counterparts. “Treaty” (širu) corresponds to akku, an agreement drawn up in writing by an overlord and imposed on his vassal, who affirmed it with an “oath.” This latter term (šarlu) is matched by nippur or tawri, the vassal-oath which, if broken, became an active curse (Frankena, OTS 14 [1965] 134–38).

The eagle’s long-term purpose is now presented, in terms of growth, subordination, and loyalty. The plant, a sprawling grapevine, lives up to the eagle’s intent with respect to its growth. The interpretation focuses on the purpose and ignores the partial fulfillment. The phrase hwmqv ṯ p̱ v “low in stature” is echoed in ẖ p̱ v “lowly” and elaborated in terms of not rising in rebellion. The role of Judah as a vassal kingdom thus comes to the fore; mention of the binding covenant also recalls the assets accruing to Judah as a vassal state of the Babylonian empire. Why is Zedekiah, as representative of the kingdom, described as a grapevine, while his predecessor was a cedar shoot? It possibly reflects Zedekiah’s subordinate status, over against Jehoiachin’s initial independence. Zedekiah, though son of Josiah, was Nebuchadnezzar’s nominee; the natural royal descent flowed through Josiah’s firstborn Jehoiakim to his son Jehoiachin.

Hitherto the eagle has been the active agent, and the plant has been the object of its care, only growing as plants do. Now the grapevine develops a mind and activity of its own and gravitates toward a rival eagle, which is somewhat damned by faint praise and by its inactivity, whereby Ezekiel plays down its significance (Brownlee 265). It turns about, in search of more water. V 8 pauses to reflect on the reasoning behind the move. Surely all its needs had been met. Yes, but the grapevine chafed at its enforced lowliness. It wanted to become “magnificent,” a high vine on stakes (cf. 1 Kgs 5:5[4:25]) and to grow independently of its master. In the interpretation, the “sending out” (hjḻ v) of branches toward the other eagle is reflected in the “sending” (jḻ v) of envoys to Egypt. The venture is defined as Zedekiah’s act of rebellion, in violation of v 14. The water sought by the grapevine is defined as “horses and a large army,” presumably as allied or mercenary forces to aid in resisting Babylonian reprisals for the rebellion of its satellite. Ezekiel is here the heir of Isaiah, who in God’s name condemned the anti-Assyrian party at Hezekiah’s court who futilely put their faith in Egypt’s horses and chariots galore (Isa 31:1–3).

The fable pauses before continuing in a different vein. The pause, which splits the story into two distinct parts, vv 3–8 and 9–10, is marked by a fresh call to speak God’s message, repeated from v 3. The fable turns from past narration and begins to ponder on the poor prospects of the ambitious grapevine. Questions now bombard the hearers (and readers), challenging them to become involved in the issue and to share the prophet’s concern, as in chap. 15 (cf. Isa 5:4). The question “Will it flourish?” receives an answer, a long negative counterquestion relating to its fate at the claws of the offended eagle. No more growth for the grapevine: it would lose its roots, fruit, and leaves. Loss of root and fruit is an idiom for total destruction: see Amos 2:9. The allegory, like that in chap. 16 at times, briefly slips from its encoded form into plain reality in contemplating the military ease with which the renegade grapevine would be destroyed.

OTS Oudtestamentische Studiën
 cf. confer, compare
 cf. confer, compare
The interpretation of v 9 in vv 15b–17 begins by repeating the initial question, “Will it/he flourish?” though English idiom now prefers “succeed.” It repeats the question in shocked tones, paraphrasing it with two separate questions that raise the prospect of failure for an enterprise that constituted the breaking of a treaty. This expansion of the single question accords with a contrast between the fable and its interpretation, in the proportion of material each uses for the past and for the future. The fable devotes to the grapevine’s likely fate only half the space it gives to its history. The interpretation leans heavily toward Zedekiah’s doom, expressing it in over twice the amount of material used for past narration. The focus shifts to the punishment it predicts for the royal rebel. The notes of accusation introduced in v 15b correspond to the resumption of the accusation at the outset of the pronouncement of punishment in a judgment oracle, for example in 13:8. The breaking of the covenant mentioned in vv 13–14 initiates a motif to be repeated in vv 16, 18, and 19.

The barrage of ominous questions in v 9b is introduced by ַל ָל “Will not?” a combination of interrogative and negative particles. In 26:15 it introduces the human consequences of divine punishment in a lament type of oracle of judgment. In Hebrew it can idiomatically represent an affirmation (GKC 150e). Not surprisingly, then, it is matched in v 16 by ָל ָל “if not, surely,” in an oath, after the swearing formula ָל ָל “as I live.” Yahweh guarantees Zedekiah’s punishment at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar his patron. Roots, fruit, and fresh leaves grown at the eagle’s behest are equated with the overlord’s gift of kingship and treaty rights, to which Zedekiah had willingly rendered his oath. Now the curses of that oath begin to operate, triggered by his breach of promise. The accusation leveled in the course of v 15b is mentioned once more, with the added factor of the oath of v 13. Both its mention and its position before the treaty fit the new context of Yahweh’s curse. The uprooting of the grapevine is equated with deportation to Babylon. The shriveling of its top growth becomes Zedekiah’s payment for his perfidy with his life, a punishment that Ezekiel was to repeat in 12:13.

V 17 clearly corresponds to v 9b, as the approximate resumption of its first five words indicates. The problem is that v 9 transparently looks ahead to Nebuchadnezzar’s military reaction, while v 17 in the MT refers to Egypt’s failure to give Zedekiah the help he had asked for in v 15. This cannot be right, especially in view of the tight correspondence between the fable and its elucidation in other respects. Either in v 9 or in v 17 some adjustment has to be made. Cornill (275) tried to read a reference to Pharaoh into v 9, following the medieval exegetes Kimchi and Rashi, but unconvincingly. A more popular expedient, initiated by Toy (130), has been to delete the military reference of v 9b b as an intrusion from v 17. However, there is no intrinsic reason for omitting the five words, and one would have expected exact repetition of v 17 in a gloss. The deviation in wording supports its authenticity. The fault must lie in v 17, in the intrusion of ֶל ַף ֶל “Pharaoh” (see Note 17.a.). Then the reference is, as


V Vulgate

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
expected, to Nebuchadnezzar’s retaliatory campaign. In the light of the long siege, the anticipated swift capture of Jerusalem turned out to be a rhetorical flourish. Egyptian military aid did cause a temporary Babylonian withdrawal (see Jer 37:5), and doubtless, the glossator had this in mind in adding “Pharaoh.” The text itself does envision a siege, describing it as in 4:2 (see the Comment there); 21:27(22). The loss of many (ד ב ) Judean lives ironically counterpoints the not large (ב ה ) army required and enhances the notion of an overwhelming defeat. The siege and its consequent casualties are a military translation of pulling up the grapevine, roots and all, in v 9.

10/18–21a The fable warns against drawing a wrong conclusion from the present impunity of the renegade grapevine. The eagle was not its only enemy. Its fate would be sealed by a mysterious new factor, the east wind, which would accelerate the shriveling threatened earlier, in v 9. The interpretation replaces the query as to the grapevine’s prospects with a statement of non impunity, which had been used in the elucidation at v 15. The accusation leveled there is pushed to the fore: the enormity of Zedekiah’s guilt leaves open no other future for him. His guilt is accentuated by mention of the initial gesture that pledged his allegiance and cooperation (cf. 2 Kgs 10:15; 1 Chr 29:24). The repetition of ה נ נ “behold” (v 10) in v 18 draws a parallel between Nebuchadnezzar’s beneficence and Zedekiah’s happy acquiescence before he rebelled.

As in v 16, the basic ו ה “will not?” is replaced by ו ה ו “if not, surely” in a divine oath. Now, however, the thought implicit in v 16 is expressed. Yahweh’s oaths trigger a realization of the self-imposed curses in Zedekiah’s oath. The treaty had been made before Yahweh as witness, and so Yahweh would hold him responsible for it. The oath had been sworn to Yahweh, and so he would act as

17.a. Comparison with v 9בג , where the army is implicitly Nebuchadnezzar’s, has provoked several textual, syntactical, and semantic considerations. Ewald (275–76) treated ה נ פ “Pharaoh” as appositional to ו ב “him” and made Nebuchadnezzar subj, “he will deal with him—Pharaoh—in war.” Kraetzschmar (159–60) deleted the name as a false gloss wrongly relating to v 15a; he noted that elsewhere in Ezekiel ה ב “army” refers to the Babylonians. Herrmann (104) followed him and claimed that in Ezekiel the verb ה ל always “deal” with ו ה “with” is always hostile; he actually considered v 17 secondary, interrupting the flow of vv 16 and 18 (106). He interpreted that Nebuchadnezzar would not need a large army to punish Zedekiah. Similarly, Greenberg (JBL 76 [1957] 307–9; cf. his Ezekiel 1–20 315) has interpreted both vv 9 and 17 as a(n unfulfilled) forecast that Nebuchadnezzar would need only a small army to defeat Zedekiah: (1) ה נ פ “Pharaoh” is secondary, introduced to overcome the difficulty that a large Babylonian army and a drawn-out siege proved necessary, and referring after the event to Hophra’s weak and futile campaign against Nebuchadnezzar; (2) ו ח ל always means “deal hostilely with” in Ezekiel (7:27; 16:59; 22:14; 39:24; and esp. 23:25, 29), whereas ו ח ל is used for a friendly sense, in 20:44; and (3) as in v 9, ו ה “and not” must negate the following adverbial phrases, and not the verb, as it is generally understood. This last point is a good one. The second point has the value of a supporting argument: in Jer 21:2 ו ח ל has a friendly meaning. Unconvincing attempts have been made to create an unambiguously positive verb. Rothstein (913), following H. Graetz, emended to ו ו ל “will save,” while Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 153), followed by the REB, found a supposed Arab. cognate for a stem ה ל meaning “protect.” As to the source of the evidently intrusive ה נ פ “Pharaoh,” it is perhaps best explained as a comparative gloss supplying a subj for the verb. The annotator confused the ה נ פ “large army” of v 9 with that desired from Egypt in v 15, misled by the ambiguity of the verbal phrase (cf. Kraetzschmar 160). See the Comment, cf. confer, compare.
its guarantor. In seeming dependence on this text, 2 Chr 36:13 states that Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, “who had made him swear by God.” Neo-Babylonian vassal treaties have not been preserved. Neo-Assyrian treaties made with subject states in the west did include an oath made by the vassal king, not only to the gods of the overlord but also to his own. Laato (Josiah 160–61) has drawn attention to a number of vassal treaties of this kind. Esarhaddon’s treaty with Baal, king of Tyre, mentions after the Assyrian gods the gods of Tyre, to whom are assigned deportation of the people and destruction of the country in case of infidelity (see ANET 534a). Ashurbanipal’s treaty with the Arab tribe of Qedar invokes Asshur and the gods of Qedar (see Grayson, JCS 39 [1987] 147–50). The treaty between Ashurnirari V and Mati’ilu of Arpad lists among the invoked gods “Adad of Alep” (see ANET 533b). It is reasonable to assume that this custom was maintained in the succeeding empire.

Greenberg’s attempt (322) to differentiate between the treaty and oath of v 18 and those of v 19, seeing in the latter a reference to the covenant between Yahweh and Israel, overlooks the close connection between vv 18 and 19 indicated by their common relation to v 10. His appeal to 16:59 confuses two distinct passages and the relation between them. The language of v 19 is comparable to the description of the agreement between Jonathan and David (1 Sam 18:1–4) as “a covenant of Yahweh” (1 Sam 20:8). V 19 only expresses what the growing emphasis on Zedekiah’s oath in vv 16 and 18 inferred, that Yahweh was to take seriously his invoked role as divine guarantor of the treaty. The conjunction therefore at the head of v 19 draws an immediate conclusion from the accusations made in v 18 (cf. 16:37). The messenger formula is a belated counterpart to the one in v 9, held over because it fits better the present statement of Yahweh’s holding Zedekiah responsible. What is said in v 19 could logically also have been said in v 16. The option to put it here is determined by Yahweh’s personal involvement avowed in vv 20–21, to which it is an excellent introduction. The east wind of v 10 is an instrument of Yahweh’s will. Greenberg (313–14) appeals to Hos 13:15, where the east wind is called “the wind of Yahweh,” and to Exod 10:13; 14:21; Ps 78:26, whereas Zimmerli (364) invokes Ps 104:4. V 19 interprets it in precisely this way. Thereby the verdict of some scholars (Rothstein 912; et al., including Zimmerli 363) that v 10 is an alien addition to the poem, perhaps inspired by 19:12, is shown to be misguided (cf. too Lang, Kein Aufstand 45–46).

The pronouncement of divine punishment is neatly framed by the same verb, יִתְכַּרְפָּו “and I will spread out” and יִכְרְפָּו “will be scattered” (Greenberg 316). V 20 restates from a divine perspective v 16 (= 9b) rather than specifically interpreting v 10b, but both basic verses have to do with destruction. The capture of Zedekiah by the divine hunter (see 12:13 and the Comment) could well link with the touch of the east wind, while the shriveling of the grapevine hints at the fatal outcome of his trial. Zedekiah was actually investigated at Riblah (2 Kgs 25:6), which at least shows that v 10 is not a

JCS Journal of Cuneiform Studies
V Vulgate
V Vulgate
cf. confer, compare
V Vulgate
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
V Vulgate
prophecy after the event (Kraetzschmar 156). Zedekiah’s divine capture and death in Babylon are reaffirmed from vv 16 and 20 in 12:13. The description of the royal offense as infringement of Yahweh’s rights (l [m) refers to its specific sense as oath violation, if J. Milgrom’s thesis is correct (JAOS 96 [1976] 237–38). The focus on the fate of Zedekiah’s army back in Judah accords with the bed of the grapevine in v 10bb. The grim prospect of death in combat for the élite troops and rout for the demoralized remainder is repeated loosely in 12:14 to a constituency who had not listened the first time the message was delivered.

21b The intent of this first pair of messages was to lay out a sketch of Zedekiah’s just fate before the Judean hostages in Babylon. If this “rebellious community” (v 12) was loath to listen, its realization would finally prove that the fate had emanated from Yahweh, who controlled history by moral principles.

22–24 The text leaps over a chasm of darkness and continues on the far side with hardly a break in its stride. By now Ezekiel’s grim word for the future had slipped into a verifying past, and everyone knew too well the truth of God’s word of judgment. The last word had not yet been said concerning Israel’s monarchy. The fable of vv 1–10 is revisited and extended to a new, positive meaning. The oracle is written in heightened prose that has poetical qualities.

22ab First, vv 3–4 deserved close reexamination: in fact, not only their terminology but their chiastic order is reproduced (cf. Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 72). There was a new message from Yahweh for God’s people to hear, now an oracle of salvation rather than of judgment. Yahweh, who had stood behind Nebuchadnezzar as the Lord of history and worked out his moral purposes through him (vv 16–21), was to take over that great eagle’s earlier role, directly intervening in Israel’s affairs. He himself would pluck a tender shoot from the crown of the cedar. The Davidic dynasty that stood permanently under the promise of God (cf. 2 Sam 7; Ps 89) was to produce a scion who would come into his inheritance.

22bb–23a Now v 8 is recycled. Its two distinct parts are treated together in a new whole. It had spoken about being planted on good, well-watered ground and about the prospect of producing branches, bearing fruit, and generally growing into a magnificent specimen. Yahweh too, in his plans for Israel, had such care and blessing in mind. He was to plant the cedar shoot on the “very high mountain” that Ezekiel had visited in his vision of the new temple (40:2), on “Israel’s high mountain” where a returned Israel was to worship him (20:40; cf. too 34:14). Here, on Mount Zion, the cedar would realize the growth that had eluded rebellious Zedekiah. It or he—for none other than a new “David,” God’s faithful “servant” or vassal (34:24; 37:24–25), is in view—would develop the full potential of the divine promise. Gone would be the period of human vassalage, when the monarchy was reduced to a trailing vine (v 6): a majestic cedar would take its place. In the phrases about the fruit and branches, the verbs of v 8 are inverted, as is common in quotation (cf. Talmon, Qumran 361–62). We need not cavil at the idea of a cedar producing fruit. As in Hos 14:9(8), biblical metaphor exercises the privilege of transcending natural realities.

23b Much of the language is derived from 31:6–7. The link with chap. 31 was doubtless made through (the already redactional) 19:11a–b, which depends on 31:3, 5, 9, and 10. Zedekiah’s attempts to be independent of Babylon were like the Pharaoh Hophra’s aspirations to become a cosmic tree, a Babel-like ambition that was doomed to fail. Here the ancient myth of the cosmic tree is reused in its original positive connotation. The motif “presents the living world as an enormous tree with its roots in the subterranean deep and its top in the clouds, a shelter for every living being” (Allen, Ezekiel 20–48...
125). The application to royal eschatology, which was facilitated by its attribution to Pharaoh in chap. 31, draws on previous prophetic illustration of the future of the Davidic monarchy in terms of a tree, in Isa 11:1 and Jer 23:5; 33:15 (and later in Zech 3:8; 6:12). The effect is to recall the promises of worldwide rule in the royal psalms (Pss 2:8; 72:8; 89:26[25]; cf. Zech 9:10) and to project them into the eschatological future.

24 The nations have a double role in vv 23–24 (cf. Herrmann 107): here they feature as “all the trees in the countryside.” Their description and reaction are an adaptation of 31:15, where they mourn in shock at the cutting down of the Egyptian cosmic tree. The recognition by the other nations that Yahweh has been at work implies not a positive vision of their conversion but an emphatic statement of Yahweh’s supremacy, which convinces them against their will (cf. Joyce, *Divine Initiative* 94–97). The expanded recognition formula majors in a claim of the sovereignty of Yahweh. The terminology is taken from the fable. “Low” (ֶ佤) comes from v 8, and “shriveled” (יִבְּשָׁנָה) from vv 9–10. Nor should we overlook a contribution from chap. 19: “high” (אֲדָמֹת) seems to echo 19:11, and the verb “shrivel” (יִבְּשָׁנָה) the action of the east wind in 19:12a. Once this perspective is broached, one notices other links with chap. 19: יִבְּשָׁנָה “shriveled” also occurs in 19:12b, while in vv 22–23 יִבְּשָׁנָה “plant” occurs in 19:10, 13, and יִבְּשָׁנָה “fruit” seem to recall יִבְּשָׁנָה “fruitful and branched” in 19:10. This is a factor that will repay consideration when we study chap. 19. 21:33 (20:47) has some similarity, but the context is quite different. The interpretation of Hölscher (Dichter 102) and Greenberg (317) is surely right, that the reference throughout is to the Davidic line. The perfect tenses of the verbs lend it support, and Greenberg compares the identical objects of contrasted verbs in Deut 32:39. The God who was responsible for destroying the monarchy, on the lines of 17:8–10 and 19:11–12, would restore it. This brief vignette of judgment and salvation fittingly sums up the double message of the literary unit. The oracle is capped with a formula of affirmation (cf. 36:36), one triumphantly longer than the one incorporated in the recognition formula of v 21. What might seem unlikely to happen on the human plane was guaranteed by God’s pledge. In fact, the humiliating destruction he had accomplished, in fulfillment of his word, brought its own confirmation of his providential power to restore and glorify.

**Explanation**

This chapter looks both backward and forward from the standpoint of the exile. Its readers also have the benefit of appreciating Ezekiel’s anti-Egyptian oracles in chaps. 29–32, which were probably all uttered later than the first pair of oracles in the present chapter. What the prophet first proclaimed amid the hurly-burly of conflicting politics, concerning the respective rights and prospects of rival kings and strategic possibilities, was now an indisputable fact. The dust had settled, leaving the Judean scene desolate and the royal palace debris. The consequences of Zedekiah’s folly in claiming independence with Egypt’s help were a matter of historical documentation in the chronicles of Babylon. Ezekiel, however, found a higher agenda. Zedekiah, in breaking his vassal oath to Nebuchadnezzar, had invited retribution from Yahweh, in whose name he had made it. So Yahweh had decreed Zedekiah’s downfall and masterminded Babylonian reprisals, working out the very curses Zedekiah earlier recited with invocation of his listening God.

This interpretation of the tragedy of Judah’s destruction, monarchy and all, opened the door to a
positive future, to which earlier royal and prophetic hopes lent credence. Moreover, appeal could be made to Israel’s traditional hymnic declaration of Yahweh’s sovereign power of reversal, that he both brings low and sets high (1 Sam 2:7; Pss 75:8[7]; 147:6; cf. Luke 1:52). Those who looked to the past with disappointment are bidden to look upward and onward in expectation of a new “David” whose world rule under God would be “for ever” (37:25). According to Mark 4:30–32, Jesus’s call to faith in the greatness of God’s coming kingdom, despite its small beginnings, fittingly echoed the cosmic cedar of v 23.

**Living the Hope (18:1–32)**

**Bibliography**


Translation

1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2 “What do you all mean by using this slogan about the country of Israel, ‘Parents eat sour grapes, but their children’s teeth feel rough’? 3 I swear by my very life, runs the oracle of the Lord, you will never again use
this slogan in Israel. 4You see, every person stands in relation to me. The parent as a personal entity and the child as a personal entity relate to me in the same direct way. 5But the case of a virtuous individual who acts justly and fairly is different. 6I mean one who has never feasted on the mountains nor looked up to the idols worshiped by the community of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor’s wife, nor does he approach a woman during her period. 7He wrongs no one: he returns the pledge entrusted to him, he seizes no property. He gives his own food to the hungry and provides the naked with clothing. 8He does not lend at interest by taking extra for a loan. 9He has no hand in such wrongdoing; he practices honest justice in his dealings with his fellows. 9He meets my standards and keeps my rules, putting them into practice. This is what it means to be virtuous. Such an individual will certainly win life, runs the oracle of

b 3.b. The inf constr is unusually employed as subj of the verb to be: cf. Waltke, Syntax 36.2.1b. Cornill (279) and others have suggested repointing as a ptcp, in line with v 2, “anyone who uses,” as Syr. Tg. imply.

a 4.a. The construction û–w...û “like ... (and) like” declares two terms to be identical in the same regard (Joüon 174i). The force ofû seems to be “relate to me”: cf. Amos 9:7, “Are you not like the sons of the Ethiopians to me [û ]?” IV 4a must have the same meaning (cf. Davidson 126), rather than referring to Yahweh’s lordship over all human life by right of creation. See the Comment.

5.a. Lit. “When an individual is righteous ...” The Heb. construction of vv 5–9 is protasis (v 5a), parenthetical definition (vv 5b–9a), and apodosis (v 9b) (cf. Schulz, Todesrecht 168).

6.a. This rendering, borrowed from the REB, usefully encompasses a reference to the preexilic period of the lives of Ezekiel’s hearers.

6.b. For the oscillation between pf in v 6ab and impf in vv 6b–8, see Joüon 112d n. 2.

6.c. The noun hdn “menstruation” stands in apposition to hva “woman”: see GKC 131c. Mishnaic Heb. has the same construction, doubtless borrowed from here. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:66) suggested that the noun developed a concrete sense.

7.a. The MT b wbj “his pledge, a debt” exhibits an appositional construction of the type encountered in 16:27 (see GKC 131r), but it is here a more extreme case, in the sense of “his pledge given in conjunction with a debt.” The LXX may imply b yj “the pledge of a debtor.” It is hardly original, as Jahn (123) and Zimmerli (370) have claimed, but a secondary attempt to make sense of an awkward phrase. The Vg conflates the MT and the LXX. Probably b wbj “debt” is itself an attempt to wrest sense from a relic bj, which represents a copyist’s abandoned mistake whereby he was about to write bj “he requires (a pledge),” with v 16a in mind. For subsequent elaboration of an abandoned error, see my explanation of ȳt j nh w “and I will deposit” in 22:20, in JSS 31 (1986) 131–33; Ezekiel 20–48 32. The suffix on wbj is objective, “the pledge given to him.”

8.a. Whether there is any difference between û v n and y vb f t , which both denote interest of some kind, is a moot point. See Greenberg’s discussion of possible meanings (330).

9.a. For the piel impf û h y “he walks,” one expects the standard qal pf û h with the same sense, as we find in v 17 and as the parallel f mw “he keeps” suggests. Most probably after dittography of yod the verb had to be construed as a poetic piel.

b 9.b. In place of the MT t ma “(to do) truth,” the LXX implies m t a “them,” which fits the context better and is supported by v 19 (Ewald 277; et al.). The sequence h c j y t ma f pv m “justice of truth he does” in v 8b encouraged metathesis in the similar m t a t wc j “and judgments … to do them.” Even Barthélemy (Critique 3:127–28) so emends.
the Lord Yahweh.

10 “Suppose he produces a son who is a ruffian and a murderer, who commits each one of these sins, while his father refrained from all of them. He, however, has feasted on the mountains. He defiles his neighbor’s wife. He wrongs the poor and needy: he seizes properties; he fails to return pledges. He looks up to those idols. He engages in a shocking practice, in that he lends at interest by taking extra for a loan. Will such a person win life? He will not. After engaging in such shocking practices, he must be put to death, with nobody to blame but himself.

13 Just suppose he in turn produces a son who, seeing all the sins his father has committed, takes thought and does not commit any such sins. He has never feasted on the mountains nor looked up to the idols worshiped by the community of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor’s wife. He wrongs no one: he does not require a pledge, and he acquires nothing illegally. He gives his own food to the hungry and provides the naked with clothing. He has no hand in wrongdoing, such as requiring

9.c. This clause is to be taken as a closing definition parallel to the opening v 5 (Greenberg 346–47) rather than as a declaratory formula (Zimmerli 376, 381). See the Comment.

10.a. So the NJPS renders.

b 10.b. The MT ja is hardly an exclamation, “alas,” as it is in 6:11, nor does the sense “brother” fit. It is doubtless an abandoned attempt to write dja “one,” in place of djam “only one” (Greenberg 331). For the idiomatic djam with a partitive preposition, attested by ‘A, see Cooke 203. The parallel hlaAlk “all these things” indicates that it means “each one,” rather than “even one (of these things),” as if committing even one of these sins meant losing the status of righteousness, as Greenberg (340) takes it. Some MSS have a fem form, tjam “only one,” in line with Lev 4:2; 5:13, but it is hardly necessary.

11.a. V 11a has been regarded as an inferior variant of v 10b by Bertholet ([1936] 64) and many. The Syr., which does not represent it, is notorious for passing over material it considered otiose. The LXX engages in paraphrase in vv 10b–11a. The pronoun awh “he” refers to the father, as the subj of v 10a (Keil 252). Clearly in both v 10b and v 11a hla “these” refers to sins or the like: cf. the similarly resumptive v 14a and also v 13b.

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b 11.b. Heb. yk seems to be asseverative, while yjw has an adversative force: “but surely” (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:67).

13.a. The LXX “he surely (will not live)” seems to reflect clumsy assimilation to v 9 in its Vorlage, though pap 967 omits the pronoun. The stylistic variation yjw “and will he live?” reappears in v 24. Cornill (281) rightly preferred the lively MT, comparing 17:15.

13.b. The pass verb, here with a sense of divine agency, is a survival of an old formulation, in the second part of which a human agent of death was exonerated of blame (Hitzig 125; Zimmerli 372, 384, with reference to Lev 20:9, 11, etc.). See the Comment. The variant wmy “he will die” brings into line with the rest of the chapter.

14.a. So von Orelli (71) and others have rendered here and in v 28: cf. BDB 907b. LXX Vg imply ar “and he feared.” Zimmerli (372) has noted that the latter verb occurs seldom in Ezekiel, whereas the former is very common. The nonrepresentation in the Syr. seems to presuppose the MT, which it passes over as repetitious (Barthélemy, Critique 3:134).
interest by taking extra for a loan. He puts my rules into practice and meets my standards. Such a person will not die for his father’s iniquity: he will certainly win life. 18 In the case of his father, who cheated others of their legal rights and seized the property of fellow Israelites, he had to die for his iniquity. 19 ‘Why,’ you ask, ‘didn’t the son bear any of the consequences of the father’s iniquity?’ His son has acted justly and fairly; he has met my standards and put them into practice, so he will certainly win life. 20 It is the person who sins that will die. A son won’t bear any of the consequences of his father’s iniquity, nor will a father bear any of the consequences of his son’s iniquity. The virtuous will enjoy the consequences of their virtue, while the wicked will suffer the consequences of their wickedness. 21 ‘If, however, the wicked give up all the sins they used to commit and meet my standards and act justly and fairly, they will certainly win life; they will not die. None of the rebel ways in which they engaged will be remembered against them. Their virtuous behavior will guarantee them life. 22 Is the death of the wicked what I really want? asks the Lord Yahweh’s oracle. Don’t I want them to give up their present behavior and win life? Correspondingly, if the virtuous give up their virtue and do wrong, committing all the same shocking practices as the wicked, will they win life? None

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17.a. Since Ewald (278), the MT יִמְנָה מִן “from the poor” has generally been taken as an error for לְמָו מִן “from wrongdoing,” which the LXX implies, as in v 8. The clause in the MT clearly means “from (harming) the poor he turned his hand” (cf. 20:22), but it can hardly be right. The substituted noun may have originated as a comparative gloss relating v 16a to the longer clause in v 12a or relating v 17ab to the interest-free loan to the poor in Exod 22:24(25). In the latter case a marginal יִמְנָה מִן “from the poor” displaced לְמָו מִן “from wrongdoing.” In the former case יִמְנָה מִן “poor” displaced לְמָו מִן “wrongdoing.” 18.a. Heb. יָא “brother,” in the sense of a fellow Israelite, is not attested by the LXX*, but the later יָמִינָה לְ “his kinsfolk” supports it (Barthélemy, Critique 3:128–32). 18.b. The MT יָמִינָה לְ “his kinsfolk” is an ancient term otherwise found in fixed formulas: see Greenberg 332. The LXX “my people” reflects haplography of waw, while Syr. Vg Tg. “his people” represents a simplification. 19.a. The preposition בֵּית seems to be partitive here and in v 20 (Hitzig 125; et al.). 20.a. See Note 2.e.* above. 20.a. See Note 2.e.* above. 20.b. It is more natural in English to render the sg references in vv 20–28 as pl. Moreover, it better reflects the fact that alternative types of behavior are in view, rather than the behavior of individuals. 22.a. The לָעֵן expresses a dative of disadvantage. It recurs in the parallel 33:16. 23.a. The verb אֲרָה “take delight (in)” is construed either with a בֵּית or with a direct object. The construction is mixed in this verse. A minority reading לְוָא מְבֹא “in the death” probably reflects assimilation to v 32 and 33:11. 23.b. A sg noun is widely attested (see BKH, BHS), probably by assimilation to the parallel 33:11. The LXX adds an explanatory adj “wicked.” 24.a. The Heb. יְּבֵן לְחֵץ יִדְעָה “(he) does, will he live?” is not represented in LXX* (“if he does” in pap 967 [cf. Syh LXXk] seems to be a prehexaplaric revision, perhaps from 5) Syr. Since Cornill (282), the words have often been deleted as superfluous. However, Hitzig (126) observed that הֲלִי יִדְעָה “he does” resumes הֲלִי וַיַּקְנָה “and does.” It goes closely with יְּבֵן לְחֵץ “like all . . .” as the accents indicate (cf. Toy 28). As for the question denying life, which echoes v 13, Eichrodt (234) noted that such an interim pronouncement at this point matches the sequence in vv 21–22, where nonremembrance of previous acts and a final pronouncement follow.
of the virtuous actions\textsuperscript{b} they engaged in will be remembered. Their faithlessness and the sin they commit will mean their death.

25 "The Lord's\textsuperscript{a} policy is inconsistent,\textsuperscript{b} you object. Just listen, community of Israel: Is it my policy that is not consistent? Isn't it rather your behavior that is inconsistent? 26 When the virtuous give up their virtue and do wrong, they will die on those grounds.\textsuperscript{a} They will die for the wrong they have done. 27 Again, when the wicked give up the wickedness they used to engage in and act justly and fairly, they will secure their lives. 28 Having taken thought and given up all the rebel ways they used to practice, they will certainly gain life; they won't die. 29 But the community of Israel objects, 'The Lord's policy is inconsistent.' Is it my policy\textsuperscript{a} that is not consistent, community of Israel? Isn't it your behavior that is inconsistent?\textsuperscript{b}

30 So\textsuperscript{a} I will judge you, community of Israel, each on the basis of your behavior, affirms the Lord Yahweh's oracle. Give up your rebel ways, do give them up,\textsuperscript{b} or else iniquity will mean a tragic end for you.\textsuperscript{c} 31 Throw away all your acts of rebellion against me,\textsuperscript{a} and you will get\textsuperscript{b} for

\textsuperscript{b} 24.b. For the K/Q variation, see Note 33:13.b.*

\textsuperscript{a} 25.a. There is ancient support for the divine name (see BHS) here and in v 29, and also in the parallel 33:17, 20. It may have been replaced to avoid associating it with an offensive charge: cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 557.

\textsuperscript{b} 25.b. The Heb. \textsuperscript{b}רְשֵׁי, here in the niph, is commonly taken as “measure” and so here “be correct” (HALAT 1596b). Greenberg (333–34) regards the niph as tolerative, with the sense “(not) determinable” and so “erratic, arbitrary.” Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation 338 n. 62) finds a similar sense, “acts without principle” (= REB).

\textsuperscript{a} 26.a. The pl. suffix is strange: it appears to refer to giving up virtue and doing wrong as two actions (cf. 33:18). The LXX\textsuperscript{b} (= pap 967, followed by LXX\textsuperscript{L}) \textsuperscript{b}ἐν \textsuperscript{b}λίπος “by it” simplified by relating to \textsuperscript{b}ὶδόν “wrong.” In LXX\textsuperscript{B} etc., the phrase is moved to the last clause.

\textsuperscript{a} 29.a. The noun and accompanying verb are pl, unlike vv 25abb and 29a. The fault may lie with the verb. Did a variant or corrective pl \textsuperscript{b}רְשֵׁי “are consistent,” relating to the final verb, displace a sg form and cause a pl. pointing of the noun? The sg forms in the LXX may so suggest; there, however, all the cases of \textsuperscript{b}רְשֵׁי “way” in vv 25 and 29 appear in the sg.

\textsuperscript{b} 29.b. The sg verb in the MT may simply denote lack of congruence due to its distance from its subj (cf. v 13bג). However, a pl. verb may have stood here (cf. BHS) and been textually confused with the verb dealt with in the preceding Note.

\textsuperscript{a} 30.a. In the Vorlage of the LXX\textsuperscript{b}, \textsuperscript{b}ἐπερέα “therefore” was overlooked after the similar ending of \textsuperscript{b}ἐπερέα (Hitzig 127).

\textsuperscript{b} 30.b. For the intransitive hiph here and in v 32, cf. 14:6 and Note 14:6.a.*

\textsuperscript{c} 30.c. There is more than one way of understanding v 30bכ: (1) “lest they be a stumbling block leading to iniquity” (cf. NJPS, NAB). This accords with the usage in 7:19; 44:12, with which 14:3, 4, 7 may be compared. Then the sg verb can be regarded as attracted to the predicate (Zimmerli 374) or even emended to a pl. with the presumed support of the LXX (Cornell 284; et al.; cf. the Tg.). Greenberg (334) understands lack of repentance as the implicit subj This construing regards \textsuperscript{b}יוד “iniquity” as genitive. However, the context does not favor temptation to sin, as the other contexts imply, but rather calamitous ruin. Accordingly, (2) “lest iniquity be your stumbling block” (Vg; cf. Syr.; cf. NRSV, REB NIV), which is how the Masoretic accentuation construes, is to be preferred, with “iniquity” as subj. It is significant that in the related 3:20; 33:12 the noun \textsuperscript{b}יוד “stumbling block” and the cognate verb respectively are used with reference to a fatal fall.
yourselves a new heart, a new spirit. Why die, community of Israel? 32 I don’t want anyone’s death, runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle. So give it all up, and you will gain life.  b

Notes
2.a. “All” is added to the translation to indicate that the Heb. for “you” is pl.

2.b. The omission in the LXX (see BHS) reflects comparative assimilation to 12:22 (Cornill 279). For the Heb. construction with a verbal clause, cf. 1 Sam 11:5, here with ellipse of וְ (that), as in Isa 3:15.

2.c. So the NIV renders; cf. NRSV “concerning.” Cf. 12:22 and see the Comment. The LXX “in the...
sons of Israel” represents false assimilation to its Vorlage in 12:24.

2.d. Lit. “fathers” and later “sons,” and similarly in v 4. In vv 5–20, a more literal translation is made, and masc pronouns can hardly be avoided.

2.e. Greenberg (327) has rightly observed that here and in v 20 the article has the force of a possessive pronoun, with reference to Joüon 137f.

2.f. Lit. “be blunt,” used of an iron instrument. The verb is here used metaphorically, with reference to the rough acidic coating of the teeth.

3.a. For the formulaic use of יְהֹוָ֣ה “Lord” in the divine-saying formula here and in vv 9, 23, 30, and 31, see Note 5:11.a.*

3.b. The inf constr is unusually employed as subj of the verb to be: cf. Waltke, Syntax 36.2.1b. Cornill (279) and others have suggested repointing as a ptcp, in line with v 2, “anyone who uses,” as Syr. Tg. imply.

4.a. The construction יִֽהְמָכָּל … יִֽהְמָכָּל “like … (and) like” declares two terms to be identical in the same regard (Joüon 174i). The force of יִֽהְמָכָּל seems to be “relate to me”: cf. Amos 9:7, “Are you not like the sons of the Ethiopians to me [יִֽהְמָכָּל]?” V 4a must have the same meaning (cf. Davidson 126), rather than referring to Yahweh’s lordship over all human life by right of creation. See the Comment.

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6.a. This rendering, borrowed from the REB, usefully encompasses a reference to the preexilic period of the lives of Ezekiel’s hearers.

6.b. For the oscillation between pf in v 6ab and impf in vv 6bb–8, see Joüon 112d n. 2.

Lit. literally
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* 11.a. For the formulaic use of יְהֹוָ֣ה “Lord” in a divine-saying formula, see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556, 562.
inf infinitive
subj subject/subjective
cf. confer, compare
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
V Vulgate
cf. confer, compare
Lit. literally
cf. confer, compare
REB Revised English Bible
pf perfect
n. note
6.c. The noun "menstruation" stands in apposition to "woman": see GKC 131c. Mishnaic Heb. has the same construction, doubtless borrowed from here. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:66) suggested that the noun developed a concrete sense.

7.a. The MT \textit{bwj \textbar} \textit{bj} “his pledge, a debt” exhibits an appositional construction of the type encountered in 16:27 (see GKC 131r), but it is here a more extreme case, in the sense of “his pledge given in conjunction with a debt.” The LXX may imply \textit{t \textbar} \textit{bj} “the pledge of a debtor.” It is hardly original, as Jahn (123) and Zimmerli (370) have claimed, but a secondary attempt to make sense of an awkward phrase. The Vg conflates the MT and the LXX. Probably \textit{bwj} “debt” is itself an attempt to wrest sense from a relic \textit{bj}, which represents a copyist’s abandoned mistake whereby he was about to write \textit{bj} “he requires (a pledge),” with v 16a in mind. For subsequent elaboration of an abandoned error, see my explanation of \textit{ytjnhw “and I will deposit” in 22:20, in JSS 31 (1986) 131–33; Ezekiel 20–48 32. The suffix on \textit{bj} is objective, “the pledge given to him.”

8.a. Whether there is any difference between \textit{ûvn} and \textit{tybrt}, which both denote interest of some kind, is a moot point. See Greenberg’s discussion of possible meanings (330).

9.a. For the piel impf \textit{ûlh} “he walks,” one expects the standard qal pf \textit{ûlhy} with the same sense, as we find in v 17 and as the parallel \textit{rmv “he keeps” suggests. Most probably after dittography of \textit{yod the verb had to be construed as a poetic piel.}

9.b. In place of the MT \textit{t ma “(to do) truth,” the LXX implies \textit{\textbar} \textit{a “them,” which fits the context better and is supported by v 19 (Ewald 277; et al.). The sequence \textit{hc \textbar} \textit{y t ma “justice of truth he does” in v 8b encouraged metathesis in the similar \textit{\textbar} \textit{a \textbar} \textit{we “and judgments … to do them.” Even Barthélemy (Critique 3:127–28) so emends.

9.c. This clause is to be taken as a closing definition parallel to the opening v 5 (Greenberg 346–47) rather than as a declaratory formula (Zimmerli 376, 381). See the Comment.

10.a. So the NJPS renders.
10.b. The MT ḥa is hardly an exclamation, “alas,” as it is in 6:11, nor does the sense “brother” fit. It is doubtless an abandoned attempt to write ḥa “one,” in place of ḥa “only one” (Greenberg 331). For the idiomatic ḥa with a partitive preposition, attested by ‘A, see Cooke 203. The parallel ḥa “all these things” indicates that it means “each one,” rather than “even one (of these things),” as if committing even one of these sins meant losing the status of righteousness, as Greenberg (340) takes it. Some MSS have a fem form, ḥa, in line with Lev 4:2; 5:13, but it is hardly necessary.

11.a. V 11a has been regarded as an inferior variant of v 10b by Bertholet ([1936] 64) and many. The Syr., which does not represent it, is notorious for passing over material it considered otiose. The LXX engages in paraphrase in vv 10b–11a. The pronoun ḥa “he” refers to the father, as the subj of v 10a (Keil 252). Clearly in both v 10b and v 11a ḥ “these” refers to sins or the like: cf. the similarly resumptive v 14a and also v 13b.

11.b. Heb yk seems to be asseverative, while ḥ has an adversative force: “but surely” (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:67).

13.a. The LXX “he surely (will not live)” seems to reflect clumsy assimilation to v 9 in its Vorlage, though pap 967 omits the pronoun. The stylistic variation ḥ “and will he live?” reappears in v 24. Cornill (281) rightly preferred the lively MT, comparing 17:15.

13.b. The pass verb, here with a sense of divine agency, is a survival of an old formulation, in the second part of which a human agent of death was exonerated of blame (Hitizg 125; Zimmerli 372, 384, with reference to Lev 20:9, 11, etc.). See the Comment. The variant ḥ “he will die” brings into line with the rest of the chapter.

14.a. So von Orelli (71) and others have rendered here and in v 28: cf. BDB 907b. LXX Vg imply ḥ “and he feared.” Zimmerli (372) has noted that the latter verb occurs seldom in Ezekiel, whereas the former is very common. The nonrepresentation in the Syr. seems to presuppose the MT, which it
passes over as repetitious (Barthélemy, *Critique* 3:134).

17.a. Since Ewald (278), the MT \(\text{yn}^\text{m}\) “from the poor” has generally been taken as an error for \(\text{lw}^\text{m}\) “from wrongdoing,” which the LXX implies, as in v 8. The clause in the MT clearly means “from (harming) the poor he turned his hand” (cf. 20:22), but it can hardly be right. The substituted noun may have originated as a comparative gloss relating v 16a to the longer clause in v 12a or relating v 17a to the interest-free loan to the poor in Exod 22:24(25). In the latter case a marginal \(\text{yn}^\text{m}\) “from the poor” displaced \(\text{lw}^\text{m}\) “from wrongdoing.” In the former case \(\text{yn}\) “poor” displaced \(\text{lw}\) “wrongdoing.”

18.a. Heb. \(\text{ja}\) “brother,” in the sense of a fellow Israelite, is not attested by the LXX*, but the later \(\text{wym}\) “his kinsfolk” supports it (Barthélemy, *Critique* 3:128–32).

18.b. The MT \(\text{wym}\) “his kinsfolk” is an ancient term otherwise found in fixed formulas: see Greenberg 332. The LXX “my people” reflects haplography of \(\text{waw}\), while Syr. Vg Tg. “his people” represents a simplification.

19.a. The preposition \(\text{beth}\) seems to be partitive here and in v 20 (Hitzig 125; et al.).

20.a. See Note 2.e.* above.

20.b. It is more natural in English to render the sg references in vv 20–28 as pl. Moreover, it better reflects the fact that alternative types of behavior are in view, rather than the behavior of individuals.

22.a. The \(\text{lamed}\) expresses a dative of disadvantage. It recurs in the parallel 33:16.

23.a. The verb \(\text{Åpj}\) “take delight (in)” is construed either with a \(\text{beth}\) or with a direct object. The construction is mixed in this verse. A minority reading \(\text{twmb}\) “in the death” probably reflects assimilation to v 32 and 33:11.

23.b. A sg noun is widely attested (see *BHK, BHS*), probably by assimilation to the parallel 33:11.

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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. *confer, compare*
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Tg. Targum
et al. *et alii*, and others
* 2.e. Greenberg (327) has rightly observed that here and in v 20 the article has the force of a possessive pronoun, with reference to Joüon 137f.
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
sg singular or under

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The LXX adds an explanatory adj “wicked.”

24.a. The Heb. יִ֫דֶ֫לֶע הָבֵן (he) does, will he live?” is not represented in LXX* (“if he does” in pap 967 [cf. Syh LXX] seems to be a prehexaplaric revision, perhaps from 5) Syr. Since Cornwall (282), the words have often been deleted as superfluous. However, Hitzig (126) observed that הֶבֶן “he does” resumes הֶבֶן “and does.” It goes closely with … לָשׁוּנָהוּ “like all …,” as the accents indicate (cf. Toy 28). As for the question denying life, which echoes v 13, Eichrodt (234) noted that such an interim pronouncement at this point matches the sequence in vv 21–22, where nonremembrance of previous acts and a final pronouncement follow.

24.b. For the K/Q variation, see Note 33:13.b.*

25.a. There is ancient support for the divine name (see BHS) here and in v 29, and also in the parallel 33:17, 20. It may have been replaced to avoid associating it with an offensive charge: cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 557.

25.b. The Heb. יִ֫דֶ֫לֶע הָבֵן, here in the niph, is commonly taken as “measure” and so here “be correct” (HALAT 1596b). Greenberg (333–34) regards the niph as tolerative, with the sense “(not) determinable” and so “erratic, arbitrary.” Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation 338 n. 62) finds a similar sense, “acts without principle” (= REB).

26.a. The pl. suffix is strange: it appears to refer to giving up virtue and doing wrong as two actions (cf. 33:18). The LXX* (= pap 967, followed by LXXL) וְמֵאָבְּקַדֵּשׁ “by it” simplified by relating to מֵאָבְּקַדֵּשׁ “wrong.” In LXXB etc. the phrase is moved to the last clause.

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
Syh The Syriac translation of origen’s Hexapla (Syrohexaplaric text)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
n. note
REB Revised English Bible
pl. plate or plural
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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29.a. The noun and accompanying verb are pl, unlike vv 25ab and 29a. The fault may lie with the verb. Did a variant or corrective pl הַיּוֹ לְךָ “are consistent,” relating to the final verb, displace a sg form and cause a pl. pointing of the noun? The sg forms in the LXX may so suggest; there, however, all the cases of יִכְרַו “way” in vv 25 and 29 appear in the sg.

29.b. The sg verb in the MT may simply denote lack of congruence due to its distance from its subj (cf. v 13bg). However, a pl. verb may have stood here (cf. BHS) and been textually confused with the verb dealt with in the preceding Note

30.a. In the Vorlage of the LXX*, יִכְרַו “therefore” was overlooked after the similar ending of יִכְרַו (Hitzig 127).

30.b. For the intransitive hiph here and in v 32, cf. 14:6 and Note 14:6.a.*

30.c. There is more than one way of understanding v 30bb: (1) “lest they be a stumbling block leading to iniquity” (cf. NJPS, NAB). This accords with the usage in 7:19; 44:12, with which 14:3, 4, 7 may be compared. Then the sg verb can be regarded as attracted to the predicate (Zimmerli 374) or even emended to a pl. with the presumed support of the LXX (Cornill 284; et al.; cf. the Tg.). Greenberg (334) understands lack of repentance as the implicit subj This construing regards יִכְרַו “iniquity” as genitive. However, the context does not favor temptation to sin, as the other contexts imply, but rather calamitous ruin. Accordingly, (2) “lest iniquity be your stumbling block” (Vg; cf. Syr.; cf. NRSV, REB NIV

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sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
sg singular or under
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
subj subject/subjective
cf. confer, compare
pl. plate or plural
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
6.a. In the light of 18:30, the hiph has an intransitive force, perhaps by way of ellipse of the natural object “yourselves.”
cf. confer, compare
NJPS New Jewish Publication Society Version
NAB The New American Bible
pl. plate or plural
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
Tg. Targum
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
which is how the Masoretic accentuation construes, is to be preferred, with “iniquity” as subj. It is significant that in the related 3:20; 33:12 the noun \( \text{\textit{lwvkm}} \) “stumbling block” and the cognate verb respectively are used with reference to a fatal fall.

31.a. The MT “with which \( \text{\textit{µb … ṭ v ṭ}} \) you have rebelled” takes \( \text{\textit{µb}} \) as resumptive. Barthélemy (Critique 3:137–38) has compared Ezra 10:13 for the style of the MT, but there no cognate noun is involved. One expects “(with) which you have rebelled against me \( \text{\textit{yb … ṭ v ṭ}} \)” with an implicit cognate object, as in 1 Kgs 8:50 (cf. Jer 33:8; Zeph 3:11), as the LXX implies (Hitzig 127; et al.). Cf. the double cognate construction in v 24, where \( \text{\textit{µb}} \) “because of them” goes with what follows: did \( \text{\textit{µb}} \) arise from a mechanical comparison with v 24?

31.b. For \( \text{\textit{hc}} \) in the sense “acquire (property),” see 22:13; 28:4; 38:12. It is used with a reflexive \( \text{\textit{lh}} \) “for (oneself)” in 28:4; Deut 8:17; 2 Sam 15:1; 1 Kgs 1:5. To take it as meaning “make” (BDB 794b) creates unnecessary tension with 11:19; 36:26. Both here and in v 32b the first impv functions as a condition, while the second presents the consequence that fulfillment of the condition will involve (cf. GKC 110f; Joüon 116f). Scholars have missed the construction here, but some have so construed v 32b, at least in their translations (e.g., “that ye may live,” Keil 256). Raitt (ZAW 83 [1971] 35) has found a promise in the closing “and live.” Hals (126) calls it “a motivation, actually a promise.” The tension that has been found between the indicatives of the other passages and the impv here in v 31b (e.g., Zimmerli 386) is imaginary. Gaebelein (128–29) went so far as take v 31 as belonging to “the law dispensation” and 36:26 as reflecting “the dispensation of grace.”

32.a. For the idiomatic use of the ptcp, see GKC 139d, 144e; Joüon 155h.
32.b. The LXX shortens v 32, overlooking v 32b in the case of LXX\(^B\) and also the divine saying formula in pap 967. The latter may be an idiosyncrasy: Ziegler (LXX 338) has observed that pap 967 also omits this element in 32:32. Zimmerli (374) unfairly takes the formula as marking a conclusion: in the parallel v 23, it is asseverative (cf. Matties, Ezekiel 18 33 n. 35). \(V\) 32b is required by the structure of the passage (see the Comment). The omission of the imperatives may well be an inner-Greek phenomenon, the result of parablepsis from \(\text{καί} \text{ν} \text{and} \) to \(\text{καί} \text{ν} \text{in 19:1}.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

Chap. 18 is set apart as a literary piece by its introductory messenger-reception formula and by its quite different content in relation to chaps. 17 and 19. Consideration will need to be given later to its role in an overarching literary unit consisting of chaps. 17–19. Form-critically it is in general terms a prophetic version of a priestly ruling, as its postulating of cases and its legal terminology indicate. More precisely it is a complex disputation that culminates in an appeal for repentance. The latter feature, in vv 30–32, contains the typical elements of admonition, accusation, and promise (cf. 14:6–14 and see the comparative table in Raitt, ZAW 83 [1971] 35). As in chap. 14, it is integrated with a motivating oracle of judgment. Since vv 30–32 represent the intent of the oracle, Tårnberg (Mahnrede 110) prefers to call the chapter a complex oracle of admonition and to subordinate the other form-critical elements within that designation.

A disputation is made up of three elements, thesis, counterthesis, and dispute (D. F. Murray, JSOT 38 [1987] 95–121). Here the thesis is the slogan reported in v 2. A counterthesis appears in a double formulation at vv 4b–5a, 9b\(^2\): “It is the person who sins that will die, but in the case that an individual is righteous, … he will certainly live” (Lescow, Stufenschema 18–20; cf. Ewald 277). Lescow noted the correlation of the pronouns \(\text{α} \text{ν} \) “he (will die)” and \(\text{α} \text{ν} \) “he (will live),” which binds together the short and amplified statements. One may draw attention to another factor, the presence of the divine-saying formula at the end of v 9, which demarcates vv 4–9 from what follows. We also have to reckon with a second, related counterthesis again formulated in two contrasting parts: v 21, “In the case of a wicked individual’s turning from all his sin …, he will certainly live,” and v 24, “But when a righteous individual gives up his righteousness … , he will die.”

The dispute occurs first in vv 3–4a, a theological denial of the thesis. It continues with vv 10–13 and 14–17, an elaboration framed as a further denial of the thesis, and with vv 18–20, restatements that incorporate an objecting question in v 19a. After the first part of the second counterthesis, v(v) 21(–22), a pair of lively questions appears in v 23. After the second part, an objection is countered with a pair of accusing questions (v 25). In vv 26–29 the second counterthesis is repeated in inverse order and amplified, and the objection of the prophet’s constituency is opposed with the same pair of accusing
The disputation ties well into the general appeal for repentance in vv 30–32. The motif of accusation is developed into a pronouncement of future judgment and then into a series of appeals that includes a further reference to Yahweh’s benevolence. Form and content are blended well into a powerfully persuasive combination of argument, challenge, and invitation.

The basic unity of chap. 18 seems assured: the aim of the disputation lies in the closing summons. Fohrer (102), however, deduced from the change of theme at v 21 that two originally separate pieces have been combined. The issue partly depends on whether an underlying setting may be envisioned that necessitated two logically related countertheses. Graffy (A Prophet Confronts 58–64) argued on form-critical grounds that the disputation concludes at v 20. It may be asked, however, whether his own definition of a disputation has captured its basic structure or its versatility, especially in the light of Murray’s research into the genre cited above. Graffy has also taken into account the overlap of chap. 18 material in chap. 33. He claims that vv 21–32 fit better in 33:10–20 and that the starkness of vv 1–20 invited the addition of a more auspicious message inspired by that passage. In fact, vv 21–32 appear to have been reused in chap. 33 and applied to two separate issues. 33:10–11 reflects material from 18:23, 30–32; it has been supplied with an introduction, the parable of the watchman. Its encouraging message is an opportunity to repent made possible by divine grace for the people who are now all too conscious of their sin. The rest of the material has been used in 33:12–20 to yield a challenging message of the people’s moral responsibility (see Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 142–48). This splitting of the content of chap. 18 gives the impression of secondary usage, doubtless at Ezekiel’s hands, to fit different settings. In chap. 18 one might loosely say that vv 1–20 teach moral responsibility to the morally unaware, while vv 21–32 preach repentance.

As for the general setting of this oracle, its time and location are clearly exilic. Ezekiel and his constituency are addressed together in v 2. The constituency is defined not only as “Israel” (v 3) but as “the community of Israel” (םיוב תֹּלְכַּי), which elsewhere refers to the exiled representatives of the covenant nation (cf. 24:21; 36:17–22). The passages just mentioned refer respectively to the pre-fall group of hostages deported in 597 and to the post-fall exilic community. Which is in view here? One’s first choice is the former, in view of the tenor of the book to present pre-fall oracles in chaps. 1–24. We have become aware, however, of insertions and updatings that upset this pattern. In fact, study of chap. 19 will show that at an earlier stage chaps. 17–19 were a self-contained unit, into which chap. 18 has been inserted. This does not make it a post-587 oracle, but it does alert us to the possibility of a different temporal setting.

Chap. 18 exhibits a pattern of elements displayed by post-fall messages. The first element is the formulation “no more” (ד ו…”µא) in v 3. It occurs just over forty times in the book, usually in the form ד ו…”א. Sixteen cases refer to God’s imminent act of radical judgment in fulfilling judgment oracles: eleven refer to the fall of Judah (e.g., 12:23–24) and five to the fall of Egypt and Tyre (e.g., 26:13). Another sixteen cases refer eschatologically to reoccupation of the land, in assurances that the horrors that marked Israel’s pre-587 occupation would not recur. Nine instances occur in Ezekiel’s own oracles (e.g., 20:39; 36:12–15), and seven are redactional (e.g., 34:28–29; 36:30). Four further cases refer to post-587, exilic conditions: 13:21, 23; 14:11; 34:22. They are all associated with a divine act of relative judgment, which would single out offenders in the exilic community: the fortune-telling women prophets.

cf. confer, compare

e.g. exempli gratia, for example

e.g. exempli gratia, for example

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e.g. exempli gratia, for example

e.g. exempli gratia, for example
in chap. 13, idolaters and false prophets in chap. 14, and oppressors in chap. 34. Chap. 18 fits well into this setting, especially as it reflects neither postexilic conditions nor the radical judgment of the fall of Judah.

The issue of a relative judgment that would befall Israel has just been broached. The verb יָכַר “judge” with divine subject, which occurs in 18:30, is used with the calamity of 587 in view, in 7:3, 8, 27; 11:10–11; 16:38; 36:19. In 34:20, 22 it relates to a judgment to punish Judean oppressors among the exiles and to vindicate the oppressed, whereas in 20:35–36 it pertains to a decisive act of judgment to remove “rebels” from the ranks of the returning exiles and prevent them entering the land. This latter reference aligns with 13:9, where in a post-587 oracle false prophets are doomed to be stripped of their membership of God’s people and denied entry into the land. Surely 18:30 and the parallel 33:20 are to be understood in terms of such an act of relative judgment, whose victims were to be egregious sinners among the Judean exiles. The oracles in chap. 33 cluster round the announcement of the fall of Jerusalem in 33:21–22 and mark the formal beginning of Ezekiel’s new ministry that superseded his earlier messages of radical judgment.

The polarization of death and life as threat and opportunity for the exiles points in the same direction. On a larger scale it is echoed in the format of the book. Chaps. 33–48 are prefaced with an increasing emphasis on the underworld in the oracles against the nations (26:20–21; 28:8; 31:15–18; 32:18–32). Chaps. 33–37 are framed with references to the life Yahweh wanted Israel to enjoy (33:1–20; 37:1–14) and so are chaps. 33–48 (see 47:9). To live was to be settled in the land of Israel once more, claims 37:12, 14. Zimmerli’s reluctance to define life in chap. 18 in terms of an eschatological return to the land as God’s saving work for his exiled people (382), even though he assigns the oracle to the post-587 period, is based on the inexplicitness he finds in the oracle. If he had not deleted v 32b, he would have seen that it parallels the future life with the eschatological gift of a new heart and a new spirit in v 31 (cf. 11:19; 36:26).

The oracle contains elements that make it an obvious member of a group of post-587 messages related to the future opportunity to return to the land. What in other texts is presented as an unconditional promise (e.g., 37:1–14) is in a significant number of texts hedged with moral conditions. A coming event of relative but serious judgment was to constitute a divine roadblock that need pose no fear for the persistent righteous but would bar the apostate, including the idolater and the oppressor and those prophets who misused their gifts given for Israel’s benefit. It is to this roadblock that the future prospect of death refers. It is an act of excommunication from God’s people that meant premature death (cf. 14:8 and the Comment). This note of conditionality stands significantly at or near the beginning of the block of salvation oracles (33:1–20 [cf. Kraetzschmar 161], 30–33; 34:17–22). The reason for its presence at this point in the book remains to be seen.

Here is a general outline of the chapter.

18:1–4a The inadmissibility of the exiles’ proverb of transgenerational punishment
18:4b–9 The principle of the present generation’s moral responsibility and its eschatological import
18:10–20 Denial of the proverb and affirmation of the principle

cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
18:21–24 The principle of a capacity to change for good or ill and its eschatological import
18:25–29 Defense and affirmation of this principle
18:30–32 An appeal to the community to change for the better and so prepare for eschatological blessing

Comment

2 The exilic community to which Ezekiel belongs receives a strong rebuke from Yahweh through this message. It focuses on a slogan that summed up their attitude. Since they were evidently the ones who gave vent to it, it seems to be a slogan “about” the homeland, as in 12:22, rather than one used “in” it, as one might otherwise render (see the discussion in Joyce, Divine Initiative 43, 56). The slogan, a snatch of poetry with a 3 + 3 rhythm, expresses a paradox. Greenberg (328) adduces evidence that eating sour grapes has long been popular in Palestine and Syria; in this context its consequences, at least, are regarded as unpleasant. Perhaps a parallel paradox would be drinking too much alcohol and somebody else waking up with the hangover. The slogan means “The present generation is paying the penalty for the errors or sins of previous generations” (McKane, Proverbs 29–30). As he goes on to say, it “serves to express the conviction of every generation that those who preceded them have made a mess of things and that they have to suffer for it.” The slogan is expressed in general terms, but the clue that the homeland was its topic helps us to anchor the slogan in the experience of the community who was using it. The fate of the homeland is in view, and so their own fate as displaced persons. In terms of Ezekiel’s forecasts and statements elsewhere, the end had come upon it (7:2), it had been destroyed (25:3) and lay desolate (33:24), and they were no longer living there and had to leave it (36:17, 20).

There is a measure of orthodoxy in the slogan. If this disputation had been expressed as a contemporary debate, one might have heard theologians referring to the deferred (“to the third or fourth generation”) punishment of Exod 34:7, which was incorporated in the Decalogue at Exod 20:5; Deut 5:9. They could have appealed to Ezekiel’s own pre-587 oracles in chaps. 16 and 23, which derived reasons for the inevitable fall of Jerusalem from sins committed in its past. These would make excellent debating points, but there is a sinister edge to the slogan that must make it the target of attack. It implies a denial of responsibility; they had nothing to feel guilty about. Krüger (Geschichtskonzepte 392 n. 482) has rightly distinguished the perspective of chaps. 16 and 23 and that of chap. 20. In the pre-fall oracle of 20:3–31, though the coming exile is presented as deferred punishment (20:23), the hostages are represented as walking in their ancestors’ footsteps and themselves as reprehensible (20:30–31). Similar, in Lam 5:7 the lament “Our forebears sinned, and are no more; and we bear their iniquities,” though superficially similar to the present slogan, does not shrug off responsibility: in the light of v 16, “we” also sinned. Likewise the Deuteronimostic History, although it grounds the downfall of Judah in a backlog of national sin, especially that of Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:11–15; 23:26; 24:3–4), carefully gives a negative assessment to each king after Josiah (23:32, 37; 24:9, 19). Earlier prophets, such as Hosea and Jeremiah, had spoken in the same double vein (cf. too Matt 23:29–36; Luke 11:45–51). Of course, Ezek 16 and 23, in view of chap. 20 and such condemnations of the present generation as 2:3–4; 3:7, are not to be understood as denials of contemporary responsibility.

The tenor of the chapter suggests that the slogan gave expression to practical nihilism. The exiles saw the present through the prism of the past. The slogan occasioned by Judah’s downfall turned into a generalization. Overwhelmed by that recent catastrophe, they saw their whole lives doomed and devoid of purpose. Life was like that, and nothing they did could alter it. Elements in Ezekiel’s prophesying
might have played a part in encouraging this sentiment. Yahweh’s punishment was not only to consist of national defeat but would chase its victims into exile, where he would continue to plague them (5:12). Life would be a misery spent in preoccupation with the past (6:9). That was to view the exile from the pre-587 perspective of judgment. After the watershed of 587, exile looked more rosy. It provided an opportunity to enjoy the limited presence of God (11:16). It was a typological Egypt from which Yahweh would lead his people to the promised land (20:33–42). The different perspectives of judgment and salvation were in line with an already established prophetic tradition and doubtless took their cue from it. In the present oracle the exiles are urged to share such optimism and to view their present and future as time to be lived in relation to God.

3–4a Irresponsibility and nihilism among the exiles, revealed in their slogan, are the targets of the oracle. Behind the vehement, oath-backed “no longer” lies the prospect of a decisive intervention that Yahweh was to make to change things, as in 13:21, 23; 14:11; 34:22, with reference to exilic shortcomings. V 30 discloses that an act of divine judgment was to take place among the community, as in 34:22. In NT parlance, it would separate the sheep from the goats (see Form/Structure/Setting; cf. Keil 248–49). Before passing to such eschatological motivation, there is an affirmation of the lines of relationship that radiated out from Yahweh to all the members of the covenant community, “Israel.” None of them was exempt from his concern and claim. So each generation in turn came under the divine purview, and no child could hide behind its parent’s skirts, whether willfully or as if of no account.

4b–9 The double challenge given to the slogan is a corrective that exposes its sinister connotation. The challenge is an affirmation of moral responsibility before God: sinners and the righteous are polarized, and their respective fates are offered as a deterrent and an incentive. The slogan was wrong in its implications: the morality of the exilic generation of God’s people did matter.

4b The first, negative part of this principle is expressed tersely. The use of V [‘m “person” with a participle is found in priestly deterring statements, such as Lev 7:18, 25; 18:29 (Tårnberg, Mahnrede 107 and n. 403), whereas it is combined with the verb אֲשִׁיט “sin” in Lev 4:2, 27; 5:1, 17, 21; Num 15:27 (Graffy, A Prophet Confronts 60). The clause as a whole is akin to short pronouncements of capital crimes, such as Exod 21:12, “Whoever fatally strikes a man must be put to death” (see Schulz, Todesrecht 70 and n. 300 for further examples). Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation 337–41) is surely correct in seeing at this early stage, rather than only in v 20, where the formulation is repeated, Ezekiel’s dependence on Deut 24:16. There a criminal ruling is presented that parents should not be put to death for their children nor vice versa, but “every one will be put to death for his own sin” (cf. Deut 7:10). It repudiates the old principle of a vendetta against a murderer’s family that survived in the case of regicide (Lindars, VT 15 [1965] 455; cf. 2 Kgs 14:1–6). Fishbane has noted the links between the content of Deut 23:20–21; 24:6, 10–15, 17 and that of the moral rulings here in vv 7–8, 13, 16, and 18. He has concluded that these examples are cited because they were already associated with a legal principle that rejected vicarious punishment. In fact, in Deut 24:15 oppression of the poor and needy by withholding their daily wage is discouraged by their complaining to God, with the consequence that the offense would be judged a sin. The parallel Exod 22:23 implies that it would be a fatal sin: God would kill the oppressor after hearing the victim’s complaints. Going a little further than Fishbane, one may suggest that for Ezekiel, if not in Deuteronomy itself, that fatal “sin” of oppression was envisioned in the statement of nonvicarious punishment of “sin” in Deut 24:16. Such wrongdoing led to fatal

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V Vulgate
NT New Testament
n. note
n. note
VT Vetus Testamentum
consequences for the perpetrators themselves. In the basic text, death is to be carried out by a human court, as the passive formulation of the verbs indicates. Here Ezekiel has in mind a divine punishment (cf. Exod 22:24). It was to be a premature death that meant exclusion from the promised land, death that would follow the judgment of v 30 (cf. Bertholet [1897] 96–97; Kraetzschmar 162; Herrmann 113; cf. 13:9; 14:8–9; 20:38). Whereas death in 37:1–14 is a metaphor for the unbearably low quality of life experienced by the exiles, here it is a divine ruling that disqualifies those among them whose hearts and habits were alienated from God.

5 The converse of this principle is expressed in vv 5–9 in a strikingly long format that cries out for explanation. The positive form of the principle can be easily detached as “When a man is righteous, he will surely live.” It is interrupted halfway through by a definition of the term “righteous”: if to be righteous is to do right (1 John 3:7), what sort of deeds does this imply? This accentuation of the positive is of a piece with the call to prepare for life in vv 30–32. A comprehensive picture is painted of the lifestyle of those who await God’s gracious restoration to the land. There was much to live for, much to motivate present behavior. Not the numbing past but the prospect of living in the land was to be their focus. Such hope must energize the present generation to respect God and each other, and stop them sinking deeper into the apathy and irresponsibility implied by the slogan of v 2.

The positive principle is expressed in terms of case law (when, if). The overall form of vv 5–9 is a tripartite legal ruling. Such a schema characteristically consists of (1) a general introduction that often uses the terms righteousness and justice, (2) a central core of cultic and ethical instruction, and (3) a conclusion, most often expressed as a promise. Lescow (ZAW 82 [1970] 363–79) has shown that it is found in a variety of contexts, such as in the tithe-related oath of Deut 26:13–14, the confession of piety in Ps 18:21–25(20–24), the definition of the acceptable pilgrim in the entrance liturgy at Pss 15:2–5; 24:4–5 and the prophetic version in Isa 33:15–16, the related conditional promise of Jer 7:5–7, the conditions for access to the palace in Jer 22:3–4, and the royal profession of loyalty in Ps 101. There is a negative version of this schema in the social analysis of Hos 4:1bb–3; independently, Westbrook (Studies 28–29) has found another in the definition of sins requiring compensation at Lev 5:21–22(6:2–3). The varied backgrounds of this schema warn against trying to pin down the present instance.

The first, general element of the schema occurs in this verse. To call a person “righteous” does not mean that he is sinless, or that he has shown his virtue by conforming perfectly to a comprehensive legal system, but that he is a willing member of the cultic community, who conforms with the ordinances of the community life and thus shows a right attitude towards the covenant relationship. (Eichrodt 239–40)

In sum, it is a term of allegiance and obligation, not of achievement (Hals, “Methods of Interpretation” 272). The term is accompanied by a general statement, acting with justice and righteousness or fairness. This standard is often a royal one in the OT. More relevantly, the phrase “justice and righteousness” is the comprehensive definition of Israel’s social ethics given by Amos and Isaiah (Amos 5:7, 24; 6:12; Isa 1:21; 5:7; cf. 9:6[7]). It is echoed in Isa 56:1 in a remarkable later parallel to the spirit of vv 5–9: “Maintain justice and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come.” Righteousness is to treat one’s neighbor fairly, while justice is usually understood as reinforcement of that behavior in the lawcourt, though Weinfeld (“‘Justice and Righteousness’” 236–46) has reasonably argued that the latter term is wider than the judicial process.

6 The concrete examples given in vv 6–8a fall into five categories, which are mostly negative and in

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ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
OT Old Testament

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pairs. Israelite law reminds one of parental training of a child. It tended to establish boundaries within which one was free to move but beyond which one must not trespass. Accordingly, vv 10–11b implicitly sum up these examples in terms of sins. This first pair of sins is cultic in nature; it expresses offenses that the priestly side of Ezekiel contemplated with horror. It is a version of the exclusive worship of Yahweh demanded in the first commandment of the Decalogue. Ezekiel had decried worship at local shrines in chap. 6, seeing in it a sinister deviation from orthodox worship at the Jerusalem temple (cf. 8:6). Here communal meals at such mountain shrines are in view (cf. 1 Sam 9:12–13). Clearly, the Babylonian plain where the exiles lived offered no such opportunity, and the prophet has a preexilic sin in mind, as in 22:9. Members of the first generation of exiles are challenged about their behavior back in the homeland. The second of the pair of cultic sins is laid at the door of those who stayed behind in Judah at 33:25, and so it too could have been committed in the homeland. Such exilic accusations as 14:4–7; 20:32, however, show that it might be a feature of the exiles’ present lives, as a continuation of an old sin. This sin, too, is particularly abhorrent to Ezekiel, as the use of his characteristic word for “idols” reveals.

The second pair of illustrations impinges on the cultic sphere inasmuch as they deal with sexual acts that caused impurity, which must not invade the sphere of the sacred (cf. 2 Chr 23:19). Two examples are given of what one might call unsafe sex. Adultery is proscribed in the two forms of the Decalogue (Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18), and it is a capital offense in the Holiness Code (Lev 20:10). It is described in terms of defilement here and in 33:26 and also in the legal codes at Num 5:14, 20, 27–29; Lev 18:20. Intercourse during menstruation was an Israelite taboo that transgressed the limits of permissible sexual contact. The sanction against it was the supernatural one of excommunication (Lev 18:19; 20:18; cf. Frymer-Kensky, “Pollution, Purification” 405).

7a Mention of one’s neighbor in v 6b has introduced a horizontal solidarity within the covenant community that pervades the rest of the examples and is made explicit at the end of v 8. These next examples form a pair that is introduced by a topical heading. Two illustrations are given of wronging someone (cf. Lev 25:17 [H]); in 34:18–19, 21 it is metaphorically described in terms of strong sheep pushing aside the weaker ones. The first concerns restoration of a collateral pledge after repayment of a debt (Greenberg 329). It is an echo at least of Exod 22:25, which is expanded in Deut 24:10–15. Although no penalty is specified, for Ezekiel, as we have suggested, the death penalty of Deut 24:15 was applicable.

The other sin of h\textsubscript{Zg}, usually rendered “robbery,” is the seizure of property from the helpless poor by the powerful rich (cf. Isa 3:14; 10:2; Mic 2:2; Junker, BZ 7 [1963] 175; Westbrook, Studies 35–38). It is prohibited in Lev 5:21, 23(6:2, 4; P); 19:13 (H).

7b–8a The fourth pair of illustrations of good living is positive. They have no specific anchorage in the legal codes but accord with such kindness to the disadvantaged as Deut 24:19–21 and similar texts enjoin. To do good is more than to refrain from wrong. The next pair, though formulated negatively, has the same charitable intent. Interest on a loan to a fellow Israelite is prohibited in Exod 22:24(25); Deut 23:20(19); Lev 25:36–37 (H). The last text is particularly similar. Loaning money was regarded not as a commercial venture but as helping out a brother or sister temporarily in need. The permission to take interest from a non-Israelite in Deut 23:20 and the ban on Jews owning land or belonging to the professions in medieval Europe led to the stereotypes of Shylock the moneylender and of Jewish economic power.
8ab–9a There is now a return to the generalizing with which the definition of the righteous person opened. Wrongdoing is associated solely with the lawcourt in Lev 19:15 (H), but is defined more widely in Lev 19:35 later. Here it functions as a summary of the inhumanity of vv 6b–8a. The negative statement is matched by mention of a positive communal spirit at work in human relationships. “Justice” is here used in a wider sense than that of a court of law (Greenberg 330). The final generalization surveys the Torah in a sweeping way characteristic of Ezekiel (5:7; 11:20; 20:13, 19, 21); it seems to depend on Lev 26:3, 15 (H).

9b So the text comes full circle back to v 5. In the context, the short nominal clause “he is righteous” is a logical, resumptive conclusion after the interim definitions (Greenberg 346–47, who compares Num 35:15b–21). Zimmerli’s interpretation of it as a declaratory formula (375–76), following von Rad ( “Faith Reckoned as Righteousness” 125–29), is closely associated with the erroneous view that the entrance liturgy is the genre underlying these verses. The statement does not occur as a cultic pronouncement; Ps 118:19–20 is hardly sufficient evidence. Nor is it found in sacral law, though a second-person formulation “You are righteous” in Prov 24:24 seems to reflect civil law. Moreover, it has no counterpart in v 13 or v 17, where one might expect it. It has to be extrapolated from such priestly pronouncements as “he is (un)clean” (Lev 13:11, 13), “it is leprosy” (Lev 13:3, 8), or “it is a burnt offering” (Lev 1:17).

The ruling that life will follow in the wake of such virtue is modeled on the death sentence of v 4b; it never serves as a judicial verdict of acquittal. Life was the intended consequence of observing the divine revelation of the Torah according to Lev 18:5, where it means that “Israel will have a secure, healthy life with sufficient goods in the promised land as God’s people” (J. E. Hartley, Leviticus, WBC 4 [Dallas: Word, 1992] 293). Ezekiel cites Lev 18:5 in 20:13, 21, and he will echo it in 18:19. In chap. 20 the wilderness generation is portrayed as turning their backs on such life and meriting destruction. By implication, the promise of qualified restoration in 20:32–44 represents enjoyment of the promised life. In 33:15, in a context similar to the present one—more exactly, corresponding to 18:21, 27—the prophet speaks of \( \mu \) \( y_j \) \( t_w q_j \) “the rules that make for life” as a precursor of future life. So such a promise aptly follows the formulation of v 9a. The concept of life may also echo the incentive for obedience given in Deut 5:33; 8:1, living and faring well in the promised land. Here in Ezek 18 an eschatological meaning is attached to the term, in the sense that it defines the salvation offered to the exiles, unconditionally in 37:1–13(14); 47:9 but in a qualified form in chaps. 3, 18, and 33 (cf. 13:19, 22). Zimmerli’s definition of life as a spiritual promise of God’s presence to be enjoyed even in exile (382; cf. von Rad, “Faith Reckoned as Righteousness” 253–66) is inadequate.

In vv 4b–9 the divine antithesis to the exiles’ demoralizing slogan has been set out, using a selection of rulings to illustrate what it means to be right with God and with one’s neighbors. Echoes of Deut 24 play a key role in justifying and reinforcing the life-or-death alternative. Ezekiel had already used a number of the standards in his pre-587 accusation of contemporary Jerusalem: eating on the mountains, intercourse during menstruation, adultery, and charging interest (22:9–12). The overlap here is natural: the same generation was in view. It serves to reinforce the implied charge that the generation who survived the fall was not so innocent as the slogan claimed. The thrust of the passage, however, is to point forward and to provide a benchmark for the lifestyle of members of a community of hope.

10–17 The slogan of v 2 is now disputed in a precise fashion and given the same eschatological application as in vv 4b–9. The slogan is false, it is claimed, and one may not generalize about bad parents and poor, innocent children. On the contrary, the bad children of good people will die (vv 10–13), while

H Holiness Code
H Holiness Code
WBC Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word)
the good children of bad people will live (vv 14–17). The summary in vv 17b–18 shows that the slogan is under attack. It was wrong to extrapolate from the deferred punishment of the recent calamity and a (doubtful) claim of contemporary innocence a nihilistic application to the present and future. Overall, Ezekiel seems to imply that the downfall of Judah, with its strong element of deferment, was a special case in God’s purposes. That judgment was now over, and one could look forward to salvation, yet not with presumption. The old divine standards for each generation of Israelites would still apply, not only back in the promised land (11:20; cf. Jer 31:33) but even now as a crucial pledge of good faith.

10–11a A worst-case scenario is presented by way of an appeal to reason. Was it fair that a ruffian or a murderer should have any future in the community (cf. 1 Cor 6:9–10)? The final question “Will such a person win life?” in v 13 reflects the same rhetorical perspective. But these categories also accord with real charges Ezekiel had brought against Jerusalem and Judah in their last days: violence (7:23; 8:17; 45:9) and the shedding of human blood (9:9; 22:3, 4, 6, 9, 12, 27; 36:18).

11b–13 By and large the same standards are applied as in vv 6–8, but now these tests are failed. The first, cultic, set of rulings is split into two, within vv 11 and 12. The second, sexual, pair is reduced to one element. The third, social, pair, with its introductory heading, remains intact, apart from a change in order. Mention of “the poor and needy” reflects the influence of Deut 24:14. The fourth test of charity is omitted as otiose. The fifth pair, relating to interest, is prefaced by an extra, emotional comment, describing the offense as abominable in God’s eyes; accordingly, later in v 13 “abominations” is used in a general summary of failure to match up to God’s standards (cf. 5:9; 7:3; 22:2). This summary replaces the long positive one in vv 8ab–9a, though it is set slightly later. The clause “he will not live” is used as an independent promise of death in Gen 31:32; Exod 19:13 (cf. 22:17[18]), but here it points the contrast with v 9 before the eschatological death sentence. Unlike v 4b, a hophal form of the verb is used here, under the influence of Deut 24:16. Both the qal and the hophal appear in old legal texts, generally with reference to divine punishment and human execution respectively (Milgrom, Encroacher 5–8; cf. Hutton, “Declaratory Formulae” 121–24). The accompanying clause, literally “his blood will be upon him,” regularly accompanies the death sentence of human execution (see Lev 20:16); here it emphasizes the bloodguilt of the accused. Generally, it also serves to exonerate the human executioner. Matties (Ezekiel 18 78) has suggested that here it absolves Yahweh from guilt, in contrast to the slogan that blamed God for unjust punishment. This suggestion ties in well with the earlier use of the passive verb: in both cases human factors are transferred to God.

14–17 The second attack on the slogan insists that good children of bad people would enjoy life in the land. A note of brave determination is struck. There is a deliberate breaking free from the bad example of the parent. The insidious cause and effect of which the slogan helplessly complains is broken by a personal decision to march to a different drummer. This note will be struck again later, in speaking of repentance (v 28). The details follow those in vv 6–8 fairly closely, naturally more so than in vv 11–13. The second, sexual pair of standards is only represented by the first item, as in v 11. The third pair, about exploiting others, reproduces v 7a, except that the standard is raised by not taking a pledge at all in security for a debt. Is Deut 24:12 in mind? The fifth pair, concerning interest, is compressed into a single statement and subordinated to the general statement of refraining from wrongdoing in v 8ab.

18–19 Vv 10–17 are now summarized. The bad father—more strictly the bad son of a good father—would die, while the good son of a bad father would live. In the former case, a lack of communal spirit is labeled as “not good” and illustrated by an intensification of the third yardstick. Cheating one’s fellows of their legal dues (see Westbrook, Studies 35–38) is cited. The charge, which Ezekiel leveled against the people of Jerusalem in 22:12, 29, here seems to have in view Deut 24:14–15, where the example of withholding wages is given. The past tense used for the father’s death is out of accord with the future references in the rest of the chapter. It has a literary sense, harking back to earlier material. As Ezekiel moves to recapitulate the second lesson, he weaves into it an objection to how the son could
escape any vestige of the father’s punishment. If the prophet’s opponents resented the truth of their slogan, to them it was an acknowledged fact of life (Junker, *BZ* 7 [1973] 177; Greenberg 332, with reference to Calvin 240). His response is simply to reaffirm the claim of vv 14–17, reverting to the general terms of vv 5b and 9a (cf. v17ab). He bends the latter sentiment to the shape of Lev 18:5, “You will keep my rules and my standards by doing which human beings live,” reinterpreting life as God’s saving gift.

20 The first half of the counterthesis, v 4b, is now emphatically repeated. The implication is drawn in v 20b that moral responsibility does not cross generational lines, in outright denial of the slogan-based protest of v 19a. The contextually novel reference to a father’s liability for a son’s faults exposes the influence of Deut 24:16 on Ezekiel’s thought. It functions as a rhetorical device to drive home the truth of what he is saying (Greenberg 332–33). Finally, the double counterthesis is briefly paraphrased. There is a new pairing of “righteous” and “wicked” that builds a bridge to vv 21–32, which is dominated by this contrast (Greenberg 335). The prophet uses these terms in the sense of a “basic decision for or against Jahweh”; he “values the keeping of the commandments … as the sign of a commitment to Jahweh” (von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* [New York: Harper, 1962] 1:393).

21–24 Ezekiel moves to a second counterthesis, which also falls into two halves. The wicked who become righteous will live (v 21), and the righteous who become wicked will forfeit their prospect of life (v 24). These declarations open wider still a door to freedom. If the present generation of exiles is no longer locked into the consequences of bad choices made by its forebears, neither are members of this generation locked into choices they have already made. The accent is still on bad choices: for the prophet, the survivors of the 587 catastrophe were a bad lot (cf. 14:22–23 and the Comment), nor were the 597 hostages any better (cf. 20:30–31).

21–22 So an implicit appeal to this largely wicked generation is given the prior place in this new counterthesis, which is elaborated in v 22. Hopefully, the first counterthesis had exposed their moral responsibility, showing that they had let down both God and their neighbors. After such bad news, it was time for good news. There was an opportunity for the wicked to put themselves in the shoes of the righteous who were promised life: vv 5, 9, 19 are echoed here. God would transfer them into that blessed category. Their former disloyalty to the covenant was regrettable, but God would not count it against them (cf. Jer 31:34). Their new right living would be accepted as their passport to the promised land.

23 The implicit reference to God in the passive verb of remembering generates a passionate opening of the divine heart that positively reinforces the first part of the counterthesis. The God whom the exiles’ slogan wrongly branded as unjust and uncaring was on their side. They were the ones who were uncaring and unjust, but beyond such inauspicious truth lay a God-given remedy. There was the chance of a new beginning that would let bygones be bygones.

24 The converse must be stated: there was a real possibility that the righteous would lose their inheritance. According to 14:3, 4, 7, there were nominally respectable members of the exilic community who hankered after syncretism. Their “Yahwism plus” amounted to punishable apostasy. The possibility of backsliding is pushed to the fore in 33:12–13 and has sizable space devoted to it in 3:20–21. So it may not be wise to regard this alternative prospect as “supererogatory” (Greenberg 333). It poses a warning—literally in 3:20–21—that had to form part of Ezekiel’s post-587 ministry to the exiles. “Let those who think they are standing beware of falling” (1 Cor 10:12). The divine shepherd did not want any of his sheep to be lost.

25–29 The double principle of vv 21 and 24 is now defended and affirmed. The repeated defense in vv 25 and 29 forcefully frames a restatement of the double principle (Zimmerli 385; Parunak, “
Structural Studies” 280; Greenberg 336). Its two elements are set in reverse order in vv 26–27, and the second one receives an elaboration parallel to v 22. The elaborations of the principle encouraging the repentance of the wicked show that this is the prime concern. There is no counterpart to the positive reinforcement of v 23: that must await v 32a. Apart from v 23, vv 21–29 fall into a chiastic structure, ABCBA, amplified with emphatic repetition of the C element of v 25 in v 29 (cf. Junker, BZ 7 [1963] 178; Joyce, Divine Initiative 51).

The objection about the first counterthesis in v 19 was slotted smoothly into the argument. These objections, presumably about the second counterthesis as in 33:17, 20, are permitted to protrude, but only to give greater weight to the counterobjections. What is at stake? Jer 18:1–12 provides fruitful parallels and in some form may well have influenced Ezekiel (cf. Miller, Verhältnis 95). There the sign of the potter reworking the spoiled clay is interpreted in terms of Yahweh’s right to cancel oracles of national judgment and salvation, if the nation in question changes its moral tune. Then Yahweh announces a plan to punish and appeals for repentance, to which the hearers’ response is to follow their own plans and do evil. The announcement of divine judgment and the appeal for repentance correspond to vv 30–32 here, while the divine relativity in terms of nations is applied within the community in vv 21–24, 26–28. The divine policy cannot yet refer to judgment, but the contrast between God’s “way” and the exiles’ “ways” recalls the one between the divine plan and evil human plans in Jer 18:11–12. In both passages the objectors represent a major element of the constituency (here “the community of Israel”).

The issue at stake for the objectors is the absolute character of the divine word (cf. A. Rofé, The Prophetic Stories [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988] 169). In a later age the concept of contingency affecting divine sovereignty came to light in the book of Jonah, where Jer 18 is deliberately echoed. It is an untidy and tantalizing notion. In the present context it must have caused mental chaos for those who were asked to unlearn the preexilic prophetic doctrine of an unalterable fate, to which Ezekiel himself had been committed. It made no sense to those who believed its perverted form encapsulated in the slogan of v 2. The divine response to the objection is more than a clever trick of argument. It implicitly points to the intellectual perversion at work in the objectors’ theology and traces it to a moral perversion. They had raised a convenient smokescreen to conceal a hidden agenda of willfulness. The charge throws the objectors into the bramble patch of the preceding argument. “Your” inconsistent “behavior” (µkkθ jfjd) echoes “their behavior” (ψkkθ jfjd) in v 23 and identifies the protesters with the wicked, who, apart from a change of heart and habit, would lose their eschatological place in the sun. The God-given standards that identified the covenant community represented a necessary bridge to a positive future, but tragically the exiles were refusing to cross it.

The second counterthesis is emphatically repeated: the intent is to preach for repentance rather than to engage in academic debate. The righteous are warned of the truth that, in John Bunyan’s parlance, “there was a way to hell even from the gates of heaven.” More weight is given to the positive side of the counterthesis, in vv 27–28. A parallel is drawn with v 14, two lives being contracted into one: only a deliberate stopping in one’s tracks and reflection can motivate a decision to turn round and go the right way.

The foregoing statements are implicit appeals to the exilic community to try them on for size and react accordingly. The direct questions of v 25bbjγ and 29b have gone further. Developing the bias toward the wicked repenting in vv 21–22 and 27–28, they accuse the community, presumably the majority within it, of failing to be on the side of the angels. Now it is time for a direct appeal.
30 The initial “therefore, so” links the accusation of v 29 with an announcement of punishment (Tårnberg, Mahnrede 109). Pre-eschatological judgment is a negative reinforcement of the appeal, corresponding to the positive one of v 23. The criterion of behavior echoes the standard of the radical judgment of 587 (7:3, 8; 24:14; 36:19), but a relative, potentially avoidable judgment is now in view, as in 33:20. In both cases “God is a judge only in the sense that he brings to light whatever already invisibly characterizes a person’s nature” (Koch, The Prophets [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983] 2:107). There was to be a rooting out of those who in 20:38 are called “rebels,” so that they did “not enter the land of Israel” but lost their lives (cf. Hölscher, Dichter 103); the repentant, however, would never forget their former, forgiven “evil ways” (20:43–44; cf. 36:17–19, 22, 25). At this sort of border inspection, there was to be a determination as to where each exile stood in relation to God and to his or her neighbor. Only such members of the community of faith as Ezekiel had defined earlier would be allowed through. “Behavior” has a negative bias in that it echoes the usage in vv 23, 25, and 29. The appeal for repentance in v 30a backs up the motif of judgment by repeating a note of accusation. The term “rebels” (µy[vp) in vv 22 and 28 is applied to the hearers. Those contexts, however, had pointed to a way of escape. If it was not seized, there was a grim alternative, spelled out in v 30b as a fatal stumbling. It is a further negative reinforcement.

31 Yahweh, the object of their rebellion, is the one who, through the prophet, graciously calls on the exiles to empty their lives of such subversive activity (contrast 20:7–8). God has something better for them. In contrast to the destiny of death that reinforced the appeal in v 30, an alternative prospect of eschatological blessing is now presented to support this appeal. It refers to a promise of permanent moral renewal that was to be God’s gift along with return to the land (11:17, 19–20; 36:24, 26; cf. Hos 2:15, 19 [17, 21] REB; Jer 31:23, 33). Who, faced with such a choice, would choose the death that had featured in both countertheses?

32 The positive reinforcement of divine goodwill, stated in v 23 and expected after v 28, is rhetorically delayed till now, since God’s kindness is meant to lead to repentance (Rom 2:4). The carrot follows the stick wielded in v 30a. A NT parallel with a similar eschatological tone occurs in Heb 6:4–8, 10 amid the exhortations of 6:9, 11–12. In vv 30b–32 the structural relation to the alternatives of death or life presented in the countertheses has thus far consisted of implicit references (1) to death in v 30b and (2) to life in v 31b as prospects for the hearers (µy[vp “for you, for yourselves”) and then an explicit reference (1) to death in v 31b, which has been reinforced by v 32a. What the passage requires to round it off is an explicit reference (2) to life. It is supplied in v 32b, together with the condition of repentance repeated from v 30a.

Explanation

Our study of chap. 19 will show that chaps. 17 and 19 are a self-contained unit. At its center stands the redactional oracle of salvation in 17:22–24, which echoes but transforms the negative messages that surround it. Into this unit chap. 18 has been editorially inserted after 17:24, as a supplement to the eschatological oracle of royal renewal. Such a hope was not merely an intellectual comfort, it is inferred, but a stimulus to an appropriate lifestyle by way of preparation (cf. Hitzig 121, followed by Davidson 132). In NT parlance, “what kind of persons ought you to be in terms of holy and godly behavior, as you await” such an eschatological expectation (2 Pet 3:11–12)? And “all who have this hope …

REB Revised English Bible
NT New Testament
NT New Testament
individually purify themselves” (1 John 3:3).

This editorial intent is in line with the basic purpose of the oracle. Although Ezekiel cites pertinent theological facets (vv 4, 23, 32), he does not speak as a systematic theologian but is handling a pastoral crisis. He pursues the watchman role he was assigned as the basis for his post-587 ministry (33:19; also 3:17–21; Vogt, Untersuchungen 108). It is given the nuance of a reply to the exiles’ slogan about a skewed pattern of cause and effect. The announcement of freedom from transgenerational retribution and the call to covenantal responsibility enable the reader to backtrack to the slogan’s meaning for its users. It gave expression to a negative syndrome contaminating the exilic community. A spirit of fatalism was causing moral and social degeneration. The mushroom cloud of God’s retrospective wrath had drifted over their lives. So nothing would change and there was no point in virtue. The vehement claim in v 3 that the slogan would be dropped alludes to a dynamic intervention of judgment (v 30), which, unlike the radical event of 587 B.C., would be relative in its effect but still momentous for the people of God. In the light of 20:35–38, the judgment would be a screening process for eschatological return to the land. Ezekiel evidently regarded it as imminent, rather like the early Church with regard to the Second Coming.

The overall intent was a positive one, as the disproportionately lengthy description of “the righteous” in vv 5–9 indicates. The aim was to provide “social stability in a situation where land, temple and monarchy no longer serve a stabilizing function” and to form a “selective dossier” for the “community under construction” (Matties, Ezekiel 18 189, 190; cf. Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 337–38). Various traditions are used to this end. They are passed through the sieve of Deut 24, so as to provide strong teeth for the older rulings, some of which had no serious sanctions. The penalty of death for the disobedient found in Deut 24:16 is given an eschatological dimension, in terms of exclusion from life in the land. To live now in exile is to prepare for this gift from God. Such are the goals and values the prophetic watchman sets before the exilic community, as in God’s name he urges them to avoid the danger that would otherwise overwhelm them. In terms of Rom 12:21, the message is: “overcome evil”—the evil of their situation as they perceived it and the evil lifestyle into which their perception had seduced them—“with good.” God calls them to a responsible freedom, to be moral masters of their own fate.

The similar denial of the slogan in terms of Deut 24:16, which appears in Jer 31:29–30, has an uncertain literary relationship with our chapter. Its focus on God’s new eschatological initiative and its sharp demarcation between (radical) judgment conditions and salvation conditions are close to the present intent. The difference is that here there is a greater, pastorally grounded emphasis on the imminence of that event.

For the Christian reader, besides those texts mentioned at the outset, biblical truths not often heard from the pulpit are pushed to the fore. The Church in every generation must be alerted to a future judgment seat that is to be a sober constraint and incentive in present living (Rom 14:10, 12; 2 Cor 5:10; Gal 6:7–8). The necessity of continuance in the faith and in a lifestyle that commends it is backed by grave provisos from which no believer is exempt (Rom 11:22; 1 Cor 15:2; Col 1:23; Heb 3:14).

Two Elegies for a Doomed Dynasty (19:1–14)

Bibliography


**Translation**

1 “You are to utter a lament for Israel’s heads\(^a\) of state, \(^2\) as follows:

‘What was your mother?\(^a\) She was a lioness\(^b\)

among the lions\(^c\)’

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\(^a\) The LXX represents a sg via haplography, assimilating to the sg suffix *ûma* on “your mother” in v 2. The pl. reflects the content of the lament.

\(^b\) An exclamatory sense “What a lioness your mother was …” (Hitzig 129; and many) is unlikely. Elsewhere ḫ m “what” is used only with adjectives and verbs in this sense. Moreover, the word order opposes it (Brownlee 299). Rather, one must understand it as a question and answer (KJV; Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 5:70). In a lament, an initial exclamation expresses shock at the downfall of the victim, such as “How are the mighty fallen!” (2 Sam 1:19; cf. Ezek 26:17). The question-and-answer format finds a parallel in 31:2–3.

\(^c\) The MT reflects an artificial pointing to highlight the gender: the standard ḫ ḫ ’ means “lioness” (Cooke 211; *HALAT* 491b).
She crouched amid the young lions and reared her cubs.

3 She singled out one of her cubs, who grew into a young lion. He learned to hunt his prey, feeding on human flesh.

4 The nations raised a shout against him; he was captured in their pit, and they took him with hooks away to Egypt.

5 Seeing she had been frustrated, her hopes dashed, she took another of her cubs, giving him the status of a young lion.

6 He stalked among the lions, having grown into a young lion, and learned to hunt his prey, feeding on human flesh.

7 He did harm to women by making them widows (?)
and depopulated his victims’ towns.
The country and all in it were aghast
at his noisy roaring.

8 The nations marched against him
from surrounding districts.

They spread their net for him;
he was captured in their pit.

9 They put him in a wooden collar,
in hooks,
and took him to the king of Babylon,
who put him in prison,
so that his noise would be silenced
on Israel’s mountains.

10 ‘Your mother was like a grapevine full of tendrils,
because it was planted beside water.

\[\text{a} 7.a. \text{This colon is a notorious crux. See Begg, \textit{ETL} 65 (1989) 370–77, for a summary of proposed solutions. Isa 13:22, where t \textit{wnml} \textit{ā} does not mean “widows” but is evidently a dialectal variant of t \textit{wnmr} a “fortresses” (= Q \textit{Tg.}, has often been judged determinative for this case. However, Greenberg (351) has felicitously revived the suggestion rejected by Hitzig (130), that \textit{wy} \textit{wnml} \textit{ā} means not “his widows” but “the women made widows by him,” just as µ\textit{kyl} “your dead” in 11:6 signifies “those whose death you have caused.” LXX Syr. “in his boldness” baffled Cornill (288), but Cooke (211) related the rendering to Aram. a t \textit{wnydm} “administrative districts,” cf. 1 Kgs 20:14–19 and see Zimmerli 389–90.

\text{b} 7.b. Lit. “their” with a reference back to µ\textit{dā} “men” in v 6.

\text{a} 8.a. For the military sense of ð f n, basically “give,” see Greenberg 352.

\text{b} 8.b. For t \textit{wnyd} m “administrative districts,” cf. 1 Kgs 20:14–19 and see Zimmerli 389–90.

\text{c} 8.c. Cf. 17:20 and \textit{Note} 17:20.b.\text{“}

\text{a} 9.a. The Heb. f \textit{gus} is cognate with Akk. sūgaru “wooden collar”: cf. the \textit{Tg. ðy}\textit{w} “collar” and Vogt, \textit{Bib} 37 (1956) 388–89; Held, \textit{JANESCUC} 5 (1973) 184–85.

\text{b} 9.b. The MT \textit{μ}\textit{yw} may have originated as an explanatory gloss on the previous word (Fohrer 105) or as a comparative gloss from v 4 (Zimmerli 390). The \textit{Syr.} does not represent it.

\text{c} 9.c. Ehrlich’s attractive suggestion to repoint as \textit{wh a ṣb} (\textit{Randglossen} 5:72) has been adopted.

\text{d} 9.d. The MT has t \textit{wd x mb “in the fortresses.” There is a variant with \textit{resh} in place of \textit{daleth}: LXX Syr. \textit{Vg} “prison” implies a Heb. noun “f x m or the like from f x n “guard,” while S “Egypt,” with v 4 in mind, presupposes f \textit{w} m. Noth (“Jerusalem Catastrophe” 273) compared Akk. \textit{masartu “custody.”}

\text{e} 9.e. The MT ð \textit{w} “(not heard) any more” is not represented in LXX \textit{Syr.} (cf. Ziegler, \textit{Bib} 34 [1953] 439). In Ezekiel it is placed right after the verb, except for here, 37:22, where it is secondary, and 39:7. Its deletion would restore a 3 + 2 meter.
It was fruitful and full of branches as a result of the abundant water.

11 It grew strong stems fit for rulers' scepters—
One of them soared high among the clouds.
It was conspicuous for its height, for its mass of branches—
12 But the vine was torn up in fury; it was thrown to the ground.

Then the east wind shriveled its tendrils,
they were broken off, and its strong stem shriveled.

a 10.a. This is another notorious crux. The MT û md "in your blood" has a modicum of sense, if µ d is credited with the figurative sense of red grape juice (cf. Gen 49:11; Deut 32:14). The LXX "like a flower in a pomegranate" stands for ðm k "like a pomegranate." This is graphically close to the MT and appears to be a degenerate form of it. For a review of suggestions, see Zimmerli 390. His own preference for a niph form of h md "be like" suffers from a misguided appeal to 27:32 (see Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 83). Rashi and Kimchi's hypothesis of a noun *µ d "likeness," thus "in your likeness" (cf. the Tg.), was revived by Ewald (281) and recently by Barthélemy (Critique 3:148–52). The simplest and so most impressive solution is Bewer's proposal in JBL 72 (1953) 159: -y k µ -y d b "(like a grapevine [= ð g k ] full of) tendrils, because." Wrong word division obscured the fact that the poem's beginning, middle (v 12), and end (v 14) feature the same noun, µ d b “tendrils” (cf. too 17:6b). Dahood (Bib 56 [1975] 96–99) gave other examples of defective spelling in Ezekiel and observed that the postulated causal clause provides good external parallelism with the second colon of the next line. He himself claimed a relative sense for y k here.

11.a. The supposition of a pl. of majesty (Brownlee, “Two Elegies” 99 n. 3; Lang, Kein Austand 91) is unconvincing. The LXX has sg nouns “stem” and “scepter.” Hitzig (131) and a number of scholars have so preferred (thus NJPS NRSV), in line with vv 12, 14. However, secondary assimilation to the latter cases is indicated by the otherwise inexplicable retention of a pl. “rulers,” which the NJPS and NRSV have unscrupulously rendered as sg. Attention switches to a single (the last) stem in vv 12–13.

11.b. The use of l a “to(ward)” in the sense of l is strange: Jer 33:4, to which Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:72) appealed, is capable of a number of interpretations. One may compare the sense, albeit different, of l a h y h “become” (= l h y h ) in 40:16; 45:2.

11.c. Lit. “it,” with a masc reference to one of the stems (cf. v 12b) that runs throughout v 11ab. The grapevine, which is fem, reappears in v 12. See Form/Structure/Setting.

12.a. Lit. “it,” a fem reference to the vine, resumed from v 11a.

12.b. The LXX indirectly attests h y d b “its tendrils”: both here and in v 14 it renders h y r b “its chosen ones.” A sg noun h y r p “its fruit” does not accord with the pl. verbs. V 14 shows how easily the two words could be confused (see Cooke 212).
fire consumed it.

13 Now it is planted\textsuperscript{a} in the desert,
in a dry, parched\textsuperscript{b} region.
14 Fire came out from its own stem,\textsuperscript{a}
consuming its tendrils,\textsuperscript{b}
and it did not have a strong stem,
a scepter to rule with."

This is a lament, and it has come to function as a lament.

Notes

1.a. The LXX represents a sg via haplography, assimilating to the sg suffix û mā on “your mother” in v 2. The pl. reflects the content of the lament.

2.a. An exclamatory sense “What a lioness your mother was . . .” (Hitzig 129; and many) is unlikely. Elsewhere ḫ m “what” is used only with adjectives and verbs in this sense. Moreover, the word order opposes it (Brownlee 299). Rather, one must understand it as a question and answer (KJV; Ehrlich, Randglossen 5:70). In a lament, an initial exclamation expresses shock at the downfall of the victim, such as “How are the mighty fallen!” (2 Sam 1:19; cf. Ezek 26:17). The question-and-answer format finds a parallel in 31:2–3.

2.b. The MT reflects an artificial pointing to highlight the gender: the standard ḥ yūl † means “lioness

12.c. For the LXX rendering of the first verb, see Cooke (212) rather than Zimmerli (390). An emendation of the second verb from pl. to sg (Cooke 210; BHS), on the evidence of the LXX and in line with the sg suffix at the end of the line, has the advantage of creating a 3 + 2 line. A pointing ṣ b ṣ w is not necessary: a pf with weak ṭaw is not unparalleled in the book (Cooke 212; Johnson, Hebräisches Perfekt 79).

13.a. The LXX implies ḥ ā t ṣ “they have planted it,” by metathesis. The rhetorical echo of the ptcp ĥ ā t ṣ “planted” in v 10 justifies the MT.

13.b. The LXX\textsuperscript{*} does not represent the second adj Cornill (291) counseled its retention in a permissible 3 + 3 line.

14.a. The MT ḫ mm “from the stem of (its tendrils)” is a consequence of its conflated text. See the next Note\textsuperscript{*}. One should point ḫ ṭ Mmi “from its stem” (Rothstein 918 [cf. Joüon 96Cf]; cf. ḫ m mh m “from the stem,” Cornill 291; ḫ Mmi “from its stem,” Kraetzschmar 169; ḫ ṭ Mmi “from its stems,” Brockington, Hebrew Text 225).

14.b. The pair of terms in the MT ḫ yā ṣ ṭ ḫ yā ṭ “its tendrils, its fruit” seems to reflect conflation. The LXX lacks the second one. It is probable that the pair represents a cue word and a correction, “for ‘its fruit’ read ‘its tendrils,’ ” and at an earlier stage was a marginal comment on v 12. Later it was inserted into the text at v 14, displacing ḫ yā ṭ “its tendrils,” which functions as the object of the verb.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
KJV King James Version (1611) = AV
" (Cooke 211; HALAT 491b).

2.c. A superlative meaning is conveyed by יד “among,” as in Cant 2:2, 3 (cf. the use of וע תב “among” in Ezek 29:12; 30:7).

2.d. The sense opposes the accentuation in the MT, while the qînâ meter (3 + 2) is nicely restored (Bertholet [1897] 101; et al.).

3.a. Thus the REB; the context suggests that a cub was taken up from the rest and given a special role (cf. v 5b).

4.a. The MT points as a qal “heard (about him)”: Wevers (148) compares 2 Kgs 19:9. Hitzig (129) and most have repointed as a hiph, understanding יד “voice,” with the sense “sound an alarm.” This yields a more dramatic sense: cf. Isa 31:4. Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:70) and others have taken “the nations” as the object of the verb in the sense “summon,” with an indefinite subj: see Zimmerli 389.

4.b. Held (JANESCU 5 [1873] 173–90) has argued that here and in v 8 וידו means not “pit” but “net,” cognate with Akk. סֶעֲתָה “net.” Lang (Kein Aufstand 97–98), however, has contested his claim.

5.a. The MT יד “she (or ‘her hope’) waited (in vain?)” is uncertain. Wevers’ sense “her hope was made to wait, postponed” (148) does not quite fit the context of disappointed hopes. Cornill’s emendation יד א מלח “she acted foolishly” (286–87) has won scholarly support, but Ehrlich (Randglossen 5:71) objected that it is unsuitable: the mother subsequently did the same as before! Smend’s comparison with Syr. סֶעֲתָה “be enfeebled, despair” (123) has received wider backing. Then presumably a second stem יד must be invoked, with which Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 67) claimed Arab. וָהֵל “be uncertain” to be cognate.

5.b. See Note 17:7.a. *


7.a. This colon is a notorious crux. See Begg, ETL 65 (1989) 370–77, for a summary of proposed
solutions. Isa 13:22, where ṭwnmla does not mean “widows” but is evidently a dialectal variant of ṭwnmr a “fortresses” (= Q Tg.), has often been judged determinative for this case. However, Greenberg (351) has felicitously revived the suggestion rejected by Hitzig (130), that ṭwnmla means not “his widows” but “the women made widows by him,” just as μkyl “your dead” in 11:6 signifies “those whose death you have caused.” LXX Syr. “in his boldness” baffled Cornill (288), but Cooke (211) related the rendering to Aram. a t ṭwnmr a “strength.” Greenberg has also suggested that b yr ḫ “he knew” does not fit. There is widespread ancient support for a reading [ l ṭwnmr with a common confusion of resh and daleth, whether from ḫ “feed on” (LXX) or [ l “do harm to” (A) or [ l “break” (Tg.). The second of these three options is the most fitting.

7.b. Lit. “their” with a reference back to μd a “men” in v 6.

8.a. For the military sense of ḫ ḫ, basically “give,” see Greenberg 352.

8.b. For ṭwnyd m “administrative districts,” cf. 1 Kgs 20:14–19 and see Zimmerli 389–90.


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Tg. Targum
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
Lit. literally
* 20.b. For the acc, see Cooke 193; Greenberg 316. The seeming parallel in 1 Sam 12:7 is textually uncertain. Did μ l “for” fall out by partial haplography (cf. BHS)?

Heb. Hebrew
Tg. Targum
Biblica
JANESCU Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
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mind, presupposes I \w M. Noth ("Jerusalem Catastrophe" 273) compared Akk. *masarti* "custody."

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**Syr.** Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

**Vg.** Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)

**Heb.** Hebrew

**MT.** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**LXX.** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

**Syr.** Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

**Bib.** Biblica

**MT.** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

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**Tg.** Targum

**JBL.** Journal of Biblical Literature

**Bib.** Biblica

**pl.** plate or plural

**n.** note

**LXX.** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

**sg.** singular or under

**NJPS.** New Jewish Publication Society Version

**NRSV.** New Revised Standard Version (1989)

**pl.** plate or plural

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11.b. The use of הָיַה “to(ward)” in the sense of הִיהֶה is strange: Jer 33:4, to which Ehrlich (*Randglossen* 5:72) appealed, is capable of a number of interpretations. One may compare the sense, albeit different, of הִיהֶה “become” (= הָיַה ) in 40:16; 45:2.

11.c. Lit. “it,” with a masc reference to one of the stems (cf. v 12b) that runs throughout v 11ab. The grapevine, which is fem, reappears in v 12. See *Form/Structure/Setting*.

11.d. For the form, see *Note* 31:3.c.

12.a. Lit. “it,” a fem reference to the vine, resumed from v 11a.

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13.b. The LXX* does not represent the second adj Cornill (291) counseled its retention in a permissible 3 + 3 line.

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**Abbreviations:**

- **sg** singular or under
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- **LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
- **pl.** plate or plural
- **BHS** *Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
- **LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
- **ptcp** participle
- **MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
- **adj** adjective/adjectival
14.b. The pair of terms in the MT \( hyrp \) (its tendrils, its fruit) seems to reflect conflation. The LXX lacks the second one. It is probable that the pair represents a cue word and a correction, “for ‘its fruit’ read ‘its tendrils,’” and at an earlier stage was a marginal comment on v 12. Later it was inserted into the text at v 14, displacing \( hydb \) (its tendrils), which functions as the object of the verb.

Form/Structure/Setting

Chap. 19 looks like a literary unit, inasmuch as a new one clearly begins in 20:1–2. However, its opening \( htaw \) (and you) is characteristic of a section within a unit, as in 4:9. It is best understood as originally a continuation of the unit that began with 17:1, into which chap. 18 has been redactionally inserted. This is suggested by the echoes of both 17:1–10 and 19:10–14 in the oracle of salvation in 17:22–24. The genre of the chapter is identified as a (funeral) lament by the inclusion of vv 1 and 14b. It actually falls into two pieces, which share the initial \( ûma \) “your mother” as a catchword in vv 2 and 10 but work within the parameters of two separate metaphors, a lioness and a grapevine. The two poems, for such they are, exhibit by and large the standard meter of the funeral lament, 3 + 2. Deviations occur in vv 9ab (3 + 3 + 3 [overloaded?]), 11ab (2 + 2, 2 + 2 [Zimmerli 391]), 12a (2 + 2). Lang (Kein Austand 91) has noted that the 2 + 2 meter is also characteristic of the lament. Ezekiel often used this genre in his oracles against foreign nations, against Tyre in 26:17–18; 27:2–36; 28:12–19 and against Egypt in 31:2–18; 32:2–16.

Whereas in its original setting the lament celebrated the past achievements of a person now dead, the prophets turned it into a forward-looking oracle of judgment. Its two standard parts of past triumph and present tragedy became a vehicle for expressing the doom of those who seemed to enjoy permanent prosperity. Moreover, at times notes of accusation were worked into the description of initial splendor (28:15–16a; 31:10). The time perspective was characteristically altered: present glory was represented as past, and future doom as already present. The prophet ominously looked back at a past tragedy. This contrast is typically seen in 26:17–18 and 27:32–34, where \( ht \) (“now”) introduces the second element.

In the second lament of chap. 19, it is present in v 13. This specimen actually divides into three parts: past glory in vv 10–11, the onset of disaster in v 12, and present doom in vv 13–14a. The middle section, with its strongly narrative format, is also found in 27:26–27, where the east wind is again the instrument of destruction, and in 28:17b, where casting to the ground features, as here in v 12. In a looser type of lament in chap. 32, much space is devoted to destruction, 32:3–8, including Yahweh’s trapping the Egyptian Leviathan or crocodile with a net, which is similar to vv 4 and 8–9b in the first lament of chap. 19. This lament falls into two main parts, which subdivide into two smaller sections, the rise and fall of the first young lion (vv 2–3 + 4) and the rise and fall of the second (vv 5–7 + 8–9). The two main parts are marked by consecutive parallelism: vv 3a and 5b–6a correspond, and so do vv 3b and

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next Note*. One should point \( hfmi \) “from its stem” (Rothstein 918 [cf. Joüon 96Cf]; cf. \( hf mhm \) “from the stem,” Cornill 291; \( HFhfmi \) “from its stem,” Kraetzschmar 169; \( hyfmi \) “from its stems,” Brockington, Hebrew Text 225).

* 14.b. The pair of terms in the MT \( hyrp \) (its tendrils, its fruit) seems to reflect conflation. The LXX lacks the second one. It is probable that the pair represents a cue word and a correction, “for ‘its fruit’ read ‘its tendrils,’” and at an earlier stage was a marginal comment on v 12. Later it was inserted into the text at v 14, displacing \( hydb \) (its tendrils), which functions as the object of the verb.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

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6b, 4a and 8, and 4b and 9a. The second part expands the features of the first. Its greater size shows its relative importance: by comparison, the first part looks like a rehearsal for it.

As to the setting of these two poems that make up the chapter, one must distinguish between the historical and the literary settings, as often in the oracles of the book. The difference is especially keen here, as the concluding comment in v 14b hints. At an earlier stage in the formation of the book, chaps. 17 and 19 were evidently adjacent. The oracle of salvation of 17:22–24 had a central role, standing head and shoulders above the oracles of judgment that surround it in 17:1–21 and 19:1–14. One may compare the centrality of the fall of Jerusalem in 33:21–22, within a series of oracles that presuppose it in the preceding and following parts of the chapter (see Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 151–52). The key role of 17:22–24 is indicated by its echoes of both 17:1–10 and 19:10–14a. The original structure of the two chapters was A/ ... /A/ ... /A. By the time of this literary grouping, the doom predicted in the judgment oracles had already been fulfilled, and they were monuments to God’s power and justice. 19:1–14a had become a lament in the literal sense of relating to the past. However, as in 32:16, the editor responsible for 19:14b was aware that a prophetic lament relates to the future. Clearly this was not so in the case of the anticipatory vv 3–4, but it is presumably true of vv 5–9 and of the second lament. So both oracles are pre-587 in origin; they look forward with the characteristic time warp of the lament.

A little more needs to be said about redaction. The reference to a single stem of the grapevine in v 11ab/b is most probably to be regarded as a subsequent insertion (Noth, “Jerusalem Catastrophe” 274 n. 22; Zimmerli, 390–91, 398). This material stands out from the rest, with its switch from plural stems to the masculine singular that pervades it before a reversion to feminine forms relating to the grapevine in v 12. Yet it has been made to fit smoothly in some other respects. It anticipates the less vehement references to a single stem in vv 12b and 14. It is metrically acceptable (Zimmerli 391). Structurally it respects the vine/stem alternation that Parunak (“Structural Studies” 289–90) has observed. However, it disturbs the proportion of lines devoted to this alternation (originally 2.1.2.1/1.2), by supplementing the single stem-related line with two further ones. These lines were probably added by Ezekiel in a literary adaptation of the oracle: they are already presupposed by the oracle of salvation in 17:22–24.

The chapter falls into the following parts:

19:1 Yahweh’s command to lament Israel’s rulers
19:2–9 The lament over Jehoahaz and Zedekiah as young lions
    19:2–4 Jehoahaz’s violent reign and deportation
    19:5–9 Zedekiah’s violent reign and coming deportation
19:10–14a The lament over the Davidic grapevine
    19:10–11 Its past glory, culminating in Zedekiah’s ambitions
    19:12 Its coming destruction
    19:13–14a Its exilic fate brought about by Zedekiah
19:14b The fulfillment of the predictive lament

Comment

The prophetic lament is a variation of the oracle of judgment, a sophisticated way of pronouncing divinely sent destruction upon the addressees. Here Israel’s “heads of state” are the subject not only of the first poem but also of the second. The term אֶדֶם נַפָּה “head of state” is one that Ezekiel typically uses of Judean royalty, particularly Zedekiah (see the Comment on 7:27). In this case the reference to recent and present reigns of such “heads of state” and the attribution to them of lionlike violence and loss of

n. note

2a One of the heads of state is rhetorically addressed. Presumably it is the current king, Zedekiah, as in 21:30–31 (25–26). His “mother,” who reappears in v 10, is best taken as the Davidic dynasty. In 17:5–10 the grapevine stands for Zedekiah himself, while the dynasty is signified by the cedar, of which Jehoiachin and the coming king are shoots in 17:3–4, 22–23. The grapevine often stands for the covenant nation in the OT, as it does in chap. 15, but the rest of the oracles in chaps. 17 and 19 point in another direction. Oort (Theologisch Tijdschrift 23 [1889] 505) and others have seen here and in v 10 a literal reference to the Judean queen mother Hamutal, the mother of both Jehoahaz and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 23:31; 24:18). This appears to be the “pushing of a metaphor beyond its original intent” (Hals 130).

Cooke (206) observed that a personification is most naturally in view in v 10 and so presumably here also. Glory attaches not to a particular woman, however prominent she might have been, but to the Davidic line from which individual kings emerged. This is their “mother” (Zinner 394, 397, implicitly following Kimchi and L. Gautier; Pohlmann, Ezechielstudien 147, 149, 154). If the kings are like young lions in their violent behavior in 22:25 and later in the oracle, here their lionhood has a glorious aspect, like the title of Christ in Rev 5:5, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” It is derived from the description of the royal tribe of Judah as a lion in Jacob’s blessing (Gen 49:9). There it is said that “he crouches like a lion. Like a lioness, who dare arouse him?” This language and its admiring tone seem to have influenced the beginning of the lament, as a reflection of the traditional grandeur of the Davidic dynasty. The second lament will likewise expand on the grapevine of Gen 49:11 (Bertholet [1936] 70; et al.). As in 31:2–3, an appreciative question elicits the superlative quality of the subject of lamentation.

2b–3 The young males are the individual kings whom the royal house produced, while the cubs are the princes being groomed for royal office or for civil and military leadership. The identification of the first young lion is no mystery: his deportation to Egypt (v 4b) reveals him to be Josiah’s son Jehoahaz, who ruled for three short months in 609 B.C. His hunting human prey might be considered an amoral description of royal duties in leonine language but for 22:25, where it is said of Jerusalem’s heads of state that they were “like a roaring lion tearing its prey: they devoured lives” (cf. Brownlee, “Two Elegies” 98 n. 1). True, three months were too short to leave an impression of despotism, but the description is essentially a generalization. From Ezekiel’s exilic perspective, Judah’s kings were all tarred with the same brush (22:6, 25; 45:8, 9). What was true of them as a group might rhetorically be credited to each monarch in turn. The violence that Jeremiah attributed to Jehoahaz’s older brother and successor Jehoiakim (Jer 22:13–17; cf. Manasseh in 2 Kgs 21:16) must have deeply impressed Ezekiel in his young years.

4 A stop was put to the young lion’s ravages by foreign hunters, Pharaoh Necho II and his army, who captured and deported him (cf. 2 Kgs 23:33–34). Both animals and human captives had hooks or rings put through their noses or lips, through which ropes could be attached (cf. ANEP 447, 524; 2 Kgs 19:28; Amos 4:2). This human act is meant to be regarded as a natural process of reaping what one sows in God’s world. As an ominous description of a past event within an oracle of judgment, Jehoahaz’s fate is comparable with the Northern Kingdom’s downfall related in 23:9–10, in an oracle directed to Judah.

5–7 After rehearsing the first king’s rise and fall, the lament begins its essential part. There is a glance at the disappointment caused by Egyptian domination, which represented the absolute failure of the policy of independence pursued by Josiah. The identity of the second lion cub has long generated controversy: it is well summarized by Begg (ETL 65 [1989] 358–65). The question is resolved at a

et al. et alii, and others
n. note
stroke by considering the genre of the passage. Von Orelli (74–76, implicitly following Oort and implicitly followed by Jahnow, Leichenlied 202–4; Fohrer 104, 107; and Lamparter 137–38) rightly observed that the lament is predictive and so must relate to Zedekiah, though he wrongly defined his “mother” as Hamutal. The funeral lament was used by Ezekiel to predict the coming downfall of a living person or extant group. One need not be concerned at the gap in the reigns of the two “young lions” in this schematic presentation of royal history. A prophetic lament requires that the future be described as if it were past. An exception can fairly be made for vv 3–4, but not for this main part of the lament. So the last king of the dynasty is in view, Zedekiah, who reigned from 597 to 587. Jehoahaz’s fate functions as an omen of what was in store for him. Theoretically, Zedekiah’s immediate predecessor Jehoiachin, now exiled in Babylon, might have been a better choice for this role. Presumably, the high regard of Ezekiel’s constituency for him ruled him out. Zedekiah’s stalking among lions may be a reference not only to his overtures to Egypt (17:15) but also to the meeting of envoys of western kings he hosted in Jerusalem in 594 to plan a revolt against Babylon (Jer 27:1–11). The man-eating of the first young lion, continued by his successor, is amplified in terms of widow-making, borrowed from 22:25. Literal, culpable wastage of human life is envisioned under the figure of a lion’s ravaging communities (cf. Jer 2:15; 2 Kgs 17:25; Greenberg 352). We know hardly anything about Zedekiah’s domestic policy. His evident weakness might have condoned all manner of evils (cf. Jer 34:8–22). It is not insignificant that Ezekiel called him “wicked” (21:30[25]).

8–9 Another foreign hunting party soon deals with the problem. See the Comment on 12:13 for the net and the pit as means of trapping. Both there and in the underlying 17:20 the net is spread by Yahweh to catch Zedekiah. Editorially, 19:8–9 is to be regarded as a fulfillment of 17:20, which goes on to mention the king being taken by Yahweh to Babylon. V 14b must be taken seriously: the prophetic lament concerning the future eventually came to function as an actual lament relating to the past. These words became historically true. What was indubitably predicted in 17:20 could now be celebrated as fulfilled in the reinterpreted lament. In relating the two passages, the nations are understood as agents of Yahweh, a reasonable notion since in 17:20 God is obviously working through the Babylonians. Such intertextuality indicates that, editorially, Zedekiah is in view both in 17:20 and here. This is early evidence indeed for the identification of the second young lion. A wooden collar, like the hooks, was used both for captured animals and for human prisoners. It was a ladderlike framework that functioned as a restraining device (Gordon, Sumer 12 [1956] 82). The tone of finality in the last line of the first lament encourages the impression that this is the last king to reign on Judean soil (Brownlee, “Two Elegies” 97).

10–11 The second lament in vv 10–14a has been used to parallel the first, as the initial catchword indicates. On a larger structural scale, it intends to resume the fable of 17:3–10. Now, however, the grapevine is not a symbol of the individual king Zedekiah but a metaphor for the royal dynasty, like the lioness of v 2. Again Zedekiah appears to be addressed, notwithstanding that later in the lament, within the horizons of the vine metaphor, he is mentioned in the third person. The past glory of the dynasty is described in positive metaphorical terms in vv 10–11a. They remind the reader of similar language used of Israel’s blessings in Ps 80:8–12(7–11), though a territorial element is absent here. The strong stems represent the princes of the royal house: candidates for the throne were ever available. In Ps 110:2 the very phrase, with an initial singular noun, z‘hfm, means not “strong stem” but “mighty scepter” of the Davidic king (cf. too Jer 48:17).

The amplification in v 11ab, already known to the oracle of salvation that closes chap. 17, takes its cue from the single stem relating to Zedekiah later in the poem. It adds an accusatory note of ambition that seems to continue the earlier glorious description of the dynasty, yet has overtones of blame. It

ETL Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses
echoes chap. 31, a lament for the Pharaoh in terms of an enormous tree that was cut down for its overweening pride, and readers are meant to catch the reference. The details are drawn from 31:3, 5, 9, 10. There is an irony about the allusion. Zedekiah’s craving for independence—historically that of his ministers, but as king he had to bear the blame—was a wagon hitched to Egypt’s falling star (17:15).

12 The lament moves prophetically to the demise of the dynasty, stating it as a firm fact. The two initial verbs are divine passives, and מזג “anger” reinforces the reference to God, who responds vehemently to the vine he had earlier favored. We cannot avoid associating the term on Ezekiel’s lips with Yahweh’s passionate moral retribution (cf. 13:13). The stark shift of the original lament has been helpfully explained by the insertion in v 11. Greenberg’s appeal to 28:17 (353) shows how good a redactional fit the insertion is, rather than its originality. The whole grapevine, now including its single soaring stem, is torn off its supports and dashed to the ground. The element of divine causality is reinforced by the reference to the east wind, which is Yahweh’s instrument of destruction, as in 17:10.

Here we must note the recurrence of a phenomenon observed in v 8. In the basic lament, the blasting by the east wind refers to the future. When it was incorporated in its written form, the predictive lament had shifted to an actual lament because its content was now history (v 14b). The reader is meant to trace a sequence between the plainly future reference of 17:10 and this now backward-looking reference. The future shriveling of 17:9b and its past counterpart in 19:12a, b have the same editorial connotation. God’s threat had come true, and so vv 10–14a, like vv 2–9, are a testimony to fulfilled prophecy. In deuteronomistic terms Yahweh’s hand matched his mouth (1 Kgs 8:24).

The grapevine’s strong stem, the present occupant of the Israelite throne as Ezekiel spoke, was to be, and in fact was, shriveled with the rest of the vine. The mention of fire harks back to the divine fury by way of inclusion (cf. 22:21, 31; 38:18–19). In a remarkable parallel, a royal psalm that saw the end of the dynasty looming lamented the burning of Yahweh’s fury like fire (Ps 89:47[46]).

13–14 The lament moves characteristically to the ignominious “now,” which reverses the glorious “then” of vv 10–11. Parunak (“Structural Studies” 288) has usefully cited D. H. Müller’s observation that vv 13–14a are meant to resume vv 10–11a in a tragic inclusion. The echoing of earlier vocabulary in a different context accentuates the reversal. The royal family is now (to be) “planted” (hlwtv) in exile (cf. Jer 38:22–23). The “tendrils” (byb µ,ydb) that signified a healthy vine are described as scorched and lifeless. The supply of royal “scepters” or individual kings had come to an end. Where there had been water aplenty, desert and drought and even fire dominated. We need not be concerned by the illogicality of a grapevine being consumed and then transplanted: a metaphor has to stretch to cover human realities. The negativity of the closing line mournfully matches that of the previous lament, and both express negation of normality that fits well the close of a lament (Jahnow, Leichenlied 131, 206).

The blame for the end of the royal house is laid firmly on Zedekiah. Like the fire coming out of the royal bramble in Jotham’s fable (Judg 9:15; Hammershaimb, “Ezekiel’s View” 136), fire issued from the last “stem” and destroyed the tendrils of the vine. The judgment that Zedekiah brought on himself by rebelling against Babylon was to engulf the dynasty. There is more in the last line than meets the eye. While the first lament evoked the lioness of Gen 49:9, the second echoes not only the vine of Gen 49:11 but also the scepter of Gen 49:10. In 21:30–32(25–27) Ezekiel rhetorically addressed a personal oracle of judgment to Zedekiah, ordering him in God’s name to give up his crown. That oracle closes with a taunting echo of Gen 49:10, reinterpreting its coming ruler as Nebuchadnezzar bringing divine judgment (see Allen, Ezekiel 20–48 28). The same message seems to underlie v 14a (cf. Moran, Bib 39 [1958] 423–24). No, the “scepter” would “not depart from” the royal house of Judah—“until” God’s final judgment came. V 14a and 21:32(27) reinforce each other in a startling prophetic reversal of earlier
promise.

Explanation

This shocking chapter gives a particular analysis of the general announcement of the “end” that, according to chap. 7, loomed for Judah in the tragic events of 587. There the head of state was merely mentioned as unable to cope with the crisis (7:27). Here the focus is on the crumbling of the Davidic throne. For all its positive traditions, its destiny was to be inglorious. The prophetic lament is here an ideal vehicle for first expressing and then denying one particular popular hope. If Zion theology was attacked in chap. 16, here it is the turn of Davidic theology (cf. Lam 4:12, 20). Ezekiel tolls the bell for Zedekiah and for the Davidic dynasty. The last king would be captured and deported, while by implication the dynasty would perish. Jehoahaz’s deportation at the hands of a world power must be seen as an omen of a similar fate for Zedekiah, the cub from the same litter of the dynastic lioness. The shameless oppression that marked the royal house was to lead to the withdrawal of divine promise, not least that of Gen 49:9. The second lament reverses Gen 49:10–11 and stresses destructive wrath. The two laments with their different emphases are to be read together for the total message. An accusatory note of soaring pride has been skillfully woven into the latter lament, to reinforce the necessity of the divine verdict.

V 14b is a hermeneutical key to the editorial significance of the chapter. History had overtaken prophecy. What has been predicated of the future in a prophetic lament was now verified as valid. Hindsight could now interpret its past tenses literally. From this perspective, chap. 19 serves to confirm what had been unambiguously future threats in chap. 17. Yahweh’s word had come true. By the eclipse of royal sovereignty, God’s moral sovereignty could be celebrated. Nor was that all. In the complex of chaps. 17 and 19, the central place is given to the salvation oracle of 17:22–24. Where there was a real and undeniable end, there was to be a new beginning. Where judgment had to do its deadly work, salvation was eventually to revive the ancient promises. Room is made for a new, positive version of the vine fable and the vine lament, promising new glory that would transcend the old. Readers who look back and around with despair are bidden to look forward with messianic hope. They—and we—are given “a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns” (2 Pet 1:19).

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Dedicated to the memory
of H. L. Ellison
whose torch as an Old Testament teacher
I proudly strive to bear

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Editorial Preface

The launching of the *Word Biblical Commentary* brings to fulfillment an enterprise of several years’ planning. The publishers and the members of the editorial board met in 1977 to explore the possibility of a new commentary on the books of the Bible that would incorporate several distinctive features. Prospective readers of these volumes are entitled to know what such features were intended to be; whether the aims of the commentary have been fully achieved time alone will tell.

First, we have tried to cast a wide net to include as contributors a number of scholars from around the world who not only share our aims, but are in the main engaged in the ministry of teaching in university, college, and seminary. They represent a rich diversity of denominational allegiance. The broad stance of our contributors can rightly be called evangelical, and this term is to be understood in its positive, historic sense of a commitment to Scripture as divine revelation, and to the truth and power of the Christian gospel.

Then, the commentaries in our series are all commissioned and written for the purpose of inclusion in the *Word Biblical Commentary*. Unlike several of our distinguished counterparts in the field of commentary writing, there are no translated works, originally written in a non-English language. Also, our commentators were asked to prepare their own rendering of the original biblical text and to use those languages as the basis of their own comments and exegesis. What may be claimed as distinctive with this series is that it is based on the biblical languages, yet it seeks to make the technical and scholarly approach to a theological understanding of Scripture understandable by—and useful to—the fledgling student, the working minister, and colleagues in the guild of professional scholars and teachers as well.

Finally, a word must be said about the format of the series. The layout, in clearly defined sections, has been consciously devised to assist readers at different levels. Those wishing to learn about the textual witnesses on which the translation is offered are invited to consult the section headed *Notes*. If the readers’ concern is with the state of modern scholarship on any given portion of Scripture, they should turn to the sections on *Bibliography* and *Form/Structure/Setting*. For a clear exposition of the passage’s meaning and its relevance to the ongoing biblical revelation, the *Comment* and concluding *Explanation* are designed expressly to meet that need. There is therefore something for everyone who may pick up and use these volumes.

If these aims come anywhere near realization, the intention of the editors will have been met, and the labor of our team of contributors rewarded.

General Editors:  
*David A. Hubbard*  
*Glenn W. Barker*

Old Testament:  
*John D. W. Watts*  
New Testament:  
*Ralph P. Martin*

Author’s Preface

* Deceased
The kind invitation to write this commentary came as a sad consequence of the untimely death of William H. Brownlee, to whom it had been assigned. I am most grateful to his widow, Mrs. Louise Brownlee, for the use of his papers relating to Ezekiel and for the generous loan of commentaries and other books from his library. In some respects this volume takes a rather different tack from *Ezekiel 1–19*, which may be seen as evidence of the diversity which the editors have graciously allowed the contributors to this series. The line which the intended author would have followed may be discerned from his numerous learned articles relating to these chapters and from his commentary in *The Interpreter’s One Volume Commentary on the Bible*.

As always, I am indebted to my wife Elizabeth for her patient reading of the manuscript and constant improvement of its style and readability. I owe thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a travel grant that permitted a sabbatical term’s research into these chapters in the British Library, London, and in the libraries of London University, Cambridge University and Tyndale House. Not least I am grateful to Fuller Theological Seminary for time and encouragement to write and for library and word processing facilities.

LESLIE C. ALLEN
Fuller Theological Seminary
Pasadena

December 1989

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TR Textus Receptus
OTL Old Testament Library (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Westminster)
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
CBC Cambridge Bible Commentary
TR Textus Receptus
TR Textus Receptus
AB Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday)
WBC Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word)
et al. et alii, and others
vol(s). volume(s)
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
BibOr Biblica et Orientalia (Rome: PBI)


**Herrmann, J.** “Stichwortglossen im Buche Ezechiel.” *OLZ* 11 (1908) 280–82.


**Joüon, P.** “Notes philologiques sur le texte hébreu d’Ézékiel.” *Bib* 10 (1929) 304–12.


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3. MAJOR MONOGRAPHS AND ARTICLES


*HUCA* Hebrew Union College Annual
vol(s), volume(s)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*ETL* Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses
BibOr Biblica et Orientalia (Rome: PBI)
vol. volume
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
SBT Studies in Biblical Theology (London/Naperville, IL: SCM/Allenson)
SCM Student Christian Movement
*JSOTSup* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament [JOST] Supplement Series
*Int* Interpretation
*ASTI* Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute


BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
AnBib Analecta biblica (Rome: PBI)
HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
BWANT Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament (Stuttgart:Kolhammer)
FzB Forschungen zur Bibel
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
ConB Coniectanea biblica (Lund: Gleerup)
OT Old Testament
JSOTSup Journal for the Study of the Old Testament [JOST] Supplement Series
JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Biblical Studies
SC Source chrétiennes
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
SBS Stuttgarter Bibelstudien (Stuttgart/Wurzburg: Echter/KBW)
ed. edited, edition(s), editor


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### Introduction

**Bibliography**


In Ezek 21:26 (21) Nebuchadnezzar is pictured as standing at a fork in the road, wondering which way forward to take. For many, biblical scholarship is faced with a similar choice. On the one hand, there is a literary path, which urges the reader to take the text as it is. This is the approach of the new literary critic under the influence of a modern perspective on literature in general. It is espoused by James A. Sanders and Brevard S. Childs in their canonical approaches to the Old Testament and, in the case of Ezekiel, by Greenberg with his “holistic” attitude to the text. The rhetorical critic and the structuralist are also adherents to this literary approach. It is consciously opposed to the older, historical approach which endeavors to elucidate the text by getting behind it, whether by way of textual criticism, form criticism, source criticism or redaction criticism. Walther Zimmerli is largely wedded to this approach. Thus two important recent commentaries on Ezekiel represent the polarization within the field of Old Testament scholarship. Of course, not all scholars take radically opposing sides. There are many who adopt a mediating approach. They are grateful for the older approach in its various manifestations and are not convinced that it has had its day or proved grossly unfruitful, as its critics allege. They are also happy to learn from the newer so-called post-critical approach and acknowledge that it nicely supplements the older perspectives.

I count myself among this number, a “scribe” who is “like a householder who brings out of his store things new and old” (Matt 13:52). Ezekiel still warrants a thorough study of the total witness to the text. It also requires investigation of literary forms and the way they are used in the book. Not least it necessitates a tentative reconstruction of how the spoken oracles reached their present shape in a literary edition. Yet it must never be forgotten that the book is the proper focus of study, the goal of exegesis, and the end to which all other perspectives are the various means. Ideally the various scholarly approaches should not be pursued in isolation but allowed to bounce off each other in an ongoing team debate toward harmony and truth. The redaction critic needs to listen respectfully to the rhetorical critic,
and vice versa. The latter has to appreciate that in the light of other evidence literary artistry may attest redactional unity, while the former must grasp that repetition may be an authentic stylistic device rather than evidence of a secondary accretion.

EZEKIEL THE PROPHET

Ezekiel was a Zadokite priest of the Jerusalem temple, who was swept up in the deportation of leading citizens, including the young king Jehoiachin, to a settlement in Babylonia, after Nebuchadnezzar’s conquest of the rebellious vassal state of Judah in 597 B.C. There he received a prophetic call in 593 to minister to these Judean hostages and later to the first generation of exiles after the fall of Jerusalem in 587; his ministry lasted at least to 571 (29:17). It has indeed been urged, since the 1930s, that Ezekiel prophesied partly in Judah. In 1936 Bertholet (xii–xvii), developing Herntrich’s earlier proposal, so argued; later the view was popularized for English readers by H. W. Robinson (Two Hebrew Prophets 70–79). This view has largely been displaced by a more straightforward acceptance of the book’s own insistence that Ezekiel was a prophet to the exiles. But it is not free of problems; hence P. R. Ackroyd, for one, has judged that Bertholet’s view is “the more coherent” (Exile and Restoration 106 note 20). Moreover, W. H. Brownlee in Ezekiel 1–19, never a timid follower of academic fashion, endeavored to argue afresh for Ezekiel’s prophetic labors in the west. This commentary, perhaps because it has not had to deal with the evidence of chaps. 1–19, finds Ezekiel firmly in the eastern sector of the Babylonian empire. When westerners are addressed, it judges the address to be rhetorical. Brownlee’s stand has impelled a serious focus on the issue of provenance in each pericope.

Ezekiel was an unusual prophet. His priestly background is everywhere apparent: in the vocabulary he uses, in his emphasis on the holy and—in since priests had a teaching role—in his didactic approach and echoing of priestly moral and cultic traditions. He is the most sophisticated of the prophets, undoubtedly because the early years of his ministry were devoted to sophisticated people, the elite of Jerusalem. Thus, with communicatory skill, he presents himself in turn as an expert in silver smelting (chapter 22) and in shipbuilding (chapter 27), and harks back to lore of paradise (chapter 28) and to the myths of the chaos monster (chapter 29; 32) and the cosmic tree (chapter 31). His use of extended metaphors or verbal cartoons may have been a device to penetrate into the minds and hearts of shellshocked folk, who had lost everything worth living for. It did not always work: sometimes the message was lost in the medium, and he was asked to speak plainly (21:5 [20:49]).

Since it is a feature of extreme disorientation to cling obstinately to the past and to wish the crisis away, Ezekiel enticed his hearers’ assent with barbed, Achilles’ heel metaphors. For example, he compared Judah’s hoped for ally, Egypt, with the chaos monster— which was destroyed — and powerful Tyre resisting a Babylonian siege with an ocean-going ship, which was fraught with risk for land-locked Judeans, and with the glorious primeval specimen of humanity, who of course fell (cf. Newsom, Int Interpretation 38 [1984] 157). The technique could work the other way: in 37:1–14 the prophet answers the despair of the exiles as to the future by dramatizing the well-known cultic saying that Yahweh kills and makes alive.

Another way of penetrating the dulled consciousness of the disoriented exiles was Ezekiel’s engaging in representative drama, in perpetuation of a prophetic tradition of symbolic acts. His culturally alien lack of mourning on the occasion of his wife’s death and his holding two sticks together, so that they looked

cf. confer, compare

Int Interpretation
like a staff, in each case stimulated interested questions (24:19; 37:18) that led on to the divine message as the decoding of the drama.

In exile Ezekiel’s hearers lived in a religious desert, far removed from their world of religious tradition. It may have been for this reason that he presents himself as an old-world prophet, harking back to pre-classical prophetic traditions well known to his audience from their cultic literature (cf. Zimmerli, *VT* 15 [1965] 515–27; Carley, *Ezekiel 13–47*). Thereby he was turned into a living religious institution, an effective vehicle for the nurturing of faith and the communication of divine truth. The mystic pressure of Yahweh’s “hand” grips him and transports him hither and thither, like an Elijah reborn (1 Kgs 18:46; 2 Kgs 2:16; Ezek 37:1; 40:1). Like Balaam of old, Ezekiel ritually and ominously turns in the direction of his prophetic target (“set your face,” 21:3 [20:47], etc; cf. Num 22:41, etc). From the ninth century prophet mentioned in 1 Kgs 20:13, 28 he resurrects the proof saying that culminated in the recognition formula “and you shall know that I am Yahweh” and makes it the keynote of his prophesying. He spoke to the exiles as a prophetic figure from the venerable past. In a landscape devoid of traditional religious forms, he stood out as a religious landmark.

Ezekiel deliberately borrowed and built upon the messages of more recent prophets and doubtless thus enhanced his religious authority. In 22:17–22 the smelting metaphor that Isaiah had earlier used of Jerusalem (Isa 1:22) is developed. In 29:6–7 and 35:12–13 use is made of an element from prophetic narratives concerning Isaiah (Isa 36:6; 37:23–24, 34), while 32:17–32 reflects Isa 14:15–20. The negative marriage metaphor of 23:2–27 is a development of Jer 3:6–11, while the watchman figure of 33:7 picks up Jer 6:17, and the sheep imagery of 34:2–16 is based on Jer 23:1–2. Prophetic truth evidently came to Ezekiel through meditating on earlier prophetic revelation and reactivating it for his own time, just as Jeremiah regarded himself as the Hosea of the southern kingdom. Moreover, this updating of accepted prophetic teaching in a contemporary context was a subtle way of commending his own message, doubtless unpopular in the pre-587 period, which of itself might have been dismissed.

Till the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel’s message had to be one of judgment. Skinner (59) insightfully described his judgment oracles as having one or more of three intentions: to indicate its moral necessity, its credibility over against the people’s optimistic illusions, and its certainty. These purposes are clearly at work in the heterogeneous oracles of judgment in chaps. 20–24.

With the news of the fall of Jerusalem, the tenor of the prophet’s message changed from judgment to salvation. God’s punitive work had been done; now his saving work could be unleashed into the future. As 36:36 later reflected, it was the very double message of Jeremiah, that Yahweh would first destroy and overthrow and then build and plant (Jer 1:10; 31:28). Yet Ezekiel was not transformed overnight into a prophet of pure salvation. Chaps. 33–34 (and 20:32–44) attest that warnings of judgment were still relevant for the heirs of salvation (cf. Rom 11:21; 1 Pet 4:17!). Ezekiel demonstrated a “fine balance between gift and demand in his future program” (Klein, *Ezekiel* 145). The foreign oracles of chaps. 25–32 form a bridge over to the following salvation chapters, and they too mix assurance (25:1–26:6) with a warning note that Tyre’s resistance to the Babylonian siege must not revive old hopes (27:1–28:19).


*cf. confer, compare
VT Vetus Testamentum
*cf. confer, compare
*cf. confer, compare
vol. volume
*cf. confer, compare
but as one who took seriously the people’s pain (cf. Greenberg, BMik 50 [1972] 276–78). He listened with God’s ear to their bitterness over their plight (18:2), their dismayed confession (33:10) and their blank despair (37:11). In his oracles he echoed their sense of tragic loss and poured divine balm into their emotional wounds (25:6; 35:10, 12).

Yet Ezekiel was no prophet of mere self-realization. Essentially he was “grounding the necessity for redemption in the divine nature” (Skinner 365; see 36:17–23; cf. Luc, JETS 26 [1983] 137–43). He has been called the John Calvin of the Old Testament. (What a pity it is that Calvin never got beyond chapter 20 in his lectures on Ezekiel!) The people of Israel were Yahweh’s clients clinging to his coattails, a hindrance rather than a help in representing him in the world. Yet he would prove himself sovereign by pushing them into a sphere of salvation and blessing, and so vindicate his shattered honor. Scholars have spoken of the radical theocentricity of Ezekiel. It dominates the book in Yahweh’s constant term of address to the prophet, יְהֹוָה יְהוָה תָּמִד “human one, mortal,” which emphasizes his own transcendent role, and in the double title הַיָּהָוֶה יִתְנָשֶׁה “Lord Yahweh” in the messenger formula and the divine saying formula, which begin and end oracles. It is especially reflected in the overall form of the book, which portrays the prophet as enveloped in a divinely woven cocoon, as it were. It is as if he mulled over events and in communion with God listened to their echo in the very voice of God, before delivering messages to the people. For example, even the exiles’ remarks are refracted through a divine oracle (33:17, 30–32). Ezekiel lived in a period when Yahweh had lost face through the exile (36:20), when his authority had been impugned through the rebelliousness of his covenant people (24:3; cf. 44:6), and when his holiness had been profaned through an impure cult (20:39; cf. 22:26). Ezekiel’s relation to God is offered as a model of what should be, and of what would be when Yahweh was revealed as all in all (20:44; 36:22). “Where men bow their knees before this God and acknowledge that in his just action he is on the move, there Ezekiel’s proclamation achieves its proper goal” (Zimmerli, Int 23 [1969] 148).

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL: THEMATIC STRUCTURES

A key to major themes is provided by their repeated mention over a series of literary units, which thus comprise a redactional block. What follows is a study of such themes that emerge within particular blocks. Ezek 1–24, which relates to Ezekiel’s ministry of judgment before the fall of Jerusalem, is commonly regarded as the first division of the book. If Boadt is correct in describing chaps. 15–19 as a self-contained block (Ezekiel and His Book 194–96), the way is open to considering chaps. 20–24 as a further block. Indeed, the accumulation of repeated motifs within these chapters points to an intentional juxtaposition. The proliferation of the stem יָּהָוֶה “judge” indicates the main theme. Ezekiel is portrayed as a prophet of judgment, whom Yahweh invites to pass a verdict of judgment upon a sinful people (20:4; 22:2; 23:36). Nebuchadnezzar and his troops are to be Yahweh’s agents of judgment (21:32[27]; 23:24 [cf. 45]; 24:14 [cf. the wordplay in the Hebrew of vv 3, 7]). Yet eventually this agent
of judgment would become its victim (21:35 [30]). Surprisingly even the new Exodus from exile would confront God’s people with the possibility of judgment (20:35, 36).

If Yahweh is judge of his people, what are the charges against them? First, an offense against his divine holiness, consisting of "abominations" (20:4; 22:2; 23:36). Second, the denial of human rights, exemplified in (the shedding of) blood: 22:2–4, 9, 12, 13; 23:45; 24:6 (cf. 21:37 [32]). Cassuto (Biblical and Oriental Studies 234–35) noted this latter link. Yahweh’s judgment is described in terms of “indignation” (21:36; 22:24, 31), or “fury” that must be “satisfied” (21:22 [17]; 24:13) or in a passionate gesture (21:22 [17]; 22:13).

The second generally acknowledged part of the book is the group of judgment oracles against foreign nations in chaps. 25–32. A stylistic link with the preceding set of chapters is afforded by the hinge in 24:21 and 25:3 (Cassuto, Biblical and Oriental Studies 235): the profaned sanctuary becomes a theme of mockery, against which Yahweh would strike out on behalf of his people and of himself. A new positive note, at which 24:27 hints, is evident in the oracles against Palestinian states in chapter 25 and also in the first oracle against Tyre in 26:2–6. Indeed, the mocking exclamations of Judah’s neighbors, ִּ֣֣֝֞֟ “Aha” in 25:3 and 26:2, form an overarching framework. The three literary units made up of oracles against Tyre in chaps. 26 and 27 and in 28:1–19 each conclude with a sinister refrain, “… a victim of terror and you will be no more” (26:21; 27:36b; 28:19b). The oracles against Tyre and the final one against Egypt are characterized as ֻּ ָּ ְ ִ “lament,” which anticipates the coming destruction of these great powers (26:17; 27:2; 32; 28:12; 32:2, 16). The downfall of Tyre and Egypt would provoke universal lamentation and shock (26:15–18; 27:35–36a; 28:19a; 31:15; 32:9–10). Tyre’s sin is described as (֟ ) ֥֣ ְ ָ ָ ְ “highness of heart” or hubris in 28:2, 5, 17. The stem ֻּ ָּ ְ ִ “be high” is used of Egypt with similar intent in 31:3, 5, 10. The doom of Tyre and Egypt is grimly portrayed in terms of Sheol in 26:19–21; 28:8; 31:14, 15–18; 32:18–32. Especially in the final instance it functions as a negative foil to the positive message of life for Israel in chaps. 33–48.

The next block consists of chaps. 33–37. It may be noted that Parunak (Structural Studies 158) envisages chaps. 24–33 as a block, with the first and last chapters forming an inclusion, while Joyce (Divine Initiative 143 note 82, 144 note 87) takes 33:1–20 as a recapitulation of the themes of chaps. 1–24, and the two watchman passages in chaps. 3 and 33 as “bookends around the pre-587 ministry of Ezekiel.” Chap. 33 might be regarded as a self-contained chiastic introduction to chaps. 34–37. The radical announcement of the fall of Jerusalem forms its dynamic center. The warning of judgment at the beginning (vv 1–11, cf. ֫ ַ ָּ “judge,” v 20) is echoed by the concluding v 33. Vv 24–29 serve to apply to the exiles the moral dimension relating to undeported Judeans in vv 12–20. Yet chapter 33 is already looking ahead, even as it looks back to the prospect of judgment on the verge of the promised land declared in 20:33–38: the similarly oriented 34:17–22 picks up the motif of judgment (see 34:17, 22). Moreover, an inclusion for chaps. 33–37 is formed by the promise of life, using the stem ֻּ ָּ ְ ֳ ִ “live.” The despairing cry of 33:10, “How will we experience life?,” receives a gracious response in v 11, which is explained in the conditional offer of vv 12, 13, 15, 16, 19. The word cluster finds an echo in the Death Valley vision and oracle of chapter 37, specifically in 37:3–10, 14.

Life is repeatedly defined in terms of returning to the land (34:13a; 36:24; 37:12, 14, 21) in literary echoing of 20:32, and of receiving Yahweh’s blessing in the land (34:13b–15, 25–29; 36:8–15, 29–30, 33–38; 37:25–28). The emphasis on the land reflects the covenant triangle of Yahweh/Israel/land that pervades the Old Testament. So it is not surprising that covenant formulas or mention of the covenant

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
feature in promises of renewal at 34:30–31; 36:28b; 37:23b, 26a, 27; comparable is the use of “my people” at 36:8, 12 (cf. 20). The Davidic king or ruler is assigned a key role in Israel’s future at 34:23–24; 37:22, 24. Perhaps the most dominant note that runs through these chapters is the pastoral assurance contained in the recurring promise “Never again …” (ד וַיִּהְיֶה ). It faces up to the worries of God’s people concerning their future and assures them that God already has solutions in hand. There were worries of royal or foreign oppression (34:10, 22, 28) and of famine and failure in the land and of consequent loss of face among other nations (34:29; 36:12, 14, 15, 30). Moreover, the meeting of Yahweh’s own hitherto frustrated desires, the ideals of a united kingdom (37:22) and of pure worship and way of life (37:23), would characterize Israel’s future.

The recurring themes of chaps. 38–39 will be treated in the next section. Consideration of chaps. 40–48 will be reserved for their own introduction later in the commentary.

Apart from clusters of themes in the different literary blocks of the book, there are also headline motifs that delineate its overall structure. The dumbness of Ezekiel features in chaps. 3, 24 and 33 in an A … A/ … /A … outline. Similarly the watchman motif appears in chaps. 3 and 33 in a B … / … /B … pattern. Israel’s realization of Ezekiel’s prophetic worth (“… know that there has been a prophet among them”) characterizes 2:5 and 33:33 in a C … / … /C … structure.

The predominant feature of chaps. 20–39 and indeed of the whole book is the use of the recognition formula ההיּ יֵהוָה יִדְרֹעַ and they will know that I am Yahweh” (and variations). Joyce (Divine Initiative 91) has compiled a useful table of its occurrences, categorizing it with the nations as subject in contexts of Yahweh’s punishing them or (rarely) Israel, and with Israel as subject in contexts of Yahweh’s punishing the nations (rarely) or Israel, or of Yahweh’s delivering Israel. It demonstrates a pervasive concern for the vindication of Yahweh in the historical context of his people’s political calamity. This concern will surface again in material to be discussed in the following section.

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL: REDACTION

Oral tradition credits H. L. Ellison, to whose memory this volume is appreciatively dedicated, with a statement that certainly accords with his trenchant style: “No doctrine of inspiration is worth its salt that does not take the work of editors into account.” The student of the book of Ezekiel has to reckon with the fact that, although it bears clear witness to the oral ministry of the prophet and to his involvement with contemporary concerns, it is marked by a distinctly literary stamp. The evidence seems to suggest that Ezekiel himself cannot be excluded from the process of ordering his oracles in a literary medium. In the discerning of literary layers, in case after case there exists a closeness of perspective to the basic oracle that suggests the same inspired mind at work. Moreover, Davis has observed the significance of the oracle of 29:17–21, dated in the 27th year of exile, which is an update of messages in chaps. 26–28 dated in the first instance in the 11th year:

Within only sixteen years Ezekiel’s words had ceased to be malleable, even by himself; they had entered into … the prophetic canon. The speed with which this fixity was achieved doubtless reflects Ezekiel’s work in instituting the text as a primary vehicle of prophecy (Swallowing the Scroll 63).

Yet the evidence drives us further. Often general literary continuity is accompanied by jumps, generalizations and other discontinuities that go far beyond the specificity and immediacy of the basic oracle(s). It seems best to ascribe this hiatus to the work of other inspired hands.

cf. confer, compare
At this point three observations are appropriate. First, the guiding principle followed in this commentary has been the general one applied to the book of Micah by Hammershaimb (Some Aspects 29): “to accept the tradition for those parts of the book where no compelling reason can be urged against their authenticity.” American scholarship rightly tends to look askance at the excesses of some German redaction critics, such as Garscha. Second, the later redactional work discernible in chaps. 20–48 reflects a profound sympathy with the prophet’s own work and in no way conflicts with it. It seems to have followed closely on the heels of Ezekiel’s own ministry, and there is no clear evidence of its extension beyond the fall of Babylon. Third, of itself redaction poses no threat to the authority of the Bible. The discipline can be regarded as seeking to discern the divine means by which a book of scripture was written. Indeed, the same prophetic formulas as elsewhere in the book consistently appear in late redactional material. There is the same claim to divine authority and prophetic inspiration, and a sense of carrying on the work of Ezekiel.

It is conventional to refer to a “school” of Ezekiel or to his “disciples,” as Zimmerli (Ezekiel 1 70–71) has done. The labeling is only an endeavor to clothe the evidence of redaction with a minimum of flesh and blood. Developing a suggestion of Zimmerli’s, Clements has proposed to identify this “school” with those responsible for editing or developing the Holiness Code (H) of Lev 17–26 (Israel’s Prophetic Tradition 128–33). The suggestion takes seriously the literary links between H and the book. Certainly one must think in terms of a priestly circle of exiles to which Ezekiel himself had belonged in the previous generation.

There are two main redactional thrusts evident in the book. Interestingly, they correspond to the two main streams of contemporary biblical scholarship, historical and literary, or diachronic and synchronic. The first is an endeavor to relate the oracles of Ezekiel to a chronological framework. Dates relating to the year of deportation (597 B.C.) occur in our chapters at 20:1; 26:1; 29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1, 17; 33:21; 40:1. (There are grounds for thinking that the date in 24:1 reflects a separate redactional activity.) Alongside this diachronic approach, which in most cases ties the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel into crucial phases of Judah’s last years and may reasonably be credited to his own pen, there is a quite different, synchronic perspective. The book is a series of literary units in which characteristically clusters of oracles trail behind a basic oracle, like a flotilla of ships sailing in the wake of their flagship. Lest we polarize the two approaches overmuch, it should be noted that in the case of 29:17–20 both are at work together. However, there is generally some tension between the two approaches in that presumably the initial date applies strictly to the first oracle in the series. Again, the hand of Ezekiel himself may not be excluded from this second redactional process, as regards its earlier manifestations.

Within our chapters there is at least one example of a negative oracle being capped by an echoing positive one, in chapter 20. The phenomenon, which is similar to the one at work in Hos 2, gives the impression that here is a book produced for exiles for whom the fall of Jerusalem in 587 was already a generation ago, so that Ezekiel’s old messages of judgment have lost their historical immediacy. Sometimes a thematic topic governs the selection of oracles within a literary unit. Thus in chapter 34 the covenant motif of Yahweh’s role as shepherd to his covenant flock is worked out in two initial oracles (vv 2–16, 17–22) that appear to have different historical references; then vv 23–24 seem to have been borrowed from 37:24–25, relating to Yahweh’s messianic undershepherd. The oracle in vv 25–30 gradually moves from sheep imagery to the underlying covenant reality. The metaphorical “wild beasts” of v 7 are translated first into literal terms at v 25 and then into the “nations” at v 28. The section is shot through with close quotation of Lev 26:4–13. Finally, v 30 is a literary conclusion that ties up the unit with a clear statement of the function of the shepherd/sheep imagery as covenant metaphor. One may discern from the distance in tone between the earlier and later parts of the chapter how two of Ezekiel’s oracles have been woven into a larger editorial whole. Indeed, the intent of the exilic redactors was obviously to amplify and explain theologically the positive messages of Ezekiel for a second generation.
who now primarily needed a divine message of hope and assurance (see Clements, *Ezekiel and His Book* 292–94) and yet still needed to take seriously Ezekiel’s burden of judgment. Nor is this task performed crudely. The sensitivity of the redactors will be observed time and time again in the stylistic symmetry with which they have lovingly endowed the whole literary unit.

There is no need to anticipate here what can better be done in detail in the course of the commentary. Attention may be drawn to an overall editorial composition running at least from 36:24 to 37:28. In it 36:27 functions as a key two-part verse worthy of grounding in two of Ezekiel’s oracles: in 37:1–13 (v 14a echoes 36:27a) and in 37:15–24a (v 24b echoes 36:27b). The prophetic oracles have been woven into an explanatory framework concerning the role of Yahweh’s spirit and the means whereby Israel’s obedience to Yahweh may be secured.

At two points in the middle of the block of foreign oracles in chaps. 25–32 an opportunity is taken to highlight the positive implications of the oracles for the people of God. One is in 29:21, which has its own part to play in vv 17–21 but within its larger setting fulfills a further agenda. The other is in 28:25–26, which builds on an oracle against Sidon (vv 20–23) and its amplification (v 24) to supply a key to unlock this whole group of foreign oracles. The passage portrays in summarizing fashion Israel’s future in its own land, and lays emphasis on its security (securely twice in v 26), an emphasis shared with 34:25–30 (see vv 25, 27, 28) and ultimately derived from Lev 26:5. The passage is comparable in vocabulary and intent with a similar summary in 39:23–29. Now the reference to security (v 26) recapitulates a recurring motif in the Gog unit (38:8, 11, 14; 39:6). Whereas the former passage stressed Israel’s security in a context of threat from neighboring nations, now it is reaffirmed in relation to attack from a powerful bloc outside the land. Alongside this assurance, both passages emphasize the vindication of Yahweh as a God of holiness or transcendent power in the eyes of the nations (28:25; 39:27). In the latter case the motif again picks up a repeated emphasis of the Gog unit, in 38:16, 23; 39:7, 13, 31.

This latter emphasis serves to recapitulate a major motif in the book. In our chapters it is an issue, problematic or resolved, in 20:9, 14, 22, 41; 22:16; 36:20–23 (cf. Rendtorff, *Ezekiel and His Book* 261–65). Rendtorff, among others, has claimed that the nations function here as sharers in the salvation promised to Israel (ZAW 71 [1959] 33–43). Rather, they function as observers, with their noses pressed against the window from the outside, convinced against their will of Yahweh’s supremacy (cf. Darr, *VT* 37 [1987] 271–72; Joyce, *Divine Initiative* 95–96). To this theological theme belongs also the use of the recognition formula recapitulated in 28:26; 38:22–23, 28. The being of Yahweh, in all its specialness, would finally be revealed to both Israel and the nations. Thus both summaries want to pinpoint as significant for the whole book the value of proclaiming Israel’s positive future, as a means of providing pastoral assurance for those whose hearts failed them. At the same time, even more importantly, Yahweh’s lordship over human history is unhesitatingly affirmed.

**THE TEXT**

Divergence between biblical scholars as to the role of text criticism is a particular dimension of the general diachronic/synchronic diversity mentioned earlier. It may be seen in a nutshell in two works

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*cf. confer, compare*

*ZAW* Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

*cf. confer, compare*

*VT* Vetus Testamentum

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sponsored by the United Bible Societies. The *Good News Bible*, in its translation of Ezekiel as elsewhere, establishes an eclectic text based on both the Masoretic Text and the ancient versions, and occasionally resorts to conjectural emendation. On the other hand, the *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project* (vol. 5), edited by D. Barthélemy et al., sticks rigidly to MT and only occasionally feels it justifiable to depart from it. In the present commentary textual study has been treated as a priority, both because of the problematic nature of the text in much of chaps. 20–48 (extremely so in 32:17–32 and chaps. 40–42) and because of my own conviction that one should press rigorously back to the earliest possible form of the text. By this is meant the redacted book of Ezekiel: an endeavor should be made to draw a firm distinction between text criticism and redaction criticism in this respect, a distinction which Fohrer failed to draw in his deletion of “redactional glosses” (*ZAW* 63 [1951] 44).

In the quest for an eclectic text MT is of such importance that very strong grounds are needed to substitute other readings or, as is more often the case, to delete words or short phrases. This principle has not always been foremost in the textual study of Ezekiel. Jahn’s textual commentary is a notorious example of a perverse predilection for the LXX and a presupposition that MT was usually wrong. The principle of the harder reading will often induce the retention of MT; so will the appreciation of elements created at the level of translation or versional transmission. When MT is judged inferior to another reading, it deserves the courtesy of a convincing attempt to show how the present form of the Hebrew text may have arisen. As Greenberg has acknowledged with regard to MT in chaps. 1–20, “its soundness cannot always be maintained” (24). We may not return to a pre-critical assumption of *hebraica veritas*, such as Fairbairn advocated: “We abide, then, by the Hebrew text as the true handwriting of the prophet, the very difficulties of which are a proof of their correctness” (470, with reference to 42:15–20). Such a judgment carries inordinately far the principle of the harder reading. To this pre-critical stand the post-critical comes close, as evidenced in Childs’ ideological strictures against Zimmerli’s textual work (*Introduction* 369–70). Tov has taken a more explicitly sophisticated position in urging that one should regard the different texts of MT and LXX as reflecting two redactional stages (*ETL* 62 [1986] 89–101). Thereby the whole issue is transferred at a sweep into the sphere of redaction, so that two separate, inviolate texts are created. It is questionable, however, whether the principle of purposeful intentionality, which governs redactional work, can be extended to cover most textual variants. Very many of the differences represent the perpetuation of blunders (in both MT and LXX), both by way of the normal errors of confusion of consonants, metathesis and so on, and of the
incorporation of random marginal comments into the text, often in the wrong place. The serious student of the early text of the book will seek to penetrate behind such mistakes and obiter dicta to as pristine a form of the text as may be achieved.

As for the ancient versions, we are fortunate to have good editions, such as Ziegler’s (second edition) for the LXX, Sperber’s for the Targum and Mulder’s for the Peshitta. Textual conclusions ever need refining in the light of further study of the versions themselves. The Hebrew text critic is dangerously prone to an atomistic use of the versions that fails to appreciate first their value in their own right. Awareness of this failing must ever induce caution, though not aversion to, the responsible, if tentative, taking of textual decisions. In the study of the LXX mention may be made of the importance of the second or early third century papyrus 967, the oldest witness to the pre-hexaplaric text, which has fine-tuned our knowledge of the LXX. Its re-ordering of the later chapters, so that chapter 37 is put after chaps. 38–39, has been championed as superior to the traditional order by Lust (CBQ 43 [1981] 517–18, 529–33). However, it may rather be judged to reflect a secondary attempt to put 37:24–28 next to its literary supplementation in chaps. 40–48, a well-intentioned change that unfortunately destroys the manifest continuity of chaps. 34–37.

Exodus, Old and New (20:1–44)

Bibliography

Translation

1In the seventh year, on the tenth day of the fifth month, some of Israel’s elders came to consult Yahweh, and they sat down in front of me. 2I received a communication from Yahweh:

3a. Contra BHS et al. the double designation הִהְיָה יֵנְדָא “the Lord Yahweh” is to be retained as an original standard element in the two messenger formulas: see Appendix 1 in Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556–62, and L. J. McGregor, The Greek Text of Ezekiel (SCS 18. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985) 75–93, 195–96. b 3.b. As in 14:3, the verbal form is a niph tolerativum, for which see GKC 51c.
judgment, please, a human one? Inform them of the shocking history of their ancestors, 2 tell them: This is the message of the Lord Yahweh. At the time I chose Israel, I raised my hand in an affirmation to the descendants of Jacob’s family. I made myself known to them in Egypt and I raised my hand, affirming to them: ‘I am your God Yahweh.’ 6 Then it was that I raised my hand with a promise to them of an exodus from Egypt to a country I had searched out for them—flowing with milk and honey, it was the most beautiful country in the world. 7 I told them, ‘Throw away, every one of you, the detestable objects of worship your eyes gloat over, and stop contaminating yourselves with Egyptian idols: I am your God Yahweh.’ 8 But they defied me and refused to listen to me. They did not throw away a those detestable objects they gloated over nor did they abandon the Egyptian idols. I had a mind to drench them with my fury, to give full vent to my anger against them, while they were still in Egypt. 9 But I acted in the interests of my name, not wanting the nations they lived among to take a debased view of it, after they had witnessed my making myself known to Israel with promise of an exodus from Egypt. 10 I did bring about their exodus from Egypt, and I provided entry into the wilderness. 11 I gave them my rules, I made known to them my standards, upon whose performance human life depends. 12 I also gave to them my sabbaths, as a symbol of our relationship, wanting them to appreciate that I am Yahweh, the one who sets them apart as holy. 13 However, the community of Israel defied me in the wilderness. They did not meet my standards, and they rejected my rules upon whose performance human life depends, and they utterly desecrated my sabbaths. I had a mind to finish them off in the wilderness, drenching them with my fury. 14 But I acted in the interests of my name, not wanting a debased view of it to be taken by the nations who had witnessed their exodus I had brought about. 15 However, I did raise my hand in the wilderness, affirming to them that I would not give them entry into the country I had given them a—flowing with milk and honey, it was the most beautiful country in the world. 16 The reason was that they had rejected my rules and not met my standards, and they had desecrated my sabbaths; instead, their bent was to give allegiance to their idols. 17 Yet I turned a compassionate eye on them rather than annihilate them; I did not finish them off in the wilderness. 18 “I told their children in the wilderness: ‘Don’t take over your parents’ standards, don’t adopt their rules and don’t contaminate yourselves with their idols. I am your God Yahweh. Meet my standards, keep my rules and put them into practice. 20 Set aside my sabbaths as holy and let them serve as a symbol of our relationship. These are the ways to appreciate that I am your God Yahweh.’ 21 The children defied me, however. They did not meet my standards, they did not put into practice my rules on whose performance human life depends, and they desecrated my sabbaths. So I had a mind to drench them with my fury, to give full vent to my anger in the wilderness. 22 But I held back my hand, a acting in the interests of my name, not wanting the other nations to take a

a 4.a. The impf. in a question here seems to have the force of a polite request (cf. Wevers, Ezekiel 116).
a 8.a. MT adds wj “each, everyone” by assimilation to v 7. LXX* Syr. rightly omit; otherwise the sg suffix with “eyes” would be expected.
a 15.a. MT lacks ǂ “them” and reads awkwardly. It is one of those little words easily overlooked in copying Hebrew. A few Heb. MSS and LXX Syr. Vg attest it.
a 21.a. MT lacks the copula, probably by oversight: there is no reason for a staccato clause. Many Heb. MSS and the ancient versions represent it, in line with v 13.
dubbed view of it after witnessing their exodus I had brought about. 23 However, I did raise my hand in the wilderness, affirming to them that I would scatter them among other nations, I would disperse them in foreign countries, because they had not complied with my standards, they had rejected my rules, desecrated my sabbaths and could not keep their gloating eyes off their parents’ idols. 25 Also I gave them no—good rules, standards that did not nourish life. 26 I made their gifts a means of contaminating themselves, when they surrendered every firstborn son. I wanted to devastate them—and I wanted them to appreciate that I am Yahweh.

27 “Speak then to the community of Israel, human one, and tell them: This is the message of the Lord Yahweh. Here is another way your ancestors showed contempt for me, breaking faith with me. 28 I gave them entry into the country which I had raised my hand in affirmation that I should give them. Yet whenever they saw a high hill or a leafy tree, they chose those places to slaughter their sacrifices, make their infuriating offerings, give their fragrant oblations and pour their libations! 29 I said to them, ‘What is the high place you are resorting to?’ It has been given the name ‘high place’ ever since.

30 “So tell the community of Israel: This is the message of the Lord Yahweh. Are you contaminating yourselves the same way your ancestors did! Are you giving adulterous allegiance to their detestable objects of worship! 31 When you offer your gifts, when you surrender your children to the flames, all the while you have been contaminating yourselves for the sake of all your idols.

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a 22.a. LXX* Syr. lack this clause, which does not occur in the parallel vv 9, 14. Greenberg (368) has drawn attention to the variations in similar parts of the chapter, at vv 6b and 15b, 8b and 13b, 12b and 20b, 16b and 24b. Here the clause is a stylistic variant of v 17a. For the pf see Greenberg.

a 25.b. LXX* lacks the recognition formula, which is certainly suspect since uniquely in Ezekiel it uses the form וַיְבָא (in order that) (but outside the formula its usage in 31:14; 36:30; 46:18 is significant) and also uses בַּשָּׁם for the usual יְכַל “that.” Elsewhere a וַאֲנַחְתָּה consec construction is used or lamed with inf (20:12, 20) or once (38:16) יָכְל with inf. However, it does fit neatly into the complex chiastic jigsaw of 3–31 (see Form/Structure/Setting), corresponding to the self–identification formula of v 7b. This may well suggest that it belongs to an early stage of the redacted text. The omission in LXX* may have been due to the overlooking of a Heb. line of twenty–one letters (see my The Greek Chronicles, vol. 2 [VTSup 27, 1974] 133–37).

a 28.a. This clause is not represented in LXX*. Its negative tone differentiates it from the objective listing of the offerings and may indicate that it is a later element.

a 29.a. There appears to be wordplay between הָמַב “the high place” and יִפְלַז “resort,” which accounts for the strange use of the art with the verb. Moffatt tried to capture the paronomasia by rendering “what is the high place you hie to?” Eichrodt (261), following Rothstein, read הָמַב “with what?” for הָמַב “what is the high place?” Brownlee in a private paper attempted to justify this reading textually via Qumran orthography הָמַב הָמַב יִפְלַז .

a 30.a. Joüon 161b refers to an exclamatory nuance for Heb. questions (“What, …!”) and this appears to be the force here.

a 31.a. LXX, cited in BHS (t a *, there is an error for t o i a ), presupposes t אָשֶׁר בָּשֵׂם יִכְתְּבַן וְתַהוּ וְתַהוּ וְתַהְוַחֲשֹׁר וְתַהְוַחֲשֹׁר וְתַהוּ וְתַהוּ וְתַהוּ וְתַהוּ וְתַהוּ וְתַהוּ Wunder the influence of v 40.

b 31.b. LXX* omits this clause. It may be an interpretative addition (Zimmerli 402, et al.), but the textual confusion earlier may have caused it to be overlooked, perhaps as a Heb. fourteen–letter line.
So should I let myself be consulted by you, community of Israel? Upon my life, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh, I will not let myself be consulted by you.

32 “The thought that is in your minds will never happen, the prospect of your being like other nations, like the communities of foreign countries, worshipping wood and stone. 33 Upon my life, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh, I will use a strong hand, a brandished arm and drenching fury to demonstrate my royal rule over you. 34 I will use my strong hand, brandishing arm and drenching fury to bring about your exodus from other peoples, to gather you from the foreign countries you are scattered in. 35 I will give you entry into a nations-related wilderness. 36 Just as I passed judgment on your ancestors in the Egypt-related wilderness, so I will on you, runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh. 37 I will make you file under my crook, imposing upon you the obligation of the covenant. 38 I will purge you of the rebels, those who are disloyal to me. I will bring about their exodus from the country they reside in, but they will not obtain entry onto Israelite soil. Then you will appreciate that I am Yahweh.

39 “As for you, community of Israel, this is the message of the Lord Yahweh. Go on worshiping your idols, every one of you, but afterwards, if you do not listen to me …! You will no longer desecrate my holy name with your gifts and idols: rather, my holy mountain, Israel’s high mountain—runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh—is where all the community of Israel in its entirety

31.c. Heb. (l k) appears to mean “for (the benefit of), in honor of” on the analogy of j b z “sacrifice to,” etc (cf. BDB 515a). Greenberg’s interpretation of the phrase as having a summarizing force (371) labors under the difficulty that “idols” is not parallel to the earlier sacrificial expressions.

35.a. lit. “the wilderness of the peoples,” a typological expression corresponding to “the wilderness of Egypt” (v 36), reached after the Exodus from Egypt.

37.a. The claim that LXX ejn a x i q mw “in number” implies r p s mb (Zimmerli 403, BHS et al.) is unlikely: cf. the verb ek a r iq mew used to render the stem f s m in Num 31:5 LXX under Aram. influence (cf. Jer 33:13). Heb. f t s m appears to be an orthographical variant for t f s a m “bond (NEB), obligation”: see GKC 23f, Cooke 225, Greenberg 372–73 and Krüger, Geschichtskonzepte 268.

37.b. The omission of t yr b h “the covenant” in LXX is as likely to be due to haplography as to dittography in MT (cf. BHS et al.). NEB rightly retained MT. For the wordplay t yr b h Oyt wr b w “and I will purge” compare the stem f b w “judge” in v 36 followed by f b w “crook” in v 37 (Greenberg 373).

38.a. MT has a sg verb by a mechanical error: see BHS, GKC 145n and cf. note 3.a. to chap. 10.

39.a. The text of v 39a is not very clear: see BHS. To delete portions of the text as unexplained glosses (Fohrer 115; Zimmerli 403) is a counsel of despair. The impv verbs appear to be ironical and the conditional clause has a suppressed apodosis (cf. GKC 159dd), expressing a frighteningly vague threat (Cooke 222, 226, Greenberg 374). Mulder (VT 25 [1975] 233–37), with some support from Syr., ignoring the MT punctuation, rendered “Let every one of you go and worship his idols, but after that, if you do not want to listen to me, you shall no longer defile …” He explained the final verb as “you will no longer have opportunity to defile.” Seemingly independently Brownlee rendered in an unpublished translation “Go and serve your idols, each one of you, but later on, even though you are now unwilling to listen to me, you will never again profane …” Both renderings are slightly forced. LXX ek a r at e “destroy” may imply a rendering w b h “remove” (cf. Zech 13:2 LXX) or w b “destroy” for w d b “worship” (Zimmerli 403 et al.). However, the motif of service plays a key role in vv 32–44: cf. vv 32, 40. Moreover, the stylistic trick of repeating nouns or verbs in adjacent sentences (f b d m “wilderness,” vv 35 , 36; µ x r a Oh x r a “I will accept,” vv 40, 41) suggests that w d b corresponds to ynd b “they will worship me” in v 40.
will worship me, back in that country.\textsuperscript{a} That is where I will give them acceptance and where I will expect your contributions and your choicest gifts, along with your holy dues. \textsuperscript{41}I will accept you with your fragrant offerings,\textsuperscript{a} when I have brought about your exodus from other peoples, gathered you from the foreign countries you are scattered in and so used you to demonstrate my holiness to other nations. \textsuperscript{42}Then you will appreciate that I am Yahweh, when I give you entry onto Israelite soil, into the country I promised with raised hand to give to your ancestors. \textsuperscript{43}There you will remember what you did, all the ways you have been contaminating yourselves. You will regard yourselves with disgust after all the evil things you have been doing. \textsuperscript{44}You will appreciate that I am Yahweh when I have used my name as the criterion for my treatment of you, rather than the deserts of your evil, corrupt ways, community of Israel—so runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.”

Notes


3.b. As in 14:3, the verbal form is a niph tolerativum, for which see \textit{GKC} 51c.

4.a. The \textit{impf.} in a question here seems to have the force of a polite request (cf. Wevers, \textit{Ezekiel} 116).

8.a. \textit{MT} adds \textit{2}y\textit{ā} “each, everyone” by assimilation to v 7. \textit{LXX}* \textit{Syr.} rightly omit; otherwise the \textit{sg} suffix with “eyes” would be expected.

15.a. \textit{MT} lacks \textit{j h} “them” and reads awkwardly. It is one of those little words easily overlooked in copying Hebrew. A few Heb. MSS and LXX \textit{Syr.} \textit{Vg} attest it.

\textsuperscript{a} 40.a. Heb. \textit{Å r ̄ b} “in the land” is to be retained with \textit{BHS} rather than deleted as a gloss since \textit{LXX}* \textit{Syr.} omit (Fohrer 115, Zimmerli 403). It conveys a contextually fitting emphasis. Its apparent redundancy evidently encouraged its omission.

\textsuperscript{a} 41.a. \textit{RSV} “as a fragrant odor” (cf. Eichrodt 260) implies not an emendation \textit{j f k} (\textit{BHK}, Fohrer 115), as Wevers (121) claimed, but a comparative use of \textit{beth essentiae}, as \textit{GKC} 119i explains (cf. \textit{BDB} 89a). It is a less likely interpretation: the literal use of cult–related terms in v 40 suggests the same here. \textit{BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia}, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977) \textit{et al. et alii}, and others
\textit{impf.} imperfect
\textit{cf. confer, compare}
\textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
\textit{LXX} The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
\textit{Syr.} Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
\textit{sg} singular or under
\textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
\textit{Heb.} Hebrew
\textit{MSS} manuscript(s)
21.a. MT lacks the copula, probably by oversight: there is no reason for a staccato clause. Many Heb. MSS and the ancient versions represent it, in line with v 13.

22.a. LXX* Syr. lack this clause, which does not occur in the parallel vv 9, 14. Greenberg (368) has drawn attention to the variations in similar parts of the chapter, at vv 6b and 15b, 8b and 13b, 12b and 20b, 16b and 24b. Here the clause is a stylistic variant of v 17a. For the pf see Greenberg.


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**Abbreviations**

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
pf perfect
pl. plate or plural
subj subject/subjective
*JBL* *Journal of Biblical Literature*
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
inf infinitive
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
vol. volume
*VTSup* Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
30.a. Joüon 161b refers to an exclamatory nuance for Heb. questions (“What, …!”) and this appears to be the force here.

31.a. LXX, cited in BHS (τὰ ἕκαστα there is an error for τοιά), presupposes τὰ ἐμὴν μυστήριον τῶν μετὰ τοῦ θυσίας χρημάτων “and with choicest gifts, with contributions,” seemingly double variants for τὰ μάλιστα "under the influence of v 40.

31.b. LXX* omits this clause. It may be an interpretative addition (Zimmerli 402, et al.), but the textual confusion earlier may have caused it to be overlooked, perhaps as a Heb. fourteen-letter line.

31.c. Heb. (ל כ)ל appears to mean “for (the benefit of), in honor of” on the analogy of יָבִישׁ “sacrifice to,” etc (cf. BDB 515a). Greenberg’s interpretation of the phrase as having a summarizing force (371) labors under the difficulty that “idols” is not parallel to the earlier sacrificial expressions.

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38.a. MT has a sg verb by a mechanical error: see BHS, GKC 145n and cf. note 3.a.a to chap. 10.

39.a. The text of v 39a is not very clear: see BHS. To delete portions of the text as unexplained glosses (Fohrer 115; Zimmerli 403) is a counsel of despair. The impv verbs appear to be ironical and the conditional clause has a suppressed apodosis (cf. GKC 159dd), expressing a frighteningly vague threat (Cooke 222, 226, Greenberg 374). Mulder (VT 25 [1975] 233–37), with some support from Syr., ignoring the MT punctuation, rendered “Let every one of you go and worship his idols, but after that, if you do not want to listen to me, you shall no longer defile …” He explained the final verb as “you will no longer have opportunity to defile.” Seemingly independently Brownlee rendered in an unpublished translation “Go and serve your idols, each one of you, but later on, even though you are now unwilling to listen to me, you will never again profane …” Both renderings are slightly forced. LXX ἐκαρατέ “destroy” may imply a rendering ὥρβ “remove” (cf. Zech 13:2 LXX) or ά “destroy” for ὡδ β “worship” (Zimmerli 403 et al.). However, the motif of service plays a key role in vv 32–44: cf. vv 32, 40. Moreover, the stylistic trick of repeating nouns or verbs in adjacent sentences (/if bd “wilderness,” vv 35, 36; µχρα ὁχρα “I will accept,” vv 40, 41) suggests that ὡδ β corresponds to ὑνδ β “they will
worship me” in v 40.

40.a. Heb. Årab “in the land” is to be retained with BHS rather than deleted as a gloss since LXX* Syr. omit (Fohrer 115, Zimmerli 403). It conveys a contextually fitting emphasis. Its apparent redundancy evidently encouraged its omission.

41.a. RSV “as a fragrant odor” (cf. Eichrodt 260) implies not an emendation [ ] YFL (BHK, Fohrer 115), as Westers (121) claimed, but a comparative use of beth essentiae, as GKC 119i explains (cf. BDB 89a). It is a less likely interpretation: the literal use of cult–related terms in v 40 suggests the same here.

Form/Structure/Setting

Structurally and form–critically this chapter falls into two distinct parts, vv 1–31 and 32–44. In literary terms at least the second part functions as the continuation of the first, so that the chapter comprises a single redactional unit. Initially, however, the parts have to be considered separately before they can be reunited meaningfully.

Vv 2–31 represent the prophet’s sermon–like transmission of a divine refusal to provide an oracle in response to the elders’ request in v 1. This vehement “no,” broached in v 3 and clinched in v 31b, employs a variation of a standard oracle of judgment, as v 4a shows. The refusal constitutes the judgment, and a reason for it in terms of accusation is furnished in vv 30, 31a (cf. Lust, ETL [1967] 502, 508–9). This reprimand is the climax of a long historical preamble in vv 5–29, which is described in v 4b as “the shocking history of their ancestors.” That negative historical survey leads up to the precise accusation of vv 30, 31a. In form and also in spirit this pattern is close to Ps 81:6b–17 (5b–16), a cultic oracle which seems to have belonged to a liturgical service of covenant reaffirmation involving citation of the covenant stipulations. Ps 95:7b–11 is similar (cf. “my ways,” Pss 81:14 [13]; 95:10). Both psalm passages, which are not necessarily post-exilic (cf. A. R. Johnson, The Cultic Prophet and Israel’s Psalmody [Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979] esp. 19; by contrast J. Jeremias, Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung in der späten Königszeit Israels [WMANT 35, Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener

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Heb. Hebrew

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)

RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)

cf. confer, compare


cf. confer, compare


cf. confer, compare

ETL Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

esp. especially
Verlag, 1970] 125–27, attributes both psalms to post-exilic Levites), combine contemporary challenge with historical examples of Israel’s infidelity in the wilderness period, with the message “Stop being like your ancestors.” Here the questions of v 30 convey a similar sense of negative challenge as well as accusation. This type of cultic oracle appears to have been a development of the covenant formulation, which has the twofold pattern of a recital of Yahweh’s activity on his people’s behalf and a positive call to obey God (Exod 19:3–6; Josh 24:2–24; 1 Sam 12:1–15; cf. J. Muilenburg, “The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations,” VT 9 [1959] 347–65). A related development is an element in the so-called covenant lawsuit which recalls both Yahweh’s benefits in past history and Israel’s ingratitude (esp. Deut 32:7–18; Jer 2:5–8; cf. J. Harvey, “Le ‘rîb-pattern,’ réquisitoire prophétique sur la rupture de l’alliance,” Bib 43 [1962] 172–96, esp. 178). Those covenant-oriented forms are strikingly akin to this oracle, which has its own covenant emphases, for instance on the covenant stipulations. The form-critical explanation given by Zimmerli (Ezekiel 1 405), in terms of a negative antithesis to credo-like summaries of Yahweh’s benefits, is unnecessarily vague and betrays his dependence on von Rad’s credo hypothesis (cf. Lust, ETL 43 [1967] 514).

The main structuring of vv 1–31 consists of a framework of five roughly parallel units, vv 5–9, 10–14, 15–17, 18–22 and 23–26, which are prefaced with vv 1–4 and to which vv 27–29 and 30–31 are appended. Bettenzoli (Geist der Heiligkeit 196–97, 203) has correctly analyzed the text in terms of these five units; he characterizes each as beginning with a movement of history, and the first two and the fourth as concluding with a refrain (vv 8–9, 13–14, 21–22). J. Bligh (Galatians 372) espied a chiastic scheme in vv 1–16, while E. Galbiati (La struttura litteraria dell’Esodo 57) claimed such a structure for vv 6–24. Their evidence is adequately explained by the repetitions in the parallel units, of which they were seemingly unaware. The constituent elements of the units in the framework are (a) a divine oath (vv 5–6, 15, 23), divine revelation (vv 5, 11) and the formula of self-introduction, “I am Yahweh” (vv 5, 19), and the same clause as a concluding formula (vv 7, 12, 20, 26); (b) human sin in terms of rebellion against Yahweh (vv 7–8a, 13a, 16, 21a, 24); (c) Yahweh’s resolve to punish (vv 8b, 13b, 21b); and (d) his relenting (vv 9, 14, 17, 22), in three cases “in the interests of my name” (vv 9, 14, 22).

The symmetry of the five units is by no means exact, doubtless in illustration of the “symmetriphobia” of Hebrew literature, to use the term coined by G. A. Smith. For instance, the divine oath is positive in v 5, but negative in vv 15 and 23—and replaced by a divine appeal in vv 18–20. This variation is logical and true to Yahweh’s nature: mercy and judgment were tussling in the heart of God. His relenting for his name’s sake (יָמַשׁ בְּשֵׂא יִהְיָה , vv 9, 14, 22) is ultimately capped by a statement of divine purpose, “I wanted to devastate them” (יִמָּשׁ בְּשֵׂא יִהְיָה , v 26), with a striking wordplay which enhances the eventual turning from repeated demonstrations of mercy to final punishment. Lust (ETL 43 [1967] 496–502), after a useful discussion of the evidence, has analyzed vv 5–26 in terms of three rigorously symmetrical sections, (a) vv 5, 7–9a, (b) vv 6, 10–14, (c) vv 15, 16, 18–21, 22ab–b, and also a final partial section, vv 23–26. He pays a price for consistent parallelism, which some may consider too heavy: he has to
transpose v 6 and delete as glosses v 17 and also material in vv 9 and 22.

Generally historical periodization, with a glance toward repeated terminology, is made the basis of dividing the text into three sections, vv 5–9, 10–17, 18–26 (e.g., Wevers 115; Zimmerli 407; cf. J. Krasovec, Antithetic Structure in Biblical Hebrew Poetry [VTSup 35, Leiden: Brill, 1984] 103–4, who finds an antithetic core in the first section, which is differently expanded in the second and third) or into four sections, vv 5–9, 10–14, 15–22, 23–26 (e.g., Cooke 213; cf. Fohrer 107). Close to the latter is Parunak’s scheme of four sections, vv 5–9, 10–14, 15–22 and 23–44 (Structural Studies 291–300), who finds three motifs, revelation, rebellion and wrath/reputation represented in the first three sections and expanded in the last (vv 5–7 + 8a + 8b–9, 10–12 + 13a + 13b–14, 15–20 + 21a + 21b–22, 23–26 + 29–32 + 33–44). The two main schemes reflect uncertainty over whether a break occurs after v 14 or after v 18, which a fivefold division resolves.

There is historical development between the five parts. Vv 5–9 begin the story in Egypt, and vv 10–17 move on to the first wilderness generation in a sequence of two parts, vv 10–14 and 15–17, while vv 18–26 progress to the second wilderness generation, again in two parts, vv 18–22 and 23–26. This structuring in an A/B1/B2/C1/C2 pattern cries out for a climax D. It is to be found in vv 30–31; it establishes a movement from Israel past in Egypt and the wilderness to Israel present in the land. The climax smoothly echoes the terminology of v 26 and concludes well by accusing the present generation of their ancestors’ crimes. Subsequently but early in the history of the text (see below), vv 27–29 seem to have been inserted. They fill the historical gap of Israel’s ancient experience in the land, but make no pretense to follow the parallelism of the five earlier units.

The whole passage, vv 3–31, with the notable incorporation of vv 27–29 into the framework material, has been woven into a chiasmus. The phenomenon of dual structuring in some of the Psalms, such as Pss 73 (see my article “Ps 73: An Analysis,” TynBul 33 [1982] 93–107), 111, 137 and 140 (see my Psalms 101–150 [WBC 21] 91, 241, 267) makes it not implausible here. The chiasmus develops the obvious inclusion in vv 3 and 31 and much of the parallelism of the separate units into a remarkable symphony of terms and motifs: A/A’, vv 3, 31; B/B’, vv 4, 30; C/C’, vv 6, 28; D/D’, vv 7a, 27b (vocabulary from the same semantic field); E/E’, vv 7b–8a, 26–27a; F/F’, vv 8b–11, 21b–25; G/G’, vv 12–13, 20–21; H/H’, vv 16, 18ab–b; I/I’, vv 17b, 18aa. The two halves of the chiastic composition are vv 3–17 and 18–31. With the incorporation of vv 3, 4 and 27–29 the overall development has been altered slightly. There is a movement from the present generation back to Egypt and the first wilderness generation (vv 3–17) and onwards to the second wilderness generation and Israel’s past experience in the land and finally to Israel’s present behavior there (vv 18–31). The hinge is the double phrase f ū d mb “in the wilderness” (vv 17, 18). A detailed study of this chiastic structure would reveal that a number of motifs are pushed to the fore. Most significant perhaps is the matching of God’s life-affirming gift of his covenant terms and another, fatal, set at the end of F/F’, vv 11, 25. Israel’s shrugging off Yahweh’s sovereign claims in favor of pagan religion is also highlighted (H/H’, vv 16, 18). So too is their slighting of the distinctive role of the sabbath in the course of G/G’ (vv 12, 20). Another impressive pair of correspondents is the ignored appeal from God to “stop contaminating yourselves” and his providential punishment whereby his unwanted gifts became “a means of contaminating themselves”

e.g. exempli gratia, for example

cf. confer, compare
VTSup Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)
e.g. exempli gratia, for example

cf. confer, compare
TynBul Tyndale Bulletin
WBC Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word)
(E/E’, vv 7, 26).

The chronological setting of vv 1–31 is given in v 1 as 591 B.C. The dating in terms of King Jehoiachin’s period of exile (cf. the explicit 1:2 and also 8:1) suggests that Babylon is the geographical setting rather than Palestine pace Brownlee (Ezekiel 1–19 127). The only obstacle to this locale is the mention of child sacrifice in v 31, which Cooke (220), Zimmerli (402, 412) et al., doubtless partly for this reason, removed as a gloss. Heider (The Cult of Molek 272–74) has reminded us that, unlike Jer 24, Ezekiel did not sharply distinguish between the exiles of 597 B.C. and the Judeans left in the land: “rather, Ezekiel’s attention constantly alternates between Palestine and Mesopotamia, and ‘house of Israel’ includes the Israelites in both places.” Thus mention of cultic aberrations in Jerusalem can be envisaged, even as the prophet addressed members of the covenant community who lived hundreds of miles away from there.

And what of vv 32–44? Their form is generally recognized as that of a disputation speech. The form is used here as the vehicle of a proclamation of salvation, a not infrequent combination of forms (cf. C. Westermann, Isaiah 40–46 [ET Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969] 14). Here, however, the positive message of the proclamation is interwoven with an announcement of (partial) judgment (vv 33–38). Comparable is Mic 4:9, 10, although there the balance is tilted more toward the negative (cf. my The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah [NICOT]. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976] 332–34). Graffy (A Prophet Confronts, 65–72) has analyzed the passage in detail. The disputation speech contains (a) an introduction in v 32a, (b) a quotation of the people in v 32b, (c) a “programmatic refutation” or brief rebuttal (cf. 18:3, 4; 33:11; Isa 49:15; Hag 1:4) in v 33, which contains an oath formula (cf. 18:3, 4; 13:3, 11), and (d) a main refutation in three parts, vv 34–38, 39–42 and 43–44 (cf. Zimmerli 414). This analysis needs to be refined in the light of Murray’s study (JSOT 38 [1987] 95–121), as introduction, thesis, dispute and counterthesis. Graffy has seen in his three parts of vv 34–44 a counterbalance to the three stages of Israel’s history portrayed in vv 1–33 (vv 5–9, 10–17, 18–26); he compares the three stages of the disputation speech in 18:1–20. However, rhetorical analysis of the passage supports the medial break after v 38 envisaged by D. Baltzer (Ezechiel und Deuterojesaja 2). Yet Baltzer’s division into two parts, vv 33–38 and 39–44, on grounds of form and conduct, requires refinement. Vv 32, 33 function as an introduction and vv 43, 44 as a conclusion, while the main part, vv 34–42, splits into vv 34–38 and 39–42. Evidence for this structuring is as follows. There is a prominent inclusion in vv 34 and 41, featuring ten Hebrew words (cf. Parunak, Structural Studies 798–99). The climactic recognition formula used in vv 38 and 42 is employed in contexts of non–entry and entry into the land respectively, whereas the one in v 44 has a different rationale in view. Each of the four parts, vv 32–33, 34–38, 39–42 and 43–44, contains an instance of the appended messenger formula, at vv 33, 36, 40 and 44. Each half of the main portion contains a reference to µk y tô vð a “your ancestors” (vv 36, 42).

The situation is obviously exilic in view of the content of the oracle. The rank despair of the quotation, however, appears not to presuppose a 591 B.C. dating, like the first oracle (v 1), but to
envisage the total collapse of Judah rather than the first deportation of 597 B.C. Accordingly it must have originated after 587 B.C. (Fohrer 114; Zimmerli 414; Wevers 119). Zimmerli, who finds no good grounds to deny the oracle to Ezekiel, has drawn attention to the allusions to a new temple in vv 40, 41 as a harbinger of material in chaps. 40–48, which are dated 573 B.C. (40:1).

The separate oracles in vv 1–31 and 32–44 comprise a redactional unit. The second message has a host of verbal echoes of the first: the oath formula rendered “upon my life” (vv 3, 31, 33), God’s raising of his hand (vv 5, 6, 15, 23, 28, 42), “idols” (vv 7, 8, 16, 18, 31, 39), “gifts” (vv 31, 39), the references to God’s drenching fury (vv 8, 13, 21, 33, 34), the climactic second plural references to self–contamination (vv 31, 43) and the motif of the divine name as a positive motivation (vv 9, 14, 22, 44). Moreover, vv 33–35 and 42 develop the earlier use of Exod 6:6–8 (Fishbane, Text and Texture 132).

Thus the second oracle has an impressive rapport with motifs used in the framework and conclusion of the first one. Graffy (A Prophet Confronts 65), noting the lack of a full introduction to the disputation speech, in contrast to 12:26, 27 and 18:1, 2, feasibly explains it as evidence that the oracle was intended to be regarded as closely related to what precedes. The brevity of the introduction and the linking with the conjunction WAW (cf. Isa 49:14) may suggest that Ezekiel himself meant it as a sequel to the earlier oracle (cf. Zimmerli, Prophecy 187). The new conclusion tempered the previous refusal with a fresh message that blended negative with positive elements. Brownlee (243–44) suggested a similar development in the case of the negative 16:2–43 and the positive 16:44–63 (cf. Baltzer, Ezechiel und Deuterojesaja 11 n. 50).

Comment

In vv 1–31 a consultation with the prophet to ascertain the divine will meets with a negative response. His refusal is grounded in an accusation of wrongdoing which in turn is backed by a review of Israel’s early history. History was repeating itself, it is implied, and spores of doom sown long ago were now spawning their terrible harvest.

1 The date is given as August 591 B.C., August 14th, according to R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein’s reconstruction (Babylonian Chronology, 626 B.C.-A.D. 75 [Providence: Brown University Press, 1956] 28). The “seventh year” is that of Jehoiachin’s exile, which took place in Nebuchadnezzar’s seventh year, in our reckoning in 597 B.C. The previous dating in the book was in 8:1, referring to 592 B.C. Time was passing between the first Judean deportation in 597 B.C. and the second in 587 B.C. It was punctuated by a desire of the first group of exiles to ascertain Yahweh’s will for them, in anxious hope of restoration. There have been endeavors to relate the dating to happenings in Palestine. Malamat (Congress Volume 138–39) has drawn attention to the prediction of Hananiah in August 593 B.C. that the exile would last only two years longer (Jer 28:1–4). He inferred that the elders hoped for Ezekiel’s confirmation that return to the land was imminent. Nothing in the text, however, supports this hypothesis (B. Lang, Ezechiel: der Prophet und das Buch [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft, 1981] 35). Freedy and Redford (JAOS 90 [1970] 480) have found in the mention of Egypt (vv 5–10) an oblique reference to Judean expectations that Egypt would support rebellion against Babylon after the recent festal visit Psammetichus II had paid to Syria and Palestine in 591 B.C. However, the reign of the Pharaoh is to be dated 595–589 (Malamat, Congress Volume 141; cf. K. A. Kitchen, The Third

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Intermediate Period in Egypt [Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1973] 406–7), so that the fourth year in which the visit occurred was 592, and thus less relevant. All that we can infer is that the exiled leaders looked for good news about return to the land, which Ezekiel was unable to transmit to them. The supposition that the exiles were enquiring about instituting a sacrificial system of worship (Fohrer 108; cf. v 32) runs into the obstacle that v 32 begins a separate unit.

3 The characteristic address of the prophet as “human one” draws attention to his creaturely role and so by contrast to the transcendent nature of Yahweh as arbiter of his people’s destiny (cf. Zimmerli 131). The habitual use of the title “Lord” in the two adjacent messenger formulas underlines this concept. The divine oath sworn “upon my life” stresses that the request ran counter to Yahweh’s very being and will.

4 The indictment in contemporary terms is to appear in vv 30, 31. The intervening historical review plays an important part in establishing that present sins were symptomatic of radical willfulness and the climax of a trend that made the exile inevitable.

5, 6 Only here does Ezekiel use the deuteronomic concept of election (cf. Deut 7:7; 14:2). It is the first of a series of indications of Yahweh’s concern for his people, a concern that was to be sorely tried by rebellion. From priestly tradition concerning Israel’s experience in Egypt the prophet borrows the motifs of God’s self-disclosure by name and of his sworn promise of the land (cf. Exod 6:3, 6–8). The reference to the physical gesture generally associated with swearing an oath, current still in modern courts of law, enhances an impression of divine commitment to his people’s welfare. In v 5, however, raising the hand relates not simply to an oath but to the making of a covenant (cf. Falk, *JSS* 4 [1959] 268–69; Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 73). Yahweh’s promise of salvation lay at the basis of his relationship with Israel; it was reinforced by promise of subsequent blessing. The lovegift of the land was the result of Yahweh’s careful searching: only the best was good enough for his people. The reference to searching takes up a term used in Num 13–14 of the spies’ reconnoitering the land, and strikingly reapplies it to Yahweh. The description of the land as “flowing with milk and honey” is a fixed phrase that belongs to general tradition. The term יָבָאי “beautiful” may reflect Jeremiah’s usage (cf. Jer 3:19). Ezekiel has ransacked earlier vocabulary to express the significance of the land and so the lengths to which Yahweh’s care had gone.

7 Divine–human commitment (“your God,” v 5) called for the breaking of other religious ties. Yahweh’s claim on his people was an exclusive one. This summons is formulated in the priestly style of the Holiness Code (cf. Lev 18:2–5; 19:3, 4), which affirms that relationship with Yahweh creates for Israel an intrinsic lifestyle. The remaining vocabulary is firmly characteristic of Ezekiel. The pentateuchal narratives know nothing of idolatry in Egypt nor of an injunction against it at that period, but in Josh 24:14 Israel in Canaan is urged to “put away the gods your parents served in Egypt” (cf. the tradition of Israelite sin in Egypt at Ps 106:7). Here Ezekiel might be fusing this challenge with its own reference to worship of Egyptian gods, and backdating it.
Israel’s defiance (מְרַכֵּבָה) echoes the label Ezekiel consistently used of the contemporary people, "rebellious community" (2:5–7, etc.). It is also a term that belongs to the tradition of murmuring in the wilderness (Coats, *Rebellion* 78, 234). No wonder then that he saw lurking behind this recent tendency long shadows stretching back to Israel’s earliest history (cf. 23:3). The sequence of Israel’s rebellion and Yahweh’s wrathful resolve and subsequent relenting establishes a pattern which is to be echoed in vv 13, 14 and 21, 22 as a litany of longsuffering grace. The constraint of Yahweh’s “name” echoes a sentiment whose original habitat was probably cultic (e.g., Ps 79:9; cf. Jer 14:7, 21; cf. J. W. Miller, *Das Verhältnis Jeremias und Hesekiels sprachlich und theologisch untersucht* [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1955] 109). Yahweh’s commitment to Israel could not be broken without a slur being cast on his reputation. Sensitive to the prospect of misrepresentation, Yahweh continued the relationship, remaining constant to his self-revelation and promises. He persisted in his commitment to those who had disowned their own commitment (vv 5, 7). In this oracle Ezekiel uses the notion of profaning Yahweh’s name to describe not disobedience of his express will (cf. v 39; Lev 18:21, etc), but the lowering of his prestige outside Israel so as “to retard the process by which he achieves recognition, to put off the day on which it shall be known that he is God” (Blank, *HUCA* 25 [1954] 8).

The pattern is repeated beyond Egypt’s frontiers. Ezekiel now follows traditional strands of the pentateuchal narratives in his depiction of the Exodus and of lawgiving and lawbreaking in the wilderness. In this context, however, the grace demonstrated in the Exodus is enhanced as an amazing response to human sinfulness rather than being due simply to divine initiative (Exod 20:2). Now for the second time the message is sounded that God’s patronage creates a specific call for allegiance. The statement that “human life depends on” performing Yahweh’s covenant stipulations agrees strikingly with the Holiness Code (Lev 18:5). Each stipulation was “a commandment that promised life,” as Paul was to confirm (Rom 7:10; cf. Ezek 33:15). Compliance with God’s moral and religious terms meant “life and good fortune,” while contravention spelled “death and disaster” (Deut 30:15). A blessed life flowed from “loving Yahweh your God, obeying him and cleaving to him” (Deut 30:20)—so far from legalism was the connotation of the laws of Sinai. They too were God’s gift, along with the land. Singled out for special mention is the sabbath ruling because of its function as a distinctive badge of the covenant (cf. Exod 31:13–17), which it has been for Judaism down the centuries. To observe the sabbath meant to stand apart from those who did not confess Israel’s faith—and to stand with God and his declared will. It was intended to express the truth that on “every sabbath day the Israelite renounces his autonomy” as master of time “and affirms God’s domain over his life” by abstaining from work and his own concerns (Tsevat, *Meaning* 48). Again Israel said no to God’s covenant terms (cf. Exod 16:23–29; Num 15:32–36; Ps 81:12 [11]). And again Yahweh overruled the fatal reprisal they deserved, for his name’s sake.

In an interim conclusion the narrative takes a sinister turn, all the more striking because it roughly follows the earlier pattern of vv 6–9, a divine oath about the promised land, human rejection and divine relenting. The first wilderness generation survived—but only to live out their lifespan within the...
confines of the wilderness (cf. Num 14:30–35; Ps 95:11). For them the promise of v 6 turned into a tantalizing mirage. It was a consequence of their rebelling against God, not only by breaking his rulings, including the crucial sabbath law, but also by reverting to paganism and so denying him the exclusive worship he claimed. The incident of the golden calf seems to be in view (cf. Exod 32:31). After this second provocation his mercy takes the form not of impunity but of mitigation of punishment in that they had a longer lease on life and their children were to inherit what they had forfeited.

18–22 The narrative begins a further installment, the story of the second wilderness generation. It is, however, a depressing rerun of the earlier phases, especially of that of vv 11–14. It echoes the exhortation of v 7, but makes positive additions to the negative injunctions. In both respects the expressions are remarkably similar to Lev 18:2–5, 24. There may be a reference to the tradition of Deuteronomy as a reaffirmation of the law of Sinai. Yahweh’s terms are contrasted with an alternative program adopted by the first generation, a do–it–themselves approach to human existence. Failure though it had been, it proved a case of “like fathers, like sons.” They too turned their backs on God’s blessing of fulfilled lives. He stayed his “hand” from instant punishment, guarding against the misrepresentation that he had failed to fulfill his obligations.

23–26 Matching vv 15–16, a suspended sentence is passed on the rebellious children, as on their parents. Zimmerli (407) has noted the gradation of punishment: lacking in v 9, it appears in a single form in v 15 and now doubly in vv 23–25. The unspoken implication of v 23 is that Israel would have their possession of the land curtailed. Probably Ezekiel was leaning on the tradition preserved in Exod 32:34, where permission to enter the land is followed by the sinister, non–specific statement “But on the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin” (Fohrer 112; Zimmerli 411). Evidently Ezekiel interpreted the ominous pronouncement in terms of fresh idolatry and related it to a particular future fate with the aid of two comparatively late texts, conditional covenant curses represented in Lev 26:33a (חרזא “I will disperse,” cf. תיו וзы “to disperse”) and Deut 28:64a (עִזְּבָה “and he will scatter you,” cf. והַיָּשָׁה “to scatter”). The post–exilic Ps 106:27 echoed Ezekiel’s interpretation in terms of God’s justice chasing Israel down the corridors of time until it overtook Judah in 597 and 587 B.C. (and earlier the Northern Kingdom in 721 B.C.). The divine landlord gave only a limited lease to his tenants’ families. It marked a final reversal of the promise of v 6, after an adumbration in v 15. There is a predestinarian note here which reflects the concept of vertical solidarity woven into the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:5, 6).

The people’s fate is sealed by a new and harmful gift, which in the concentric structuring of vv 1–31 and also in the development of thought is the counterpart of the good gift of v 11. Ezekiel seems to have put back the reference from Canaan to the wilderness in line with his theme of Israel’s early rebellion (Heider, The Cult of Molek 373 note 740). A new set of legislation forced them into a track that was to culminate in death, after their refusal of Yahweh’s life-affirming terms. Elsewhere in the Old Testament תְּוָקָה and יִפְטָה “rulings” are used interchangeably, and יִפְטָה is used of divine rulings in Ezek 11:12; 36:27. However, a careful reading of the present oracle discloses that while elsewhere in it תְּוָקָה is used alongside יִפְטָה “standards” with first singular suffixes relating to Yahweh, here not only is יִפְטָה used but both terms lack such a suffix. It seems to be significant too that יִפְטָה has been used in v 18 concerning self–made rulings that Israel had substituted for Yahweh’s and persisted in observing (van Hoonacker, Le Muséon 12 [1893] 150–54; Lust, ETL 43 [1967] 511; cf. Zimmerli 411). Here was a

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

ETL Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses
comparable set of rulings independent of Yahweh’s positive will and yet enclosed within the purview of his punitive will. Not of God, they were given by God! Theologically the divine policy is akin to the role of prophecy in Isa 6:9–10, where the prophetic word is given to seal the people’s fate by giving them an opportunity to add to their sin by rejecting that word. Judgment had already been passed and the gateway to life was locked by his providential judgment. The covenant goal of recognition of Yahweh, unattained by positive means (vv 5, 7, 12, 19, 20), had finally to be attained by a life–denying encounter with his judgment.

But what does v 25 mean in historical terms? Part of the vocabulary of v 26, µjr rfp lk (lit. “every opening of the womb”) and r yb[h (lit. “make over”), echoes the law of the redemption of the firstborn particularly as represented in Exod 13:12, 13. It ruled that, whereas firstborn male sacrificial animals were to be sacrificed, firstborn sons were to be redeemed with money paid to the sanctuary. The combination of the motifs of giving and making over (v 26, cf. v 31) reminds the alert reader of 16:20, 21 (cf. Lev 18:21), where they were used in a description of child sacrifice. There seems, then, to be a double entendre in that the verb r yb[h suggests the fuller phrase דב גח “make over by fire” or “surrender to the flames,” which actually occurs in v 31. It is a formula for a pagan rite widely practiced in seventh–century Judah (cf. 2 Kgs 21:6; 23:10; Heider, The Cult of Molek, passim; J. W. McKay, Religion in Judah Under the Assyrians [SBT 2:26, Naperville: A. R. Allenson, 1973] 40–41).

Accordingly v 25 seems to represent Ezekiel’s retort to popular claims that in the law of the firstborn Yahweh had authorized the child sacrifice offered in the syncretistic cult: “In a baroque twist worthy of the prophet Ezekiel turns the theological tables on the practitioners: very well, Yahweh did give the law they were citing, but it was given so that obedience would not bring life but would ‘devastate’ them” (Heider, The Cult of Molek 372).

, 27, 28 This oracle, along with v 29, breaks the pattern of the preceding units and so shows itself to be a supplement to their carefully constructed framework. The use of " then, therefore” is strange. It fits rather the development of vv 30, 31 where it occurs at the outset (“so”). Perhaps the introductory v 27a originally prefaced the message of vv 30ab–31 and, after the insertion of vv 27b–28 or 29, was loosely repeated in v 30a. Repetitive resumption of this type is well attested in post–exilic prose (see S. Talmon, IDBSup 322; H. G. M. Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles [NCBC, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1982] 122–23, 179, 248, 272). This supplementary oracle, which has been woven into the chiastic jigsaw of vv 3–31, takes further the negative history of Israel. It accuses the people of the deuteronomistic charge of adopting Canaanite fertility sanctuaries. This infidelity was a shocking return for the faithfulness of God in giving the land.

29 This verse appears to be a prophetic fragment, slipped in because of the implicit references to high places in vv 27, 28. It uses the culturally popular device of wordplay in a propagandist attack on unorthodox religion.

30, 31 Here is the climax of the overall message, which originally continued v 26 and in fact echoes its vocabulary. The present generation were no better than their forebears. They had been traveling the

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cf. confer, compare

SBT Studies in Biblical Theology (London/Naperville, IL: SCM/Allenson)

IDBSup Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume, ed. K. Crim (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976)

NCBC New Century Bible Commentary
same downward path away from Yahweh’s revealed will. Repentance and efforts toward a better lifestyle were conspicuously absent. Accordingly Yahweh’s refusal to give a favorable word in response to consultation (vv 1–3) was justified. They had forfeited any claim they might have had to the land.

There is a radical difference between the divine treatment of Israel in 20:1–31 and in chap. 18. Each generation’s responsibility and repentance, prized there, are ignored in vv 9, 10, where deliverance comes despite human sinning, and in vv 23–26, where the punishment of the sins of the second generation is deferred to their descendants (cf. M. Fishbane, *Int* 38 [1984] 141–43, who speaks of “intense contradictions” between the two chapters). The differences are eased by the observation that Ezekiel thought in terms of two eras in Yahweh’s dealings with his people: an old era dogged by a deuteronomistic type of theology featuring the eventual wearing down of divine grace by human disobedience and a burden of human liability carried over from the past, and a new era of grace renewed and bondage to the past removed (cf. T. M. Raitt, *A Theology of Exile* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977] 212–22). Ezek 18 had already pushed ahead to a vision of the new age, but 20:1–31 honor the overall pre-587 B.C. framework of chaps. 1–24 in preaching the bad news of God’s past and present dealings with his people. Vv 32–44, like chap. 18, are to be a further indication that Ezekiel was eventually given another, relatively positive, word to transmit.

32, 33 Form–critically v 32 belongs to the disputation speech as introduction and thesis. Accordingly it does not align with vv 1–31, as Fohrer (107–8, 131) and Wevers (119) urged. Does willful challenge or hopeless despair underlie the mention of idolatry? Heb. יָ֣הָנָ֑נָן could literally be rendered either as a defiant “We will be, let us be” (*RSV*; cf. 1 Sam 8:19, 20) or as a despairing “we shall be” (cf. 33:10; 37:11). In favor of the former possibility is the emphasis on judgment in vv 33–38 and the virtual accusation of v 39. The alternative view is suggested by the overall leaning of vv 33–44 toward promise: even the announcement of punishment relates only to a partial judgment. Elements of both facets appear to be present (Zimmerli, “Le nouvel ‘exode’ ” 217) insofar as the exiles’ resignation to their fate had already made them embrace idolatry (v 39). The ridicule with which idolatry is described, “worshipping wood and stone,” reflects the prophetic tendency to recast popular attitudes in interpretative terms (cf. H. W. Wolff, “Das Zitat im Prophetenspruch,” *Gesammelte Studien zum AT* [ThB 22, München: Chr Kaiser Verlag, 1964] esp. 72–84). One may not take it at face value, as Y. Kaufmann attempted to do (*The Religion of Israel* [ET Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960] 441).

Historically the total catastrophe of 587 B.C. prompted the despair; in literary terms there is a looking back to the certainty of exile pronounced in v 23, with which v 32 has language in common. Both the exiles and Ezekiel assumed that territorial residence and religion went hand in hand and that Yahwistic religion required return to Jerusalem, if assimilation to a pagan faith was not to ensue. In vehement protest Yahweh lays claim to his people’s allegiance (cf. Exod 12:12; Num 33:4). The motif of kingship,
which occurs only here in the book and seems to echo Exod 15:18 (cf. too 1 Sam 8:5, 7, 8), is a retort to 
popular resignation to the worship or service of other gods. Yahweh’s powerful intervention would 
resemble that of the Exodus: cf. Exod 6:6 and the deuteronomic phrases of Deut 5:15, etc The addition 
of “drenching fury,” however, especially after the usage in vv 8, 13 and 21, indicates a typical prophetic 
reversal whereby the language of salvation became the vehicle of judgment, and Israel became the victim 
of divine power (cf. Jer 21:5). Here salvation and judgment are mingled in the one event.

34–38. There is thus a typological contrast between the old Exodus and the new version by which 
Yahweh was to inaugurate a new era of salvation. It is followed here by a comparison between the 
wilderness experience after the Egyptian Exodus and a parallel one after an “Exodus” from the 
Diaspora. The confrontation, literally “face to face” (v 35b), echoes Yahweh’s self–revelation at Sinai ( 
Deut 5:4). Another echo of the Sinai revelation is the reimposition of covenant “obligation” (v 37b), 
which the process of selection motivated by covenant principles would serve to accomplish. The images 
of judge and shepherd both had strong royal overtones in the ancient Near East and so represent a 
reassertion of Yahweh’s kingly authority (cf. 34:17–24). The shepherd’s role of sorting out his flock (cf. 
Lev 27:32) is a powerful metaphor for inexorable selection. Historically the tradition of Dathan and 
Abiram’s rebellion appears to be in view (cf. Num 16; Deut 11:6; Zimmerli 416; Coats, Rebellion 241). 
This announcement of a partial judgment was meant as a powerful warning to the exiles not to exclude 
themselves from restoration to the land (cf. Fohrer 116). Only such a radical sifting process could rectify 
Israel’s deficient understanding of Yahweh.

39–42 This second main part of the oracle, whose importance is indicated by a separate messenger 
formula, begins with an appeal for repentance strongly couched in ironic and threatening terms. 
Idolatrous worship among the exiles is implied (cf. Isa 48:4, 5; cf. A. Schoors, I Am God Your Saviour [ 
42–43). Yahweh’s reassertion of his authority, in reaction to their worshiping or serving (יְהָוֶה, v 32) 
other deities, was demonstrated in vv 33–38 in terms of royal judgment. Now it is expressed in religious 
terms: Israel will serve or worship (דַבְּר, vv 39, 40) only Yahweh. The general concept of service runs 
all through the oracle. A related keynote of vv 39–42 is Yahweh’s holiness or transcendent supremacy. 
It would be reacknowledged via proper religious worship, legitimate as to both place and procedure. It 
would involve (a) a return to his “holy mountain,” a phrase borrowed from Zion theology and used 
only here in Ezekiel, and (b) “holy dues” (v 40) as part of Israel’s acceptable worship. And Israel’s 
restoration to the land would spell the vindication of Yahweh’s holiness on the international scene (v 41). 
This latter reference serves to resolve a problem left unanswered in vv 1–31. Yahweh’s reluctance to 
damage his reputation by renouncing his people (vv 9, 14, 22) had to be set aside in the exile, which 
accordingly compromised his standing. The restoration of his people would resolve this anomaly (cf.

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cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

VTSup Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)
SCM Student Christian Movement
36:20–24; Ps 126:2b).

43, 44 Yahweh’s remaking of a worshiping people would effect a spiritual work in their hearts. From their new vantage point they would be able to survey both the depths to which they had earlier sunk and the heights to which Yahweh’s redeeming grace had lifted them (cf. 36:31). Over against the bankruptcy of Israel’s own covenant claims, their patron’s free determination to honor his ancient promises would gloriously come to light.

**Explanation**

The prophet Ezekiel straddled two eras, the grim era of the past and present which culminated in double exile and—in prospect at least—a glorious era to be inaugurated by a new work of God. In this chapter both these aspects are set side by side so that it presents an epitome of his total message.

Israel’s theology placed a high value on the events of the Exodus, the trek through the wilderness and settlement in the land. This complex of events constituted a once-for-all divine intervention in human history which revealed ongoing positive purposes for Israel. For Ezekiel, however, these archetypal saving events were cancelled out by a counter-determination on Yahweh’s part. A step behind each stage of his saving work there loomed a shadow of divine threat in reaction to Israel’s rejection of their God. Here indeed was theological time which presented Israel with a warranty—but it was negative in its import. Yahweh was characteristically no longer one who saved and blessed but one who deprived and destroyed. Yet he took on this negative role not willingly but under the ever growing constraint of the perversity of his covenant partner. Commitment and justice tussled in the mind of God; eventually not even a possible slur of capriciousness could stay his hand, so blatant was Israel’s lack of commitment. Singled out for special mention are their breaking of what in the Decalogue is the first commandment, to have no other gods before Yahweh, and the profaning of the sabbath, which was regarded as a hallmark of Israel’s faith.

This is perhaps the most striking example of ideological reversal so characteristic of the prophets. Ezekiel searched out and amplified negative traditions available to him. Thus he associated the wilderness not with a high level of human commitment, as in Hos 2:17 (15) and Jer 2:2, but with sin and judgment, as in Exod 16 and 32 and Num 14 and 16. The present had to be interpreted in terms of this theological past. Ezekiel had no positive reply from God to give to the exilic leaders. Exile was Yahweh’s inevitable word for that hour. To this truth he brought a veritable sledgehammer of theological argument. The perversity of the present generation who had suffered the first deportation of 597 B.C. constituted a symptom of a chronic and terminal illness which had afflicted Israel from the beginning. Recent idolatry and sabbath-breaking had for Ezekiel deep roots in the people’s past. There was “a hard bed—rock of unbelief and superstition in the national character which had never yielded to the influence of revelation” (Skinner 186). The radical tone which marks much of Ezekiel’s prophesying finds illustration in this feature, which corresponds to the Christian tenet of original sin.

He regarded pagan rites introduced into Israelite religion as a destructive course into which the people had locked themselves—and even been locked by God in the playing out of his negative role (vv 25, 26). The Christian is reminded of the refrain in Rom 1:24, 26, 28 that “God gave them up” to self-chosen perversity. Rejected laws that were the key to a blessed life were replaced with death-dealing laws. Paul in his attitude to the Jewish law went further than Ezekiel: he linked a basically life-giving and good entity (Rom 7:10, 12) with its tragic effects inasmuch as human nature was unable to live up to it (Rom 8:3). However, he built on a foundation laid by Ezekiel in that he too envisaged a radically new

**cf. confer, compare**

**cf. confer, compare**
work of God as the only way forward from failure.

Eventually the theological tide was to turn, and to this welcome change vv 32–44 are addressed. The Exodus is reinvested with promise, but only as an omen pointing to God’s new activity. Its value, one might say, was that of “a shadow of good things to come” (Heb 10:1). The old Exodus was a model for a new one, which would this time fulfill its potential. There is a down-to-earth realism in the development, in that a selective judgment was to purge the exiles of their renegade members. In this respect Ezekiel differs from Second Isaiah who represented the new Exodus in purely positive terms. Supremely there would be a demonstration of Yahweh’s sovereignty over his people in reaction to the threat of pagan religion. As Israel’s king—and so judge and shepherd—he would resume his rightful place at their head. And as divine Lord he would receive their pure worship at—it is implied—a reconstituted temple. Is there a further echo of the Song of the Sea, which celebrated Yahweh’s role as king along with worship at his appointed sanctuary (Exod 15:17, 18)?

The certainty of God’s new work came not simply from its oracular attestation but also from its typological quality. Yahweh was to be true to his earlier revelation by reverting to a positive means of attaining his covenant will (v 42). There would be an authenticating consistency and development whereby the old was transmuted into the new, with a degree of promise that transcended the old. Realistically there was a call for individual response from the hearers as they adjusted to the new era, on the lines of chap. 18, but it is implied that this time Yahweh would not let human sinfulness stand in his way. Confronted by God’s gracious achievement, his people would be shamed into deep contrition and true appreciation of his being. Grace would be the effectual means of God’s positive will and of redemption from human failure (cf. Rom 5:21). His “purpose in election” (Rom 9:11) would find fulfillment.

The Sword of Damocles (21:1–37 [EVV 20:45–21:32])

Bibliography

Translation

"I received the following communication from Yahweh: "Human one, turn and face southwards and preach against the south, with a prophecy against the forest land in the south." I command the southern forest: Hear Yahweh's word. This is a message from the Lord: I am about to light a fire in you, which will consume every green tree in you as well as every dry tree. The blazing flames will not be extinguished, and every face from south to north will feel their heat.

Everybody will see that I, Yahweh, have set the fire inextinguishably alight." I protested, "Alas, Lord Yahweh, people are complaining that I am always using figurative language."

I received the following communication from Yahweh: "Human one, turn and face Jerusalem and preach against their sanctuary with a prophecy against the land of Israel. Tell the land of Israel: This is a message from Yahweh: I am your adversary, I am about to draw my sword from its scabbard and execute the innocent among you as well as the guilty. Inasmuch as I mean to execute the innocent..."
among you as well as the guilty, my sword will be drawn from its scabbard against all people from south to north. b 10 Then everybody will realize that I, Yahweh, have drawn my sword from its scabbard, never to be put away. 11 As for you, human one, groan with sagging limbs, a groan with bitter grief while they look on. 12 When they ask you why you are groaning, tell them it is because of what you have heard. When it happens, every heart will melt, all hands will hang limp, all morale will flag and everyone will have water running down their knees. a It is about to happen and will become fact. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle."

13 I received the following communication from Yahweh: 14 “Human one, prophesy and say, This is a message from the Lord. Say: a

A sword, a sword is sharpened and polished b too, sharpened for slaying, polished to shine like lightning, a It is presented for polishing, a for grasping in the palm.

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a 9.a. The pf appears to be prophetic (cf. Cooke 228).
b 9.b. Contra BHS et al., it is not necessary to harmonize with hnwp X in v 3: stylistic variation is feasible.

11.a. lit. “breaking of loins,” with reference to the psychosomatic effect of shock: the legs cease to give support. For Ug. examples see Hillers, ZAW 77(1965) 86–87.
12.a. G. R. Driver, ZAW 65 (1953) 260, suggested that here and in 7:17 “knees” was a euphemism for penis.
14.a. Heb. g ma “say” is seemingly redundant after t fr ma “and say” earlier. This may be why LXX* Syr. omitted it. The well-attested form t fr ma in v 33 appears to be a paraphrase that presupposes it in a passage that echoes elements earlier in the chapter (cf. Zimmerli 449).
b 14.b. The parallelism suggests a pointing as a pual pf h F r m, as in vv 15, 16 (BHS et al.). MT has been assimilated to the form in v 33.

15.a. MT hyh is unparalleled as inf constr “to be”; already LXX seems to have so understood it, although it rendered q r b h l “to it lightning” as though it were q r b l “for lightning,” perhaps by translator’s license. The conjecture Hl[h h l]”so that it might shine” from l h (F. Zorell apud Bib 19 [1938] 67 n. 4; NEB[cf. Brockington, Hebrew Text 126]; cf. h b, suggested by Cornill 300) commends itself. Then q r b “lightning” functions as a loose adv acc (cf. GKC 118m, q, v).

For vv 15b and 18a see VT 39 (1989) 67–71. V 15b appears to have originated as a marginal comment on “every tree” in v 3, relating it to the demise of the Davidic monarchy: cf. the note on v 18. It has the sense “Every tree: or the ruler(s) of Israel, the rejected scepter.” In both cases t s a m n “the rejected scepter” is to be read as the text underlying MT’s divergent t s a m ynb f b w “a scepter, my son, rejecting” and t s a m f b w “a rejecting scepter.” For Wb “or” in the sense “that is to say” cf. H. C. Brichto’s claim (HUCA 46 [1975] 62 note u) that it has this function in Mal 2:17 and probably in Gen 24:55; 1 Sam 29:3.

16.a. Seemingly an indefinite pf and a long form of the inf In place of the latter the conjecture l X e h n l “to a slayer” (Cooke 237, following Bertholet) is attractive, as improving the sense and increasing the external parallelism of vv 16a, 16b; then assimilation to the consonants of the form in v 15 was suffered. Or was Ehrlich (Randglossen 79) right in postulating Hf f f n “the one who polished it (gave it),” with l intruding as an anticipation of (dp f )? 

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It is sharpened, this sword,\(^b\) and it is polished to be placed in the hand of a killer.  
17 Shout and wail, human one, because it is directed against my people, against all Israel’s rulers—they are delivered\(^a\) to the sword with my people. So slap your thigh.  
18 So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.\(^a\)  
19 You, human one, are to prophesy and clap your hands. Let the sword strike twice, thrice,\(^a\) the sword intended for those to be killed. The great\(^b\) sword for those to be killed\(^c\) will be surrounding them, so that hearts may melt\(^a\) and the fallen\(^b\) be many.

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\(^a\) 17.a. MT \(\text{yr wgm}\) derives from \(\text{gym}\) “overthrow,” but Aram. usage suggests that the qal was intransitive, which rules out a pass ptpc. A hoph pointing \(\text{yr emu}\) from \(\text{gym}\) (hiph “throw down”) is lexicographically a more feasible vocalization (Zimmerli 428, BHS, following J. Herrmann 129).

\(^b\) 16.b. MT \(\text{brj}\) “sword” is syntactically otiose, but not unparalleled as epexegetical in relation to the pronoun (cf. e.g., Exod 7:11; Ps 87:5 [4] and perhaps Ezek 3:21). To take \(\text{ayh}\) as explanatory (“that is”) with Cooke, ibid., awkwardly differentiates \(\text{ayh}\) from \(\text{ayhw}\) “and it.” BHS, substantially following Ehrlich, ibid., attractively suggests \(\text{Hf rm]awh w brj h d} \text{ja} \text{ea wh}\) “he sharpened the sword and he polished it.” K. S. Freedy, VT 20 (1970) 142, took \(\text{brj}\) as a rubrical gloss indicating the theme of the passage.

\(^a\) 18.a. MT has in v 18a a comment related to the one in v 15b: it explains \(\text{hyh al tazAµg}\) “also this will not continue” in v 32 with the tentative remark “For investigation has been made and what if (it means that) the rejected scepter will not continue?”

\(^a\) 19.a. MT \(\text{ht yl} \text{yl}\) “its third” (cf. GKC 91e) requires emendation to a verbal form \(\text{h v l v w}\) “(and) let it be moved thrice,” attested by Vg (BHS et al., following Kraetzschmar 179). Ehrlich’s emendation (Randglossen 80) \(\text{HT wlv v wbrj}\) (cf. LXX) \(\text{P b w v}\) “and you are to wield the sword twice, thrice,” does more justice to the consonantal text, but Ezekiel’s role is to order the slaying rather than carry it out.

\(^b\) 19.b. The masc. adj \(\text{brj h}\) \(\text{w gh}\) needs to be fem \(\text{brj h}\) \(\text{w gh}\) by redivision (cf. BHS et al.).

\(^c\) 19.c. Heb. \(\text{llj}\) is a collective sg, as in 11:6 after a pl., unless it represents an abbreviated form \(\text{llj = muyl j}\) “the killed.”

\(^a\) 20.a. MT \(\text{gwml}\) presupposes a pleonastic \(\text{lamed}\) and a qal with the metaphorical meaning “melt” elsewhere found in the niph. The paseq indicates masoretic uneasiness. The conjectured niph inf \(\text{gwmh}\) (BHS et al.) may be correct, if a careless writing of initial \(\text{lamed}\), as in the adjacent words, can be assumed.

\(^b\) 20.b. In place of MT’s rather stilted “the stumblings” LXX Syr. render in personal terms, viz. \(\text{myj v k mb}\) “those who are made to stumble” (cf. Jer 18:23), and Cornill (306) et al. are probably correct in so repointing.
At all their gates I have set
the slaying sword.
Ah, it is made to flash like lightning,
it is drawn to slay.
21 Lunge to the rear, to the right, to the left,
and wherever your front is situated.
22 I too will clap my hands
and satisfy my fury.
I, Yahweh, have spoken.”

23 I received the following communication from Yahweh: “You, human one, are to represent
two routes for the sword of the king of Babylon to approach by. They are both to begin in the same region. And a signpost at the head of each route you are to represent, with a view to the sword’s

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c 20.c. The meaning of tjba is unknown. LXX Tg. presuppose tjbf “slaughter.”
d 20.d. Heb. jā may be an exclamation like jāh in the light of LXX (εὐγε, cf. Ziegler, LXX 183, with reference to P. Katz, TLZ 61 [1936] 280) Tg. Or it may represent abbreviated jā = brj tjba, implying repetition of the earlier phrase (NEB [Brockington, Hebrew Text 226]; cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 81), in which case a 2 + 2 + 2 tricolon is to be found in place of a 3 + 2 bicolon.
e 20.e. MT hīf appears to be pointed to mean “wrapped, covered” from hīf, although M. Dahood, Bib 43 (1962) 226, claimed a privative meaning “unsheathed.” A contextually better rendering is achieved by relating to Arab. ma’ata “draw (a sword),” with the vocalization hīf = hīf (Cooke 238; Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 68, comparing āḥ bī p “drawn” in v 33; NEB [Brockington, Hebrew Text, ibid.]).
a 21.a. MT ydjāt h “be sharpened (?)” from djjā, perhaps here a by–form of ddj (Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 68), seems to have suffered a f/d error under the influence of (l r ) dj (h) in v 19. The reading of a few MSS, yrjāt h “go behind,” is contextually better (Hitzig 147–48; Delitzsch, Zeitschrift für Keilscriftforschung 2 [1885] 396; Zorell, Lexicon 30). LXX diapereuου εκκουου “come, be sharpened” seems already to presuppose MT, in the disjointed form ydjjāt h (j bī f l ).
b 21.b. MT prefaces with ymōsh, a hiph form of wāḇ which is questionable. It appears to be an uncorrected erroneous start of yl ymōsh (Cornill 307): cf. ā in 18:10.
a 24.a. The masc. djjā “one” appears to be original, and the expected tjā read by 2 MSS and preferred by BHS is the easier and so inferior reading. Driver, Bib 35 (1954) 145, suggested a colloquialism here, comparing cases in 1:6 and 2 Sam 23:8.
The explanation is that the king of Babylon has halted at the forking of the road, at the beginning of two routes, in order to practice divination. He has shaken arrows, consulted teraphim and observed livers. Into his right hand has come the divining device indicating Jerusalem, which means that a shout must issue from his mouth, the loud command of a war cry, for battering rams to be installed against the gates, earthworks to be piled up and siege structures to be built. To them it seems like a false divination, whereas it is evidence of their guilt, leading to their apprehension. This therefore is the message of the Lord Yahweh: Because you have presented evidence of your guilt, in that your rebellious ways are exposed to view and your sins are conspicuous in everything you do—because this evidence against you has been presented—you will be apprehended by force.

24.b. The MT of v 24 appears to be in a confused state, which has led to a false break with v 25. The first (pre–LXX) mistake was the intrusion of “city,” intended as a marginal comment on the difficult hr wb in v 25, understanding it in terms of the standard phrase “fortified city.” It was taken as a correction of the similar–looking “signpost”: for this “cuckoo in the nest” cf. my articles in JTS 22 (1971) 143–50; 24 (1973) 69–73. The second (post–LXX) mistake was that the second arb, meant as a simple abbreviation of a repeated warb “at the head,” attested by LXX, was annotated warb arb, indicating “for arb read warb”; but the note was taken as a correction of the first warb, again attested by LXX, and displaced it. Then the repeated arb was taken as an imperative “cut.” The repeated ūrb d warb dy “a signpost at the start of a road” is a distributive idiom (Ehrlich, Randglossen 82; Zimmerli 436; cf. GKC 123c, d). The verb µyw “you are to make” in v 25 governs the nominal phrase of v 24b.

25.a. Heb. t a is the object sign. The following nouns are in loose apposition to dy “signpost.”

25.b. Zimmerli 437 defends the Heb. well as a chiastic (ABB′A′), triple-accented pair of phrases relating to city and people. Heb hr wb functions as a neuter noun: cf. GKC 122q with a reference to h mosh “the desolate place” in 36:36. LXX reflects an easier reading k wb “in its midst”: appeal to an underlying r wb = Akk. siurr “heart” (Driver, JTS 41 [1940] 169; NEB [Brockington, Hebrew Text, ibid.]) is doubtful.

26.a. For beth introducing the object see GKC 119q. Here the usage is stylistic, matching the next two clauses.

27.a. L. Boadt, VT 25 (1975) 698, has defended MT µyw k µwv “to install rams” as part of a chiastic chain (ABB′A′) of four verbal phrases, but then a three-beat phrase is expected. It is generally deleted as an anticipation of v 27b (cf. BHS). It doubtless arose because a copyist’s eye slipped a 24–letter line, from ( µyw) to ( µwv) and the mistake was left uncorrected.

27.b. Lamed in the first two phrases loosely indicates the series of actions which follow the momentous initial act.

27.c. MT j xrb is a classic case of metathesis for j x b “with a cry,” attested by LXX and required by the parallel phrase.

27.d. The switch from a pair of parallel phrases to a triple parallel group implies that the latter is not coordinated but supplies the content of the earlier command.

28.a. MT adds µhl t wb b wb, which is syntactically difficult and, in line with its omission in LXX*, best explained as originally a marginal comment on µhl earlier, with citation of the text as a cue, “to them: those who have sworn oaths.” The gloss was referring to the broken oath and covenant of 17:13–19. The pass qal form seemingly stands for the normal niph.
As for you, impious a villain, Israel’s head of state, whose day of reckoning has come at a time of terminal guilt, this is the message of the Lord Yahweh: Take off a the royal turban, remove the crown! The present state of affairs is not to continue. b Up with the low c and down with the high!  Ruin, a ruin, ruin is what I will reduce it to. Moreover, the present state of affairs is not to persist b during the time when c the person comes to whom the task of judgment belongs and to whom I assign it.

As for you, human one, prophesy with the words, This is a message from the Lord Yahweh against a the Ammonites and their insults. Say: Sword, sword, drawn for slaughter, polished in order to flash b in destruction c— even while they see false visions about you, while they produce deceitful divinations about you—you are to be applied b to the necks of impious villains whose day of reckoning has come, at the time of terminal guilt. Put it back in its scabbard. a In the place of your creation, in the land of your origin I will judge you. I will vent my anger on you, I will blast you with the fire of my wrath, handing you over to brutal men, experts in destruction. You will be put back in its scabbard.

a 29.a. LXX ἐν τούτῳ” seems to imply an inferior reading ἡ ἱδονή “in this way” rather than ἡ ἱδονή, as generally reconstructed (cf. BHS).

b 30.a. Heb. לֹא, like the pl. in v 34, means “profane” rather than “killed.” In accord with the phrase there it is more idiomatically pointed לָא לֹא taking [נַפְשׁ] as a genitive collective: “a profane person among the wicked” (BHS et al.; cf. GKC 1281).

31.a. The first two and final verbs of v 31 are seemingly intended in MT not as pf (Wevers 127) but as inf constr forms doing duty for inf abs (Boadt, VT 25 [1975] 695), which is required with the sense of emphatic impv. The vowel letter may have been meant simply as a plene writing for יָדָּר b; etc (GKC 113b note 3).

b 31.b. For the idiom Ehrlich (Randglossen 83) compared 2 Kgs 9:37.

c 31. c. MT ḥl לָא “the low” is pointed and accented with an otiose ḥ ending (cf. GKC 90f), evidently to maintain a masc. form in accord with the parallel ḥbgh “the high.” Were the forms originally both masc, ḥ (וּפְשׁ) being a dittograph, or fem, ḥ (בַּפְשׁ) being lost by haplography?

a 32.a. Heb. הִשְׁמיע is apparently used in the sense of יָדָּר “ruin.”

b 32.b. For ḥְיָה after a fem subj separated by ד, “not” see Driver, JRAS 75 (1948) 164–76. The pf is seemingly prophetic. An emendation לָא לָא “sign” for לָא לָא “this” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 83, following Hitzig; RSV “trace”) is not necessary. Nor is Cornill’s לָא לָא (309) with the sense “woe to it.”

c 32. c. In view of the negative לָא לָא must here refer to a period rather than a temporal goal (Zimmerli 439).

a 33.a. Heb. לָא לָא is used in the sense of לָא לָא “against” (BHS).

b 33.b. MT צִכָּר is better pointed as a verb צִכָּר after לָא לָא , which with a noun means “on account of.” For the verb cf. Ps 144:6.

c 33.c. MT צָכָה לָא לָא “to contain” (cf. 23:32) or “to feed” (short for צָכָה לָא לָא ) is problematic. A developed meaning “as much as it can hold, to full capacity, as much as possible” (Smed 147, following Schnurr) seems strained. LXX Vg Tg. may imply צָכָה לָא לָא for destruction” (Bertholet 76 et al.), but more probably represent an attempt to get some sense out of the present text. The parallelism does not require it, and its position in the clause is strange. RSV “to glitter” adopts Cornill’s emendation צָכָה לָא לָא (ibid.).

34.a. This rambling sentence lacks a main verb; perhaps לָא לָא has this role (cf. GKC 114i, k, l; BDB 518a; HALAT 485b).

a 35.a. Contra Zimmerli (440) LXX מַהוּדַה לָא לָא לָא לָא “do not destroy” supports the consonants of MT, taken as מַהוּדַה לָא לָא לָא לָא “do not pour out, slay.” cf. this rendering for another verb of destruction at 26:13.
consigned\textsuperscript{a} to the fire as fuel, your blood will flow through the land, you will leave no memory behind. Surely I, Yahweh, have spoken.”

Notes

2.a. In MT $b$ gn “south” functions appositionally. The Eastern reading $h$ $b$ gn “to the south” (cf. BHS) clarifies this role. The shorter phrase in v 3 has been interpreted as supporting a reading $b$ gn $y$ “to the forest of the south” here, but stylistic shortening of a longer phrase is not impossible. Yet the syntactical oddity and the parallel terms of v 2 do favor the view that $h$ $d$ $w$ “region, land” originated as a gloss on $y$, which was inserted into $b$ gn $y$ (BHS, Fohrer 117, Zimmerli 420 et al.). cf. the parallelism of $h$ $d$ $w$ and $y$ in 39:10, to which attention may have been drawn by the common phraseology of 21:12 and 39:8.

3.a. For the formulaic ynd $a$ “Lord” here and in vv 5, 12, 29, 31 and 33 see the note on 20:3. There is also unusual variation in this chapter, v 8 lacking ynd $a$ and v 14 lacking $h$ $w$ $y$ “Yahweh.”

5.a. The piel, in distinction from the qal in 17:2, seems to have an intensive force (Fohrer 119; A. R. Johnson, VTSup 3 [1969] 169).

7.a. MT’s indefinite form $m$ “sanctuaries” is suspect, and $v$ $D$ $h$ “their sanctuary,” supported by a few MSS and Syr., is preferable. LXX $t$ $a$ $a$ $u$ $w$ “(their) holy place(s)” is used to render the sg as well as the pl. noun and more probably gives further support than reflects the consonantly divergent $m$ “their sanctuaries,” as Wevers (123) supposes. The pl. suffix refers to the people of Jerusalem.

9.a. The pf appears to be prophetic (cf. Cooke 228).

\textsuperscript{a} 37.a. Heb. $h$ $y$ $t$ more probably reflects a dislike of the fem form (cf. GKC 145t) than a change of person which indicates a gloss (Zimmerli, ibid.; Wevers 128).

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

\textit{cf. confer}, compare


et al. \textit{et alii}, and others

\textit{cf. confer}, compare

\textit{VTSup} Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

MSS manuscript(s)

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

sg singular or under

pl. plate or plural

pl. plate or plural

pf perfect

\textit{cf. confer}, compare
9. b. Contra BHS et al. it is not necessary to harmonize with ẖ ḫ̀ ẖ in v 3: stylistic variation is feasible.

11. a. lit. “breaking of loins,” with reference to the psychosomatic effect of shock: the legs cease to give support. For Ug. examples see Hillers, ZAW 77(1965) 86–87.

12. a. G. R. Driver, ZAW 65 (1953) 260, suggested that here and in 7:17 “knees” was a euphemism for penis.

14. a. Heb. ẖ ẖ “say” is seemingly redundant after ẖ ḫ “and say” earlier. This may be why LXX* Syr. omitted it. The well–attested form ẖ ḫ ẖ in v 33 appears to be a paraphrase that presupposes it in a passage that echoes elements earlier in the chapter (cf. Zimmerli 449).

14. b. The parallelism suggests a pointing as a pual ḫ ẖ ḫ, as in vv 15, 16 (BHS et al.). MT has been assimilated to the form in v 33.

15. a. MT ẖ ẖ is unparalleled as inf constr “to be”; already LXX seems to have so understood it, although it rendered q r b “to it lightning” as though it were q r b “for lightning,” perhaps by translator’s license. The conjecture ḫ ḫ (“so that it might shine” from ḫ ḫ (F. Zorell apud Bib 19 [1938] 67 n. 4; NEB[cf. Brockington, Hebrew Text 126]; cf. ẖ ḫ, suggested by Cornill 300) commends itself. Then q r b “lightning” functions as a loose adv acc (cf. GKC 118m, q, v).

For vv 15b and 18a see VT 39 (1989) 67–71. V 15b appears to have originated as a marginal

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BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
et al. et alii, and others
lit. literally
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare
pf perfect
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
et al. et alii, and others
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Biblica
n. note
NEB The New English Bible
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
comment on א[מ]ל k “every tree” in v 3, relating it to the demise of the Davidic monarchy: cf. the note on v 18. It has the sense “Every tree: or the ruler(s) of Israel, the rejected scepter.” In both cases fs b v ts a m “the rejected scepter” is to be read as the text underlying MT’s divergent ts a m ymb fs b v “a scepter, my son, rejecting” and ts a m fs b v “a rejecting scepter.” For ו “or” in the sense “that is to say” cf. H. C. Brichto’s claim (HUCA 46 [1975] 62 note u) that it has this function in Mal 2:17 and probably in Gen 24:55; 1 Sam 29:3.

16.a. Seemingly an indefinite pf and a long form of the inf In place of the latter the conjecture j X e m l i “to a slayer” (Cooke 237, following Bertholet) is attractive, as improving the sense and increasing the external parallelism of vv 16a, 16b; then assimilation to the consonants of the form in v 15 was suffered. Or was Ehrlich (Randglossen 79) right in postulating Hf r h m the one who polished it (gave it),” with l intruding as an anticipation of (w p t ) ?

16.b. MT br j “sword” is syntactically otiose, but not unparalleled as expository in relation to the pronoun (cf. e.g., Exod 7:11; Ps 87:5 [4] and perhaps Ezek 3:21). To take a yh as explanatory (“that is”) with Cooke, ibid., awkwardly differentiates a yh from a yh w “and it.” BHS, substantially following Ehrlich, ibid., attractively suggests Hf r m a wh w br j h d j b e a w h “he sharpened the sword and he polished it.” K. S. Freedy, VT 20 (1970) 142, took br j as a rubrical gloss indicating the theme of the passage.

17.a. MT yr wgm derives from f qn “overthrow,” but Aram. usage suggests that the qal was intransitive, which rules out a pass ptc p. A hoph pointing yr ém a from f qn (hiph “throw down”) is lexicographically a more feasible vocalization (Zimmerli 428, BHS, following J. Herrmann 129).

18.a. MT has in v 18a a comment related to the one in v 15b: it explains h yh a l t a zAµ g “also this
will not continue” in v 32 with the tentative remark “For investigation has been made and what if (it means that) the rejected scepter will not continue?”

19.a. **MT** h t s w y h “its third” (cf. **GKC** 91e) requires emendation to a verbal form h v j j w (and) let it be moved thrice,” attested by Vg (**BHS** et al., following Kraetzschmar 179). Ehrlich’s emendation (**Randglossen** 80) h T s w l = v w b r j (cf. **LXX**) l P b r j w “and you are to wield the sword twice, thrice,” does more justice to the consonantal text, but Ezekiel’s role is to order the slaying rather than carry it out.

19.b. The masc. adj (b r j h) l w d g h needs to be fem (b r j h) l w d g h by redivision (cf. **BHS** et al.).

19.c. **Heb.** l j is a collective sg, as in 11:6 after a pl., unless it represents an abbreviated form l l j = μ y l l j “the killed.”

20.a. **MT** gw m l presupposes a pleonastic *lamed* and a qal with the metaphorical meaning “melt” elsewhere found in the *niph*. The *paseq* indicates masoretic uneasiness. The conjectured niph inf *g w m h* (**BHS** et al.) may be correct, if a careless writing of initial *lamed*, as in the adjacent words, can be assumed.

20.b. In place of **MT**’s rather stilted “the stumblings” **LXX Syr.** render in personal terms, viz. μ y l l v k μ b t “those who are made to stumble” (cf. Jer 18:23), and Cornill (306) et al. are probably correct
in so repointing.

20.c. The meaning of tjba is unknown. LXX Tg. presuppose tj bf “slaughter.”

20.d. Heb. ja may be an exclamation like ja h in the light of LXX (eug e, cf. Ziegler, LXX 183, with reference to P. Katz, TLZ 61 [1936] 280) Tg. Or it may represent abbreviated ja = br tj ba, implying repetition of the earlier phrase (NEB [Brockington, Hebrew Text 226]; cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 81), in which case a 2 + 2 + 2 tricolon is to be found in place of a 3 + 2 bicolon.

20.e. MT hfv m appears to be pointed to mean “wrapped, covered” from hfv, although M. Dahood, Bib 43 (1962) 226, claimed a privative meaning “unsheathed.” A contextually better rendering is achieved by relating to Arab. ma c‘ata “draw (a sword),” with the vocalization hfv m (= hfv W m) (Cooke 238; Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 68, comparing hjrt p “drawn” in v 33; NEB [Brockington, Hebrew Text, ibid.]).

21.a. MT ydj at h “be sharpened (?)” from dj a, perhaps here a by–form of ddj (Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 68), seems to have suffered a r/d error under the influence of r dj (h) in v 19. The reading of a few MSS, yrjath “go behind,” is contextually better (Hitzig 147–48; Delitzsch, Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung 2 [1885] 396; Zorell, Lexicon 30). LXX diaporeuov ojxuvn “come, be sharpened” seems already to presuppose MT, in the disjointed form ydj at h (j bfl ).

21.b. MT prefaces with ymzy, a hiph form of µz which is questionable. It appears to be an uncorrected erroneous start of yl ymzy (Cornill 307): cf. ja in 18:10.

et al. et alii, and others
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
TLZ Theologische Literaturzeitung
Tg. Targum
Or Orientalia (Rome)
NEB The New English Bible
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Bib Biblica
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ibid. ibidem, in the same place
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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cf. confer, compare

24.a. The **masc. dja “one”** appears to be original, and the expected †j †a read by 2 MSS and preferred by **BHS** is the easier and so inferior reading. Driver, *Bib* 35 (1954) 145, suggested a colloquialism here, comparing cases in 1:6 and 2 Sam 23:8.

24.b. The **MT of v 24** appears to be in a confused state, which has led to a false break with v 25. The first (pre–LXX) mistake was the intrusion of †y “city,” intended as a marginal comment on the difficult hrw in v 25, understanding it in terms of the standard phrase “fortified city.” It was taken as a correction of the similar–looking d’y “signpost”: for this “cuckoo in the nest” cf. my articles in *JTS* 22 (1971) 143–50; 24 (1973) 69–73. The second (post–LXX) mistake was that the second ḏrb, meant as a simple abbreviation of a repeated ṣr b “at the head,” attested by LXX, was annotated ṣr b ḏrb, indicating “for ḏrb read ṣr ḏrb”; but the note was taken as a correction of the first ṣr b, again attested by LXX, and displaced it. Then the repeated ḏrb was taken as an imperative “cut.” The repeated ṭrd ṣr b ḏy “a signpost at the start of a road” is a distributive idiom (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 82; Zimmerli 436; cf. *GKC* 123c, d). The verb ṭy “you are to make” in v 25 governs the nominal phrase of v 24b.

25.a. **Heb. †a** is the object sign. The following nouns are in loose apposition to ḏy “signpost.”
25.b. Zimmerli 437 defends the Heb. well as a chiastic (ABB‘A‘), triple-accented pair of phrases relating to city and people. Heb. \( \text{hr} \ \text{wk} \ \text{b} \) functions as a neuter noun: cf. GKC 122q with a reference to "the desolate place" in 36:36. LXX reflects an easier reading \( \text{hkwtb} \) "in its midst": appeal to an underlying \( \text{rk} \ \text{wk} = \text{Akk. siurru} "heart" (Driver, JTS 41 [1940] 169; NEB [Brockington, Hebrew Text, ibid.]) is doubtful.

26.a. For \textit{beth} introducing the object see GKC 119q. Here the usage is stylistic, matching the next two clauses.

27.a. L. Boadt, VT 25 (1975) 698, has defended MT \( \text{mu} \text{yrk} \text{mwl} \) "to install rams" as part of a chiastic chain (ABB‘A) of four verbal phrases, but then a three-beat phrase is expected. It is generally deleted as an anticipation of v 27b (cf. BHS). It doubtless arose because a copyist’s eye slipped a 24-letter line, from (\( \text{jtp} \text{twp} \)) to (\( \text{mu} \text{mwl} \)) and the mistake was left uncorrected.

27.b. Lamed in the first two phrases loosely indicates the series of actions which follow the momentous initial act.

27.c. MT \( \text{jxr b} \) is a classic case of metathesis for \( \text{fr x b} \) “with a cry,” attested by LXX and required by the parallel phrase.

27.d. The switch from a pair of parallel phrases to a triple parallel group implies that the latter is not coordinated but supplies the content of the earlier command.

28.a. MT adds \( \text{mhl tw[b} \) \( \text{y[b} \), which is syntactically difficult and, in line with its omission in LXX* Syr., best explained as originally a marginal comment on \( \text{mhl} \) earlier, with citation of the text as a cue, “to them: those who have sworn oaths.” The gloss was referring to the broken oath and covenant of Hebrew.

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Heb. Hebrew
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cf. confer, compare
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JTS Journal of Theological Studies
NEB The New English Bible
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
17:13–19. The pass qal form seemingly stands for the normal niph.

29.a. LXX ἐν τούτοις seems to imply an inferior reading Ἐκ τῆς ἐκ τῆς “in this way” rather than μὴ ἐκ, as generally reconstructed (cf. BHS).

30.a. Heb. לְּאֵך, like the pl. in v 34, means “profane” rather than “killed.” In accord with the phrase there it is more idiomatically pointed לְאֵך קַר as a genitive collective: “a profane person among the wicked” (BHS et al.; cf. GKC 1281).

31.a. The first two and final verbs of v 31 are seemingly intended in MT not as pf (Wevers 127) but as inf constr forms doing duty for inf abs (Boadt, VT 25 [1975] 695), which is required with the sense of emphatic impv. The vowel letter may have been meant simply as a plene writing for Ἑσαχα, etc (GKC 113bb note 3).

31.b. For the idiom Ehrlich (Randglossen 83) compared 2 Kgs 9:37.

31. c. MT הָלֹא יִצְפַּר “the low” is pointed and accented with an otiose הָלֹא ; ending (cf. GKC 90f), evidently to maintain a masc. form in accord with the parallel הָלֹא יִצְפַּר “the high.” Were the forms originally both masc, הָלֹא יִצְפַּר being a dittograph, or fem, הָלֹא יִצְפַּר being lost by haplography?

32.a. Heb. הָלֹא יִצְפַּר is apparently used in the sense of יִצְפַּר “ruin.”

32.b. For הָלֹא יִצְפַּר after a fem subj separated by אָל “not” see Driver, Jf 75 (1948) 164–76. The pf is

niph Niphal
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
Heb. Hebrew
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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
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masc. masculine
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seemingly prophetic. An emendation т в “sign” for т а “this” (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 83, following Hitzig; RSV “trace”) is not necessary. Nor is Cornill’s h l y w a (309) with the sense “woe to it.”

32. c. In view of the negative d l must here refer to a period rather than a temporal goal (Zimmerli 439).

33.a. Heb. l a is used in the sense of l [ “against” (*BHS*).

33.b. MT q r b is better pointed as a verb q r i after q m l, which with a noun means “on account of.” For the verb cf. Ps 144:6.

33.c. MT y h l “to contain” (cf. 23:32) or “to feed” (short for y h k l) is problematic. A developed meaning “as much as it can hold, to full capacity, as much as possible” (Smend 147, following Schnurr) seems strained. LXX Vg Tg. may imply h[l k l “for destruction” (Bertholet 76 et al.), but more probably represent an attempt to get some sense out of the present text. The parallelism does not require it, and its position in the clause is strange. RSV “to glitter” adopts Cornill’s emendation l h b l (ibid.).

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35.a. Contra Zimmerli (440) LXX m h ; k а t a l w s х l “do not destroy” supports the consonants of MT,

37.a. Heb. הַיְהָה more probably reflects a dislike of the fem form (cf. GKC 145t) than a change of person which indicates a gloss (Zimmerli, ibid.; Wevers 128).

**Form/Structure/Setting**

Chap. 21 is made up of four units, vv 1–12, 13–22, 23–32 and 33–37. The first has two message reception formulas, at vv 1 and 6, but the two pieces, vv 1–4 and 6–12, are closely linked by v 5 in terms of metaphor and meaning (cf. 17:2–10, 11–21). Vv 2–4 are a judgment oracle developed into a proof saying by the recognition formula of v 4. The variation of the normal “know” with “see” (וַיִּתֵּן) is obviously due to the metaphorical nature of the passage: a forest fire is visually observed. After the prophet’s plea in v 5 the oracle is reissued in vv 6–10 in a plainer version which substitutes the simpler imagery of the sword. It is then capped by a fresh call to Ezekiel in vv 11, 12. A command to engage in a symbolic action is combined with another command characterized by a question and answer schema, as in 37:18, 19 (cf. 12:9–11; 24:19–21). For this schema and its varied usage especially in Jer (e.g., 15:1–4) and Ezek see B. O. Long, *JBL* 90 (1971) 129–39. V 12 makes impressive use of the widespread convention describing the reaction to bad news, for which see D. R. Hillers, *ZAW* 77 (1965) 86–90.

This overall oracle, like the rest of the chapter, is not dated. The threat to Jerusalem and the temple (v 7) is significant. 20:1 cited a date in 591 B.C. and 24:1 refers to 588, the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem. In line with this literary placement the present oracle feasibly falls between these dates, sometime before the Babylonian invasion. The reference to Judah as the “south” (v 7) indicates that the oracle was spoken in Babylonia at the other end of the Fertile Crescent which stretched northwards from Judah to Syria. Editorial reworking has been suspected (cf. Zimmerli 422; Wevers 122–23), but the evidence adduced is hardly compelling.

Vv 2–4 and 6–10 are marked by remarkably detailed parallelism, noted by Fohrer (118–19), as far as his deletions of presumed glosses (vv 3b, 9, 10b) allow him. It was not a feature of 15:2–5/6–8 nor of 17:2–10/11–21. The difference is because 21:2–4 already take the clear form of a judgment oracle and proof saying, and what the interpretation requires is a recapitulation with recasting of the fire metaphor. Elements in the first section are repeated or rephrased—often in an alternating sequence—in the second; only the summons to hear (v 3ab) has no counterpart. Assonance plays a part in the parallelism, a נ sequence marking v 3bb (נַב יָד מְנַה) and v 8ad (יָדְנַבּ נֶרֶפֶּר וָה) and a נ sequence in v 4 (וַיַּתְּנַבּ נַבּ וָיַו) and v 10 (}
The statement in v 3bd intensifies v 3bg; correspondingly v 8b intensifies v 8a by repetition. The latter phenomenon is part of a chiastic scheme which tightly interlocks vv 8–10 in an ABBACCA structure, as Boadt, VT 25 (1975) 697, observed. At the end of v 10 the addition of "any more" adds an appropriate climactic force in comparison with v 4.

Vv 2–10 are caught up in another, larger scheme embracing further material, vv 11–12, rather as we noticed in chap. 20. There is a rhetorical structure marked by the speech of prophet and people in vv 3//8 //12a (t r m a w “and you are to say”) and vv 5//12b (μ y ν m a , w m a y “they say”) with an ABABA rhythm. Moreover, h nh “behold” follows each A element. The passage highlights a verbal interchange between the prophet and people, in which the prophet’s words are directed by Yahweh. There is an inclusion, ṭ m ¤ “hear” in v 3 and Ṫ w m c “what you have heard” in v 12b, which stresses the news of the disaster that Yahweh is to bring about. V 12b has a climactic role, with its four instances of lk “all” echoing the two in v 3a and the two parallel ones at the end of vv 3, 9.

A poem, the song of the sword (vv 14bb–22a), is set within a judgment oracle that Ezekiel is to report (vv 13–22; cf. v 18b), and indeed the oracular formula of prophetic address is included at the beginning of its second strophe (v 19a), while the prophet is also addressed at v 17a. It may have been based on an existing song that Ezekiel used and amplified or it may represent a subsequent elaboration of an earlier poem he composed (cf. Fohrer 120; Zimmerli 431–32; cf. E. Maarsingh’s comparison with an Akkadian poem, probably of the ninth century B.C., in Ezekiel and His Book 350–58). However, attempts to isolate additions on grounds of meter or repetition are not convincing, apart from the glaring glosses in v 15b and v 18a.

The oracle clearly antedates the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. Reference is made to Jerusalem in respect of its administration (v 17) and gates (v 20). V 17 need not be regarded as a post–587 supplement (Zimmerli 432, 434–35; contrast Eichrodt 295). It fits structurally and its perfect verbs may be regarded as prophetic, relating to the divine purpose.

The poem divides into strophes, vv 14bg –17, 19–22a. The first consists of six lines, three pairs marked by external parallelism. There are two tricola, in vv 16b and 17a. In the first pair the verb ḏ n “give” acts as an inclusion, while in the third (v 17) there is a chiasmus in an ABBA pattern. The second strophe, consisting of eight lines, breaks evenly into two halves, vv 19–20a and 20ab–22a. In the second half divine activity provides an inclusion (vv 20ab, 22). The strophe as a whole has a double inclusion, the polarization of pronouns together with the clapping of hands (vv 19a, 22a) and the multiple strokes of the sword (vv 19b, 21). The address to the “human one” functions as a hinge for the strophes (vv 17a, 19a). There is a loose overall inclusion, ṭ r ḫ “flashing” and ḥ ḫ “slaughter” in v 15a and 20b. The two strophes match in other repetitions: a multiple use of ṭ ḫ “sword,” including two cases in the first lines of each, the verb ḏ n “give,” the preposition of purpose ḏ m l “in order to” (vv 15a, 20a) and the inclusive lk “all” (vv 17ab, 20ab); while the reference to the people and their leaders in v 17 is paralleled by the plural pronouns in vv 19b and 20ab. Zimmerli (434) has observed that ṭ ḫ “palm, hand” functions as a key term: apart from vv 16a, 19a and 22a, it occurs in a wordplay in ṭ ḫ t w “and let it be doubled” in v 19b. Outside the poem there is a stress on the divine word at its beginning, middle and end (vv 13–14a, 18b, 22b).

The third oracle of judgment, vv 23–32, consists of two parts. Vv 24–28 represent Yahweh’s...
command to the prophet to perform a symbolic action concerning the threat to Jerusalem (vv 24, 25),
together with its interpretation (vv 26–28). In vv 29–32 appears an accompanying double message to the
people (v 29) and to Zedekiah (vv 30–32); each is introduced by the messenger formula. The second part
develops the language at the end of the first (v 28b), with repetition of its verbs in v 29, repetition of הָוֹי
“guilt” in v 30b and allusion to it in a wordplay, the triple הָוֹי “ruin” in v 32a.

The addressees are to be taken as rhetorical rather than literal, as if the prophet were in Jerusalem
(Zimmerli 441, contrast Brownlee xxvii). The reference to Nebuchadnezzar’s campaign march against
Judah (and Ammon) applies to 589 B.C., after Zedekiah’s rebellion (cf. 17:15; 2 Kgs 24:20). Lang (Kein
Aufstand 158–66) has feasibly grounded this oracle in a denial of the political hopes of a pro–rebellion
party among the exiles (cf. Jer 29:21–32).

A fourth oracle of judgment occurs in vv 33–37. Because of its lack of a message reception formula
it reads at first like a continuation of the preceding oracle. However, its contents mark it out as separate.
It is directed against the Ammonites and clearly presupposes a post-587 B.C. phenomenon, their
malicious enjoyment of Judah’s downfall (v 33ab). It leaves the reader with a distinctly literary
impression, for it consists largely of material adapted from the three earlier oracles, from the first in v 35a
and v 37a and from the second in vv 33b, 34b and 36b and, despite different vocabulary, in the wrath
of v 36. Most closely echoed is the third, especially in the vocabulary of opening (יָהָב הָוֹי , v 27a; הָוֹי הָוֹי ,
v 33b), judgment (vv 32b, 35b) and pouring (וְמַעַרְשָׁהוֹי , v 27b; יָוֹי הָוֹי , v 36a). Because of these marked
borrowings and also because of recourse to prophetic motifs not clearly used by Ezekiel, it is generally
judged to be later, although its claim to prophetic authority (vv 33a, 37b) must be taken seriously. It
was presumably written before 539 B.C., when Babylon fell. It is unique in that only here in the book
does Babylon feature as the object of judgment.

It is clear that the oracles in chap. 21 are intended as an overall redactional unit. All of them relate to
the sword of judgment, whether Yahweh’s (vv 8, 9), acting virtually under its own power (vv 14–22) or
Nebuchadnezzar’s (v 24). The calls to the prophet to lament (vv 11, 17) bind together the first and
second oracles. Noteworthy too is the apparent echo of the “gates” and “hand” featured in the
second oracle, in the course of the third (vv 27b and 29b [“by force”]); and also in the second oracle
the echo of the remorseless יָוֹי “all” from the first. The song of the sword functions as the
centerpiece, bounded on either side by a prose oracle, while the fourth, with its strong echoes of all
three, has a supplementary role. The fourth supplies an overall inclusion: the devouring fire of v 37
matches that of v 3.

Comment

1–4 The oracle is introduced with a prophetic formula “set your face toward” that has already
occurred in 6:2 and 13:17, and will recur in the interpretation of v 7, with reference to Jerusalem, in the
foreign oracles at 25:2 (relating to Ammon); 28:21 (Sidon) and 29:2 (Pharaoh), and again in 35:2 (Seir)
and 38:2 (Gog). The preposition “toward” is usually יָוֹי , but it is varied with יָוֹי in 29:2; 35:2 and with
יָוֹי here. The formula is an archaism used of Balaam in Num 24:1 and of Elisha in 2 Kgs 8:11. In the
former case it clearly refers to visual contact, but in Ezekiel it appears rather to be a symbolic action
of staring in a certain direction, to indicate the target of an oracle (cf. “direct יָוֹי your face toward,” 4:3
). Brownlee insisted on a literal sense of the formula as a travel idiom. It was one part of his package

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presentation of the prophet as exercising a Palestinian ministry (HUCA 54 [1983] 83–110; Ezekiel 1–19 96, 195). Others have found no difficulty in attributing a weakened meaning (cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1 29–30, 182–83; Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets 40–42). Here the use of the preposition ûrd invites comparison with the directional turning toward Jerusalem in 1 Kgs 8:44 (cf. Dan 6:11). A symbolic interpretation accords with the phenomenon that foreign oracles in the prophetic books have rhetorical audiences, while the real audiences were the prophet’s own constituency.

The “south,” for which the Hebrew language can lavishly use three different words, stands for Judah, as v 8 is to clarify. Thus a geographical reference to the “Negeb” (RSV, NEB), south of Judah, is not to be seen; it has never been wooded anyway. In the background there seems to be the sinister motif of the “foe from the north” (Zimmerli 424; cf. Jer 6:22; Ezek 38–39). The prophetic image of fire for judgment is as old as Amos (1:4, etc) and has already been used by Ezekiel in connection with the covenant metaphor of the vine (15:4–7; cf. 19:12, 14). Now the metaphor is extended to a forest fire (cf. Jer 21:14), which during dry summers must have been as fearful a phenomenon as it is in the brush of southern California. So intense was the conflagration to be that it would blaze unchecked, while all people nearby would have their faces scorched. The dire fierceness of the fire would force them to see Yahweh’s hand in the incident.

5 The prophet, sensitive about the effectiveness of such an oracle, implicitly appeals for plainer speech, so that its message may not be blunted. His protest is born of painful experience (“alas”) of contemptuous dismissal of his oracles among his contemporaries. Heb. 工作报告 refers to “a composition which offers in … colourful and … elaborate allegorical language a forecast of some impending event which is envisaged … in terms of Yahweh’s purposeful action” (A. R. Johnson, VTSup 3 [1969] 168).

6–10 As a concession the oracle is reissued, admittedly dominated by another metaphor, that of the sword, but now speaking plainly of the people of Judah and their total fate. The homeland and its capital—temple and all—would be the target of Yahweh’s weapon of judgment. Mention of the sword seems to echo the covenant curse of Lev 26:25, which thus provides an implicit reason for the onslaught. All would be caught up in a solidarity of judgment for the broken covenant. Vv 8–10 with their chiastic structuring stand out as tremendously forceful. The divine sword would be wielded until it had done its grisly work. So radical would be the onslaught upon Judah that others to the north would be included, like the seeping contamination of a neighborhood after a nuclear attack. In a culture prone to religious explanations of overwhelming crisis (cf. Jonah 1:4, 5), the message would be inescapable and no natural explanation could satisfy. It must be Yahweh’s work.

The moral dimension of vv 8–9, accentuated by repetition, serves to underline the radical nature of the catastrophe expected by Ezekiel. Taken at its face value, it seems to rule out the survival of any, even in exile, over against such passages as 6:8–10; 12:16; 14:22, 23. Moreover, 14:12–20 had envisaged survival of the righteous—although so venerable are the grudging examples of righteousness cited there

HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual

RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)

NEB The New English Bible

Heb. Hebrew

VTSup Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)
that doubt is implicitly cast on the existence of contemporary equivalents. Chap. 18 looks forward to a new era of divine dealing after the corporate experiences of 597 and 587 B.C. However, 9:4–6 seems clearly enough to exempt the repentant from destruction. Essentially Ezekiel speaks here as a pastoral theologian and in his use of overkill is evidently responding to a contemporary need to rule out any hope of reprieve, any optimism that life could by some means go on in Judah.

11, 12 If in the development of the oracle vv 1–4 present a parable and vv 6–10 its interpretation, this section serves to reinforce the message. The prophet is to engage in a symbolic action, in order to stimulate inquiry which will afford an opportunity to emphasize the severity and inevitability of the coming crisis. The literary schema used in v 12 deals with the symbolic action in a direct movement from omen to full communication of its meaning. Severity is indicated obliquely in the conventional terms of a reaction to bad news (cf. e.g., Isa 13:7, 8; Jer 6:24). The extreme nature of the reaction mirrors its grimness. The prophet is ordered to act out this reaction in advance and to reflect the ghastly shock in his own experience. No lesser reaction could match the coming catastrophe.

13–17 The next oracle, the song of the sword, owes its dynamic not so much to logic as to the aesthetic factors of poetry and a sustained imagery. In this first strophe preparation and purpose are the keynotes. A sword, a veritable Excalibur with a life of its own, is made ready for its grim destiny. There is a dwelling upon the necessary sharpening and burnishing, as unseen hands tenderly ensure that it will do its very worst. Focus passes from the sword to the hand that is to wield it to mete out death. But who is to die? None other than Yahweh’s people and the members of their government: they are the destined victims. Again the prophet is ordered in his own person to act out a shocked reaction with the language of mouth and body. Once more his behavior is to be a measure of the tragedy (cf. Jer 47:2). It does not function as expression of sympathy (contra Zimmerli 435 et al.). The repeated “my people” represents not divine pathos and patronage, as it often does in the prophets, including Ezekiel (e.g., 13:10), but notes the discordant lengths to which Yahweh has to go in his estrangement from his erstwhile partner (cf. Isa 2:6).

19–22. The second strophe focuses upon the sword at work. Now the prophet’s role is not merely to reflect the catastrophe but to initiate it with a prophetic gesture of command (cf. Hos 6:5; Jer 1:10). The sword was to hem in Jerusalem on every side, cutting off all escape. Fear and carnage would be rife as the drawn sword did its destined work. Behind this gruesome prospect stands the terrifying figure of Yahweh, stresses the second half of the strophe at its start and finish: the prophet was but the servant of his master in signaling that battle should begin (vv 19a, 22a). The savagery of the sword was to give vent to the passionate fury of Yahweh. In the whole scenario the hands of three persons have their part to play: the human wielder, the prophetic intermediary and the divine figure whose moral will was to be done.

23–25. In its present context the next oracle serves to identify the swordsman as the king of Babylon (v 24). Ezekiel is ordered to engage in a symbolic action depicting the campaigning king at the crossroads, confronted with two possible routes, to Ammon in the southeast and to Jerusalem in the southwest. The form the representation was to take is not specified: so presumably it was to be engraved with a stylus on a brick, as in 4:1. In light of 1 Sam 15:12; 2 Sam 18:18 and Isa 56:5 δύ “signpost”

cf. confer, compare

e.g. exempli gratia, for example

cf. confer, compare

et al. et alii, and others

e.g. exempli gratia, for example

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
seems to refer to an inscribed stone monument. Perhaps we are meant to think of Damascus as the junction—Nebuchadnezzar’s military headquarters were at Riblah to the north (2 Kgs 25:6)—and the choice of the two great trade routes, the King’s Highway down the Transjordan or the Sea Road which at a lower point ran along the coast. Or are we to envisage a junction to the south, a turning off the King’s Highway in Bashan, which followed the watershed of central Palestine down to Jerusalem? The text implies that Ammon too had rebelled against Babylonian rule.

26, 27 The divine command to represent the routes has already mingled with the symbolic action a number of interpretative elements. The formal explanation (אכ “for”) that begins in v 26 abandons the general catchword “sword” and concentrates on details of military campaigning, initially the testing of the divine will by the taking of omens. Three types of divination are given. The third, the examination of animal livers, was a characteristic and highly developed feature of Babylonian religion. The first one, selection from marked arrows, was an Arabian practice, while the second was Israelite (cf. 1 Sam 15:23; Hos 3:4), but how the religious figurines were used is not known. Conceivably Nebuchadnezzar would have employed a mixture of oracular methods (under the influence of vassal kings under his command?). Alternatively the variety is intended in the account as cultural translation to communicate the king’s intent with all clarity. The result of the inquiry indicates that Jerusalem was to be the first of the national capitals to be attacked. The element of choice presumably reflects hopes among the exiles that a campaign against Jerusalem would be deferred, allowing better prospects of defensive measures including the arrival and deployment of Egyptian troops. These hopes are dashed. The processes of siege warfare lay inevitably in Jerusalem’s future and would soon be the explicit theme of Babylonian military orders. For the siege tactics mentioned here see Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands* (New York: McGraw–Hill, 1963) 313–17, 388–93.

28 Of course, Jerusalem’s citizens, like Ezekiel’s hearers, would not be disposed to take seriously Nebuchadnezzar’s divinatory games. Yet ironically this non–Yahwist was taking a path marked out for him by Yahweh. His religious actions could not be ignored, for they were of a piece with other incriminating evidence against Jerusalem. Legal language is used which carries the discussion beyond controversial religious matters to a formal and decisive level. The “arrest” of the people of Jerusalem was clearly imminent. For אכ תְּפֹּת זָרַע (lit. “causing guilt to be remembered”) see H. J. Boecker, *TZ* 17 (1961) 212–16; for combination with זָרַע “apprehend” cf. Num 5:13, 15; for the latter verb cf. Jer 37:14.

29 The divine communication now takes on the form of a judgment oracle, introduced by the messenger formula and consisting of the standard two parts of accusation and punishment. Weight is laid on the element of accusation. There was further and more compelling evidence against Jerusalem: it is summed up in general terms as rebellion and sin. This internal evidence was warrant enough for the strong arm of the divine law to act. Nebuchadnezzar was Yahweh’s policeman, providentially upholding law and order.

30–31 Zedekiah is singled out in a personal oracle. He is introduced not by name but by office (cf. 12:10, 12) and moral invective. There is a sinister allusion to the coming of the day of Yahweh in all its finality (cf. 7:2, 3, 6, 10, 12 and Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19* 114, 117, 119). Judah’s mounting history of

cf. confer, compare
TZ *Theologische Zeitschrift* (ThZ)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

sinfulness had reached a level that forced Yahweh to intervene (cf. Gen 15:16; 2 Kgs 21:11). Zedekiah’s own behavior had been “the last straw that breaks the camel’s back” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 83, cf. 17:11–21). He is to lose his royal status: Yahweh’s staccato orders already ring out, stripping his vassal of power. The social order was to be overthrown in the coming crisis, along with the regime of king and government.

32 The oracle reverts more generally to the fate of Jerusalem, which is the basic theme of the overall message (for the pronoun “it” cf. “them” in v 28). The unusual term הַדוּד “ruin” seems to have been used deliberately for a play on דֶּשָּׁם “guilt” earlier. Its triple mention echoes the three instances of הַדוּד in vv 28–30. The punishment was to fit the crime, stresses the rhetoric. Yahweh would execute his sentence: his involvement in the situation is now disclosed by way of climax. The absolute climax is reserved for a damning echo of Gen 49:10 (cf. W. Moran, Bib 39 [1958] 416–25). The traditional promise of prosperity for Judah is subjected to prophetic reversal. The prophets typically gave sinister reinterpretation to motifs of hope (cf. Amos 5:18–20; Isa 28:21). V32b has been understood by some in terms of restoration (e.g., RSV; Smend 147; Eichrodt 302–4), perhaps envisaging the replacement of Jehoiachin as king (Fohrer 125–26; Carley 143–44). However, the use of the same phrase כִּי לֹא אוּלָה יַעֲשֶׂה “and I shall assign the judgment” in 23:24b in terms of the Babylonians points inexorably to “judgment” as the rendering of the noun rather than “right” (RSV), as Moran (Bib 39 [1958] 422–25) and Zimmerli (447) have emphasized (cf. M. Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel [Oxford: Clarendon, 1985] 502–3; Seitz, Theology in Conflict 151–54). By his parody Ezekiel indicated that this was no time for claiming royal promises (cf. the seeming parody of Isa 2:4 and Mic 4:3 in Joel 4[3]:10). Doubtless he was countering a claim currently being made by his contemporaries in exile. Instead, Yahweh’s agent was the one who had been presented as his virtual policeman in vv 28–29, none other than Nebuchadnezzar. The oracle ends as it began, with the Babylonian king in the limelight.

33, 34 The final oracle weaves together threads drawn from the three previous ones. Lang has contended that “the Ammonites” is a subsequent insertion and that the oracle originally applied to Judah and was reapplied as too shocking by subsequent insertion of new addressees (Kein Aufstand, 120–125; VT 29 [1979] 40–41). However, in a literary sense the oracle as it stands fits the context. As for his argument that the second התמרא “and say” is a case of resumptive repetition after intervening material was inserted, see Note 14.a. above. The oracle begins by taking up the unfinished business of v

cf. confer, compare
Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare

" 14.a. Heb. יָעַשֶּׂה “say” is seemingly redundant after התמרא “and say” earlier. This may be why LXX* Syr. omitted it. The well–attested form התמרא in v 33 appears to be a paraphrase that presupposes it in a passage that echoes elements earlier in the chapter (cf. Zimmerli 449).
and promises that Ammon’s fate was merely deferred, in reprisal for exultation over the downfall of Jerusalem, which is described in 25:3, 6. The sinister sword of vv 13–22 is summoned for a fresh mission, which will make short shrift of the religious optimism of the Ammonites and at last get justice done.

35–37 Was Babylonian hegemony—for such the sword implies in the light of v 24 (Zimmerli 448–49)—to be Yahweh’s last word? By no means. A voice offstage, as it were, gives an order for the sword to be replaced in its scabbard. Then the sword is addressed afresh, now as Yahweh’s victim. Its work done, it is destined for destruction in its sheath, the place it came from, just as the Assyrian rod of Yahweh’s anger had at length been broken (Isa 10:5–19; 37:23–38; cf. Mic 5:4, 5 [5, 6]). Babylon too was doomed to fall (cf. Isa 13–14; 47; Hab 1:6–2:20; Jer 50:1–51:58).

Explanation

The chapter is dominated by the image of the sword of judgment. In the powerful poem that stands at its heart the sword functions as a destructive force unleashed by Yahweh and so an instrument of his providential will. In the first oracle it is described more precisely as Yahweh’s sword, seemingly wielded for breach of covenant, while in the third it is Nebuchadnezzar’s, who functions as Yahweh’s agent in punishing an immoral community. Divine and human factors are intertwined in Ezekiel’s representation of Judah’s grim future.

The prophet’s agenda is to interact convincingly with his fellow exiles. They are not allowed to concentrate pettily on the medium at the expense of the message (v 5). It is too late for the theologically inclined to barter with God, as if a righteous remnant could preserve the city (cf. Gen 18:22–33). A symbolic action concerning reaction to crisis serves to reinforce the message, which far from being fabricated by Ezekiel was an expression of divine truth (“hear,” “heard” in vv 3, 12). The dynamic centerpiece of the chapter intends to sway Ezekiel’s fellow exiles by its emotive poetry, as they are permitted to overhear Yahweh’s commissioning of sword and prophet to execute his terrible will. In the third oracle any flickering hopes of the exiles are firmly quenched. Jerusalem would not be allowed more time to repel the invader. Pagan religion would not lose the day against an external structure of Yahwistic faith. Above all, appeal to an ancient word of salvation could not be allowed to nullify Yahweh’s present word of judgment. The catastrophe, eventually to materialize in 587 B.C., was inevitable. The prophet tells them naught for their comfort.

As in chap. 20, the final, supplementary oracle wants to peep around the corner of its pre-587 context. It seeks to consider more widely the issues raised earlier. Both by its rhetorical techniques and its content it endeavors to draw two matters to a satisfactory conclusion. First, Ammon was not to go scot free, despite Nebuchadnezzar’s choice to attack Judah instead. Its turn would come, as 25:1–7 was to amplify. If Judah’s guilt had to be punished (v 30), so too had Ammon’s (v 34). Second, in vv 35–37 an issue is broached of passionate concern to other prophets. Was Babylon to rule unchecked, as Yahweh’s favorite? Or, in theological terms, was Yahweh wedded to the sword? The negative answer turns judgment into a means, not an end, and so implicitly lets a chink of light into the dark early messages of Ezekiel. Beyond hopelessness there might yet be hope. If Yahweh was eventually to take up cudgels on behalf of his impugned people (v 33), it was a hint that, though temporarily enemies of God (v 8), their election was veiled rather than revoked (cf. Rom 11:28, 29).
Jerusalem: The Inside Story (22:1–31)

Bibliography


Translation

1I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2Human one, would you pass judgment, would you pass judgment, please, a on the bloodstained city? Inform it of all its shocking behavior, b saying, This is a message from the Lord a Yahweh: City b spilling blood inside yourself c to bring closer your time of reckoning and making yourself d idols to pollute yourself with, 4 you have incurred guilt from the blood you have spilled and pollution from the idols you have made, and so you have brought your period of reckoning a closer and your years of retribution nearer. b

JSS Journal of Semitic Studies
vol. volume
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
FzB Forschungen zur Bibel
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

a 2.a. See the note on 20:4. The omission of the second verb in a few MSS LXX* Syr. is a shortening of Ezekiel’s idiomatic repetition (Zimmerli 452; cf. 20:4) rather than original (cf. BHS). In support of the Heb. may be cited J. S. Kselman’s observation of a semantic-sonant chiasmus in an ABBA pattern (Bib 58 [1957] 221). The repeated verbs form the B/B elements, and the µ̄d ̄a “human being” and µ̄ymdh ̄h “blood” the A/A elements.

b 3.a. For the authenticity of ynda “Lord” in this formula here and in vv 19 and 28 and in the formula of v 12 see the first note on 20:3.

b 3.b. LXX w[“O” implies a vocative (l ̄y)] h lost by haplography after h w ̄y (Zimmerli, ibid.; Eichrodt 308; cf. v 5 and GKC 126e).

c 3.c. For the change from second to third person after a vocative in the Heb. of the rest of the verse see GKC 144p and cf. Isa. 22:16; 2 Kgs 9:31.

d 3.d. Heb. h ̄y[ means “on behalf of herself”: cf. BDB 754a, b and l ̄h w[ “do for” in Neh 5:19.

a 4.a. Tg.’s sg form for ̄y ̄m “your days” would be easier (cf. 21:30 [25]), but 12:23 provides a parallel.
That is why I have made you the object of other nations’ insults, the scorn of every country.  
Countries nearby and far from you scorn you, famed as you are for pollution and eminent as you are for your social disorder.  
For instance, you have had present in you Israel’s heads of state who used their respective powers to spill blood.  
Present in you are persons who dishonor fathers and mothers, treat resident aliens oppressively and abuse orphans and widows.  
You have despised what is sacred to me and desecrated my sabbaths.  
Present in you are informers who are responsible for blood being spilled. Present in you are people who eat on the mountains. Present in you are people who practice lasciviousness.  
Present in you are those who go to bed with their stepmothers, and others who force themselves on women suffering from menstrual pollution.  
One man shockingly carries on with his neighbor’s wife, another lasciviously sullies his daughter-in-law, while yet another man present in you forces himself on his half sister.  
Present in you are people who take bribes to get blood spilled. You charge interest and usury and oppressively extort money from your neighbors. You have forgotten me!” So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.

Accordingly I clench my fist at the extortionate profit you have made and at the spilling of blood that has taken place inside your walls. Will your courage last, will you have any strength in your hands during the period I am dealing with you? I, Yahweh, have spoken and I will act. I will scatter you among the nations, dispersing you throughout other countries, and I will remove your pollution from you completely. I will let the other nations take a debased view of me on your account, but you will realize that I am Yahweh.”

I received the following communication from Yahweh: Human one, the community of Israel has turned into dross in their relations with me. All of them are copper, tin, iron and lead in...
the furnace: they have turned into dross. So this is the message of the Lord Yahweh. Inasmuch as you have all turned into dross, for that reason I am going to put you together inside Jerusalem. In the same way as silver, copper, iron, lead and tin are put together inside a furnace, ready for the metal ore to be blasted with fire in order to melt it down, that is how I in my anger and fury am going to put you together and melt you down. I will blast you with the fire of my wrath and you will be melted down inside Jerusalem. In the same way that silver is melted in a furnace, so will you be melted down inside it. Then you will realize that I, Yahweh, have vented my fury on you.”

I received the following communication from Yahweh: “Human one, tell Jerusalem, You are a region that has received no rain, upon which no shower has fallen at a time of indignation.

a 18.a. For K gwsl (“to backslide?”) the usual form µygIsil “to dross” is expected, as in v 19a (cf. v 18b). Probably mem was dropped by pseudohaplography before kaph (cf. v 20). Q gysl appears to be an intermediate form.
b 18.b. For this sense of µ “to me” cf. the idiomatic usage of lamed of reference with a lamed of new condition, illustrated in BDB 512b (4b).
c 18.c. MT 5 k adds “silver,” a gloss mistakenly intended to supply the metal missing from the list in comparison with v 20 (see Comment and Zimmerli 463). LXX indirectly attests its secondary nature: in its underlying Heb. MS. evidently stood in place of rwk “furnace” because a marginal 5 k had been wrongly taken as a correction for rwk and displaced it. Accordingly LXX* does not represent it where MT does.
a 20.a. MT 1 x b q “gathering” has lost an initial kaph by pseudohaplography after mem (cf. v 18); it is attested by LXX Syr. Tg.. The cognate construction “gather with the like of a gathering” is matched by that of v 22a (cf. GKC 117p-q, 118s).
c 20.c. For û y t nh l “to smelt” LXX Syr. attest niph t bh l but the hiph accords with the hoph form in v 22 (Cooke 247). In pausal forms of pe-nun verbs there is a tendency not to assimilate the nun (GKC 66f; Bauer-Leander 151).
d 20.d. MT adds y t j nh w “and I will deposit,” absent from Syr. perhaps as incomprehensible. It was evidently an attempt to make sense of an abandoned error (yt k) t hj wunder the influence of û y t nh l earlier: see JSS 31 (1986) 131–33 for elaboration of this and the next notes.
a 21.a. MT prefaces with µ k t a y t s nh w, intended as a qal with the meaning “and I will bring you in” and meant as an explanatory gloss on y t j nh win v 20. In the Heb. MS. underlying LXX (kai; s unaww) the same gloss, without the pronominal object, had displaced y t j nh w.
b 24.b. MT hr h f nh “cleansed” hardly fits the term in the parallel clause. LXX bercowmewh “rained on” attests an original hr = mu a pual ptcp lacking the preformative mem (cf. GKC 52s; cf. BHS) or, better, since this verb occurs in the hiph but not piel, a hoph pf hr f nh assuming haplography of he (NEB [Brockington, Hebrew Text 227]). There is then a relative clause with ellipse of ḫ ṣā “which”; for the resumptive pronoun cf. 2 Kgs 22:13.
c 24.c. MT nh mswg appears to be a mixed form, combining a pual ptcp h m ly G (cf. BHS et al.) “showered upon” with a suffixed noun “its showers” (from µ y ṣ?).
Its heads of state were reminiscent of a roaring lion tearing its prey: they devoured lives, seized wealth and riches and widowed many women inside its walls. Its priests did despite to my law and desecrated what is sacred to me. They made no distinction between what is impure and pure, while they turned a blind eye to my sabbaths. The result is that I have been besmirched among them. Inside its walls were officials like wolves who tore their prey—spilling blood and destroying lives for extortionate profit. On the people of the land they practiced oppression and committed robbery. The poor and needy they abused, and resident aliens they treated unjustly.

28 Its prophets whitewashed them by seeing false visions and making lying divinations for them, while claiming ‘This is a message from the Lord Yahweh’ when Yahweh had not spoken at all. I looked for a person from their number who would build a barricade and on the land’s behalf stand in the breach in front of me, to stop me destroying it; but I could not find anyone. So I vented my indignation on them, I consumed them with the fire of my wrath, I held them responsible for their behavior.” So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.

24.d. An emendation מז “storm,” suggested by Ehrlich (Randglossen 88; cf. BHK) is prohibited by the structural role of מז “indignation” (Zimmerli 465).

25.a. MT “conspiracy of its prophets” is generally judged inferior to יָאָ֣וֹת רֵצְתָּא “whom rulers,” attested by LXX. MT here and in v 24 may have originated in a pair of rubrical terms, placed in the margin to indicate the theme of v 26, ר הֵֽעַ “pure” and שֵׁלֵד “holy” (cf. in principle Freedy, VT 20 [1970] 141–44). cf. the confusion of של and של in Isa 8:12–14 (see H. Wildberger, Jesaja 1–12 [BKAT 2, 1980] 334–35; J. D. W. Watts, Isaiah 1–33 [WBC, 1985] 119). MT יָאָוֹת חֲרָמָא “its prophets” has been assimilated to the term in v 28. In favor of יָאָוֹת רֵצְתָּא “its rulers,” apart from LXX, is the use of the term in Zeph 3:4, which underlies the passage, and the same imagery in 19:3, 6 used of ר חֲרָמָא יָאָוֹת “rulers of Israel” (M. Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 462 n. 9).

25.b. For מַקְרָא קַל “they seize” a pf מַקָּר מַקָּר, read by 2 MSS, is often preferred, in line with the adjacent verbs (cf. BHS). However, Zimmerli (465) has compared the tense changes in 18:5–9, 10–13. Was there a desire for assonance (מקרא קלא מקרא קלא)?

26.a. MT מָצֵּי ה “the impure” does not align with anarthrous מָצֵּי מָצֵּי. c and a few MSS read the expected מָצֵּי, as in 44:23. MT may have arisen from a comparative gloss citing מָצֵּי ה in Lev 10:10; 11:47.

26.a. For the verbal continuation, indicating synonymous parallelism, see B. Johnson, Hebräisches Perfekt und Imperfekt mit vergehenden w (Lund: Gleerup, 1979) 79.

29.b. In place of ומ “they oppressed,” ומ “they dealt,” attested by LXX, is generally regarded as preferable: cf. v 7. Mechanical assimilation to מ כ earlier was responsible for MT Heb. מ כ is then the preposition “with.”

29.c. Cornill (316) transposed vv 28 and 29, taking מ ה “the people of the land” as object with LXX Syr.. He noted that the section concerning the officials is then about as long as the one relating to the rulers in vv 25–26 and that v 30 more naturally refers to a prophetic obligation, as in 13:5. V 28 could easily have dropped out by a slip of the eye from מ רַֽשָּׁם אלב (v 29) to ר בּוֹל מ ה (v 28).

Then it was reinserted too soon on the assumption that (a) מ ה was the subject and so (b) a reference to prophets should go earlier alongside specific leadership groups rather than after a general statement. The structure of clauses in v 29 suggests that מ ה functions as object (cf. v 25). Then מ מ “from them” in v 30 relates to the prophets, while מ יל “upon them” in v 31 refers to the Judeans generally, after the references to the land and its destruction in v 30b.
Notes

2.a. See the note on 20:4. The omission of the second verb in a few MSS LXX* Syr. is a shortening of Ezekiel’s idiomatic repetition (Zimmerli 452; cf. 20:4) rather than original (cf. BHS). In support of the Heb. may be cited J. S. Kselman’s observation of a semantic-sonant chiasmos in an ABBA pattern (Bib 58 [1957] 221). The repeated verbs form the B/B elements, and the µd play of µd “human being” and µymd “blood” the A/A elements.

3.a. For the authenticity of µnd µ “Lord” in this formula here and in vv 19 and 28 and in the formula of v 12 see the first note on 20:3.

3.b. LXX w[“O” implies a vocative (l y) ] lost by haplography after h Wh y (Zimmerli, ibid.; Eichrodt 308; cf. v 5 and GKC 126e).

3.c. For the change from second to third person after a vocative in the Heb. of the rest of the verse see GKC 144p and cf. Isa. 22:16; 2 Kgs 9:31.


4.a. Tg.’s sg form for µymy “your days” would be easier (cf. 21:30 [25]), but 12:23 provides a parallel.

MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980) 
cf. confer, compare 
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977) 
Heb. Hebrew
Bib Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
ibid. ibidem, in the same place 
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew 
cf. confer, compare
Tg. Targum
sg singular or under 
cf. confer, compare
4.b. MT ṣawbt w“and you (masc.) have come to (your years)” is generally emended in line with the parallel clause to ṣeyabbišt w“and you (fem.) have advanced the time.” The verbal form is attested by LXX Vg, and the noun by 2 MSS QOr and the ancient versions. Hossfeld (Untersuchungen 115) has noted the association of ṣawbt “time” and ṣeyawbišt “day(s)” in 7:7, 12; 12:27; 21:30, 34; 30:3. Probably MT arose via an intermediate reading ṣawbt w“and the time has come,” as Syr. Tg. rendered.

10.a. lit. “uncover the nakedness of a father.” The sg verb of MT may be a mechanical assimilation to the verbs of v 11 from an original ṣawbt ṣawbt, seemingly attested by the ancient versions.

13.a. The pf functions as performative, indicating instantaneous action (cf. Joüon 112f).

13.b. The following pl. verb suggests a reading ṣeyawbišt ṣeyawbišt for MT ṣeyawbišt ṣeyawbišt “your blood,” with a few MSS and LXX. The sg ṣawbt in v 12, etc, has influenced MT.

16.a-a. For MT’s second person verb yTiljnw “and I will be profaned” is generally read; it is attested by one MS and the ancient versions. This is supported by ṣawbišt ṣawbišt “on your account,” while ṣawbišt ṣawbišt “in the eyes of the nations” commonly accompanies mention of Yahweh’s profanation (20:9, 14, 22; cf. 36:20). MT may simply represent a wrong interpretation of yTiljnw as an archaism for ṣawbišt (cf. GKC.}

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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
masc. masculine
fem. feminine
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MSS manuscript(s)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Tg. Targum
lit. literally
sg singular or under
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
pf perfect
cf. confer, compare
pl. plate or plural
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
sg singular or under
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
44h), under the influence of the following verb.

16.b. MT µywgl “nations” seems to be a slip for µywgh “the nations,” attested by many MSS.

18.a. For K gwsl (“to backslide?”) the usual form µygIsil “to dross” is expected, as in v 19a (cf. v 18b). Probably mem was dropped by pseudohaplography before kaph (cf. v 20). Q gysl appears to be an intermediate form.

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since this verb occurs in the hiph but not piel, a hoph pf hr f hophal assuming haplography of he (NEB [Brockington, Hebrew Text 227]). There is then a relative clause with ellipse of r sh “which”; for the resumptive pronoun cf. 2 Kgs 22:13.

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a desire for assonance (\( wjqy \) r q yw)?

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**Form/Structure/Setting**

Chap. 22 is composed of three prophetic units, vv 1–16, 17–22 and 23–31, each introduced by the message reception formula and focusing upon Jerusalem. The first is a proof saying, as the recognition formula of v 16b shows. It is basically a judgment oracle addressed to Jerusalem, with accusations leveled in general terms in vv 3ab–4a and in detail in vv 6–12, while sentence is passed in vv 13–15. Interim judgment, which lies in the past, is cited in vv 4b–5. Vocatives begin and end vv 3ab–5, which are thus characterized as having an introductory role in relation to the oracle as a whole. The divine saying formula in v 12 provides a caesura for the first half of the main oracle. An affirmation formula occurs near the end, in v 14b.
Like very many of Ezekiel’s prose oracles, this oracle is marked by an elevated style. It is especially evident in the introductory section, which consists of two parts, each with its own parallelism, vv 3ab–4a and 4b–5. The ABCD/ACDB repetitive scheme in the former highlights both the shedding of blood and the attraction of doom. To delete v 4a as “needlessly repetitive” (Freedy, VT 20 [1970] 145 n. 2) is to overlook the powerful role of repetition in the book. Vv 6–12 present accusations that develop those of the introduction. Like chap. 18, this section draws freely from traditional listings of obligations that have been infringed (cf. Reventlow, Wächter über Israel, 104–5). It falls into two parts, vv 6–8 and 9–12. Each concludes with statements that have Jerusalem as their subject (vv 8, 12), the second being climactically longer. The phrase µd ûp “in order to shed blood” in vv 6, 9 and 12 functions as a double inclusion, for vv 6–12 and also for vv 9–12. Another inclusion is q û “in oppression” in vv 7 and 12. The phrase ūb wyh “they have been in you” significantly occurs in vv 6a and 9a. In fact the term ūb “in you” is a persistent element, occurring three times in vv 6–7 and six in vv 9–12. Once in each part it is stylistically varied by ūkwtb “in your midst” (vv 7, 9). There are close rhetorical links with the introduction, which twice uses µd ūp and specifies hkwtb “in her midst” and ūb. Moreover, the stem a mf “be unclean,” twice used in vv 3–4, is formally echoed by its presence in vv 10, 11.

In the final section, vv 13–16, hnh “and behold” is used to introduce divine reprisal for the accusations prefaced with hnh “behold” in v 6. The stem x b “extort” is used as an intersectional hinge (vv 12, 13). The reference to Jerusalem’s activity (ty, v 13) picks up the use of the verb in vv 7, 9, and 11, and also in the first section at v 4. It meets its match in the divine activity of v 14 (h û, yt û, yst û). The drumbeats of the prepositional terms ūk wt b and ū b sound here too (vv 13, 16), while the reference to “blood” (ûymd, v 13) brings to a climax a concern of the whole oracle. So too does mention of “uncleanness” (ût a mf ) in v 15. Specific throwbacks to the introductory section, by way of inclusion, are to be found in the international references (t W R a “countries” and µywg “nations”) in vv 4b–5 and 15–16 and the sinister references to coming “days” (ûymy, µymyl ) in vv 4a and 14. There are thus strong rhetorical features which both characterize the three sections of the oracle and bind it together into a compact whole. Together with form-critical factors the tight bonding gives the impression of compositional—rather than redactional—unity, which hardly comports with suggestions that vv 13–16 are secondary (Zimmerli 455, 459; Wevers 128) or that only vv 1–5 and 14 are original (Fohrer 128). Greenberg has discussed the authenticity of 22:1–16 in Ezekiel and His Book 128–31, with reference to Hossfeld’s arguments that a basic oracle, vv 1–6, 9a, 12, has been expanded with insertions and supplemented first with vv 13–14 and then with vv 15–16 (Untersuchungen 148–152). Schulz (Das Todesrecht) has argued that a number of passages, including 22:1–16, which depend on established sets of laws, are to be attributed to a post-exilic Deutero-Ezekiel. However, Zimmerli, ZAW 84 (1972) 501–16, has observed that many of these passages reflect the historical situation of Ezekiel’s own period.

This first oracle reflects particularly well the midpoint historical position peculiar to Ezekiel’s first period of prophesying. It looks back to the catastrophe of 597 B.C. and forward to the further, final one of 587. It has a geographical setting in Babylonia. Rhetorical address, here of Jerusalem, is a common prophetic phenomenon and against Brownlee (Ezekiel 1–19 xxiv, 58, 220) there is no need to suppose the prophet’s presence in the city. Certainly the use of traditional material as a basis for the detailed accusations strikes a different note from the immediacy of the denunciations of an Isaiah or a Jeremiah.

*VT* Vetus Testamentum
*cf.* confer, compare
*ZAW* Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
The second oracle in vv 17–22 is a proof saying developed from a judgment oracle. Working with a consistent metallurgical image, it presents accusation in v 18 and predicts punishment in vv 19–22, at the beginning of which the accusation of v 18 is briefly resumed, while the list of metals resumed from v 18 in v 20 provides a further link. The accusatory part is defined by a chiastic inclusion, μγσ … ωη “they have become dross” and ωη … μγσ. In turn vv 20–22a are marked by an inclusion ὁκ … ὁ “as … so,” in vv 20 and 22a; in logical terms a simile is presented at length in vv 20–21 and summarized in v 22a. An inclusion for the whole oracle is provided by ῥ ῳ “in the midst of a furnace” at vv 18 and 22. In fact, the oracle is dominated by a wordplay ῳ and ῳ “smelt” (Parunak, Structural Studies 330), which gives rhetorical point to the imagery. Six times ῳ is used concerning the furnace and Jerusalem in an alternating arrangement (ABABAB). The three verbs of the simile in v 20a ἄβκ “gather,” ἰπν “blast” and ῳ “smelt,” are picked up in turn in vv 20b–22a so as to create an ABC/AC/BC/CC pattern, with the element of smelting occurring emphatically at the end of four consecutive statements. There is a further rhetorical scheme that again runs from v 20 but now includes v 22b. The sequence of ῶ “fire,” ῵ “my anger” and ῵ “my fury” (v 20) is resumed with one variant in ῶ, ῵ ῵ “my wrath” and ῵ “my wrath” (vv 21, 22) in an ABCAB’C distribution. As in the first oracle, there is tight rhetorical structuring here in the second.

In its historical setting this one too looks forward to the final catastrophe, specifically to the successful siege begun early in 588 B.C. The introductory third person references to the people who were to be gathered in Jerusalem reflect the prophet’s position in exile, while the subsequent second person address has a rhetorical function.

The third oracle, in vv 23–31, is an unusual type of judgment oracle in that, like Isa 1:2–9, it looks back to the past in its description of punishment (see esp. v 31). The note of judgment envelops the oracle in vv 24 and 31, while the accusations are presented in four sections in vv 25–29. In line with the content an expression of divine displeasure, μ[ζ/μζ “(my) indignation,” functions as an inclusion in vv 24 and 31 (cf. Zimmerli 467). The four sections accusing civil and religious leaders are presented in an ABA’B’ order. The similes of predation link the A/A’ sections (vv 25, 27), while the topics of taking life and property from the underprivileged pervade both (vv 25, 27, 29). In the B/B’ sections a series of shortcomings is capped by a statement with a divine subject (vv 26, 28). Verbal repetition is a feature of most of the sections: cognate phrases in the first and third (vv 25, 27, 29) and also in v 30; triple use of a stem in the second (Ware/ “they profaned,” W / “and they profaned,” W / “and I was profaned” in v 26); and double usage in the fourth (μ[ “they say,” ῵ “he has said” in v 28).

Historically the oracle seems to presuppose the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. As to authorship, there is a strong scholarly consensus that its composition is to be credited to Ezekiel’s “school” (cf. Fohrer 130; Zimmerli 467; Wevers 131; Eichrodt 316). First, there seems to be literary dependence on Zeph 3:3–4, 8 (cf. Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 461–63), where a fourfold sequence of Jerusalem’s civil and religious authorities occurs (but in an AA’BB’ order). Apart from structure, the language is remarkably close in places: ῦ[ “the profaned the holy” and ῦ[ “they did despite to the law” in Zeph 3:4 (cf. v 26 here), ῦ[ “wolves” in 3:3 (cf. v 27) and ῵[ “to pour out on them my indignation” in 3:8 (cf. v 31). The oracle seems to have been composed with consultation of a
scroll of Zephaniah. The material cited seems to date from the end of the seventh century B.C. (cf. W. Rudolph, *Micha, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanja* [KAT, 1975] 256, 287–90) and so there is no intrinsic reason why Ezekiel himself did not make use of it, assuming that he had a hand in the literary adaptation of his oral oracles.

There are also clear verbal leanings on Ezek 13:2–16 in vv 28 and 30. Moreover, it is significant that the oracle starts in midstream, making mention of Jerusalem only with pronouns. This is quite comprehensible if the oracle was composed as a literary continuation of the previous two. Links with them are not lacking. As to the first oracle, v 25 harks back to v 6; v 26 is closely linked in vocabulary to v 8, and v 29 to v 7. V 27 echoes not only the double mention of extortion (עַל בַּדַּרְכֵּנָה) of vv 12–13, but also the refrain יִדְעֶהוּ פַּדַּל “in order to spill blood” in vv 6, 9 and 12, by the phrase יִדְעֶהוּ פַּדַּל “to spill blood.” As to the second oracle, the references to divine anger in vv 21 and 22 are echoed in v 31.

What provides the closest overall link between the oracles is the presence of *ûw* (ב) “in the midst” with direct or indirect reference to Jerusalem. Not only is it found in the first two oracles, but the third has it three times in vv 25 and 26. A second common feature is the stem יִפְרַע “pour out”: human spilling of blood (vv 6, 9, 12, 27) finds reprisal in the outpouring of divine wrath (vv 21, 31): it is the third oracle that contains both. The combination of the three oracles is a result of devoted editorial labors that sought to highlight the deserved fate of Jerusalem.

**Comment**

1–5 In terms close to those of 20:4, Ezekiel is invited to transmit a message of crime and punishment; but now the perspective is contemporary or recent rather than historical, and it is Jerusalem’s behavior that comes under scrutiny. It is characterized initially as “city of bloodshed,” a phrase used of Nineveh in Nah 3:1! In the ensuing exposition two offenses are specified, not only holding human life cheap (cf. 11:6), but also abandoning Israel’s traditionally aniconic faith. An implicit link between the two finds expression in the priestly perspective of Gen 9:5–6: humanity is precious as the image of God, and humanity is his only image. The state of moral guilt and religious impurity that resulted from the capital’s behavior could not go unchecked by Yahweh as upholder of the social and sacred obligations he had laid on his people. Their wrongdoing would catch up with them; in fact they were inviting the onset of retribution (cf. Amos 6:3b). Already evidence was not lacking of such reprisal from Yahweh’s hand (cf. Hos. 4:3. Heb. אָל “that is why” introduces “the statement of a fact rather than a declaration” [BDB 487a]). The fall of Jerusalem in 597 B.C. had been his handiwork. Yet it is only the start of “years” of punishment. Loss of face was dreaded in Israelite culture, yet this had been what Jerusalem had incurred (cf. 16:57). Jerusalem the golden, “she that was great among the nations” (Lam 1:1; cf. Ezek 16:14), had to learn to live with the consequences of a new reputation, for

*cf. confer, compare
KAT E. Sellin (ed.), Kommentar zum Alten Testament
Heb. Hebrew
*cf. confer, compare*
religious and social shortcomings.

6–8 In vv 6–12 the accusations of vv 3–4a are developed. It is a roll call of infamy. First place is given to the royal house who over a number of generations had abused their political power, staining their hands with blood. Jeremiah’s strictures against Jehoiakim in Jer 22:13–19 for causing human suffering and death come readily to mind.

Commoners too followed in the kings’ steps, in their lack of respect for persons. Aged parents and other underprivileged groups such as resident aliens and orphans and widows had suffered a similar abuse of power, directed at those low in society’s pecking order. “The real test of any society is … how it treats the people with no voice and no power” (D. Lane, The Cloud and the Silver Lining [Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1985] 88). It is clear that Ezekiel is echoing Israel’s sacred lawcodes, for instance Exod 20:12; 22:20–26 (21–27), and implicitly claiming that their threat of retribution (e.g., Exod 22:22, 23 [23, 24]) was to be unleashed. This phase of the accusation is capped with cultic sins, with which the prophet confronted the city. Breaking the sabbath (cf. 20:12–13, 16, 21, 24) and infringing the cultic traditions of worship were a supreme affront to God in that they related to his revelation of himself (cf. Lev 19:30).

9–12 The second block of accusations is a catalog of three types of social disorder. The first recalls Lev 19:16, a prohibition of slander that could become the basis of false accusation at a trial for a capital offense. A religious wrong follows, mentioned earlier at 18:6, 11, 15, the eating of sacred meals at illicit shrines (cf. Hos 4:13). V 9b provides a headline (Zimmerli 458) for a series of five sexual crimes detailed in vv 10–11. They implicitly appeal to such traditions as are concentrated in Lev 20:10–18 (cf. Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 293). In Israelite thinking they stood on the borderline between social and sacred wrongs and partook of both: accordingly the term “unclean” is used of two of them. Three cases relate to incest, one to adultery and one, no less real a taboo in Israel’s culture, to intercourse during a wife’s period, while she was ritually unclean.

The third type of wrongdoing is mercenary. Bribery with a view to the fatal miscarriage of justice and capitalizing on another’s misfortune had featured in Israel’s legal traditions (see especially Exod 22:24 [25]; 23:8). Here it is accompanied with a general charge of racketeering. The switch to direct address paves the way for the final charge (to be repeated in 23:35) of forgetting Yahweh (cf. Hos 2:15 [13]). Here too Yahweh’s revelation of his comprehensive will in Israel’s lawcodes is presupposed.

13–15 The previous scenario of vv 6–12 triggers another, one of judgment (יהוה “behold,” v 6; יהוה “and behold,” v 13). Hand clapping, to which the text literally refers, seems here to be the gesture of a hostile reaction (cf. 21:22 [17]) to the profiteering and murder, examples that span the foregoing, from v 12 back to v 3. The provocative question of v 14 intends to stimulate a sense of foreboding. Human activity (v 13; cf. v 4) was to give way to the activity of Yahweh, guaranteed by his solemn promise (cf. 12:25, 28; 17:24). In plain terms, those spared exile in the first deportation of 597 B.C. would now encounter it (cf. 12:15; 20:23), and so by implication Jerusalem was to fall again. Such drastic action was

cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

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16 The corollary was a mixed one. In the conquest of the capital and exile of its people Yahweh would himself suffer, as 36:20 will explain. At last he had to come to a point earlier avoided (cf. 20:9, 14, 22). It was the lesser of two evils that he was prepared to endure as the price to pay for making his forgetful people remember who and what he was.

17, 18 If the first oracle devotes more space to accusation, the second in vv 17–22 concentrates on judgment. Brief as it is, the accusatory element here tellingly conveys its message by the metaphor of dross. Ezekiel can evidently assume that the negative meaning of the metaphor is intelligible to his audience as a condemnation of the people left in Judah. This is not only because a smattering of the silversmith’s art would be common knowledge, but also because its prophetic application could be presupposed. The prophet Ezekiel appears to be making fresh use of Isaiah’s illustration of Jerusalem’s political degeneration and coming punishment (Isa 1:22a [µ γυνῃ ἐν ἀθικῇ], 25). Jer 6:27–30 also seems dependent on Isaiah, but makes a different point, that Jeremiah with his prophetic message functions as the refiner (cf. J. W. Miller, Verhältnis 2 note 2, 113). Unlike Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel refers not to the whole process of refining but only to the preliminary stage of smelting, thereby ruling out any optimism such as Isa 1:21–26 offers. In v 18 there is reference to the raw material, lead ore, which is galena or lead sulfide, a mixture of lead and small quantities of other metals. Hopefully it would contain silver, the extraction of which was the object of the metallurgical exercise, although in practice the silver content would be less than 0.5%. But here Yahweh pronounces that it is all mere slag, devoid of silver. He speaks as one who stands at the end of the smelting process. Dross was one of the products of the smelting stage itself, as it is in Isa 1:22a. Here, as there, it represents an accusation. The Hebrew etymological association of “dross” with deviation appears to be presupposed.

19–22 Isa 1:25, after speaking earlier of the smelting process that produced dross, refers logically to the second stage of refining. Here, however, there is a return to the first stage. What in v 18 was a prophetic metaphor for worthlessness is re-used in a different way. The metaphor now stands not simply for the divine evaluation but for divine event. There is to be a gruesome acting out of the metaphor, with Jerusalem as victim. There is a theological parallel for the double usage in the Gospel of John, where the unbeliever is condemned already but still has to undergo the last judgment (John 3:18; 5:24; 12:48). Jerusalem was to be put through the fires of judgment in a physical approximation to the smelting process. The capital under siege would be the furnace to which heat was to be applied. Those gathered for protection would find destruction instead. There is a sinister play on smelting (ûtn) and the midst (ûwt) of the furnace or Jerusalem.

The smelting process consisted of two stages, the first of which was desulfurization, in which the galena was heated gently in a hearth furnace to release most of the sulfur in the form of sulfur dioxide, leaving a mixture of galena and lead oxide or litharge. The second stage took advantage of the fact that lead has a lower melting point than most of the other metals contained in the metallic mass. The furnace was heated enough to melt the lead and silver, leaving behind the dross. The concentrated silver-lead alloy was then subjected to a further stage, refining (Heb. ¹ l ỹ) to isolate the silver, but that seems to be beyond the purview of the text. In the smelting the temperature was controlled by blasts of air, provided by bellows according to Jer 6:29. A brief description of the smelting and refining techniques has been

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
supplied by W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1–25* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 231. A fuller description may be found in Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, vol. 8, 228–39. The three steps of inserting the crude metal, heating it with the aid of bellows and smelting it, are recounted as metallurgical facts in v 20a, then rhetorically the prophet gives the interpretation, taking each of the first two steps in turn and combining it with the third. In the summary of simile and explanation at v 22 two mentions of the final step occur side by side. The result is a sinister emphasis on smelting down the raw material and so on subjecting the people cowering in Jerusalem to enormous stress. This would be Yahweh’s way of teaching his people that unfaithful deviance from him (v 18) must end in tragic consequences, an experience of his wrath.

23, 24 The final oracle in this series of three, vv 23–31, reasons back from consequence to cause. The catastrophe of 587 B.C. was an outworking of divine indignation (vv 24, 31). The tradition of covenant curse or blessing whereby rain was the reward of loyalty to Yahweh and drought was a reprisal for unfaithfulness (cf. Lev 26:4, 19; Deut 11:14, 17; Amos 4:7) is here taken up by way of metaphor. Fallen Jerusalem is rhetorically bidden to reflect on the fact that its experience had been nothing less than divine judgment.

25–31 In a flashback the social history of the last period of Jerusalem is traced in terms of accusations that give warrant for the interpretation of v 24. The testimony of the prophet Zephaniah, who was contemporary with that period, is employed (Zeph 3:3, 4) and in fact the terms “day” and “indignation” in v 24 already drew on that source (Zeph 3:8). Jerusalem, viewed as administrative capital and religious center of the people of God, had proved to be a failure and so had to be obliterated (cf. Mic 3:9–12). The secular authorities, the priests and the prophets, are treated in an alternating scheme that looks from one authority to another and despairingly finds no cause for optimism anywhere.

By a terrible Jekyll and Hyde transformation the civil authorities who should have been shepherds with the welfare of their flock at heart changed into wild beasts preying on the sheep (cf. 34:8). Neither private property nor personal life had been immune to their ravages. While the royals had concentrated on such wrongdoing in Jerusalem, their officials who represented them in the provincial towns of Judah had illtreated people at large and especially the underprivileged. The priests, properly custodians of Israel’s sacred traditions and both practitioners and teachers of the vital norms of purity and holiness, belied their calling. They contravened the ideology of separation that lay at the heart of Israel’s cult in terms of calendar, food and many other aspects of religious life. Yahweh himself had been affected by these lapses, which allowed the impure and the unholy to infiltrate both a holy temple and a holy people. The tirade against the prophets is based on Ezekiel’s metaphor of whitewashing and accusation of erroneous predictions in 13:2–16. The canonical pre-exilic prophets regularly complained of professional colleagues who ignored glaring moral factors and preached a comfortable message of blessing and salvation (cf. e.g., Mic 3:1–8).

The climax of the accusation against the prophets comes in v 30, a reprise of 13:5. Prophetic intercession against the coming catastrophe had been conspicuous by its absence. It could have averted or at least postponed the end (cf. Amos 7:1–9; Jer 5:1). Yahweh had no alternative but to do his worst, in moral retribution for the authorities’ reneging on their duties, and to destroy Jerusalem, bastion of
perversity as it had become.

Explanation

Chap. 21 with its symbolism of the sword painted a picture of ruthless destruction. This chapter provides a rationale for such ruthlessness, telling the inside story of Jerusalem’s fate. Its keyword is ûwâ “midst,” a term that binds together its three separate oracles. Its association with Jerusalem seems to reflect traditional Zion theology, with its stress on the glory and security of God’s own city—but here in ironic denial (cf. v 5b in the light of Lam 1:1). The proud claims of worshipers in the temple courts was that they were able to praise Yahweh “in your midst (ûk wâ b), Jerusalem” (Ps 116:19). In the first oracle ûwâ “in the midst” appears in stylistic variation with ûb “in you.” One cannot help recalling the happy sentiments of a Song of Zion, Ps 87: “Glorious things are spoken of you (ûb), city of God” (v 3, cf. vv 5, 7), and the wish expressed in a pilgrim song, ûb ùb “May peace be in you” (Ps 122:8).

But Ezekiel found less happy ways of describing Jerusalem in vv 6–12. Its once valid claims proved hollow and pretentious. Jerusalem was destroyed from within; Yahweh’s work of destruction only endorsed what Jerusalem had already done to itself.

The emphasis on moral irresponsibility in the first and third oracles is a vindication of other traditions in Judah’s history. If Zion theology proved a mirage, there were other traditions that triumphed. The taking of human life and the misrepresentation of divine reality by means of images were particularly repugnant to priestly thinking. And the sacred lawcodes laid down wider standards for living in the presence of God. For Ezekiel recent history had already shown the priority of such criteria in Yahweh’s providential ordering of Jerusalem’s experience (vv 4b, 5). Respect for persons and their property, for religious traditions and for justice was ignored at Jerusalem’s peril. A right regard for sexuality stands at the heart of human relations, proclaims this oracle by setting at its center a series of examples of perverse sexuality. The climax of its second part comes at the end of v 12: Yahweh’s will was enshrined in such traditions, and to ignore them was to forget him.

If God’s ancient word had gone unheard (cf. 20:13), so too had his contemporary, prophetic word, states the third oracle, which no longer anticipates the final tragedy of 587 B.C. but looks back at it. Zephaniah’s denunciations of Jerusalem’s civil and religious administration had been fulfilled in its experience of divine curse. Moreover, Ezekiel’s own charges in chap. 13 had found verification. In the fall of Jerusalem the divine word in the law and the prophets stood all the more firm. For all its failure, the crisis of 587 B.C. paid tribute to Yahweh’s revealed will and to the seriousness of his moral and religious claims upon his people. With similar challenge and in seeming echo of terms used in this chapter (cf. vv 2–4, 10, 11, 15, 28), the seer of Patmos spoke of the new Jerusalem, affirming that “nothing unclean shall enter it nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood” (Rev 21:27).

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
Chronic Nymphomania (23:1–49)

Bibliography


Translation

1I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2“Human one, there were once two women, daughters of the same mother. 3They became loose women in Egypt; while still girls, they became loose women. a

There it was their breasts were squeezed, there they had their virgin bosoms fondled. b

4The older one’s name was Oholah and her sister’s name was Oholibah. I married them a

and they gave birth to sons and daughters. b

5Oholah continued her loose behavior while she was under my authority: she had affairs with her lovers. a

They were soldiers b

in purple uniforms, officers and men of rank; b

all of them were handsome young cavalrymen, riding on horseback. 7She bestowed her loose favors on them, all of them the pick of the Assyrians, and with all those with whom she had love affairs, with all their idols, she sullied herself. 8Nor did she abandon her loose ways practiced back in the days of the Egyptians a

who had slept with her as a girl, fondling her virgin bosom and wantonly ejaculating b

upon her. 9That is why I handed her over to her lovers, the Assyrians she had affairs with. 10They it was who exposed her naked body, took away her sons and

Int Interpretation

BZA W Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
FS Festschrift, volume written in honor of
ed. edited, edition(s), editor

3.a. The omission of וּבַז they fornicated” in LXX Syr. is a case of stylistic abbreviation (Zimmerli 471). L. Boadt, VT 25 (1975) 699, has drawn attention to the ABB´A chiasmus.

3.b. Heb. וּבַז “they squeezed” has an indefinite subj.

4.a. cf. BDB 226b.

4.b. MT and the ancient versions add “and their names: Oholah is Samaria and Oholibah is Jerusalem.” The addition is widely recognized as an early marginal gloss on v 4aa. The clues are the odd positioning and the presence of the cue word יָדְעָה and their names,” for which cf. in principle Freedy, VT 20 (1970) 131–36. The interpretation was inspired by v 33.

5.a. MT and the ancient versions add תִּשְׂאוּ אלוֹנָה a concerning Assyria,” which seems to be an early gloss anticipating v 7ab.

5.b. Heb. יָאֹת Q is related to בְּרָנָה “battle” (HALAT 1063b, following Ewald and Fohrer). The term is to be taken closely with v 6.


6.b. Heb. יוֹנָס Q “governors and prefects” here and in vv 12 and 23 seems to be used loosely of highranking officials. For the vagueness of הָא see HALAT872b with reference to A. Alt.

8.a. Heb. (יוֹרְחִים Q) יָר “from (Egypt[ians])” is used in a temporal sense, “since the time.”

8.b. Heb. וּבַז “fornication” seems to be an euphemism in view of the verb.
daughters, and used a sword to kill her. She became notorious to other women, after sentence had been carried out upon her.

11 “Her sister Oholibah observed all this, only to become even more corrupt in her affairs and loose ways, which were worse than her sister’s. 12 She engaged in love affairs with the Assyrians, who were officers and men of rank, soldiers in magnificent uniforms, cavalymen riding on horseback, all of them handsome young men. 13 I observed that she sullied herself—now both had gone the same way. 14 But she carried her loose ways even further. She saw on a wall reliefs of male figures, engraved representations of Chaldeans outlined in vermilion: 15 they had sashes round their waists and flowing turbans on their heads. The reliefs were wholly of officers, illustrating Babylonians whose native country was Chaldea. 16 When her eyes caught sight of them, she wanted love affairs and sent envoys to Chaldea for them. 17 The Babylonians came and shared her love bed, sullying her with their loose ways. Once sullied by them, she reacted against them with disgust.

18 That was the reaction I had to her for flaunting her loose ways and exploiting her naked body, just as I had reacted against her sister. 19 She took her loose living further, remembering her girlhood when she had lived so loosely in the country of the Egyptians. 20 She had love affairs with Egyptian paramours, who rivaled asses in the size of their penises and horses in the amount of sperm they produced. 21 You missed the lascivious ways of your girlhood, when the Egyptians fondled your breasts, squeezing your young bosom.

22 “So, Oholibah, this message comes from the Lord Yahweh: I mean to influence against you the lovers you turned from with disgust. I will get them to invade you from all quarters—the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, Shoa and Koa, all the Assyrians with them, handsome young men, all officers and men of rank, adjutants and heroes, all riding on horseback. 24 They will invade you … with chariots and wagons and with an international army. From all quarters they would march against you in a vast array, 25 and shout against you:

Note:

a 12.a. Heb. ℓ[w k m “perfection” is a case of stylistic variation: Syr. assimilated to ℓ[ k t “purple” in v 6.

b 16.a. Q h b g l t w coordinates with the form in v 20.

c 17.a. In this chapter the impf. is derived from the stem [ Q [y (vv 17, 18) and the pf from [ Q n (vv 22, 28).

b 20.a. For the ending, influenced by the coh form in the first person consec impf., see GKC 48d.

b 20.b. lit. “their.”

c 20.c. Heb. μwgl p is elsewhere fem. and means “concubines.” Is it used ironically here in the sense of gigolos (cf. 16:31–34)?

d 20.d. The stem μf z, primarily relating to a downpour of rain, here has a developed meaning (BDB 281a). KB 267b and HALAT 270b find metathesis and link with ℓ[C Wm “twig,” in the sense of penis. Support may come from LXX Syr., which render “private parts.”

a 21.a. For MT ℓ[C B “when (you) acted” the following Ṽyd “your breasts” and the phraseology in vv 3, 8 suggest the piel of the second stem, ℓ[C B “when you pressed.” Then μ[V x m “the Egyptians” (cf. vv 19, 20, 27) is best read with 2 MSS as subj in place of MT μ[V x mm “since (the) Egypt(ians),” which seems to have resulted from a misunderstanding of the verb and from comparing v 8.

b 21.b. MT 4 ml “in view of” seems to be a copyist’s error for [ [o] “to squeeze,” attested by Syr. Vg, in the light of v 3. There a pass qal is evidently used (cf. Lev 22:24; 1 Sam 26:7), which suggests a qal form here. For the O+ error cf. the minority reading 4 ṼWm Josh 8:13 for 4 ṼWm.

a 22.a. For the formulaic use of hW V yrd a “Lord Yahweh” here and in vv 28, 32, 34, 35, 46 see the note on 20:3.

a 23.a. Heb. μy wr Q “famous” is a stylistic variant for μy b Q “soldiers” in vv 5, 12 (contra BHS, RSV, NEB.
will confront you with body protectors, shields and helmets. I will give them the right of judgment and they will carry out the sentence they have passed in accord with their own standards. I will make you the object of my jealous anger, and they will deal with you in fury. They will sever your nose and ears, and your posterity will fall victim to the sword. They will take off your clothes and remove your jewelry. And so I will bring to an end your lasciviousness and your loose living which started in the country of the Egyptians. You will not make eyes at them nor will you remember the Egyptians any more.”

28 The following message from the Lord Yahweh supplies the reason why: “I mean to hand you over to people you hate, to people you turned away from in disgust. They will deal with you in hatred, taking away your hardwon earnings and leaving you stark naked, with the nakedness typical of your loose living exposed to view. That is where your lasciviousness and loose ways will get you, in view of the fact that you chased after other nations, loose woman as you are, and let yourself be sullied with their idols. You went the same way as your sister and I will hand to you the cup she drank from.

32 “This message comes from the Lord Yahweh:
You will drink your sister’s cup,
a cup deep and wide, brimming with contents.

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*a 24.a. Heb. is of unknown meaning, although a number of guesses have been made. LXX renders “from the north,” which implies (cf. RSV), an attempt to obtain meaning inspired perhaps by 26:7 (cf. 26:10).
*a 25.a. MT and the ancient versions add the contextually unexpected “They: your sons and daughters they will take away,” probably originally an early marginal gloss with “they” functioning as a cue word (cf. v 4). The gloss related to v 10 and supplied either a variant reading or an explanation for “her sons and daughters they took away” there and became incorporated in the column on the wrong side of the margin (cf. my The Greek Chronicles [Leiden: Brill, 1974], vol. 2, 90–104). Perhaps fresh suffixes were introduced after the displacement. The textual tradition also adds “and your posterity: it shall be consumed with fire,” evidently an early comparative gloss referring to v 37 (cf. the frequent phrase “cause to pass through the fire,” 20:31 etc) and introduced by a cue word relating to v 25a. The repetition of a “posterity” in MT is very awkward.
*a 27.a. Heb. “fornication” deviates from the normal form found in chaps. 16 and 23. Like in v 29, it may be a stylistic variant: it occurs in 43:7, 9. Many prefer to regularize the form (cf. BHS).
*a 29.a. Heb. “exposed,” a fem. ptc, indicates a circumstantial clause. Emendation to a pf (Bertholet 83, cf. BHS) is unnecessary.
*b 29.b. The verse division in MT is incorrect.
*a 30.a. Heb. is grammatically feasible (Cooke 261–62). In the light of Jer 4:18 it is not necessarily an adaptation of an original (BHS et al.) after wrong sentence division.
*a 32.a. MT adds “She becomes an object of laughter and mocking,” which ill fits the present context in language and position. LXX omits. It probably originated as a marginal comment on material in the adjacent column, “and she became a byword,” where exhibits a rare usage (v 10; cf. BDB 1028a). cf. Ps 44:14, 15 and the first note on v 25 above.
33. You will be filled with drunkenness and depression:
   A cup of devastation
   is the cup your sister Samaria drank from.
34. You will drink it to the last drop,
   consuming its dregs,
   and you will tear at your breasts.
I have indeed spoken. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.

35. “This then is the message of the Lord Yahweh: Because you have forgotten me and tossed me
behind your back, you in turn are to bear the consequences of your lasciviousness and loose ways.”

36. Yahweh said to me: “Human one, would you judge Oholah and Oholibah, please? Declare to
them their shocking ways. 37. They have committed adultery and there is blood on their hands. It is
their idols they have committed adultery with; they have even devoted to them for food their sons
they bore me. 38. This too they have done to me: they have contaminated my sanctuary and
desecrated my sabbaths. 39. When they slaughtered their sons to their idols, on the same day they
came into my sanctuary to desecrate it—they have actually done this in my own house.”

b 32.b. MT’s unique noun hbrm “abundance” is more naturally pointed as a fem. hiph ptc hBr hnr in the
light of the context and with the support of LXX S Vg Tg. (BDB 916a et al.).
a 33.a. A change to a\mt “it will be filled,” proposed by Cornill (323), is attractive, but the second
persons of all the other finite verbs in the song militate against it.
b 33.b. The minority Heb. reading דבש “breaking,” advocated by many since Cornill (ibid.; see BHS) is
c 33.c. LXX has only one term for the synonymous pair of MT המגמה hhm “waste and destruction.”
Ezekiel’s standard pair is המגמה המהם (6:14; 33:28, 29; 35:3): המהם is characteristic of Jeremiah.
Moreover, the secondary presence of המהם is explicable in terms of the first note on v 34.
d 33.d. The idiosyncratic absence of a rendering of המהם “Samaria” in LXX B* is irrelevant for MT (cf.
Ziegler, LXX 197) contra Fohrer 135, Freedy, VT 20 (1970) 138, et al.. It can be explained easily as an
inner-Greek error, mechanical assimilation to the sequence in v 32.
a 34.a. MT has ymrgt hy yrmj At a\w “and you will break its shards,” but the stem µrg properly means “break
bones.” Ehrlich’s emendation yr mgo\h h\yr mv At a\w “and you will (complete =) consume its dregs” (Randglossen 91) is irresistible. The verbal form is graphically preferable to Cornill’s proposal ya mgo “and you will swallow” (323–24). The interpretation of MT’s verb as “gnaw” (RV) or “chew” (NEB), to get at every trace of the wine, following Vg devorabis, seems hardly permissible. Was a marginal correction h\yr may misread as h\may (or w\h\may), assuming a \l error and wrongly inserted into v 33? RSV “and pluck out your hair” follows Syr. (cf. BHK), which appears rather to give “a free rendering from the general context of mourning” (Zimmerli 477).
b 34.b. Structurally a third colon is expected (see Form/Structure/Setting) and so its omission in LXX* is
a false track contra the scholarly consensus (cf. Zimmerli, ibid., BHS).
a 36.a. See the note on 20:4.
a 38.a. MT adds a\w\h\wzh “on that day,” a wrong anticipation of the phrase in v 39 caused by a slip of
the eye and not corrected. LXX omits.
a 39.a. The suffixes are masc. throughout v 39.
b 39.b. Heb. a\w\h\wzh “on that day” is to be retained despite its omission in LXX (Cornill 324–25;
Ehrlich, Randglossen 92) contra Zimmerli 478, BHS et al.. See Comment.
Furthermore they would send for men to come\textsuperscript{a} from a great distance after a messenger had been sent to them, and they did come—the men for whom you\textsuperscript{b} bathed, painted your eyes and put on your jewelry.\textsuperscript{41} You sat on a magnificent\textsuperscript{c} couch, with a table set in front of it, on which\textsuperscript{d} you put my incense and oil.\textsuperscript{42} She enjoyed\textsuperscript{e} the noise of a carefree crowd\textsuperscript{f} of men from all over the world—\textsuperscript{g} Sabeans\textsuperscript{d} had been brought\textsuperscript{g} from the desert. They gave bracelets for them to wear on their wrists and fine garlands for them to put on their heads.

\textsuperscript{43} “Then I asked myself about this woman who was worn out\textsuperscript{a} by adultery, whether they would there and then fornicate\textsuperscript{b} with her.\textsuperscript{c} They paid calls\textsuperscript{a} on her as if resorting to a prostitute: that was just how they visited Oholah and Oholibah, those lascivious women.\textsuperscript{b} \textsuperscript{45} But other people will rightly judge them to be guilty of adultery and bloodshed, because they have indeed practiced adultery and their hands do have blood on them.

\textsuperscript{46} “This\textsuperscript{a} message comes from the Lord Yahweh: An army is to be ordered to invade\textsuperscript{b} them\textsuperscript{c} and submit them to terror and looting.\textsuperscript{47} They are to stone\textsuperscript{a} them and cut them to pieces with their

\textsuperscript{a} 40.a. For the use of a ptcp in place of an inf cf. Driver, \textit{Bib} 35 (1954) 155.
\textsuperscript{b} 40.b. The second person verbs are sg in vv 40, 41.
\textsuperscript{a} 41.a. Heb.  הָדָוִבֵֽי  “glorious” is often emended to  הָדָוִבֵֽי  “covered” on the basis of LXX (εἴς τὸ ὅμοιον ἀνθρώπον) Syr. (see, e.g., Zimmerli, \textit{ibid}.), but LXX more probably presupposes  הָדָוִבֵֽי  “covered with netting” (Cornill 325 with reference to LXX: εἴς τὸ ὅμοιον ἀνθρώπον for ἐν ὅμοιοι ἀνθρώποι in 4 Kgds [2 Kgs] 8:15).
\textsuperscript{b} 41.b. Heb.  יִתְמַגְּלֵי  with a fem. suffix referring to the masc. יָֽצָר  “table” is a case of careless writing, perhaps original, under the influence of  יָֽפַנְי  “in front of it” earlier.
\textsuperscript{a} 42.a. The text of v 42a is very uncertain. Heb.  בָּה  is literally “in/with her.”
\textsuperscript{b} 42.b. MT and the ancient versions add  מְיַפַּה  (and) to men,” possibly originally a variant of  מְיַפַּה  “to men” in v 40.
\textsuperscript{c} 42.c. lit. “from a multitude of humanity.”
\textsuperscript{d} 42.d. K יָֽעַבְּשָׁה , assimilated to יָֽעַבְּשָׁה , presumably stands for יָֽעַבְּשָׁה  “drunkards.”
\textsuperscript{e} 42.e. The ancient versions imply יָֽעַבְּשָׁה  “coming.”
\textsuperscript{a} 43.a. The text of the whole verse is uncertain, not least in its switch to the sg. For  הֵב  “worn out” cf. Gen 18:12. LXX (and in part Syr.) presupposes מְיַפַּה  יָֽצָר アルא  (מ) “(and) to men,” possibly originally a variant of מְיַפַּה  יָֽצָר  “to men” in v 40.
\textsuperscript{c} 43.c. lit. “(fornicate) her fornication and she”: apparently the suffix is emphatically resumed by the pronoun (Smend 168). MT is already presupposed by LXX, where ἠγοράζω  “works of a prostitute” is a loose rendering for הֵשַּׁר זֶבַע inspired by 16:30. Cornill (327) et al. (cf. \textit{BHS}) postulated הֵשַּׁר יָֽצָר  but graphically it is improbable.
\textsuperscript{a} 44.a. MT אֵֽוְֽהַֽי  יָֽצָר  “and he one came” is to be corrected to אֵֽוְֽהַֽי  יָֽצָר  “and they came” with 2 MSS and the ancient versions: see the notes on 14:1 and 20:38*. The Qumran MS MS\textsuperscript{a} is a further witness (J. Lust, \textit{Ezekiel and His Book}, 98, 99).
\textsuperscript{b} 44.b. Heb.  צָֽפַת  “women” accords with the Akk. pl. אָסָֽחְתִּי (Driver, \textit{Bib} 19 [1938] 175).
\textsuperscript{a} 46.a. MT prefixes with  יָֽק  “for,” omitted by one MS and LXX*: it probably arose by dittography. Freedy, \textit{VT} 20 (1970) 152, regards it as an editorial gloss.
\textsuperscript{b} 46.b. The following inf abs suggests that הֵב  יָֽצָר  is one also, rather than an impv: cf. 16:40.
\textsuperscript{c} 46.c. The suffix is masc..
swords. Let them kill their sons and daughters and burn down their homes. 48I will finally remove lasciviousness from the land as a warning to every woman not to commit adultery as you have. 49 Your lasciviousness will receive punishment and you will bear the penalty for your sin of idols. Then you will come to realize that I am Yahweh.”

Notes

3.a. The omission of וּנֵז “they fornicated” in LXX Syr. is a case of stylistic abbreviation (Zimmerli 471). L. Boadt, VT 25 (1975) 699, has drawn attention to the ABB´A chiasmus.

3.b. Heb. וּז[ “they squeezed” has an indefinite subj.

4.a. cf. BDB 226b.

4.b. MT and the ancient versions add “and their names: Oholah is Samaria and Oholibah is Jerusalem.” The addition is widely recognized as an early marginal gloss on v 4a. The clues are the odd positioning and the presence of the cue word וַתְּמוֹנַת“and their names,” for which cf. in principle Freedy, VT 20 (1970) 131–36. The interpretation was inspired by v 33.

5.a. MT and the ancient versions add וַתְּמוֹנַת אֲלֹהִים אֲלֹהֵי אֲרָם “concerning Assyria,” which seems to be an early gloss anticipating v 7ab.

5.b. Heb. וַתְּמוֹנַת אֲלֹהִים אֲלֹהֵי אֲרָם is related to וַתְּמוֹנַת אֲלֹהִים אֲלֹהֵי אַרְעָא “battles” (HALAT 1063b, following Ewald and Fohrer). The term

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47.a. The following inf abs suggest a reading וַתְּמוֹנַת אֲלֹהִים אֲלֹהֵי אֲרָם which probably arose by parallel assimilation to 16:40. MT adds וַתְּמוֹנַת אֲלֹהִים אֲלֹהֵי אֲרָם “army” in an awkward position as subj and yet difficult as genitive, as LXX construed it. It is generally taken as an early gloss clarifying the subj of MT’s pl. verb.

47.b. The suffixes on the two nouns are masc..

48.a. For the form of the verb see GKC 55k.

49.a. Heb. וַתְּמוֹנַת אֲלֹהִים אֲלֹהֵי אֲרָם “and they will put” has an indefinite subj LXX Tg. fittingly render as a passive.

49.b. The verb is masc. pl.

49.c. MT prefaces with יָנָד אֲדֹנָי “Lord,” which occurs only five times out of 87 in the recognition formula (Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556; see the note on 13:9). It may have come in under the influence of v 46. Zimmerli justifies it here as set in a passage not from Ezekiel’s hand.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)

VT Vetus Testamentum

Heb. Hebrew

subj subject/subjective

cf. confer, compare


MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

cf. confer, compare

VT Vetus Testamentum

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

Heb. Hebrew
is to be taken closely with v 6.


6.b. Heb. μγνς μτ μ “governors and prefects” here and in vv 12 and 23 seems to be used loosely of highranking officials. For the vagueness of μτ μ see HALAT 872b with reference to A. Alt.

8.a. Heb. (μρφ μ) μ “from (Egypt[ians])” is used in a temporal sense, “since the time.”

8.b. Heb. μτ μ “fornication” seems to be an euphemism in view of the verb.

12.a. Heb. μτ μ μ “perfection” is a case of stylistic variation: Syr. assimilated to μτ μ “purple” in v 6.

16.a. Q h b g f t w coordinates with the form in v 20.

17.a. In this chapter the impf. is derived from the stem μάλ (vv 17, 18) and the pf from μάλ (vv 22, 28).

20.a. For the ending, influenced by the coh form in the first person consec impf., see GKC 48d.

20.b. lit. “their.”

20.c. Heb. μτ μ μ is elsewhere fem. and means “concubines.” Is it used ironically here in the sense of gigolos (cf. 16:31–34)?
20.d. The stem µfZ, primarily relating to a downpour of rain, here has a developed meaning (BDB 281a). KB 267b and HALAT 270b find metathesis and link with ḫrwm “twig,” in the sense of penis. Support may come from LXX Syr., which render “private parts.”

21.a. For MT t /c [ B “when (you) acted” the following ḫyd “your breasts” and the phraseology in vv 3, 8 suggest the piel of the second stem, t /c [ B “when you pressed.” Then µyr x ḫm “the Egyptians” (cf. vv 19, 20, 27) is best read with MSS as subj in place of MT µyr x mm “since (the) Egypt(ians),” which seems to have resulted from a misunderstanding of the verb and from comparing v 8.

21.b. MT dl “in view of” seems to be a copyist’s error for [ o] “to squeeze,” attested by Syr. Vg, in the light of v 3. There a pass qal is evidently used (cf. Lev 22:24; 1 Sam 26:7), which suggests a qal form here. For the ḫO+ error cf. the minority reading dl yw in Josh 8:13 for ḫ l yw.

22.a. For the formulaic use of ḫwy ynd ḥ “Lord Yahweh” here and in vv 28, 32, 34, 35, 46 see the note on 20:3.

23.a. Heb. µywq “famous” is a stylistic variant for µybwrq “soldiers” in vv 5, 12 (contra BHS, RSV, NEB).

24.a. Heb. ḫh is of unknown meaning, although a number of guesses have been made. LXX renders

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
MSS manuscript(s)
subj subject/subjective
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
qal the basic stem of Heb. verbs
cf. confer, compare
qal the basic stem of Heb. verbs
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
NEB The New English Bible
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
“from the north,” which implies ḫ hm “(cf. RSV), an attempt to obtain meaning inspired perhaps by 26:7 (cf. 26:10).

25.a. MT and the ancient versions add the contextually unexpected “They: your sons and daughters they will take away,” probably originally an early marginal gloss with ḫ hm “they” functioning as a cue word (cf. v 4). The gloss related to v 10 and supplied either a variant reading or an explanation for ḫ ynb ṣ q  ḫ yṭ wnb w “her sons and daughters they took away” there and became incorporated in the column on the wrong side of the margin (cf. my The Greek Chronicles [Leiden: Brill, 1974], vol. 2, 90–104). Perhaps fresh suffixes were introduced after the displacement. The textual tradition also adds “and your posterity: it shall be consumed with fire,” evidently an early comparative gloss referring to v 37 (cf. the frequent phrase ṣ rb ṣ ḫ “cause to pass through the fire,” 20:31 etc) and introduced by a cue word relating to v 25a g. The repetition of ḫ ṣ ḫ “posterity” in MT is very awkward.

27.a. Heb. ṣ wnz “fornication” deviates from the normal form ṣ wnz found in chaps. 16 and 23. Like ḫ ywb ṣ ṣ ḫ in v 29, it may be a stylistic variant: it occurs in 43:7, 9. Many prefer to regularize the form (cf. BHS).

29.a. Heb. ḫ ṣ ṣ ḫ “exposed,” a fem. ptp, indicates a circumstantial clause. Emendation to a pf (Bertholet 83, cf. BHS) is unnecessary.

29.b. The verse division in MT is incorrect.

30.a. Heb. ḫ ṣ ḫ ṣ ḫ is grammatically feasible (Cooke 261–62). In the light of Jer 4:18 it is not necessarily an adaptation of an original ṣ ḫ (BHS et al.) after wrong sentence division.
32.a. MT adds “She becomes an object of laughter and mocking,” which ill fits the present context in language and position. LXX* omits. It probably originated as a marginal comment on material in the adjacent column, דודו והי יבמה “and she became a byword,” where דודו exhibits a rare usage (v 10; cf. BDB 1028a). cf. Ps 44:14, 15 and the first note on v 25 above.

32.b. MT’s unique noun הָבָּרָמח “abundance” is more naturally pointed as a fem. hiph ptp הָבָרָמח in the light of the context and with the support of LXX ס Vg Tg. (BDB 916a et al.).

33.a. A change to בְּלֵךְ “it will be filled,” proposed by Cornill (323), is attractive, but the second persons of all the other finite verbs in the song militate against it.

33.b. The minority Heb. reading בָּשָׁל “breaking,” advocated by many since Cornill (ibid.; see BHS) is rightly rejected by Zimmerli (477) and Wevers (137–38). cf. Isa 51:21; Jer 51:7.

33.c. LXX* has only one term for the synonymous pair of MT הָֽמָּשַׁעַת הָֽמָּשַׁעַת “waste and destruction.” Ezekiel’s standard pair is הָֽמָּשַׁעַת הָֽמָּשַׁעַת (6:14; 33:28, 29; 35:3): הָֽמָּשַׁעַת is characteristic of Jeremiah. Moreover, the secondary presence of הָֽמָּשַׁעַת is explicable in terms of the first note on v 34.

33.d. The idiosyncratic absence of a rendering of בָּשָׁל “Samaria” in LXX ב* is irrelevant for MT (cf.
Ziegler, LXX 197) contra Fohrer 135, Freedy, VT 20 (1970) 138, et al. It can be explained easily as an inner-Greek error, mechanical assimilation to the sequence in v 32.

34.a. MT has ymr ḫ  ywr ḫ  ḏ  w “and you will break its shards,” but the stem µrg properly means “break bones.” Ehrlich’s emendation ymrg  ḫ  ḏ  w “and you will (complete =) consume its dregs” (Randglossen 91) is irresistible. The verbal form is graphically preferable to Cornill’s proposal ya mrg. “and you will swallow” (323–24). The interpretation of MT’s verb as “gnaw” (RV) or “chew” (NEB), to get at every trace of the wine, following Vg devorabis, seems hardly permissible. Was a marginal correction ḫ  ḏ  (or ḫ  ḫ ), assuming a /w error) and wrongly inserted into v 33? RSV “and pluck out your hair” follows Syr. (cf. BHK), which appears rather to give “a free rendering from the general context of mourning” (Zimmerli 477).

34.b. Structurally a third colon is expected (see Form/Structure/Setting) and so its omission in LXX* is a false track contra the scholarly consensus (cf. Zimmerli, ibid., BHS).

36.a. See the note on 20:4.

38.a. MT adds a ḫ ḫ  ḫ  “on that day,” a wrong anticipation of the phrase in v 39 caused by a slip of the eye and not corrected. LXX omits.

39.a. The suffixes are masc. throughout v 39.

39.b. Heb. a ḫ ḫ  ḫ  “on that day” is to be retained despite its omission in LXX (Cornill 324–25; MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS) cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

VT Vetus Testamentum
e t alii, and others
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
RV Revised Version, 1881–85
NEB The New English Bible
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980) cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT cf. confer, compare
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
masc. masculine
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

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Ehrlich, Randglossen 92) contra Zimmerli 478, BHS et al. See Comment.


40.b. The second person verbs are sg in vv 40, 41.

41.a. Heb. ḥ d ṭ ṭ b “glorious” is often emended to ḥ d ṭ ṭ b “covered” on the basis of LXX (εσ τ ῶ ῳ μενμην *) Syr. (see, e.g., Zimmerli, ibid.), but LXX more probably presupposes ḥ ṭ ṭ b “covered with netting” (Cornill 325 with reference to LXX ῥ ῵ ῳ μα for ῰ β κ μ in 4 Kgdms [2 Kgs] 8:15).

41.b. Heb. ḡ y l [ with a fem. suffix referring to the masc. ḡ l “table” is a case of careless writing, perhaps original, under the influence of ḡ y ṭ p “in front of it” earlier.

42.a. The text of v 42a is very uncertain. Heb. ḡ b is literally “in/with her.”

42.b. MT and the ancient versions add μ γι α l a (w) “(and) to men,” possibly originally a variant of μ γι α l “to men” in v 40.

42.c. lit. “from a multitude of humanity.”

42.d. K μ γα b w s, assimilated to μ γα b w m, presumably stands for μ γα w b s “drunkards.”

42.e. The ancient versions imply μ γα b “coming.”

43.a. The text of the whole verse is uncertain, not least in its switch to the sg. For ḡ l “worn out”

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*BHS* Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
et al. et alii, and others
ptcp participle
inf infinitive
cf. confer, compare
*Bib* Biblica
sg singular or under
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
fem. feminine
masc. masculine
Heb. Hebrew
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
lit. literally
sg singular or under
cf. Gen 18:12. LXX (and in part Syr.) presupposes ἡ ὠψ ἑβαλάω ἢν ἔστην and do they not with these commit adultery?"

43.b. K ἓν ἐν τῷ “now (?) he will fornicate” becomes in Q ἓν ἐν τῷ “now they will fornicate.”

43.c. lit. “(fornicate) her fornication and she”: apparently the suffix is emphatically resumed by the pronoun (Smend 168). MT is already presupposed by LXX, where ποιμὴν “works of a prostitute” is a loose rendering for ἡ ὠψ ἑντζελει inspired by 16:30. Cornill (327) et al. (cf. BHS) postulated ἓν ἐν τῷ ἵππῳ, but graphically it is improbable.

44.a. MT ἡ ἔως ἐδορὰ “and he/one came” is to be corrected to ἡ ἔως ἐδορᾷ “and they came” with 2 MSS and the ancient versions: see the notes on 14:1 and 20:38*. The Qumran MS 4QEnz is a further witness (J. Lust, Ezekiel and His Book, 98, 99).

44.b. Heb. יָבַע “women” accords with the Akk. pl. assapi (Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 175).

46.a. MT prefaces with יְק “for,” omitted by one MS and LXX*: it probably arose by dittography. Freedy, VT 20 (1970) 152, regards it as an editorial gloss.

cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
lit. literally
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MSS manuscript(s)
* 38.a. MT adds a ὁ ἔως ἢν ὑπάθη on that day,” a wrong anticipation of the phrase in v 39 caused by a slip of the eye and not corrected. LXX omits.
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
4QEnz MS of Ezekiel from Qumran Cave 4
* MS of Ezekiel from Qumran Cave 4
Heb. Hebrew
Akk. Akkadian
pl. plate or plural
Bib Biblica
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
VT Vetus Testamentum
46.b. The following inf abs suggests that א | ה is one also, rather than an impv: cf. 16:40.

46.c. The suffix is masc..

47.a. The following inf abs suggest a reading | וּגְר for MT וּמְגַר which probably arose by parallel assimilation to 16:40. MT adds | וּגְר “army” in an awkward position as subj and yet difficult as genitive, as LXX construed it. It is generally taken as an early gloss clarifying the subj of MT’s pl. verb.

47.b. The suffixes on the two nouns are masc..

48.a. For the form of the verb see GKC 55k.

49.a. Heb. וְנָתָנָו “and they will put” has an indefinite subj LXX Tg. fittingly render as a passive.

49.b. The verb is masc. pl.

49.c. MT prefaches with וְנָתָנָו “Lord,” which occurs only five times out of 87 in the recognition formula (Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 556; see the note on 13:9). It may have come in under the influence of v 46. Zimmerli justifies it here as set in a passage not from Ezekiel’s hand.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

From a redactional perspective the message reception formula of v 1 is obviously intended to identify the chapter as an overall unit. It is made up of a number of smaller oracles. The first in vv 2–27
constitutes the backbone of the unit. There follows a redactional complex, with vv 32–34 at its center, bordered by vv 28–31 and v 35. The third and last element consists of vv 36–45, to which vv 46–49 have been joined. Introductory messenger formulas occur at vv 28, 32, 35 and 46; at v 22 the second half of an oracle is so preaced. In v 36 a piece is introduced by a formula uncommon in Ezekiel,  יָ♡ארִםונֶּרֶךֶל "And Yahweh said to me" (cf. 9:4; 44:2, 5 and the shorter form in 4:13): elsewhere it belongs to consecutive narrative.

The main oracle in vv 2–27 is composed in elevated prose frequently marked by parallelism. Fundamentally it is a judgment oracle with two basic parts, accusation (vv 2–21) and prediction of punishment (vv 22–27). The latter part is introduced by a typical ÷➡ “therefore.” The whole has been cast in an allegorical framework of gross marial infidelity, while into the accusation has been woven an account of the shortcomings and judgment of the northern kingdom (vv 5–8, 9–10 [note ÷➡ “therefore” in v 9]) in order to emphasize the certainty of the coming punishment of the south (cf. הָיְבָהָא מ “her lovers,” v 9, יָ♡ערִיםונֶּרֶךֶל “your lovers,” v 22). The judgment section in vv 22–27 is also accentuated by a switch from third person citations of the accused to the second person, as well as by its own messenger formula at v 22. The direct address is anticipated at the end of the accusatory section, in v 21.

The motif of “the Egyptian affair” is broached in v 3. It plays a strong structural role: it recurs in the climactic v 27, and thus provides an inclusion that binds the piece together. Furthermore, it marks the ends of accusatory sections, at vv 8 and 21. The main sections of accusation and judgment end on a parallel note with הֹמֶּר “lasciviousness” at vv 21 and 27, and on a contrasting note with memory (יָלֹל) first stimulated (v 19) and then frustrated (v 27). Another unifying element in the oracle is the stylistically varied descriptions of the Assyrian lovers within the accusatory sections, at vv 5b and 12. The repetition exhibits a not uncommon literary pattern of chiastic inversion (ABCD/BADC; cf. E. F. Davis, Swallowing the Scroll [Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989] 63, with reference to R. Weiss). The recurrence of this element at the start of the judgment passage (v 23b) provides an ironic reprise, which is not to be branded as secondary contra Cooke (253), Zimmerli (488) et al.. The structural equivalent of this refrain occurs in the equally striking descriptions of the Babylonians in vv 14b–15 and of the Egyptians in v 20.

In historical terms the accusations of vv 11–21 fall into three parts, relating to Assyria (vv 11–13), Babylonia (vv 14–18) and Egypt (vv 19–21). The first two come to a peak with subjective statements of Yahweh’s reactions in vv 13 and 18b, while in v 21 their counterpart is the direct address of the guilty party. The personal references to Yahweh are preaced with mention of his initial involvement in v 4 and capped by his resolves to punish in vv 22, 24b–25a and 27a, at the beginning, middle and end of the judgment section. Form critics have tended to brand a number of elements in this oracle as secondary (see, e.g., Zimmerli 418, Wevers 133–34), but rhetorical criticism urges the retention of most of them as stylistic highlights. Apart from the glosses in vv 4b, 5b and 25b, the only intrusive element appears to be the seemingly redactional reference to idols in v 7b (see Comment on v 30).

The passion of the piece comes out in the repetition of key sexual terms. Apart from those already mentioned, there is the dominant usage of the stem הֹרֶךֶל “fornicate, be sexually loose” to describe Israel’s pre-Canaanite history (v 3, twice), northern politics in vv 5, 7, 8 and southern politics in the three sections of vv 11–21, at v 11 (twice), vv 14, 17, 18 and v 19 (twice). The term is recapitulated at the end of the judgment portion in v 27, in such a way as to leap back to v 3 and to encompass the ensuing
references up to v 19. Is ū ṱnţa “your ears” in v 25 intended to sound an ironic echo of the crime in the punishment? Another strong term is ḫ ṣ “lust, have an affair.” It marks the accusation and judgment of the north at the start of sections (vv 5, 9). It also punctuates the accusations of the south, at beginning (vv 11, 12), middle (v 16) and end (v 20), and so appears in each of the three sections of accusation. A vehement term characteristic of Ezekiel, ṣ ḫ “be/make unclean,” which itself has sexual overtones (cf. 22:10, 11), is found in the accusation of the north at v 7 and in the first two of the three accusatory sections relating to the south, at v 13 and 17. In v 21 it is replaced in its emotional tone by ḫ ṱ “lasciviousness” in order to fulfill another structural agenda.

The historical setting of the oracle is clear from its emphasis on Judah’s political dependence on Egypt. It must have been uttered between Zedekiah’s breaking of his treaty of vassalage to Babylon (cf. 17:15) and Nebuchadnezzar’s campaign against Judah which culminated in the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The strongly worded language of v 20 more probably refers to the dynamic Hophra who came to the Egyptian throne early in 589 B.C. than to his less ambitious predecessor Psammetichus II. If so, the oracle fits well between the last chronological reference in 20:1 (591 B.C.) and the next in 24:1 (588 B.C.).

The next passage, vv 28–35, is a redactional complex made up of three messages, each introduced by a messenger formula (vv 28, 32, 35), while a closing divine saying formula occurs after an affirmation formula, in v 34b. Its throbbing heart is the poem of the cup of wrath in vv 32ab–34a, which is a judgment oracle directed evidently to Jerusalem in view of the mention of Samaria in v 33. The poem with its dominant prophetic motif of the cup divides into three strophes, each of which consists of a tricolon (3+2+2, 3+2+3, 3+3+2). The first speaks of drinking the contents of the large cup and the second of its baleful effects, while the third seems to combine both features by way of climax. The second strophe is marked by a series of assonances. The final ḫ ṱ “Samaria” is echoed by the ḫ ṱ endings of ḫ ṱ ḫ ṱ ḫ ṱ “drunkenness and depression,” by the shin-mem alliteration of ḫ ṱ ḫ ṱ ḫ ṱ “you will be filled with … drunkenness” and by the wordplay ḫ ṱ “devastation.” The alliteration and wordplay are continued in the first colon of the next strophe, ḫ ṱ ḫ ṱ … ḫ ṱ ḫ ṱ “and you will drink … and drain … its dregs.” The poem is probably an independent oracle of Ezekiel’s, placed here because of its similarity to the first one, with reference to sisterhood with Samaria and a common fate (cf. 16:46, 52).

The poem is introduced by vv 28–31, a judgment oracle with accusatory notes struck in vv 30–31a. It both looks back to the preceding oracle, in vv 28–31a, and forward to the next, in v 31b. It therefore has a bridging function. It has its own inclusion, a double handing over in punishment (ḏ ṱ ḫ “put into the hand,” vv 28, 31), which seems to brand it as a unit and conflicts with the frequently found notion of units dividing into vv 28–30 and 31–34 (cf., e.g., Zimmerli 490). It is clearly redactional, although it may be the product of Ezekiel’s later hand (Fohrer 136).

The cup oracle is supplemented with a short judgment oracle in v 35, which moves succinctly from accusation to verdict. Again it is dependent on vv 2–27. The echo of v 29b gives the impression that both vv 28–31 and v 35 were composed to cement the cup oracle to the preceding one. The direct address that runs through vv 28–35 serves to continue that of vv 21–27, as does the first person speech in vv 28–31 and 35.

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
Vv 36–49 are clearly meant to round off the chapter. They read as a judgment oracle and mostly revert to the motif of the two sisters of vv 2–4. The effect is that of an overall inclusion, especially as the sisters are mentioned in the third person, as in vv 2–4 (and 5–20). Vv 36–45 consist of two types of accusation, religious (vv 36–39, 45) and political (vv 40–44). The arrangement provides an inclusion, the issues of adultery and loss of life (vv 37a, 45). Vv 36–45 have been supplemented in vv 46–49 with a prediction of punishment that is also a proof saying (cf. v 49b). Both sisters are addressed in vv 48b–49, while throughout vv 36–49 feminine plural references are interspersed with masculine ones. The former phenomenon provides a vivid conclusion, while the latter exhibits simply a dropping of the imagery.

What is very strange is the direct address of Oholibah in vv 40b–41 and third person references to her in vv 42a, 43–44a, both of which want to concentrate on Jerusalem alone. The variety of perspectives in vv 36–49 is evidence of a process of redaction: more than one hand has been at work.

Comment

The message of vv 1–27 re-uses the sexual allegory of chap. 16. However, the enhancement of human inconstancy by reference to initial divine grace is lacking here. Moreover, the pagan origins of Jerusalem are deliberately replaced by the nation’s beginnings in Egypt, in line with the intent to decry Judah’s current political involvement with Egypt. Accordingly, while chap. 16 has a cultic emphasis, here political issues are in view.

2–4 Israeliite history is described by hindsight from the perspective of the divided kingdom of Judah and Israel, which are portrayed as sisters, probably on the model of Jer 3:6–11 (cf. Ezek 16:46). Even more starkly than in Hosea’s imagery (Hos 1:2; cf. Ezek 16:3), the people are described as deviant from the start. So ingrained is their sin in Ezekiel’s eyes that it is traced back to the sinners’ very beginnings, just as in 20:7 idolatry is ascribed to Israel even in Egypt. Here, however, the basic development of the metaphor points to political sin. As vv 19–21 will make clear, Ezekiel has in mind a contemporary Judah that was aligning itself politically with Egypt in the hope of throwing off Babylon’s yoke. In his mind too was doubtless Hosea’s usage of wrong sexuality as a metaphor for political alliance (Hos 8:9; 9:10), which he had used also in Ezek 16:26–29, and he portrays Israel’s ancient political dependence on Egypt in similar terms. Thereby he dashes contemporary hopes of Egypt as Judah’s savior from Babylon, suffusing them with a negative image of pre-Exodus oppression in Egypt. He makes that image even blacker by attaching to it willfulness that he saw in Judah’s present pro-Egyptian policy.

The metaphor of the covenant relationship as a marriage is here extended along bigamous lines, a development already implicit in Jer 3:6–11 (note especially v 8). The patriarch Jacob married sisters, but the tradition represented in Lev 18:18 prohibits it. Christian apologists tend to play down references to polygamy in the Old Testament, under the constraint of their own theological ethics, but the echo of this practice in a divine context discloses how unobjectionable it generally was in Israeliite culture.

The names given to the two communities have a matching quality, like Tweedledum and Tweedledee, used to describe individuals or groups that are practically indistinguishable. “It was common in the East to give sisters or brothers names almost the same, as Hasan and Husein (little Hasan), the two sons of `Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed” (Davidson 181). The names are compounded with `l h `t “tent” (“Tent” with a feminine ending and “My-tent-in-her”), perhaps with reference to the marriage tent (cf. 2 Sam 16:22) or, less likely, to the priestly term for the sanctuary, “

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
the tent of meeting.” Does it reflect the nomadism of the patriarchal period, since in v 2 the sisters are represented as alive before involvement with Egypt? Attempts to distinguish between the names as disparaging to Israel (as if Oholah means “her (own) tent”) but complimentary to Judah are contextually out of place.

5–10 The political involvement of the northern kingdom with Assyria in the eighth century B.C. is interpreted negatively, as it was by Hosea. For Hosea it spelled a fundamental lack of faith in Yahweh—deserting him in favor of “lovers” (Hos 8:9; cf. 5:13; 14:3). Ezekiel develops this imagery in terms of the sexual attractiveness of macho Assyria, a veritable world power with all its impressive trappings. He categorizes Israel’s subsequent overtures to Egypt, made in order to secure liberation from Assyria (cf. 2 Kgs 17:4; Hos 7:11; 12:2[1]), as a further manifestation of a deep urge toward inconstancy. This urge met its providential nemesis in the fall of Samaria and the end of the northern kingdom. The victors’ indulgence in their fruits of victory, the rape and killing of women and the selling of children, is woven into the allegory, as is Israel’s loss of face in the sight of other nations. For the reference to idols in v 7 see the exegesis of v 30.

11–13 The political sin of the northern kingdom in tangling with Assyria now gets a rerun in the case of the south. The phenomenon is intended to create an impression that in turn Judah’s nemesis must eventually come. Ezekiel is here leaning on earlier Judean prophecy, Isaiah’s isolationism and Jeremiah’s language concerning Judah’s religious sins (Jer 3:7). From Jer 3:11 comes the notion of Judah’s greater guilt (cf. Krüger, Geschichtskonzepte 156–57). Her guilt was greater (v 11) in that she not only took over her sister’s lovers but added the Babylonians to the list, as v 14 will explain. The northern kingdom had a bad image in Judean eyes (cf. 2 Kgs 17), but Judah had even more skeletons in her closet.

140–18 The second phase of Judah’s political involvement was with Babylonia, Assyria’s successor as the eastern world power. The glamor of Babylon is described in terms of architectural ornamentation. Doubtless Ezekiel and his audience had seen such painted bas-reliefs on Babylonian buildings, and the account is embroidered by the contemporary reference in the interests of communication with his hearers. Hab 1:6–11 reflects the tremendous impression the Babylonian army made on Judah. Underlying v 16 may be a tradition of secret negotiations with Babylon, whether in Hezekiah’s reign (cf. 2 Kgs 20:12–15) or in Jehoiakim’s (cf. 2 Kgs 23:34–24:1). Judah’s subsequent disenchantment is clothed in the psychological phenomenon of sexual revulsion (cf. Gottwald, All the Kingdoms of the Earth 305–6), which for the prophet illustrates the restlessness of those who refuse to find their rest in Yahweh. The narration of this second phase of Judah’s infidelity is drawn to a close by mention of Yahweh’s abhorrence. The partner who sadly “observed” at the end of the first phase (v 13) is now stung to a stronger reaction, which with its reference back to the northern kingdom bodes ill for Judah.

19–21 The third phase, hinted at in v 17, relates to Egypt and brings the account down to the present. Judah’s overtures to the ambitious Hophra, which Judeans at home and doubtless abroad viewed positively as the answer to all their problems, are invested with a negative aura, as a return to Egyptian bondage (v 3) and also as the history of the northern kingdom disastrously repeating itself (v 8 ). The coarseness of the description in v 20 leaves no doubt that for Ezekiel and his God the political alliance stank. The direct address of v 21, which continues in the next section, is both rhetorical and real

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cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
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cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

in that Ezekiel was speaking to exiled Judeans. It creates a passionate conclusion.

22–27 Accusation gives way to pronouncement of punishment. The mounting reactions of Yahweh (vv 13, 18) now rise to a crescendo after the final provocation: v 22a ominously picks up v 9 (“therefore” and ãyb há m “your lovers”), as well as v 17bb, while vv 9–10 are echoed in vv 24 and 25 (vt ã nw “and I will give,” the stem fp “judge” and bfr “with the sword”). How can Judah avoid Israel’s fate after playing the same political game of brinkmanship? With the fury of the scorned lover the military machismo once so attractive (cf. vv 12, 15) was ironically to be turned against Judah (cf. 16:37). The invincibility of the army is indicated by the list of names in v 23. “Chaldeans” refers to dominant, tribal groups in Babylonia, and “Assyrians” presumably to a vassal contingent in the Babylonian army. The rhyming [†Q]wÒ [†vwÒ dqop] seem to refer to outlying tribes, the Aramean Puqudu east of the Tigris and probably to the Sutu and Qutu, other tribes in the area which are often coupled in Assyrian records (for discussion of the groupings see Zadok, Studies in the Bible 178–79). The trio of names also express a sinister wordplay, suggesting “punish,” “cry for help” and “shriek” (cf. Jud. Aram. [Q [Q “cackle”; Eichrodt 328), which has necessitated the distortion of the latter two names. The catalog of military equipment in v 24 gives another overwhelming impression. “Body protectors,” carried by riot police today, are distinct from the small round “shields.” The gruesome mention of mutilation and the killing of children in v 25 lends horror to the description. V 26, unless it is an addition from 16:39, intends to bring the account back to the basic imagery, to which v 27 more explicitly reverts.

Overshadowing this whole operation would be the figure of Yahweh, Ezekiel discloses in vv 22, 24b–25aa and 27a, at the beginning, middle and end of the pronouncement. It would be the reprisal of a cuckolded husband (cf. v 4) provoked to jealousy. The human enemies would be given free rein to put their own cruel standards into operation. Such was the noose into which Judah had rashly put its head by dallying with the Egyptians. The ghost of Egypt (cf. v 19) had to be laid to rest once and for all. Judah’s dream was to turn into a waking nightmare.

28–35 The song of the cup that eventually follows in vv 32–34 serves to reinforce the message of the first oracle: the fate of the northern kingdom, Judah’s “sister,” was to be shared by Judah. Strictly Jerusalem is now in view, as in chap. 16, rather than Judah. The poem uses a prophetic motif concerning the manifestation of divine wrath, the consumption of an intoxicating drink (cf. Hab 2:15, 16; Jer 25:15, 17, 28). It would be an overwhelming experience, so large and full was the cup. Its effects would be both devastating and distressing; the draining of the cup would result in laceration of the breasts. Beating of the breasts, part of the body language of reaction to crisis (cf. Isa 32:12; Nah 2:7), is here seemingly heightened. In the redactional context the mention of breasts becomes an ironic echo of the earlier refrain of accusation (vv 3, 21).

The song is introduced by vv 28–31 and supplemented with v 35. Both passages seek to bond it to the previous oracle. The first is a summary of its accusation and even more of its prediction of punishment. V 28 uses the language of vv 9 and 22. V 29aa is a variation of v 25ab, while v 29b echoes v 10aa and key terms of the previous earlier oracle, especially v 27a. V 31 adapts v 13. Especially interesting is the link between v 30bb and v 7b. Not political fornication is in view, but a cultic variety. It

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
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cf. confer, compare
is probable that the mention of idols in v 7 is redactional. Both there and in vv 28–31 there is a desire to ponder on the oracle and to note the short distance between political association with other, polytheistic communities and religious syncretism. The switch in perspective seems to reflect the influence of chap. 16 (cf. Zimmerli 490). As for v 35, it too is dependent on the first oracle, echoing its key language especially as used in v 27a, while the wrongful memories of vv 19 and 27 are developed. Jerusalem had “forgotten what she should have remembered and remembered what she should have forgotten” (S. DeVries, Int 16 [1962] 64). Ahijah’s striking language in 1 Kgs 14:9 (cf. Neh 9:26; Ps 50:17) is reused to describe the situation, which was nothing less than blatant rejection of Yahweh himself.

36–39 Vv 36–49 also want to take the whole issue further in certain directions. They are mainly marked by unexpected references to both sisters as contemporary. The northern kingdom now falls into the background and the sisters stand simply for Judah as the covenant nation (note v 38). Vv 36–39 use the expressions of 22:2 (cf. 20:4) to introduce cultic accusations, which develop v 30 (and v 7b). Association with idols is explained not only as adultery—a sexual metaphor new to this chapter—but also in terms of child sacrifice to pagan gods (see 20:26 and Comment); chap. 16 seems to underlie these charges, especially 16:20, 38. Defiling, part of the sexual imagery of political fraternizing in the first oracle, is now used with reference to the temple and is linked with the worship of practitioners of child sacrifice.

40–44 There is a return to the political accusations of the first oracle. This section develops vv 16b–17, particularly in vv 40b–42b and 44. The intervening material imaginatively speaks of Judah in the singular, as an unfaithful wife. She prepares herself for the assignation—a borrowing from 16:18—and misuses her husband’s provisions for the celebration, which is attended by such exotic foreigners as Sabeans from the Arabian desert.

45–49 This passage seems to carry on from v 39. V 45 crowns the accusations of vv 36–39 with forensic terminology taken from 16:38. A pronouncement of punishment follows in vv 46–49, investing vv 36–49 with the form of a two-part judgment oracle. Vv 46–48b are a recapitulation of 16:40–41b. In v 48b the reference to women is figurative, as in v 10, and signifies other nations (Keil 338, Eichrodt 333; contra Zimmerli 492; B. S. Childs, Introduction 368–69; cf. 31:14). Mention of the deterrent value of the punishment is meant to reflect its appalling severity. V 49a picks up the key term of the first oracle and of the chapter, “lasciviousness,” and links it with the prevailing redactional term “idols.” The closing recognition formula looks forward to a convincing disclosure of divine reality and so to a response of respect, perhaps with special reference to v 35a.

The intent of vv 36–39 and 45–49 is to stress cultic sins connected with idolatry and to widen the perspective from political infidelity to Yahweh to religious unfaithfulness, on the lines of v 30. The emphatic inclusion in the accusatory section links infidelity with the taking of life, which is spelled out as child sacrifice. V 45 is clearly a crucial verse from a redactional perspective: its vocabulary of judgment underlines that of v 25 (cf. v 10). Overall there is a desire to enlarge the concerns of the chapter to include those of earlier chapters, the bloodshed of chap. 22—although now in terms of human sacrifice, as in 16:20, 21—and the divinely ordained punishment at Babylonian hands announced in chap. 21 (especially v 32). To these ends material has been borrowed from chap. 16.

cf. confer, compare
Int Interpretation
cf. confer, compare

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**Explanation**

Ezekiel preaches in vv 1–27 a political sermon as inflammatory as any that Pastor Niemöller preached against the German government. The links that Judah forged with Egypt in a last, desperate attempt to avert Babylonian doom are denounced in the strongest of terms. Sexuality, about which Israel could be as coy as any Victorian, is used as a blatant weapon of communication, to convey the emotional distaste of Yahweh to this expedient. Its “potential to offend is, of course, its very point” (Stuart 220). Significantly the most repulsive sexual language is reserved for associations with Egypt. It is a vehement effort to convince a constituency who did not want to believe the truth the prophet brought.

Along with sexuality, theological history is used to interpret contemporary politics, in a culture where politics and religion were regarded as two sides of one coin. First, the Exodus traditions are used to remind the Judean exiles that Egypt is the enemy of God and that the purpose of the Exodus was to get his people out of Egypt’s clutches and safe within the covenant relationship. By the present political link-up the Judeans in the homeland were not only trespassing outside that relationship, but putting the clock back to pre-Exodus times in an involvement that was not of God and constituted an act of infidelity to him. The temptation to harness Judah’s wagon to Egyptian power was an illicit one.

The second lesson the prophet draws from history is the experience of the northern kingdom, which too had flirted with Egypt, only to meet its end at the hands of the power of the east. The parallel is no random one: it moves in a theological orbit already familiar to Judah. Ezekiel adopts the prophetic and deuteronomistic interpretation of the fall of Israel, that behind the thrust and parry of that phase of international politics lay the sovereign will of the covenant God. He does not hesitate to reapply this interpretation to contemporary politics and to predict in Yahweh’s name reprisal against a people whose policies time and time again revealed not only a lack of allegiance to him but an espousal of human power. It was to be—and this is Ezekiel’s third lesson—the end of the long road of two centuries of sordid Judean history, as first Assyria, then Babylon and now Egypt had been the pin-ups of the moment, to whom Judah had given her heart. But to fall away from the living God was to fall into the hands of that living God, a fearful thing (Heb 3:12; 10:31).

The message is a reminder that there is no seal between religious faith and the actualities of human life. The covenant relationship shines its searchlight into every corner and ruthlessly confronts that which is not compatible. And it is nobody’s fault but our own that experience is not a better teacher of this truth.

The oracle of the cup of wrath reinforces the second lesson from history which the first message taught, that Judah was to drink the same bitter medicine as Israel. In using this imagery Ezekiel belongs to a long prophetic chain that was to culminate in Jesus, who absorbed in his own person the horror of God’s judgment, accepting it from his hand not without a shudder (Mark 14:36). This oracle is set within a wider framework, which wants to underline the truth of the first message. Judah is indeed guilty of infidelity. The people in the homeland—and those exiles who mentally align themselves with them—have thrown God away and walked off without him. By way of further illustration, religious syncretism is cited. To worship the nations’ gods was a violation of covenant faith.

Further developments follow. In vv 36–39 and 45 more light is shed on the charge of infidelity by specifying the horrible practice of child sacrifice, while in vv 40–44 Judah’s political entanglements are portrayed in gaudy and vulgar hues. There was no alternative for Judah but to face the grim ordeal of invasion already forecast in chap. 16. There was no other way to get the cancer of infidelity out of Judah’s system. To others, and so to us, the tragedy must function as a warning (v 48; cf. Heb 3:12; 4:1, 2).

*cf. confer, compare*
**Two Fateful Days (24:1–27)**

**Bibliography**


**Translation**

1 I received the following communication from Yahweh—in the ninth year, on the tenth of the tenth month. 2 “Human one, write down today’s date:* this very day the king of Babylon has laid siege tob Jerusalem. 3 Tell a parable to that community of rebels, saying to them, Here is a message from the Lord* Yahweh.

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*a 2.a. MT’s “the name of this day, this selfsame day” appears to be conflated. Probably the second phrase, missing from Syr. Vg, was written by faulty anticipation of v 2b and a supralinear correction has been incorporated into the text. Wevers (140) suggests that ἡ ηὗτος ἡμέρα ἡ ἴδια “selfsame” was intended as an explanation of ἡ ἴδια ἡμέρα “name,” here unusually in the sense of date as in an Arad ostracacon (see *ANET*, supplementary vol. 569 note 28).

*b 2.b. lit. “put pressure on.”

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* CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly  
* FS Festschrift, volume written in honor of  
* ed. edited, edition(s), editor  
* JBL Journal of Biblical Literature  
* JJS Journal of Jewish Studies  
* ExpTim The Expository Times  
* AnBib Analecta biblica (Rome: PBI)  
* VT Vetus Testamentum
Set on the caldron, set it on\textsuperscript{b}
and pour water into it\textsuperscript{c} too.
\textsuperscript{4}Collect it into cuts of meat,\textsuperscript{a}
all the best cuts, shank and shoulder,
fill it with the choicest bones.
\textsuperscript{5}Take the choicest of the flock
and pile the logs underneath it\textsuperscript{a} too.
Boil its cuts,\textsuperscript{b}
let there be cooked\textsuperscript{c} also
its bones inside it.

The meaning is found\textsuperscript{b} in this message from the Lord Yahweh. Woe to the bloodstained city,
the caldron that has in it corrosion,\textsuperscript{b} corrosion that does not come off. Cut by cut take out its contents.\textsuperscript{c} Retribution\textsuperscript{d} has not fallen on her,\textsuperscript{7} although\textsuperscript{a} the blood shed by her remains within her.
The bare rock was where she put it: she did not pour it out on the ground where the dust would cover it.\textsuperscript{8} I have permitted\textsuperscript{a} the blood she has shed to be left uncovered on the bare rock, with a view

\textsuperscript{a} 2.a. MT’s “the name of this day, this selfsame day” appears to be conflated. Probably the second phrase, missing from Syr. Vg, was written by faulty anticipation of v 2b and a supralinear correction has been incorporated into the text. Wevers (140) suggests that \(\mu x\) “selfsame” was intended as an explanation of \(\mu \mathbf{w}\) “name,” here unusually in the sense of date as in an Arad ostracon (see \textit{ANET}, supplementary vol. 569 note 28).
\textsuperscript{b} 3.b. The omission of the repeated verb in LXX* Syr. is probably stylistic, removing a feature common in Ezekiel (Zimmerli 493).
\textsuperscript{c} 3.c. MT \(\mathbf{w}\) originally was probably \(\mathsf{H}\mathbf{B}\); via \(\mathsf{H}\mathbf{B}\alpha\) (cf. 31:18): elsewhere in the poem \(\gamma\mathbf{s}\) “caldron” is treated as fem.
\textsuperscript{d} 4.a. For MT \(\gamma\mathbf{y}\) \(\tau\) \(\eta\) “its cuts” LXX Syr. imply a suffixless \(\gamma\mathbf{y}\) \(\tau\) \(\eta\). For the origin of MT see the second* note on v 5.
\textsuperscript{a} 5.a. The consonants of MT \(\gamma\mathbf{y}\) \(\tau\) \(\eta\) \(\mu\) “the bones under it” are to be redivided as \(\mu \mathbf{y}\) \(\tau\) \(\mu\) \(\mathbf{m}\) “the logs underneath it” (Driver, \textit{Bib} 19 [1938] 175; cf. Ezek 1:8, etc). The term in v 4 led a copyist astray.
\textsuperscript{b} 5.b. MT \(\gamma\mathbf{y}\) \(\tau\) \(\eta\) “its boiled things” is generally regarded as having suffered mechanical assimilation to \(\gamma\mathbf{y}\) \(\tau\) \(\tau\); \(\gamma\mathbf{y}\) \(\tau\) \(\eta\) “its cuts” is to be read with 2 MSS. The parallelism of v 4 so suggests. Heb. \(\gamma\mathbf{y}\) \(\tau\) \(\eta\) in v 4 probably originated in a marginal correction of the term here, which subsequently was taken as a correction of the form there.
\textsuperscript{c} 5.c. The pf \(\mathbf{w}\) \(\mathbf{w}\) “they were cooked” is probably a slip for a juss \(\mathbf{w}\) \(\mathbf{w}\) \(\mathbf{y}\) “let them be cooked,” as Tg. implies. The common emendation to a piel \(\textbf{impv}\) \(\mathbf{V}\) \(\mathbf{b}\) “cook” suits the context, but the ancient versions represent the \(\mathbf{w}\mathbf{w}\).
\textsuperscript{a} 6.a. lit. “therefore.”
\textsuperscript{b} 6.b. MT \(\mathbf{h}\tau\) \(\mathbf{a}\) \(\mathbf{n}\) “its corrosion” (cf. \textit{GKC} 91e) is probably to be accented \(\mathbf{h}\tau\) \(\mathbf{a}\) \(\mathbf{l}\), a euphonic form of \(\mathbf{h}\mathbf{a}\) \(\mathbf{\l}\), to avoid a final accented syllable before \(\mathbf{h}\mathbf{b}\); cf. \textit{GKC} 29e, f, 90f and \textit{Ezek} 28:15; Ps 3:3 (contrast v 8).
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\textsuperscript{d} 6.d. For this developed meaning see \textit{BDB} 174b. The usual meaning “lot” does not fit.
\textsuperscript{a} 7.a. lit. “for,” here in the sense “as one might expect in view of the fact that” (cf. \textit{BDB} 473b, 474a).
to wrath being aroused and vengeance being exacted."

9 Here therefore is the Lord Yahweh’s message. “I myself am going to make the pile larger. 10 Put on an abundance of logs, keep the fire burning, finish cooking the meat and remove the broth and let the bones be burned. Then let it stand empty on its coals in order that it may be heated and its copper may become red-hot and its uncleanness inside it may be melted and its corrosion consumed. 12 It has frustrated all efforts (?) and its abundance of corrosion does not come off. In view of your unclean vileness, because I have tried to purify you but you did not stay purified from your uncleanness, you will never be pure again until I have sated my wrath against you. 14 I, Yahweh, have spoken—it is about to happen—and I will act. I will not refrain nor spare nor relent. Your own behavior is the measure of the judgment they have been meting out to you. So runs the

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8.a. cf. BDB 679a and especially Deut 18:14. An emendation to הַנָּתַן: she has put” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 95; Fohrer 139; Eichrodt 335) is ruled out by the resumption of the stem הֶסֹק “cover” in the passive (Christ, Blutvergiessen 77).
9.a. MT adds “woe to the bloodstained city,” lacking in LXX* and probably added by mechanical assimilation to v 6. Zimmerli (494) notes that it fits the beginning of the accusation there better than that of an announcement of judgment here.
10.a. For another interpretation of this and adjacent verbs, which take Yahweh as subject, see Form/Structure/Setting. Redactionally, however, impv forms seem to be intended.
10.b. MT הָגִישׁ וְרְתִּם יִרְדַּעֲנֵךְ, “and season the seasoning,” contextually illfitting, seems to have suffered metathesis and mutual assimilation from an original וְרְתִּם יִרְדַּעֲנֵךְ “and remove the broth.” A few MSS read וְרְתִּם יִרְדַּעֲנֵךְ, which is graphically closer to MT than וְרְתִּם יִרְדַּעֲנֵךְ; “empty,” proposed by Kraetzschmar (196). LXX καί ἐξατάσαι τὸ ὕπηργεῖν “and let the broth be diminished” seems to imply וְרְתִּם יִרְדַּעֲנֵךְ. Its verb (הָגִישׁ of דַּעֲנֵךְ, cf. דַּעֲנֵךְ “small, fine”) is a misreading of MT; its phrase attests a stage between the original and MT.
12.a. Heb. תָּלָה יִתְנַעֲתָה “she wearied toils” is most uncertain. LXX* lacks the phrase, and it is often regarded as a ditto graph of תָּלָה יִתְנַעֲתָה at the end of v 11 (see BHS). Is it another case of an incorporated correction of a corrupted text (cf. v 2)? RSV “in vain I wearied myself” adopts the proposal of BHK, followed by Ziegler, Ezechiel 79, יָבָא בּ יִתְנַעֲתָה. McHardy’s emendation of the verb to דָּבָא יִתְנַעֲתָה “together” (JJS 2 [1949] 155), accepted by NEB, imports a term not used in Ezekiel and loses the rhetorical value of the present text.
13.a. For the construction cf. GKC 132r and 16:27 (Zimmerli 496).
14.a. For this variation of a standard formula (cf. 17:24; 36:36; 37:14) see Comment.
14.b. LXX* omits the last clause, but in favor of its retention (contra Zimmerli 496 et al.) see Form/Structure/Setting.
Lord Yahweh’s oracle.”  

15 I received the following communication from Yahweh:  

“Human one, I am going to take from you the delight of your eyes in a fatal blow, but you must not wail or weep.  

16 Groan in silence — you may not engage in ritual mourning for the dead.  

17 Bind your turban round your head and put sandals on your feet. You are not to cover your upper lip nor eat the bread of despair.  

18 That evening my wife died. Next morning I carried out my instructions.  

The people asked me to tell them the meaning of my conduct.  

I replied to the people that morning with the statement that I...
had received the following message from Yahweh: 21 Tell the community of Israel I am going to desecrate my sanctuary, your source of pride and power, the delight of your eyes and desire of your hearts, while the sons and daughters you’ve left behind will fall victims to the sword. 22 But you are to copy me: you must not cover your upper lips nor eat the bread of despair. 23 Your turbans are to stay on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You must not wail or weep, but be mortified over your iniquities and whimper among yourselves. 24 Ezekiel is to be your prophetic example, you are to copy him exactly. When it happens, you will realize that I am Yahweh.

25 “As for you, human one, on the very day I take away from them their refuge, their pride and joy, the delight of their eyes and the desire of their hearts, and their sons and daughters, 27 on that very day your mouth will be opened and you will speak, dumb no longer. You are to be a prophetic sign to them and they will realize that I am Yahweh.”

Notes

2.a. MT’s “the name of this day, this selfsame day” appears to be conflated. Probably the second phrase, missing from Syr. Vg, was written by faulty anticipation of v 2b and a supralinear correction has been incorporated into the text. Wevers (140) suggests that με[...]

19.a. MT adds וְלִי “for us” superfluously. It is generally taken as an erroneous repetition of וְלִי earlier. LXX Syr. Vg omit.

20.a. See the first note on v 18.

21.a. MT מ[...] מ used to be taken as “object of compassion,” but the parallelism with אֲשֶׁר (v 25) suggests that it is a synonym, “that to which one lifts (one’s desire),” deriving from another stem cognate with Arab. hamalā “carry and evidenced in Talmudic h[...] h “wrapper” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 98; Zimmerli, ibid.; BHS). Ehrlich suggested that a desire for assonance with the earlier מ[...] מ prompted the usage.

24.a. MT adds יְנִדָּה “Lord,” which does not correspond to Ezekiel’s formulaic usage (cf. v 27b). See the third note on 23:49.

25.a. The Heb. loosely appends with asyndeton. There hardly seems to be reason to delete the next phrase as secondary (cf. Zimmerli 508).

27.a. V 26 “On that day a refugee will come to you to give information” intrudes between the evident correlation of the fall of Jerusalem and the ending of Ezekiel’s dumbness. Moreover, the verse creates a chronological problem in that it equates the day of Jerusalem’s fall with the day when the news reached the exiles. It seems to have been a marginal exegetical note coordinating with 33:21–22, as the Aram. inf[...] מ[...] מ “to cause to hear” suggests (Fohrer 143; cf. Zimmerli, ibid.; te Stroete Bijdragen 38 [1977] 169). It wants to suggest that the date in question was not when Jerusalem fell but rather later, when Ezekiel received the news. Heb. עָנָה מִים מִי “on that day” functions as a cue, citing the phrase in v 27. Perhaps the comment referred to Ezekiel in the third person and incorporation into the text caused a change to עִיָּלָה “to you.”

b 27.b. MT and the ancient versions add כְּפַר הָאָרֶץ “with the refugee,” which semantically aligns with רָבְדָּת ו “and you will speak” (cf. 20:3): the misplacement suggests that it was a marginal comment occasioned by the intrusion of v 26 (cf. Zimmerli 504, 508; BHS).

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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
explanation of µ wealthiest “name,” here unusually in the sense of date as in an Arad ostracon (see ANET, supplementary vol. 569 note 28).

2.b. lit. “put pressure on.”

3.a. For the formulaic use of ynd a “Lord” here and in vv 6, 9, 14 see the note on 20:3.

3.b. The omission of the repeated verb in LXX* Syr. is probably stylistic, removing a feature common in Ezekiel (Zimmerli 493).

3.c. MT ṭbd originally was probably ḤB; via ḤB q (cf. 31:18): elsewhere in the poem ḤSy “caldron” is treated as fem.

4.a. For MT ḥjl j n “its cuts” LXX Syr. imply a suffixless ṭyjl j n. For the origin of MT see the second* note on v 5.

5.a. The consonants of MT ḥytj j t ṭymx[ h “the bones under it” are to be redivided as ṭymx[ h ḥytj t m “the logs underneath it” (Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 175; cf. Ezek 1:8, etc). The term in v 4 led a copyist astray.

5.b. MT ḥjl j t r “its boiled things” is generally regarded as having suffered mechanical assimilation to ḥjl j t n “its cuts” is to be read with 2 MSS. The parallelism of v 4 so suggests. Heb. ḥjl j t n in v 4 probably originated in a marginal correction of the term here, which subsequently was taken as a correction of the form there.

vol. volume
lit. literally
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
fem. feminine
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Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
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MSS manuscript(s)
Heb. Hebrew
5.c. The pf וַיְבִשׁ “they were cooked” is probably a slip for a juss וַיִּבָּשֵׁ׏ׁו “let them be cooked,” as Tg. implies. The common emendation to a piel impv וּבָשֵׁ׏ׁו “cook” suits the context, but the ancient versions represent the וַּבָּשְׁׁו.

6.a. lit. “therefore.”

6.b. MT הִתָּאֹלְי “its corrosion” (cf. GKC 91e) is probably to be accented הִתָּאֹלְי, a euphonic form of הִתָּאֹלְי, to avoid a final accented syllable before הִבָּ: cf. GKC 29e, f, 90f and Ezek 28:15; Ps 3:3 (contrast v 8).

6.c. Heb. הִתָּאֹלְי is lit. “take it out”: the suffix seems to refer to its contents (Smend 172).

6.d. For this developed meaning see BDB 174b. The usual meaning “lot” does not fit.

7.a. lit. “for,” here in the sense “as one might expect in view of the fact that” (cf. BDB 473b, 474a).

8.a. cf. BDB 679a and especially Deut 18:14. An emendation to הִתָּאֹלְי “she has put” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 95; Fohrer 139; Eichrodt 335) is ruled out by the resumption of the stem הִתָּאֹלְי “cover” in the passive (Christ, Blutvergiessen 77).

9.a. MT adds “woe to the bloodstained city,” lacking in LXX* and probably added by mechanical assimilation to v 6. Zimmerli (494) notes that it fits the beginning of the accusation there better than that of an announcement of judgment here.
10.a. For another interpretation of this and adjacent verbs, which take Yahweh as subject, see *Form/Structure/Setting*. Redactionally, however, *impv* forms seem to be intended.

10.b. MT םִבּו רְמֵד וַ֡יְהַחֲמֵר וַ֡יְכָּרְנוּ וָ֗בֹתַּל וַ֡יְהַיְּבַּרְשֵׁ֛נָּה ְתַכִּיְּבֹתַּלּ ְחַָּרְשֵׁ֛נָּה “and season the seasoning,” contextually illfitting, seems to have suffered metathesis and mutual assimilation from an original רְמֵד וַ֡יְכָּרְנוּ וָ֗בֹתַּל וַ֡יְהַיְּבַּרְשֵׁ֛נָּה “and remove the broth.” A few MSS read רְמֵד וַ֡יְכָּרְנוּ וָ֗בֹתַּל, which is graphically closer to MT than רְמֵד וַ֡יְכָּרְנוּ וָ֗בֹתַּל; “empty,” proposed by Kraetzschmar (196). LXX καὶ ζωμὸς ἐξανεμήσαντο “and let the broth be diminished” seems to imply רְמֵד וַ֡יְכָּרְנוּ וָ֗בֹתַּל. Its verb (הֹפָה הָּפָה, cf. כַּף “small, fine”) is a misreading of MT; its phrase attests a stage between the original and MT.

10.c. The omission in LXX* is probably a case of homoeoarcton (Parunak, *Structural Studies* 348). Brownlee in an unpublished paper suggested that וְיַעַמֵּשׁ meant the now meatless bones (cf. Zimmerli 495) as distinct from אַמָּשׁ, the meat-covered bones of v 4. The verb וְיַעַמֵּשׁ “let … be burned” fits the rhetorical structuring of the passage (see *Form/Structure/Setting*). McHardy’s emendation of the verb to וְיַעַמֵּשׁ “together” (*JJS* 2 [1949] 155), accepted by NEB, imports a term not used in Ezekiel and loses the rhetorical value of the present text.

12.a. Heb. תָּלָּח נַעֲרָת “she wearied toils” is most uncertain. LXX* lacks the phrase, and it is often regarded as a dittograph of תָּלָּח מְעַרְּצִי at the end of v 11 (see BHS). Is it another case of an incorporated correction of a corrupted text (cf. v 2)? RSV “in vain I wearied myself” adopts the proposal of BHK, followed by Ziegler, *Ezechiel 79*, יַעְמֵשׁ, and אַמָּשׁ נַעֲרָת נַעֲרָת. For the cue

| MT | The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS) |
| MSS | manuscript(s) |
| LXX | The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT |
| hoph | hophal |
| cf. | confer, compare |

12.b. MT and the ancient versions add יַעַמֵּשׁ תָּלָּח, which may have been an early gloss on the end of v 11, with the sense of “its corrosion: (consumed) by fire” (P. Rost, *OLZ* 6 [1903] 443). For the cue

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| LXX | The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT |
| cf. | confer, compare |

| NEB | The New English Bible |
| Heb. Hebrew |
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| BHS | Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977) |
| cf. | confer, compare |

| RSV | Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957) |
| MT | The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS) |
element see the second note on 23:4.

13.a. For the construction cf. GKC 132r and 16:27 (Zimmerli 496).

14.a. For this variation of a standard formula (cf. 17:24; 36:36; 37:14) see Comment.

14.b. LXX* omits the last clause, but in favor of its retention (contra Zimmerli 496 et al.) see Form/Structure/Setting.

14.c. For ûwfp “they judged you” some MSS read ûyt fpw “I judged you” and the ancient versions render as first sg, representing either that or ûfp “I judge you.” MT has the merit of being the harder reading; the variant is probably a case of assimilation to 7:3, 8. See Form/Structure/Setting.

14.d. LXX has an addition which seems to go back to a Heb. Vorlage in the form ym h t br ûyt fpw “Therefore I judge you according to your bloodshed and according to your deeds I judge you, unclean in name and great in rebellion.” Apart from the initial word the addition seems to be a pastiche of comparative glosses. The first is from 7:3, with ûymdk corrupted from ûykrdk “according to your ways” via a /µ error; it was intended to qualify v 14ba. The second is from 36:19 with a change of suffixes and with the same intention. The third cites the vocative phrase in 22:5: yr mh t br appears to be a compression, via parablepsis, of t br yr mh t yb h mw h m, “great in disorder, house of rebellion.” So there was a fourth reference, which evidently sought to identify the addressee in v 14b with that of v 3. The third gloss cited a parallel for the uncleanness of Jerusalem (v 13abb).

16.a. MT adds ût md awbt awlw “nor may your tears come,” lacking in LXX*. It appears to have no place in the tight structuring of vv 16–23 (see Form/Structure/Setting). Was it an effort to make sense of an illegible µd qnah h kbt awlw “and you must not weep. Groan in silence,” with which it shares a number of consonants (…µd …a …bt awlw)? Then the correct text was restored, but the aberration was preserved in a conflated reading. The unusual verb, as well as the spelling awlw (cf. Zimmerli 502), arouses suspicion.

17.a. This sense seems to be corroborated by the parallel v 23b. For the coordination of the verbs in

OLZ Orientalische Literaturzeitung
cf. confer, compare
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
MSS manuscript(s)
sg singular or under
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
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which the principal idea precedes cf. GKC 120h, with reference to Jer 4:5.

17.b. MT l b a µytm “dead, mourning” is best transposed with Fohrer (141) and Eichrodt (340). The massoretic accentuation includes µytm “dead” with what follows.

17.c. Here and in v 22 MT µyzn “(bread of) men” is best repointed as µ yv ñd “despair” (Wellhausen apud Smend 176; Driver, JTS 41 [1940] 169; NEB). Vg Tg. imply µyn “sorrow” (cf. Hos 9:4), read by many, including Zimmerli (503), and adopted by RSV.

18.a. MT and the ancient versions begin v 18 with “and I spoke to the people in the morning,” which in terms of content seems to link with vv 18ab–20a, but of itself is tantalizingly incomplete. Ehrlich (Randglossen 97) suggested that the main verbs of v20ab–b function as pluperfects (“now my wife had died … and I had done … ”), but to relegate the fulfillment of v 16 to a flashback seems incongruous, and so does an initial mention of an address from the prophet, in the absence of a prior command so to do. To delete (Fohrer, ibid.; Zimmerli, ibid., et al.; cf. BHS) is a counsel of despair. The clause is best moved to a position between vv 19 and 20. Was it overlooked by homoeoarcton (ñd ñd), restored in the margin and misplaced in the text under the assumption that the “morning” was on the same day as the evening of v 18ab?

19.a. MT adds wn “for us” superfluously. It is generally taken as an erroneous repetition of wn earlier. LXX* Syr. Vg omit.

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JTS Journal of Theological Studies
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Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
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21.a. MT מְלַיִם (v 25) used to be taken as “object of compassion,” but the parallelism with מִלְחַמָּה (v 25) suggests that it is a synonym, “that to which one lifts (one’s desire),” deriving from another stem cognate with Arab. הַמָּלַא “carry and evidenced in Talmud הִליָם מֶלֶל “wrapper” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 98; Zimmerli, ibid.; BHS). Ehrlich suggested that a desire for assonance with the earlier מִלָּה מֶלָּה prompted the usage.

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ibid. ibidem, in the same place
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
inf infinitive
cf. confer, compare
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
Heb. Hebrew

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
“and you will speak” (cf. 20:3): the misplacement suggests that it was a marginal comment occasioned by the intrusion of v 26 (cf. Zimmerli 504, 508; BHS).

Form/Structure/Setting

The message reception formula of v 1, which recurs at v 15, identifies vv 1–14 as an overall unit. A personal command to the prophet to record the date as a day of tragedy is followed by another to deliver publicly a parable that gives instructions for cooking meat. The addressee is not named in the poem of vv 3b–5 nor subsequently, but the structure of vv 3b–14 sheds light on his identity. They are marked by a punning inclusion, ṭ p ṭw “set on” and ṭ ṭw ṭw “they have judged you.” There is also a midpoint echo of both terms in the accusatory ṭ ṭw ṭw “she did (not) pour it” at v 7. The punitive inclusion seems to refer to the king of Babylon and his army (cf. 23:24; 24:2) and thus to identify him as the unnamed addressee for the imperatives of vv 3b–5 (and also of vv 10, 11). Accordingly the poem recites a parable rather than instructing the prophet to engage in a symbolic action, against Fohrer (138) and Brownlee (For Me to Live 30; Ezekiel 1–19 61). Whether the poem was originally a work song that Ezekiel reused (van den Born 154; Zimmerli 496 et al.) can hardly be established.

Subsequent interpretation of the parable is expected, and an extended one follows in vv 6–14. It functions as a judgment oracle with two parts, accusation (vv 6–8) and pronouncement of punishment (vv 9–14), each part being introduced by a messenger formula. The role of ḫl “therefore” in v 9 is the standard one of linking fault and fate, whereas that of ḫl in v 6 is rather to introduce the interpretation, as in 15:6. By way of interpretation the caldron is identified with Jerusalem, “the city of blood” (v 6a), whose blood is as yet unpunished (vv 6b–8). However, the main intent of the judgment oracle is not to supply an interpretation of the parable but to develop it on allegorical lines as the prelude to further calamity at Yahweh’s hands through his foreign agent (vv 6a–b, 9b–11).

The complicated nature of vv 3b–14 with their double message of cooking meat in a caldron and removing corrosion from it raises the question whether a redactor has been at work, perhaps combining two separate messages. Bertholet (85, 87) divided simply into vv 1–5 and 6–14, but a prophetic parable does demand an interpretation (Zimmerli 497). Zimmerli himself has made a threefold division of vv 3b–14 into (a) vv 3b–5 and their original interpretation in vv 9–10a, (b) an expansion in which vv 6–8 was interpreted in v 10b–13a, and (c) a further addition in vv 13b–14, marked by a new keyword, ḫ ḫ “be/make pure.” Similarly Wevers (140) has split the passage into vv 3b–5 + 9–10 and vv 6–8 + 11–14 (cf. Freedy’s redactional analysis in VT 20 [1970] 139 note 2). Both distinguish vv 9–10 (or 10a) from vv 11 (or 10b–14) (or 13a) as relating to divine and human actions respectively, by interpreting the verbs of v 10a or 10a–b (both delete v 10b) as infinitives absolute with Yahweh as subject. The LXX and Sryiac provide ancient support for this interpretation. Then the interpretative role of vv 9–10(a) is to identify Yahweh as stoker and cook.

cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
VT Vetus Testamentum
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
The form-critical coherence of vv 6–8 with what follows is indeed not a proof of unity. The distinction between vv 9–10(a) and its present sequel is a little wooden: Yahweh can be both collaborator with and cause behind his human intermediary (cf. the interlocked polarity of 23:22–27, even when pruned by Zimmerli [481]). Yet this observation may only attest the intelligibility of a skillfully redacted text. The division of vv 3b–14 into two parts is plausible: it manages to separate a complex passage into two straightforward strands. Zimmerli’s third part is less convincing: v 14 seems to be required as a conclusion and Zimmerli’s new catchword is actually confined to v 13b and follows naturally as a foil to הַּֽאָֽמִֽן “uncleanness” in vv 11–13a. How necessary is it to split the text into two parts? The fate of both citizens and city is hardly different than the message of 12:19, 20 and 15:6–8. Here, however, the allegorical text seems to bombard a hearer with too much material to assimilate at once. If vv 6–8 together with vv 11–14 did subsequently build on vv 3b–5 and 9–10, they could not have been uttered much later than the basic part: they must be Ezekiel’s elaboration of a recent oracle (cf. Stuart 237). As vv 1, 3 indicate, the historical setting of the piece is the siege of Jerusalem begun in 588 B.C. The command to write down a date that was not yet significant for Ezekiel’s audience points to an exilic location.

For full stylistic details of vv 1–14 the reader may be directed to CBQ 49 (1987) 404–14. Vv 3b–5 consist of two strophes, interlocked by יִבְּרָם “choicest” (Brownlee, For Me to Live 24). They go through the stages of preparation and cooking on separate and roughly parallel lines. The elevated prose of vv 6–8 also falls into two halves, each of which moves from accusation (“blood/corrosion”) to the necessity for judgment. The third section, vv 9–14, is demarcated by its own inclusion, מִי “I” in vv 9 and 14. It falls into three parts. The first two, vv 9–10 and 11–12, match an abundance of punishment (הָבְרִים “multiply,” v 10) with an “abundance” (תְּבַר) of corrosion or reason for punishment. They are marked by a triple use of repetition or wordplay in an ABC/BCA order: מַתּ “finish” and מַתּ “be consumed,” עַל “remove” and עַל “empty,” and וּמַי “be burned” and וּמַי “be red-hot.” The third part, vv 13–14, with its direct address represents a climax. Vv 9–14 throw with their own somber wordplay: מַי “be heated,” יִמּ “my wrath” and מַי “I will (not) relent.” This wordplay serves to reinforce מַי “wrath” in v 8.

Vv 15–24 comprise (a) a divine command to the prophet to engage in a symbolic action (vv 16, 17); and (b) a report of the prophet’s compliance (v 18); (c) the people’s request for an explanation (v 19); and (d) the sequel, a proof saying that applies the symbolic action to the people in a message of judgment (vv 21–24). A further proof saying in vv 25–27 continues the foregoing; it is a personal message to the prophet. The continuing role of these verses is evident from the reverting in vv 25 to the event of v 21, and in 27b to the motif of v 24, while מַי מִי “from them” in v 25 presupposes the earlier reference to the people. Accordingly vv 15–27 make up an overall unit, as the single message reception formula in v 15 suggests: the unusual inclusion of the one in v 20 within an oracle serves to emphasize the continuity of the message. The mention of younger family members left behind (v 21) is a clear pointer to an exilic audience. The occasion seems to be later than the onset of siege in vv 1–2, but it is still within the period of siege that was to reach its climax in the summer of 587 B.C. with the fall of the city.

Structurally vv 16–24 are controlled by a quite rigid parallelism. The announcement of Yahweh’s removal of Ezekiel’s wife (v 16a) coordinates verbally with the parallel announcement of the loss of the temple in v 21a, and thematically with the loss of family members in v 21b. Three pairs of instructions to

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cf. confer, compare

*CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
the prophet in vv 16b–17 are echoed chiastically in vv 22b–23a. An extra pair in v 27a expands the first; so does a verbally nonparallel but thematically related pair in v 23b. Accordingly the structure is ABCD/ADCB. The effect is to highlight the instructions of vv 16b–17 and vv 23a–b. There does not seem to be room in the structure for v 27a (see Note* on v 16). On the other hand, the assessment of vv 22–23 as secondary, made by Zimmerli (508), Wevers (142), and te Stroete, Bijdragen 38 (1977) 169, 175, overlooks the important role that repetition has in Hebrew literature. The switch from the divine “I” to a prophetic “I” and back again in vv 21–24, at which they look askance, is not unparalleled in oracles. Another scheme is superimposed on the commands of vv 22b–23 and serves to extend them. The extra commands in vv 22a and 24a are wrapped round vv 22b–23 as an emphatic inclusion. It echoes an earlier scheme evident in vv 18 and 19, where the prophet’s actions (תָּתָנָה t̄nə h̄w “you are doing”) are a hinge linking the symbolic action with the truth to which it points.

As for vv 25 and 27, the A/A material of vv 16a and 21 is resumed in v 25 with vocabulary drawn from both, and Ezekiel’s role modeling from v 24a is recalled in v 27a. The parallelism of vv 24 and 27 is increased by the recognition formulas of vv 24b and 27b. The rhetorical bonding of vv 15–27 confirms that it functions as a unit. However, one must think in terms of the whole chapter as a redactional unit. Just as the oracles of chap. 21 were linked by the term בְּרַד brjd “sword,” so here מָעַה μ̄w “day” is the catchword: a special “day” in v 2 is echoed in “on the day when” in v 25 and “on that day” in v 27. The catchword operates as an inclusion linking two fateful days in the Jewish calendar.

Comment

1, 2 According to Parker and Dubberstein (Babylonian Chronology 28) this date represents January 15, 588 B.C. by our reckoning (see 20:1 Comment). This precision bears witness to the interacting of divine revelation and human history, so that neither can be understood apart from the other. On the human plane what happened on this day was a momentous event, like the arrival of the Russians at Berlin in World War II: it spelled the beginning of the end. On the theological plane it meant vindication for Ezekiel and for his insistence that the first fall of Jerusalem in 597 B.C. would not be reversed but worse was yet to come. Micawber-like hopes in Judah and doubtless among the exiles that the situation would improve were unjustified. The same date is attested in terms of Zedekiah’s reign in 2 Kgs 25:1 (cf. Zech 8:19). Here it is intended as a specification concerning the event in v 2. However, there are variations from the normal ways in which the date is cited in Ezekiel (see Zimmerli 498; cf. Freedy and Redford, JAOS 90 [1970] 468), which tend to suggest that it has been borrowed from 2 Kgs, to identify the reference in v 2 for a later readership.

The prophet’s insight was to be written down, for verification later when news came overland to

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* 16.a. MT adds אם md awk a l̄w “nor may your tears come,” lacking in LXX*. It appears to have no place in the tight structuring of vv 16–23 (see Form/Structure/ Setting). Was it an effort to make sense of an illegible מֵד qn̄ aw̄k at̄ l̄w “and you must not weep. Groan in silence,” with which it shares a number of consonants (...מֵד ...א ...א l̄w)? Then the correct text was restored, but the aberration was preserved in a conflated reading. The unusual verb, as well as the spelling מ̄w (cf. Zimmerli 502), arouses suspicion.

A Codex Alexandrinus
A Codex Alexandrinus
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society
Babylonia, as evidence that Ezekiel was an inspired prophet of Yahweh (cf. Isa 8:1–4; 30:8; Hab 2:2, 3).

3–5 The prophet is to deliver a parable about the siege to “the community of rebels” (נֶפֶשׁ תַּנְבִּיִּים), which in the book of Ezekiel is the sardonic version of the title for the covenant nation, יִשְׂרָאֵל “house of Israel.” The “house” or family is an unrepentant family of prodigal sons and daughters. The exilic representatives of Israel, who shared the rebellious spirit of the Judeans in the homeland, are meant. Fittingly such a people is to be the object of Yahweh’s retribution, which is to strike at its heart. The context makes clear (see Form/Structure/Setting) that the parable addresses Nebuchadnezzar and orders him to make things hot for Jerusalem. The meaning of the imagery is relatively clear from Ezekiel’s earlier usage in 11:7, where the meat in the caldron of Jerusalem represents those slain there. A “caldron” (רָסִים) was a large, two-handed cooking pot with a round base and a wide mouth (A. M. Honeyman, PEQ for 1939, 85). The point of the parable is that Yahweh is in charge of the military operations, and that the king of Babylon functions as a servant or vassal carrying out his orders to besiege the city and threaten the lives of its citizens and refugees. There is irony in the rhetorical stress on “the choicest” (vv 4, 5): the most distinguished were by no means exempt from his culinary exercise, which is commissioned in two series of commands, in v 3b–4 and 5.

6–8 The interpretation that follows identifies the caldron as “the city of blood,” which recalls the charges in 22:2–5. Now, however, the imagery is developed on different lines, in terms of dealing with damage of the caldron. The word הָלַּחֲלָה “corrosion” is to be related to the reference to copper in v 11. It occurs with copper in a verbal form (דָּלִ֥יָּה לֹֽעָה “corrode”) at Sir 12:10. Semantically it is probably a development of the stem הָלַּחֲלָה לֹֽעָה לֹֽעָה “be sick.” Driver’s hypothesis of another stem meaning “be green, gangrenous” (Hommages à André Dupont-Sommer, ed. A. Caquot, Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1971, 283–84) is not convincing (cf. H. G. M. Williamson, 1 & 2 Chronicles [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982] 276; HALAT 302a, b).

So blemished was the city that extremely harsh measures had to be taken to remove the blemishes. Accordingly the cooking process was to be only stage one of Jerusalem’s experience of nemesis. The capital had undergone nothing yet by comparison with its eventual doom. In the second part of the section the inevitability of this fate is explained with fresh reference to the blood of v 6. The blatant taking of life in the capital was a crying shame. Like Abel’s blood in Gen 4:10 (cf. Job 16:18), it cried out for vengeance. Yahweh himself had seen to it that the powerful moral process of retribution took its course and that no cover-up was possible to impede Jerusalem’s exposure to vengeance. Retribution is expressed as an inexorable process at work in society, triggered by wrongdoing (cf. Wevers 141). Here that impersonal process is helped along by Yahweh’s personal intervention.

9–12 Vv 6–8 represented the element of accusation in a judgment oracle. Now follows the pronunciation of punishment, emphatically confirmed by its own messenger formula. Yahweh’s nudging (v 8) grows into a major part of the action. He stands behind Nebuchadnezzar, aiding him in his sinister focus on Jerusalem so that the second stage of punishment takes place. V 11 develops the imagery introduced in v 6. Not only would the inhabitants of Jerusalem suffer—and be removed in
exile?—but the city would be engulfed in an inferno of destruction. Only thus could its ingrown blemishes be eradicated (cf. Mic 3:12). V 11 introduces the notion of religious uncleanness before God as an explanatory variant of corrosion: again it belongs within the orbit of 22:2–5. Indeed, v 11b recalls 22:15, the purpose of God to eradicate Jerusalem’s uncleanness, while the imagery is not far from the smelting motif of 22:17–22. Here, however, the reference is not to the melting down of the metal pot into scrap, against Kelso, JBL 64 (1945) 391–92, and Brownlee, For Me to Live 26, but to the burning off of the blemishes on the metal.

14, 14 The close of the message dramatically shifts to the direct address of Jerusalem. Uncleanness is now equated with מז “vileness,” which in the sexual terms of chap. 23 was “lasciviousness.” The series of references to wrath that began with the impersonal reference of v 8 and which wordplay has echoed in the heating of the caldron (v 11) and will echo again in Yahweh’s relentlessness in v 14, now comes to a head as “my wrath.” Yahweh identifies himself with the moral process that made Jerusalem its victim. The identification is of a piece with the emphatic pronoun “I” that occurs at the start and finish of the last section (vv 9, 14). The identification is reinforced in v 14 in terms of the fusion of the divine word and work with the arrival of a quasi-independent event. Yahweh’s will was by no means vindictive: it was the materializing of a force activated by Jerusalem’s wrong behavior. The Babylonian invaders stood as the final link in a moral chain of cause and effect. Does v 14 envisage positive purification, so that the pot may be re-used (Fohrer 140; Fuhs, Ezekiel and His Book 270–71)? The context and the parallel of the smelting furnace in 22:17–22 suggest rather that cleansing is an ironic metaphor for destruction.

16, 17 Perhaps nowhere does the radical significance of a prophet’s surrender to the divine will emerge more clearly than here. Ezekiel is called to sacrifice his wife on the altar of his prophetic vocation. The pain of this bereavement is utilized as a reflection of his people’s imminent catastrophe. The pain is intensified in that it must remain bottled up instead of trickling away in the reassuring routine of cultural behavior, which to this day makes Jewish reaction to bereavement psychologically superior to that of the Gentile. Disorientation of this type had its own customary conduct: loud wailing, neglect of one’s appearance, the covering of the lower part of the face and the funeral meal (cf. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961] 59–61). It all ministered to the expression of grief and so promoted a return to normal life. Here the norms of disorientation are suspended, so stunning is the experience of which it is meant to be the symbol (cf. Jer 16:5).

18–24 Ezekiel’s submission to the divine command is dispassionately recounted. It stimulates the questioning of the exiles when the interment takes place on the morning of the next day. From experience of his symbolic actions they recognize the prophetic nature of the absence of mourning rites but not yet its significance. Ezekiel has the opportunity to give the divine interpretation and so to carry out his prophetic task, functioning as Yahweh’s witness. A double blow is to befall the exiles. First, the temple is to be desecrated as a consequence of the coming fall of Jerusalem. The temple had immense significance in Judah’s religion-based culture as the visible guarantee of divine goodwill. The formal Songs of Zion celebrated the aura of inviolability the temple gave to Jerusalem (Pss 46, 76, 87; cf. 78:68, 69), and their informal versions attested the people’s devotion to it (Pss 84, 122). It stood as the bastion of the community’s present life and future hopes. Now, however, this visible link between Yahweh and his people (“my … your”) was to be severed. Second, just as Ezekiel had lost his wife, so the fall of
Jerusalem was to mean the deaths of members of the exiles’ families. In 597 B.C. people of significance had been deported as hostages to insure Judah’s loyalty; evidently their children had been left behind. Hopes of fond reunion were dashed by the forecast. Ahead lay only the total breakdown of society, attested in the loosing of its religious moorings and in the damming of its hopes vested in the next generation.

So overwhelming a double calamity would force the exiles to take over Ezekiel’s precedent. Not only would it be too stunning for tears but the inevitable “why?” of anguish would bring the appalling answer that the people’s deviation from the divine will had been the ultimate cause of the catastrophe. There was no less cruel way for Yahweh to be appreciated for what he was.

25–27 However, the destruction of the temple and the killing of children would bring about a positive change in Ezekiel’s prophetic role. Ironically such devastating disaster—indicated by the piling up of terms old and new—would mark a turning point in the people’s fortunes. It would find its first focus in the prophet’s symbolic experience. The dumbness with which Yahweh had earlier afflicted him would be removed. He would be given new words that revealed Yahweh’s being from a different perspective. “In 24:24 he is a sign of God’s judgment and its consequences; in 24:27 he is a sign of God’s grace and its consequences” (R. W. Klein, Ezekiel 39–40).

The event has been preserved in two versions, here and in 33:21–22; a later attempt to bridge them is attested in 24:26. However, they must be left as independent witnesses to the spiritual watershed represented by the fall of Jerusalem. The double recording of the removal of the prophet’s dumbness, which clearly has an important role in the structuring of the book, is not so problematic as their relation to the record of its imposition in 3:24–27, as a survey of some representative interpretations will show. Zimmerli (508–9) and Wevers (143) feel no need to relate the dumbness to chap. 24 since for them vv 25–27 are a secondary insertion based on 33:21, 22. At the other extreme, Eichrodt (348–50) holds that 3:24–26 (and 4:4–8) originally belonged with 24:15–27, so that the dumbness lasted for a period linked with the siege and fall of Jerusalem (cf. Cooke 44, 46). Vogt (Untersuchungen 95–101) has developed this hypothesis. Similarly, Brownlee associated the phenomena with the death of Ezekiel’s wife and regarded 3:26–27 as relating to this period (Ezekiel 1–19 56–58, 209). Greenberg has developed the traditional understanding of 3:24–27, in terms of intermittent dumbness—as a sign of Yahweh’s displeasure with his people—interrupted only by periodic messages of judgment from him (Ezekiel 1–20 102–21). Sherlock has taken this view further by noting how little of chaps. 4–24 is presented as public oracles (ExpTim 94 [1982/83] 296–98). Wilson has adopted the same longterm approach but understands יָפִיק in 3:26 as “arbitrator” and so in a prophetic context “intercessor.” He relates it to a prohibition of Ezekiel’s prophetic role of positive intercession till Jerusalem fell (VT 22 [1972] 91–104). He is able to undergird his interpretation with reference to passages that appear to have in common the motif of intercession denied: 8:1–4; 20:1–31 (contrast 36:37–38). The complex problem has no incontrovertible solution, but on balance Wilson’s seems the most impressive.

Explanation

Judaism was to single out a number of days in its calendar as fast days, including the 9th of Ab to commemorate the destruction of the temple (and also the second temple) and the 10th of Tebet, when Nebuchadnezzar began the siege of Jerusalem (cf. Zech 7:5; 8:19). In this chapter we find contemporary
reactions to these two fatal days.

Human hopes are shattered in the messages of vv 1–14. Ezekiel’s ministry was later to manifest a radically new, divinely based optimism, but that time was not yet. God’s no to a sinful people had to be heard and accepted with despair before good news could take its place. Here the fire of warfare threatens the peace of Jerusalem. As yet only Ezekiel knew the ominous facts, by prophetic inspiration. For those who were ready or eventually compelled to accept the prediction, this black day was the moment of truth. Yahweh stood on the side of the enemy, issuing orders for the siege. The citizens of Jerusalem, swollen by Judean refugees, were so many joints of meat tossed into a boiling caldron. Their goose was well and truly cooked.

Yet even worse news must be communicated. Perhaps in a later message, which followed on the heels of the first and has been redactionally blended with it, the metaphor of the cooking pot is taken further. Attention turns from the fate of Jerusalem’s inhabitants to that of the city itself. It was to suffer devastating damage. Jerusalem was infected with life-destroying social corruption, which must lead to its own demise. The capital was attracting to itself the outworking of a self-incurred curse. It was to become no mere ghost city, waiting quietly for a kinder turn of events, but a Dresden, an inferno of destruction (cf. Lam 2:8, 9, 15; Neh 1:3, 17). Such was its inevitable destiny—in which Yahweh too was mysteriously involved (vv 8, 11, 13). There was no less severe way for him to deal with the stain of spiritual impurity that contaminated the scene. The city was locked into a triangular situation. On the horizontal plane the Babylonian siege and its destructive outcome were the doom that the city had attracted to itself. Above both, however, towered the divine will, endorsing the nemesis triggered by the capital’s wrongdoing and even using a foreign army to this end. Those exiles who perversely continued to put their faith and hope in something other than God had to grasp that outside God there was no hope.

For Ezekiel years of loving turned in an instant into history, when his wife passed away. He was not permitted, however, to let his first reaction of numb shock be channeled into the cultural modes of expressing grief, which would have brought eventual healing to the hurt and helped to make him whole again. By this ban he was to model the overwhelming shock of a communal bereavement caused by the destruction of the temple and the killing of children left in the capital. These two tragedies stole all the meaning from life then and thereafter, and turned the whole future into a chaotic void. The first was theologically more crucial than the second: it not only slammed the door on centuries of worship, but removed the ground of Israel’s spiritual being. The fall of the temple exposed it as an outer shell corroded from within by national sinfulness. Yet in the removal of Ezekiel’s dumbness the text drops a clue that the debris of a false foundation was cleared away in order that an authentic relationship might be inaugurated, as later chapters will make plain. The second day held out hope to the hopeless.

The two days of this chapter find a double antitype in the letter to the Romans. In the Christian gospel the wrath of God is revealed against Jewish and Gentile sinfulness—and every mouth is stopped!—as the prelude to the manifestation of his saving righteousness (Rom 1:18; 3:19, 21). Furthermore, Paul interpreted Jewish rejection of Jesus in terms of their being pruned out from the tree of God’s people, with a view to their eventually being grafted back, which would mean nothing less than “life from the dead” (Rom 11:12–32; cf. Ezek 37). And he did not scruple to warn Gentile Christians that God’s severity could strike again, to their own loss (Rom 11:22).

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
Palestinian Scores to Be Settled (25:1–17)

Bibliography


translation

I received the following communication from Yahweh: “Human one, look in the direction of the Ammonites and issue a prophecy against them. Tell the Ammonites: Listen to Yahweh’s communication. Here is a message from the Lord Yahweh. Inasmuch as you, Ammon, jeered at the desecration of my sanctuary, the desolation of Israel’s land and the deportation of Judah’s community, for that reason I mean to give the easterners the right to own your land. They will set up their encampments in your country, making their homes there. They will eat the fruit and drink the wine that belong to you. I will turn Rabbah into a camel corral and Ammon into a sheepfold. Then you Ammonites will realize that I am Yahweh.

“Here is a confirmatory message from the Lord Yahweh: Inasmuch as you clapped your hands, stamped your feet and laughed with passionate and utter scorn, over Israel’s land, for that
reason I have determined\(^a\) to deal you a blow. I will get other nations to plunder\(^b\) you. I will eliminate you as a people, I will efface you as a country. I will destroy you—then you will realize that I am Yahweh.

8 “Here is a message from the Lord Yahweh: Inasmuch as Moab\(^a\) declared that the community of Judah is no different from any other nation,\(^9\) for that reason I mean to expose Moab’s flank, depriving it\(^b\) of cities, its cities\(^b\) throughout its territory,\(^c\) the showpieces of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baalmeon and Kiriathaim.\(^10\) I will give\(^a\) the easterners the right to own its land, as well as that of the Ammonites, so that its\(^b\) national status\(^c\) may not be remembered,\(^11\) and I will carry out judgment on Moab. Then they will realize that I am Yahweh.

12 “Here is a message from the Lord Yahweh: Inasmuch as Edom has treated Judah’s community with vindictive revenge and incurred serious guilt by persisting\(^a\) in revenge against them,

\(^{6.c.}\) For the form see \textit{GKC} 23c. The omission of \(\text{ûf a wAl k b} \) “with all your scorn” in LXX Syr. is due to failure to understand the noun. The correct rendering in 28:24, 26; 36:5 comes from a different translator (Zimmerli, \textit{Ezekiel} 2 7; cf. L. J. McGregor, \textit{The Greek Text of Ezekiel} 197–99).

\(^{7.a.}\) The pf is prophetic (Cooke 286). \textit{MT} prefaces with \(\text{ynnh} \) “behold I,” unusual with a pf verb (cf. 36:6): it may be a case of mechanical assimilation to vv 4, 9.

\(^{7.b.}\) \textit{K gb l} is meaningless; \textit{Q zb l} “to plunder” is correct (cf. 7:21; 23:46). \textit{K} is due to confusion with a marginal alternative \(\text{ywgb} \) for the following \(\text{ywgl} \) “to the nations” (cf. Cornill 336; \textit{BHS}).

\(^{7.c.}\) Heb. \(\text{ûdym k l} \) “I will destroy you” is often regarded as a gloss, but it is well attested and a reason or source for such a gloss is difficult to detect. For a climactic single word preceding the recognition formula cf. 24:24b. However, the emphasis on destruction does appear to be excessive. Ehrlich’s hypothesis (\textit{Randglossen} 99) is worth considering, that \(\text{ûyt d b a h w} \) “and I will efface you” is a variant of \(\text{ûyt r k h w} \) “and I will eliminate you,” that \(\text{êm w} \) “and from” once stood in the place of \(\text{êm} \), and that \(\text{ûdym k l} \) goes with the preceding phrase. More precisely, \(\text{ûyt d b a h w} \) could have originated as a comparative gloss, from v 16.

\(^{8.a.}\) \textit{MT} adds \(\text{ry[w} \) “and Seir,” absent from LXX\(^*\) and from consideration in vv 9–11. Evidently a marginal note \(\text{yl[y} \) intended to note the parallels between the oracle against Edom in vv 12–14 and that against Mount Seir in 35:2–9, but the common beginning of vv 8 and 12 caused the note to be put too high and it was incorporated into the text at this point.

\(^{9.a.}\) For the privative \(\text{êm} \) “from” see \textit{BDB} 583b.

\(^{9.b.}\) LXX does not represent \(\text{wr[m} \) “of its cities,” perhaps by oversight, unless \(\text{wr[m} \) “of the cities, of its cities” reflects a conflated text.

\(^{9.c.}\) See \textit{BDB} 892a; \textit{HALAT} 1046b.

\(^{10.a.}\) The order of words may require changing: cf. Zimmerli 9; \textit{BHS}.

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\(^{10.c.}\) LXX\(^*\) does not represent \(\text{ywgb} \) “among the nations,” which could thus be an addition in \textit{MT}, perhaps linked with the variant in v 7. It may, however, have been overlooked before \(\text{b a wmb w} \). It seems to have a structural role in the oracle (see \textit{Comment}).

\(^{12.a.}\) The consec pf has a frequentative force: cf. \textit{GKC} 112f; Joüon 119v. However, B. Johnson (\textit{Hebräisches Perfekt} 79) credits it with a pluperfect or specifying sense.
13. **b** this is the consequent message of the Lord Yahweh. I will deal**a** Edom a blow. I will eliminate from it humans and animals alike and turn it into a waste area: from Teman as far as Dedan**b** they will fall victims to the sword. **14** I will use my people Israel to avenge myself on Edom: their dealings with Edom will match my anger and fury. Then they will experience my vengeance. So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.

15 “Here is a message from the Lord Yahweh: Inasmuch as the Philistines have acted vengefully, and vindictively revenged themselves with passionate scorn, making destruction an outlet for their undying enmity, **16** this is the consequent message of the Lord Yahweh. I mean to deal the Philistines a blow. I will eliminate the Cherethites and efface the rest of the people along the coast. **17** I will forcefully avenge myself on them by punishing them furiously. Then they will appreciate that I am Yahweh, when I have avenged myself on them.”

**Notes**

3.a. **MT** adds **yənā** “Lord,” violating normal usage: cf. the next note. The addition anticipates the next clause.

3.b. For the presence of **yənā** “Lord” in this formula here and in vv 6, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16 and in the formula of v 14, see the note on 20:3.

3.c. The vocative has been added to the translation to express a switch from pl. to fem. sg (vv 3b–4).

4.a. For the piel of **ḇəšē** cf. post-biblical Heb. usage (Jastrow 599a).

5.a. The noun has been added to the translation to show that the verb is pl.

6.a. **Heb. yāk** “for.”

6.b. The pronouns in vv 6–8 and the final verb are masc. sg.

6.c. For the form see **GKC** 23c. The omission of **û ḳ tā⸈َاרָ h b** “with all your scorn” in LXX Syr. is

**b** 12.b. For **µ h b** “against them” LXX reflects **µ q n** “vengeance” under the influence of the phrase in v 15b **ā**.

**a** 13.a. For the construction cf. 35:11.

**b** 13.b. **MT** wrongly links the phrase with what precedes. For **h n d d w** a pointing **h n d d w** is expected (cf. Driver, **Bib** 35 [1954] 156).

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

cf. confer, compare
pl. plate or plural
fem. feminine
sg singular or under
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
pl. plate or plural
Heb. Hebrew
masc. masculine
sg singular or under
due to failure to understand the noun. The correct rendering in 28:24, 26; 36:5 comes from a different translator (Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2; cf. L. J. McGregor, The Greek Text of Ezekiel 197–99).

7.a. The pf is prophetic (Cooke 286). MT prefaces with ymnh “behold I,” unusual with a pf verb (cf. 36:6): it may be a case of mechanical assimilation to vv 4, 9.

7.b. K gb | is meaningless; Q zb | “to plunder” is correct (cf. 7:21; 23:46). K is due to confusion with a marginal alternative µywgb for the following µywgl “to the nations” (cf. Cornill 336; BHS).

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8.a. MT adds r yl “and Seir,” absent from LXX* and from consideration in vv 9–11. Evidently a marginal note r yl intended to note the parallels between the oracle against Edom in vv 12–14 and that against Mount Seir in 35:2–9, but the common beginning of vv 8 and 12 caused the note to be put too high and it was incorporated into the text at this point.

9.a. For the privative km “from” see BDB 583b.
9.b. LXX does not represent \( \text{wyr} \) “of its cities,” perhaps by oversight, unless \( \text{wyr} \) “of the cities, of its cities” reflects a conflated text.

9.c. See BDB 892a; HALAT 1046b.

10.a. The order of words may require changing: cf. Zimmerli 9; BHS.

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12.b. For \( \text{h b} \) “against them” LXX reflects \( \text{qn} \) “vengeance” under the influence of the phrase in v 15b.

13.a. For the construction cf. 35:11.

Form/Structure/Setting

The tradition of issuing oracles against foreign countries or cities is an ancient one in Israelite prophecy (cf. Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, 58–61). The tradition was well maintained in the prophetic books, each of the major books having a distinct and lengthy section devoted to this genre (cf. Amos 1–2). The present collection in chaps. 25–32 begins with a cluster of five short oracles directed against four of Judah’s neighbors, Ammon, Moab, Edom and Philistia. Form-critically they are all proof sayings developed from judgment oracles by the addition of the recognition formula. Each is introduced by the messenger formula and proceeds from reasoned accusation (‘because’) to a logical verdict (‘therefore’) and the closing recognition formula. The fourth and fifth oracles introduce the verdict with a second messenger formula (vv 13, 16), and the fourth ends with the final divine saying formula (v 14b). The first oracle has its own introduction, the message reception formula and the call to the prophet to symbolically confront Ammon and deliver an oracle. The structural rigidity of the oracles attests the antiquity of the foreign oracle form used here (cf. Clements, Prophecy and Tradition 60; Zimmerli 11).

The presence of a second oracle against Ammon (vv 6, 7) is thought-provoking. The use of second masculine singular forms, after the feminine singular and masculine plural forms earlier, suggests that, while the first oracle is presupposed, this one is a subsequent expansion (Zimmerli, ibid., et al., following G. Hölscher, Hesekiel 133 note 1). The third person references of the third, fourth and fifth oracles flow naturally from v 2, where Ammon is the object of direct address. The second oracle borrows freely from the language of the fourth and fifth oracles, besides echoing that of the first and third.

The four original oracles fall into two pairs: the first and third go together and so do the fourth and fifth. The last two, apart from their formal structure, are united by their extensive use of the vocabulary of vengeance (עון הנ) along with the motif of fury (המ), the use of wordplay (הבר “desolation,” הר “sword,” v 13; יטרק אטרק “and I will eliminate the Cherethites,” v 16) and the sequence of action and reaction (א “do,” vv 12a, 14ab, 15a, 17a). The first and third oracles share the motifs of presumptuous speech (חמה “say”) and transfer of land (בר ימ) to the easterners. Apart from their common form, the third and fourth oracles are linked by their references to “the community of Judah.”

The chronological setting of the oracles is clearly post-587 B.C.: the reactions of Judah’s neighbors to the disaster are their explicit occasion, apart from the fifth, where it is implicit. The Ammon and Moab oracles seem to antedate 582 B.C. (see Comment). Whether they originated at the same time is a separate issue. To credit them all to the school of Ezekiel (Wevers 144) on the grounds that נד מ יב “community of Judah” is not a phrase of Ezekiel’s, since he uses נד מ יב “community of Israel,” is
hardly compelling (cf. Zimmerli 13). The authenticity of the fourth has been doubted on the grounds that uniquely in Ezekiel’s foreign oracles, divine reprisal is mediated through Israel (v 14), unlike the parallel oracle against Edom in chap. 35. To delete v 14a as a later expansion (cf. Zimmerli 18) would spoil the symmetry of the fourth and fifth oracles. To emend יד into יד מ (Ehrlich, Randglossen 100) is too conjectural to carry conviction. Zimmerli, ibid., has noted too the variation in the recognition formula at v 14b. Accordingly it is possible that the two final oracles are a later composition. It is clear, anyway, that the two pairs of oracles arose independently and have been redactionally combined. Subsequently the second oracle was added, which addressed Ammon like the first but used the language of the last pair. The resultant composition comes over as a powerful fivefold statement of Yahweh’s purpose to reveal himself on the side of his suffering people.

Comment

1–5 In 21:33, 34 (28, 29) the book of Ezekiel has already demonstrated a concern that Ammon’s crowing over Jerusalem’s fall should not go unpunished. Here the prophet is bidden to direct his symbolic gaze upon Ammon (cf. 21:2, 7 [20:46; 21:2] and Comment) and in rhetorical address issue a formal oracle of denunciation to doom Judah’s northeastern neighbor. Vv 2–5 form a unit, rounded by the inclusion of third person references to the Ammonites (vv 2–3a, 5b). Another inclusion is formed by the emphasis that Yahweh himself has been the victim of Ammonite jeers, and so needs to intervene in vindication of himself (vv 3b, 5b). But bound up with Yahweh’s loss of face is that of his people. Hitherto punisher of a disobedient covenant people, Yahweh reveals himself as their patron, now that judgment has been carried out. The land was a third entity in the triangular covenant relationship and functioned as the gauge of its healthy or sorry state. Accordingly desolation of the land and expulsion from it featured in the punishment of his people. Now, with surprising grace, Yahweh proposes to leap to their defense. The oracle against Ammon clearly functions as an affirmation of support for the Judeans. The motifs of territorial desolation and deprivation were to boomerang into Ammon’s experience. According to Josephus (Ant. 10.9.7) Nebuchadnezzar campaigned against Ammon and Moab in his twenty-third year, that is, 582 B.C. Ammon may have been deported, like Judah, and its land left as a vacuum for desert tribes to fill; certainly the area was largely depopulated before the middle of the sixth century B.C. until the third (G. M. Landes, IDB, vol. 1, 112–113).

6, 7 The previous message is reinforced by another, supplementary one. It reflects more emotion in its description of Ammon’s insulting behavior: hand, foot and inner being had joined forces in a totality of opposition. In reprisal total extinction is threatened for the body politic. The harshness of the verdict corresponds to the depth of feeling aroused in the accusation.

8–11 The oracle against Moab, Ammon’s southern neighbor, functions as a companion piece to the first Ammonite one. Their slighting of Yahweh, although only implicit in the accusation, is no less real than before, for their declaration is tantamount to a denial of his special relationship with Judah. Moab, in disparaging Judah (cf. Jer 48:27; Zeph 2:8), has Yahweh to answer to, in a double confrontation: the
name rhetorically features three times (vv 8b, 9a, 11a). Again the punishment fits the crime, for national downgrading turns into national destruction (vv 8b, 10b). These generalities are interspersed with precise geographical references to the western side of the Moabite highland that towers above the Dead Sea and to three of Moab’s many towns, Beth-jeshimoth (Tel el-Aziemān) in the Jordan valley at the foot of the mountain slope, Baal-meon (Māın), some thirteen miles to the south-east, and Kiriathaim, a city of uncertain location that van Zyl has placed near Medeba up on the plateau some five miles to the north-west of Māın (The Moabites 83; cf. Y. Aharoni, The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography [2nd ed. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979] 381 note 52, who suggests a positive identification with Qaryat el-Mekhaiyet). The cities represent three of Moab’s fortresses against western aggression, but they would prove of no avail against Yahweh’s onslaught, while the eastern frontier too would be overrun, by the nomadic tribes of the desert.

12–14 The literary reactions to the tragedy of 587 B.C. in the Old Testament tend to highlight with peculiar passion the part played by Edom (e.g., Ps 137:7; Lam 5:21, 23; Joel 4[3]:19; Obad). In the same vein especially strong language is used here to accuse Edom, in the first of a second pair of oracles against Judah’s neighbors. Presumably such precise accusations as are mentioned in Obad 11–14 underlie the virulence of the complaint. As in the previous oracles, Yahweh makes himself responsible for punishing offenses against his people. Depopulation and desolation are to be his reprisal. The phrase “from Teman as far as Dedan” does not signify a north-south inclusiveness, as one might have expected. “Teman” seems to represent not the city of Tiawilan##, with which it used to be identified, but simply the southern region of Edom (de Vaux, RB 76 [1969] 383–84). Dedan (el-Ulaµaµ, cf. M. C. Astour, IDBSup 222) was south of Edom’s territory. A “greater Edom” seems to be reflected here, with boundaries that stretched beyond Edom’s traditional frontiers (Lindsay, PEQ 108 [1976] 38). Once more the punishment is to be a fitting one, in the light of the crime of v 12, as often in Old Testament oracles of judgment (cf. in principle P. D. Miller, Sin and Judgment in the Prophets [Chico: Scholars Press, 1982] passim). Here a deed triggers another deed done by its victims (¶ NN), and Edomite vengeance provokes divine vengeance (¶ NN). In this dire activity Israel is assigned a role, as in Obad 17b–21 in recapturing the Negeb from Edomite occupation. The stem ¶ NN, when used in an accusation of base human conduct (v 12) implies vindictive excess, but in a divine context (v 14) refers to punitive vindication, “the executive exercise of power by the highest legitimate political authority for the protection of his own subjects” (Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation 78).

5–17 The companion message to the oracle against Edom is directed against the Philistines. The redactional unit represented by chap. 25 has by now moved around in a circular direction, from Ammon in the northeast to Moab in the east, to Edom in the southeast and eventually to Philistia in the west. That Judah had been their victim is not stated, but seems to be implied by the context. The oracle aligns with Joel 4(3):4–8 in attacking the Philistines for capitalizing on Judah’s downfall; there looting and slave trading are specified. Here the same high level of emotional language is used as against Edom, and

cf. confer, compare
ed. edited, edition(s), editor
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
RB Revue biblique
cf. confer, compare
IDBSup Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume, ed. K. Crim (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976)
PEQ Palestine Exploration Quarterly
cf. confer, compare
they too are threatened with destruction at Yahweh’s hands, which was to represent a boomerang of vengeance and an outbreak of fury. Only thus could Yahweh assert himself in self-vindication, after violation of his sovereignty.

**Explanation**

The end of chap. 24 gave a hint that the tide of Yahweh’s dealings with his people was to turn. That hint is taken up in this chapter, the first part of a series of foreign oracles. Its role is to bring reassurance to the Judeans, in a roundabout way. The chapter virtually takes up a host of communal laments for Yahweh to intervene on his people’s behalf. Israel has been overwhelmed by crisis, and their enemies have taken advantage of the situation and derided them—and thereby done despite to Yahweh’s own concerns (cf. Pss 74:7, 10, 18, 22; 79:1, 4, 10, 12).

Politics and religion were interlocked in the ancient world. In political terms these nations were expediently climbing onto the Babylonian bandwagon and expressing their allegiance to the victorious world power in opposing Judah. However, such a political move struck at the heart of the victimized nation and triggered religious reactions. Loss of face seems to have been an excruciating experience in Israelite culture—and Israel’s God took tender notice of such deep feelings (cf. Joel 2:26b, 27b). Woudstra’s denial that Judean emotions play an essential part here (Calvin Theological Journal 3 [1968] 23, 24) cannot be upheld. He was overreacting to liberal reductionism. The divine and the human are here inextricably intermingled, as passion-filled grievances find a hearing and promise of vindication at the lawcourt of their patron (cf. Luke 18:1–8). Throbbing beneath the surface of the text and surprisingly never verbalized is the Ezekielian motif of the profanation of Yahweh’s name involved in the fate of the covenant nation (cf. 20:9; 36:20–23). Part of the clearing of that name was the repeated declaration of this chapter that he would intervene in Judah’s world and make human experience a witness to divine justice and truth.

**Reassurances that Tyre Would Fall (26:1–21)**

**Bibliography**

In the twelfth year, on the first of the month, a I received the following communication from Yahweh: "Human one, inasmuch as Tyre has shouted about Jerusalem,

'Hurray! Smashed is that international meeting place. a
It has been turned over b to me!
I will be filled c—it has been destroyed,'

for that reason here is the Lord a Yahweh's message: I am your opponent, Tyre. I will get many nations to surge against you, like sea waves at high tide. b 4 They will destroy Tyre's walls and

Transliteration

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<tr>
<th>Biblica et Orientalia (Rome: PBI)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.a. The date in MT, -/1/11, is problematic, apart from the absence of a month. If the first month is presupposed (cf. 32:17), it corresponds to April 23, 587 B.C. according to Parker and Dubberstein's reconstruction (Babylonian Chronology 28). However, v 2 mentions Tyre's reaction to the fall of Jerusalem, which probably took place in the summer of 587. Not only does that event need to be taken into account but also the time it took for news of it to reach the exiles. According to 33:21 that occurred in 10/5/12, another problematic date, which may originally have been 10/5/11. If so, here a dating (1)/1/12 (= April 13, 586) would be feasible. Some support for this may be derived from the unusual Heb. numeral for the eleventh year, hîl wîl, which elsewhere in Ezek is hîl wîl tîrā (30:20; 31:1). A corruption from the similar hîl wîl yîl “twelfth” may have taken place, a slip which did occur in 40:49 (Zimmerli 26, following C. Steuernagel). In fact LXX has a date 1/1/12, although the indication of the month appears to be secondary (cf. Zimmerli, ibid.). BHS follows a popular expedient in postulating a date 11/1/11, presumably on the assumption that the month numeral fell out, being the same as that of the year (cf. Cooke 294; Albright, JBL 51 [1932] 93; Fohrer 149). A third expedient is to relate the date in MT to vv 7–14 and to regard the oracle as a subsequent insertion (Freedy and Redford, JAOS 90 [1970] 469; Wevers 147).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.a. Heb. ti wîl d “doors” here refers to the two doors of a gate (Zimmerli 27) and so a single entity: hence the sg verbs.</td>
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<td>2.b. cf. Jer 6:12 for the use of the verb.</td>
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<td>2.c. LXX Tg. imply hîl mîl “she who was full (is destroyed),” preferred by some, such as Cornill (339) and Zimmerli, ibid., and adopted by NEB. But the contrast in MT provides four statements that make up an impressive ABB’A’ structure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.a. For the formulaic use of yînd a “Lord” here and in vv 5, 7, 15, 19, 21 see the note on 20:3.</td>
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demolish its towers. I will clear away its rubble and turn it into bare rock. It will be a sea-girt area for spreading nets. I have given my word thereto. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle. Tyre will become plunder for other nations, while the members of her satellite communities on the mainland will be casualties of the sword. Then they will appreciate that I am Yahweh.

7 “Here is a confirmatory message from the Lord Yahweh: I mean to make Tyre the target of invasion by Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon’s king in the north, the king of kings. He will bring horses, chariots, cavalry, and an army of large numbers of troops. The members of your satellite communities on the mainland he will make casualties of the sword. He will set up siege structures against you, pile up earthworks against you and raise a barrage of shields against you. He will make your walls feel the brunt of his battering rams, and break down your towers with his iron bars.

8 Dust raised by his hordes of horses will cover you, while the noise of his cavalry, wagons and chariots will shake your walls, when he enters your gates with the triumphant air of one entering a city whose walls he has breached. He will trample all your streets with his horses’ hooves, he will make your troops casualties of the sword, and your stout pillars will be thrown down to the ground. Soldiers will loot your wealth and plunder your commercial assets. They will demolish your walls and destroy your elegant houses. Your stones, timber and rubble they will consign to the waters' depths. I will put a stop to the sound of your songs, while the music of your lyres will never be heard again. I will turn you into bare rock: ‘it will be an area for spreading nets,’ never

3.b. MT ﬀ וְאַלַּקֶּב לְמַּשֶּׁבֶת “like (Yahweh’s) causing (the sea) to rise” has probably been assimilated to the previous verb (and cf. v 19). The ancient versions imply ﬀ וְאַלַּקֶּב “like the sea’s rising.” The following וֶאֶעְטַח לְמַּשֶּׁבֶת provides a closer definition of the subj, “in respect of its waves” (BDB 514b). For Smend (189) and Fohrer (149) the sea is subj and, as in Aramaic, (וֶאֶעְטַח לְמַּשֶּׁבֶת) introduces the object: “like the sea’s raising its waves.”

4.a. The preceding reference to destruction suggests that ﬀ הַשָּׁבֶת so means, as in v 12; Ps 102:15(14) (Smend 189; Ehrlich, Randglossen 101).

6.a. lit. “daughters” of a metropolis, here with reference to the inhabitants of daughter towns.

7.a. Heb. ﬀ יָרְאָהְיָדַק וּבְנָה here preserves the form of the Bab. nabukudurri-usur “May Nabu protect the son,” as elsewhere in Ezek and usually in Jer. Elsewhere in the OT the resh is changed to nun by consonantal dissimilation; hence the English form Nebuchadnezzar.

7.b. Heb. מִבְּלָא שֶׁלֹא וּגֶנֶשֶׁת “and army and people” is probably a case of hendiadys, as LXX implies. The earlier preposition ב “with” does double duty (Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 15).


10.a. For the vocalization see GKC 130b.

10.b. lit. “as (at) the acts of entrance.”

11.a. For this meaning of ﬀ תַּעֲל “people” cf. v 7; 30:11.

11.b. For ﬀ ﬀ תַּעֲל “will come down” LXX Syr. Tg. imply ﬀ ﬀ תַּעֲל “he will bring down,” maintaining the same subj MT is to be kept as the less obvious reading (cf. Zimmerli 29). For the change of subj cf. v 13a, b. For the sg verb cf. GKC 145k.

12.a. lit. “they.” LXX has sg verbs in v 12a, probably a harmonization. The interpretative role of vv 7–14 can explain the pl. forms: they correspond to the invading nations in v 5.

12.b. For ﬀ יָם “water” LXX Syr. Tg. MSS imply ﬀ יָם “the sea,” preferred by many. But cf. 27:34. Van Dijk (Ezekiel’s Prophecy 24–26), finding an enclitic mem redivides as ﬀ יָם יָם יָם וּבִלּוּא “in the midst of (the) sea.” However, H. Hummel, JBL 76 (1957) 107, and L. Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles against Egypt 135 note 31, doubt whether the book contains convincing examples of the usage.
rebuilt. I, Yahweh, have given my word thereto. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.

15 “Here is a message from the Lord Yahweh to Tyre: The coastlands will certainly quake at the sound of your downfall, when the fatally wounded groan, when slaughter takes its toll within you. The seafarers will step down from their thrones. They will divest themselves of their robes and embroidered clothing, and trembling will be their attire. Sitting on the ground, they will tremble in agitation, appalled by your fate.

17 They will raise this dirge over you:

‘How distressing it is that you have perished from the seas,
city once renowned,
one time potentate of the sea,
you and your citizens,
one time a source of terror
that all your citizens inspired.

18 Now the coastlands tremble on the day of your downfall.
Yes, the coastlands by the sea

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a 14.a. Heb. יָהָּ֣ת and הָּֽיָּהָּ֣ת are straightforward third person forms: “it will be,” “it will be rebuilt.” V 14 ab seems to function as a quotation of v 5a. 
b 14.b. Some massoretic evidence (cf. BHS) and that of the ancient versions favor the omission of the divine name: cf. v 5; 28:10.
a 15.a. MT’s vocalization of (gr h) gr h b implies an anomalous extension of the cognate acc construction in the passive: “when slaughter is slaughtered.” A pointing as a qal gr h b is preferable (GKC 511); then the subj is indefinite, “when one slaughters with a slaughter.” For LXX see Zimmerli 29–30. 
b 16.a. The pl. תַּדְּרִי is strange (cf. BDB 353b). Cornill (342) suggested a pointing תַּדְּרִי, noting the sg rendering of the ancient versions. 
a 17.a. MT has תָּבְשִׁית תַּדְּבִּי “you are destroyed, O inhabited one.” LXX* lacks תָּבְשִׁית and takes the second word as תָּבְשִׁית תַּדְּבִּי “you are brought to an end” (cf. NEB), finding a form of the stem תָּבְשִׁית תַּדְּבִּי as in v 13. Probably תָּבְשִׁית תַּדְּבִּי originated as an explanatory gloss clarifying a vowelless תָּבְשִׁית, which later, however, was vocalized as if from תָּבְשִׁית תַּדְּבִּי under the influence of v 19. 
b 17.b. MT תָּבְשִׁית תַּדְּבִּי is accented as pf with a relative use of the article. It is better taken as a pual ptc without a preformative mem (Smend 192; Fohrer 151). 
c 17.c. LXX* lacks the line v 17bb; it may well have fallen out by homoeoarcton. For the third person references in v 17bg see GKC 144p. 
d 17.d. LXX implies חַיָּ֣ת יִֽהְּנָּ֣ת תָּבְשִׁית תַּדְּבִּי: “(who) produced terror of herself,” with Tyre as subj rather than the citizens (MT): the subsequent specification of “citizens” so suggests. 
e 17.e. Heb. תָּבְשִׁית תַּדְּבִּי further specifies the object of terror: cf. the sense “in reaction to” sometimes found after intransitive verbs connoting fear. To avoid repetition BHK, Bertholet (54) et al., with a little support from Syr., emend to חַיָּ֣ת יִֽהְּנָּ֣ת תָּבְשִׁית תַּדְּבִּי: “to all the mainland,” which is adopted by RSV, NEB, and NJB. 
a 18.a. MT יָּם יָּם תָּבְשִׁית תָּבְשִׁית “the coastlands” exhibits an Aram. pl. For a suggested differentiation between this term and the regular form יָּם יָּם in the next line see Lohfink, VT 12 (1962) 272 n. 3. 
b 18.b. MT יָּם יָּם “day” is syntactically difficult: cf. the discussion in Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 38. It may reflect an acc of time: cf. GKC 118 i.
are overwhelmed by your passing.  

19 “Here is a confirmatory message from the Lord Yahweh: When I turn you into a ruined city, as desolate as any unpeopled city can be, when I get the deep to surge over you so that the ocean covers you, \(^a\) then I will send you down to be with \(^a\) those who have descended \(^b\) to the Pit, to people of the distant past. I will give you a home in the nether world, \(^c\) which is like \(^d\) ancient ruins, along with those who have descended to the Pit. Your fate will be to cease to be peopled \(^e\) or to maintain your position \(^f\) in the world of the living. \(^2\) I will make you the victim of a terrible end, and you will be no more. You will be sought, but never found \(^a\) again. \(^b\) So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.”

Notes

1.a. The date in MT, -/1/11, is problematic, apart from the absence of a month. If the first month is

\(^c\) 18.c. Heb. \(t \& X\) implies exit or departure and so here evidently destruction. LXX* lacks v 18b. It is often taken as a variant or interpretation of v 18a, and so it may be. However, it could have fallen out in LXX* or its Vorlage because of its similarity to v 18a. It does have a recognizable poetic form 2 + 3, a respectable variant of 3 + 2. Heb. \(t \& X\) is a distinctive term and not a trite equivalent for \(t \& p m\) “overthrow.”

\(^a\) 19.a. Heb. \(t w \& h b\) “when (I) cause to rise” depends on the double duty suffix of \(y t t b\) earlier (Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 40).

\(^a\) 20.a. Heb. \(t a\) is used in a pregnant sense (cf. Cooke 295).

\(^b\) 20.b. The ptcp relates to the past (Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 42; Tromp, Primitive Conceptions 68 note 213).

\(^c\) 20.c. The usual form is \(\& r a \& w j t\) “depths of the earth”; in this inversion here and in 32:18, \(24 \& r a\) itself has the sense underworld, which the genitive reinforces. However, Tromp (Primitive Conceptions 181–82) understands in terms of a separate region within Sheol, to which it certainly seems to refer in 32:18 (see Comment there).

\(^d\) 20.d. Many MSS B Syr. read \(t w b r j b\) “in the ruins” for \(t w b r j k\) “like the ruins.”

\(^e\) 20.e. Ehrlich’s proposal (Randglossen 103) to repoint \(y b w t\) “you will be populated” as \(y b w w t\); and take it adverbially, “and you will (not) again …, “has proved popular (cf. Zimmerli 32; BHS). Tromp (Primitive Conceptions 68, n. 215) also repoints, but takes as independent, “you will (not) return.” However, these expedients ignore the structural value of the stem \(b w y\) (see Form/Structure/Setting).

\(^i\) 20.f. MT \(y b x y t t n w\) “nor will I put glory” yields little sense. LXX implies \(y b x y t t w\) “nor will you stand” (cf. Num 22:22 for the rendering), which is generally read. For the structural role of the term see Form/Structure/Setting. MT probably suffered mechanical assimilation to \(y t t n\) in v 4 and/or to \(u y t t n w\) in v 14.

\(^a\) 21.a. LXX* does not represent \(y a x m t \& a l w y b q b t w\) “and you will be sought and not found,” and in view of the parallel unit endings at 27:36; 28:19 its shorter text is often preferred (cf. Zimmerli 32; BHS). However, the material is distinctive and its source, if a gloss, is difficult to ascertain. See Form/Structure/Setting.

\(^b\) 21.b. For \(\mu l w l \& d w\) “again for ever” an emendation \(\mu l w d l\) “for ever” is often postulated (Cornill 344 et al.), in line with 27:36; 28:19. But \(d w\) has its own structural symmetry: it is matched in vv 13, 14.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
presupposed (cf. 32:17), it corresponds to April 23, 587 B.C. according to Parker and Dubberstein’s reconstruction (*Babylonian Chronology* 28). However, v 2 mentions Tyre’s reaction to the fall of Jerusalem, which probably took place in the summer of 587. Not only does that event need to be taken into account but also the time it took for news of it to reach the exiles. According to 33:21 that occurred in 10/5/12, another problematic date, which may originally have been 10/5/11. If so, here a dating (1)/1/12 (= April 13, 586) would be feasible. Some support for this may be derived from the unusual Heb. numeral for the eleventh year, ḫ[r ẑ[r, which elsewhere in Ezek is ḫ[r ẑ[t j dh (30:20; 31:1). A corruption from the similar ḫ[r ẑ[r “twelfth” may have taken place, a slip which did occur in 40:49 (Zimmerli 26, following C. Steuernagel). In fact LXX-A has a date 1/1/12, although the indication of the month appears to be secondary (cf. Zimmerli, ibid.). BHS follows a popular expedient in postulating a date 11/1/11, presumably on the assumption that the month numeral fell out, being the same as that of the year (cf. Cooke 294; Albright, *JBL* 51 [1932] 93; Fohrer 149). A third expedient is to relate the date in MT to vv 7–14 and to regard the oracle as a subsequent insertion (Freedy and Redford, *JAOS* 90 [1970] 469; Wevers 147).

2.a. Heb. t[w]l “doors” here refers to the two doors of a gate (Zimmerli 27) and so a single entity: hence the sg verbs.

2.b. cf. Jer 6:12 for the use of the verb.

2.c. LXX Tg. imply ha l involving “she who was full (is destroyed),” preferred by some, such as Cornill (339) and Zimmerli, ibid., and adopted by NEB. But the contrast in MT provides four statements that make up an impressive ABB’A’ structure.

3.a. For the formulaic use of yndḥ “Lord” here and in vv 5, 7, 15, 19, 21 see the note on 20:3.

3.b. MT t[w]l “like (Yahweh’s) causing (the sea) to rise” has probably been assimilated to the

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cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
cf. confer, compare
*JBL Journal of Biblical Literature*
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
*JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society*
Heb. Hebrew
sg singular or under
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
NEB The New English Bible
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
previous verb (and cf. v 19). The ancient versions imply מַיִת יֵלְכֵא "like (the sea’s) rising.” The following מַיִת יֵלְכֵא provides a closer definition of the subject, “in respect of its waves” (BDB 514b). For Smend (189) and Fohrer (149) the sea is subject and, as in Aramaic, מַיִת יֵלְכֵא introduces the object: “like the sea’s raising its waves.”

4.a. The preceding reference to destruction suggests that מַיִת יֵלְכֵא so means, as in v 12; Ps 102:15(14) (Smend 189; Ehrlich, Randglossen 101).

6.a. lit. “daughters” of a metropolis, here with reference to the inhabitants of daughter towns.

7.a. Heb. מַיִת יֵלְכֵא here preserves the form of the Babylonian nabuudurri-usur “May Nabu protect the son,” as elsewhere in Ezek and usually in Jer. Elsewhere in the OT the resh is changed to nun by consonantal dissimilation; hence the English form Nebuchadnezzar.

7.b. Heb. מַיִת יֵלְכֵא “and army and people” is probably a case of hendiadys, as LXX implies. The earlier preposition ב “with” does double duty (Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 15).


10.a. For the vocalization see GKC 130b.

10.b. lit. “as (at) the acts of entrance.”

11.a. For this meaning of מַיִת יֵלְכֵא “people” cf. v 7; 30:11.

11.b. For מַיִת יֵלְכֵא “will come down” LXX Syr. Tg. imply מַיִת יֵלְכֵא “he will bring down,” maintaining the same subject MT is to be kept as the less obvious reading (cf. Zimmerli 29). For the change of subject cf. v 13a

cf. confer, compare

subject subject/subjective


subject subject/subjective

lit. literally

Heb. Hebrew

Bab. Babylonian

OT Old Testament

Heb. Hebrew

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Heb. Hebrew

cf. confer, compare


lit. literally

cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

Tg. Targum
, b. For the sg verb cf. *GKC* 145k.

12.a. lit. “they.” LXX has sg verbs in v 12a, probably a harmonization. The interpretative role of vv 7–14 can explain the pl. forms: they correspond to the invading nations in v 5.

12.b. For μ̇ẏm “water” LXX Syr. Tg. MSS imply μ̇ẏh “the sea,” preferred by many. But cf. 27:34. Van Dijk (*Ezekiel’s Prophecy* 24–26), finding an enclitic mem redivides as μ̇ẏ μ̇ė̄u̇̄ μ̇ḃ “in the midst of (the) sea.” However, H. Hummel, *JBL* 76 (1957) 107, and L. Boadt, *Ezekiel’s Oracles against Egypt* 135 note 31, doubt whether the book contains convincing examples of the usage.

14.a. Heb. h̄ȳt and h̄n̄t are straightforward third person forms: “it will be,” “it will be rebuilt.” V 14 ab seems to function as a quotation of v 5a.


15.a. MT’s vocalization of (gr h) gr h b implies an anomalous extension of the cognate acc construction in the passive: “when slaughter is slaughtered.” A pointing as a qal gr b b̄ is preferable (*GKC* 511); then the subj is indefinite, “when one slaughters with a slaughter.” For LXX see Zimmerli 29–30.

subj subject/subjective
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
subj subject/subjective
cf. confer, compare
sg singular or under
cf. confer, compare
lit. literally
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
*JBL* Journal of Biblical Literature
Heb. Hebrew
V Vulgate
cf. confer, compare
*BHS* Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
16.a. The pl. תָּבִירות is strange (cf. BDB 353b). Cornill (342) suggested a pointing תֶּבִירות, noting the sg rendering of the ancient versions.


17.a. MT has תִּבְשֹׁנַת תֶּבָּא “you are destroyed, O inhabited one.” LXX* lacks תֶּבָּא and takes the second word as תִּבְשֹׁנַת “you are brought to an end” (cf. NEB), finding a form of the stem תַבְשֵׁנ, as in v 13. Probably תֶּבָּא originated as an explanatory gloss clarifying a vowelless תַבְשַׁנ, which later, however, was vocalized as if from תַבְשֲׁנ under the influence of v 19.

17.b. MT הִלְּלִים is accented as pf with a relative use of the article. It is better taken as a pual ptcp without a preformative mem (Smend 192; Fohrer 151).

17.c. LXX* lacks the line v 17bb; it may well have fallen out by homoeoarcton. For the third person references in v 17bg see GKC 144p.

17.d. LXX implies חָטְבָּה תַבְשִׁיתוּ “(who) produced terror of herself;” with Tyre as subj rather than the citizens (MT): the subsequent specification of “citizens” so suggests.

17.e. Heb. לָא further specifies the object of terror: cf. the sense “in reaction to” sometimes found after intransitive verbs connoting fear. To avoid repetition BHK, Bertholet (54) et al., with a little

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pl. plate or plural
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
NEB The New English Bible
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
pf perfect
ptcp participle
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
subj subject/subjective
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
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support from Syr., emend to חַבַּרְיָה יִתְבָּרָה לָכִי “to all the mainland,” which is adopted by RSV, NEB, and NJB.

18.a. MT אָרְיָה אָרְיָה “the coastlands” exhibits an Aram. pl. For a suggested differentiation between this term and the regular form וַיָּרְיָה in the next line see Lohfink, VT 12 (1962) 272 n. 3.

18.b. MT וַיָּרְיָה “day” is syntactically difficult: cf. the discussion in Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 38. It may reflect an acc of time: cf. GKC 118 i.

18.c. Heb. לֶאָרְיָה implies exit or departure and so here evidently destruction. LXX* lacks v 18b. It is often taken as a variant or interpretation of v 18a, and so it may be. However, it could have fallen out in LXX* or its Vorlage because of its similarity to v 18a. It does have a recognizable poetic form 2 + 3, a respectable variant of 3 + 2. Heb. לֶאָרְיָה is a distinctive term and not a trite equivalent for לֶאָרְיָה “overthrow.”

19.a. Heb. לֶאָרְיָה לֶאָרְיָה “when (I) cause to rise” depends on the double duty suffix of יָרְיָה earlier (Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 40).

20.a. Heb. לֶאָרְיָה is used in a pregnant sense (cf. Cooke 295).

20.b. The ptcp relates to the past (Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 42; Tromp, Primitive Conceptions 68 note 213).

20.c. The usual form is עַרְיָה לֶאָרְיָה “depths of the earth”; in this inversion here and in 32:18, 24 עַרְיָה itself has the sense underworld, which the genitive reinforces. However, Tromp (Primitive Conceptions 181–82) understands in terms of a separate region within Sheol, to which it certainly seems

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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
NEB The New English Bible
NJB New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Aram. Aramaic
pl. plate or plural
VT Vetus Testamentum
n. note
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
Heb. Hebrew
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
ptcp participle
to refer in 32:18 (see Comment there).

20.d. Many MSS B Syr. read τῳ ῥ]{λ}θιμ “in the ruins” for τῷ ῥ]{λ}θικ “like the ruins.”

20.e. Ehrlich’s proposal (Randglossen 103) to repoint ὑὸ ῥ]{θ}τ “you will be populated” as ὑὸ ῥ]{θ}κ; and take it adverbially, “and you will (not) again . . . , “has proved popular (cf. Zimmerli 32; BHS). Tromp (Primitive Conceptions 68, n. 215) also repoints, but takes as independent, “you will (not) return.” However, these expedients ignore the structural value of the stem ῥ]{θ}ν (see Form/Structure/Setting).

20.f. MT ὑὸ ḳτ ῥ]{θ}τ ῥ]{κ} “nor will I put glory” yields little sense. LXX implies ὑὸ ḳτ ῥ]{θ}τ ῥ]{κ} “nor will you stand” (cf. Num 22:22 for the rendering), which is generally read. For the structural role of the term see Form/Structure/Setting. MT probably suffered mechanical assimilation to ῥ]{θ}τ ῥ]{κ} in v 4 and/or to ῥ]{θ}τ ῥ]{κ} in v 14.

21.a. LXX* does not represent ὑὰ ὑὸ ῥ]{θ}τ ῥ]{κ} “and you will be sought and not found,” and in view of the parallel unit endings at 27:36; 28:19 its shorter text is often preferred (cf. Zimmerli 32; BHS). However, the material is distinctive and its source, if a gloss, is difficult to ascertain. See Form/Structure/Setting.

21.b. For ὑὸ ῥ]{θ}τ “again for ever” an emendation ὑὸ ῥ]{θ}τ ῥ]{κ} “for ever” is often postulated (Cornill 344 et al.), in line with 27:36; 28:19. But ὑὸ ῥ]{θ}τ has its own structural symmetry: it is matched in vv 13, 14.

Form/Structure/Setting

Chap. 26 is the first of three redactional units that forecast the fall of Tyre, all of which end with a refrain, in 26:21; 27:36b and 28:19b. The message reception formula and initial address to the prophet in vv 1–2ab serve to introduce the unit. It is made up of four oracles, which fall into two pairs, as the linking conjunction ὑ] in vv 7 and 19, the final divine saying formulas of vv 14b and 21b, and the climactic ῥ]{θ} . . . ῥ]{θ} in vv 13b, 14a and 21b suggest. The first oracle in vv 2–6 is a

MSS manuscript(s)
B Codex Vaticanus
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
n. note
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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et al. et alii, and others
three-part reasoned proof saying, in which a messenger formula introduces the second part and an affirmation formula closes it, while supplementary material in vv 5b–6 paves the way for the recognition formula. The second oracle of vv 7–14, introduced by יק “for” and a messenger formula, gives careful interpretation of the message of judgment in the first oracle. It concludes with an affirmation formula before its final messenger formula. The third oracle in vv 15–18, which opens with a messenger formula, functions as an implicit judgment oracle: it looks forward to a funeral lament over Tyre. The fourth oracle in vv 19–21, like the second, opens with יק “for” and the messenger formula, and closes with a divine saying formula. It is a judgment oracle that announces the sending of Tyre down to Sheol.

The rhetorical structuring of the initial oracle is more impressive than a first reading might suggest. There are a number of correspondences between the accusation and the ensuing announcement of punishment. The prepositional ל[ “about, against” with Jerusalem as object is picked up in the double יל “against you” and echoed in the double use of the verb הל “go/bring up” (v 3). The prepositional term probably also counters יל “to me” in v 2. The breaking of Jerusalem’s doors turns into the destruction of Tyre’s defenses (v 4a). The ending of Jerusalem’s international influence (₪ yol “the peoples”) is matched by Tyre’s international victimization (₪ ywg “nations,” vv 3, 5). The prospect of Tyre’s fullness finds correspondence in its emptiness in vv 4b–5a and 5b. Finally, the destruction (ח b r j h ) of Jerusalem is echoed in the wordplay of ב r j “sword” at v 6.

The second oracle falls into two parts, vv 7–9 and 10–13: so suggests the resumption of “horses” and “cavalry” from v 7 in vv 10–11a. It is framed by a double inclusion, the divine word and the divine “I” in v 7a and vv 13–14. But its most obvious feature is the careful echoing of material from the first oracle. Thus יל “behold I am against you” (v 3) becomes יננפ “behold I … against” in v 7 , while יב r יב ywg “many nations” becomes b r Aμ “much people.” A whole set of terms are repeated in turn: three near the beginning of the earlier oracle, in vv 8b–9a (“against you,” “walls,” “towers,” vv 3–4ab) and three at the end, in vv 12b and 14 (“rubble,” “bare rock,” “it will be an area for spreading nets,” from vv 4a–5a). Indeed, the first two terms, “against you” and “walls,” are emphasized, the first by repetition within v 8b and the second by further repetition in vv 10b and 12ab. Correspondingly, the two final components in the first oracle, “plunder” and the killing of daughters on the mainland “with the sword” (vv 5b, 6a), are given pride of place at the beginning and center of the second oracle (vv 8a, 12aa). Outside this scheme stands v 13, which by way of climax means to hark back to the derisive poem of v 2. The dependence of the complex second oracle on the first appears so marked that it is difficult to understand Wevers’ contention (200) that vv 2–6 are secondary and based on vv 7–14.

The third oracle has been helpfully analyzed by Parunak in terms of an extended inclusion (Bib 62 [1981] 158). Three words at the outset are repeated at the end: י t p m “your fall,” י y h “the coastlands” and יר b r יר b r “and (and) they will tremble” in vv 15–16 and 18. A narrative of mourning rites dominates the first half of the oracle, in preparation for the lament of the second. Parunak has also defined the fourth oracle rhetorically, as a chiasmus (Bib 62 [1981] 158–59), although one of his terms, the stem ה “give” in vv 19 and 20b, must be abandoned (see Notes). Three components, the negatived stem b י “inhabit,” r יד r יד yAt a “those who have gone down to the Pit” and י l ו (יו) “(from) of old,” occur twice in an ABC/CBA pattern. They demarcate the two main parts of the oracle, vv 19–20aa and 20ab–b, with inverted parallelism. It may be noted that there is also evidence of a scheme of
consecutive parallelism: the stem br ’ “ruin” and ū “like” in vv 19ab and 20ab. The second part poses its own contrast with t wḥ ū ṭ Ār a b “in the land of the nether places” and ṭ ṭ ū “in the land of the living”: this parallel contrast explains the form of the first phrase. The fourth oracle has a conclusion, v 21, which, as well as supplying the refrain of the redactional unit, caps the middle component of the chiasmus with µ lw “[forever.”

Just as there is an organic relationship between the first two oracles, so there is between the last two, although it is not so rigidly structured. The relationship consists of repeated words and motifs and wordplays. The “famed city” turns into the “ruined city” (vv 17, 19) and the references to Tyre’s “inhabitants” are replaced by one to “uninhabited” cities (vv 17, 19). The “fall” of vv 15, 18 is echoed in the failure to “stand” in the emended v 20b, while in vv 18 and 21 being “overwhelmed” (w ḫ b nw) at the “passing” (ū t x m) of Tyre finds echoes in its “terror” (t ṭ l b) and not being “found” (y x m t). V 21 has organic, if redactional, links with its present context, which counter attempts to prune it in line with the other refrains (see Notes).

There is also a network of links between the oracles. The most obvious ones are the references to killing (grw ḫ) in the first three, which areGapw by the descent to Sheol in the fourth, and the motif of descent that marks the second, third, and fourth. Two lesser ones are the covering sea in the first and fourth, and the shaking/quaking (r n ḫ) of the second and third.

The historical setting of the oracles is a post-587 B.C. situation (v 2), and a relatively short time seems to lie between the fall of Jerusalem and the first oracle, while the explanatory oracle was presumably delivered a little later. Nebuchadnezzar’s thirteen-year siege of Tyre mentioned by Josephus from an earlier source, perhaps Menander of Ephesus (Ant. 10.11.1; Contra Ap 1.21), is generally dated 586–573 B.C. The second oracle still seems to look forward to its inception, rather than merely to its success. The third and fourth oracles appear to depend on other material, the third on the lament over Tyre in 27:28–36, and the fourth on the descent of Egypt to Sheol in 32:17–32. They must antedate the somewhat disappointing outcome of the siege on which Ezekiel commented in 571 B.C. (cf. 29:17–20). The presence of literary echoes by no means precludes that in the course of the long siege Ezekiel himself reaffirmed its eventual result in these oracles.

Comment

1–6 The Phoenician city–state of Tyre was situated on the Mediterranean coast some 100 miles northwest of Jerusalem. An island with mainland suburbs, it was renowned for its maritime trade. Tyre had taken part in the anti-Babylonian conference of western states organized by Zedekiah at Jerusalem in 594 B.C. The subsequent siege of Tyre undertaken by Nebuchadnezzar indicates that this powerful maritime state persisted in its desire for independence. Presumably it took no warning from Jerusalem’s fall, convinced that in its natural fortress it had no need to fear Babylonian attacks. Rather, it derived selfish relish from the event. It is not clear what precise advantage is envisaged. It may be economic, the “doors” or gate of Jerusalem standing for a market, as the Targum paraphrased. However, whether Jerusalem’s trade was so extensive (cf. Eichrodt 369) and whether any benefit would be transferred to Tyre are moot points. Accordingly the reference is generally taken as political. The gate of the city, where the elders sat, was the controlling center of its affairs, and it functions here as a political rallying point.

V Vulgate
Ant. Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
point. Tyre expects a shift of power as new leader of the western states. In Yahweh’s name the prophet dashes such hopes, countering its attitude with corresponding reprisals point by point (see Form/Structure/Setting). Tyre would become victim of a relentless sea of foes, at Yahweh’s behest. The predicted reversal of its proud claims would bring proof of Yahweh’s power. In principle it would also reveal him as a patron of his covenant people, their new ally after his previous enmity.

7–14 The second oracle in relation to the first is like 21:6–10 (EVV. 1–5) over against 21:1–5 (20:45–49), in that it invests the details of the first oracle with a new clarity (see Form/Structure/Setting). Here the clarity consists in the identification of Nebuchadnezzar as the foreign aggressor and in the references to successful siege warfare (cf. 21:27[22] and Comment) as the tactics of aggression. The latter reflects standard military procedure in attacking a city: presumably there was little or no vocabulary for a naval bombardment. In 332 B.C. Alexander the Great conquered Tyre by building a causeway between the mainland and the island. The title “king of kings” is striking: politically it echoes Assyrian royal usage, while in terms of the first oracle it expresses his role as ruler of its “(many) nations” (vv 3, 5). The mention of a barrage of shields in v 8 refers to a siege tactic called by the Romans testudo or tortoise, whereby troops in close formation advanced under the cover of their raised shields (cf. Y. Yadin, The Art of Warfare 316, 420–21). The silencing of music in v 13 harks back to the poem of v 2: there may be a slight reminiscence of the language of Amos 5:23, although the quite different context makes the possibility doubtful. The forceful language of v 14a–b also reacts to v 2. It provides an emotion-laden response to Judean resentment of Tyre’s statement and attitude.

15–18 In the first of a second pair of oracles that presuppose the earlier pair, Tyre’s downfall is viewed from another aspect, that of a funeral lament put in the mouths of Tyre’s maritime partners. It has the effect of sealing the city’s doom: its fall is irrevocable. The prose report specifies the elements of the mourning ritual (cf. 24:16b–17 and Comment; and Lohfink, VT 12 [1962] 269–72). An unusual component of the description, which in fact pervades it, is a reaction of fear, which envelops the mourners like a garment (v 16). It is an awed reflection of the unexpected reversal of great Tyre’s fortunes. In the light of the foregoing oracles it implicitly evokes the power of Yahweh. The reaction of fear is an aftershock following the divinely caused quake of v 10 (כָּל 15). The lament is shot through with an appropriate maritime emphasis. True to its form, it begins with a typical exclamation (קִרְבָּה “how [distressing it is that]”) and counterposes past fame and present fate. The redactional juxtaposition of two poems reacting to a city’s fall (vv 2, 17–18) points up the absence of malicious joy in this instance: the speakers now have a sober intuition that a power greater than themselves has been at work in their midst (cf. 32:10).

19–21 The companion piece now makes explicit the truth that Yahweh will have been at work in the fall of Tyre. It points overtly and constantly to Yahweh’s activity. In so doing it means to shed light on the previous oracle. If the rehearsal of mourning rites served to seal Tyre’s doom, even more does this portrayal of a descent to Sheol in premature death. The crumbling of the war-ravaged island into the sea would be both fact and symbol. The sea was a powerful image of chaos and death (cf. Tromp, Primitive Conceptions 59–61). Tyre was to join the dead in Sheol, becoming a nonentity as they were, and to exchange the land of the living for the land of the nether places. The once virile city would leave behind
an uninhabited ruin (vv 19a–20a). Fallen, it would not stand (v 20b, cf. vv 15, 18). The “never again” of v 21b echoes and intensifies the close of the first half of the overall unit (v 14). This sealing of Tyre’s fate in irrevocable finality (cf. Jenni, *ZAW* 65 [1953] 14) is meant to assuage the passionate feelings of Ezekiel’s fellow exile.

**Explanation**

Chap. 26 follows the agenda of the previous chapter. It functions as a response to shattered nerves, to people who cry out in poignant despair and raise impotent fists against cruel taunts. The prophet brings Yahweh’s response to the sobs of the exiles, coming to them where they are and ministering to their immediate needs. As the laments of the Psalms abundantly testify, God takes into account each stage of human disorientation, even the feelings of angry frustration, ignoble as they may seem to the detached observer. The stops and starts of these oracles and their evident linking in a redactional chain illustrate how often the prophet had to revert to the one theme with repeated assurance to hearts that needed to hear it over again. Only as Ezekiel’s readers appreciate the emotion-ridden setting of these oracles, can they put into focus their vehemence as that of a pastoral message of comfort.

Yahweh did not retract the necessity of Jerusalem’s fall, but it was a private matter between him and his people. If others reacted thereto, a seemly response was in terms of uneasy awe (cf. vv 15–18). There was no place for the raucous triumphalism that brought agony to the exiles’ raw and sensitive spirits, adding insult to injury and exposing them to utter loss of face. Yahweh’s retaliatory threat rings out from different perspectives. Divine self-revelation (vv 1–6) and divine activity (vv 19–21) would bring reprisal, using human means to bring it about (vv 7–14) and getting human voices to testify in awe to its implementation (vv 15–18). The God who has chosen what is weak in the world also shames the strong by evidence of his power, so that no human being may boast in his presence (1 Cor 1:27–29).

**Tyre In Terms of the Titanic (27:1–36)**

**Bibliography**

Translation

1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2 “You, human one, are to raise a lament over Tyre 3 and to tell Tyre, dweller[3] at the entrances[4] to the sea and international merchant traveling to many coasts: Here is a message from the Lord[5] Yahweh:

O Tyre, you were called a ship[6]
perfection in beauty.

4. In the heart of the seas was your range:

your builders brought your beauty to perfection.

5. With junipers from Senir they built for you
every part of your pair of decks.

A fir from Lebanon they took
to make a mast for you.

6. With oaks from Bashan

they made your oars.

Your planking they made

with cypresses from the coasts of Cyprus.

7. Fine, embroidered linen from Egypt

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d. MT ṣna tr ma “you said ‘I (am)’ ” is doubtful: reference to a ship is expected and easily obtained by repointing ṣna. For the sense of a single ship (usually ṣna) rather than fleet there are Ug. and El Amarna parallels (cf. Zimmerli, ibid.; Dahood, Bib 45 [1964] 83 n. 2). Then the verb is to be repointed as pass qal ṭ ml (Dahood, ibid., followed by Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 56–57): contra Ehrlich, Randglossen 103, the noun can be fem.

a. Lit. “borders,” here in the sense of range or distance attainable by a well-made vessel (Ehrlich, Randglossen 104). Then the reference is not to the city and it is unnecessary to emend in order to relate to a ship (cf. Zimmerli 43, BHS et al.). The phrase ṭ ṭ ṭ “in the heart of the seas” refers not literally to the water round the island but metaphorically to the mid ocean, as in v 25 in the light of v 26 (Cornill 344). Smith, PEQ 85 (1953) 102, also interpreted in terms of a ship, finding a reference to its hull as “(defending) limits.”

b. A reference to Juniperus excelsa, which still grows in the area (Zohary, Plants of the Bible, 106–7).

c. The dual form ṭ ṭ ṭ is better taken as referring to a double deck than to the wooden sides: see Krantz, Des Schiffes Weg 85–91, who observes in support the sequence decks, masts and oars. An emendation to ṭ ṭ ṭ “your decks” on the evidence of Tg. (BHS following J. Olshausen et al.) is unnecessary after ṭ ṭ ṭ “for you” (Krantz, Des Schiffes Weg 76; Zimmerli 43).

d. A desire for metrical rigidity has dictated the popular emendation ṣ-my ṭ ṭ “the tallest of (the oaks),” taken with v 6 (BHS et al., following Bertholet 95). Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 62, notes the parallelism of “for you” with ṭ ṭ “for you” in v 5a (cf. Krantz, Des Schiffes Weg, ibid.).

e. Tg. presupposes ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ, rendering as in Isa 41:19; 60:13. The tree cannot be identified with certainty: it may be Cupressus sempervirens horizontalis. See the discussion in Krantz, Des Schiffes Weg 160–62, 175.

d. The pun in the English is accidental.
was your sail,  
  serving as your ensign.\textsuperscript{b}

\textit{Purple\textsuperscript{c} and puce\textsuperscript{d} cloth from the coast of Elishah}  
was your awning.

\textsuperscript{8}\textit{Sidon’s and Arvad’s elders\textsuperscript{a}}  
were your oarsmen.

Your experts, Tyre,\textsuperscript{b} were on board:  
they were your sailors.

\textsuperscript{9}\textit{Elders of Gebal\textsuperscript{a}} were on board  
as ship’s carpenters.\textsuperscript{b}

\textit{All the maritime ships and their sailors visited you to barter\textsuperscript{c} for your wares.}

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{Persia, Lud and Put}  
served in your navy  
as your marines.\textsuperscript{a}

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\textsuperscript{a}\textsuperscript{7.a. Heb (\textit{hmqr}) represents a \textit{beth} of accompaniment; cf. \textit{GKC} 119n; Van Dijk, \textit{Ezekiel’s Prophecy} 65; Krantz, \textit{Des Schiffes Weg} 128.}

\textsuperscript{b}\textsuperscript{7.b. Heb. \textit{sn} may refer to a distinctive sail serving for identification of the vessel: see the discussion in Krantz, \textit{Des Schiffes Weg} 122–26.}

\textsuperscript{c}\textsuperscript{7.c. Heb. \textit{tlkt} refers to a cloth dyed with a blue purple range of hues: cf. A. Brenner, \textit{Colour Terms} 146, 148.}

\textsuperscript{d}\textsuperscript{7.d. Heb. \textit{÷mgra} refers to red purple shades: see Brenner, \textit{Colour Terms} 147–48.}

\textsuperscript{8.a. MT \textit{yb} \textit{w} “inhabitants” does not accord with the special groups in vv 8b–9. Van Dijk, \textit{Ezekiel’s Prophecy} 66, translates “kings,” hardly an obvious rendering. LXX has a doublet that is often held to represent \textit{ya yecn} “rulers” (\textit{BHS} et al. following Cornill 347). Zimmerli (45), noting the graphical difficulty, proposes \textit{yf e} “leaders.” An even better suggestion might be \textit{yb e} “elders” from Heb. \textit{yc i} “be gray, old” (cf. Aram. \textit{yb e}; in this sense in Ezra 5:5, 9; 6:7, 8, 14), which may be presupposed by LXX.}

\textsuperscript{b}\textsuperscript{8.b. The vocative relates to the city, as in v 3, and \textit{ûb} “in you” to the ship (Ehrlich, \textit{Randglossen} 104). There is no need to change the text to \textit{rmx ymkj} “experts of Zemer” (Kraetzschmar 209 et al., including \textit{RSV}). Moriarty, \textit{Greg} 46 (1965) 86, has noted that wisdom is associated with Tyre in 28:5, 7, 17.}

\textsuperscript{a}\textsuperscript{9.a. The second term in MT, \textit{ymkj} \textit{w} “and her experts,” violates the structure of the listing. It may originally have been \textit{ymk j} “experts of,” a variant of \textit{û ymk j} “your experts” in v 8b\textsuperscript{a}, which was put into the next line and suffered dittography.}

\textsuperscript{b}\textsuperscript{9.b. lit. “those who strengthened your damaged parts.” A repointing as piel \textit{yqeZÒj’m} here and in v 27 accords with the phrasing in 2 Kgs 12:6, etc; 22:5 (\textit{BHK}, Zimmerli, \textit{ibid.}), but the hiph too is used of repairing (cf. \textit{BDB} 305a).}

\textsuperscript{c}\textsuperscript{9.c. Cognates of the verb \textit{br} [ ] mean “give” in S. Arab. and Syr.: cf. Driver in \textit{Studies in OT Prophecy} (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1957) 64–65, who pointed as a causative piel \textit{b\textit{f} [ ]} “to cause to give, obtain.” Other suggestions are to relate it to a stem meaning “take in pledge” and so “exchange in trade” (\textit{BDB} 786b; \textit{HALAT} 830a) or to another meaning “enter” with the sense of “import” (Dahood, \textit{Bib} 45 [1964] 83 n. 2, following D. H. Müller).}

\textsuperscript{a}\textsuperscript{10.a. The line functions as a tricolon.}
Hanging shield and helmet on you, 
they invested you with splendor.

11 The men of Arvad and Cilicia\(^a\) manned the walls around you; the Gammadites\(^b\) were stationed in your turrets. Hanging their weapons\(^c\) on the walls around you, they brought your beauty to perfection.

12 Tarshish was your trader because of your\(^a\) great wealth of every kind: for silver, iron, tin and lead they sold\(^b\) your goods.\(^c\) Ionia, Tubal and Meshech were your merchants: for slaves and bronze articles they sold your wares.\(^d\) From Beth-Togarmah for draft horses, war horses and mules they sold your goods.\(^a\) The folk of Rhodes\(^a\) were your merchants; many coasts were your trading agents.\(^b\) Ivory tusks and ebony they brought as your payment.\(^c\) Edom\(^a\) was your trader because of your many products: for garnets,\(^b\) puce cloth, embroidered fabric, fine linen, black corals\(^c\) and rubies\(^d\) they sold your goods.\(^17\) Judah and the territory of Israel were your merchants: for wheat of Minnith,\(^a\) early figs (?),\(^b\) honey, oil and storax\(^c\) they sold your wares.\(^18\) Damascus was your trader

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\(^a\) 11.a. Heb. \(ûlyj\) probably accords with Phoen. \(ûlj\) and Akk. \(Hâllakku\) “Cilicia” (BDB 299b; 319a). Cornill (348) considered it too far away.

\(^b\) 11.b. The geographical location of this group is unknown. The N. Syrian Kumidi have been suggested (cf. Katzenstein, History 156 note 149).

\(^c\) 11.c. The specific meaning of \(fl\) is uncertain: see Borger, VT 22 (1972) 394–95.

\(^a\) 12.a. The Heb. lacks a pronoun, but Tyre’s wealth is in view: cf. vv 16, 27, 33 (Ehrlich, Randglossen, 105).

\(^b\) 12.b. Heb. \(÷tn\) “give” in commercial contexts refers to selling (BDB 679a). The places have the function of middlemen or agents (Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 76). The construction is stylistically varied in this passage, together with the terminology for goods: sometimes a \(beth\) of price is used of the object given in exchange or of that received or even (vv 16, 18–19) of both.

\(^c\) 12.c. The precise meaning of \(÷wbz\) is uncertain. Is it what caravans leave behind to be sold (HALAT 764a)? See the discussion in Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 75–76.

\(^a\) 15.a. MT \(÷dd\) “Dedan” belongs geographically in v 20, not here. LXX implies \(÷fl\) “Rhodes,” which accords with \(÷yy\) “coastlands” in v 15ab and is generally read.

\(^b\) 15.b. lit. “trading syndicate of your (hand =) agency”: cf. Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 78, with reference to Albright, JBL 71 (1952) 249. For the collective form \(÷fl\) see T. N. D. Mettinger, JSS 16 (1971) 11.

\(^c\) 15.c. Heb. \(÷wb\) “gift, tribute” so signifies in this commercial context. It is a loanword from Sumerian via Akk. (HALAT 92a).

\(^a\) 16.a. MT \(÷\) “Syria” conflicts with the reference to Damascus in v 18. LXX presupposes \(÷\) “human beings,” but properly signifies \(÷/\) “Edom,” as Syr. interprets. For the error in MT see 16:57. M. Haran (JEJ 18 [1968] 204) urged that some of the products cited apply better to Aram than to Edom. J. Lindsay (PEQ 108 [1976] 30) countered that Haran ignored the transit nature of the trade, which probably consisted of re-exports.

\(^b\) 16.b. See the discussions in Driver, Bib 35 (1954) 156; H. Quiring, Sudhofs Archiv 38 (1954) 199–200; HALAT 670a.


\(^d\) 16.d. cf. HALAT 439b.

\(^a\) 17.a. Rabin, JSS 11 (1966) 2–7, saw here an Indian loanword for rice (cf. HALAT 570a).
because of your many products and great wealth of every kind: for wine of Heshbon, wool of Zachar
and casks of wine from Izal\(^a\) they sold your goods. Wrought\(^b\) iron, cassia and aromatic grass
were delivered in return for your wares. Dedan was your merchant in saddle cloths.\(^a\) Arabian and
casses of wine from Izal\(^a\) they sold your goods. Wrought iron, cassia and aromatic grass
were delivered in return for your wares. Dedan was your merchant in saddle cloths.\(^a\)
Arabia and all the sheikhs of Kedar were your trading agents in lambs, rams and goats: these were the items
they traded with you. Merchants of Sheba, Asshur, Kilmad\(^a\) and Raamah were your merchants: for
the best of all types of perfumes, for precious stones of every kind and for gold they sold your
goods. Haran, Canneh and Eden\(^a\) were your merchants: for fine garments, purple clothes,\(^a\)
embroidered fabrics, cloth\(^b\) of variegated material\(^c\) and braided, strong ropes—for these items they
were your merchants.\(^d\) The ships of Tarshish were your transporters for your wares.\(^a\)


\(^{19.b}\) The meaning of \(\text{gnp}\), a *hapax legomenon*, is not known. 2 MSS read \(\text{gpp}\) “early figs.” M. Stol, *On
Trees* 68–71, explained \(\text{gpp}\) as a healing plant, cognate with Gk. \(\rho \alpha \nu \alpha \epsilon\), a medicinal plant.

\(^{17.c}\) For the identification, which is controversial, see Zohary, *Plants of the Bible* 198.

\(^{18.a}\) MT \(\text{zya \(\text{m} \text{\(\backslash\)w} \text{\(\backslash\)d \text{\(\backslash\)w}}\))}

\(^{19.a}\) MT \(\text{\(\backslash\)za “spin”}. \text{\(\backslash\)za me \(\text{\(\backslash\)w} \text{\(\backslash\)w} \text{\(\backslash\)w}}\))

\(^{23.a}\) See the note on v 22. MT also adds \(\text{\(\backslash\)lt \(\text{\(\backslash\)r “your group of merchants,” for which see the final
note on v 24. The authentic material in v 23 connects with v 24.}

\(^{24.a}\) For \(\text{ymwlg “garments” see BDB 166a.}

\(^{24.b}\) Heb. \(\text{yzng “garment” see HALAT 328a.}

\(^{22.a}\) MT adds after v 23a an apparent gloss introduced by a cue phrase (cf. P. Rost, *OLZ* 7 [1904]
482): “merchants of Sheba: Asshur, Kilmad,” which seems to indicate that two names have fallen out
of v 22, Asshur, referring to the Arabian tribe \(\text{\(\backslash\)yrw “Asshurites” (cf. Gen. 25:3) and the now
unknown Kilmad, which Tg. rendered as if \(\text{\(\backslash\)yd “all Media.” For the tolerable repetition of “
merchants” see Zimmerli 50.}

\(^{24.c}\) Heb. \(\text{yymrb “garments” see HALAT 328a.}

\(^{24.d}\) MT \(\text{\(\backslash\)lt \(\text{\(\backslash\)r “in your place of trade (?)” introduces a new term—a *hapax legomenon*—to the
passage. V 21 suggests a division into \(\text{\(\backslash\)lt \(\text{\(\backslash\)r “for them your merchant group,” to which the term
\(\text{\(\backslash\)lt \(\text{\(\backslash\)r in v 23b may originally have referred, as a marginal note.}

\(^{25.a}\) For the appositional construction cf. *GKC* 128d (Zimmerli 51).
So you were filled and heavily laden
in the heart of the seas.
26 Out to sea you were brought
by your rowers.
An east wind wrecked you
in the heart of the seas.

27 Your wealth, your goods, your wares, your mariners and sailors, your ship’s carpenters, the dealers in your wares, all the marines who were aboard, in fact all\(^a\) your company\(^b\) who were on board, sank into the heart of the seas at the time of your sinking.

28 At the loud cries of your sailors
the countryside\(^a\) quakes.
29 From their ships disembark
all the handlers of oars.\(^a\)
All the sailors of the sea\(^b\)
go ashore
30 and cry out\(^a\) for you
with bitter shouts.
They throw dust on their heads
and wallow\(^b\) in ashes.
31 They shave off patches of their hair for you
and tie sackcloth around themselves.
They weep for you with bitter emotions,
in bitter mourning.
32 They raise a lament for you in their dirge,\(^a\)
lamenting over you in these words:

\(^a\) 27.a. MT \(\text{b w}^\text{b}\) “and with all” seems to be an error for \(\text{b w}^\text{w} “and all,” for which there is much ancient support (see \textit{BHS}). The \textit{beth} is a case of mechanical assimilation to \(\text{b b “in you” (Cornill 355).}
\(^b\) 27.b. Rather than “crew” (Van Dijk, \textit{Ezekiel’s Prophecy} 83–84): see the discussion in Krantz, \textit{Des Schiffes Weg} 193.
\(^a\) 28.a. \(\text{b w}^\text{m} \) may refer to open land associated with Tyre, i.e., territory under its control on the mainland. Driver, \textit{Bib} 35 (1954) 157, rendered “driven waves,” which is etymologically possible but hardly suits the context (cf. 26:15).
\(^b\) 29.a. Or “rudders”: see the discussion in Krantz, \textit{Des Schiffes Weg} 110–22.
\(^b\) 29.b. MT prefixes \(\text{m} \) “mariners,” which breaks the chiastic structure of vv 28–30a (cf. Krantz, \textit{Des Schiffes Weg} 181). It was probably a marginal note explaining that this crew of other “ships” were so called in v 9b (cf. \textit{BHS}).
\(^a\) 30.a. For the construction see \textit{GKC} 119q.
\(^a\) 32.a. \(\text{b w}^\text{b} “in their lament” (= \textit{Vg}; cf. \textit{GKC} 23k). A pointing \(\text{b w}^\text{w} \) “their sons,” although it has ancient attestation (see \textit{BHS}) makes little sense. The supposition of a gloss (Cornill 356) would get rid of the awkward and contextually redundant word, but no cogent explanation for such a gloss has been offered. Does \(\text{b w}^\text{w} “in groaning” underlie MT? cf. 24:23 and Ps 38:9(8).
'Who was like Tyre,
like the fortressb in the middle of the sea?'

33By the unloadinga of your goods from the seas you brought plenty to so many peoples. By your
great wealth and your wares you enriched kings the world over.

34Now you are wreckeda byb the seas,
in the watery depth.
Your wares and all your company on board have sunk.
35All who dwell at the coasts
are appalled at your fate.
The hair of their kings stands on end,
theira faces are downcast.b
36Among the peoples the traders
whistle at you.
You have become a victim of terror
and will be no more for ever.”

Notes
3.a. For K see GKC 90 1-n.
3.b. The Heb. lacks an article with the genitive and is pl. LXX Syr. Vg have been regarded as

b 32.b. For the rendering see Dahood, Bib 45 (1964) 83–84, who compared Akk. dīmtu and Ug. dmt “tower, fortress.” For less likely options see Zimmerli 52. A reading h md n, often postulated for h md k either in the sense “was likened” or “was destroyed,” seems to have ancient support (cf. BHS), but is unlikely to be original. It was probably an attempt to make sense of an unrecognized word. The former alternative labors under the difficulty that the verb is never construed with û “like,” and the latter misunderstands the role of the verse, which praises the past glory of Tyre (cf. its elaboration in v 33 and the parallel at the start of a lament in 19:2).

a 33.a. Heb. ã x j “go out” appears to refer here not to exporting (Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 86) but to the unloading (NEB) of goods from the vessels.
34.a. MT T r B z n T “(at) the time of your being broken” (cf. GKC 116g note 1) is generally repointed T B V N(h ) T "now you are broken,” with strong versional support (see BHS).

b 34.b. The preposition is instrumental (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 158, with reference to Gen 9:11).
35.a. For the lack of suffix with parts of the body see the list of references in Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 91.
35.b. Heb. µ Y f usually refers to (the sound of) thunder. KB 901a relates it to a separate stem “be disconcerted,” cognate with Arab. raghama “be abased, humbled” here and in 1 Sam 1:6. LXX Syr. imply W md W “and wept,” but this would require “eyes” as subj (Zimmerli 53).
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
Heb. Hebrew
pl. plate or plural
implying a sg μυ θα m “entrance to the sea” which was corrupted via a h / t error and wrong division (Zimmerli 42). But the versions’ rendering may be free and the reference to the island’s two harbors, on the north and south sides. Moriarty, Greg 46 (1965) 86, followed by Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 56, postulated a Phoenician fem sg form.

3.c. For the formulaic ynd a “Lord” see the note on 20:3.

3.d. MT yna t r ma “you said ‘I (am)’ ” is doubtful: reference to a ship is expected and easily obtained by repointing ynα (For the sense of a single ship (usually h γα) rather than fleet there are Ug. and El Amarna parallels (cf. Zimmerli, ibid.; Dahood, Bib 45 [1964] 83 n. 2). Then the verb is to be repointed as pass qal T J Ma u Dahood, ibid., followed by Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 56–57): contra Ehrlich, Randglossen 103, the noun can be fem.

4.a. lit. “borders,” here in the sense of range or distance attainable by a well-made vessel (Ehrlich, Randglossen 104). Then the reference is not to the city and it is unnecessary to emend in order to relate to a ship (cf. Zimmerli 43, BHS et al.). The phrase μυ θα b b “in the heart of the seas” refers not literally to the water round the island but metaphorically to the mid ocean, as in v 25 in the light of v 26 (Cornill 344). Smith, PEQ 85 (1953) 102, also interpreted in terms of a ship, finding a reference to its hull as “(defending) limits.”

5.a. A reference to Juniperus excelsa, which still grows in the area (Zohary, Plants of the Bible, 106–7).

5.b. The dual form μ θα j j is better taken as referring to a double deck than to the wooden sides: see Krantz, Des Schiffes Weg 85–91, who observes in support the sequence decks, masts and oars. An emendation to θ θ j j “your decks” on the evidence of Tg. (BHS following J. Olshausen et al.) is

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
sg singular or under
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Ug. Ugaritic
cf. confer, compare
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
Bib Biblica
n. note
qal the basic stem of Heb. verbs
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
contra in contrast to
lit. literally
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
et al. et alii, and others
PEQ Palestine Exploration Quarterly
unnecessary after ûl “for you” (Krantz, Des Schifles Weg 76; Zimmerli 43).

5.c. A reference to Abies ciliicica (Zimmerli, Ezek 1 361).

5.d. A desire for metrical rigidity has dictated the popular emendation ינויַל [“the tallest of (the oaks),”] taken with v 6 (BHS et al., following Bertholet 95). Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 62, notes the parallelism of “for you” with ûl “for you” in v 5a (cf. Krantz, Des Schifles Weg, ibid.).


6.b. MT adds עִי “ivory,” an exotic item even in this magnificent context. RSV “(pines) inlaid with ivory,” following Tg, hardly represents MT (Ehrlich, Randglossen 104), which is generally taken as an erroneous ditto of the preceding עִי (I) (cf. BHS). The chiasmus in v 6 (Cooke 308; Krantz, Des Schifles Weg 77) supports the omission.

6.c. Tg. presupposes עִי עִי (פִ), rendering as in Isa 41:19; 60:13. The tree cannot be identified with certainty: it may be Cupressus sempervirens horizontalis. See the discussion in Krantz, Des Schifles Weg 160–62, 175.

6.d. The pun in the English is accidental.

7.a. Heb (חָמַר) ד represents a beth of accompaniment; cf. GKC 119n; Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy
65; Krantz, *Des Schiffes Weg* 128.

7.b. Heb. äß may refer to a distinctive sail serving for identification of the vessel: see the discussion in Krantz, *Des Schiffes Weg* 122–26.


8.a. MT ăăăăă “inhabitants” does not accord with the special groups in vv 8b–9. Van Dijk, *Ezekiel’s Prophecy* 66, translates “kings,” hardly an obvious rendering. LXX has a doublet that is often held to represent ăăăăă “rulers” (*BHS et al.* following Cornill 347). Zimmerli (45), noting the graphical difficulty, proposes ăăăăă ; “leaders.” An even better suggestion might be ăăăăă ; “elders” from Heb. ăăăăă “be gray, old” (cf. Aram. ăăăăă ; in this sense in Ezra 5:5, 9; 6:7, 8, 14), which may be presupposed by LXX.

8.b. The vocative relates to the city, as in v 3, and ăăăăă “in you” to the ship (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 104). There is no need to change the text to ăăăăă “experts of Zemer” (Kraetzschmar 209 et al., including RSV). Moriarty, *Greg* 46 (1965) 86, has noted that wisdom is associated with Tyre in 28:5, 7, 17.

9.a. The second term in MT, ăăăăă “and her experts,” violates the structure of the listing. It may originally have been ăăăăă “experts of,” a variant of ăăăăă “your experts” in v 8bă, which was put into the next line and suffered dittography.

9.b. lit. “those who strengthened your damaged parts.” A repointing as piel ăăăăă here and in v 27 accords with the phrasing in 2 Kgs 12:6, etc; 22:5 (*BHK*, Zimmerli, ibid.), but the hiph too is used of...
repairing (cf. BDB 305a).

9.c. Cognates of the verb בָּרָא meaning “give” in S. Arab. and Syr.: cf. Driver in Studies in OT Prophecy (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1957) 64–65, who pointed as a causative piel בָּרָא “to cause to give, obtain.” Other suggestions are to relate it to a stem meaning “take in pledge” and so as “exchange in trade” (BDB 786b; HALAT 830a) or to another meaning “enter” with the sense of “import” (Dahood, Bib 45 [1964] 83 n. 2, following D. H. Müller).

10.a. The line functions as a tricolon.

11.a. Heb. יָלַי | יָלָה probably accords with Phoen. יָלָה and Akk. Haîlakku “Cilicia” (BDB 299b; 319a). Cornill (348) considered it too far away.

11.b. The geographical location of this group is unknown. The N. Syrian Kumidi have been suggested (cf. Katzenstein, History 156 note 149).

11.c. The specific meaning of יָלָה is uncertain: see Borger, VT 22 (1972) 394–95.

12.a. The Heb. lacks a pronoun, but Tyre’s wealth is in view: cf. vv 16, 27, 33 (Ehrlich, Randglossen, 105).

12.b. Heb. יָלַי “give” in commercial contexts refers to selling (BDB 679a). The places have the function of middlemen or agents (Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 76). The construction is stylistically

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ibid. ibidem, in the same place


Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)


Bib Biblica

n. note

Heb. Hebrew

Akk. Akkadian


cf. confer, compare

VT Vetus Testamentum

Heb. Hebrew

cf. confer, compare

Heb. Hebrew

varied in this passage, together with the terminology for goods: sometimes a *beth* of price is used of the object given in exchange or of that received or even (vv 16, 18–19) of both.

12.c. The precise meaning of אַבִּז[מ] is uncertain. Is it what caravans leave behind to be sold (*HALAT* 764a)? See the discussion in Van Dijk, *Ezekiel’s Prophecy* 75–76.

15.a. MT תַּדְד “Dedan” belongs geographically in v 20, not here. LXX implies תַּר “Rhodes,” which accords with תַּר אֶרֶץ “coastlands” in v 15ab and is generally read.


15.c. Heb. תַּר א “gift, tribute” so signifies in this commercial context. It is a loanword from Sumerian via Akk. (*HALAT* 92a).

16.a. MT תַּר א “Syria” conflicts with the reference to Damascus in v 18. LXX presupposes תַּר א, which it took as תַּר א “human beings,” but properly signifies תַּר א אָדָם “Edom,” as Syr. interprets. For the error in MT see 16:57. M. Haran (*IEJ* 18 [1968] 204) urged that some of the products cited apply better to Aram than to Edom. J. Lindsay (*PEQ* 108 [1976] 30) countered that Haran ignored the transit nature of the trade, which probably consisted of re-exports.


MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)  
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT  
lit. literally  
cf. confer, compare  
*JBL* Journal of Biblical Literature  
*JSS* Journal of Semitic Studies  
Heb. Hebrew  
Akk. Akkadian  
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)  
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT  
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)  
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)  
*IEJ* Israel Exploration Journal  
*PEQ* Palestine Exploration Quarterly  
*Bib* Biblica  


17.b. The meaning of ḡpp, a *hapax legomenon*, is not known. 2 MSS read ḡpp “early figs.” M. Stol, *On Trees* 68–71, explained ḡpp as a healing plant, cognate with Gk. πάπακα, a medicinal plant.

17.c. For the identification, which is controversial, see Zohary, *Plants of the Bible* 198.


19.a. MT ↓ ẓwâ m ⴙ ⴱ ⴧ ⵮ w means “and Dan and Javan (= Ionia, cf. v 13) that which is spun” (cf. Aram. ⵮ “spin”). LXX implies ↓  me ⸠ ⵱ ⴳ ⴳ ⴱ ⴽ and wine from …” and accordingly Millard, *JSS* 7 (1962) 201–3, assuming three ⴳ ⴱ ⴳ ⴱ ⸠ ⸠ ⸠ errors, proposed ↓ ẓyâ m ⸠ ⴳ ⴱ ⴳ ⴳ w “and casks of wine from Izal,” linking ⴳ ⴳ with Akk., Aram., Syr. Arab. and Ug. cognates signifying “cask.” Izal, between Haran and the Tigris, was famous for its wine (Kraetzschmar 211; Millard, *JSS* 7 [1962] 201). Then v 19a is to be construed with v 18b. Elat, *VT* 33 (1983) 324, has objected that v 19b would then lack mention of a commercial source of the wares it enumerates: elsewhere in the trading list places and wares are linked. In fact, Damascus (v 18) appears to be the continuing source. MT has its own problems. Elat himself has noted
the difficulty of the initial "and (Dan),” unique in the list. Moreover, a further mention of "IONIA” (cf. v 13) is anomalous. Elat’s defense of MT in v 19 ignores the fact that v 18, as it stands, is incomplete (cf. Zimmerli 49).

19.b. The hapax legomenon יָאָשׁ is so rendered in LXX Syr. Vg.

20.a. The hapax legomenon שִׁנָּה may be a loanword related to Akk. šunu “woolen fabric” (HALAT 328a).

22.a. MT adds after v 23a an apparent gloss introduced by a cue phrase (cf. P. Rost, OLZ 7 [1904] 482): “merchants of Sheba: Asshur, Kilmad,” which seems to indicate that two names have fallen out of v 22, Asshur, referring to the Arabian tribe מָיָר וַהֲשָׁא “Asshurites” (cf. Gen. 25:3) and the now unknown Kilmad, which Tg. rendered as יִדֶל “all Media.” For the tolerable repetition of “merchants” see Zimmerli 50.

23.a. See the note on v 22. MT also adds יֶתֶר כְּלָא “your group of merchants,” for which see the final note on v 24. The authentic material in v 23 connects with v 24.

24.a. For יָמָו “garments” see BDB 166a.

24.b. Heb. יָנָג is of uncertain meaning: see HALAT 191b.

24.c. Heb. יָמַר is a loanword from Akk. birmu, variegated cloth woven from differently colored threads (Brenner, Colour Terms, 149–50).
24.d. MT ûtl kr mb “in your place of trade (?” introduces a new term—a *hapax legomenon*—to the passage. *V* 21 suggests a division into ûtl kr mb “for them your merchant group,” to which the term ûtl kr in v 23b may originally have referred, as a marginal note.

25.a. For the appositional construction cf. *GKC* 128d (Zimmerli 51).

27.a. MT kr wb “and with all” seems to be an error for kr w “and all,” for which there is much ancient support (see *BHS*). The *beth* is a case of mechanical assimilation to û b “in you” (Cornill 355).

27.b. Rather than “crew” (Van Dijk, *Ezekiel’s Prophecy* 83–84): see the discussion in Krantz, *Des Schiffes Weg* 193.

28.a. Heb. *t mrm* may refer to open land associated with Tyre, i.e., territory under its control on the mainland. Driver, *Bib* 35 (1954) 157, rendered “driven waves,” which is etymologically possible but hardly suits the context (cf. 26:15).


29.b. MT prefixes *h m* “mariners,” which breaks the chiastic structure of vv 28–30a (cf. Krantz, *Des Schiffes Weg* 181). It was probably a marginal note explaining that this crew of other “ships” were so called in v 9b (cf. *BHS*).

30.a. For the construction see *GKC* 119q.


32.a. Heb. *h ynb* is commonly regarded as an abbreviation for *h ynh nb* “in their lament” (= Vg; cf.
A pointing בָּנֵי הָעִם “their sons,” although it has ancient attestation (see BHS) makes little sense. The supposition of a gloss (Cornill 356) would get rid of the awkward and contextually redundant word, but no cogent explanation for such a gloss has been offered. Does בַּאֲדֹנִית “in groaning” underlie MT? cf. 24:23 and Ps 38:9(8).

32.b. For the rendering see Dahood, Bib 45 (1964) 83–84, who compared Akk. 딦ִ֖ת “tower, fortress.” For less likely options see Zimmerli 52. A reading הָגְדִּית, often postulated for הָגְדִּית either in the sense “was likened” or “was destroyed,” seems to have ancient support (cf. BHS), but is unlikely to be original. It was probably an attempt to make sense of an unrecognized word. The former alternative labors under the difficulty that the verb is never construed with בּ “like,” and the latter misunderstands the role of the verse, which praises the past glory of Tyre (cf. its elaboration in v 33 and the parallel at the start of a lament in 19:2).

33.a. Heb. אני 같이 “go out” appears to refer here not to exporting (Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 86) but to the unloading (NEB) of goods from the vessels.

34.a. MT תִּרְבּוּ נֵס “(at) the time of your being broken” (cf. GKC 116g note 1) is generally repointed תִּרְבּוּ נֵס (יִתְנַל) “now you are broken,” with strong versional support (see BHS).

34.b. The preposition is instrumental (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 158, with reference to Gen 9:11).

35.a. For the lack of suffix with parts of the body see the list of references in Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s

Heb. Hebrew
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
cf. confer, compare
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cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
NEB The New English Bible
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cf. confer, compare
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Bib Biblica
Prophecy 91.

35.b. Ἱβ, [ ן ] usually refers to (the sound of) thunder. KB 901a relates it to a separate stem “be disconcerted,” cognate with Arab. ῥαχα “be abased, humbled” here and in 1 Sam 1:6. LXX Syr. imply מ ו מ and wept,” but this would require “eyes” as subj (Zimmerli 53).

Form/Structure/Setting

Chap. 27 exhibits form-critical diversity in striking variance with its straightforward self-designation as a lament in v 2. On the other hand, in its present shape it bears clear marks of rhetorical unity, of which it is better to take note before discussing the diversity. The single message reception formula in v 1 brackets the contents of the chapter as an overall unit. V 36b is a refrain already encountered in 26:21 and to be met again in 28:19b: it labels chap. 27 as the second in a series of three explicit or implicit forecasts of disaster for Tyre. An inclusion for the unit is provided by מ י מ [ b ] [ ה ] “merchant to the peoples” in v 3 and מ י מ [ b ] [ י ] “traders among the peoples” in v 36; another is (מ י [ b ] [ י ] ) מ י [ a ] “(many) coasts” in vv 3 and 35, which is echoed in v 15. From a rhetorical perspective the chapter falls into four sections. Vv 3–11, which describe the island-city of Tyre in terms of an ocean-going ship, are marked by the inclusion מ י פ מ [ ו ] מ [ י ] כ “they perfected your beauty” in vv 4 and 11 (Parunak, Structural Studies 369–70; cf. מ י פ מ [ ו ] מ [ י ] כ “perfect in beauty,” v 3b). Vv 12–25a, which seem to describe the trading city’s articles of commerce in terms of the ship’s cargo (cf. v 25b), are framed at beginning and end by another inclusion, a double reference to Tarshish (Parunak, Structural Studies 370). Vv 25b–32a and vv 32b–36 are two parallel sections, which both portray a reversal from riches to ruin in terms of shipwreck and the shocked reactions of others to the catastrophe (see Comment). The parallel movement of the last two sections from past glory to destruction and then to present lament have a part to play within the lament of the whole chapter. Vv 3–11 and 12–25a are descriptions of past glory, which the final sections each resume before moving on to the grim sequel.

It is evident, however, that the present unit has been enlarged by elements which are both redactionally intrusive and formally diverse. Criteria for determining the primary material are (a) poetry rather than prose, (b) description of Tyre as a ship rather than as a city, and (c) the absence of mention of trading goods. A criterion of meter adopted by Zimmerli (64) and others is hardly valid (cf. Krantz, Des Schiffes Weg 29 note 14). The third criterion derives its force from the fact that vv 12–25a, which are in prose and relate to the city of Tyre, supply a catalog of commercial items and their places of origin. With the aid of these criteria a basic poetic composition can be isolated: vv 3–9a, 10, 25b, 26, 28–32, 34a, 35a, 36a (cf. substantially Krantz, Des Schiffes Weg 27–31; for a strong defense of v 25b, against Zimmerli 54–55, see P. D. Miller, Sin and Judgment 70 note 13). It functions as a lament (v 2, cf. v 32) and in
keeping with that genre moves from past glory to present disaster. It does so in a double representation in which a long version flows into a much briefer one: vv 3b–9a, 10, 25b / 26, 28–32a and vv 32b / 34a, 35, 36a. There is a rhetorical and ironical fusion of the shift from prosperity to disaster in the repetition of "in the heart of the seas" at vv 4, 25b, 26b and in the alteration of "in the midst of the sea" to "in the depths of the waters" (vv 32b, 34a). In the shorter version the accent shifts from splendor to humiliation, and the tone changes from sympathetic lament to horror that distances itself from the victim. "The lament genre ... becomes an important factor in the creating of a rhetorical relationship between prophet and audience. [Its] limping ... metre would have drummed into the minds of the hearers the belief that the subject of the oracle was doomed" (Durlesser, Proceedings 7 [1987] 80).

The intent behind the added material is both to enhance the reversal and to provide historical realism. The urban defense system of v 11 (after v 10) and the commercial catalog of vv 12–25a (before the implicit reference to cargo in v 25b) fulfill the latter purpose. Yet in both passages there is a concern for rhetorical style: v 11 with its reference to perfection rounds off a new sub-unit (vv 3b or 4–11) and so does v 25a with its mention of Tarshish. A further role of v 25a is to enhance the theme of reversal by anticipating the (negative) reference to ships in v 29; so does v 9b. Other verses that have this function are v 27, which echoes the terms used for crew and cargo in vv 8–10 and 12–22 respectively and is locked into its context by the repetition of "in the heart of the seas" from v 26; v 33, which aesthetically echoes in a positive context the sinister terms "from the waters" (v 34) and "their kings" (v 35); and v 34b, which briefly reiterates terms used in v 27 to accentuate the loss of former assets. These additions then are by no means crude and insensitive, but with a fresh display of stylistic skill seek to enhance the contrast of past prosperity and present adversity. The aspect of realism whereby the city takes the place of the ship seems to have been inspired by elements within the poem itself at vv 3b and 8b (see Notes).

The effect of these expansions is to change the ABAB structure of the poem to a longer A A B B one, a composition of two parts, the first of which has a double celebration of the glory of Tyre (vv 4–11, 12–25a) and the second a double declaration of a fall from glory to disaster (vv 25b–32a, 32b–36). Greater weight to the glory of Tyre is given by the addition of the block of material in vv 12–25a. It does justice to a concern implied but not exploited by the poem, the commercial achievements of Tyre. It is generally and plausibly regarded as the writing up of an independent list of trading products and places. Its most dominant vocabulary, relating to traders, the stems κρ, which occurs some nine times, and φίλ, which appears six times, is presumably derived from the introduction to the poem (v 3) and from the poem itself (v 36a); so too is the frequent ἡμὶ (“these”) formulation (cf. vv 8b, 10b). There is thus a concern to integrate the new material into its older context. There is also an attempt to make the list more readable by varying terms for products (παπαζ “goods”; φίλ or μ “wares”), by mixing nominal and verbal sentences and by varying verbal constructions. The repetition of ἵνα ἀκόλουθον “because of great wealth of every kind” in vv 12, 18 may indicate a division into nearly equal halves, vv 12–17 and 18–24.

The chronological setting of the poem is within the period of the Babylonian siege of Tyre. As for the redactional insertion of the prose list and the terminologically related prose additions, the basic document obviously describes Tyre in its heyday, while v 17 suggests that it was written between 721 and 587 B.C.

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
Comment

1–3b The divine command to utter a funeral dirge over Tyre accords well with the content of the chapter. However, the poem and the accompanying expansions are rigorously human in their perspective: theology is conspicuous by its sheer absence. The importance of the introduction is that it gives a divine orientation to the fall of the great city-state of Tyre. This was to be no mere human phenomenon whose repercussions would ripple through the consciousness of Tyre’s neighbors and partners. The fate of Tyre was divinely ordained. The lament form essentially looks back to past glory from the perspective of present disaster. Here the usage is typically prophetic, serving the function of a prophetic announcement of doom by speaking as if that doom had already occurred. Tyre’s present position of affluence as supplier of goods to the world around (v 3a), secure as it seemed, was destined not to last. Tyre had two harbors, a natural one on the north side of the island and an artificial one on the south (Katzenstein, History 11, 14, 154). From them its merchant ships traveled the Mediterranean.

3bb–11 In a rhetorical address to Tyre the island city is described in terms of a magnificent ship. The metaphor appears to be regarded as a standard one, here re-used. In this case, however, the description, and by implication its magnificence, are set in the past in a sinister fashion (cf. Lam 2:15). The metaphor is a natural one in view of Tyre’s island situation and the greatness it derived from maritime trading. The deeper significance of the metaphor will be revealed later in the chapter. After the introductory line of v 3bbg, the metaphor is developed in vv 4–7 in terms of its construction and in vv 8–10 in terms of its crew. The initial phrase “in the heart of the seas” is to have a key structural role; here it refers to an ocean-going ship, superbly constructed for this task. Adjacent territories had yielded their best resources, to ensure the quality of the vessel that was to brave the seas. For each aspect of the ship the right lumber was selected, for the decking, mast, oars and sides. Only the best of cloth was chosen for sail and awning. Behind the metaphor lies the reality of Tyre’s wealth as the result of trading with other states (cf. Newsom, Int 38 [1984] 156).

Likewise, the description of the crew expresses Tyre’s political supremacy that came on the heels of success in trade (Newsom, ibid.). Sidon, a little higher up the coast, was to come to dominance after the completion of Nebuchadnezzar’s siege (Harden, The Phoenicians 47), but till then it functioned as Tyre’s subordinate, putting its best personnel at the disposal of Tyre. Other Phoenician coastal cities, Arvad and Gebal (or Byblos), were as eager as Tyre itself to use their manpower in Tyre’s interests. The redactional v 9b seeks to explain the metaphor in terms of Tyre’s role as a port for commercial ships from elsewhere, and finds a literal meaning in the reference to a maritime crew. It also wants to anticipate the reference to other ships in the description of the reversal of Tyre’s fortunes at v 29, and so eventually to highlight that reversal. The military references in v 10 function in the metaphor as allusions to marines posted on board the merchant ship in case of piracy. Tyre’s warships typically had a row of round shields hung along their sides (cf. ANEP, fig. 106), and conceivably a merchant ship would have done the same to deter pirates. The ethnic references in v 10 are not clear. Put seems to refer to Libyans (cf. IDB, vol. 3, 971). Lud is generally related to the Lydians, but conceivably may refer to an ethnic

cf. confer, compare

Int Interpretation

ibid. ibidem, in the same place

cf. confer, compare


cf. confer, compare
group in N. Africa (cf. Gen 10:13; Jer 46:9). Heb. סַּנֵּר is most naturally to be taken as Persia (cf. Katzenstein, History 156 n. 146). Hence the far-flung sources of Tyre’s mercenaries seem to be in view, from the east, west and south (cf. Keil 390; Cooke 300). Not unreasonably v 11 interprets in terms of Tyre’s mercenary troops. Its walls and turrets are portrayed in Assyrian depictions (see, e.g., ANEP, fig. 356). The redactor sensitively rounds off the account of Tyre’s glory by the stylistic device of inclusion (see Form/Structure/Setting).

12–25a Between the description of the ship’s construction and crew and the reference to its setting sail fully laden in v 25b has been inserted a bridging account of its cargo. For this purpose an extant commercial catalog of trading commodities and their sources has evidently been used. It has been written up into a prose account of Tyre’s trade relations with other parts of the world. In this context it functions virtually as a cargo list, although strictly the trading city of Tyre is in view rather than the metaphorical ship. Again an eye for the aesthetic is evident in the inclusion referring to Tarshish, which was most probably in Spain and was renowned in ancient times as a source of metals. The material seems to be organized according to geographical groups (Simons, GTTOT 456–57, followed by Zimmerli 71 and Eichrodt 387–88): Mediterranean areas and Asia Minor, vv 12–15; Palestinian regions from south to north, vv 16–17; Syria, vv 18–19; Arabia, vv 20–22; and Mesopotamia, vv 23–24.

V 13 refers to the western (Ionia) and eastern ends of Asia Minor, and v 14 to Armenia according to Hittite and Assyrian parallel sources (cf. Zimmerli 66). Rhodes in v 15 (see Notes) points to an African source for the ivory and ebony rather than an Indian one implied by MT (cf. van Lerberghe, On Trees 44–45). The reference to merchants and many coasts picks up the introduction (v 3), and is eventually to be echoed in the anticlimax of v 35. The reference to Judah and Israel in this cosmopolitan list is intriguing. The existence of the monarchical state of Judah seems to be implied, while that of Israel was evidently no more, and only its territory is cited. Minnith may be the transjordanian place of Judg 11:33, which would be suitable in the context. Wheat, oil and honey were traditional Palestinian products (cf. Deut 8:8; Jer 41:8). The former reference would support an emendation of the unknown גֶּפֶּנֶּם in terms of figs (see Notes).

The second half of the list begins impressively with Damascus, the great center of caravan trade. Assyrian records mention in lists of regional wines Helbon to the north of Damascus and Izal in N.E. Syria. Vv 21–22 refer to various Arabian groups, and v 23 to cities in Mesopotamia. The list’s varied


vol. volume
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
n. note
cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example


**V** Vulgate
cf. confer, compare

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
range of goods and places presents an intricate web of trade relations throughout the ancient world, at
the center of which sat Tyre, powerful and wealthy. This prose supplement has been artistically
concluded in v 25a with a flashback to its opening reference to Tarshish. Here the reference to ships, like
that in v 9b, paves the way for the reversal of v 29.

25b–32a The poem resumes, its implicit reference to cargo having been explained to the reader.
Now, however, its glory, after a short two-line statement, is superseded by a report of the shipwreck.
The key phrase “in the heart of the seas,” as in v 4, refers to the mid-ocean in which the ship of Tyre
proudly sails—and suffers shipwreck. “She who lived by the sea will fall by or into the sea. The means
of her pride becomes the means of her destruction” (Miller, Sin and Judgment 72). The correlation is a
dynamic dramatic expression of reversal. The supplement in v 27 reinforces the reversal by repeating the
rich language of crew (vv 8–10) and cargo (vv 12–22) in a grim context of sinking, and by its own echo
of the key phrase.

In v 28 the poem itself echoes previous terminology in “your sailors,” used in a positive context at v 8
. The neat chiastic grouping of four lines, vv 28–30 (Zimmerli 55, Krantz, Des Schiffes Weg 181)
merges the loud cries of drowning men with those of their groaning colleagues from other ships. The
bitterness of the latter cries is echoed in v 31 near the end of a listing of mourning rites, which culminates
in a dirge. This final dirge is set within the larger dirge of the chapter and encapsulates its message.

32b–36 The content of the dirge, supplied in vv 32b–34, typically moves from past fortune to present
fate. It has been sensitively expanded at two points, to enhance the reversal: v 33, with its echo of terms
from the trading list and its anticipation of vv 35–36a (“kings,” “peoples”), and v 34b with its resumption of
terms relating to crew and cargo. More importantly the supplements develop the parallelism between
vv 25b–32a and 32b–35—already present in v 34a (“wrecked,” as in v 26)—by echoing the language of
v 27 in v 33 (“your great wealth and your wares”) and v 34b (passim). Furthermore, the poem’s own
correlation of fortune and failure, “in the heart of the seas,” is supplemented by a new and similar one.
Heb. יֶבָא “from the seas” in v 33 functions as a foil to the sinister use of the term in v 34. In vv 35–36a
the reaction of others involved in Tyre’s enterprises, now stripped of metaphor and identified in plain
terms, is no longer one of ritual mourning but is heightened to shock and horror. It serves as a
commentary on the certainty and finality of Tyre’s coming doom, as the refrain of v 36b explains.

Explanation

Chap. 27 is a brilliant exercise in communication. Tyre, queen of the sea with her merchant and naval
fleets, and center of an advanced economic, political and artistic culture, was obviously there to stay. Its
fall to the Babylonians was unthinkable. Ezekiel challenges this assumption by recourse to a type of
lateral thinking, the use of analogy, in this case a metaphor. Metaphor can function as a pedagogical tool,
as when the scientific educator describes the atom as a miniature solar system. It “can provide a rational
bridge from the known to the radically unknown, to a changed context of understanding” by providing a
new framework of reference (G. Petrie, Metaphor and Thought 440–441). By speaking of one thing in
terms of another new horizons may be opened up. A “strong metaphor … suggests new categories of
interpretation and hypothesizes new entities, states of affairs and causal relations” (Soskice, Metaphor
and Religious Language 62). The initial material about the construction and crew of this magnificent
ship is meant to prepare for the real point: Tyre is the Titanic, doomed to shipwreck. The poem’s sudden
switch to the motif of shipwreck in vv 25b–26 is eloquent evidence of this intent. The ship metaphor
superimposes the powerful negative notion of shipwreck, especially for those like Ezekiel’s audience
who were landlubbers, having little to do with the sea. A new, emotive factor is introduced, which is able
to dislodge the powerful positive images that Tyre suggested. From this perspective its glory only makes
its fall heavier and more ignominious. A sense of doom is reinforced by clothing the poem in the form of
a fun eral lament.

The redactor seeks to provide an interpretation of the poem’s metaphor. Writing in prose but by no means prosaic, he sensitively exploits the notion of reversal, while anchoring the metaphor in historical realities. He also provides literary continuity and theological depth for the poem. The poem itself does not theologize: it exercises restraint in developing a metaphor within its own dynamic boundaries (cf. Good, Semitics 1 [1970] 89). Yet, as a prophetic dirge, it obviously carries a message in keeping with Ezekiel’s overall ministry at this period. The redactional refrain of v 36b serves to remind the reader that the chapter belongs with chaps. 26 and 28 and so has associations of sin and overweening pride, about which the poem is silent. Moreover, the redactor’s word “fall” or “sink” (יָנָה, vv 27, 34) is deliberately reminiscent of 26:15, 18, in a context of lament over divine judgment. In such ways the role of the poem in Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry could be made explicit. Miller (Sin and Judgment 72) has also noted the greater impact the literary contextualizing of chap. 27 provides: in chap. 26 the judgment of God is described consistently in terms of the sea and the waters, while in chap. 28 the key phrase יָמָה סֹנֵך “in the heart of the sea,” as in chap. 27, correlates fortune with fate in the context of a judgment oracle (28:2, 8). The effect is to give chap. 27 a stronger, more explicit role as a judgment oracle.

Yahweh’s purposes on earth were to be worked out inexorably, and not even Tyre could stand in his way. In opposing Babylon, Tyre stood against Yahweh, and so could not stand. With the certainty of prophetic revelation, the dirge form proclaims its inevitable doom. How are the mighty fallen! Inspired by this chapter, John the Seer was later to proclaim the fall of Rome, “who is seated upon many waters” (Rev 17:1), and the sure demise of its commerce-based empire. Human power, invincible as it seems in any given culture, meets its match in the Lord of history.

Tyre’s Pretensions Shattered and Paradise Lost (28:1–19)

Bibliography


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cf. confer, compare
vol. volume
VT Vetus Testamentum
ALUOS Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society

Translation

1I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2“Human one, tell the ruler of Tyre that the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: Inasmuch as you have displayed a proud attitude, supposing yourself to be a god and to sit on a divine throne there in the middle of the sea, although you are really a human being rather than a god, and yet you have adopted godlike pretensions—

3obviously you are wiser than Daniel and no mystery is too obscure for you! 4You have used your wisdom and insight to get yourself wealth and to acquire silver and gold for your coffers, 5You have used your considerable wisdom to augment your wealth through trading, and your wealth has given you a proud attitude. 6That is why the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: Inasmuch as you have adopted godlike pretensions, 7for that reason I intend to make you the victim of aliens, the most brutal nation in the world. 8They will draw their swords against the beauty created by your
wisdom and they will sully your splendor. They will send you down to the Pit and you will die a violent death, there in the middle of the sea. When your killers confront you, will you persist in your claim to be a god? In the clutches of those who wound you, you will be a human being rather than a god. You will die the death of the uncircumcised at the hands of aliens. I have given my word hereto. So runs the message of the Lord Yahweh."

I received the following communication from Yahweh: "Human one, raise a dirge over the king of Tyre, informing him that the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: You were once a seal of intricate design, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty.

You wore precious stones of every kind—sard, topaz, moonstone(?), gold topaz, carnelian, jasper, lapis lazuli, garnet and emerald—and the mounts and settings you wore were made of gold and had been fashioned on the day you were created. With a winged(?) guardian I set you.

7.b. The expression is an unusual one. Joüon, Bib 10 (1929) 307, proposed yr p “fruit (of your wisdom)” for yp y “beauty” or that yp y is a false anticipation of û t [ p y “your splendor” later. The phrase presumably means “the beautiful buildings and artifacts created by your wise skills,” which is culturally appropriate.

8.a. lit. “die the death of the slain.”; See Comment.

9.a. MT û gr h is defectively written for û yr h “your killers,” for which there is much Heb. and versional evidence (cf. BHS).

9.b. MT û yl j m “those who profane you” is taken by most as a mis pointing for û yl j on “those who wound you” (= MS Syr. Vg Tg.), influenced by the verb in v 7.

12.a. MT µ t ej “sealing, sealer” (= “completing, completer”? cf. NEB “you set the seal on perfection,” following Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 159) is generally revocalized with the ancient versions and a Heb. variant tradition to µ t Wj “seal.” Ehrlich (Randglossen 107), comparing Arab. cognate terms, took MT as a byform of µ t W “seal.”

12.b. The ancient variant t ymb t “construction, pattern” (cf. BHS) is less likely. Driver, Bib 35 (1954) 158–59, helpfully compared with Akk. taknû, taknitu “careful preparation, correctness.”

13.a. Either the jewels were worn or they feature in the topography. The echo of jewels worn by the high priest suggests the former. In that case û t k s m means “your covering” in the sense of a garment (= Vg operimentum “covering”; LXX “you bound on”; Syr. “you girded yourself with”); otherwise it signifies a protective structure or enclosure (cf. §).

13.b. The identification of the stones is by no means certain or generally agreed, apart from the first, second, sixth, seventh and ninth terms. In the rest of the cases the detailed researches of Quiring, Sudhofs Archiv 38 (1954) 193–213, have been followed. Other treatments have been undertaken by Harris, ALUOS 4 (1962/63) 49–83, and by Garber and Funk, IDB, vol. 2, 900a–903b.

13.c. These two nouns are of uncertain meaning. A possibility for the second is metal cavities or setting for jewels: cf. b q h “bore out” and Vg foramina “holes” (cf. BDB 666a; Driver JTS 45 [1944] 14). If so, the earlier term has a similar sense (Cornill 360).

13.d. Heb. û b is literally “in/on/with you.” Some delete as a dittothraph of û y b (q m) (cf. BHS).

13.e. Heb. b h zw “and gold” is to be taken with v 13b (BHS).

13.f. LXX* Syr. lack wnnk “they had been prepared,” but it may function as a stylistic echo of t ynk t “intricate design” in v 12.
On God’s sacred™ mountain you lived, and amidst blazing gems you walked about. 15 Your conduct was blameless from the day you were created until wrongdoing was discovered in you. 16 Your extensive trading filled your habitat with violence and you committed sin. So I removed you in your sullied state from the divine mountain, and the guardian™ cherub banished you from the

14.a. MT has Ṣytt n ṣw… T b “you (were) … and I put you.” If v 14a were an unpointed text, an interpretation - t a, “with,” as LXX Syr. took it, would be a natural one. In the imagery the king represents the first man (cf. the stem Ṣ f b “create” used in vv 13, 15) in a tradition in which he was differentiated from the cherub, as in Gen 2–3. In ancient Near Eastern culture the cherub also has a subservient role. The form T b, usually fem., is rare for the masc. sg pronoun (Num 11:15; Deut 5:24; cf. GKC 32g). MT subsequently prefixed the conjunction to the verb, which should be taken with v 14a, as in LXX Syr.. The construction of clauses in v 14, in which the verb is put last in each case, favors this alignment (Yaron, ASTI 3 [1964] 31).

14.b. Heb. j µm is textually and semantically problematic. It may mean “anointing” (j µm “anoint”; thus Q Syr.), in which case Wevers’ suggestion (217) that it is a gloss on Ṣ k Ṣ h, relating it to Ṣ Ṣ “anoint,” is worth considering. Aram. j µm “measure, extend” underlies S Vg: this expedient yields a meaning “full-sized, colossal,” like the Akk. kurubu guarding entrances to Mesopotamian palaces (Driver, JTS 41 [1940] 169–70) or “with outstretched wings” (Dahood, Mélanges E. Tisserant, vol. 1, 95). The last interpretation accords with the dominant ancient Near Eastern tradition of winged sphinxes (cf. de Vaux, Mélanges de l’Université Saint Joseph 3 [1960/61] 98–113).

14.c. Heb. Ṣ k Ṣ h is also lacking in LXX*, but its probable corrupted representation in v 16 may well indicate that it was once represented here. The lack of the article with the accompanying noun seems almost to take it as a name. The verb, meaning “cover,” is used of the cherubim covering the ark at Exod 25:20, etc, and here it may have the sense “protect,” like the hiph in Pss 5:12(11); 91:4.


14.e. Heb. Ṣ d q “holiness” has often been deleted as a variant of Ṣ yh a “God” (e.g., Ehrlich, Randglossen 109; BHS) especially as it is not represented in v 16. The clause does correspond well in length to the parallel statement in v 13a, Ṣ yh a A q B “you were in Eden, God’s garden,” in relation to which it may have a resumptive role.

16.a. Heb. Ṣ Ṣ m, vocalized in MT as a pl. “they filled,” perhaps under Aram. influence seems to stand for Ṣ Ṣ m, read by a few MSS: cf. W m for Ṣ Ṣ m in IQIsª at Isa 14:21 (R. Meyer, TLZ 75 [1950] 721–22). It appears to take the subj as pl. in sense: “those in your midst” (Zimmerli 86). Probably it should be repointed as inf abs || Ṣ m (= Ṣ Ṣ m, cf. GKC 75n, aa, nn–rr) “(your midst) was full of,” used as a finite verb (cf. Van Dijk, Ezekiel’s Prophecy 121).

16.b. lit. “your midst”: the king appears to represent the city-state, and the perspective varies.

16.c. Heb. Ṣ m “from” has a pregnant force which by implication lends action to the verb (cf. GKC 119z).

16.d. Whether LXX* omitted Ṣ k Ṣ h “protected” (BHS) is disputed. Probably the reading of MS 967 t Ṣ etc., supported by an OL MS (sech), corrupted from a transliteration, is authentic (Wevers, TRu 22 [1954] 124; Zimmerli 86).
habitat of the blazing gems. 17 Your beauty gave you a proud attitude. With your splendor in mind, you used your wisdom perversely. So I threw you down to the ground and exposed you to the gloating gaze of other kings. 18 Your serious wrongdoing involved in your wicked trading led you to sully your sacred places. So I made fire issue from your habitat and it consumed you. I turned you into ashes before the gaze of all who saw you. 19 All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you. You have become a victim of terror and will be no more for ever.”

Notes
2.a. For the formulaic ynd a “Lord” here and in vv 6, 10, 12 see the note on 20:3.
2.b. Not “El”: see Zimmerli 77–78.
2.c. For the syntax of v 2bb see Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 158.
3.b. LXX hσp of Ωpresupposes a misreading of µw s Al k “every mystery” not as µymk “wise” (BHS and most) but as if derived from the Aram. stem k $ “be wise.”
3.c. The suffix is evidently datival (cf. GKC 117x). The form and meaning of the verb are uncertain. There appear to be two stems µm|$ meaning “be compared with” (31:8; cf. KB 715b) and “cover, darken” (Lam 4:1; cf. HALAT 800b, 801a). Driver, Bib 19 (1938) 177, followed the latter.

16.e. MT vocalized as “and I banished you” and took the adjacent noun phrase as vocative. This construction is consistent with and dependent on MT’s interpretation of v 14a. LXX seems to represent an earlier tradition in implying òr B bαv and he banished you” with the cherub as subj. The Gr. rendering hγage “brought” is not unparalleled in the Gr. OT for ò B bαv : see my The Greek Chronicles, vol. 1, 126. A Heb. variant õ y dvw (BHK; cf. Zimmerli 86) is not implied. The resultant Heb. form, a pf with weak waw after a pf or consec impf., accords with other cases in Ezek: cf. 22:29; 25:12; 37:10; 40:24 (cf. B. Johnson, Hebräisches Perfekt und Imperfekt 78–81). The preceding 1st person verb and the unusual construction helped to cause confusion in MT.

18.a. In place of the pl. form in MT a sg is preferable, with much support within the Heb. tradition: see BHS and Zimmerli 86.
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
cf. confer, compare
VT Vetus Testamentum
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
lexicographical option, but, deducing from cognate use of the stem that the verb is intransitive, changed slightly to a poel sg ò m\[m\] (\(=\NEB\) [Brockington, Hebrew Text 229] “is too dark for you”).

7.a. For the superlative expression see GKC 133k.

7.b. The expression is an unusual one. Joüon, Bib 10 (1929) 307, proposed \(\mathcal{y} \mathcal{p} \mathcal{p}\) “fruit (of your wisdom)” for \(\mathcal{y} \mathcal{p} \mathcal{y}\) “beauty” or that \(\mathcal{y} \mathcal{p} \mathcal{y}\) is a false anticipation of \(\mathcal{u} \mathcal{t} \mathcal{p}\) “your splendor” later. The phrase presumably means “the beautiful buildings and artifacts created by your wise skills,” which is culturally appropriate.

8.a. lit. “die the death of the slain.”; See Comment.

9.a. MT \(\mathcal{u} \mathcal{g} \mathcal{r} \mathcal{h}\) is defectively written for \(\mathcal{u} \mathcal{y} \mathcal{r} \mathcal{h}\) “your killers,” for which there is much Heb. and versional evidence (cf. BHS).

9.b. MT \(\mathcal{u} \mathcal{y} \mathcal{l} \mathcal{i}\) “those who profane you” is taken by most as a mis pointing for \(\mathcal{u} \mathcal{y} \mathcal{l} \mathcal{i}\) “those who wound you” (\(=\MS\Sy\Vg\Tg\)) influenced by the verb in v 7.

12.a. MT \(\mathcal{u} \mathcal{t} \mathcal{i} \mathcal{j}\) “sealing, sealer” (\(=\) “completing, completer”? cf. NEB “you set the seal on perfection,” following Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 159) is generally revocalized with the ancient versions and a Heb. variant tradition to \(\mathcal{u} \mathcal{t} \mathcal{i} \mathcal{j}\) “seal.” Ehrlich (Randglossen 107), comparing Arab. cognate terms, took

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**cf. confer**, compare


**Bib Biblica**

sg singular or under

**NEB** The New English Bible


**Bib Biblica**

lit. literally

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**Heb. Hebrew**

**cf. confer**, compare


**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**MS Monograph Series or Manuscript**

**Syr.** Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

**Vg Latin Vulgate** (as published in Weber’s edition)

**Tg. Targum**

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**cf. confer**, compare

**NEB** The New English Bible

**Bib Biblica**

**Heb. Hebrew**

**Arab. Arabic**
MT as a byform of ꞌὕ ṭ ṭ̣̱ “seal.”


12.c. LXX omitted, perhaps as inappropriate for a seal. See Comment.

13.a. Either the jewels were worn or they feature in the topography. The echo of jewels worn by the high priest suggests the former. In that case ꞌו ㎢ ṭ means “your covering” in the sense of a garment (= Vg operimentum “covering”; LXX “you bound on”; Syr. “you girded yourself with”); otherwise it signifies a protective structure or enclosure (cf. 5).

13.b. The identification of the stones is by no means certain or generally agreed, apart from the first, second, sixth, seventh and ninth terms. In the rest of the cases the detailed researches of Quiring, Sudhofs Archiv 38 (1954) 193–213, have been followed. Other treatments have been undertaken by Harris, ALUOS 4 (1962/63) 49–83, and by Garber and Funk, IDB, vol. 2, 900a–903b.

13.c. These two nouns are of uncertain meaning. A possibility for the second is metal cavities or setting for jewels: cf. ꞌב ٷ ណ “bore out” and Vg foramina “holes” (cf. BDB 666a; Driver JTS 45 [1944] 14). If so, the earlier term has a similar sense (Cornill 360).

13.d. Heb. ꞌו is literally “in/on/with you.” Some delete as a dittograph of ꞌיו (Ǫ ណ) (cf. BHS).

13.e. Heb. ꞌו .StatusOK “and gold” is to be taken with v 13b (BHS).

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cf. confer, compare
ALUOS Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society
vol. volume
cf. confer, compare
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
cf. confer, compare
JTS Journal of Theological Studies
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
13.f. LXX* Syr. lack ὄψιν “they had been prepared,” but it may function as a stylistic echo of τὸ ἐπὶ τὸ “intricate design” in v 12.

14.a. MT has בְּכָל נֶפֶשׁ יָדַע אֲנַהַיָּר “you (were) … and I put you.” If v 14a were an unpointed text, an interpretation - כָּל אָ, “with,” as LXX Syr. took it, would be a natural one. In the imagery the king represents the first man (cf. the stem שָׁם “create” used in vv 13, 15) in a tradition in which he was differentiated from the cherub, as in Gen 2–3. In ancient Near Eastern culture the cherub also has a subservient role. The form כָּל, usually fem., is rare for the masc. sg pronoun (Num 11:15; Deut 5:24; cf. GKC 32g). MT subsequently prefixed the conjunction to the verb, which should be taken with v 14a, as in LXX Syr.. The construction of clauses in v 14, in which the verb is put last in each case, favors this alignment (Yaron, ASTI 3 [1964] 31).

14.b. Heb. יָּסְבִי is textually and semantically problematic. It is lacking in LXX*. It may mean “anointing” (יָּסְבִי “anoint”; thus Q Syr.), in which case Wevers’ suggestion (217) that it is a gloss on יָּסְבִי, relating it to יָּסְבִי “anoint,” is worth considering. Aram. יָּסְבִי “measure, extend” underlies S Vg: this expedient yields a meaning “full-sized, colossal,” like the Akk. kurubu guarding entrances to Mesopotamian palaces (Driver, JTS 41 [1940] 169–70) or “with outstretched wings” (Dahood, Mélanges E. Tisserant, vol. 1, 95). The last interpretation accords with the dominant ancient Near

Heb. Hebrew
BHS Bibliia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare
fem. feminine
masc. masculine
sg singular or under
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Aram. Aramaic
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Akk. Akkadian
JTS Journal of Theological Studies
vol. volume

14.c. **Heb. ûk vs h** is also lacking in LXX*, but its probable corrupted representation in v 16 may well indicate that it was once represented here. The lack of the article with the accompanying noun seems almost to take it as a name. The verb, meaning “cover,” is used of the cherubim covering the ark at Exod 25:20, etc, and here it may have the sense “protect,” like the hiph in Pss 5:12(11); 91:4.


14.e. **Heb. wðq “holiness”** has often been deleted as a variant of µyh a “God” (e.g., Ehrlich, Randglossen 109; *BHS*) especially as it is not represented in v 16. The clause does correspond well in length to the parallel statement in v 13aa, tyyh µyh a A÷g ÷r “you were in Eden, God’s garden,” in relation to which it may have a resumptive role.

16.a. **Heb. wlm, vocalized in MT as a pl. “they filled,” perhaps under Aram. influence seems to stand for walm, read by a few MSS: cf. wlm for walm in IQIsa at Isa 14:21 (R. Meyer, *TLZ* 75 [1950] 721–22). It appears to take the subj as pl. in sense: “those in your midst” (Zimmerli 86). Probably it should be repointed as inf abs m (= a m, cf. *GKC* 75n, aa, mn–rr) “(your midst) was full of,” used as

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**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

*14.a. MT has ûyttnw...t “you (were) … and I put you.” If v 14a were an unpointed text, an interpretation - t ã, “with,” as LXX Syr. took it, would be a natural one. In the imagery the king represents the first man (cf. the stem ã “create” used in vv 13, 15) in a tradition in which he was differentiated from the cherub, as in Gen 2–3. In ancient Near Eastern culture the cherub also has a subservient role. The form Ñ, usually fem., is rare for the masc. sg pronoun (Num 11:15; Deut 5:24; cf. *GKC* 32g). MT subsequently prefixed the conjunction to the verb, which should be taken with v 14a, as in LXX Syr.. The construction of clauses in v 14, in which the verb is put last in each case, favors this alignment (Yaron, *ASTI* 3 [1964] 31).

** Heb. Hebrew**

e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example

*BHS* Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

** Heb. Hebrew**

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

pl. plate or plural

MSS manuscript(s)

cf. confer, compare

**TLZ** Theologische Literaturzeitung

subj subject/subjective

pl. plate or plural

inf infinitive

abs absolute (nouns)

cf. confer, compare
a finite verb (cf. Van Dijk, *Ezekiel’s Prophecy* 121).

16.b. lit. “your midst”: the king appears to represent the city-state, and the perspective varies.

16.c. Heb. 뢸 “from” has a pregnant force which by implication lends action to the verb (cf. *GKC* 119z).

16.d. Whether LXX* omitted 우קشد “protected” (*BHS*) is disputed. Probably the reading of MS 967 테כס, supported by an OL MS (*sech*), corrupted from a transliteration, is authentic (Wevers, *TRu* 22 [1954] 124; Zimmerli 86).

16.e. MT vocalized as “and I banished you” and took the adjacent noun phrase as vocative. This construction is consistent with and dependent on MT’s interpretation of v 14a. LXX seems to represent an earlier tradition in implying ויבאו “and he banished you” with the cherub as subj. The Gr. rendering δῆλον “brought” is not unparalleled in the Gr. OT for פַּרְעַה: see my *The Greek Chronicles*, vol. 1, 126. A Heb. variant 우ל יבָא חָי (BHK; cf. Zimmerli 86) is not implied. The resultant Heb. form, a pf with weak מ after a pf or consec impf., accords with other cases in Ezek: cf. 22:29; 25:12; 37:10; 40:24 (cf. B.

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cf. confer, compare
lit. literally
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
OL Old Latin
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
*TRu* Theologische Rundschau
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
subj subject/subjective
Gr. Greek
Gr. Greek
OT Old Testament
vol. volume
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
pf perfect
pf perfect
Johnson, *Hebräisches Perfekt und Imperfekt* 78–81). The preceding 1st person verb and the unusual construction helped to cause confusion in MT.

18.a. In place of the pl. form in MT a sg is preferable, with much support within the Heb. tradition: see *BHS* and Zimmerli 86.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

Vv 1–19 fall into two prophetic units, vv 1–10 and 11–19, as the separate message reception formulas in vv 1, 11 and the concluding messenger formula in v 10 reveal. However, they comprise a single redactional piece, in the light of the refrain of v 19b, which repeats the refrains of 26:21 and 27:36b. The first of the combined units is a judgment oracle. It characteristically has two parts, presenting an accusation and a pronouncement of punishment that features divine intervention and its results, and is confirmed by a formula of asseveration (v 10b). The two parts are tightly coordinated by logical statements of cause and consequence (vv 2ab–b, 6–10), with the cause reiterated at the beginning of the statement of consequence (v 6b; cf. 22:19). However, the strict coordination is interrupted by a further statement of accusation introduced by הָנֵּיה (v 3–5). This expansion of the element of accusation has been regarded as redactional (see Zimmerli 75–76, 79–80; Wevers 213; Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen* 159) and linked with a later desire to import the motif of wisdom. Then the resumptive recapitulation of the basic accusation was needed, evidence of which has been found in the variants לְבֵל / לְבּּלַת at a “your heart” at v 2b and v 6b. However, the characteristic of rhetorical criticism tells another story. Stylistic variation occurs in יָנָה | a יָנָה | יָה | a “I am a god” (vv 2, 9) and יָט | יָט | יָט | “death” in vv 8,10), and the variants לְבֵל and לְבּּלַת may be similarly explained. The oracle has an overall inclusion in the rejected divine claim of vv 2 and 9, while the second part has its own inclusion in the reference to מָיֶר ז “aliens” in vv 7 and 10 (cf. Parunak, *Structural Studies* 376, who plausibly envisages a chiastic structure for vv 7–10 [ABC/CBA], with the motifs of aliens and death surrounding a claim to deity that is denied). An inclusion for the first part may be sought and found in the proud heart of vv 2 and 5 (cf. Parunak, *Structural Studies* 374). Moreover, there appears to be a wordplay running through the piece: the accusation contains a threefold (לְבֵל) יָל “(your) wealth” in vv 4–5, and the pronouncement of punishment uses forms of לָל | לָל | לָל | “and they will sully,” v 7; ל | ל | מ “slain,” v 8; and לְבֵל | מ | מ “those who wound you,” v 9). Vv 3–5 fit well into this rhetorical complex. A further stylistic

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consec consecutive
impf. imperfect
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
pl. plate or plural
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sg singular or under
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
feature is the coordination of present fortune and future fate in the ironic repetition of μυμυ b l b “in the heart of the seas” in vv 2 and 8 (Miller, Sin and Judgment 71–72). Moreover, in vv 6–10 a divine promise to intervene (v 7a) and a divine asseveration (v10b) frame a series of human actions in vv 7b–10a (Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 161).

The second unit, vv 12–19, is described as a dirge. Unlike other prophetic laments, it seems to be composed in rhythmic prose rather than in poetry. Zimmerli’s attempts to restore a lament meter (3 + 2) and strophes, as well as his deletions of what does not conform (87–89), are questionable. The composition does retain the contrast of then and now typical of the dirge, and the sinister displacement of the present into the past and of future ruin as an accomplished fact. Yet the form is somewhat overwhelmed by the imagery it is made to carry (Jahnow, Leichenlied 228). There is an emphatic triple mention of an intermediate stage, the committing of wrong (vv 15b–16a, 17a, 18a). The form functions therefore as a sophisticated kind of judgment oracle. A series of stylistic repetitions reinforces the message. By use of the same verb divine privilege (ûyt Đ n “I set you,” v 14) turns into divine reprisal (ûyt Đ n “I set you,” v 17; ûr l a w “and I made you,” v 18). The mountain of God features as a place of privilege in relation to access and expulsion (vv 13, 16); so does ðq ð “fire from your midst,” v 18). The guardian cherub features in the idyllic stage and in its reversal (vv 14, 16), while the holy setting (ðq “holiness”) of v 14 is shattered by the profanation of v 18 (ûy ðq “your sanctuaries”).

The chronological setting of both oracles was evidently the long siege of Tyre, while the Babylonians were endeavoring to subdue the island fortress. The second oracle seems consciously to echo the first in places, a phenomenon that must have encouraged its redactional combination. The monarch’s proud heart features in vv 2, 4, 17; his beauty in vv 7, 12, 17; his splendor (û Łp y) in vv 7, 17; his wisdom in vv 4, 5, 7, 17; and his trading in vv 5, 16, 18. Gold finds a place in both pieces (vv 4, 13).

Comment

1–2 The target of the judgment oracle is the ruler of Tyre, Ethbaal II. His claims centered in the impregnability of his island city and the survival of his power. These claims were doubtless echoed by or attributed to him by Tyrian exiles known to Ezekiel and his Jewish compatriots in Babylonia (cf. Katzenstein, History of Tyre 307). For Ezekiel they constituted a challenge to God and his ongoing purposes, which were bound up with the success of Babylonian interests. The self-confidence of the king, who functions also as a symbolic figure for the city-state of Tyre, was an attitude of proud defiance against Yahweh as well as against Nebuchadnezzar. The claim to divinity is a stronger expression of Isaiah’s characterization of Judah’s allies in an earlier confrontation between Mesopotamia and the west: “The Egyptians are men and not God” (Isa 31:3). Whether an ancient Near Eastern concept of divine kingship has contributed to the imagery (cf. Zimmerli 78; Eichrodt 390) is by no means certain.

3–5 The note of excess is sounded now in a claim (h nh “behold” has an ironic force, “obviously ”) to wisdom greater than that of most men. Daniel, as in 14:14, 20, functions as a figure from remote antiquity, who appears in Ugaritic literature, in the Aqhat epic (esp. ANET 153–54a), as a ruler who

cf. confer, compare

practiced magical wisdom (see Day, *VT* 30 [1980] 174–84). The pride of the Tyrian king is now linked with his commercial wealth, which in his own eyes makes him more than a match for Nebuchadnezzar.

6–10 The ruler has reckoned without Yahweh. His brazen challenge was to find a reprisal in Yahweh’s punishment, to be meted by cruel “aliens,” who for the reader, as for Ezekiel’s hearers, stand for the Babylonian army (cf. 26:7). It would patently disprove Ethbaal’s quasi-divine claims upon life and power by establishing his mere humanity—in death. Not only would the external evidences of human power be attacked, but its very heart, life itself, would pass away. The place where Tyre ruled the waves in commercial power would become the place of its downfall. This ironic reversal would be the final proof of the falsity of present claims. The event would overtake Tyre and its ruler with an unanswerable counter argument. As to the reality of such a future event, Ezekiel pledges God’s own promise. In vv 8 and 10 an ignominious death is in view. Heb. יָלָה “slain” functions in the context as shorthand for יָלָה יָעַב “slain by the sword,” an idiom for violent death whose victims forfeited proper burial and a normal resting place in Sheol (cf. Eissfeldt, *Studies in Prophecy* 81 n. 22), as did those who died uncircumcised (see 31:17, 18 and Comment).

11–14 On another occasion Ezekiel delivered a prophetic lament which with eloquent finality attested the reality of Tyre’s downfall by projecting it into the past. Unfortunately the passage leaves the reader uncertain as to how to interpret some of its details. Basically it makes use of a version of the garden of Eden story that appears in Gen 2–3. The description of the garden as “the garden of God” accords with 31:8–9 and is comparable with the phrase “garden of Yahweh” in Gen 13:10 and Isa 51:3. Yet this version knows nothing of the serpent or the first woman; it credits the first man with wisdom and adorns him in bejeweled clothing and apparently leaves him dead (cf. May, *Israel's Prophetic Heritage* 168; McKenzie, *JBL* 75 [1956] 326). However, it does speak of the garden of Eden and expulsion from it, of moral perfection before a fall and of one cherub who is the agent of expulsion (cf. further Yaron, *ASTI* 3 [1964] 154). To what extent Ezekiel is retelling an oral tradition known to him we cannot know. He obviously adapts the tradition to the Tyrian situation (cf. Fohrer 162), but whether to this end he created other elements that do not belong to the Adam and Eve story in Genesis and/or whether he is fusing different creation myths known to him is tantalizingly uncertain (cf. Williams, *BTB* 6 [1976] 49–61, who seems, however, to go too far in seeing merely Ezekiel’s imagination at work).

Does the first-man imagery begin with v 12b or with v 13? Is the seal or signet ring simply an object of artistic beauty or does it consciously have a royal reference, as in Jer 22:24; Hag 2:23? Does it characterize the king of Tyre as Yahweh’s vassal or instrument of authority? And is kingship already associated with the traditional story used by Ezekiel (cf. e.g., Ps 8:6[5]b)? The metal settings, if such

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*VT* Vetus Testamentum  
*Heb.* Hebrew  
*n.* note  
*JBL* Journal of Biblical Literature  
*ASTI* Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute  
*BTB* Biblical Theology Bulletin  
*e.g.* exempli gratia, for example
they are, in v 13b seem to echo the beautiful seal (תַּנַּקְתָּא "intricate design," v 12, וְהָנָקָה "were prepared, " v 13). The reference to wisdom seems to allude to the king rather than to the seal: it is to be resumed in the perversion of his wisdom at v 17. A wisdom motif is part of the creation and first man traditions in the Old Testament, e.g., in Job 15:7–8 (Habel, Concordia Theological Monthly 38 [1967] 519).

The role of the precious stones in v 13 is not clear. Are they worn by the king or do they feature in his topographical environment, as vv 14b and 16b more naturally suggest, if they are the equivalent of the fiery stones (שָׁרָא יִנְבִּיד אֶל אֱלֹהִים) mentioned there? Perhaps they are not meant to be the same, and we are to envisage a more complex picture involving stones of two kinds (cf. Yaron, ASTI 3 [1964] 38–39). The listing of nine jewels in a gold setting at v 13 is evidently borrowed from the catalog of twelve jewels mounted in gold which were attached to the high priest’s breast piece according to Exod 28:17–20; 39:10–12. The order is slightly different. The LXX reinforces the reference by listing all twelve stones. The list has been regarded as redactional (e.g., Zimmerli 82; Wevers 217), although, if so, it is valuable early evidence of interpretation of the message. However, the frequent use of the language of P by Ezekiel (cf. here the stem אֲבָרך “create” in vv 13, 15) may indicate that the prophet borrowed the list (Gowan, When Man Becomes God 83) in order to express the privilege of wealth with which the king was endowed as Yahweh’s creature and perhaps to indicate the role of the king of Tyre as priest-king, in line with the religious references elsewhere in the passage. The difference in the order and number of gems may indicate inexact reminiscence of a written text.

A threefold chain of divinely given endowments commences with a reference to the cherub or attendant sphinx-like creature of mixed animal and human appearance. In the second link of the chain the reference to the holy mountain of God (or the gods) complicates the picture. It sounds like Mount Zaphon in N. Syria, in Ugaritic mythology the abode of the gods, rather than a place for human habitation. It is likely that its polemical transfer to the sanctuary of Zion (cf. Ps 48:3[2]) was in Ezekiel’s mind, and that he projected it onto Tyre, where the king traditionally was also a priest (cf. v 18; cf. Bogaert, Homo Religiosus 9 [1983] 139, who, however, believes that an oracle originally relating to Jerusalem has been amplified and reapplied to Tyre). Widengren usefully compared יָדוֹת בַּר נְבוֹת “in all my holy mountain” at Isa 11:9 in a description of the return of Paradise (Ascension of the Apostle 97).

The fiery stones have been compared with a divine garden in the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh epic, in which the fruit and leaves of the trees took the form of jewels (ANET 89), but other suggestions are not lacking (cf. Zimmerli 93).

15–19 The narrative takes a sinister turn, with a willful moral decline. Vv 16–18 present an emphatic threefold account of human sin and divine punishment. In each case a double sin meets a double reprisal.
In the reference to commerce (vv 16, 18) contemporary reality mingles with the tradition. Commerce gave rise to oppression and to the arrogance (cf. vv 2, 5) that is the stepchild of privilege, and to perverse use of the gift of wisdom. The religious allusion in v 18a is not clear: it may be a reference to the pagan religion of the priest-king.

The punishment first keeps to the story line, expulsion from the garden—the place of privilege—at the hands of Yahweh and the attendant cherub. The ensuing descriptions of retribution speak more generally of social humiliation and of Yahweh’s triggering the providential fate inherent in the human situation, although in the latter case the fiery stones appear to put their fire to new use (cf. v 14b), which may be linked with the “flaming sword” of Gen 3:24. In v 19a the motif of shock resumes a note struck in the two previous chapters (26:16; 27:35). As the refrain of v 19b implies, Tyre’s fate was sealed.

The application of vv 11–19 to Satan by third and fourth century A.D. Church Fathers, Tertullian, Origen, John Cassian, Cyril of Jerusalem and Jerome, and thence in some modern popular conservative expositions, is based on MT’s equation of the king and cherub and on comparison with Isa 14:12–15. It is a case of exegeting an element of Christian belief by means of Scripture and so endeavoring to provide it with extrabiblical warrant and to fit the passage into the framework of the Christian faith. However, it is guilty of detaching the passage from its literary setting (Ellison 108–9).

Explanation

Ezekiel’s necessary task was to counter a mood of optimism among the Jewish exiles. Stunned as they were at Jerusalem’s fall, they were evidently clutching at a straw offered to them by their fellow exiles from Tyre. With a shift of confidence, they imagined that Tyre’s resistance to the besieging Babylonians might mean a turning of the tide for them. The prophet reacts to this chauvinist reading of current affairs with a divine no. Yahweh was working in a more radical way. The old order had to go completely before a new day of salvation and blessing could dawn. Vv 2–10 and 12–19, rhetorically addressed to one termed Tyre’s ruler and king, respectively, are two striking attempts to communicate this political and theological truth.

The first puts Tyre firmly in its place as essentially a human, and therefore weak, entity whose commercial affluence had gone to its head and whose efforts at resistance were perilously tantamount to pretensions of divine power. Such lay only with Yahweh and with those whom he chose as his agents. Tyre was guilty of hubris, and in reprisal had to be horribly struck down. The prophet’s coloring of the political map with these theological hues comes over with compelling persuasiveness. It is emotionally reinforced by wordplay, a technique that exerted much influence on the Hebrew ear. Tyre’s wealth (לִי) had in it the seeds of profanation, wounding and slaying (לָּיָהָה). Tyre’s sense of security grounded in economic power and natural resources was to be rudely shattered by political events controlled by Yahweh himself.

The second message is much more dramatic. Rather like the ship metaphor of chap. 27, it superimposes negative imagery of ruined grandeur on Tyre’s cultural success and self-confidence. Despite regrettable difficulties of interpretation in so many of its details, the general picture of Paradise lost shines through clearly. Tyre was not self-made, but as a created entity owed its prosperity and glory to divine endowment. Yet privilege had not been matched with moral responsibility. “Violence,” ever a besetting sin in the prophetic vocabulary, had accompanied its rise to power. The tragic truth was

*cf. confer, compare

*cf. confer, compare

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
that Tyre’s wrongdoing contained the seeds of its own destruction, which Yahweh’s intervention would encourage to germinate and grow into a baneful harvest. Three times it is stressed that moral failure must result in loss of fortune and in subjection to a terrible fate. Moreover, there is a religious theme that seems to run through the oracle. The monarch in his role as priest-king is evidently accused of misrepresenting true religion, despite the strong religious basis of his rule.

Ezekiel had two perceptions of reality, whereas his fellow exiles had only one. With prophetic insight and boldness he was able to judge one perception by the standards of the other, and to find it wanting. In a radical reinterpretation of current affairs he was enabled to grasp that the most solid and settled expression of human power was ephemeral, if it took issue with the moral and providential will of God. He was one with Paul the apostle: “We look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Cor 4:18). Luke was aware of Ezekiel’s message: by coloring the narrative of Acts 12:20–23 with tints derived from the palette of Ezekiel 28:2–10, if not 2–19 (cf. Strom, NTS 32 [1986] 289–92), he used the death of Herod to affirm the triumph of God’s moral will in the interests of his covenant people.

### Sidon’s Fate and Judah’s Fortune (28:20–26)

#### Bibliography


#### Translation

20 I received the following communication from Yahweh:

21 “Human one, look in the direction of Sidon and prophesy against it, informing it that the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: I am your adversary, Sidon, and I will reveal my glory within you. People will realize that I am Yahweh when I carry out acts of judgment against it and reveal my holy power therein. I will send against it plague and bloodshed in its streets, and the slain will fall within it, victims of the sword.

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**Note:**

- **20.a.** For the formulaic ynda “Lord,” here and in v 25, see the note on 20:3.
- **20.b.** LXX has a 2nd sg verb here and 2nd fem. pronouns through v 23a, inferior readings that exhibit contextual assimilation.
- **23.a.** MT p ∥ p “and … will fall,” read by a few MSS. The false doubling was occasioned by the following p (Cornill 363).
- **23.b.** The proposal to read b ṭ j W “and the sword” for b ṭ j b “by the sword” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 110; cf. BHK) produces a smooth circumstantial clause. The phrasing of 32:22b, etc, supports the text.
raised on all sides against it. The people will realize that I am Yahweh. No longer will the community of Israel feel briers tearing at them or thorns harming them, created by all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. Thus they will come to appreciate that I am Yahweh.”

The message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: “When I gather the community of Israel from the peoples in whose territory they are scattered, I will reveal my holiness among them in the sight of all other nations. Then they will live in their country, which I gave to my servant Jacob. In it they will live securely, building houses and planting vineyards. They will live in security, once I have carried out acts of judgment on all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. Thus they will come to appreciate that I am Yahweh their God.”

Notes

22.a. For the formulaic ynd a “Lord,” here and in v 25, see the note on 20:3.

22.b. LXX has a 2nd sg verb here and 2nd fem. pronouns through v 23a, inferior readings that exhibit contextual assimilation.

23.a. MT  pó pənî “and … will fall,” read by a few MSS. The false doubling was occasioned by the following  pó lll (Cornill 363).

23.b. The proposal to read br j W “by the sword” for br j b “and the sword” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 110; cf. BHK) produces a smooth circumstantial clause. The phrasing of 32:22b, etc, supports the text.

24.a. MT prefices with ynd a “Lord,” in violation of formulaic usage in Ezek (cf. Zimmerli 556): it is to be omitted with a few masoretic witnesses (cf. BHS).

25.a. The syntax of the clauses is uncertain: the main clause may begin with v 25b or even with v 26b b.

Form/Structure/Setting

a 24.a. MT prefices with ynd a “Lord,” in violation of formulaic usage in Ezek (cf. Zimmerli 556): it is to be omitted with a few masoretic witnesses (cf. BHS).
a 25.a. The syntax of the clauses is uncertain: the main clause may begin with v 25b or even with v 26b b.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

sg singular or under
fem. feminine

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MSS manuscript(s)
cf. confer, compare
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cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgentensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
This passage is demarcated from the foregoing by its own message reception formula. Although it is capable of being divided into coherent smaller units, it is marked by an ongoing movement from unit to unit. Its flow eddies from bank to bank, as it were, with a contrasting mode, before it pushes forward in steady spate. It betrays consciousness of earlier material and gives the impression of being a literary tailpiece, although the widely held notion that it was added to bring the number of nations up to seven (e.g., Eichrodt 396) has little to commend it.

In form this epilogue consists of a collection of proof sayings. The recognition formula occurs four times, but the first two cases (vv 22b, 23b) belong together after a double statement of divine intervention; the third is set in a supplementary sentence (v 24b), while the fourth concludes its own oracle (v 26b). The two initial messenger formulas in vv 22 and 25 reinforce the impression of a two-part structuring. First, an oracle of judgment against Sidon is introduced by an address to the prophet to confront Sidon rhetorically and to deliver the oracle. It contains no specific accusation and simply announces punishment to come. In v 24 the oracle shades into an oracle of salvation for Israel. The rest of the material reverses these perspectives: an oracle of salvation veers into a subordinate threat of punishment for Israel’s persecutors. The overall passage thus displays a loose ABBA pattern.

Linguistically this pattern is reinforced by a double inclusion, consisting of the recognition formula and µyw µywb “when I carry out acts of judgment” in vv 22b and 26b; and by the hinge-like phrase λa rwb tvb “community of Israel” in vv 24aa and 25ab. There is not lacking, however, terminological evidence of a complementary structure, ABAB: the motif of Yahweh’s vindication (µb/hb yb wbq nw “and I am sanctified in it/them”) in vv 22bb and 25ad (A/A) and the combination of the recognition formula and mention of all the contemptuous neighbors of Israel in vv 24agb and 26b (B/B). The two messages have been sensitively interwoven.

Signs of an interlacing of this epilogue with its immediate context, the related oracles against Tyre in vv 1–19, are also evident. An overall inclusion is provided by the stem b wb “sit, dwell” in a contrast between Tyre, temporary occupant of a pseudo-divine throne (yb wb µyhλa bwm “I sit on a divine throne,” v 2) and Israel, prospective secure occupant of a God-given country (“they will dwell” x 3, vv 25, 26). The somber term | | “slain” in v 23 not only echoes the fate of the king of Tyre in v 8 but prolongs the | | wordplay that permeates the two previous oracles. The passage, then, functions as a literary finale to the chapter. It also reveals awareness of other local ethnic groups at whose hands Israel had suffered, and so awareness of chaps. 25–26. In fact the stem f αb “scorn” seems consciously to echo its use in 25:6, 15, while the formula of prophetic gazing in v 21 recalls 25:2; the formula of encounter in v 22 pairs Sidon with Tyre in 26:3. Moreover, the passage is marked by positive content and phraseology characteristic of the following section of the book, chaps. 33–39. Zimmerli (100; cf. Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 493) has noted the similarity of vv 25–26 in form and content to the closing verses of chap. 39, and Westermann (Heilsworte 144) the overlap with chaps. 36–37. Moreover, there are close parallels with 34:25–30. It is probable that a basic oracle against Sidon in vv 21–23 has been expanded to fulfill a literary function. Most likely one should envisage two stages of supplementation, first v 24 and then vv 25–26. Overall, 28:25–26 seems to belong to a series of late redactional supplements, which are continued in 34:25–30; 36:24–32; 37:24b–30 and 39:23–29, and serve to present summaries of important truths. As in chap. 39, the intent here is to relate the foregoing material to the general positive themes of the book as they pertained to the people of God. The assignment of third fem. sg material in vv 22b–23 to a redactor (see, e.g., Cooke 321; Wevers 219) is

e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare
less convincing: the switch to third person speech follows on naturally after a verb with a different subject.

Comment

21–24 The solemn old formula of turning a prophetic gaze upon Sidon (cf. the comment on 21:2) and the formula of encounter serve to remind the reader of 25:2 and 26:3, and to give the impression of reaching the end of a series of oracles against foreign nations. Sidon, a coastal city 25 miles north of Tyre, alternated with Tyre as the leading city of Phoenicia. Tyre was dominant in the period up to its siege, but thereafter Sidon gained supremacy. According to Jer 27:3, early in Zedekiah’s reign Sidon took part in an anti-Babylonian conspiracy, a circumstance that fits the military opposition to Nebuchadnezzar underlying this oracle. No historical reason is given for Yahweh’s intervention, which may therefore imply the triumph of his will in his sponsorship of Babylon’s attacks. However, v 24 explains it in terms of Sidon’s animosity against the Judeans, presumably in connection with the fall of Jerusalem (cf. 25:6, 15; 26:2).

Pride of place is given to the revelation of Yahweh’s glory (cf. 39:13 and Comment thereon). There may be a deliberate echo of the priestly passage Exod 14:4, 17–18 and so the drawing of a typological parallel: as in the case of Pharaoh long ago, Yahweh’s glory would be manifested by means of a negative demonstration of his will against Israel’s and so his foes. The related motif of Yahweh’s revelation of his transcendent power or holiness (cf. 36:23; 38:16, 23; 39:27) provides implicit contrast with his apparent humiliation in the fall of Jerusalem and the Judean exile. Klein (Ezekiel 130, 141) has found in v 22 a theological key to the oracles against the nations: only if the nations were judged could Yahweh’s glory and holiness be maintained. The description of Sidon’s downfall in v 23 uses a standard combination of pestilence, blood and sword (cf. 5:12; 6:12; 14:12–23). Since elsewhere in Ezek it is used in connection with the fall of Jerusalem, reprisal for an offense related to that event may be implied, in line with v 24.

The expansion of v 24 develops the term סולוב ל “on all sides” in v 23b into a quid pro quo reprisal for Judean harassment at the hands of their ethnic neighbors, which was treated in chaps. 25–26. From this perspective Sidon is regarded as typical of the total group of adjacent alien states. An implication of Yahweh’s intervention is presented. One of Ezekiel’s metaphors for hostility (אמש “briers,” 2:6) is blended with a priestly or deuteronomistic one (אמש “thorns,” cf. Num 33:55; cf. Josh 23:13). One may compare the use of Num 33:50–54 in 47:13–23; probably in both cases we have to do with a relatively late redaction.

25–26 The second oracle develops in positive terms the note of relief sounded in v 24. There is a looking forward to the restoration of the Judeans to their own country, as frequently in chaps. 33–39 (e.g., 34:13). It is envisaged as a further stage in Yahweh’s self-vindication (cf. 39:27). The motif of

fem. feminine
sg singular or under
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
settling in the promised land is an anticipatory echo of 37:25. Such settlement would be Yahweh’s checkmate against Tyre’s presumptuous claims (v 2). There is an emphasis on security, borrowed from 34:25–28, but here developed in terms of building houses and planting vineyards (cf. 36:36), motifs common in the book of Jeremiah. Such welcome reorientation, incredible as it seemed, would be the aftermath of the reprisals of vv 22b and 24a, which are repeated in v 26b. It was to be a sacramental sign pointing the Judeans beyond themselves to the praiseworthy reality of their covenant God.

**Explanation**

An implicit aim of many prophetic oracles against foreign nations was to bring reassurance to their Judean hearers. The oracles in chaps. 25–26 served this very purpose. Now the series of Palestinian and Phoenician oracles is rounded off with an expanded oracle against Sidon, before Egypt becomes the subject of the complex of foreign oracles. In this passage the pastoral role of the oracle of judgment against Sidon is spelled out loud and clear. A theological parallel is to be found in Paul’s message to the persecuted Christians at Thessalonica. “At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven” God would “repay with affliction those who afflict you” and also grant “rest to you who are afflicted” (2 Thess 1:6, 7). Then the focus of the passage moves from the relief of the church’s suffering to the vindication of Jesus, who would be “glorified among his saints” and “admired among all believers” (2 Thess 1:10). Correspondingly, here the coming vindication of Yahweh is found both in the destruction of Sidon and in the rehabilitation of the covenant people. The latter were to be caught up in his purposes and to be participants in his triumph. The assurance is given that solid proof was forthcoming and human politics would surrender to the divine purpose. Till then faith and hope in the prophet’s interpretation of the divine will were necessary. Bruised and insecure hearts were soothed with the promise that justice, peace and truth would prevail. A caring God would provide the cure for their ills.

**False Faith in Egypt (29:1–16)**

**Bibliography**

Translation

1 In the tenth year, on the twelfth day of the tenth month, I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2 “Human one, look in the direction of Pharaoh, Egypt’s king, and prophesy against him and the whole of Egypt. 3 You are to tell him that the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows:

I am your adversary, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, great monster lying in your Nile streams, thinking, ‘My Nile is mine, made for me by myself.’

4 I will put hooks in your jaws and make the fish in your streams stick to your scales. From your streams I will haul up both you and all the fish in your streams that are sticking to your scales.

5 Then I will hurl you into the wilderness, you and all the fish from your streams. You will lie fallen on the open ground,
neglected and ignored.

To the wild animals on the earth and to the birds in the sky
I am giving you for food.

Then all who live in Egypt will realize
that I am Yahweh.

“Inasmuch as you have proved to be
a reedy staff
for the community of Israel to lean on—
when they grasped you, you collapsed
and badly wrenched their shoulders;
and when they leaned on you, you broke
and left their hips quite unsteady—

That is why the following message comes from the Lord Yahweh: I intend to make a sword attack you, exterminating from you humans and animals alike, while Egypt will turn into an area of desolate ruin. Then they will realize that I am Yahweh.

“Inasmuch as you have been thinking, ‘The Nile is mine, made by me,’ that is why I am an adversary of you and your Nile streams. I will turn Egypt into an area of desolate and waste ruins.

5.b. The two Heb. verbs for “gather” here have the sense of care and concern (cf. BDB 62a). Since the first verb 5a can be used for gathering for burial, the second 5b is often emended to “be buried” with the support of some MSS, Tg. and perhaps LXX (cf. Jer 8:2); but MT is to be retained (cf. Zimmerli 107). In v 13 5a “I will gather” appears to be a conscious positive development of v 5.

6.a. MT μτ 5h “(because of)” their being has suffered dittography of 5a and wrongly takes as subj the pl. entity in v 6a. A new sentence appears to begin at v 6b: 4 “because” looks forward to 8 “therefore” in v 8. In content too v 6b goes closely with v 7. LXX Syr. Vg render with 2nd sg verbs and so probably 5h “(because) you were” is to be read, assuming a /W error. This emendation is simpler than the common one of 5h “your being” (BHS et al.) and more feasible than Boadt’s explanation of MT (Ezekiel’s Oracles 36).

6.b. MT adds Ṣbpk 5b “in your hand” (K), corrected by Q to 5b “by the hand.” The reading 5b “hand” presupposed by LXX Syr. for 5 “shoulder” later suggests that in MT a variant 5b has been taken as a correction of 5b “(grasped) you” to Ṣbpk 5b. The external parallelism of v 7a and 7b supports its omission.

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7.b. Heb. Ṣk “all” here and in v 7b means “the whole of” (GKC 127a) and implies extensive harm, here conveyed in the translation by “badly” and “quite.” The reading 5 “hand” presupposed by LXX Syr. (see previous note) is probably a case of assimilation to 2 Kgs 18:21 (= Isa 36:6): the difference of accompanying verb is significant.

7.c. The stem 5m “stand” in MT is an error of metathesis for 5 “(to cause to) shake,” as Syr. Vg (cf. LXX) imply (BHS et al.). Driver’s appeal to Akk. and Arab. usage (Bib 35 [1954] 299) is a linguistic tour de force.

9.a. MT takes Pharaoh as the 3rd person subj of the verb (cf. 3 “he said,” v 3). LXX Syr. Vg imply 5 “(because of) your saying,” which seems to be required (BHK et al.). MT appears to have suffered assimilation to v 3.
from Migdol to Syene\(^b\) and as far as the Egyptian border. \(^{11}\) It will lie untrodden by any human foot and untraversed by any animal paw: it will stay uninhabited for forty years. \(^{12}\) I will make Egypt as desolate as any country could be. Its cities, as ruined as any city could ever be, will lie desolate for forty years. I will scatter the Egyptians among other nations, dispersing them into other countries. \(^{13}\) What this means,\(^a\) runs the message of the Lord Yahweh, is that at the end of forty years I will collect the Egyptians from the peoples they have been dispersed among\(^{14}\) and change their fortunes,\(^a\) bringing them back\(^b\) to the area of Pathros, their native country. There they will comprise a paltry nation,\(^{15}\) more paltry than any other realm and unable to dominate any other nation—I will keep them too small to exercise such control. \(^{16}\) Never again will the community of Israel have\(^a\) an object of trust to which they turn and which they follow mistakenly to their eventual regret,\(^b\) but they will realize that I am Yahweh.”

**Notes**

1.a. LXX mi a “first” implies d j a b. Probably if c h j “on the twelfth” was lost by homoeoteleuton and then a filling out of the now incomplete date from 26:1 and/or 29:17 (cf. 45:20 LXX) occurred.

3.a. Heb. t b d “speak” is not represented in LXX* before t r ma w “and say,” and is often deleted (cf. BHS). It is unusual in this formulaic context, but present in 14:4; 20:3. LXX may have omitted as otiose,\(^a\)

\(^a\) 10.a. Heb. b r j “desolation” or “drought” is rendered as if b r j, “sword” in LXX Vg and not represented in Syr.. In its favor Boadt has noted the triad of sinister terms in Isa 61:4; Jer 49:13 (Ezekiel’s Oracles 42): he takes them as parallel terms in asyndeton, pointing the first as as abs t w b r j ō;\(^b\)

10.b. Here and in 30:6 MT h n w s is uncoordinated: it is to be pointed h n w s “to Syene” (Smend 231, following Michaelis; Zimmerli 108).

12.a. The two expressions with ū w b “among” appear to have a comparative force: cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 112, who compared the superlative ū v d q w d q “holy of holies.”

13.a. lit. “for,” The implication of the limitation of forty years is spelled out. LXX* Syr. do not represent, perhaps omitting because of the subtlety of usage.

14.a. For this idiom of reorientation see most recently J. M. Bracke, ZAW 97 (1985) 233–44.\(^b\)

14.b. LXX Syr. Vg derived the Heb. verb from b w “inhabit,” rather than from b w “return.”

16.a. MT h y h y “it will become (… an object of trust)” strangely speaks of Egypt as masc. sg, in a context of masc. pl. and fem. sg references. The ancient versions imply h y h y “they will be,” which appears to be a simplistic correction that leaves the present reading unaccounted for. Ehrlich (Randglossen 112) interestingly suggested reading j t b m “object of trust” as subject, assuming dittography of lamed. Then the obviously intended parallelism with 28:24 is even more complete.\(^b\)

16.b. lit. “reminding of iniquity.”

16.c. MT prefaces with y t d a “Lord”: see the note on 28:24.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT Heb. Hebrew

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT cf. confer, compare

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like its omission of µyrm x m õ m “king of Egypt” later.

3.b. For the formulaic ynda “Lord” here and in vv 8, 13 see the note on 20:3.

3.c. Heb. µynt is usually a plural “jackals,” but the sg verb and adj demand a sg sense, and its watery habitat rules out a reference to jackals (Wakeman, God’s Battle 75). It is either a slip for µnt (cf. Jer 51:34) or a variant form of it: it recurs in 32:2.

3.d. For the idiomatic third pl. references in the Heb. of v 3a d–b see the note on 22:3.

3.e. Heb. yri “my stream” is more naturally pointed yr’ay “my streams” (cf. Zimmerli, ibid.) in view of the pl. in v 3a, 4, 10. On the other hand, the versional evidence points in a different direction (cf. BHS) and in v 9 the term occurs in the sg without a suffix. Stylistic variation may have been intended (cf. Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 29).

3.f. The suffix on the verb appears to be datival: cf. Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 30, and GKC 117x. Emendation to µytyc “I made them,” if a pl. is read earlier, or to wytyc “I made it” (cf. Zimmerli 106–7) is unnecessary.

4.a. Heb. tā could be emphatic (Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 31), but is more probably the object sign, in which case v 4b g functions as a short relative clause (Ehrlich, Randglossen 111). The omission of v 4b g in LXX* is probably due to the translator’s judging it to be superfluous after v 4a.

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BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
sg singular or under
adj adjective/adjectival
sg singular or under
cf. confer, compare
pl. plate or plural
Heb. Hebrew
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
pl. plate or plural
cf. confer, compare

pl. plate or plural
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
5.a. Heb. וַיִּבָּל normally means “leave,” but here and in 31:12; 32:4 both the ancient versions and the adjacent verbs suggest a primary sense “throw” (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 299; HALAT 657a).

5.b. The two Heb. verbs for “gather” here have the sense of care and concern (cf. BDB 62a). Since the first verb וָסַּנ can be used for gathering for burial, the second אֲבָט is often emended to רָבָט “be buried” with the support of some MSS, Tg. and perhaps LXX (cf. Jer 8:2); but MT is to be retained (cf. Zimmerli 107). In v 13 אֲבָט “I will gather” appears to be a conscious positive development of v 5.

6.a. MT וַיְהַל “(because of) their being” has suffered dittography of mem and wrongly takes as subj the pl. entity in v 6a. A new sentence appears to begin at v 6b: וַיַּל “because” looks forward to בִּלְךָ “therefore” in v 8. In content too v 6b goes closely with v 7. LXX Syr. Vg render with 2nd sg verbs and so probably וַיְהַל “(because) you were” is to be read, assuming a ו/י error. This emendation is simpler than the common one of וַיִּהְל “your being” (BHS et al.) and more feasible than Boadt’s explanation of MT (Ezekiel’s Oracles 36).

7.a. MT וַיְהַל כָּלִים “in your hand” (K), corrected by Q to וַיְהַל כָּלִים “by the hand.” The reading כָּלִים

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
Bib Biblica
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cf. confer, compare
MSS manuscript(s)
Tg. Targum
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subj subject/subjective
pl. plate or plural
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et al. alii, and others
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K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
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7.c. The stem d[m] “stand” in MT is an error of metathesis for d[m] “(to cause to) shake,” as Syr. Vg (cf. LXX) imply (BHS et al.): cf. Ps 69:24(23). Driver’s appeal to Akk. and Arab. usage (Bib 35 [1954] 299) is a linguistic tour de force.

9.a. MT takes Pharaoh as the 3rd person subj of the verb (cf. ¹îmā “he said,” v 3). LXX Syr. Vg imply ¹µb ¹îmā “(because of) your saying,” which seems to be required (BHK et al.). MT appears to have Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
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10.b. Here and in 30:6 MT הָנָשִׁים is uncoordinated: it is to be pointed הָנָשִׁים “to Syene” (Smend 231, following Michaelis; Zimmerli 108).

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16.b. lit. “reminding of iniquity.”

16.c. MT prefaces with יְהֹוָה “Lord”: see the note on 28:24.

Form/Structure/Setting

29:1–16 falls into three proof sayings, vv 3–6a, 6b–9a and 9b–16. The distribution of the recognition formula in vv 6a, 9ab and 16b so suggests, and this form-critical clue is generally so interpreted, even Keil so dividing vv 6 and 9 (vol. 2:5, 7). MT, however, in its division of verses and sections follows another arrangement, vv 3–7, 8–12 and 13–16. Van Rooy, Semitics 8 (1982) 90, has endeavored to justify this arrangement by regarding the messenger formula of vv 3, 8, 13 as an initial refrain. This argument is not convincing, since the messenger formula regularly occurs at the head of the second part of a judgment oracle or proof saying, as well as at the very beginning.

The proof saying of vv 3a–6a consists of the standard three parts of accusation, pronouncement of punishment and recognition formula, with the accusation introduced by the formula of confrontation, to which the accusation is related as appositional description. The second oracle, which lacks an oracular introduction, is a proof saying of the classic, logical type inasmuch as accusation and announcement of punishment are locked together with a “because-therefore” formulation, as in the oracles of chap. 25. The third proof saying, which also begins abruptly, closely follows the format of the second, except that the second component is lengthened by a modification of the punishment in vv 13–15, and by the spelling out of positive implications for Israel in v 16a.

The third oracle seems deliberately to echo the first two. Thus vv 9b–10a repeat clauses and terms from v 3, and in v 16 allusion is made to the motif of Israel’s trusting in Egypt that was used in vv 6b–7. Moreover, the verb of judgment יַתְנָו “and I will give” in v 4 (cf. יָתְנָו “I have given you” in v 5b) reappears in this role in vv 10b and 12, and the comprehensive reference to absence of human and animal life in v 8b reappears in a different formulation in v 11a, while the terms for desolation and ruin in v 9a feature too in vv 10 and 12a. The impression given by these echoes is that vv h comprise a literary expansion of the two former oracles, presenting their message in a less radical tone. The repetition of the stem אֲבָד “gather” at v 13 in a positive setting, after its negative usage in v 5, is striking. A shin-beth wordplay seems to run through the three oracles: יְבִּינְי “inhabitants” (v 6a), רְבָ֑שִׁית “you broke” (v 7b), בְּשֵׁת (אָל) “you will (not) be inhabited” (v 11), and יִתְבָּא אֲלָ֑י “and I will change the fortunes” and יִתְבָּא “and I will restore” in v 14. The wordplay seems to carry a rationalizing message, which the third oracle claims to explain: the breaking of Egypt in the second oracle is not to be regarded as final, in view of the survival and presence of inhabitants in Egypt at the end of the first. Rather, the loss of habitation must be temporary and eventual restoration is to be envisaged. The statement in v 16a aligns closely with that in 28:24a, and each occurs before the recognition formula. It seems then that both may well come from the same redactional hand (cf. Höfken, VT 27 [1977] 409), which could easily have been Ezekiel’s own at a later period.

lit. literally
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
vol. volume
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
VT Vetus Testamentum
As to the setting of the oracles, the dating of v 1 seems determinative for the first, which accordingly belongs to the period just before the fall of Jerusalem. The second, independent oracle appears to be a little later. In characterizing Egyptian help as vain, it presupposes the military support that Hophra sent to try to relieve besieged Jerusalem (Jer 37:5): Ezekiel and his contemporaries knew of its failure. The generalizations in both these oracles suggest Ezekiel’s remoteness from the Palestinian scene and so an exilic provenance. The third oracle, which consciously develops the other two, is a meditation that builds upon the positive phase of the prophet’s ministry, inaugurated by the fall of Jerusalem. It is associated with the written form of the previous oracles in a literary redaction.

Comment

1–6a The chapter opens with a solemn introduction, consisting of date, the message reception formula and the formula of prophetic gaze. Parallelism with 25:1 and 26:1 seems to be intended: here begins the third block of oracles against foreign nations, after those against the Palestinian states and against Tyre (Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 17). The date, reconstructed by Parker and Dubberstein as January 7, 587 B.C. (Babylonian Chronology 28), sets the first oracle half a year before the fall of Jerusalem, although of course it reflects events rather earlier than that, since Ezekiel is commenting on matters known to the Babylonian exiles. There seems to be an awareness of the willingness of the dynamic new Pharaoh Hophra, who came to the throne in 589 B.C., to become involved in the attempts of the Palestinian states to rebel against Babylon, and even of Zedekiah’s negotiations to this end (cf. 17:15). Ezekiel firmly quenches such Judean hopes as not in accord with the divine will.

The arrogant claims of the Egyptian monster to be master and even maker of his Nile domain, made prosperous by its system of irrigation, conclude a scenario of secular power. Yahweh, however, would be more than a match for him. The intent of the last clause of v 3 is to trigger an awareness that Yahweh is the true and only creator and so to stimulate a shocked, negative reaction to Egyptian power. The account of his destruction imaginatively extends the metaphor by using terms of hunting and expulsion from his Nile habitat. The phrase ûyr ûwtb “among his Nile streams” (v 3a) is deliberately countered with ûyr ûwtm “from among your Nile streams” (v 4b). The fish clearly correspond to the royal subjects, who are to be caught up in this removal and destruction. Behind the sinister vignette lurks the implication of Babylonian defeat of Egypt, and even the exile of its citizens. It is regarded as the outworking of Yahweh’s providential will: it would prove to Egypt his dynamic reality.

6b–9 The second oracle owes its force to its evocation of a metaphor used in a prophetic narrative that is set in an earlier period of history. In Isa 36:6 (= 2 Kgs 18:21) trusting in Pharaoh is described as leaning on a staff no stronger than a reed, that breaks and hurts the hand that holds it. Here the metaphor with its clever reference to the Nile bulrush, is re-used but associated with more serious physical harm. The oracle looks back on Hophra’s abortive attempt to give military support during the siege of

cf. confer, compare
Jerusalem (cf. Jer 37:5, 7–8). It functions, however, as a theological comment, rather than as a political one: the later interpretation in v 16 is correct. Leaning is part of the Old Testament vocabulary of faith: God’s people had once again turned elsewhere for the support they should have sought in him and his will (cf. Isa 36:6, 7). So nothing but ill could have come from this spiritual adventure. Divine reprisals were to be meted out on the Egyptian tempter and his realm, in the form of a devastating attack, which would bring home to the Judeans the truth taught in this oracle.

9b–12 The later message in vv 9b–16 wants to reflect on the two previous oracles against Egypt and to set them within a wider framework of revelation. To this end it repeats their form and echoes their vocabulary, both plainly and by way of significant wordplay (see Form/Setting/Structure). Yahweh’s intent was still to counter the defiant claims of this world power. The punishment of the earlier oracles is endorsed in the double representation of vv 10b–11 and 12, both of which begin with the initial verb of v 4. Indeed, the totality of Egyptian destruction, indicated in v 10 by the geographical references to its northern and southern frontiers and even beyond, serves to underline the statement of v 9a. However, in each case a temporal limitation is set on the punishment, a span of “forty years.” The exuberance of the preceding oracles is abandoned in a sober reappraisal, in the course of which the vivid statements of vv 5 and 8b are interpreted, not unreasonably, in terms of exile.

13–15 A third phase of punishment is now set out, reinforced by an emphatic messenger formula and a re-use of the key phrase “forty years,” in order to prepare for the blatancy of affirming a gathering denied earlier (v 5). A generation (cf. Num 14:28–31) would serve the sentence imposed by the divine judge (cf. Ezek 4:6, of Judean exile), yet even their repatriated posterity would not enjoy the privileges of world power. Instead, they were to be demoted to a third-world country and confined territorially to Upper Egypt, with Lower Egypt in the north seemingly remaining a no man’s land. The language of 17:14, set in a wider Egyptian context and so not unnaturally coming to the redactor’s mind, is borrowed to help to describe the low political profile to which Egypt was to be reduced (cf. Vogels, Bib 63 [1972] 488–89).

16 This political shrinkage was to be Yahweh’s way of preventing his people’s backsliding. By delving into the context of Isa 36:6 the redactor is able to use the crucial term “trust” (Isa 36:4) to describe the point of the metaphor of vv 6b–7. Systematically Yahweh was to deal with the ills that beset his people (cf. 28:24), first by removing the threat that the other Palestinian states posed to them (28:24) and, second, by forestalling a perpetual temptation to sin posed by Egypt in putting it beyond their reach (cf. Höffken, VT 27 [1977] 409). Only thus could he get them to take him as seriously as his being warranted.

Explanation

The first oracle is an eloquent warning that for Judah to put its political eggs into Egypt’s basket was a mistake. It is part of Ezekiel’s crusade, to which chap. 23 notably belongs, against the Judeans’ hopes
that Egypt would get them out of Babylon’s clutches. The truth of the matter, as the oracle proclaims at its opening, was that Yahweh’s will lay in a contrary direction. For all its present greatness, Egypt was doomed, victim of its own hubristic arrogance. This super crocodile, this Egyptian Shelob, was to go the way of the fabled chaos monster of the sea who attempted to battle with the creator God! The metaphor, used because of its sinister finale, like the nautical one of chap. 27, could discount present power, however great. The Judeans at home, supported by their compatriots in exile, were totally failing to read the historical situation aright. By this imaginative oracle the prophet warned that a pro-Egyptian policy was out of alignment with Yahweh’s providential—and destructively power ful—will. In New Testament terms, they were resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51).

The second oracle, evidently spoken after the failure of Hophra to make a lasting dent in Babylon’s armor, draws a historical parallel with the events of the eighth century. Once more, Egypt’s support had been shown to have all the strength of a Nile reed. Judah’s hopes had been dashed—but what else could one have expected of such demonstrably false hopes, marked as they were by reliance on a human power rather than on Yahweh? Once more it is affirmed that Egypt was on the losing side in the battle between political giants. Yahweh was Babylon’s champion, and Egypt was to be its, and his, victim. The future was to make quite clear that Judah had been backing a loser. To gain support for his message, Ezekiel is here consciously reflecting a conviction of eighth-century prophets, especially Isaiah, that spiritual faith had to be exercised in the political arena.

The third and strongest message, written sometime after the heat of religio-political controversy had cooled, wants in part to reaffirm the truths of the earlier oracles: the inevitable harvest of national arrogance and the need for a true faith in God that resists temptations to look elsewhere for salvation. However, evidently there was now a need to temper the message to one of a limited chastening of Egypt, rather than permanent destruction. This toning down is achieved by borrowing from the language of Judah’s own past and prospective experience: a limited exile and reduction in power (cf. Vogels, Bib 53 [1972] 480–89). The reasons for this reappraisal are no longer discernible. It seeks to know the will of God in terms of a wider agenda. Perhaps there is a recognition that Yahweh may threaten, but eventually “relents of evil” (Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2) and “has no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezek 33:11; cf. 2 Pet 3:9). Or there may have been a desire to reckon with other, more positive, prophetic traditions concerning Egypt (cf. Jer 46:26): Isa 19:19–22 appears to bear some relation to this passage.

The Sealing of Egypt’s Fate (29:17–21)

Bibliography


Bib Biblica
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
SCM Student Christian Movement

Translation

17 In the twenty-seventh year, on the first day of the first month, I received the following communication from Yahweh: 18 “Human one, Babylon’s king Nebuchadnezzar has put his army to strenuous efforts in fighting Tyre. Every head is worn bald and every shoulder chafed, but neither he nor his army has had any remuneration for the efforts he has expended against it. 19 That is why the Lord’s message is as follows: I am going to present Babylon’s king Nebuchadnezzar with Egypt. He will carry off its troops and plunder and loot it, and it will be his army’s remuneration. 20 As compensation for his efforts I give him Egypt. c So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh. 21 When that happens, I will cause the community of Israel to grow a horn and I will permit you to speak freely. Then they will realize that I am Yahweh.”

Notes

19.a. For the formulaic ynd a “Lord” here and in v 20 see the note on 20:3.
19.b. LXX* does not represent this clause. Heb. וֶמֶה “troops” functions as a catchword in the oracles against Egypt, and it may have been added to enhance this feature (Zimmerli 117).
20.a. lit. “(as) his wages for which he worked.”
20.b. The pf is performative: see 22:13 Note.
20.c. MT adds יִלֵּד יָמִים “which they have made/done for me.” The clause is not represented in LXX Syr. and is difficult to relate to the context. Was it a marginal exegetical comment on the end of v

Int. Interpretation

ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
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c 20.c. MT adds יִלֵּד יָמִים “which they have made/done for me.” The clause is not represented in LXX Syr. and is difficult to relate to the context. Was it a marginal exegetical comment on the end of v 18 “(the work) that he did against it,” supplying an expected pl. verb (cf. Cornill 368)? If so, it may have slipped because of the similarity of v 18bб and v 20aâ. It is significant that in v 18bб Vg inserted mihi “for me.”
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
lit. literally
pf perfect
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
18 “(the work) that he did against it,” supplying an expected pl. verb (cf. Cornill 368)? If so, it may have slipped because of the similarity of v 18bb and v 20aa. It is significant that in v 18bb Vg inserted mihi “for me.”

**Form/Structure/Setting**

Two oracles are to be found here, in vv 17–20 and 21. The first appears to be an oracle of judgment in the light of the announcement for punishment for Egypt in its second half (vv 19–20), which is emphatically prefaced with a messenger formula and concluded with a divine saying formula. However, the first element is not an accusation but a statement of the disappointing nature of Nebuchadnezzar’s capture of Tyre. This introduction puts the focus on Nebuchadnezzar in vv 19–20, which are thus reminiscent of an oracle of holy war promising victory. In fact, v 20 includes the perfect verb ytt “I have given” characteristic of such oracles (Zimmerli 118, referring to Josh 6:16). The second oracle is a supplementary double oracle of salvation for Israel and Ezekiel, to whom it is addressed; it concludes with a recognition formula. This positive type of proof saying occurred in 28:25–26. There seems to have been a redactional intent to conclude chap. 29 in a similar way to chap. 28. There is also evidence of redactional alignment within chap. 29: (a) the phrase ¹tkAlk “every shoulder” (v 18), which appeared earlier at v 7; (b) the role of ytt “I have given/and I will give” as a key verb throughout the chapter (vv 4, 5, 10, 12, 20) and indeed the echo of the fuller µyr x m År a At a ytt “and I will give the land of Egypt” (vv 10, 12) in vv 19 and 20; and (c) the initial similarity of vv 8a and 19a, which gives an air of continuity and explanation of the latter verse, just like 21:23–28 (18–23) after 21:13–22 (8–17). Vv 17–20, when read in the light of the foregoing, have their perspective shifted from Nebuchadnezzar to Egypt, and the role of the Babylonian king becomes that of the human agent through whom Yahweh is to do his destructive work against Egypt. Accordingly the redactional role of the oracle is one of judgment.

The historical setting assigned to the oracle of vv 17–20(21) places it sixteen years after that of vv 1–6a and out of sequence with the otherwise consecutive series of Egypt-related oracles in chaps. 29–32. It has been inserted here as a link between the Tyre oracles in chaps. 26–28 and the Egypt oracles of chaps. 29–32. As noted above, it fits well redactionally both in its role within chap. 29 and in its relationship to chap. 28. V 21, although supplementary to vv 17–20, seems to belong to the same period.

**Comment**

17–18 The date has been reconstructed by Parker and Dubberstein as April 26, 571 B.C. (Babylonian Chronology 28). The thirteen-year siege of Tyre (see Form/Structure/Setting of chap. 26) must have lasted about 586–573 B.C.. This date is the latest one attached to Ezekiel’s oracles and gives some indication of the length of his prophetic ministry. The objective reason for the oracle is supplied in v 18. However, the more immediate agenda is implied by v 21ab: Ezekiel was being criticized by his Jewish contemporaries for the lack of precise fulfillment of his oracles against Tyre. It was to some extent a carping criticism: the siege was successful and Tyre did pass into Babylonian control. In a list of royal hostages at Nebuchadnezzar’s court, to be dated about 570 B.C., the king of Tyre has the initial place (pl. plate or plural

*cf. confer, compare*

Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition) *V* Vulgate
About 564 B.C. Baal, Ethbaal’s successor as king of Tyre, was replaced by a Babylonian High Commissioner (Katzenstein, *History of Tyre* 323–33; cf. Unger, *ZAW* 44 [1926] 314–17). Any prophet might have been glad to chalk it up as a vindication of his or her prediction, despite Nebuchadnezzar’s non-destruction of Tyre. Evidently Nebuchadnezzar’s troops returned home disgruntled at the lack of loot: after so long a campaign they found Tyre’s cupboard bare, used up over the years or salted away by its fleet to a safe place. Their expected perquisites and indeed perhaps their literal wages (cf. Cooke 329 with reference to Driver) had not been forthcoming. The disappointment, overheard by the exiles, was used as a weapon against Ezekiel, who had indeed spoken of spoils (26:5, 12). To him then was given this sympathetic word from Yahweh.

Most of v 18 is carefully constructed as a chiasmus, with an ABCD/DCBA structure. In sense its double center qualifies the first half. It relates to the carrying of loads on the head and shoulders during the siege. These may be simply conventional expressions for land siege warfare (cf. 26:8 and Comment) or perhaps efforts were made to construct a causeway between the mainland and the island, as Alexander was to do later. Essentially Yahweh takes over responsibility for the situation from Nebuchadnezzar, who functioned as Yahweh’s agent. Pastorally, of course, Yahweh is lifting the blame from Ezekiel’s head and shoulders.

19–20 The initial response to the situation described in v 18 corresponds to that verse at beginning and end (v 19a, bb); the parallel clauses in the middle (v 19b) have a qualifying function, like the center of v 18. V 20a echoes another component of v 18, ḥū[b “do, work,” and serves as a final restatement of v 19a and 19b. Promise of a victory over Egypt anticipates Nebuchadnezzar’s campaign against Hophra’s successor Ahmose II in 568 B.C., which may already have been in the air. The new oracle applies an adaptive principle to the old, not completely satisfying, oracle: a switch of position is offered as compensation for the exuberant claim with which Ezekiel’s constituency found fault (Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*, 172–77).

21 An accompanying disclosure spells out, again in terms of consolation, the advantages to accrue to both the Jewish community and to the prophet himself. The initial “on that day” seems to be simply an adverb of time, rather than having the specialized eschatological function it often does in oracles of salvation (Fohrer 170; cf. S. DeVries, *Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975] 306). Despite the royal usage of the phrase יִקְרָא לָעָד “I will cause a horn to grow” in Ps 132:17, to take it as messianic in this context would amount to eisegesis. The horn is a common metaphor for vigor and power (cf. Ps. 92:11[10]). Ezekiel’s critics by implication cast doubt on the positive images that he delivered in the period after the fall of Jerusalem concerning renewal and restoration to the land. This promised resurgence here finds confirmation. Ezekiel too is encouraged by promise of vindication of his messages. The expression הַפְּרוּ הֵמָּה “opening of the mouth” occurs also in 16:63. The usage in these two passages is to be differentiated from the special circumstances encountered in 24:27, which historically lay in the past (cf. 33:22). Here it connotes confidence in speech. Greenberg (*Ezekiel 1–20* 

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*cf. confer, compare*

*ZAW* Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

*cf. confer, compare*

*V Vulgate*

*cf. confer, compare*

*cf. confer, compare*
by comparison with Mishnaic Hebrew has seen in the phrase the connotation “a claim to be heard” afforded by the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s oracles. The pastoral encouragement comes to a head in the recognition formula. The prophet is reminded that he is a witness to Yahweh and that Yahweh’s revelation of himself depends on his vindication of Ezekiel by fulfilling the oracles entrusted to him.

**Explanation**

These twin oracles, which historically mark the end of Ezekiel’s recorded ministry to the exiles, reveal an all too human situation. The prophet is the victim of literalists who pass on to him the resentment of returning Babylonian veterans, in the form of blame that implicitly casts doubt on the positive oracles that flowed from Ezekiel in the latter part of his ministry. Readers must be careful not to share the woodenness of Ezekiel’s contemporary critics and so distance themselves from the text itself. The prophet “does not find it necessary to defend or explain away his earlier prophecy; in effect he just admits that it didn’t happen. The failure of a prediction in every detail thus does not appear to have been considered any great scandal … Prophecy [must have been understood] in a way different from those who believe it must involve one hundred percent predictions” (Gowan 103). An element of rhetorical exuberance was naturally involved in prophesying, the role of which was to persuade the audience of a basic theme, using both conventional and emotional language as supportive aids. Physical images may be used to convey emotional reality (Roberts, *Int* 33 [1977] 251). Language contains a legitimate element of hyperbole, and prophetic language is entitled to this feature. For Ezekiel the criticism was evidently a depressing experience, which warranted these two messages that dealt with the immediate complaint and also with the implication that Ezekiel’s subsequent positive ministry was untrustworthy. It is pastorally reassuring to observe that Ezekiel’s recorded oracles conclude with a divine concern for the prophet himself, so that he might share the spirit of Isa 49:4: “My cause is in Yahweh’s hands and my recompense lies with my God” (cf. 1 Cor 4:1–5).

The redactional agenda of these verses is a different one. Their content functions as a supportive statement of the downfall of Egypt and so as a confirmation of the work of God in the world of political power, and as an assurance that his destructive work was a precursor of salvation for his people. Yahweh would effect his providential will, clearing obstacles from his people’s and his own path (cf. v 16; 28:24) before he brought rehabilitation and honor (v 21; cf. 28:25–26). He was to use his lordship of history as a means of fulfilling his covenant purposes (cf. Rev 11:15–18).

**Egypt’s Day of the Lord (30:1–19)**

**Bibliography**

*cf. confer, compare Int Interpretation cf. confer, compare cf. confer, compare cf. confer, compare cf. confer, compare cf. confer, compare*

Translation

1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: “Human one, prophesy and say that the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows:

Wail ‘Alas, the day!’
2 because Yahweh’s day is nearly here. A day of clouds, it will be a fateful time for the nations.
4 A sword will invade Egypt and anguish will befall Ethiopia, when people drop dead in Egypt and its foundations are razed.

5 Ethiopia, Put, Lud and all the various foreign troops, and Libya(?) and the people of the covenant land will fall there, victims of the sword along with them.

6 Egypt’s supporters will fall and its vaunted power will collapse.
From Migdol to Syene people will fall there, victims of the sword.
So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.

7 It will be desolated, becoming as desolate as a country could be, and its cities will be as ruined

FzB Forschungen zur Bibel

2.a. For the formulaic ynd a “Lord” here and in vv 6, 10 and 13 see the note on 20:3.

3.a. MT adds μωρί Q W “and near is the day” after v 3a. It is not represented in LXX* and is taken by most as a dittograph. In MT the first, anarthrous μωρί “a day” is difficult. Hossfeld (Untersuchungen 192) has adduced in favor of the shorter text the chiastic inclusion of v 3: b w q μωρί “near is the day”/ μωρί Q W “a time for the nations it will be.”

4.a. MT adds ἡμπρ ὡμὴ Q W “and they take away its troops,” not represented in LXX* and probably reflecting a tendency in MT to increase the frequency of ὡμὴ “army,” a catchword in the Egyptian oracles (cf. 29:19 Note). The act verb with indefinite subj is awkward and the content does not accord with the death and destruction of the context.

5.a. MT μωρί “Kub” is not known. It may be an error for μωρί “Libya,” which LXX Λυβᾶς “Libyans” at the end of the previous list may support, although elsewhere it stands for μωρί “Put.”

5.b. MT begins v 6 with ὡμὴ γράμμα μωρί “thus said Yahweh.” In its place LXX* presupposes Ἡμᾶς “in it,” taking it with v 5. In the light of the clause in v 6bb, probably this was corrupted to μωρί by a not uncommon b/μ error, and subsequently filled out in terms of the messenger formula under the influence of the final divine saying formula in v 6bb. The lack of the normal ynd a “Lord” suggests a secondary hand (Zimmerli 124).

6.a. MT μωρί should be pointed μωρί “to Syene”: see 29:10 Note.
as any city could ever be. 8 Then they will realize that I am Yahweh, when I set fire to Egypt and all its helpers are shattered. 9 At that time messengers will leave my presence in ships to alarm the heedless Ethiopians, and anguish will befall them on Egypt’s fateful day—indeed it is on its way. 10 “The message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: I will use the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar to make an end of Egypt’s troops. 11 He and his army with him, the most terrible army in the world, will be brought in to ravage the country. They will draw their swords against Egypt and fill the country with their dead. 12 I will make the Nile streams dry, selling the country into the control of evil folk. I will use foreigners to devastate the country and everything in it. I, Yahweh, have given my word.

13 “The message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: I will make an end of rulers from Memphis and no leader will arise any more from Egypt. I will inflict fear on Egypt. 14 I will devastate Pathros and set fire to Zoan. I will carry out acts of judgment on Thebes. 15 I will drench with my wrath Egypt’s stronghold Pelusium and will make an end of Thebes troops. 16 I will set fire to Egypt. Pelusium will writhe in anguish and Thebes will be breached. Memphis will be attacked in broad daylight. 17 At On and Pibeseth men in their prime will fall to the sword, while their

7.a. For MT וּפּוֹשֵׁס "they will be desolated” we should read fem. sg ה פּוֹשֵׁס with reference to Egypt, as LXX presupposes and as 29:12 suggests. MT evidently suffered mechanical assimilation to וּפּוֹשֵׁס earlier and/or to (וּפּוֹשֵׁס) later.
7.b. For the superlative idiom here and in v 7b see 29:12 Note.
7.c. MT וְאִם "its cities” has a masc. suffix: ה יִהוּד with fem. suffix is expected, as in 29:12. To relate the suffix to Pharaoh (Smend 238) hardly seems possible.
9.a. LXX* does not represent יַנְבָּנָה "from before me,” perhaps finding difficulty with it. The term seems to develop v 8b “when I set fire to Egypt,” which implies Yahweh’s presence in Egypt.
9.b. The Heb. appears to echo the thought of Isa 18:2. LXX* סַי may imply מַלְאֵךְ "hastening” (cf. RSV, NEB), as Q לֶסֶנִים evidently does.
12.a. LXX* does not represent וּפּוֹשֵׁס, which employs unusual language (see Zimmerli 125) and does not fit the adjacent topics of natural and military catastrophes. However, it is difficult to see why it was added. Does omission of a nineteen letter line underlie LXX?
13.a. LXX appears to presuppose מַלְאֵךְ יִהוּד "rams, leaders” for מַלְאֵךְ יִהוּד "divine images” and does not represent the earlier clause in MT מַלְאֵךְ יִהוּד וּפּוֹשֵׁס מַלְאַכְיָה "and I will destroy idols.” MT seems to reflect a later reference to Egyptian gods, perhaps encouraged by a miswriting of מַלְאֵךְ יִהוּד (Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 198). It is significant that the term מַלְאֵךְ יִהוּד occurs in Ezekiel only here, whereas (מַלְאֵךְ יִהוּד) מַלְאַכְיָה does occur in the sense of rulers (17:13; 31:11; 32:21; 34:17).
13.b. LXX* סַי lack v 13b, but with its mention of Egypt it seems to be required structurally: see Form/Structure/Setting.
15.a. LXX presupposes מַלְאֵךְ יִהוּד מַלְאַכְיָה "Memphis” for MT מַלְאֵךְ יִהוּד מַלְאַכְיָה "Thebes,” and in v 16a מַלְאַכְיָה “Syene” for MT מַלְאַכְיָה "Sin,” evidently seeking to vary the repeated terms. The structure of the passage supports MT (see Form/Structure/Setting).
16.a. The verbal forms are uncertain, as the K and Q variants attest. An inf abs form מַלְאֵךְ יִהוּד seems to be required. Q מַלְאֵךְ יִהוּד חָיָב may represent vocalic assimilation (GKC 73d).
communities\textsuperscript{b} will leave as captives. \textsuperscript{18}At Tahpanhes the day will turn dark\textsuperscript{a} when I break Egypt’s scepters\textsuperscript{b} there and its vaunted power is brought to an end in it. It will be covered with a cloud, and its women folk\textsuperscript{c} will leave as captives. \textsuperscript{19}I will carry out acts of judgment against the Egyptians\textsuperscript{a}—then they will realize that I am Yahweh.”

Notes

2.a. For the formulaic \textit{ynd} a “Lord” here and in vv 6, 10 and 13 see the note on 20:3.

3.a. MT adds \textit{\(\mu\)\(\nu\)\(\gamma\)\(\nu\)\(\omega\)\(\gamma\)} “and near is the day” after v 3\textsuperscript{a}. It is not represented in LXX\textsuperscript{*} and is taken by most as a dittograph. In MT the first, anarthrous \textit{\(\mu\)\(\nu\)\(\omega\)} “a day” is difficult. Hossfeld (\textit{Untersuchungen} 192) has adduced in favor of the shorter text the chiastic inclusion of v 3: \textit{\(\beta\)\(\nu\)\(\omega\) \(\mu\)\(\nu\)\(\gamma\)} “near is the day”/ \textit{\(\eta\)\(\gamma\)\(\eta\)\(\gamma\)\(\nu\)\(\gamma\)\(\alpha\)} “a time for the nations it will be.”

4.a. MT adds \textit{\(h\)\(\nu\)\(\omega\)\(m\)\(\mu\)h} \(w\) \(q\) \(l\) \(w\)“and they take away its troops,” not represented in LXX\textsuperscript{*} and probably reflecting a tendency in MT to increase the frequency of \textit{\(\nu\)\(\omega\)\(m\)h} “army,” a catchword in the Egyptian oracles (cf. 29:19 \textit{Note}). The act verb with indefinite \textit{subj} is awkward and the content does not accord with the death and destruction of the context.

5.a. MT \textit{\(\beta\)\(w\)k} “Kub” is not known. It may be an error for \textit{\(\beta\)\(w\)l} “Libya,” which LXX \textit{L\(i\)\(b\)\(u\)\(e\)} “Libyans

\textsuperscript{b} 16.b. lit. “and as for Memphis enemies (or besiegers) of daylight.” Boadt (\textit{Ezekiel’s Oracles} 79) urges that the preceding verbal phrase does double duty: “and Memphis will be for (= serve as) daytime besiegers.” LXX seems to presuppose \textit{\(\mu\)\(\nu\)\(m\)\(w\)\(k\)\(p\)\(n\)\(w\)}“and water will spread” or \textit{\(\mu\)\(\nu\)\(m\)\(w\)\(p\)\(p\)\(n\)\(w\)}“and water will burst forth.” RSV “and its walls broken down” follows Cornill’s imaginative emendation \textit{\(w\)\(k\)\(p\)\(p\)\(n\)\(w\) h\(\gamma\)\(t\)\(m\)\(w\)} (371).

\textsuperscript{a} 17.a. LXX Vg rightly presuppose \textit{\(\gamma\)\(\alpha\)} “On, Heliopolis” for MT’s misvocalization \textit{\(\nu\)\(k\)“iniquity.”}

\textsuperscript{b} 17.b. lit. “they” (fem. pl.), referring to the (inhabitants of the) cities.

\textsuperscript{a} 18.a. For \textit{\(\mu\)\(\gamma\)\(\iota\)\(\zeta\)} “withhold” MT has an alternative tradition \textit{\(\mu\)\(\gamma\)\(\iota\)} “grow dark,” which the ancient versions support (see BHS). In the first case an ellipse of the natural object (sc. “its light” [cf. Cooke 334]) or an intransitive force “withdraw” (Driver, JTS 34 [1933] 380) is presupposed. Darkness is associated with day of Yahweh imagery (cf. e.g., Zeph 1:15).

\textsuperscript{b} 18.b. The breaking of \textit{\(\tau\)\(\nu\)\(w\)\(m\)ο”yoke bars” (MT) suggests liberation (Cornill 372; Zimmerli 127). LXX Vg (cf. Syr.) presuppose \textit{\(\tau\)\(\nu\)\(F\)\(m\) “scepters,” which provides more obvious parallelism with v 18\textsuperscript{a} (cf. Boadt, \textit{Ezekiel’s Oracles} 82–83).

\textsuperscript{c} 18.c. Or “dependent towns.”

\textsuperscript{a} 19.a. Heb. \textit{\(\mu\)\(\gamma\)\(r\) \(\lambda\)\(m\)} signifies not “Egypt” but “Egyptians” here and in vv 23 and 26.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
\textit{subj} subject/subjective
” at the end of the previous list may support, although elsewhere it stands for elfare “Put.”

5.b. MT begins v 6 with hwh y runa h k “thus said Yahweh.” In its place LXX* presupposes HB; “in it,” taking it with v 5. In the light of the clause in v 6b, probably this was corrupted to h k by a not uncommon b/û error, and subsequently filled out in terms of the messenger formula under the influence of the final divine saying formula in v 6b. The lack of the normal ynd a “Lord” suggests a secondary hand (Zimmerli 124).

6.a. MT hries should be pointed h nus “to Syene”: see 29:10 Note.

7.a. For MT wm w with reference to Egypt, as LXX presupposes and as 29:12 suggests. MT evidently suffered mechanical assimilation to w(l p) earlier and/or to (t ) wm later.

7.b. For the superlative idiom here and in v 7b see 29:12 Note.

7.c. MT wyr “its cities” has a masc. suffix: h yr with fem. suffix is expected, as in 29:12. To relate the suffix to Pharaoh (Smend 238) hardly seems possible.

9.a. LXX* does not represent ymp m “from before me,” perhaps finding difficulty with it. The term seems to develop v 8b “when I set fire to Egypt,” which implies Yahweh’s presence in Egypt.

9.b. The Heb. appears to echo the thought of Isa 18:2. LXX* 5 Syr. may imply l yx a “hastening” (cf. RSV, NEB), as Q essi m evidently does..

9.c. For the adjectival use of  t b “security” cf. Gen 34:25.
12.a. **LXX** does not represent v 12ab, which employs unusual language (see Zimmerli 125) and does not fit the adjacent topics of natural and military catastrophes. However, it is difficult to see why it was added. Does omission of a nineteen letter line underlie **LXX**?

13.a. **LXX** appears to presuppose μυλα “rams, leaders” for μυλα “divine images” and does not represent the earlier clause in **MT** μυλα “and I will destroy idols.” **MT** seems to reflect a later reference to Egyptian gods, perhaps encouraged by a miswriting of μυλα (Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen* 198). It is significant that the term μυλα occurs in Ezekiel only here, whereas (μυλα) does occur in the sense of rulers (17:13; 31:11; 32:21; 34:17).

13.b. **LXX** *Syr.* lack v 13b, but with its mention of Egypt it seems to be required structurally: see *Form/Structure/Setting*.

15.a. **LXX** presupposes מומ “Memphis” for **MT** מומ “Thebes,” and in v 16ab מומ “Syene” for **MT** מומ “Sin,” evidently seeking to vary the repeated terms. The structure of the passage supports **MT** (see *Form/Structure/Setting*).

16.a. The verbal forms are uncertain, as the **K** and **Q** variants attest. An inf abs form ל/l seems to be required. **Q** ל/י may represent vocalic assimilation (*GKC* 73d).

16.b. lit. “and as for Memphis enemies (or besiegers) of daylight.” Boadt (*Ezekiel’s Oracles* 79) urges that the preceding verbal phrase does double duty: “and Memphis will be for (= serve as) daytime besiegers.” **LXX** seems to presuppose μυλ μωξ νω “and water will spread” or μυλ μωξ νω “and water
will burst forth.” RSV “and its walls broken down” follows Cornill’s imaginative emendation ṣw r ṣw ḫ y ṣw ṣw (371).

17.a. LXX Vg rightly presuppose 𐤀𐤄 “On, Heliopolis” for MT’s misvocalization 𐤀𐤅 “iniquity.”

17.b. lit. “they” (fem. pl.), referring to the (inhabitants of the) cities.

18.a. For 𐤀𐤃𐤆 “withhold” MT has an alternative tradition 𐤀𐤆 “grow dark,” which the ancient versions support (see BHS). In the first case an ellipse of the natural object (sc. “its light” [cf. Cooke 334]) or an intransitive force “withdraw” (Driver, JTS 34 [1933] 380) is presupposed. Darkness is associated with day of Yahweh imagery (cf. e.g., Zeph 1:15).

18.b. The breaking of t 𐤀𐤃𐤆 “yoke bars” (MT) suggests liberation (Cornill 372; Zimmerli 127). LXX Vg (cf. Syr.) presuppose t 𐤀𐤃𐤃 “scepters,” which provides more obvious parallelism with v 18a (cf. Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 82–83).

18.c. Or “dependent towns.”


Form/Structure/Setting

Vv 1–19 are distinguished as a literary unit by the message reception formula and the formula of prophetic address in vv 1–2; the former does not reappear until v 20. The repeated messenger formulas in vv 2, 10 and 13 (for v 6 see Note), the recognition formulas of vv 8 and 19, and the confirmatory
statement of v 13 serve to separate the piece into three smaller units, vv 1–9, 10–12 and 13–19. The divine saying formula that closes v 6 seems to have an intermediate role, here marking the conclusion of a subdivision. The first unit is a proof saying announcing judgment for Egypt and concluding in v 9 with a supplementary statement that serves to round off the unit. The second unit is an oracle of pure judgment, lacking (like the first) any note of accusation. The third is a proof saying that permutates conventional terms of divine aggression with mention of Egypt and its key cities.

As to structure, vv 2–9 are marked by a double, inverted inclusion (AB ... BA) at vv 2b–4a and 8b–9, which features (hwhyl) µwy “the day (of the Lord)” and a cluster of terms, “Ethiopia,” “Egypt” and °lw “anguish” (cf. Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 71, who, however, thinks in terms of a larger chiastic structure). Vv 10–12 have their own inclusion dyb “by the agency of, into the hand of” in vv 10 and 12a, b. Its punning sequence µt wbfrj “their swords” (v 11) and hbrj “dryness” (v 12) reads like an echo of brjb “by the sword” (vv 4–6) and t wbfrj h “desolated” (v 7).

Boadt has sensitively split vv 13–19 into three sections, vv 13–14a, 14b–16a and 16b–19 (Ezekiel’s Oracles 74–75; Hossfeld offers a different threefold structure [Untersuchungen 201]). While each section mentions Egypt twice, the second also alternates two cities, Thebes and Pelusium, in a checkerboard sequence into which the two references to Egypt are integrated in an overall ABCACBA pattern. The other two sections both start their random lists of cities with Memphis.

The complex of small units has been supplied with a double inclusion, by echoing the “day” (µwy) and the “clouds” (/>. ) of vv 2b–3 in v 18. This is the only group of oracles in the Egyptian collection that lacks an initial dating. There is a scholarly tendency to use aesthetic appreciation as the bench mark of originality and so to credit Ezekiel with the first oracle, if any, because of its creative application of the “day of Yahweh” imagery to Egypt and because of its poetic form, at least in vv 2–4, 6 (cf. Eichrodt 415–18; Zimmerli 127–28). The oracle of vv 10–12, with its precise mention of Nebuchadnezzar, must antedate his attack on Egypt in 568 B.C.. It is not close enough to the previous oracle to be regarded as originating in a literary expansion of it—the meaning of µywg “nations” in v 3, where it is explained by “Egypt” and “Cush” (v 4), and in v 11 is quite different—and yet its similarities, especially the wordplay of (h) bfrj as “sword” and “dryness,” make it a fitting sequel. The verbal affinities with 28:7, 10 may indicate that language used concerning Tyre is deliberately being reapplied to Egypt.

The oracle in vv 13–19 seems consciously to be echoing at its close the earlier, distinctive “day of Yahweh” language, which suggests that it was written as a literary affirmation of the coming fall of Egypt. The recurrence of other phraseology from the first and second oracles (e.g., W py bfrj b “they will fall by the sword,” vv 5, 6, 17; ylw “and I will devastate,” vv 12, 14) points in the same direction. These criteria are more solidly grounded than Cooke’s modern distaste for a “haphazard enumeration of ... cities” (331). The listing of cities is a traditional prophetic technique in foreign and also domestic oracles (cf. Isa 15:1–9; Jer 48:1–5; Mic 1:10–16).

Comment

1–6 The concept of the day of Yahweh is well attested as a sinister prophetic figure of judgment against Israel or other nations. Ezekiel had made use of it in chap. 7 (see esp. 7:7), with Israel as its
target. Yet what threatened Israel threatened the nations also, according to the prophetic pattern (cf. Lam 1:21, RSV; Zeph 1:3–4, 18; 2:3; Obad 11–14, 15). In vv 2b–3 the announcement of the day begins with a traditional call to communal lamentation: of its three standard elements of a plural imperative, a vocative and an explanatory clause, only the second is absent (cf. Joel 1:5–14; Isa 13:6; cf. H. W. Wolff, Joel and Amos [ET Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972] 21–22). It is here combined with a cry of lamentation similar to Joel 1:15, while there too, as also in Isa 13:6, the explanation features the nearness of the day, the earliest known instance of which occurs in Zeph 1:7, 14. As a time of Yahweh’s intervention, his day was associated with motifs of theophany, attendant storm and “cloud” (cf. Zeph 1:15). The prophet seems to exploit older language and conceptions, which he applies to Egypt and to Ethiopia, its southern neighbor, in terms of death and devastation. The function of v 5 is to elaborate the reference to Ethiopia in v 4 as further victim of the coming destruction (cf. Eichrodt 414). Since it is in prose, it may have been added to the oral version of the oracle. It specifies auxiliary and mercenary troops in the Egyptian army and interestingly appears to include Jewish mercenaries (cf. B. Oded, Israeliite and Judean History, ed. J. H. Hayes and J. M. Miller [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977] 487). A mightier force would prove victor under Yahweh and bring about the subjection of Egypt, from south to north (cf. Comment on 29:10).

7–9 The superlatives for destruction, so telling that they were taken over in 29:12 (cf. Zimmerli 128, 130), describe a scenario that would be revelatory to its victims. The supplementary statement in v 9 imaginatively borrows from Isaiah’s oracle against Ethiopia in Isa 18:1–2. The detail of ambassadors sailing the Nile is used to help to draw a word picture of apprehension and dread.

10–12 The originally independent little oracle that follows grounds the coming destruction of Egypt in political actualities. Nebuchadnezzar is named as Yahweh’s agent and so, in this context, as the wielder of the sword of the previous oracle. The total devastation that was stated earlier in geographical terms (v 6b) is now expressed in the doubled reference to fullness (יָחַלְמָו “and they will fill,” v 11; חֲלָמָו “and its fullness,” v 12). The explicit reference to Nebuchadnezzar prompts the reader to ask how it relates to historical fact. There has survived a Babylonian fragment that mentions Nebuchadnezzar’s campaign against Egypt in his 37th year, in 586 B.C. (see ANET 308b; D. J. Wiseman, Chronicles of Chaldean Kings, London: British Museum, 1956, 94–95; CAH, vol. 3, 215, 304; Katzenstein, History of Tyre 338), but it seems to have achieved Egyptian acceptance of Nebuchadnezzar’s control of Palestine and Syria rather than his mastery of Egypt itself. The purpose of the early Egyptian oracles was to dash contemporary Judean hopes rather than to establish predictive
parameters of future history (see *Explanation* of 29:17–21). The strong language of destruction (and of exile in vv 17, 18, etc) characterizes Egypt as a political nonentity in the face of Yahweh’s sovereign will.

13–19 By its re-use of earlier language this literary oracle wants to reaffirm the message of the fall of Egypt. The message is set in a new framework of lists of cities, interspersed with references to Egypt as a whole. They serve to break up the mention of the land and its cities (v 7) and of Egypt and “its fullness” (vv 11–12) in a detailed and specific manner. In the first section, vv 13–14a, pride of place is given to Memphis, an important city of Lower Egypt, as doomed to lose its civil authorities and in this respect a paradigm for Egypt as a whole. Upper Egypt (“Pathros”) would not escape; Zoan in the eastern Delta would also suffer.

The second section, vv 14b–16a, selects two cities, northern and southern, as microcosms of fated Egypt, combining them in an artistic permutation. Thebes, a key city in Upper Egypt, is polarized with Pelusium in the N.E. Delta, a frontier city of military importance. In the last section, vv 16b–19, the singling out of specific targets begins with Memphis, as in the first section. It moves north to the adjacent city of On or Heliopolis and then further north to Pibeseth or Bubastis. It concludes with Tahpanhes in the N.E. Delta, and at the same time reverts to the opening theme of the first oracle, the day of Yahweh, first combining it with the traditional motif of darkness and then repeating the clouds of v 3. On a smaller scale, the smashing of Egypt’s political power echoes thematically the oracle’s own beginning (v 13a). By such means was Yahweh to break into the historical scene as a factor to be reckoned with.

*Explanation*

The prophet Joel, faced with a spiritually apathetic audience, stabbed it awake with the theme of the day of the Lord (Joel 1:15–2:11). It is reasonable to suppose that Ezekiel too made use of this ultimate weapon in the prophetic armory in order to add emotional vehemence to an unwelcome message. Did vv 1–9 originate in the Indian summer of 29:1, when expectations of Egyptian aid for a beleaguered Jerusalem ran high? If so, Ezekiel’s realistic message was that the only deus ex machina intervention to await was one in which Egypt would be the victim. The sinister language and grim associations of the day of the Lord are used at the start and finish to communicate this unpalatable truth. For all its military power, reinforced by allied and mercenary contingents, Egypt was to be no match for Yahweh and the destructive forces at his disposal. The message is part of Ezekiel’s larger agenda, that God’s way forward for his people lay only by way of frustration and loss.

The role of vv 10–12 is to accentuate the human and divine agencies at work against Egypt, combining to nullify Judean hopes. At Yahweh’s behest Nebuchadnezzar was to continue his conquests down into Egypt. It was Ezekiel’s way of emphasizing that the Judeans had put their political and providential eggs into the wrong basket. The final message means to underline the two earlier ones. By interweaving echoes of them into a recital of Egypt’s urban centers, it states that none of its cities was so great or so impregnable as to escape the wrath of God against those who challenged his will (cf. Rev 6:12–17).

cf. confer, compare
Egypt’s Broken Arms (30:20–26)

Translation

20 In the eleventh year, on the seventh of the first month, I received the following communication from Yahweh: 21 Human one, I have broken the arm of the Egyptian king Pharaoh. In fact it has not been bandaged to allow healing by applying a dressing, with the prospect of its getting strong enough to wield a sword. 22 Accordingly the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: I am an opponent of the Egyptian king Pharaoh. I intend to break both his arms, the strong one as well as the broken one, and make the sword drop out of his hand. 23 I will scatter the Egyptians among other nations, dispersing them in foreign countries. 24 I will strengthen the arms of the Babylonian king and put my sword into his hand; but I will break Pharaoh’s arms and he will face him with the groans of a dying person. 25 I will strengthen the arms of the Babylonian king, but Pharaoh’s arms will fall useless to his side. Then people will realize that I am Yahweh, when I have put my sword into the hand of the Babylonian king and he brandishes it over Egypt, country wide, and when I scatter the Egyptians among other nations, dispersing them in foreign countries—then they will realize that I am Yahweh.”

Notes

21.a. MT adds הָשבָתָת “(or) bandaging it,” not represented in LXX and otiose after הָשבָתָת “it was bandaged” earlier. To define it as a gloss on מַשְׁפָּר “by applying a dressing” (Zimmerli 136) seems unlikely: theoretically the opposite would be more feasible. In MT the phrase מַשְׁפָּר הָשַׁבָּתָת “to bandage it, to strengthen it” probably represents a doublet, with the correct reading standing beside an erroneous term written under the influence of הָשבָתָת “it was bandaged” earlier.

b 22.a. For the formulaic יְנָּדָא “Lord” see the note on 20:3.

b 22.b. Heb. תַּרְבּוֹת הָתַשְּׁמִית אֲנָחַו הָשַׁבָּתֵה בַּהוּ אֲנָחַו הָשַׁבָּתֵה “the strong one and the broken one” is often deleted as a clumsy attempt to harmonize the arms yet to be broken with the broken one of v 21 (Cooke 337; Eichrodt 419; Wevers 233). The ancient versions found difficulty with the phrase, seemingly on rationalizing grounds (cf. Zimmerli, ibid.).

b 24.a. In place of v 24b LXX has “and he will bring it upon Egypt and he will plunder it and loot it” (cf. BHS). This material seems to go back to two Heb. explanatory glosses, first, בֵּר יָבִימ “(I am) about to bring a sword upon you” from 29:8, and, second, הֶזָּב זָזָב וּלָה הָשַׁבָּתֵה בֵּר בֵּר “and he will plunder it and loot it” from 29:19. The first gloss was meant to elucidate v 25בּ “(when I put … Egypt”) and the second v 25בּ “(and he has brandished … Egypt”). The glosses were incorporated into the text, with the wrongful application of the first statement to Nebuchadnezzar; in the process they displaced v 24b. BHK and BHS have reversed the looting clauses in their notes (contrast Zimmerli 137): the evidence for retroversion of the terms in the LXX is not crystal clear, but tends to support an order as in 29:19.

b 25.a. The Heb. הָשַׁבָּתֵה over against the piel in v 24 exhibits a type of variation found in poetic parallel clauses, the use of two different conjugations of the same verb (cf. M. Dahood, Psalms 101–150 414; Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 32–33).

b 26.a. For this syntactical interpretation see Form/Structure/Setting.
bandaged” earlier. To define it as a gloss on \( \text{vt} \text{ μν} \) “by applying a dressing” (Zimmerli 136) seems unlikely: theoretically the opposite would be more feasible. In MT the phrase \( \text{hqzj} \text{ ṣb} \) “to bandage it, to strengthen it” probably represents a doublet, with the correct reading standing beside an erroneous term written under the influence of \( \text{ḥsb} \) “it was bandaged” earlier.

22.a. For the formulaic \( \text{ynd} \) “Lord” see the note on 20:3.

22.b. \text{Heb. tr b}[\text{h} \text{σw}]h \text{At} \ a \ w \ h \text{qzj} \ h \text{At a “the strong one and the broken one” is often deleted as a clumsy attempt to harmonize the arms yet to be broken with the broken one of v 21 (Cooke 337; Eichrodt 419; Wevers 233). The ancient versions found difficulty with the phrase, seemingly on rationalizing grounds (cf. Zimmerli, ibid.).}

24.a. In place of v 24b LXX has “and he will bring it upon Egypt and he will plunder it and loot it” (cf. \textit{BHS}). This material seems to go back to two \text{Heb.} explanatory glosses, first, \( \text{brj ûyl[y]} \text{ ybm “(I am) about to bring a sword upon you” from 29:8, and, second, h zb \ text{zzb w ṣw “and he will plunder it and loot it” from 29:19. The first gloss was meant to elucidate v 25bbg (“when I put … Egypt”) and the second v 25bg (“and he has brandished … Egypt”). The glosses were incorporated into the text, with the wrongful application of the first statement to Nebuchadnezzar; in the process they displaced v 24b. \textit{BHK} and \textit{BHS} have reversed the looting clauses in their notes (contrast Zimmerli 137): the evidence for retroversion of the terms in the LXX is not crystal clear, but tends to support an order as in 29:19.

25.a. The \text{Heb.} hiph over against the piel in v 24 exhibits a type of variation found in poetic parallel clauses, the use of two different conjugations of the same verb (cf. M. Dahood, \textit{Psalms 101–150 414}; Boadt, \textit{Ezekiel’s Oracles} 32–33).

26.a. For this syntactical interpretation see \textit{Form/Structure/Setting}.
Form/Structure/Setting

This unit is initially similar to 29:17–21 in following a dated message reception formula with a prophetic address that lacks a commission to speak, and then citing an established fact that is made the logical basis of a divine assurance. The oracle is a proof saying in view of the recognition formula(s) of vv 25b–26. However, its initial part is not an accusation, as the use of “therefore” in v 22 might suggest. Rather, in the context the conjunction has the looser sense of “accordingly,” in arguing from the past to the future. The repetitions in vv 22–26 suggest to the redaction critic that the passage has been worked over and amplified (cf. Cooke 335–36; Zimmerli 137–39). The rhetorical critic, on the other hand, although not averse to the possibility of redactional unity, wants to ask whether or not repetition has been used deliberately for emphasis. From this perspective the pronouncement of judgment may be understood in terms of three sections: a fourfold statement of Pharaoh’s overwhelming defeat (vv 22a–23), a fourfold statement of victory and defeat (v 24) and a double statement of victory and defeat (v 25a). Each section mentions royal arms, negatively in the first case and both positively and negatively in the other two. The recognition formula in v 25b is followed by two resumptive elements (v 25b–26), which look back to the second and first sections, respectively. Their length not unreasonably warranted a repetition of the recognition formula (cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1 39). Probably vv 25–26 together comprise a longer, climactic third section, which recapitulates the other two in a comprehensive summary. There seems to be no need to envisage v 21 as originally an independent oracle that was subsequently expanded (e.g., Fohrer 173–74; Zimmerli 137; contrast Eichrodt 420). Its motifs of Pharaoh’s broken arm and unused sword prepare well for the triple sequel. Boadt’s double chiastic scheme (Ezekiel’s Oracles 86), with a break after v 22, suffers from the defect of highlighting the role of the sword in vv 21–22 but ignoring it in v 24 (v 25b is judged to be an addition).

As to setting, both date and content suggest that news of the Babylonians’ repulse of the Egyptian attack had reached the exiles, in the period before the fall of Jerusalem.

Comment

20–21 Parker and Dubberstein’s reconstruction of the date is April 29, 587 B.C. (Babylonian Chronology 28). The significance of the date in Judah’s history is that it was about three months before the besieging Babylonians managed to break through the walls of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 25:3–4). The statement of v 21 implies that the Judean exiles had by now heard that Hophra’s attempt to come to the aid of Judah, while initially successful in drawing away the invaders, had failed (cf. Jer 34:21–22; 37:5). The information is cast in a standard theological turn of phrase (cf. Job 38:15; Ps 10:16[15]; Jer 48:25), in order to claim that a higher agenda than human conflict had been pursued and that Hophra had suffered a decisive defeat, as v 21b underlines. In content v 21 could stand by itself, but in form it looks forward to the sequel in vv 22–26.

22–26 Hophra’s military future is invested with even stronger negative language. It is stronger in intensity (“break arms,” as in Ps 37:17; cf. Job 22:9), in its series of repeated motifs and in its polarization of the defeat of the Egyptian king and the victory of the Babylonian king. Freedy and
Redford, *JAOS* 90 (1970) 471 note 39, 482, have plausibly seen in the breaking of two arms the defeat of a two-pronged attack by land and sea, of which the first had already been repulsed (cf. Boadt, *Ezekiel’s Oracles* 85). The reference to breaking the broken arm strains the metaphor, but is probably a case of passionate rhetoric outrunning reason. The final section in vv 25–26 adds its own emphasis by using the recognition formula to recapitulate the most telling statements, that the Babylonian king was to be Yahweh’s swordsman in attacking Egypt and that so utter would be Egypt’s eventual defeat that deportation would occur. It may be that we are to see in the vehemence of this oracle a psychic presentiment of the Persian king Cambyses’ brutal conquest of Egypt in 525 B.C..

**Explanation**

Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel had the difficult task of communicating to his Judean hearers an unpatriotic message. Elsewhere he established on moral grounds the prophetic truth that Yahweh’s judgment was at work in the fall of Jerusalem. As a corollary he had to counter jingoistic hopes with theological cold comfort. His vehement language was a loud and repeated “no” to the nervous optimism of his compatriots. If Judah was doomed by divine decree, so too were all attempts to save it. The prophet’s yearning was that not only his fellow exiles but all people would confess the lordship of Yahweh and assent to his sovereign will (cf. Isa 45:23–25; Phil 2:10–11). Before such a hope all lesser hopes had to wither.

**The Felling of the Egyptian Cosmic Tree** *(31:1–18)*

**Bibliography**

Translation

In the eleventh year, on the first of the third month, I received the following communication from Yahweh:

With what do you compare in your magnificence?

There was a cypress or a cedar in Lebanon

with beautiful branches

and lofty height,

whose top was up in the clouds.

Water made it so magnificent,

the deep made it grow so tall,

letting its currents flow around where it was planted,

and sending its channels to all the trees in the countryside (?).
5That is why its height became more lofty than all the other trees in the countryside. Its branches grew large, its boughs grew long because of abundant water in its shoots.a

6Every bird in the sky used its branches for nesting, and every animal in the countryside gave birth to its young beneath its boughs, while every powerful nation livedb in its shade.

7It was magnificently beautiful with its long limbs, because its root system had access to abundant water.

8Other cedars could not rivala it in God’s garden, junipersb could not match its branches nor could plane treesc compare with its boughs. No tree in God’s garden was like it, such beauty did it have.

9I made it a beautiful thing with its abundant limbs,

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a 5.a. V 5 has been regarded as a later addition because of its Aramaisms a h b q “it was high” and wyt p “its branches” (contrast the form in vv 6, 8). Boadt (Ezekiel’s Oracles 108) suggests stylistic variation. LXX* lacks one of the parallel clauses in v 5b, and the deletion of the second is sometimes counseled (Cornill 375; BHS), but v 12 seems to echo it in a contrast. Boadt (Ezekiel’s Oracles, ibid.) has noted the parallelism of b “great” and t “long” in the credal statement of Exod 34:6, etc MT wj “when it sent forth (branches?)” is difficult and perhaps for that reason not represented in LXX*. It may be a short writing for wj l “in its shoots” (Cornill 375–76; RSV) or “in its channels” (Bewer, The Book of Ezekiel, vol. 2, 31; NEB).

b 6.a. For MT’s impf. wb “they lived,” read by many MSS and implied by the ancient versions, seems to be required.

c 7.a. The parallelism suggests that the stem means “be comparable with”: see 28:3 Note.

d 8.a. The parallelism suggests that the stem means “be comparable with”: see 28:3 Note.

e 8.b. See 27:5 Note.

f 8.c. Heb. ðmr “is the oriental plane, Platanus orientalis (Zohary, Plants of the Bible 129).

r 9.a. wyt “I made it beautiful,” not represented in LXX*, is often regarded as a theological gloss. However, Cooke (341) noted that the motif of divine agency accords with vv 11, 15.
and it was the envy of all of Eden’s trees, which were in God’s garden.

10 That is why the Lord Yahweh’s message is as follows: Inasmuch as it was so lofty in height, putting its top up in the clouds, and its pride soared with its height, 11 I handed it over to a leader of nations, to deal with it as its wickedness warranted. I expelled it. 12 and aliens, the most terrible in the world, cut it down. They hurled it on the mountains. Its limbs fell into every valley, its boughs lay broken in every ravine on the earth. All the peoples in the world fled from its shade, when it was hurled out. 13 On its fallen trunk perched every bird in the sky, while over its boughs prowled every animal in the countryside. 14 This happened to stop any watered trees gaining such lofty height and putting their tops up in the clouds, or any irrigated trees reaching up to them by means of their height. In fact they have all been assigned to death, to the underworld, to share the human lot, to join those who descend to the Pit.

the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: On the day it descended to Sheol, I caused
the deep to mourn for it. I restrained its currents—the abundant water was held back. I dressed Lebanon in black for it, and every tree in the countryside fainted over it. At the noise of its fall I made nations quake, when I brought it down to Sheol to be with all who descend to the Pit. In the underworld every one of Eden’s trees, the choicest of Lebanon, every irrigated tree, was gratified. They too descended with it to Sheol, to join victims of violent death, while those among the nations who once lived in its shade perished. With what do you compare in such splendor and magnificence among Eden’s trees? Yet you will be brought down with Eden’s trees to the underworld, to live among the uncircumcised, along with victims of violent death. This is all about Pharaoh and his entire army. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.”

Notes

2.a. For the sense “what” for מ (normally “who”) see Driver, Bib 35 (1954) 300.
3.a. Heb. וָמָא is problematic. RSV “I will liken you to” adopts the emendation וָוּא (וָוּא) in (BHK). It may be a variant of וָמָא “cypress” (27:6; for similar variants see Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 99) or a miswriting for it (cf. BHS et al.). If it means “Assyria,” then vv 3–17 are a metaphorical description of

15.a. MT “I inflicted mourning, I covered the deep over it” is difficult. V 15b suggests that here the deep is made to mourn. LXX* does not represent וָמָא “I covered,” which may be a gloss linking with 26:19 (Cornill 379).
16.a. MT לָוַּא seems to be pointed as a noun or adj: it is generally repointed as a verb לָוַּא “fainted.”
16.a. Heb. לָוַא has a pregnant force “so as to be with” (Cooke 345), in as 26:20.
16.b. MT adds לָוַּא “and best” in a difficult double construction (cf. GKC 128a note 1). Its absence from LXX* may indicate a conflated text in MT.
17.a. MT “and his arm, they lived in his shade among the nations” makes no sense. LXX (cf. Syr.) implies לָוַּא מָלְוָיִּים and (those who lived …) perished (Bertholet 110; Fohrer 175; Zimmerli 145). LXX לָוַּא מָלְוָיִּים “they perished” at the end of v 17 (see BHS) may represent an incorporated gloss to this effect. Driver repointed to לָוַּא מָלְוָיִּים and … were scattered” ( = NEB) with appeal to Syr. זר cent. (Bib 19 [1938] 179), but a reference to death seems to be required (cf. Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 121).
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Biblica
Heb. Hebrew
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
the past power of Assyria (Ehrlich, Randglossen 115–16; Joüon, Bib 10 [1910] 309 note 1; van den Born 188; Haag, Wort 172–73; Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 46–48; NEB). But v 18 implies that the question of v 2b is rhetorical rather than literally answered by reference to Assyria. Vv 3–8, rather than answering the initial question, draw a metaphorical parallel between Pharaoh or Egypt and an incomparable tree (cf. v 8; Smend 246). “When we follow the connection of ideas, we cannot fail to see that Assyria is not in the prophet’s thoughts at all” (Skinner 272)

3.b. MT adds  lx m  wr y “(beautiful as to branches) and as to shade-giving growth” or “and overshadowing the wood.” LXX* does not represent the phrase, which does not accord with the parallelism of the accompanying phrases. Ehrlich (Randglossen 116) plausibly explained it, with the sense “shady growth,” as a gloss on µ y t wb [ , understanding it as “interwoven foliage” (cf. BDB 721b).

3.c. Ezekiel consistently uses the form µ y t wb [ for t wb [ “clouds,” in 19:11; 31:3, 10, 14. See the Note on 19:11.

4.a. MT û lh “going” seems somehow to have the tree as subject. LXX implies h k | h o “(the deep) made to go,” a good external parallel with h j | w “it sent” in the next line.

4.b. MT H[ f m must be pointed with a masc suffix h[ b m “its place of planting” since the tree is masc..

4.c. This reading is universally attested, but can hardly be right, since (i) it fails to explain the superiority of the special tree (v 5a) and (ii) external parallelism requires a reference to the tree itself. Early vertical dittography could account for the present text, but, if so, what originally stood there is irrecoverable (cf. BHS). Ehrlich (Randglossen 116) attempted to explain the text on the supposition that h l t “watercourse, channel” was much smaller than f h “river,” and so supplied less water.

5.a. V 5 has been regarded as a later addition because of its Aramaisms  ah b q “it was high” and wt p [ r s “its branches” (contrast the form in vv 6, 8). Boadt (Ezekiel’s Oracles 108) suggests stylistic variation. LXX* lacks one of the parallel clauses in v 5b, and the deletion of the second is sometimes

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et al. et alii, and others

Biblica

NEB The New English Bible
cf. confer, compare

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare


MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
masc. masculine
cf. confer, compare

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
counseled (Cornill 375; BHS), but v 12 seems to echo it in a contrast. Boadt (Ezekiel’s Oracles, ibid.) has noted the parallelism of בְּרַצְנָה “great” and מַעַל “long” in the credal statement of Exod 34:6, etc. MT וַיִּצְאָם “when it sent forth (branches?)” is difficult and perhaps for that reason not represented in LXX*. It may be a short writing for וַיֶּשַׁבֶּל “in its shoots” (Cornill 375–76; RSV) or “in its channels” (Bewer, The Book of Ezekiel, vol. 2, 31; NEB).

6.a. For MT’s impf. וָלְךָ וָצלִּיתוֹ “they lived,” read by many MSS and implied by the ancient versions, seems to be required.

8.a. The parallelism suggests that the stem means “be comparable with”: see 28:3 Note.

8.b. See 27:5 Note.

8.c. Heb. יָשָׁבוּ is the oriental plane, Platanus orientalis (Zohary, Plants of the Bible 129).

9.a. וָלֶא בַּיָּנִים “I made it beautiful,” not represented in LXX*, is often regarded as a theological gloss. However, Cooke (341) noted that the motif of divine agency accords with vv 11, 15.

10.a. For the formulaic יָדָה “Lord” here and in vv 15, 18 see 20:3 Note.

10.b. MT “you,” supported by LXX, accords with the direct address of vv 2b, 18, but conflicts with the present context. Syr. Vg presuppose a third person form הָבּוּ which is generally read.

11.a. MT וַיְהִי־בָּתַנְא “and I will give it,” influenced by the later impf. יָכְשַׂר “he will deal.” LXX Vg correctly imply וַיְהִי־בָּתַנְא “and I have given it”.

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensis, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

ibid. ibidem, in the same place
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
vol. volume
NEB The New English Bible
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
impf. imperfect
pf perfect
MSS manuscript(s)
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
impf. imperfect
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
11.b. The strange fut reference of הָשָׁעָיו יִשְׁחָט "he will deal" has led to the suggestion that v 11b is a later addition (Zimmerli 144; Wevers 237). For הָשָׁעָיו יִשְׁחָט "he will surely deal," יִשְׁחָט יִשְׁחָט "and he dealt" is sometimes read (e.g., Fohrer 175; Eichrodt 424). MT’s punctuation is rather unnatural (“he will surely deal with him; according to his wickedness I drove him out”), although Driver has endeavored to justify it by recourse to another stem שָׁעָה יִשְׁחָט “expose to scorn,” cognate with Arab. jarasa (Bib 19 [1938] 178; = NEB “I made an example of it as its wickedness deserved”). It was probably an attempt to accommodate the otherwise staccato final verbal form.

11.c. The final verb is best taken with v 12, so that parallel statements are made in vv 11–12a: “I … and he …, I … and they …” (Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 114).

12.a. For this meaning of שָׁעָה יִשְׁחָט see 29:5 Note.

12.b. MT וָדְרוּ יָרְמָה “and they went down” is supported by the ancient versions, but is a strange verb. Hitzig’s proposal וָדְדִי יָרְמָה “and they fled” (241), from דְּדָנ "retreat, flee" used of birds and beasts in Jer 4:25; 9:9, is graphically feasible. The use of the verb in Dan 4:11(14) may well be dependent on its original presence here. Conceivably וָדְדָנ וָדְדוּ יָרְמָה “and they went down from its shade” in MT suffered assimilation to וָדְדָנ וָדְדוּ יָרְמָה “they went down … in its shade” in v 17.

12.c. Heb. וָהָשָׁעָה יָרְמָה “and they flung it” seems redundant. Driver, Bib 35 (1954) 301, took it to mean that all the others joined the aliens in their attack.

13.a. Heb. וָהָשָׁעָה יָרְמָה “they will rest (?)” may be an error for וָשָׁעָה יָרְמָה “they rested” by pseudodittography, but it could be a frequentative impf. .

14.a. MT מֵהָשָׁעָה יָרְמָה “their leaders” seems to have been influenced by מֵיָרְמָה יָרְמָה “leader” in v 11 and should be repointed מֵהָשָׁעָה יָרְמָה "to them (= the clouds)” in line with a minority masoretic tradition and LXX Tg. (Ehrlich, Randglossen 117).

15.a. MT “I inflicted mourning, I covered the deep over it” is difficult. V 15b suggests that here the deep is made to mourn. LXX* does not represent יָרְמָה יָרְמָה “I covered,” which may be a gloss linking with

e.g. exempli gratia, for example
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Bib Biblica
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Heb. Hebrew
Bib Biblica
Heb. Hebrew
impf. imperfect
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
26:19 (Cornill 379).

15.b. MT הּ פָּל־לְּעַנּ רוּבָּה seems to be pointed as a noun or adj: it is generally repointed as a verb הּ פָּל־לְּעַנּ רוּבָּה fainted.”

16.a. Heb. † רָעָה has a pregnant force “so as to be with” (Cooke 345), as in 26:20.

16.b. MT adds בַּרְנֶֽפֶר “and best” in a difficult double construction (cf. GKC 128a note 1). Its absence from LXX* may indicate a conflated text in MT.

17.a. MT “and his arm, they lived in his shade among the nations” makes no sense. LXX (cf. Syr.) implies יְבַשְׂשָׁנּי לְֽעָלִי וּרְשׁוֹפֶּה “and his descendants who lived … ” The most feasible of a number of emendations is יְבַשְׂשָׁנּי לְֽעָלִי וּרְשׁוֹפֶּה and (those who lived …) perished” (Bertholet 110; Fohrer 175; Zimmerli 145). LXX אֵפְּרְשָׁנּוּ טוּרָנִּים they perished” at the end of v 17 (see BHS) may represent an incorporated gloss to this effect. Driver repointed to וּרְשׁוֹפֶּה and … were scattered” (= NEB) with appeal to Syr. שֶׁרְשָׁמָה. (Bib 19 [1938] 179), but a reference to death seems to be required (cf. Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 121).

18.a. Heb. הָאָמַר “thus” is used strangely here, which may explain the variant יְבַשְׂשָׁנּי לְֽעָלִי “with strength” underlying Theod. (see BHS).

Form/Structure/Setting

Chap. 31 is distinguished as a literary unit by the dated oracular introduction of vv 1–2a. The initial
messenger formulas in vv 10 and 15 and the final one in v 18 point to three smaller units, vv 2b–9, 10–14 and 15–18. There are structural indications that lend support to these divisions: an inclusion expressing incomparability marks the first (t ymd ymA ł a “with what do you compare?” in v 2b; wyI a h md a l “did not compare with it” in v 8b), and a triple inclusion marks the second (ABC ... ABC: v 10, resumed in v 14a). The whole piece is bound together by a double, chiastic inclusion, relating to interpretation and to incomparability (AB ... BA: vv 2a, b, 18a, b) [Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 48]). It functions as a judgment oracle, as the telltale ÷kl “therefore” in v 10 reveals. The oracle is explicitly directed against Pharaoh and his army. Accordingly, the poem of vv 2b–9 has the role of an implicit accusation, which becomes explicit in the rephrasing of v 10. After the direct rhetorical question of v 2b, the story is told of a magnificent tree, a mythological cosmic tree. From v 10 the story takes a sinister turn as the tree is accused of pride and wickedness, and Yahweh describes how he had it cut down and humiliated. In vv 15–17 the ritual mourning for the tree and its descent to Sheol are related, while v 18 returns to the present and to direct address in a threat of future punishment that echoes the language of Sheol used earlier. V 18 has a summarizing role, presenting the chapter in a nutshell and with greater clarity.

A striking phenomenon in vv 3–17 is the use of past tenses, which resembles the style of a h Ṿyq or funeral dirge that Ezekiel often uses elsewhere. The device, as it does in the formal dirge, serves to characterize the coming downfall of Egypt as a prophetic certainty, already decreed in the counsels of Yahweh (cf. Zimmerli 148). Moreover, the movement from glory to destruction and the reference in v 15 to mourning (cf. Parunak, Structural Studies 400) also fits the prophetic dirge as Ezekiel used it. It is therefore less likely that the verbs relate to the past and so to the Babylonian defeat of Egypt’s military attempt to relieve besieged Jerusalem (Freedy and Redford, JAOS 90 [1970] 472), an interpretation that necessitates the omission of v 11b. The chapter is complex in form. It has the force of a judgment oracle, yet uses the past perspective of a lament. It relies heavily on allegory. However, the allegory wears thin as the chapter goes on and, with its mixture of real and unreal features, takes on more of the character of a political fable (cf. Solomon, “Fable” 119).

The chronological setting of the piece given in v 1, two months later than the previous indication in 30:20, accords with the contents and with historical events. Its lack of awareness of the actualities of the ongoing siege of Jerusalem suits its composition away in exile. The oracle probably contains little adaptation from its original form. V 5 has been regarded as an addition because of its Aramaisms, but it fits its context well. V 14 has greater claim to be considered redactional: its generalized warning makes use of information yet to be given in vv 17–18 (cf. Cooke 342). Stylistically, however, like the additions in chap. 27, it has been made to fit snugly by the use of inclusion.

Comment

1–2a The date in Parker and Dubberstein’s reconstruction (Babylonian Chronology 28) corresponds to June 21, 587 B.C., while the siege of Jerusalem was still taking its relentless course. Ezekiel has yet again to deal with an obsession that gripped the minds of the exiles, a continuing obsession that Pharaoh would ride to the rescue of the beleaguered city.

2b–4 After the initial question the poem of vv 3–9 divides into three strophes, vv 3–4, 5–6 and 7–9,
each of which begins with the size of the tree and moves to the supply of water (cf. Parunak, *Structural Studies* 401–2). The rhetorical question concerning Pharaoh in his military might gives way to an allegory of a cosmic tree. The parallel is a flattering one, and by it Ezekiel is empathizing with the dreams of his compatriots. The beauty and height of the tree and its unfailing water supply (cf. Gen 49:25; Deut 33:13) are admiringly described.

The motif of the cosmic tree is well attested in ancient mythology. It presents the living world as an enormous tree with its roots in the subterranean deep and its top in the clouds, a shelter for every living being. It is a separate motif from that of the tree of life, although the two were often linked, as later in this poem. The motif came to greatest prominence in Indian and Scandinavian mythology. There is some evidence of it in Sumerian and Mesopotamian literature (cf. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Literature* 271–73; Gowan, *When Man Becomes God* 103–5; Zimmerli 146), and it must have been from Mesopotamian culture that Ezekiel became aware of it and utilized it for the allegory. Whether the royal application he made depends on a previous association of the tree of life with royalty, as the embodiment of human life and power (cf. Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life* 42–58) or whether this development was Ezekiel’s own contribution from Israelite tradition in which monarchy and tree language were associated (Gowan, *When Man Becomes God* 111; cf. Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5; Ezek 17; 19:10–14) is uncertain. It may be that both sources come to a nice meeting point here.

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The second strophe develops like the first, but moves to the tree’s cosmic dimensions, alluding to the political power wielded by its Egyptian representative. The royal application of the tree imagery is evident in the reference to “nations.”

The second strophe, after repeating the two parallel characterizations of the earlier two, returns to the note of incomparability struck at the beginning of the piece and also reiterates the beauty of the tree. In the statement of v 9a there appears to be a variant of the reference to water as the cause of the tree’s beauty (cf. v 7a, b). The tree, for all its assets, is not self-made or self-perpetuating, but has a function within a larger scheme of creative force, to which it is subordinate. The expressions of incomparability blend the motifs of the cosmic tree and the tree of life by referring to the Israelite conceptions of Eden or the garden of God, traditionally a grove of trees (cf. Eichrodt’s caution, however, against identifying the streams of the deep with the rivers of Paradise [427]. Haag [*Wort, Lied und Gottesspruch* 177–78] goes too far in seeking to harmonize the chapter with Gen 2–3).

The idyllic tone of the previous poem now takes a sinister turn with the use of language associated with pronouncement of divine judgment. The tree’s height is associated with pride by means of a semantic twist not alien to Hebrew usage (וַתִּמֹּסְר “made it tall,” v 4;׃ מָה בֵּית יִשֵּׁר “its heart became high,” v 10; cf. Isa 2:12). The cosmic tree myth is strikingly abandoned in the divine command to fell the tree. While vv 3–4 (or 5) are echoed in the accusation of v 10, in vv 12–13 the language of vv 5–8 is repeated in a shocking reversal. The tree’s former power and protective role are mocked as beasts roam over the dead trunk.

V 14 stands aside from the narrative as an interlude. It extends the horizon of the judgment into a warning to all other nations who are tempted ambitiously to follow Egypt’s lead and soar away from
their roots. In so doing, they virtually forget their grounding in a source of life not inherently their own ("watered trees," "irrigated trees"), and so forget too that creaturely mortality is their lot (cf. v 17).

15–18 The allegory fades into a description of human bereavement, in a development of the human allusions introduced in vv 10–11. The falling of the tree (vv 13, 16) is equated with its descent to Sheol (vv 15–17). The mourning for the dead tree instigated by Yahweh is blended with the withdrawal of the life-giving waters of the deep, in a reversal of vv 4–5. Yahweh’s positive control over the tree, unacknowledged, becomes a negative and destructive force. Lebanon’s forest and the trees of the countryside (vv 3–4) now have a new role as mourners. The allegory lingers, however, since the mourning of nature was an established Hebrew concept (cf. Isa 24:7; 33:9; Joel 1:10, 12). The references to the trees of Eden and Lebanon in v 16 merge the natural and mythological concepts of vv 3 and 9. At this point they have become mere ciphers for other great powers who have already waned, but the note of reversal is still dominant: envy (v 9) gives way to consolation and satisfaction, now that their powerful survivor has in turn been toppled. The reference to “those slain by the sword” (זֵרְעַיִם) together with mention of the “uncircumcised” in v 18 suggests a grimmer experience in the shadowy afterlife than most underwent. Lods plausibly argued that here, as in 28:10 and in chap. 32, there is an echo of an Israelite custom, for which there are anthropological parallels in other cultures, that infants who died before they were circumcised were buried separately from other people’s remains and that this difference gave rise to a belief in a difference of experience in Sheol itself (Comptes rendus [1943] 279–83). In turn Eissfeldt has urged that זֵרְעַיִם means murdered or executed persons and so victims of violent death, who were likewise treated differently in their burial and, by a natural extension of thought, in the underworld (cf. Isa 14:19–20; Studies in OT Prophecy 73–81).

V 18 provides a clear interpretation of the allegory in its developed form, pairing present magnificence and future doom in a shocking blend that is facilitated by the double role of “Eden’s trees” (vv 9, 16).

Explanation

Outright denial does not necessarily change an opponent’s mind. Here Ezekiel was faced with the task of persuading his fellow exiles to forget their optimistic hopes that Hophra’s military forces would be a match for the Babylonians besieging Jerusalem. He shrewdly begins by sharing their positive assessment of Egypt. Pharaoh was indeed the embodiment of a world power, magnificent in its impression of permanence. As such, he corresponded to the cosmic tree of ancient lore, filling his observers’ horizon with his fascinating prestige. Essentially, however, his continued vitality was derived from a source outside himself, like the subterranean water supply of the cosmic tree. This element of contingency struck a warning note for those with ears to hear. The virtual hymn to Pharaoh suddenly turns into an oracular pronouncement of punishment for his lofty pride. The scenario changes into woodcutters at work, leaving a fallen giant of a tree, like some California redwood, lying inert and powerless over an enormous expanse of ground.

The great embodiment of throbbing vitality is forced to take the low road to death and the underworld. As nearly as Ezekiel is able to express it culturally, it is a descent to hell. The question of v 2 is repeated ironically at the end. The incomparable finally meets his match in the one who has power of life and death. The greatest of trees in God’s garden has the gardener to answer to.

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

OT Old Testament
V 14 is already aware that the piece speaks far beyond its own concerns of feasibility of Egyptian relief of Jerusalem. Secular power has its temporal and moral limits. In God’s world ideological pride in human achievement is doomed to end in destruction. It was a lesson that the book of Daniel would need to proclaim afresh, finding literary inspiration for its fourth chapter in this very allegory. The Christian Church too, liable to be deceived by the empty promises of the world, needs to be ready to take this lesson to heart (cf. 1 Cor 1:28–31; 1 John 2:16–17).

The Slaying of the Egyptian Dragon (32:1–16)

Bibliography


Translation

1 In the twelfth year, on the first of the twelfth month, I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2 “Human one, utter a lament for the Egyptian king Pharaoh and tell him:

You lion of the nations, you are undone! a
Once you were like the monster b in the seas,
splashing in your rivers, c
disturbing the water with your feet
and fouling its rivers.

3 The message of the Lord b Yahweh is as follows:

cf. confer, compare
CUP Cambridge University Press
BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
a 1.a. The minority reading “eleventh” (see BHS) is an attempt to cope with the difficulties of the next date in v 17, in such a way as to ensure consecutive dating. See further v 17 Note*.

b 1.b. There are two stems המד. One occurs in the niph conjugation, as here, with the sense “be destroyed,” while the other, meaning “be like,” is not so used. Ehrlich (Randglossen 119) suggested that the niph, related to the latter stem, had a reflexive sense “you considered yourself” and that the next clause was adversative “but (you are only) … ” (cf. RSV; Eichrodt 430, Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles, 129). The series of echoes of v 2 in vv 13–14a suggests that destruction is here in view, as in v 13a.

b 1.c. Since Ewald, ית מ and י י are “(you snorted) in your nostrils,” but it should be retained with Gunkel (Schöpfung 72 note 4), Boadt (Ezekiel’s Oracles 132) and Day (God’s Conflict 94 note 25). It is a good parallel to יבם denen “in the seas”; see further Form/Structure/Setting.
I will spread my net over you\(^b\) and bring\(^c\) you up in my mesh.  
Then I will throw\(^a\) you on the land, hurling\(^b\) you down to the ground.  
I will invite all the birds in the sky to settle on you and get all the beasts of the earth\(^c\) to gorge on you.  
I will put your flesh on the mountains and fill the valleys with your bulk.\(^a\)  
I will soak the land with your body fluid\(^a\) and the ravines will be filled with your blood.\(^b\)  
When you are extinguished,\(^a\) I will cover the sky and black out all its stars.

\(^{a}\) For the formulaic ynda “Lord” here and in vv 8, 11, 14, 16 see 20:3 \textit{Note}.  
\(^{b}\) MT adds μyb r μym[ l ḫq b “with a company of many peoples,” the first word of which is not represented in LXX*, which has “(nets of = yvt ḫr ) many nations.” The genitive phrase is used at vv 9, 10 not in terms of the agents of the catastrophe, but in terms of reaction to it, and the metaphorical language of the context makes it unwelcome here. Moreover, the rest of the passage envisages Yahweh as agent. Cornill (382) plausibly saw the influence of 19:8 here. At a later stage l ḫq b (cf. 26:7) was inserted to ease the addition into the sentence (Jahn 220; Zimmerli 155).  
\(^{c}\) MT ūw [[ ḫ w“and they will bring you up” appears to be an adaptation of ūyṭ y[ l ḫ w“and I will bring you up,” presupposed by LXX Vg: the overall context favors a verb with Yahweh as subject. MT is the consequence of the previous amplification.

\(^{a}\) For this rendering of the verb see 29:5 \textit{Note} and cf. Boadt, \textit{Ezekiel’s Oracles} 136.  
\(^{b}\) LXX πεδία πληθος qn et aliv ou “plains will be full of you” appears to be a rendering of v 6b ūmm ÷walmy µyqypaw “and valleys will be full of you,” which evidently slipped here and probably displaced the original Gr. rendering of v 4ab because of the common factor of πεδιον, which is used to render both ḥḍz “countryside” and qypa “valley” in adjacent chapters of the LXX (see 31:12, 15; 34:27; 35:8).  
\(^{c}\) For MT’s anomalous Ār aḥ Al k ṭyj “beasts of all the earth” a few MSS and LXX* Syr. attest Ār aḥ ṭyj Al k “all the beasts of the earth.”

\(^{a}\) Heb. ṭwmr apparently means “heap,” although the form of the noun is strange. S Syr. took as t/Mr i “worms.” LXX presupposes at this point two Heb. glosses, apatou’aihatov sou “from your blood” representing ūmd m which relates to v 6 and displaced the similar-looking ūt wmr ; and pas’ant h n qn “all the land,” representing Ār aḥ ḥ l k, which was intended as a reference to the variant Ār aḥ Al k ṭyj (= MT) “beasts of all the earth” in v 4, but it displaced ṭwgh “the valleys.”

\(^{a}\) MT adds ūmd m “with, of your blood,” which came into the text as a correction of ūmm “from you” in v 6b (see \textit{BHS}). MT also inserts y ḫ h Al a “to the mountains,” originally intended as a variant for y ḫ h Al [ “on the mountains” in v 5 (Ehrlich, \textit{Randglossen} 120).  
\(^{b}\) MT ūmm “from, with you” seems to be an accidental miswriting for ūmd m “from, with your blood”: see the previous note.  
\(^{a}\) MT ṭ[bbk] implies “when (I) extinguish you” (cf. \textit{GKC} 115e note 1). More naturally, however, one would point as a qal ṭ[bbk] “when you are extinguished,” as LXX Syr. Vg imply (Cornill 384 et al. ). Cooke (356) and Wevers (242) regard MT as having an indefinite subj and so pass in sense.
The sun I will cover with clouds,  
and the moon will not bear its light.  
8 All the light bearers in the sky  
I will black out on your account  
and I will bring darkness over your land.  
So runs the Lord Yahweh's oracle.

9 "I will distress many people's minds when I bring your broken parts among the nations, to countries unknown to you. 10 I will fill many peoples with horror at your fate. The hair of their kings will stand on end because of you, when I wave my sword in their faces. Each of them will tremble in agitation for his own life on the day you fall.

11 "The explanatory message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: The sword of the Babylonian king will reach you.

12 I will make your army fall to the swords of warriors,  
all of them the cruelest in the world.  
They will ravage Egypt's source of pride,  
and all its army will perish.  
13 I will destroy all its animals  
beside an abundance of water.  
No more will it be disturbed by human foot  
nor will animal hooves disturb it.  
14 Then I will make their water clear  
and cause their rivers to flow smooth as oil.  
So runs the Lord Yahweh's oracle.

15 "When I reduce Egypt to a ruin  
and the land is ruinously stripped of all that fills it,  
when I strike down all who live there—  
then they will realize that I am Yahweh.

16 Such is the lament that will be chanted. Women among the nations will chant it. Over Egypt and

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9.a. LXX implies ὑπὸ βῆς “your captivity,” which appears to suit the context. However, Boadt (145) has observed that in Ezek ὑπὸ always occurs with ἔλθῃ “go” and is not used in threats of exile. MT ὑπὸ βῆς “your breaking” may be used in the concrete sense “your broken army” (NEB; cf. Tg.’s paraphrase “your war-broken ones”).

10.a. Heb יָדְו לֵּבֶן is probably to be derived from יָדְ לֵּבֶן “fly”; cf. Zimmerli’s discussion (156).


11.a. Heb יָכ “for.”

15.a. MT את א may be derived from את “the land of (Egypt),” not represented in LXX, is probably a comparative gloss, harmonizing with 29:12.

15.b. MT has a participial form מְשַׁרְתָּם “and ruined”: it is more naturally pointed as a consec pf מְשַׁרְתָּם “and will be ruined,” which the ancient versions imply. For the pregnant construction with מ From “cf. 12:19.

15.c. LXX renders in terms of scattering (cf. BHS), but it is interpretative rather than of textual significance (Boadt 149). For the Heb. verb cf. Deut 13:16.
all its army they will chant it. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.”

Notes

1.a. The minority reading “eleventh” (see BHS) is an attempt to cope with the difficulties of the next date in v 17, in such a way as to ensure consecutive dating. See further v 17 Note*.

2.a. There are two stems h md. One occurs in the niph conjugation, as here, with the sense “be destroyed,” while the other, meaning “be like,” is not so used. Ehrlich (Randglossen 119) suggested that the niph, related to the latter stem, had a reflexive sense “you considered yourself” and that the next clause was adversative “but (you are only) …” (cf. RSV; Eichrodt 430, Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles, 129). The series of echoes of v 2 in vv 13–14a suggests that destruction is here in view, as in v 13a.

2.b. For the Heb. form see 29:3 Note.

2.c. Since Ewald, ū ʾyt ṃ r ṃ nb “in your rivers” has generally been emended to ū ʾyt ṃ r ṃ nb “(you smothered) in your nostrils,” but it should be retained with Gunkel (Schöpfung 72 note 4), Boadt (Ezekiel’s Oracles 132) and Day (God’s Conflict 94 note 25). It is a good parallel to μ ymyb “in the seas”; see further Form/Structure/Setting.

3.a. For the formulaic ynt ḳ “Lord” here and in vv 8, 11, 14, 16 see 20:3 Note.

3.b. MT adds μ yb r μ ym[ h mb “with a company of many peoples,” the first word of which is not represented in LXX*, which has “(nets of = ʾyt ʾbr ) many nations.” The genitive phrase is used at vv 9, 10 not in terms of the agents of the catastrophe, but in terms of reaction to it, and the metaphorical language of the context makes it unwelcome here. Moreover, the rest of the passage envisages Yahweh as agent. Cornill (382) plausibly saw the influence of 19:8 here. At a later stage ʾ h mb (cf. 26:7) was inserted to ease the addition into the sentence (Jahn 220; Zimmerli 155).

3.c. MT ū ḡ ṃ “and they will bring you up” appears to be an adaptation of ū ʾyt yl ʾ h mb “and I will bring you up,” presupposed by LXX Vg: the overall context favors a verb with Yahweh as subject. MT

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BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

* 17.a. MT lacks a month (cf. 26:1). It may be that the month mentioned in v 1 is to be understood (Cooke 350; Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 152). LXX* refers to the first month, but it seems to be interpreting the present text, and its form is linguistically suspect (Zimmerli 163).

niph Niphal

cf. confer, compare

RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)

Heb. Hebrew

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)

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is the consequence of the previous amplification.

4.a. For this rendering of the verb see 29:5 Note and cf. Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 136.

4.b. LXX pediav plhs qhs et aivos ou “plains will be full of you” appears to be a rendering of v 6b ὑμίν ὑπὲρ ὑπὸ ἡμῖν “valleys will be full of you,” which evidently slipped here and probably displaced the original Gr. rendering of v 4ab because of the common factor of pedion, which is used to render both ἡδοί “countryside” and ὄψις “valley” in adjacent chapters of the LXX (see 31:12, 15; 34:27; 35:8).

4.c. For MT’s anomalous ἄρα h λk t γj “beasts of all the earth” a few MSS and LXX* Syr. attest ἄρα h t γj λk “all the beasts of the earth.”

5.a. Heb. ἐρωμείρ apparently means “heap,” although the form of the noun is strange. Syr. took as τ/Μρ i “worms.” LXX presupposes at this point two Heb. glosses, ἀπό τού αἰματος σου “from your blood” representing ὑμδμα which relates to v 6 and displaced the similar-looking ὑτ ὑμείρ; and πασαν την γην “all the land,” representing ἄρα h λk, which was intended as a reference to the variant τγj ἄρα h λλk (= MT) “beasts of all the earth” in v 4, but it displaced τγαγ “the valleys.”

6.a. MT adds ὑμδμ “with, of your blood,” which came into the text as a correction of ὑμμ “from you” in v 6b (see BHS). MT also inserts μυρρ ἡ λλk as “to the mountains,” originally intended as a variant for μυρρ ἡ λλk [ “on the mountains” in v 5 (Ehrlich, Randglossen 120).

6.b. MT ὑμμ “from, with you” seems to be an accidental miswriting for ὑμδμ “from, with your blood”: see the previous note.

7.a. MT ὃτ [ΜBκβ] implies “when (I) extinguish you” (cf. GKC 115e note 1). More naturally,
however, one would point as a qal ḫ t ḫ b ḫ b “when you are extinguished,” as LXX Syr. Vg imply (Cornill 384 et al.). Cooke (356) and Wevers (242) regard MT as having an indefinite subj and so pass in sense.

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10.a. Heb ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ is probably to be derived from ḫ ḫ “fly”: cf. Zimmerli’s discussion (156).


11.a. Heb ḫ “for.”

15.a. MT ḫ ḫ a ḫ “the land of (Egypt),” not represented in LXX, is probably a comparative gloss, harmonizing with 29:12.

15.b. MT has a participial form ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ “and ruined”: it is more naturally pointed as a consec pf ḫ ḫ ḫ “and will be ruined,” which the ancient versions imply. For the pregnant construction with ḫ ḫ “from” cf. 12:19.

15.c. LXX renders in terms of scattering (cf. BHS), but it is interpretative rather than of textual

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
et al. et alii, and others
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
NEB The New English Bible
cf. confer, compare
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
consec consecutive
pf perfect
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
Form/Structure/Setting

Verses 1–16 are clearly demarcated as a unit by their introductory dating and prophetic formulas, which vv 17–18 give all over again. Although the unit describes itself as a lament (vv 2, 16), in form-critical terms it is a very loose representation of the genre, which has little left of its characteristic elements (Jahnow, *Leichenlied* 229). The strict 3 + 2 meter is found only sporadically (vv 2ba 3d, 3ab -b, 8a). As regularly in the lament, the destruction is set in the past at v 2a (cf. 26:17a) and so is Pharaoh’s power (v 2b). The composition is a lament-tinged oracle of (future) judgment and even, in view of the recognition formula of v 15, a three-part proof saying. The element of accusation is here represented by a metaphorical statement of power (v 2b), as in 31:2–9. The usage of the introductory messenger formulas and closing divine saying formulas suggests a series of smaller units, vv 3–8, 9–10, 11–14 and 15–16. Further examination suggests that v2a-b goes closely with vv 3–8, the messenger formula in v 3 serving to introduce the pronouncement of punishment. The extended recognition formula of v 15 is strictly to be separated from v 16, whose role is to complement v 2a-b with an inclusion that emphasizes the role of lament (Parunak, *Structural Studies* 398). This stylistic framework may be regarded as part of a loose chiastic structure in which metaphor is matched with interpretation. Thus vv 9a and 10 echo the cosmic mourning of vv 7–8 on a human scale, and v 9b echoes vv 5–6, while vv 11–12 echo v 4b and vv 13–14 echo v 2b. A key word of the whole unit is נְתֵנִים “nations,” which occurs in vv 2, 9, 12 and 16, and so in most of the small units. A feature of vv 2a-g -8 is the cosmic orientation: water (v 2b), earth (vv 4–6) and sky (vv 7–8a) come respectively to the fore as major terms used along with members of their semantic fields. This feature suggests that MT is correct in its reading יְתֹם יִבְיַר אֶלֶף “in its rivers” in v 2b (cf. Note).

To what degree this literary unit has been built up by stages is difficult to assess. Certainly v 15, which has a form-critical role but shares no stylistic features with the rest of the piece, looks like a redactional addition, perhaps to clarify the theme of vv 13–14. The rest consists of metaphor, vv 2a-g -8, and interpretation of various kinds, vv 9–14. The careful hinging of v 10 and 11–12 (בְּשָׂר וּפְנֵי “sword” and פְּנֵי “fall”) appears to be a blatant literary device. The echoing of motifs of earlier oracles against Tyre and Egypt in vv 9–10 (cf. Zimmerli 160) may suggest that this part too is redactional. The whole unit, however, has a coherent and artistic harmony, which may well reflect Ezekiel’s own penmanship.

The setting of at least vv 2–8 depends on the dating of v 1. If MT is correct, Jerusalem’s fall lies in the past even for the exiles. Vv 11–14, like 29:17–21, obviously look forward historically to Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion of Egypt.

Comment


Heb. Hebrew

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
1–2 The major textual evidence supplies a date that corresponds to March 3, 585 B.C., according to Parker and Dubberstein (*Babylonian Chronology* 28). Earlier hopes that Egypt would rally to Jerusalem’s support in its hour of need had been dashed, and for the exiles the fall of the capital was history (cf. 33:21). The oracle that follows is virtually a re-issue of 29:3–6. The description of the oracle as a lament strikes a more strident note than the previous one. It affirms the inevitability of Egypt’s fall: a lament looked back on past tragedy, and the temporal perspective of v 2aITERAL b aligns with this formal feature.

The double zoological description of Pharaoh is strange, even when it is granted that “lion” may have strong royal associations (cf. 19:3, 5–6). King of the international jungle though Pharaoh was, his defeat was assured. His power, sinisterly set in the past, is then described in terms of an aquatic beast, doubtless as in chap. 29 a fusion of the Nile crocodile and the mythological chaos monster. The former perspective is less pronounced here, although the muddying of shallow waters suggests the crocodile.

3–8 The mythological story line dictated the sequel of defeat at the hands of the creator God. The very metaphor spelled defeat. The form now used is the straightforward pronouncement of future punishment. The elements of water, earth and heaven introduce a cosmic dimension appropriate to the subject. The lord of the seas is wrenched from his habitat by the divine hunter, and the remains of this enormous being are strewn over the earth. To seal its death, heavenly mourning is ordered. The terms also evoke the grim motif of the day of Yahweh announced for Egypt in 30:3, 18 (cf. Joel 2:2, 10).

9–10 The interpretation of the extended metaphor begins here, in reverse order. The cosmic mourning of vv 7–8 is equated with universal lamentation and shock, as others who witness Pharaoh’s downfall fear for their own safety. It is a motif that has run through the oracles against Tyre (cf. 26:15–18 ; 27:28–36; 28:19) and helps to bind together the section of foreign oracles. The reference to exile in v 9b explains vv 5–6, using a motif already employed in 29:12; 30:23, 26.

11–15 First, v 4b is interpreted in vv 11–12. The cosmic battle between Yahweh and the Egyptian monster is grounded in a historical perspective of Nebuchadnezzar and his ruthless swordsmen (cf. 30:11 ), who would get the better of Pharaoh’s army. In v 13a the destruction of the lion and the crocodile monster (v 2aITERAL bb) is correlated with the killing of all the animals that drink from the Nile, as part of a program of desolating Egypt (cf. v 15; 29:9–12). Its extension to the human plane would bring back a reversal of the muddying of v 2bITERAL d. V 15 spells out even more clearly the divine agenda and its human consequences, before providing a closing recognition formula, as in 29:9.

16 The literary unit is tied together by these closing statements that revert to the lament of v 2aITERAL a. It stands, however, at a little distance from vv 2–8 in that it focuses not on Pharaoh but on Egypt, which has gradually come to the fore in recent verses (vv 12b–15). The reference to universal mourning, traditionally carried out by women (cf. Jer 9:16–17 [17–18]) echoes that of vv 9–10, while the reference to “Egypt and all its army” recapitulates v 12b and is also reminiscent of 31:18bITERAL g.

**Explanation**

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
Although vv 2–8, and indeed vv 2–16, may only loosely be called a lament, sufficient elements are present in v 2a/b to regard the piece as an ironic obituary for an arrogant world power. The emphasis is not on Babylon’s defeat of Egypt, but on Egypt’s defeat at the hands of Yahweh. Did the exiles even now cling to a hope that Egypt would not tolerate Babylonian control of Palestine and Syria, but would retaliate in a counterthrust? As in earlier oracles, Ezekiel grants that Egypt is larger than life in its military and economic power and influence. However, a distinctive metaphor, used already in chap. 29, cuts it down to size. Just as the description of Tyre in terms of a veritable Titanic revealed the island fortress in a new and negative perspective, so here does the chaos monster metaphor for Egypt. If Egypt is a mighty dragon, one might say, Yahweh is cast in the role of St. George! Yahweh is quite capable of fighting and winning a cosmic battle against such a foe.

The series of interpretations that follow and complete the literary piece concentrate on the failure of Egyptian militarism, with their war-related language (cf. -ywh “army,” vv 12a, b, 16b). They also pick up the initial µywg “nations” and mockingly turn it into a keyword for radical reversal. Pharaoh, the “lion” of other nations (v 2), was to lose his power. At Yahweh’s behest the political tables were to be turned. Nations would provide new homes for the displaced (v 9), would victimize the defeated (v 12) and would lament the dead (v 16). The message is plain: “It is better to take refuge in Yahweh than to put confidence in princes” (Ps 118:9).

Egypt’s Infernal Doom (32:17–32)

Bibliography


Translation

In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day, I received the following communication from Yahweh:

18 “Human one, wail over the Egyptian army and bid it go down among mighty nations, to the

cf. confer, compare
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Biblical Studies
OLZ Orientalische Literaturzeitung
BibOr Biblica et Orientalia (Rome: PBI)

a 17.a. MT lacks a month (cf. 26:1). It may be that the month mentioned in v 1 is to be understood (Cooke 350; Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 152). LXX* refers to the first month, but it seems to be interpreting the present text, and its form is linguistically suspect (Zimmerli 163).
lowest parts of the underworld, among those who have gone down to the Pit.

19 Whom do you surpass in loveliness? Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised. a
20 Among victims of violent death a they will lie fallen with him. b
21 To him will speak the leaders of the valiant from the middle of Sheol, a (and) with his helpers. b
22 Assyria is there and all its company around its grave, a all of them killed after falling b as

a 18.a. MT has μyw t wnb w h t w “it (fem) and the daughters of (the) nations.” The first word is often emended to hTa “you” (Hitzig 248–49 et al.). The phrase seems to be an early (pre-LXX) variant for h μyw t wnb (wnnw w) “(and) the daughters of the nations (will chant) it” in v 16, reading h t w for the suffix and a conjunction before t wnb (cf. BHS note b in v 16) and writing μyw carelessly for μywgh. The marginal note evidently slipped down because of the similarity of h nwmh el k Al [ w μ yr x mAl] “over Egypt and over all its army” in v 16 and μyr x m nwmh Al “over the army of Egypt” in v 18. However, the second command is left unreasonably short and μyr d a “mighty” requires explanation. It is probable that the gloss displaced the partially similar μyw g vt b “among (the) nations” (cf. Bewer, ZAW 63 [1951] 201, following Heinisich).

b 19.a. LXX places v 19 after lwa “Sheol” in v 21, in order to provide the direct speech implied there. For its secondary nature see Zimmerli 164.

20.a. See 31:17–18 and Comment.

b 20.b. LXX presupposes ταί “with him”: in MT the corresponding term is h t w “here, it” in v 20bb. In v 20ba brj is unrepresented in LXX Syr.: it may have been supplied as a subj for the following h nt n “it has been given, appointed.” The phrases wk wlm “they drew away” and h ywnmh Al k w “and all its armies” are best explained as originally marginal variants related to h nwmh Al k w l b t w “Meshech-Tubal and all its army” in v 26, while h nt n, lacking in LXX Syr., is a replacement for h hln in v 25bb, whose subj is the fem t yt j. Evidently the variants became attached to the column on the wrong side of the margin. In v 20 LXX for wk wlm implies b k w “and it shall be laid to rest,” which has probably suffered assimilation to the verb in v 19 (and v 32); it provides a closer rapport with b k wlm in v 25. It is likely that wk wlm is related to the minority reading l b vt w wlm “Meshech and Tubal” in v 26 (see BHS).

a 21.a. LXX implies r wb yt kr yb “in the furthest parts of the Pit” (cf. v 23), which is hardly correct here. Probably in its Vorlage a gloss from v 18b, which sought to clarify the infernal phraseology, displaced the original text which had similar meaning.

b 21.b. Heb. wyr ṣl “with?” his helpers” seems to function as a prepositional phrase corresponding to w “to him” earlier: “(speak) with …” In v 21b MT adds brj yl [[ μyr r [ h wb k wdr “they went down, lay, the uncircumcised, victims of violent death.” LXX lacks completely and Syr. lacks the first three terms, which appear to be a variant of μyr r [ ṣl “go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised” in v 19; probably a jussive sense was intended, “let them go down and lie (wb k w),” and μyr r [ h “the uncircumcised” prosaically corrects the anarthrous μyr r [. The last pair of words probably originated as a marginal correction of brj yl [[ m “slain by the sword” in v 26, which became attached to the wrong column.
victims of the sword, those who once inspired terror in the land of the living. Elam is there and all its army around its grave, all of them killed after falling as victims of the sword, who went down uncircumcised to the underworld, yet who once inspired terror in the land of the living. Now they bear their shame among those who have gone down to the Pit: among the killed was placed a bier for it. Meshech-Tubal is there and all its army around its grave, all of them uncircumcised, killed

a 22.a. MT has various forms of this phrase in vv 22–26. (i) Sometimes it is construed as a circumstantial clause (“while its graves were around it”) and sometimes as a prepositional phrase (“around its grave”). (ii) The noun is sometimes pointed from a sg ʰʳ ʷᵇ q and sometimes from a plural ᵗʷʳᵇ q. This second type of variant is closely linked with the first: if the army’s burial place is around the ethnic entity, it is regarded as pl., but if the army is around the ethnic entity’s burial place, the latter is treated as sg. (iii) The suffixes vary between masc and fem. One expects a masc suffix with ᵗ ʷᵇ ʸᵇ s, agreeing with ˡʰ้อย “company” or ˡʰ,’”army,” and a fem suffix with the noun, referring to the ethnic entity. Here ʰʳ ʳᵇ q ʷᵗ ʷᵇ ʸᵇ s “while its graves were around it” (cf. v 25a) or else ʰʳ ʳᵇ q ᵗ ʷᵇ ʸᵇ s “around its grave” (cf. v 23a) is expected. Are the two basic variations stylistic? The ethnic name appears to stand for its king (cf. v 29), and logically his troops or their graves would be ranged around his own. Accordingly ʰᵗʳᵇ q ᵗ ʷᵇ ʸᵇ s “around its grave” must have been original, as in vv 23 and 24. So the rendering of LXX presupposes, although in v 22a the phrase is not represented, probably because in the Heb. Vorlage an erroneous reading has been deleted.

b 22.b. Here and in v 24b the Heb. is ˡµ yardı “the fallen,” yet ˡµyll “fallen” in v 23. Driver, Bib 19 (1938) 179, viewing the article as resumptive, “who (fell),” urged that the form in v 23 should be corrected. LXX does not represent the phrase: probably in its Heb. text, as at v 22a, a rejected rendering had been deleted.

a 23.a. MT repeats ʷᵗ ʰʳ ʳʷᵃ “those who inspired (terror),” with a different pointing of the verb. Between the repeated phrases are what appear to be a string of variants which have been incorporated into the text. The LXX attests a non-glossed text. The addition of ˡµyll “and … was” in v 23ab gave a modicum of sense (cf. Rost, OLZ 6 [1903] 446). After the incorporation the interrupted ʷᵗ ʰʳ ʳʷᵃ was understandably repeated in the last line. (i) ʰʳ ʷᵗ ʳᵇ q “its graves” relates to ʷᵗ ʳᵇ q in v 22a, rightly supplying a fem suffix (Rost, ibid.). (ii) ʳᵗ ʷᵇ ʸᵗ kʳ ʸḇ “in the recesses of the Pit,” has already appeared as a variant in the LXX of v 21. (iii) ᵗ ʷᵇ ʸᵇ s ᵛʰˡʰindexOf “its company around its grave,” is a correction of the phrase in v 22ab with a cue word ʰˡʰIndexOf. With its sg noun and fem suffix it supplies the authentic reading. (iv) ʳµyll ˡµyll ˡµlk “all of them killed, having fallen by the sword,” is a variant for v 22b, which deletes the article with ˡµyll ˡµ. 

b 23.b. In place of ˡµyll ˡµ “terror of them(selves),” which appears in vv 24–26, MT has simply ˡµyll ˡµ “terror.” See BHS.
as victims of the sword, because although they inspired terror in the land of the living, **they do not lie with the valiant ones who fell long ago,** who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war, their swords placed under their heads and their shields over their bones because there was terror of the valiant ones in the land of the living. **But as for you,** among the uncircumcised you will lie broken and you will rest with those killed as victims of the sword.

**“Edom is there, its kings and all its leaders** who in spite of their might are set with those

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a 25.a. MT continues with what seem to be two versions of the same text, up to the end of v 26. Significantly the LXX has only one version. The most plausible explanation is that v 25a-bγ has been heavily annotated with a mass of material, which has survived in the form of vv 25bd–26 (cf. Rost, *OLZ* 7 [1904] 393). Most of the material takes the form of corrections of a poor text. (i) \(\text{wt} \; \text{n} \; \text{yl} \; l \; \text{vt} \; b\) “among the slain they set” and \(\text{tn} \; \text{yl} \; l \; \text{vt} \; b\) “among the slain was set” are variants, with a different form of the verb. (ii) \(\text{lt} \; \text{wt} \; \text{Al} \; \text{wm} \; \text{yl} \; \text{bn} \; \text{t} \; \text{yn}\) “Meshech-Tubal is there” is supplied, having fallen out after the very similar-looking \(h \; \text{lt} \; \text{bk} \; \text{wm} \; \text{yl} \; \text{bn} \; \text{t}\) “a bier for it.” (iii) \(\text{hnwm} \; \text{Al} \; \text{kb} \; \text{w} \; \text{all} \; \text{its} \; \text{army}\) “all and all its army” is a correction of \(\text{hnwm} \; \text{Al} \; \text{kb} \; \text{w} \; \text{all} \; \text{its} \; \text{army}\). (iv) \(\text{hyt} \; \text{rb} \; \text{b} \; \text{yt} \; \text{yl} \; \text{bs}\) “with its graves around them” is a minor correction of \(\text{wyt} \; \text{yb} \; \text{yl} \; \text{bs} \; \text{ht} \; \text{rb} \; \text{q}\), making clear that the noun is pl. (v) \(\text{brj} \; \text{yl} \; \text{kb} \; \text{yl} \; \text{r} \; \text{yl} \; \text{k}\) “all of them uncircumcised, killed by the sword” is an incorrect variant of the line that rightly has \(\text{yl} \; l \; j\) “killed.” (vi) \(\text{yln} \; \text{yl} \; \text{yl} \; \text{r} \; \text{yl} \; \text{yln}\) “for they inspired fear of themselves in the land of the living” provides a correction of \(\text{wt} \; \text{n}\) for the sg verb \(\text{tn}\). Seemingly variants (i) and (vi) are double recordings of an originally single variant, probably (vi).

b 26.a. See the preceding note. MT arose by dittography of \(\text{mem}\) The stylized phrase of vv 20 and 25 relates to the victims of violent death.

b 26.b. The first of the two syntactically coordinated clauses is logically subordinate to the second, to which \(\text{y} \; \text{k}\) “because” refers: cf. *GKC* 111d; BDB 474a.

a 27.a. For MT \(\text{yl} \; \text{r} \; \text{l} \; \text{m}\) “from (the) uncircumcised” LXX correctly presupposes \(\text{yl} \; \text{yl} \; \text{r} \; \text{l}\) “from of old.” The error arose from a \(\text{wt}\) confusion and from assimilation to the frequent term \(\text{yl} \; \text{r} \; \text{l}\). Support for the corrected text comes from 26:20. See further the next note.

b 27.b. MT with the support of all the ancient versions has \(\text{yt} \; \text{rt} \; \text{m}\) “their iniquities,” which is totally unfitting, both because a better class of dead is under consideration and because in the context a piece of military equipment is expected. Cornill’s conjectural emendation \(\text{yt} \; \text{nx}\) “their shields” (390) is generally accepted. Cornill envisaged a \(\text{A} / \text{N}\) error. But why would it ever have occurred? Was an annotation \(\text{w}\), intended to correct \(\text{yl} \; \text{r} \; \text{l} \; \text{m}\) earlier to \(\text{yl} \; \text{yl} \; \text{r} \; \text{l}\), wrongly regarded as a correction of \(\text{A}\)? In that case there is ancient Heb. evidence for a reading \(\text{yl} \; \text{yl} \; \text{r} \; \text{m}\). One cannot discount, however, the possible influence of \(\text{w} \; \text{ln}\) “in his iniquity” in the next column (33:6, 8, 9).

a 28.a. LXX* does not represent \(\text{bk} \; \text{yt} \; \text{yt} \; \text{b}\) “you will be broken and (you will rest).” It is customary to omit it as a corrupt dittograph of \(\text{bk} \; \text{yt} \; \text{yt}\) (Cornill 391 et al.). However, the shorter text in LXX may represent parablepsis due to homoeoteleuton. In favor of MT is the alliteration of the verbs (Boadt, *Ézekiel’s Oracles* 166), the chiastic structure of the sentence and the distinctiveness of the first verb.
killed as victims of the sword. They lie with the uncircumcised and with others who have gone down to the Pit. 30 The commanders of the north are all there, and all the Sidonians who have gone down to join the killed despite the terror they inspired, let down by their might. They rest uncircumcised with those killed as victims of the sword and bear their shame with others who have gone down to the Pit. 31 The sight of them will bring consolation to Pharaoh for the loss of all his army. a 32 For, although he inspired terror while he was in the land of the living, Pharaoh and all his army will be laid to rest among the uncircumcised, with those killed as victims of the sword. So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.”

Notes

17.a. MT lacks a month (cf. 26:1). It may be that the month mentioned in v 1 is to be understood (Cooke 350; Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 152). LXX a refers to the first month, but it seems to be

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a 29.a. LXX επόθησαν οἱ ἄρχοντες Ἀσσυρίας ἐπὶ αὐτούς “the rulers of Assyria were given” seems to reflect a complex Gr. tradition. επόθησαν probably originated as a marginal correction of οἱ ἄρχοντες “who gave” in line with the Heb. וּל- אֲשָׁר, which displaced the initially identical Edom “Edom.” The rest is a loose rendering of θαῖρε τῆς ἁγιότητος Ἰούδα τῶν οἰκτορίων Ἀλ θὰ λύσῃ λοιπὸν τὸν ἀρχόντα τῶν Σιδονίων ἐκ τῶν θανάτων αὐτῶν οἵτως καὶ ἀποκαθίσταται. The rest is a loose rendering of θαῖρε τῆς ἁγιότητος Ἰούδα τῶν οἰκτορίων Ἀλ θὰ λύσῃ λοιπὸν τὸν ἀρχόντα τῶν Σιδονίων ἐκ τῶν θανάτων αὐτῶν οἵτως καὶ ἀποκαθίσταται. The rest is a loose rendering of θαῖρε τῆς ἁγιότητος Ἰούδα τῶν οἰκτορίων Ἀλ θὰ λύσῃ λοιπὸν τὸν ἀρχόντα τῶν Σιδονίων ἐκ τῶν θανάτων αὐτῶν οḿ “her kings and all her rulers who,” with ἀποκαθίσταται treated as ἀποκαθίσταται.

b 29.b. cf. Cooke 358; Zimmerli 168 and Boadt, Ezekiel’s Oracles 166, for this rendering of the preposition. It recurs in v 30.

30.a. In place of θαῖρε τῆς ἁγιότητος Ἰούδα τῶν οἰκτορίων Ἀλ \k “every Sidonian who” LXX has πάντες στρατηγοὶ Ἀσσυρίας “all the generals of Assyria.” It seems to be an alternative or supplementary rendering of θαῖρε τῆς ἁγιότητος Ἰούδα τῶν οἰκτορίων Ἀλ θὰ λύσῃ λοιπὸν τὸν ἀρχόντα τῶν Σιδονίων ἐκ τῶν θανάτων αὐτῶν in v 29, which slipped to this place, probably dislodging the Gr. original.

b 30.b. For the construction see P. Haupt, AJSL 26 (1910) 228–30. The non-representation of μὴν ἐμὸν “let down, ashamed” in LXX is a consequence of its misconstruing of μὴν ἐμὸν “by, in spite of their might” and has no significance for the Heb. text (cf. Zimmerli 169).

31.a. MT ἔγγυτον \k k \k k \k k \k k \k k “killed by the sword, Pharaoh and all his host,” not represented in LXX, is a variant of ἔγγυτον \k k \k k \k k “killed by the sword, Pharaoh and all his army,” which, using cue words, was intended to define ἔγγυτον in terms of the more military term \k k (cf. 17:17; 38:4). It is probable that the divine saying formula in v 31 was also in the variant as part of the cuing device.

32.a. MT ἔγγυτον “I inspired” is supported by LXX Syr. Vg. LXX L and Tg. imply ἔγγυτον “he inspired,” which the wider context supports: v 32 is a restatement of v 24b (cf. v 26b) in terms of Pharaoh. A first person reference, if anywhere, would be expected in v 32b, rather than here. Then Q ἔγγυτον “terror of myself” is a consequence of the change and is to be rejected in favor of K ἔγγυτον “terror of him,” which LXX Syr. Tg. imply.

a 32.a. MT ἔγγυτον “I inspired” is supported by LXX Syr. Vg. LXX L and Tg. imply ἔγγυτον “he inspired,” which the wider context supports: v 32 is a restatement of v 24b (cf. v 26b) in terms of Pharaoh. A first person reference, if anywhere, would be expected in v 32b, rather than here. Then Q ἔγγυτον “terror of myself” is a consequence of the change and is to be rejected in favor of K ἔγγυτον “terror of him,” which LXX Syr. Tg. imply.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS) cf. confer, compare
interpreting the present text, and its form is linguistically suspect (Zimmerli 163).

18.a. **MT** has $\mu ywg \ t \ wn\ h \ t \ w\ b$ “it (fem) and the daughters of (the) nations.” The first word is often emended to $h\ t\ w\ “you” (Hitzig 248–49 et al.). The phrase seems to be an early (pre-LXX) variant for $\mu ywgh \ t \ wn\ h \ (\ w\ n\ w\ q\ w\ h)$ “(and) the daughters of the nations (will chant) it” in v 16, reading $h \ t \ w\ b$ for the suffix and a conjunction before $t \ wn\ b$ (cf. **BHS** note b in v 16) and writing $\mu ywg$ carelessly for $\mu ywgh$. The marginal note evidently slipped down because of the similarity of $h \ n\ w\ m\ h\ e\ l\ k \ A\ l \ \ w \ \ w\ y\ r \ x \ m\ A\ l$ “over Egypt and over all its army” in v 16 and $\mu y\ r \ x \ m\ \ w\ m\ h\ A\ l$ “over the army of Egypt” in v 18. However, the second command is left unreasonably short and $\mu y\ r \ d\ a$ “mighty” requires explanation. It is probable that the gloss displaced the partially similar $\mu ywg \ u\ w\ t\ b$ “among (the) nations” (cf. Bewer, **ZAW** 63 [1951] 201, following Heinisch).

19.a. **LXX** places v 19 after $l\ w\ b$ “Sheol” in v 21, in order to provide the direct speech implied there. For its secondary nature see Zimmerli 164.

20.a. See 31:17–18 and **Comment**.

20.b. **LXX** presupposes $/T\ a\ i$ “with him”: in **MT** the corresponding term is $h \ t \ w\ b$ “here, it” in v 20bb. In v 20ba $b\ r\ j$ is unrepresented in **LXX** **Syr.**; it may have been supplied as a subj for the following $h \ n\ t\ n$ “it has been given, appointed.” The phrases $w\ k\ w\ m$ “they drew away” and $h\ y\ m\ w\ m\ h\ A\ l \ k\ w\ “and all its armies” are best explained as originally marginal variants related to $h \ n\ w\ m\ h\ A\ l \ k\ w\ l\ b\ t \ u\ w\ m$ “Meshech-Tubal and all its army” in v 26, while $h\ n\ t\ n$, lacking in **LXX** **Syr.**, is a replacement for $T\ h\ l$ in v 25bb, whose subj is the fem $t\ y\ t\ j$. Evidently the variants became attached to the column on the wrong side of the margin. In v 20 **LXX** for $w\ k\ w\ m$ implies $b\ k\ w\ h$ “and it shall be laid to rest,” which has probably suffered assimilation to the verb in v 19 (and v 32); it provides a closer rapport with $b\ k\ w\ m$ in v 25. It is likely that

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**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
et al. et alii, and others
**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
**BHS** Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
cf. confer, compare
**ZAW** Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
**Syr.** Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
subj subject/subjective
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21.a. LXX implies r wb yt k r yo “in the furthest parts of the Pit” (cf. v 23), which is hardly correct here. Probably in its Vorlage a gloss from v 18b, which sought to clarify the infernal phraseology, displaced the original text which had similar meaning.

21.b. Heb. wyr z[ At a “with (?) his helpers” seems to function as a prepositional phrase corresponding to wb “to him” earlier: “(speak) with … ” In v 21b MT adds yl I j µyl r [ h wb k w wb r y br] “they went down, lay, the uncircumcised, victims of violent death.” LXX lacks completely and Syr. lacks the first three terms, which appear to be a variant of µyl r [ At a h b k w h dr “go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised” in v 19: probably a jussive sense was intended, “let them go down and lie (wb k w wb)” , and µyl r [ h “the uncircumcised” prosaically corrects the anarthrous µyl r [ . The last pair of words probably originated as a marginal correction of ḥ br j yl I j m “slain by the sword” in v 26, which became attached to the wrong column.

22.a. MT has various forms of this phrase in vv 22–26. (i) Sometimes it is construed as a circumstantial clause (“while its graves were around it”) and sometimes as a prepositional phrase (“around its grave”). (ii) The noun is sometimes pointed from a sg ḥ r wb q and sometimes from a plural t wb b q . This second type of variant is closely linked with the first: if the army’s burial place is around the ethnic entity, it is regarded as pl., but if the army is around the ethnic entity’s burial place, the latter is treated as sg. (iii) The suffixes vary between masc and fem. One expects a masc suffix with t wb y b s , agreeing with ḥ l q “company” or ṣwmh “army,” and a fem suffix with the noun, referring to the ethnic entity. Here h yt r b q wyt wb y b s “while its graves were around it” (cf. v 25ab) or else h t r b q t wb y b s “around its grave” (cf. v 23ag) is expected. Are the two basic variations stylistic? The ethnic name appears to stand for its king (cf. v 29), and logically his troops or their graves would be ranged around his own. Accordingly Ḥ t r b q t wb y b s “around its grave” must have been original, as in vv 23 and 24. So the rendering of LXX presupposes, although in v 22ab the phrase is not represented, probably because in the Heb. Vorlage an erroneous reading has been deleted.

22.b. Here and in v 24b the Heb. is µyl p nh “the fallen,” yet µyl p n “fallen” in v 23. Driver, Bib 19

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
pl. plate or plural
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
(1938) 179, viewing the article as resumptive, “who (fell),” urged that the form in v 23 should be corrected. LXX does not represent the phrase: probably in its Heb. text, as at v 22ab, a rejected rendering had been deleted.

23.a. MT repeats וְנִרְשָׁע “those who inspired (terror),” with a different pointing of the verb. Between the repeated phrases are what appear to be a string of variants which have been incorporated into the text. The LXX attests a non-glossed text. The addition of יִשָּׁע וּזְכִי “and … was” in v 23a gave a modicum of sense (cf. Rost, OLZ 6 [1903] 446). After the incorporation the interrupted וְנִרְשָׁע was understandably repeated in the last line. (i) הֶלְיוֹם וּבְצֵי “its graves” relates to וְנִרְשָׁע in v 22a, rightly supplying a fem suffix (Rost, ibid.). (ii) וְיִבְּשַׁע יְבִי “in the recesses of the Pit,” has already appeared as a variant in the LXX of v 21. (iii) וּבְצֵי יִשָּׁע “its company around its grave,” is a correction of the phrase in v 22a with a cue word הָלְיוֹם. With its sg noun and fem suffix it supplies the authentic reading. (iv) בֹּרְשֵׁי יַד Ⓚ “all of them killed, having fallen by the sword,” is a variant for v 22b, which deletes the article with יַד.

23.b. In place of מִיְּלַח יַתִּג “terror of them(selves),” which appears in vv 24–26, MT has simply יְתִג “terror.” See BHS.

25.a. MT continues with what seem to be two versions of the same text, up to the end of v 26. Significantly the LXX has only one version. The most plausible explanation is that v 25a-bc has been heavily annotated with a mass of material, which has survived in the form of vv 25bd–26 (cf. Rost, OLZ 7 [1904] 393). Most of the material takes the form of corrections of a poor text. (i) וְנִרְשָׁע מִיְּלַח יָתִג “among the slain they set” and וְנִרְשָׁע מִיְּלַח יָתִג “among the slain was set” are variants, with a different form of the verb. (ii) לְבַט אֶת מְשֶׁךָ תּוּבּ “Meshech-Tubal is there” is supplied, having fallen out after the very similar-looking הָלְיוֹם וּבְצֵי “a bier for it.” (iii) הִנְוֵמַה אֵל כִּבָּא “and all its army” is a correction of הִנְוֵמַה אֵל כִּבָּא “with all its army.” (iv) הֶלְיוֹם כִּבָּא מִיְּלַח כִּבָּא “with its graves around them” is a minor correction of וְנִרְשָׁע מִיְּלַח כִּבָּא , making clear that the noun is pl. (v) בֹּרְשֵׁי יַד Ⓚ “all killed by the sword,” is a variant for v 22b, which deletes the article with יַד.
“all of them uncircumcised, killed by the sword” is an incorrect variant of the line that rightly has יָכְרוּ כְּתִיָּה לָהֶם “killed.” (vi) מִיעֲלָה יִרְאַת הַגְּבוֹרָה "for they inspired fear of themselves in the land of the living " provides a correction of וַיִּמְסְסֵה for the sg verb יַמְסֵה. Seemingly variants (i) and (vi) are double recordings of an originally single variant, probably (vi).

26.a. See the preceding note. MT arose by dittoography of מִיעֲלָה. The stylized phrase of vv 20 and 25 relates to the victims of violent death.

26.b. The first of the two syntactically coordinated clauses is logically subordinate to the second, to which יָכְרוּ כְּתִיָּה “because” refers: cf. GKC 111d; BDB 474a.

27.a. For MT מִיעֲלָה מִמֶּן “from (the) uncircumcised” LXX correctly presupposes מִיִּרְאַת מַמְשִׁים “from of old.” The error arose from a וַיִּמְסְסֵה confusion and from assimilation to the frequent term מִיִּרְאַת. Support for the corrected text comes from 26:20. See further the next note.

27.b. MT with the support of all the ancient versions has מִיִּרְאַת מַמְשִׁים “their iniquities,” which is totally unfitting, both because a better class of dead is under consideration and because in the context a piece of military equipment is expected. Cornill’s conjectural emendation מִיִּרְאַת מַמְשִׁים “their shields” (390) is generally accepted. Cornill envisaged a מִיִּרְאַת error. But why would it ever have occurred? Was an annotation מַמְשִׁים intended to correct מִיִּרְאַת מַמְשִׁים earlier to מִיִּרְאַת מַמְשִׁים, wrongly regarded as a correction of מִיִּרְאַת? In that case there is ancient Heb. evidence for a reading מִיִּרְאַת מַמְשִׁים. One cannot discount, however, the possible influence of מַמְשִׁים "in his iniquity" in the next column (33:6, 8, 9).

28.a. לְאֵלֵיוֹ לְאֵלֵיהֶם לְאֵלֵיהֶנָּן “the rulers of Assyria were given” seems to reflect a
complex Gr. tradition. ἐγκαίνια probably originated as a marginal correction of οἴς δοῦτε "who gave " in line with the Heb. וַיֹּאמֶר "which displaced the initially identical Edwm "Edom." The rest is a loose rendering of הֹגִים בִּיִּמְנָה "her kings and all her rulers who," with לָא treated as לָא לָא.

29.b. cf. Cooke 358; Zimmerli 168 and Boadt, *Ezekiel’s Oracles* 166, for this rendering of the preposition. It recurs in v 30.

30.a. In place of לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא LXX has παυτε "strathgoi; Assour "all the generals of Assyria.” It seems to be an alternative or supplementary rendering of לָא לָא לָא לָא LXX in v 29, which slipped to this place, probably dislodging the Gr. original.

30.b. For the construction see P. Haupt, *AJSL* 26 (1910) 228–30. The non-representation of לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא LXX* is a consequence of its misconstruing of לָא לָא לָא LXX* by, in spite of their might” and has no significance for the Heb. text (cf. Zimmerli 169).

31.a. MT לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא LXX, is a variant of לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא LXX “killed by the sword, Pharaoh and all his host,” not represented in LXX*, is a variant of לָא LXX in v 29, which, using cue words, was intended to define לָא LXX in terms of the more military term לָא LXX (cf. 17:17; 38:4). It is probable that the divine saying formula in v 31 was also in the variant as part of the cuing device.

32.a. MT לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא לָא LXX, “I inspired” is supported by LXX Syr. Vg. LXX and Tg. imply לָא LXX “he inspired,” which the wider context supports: v 32 is a restatement of v 24bg (cf. v 26bb) in terms of Pharaoh. A first person reference, if anywhere, would be expected in v 32ba, rather than here. Then Q לָא לָא לָא לָא “terror

Gr. Greek
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Gr. Greek
*AJSL* American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
of myself” is a consequence of the change and is to be rejected in favor of $\text{K v} \text{v j} \text{y t} \text{y j} \text{r} \text{r} \text{y l} \text{y l} \text{r} \text{r} \text{j} \text{y l} \text{y l} \text{y l}$ “terror of him,” which LXX Syr. Tg. imply.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

In essence this literary unit, distinguished by its separate dating and prophetic introduction, is an oracle of judgment against Egypt or Pharaoh, which lacks any clear element of accusation and only pronounces judgment. The term $\text{h h n}$ “wail” (v 18), which belongs to the semantic field of mourning for the dead (cf. Jer 9:17–19; Amos 5:16), merely enhances the sinister nature of the message and anticipates its pr eoccupation with Sheol; it is reminiscent of the loose use of $\text{h n y m h}$ “dirge” in the previous unit. Although there is no initial messenger formula, two divine saying formulas appear in vv 31 and 32 in MT (but see Note 31.a). Vv 29–32, which consist of pure prose rather than poetry, have the air of a literary epilogue. It is doubtful, however, whether one may envisage two additions, on the evidence of the double final formula (cf. e.g., Zimmerli 169): v 32 goes closely in content with v 31. The form $\text{h m h}$ “there” in vv 29 and 30 does not accord with the triple $\text{h y l}$ of vv 22, 24 and 26; and the language of vv 29 and 30 is obviously intended to be merely a loose echo of the preceding strophes. Moreover, v 28, with its direct address, forms an inclusion with v 19.

There are three stylized parallel strophes relating to Assyria, Elam and Meshech-Tubal, which are reminiscent of the parallel sections of chaps. 18 and 20. However, even when textual criticism has done with them what it can, they are not constructed symmetrically. The Assyria strophe consists of three lines, the Elam one of six lines and the climactic Meshech-Tubal one, including its section of contrast, of nine lines. The third strophe contains a wordplay that enhances the contrast, $\text{h m t m j l m A y l k}$ “their shame” and $\text{h m t m j l m A y l k}$ “their weapons of war.” At the beginning and end of v 27 $\text{h m t y f g}$ “valiant ones” provides an inclusion for this contrasting section, while $\text{h m t y f g}$ and $\text{l w b h}$ “Sheol” there supply an inclusion for the whole poem, echoing $\text{l w b h}$ … $\text{h m t y f g}$ in v 21. The Elam strophe itself points forward to the final contrast: the relative clause relating to their shameful fate, … $\text{w d f y r y s a}$ “who went down … ” (v 24b), is countered in v27ba with a reference to a nobler end, while the ignoble $\text{b k w m}$ “bier” provided in v 25a contrasts with the negated resting ($\text{w k w y}$) of v 27a. Indeed, $\text{b k w}$ “lie” is the keyword of the whole poem, occurring at the beginning and end (vv 19, 28) and in the second and third strophes. It is then correspondingly echoed in vv 30–32.

The temporal setting of vv 18–28 seems to be close to that of vv 2–8. Egypt’s military power is

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K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Tg. Targum
* cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
* 31.a. \text{MT w j y l k w h l r p b r j y l l j} “killed by the sword, Pharaoh and all his host,” not represented in LXX*, is a variant of $\text{h n w m h l r p b r j y l l j}$ “killed by the sword, Pharaoh and all his army,” which, using cue words, was intended to define $\text{h n w m h}$ in terms of the more military term $\text{y f g}$ (cf. 17:17; 38:4). It is probable that the divine saying formula in v 31 was also in the variant as part of the cuing device.
* cf. confer, compare
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
associated not with hope but with hopelessness, not with life but with death, a necessary message for the Judean exiles. The listing of Mesopotamian nations suits a Babylonian provenance.

Comment

17–18 According to Parker and Dubberstein’s comparative scheme (Babylonian Chronology 28), if the same month is intended as in v 1, the date would be March 17, 585 B.C. Ezekiel is given the task of ironically bewailing the coming fate of Egypt’s army. Defeat, not victory, was to be their lot — defeat resulting in a death that was the doorway to an ignominious fate in Sheol. Ezekiel has the role of inaugurating that fate with this oracle, for such is the power of the prophetic word (cf. Hos 6:5). The “mighty nations” are the three to be enumerated as the poem is developed. The phrase כְּהָרַת הֲוָיִם “land of nether places” here and in v 24, with its intensive genitive plural and contextual distinction from Sheol proper (vv 21, 27) seems to refer to a deeper level, the lower regions (Tromp, Primitive Conceptions 181; cf. Isa 14:15). Egypt was to occupy a place that distinguished it from the generality of those who went down to the Pit or Sheol. Such a concept is found in Isa 14:15–20, and Ezekiel may be depending on that text and developing it. There are also traces of it in Mesopotamian literature: in the Akkadian Gilgamesh epic, concerning one who has died, it is said that “he lies upon the night couch and drinks pure water,” while as for “him whose corpse was cast out upon the steppe,” “his spirit finds no rest in the nether world” (12:148, 151–52; ANET 99). The characteristics of the grave are transferred to Sheol, so that the underworld reflects the burial status of the corpse (cf. Tromp, Primitive Conceptions 139, 183). This concept is especially noticeable in the reference to a bier in v 25. Although that and the related verb כָּהַק “lie down, rest” are used in this passage, they do not imply a state of unconsciousness (cf. McAlpine, Sleep 147–49).

19–21 The question cuts Egypt down to size. In the end it has no special claims. Perhaps the thought is that they are (to be) forfeited in death (cf. Eichrodt 439; cf. 31:2–3, 18a). As in 31:17–18 (see Comment there), the uncircumcised and the victims of violent death represent classes that at death are not buried with their families, and so in Sheol are regarded as occupying a separate place in dishonor. The direct address is dropped from v 20 until the concluding v 28. In vv 20–21 Egypt stands virtually for Pharaoh its representative (cf. vv 31–32), like the other nations of vv 22–26. Accordingly it is spoken of in the masculine singular. The plural references appear to allude to the army, which, as in vv 22–26, is distinguished from the ethnic entity or figurehead. Over against the national symbol and its army are set certain inhabitants of the regular Sheol, who are called “valiant ones.” They correspond to “the kings of the nations who lie in glory” in Isa 14:18, and they reappear here in v 27. The reference to their speaking suggests that their speech should follow. This is an old problem that the LXX tried to solve by placing v 19 after v 21a. It may be that vv 22–26 are to be understood as the speech of the valiant ones, who greet the newcomers and from their own more comfortable quarters point to the lower regions,

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare


cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
where the Egyptians were to go, and somewhat like Virgil in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, describe the
neighbors alongside whom Egypt is to exist.

22–23 The short Assyria strophe envisages the Assyrian figurehead and his once invincible army now
lying in dishonor in a vast cemetery-like place where the troops are ranged around their leader. For the
living the Assyrian empire was now only a bad memory. A contrast is posed between their present state
and their former position of awesome power on earth. Now they are classed with the victims of violent
death, to which the language of the second line refers.

24–25 The Elam strophe develops the theme of dishonor. As in 28:8, “the killed” seems to have
the special sense of victims of a dishonorable death. Elam, east of Babylonia, enjoyed periods of power
over southern Mesopotamia in ancient times. Its might was broken by Assyria.

26–27 The third example of fallen imperialism is Meshech-Tubal (cf. 38:2–3 and *Comment*), who
occupied the area south-east of the Black Sea. Historically the nations known to the Assyrians as Mushki
and Tabal are in view, who in the eighth century B.C. posed a threat to Assyria in the south. Here they
too are classed with the hapless uncircumcised and victims of violent death. Their fate is contrasted with
that of the valiant in the regular part of Sheol. There may be a link at this point with the heroes of Gen
6:4; but, if so, it is not a direct one, as there they have no military role. Whether we are to find a concept
of world ages in this passage (cf. Zimmerli 176) is doubtful: historically the nations mentioned do not fall
into a chronological sequence nor does there seem to have been such an intention. The valiant are
conceived as lying in a veritable Valhalla of a cemetery, their earthly phase of awesome power finding a
fitting sequel in their honorable state of rest.

28 The fortune of the valiant provides a foil for Egypt’s coming ignominy. The Egyptians are
assigned the same dishonorable fate as the nations previously listed.

29–30 The literary conclusion in vv 29–32 takes the opportunity to assign two further groups to the
bitter fate of Assyria and the other two. Now the perspective is unambiguously future. Edom is to lose
its present power. There was a lingering antagonism against Edom in the Judean heart, which this
reference seeks to assuage (cf. 25:12–14; 35). The second group of references is much less
straightforward. Its slightly shriller vehemence suggests that here too a chord of contemporary
resentment is being struck. The Sidonians (cf. 28:20–23) may refer generally to the Phoenicians
(Katzenstein, *History of Tyre* 324 n. 166). Doomed kings of the north appear in Jer 25:26 after an earlier
reference to Elam, but a desire to round off a literary list is not appropriate here. The Phoenicians did in
fact practice circumcision: as before, the reference is to sharing the special fate of the uncircumcised.

31–32 The literary unit is concluded with a final reference to Egypt, now in the form of Pharaoh and
his army, which reverts to the language of v 18 and to the thought of vv 20–21. In a final statement that
gathers up both v 19 and v 28 it firmly equates Pharaoh’s fate with that of the doomed nations earlier,
contrasting present awe and might with future shame.

**Explanation**

Ezekiel refused to be mesmerized by the spectacle of Egypt’s military power or captivated by Judean
dreams of the political renewal that might be served thereby. History’s theatrical wardrobe was cluttered
with the national costumes of those who had strutted across its stage for a while, until the curtain fell on
their particular scene. They lived on only in popular infamy—or, in terms of contemporary beliefs about
the underworld, in the deeper regions of Sheol. Such would be Egypt’s fate, instead of a Valhalla of
chivalrous warriors who rested in peace and honor.

The supplementary conclusion changes the tone by adding to the list of dishonored dead others at
whose hands the Judeans had seemingly suffered (cf. 28:24). They too would pass away to an inglorious
fate. But the climax reverts to Egypt, which once more is cast in the sinister role of a tragic has-been.
The pronouncement is a warning to world powers in any age:

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart …
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the nations, spare us yet.
Lest we forget—lest we forget.

(R. Kipling, *Recessional*)

The emphasis on the underworld brings to a climax a motif that has been running through the oracles
against the nations (cf. 26:20–21; 28:8; 31:15–18). Its literary role is to be a counterpoint to the promise
of life for God’s people, which follows and is developed in the remaining chapters of the book.

**The Goodness and Severity of God (33:1–20)**

**Bibliography**

Translation

1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2 “Human one, speak to your fellow nationals and tell them: Suppose I cause a sword to attack a particular country, and its people take an individual from their number and make him their lookout, 3 and then he sees the sword attacking the country and blows on the horn to warn the people. 4 Now if anybody hears the horn without acting on the warning and the sword attacks and dispatches him, the responsibility for his death rests on his own head. 5 He heard the horn but did not act on the warning. His death is his own fault. If he had acted on the warning, he would have saved his life. 6 As for the lookout, if he sees the sword attacking but fails to blow on the horn, so that the people are not warned—and then the sword attacks and dispatches somebody, that person is dispatched for his wrongdoing, but I will hold the lookout responsible as agent of his death.

7 “You it is, human one, whom I have appointed lookout for the community of Israel. Whenever you hear a message from my lips, you are to pass on to them a warning from me. 8 If I tell someone who is wicked, ‘You wicked person, you are doomed to die,’ and you have not given him an explicit warning about his behavior, he will die for his wrongdoing, but I will hold you responsible.

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2.a. In this long hypothetical sentence the apodosis comes in v 4b in the Heb. (Cooke 370).
2.b. For the meaning of the Heb. term see Zimmerli 179.
4.a. Heb. "הזה can have the positive sense “take warning” as well as “be warned” (BDB 264a). The switch to a pf here and in v 6ab implies that an actual case is now envisaged (Cooke, ibid.).
4.b. The lack of an article with "הכתוב" “sword” here and in v 6a is a mark of idiomatic and/or slack composition; cf. the anarthrous [osaic “wicked” in vv 8, 9, 11.
4.c. Attempts to translate this pericope with more inclusive language led to distortion of its meaning or clumsiness. Essentially the translation reflects ancient culture in a readable, fairly close form.
5.a. For the conditional use of the ptcp see GKC 116w, 159i; for the following hypothetical pf see GKC 106p. Wellhausen (apud Smend 268) proposed a widely adopted conjectural emendation "יוחמ “(but he [= the lookout]) passed on the warning (and saved his life),” on the ground that the parallel statement in the interpretation (v 9bb) so suggests. From the same standpoint Auvray, RB 71 (1964) 193, keeping MT, rendered “(but he) acted on the warning,” urging that a conditional sense was tortuous after the series of narrative verbs. Zimmerli (180), impressed by the unanimity of the textual tradition, objected that the verb י的风险 “save” would have been used, as in v 9; 3:19, 21. In reply Auvray, ibid., rightly pointed out that in those texts the prophet is in view, but here the lookout, so that a different verb is permissible. However, the usage of יוחמ “and he” in v 13 suggests that the same subj is in view as in v 5a. The lookout has not been in view since v 3, so that he is not an obvious antecedent, while the initial יוחמ יוחמ “and the lookout” in v 6 suggests that a new subject is broached at that point. Auvray’s interpretation labors under the difficulty that elsewhere the lookout/prophet is the channel of warning. In v 9bb a new, climactic element appears to be added.
7.a. The force of יוחמ “(warn) from me,” here and in 3:17, is not absolutely clear. Greenberg (Ezekiel 1–20 84) interprets the phrase as “advise of the danger … coming from someone” and so “warn against.” Likewise, del Olmo Lete, Est Bib 22 (1963) 14, who correlates with the coming of the sword in the parable.
8.a. Heb. [osaic “O wicked one” may be a dittograph: it is lacking in the parallel 3:18 (cf. 33:14) and here in LXX Syr..
as a party to his death. If, on the other hand, you have warned him about his behavior, urging him to give it up, but he fails to do so, then he will die for his wrongdoing, but you will have saved your life.

10 “You, human one, are to tell the community of Israel, Your complaint has been: ‘Our rebel ways and our sins are getting us down and they are sapping our vital energies. How are we going to experience life?’ Tell them that I swear by my own life—so runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh—that what I want is not the death of the wicked person but for him to win life by giving up his present behavior. Give up, do give up your bad behavior—why should you die, community of Israel?

12 “You, human one, are to tell your fellow nationals: The virtue of the virtuous person will not keep him safe once he backslides, nor will the wickedness of the wicked person be his downfall once he gives up his behaving wickedly. Wickedness prevents the virtuous person from gaining life, when he sins: when I promise the virtuous person that he will win life and then, relying on his earlier virtue, he does wrong, none of his virtuous actions will be remembered. The wrong he does will be the cause of his death. Again, when I tell the wicked person ‘You are doomed to die’ and he gives up his sins and does what is right and fair, such as returning a pledge, giving back stolen property and generally behaving in line with the rules that make for life rather than doing wrong, he will win life, he will not die. None of his past sins will be remembered against him. He is doing what is right and fair, he will certainly win life.

17 “Your fellow nationals have been objecting: ‘The Lord’s attitude is not equitable,’ when it is...
their own attitude that is not equitable. 18 If the virtuous person gives up his virtue and does wrong, he will die on those grounds. 19 Correspondingly, if the wicked person gives up his wickedness and does what is right and fair, he will win life on that score. 20 You have objected ‘The Lord’s attitude is not equitable.’ I mean to make individual behavior the measure of my judgment of you, community of Israel.”

Notes

2.a. In this long hypothetical sentence the apodosis comes in v 4b in the Heb. (Cooke 370).

2.b. For the meaning of the Heb. term see Zimmerli 179.

4.a. Heb. h z h can have the positive sense “take warning” as well as “be warned” (BDB 264a). The switch to a pf here and in v 6a implies that an actual case is now envisaged (Cooke, ibid.).

4.b. The lack of an article with b r j “sword” here and in v 6a is a mark of idiomatic and/or slack composition; cf. the anarthrous b r f “wicked” in vv 8, 9, 11.

4.c. Attempts to translate this pericope with more inclusive language led to distortion of its meaning or clumsiness. Essentially the translation reflects ancient culture in a readable, fairly close form.

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a 17.a. For ynda “Lord” here and in v 20 many MSS have h y “Yahweh”: cf. 18:25, 29 and Note. The divine name may have been replaced to avoid its association with an offensive charge.

b 17.b. Heb. h a appears to mean here in the niph “be conformed to a standard, be right and fair” (cf. BDB 1067a). Greenberg (Ezekiel 1–20 333–34), working from the primary sense “determine,” regards the niph as tolerative, with the sense “(not) determinable” and so “erratic, arbitrary.” Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation 338 note 62), working from a basic meaning “measure,” interprets with NEB “acts without principle.”

c 17.c. Heb. h mh “they” reinforces the suffix: see GKC 135f.

a 18.a. Heb. h h b “by them” seems to use the pl. in a neuter sense (Cooke 370–71).

Heb. Hebrew
Heb. Hebrew
Heb. Hebrew


ibid. ibidem, in the same place

cf. confer, compare

ptcp participle

pf perfect

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10.a. For the seemingly redundant מָלַל “saying” cf. v 24; 35:12; 37:18 (Zimmerli 180–81).

11.a. For the formulaic יָנָה “Lord” see the note on 20:3.

12.a. V 12b, taken in the sense “and the righteous one cannot live thereby,” is widely held to be not original: it is redundant after the parallelism of v 12a and הֲבַה “thereby” is too far away from תְדֵד “righteousness” to be the antecedent, and the clause represents a gloss on v 12aא (Cooke 365; Zimmerli 181 et al.). However, Ehrlich (*Randglossen* 124) argued that the antecedent was תְדֵד “wickedness”
and that hōb qualifies lōw “cannot” rather than lōw “live,” with the sense given in the translation. He regarded lōw (μ) not as a noun “wickedness” but as an infinitive “(from) acting wickedly,” comparing especially 2 Chron 11:4 for the construction. Then the clause is evidently not a repetition of v 12a but a restatement expressing a basic principle, which paves the way for v 13 (cf. del Olmo Lete, Est Bib 22 [1963] 21 note 32).

13.a. LXX MSS attest a 2nd person verb, which reflects harmonization with v 14 (Zimmerli, ibid.).


15.a. MT adds [ע] “(the) wicked one,” which reads awkwardly at this point. Since 2 MSS LXX Syr. do not represent it, it may well be a misplaced annotation relating to v 14, with reference either to hōmw “and he turns” or to lōm t wmt lōm “you will surely die” as a vocative to match v 8 (Hitzig 258).

16.a. cf. the second note on v 13.

16.b. The lamed expresses a dative of disadvantage (BDB 515a).

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et al. alii, and others
inf infinitive
constr construct
cf. confer, compare
Est Estudios biblicos
Bib Estudios biblicos
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
BibOr Biblica et Orientalia (Rome: PBI)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
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the *niph* as tolerative, with the sense “(not) determinable” and so “erratic, arbitrary.” Fishbane (*Biblical Interpretation* 338 note 62), working from a basic meaning “measure,” interprets with *NEB* “acts without principle.”

17.c. *Heb.* ḫ nh “they” reinforces the suffix: see *GKC* 135f.

18.a. *Heb.* µ ḫ b “by them” seems to use the pl. in a neuter sense (Cooke 370–71).

**Form/Structure/Setting**

The boundaries of the literary unit are set as vv 1–20 by the message reception formula of v 1 and by the beginning of a new, dated piece in v 21. The use of the prophetic address in vv 2, 7, 10 and 12 reveals four sections, vv 2–6, 7–9, 10–11 and 12–20. It is customary to split these sections into two larger units, vv 2–9 and 10–20, mainly because of the external links these verses have with chaps. 3 and 18 respectively. However, there are five internal factors that suggest otherwise. (i) The occurrences of ḫ mḥ “your compatriots” in vv 2, 12, 17 (and 30) may indicate a significant break at v 12. (ii) In vv 2–20 there is an alternating sequence of divine address to Ezekiel and through the prophet to the people, in an ABA/ABA pattern, with the first group ending at v 11. (iii) In v 11 l̄ yr ṯ y rh “house of Israel” seems to echo its occurrence in v 7, so that the force of vv 7–10a is that Ezekiel receives an order to speak in his role as watchman for the community, the role assigned to him in vv 7–9. (iv) Direct address to “the house of Israel” at vv 11 and 20 brings about parallel endings. (v) Disputations (vv 10–11, 17–20) end both sections, after double treatments of (a) the prophet’s responsibility, in parable and interpretation (vv 2–9), and (b) the people’s moral responsibility in relation to a shift from good to bad or from bad to good (vv 12–16).

The parable of the lookout uses a framework of legal language. Two “cases” are presented (*ŷk* “if, when,” vv 2, 6), in accord with priestly casuistic formulation of offenses. The style of the Holiness Code is very similar, especially the combination of case and verdict in Lev 24:17, “If (*ŷk*) someone kills a human being, he will surely be put to death.” V 9 in the course of the application is closer to this formulation: the parabolic illustration demanded its own terminology. The casuistic framework is developed with a loose narrative sequence of clauses, like Deuteronomy’s homiletic development of the case-law style (cf. e.g., Deut 13:1–5). The polarized opposition of life or death is also derived from Deuteronomy, from a deuteronomistic portion (Deut 30:15–20). The legal framework is used to describe a non-legal set of circumstances, which comprised no legal offense and for which no legal penalty had been prescribed. The priestly style is used to convey an essentially prophetic concern. The application (vv 7–9) is addressed to the prophet, for it takes the form of a commissioning oracle (v 7), investing Ezekiel

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*niph* Niphal

*NEB* The New English Bible

*Heb.* Hebrew


*Heb.* Hebrew

pl. plate or plural

cf. *confer*, compare
e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example
with the role of a lookout, and of exposition of that role (vv 8–9). The two cases of the parable are here inverted in a chiastic order (v 4 = v 9, v 6 = v 8; del Olmo Lete, *Est Bib* 22 [1963] 15).

Vv 10–11 are a disputation, consisting of three basic elements, thesis, dispute and counterthesis (cf. in principle Murray, *JSOT* 38 [1987] 99; Graffy [4 Prophet Confronts 72–78] has postulated an extended disputation, vv 10–16 or vv 10–20). The first element is also a lament, while the second and third elements (v 11) comprise a summons to repentance, with motivation mingled with appeal, in an overall combination of standard elements: the messenger formula, divine promise or assurance, accusation, admonition, threat and a vocative (cf. Raitt, *ZAW* 83 [1971] 35). An inclusion is formed by the phrase lā ṣṣĕry t̄yō “house of Israel.”

Vv 12–16 are a didactic discourse, summarized in a double formulation at the beginning (v 12a) and developed separately in vv 12b–13 and vv 14–16. There is a fourfold parallel structuring of points: (i) a divine pronouncement of life or death, (ii) apostasy or conversion, (iii) the irrelevance of past behavior, and (iv) a final pronouncement of death or life (del Olmo Lete, *Est Bib* 22 [1963] 22). The parallelism is broken at two points, the introductory v 12b and the catalog and pronunciation of v 15, each of which strives to reinforce the stage of apostasy or conversion.

Vv 17–20 are a disputation, presented obliquely until the direct, recapitulating conclusion in v 20. V 17a, repeated in v 20a, is the thesis, and it is disputed in v 17b. A counterthesis occurs in vv 18–19 and is restated in v 20b. There is a chiastic structure ABBA in vv 17–20a, with vv 18–19 constructed in a parallel fashion and v 17 reiterated in v 20a. In sense, v 20b functions as a further B element, so that emphasis is laid on the counterthesis.

The primary setting of vv 1–9 is difficult to determine because of the fact that vv 7–9 are a virtual repetition of 3:17–19. The factor of literary structuring has undoubtedly played a role in this double placement: chap. 33 introduces a new section of the book, in which a positive message of judgment replaces the earlier proclamation of judgment. However, where the watchman passages originally belonged is disputed, and both literary and historical factors are involved in the question. Schmidt, *TZ* 6 (1950) 92, has claimed that different situations lie behind vv 1–6 and 7–9 respectively, in that first the people and then the prophet are addressed, and that, while the parable belongs to the second, post-587 B.C. phase of the prophet’s ministry, the “application” has been borrowed from the chronologically earlier 3:16–21. By contrast, Kraetzschmar (35–36) argued that 33:1–9 all belong to the second phase and that the emphasis on the individual rather than on national solidarity is evidence of that setting. A number of scholars, including Eichrodt (75) and Zimmerli (189), have made similar claims. As to the unity of vv 1–9, Zimmerli has pointed to the close correspondence between vv 1–6 and 7–9 and the unlikelihood that vv 2–6 ever existed independently, although it is possible that they were subsequently inserted to amplify vv 7–9.

The issue is complicated by the extra material 3:20–21, which does not recur here, concerning the perseverance of the righteous and wicked. Auvray, *RB* 71 (1964) 197, has noted that the theme of this material does not logically belong to the watchman illustration, and concluded with some reason that it represents a desire to present a more comprehensive and systematized description of Ezekiel’s prophetic
task (cf. del Olmo Lete, *Est Bib* 22 [1963] 29). There it serves to enhance the dual response of 2:5, 7; 3:11, 27 (cf. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1* 55). In that case, there is a concern in chap. 3 to give an introduction to the prophet’s ministry as a whole, rather like the redactional role of Isa 1 in relation to the work of Isaiah (cf. Fohrer, *ZAW* 74 [1962] 251–68). If that is so, then 3:17–19 comprise a repetition of material already present in 33:7–9. It must be said, however, that other scholars have argued differently to a greater or lesser degree. For instance, Eichrodt (444) would place 3:20–21 after 33:9 (cf. Fohrer 23, 184). On the other hand, Brownlee, *VT* 28 (1978) 398, considered that 33:2–6 have been removed from an earlier position before 3:17. In harmonizing fashion Greenberg (*Ezekiel 1–20* 90–97) has urged that Ezekiel’s role as a watchman belongs to both periods of his activity (cf. Reventlow, *Wächter über Israel* 130), although the claim of a new emphasis on individualism in the second phase is illfounded. Klein (*Ezekiel: The Prophet and His Message* 28–32) has limited Greenberg’s view of a double delivery to a redactional concern that must be taken seriously within the present form of the book: difference in context indicates that the first watchman pericope in chap. 3 is a private message to Ezekiel, linked to the prophet’s call, while the second in chap. 33 is part of the prophet’s public message later on and is oriented toward forgiveness.

33:10–11 are related to portions of chap. 18, viz. 18:23 and, in general terms, 31b. This relationship is part of a larger one shared with vv 12–20. Chap. 18 does seem to belong to a post-587 B.C. period, and so to the second part of Ezekiel’s twofold ministry (Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1* 377). Hence parallels with it have a not unreasonable role in chap. 33, which serves to introduce the prophet’s new words of hope. Vv 12–16 are close to 18:21–22 and 24. Here there is an emphasis on divine address, absent from chap. 18. The order of the propositions in vv 13 and 14–15a, 16 is reversed: they accord with 18:24 and 18:21–22 respectively (v 15a accords loosely with the series of positive and negative catalogs found in chap. 18; v 11a has a counterpart in 18:23). Auvey, *RB* 71 (1964) 202, has commented on the illogicality of the order here: the divine principle relating to conversion in chap. 18 (18:21–22, 23) is here separated from it and placed next to the statement of apostasy, on which it has no bearing. His comment holds good only if vv 10–11 belong with vv 12–16. Vv 17–20 are found at greater length in 18:25–30, with minor differences.

It is clear that similar material now exists in different recensions. Whether one can trace literary dependence is uncertain. Auvey, *RB* 71 (1964) 203, and del Olmo Lete, *Est Bib* 22 (1963) 31, have argued for the priority of the material in chap. 33 rather than in chap. 18, while Wevers (176) has urged that chap. 33 is an editorial recapitulation of chap. 18. Zimmerli (189) leaves the relationship of vv 10–16 to chap. 18 open, while inclined to regard vv 17–20 as a secondary addition from chap. 18, in view of their extreme closeness.

Comment
cf. confer, compare
*Est Bib* Estudios biblicos
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
*ZAW* Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
cf. confer, compare
*VT* Vetus Testamentum
cf. confer, compare
*RB* Revue biblique
*RB* Revue biblique
*Est Bib* Estudios biblicos
1–5 Ezekiel is instructed to tell a parable to his exiled compatriots. It concerns providential warfare, whereby military invasion is instigated by the punitive will of Yahweh (cf. 21:13–22 [8–17]). As a defensive measure the people appoint a lookout to warn them with a trumpet signal when the attack is launched. If any do not heed the warning signal, presumably by running for shelter into the walled city, they have only themselves to blame when they become casualties of war, having failed to take the opportunity open to them. The statement “his blood is on his own head” originally related to the innocence of the human agent of death (Koch, VT 12 [1962] 413; cf. 2 Kgs 2:37). Here the implicit reference is not to the killing invaders but to the lookout who had discharged his responsibility in giving a signal. The purpose of v 5 is to underline this observation. The fault lay with the heedless—and so not with the lookout, whose trumpet blast had been clearly heard.

6 Next, the case of the lazy lookout is considered. When the sword strikes and lives are taken, justice is done from the divine standpoint, for the sword accomplishes Yahweh’s punitive will (v 2a). Yet the case is a complex one: the lookout, having failed in his duty, is guilty of a capital offense, and from this perspective his life too is forfeit because of the bloodguilt resting on him. The task of a lookout is to pass on a warning, and woe betide him if he is remiss. Yahweh will act as a laego or avenging next of kin, claiming the lookout’s life (del Olmo Lete, Est Bib 22 [1963] 13; cf. Num 35:12–21).

7–9 This section, addressed to the prophet, looks back and forward. It interprets the parable in terms of Ezekiel’s role and paves the way for vv 10–11 by clarifying in what capacity the prophet is to transmit Yahweh’s message in v 11. This conception of the prophet as a lookout is a development of Jer 6:17 (cf. J. W. Miller, Das Verhältnis Jeremia 112–12). In the application the place of the citizens in appointing the lookout is strikingly taken by Yahweh. The phenomenon looks forward to v 11, to the role of Yahweh as would-be defender of his people and not their destroyer, the preserver and giver of life and not the taker. The two cases of vv 2–5 and v 6 are now considered in reverse, with reference to the prophet. His task is to pass on to his constituency verbal messages of Yahweh’s moral judgment in order that they may act as a deterrent. This is a reapplication of a positive concept of prophecy as encouraging a change of heart and habit, in order that divine punishment might be averted (see 2 Kgs 17:13; Jer 23:14; Zech 1:4; cf. Ezek 13:22).

To a large extent the parable of the lookout had in view a pre-exilic type of situation, the invasion of Judah and destruction of its inhabitants as the outworking of a moral providence. In the interpretation, however, all such language falls away, as befits an exilic situation. Ezekiel prophesies to the community of exiles in order to win moral converts. The verdict “You will surely die” has its roots in a judicial setting, and the priests as the custodians of sacral law were cognizant of capital offenses. Here, however, such doom as the prophets traditionally threatened sinners with (v 21) is in view. Ezekiel’s task was to warn, and if he failed to do so, the doom of which he warned sidestepped to include him in its path. Yahweh would again intervene as laego as in v 6. The reason why Yahweh avenge the death in the first case but not now, is that then the prophet’s silence deprived the sinner of the potential to begin anew and so sealed his liability to death. The prophetic warning was necessary as the first step in Yahweh’s positive purpose for the exiles.

cf. confer, compare
VT Vetus Testamentum
cf. confer, compare
Est Bib Estudios biblicos
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
What this purpose was the disputation now makes clear. Ezekiel’s constituency in its post-587 B.C. situation was well aware of the aura of death that had already invaded their life and impoverished its quality. They were aware too that their own sins were the cause. In terms of the context, the admission puts them in the category of the wicked person dying for his wrongdoing (vv 8, 9, cf. v 6). That we are so to understand it is suggested by the resumption of earlier vocabulary, “the death of the wicked person,” in v 11ab. The people’s admission is expressed in the style of a communal lament, the first clause of which poignantly uses a series of three -ēnumounds, as in Isa 53:5a; 59:12. It uses a distinctive lament motif in speaking of death as a power rampant in their lives (cf. Ps 116:3, 8), and in posing a despairing question (cf. Ps 137:4) they were expressing the conviction that a new lease on life seemed unattainable. Yahweh is the implicit agent of such disorientation, as Ps 22:16 (15) affirms: “You set me in the dust of death.” Historically the lament gives expression to the aftermath of the catastrophe of 587 B.C. and to the social and religious disorientation that the crisis created (cf. Lam 3:42–47).

In a vehement protest Yahweh objects to being cast solely in the role of punitive destroyer. It does not express his ultimate will, which is to bestow life on those who turn from the bad lifestyle that occasioned the punishment. The judgment was a means to this very end. The divine principle here enunciated gathers up the message of the prophetic canon, that judgment was the precursor of salvation: Yahweh plucks up with a view to planting again (Jer 1:10). Also, life’s present death is regarded as an omen of real, future death. The deuteronomistic alternatives of life or death on the basis of a radical choice are offered anew (Deut 30:15–20; cf. Jer 21:8). For Ezekiel there was an eschatological connotation, which his later chapters expand, the opportunity of a new life associated with return from exile (cf. 36:24–32; 37:11–14). Yahweh would honor a change of lifestyle, the fruit of repentance, and to this end the people are summoned (cf. 14:6, in an earlier message to the exiles). The divine question is a hope-laden challenge to the despairing question of the people. Such was Yahweh’s gracious offer, to which the prophetic warning was the necessary precursor in order to expose the danger that loomed over the impenitent (cf. 2 Chron 24:19; 36:15–16). Does the offer of life link theologically with the divine life of the oath formula? If so, Ps 102:12–13, 24–25 (11–12, 23–24) and John 14:19b provide significant parallels.

The ensuing discussion majors not in Yahweh’s offer of life but in the necessity for a choice of life or death and pursuit of a God-honoring moral way of life, with which Yahweh’s pronouncements are inextricably linked. The term “give up” or “return” (ḇʿlw) is now used not only in the sense of renouncing evil and embracing God’s good way but also in the opposite sense. There is a refusal to think in conventional categories of sinner and saint. Or rather, these categories are regarded not as fixed but as flexible. A conditional element looms large. It is disconcertingly possible both for the apostate who has not taken Yahweh’s moral will to heart and for the person whose way of life has been an outworking of that will to reverse their roles. Neither is locked into a previously made moral determination, nor is Yahweh’s word of hope or doom irrevocable. The saint may abandon the lifestyle that is the fruit of his faith, while the apostate may return to the path of obedience that leads to life (cf. 20:11, 13, 21; Lev 18:5). Yahweh’s
word is an amen, a “So be it!” that affirms each deliberate choice to pursue good or evil. The onus for
judgment or salvation is placed squarely on the shoulders of the people of God.

17–20 The disputation echoes and answers an objection voiced evidently by those whose pretensions
of a comfortable, superior status and conventional religious categorizing had been shattered by this
disconcerting message. It is not fair: is God so unjust as either to overlook earlier moral commitment (cf.
Heb 6:10) or to welcome back diehard sinners? In reply the charge of unfairness is thrown back in the
critics’ faces. The alternatives set out in vv 12–16 are uncompromisingly restated and summed up in a
principle of judgment addressed to the nominally sound members of the people of God. If the cap of v 18
fitted, they had to wear it! “Whoever rejects the redeemer finds himself face to face with the judge”
(Eichrodt 456).

Explanation

The prophet is fighting on two pastoral fronts. On the one hand he has to counter despair and
demoralization among the exiles; on the other, he has to do it in such a way as not to encourage moral
indifference and a false sense of security. The complexity of his message is occasioned not only by his
pastoral situation but also by a traditional tension in Yahweh’s self-revelation, which the New Testament
and Christianity also know, that he is both gracious savior and moral judge. The first is affirmed in the
parable of the lookout and its application to the prophet, and also in the accompanying disputation that
anchors the prophet’s role to a specific exilic situation. Emphasis rests on the will of Yahweh and the
communication of that will to the people. His will for the exiled community was life and restoration (cf.
37:1–14). Yet it was not an automatic, unconditioned hope: “whoever has this hope in [God] purifies
himself as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). Ahead lay not merely a new Exodus that issued in a return to
Yahweh’s favor and land, but also a judgment scenario such as the generation of the old Exodus
encountered in the wilderness: rebels would have no part in the return (20:35–38; 34:17–22; cf. C. J.
Mullo Weir, VT 2 [1952] 109–11). It is in the light of this coming judgment which would split God’s
people that they are counseled to prepare themselves. Yahweh warns of judgment and the prospect of an
eschatological death precisely because life and not death is his priority (cf. 2 Pet 3:9). The warning given
through the prophet is itself evidence of Yahweh’s grace, as the first step toward a desired goal achieved
via reformed, godly lives, the goal of a life that was life indeed (cf. 2 Pet 3:11–12). The prophet thus had
a vital role. A necessary task was laid on him, as in a later era on Paul, both as gospel preacher (1 Cor
9:16) and as church teacher (Col 1:28).

Yet divine grace is easily misunderstood as implying moral irresponsibility, and indeed it has always
been difficult to find rational coherence between the righteousness and grace of God (cf. Rom 3:5–8; 6:1
15). Accordingly, the second half of the total message has a human focus, an emphasis on a moral
imperative. It is grounded in Yahweh’s earlier revelation, in the provision of the Torah that with precise
directions (v 15) pointed to the path of life. So Torah and prophecy alike spelled out Yahweh’s will, and
the role of the latter was to reinforce the former in the creation of a people who with integrity and steady
commitment sought to walk in the path of life that was also a path of righteousness. There are New
Testament parallels to this dynamic emphasis on conditionality, such as Col 1:23. Supremely, perhaps, Ezekiel’s total message may be summed up in the words of Rom 11:22: “Take note of the goodness and severity of God: severity to those who fell and goodness to you, provided that you continue in his goodness; otherwise you too will be cut off.”

This emphasis on Yahweh’s gracious longing and moral demand is fittingly placed at the head of a new section of the book which will announce promises of hope. It reminds the Christian reader of Jesus’ ironic allocation of divine judgment and grace in Matt 7:21–23; 20:1–16; Luke 15:11–32. Here it seems to serve as a corrective. Later chapters might be understood to imply that all the exiles had to do was to wait idly till Yahweh’s gift of new life fell into their laps. Earlier in the book 18:30–31 provided an implicit rejoinder: the gift of a new heart had to be appropriated, and a change of heart and habit played a part in that appropriation. As noted above, 20:35–38 convey their own caution. Gospel and law do have a certain essential compatibility (cf. Rom 6:15–17).

Do the two halves of vv 1–20 reflect two separate messages concluded with divine disputations and subsequently united with the help of their common keyword יָדֵע “return, give up”? The presence of elements from both halves in chap. 18, if that chapter reflects a single situation, may indicate that vv 1–20 were delivered on one occasion and sought to clarify a complex theological and pastoral issue. In any case, the material finds its unity in the nature of God and in the outworking of divine truth in the experience of his people.

Perspectives On The Fall of Jerusalem (33:21–33)

Bibliography


Translation

21 In the twelfth year of our deportation, on the fifth of the tenth month, a person who had
survived the fall of Jerusalem came to me with the news that the city had been captured. Now I had felt Yahweh’s hand on me the evening before the survivor arrived, and he had opened my mouth by the time he came in the morning. Yes, my mouth was opened and I was dumb no more.

I received the following communication from Yahweh: “Human one, the folk who live in those desolated areas on Israelite soil are claiming that Abraham was just one individual and yet he took over the country. ‘We are numerous,’ they are saying. ‘We have been given the country to take over.’ Tell them, then, the following message from the Lord: You eat meat containing blood, you look up to your idols and you spill blood. Is it likely then that you will take over the country? You rely on your swords, you engage in shocking religious practices and you are one and all sullying your neighbors’ wives. Is it likely that you will take over the country?

This is what you are to tell them. The message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: I swear by my life that those who are in the desolate areas will fall as victims of the sword, and anyone in the open country is assigned by me to the wild animals as prey, while those in hideouts and caves will die of plague. I will reduce the country to wrack and ruin. Its celebrated assets will be destroyed and Israel’s mountains will become untraveled ruins. Then they will realize that I am Yahweh, when I reduce the country to wrack and ruin, in reprisal for all the shocking religious practices they have been engaging in.

“Your fellow nationals, human one, who are talking about you in alleys and doorways, invite each other to come and hear what message Yahweh has sent. They come to you in crowds and sit down in front of you. They listen to your messages without acting on them.”

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a. MT awb “coming” may have suffered metathesis from an original wab “his coming”: the phenomenon is not uncommon in Ezek with this verb (see Zimmerli 191).

b. For the formulaic ynda “Lord” here and in v 27 see 20:3 Note.

b. LXX probably omitted as inappropriate for an exilic setting.

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like a fine vocalist, some professional musician who sings erotic songs. They listen to your messages without acting on them. \(^{33}\) When it finally happens—and happen it will—then they will realize that they have had a prophet among them."

Notes

21.a. There is some ancient support, a few MSS and LXX Syr., for “eleventh”: see Comment.

21.b. Heb. \(\text{f } \text{yl } \text{ph}\) “the survivor” exhibits an idiomatic use of the article: see GKC 126r.

22.a. MT \(\text{awb}\) “coming” may have suffered metathesis from an original \(\text{wab}\) “his coming”: the phenomenon is not uncommon in Ezek with this verb (see Zimmerli 191).
24.a. Heb. “these,” as mentally present to the speaker. LXX* probably omitted as inappropriate for an exilic setting.

25.a. For the formulaic ינד a “Lord” here and in v 27 see 20:3 Note.

25.b. LXX* omits vv 25ab–27a by parablepsis due to homoeoteleuton: a copyist’s eye slipped to the next messenger formula. The missing material comprises the logically necessary accusation.

25.c. Cornill’s fairly popular emendation מ"י[ל] “on the mountains” (396), aligning with 18:6, is not necessary. For the idiomatic use of מ"י[ל] “together with” see BDB 755b.

25.d. MT מ"ק נ[ל] ו“and (you raise) your eyes” is written defectively.

25.e. For the interrogative sense after the conjunction here and in v 26b see GKC 150a.


26.b. Heb. מ"וי “you have done,” as if fem, is anomalous for the regular מ"וי, for which there is a little support (cf. BHS): see GKC 44k.

27.a. MT מ"ק[ל] “to eat him” is possible, but מ"ק[ל] מ"י “give for food” is a regular phrase in Ezek, which suggests that an original מ"ק[ל], for which there is some Heb. and versional support (see BHS), was misunderstood as מ"ק[ל] and modernized into the present form.

30.a. For the Heb. construction see Cooke 371 and GKC 112oo, 116w. A pl is expected: perhaps the...
Heb should be pointed as inf abs τ β δ ω (Zimmerli 196).

30.b. MT may have a conflated text. If so, which is the intruder is hard to assess, although the first phrase δβαι δ̣ α † τ α † δβαι “one with one,” not represented in LXX*, is often so regarded (Cornill 398 et al.). The doubling may intend to represent a plethora of gossiping (Zimmerli, ibid.). Heb. δβαι is a strange Aramaism alongside δβαι τ̣ α, which is evidently so pointed for assonance (Cooke, ibid.).


31.b. MT adds γλῶ[ “my people,” which is difficult to fit into the sentence. LXX* Syr. do not represent, and it may originally have been a marginal gloss on μ[ “people” earlier (Cornill, ibid., et al.). Ehrlich (Randglossen 125–26) regarded it as a true correction, rendering the earlier phrase “as a person to whom my people should come.”

31.c. MT adds “for erotic talk [cf. Tg. αβ[ ‘lascivious talk’] is on their lips, their minds pursue their illgotten gain.” Zimmerli (196–97) and Wevers (256), following Hölscher, delete v 31ab–b as an expansion linked with v 32, but at least the repetition of v 31abγδ in v 32b provides a fitting emphasis. As a whole v 31b seems to be saying too much. The focus of the content is on hearing without heeding Ezekiel’s messages rather than on actual wrongdoing. V 32b reads like an anticlimax after it. Was μχγβδιον ἀλογία “for erotic talk is on their lips” originally a comment on v 32a “you are to them like a love song (MT),” understanding the people to be the singers of disreputable songs—not the prophet? LXX Syr. render μχγβδιον “lying,” which is a better match with μχδιον “their gain” in v 31b (cf. 22:27b–28a). It may represent an interpretative translation, supplying a general derogatory term suitable to the context. Many read μχβζκ “lies” (Cornill, ibid.; Fohrer 189, et al.), but it is graphically
unlikely. LXX also represents μıld as “defilements,” perhaps reading μibold “idols” (Cornill, ibid., cf. 11:21; 20:16). LXX* Syr. do not represent μишь “they do,” which does not easily relate to talking. The phrase probably originated as a marginal variant for, or clarification of, μишь “do” in v 32bb. Was the staccato ûlh μlbl μlyja “their hearts pursue their gain” meant as a comment on the bad shepherds of chap. 34? If so, it was intended as a reminiscence of the greedy shepherds of Isa 56:11b. MT ûlh “goes (after)” is not represented in LXX*. It was probably overlooked before the following ûnhw.

32.a. For MT ñykl “like a song” the following reference to a musician requires “like a singer.”

The consonantal text may be maintained if, instead of reading ñykl (Fohrer, ibid., following Herrmann, et al.) one points ñykl (Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 180, following Ewald).

Form/Structure/Setting

The autobiographical narrative report in vv 21–22, prefaced with a chronological reference, serves as an introduction to an extended oracle that is introduced by a message reception formula, in vv 23–33. The separate addressing of the prophet in vv 24 and 30 splits the oracle into two parts, vv 24–29 and 30–33. The two prophetic messages—for such they are in their diverse content and targets—are both proof sayings ending in third-person recognition formulas (vv 29, 33). The first is a standard three-part proof saying, developed from an oracle of judgmentment that consists of both a second-person accusation and a third-person pronouncement of punishment (vv 25–26, 27–28). Each part is introduced with commissioning and messenger formulas (vv 25a, 27a) and in the second case a divine oath has a reinforcing intent (v 27ab), while a typical ðkl “therefore, then” interlocks charge and verdict. The piece is also sa disputation that consists of thesis in v 24, dispute in vv 25–26, and counterthesis in vv 27–29 (Murray, JSOT 38 [1987] 103–4). The second divine communication also has elements of an oracle of judgment. An accusatory tone sounds loud and clear in the bittersweet narrative of vv 30–32, while there is a short, sinister reference to punishment in v 33a, as a qualification of the recognition formula.

The chronological setting of this prophetic unit is clearly post-587 B.C. and the geographical setting the place of exile, as the introductory message makes clear. The second message reflects the prophet’s vindication, now that Jerusalem has fallen. The message concerning the survivors of Judah rhetorically addresses them directly in vv 25–27a, before lapsing into a natural third-person reference (contra Brownlee, JBL 89 [1970] 393). It obviously reflects a period some time after the initial shock of
destruction had passed and in which there was a turning to a brighter future (Cooke 367; Eichrodt 461). Wevers (254) has queried the relevance of vv 28–29 to a post-587 B.C. situation on the ground that threat of further devastation seems out of place, and so he has suggested a setting for vv 25–29 after 11:15. However, Zimmerli (199–200) has compared the presence of this very theme in Jer 52:30, while Graffy (A Prophet Confronts 82) has observed that the prophet uses strong stereotyped language of destruction in order to answer the positive claims of v 24.

In rhetorical terms the three phases of the disputation in vv 24–29 are highlighted by three expressions featuring a double use of l mā “say,” in vv 24, 25 and 27. Running through the accusation, pronouncement of punishment and amplified recognition formula is the issue of giving the land (y h, Ḥ ṭ a h) in vv 24, 28 and 29: the positive sense of the first is ironically twisted to a negative one in the second and third cases. Stylistically, rather than form-critically, the disputation falls into two parts, vv 24–26 and 27–29. The first raises and disputes the question of the possession of the land (y h and Ḥ ṭ a h in vv 24, 25b, 26). The mention of “ruins” (l v b ṭ j) provides parallel beginnings in vv 24 and 27.

The second message is rhetorically paralleled with the first by different locations involving the verb b ṭ y “sit, inhabit”: the first target comprises “those who inhabit (y b ṭ y) ruins” (v 24), and the second those who “sit (b ṭ y w b ṭ y) before” the exilic prophet (v 31). This message is engrossed with hearing ([m] and coming (a w b): the seemingly positive coming and hearing in v 30 turn into a heedless pair of activities in v 31 and into a heedless hearing in v 32 — which is capped in v 33 by a reference to the coming of disaster.

Although chap. 33 falls into two distinct literary units, there are clear indications of a larger structuring for this introductory chapter. In a frightening inclusion the coming of the sword in vv 2–6 is echoed in the coming of an unnamed woe in v 33. The motif of hearing to no effect in vv 30–32 picks up the double statement in the parable at vv 4–5, while the mention of a “word … from Yahweh” in v 30 resumes “a word from my mouth” in v 7. Moreover, the styling of the exiles as u m[y] “your compatriots” takes the reader back to vv 2, 12 and 17, and especially to v 2 in view of the watchman terminology reiterated in vv 30–33. Perhaps one may envisage an ABBA structuring for the oracles of chap. 33, with vv 1–11 matched in vv 30–33 and then vv 12–20 finding a counterpart in vv 23–29 with their shared moral emphasis. The historical pivot of the chapter, C in an overall ABCBA pattern, is the sequence of events in vv 21–22.

There are also wider structural links with earlier material. The ending of Ezekiel’s “dumbness” was adumbrated predictively in 24:27 and marks a reversal of its imposition in 3:26. Moreover, the divine assertion that Ezekiel’s prophetic gifts would eventually be acknowledged by the exiles constitutes an echo of 2:5.

Comment

21–22 The dating corresponds in Parker and Dubberstein’s reconstruction (Babylonian Chronology 28) to January 19, 585 B.C. It creates a problem in that it means that a year and a half had elapsed since the fall of Jerusalem, which seems an unreasonably long time for the news to reach Babylonia. So the minority tradition for the “eleventh” year is attractive, especially when it is supported by the suggestion that the present text is the result of an attempt to follow on from the dating of 32:17 (Zimmerli 192; Eichrodt 457–58). Then there is a more feasible six-month lapse between the fall and its communication (cf. the nearly four months’ journey of Ezra’s party from Babylonia to Jerusalem in Ezra 7:9; 8:31).
especially if one envisages the “survivor” not as a refugee making his own way eastwards, but a survivor of the fall who shared in one of the general and more time-consuming deportations to Babylonia (see Zimmerli, ibid.). However, one cannot help suspecting that the textual support for the earlier date is a secondary rationalization.

Kutsch (Die chronologischen Daten, esp. 41–45) has argued that the first year of Jehoachin’s deportation, from which most dates in Ezekiel are reckoned (except 24:1) occurred in 598/7 B.C., while Zedekiah’s first regnal year was not until 597/6 B.C. Accordingly, the dates relating to the deportation need to be set a year earlier, and here interpreted as January 19, 586 B.C. which again posits six months or so as the time for the news to travel east. Malamat, IEJ 18 (1968) 146–50, following Cooke (366), May (248) et al., has justified the present text on the supposition that, while the dates throughout Ezekiel rely on a calendar that began the new year in the spring, in the month Nisan, the regnal years of the Judean kings are based on an autumn calendar beginning in the month Tishri, while the months were reckoned from Nisan. Thus the fall of Jerusalem occurred in the summer between Nisan and Tishri, already in the twelfth year of Zedekiah according to the reckoning in Ezekiel, but still in Zedekiah’s eleventh year that was going to end in Tishri. By this means too a six-month interval is achieved. It is clear that there are serious chronological problems connected with the fall of Jerusalem, and somehow the present text may be correct.

Judean confirmation of Jerusalem’s fall (cf. 14:22) has repercussions for the prophet’s ministry forecast earlier in 24:27. Whatever the precise significance of the dumbness (see Comment on 24:25–27), its termination, here mentioned twice for emphasis, clearly marked a turning point for the prophet and his people, and made possible a new message of national hope to replace that of judgment. The momentous release that Ezekiel underwent first in his own person was suitably anticipated by an uncanny presentiment that he recognized as the working or “hand” of Yahweh (cf. 1:3, etc; see Roberts, VT 21 [1971] 244–51), which preceded important developments in the prophet’s experience of God.

Yet exile was the necessary channel of true hope. Ezekiel somehow hears of a false hope that, theologically grounded as it was, had to be exposed as not of God. At an earlier period the prophet had to disabuse the non-exiled Judeans of the notion that, while the deportation of 597 B.C. spelled divine rejection, staying in the land was an earnest of God’s providential favor (11:15). Such theological naivety was being used again, in a post-587 B.C. situation, to bolster a self-centered resilience that merely indicated that Yahweh’s purpose had not yet been understood (cf. v 29; cf. Isa 9:8–10). Those still in the land saw themselves as religious pioneers, typologically reliving not the occupation achieved by Israel under Joshua, but Abraham’s earlier occupation (cf. Gen 15:7, 8; Exod 6:8). This parallel, rather than the other, made their hopes seem more likely to be fulfilled. It is striking that in Isa 51:2 forty years or so later the same patriarchal tradition is claimed as relevant by the prophet of the exile (cf. Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 375–76). In this case the timing was wrong. The people needed a fallow period
for the lessons of the exile to sink in before they were ready for restoration (Sanders, *Canon and Authority* 31–33).

25–26 The prophet counters this optimistic bandying of theological language with a rhetorical disputation. He argues that its proponents have disqualified themselves from such a promise. Like the orthodox Jews who much later in history claimed that secular Zionists were flying in the face of heaven, he denies that their enthusiasm can be of God. His argument is a pragmatic one. “You shall know them by their fruits”! Here the fruit was not promising, for it violated traditional standards of religious and moral propriety. In 22:3–4, 6–12 this test had been applied to the yet unfallen Jerusalem, and its truth had not ceased to be valid, although the lesson of the capital’s destruction had not been learned. Here both specific covenant rulings (cf. Lev 18:20; 19:26) and more general deviations are combined in a vehement double protest at the incompatibility of claims and way of life. The reference to the sword seems to relate to social unrest in which might was right.

27–29 Those who take the sword will perish by the sword! The punishment would fit the crime. The prophet’s counterthesis invokes, instead of occupation of the promised land, covenant curses for these covenant-breakers (cf. Reventlow, *Wächter über Israel* 100; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation* 294, 420). The threefold bane of sword, wild animals and plague evokes Lev 26:22, 25, and the ruin and destruction of v 28a relates to Lev 26:19a, 33b. An inexorable fate would remorselessly search out any survivors of the earlier destruction and deprive them of both hope and life. The land-giving of v 24 is ironically transformed into a giving of the land to ruin in v 28. The extended recognition formula of v 29 neatly recapitulates the ironic reversal along with its logical basis. Only thus could inconsistency with Yahweh’s own nature be exposed for what it was.

30–33 The primary message of vv 24–29 must have been to reassure the exiles that the spiritual future, in terms of return to the land and to God’s favor, lay with them rather than with those still in Judah. In this sense, along with the news of Jerusalem’s fall in vv 21–22 and its implications for the prophet’s ministry, it provides a fitting prelude to this next oracle. Ezekiel, long regarded with suspicion and distaste for his defeatism and scolding (cf. 2:6; 3:9), has been vindicated as a true prophet. In spirit he now seems to stand shoulder to shoulder with his compatriots in exile. Ezekiel’s popularity knows no bounds, as the exiles crowd into his home (cf. 8:1; 14:1; 20:1) to hear what this sensational prophet will say next. Unfortunately, it was the popularity of an entertainer, a pop star, that Ezekiel enjoyed, and he was being taken no more seriously than before. His hearers functioned as a concert audience rather than a congregation. The extended simile of the singer refers not to the prophet’s poetic eloquence, as Brownlee supposed (*JBL* 89 [1970] 396), but to the fact that his words were so welcome that they were music in the ears of those who thronged to hear them.

Yahweh gives his prophet an assurance, which in the publishing of the personal oracle became a warning, that a fresh vindication was on its way. The recognition formula is here strikingly reused to apply to the prophet: in this context Yahweh and prophet were inextricably linked. To those who came and heard without acting on the prophetic message, divine judgment (cf. 24:24) would come instead of salvation.

**Explanation**

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

*JBL* Journal of Biblical Literature

cf. confer, compare

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This pericope has its own coherence as a triple statement of the effect of Jerusalem’s fall: on the
prophet and on those of the people who did not feature in the wave of deportations from Judah and on
those who had been deported earlier. However, it fits well with the previous pericope as a continuation
of material intended to be introductory to the new, positive messages of chaps. 34–48. Indeed, within
chap. 33 as a whole the report of the downfall of Jerusalem and its prophetic implications has a central
role, around which the surrounding oracles are set with the purpose of sounding notes of caution. From
this perspective the final reference to the coming of doom in v 33 neatly echoes in an inclusion the
warning the prophetic watchman was to give to the exiles. Divine grace is never cheap: Yahweh’s new
word of hope carried with it the responsibility for the exilic generation to appropriate it by turning from
their wicked ways. In turn, the moral dimension of vv 12–20 is echoed in vv 24–29, so that the latter
oracle is not only an insistence that basic immorality undercut the happy theology of the non-deported
Judeans, but in the light of its literary setting carries with it a corollary that the exiles too may not
exempt themselves from Yahweh’s moral will, if they are to obtain repossession of the promised land.

The New Testament in turn applies to theology the acid test of social and religious ethics and issues
its own warning that those who fail the test “will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:19–21; cf. 1
Cor 6:9–10; Eph 5:5). And the divine protest against hearing and not heeding, against stirring of
emotions without a moving of the inner spirit, finds an echo in the parable Jesus directed against the
destructive folly of “every one who hears my words and does not do them” (Matt 6:26; Luke 6:49).

The Good Shepherd (34:1–31)

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Translation

1 I received the following communication from Yahweh: “Human one, prophesy against Israel’s shepherds. Prophesy and tell them: You shepherds, here is a message from the Lord Yahweh. Alas for Israel’s shepherds, who have been tending themselves. Are not shepherds supposed to tend the sheep? 2 You eat the curds, wear the wool, slaughter the fatlings and fail to tend the sheep. 4 You have not strengthened the infirm, cured the ailing, bandaged the fractured, brought back the strays nor searched out the lost, while you have dominated the strong in a brutal manner. 5 My sheep have been scattered for lack of a shepherd and eaten by all the wild animals. 6 On all the mountains, on every high hill and all over the country my sheep have been scattered, with nobody to look for them and go searching. 7 So, you shepherds, listen to Yahweh’s declaration:”

a 2.a. In the sense “to the shepherds” μητρίματεί not does not fit after μητρίματεί α “to them,” which is probably why LXX* Vg omitted the former term, nor is it likely to be a gloss explaining it. It has been understood as originating in a chapter heading “concerning the shepherds” (Zimmerli 204 et al.; cf. Jer 21:11; 23:9). However, taking the lamed as a vocative particle, as Syr. seemingly did (contra BHS), has the merit of leaving the text as it stands (cf. v 17; Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 302; Eichrodt 469; NEB).

b 2.b. For the formulaic ήν δ “Lord” here and in vv 8, 10, 11, 15, 17, 20, 30, 31 see the note on 20:3.

c 2.c. For the reflexive usage see GKC 135k. The alternative reading of LXX in this clause (see BHS: “Should shepherds tend themselves?”) suits the context, but its closeness to v 8 suggests assimilation. Zimmerli, ibid., aptly cites 13:3 in favor of MT.

d 2.d. For the modal impf in the sense of obligation cf. Joüon 113m.

a 3.a. LXX Vg presuppose a pointing χειρίστει “milk” and presumably here “curds” in view of the verb “eat,” which is generally preferred to MT χειρίστει “fat,” since the necessary slaughter does not occur till later in the sequence.

b 3.b. Both the object-verb order throughout v 4a and the reverse statement in v 16 suggest that LXX is correct in implying ήν δ τεταμένης “sick ones” LXX Syr. Vg imply ήν δ τεταμένης, which conforms to the sg terms hereafter. Possibly a comparative gloss from v 21 displaced the sg. Driver, Bib 19 (1938) 180, vocalized τεταμένης τεταμένης, relating to a stem nnil attested in Syr. and Arab. “be wasted from fatigue, sickness” (= NEB “the weary”), but Ezekiel’s propensity to use the same stem in different conjugations is well attested (cf. vv 5, 6).

b 4.b. Both the object-verb order throughout v 4a and the reverse statement in v 16 suggest that LXX is correct in implying ήν δ τεταμένης “sick ones” LXX Syr. Vg imply ήν δ τεταμένης, which conforms to the sg terms hereafter. Possibly a comparative gloss from v 21 displaced the sg. Driver, Bib 19 (1938) 180, vocalized τεταμένης τεταμένης, relating to a stem nnil attested in Syr. and Arab. “be wasted from fatigue, sickness” (= NEB “the weary”), but Ezekiel’s propensity to use the same stem in different conjugations is well attested (cf. vv 5, 6).

a 5.a. MT lacks ήν καλός “my sheep,” presupposed by LXX Syr. Vg: it doubtlessly fell out after ήν καλός (Cornill 400). The change of subject warrants its inclusion (Willmes, Hirtenallegorie 46). Probably ήν καλός and my sheep were scattered” in vv 5b–6a, which LXX takes together in v 6, leaving ἕντασσαν “they strayed” unrepresented, comprises a correcting gloss in which the verb functioned as a cue (Zimmerli 206, following J. Herrmann [219]; Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 237). The second verb ἕντασσαν was probably inserted after the wrong sentence division, since it is unexpectedly masc and, inasmuch as it is used only morally elsewhere in Heb., appears to be an Aramaism.
Upon my life, declares the Lord Yahweh, I swear an oath. a Because my sheep have become prey and my sheep have been eaten by all the wild animals for want of a shepherd, because they b have not looked for my sheep, but the shepherds have tended themselves rather than my sheep, 9 in view of all this, you shepherds, listen to Yahweh’s declaration. 10 The message from the Lord Yahweh is as follows: I am the shepherds’ adversary, I will hold them liable for my sheep and stop them tending my c sheep. No longer will the shepherds tend themselves: I will snatch my sheep from their mouths to stop them being eaten by them. 11 In explanation the Lord Yahweh has sent the following message: I will intervene a and look for my sheep and seek them out. 12 I will seek out my sheep just as a shepherd seeks a out his flock when his sheep have been dispersed. b I will rescue them from wherever they were scattered on a day of clouds and dark skies. 13 Taking them out from other peoples and gathering them from foreign countries, I will bring them home to their own soil and tend them on Israel’s mountains, in the valleys and in all the habitable parts a of the country. 14 I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will rest on good grazing land, and on rich pasture will they feed on Israel’s mountains. 15 I will tend my sheep myself and I myself will give them rest—so runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh. 16 I will search out the lost, bring back the strays, bandage the fractured, strengthen the ailing; as for the strong, a I will tend b them justly.

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a 7.a. The anarthrous µy[r “shepherds” seems to be simply a stylistic variant of µy[r h “O shepherds” in v 9.

b 7.b. The object-sign t a, unique in the summons to hear formula throughout the book (e.g., 6:3; 37:4), is unattested in 20 MSS and may be secondary.

a 8.a. Heb. a l µy[r “surely,” normally introducing an oath, functions as an anacoluthon (GKC 149c, 167b); it is logically resumed in v 10.

b 8.b. MT µy[r “my shepherds” conflicts with the usage throughout the context. LXX Syr. imply µy[r r h “the shepherds,” which looks suspiciously like a harmonization. Was the subj delayed till v 8ba in order to enhance the h [ r play (“shepherds/tend”)? If so, MT arose from an abbreviated gloss µy[r r (= µy[r r ) “shepherds” clarifying a change of subj or from a comparative gloss relating to v 2, µy[r r = µy[r µy[r “shepherds of Israel.”

a 10.a. For MT ëh X “sheep” LXX Syr. presuppose the expected µy[r X “my sheep.” Pseudohaplography of yod before waw was doubtless responsible (Zimmerli, ibid.).


b 12.a. For the Aram. type of inf or verbal noun cf. 16:52 and see GKC 84b.e.

b 12.b. t w f p n ... µy[r “on the day when he is among his flock, separated (?)” is corrupt. The verb means “separate” in later Heb. and in Aram.; generally the form is repointed t w f p n “dispersed” (cf. 17:21), as the synonymous w p n “were scattered” in v 12b suggests. Driver’s rendering “on the day when he is in the midst of his sheep, scattered as they are” (Bib 35 [1954] 302), followed in principle by NEB is hardly intelligible. Apparently rightly one MS reads, and LXX presupposes, t µy[r “(when) there is, they are” for MT w µy[r “(when) he is,” but LXX fills up a seeming lacuna by a loose reference to v 12b: “darkness and cloud”; similarly Syr. “on the day of storm.” Cooke (380) et al., following Toy, delete t µk w b “among” (so RSV): it may have intruded somehow from µk w b (h µy[r ) in 33:33, adjacent in the previous column. For the construction of µy[r and participle cf. v 2.

a 13.a. Heb. b w³m “inhabited place” elsewhere has a fem pl. Accordingly Driver, Bib 19 (1938) 181, related it to an Arab. stem wasaba “abound with grass,” whence NEB “green fields.”
17 “As for you, my sheep, this is the Lord Yahweh’s message: I am going to adjudicate between this animal and that. You rams and male goats, are you not satisfied with feeding on good pasture that you have to trample down the rest of the pasture with your hooves, and not only drink the clear water but have to foul with your hooves what is left? And as for my sheep, they have to feed on what your hooves have trampled, and drink what your hooves have fouled. This then is the Lord Yahweh’s message to them: I am going to intervene in adjudication between the fat animals and the thin ones, because you have used flank and shoulder to push all the infirm, and your horns to butt them, until you made them run off. I will come to the rescue of my sheep and they will no longer be prey, and so I will adjudicate between this animal and that.

23 “I will appoint over them a single shepherd and he will tend them, namely my servant David. He will be their shepherd, while I, Yahweh, will be their God, and my servant David will be head of state among them—I, Yahweh, give my promise.

25 “I will make with them a covenant of peace and I will rid the land of dangerous animals. They will sit in the wilderness with security and go to sleep in the woods.

26* will send down rain in
its season: there will be the blessing of abundant rain. 27 The trees in the countryside will yield their fruit, the ground will yield its crops, and they will live secure on their own soil. Then they will realize that I am Yahweh, when I break the poles of their yokes and release them from the control of their taskmasters, 28 so that they will never again be the prey of other nations. Wild animals in the land will not eat them up, but they will live secure and fearless lives. 29 I will provide them with prosperous plantations, and they will never again be victims of starvation in the land. Nor will they anymore have to put up with humiliation from the other nations. 30 Then they will realize that I am their God Yahweh and that they, the community of Israel, are my people—so runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh. 31 You are my flock, you are the flock I tend, a I am your God. So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.”

Notes

2.a. In the sense “to the shepherds” μη[t]ί α does not fit after μη[ν] α “to them,” which is probably why LXX* Vg omitted the former term, nor is it likely to be a gloss explaining it. It has been understood as originating in a chapter heading “concerning the shepherds” (Zimmerli 204 et al.; cf. Jer 21:11; 23:9). However, taking the lamed as a vocative particle, as Syr. seemingly did (contra BHS), has the merit of leaving the text as it stands (cf. v 17; Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 302; Eichrodt 469; NEB).

a 25.a. LXX omits μη[t]ί β “securely,” which is stylistically required (see Form/Structure/Setting).

a 26.a. MT prefaces with “and I will make them and the areas round my hill (recipients of) blessing.” The clause falls outside the fairly tight grouping of motifs (see Form/Structure/Setting). It appears to be a jumbled pair of glosses. “My hill” conceivably refers to the temple mount, but is a very unusual term (cf. Isa 31:4) and not at all obvious in this context (Cornill 404). It is probably a misunderstanding of μη[t] α “rain in its season,” via a waw/yod error. The error was encouraged by μη[t] β “hill” in v 6. This part of the gloss attests an alternative reading “and I will give rain in its season (as a) blessing” that reflects assimilation to Lev 26:4. The LXX in v26b attests a similar reading: “and I will give the rain to you, rain of blessing.” The phrase μη[t] να μη[t] α φ σ, omitting the copula with LXX, means “μη[t] να in the context” and relates to μη[t] α in the previous column at v 12 (cf. vv 2, 8, 10, 14).

a 29.a. MT μη[t] α “for a name, honorable” seems to have suffered metathesis. LXX Syr. Tg. presuppose μη[t] θ “peace, prosperity,” which stylistically fits the context (see Form/Structure/Setting).

a 30.a. MT adds μη[t] α “with them,” which gilds the lily: it is formally intrusive in the covenant formula (Zimmerli 211): a few MSS LXX* Syr. lack it. Probably it was meant to be μη[t] α “you” (masc), a gloss relating to fem μη[t] α (ψ) “(and) you” and aligning it with μη[t] α at the end of v 31a: cf. the reading μη[t] α ψ and you” in two MSS.

a 31.a. MT adds μη[t] α “human,” missing from LXX*. The annotation was inspired by 36:37–38 (Cornill 406).

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
cf. confer, compare
2. b. For the formulaic ynda “Lord” here and in vv 8, 10, 11, 15, 17, 20, 30, 31 see the note on 20:3.

2. c. For the reflexive usage see GKC 135k. The alternative reading of LXX in this clause (see BHS: “Should shepherds tend themselves?”) suits the context, but its closeness to v 8 suggests assimilation. Zimmerli, ibid., aptly cites 13:3 in favor of MT.

2. d. For the modal impf in the sense of obligation cf. Joüon 113m.

3. a. LXX Vg presuppose a pointing ḫl j h, “milk” and presumably here “curds” in view of the verb “eat,” which is generally preferred to MT ḫl j h “fat,” since the necessary slaughter does not occur till later in the sequence.

4. a. For MT’s pl. ṭl w j nḥ “sick ones” LXX Syr. Vg imply sg ḥl j nḥ, which conforms to the sg terms hereafter. Possibly a comparative gloss from v 21 displaced the sg. Driver, Bib 19 (1938) 180, vocalized ṭl j nḥ, relating to a stem nhil attested in Syr. and Arab. “be wasted from fatigue, sickness” (= NEB “the weary”), but Ezekiel’s propensity to use the same stem in different conjugations is well attested (cf. vv 5, 6).

4. b. Both the object-verb order throughout v 4a and the reverse statement in v 16 suggest that LXX is correct in implying h q ṭl ḭē ḭē “and (rule) over the strong” for MT “and with strength,” and in omitting

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Bib Biblica
NEB The New English Bible
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
pl. plate or plural
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
sg singular or under
gs singular or under
sg singular or under

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“(rule) them and.” The verb is generally, though not always, construed with *beth*, as in 29:15; the misunderstanding required the addition of a copula before *ûrpb* “with severity.” For the different use of *beth* in the same clause cf. Lev 25:43, 46. Zimmerli (205) has plausibly explained *µt a* “them” as arising by pseudodittography after *µt ydr*. Driver, *ibid.*, followed by NEB (Brockington, *Text of the Hebrew Bible* 232), proposed repointing to *µT,a* “you,” with reference to *GKC* 135b, with the function of emphasizing a change from negative to positive offenses.

5.a. MT lacks *ynx* x “my sheep,” presupposed by LXX Syr. Vg: it doubtless fell out after *h nyx* (wp t w) (Cornill 400). The change of subject warrants its inclusion (Willmes, *Hirtenallegorie* 46). Probably *ynx* x *h nyx wp t w* “and my sheep were scattered” in vv 5b–6a, which LXX takes together in v 6, leaving wp *ygr* “they strayed” unrepresented, comprises a correcting gloss in which the verb functioned as a cue (Zimmerli 206, following J. Herrmann [219]; Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen* 237). The second verb *wp* was probably inserted after the wrong sentence division, since it is unexpectedly masc and, inasmuch as it is used only morally elsewhere in Heb., appears to be an Aramaism.

7.a. The anarthrous *µy[r “shepherds” seems to be simply a stylistic variant of *µy[r h “O shepherds” in v 9.

7.b. The object-sign *ta*, unique in the summons to hear formula throughout the book (e.g., 6:3; 37:4), is unattested in 20 MSS and may be secondary.

8.a. Heb. a l *Ay a “surely,” normally introducing an oath, functions as an anacoluthon (*GKC* 149c, 167b); it is logically resumed in v 10.

8.b. MT *y[r “my shepherds” conflicts with the usage throughout the context. LXX Syr. imply *µy[r h “the shepherds,” which looks suspiciously like a harmonization. Was the subj delayed till v 8ba in

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cf. confer, compare

ibid. *ibidem*, in the same place

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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Heb. Hebrew

e.g. exempli gratia, for example

MSS manuscript(s)

Heb. Hebrew


MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

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order to enhance the \( y\overline{r} \) play (“shepherds/tend”)? If so, MT arose from an abbreviated gloss \( \overline{y\overline{r}} \) “shepherds” clarifying a change of subj or from a comparative gloss relating to v 2, \( y\overline{r} \) “shepherds of Israel.”

10.a. For MT \( \overline{yr} \) “sheep” LXX Syr. presuppose the expected \( y\overline{m} \) “my sheep.” Pseudohaplography of \( yod \) before \( \overline{aw} \) was doubtless responsible (Zimmerli, ibid.).


12.a. For the Aram. type of inf or verbal noun cf. 16:52 and see GKC 84\(^b\) e.

12.b. \( tw\overline{r}pn \ldots \overline{wyt} \) “on the day when he is among his flock, separated (?)” is corrupt. The verb means “separate” in later Heb. and in Aram.; generally the form is repointed \( tw\overline{r}pn \) “dispersed” (cf. 17:21), as the synonymous \( wp\overline{r}pn \) “were scattered” in v 12b suggests. Driver’s rendering “on the day when he is in the midst of his sheep, scattered as they are “ (Bib 35 [1954] 302), followed in principle by NEB is hardly intelligible. Apparently rightly one MS reads, and LXX presupposes, \( tw\overline{ny} \) “(when) there is, they are” for MT \( \overline{wtn} \) “(when) he is,” but LXX fills up a seeming lacuna by a loose reference to v 12b: “darkness and cloud”; similarly Syr. “on the day of storm.” Cooke (380) et al., following Toy, delete \( \overline{um} \) \( \overline{b} \) “among” (so RSV): it may have intruded somehow from \( \overline{yk} \overline{w} \overline{b} \) (\( h\overline{yn} \)) in 33:33, adjacent in the previous column. For the construction of \( h\overline{yn} \) and participle cf. v 2.

13.a. Heb. \( b\overline{wpn} \) “inhabited place” elsewhere has a fem pl. Accordingly Driver, Bib 19 (1938) 181,

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subj subject/subjective
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
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ibid. ibidem, in the same place
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et al. et alii, and others
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
Heb. Hebrew
pl. plate or plural
Bib Biblica
related it to an Arab. stem wasaba “abound with grass,” whence NEB “green fields.”

16.a. In the light of the stylistic counterpointing with v 4 (see Form/Structure/Setting) there is no room for the preceding h mizâh = a w “and the fat”; moreover, the sg suffix on h n’ r’a “I will tend it” presupposes a sg object. It may well have originated as a comparative gloss on h yr b “fat” in v 20b: in Num 13:20 h zr “thin” is opposed to h mizâh. If so, it became misplaced in the margin to a position near h l h mîk “judge sheep and sheep” (v 17) from a place adjacent to h zr h mîk “and I will judge between sheep … and sheep” (v 20) and was subsequently understood to qualify h q z h mîk “the strong.”

16.b. MT’s negative understanding “And as for (the fat and) strong I will destroy, I will tend him in judgment” was encouraged not only by the previous gloss (cf. v 20) but also by relating f p sî “with justice” to f p sh “judge” in v 17, with the sense “in judgment.” For the negative usage of h[ r “tend, feed on” in the sense of “destroy” cf. Mic 5:5(6). The intrusive d ymâ “I will destroy,” omitted by one Heb. MS, was evidently a gloss intended to confirm the negative sense: the parallel v 4b leaves room for only one verb, and the h d r h mr “dominate/tend” match is clearly deliberate. LXX Syr. Vg imply a correction f mîk “I will keep,” which sought to uphold a positive understanding; their rendering of the suffix on the next verb as pl., adopted by Cornill (403), BHS et al., is ruled out by the intended parallelism with v 4b.

17.a. A vocative particle lamed, as in v 2, and a different sentence division suit the overall context (Driver, JTS 35 [1954] 302; NEB). Then the male addressees of vv 18–21 are specified, as one would expect: h sh “sheep” is fem. Ehrlich (Randglossen 128) noted that f l … ym “between … and” applies to two parties, so that the extra terms do not belong in v 17.

18.a. Heb. f m “little” is usually followed by a yk (“that”) clause; in Isa 7:13 by an inf constr. For the present construction see GKC 120c.
23.a. µĥy/ [“over them,” which is not represented in C, conflicts with the fem context of the verse. It betrays the influence of the underlying text in 37:24 (see Form/Structure/Setting).

23.b. For MT ḏ̄ ā “one” LXX presupposes ḥ̄ ā “another,” with obvious reference to v15.

23.c. The object sign is due to the influence of the initial verb (cf. T. Muraoka, Emphasis in Biblical Hebrew 121–23). MT adds “he will tend them,” lacking in LXX* and an apparent alternative to v 23bb. It may have been a gloss noting the tension with v 15a.

24.a. V 24a functions as the counterpart of v 23b in a double formulation. The verse division in MT is insensitive here and also in v 28.

25.a. LXX omits ḥ b “securely,” which is stylistically required (see Form/Structure/Setting).

26.a. MT prefaces with “and I will make them and the areas round my hill (recipients of) blessing. ” The clause falls outside the fairly tight grouping of motifs (see Form/Structure/Setting). It appears to be a jumbled pair of glosses. “My hill” conceivably refers to the temple mount, but is a very unusual term (cf. Isa 31:4) and not at all obvious in this context (Cornill 404). It is probably a misunderstanding of Wt [b ( = µ w  y) q “rain in its season,” via a waw/yod error. The error was encouraged by h b q “hill” in v 6. This part of the gloss attests an alternative reading “and I will give rain in its season (as a) blessing” that reflects assimilation to Lev 26:4. The LXX in v26b attests a similar reading: “and I will give the rain to you, rain of blessing.” The phrase µ t w b t w b y b S , omitting the copula with LXX, means “µ t w b in the context” and relates to µ h t ā in the previous column at v 12 (cf. vv 2, 8, 10, 14).

29.a. MT µ w “for a name, honorable” seems to have suffered metathesis. LXX Syr. Tg. presuppose µ l “peace, prosperity,” which stylistically fits the context (see Form/Structure/Setting).

30.a. MT adds µ t ā “with them,” which gilds the lily: it is formally intrusive in the covenant
formula (Zimmerli 211): a few MSS LXX* Syr. lack it. Probably it was meant to be µT’a’ “you” (masc), a gloss relating to fem ë’ a (W) “(and) you” and aligning it with µT’a at the end of v 31a: cf. the reading µT’a wÔ and you” in two MSS.

31.a. MT adds µd’a “human,” missing from LXX*. The annotation was inspired by 36:37–38 (Cornill 406).

**Form/Structure/Setting**

The message reception formula in v 1, which next occurs in 35:1, labels the chapter as a literary unit. The commission to prophesy in v 2 introduces an oracle that seems to run to v 16. It has an overall metaphorical theme of shepherding; Willmes (Hirtenallegorie 408–13) has rightly disputed its designation as allegory. In form it has the elements of both an oracle of judgment and an oracle of salvation. The two-part oracle of judgment introduces its first part of accusation with a short third-person “woe” statement that serves to identify the target of the oracle and to make a basic charge (v 2bb). The accusation continues with second-person address (vv 2g–6), beginning with a rhetorical question, as in 13:18 (cf. Isa 10:1–3; Amos 5:18; 6:1–2). The pronouncement of punishment begins with a consequential (÷kl “therefore”) summons to hear (v 7) and, after a divine oath, recapitulates the charges (v 8). It proceeds to echo the earlier consequential summons and, with a formal messenger formula and a formula of encounter, threatens to deal with the “shepherds” (v 10a). Equally, however, Yahweh’s intervention would bring salvation to his “flock” (v 10b). This positive message is developed in a further, explanatory (yk “for”) section, after a messenger formula, by means of a series of promises (vv 11–16). This section has a grammatical peculiarity in that masculine suffixes are consistently used for the flock, while, as in vv 5–10, verbs with the flock as subject are feminine (vv 12, 14). The anomaly is probably to be explained in terms of looseness (cf. GKC 135o), which was not liable to misunderstanding, now that the shepherds were no longer in view. It hardly warrants finding a fresh oracle in vv 11–16 or 11–15 (Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 241–43). The double nature of vv 2–16 as both oracle of judgment and oracle of salvation is striking. Willmes (Hirtenallegorie 259–68) has called it a “differentiating” prophetic oracle and noted other examples in Isa 1:21–26; Zeph 3:11–13; 2 Kgs 22:14–20.

Vv 7–9 have been widely regarded as redactional on account of their repetitious nature (e.g., Zimmerli 212; Wevers 181; Hossfeld 237–38; cf. vv 2–6, 9; for the object sign in v 7 see Notes), but the
forceful echoing of an accusation at the outset of a pronouncement of judgment is an attested modification of a judgment oracle (cf. v21; 22:19; 28:6; see C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* [London: Lutterworth, 1967] 175, 180–81. Parunak, *JBL* 102 [1983] 533–34, appealed to 5:5–11; 13:1–16, but the original unity of these passages is not beyond doubt [see, e.g., Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1* 175–76, 295]). V16 too has been viewed as supplementary (e.g., Zimmerli 212; Wevers 181–82; Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen* 265–66). However, the use of the formula for a divine saying in v15 does not necessarily indicate the close of the oracle: its role here is to stress the certainty of divine action (cf. 38:21; 39:8). Moreover, the verse hardly introduces the next oracle (Hölscher, *Dichter* 170) or serves as a literary link between the previous oracle and the next (Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen* 244, 265–66). Although the motif of the strong sheep occurs in both v16 and in vv17–22, in the first case they are best understood as the object of care, while in the second they are the target of judgment. Admittedly the mention of justice/judging in vv16, 17 is shared, but the phenomenon is no more than an instance of redactional linking in the arrangement of oracles (cf. e.g., Isa 1:9, 10).

The next unit is evidently vv17–22. It shares the general metaphor of the previous oracle, but now its target is not irresponsible shepherds but domineering sheep. The initial ñë ú í è ò “and you are my flock” may be redactional (cf. v30), since the flock is not addressed in the oracle (cf. vv19, 22). The parameters of the oracle are determined by the triple A … /A … A structure (vv17ba, 20b, 22b), whereby, after the initial messenger formula, mention of judging between the sheep acts as an overall inclusion and also as an inclusion for the divine intervention of vv20–22. Within this framework comes first an accusation, in the form of an extended rhetorical question (vv18–19). Then after a second messenger formula introduced by a linking ìl “therefore,” fresh charges are incorporated in a causal clause. The final element is not an expected pronouncement of punishment, but rather an announcement of salvation (v22a). Thus this second oracle has the same double perspective as that in vv2–16.

Vv 23–31 variously develop the two basic oracles in a series of three amplifications (cf. Zimmerli 219–20, 222; cf. Taylor 222: “If the chapter is taken as a whole, it will appear full of inconsistencies, but if each section is taken separately it will be obvious that new ideas are being added all along.”). Vv 23–24 take further the shepherding theme of vv2–16 and the covenantal concept of Israel as Yahweh’s flock, shared by vv2–16 and 17–22. They promise “a single shepherd” and spell out the nature of this triangular relationship, before closing with a formula of divine asseveration. The new motif appears to be borrowed from 37:24–25. The second amplification, in vv17–22, reflects in turn on the motif of the covenant implicit in vv2–22 and explicit in v24, and defines it in a series of promises based on Lev 26:4–13. The pair of recognition formulas (vv27b, 30) characterize it as two proof sayings. V31 is the final amplification, which in Yahweh’s name seeks to tie together the earlier metaphorical and literal references to the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel.
As to the setting of the various oracles, in their final arrangement they comprise a literary assurance to the Judean exiles that they are under Yahweh’s care and heirs of a positive destiny. The first oracle sends conflicting signals concerning its background. Based on Jer 23:1–2, it at first sight has a pre-exilic setting insofar as it attacks the Judean monarchy, presumably in the person of its last representative, Zedekiah. However, a post-587 B.C. provenance is evident, probably in v 6 and certainly in v 12b. It is possible to envisage an original, pre-587 oracle in vv 1–10 (Brownlee, *HTR* 51 [1958] 190–203, who reconstructs a poetic original and interprets v 6 in terms of Judean high places) or in vv 1–2, 9–10 (Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen* 280), or to reconstruct two interwoven oracles, one pre-exilic and the other post-exilic (Willmes, *Hirtenallegorie* 255–58; Rembry, *SBFLA* 11 [1960] 119, by relating v 12b to the Exodus, regards the whole oracle as pre-exilic.). But the glance at the monarchy may well be a backward and rhetorical one (cf. Hölscher’s designation of the oracle as a literary fiction [*Dichter* 169]) — as to a certain extent at least it was in the basic Jer 23:1–2 — which serves as a powerful prelude to promises of return from exile. Possibly the second oracle, in vv 17–22, seesaws on 587 B.C. in a similar way. Then the rams and male goats refer to the upper classes who exploited their economic power at the expense of the poor, and were the moral cause of the exile (v 21b). It is more likely, however, that we are to relate the oracle to the still future judgment of 20:35–38 and to envisage dissension among the exiles as the occasion.

The combination of the two oracles formed the nucleus for the literary unit, which has been rounded out with three supplements. The first, Zimmerli is prepared to ascribe to Ezekiel’s pen (220), but its dependence on 37:24–25, which in part is a product of late redaction, witnesses against such an ascription. The second, in vv 25–30, has a very different perspective from what precedes and operates at a distance from it. Especially its literal interpretation of the wild beasts of vv 5 and 8, in vv 25 and 28 —v 28 also relates them to the nations (cf. v 8)—seems to betray another hand. Moreover, in some of its content it has parallels with the evidently late 28:25–26. Yet it affirms its own prophetic authority (v 30bb). The same is true of the concluding v 31 (cf. v 31bb), which wraps up the literary unit in a comprehensive fashion.

A sophisticated inclusion for the chapter is provided by the reference to יֲִלָֽשֶׁנָּֽךְ̣̄ עַל־עָנָֽיִיתֵךְ יְֽהֹוָֽהֵ יִתְּנֶֽנָּךְ “the sheep that I tend,” an allusion to Jer 23:1–2, which was the starting point for the first unit (see *Comment*). The threefold mention of Israel being a prey (vv 8, 22, 28) is a further unifying factor. As to the first oracle, an inclusion is provided in vv 4 and 16 by chiastic repetition, in which the first two clauses of v 4 are telescoped in v 16, using the noun of one and verb of the other (see, e.g., Parunak, *Structural Studies* 447). The review in v 8 comprises a chiastic recapitulation, echoing first vv 5–6 and then vv 2–3. The echoes continue, of v 3 in v 10, and of the scattering of vv 5–6 in v 12, in a loose chiasmus. The verb לְֽאֹיְבֵנֵךְ “look for, hold liable” functions as a keyword: there are four instances, in the indictment, pronouncement of punishment and announcement of salvation (vv 6, 8, 10, 11).

The stylistic structure of vv 17–22 has been mentioned earlier. Vv 23–24 present an overall chiastic formation: the central paired reference to David’s and Yahweh’s role vis-à-vis the people (vv 23bb, 24aa) are surrounded respectively by mention of “my servant David” and by mention of his relationship to the people (v 23a, 24ab). The framework of vv 25–30 is the “covenant” of v 25aa and the two-part covenant formula of v 30. Within these parameters is a double scheme, ABC/ABC, which twice
mentions the motifs of wild animals (vv 25ab, 28ab), fertility (vv 26b–27aa b, 29abâ) and the nations (vv 28aa, 29bb) respectively. Hossfeld (Untersuchungen 276) noted this doubling, but confined it to wild beasts and fertility. Attached to each of the first two motifs are references to the “land” (År å) and to mutually related concepts, j f b | “securely” in three cases (A/A’, B cf. Willmes, Hirtenallegorie 224) and µâ “peace, prosperity” in the last case (B’). There is also an interlocking between the inner pairing and the framework: µ W µ “peace” of v 25aa is repeated in v 29a, and the recognition formula of v 27b is repeated in v 30.

Comment

1–16 When Ezekiel used metaphor to communicate his divine message, he sometimes borrowed images from earlier prophets. Thus the metallurgical imagery of 22:17–22 was inspired by Isa 1:22, 25, while the sexual allegory of 23:2–27 may well be a development of Jer 3:6–11. Here Jer 23:1–2 is evidently the source of the shepherd metaphor, which Ezekiel characteristically embellished (J. W. Miller, Verhältnis 106; Fohrer 192; Wevers 182). Levin’s inclusion of Jer 23:3–8 as source material for chap. 34 as a whole (Verheissung 218–19; cf. Zimmerli 214) is much less certain: the differences are such that probably we are to envisage independent developments of basic material in the two complex texts. The series of correspondences between Jer 23:1–2 and this oracle is striking: “against the shepherds” (µ y w r À ), “alas for the shepherds” (?µà ywh y( r ), “my flock” (ynà x), “stray” (j à n), “lose” (dba) and “scatter” (Åyph). Moreover, d q p “care for, punish,” used in positive and negative senses, seems to have been paraphrased as µf d “look for, hold liable.” Jer 23:1–2, in referring to shepherds, appears to relate to the last major kings of Judah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, as responsible for the deportation of 597 B.C. and Judah’s ensuing ills because of their negligence (cf. McKane, Jeremiah 1–25 555, 559). The term “shepherd” is standard for a king throughout the ancient Near East. In this context it is combined with the use of the metaphor to portray the covenant between Yahweh and Israel (cf. Pss 74:1; 79:13; 80:2[1]; cf. the individualization in Ps 23). Accordingly the shepherds were employees of the divine shepherd and responsible to him.

2–6 However, the Judean kings had failed in their responsibilities to Yahweh for their charges. Ezekiel dramatically repeats Jeremiah’s ominous accusations, now vindicated by history. The self-centeredness of v 2b is elaborated in the direct address of v 3a. The taking of milk (cf. Deut 32:14) and wool from the flock appears unobjectionable in itself (cf. 1 Cor 9:7); yet the taking was unaccompanied by giving, and rights were unmatched by responsibilities. However, the climactically placed slaughter of the best sheep, in the light of v 10, is a grimmer charge, as something inherently wrong. The general challenge of v 2b is particularized in the accusation of v 3b, which in turn is elaborated in the failures of v 4. Behind the shepherd language lies the typical royal duty of welfare of society’s weaklings (cf. Jer 21:12; 22:3; Ps 72:4, 12–14)—and its absence from the royal agenda in the last decades of the kingdom (cf. Jer 22:15–17; 34:8). Nor had only the weak suffered: the resources and

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

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rights of the strong too had been wantonly abused. Tragically the monarchy had been the bane of its subjects: it had brought about grim consequences for them, which are spelled out in vv 5–6. Responsibility for the deportation of 597 B.C. and for the flight of refugees from Judah to neighboring states is laid at the palace door. The end of v 6 returns to the charge of searching out the lost in v 4 and underlines the perverse neglect of royal responsibility. It also introduces a new key term of the oracle, שָׁנַיִם, the shepherd’s duty to put himself out and “look for” the missing sheep in order to bring them home.

7–8 The emotional vehemence of Yahweh’s reaction is expressed by the divine oath and emphasized by the abrupt change of construction in the Hebrew. The reprehensibility of the Judean kings is summed up in a sweeping review of vv 5–6 and 2–3.

9–10 Yahweh declares that he will take on the monarchy and—with a deft re-use of the keyword שָׁנַיִם—“hold it liable” for its negligence. Nothing less than their removal from their royal post would transpire in view of their general self-seeking (vv 2, 3, 8) and in particular the suffering and fatality of their subjects at their hands (cf. v 4). They are ironically portrayed as wild animals (cf. v 5) — a travesty of true shepherding (cf. 1 Sam 17:35; Amos 3:12). Only by removal of the monarchy could God’s people be preserved. Although Yahweh’s positive concern has resounded through the oracle thus far, especially in the outraged phrase “my sheep,” it comes to the fore in the first and last verbs of divine action at v 10, as the focus gradually changes from punishment of one group to salvation of the other.

11–16 This positive note is now developed in a fresh section. Yahweh declares that he is to take over his negligent agents’ responsibilities. Pride of place is given to the keyword שָׁנַיִם in a promise that the subjects’ future is assured by his determination to “look for” them. Yet, by now, their situation was dire indeed. They needed to be saved not only from royal rapacity (v 10) but from homelessness. Ezekiel moves from reliving the past to describing the people’s present lot. The horror of the fall of Jerusalem and its tragic consequences in 587 B.C. is summed up in the pregnant phrase “a day of clouds and dark skies.” For those with ears to hear, it conveys overtones of the Day of Yahweh (cf. 13:5; 30:3; Zeph 1:15), the fulfillment of prophetic doom in a final catastrophe. Yet, marvelously, the divine enemy takes on the role of the shepherd, tending and retrieving his flock. In his hands shepherdly duties would be capably discharged. The alien places of exile were only temporary habitations for God’s people, until they enjoyed a new exodus and a new settlement in the land of promise (cf. 20:34). Israel’s mountainland—for Ezekiel an emotion-laden phrase would be theirs once more. The prophet uses this phrase three times, along with a threefold use of the basic shepherding verb הַעֲנִיָּהוּ “tend, feed,” now with Yahweh as subject, in virtual echo of v 11. Good pasture is promised, at some length, as a metaphor of the blessings that would be theirs. Yahweh’s provision would be a measure of his responsibility, as he devoted himself to caring for his own. The point is emphasized in a final contrast. The derelictions of the pre-exilic monarchy (v 4) would be no more. Now, in keeping with the exilic context, the retrieval of the lost and strayed is set at the head of the list. Justice — ever an ideal royal virtue, but denied by the overbearingness of v 4— was to be the hallmark of Israel’s divine shepherd and king (cf. 20:33).
17–22 The final note of v 16 provides a neat carry-over to the theme of the next oracle, which was originally separate from, though not uninfluenced by, the former one. Infighting and competition among the flock, which in ancient times contained both sheep and goats, now replace the issue of rapacious and negligent shepherds. The promise of justice, which dominates the oracle at beginning, middle and end, has two connotations, retribution for the guilty and vindication for their victims. Here “the rams and male goats” are accused in a long, indignant question of unfair exploitation by dominating the flock. Both nouns are used elsewhere as metaphors for human leadership (cf. e.g., 17:13; 32:21; Isa 14:9; Zech 10:3). The setting is not divulged, but it is noteworthy that exile, if such it is, is now a minor theme (v 21b) and that the emphasis on judgment is reminiscent of 20:35–38 (cf. the conditional promise of life for the exiles in 33:1–20). These factors suggest that we are to envisage social exploitation not in pre-exilic Judah but among the exiles themselves, which Ezekiel endeavors to correct. It is striking that the phrase “my sheep” is reserved for the victims, rather like the pre-exilic prophets’ use of “my people,” as in Isa 3:12, 15; Mic 2:8, 9; 3:3, 5. The self-serving leaders, in distancing themselves from the rest of the community, had disqualified themselves from its membership—and divine ratification of their status was to be only a matter of time. The fresh charges in v 21 go beyond privation to a more penetrating accusation of outrageous abuse of superior power. Yet ironically the fat and sleek who shoved the weak away were themselves the outsiders in Yahweh’s eyes. The point of the oracle comes in v 22. As in the Psalms, the verbs “save” and “judge” are used side by side with Yahweh as subject (Pss 54:3[4]; 72:2). Divine justice spelled vindication for God’s suffering people, even and perhaps especially when the suffering was caused within the community.

23–24 In the first of three literary developments, a topic that is an important corollary of the two earlier oracles is broached. It is borrowed from chap. 37, where one shepherd-king is promised in the constitution of a new, now undivided, kingdom (37:24–25). In this context the oneness has its own point, as God’s eventual solution for divisions among his people, in that a single authority would be put in charge, ensuring social unity. Yet the door would not thereby be opened to the pre-exilic abuses of the first oracle. The restoration of the Davidic monarchy would have new safeguards in the realization of a subordinate vassal status (“my servant”) and in the constitutional nature of the ruler as “head of state among them” rather than as despotic overlord (see 37:25 Comment). Thus his shepherding role, resuming that of the pre-exilic kings (cf. v 2), would this time be compatible with Yahweh’s covenant relationship with his people. Such is the message of the parallel formulations of v 23b and 24a.

25–30 The covenant formula used in v 24a triggers a fresh development, which is also meant as an interpretative unfolding of “my sheep,” a key term in the first two oracles, and so as a reassuring delineation of Yahweh’s commitment to them. The relationship is now set to a different tune, the blessings of Lev 26:4–13 (see the table in Baltzer, Ezechiel 156–157). It is not difficult to trace a very close connection with it, especially 26:4–6, 13. Yet the borrowing is not slavish but creative. The blessings are relayed via a double, parallel scheme of banished dangers relating to wild animals, famine and the nations respectively. The expanded recognition formula of vv 27b–28a has been inspired by the self-introduction formula of Lev 26:13, with the old Exodus achievement reapplied to future liberation in a manner reminiscent of v 13a earlier. There is thus a sensitivity to the previous material in this chapter: the danger of being eaten by beasts corresponds to the metaphor of vv 5, 8 and the provision of fertility to the good pasture of vv 14, 18, while sheep imagery lingers in v 25b (cf. Mic 5:3[4]b). The accent on

*cf. confer, compare*
*e.g. exempli gratia, for example*
political and psychological inferiority to other nations, while in the first case echoing Lev 26 and interpreting the “prey” metaphor of vv 8, 22, also sympathetically responds to keenly felt exilic (and post-exilic) concerns. The prophetic assurance is that Yahweh was able and willing to resolve these and the other problems. The double presentation of promises of Yahweh’s sufficiency is set in a covenantal framework, in vv 25a and 30. As the latter verse implies, the realization of covenant blessings would bring with them a proof of the bond between Yahweh and his people.

In a summarizing climax to the unit, readers are warmly (“you,” “your”) reminded of the pervading metaphor by an echo of the phrase “the sheep that I tend” from Jer 23:1, part of the passage that underlies vv 2–16. They are reminded too of the precious reality behind the metaphor, the covenant bond between them and Yahweh, in a recapitulating echo of vv 24a and 30.

Explanation

This chapter is full of pastoral reassurance. The backward look at the last years of the Judean monarchy, through the eyeglasses of Jeremiah (Jer 23:1–2), answers the question as to why the bitter experience of exile was the people’s lot. The blame is laid firmly on the policies of the last kings of Judah, and the catastrophe is interpreted in prophetic vein as the outworking of a moral providence. The monarchy had to go, divinely ordered as it was, after it degenerated into a self-serving institution that ignored the interests of its subjects, neglecting the weak and exploiting the strong. Yahweh’s traditional covenant role as royal “shepherd” of his people, to whom the kings were responsible as under-shepherds, drove him to intervene against them. Yet this very role carried welcome promises that the ravages of destruction and deportation would be repaired. What Ezekiel typically has to say at length was expressed a generation later in distilled form: “He will tend his flock like a shepherd …” (Isa 40:11). Above all, combined with a land-based theology, Yahweh’s covenant guaranteed return to the land.

However, even the exiles had not seen the end of internal oppression. A more immediate assurance is given that Yahweh in his very role as shepherd would not tolerate a contemporary trampling on others’ rights and an abuse of power. Such behavior brought about in God’s eyes self-excommunication from the covenant community and its future, which would be endorsed by Yahweh as judge. The threat aligns with that sounded earlier in the book, using shepherd language (20:37), and underlines the warnings of chap. 33. As in the Psalms and in the parable of the importunate widow (Luke 18:1–8), divine judgment carries with it an assurance for the victims of those to be judged. The promise “no longer” (v 22), which echoes a motif of the first oracle (v10), was intended to bring psychological comfort to the exiles (Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel 374, note 141).

Matters are not left there. Further light could be shed on a place for the Davidic monarchy in the life of the community. Yahweh’s promise (cf. v 15), properly understood, did not entail the abrogation of an older promise. The restored monarchy was to have a role under God, as a guarantee of social unity and as a means of working out their covenant relationship with Yahweh. What that outworking involved is spelled out in vv 25–30. The needs of the community would be met and their natural fears would be resolved, as the reiterated, double “no longer” of vv 28 and 29 underlines. The land-oriented theology of vv 13–14 is developed in physical promises for the renewed nation. The triangle of Yahweh, Israel and land, whereby life in the land was a measure of fellowship with Yahweh, would find full expression. Finally, with literary sensitivity, the sheep metaphor and its covenant meaning are reaffirmed.

It is not surprising that the New Testament took up this shepherd motif and echoed chap. 34 together with other texts that give expression to it. Jesus’ self-proclaimed purpose “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10) attests the undertaking of a divine mission. The allegory of the “good shepherd” in John 10

cf. confer, compare
betrays the influence of v 23 especially in the “one shepherd” of 10:16. The same verse is reflected in
Rev 7:17 (“the Lamb … will feed [póimaínei] them”). The parable of the last judgment (Matt 25:32–46),
with its segregation of sheep and goats, is indebted to vv 17–22, especially to v 17, and again envisages
(the glorified) Jesus as discharger of a divine function, this time of judgment. The strictures of Jude
include a reference to those “who feed [póimaíont e” ] themselves” (v 12), and thus update Ezekiel’s
warning (34:2, 8, 10) that leadership of God’s people carries with it obligations of selfless service.

**Whose Land? (35:1–36:15)**

**Bibliography**

theologische Nachgeschichte der Prophetie EzechIELs. Form- und traditionskritische Untersuchung zu Ez. 6; 35;

**Translation**

1“I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2“Human one, look in the direction of
Mount Seir and issue a prophecy against it. 3Tell it that this is the message of the Lord a Yahweh:

I am your opponent, Mount Seir,
and I will deal you a blow,
reducing you to wrack and ruin.
4I will make your cities desolate
and you will become a ruin—
then you will discover that I am Yahweh.

5“Inasmuch as you discharged an ancient enmity by handing the Israelites over to the sword at
their time of calamity, at the time of terminal guilt, 6for that reason I swear by my life—so runs the
Lord Yahweh’s oracle a—that you have committed the sins of bloodshed, b and blood will pursue you.

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BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
FzB Forschungen zur Bibel
a 3.a. For the formulaic ýnd a “Lord” see the note on 20:3. It recurs in vv 6, 11, 14; 36:2, 3, 4, 5, 6,7, 13,
14 and 15.
I will reduce Mount Seir to wrack and ruin and will eliminate every wayfarer from it. I will fill its mountains with its casualties—on them will fall casualties of the sword. I will reduce you to perpetual ruins, and your cities will remain unpopulated. Then you will discover that I am Yahweh. “Inasmuch as you claimed the two nations, the two countries, for yourself, boasting in Yahweh’s presence, ‘We will take possession of it,’ despite the fact that Yahweh was there, for that reason I swear by my life—so runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle—that I will treat you in requital for your anger and passion with which you treated them because of your hatred for them, and I will make myself known to them when I judge you. Then you will discover that I, Yahweh, have heard...

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a 6.a. MT adds ûpdr y µdwûš [a µdl Ayk “because I will make you into blood and blood will pursue you.” It is unattested in LXX and interrupts the oath formula of v 6a b from its continuation with a l Aya “surely” in v 6b. Basically µdl appears to be a variant for µd in v 6b, “(in)to, in respect of blood,” which preserves the correct reading there. Heb. û[ a yk “because I will make you” seems to go back to an annotation of (û l ) yk w “and I will do (to you)” in v 11, paraphrasing the unusual construction and adding a prepositional form with LXX Syr., with the sense “surely I will do to you.” The note slipped back to v 6 because of the similar beginnings of vv 6 and 11; adapted for a modicum of sense to û[ a yk it was taken as a variant of v 6b and was accordingly supplied with the wording of v 6b. b 6.b. For MT’s strange t a n µd “you hated blood” LXX attests a seeming original t n mã µd “in respect of blood you have incurred guilt” (for the verb cf. 25:12). Heb. t a n appears originally to have been a gloss on the complex û t a n mã “(because of) your hating” in v 11, which, as in the previous case, strayed to v 6 and was regarded as a correction of t n mã, with which it shares three out of four letters. To fit the new verb (µ d l) “in respect of (blood)” was dropped. a 7.a. MT h mmnwh h mmn “to ruin and ruin” appears to be a slip for h My h W “to wrack and ruin,” as in v 3 and in Ezek generally and as some MSS read. MT h mmn l is a subsequent attempt to differentiate between the two nouns: the minority masoretic reading h mmn l (see BHS) is correct. b 7.b. lit. “him who passes by and returns.” a 8.a. MT adds “your hills and your valleys and all your ravines,” an attempt to fill out the text in accord with the fourfold phrasing of 36:4, 6 (and 6:3). The order is different, t W lg “valleys” is spelled differently and the 2nd masc suffixes accord with vv 3–6, 9a rather than with vv 7–8a. LXX attempted to harmonize by deleting W h At a “his mountains” and rendering W l j “his slain” with a 2nd masc sg pronoun, but it thereby lost the first and original part of the chain of nouns (Zimmerli 225; Simian, Nachgeschichte 106). a 9.a. For the abnormal scriptio plena of K h nb yt (= h nb Y t “they will be inhabited”), for which Q substituted a form “they will be restored” from b W “return,” see GKC 69b note 1. a 10.a. The object signs indicate that the nouns are perceived as objects, in anticipation of the later verb h W W “and we will possess it” (T. Muraoka, Emphasis in Biblical Hebrew 123). b 10.b. The ancient versions presuppose µ yt W “and I will possess them,” an easier and so inferior reading (Kraetzschmar 246). Heb. h W W “and we will possess it” has a lst pl. subject, as in v 12b, and presupposes the land as the object, with loose reference to the territory of the previous clause. a 11.a. MT û yt a n mã “because of your hatred” has an unexpected pl. form, for which many MSS read û t a n mã. MT may have been influenced by û yt W a n “your insults” in v 12. b 11.b. Israel is in view: cf. 20:9 (Simian, Nachgeschichte 107). Many (cf. BHS) prefer û b “in you,” implied by LXX, but it is an easier reading.
all the insults you leveled against the mountains of Israel, claiming ‘Ruined as they are, a they have been given to us to devour.’ 13 I was the one you opened your big mouths against, I was the one you bragged (?) over, I heard.

14 “The message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: a I will treat you in requital for your jubilation over the ruin of the heritage of Israel’s community. You will be turned into a ruin, Mount Seir, and so will all Edom in its entirety, a and then they will discover that I am Yahweh.

36:1 “You, human one, are to issue a prophecy to the mountains of Israel, saying, Mountains of Israel, hear Yahweh’s pronouncement. 2 The message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: Inasmuch as the enemy jeered over you ‘The ancient high places a are b ours to possess,’ for that reason issue a prophecy, telling them this message from the Lord Yahweh: Forasmuch as a ruination and hounding b from all sides have resulted in your becoming the possession of the remainder of the nations, and tongues have wagged about you c and people have defamed you, for that reason, mountains of Israel, hear Yahweh’s a pronouncement. The Lord Yahweh has the following message for the mountains and hills, ravines and valleys, for the desolate ruins b and abandoned cities that have been looted c and derided by the remainder of the nations round you. 5 For that reason here is the

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a 12.a. K ה.sin “she is ruined” links with the sg reference in v 10; Q ו.sin “they are ruined” aligns with the following pl. reference.

a 13.a. This stem ל ת is not otherwise known—hence presumably the omission of the clause in LXX* —but the general meaning here is assured from the parallelism. An emendation to ו ת ל ו “and you made bold” (cf. Cornill 408; BHS) is not methodologically sound. A link with Aram. ל ת (= Heb. ו ת ) “be rich” is unlikely. N. S. Doniachi’s appeal to an Arab. cognate with the sense of “stumble” (AJSL 50 [1933/34] 178) is not convincing.

a 14.a. MT adds ע ת ל ת a ה.sin א ת א ת א (י.sin מסק = ע ת ל ת מסק) “as (you) rejoiced ‘The whole land is ruined,’ (so) I will do to you.” Basically א ת א ת א was a gloss on ה.sin (K) in v 12a explaining the sg form. The gloss was evidently wrongly related to ה.sin in v 15a; subsequently it was reinterpreted as an alternative to v 15a and so supplied with a framework of terms from there. Usually v 15a is regarded as secondary to (a corrupt) 14b (cf. BHS et al.) because it is unattested in LXX*, but parablepsis by homoeoteleuton may well be the cause (Parunak, Structural Studies 463).

a 15.a. For the idiom, which recurs in 36:10, see 20:40 and note. Misunderstanding the idiom, LXX implies ל ת ל ו “and … will perish” for ל ת ל ו “and all,” which is adopted by BHS and NEB.

a 36:2.a. LXX presupposes ו.sin ול.sinו and ruins” for Heb. ו.sin ול.sinו “and high places,” probably by assimilation to ו.sin ול.sinו “perpetual ruins” in 35:9. For the copula see note 3. a.

b 2.b. Heb. ה ת י is a collective sg (Simian, Nachgeschichte 130; cf. GKC 145k*).

a 3.a. For י ב י י “because, by the cause” compare י ב י י in 13:10; Lev 26:43. The unexpected copula with ו.sin ול.sinו “high places” earlier may be due to the misunderstanding of a note ו י intended to compare the form found elsewhere.

b 3.b. For the two Heb. verbs see Zimmerli 228.

a 3.c. lit. “and you have come up on the lip of tongue(s).” The verb ו ת ל ת appears to be a mixed form for qal ו ת ת and niph ו ת ת (GKC 75y).

a 4.a. MT ה.sin י ינד a “the Lord Yahweh” defies the formulaic practice in Ezek: see Zimmerli 556 and the first note on 25:3. Assimilation to the messenger formula in the next clause is probably to blame here.

b 4.b. Here and in v 10 NEB’s “palaces” for ו ת ל ת “ruins” depends on Driver’s equating the word with what he regarded as S. Arab. and Arab. counterparts (ETL 26 [1950] 349).
message of the Lord Yahweh: Assuredly I speak with fiery passion against the remainder of the nations and particularly against Edom—all who have made my country their possession with such heartfelt jubilation, such vehement scorn. 6 For that reason issue a prophecy to the land of Israel and tell the mountains, hills, ravines and valleys that this is the message of the Lord Yahweh: I speak in my passion and anger because you have had to put up with other nations’ humiliating you.

7 For that reason this is the message of the Lord Yahweh: I raise my hand in a solemn promise that the nations round you will have to put up with humiliation themselves. 8 But you, mountains of Israel, will put forth your branches and produce your fruit for my people Israel, because they will soon be arriving, 9 because I am disposed toward you and will turn to you, and you will be tilled and sown. 10 I will put many human beings on you, all the community of Israel in its entirety, and the cities will be repopulated and the ruins rebuilt. 11 I will put many human beings and cattle on you, and will make you as populous as you were in your past and do you more good than I ever did before; then you will realize that I am Yahweh. 12 I will get you trodden by human beings, namely my people Israel, and they will possess you, and you will be their heritage and will no longer take away their children.

13 “The message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: Inasmuch as it is said of you that you eat 4.c. To obtain synonymous parallelism with the next verb Bertholet (123) proposed zbl “to despise,” as Tg interpreted zbl “to plunder.” But both verbal and physical persecution runs through the chapter. 5.a. MT pl k has been regarded as an (Aramaizing?) error for HL K “all of it” (cf. 35:15), but dittography is the more likely culprit: for ša pl k should be read ša AL k “all who” (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 132–33; Fohrer 199).

b 5.b. Heb. 4 h here, as often, has the sense “make, constitute.”

5.c. MT adds zbl h wr gm ḫ ml “with a view to its (= ?) open land to plunder.” Since wr gm means “open land around a city,” a link with “cities” in v 4 is feasible. Probably the words were an early gloss in which zbl h was a cue phrase in a final position (cf. 21:28 and note) specifying that the note related to zbl wyh “were subject to plunder” in v 4b. The note wanted to harmonize “cities” with the three rural terms that presumably by indicating that in the last case the cities’ open land was exploited along with the rural areas, presumably by using it and them for grazing. When the he was understood as a fem sg suffix, it was evidently related to yx r “my land” in v 5b and the gloss was incorporated into the text at the end of that verse.

a 7. a. For the performative pf see the note on 22:13.

11.a. MT adds wr p w rd r w “and they will increase and be fruitful,” which is not represented in LXX and interrupts the direct address in the context. Probably it was a loose comparative annotation, which sought to compare the command w rd w rd p “be fruitful and multiply” in Gen 1:22, 28; 9:1 with the occurrences of k yr p “your fruit” (v 8) and y t yb r h w “and I will increase” (vv 10, 11).

12.a. MT construes as masc, presumably as a counterpoint to Edom’s claims (cf. 35:10, 15). It is more probable that fem forms were intended (w rd wr “and they will possess you,” t ybh w “and you will be” and y p y s w c “you will add”) with reference to the land (vv 6, 14–15). In the third case y p y s w c was doubtless adapted to 3 s w c after the reinterpretation. The pl. verbal forms in LXX Syr. are clearly secondary. 12.a. MT construes as masc, presumably as a counterpoint to Edom’s claims (cf. 35:10, 15). It is more probable that fem forms were intended (w rd wr “and they will possess you,” t ybh w “and you will be” and y p y s w c “you will add”) with reference to the land (vv 6, 14–15). In the third case y p y s w c was doubtless adapted to 3 s w c after the reinterpretation. The pl. verbal forms in LXX Syr. are clearly secondary.
people up and take away your nation’s children, consequently you will no longer eat people nor will you any longer take away your nation’s children—so runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle. I will no longer let other nations’ humiliating talk about you be heard nor will you have to put up any longer with the taunts of other peoples. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.”

Notes

3.a. For the formulaic ynd ‘Lord’ see the note on 20:3. It recurs in vv 6, 11, 14; 36:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14 and 15.

6.a. MT adds ûpdr y µd wûṣ[a µd] Ayk “because I will make you into blood and blood will pursue you.” It is unattested in LXX and interrupts the oath formula of v 6aabb from its continuation with a Aµa “surely” in v 6b. Basically µd appears to be a variant for µd in v 6b, “(in)to, in respect of blood,” which preserves the correct reading there. Heb. ûš[a yk “because I will make you” seems to go back to an annotation of (û ] yf w đâu “and I will do (to you)” in v 11, paraphrasing the unusual construction and adding a prepositional form with LXX Syr., with the sense “surely I will do to you.” The note slipped back to v 6 because of the similar beginnings of vv 6 and 11; adapted for a modicum of sense to ûš[a yk it was taken as a variant of v 6b and was accordingly supplied with the wording of v 6bb.

6.b. For MT’s strange t a µd “you hated blood” LXX attests a seeming original t mwa µd “in respect of blood you have incurred guilt” (for the verb cf. 25:12). Heb. t a µd appears originally to have been a gloss on the complex û t a mwa “(because of) your hating” in v 11, which, as in the previous case, strayed to v 6 and was regarded as a correction of t mwa, with which it shares three out of four letters.

a 13.a. Heb. µyrmā is an indefinite pl. ptcp (“they say”) after the conjunction (not preposition) û[ y “because” (cf. Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 302–3).

b 13.b. Heb. µk “[of you (pl.)] relates to the mountains. In view of the following fem sg references Kraetzschmar’s division t [k ə h] “(to you (fem sg) … eat) (248) is attractive, although the lack of a piel elsewhere militates against it. The pl. may simply be a redactional attempt to link the fresh saying more closely with the preceding context.

c 13.c. Q û Qyywg “your nations” here and in v 14 obviously harks back to the “two nations” of 35:10. K û Qyywg “your nation” is supported by the ancient versions.

a 14.a. K ə wikt “you will cause to stumble” appears to be an error by metathesis for Q ə k ət “you will make childless,” the verb in vv 12, 13.

To fit the new verb (µd l) “in respect of (blood)” was dropped.

7.a. MT h mmw w h mmw “to ruin and ruin” appears to be a slip for h My h My “to wrack and ruin,” as in v 3 and in Ezek generally and as some MSS read. MT h mmw l is a subsequent attempt to differentiate between the two nouns: the minority masoretic reading h mm (see BHS) is correct.

7.b. lit. “him who passes by and returns.”

8.a. MT adds “your hills and your valleys and all your ravines,” an attempt to fill out the text in accord with the fourfold phrasing of 36:4, 6 (and 6:3). The order is different, tv t “valleys” is spelled differently and the 2nd masc suffixes accord with vv 3–6, 9a rather than with vv 7–8a. LXX attempted to harmonize by deleting wyr h At a “his mountains” and rendering wyl a “his slain” with a 2nd masc sg pronoun, but it thereby lost the first and original part of the chain of nouns (Zimmerli 225; Simian, Nachgeschichte 106).

9.a. For the abnormal scriptio plena of K h nb yt (= h nb t e “they will be inhabited”), for which Q substituted a form “they will be restored” from bw “return,” see GKC 69b note 1.

10.a. The object signs indicate that the nouns are perceived as objects, in anticipation of the later verb h wry “and we will possess it” (T. Muraoka, Emphasis in Biblical Hebrew 123).

10.b. The ancient versions presuppose µyt šw yw “and I will possess them,” an easier and so inferior reading (Kraetzschmar 246). Heb. h wry “and we will possess it” has a lst pl. subject, as in v 12b, and presupposes the land as the object, with loose reference to the territory of the previous clause.

11.a. MT ūyt a n “because of your hatred” has an unexpected pl. form, for which many MSS read ū t a n. MT may have been influenced by ūyt w a n “your insults” in v 12.
11.b. Israel is in view: cf. 20:9 (Simian, *Nachgeschichte* 107). Many (cf. *BHS*) prefer ḫ b “in you,” implied by LXX, but it is an easier reading.

12.a. ḫ h mmם “she is ruined” links with the sg reference in v 10; Q ḫ mmם “they are ruined” aligns with the following pl. reference.

13.a. This stem ḥ t [ ] is not otherwise known—hence presumably the omission of the clause in LXX*—but the general meaning here is assured from the parallelism. An emendation to µt q t [ ḫ w “and you made bold” (cf. Cornill 408; *BHS*) is not methodologically sound. A link with Aram. ḥ t [ (= Heb. ḫ ל) “be rich” is unlikely. N. S. Doniach’s appeal to an Arab. cognate with the sense of “stumble” (*AJSL* 50 [1933/34] 178) is not convincing.

14.a. MT adds ḫ l h [ a h mmם Ār ał Ak ( ) j msk = ḫ j msk ] j msk “as (you) rejoiced ‘The whole land is ruined,’ (so) I will do to you.” Basically Ār ał Ak was a gloss on h mmם (K) in v 12a explaining the sg form. The gloss was evidently wrongly related to h mmם in v 15a; subsequently it was reinterpreted as an alternative to v 15a and so supplied with a framework of terms from there. Usually v 15a is regarded as secondary to (a corrupt) 14b (cf. *BHS* et al.) because it is unattested in LXX*, but parablepsis by homoeoteleuton may well be the cause (Parunak, *Structural Studies* 463).

15.a. For the idiom, which recurs in 36:10, see 20:40 and note. Misunderstanding the idiom, LXX implies h[l k W “and … will perish” for l k W “and all,” which is adopted by *BHS* and NEB.

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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
sg singular or under
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” ḫ re (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
pl. plate or plural
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
*AJSL* American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
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36:2. a. LXX presupposes \( t \text{ wmmw} \) or \( t \text{ wmbw} \) “and ruins” for Heb. \( t \text{ wmb w} \) “and high places,” probably by assimilation to \( m / \text{ w} \ t \text{ wmmw} \) “perpetual ruins” in 35:9. For the copula see note 3. a."

2. b. Heb. \( h \text{ t yh} \) is a collective sg (Simian, Nachgeschichte 130; cf. GKC 145k*).

3. a. For \( \text{ yh h t yh w} \) “because, by the cause” compare \( \text{ yh h t yh w} \) in 13:10; Lev 26:43. The unexpected copula with \( t \text{ wmb w} \) “high places” earlier may be due to the misunderstanding of a note \( b \text{ w} \) intended to compare the form found elsewhere.

3. b. For the two Heb. verbs see Zimmerli 228.

3. c. lit. “and you have come up on the lip of tongue(s).” The verb \( W \) appears to be a mixed form for qal \( W \) and niph \( W \) (GKC 75y).

4. a. MT \( h \text{ wh y ynd a} \) “the Lord Yahweh” defies the formulaic practice in Ezek: see Zimmerli 556 and the first note on 25:3. Assimilation to the messenger formula in the next clause is probably to blame here.

4. b. Here and in v 10 NEB’s “palaces” for \( t \text{ wbrj w} \) “ruins” depends on Driver’s equating the word with what he regarded as S. Arab. and Arab. counterparts (ETL 26 [1950] 349).

4. c. To obtain synonymous parallelism with the next verb Bertholet (123) proposed \( \text{ zbl} \) “to despise,” as Tg interpreted \( \text{ zbl} \) “to plunder.” But both verbal and physical persecution runs through the chapter.

5. a. MT \( a \text{ l k} \) has been regarded as an (Aramaizing?) error for \( H \text{ L K u} \) “all of it” (cf. 35:15), but

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**NEB** The New English Bible

**LXX** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

**Heb. Hebrew**

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**Heb. Hebrew**

sg singular or under

cf. confer, compare


lit. literally


**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

**NEB** The New English Bible

**ETL** Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses

**MT** The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
dittography is the more likely culprit: for יָּשָׁר אָּלְק should be read יָּשָׁר אלכ “all who” (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 132–33; Fohrer 199).

5.b. Heb. ָּד here, as often, has the sense “make, constitute.”

5.c. MT adds זָּב הָּרָּגָם וּפֶּל “with a view to its (= ?) open land to plunder.” Since הָּרָּגָם means “open land around a city,” a link with “cities” in v 4 is feasible. Probably the words were an early gloss in which זָּב הָּ נ was a cue phrase in a final position (cf. 21:28 and note) specifying that the note related to זָּב וּפֶּל “were subject to plunder” in v 4b. The note wanted to harmonize “cities” with the three rural terms that preceded by indicating that in the last case the cities’ open land was exploited along with the rural areas, presumably by using it and them for grazing. When the he was understood as a fem.sg suffix, it was evidently related to יָּר א “my land” in v 5b and the gloss was incorporated into the text at the end of that verse.

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12.a. MT construes as masc, presumably as a counterpoint to Edom’s claims (cf. 35:10, 15). It is more probable that fem forms were intended (יָּר וּפֶּל “and they will possess you,” יָּר יָּר יָּר וּפֶּל “and you will be” and יָּר נ וּפֶּל “you will add”) with reference to the land (vv 6, 14–15). In the third case יָּר נ וּפֶּל was doubtless adapted to יָּר יָּר נ after the reinterpretation. The pl. verbal forms in LXX Syr. are clearly secondary.

13.a. Heb. יָּר מָא is an indefinite pl. ptcp (“they say”) after the conjunction (not preposition) יָּר “because” (cf. Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 302–3).
13.b. Heb. µkl “of you (pl.)” relates to the mountains. In view of the following fem sg references Kraetzschmar’s division tl, K, a’m Jl; “to you (fem sg) … eat” (248) is attractive, although the lack of a piel elsewhere militates against it. The pl. may simply be a redactional attempt to link the fresh saying more closely with the preceding context.

13.c. Q ûyywg “your nations” here and in v 14 obviously harks back to the “two nations” of 35:10. K ûywg “your nation” is supported by the ancient versions.

14.a. K yl  kt “you will cause to stumble” appears to be an error by metathesis for Q yl k wt “you will make childless,” the verb in vv 12, 13.

15.a. V 15b appears to be a dittograph, copied from v 14. It is absent from one MS, LXX and Syr.. A copyist’s eye evidently strayed back to dl “any longer” in v 14a.

Form/Structure/Setting

35:1–36:15 comprises a literary unit in view of the single message reception formula in 35:1. 35:2 and 36:1 mark the separation of the unit into two halves, by the addressing of the prophet as µdaA “human one” and also by the commission to address r yl w r h “Mount Seir” and l a r yrh y r h “mountains of Israel.” Chap. 35 contains two messenger formulas, in vv 3, 14, and four recognition formulas, in vv 4, 9, 12(–13), 15. Accordingly it falls into four oracles: vv (2)3–4, 5–9, 10–13, 14–15. They are all judgment oracles developed into proof sayings by the addition of the recognition formula. The first lacks an accusatory element. The second, third and fourth are tripartite. In vv 10–13 the last element is extended and reverts to accusation, as the conclusion of a judgment oracle sometimes does. In vv 14–15 the accusation is varied with a comparison (µk … û “as … so”). Apart from vv 7–8a, all the oracles are spoken to Mount Seir, which is identified with Edom in v 15, perhaps redactionally in view of the third person reference. After the first oracle there is no separate introduction specifying the addressee, so that the chapter reads consecutively as a tirade of judgment against a foreign nation.

36:1–15 falls into two sections, vv 1–7 together with the closely linked vv 8–12, and the concluding vv 13–15. Vv 8–11 are a positive proof saying in which a recognition formula caps an oracle of salvation; v 12 which falls outside this formal structure appears to be a redactional amplification (see...
Comment). Vv 13–15 are a two-part oracle of salvation that begins with a messenger formula and moves from a reasoned (י “because”) description of present adversity to a corresponding (ל “therefore”) reversal. Vv 1–7 are form-critically less coherent. They are essentially an oracle of judgment against the nations surrounding Judah and especially against Edom (v 5), which in the light of the sequel in vv 8–12 has the role of an oracle of salvation for “the mountains of Israel,” which are the addressees from v 1 onwards. The oracle culminates in a pronouncement of punishment at v 7, which reverses the accusation in v 6. Its underlying structure is that of a reasoned oracle of judgment in which the accusation is resumed at the beginning of the pronouncement of punishment (cf. 34:1–10, 17–22). However, this structuring is developed in a most complex way: there is a series of stops and starts. After a call for attention in v 1 and a motivating accusation in v 2, “therefore” inaugurates the pronouncement of punishment no less than five times before it finally emerges in v 7. In v 3 is followed by a fresh commission to speak, a messenger formula and a motivating accusation; in v 4 it is followed by a call for attention, a messenger formula and an implicit accusation; in v 5 by a messenger formula and an oath threatening judgment against the nations, who are accused afresh; in v 6 by a commission to address the land of Israel and the mountains, a messenger formula, a threat of judgment against the nations and an accusation; and finally in v 7 by a messenger formula, an oath formula and the long-awaited pronouncement of punishment. In order to explain this unwieldy structure, there is substantial, though by no means unanimous, agreement that at least vv 3 and 5 have been added to the basic oracle (Hölscher, Hesekiel 172–73; Zimmerli 237; Simian, Nachgeschichte 83–84). Another, not unattractive possibility is that two oracles have been blended in vv 1–12: Bertholet (122) separated vv 1ab , 3ab , 4b , 5ab , 6ab , 9 , 10, 12 from vv 1bg , 2, 4a, 5aa, 6bb, 7, 8, 11. Whatever the explanation, vv 1–7 in their present form are heavily weighted on the side of grievance. The continuation of vv 1–7 in vv 8–11 makes the combined piece a proofsaying developed from an oracle of both judgment and salvation, the same complex type as appeared in 34:2–16, 17–22.

As to rhetorical structure, in chap. 35 the combination of מ Mount Seir” (vv 2, 3, 15) and מ “ruin” (vv 4, 15) forms a fitting overall inclusion (cf. P. D. Miller, Sin and Judgment in the Prophets 73). There seems to be extensive wordplay that emphasizes the total message: the ruin Mount Seir is to experience (מ מ , מ in vv 3, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15ab) is linked with the underlying guilt it has incurred (מ , v 6), Yahweh’s presence as witness in Israel (מ “there,” v 10) and the divine hearing of Edom’s claims to the land (מ , vv 12, 13). Within vv 5–8 מ “sword” provides an inclusion of crime and punishment (vv 5, 8), while there appears to be implicit wordplay on מ “Edom” in מ “their calamity” (v 5; Kraetzschmar 246) and the repeated מ “blood” (v 6; Reventlow, Wächter 143–44). Within vv 10–13 the verbal claims of Mount Seir function as an inclusion: מ “your saying,” v 10, and מ “you have said,” v 12.

In 36:1–11 the motif of desolate places and abandoned cities is matched with an opposite one (vv 4, 10), while the mention of surrounding nations occurs in vv 3, 4, 7 (cf. v 5). V 12 provides a bridge between vv 1–11 and vv 13–15, amplifying the blessing of human repopulation for “my people Israel” (vv 8, 10, 11) and paving the way for the removal of a related curse on the land (vv 13–14). V 15 resumes the motif of מ “the humiliation of the nations” from vv 6, 7.

There are close links between chap. 35 and 36:1–15. A number of these are appropriately concentrated in 35:15, which thus has a transitional role in a literary complex: מ מ “house of

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
Israel” (36:10), the counterpoint of the cursed 

μδαλ κ “all Edom in its entirety,” namely the blessed 

λργτ υτβ Αλ κ “all the house of Israel in its entirety” (36:10), and Edom’s rejoicing ( ) that is resumed in 36:5. 36:12 builds on this linkage by using the verb “possess” and “heritage.” Of course, the keywords of the chapters, “Mount Seir” (35:1, 7) and “Mountains of Israel” (36:1, 4, 8) are set in antithesis. The latter phrase is anticipated in 35:12. The different meanings of “behold I am against you” (35:3) and “behold I am disposed toward you” (36:9) are blatant counterparts. The “enmity” ( ) of 35:5 finds an echo in the “enemy” ( ) of 36:2. Adverse quotations feature in both 35:10 and 36:2, 13. Mount Seir’s passion in 35:11 meets its match in Yahweh’s passion in 36:5, 6. Edom’s predicted desolation ( ) of 35:4, a present fact for Israel in 36:10; Edom’s prospect of uninhabited cities in 35:9 is the opposite of Israel’s in 36:10. It is probable too that we are meant to see the occurrences of “Edom” (36:5) and the repeated “human beings” in 36:10, 11, 12 and in 36:13, 14 as intentional wordplays. They serve as a link between the three pieces of chap. 36 and also between them and the theme of chap. 35 (see especially 35:15). It is clear that the judgment of chap. 35 is intended as a foil for Israel’s salvation in 36:1–15.

The charges against Mount Seir in chap. 35 represent a later historical setting than that of 25:12, where the Edomites’ behavior at the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. is the only point at issue. Here Edom’s occupation of unpopulated Judean territory is an accompanying charge. Likewise, in 36:1–7 the claims of surrounding ethnic groups are disputed. These matters were obviously of concern for the exiles, just as the question of the rights of Judeans left in the homeland after 587 B.C. was in 33:24–29.

There seems to be no compelling reason for denying Ezekiel’s voice and hand in most of this material, although the complexity of 36:1–7 does raise questions of redaction that have not yet been resolved. The use of stereotyped language in 35:1–4, 5–9 is not adequate ground for ascribing the material to the school of Ezekiel (Zimmerli 234–35 et al.). The proximity of return from exile (36:8) need not be taken too literally. However, the apparent echo of Echo 26:9 in 36:9–11 recalls the use of Lev 26 in 34:25–30 and anticipates its further use in 37:26–28. Baltzer (Ezechiel 156–57) noted the echoes in chaps. 34 and 37, but overlooked this evidence, which suggests that at least vv 9–11 are from the same redactional hand as the other passages. One has also to take into account the summarizing nature of v 12, which forms a literary bridge to vv 13–15.

Comment

At first sight chap. 35 belongs with chap. 25, where indeed an oracle against Edom appears (25:12–14). However, the function of the chapter is to serve as a dark backcloth to enhance the revelation of Israel’s glorious salvation in 36:1–15, in a series of general and specific contrasts (cf. in principle Mal 1:2–5), and to highlight the question whether the land belonged to Edom or to Israel. There is a larger agenda here too. 35:1–36:15 functions in the group of positive messages for Israel as a counterpart to chap. 6, an oracle of judgment against the mountains of Israel. Parunak has noted the similar initial framework of the chapters (Structural Studies 455–56). In chap. 6 the commission to Ezekiel to “direct " his “gaze against the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them and say ‘You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Yahweh,’ ” finds a counterpart in chap. 35, where the first two elements appear with Mount Seir as object, and in chap. 36, where the last two elements reappear in a

et al. et alii, and others

cf. confer, compare
positive sense. Moreover, the call to attention and messenger formula directed “to the mountains and hills, ravines and valleys” (6:3) are repeated in 36:4. There is surely a link intended between the *wbn* “high places” of 36:2 and those under attack in 6:3, 6. The prediction of divine intervention in 6:14 is closely paralleled in 35:3, 4b, with Mount Seir as the victim now. It could not have been made clearer that whereas before sin and judgment predominated, now grace and salvation were to succeed them as marks of the new era that awaited the people of God.

### 35:2–4
For the formula of v 2a see the comment on 21:2; it significantly recurs in oracles against foreign nations at 25:2; 28:20; 29:2. “Mount Seir” is the traditional description of the mountainous area to the south-east of Judah, on the other side of the rift valley, where Edom was situated (see Gen 36:8, 9). The formula of encounter in v 3a is used in a foreign oracle at 26:3; 28:22. The formula of Yahweh’s stretching out his hand against his victim has a parallel in the Edom oracle in 25:12–14. This proof saying, rhetorically addressed to Edom in the dramatic convention of the oracles against the nations, lacks an accusation. It is a stark pronouncement of judgment that would serve to vindicate the true nature of Yahweh.

### 5–9
The remaining two oracles amplify the first one by giving reasons for its blunt language. In this one the Edomites’ behavior at the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. is the focus of accusation. Obad 10–14 serve as a commentary on these charges. There is a heightened sense of time: history comes to a head in the outworking of Seir’s “ancient enmity” (cf. 25:15) and in the ultimate punishment of Judah for generations of sin (cf. 21:30, 34 [25, 29]). The mention of Israel’s “calamity” (cf. Obad. 13) serves to trigger an uncanny nemesis: *µd* *µa* is reminiscent of *µ* *µa* “Edom.” The ominous wordplay, so powerful to the Hebrew ear, is sustained in the references to *µ* “blood” in the impassioned threat of v 6. The reference to sinning (*lm* *lm*) is paralleled in the Edom oracle at 25:12. “The blood is personified as the *golus*, who demands full retribution (cf. Gen 9:6)” (Wevers 187)—and pursues the sinner mercilessly (Deut 19:6; Josh 20:5; Christ, Blutvergiessen 94). The punishment of v 3 is reinforced in v 7, and the prophetic principle of reaping as one sows is expressed in the grisly work of the sword at v 8b. The same principle comes to the fore in v 9: the discharge of the age-old (*µ* *µl*) enmity of v 5 was to find a fitting echo in the perpetual (*µ* *µl*) ruins. Again it would be a demonstration to the Edomites of Yahweh’s supremacy.

### 10–13
The framework for this piece, which again is grounded in explicit accusation, is the verbal claims made by Israel’s aggressive neighbor. We are to see as the historical background Edom’s incursion into Judean territory, to fill a vacuum left by exile. The extreme statement of v 10a (cf. 37:22), whereby even the territory of the old northern kingdom was under threat, seems to reflect the nightmares of the exiles who exaggerated the reports that reached them into a danger to the land as a whole (Zimmerli 235). The aggressor had reckoned without Yahweh, who as owner of the land was present in his people’s absence and witnessed this outrage (cf. 36:5; Lev 25:23. The cultic presence of Yahweh in Jerusalem [cf. 11:23] was, of course, a separate concept.). His reaction would match Edom’s hostile actions in all their vehemence. Yahweh’s judgment of them would be his way of vindicating himself to Israel: the statement in v 11b gives expression to the aim of the chapter, to use the foreign oracle form as...
a means of ministering to Israel. The extended recognition formula in vv 12–13 reverts to the theme of accusation. There seem to be echoes of Isa 37 in the divine hearing of human insults (Isa 37:3–4 // 2 Kgs 19:3–4, including ls “insult”) and in the divine self-understanding as victim of the aggressor (Isa 37:23, 24 // 2 Kgs 19:22, 23) against Israelite territory. The application of an old prophetic message to a new, parallel historical event serves to reinforce the pronouncement. The reference to devouring uses the imagery of beasts of prey (cf. 34:5, 8). The passive form wnt (“have been given”) claims divine permission for taking over the land (cf. 33:24), which is firmly repudiated in the statement of v 13, where the plural verbal forms follow on naturally from “to us” in v 12 (contra Zimmerli 236; Wevers 186). The divine hearing develops the divine witnessing of v 10b.

14, 15 This short final oracle draws the chapter to a close by echoing vv 2 and 4, and looks ahead to motifs contained in chap. 36 (see Form/Structure/Setting). Edom’s ruin would be a fitting return for its malicious involvement in the ruin of Judah (Miller, Sin and Judgment 73). Israel’s right to the land is reaffirmed: Yahweh as owner had given it to “the community of Israel” as a “heritage.” While the promise was in abeyance, it was not abrogated.

36:1–7 The “mountains of Israel,” earlier the object of human aggressive claims (35:12), are now the rhetorical recipients of divine assurance. The exiles, who are the real recipients, had evidently heard disquieting news of usurpation of their land, which spelled the end of any hopes of return. The report is sympathetically taken up by the prophet in Yahweh’s name (cf. 25:3, 8; 26:2). Although there might be justification for forfeiture in the religious sins of the pre-exilic community (cf. 6:4–6), in fact Yahweh wondrously declares himself on the side of the exiles. In view of 35:5 “the enemy” is primarily Edom, but v 3 suggests that Edom is the archfiend who represents and speaks for a multiplicity of ethnic groups in Palestine (cf. Amos 9:12a; Obad 15, 18). Political claim to the land, now that the old order had passed for Judeans and other groups alike (“remnant,” cf. 25:16), was a matter of seizure and declaration that the absent, defeated owners had lost all rights. Yet Yahweh “acts by laws totally different to those taken for granted by political calculators” (Eichrodt 490). Devastation, dispossession and disgrace were heavy blows that rained down on the heads of the cringing exiles, but they failed to reckon with Yahweh’s positive will and his determination to champion his land and so, by implication, his people. The catalogue of disjointed oracular formulas and accusations in the text serve to reflect the reverberations of doubt and despair in the hearts of the exile s— and to reassure them that Yahweh has something else to say (cf. Ps 118:6, 7). Yahweh can speak with a passion that challenges that of the enemy (vv 5, 6; cf. 35:11; 25:14). The malicious vehemence of the enemy (v 5; cf. 25:6, 15) not only struck at the Judeans’ self-esteem but reached Yahweh’s own heart, for it was his own country that was at stake. The humiliation they had experienced was both external and subjective, physical and psychological, and to ease its pain the promise is given that the tables will be turned (cf. Miller, Sin and Judgment 74).

8–11. The message opens out into a positive unfolding of blessing for the land and for its old-new

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cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
owners, whose time for repatriation was imminent. The “mountains of Israel” and “my people Israel” belonged together, under Yahweh who in grace still acknowledged himself a party to the old trio of God, people and land, and promised a new manifestation of such grace. The blessings for the land in Lev 26, already appropriated in chap. 34, are now claimed afresh (vv 9–11; cf. Lev 26:9a). The grim present of abandoned cities and desolate ruins (v 4) would give way to a program of rebuilding and repopulation—unlike Edom’s lot (35:9). The counterecho of Edom’s fate is seemingly continued in a positive wordplay (µ ḫ “human beings,” vv 10, 11). In characteristic typological vein, the best of the past is promised again, in an even better form (cf. the elements of correspondence and contrast in the typology of Second Isaiah, for which see B. W. Anderson, Israel’s Prophetic Heritage 185–92).

12 This transitional verse lingers on promises just given, gathers up fresh contrasts with Edom and anticipates the next passage. The covenant phraseology “my people Israel” (v 8) is savored anew and related to the promises of population growth given in vv 10–11. The last clause relates the promise to the cessation of the curse on the land to be presented in vv 13–14. The Edomite claim to the land (35:10) and malicious dismissal of Israel’s claim (35:15) would both be overturned, for Israel would come into its inheritance once more. The underlying factor that binds together the material of v 12 is the enhancing of the play on µ w ḫ / µ ḫ (Edom/human beings).

13–15. Here “the land of Israel” (v 6) is the implicit subject. An old slur is echoed, the charge of those who went to spy out the land before its first occupation, that “the land is a land that devours its inhabitants” (Num 13:32). In a sense it had proved tragically true. Would repatriation repeat the nation’s history of failure and loss? Seemingly the fears of the exiles are crystalized in this pessimistic grievance—although strictly the criticism is credited to the nations, in the light of v 5— and countered in a promise that the past would not haunt their future. The implicit reverting to v 6 in the references to the land prompts a reversal of the grievance mooted there: the land would be free of humiliating criticism from Judah’s neighbors. Yahweh was going to change its image and make the land a means of life instead of an instrument of death.

Explanation

This literary unit has a number of agendas to fulfill. It has its own internal agenda: Edom and Israel are polarized as negative and positive counterparts. Edom’s involvement in Israel’s fate meant that Edom’s experience would echo that fate, while Israel’s fate would give way to coming fortune. Both promises operate on the level of pastoral reassurance, as damaged self-respect is built up with recourse to faith in a powerful covenant God. The role of the destroyed Jerusalem in the oracles of Second Isaiah is that of the desolated land here. It stands as an objective image of the inner feelings of the exiles. Both prophets appealed to the land-centered theology of pre-exilic times and insisted that it still represented the divine intent. Another agenda of this unit is to provide a counterpart to chap. 6. The judgment on the land and people presented there was not Yahweh’s last word: its task done, it was to give way to a new proclamation of salvation. In the two contrasting units the double message of Ezekiel finds its focus. A third agenda is to carry forward the message of salvation inaugurated in chap. 34. Apart from the form-critical parallels, a number of motifs find fresh expression here. Its psychological assurances that past and present grievances would be dealt with (“no longer,” 34:10, 22, 28, 29) are underlined (36:12, 14, 15). In this connection the assurance about “the humiliation of the nations,” which reflected so deep a wound in the Judean psyche, is given again (34:29; 36:15). The worth of “the community of Israel” in Yahweh’s eyes is reaffirmed (34:30; 36:10; cf. 35:15), along with its role as “my people” (34:30

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
Moreover, the echoing of the blessings of Lev 26:4–13 and their grounding in the prophetic program for the future (cf. 34:26–29) continue in the use of Lev 26:9 at 36:9b, 10a. There is continuity and development in the gospel of salvation for the shellshocked exiles. Those who had lost everything would find in God—and nowhere else—new resources for life and fulfillment.

**Two Inner Constraints (36:16–38)**

**Bibliography**


**Translation**

16I received the following communication from Yahweh: 17“Human one, the community of Israel, when living in their own land, defiled it with both their general behavior and their specific practices. I regarded their behavior as being in the same defiling category as menstruation. 18So I drenched them with my fury and scattered them through the nations so that they were dispersed

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* cf. confer, compare
* cf. confer, compare
* JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*
* FzB Forschungen zur Bibel
* BZAW Beihfte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
* FRLANT Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck)
* CBQ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
* BZAW Beihfte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [ZAW]
* FzB Forschungen zur Bibel

17.a. For the construction of the ptcp see Cooke 395.
18.a. MT adds material that is unrepresented by LXX*, “because of the blood that they shed on the land and with their idols they defiled it.” It reads awkwardly both in respect of the repetition of (“upon/because of”) in different senses and in the change of construction in the last clause. It appears to have originated as two explanatory comments on v 17a$g$ and v 17a$g$ respectively. The first appears to depend on Num 35:33, 34. LXX reflects in v 17a$g$ a similar need to define the vague terms: “with their idols and their defilements.” Both sets of clarifications depend on v 25.
in foreign countries as a judgment on their behavior and practices. 20 But, whichever nation they came to, they got my holy name desecrated, because people said about them, ‘They are Yahweh’s people, but they have left his country.’ 21 I felt concerned about my holy name, which the community of Israel got desecrated, whatever nation they came to. 22 So tell the community of Israel that this is the message of the Lord Yahweh: I am going to act not for your sakes, community of Israel, but on behalf of my holy name which you have gotten desecrated in each country you came to. 23 I will honor the holiness of my great name, now desecrated among the nations where you got it so treated. Then the nations will realize that I am Yahweh when they see my holiness reflected in your experience. 24 I will take you from the nations, gathering you out of every country, and bring you home to your own land. 25 I will sprinkle pure water on you so that you are purified from all that defiles you and from all your idols I will purify you. 26 I will give you new hearts, putting a new spirit within you. I will remove the stony hearts from your bodies, giving you hearts soft as flesh. 27 I will put my own spirit within you and ensure that you follow my rulings and maintain my standards by putting them into effect. 28 You will live in the country I gave your fathers, and you will be my people and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from everything that defiles you. I will summon the grain and make it plentiful, instead of sending you famine. 30 I will make the fruit of the trees plentiful and also the produce of the fields, so that you are no longer the object of taunt from the other nations because of famine. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and no-good practices, and loathe yourselves for your iniquities and shocking behavior. 32 You must realize that I am not going to do this for your sakes—so runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle. Feel ashamed and penitent for your ways, community of Israel.

33 “This is the Lord Yahweh’s message: At the same time as I purify you from the taint of all your iniquities, I will repopulate the cities and the ruins will be rebuilt. 34 The country now desolated will be tilled again, instead of being a scene of desolation for all who pass by. 35 They will say, ‘This desolated country has become a veritable garden of Eden, and cities once ruined, desolated and destroyed have been repopulated and fortified.’ 36 Then the nations left in your vicinity will realize that I, Yahweh, have rebuilt scenes of destruction, I have replanted areas of desolation. I, Yahweh, have spoken, given my promise and will keep it.

37 “This is the message from the Lord Yahweh: Furthermore I will encourage the community of Israel to ask me to grant them this petition, that in terms of people I make them as numerous as

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\[a\] 20.a. For MT כ ב יי "and he/one came," an amply supported (cf. BHS) reading כ ב יי "and they came" is required. This particular error of metathesis is common in the book: see the note on 20:38. The indefinite construction here has an intensive sense (Vriezen, cited by Zimmerli 241).

\[a\] 22.a. For the formulaic ידה "Lord" here and in vv 23 (MT), 32, 33, 37 see the note on 20:3.*

\[a\] 23.a. MT adds a divine saying formula “so runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh,” lacking in two Heb. MSS and LXX\[b\]. It is here employed uniquely in the middle of an expanded recognition formula (cf. 25:14 ). It may have originated as a comparative gloss on v 22a, noting that in place of a messenger formula a divine saying formula occurs in v 32. For the omission of vv 23bb–38 in LXX\[967\] see Form/Structure/Setting.

\[a\] 26.a. lit. “heart”: a sg is used where a part of the body is common to a number of persons (S. R. Driver, Hebrew Syntax 17 remark 4).

\[a\] 27.a. For the construction see GKC 157c and BDB 795a, with reference to Eccl 3:14.

\[a\] 30.a. The Heb. stem י in is here used not of taking but of receiving (Ehrlich, Randglossen 134).

\[a\] 33.a. For NEB “palaces” see the note on v 4.*

\[a\] 35.a. For the Heb. construction see Cooke 396.
sheep. \textsuperscript{38} The ruined cities will be filled with veritable flocks of people, as many as the sheep for sacrifice, as many as the sheep in Jerusalem used to be at its public services. Then they will discover that I am Yahweh."

Notes

17.a. For the construction of the ptpc see Cooke 395.

18.a. \textit{MT} adds material that is unrepresented by LXX\textsuperscript{*}, “because of the blood that they shed on the land and with their idols they defiled it.” It reads awkwardly both in respect of the repetition of $\mid$ (“upon/because of”) in different senses and in the change of construction in the last clause. It appears to have originated as two explanatory comments on v 17a$^g$ and v 17a$^b$ respectively. The first appears to depend on Num 35:33, 34. LXX reflects in v 17a$^g$ a similar need to define the vague terms: “with their idols and their defilements.” Both sets of clarifications depend on v 25.

20.a. For \textit{MT} $\mid$ $\mid$ $\mid$ $\mid$ “and he/one came,” an amply supported (cf. \textit{BHS}) reading $\mid$ $\mid$ $\mid$ “and they came” is required. This particular error of metathesis is common in the book: see the note on 20:38. The indefinite construction here has an intensive sense (Vriezen, cited by Zimmerli 241).

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26.a. lit. “heart”: a sg is used where a part of the body is common to a number of persons (S. R. 

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\textsuperscript{37.a} Heb. $\mid$ $\mid$ $\mid$ “human beings” seems to be used appositionally: see \textit{GKC} 131d, k. 

ptpc participle

\textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

\textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

\textit{cf. confer}, compare

\textit{BHS} Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

\textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)


\textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

\textit{Heb. Hebrew}

\textit{MSS manuscript(s)}

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

\textit{cf. confer}, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

27.a. For the construction see *GKC* 157c and *BDB* 795a, with reference to Eccl 3:14.

30.a. The *Heb.* stem \( \text{jql} \) is here used not of taking but of receiving (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 134).

33.a. For *NEB* “palaces” see the note on v 4.*

35.a. For the *Heb.* construction see Cooke 396.

37.a. *Heb.* \( \text{µda} \) “human beings” seems to be used appositionally: see *GKC* 131d, k.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

Ezek 36:1 6–38 constitutes the next literary unit, as the message reception formula of v 16 reveals. The three messenger formulas of vv 22, 33 and 37 indicate three oracles: vv 22–32, 33–36 and 37–38. In content they are all oracles of salvation. The first is introduced with an address to the prophet and a historical explanation to him (vv 17–21) that provides the background for the ensuing public oracle, as in 22:18 + 19–22; 23:2–21 + 22–27. The expanded recognition formula in v 23b seems to mark a caesura in the oracle, as it does in 34:27b. The oracle ends with an appeal in v 32. The second oracle is a positive proof saying. It begins with a careful recapitulation of the first oracle (v 33abg) and closes with a formula of affirmation (v 36b; for the form of v 36 cf. 17:24) after an expanded recognition formula. Its conscious continuation of the first oracle is indicated by its second person references without specification of the addressees. The third is also a positive proof saying, but it speaks of its objects in the third person. The phrase \( \text{tâ} \, \text{dâ} \, \text{dâ} \) “furthermore this” marks out the oracle as an amplification of the foregoing: cf. 20:27; 23:38.

As for the rhetorical structure of the first piece, a common inclusion is provided for the divine explanation and the prophetic oracle by \( \text{lar} \, \text{ytyb} \) “house of Israel,” in vv 17, 21, 22 and 32; it is picked up in the final oracle at v 37. The public oracle has another inclusion, *µkn*[ml al h\*y\*na “not for your sakes am I about to act” in vv 22 and 32. Thematically vv 17–32 appear to exhibit a chiastic structure ABBA, relating to uncleanness of people and land in vv 17–19, 24–32 and to profanation of

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* lit. literally  
* sg singular or under  
* *Heb.* Hebrew  
* *NEB* The New English Bible  
* 4.a. *MT* ḣẇy ynḋa “the Lord Yahweh” defies the formulaic practice in Ezek: see Zimmerli 556 and the first note on 25:3. Assimilation to the messenger formula in the next clause is probably to blame here.  
* *Heb.* Hebrew  
* cf. confer, compare

As with many literary units in the book, it is clear that a basic oracle has been subjected to a series of literary expansions. The issue of setting is complicated by the omission of vv 23bb–38 in the oldest LXX manuscript, papyrus 967, and the significance of this omission for the Hebrew text. The extant Greek rendering is marked by elements out of accord with the translational block of chaps. 26–39 and was clearly supplied later to amplify the shorter text (Filsen, *JBL* 62 [1943] 29–30, with reference to Thackeray’s researches; McGregor, *The Greek Text of Ezekiel*, 190–91). Filsen (*JBL* 62 [1943] 31), followed by Wevers (192), himself no mean septuagintalist, explained the omission as a case of inner-Greek parablepsis from the recognition formula in v 23 to the one in v 32, noting that the manuscript exhibited many errors of this type. However, Lust (*CBQ* 43 [1981] 517–33) has developed argumentation used by W. A. Irwin, in tracing the phenomenon back to the Hebrew tradition. He has noted that nowhere else in 967 does parablepsis feature so much material. Moreover, the Old Latin Codex Wireceburgensis shares the omission (cf. P.-M. Bogaert, *Bib* 59 [1978] 390–91). Significant too is the non-Ezekielian nature of the Hebrew, notably ykn “I” (v 28), the longer form of the first person pronoun in place of ymn, n “deed” (v 31) for hyl [used in vv 17, 19], wla “instead of the fact that” (v 34) and wel “this” (v 35). Lust considers the missing material a late redactional addition. Certainly the omission in 967 is of great significance for the history of the LXX text, as its reflection in the Old Latin codex and the alien nature of the extant Greek demonstrate. However, it may well go back to a mechanical accident, as the breaking off in the middle of the expanded recognition formula could indicate. Spottorno (*Emerita* 50 [1981] 96–97), who also notes that ordinary parablepsis of so much material would be unusual, has related the omission to a codex page of 1512 letters in the past history of the papyrus: a page was lost either through frequent use in the synagogue or through parablepsis. Moreover, one should take note of the structural importance of v27 within the redactional framework of the ensuing chapter: seemingly v27a is deliberately repeated in 37:14a, and v 27b in 37:24b. It is probable that we are to envisage two separate phenomena, redactional amplification within the Hebrew text and coincidental omission of a wider block of material in the Greek tradition. The unusual language in vv 28 and 31, which in both cases is characteristic of later elements in the book of Jeremiah (cf. the longer form ykn “I” in Jer 11:4; 24:7; 30:22), may indicate that vv 24–32 are a redactional amplification to be ascribed to Ezekiel’s school and yet to be regarded as fully prophetic in their authority (cf. v 32). The overlap of material in vv 24–32 with other parts of the book (see Comment) could certainly point in

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cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*JBL* Journal of Biblical Literature
*JBL* Journal of Biblical Literature
*CBQ* Catholic Biblical Quarterly
cf. confer, compare
*Bib* Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
the direction of later redaction. The artistic coherence of the piece is then, as in chaps. 20 and 27, a mark of redactional sensitivity. Vv 33–36, which presuppose vv 25 and 31, and vv 37–38, which presuppose vv 33 and 35, are then likewise a product of later redaction. There seems to be no reason to put this literary activity beyond the period of the exile.

Comment

17–19. The first half of the divine introduction to the oracle characterizes the history of Israel in the land as a history of failure. The failure is put in cultic terms as uncleanness, in accord with the priestly theology of Ezekiel—an uncleanness that infects the land (cf. Num 35:34; Deut 21:23). Lev 18:24–30 is especially worth noting in its insistence that self-defilement has the effect of defiling the land, which is prone to vomit out its defilers. Here the taboo matter of menstruation (cf. Lev 15:19–30) is cited as an indication of the intensely abhorrent nature of Israel’s offense against God. Thus his vehement reaction was to expel them in judgment. An emphatic framework for this section is provided by µkrd “their way” and µtwlyl “their deeds” in vv 17 and 19; here the terms function as the measure of and justification for divine judgment.

20–21. The solution had an unfortunate corollary, which is also expressed in cult-based language, the profaning of Yahweh’s holy name. It is a problem that Ezekiel described in chap. 20, unencountered in Israel’s earlier history because Yahweh had refrained from the ultimate treatment that their blatant provocation deserved (20:9, 14, 22). The portrayal of their pre-exilic history in these terms was obviously occasioned by the exile and by the loss of prestige that Yahweh consequently suffered as Israel’s patron, in view of the territorial nature of ancient religious and political thinking. A theological interpretation in terms of Yahweh’s weakness was more obvious to “the nations” than the prophetic one of vv 17–19. To vindicate his “holy name” Yahweh would have to act again. The verb µf “feel concern,” used in v 21, implicitly evokes its standard negative use earlier in the book: in consigning his people to exile Yahweh showed no mercy (5:11; 7:4; 8:18; 9:5, 10). The new usage paves the way for the statement of v 22. An inclusion for vv 20–21 is formed by the repeated “the nations to whom they came”: it represents the basic situation of exile that posed the intense theological problem. It is part of a chiastic structure whereby a sinister logic of “nations,” “profaning” and “my holy name” is traced to and fro (Parunak, Structural Studies 473).

22–23. In the proclamation of the resolution of Yahweh’s problem the language of vv 20–21 is echoed. What was implicit in the first verb of v 21 is now brought into the open. Israel had no claim on Yahweh, who had been entirely fair in rejecting them from his land and favor. No, his own honor was at stake (cf. 20:9 and Comment). From this perspective the exile was intolerable, and its ending was a theological necessity, in order that Yahweh’s holiness or transcendent power might be vindicated in human history. The recognition formula fittingly caps the theme of the clearing of his name.

24–28. Vv 24–32 move from the “holy/profane” category of vv 20–21 and 22–23 back to the “unclean” category of vv 17–19, and provide its polar opposite “clean, pure” (v 25; cf. 22:26). If vv 22–23 show how the problem of vv 2–21 may be resolved, vv 24–28 indicate how Israel’s history in the land may be prevented from repeating itself. V 24 puts vv 17aa and 19a into reverse, using the new Exodus language of 20:34 and 34:13 but borrowing from 37:21 the distinctive verb µ “take.” In order to

\[\text{cf. confer, compare} \]
\[\text{cf. confer, compare} \]
\[\text{cf. confer, compare} \]
\[\text{cf. confer, compare} \]
reverse v 17abb, v 25 employs the language of a purificatory rite as a metaphor for forgiveness and spiritual cleansing (cf. Num 19:13, 20; Ps 51:9 [7]); the terminology of 37:23 has been borrowed and enhanced. In fact the language is partly metaphorical and partly literal: moral, social and cultic (“idols”) sins are all in view.

This fresh start, wonderful as it was, was not enough. How could Israel hope to maintain Yahweh’s covenant standards, after their signal failure in pre-exilic times? The promise of 11:19–20 is echoed (cf. Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 336). The two statements of v 26a are unpacked in v 26b and v 27. Yahweh would creatively endow Israel with new wills that were to be sensitive rather than stony and hard in their reactions to Yahweh’s will. Thanks to him, their lives would be governed by a new impulse that was to be an expression of Yahweh’s own spirit. He would re-make their human natures, so that they marched to the music of the covenant terms that expressed Yahweh’s nature and will. Only thus could the covenant relationship become a living actuality rather than a doctrinal truth. Only thus could the old ideal of Yahweh’s people in Yahweh’s land (cf. v 20) become a reality.

29–32. The role of vv 24–28 has been to cope with the defiling sins of vv 17, 19. But what of the defiled land of v 17? There too reversal had to take place, as the new headline of v 29a announces. Divine salvation from the consequences of uncleanness, a motif derived from 37:23, is a glorious counterpart to the divine judgment of v 19b. The produce of the land would be responsive to Yahweh’s rich blessing (cf. v 8a; Hos 2:23–24a [22–23a]). Famine, associated with judgment earlier in the book (5:16, 17; 14:13, 21), would be a thing of the past in the new era of salvation (cf. 34:29). So too would be the old lifestyle of vv 17, 19. Far from being a temptation to revert to, it would be recalled with revulsion, as 20:43 had proclaimed. Far from having any claims on Yahweh, the exiles needed even now to share his view of their former lives by making an appropriate response of repentance (cf. 20:44).

33–36. The new oracle consciously supplements the previous one by echoing the language of vv 25 and 29 by way of summary. The homeland, now deprived of the exiles and reduced to ruins and to the curse of disuse, would be changed by Yahweh’s work of renewal. The terminology of judgment used in 5:14 is significantly reversed (Simian, Nachgeschichte 232). A vignette of wonder at the miraculous change is presented in v 35. In its light v 36 serves the purpose of promising the vindication of God’s people, which is accentuated by the straits of those who once crowed over Israel’s downfall (cf. vv 3–6) and seized their land. The glory would go to Yahweh as, in Jeremiah’s terms, not only the one who overthrows but also the one who builds and plants (cf. Jer 1:10; 18:9; 24:6).

37–38. If vv 33–36 focus upon the land, this message focuses on the people restored to the land. The exiles felt themselves to be a small, insignificant group (cf. 12:16; Isa 41:14a), whose lamenting prayer was to be restored to the dimensions of a sizable nation. Yahweh declares himself sensitive to their prayer. The transformed ruined cities of v 35 are reinvoked, as sheepfolds teeming with human flocks. The lively similes of v 38a, emanating from a priestly circle, reflect positive memories of pre-exilic Jerusalem.

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare
Explanations

The unit speaks of two inner constraints. The first concerns the issue of theodicy. Transcendent though Yahweh ever is throughout the book, nevertheless even for him commitment to others meant personal pain and loss. The divine image that is presented is eventually to be reflected in New Testament teaching. A model is provided for a descent to weakness as the precursor of a demonstration of power and glory. Ezekiel’s insight into a transcendent God, now veiled to others, would be revealed to all when Yahweh reversed his people’s fortunes. The prophet’s faith would be transformed to sight. In this way the absolute certainty of restoration was pastorally underlined, by defining it in terms of divine necessity. “All hope for the future rests in the very character of God, for their God will take seriously being God” (Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination* 79). Moreover, covenant Lord of Israel though Yahweh was, his people had exhausted every possibility of laying any claim or condition upon him, and Yahweh’s new show of strength was to be a manifestation of sheer grace. Just deserts were a signpost to exile and to destruction (v 19). The road from exile to salvation was paved with mercy and forgiveness (vv 25, 29).

The second inner constraint relates to the people of God. Failure seemed inevitable. How could the self-forged chains of sin be broken? Only a “heart” transplant could achieve obedience to Yahweh’s revelation of his will for his people. And only God could bestow sufficient inner resources. Lest the concept suggest the creation of clones and the loss of the free will that is the hallmark of humanity, we must be aware of the dire straits of destruction and deportation to which free will had led. We must also take into consideration that the Christian ideal, achieved fully only in the hereafter, is to do the will of God and therein find true personal fulfillment. Even now that ideal creates a moral challenge to live up to the grace of inaugurated eschatology (cf. 1 Thess. 4:8 in its context).

There is a beautiful sense of the achievement of human destiny in the pictures of land and work and communal life. There is also an awareness that only with the constructive help of God could this be achieved. Yet, before that era dawned, hope was able to foster a new attitude, a discerning regret that laid in the heart a foundation for the new work of God (v 31; cf. 2 Pet 3:11–14; 1 John 3:3).

A dominant concern in this literary unit is to carry forward the message of salvation begun in chap. 34. Certain notes already sounded are struck again. The weighty description of the exiles as “the community of Israel” (34:30; 35:15; 36:10) is echoed at significant points (vv 17, 21, 22, 32, 37), and their role as his “people” (34:30; 36:8, 12) is reaffirmed (vv 20, 28), while their description as “sheep” (vv 37, 38), though nuanced differently, evokes 34:30. Obviously the promise of return to the land is given afresh (36:24; cf. 34:13), since the presence of Yahweh’s people in Yahweh’s land (cf. v 20) was necessary for the glory of Yahweh. The psychological assurance that hurtful negative features would be blotted out (34:22, 28, 29; 36:12, 14, 15) is pastorally preached again (v 30), with relation to the human fear of famine and the equally deep dread of loss of self-respect (cf. 34:29; 36:15). The vindication of God was to bring with it the vindication of the people, who represented him, so that in his service they might walk tall.

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
The Promise of New Life (37:1–14)

Bibliography

Translation

1 I felt the pressure of Yahweh’s hand, and he used his own spirit to carry me off, eventually setting me down in the middle of the plain, which was filled with bones. 2 He took me on a complete tour of them, and I noticed that there were a great many of them strewn over the plain and also that they were extremely dry. 3 He asked me, “Human one, can these bones come back to life?” 4 “Lord Yahweh,” I answered, “you must know that.” 4 He told me to prophesy over the bones that were there and to tell them, “Dry bones, listen to Yahweh’s pronouncement. 5 Here is the Lord Yahweh’s message to these bones: I am going to imbue you with breath, and you will come back to life. 6 I will put sinews upon you, I will make flesh form over you and then cover you with skin. Then I will imbue you with breath and you will come back to life and realize that I am Yahweh.” 7 I prophesied as I had been ordered, and as I did so I heard a rattling and the bones joined themselves together in their proper order. 8 Before my very eyes sinews appeared on them, flesh formed and a top layer of skin covered them. 9 He told me to prophesy to the spirit a “

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a 1.a. lit. “the spirit of Yahweh,” apparently used as a stereotyped term in this clause where Yahweh is subj (Zimmerli 254).
b 1.b. Here and in 40:2 the first hiph of וָיָרָא “rest” is used in the sense of the second form.
a 2.a. The consecutive pf forms here and in vv 7, 8, 10 may be employed under Aramaic influence (cf. GKC 112pp; Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 347–49). B. Johnson (Hebräisches Perfekt 78, 80) took the present case as iterative, but listed v 10 among cases in the later chapters of the book where the usage deviated from general Hebrew practice. Bartelmus (ZAW 97 [1985] 385–89) interpreted the phenomena as evidence that vv 7a, 8b–10 belong to an insertion dating from the Maccabean era in terms of a literal resurrection. For a brief critique see Klein, Ezekiel: The Prophet and His Message 155 note 7.
b 2.b. Masc. suffixes are consistently used in this section, to refer to fem. רмяי “bone,” either as a simpler form or because their humanity is in view (cf. v 9). The fem. would have conveyed a neuter, inanimate connotation.
a 3.a. The verb has an ingressive sense in this pericope (BDB 311a; Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 376–77). The impf. is modal (Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 150; cf. Joüon 1131).
b 3.b. For the formulaic usage of יהוה “Lord” here and in vv 5, 12 see the note on 20:3. In v 14, however, it is uncharacteristically absent, probably because it occurs in a redactional addition (Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 387). Here the cry lacks a preceding interjection מָהַ “alas”: contrast 21:5.
a 5.a. In this section וָיָרָא “breath” and “wind.” In v 6 the LXX interpreted as “my ( = Yahweh’s) spirit,” under the influence of 36:27; 37:14.
b 7.a. MT anticipates לָעָשׂ “rattling” with לֵא “noise,” which takes away any sense of surprise in the narrative and is not represented in LXX* and one Heb. MS. It probably originated in a comparative gloss inspired by 3:12, 13, where the terms occur together (Cooke 399; Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 379, although he relates it on p. 357 to 1:25).
b 7.b. The anarthrous רмяי “bones” in MT is suspicious. Is it an uncorrected miswriting of the following רמא “bone” under the influence of the earlier pl. forms? Or did it arise as a marginal indication of the subj (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 303 note 9)? Two MSS lack it; the reading רмяי “the bones” in two other MSS is undoubtedly secondary. Whether the LXX so reads is impossible to determine (Cornill 416).
c 7.c. For the unusual verbal form see GKC 60a note 1 and Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 303.
Prophesy, human one, and tell the spirit that the Lord Yahweh’s bidding is to come from the four winds and to breathe into these corpses that are victims of carnage, enabling them to come back to life.” 10 So I prophesied as he ordered me, and the spirit entered them and they came back to life and got to their feet, an enormous army.

11 Then he told me, “Human one, these bones represent the whole community of Israel, who in fact have been saying, ‘Our bones are dried out, our hope has perished, we are bereft of life. 12 So prophesy and tell them this message from the Lord Yahweh: I am going to open up your graves and raise you from those graves of yours, and take you home to the land of Israel. 13 You will realize that I am Yahweh when I do open your graves and raise you from those graves of yours. I will imbue you with my spirit so that you come back to life, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will realize that I, Yahweh, have made a promise that I will keep.” So runs Yahweh’s oracle.

Notes

1. a. lit. “the spirit of Yahweh,” apparently used as a stereotyped term in this clause where Yahweh is

a 8.a. The transitive use in v 6 leads us to expect here a niph form, YW(BHS et al.). MT seems to understand as active with YW “skin” as object and Yahweh as implicit subj, corresponding to v 6.


a 10.a. The hith form replaces the niph used in v 7. Its rare and special usage elsewhere in Ezek (13:17) may suggest an error under the influence of the niph impv abnh (Cornill 418; Zimmerli 255–56), but see Comment.

a 11.a. For Hmh “they” see GKC 141g, h. On the proposal of Baltzer (Ezechiel 102) and Hossfeld (Untersuchungen 361–62) to attach Hmh to v 11b see Bartelmus, BN 25 (1984) 55–64.

b 11.b. Heb. Hmh “behold” can stand without definition of subj (GKC 116s; Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 303). The subj seems to be “the whole community of Israel” (Keil 119). The supplying of a pronoun in LXX* Vg Tg. is a natural clarification of the translators.

c 11.c. In view of the asyndeton of the next clause the copula in MT H d b a W “and … has perished” is generally deleted as a dittothram with many MSS LXX Tg..

d 11.d. NEB “our thread of life is snapped, our web is severed from the loom” has adopted in the latter clause the interesting emendation of Perles (OLZ 12 [1909] 251–52; cf. BHS), YW EN% ZEG1 “our web is cut off”; he appealed to post-biblical Hebrew. The suggestion was adopted by KB 602b, but cf. HALAT 643a. The lack of parallels in the rich imagery of the OT renders it unlikely (Zimmerli 256). In the earlier clause N WQ “hope” has been related to a homonym meaning “cord” (cf. Josh 2:18, 21). For N see GKC 119s.

a 12.a. MT adds YMN “my people,” unrepresented in LXX Syr. and, if authentic, expected earlier in the direct speech. It probably originated as a comparative gloss on Y [ to a people” in the verbal covenant formulation of v 27, citing YMN in the nominal clause of 34:30; it became attached to the wrong column.

a 13.a. MT YMN “my people” has been repeated by dittothram from v 12; it is not represented in Syr. However, its presence in LXX may indicate that it was first incorporated into the text at this point and subsequently entered v 12 by assimilation.

lit. literally
subj (Zimmerli 254).

1.b. Here and in 40:2 the first hiph of הָתֵב “rest” is used in the sense of the second form.

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3.b. For the formulaic usage of יָדָא “Lord” here and in vv 5, 12 see the note on 20:3. In v 14, however, it is uncharacteristically absent, probably because it occurs in a redactional addition (Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 387). Here the cry lacks a preceding interjection יָדָא “alas”: contrast 21:5.

5.a. In this section יָפֵע variously means “spirit,” “breath” and “wind.” In v 6 the LXX interpreted as “my ( = Yahweh’s) spirit,” under the influence of 36:27; 37:14.

7.a. MT anticipates יָפֵע “rattling” with יָפֵע “noise,” which takes away any sense of surprise in the narrative and is not represented in LXX* and one Heb. MS. It probably originated in a comparative gloss

subj subject/subjective
hiph Hiphil
pf perfect
cf. confer, compare
ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
Masc. masculine
fem. feminine
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
inspired by 3:12, 13, where the terms occur together (Cooke 399; Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 379, although he relates it on p. 357 to 1:25).

7.b. The anarthrous ת וּמַשׂנֵי “bones” in MT is suspicious. Is it an uncorrected miswriting of the following יָמֵשׂנֵי “bone” under the influence of the earlier pl. forms? Or did it arise as a marginal indication of the subj (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 303 note 9)? Two MSS lack it; the reading ת וּמַשׂנֵי h “the bones” in two other MSS is undoubtedly secondary. Whether the LXX so reads is impossible to determine (Cornill 416).

7.c. For the unusual verbal form see GKC 60a note 1 and Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 303.

8.a. The transitive use in v 6 leads us to expect here a niph form, יָמֵשׂנֵי (BHS et al.). MT seems to understand as active with יָמֵשׂנֵי “skin” as object and Yahweh as implicit subj, corresponding to v 6.


10.a. The hith form replaces the niph used in v 7. Its rare and special usage elsewhere in Ezek (13:17) may suggest an error under the influence of the niph impv אֲבֹתֵּנִי (Cornill 418; Zimmerli 255–56), but see Comment.

11.a. For ה מַה “they” see GKC 141g, h. On the proposal of Baltzer (Ezechiel 102) and Hossfeld (Untersuchungen 361–62) to attach ה מַה to v 11b see Bartelmus, BN 25 (1984) 55–64.

11.b. Heb. ה מַה “behold” can stand without definition of subj (GKC 116s; Driver, Bib 35 [1954]
303). The subj seems to be “the whole community of Israel” (Keil 119). The supplying of a pronoun in LXX* Vg Tg. is a natural clarification of the translators.

11.c. In view of the asyndeton of the next clause the copula in MT hāḇā w“and … has perished” is generally deleted as a dittograph with many MSS LXX Tg..

11.d. NEB “our thread of life is snapped, our web is severed from the loom” has adopted in the latter clause the interesting emendation of Perles (OLZ 12 [1909] 251–52; cf. BHS), ṭēḇēl ṭōzqān “our web is cut off”; he appealed to post-biblical Hebrew. The suggestion was adopted by KB 602b, but cf. HALAT 643a. The lack of parallels in the rich imagery of the OT renders it unlikely (Zimmerli 256). In the earlier clause h wq t “hope” has been related to a homonym meaning “cord” (cf. Josh 2:18, 21). For wq see GKC 119s.

12.a. MT adds ymn “my people,” unrepresented in LXX Syr. and, if authentic, expected earlier in the direct speech. It probably originated as a comparative gloss on āl “to a people” in the verbal covenant formulation of v 27, citing ym in the nominal clause of 34:30; it became attached to the wrong column.

13.a. MT ymn “my people” has been repeated by dittography from v 12; it is not represented in Syr..
However, its presence in LXX may indicate that it was first incorporated into the text at this point and subsequently entered v 12 by assimilation.

Form/Structure/Setting

The message reception formula which usually begins a literary unit, and which will return in v 15, is here replaced by a formulaic introduction to a vision account (cf. 1:3; 40:1). The unit of vv 1–14 continues the vision account of vv 1–10 with an interpretative oracle of salvation in vv 11–14. This oracle is also a disputation consisting of a thesis of despair (v 11) and a counterthesis of hope (vv 12–14) (cf. Graffy, A Prophet 83–86). The latter element is a two-part proof saying concluded with an extended recognition formula (v 13) and amplified with a summarizing, seemingly redactional, statement (v 14). The vision narrative has its own two-part proof saying, vv 5–6, and a further oracle, a command, in v 9.

After the introduction in v 1a, the vision narrative falls into two parts unequal in size but largely symmetrical as to their motifs, vv 1b–8a and vv 8b–10. A negative description (vv 1b–2, 8b) is eventually countered with a positive one (vv 7b–8a, 10b). In between lies divine speech, introduced by yla rmayw “and he said to me” (vv 3, 4, 9) and its prophetic transmission (vv 7a, 10a). The divine speech begins with µda ÷b “human one” (vv 3, 9) and continues with a commission to prophesy and a messenger formula (vv 4, including a summons to hear, 9). An extra element in the first part is the question and answer of v 3. The two parts of the vision account find a close structural parallel in vv 11–13. Here too a negative description (v 11) appears, but now set within a divine speech, which is once more introduced by yla rmayw “and he said to me” and begins with µda ÷b “human one” and continues with a commission and a messenger formula (v 12). Moreover, just as the first part of the vision story introduces the negative situation, the announcement of divine activity and the positive fulfillment with hnh (w) “(and) behold” in vv 2 [twice], 5, 7, 8), so in the interpretation the negative description includes the term (v 11) and the announcement of divine intervention starts with it (v 12).

The double and triple structuring is in each case accompanied by an inclusion that serves to confirm its respective boundaries. The two separate instances of µda ḫm “very” in v 2 are capped by its doubled presence at the end of v 10 (Baltzer, Ezechiel 109). The double hnh “and behold” in vv 2b, 7–8 supplies an inclusion for vv 1b–8a. Within two of the three divine speeches the bringing/bestowing of jw “breath” in vv 5b and 6a ḥ provides an inclusion (Höffken, VT 31 [1981] 306; similarly Parunak [ Structural Studies 481] speaks of a chiasmus, ABA), and so do the divine promises to “open your graves” and “raise you up from your graves” in vv 12–13 (Parunak, Structural Studies 483) in an emphasis on the reversal of death. Overall inclusions are afforded by the mention of Yahweh’s jw “spirit” and the verbs of resting (j jw in two different hiphil forms) in vv 1 and 14. Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation 451–52) has viewed this inclusion as part of a chiasmus with v 11 at its center.

The overall form of the unit is similar to that of 36:16–32 in consisting of a private communication to the prophet and a public oracle. In content, although not in the order of its component parts, it is especially close to 11:1–13, where a vision and its divine interpretation are followed by a commission to
deliver an oracle, an account of its effect and the prophet’s question. There can be little doubt that this unit reflects a situation not long after 587 B.C. when sentiments of death-like hopelessness occasioned by the shock of Jerusalem’s fall, the dissolution of Judah and the Babylonian exile must have been rife. An important issue is the relation of the oracle of disputation to the vision account, in view of their quite different representations of a field strewn with unburied bones and a cemetery of graves. Bertholet (126), Fohrer (209–10) and Wevers (194, 196) resolved the discord by regarding vv 12a–13 as a redactional intrusion. Hossfeld (Untersuchungen, esp. 369) has gone further in differentiating between vv 1–11a (up to אֵלֶּה יִשְׂרָאֵל “Israel”) and vv 11b (from תֹּבַע “they”)–13a: he regards the latter as redactional and later than Ezekiel’s own work in the former passage. The basic question is whether the tension in the imagery requires such a literary-critical conclusion (see Comment). A further issue relates to the closing verses. Garscha (Studien zum Ezechielbuch 222) and Hossfeld (Untersuchungen, esp. 400–401) have followed Jahn and J. Herrmann in regarding vv 13b–14 as redactional. Although Zimmerli (257) has regarded this expedient as unnecessary, there does seem to be sufficient ground for detaching v 14 (only) as a typical redactional conclusion to the unit (cf. 31:18; 34:31) which wants to connect it closely to the key promise of 36:27 (cf. Baltzer, Ezechiel 107–8).

Comment

1a The introduction to the vision impressively describes the psychic experience of being caught up by supernatural power and transported elsewhere. The language used evokes very ancient prophetic experiences and characterizes Ezekiel as an old-world prophet with authoritative credentials (cf. 1 Kgs 18:12, 46; 2 Kgs 2:16). Divine agency is indicated both by the pressure of Yahweh’s “hand” (see 33:22 and Comment; cf. 1:3; 3:14, etc) and by the participation of his “spirit” (cf. 8:3; 11:1, 24). The “plain” or broad valley appears to be that mentioned in 3:22–23 and 8:4, close to Ezekiel’s residence in exile at Tel-abib. Whereas before it was the scene of a revelation of God’s glory, now it has quite different visionary associations. The abrupt beginning of the account, softened in the LXX and Syriac by a copula, has led commentators to speculate whether at an earlier stage a date was prefixed, as in the case of other visions (cf. 8:1; 40:1). Brownlee considered that 1:1a, with its difficult reference to the thirtieth year, related to the exile ( = 568 B.C.) and belonged here (xxxi–ii, 4), but the historical setting of the vision appears to be earlier than that.

1b–3 The visionary scene, a gruesome one, is gradually unfolded. First impressions of a grotesque mass of bones are reinforced as the prophet is taken round the site; he is made aware too that what were once corpses had long since rotted or been eaten away into fleshless bones. The divine question is a standard element in a vision, to wrest significance from the sight (cf. Jer 1:11, 13; Amos 7:8; 8:2; Zech 4:2, 5). It was a ridiculous question. A seeming corpse might be revived, but these pathetic piles of bones were hopelessly dead. Out of polite deference to his questioner the prophet leaves him to answer his own question. Yahweh knew the answer as well as he did (cf. Craigie 260)!  

cf. confer, compare  
cf. confer, compare  
cf. confer, compare  
cf. confer, compare  
cf. confer, compare  
cf. confer, compare  
cf. confer, compare  
cf. confer, compare  
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT  
cf. confer, compare  
cf. confer, compare  
cf. confer, compare  
cf. confer, compare  

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4–6 No, evidently Yahweh knew more than Ezekiel did, for he commands the prophet to address the defunct bones around him and to announce their imminent reanimation. Yahweh is to do the impossible (Wevers 278)! The promise of reanimation is given twice, as a framework for the reclothing of the bones with bodies made up of sinews, flesh, and skin. Yahweh is portrayed as the creator of the individual, the giver of personal life (cf. Job 10:11–12; Ps 139:13–16), but now in a context of restoring life rather than initially bestowing it. The demonstration of such power would be proof indeed of Yahweh’s being.

7–8a The prophetic oracle triggers a movement from disorientation to reorientation. Ezekiel discharges his strange commission, and the ensuing silence is broken by a rattling sound as the bones realign themselves into skeletons. Then before his wondering eyes they turn into bodies, in step with the stages of his oracle. First sound, then sight: Ezekiel’s senses are bombarded with an overwhelming experience.

8b However, the narrative lapses into negative description. The process is halted without the emphasized reanimation of vv 5b and 6a having yet taken place. These bodies lack the essential element of “breath,” and it requires a further oracle to achieve the renewal of life. Zimmerli (257) has referred to 3:1–2 as a precedent for a two-phased visionary process. It is also customary to compare the double manner of creation in Gen 2:7, whereby the human being was first given a shape, like some life-size doll, and then received from God himself animating breath, יָנָשׁ יִשְׁהַל נֶפֶשׁ “the breath of life,” although וְיָנָשׁ “breath, spirit” is the term used here. (It is seemingly in dependence on Gen 2:7 that the LXX has “the breath of life” at the end of v 5.) So here separate acts take place because two miracles were necessary, to reconstitute the bones into bodies and to reanimate the bodies. There is also an element of drama in the double process. “One is reminded of the magician who invariably ‘fails’ once or twice in attempting his grand finale in order to intensify suspense and to focus attention on the climactic success to follow” (Fox, HUCA 51 [1980] 11). The process accentuates the power of God even as it conceives the difficulty of the enterprise.

9. The prophetic commissioning follows the pattern of v 4, but this oracle is to be addressed to the וְיָנָשׁ “breath, spirit” that is out there in the wide world. Moreover, the oracle is not a statement of Yahweh’s imminent action but a command to the וְיָנָשׁ, unleashed to the four points of the compass, to focus its attention on the corpses. The in-breathing echoes the verb of Gen 2:7 (וְיָנָשׁ), when Yahweh “breathed” into the human being the breath of life. However, the conception seems to borrow too from the priestly account of creation, in which the וְיָנָשׁ of God hovered over the raw elements of the world, waiting to transform them into a living cosmos (Gen 1:2). It was this pervading power that gave continued life to a finite world (Ps 104:29–30; Job 34:14–15). One may compare too the powerful creative word in Genesis 1 (Baltzer, Ezechiel 112).

10 Again the prophet functions as agent of the process, and at last the coming of the breath forecast in v 5b is achieved. The verb of prophesying used in v 7 (and in vv 4, 9) is slightly varied. The hithpael form is elsewhere used in the book only at 13:17, where it characterizes a misused psychic gift of mediating life or death (13:19). Here the prophetic word shares this powerful potential (cf. R. Rendtorff, TDNT 6, 799; Baltzer, Ezechiel 113–14). The superlatives of the negative description in v 2b (דָּמַם “very,” twice) are gathered together in a positive account of the dynamic sequel (דָּמַם דָּמַם), to enhance

\[\text{cf. confer, compare}\]

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
\[\text{cf. confer, compare}\]

the transformation of bones on an old battlefield into a virile company standing up and so poised and purposeful. The contrast is accentuated by the consonantal wordplay between ḥl̄aḥ µyw̄r ḥ (b) “these slain ones” (v 9), referring to the inanimate bodies into which the bones had been transformed, and µ̄h̄ȳl̄ḡAl (“on their feet.” Moreover, the notion of new life (w̄j̄w “and they became alive”) is carried forward in the term ḥl̄ “army, strength.”

11 Once more the prophet hears the divine voice, as especially in v 3 and also in vv 4 and 9. Now tantalizing question and performative commissions are replaced by plain interpretation. The negative factors of vv 1b–2 and 8b are perpetuated in the explanation. The bones represented the exiles, and dramatized the evidence of their own mouths in a communal lament (cf. 33:10). The quotation is a poetic tricolon (2 + 2 + 2; cf. 33:10) that expresses pathos with -ep̄ūn̄d̄ and -āpūl̄syllables, as in 33:10. Their “bones” stand for the whole person, which has been sapped of vitality by the crisis of exile (cf. Ps 31:10 [10]; 32:3; 102:4–6 [3–5]; cf. A. R. Johnson, The Vitality of the Individual [Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964] 67–68). The second of the three clauses alludes to death, the death of hope (cf. Ps. 9:19 [18]). The third clause, literally “we have been cut off,” refers to loss of life (cf. Isa 53:8), here in the sense of being reduced to a deathlike state (cf. Lam 3:54). The metaphor of death is typical of the psalms of lament and thanksgiving. It is used to described an abysmally low level of human existence that, crushed by crisis, lacked any of the quality that life ordinarily had. “The dangerously ill, the accused who face the court without any support, the persecuted who are hopelessly delivered over to their enemies—all these already belong to the world of the dead” (H. W. Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974] 111; cf., e.g., Ps 116:3, 8–9). Clearly the vision has grown out of the lament of the exiles: the dry bones of the first clause have been strikingly reinterpreted in terms of the explicit death language of the third. “Strange, shocking and bizarre images… are needed when one seeks to break down old frameworks of perception and to create new ones” (Fox, HUCA 51 [1980] 9).

12–13 The divine response to the lament is to commission an oracle of salvation, with opening formulas that deliberately echo those of vv 4–5. The three clauses of lament are answered with three divine statements of reversal. The inconsistency in the imagery of death between a cemetery and a battlefield is more real to the Western mind than it would have been to the ancient Hebrew one, which did not object to the mixing of metaphors (cf. G. B. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980] 149–52). In the laments the aura of death that surrounds the sufferer may be described at one and the same time in terms of drowning and of being caught in a hunter’s trap (Ps 18:5–6 [4–5]). Mention of the grave finds a parallel in Ps 88:6 (5), along with the verb “cut off,” so that v 12 follows on naturally from the end of v 11 (cf. Baltzer, Ezechiel 104). At another level than the thematic there are ample reminiscences of the vision oracle of vv 4–5 especially with reference to
Yahweh’s dynamic acts: the repetition of the verb “and I shall raise” (ytylhw, vv 6, 12) and of the divine bringing of vv 5 (aybm yna “I am going to bring”) and 12 (yt ab hw “and I shall bring”), and the assonance between opening (j t p) and breathing (y p v 9) and of graves (µkytwrbq) and the joining of the bones (wb q t w, v 7). The experience of exile is a veritable grave-yard; to live again is to return to the land. The lament is countered with an oracle of salvation that proclaimed afresh the truth of a new Exodus, here expressed in contextually adapted terms, and of a return to the land that symbolized return to living fellowship with Yahweh. As ever in the book of Ezekiel, salvation is to be a means to a divine end. The redeeming act of God would bring with it the revelation of his true self.

14 The editorial rounding off of the unit wants also to tie it to the preceding piece. The vision and its interpretation were of a piece with the message of 36:27, “I will put my spirit within you.” The following of the promise with an assurance of dwelling or settling in the land both in 36:28 and here confirms that an echo of 36:27 is intended. In fact, the placing of this whole unit in its present position seems to have been due to an intent to amplify 36:27: ] W “breath, spirit” is used no less than ten times. The metaphorical reviving breath given by Yahweh (v 6) is related to a new potential, the opportunity to comply with Yahweh’s covenant terms and so to enjoy the life that is life indeed (cf. 20:21; 33:19). The pathway to this reinterpretation runs via v 1, where the ] W “breath, spirit” is that of Yahweh (cf. Wagner, Theologische Versuche 10 [1979] 62). There is another echo of v 1 in the verb “settle” (yt Nhw cf. ynjynyw “he set me down,” v 1). The prophetic experience itself contained seeds of hope for the people of God (cf. too v 10 with 2:1–2; 3:24). He was the harbinger of a new work of God, just as Joel’s prophetic insight was the model of Israel’s coming closeness of fellowship with Yahweh (Joel 3:1–2 [2:28–29]) and Isaiah’s burning of purification prefigured that of the people (Isa 6:6–7, 13; cf. 4:4). The repeated recognition formula also harks back to v 6. It is followed by an affirmation that not only recalls 36:36b and links this oracle with the preceding one, but also has a role within this unit. The vision’s sequence of divine word and action (vv 5–6/7, 9/10) would not fail to have its counterpart in coming reality.

Explanation

In terms of tradition history one must look back to Israel’s hymnic language, doubtless derived from cultic use, which celebrated Yahweh as one who can “kill and make alive” (Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6). As the immediate context in the former case (“I wound and heal”) and the usage in 2 Kgs 5:7 with relation to healing make clear, the reference is to rescuing from the aura of death that surrounded the victim of crisis, especially at time of illness (see Johnson, Vitality 108–9). This credal statement seems to underlie the present message of vision and interpretation. The Judeans, suffering the fate of exile and estranged from both Yahweh and their land, were in the throes of disorientation. Yet Yahweh was able to deliver from so threatening a crisis. And, the prophet proclaims, Yahweh’s own desire was to put the people back on their feet. The leitmotif of the vision, ywy w t yyyyw “breath, and you shall live/and they lived” loudly proclaims Yahweh to be the creator of new life. Before the exile the temple courts had echoed with personal testimonies of thanksgiving to Yahweh: “You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I walk before Yahweh in the land of the living” (Ps 116:8, 9

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*cf. confer, compare*
This cultic heritage was the fuel for an affirmative answer to the lament of the exiles. It provided the theological dynamic for the vision of miraculous renewal. Ezekiel has historicized the Psalms’ gospel of reorientation and actualized “the land of the living” sought by the disoriented bringer of lament.

A recurring element in the vision, which is both resumed in the interpretation and reflected on in the supplement of v 14, is the prominent role played by Ezekiel as agent of renewal (cf. Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 399). He functions not merely as observer but as participant. As in 11:4–12, Ezekiel’s prophetic word controls the development of the vision (cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1 258). This role served both as an assurance to the prophet and as an assertion to his audience regarding the authority and authenticity that he possessed as prophet of salvation, as truly as when he had predicted judgment. The vision exposes an organic relationship between the two prophetic events, the wreaking of judgment and the bestowing of salvation. Salvation was to rise phoenix-like from the embers of judgment. The vision affirms the reality of divine judgment: Yahweh had indeed dealt a death blow to his covenant people (µywr “slain,” v 9; the verb is used of Yahweh’s judgment of Israel in 9:6; 21:16 [11]; 23:10, 47).

However, even from this veritable Sheol the promise of deliverance could be given.

It would be surprising if the New Testament did not take up the vibrant terminology of this vision. In his own vision John the Seer described the resurrection of God’s two prophetic witnesses after three and a half days of death in terms of vv 5 (LXX) and 10 (Rev 11:11), in a theological affirmation of the invincibility of the witness of the Church to God, which is undergirded by God’s power. There are close parallels between vv 7 (s eis moq “earthquake,” LXX) and 12 and the account of earthquake and raising of the saints in Matt 27:51–54 (Grassi, NTS 11 [1964/65] 163). Naturally Christian (and Jewish) development in the conception of salvation envisaged the literal re-use of Ezekiel’s metaphor of death and revival, so that Matthew’s narrative could recall the vision in an omen of the resurrection of the people of God. More true to the original intent of the passage is the seeming echo of v 9 at John 20:22, in the breathing of the risen Christ upon the disciples, bestowing the Holy Spirit (eμfuvshsen “he breathed”; cf. LXX ejmfuvshson “breathe”; Grassi, NTS 11 [1964/65] 164). In different ways both these references relate the passage to the inauguration of eschatological hope. Paul seems to relate it rather to eschatological consummation in discussing the anticipated final Jewish acceptance of God’s further revelation in Christ. He vividly describes their re-incorporation into the community of faith as “life from the dead” (Rom 11:15). It is difficult to miss a Christian Jew’s interpretation of Ezekiel’s vision.

One King, One People (37:15–28)

Bibliography

cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

NTS New Testament Studies
Translation

I received the following communication from Yahweh: “As for you, human one, take a stick and write on it ‘Judah and all of the Israelites associated with it.’ Then take another stick and

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write on it ‘Joseph’ and all of the community of Israel associated with it. 17 Then join them to one another as one stick, so that they are united in your hand. 18 When your fellow nationals ask you to tell them what you mean by this, 19 inform them of the following message from the Lord: I am about to take the stick representing Joseph and the tribes of Israel associated with it and put with it the stick representing Judah, and make them one stick so that they are one in my hand. 20 “With the sticks you write on clearly visible in your hand, 21 inform them of the following message from the Lord Yahweh: I am going to take the Israelites out of the nations they went to, gathering them from the surrounding areas, and I will bring them home to their own country. 22 I will make them one nation in the land, on Israel’s mountains, and one king they will all have as
No longer will they be divided into two kingdoms any longer.\(^c\)  23 No longer will they sully themselves with their idols, their detestable objects of worship or any of their rebellious ways.\(^a\) I will save them from all their deviations\(^b\) in which they have sinfully engaged and purify them. Then they will be my people and I will be their God.

24 “My servant David will be king over them: they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my standards and observe my rulings and carry them out.  25 They will live on the land I gave my servant Jacob, in which your forebears lived. They, their children and their grandchildren will live on it for always.\(^b\)

26 “David my servant will be their head of state for ever. I will make with them a covenant of peace: there will be an everlasting covenant with them.\(^a\) I will swell their numbers and put my sanctuary in their midst for ever.

27 My dwelling place will overlook them, and I will be their God and they will be my people.\(^28\)

\(^{b}\) 22.b. LXX a ἄρχων “ruler” here and in vv 24 and 25, as if reading ἄρχων “head of state” for ὁ μόνος “king, ” seems to reflect the same assimilating tendency, in this case to 34:24. The same passage is echoed in v 23 in the addition of “Lord” after “I” and in v 24, implying μαχαιρίστας μακρὸν “leader in their midst.” Zimmerli (269, 275) observed that the parallelism of ὁ μόνος … ἀγαθός (“nation … king”) with τὸ ἐδαφὸς ἡμῶν … ἡγεῖται (“kings … nations”) in v 22b favors MT.

22.c. Heb. ὁ μόνος “for, as king” is not represented in LXX Syr. Again Zimmerli, ibid., has noted in its favor a correspondence with the construction of v 22b.

22.d. K k y h y y “he will be (king for …)” Q w h y “they will be” is generally read with many MSS and in accord with the ancient versions, as the parallelism of v 22b favors MT.

22.e. Unlike LXX Vg, MT retains ὁ μόνος “leader in their midst.” It reflects a conflated text: in Ezek ὁ μόνος is usually placed immediately after the verb, while 19:9; 39:7 attest a later position.

23.a. LXX* does not represent the latter two noun phrases; it is difficult to decide whether parablepsis or secondary accretion in MT is the culprit. Levin (Verheissung 215 note 67) argues for the priority of MT, with reference to 14:11.

23.b. MT μὴ ἔχω “their dwelling places” reflects the incorrect insertion of a vowel letter into μὴ ἔχω (cf. BHS) “their deviations,” implied by LXX. MT was influenced by the triple usage of μὴ ἔχω -μεν, “(and) they will dwell/dwelt” in v 25 and perhaps by the association of ὁ ἐδαφός ἡμῶν “in all their dwelling places” in 6:14 with μὴ ἔχω ἔπος Γκ “all their idols” in 6:13.

25.a. LXX Syr. imply “their,” an easier and so secondary reading. See Form/Structure/Setting.

25.b. For the omission in LXX* see Zimmerli 270.

26.a. MT adds μὴ ἔχω “and I will give them.” An original μὴ ἔχω with them and I will increase them and give seems to have suffered the loss of μὴ ἔχω ἔπος ἔπος ἔπος by parablepsis caused by homoeoteleuton: the LXX attests such an abbreviated text (cf. BHS). A marginal correction μὴ ἔχω ἔπος ἔπος “and I will increase them and give,” in which the last term functioned as a cue word, was mistakenly inserted after the shortened text. Subsequently μὴ ἔχω was slightly adapted for sense, by the addition of a pronounal object. Tg. wrested sense out of μὴ ἔχω ἔπος by rendering “and I will bless them,” which RSV adopted. Herrmann (234) followed by Cooke (406) and Zimmerli, ibid., regarded the first μὴ ἔχω (= μὴ ἔχω) “with them”: cf. GKC 103b) as not original, but μὴ ἔχω “with you” in a similar context at Lev 26:9b supports its presence here; moreover, it affords a reasonable explanation for the basic error.

27.a. lit. “will be over, above.” The temple’s standing on a hill is in mind (cf. 40:2).
Then the other nations will realize that I, Yahweh, have set apart Israel as holy, when my sanctuary is set in their midst for evermore.”

Notes

16.a. Heb. (h d w h y) l is generally taken as lamed inscriptionis, introducing the wording of an inscription or title (GKC 119u), but it may indicate possession “for, belonging to” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 136; Zimmerli 267; RSV).

16.b. For the spelling in K here and in v 19a see the note on 40:6.

16.c. Heb. ḥ q l “take” is a rare form of the impv: ḥ q is expected, as in v 16a. Perhaps it should be pointed as inf abs (cf. Zimmerli 268).

16.d. Heb. ḥ ḥ a ḥ a in v 16a, b means “one … another,” as in v 17a. An emendation ḥ ḥ a “another” on the supposed basis of LXX Syr. Vg is counterproductive, since ḥ ḥ a functions as a sectional key word (Zimmerli, ibid.).

16.e. MT and the ancient versions add µ y ṭ p ṭ “Ephraim’s stick,” which spoils the parallelism. It is generally taken as an early gloss, explaining the uncommon “Joseph” as a designation for the northern tribes; “Ephraim” may have been influenced by the reunification promises of Jer 31:9, 18, 20. It also seems to interpret the lamed as one of possession.

17.a. For the vocalization see GKC 52n, 64h.

17.b. The pl. µ y ḥ ḥ ḥ seems to be a case of grammatical assimilation to the verb (Hölscher, Hesekiel 176 note 3; cf. Gen 11:1).
18.a. **LXX** represents here and at the beginning of v 19 a more idiomatic Heb. style: see *BHS*.

19.a. For the formulaic **ynd a** “Lord” here and in v 21 see the note on 20:3.

19.b. **LXX** "tribe" for "stick" here and in v 19b is due to the translator’s wish to replace metaphor with reality in this statement of Yahweh’s actions: cf. Tg. "people" for "stick" in v 19b.

19.c. **MT** and the ancient versions add "which is in Ephraim’s hand," which seems to be an early gloss on "stick" in line with the one in v 16b. It may have been an amplification of the previous one, which has entered the text at this lower point. In that case its interest was primarily grammatical, indicating possession.

19.d. **MT** adds "them," which does not fit the clause. It was probably a variant or comparative gloss relating to "which is in Ephraim’s hand," which seems to be an early gloss on "stick" in line with the one in v 16b. It may have been an amplification of the previous one, which has entered the text at this lower point. In that case its interest was primarily grammatical, indicating possession.

19.e. **LXX** renders "in my hand" as if "with the stick" (cf. *BHS*), which is interesting evidence for the practice of abbreviation in Heb. MSS.

22.a. **LXX** implies "in my land," which Cornill (420) et al. prefer. However, not only is it inappropriate here (see Zimmerli, ibid.), but it is significant that in the context the **LXX** reflects assimilation to other passages: to v 11 in rendering “house” for "sons" in v 21a; to 28:24 in...
translating “from all around them” for ב יִבְשָׁם “around” in v 21b; and to v 12 in its translation “the country of Israel” for µַמְדַא “their country.” Correspondingly, here the influence of 36:5 is probable.

22.b. LXX α[ρων “ruler” here and in vv 24 and 25, as if reading α[ρων “head of state” for ον “king,” seems to reflect the same assimilating tendency, in this case to 34:24. The same passage is echoed in v 23 in the addition of “Lord” after “I” and in v 24, implying µַקְוַכָב a[рων “leader in their midst.” Zimmerli (269, 275) observed that the parallelism of ον … יָגוּג (“nation … king”) with מַקְוַכָb … מַמְדַא (“kingdoms … nations”) in v 22b favors MT.

22.c. Heb. οn … מַלְאָכָה “for, as king” is not represented in LXX* Syr.. Again Zimmerli, ibid., has noted in its favor a correspondence with the construction of v 22b.

22.d. K יֵחָזְק יִי retains the king as subj: “he will be (king for …).” Q וִיִּהְיָה יִי “they will be” is generally read with many MSS and in accord with the ancient versions, as the parallelism of v 22b requires.

22.e. Unlike LXX Vg, MT repeats וָשָׁנ “(no) longer.” It reflects a conflated text: in Ezek וָשָׁנ is usually placed immediately after the verb, while 19:9; 39:7 attest a later position.

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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
sbj subject/subjective
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” שֶׁמֶנ (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
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cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
triple usage of ὧν ἔχουσιν ἦν, “(and) they will dwell/dwelt” in v 25 and perhaps by the association of ἱερὰ ἱερὰ ἱερὰ “in all their dwelling places” in 6:14 with ἱερὰ ἱερὰ ἱερὰ “all their idols” in 6:13.

25.a. LXX Syr. imply “their,” an easier and so secondary reading. See Form/Structure/Setting.

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27.a. lit. “will be over, above.” The temple’s standing on a hill is in mind (cf. 40:2).

Form/Structure/Setting

This literary unit is demarcated by its own message reception formula (v 15) and by that which introduces chaps. 38–39 in 38:1. It begins with a command to perform a symbolic action (vv 16–17) and continues with a question and answer format that in Ezekiel is used to create a hinge between a symbolic action and its meaning (vv 18–19; see Long, JBL 90 [1971] 134–37, with references to 12:9–12; 21:12; 24:19–21). Vv 20–28, after an introductory reference to the symbolic action and a messenger formula (v 20), launch into a further oracle that eventually concludes with a recognition formula (v 28). However,
one would hesitate to call vv 21–28 a proof saying, since the content of the formula does not relate to the theme of the earlier part of the oracle. This factor raises the question of literary development within vv 20–28. A further pertinent question concerns the relation of vv 20–28 to the earlier two parts of the unit. Zimmerli (272–73, 275) views these verses as a redactional addition to the basic text of vv 16–19, which emanated either from Ezekiel or from his school in the case of vv 20–23+24a and from the latter, in a late phase, in the case of vv 24b–28. Certainly the explanatory oracle of salvation in vv 16–19 could be complete in itself. Yet there is logic in what follows it, whether it is secondary or not. While vv 16–19 proceed from symbolic action to meaning, the “meaning” is simply a conversion of the prophetic sign into divine metaphor. It remains for the salvation oracle of vv 20–22 (at least) to move from metaphor to factual interpretation. What in Ezekiel is elsewhere separately attested as a pair, a symbolic action and its meaning on the one hand or a metaphorical statement or parable and its meaning on the other hand, appears here to be combined in a triad. Yet v 20 indicates continuity with what precedes: v 21 is still intended as an answer to the exiles’ question concerning the symbolic action. This organic unity is to be taken seriously. In terms of content v 22 seems to be a necessary interpretation of the symbolic action, as Garscha recognized in his own way by regarding it as originally linked with v 19 (Studien 225), and as Bertholet (129) and Fohrer (210) acknowledged by continuing the basic unit till v 22. Certainly vv 16–22 have a structural flow, in moving from dja Å[l ... µta brqw ... (j ql w ... ] q, “take ... (and take) ... and join them ... into one stick” (vv 16–17) to dja Å[l µty l[w ... ] q “(I will) take ... and make them into one stick” (v 19) and on to dja ywgl µta yty l[w ... ] q “(I will) take ... and make them into one nation” (vv 21–22). Moreover, the flow seems to continue till v 24a, in that a key word dja “one” dominates vv 16–24a, and µl kl hyhy dja úl mw “and they will all have one king” (v 22ab) and µl kl hyhy dja h[ w “and they will all have one shepherd” (v 24ab) are an evident inclusion. The latter clause is closely related to 34:23a, but the borrowing is to be attributed there rather than here, since h[ r “shepherd” is a common royal term, and dja “one” clearly has its home in this context (cf. Baltzer, Ezechiel 138).

With v 24b one has to compare the redactional v 14a: both seem to be derived from 36:27. Nor can one overlook the similarity of v 25ab to 36:28a, which includes µl kytwba “your fathers,” less suited to the present context than to its original setting (cf. Levin, Verheissung 215, 216 note 69). Moreover, v 25 has a close relation with the late 28:25–26. The term a ywgl “head of state” in v 25bb differentiates from d v m “king” in vv 22, 24a in a seemingly corrective way (cf. 34:24). The change in order from d wd yd b [ “my servant David” in v 24a to yd b [ d wd “David my servant” in v 25bb is a minor indication of a different hand. Vv 25–28 are united by their own key word, µl w “everlasting.” This passage complements the late 34:25–30 in its use of Lev 26 (see Comment) and is a parallel piece.

The addition of vv 24b–30, an oracle of salvation in the form of a proof saying, brought changes to the overall structure, such as occurred in chap. 27 as a corollary of supplementation. The royal references in vv 22a, 24a and 25b function now as headlines in a series of three sections. The initial section with the key word d w “(no) longer” (vv 22b, 23a) and the final one that has the key word µl w “forever” (vv 25b, 26b, 28b) or µl w “everlastingness” (v 26a) are nicely bridged by the middle one, which ends with µl w Ad “forever” (v 25a). It is clear that vv 15–28 represent a basic text that has been subsequently amplified, as is the case with very many of the literary units in the book. Its early part derives from Ezekiel, but seems to be later than vv 1–13, which still reflect the shock of the
catastrophe in 587 B.C. It looks back at the crisis reflectively (Zimmerli 272) and ponders deeply on its reversal. Whether vv 23–24a belong to this early part or have already begun the process of literary growth is not easily decided. The term µhwf “their deviations” is unique in the book (cf. Jer 2:19; 3:6, etc). However, the sharing of the vocabulary of v 23 by the late 36:25, 29 is by way of echo. The double use of ūlm “king” in vv 22a and 24a, and the persistence of the key term ḫa “one” in v 24a appear to attest the integral nature of vv 22–24a in a seemingly original fashion (cf. Carley 251).

The echoes of 36:27a in 37:14a and of 36:27b in 37:24b suggest extensive compositional structuring. 37:1–13 seems to have been intended as a commentary on 36:27a, as we noted earlier, and likewise 37:15–24a as a commentary on 36:27b. Ezekiel’s oracles have thus been artistically woven into an explanatory framework, which sought to illustrate the role of Yahweh’s spirit and the means whereby obedience to Yahweh’s moral will would be achieved in the new age.

Comment

15–17 Ezekiel is commanded to perform a symbolic act, such as occasionally preceded and reinforced his public oracles (cf. 24:15–24). It is a simple one, holding two sticks together end to end in his hand, with the adjacent ends concealed so that they looked a single long stick: v 20 makes clear that they were still really two. An essential part of the action was that these sticks were to have writing on them and so were openly representational. “Judah” and “Joseph” stand respectively for the people of the old southern and northern kingdoms. “Joseph” refers to the two leading tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, while by implication “Judah” has a tribal flavor, the tribe of Judah being the main constituent of the state of Judah. The extra material in the labels identifies the two groups as joint members of a larger entity, the sons/community/tribes of Israel. Are the sticks simply convenient objects to convey a written message and feature in an enacted demonstration? The Targum interpreted in terms of wooden tablets, in view of the writing (cf. Isa 8:1). G. R. Driver (JTS 22 [1971] 549–50) developed this notion by envisaging two leaves of a folding tablet (=NEB; cf. Steinmann 188). He noted that such folding tablets had been found at Nineveh. However, the LXX rendered with ῥβδον “staff,” perhaps with Num 17:16–26 in mind, where “rods” (Str; LXX ῥβδοι) representing tribal leaders have names written on them. The present context leads us further along this direction with its mention of two kingdoms and a single nation and king in v 22: reasoning back from these data, the sticks stand for royal scepters (cf. the interpretation of ἄμμον “tree, piece of wood” at 21:3[20:47] as ῥβ “scepter” in the gloss of 21:15b [10b]). It may be that the LXX was alluding to 19:11–14, where the ἄμ “rod, stem” that became a ruler’s scepter is thrice rendered ῥβδον, although the factor of a different Greek translator must be borne in mind. Here the ensuing emphasis on kingship in the inclusion of vv 22a and
and redactionally in the three royal headlines that included vv 25bb so highlight the concept of kingship that it is difficult to avoid seeing such an implication in the stick symbolism. The sticks have a national significance insofar as they suggest the institution of monarchy that represents the nation.

18–19 The sign, performed in public, was intended to stimulate Ezekiel’s audience of Judean exiles. The scenario of question and answer in v 18 leads into the oracular answer, which transforms the prophetic act into divine metaphor and thus affirms that the prophet was in advance enacting Yahweh’s own intent.

20–23 The plain interpretation of the two hand-held sticks that follows adopts the same twofold sequence of the symbolic act and metaphor: “take … join/make into one …” The homogeneity of the two groups is pushed to the fore rather more by the absence of the distinguishing terms “Judah” and “Joseph.” Their repatriation and reunion would be a realization of a truth for long tragically hidden from view, the ideal of a united kingdom. The miracle Yahweh would perform for Judah (vv 1–14) he could also work for its northern partner. The theological triangle of God, people and land now seemingly becomes a square with the addition of a fourth component, the king. Really, however, the king represents both the people in their unity and the rule of Yahweh (cf. 20:33b), as the earthly guardian of the people’s worship and way of life (cf. Seybold, Königstum 152) or, in terms of the British conception of monarchy, “defender of the faith.” By such means pre-exilic failure in these areas would be prevented from recurring, and the covenant relationship would be brought to glorious fulfillment.

24–25b The original conclusion to the previous oracle (v 24a) now becomes the redactional introduction to a new stanza. It gives expression to the role of the king as symbol of social unity under God. As “servant” or vassal of an overlord, he would be committed to Yahweh’s will. His designation as “David” characterizes him not only as a scion of Davidic lineage but as an upholder of the united kingdom, such as David himself was as nominee of all the tribes of Israel (2 Sam 5:1–4; cf. 1 Kgs 3:28). The title “shepherd” “seeks to guard against a one-sidedly political understanding of the future ruler” (J. Jeremias, TDNT 5 488, with reference to K. Galling). It gives the king the role of an undershepherd of the covenant flock, fulfilling all of God’s purposes for them (cf. Isa 44:28; Gottlieb, VT 17 [1967] 196). The addition of v 24b alludes to the fulfillment of 36:27, as surely as 37:14a claimed the outworking of 36:27a. In this new context it draws on the deuteronomistic conception of the Davidic dynasty as model and monitor of the covenant law (cf. 1 Kgs 3:6, 14; 9:4; 18:6; 23:3, 24–25; Kellermann, Messias und Gesetz 87). The people’s obedience would make possible continued occupation of the promised land envisaged in 28:25–26 and 36:28. The disobedience that had been the cause of the exile would haunt them no longer.

25b–28 The final stanza celebrates afresh the restoration of the united monarchy, but now in place of the traditional ûl n “king” the modified term ã ḳ效能 “head of state” appears. Ezekiel revived this archaic title for an elected tribal chieftain or intertribal president and used it often, although not to the exclusion of ûl n, to differentiate minor kings in the ancient Near East from imperial kings (cf. 1 Kgs

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**References:**

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare


cf. confer, compare

**VT** *Vetus Testamentum*

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

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In chaps. 40–48 it is the standard term for the royal leader of the new state. Here it seems to underline the monarch’s subordination to Yahweh, the real king whose vicegerent he was, and to distinguish his rule from an expression of absolute, tyrannical power (B. Lang, *Kein Aufstand* 180). It also emphasizes the king’s links with the people, as an old, democratic term. The old promise of the permanence of the Davidic dynasty (cf. 2 Sam 7:13, 15) is recalled and it provides the key word of the stanza. Like the people, the dynasty is to live on from generation to generation (Caquot, *Sem.* 14 [1964] 20–21). The dynasty’s deuteronomistic role as guarantor of the Mosaic covenant is the implicit link with what follows. In vv 26–27 there are deliberate echoes of Lev 26:4–13 that parallel those in 34:26–29 and 36:9–11. In fact a principle of filling in the gaps seems to underlie the present text: expressions left unused in the earlier pieces are now taken up (cf. Baltzer, *Ezechiel* 156–59). An overlapping framework is provided by the sentiment of making a covenant of peace (34:25aa; cf. Lev 26:6, 9b) and by the self-introduction formula (34:30; cf. Lev 26:13). In between, the motifs of population increase and Yahweh’s making a covenant with Israel (Lev 26:9), his setting his dwelling place in their midst (Lev 26:11) and the double covenant formula (Lev 26:12) are taken up here. In the penultimate case the sentiment is expanded and integrated by the use of Ezekiel’s characteristic term "dqm “sanctuary.” Similarly the self-introduction formula both here and in 34:30 is woven into the typical recognition formula.

A new element, with respect to Lev 26, is υι ϊτ ϊ "an everlasting covenant” (cf. 16:60), which happily marries a Davidic tradition (2 Sam 23:5) with the national tradition of the patriarchal covenant (Gen 17:7; cf. Ps 105:10). In keeping with the context, the conception that dominates this final stanza is the echoing of the historical period of the united monarchy, which under David and Solomon was closely connected with the centralization of worship in Jerusalem and especially with the building of the temple. That period is visualized as creating an ideal for the future. Emphasis is laid on the restored temple towering over the people as the capstone of the new divine-human constitution that time would not decay. It would be a material symbol to the world of the special relationship between God and the people consecrated to him (cf. Lev 20:26).

Explanation

This literary unit, like the previous one, functions as a commentary on 36:27. It wants to carry forward the earlier one in a dynamic development. The pair of units conforms to a pattern in the book: vision followed by symbolic act (cf. 1:1–3:15/3:22–5:17; 8:1–11:25/12:1–20; Barth, *Beiträge* 42–43). The repeated promise to bring the people home to their own country hinges the units, ending the former and introducing the interpretative oracle in the latter (vv 12, 21). In the first case the promise functions as a goal, and in the second as a starting point for a new work of God. The same figurative verb for uniting occurs in both, with reference to the joining of the bones in the vision and the joining of the sticks...
in the symbolic act ( đèn , vv 7, 17). But now the first simile of coherent life has given way to one of greater unity. “All the house of Israel” (v 11), which in its context connotes the Judean exiles, is broadened to signify a larger grouping, together with the terms “Israelites” and “tribes of Israel” (vv 16, 19, 21, cf. v 28). There is a reaching back beyond the claims of a southern kingdom to represent the Yahwistic traditions, beyond the religious and political tensions of a divided nation. The deuteronomistic ideal of a united kingdom, under a monarchy that reflected and upheld Yahweh’s purposes for lifestyle and worship, is held up as a model for the future. The Davidic heritage, represented by such terms as “king” and “my servant David” (cf. 2 Sam 7:5, 8; Ps 89:21[20]) is to be revived, although its future role is to be a constitutional symbol of national unity and a means whereby Yahweh may keep at bay abuses prevalent in Judah’s pre-exilic history. The redactional supplement develops these concepts further, downplaying and limiting the royal function both by use of a lesser term and by highlighting the ends to which it was to be the means. Memories of an autocratic monarchy that served its subjects badly were so bitter, and the constraints of political realism were so compelling, that messianic exuberance was necessarily absent. The focus is on Yahweh and the fulfillment of his purposes in setting aside a people for himself. For all its symbolism, the palace must play second fiddle to the temple as a pointer to a fulfilled and lasting covenant of fellowship between God and the community of faith.

Ezekiel’s prophetic dream of a reunited Israel (cf. 4:4–8; 16:53) had antecedents among the prophets. Jeremiah in his early ministry endorsed Joseph’s aim of political reunion between Judah and the members of the northern kingdom left in the land after the exile of 721 B.C. (Jer 3:12, 14; 31:2–6; cf. Holladay, Jeremiah I 65, 118, 120), and his redactors, if not he himself, extended the hope to the northern upper classes who were exiled to Assyria (3:8; 31:18, 27, 31). The hope cherished by Jeremiah went back to Hosea’s expectation that one day the people of the northern kingdom would return to favor with Yahweh (e.g., Hos 11:11). We know comparatively little about the history of the exiled northerners, but there is no evidence of any return. There was Jewish awareness of northern tribes in Assyria: the apocryphal book of Tobit has such a setting. In Judah’s early post-exilic period it is clear that barriers were erected from the southern side, and time seems to have done nothing to demolish them.

Greenwood called the predictions regarding a restored northern kingdom “perhaps the most conspicuous example in the [Old Testament] of patently false prophecy” (ZAW 88 [1976] 384). Should it not rather be regarded as a truly divine wish that became victim, in part at least, to human willfulness (cf. Luke 13:34)? The prophetic dream refused to bow totally to the insinuence of historical realities: it continued to surface in one form or another. The Chronicler, probably around 400 B.C., took seriously the prophetic ideal and tried to heal the breach among divided Yahwists in the land with a call to Judah to rediscover the principle of “all Israel” and to welcome northerners to worship at the Jerusalem temple. Eventually, however, a final schism took place, so that “the Jews” had “no dealings with Samaritans” (John 4:9). The New Testament proclaimed a new Christ-centered unity between Jew and Samaritan (John 4:7–42; Acts 1:8; 8:5–25) and indeed an overarching unity between Jew and Gentile that created a metaphorical “holy people” (Eph 2:11–22) and posited the ideal of “one flock, one shepherd” (John 10:16). The ideal, like that which Ezekiel set before his Judean audience, presents a challenge to work toward.
The unit in its closing verses clearly paves the way for the vision of chaps. 40–48. In its latter part it also wants to draw together positive strands from chaps. 34 and 36, as well as from chap. 28. The message of new life and of the fulfillment of covenant ideals is both repeated and developed along fresh lines.

Israel’s Security Paradoxically Affirmed (38:1–39:29)

Bibliography


Translation

1I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2“Human one, look in the direction of Gog, 3the chief officer of Meshech and Tubal, and issue a prophecy against him, 4telling him that

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Translation

1I received the following communication from Yahweh: 2“Human one, look in the direction of Gog, 3the chief officer of Meshech and Tubal, and issue a prophecy against him, 4telling him that
the following message comes from the Lord: Yahweh: I am your adversary, Gog, chief officer of Meshech and Tubal. I will summon to battle you and your entire army of horses and riders, all of them fully armed, a huge company, with them Persia, Cush and Put. Gomer and all its hordes.

a 2.a. MT adds gwgmh Åra “in/to (?) the land of Magog,” which intrudes between “Gog” and the appositional phrase (contrast v 3; 39:1) and is to be regarded as an early gloss inspired by 39:6. The ancient versions attest it; the omission in the hexaplaric LXX is probably a case of oversight due to homoeoteleuton. Driver’s interpretation of MT as “Gog of the land of Magog” (JBL 73 [1954] 127) is unlikely: cf. M. Tsevat, HUCA 36 (1965) 54 note 36. The article is awkward: was the earlier form of the gloss gwgm h x r a “Magog is his land”?

b 2.b. So the masoretic accentuation interprets שׁר : contrast the first accent in the listing of v 5a. For the double construct cf. GKC 127a(d). For the phrase cf. שׁר h ḫk “chief priest” at 2 Kgs 25:18, etc (cf. J. R. Bartlett, VT 19 [1969] 5–7). LXX Theod. S transliterated as Rw”, regarding as the name of a country, “Rosh” (= NEB), while DA Syr. Vg Tg. took as “head, chief” (=KJV RSV). “The only known ancient geographical name that would resemble the alleged Roµïsû is Raµðsi (or Araµsi) of neo-Assyrian records, a district on the border of Babylonia and Elam …, which had nothing in common with Meshech and Tubal” (Astour, JBL 95 [1976] 567 note 4). Accordingly one has to accept a difficult, but not impossible, grammatical construction (cf. GKC 130f, note 4, 135n). Price (Grace Theological Journal 6 [1985] 67–89) made the construction unnecessarily difficult by regarding שׁר as an adj rather than a noun.

a 3.a. For the formulaic ynd a “Lord” here and in vv 10, 14, 17, 18, 21; 39:1, 5, 8, 10, 13, 17, 20, 25, 29 see the note on 20:3.

a 4.a. MT prefaces with “And I will repel you and put hooks in your jaws,” most of which is not represented in LXX (see below) and is very probably a gloss (Fohrer 213; Zimmerli 284). It is significant that the first verb recurs in 39:2 in a similar context. Most probably a gloss intended for 39:2 was misplaced here because of the similarity of context. It was seemingly intended as an explanation of the hapax legomenon Ѯ yt w “and I will lead you along.” The first verb functions as a cue word. The interpretation was borrowed from 29:4a; it was encouraged by the presence of Ѯ yt Ѯ “and I will bring you up” in 29:4ab and 39:2ab and of Ѯ wk Ѯ “on the ground you will fall” in 29:5ab and 39:5aa, and also by the similarity of 29:5b and 39:4b. Here in LXX* ka ξ unaxw “and I will gather” stands for Ѯ ik wk wk “and I will repel you … and bring out.” Cornill (422), citing 2 Sam 10:16 LXX, argued that LXX* lacked v 4a (cf. BHS). However, the use of s unaxw for Ѯ b b wk in 39:2 complicates matters (cf. Zimmerli, ibid.). Most probably at some stage in the LXX’s Vorlage a full text like that of MT had been revised against a shorter text but carelessly a wrong run of words was struck out, viz. Ѯ ik wk wk “and I will put … and bring out.”

b 4.b. The verb has a military connotation (Lutz, Yahweh 76; cf. BDB 424b).

c 4.c. MT adds without coordination “body shield and small shield, wielding swords, all of them.” The first term is not suitable for cavalry (Cornill, ibid.; perhaps for this reason Syr. Vg have “spears”) and the change of number and construction in the last phrase is suspicious. The words appear to be an explanatory gloss on Љ wk “panoply” (Herrmann 238; Cooke 415–16 et al.), with Љ all of them functioning as a cue word; Ѯ wk “wielding,” not represented in LXX, may be a separate comparative gloss: cf. Jer 46:9 Љ wk Ѯ “Cush and Put wielding small shield(s).” The last term may have been inspired by v 21. For the first two terms LXX appears to presuppose Љ wk “small shield and helmet,” as in v 5b.

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northernmost Beth Togarmah and all⁵ its hordes—many peoples with you. Ṣ Be ready, steady,⁶ you and all your company that has been mobilized for you, and take good care of them.⁷ ⁸ A long period of time will elapse before you are given your orders. When those years are past,⁸ you will invade a country that has been rehabilitated from the sword’s effects, which has been reconstituted from among many peoples on Israel’s long ruined mountains, whose population⁹ all live securely after being brought out from among other peoples. Ṣ You will advance like a storm, invading like a cloud to cover the country,⁴ you and all your hordes and many peoples with you.⁹

“Here is the Lord Yahweh’s message: That will be the time when you start thinking up a scheme. Devising an evil plan,¹¹ you will decide ‘I mean to attack a defenseless⁴ country. I will invade peaceable folk who all⁵ live securely, who live without walls and have no bars or gates.’¹² Your motive will be to loot and plunder, to raise your hand against ruins that have been repopulated and against a people who have been gathered from among other nations, who have now acquired livestock and other property and live at the center of the earth.¹³ Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all its traders⁴ will ask you: ‘Is looting the reason you are

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⁵.a. MT (cf. versions) adds ungrammatically ℹ b wk w ্gm μl k “all of them shield and helmet,” which appears to be a variant of the weapons in v 4, with μl k “all of them” functioning as an initial cue word (Herrmann 238 et al.). The variant is attested in v 4b by the LXX (see previous note).

⁶.a. cf. the use of ℹ to introduce the second part of a subject in Samaritan Heb. (cf. J. Macdonald, VT 14 [1964] 268–76). The difference from v 6a and the fact that the place name and first accompanying phrase balance v 6a may indicate that the second phrase is a gloss (Zimmerli 285).

⁷.a. Heb. ℹ h w ℹ h “prepare and make preparation” has assonance characteristic of Ezek: cf. the examples in Zimmerli (286).

⁷.b. Heb. ℹ ℹ ℹ ℹ “(and be) on the watch for them.” Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 303–4) took the noun as “something kept under observation” and so “rallying point.” LXX implies יל, with the apparent sense “Be on the watch for me, await my command,” which fits well the command of v 7a (Zimmerli, ibid.) and is often adopted. But perhaps MT is to be preferred as the harder reading, with the sense of taking charge, as an example of readiness.

⁸.a. Heb. μy m h t yr j a b “at the end of the days” is a variant of the more common μy m h t yr j a b “at the end of the years” as it replaces it in v 16. It refers not to an eschatological finale (cf. 39:22) but to a second phase of Israel’s future after the first phase of return from exile and resettlement in the land (Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 440–41; cf. in general H. Kosmala, ASTI 2 [1963] 27–37).

⁸.b. lit. “it,” the country standing for the people. For the omission of the two clauses in Syr. see Zimmerli, ibid..

⁹.a. In MT a wb t “you will come” and h y h t “you will be” appear to be alternatives (Wevers 202): Syr. Vg omit the second, which may be a comparative gloss from v 16, taking h y h t there not as 3rd fem. sg but as 2nd masc., as Vg (and Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 183) did.

⁹.b. Heb. ú t w b is a stylistic variant of ú T a “with you”: cf. BDB 85b.

¹.a. lit. “a country of (unwalled) villages.”

¹.b. The verb a wb in the sense “attack” can take a direct object, elsewhere a suffix (e.g., 32:11). A more natural division would be μ y f q w h a wb á, with a coh form following ℹ “I will invade” and an anarthrous object (Ehrlich, Randglossen 137).

¹.c. Heb. μl k “all of them” is perhaps better taken with v 11a. Then there is a metrical balance in the three clauses; for the order cf. vv 4, 8, 15 (Hossfeld 415).

¹.d. LXX “my hand” continues the quotation.
invading? Is plunder the reason why you have mobilized your company? Is it to get gold and silver, to carry off livestock and other property and so to acquire a lot of loot? ’

14 Prophesy therefore, human one, and tell Gog that here is the Lord Yahweh’s message: At that coming time, when my people Israel are living securely, you will be prompted to make a move, won’t you? 15 You will leave your home in the farthest north, you and many peoples with you, all mounted on horseback, a huge company, an enormous army. You will attack my people Israel, covering the country like a cloud. Yes, when the time comes, I will send you to invade my country, with the intent that the other nations may acknowledge me when they see me using you, Gog, to reveal my transcendent holiness.

17 “The Lord Yahweh’s message is as follows: You are the one of whom I was speaking in past history through my servants, the prophets of Israel who prophesied in those days, promising that I would induce you to invade them.

18 “At that future time, when Gog invades the land of Israel—so runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle—my fury will be aroused, along with my anger and my passion. In my fiery rage I declare that a severe earthquake will befall the land of Israel at that time. My presence will convulse the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky and the beasts of the countryside, all the reptiles that crawl on the ground and all the human beings on the earth. Mountains will be overthrown, steep places will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground. I will summon against him every sword. 

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a 13.a. MT h'yr p k “its lions, rulers” (cf. 32:2) is strange in this context. LXX Theod. Syr. interpreted as h'yr p k “its villages” (= RSV). An emendation h'yr k r “its traders” (Toy 67 et al.) is plausible, assuming an insertion of p for sense after corruption to h'yr k (Al k w), but a simpler suggestion would be h'yr k o its traders”; since the stem is not used elsewhere in Ezek, it would be liable to adaptation.

b 14.a. MT [ dt “you will know, be taught a lesson” is generally emended to r [ ṭē “you will be aroused” with the support of LXX and assumption of a dr error and metathesis. The sequence [ dt j f b l may have been influenced by W d yw j f b l in the next column (39:6); or [ dt may have originated as a comparative gloss relating to the formula in 39:5b, with 5:13; 17:21 (cf. 6:10) in view, which subsequently displaced the similar-looking [ t. cf. usage of the niph verb in a “foe from the north” passage of Jer 6:22; cf. the hiph in Ezek 23:22.

b 16.a. The absence of the vocative from LXX* Syr. and its seeming alternative representation within v 17 in LXX* (see BHS) may indicate that it was originally an explanatory gloss on h[t “you” in v 17. 

b 16.b. For this non-Ezekielian version of an extended recognition formula see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1 39.

a 17.a. MT h't a h “are you?” is generally emended to a statement h[t a “you are,” assuming dittography of he, with the support of LXX Syr. Vg. The change to a question had v 14 in view, but then h l h “are (you) not?” would be necessary (Cornill 425).

b 17.b. MT (cf. versions) adds µ yw “years,” presumably as an alternative to µ ymy “days” (Talmon, Textus 1 [1960] 171). It probably originated as an early gloss on µ ym'h t yr j a b “at the end of the days” (v 16 ), comparing µ ym'h t yr j a b “at the end of the years” in v 8, and was placed beside the wrong µ ymy.

a 19.a. Sentence re-division seems necessary with LXX (cf. BHS); cf. 35:11.

a 20.a. Perhaps terraces constructed on hillsides: see Zimmerli 289.
Lord Yahweh’s oracle: every man’s sword will be directed against his comrade. 22 I will enter into judgment with him, using plague and bloodshed. Drenching rain and hailstones, fire and brimstone will I pour down upon him and his hordes and the many peoples with him. 23 I will reveal myself in my greatness and in my transcendent holiness, and communicate my presence visibly to many nations, and they will learn that I am Yahweh.

39:1 “Now you, human one, are to counter Gog with a prophecy, telling him that the message of the Lord Yahweh is as follows: I am your adversary, Gog, chief officer of Meshech and Tubal. 2 I will repel you, having led you along and brought you up from the farthest north to invade the mountains of Israel, only to strike your bow out of your left hand and dash your arrows out of your right. 3 The mountains of Israel will be the place where you fall, you and all your hordes and the peoples with you. I will give orders for you to be eaten by birds of prey of every kind and by wild beasts. 4 You will fall on the battlefield, I promise (so runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle). 5 I will launch fire against Magog and the secure denizens of the coastlands, and then they will learn that I am Yahweh. 6 My people Israel will be the setting for the revelation of my holy name. I will allow that holy name of mine to be desecrated no longer, and the nations will learn that I am Yahweh, the one who is holy in Israel. 7 It will come to pass and become actual fact (so runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle): that is the day I foretold. 8 The people who live in Israel’s cities will come out and set fire to the weaponry and burn it, bows and arrows, hand javelins and spears. They will take seven years to burn them up. 9 They will have no need to bring wood from the countryside or cut it down from the woods because they will use the weapons as fuel for fires. It will be the plunder they take from their plunderers, their loot from those who looted them. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle. 10 At that time I will provide Gog with a burial place there in Israel, the valley of Abarim, east of the (Dead) Sea.
It will be blocked off and Gog and his entire army will be buried there, and it will be given the name ‘Gog’s Army Valley.’ The community of Israel will take seven months to bury them, as a means of decontaminating the country. Everybody in the land will be responsible for the burying and it will redound to their honor, on the day when I am revealed in my glory. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle. A full-time group of people will be assigned to the respective tasks of touring the country and burying any left lying on the ground, with a view to decontaminating the country. They are to carry on searching until seven months are up. As the search party tours the country, they are to erect a marker beside any human bones they see, for the burial party to bury them in Gog’s Army Valley, leaving the country decontaminated.

“Now you, human one—what follows is a message from the Lord Yahweh—are to proclaim to...
every kind of bird and to every wild beast: Congregate and come, gather from everywhere around to my sacrificial feast that I am holding for you, a huge sacrifice on Israel’s mountains. Eat flesh and drink blood. 18 The flesh of warriors is to be your food, and the blood of national leaders your drink, all of them so many rams, sheep and goats, bulls and Bashan fatlings. 19 You are to eat fat till you are full and drink blood till you are sated, partaking of my sacrificial feast I have held for you. 20 You are to eat to the full at my table—horses and chargers, officers and soldiers: so runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.

21 “I will manifest my glory to the nations: all nations will view my judgment that I will have carried out and the effects of my hand laid on them. 22 From that time onward the community of Israel will know that I am Yahweh their God.

23 “The nations will become aware that iniquity was the reason for the exile of Israel’s community, because they were so faithless to me that I hid my face from them and handed them over to their foes to be victims of the sword. 24 I treated them as their impurity and rebellious ways warranted, and so I hid my face from them.

25 “This then is the message from the Lord Yahweh: Now I will restore Judah’s fortunes and show affection to all the community of Israel out of passionate concern for my holy name. 26 They will take seriously their humiliation and their faithlessness to me, when they live securely on their own soil, free from care, 27 when I have brought them back from among other peoples, gathering them from the countries of their enemies, and have used them to reveal my transcendent holiness to the nations. 28 They will realize that I am Yahweh their God when, after exiling them to other nations, I bring them together on their own soil, not leaving behind any of them there. 29 No longer will I hide my face from them, once I have poured out my spirit on the community of Israel. So

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a 17.a. For the unusual placing of the messenger formula cf. 21:33.
a 18.a. For the accentuation see Zimmerli 294.
a 20.a. Heb. ב כ ת usually means “chariots,” an unlikely part of the menu. It appears to mean here “chariot horses,” as in 2 Sam 8:4.
a 25.a. See the note on 29:14.
a 26.a. MT וּכְנָנָיו implies a short writing of וב כְּנָנָיו “and they will bear,” read by a few MSS and implied by the ancient versions (cf. 28:16; GKC 75qq). Hitzig’s proposal to read וּכְנָנָיו “and they will forget” (301) has been widely adopted (cf. BHS, RSV, NEB, NJB). Zimmerli (295), however, has noted that the verb never occurs in Ezekiel, while חַיָּל ב כו with the sense of “bear shame” is common, and also that the sequence “change fortunes … bear shame” occurs in 16:54, with the latter phrase being evidently used as here.
a 27.a. MT adds many ungrammatically; it is unexpected and unwanted in comparison with the stylistic counterpart in 38:23, and the nonrepresentation in LXX* suggests its secondary nature. The reading of a few MSS, מַכְוֶת מִגְּנוֹת לֹא כִּי מִן מַלְאָכָם “many nations,” is a correction of MT. It appears to be a comparative gloss relating to 38:23.
a 28.a. For the variant vocalization underlying LXX see Zimmerli, ibid..
a 29.a. lit. “(I) who will have … ”; LXX Vg interpreted more specifically as causal, “because.”
b 29.b. LXX τ ὁ πρὸς κυβερνὰς μου “my anger” is most probably an exegetical interpretation (pace Lust, Ezekiel and His Book 52–53; cf. the equivalence in Isa 59:19; Zech 6:8; Prov 18:14; 29:11). It relates v 29b to the past experience of judgment in defeat and exile, in reminiscence of vv 23–24 and also 36:17–19 that in v 18 uses the phrase יָפָה אוֹלָּה וְנִפְרַדָּה וְנִפְרַדָּה וְנִפְרַדָּה “and I poured out my wrath” (cf. the motif of uncleanness in both v 24 and 36:17). However, as Cornill (433) observed, 36:27 and the whole context favor a positive sense.
runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.”

Notes

2.a. MT adds gwgmh År a “in/to (?) the land of Magog,” which intrudes between “Gog” and the appositional phrase (contrast v 3; 39:1) and is to be regarded as an early gloss inspired by 39:6. The ancient versions attest it; the omission in the hexaplaric LXX is probably a case of oversight due to homoeoteleuton. Driver’s interpretation of MT as “Gog of the land of Magog” (JBL 73 [1954] 127) is unlikely: cf. M. Tsevat, HUCA 36 (1965) 54 note 36. The article is awkward: was the earlier form of the gloss gwgm h x ã “Magog is his land”?

2.b. So the masoretic accentuation interprets מְלֹא : contrast the first accent in the listing of v 5a. For the double construct cf. GKC 127a(d). For the phrase cf. מְלֹא h ã “chief priest” at 2 Kgs 25:18, etc (cf. J. R. Bartlett, VT 19 [1969] 5–7). LXX Theod. S transliterated as ṭw”, regarding as the name of a country, “Rosh” (= NEB), while DA Syr. Vg Tg. took as “head, chief” (= KJV RSV). “The only known ancient geographical name that would resemble the alleged רושׂ (or אָרָם) of neo-Assyrian records, a district on the border of Babylonia and Elam …, which had nothing in common with Meshech and Tubal” (Astour, JBL 95 [1976] 567 note 4). Accordingly one has to accept a difficult, but not impossible, grammatical construction (cf. GKC 130f, note 4, 135n). Price (Grace Theological Journal 6 [1985] 67–89) made the construction unnecessarily difficult by regarding מְלֹא as an adj rather than a noun.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
cf. confer, compare
HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
VT Vetus Testamentum
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Theod. Theodotion
NEB The New English Bible
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Tg. Targum
KJV King James Version (1611) = AV
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
cf. confer, compare
3.a. For the formulaic יְהֹון "Lord" here and in vv 10, 14, 17, 18, 21; 39:1, 5, 8, 10, 13, 17, 20, 25, 29 see the note on 20:3.

4.a. MT prefaces with "And I will repel you and put hooks in your jaws," most of which is not represented in LXX (see below) and is very probably a gloss (Fohrer 213; Zimmerli 284). It is significant that the first verb recurs in 39:2 in a similar context. Most probably a gloss intended for 39:2 was misplaced here because of the similarity of context. It was seemingly intended as an explanation of the hapax legomenon עַיְּתָ aws "and I will lead you along." The first verb functions as a cue word. The interpretation was borrowed from 29:4a; it was encouraged by the presence of עַיְּתָ יִל ה怦 "and I will bring you up" in 29:4ba and 39:2ab and of עַיְּתָ עַיְּתָ יִל ה怦 "on the ground you will fall" in 29:5ab and 39:5aa, and also by the similarity of 29:5b and 39:4b. Here in LXX καὶ σύναξὼ "and I will gather" "stands for עַיְּתָ אֵל יִנ ה怦 "and I will repel you ... and bring out." Cornill (422), citing 2 Sam 10:16 LXX, argued that LXX lacked v 4a (cf. BHS). However, the use of σύναξὼ for עַיְּתָ בּ بּ יִנ ה怦 “and I will put ... and bring out.”

4.b. The verb has a military connotation (Lutz, Yahweh 76; cf. BDB 424b).

4.c. MT adds without coordination “body shield and small shield, wielding swords, all of them.” The first term is not suitable for cavalry (Cornill, ibid.; perhaps for this reason Syr. Vg have “spears”) and the change of number and construction in the last phrase is suspicious. The words appear to be an explanatory gloss on פָּנֹפֶל ה怦 "all of them" functioning as a cue word; יְּתָ עַיְּתָ יִנ ה怦 “wielding,” not represented in LXX, may be a separate comparative.
gloss: cf. Jer 46:9 אוגר יושב f wp w 웰ק “Cush and Put wielding small shield(s).” The last term may have been inspired by v 21. For the first two terms LXX appears to presuppose [b wk w אוגר “small shield and helmet,” as in v 5b.

5.a. MT (cf. versions) adds ungrammatically [b wk w אוגר µlk “all of them shield and helmet,” which appears to be a variant of the weapons in v 4, with µlk “all of them” functioning as an initial cue word (Herrmann 238 et al.). The variant is attested in v 4bb by the LXX (see previous note).

6.a. cf. the use of תא to introduce the second part of a subject in Samaritan Heb. (cf. J. Macdonald, VT 14 [1964] 268–76). The difference from v 6a and the fact that the place name and first accompanying phrase balance v 6a may indicate that the second phrase is a gloss (Zimmerli 285).

7.a. Heb. כה ופ “prepare and make preparation” has assonance characteristic of Ezek: cf. the examples in Zimmerli (286).

7.b. Heb. כה ממל µh | “(and be) on the watch for them.” Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 303–4) took the noun as “something kept under observation” and so “rallying point.” LXX implies יל, with the apparent sense “Be on the watch for me, await my command,” which fits well the command of v 7a (Zimmerli, ibid.) and is often adopted. But perhaps MT is to be preferred as the harder reading, with the sense of taking charge, as an example of readiness.

8.a. Heb. µyש תירב a b “at the end of the years” is a variant of the more common µymyת תירב a b “at the end of the days,” which replaces it in v 16. It refers not to an eschatological finale (cf. 39:22) but to a second phase of Israel’s future after the first phase of return from exile and resettlement in the land (Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 440–41; cf. in general H. Kosmala, ASTI 2 [1963] 27–37).

cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
et al. et alii, and others
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
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VT Vetus Testamentum
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Bib Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
8.b. lit. “it,” the country standing for the people. For the omission of the two clauses in Syr. see Zimmerli, ibid..

9.a. In MT awb t “you will come” and hyh t “you will be” appear to be alternatives (Wevers 202): Syr. Vg omit the second, which may be a comparative gloss from v 16, taking hyh t there not as 3rd fem. sg but as 2nd masc., as Vg (and Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 183) did.

9.b. Heb. ût wè is a stylistic variant of ûTa “with you”: cf. BDB 85b.

11.a. lit. “a country of (unwalled) villages.”

11.b. The verb wè in the sense “attack” can take a direct object, elsewhere a suffix (e.g., 32:11). A more natural division would be µyfq w a, with a coh form following hl[ a “I will invade” and an anarthrous object (Ehrlich, Randglossen 137).

11.c. Heb. µlk “all of them” is perhaps better taken with v 11a. Then there is a metrical balance in the three clauses; for the order cf. vv 4, 8, 15 (Hossfeld 415).

12.a. LXX “my hand” continues the quotation.

13.a. MT hrp k “its lions, rulers” (cf. 32:2) is strange in this context. LXX Theod. Syr. interpreted

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lit. literally
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
fem. feminine
sg singular or under
masc. masculine
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Bib Biblica
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
lit. literally
e.g. exempli gratia, for example
coh cohortative
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Theod. Theodotion
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
as “its villages” (= RSV). An emendation “its traders” (Toy 67 et al.) is plausible, assuming an insertion of for sense after corruption to “its traders”: since the stem is not used elsewhere in Ezek, it would be liable to adaptation.

14.a. MT “you will know, be taught a lesson” is generally emended to “you are aroused” with the support of LXX and assumption of a error and metathesis. The sequence may have been influenced by in the next column (39:6); or may have originated as a comparative gloss relating to the formula in 39:5b, with 5:13; 17:21 (cf. 6:10) in view, which subsequently displaced the similar-looking in, cf. usage of the niph verb in a “foe from the north” passage of Jer 6:22; cf. the hiph in Ezek 23:22.

16.a. The absence of the vocative from LXX* Syr. and its seeming alternative representation within v 17 in LXX* (see BHS) may indicate that it was originally an explanatory gloss on “you” in v 17.

16.b. For this non-Ezekielian version of an extended recognition formula see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1 39.

17.a. MT “are you?” is generally emended to a statement “you are,” assuming dittography of and the support of LXX Syr. Vg. The change to a question had v 14 in view, but then “are (you) not?” would be necessary (Cornill 425).

17.b. MT (cf. versions) adds “years,” presumably as an alternative to “days” (Talmon, Textus 1 [1960] 171). It probably originated as an early gloss on “at the end of the days” (v 16), comparing “at the end of the years” in v 8, and was placed beside the wrong.

19.a. Sentence re-division seems necessary with LXX (cf. BHS); cf. 35:11.

RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
et al. et alii, and others
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
niph Niphal
cf. confer, compare
hiph Hiphil
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
20.a. Perhaps terraces constructed on hillsides: see Zimmerli 289.

21.a. MT prefaces with ὑπῆρθεν “my mountains.” LXX* has ὠφελέσαι “fear” for βρέθη ὑπῆρθεν, which could presuppose ὁ βρέθη ὑπῆρθεν read by many but rightly doubted by Ehrlich (Randglossen 139) and Cooke (417). It is more likely that out of the sequence βρέθη ὑπῆρθεν some sense was wrested by understanding as βρέθη ὑπῆρθεν “frighten” (cf. KB 876a). Ehrlich’s suggestion to delete ὑπῆρθεν as a dittograph of ὁ βρέθη may be refined: ὑπῆρθεν appears to be an adapted torso, whereby ὑπῆρθεν was written for βρέθη under the influence of ὑπῆρθεν ὑπῆρθεν ὑπῆρθεν ὑπῆρθεν in v20, then abandoned and adapted to ὑπῆρθεν for a modicum of sense.

39:2.a. The meaning of this polel form is disputed: see the summary of discussion in Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 462. The sense that the ἡπὶθ may bear (BDB 999b) fits well here.

2.b. The verbs after the first one appear to have a parenthetic recapitulating force until v 3 (Hölscher, Dichter 184 note 6). The consecutive perfect need not imply temporal sequence: see Joüon 119e, f (cf. 118h–j). The verb ὁ ὑπῆρθεν is a hapax legomenon, related to Eth. ὑπῆρθεν “walk along” (KB 1013).

4.a. In 38:6, 9 the recurring phrase includes ὑπῆρθεν ὑπῆρθεν “many,” which many MSS and LXX⁹⁶⁷ L Syr. Tg. insert; the shortening appears to be stylistic.

4.b. For the fut reference see GKC 106n.

4.c. For the idiom see GKC 130e.
4.d. The earlier preposition does double duty (cf. \textit{GKC} 119hh; Hossfeld, \textit{Untersuchungen} 421, contra \textit{BHS}).

6.a. \textit{LXX} “Gog” for “Magog,” read by Eichrodt (518), is an inferior reading: see Zimmerli 315. “Magog” occurs in \textit{Gen 10:2} along with Meshech and Tubal.

9.a. \textit{MT} prefaces with \(\text{הִנֵּה} \text{וְמִגְּגָמָּה} “and small shield and big shield.” The lack of preposition suggests that the phrase relating to defensive weapons is a gloss (cf. 38:4; Zimmerli 291; Wevers 204). \textit{LXX} \textit{Syr. Vg} unaccountably render the second noun “spears.”

11.a. \textit{c LXX Vg} attest a variant \(\text{עִים} \text{הָעַיִם} “a famous” or “memorial place”) for \(\text{עִים} \text{הָעַיִם} “there,” but \textit{MT} is usually preferred, as a short relative clause: “a place where there is a grave in Israel” (cf. \textit{GKC} 130c, d).

11.b. \textit{MT \(\text{עִים} \text{רֹבִי} \text{הָעַיִם} “(valley of) the travelers, passers by” has probably suffered assimilation to the term in v 15 and was originally \(\text{עִים} \text{רֹבִי} \text{הָעַיִם} “Abarim,” a mountainous district in Moab, as the Coptic version interpreted and as J. D. Michaelis suggested (cf. \textit{BDB} 717b, 720b). Although Moab was not in Israel, it did belong to the Davidic empire (2 Sam 8:2; cf. Josh 1:4). Ribichini and Xella (\textit{UF} 12 [1980] 434–37) have claimed \textit{Ug.} support for a reference to the dead as having passed away, so that the place fittingly describes a cemetery.

11.c. \textit{MT} has \(\text{עִים} \text{רֹבִי} \text{הָעַיִם} “and it will stop the passers by/ tourers,” but \textit{LXX} \textit{Syr.}
“and they will stop up the valley,” which is preferable (Hitzig 297 et al.). In MT
μυρ β[ h - t ā “the tourers” is to be explained as a gloss on l ā r š y t y b “community of Israel” in v 12
(for l ā introducing a gloss see Driver, L’Ancien Testament et l’Orient 127, with reference to 4:1, unless
it here means “together with”), in an attempt to square the two sets of burial descriptions (cf. v 15). It
was wrongly set next to w r b q w “and they will bury” rather than near μ w r b q w “and they will bury them”
in v 12. The 3rd pl. verb wms h w suits the next two verbs. MT may have been corrupted after the gloss
entered the text.

14.a. For the circumstantial use of the two ptcp forms see Cooke 424. The asyndeton may well refer
to a subdivision into two groups (cf. v 15; Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 475). MT adds μ y r b[ h - t ā “
(with ?) the tourers,” unrepresented in one MS and LXX* Syr.. It is to be explained in the same way as
in v 11. In this case it was meant to qualify Ā r ā h ś μ ī - l k “all the people in the land” in v 13, but was
linked with μ y r b q m “bury” here rather than with w r b q w “and they shall bury” there.

15.a. lit. “the tourers.”

16.a. MT prefaces with h mw mh r y[ - μ w w μ g w “and also the name of a city is Hamonah,” generally
acknowledged as a gloss, even by Barthélemy et al., Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew OT,
vol. 5, 130. Driver, Bib 19 (1938) 184, with typical rearrangement of consonants, suggested ȓ mb60
h x x x x “and the fame of his multitude will come to an end” (cf. NEB), developing earlier
suggestions made by Hitzig and Cornill. But this, like MT, interrupts the context. MT seems to represent
two glosses relating to v 11 and misplaced here due to the presence of gog ðwmh a yg “valley of Gog’s army” in both vv 11b and 15b. The first two words “also name” were a comment on µv ì “there,” indicating the variant (see note). The second pair of words was originally h nœwmh (= µybr µym[ ] r) ì “his army: many nations,” indicating that earlier the phrase had accompanied a reference to Gog (cf. 38:15 and also 38:6, 9, 22; 39:4).

17.a. For the unusual placing of the messenger formula cf. 21:33.

18.a. For the accentuation see Zimmerli 294.

20.a. Heb. bkr usually means “chariots,” an unlikely part of the menu. It appears to mean here “chariot horses,” as in 2 Sam 8:4.

25.a. See the note on 29:14.

26.a. MT wòwnw implies a short writing of vb wòwnw “and they will bear,” read by a few MSS and implied by the ancient versions (cf. 28:16; GKC 75qq). Hitzig’s proposal to read vW nw “and they will forget” (301) has been widely adopted (cf. BHS, RSV, NEB, NJB). Zimmerli (295), however, has noted that the verb never occurs in Ezek, while h ml k a ñh with the sense of “bear shame” is common, and also that the sequence “change fortunes … bear shame” occurs in 16:54, with the latter phrase being evidently used as here.

27.a. MT adds µybr “many” ungrammatically; it is unexpected and unwanted in comparison with the stylistic counterpart in 38:23, and the nonrepresentation in LXX* suggests its secondary nature. The reading of a few MSS, µybr µywg “many nations,” is a correction of MT. It appears to be a comparative gloss relating to 38:23.

28.a. For the variant vocalization underlying LXX see Zimmerli, ibid..

cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MSS manuscript(s)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
NEB The New English Bible
NJB New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MSS manuscript(s)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
29.a. lit. “(I) who will have … ”; LXX Vg interpreted more specifically as causal, “because.”

29.b. LXX τὸν κυνωνίαν μου “my anger” is most probably an exegetical interpretation (pace Lust, *Ezekiel and His Book* 52–53; cf. the equivalence in Isa 59:19; Zech 6:8; Prov 18:14; 29:11). It relates v 29b to the past experience of judgment in defeat and exile, in reminiscence of vv 23–24 and also 36:17–19 that in v 18 uses the phrase ὅτε ἔκρηξα δικαίωμα ἐμαυτοῦ “and I poured out my wrath” (cf. the motif of uncleaness in both v 24 and 36:17). However, as Cornill (433) observed, 36:27 and the whole context favor a positive sense.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

These two chapters form a single complex introduced by the message reception formula, with the single theme of a future invasion of the land of Israel and Yahweh’s resounding victory. The complexity and size of the unit make an initial investigation of its structuring expedient. Taylor (242), followed by Stuart (352), has found in the repetition of the messenger formula a clue that the unit is made up of seven oracles so introduced in 38:3, 10, 14, 17; 39:1, 17, 25. However, 39:23–24 appear to belong with vv 25–29 in view of the recurring motif of Yahweh’s hiding his face (vv 23, 24, 29), and so the messenger formula has an intermediate role within a larger subunit. Moreover, 38:17 hardly introduces a subunit vv 17–23: v 18, with its supplemental reference “on that day,” appears to begin afresh. The repeated messenger formula functions as a stylistic drumbeat of divine control rather than as a strict structural marker.

Parunak (*Structural Studies* 490–91) has seen a fourfold structure, introduced in each case by the vocative ἰδιός “human one,” in 38:2, 14; 39:1, 17. However, Hossfeld (*Untersuchungen* 406) has argued convincingly that the instance in 38:14 belongs to a subunit vv 10–16: he notes especially the initial Πλὴρος “therefore,” which links with the foregoing. One might then envisage a threefold structure, signaled by the initial oracular introductions of 38:2; 39:1, 17. Zimmerli’s position (296–99; so Garscha, *Studien* 237) is similar to this: in redactional terms he finds three original “strophes,” which were subsequently amplified with further material. The basic text, 38:1–9; 39:1–5, 17–20, is characterized by individual repeated phrases relating respectively to Gog’s forces (38:6, 9), Gog’s falling “on Israel’s mountains/on the ground” (39:4, 5) and Yahweh’s “sacrifice” (vv 17, 19). Lutz (*Jahweh, Jerusalem* 65 note 10), however, has noted an inconsistency in Zimmerli’s treatment, in that he also characterizes the second occurrence of the special phrase in the first strophe (38:9b) as a gloss (Zimmerli 287)! Closer examination discloses that the third strophe is of quite a different kind than the two earlier ones, which are marked initially by extensive parallelism (38:2; 39:1). Accordingly one might envisage a twofold scheme, as the chapter division evidently does. But there are two further pointers to a threefold division. The first is the presence of climactic references to the fulfillment of a prophesied event or day in 38:17 and 39:8, which appear to be capped in 39:22. A second is the reference to Yahweh’s vindication in 38:16, 23; 39:7, 13 and 39:21, 27.

*ibid.* *ibidem*, in the same place
*lit.* literally
*LXX* The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*Vg* Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
*LXX* The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
*cf. confer, compare*
*cf. confer, compare*
One cannot analyze structure without consideration of redaction. The overall unit looks like a kaleidoscope of facets of Gog’s invasion and his defeat. Although superficially it moves from invasion to conquest, it lacks logical coherence: most obviously, the command to birds and beasts in 39:17–20 to devour the dead develops the statement in v 4b, but meanwhile they have been buried, in vv 11–16! The repatriated people lack walls in 38:11, but walls figure in the destruction of 38:20. The reference to Yahweh’s destructive judgment in 38:18–23 anticipates Gog’s downfall in 39:3–5. Taylor (247) denied redaction in these chapters (cf. Block, VT 37 [1987] 263), but it is not insignificant that a pattern of redactional growth has been detected in recent chapters, especially chaps. 34, 36 and 37, and this phenomenon suggests that the evidence of tension be so explained here. Indeed, Taylor’s redactional characterization of chap. 34 admirably fits the Gog unit: “If the chapter is taken as a whole, it will appear full of inconsistencies, but if each section is taken separately, it will be obvious that new ideas are being added all along” (222). In this case, as Zimmerli has argued, a basic threefold unit has been successively amplified. There is emphasis throughout on the prophetic/divine authority of the amplifications by means of the messenger formula and the divine saying formula.

As to the hypothetical basic core, Lutz (Jahweh, Jerusalem 65) has whittled down Zimmerli’s three strophes to two, regarding 38:1–9 as a copy of 39:1–5 in form and content (cf. Wevers [201] who regards 39:1–4, 6 as the original core; earlier Herrmann [249] and Hölscher, Hesekiel 178, 186–87, had regarded 39:17–20 as secondary). Hossfeld (Untersuchungen 444, 481, 497, 499–504) considers 38:3b–9 and 39:17–20 as early expansions of an original 38:1–3a and 39:1b–5 respectively. He derives support for his hypothesis from the fact that together these passages exhibit the form of a foreign oracle very like Ezekiel’s other oracles against the nations, especially 25:1–5; 26:1–5a; 28:1–10; 29:1–6, and in fact Hossfeld identifies it as a pre–587 B.C. oracle of his. Hossfeld’s form-critical observation is striking and clearly gives him the edge over Lutz’s assessment of the whole of 38:1–9 as secondary. However, there is danger in confusing form criticism and redaction criticism: development of a basic form does not necessarily imply separate literary accretion. It is safer to envisage a larger core of basic Gog material that is modeled on the form of a standard foreign oracle but manifesting a development of its own. As elsewhere in the prophets (see S. DeVries, Yesterday 297–310, esp. 306–7), a clue to supplementary material is the use of ̆̂̂̂̂̂̂ “on that day” (38:10, 14, 18; 39:11, 21). Hossfeld (Untersuchungen 432, 469, 485, 505–7) shows interesting alignment of supplementary material, viz. 38:10–16; 39:6–7 and 21–22, as a parallel set of revisions that is concerned with Yahweh’s vindication, and also 38:18–23 and 39:11–16, which both begin in the same way, mention Gog in the third person and also refer to the vindication of Yahweh. Hossfeld (Untersuchungen 506) has linked the latter sequence with the relatively late oracle against Sidon in 28:20–23 (compare 38:22 with 28:23; 39:13 with 28:22a [but compare also 38:16bb with 28:22b]). He also parallels the independent 38:17 with 39:8–10 (ibid.), but 38:17 and 39:8 with their emphasis on prophecy fulfilled make a better match. 39:9–10, lacking an introduction, aligns with vv 6–7 and so with related units.

Most would agree with Hossfeld that 39:23–29 functions as a redactional epilogue (Untersuchungen 408, 429). The precise beginning of the final unit has been disputed, but a major break does seem to occur with v 23, while v 22 makes a climactic conclusion. As Block has clearly shown (VT 37 [1987] 266–70), the final unit serves to integrate the Gog unit with the message of chaps. 33–37. In terminology it is especially close to 28:25–26 (see Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 493, 508), which belongs to the final

cf. confer, compare

VT Vetus Testamentum
cf. confer, compare

ibid. ibidem, in the same place

VT Vetus Testamentum
redactional layer of the book; both passages have the character of compendiums. It also uses language new to the book but familiar outside it: Yahweh’s hiding his face (cf. 7:22), ăr.back “their foes” (cf. the uncertain case in 30:16), ẓj “show affection,” ㎡h “go/send into exile” (cf. 3:3, on which see Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 485) and ㎡ ”gather” (cf. the gloss in 22:21). The epilogue presumably serves to express what was already latent in the earlier compilation, the final security of God’s people in the face of the worst of threats, as well as to reaffirm the fundamental promise of return to the land.

As to authorship, scholars tend to attribute the basic core, however they define it, to Ezekiel and the subsequent layers to his school. It is probable that some of the layers are to be assigned to Ezekiel’s hand. It is not possible to find a historical occasion in the early exile that triggered the basic oracle, although clear links with Jeremiah’s “foe from the north” oracles afford a parallel with Ezekiel’s evident dependence on Jeremiah elsewhere.

Comment

38:1–6 Meshech and Tubal were two nations in Cappadocia, in the northeast sector of Asia Minor. They were characterized in 32:26 as a bygone power in the world, along with Assyria and Elam (and in 27:13 as engaged in metal trading). Here they are regarded as resurgent, an old menace come back to haunt their southern neighbors. Until they were destroyed by the Cimmerians, they were a threat to the Assyrians in the reign of Sargon toward the end of the eighth century, and probably this memory, current in Babylonia, had reached the Jewish exiles. Here they are under the authority of “Gog,” who has been given preeminent power over his fellow leaders. The name seems to relate to one known to the Greeks as Gyges and to the Assyrians as Gugu, who was a powerful king of Lydia in west Asia Minor in the first half of the seventh century. As with the national names, so here a great figure of the past is evidently used to define a future threat, as we might speak fearfully of a new Hitler. The complementary influence of a popular Babylonian legend of invasion from Asia Minor has also been suggested (Astour, JBL 95 [1976] 567–79).

Dire though this mysterious threat is intended to be, it is firmly set in the comforting context of a judgment oracle against foreign nations. Although the enemy is a figure of the future, rather than a present entity as elsewhere, Ezekiel is to formally look in his geographical direction (cf. 21:2 Comment) and indicate Yahweh’s hostility in a formula of encounter. The oracle does not continue in a standard message of destruction until the form is resumed and developed in 39:1–5 (cf. Zimmerli 307–8). Instead, the enveloping of threat with assurance is continued with a positive message that the hostile movements of Gog’s enormous army are masterminded by Yahweh. Its great numbers are further augmented by mercenary troops from the east and far south (cf. 27:10; 30:5 Comment) and by local allies, the Cimmerians (“Gomer”) who had been in earlier history a threat to Assyria, and the people of Armenia (“Beth Togarmah”).

7–9 The theme of Yahweh’s control stated in v 4, is here stylistically developed in a summons to
make preparations for Yahweh’s signal to mount a future campaign. With rhetorical generalization reference is made to God’s people duly returned from exile and resettled in a land that had been ravaged by destruction. The area is identified by the phrase “mountains of Israel,” which is Ezekiel’s standard way of referring to the Judeans’ homeland. The rather labored conglomeration of phrases and clauses in v 8 serves to lay emphasis on a new era of security and the welcome putting down of new roots after a period of homelessness. Living in security becomes a key phrase in the overall unit (cf. vv 11, 14; 39:6, 26). Here it is threatened by the prospect of post-exilic invasion, but the context both before and after makes it clear that Yahweh would prove an adequate protection. The figurative references to storm and advancing rainclouds deliberately echo older prophetic threats, Isa 10:3 and Jer 4:13, which function as prototypes for this final onslaught against the land of God’s people. The latter reference is significant, for it indicates Ezekiel’s dependence on Jeremiah’s early oracles concerning a foe from the north (Jer 4–6; compare the cavalry of v 4 with Jer 4:26; 6:23 as well as Isa 5:28). The piece ends with a refrain (cf. v 4b) harking back to the gigantic forces at Gog’s disposal. But the ironic truth is that Gog is carrying out Yahweh’s orders and operates within limits that Yahweh has set.

10–16 A fresh, supplementary oracle reiterates and develops the themes of Gog’s invasion and Yahweh’s overwhelming control. The verbs of invasion in vv 8 and 9 (א وت “you will invade,” ו ת “and you will advance”) are repeated in vv 11, 13, 15 and 16a, and in v 16b are capped by the causative verb with Yahweh as subject, ו י י “and I will cause you to invade” (cf. v 4). The oracle is a triad of verbal statements, using מנה “say” four times with relation to the speaking of Gog (v 11), of foreign traders (v 13) and of Yahweh through his prophet (v 14, twice); מ י א “human one” is used here to identify the third significant party after Gog and the Sheba group.

This oracle, with its repetition of earlier vocabulary, clearly functions as a commentary on the earlier one, but its series of short speeches give it dramatic liveliness. The first of the three sections, in vv 10–12, builds on the use of Isa 10:3 in v 9 by echoing Isa 10:7 (“mind,” “devise,” “loot,” “plunder”). Here is a counterpart of Sennacherib, who set his self-centered ambition to work—yet, as Isaiah declared, he was Yahweh’s unwitting tool and doomed to destruction (Isa 10:5, 12, 15, 16; Jer 49:30–33 seems also to have colored the passage). Gog is given enough rope to be eventually hung by. With unprovoked, brutal aggression he intends to take advantage of a defenseless people who have been given a new lease on life (v 8; cf. 36:10) and are enjoying a new freedom and prosperity. The exceptional nature of this people is indicated by their habitat at “the center (lit. “navel”) of the earth,” which appears to indicate their role as God’s elect (cf. 5:5 with reference to Jerusalem; contra D. Sperling, IDBSup 622–23, and Talmon, TDOT 3, 437–38, who both overreact against an older mythological emphasis). The reference to lack of fortifications conflicts with 36:35. If harmonization is necessary, this passage may envisage a period before fortifications were built (Fohrer 216; Wevers 203).

In the short middle section the world’s traders by land and sea (cf. 27:12, 20, 22) lend their voices, as

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

IDBSup Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume, ed. K. Crim (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976)

would-be customers hoping to buy up the expected booty. Their question serves to reinforce Gog’s military aims. These aims function as a ground of accusation, which triggers the prophet’s judgment oracle of vv 14–16 (“therefore”). It repeats the message of the basic oracle, that Gog’s momentous invasion after Israel’s return from exile would be at Yahweh’s behest. A fresh “foe from the north” allusion is added in the emphatic verb of v 14, “you will be stirred up”: in Jer 6:22 it occurs in parallelism with “come” (cf. v 15) and together with “the land of the north” and “the farthest places of the earth.” The reference to election in v 12 is now given further and clearer expression in “my people” and “my land” (for the latter cf. Isa 14:25). The genre of vv 14–16 as a judgment oracle indicates their sinister nature, which is also reflected implicitly by the accusing notes of Yahweh’s personal grievance and by Gog’s role as Yahweh’s dupe, and explicitly by the final statement of Yahweh’s aim to use Gog to win further world recognition of his own divine status (cf. 28:22, 25; 36:23).

17 The use of older prophecies prompts an explanatory oracle that makes explicit the reasoning that underlies the literary echoes (cf. Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 477, 514; Grech, Augustinianum 9 [1969] 248; Erling, Ex Orbe Religionum, vol. 1, 111–13). There is a distance between the writer and the past prophets that suggests a period later than Ezekiel himself. Moreover, the phrase “my servants the prophets” has a deuteronomistic ring. There is a canonical assumption that, although the prophets spoke for their own times, their words were not exhausted in earlier fulfillments: there was an overplus of meaning, a typological pattern to be realized at a still later time. One may compare Joel’s insistence that Obadiah’s “day of Yahweh” was not consummated in the tragedy of 587 B.C. but found a comparable encore in a locust plague that threatened to wipe out the community. In such Old Testament antecedents lie the seeds of the New Testament’s treatment of earlier scriptures.

18–23 A further supplementary oracle follows, which wants to build on vv 10–16. It subdivides into a divinely oriented framework consisting of vv 18–19a and 23, and a double center, vv 19b–20 and 21–22, in which Yahweh’s instruments of judgment have as their targets “the land of Israel” and “Gog” respectively (cf. Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 418, 451–59). Gog’s brazen proposal (“words,” v 10) finds a response in Yahweh’s own proposal (“I promise,” v 19), while its “coming” to mind (“will come,” v 10) corresponds to the surge of Yahweh’s anger (“will be aroused,” v 18). So the oracle presents Yahweh’s vehement counter declaration. Gog’s military destination, “the land of Israel” (vv 18, 19), would be the scene of a theophany of judgment that caused cataclysmic devastation (cf. esp. Jer 4:23–26, which appears to be in mind). In the context the sole victims of the theophany are Gog and his forces (vv 21, 22). Earthquake, self-destruction, plague and a gamut of celestial devices would be the versatile means of Gog’s downfall and so of Yahweh’s vindication. “Great” forces (v 15) would be met by a “great” earthquake (v 19) and by proof of Yahweh’s greatness (v 23). The series of supplements to the basic oracle is drawn to a stylistic close by echoes of the refrain of vv 6 and 9 in v 22, and of the world recognition of v 16 in v 23.

39:1–5 The form of a foreign oracle is now resumed from 38:2–3 and brought to completion. In fact

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

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the content of vv 1–2 is a recapitulation of 38:2–4, while the reference to Gog’s forces in v 4 picks up the refrain of 38:6 and 9. Now, however, the earlier material is associated explicitly with judgment. The divine encounter with Gog (v 1) would result in his weapons being dashed from his hands and in his military destination (38:8) becoming the scene of defeat and of dishonor for his corpse, like a second Pharaoh (29:5).

6–7 The previous oracle is supplemented with material that recalls 38:10–16 and may be from the same hand. The war is to be carried into the enemy country. The phrase “send fire” is an old expression for divine judgment (Amos 1:12; Hos 8:14; cf. Ezek 21:3). “Magog” is the people or country of Gog. The tables are to be turned: invasion of a people living in security is to be met with destruction of Gog’s secure neighbors in the western coastlands of Asia Minor, as proof of the universal power of Yahweh (cf. 38:16). And Yahweh’s coming to the aid of the nation allied to him in covenant (cf. 38:14) would bring about the vindication of his transcendent holiness anticipated in 38:16. The motif of clearing Yahweh’s holy name from profanation is borrowed from the theological justification of the termination of exile (cf. 36:20–23). It serves to provide a cast-iron warranty of Israel’s deliverance.

8 This appears to be a separate amplification akin to that in 38:17; it uses the terms of 21:12(7)bb. Whereas 38:17 focused on Gog’s invasion, now his defeat is celebrated as the long-range fulfillment of Yahweh’s prophetic word. Like the motif used in v 7, the claim brings assurance that Israel had nothing to fear from the worst of foreign foes.

9–10 This self-contained unit, concluded by a divine saying formula, is appended without introduction, like vv 6–7; it may have been an addition from the same hand. But now Israel’s work, rather than Yahweh’s, is in view. The “fire” of v 6 becomes a catchword, used here twice, and the theme of turning the tables continues. Gog’s intent to plunder (38:12, 13) would be reversed, as his troops’ wooden weapons are seized and burned. Israel, hitherto safe in its cities, engages in mopping up operations. The motif of burning weapons, which represents the sealing of Gog’s fate, was doubtless taken over from the Songs of Zion (Pss 46:10 [9]; 76:4 [3]; cf. B. C. Ollenburger, Zion the City of the Great King, JSOT SS 41 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987] 141–44; cf. the transference of the “navel” motif from Jerusalem [5:5] to the land in 38:12). The seven years’ period of burning the firewood refers obliquely back to the overwhelming size of Gog’s forces, now ironically with reference to the aftermath of their destruction.

11–16 This supplementary unit is parallel to 38:18–23, although its interests are priestly rather than prophetic. It falls into two halves, vv 11–13 and 14–16, with v 13b providing an interim climax. It flows from the foregoing material in that Yahweh’s provision for disposal of the human remains (v 4) is continued: the eating of flesh is followed by the burial of bones (v 4 = w[úŷ]yt ‘I will give you’; v 11 = ã gwgl “I will give for Gog”). Moreover, the numeral “seven” becomes a catchword, seven months of burial linking with seven years of burning, in both cases with threat-free reference to Gog’s immense army. The dominant concerns of the unit are not only the burial of remains — the stem vbb “bury” occurs seven times — but also the ritual cleanness of the land, which is mentioned three times, in vv 12, 14 and climactically in v 16. The motif may have been triggered by mention of Yahweh’s “holy name”
and of Yahweh as “holy in Israel.” The motifs of purity of the land and divine holiness are associated in 36:17–21. As in 36:18, contamination, here by human remains (cf. Num 19:11–22; Deut 21:1–9), is associated with the land. The decontamination would be a fitting and necessary corollary to God’s triumph and so bring credit to its executors (v 13). It underscores from a cultic perspective the vindication of Yahweh. The seven-month task by the general population is followed scrupulously by the commissioning of a work party divided into two groups, one to flag extant remains and another to collect and bury them in the designated cemetery.

17–20 This prophetic unit, closed by the divine saying formula in v 20, appears to be the original development of v 4b and so the continuation of 39:1–5. It has been separated by redactional layers that parallel those in 38:10–23. Despite a lack of chronological sequencing, the unit provides a dramatic climax as the penultimate piece, before the epilogue was eventually appended. The symbolism of Yahweh’s sacrifice, which provides a double refrain, is probably derived from Jer 46:10 (cf. Zeph 1:7; cf. Grill’s study of the motif in BZ N.F. 2 [1958] 278–83), where it is significantly linked with “the north country.” Now, however, the devouring and blood-sated sword is replaced by birds and beasts of prey, in line with v 4 (cf. Hossfeld, Untersuchungen 479). The gruesome metaphor signifies the satisfying coup de grace for the army that had earlier posed such a threat to “the mountains of Israel” (38:8; cf. 39:3, 4).

21–22 Such a finale effectively discouraged a trail of expansions such as the earlier basic units attracted. However, it was deemed appropriate to append a short, final and emphatic drawing of the moral of Yahweh’s vindication. He would be vindicated in the eyes of the pagan world by means of his act of judgment (cf. 38:22) and retaliatory blow (cf. 38:12) against Gog and his international forces. And a direct lesson is drawn for Israel, the real audience of these oracles, that by the events of “that day” (cf. 39:8 and also the repeated supplemental “on that day”) the covenant relationship between them and Yahweh would be fully and finally endorsed. The threat would serve to tighten rather than cut the bond of fellowship, to enhance rather than disrupt the covenant union. The affirmation coincides happily with an assurance linked with resettlement in the land in 34:30, 31; 36:28; 37:23.

23–29 In the final stage of the book the Gog prophecy in its expanded form has been integrated with its preceding context, so that the overall positive message of return to the land in chaps. 33–37 may not be obscured. An inclusion for this epilogue is provided by the striking description of Judah’s defeat and exile in terms of Yahweh’s hiding his face (vv 23–24, 29). In the final case it is denied in assuring tones of pastoral psychology, with the same \( \text{d|\|} \ldots \text{a\l} \) (“no longer”) construction that marked earlier chapters (34:10, 22, 29; 36:12, 14, 15, 30; 37:22; cf. 39:7). The divine face-hiding, which occurs only here in the book, implies a break in communication that in this context is the opposite of covenant intimacy (vv 22, 28). In prophetic literature, which took over the expression from the cultic lament, it relates to God’s punishment of sin and especially to his judgment meted out in 587 B.C. (Isa 54:7–8; 64:6 ; Jer 33:5; cf. Mic 3:4); yet mostly it has a temporary duration that promises future restoration (Isa 8:17;

cf. confer, compare

BZ Biblische Zeitschrift

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

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54:8; Jer 33:6–9; cf. Balentine, *The Hidden God* 65–76). It is used fittingly here as the prelude to a permanent new covenant relationship such as Isa 54:7–8 (cf. 9–10) predicates in more polarized terms.

The epilogue falls into two sections, vv 23–24, with negative emphasis on Israel’s sin and its divine consequences, and vv 25–29, which positively stress Israel’s restoration in both human and divine terms. A relation between the two phases of Yahweh’s deliverance of his people, from exile and from subsequent invasion, is drawn first in v 23: the final proof of Yahweh’s power evinced in the latter would shed light back on the destructive episode of the exile and make clear that even then he was in control. The parallelism between the two phases becomes explicit in the “now” of v 25, which serves as a counterpoint to the later phase of the Gog affair (cf. 38:8, 16; Block, *VT* 37 [1987] 265). Ezekiel’s constant message is repeated, that destruction and deportation were nothing less than divine punishment of a guilty people: terms for the people’s sin that are characteristic of Ezekiel abound in vv 23–24. But it was to be the prelude to a divinely occasioned turn of events — return from exile — that would find motivation both in his affectionate love and in his zealous desire to clear his profaned name (cf. v 7; 36:20–23). There is a rhetorical exuberance about the use of “all” in vv 23 and 25 (echoed in different terms in v 28b) that is matched in spirit by Paul’s “As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor 15:22).

In v 26 a phrase of Ezekiel’s, “bear humiliation,” is adapted, as in 16:54 (cf. esp. 34:29; 36:6–7), to a new meaning of remorse for former sins, which Yahweh’s gift of secure resettlement in the land would provoke. The lengthened emphasis on security repeats 34:28, with the hint that even the invasion of Gog would constitute no real threat to its continuance. The language of 38:8 is resumed in a reminder that before the Gog crisis and its resolution there was to take place a more fundamental act of deliverance, which like the later event (38:16) would reveal Yahweh’s transcendent power to the world. Like that later event too (39:22), restoration from exile would prove to Israel his covenant relationship with them. It would be the beginning of a new era of favor, with the door firmly shut on Yahweh’s former break in communication. The new age would be characterized by the gift of Yahweh’s enabling spirit, as 36:26 and 37:14 had proclaimed. The verb “pour out” seems to be used to point an implicit contrast. The old era of destruction and exile is characteristically in Ezekiel and especially in 36:18 described as the outpouring of his wrath. The new era would be marked by equally lavish dealings of a positive nature. Thus the phrase has a different nuance from the cases in Isa 44:3; Joel 3:1 (2:28); Zech 12:10.

In the renewal of covenant blessing for “the community of Israel” (vv 28–29), the epilogue has reverted to the older ending of the Gog unit in v 22. However, the readers’ attention has been diverted to the more basic work of salvation Yahweh was to perform. The implication is that it would be a work that the worst onslaught of alien forces was powerless to undo. As 28:25–26 had affirmed the security of the resettled people of God in relation to neighboring nations, so the epilogue promises it in the face of a terrible onslaught from afar.

**Explanation**

The Gog unit is proto-apocalyptic in its forward look into a distant future. It is “an example of

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*cf. confer, compare*
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apocalyptic taking off but still touching the runway” (Grech, *BZ* N.F. 2 [1958] 249). A new period within human history is under consideration, rather than a transcendental age inaugurated by a decisive break with that history. Two phases of the new period are envisaged. The first is marked by the repatriation of the exiled people, to enjoy secure lives in their own land. The second, after a considerable interval of time, is characterized by the combating of a foreign invasion that seemed to threaten Israel’s security, but provided an opportunity for a miraculous intervention that both glorified Yahweh and successfully put Israel’s safety to the test. The invasion thus has the function of a fire drill to test the system and hopefully confirm its efficiency.

The re-use of motifs associated with Jerusalem (38:12; 39:9–10) suggests that behind this unit as a whole and in its basic form there stands the tradition of the Songs of Zion. Those poems celebrated the divine averting of a military threat to Jerusalem and drew from that victory the assurances of Yahweh’s absolute power and Israel’s permanent security (see Pss 46; 48; 76; esp. 46:2–4, 6 [1–3, 5] and 48:15 [14]; cf. Ollenburger, *Zion* 66–100; Levenson, *Theology* 15). These motifs coincided well with the theological emphases of Ezekiel and his school. Here such a foreign threat has been projected into the eschatological future and the “mountains of Israel” have been substituted for Zion as the target of invasion (cf. Ps 125). Seemingly in 39:9 “the cities of Israel” have replaced Jerusalem as a place of refuge. This re-use of Songs of Zion motifs has presumably been channeled through their prophetic echoes in Isa 17:12–14 (cf. מִיַבָּר מִיַמִּים “many peoples,” Isa 17:12; cf. Isa 8:9–10; cf. in general Müller, *Ursprünge* 86–101). The door was thereby opened for material from Isa 10 (cf. “my mountains,” Isa 14:25) and for Jeremiah’s “foe from the north” oracles to be integrated into the Gog prophecy. Whereas this latter prophetic material was dominated by Yahweh’s use of foreign nations to punish Israel, the underlying positive influence of the Songs of Zion and also of Isa 8:9–10; 17:12–14 has transformed the theological purpose. The emphasis in Isa 10 on Assyria’s culpability, which manifestly underlies 38:10–16, undoubtedly aided this transformation. The resultant eschatological hope is presented as a warranty of faith in Yahweh’s supremacy and Israel’s permanent security. It is offered as an assurance to counteract the trauma of exile, with the pastoral message that “if God is for us, who is against us?” and “in all these (sufferings) we are more than conquerors” (Rom 8:31, 37).

The Gog revelation colored the prediction of the end of Antiochus Epiphanes in Dan 11:40–45. Thereafter it became a firm part of Jewish eschatology in rabbinic tradition. It is correspondingly reflected in Rev 20:7–10 as an event after the millennium and before the Last Judgment. In that event “Gog and Magog,” the labels of “the nations at the four quarters of the earth,” feature as dupes of Satan. The linking with Satan, who “must be loosed for a little while” but then is overthrown and suffers “for ever and ever” (Rev 20:3, 10), is significant: it reveals a comparable Christian pastoral emphasis that evil is destined to fail and so God’s people are on the winning side.

There has been a Christian tendency to actualize biblical eschatology exclusively in terms of one’s own generation and political circumstances. Thus Luther, true to the original geography, interpreted Gog’s forces as the Turks. With the principle of wordplay replacing that of geography, modern dispensationalism, taking מַר “head” as a noun “Rosh,” has seen communist Russia as the great threat to the faithful, further equating Meshech with Moscow and Tubal with Tobolsk (and earlier in this
century Gomer with Germany [see Gaebelien 259]). Inconsistently, however, it has tended to locate the fulfillment primarily before the second advent as well as in a postmillennial period (Ellison, 133–34, who characterized a reference to Russia as “an excellent example of the wish being father to the thought”; cf. Alexander, *JETS* 17 [1974] 162–69).

**The Sanctuary as Focus of the New Age (40:1–48:35)**

**Bibliography**


*cf. confer, compare*

*JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*

*ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

*BHTH Beiträge zur historischen Theologie*

*Int Interpretation*

ed. edited, edition(s), editor

*HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual*

*HSMS Harvard Semitic Monograph Series*

*MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)*

*EvQ The Evangelical Quarterly*

*CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

*ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

*WMANT Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament (Neukirchen: Neukirchener)*

*Int Interpretation*

*BSac Bibliotheca Sacra*

*AnBib Analecta biblica (Rome: PBI)*

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This final section of the book is organized around a series of visionary narratives. In chaps. 40–42 the prophet is transported to the area of Jerusalem and taken by a supernatural guide on a tour of a restored, holy temple. The temple area stands empty and unused until in 43:1–5 it is energized by Yahweh’s glory, returning to take up permanent royal residence. The divine coming enables the temple to come to life, so that the text can move from an anatomical description to a physiological one. The altar is dedicated as the hub of atonement and worship (43:13–27). Now the clock of temple ritual can start ticking again so as to reflect and to maintain the holiness of Israel’s God. The flow of the visionary narrative is then diverted to a series of divine revelations as to the running of the temple (44:5–46:18). First, temple personnel are described, in a two-tier system of priests and Levites (44:6–16). The text concentrates upon the priests as prime representatives of the divine holiness, and outlines their holy lifestyle (44:17–31).

The practical matters of the support of the priests and of the regular provision of sacrifices for the temple are dealt with (45:1–17). Finally within chaps 43–46, rulings are laid down for temple procedure, in terms of annual, monthly, weekly and daily rites and of the participation of people and head of state (45:18–46:15).

In the last part of the overall vision, chaps. 47–48, the temple is set within a larger perspective. The vision of 47:1–12 draws upon older Zion symbolism to describe in apocalyptic-like vein the blessing that flows from the temple graced by God’s presence. Life and healing are brought by a powerful river of blessing. Then in 47:13–48:29 the relation of temple and land is revealed in a new geographical configuration of tribal territories. Concentric bands are arranged around a reservation that itself has at its heart the temple. Within this buffer zone there are also areas for the temple staff, the new Jerusalem and crown property. The city receives added recognition in 48:30–35.

The whole section is oriented toward the theme of the temple. It thus reflects priestly concerns already evident earlier in the book. The prophetic thinking of Ezekiel and of his immediate literary successors moved within a strongly religious orbit, and the trait reappears in this literary complex. This common concern enables the section to function as a reversal of earlier temple-oriented material. The vision of chaps. 8–11 in which temple and city are destroyed in reprisal for cultic aberrations finds here a positive counterpart. Moreover, the motif of the departing glory of God that not only pervades chaps. 8–11 but spills into chap. 1 is brought to a happy conclusion in the return of the divine presence. Thereby a frame is provided for the book. This literary polarization also serves as a reflection of the pattern of judgment and salvation in the book as a whole, and enables the section to function as a satisfying finale.

A similar note of contrast is struck by the deliberate mention of changes in temple layout and organization. There is a new emphasis on divine transcendence that results in a conscious endeavor to reflect it in the areas of topography and personnel. What was good enough for the old temple would no longer do (cf. 43:10, 11). Its role as a royal chapel, overshadowed by a complex of palace buildings, must end (43:7–8). The policing of the temple area by the “Swiss guards” who patrolled the palace grounds was no longer permissible (44:7, 9). Instead, a double system of temple staff, priests and Levites, must be inaugurated on lines already laid down in priestly literature (Num 18). The holiness of God was to be a paramount principle, and its outworking was to permeate both the structure and the procedure of the temple.

Functioning as an extended oracle of salvation, the section continues the message of chaps. 34–39.
and belongs with them as the conclusion of an overall complex. Perhaps in this connection its most important role is to serve as a direct outworking of 37:24–28, which at an earlier stage probably immediately preceded chaps. 40–48, before the redactional insertion of chaps. 38–39. The four motifs of new temple, covenant, king and land find here a practical grounding and a detailed development. Although this role for the section does seem to be the redactional intent, there is a little tension between the two sets of material. Chaps. 40–48 have their own temple-oriented agenda, and although they embrace the other motifs to a greater or lesser extent, its prime motif tends to obscure the rest. Notably the motif of the future king could not be developed as fully as 34:23–24 and 37:24–25 (cf. 17:22–24) might lead one to expect. However, the hints within this section are consonant with the earlier representations. Especially the contrast in 34:1–16, 23–34 between the pre-exilic monarchy and its future counterpart corresponds well with 45:8–9; 46:16–18, although the first of these latter passages has its own part to play in a context of economic support for the temple. It is possible that their presence reflects a redactional concern to link with the material earlier in the book. There seems to be a conscious desire to ensure that pre-exilic royal abuses would never be repeated, just as tribal inequities (47:14) and the plight of the landless resident alien (47:21–23) are addressed. This concern for human rights obviously reflects fears among the exiles that return to the land would mean the resumption of the bad old status quo. So a pastoral concern, already seen in earlier chapters, is here shining out afresh. Especially in the issue of monarchy there is a pastoral sensitivity both to earlier prophetic ideals (cf. e.g., Isa 9:1–6[2–7]) that must still have had their advocates (cf. 2 Kgs 25:27–30) and to a popular disenchantment with the monarchy as totalitarian and not reflecting the people’s best interests, let alone the will of the divine King. The result of this sensitivity is a remarkably realistic presentation that limits royal power, even as it invests the head of state with privilege. Was this pastoral sensitivity responsible for the restricted perspective of the monarchy in this section, which majors in its religious role and leaves much else unsaid? If in 34:24 the future Davidic king was to function as upholder of the laws of the Sinai covenant, here his ability to interfere with Yahweh’s will for his covenant people is expressly checked (cf. “my people,” 45:8, 9; 46:18).

There is also ample room for the motif of the covenant people to surface in 47:13–48:35. The blessing of the people with fertility promised in 34:26–27; 36:8, 11, 30, 34–35 is crowned by the vision of blessing in 47:1–12. Insistence on their traditional completeness as twelve tribes, found in 37:16–22, recurs in the twelfold tribal division of the land and in the twelve gates of the city. It expresses the same sense of tragic loss that the united kingdom had ever been divided and reduced to a shadow in the kingdom of Judah. Such a truncated torso was not worthy of the kingdom of God. The contours of the restored land and its distribution in 47:13–48:29 dramatically develops the promise of return to the land that punctuates the book, at 20:42; 28:25–26; 34:27; 36:24, 28; 37:12, 14, 25; 39:28 (cf. 38:8, 12). The old theological triangle of Yahweh, people and land which summed up the covenant would be reestablished.

Supremely the divine promise of renewal of worship in the climactic 20:40–41 and in the equally climactic 37:26b–27 is developed in this final part of the book. The new sanctuary would again be Yahweh’s dwelling place, the sign that he dwelt or presenced himself among his people (43:7). The divine initiative with respect to the temple in 37:26b (“I will put my sanctuary among them”) seems
also to underlie the present section. Significantly there is no call to rebuild the temple, only to observe the regulations for rites and offerings (43:11; cf. 44:5). The new temple was to be Yahweh’s creation built for rather than by his people (cf. Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh* 115–16), as a model of his own being and of his relationship with them. “The temple that Ezekiel saw is a house not made with hands” (Skinner 392).

Readers will find themselves embarrassed by these chapters (cf. Roberts’ helpful facing up to this problem in *Int* 33 [1979] 245–53). To some extent at least they were presumably presented as normative for the future. Yet the post-exilic community, even when adoption of their rulings was within its power, found other models for its worship, while the different orientation of the Christian faith has left these chapters outdated. Must one relegate them to a drawer of lost hopes and disappointed dreams, like faded photographs? To resort to dispensationalism and postpone them to a literal fulfillment in a yet future time strikes the author as a desperate expedient that sincerely attempts to preserve belief in an inerrant prophecy. The canon of scriptures, Jewish and Christian, took unfulfillment in its stride, ever commending the reading of them as the very word of God to each believing generation. Essentially they spoke first to their own generation, and one must overhear them before hearing them for oneself. It may be that, just as the book of Revelation gives up its treasures to a persecuted church, these chapters along with the other oracles of salvation speak loudest to those in a state of disorientation, who can catch their note of pastoral concern and reassurance. Land and temple become symbols of solid hope for the renewal of social identity, for full fellowship with God and for “a kingdom that cannot be shaken” (Heb 12:22–24). The concern with correction of pre-exilic abuses becomes God’s call for the translation of theology into the stuff of worship and of daily life, so that, “as he who calls you is holy,” you may “yourselves be holy in all your conduct” (1 Pet 1:15; cf. Ezek 43:10–11).


**Bibliography**


Translation

1 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, thirteen years after the capture of the city, at the new year, on the tenth of the month — that was the very day I felt Yahweh’s hand on me, and that was where he brought me. 2 In a divine vision he brought me to the land of Israel and set me down on a very high mountain, on which there was a group of buildings that looked like a city, to the south. 3 When he brought me there, I found standing by a gatehouse a man who glistened like copper. He had in his hand a linen tape and a measuring rod. 4 The man told me, “Human one, use your eyes to look and your eyes to listen, and pay attention to everything I show you, because the purpose of your having been brought here is that I should show it to you. Tell the community of Israel everything you see.” 5 I found a wall marking the outer perimeter of the temple area, and the man measured the thickness of the structure, using the measuring rod in his hand, which was 6 cubits long — 1
cubit being reckoned as 1 cubit plus 1 handbreadth. It was 1 rod thick and 1 rod high. Then he approached the gatehouse, which faced east, and, going up its steps, measured the threshold of the gatehouse: it was 1 rod deep. The alcoves were set 5 cubits apart, while next to the porch of the gatehouse was its inner threshold, which was 1 rod deep. He measured the porch of the gatehouse on the inner side of the gate structure, and it was 8 cubits (deep), while its jambs were 2 cubits (thick). There were three alcoves on either side of the east-facing gatehouse. The alcoves were all the same size, and so were the jambs that stood on either side of the passage. Then he measured the width of the gatehouse entrance, and it was 10 cubits, while the width of the gate was 13 cubits. There were barriers across the front of the alcoves, 1 cubit deep on either side of the passage. The alcoves on either side measured 6 cubits. He measured the gate structure at roof height to find the distance between the far walls of the alcoves through their parallel openings, and it was 25 cubits.

5.d. The Heb. adds "by the cubit": see GKC 134n; S. J. DeVries, 1 Kings (WBC. Waco, TX: Word, 1985) 90–93.
6.a. For MT "a gate" the gate is expected after the reference in v 3. But the anarthrous form (cf. 43:1) seems to be idiomatic, representing the constr before a relative clause (GKC 130c).
6.b. The defectively written form in K, whereby is written for , is legion in chaps. 40–48. It represents an orthographical style that is not to be "corrected" (see Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 133; Zimmerli 333). It represents an older convention of writing: see Andersen and Forbes, Spelling in the Hebrew Bible 323–28.
6.c. Heb. "breadth," can also indicate a horizontal distance away from an observer or starting point. MT adds "the threshold one, one rod in depth," of which the foregoing is a correction. A copyist’s eye and hand leapt to "another," omitting "the gate rod"; then the error was partially corrected by inserting "one rod." The muddle has been corrected in v 6ba, but the error has been retained. LXX presupposes only v 6ba, but fails to represent presumably in its underlying Heb. text the conflated text of MT had suffered hypercorrection by the deletion of one word too many. Busink’s attempt to retain MT (Tempel 715) is unconvincing: he finds reference to a landing at the top of the steps in v 6ba and to the threshold proper in v 6bb, reading "another" with Syr. for 2.
7.a. For the addition in LXX see Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 130–32.
8.a. Many MSS LXX Syr. Vg lack the ditto of MT, which repeats "inner ... gatehouse" in vv 8–9.
11.a. Heb. "length," here refers to the longer dimension and "width" to the shorter one (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 125). Hence an emendation of to to "way, passage" (BHK; Galling in Fohrer 223; see Cooke 433, 442) is unnecessary.
13.a. Galling (in Bertholet 136 and Fohrer 223) emended "from the roof ... to its roof" to "from the back ... to its back," taking Vg as "back wall" on the basis of LXX τοιος "wall"; RSV, NEB AND NJB have adopted the emendation. But there is no evidence that Vg was used architecturally (Cooke 442; Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 139).
from the front of the gatehouse at its point of entry to the front of the porch on the inner side of the gatehouse was 50 cubits. All along its inner length the gatehouse had recessed windows in its

13.b. MT adds v 14 “And he made (the) jambs 60 cubits and to the jamb of the gate, the court, around.” Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 146–47; cf. BHS) has observed that there is no room for material between v 13 and v 15, which move logically from overall width of the gatehouse to its overall depth. He has explained v 14a as a variant of v 15ag d – b with the omission of ימעח h “inner,” and v 14b as corresponding to v 16aa without the first four words and with ימעח omitted. He rightly rejected יע תא יא יא ו and he made (the) jambs” in favor of an earlier ר [ ש h m a ] ינפ על [ w “across the front of the porch of the gate,” which LXX attests. A complex series of adaptations to the text seems to have occurred. First, double parablepsis took place: the copyist’s eye jumped from ינפ על in v 15a to ר [ ש h m a ] יג (…” in v 15ab to ב יסב ב יס כ ( r [ ש ) in v 16aa. Then this truncated text had incorporated into it (between מ a and ר [ ש ) two glosses from the account of Solomon’s building of the temple in 1 Kgs 6:(i) ח מ ימעח “60 cubits” from 1 Kgs 6:2, the length of the temple (cf. “20 cubits” underlying LXX, which read יכ ת “alcoves” in error for ת מח “cubits”: it appears to refer to its width), and (ii) ו “and he made (recessed windows)” from 1 Kgs 6:4. The latter gloss displaced ינפ על [ w “and in front of,” and the object sign was subsequently added. These comparative annotations proper related to 41:13–16, but they seem to have been misplaced here because this and the other gatehouses also had recessed windows (v 16). A third incorporation, missing from LXX’s Vorlage, was ר x ] h יא יא w “and to the jamb of the court,” which, it may be suggested, represents ג x ] h ( = מ מ a ו ) ת a w “and its porch faced the court,” a correction of ג x ] “court” in v 31 preceded by cue words. The marginal correction was related to the wrong column, and מ a was miswritten מ a under the influence of יא יא a ו and on jamb” in v 16. The original text of vv 15–16aa has been added in MT without deletion of the truncated and annotated version in v 14.

15.a,c. MT ינפ על “to the front” represents an early correction of ינפ על “to, before” (cf. Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 141), which suffered dittography of lamed. The reading has some support in the masoretic tradition (see BHK). The marginal correction was wrongly taken as a replacement for the first prepositional phrase: v 19 suggests that it was ינפ מ ( ו ) “(and) from before.” The fact that the sequences ינפ מ and ינפ על “have four out of five consonants in common encouraged the substitution; this factor and the demands of the context confirm the conjectural emendation.

15.b. K מ a יא and Q מ a יא may be errors for a hapax legomenon מ a ( h ), an adjectival form from מ a / מ a “come” referring to the part of the gate at which one enters (cf. Cornill 440; Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 145). A nominal phrase “the entry of the gate” would be a more natural expression. But it may function as a counterpart to ימעח h ר [ ש “the inner gate,” which seems to refer to the inner part or western end of the (outer!) east gate (cf. Zimmerli 336). LXX εκ ως “outside” is an intelligent guess or correct paraphrase suggested by the contrasting phrase that follows.

15.c. MT ינפ על “to the front” represents an early correction of ינפ על “to, before” (cf. Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 141), which suffered dittography of lamed. The reading has some support in the masoretic tradition (see BHK). The marginal correction was wrongly taken as a replacement for the first prepositional phrase: v 19 suggests that it was ינפ מ ( ו ) “(and) from before.” The fact that the sequences ינפ מ and ינפ על “have four out of five consonants in common encouraged the substitution; this factor and the demands of the context confirm the conjectural emendation.

15.d. See the preceding note.
alcoves. Likewise its porch had windows round its interior. There were palm trees on the jambs of the gatehouse. Then he took me into the outer court, where I found rooms and a pavement constructed all round the court; there were thirty rooms fronting on the pavement. The pavement (that is, the lower pavement) abutted the gatehouses; it extended the same depth as the gatehouses themselves did. He measured the distance from the inner front of the lower gatehouse to the outer front of the inner gatehouse, and it was 100 cubits. Then he measured the north-facing gatehouse of the outer court, its length and breadth. Its alcoves, three on either side, jambs and porch all had the same proportions as those of the first gatehouse. It was 50 cubits

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a 16.a. The term twnwlj wh, lit. “closed,” occurs also in 1 Kgs 6:4 and Ezek 41:16, 26. G. Molin (BZ NF 15 [1971] 250–53) took it literally with reference to blocked imitation windows, but usually it is interpreted in terms of partial closure. Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 305) compared Arab. ’atama “contract, narrow.” Then it may refer to embrasured windows, narrowing toward the inside, as Driver urged. However, the further definition in 41:16 seems to indicate a recessed, gradated framing, which narrowed toward the outside, as Syr. interpreted here and in 1 Kgs 6:4 (Galling in Fohrer 226; Zimmerli 351 and note 35; cf. too 41:21 and Note). LXX at 1 Kgs 6:4 and LXX in Ezek 41:16 rendered “latticed,” with reference to a grating filling the window opening (see Busink, Tempel 1, 195–96).

b 16.b. Heb. la is used loosely for with the sense “belonging to,” as in 45:2.

c 16.c. MT adds hmnly  l a w “and belonging to their jambs.” The long form of the suffix, found in Qumran documents (see Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 148), occurs only here in Ezek: cf. fem hnh by in 1:11 (GKC 91l). It is difficult to conceive of windows set in the jambs. The phrase seems to have originated as an explanatory note on the suffixless l ya  l a w“and on jamb” in v 16b, relating the jambs to the alcoves next to them; the expedient caused the gloss to enter the text alongside µyath “the alcoves.”

d 16.d. For MT twnwlj vt wnml  “to the porches and windows” must be read twnwlj “belonging to its porch (were) windows,” with partial support from LXX (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 149). There was only one porch in each gatehouse: plurals also wrongly occur in suffixed forms at v 21 and following verses. For the form of the noun see BHS. Here mechanical assimilation to the ending of the next noun seems to have occurred, which then necessitated the insertion of the copula. The ’athnach needs to be written on byb s (Gese, ibid.).

e 16.e. MT l ya “(and on) jamb” requires correction to w  l a (= wyl  a ) “its jambs” (Gese, ibid.).

a 17.a. Heb. yw “constructed” lacks grammatical agreement here and in 41:18–19. For suggested explanations see Zimmerli 337.

18.a. lit. “(was) along the side of.” Heb. t k means here the long sides of the gatehouse, not the short projecting walls beside the porch entrances of the gatehouses and temple, as elsewhere in chaps. 40–42.

19.a. For MT ynp  l nwt j t h “the lower (fem.!) before” LXX implies ynp  l a nwt j t h “the lower to the front of.” Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 141) may be correct in assuming wrong word division as the basic error.

b 19.b. LXX correctly implies r [ nwm “the gateway” for MT r x j h “the court.” MT reflects the influence of vv 23 and 27, where the inner court is mentioned together with the same measurement.

c 19.c. MT adds ywh x h wmyd q h “the east and the north,” which seems to reflect marginal rubric glosses relating to the topics of the previous (vv 16–19) and following (vv 20–23) material (Herrmann 256; cf. in principle Freedy, VT 20 [1970] 141–44, 151–52). LXX has a guidance formula at this point, harmonizing with v 24 (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 153; Zimmerli 337; contra BHS, RSV NEB).

long and 25 cubits wide. Its porch windows and palms were the same as those of the east-oriented gatehouse. There were seven steps by which one climbed up to it, and its porch was at the inner end. A gatehouse leading to the inner court faced the north gatehouse, as in the case of the east gatehouse. He measured the distance between the two gatehouses, and it was 100 cubits. Then he led me to the south, and I found a gatehouse facing south. He measured its jambs and vestibule, and the dimensions were the same as before. Both it and its porch had windows all round their interior just like the windows of the other gatehouses. It was 50 cubits long and 25 cubits wide. It had a stairway of seven steps and its porch was at the inner end; it had palm trees on its jambs, one on each opposite jamb. The inner court had a gatehouse facing south: he measured the distance between the south-facing gatehouses, and it was 100 cubits.

Then he led me through the south gatehouse into the inner court and measured the gatehouse, and it had the same dimensions as the others. Its alcoves, jambs and porches measured the same as before, and both it and its porch had windows round them. It was 50 cubits long by 25 cubits wide. Its porch faced the outer court, and it had palm trees on its jambs, and its stairway had

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21.b. The sg vb may be agreeing with the nearest of its subjects (Zimmerli 338).
21.c. See note 5. d.
22.a. In place of MT “its windows and its porches,” where the copula cannot stand since the porch was already mentioned in v 21, it is better to read wml al t wml “the windows of its porch”: cf. vv 25, 29, 33 (Zimmerli 339).
22.b. MT t d mk “the same dimensions as” labors under the difficulty that no measurements were ever given for the windows or palms. Cornill (443), with appeal to the LXX, suggested the graphically close wmk “the same as” (cf. 16:57). Then the phrase in v 21 influenced MT (Jahn 281).
22.c. One must read here and in v 26 h mjpl “inside,” as LXX implies for MT µ h ymp l “before them,” which has suffered metathesis. The porch and the steps were at opposite ends of each outer gatehouse (cf. vv 7, 9).
23.a. Heb. µ ydq l “and in respect to the east” appears to bear this meaning (Zimmerli, ibid.). Cornill, ibid., et al. consider that LXX implies µ ydq l Ṣk “like the east gate”; NEB and NJB so read. Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 18 note 5) regarded as a gloss, comparing v 19b.
23.b. MT wtwl w h b “seven its stairway (?)” presents difficulties: Heb. idiom requires a masc. numeral, and h h nowhere else occurs with this sense. One should probably read W [ m [ b w (cf. vv 31, 34, 37): MT basically reflects a h / µ error.
24.a. MT adds µ wdr d h “the south,” not expressed in LXX Vg. The abs r [ µ “the gate” (contrast v 28a) militates against it. It may have been copied mechanically from v 28a; see further in note 44. f.
24.b. MT adds v 30 which is very similar to v 29 and is missing in some Heb. MSS and in LXX*. It seems to represent a corrupted text, to which a corrected text has been prefixed in v 29. Parablepsis was responsible for the loss of wml a l w … τ ω mk “like the dimensions … and to its porches” (cf. v 16). Next h ma µ yzm “50 cubits” and b r “and width” were overlooked and the measurement of 25 cubits was given in the form in which it was supplied in vv 25, 33, 36 (contrast v 13). Then the missing b r “and width” was supplied. The pl. t wma “cubits” seems to be a correction of the sg h ma. Finally Ṣm t wma “5 cubits,” intended as “50 cubits” ( for µ yzm) attempted to supply the missing length (for the pl. noun cf. 42:2).
eight steps.  

32 He brought me east into the inner court and measured the gatehouse, which had the same dimensions as the others.  

33 Its alcoves, jambs and porch were also the same size as before, and both it and its porch had windows round them. It was 50 cubits long by 25 cubits wide.  

34 Its porch faced the outer court, and its opposing jambs had palms on them, while its stairway had eight steps.  

35 He led me into the north gatehouse and measured it, finding the same dimensions for it and its alcoves, jambs and porch. It had windows round it. It was 50 cubits long by 25 cubits wide.  

36 Its porch faced a the outer court, and its opposing jambs had palms on them, while its stairway had eight steps.  

37 There was a room opening into the porch of the gatehouse, where the holocausts were to be washed.  

38 In the vestibule itself stood tables, two on each side, on which to slaughter the holocausts, sin offerings and reparation offerings, while two more tables stood outside by either sidewall of the porch, at the entrance to the north gatehouse.  

41 So there were four tables inside the sidewalls of the gatehouse and four outside, a total of eight tables on which slaughtering was to take place.  

42A The four tables for the holocausts were made of stone blocks: they were 1 1/2 cubits long and wide, and 1 cubit high.  

43A Shelves 1 handbreadth wide were fixed all round the inside walls:  

42B on
them were to be put\textsuperscript{a} the instruments for slaughtering the holocausts and the sacrificial offerings.\textsuperscript{43B}

The meat for the oblations was to be placed on the tables.\textsuperscript{a}

Outside the inner gatehouse\textsuperscript{a} there were two rooms\textsuperscript{b} in the inner court, one\textsuperscript{c} facing\textsuperscript{d} south and the other\textsuperscript{e} on the sidewall of the south\textsuperscript{f} gatehouse facing\textsuperscript{g} north.\textsuperscript{45} He told me, “This room\textsuperscript{a} that faces south is meant for the priests responsible for the temple area,\textsuperscript{46} while the room that faces north is for the priests responsible for the altar. The latter are the Zadokites, those descendants of Levi who may approach Yahweh to serve him.”

Then he measured the court: it was a square, 100 cubits long and wide, with the altar standing in front of the temple.\textsuperscript{48} He led me into the temple porch and measured its pair of jambs\textsuperscript{a}: they were each 5 cubits (thick). The doorway was 14 cubits wide and its sidewalls\textsuperscript{b} were each 3 cubits.\textsuperscript{49} The breadth\textsuperscript{a} of

\textsuperscript{a}43A.a. MT  עטְּחלֶים is a dual form of a term derived from “set on.” It appears to mean “places on which to set down things” (KB 1006b; cf. HALAT 616a). LXX Syr. Vg ᾱὶ ἑκάστῳ all related to ἔπεκαθεν “lip,” while Tg. rendered ῳér αἰτίον “hooks,” with a feature of the slaughter chamber of the Herodian temple in mind (Levey, Targum of Ezekiel 113 note 19, with reference to the Mishnah, Mid. 3:5). A rendering “ledges” (NEB) or “shelves” (Eichrodt 534) would suit the context. The relevance of a dual vocalization is hard to discern, and a pl. pointing (BHS) is expected.

\textsuperscript{b}42B.a. MT וְתַּמָּכָה is to be preferred to LXX “court”: see Zimmerli 368. The variant may be linked to the guidance formula introduced in LXX (cf. v 28).

\textsuperscript{b}44.b. LXX presupposes עִם תַּמָּכָה “two rooms” for MT וְתַּמָּכָה “singers’ rooms,” which is at odds with the purpose stated in vv 45–46. Mechanical assimilation to the ל ו sequence before (ל ו) and after (ל ו) may be to blame. The context favors the LXX reading.

\textsuperscript{c}44.c. For MT ל ו “which,” relating to both rooms, LXX presupposes ל וא “one,” required by the parallelism in v 44b and the differentiation in vv 45–46. A copyist looked ahead to the two occurrences of ל ו in vv 45–46 and wrongly anticipated them here.

\textsuperscript{d}44.d. MT עִם תַּמָּכָה וַיִּסְתַּקִּד וַיַּמַּעַר “and their face” is a logical consequence of the former error: עִם תַּמָּכָה ו “and its face” is generally restored.

\textsuperscript{e}44.e. The fem. form ל וא “one” is expected: the masc form in v 43a may have been thoughtlessly repeated.

\textsuperscript{f}44.f. LXX implies עִם תַּמָּכָה ו “the south” for MT עִם תַּמָּכָה ו “the east.” The directional orientation of the two rooms suggests their antithetical location. Was the otiose עִם תַּמָּכָה ו “the south” at v 28 originally a marginal correction that was related to the wrong column?

\textsuperscript{g}44.g. MT יִמְנָע “face of” needs to be adapted to ל ו “its face” for symmetry. Probably an abbreviated form was misunderstood.

\textsuperscript{a}45.a. For the construction see GKC 136d note 1.

\textsuperscript{a}48.a. MT’s anarthrous עִם אֲחַרָה “porch” is more grammatically represented as עִם אֲחַרָה by LXX (but see note 6. a” above); ל א “jamb” is defectively written for ל יא, which LXX אָל implies. Mechanical assimilation to the earlier עִם א ל א “to (the) porch” seems to have occurred.
the porch was 20 cubits and the length\textsuperscript{a} 12\textsuperscript{b} cubits. There were ten\textsuperscript{c} steps by which one went up to it, and a pillar stood by each of the jambs. \textsuperscript{41:1} He led me into the nave and measured the pair of jambs: they were each 6 cubits (thick).\textsuperscript{a} The entrance was 10 cubits wide, and the sidewalls at the entrance were each 5 cubits. Next he measured its\textsuperscript{a} depth, which was 40 cubits, and its breadth, 20 cubits. \textsuperscript{3} Then he went inside\textsuperscript{a} and measured the jambs at the (next) entrance: they were each 2 cubits (thick), while the entrance itself was 6 cubits (wide). The sidewalls\textsuperscript{b} next to the entrance were each\textsuperscript{b} 7 cubits wide. \textsuperscript{4} He measured its depth and its width across the nave: it was 20 cubits deep and wide. “This is the holy of holies,” he told me.

Then he measured the wall of the temple, which was 6 cubits (thick), and the width of the annex that surrounded the temple, which was 4 cubits. \textsuperscript{4} The annex rooms\textsuperscript{a} consisted of three stories of thirty rooms.\textsuperscript{b}

\textsuperscript{b} 48.b. MT has lost by homoeoteleuton five words represented in LXX: hr š[ b r a r [ š h t w p t k w h ma “14 cubits and the sidewalls of the gatehouse” (cf. Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 23 note 2).

\textsuperscript{a} 49.a. See note 11. \textsuperscript{a} above.

\textsuperscript{a} 49.b. See note 11. \textsuperscript{a} above.

\textsuperscript{b} 49.b. MT “11” does not accord with the total length of 100 cubits; LXX “12” does. For the y[t š / y[t š error see the next note.

\textsuperscript{c} 49.c. MT j w a t w [ Mb “and by the steps which” must be corrected to r c t w [ mb w “and by ten steps” with LXX, as even Barthélemy et al., Preliminary Report on the Hebrew OT, vol. 5, 148, acknowledge. LXX has preserved a superior reading: a main clause is required and a number is expected. The extra ‘ayin earlier (see note 49. b.) probably originated as a correction of the ‘aleph.

\textsuperscript{a} 41:1.a. MT adds l h å h b j r “the width of the tent,” evidently an early comparative gloss on v 2. It seems to refer to the width of the tabernacle, by which deduction was 10 cubits (Exod 36:21, 27–28; cf. D. W. Gooding, Illustrated Bible Dictionary 3, 1508). LXX’s a l a m = µ l w “porch” is a contextually harmonized reading; its earlier placing of the phrase also represents contextual integration.

\textsuperscript{a} 2.a. i.e. of the nave (v 1a).

\textsuperscript{a} 3.a. i.e. into the inner room.

\textsuperscript{b} 3.b. LXX implies t w p t k w “and the sidewalls” for MT b j r w “and the width,” and has a longer text h p m t w m a “on this side and 7 cubits on that side.” Expected parallelism with v 2a favors the LXX readings. In MT assimilation to j t p h b j r w “and the width of the entrance” in v 2 may have occurred (Cornill 452) and/or to the sequence b j r w t w m a “6 cubits and the width” in v 5. The loss of the later four words may be a subsequent dropping of now meaningless words (Zimmerli 342) or represent oversight of a 14-letter line (cf. Allen, Greek Chronicles 2, 134–36).

\textsuperscript{b} 3.b. LXX implies t w p t k w “and the sidewalls” for MT b j r w “and the width,” and has a longer text h p m t w m a “on this side and 7 cubits on that side.” Expected parallelism with v 2a favors the LXX readings. In MT assimilation to j t p h b j r w “and the width of the entrance” in v 2 may have occurred (Cornill 452) and/or to the sequence b j r w t w m a “6 cubits and the width” in v 5. The loss of the later four words may be a subsequent dropping of now meaningless words (Zimmerli 342) or represent oversight of a 14-letter line (cf. Allen, Greek Chronicles 2, 134–36).

\textsuperscript{a} 6.a. The Hebrew pl. seems to refer to the annex rooms. Alternatively the sg would relate to the annex on a ground plan, and the pl. to its vertical aspect as a series of stories.

\textsuperscript{b} 6.b. MT “annex (room?) upon annex (room?) three and thirty times” appears to signify thirty-three stories. The easiest and most feasible reconstruction, with some support from LXX Vg, is to reverse the numbers and omit the copula: “… thirty (rooms), three times” (Cornill 454 et al.). Others delete µ y w “and thirty” as a gloss (Herrmann 258, 269 et al.).
There were offsets in the temple wall for the annex rooms that surrounded it; their purpose was to allow supports but not of a kind that penetrated the temple wall. The annex rooms had a wider portion in the form of an ascending ramp: the sides of the temple were enclosed up to the top. Consequently the temple had extra breadth from bottom to top, with ascent being made from the lowest story up to the highest one, as well as the middle one. The temple had a raised foundation, an elevated area that extended all round it, which provided a base for the annex rooms; its substructure measured a full rod or 6 cubits. The thickness of the external wall of the annex was 5 cubits. There was an area left open between the annex rooms of the temple and the (other) rooms: it surrounded the temple to a width of 20 cubits. The annex had a door to the open area, in fact one door on the north side and another on

6.c. Heb. וָבָּא “insets” correspond to וָּאָבְגָּז “recesses” in 1 Kgs 6:6, referring (from different perspectives) to spaces let into or out of the wall (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 305). LXX copies the Kgs translation with διάστημα “interval, dimension.” Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 164), has maligned the Gk. translator by regarding it as a stopgap word betraying ignorance.

6.d. This is a noun, not a participial adj, since it would then be fem.: for the form see GKC 84a (Herrmann, ibid.).

7.a. MT הָבָּשִׁים וּבָּגָיָבְרִים וּוַיְהִי “and it was wide and went round” can hardly have the annex as subj: Cooke (453) viewed its fem. sg as impersonal. Tg. presupposes הָבָּשִׁים וּבָּגָיָבְרִים וּוַיְהִי and the width of the surrounding path,” with support from LXX Vg for the first word. This emendation is now widely read: (i) the contextual series of nouns or nominal clauses (vv 5b, 6a, 6ab) is then continued (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 165), and (ii) v 7ab functions in accord with its stated intent as a logical deduction from v 7ab. Heb. וּוַיְהִי is here used in a concrete sense (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 307).

7.b. MT’s noun form בָּשִׁים וּוַיְהִי “surrounding” is more naturally pointed as a hoph ptcp בָּשִׁים (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 167 note 4).

7.c. c reads and LXX Syr. presuppose an expected בָּשִׁים “and from” for MT וָבָּא “and so,,” which has suffered assimilation to ו earlier.

7.d. Heb. מְסַתָּה seems to signify “in addition to” (cf. BDB 511b).

8.a. MT וַיְהִי וַיָּמַג וַיָּמַג “and I saw” introduces a verb alien to the vision report of chaps. 40–42 and breaks the sequence of nominal clauses (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 169). LXX qַרְאֵל implies a technical term וַיֶּלֶאַח from which the context appears to have some such meaning (Zimmerli 371–72; cf. Jahn 291): evidently in MT an unknown term has been rendered intelligible, via haplography of lamed and metathesis.

8.b. MT וַיָּמַג “height” may have a concrete sense (cf. note 7. a. “above). A popular repointing is וַיָּמַג back, elevation”: cf. גַּבְבַּגְא in John 19:13 (Herrmann 259, following C. Siegfried, et al.).

8.c. Reading Q: LXX διάστημα “dimension” implies a misreading וָלְמָא “measurements.”

8.d. Heb. הָלְמָא יַחֲדָי is evidently a technical building term, with reference to a terrace according to Elliger (Geschichte 92), followed by Zimmerli (372), who related it to l x אֲנִי in 42:6: see the note there. In fact it does not seem to have formed a projecting terrace (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 170; Busink, Tempel 750). LXX διάστημα “intervening space,” followed by Vg spatio, reflects an exegetical tradition shared by Tg. וַיְהִי “wide space.” Busink (Tempel 752) plausibly renders “Grundlage,” relating to Arab. ’asula “be deep rooted” (cf. HALAT 79b).

8.e. For the form cf. GKC 23f.

9.a. lit. “that which was left.” In v 11 the verbal form is used as a noun.

9.b. The continuation in v 10 requires וָלְמָא יַחֲדָי “house of,” which may have suffered assimilation to וָלְמָא later.
the south. The wall around the open area was 5 cubits thick. The building fronting a restricted area on the west was 70 cubits wide; there was a wall round it 5 cubits thick, while its length was 90 cubits. Next he measured the temple, which was 100 cubits long, and the restricted area plus the building, including its walls, which in all were 100 cubits deep. The breadth of the front of the temple plus the restricted area to the east was 100 cubits. He then measured the length of the building that lay alongside, i.e., behind, the (other) restricted area, and it was 100 cubits.

The inside of the nave and its outer porch were paneled. The recessed windows and the gradations with their three layers had a wooden trim round them, excluding the sills. From the floor up to the windows there was a facing, up to the area of the wall above the entrance. Inside the temple
room and in the outer section, covering all the walls inside and in the outer section, there was a design depicting cherubs and palm trees in an alternating pattern. Every cherub had two faces, one human and the other a lion’s, which looked in different directions, toward the palms beside them. The temple room had this same design on all its walls: the design of cherubs and palm trees covered them from the floor to an area above the entrance. The wall of the nave had quadruple gradations. In front of the holy place there was an object that looked like a wooden altar: its height was 3 cubits, its length 2 cubits and its breadth 2 cubits. It had corners and its base and sides were made of wood. “This,” he told me, “is the table that stands in front of Yahweh.” The nave had a pair of double doors, and the holy place also had a pair of double doors. Each double door had leaves that opened right back, two leaves to each door. On them, or at least on the doors of the nave, there was a design of cherubs and palm trees, the same design as on the walls. There was a wooden railing outside, in front

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b 17.a,b. MT | “on” and d “up to” seem to have been reversed. Either d (W) “and up to” was the initial error by assimilation and a correcting note | “on” was taken as a correction of the earlier d or vice versa.

c 17.c. i.e. on the inner surfaces of the walls of the porch (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 178 note 2).

a 18.a. For MT see the note on 40:17; cf. vv 18, 25 and contrast the normal form in v 20.

b 18.b. MT has | “measurements” (cf. 42:15; 43:13) at the end of v 17, which LXX does not represent. Zimmerli (384) has urged the unique sense of a measured area. Perhaps an original reading t WhD “likeness” (cf. BHK) earlier followed | W “and there was made” (Brockington, Hebrew Text 237; cf. Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 306).

a 20.a. MT is abrupt and disjointed: for | “and the wall” it may have earlier had | W “and to the wall” (BHK) or | “to the wall.” Wrong verse division in vv 20–21 may have encouraged the change.

b 20.b. MT repeats | “the nave”: its use of “extraordinary points” over the first instance reflects its own query. LXX Syr. Vg have only one representation.

a 21.a. MT | Zw “doorpost” is better pointed as pl.

b 21.b. MT ydp W “and the front of” is again staccato, giving an awkward listing of disconnected items in vv 20b–22; ydp W “and before” is often read (BHK et al.).

a 22.a. LXX Syr. imply | b zm h ar mk “like the appearance of a (wooden) altar”: wrong verse division and dittography underlie MT.

b 22.b. For MT h b g “high” the context requires b g “its height,” as LXX Syr. Tg. presuppose: haplography of waw is to blame.

c 22.c. MT lacks the last clause, presupposed in LXX and lost by homoeoteleuton: see BHS.

d 22.d. MT wq | x q mw “and its corners” may be a case of mechanical assimilation to the following suffixed nouns: LXX Syr. Tg. do not represent the suffix.

e 22.e. MT wq t a W “and its length” has been assimilated to the earlier form: LXX attests w q a Ye “and its base,” the Heb. noun being regularly used in the pl. (Cornill 465 et al.).

a 24.a. For the need to change the phrasing in MT see especially Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 180–83. The copula in h v z “and two” should be deleted, as LXX attests.

b 24.b. Heb. t wq s wn has a gerundive force “capable of being turned” (cf. GKC 116e). Heb. t d means here both “door” and “door leaf.”

a 25.a. The fem. seems to have a neuter sense: cf. Ps 37:31b (Cooke 455).

b 25.b. See Zimmerli (390) for this and other suggested meanings. In v 26b this interpretation would suit the ramp of v 7 (Busink, Tempel 763).
26. There were recessed windows and palm trees on both sidewalls of the porch. The temple annex rooms also had railings.

42:1. Then he took me out northwards into the outer court, and led me to a set of rooms situated opposite the restricted area and also opposite the building, north of them. Its length was 100 cubits on the north side, and the width was 50 cubits. It lay between the 20 cubits belonging to the inner court and the pavement that was part of the outer court; it was built tier upon tier in three levels. In front of the rooms there was a walkway 10 cubits wide, giving access to the interior, and a wall 1 cubit thick, and their doors were on the north. The top rooms did not extend the full breadth, since the tiers that

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a 26.a. J. P. Peters’ suggestion (*JBL* 12 [1893] 48) that v 26b “and the temple annex rooms and the railings(?)” was a rubric gloss defining the topics of vv 5–7 and v 25 and so of vv 5–26 does not carry conviction. Zimmerli (390) considers that a longer account has been broken off. Perhaps a coordinated listing has once more replaced subordination (cf. vv 16a, b, 20, 21), and yb\[…\]w “and the annex rooms … had railings(?)” should be read.

b 42:1.a. MT ûrd ûrdh “the way, way of” constitutes a conflated text: the second term corrected the first, which arose by dittography of *he* and mechanical continuation of a series of words preceded by the article. Syr. omits the first term.

c 1.b. LXX has “inner,” read by Cornill (468), *BHK*, RSV et al. It represents a change that takes seriously the description of the temple in 41:15b–26. Strictly the prophet was last perceived to be in the inner court (41:15a). What follows is written from the perspective of the outer court.

d 1.c. The Heb. has a collective sg and thereafter pl. forms.

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a 2.a. MT and perhaps the Vorlage of LXX (see Zimmerli 392) begin with an intrusive ynp Al a “adjoining”: it seems to be a comparative gloss relating to the phrase hr yzgh d gn “before the restricted area” in v lb and comparing hr zgh ynp Al a “adjoining the restricted area” in v 13. In MT’s t wma k r a h a m h “length of cubits the 100,” transposition and wrong word division appear to have disfigured an original t wma h a m h k r a “its length was 100 cubits” (cf. 40:27): in the description of length and breadth a suffix accompanies the length in 40:21; 41:2, 4, 12 (Elliger, *Geschichte* 84 note 1).

b 2.b. For MT j t p “door, entrance” LXX rightly implies t a p “side.” Was \(\text{\textit{awph j t p “the north door}}\) an explanatory note on j t p “door” in 41:11, which was taken as a correction of \(\text{\textit{awph t a p “the north side}}\) in the next column?

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a 3.a. lit. “in front of … and in front of.”

b 3.b. For q y t a “ledge, tier” see the note on 41:15.

c 3.c. lit. “in the thirds,” i.e., in an area divided into three. Scholars tend to assimilate to the participial form in v 6, with some apparent ancient support (see *BHS*), but stylistic variation and the principle of the harder reading are adequate arguments for MT.

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a 4.a. Elliger (*Geschichte* 87) relates to the inner court (= NEB): see Comment.

b 4.b. MT has t j a h m a û r d “a passage 1 cubit,” presumably wide, but this is an impracticable dimension. Standard recourses are (a) to read with the support of LXX Syr. û r a w h m a h a m “and length 100 cubits” (Smend 346 et al.), which suits the context (see Zimmerli 393; even Keil [259] so reads) and is generally adopted by modern versions; and (b) to emend conjecturally to (t j a h m a) r d gw “and a wall (1 cubit thick)” (Galling in Bertholet 146, 148; Elliger, ibid.; *BHS*). The second expedient better explains the present text of MT: û r d “passage” may have originated as a comparative gloss, noting û r d in v 11 instead of û l h m “walkway.” Then an original r d gw “and a wall” was displaced by the similar-looking gloss. The wall is further described in v 7.
consisted of lower and middle rooms limited them.\(^b\) \(^6\) This was because the rooms were built on three levels, instead of having pillars like those elsewhere in the courts;\(^a\) so it was reduced\(^b\) from the bottom, as it rose from the lower and middle rooms. \(^7\) The wall outside was parallel to the rooms and in front of them, beside the outer court; its length was 50 cubits, \(^8\) since that was the length of the rooms as they related to the outer court, facing it,\(^a\) although the total length\(^b\) was 100 cubits. \(^9\) At the base\(^a\) of these rooms there was an entry\(^b\) from the east, leading in from the outer court, \(^10\) at the start\(^a\) of the wall blocking the court. On the south\(^b\) side, alongside the restricted area and the building, there were

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\(^{a\text{5.a.}}\) lit. “were shortened.” Brockington (\textit{Hebrew Text} 237 = \textit{NEB}) prefers a pointing \(\textit{twrxjh}\) “short,” since the verb is intransitive (cf. Ehrlich, \textit{Randglossen} 146).

\(^{b\text{5.b.}}\) The double usage \(\text{\textit{wmx}}\) of “from/consisting of” is awkward, but the text can hardly be understood otherwise. MT construes the verbal form from \(\text{\textit{lka}}\) “eat,” with the derived sense “take away space,” as in postbiblical Heb. (Ehrlich, ibid.; \textit{HALAT} 44b, 45a; cf. Tg. “took away”). However, an impf. is unexpected in a descriptive context (cf. v \(6b\)) and LXX “projected” points to the stem \(\text{\textit{lky}}\) “be able” with the sense “predominate (over)”: cf. Job 31:23 (Elliger, \textit{Geschichte} 89). Then a vocalization \(\text{\textit{Wlk\}}\) is necessary (\textit{BHS}). MT adds \(\text{\textit{÷ynb}}\) “building,” already in the \textit{Vorlage} of LXX, which cannot be construed, unless with Zimmerli (394) one takes the final three words as a separate clause, in which case it awkwardly relates not to the west building, as in the context (vv 1, 10), but to the vestries themselves. Probably it was a gloss that supplied a subject to the sg \(\text{\textit{lxan}}\) in v 6 (cf. Zimmerli’s translation “so \[the building\] was terraced”), but became attached to the phrase \(\text{\textit{twnkthmw twntjthm}}\) “from the lower and middle rooms” in v 5 instead of v 6.

\(^{a\text{6.a.}}\) Cornill (471) and Zimmerli (394) prefer LXX’s \textit{Vorlage} \(\text{\textit{twnxyjh}}\) “the outer (rooms)” to MT \(\text{\textit{twrxjh}}\) “the courts”; the latter finds reference to 40:17–18 or 40:38–46.

\(^{b\text{6.b.}}\) Elliger (\textit{Geschichte} 92) related to \(\text{\textit{lyxa}}\) in 41:8, which he took as “terrace,” finding here a verb “was terraced”; but see the note there. Driver (\textit{Bib} 19 [1938] 185) explained the stem as a byform of \(\text{\textit{lky}}\) “take away.”

\(^{a\text{8.a.}}\) For MT \(\text{\textit{k yh h ynp Al}}\) “and behold, facing the temple” it is preferable to read \(\text{\textit{h Nh w}}\) “and behold, facing the whole” (= LXX). The visionary particle \(\text{\textit{h Nh}}\) “behold” does not suit this context, where no new object is revealed (Cornill, ibid.; Zimmerli, ibid.). The term \(\text{\textit{k yh}}\) refers in chaps. 40–42 to the nave, not to the temple, for which \(\text{\textit{ydo}}\) “house” is used (Cornill, ibid.; Elliger, \textit{Geschichte} 95 note 3). Wrong word division introduced the term (cf. Driver, \textit{Bib} 35 [1954] 306–7). The suffix relates to the court; LXX implies \(\text{\textit{µ h ynp Al}}\) “in front of them,” mistakenly differentiating the rooms of v \(8a\) from those of v 7.

\(^{b\text{8.b.}}\) See the previous note.

\(^{a\text{9.a.}}\) Q is to be followed. LXX found a reference to the “doors” (\(\text{\textit{ẏ p}}\) \(\text{\textit{þ p}}\) ), as in v 12, which Zimmerli (395) prefers, but it was probably due to assimilation.

\(^{b\text{9.b.}}\) K is to be followed.

\(^{a\text{10.a.}}\) MT \(\text{\textit{bjrb}}\) “in breadth” is difficult to explain in text-critical or exegetical terms. Driver’s recourse to a ramp, as in 41:7 (\textit{Bib} 35 [1954] 305), hardly fits here. LXX implies \(\text{\textit{w̄ g r̄ b}}\) “at the head,” probably as a comparative gloss from v 12, as its order of words implies, but ultimately this reading must underlie the text. Did \(\text{\textit{bjrb}}\) originate as an explanatory gloss (“thickness”) on the single cubit of v 4, and become wrongly related to \(\text{\textit{f d̄ g}}\) “wall” in v 10? If so, \(\text{\textit{f d̄ g}}\) must have been the older reading in v 4, as argued earlier.
rooms, with a path in front of them. They looked the same as the rooms on the north side: the same length, breadth, exits, design and doors pertained to the rooms on the south side. There was an entrance at the open end of a path beside the protective wall, which afforded entry to them at the east end. He told me, “The northern and southern rooms adjoining the restricted area are the sacred rooms where the priests who have access to Yahweh are to eat the most sacred offerings. It is there that they are to put the most sacred offerings, namely the cereal offerings, sin offerings and reparation offerings, because the place is sacred. Once the priests have entered the sanctuary, they are not to go out to the outer court without leaving there the clothing they wear for their official duties, because it is sacred. They are to put on other clothing before they approach the people’s area.”

Having completed the measurements inside the temple area, he took me out through the gatehouse that faced east, and measured its perimeter. He used the measuring rod to measure the east side; it was 500 (cubits) by the measuring rod. He changed direction, measured the north side: it was 500 cubits.
(cubits) by the measuring rod. He changed direction to the south side, measured it: it was 500 (cubits) by the measuring rod. Then he changed direction to the west side, measured it: it was 500 (cubits) by the measuring rod. On the four sides he measured it: it had a perimeter wall whose dimensions were 500 (cubits) long and wide. Its purpose was to separate the sacred area from the profane.

Notes

1.a. Heb. הַמָּשׁ "there" does not anticipate the venue of v 2 (Cooke 429 et al.), but refers back to the city of Jerusalem mentioned in v la, so that there is a double emphasis on time and place. But the allusiveness of the description in v 2 may favor its absence from LXX* and suggest an addition assimilating to v 3aa. Then the verbal form יָנָה יָבָּני "he brought me" in v 2aa must also be deleted with LXX* (Cornill 433; Zimmerli 331 et al.). However, a contrast of destruction and implicit restoration is impressive, and there may well have been a deliberate echo of 8:3 “and it brought me to Jerusalem.”

2.a. For the unusual verbal form cf. 37:1.

2.b. Repeatedly in the vision description לָא "to" is used in the sense of לָא "on."

2.c. MT בֵּ곰 "in the south" may be an early gloss that wrongly finds reference to the city of Jerusalem south of the temple; “south” is מְרָרַד in chaps. 40–42, not בֵּɢוֹמּ (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 10, et al.). However, it may simply represent the prophet’s position vis-a-vis the temple: in 8:3 he also landed to the north of the temple (Vogt, Untersuchungen 134). For the use of בֵּגוֹמ see 47:1 and Zimmerli

b 16.b. MT יָנָה (Q) לָא מִשְׁמֶרֶת “500 rods” is inconceivable since the dimensions given hitherto favor a square of 500 x 500 cubits (cf. Busink, Tempel 709–10); v 20 appears so to state and 45:2 does more clearly. A rod was 6 cubits (40:5), which gives a square of 3000 x 3000 cubits. To claim that only in this passage it is equivalent to a cubit (Barthélémy et al., Preliminary Report, vol. 5, 165) is willfully to perpetuate an erroneous reading. Here and in vv 17–19 יָנָה “rods” has been added in MT, presumably as a result of misunderstanding מְרָרַד “by the measuring rod” in vv 16b, 17b, 18b and 19b as an expression of the unit, like מְרָרַד "by the cubit" in 40:21; 47:3. It is not represented in LXX. For the ellipse of מְרָרַד “cubits” compare v 20; 43:16–17; 45:1; 46:22 (Cooke 462): K לָא מִשְׁמֶרֶת “cubits” makes the unit explicit in a conflated text, perhaps as a correction of יָנָה “rods.” In MT it has displaced the necessary לָא מִשְׁמֶרֶת “100.” The LXX specifies “cubits” once, in v 17 (and also in v 20a).

c 16.c. V 19 and LXX suggest that MT בֵּיָבָּס "around” should be read as בֵּיָבָּס “he turned” (the copula is not required in this asyndetic passage: see Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 29) and taken with v 17. The same applies to v 17b. The error arose by assimilation to the end of v 15.

18.a. LXX presupposes לָא “to,” as in v 19, for the object sign in MT. The error at the end of v 17 necessitated a change in MT.

Heb. Hebrew
et alii, and others

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
et alii, and others
511. **LXX** presupposes an adaptation to d grm “opposite,” which seems to be a paraphrase.

4.a. **LXX** represents “your coming” and **Syr.** “my coming,” but the hoph reflects the **hiph** forms of vv 1–3 (Zimmerli 332).

5.a. lit. “behold,” also in v 17.

5.b. lit. “house, temple,” here, as elsewhere, used in a wider sense.


5.d. The **Heb.** adds ḫ mā b “by the cubit”: see *GKC* 134n; S. J. DeVries, *1 Kings* (WBC. Waco, TX: Word, 1985) 90–93.

6.a. For **MT** ḫ [ ḫ “a gate” ḫ [ ḫ “the gate” is expected after the reference in v 3. But the anarthrous form (cf. 43:1) seems to be idiomatic, representing the constr before a relative clause (*GKC* 130c).

6.b. The defectively written form in **K**, whereby ṣ is written for ṣ, is legion in chaps. 40–48. It represents an orthographical style that is not to be “corrected” (see Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 133; Zimmerli 333). It represents an older convention of writing: see Andersen and Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible* 323–28.

6.c. **Heb.** ḫ ḫ, normally “breadth,” can also indicate a horizontal distance away from an observer or starting point. **MT** adds “the threshold one, one rod in depth,” of which the foregoing is a correction. A copyist’s eye and hand leapt to ḫ ḫ “one,” omitting ḫ ṣ “the gate rod”; then the error was partially corrected by inserting ḫ ḫ “one rod.” The muddle has been corrected in v 6bā, but the error has been retained. **LXX** presupposes only v 6bā, but fails to represent ḫ ḫ : presumably in
its underlying Heb. text the conflated text of MT had suffered hypercorrection by the deletion of one word too many. Busink’s attempt to retain MT (Tempel 715) is unconvincing: he finds reference to a landing at the top of the steps in v 6b and to the threshold proper in v 6b, reading ą “another” with Syr. for ą 2.

7.a. For the addition in LXX see Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 130–32.

8.a. Many MSS LXX Syr. Vg lack the dittograph of MT, which repeats ē  ē “inner … gatehouse” in vv 8–9.

11.a. Heb. ē, usually “length,” here refers to the longer dimension and ē “width” to the shorter one (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 125). Hence an emendation of ē to ē “way, passage” (BHK; Galling in Fohrer 223; see Cooke 433, 442) is unnecessary.

13.a. Galling (in Bertholet 136 and Fohrer 223) emended ygg ygg “from the roof … to its roof” to ygg ygm “from the back … to its back,” taking yg as “back wall” on the basis of LXX t o “wall”; RSV, NEB AND NJB have adopted the emendation. But there is no evidence that yg was used architecturally (Cooke 442; Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 139).

13.b. MT adds v 14 “And he made (the) jambs 60 cubits and to the jamb of the gate, the court, around.” Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 146–47; cf. BHS) has observed that there is no room for material between v 13 and v 15, which move logically from overall width of the gatehouse to its overall depth. He has explained v 14a as a variant of v 15a  with the omission of m “inner,” and v 14b as corresponding to v 16a without the first four words and with m omitted. He rightly rejected m “and he made (the) jambs” in favor of an earlier m “across the front of the porch of the gate,” which LXX attests. A complex series of adaptations to the text seems to have

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Heb. Hebrew
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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
NEB The New English Bible
NJB New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
occurred. First, double parablepsis took place: the copyist’s eye jumped from \( \text{ynp} \text{ël} \) in v 15aa to \( \text{r} \text{yl} \text{m} \text{l} \text{a} \) (\( \text{ynp} \ldots \)) in v 15ab to \( \text{b} \text{y} \text{b} \text{s} \text{b} \text{y} \text{b} \text{s} \) (\( \text{r} \text{[} \text{š} \text{]} \)) in v 16aa. Then this truncated text had incorporated into it (between \( \text{r} \text{yl} \text{a} \) and \( \text{r} \text{[} \text{š} \text{]} \) two glosses from the account of Solomon’s building of the temple in 1 Kgs 6:(i) \( \text{h} \text{m} \text{a} \) “60 cubits” from 1 Kgs 6:2, the length of the temple (cf. “20 cubits” underlying LXX, which read \( \text{µ} \text{yal} \) “alcoves” in error for \( \text{t} \text{w} \text{ma} \) “cubits”: it appears to refer to its width), and (ii) \( \text{š} \text{[} \text{w} \text{]} \) “and he made (recessed windows)” from 1 Kgs 6:4. The latter gloss displaced \( \text{ynp} \text{ël} \) “and in front of,” and the object sign was subsequently added. These comparative annotations properly related to 41:13–16, but they seem to have been misplaced here because this and the other gatehouses also had recessed windows (v 16). A third incorporation, missing from LXX’s Vorlage, was \( \text{r} \text{x} \text{[} \text{Ʌ} \text{]} \text{h} \text{l} \text{a} \text{ël} \text{a} \text{w} \) “and to the jamb of the court,” which, it may be suggested, represents \( \text{r} \text{x} \text{[} \text{Ʌ} \text{]} \text{h} \text{l} \text{a} \text{a} \text{w} \) “and its porch faced the court,” a correction of \( \text{r} \text{x} \text{[} \text{Ʌ} \text{]} \text{h} \) “court” in v 31 preceded by cue words. The marginal correction was related to the wrong column, and \( \text{a} \text{a} \) was miswritten \( \text{ya} \) under the influence of \( \text{yl} \text{ël} \text{a} \text{w} \) “and on jamb” in v 16. The original text of vv 15–16aa has been added in MT without deletion of the truncated and annotated version in v 14.

15.a,c. MT \( \text{ynp} \text{ël} \) “to the front” represents an early correction of \( \text{ynp} \text{m} \) “to, before” (cf. Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 141), which suffered dittography of \( \text{lamed} \). The reading has some support in the masoretic tradition (see BHK). The marginal correction was wrongly taken as a replacement for the first prepositional phrase: v 19 suggests that it was \( \text{ynp} \text{m} \text{m} \text{w} \) “(and) from before.” The fact that the sequences \( \text{ynp} \text{m} \text{m} \) and \( \text{ynp} \text{ël} \) have four out of five consonants in common encouraged the substitution; this factor and the demands of the context confirm the conjectural emendation.

15.b. K \( \text{w} \text{t} \text{a} \text{ya} \text{h} \), and Q \( \text{w} \text{t} \text{a} \text{h} \), may be errors for a hapax legomenon \( \text{w} \text{t} \text{a} \text{[} \text{h} \text{]} \text{a} \text{h} \text{a} \text{ “come” referring to the part of the gate at which one enters} (\text{cf. Cornill 440}; \text{Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 145}). A nominal phrase “the entry of the gate” would be a more natural expression. But it may function as a counterpart to \( \text{ymyn} \text{h} \text{r} \text{[} \text{š} \text{]} \text{ “the inner gate,” which seems to refer to the inner part or western end of the (outer!) east gate} (\text{cf. Zimmerli 336}). LXX \( \text{ekwqen} \text{ “outside” is an intelligent guess or correct paraphrase suggested by the contrasting phrase that follows.}

15.d. See the preceding note.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
\text{cf. confer, compare}
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
\text{LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT}
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
\text{cf. confer, compare}
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
\text{cf. confer, compare}
\text{cf. confer, compare}
\text{LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT}
16.a. The term ₣ wmf א, lit. “closed,” occurs also in 1 Kgs 6:4 and Ezek 41:16, 26. G. Molin (BZ NF 15 [1971] 250–53) took it literally with reference to blocked imitation windows, but usually it is interpreted in terms of partial closure. Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 305) compared Arab. "atama “contract, narrow.” Then it may refer to embrasured windows, narrowing toward the inside, as Driver urged. However, the further definition in 41:16 seems to indicate a recessed, gradated framing, which narrowed toward the outside, as Syr. interpreted here and in 1 Kgs 6:4 (Galling in Fohrer 226; Zimmerli 351 and note 35; cf. too 41:21 and Note). LXX at 1 Kgs 6:4 and LXX in Ezek 41:16 rendered “latticed,” with reference to a grating filling the window opening (see Busink, Tempel 1, 195–96).

16.b. Heb. א is used loosely for א with the sense “belonging to,” as in 45:2.

16.c. MT adds ℓ nhylא | א ו“and belonging to their jambs.” The long form of the suffix, found in Qumran documents (see Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 148), occurs only here in Ezek: cf. fem ℓ nh:E in 1:11 (GKC 911). It is difficult to conceive of windows set in the jambs. The phrase seems to have originated as an explanatory note on the suffixless א | א ו“and on jamb” in v 16bb, relating the jambs to the alcoves next to them; the expedient caused the gloss to enter the text alongside ℓ ya ℓ “the alcoves.”

16.d. For MT ₣ wwl j | א ו “to the porches and windows” must be read ₣ m a ] ℓ wwl j “belonging to its porch (were) windows,” with partial support from LXX (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 149). There was only one porch in each gatehouse: plurals also wrongly occur in suffixed forms at v 21 and following verses. For the form of the noun see BHS. Here mechanical assimilation to the ending of the next noun seems to have occurred, which then necessitated the insertion of the copula. The ‘athnach needs to be written on יョס 2 (Gese, ibid.).

16.e. MT | א “(and on) jamb” requires correction to א a ל “its jambs” (Gese, ibid.).
17.a. Heb. ינּוֹלָל “constructed” lacks grammatical agreement here and in 41:18–19. For suggested explanations see Zimmerli 337.

18.a. lit. “(was) along the side of.” Heb. יָבַע “the lower (fem.!) before” LXX implies ינּוֹלָל אֲלָ אָנָא יָבַע “the lower to the front of.” Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 141) may be correct in assuming wrong word division as the basic error.

19.a. For MT ינּוֹלָל יֵשֶׁב יִתְּנָה הָאֵל “the lower (fem.!) before” LXX implies ינּוֹלָל אֲלָ אָנָא יָבַע “the lower to the front of.” Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 141) may be correct in assuming wrong word division as the basic error.

19.b. LXX correctly implies ינּוֹלָל יֵשֶׁב יִתְּנָה הָאֵל “the gateway” for MT יֵשֶׁב יִתְּנָה “the court.” MT reflects the influence of vv 23 and 27, where the inner court is mentioned together with the same measurement.

19.c. MT adds ינּוֹלָל יֵשֶׁב יִתְּנָה יָבַע “the east and the north,” which seems to reflect marginal rubric glosses relating to the topics of the previous (vv 16–19) and following (vv 20–23) material (Herrmann 256; cf. in principle Freedy, VT 20 [1970] 141–44, 151–52). LXX has a guidance formula at this point, harmonizing with v 24 (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 153; Zimmerli 337; contra BHS, RSV NEB).


21.b. The sg vb may be agreeing with the nearest of its subjects (Zimmerli 338).

21.c. See note 5. d.*

22.a. In place of MT “its windows and its porches,” where the copula cannot stand since the porch was already mentioned in v 21, it is better to read wml a t wml j “the windows of its porch”: cf. vv 25, 29, 33 (Zimmerli 339).

22.b. MT t d mk “the same dimensions as” labors under the difficulty that no measurements were ever given for the windows or palms. Cornill (443), with appeal to the LXX, suggested the graphically close wmk “the same as” (cf. 16:57). Then the phrase in v 21 influenced MT (Jahn 281).

22.c. One must read here and in v 26 h mynp l “inside,” as LXX implies for MT h ymp l “before them,” which has suffered metathesis. The porch and the steps were at opposite ends of each outer gatehouse (cf. vv 7, 9).

23.a. Heb. yd q l w “and in respect to the east” appears to bear this meaning (Zimmerli, ibid.). Cornill, ibid., et al. consider that LXX implies yd q l r k “like the east gate”; NEB and NJB so read. Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 18 note 5) regarded as a gloss, comparing v 19b.

* 16.d. For MT t wml j v t wml a l “to the porches and windows” must be read /M l a l t wml j “belonging to its porch (were) windows,” with partial support from LXX (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 149). There was only one porch in each gatehouse; plurals also wrongly occur in suffixed forms at v 21 and following verses. For the form of the noun see BHS. Here mechanical assimilation to the ending of the next noun seems to have occurred, which then necessitated the insertion of the copula. The athnach needs to be written on byb $ (Gese, ibid.).

sg singular or under
vb verb

* 5.d. The Heb. adds h m a b “by the cubit”: see GKC 134n; S. J. DeVries, 1 Kings (WBC. Waco, TX: Word, 1985) 90–93.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
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cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
et al. et alii, and others
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
NEB The New English Bible
NJB New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
26.a. MT wū wū h bl hō “seven its stairway (?)” presents difficulties: Heb. idiom requires a masc. numeral, and h bl hō nowhere else occurs with this sense. One should probably read wū m br hō (cf. vv 31, 34, 37): MT basically reflects a n / µ error.

26.b. See note 22. c.*

28.a. For the dispensability of the article see GKC 126w.

28.b. MT adds µ w d h “the south,” not expressed in LXX* Vg. The abs r h “the gate” (contrast v 28a) militates against it. It may have been copied mechanically from v 28a; see further in note 44. f.*

29.a. MT adds v 30 which is very similar to v 29 and is missing in some Heb. MSS and in LXX*. It seems to represent a corrupted text, to which a corrected text has been prefixed in v 29. Parablepsis was responsible for the loss of wml a l w . . . t wd mlk “like the dimensions . . . and to its porches” (cf. v 16). Next h ma br hō “50 cubits” and b j r w “and width” were overlooked and the measurement of 25 cubits was given in the form in which it was supplied in vv 25, 33, 36 (contrast v 13). Then the missing b j r w “and width” was supplied. The pl. t wma “cubits” seems to be a correction of the sg h ma . Finally br hō t wma “5 cubits,” intended as “50 cubits” ( br hō for µ br hō ) attempted to supply the missing length (for the pl. noun cf. 42:2).

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
masc. masculine
cf. confer, compare

* 22.c. One must read here and in v 26 h mnp l “inside,” as LXX implies for MT µ h mnp l “before them,” which has suffered metathesis. The porch and the steps were at opposite ends of each outer gatehouse (cf. vv 7, 9).


MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
abs absolute (nouns)
* 44.f. LXX implies µ w d h “the south” for MT µ yd q h “the east.” The directional orientation of the two rooms suggests their antithetical location. Was the otiose µ w d h “the south” at v 28 originally a marginal correction that was related to the wrong column?

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
pl. plate or plural
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
cf. confer, compare
31.a. Here and in v 34 K Ṣ m intended / l Ṣ m “its stairway,” rather than a defectively written pl. as Q interpreted it.

34.a. Here and in v 37 l is used for a (v 31) in the sense of facing toward.

37.a. MT “and its jambs” is a false anticipation of the term later in the verse. LXX Vg imply a wm “and its porch,” as in vv 31, 34.

38.a. For MT Ṣ y  ][ Ṣ m l Ṣ b into the jambs, the gatehouses” should be read Ṣ m l Ṣ b “into the porch of the gatehouse” with Syr. in line with v 39. Assimilation to l Ṣ b Ṣ h “the jambs” in the next column at 40:49; 41:1 was probably to blame. In LXX parablepsis has led to the omission of v 38a b, which Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 154) and Zimmerli (363) failed to recognize: Ṣ k σ Ṣ l “outpouring” is its rendering of a partly illegible t Ṣ k “tables” in v 39a a (Cornill 446, following F. Field).

39.a. LXX’s omission of the holocaust was probably on rationalizing grounds: see Zimmerli 367.

39.b. See Comment on 43:19.

40.a. MT Ṣ l Ṣ l “to him who goes up” is generally emended conjecturally to Ṣ l Ṣ b “in respect of the porch,” by comparison with v 40b. LXX Syr. interpret as Ṣ l Ṣ l “for the holocaust.” In fact the outside tables of v 40 were not for the holocaust in view of v 42b, but their understanding may supply a clue to the origin of the reading. It was probably intended as a rubric gloss drawing attention to the sacrificial content of vv 38–43. It was taken as a correction of Ṣ l Ṣ b, with which it has three letters in common, and displaced it.

40.b. Heb. Ṣ l Ṣ l “northern” qualifies not the sidewall, which is too far away, but the gatehouse, so that the north gate rather than the east one is in view (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf, 156–57, followed by Zimmerli 363).

42A.a. To MT Ṣ Ṣ Ṣ “tables” a Ṣ e, lost by haplography, is probably to be prefixed.
42A.b. In vv 42–43 as arranged in MT the massive tables are the repository for both the sacrificial meat and the knives, while the narrow µytp (see note on 43A*) are mentioned without a statement of their purpose. It is logical to posit an order vv 42a, 43a, 42b, 43b, so that object and purpose are distributed in an ABB’A’ order (Herrmann 267 et al.; cf. Cornill 450). Why was the order changed? In v 39 the slaughter of the holocausts was related to the tables. Accordingly µhl “upon them,” which referred to the tables in v 39, was interpreted in the same way here, and this necessitated the placing of v 42b in its present position in MT.

43A.a. MT µytp is a dual form of a term derived from “set on.” It appears to mean “places on which to set down things” (KB 1006b; cf. HALAT 616a). LXX Syr. Vg all related to ḥp “lip,” while Tg. rendered ḥq “hooks,” with a feature of the slaughter chamber of the Herodian temple in mind (Levey, Targum of Ezekiel 113 note 19, with reference to the Mishnah, Mid. 3:5). A rendering “ledges” (NEB) or “shelves” (Eichrodt 534) would suit the context. The relevance of a dual vocalization is hard to discern, and a pl. pointing (BHS) is expected.

42B.a. The ancient versions imply ḥyny “they were to put” for MT ḥynw “and …” MT is more emphatic: “it was upon them that …” (Cooke 444; cf. Exod 16:6, 7). But extant examples refer to expressions of time rather than place; and one would expect a consec pf form.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
* 43A.a. MT µytp is a dual form of a term derived from “set on.” It appears to mean “places on which to set down things” (KB 1006b; cf. HALAT 616a). LXX Syr. Vg all related to ḥp “lip,” while Tg. rendered ḥq “hooks,” with a feature of the slaughter chamber of the Herodian temple in mind (Levey, Targum of Ezekiel 113 note 19, with reference to the Mishnah, Mid. 3:5). A rendering “ledges” (NEB) or “shelves” (Eichrodt 534) would suit the context. The relevance of a dual vocalization is hard to discern, and a pl. pointing (BHS) is expected.

et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Tg. Targum
Mid. Middot
NEB The New English Bible
pl. plate or plural
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
43B.a. In LXX v 43b has been replaced with mention of a protective cover or awning over the tables. MT is preferable: see Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 160.

44.a. MT "gate" is to be preferred to LXX "court": see Zimmerli 368. The variant may be linked to the guidance formula introduced in LXX (cf. v 28).

44.b. LXX presupposes μυτῷτοντοκαὶτὸν ἀρχόμενον "two rooms" for MT "singers’ rooms," which is at odds with the purpose stated in vv 45–46. Mechanical assimilation to the τῷ ἀρχόμενον sequence before (τῷ ἀρχόμενον) and after (τῷ ἀρχόμενον) may be to blame. The context favors the LXX reading.

44.c. For MT γὰρ τὰ ἀρχόμενα “which,” relating to both rooms, LXX presupposes τῷ ἀρχόμενον “one,” required by the parallelism in v 44b and the differentiation in vv 45–46. A copyist looked ahead to the two occurrences of τῷ ἀρχόμενον in vv 45–46 and wrongly anticipated them here.

44.d. MT μὴ ὑπὸν τῷ ἀρχόμενον “and their face” is a logical consequence of the former error: ἡ ὑπὸν τῷ ἀρχόμενον “and its face” is generally restored.

44.e. The fem. form τῷ ἀρχόμενον “one” is expected: the masc form in v 43a may have been thoughtlessly repeated.

44.f. LXX implies μὲν ὀρθὸν "the south" for MT μὴ ὑπὸν τῇ ἀρχόμενον "the east." The directional orientation of the two rooms suggests their antithetical location. Was the otiose μὲν ὀρθὸν "the south" at v 28 originally a marginal correction that was related to the wrong column?

44.g. MT ὑπὸν "face of” needs to be adapted to ἡ ὑπὸν τῷ ἀρχόμενον “its face” for symmetry. Probably an abbreviated form was misunderstood.

45.a. For the construction see *GKC* 136d note 1.
48.a. MT’s anarthrous מִלְתָּה “porch” is more grammatically represented as מִלְתָּה by LXX (but see note 6. a* above); מִלְתָּה “jamb” is defectively written for מִלְתָּה, which LXX מִלְתָּה implies. Mechanical assimilation to the earlier מִלְתָּה “to the porch” seems to have occurred.

48.b. MT has lost by homoeoteleuton five words represented in LXX: [בְּרֵא שָׁהְתָּכָּו מַה שָּׁה] “14 cubits and the sidewalls of the gatehouse” (cf. Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 23 note 2).

49.a. See note 11. a.* above.

49.b. MT “11” does not accord with the total length of 100 cubits; LXX “12” does. For the יֵת שָׁה / יֵת שָׁה* error see the next note.

49.c. MT רָבָּה תָּו לְּפִלְשַׁי “[and by the steps which” must be corrected to רָבָּה תָּו לְּפִלְשַׁי “and by ten steps” with LXX, as even Barthélemy et al., Preliminary Report on the Hebrew OT, vol. 5, 148, acknowledge. LXX has preserved a superior reading: a main clause is required and a number is expected. The extra מְלָא הָא earlier (see note 49. b.*) probably originated as a correction of the מְלָא הָא.

41:1.a. MT adds לה הָבָּר “the width of the tent,” evidently an early comparative gloss on v 2. It seems to refer to the width of the tabernacle, which by deduction was 10 cubits (Exod 36:21, 27–28; cf. D. W. Gooding, Illustrated Bible Dictionary 3, 1508). LXX’s מִלְתָּה מִלְתָּה “porch” is a


MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

* 6.a. For MT רָבָּה תָּו לְּפִלְשַׁי “a gate” רָבָּה “the gate” is expected after the reference in v 3. But the anarthrous form (cf. 43:1) seems to be idiomatic, representing the constr before a relative clause (GKC 130c).

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

 cf. confer, compare

* 11.a. Heb. יֵת שָׁה, usually “length,” here refers to the longer dimension and יֵת שָׁה “width” to the shorter one (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 125). Hence an emendation of יֵת שָׁה to יֵת שָׁה “way, passage” (BHK; Gallin in Fohrer 223; see Cooke 433, 442) is unnecessary.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
OT Old Testament
vol. volume
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

* 49.b. MT “11” does not accord with the total length of 100 cubits; LXX “12” does. For the יֵת שָׁה / יֵת שָׁה* error see the next note.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

 cf. confer, compare
contextually harmonized reading; its earlier placing of the phrase also represents contextual integration.

2.a. i.e. of the nave (v 1a).

3.a. i.e. into the inner room.

3.b. LXX implies ὣποτῆς “and the sidewalls” for MT βράω “and the width,” and has a longer text ἡπὶ τῷ ὀπίσω ὀκτώ “on this side and 7 cubits on that side.” Expected parallelism with v 2a favors the LXX readings. In MT assimilation to ἡπὶ τῷ πάθει ὀκτώ “and the width of the entrance” in v 2 may have occurred (Cornill 452) and/or to the sequence βράω ὀκτώ ὀκτώ “6 cubits and the width” in v 5. The loss of the later four words may be a subsequent dropping of now meaningless words (Zimmerli 342) or represent oversight of a 14-letter line (cf. Allen, Greek Chronicles 2, 134–36).

6.a. The Heb. pl. seems to refer to the annex rooms. Alternatively the sg would relate to the annex on a ground plan, and the pl. to its vertical aspect as a series of stories.

6.b. MT “annex (room?) upon annex (room?) three and thirty times” appears to signify thirty-three stories. The easiest and most feasible reconstruction, with some support from LXX Vg, is to reverse the numbers and omit the copula: “… thirty (rooms), three times” (Cornill 454 et al.). Others delete μισθῶν “and thirty” as a gloss (Herrmann 258, 269 et al.).

6.c. Heb. וֹב "insets" correspond to וֹב "recesses" in 1 Kgs 6:6, referring (from different perspectives) to spaces let into or out of the wall (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 305). LXX copies the Kgs translation with δια τῆς ἡμέρας “interval, dimension.” Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 164), has maligned the Gk. translator by regarding it as a stopgap word betraying ignorance.

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
i.e. id est, that is
i.e. id est, that is
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
pl. plate or plural
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber's edition)
et al. et alii, and others
et al. et alii, and others
Heb. Hebrew
Bib Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Gk. Greek
6.d. This is a noun, not a participial adj, since it would then be fem.: for the form see _GKC_ 84^a^m (Herrmann, ibid.).

7.a. MT hbs nw bj w “and it was wide and went round” can hardly have the annex as subj: Cooke (453) viewed its fem. sg as impersonal. Tg. presupposes hbs Mbj w 2w and the width of the surrounding path,” with support from LXX Vg for the first word. This emendation is now widely read: (i) the contextual series of nouns or nominal clauses (vv 5b, 6a, 6ab) is then continued (Gese, _Verfassungsentwurf_ 165), and (ii) v 7aq b functions in accord with its stated intent as a logical deduction from v 7aa b. Heb. bj w is here used in a concrete sense (Driver, _Bib_ 35 [1954] 307).

7.b. MT’s noun form bs wm “surrounding” is more naturally pointed as a hoph ptpc bs wm (Gese, _Verfassungsentwurf_ 167 note 4).

7.c. c reads and LXX Syr. presuppose an expected ÷mw “and from” for MT ÷k w “and so,” which has suffered assimilation to ÷k earlier.

7.d. Heb. l seems to signify “in addition to” (cf. BDB 511b).

8.a. MT ytyarw “and I saw” introduces a verb alien to the vision report of chaps. 40–42 and breaks the sequence of nominal clauses (Gese, _Verfassungsentwurf_ 169). LXX qra el implies a technical term

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adj adjective/adjectival
dem. feminine
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
sbj subject/subjective
dem. feminine
sg singular or under
Tg. Targum
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Heb. Hebrew
_Bib_ Biblica
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
ptcp participle
c common or correction by a later hand ^1^ first corrector ^2^ second corrector
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
8.b. MT hbg “height” may have a concrete sense (cf. note 7. a. above). A popular repointing is hbg “back, elevation”: cf. Gabbaqa in John 19:13 (Herrmann 259, following C. Siegfried, et al.).

8.c. Reading Q; LXX diasthm “dimension” implies a misreading tdm “measurements.”

8.d. Heb. hlx is evidently a technical building term, with reference to a terrace according to Elliger (Geschichte 92), followed by Zimmerli (372), who related it to lxn in 42:6: see the note there. In fact it does not seem to have formed a projecting terrace (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 170; Busink, Tempel 750). LXX diasthm “intervening space,” followed by Vg spatio, reflects an exegetical tradition shared by Tg. “wide space.” Busink (Tempel 752) plausibly renders “Grundlage,” relating to Arab. ’asula “be deep rooted” (cf. HALAT 79b).

8.e. For the form cf. GKC 23f.

9.a. lit. “that which was left.” In v 11 the verbal form is used as a noun.

cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
* 7.a. MT hbs mw hbj “and it was wide and went round” can hardly have the annex as subj: Cooke (453) viewed its fem. sg as impersonal. Tg. presupposes hbs Mhj and the width of the surrounding path,” with support from LXX Vg for the first word. This emendation is now widely read: (i) the contextual series of nouns or nominal clauses (vv 5b, 6a, 6ab) is then continued (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 165), and (ii) v 7agb functions in accord with its stated intent as a logical deduction from v 7aab. Heb. b is here used in a concrete sense (Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 307).

cf. confer, compare
e et alii, and others
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Tg. Targum
Arab. Arabic
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
lit. literally
9.b. The continuation in v 10 requires (t ḫ | x ) h ḫyō “between the (annex rooms),” as LXX presupposes, for MT ḫ yō “house of,” which may have suffered assimilation to ḫ yō later.

11.a. The Heb. sg form, often emended to a pl. with the seeming support of LXX, may stand as a harder reading (Zimmerli 373).

11.b. Instead of MT ṣ ṝ m “place” LXX has ṣ o "window,” which is the standard interpretation of ṣ ṝ ṣ “wall” in 42:7, 10, 12 and does not imply a misreading as ṣ ṝ “light” (Zimmerli 394; cf. Cooke 461). Evidently in MT a gloss ṣ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ “a place which was left open,” intended to explain the phrase in v 9b (cf. Tg. ṣ ṝ ṝ “place” for ṣ ṝ “that which”), was taken as a correction of ṣ ṝ ṝ “the wall of the open space” and displaced it.

15.a. MT adds ṣ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ “and its ledges on either side,” using a type of suffix found at Qumran (see Zimmerli 374). The term is used in v 16 of a window design and in 42:3, 5 of a feature of a building. It seems to be derived from ṣ ṝ ṝ “take away,” with a prosthetic ‘aleph (Elliger, Geschichte 85). Here it appears with reference to quite a different building than that in 42:3, 5. It may well have originated as an early explanatory gloss (cf. Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 173–74; Zimmerli, ibid. ) on the term in v 16, indicating that the recessed frames of each window were stepped in lateral ridges.

15.b. For the anomalous ṣ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ “and the porches of the court” in MT, LXX presupposes ṣ ṝ ṝ ṝ “and the outer porch.” A feasible reading graphically closer to MT is ṣ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ “and its outer porch,” which 2 MSSKen read (Cornill 461, following Ewald, et al.).

16.a. For MT ṣ ṝ ṝ “the thresholds” LXX implies ṣ ṝ ṝ ṝ ṝ “paneled” and takes with v 15, as the
context requires. In MT “porches” earlier seems to have suggested “thresholds” by word association (cf. 40:7).

16.b. Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 305–6) compared Syr. shp’ “course (of wood, stone)” and shpt’ “covering” and Talm.-Aram. \[^1\] $ “cover” to elucidate the hapax legomenon \[^1\] y] c, which Vg Syr. Tg. interpreted on similar lines.

16.c. lit. “opposite the sill,” with reference to the three sides of the window frame. LXX Syr. omit, perhaps because of the difficulty of grappling with a complex text. Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 175) et al. have regarded it as a gloss.

16.d. LXX (in a doublet) and comparison with v 20 suggest $å r a h mw “and from the floor” in place of MT $å r a h w “and the floor.”

16.e. MT has “and the windows were covered,” taking $w h m “coverings” as a verbal form, but the context requires a nominal reference to the covering of the walls. Hence $w j h w “and the windows,” already presupposed by LXX, is to be omitted (Galling in Bertholet 144, et al.).

17.a,b. MT $ “on” and d “up to” seem to have been reversed. Either d (w) “(and) up to” was the initial error by assimilation and a correcting note $ “on” was taken as a correction of the earlier d or vice versa.

17.c. i.e. on the inner surfaces of the walls of the porch (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 178 note 2).

18.a. For MT see the note on 40:17; cf. vv 18, 25 and contrast the normal form in v 20.
18.b. MT has m "measurements" (cf. 42:15; 43:13) at the end of v 17, which LXX does not represent. Zimmerli (384) has urged the unique sense of a measured area. Perhaps an original reading t WnD) "likeness" (cf. BHK) earlier followed wqW W "and there was made" (Brockington, Hebrew Text 237; cf. Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 306).

20.a. MT is abrupt and disjointed: for m yq W "and the wall" it may have earlier had m yq W "and to the wall" (BHK) or m yq W "to the wall." Wrong verse division in vv 20–21 may have encouraged the change.

20.b. MT repeats l k h h "the nave": its use of "extraordinary points" over the first instance reflects its own query. LXX Syr. Vg have only one representation.

21.a. MT t z w m "doorpost" is better pointed as pl..

21.b. MT m n p W "and the front of" is again staccato, giving an awkward listing of disconnected items in vv 20b–22; m n q W "and before" is often read (BHK et al.).

22.a. LXX Syr. imply j b z m h a r m k "like the appearance of a (wooden) altar": wrong verse division and dittography underlie MT.

22.b. For MT h b g "high" the context requires h b g "its height," as LXX Syr. Tg. presuppose:
haplography of \textit{waw} is to blame.

22.c. MT lacks the last clause, presupposed in \textit{LXX}\textsuperscript{*} and lost by homoeoteleuton: see \textit{BHS}.

22.d. MT \textit{wytw} \textit{w} \textit{yq mw} “and its corners” may be a case of mechanical assimilation to the following suffixed nouns: \textit{LXX Syr. Tg.} do not represent the suffix.

22.e. MT \textit{wk r a w} “and its length” has been assimilated to the earlier form: \textit{LXX} attests \textit{wn d} \textit{a} \textit{WE} “and its base,” the \textit{Heb.} noun being regularly used in the \textit{pl.} (Cornill 465 \textit{et al.}).

24.a. For the need to change the phrasing in MT see especially Gese, \textit{Verfassungsentwurf} 180–83. The copula in \textit{µyt w} “and two” should be deleted, as \textit{LXX} attests.

24.b. \textit{Heb. t wb s wm} has a gerundive force “capable of being turned” (cf. \textit{GKC} 116e). \textit{Heb. t d} means here both “door” and “door leaf.”

25.a. The \textit{fem.} seems to have a neuter sense: cf. Ps 37:31b (Cooke 455).

25.b. See Zimmerli (390) for this and other suggested meanings. In v 26b this interpretation would suit the ramp of v 7 (Busink, \textit{Tempel} 763).

26.a. J. P. Peters’ suggestion (\textit{JBL} 12 [1893] 48) that v 26b “and the temple annex rooms and the railings(?)” was a rubric gloss defining the topics of vv 5–7 and v 25 and so of vv 5–26 does not carry

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Syr.} Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institue edition, 1980)
\item \textit{Tg.} Targum
\item \textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
\item \textit{LXX} The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
\item \textit{BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia}, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
\item \textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
\item \textit{LXX} The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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\item \textit{LXX} The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
\item \textit{Heb.} Hebrew
\item \textit{pl.} plate or plural
\item \textit{et al.} \textit{et alii}, and others
\item \textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
\item \textit{LXX} The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
\item \textit{Heb.} Hebrew
\item \textit{cf.} confer, compare
\item \textit{Heb.} Hebrew
\item \textit{fem.} feminine
\item \textit{cf.} confer, compare
\item \textit{JBL} Journal of Biblical Literature
\end{itemize}
conviction. Zimmerli (390) considers that a longer account has been broken off. Perhaps a coordinated listing has once more replaced subordination (cf. vv 16a, b, 20, 21), and μυβ... “and the annex rooms... had railings(?)” should be read.

42:1.a. MT ûrd ûrdh “the way, way of” constitutes a conflated text: the second term corrected the first, which arose by dittography of he and mechanical continuation of a series of words preceded by the article. Syr. omits the first term.

1.b. LXX has “inner,” read by Cornill (468), BHK, RSV et al.. It represents a change that takes seriously the description of the temple in 41:15b–26. Strictly the prophet was last perceived to be in the inner court (41:15a). What follows is written from the perspective of the outer court.

1.c. The Heb. has a collective sg and thereafter pl. forms.

2.a. MT and perhaps the Vorlage of LXX* (see Zimmerli 392) begin with an intrusive ynp Al a “adjoining”: it seems to be a comparative gloss relating to the phrase h r yzhg d gn “before the restricted area” in v 1b and comparing h r yzhg ynp Al a “adjoining the restricted area” in v 13. In MT’s twmakra h a m h “length of cubits the 100,” transposition and wrong word division appear to have disfigured an original twma h a m h k r a “its length was 100 cubits” (cf. 40:27): in the description of length and breadth a suffix accompanies the length in 40:21; 41:2, 4, 12 (Elliger, Geschichte 84 note 1).

2.b. For MT jtp “door, entrance” LXX rightly implies t a p “side.” Was ùwp x h jtp “the north door” an explanatory note on jtp “door” in 41:11, which was taken as a correction of ùwp x h t a p “the north side” in the next column?

3.a. lit. “in front of... and in front of.”

3.b. For qyta “ledge, tier” see the note on 41:15.

3.c. lit. “in the thirds,” i.e., in an area divided into three. Scholars tend to assimilate to the participial

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**cf. confer, compare**

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
et al. et alii, and others
Heb. Hebrew
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
lit. literally
form in v 6, with some apparent ancient support (see BHS), but stylistic variation and the principle of the harder reading are adequate arguments for MT.

4.a. Elliger (Geschichte 87) relates to the inner court (= NEB): see Comment.

4.b. MT has ṭ j a h ma ʿ r d “a passage 1 cubit,” presumably wide, but this is an impracticable dimension. Standard recourses are (a) to read with the support of LXX Syr. ʿ r a w h ma h a m “and length 100 cubits” (Smend 346 et al.), which suits the context (see Zimmerli 393; even Keil [259] so reads) and is generally adopted by modern versions; and (b) to emend conjecturally to (t j a h ma ) Ṧ r g w “and a wall (1 cubit thick)” (Galling in Bertholet 146, 148; Elliger, ibid.; BHS). The second expedient better explains the present text of MT: ʿ r ṣ “passage” may have originated as a comparative gloss, noting ʿ r ṣ in v 11 instead of ʿ l h m “walkway.” Then an original ṣ ṣ “and a wall” was displaced by the similar-looking gloss. The wall is further described in v 7.

5.a. lit. “were shortened.” Brockington (Hebrew Text 237 = NEB) prefers a pointing t w x q short,” since the verb is intransitive (cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 146).

5.b. The double usage ḫ m of “from/consisting of” is awkward, but the text can hardly be understood otherwise. MT construes the verbal form from l k ṣ “eat,” with the derived sense “take away space,” as in postbiblical Heb. (Ehrlich, ibid.; HALAT 44b, 45a; cf. Tg. “took away”). However, an impf. is unexpected in a descriptive context (cf. v 6b) and LXX “projected” points to the stem l ḫ “be

lit. literally
i.e. id est, that is
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
NEB The New English Bible
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
et al. et alii, and others
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
lit. literally
NEB The New English Bible
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
cf. confer, compare
Tg. Targum
impf. imperfect
able” with the sense “predominate (over)”: cf. Job 31:23 (Elliger, Geschicht 89). Then a vocalization \( \text{W k q} \): is necessary (BHS). MT adds \( \text{ynb} \) “building,” already in the Vorlage of LXX, which cannot be construed, unless with Zimmerli (394) one takes the final three words as a separate clause, in which case it awkwardly relates not to the west building, as in the context (vv 1, 10), but to the vestries themselves. Probably it was a gloss that supplied a subject to the sg \( x \) \( \alpha \) \( n \) in v 6 (cf. Zimmerli’s translation “so [the building] was terraced”), but became attached to the phrase \( \text{t wnk t h m} \) \( \text{wnt} \) \( t \) \( h \) \( m \) “from the lower and middle rooms” in v 5 instead of v 6.

6.a. Cornill (471) and Zimmerli (394) prefer LXX’s Vorlage \( \text{t wnx q} \) \( h \) “the outer (rooms)” to MT \( t \) \( w \) \( x \) \( q \) \( h \) “the courts”; the latter finds reference to 40:17–18 or 40:38–46.

6.b. Elliger (Geschichte 92) related to \( (h) \) \( yx q a \) in 41:8, which he took as “terrace,” finding here a verb “was terraced”; but see the note there. Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 185) explained the stem as a byform of \( X n \) “take away.”

8.a. For MT \( l k y h \) \( ynp Al \) \( h \) \( nh \) \( w \) “and behold, facing the temple” it is preferable to read \( h Nh w \) \( K b ^{1} h ynp Al \) \( “and they were facing it; the whole” (= LXX). The visionary particle \( h nh \) “behold” does not suit this context, where no new object is revealed (Cornill, ibid.; Zimmerli, ibid.). The term \( l k y h \) refers in chaps. 40–42 to the nave, not to the temple, for which \( yb \) “house” is used (Cornill, ibid.; Elliger, Geschichte 95 note 3). Wrong word division introduced the term (cf. Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 306–7). The suffix relates to the court; LXX implies \( \mu h ynp Al \) \( “in front of them,” mistakenly differentiating the rooms of v 8a from those of v 7.

8.b. See the previous note

cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
sg singular or under
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Bib Biblica
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
cf. confer, compare
Bib Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
9.a. Q is to be followed. LXX found a reference to the “doors” (יִפְתֶּפֶת), as in v 12, which Zimmerli (395) prefers, but it was probably due to assimilation.

9.b. K is to be followed.

10.a. MT בָּן בָּן “in breadth” is difficult to explain in text-critical or exegetical terms. Driver’s recourse to a ramp, as in 41:7 (Bib 35 [1954] 305), hardly fits here. LXX implies יָבֹא בָּן “at the head,” probably as a comparative gloss from v 12, as its order of words implies, but ultimately this reading must underlie the text. Did בָּן originate as an explanatory gloss (“thickness”) on the single cubit of v 4, and become wrongly related to דָּג “wall” in v 10? If so, דָּג must have been the older reading in v 4, as argued earlier.

10.b. LXX presupposes מִנְחָה דָּג “the south,” which the context requires (see esp. v 13) and so which most scholars (even Keil 264) and modern versions read. MT מִנְחָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה “in an easterly direction,” it may be suggested, originated as a comparative gloss on מִנְחָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה “from the east” in v 9b, referring to מִנְחָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה in v 12b. The gloss was wrongly taken as a correction of the original directional phrase here, which also uses מִנְחָה.

11.a. LXX presupposes בָּנָה בָּנָה בָּנָה “and like their width” for MT בָּנָה בָּנָה בָּנָה “so (was) their width”; the context so requires. Was abbreviation (טו for בָּנָה) wrongly assumed?

11.b. MT בָּנָה בָּנָה בָּנָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה “and all their exits” surprisingly accentuates this element. Generally בָּנָה בָּנָה בָּנָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה “and like their exits” is read: cf. the conflated מִנְחָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה “and like all …” implied by LXX. Did

* 8.a. For MT בָּן בָּן בָּן מִנְחָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה “and behold, facing the temple” it is preferable to read מִנְחָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה “and they were facing it; the whole” (= LXX). The visionary particle מִנְחָה “behold” does not suit this context, where no new object is revealed (Cornill, ibid.; Zimmerli, ibid.). The term בָּן refers in chaps. 40–42 to the nave, not to the temple, for which בָּן בָּן “house” is used (Cornill, ibid.; Elliger, Geschichte 95 note 3). Wrong word division introduced the term (cf. Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 306–7). The suffix relates to the court; LXX implies מִנְחָה מִנְחָה מִנְחָה “in front of them,” mistakenly differentiating the rooms of v 8a from those of v 7.

Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Bib Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

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“all” originate as a correction of v 8b?

12.a. MT in vv 11–12 has a seemingly conflated text יַֽ֣יַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו יַֽ֣יַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו “and like their doors and like the doors of.” The second term, not represented by LXX, was evidently an error caused by homoeoarcton of he, which the first term corrected. In the Vorlage of the LXX יַֽיַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו “door” later in v 12 was displaced by יַֽיַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו “and like the doors of,” an annotation approximating to MT earlier. BHS and RSV, following Galling (in Fohrer 235) and Elliger (Geschichte 98 note 4), emend in accordance with v 9a, but see the note there.

12.b. MT’s repetition of יַֽיַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו “path” is generally taken as a dittograph (see BHS). Zimmerli (396) proposes a new clause.

12.c. See Elliger (Geschichte 101), who points יַֽיַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו and relates to the stem יַֽיַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו “protect,” comparing יַֽיַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו for יַֽיַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו in Lam 1:8 for the form (cf. GKC 20n). LXX presupposes יַֽיַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו “intervening”; within the Greek tradition the translation was glossed “a distance of 1 rod,” with reference to the outer wall of 40:5.

12.d. The Heb. implies an objective suffix: cf. 32:11. One expects וּֽיַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו “as one enters,” in line with v 9b.

13.a. The copula appears necessary, as LXX Syr. Vg suggest.

14.a. For the proleptic suffix see Joüon 146e; Driver, L’Ancien Testament et l’Orient 135 note 37.

14.b. lit. “they are not to go (straight) out, but leave …”

15.a. Heb. יַֽיַּֽ֑פֶּקַ֖ו “the house” so signifies here, as in 40:5.

16.b. MT יְנִק (Q) וָאָמָר יָנִק “500 rods” is inconceivable since the dimensions given hitherto favor a square of 500 x 500 cubits (cf. Busink, *Tempel* 709–10); v 20 appears so to state and 45:2 does more clearly. A rod was 6 cubits (40:5), which gives a square of 3000 x 3000 cubits. To claim that only in this passage it is equivalent to a cubit (Barthélemy et al., *Preliminary Report*, vol. 5, 165) is willfully to perpetuate an erroneous reading. Here and in vv 17–19 יְנִק “rods” has been added in MT, presumably as a result of misunderstanding הָדָּמָה הָנַּק ב “by the measuring rod” in vv 16b, 17b, 18b and 19b as an expression of the unit, like הֶמָּה ב “by the cubit” in 40:21; 47:3. It is not represented in LXX. For the ellipse of וָאָמָר יָנִק “cubits” compare v 20; 43:16–17; 45:1; 46:22 (Cooke 462): K וָאָמָר יָנִק “cubits” makes the unit explicit in a conflated text, perhaps as a correction of יְנִק “rods.” In MT it has displaced the necessary וָאָמָר יָנִק “100.” The LXX specifies “cubits” once, in v 17 (and also in v 20a).

16.c. V 19 and LXX suggest that MT בֵּי בּוּש “around” should be read as בָּשׁ “he turned” (the copula is not required in this asyndetic passage: see Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 29) and taken with v 17. The same applies to v 17b. The error arose by assimilation to the end of v 15.

18.a. LXX presupposes יָד “to,” as in v 19, for the object sign in MT. The error at the end of v 17 necessitated a change in MT.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

This long visionary account of the new temple complex is uneven in content, style and perspective. Basically it appears to fall into five sections: (i) 40:1–5, introduction and description of the perimeter wall; (ii) 40:6–37, the gate structures of the outer and inner courts; (iii) 40:47–41:4, the inner court and the temple; (iv) 41:5–15a, the buildings in the immediate area of the temple structure; and (v) 42:15–20,
conclusion and dimension of the perimeter wall. The first and last sections obviously correspond and are of the same length (7 and 7 1/2 lines in BHS); both feature a measuring rod. The third section (12 lines) is central and has an importance that often attaches to the middle portion of a Hebrew composition. One may speak of a loose chiasmus, ABCB´A´, with the looseness relating to the second and fourth sections, which are quite unequal in size (44 1/2 lines and 16 1/2 lines) and diverse in content, but do lead the reader architecturally toward and away from the center respectively. Parunak (Structural Studies 510) with different divisions envisages a chiastic structure for 40:1–42:16 (ABCB´A´), but mistakenly links 42:1–14 with the outer court.

This basic account seems to have been supplemented at three points. 40:38–46 supplements 40:6–37 (B) by referring to rooms adjacent to certain of the gatehouses, while 42:1–14 supplements 41:5–15a (B´) by mentioning two sets of rooms in the particular area; both are united in specifying a feature not found in the basic sections, the priestly use to which the respective rooms were to be put. Also, 41:15 b–26 is concerned mainly with the woodwork of the temple: this passage obviously relates to the temple-oriented material of 40:47–41:4 (C) and separates 41:5–15a from the related supplementary material in 42:1–14. One expects to find it after 41:4, as a supplement to the C section, which in content it really is. The ultimate intent in chaps. 40–42 seems to have been to present an A/B+/C+/B´+/A´ structure, but it has been flawed by the positioning of 41:15 b–26. All three supplements echo the direct speech of the prophet’s supernatural guide (41:4b), in 40:45–46; 41:22b and 42:13–14. However, there are differences: (a) while priestly functions are communicated in what one may call the B and B´ supplements, a sacred element is identified in the C supplement, as in the C section; (b) in the B and B´ supplements the direct speech comes at the end, as in the C section, while in the C supplement it comes in the middle; and (c) in the B and B´ supplements the direct speech is extensive and prescriptive, while in the C supplement it is brief and descriptive, as in the C section. It is clear that the C supplement of 41:15b–26 stands somewhat apart from the other two.

Chaps. 40–42 are similar to chaps. 8–11 in consisting of the description of a visionary experience involving transportation to the Jerusalem area and guidance through the temple precincts. This vision majors in careful measurements of the constituent parts of the precincts. Insofar as the dimensions concern length and breadth but rarely height, it has generally been concluded that the account depends on an architectural ground plan, which may be true (for ancient parallels see ANEP 749 and cf. Isa 49:16; cf. Talmon and Fishbane, ASTI 10 [1975–76] 139, 142), but the measurements given may reflect what could be ascertained by someone walking, measuring rod in hand. Certainly the format was intended to be conducive to the construction of a ground plan, according to 43:11. But Busink (Tempel 773) has adduced the references to height in 41:6–8 (cf. 42:3)—one might mention too the wall height of 40:5 and the steps of 40:6, etc—as evidence for a vertical perspective that belies a ground plan.

A full style with verbs of guidance and measuring appears in the main descriptive passages of 40:1–19, which after the introduction describes the outer east gate, and 40:47–41:4, which describes the inner court and the temple. As for 40:20–37, which describes the other outer gates and the inner gates, there is frequent use of a weak perfect with copula d̄ m̄ w̄ “and he measured” instead of the regular consecutive

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BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare

ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
cf. confer, compare
imperfect $\dd$ {myW} used earlier. In the rest of what has been termed the basic account, 41:5–15a lacks guidance formulas; it falls into a cataloguing style in vv 5–12, with a series of nominal clauses, while vv 13–15a again exhibit the $\dd$ {myW} version of the measurement formula. In 42:15–20 the latter phenomenon also appears, at v 15, and is followed by a series of asyndetic verbs (cf. 40:20) in a weighty climax.

Of the supplementary passages, 40:38–46 lacks both guidance and measurement formulas, and so does 41:15b–26, while 42:1–14 has no measurement formulas and only an initial guidance formula. When one weighs up the evidence of style and content, the supplementary passages, which read like extended footnotes to the main sections, appear to be redactional additions to a primary account. Zimmerli (397) has observed on the one hand the similarity of 40:38–46 (or at least 44–46) and 42:1–14, and on the other hand the later insertion of 41:15b–26, in that it interrupts 41:5–15a and its continuation in 42:1–14. As so often in the literary units of this book, there is evidence of three strata: a basic layer, an added layer with related theme, and a third one that stands at a noticeable distance from the previous layers in its perspective. We have tended to credit the second stage to Ezekiel himself, and the third to later hands within the exilic period. Accordingly it is feasible that the triple layering of chaps. 40–42 reflects the same compositional process. The amplification in 41:15b–26, which is marked by different terminology (see Zimmerli 386), has then emanated from the priestly school of Ezekiel (cf. Zimmerli 387, 553). Mention should be made here of 40:46b, which appears secondarily to relate v 46a to 44:6–31 (see Form/Structure/Setting of chaps. 43–46).

Comment

1 The reference to “the new year” is ambiguous. Does it refer to the spring and so to 19 April 573 B.C. (Parker and Dubberstein, Babylonian Chronology 28) or to the autumn, to 22 October? The latter would link well with Lev 25:9: on that date the year of jubilee was proclaimed (cf. Lev 25:10; Ezek 46:17). Zimmerli (345–46) has noted that the particular year of exile lends support to a symbolic interpretation of the jubilee, the 50th year, with reference to the end of exile (cf. Lev 26:34): the 25th year marks a significant stage toward release. Moreover, in the ensuing dimensions the number twenty-five and its multiples predominate (Zimmerli 347; Greenberg, Int 38 [1984] 190; Levenson, Theology 24 note 56, interestingly compares the midpoint theme in Dante’s Divine Comedy).

If one date points forward, the other points back, to the fall of Jerusalem. As a historical fact the language recalls 33:21, but in prophetic terms it is reminiscent of chaps. 8–11, where in another temple vision destruction was forecast. Compare $\frown {wy} \ h \ h \ h \ k \ h \ “the \ city \ was \ captured” \ with $\frown w \ h \ w \ … \ frown \ b \ “in \ the \ city \ … \ and \ smite,” 9:5. For the hand of Yahweh and Ezekiel’s metaphysical transportation see 33:22; 37:1 and Comment.

2–5 The “very high mountain” represents theological geography and points to Yahweh’s supremacy: cf. Isa 2:2. Mount Zion is in view (cf. 17:22; 20:40). The city-like appearance of the temple complex was doubtless prompted by its gate structures (Galling in Fohrer 223). The ostensibly human figure is a supernatural being, as his radiance indicates (cf. 1:7; Rev 21:17): his role will be to guide, measure and

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

Int Interpretation

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

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interpret. His equipment is a rod (lit. “reed”) for short measurements and a tape for longer ones (cf. 47:3). The vision is explicitly related to the exiles: its purpose was to crystallize Yahweh’s promises of restoration given through Ezekiel. The unit of measurement is defined as a long cubit. Scott has related the Hebrew common cubit to the Egyptian cubit of 6 palms or 24 fingers, close to 17.5 inches, and the long cubit to the Egyptian royal cubit of 7 palms or 28 fingers, about 20.6 inches; the extra palm or handbreadth amounts to 4 fingers (JBL 77 [1958] 205–14). The account will revert to the wall and state its purpose in 42:15–20. The height of the wall reflects its external measurement. The higher level of the ground in the outer court (vv 6, 22) meant that from the inside the wall was only about 2 cubits high.

6–16 The outer east gatehouse (see fig. 1) is treated as representative of the others. It is singled out in anticipation of its key role in 43:1–4. It is presupposed that the prophet followed his guide and watched him. Comparison with vv 22, 26 shows that there were seven steps: the outer court and its gatehouses were built about 4 cubits or 7 feet (cf. 40:49; 41:8) higher than the surrounding area. The gatehouse measured internally 50 cubits x 25 cubits (about 86 x 43 feet). Through the middle of the gatehouse ran a passage, with three alcoves on each side, doubtless meant as guardrooms, as in the case of Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 14:28). The alcoves were separated by internal walls. At both ends of the passage were thresholds, with a porch at the inner end. The gate seems to have been set at the inner end of the outer threshold, so that it spanned the 13 cubits wide passage and overlapped the sidewalls of the 10 cubits wide threshold (Busink, Tempel 716–17). We are not told whether there was also a gate at the inner end of the gatehouse. Access to the alcoves was barred by a railing or the like. Light was provided by the window openings in the alcoves and porch. Mention is made of palm tree decoration on the ends of the walls between the alcoves (see further v 26; 41:18; cf. ANEP 654). The overall design of the gatehouse, with its three alcoves beside a corridor, is typical of pre-exilic Palestinian city gates, such as have been found at the sites of Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer (see Zimmerli 352–53; Busink, Tempel 714–15, 720; see ANEP 721).

17–19 A brief description is given of the outer court. The gatehouses projected into the court beyond the wall; on either side of them and extending to the same distance from the wall (i.e., 50 cubits) was a paved area. The thirty rooms, probably porticoes (cf. 42:6) and used by small groups of worshipers as meeting and eating places, seem to have been divided into eight on the east, north and south sides, 50 cubits wide and 25 cubits deep, and six on the west side, 25 cubits wide and 50 cubits deep (42:8; Vincent, Jérusalem 475; see Busink’s diagram of the temple plan [fig. 2]). The area left unpaved was 100 cubits wide.

20–27 Now first the northern and then the southern inner gates are summarily described, together with the distance from the corresponding inner gates. There was no gate on the west side.

28–37 The three inner gates are measured from the inner court. The dimensions are the same, but
they are mirror images of the outer gates in that their porches are placed at their outer ends and so face the (inner) porches of those gates. The design of the inner gates is the expected one, and exposes the unusual nature of the design of the outer ones. The effect is to make a demarcation between the two courts: properly entry into the sanctuary occurs only at the point of passing into the inner court (cf. Busink, Tempel 720–21). One receives the impression of the greater holiness of the inner court (cf. 42:14; 44:19; 46:1–3, 20). Eight steps led up to the inner gatehouses: thus the inner court formed a terrace nearly 5 cubits or 8 feet above the outer court. There was no west gate: the large building of 41:12 took its place.

38–46 The first supplement to the basic account falls into two parts. It begins with extra information about the north gatehouse just mentioned (vv 38–43; see Note 40. b.*) and then has more to say in connection with the north and south inner gate structures (vv 44–46). Both parts are interested in cultic functions. Washing of the sacrificial victim took place after the slaughter (cf. Lev 1:9, 13). The holocaust was completely burned on the altar hearth; parts of the other sacrifices were eaten by priests. Sin offerings restored to a state of purity; reparation offerings accompanied fines for damage done to persons or property. In the case of the outside tables we are to envisage a landing 25 cubits wide at the top of the steps, alongside walls 7 1/2 cubits wide on either side of a 10 cubit wide porch (Busink, Tempel 727–28). In v 42 “the holocaust” seems to be mentioned as shorthand for the three offerings of v 39 (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 158). The outside tables were presumably used for the slaughter of the “sacrificial offerings” (יְדֵי, v 42b), otherwise known as “shared (or peace) offerings” (cf. 43:27; 46:2). There was a distinction in holiness between the two types of offerings in that only the latter were shared by the people in a sacrificial meal (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 159; cf. 46:19–20).

Figure 1. The outer gatehouse

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*40.b. Heb. הִנֵּה X הַֽהַֽנוֹר “northern” qualifies not the sidewall, which is too far away, but the gatehouse, so that the north gate rather than the east one is in view (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf, 156–57, followed by Zimmerli 363).

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In vv 44–46 the topic of the room of v 38 is expanded in a seemingly independent way: the two passages may have originated separately (see Zimmerli 365–66, 549). Busink (Tempel 729–30) finds difficulty in squaring the purpose of the room beside the north gatehouse with v 38: should not altar personnel occupy it? But in the light of information supplied in later chapters the temple personnel align with the Levites responsible for slaughtering the animals (44:11) and assigned to general temple duties (44:11, 14; 46:24). V 46b (see Form/Structure/Setting) identifies the second group with the Zadokite priests who are differentiated from the Levites in 44:15–16 and perform the actual sacrifices. In the present representation, however, both groups are described as priests.

47 This verse concludes the information about the inner gates (vv 28–37), as vv 17–19 concluded vv 6–16, and vv 23 and 27 concluded vv 20–22 and vv 24–26 respectively. The “court” seems to refer to the inner, unpaved area between the gates and to the east of the temple: on its southeast and northeast was probably a pavement corresponding to the lower pavement of v 18. There is strangely no mention of a wall around the court. The altar is described in 43:13–17.

40:48–41:4 The temple building, set on a raised foundation 6 cubits or 10 feet high (cf. 41:8) is divided into three rooms, the porch, the nave and the holy of holies. The pillars beside the porch are generally identified with the freestanding pillars named Jachin and Boaz in Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 7:15–22; contra Busink, Tempel 752; cf. vol. 1, 174). In increasing sacred privacy the openings into the rooms contract from 14 cubits, to 10 cubits, to 6 cubits, although their internal width is the same, 20 cubits. Although Ezekiel, with his priestly rank, is taken into the first two rooms, his angelic guide goes alone into the third. By such means is exemplified the absolute degree of holiness revealed in the
declaration that breaks the silence of the basic account.

5–15a This section is concerned with the temple complex formed by the two annexes, and with the areas to its north, south and west. In vv 5–12 it supplies individual measurements and in vv 13–15a overall ones corresponding to the areas described in 40:48–41:12. First, attached to the south, west and north sides of the temple were annex rooms. As in Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 6:6, 10), they were structurally differentiated from the holy temple itself, by building the temple wall in a vertically narrowing design so that wooden beams, resting on the resultant ledges, supported the two upper stories. If each story contained thirty rooms, the distribution was doubtless twelve on each side and six at the rear. The total dimensions of the temple complex on its raised foundation (v 8) add up to 100 cubits long by 50 cubits wide (cf. v 13). The width evidently has to be increased by the “ramp” of v 7, if such it is, which Busink (Tempel 763) has compared to the outer stairing of the Babylonian ziggurat.

The open area on the north and south sides of the complex extended 20 cubits each way to a wall, beyond which were other rooms that are left undescribed (v 10). The walls and open areas, together with the complex, made up a total width of 100 cubits. The resultant square of 100 x 100 cubits was bounded by one of the same size on the west: it was broken up into another open area —significantly called “the restricted area” (lit. “cut off place”: cf. Gk. τεμένον “sacred precinct” [Vogt, Untersuchungen 144]) since it was next to the holy of holies—100 cubits by 20 cubits, and a structure called simply “the building” whose external area was 100 (=5 + 90 + 5) cubits by 80 (=5 + 70 + 5) cubits. Over on the east side of the temple the two rectangles of open space on either side of the porch were also called a “restricted area.” The open spaces around the temple complex obviously made it into a structural island of holiness, while the building on the west served similarly to seal off the back of the holy of holies.

15b–26 This appendix to 40:48–41:4 is concerned with the internal design and decoration of the temple porch and nave, with respect to its woodwork. The wooden framing of the windows corresponds to the triple rabbeted design in the Lady at the Window carving found at Nimrud (ANEP 131). The windows must have been set high in the walls, above the level of the annex rooms, as evidently in Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 6:4–5). The reliefs on the paneling complement the palms seen in the gatehouses with two-headed cherubim, but omit the flowers added in the Solomonic temple (1 Kgs 6:29, 32, 35). The two heads are a two-dimensional version of the four heads of 1:10; 10:14 (Wevers 213; Haran, Temples 258 note 17). The all-seeing cherubim or sphinxes are vigilant guardians of God’s sovereign holiness, while the palms, as often in ancient Near Eastern art, represent the tree of life (cf. 47:1–12). The door frames, as in Solomon’s temple, had quadruple rabbeting (cf. Noth, Könige 127; Zimmerli 388). A wooden piece of furniture is specified, an altar-like table, which evidently refers to the table for the showbread (lit. “bread of the presence [µνπ],” 1 Kgs 7:48; cf. yπρ “before,” v 22). The “corners” seem to refer to the “horns” on top of an altar (cf. 43:15). The description in terms of an altar is presumably meant to discourage any notion of food being eaten by the deity (cf. Ps 50:12–13). For the

cf. confer, compare
lit. literally
Gk. Greek
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
lit. literally
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
design of the doors of the nave and the rear room (“holy place,” vv 21, 23) see Gese’s sketch reproduced here (fig. 3; cf. Zimmerli 389).

Figure 3. The inner doors of the temple

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42:1–14 This second main supplement wants to amplify the description of 41:5–15a, which at an earlier stage it doubtless followed, by reference to two identical structures on the north and south sides of the building behind the temple. Earlier commentators located them on either side of the temple, but Elliger (Geschichte 80–84, 93–94) established their location further west, by comparison with 40:17–18; 41:12, 15. First, a northern set of rooms is described in vv 1–10a, and then the southern counterpart briefly in vv 10b–12. The prophet is taken from the temple area of 41:5–15a, presumably out through the north inner gate and in a westerly direction, to view the north rooms from the outer court. There is a pointed avoidance of the alternative possibility, to linger behind the temple. Seemingly, there is a gap between the building and the rooms: ḏgūn “opposite” implies some intervening space. On their south side they were 100 cubits long, parallel to both the 20 cubits of the restricted area and the 80 (= 5 + 70 + 5) cubits of the exterior of the building. Access was via doors in the north wall and a path 10 cubits wide running parallel with the set of rooms. The path on its north side was bounded by a wall that separated it from the outer court for a length of 50 cubits. This path, which was open to the outer court at its eastern end, was 100 cubits long, corresponding to the length of the set of rooms; the other 50 cubits were protected by other rooms built on the pavement alongside the northwest perimeter wall of the whole temple complex. Vv 4 and 7–10a refer to this path and wall. It is customary to relate v 4 to a path on the other (south) side, but they can hardly be localized there in view of the prepositional phrase “in front of” with relation to the prophet’s perspective.

The construction of the rooms is not clear. The roof was built on three levels. Was this to accommodate the difference in level between the outer court and the inner court (cf. Galling’s design reproduced here [fig. 4]) or was it purely an artistic feature?

Figure 4. Galling’s reconstruction of the inner temple area

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
A related issue is whether each level had one series of rooms (cf. Busink, *Tempel* 741) or whether the highest level encompassed three stories. The reference to the absence of pillars is not clear: are they envisaged as forming a substructure, as the rooms of 40:44 may have had? In vv 10b–12 the southern rooms are briefly described. The reference to exits must be to access on the far side adjoining the western building (cf. Elliger, *Geschichte* 99). The statements of vv 13–14 ascribe two functions to the rooms. First, they were to serve as a refectory for the priests, with reference to the offerings used as their food (cf. 44:29 Comment; Num 18:9–10). The rooms would have this sacred function because of their position at the rear of the temple, on the level of the inner court, which was reserved for priests. Second, they were to be vestries or changing rooms, where sacred clothing used while performing duties in the inner court and nave would be left. Different clothing was to be worn in the outer court accessible to the people.

15–20 This explicit conclusion rounds off the account with further reference to the perimeter wall of 40:5 and with fresh mention of the measuring rod of 40:5–8. It originally stood after 41:15a, and it follows the directional order of 40:6–41:15a as it related to areas near the outer wall: east, north, south and west. In staccato sentences suitable for a finale the collective area is surveyed. The dimension of 500 cubits accords with details given in 40:6–41:15a. From south to north along the orientation of the gatehouses there stretches a total of four gatehouses (4 x 50 cubits), two outer courts (2 x 100 cubits) and the inner court (100 cubits). From east to west the area embraces two gatehouses (2 x 50 cubits), the outer and inner courts (100 + 100 cubits), the temple including the rear annex (100 cubits), the restricted area (20 cubits) and the rear building (80 cubits).

There is a lack of clarity concerning the relation of the perimeter wall to the back walls of the rooms and of the rear building. Were they the same, with the back wall of the building narrowing to 5 cubits (41:12; cf. 40:6)? Or was the perimeter wall a supporting structure outside them, as the LXX appears to have envisaged (cf. Busink, *Tempel* 711–12)? The latter solution would exceed the dimension of 500 cubits. Either the former expedient is correct or there is a slight inconsistency here.

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

cf. confer, compare
The statement of the purpose of the wall in v 20b reveals the sanctity of the temple area as the domain of God. This sphere of the divine was set aside, in the world and yet not of the world, as a colony of heaven.

**Explanation**

Chaps. 40–42 are a celebration. They harness the wagon of contemporary reality to a star of hope. The prophet and his constituency are stuck fast in exile. For Ezekiel and those of the exiles who had been his fellow hostages, twenty-five weary years have elapsed since they were deported in 597 B.C.. Yet on this Rosh ha-Shanah or New Year’s Day, when the vision is experienced, he is looking forward to the completion of a calendar process, the year of Jubilee at the end of forty-nine years (cf. Lev 25:9–10; Ezek 46:17). He views it as a metaphor for God’s new work of liberation and restoration for his people. At this spiritual midpoint he celebrates in advance the “salvation that is nearer than” ever before (Rom 13:11). Present time and the eschatological future are blended in a series of geometrical shapes, squares and half-squares, whose dimensions are made up of twenty-fives and fifties and their multiples. Even the total number of steps from outside the temple area to the temple itself amounts to twenty-five (7 + 8 + 10 [40:22, 34, 49]). The account is an architectural symphony, an intricate composition that counterpoints the predicament of exile and the promise of restoration in a grand celebration of God’s sure purposes. This theological stylization is presented both as an assurance and as a challenge to the exiles; it ministers pastorally to their needs (40:4; cf. 43:10–11).

Along with chaps. 43–46, the vision stands as a positive counterpart to the negative temple vision of chaps. 8–11. Parunak (Structural Studies 508–9) has observed that 40:1–2 echoes the phraseology of 8:1–3, while 43:2–5 picks up motifs found in 8:3–4. In stark contrast to the cultic aberrations and consequent judgment stands an edifice whose symmetry spells decent order and which brings only glory to the holy God, keeping at bay all that is profane. No abominable illustrations besmirched these walls (8:10; cf. 43:10)!

Moreover, Ezek 37:26–28 (cf. 20:40) serves to pave the way for the vision, with the promise that God would set his sanctuary among his people. The vision, unfolded by the supernatural guide and portraying the temple as already built, is a concrete outworking of the promise, in terms of feet and inches. It fleshes out the promise with gates and courts, with pavements and pillars. It is true to the heart of the promise, although the term “sanctuary” is not used in these initial chapters: “sanctuary” (מִקְדֶם) relates to holiness (דָקִי), and above all the temple area is a monument to the holiness of God. The perimeter wall demarcates the sacred square. The massive gatehouses, as forbidding as those at the entrance to any city, warn all who come to worship of the awesome solemnity of the areas beyond. Access should not lightly be undertaken. “Who can go up to the mount of Yahweh and who can stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart” (Ps 24:3–4; cf. Ps 15; Isa 33:14–15). There is a sliding scale of holiness. The temple area stands out from its surroundings like a three-tiered wedding cake, with a series of elevations marking first the outer court, where the people worshiped, then the inner court, where only the priests might go, and finally the temple with its innermost shrine, over which a veil of reticence is drawn.

This symbolic stylization, along with the geometric symmetry, contrasts with the pre-exilic temple,
where the outer court enclosed the palace complex as well as the temple, and both courts were open to
the laity (cf. Isa 1:12; Ps 100:4; see Haran, *Temples* 192–93. On the detailed relation between the
pre-exilic temple and Ezekiel’s see Zimmerli 358–60, 379–80, 400–401).

The ministry of the prophet and his literary successors was to their own generation. We
twentieth-century believers may only overhear the message of theological hope and extrapolate its spirit
temple! Even the post-exilic community who rebuilt the temple found only peripheral value in the vision
Scroll developed from this vision their ideals for the temple, in terms of a quadratic layout and gradations
of holiness (see Maier, *Temple Scroll* 58–65, 90–96). The modern reader is called, like the exiles, to
glean from the vision a reflection of divine reality that challenges present living and invests the future
with hope.


**Bibliography**


**cf. confer, compare**

*ZAW* Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
*VT* Vetus Testamentum
*AnBib* Analecta biblica (Rome: PBI)
*JSOT* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Biblical Studies
*UF* UF Ugaritische Forschungen
*VT* Vetus Testamentum
Translation

Then he brought me to the east-facing a gate. b My attention was drawn to the glory of the God

1 ZDPV Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins
2 JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society
3 FRLANT Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck)
4 FRLANT Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck)
5 TynBul Tyndale Bulletin
6 JSOTSup Journal for the Study of the Old Testament [JOST] Supplement Series
7 ConB Coniectanea bibliica (Lund: Gleerup)
8 OT Old Testament
9 OT Old Testament
10 IDBSup Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume, ed. K. Crim (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976)
11 VT Vetus Testamentum
12 VT Vetus Testamentum
13 HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
14 JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
15 JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
16 ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
17 SBL Society of Biblical Literature
18 JBL Journal of Biblical Literature

\[a\] 1. a. For MT \(\text{h\
\text{n}}\) “(which) faces” \(\text{\text{w}}\) “its face” is expected. The usual formulation is \(\text{\text{w}}\) “whose face” (e.g., v 4; 42:15); less common is \(\text{h\
\text{n}}\) “which faces,” as in 44:1. Did a comparative gloss \(\text{h\
\text{n}}\) displace \(\text{\text{w}}\)? In LXX an added \(\text{t}^{\text{\text{h}}} \text{\text{b} l \text{e} \text{p} \text{o} \text{u} \text{s} \text{h}}^{\text{\text{h}}} \) “which faces” in v 2 may represent a misplacement of the same gloss.
of Israel coming from the east. The noise it made was as loud as floodwaters, and the land was lit up by its brightness. 3 The manifestation was comparable to the one I had seen when Yahweh came to destroy the city, and to the one I had seen by the river Chebar, and I fell on my face. 4 The glory of Yahweh approached the temple via the east-facing gate. 5 The spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and I observed the glory of Yahweh filling the temple. 6 I heard someone speaking to me from the temple—the man was standing next to me at the time. 7 “Human one,” he said to me, “The place of my throne, the place for the soles of my feet, where I will live among the Israelites for ever—never again will the community of Israel or their kings sully my holy name with their debauchery or with the memorials of their kings erected at their death. 8 When they set
their threshold beside my threshold and their doorposts next to my doorposts, with only a wall separating them from me, they used to sully my holy name with the shocking practices they committed, and so in my anger I destroyed them. From now on they must cease to associate me with their debauchery and their royal memorials, and I will live among them for ever. You, human one, are to describe the temple to the community of Israel, to make them ashamed of their iniquities. They are to measure its layout, and then they themselves will be ashamed of all they have done. Inform them of the design of the temple and its layout, its exits and its entrances, and all the instructions and regulations for it. Draw it for them to see, so that they may duly follow all the instructions and regulations for it and carry them out. This is the instruction for the temple area on the top of the mountain: the whole territory surrounding it is particularly holy.

"These are the dimensions of the altar, in cubits increased by a handbreadth. Its gutter..."
cubit (deep) and 1 cubit wide, while its ridge all round the edge is 1 span (high). The protruding base of the altar is constructed as follows: the distance from the gutter in the ground up to the ledge of the lower plinth is 2 cubits, and the width (of the ledge) is 1 cubit. The distance from the ledge of the shorter plinth to that of the taller one is 4 cubits, and its width is 1 cubit. 15 The hearth is 4 cubits (high), and from the hearth project horns, four in number. The hearth is 12 cubits long by 12 cubits wide, a square with four equal sides. 17 The plinth is 14 (cubits) long by 14 wide with four equal sides, and the ridge surrounding it is 1/2 cubit (wide), while the related gutter extends...
I cubit all round. Its steps face east."

18 He said to me, “Human one, here is the message of the Lord Yahweh. These are the regulations for the altar, when it has been constructed, to permit the sacrificing of holocausts on it and the splashing of blood against it. You are to give a young bull as a sin offering to the levitical priests of Zadokite lineage, who have access to me in my service—the Lord Yahweh is speaking. 19 You are to take some of its blood and put it on its four horns, the four corners of the plinth and all round the ridge, and so decontaminate it and make expiation for it. 20 Then take the sin offering bull and get it burned outside the sanctuary area at the place designated in the temple area. 22 On the second day you are to offer an unblemished young goat as the sin offering and they are to decontaminate the altar, as they did with the bull. 23 When you have finished the decontamination, you are to offer an unblemished young bull and an unblemished young ram, offering them in Yahweh’s presence, and the priests are to throw salt on them and sacrifice them to Yahweh as a holocaust. 25 Every day for seven days you are to prepare a goat as a sin offering. They must also prepare a young bull and a young ram, both unblemished. 26 Over a period of seven days they are to make expiation for the altar and so cleanse it and dedicate it, 27 and they are to complete this...
period. On the eighth day and afterwards the priests will sacrifice your holocausts and shared offerings on the altar, and I will accept you. So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.”

44:1 He brought me back to the east-facing outer gate of the sanctuary area, but it was closed. 2 He said to me, “This gate is to be kept closed. It is not to be opened and no human beings are to come in through it, because Yahweh, the God of Israel, has come through it and so it is to be kept closed. 3 The head of state is to sit in it, eating a meal in Yahweh’s presence. He is to enter from the side of the gate porch and leave from the same side.”

4 Then he brought me in through the north gate to the front of the temple. There I saw the glory of Yahweh filling Yahweh’s temple, and I fell on my face. 5 He said to me, “Pay attention, human one, use your eyes to see and your ears to hear everything I tell you about all the regulations for Yahweh’s temple and all the instructions for it. Pay attention to all the procedures for entering the temple and to all those for exiting the sanctuary.

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a 26.a. lit. “fill its hand” (K sg וּלַּי “its hand” is idiomatic [Cornill 484]). The phrase primarily relates to the ordination of a priest, but is here used in a developed sense. It may have originally referred to the priest’s inaugurator sacrifice. Here it signifies the dedication of a sacred object. See further HALAT 552b, 553a.

a 27.a. The pronouns in v 27b are pl.

b 27.b. Heb. יֵעָנֵי, here rendered “shared offerings,” has defied any certain interpretation. The options are outlined by Milgrom, IDBSup 769, to which should be added “final offerings” (Rendtorff, Studien 133, following Köhler).

a 44:2.a. MT יְהֹוָה “Yahweh,” although supported in the general tradition, is usually deleted as a gloss influenced by 43:5–6 (cf. 46:1): Ezekiel is no longer in that special situation (Rautenberg, ZAW 33 [1913] 102). In the speech Yahweh is mentioned in the third person. Zimmerli (437) has noted that the word order does not conform with the normal sequence found in 9:4; 23:36.

a 3.a. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the preceding particle תָּא emphasizes the subject (J. Blau, VT 4 [1954] 7 note 3; Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 308, et al.). The emendation תָּא “however” (Toy 80 et al.) does not commend itself nor does לָא “concerning,” introducing a gloss (Botterweck, VT 1 [1951] 146, claiming some versional support). MT repeats לָא יִצְוָה “head of state,” unlike LXX Syr., and it is generally taken as a dittograph or an incorporation of a marginal note (Zimmerli 438). Driver, ibid., interpreted MT as “qua prince” (= NEB “when he is here as prince”).

a 5.a. MT and ancient versions add לָא יִצְוָה “Yahweh,” which appears to be an early explanation misled by the following לָא יִצְוָה “son of man,” usually in divine address (but see 40:4), and by finding wrong cues in the messenger formula of v 6. The addition probably occurred earlier than the same one in v 2 (Ehrlich, Randglossen 150).

b 5.b. For the suffix forms in K/Q see the note on 40:6.

c 5.c. One expects לָא יִצְוָה “all” in the context. Did לָא יִצְוָה drop out by haplography from לָא יִצְוָה “(set) your mind on all” (Vogt, Untersuchungen 161)? The preposition לָא יִצְוָה introduces the object of the verbal phrase: cf. Job 23:6. Note לָא יִצְוָה following. Later in the verse LXXージְּטָנִי “in all the holy places” (= וּדֲפַר מֶחוּץ “in the sanctuary”) for וּדֲפַר מֶחוּץ “the sanctuary” probably attests a misplaced correction.

d 5.d. Analogy with both the parallel noun and the basic 43:11 suggests that MT’s sg לָא יִצְוָה “entrance” be simply emended to לָא יִצְוָה “entrances,” as Syr. Vg Tg may imply: see Zimmerli 443. Haran (HUCA 50 [1979] 56 note 22; also Vogt, Untersuchungen 161–62) feasibly suggested that in this context the nouns have a verbal force.
"Tell that rebellious community, the community of Israel, the following message from the Lord Yahweh: You went too far in all your shocking practices, community of Israel, when you introduced foreigners uncircumcised in heart and body to function in my sanctuary, profaning it when you offered my food, the fat and the blood. They caused my covenant to be broken because of all such shocking practices of yours. You failed to undertake the duties pertaining to what I hold sacred. Instead, you appointed them to undertake those duties for me. Therefore the Lord Yahweh’s message is as follows: No foreigner uncircumcised in heart and body is to enter my sanctuary, not one of the foreigners living among the Israelites. Rather, the Levites will do so, who absconded..."

5.e. Before MT | k b “to all” one expects the copula (cf. Syr.), probably dropped as a consequence of textual damage earlier. The emendation ya e wh | k | w... ya e wh (Bertholet 156 et al.; cf. Ehrlich, ibid.) “those who may be admitted... and all who are to be excluded” (RSV, cf. [N]JB) is not cogent: the present text looks back to 43:11 and forward to 46:8–10 (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 52 note 2, 57 note 1), and such a sense for the second verb is unparalleled.

6.a. MT yr m “rebellion,” presumably regarded as abstract for concrete (“rebels”), stands in place of the expected yr mh t yb “the house of rebellion,” the normal phrase in Ezek, which is represented in LXX and apparently in Tg., unless it is paraphrasing. MT is partly paralleled in a predicative use at 2:7, but even that is textually uncertain. Probably t yb “house” was overlooked in view of its occurrence in the next phrase.

6.a. Elsewhere in the book µyr z “aliens” is used for foreigners, not the term f k n. It may have been avoided here because in a cultic context P uses f z in the particular sense of a person unauthorized to perform a cultic act, a layperson.

7.b. MT adds y t yb bty “my house, temple area,” unrepresented in LXX*, apparently to clarify the suffix. Probably it was originally intended as a correct exegetical gloss on y wq m “my sanctuary,” explaining that it referred to the temple area, like t yb “house, temple area” in vv 11, 14. For t bty used to introduce a gloss see Driver, L’Ancien Testament et l’Orient 127.

7.c. Rather than “bread”: see Driver, Bib 35 (1954) 309, and also BDB 537a.

7.d. LXX Syr. Vg presuppose w pt w “and you broke,” which is often read, but it smacks of an easier reading. Driver, ibid., has explained the Heb. in terms of causing a covenant to which one is not a partner to be broken, citing Jer 33:20–21 (cf. NEB).

7.e. Or “in addition to” (Cooke 491; BDB 755b).

8.a. Milgrom (Studies 8–16, esp. 11 note 41) has restricted the meaning of t yr m to “perform guard duty” and, with Yahweh as object, “guard the taboos.” The former technical sense fits some OT passages well, but it is uncertain whether it is so widespread as Milgrom urges.


8.c,d. MT wyt w “and you made them (fem, with reference to abominations?),” in place of the expected w wyt t w “and you made them (masc),” and µkl “to you,” in place of µkl “therefore,” attested by LXX and taken with v 9, seem to be related errors (Cornill 485). Did µkl after the messenger formula in v 6 influence MT and was a correcting nun related to the wrong word?

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from me when Israel went astray from me in pursuit of their idols. They will suffer punishment for their iniquity: they will function in my sanctuary, carrying out security service at the temple gates and other services in the temple area. They it is who will slaughter the holocausts and sacrifices for the people, and they it is who will be in attendance on them to serve them. Because they used to serve them in the presence of their idols and caused the community of Israel to fall into iniquity, for that reason I swear with uplifted hand an oath against them, runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle, that they will suffer punishment for their own iniquity.

They it is who will work in my sanctuary, carrying out security service at the temple gates and other services in the temple area. They it is who will slaughter the holocausts and sacrifices for the people, and they it is who will be in attendance on them to serve them. Because they used to serve them in the presence of their idols and caused the community of Israel to fall into iniquity, for that reason I swear with uplifted hand an oath against them, runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle, that they will suffer punishment for their own iniquity.

They it is who will have no access to me by acting as my priests or by having access to anything I hold sacred or most sacred. They are to suffer the shame they deserve and the consequences of the shocking practices they have perpetrated. I will make them responsible for duties that pertain to all the labor of the temple area and to all the work that has to be done in it.

“‘The levitical priests of Zadokite lineage, however, who discharged the duties of my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to be the ones who have access to me in serving me. They will be in attendance on me, offering me the fat and the blood, runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle. They it is who will enter my sanctuary, and they it is who will carry out duties on my personal behalf.

“When they come through the gates of the inner court, they are to put on linen clothes: they are to wear nothing woolen when they serve in the gates of the inner court and further inside. They are to wear on their heads linen caps and on their loins linen breeches, and nothing round their waists that causes sweat. When they go out to the people in the outer court, they are to take off the clothes they wore while serving and leave them in the sacred rooms. They must put on other clothing, to prevent them transmitting holiness to the people from their clothes. They should neither shave their heads nor wear long locks, but keep their hair quite short. None of the priests is to drink wine when he enters the inner court. They are not to marry widows or divorcees, but...
only virgins of Israelite stock; however, they may marry widows provided that they are widows of priests. 23 They are to teach my people the difference between what is sacred and what is profane, and make them knowledgeable in distinguishing cleanness and uncleanness. 24 In disputes they should pass formal judgment, using my rulings as the basis of their verdicts. 25 They must not defile themselves by contact with a dead person; they may only get defiled in the case of a father or mother, a son or daughter, a brother or unmarried sister. 26 After purification each one should let a week elapse, and on the day he comes to the sanctuary, entering the inner court for service in the sanctuary, he is to offer up a sin offering for himself. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.

28 “They are not to own any tenured land. I am their basis of tenure. You are to give them no property in Israel: I represent their property. 29 The cereal offerings, sin offerings and reparation offerings are to be their food, and they are to have everything devoted by Israel. 30 The best of all the firstfruits of all kinds and each contribution of every kind selected from your total contributions are to belong to the priests. You must give to the priest the best of your dough and in this way make a blessing rest on your home.

31 The priests cannot eat any bird or beast that has died from natural causes or from predators.

When you allot the country for tenure, you must set aside a reservation for Yahweh as a sacred area of the country 25,000 (cubits) long and 20,000 wide, and it is to be sacred throughout its entire length.

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*a* Heb. “stand to judge” (= K, supported by LXX Syr. Tg.; Q “for judgment” is clumsy in the context) refers to the formal posture of a judge delivering his verdict: cf. Isa 3:13 and de Vaux, Ancient Israel 156.  
*b* Q is generally preferred with many MSS LXX Syr. Tg.  
*a* MT’s sg & WD Y “he shall come” appears to be a case of metathesis, as often in the book: see 36:20 Note.  
*b* MT’s pl. verb seems to reflect harmonization with v 25: ́p ś ́y “he shall count off” is attested by one MS and LXX Syr. (cf. Lev 15:13, 28). In this verse RSV and in part NEB follow Cornill (488) in adopting the variants of Syr., but see Cooke (493); Wevers (222).  
*a* LXX* omits wḏ q h ́l “to the sanctuary” as redundant, but it may be retained as emphatic (see Comment).  
*a* LXX Vg have preserved the correct reading (cf. BHS), required by the parallelism. MT probably arose as a comparative gloss on 45:8bb from 36:12 h ́l n m h t yh w “and you (the land) will become their possession.” It was taken with the wrong column and displaced the original text. The verb was adapted to h t yh w“and it (fem) will be” and related to the sin offering of v 27.  
*a* And so not redeemable: cf. Num 18:14.  
*b* See Cooke, ibid.; Driver, Bib 35 (1954) 310.  
*b* Heb. h ́l yf is of uncertain meaning: it occurs in Num 15:20; Neh 10:38. The LXX in Num renders “dough.” See the discussion in Eissfeldt, Erstlinge 62.  
*c* For ́l yb “your (sg) house” LXX Syr. presume ṭ k yt b “your (pl.) houses” in accordance with the earlier pl. verb.  
*a* For the construction see Cooke 505.  
*b* MT has a conflated text: ́l ́l “length” occurs both at the head of the phrase (= Syr. Vg), as in v 3 and very often, and at the end (= LXX), as in v 5.
extent. (²Of this area a square of 500 by⁵ 500 [cubits] is to belong to⁴ the sanctuary, surrounded by 50 cubits of open land.) From this measured area you⁵ should measure off a section 25,000 ³ (cubits) long and 10,000 wide, containing the sanctuary. It will be the most sacred part ⁴ of the country. ³ It will belong to the priests that serve in the sanctuary, who have access to Yahweh in his service, and will furnish room for their houses (as well as open land⁶ for the sanctuary). ³ A section 25,000 (cubits) long and 10,000 wide is to be assigned⁶ to the Levites who serve in the temple area as their property, with cities to live in. ³ Alongside the sacred reservation you must provide an area 5,000 (cubits) wide and 25,000 long as the city’s property; it will belong to the whole community of Israel. ⁴ The territory on each side of the sacred reservation and the city property, adjoining both of them, will belong to the head of state. On the west side it will extend westwards and on the east⁶ side eastwards. In length it will correspond to⁶ one of the (tribal) tracts,⁶ being bounded by the west⁶ and east frontiers ⁸ of the country. That will be⁶ his
property in Israel. Never again will my heads of state oppress my people: they will let the community of Israel have the country, tribe by tribe.

9““This is the Lord Yahweh’s message: You heads of the state of Israel, you have gone too far. Have done with violence and mayhem, and practice what is just and fair. Give my people respite from your evictions. So runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle.

10“Have standard weights and a standard ephah and bath. 11The ephah and bath are to have the same capacity: the bath is to contain 1/10th homer and the ephah 1/10th homer, the capacity of each being determined by the homer. 12The shekel is to be 20 gerahs. 5 shekels are to be really 5; 10 shekels are to be 10. There must be 50 shekels to your mina.

13“These are the contributions you should give: 1/6th ephah out of every homer of wheat and 1/6th ephah out of every homer of barley; 14the set amount of oil, oil being measured by the bath, a 1/10th bath out of each kor, at the rate of 10 baths to the kor; 151 sheep out of a flock of 200 from Israel’s watered land (?) for the cereal offerings, holocausts and shared offerings that will be used to make expiation for...
them (so runs the Lord Yahweh’s oracle). All the people will be liable for these contributions to the head of state in Israel. The head of state will be responsible for the holocausts and cereal offerings and the libations at the festivals, new moons and sabbaths—all the public services of the community of Israel. He is to provide the sin offerings, cereal offerings, holocausts and shared offerings given that expiation may be made on behalf of the community of Israel.

The Lord Yahweh’s message is as follows: On the first of the first month you are to take an unblemished young bull and decontaminate the sanctuary. The priest will take some of the blood from this sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, the four corners of the altar plinth and the doorposts of the gate to the inner court. You are to do likewise on the seventh of the month, for anyone who sins inadvertently or through ignorance. In this way you are to make expiation for the temple. On the fourteenth day of the first month you should hold the passover, after which unleavened bread is to be eaten for seven days. The head of state is to provide on that day a bull as a sin offering for himself and all the people in the land. During the seven days of the festival he is to provide as a holocaust to Yahweh seven bulls and seven rams, unblemished beasts, on each of the seven days; also a

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*a* 15.a. Heb. ḥqwm -ḥ_ is literally “irrigation, drink,” here conceivably “watered land” (cf. Gen 13:10; Wevers 225; cf. 47:1–12; cf. KJV “fat pastures,” NJB “pastures”). LXX may imply t ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “families” (Cornill 494 et al.; cf. RSV, NEB), unless it is a guess (Zimmerli 475). Gese (*Verfassungsentwurf* 70 note 1) et al., following Grätz, emended to h q ṭ ṭ “cattle.”

*b* 16.a. MT adds ungrammatically ḫ ḫ “the land,” unattested by LXX*. It was probably a comparative gloss with reference to ḫ ḫ ṭ ṭ “the people of the land” in v 22; 46:3 (cf. Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 72).

*b* 16.b. For ḫ ṭ ṭ “be obliged to” see Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 71 note 2; Zimmerli, ibid., with reference to GB 179a. An emendation t ḫ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “will give” (Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 154; Cooke 507, claiming the support of LXX Syr.) is unnecessary.

*a* 17.a. MT has a pl. t ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “the holocausts,” for which a sg ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ, read by many MSS, is expected. Did the pl. form come in from the margin, originally clarifying the sg form at 46:2 in the next column, where it has a pl. predicate?

*b* 17.b. The prefacing of a copula, with much support (see *BHS*), is unnecessary for this summarizing phrase. Cornill (495) takes it with v 17b.

*a* 18.a. The second person references are sg in vv 18–20a, but pl. in vv 20b and 21.

*a* 19.a. LXX Syr. Vg have pl. forms: probably the sg forms in MT have been influenced by 46:2.

*a* 19.a. LXX Syr. Vg have pl. forms: probably the sg forms in MT have been influenced by 46:2.

*a* 20.a. Instead of ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “in the month” one expects ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “of the month” (see Cooke 507), and a few MSS so read. For the variant in LXX, which many adopt, see Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 77–78 and Zimmerli 480, 483.

*b* 20.b. Heb. ṭ ṭ ṭ here signifies “because of, on account of” (BDB 580a).

*c* 20.c. The clause functions as a final summary: cf. 47:17a and the analogous use of a consec pf (cf. *GKC* lllk).

*a* 21.a. For the construction of an impersonal pass with a retained acc cf. *GKC* 121a,b.

*b* 21.b. MT ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “a feast, weeks” is hardly original. The latter term appears as “seven” (t ṭ) in a few MSS and the ancient versions, which suits the context. MT appears to have originated in an annotation that referred to the missing festival of weeks; the annotation displaced ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “seven.” Heb. ṭ ṭ ṭ “feast,” which is pointed as abs in MT, can hardly qualify ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “the passover” in v 21a. It may have been an early note paving the way for the “feast” of unleavened bread in v 23 (Zimmerli 481).
young goat for a sin offering each day. 

For every bull and ram he is to provide an ephah as a cereal offering, with a hin of oil to every ephah. 

At the festival that begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month he is to make the same provision for seven days, the same sin offerings, holocausts, a cereal offerings and oil.

46:1 “The Lord Yahweh’s message is as follows: The east-facing gate to the inner court is to be kept closed on the six working days, but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and also on the new moon day. 

The head of state is to enter through the porch on the outer side of the gatehouse and to take his stand by its doorpost, while the priests present his holocaust and shared offering. He is to kowtow in worship on the threshold a of the gatehouse and then leave, but the gate is not to be closed till the evening. 

On sabbaths and new moons the people in the land are to kowtow worshipfully in Yahweh’s presence by the entrance to the same gate. 

On the sabbath the holocaust brought to Yahweh by the head of state is to consist of six unblemished lambs and an unblemished ram, while the cereal offering is to be an ephah with the ram and as much as he cares to give with the lambs, together with a hin of oil to every ephah. 

On the new moon day it is to consist of an unblemished young bull and six lambs and a ram, which are also to be unblemished; and an ephah with the bull and a further one with the ram are what he must present as a cereal offering, and as much as he can afford with the lambs, and a hin of oil to every ephah. 

When the head of state enters, he is to do so through the porch of the gatehouse and to leave the same way. 

But when the people in the land come into Yahweh’s presence for the public services, those who enter through the north gate to kowtow in worship should leave by the south gate, while those who enter through the south gate are to leave by the north gate. They are not to go back through the gate of entry, but leave b by the opposite b one. 

The head of state is to join them, entering as they do and leaving a as they do. 

At festivals and other public services the cereal offering should be an ephah with each bull and a further one with each ram, and as much as he cares to give with the lambs, together with a hin of oil to every ephah. 

Whenever the head of state presents a voluntary sacrifice, whether a holocaust or shared offering as a voluntary sacrifice to Yahweh, the east-facing gate should be opened for him, and he is to present his holocaust or shared offering just as he does on the sabbath. Then he should leave, and the gate is to be closed after he has done so.

You a are to present an unblemished yearling lamb as a daily holocaust to Yahweh, presenting it every morning. 

In addition to it you are to present every morning a cereal offering consisting of 1/6th ephah and 1/3rd hin of oil to moisten the flour. This cereal offering for Yahweh is a permanent ruling. 

a 25.a. LXX Syr., along with a few MSS, prefix a copula; but noun lists follow various patterns and even the asyndeton here is possible: cf. Jer 2:26 and GKC 154a note 1. 

a 46:2.a. In 40:6–7; 43:8 the term for “threshold” is 5 ; here and in 47:1 it is 7 p M. See Zimmerli 490. 

a 6.a. The pl. μ μ MT “unblemished” is anomalous with a sg noun. Generally a sg μ MT is read with much ancient support (see BHS). MT could be a case of ditography (Zimmerli 487) or of assimilation to the form in v 6b (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 82 note 4). 

a 9.a. For pl. Θ ττ Θ (K) “they will leave” one expects a sg δ ττ (Q etc: see BHS). Hitzig (359) defended K as the harder reading, explaining the preceding sg as distributive (cf. GKC 145m). The waw may be simply a ditograph. A similar case occurs in v 10 (see BHS). Were the two instances originally meant as marginal notes on δ ττ ττ in v 9a, indicating that the subjects were collective? 

b 9.b. The suffix more probably refers to the gate (LXX Vg; Smend 381) than to the subj (cf. v 10bb). 

a 10.a. See note 9.a.”

a 13.a. There is ancient evidence for a third sg verb here and in v 14 (see BHS), with reference to the head of state, which some older scholars and RSV and NJB follow, but it smacks of an easier and so inferior reading (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 84).
The lamb, together with the cereal offering and the oil, is to be presented\(^a\) every morning as the regular holocaust.

16The Lord Yahweh’s message is as follows: If the head of state makes a gift to any of his sons, it will become the latter’s tenured possession\(^b\) and, passing on to his sons, become their tenured property.\(^c\) But if he makes a gift out of his tenured possessions to anyone in his service, it will belong to that person till the year of release and then revert\(^a\) to the head of state. After all, it is his tenured possession; it must pass to his sons.\(^b\) The head of state must not seize any part of the people’s tenured land by ousting them from\(^a\) their property oppressively. He must settle his own property on his sons, to avoid my people becoming displaced from their personal property.”

19Then he brought me through the entrance adjacent to the gatehouse that leads to the north-facing sacred rooms\(^a\) of the priests.\(^b\) There I found a place at the west end,\(^c\) about which he told me, “This is the place where\(^a\) the priests are to boil the meat of the reparation offerings and sin offerings, and where

\(^a\) 14.a. There is overwhelming ancient support (see BHS) for a sg ḫ tqj “ruling” in place of the pl. form in MT. The pl. seems to have arisen from a desire to include the daily holocaust with the cereal offering. The same desire may have encouraged the early overloading with ḫ ymt “regular” in the ancient tradition: the term refers primarily to the holocaust (v 15; Num 28:6, etc). Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 85 note 2) et al. regard ḫ ymt simply as an intrusion from v 15. However, more probably it represents an independent annotation to the effect that not only the daily holocaust (v 15) but also the daily cereal offering could be termed ḫ ymt, as in Lev 6:13 (20); Num 4:16; Neh 10:34 (33). Seemingly LXX* attests a text in which ḫ ymt had displaced ṭ [ ṭ qj “permanent.” The expression ṭ [ ṭ qj “permanent ruling (sg )” is common in the priestly literature.

15.a. K is usually followed. The pl. has priests in view.

16.a. Generally LXX is followed in reading ṭ ṭ [ ṭ m “out of his inheritance,” as in v 17, and taking with the preceding. But (a) LXX* omits the term in v 17 and in its Vorlge it may well have been displaced here, and (b) there is awkwardness in a switch from “one of the sons” to sons in general. MT may be retained, and the suffix related to “one of the sons”: cf. the contrasting v 17ab [ (Keil 346).

17.a. For the old form of verbal ending see GKC 44f, 72o.

17.b. Generally ṭ ṭ [ ṭ m “the inheritance of (his sons, it will become theirs)” is read with LXX Syr., but MT ( = Vg Tg.) has the merit of being the harder reading. The particle ṭ [ ṭ is asseverative, “surely”; for ṭ [ ṭ “his sons” as casus pendens with a retrospective suffix cf. GKC 143b.

18.a. For the pregnant use of ṭ ṭ “from” cf. GKC 119ff.

18.b. MT ṭ ṭ m k ṭ ṭ “to the priests” is strange on three counts: (a) elsewhere in the vision account the only person the prophet encounters is the supernatural guide; (b) in LXX Syr. Tg. the priests function as users of the rooms, as in 42:13–14; and (c) the phrase must be subordinate to the rooms, since the following phrase in the Heb., “north-facing,” refers back to the rooms (Zimmerli 498). Cooke (516), following a cue from Herrmann (286), plausibly suggested that ṭ ṭ arose from an abbreviation ṭ ṭ “which belong to” (cf. Driver, Textus 1 [1960] 123).

19.a. The article is anomalous before a noun pointed as constr: an anarthrous ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “rooms” is expected, as in 42:13. Was there assimilation to the sequence - ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ later in the sentence?

19.b. MT ṭ ṭ m ṭ ṭ “to the priests” is strange on three counts: (a) elsewhere in the vision account the only person the prophet encounters is the supernatural guide; (b) in LXX Syr. Tg. the priests function as users of the rooms, as in 42:13–14; and (c) the phrase must be subordinate to the rooms, since the following phrase in the Heb., “north-facing,” refers back to the rooms (Zimmerli 498). Cooke (516), following a cue from Herrmann (286), plausibly suggested that ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ arose from an abbreviation ṭ ṭ “which belong to” (cf. Driver, Textus 1 [1960] 123).

19.c. MT ṭ ṭ ṭ ṭ “at their far side” envisages a sg noun with suffix ( = Syr. Tg.), as only in Gen 49:13. Q is preferable: it accords with the usage of P in Exod 26:27; 36:32, where the abs dual is combined with ṭ ṭ “westward” (Zimmerli, ibid., who reasonably explained LXX*’s nonrepresentation of ṭ ṭ in terms of haplography).
they are to bake the cereal offerings. Then he took me out into the outer court and so transmit holiness to the people."

Next he took me out into the outer court and led me over to the four corners of the court. I found an enclosure in each of the corners: in the court’s four corners there were integrated enclosures, each the same size, 40 (cubits) long by 30 wide. Each of the four had a constituent part a low wall around it. All round the bottom of the walls were constructed fireplaces for cooking. “These,” he told me, “are the kitchens where those who serve in the temple area are to boil the sacrifices offered by the people.”

Notes

1.a. For MT h np “(which) faces” wynp “its face” is expected. The usual formulation is wynp r wa “whose face” (e.g., v 4; 42:15); less common is h np h “which faces,” as in 44:1. Did a comparative gloss h np displace wynp? In LXX an added t h n b l e p o u s h “which faces” in v 2 may represent a misplacement of the same gloss.

1.b. In MT f w “gate” introduces an appositional definition of f w h “the gate,” but LXX Syr. Vg do not represent it. The text is conflated with alternative formulations, that of 42:15 and that of 40:6; 43:4.

3.a. MT has “And like the manifestation, the manifestation which I saw”: LXX is generally followed.
in its nonrepresentation of “like the manifestation” (see BHS). MT has anticipated subsequent terms. Zimmerli (407–8) may be right in regarding MT’s “which I saw” as a similar anticipation: cf. for the resultant text 8:4; 41:21.

3.b. MT has “when I came to destroy” or, since Ezekiel took no part in the destruction, not even by prophecy, “when I came in connection with destruction” (cf. GKC 114o). Generally preferred is a minority reading וָב וֹב b “when he came,” supported by a few MSS Theod. Vg. A conjectured source for both readings may be found in ה וֹ y a וֹ b “when Yahweh came,” via an abbreviation y (cf. Cooke 474; cf. LXX 38:20).

3.c. LXX τοὺς εἰσαί “to anoint” in place of “to destroy” represents יָמָל “for destruction,” perhaps a comparative gloss from 9:6 that displaced יָמָל; it was wrongly linked with the stem יָמ “anoint.”

3.d. MT adds וָב וֹ b “visions,” which Syr does not represent. It was probably a comparative gloss from 1:1 (cf. 8:3).

4.a. See 40:6 Note *

5.a. For the construction see Ehrlich, Randglossen 148; BDB 570a and cf. 44:4.

6.a. For the form cf. 2:2 and Zimmerli 408.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
MSS manuscript(s)
Theod. Theodotion
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
*6.a. For MT וֹ b “a gate” וֹ b “the gate” is expected after the reference in v 3. But the anarthrous form (cf. 43:1) seems to be idiomatic, representing the constr before a relative clause (GKC 130c).
cf. confer, compare
6.b. For MT שְׁאָה “a man” one expects שְׁאָה הָ “the man,” as the ancient versions represent and as in 40:4.

7.a. Heb. תֹּא has been ascribed an emphatic value, e.g., by Cooke (474) with reference to Mishnaic Heb., but the non-integration of the following nouns militates against this explanation. More naturally this is a case of anacoluthon, with תֹּא functioning as an object sign relating to the object of וַעֲמַפְּי “they sully” later; but the stream of thought was diverted (Muraoka, *Emphasis* 133). LXX supplied a verb “you have seen”: it is unlikely that a verb תְּאָר “have you seen?” fell out by homoeoteleuton before תֹּא (Cornill 478 *et al.; cf. NEB*), since the Gk. verb occurs before “son of man.” Tg. paraphrased “this is …, this is …”

7.b. See *Comment*.

7.c. MT מִת נָמַב ;, usually “their high places,” may here mean “funeral shrines” and be short for מִת נָמַב בּ “in …” (Albright, *VTSup* 4, 247). But some MSS Theod. Tg. ed represent a pointing מִת נָמַב בּ “at their death,” which is generally preferred.

8.a. The use of an inf suggests that the phrase is not coordinate with the noun phrases of v 7b, but starts a fresh sentence as a subordinate clause (*cf. GKC* 112oo; Cooke, *ibid.*).

9.a. lit. “keep away from me.”

10.a. The Heb. noun occurs in 28:12, but מִת נָק תֵּ in v 11 and the identical renderings for both in Tg. Vg (see *BHS*) suggest that it be read here too (Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 40). For an evaluation of

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cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Heb. Hebrew
e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example
Heb. Hebrew
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
NEB The New English Bible
Tg. Targum
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
*VTSup* Vetus Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill)
MSS manuscript(s)
Theod. Theodotion
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
ibid. *ibidem*, in the same place
lit. literally
Heb. Hebrew
Tg. Targum
suggested emendations of the preceding verb see Gese, ibid.; Zimmerli 410. In place of the preceding verb \( \text{vdl mwm} \) “and they will measure” RSV and NEB (“and its appearance” = \( \text{whr m} \)) follow the LXX with some scholars, including Cornill (480).

11.a. MT \( \text{wml n m w} \) “and if they shall have become ashamed” is logically inferior to \( \text{wml k y h w} \) “and they will be ashamed,” represented by LXX Vg. A condition for communication does not accord with v 10 (Gese, ibid.).

11.b. LXX presupposes a verb \( \text{trx w} \) “and depict,” which has often been preferred (cf. BHK; BDB 849a; RSV; NEB), but it was the factual basis for the noun-related errors partially perpetrated by the LXX later in the verse (Cooke, ibid.).

11.c. For the Heb. assonance see Zimmerli, ibid..

11.d. Herrmann’s explanation of MT in terms of a cue gloss correcting an error (263) accords with the evident formulation of three pairs of terms (Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 40–41): \( \text{vt r w} \) \( \text{Al k w} \) “and all its shape” was an assimilating error for \( \text{vt r vt Al k w} \) “and all its instructions,” while in v 11b \( \text{vt r w} \) \( \text{Al k w} \) \( \text{vt r vt Al k w} \) “and all its shape and all its instructions,” which LXX* does not represent, was a marginal correcting note that was subsequently swept into the text. In *BHS* \( \text{vt r w} \) is a printing error for \( \text{vt r w} \) (cf. BHK). For the K/Q variants see in principle the note on 40:6.

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*Vg* Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)

*BHS* *Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

*ibid.* *ibidem*, in the same place

*LXX* The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

*MT* The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

*LXX* The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

*Vg* Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)

*ibid.* *ibidem*, in the same place

*LXX* The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

*cf. confer*, compare


*LXX* The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

*ibid.* *ibidem*, in the same place

*Heb.* Hebrew

*ibid.* *ibidem*, in the same place

*MT* The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

*LXX* The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

*BHS* *Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

*cf. confer*, compare


*K* Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
11.e. **LXX** represents first person suffixes, which are sometimes preferred (see **BHS**), but they represent assimilation to a common deuteronomistic formulation. In this case **LXX**’s underlying \( \text{y} \text{r} \text{f} \text{w} \) suggests an original \( \text{v} \text{f} \text{r} \text{w} \) “instructions for it.”

12.a. **MT** adds a superfluous “Behold, this is the instruction for the temple,” not represented in **LXX** \* **Syr.**. It seems to have arisen from a grammatical note \( \text{h} \text{n} \text{h} \text{e} \) “these (fem),” which, used as object as in Aram. (cf. **GKC** 135a note 1), observed that \( \text{µ} \text{t} \text{w} \) at the end of v 11 referred to fem antecedents; it was wrongly understood as \( \text{h} \text{N} \text{e} \text{i} \) “behold” and related to v 12a. Talmon and Fishbane (**ASTI** 10 [1975/76] 140–42) defend the clause in terms of a concluding inclusion, comparing Lev 14:54–57; Num 7:84–88. Their explanation is closely tied to their structural interpretation of v 12 (see **Form/Structure/Setting**).

13.a. **MT** has “and gutter the cubit”: the consonantal text would be more naturally divided as \( \text{h} \text{ma} \text{h} \text{q} \text{j} \text{w} \) “and its gutter (is) a cubit,” as **Syr. Vg** imply. **Heb. q y j** , usually “bosom, fold of garment at the chest,” has the sense of a hollow space: it is used figuratively for the bottom of a chariot in 1 Kgs 22:35 and here for an area hollowed out of the ground.

13.b. The fem suffixes here and on the next noun (also \( \text{h} \text{l} \text{r} \), v 17) indicate that the antecedent, \( \text{q y j} \) “gutter,” is regarded as fem: see Zimmerli 423.

13.c. For **MT** \( \text{d j} \text{a h} \) “the one (masc),” a fem and anarthrous form \( \text{t j} \text{a} \) “one” is expected, agreeing with \( \text{t f z} \) “span.”

13.d. Most emend \( \text{b g} \) to \( \text{h b G G} \) “height” on the evidence of **LXX**: an error of haplography is easily assumed. But **MT** is to be retained as the harder reading: \( \text{b g} \) “bulge, protuberance, mound” here refers to the squat, lower block of the altar, half below ground (Galling in Bertholet 153–54; Vincent,
Jérusalem 491; Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 44; Zimmerli 424; they compare the usage in 16:24).

14.a. MT (Q) \( \text{qyjm} \) “and (from the gutter)” is a consequence of taking v 13bb to relate to the gutter and rim. More probably it refers to the dimensions of v 14a, and the copula, unrepresented in LXX, is to be omitted.

14.b. Driver (Bib 35 [1954] 307–8) related \( \text{hrz} \) “ledge” to Arab. ‘dr “protect, screen,” and so here surrounding ledge or stone framework around the earthen core of the altar.

14.c. MT’s \( \text{hm} \, \text{bj} \, \text{rw} \) “and width (is) the cubit” is more naturally divided as \( \text{hm} \, \text{h} \, \text{b} \, \text{p} \, \text{r} \, \text{w} \) “and its width (is) a cubit” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 149; BHK). cf. \( \text{wk} \, \text{r} \, \text{a} \) “its length” in 40:21; 41:12; 42:7.

15.a. The form of the noun is variously represented in vv 15–16. In v 15a MT takes as “mountain of God” (\( \text{larh} \)). Q \( \text{l} \, \text{y} \, \text{r} \) a in vv 15b, 16 aligns with Isa 29:1–2 and construes as “lion of God.” Both are popular etymologies. The term seems to mean “hearth” from a presumed stem \( \text{hra} \) “burn” cognate with Arab. ‘ry, whence ‘iratun “hearth” (BDB 72a; HALAT 82a; the ending is developed from an affixed lamed [cf. GKC 85s]).

15.b. For the construction see Zimmerli, ibid..

16.a. The preposition \( \text{beth} \) here and in v 17; 45:2; 48:20 finds parallel usage in its Arab. cognate (Ehrlich, ibid.).

17.a. One expects reference to the lower block of 16 x 16 cubits, not least as a referent for the surrounding ridge in v 17b. Loss by homoeoteleuton, often predicated, is feasible, although an adj \( \text{hl} \, \text{wd} \) “taller” is also required with \( \text{hrz} \) \( \text{hr} \, \text{w} \) “and the ledge” in v 17a (see BHS). More probably incomplete writing from the outset is to blame: the text concentrates on the upper, vertically larger
plinth, as in v 20.

17.b. MT is ungrammatical: either (a) ʰt wə b b wə “surrounding it” (cf. Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 308) or (b) ʰyt wə b yə s “around it” is required. LXX kukoŋen kukoʊmenon au t w/“around, surrounding it” is a doublet that may go back to its Heb. Vorlage in a form b yə s ʰt wə b b wə and attest the first alternative, which is closer to MT than the latter. MT is easily explained as assimilated to the form later in v 17 (cf. v 20). In MT one alternative, b yə s , may have displaced b b wə .

17.c. The article in ḥmə h “the cubit” is unexpected: see Cooke 476.

17.d. For the construction see Cooke, ibid.

17.e. For the form of the suffix see GKC 911. Driver, ibid., regarded MT as a mixed form attesting sg (“ramp” = Tg.) and pl. (“stairs” = LXX Syr. Vg) nouns.

17.f. MT vocalizes as inf construct; a ptep t ʰn p 0 “facing” is required, as the ancient versions imply.

18.a. For yndə “Lord” here and in vv 19, 27; 44:6, 9, 12, 15, 27; 45:9, 15; 46:1, 16 see the note on 20:3.

20.a. For the variants in LXX harmonizing difference of person here and elsewhere in the section see BHS and Zimmerli 431.

20.b. For the privative piel, “de-sin,” see GKC 52h.
21.a. The construction is appositional instead of genitival; to read a construct $\text{ ג ב} \text{ “bull of (the sin offering)” (cf. BHS)}$ is to surrender to an obvious correction (Cooke, \textit{ibid.}), in line with v 25. The second term may have been added (Herrmann 276 et al.) to differentiate from the holocaust bull of vv 23–24. Or was it a comparative gloss from \textit{Lev 8:14(–17)}?

21.b. The verb has an indefinite \textit{sg} subject: Zimmerli (434) aptly compared \textit{Lev 16:27–28}.

21.c. \textit{Heb. י鹞 מ “sanctuary”} is here used in the sense of the temple area, as in 44:5, etc, according to Gese (\textit{Verfassungsentwurf} 126–27), but Milgrom may well be right in relating it to the inner court, as in 45:4, etc (\textit{VT} 26 [1976] 335).

21.d. \textit{Heb. י鹞 מ is of uncertain meaning. It has been linked topographically with the Muster (ד י鹞 מ) Gate of Jerusalem in \textit{Neh 3:31} to the northeast of the temple area. Tg. interprets as “proper, prepared place.” LXX Vg “separated place” is a paraphrase.}

26.a. \textit{lit. “fill its hand” (K sg י鹞) “its hand” is idiomatic [Cornill 484]). The phrase primarily relates to the ordination of a priest, but is here used in a developed sense. It may have originally referred to the priest’s inauguratory sacrifice. Here it signifies the dedication of a sacred object. See further \textit{HALAT 552b, 553a.}}

27.a. The pronouns in v 27b are \textit{pl.}.

27.b. \textit{Heb. ימ ימ, here rendered “shared offerings,” has defied any certain interpretation. The options are outlined by Milgrom, \textit{IDBSup 769, to which should be added “final offerings” (Rendtorff,}}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{cf. confer, compare}
  \item \textit{BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia}, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
  \item \textit{ibid. ibidem, in the same place}
  \item \textit{et al. et alii, and others}
  \item \textit{sg singular or under}
  \item \textit{Heb. Hebrew}
  \item \textit{VT Vetus Testamentum}
  \item \textit{Heb. Hebrew}
  \item \textit{Tg. Targum}
  \item \textit{LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT}
  \item \textit{Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)}
  \item \textit{lit. literally}
  \item \textit{K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)}
  \item \textit{sg singular or under}
  \item \textit{HALAT W. Baumgartner et al., Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament, rev. 3rd ed. of KB (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967-83)}
  \item \textit{pl. plate or plural}
  \item \textit{Heb. Hebrew}
  \item \textit{IDBSup Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume, ed. K. Crim (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976)}
\end{itemize}
Studien 133, following Köhler).

44:2.a. MT Ḥ WV Ḥ “Yahweh,” although supported in the general tradition, is usually deleted as a gloss influenced by 43:5–6 (cf. 46:1): Ezekiel is no longer in that special situation (Rautenberg, ZAW 33 [1913] 102). In the speech Yahweh is mentioned in the third person. Zimmerli (437) has noted that the word order does not conform with the normal sequence found in 9:4; 23:36.

3.a. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the preceding particle ℓ َ emphasize the subject (J. Blau, VT 4 [1954] 7 note 3; Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 308, et al.). The emendation ℓ َ “however” (Toy 80 et al.) does not commend itself nor does ℓ َ “concerning,” introducing a gloss (Botterweck, VT 1 [1951] 146, claiming some versional support). MT repeats ℓ َ “head of state,” unlike LXX * Syr., and it is generally taken as a dittograph or an incorporation of a marginal note (Zimmerli 438). Driver, ibid., interpreted MT as “qua prince” (= NEB “when he is here as prince”).

5.a. MT and ancient versions add Ḥ WV Ḥ “Yahweh,” which appears to be an early explanation misled by the following μ d a A: “son of man,” usually in divine address (but see 40:4), and by finding wrong cues in the messenger formula of v 6. The addition probably occurred earlier than the same one in v 2 (Ehrlich, Randglossen 150).

5.b. For the suffix forms in K/Q see the note on 40:6.

5.c. One expects ℓ k “all” in the context. Did ℓ b drop out by haplography from ℓ k b ℓ b “(set) your mind on all” (Vogt, Untersuchungen 161)? The preposition beth introduces the object of the verbal phrase: cf. Job 23:6. Note ℓ k b following. Later in the verse LXX ᵇ w ˢ ᵇ ᵈ ᵇ ᵇ ʷ i “in all the holy places” (= ᵄ ᵇ ᵈ ᵇ ʷ ᵇ “in the sanctuary”) for ᵆ ᵇ ᵇ “the sanctuary” probably attests a misplaced correction.
5.d. Analogy with both the parallel noun and the basic 43:11 suggests that MT’s sg a vb m “entrance” be simply emended to ya b m “entrances,” as Syr. Vg Tg. may imply: see Zimmerli 443. Haran (HUCA 50 [1979] 56 note 22; also Vogt, Untersuchungen 161–62) feasibly suggested that in this context the nouns have a verbal force.

5.e. Before MT l k b “to all” one expects the copula (cf. Syr.), probably dropped as a consequence of textual damage earlier. The emendation ya e w m l k l w... ya b w m l (Bertholet 156 et al.; cf. Ehrlich, ibid.) “those who may be admitted ... and all who are to be excluded” (RSV, cf. [N]JB) is not cogent: the present text looks back to 43:11 and forward to 46:8–10 (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 52 note 2, 57 note 1), and such a sense for the second verb is unparalleled.

6.a. MT y rm “rebellion,” presumably regarded as abstract for concrete (“rebels”), stands in place of the expected y rm h t y b “the house of rebellion,” the normal phrase in Ezek, which is represented in LXX and apparently in Tg., unless it is paraphrasing. MT is partly paralleled in a predicative use at 2:7, but even that is textually uncertain. Probably t y b “house” was overlooked in view of its occurrence in the next phrase.

7.a. Elsewhere in the book µ y r z “aliens” is used for foreigners, not the term f k n. It may have been avoided here because in a cultic context P uses f z in the particular sense of a person unauthorized to perform a cultic act, a layperson.

7.b. MT adds y t y b At a “my house, temple area,” unrepresented in LXX*, apparently to clarify the suffix. Probably it was originally intended as a correct exegetical gloss on y rm d q m “my sanctuary,” explaining that it referred to the temple area, like t y b “house, temple area” in vv 11, 14. For t a used to introduce a gloss see Driver, L’Ancien Testament et l’Orient 127.

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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
sg singular or under
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Tg. Targum
HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Tg. Targum
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
P Pesher (commentary)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

7.d. LXX Syr. Vg presuppose ἐὰν καὶ ἐπλήσθης “and you broke,” which is often read, but it smacks of an easier reading. Driver, *ibid.*, has explained the Heb. in terms of causing a covenant to which one is not a partner to be broken, citing Jer 33:20–21 (cf. NEB).

7.e. Or “in addition to” (Cooke 491; *BDB* 755b).

8.a. Milgrom (*Studies* 8–16, esp. 11 note 41) has restricted the meaning of יָרוּת יָרוּת to “perform guard duty” and, with Yahweh as object, “guard the taboos.” The former technical sense fits some OT passages well, but it is uncertain whether it is so widespread as Milgrom urges.


8.c,d. MT אָדוֹן וּתָבָא תַּבָא “and you made them (fem, with reference to abominations?),” in place of the expected לִשְׂמַע לָּתָבָא לִשְׂמַע “to you,” in place of לִשְׂמַע therefore,” attested by LXX and taken with v 9, seem to be related errors (Cornill 485). Did לִשְׂמַע after the messenger formula in v 6 influence MT and was a correcting nun related to the wrong word?

9.a. For the emphatic particle *lamed* see *GKC* 143e, Driver, *ibid.*, and *HALAT* 485b, 486a.


10.b. MT adds לִשְׂמַע “who went astray,” not represented in LXX* Syr.*. It seems to have been
intended as a variant of וָּשָׁנָה “who went far away,” assimilating to 48:11, which was inserted into the text before the wrong יִלָּמ “from me.”

10.c. Duke’s interpretation in terms of the technical phrase of Num 18:1, etc (JSOT 40 [1988] 65–66) fails to take into account the accusatory usage of הָיְלִי “iniquity” in v 12ab.


12.a. Duke (JSOT 40 [1988] 68) subordinates v 12a to v 11. But vv 12–14 appear to elaborate vv 10–11. A double movement from accusation to punishment so suggests. The repetition of vocabulary points in this direction: דָּבָר “serve,” functioning as a hinge in vv 11b, 12a, נַחֲלָת “their idols” (vv 10ab, 12a), וְהָיְלִי “and they will bear their iniquity” (vv 10b, 12bb) and יִבְּקְר “the temple area” (vv 11ab, g, 14ab).

12.b. The imperfect may be frequentative (Cooke 481).

12.c. As in 36:7, the pf is performative.

12.d. The lack of representation of v 12bb in LXX* is probably for non-repetitive conciseness. The stylistic scheme observed above supports its presence. The unusual construction with waw is dictated by a rhetorical motive, to repeat the clause of v 10b.

14.a. For this sense see Milgrom, Studies 60–87, esp. 83–86.

19.a. MT repeats this phrase by dittography, as even Barthélemy et al. (Preliminary Report 5, 176) grant: it is absent from some MSS and LXX Syr. Vg.

24.a. Heb. “stand to judge” (= K, supported by LXX Syr. Tg.; Q “for judgment” is clumsy in the
context) refers to the formal posture of a judge delivering his verdict: cf. Isa 3:13 and de Vaux, Ancient Israel 156.

24.b. Q is generally preferred with many MSS LXX Syr. Tg.

25.a. MT’s sg א ו י “he shall come” appears to be a case of metathesis, as often in the book: see 36:20 Note.

25.b. The context favors insertion of the copula read by some MSS and presupposed in LXX Syr. Vg.

26.a. MT’s pl. verb seems to reflect harmonization with v 25: י δ φ י “he shall count off” is attested by one MS and LXX Syr. (cf. Lev 15:13, 28). In this verse RSV and in part NEB follow Cornill (488) in adopting the variants of Syr., but see Cooke (493); Wevers (222).

27.a. LXX* omits ו ד ה ל א “to the sanctuary” as redundant, but it may be retained as emphatic (see Comment).

28.a. LXX967 Vg have preserved the correct reading (cf. BHS), required by the parallelism. MT

Tg. Targum
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
cf. confer, compare
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
MSS manuscript(s)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
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sg singular or under
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
pl. plate or plural
MS Monograph Series or Manuscript
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
cf. confer, compare
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Institute edition, 1980)
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
cf. confer, compare
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
probably arose as a comparative gloss on 45:8bb from 36:12 ʰ INCIDENTAL ــ ʰ “and you (the land) will become their possession.” It was taken with the wrong column and displaced the original text. The verb was adapted to ʰ “and it (fem) will be” and related to the sin offering of v 27.


30.b. Heb. ʰ is of uncertain meaning; it occurs in Num 15:20; Neh 10:38. The LXX in Num renders “dough.” See the discussion in Eissfeldt, Erstlinge 62.

30.c. For ʰ “your (sg) house” LXX Syr. presuppose ʰ “your (pl.) houses” in accordance with the earlier pl. verb.

45:1.a. For the construction see Cooke 505.

1.b. MT has a conflated text: ʰ “length” occurs both at the head of the phrase (= Syr. Vg), as in v 3 and very often, and at the end (= LXX), as in v 5.

1.c. MT ʰ “10,000” is a revision of “20,000” (= … ʰ ) attested by LXX*, which is generally preferred, even by Keil (320), since it aligns with vv 3, 5. “10,000” would be ʰ , as in vv 3, 5; 48:9 (MT), 10, 13, 18. MT secondarily restricts the sacred reservation to its priestly half (cf. 48:9).

1.d. Heb. ʰ “it” is attracted to the masc predicate (Cooke, ibid.; Joüon 149c).
2.a. See the note on 43:16.

2.b. For this use of לֵֽא see 40:16.

3.a. In the pl. context of vv 1, 6 d wmt “you (sg) will measure” is generally emended to a pl. wdm, assuming metathesis. In fact it turns up in this pre-corrupted form as a misplaced comparative gloss in 47:18.

3.b. Q is the expected form: K probably suffered assimilation to the forms in v 2.

4.a. MT שֵׁד q “(It will be) a sacred area (of the country)” harks back to v 1 in accord with MT’s reference to the priestly half of the total area (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 103 note 1; Eichrodt 568). Its omission in LXX* supports its secondary nature. Originally v4a as far as א וּ “it” completed v 3 (Zimmerli 466).

4.b. MT שֵׁד q מִל “and sanctuary/ a sacred area (?) (for the sanctuary)” seems to be a ditto graphic error for שֵׁד q מִל “and open land,” attested by LXX (cf. Lev 25:34) Tg.; it refers to v 2b (cf. Smend 371). A further, conjectural emendation שֵׁד q מִל “(and grazing land) for cattle” (BHK et al.) is speculative and unwarranted.

5.a. K is generally preferred, in line with vv 4, 6.

5.b. MT תָּק שִׁל מְיַר “[twenty rooms] does not suit the context: תָּק שִׁל מְיַר [ “cities to live in,” presupposed by LXX, is generally read, even by Barthélemy et al., Preliminary Report 5, 178–79, via a ב/א error in the second case (cf. Num 35:2; Josh 14:4; 21:1). Did the numeral originate as a correction relating to v 1 or was it assimilated mechanically to the number “20” earlier in v 5? Did the second term fall under the influence of the noun adjacent in the previous column at 44:19?"
7.a. In place of המדק with a meaningless he of place (cf. 48:21) analogy with the previous phrase leads one to expect שבגדק “east.” Did המדק, intended as a variant of המדק “eastwards,” displace שבגדק?

7.b. Elsewhere the form is sg, as in v 6: see BHS.

7.c. cf. chap. 48.

7.d. Comparison with the parallel 48:21 and consistency with the coordinated phrase suggest המד “west,” as presupposed by LXX, with a meaningless he of place. Perhaps MT was influenced by שבגד “east” in pm “on the west side” earlier.

8.a. LXX is generally followed in taking the awkward אָרְאָא | “in relation to the country” with v 7 and reading הִיהָו “and it will be” for הִיהוּ “it will be,” a consequence of the wrong division (cf. K/Q in v 5).

8.b. One MS and LXX imply | אָרְאָא יָהָא יָהָא | “heads of state of Israel” for יָהָא יָהָא | “my heads of state.” Obviously scribal abbreviation underlies the variants (Driver, Textus 1 [1960] 121 = NEB; cf. יָהָא יָהָא | “we will rejoice” in 21:15[10]). The longer reading is often preferred, but MT can stand (Cooke 496).

8.c. Bertholet (159) referred to 1 Kgs 18:26 for אָרְאָא | “give” in this sense.

12.a. MT construes v 12b as a single clause: “20 shekels, 25 shekels, 15 shekels shall be your mina,” apparently meaning that a 60-shekkel mina is to be represented by three weights, weighing respectively 20, 25 and 15 shekels. However, (a) the form of the numeral 15 is unique (cf. GKC 97d, e) and (b) in the third case “shekels” switches to a sg form, which suggests that its clause is not coordinated with the foregoing (Smend 373). Accordingly the reading of LXX adopted in the translation (cf. RSV), with the

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cf. confer, compare

sg singular or under

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

cf. confer, compare

K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)

Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)

MS Monograph Series or Manuscript

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

cf. confer, compare

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

cf. confer, compare


gs singular or under
numerals 5/5, 10/10, 50, is generally preferred. Perhaps the root of the problem lies in the second numeral in MT, יִשְׁתָּמַת יָרְשׁוֹן “5 and 20.” Did it originate as a marginal variant or correcting gloss on the number in K at v 3 in the previous column, and then displace יִשְׁתָּמַת יָרְשׁוֹן “5 and 10”? Then in the case of the other numbers, 20 and 15, the elements יִשְׁתָּמַת יָרְשׁוֹן “20” and יָרְשׁוֹן “5” were subsequent assimilations to the central figures. In v 13 the extra mem on יִשְׁתָּמַת יָרְשׁוֹן “5,” indicating יִשְׁמָת יָרְשׁוֹן “50.”

13.a. MT יִשְׁתָּמַת יָרְשׁוֹן “and you shall give a sixth part” invents a denominative verb. The parallelism leads one to expect יִשְׁתָּמַת יָרְשׁוֹן “and a sixth,” as the ancient versions attest. Ehrlich (Randglossen 153) suggested wrong word division, יָרְשׁוֹן יִשְׁמָת יָרְשׁוֹן “and a sixth from/of the ephah” (cf. 2 Kgs 11:5), but again the parallelism is broken. See the previous note.

14.a. lit. an appositive phrase, “the oil (being in terms of) the bath”: cf. Cooke 506. cf. the paraphrase in Tg., and Zimmerli 474. It is often taken as a gloss, even by Barthélemy et al, Preliminary Report 5, 180.

14.b. MT has “the 10 baths are a homer, for the 10 baths (are) a homer.” In the second clause Vg attests הקד “(for) the kor (is 10 baths)” for מ “a homer”; it suits the context better. MT could have arisen by assimilation to the other term, used frequently earlier, through similarities. Then the first clause, unrepresented in LXX, rather than being a dittograph of MT, as it is usually taken to be, may have originated as a variant מ “homer” preceded by cue words, which entered the text and caused the assimilation of הקד “the kor” to מ. Conceivably the clauses are parallel, equating a homer and a kor (cf. RSV, GNB, NJPS); yet the article would then be required with מ “homer,” and הקד “for” is unexpected.

(Cornill 494 et al.; cf. RSV, NEB), unless it is a guess (Zimmerli 475). Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 70 note 1) et al., following Grätz, emended to ה נֵמ “cattle.”

16.a. MT adds ungrammatically א ה “the land,” unattested by LXX*. It was probably a comparative gloss with reference to א ה מ[“the people of the land” in v 22; 46:3 (cf. Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 72).

16.b. For ל a ה “be obliged to” see Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 71 note 2; Zimmerli, ibid., with reference to GB 179a. An emendation ת א וָה “will give” (Ehrlich, Randglossen 154; Cooke 507, claiming the support of LXX Syr.) is unnecessary.

17.a. MT has a pl. וְ תוּ “the holocausts,” for which a sg ה וְ ה, read by many MSS, is expected. Did the pl. form come in from the margin, originally clarifying the sg form at 46:4 in the next column, where it has a pl. predicate?

17.b. The prefacing of a copula, with much support (see BHS), is unnecessary for this summarizing phrase. Cornill (495) takes it with v 17b.

18.a. The second person references are sg in vv 18–20a, but pl. in vv 20b and 21.

19.a. LXX Syr. Vg have pl. forms: probably the sg forms in MT have been influenced by 46:2.

cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
et al. et alii, and others
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
GB Gesenius’ Hebräisches Handwörterbuch, ed. F. P. W. Buhl (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1949)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
pl. plate or plural
sg singular or under
MSS manuscript(s)
pl. plate or plural
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartsenia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
20.a. Instead of 'djb “in the month” one expects 'djl “of the month” (see Cooke 507), and a few MSS so read. For the variant in LXX, which many adopt, see Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 77–78 and Zimmerli 480, 483.

20.b. Heb. סק here signifies “because of, on account of” (BDB 580a).

20.c. The clause functions as a final summary: cf. 47:17a and the analogous use of a consec pf (cf. GKC 111k).

21.a. For the construction of an impersonal pass with a retained acc cf. GKC 121a,b.

21.b. MT [ם נ] “a feast, weeks” is hardly original. The latter term appears as “seven” (ם נ) in a few MSS and the ancient versions, which suits the context. MT appears to have originated in an annotation that referred to the missing festival of weeks; the annotation displaced [ם נ “seven.” Heb. נ “feast,” which is pointed as abs in MT, can hardly qualify מ “the passover” in v 21a. It may have been an early note paving the way for the “feast” of unleavened bread in v 23 (Zimmerli 481).

25.a. LXX Syr., along with a few MSS, prefix a copula; but noun lists follow various patterns and even the asyndeton here is possible: cf. Jer 2:26 and GKC 154a note 1.
46:2.a. In 40:6–7; 43:8 the term for “threshold” is ¹s; here and in 47:1 it is ū ṭūm. See Zimmerli 490.

6.a. The pl. ṭūm “unblemished” is anomalous with a sg noun. Generally a sg ṭūm is read with much ancient support (see BHS). MT could be a case of dittography (Zimmerli 487) or of assimilation to the form in v 6b (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 82 note 4).

9.a. For pl. ḫū x ḫ (K) “they will leave” one expects a sg ḫū x ḫ (Q etc: see BHS). Hitzig (359) defended K as the harder reading, explaining the preceding sg as distributive (cf. GKC 145m). The ṭaw may be simply a dittograph. A similar case occurs in v 10 (see BHS). Were the two instances originally meant as marginal notes on ḫū x ḫ in v 9a, indicating that the subjects were collective?

9.b. The suffix more probably refers to the gate (LXX Vg; Smend 381) than to the subj (cf. v 10bb).

10.a. See note 9.a.*

13.a. There is ancient evidence for a third sg verb here and in v 14 (see BHS), with reference to the head of state, which some older scholars and RSV and NJB follow, but it smacks of an easier and so

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pl. plate or plural
sg singular or under

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

pl. plate or plural
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)

Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)

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K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)

cf. confer, compare


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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

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cf. confer, compare

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sg singular or under

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
inferior reading (Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 84).

14.a. There is overwhelming ancient support (see *BHS*) for a sg /t q/ “ruling” in place of the pl. form in MT. The pl. seems to have arisen from a desire to include the daily holocaust with the cereal offering. The same desire may have encouraged the early overloading with /d ymt/ “regular” in the ancient tradition: the term refers primarily to the holocaust (v 15; Num 28:6, etc). Gese (*Verfassungsentwurf* 85 note 2) et al. regard /d ymt/ simply as an intrusion from v 15. However, more probably it represents an independent annotation to the effect that not only the daily holocaust (v 15) but also the daily cereal offering could be termed /d ymt/, as in Lev 6:13 (20); Num 4:16; Neh 10:34 (33). Seemingly LXX* attests a text in which /d ymt/ had displaced /µlw/ “permanent.” The expression /µlw/ “permanent ruling (sg)” is common in the priestly literature.

15.a. K is usually followed. The pl. has priests in view.

16.a. Generally LXX is followed in reading /wt l j ṣm “out of his inheritance,” as in v 17, and taking with the preceding. But (a) LXX* omits the term in v 17 and in its *Vorlage* it may well have been displaced here, and (b) there is awkwardness in a switch from “one of the sons” to sons in general. MT may be retained, and the suffix related to “one of the sons”: cf. the contrasting v 17abg (Keil 346).

17.a. For the old form of verbal ending see *GKC* 44f, 72o.

17.b. Generally /d l n/ “the inheritance of (his sons, it will become theirs)” is read with LXX Syr., but MT (= Vg Tg.) has the merit of being the harder reading. The particle ḫ ṣ asseverative, “surely”; for ṣnw “his sons” as casus pendens with a retrospective suffix cf. *GKC* 143b.
18.a. For the pregnant use of מִמַּאן “from” cf. *GKC* 119ff.

19.a. The article is anomalous before a noun pointed as constr: an anarthrous מִמַּאן “rooms” is expected, as in 42:13. Was there assimilation to the sequence - ה | א later in the sentence?

19.b. MT מִמַּאן | א “to the priests” is strange on three counts: (a) elsewhere in the vision account the only person the prophet encounters is the supernatural guide; (b) in LXX Syr. Tg. the priests function as users of the rooms, as in 42:13–14; and (c) the phrase must be subordinate to the rooms, since the following phrase in the Heb., “north-facing,” refers back to the rooms (Zimmerli 498). Cooke (516), following a cue from Herrmann (286), plausibly suggested that א arose from an abbreviation מִמַּאן “which belong to” (cf. Driver, *Textus* 1 [1960] 123).

19.c. קְפַּרְתּוֹ | ר | א “at their far side” envisages a sg noun with suffix (= Syr. Tg.), as only in Gen 49:13. Q is preferable: it accords with the usage of P in Exod 26:27; 36:32, where the abs dual is combined with מִמַּאן “westward” (Zimmerli, ibid., who reasonably explained LXX’s nonrepresentation of מִמַּאן in terms of haplography).

20.a. MT’s staccato and loose relative conjunction is not impossible (Herrmann, ibid.). LXX Syr. may imply מִמַּאן | א “and there,” which is often read, but the harder reading is to be preferred. Wevers (228) took the lack of coordination as evidence that the clause is secondary.

21.a. For the Heb. distributive repetition cf. *GKC* 123d.

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cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare


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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

Tg. Targum

Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
go singular or under

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

Tg. Targum

Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)

P Pesher (commentary)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
22.a. MT \( \text{w} \text{f} \text{q} \) is most uncertain: see the discussions in Cooke, ibid., and Zimmerli 499. The most plausible rendering in terms of etymology and context is “joined, attached” (Tg. 5), with reference to the overall structure of the outer wall and bordering rooms (Busink, \textit{Tempel} 723 and note 26; cf. Driver, \textit{Bib} 35 [1954] 311). \textit{LXX Syr.} appear to presuppose \( \text{w} \text{f} \text{q} \) “small,” which is generally read; but, being an easier reading, it does not commend itself (Cooke 514).

22.b. MT adds \( \text{w} \text{x} \text{q} \) pointed as a denominative hoph ptcp, “set in corners,” but the special points over it (cf. \textit{GKC} 5n) indicate the Masoretes’ suspicions. It is not represented in \textit{LXX Syr. Vg}; it may have originated as \( \text{w} \text{x} \text{q} \) “corners,” intended as a grammatical note on the unusual masc form in v 21.

23.a. lit. “in them.” Contra \textit{BHK} and \textit{BHS}, Ehrlich (\textit{Randglossen} 156) and Zimmerli, ibid., have defended MT.

23.b. lit. “a course (of masonry).”

23.c. The uninflected form \( \text{w} \text{v} \) “constructed” is paralleled in 40:17; 41:18.

24.a. For the representation of the pl. see \textit{GKC} 124r.

\textit{Form/Structure/Setting}

\textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
\textit{Tg.} Targum
cf. \textit{confer, compare}
\textit{Bib} \textit{Biblica}
\textit{LXX} The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
\textit{Syr.} Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
\textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. \textit{confer, compare}
\textit{LXX} The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
\textit{Syr.} Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
\textit{Vg} Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
\textit{lit.} literally
\textit{BHK} R. Kittel, ed., \textit{Biblia hebraica} 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: Württembergische, 1937)
\textit{BHS} \textit{Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia}, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
\textit{MT} The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
\textit{lit.} literally
\textit{pl.} plate or plural
The next major literary unit of the book in its present form should probably be demarcated as chaps. 43–46 (Parunak, *Structural Studies* 506–9; cf. Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 2, 6, 36, 54; Zimmerli 406; Vogt, *Untersuchungen* 132, 146, 165). Talmon and Fishbane (*ASTI* 10 [1975–76] 138–53) have impressively argued for 40:1–43:12 as a redactional unit. They were followed by Greenberg (*Int* 38 [1984] 189, 193–4), who regarded the next main division as 44:1–46:24, with 43:13–27 functioning as a transitional passage. Talmon and Fishbane might have come to a different conclusion, if they had conducted a wider study that embraced chaps. 40–46. They interpret 43:12 as a concluding formula, but it could equally be an initial formula, such as occurs in Lev 6:2, 7, 18 (9, 14, 25); 7:1, 11, as they observe. In fact, the reference to “the most holy” may be influenced by the convention followed in Lev 6:18(25); 7:1. Their interpretation of הָלַע נִצְחָא “law, instruction” as “instruction-plan” is given without elucidation. Does it not more naturally refer to instructions for cultic procedure, in line with the plural usage in 43:11; 44:5, 24 (cf. Eichrodt 556)? The parallels with the early verses of chap. 40 seem to represent not an inclusion (A … A’), but matching beginnings (A … /A’ …). In v 12b גְּלַת “territory/boundary” may well look forward structurally to the sacred “territory” of the reservation described in 45:1–4, rather than back to the wall of 40:20.

Haran (*HUCA* 50 [1979] 53, 55–56), examining chaps. 40–48 as a whole, found three parts, of which the first comprises 40:1–44:3 and concerns the form of the temple, while the second in 44:4–46:24 deals with temple procedures. He too took 43:12 as a conclusion. He rightly noted that the largely parallel 40:4 and 44:5 have different references to material layout and to rules of procedure. He did not take into account the role of 43:11 in relation to 40:4 and 44:5 nor the structural role of the visionary scenes. He played down the fact that procedure seems already to be in view in 43:18–27; 44:1–3 (cf. 43:11–12).

Rautenberg (*ZAW* 33 [1913] 114–15), stripping chaps. 40–46 down to a shorter, pre-redactional entity, analyzed 40:4–42:20 and 44:5–46:14 as main parts, with 43:1–11 functioning as a middle portion and 44:1–4 as a bridge to the second main part. It is clear that chap. 43 and the early verses of chap. 44 have posed problems for structural analysts.

Parunak (*Structural Studies* 522–23; *JBL* 102 [1983] 542) has found within 43:1–46:24 a compositional block made up of three units, 44:5–31; 45:1–8 and 45:9–46:18. The first and third he takes as parallel treatments of the worship of the priests and of the head of state, dealing with past offenses (44:5–8; 45:9–12), future ministry (44:9–27; 45:13–46:15) and inheritance (44:28–31; 46:16–18). The middle section is a hinge concerned with the allotment of land, dealing with priests (vv 1–5) and head of state (vv 7–8), as well as people (v 6). The advantages of Parunak’s scheme are that he does nicely integrate the otherwise difficult 46:16–18 and that he can find structural highlighting for the two occurrences of µk l אֶבֶן “you went too far” in 44:6; 45:9 (cf. Rautenberg, *ZAW* 33 [1913] 103). However, he ignores the catchword הָלַע נִצְחָא “contribution” in chap. 45, overlooks that not only the head

cf. confer, compare

*ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*

*Int Interpretation*

cf. confer, compare

*HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual*

cf. confer, compare

*ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

*JBL Journal of Biblical Literature*

cf. confer, compare

*ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
of state is in view in 45:9–46:18 (see 45:13–16, 18–21; 46:9, 13–15) and in general does not perceive how intimately the material is related to temple concerns.

Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 6, 8) drew attention to the conglomeration of individual passages that confront the reader in chaps. 43–48 and the difficulty of discerning their coherence. What follows is an attempt to see a structural wood in those different trees. 43:1–44:5 appears to function as an extended introduction. Then there are three main sections. (1) 44:6–31 is concerned with cultic personnel. Vv 28–30 form a bridge over to the next section, (2) 45:1–17, which features the maintenance of the cult by means of the people’s contributions. (3) 45:18–46:15 explores the theme of ritual offerings. A framework is provided by the narratives of visionary guidance in 43:1–5; 44:1–5 and 46:19–24: they provide an inclusion both for the introduction and for the whole, in an A … A/… A pattern. 46:16–18 provides an intersectional link between a concern of its longer section, expressed in 45:1–8, and that of the next, the issue of property rights in the land. The three sections vary in length: the first is 26 verses long (41 lines in BHS), the second 17 verses (30 lines) and the third 23 verses (34 lines). It is clear that most weight rests on the first section with its theme of cultic personnel; moreover its theme spills over into the other sections and even into the preceding and following units.

The overall literary unit starts with a vision narrative introduced by a formula of guidance and a double communication from Yahweh (43:1–12). The guide soon retires to the background, to be replaced by the transporting spirit and by Yahweh’s own voice. As elements of 8:1–3 were echoed in 40:1–3, so here motifs of 8:3–4 are resumed in 43:2–5: the divine glory that now returns, explicit reminiscence of the visions of chap. 1 as well as of chap. 8, and the spirit’s work. The introduction to chap. 8 has been split into two, to preface the visionary counterparts in chaps. 40–42 and 43–46 (Parunak, Structural Studies 509). The divine communication falls into two parts, both headed by the address יְהֹוָה "human one." Vv 6–9 are a carefully constructed statement (see Comment) of a necessary change from pre-exilic conditions to be instituted. Vv 10–11 serve to recapitulate chaps. 40–42 and look forward to what follows, in instructing the prophet to report the design and procedures of the temple. V 12, which may be redactional, forms the conclusion of the divine speech and serves as a heading for what follows. It is structurally significant that the vocabulary of vv 10–11 is developed in the הֹוָה "instruction," יֵשׁ הָרֶשׁ "measurements" and יֵשׁ הֹוָה "regulations" of v 12, 13 and 18.

The regulation for dedicating the altar which appears in vv 18–27 would more naturally appear next. It is introduced by divine address of the prophet, with the customary title, as in v 6, and a messenger formula, before a brief description that announces the topic. It is typical of chaps. 43–46 that ritual regulations are introduced in terms of a prophetic oracle (cf. F. Baumgärtel, ZAW 73 [1961] 286): priestly and prophetic concerns are here united. Vv 13–17, which begin with their own superscription, are prefixed in order to explain the design of the altar, which is done in verbless terms, and so prepare for the technical vocabulary used in the dedicatory regulation. In the latter the second person verbs indicate that Ezekiel was to be assigned a key role in the rite. In this respect and in the representation of a ritual regulation as divine communication, there are formal echoes of the usage in P (cf. Exod 25–29; Num 19 [Zimmerli 430–31]). In v 19 there appears to be a redactional expansion like that of 40:46b, which will be considered later.

44:1–5 is at first sight very similar to 43:1–11 in respect of form. It certainly contains vision narrative

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**BHS** Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

**cf. confer,** compare

**ZAW** Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

P Pesher (commentary)

**cf. confer,** compare

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featuring guidance formulas and the motif of Yahweh’s glory, and in v 5 the prophet is addressed as םדא אב “son of man” and exhorted in terms close to those of 43:11. Closer examination shows that there are two vision narratives, in vv 1–3 and 4–5. The first case includes an explanation relating to cultic procedure, which is reminiscent of material in chaps. 40–42. V 3 introduces the reader to the איהי “head of state,” who plays a prominent role in chaps. 43–46: it will require discussion below. V 5 deliberately echoes both 40:4 and 43:11. The former factor suggests that the overall unit is parallel with the previous one of chaps. 40–42, 40:4/44:5 serving as parallel introductions. The verse also functions as a recapitulation, after the intervening material of 43:13–27 (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 57). The double echoing confirms the role of 44:5 within an extended introduction. The exhortation looks forward as well as back. It serves as a structural heading for the rest of the unit or at least up to 46:18 (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 56).

44:6–16 constitutes the first half of the first main section concerning temple personnel. Introduced by a commission to address the exiled community and a messenger formula, in form it is reminiscent of the complex oracles of judgment/salvation that occurred earlier in 34:2–16, 17–22. It is strongly influenced by the style of the priestly ordinance: only the accusation of vv 6b–8 employs direct address (to Israel). Israel’s punishment is expressed in legal terms from v 9, after Therefore and a messenger formula. V 10a introduces the complication of a fresh accusation relating to a particular group, the Levites, whose new subordinate role is punitively laid down in the regulations of vv 10b–11. Accusation and punishment of the Levites are emphatically reasserted in vv 12–14. After an oath formula qualified by a divine saying formula (v 12a) the same legal terminology as in v 10b introduces the punishment, Therefore “and they will bear their punishment” (v 12b; cf. 14:10 and Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 305). Vv 15–16 provide the legal equivalent of a promise of salvation: a further group, the Zadokite priests, as a reward for their loyalty (v 15a), are assigned an exclusive, prime role (vv 15ab–16). The reinforcing divine saying formula in v 15b corresponds to the one in v 12.

Despite the complexity of the piece, it is bound together with strong structural ties. A framework is provided by the threefold use of the phrase מזומן מזומן מזומן “carry out (cultic) duties” in vv 8, 14 and 16 in relation to the three groups of Israel, the Levites and the priests. Levitical and priestly roles are polarized in the respective service of Israel and Yahweh (vv 11, 15), the contrasting right or denial of special access (vv 13, 15) and the matching Therefore “they … and they” (vv 11, 16). A negative wordplay pervades the piece, the combination in וב וב “abominations” and the stem Therefore “go astray,” in vv 6, 7, 10, 13, 15. An inclusion is supplied by reference to “the fat and the blood” in vv 7 and 15.

44:17–31 is an appendage to vv 15–16 that comprises a selection of regulations for the cultic and social behavior of priests. It is dominated by a keyword, forms of קדוש “holiness” in vv 19, 23, 24 and 27. The motif of entry to the inner court in vv 17, 21 and 27 provides a framework. This factor, together with the divine saying formula of v 27b, seems to suggest that vv 28–31 were added subsequently. In fact, as noted earlier, they build a bridge to the next section. Not only Therefore “contribution” (v 30), but Therefore “tenured land” and Therefore “property” (v 28) link them to 45:1–8 (cf. 45:1, 5–8). Vv 28–30a stand out as addressed to Israel; thus they provide a structural tie with the beginning of the section, vv 6–8.

The next section, concerning maintenance of the cult, falls into three parts, 45:1–8, 9–12 and 13–17. It is dominated by an initial key phrase, Therefore “you are to give a contribution,” in vv 1 and 13; it is ironically echoed by Therefore “remove” in v 9. The first part, or at least vv 1–8a, has evidently been borrowed from 47:13–48:29, specifically 48:8–22 (see Zimmerli 467, 542). Vv 1–8a are addressed to
Israel. The promise of v 8b in its first clause echoes the \( \text{d} \text{q} \text{h} \text{y} \text{y} \) “no longer” formulations of earlier chapters, while its second clause is reminiscent of 47:21. It not only rounds off this first part, but is formulated to prepare for the beginning of the second, v 9.

V 9 appears to be an originally independent prophetic oracle that rhetorically addresses the oppressive rulers of pre-exilic times (cf. 34:2–10). It begins with a messenger formula and ends with a divine saying formula, and is artistically constructed. Its accusation, vigorously introduced like that of 44:6, constitutes an implicit promise to God’s people. Vv 10–12 comprise regulation concerning weights and measures, addressed to Israel. An inclusion is provided by \( \mu \text{kh} \text{y} \text{h} \text{y} \text{y} “let there be/it will be for you” (cf. the intermediate \( \text{h} \text{y} \text{h} \text{y} \text{y} “will be” twice in v 11). V 9 is rhetorically woven in by its own use of \( \mu \text{kh} \text{y} “to you” and by the presence of \( \text{q} \text{d} \text{h} “righteousness” in vv 9 and 10.

The regulations of vv 13–17 fall into two parts, vv 13–15, with a heading in v 13a addressed to Israel (but note v 15b) and a final divine saying formula, and the appended vv 16–17, which speak of the people in the third person. The two parts are integrated by parallel endings, vv 15b and v 17b.

The third part, 45:18–46:15, is concerned with rites and offerings. The comprehensive vocabulary of v 17a-b serves admirably to introduce it. It subdivides into two unequal halves, 45:18–25 and 46:1–15, both demarcated by messenger formulas. The regulations of vv 18–25, dealing with annual rites, fall into two parts, vv 18–20 and 21–25. The former concerns the cleansing of the temple and is seemingly addressed to Ezekiel; the second plural statement in v 20b appears to be a summarizing postscript that links with the plural address to Israel in v 21. Vv 21–25 major in the role of the head of state at the spring and autumn festivals. 46:1–15 discuss other cultic offerings and gate procedures. Vv 1–12 are bound together by the key figure of the head of state and by an inclusion relating to the inner east gate of the temple (vv 1–3, 12). The piece about daily offerings in vv 13–15 is evidently addressed to Ezekiel in vv 13–14.

The three related regulations of vv 16–18 are differentiated from what precedes by an initial messenger formula. The casuistic (\( \text{y} \text{y} “when”) formulations in vv 16 and 17 link with the one in v 12 and may indicate that at an earlier stage this piece, which continues to highlight the head of state, was joined with vv 1–15 (Zimmerli 495, 551–52). However, with its emphasis on property, its present placing serves to prepare for the topic of the next unit.

46:19–24 provides a vision narrative that has a concluding function. It has two halves, vv 19–20, 21–24, each opening with a guidance formula and closing with an explanation of cultic procedure for cooking sacrifices. Its topic of separate kitchens for priests and people makes it a fitting finale to the sectional emphasis on offerings and also to the pervasive issue of the two groups of temple personnel and the related motif of holiness.

So much for the form and structure of the various pieces and their role in an overall scheme. The question of setting raises redactional issues. The impression conveyed by the previous survey is surely that the very real coherence of chaps. 43–46 is contrived rather than natural (cf. Craigie 291). Greenberg has conceded that the composition of chaps. 43–46 took place in stages (Int 38 [1984] 199). Its unevenness may be illustrated from the juxtaposition of 45:10–12 with vv 13–17: they prepare the way for most of the measures mentioned in vv 13–14 but lack reference to the kor (v 14) and include the shekel, which finds no place in what follows. Clearly pre-existing material has been re–used in a new context. McConville, who presupposes a basic, authorial unity for chaps. 40–48, has claimed structural

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Int Interpretation
evidence for it in a centripetal and centrifugal movement within chaps. 40–46 (TynBul 34 [1983] 20–21). This movement reaches its midpoint not in the holy of holies (41:4) but in the altar of 43:13; and then an outward flow veers to the temple (44:5) and on to the holy reservation (chap. 45) and the tribal areas. If this structural analysis were correct, it would not remove the necessity of taking into account other phenomena that point away from a primary unity; but McConville has overlooked the presence of the altar in 40:47, where it has a minor role within the static blueprint of the holy temple in chaps. 40–42. It leaps to prominence, however, in the presentation of a dynamically functioning temple, in which the issue of maintaining the intrinsic holiness of the temple arises.

A good case has been made by Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 85) and refined by Zimmerli (550) that an underlying unit of chaps. 43–46 was a stratum concerned with the āḇōḏ “head of state”; its characteristics are (1) a positive attitude, (2) parallel mention of āḇēr āḥ mū “the people of the land,” and (3) singular mention of the āḇōḏ “head of state.” This hypothetical stratum would have consisted of 44:3 (cf. Rautenberg, ZAW 13 [1933] 102 note 1); 45:21–25 and 46:1–12. It may early have attracted 46:16–18 (cf. Zimmerli 552) and the related 45:16–17, and even 45:8 and 45:9. If, as seems likely, this expanded stratum lies behind our chapters, it is striking how its components have been divided among the various sections of chaps. 43–46 and creatively integrated into new contexts with their own agendas.

Evidence of redactional development appears in connection with what Gese called a Zadokite stratum (Verfassungsentwurf 67), but which Gunneweg more justly defined as a Zadokite section in 44:6–16 and “metastases” or corresponding sporadic amplifications in 40:46b; 43:19 and 48:11ab (Leviten 188). A quadruple series may be discerned. First, in 40:45–46a are mentioned two types of priest, those with duties in the temple area and those with altar duties. The former are clearly subordinate to the latter, in a sacerdotal hierarchy. The latter are qualified as levitical Zadokites in 40:46b, while no corresponding qualification is added to the former. This lopsidedness suggests redactional supplementation from 44:15. Duke (JSOT 40 [1988] 75, following Milgrom, Studies 13–14 note 47; cf. Smend 333; Hitzig 324; Allan, Heythrop Journal 23 [1982] 260 note 4) has urged that the qualification applies to both types, since āḇōḏ in v 45 means not “temple area” but “temple building.” This interpretation would create unnecessary tension within chaps. 40–48, in which only the inner circle who serve at the altar or in the sanctuary (cf. Num 18:5) are called Zadokites and are differentiated from other cultic staff responsible for the temple area (see 44:14; 45:5; 46:24; cf. Baudissin, Geschichte 114; HDB 4, 78). It has generally been overlooked that the subordinate priests are assigned to a room next to the inner north gate, where according to v 41 slaughtering took place. A similar phenomenon occurs in 43:19, where originally only priests were mentioned and again the reference to levitical priests of Zadokite descent appears to be a secondary comment derived from 44:15, to which a divine saying formula has been added by way of emphasis. In fact the context requires a reference to or inclusion of slaughtering; as in 40:45, this seems to have been the role of the priests originally in view here. Already then these priests have a role like that of the Levites to be mentioned in 44:11.
A second category of texts is represented in 46:19–20, 24, where “priests” and “those who serve in the temple area” are polarized, but the latter group is not expressly identified with the Levites. Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 89 note 2) found here the influence of 44:11 (cf. 45:5), where the latter terminology is used of the Levites, but more probably an older formula has been used there, as the similar language of 40:45 suggests. One should consider in this category 42:13–14, which Gunneweg (Leviten 189–90, 196) rightly brought into the discussion of texts relevant to the general issue. In this passage “the priests who have access to Yahweh” (cf. 45:4) or “the priests” are mentioned. It is clear that they are a privileged, exclusive group, which implies an unnamed subordinate group. One cannot deduce with Gunneweg (Leviten 189) that mention of two sets of rooms in the west building involves two groups of priests who are defined in the same way (cf. Zimmerli 400).

A third category distinguishes explicitly between priests and Levites. It appears in the basic text of 48:8–26, where the most holy territory of the priests is differentiated from that of the Levites in the holy reservation. It is evidently this basic text that is reflected in 45:4–5, which lacks a reference to Zadokite ancestry and simply distinguishes between “the priests who serve in the sanctuary and have access to serve Yahweh” and “the Levites who serve in the temple area.” Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 66) saw here the influence of chap. 44 because of overlapping terminology, but the precedents in 40:45 deserve consideration. The reference to Levites is the only new factor.

The fourth category explicitly refers to Zadokite priests. It receives fullest expression in 44:15–16, over against reference to Levites with duties in the temple area, including responsibility for slaughtering, gate security and menial tasks (vv 11–14). There was a quite thorough endeavor to incorporate this final development elsewhere, into 48:11, as the aberrant first person reference to Yahweh suggests, 40:46 and 43:19.

There are thus a series of texts that reflect development in the conception of temple personnel, although they are not necessarily to be assigned to four separate historical stages. The series begins with a hierarchy of two priestly classes, the lower of which already has the task of slaughtering. It progresses to separate classes of priests and Levites, and reaches an extreme form in the categorization of the priests as Zadokite in descent, together with an insistence that the Levites have no priestly role (44:13). Such development must run counter to a unitary approach to the text.

The dating of the diverse material in chaps. 43–46 can only be treated in a tentative and partial way. One must listen to McConville’s caution (TynBul 34 [1983] 10–15, 18), underlined by Duke (JSOT 40 [1988] 73–74), against importing a rigid distinction between a prophetic gospel and cultic law or between visionary material and legislation (Eichrodt 555–56, 564; Zimmerli 431–33; cf. 20:40). It is another aspect of a common confusion between form-critical and redactional issues, noted in connection with earlier chapters. However, the caution has to be held in tension with the evidence of compositional unevenness and development that these chapters indubitably contain, unless one adopts a purely canonical approach.

A suitable beginning is with Zimmerli’s minimal acceptance of the visionary 43:1–11 (12) and 44:1–2 as historically very close to the 573 B.C. date of the basic stratum of chaps. 40–42 (548, 552). At the other extreme, 45:1–8, having been borrowed from chap. 48, must fall outside present consideration. The little oracle in 45:9 has an original ring in light of 34:1–16, although its insertion seems to be
redactional. Its striking introductory μκλ Αβρ “enough of your …” seems to have been imitated in 44:6. The final vision in 46:19–24 has close links with 42:1–14, which was assigned to an early redactional layer that very possibly goes back to the prophet himself. A group of legislative sections seem to address the prophet as cultic founder (43:18–27; 45:18–20a; 46:13–14 [15]), and it is most natural to credit these to Ezekiel. If so, the closely related 43:13–17 cannot be far removed. The δ ḥn (“head of state”) stratum, if such it is, invites comparison with 34:24 and 37:25, where the term occurred. In both cases the immediate contexts were judged to reflect a relatively late redactional stage.

The review of the material relating to temple personnel undertaken above seems to show that 44:6–16 stands at the end of a process of development. Its starting point, in the pre-redacted texts of 40:38–46 and 43:18–27, with their references to subordinate priests, interestingly accords with the deuteronomistic 2 Sam 2:35–36 (cf. 2 Kgs 2:27). There the house of Eli seems to represent those who claimed priestly authority outside Jerusalem, and its rejection points to their reduction to a minor priestly role (see McCarter, 1 Samuel [AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980] 91–93). Accordingly, both passages, as already suggested on other grounds, can be credited to the period of Ezekiel. The development to the perspective of 44:6–16 was not so radical as is often thought. Even the Deuteronomist had Zadokites in view as the main priestly authority, while even the earliest texts in Ezek 40 and 43 envisage the subordinate cultic personnel as slaughterers.

The Zadokite reference which in 1 Samuel reflects the priesthood of the Jerusalem temple is certainly perpetuated in the last stage of the literary sequence. It is usually attributed to the postexilic period (e.g., P. Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975] 238–40). Gese (Verfassungsentwurf 122), following Procksch, assigned it to the earliest period, prior to Zerubbabel’s governorship, and Zimmerli (553) has followed him. Should it be pushed back earlier? Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation 138–42), developing work done by Milgrom (Studies 83–86; cf. Gunneweg, Leviten 199–202), has shown that 44:6–16 is an “exegetical” oracle that closely follows the terminology of Num 18:1–7, 22–23. Although he too assigns the oracle to a post-exilic date, the phenomenon is comparable with the verbal echoing of Lev 26:4–13 in Ezek 34 and 37. Both later passages were credited to a late redactional stage, but they are evidently exilic, inasmuch as they look forward to a return from exile. Perhaps the echoing of Num 18 has the same setting. Certainly the relative closeness between Ezek 40:45–46a and the Zadokite overlay, which was noted earlier, suggests that a long period of development is not necessary (cf. Levenson, Theology 131, 153 note 13: he envisages an exilic dating for 44:6–16). It is noteworthy that the redacted text claims full prophetic authority (44:6) and refuses to distinguish between the authorially “authentic” and the “inauthentic.” The fact that the oracle is given pride of place as the keynote passage of the first main section is significant. It is a pointer to the redactional shaping that underlies the present text of chaps. 43–46.

Comment

43:1–5 This visionary experience may have formed the climax of the temple vision at an earlier literary stage, but in the present form of the text it forms an introduction to the promise of chaps. 43–46 that worship would be restored. The luminous presence of Yahweh, which had departed in the vision of chaps. 8–11 and had followed the first Judean exiles to Babylonia according to chap. 1, was to return from there. In v 3 the text explicitly makes the connection with the earlier motif and brings it to a grand
conclusion. The outer east gate, where the tour had begun in 40:6 and to which Ezekiel had been brought back in 42:15 before he followed his celestial guide around the walls, features once more. Now it is the closest point of entry for Yahweh’s return to take up residence in the new, east-facing temple—just as it had been the way he had earlier left the old temple (10:18–19; 11:23). The noise and light that bombard Ezekiel’s senses recall the flapping wings of the living creatures that transported the chariot throne in 1:24, and the theophanic appearing of 1:28. “Glory” here refers to “the complete manifestation of divine majesty, both to the chariot throne and to God himself” (Mettinger, *Dethronement* 107). The prophet again reacts with the body language of shocked submission (1:28). In a deliberate counterpart to 8:3 and in an expression of the climactic point the present vision has reached, he is transported by the spirit above the route taken by the divine apparition. He witnesses its occupation of the temple building that till now had been but a shell.

6–9 Hitherto the angelic guide has explained significant features of what the prophet saw. Now in a conscious differentiation his voice is superseded by what is recognized from its source as a greater one. “When the sun rises, the stars grow pale. When the king enters and begins to speak, the courtiers … fall back” (Zimmerli 415). The first of two communications is strikingly given in vv 7–9 in a rhetorical scheme of alternating parallelism (ABC/ABC) set in a framing inclusion (Parunak, *Structural Studies* 520; cf. Talmon, *Qumran* 365). The framework, in vv 7ab and 9b, interprets the vision in terms of Yahweh’s immanence among his people, never to leave again. The verb יְכַל “live” recalls the tabernacle (יְכַל) of P: the sovereign God, who moved where he willed, was graciously to settle in the new temple, his wanderings over. In language derived from the ark tradition, the temple is initially described as the exclusive royal residence of Yahweh (cf. Isa 6:1; 60:13; Ps 99:5). The footstool is no longer the ark itself, as originally in the tradition, but the temple: the ark never features in the new temple (cf. Jer 3:16–17).

In pre-exilic times a cultic offense had been committed against the divine immanence, which is now graced with the term Yahweh’s “holy name” (A/A: vv 7bα, 8bα; cf. 20:39; 36:21–23). The offense is described in strong terms as “debauchery” or infidelity to the covenant (B/B: vv 7bα, 9a), before it is at last defined first as “memorials of their kings” (C/C: vv 7bβ, 9a) and then as insufficient differentiation between Yahweh’s and Israel’s zones (v 8a). The first accusation of lese majesty significantly cites prerogatives claimed by the kings of Israel. The implication is that their kingship was markedly inferior to Yahweh’s and that its exercise spelled an encroachment upon his own. The Hebrew term רָעָב seems here to mean not “corpses” but royal stelae, in the light of Ugaritic usage (see Neiman, *JBL* 67 [1948] 58–59; Gallling, *ZDPV* 75 [1959] 11–12; however, Ebach, *UF* 3 [1971] 365–68, has argued for a meaning “offerings for the dead”), set up in memory of deceased kings. The second charge relates to the duplex-like layout of palace and temple since Solomon’s period, the latter forming a part of the larger royal complex (see the sketch in Hasting’s *Dictionary of the Bible* 4, 695). Henceforth, in line with the holiness zones built into the new temple of chaps. 40–42, such closeness between Yahweh and Israel in the persons of their kings or their representations could no longer be tolerated. Inevitably the immanence of a transcendent (“holy”) God could only be realized by a corresponding separateness. A God so near

cf. confer, compare

JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*

ZDPV *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

UF *UF Ugaritische Forschungen*
to them ("among") had nevertheless to be so far from them, if his revelation was not to be impugned.

10–11 The second communication flows smoothly from the first (see Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 41–42). If such wrong practices had resulted in exile (v 8b; cf. 22:31), a prerequisite for return from exile was a change of heart that took seriously their shamefulness. Proclamation of Yahweh’s new work of salvation was to stimulate a realization of how far the people stood from God and from his will (cf. 16:54, 61; 36:31–32). This end was to be served first by study of the temple plan, to be drawn by the prophet, with its massive gatehouses that warned of the awesomeness of the one who resided there, and with its gradations in holiness from periphery to center. Second, the temple procedures that promoted and protected Yahweh’s holiness, which were also revealed to the prophet (and presented in the course of what follows) would bring a challenging message. The architectural plan was itself to serve as an inducement for inaugurating and maintaining the procedures.

12 In the present compositional structure this verse is a headline for the overall unit. It forms a bridge with the foregoing oracle by echoing its theme, the holiness of the temple as Yahweh’s abode. Not only the temple complex built on the mountain top (cf. 40:2) but also the surrounding reservation (see 45:1–3) partook of this holiness. So far did its aura spread. The superlative expression grandiosely differentiates the area from the rest of the land (cf. 45:3–4: “the most sacred part of the country”).

13–17 This section represents a preliminary footnote to the next one about the dedication of the altar (cf. 1 Sam 9:9 in relation to 9:11). It explains the technical vocabulary used in v 20 by presenting the design of the altar and its dimensions. The altar was mentioned in passing in 40:47 as standing in the inner court, but now it leaps into prominence as a major element in the operation of the temple. The reminder of the larger unit from 40:5, together with the echo of 40:2 in v 12, gives the impression of a fresh beginning and so of the continuance of introductory material within a new unit. For a reconstruction of the design see Fig. 5. After the heading in v 13a, vv 13b–15 describe the parts of the altar from bottom to top and in terms of its lateral tapering, while vv 16–17 supply its respective widths from top to bottom and the access by steps from its east side. The circular gutter, deepened by its raised edging, was a sump for sacrificial blood to drain into (cf. v 18b), so that the inner court was kept clean and dry. Above it rose the altar to a height of 10 cubits above the bottom of the gutter, and 9 above ground level. It apparently consisted of three square blocks of diminishing lateral size: a “lower plinth,” also called a “protruding base,” a vertically larger “upper plinth” and a “hearth.” However, Milgrom (EncJud 2, 763), followed by Wright (Disposal 151–53), envisages four tiers, with the base set below the lower plinth and of the same width, and the “ridge” of v 17 constructed at the outer, upper edge of the lower plinth and bordering a separate gutter. The width of the altar ranged from 12 x 12 cubits at the level of the hearth, widening to 14 x 14, then to 16 x 16 at the level of the lower plinth, with the gutter measuring 18 x 18 externally. The overall dimensions compare with the Chronicler’s figures for the temple altar: 20 cubits long, 20 wide and 10 high (2 Chr 4:1). The Herodian altar consisted of four blocks that increased from 24 x 24 cubits at the top to a base of 32 x 32, according to the Mishnah (Mid. 3:1). The “horns” were projections rising from the corners of the hearth, a regular feature of ancient altars (cf. 1 Kgs 2:28). The steps, which have no number given, permitted access to the hearth (cf.
Cooke 469; the ban in Exod 20:26 was impracticable with so high an altar): the orientation meant that the officiating priest faced the temple and so Yahweh’s symbolic presence. It is often urged that the altar’s design was modeled on a Babylonian ziggurat (Galling in Fohrer 238; Wevers 313; de Vaux, Ancient Israel 412; Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 370 note 132); Zimmerli (425–27) has vigorously countered the arguments adduced.

Figure 5. The altar

18–24 If the presence of Yahweh is the sine qua non for the temple to function, another essential premise is a properly dedicated altar, on which the regular rites of worship and expiation may be carried out (v 18b; cf. v 27b). The implication of the dedication is that the altar would be consecrated or made holy for such use, as all of P’s specifications for the dedication of the tabernacle altar expressly state (Exod 29:37; 40:10; Lev 8:11; cf. 16:19). The directions are presented as a further communication of Yahweh to the prophet (cf. vv 7, 10; the third-person references to Yahweh in v 24 are formulaic). The prophet functions as a second Moses in inaugurating the new cult (cf. Exod 29:36b–37). The ceremony described here is especially close to part of P’s Day of Atonement rites (Lev 16:18–19). The sin offering, or more strictly decontamination offering, since its function reflects the privative use of the verb that actually appears in v 20 (cf. Milgrom, VT 21 [1971] 237–39; G. Wenham, Leviticus [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979] 88–89), plays a crucial part, in purifying the inherently profane material used to construct the altar. There is no mention of the necessary slaughter of the young bull or of the sacrifice of its fat, liver and kidneys on the altar (cf. Lev 4:8–10). The text rushes on to the smearing of key parts of the altar with some of the blood drained from the animal, as a means of expiation. The flesh was not to be eaten by the priests (cf. 42:13; 44:29), but the carcass was to be disposed of outside the sacred area, as in the case of an initiatory sin offering or in a ceremony of consecration of priests according to P (Exod 29:14; Lev 8:17; 9:11; cf. Milgrom, VT 26 [1976] 333–37). How the blood ceremony was deemed
to achieve expiation we are not told. The Hebrew verb סקר , rendered “make expiation,” may function as a denominative verb, “function as a ransom (סקר) ,” so that death is averted (cf. Wenham, Leviticus 28, 59–61). However, Milgrom (VT 26 [1976] 336–37), although he allows this sense in a number of cases (e.g., Lev 17:11), in the context of the sin offering works from a primary meaning “wipe off.” He envisages a purging effect upon the contaminated part of the sanctuary (cf. Lev 15:31; 16:19): the blood is applied as a neutralizing cathartic. Zohar (JBL 107 [1988] 614–15), while concurring with Milgrom’s view of the magnetic contamination of the sanctuary by sin, conceives of the transfer of impurity to another medium, the blood that is presented to God by the smearing of the altar.

The ceremonies of a second day begin in the same way as those of the first, but involve a young goat (cf. Lev 16:11, 15, 18). Then follow holocausts, with an expiatory intent (cf. Lev 16:24). Here the rite unusually includes salt, as in later Jewish ritual (see Cooke 472 and note the textual gloss in Mark 9:49). Salt is specifically mentioned in P only in connection with the cereal offering (Lev 2:13) and incense (Exod 30:35); it alludes to the covenant relationship according to Lev 2:13; Num 18:19 (cf. 2 Chron 13:5). The parallel with Lev 16:24 suggests that in vv 23–24 expiation of the people’s sins is in view (cf. 2 Chron 29:21–24). The contextual references to Israel’s pre-exilic cultic sins in 43:7–9, 10–11 are significant. They required formal expiation before the cult could function properly again. The altar, polluted by the people’s sins, needed to be cleansed (v 26).

25–27 The second day’s double ceremony was to provide a model for the ceremonies of a week (strictly, six days of rites, including the second day). Zimmerli (431, 435), following Rautenberg’s lead (ZAW 33 [1913] 102), regards vv 25–27 as secondary (cf. Rendtorff, Studien 28) with the purpose of harmonizing with later P regulations (cf. Exod 29:36–37; Lev 8:33, 35); but v 27b provides an expected conclusion, which moreover supplies a partial inclusion with v 18b. The orientation of the ritual description veers elliptically from the prophet (v 25a) to Israel. The double sacrificial system of holocausts and shared offerings (see 40:42 Comment) could only be initiated after the dedication of the altar. It was the only way to ensure right, acceptable cultic activity (cf. 20:40–41; Lev 1:3–4; Amos 5:22; Rom 12:1; see Rendtorff, Studien 253–58).

44:1, 2 A further visionary experience is related, which presupposes the vision of 43:1–5, especially in v 2ab. The old pattern of the guide’s leading the prophet to a new phenomenon and then explaining it, which is found in chaps. 40–42, is now resumed. From the inner court Ezekiel is taken to the outer court, near its east gateway. He is able to glimpse its closed doors at the far end of the long corridor of
the gatehouse (cf. 40:6–16 Comment). The shut doors, defying their natural purpose, were to commemorate the initial point of the divine re-entry into the temple area. Though in a public place, the east gate thus shared the special sanctity of the temple itself and was off limits to the people.

3 The theme of the head of state in his ritual capacity is broached here (see 45:21–25 Comment). It apparently formed part of the δ ἀρχηγός (“head of state”) layer (see Form/Structure/Setting). Entering the outer court through the outer north or south gate, he was to have access from the outer court to the porch of the east gate, which opened into the outer court. There in the roomy porch, which measured 20 x 8 cubits, he would have the privilege of eating his sacrificial meal that was associated with the shared offering (cf. 46:2). The privilege is reminiscent of the place reserved for the worshiping king in the pre-exilic temple (2 Kgs 11:14; 23:3).

4, 5 The complex introduction of 43:1–44:5 is drawn to a close by this further vision, which includes an explanation that serves to point forward to the main body of the unit. Ezekiel is taken into the inner court via the north gate, presumably because of the closure of the inner east gate to be mentioned in 46:1. The visionary experience is a reprise of 43:3b, 5b, and functions as a reminder of the basic message of the presence of Yahweh as motivation for temple procedure. The methods of worship are dictated by the nature of the God to whom it is directed and who graces the place of worship with his presence. The explanation seeks to express this link. It couples the esoteric vision of Yahweh’s glory (“saw/see,” vv 4, 5) with practical instructions for operating the temple. There is a focus on access, which refers not only to the use of gates (vv 3, 11; 46:1–3, 8–10, 12) but also to the gradations of holiness expressed in the system of outer and inner courts (cf. vv 16, 17, 19, 21; 45:4, 19; 46:19–24). V 5 echoes 40:4, as a parallel element of introduction; the focus on showing there changes to one on speaking here, in line with the change in theme from temple plan to temple procedure. V 5 more closely echoes 43:11, in an indication that the long introduction is drawing to a close. The four plural nouns are reversed (ABCD/DCBA), a standard technique in recapitulation (cf. Talmon, Qumran 359–62, who calls the phenomenon “distant chiastic parallelism”).

6–16 The topic of temple personnel, which occupies 44:6–31, is dominated by this oracle addressed to the exiles as a “rebellious community,” an accusatory phrase often found in Ezekiel’s judgment oracles. The emphasis on pre-exilic cultic aberration in the charges of vv 6–8 is reminiscent of chaps. 6 and 8. As in 43:7–9, the references to the cultic past imply a summons to a radical break and the need for religious reformation in a particular area. The underlying fault in both passages appears to be similar. Another facet of anti-secularization is in view. The foreigners of v 7 are generally related to the Nethinim or temple slaves, who seem to have originated as prisoners of war. This group is included in the list of returning exiles that is found in both Ezra 2:43–58 and Neh 7:46–60 and probably reflects the early decades of the post-exilic era (see H. G. M. Williamson, Ezra and Nehemiah [WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1985] 31–32). Accordingly, it is difficult to imagine that the group was not fully integrated into Yahwism by the exilic period (cf. Greenberg, JAOS 70 [1950] 44 note 9). If we are to take literally the appositional phrase “uncircumcised in heart and body,” which is emphatically repeated in v 9, the reference must be sought elsewhere. A more likely identification is with the Carian royal guards of 2 Kgs 11, from southwest Asia Minor. Although they were palace guards, their regular sphere of duty also
covered the temple, within the complex of royal buildings (2 Kgs 11:6–7; Hitzig 348; Skinner 427–28). That gate duty is in view is suggested by v 11 below.

Such an arrangement would clearly conflict with the categorical holiness of the new temple. Interestingly the Chronicler’s version of 2 Kgs 11 replaces the Carians with Levites for the express reason of cultic holiness (see esp. 2 Chr 23:4–7). Here the term הֵיכָל “sanctuary, holy place” in vv 7, 9 (cf. יָדָי “my holy things,” v 8) is eloquent on this very point. The pagan intrusion cast a cloud of profanation over the central act of altar worship, where the sacrificial fat burned on its hearth and the blood splashed on its sides constituted Yahweh’s “food” brought to the altar table (cf. v 16). More generally it caused a rift in the covenant relationship. Israel had neglected its cultic responsibilities as the covenant people by entrusting them to pagans (contra Levenson, Theology 146–47, who finds a reference to Yahweh’s covenant with Levi [Jer 33:17–26; Mal 2:4–9]; cf. the association of “shocking practices” and “covenant” in 16:58, 59).

10–14 Their place as temple guards was to be taken by the Levites, who feature here as a non-priestly group of temple attendants, as in P. Seemingly by way of punishing Israel (Milgrom, Studies 84), they were also to take over Israel’s role of slaughtering sacrificial victims (cf. Lev 1:5, etc) and to be generally responsible for the outer area (cf. 40:45; 45:5; 46:24 and also Ezra 8:17). The Levites are introduced with a new factor of accusation: they had been abettors of Israel in its worship of idols. Thus the punishment of Israel becomes overshadowed by that of the Levites. Vv 10–14 fall into two parts, vv 10–11 and the parallel but fuller vv 12–14. Much of the terminology of accusation and punishment seems to be derived from 14:1–11 concerning the idolatrous exilic elders, but here it is overlaid by the concept of different degrees of cultic holiness, which prescribed separate roles for people, Levites and priests (vv 11, 13, 14). In the new order of the cultic relationship between Israel and Yahweh, the Levites were to represent the interests of the former, while the priests represented those of the latter (v 11, cf. v 15). For the range of “holy things” and “most holy things” (v 13) in priestly writings see Haran, Temples 172 note 50.

15–16 The role of the priests is duly spelled out. They are strikingly demarcated as “levitical” and “Zadokite,” that is, members of the same tribe as the Levites but descended only from Zadok. While the Levites’ role is tinged with a vehement expression of disgrace, that of the priests is antithetically expressed in terms of honor. Theirs were to be the privileges of the central task of altar duty and of access into the inner court, to which, together with the temple, the term “sanctuary” now refers, over against the “temple area” of v 14 (cf. Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 127).

This passionate oracle, which is most heated in the middle section concerning the Levites, vv 10–14, clearly reflects a situation of controversy. Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation 138–43) has observed an appeal to Num 18, reflected in the overlap of key vocabulary between Num 18:1–7, 22–23 and Ezek 44:9–16. In the former passage Israel, Levites and Aaronide priests are similarly polarized in a pecking order. Here, by means of both citation and reinterpretation, implicit justification seems to be claimed for the roles now assigned to them. New factors that appear in the present passage are the religious unorthodoxy of the Levites, stated doubly for emphasis in vv 10 and 15, and the orthodoxy of the “Zadokite” priests. Both factors evidently mean to hark back to the pre-exilic period.


cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
Commonly the Levites are identified with the priests of the high places of Judah—presumably of levitical descent—who were displaced by Josiah’s reform and were maintained at the Jerusalem temple but not permitted to officiate in altar service (2 Kgs 23:8–9). If these same priests are called יִפְקַר “pagan, idolatrous priests” in 2 Kgs 23:5 (Abba, VT 28 [1978] 4; but cf. Gunneweg, Leviten 122 note 2), there would be an alignment with the charges made here. The present context suggests that earlier the Levites had carried out priestly duties (vv 9–11, not foreigners but Levites; vv 12–16, not Levites but Zadokites). Accordingly the Zadokite priests would represent the priests of the Jerusalem temple, where the leading priests were descended from Zadok, whom Cross has argued was an Aaronide priest of the sanctuary at Hebron (Canaanite Myth 207–15). Then the use of Num 18 in Ezek 44 was intended to equate the sons of Aaron with the descendants of Zadok, the shift of name being dictated simply by historical circumstances. It is often objected that the alleged orthodoxy of the Jerusalem priesthood ill accords with Ezekiel’s own representations in 7:26; 22:26. Certainly one may allow for some argumentative hyperbole here; Baudissin (Geschichte 107 note 1) observed that at least they were not accused of idolatry there. Some blame must accrue to the temple priests for tolerating the religious deviations in the temple attested in Ezek 8, but it is noteworthy that the perpetrators are not specified as priests (McConville, TynBul 34 [1983] 17, who also refers to 9:6b). Zimmerli himself raised the question as to whether the lamenting pious of 9:4 included Zadokite priests who lacked influence (Ezekiel 1 248). Fundamentally the passage seems to argue for one religious group as preferable to another in the all-important practicality of the staffing of the post-exilic temple, probably to settle controversial debate among the exiles. “The judgment is only a relative one, as all class judgments necessarily are” (Skinner 433). If it be urged that elsewhere in the book forgiveness was to be the order of a new day of grace, it is expected in 20:33–38 (cf. 34:17–22) that the new Exodus would be accompanied by an act of judgment and here a more lenient punishment is envisaged. Indeed, a purpose in citing Num 18, which follows the cultic aberration of Num 16–17, may have been to claim a typological warrant for the cultic differentiation, like that of the wilderness judgment in chap. 20.

The passage raises a much larger question. Wellhausen superimposed the (post-exilic) priestly writing (P) on a pre-existing tripod whose legs were Ezek 44:6–16; 2 Kgs 23:8–9 and Deut 18:6–8 (Prolegomena 121–24): P’s Levites developed solely from the late pre-exilic disfranchised priests of the high places, for whom D claimed priestly privileges. There have been some countertrends since Wellhausen’s time. There is a tendency to recognize that P consists of a series of strata from different periods, rather than being a monolithic entity. And difficulty has been seen in relating 2 Kgs 23:9 too quickly to Deut 18:6–8 (see A. D. H. Mayes, Deuteronomy [NCB; London: Oliphants, 1979] 278–79; McConville, TynBul 34 [1983] 6–9). Certainly the present passage gives the impression of dependence on a written source known to us as Num 18. Milgrom has argued that D at times explicitly depends on portions of P (HUCA 47 [1976] 9–13). In the formula יְבַדֶד יָשַׁא כָּן “as he promised” in Deut 18:2 he
urges that a written priestly source is being echoed, which must be Num 18:20. Whereas the P passage grants to priests the right to food offerings, D claims that all members of the tribe of Levi had the right to officiate at the central sanctuary and to receive the sacrificial stipend. D polemically advocates that “the levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi” were so privileged (Deut 18:1; cf. 17: 9, 18; 21:5; 24:8 etc). If Milgrom is right, it is possible to view the present passage as a further development, a statement of arbitration between D and P that finds grounds to come firmly down on P’s side, yet acknowledges its awareness of D’s claims by the use of the phrase “levitical priests” (v 15; 43:19). As to the pre-existence of Levites as a cultic subgroup, it is difficult to draw incontrovertible conclusions; but at least Ezek 44 seems to hark back to an earlier claim that the non-Aaronide members of the tribe of Levi at some point had such a role, and finds a precedent in the claim. However, for D the whole tribe of Levi had priestly rank and privilege (see Emerton, VT 12 [1962] 129–38; Abba’s tentative claim that in Deut 18:7 “fellow Levites” means not priests but subordinate Levites already serving at the central sanctuary [VT 27 (1977) 264–65] is invalid: in the context only tribal affinity is in view, the priest of v 3 being the antecedent of the tribal “him” of v 5 [see Cody, History 131 note 17]). D may well have had its own theological ax to grind in its distinctive presentation (cf. McConville, Law 147–53).

17–31 To the clarification of vv 15–16 has been smoothly appended a potpourri of regulations concerning priests. They are essentially a selection designed to illustrate how cultic holiness was to be translated into the priestly lifestyle. Holiness is their explicit (see Form/Structure/Setting) or implicit motif. The priests’ right of access to the inner court (vv 17, 21, 27) made them stewards of a scrupulously guarded holiness.

17–19 Vv 17 and 19 are closely related to the explanation in 42:13–14 concerning the use of the rooms on either side of the west building as changing rooms. They were to form a sort of air lock between the inner court and the outer court accessible to the people. Holiness is here regarded as a dangerous, contagious element from which nonpriestly mortals needed to be protected (cf. Exod 19:12–13; Lev 10:1–2; 2 Sam 6:7). Linen, although the particular word used here is different from that used elsewhere in the Old Testament, was the traditional material for the priest’s ritual uniform. V 18 supplies information about part of this uniform: the cap and breeches accord with Exod 28:40–42; 39:28. The ban on wool in v 17 is explained as a way of preventing perspiration, which was probably regarded as unclean.

20–27 Clusters of regulations from Lev 10 and 21 have provided the basis for this group (Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 294–95). Lev 10:6 and 21:5, 10 underlie the ruling about hair style in v 20, which thus links the two clusters. The prohibition of v 21 depends on Lev. 10:9, while the job description of vv 23–24 depends on Lev 10:10–11. Lev 21:1–3 has supplied the family death regulation of v 25, while the marriage ruling of v 22 has drawn on Lev 21:7, 13–14. The holiness motif in the Lev 10 cluster appears
at v 23 (= Lev 10:10). The group from Lev 21 contains it abundantly in its source (Lev 21:6–9, 12–15), and presumably this is the implicit reason for their citation here.

There are a few variations. One factor is the absence of the high priest from the present material (cf. Levenson, Theology 141–44; Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 295). The permission in v 22b is not found in Lev 21. V 24 takes v 23 further in several respects, beyond the Lev 10 parallel. The judicial responsibility of the priests may have been inspired by Deut 17:9; 21:5, where their cultic closeness to Yahweh is stressed. The reference to sabbath holiness and to public services reflects Ezekielian concerns: see 22:26; 45:17; 46:9–11. The purificatory ritual of vv 26–27 has been added to v 25: so the switch to a singular subject suggests. It may be based on the lay regulation of Num 19:11–19, with extra demands in view of a priestly status. The emphatic references to the sanctuary (יהול) in v 27 reveal the necessity for these demands, as well as carrying forward the overall motif of holiness.

28–30 These verses anticipate the next section on the material support of priests. They closely reflect Num 18:8–20; but, unlike that passage, are addressed to Israel as a statement of their obligations, just as vv 6–8 were a statement of their cultic irresponsibility. Accordingly vv 28–30 may have been an earlier continuation of vv 6–16 (Cooke 488; Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 64). In favor of this reconstruction is the dependence of vv 28–30 on Num 18, in line with vv 9–16. The priests’ income was to be derived from the land allocated to the laity indirectly, by way of offerings. The contextual relevance of this provision, in relation to the motif of holiness, is that it had the quality of מ jailed b q יב “most holy things” (Num 18:9; cf. Lev 27:28; Ezek 42:13), inasmuch as it was consumed by the priests alone. A tenth part of the tithe (here called “contributions”: cf. Num 18:26–29; Eissfeldt, Erstlinge 65–67) presented to the Levites was forwarded to them. Implicitly these dues were “holy” in that they were to be eaten by priests’ families (cf. Num 18:11–13, 29; Lev 23:20; 27:30). Also counted as their perquisite is the “best of the firstfruits,” a possible interpretation of the Hebrew of Num 18:12 (cf. Budd, Numbers 199) and one that was doubtless influenced by Exod 23:19 (E); 34:26 (J). In this context it may envisage a partial priestly due from among a larger due assigned to the Levites. As in vv 6–16, there appears to be a deliberate conflation of older traditions. The last emolument includes a singular reference to the priest, which may indicate a later expansion, especially as Num 18 no longer lies in the background. Instead, Num 15:20–21 appears to be in view. That passage has a link with Num 18 in the use of the phrase ה נור ת יב ירה ה “make a contribution,” besides having ייבא י “best” in common. The final clause of v 30, with its switch to a second person singular pronoun, seems to be a further amplification. The incentive may loosely echo Deut 14:29b, which shares a second singular and is set in a context of giving tithes to the landless Levite. The motivating postscript reveals a knowledge of human nature!

31 Now Lev 22:8 appears to be the basis, in a prohibition of eating carrion that has priests in mind, unlike the general ban of Exod 22:30 (31), etc Lev 22 is organically linked with Lev 21, which was echoed earlier in the passage. As before, there seems to be an implicit awareness of a literary context of holiness: Lev 22:9 speaks of Yahweh as the sanctifier of priests. There is a further relevance in that Lev 22:2–9 is mainly a discussion of access to “holy things” assigned as food to the priests, the very topic of vv 29–30. Thus this final injunction serves to reinforce the role of the priests as mirrors of divine holiness.

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
J Yahwist/Jahwist (supposed biblical literary source)
This summary of 48:8–22 opens a new section on the maintenance of the cult (45:1–17). Its significance in its original context and consideration of its detailed content may be left till later in the commentary. At this point the use to which it is put in its present setting requires brief examination. The theme of the *hmwrt* "contribution," broached in 44:30, is developed. Now it is used in the sense of "reservation," a contribution of land to Yahweh. What is called "the sacred reservation" was to be divided into two strips, each 25,000 x 10,000 cubits. One was to possess the highest degree of sanctity: it would contain the temple area and also provide habitation for the priests. In the other strip the Levites were to reside. This allocation of land creates some tension with the lack of land mentioned in 44:28, but it was a tension that already existed with the older system of levitical cities (cf. "cities," v 5; cf. Budd, *Numbers* 376), which this plan replaces. Essentially the priests and Levites were "grace and favor" (to use a British royal idiom) tenants of religious property, while the laity occupied their own tribal areas and had rights of disposal (contrast 48:14). Strictly only the priests were involved in the full scheme (cf. 44:28). The Levites' territory had an intermediate status in that it was termed their "property." This territorial system, along with the explicit degrees of holiness, is obviously an extension of what pertained within the temple area, in relation to holiness and the related differentiated staffing, as vv 4–5 suggest. Again the motif of holiness is looming large in the text. V. 2, which breaks the continuity of vv 1 and 3 and has a slightly different word for "sanctuary," appears to be an afterthought, along with the related v 4bb. It supplies the dimensions of 42:15–20 and specifies an insulating circle of no man's land.

The passage majors in the allocation of part of Israel's land for the needs of the temple personnel. The remaining material earmarking land for the city and for the head of state in part serves the holiness motif: both entities were to be kept at a certain distance from the temple (contrast 43:8). In the latter case temptation to upset the economic stability of his subjects is averted: adequate provision is made for his support. In turn—and this is the contextual point—the material upkeep of the temple staff was thereby safeguarded. The underlying thought of the people's freedom from royal landgrabs comes to the fore in the appended v 8b, in which the peremptory voice of Yahweh is heard as advocate for his covenant people so pained by memories of the pre-exilic monarchy. It was an indispensable premise of the smooth running of the temple.

V. 8b has paved the way for the incorporation of a curt oracle that now rhetorically serves to proclaim a new era of economic justice in which private land would be protected from royal confiscation (cf. 1 Kgs 21:1–16; Jer 22:1–5, 13–17; Ezek 22:25). It would mean the realization at long last of a royal ideal: cf. 2 Sam 8:15; Ps 72:1–2; Jer 22:3 and the eschatological Isa 9:6(7). The ironic wordplay of *wmyrh* *hmwrt* "remove" on *hmwrt* *µyrh* "make a contribution" reminds the reader of the overall theme. V. 9 ministers to this theme by providing circumstances that permitted sufficient giving to the religious cause. The economic welfare of the temple was intertwined with that of the state. Vv 10–11 elaborate these conditions by particularizing the fair play (ḥ *qqdx*) of v 9 with fair, "standard" (qq *dx*) weights and measures. Vv 10–11 also look forward to the contributions of vv 13–14, and thus indicate the subservience of economic matters to religious. As for dry measures, the ephah was about 1/2 bushel, and the homer about 5 bushels; as for liquid measures, the bath was about 5 1/2 gallons and the homer (or kor, v 14) about 55 gallons (see *IDB* 4, 834–35). As for weights, in v 12 the MT wrongly accords with

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**cf. confer, compare**
**cf. confer, compare**
**cf. confer, compare**
**cf. confer, compare**
**cf. confer, compare**

the Babylonian sexagesimal system of 60 shekels to the mina, rather than the regular one of 50 shekels. The shekel has been estimated as 11.424 grams (IDB 4, 832). Evidently weights of 5 and 10 shekels were in common use.

13–17 The theme becomes explicit once more in the heading. A tax in kind, separate from the tithe, was to be imposed. It amounted to 1/60th in the case of wheat and barley, 1% in the case of oil, and 1/2% in the case of sheep or goats. These contributions would go toward cereal and animal offerings, which actually became the perquisites of the priests who achieved expiation for the people by ritually offering them. Vv 16–17 add supplementary material relating to the head of state. Evidently the religious tax was to be channeled through him as representative of the cultic community. In vv 16, 17a and 17b emphasis is laid on his role. Libations are probably specified not as consisting of wine but of oil, aligning with the oil of v 14 (cf. vv 24–25; 46:5, 7, 11). The ritual occasions are enumerated. For comprehensiveness the sin offering is added to a fresh list in v 17b, and the expiatory function of the sacrificial work of the priests is again stressed. Significantly both the priests and the head of state were to strive for the restoration of right relations with Yahweh and so for the community to accord with the holiness of Yahweh.

18–25 V. 17 serves to introduce the final section, 45:18–46:15, concerning the rites of offerings to be enacted in the new temple. In the present unit, which deals with annual ceremonies, the first part, vv 18–20, announces an annual ritual of decontaminating the inner sanctuary area. It is reminiscent of the dedication of the altar in 43:13–17. It is a counterpart of P’s great Day of Atonement ceremony in Lev 16, but here the rite takes place in the spring, at the start of the year. As there, the blood of the sin offering has the function of bringing about the regular decontamination of the sanctuary from the accumulation of past sins that had a polluting effect upon it (cf. Lev 16:19 “... sanctify it from the impurities of the people of Israel”). Probably major sins were covered by this rite (cf. Milgrom, IDBSup 767, with regard to Lev 16), but there was a minor ceremony on the seventh day to cope with lesser sins (for the concept of inadvertency see Milgrom, JQR 58 [1967/68] 115–25). However, it is possible that the specification of such sins was intended to refer to both ceremonies, if it is significant that the holy of holies is not included in the places daubed with blood (cf. Milgrom, ibid.). V. 20b may want to relate this second ceremony to the whole temple area (Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 79; Koch, Priesterschrift 107).

In vv 21–25, which are part of the ḥānî (“head of state”) layer (see Form/Structure/Setting), the sacrificial requirements for two annual festivals are sketchily featured, the combined passover and festival of unleavened bread in the spring and the autumn festival (of booths). The sequencing for the former two-part celebration in vv 21/22/23–24 represents an AB/A’/B’ structure. In each case there is some emphasis upon the sin offering. In particular, the passover sin offering has no parallel in the Pentateuch. This emphasis aligns with v 17b and implies the regular need to purify the sanctuary and so protect its holiness from the people’s sins. For the relationship of the sacrifices to those in the comparable Num
28–29 see Zimmerli 485–86. The missing reference to the traditional third festival of weeks or harvest or firstfruits (Exod 23:14, 16; 34:22–23; Deut 16:16; Num 28:26) may be linked with the fact that in H (Lev 23:16–21) and P (Num 28:26) it is not called a "pilgrimage festival" and so does not necessitate pilgrimage to the temple (Haran, Temples 297). Oil was regularly mixed into the cereal offering; a hin, 1/16th of a bath, amounted to about a gallon (IDB 4, 835).

A further emphasis in this passage (and also in 46:1–12; cf. 43:3; 45:16–17) is the cultic role of the head of state both in his own right and as representative of "the people of the land." He is described largely from a cultic perspective. He is given a position of privilege over against the people (43:1; 46:2, 8) and functions as the representative of the people in presenting sacrifices (45:16–17, 22–25). He is assigned his own tract of land (45:7; 48:21–22) and is not to usurp that of other Israelites (46:16–18). In the last reference there is obviously a restrictive note that reflects the excesses of the pre-exilic monarchy (cf. 45:8–9). The same attitude seems to underlie the other references. In the temple area he may go so far and no further. Crown property no longer adjoins the temple (cf. 43:8). An impression is given of a future constitutional monarchy that seeks to do justice to two factors. The first is the messianic hope inherited from other prophetic thinking. The second is the pain that lingered in the hearts of the Judean exiles after experiencing the imperiousness of late pre-exilic kings with regard to the cult and to the property rights of their subjects. Moreover, human kingship must never again be a threat to the kingship of Yahweh himself (43:7–9).

46:1–15 This second part of the section dealing with ritual procedure continues the series adumbrated in the listing of 45:17a. After the annual rites of 45:18–25, there is a majoring in those of the sabbath and new moon day (vv 1–3, 4–8). Vv 13–15 will round off the cultic survey by featuring the daily offerings.

1–12 This material continues the "head of state" layer from 45:21–25 (see Form/Structure/Setting). It is framed by references to the inner east gate (vv 1–3, 12); gates also feature in vv 8–10. One might consider this element contextually subordinate to the theme of sacrificial occasions, but its importance is revealed by the attention drawn to it in the introductory 44:5. Access and limits were regulated so that the holiness of the temple should not be infringed. The two motifs of access and sacrifice are given a role to play in the structure. On the sabbath and new moon day the access of the head of state (vv 1–2) and the people (v 3) is regulated before the offerings of those days are discussed (vv 4–7). Then at the public services the access of people (v 9) and head of state (v 10) is again broached before their offerings are mentioned (v 11). A reverting to the gate in the first case, at v 8, has as a corresponding feature in the second case, in v 12, a gate regulation for a separate occasion; here a sacrificial component is included as a minor element, as indeed it is in v 2.

Closure and limited access to the head of state are predicated of both the outer (44:1–3) and inner east gates. Since the outer east gate could be approached via the other outer gates, it was kept permanently closed. However, in the case of the inner east gate, it had to be opened, if the head of state was to have access, since there was no other point of entry, the inner court being off limits to all but priests (cf. v 8). The closure of both gates was to commemorate Yahweh’s entry through them when he came to take up permanent residence in the new temple. The head of state had the privilege of passing

H Holiness Code
P Pesher (commentary)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
through the porch at the outer end of the gatehouse (cf. 40:31, 34) and standing at the inner end, at the point to which 45:19b refers, in order to witness the priests’ sacrificing his offerings and to perform there a gesture of obeisance, kneeling with head pressed to the ground. Leaving the gate open allowed the people to look from the other side of the gateway in the outer court, as they chose to come during the holiday to perform their act of worship (cf. Ps 5:8[7]). Even if for most the outer steps and the 75 foot long corridor blocked their vision, the open door would provide at least a token of intimacy each week and month. The content of the holocaust mentioned in v 2 is spelled out in vv 4–7, along with the accompanying cereal offerings, which were moistened with oil (cf. Num 28:9–15).

The public services evidently excluded the sabbath and new moon services, but were wider than the festivals. Since attendance was mandatory, a system of traffic control within the outer court had to be set up, creating two orderly streams in procession (cf. Ps 42:5[4]; 68:25–28 [24–27]), with no U-turns permitted. On these occasions the head of state had no special privilege, although he may have headed a procession. V. 11, although structurally relevant, as we argued above, is strangely incomplete in its concentration on the cereal offering (cf. Num 15:1–16). The missing holocaust might be explained as superfluous after 45:24, were it not for the fact that the lambs are an extra (cf. v 47; Num 28:19; 29:13–36). The sabbath (and new moon day) privilege of the head of state is extended to his voluntary sacrificing, but there was no need to keep the gate open longer at such times.

13–15 The daily offerings were to consist of a holocaust (v 13) and a cereal offering made from semolina (“fine flour,” v 14). The injunction is repeated in v 15 to emphasize both its timing, in the morning, and the major role of the holocaust. There was probably an awareness of (an)other tradition(s), double morning and evening offerings (P: Exod 29:38–42; Num 28:3–8) and/or an animal offering in the morning and a cereal offering in the evening (2 Kgs 16:15; cf. 1 Kgs 18:29, 36) and/or only a cereal offering in the morning (2 Kgs 3:20).

16–18 This unit reads like a belated footnote to the land-oriented 45:1–9. V. 18 is close to 45:8 in tone. One could almost regard the unit as an economic counterpart of the cultic v 10: privilege remained within certain limits, beyond which it must not trespass. There may be a subtle wordplay contrasting what the head of state gives to God (יָדְיוּֽהָתָם “gift of his hand,” vv 5, 11) and what he gives to others (הָנִיטָם “gift,” vv 16–17). In ownership of the land the head of state was bound up in a vertical and horizontal solidarity of human relationships. Vertical, inasmuch as he owed it to his descendants to preserve crown property within the family. Horizontal, insofar as property rights were guaranteed for commoners as well as for royalty, by divine sanction (cf. 1 Kgs 21:18–19). In these respects the passage lets the reader look ahead to the territorial material of chaps. 47–48. V. 17 makes an interesting reference to the institution of the fiftieth year of release or jubilee (cf. 40:1 Comment; Lev 25:8–13).

19–24 This is the final part of the visionary framework for the whole unit, chaps. 43–46. Its references to cultic procedure and sacrifices make it a fitting conclusion to the section 45:18–46:15, which has been concerned with this very topic. Two sets of outdoor kitchens are described. The first is
situated beside the rooms on the north side of the west building, at the far end of the access path leading from the outer court (cf. 42:9). To get there the prophet is taken out of the inner court (44:4) through the north gate into the outer court, and then left to the entrance to the path, which was built up on the higher level of the inner court and was regarded as an extension of it. As such, it was priestly ground, and so the other end of the path formed a suitable location for cooking the most holy offerings, which were the priests’ dues (cf. 42:13; 44:29; cf. the rulings of P in Exod 29:32–33; Lev 10:12–13, etc). Confining these offerings to the inner court meant that the people, who had access to the outer court, were protected from contagious holiness (cf. 44:19 and Comment).

Ezekiel is made to retrace his steps, back into the outer court, and is taken over to each of the four corners, where outdoor kitchens were demarcated by a low wall. There the laity’s sacred meals associated with the shared offerings were to be prepared by the lower order of temple personnel (cf. 44:11; 45:5). The demarcation is typical of the temple vision; it reinforces the concept of a scale of holiness that peaked at the center.

**Explanation**

The theme of the temple as a material embodiment of divine holiness continues in this complex unit. The palace could not stand next door to the temple any longer nor could the city include it in its limits. It must stand in isolated splendor (43:12). Pagans might no more do guard duty at the temple gates, as if the temple were an annex to the palace. Rather, within its walls the two-tier system of holiness that pertained to the buildings and courts must find expression in the human sphere. The inner court was to be reserved for the priests, while the outer one was to be where the people worshiped, serviced by a lower order. The priests were to reflect both in their work and in a different lifestyle the very holiness of God (cf. 1 Pet 1:15; 2:5).

The empty temple complex of chaps. 40–42 now comes alive. Supremely Yahweh takes possession of his new home. Earlier threads in the book which have traced the departure of his glory are now drawn together in a positive finale. The traditional phrase “in the presence of Yahweh” may now be meaningfully used again (44:3; 46:3, 9; cf. 41:22). It is Yahweh’s taking up residence in the temple that starts the wheels of worship turning and energizes the temple area into a concourse of bustling activity. Thereupon, staffing with temple personnel, the question of their economic support, and temple procedures become the relevant topics of this unit.

Now that a working temple is in view, another aspect of holiness comes into consideration, alongside the former one. The altar, an item mentioned in passing in the earlier unit, now leaps into prominence. If the divinely occupied temple building is a throbbing heart, the altar represents lungs that maintain the spiritual life of the community of faith. Accordingly the visionary narrative of Yahweh’s return is followed by the description of the altar and its dedication (43:13–17, 18–27). In both the latter account and in the delineation of annual rites (46:18–25) the sin offering plays a key role. It was the means by which the infringement of cultic holiness by human sinning could be repaired. There was constant need to

cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
P Pesher (commentary)
cf. confer, compare
remove the pollution by daubing the blood of the sin offering and indeed of other sacrifices (45:15, 17; cf. the christological application in Heb 9:21–26; 10:19–22). The weekly and monthly rites are presented as an everflowing stream of worship that consisted of sacrifice, body language (46:3, 9) and sacrificial meals (44:3; cf. 46:23, 24).

Most space, however, and prior place are devoted to the personnel of the temple, who in their twofold grouping not only reflect gradations of holiness but also, one might say, cultically embody the two-sided covenant relationship, one group representing the people and the other Yahweh himself (44:11, 15). Yet the priests also directly reveal God’s will to his people (44:23–24). There are at least two attempts to work out the relationship between the two cultic groups (cf. esp. 40:45; 44:13). In part at least these attempts correspond to the difficulties of translating theology into human actuality (cf. 37:5–10!) and of adequately reforming a system that had become corrupt.

Theology has ever to embrace social and economic factors if it is to be worthy of the name. Here there is concern for the maintenance of especially the upper order of the temple staff. The people paid sacred dues that went to support the priesthood; their sacrifices too in many cases were so allocated, on the principle that “those who serve at the altar share in the altar offerings” (1 Cor 9:13). There were to be no hindrances in the steady flow of the people’s contributions. Especially the head of state was not to follow the precedent of his pre-exilic counterparts and by his unjust demands upset this rhythm. The messianic hope of earlier prophets, although tempered by political realism, is preserved; even in the mainly cultic orientation of these chapters the head of state comes over as a key figure.

Overall these chapters present sketches of the working temple, often taking over earlier cultic traditions and sometimes evidently creating new details of cultic expression. The unit gives the practical working out of a theology of an overwhelmingly transcendent God immanent among his covenant people. It presents a challenge still relevant to modern believers. Worship that is done decently and in order (1 Cor 14:40; cf. Ezek 46:9), the constant reconciliation of an imperfect people (cf. 1 John 1:8–2:2), and viable back-up systems of administration and economic support are issues that still confront the people of God.

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**Temple and Land (47:1–48:35)**

**Bibliography**


**Translation**

1 He brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and there I found water issuing from under the temple threshold and flowing east, the direction the temple faced. The water ran along the southern sidewall of the temple, then to the south of the altar. 2 He led me out through the north gate and took me round the outside to the outer gate that faces east, where I found the water gurgling out on the south side. 3 As the man went on eastward with the measuring line in his hand, he measured 1000 cubits and led me through the water, which came up to the ankles. 4 He measured a further 1000 and led me on through the water, which was now up to the knees. Then he measured another 1000 and led me through—it came up to the waist. 5 He measured 1000 more: it became a river I could not wade through because the water came so high. It was deep enough to swim in, an unfordable river. 6 He asked me, “Do you see, human one?” Then he led me back to the river bank. 7 When I got back, I found a great number of trees on both banks of the river.

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*a* 1.a. MT prefixes ⱦ ⱨ Ⱪ which, if correct, is locative “at the foot.” Yet in v 1a it has been used literally “from beneath.” This awkwardness and its absence from LXX Syr. Vg suggest that it has been wrongly copied from v 1a (Toy 201; Cooke 522).
*a* 2.a. For the form of the Heb. cf. 46:9; 47:15.
*a* 2.b. cf. 44:1, although there the term is adjectival.
*a* 2.c. An error of metathesis is generally assumed, so that one reads ûr d ḥîmph “that faces toward” (cf. 43:1).
*a* 2.d. Since the water has already been mentioned, µymh “the water” is generally read, as LXX implies, assuming haplography.
*a* 2.e. The Heb. is onomatopoetic.
*a* 3.a. For the Heb. idiom see 40:5 and note.
*a* 3.b. For the genitive see *GKC* 128n.
*a* 4.a. The abs form µym “waters” implies apposition, but constr µm “waters of” is generally read with c, many Heb. MSS, LXX and Tg. MT probably suffered assimilation to the preceding µymb “through the waters” (Cooke 523).
*a* 4.b. For consistency’s sake µymb “through the waters” is often inserted, with ancient support (see *BHS* ), but significantly LXX supports MT’s shorter text.
This water,” he told me, “flows out to the region in the east and then it will go down into the Arabah and reach the sea, which is polluted water, and that water will become pure. All the living things that surge wherever the river formed by it reaches will thrive. There will be fish aplenty once this water has reached there. Fishermen will stand on its shores; nets will be spread out to dry from En-gedi to En-eglaim. It will match the Mediterranean in the variety and quantity of its fish. But its marshes and pools will be left impure and used to supply salt. Along the river, on either bank, will grow fruit trees of every kind, with leaves that never wither and fruit that never stops cropping. They will produce new fruit every month, because the water for them issues from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be used for food and their leaves for healing.”

13 The following message comes from the Lord Yahweh: “Here is a description of the frontiers

7.a. The objective suffix is anomalous and doubtless assimilation to yōd šaww “and he brought me back” in v 6 has occurred (GKC 91e). The regular form would be yōd šawb (cf. Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 312).

8.a. MT µya x whm h myh Al a “to the sea, those which had been brought out” is problematic. The first term with its otiose ending is generally emended to µymh Al a “to the waters,” with the support of LXX Syr., assuming assimilation to the preceding h myh “to the sea.” Then the following pl. term qualifies it. In this case MT’s consonants are supported by LXX (cf. 48:30). Accordingly Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 186–87), followed by NEB (“foul”), suggested a hoph ptcp from the stem a wh “be filthy, polluted” (cf. Syr. “stagnant”). He judged that the Gk. translation “salty” cited in LXX Qmg, which inspired Field’s popular suggestion µyxwmjh “seasoned, salty” (cf. Isa 30:24), was a guess.

8.b. For Q cf. GKC 75oo.

9.a. MT’s dual µyl j n “two rivers” is strange. LXX Vg (cf. Syr. Tg. “the waters of the river”) imply l n “the river,” as in v 9b (see the next note *). Ehrlich (Randglossen 158) plausibly revocalized µyl j n “their river, the river formed by them (= “waters” of v 8),” comparing “rivers of water” in Deut 8:7; 10:7; Jer 31:9; Syr. Tg. may reflect such an understanding. MT may have been influenced by the two rivers of Zech 14:8 (Cooke 520, with reference to Jewish tradition; cf. Clements’ suggestion that it echoes the two rivers at the source of which El lived in Ugaritic mythology [God and Temple 107 note 2]).

9.b. MT and the ancient versions add “and it (lit. pl. with reference to the waters) will become pure and it (sg) will live, everywhere that the river reaches,” with a violent change of subject in the first case to the polluted water of v 8b. The material adds nothing to the content and is best explained as a collection of textual variants. The first verb is a variant of µw dp n “and they will become pure” in v 8b. What follows is another form of the latter part of v 9a, incorporating the variants h mdw “thither” for µw “there” and l n “the river” for µyl j n (see preceding note).

10.a. L reads µm n “and they will stand” according to BHK. For a discussion of the various Heb. forms see Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 90 note 1.

10.b. The suffix naturally relates to the river of v 9a, via h mdw “thither” of v 9b (contra Zimmerli 507).

12.a. For the K/Q variants cf. GKC 146f.

13.a. For the formulaic ynd t “Lord” here and in v 23; 48:29 see the note on 20:3.
of the land you are to share as tenured property among Israel’s twelves tribes. You are to receive in equal shares tenure of this land I promised with raised hand to give to your ancestors and which now you will have allotted to you as tenured property.

Here then are its frontiers: on the north a line from the Mediterranean through Hethlon and the Hamath Pass to Zedad, then through Berothah and Sibraim, situated between the territories of Damascus and Hamath, to Hazar-enon. So the frontier runs from the sea to Hazar-enon, where the territory of Damascus lies to the north and likewise that of Hamath. Such will be its northern border. East border: it runs from that point between Hauran and Damascus, and then the Jordan forms the frontier between Gilead and the land of Israel down to the eastern sea as far as

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b. MT hūg, pointed as if (ā) yGē “valley” (=Syr.), is generally taken, even by Barthélemy et al., Preliminary Report 5, 188, as a textual error for hūz “this,” attested by MSS LXX Tg. Vg (cf. Num 34:6, 13): gimel was written in anticipation of (ā wā) g “frontier.”

c. MT lī wāg “frontier” requires the article, lost by haplography.

d. MT, supported by the ancient versions, adds yīl bōj ¹swy “Joseph: (two) portions”: the noun requires pointing as a dual on the evidence of Tg. Vg. It would be possible to integrate it into the text by reading ¹swyl “for Joseph,” assuming haplography (Ehrlich, ibid.); however, its ungrammatical nature (Driver, L’Ancien Testament et l’Orient 144) and use of bīq instead of qīq “portion” (Cooke 530: cf. 45:7; 48:8, 21) brand it as an early harmonizing gloss that contrasted the reckoning of the twelve tribes here (excluding Levi) and in 48:30–34 (Rautenberg, ZAW 33 [1913] 112 note 1).

a. In MT ‘ūrdh “the way of” the article is otiose (cf. BHS). See the note on v 16.

b. In MT ‘īddh x “to Zedad” and mlī “Hamath” (v 16) are out of order: cf. LXX; 48:1; Num 34:8. Probably a抄ists’ omission was restored at the wrong place.

a. MT wāy y h r x j “the central court” was probably part of an annotation that together with the cue phrase ‘ūrd h (= ‘ūrd Awjh “outer, toward”) now in v 15 belongs with v 2. It was connected with the reading r x j h “the court” presupposed by LXX Syr. for Awjh h “the outside.” It was referred to the wrong column: ‘ūrd h was taken as a correction of ‘ūrd , and the next phrase as a correction of the similar-looking wīn[ h r x j] “to Hazar-enon” that underlies LXX (cf. v 17; 48:1; Num 34:9). The form of the second noun is wīn[ r x j] in 48:1, as in Num 34:9–10, and LXX so standardizes.

b. For lī x j the context seems to require hī lī x j (“to …”), as originally in v 16. Was the form assimilated to that in 48:1 or to MT in v 16?

c. MT hānp x “and north northwards” is attested by the ancient versions (cf. Zimmerli 519), but probably originated as an early note that displaced hān p x “northwards” (cf. 48:1). It recorded the variants wāp x/hānp x “north (side)” in vv 15, 17.

d. The copula and object sign t ā wīn MT here and in vv 18, 19 are an error for t ā z “this” (cf. v 20): see BHS.

a. Heb. ̀ḥōb māl here signifies “from the place between” (see Zimmerli 519; Wevers 231; cf. 2 Kgs 16:14). The insertion of “Hazar-enon” (Cornill 506 et al.; RSV) is unnecessary. However, the form seems to have contaminated ̀ḥōb māl: the latter replaced ̀ḥōb “between,” which is generally read.

b. For MT lī yāgm “from a boundary” a verb lī yāgm “bounds” is implied by LXX Syr. Vg here and by LXX Syr. in v 20. MT was assimilated to the noun form that dominates the context.

c. Heb. lī is used, as often, in the sense of lī ā “to” (Fohrer 257). Another instance occurs in 48:28.

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as Tamar\textsuperscript{d}—such will be its eastern border. \textsuperscript{19}South\textsuperscript{a} border: it extends from Tamar and runs to Lake Meribah\textsuperscript{b} at Kadesh and to the Wady and on to the Mediterranean—such will be the southern border. \textsuperscript{20}West border: the Mediterranean forms the frontier up to a point level with the Hamath Pass—such will be the western border. \textsuperscript{21}You are to make a distribution of this land among yourselves on the basis of Israel’s tribes, \textsuperscript{22}allotting it as tenured property to yourselves and to the aliens who reside with you and have produced families there. You must treat them the same as native Israelites: they are to share the allotment\textsuperscript{e} of tenured land with Israel’s tribes. \textsuperscript{23}The land you give each alien to hold by tenure is to be located in the tribal area where he resides. So runs the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.

48:1 “Here is a list of the denominated tribal areas.\textsuperscript{a} (1) At the northern end, next to the line made by Hethlon, the Hamath Pass and Hazar-enan, south of the territory of Damascus and adjacent to Hamath, with an allocation\textsuperscript{d} from east to west: Dan. (2) \textsuperscript{2}Bordering Dan’s territory, from east to west: Asher. (3) \textsuperscript{3}Bordering Asher’s territory, from east to west: Naphtali. (4) Bordering Naphtali’s territory, from east to west: Manasseh. (5) \textsuperscript{5}Bordering Manasseh’s territory, from east to west: Ephraim. (6) \textsuperscript{6}Bordering Ephraim’s territory, from east to west: Reuben. (7) Bordering Reuben’s territory, from east to west: Judah. (8) \textsuperscript{8}Bordering Judah’s territory, from east to west, will be situated the reservation that you are to set apart, 25,000 (cubits) wide and as long as each of the allocations extending from east to west; it will have the sanctuary within it.\textsuperscript{9} The reservation you set apart as Yahweh’s is to be 25,000 (cubits) long and 20,000\textsuperscript{a} wide. \textsuperscript{10}The

\textsuperscript{d} 18.d. MT \textit{vd} mt “you shall measure” is generally judged, even by Barthélémy et al., \textit{Preliminary Report} 5, 192–93, a reading inferior to \textit{h f} mt “to Tamar” that underlies LXX Syr. and is corroborated by v 19; 48:28. Doubtless MT originated as a comparative gloss on 48:10, inspired by the parallel 45:3. The note was related to the wrong side of the margin and taken as a correction of the look-alike \textit{h f} mt.

\textsuperscript{a} 19.a. For the double representation in this verse and 48:28 see Zimmerli 520.

\textsuperscript{b} 19.b. MT \textit{w} \textit{y r} \textit{m} “Meriboth” is supported only by LXX; in 48:28; Deut 32:51 a sg form appears.

\textsuperscript{a} 22.a. As in v 22a, a hiph form is expected: see \textit{BHS}. MT \textit{w} \textit{p} \textit{y} “they shall be allotted” can hardly be used of people. Strictly the hiph signifies not “acquire by lot” (Zimmerli 521) but that the aliens were to join the Israelites in distributing the land (Cooke 530; cf. Ehrlich, \textit{Randglossen} 159).

\textsuperscript{a} 48.1.a. lit. “the names of tribes.” The language may have been influenced by Num 34:17, 19, which immediately follows the underlying literary model for Ezek 47:13–23.

\textsuperscript{b} 1.b. The Heb. adds “one” (i.e., allocation, \textit{q l j}, v 8) to each of the tribal statements of vv 1–7, 23–27. As in Josh 12:9–24, it is a primitive method of counting, like the strokes a prisoner traditionally puts on the cell wall.

\textsuperscript{c} 1.c. For justification of the Heb. see Zimmerli, \textit{ibid}.

\textsuperscript{d} 1.d. lit. “and they shall be (assigned) to him”: the pronoun anticipates Dan; the pl. verb envisages a compound subj (Cooke 539).

\textsuperscript{e} 1.e. For MT \textit{t} \textit{\textbar} \textit{p} “(east) side” \textit{t} \textit{\textbar} \textit{m} “from …” is required in the context (cf. vv 2–8) and underlies LXX. The opposite occurs in v 16 (see \textit{BHS}). Undoubtedly this is an inter-column phenomenon: perhaps corrections of errors were misplaced (cf. 44:8).

\textsuperscript{f} 1.f. MT \textit{y} \textit{y} “the sea” has suffered metathesis: in the context \textit{h y l} “to the sea” is necessary and is supported by LXX (see Zimmerli, \textit{ibid}). Was it a comparative note relating v 1 to 47:15?

\textsuperscript{a} 8.a. The same Heb. occurs in v 10; contrast K in v 21. The fem antecedent is not always remembered (Cooke 539).

\textsuperscript{a} 9.a. See the relevant note on 45:1. LXX\textsuperscript{*} (=LXX\textsuperscript{967}) has preserved the original, adapted to “10,000” in MT. Cornill (508–9) shrewdly deduced the pristine form of LXX.
following groups will have the sacred reservation assigned to them: an area with north and south dimensions of 25,000 (cubits) in length, and west and east dimensions of 10,000 in breadth, at the center of which Yahweh’s sanctuary will be situated, is to be assigned to the priests. The consecrated priests, descendants of Zadok, who discharged their duties for me, refraining from going astray when the Israelites did—unlike the Levites! They will have a special area set apart from the reservation that is set apart from the land, a particularly sacred area adjoining the Levites’ territory. Assigned to the Levites will be a section adjacent to the priests’ territory, 25,000 (cubits) long and 10,000 in breadth. The whole of it will be 25,000 long and 20,000 wide. None of this prime land is to be sold or exchanged by the holders or transferred to others, because it is sacred to Yahweh. The extra strip 5,000 cubits wide, broadside to the dimension of 25,000, is unconsecrated: it will belong to the city for residence and as open land, and will have the city at its center. The latter’s dimensions are as follows: the north, south, east and west limits will each be 4,500 cubits. The city’s open land will extend 250 (cubits) to the north, south, east and west. As for the remaining area that lengthwise runs alongside the sacred reservation and measures 10,000 (cubits) on the east and west edges, its produce will be the food supply of the city workers. The city’s workforce, drawn from all the tribes of Israel, is to farm it.

10a. Heb. b j r 1,2 “breadth” and û r a “length” occur here only: û r a is expected in the northern phrase, as in Vg LXX*(=967) represents MT, except in the case of b j r 2; Syr. presupposes only b j r 1. For a similar inconsistency in the Heb. cf. h d m “measurement” in vv 30, 33.

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11.a, b. MT ynb m w d q mh “the consecrated (place) from the sons” is generally redivided as µ w d q mh ynb “consecrated, sons,” supported by LXX and partially by Syr. Tg.: cf. 44:15; 2 Chr 26:18.

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12.a. For the Heb. form see BDB 929a; Zimmerli 522–23.

12.a. For the Heb. form see BDB 929a; Zimmerli 522–23.

13.a. LXX Vg rightly imply µ ywl h w “and to the Levites” for MT µ ywl h w “and the Levites,” which has been assimilated to the end of v 12 (Hitzig 375).

13.b. For MT û r a h Al k “whole length” LXX attests û r a h Al k “the whole length,” which is surely an error for û r a h Al k “the whole of it (in) length” presupposed by Syr. (cf. Driver, Bib 19 [1938] 187, who emended to w l k): for the form see 11:15; 20:40; 36:10.

13.c. As in v 9, LXX* again preserved the correct number: see BHS.

14.a. MT’s indefinite sg r m “one shall exchange” is supported by LXX, which also represents a sg verb in the first case. A pl. form w m, presupposed by Syr. Vg, was probably distorted by dittography.

14.b. Q aligns with the preceding verb. Probably K is to be followed, the masc. being used as the simplest form of the verb (Ehrlich, Randglossen 160).

15.a. For w m “open land” see Barr, JSS 29 (1984) 22–27. Comparison with Num 35:2–3 suggests that here it was to be used as grazing land, while the land of v 18 below was to be used for crops.

16.a. In the southern dimension w m “five” has been accidentally repeated in MT, as the Masoretes recognized.

18.a. MT, supported by the ancient versions, adds “and it will be alongside the sacred reservation,” seemingly an early case of vertical dittography eased into place by the verb (Ehrlich, ibid.).
reservation will be 25,000 by 25,000 (cubits). You are to set aside this square sacred reservation, including the city property. The remaining sections on each side of the sacred reservation and of the city’s property are to be assigned to the head of state. The section on the east will abut the area of 25,000 (cubits) and stretch to the eastern frontier, while the western section will also abut the area of 25,000 (cubits) and will extend to the western frontier. These sections, which are parallel to the other allocations, are to be assigned to the head of state. The sacred reservation, within which lies the temple sanctuary and which is bounded by the Levites’ property and by the city’s property and is flanked by the land that belongs to the head of state, is to be situated between the territories of Judah and Benjamin. The rest of the tribal areas, (8) from east to west: Benjamin. (9) Bordering Benjamin’s territory, from east to west: Simeon. (10) Bordering Simeon’s territory, from east to west: Issachar. (11) Bordering Issachar’s territory, from east to west: Zebulun. (12) Bordering Zebulun’s territory, from east to west: Gad. The southern border of Gad’s territory will coincide with the frontier running from Tamar, through Lake Meribah at Kadesh and through the Wady to the Mediterranean. That is the specification of the land you are to allocate as tenured property to the tribes of Israel, and those are to be their allocations. So runs the oracle of the Lord.

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b 20.a. The form of MT  יב ר usually connotes a fraction, “a fourth.” For a meaning “square” either ה ר (cf. 41:21; 43:16) or ב מ (cf. 40:47; 45:2) is expected. The ’athnach needs to be moved to this word.

b 20.b. lit. “together with,” a being used in the sense of א .

a 21.a. In place of MT  המר ת “reservation,” which is uncoordinated and which LXX Syr. do not represent, the parallelism requires המד א “east” (Smend 396–97 et al.). Did MT originate as a marginal note recording a variant, which a few MSS do read, for המר in v 12? If so, it was related to the wrong column and taken as a correction of the similar-looking המד א.

b 21.b. Heb. א is presumably used in the sense of א . Strict parallelism is not necessary, contra BHS et al.

c 21.c. The article is contextually necessary (cf. v 8): he fell out by pseudohaplography between ת and הייח.

d 21.d. The suffix relates to the reservation (K) rather than to the remaining area of v 21a (Q).

a 22.a. lit. “and (it [= the reservation] extends) from … and from,” specifying the northern and southern purlieus after the reservation’s central nucleus (cf. Keil 377–78). The oft counseled deletion of the prepositions, initiated by Toy (89), is not justifiable. For the repeated prepositions cf. המל המ “on this side and on that,” 47:7, etc.

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b 22.b. MT המל יא יכלה “it will belong to the head of state,” omitted by Syr., seems to be another case of vertical ditography. It spoils the thrust of vv 21b–22 (Zimmerli 525).

a 28.a. Haplography of he is suggested by LXX Syr. Tg.: יב ג “the frontier,” as some MSS read, is required, as in 47:13, 17.

b 28.b. lit. “up to,” if ד is read with some ancient support (see BHS) and in line with 47:19. Oversight by homoeoteleuton may be assumed.
Yahweh."

30 Here is a description of the city’s exterior. a On b the north side 4,500 (cubits) are to be measured c and there will be three of the city gates, which are to be named after Israel’s tribes, a in the north: (1) Reuben Gate, (2) Judah Gate, (3) Levi Gate. 31 On the east side there will be 4,500 (cubits) and three gates: (1) Joseph Gate, (2) Benjamin Gate, (3) Dan Gate. 32 The south side is to measure 4,500 (cubits) and there are to be three gates: (1) Simeon Gate, (2) Issachar Gate, (3) Zebulun Gate. 33 The west side will be 4,500 (cubits) and there are to be three gates b: (1) Gad Gate, (2) Asher Gate, (3) Naphtali Gate. 34 The perimeter will be 18,000 (cubits), and from that time on the city will be named “Yahweh-is-there.”

Notes

1.a. MT prefixes $\text{t\(\text{t}\)}} \text{m which, if correct, is locative “at the foot.” Yet in v 1a it has been used literally “from beneath.” This awkwardness and its absence from LXX* Syr. Vg suggest that it has been wrongly copied from v 1a (Toy 201; Cooke 522).

2.a. For the form of the Heb. cf. 46:9; 47:15.

a 29.a. Generally $\text{h\(\text{l}\)}} \text{j} \text{nb} “as an inheritance” is read with the ancient versions and 45:1; 47:14, 22. Unless it was simply a common b $\text{l\(\text{m}\)}}$ error, MT $\text{h\(\text{l}\)}} \text{j} \text{nm “from inheritance” may have originated as a note on h\(\text{l}\)}} \text{j} \text{n “to the Wady” in v 28, in which it was misunderstood as “inheritance” like the ancient versions, attempting to integrate it into the context. If so, it was wrongly taken as a correction of h\(\text{l}\)}} \text{j} \text{nb here, which it displaced.}

b 30.a. Heb. $\text{h\(\text{a\(\text{x}\)}} \text{w\(\text{t}\)}}$ refers to the extremity of a boundary in Num 34; here the following references to walls and gates suggest “exterior parts, outer limits” (cf. BDB 426a; Cooke 537). The meaning in Num 34 may well have influenced the present usage.

c 30.c. Inconsistently the Heb. uses $\text{h\(\text{d\(\text{m}\)}}$ “measurement” again only for the south side. LXX adds in v 34, while Syr. typically represents it in all four cases. Zimmerli’s refusal to “restore” a uniform text here and in other cases (544) is commendable.

a 31.a. The Heb. places this clause first, in v 31a . Its original position is often judged to be after v 30a (e.g., BHK), while Zimmerli (ibid.) considers it a gloss. It may simply be a case of clumsy writing, which matches the lack of symmetry in vv 30–35.

b 31.b. The Heb. adds “one” to each gate: see the relevant note on v 1.

c 32.a. Surprisingly MT prefixes the copula, which is generally removed, with much ancient support (see BHS). Doubtless assimilation to (\(\text{r\(\text{t}\)}} \text{w-and gates} “is to blame.

a 34.a. The parallels in vv 32, 33 have a copula: should it be restored, as is often counseled, e.g. by BHS?
b 34.b. MT, in place of the expected $\text{h\(\text{r\(\text{t}\)}} \text{w-and … gates,” implied by LXX* Syr. and read by one MS, has $\text{h\(\text{r\(\text{r\(\text{t}\)}} \text{w “their gates,” with no clear antecedent. Was it originally a marginal comment or variant referring to $\text{h\(\text{r\(\text{r\(\text{t}\)}} \text{w “gates” in v 31, the suffix relating to the tribes? If so, it eventually displaced $\text{h\(\text{r\(\text{r\(\text{t}\)}} \text{w later in the list.}

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Heb. Hebrew
2.b. cf. 44:1, although there the term is adjectival.

2.c. An error of metathesis is generally assumed, so that one reads ḥ nwph “that faces toward” (cf. 43:1).

2.d. Since the water has already been mentioned, µymh “the water” is generally read, as LXX implies, assuming haplography.

2.e. The Heb. is onomatopoeic.

3.a. For the Heb. idiom see 40:5 and note.

3.b. For the genitive see GKC 128n.

4.a. The abs form µym “waters” implies apposition, but constr ym “waters of” is generally read with c, many Heb. MSS, LXX and Tg. MT probably suffered assimilation to the preceding µymb “through the waters” (Cooke 523).

4.b. For consistency’s sake µymb “through the waters” is often inserted, with ancient support (see BHS), but significantly LXX supports MT’s shorter text.

7.a. The objective suffix is anomalous and doubtless assimilation to ywb “and he brought me back” in v 6 has occurred (GKC 91e). The regular form would be ywb (cf. Driver, Bib 35 [1954] 312).
8.a. MT μ' yαχ wmn h myh Al a “to the sea, those which had been brought out” is problematic. The first term with its otiose ending is generally emended to μ' ymh Al a “to the waters,” with the support of LXX Syr., assuming assimilation to the preceding h myh “to the sea.” Then the following pl. term qualifies it. In this case MT’s consonants are supported by LXX (cf. 48:30). Accordingly Driver (Bib 19 [1938] 186–87), followed by NEB (“foul”), suggested a hoph ptcp from the stem α ωx “be filthy, polluted” (cf. Syr. “stagnant”). He judged that the Gk. translation “salty” cited in LXX Qmg, which inspired Field’s popular suggestion μyxwmjh “seasoned, salty” (cf. Isa 30:24), was a guess.

8.b. For Q cf. GKC 7500.

9.a. MT’s dual μ'yIjn “two rivers” is strange. LXX Vg (cf. Syr. Tg. “the waters of the river”) imply j nh “the river,” as in v 9b (see the next note *). Ehrlich (Randglossen 158) plausibly revocalized μI j nh.
“their river, the river formed by them (= “waters” of v 8),” comparing “rivers of water” in Deut 8:7; 10:7; Jer 31:9; Syr. Tg. may reflect such an understanding. MT may have been influenced by the two rivers of Zech 14:8 (Cooke 520, with reference to Jewish tradition; cf. Clements’ suggestion that it echoes the two rivers at the source of which El lived in Ugaritic mythology [God and Temple 107 note 2]).

9.b. MT and the ancient versions add “and it (lit. pl. with reference to the waters) will become pure and it (sg) will live, everywhere that the river reaches,” with a violent change of subject in the first case to the polluted water of v 8b. The material adds nothing to the content and is best explained as a collection of textual variants. The first verb is a variant of וָפַרְנָּה “and they will become pure” in v 8b. What follows is another form of the latter part of v 9a with the pl. notion suggested by the two places.

10.a. L reads וָדָם יִהְיֶה “and they will stand” according to BHK. For a discussion of the various Heb. forms see Gese, Verfassungsentwurf 90 note 1.

10.b. The suffix naturally relates to the river of v 9a, via וָכָּה “thither” of v 9b (contra Zimmerli 507).

10.c. The pl. verb relates to the pl. notion suggested by the two places.

10.d. Probably to be identified with Ain el-Feshkah, just to the south of Khirbet Qumran.

10.e. lit. “the great sea”; also vv 15, 19, 20; 48:28.

10.f. See GKC 91e for the form.

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Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)

Tg. Targum

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

cf. confer, compare

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)

lit. literally

pl. plate or plural

sg singular or under

L Leningrad Codes of MT (as published in BHS) or Codex Leningradensis, B19a


Heb. Hebrew

contra in contrast to

pl. plate or plural

pl. plate or plural

lit. literally

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10.g. lit. “their,” relating to the pl. earlier.

12.a. For the K/Q variants cf. *GKC* 146f.

13.a. For the formulaic *ynda* “Lord” here and in v 23; 48:29 see the note on 20:3.

13.b. MT ḥg, pointed as if (ā) ḫ[G“valley” (=Syr.), is generally taken, even by Barthelemy et al., *Preliminary Report* 5, 188, as a textual error for ḥ Z “this,” attested by MSS LXX Tg. Vg (cf. Num 34:6, 13): *gimel* was written in anticipation of (׀ wb) g “frontier.”

13.c. MT ׀ wb g “frontier” requires the article, lost by haplography.

13.d. MT, supported by the ancient versions, adds ׀ y b j ׀ 5 ḡ “Joseph: (two) portions”: the noun requires pointing as a dual on the evidence of Tg, Vg. It would be possible to integrate it into the text by reading ׀ 5 ḡ “for Joseph,” assuming haplography (Ehrlich, *ibid.*); however, its ungrammatical nature (Driver, *L’Ancien Testament et l’Orient* 144) and use of ׀ b j instead of Q׀ j “portion” (Cooke 530: cf. 45:7; 48:8, 21) brand it as an early harmonizing gloss that contrasted the reckoning of the twelve tribes here (excluding Levi) and in 48:30–34 (Rautenberg, *ZAW* 33 [1913] 112 note 1).

15.a. In MT Ṿd ׀ ḥ “the way of” the article is otiose (cf. *BHS*). See the note on v 16.
15.b. In MT ḫ ḫ ḫ “to Zedad” and ṭ ṭ “Hamath” (v 16) are out of order: cf. LXX; 48:1; Num 34:8. Probably a copyist’s omission was restored at the wrong place.

16.a. MT אָמְכֶּ֔ית ṭ ṭ ḫ “the central court” was probably part of an annotation that together with the cue phrase ṭ ṭ ḫ (“outer, toward”) now in v 15 belongs with v 2. It was connected with the reading ṭ ṭ ḫ “the court” presupposed by LXX Syr. for ḫ ḫ ḫ “the outside.” It was referred to the wrong column: ṭ ṭ ḫ was taken as a correction of ṭ ṭ ḫ, and the next phrase as a correction of the similar-looking ṭ ṭ ḫ “to Hazar-enon” that underlies LXX (cf. v 17; 48:1; Num 34:9). The form of the second noun is ṭ ṭ ḫ in 48:1, as in Num 34:9–10, and LXX so standardizes.

17.a. As in v 13, the article lost by haplography needs to be restored: see BHS.

17.b. For ṭ ṭ ḫ the context seems to require ṭ ṭ ḫ (“to …”), as originally in v 16. Was the form assimilated to that in 48:1 or to MT in v 16?

17.c. MT ḫ ṭ ṭ ḫ “and north northwards” is attested by the ancient versions (cf. Zimmerli 519), but probably originated as an early note that displaced ḫ ṭ ṭ “northwards” (cf. 48:1). It recorded the variants ṭ ṭ ḫ/Ḥ ṭ ṭ ḫ (tap) “north (side)” in vv 15, 17.

17.d. The copula and object sign ṭ ṭ ḫ in MT here and in vv 18, 19 are an error for ṭ ṭ ḫ “this” (cf. v 20): see BHS.

18.a. Heb. ḫ ḫ ḫ here signifies “from the place between” (see Zimmerli 519; Wevers 231; cf. 2 Kgs

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cf. confer, compare

BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
cf. confer, compare
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BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
16:14). The insertion of “Hazar-enon” (Cornill 506 et al.; RSV) is unnecessary. However, the form seems to have contaminated יִבְּרֶנֶּון: the latter replaced יִבְּרֶנֶּון “between,” which is generally read.

18.b. For MT וּבִגְפַּם “from a boundary” a verb יִבְּרֶנֶּון “bounds” is implied by LXX Syr. Vg here and by LXX Syr. in v. 20. MT was assimilated to the noun form that dominates the context.

18.c. Heb. יַד is used, as often, in the sense of אֹת “to” (Fohrer 257). Another instance occurs in 48:28.

18.d. MT וּדְמַת “you shall measure” is generally judged, even by Barthélemy et al., Preliminary Report 5, 192–93, a reading inferior to הַר מַת “to Tamar” that underlies LXX Syr. and is corroborated by v. 19; 48:28. Doubtless MT originated as a comparative gloss on 48:10, inspired by the parallel 45:3. The note was related to the wrong side of the margin and taken as a correction of the look-alike הַר מַת.

19.a. For the double representation in this verse and 48:28 see Zimmerli 520.

19.b. MT וּבִרְעֵם “Meriboth” is supported only by LXX; in 48:28; Deut 32:51 a sg form appears.

22.a. As in v 22a, a hiph form is expected: see BHS. MT וֻֽלְּפַה “they shall be allotted” can hardly be used of people. Strictly the hiph signifies not “acquire by lot” (Zimmerli 521) but that the aliens were to join the Israelites in distributing the land (Cooke 530; cf. Ehrlich, Randglossen 159).

Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
et al. et alii, and others
RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
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Heb. Hebrew
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sg singular or under
hiph Hiphil
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MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
hiph Hiphil
cf. confer, compare
48.1.a. lit. “the names of tribes.” The language may have been influenced by Num 34:17, 19, which immediately follows the underlying literary model for Ezek 47:13–23.

1.b. The Heb. adds “one” (i.e., allocation, $q\mid j$, v 8) to each of the tribal statements of vv 1–7, 23–27. As in Josh 12:9–24, it is a primitive method of counting, like the strokes a prisoner traditionally puts on the cell wall.

1.c. For justification of the Heb. see Zimmerli, ibid..

1.d. lit. “and they shall be (assigned) to him”: the pronoun anticipates Dan; the pl. verb envisages a compound subj (Cooke 539).

1.e. For MT $\mu \nu q \rho “(east) side” \tau q \rho \nu “from …” is required in the context (cf. vv 2–8) and underlies LXX. The opposite occurs in v 16 (see BHS). Undoubtedly this is an inter-column phenomenon: perhaps corrections of errors were misplaced (cf. 44:8).

1.f. MT $\nu y q h “the sea” has suffered metathesis: in the context $h m y “to the sea” is necessary and is supported by LXX (see Zimmerli, ibid.). Was it a comparative note relating v 1 to 47:15?

8.a. The same Heb. occurs in v 10; contrast K in v 21. The fem antecedent is not always remembered (Cooke 539).

9.a. See the relevant note on 45:1. LXX* (=LXX$^{967}$) has preserved the original, adapted to “10,000” in MT. Cornill (508–9) shrewdly deduced the pristine form of LXX.

lit. literally
Heb. Hebrew
i.e. id est, that is
Heb. Hebrew
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
lit. literally
pl. plate or plural
subj subject/subjective
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
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LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
Heb. Hebrew
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
10.a. Heb. bj r 1,2 “breadth” and ûr a “length” occur here only: ûr a is expected in the northern phrase, as in Vg LXX*(=967) represents MT, except in the case of bj r 2; Syr. presupposes only bj r 1. For a similar inconsistency in the Heb. cf. hd m “measurement” in vv 30, 33.

11.a, b. MT ynr m w dq mh “the consecrated (place) from the sons” is generally redivided as w dq mh ynr “consecrated, sons,” supported by LXX and partially by Syr. Tg.: cf. 44:15; 2 Chr 26:18.

12.a. For the Heb. form see BDB 929a; Zimmerli 522–23.

13.a. LXX Vg rightly imply µyw l w “and to the Levites” for MT µyw h w “and the Levites,” which has been assimilated to the end of v 12 (Hitzig 375).


13.c. As in v 9, LXX* again preserved the correct number: see BHS.

14.a. MT’s indefinite sg f mj “one shall exchange” is supported by LXX, which also represents a sg

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Heb. Hebrew
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Heb. Hebrew
cf. confer, compare
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Tg. Targum
cf. confer, compare
Heb. Hebrew
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cf. confer, compare
Bib Biblica
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
verb in the first case. A pl. form $\text{wrmy}$, presupposed by Syr. Vg, was probably distorted by dittography.

14.b. Q aligns with the preceding verb. Probably K is to be followed, the masc. being used as the simplest form of the verb (Ehrlich, Randglossen 160).

15.a. For $\text{rgm}$ “open land” see Barr, JSS 29 (1984) 22–27. Comparison with Num 35:2–3 suggests that here it was to be used as grazing land, while the land of v 18 below was to be used for crops.

16.a. In the southern dimension $\text{mjr}$ “five” has been accidentally repeated in MT, as the Masoretes recognized.

18.a. MT, supported by the ancient versions, adds “and it will be alongside the sacred reservation,” seemingly an early case of vertical dittography eased into place by the verb (Ehrlich, ibid.).


20.a. The form of MT $\text{ty[ybr}$ usually connotes a fraction, “a fourth.” For a meaning “square” either $\text{h[wbr}$ (cf. 41:21; 43:16) or $\text{b[r m}$ (cf. 40:47; 45:2) is expected. The ’athnach needs to be moved to this word.

20.b. lit. “together with,” $\text{l\[}$ being used in the sense of $\text{l\[}$.

21.a. In place of MT $\text{hmwr}$ “reservation,” which is uncoordinated and which LXX Syr. do not represent, the parallelism requires $\text{h myd q}$ “east” (Smend 396–97 et al.). Did MT originate as a marginal

sg singular or under
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
sg singular or under
pl. plate or plural
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
Vg Latin Vulgate (as published in Weber’s edition)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
K Kethib (the written consonant Hebrew text of OT)
masc. masculine
JSS Journal of Semitic Studies
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
VT Vetus Testamentum
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
cf. confer, compare
lit. literally
MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT
Syr. Syriac language or text version of the OT, (as published in the Peshitta Insitute edition, 1980)
et al. et alii, and others
note recording a variant, which a few MSS do read, for ḥymwr t in v 12? If so, it was related to the wrong column and taken as a correction of the similar-looking ḥmydq.

21.b. Heb. ( is presumably used in the sense of (a). Strict parallelism is not necessary, contra BHS et al.

21.c. The article is contextually necessary (cf. v 8): he fell out by pseudohaplography between taw and hieth.

21.d. The suffix relates to the reservation (K) rather than to the remaining area of v 21a (Q).

22.a. lit. “and (it [= the reservation] extends) from … and from,” specifying the northern and southern purlieus after the reservation’s central nucleus (cf. Keil 377–78). The oft counseled deletion of the prepositions, initiated by Toy (89), is not justifiable. For the repeated prepositions cf. ḥzmw ḥzm “on this side and on that,” 47:7, etc.

22.b. MT ḥḥｙｙｙ ṣj “it will belong to the head of state,” omitted by Syr., seems to be another case of vertical dittography. It spoils the thrust of vv 21b–22 (Zimmerli 525).

28.a. Haplography of he is suggested by LXX Syr. Tg.: ḥwbgh “the frontier,” as some MSS read, is required, as in 47:13, 17.

28.b. lit. “up to,” if d ( is read with some ancient support (see BHS) and in line with 47:19. Oversight by homoeoteleuton may be assumed.

MT The Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS)
MSS manuscript(s)
Heb. Hebrew
contra in contrast to
BHS Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977)
et al. et alii, and others
cf. confer, compare
K Kethib (the written consonantal Hebrew text of OT)
Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)
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29.a. Generally הֶלְבָּנָב “as an inheritance” is read with the ancient versions and 45:1; 47:14, 22. Unless it was simply a common b µ error, MT הֶלְבָּנָב “from inheritance” may have originated as a note on הֶלְבָּנָב to the Wady” in v 28, in which it was misunderstood as “inheritance” like the ancient versions, attempting to integrate it into the context. If so, it was wrongly taken as a correction of הֶלְבָּנָב here, which it displaced.

30.a. Heb. הֶלְבָּנָב refers to the extremity of a boundary in Num 34; here the following references to walls and gates suggest “exterior parts, outer limits” (cf. BDB 426a; Cooke 537). The meaning in Num 34 may well have influenced the present usage.

30.b. The preposition is local in sense.

30.c. Inconsistently the Heb. uses הָדִימ “measurement” again only for the south side. LXX adds in v 34, while Syr. typically represents it in all four cases. Zimmerli’s refusal to “restore” a uniform text here and in other cases (544) is commendable.

31.a. The Heb. places this clause first, in v 31a. Its original position is often judged to be after v 30a (e.g., BHK), while Zimmerli (ibid.) considers it a gloss. It may simply be a case of clumsy writing, which matches the lack of symmetry in vv 30–35.

31.b. The Heb. adds “one” to each gate: see the relevant note on v 1.

32.a. Surprisingly MT prefixes the copula, which is generally removed, with much ancient support (see BHS). Doubtless assimilation to (בָּנָב) יְלֵֽדֶת“and gates” is to blame.

34.a. The parallels in vv 32, 33 have a copula: should it be restored, as is often counseled, e.g. by BHS?
34.b. **MT**, in place of the expected מִֽעְרָפָם (מִֽעְרָפָם “and … gates,” implied by LXX* Syr.* and read by one **MS**, has מִֽעְרָפָם (מִֽעְרָפָם “their gates,” with no clear antecedent. Was it originally a marginal comment or variant referring to מִֽעְרָפָם in v 31, the suffix relating to the tribes? If so, it eventually displaced מִֽעְרָפָם later in the list.

**Form/Structure/Setting**

The final redactional unit of the series of temple-related visionary descriptions and legislative prescriptions in chaps. 40–48 is found in these last two chapters. It falls into two unequal parts, a short visionary account of the stream that flows from the temple in 47:1–12, and a long description of the boundaries and tribal divisions of the land in 47:13–48:35. As in the second unit (chaps. 43–48), a visionary description forms the introduction to other relevant and related material. Structurally these quite different sections are tied together by several factors. The first is a wordplay formed by the terms that dominate each section: יָרָם “river” and הָרָם “inheritance” (and the verb יָרָם [יָרָם] “inherit”). The second is a shared reference to the Dead Sea in the east (47:8, 18) and to the Mediterranean (47:10, 20). The third and most important is the source in the first section and the center in the second: the יָרָם “house” (47:1) and מִֽעְרָפָם “sanctuary” (47:12), which find echoes, the latter term reappearing in 48:8, 10 and both terms in 48:21. The common theme is the essential bond between temple and land.

47:1–12 is the first primary unit. Its elements of guidance, measurement and explanation accord with the earlier visions of chaps. 40–46, especially those of chaps. 40–42, although its vocabulary diverges slightly (cf. Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 94–95, but see also Zimmerli 511). The explanation, which here plays a major role, functions as a means of communicating the miraculous effects of the river. However, the tone of the narrative is much more apocalyptic than any of the other visionary accounts in chaps. 40–48 (cf. Zech 14:8). The water that issues from the temple or sanctuary (vv 1, 12) provides a framework for the whole piece. Moreover, the “water” (מִֽעְרָפָם) dominates it throughout; from v 5 onwards it shares its prevalence with “river” (יָרָם). The explanation of vv 8–12 has a double healing as its inclusion, the water’s healing or purification (יוּבָרָם נֶֽם v 8) of the Dead Sea, and the healing effect (הָֽֽוֹרָם יָֽרָם , v 12) of the trees growing beside the river. The reference to the trees lining the river (vv 7, 12) provides a common conclusion for the visionary narrative (vv 1–7) and the explanation. The first part of the framework of the explanation, in v 8, is expanded by a double elaboration, in terms of fish (vv 9–10) and residual salt (v 11). The elaboration is rhetorically tied to v 8 by an initial echo of “these waters” (הָֽֽוֹרָם יָֽרָם , vv 8, 9) and a closing echo of the earlier verb of healing or purification (יוּבָרָם נֶֽם v 8; יוּבָרָם יָֽרָם , v 11). The block of vv 8–11 and the statement of v 12 both culminate in cases of lamed of purpose (“for salt”/“for food … for healing”).

Within the visionary description הָֽֽוֹרָם נֶֽם “and behold” (translated “and I found”) has the role of introducing a series of disclosures, in vv 1אא, 2ב and 7. This feature is varied by the attention-seeking question of v 6, which highlights the phenomenon of v 5בב. These stylistic elements suggest that the narrative moves in four stages, vv 1/2/3–6א/6ב–7. Each stage is introduced by the prophet’s being led to
a fresh location. In the third case the leading is slightly delayed: it develops into a series of its own, each phase prefaced by mention of measuring—until the prophet cannot follow. Indeed, from v 4 till the end of the unit hyperbole is a marked stylistic trait. It is evidenced by repetition within vv 5 and 9, dām bīr “very many” (vv 7, 9), lāk “all” (vv 9, 12) and by the comparison of v 10 and the miraculous monthly cropping of v 12. Exception has been taken to vv 6b–8a (Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 92–93 et al.) on account of the repetition of yā ṭāfār mà wāy “and he said to me” and the anticipation of the material of v 12. It has been hailed as a typical case of *Wiederaufnahme*, or redactional insertion, that repeats an earlier element as a tie back into an older narrative. However, repetition is not necessarily to be so explained (cf. other cases where *Wiederaufnahme* has been questionably assumed: in 21:14 by B. Lang [*VT* 29, 1979, 40] and in 40:2, 4–5a by Talmon and Fishbane [*ASTI* 10, 1975/76, 14 4–45]). In this case there seems to be an intention in v 6a to borrow a feature from the vision in chap. 8, where an alternating sequence of such questioning and narrative of guidance and discovery occurs (see especially 8:6–13) as a device both to draw attention to something remarkable and to refer to further surprises in store. V 11 too has been even more widely regarded as a secondary amplification, but stylistically it does nestle comfortably in its context, as noted above.

47:13–48:29, to which 48:30–35 has been appended, forms an integral unit, as Gese (*Verfassungsentwurf* 100) confirmed from its stylistically homogeneous series of passages framed with headings and summaries. The unit falls into two parts, 47:13–23, which describes the frontiers of the land to be distributed to the tribes, and 48:1–29, which outlines its actual tribal distribution. 48:29 seems to resume both 47:13–23, with its reference to the allotting (wālā)

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(yā tāzār aḥ) as “tenured property” (hā mēḏ), and 48:1–28, by echoing “and these” (hā wāy) from 48:1. Basically the unit combines geographical and demographical lists (47:15–20; 48:1–28), with their own headings in 47:15a and 48:1a, and sets them in an oracular framework addressed with second plural references to Israel. The framework is bounded by a messenger formula and by two divine saying formulas, which appear to demarcate the two halves of the unit (A … A’/… A’: 47:13–14, 21–23; 48:29. cf. too the framing 48:8b–9a, 20b). The divine speaking of 47:14 nominally conflicts with the third person references of 48:9, 10, 14 (for v 11 see *Comment*), but each fits its own form-critical context. The mixed composition is reminiscent of the deliberate presentation of cultic regulations as prophetic revelation within chaps. 43–46.

There is a tendency to regard 47:22–23 as redactional: their reference to resident aliens is taken as a correction of v 14 (see Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 98–99; Zimmerli 526, 532). Certainly these verses go beyond v 14, but their content seems to function both as a parallel to vv 13–14 and as a climactic advance. There is a nice correspondence between ḫā k yēt bā l … wājī a k ḥā “each like his brother … to your fathers” and lā r ṣā ṣā yā nā b j r ṣā ḫ “like a native among the sons of Israel.”

The tribal list in 48:1–28 interlocks with the frontier lists of 47:15–20 in that the initial reference to the north frontier and the final reference to the south border are brief echoes of the earlier list (47:15b–17 //48:1b; 47:19//48:28b). This latter list divides into vv 1–7, 8–22, 23–29 in an ABA pattern, with proportions of seven, fifteen and seven lines respectively. The second, largest section concerning the central reservation is carefully interwoven into the other two. V 8a dovetails into v 7, while vv 21b–22 elaborately tie into vv 7 and 23–29; v 23a glances back at vv 1–7.
48:30–35 is a supplement that develops v 16 by giving details of its gates and wall. It is modeled on the tribal list of 48:1–29 in its initial heading “and these . . .” in v 30a and in its numerical system of a repeated “one.” The order of the compass points does not correspond exactly to that of v 16, but echoes that of the frontier description in 47:15–20. The structure of the piece is a framing of the description of the external parts of the city (vv 30b–34) with material concerning the whole (vv 30a, 35).

The three pieces of this redactional unit, behind a facade of compositional coherence, mirror on a smaller scale the unevenness of the previous unit in chaps. 43–46. The spiritual fantasy of the vision in 47:1–12 gives way to the down-to-earth geographical and demographical details of 47:13–48:29. As for 48:30–35, although it is obviously written with the previous piece in view, a skewing of emphasis from sanctuary to city represents a different perspective. 47:1–12 is widely accepted as the high-flown, climactic conclusion to a series of primary vision accounts, which reflects the phenomenon of the closed east gate (43:1–11; 44:1–2, 4; cf. Zimmerli 549–50). Within 47:13–48:29, 47:15–20 demonstrates a close dependence on Num 33–34 that is reminiscent of the echoes of Num 18 in the late 44:4–16 and of Lev 26 in the parts of chaps. 34 and 37 that were the fruit of late, though exilic, redaction. 48:30–35, which leans heavily on 47:13–48:29, but has its own counter emphasis, is later still. Redaction is as alive and well in this unit as in any of the previous ones; so too is its sense of divine authority, evidenced in the prophetic formulas of 47:13, 23; 48:29.

Comment

47:1–2 This visionary experience portrays and proclaims the temple as source of blessing for the land. Redactionally the prophet returns from inspecting kitchens in the outer court (46:21). Ezekiel evidently stands at the entrance to the nave of the temple (cf. 41:2; Busink, Tempel 767, contra Zimmerli 511, who envisages a position in front of the temple building). The “threshold” (÷tpm, cf. 46:2) seemingly equates with the 1 § (“threshold”) of 41:16. A trickle of water ran down the steps in the direction of the east gate. However, since the altar stood in the way of a direct flow, the water first flowed down the right side of the steps and along the south sidewall of the temple before crossing the inner court in a course to the south of the altar. That course was apparently maintained across the outer court and beyond the outer east gate, as the prophet discovered after a necessary detour through the north gate(s), since the east gates were closed. There is an implicit reminder that this was the route that Yahweh had traveled in his return to the temple (43:1–5). The stream, virtually retracing his path, was flowing from the very presence of God.

3–6a The two discoveries made in quick succession in vv 1–2 are followed by a third, which is described at greater length as a focus of interest. The description is heightened by a series of stops and starts. Probes undertaken by the supernatural guide, who in this final appearance is introduced in a way similar to his first appearance in 40:3, record the amazing progress of the stream. Clearly the measuring has a different function than in chaps. 40–42. In just over a mile the stream increases to a deep river. Normally one would envisage tributaries and drainage as the cause of such a phenomenon. Here, however, a miracle is at work, somewhat like the unspent jar of meal and unfailing cruse of oil in 1 Kgs 8:12–16, or like the growth of the kingdom of God from mustard seed to spreading tree (Mark 4:31–32; cf. Dan 4:8[11]) or like the stone that became a great mountain (Dan 2:35). Still more surprises are in
store. As the question implies, Ezekiel has seen nothing yet!

6b–7 The climax in the narrative, as in the ensuing explanation (v 12), comes with the discovery of an oasis of trees growing in the barren Wilderness of Judah between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. Do they find an echo in Second Isaiah’s trees in the desert (Isa 41:19; cf. 35:1–2)?

8–12 The habitual visionary element of explanation here serves to describe first the further course of the river, although the topography is left unclear (cf. Zimmerli 513), and then another miraculous effect, both of which lie beyond the prophet’s sight. At the end, in v 12, a more usual type of explanation is devoted to the orchard of trees that line the river in v 7. First, however, the healing effect of the river upon the Dead Sea is described in vv 8–10. It was to become a freshwater lake, able to sustain an enormous abundance of fish. The upper half of the west shore of the Dead Sea (cf. Farmer, BA 19 [1956] 19–20) is portrayed as a fisherman’s paradise. In its backwaters, however, would be left salt water to provide salt for cultic (43:24) and presumably for human needs, although the verse seems primarily to reflect the cultic concern evident throughout chaps. 40–48. The Dead Sea is cursed with its deadly minerals, which make up 25% of its water over against a 5% salt content of sea water (Cooke 520). Moreover, simply as a mass of water it is a symbol of chaos, that which is hostile to the purposes of God for his people (cf. Rev 21:2). The explanation reverts in v 12 to the trees. Barren land was to be transformed into a scene of sustenance and herbal healing, a perennial antidote to pain and need. Rev 22:2, drawing on a slightly different tradition, firmly equates this blessing with the tree of life. The source of such blessing, v 12 wants to remind us, is the sanctuary (cf. Ps 133:3; 134:3; Mal 3:10–12).

Behind the vision stands the cultic concept of blessing, as the power of God which, crowning the worship of his pilgrim people, returns home with them and enriches their lives. Here it appears appropriately, after the regulations for temple upkeep and worship have been revealed in chaps. 43–46. The particular imagery is drawn from a motif in the Songs of Zion tradition, the “river whose streams delight the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High” (Ps 46:5[4]). The river was a religious metamorphosis of the little Gihon spring, which was itself of some cultic significance (1 Kgs 1:33, 45; cf. Ps 110:7) or possibly of the Shiloh canal (Isa 8:6). The rivers of Eden (Gen 2:10–14) may have also been a contributing tradition, as is often claimed (see e.g. Baltzer, Ezechiel 155; Levenson, Theology 28–29, 32; Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation 370 note 131).

13–23 This passage functions as an introduction to 48:1–29, where the allocation of the land is described. V 14 lays down a theological premise, the revival of the theme of the land promised to the patriarchs, which runs through the pentateuchal sources. Once more a landless people stood on tiptoe, to use the language of Rom 8:19, awaiting God’s promise. Like the Second Exodus, a second possession of the land was typologically theirs. A geographical premise to be clarified is the total extent of the land to be severally allocated, and to this question the present passage addresses itself. The answer is again expressed in a traditional form, inspired by the material of Num 33:50–34:15, of which this is a briefer version apart from the description of the northern boundary. Only in Num 33:54; 34:13 and Ezek 47:13 is הָעִנֻיָה הָאָדָם הַיּוֹם “take as one’s inheritance” used with the land as object, while 47:14b is close to Num 34:2b.
However, the land is no longer to be distributed by lot but by the sovereign decree of Yahweh. Essentially both in Numbers and here the promised land is described as the land of Canaan, as regularly in P. This was a recognized political entity that included Palestine and southern Syria in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C. It is these ancient limits that are echoed (Aharoni, Land 68–69; M. Weippert, IDBSup 126). The emphasis on equal shares intentionally seems to run counter to the disparate portions of Num 33:54 (cf. Num 26:52–56), which depended on tribal size. The motif of equality anticipates the tribal strips of chap. 48.

15–17 A heading and summary box in the description of each frontier. While the order is south/west/north/east in Num 34, here the order north/east/south/west is intended to accord more closely with the order of chap. 48, where there is a longitudinal progression, from north to south, of strips on a lateral east/west plane. The crucial identification for the northern frontier is that of תְּנֵי יָמָן, which occurs in a number of Old Testament texts as Israel’s most northerly point. Is it “Lebo (of) Hamath” or “entrance to Hamath”? The controverted identification of this place drastically affects the placing of the north border. It is perhaps best interpreted as the approach road that leads north to Hamath, and specifically the southern end, near the modern Merj ʿUyun (see North, Mélanges 46 [1970] esp. 97–99; cf. the discussion in Zimmerli 528–30). Then the western end, which is left undefined, may begin just north of Tyre, at the mouth of the Litani river perhaps. De Vaux (JAOS 88 [1968] 29) has put forward the attractive suggestion that in vv 16–18 reference is made to the Assyrian provinces of Hamath, Damascus and Hauran, established between 733 and 720 B.C. One may add “Israel” in v 18, corresponding to the province of Samerina. The northwest border of the province of Hauran seems to have come to a northerly limit parallel with a point just to the north of Tyre (see J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, A History of Ancient Israel and Judah [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986] 333, map 24). The mention of Hamath creates some difficulty: even as a province it lies too far to the north. However, if it was governed jointly with the province of Mansiuate (see J. D. Hawkins, CAH [revised] 3:1, 417), the name may be used loosely to cover both areas; there would be consistency with a line running horizontally from the vicinity of Tyre. The other place names are no longer identifiable.

18 The description of the east frontier pinpoints its northerly end, then seemingly runs down the eastern boundary of the province of Hauran, then along the boundary between the provinces of Qarnini (Karnaim) and Gal’azu (Gilead) till it reaches the Jordan. It follows the Jordan and the west bank of the Dead Sea as far as Tamar at the southwest end of the Dead Sea (cf. J. T. Butler, ISBE 4, 724–25). As consistently in P, the promised land, coinciding with the land of Canaan, excludes the Transjordan, which is regarded as unclean (Josh 22:19, 25, 27; cf. Haran, Temples 39, 41). Did Tolkien have this conception in mind when he wrote of the outlandish Buckland hobbits who lived to the east of the river Brandywine?

19–20 The south border makes a wide sweep to the southwest, to the oasis of Kadesh-barnea, as Num 34:4 terms it (cf. Num 20:1–13; 27:14), before linking with the Wady el-ʿArish, the standard

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**IDBSup** Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume, ed. K. Crim (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976)

cf. confer, compare

cf. confer, compare

**JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society**


cf. confer, compare


**P Pesher (commentary)**

cf. confer, compare
frontier with Egypt (cf. Josh 15:4, 47; 1 Kgs 8:65). The west frontier, which skirts the Mediterranean, is an ideal limit never attained by Israel in the Old Testament period.

21–23 Num 34:13–15, like 33:54, is deliberately transformed: mention of the 9 1/2 cisjordanian tribes and of the 2 1/2 tribes in the Transjordan is replaced by citation of two other categories, native Israelites and resident aliens. Elsewhere in the Old Testament the latter are represented as incapable of owning land. Their underprivileged status left them open to oppression (cf. 22:7, 29). The injunction to treat them like nationals did indeed form part of the legal traditions in H and P, in moralistic (but lacking teeth) and religious exhortations (e.g. Lev 19:33–34; Num 15:29), but here it is given a radically new application in terms of naturalization and integration into tribal communities.

48:1–29 There follows a schematic representation of the tribal allocation of the land, in which the equality of 47:14 is expressed in latitudinal strips of equal size (cf. v 8), each just over eight miles from north to south. The tribal areas (vv 1–7, 23–29) are augmented by a further one that is designated a territorial “contribution” or “reservation” set aside as a token that the whole land belonged to Yahweh (vv 8–22; cf. Lev 25:23). In literary terms this reservation has the lion’s share of the elaboration, in keeping with the primarily cultic interests of chaps. 40–48.

1–7, 23–29 The tribal allocations to the north of the reservation are prefaced with a recapitulation of the northern frontier. Correspondingly those to the south will conclude with a repetition of the southern border (v 28). The assignment of seven tribes to the north of the reservation and five to the south accords with the fixed position of Jerusalem and the temple in Hebrew tradition, and analogously with the larger size of the northern kingdom. The traditional number of twelve

Figure 6. The division of the land
tribes is attained by the division of Joseph into the tribal groups Ephraim and Manasseh, after the omission of the landless Levi.

Historical tradition is also followed in the ordering of Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh and Ephraim and in their allocation to the north, and also in the placing of Simeon in the south. With the Jordan as the eastern frontier, Reuben and Gad had to be moved west. A further, major principle at work in the distribution was a genealogical one, derived from Gen 29–30; 35 (Fohrer 262). The sons of Jacob’s two wives, Leah and Rachel, who included Levi, are given the privilege of proximity to the reservation and so to the temple. The sons of his two concubines Bilhah and Zilpah are set at a distance. Accordingly the geographical placing of the top three tribes nicely combine historical tradition and a stepson status; for balance the (transjordanian) stepson Gad had to be set in the far south. The eight full sons are placed four and four, to the immediate north and south of the reservation. The placing of Manasseh and Ephraim is also true to both history and the family principle; for balance Issachar and Zebulun had to be displaced to the south. The transjordanian Reuben, as the firstborn full son and part of the old northern kingdom, fits well below Ephraim. A surprising feature is the placement of Judah and Benjamin. Although their juxtaposition to the reservation is expected in view of their long history of support of the temple, one expects them to be reversed. The juxtaposition of Reuben, Judah and Levi as north gates of the city (v 31) suggests that in both cases common roles as sons of Leah may have been a determining factor (Zimmerli 541, who also notes that the meaning of Benjamin’s name, “son of the right [= south],” also suits the southern location of this tribe).

8–22 The tribal units provide an outer framework for the main, cultic concern of this passage, which lies at the center: the literary and geographical structures nicely correspond. The reservation is defined in fluctuating terms. It can be the whole strip (v 8) or the central square including the city and its land (v 20). But, most often, as “the sacred reservation,” it consists of the oblong made up by the priests’ and Levites’ territories (vv 9, 10). The priests’ territory, which includes the sanctuary (v 10), is regarded as the most sacred area (v 12). The definition of the priests in v 11 represents a scrupulous revision in terms of the book’s final ruling in 44:4–16 (see Form/Structure/Setting of chaps. 43–46). The two levels of holiness in the sacred reservation obviously extend the gradation that was a key feature of the sanctuary
itself. As in their work, so in their living quarters the temple personnel reflect their respective standing. In principle the sacred reservation obviously corresponds to the older system of levitical cities advocated in P (Num 35:1–8), which is generally held to go back to pre-exilic times (see Budd, Numbers 372–75). The phrase “cities to live in” at 45:5 is a clear echo of terminology associated with that system (cf. Num 35:2; Josh 14:4; 31:2). A difference is that, whereas the tribe of Levi was landless in tribal terms and had the cities for residence and their surrounding land for grazing (rather than for crops), here the priests have that corresponding privilege, while according to the transitional summary in v 22 (=45:5; contrast the priests’ lack of property in 44:28) the Levites are in an intermediate position. They own their land and evidently use it for crops (see Haran, Temples 116–17, 127), although it is inalienable, like that of the priests (v 14). The distinction reflects the midway position of the Levites observed in other portions of chaps. 40–48. In certain respects they are aligned with the people, as their representatives (44:11; 46:24). Accordingly the term “property” is used both of the city (vv 20–22) and of the Levites’ holding.

Figure 7. The reservation

The inclusion of the city and of crown land in the reservation is a reflex of older traditions: king, capital and temple had been interconnected for centuries. Although these bonds are noticeably loosened—palace and temple no longer adjoin (43:7–8) and the city is kept at a respectful distance from the temple—the influence of their unity is not allowed to fade into oblivion. The city, open to the members of every tribe (v 19; cf. 45:6), like some federal district, functions as a microcosm of the whole nation of tribes, representing them in the focal part of the land, next to the divine dwelling place.

The order of the three areas in the middle square of the reservation is not categorically stated. Does the order of mention imply a north-south order, priests/Levites/city (Macholz, VT 19 [1969] 335; Greenberg, Int 38 [1984] 202 note 37; Busink, Tempel 770)? Probably not. It is appropriate to conceive of the temple as in the center of the priests’ territory and so of the whole reservation laterally and, less literally, vertically. It is not possible, however, to render ûwtb consistently as “in the center”: although it fits the priests’ territory (v 10, cf. v 15), it obviously would not suit the rectangle of the sacred reservation (vv 8, 21b). The positioning of the Levites’ and city’s areas on either side of the priests’ area is indicated by the closing v 22, if it has been interpreted aright. Most probably the city was envisaged as on the south side of the temple, in keeping with the pre-exilic tradition of the topography of city and

P Pesher (commentary)
cf. confer, compare
cf. confer, compare
VT Vetus Testamentum
Int Interpretation
cf. confer, compare
temple. The tribe of Judah has a slightly more honorable position than Benjamin, next to the sacred reservation (cf. Macholz, ibid.)

The estates of the head of state extend in two large blocks on either side of the sacred reservation and city land. The size of this property and its positioning reflect the pre-exilic links with temple and city. The distancing from the temple, like that of the city, symbolizes a loosening of the dangerous old bonds, in order to accentuate the holiness of the temple. Yet in the clustering of all three elements within the reservation there is a clear echo of the theological significance that the two “secular” elements had in Judah’s traditions. The reservation “in its various parts, not all of them equally sacred, keeps alive the memory of God’s way with his people” (Zimmerli 543). In social and doubtless by implication political terms there is also a statement of the prestige, status and power possessed by the head of state. Quietly but firmly a negative note is also being sounded, as explicitly in 45:8, 9: the head of state, already richly endowed, was not to trespass upon tribal property.

30–35 This final section is a commentary on v 16: the “measurements” (twdm) of the latter are echoed in the “measurement” (hdm) of vv 30 and 33. In changing the order of the compass points from that of v 16 to that of 47:15–20, was there an intent to portray the city as a microcosm of the land? The twelve tribes are listed differently than in vv 1–29: reasonably so, because there a purely territorial tradition was being echoed, which excluded Levi, while here the genealogical tradition is resumed, in which Levi had a normative place, with Joseph replacing Ephraim and Manasseh to keep the number down to twelve. The city walls, which are nowhere mentioned but must be in view, are punctuated by gates named after the tribes. Perhaps the idea was suggested by the Ephraim and Benjamin gates of pre-exilic Jerusalem (2Kgs 14:13; Jer 37:13); they, however, were named solely for reasons of geographical orientation.

The west side is regarded as the least significant, being allocated to three of the concubines’ children. The south side is represented by three of Leah’s sons: there may be an echo of the geographical placing of these tribes, to the south of the city, as indeed in the case of the north side. The east side is shared by Rachel’s two children, while Dan, a concubine’s son, is promoted to join them. The genealogical factor has clearly influenced the ordering, but not in the same way as in vv 1–29. The main point is that, as in the case of the city’s population at v 19, all the traditional tribes are represented in the capital.

If the names of the gates represent the tribes’ stake in the city, the eschatological name of the city symbolizes Yahweh’s own stake in it. Although the temple where Yahweh had come to dwell in 43:1–9 was now separate from the city, his presence is firmly claimed here too. The new name “Yahweh-is-there” (hm Ahwhy) may reflect a wordplay on the old name “Jerusalem” (µl wry). The aura of sacred privilege that in earlier verses pervaded the city by its position within the central reservation, here extends to an enjoyment of full fellowship with Yahweh. The city thus symbolizes the covenant bond between the whole people, portrayed in its gates, and their God, who was present within. These final verses seek to rehabilitate the old Zion traditions and claim them for the new Jerusalem as “the city of our God” (Ps 48:2[1]) and the city “to which the tribes go up” (Ps 122:4). One can hear a pastoral response to the spiritual longings of the exiles here, and an endorsement of their fervent prayer for Yahweh to “build up Zion, appearing in his glory” (Ps 102:17[16]).

Explanation

These closing chapters trace the relation of the temple to the land of Israel. There is a tradition

cf. confer, compare
ibid. ibidem, in the same place
deeply embedded in Israel’s faith that inextricably linked together the fortunes of temple and land. To worship in the temple carried with it the privilege of dwelling in the land and enjoying God’s blessing there (cf. Exod 15:17; Ps 78:54; Isa 57:13; Obad 17; cf. Clements, Temple 73). That tradition finds reaffirmation in this representation of Israel’s future. It is used in conjunction with a further cultic tradition, expressed in a Song of Zion, Ps 46:5(4), of the mythological river that enhanced the city of God. In Ps 36:9–10 (8–9) the river is spiritualized as “a fountain of life” in the temple, which God gives his worshiping people to drink. That life is a blessing that enriches their future after they leave the temple courts (cf. Ps 133:3; 121). Correspondingly, here the river overflows its cultic bounds and spreads out into the Wilderness of Judah and down to the Dead Sea, to transform wherever it reaches and to bring life (v 9). God’s abundant power to bless is affirmed by the increasing depth of what originated as a bubbling spring and by its instrumentality in creating entities that were “very many” (vv 7, 9, 10; cf. Eph 1:19; 2:7; 3:20). His dominion over the powers of chaos and death is clearly sounded in the healing brought about by the water and by the trees it nourishes (vv 8, 11). The seer in Revelation later borrowed from this vision. For him the leaves were for the healing of the nations (Rev 22:2). Ezekiel does not go that far: he makes a necessary pastoral start in the healing of the people of God, disoriented by the trauma of exile (cf. Darr, VT 37 [1987] 271–79, contra Eichrodt 585–86).

If chaps. 40–48 begin with theological architecture, they end with theological geography. The destruction of the old people of God gave an opportunity for a new beginning on sounder principles that took theology seriously. The tradition of the promised land and its distribution in Num 34 is re-used, so that Yahweh’s ancient promise may eventually find a fulfillment that will supersede the old history of tragic self-will, with which the earlier chapters of this book are concerned. Land and people are closely connected throughout the Old Testament and not least in the book of Ezekiel. Expulsion from the land was the people’s judgment; restoration to it was to be their salvation. Indeed, the repeated phrase יְהֹוָה “people of the land” in the previous section (45:22; 46:3, 9) may be considered a seminal concept that entails as its corollary a literary progression to the renewed gift of the land.

At the heart of the land stands the temple, its holiness suitably insulated from the tribal territories by the sacred lands assigned to the priests and Levites. There is respect for the otherness of the inmanent God, a respect that is also evident in the removal of the crown land and the city from close proximity to the temple. Gone for good is a feature of the old Jerusalem, where the temple had been too often subordinated to fallible, human concerns. Yet, in an echo of the positive traditions that bound temple, palace and city together in holy concord, the city’s territory and the crown estates still lie in a demarcated cluster, within the strip of land reserved for Yahweh.

The reservation, a material token that the whole land belongs to Yahweh, is sandwiched between two groupings of tribal strips. The twelve strips serve to recall the exiles from the narrowness of pre-exilic Judah and to widen their vision to the ecumenical ideal of an association of twelve tribes. Indeed, this liberating spirit goes further than ever before, embracing within its range of tribal privilege the resident alien (47:22–23). If there was no longer room in the temple for pagan staff who cared nothing for Yahweh (44:7, 9), there was room aplenty in the land and so in the covenant for non-Israelites who were committed to him in faith. The covenant clearly has implications for human relations. The tribal
territories are differentiated from the portion of the head of state: by implication, as 46:18 stated, there was to be no more exploitation of human power through the seizing of subjects’ land. Moreover, the tribal strips were to be equal longitudinally (contrast Num 33:54). Each strip included a slice of coastal plain, highlands and the Jordan valley, as far as it goes (Greenberg, *JAOS* 88 [1968] 64–66). The message was that large tribes were never again to swamp the interests of smaller ones. Lessons from the recent past have been well learned in this representation of a new Israel.

There is an absence of a sterile egalitarianism. The head of state still has an exalted role, as the large estates assigned to the royal family attest. The grouping of the tribes in proximity to or at a distance from the temple presumes a tradition of ancestral rank within the family of Jacob. This latter feature aligns with the importance that the priestly school found in patriarchal narratives as archetypal for the faith of Israel.

The postscript in 48:30–35 wants to highlight the positive role assigned to the city in vv 16–17, rather than the negative implication. In so doing it seeks to give greater prominence to the Zion tradition, in which the city shared in the aura of divine presence that emanated from the temple (Ps 46:6[5]) and in which the people found their basic oneness with God (Ps. 48:13–15 [12–14]). Also in these verses a conspicuous loose end of the book is tied up. The city that Yahweh had abandoned to destruction (9:5–8; 11:23; cf. 33:21; 40:1) would once more rejoice in the nearness of its Lord, in line with the positive message of 16:53, 55 (cf. Isa 1:21–26).

The two parts of this final literary unit give expression to a biblical tension, the paradox of an immanent God who blesses his covenant people in lavish abundance, and of a transcendent God who, however immanent, must remain apart in his holiness of being. The tension finds its implicit resolution in the fact that the people who worship and pay tribute to him by their contribution/reservation receive from him a rich quality of life and the healing of their hurts. One can go on to envisage a perennial cycle, in which a second stage is the further bringing of worshipful contributions. Strictly it is this second stage that the present unit has in view, in which the initiative lies with the divine blessing (cf. 2 Chr 31:5–10; Joel 2:14).

The symbolism of theology translated into the stuff of an imaginative vision and more mundane cartography challenges believers to new efforts in the communication and outworking of their faith. The faithfulness and grace of God, the covenant bond of fellowship with him, social implications for church and state—in these lies inspiration for our dreams and endeavors.