

MAPPING JUDAH'S FATE IN EZEKIEL'S
ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS

SBL Press

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN MONOGRAPHS

General Editors

Alan Lenzi
Juan Manuel Tebes

Editorial Board:

Reinhard Achenbach
Roxana Flammini
Esther J. Hamori
Steven W. Holloway
René Krüger
Steven L. McKenzie
Martti Nissinen
Graciela Gestoso Singer

Number 15

SBL Press



MAPPING JUDAH'S FATE IN EZEKIEL'S
ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS

Lydia Lee

SBL Press



SBL PRESS

Atlanta

Copyright © 2016 by Lydia Lee

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by means of any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act or in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed in writing to the Rights and Permissions Office, SBL Press, 825 Houston Mill Road, Atlanta, GA 30329 USA.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Lee, Lydia, author.

Title: Mapping Judah's fate in Ezekiel's oracles against the nations / by Lydia Lee.

Description: Atlanta : SBL Press, [2016] | Series: Ancient Near East monographs ; number 15 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016040614 (print) | LCCN 2016040853 (ebook) | ISBN 9781628371512 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780884141839 (hardcover : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780884141808 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Bible. Ezekiel, XXV-XXXII--Criticism, interpretation, etc.

Classification: LCC BS1545.52 .L44 2016 (print) | LCC BS1545.52 (ebook) | DDC 224/.406--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016040614>

Printed on acid-free paper.



Dedicated to my foes, friends, and family,
all of whom have led me on a journey of self-discovery

SBL Press

SBL Press

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	xi
Abbreviations	xiii
Prologue: A Journey of Self-Discovery	1
Chapter One: Setting the Course	7
1. Navigating the Landscape.....	8
1.1. The “Implicit Hope” Focus.....	8
1.2. The “Hubris” Focus.....	14
1.3. The “Oblique Judgment” Focus.....	17
2. Identifying the Obstacles.....	23
2.1. Ideological Overgeneralization.....	23
2.2. Contextual Isolation.....	33
3. Marking the New Path.....	35
3.1. Semantic Links, Textual Allusions, and Rhetorical Impacts.....	40
3.2. Wider Influences beyond Ezek 25–32.....	44
Chapter Two: The Dispossession of the Promised Land in Ezek 25	51
1. The Ominous Beginning.....	53
1.1. The First Proof-Saying.....	54
1.2. The Second Proof-Saying.....	56
1.3. The Third Proof-Saying.....	57
1.4. The Fourth Proof-Saying.....	58
1.5. The Fifth Proof-Saying.....	61
2. The Allusions to the Promised Land and Divine Retribution.....	63
2.1. The “Possession”.....	64
2.2. The “Glory of the Land”.....	68
2.3. The “Vengeance”.....	71

2.4. The “Stretching-Hand” and “Cutting-Off”	73
3. The Rhetorical Impact	76
3.1. The Territorial Resemblances between the Nations and Judah	77
3.2. The Shared Judgment between the Nations and Judah	77
Chapter Three: The Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and Priesthood in Ezek 26–28.....	79
1. The Allocation of the Perfect Beauty	83
1.1. The Proof-Sayings	84
1.2. The Dirges	86
2. The Allusions to the Israelite Sanctuary and Priesthood	89
2.1. The Conflation of the Tabernacle and First Temple Images	89
2.2. The Enumeration of the Jewels on the High Priestly Pectoral	95
3. The Rhetorical Impact	102
3.1. The Foreboding Beauty	102
3.2. The Exalted Glory	105
3.2.1. The All-Encompassing Trade List	105
3.2.2. The Divine Cherub	107
3.3. The Destruction <i>in toto</i>	118
3.3.1. The Final Blow by the East Wind	118
3.3.2. The Profanation of the Tyrian King	120
Chapter Four: The Death of Judah in Ezek 29–32.....	123
1. The Shaping of Egypt as YHWH’s Enemy	127
1.1. The Crocodile/Dragon Monster	127
1.2. The Broken Arm	135
1.3. The Chthonic Cedar	139
2. The Allusions to Judah as Egypt’s Ally	144
2.1. The Crushed Reed to the House of Israel	145
2.2. The People of the Covenant Land	147
2.3. The Multitude	154
2.4. The Cedar and the Vine	158
3. The Rhetorical Impact	165
3.1. Destruction	167
3.2. Exile	170
3.3. Death	171
3.4. Restoration	175
Chapter Five: Exploring the Afterlives.....	183
1. Summary	184
2. Affirming the Oblique Judgment	186
2.1. The Beginning of the Fateful Siege	188

2.2. The Arrival of the Terrifying News.....	193
3. Transforming the Oblique Judgment.....	197
3.1. In Opposition to the Mountains of Israel.....	198
3.1.1. The Magnified Hostility.....	200
3.1.2. The Magnified Desolation.....	204
3.2 Not an Ally, but an Enemy.....	207
3.2.1. The Previous Ally.....	209
3.2.2. The Present Enemy.....	217
Epilogue: Implications of the Study.....	223
Bibliography.....	231
Indexes.....	257

SBL Press

SBL Press

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This monograph is a revised version of my doctoral thesis submitted to Georg-August-Universität Göttingen in April 2014. The completion of the thesis is impossible without the assistance of my *Doktorvater*, Dr. Nathan MacDonald, my *Doktormutter*, Prof. Annette Zgoll, and the third committee member, Prof. Hermann Spieckermann. Special thanks are due to Dr. Nathan MacDonald. Working as one of the doctoral research assistants in his Sofja-Kovalevskaja Research Team in Göttingen, “Unity and Diversity in Early Jewish Monotheisms” allowed me to test and exchange ideas at various local and international conferences. Summaries of my research were presented at the doctoral colloquiums in Göttingen (June 2012, May 2013), at the Society of Biblical Literature meetings held in Amsterdam and Chicago (July 2012, November 2012), and at the graduate meetings in Lausanne (June 2012, June 2014). The intellectually challenging research job introduced me to other ingenious colleagues in Göttingen, including Dr. Sonja Ammann, Dr. Rob Barrett, Dr. Ken Brown, Dr. Mette Bundvad, Reed Carlson, Dr. Izaak de Hulster, Dr. (des.) Paul Michael Kurtz, Dr. Matt Lynch, Roberto Piani, and Dr. Harald Samuel. All of them have offered me different kinds of incentives to complete the doctoral thesis as well as possible.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to another group of people, whose precious encouragements, critical insights, and technical support have helped the book see the light of day. Prof. Ian Young, my Honors supervisor at the University of Sydney, who has always believed in me and shown me the way, kindly proofread an earlier version of Prologue and Chapter One. Prof. Shani Tzoref, who had introduced me to the fascinating world of the Second Temple Literature during my undergraduate studies, helpfully commented on a previous version of Chapter Five and Epilogue. Prof. Mark Leuchter’s passion for the prophetic literature is so contagious that I have been infected by it ever since I undertook an undergraduate course taught by him. Dr. Carla Sulzbach, Dr. Rachele Gilmour, Dr. Nickolas Roubekas, and Dr. Safwak Marzouk selflessly shared their insights and tirelessly proofread my work, either in part or in whole. Dr. Selim Adalı deserves credit and thanks for showing interests in my chapter on Gog and for

pointing me to many valuable references. The feedback of the editors and reviewers of my articles at *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (on Ezek 25) and *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (on Ezek 28) has helped sharpen my argument in various sections of the book. Parts of those articles are reused in chapters two and three with the permission of the editors. I am indebted to Prof. Herrie van Rooy and Prof. Hans van Deventer for accepting me as a postdoctoral research fellow at the North-West University in South Africa, where I completed the final editing before publication. I cannot express enough thanks to Prof. Alan Lenzi, the General Editor of the SBL Ancient Near Eastern Monograph Series, who graciously accepted the manuscript, went through it with efficiency and erudition, and drew my attention to various relevant ancient Near Eastern materials. The anonymous reviewers of my manuscript provided highly useful comments for the improvement of my arguments. Nicole Tilford, the Production Manager of the SBL Press, went to great lengths in supervising my preparation of the printer-ready manuscript. Participating in this innovative online open-access endeavour has brought me much satisfaction and joy.

Devoting countless days and nights to the study of ancient texts can be tedious without the loving support of a family. Throughout my doctoral studies, my parents, Kau and Mu Tan Lee, kept me in their prayers. My brother, Paul Lee, and my sister, Esther Lee, constantly cheered me up with words of encouragements. My brothers and sisters in Christ from the Göttingen Chinese Christian Congregation and the Potchefstroom International Church (RC Potch Bult) have melted my heart with their warmth and made me feel at home in the foreign countries. The gratitude list would be incomplete without mentioning the sacrificial love of my husband, Zhiyang Liu, who patiently and joyfully looked after my practical needs over a long period of time, so as to free me up for academic research.

Reflecting on the writing and production of this book has made me realized the importance of all of the aforementioned people in shaping and enriching my life. They all have led me on a journey of self-discovery, teaching me to revisit the past and to embrace not only the good but also the bad experiences in life. I thus dedicate this study to all of them.

Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.

Lydia Lee
Potchefstroom
Heritage Day 2016

ABBREVIATIONS

AASF	<i>Annales Academiae scientiarum fennicae</i>
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
<i>ABR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
<i>Ag. Ap.</i>	<i>Against Apion</i>
<i>AHw</i>	<i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . W. von Soden. 3 vols. Wiesbaden, 1965–1981
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs/Monografías sobre el Antiguo Cercano Oriente
<i>ANEP</i>	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by James B. Pritchard. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954
<i>ANET</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969
<i>ANF</i>	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i> . Edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. 1885–1887. 10 vols. Repr., Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994.
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AoF	Altorientalische Forschungen
<i>ASTI</i>	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
<i>AUSS</i>	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentum
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium

- BEvT Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
 BHS *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983
- Bib* *Biblica*
BibInt *Biblical Interpretation*
 BibInt Biblical Interpretation Series
 BibOr *Biblica et orientalia*
 BIES *Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society (=Yediot)*
Bijdr *Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie*
 BN *Biblische Notizen*
- b. Sanh. Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin
 BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
 CAD *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006
- CBC Cambridge Bible Commentary
 CBET Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
 CBQMS Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
 CC Continental Commentaries
 CEV Contemporary English Version
 ConBOT Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
COS *The Context of Scripture*. Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002
- CTJ* *Calvin Theological Journal*
DDD *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. Edited by Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst. Leiden: Brill, 1995. 2nd rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999
- DSSSE* *Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*. Edited by F. G. Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar. Leiden: Brill, 1997–1998
- EA El-Amarna tablets. According to the edition of Jørgen A. Knudtzon. *Die el-Amarna-Tafeln*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908–1915. Repr., Aalen: Zeller, 1964. Continued in Anson F. Rainey, *El-Amarna Tablets, 359–379*. 2nd rev. ed. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1978
- EdF Erträge der Forschung
EncJud *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Edited by Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum. 2nd ed. 22 vols. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007
- ESV English Standard Version
ETL *Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*
 FAT Forschungen zum Alten Testament

FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GNB	Good News Bible
<i>HALOT</i>	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JPS	Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JSSEA</i>	<i>Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities</i>
Jub.	Jubilees
<i>J.W.</i>	<i>Jewish War</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>KTU</i>	<i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i> . Edited by Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013. 3rd enl. ed. of <i>KTU: The Cuneiform Al- phabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places</i> . Edited by Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995 (= CTU)
<i>LÄ</i>	<i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> . Edited by Wolfgang Helck, Eberhard Otto, and Wolfhart Westendorf. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972
LAE	Life of Adam and Eve
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint

Midr. Ps	Midrash Psalms
<i>MIO</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
NET	New English Translation
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NKJV	New King James Version
<i>NTT</i>	<i>Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift</i>
OAN	Oracles against the Nations
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>OtSt</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
Pesiq. Rab.	Pesiqta Rabbati
Pirqe R. El.	Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RIA</i>	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i> . Edited by Erich Ebeling et al. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928–
RINAP	The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigraphica
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>

VAB	Vorderasiatische Bibliothek
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
Vulg.	Vulgate
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>WW</i>	<i>Word and World</i>
YOSR	Yale Oriental Series, Researches
<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

SBL Press

SBL Press

PROLOGUE

A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

No man is an Iland, intire of itselfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the mained; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Manor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

John Donne

Ezekiel 25–32 possesses a rich tapestry of imagery of foreign nations. These eight chapters of prophecies paint a lush landscape, in which all sorts of ancient nations come to life. Here, Ammon and Moab scorn and taunt; Edom and Philistia execute vengeance; the beautiful Tyre, decorated with merchandise from many countries, proudly possesses all her splendor and glory, but is ultimately destroyed by the east wind and overthrown into oblivion; and the monstrous Egypt, comparable to a tall cosmic tree or a ferocious lion, finally enters a shameful fate in the netherworld with the uncircumcised and the pierced.

This collection of prophecies within the book of Ezekiel belongs to the literary terrain of the so-called Oracles against the Nations (OAN). Concerned with the mystical past, disputed present, and oft-disastrous future of the specifically named nations other than Israel and Judah, the OAN sprawl over the Latter Prophets. These texts, as in Isa 13–23, Jer 46–51, Ezek 25–32, Amos 1–2, Zeph 2–3, and Zech 9, appear as a collection within the prophetic books. Sometimes, they occupy the entire prophetic book, as is the case with Nahum and Obadiah, which indict Nineveh and Edom respectively. The OAN in no way represent a specific *Gattung* or genre, and the content often plays a far

more important role than the form in defining the OAN.¹ This is because the OAN display diverse structures and forms, be it a proof-saying,² an invitation to flight or flee,³ a dirge (הִקִּינָה),⁴ or an utterance (מִשָּׁא).⁵ They comprise a significant percentage of word count, covering 13.6 percent of the corpus of the Latter Prophets.⁶ If one would include all doom passages against the nations, including Isa 34, Ezek 35, 38–39, and Joel 4, the percentage would probably increase to 15–20 percent.⁷ That is to say, nearly a fifth of the Latter Prophets would consist of the OAN.

Despite its statistical prominence in the Hebrew Bible, Fechter rightly acknowledges that the OAN in general remain an alien or unfamiliar acre in

¹ For this consensus, see B. Huwylar, *Jeremia und die Völker: Untersuchungen zu den Völkersprüchen in Jeremia 46–49*, FAT 20 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 2; R. Albertz, *Die Exilszeit: 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, Biblische Enzyklopädie 7 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 145–46; D. L. Christensen, *The Transformations of the War Oracle in Old Testament Prophecy: Studies in the Oracles against the Nations*, HDR 3 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 1; A. Hagedorn, *Die Anderen im Spiegel: Israels Auseinandersetzung mit den Völkern in den Büchern Nahum, Zefanja, Obadja und Joel*, BZAW 414 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 11; B. C. Jones, *Howling over Moab: Irony and Rhetoric in Isaiah 15–16*, SBLDS 157 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 56–57.

² E.g., Amos 1–2; Ezek 25; 26:1–6, which usually include a reason for judgment and a statement of judgment. Cf. J. B. Geyer, “Mythology and Culture in the Oracles against the Nations,” *VT* 36 (1986): 129–45, here 130–32.

³ This form is typical of the Jeremianic oracles. The invitations to flee include Jer 48:6–8, 28; 49:8, 30; 50:8–10; 51:6, 45. The invitations to fight include Jer 46:3–6, 9–10; 49:14–15, 28–29, 31–33; 50:14–15, 16, 21–23, 26–27, 29–30; 51:3–4, 11–12, 27–29. See also Isa 13:2; 21:2b, 5b; Jer 5:10; 6:4–6; Hos 5:8; Joel 4:9–12, 13; Mic 4:13; Obad 1. For more details, see R. Bach, *Die Aufforderungen zur Flucht und zum Kampf im alttestamentlichen Prophetenspruch*, WMANT 9 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1962), 15–22, 51–69.

⁴ E.g., Ezek 27; 28; 32. Cf. the מִשָּׁא in Isa 14.

⁵ E.g., Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zech 9:1, but especially in Isa 13–23 (e.g., 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1). The texts to which מִשָּׁא is attached display a diversity of styles and structures. For more explications, see B. B. Margulis, “Studies in the Oracles against the Nations” (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1966), 200–222; G. H. Jones, “An Examination of Some Leading Motifs in the Prophetic Oracles against Foreign Nations” (PhD diss., University of Wales, 1970), 50–55; Jones, *Howling*, 62–76.

⁶ P. R. Raabe, “Why Prophetic Oracles against the Nations?” in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. A. B. Beck et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 236.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 236–37.

the wider landscape of biblical scholarship.⁸ On one level, none of these texts appears as part of a liturgical reading or sermon in churches. On another level, they rarely feature in a biblical course taught at a tertiary institution. Fechter thus questions if the exclusion of this large part of the biblical traditions is executed with justice. Independent of Fechter's study, Boadt comes to a similar conclusion: "Rarely does the commentator integrate the oracles against the nations into a summary of the prophet's theology."⁹ Their observations are indeed justified when Westermann's classic study entitled *Grundformen prophetischer Rede* dedicates only one out of 149 pages to the biblical OAN, so that the reader gets the impression that the corpus is not part of the original prophetic judgment or that it is an insignificant part of the prophetic books in general.¹⁰ A later period has witnessed the writing of one English dissertation on Ezek 25–32 completed by Strong (1993) and the publication of a German monograph on Ezekiel's OAN composed by Premstaller (2005).¹¹ Still, their studies do not alleviate the general indifference shown toward this corpus within the book of Ezekiel. This neglect is amply demonstrated when Schmid's introduction to the book of Ezekiel in the recently published *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament* (2006, Eng. 2012) barely mentions the collection of the OAN.¹²

Even if references are made to the OAN, commentators generally assume the corpus' vitriolic tone and nationalistic spirit. Having compared the OAN

⁸F. Fechter, *Bewältigung der Katastrophe: Untersuchungen zu ausgewählten Fremdvölkersprüchen im Ezechielbuch*, BZAW 208 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), 1, n. 2.

⁹L. Boadt, "Rhetorical Strategies in Ezekiel's Oracles of Judgment," in *Ezekiel and His Book: Textual and Literary Criticism and Their Interrelation*, ed. J. Lust; BETL 74 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 196. This isolated status of the OAN is also observed by P. C. Beentjes, "Oracles against the Nations, a Central Issue in the 'Later Prophets,'" *Bijdr* 50 (1989): 204–5.

¹⁰He characterizes the OAN in the Hebrew Bible simply as the judgment proclamation to Israel's enemy. C. Westermann, *Grundformen Prophetischer Rede*, 5th ed., BEvT 31 (München: Kaiser, 1978), 147–48.

¹¹J. T. Strong, "Ezekiel's Oracles against the Nations within the Context of His Message" (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary of Virginia, 1993); V. Premstaller, *Fremdvölkersprüche des Ezechielbuches*, FB 104 (Würzburg: Echter, 2005).

¹²This neglect of the OAN is despite the fact that the author of the introduction acknowledges that "the book of Ezekiel is widely and correctly considered the most tightly structured prophetic book of the Old Testament" (452). For the introduction, see K. Schmid, "The Book of Ezekiel," in *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, ed. J. C. Gertz et al., trans. J. Adams-Maßmann (New York: T&T Clark International, 2012), 451–65. This textbook first appeared in 2006 in German as *Grundinformation Altes Testament: Eine Einführung in Literatur, Religion und Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, ed. J. C. Gertz et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

in Jer 46–51 with the rest of the prophetic book, Schwally claims that YHWH in the OAN section appears thoroughly as the “Rachegott,” which is an image incompatible with the compassionate and merciful God portrayed elsewhere in the book.¹³ Pfeiffer famously condemns all OAN in the Hebrew Bible as “ardently nationalistic and fanatically intolerant.”¹⁴ Even in an attempt to redeem the moral reading of Nahum, Nysse still issues a pessimistic assessment: “The oracles against the nations are not safe to read, and no amount of explanation can make them so.”¹⁵ In short, these oracles in the Hebrew Bible are either blatantly ignored or deeply feared.

Looking beyond this sense of alienation and estrangement, this study explores one important dimension of Ezek 25–32, which has not yet received sustained attention: *Ezekiel 25–32 highlights the commonality between Judah and the nations, by deploying the doom oracles of the nations as the implicit pronouncements concerning the dispossession of the Judean land, the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and priesthood, and the demise of Judah.*

To justify this argument, I will examine the concrete lexical features of Ezek 25–32, taking into consideration both the diachronic (temporal) and synchronic (spatial) aspects of the features. That is to say, this study will pay attention to the synchronic space occupied by the literary features used to construct the imagery of Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, and Egypt in Ezek 25–32. At the same time, the study will explore the possible textual allusions to Judah or the pre-exilic house of Israel embedded in the lexemes used in Ezek 25–32. A more detailed explication of how the synchronic and diachronic aspects of the texts aid in a deeper appreciation of the rhetorical impacts created by the texts will be found in Chapter One.

The subsequent chapters deal with the focal texts for examination, including the oracles against Transjordan and Philistia in Ezek 25, the dirges against Tyre in chapter 26–28, and the prophecies against Egypt in chapters 29–32. The goal is not to deal with every facet of all these oracles, but to pay attention to the major literary allusions embedded in Ezekiel’s OAN that have received less sustained attention, to highlight the unstable boundary between Judah and

¹³ F. Schwally, “Die Reden des Buches Jeremia gegen die Heiden XXV, XLVI–LI,” *ZAW* 8 (1888): 177–217, esp. 204: “In 46 bis 49 dagegen tritt Jahve durchgehends als Rachegott auf, welcher die Heiden unabänderlichem Untergang geweiht hat.” In comparison with the other materials concerning foreign nations such as Isa 15, 16, 24, Obadiah, and Ezek 25–32, 38–39, Schwally claims that Jeremiah’s OAN share characteristics with the OAN found in other prophetic books (207–13). Subsequently, Schwally passes the judgment that Jeremiah’s OAN, like the other OAN in the Hebrew Bible, are more likely to be late, postexilic, and spurious.

¹⁴ R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1941), 443.

¹⁵ R. W. Nysse, “Keeping Company with Nahum: Reading the Oracles against the Nations as Scripture,” *WW* 15 (1995): 412–19, here 412.

the nations in these passages, and to emphasize their common characteristics and shared judgment.

Chapter Two examines Ezek 25, which inaugurates a series of prophecies against the nations in the middle of the prophetic book. I will argue that this chapter with prophecies against Transjordan and Philistia contains an oblique judgment against the land of Judah. The lexical features of the oracles in Ezek 25, such as “possession” (מורשה) and “the glory of the land” (צבי ארץ) are linked to the traditions related to the Promised Land. The language of judgment applied to the nations reflects knowledge of the divine punishments applied to Jerusalem in Ezek 14 and 24. Taken as a whole, the dispossession of the neighboring countries in chapter 25 implicitly affirms the dispossession of the territory of the kingdom of Judah.

Chapter Three centers on the two dirges lifted up over Tyre in Ezek 27 and 28. It will be argued that these dirges reveal extensive connections to the traditions related to the Israelite sanctuary and priesthood pictured in Exod 28, 39, numerous passages of 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, as well as Ezek 16. With the sudden downfall of Tyre and its ruler in the two dirges, the common lexemes are contextualized in a way that brings suspense, anxiety, and apprehension toward the fate of Jerusalem’s cultic sphere.

From Chapter Four comes an analysis of the portrayals of Egypt and Pharaoh in Ezek 29–32. It will be argued that the lexical features of the oracles against Egypt allude to various historical alliances between Egypt and Judah. The lexemes are contextualized in the Egypt oracles in an indirect manner, not only to announce the shared exile, destruction, and demise of Egypt and Judah, but also to anticipate the future restoration of Israel as a nation with Egypt being kept at bay.

The dispossession of the land of Judah, the destruction of the First Temple, and the demise of the kingdom of Judah, weaved intricately into Ezek 25, 26–28, and 29–32 respectively, elicit response and counter-response in later layers of the book of Ezekiel. Chapter Five thus moves beyond Ezek 25–32 and places the attention on the surrounding literary contexts of Ezek 25–32, which include the chronological markers in 24:1 and 33:21, as well as the Seir and the Gog oracles in chapters 35 and 38–39. Representing later editorial activities within the book of Ezekiel, they interpret chapters 25–32 in two directions. One chooses to reinforce the oblique judgment focus by framing Ezek 25–32 with the chronological formulas that accentuate the siege and fall of Jerusalem. Another selects, adapts, and reconfigures the lexical features found in Ezek 25–32, in order to polarize the fate of the nations with that of the restored house of Israel. The aim of this polarization is to herald hope and salvation for the house of Israel.

The Epilogue will return to examine the accusations, which have been mentioned in the Prologue, and which judge all the OAN as vitriolic, xenophobic, intolerant, particularistic, unsafe to read, and thus best to be ignored.

How should we respond to such challenges in reading the biblical texts? Do Ezekiel's OAN really lend themselves to such criticisms? Let us then begin the quest for answers in the subsequent chapters.

SBL Press